



# Tui Motu InterIslands

May 1999 Price \$4

*The Year of the Father*



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# Fathers and Warriors

As I write it is Anzac Day. It reminds me of my own father mutilated by one World War – and of memories of the horrors of the Blitz in a second one. Meantime we are constantly being bombarded by images of yet another bloody conflict in the Balkans – and the fears of a further conflagration in our own backyard, in East Timor. I am also reminded of another anniversary which falls about this time: the bombing of Dresden. It received little publicity at the time. Only years later did it become publicly known that Dresden in 1945 was probably the most successful example of ethnic cleansing ever: the slaughter of 120,000 mostly innocent civilians in a few minutes.

It is human decisions that start wars and prosecute wars. People designed and used the Atomic Bomb. A human strategy devised the firestorm of Dresden. It is Slobodon Milosevic who has decreed that hundreds of thousands of Kosovans be driven from their homes and who launched his military on a spree of rape and pillage. Yet the Serbs are Orthodox Christians. And Clinton and Blair are both church-going Christians. So what is happening to the gospel imperative of love? Dr Tony Russell (opposite) asks this fundamental question as he seeks to look behind the traditional Christian ethic regarding the morality of war.

This issue of the magazine, however, is not primarily concerned with war. In view of the season and the *Year of the Father* which Pope John Paul decreed for 1999 in preparation for the millennium, we have particularly concentrated on human fatherhood and what Christian faith does to put it in religious context. It also is a topical issue because there is growing social

concern regarding the role of fathers, especially when they are absent from the home. The issue is complex; a whole set of causes, related and unrelated, have combined to make fatherhood a somewhat threatened vocation. The advance of women's rights against the effects and legacy of patriarchy has been a wonderful and admirable feature of this age. But it has often left the male half of society in a state of guilt and uncertainty. The avalanche of sexual abuse cases where the guilty party is nearly always the male, has added to this sense of collective guilt, so that it is almost impossible now to recruit males into professions which involve caring for young children.

The traditional role of being a faithful Christian dad has never been so seriously undermined. The good news is that in spite of appalling publicity there are still lots of males who continue to happily share the joys and burden of raising a family with their spouses, and to give their time unsparingly to sharing the chores, coaching, supervising, or just playing – doing all those things which help make the childhood of another generation a secure and joyous experience. The churches cannot do enough to support fathers.

The spectre of war and the vocation to fatherhood may seem to be topics which are utterly unrelated. Yet fundamentally they are? Virtually every man guilty of abuse has himself been sometime the victim of abuse. Conversely, strong and caring male figures help to shape our families, our parishes, neighbourhoods, indeed society itself as it evolves. I wonder what sort of a childhood Slobodon Milosevic had?

M.H.

*Tui Motu* welcomes discussion of spiritual, theological and social issues, in the light of gospel values and in the interest of a more peaceful and just society. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.



# Make Love, not War!

Tony Russell

*Make love, not war* was one of slogans of the 1960s. For a generation which was witness and heir to war in Europe, Korea and Vietnam, it was a cry which summed up an option to drop out rather than become embroiled in a world of international conflagrations. Beneath that option there was also a profound protest against the violence of war.

*Make love, not war* also encapsulated much of the history of Christian moral reasoning about war. Since Augustine in the 5th Century, the Christian community has been debating the rationale for legitimate defence of self and neighbour, and the criteria which can justify military violence. The heirs of Augustine – Aquinas, Suarez, Francesco di Vitoria, and in recent times, Bernard Haring, Bruce Kent, Gordon Zahn, Jacques Ellul and Richard McCormick, to name but a few – have all added to the endless debate about justifiable warfare.

The war in Kosovo and the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia has brought the whole issue of justifiable war back to the front pages of our newspapers and the top of the TV news. Tragically we are back there once again: missiles, “collateral damage”, ethnic cleansing, atrocities, the endless stream of bewildered refugee faces, the international posturing and feinting, Ministers meeting, press conferences, interviews with the ‘enemy’ on the streets of Belgrade. Nightly the TV counts down the Days.

It is my observation that in the face of conflicts such as that in Yugoslavia, Christians have a tendency to roll into some sort of moral foetal position. In other words, they are inclined to flinch and even retreat before a barrage of troubling questions. Some of these interrogatives revolve round such questions as “Can war ever be justified?” “Can Christians use *evil* means (warfare) to achieve a *good* end (peace)?” “What are

the criteria which can justify taking lives to save lives?” Most if not all these questions revolve around issues of justice.

Justice *per se* is a human construct, in so far as it is often relative to a variety of dimensions and contexts. Justice is also a ‘second tier’ virtue. It is one of cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude), rather than the theological or God-given virtues (faith, hope and love – or *agape*). Arguing out the pros and cons of war purely in terms of justice is, in a way, short-circuiting the Christian ethical argument. Christian reasoning must be ultimately founded on the discourse about love (*agape*). If we approach war – *is it justified or unjustified?* – purely from the perspective of justice, our arguments will ultimately be confused and insufficient. Our arguments must be founded on *agapaic* reasoning.

The foundational order of *agape* is generated by the command of Christ to love our neighbour. The cosmic firestorm of the Resurrection, as Chardin says, renders the whole cosmos Christic. All things, all times and events, all activity is now *in Christ*, and must be subjected to his foundational law of *agapaic* love.

What if violent people invade my home, and the lives of those I love are not merely threatened but even being

destroyed? What if my neighbour – the tyrant, the unjust aggressor, the military or political dictator – violates the foundational command of *agapaic* love? What can I rightly do – in fact, what *must* I rightly do – to restore *agapaic* order? What am I commanded to do to defend my life, and, above all, the life of my neighbour and so restore love – and justice?

Moving the discourse about war away from arguments founded on justice to arguments founded on *agape* does clarify the Christian moral posture. In the face of rape and pillage, of ethnic cleansing, murder and atrocity, the Christian cannot just stand by. When the violent and the unjust violate the foundational *agapaic* order, no matter what their motives, political beliefs or religious persuasions, I *must* act to restore the *agapaic* order of things.

The means of restoration are going to be grim, confused, costly, violent and often plain distasteful. The consequences are certainly going to be complex, even bitterly contestable. But, neither you nor I can stand by and let the foundational command of Christ be violated. . We are commanded to restore the *agapaic* order. Are we, then, called to make love – and war? ■

(Dr Tony Russell is Director of Challenge 2000, Wellington)



## The Fifth Horseman

Ethnic cleansing.

The Holocaust, Hutu slaughtering Tutsi in Rwanda, the Armenian massacres in Turkey, the plight of the Kurds, the killing fields of Cambodia – and many more. And as we write Serbs are driving our Kosovans from their homeland, and Indonesian troops continue to ravage East Timor.

(See pp 12-13 for a war report from Pax Christi)

In the Book of Revelation Chapter 6 four ‘avenging’ horsemen are depicted, representing conquest, famine, pestilence and war. Our age will surely be remembered for conceiving a fifth –

## Where will the sun rise first in 2000?

I am writing briefly re the article by Simon Caldwell (Feb issue *Tui Motu*) about sunrise for the new millennium. Now either Simon has his tongue in his cheek, or he does not know his geography because the International Date Line (IDL) does not run down the 180th meridian at Taveuni. By a convention going back a very long time, it deviates to the east of the 180th meridian from about 5 degrees South latitude and then runs close to the line of longitude 172 degrees West until south of the Chatham Islands where it then angles back to rejoin the 180th meridian at about 51 degrees South latitude. Taveuni thus lies some 400 odd nautical miles to the west of the International Date Line, and sunrise observed at the IDL will be perhaps 25 or 30 minutes **earlier** than when seen from Taveuni. So, when Simon says in his first paragraph, "...the 180th meridian, more commonly known as the International Date Line... etc", he is seriously in error, as far as this aspect of his story goes. There can be no doubt that Taveuni may well be the first place in the Eastern Hemisphere to meet the sun, but if there is to be a New Year's Day Mass to be celebrated on the Chatham Islands that morning, then no doubt they will claim the honour.

Maurice McGreal  
Glenfield, Auckland.

## The Vatican and General Pinochet

*It was reported in the press a few weeks ago that the Cardinal Secretary of State, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, had petitioned the British government not to extradite ex-President Pinochet of Chile, to face charges of gross violation of human rights before a Spanish Court (see April Tui Motu).*

let-



*Tui Motu enquired if there had been any official response to this from the New Zealand Catholic Church. Bishop Cullinane kindly allowed us to quote from a letter written by him as President of the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference to Cardinal Sodano on 6 April.*

### Bishop Cullinane wrote:

"The New Zealand bishops realise that the issue is complex and not as simple as it is presented by the media. We also take it for granted that the Holy See's position is a principled one, and not merely political.

"Your Eminence will equally appreciate our difficulty when we are asked about this by people whose only source of information is the news media. On

the basis of that limited information, it can appear to people that the Church is supporting immunity from prosecution for one who should be held to account for human rights' violations committed during his rule. It is claimed by some that the Vatican's intervention is inconsistent with the Church's commitment to human rights and justice. And so, in the absence of better explanations than those available so far, it is the Church's credibility that can suffer.

"Some Catholics simply distinguish between the Church's teaching role in matters of faith and morals, and its interventions of a more political kind... Our more immediate concern is to be able to offer adequate answers to those Catholics who are committed to the promotion of human rights and justice, and who are perplexed by the Vatican's position regarding General Pinochet.

"New Zealand Catholics have a good record of support for justice, peace and development across national boundaries, and so it is only natural for them not to think of national sovereignty as a higher value than solidarity across national borders when it is a matter of promoting human rights. Any advice that you can offer us will be greatly appreciated." (abridged)

*At the time of going to press we understand that no reply had been received to Bishop Cullinane's letter.*

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*Tui Motu offers its congratulations to*

## Anne Powell

*of the Cenacle, Wellington*



*on the launch of her first volume of published poetry.*

*Firesong is published by*

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# *The Year of the Father*

*In the three year lead-up to the Millennium Pope John Paul decreed 1999 as the Year of the Father. Catholic Theologian and feminist writer, Janet Soskice, traces the history of the Christian use of the title of Father for God – and suggests some applications for the vexed problems of fatherhood in contemporary society*

**I**n our society the phrase *the Year of the Father* has all the happy resonance of 'the Day of the Jackal'. How have we got where we are? Fathers, of any sort, get only bad press these days. My husband, himself a father, has pointed this out to me. Fathers-as-fathers seem only to appear in the press if associated with criminal violence of a sexual, physical or psychological sort

(usually all three) towards their nearest and dearest. Or else they appear as absent. Fathers aren't around. Single-parent families are overwhelmingly led by women while 'fathers' can't be found, or won't be found, or start up new families with someone else.

Fathers, then, are regarded with suspicion. Many fathers pick their

children up from school, but it is a brave dad who will try to arrange in the playground – as any mother would – for his child's little friend to "come round our place to play". We can understand all this. We can all understand that priests get treated with the same suspicion in many quarters. But isn't it sad? Yet it is true that even very good fathers are often absent fathers. A friend of mine

remembers, in the 60s, telling her two young children they had to get tidied up to go to meet daddy at the airport. “Has he been away?”, they chirped. He’d been away for two weeks.

Now that was the 60s, but businessmen still travel, work late and leave early. Children in Florida a few years back were posed with the question, “If you had to choose never again either to see your father or to watch TV, which would you choose?” A poser, admittedly, for anyone, but it’s not surprising most of them elected to keep the television and ditch Dad. After all they see the television between four to six hours every day.

And yet on Sunday we expect the sinews of the Christian heart to pulse to the invocation of God as Father, we pray that God be near us and hear us. Some might find the comparison more apt if we offered to fax the Father, or leave a message on the answering service attached to his mobile phone.

### **Father in Scripture**

Yet in the New Testament, calling God ‘Father’ is a sign of great intimacy, of new relation, of hope and of love. Much has been made in the scholarly literature in recent years of the fact that Jesus, on occasion, used the Aramaic *abba* in addressing God – an intimate title.

### *in the Gospel, calling God ‘Father’ is a sign of great intimacy*

But any invocation of God as Father – personal father rather than father of the people Israel – was in all likelihood new and striking in his day. The Hebrew Bible with its plethora of divine titles by no means privileges ‘Father’. Indeed God is styled as ‘Father’ only 11 times and never invoked in prayer in this way in the Old Testament.

But Jesus taught his disciples to pray to God as Father, and nowhere, with the exception of the cry of dereliction from the cross, does Jesus address God by any other name. The relatively insignificant

usage of the title in the Old Testament makes Jesus’ preference for calling God ‘Father’ (over 170 times in the Gospels) distinctive.

The New Testament writers and theologians of the early Church saw it as such. In some of the earliest Christian writings Paul expands upon the idea that the Christian is no longer slave but a son of God, “the spirit of sons...makes us cry out, ‘Abba, Father’”. The extension of the familial metaphors, begun by Paul, suggested to early theologians a nexus of familial metaphors in which Christians are ‘children’ or ‘sons’ of God by virtue of being one with Jesus, for whom God was ‘Father’.

**I**t would be a mistake however, and one which on our entry to the third millennium we must not make, to think that Jesus inherited, as a first century Jew, a frozen and austere kind of theism and transformed it into a new religion of love. God’s relationship to Israel is, from the stories of her earliest foundation, one of intense intimacy and love. The God of the Hebrew Bible has a really shocking knowledge of and concern for his people. Jesus’ teaching is in continuity with this – an intensification perhaps.

### **Son of the Father**

We seem to find, then, in the first centuries of the current era, in the very mixed companies of Christians and Jews, an emphasis of the nearness of God that went hand in hand with calling God ‘Father’. What is new, and for the Jews shocking, amongst the Christians is not the calling God ‘Father’ but rather the special status of Jesus as the Son.

For some early theologians the fact that Jesus called God ‘Father’ suggested the subordination of the Son to the Father, on the model of then customary relations in human families, where sons were ‘lower than’ their fathers. Deploying a penchant for biblical literalism, some Arians moved from insistence that Scripture shows God is the Father and Christ the Son to the conclusion that

the Son must have been non-existent before begotten. This from a distance of two millennia may seem a piece of theological nit-picking, but, as those theologians who defended emergent Trinitarian orthodoxy were quick to note, if accepted it would kybosh insistence on the true divinity of the Son.

This subordinationist theology was, as we know, defeated by the Trinitarian orthodoxy which insisted on the equality and co-eternity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The titles ‘Father’ and ‘Son’, it was early observed, were relational. Origen argued that there must always be the Son if there is always the Father, for the Father is not Father without the Son.

Into this rich stew came also the influence of Greek philosophy. Plato had spoken of God as ‘fatherly’ in his generative powers and contrasted passive, ‘maternal’ matter with the active and creative male principle. Such an image of divine fatherhood stressed generation and governance, and was not at all interested in the affective or intimate range of the metaphor. This is not the ‘Father’ of Jesus in the New Testament. None the less, this more metaphysical ‘fatherhood’ was to have its influence on subsequent Christian theology.

### **Beyond God the Father**

No divine title has been more central to Christian thought and worship than that of ‘Father’; the title seems now, for not a few people and for understandable reasons, to be vexed. The modern period has seen real concern amongst theologians and the Christian faithful about the symbolic and psychological outworkings of the ‘fatherhood of God’.

### *..if God is male then male is God..*

The criticisms are associated now with feminist theology but antedate it considerably. Hume, and any number of Freudian critics of religion, preceded Mary Daly’s *Beyond God the Father*. Daly’s work, however, is a *locus classicus*. She writes: “The biblical and popular



image of God as a great patriarch in heaven, rewarding and punishing according to his mysterious and seemingly arbitrary will, has dominated the imagination of millions over thousands of years.”(p.13). While Daly notes that “sophisticated thinkers” have never identified with God a Superfather in heaven, nevertheless “if God is male, then the male is God. The divine patriarch castrates women as long as he is allowed to live on in the human imagination” .

Many women, and not a few men, found Daly’s critique compelling – broadly said ‘yes’ to her sketch of the Father. The book sold, and continues to sell and to convince. Brutality, psychological violence, or just plain indifference marks the experience many have of their earthly fathers – and much of it, until recently, was accepted as ‘just the way fathers were’ or ‘just the rights fathers have’. Montaigne, in his essays, records a conversation with a friend, who regrets that he never in his life told his adult son, recently killed, that he loved him!

So, if the New Testament paints so positive a picture of God’s Fatherhood and one which surely must be a model for human fatherhood, how did the Christian authoritarian office degenerate into capricious violence of physical or psychological nature?

### **Fatherhood equals oppression?**

Must the ‘Fatherhood of God’ as found in Scripture and tradition inevitably yield to a patriarchal Christianity in which women are held in low esteem? Does ‘fatherhood’ always imply dominance and oppression? Was Freud right in thinking religion is born of a stubborn delusion that God is the omnipotent Father who can protect us even as we fear him?

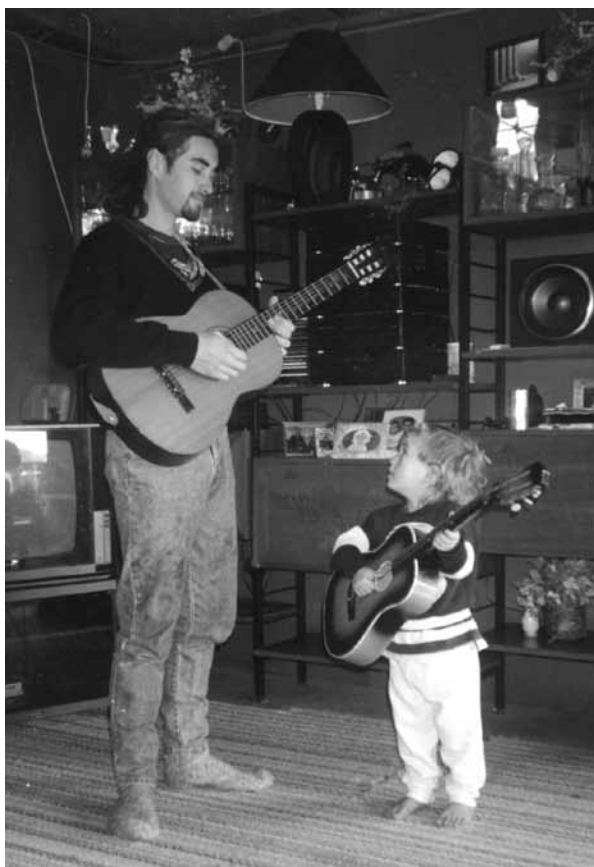
The very diversity of the Church may come to our aid – as well as the diversity or cultural configurations of fatherhood. For while every human being has a

biological father, what fatherhood means at the social and symbolic level varies greatly across societies and historical periods. It’s interesting to note that after stinging criticisms of Fatherhood of God from white feminists, some black or ‘womanist’ theologians were quick to point out that they did not have the same difficulties with ‘God the Father’ language in their religious sub-culture.

The modern preacher, perhaps espe-

generative principle is contrasted, and over which the male symbolically dominates. The ‘fatherhood’ model in Christianity moves, for the most part, within the affective, and not the ‘governance’ extensions of the metaphor. Jesus’ startling preference for calling God ‘Father’ suggests not only a natural human intimacy, but alludes to other kinship metaphors deployed in the Hebrew Bible, and perhaps suggests the fulfilment in his person of a prophetic aspiration that one day Israel will call God ‘Father’.

The Father cannot be, within the Trinitarian economy, sole ruler, Chairman of the Board, Emperor of celestial domination, without collapse into monarchianism. So we need from our preachers good teaching on the developed, Trinitarian theology of fatherhood. We need to be told a story that is historically nuanced. We need also some recognition from our preachers and church leaders that there are problems: that things are not now and, most importantly, *have not been* what they should be. While Catholic women have been strongly encouraged, in the last couple of centuries at least, to model their motherhood on the albeit very different motherhood of Mary, Catholic men have not equally been encouraged to model their fatherhood on the, albeit very different, Fatherhood of God.



cially in the West, faces a pastoral and a pedagogical challenge. What tools do we have to address it? ‘Father’ is a central term in the New Testament writings and closely associated with the teaching of Jesus. Jesus’ use of the title ‘Father’ was above all affective, and suggested an intimacy which the Christians were to enjoy as a new family of God, not by blood but by Spirit.

There is, in this New Testament use (and unlike that of the Platonists), no correlative and subordinate female principle (akin to matter) over and against which the male creative and

We have an opportunity now, at this late date in the millennium, to ask what impact our understanding of God as Father should have on all our human relationships. It might be a symbolic start if all Catholic fathers were encouraged, in this year, to look over their past behaviour and to apologise to wives and to children for any behaviour that now seems high-handed, thoughtless, selfish or brutal – even if, at the time, it was done for the good. ■

*This article, somewhat abridged, is reprinted from Priests and People*

# Being a father in 1999

## *Looking at the problems – and the spirituality*

Arthur, Bernie, Chris and David are all fathers of growing families. They are active members of the same Catholic parish. One thing they were agreed on regarding their role as fathers: they wanted to provide more love and guidance to their growing children than they received a generation ago from their own fathers. “I saw my father as a source of authority”, says Chris, “but I prefer to be a friend to my children.”

All four acknowledged they had been a lot closer to their mothers. “I wanted a close relationship with my father,” says Arthur, “but it didn’t happen. But I was extremely close to my mother.” Bernie also found his father distant: he was out of the house all day and spent a lot of time at the pub in the evenings. Often when he came home he went to bed early, because his work made him physically tired.

So what about this tension between being the breadwinner and spending time with the children? David sees men generally as being inclined to become absorbed in their work to the exclusion of their family life. Women, on the other hand seem to be able to do both. “I find my work dominates my life. It worries me, and I try to make up for it in other ways by giving the children quality time.” Of the four David had the closest bond with his father. “It was a truly spiritual thing. It has been probably the greatest influence in my life. And now I find that I am developing a similar bond with one of my sons. It doesn’t necessarily depend on the amount of time you spend.”

“My father,” says Chris, “never took any interest in me. It was my mother who spent a lot of time talking to me and supported me especially in my teenage years. So that would be my strongest wish: to spend a lot of time talking with

my children especially during their difficult times.”

‘Busy-ness’ is a real problem, reckons Bernie. “I know I don’t spend enough time with my children. I have less spare time in my life than my father had, because of my work – but I try to spend more time with the family.”

### Bathing the babies

They all welcomed the change in roles that this generation has seen. Fathers share in a lot of household and parenting chores which were taboo to an earlier generation of fathers. “A wonderful development”, reckons Bernie. “Even from the practical point of view it helps take the load off the mother especially when she is still feeding. And feeding and bathing and the ‘bringing up wind’ bit helps establish a stronger contact with the children.”

Arthur prefers bathing the young ones to sharing in the cooking. But he and his wife carefully discuss who does what so that the work is shared. David is adamant that men generally accept now that this is how it should be. But these domestic roles don’t always come easily. He has felt a ‘natural resistance’. The woman is the natural ‘manager’ of the household: so coming home and adjusting to another role after a day’s work requires a whole refocussing of one’s energy. “We establish routines. I cook sometimes, and I come home early a couple of days a week. If the roles are reversed, then you soon get tuned in to the details of managing the home.”

Chris sees putting the children to bed as an important part of the bonding. But his preferred way is to work and play with the boys. “They learn important skills. They love being helpful. You have

### Parenting programmes for dads

Shelley Auld is a professional counsellor who works for Dunedin’s Early Childhood Development centre. One of her major concerns is how to attract fathers to come to Parent Training programmes. She thinks we are still living in the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution and the World Wars which effectively removed the father from the average home.

Research has clearly shown that parenting works best when both partners are involved. A break-up of a marriage or relationship adversely affects the trust that children have in their parents. And often when men walk out of a relationship they grieve because they no longer see their children, and they run the risk of finishing up lonely old men.

So Shelley set about finding out why men often opted out of parenting programmes, with a view to attracting more of them to come. She contacted a sample group of 26 dads and by telephone interviews she was able to collect valuable data. Most were interested although a couple

indicated that nothing would attract them to attending a course. Some preferred to come on their own; some with their partner. What came through clearly was that if a course was properly advertised men would come.

Two types of course were planned: one with partner, one without. The facilitator needed to be male, a parent and someone used to working with groups. The courses consist of four two-hour sessions. The feedback from those who have completed the courses has been very positive.

Shelley thinks the classical ‘male stereotype’ thing is dying. Nevertheless men cherish their privacy more than women, especially when it comes to talking about their feelings. A very fruitful exercise for the men on the ECD courses was to have an older, prominent person come and share his experience of fathering. A great success was Greg Cooper, the ex-Otago footballer.

A book that Shelley Auld especially recommends is *Fatherhood Reclaimed*, by Adrienne Burgess.

MH



to put up with things not being quite so right!"

### **What about fatherhood as part of one's Christian vocation?**

David does not accept the notion that the father is head of the household. "My role as a parent is God-given. It is something I reflect on and pray about. I am very blessed as a parent. By raising the children in a Christian environment, the groundwork is being done.

*my children have  
taught me so much  
about love*

"I reflect on the spiritual things which I wish my parents had discussed with me when I was younger. I try to provide that for my own children, so they grow up with a spiritual awareness. The children are never excluded from discussions which touch on spiritual things."

Bernie stresses the importance of giving firm guidance in moral issues and in Christian principles. "I aim," he says, "to see the children behave correctly, but I also try to set an appropriate example." For Chris an important aspect is to pray together as a family. "And I feel tremendous support from the parish community. The children share in the riches of the Christian community. And we are fortunate here in our ecumenical relations: they can see how it helps build the whole community. And they compare the experience with some of their friends who don't go to church: there is a real hollowness, a lack of something special."

David regrets that fatherhood is not celebrated in the way motherhood is. "Manhood has gone through a rough patch, especially with the attention given to sexual abuse and incest. And the rise of feminism – which is a wonderful thing – has had one negative effect. The male sex has taken the back seat, having lost the dominant role.

"We've gone too far the other way. I think as fathers we are not taking the positive role in our families which we

should. As men we don't know how to celebrate our maleness. There is a certain time when bonding between males – and between fathers and their sons – becomes very important."

Chris is of the opinion that the media have had a really bad influence especially since the Christchurch creche case. "I don't think you should allow that to deter you from gaining your children's confidence."

"I think men can become isolated," says David. "Men don't have the network of friends that women have. Sports clubs provide something but not at the deepest level. We men can lack close male friends: such deep friendships are not easily made. Men with deep hurts, perhaps from their early life, need to get together; often counselling is needed. I think males in our generation have missed out a lot; in many ways we could grow a lot stronger and more 'whole'."

Arthur agrees that confiding about very personal issues is not easy. He has found that his spirituality has grown through regular contact with certain friends. "Often over the phone we will pray together." Bernie agrees that strong friendships are very important. "Good companions of earlier times are friends for life. We need someone to listen when we are under stress.

"Sometimes when I am facing a particular difficulty I think what Christ would do. I reflect on his calibre of loving. I think Christ's message of universal love touches at the heart of living – even in



one's business. The way to work well with people is to practise 'love your neighbour'".

Chris spoke of a neighbour who is a single man "who is a bit of a guru. He is a solid part of my life. He has this amazing outlook! We have become very close. I also think we have a wonderful parish community. Like a group of the young people going away with the adults for the Duke of Edinburgh Award hikes: this is building a better level of relationship between adults and young people in the parish."

Says Bernie: "My children have been absolutely wonderful. They have taught me so much about love; they have shown me my faults and taught me about forgiveness. The privilege of having children has been magnificent!" ■

# The sacrament of ordinary living

## *Living signs of unseen grace*

Dennis Horton

**D**uring my years of ministry, I always sensed a link between the sacraments we celebrate in church and those special moments of grace in daily life, when we know that God's presence makes a difference to how we live and love. The reason for this link between the so-called sacred and secular spheres is clear: the same Spirit is at work in both.

The Christ who makes himself present when Christians gather round the table of the eucharist is also really present whenever we welcome strangers in his name and share what we have with those who have less. The forgiveness we receive when the priest absolves is also there when "enemies begin to speak to one another, and those who were estranged join hands in friendship." (*Preface for Reconciliation*)

One might argue about which comes first. Is it because we break the bread of life and share it each Sunday that we become adept at sharing the bread of our lives with others through the rest

*profoundly aware of  
God's presence at the  
heart of all creation*

of the week? Or do we need to have begun the sharing and caring, for the sign of the eucharist even to begin to make sense? Is it because we have experienced God's mercy in the sacrament of reconciliation that we are more likely to be forgiving, reconciling people? Or must we already have started on the path of forgiving and being forgiven, before we can see the risen Christ and celebrate his mercy in the liturgy of forgiveness? The fact is that unless we are aware of God present in our daily living and of the deep-down holiness of all human effort and endeavour, chances are that all the

sacraments in the world will not make much difference to our lives.

I suppose my awareness of the sacredness of daily life has been heightened in recent months by the fact that I can no longer celebrate the sacraments as a priest. I often find myself remembering the prayer of Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit palaeontologist whose research half a century ago took him into the hinterland of China, far from any Christian church or Mass-going congregation. As he stood there alone, on the steppes of Asia, lacking the elements of bread and wine but profoundly aware of God's presence at the heart of all creation, Teilhard joined the one eternal Priest in offering our world and the whole of human history back to the God from whom it came and by whose providential care it continues to unfold.

My eye strays to the bookshelf where now, in its case, sits the chalice which my family gave me as an ordination gift, and I wonder if I shall ever be able to use it again. For the moment, I am not free to receive communion in my own church, much less say Mass. But so deeply imbued is the gospel imperative to "eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood" in order to have life, that I have sought – and found – a eucharistic community which, while not asking me to renounce my Catholic faith and identity, is still ready to welcome my wife and me to share at the Lord's table.

In that gesture of hospitality, I have been helped to see how much wider than our denominational boundaries are both the embrace of God's love and the redeeming power of Christ's grace; and I ponder on how often our church excludes from its sacraments those whose hurts and failures would have caught the compassionate gaze of

the Jesus of the gospels. We may have doctrinal purity, faith in all its fulness, but – as Paul warns – without love, then we are nothing at all. (*1 Cor. 13:2*)

**I**wonder now about our tendency to see the sacraments as rewards for orthodoxy or proven faith, rather than as signs of God's amazing grace, there for anyone who is willing to approach them with an open heart. The Catholic Church, wrote James K Baxter, "has the crown jewels of sacraments and doctrine, but is not exceptional in the vigour of her performance of works of mercy and justice. If the spirit moves

*often in the gospels the  
outsider has the faith  
Jesus requires*

today most forcibly among the Pentecostals, are we to call God an imperfect Christian? He chooses whom he chooses, and we dare not deny fellowship to those who call on the name of the Lord Jesus and are filled with the Spirit." (*Thoughts about the Holy Spirit*)

True, Jesus seems to chide the Canaanite woman who comes seeking a cure for her daughter, by insisting that the children's food cannot be thrown to the house-dogs. But in fact her faith wins the day, and her daughter is restored to health. (*Matt. 15:27*) So often in the gospels, it is the outsider who has the faith that Jesus requires, while those within the pale are found wanting. And one of his sternest rebukes is for the religious legislators of his day: "Alas for you who have taken away the key of knowledge! You have not gone in yourselves, and have prevented others going in who wanted to!" (*Luke 11:52*) I wonder what our canonists make of that!



The author enjoying a 'sacramental' moment in the family aviary with his stepson, Francis

Part of the cost of having to surrender my ministry as a priest to follow another call to love has been the need to retrace my steps as one of the baptised. For a time after resigning my parish, I was not even sure if God heard my prayers or if I could still say "God bless you" as I finished talking on the phone.

I know now that to bless in God's name is something that not just priests do; it's the prerogative of all the baptised. No matter where else the Christian journey leads us, whether we become priest or even pope, nothing ever quite equals the dignity that comes to us in baptism, with its call to recognise God's purpose at the heart of our world, and to invite others to see it, too.

I miss the lovely parish eucharists at which I was able to celebrate the anointing of the sick. But I see Christ healing the lives of the people I now serve, as they face the daily struggle of coping with mental illness and the prejudice and put-downs that come so often from those around them. Working as I do for an ecumenical agency, contracted by the public health system to provide a service irrespective of colour or creed, I see a value in signs of care that stand on their own, with no

preaching or proselytizing, no strings attached. The clearest sacraments speak for themselves; they need no explaining.

I have discovered little sacraments, too, in the myriad signs of love that occur in our family, fostering four feisty, spirited children in their bid to put their own stamp on life and to grow in both independence and respect for others. And I am often overwhelmed by a mother's unconditional love, as she rises above the hurts that children can sometimes even unwittingly cause, and wakes each morning to a new day and a fresh resolve to let love conquer all. In

*to bless in God's name  
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the baptised*

that letting-be of being, we are able to mirror God's own patience with ourselves, waiting for us to let the gift of grace unfold within us.

The most powerful of these living sacraments is the one at the heart of our marriage; it is never so clearly seen as when one of us recognises how vulner-

able or wounded the other may be, and renews the offer of love just at the point when we may be feeling that we are not worth loving. It's a love that images the tenderness of God, who knows us better than we know ourselves, and who heals us and makes us whole by continuing to cherish us just as we are.

A fortnight before Christmas, I fell suddenly and unaccountably ill. As we waited together for an ambulance to arrive, holding hands in the face of this frightening reminder of how tenuous life is, we were both aware of the deep peace that enveloped us and of how, in some mysterious way, we were making God present to each other.

Thank God, the pain was short lived, but the symbolic power of that terrifying moment endures. God's providential care is revealed in our caring for one another. We can become for each other living sacraments of the unseen God. ■

*Dennis Horton, ex-editor of Zealandia, resigned the active priestly ministry in 1996. He lives with his wife and her four children in Auckland*



# Wars – and rumours of wars

*The war in Kosovo has destroyed ten years work by Pax Christi trying to build dialogue between the Serb and Albanian communities. Below is an excerpt from the editorial of the Flemish Pax Christi paper*

## Is there still a way out of the problem of Kosovo?

For nearly ten years negotiations have sought fruitlessly for a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the problem of Kosovo. After the events of the past weeks the option of a negotiated agreement with the signatures of both the Serbs and the Albanians seems beyond reach. The crucial question at this juncture has become: Can President Milosevic cause a division at the heart of NATO and thus become the virtual victor in the conflict? Or can NATO force Milosevic to withdraw his troops from Kosovo? In both scenarios the civil population will be the victims of a tragedy with unforeseeable consequences.

For a peace movement such as *Pax Christi*, these events represent a real anguish. For more than ten years we have been issuing warnings on the escalation of violence in Kosovo. These warnings have been noticed but not heeded, nor given any urgency, so that currently we are witnessing the failure of a policy of prevention of conflicts. *Pax Christi* sent its own personnel and succeeded in committing more than 20 organisations and innumerable people in a process of dialogue between the two communities. All this has come to an end, and since 27 March we have had no news of our correspondent in Pristina.

This anguish has not spared NATO itself these last two weeks, and the organisation finds itself facing an impossible dilemma. Not to intervene between the two communities would have meant in the end accelerating the military confrontation on the ground in Kosovo. But aerial strikes themselves have still not succeeded in stopping

the exactions against the populations: indeed they seem to have resulted only in aggravating their state.

After brandishing the threat of aerial bombardment for a whole year, Western political leaders could do nothing but proceed to action if Milosevic persisted

Milosevic did not back down, while the exactions against the Albanian-speaking population increased in terror.

Moreover, our contacts have informed us that the Serbian forces in Kosovo received orders just as the bombing started, that in the event of communications with Belgrade being cut they were to proceed to mass expulsion of the population of Kosovo and execution of its leaders. How can one reconcile NATO's hope that Milosevic would back down with the information that exactions were to be undertaken as soon as communications were cut?

It is now beyond imagining that Milosevic will capitulate. The President, and with him the whole Serb élite, would apparently prefer to rule over a devastated country rather than yield to NATO. This places us in a scenario like that in Iraq, where a State condemned by the international community no longer considers itself bound by anyone or anything. Indeed 'collateral' damage could mean it gains considerable reinforcement from the Serb democratic opposition.

## What strategy is possible for NATO now?

According to military logic there is only one way: continue the bombing for days, even weeks. Eventually the spine of the Yugoslav army will be broken. However, even that may not put an end to the reign of terror in Kosovo.

It is even possible that after weeks of hesitation military logic will oblige NATO to introduce ground troops. The Serbs, for their part, are quite capable of sustaining a long guerilla war. The terrain is ideal for it. There is the

### Strike home

*Christine Armstrong reporting  
from Yugoslavia tells us  
of the "big night sky,  
crowds of stars,  
peach-moon over mountains."*

*Unthinking we relax  
for romance  
think of love even  
on a cruise.*

*Missiles don't miss.  
Strike targets like  
trees  
children  
old people  
factories.*

*Oh Christ!  
Oh terror!  
Obscene war in our sitting rooms.  
Anne Powell*

in refusing any reasonable compromise. The west, in effect, laid a bet: perhaps Milosevic would back down right at the start of the strikes; he had – or so they believed – a need for a first wave of bombardments as an 'excuse'; for making his citizens and party officials accept the Rambouillet agreement, including the occupation of Kosovo by foreign troops. But the bet was lost and



...Obscene war in our sitting rooms

possibility of open war between the Serbian troops and the Kosovo Liberation Army, assisted by NATO, thus prolonging the devastation of Kosovo. An even wider war is no then unthinkable, the nightmare of Western political and military leaders.

The restraint shown by the present Russian leaders could soon disappear in the unstable Russia we know, with radical and extremist elements taking the upper hand, unafraid of a direct confrontation with the West. Consequently, it is equally in the interests of the present Russian leadership that a solution be found. The conversations between Prime Minister Primakov and President Milosevic on 29 March gave no tangible results. Milosevic repeated that he was ready to withdraw his troops from Kosovo "partially" – and in the meantime hundreds of thousands of Kosovans are forced to flee their homes.

### What diplomatic avenues are left for resolving the conflict?

Beyond the military logic *Pax Christi* persists in arguing in favour of a negotiation with Milosevic, Draskovic and other Belgrade leaders. Moscow's support for such a negotiation would

be indispensable. The first step must be to establish contact with Moscow, among other reasons to ensure that the supplying of arms to Yugoslavia would not prolong the conflict; above all, to ensure this conflict does not degenerate into a direct confrontation between the former protagonists of the Cold War. Could not the current presidents of the European Union go to Moscow? The urgent request made at the end of March to meet European leaders to discuss Kosovo should receive

a favourable response. Prominent on the agenda should be the withdrawal of Serbian troops and the secure return home of the refugees.

If no serious agreement can be made in this direction and if, further, the exactions and the bombings continue for weeks more, that would be the end of little Kosovo as a separate entity. We would be headed for deadlock on the ground; the Serbian military forces would be almost completely annihilated, the Albanian-speaking population almost completely expelled; different armed groups would dispute the territory; NATO would oversee a no-fly zone over Kosovo; Milosevic would try to integrate part of Kosovo with Serbia; and there would be no prospect of any agreement bearing the signatures of both Serbs and the Albanian-speaking.

The one thing European countries can still do is to assure humanitarian aid. We are going to have to welcome an influx of refugees and accord them special status as fugitives of war. The countries bordering Kosovo cannot accommodate all the Kosovans who are fleeing. Otherwise the delicate ethnic balance of Macedonia and of Montenegro would be threatened, risking the creation of medium term instability throughout the region. ■

(translated by Paul Lansu, of *Pax Christi*)

### NATO bombing – churches disagree

NATO bombing in Yugoslavia has elicited various reactions from Church leaders and moralists.

Pope John Paul is said to be "profoundly concerned", and Cardinal Sodano, Secretary of State, asserted: "The bombings must be stopped at once. One cannot talk of peace and negotiate under the nightmare of bombs and massacres".

In the United States the President of the National Conference of Bishops, Joseph Fiorenza, said the air strikes posed "difficult moral and policy questions on which people of goodwill may disagree"; but representatives of American religious deplored the attacks, saying they can only foment more violence.

The head of the Serbian Orthodox

Church, Patriarch Pavle, appealed for a halt in NATO action, and Patriarch Alexis II of Moscow said: "What is being done is a sin before God and a crime in international law".

Chief Rabbi Dr Jonathan Sacks said he is praying military action will succeed. "But," he said, "when it is over, all the problems will still remain." Serbs and Albanians would still need to live together, each willing to move beyond the hatreds of the past.

"You can't achieve that by air strikes alone," he said. "When will we learn that peace does not grow from the barrel of a gun? It is born in the hearts of human beings, and its seeds are planted in the stories we teach our children".

# Searching the Soul of the Land

A personal reflection from a New Zealand Lenten Study, 1999

Kevin Francis O'Connor

Some 30 years ago, as a new member of the New Zealand National Commission for Unesco, I was challenged by another member, Sir Charles Fleming, to identify my value system: "Are you nature-centred or human-centred?", he asked. I tried to avoid the issue by saying I aimed to be God-centred. "...and what about your God? Where is he or she centred?" I have never forgotten that challenge. The *Restore Land* Lenten program, recent issues of *Tui Motu* and the visit of Miriam MacGillis O.P. have brought the question into fresh focus.

I have spent most of my working career in research and teaching for better land use, pursuing what became ecology, ecological economics and resource management. I am far from content with either achievement or the direction of our agriculture and forestry. Yet we are not free to renounce them, or seek in them a way of comfort while ignoring the balance of social benefits, nor are we free to dispense with science. I believe all these human activities need redemption, as Earth itself groans to be redeemed.

I hear anew the *Francis* call for a **fresh theology of Earth**. Those who deal in theology face a dilemma: either admit that we have failed to apply theology to natural resources issues in our historic past, or confess that the theology applied has grown inept for the emerging human and planetary condition. While I see no escape from a commitment to renewed agriculture and forestry if the people of the world are to be fed, sheltered and clothed, I emphasise our urgent need of a revised and reapplied theology of nature, if we humans are to survive as a species in the world as we know it. In such a quest, I see a *theology of land* as an important focus in the Year of Jubilee 2000. It is needed if we are to

make any progress in restoring land to be worthy of God's creation; we must be reconciled to Earth in order to be reconciled to God and to one another.

As I see it, a renewed modern physical and biological science enables us to see how we might mend our ways and still meet genuine human needs, at the same time as it unfolds the continuing degradation of the planet. Contemporary studies in ecological economics reveal the social and political mechanisms by which such degradation occurs. I search

## *Earth itself groans to be redeemed*

for a theology of land that demonstrates the ungodliness of continuing to degrade and desecrate Earth and at the same time enables human beings to live with confidence in the wise providence of the Creator, honouring God and serving others in the care of land. Humans can practise conservation – but we don't!

Theologians, moralists and conservationists agree that humans differ from other organisms in that they can consciously practise conservation in various ways. Humans can care for species other than themselves. They can preserve functioning natural ecosystems irrelevant in any way to the material needs of humans, even if these inspire awe and wonder at their beauty. They can manage their use of natural resources for the material needs of present generations so that access by future generations is ensured without diminishing quantity or impairing quality.

Despite our potential for conservation, we do little about it. Deterioration of the environment is evident in the form of pollution of air

and water, depletion of seas and forests, and loss of species as well as habitats in all parts of the planet. We delude ourselves we are solving the problem. We show that Earth is being made to feed more people. We comfort ourselves that all is not lost, that humanity can lick these problems by generating surpluses through existing economies, adopting science-based technologies and allowing markets to dictate terms and directions of production and trade.

We deceive ourselves. For some years from the early 1960s we had widespread and genuine effort by scientists to understand the problems and by government agencies and associations of people to devise remedies. Over the last ten years not only is the battle not being won, but we are often not even engaging in it, even when we pretend to.

## **Why the need of theology?**

It is all too easy to identify technological symbols as problem, whether it be ryegrass pastures, radiata pine, heavy tractors or genetic modification of crops and animals. The real problem lies deeper. We have abandoned to commercial forces the direction of agriculture and forestry as international industries. Increasingly such industries are dominated by the amoral power-centres of transnational corporations. In New Zealand we transform our own co-operative dairy industry into a complex enterprise that functions in the image of a transnational. Traditional stewardship of land is worn away by the abrasion of market economics. More subtly, we so emphasise the commercial character of our farming that we pretend to exempt it in some way from the duties and rights of conservation.

From my experience in resource management I believe that necessary changes in land use behaviour can come about



only if those who believe in God as Creator, Redeemer and Spirit discover and teach a genuine Theology of Earth. For three reasons:

- no change in social behaviour comes about without a major change in worldview and spiritual motivation. Without a theology, a worldview is not compelling and spiritual motivation is ephemeral:
- traditional Christian teaching on practical human ecology is inadequate for current human and planetary condition. The material created world is more than the goods of persons from whom we should not steal. Private property is

Earth exists in space, with variety and complexity as essential features. In all its early meanings, “land” has place, whether it be as solid ground separate from seas, or a patch of ploughed ground, or a particular tract occupied by a community of people. Lands have particular features, special to each. A thousand years ago we had a word in old English: “**landship**” – usually written “landscip”. Like “township” or “tunscip”, it was a collective noun for the people of a particular place. The word lost its own original form and meaning to become “landscape” – a “picture of or appearance of the land”. The sad



not the universal path to the common good. In a sense, Christian teaching has become part of the problem rather than contributing to its solution.

- I see the essential grounds for hope in the Christian teaching of God’s goodness as Creator and of God’s love for the whole of creation – and in a special way for us humans. To our hope in God, we humans must join the duty of care. We must discover how to love God by caring for creation.

### Changes in the meaning of Land

We shall discover and be motivated by a profound and wondrous *theology of Land*. I distinguish here between Earth and Land. We appreciate that planet

fact is that we lost not only the word “landship” but also its meaning. This loss has been accompanied by change in the meaning of “land” itself.

In the cultural expansion of economic empire over the Earth for several hundred years, the meaning of “land” has become generalised. From becoming the object of tenure, land in many minds became merely another form of property, rather than a particular tract of a country to which we belong in a community. In the process of becoming property that we own, even if we are absent from it, land has tended to lose its sense of place. The value of land has become transmuted into wealth, represented

by mere title to land, negotiable and tradeable. Furthermore, land lost some of its dignity by becoming simply a means in the economics of production, just as human dignity was reduced in becoming industrial labour.

### What of the search for soul?

The idea of soul was not invented in the Bible, but is rooted in traditional Western philosophy and in the world-views of different peoples. Christians have been most concerned with the nature of the human soul. Pre-Christian and Christian philosophers in earlier times recognised an animal soul as real but different from the human. Yet we are surely all conscious of claiming or denying the existence of a soul in animals. We scoff tolerantly but politely at the Swiss woodsman who asks forgiveness of the tree he is about to cut down. Lack of respect for the world of nature will continue so long as we neglect or deny the existence of soul in individual animals, plants and life systems.

In essence, soul is the life principle which infuses every living entity, be it plant, animal or ecosystem. Other cultures, including Maori with the vital idea of *mauri*, have nourished the idea of a life-force in every place significant to them. How did our Western ancestors manage to lose what others kept, while we gained the benefits of material civilisation? We have been so busy seeing land as the object of different kinds of physical and biological science, and so busy simply regarding land as property, that we have neglected what our earlier ancestors seem to have known, and as less sophisticated peoples continue to appreciate, that land is both body and soul.

Land is a natural or cultural open-boundaried ecosystem that occurs as place. Its meaning is enriched by care in human community, forming a landship. Land enjoys a spirit of place. Land as life-system has soul. Our economies and our civilisation will be distorted and unfruitful as long as we neglect this soul of the land. ■

# A song of Christ ascending – and

## An Anglo-Saxon poet paints the Ascension of Christ and the gifts of Pentecost in a very human way

The Anglo-Saxon poet Cynewulf begins his work on the Ascension (untitled in the original manuscript, a late-tenth-century poetic codex known as the Exeter Book, but known to modern readers as *The Ascension of Christ II*) by asking a question: Why did the angels wear white garments at Christ's Ascension, but not at his birth?

Cynewulf found this same question two-thirds of the way through an Ascension-day homily by Pope Gregory the Great, a work set down for reading in the monastic Office at this season. Although Cynewulf—who lived in the ninth or tenth century and whose name is preserved only by being woven in runic letters into the poem's epilogue—does not directly answer this question, Gregory replies that white is the colour of celebration and exaltation: 'When the Lord was born, divinity seemed humiliated; but when the Lord ascended, humanity was exalted'.

In the last section of his sermon, Gregory develops this theme by discussing briefly a number of Old Testament texts that conjure up a series of vivid images: the ascending Christ as a bird, based on a reading of *Job* 28:7; the sun and moon as figures of the ascended Christ and his newly-emboldened church (*Habakkuk* 3:11); and Christ as a divine 'leaper', springing in five great salvific strides from heaven to Mary's womb, and from there to the manger, the cross, the sepulchre and finally to heaven (*Song of Songs* 2:8). Gregory ends with a call for repentance and reform of life, and a meditative focus on the ascended Lord: *Although we are still held here by the body's infirmity, let us follow Him with the footsteps of love.*

Cynewulf takes Gregory's rather

abstract theological themes (focussing on the relationship between divinity and humanity) and lightly-developed images, and creates an energetic, sprawling poem which begins with a series of vivid narrative images of Christ's Ascension and Harrowing of Hell and then develops Gregory's Old Testament images and symbols, expanding them and adding images of his own so that the various parts of the poem interact and jostle one another, almost playfully.

For example, whereas Gregory's Christ-bird moves in only one direction, from earth to heaven, Cynewulf's bird soars heavenward but also 'dives back to earth', moving freely between the two spheres in a continuous process of love and gift to humankind. And in the section on Christ's six saving 'leaps' – Cynewulf adds one more, the descent into hell, to Gregory's list – there is a playful reference back to the image of the bird: 'the Prince's flittings became an everlasting delight to the blessed inhabitants of that city (i.e. the heavenly Jerusalem, with a suggestion of the earthly city with which it is twinned)'.

Gregory's theme of the raising of our humanity in Christ's Ascension, and our aspiration to complete that spiritual transformation, is changed by Cynewulf into an emphasis on victory over the forces of evil, the winning of a lasting peace between God and God's people, and Christ's continuing presence with us through his many gifts, both spiritual and earthly. These themes are clearly developed in the two extracts translated opposite.

In the first, the poet expresses thanks not only for Christ's great work of salvation and reconciliation with God, but also for the things we enjoy and the world around us, including both good weather and rain! The reference to sun and moon as simple gifts – taken for granted by most of us – anticipates the later discussion, following Gregory, of these heavenly bodies as symbols of God and the church.



# *d returning with abundant gifts*



*It is fitting that the peoples  
should say thanks to the Lord for all the good things  
which he has continually done for us, early and late,  
through the mystery of his manifold powers.*

*He gives us food and an abundance of goods,  
wealth across the wide world, and mild weather  
under the sky's shelter. Sun and moon,  
most splendid of stars, shine down on all,  
candles of heaven, on people throughout the earth.  
Dew and rain both fall, producing good things  
to sustain humankind,  
and increase the goods of the earth. For this let us all  
speak thanks and praise to our Lord –  
and especially for the salvation which he gave us as our hope,  
when at his Ascension he turned aside  
the sorrows that we earlier suffered  
and, only-begotten king, settled for all peoples  
with his dear father the greatest of feuds.*

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*The one who made the world, dignified us then,  
God's spirit-son, and gave us gifts –  
everlasting homes on high with the angels,  
and also abundantly sowed and set  
wisdom of mind in the hearts of humankind.  
To one he sends wise eloquence  
into the thoughts of the mind through the mouth's breath,  
excellent understanding. The one for whom wisdom's skill  
is hidden in the heart can sing and recite  
a great many things. With the fingers, another  
can skillfully stir the harp, loud before an audience,  
strike the joyful instrument. Another can interpret  
the true and sacred law. Another can tell  
the course of the stars, this broad creation. One can skillfully  
write down words. To another he gives  
success in battle, when the bowmen send  
an army of arrows, a mass of flying darts,  
over the shield-wall. Another can bravely  
drive a ship over the salt sea,  
stir the restless waves. Another can climb  
a tall, sheer-sided tree. Another knows how to  
make a tempered sword. Another knows the land's expanses,  
the far-flung ways...*

*In this way mighty God, king of all creatures,  
through limitless gifts dignifies with skills  
the offspring of the earth.*

**T**he second extract, listing God's manifold gifts to the human race, emphasises not just spiritual gifts (as Gregory does, drawing on *1 Corinthians* 12:8-10 to expand *Psalms* 67:19, 'Ascending on high ... he gave people gifts'), or intellectual prowess, but practical vocational gifts of every kind. While it is fascinating to read

about the kinds of occupations valued by the Anglo-Saxons – there is a very similar catalogue in another Exeter Book poem called *The Gifts of Men* – Cynewulf's list has a deeper purpose here. The emphasis is on the special skills that God allots to each of us, and, by implication, our need to develop and cherish them in a response that

includes both gratitude and wonder. To find our particular vocation, whether sailor, musician or poet – or mechanic, teacher or psychotherapist – and to strive to excel in it both enriches us at every level of our being and acknowledges the love, the wisdom and the abundance of the Creator who first implanted these gifts within us. ■

*Paul Sorrell*



*The very first to announce the good news of the Risen Christ – the first ‘apostle’. Yet slowly and subtly Mary Magdalen was transformed into the pathetic penitent, the rescued prostitute. CIT lecturer, Susan Smith, takes a critical look at this distortion*

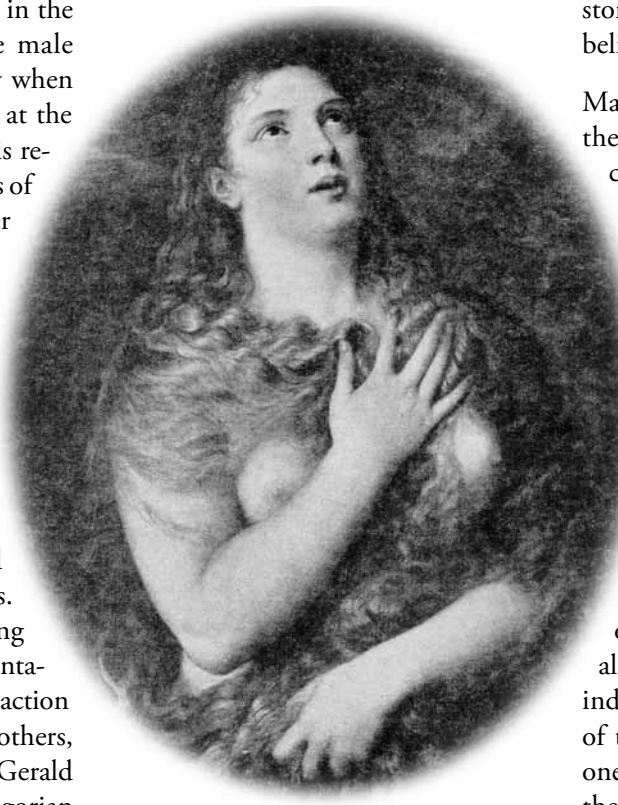
## Time to rehabilitate Mary Magdalen

**T**he Resurrection narratives are surely good news for us all, but particularly for women because the gospels reveal that women are the first witnesses of the resurrection. With the exception of the Beloved Disciple in John’s gospel, who is faithful to the end, women emerge as heroines in the Passion narratives. Unlike the male disciples, they do not run away when the going gets tough, but stand at the foot of the Cross. Such fidelity is rewarded through their experiences of the Risen Jesus on that first Easter morning.

The first of our gospels, *Mark*, tell us that Mary Magdalen, Mary, the mother of James, and Salome, go to the tomb and learn from a young man, clothed in a white robe, that Jesus has risen and gone before them to Galilee. They are charged with telling Peter this good news. But they are seized with trembling and bewilderment. Some commentators argue that this is a negative reaction on the part of the women while others, most notably Australian Jesuit, Gerald O’Collins, Professor at the Gregorian University in Rome, suggest that silence and awe are a suitable response to the mystery of the resurrection, and after all, it is obvious that the women did

not remain silent for ever. The male disciples later would have heard of the resurrection from the women.

In *Matthew’s* gospel, the resurrection narrative begins as “Mary Magdalen and the other Mary” come to the



tomb, and then are commissioned by both an angel of the Lord and the risen Jesus to go and tell the male disciples that Jesus has risen. *Luke* tells us that

Mary Magdalen, Joanna and Mary, the mother of James, visit the tomb of Jesus at day break on the first day of the week, and after hearing from “two men in dazzling garments” that Jesus has been raised from the dead, return to tell the apostles who thought “their story seemed like nonsense and did not believe them”. (*Luke* 24:11)

Mary of Magdala is the first witness of the resurrection in *John’s* gospel too, commissioned by the risen Jesus to announce to the disciples what has happened. So in our four gospels we have these wonderful texts that indicate that the women, above all Mary Magdalen, were the first witnesses of the resurrection, commissioned by Jesus or angelic persons to be the proclaimers of the good news to the male disciples and apostles. Most of us seem oblivious of the important role that belongs to women as first witnesses of the resurrection. The first readings, all from the *Acts of the Apostles*, clearly indicate that Peter is the key witness of the Resurrection, and therefore the one who most appropriately preaches the good news to others. In popular tradition, as distinct from the gospel tradition, Mary Magdalen is not the first witness of the resurrection, the one who

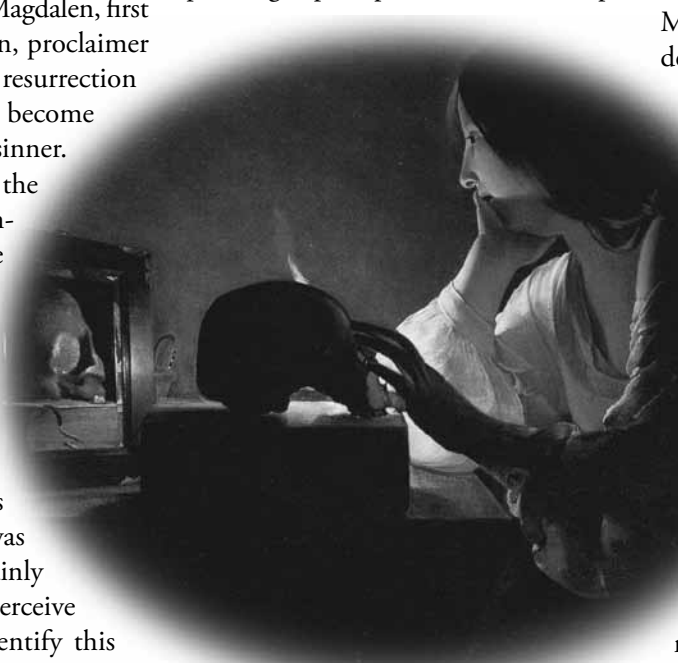
brings the good news to the male disciples, but a prostitute, a repentant sinner, though there is no scriptural evidence that allows such an interpretation.

So what has happened? There are a number of possibilities that can explain why Mary Magdalen, first witness of the resurrection, proclaimer of the good news of the resurrection to the male disciples has become a prostitute, a repentant sinner. In *Luke 7:36-50*, we have the wonderful story of the sinful woman whose sins are forgiven by Jesus, and who washes his feet with her tears. She is a model of true repentance, unlike Simon the Pharisee, in whose house this incident occurs. *Luke* does not say that the woman was a prostitute, though certainly that is how most of us perceive her. Never does *Luke* identify this woman as Mary Magdalen. Unfortunately, later patriarchal Christian tradition had little difficulty in collapsing Mary Magdalen into the sinner of *Luke 7*.

Some early commentators also linked her with the promiscuous Samaritan woman at the well of *John 4*, and the woman taken in adultery in *John 8*. There are no scholarly grounds for such associations, but they all contributed to the false perception of Mary Magdalen as fallen. Indeed, Pope Gregory the Great who died in 604 gave ecclesiastical approval to these traditions by declaring that Mary Magdalen, Mary of Bethany whom we read about in *Luke 10:38-42*, *John 11* and *12:1-8*, and the sinful woman of *Luke 7* were one and the same woman. Until 1969, the gospel reading of the feast of Mary Magdalen was the Lukan story. It was not until the 1969 calendar changes that the wonderful reading from *John* about Mary Magdalen as the first witness of the resurrection was returned to her liturgical celebration.

Prior to that, the work of Pope Gregory

the Great in turning Mary Magdalen into a prostitute was continued by other men who were fascinated by this beautiful repentant sinner, reformed prostitute and contemplative woman. The great Renaissance artist, Titian, delighted in painting a plump, sensual and volup-



the figure of a woman as a repentant sinner, as a reformed prostitute than with a woman as the first witness of the resurrection, the one who proclaimed to the disciples that Jesus indeed had risen?

Modern biblical scholarship has retrieved for us a more biblically appropriate picture of Mary Magdalen as female disciple, apostle to the apostles, first witness of the resurrection. Traditionally the Catholic Church has focused attention, particularly the attention of women, on Mary, the mother of Jesus, as the model for women. It has dismissed Mary Magdalen as the penitent, sexual sinner, thus providing a convenient female scapegoat for sin. But Magdalen's role as apostle and witness needs retrieving in today's church where women faithfully serve in the community. The story of Mary Magdalen as first witness to the resurrection, as the one commissioned to bring the good news of the resurrection to the male disciples should significantly affect our understanding of the role of women in the contemporary Church. ■

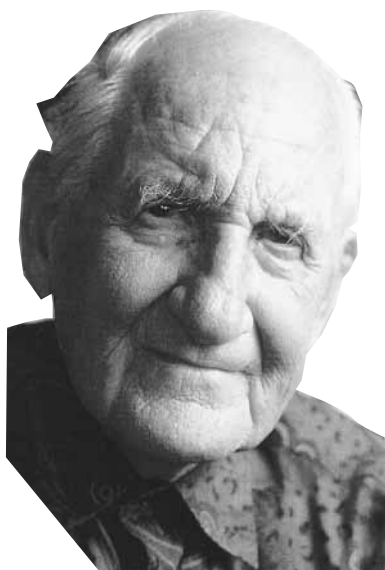
tuous Mary Magdalen, though in the wake of the Counter Reformation, he gave her a loose fitting gown, a shawl and book, and she was transformed into a penitent sinner. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits, invited those doing the *Spiritual Exercises* to reflect on Mary Magdalen in their meditation of death. Mary is imagined as pensively holding a skull, laying aside her fine clothes and expensive jewellery in exchange for a crucifix. It was indeed the tears of Mary Magdalen which gave rise to the term "maudlin" first used in the 17th century to mean mawkishly emotional and sentimental.

Throughout the 17th and 18th centuries, the most pervasive image of Mary Magdalen was the penitent woman in her grotto, naked, meditating upon death and weeping for her sins. Her nakedness relates to her femaleness and her sexuality as well as to her repentance and rejection of the world. Powerful overtones of *nuditatis criminalis*, the sin of lust, for which she has been pardoned, is always present. All of this is a far cry from the gospel story of the woman who remained faithful to Jesus to the end.

Women today can well ask why the church has been more comfortable with

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# Marching to a different tune



*Former President of the Methodist Church, Selwyn Dawson, writes the first article of a Tui Motu series on the Beatitudes of Jesus. In the lectionary, 1999 is the year of Matthew: it is in Matthew's Gospel we find the basis for the Christian ethic in the Sermon on the Mount – and in the Beatitudes*

It is hard for modern readers to understand how shocking – even absurd – the beatitudes must have seemed to those who, perhaps in the bustling market place of Capernaum, heard Jesus utter them for the first time. Did the young prophet's words leave his workaday hearers scratching their heads, and wondering if he had lost touch with reality?

How in their hard cold world could the poor in spirit ever expect to inherit a kingdom? How could the bereaved ever find blessedness in their mourning? Was Jesus joking when he told them the meek would inherit the earth? Could those who longed for righteousness as the hungry and thirsty long for food and drink, ever expect to be satisfied? In their world, mercy was a rare commodity, seldom given or received. How then could they practise mercy, and expect in turn to receive it? No one in all their long history had ever seen God – not even Moses. Could any mortal so purify his heart as to achieve that vision?

As for peacemakers – in their world, such people were hardly taken seriously.

Caesar's peace had been imposed and was maintained, not by sweet reason but by the mailed fist. When Jesus called peacemakers children of God, he must have been jesting. Some did indeed yearn for righteousness, but how could their innate sense of goodness and justice expect to survive, let alone be blessed, when they came up against the hard realities of a society where evil was deeply entrenched?

The beatitudes today still strain our credulity since our world in its essence is not so very different from theirs. Even Christians, doing their best, may find the rarefied air of the beatitudes leaves them gasping. What authority then do they carry? Are they an actual prescription of the code of conduct which God requires us to follow in our day-to-day behaviour or do they describe an impossible dream, an idealism far beyond anything which can be expected of us?

The beatitudes are, in fact, neither demanding rules nor hopeless aspirations. Jesus is describing the kind of life those who are already citizens of the kingdom of God will begin to experience and exhibit. Until we

understand what he meant by that often repeated phrase, the *Kingdom of God*, the kingdom of heaven, or just the kingdom, we will never be able to understand, not only the beatitudes but everything else Jesus was on about. Contrary to what many believe, he did not come to bring in a new ethic, a new code of conduct for human behaviour. He came instead to initiate a new order, a new way of life, summed up in that shorthand title, – the *Basileia*, the kingly rule of God. When through faith men and women commit themselves to that new order, they discover that their lives have taken on a new dimension, that they are directed by new impulses, have access to new powers and see the world through fresh eyes. Outwardly nothing much may appear to have changed, but inwardly, as St Paul understood, "If any one is in Christ there is a new creation; everything old has passed away: see, everything has become new!" (2 *Corinthians* 5:17)

In another connection Henry Thoreau wrote, "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music



which he hears however far away.” Christians are those who indeed march to another drum, and know themselves to belong to another kingdom. Even while remaining citizens of this world, participating fully in its life, enjoying its richness and beauty, they know that they have an overriding allegiance to that other world’s values and goals. They also know that the kingdoms of this world are shot through with false values, and that the one who buys into them and lives by them will be building his house on sand.

*Jesus came to initiate  
a new order, a new  
way of life*

Understood in this way, Jesus’ words in the beatitudes can be seen in a new light. The poor, the marginalised, those the world may adjudge as failures can hold high their heads knowing that through faith they belong to a kingdom which will outlast all earthly power systems. His followers may well know sorrow and mourn their earthly lot, but will know the comfort of God’s reinforcement within. They may appear to live meek and modest lives, without much clout or worldly influence, but the future under God belongs to them rather than to the

world’s braggarts, bullies and wealth accumulators. Longing to advance further into the kingdom, and never satisfied that they are serving God as he deserves, they discover that increasingly their lives are being transformed from within. Desiring only to know and do God’s will they enjoy a clarity of vision which sees into the heart of things, and enables them to view their world as through God’s eyes. Called to make peace wherever they encounter strife and conflict in a fractious world, they may not be held in much esteem, but they know inwardly what it means to enjoy their Father’s approval. Even when called to pass through the fires of misunderstanding and persecution, they will know that they are not abandoned, but are still in God’s hands.

Viewed in this way, Christians can treat the beatitudes as signs and markers of that hidden kingdom which Jesus came to bring. They will continue to march to that drum whose beat is not heard by most in the hubbub of the world, but they listen for it, and are alert to its significance. They know that it leads to eternal life experienced in part here and now, but that in some unimaginable future they will see the King face to face. That knowledge is sufficient to redeem the present and light up the future. ■



## Threes

*All good things come in threes.  
Didn't you know?  
Look and see.*

*Root, stem and branch  
Deeply seeks its hidden food  
Reaches high towards the light  
Opens wide to share its fruit.*

Look and see.

*Water, earth and air  
Birthing womb of all that is  
Solid place to stand upon  
Space to fly and soar released.*

Look and see.

*Rain, sun and wind  
Moisture softens hardest shell  
Warmth expanding germinates  
Rushing breath to spread the seed.*

Look and see.

*Solid, liquid, gas  
Compactly firm and tangible  
Flowing plastic flexible  
Only to knowledge visible.*

Look and see.

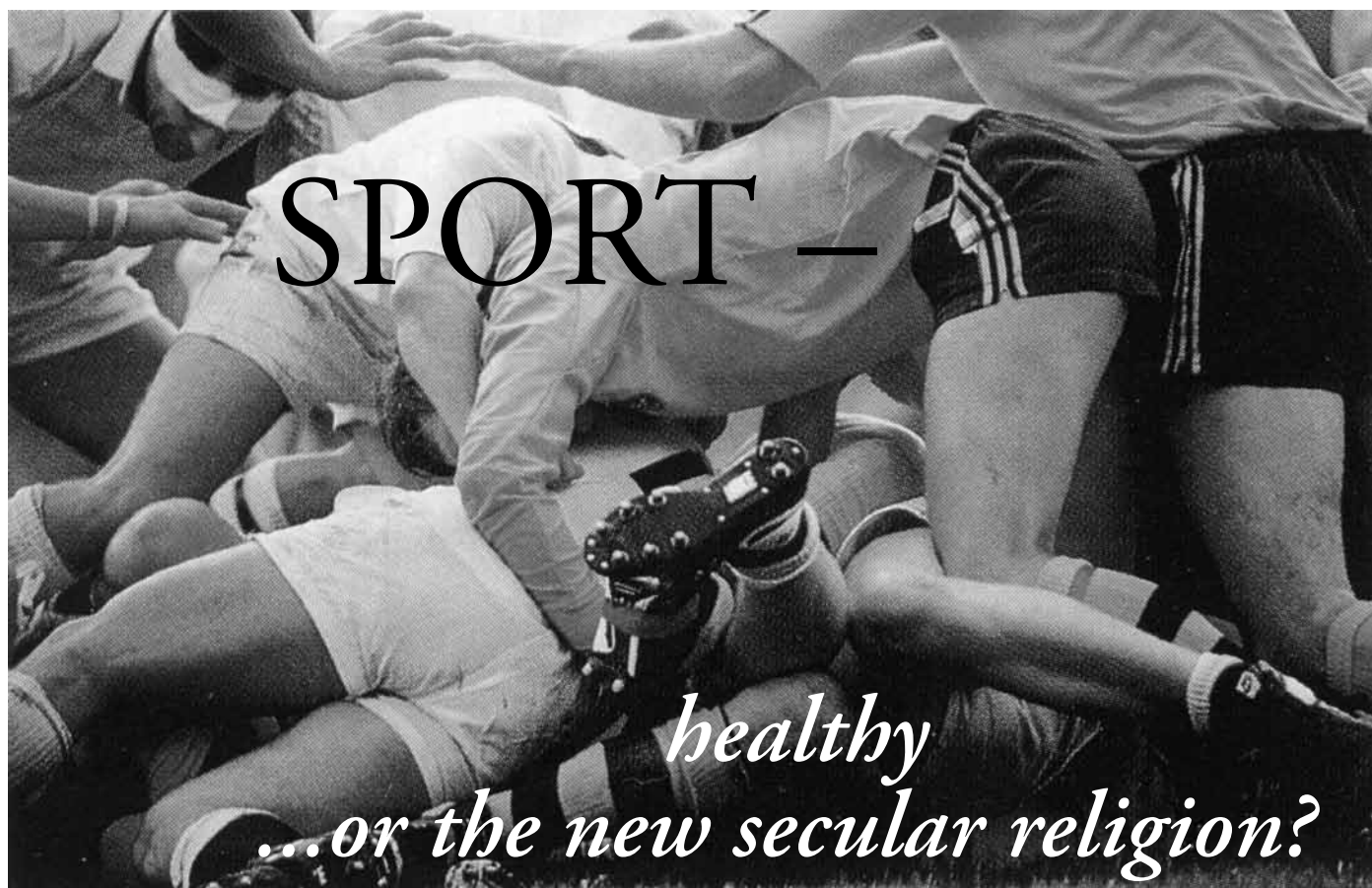
*Father, mother, child  
Sperm in joy ejaculates  
Warmly mates to eager egg  
Conceived, unknowing,  
brought to birth.*

Look and see.

*Father, Son and Holy Ghost  
Gently moulds the universe  
Delight of brother in his kin  
Flame and oil and peaceful dove.*

*All good things come in threes.  
Didn't you know?  
Look and see.*

**Jan Emson**



*Tui Motu* reader,  
*Mike Marshall*,  
offers this lament  
on the way  
professionalism is  
steadily wrecking  
the sports he has  
loved

On the north-east coast of England is the town of Sunderland, once famous, among other things, for shipbuilding, Pyrex ovenware and a football team. This football team engaged the interest of New Zealanders, when, in 1973, they were the winners of the first F.A. Cup final to be televised live to New Zealand in the middle of the night. As a boy in the 60s I regularly went with my Dad to watch 'the lads' play at Roker Park, the mecca of this particular team, and my equivalent of Eden Park or Carisbrook. In those days the teams lined up with two defenders, three midfielders and five attacking forwards.

Last year my daughter became an avid watcher of English football so the World Cup became a must-see activity in our house. My passing interest increased as the competition progressed. But the more I watched, the more I was appalled. The game I had idolised, fantasised, written about, played, coached

and managed for so many years seemed to have become a sad travesty of that fascinating game. Now most teams seemed to employ only one attacking player, 90 percent of the game was virtually played in the midfield at a safe distance from either end, pretty much relying on individual breakouts to score the all-important goal. Safety first. There was too much at stake to play really interesting football. Winning had become everything. But more than that. A friend of mine and a soccer fanatic has just returned from England. Soccer totally dominated the media – it has ceased to be a game, he said. It has also become an industry.

*Soccer has ceased  
to be a game – it has  
become an industry*

This, of course, is typical of all sports, not just soccer. Nobody is interested in second place. But it is more than that.



Sport has become the international religion. It is videoed from umpteen angles, dissected, discussed, highlighted, analysed, profiled, replayed – it takes almost 30 percent of our TV news, about 40 percent of our radio news and a good chunk of our daily newspapers, as well as many hours of TV time and spawns countless magazines, books, computer games and ‘greatest moments’ videos.

### *sport needs to be essentially fun for all children involved*

During my 29 years teaching I was heavily involved in coaching a range of sports in primary school. One of my cornerstone beliefs was that sport needed to be essentially fun for all children involved, not just those who were skilled or sportsminded. This occasionally brought me into conflict with those who always wanted to be ‘best’ team on the field and whose sole aim was to collect cups.

The advent of Kiwisport into our schools was a godsend. Over the years I was involved in Kiwisport we played some 22 different sports, with cut down equipment that kids could handle, no more than five-a-side, so all the kids were involved, had a chance to develop real skills, learn there were more sports available in NZ than rugby, netball and cricket, and have some fun. As the years passed, the lobbying from within part of the parent body grew for participation in ‘real’ sport once again.

The changes to sport over the last decade or so – the huge amount of corporate investment, win-at-all-costs attitudes and huge media coverage – have taken it far beyond team participation, personal satisfaction, individual fitness and simple entertainment. It has become a business. No? How many fewer Cantabrians can now get into Lancaster Park – sorry, “Jade Stadium” – because of the corporate boxes? It has now become a trendy meeting place for gathering to eat, drink and socialise. “Good god, darling, no we didn’t

actually watch the game!”

In the lead up to the soccer or rugby World Cups, Olympics or Commonwealth Games, how much money is spent lobbying or bribing to secure the venue? How much is spent on the opening and closing ceremonies alone? Yes, there are short-term spin-offs for the country involved, but ultimately at what cost? In fact, how many sporting events, team or individuals, can now survive without sponsorship?

The current attitude to sport is just one not so obvious manifestation of the 90s’ thinking that promotes one-upmanship and an ‘I’m all right Jack’ attitude in our business and social world as the new first commandment. Why do we need sheep-shearing champs, cat shows, best gardens, gumboot throwing contests, waiters’ races? Why do we need to pick winning entertainers in *Showcase* rather than just enjoying their talents? We all have a degree of competitiveness, and in some it is more acutely present than in others. In fact we would probably have not survived or evolved as a race had this not been so.

All humans need challenges in their lives, but that is not the same as the apparent driving requirement to be the best, fastest, first or biggest. I find it hard to understand why Peter Hillary needs to walk to the South Pole or Richard Branson needs to fly around the world in a balloon – why do these people get so much media coverage and why are they regarded as some kind of hero?

In the current world climate that puts so

heading towards legalised violence for the voyeuristic pleasure of the armchair Caesars.

The fanaticism of the public at large with sport begs the question... are we more involved today because it’s ‘in our faces’ all the time, or is there a genuine interest – more so than 50 years ago, say? Has the level of interest moved beyond participation, support and entertainment to fixation? Those of us who remember sport in the days before TV – if they were to take a step back and take a real objective look – might well say that standing in the rain at Roker Park or listening to the Cup Final on the radio had a greater degree of involvement and excitement and genuine interest than all the wall-to-wall telecasts (on two channels plus Sky!!) that we can channel-surf through today.

Where do we, as Catholics and as Christians, stand? Do we need to? Some very hard questions were asked and answered in 1981 when the Springbok Tour challenged the nation’s sensibilities. Yet this is potentially a bigger threat because it is so far-reaching and insidious. Is there a solution to the sports dilemma?

Ideally, we could take it off TV. Instead, play it, watch it live or listen on the radio. Take it off TV and radio news. Remove corporate sponsorship. Drop the superleagues and huge variety of competitions. Make sport amateur, or at least pay sensible wages – same as any other NZ ‘average’ worker – \$34,000 p.a. I am not so naive that I can’t anticipate the howls of outraged pragmatism

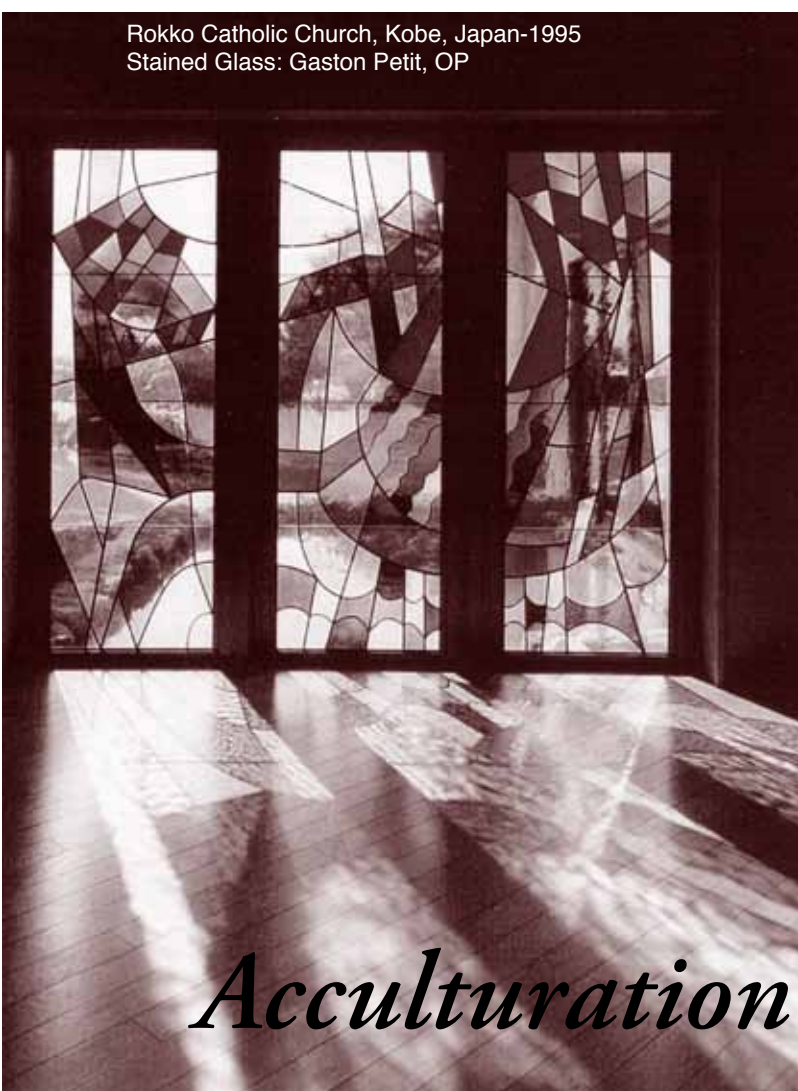
*some solutions...*    remove corporate sponsorship  
pay sensible wages  
take sport off TV

much importance on financial rewards and winning, what was a perfectly healthy competitive trait has been shaped and directed, at the top level, into something positively dangerous, increasingly reminiscent of a Roman amphitheatre. At the risk of sounding melodramatic, professional sport is

that leap out in response to these suggestions. Would this actually confront the attitudinal problem that underlies this? Maybe the first step is to simply admit that the problem actually exists. ■



Rokko Catholic Church, Kobe, Japan-1995  
Stained Glass: Gaston Petit, OP



*Tui Motu recently interviewed Kevin Toomey OP, on a tour of duty round the Pacific.*

*Fr Kevin spoke of the problems and the successes of the process of acculturation*

## *Acculturation in East Asia*

**A**cculturation is a challenge in all the Christian churches of East Asia. Behind it is an abiding desire of indigenous peoples to be independent and to be themselves. Dominican Fr Kevin Toomey, who acts as Visitor for the Dominican General throughout Eastern Asia, has taken note of the widely differing ways acculturation is presently taking place.

In Japan for instance, one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world, some of the churches built in recent years are all Japanese in their style and flavour. You feel when you go in, says Fr Kevin, that you are in a 'Japanese space'. At Xavier University in Tokyo there is a brand new students' chapel the shape of two intersecting ellipses. Twelve soaring columns support a very high roof: the 12 Apostles physically embrace the liturgical space as a way of helping the worshippers feel a part of the universal Church. The new churches are often lavish in design and detail, reflecting the wealth of Japanese society.

And yet the Japanese Christians are equally at home in an environment of extreme simplicity. Fr Kevin visited a small community of contemplative Dominican Sisters at Bandai in

the foothills of the Japanese Alps, 100 miles NW of Tokyo. The whole monastery looks like three farmhouses joined together – and it is built to look like that. The life of the Sisters centres around a tiny chapel. The floor is of Japanese maple. The stalls are simply wooden prayerstools on either side of a tiny altar raised only a foot above ground level. The furniture is made of Japanese woods: there is no Western influence at all. The whole space is bathed in natural light from high-up latticed windows. It is prayerful and exquisitely beautiful.

The movement towards acculturation in Japan arose especially after Vatican II through the work of a Dominican priest, Fr Oshida OP, who recast the Catholic ritual through the medium of Zen – hence the tiny low altars. The bishops at first were outraged, but now this style has diffused throughout Japan. In other monasteries Kevin visited, he found a strong influence of Japanese culture. For instance, the Christian Scriptures have been melded into a Japanese frame. The result is dignified, contemplative – with a strong emphasis on silence and joy. As a race the Japanese are eclectic. They find no difficulty in accepting ideas and cultural themes from outside – but they will transform them into something

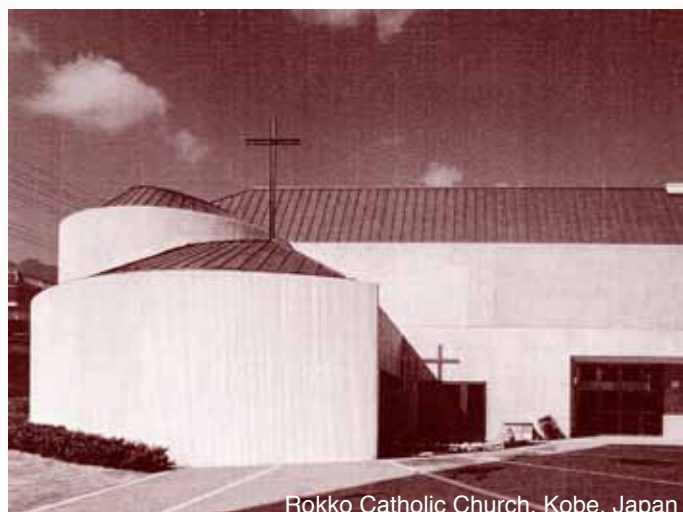
essentially Japanese.

**I**n the Philippines, however, styles of liturgy and building are still very evidently Spanish. It has been that way for centuries, and has pervaded the whole of Filipino society to its roots. The population is 86 percent Christian. Religion is very devotional, centred especially on Mary and the Saints and rooted in popular traditional practices. People frequently visit their churches, kissing, touching and embracing statues of their favourite saints. It's Latin – yet it's also Filipino. The old missionary style still holds.

The national shrine to Our Lady at Manaog in N Luzon attracts thousands of pilgrims. Crowds will enter the great basilica on their knees, but although it reflects Latin devotion in other parts of the world, it is still nevertheless their Filipino way of prayer. No wonder therefore that they resonate so warmly with Pope John Paul.

But it is also true that the liturgical changes are all evident. Thousands come to communion. At Santo Domingo church in Manila there are 14 Masses on a Sunday and up to 12 special ministers are needed. The charismatic movement flourishes, as does the Cursillo movement. And in the shanty towns Mass is often celebrated out in the open because there are no churches, and people come in large numbers.

At the same time the Filipino bishops have been very outspoken on social justice issues. In the countryside where there have been grave instances of oppressive injustice the movement of 'rural action' is strong. Cardinal Sin remains a powerful and influential figure. He had a big hand in toppling Marcos. Each week he goes out to visit the poor areas – even if it is rather like the procession of a benevolent monarch. He speaks many languages and is very hospitable. To English-speaking visitors he says; "Welcome to the house of Sin!" Catholicism is an essential part of modern Filipino society and culture. It is 'part of', not a cultural layer imposed from outside.



Rokko Catholic Church, Kobe, Japan



Baptistry, Yamato Takada Church, designed by Gaston Petit, OP

**V**ietnam is quite another story. There you see a church in tension, surviving in the shadow of a functioning Communist regime. The state wants the benefits of the capitalist world, but it seeks to keep religion under strict control.

Christianity is very much alive and has to fight to survive. It is a vital church, but always with one eye over the shoulder to see what the controlling force of the government is up to. Some degree of accommodation is necessary. Fear is not perceptible; it is there nonetheless. In issues of social justice activist priests have to operate round the fringes: the state would not tolerate open confrontation.

Last year the state tried to seize some church land. The people sat down on the state highway, including some very old women, to disrupt traffic. It was a gesture, but for the most part the church has to keep within the rules to survive. Just as in Poland, the religious life and vocations to the priesthood flourish. It is said that 'Vietnamese Catholics do not fear communism – they know their enemy; but they fear materialism'.

Catholicism was an import from France and Spain three centuries ago, and about 7 percent of the population are Catholic. Likewise there is a very alive Buddhist minority. Relations between Catholics and Buddhists are good. Many Catholics look to the best of the Buddhist religious tradition to blend with their Catholicism. There is a strong movement in favour of more contemplative prayer. So, the two groups seek for common ground while acknowledging that their theologies and ways of looking at morality are poles apart.

Kevin Toomey is of the opinion that true acculturation is the fruit of a process of prayer. Prayer forms develop over centuries, and customs of prayer will often tend to converge. Perhaps this will be the hope of a new century – a world seeking unity in God. ■

*M.H.*

# Charles Davis: Living the Truth

by Mary Eastham

By now the Christian community around the world knows that Charles Davis died on 29 January in Edinburgh at the age of 76 after an extended battle with Parkinson's disease. He was a giant among those eminent theologians whose work paved the way for Vatican Council II – Karl Rahner, Gregory Baum, Edward Schillebeeckx, John Courtney Murray and Raimon Panikkar.

At the height of his career as England's most prominent theologian, Charles Davis left the priesthood and the Church in the 1960s. Why? He had come to believe that the institutional Church was deeply immoral because the Magisterium often suppressed the quest for truth.

In *A Question of Conscience* (1967) Davis put forward a carefully reasoned argument. He maintained that the Church as a social institution was subject to historical and cultural distortions that often result in error. Any assertion of truth, therefore, must be examined critically. The Magisterium should encourage this work, not suppress it. Equally important, Christians must dedicate their lives to forming communities of love and justice.

Davis also believed ecumenism to be one of the most crucial issues facing the Church – not just the quest for Christian unity but the dialogue between Christianity and world religions. He believed that Christians could hold to the uniqueness of the Christ event while also respecting the truth in other great religions. This was the subject of his book *Christ and the World Religions* (1970).

In 1987, our paths crossed in Montreal. Charles was Principal of Lonergan College at Concordia University, named after the Canadian Jesuit, Bernard Lonergan. My husband, Scott, was visiting scholar then, giving a year long course on the works of R Buckminster Fuller, American inventor and philosopher. The Davis family adopted us into their family; their daughter Claire is our youngest daughter's godmother. They lived the principle that the family was the centre of community. They embodied the ideas Charles expressed in his books, *What Is Living, What Is Dead in Christianity Today?* (1986) and *Religion and the Making of Society* (1994).

Every Friday evening the Davis family hosted a dinner and opened their home to students and their families. A key focus was how we might live out the "preferential option for the poor". Charles observed that we all claimed to care about the poor, and yet we were a group of middle-class academics and graduate students. He asked: "Do any of us even know by name any poor people?"

Florence Davis, an accomplished theologian herself, suggested that our group of young families might engage other young families living in poverty in order to establish networks of support and solidarity. So, instead of coming to dinner, *we* prepared the meal and went from church to church, meeting people, listening to their stories and discerning how we might make a difference in someone's life. This ideal was the originating impulse for the St Pat's Community Café, which has provided a monthly community meal in Palmerston North since 1994.

The Davis family also hosted meaningful paraliturgical celebrations. Ceremonies to bless expectant parents come to mind. A "Blessing of the Mother" celebration was the catalyst for fathers to express the joys and apprehensions of being a father in a society where fathers often default in their responsibilities.

We count the five years we shared with the Davis family in Montreal among the richest in our lives. Anthony and Claire are both following in their parents' footsteps. Anthony is studying Social Policy and Social Anthropology at the University of Edinburgh where Claire is completing a doctorate in theology. ■

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*Little Voice*

Review: Nicola McCloy

My post-Oscar depression has seen me avoid cinemas for the last wee while. Gwyneth Paltrow's performance at the Oscars was almost enough to put me off going to the movies ever again. If it weren't for Roberto Benigni's ecstatic acceptance speech, I would have been sorely tempted to hang up my keyboard and popcorn forever...

But then along came *Little Voice*. I could not resist the combination of Michael Caine and Brenda Blethyn (*Secrets and Lies*). They are two of Britain's funniest character actors and the chance to see them together was not to be missed. Added to an already star blend was a personal fave, Ewan MacGregor (who I can't wait to see in the new *Star Wars* movie) and Jane Horrocks, best known for her role as Bubble in *Absolutely Fabulous*. With a pedigree like this, *Little Voice* was never going to be a dud.

The movie is based around an unusual story of a girl, LV (Horrocks), who lives

## Cinema



with her overbearing and – let's face it – tacky mother, played divinely by Blethyn. LV lives for her dead father's huge collection of Marilyn Monroe, Shirley Bassey, Judy Garland and the late great Dusty Springfield records. She also happens to have the voice of an angel.

This is an hilariously entertaining film which portrays LV's struggle against her mother and small-time promoter, Ray, (Caine) as well as her blossoming relationship with a pigeon-fancying telephone installer played by MacGregor.

Probably the most staggering thing about it is the fact that Horrocks provides all the voices for LV's one woman cabaret act. It is almost impossible to believe that a single person could pro-

vide a flawless Marilyn Monroe and then, quicker than blink, sound exactly like Judy Garland. LV's fictional talent is outstripped by the very real talent displayed by Horrocks. Playing a role in which she manages to pretend to be a dozen other people is a challenge which most actors would never tackle. Jane Horrocks makes it look easy. She is an incredible talent with a great future.

However, it is Michael Caine who is the scene stealer on the cabaret front. Ray's swan song is one of the most hilarious things I have ever seen on film. The fabulous, on-screen relationship between Caine and Blethyn alone makes this a film worth seeing. Their portrayal of a couple of middle-aged teenagers is so marvellously ghastly that you can't help but like them.

*Little Voice* is well worth seeing, particularly if you are partial to any combination of British humour, classic music, medallion-wearing nightclub owners, or pigeon fanciers! ■

*Jerusalem*

Choreography: Michael Parmenter

Music: David Downes

Review: Professor Jocelyn Harris

Cheering, stamping, whistling and vehement applause burst out for Michael Parmenter's energetic, beautiful dance-opera *Jerusalem*. What made the audience feel they had witnessed an historic event in New Zealand theatre was a seamless combination of sinewy, exuberant dancing and whole-hearted, piercing choral singing and solos that drew on European and Maori harmonies, all based on spiritual, allusive texts drawn from Baxter, Blake, Herbert, Hopkins, the Psalms and the New Testament.

Couples in Victorian clothing wrestled unhappily with each other, alternating

## Theatre



with the more seductive prostitutes and their men. In a liberating moment they first tore off the clothing that defined them, then excitedly put on other people's clothes to signify their choice of sexual and social identity. Clad in a robe-like garment, the lead dancer evolved into a sweetly strong Christ-figure that the poet Herbert would have recognised. He even contained Mary Magdalen when he let down his hair and softly brushed the feet of the other 'disciples' in an act of humility and love.

The events of Christ's life were acted out ingeniously and simply. for the Crucifixion, he was pulled up under

the arms by a twisted shroud-cloth that had served as a tablecloth for the Last Supper, and his agony was swiftly mimed. For the resurrection scene, the church scene fell away to be replaced by a huge and stunning backdrop of the promised land – McCahon's "Otago Peninsula from Peggy's Hill". The resurrected dead, dressed in flame-like garments, rang out chimes on bell-ropes, then rose up on them in a very ecstasy of liberation.

Spirituality and dance have always belonged together, as Shona MacTavish said next day at a panel discussion, and Ian Wedde confirmed the power of word and dance even for a secular audience. Michael Parmenter's decision to premiere the work in Dunedin was fully rewarded by the excitement that had brought everyone to their feet. ■

## A rich oral history

*Southernmost Seminary: The Story of Holy Cross College*

by Dr Peter Norris

Holy Cross Seminary 1999

Price: \$38 (inc.p&tp)

**Review: Professor Gerald Pillay**

**S***outhernmost Seminary: The Story of Holy Cross College*, on the face of it, is a story of the pioneering efforts at Catholic theological training in New Zealand. As one reads, however, it quickly becomes clear that the story is much bigger than how one seminary far in the south began, developed and changed over almost a hundred years. It is full of insight into early Catholic life in this country and the changing face of a vital part of New Zealand society.

Peter Norris, a graduate of the College and later a lecturer there, tells the story in compelling fashion with an eye to the challenges that both students and staff faced. It records for the first time the struggles and the successes of this theological enterprise, and in the process “brings to life” some well-known names and events from the past. The history of this seminary is not joyless, and Norris is not humourless. The book is rich in colourful anecdotes. For example, it is almost inconceivable that a bishop returning from a tour abroad could have such a

spectacular homecoming as Bishop Verdon, one of the chief pioneers of the College, had in 1900. This inconceivability today is a reflection of how social and church life has altered in the course of this century. The book is full of other reminders of this kind into the way we were.

Readers are drawn into the pioneering years, to the difficulties faced during the two World Wars, the challenges raised by the Second Vatican Council, the development of university accreditation and the eventual decision to move the College from Dunedin to Auckland. Each of these episodes in the unfolding story are windows into both Catholic life in New Zealand and into the wider New Zealand society. They indicate the changing attitudes to education, the calling to priesthood, ecumenism and some of the challenges facing the Catholic Church here and abroad.

The book makes compelling reading and is full of interesting information for both historians and the general reader interested in church and society in New Zealand. Peter Norris, a church historian and one who is keenly concerned about Catholic life and thought in New Zealand, does not gloss over the difficult parts of the story but writes with empathy and balance. He has done a great service in gathering the rich oral history that would otherwise be easily lost and in writing a lucid and insightful history. ■

*With No Regrets: The Story of Francis*

*Vernon Douglas*

by Patricia Brooks

Claretian Publications, 1998

Price \$14.50

**Review: Paul Hitchfield**

**W**hy a good and generous God allows catastrophes of the scale of a world war to befall the human race and why undeserving people are sometimes tortured and murdered, are enduring questions. Catastrophes sometimes cause fine qualities of character to be displayed and wars produce heroes. Perhaps one such hero is the New Zealand priest, Francis Vernon Douglas, tortured and almost certainly killed (though his body has never been found) by the invading Japanese in the Philippines during the Second World War. The Church may in time officially recognise him as a martyr and saint.

His story has been told recently by Patricia Brooks in *With No Regrets*, a book into which ten years of research has gone. The author has drawn on a variety of sources and talked to a large number of people in New Zealand, the Philippines, the United States, Australia, Ireland and Rome. The place from which she found it most dif-

## Martyr's life well researched

ficult to get information was Japan, with only one Japanese person responding to her requests. Perhaps there is more to be uncovered there.

The book tells of Vernon's early life in Johnsonville, with an Irish mother, Australian father and seven brothers and sisters. The accounts of Irish Catholic life in Wellington during the first three decades of this century when people often lived in large families amidst conditions of financial insecurity, are interesting. Catholics with minimal resources put up churches and schools. It was said of the O'Neills, local people, that “They lived on bread and dripping but they built churches”(p.9).

In 1927 at the age of 16 Vernon entered Holy Cross College, the seminary which prepared young men for ordination to the diocesan priesthood. Accounts of life there are also interesting. Vernon was a good sportsman and made a favourable impression on most. He was popular among the seminarians. Soon after ordination Vernon was appointed to Opunake parish in Taranaki. However, he had become

interested in the missionary work of the Columban Missionary Society and wanted to work in China. After being accepted into the Columbans he was sent, not to China, but the Philippines.

In the Philippines he worked in somewhat difficult circumstances and found the language difficult. After Pearl Harbour the Japanese Imperial Army moved in. A million Filipino nationals were to die as a result of the war. Vernon eventually fell foul of the Japanese army and the book contains eye-witness accounts of some of the brutality he endured. He bore up under it bravely. The reasons why he was treated as he was are not altogether clear. Was he killed because he refused to reveal what he knew through the confessional or because he was protecting others, refusing to speak about the guerillas in the area?

*With No Regrets* is undoubtedly an important book in that it is a careful attempt to clarify the historical record. The author has tried to collate as much



# Faith and Art in the S Pacific

*Arts in the Religions of the Pacific: Symbols of Life*

by Albert C. Moore

Published by Cassell

Price: NZ \$74.95; A\$48.95

Review: Winston Halapua

This book is a work of a lifetime. I salute Moore for the distinct contribution of this scholarly work. His book reflects an attempt to do justice to the diversity of arts in the religions of the Pacific. He opens up windows for readers to see the common roots of the people in the Pacific.

I celebrate Moore's findings which promote a deep appreciation of arts in the context of religions in the Pacific. Arts are an ancient and important means of communication. Oral forms of art and visual forms are closely linked. Moore identifies the close connection between the spoken word in the forms of oratory, music and dance with the role of painting, carving, masks and other art forms.

Through Pacific arts, important stories of how people related to one another and to their world are expressed, preserved and celebrated. Arts in the Pacific convey the life of the people. They are of deeply religious significance. Moore's book unveils arts as living expressions of relationships between people and ancestors, and between people and their whole environment. Arts speak of interrelationship as sacred. They carry the stories of close connections from one generation to another.

verifiable information as possible and does not give in to unprofitable speculation. Whether or not enough will ever be known about Vernon Francis Douglas and his fate to allow canonisation (and a New Zealand saint) remains to be seen. His cause certainly seems to be a good one. ■

Moore's work covers a huge geographical area and diversity of artistic expression. He identifies a common legacy. People and their surroundings are not in isolation from their ancestors. The connecting power of living art forms displays the interwoven reality of people and environment. Art forms motivate and invite experience and encounter. They are not properly seen as frozen in the past but rather as expressions of ongoing relationship. Moore's insights prompt people in the Pacific to see themselves more clearly. His insights provide windows for the outside world to appreciate more deeply the living art forms of the Pacific.

Moore's work helps raise some fundamental questions. To what extent are the people in the Pacific today expressing meaning in their art forms? How relevant are the religious ideas conveyed through pictures and symbols from another context? Are Moore's findings a prompt for urgent revision in the approach to communicating religious values in the Pacific context today?

Through his skilful discernment and display of the rich diversity of arts in the religions of the Pacific, Moore helps me raise issues relating to the contextual and theological relevancy of western arts which still dominate in the Churches of the Pacific.

Moore's book leads me to a deeper understanding and appreciation of the richness of my background as a Pacific Islander. To be connected to God, to the world around and to one's self expressions arising deep within the life of the Pacific, has a vital significance. Rituals are part of Pacific life. Dance is in the bloodstream of religious expression. Drums and music echo the oneness with the rest of creation. The outdoor is an important dimension of religious experiences. Pacific carvings, weaving, *tapa* design and painting are expressions of religious values and identity. They communicate and transmit a way of

life, struggle and hope. Pacific art forms are alive and potentially evolve with the changing world.

Early missionaries with their understanding of theology and cultural perspectives, discouraged important expressions as part of the Pacific way of life. Moore's work opens up opportunity for discernment and new choices. The arts in the religions of the Pacific convey an eternal message. Life is sacred. The interrelationships which connect the past, the present generation and the future are more than viewing life as personal property and possession. Pacific people are challenged to resist trends which reduce art to commercial commodities. The recognition of the significance of artistic expression will reverse the dominant and prevailing cancer of our present world – the cosmos treated as a commodity.

The contribution from arts in the realm of transcendence will be enriched by encouraging Pacific people to articulate the story embodied in arts from their own perspectives. The arts are an integral part of our own evolution and development, and Moore's book points to the vital significance they may continue to have for Pacific people as they connect with the roots of their reality and enter the future. ■

(Albert Moore was Associate Professor of Religious Studies in the University of Otago)

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# Who will inherit the keys of Peter?

While Easter proved to be a spiritual desert on our television screens, one fascinating programme emerged late at night on Easter Day. *Papabile: the Men Who Could be Pope* was a splendid documentary from the BBC *Everyman* stable. Beautifully filmed, carefully edited and with suitable choral backing, the producers set out to explain the ancient ritual of papal selection and to describe some of the most likely candidates. Reputable journalists each gave considered authoritative opinion on the chances of various Cardinals. At the end it certainly looked as if John Paul's successor would be an Italian, familiar with Vatican politics and wise in the ways of the Curia.

One commentator put forward the view that within the Vatican the Polish experiment, – the choice of Pope John Paul II – had had both positive and negative results for the world-wide Church; he believed the College would look to Italy for John Paul's successor.

The candidate favoured by the media is Cardinal Carlo Martini, Archbishop of Milan, often dubbed by the press the 'heir apparent'. A successful author and an excellent communicator with the ability to move easily in the corridors of power; urbane, accessible and multi-talented, he appears the ideal candidate. But one writer warned that as champion of the liberal wing, Martini would be unacceptable to the majority of the College of Cardinals. Eamon Duffy, a Cambridge historian, was also opposed to the charismatic Archbishop, noting that the Pope should not be a superman, expected to possess heroic qualities. Such a character, he believed, made communication and constructive critical dialogue difficult. Also, Martini is a Jesuit, and no Jesuit has ever been called to the throne of Peter.

Cardinal Pio Laghi, on the other hand, appealed to the commentators as a pos-

## Crosscurrents

by Caliban

sibility because of his conservatism. He was familiar with the North Americans and had the dubious advantage of covering his conservatism with a liberal face. But at 72 his age would be against him.

A Cardinal outside Italy winning favourable comment was Belgium's Godfried Danneels, Archbishop of Malines, who appears to have a foot in each of two worlds. He was described as a charismatic and popular figure who took a conservative stance in matters theological but whose support for social justice had been clearly expressed.

The great dilemma for the future Church is her ability to cater adequately for the burgeoning congregations of Africa and South America. The bridge to be crossed here is between the wealth of the established Church and the grinding poverty of the emerging Church. The Africans are evolving a distinctive style of worship while in South America the politics of Liberation Theology have deeply polarised the Church. The documentary offered viewers film of the Cardinal Archbishop of Sao Paulo, Paulo Arns, addressing his people and assuring them that privileges would be swept away, and that this equality would signal the new heaven and the new earth that would be their Brazil. The Archbishop himself, we were told, had sold his palace to build housing for the poor.

The Church of the new millennium must be seen to accommodate such concerns within her government and not merely dismiss such men as left wing agitators. Pope John Paul's deep fear and distrust of Marxism has encouraged his administration to distrust

popular movements against governments and to look with suspicion at socialist pressures. The Church has to tread a delicate path between the acceptance of a government which may be abusing human rights and the welfare of its citizens. John XXIII wrote, "If civil authorities legislate for or allow anything that is ...contrary to the will of God, neither the laws made or the authorisations granted can be binding on the consciences of its citizens, since God has more right to be obeyed than man." (*Pacem in Terris*, 1961 n.142)

When the College of Cardinals meet in conclave – a wonderfully descriptive word which once meant a lockable room – they will be housed in comfortable quarters instead of the usual discomfort, and it is likely that they will take their time. The longest conclave (of three years) took place in the 13th Century while the shortest lasted one day. But one thing is certain. No women will emerge as candidates nor is there likely to be any change given to the status of women in the Church from the present College of Cardinals. This is another issue which the leaders of the Church must face in the next decade.

If the present Pope had a choice he would probably choose Cardinal Lustiger, the Archbishop of Paris, whose family background is Jewish. One commentator reminded us: the French astrologer Nostradamus had predicted that when a Jew ascended the throne of St Peter, that would herald the end of the world!

When the time comes for this, the most exclusive club in the world, to make its great decision in conclave, they already have, standing by for them in the Sistine chapel, three white Papal soutanes, one large, one medium and one small, for the person of their choice. ■

In June 1998 a meeting of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF), chaired by Cardinal Ratzinger, opened an investigation into the theology of Belgian Jesuit, Fr Jacques Dupuis, who has been teaching in Rome. The decision brought a reaction from theologians and church people everywhere.

The Archbishop of Calcutta wrote personally in support of Fr Dupuis, who had worked many years in India. "I am seriously concerned," he said, "over the news that you are under investigation by the CDF. I could hardly believe the news. You have been known for your orthodoxy and steady pursuit of theological reflection in conformity with the Church's teaching."

The Congregation's questions concerned a book of Dupuis *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, in which he tries to answer the question: "Whether theology is able to assign to the plurality of religious traditions a positive meaning in God's overall design for humankind". Dupuis gives an overview of Christian approaches to other religions down the centuries,

and argues that there are various paths to salvation in God's plan.

In many sections he echoes the thoughts of Pope John Paul II in his encyclicals, where the Pope speaks of the deep respect for the "treasures of human wisdom" in other religious traditions; an acknowledgment made also by the Pope in Assisi in 1986 when he invited representatives of the world's religions to discuss common ground.

In an unusual move the retired Cardinal Konig spoke out: "...I cannot keep silent for my heart bleeds when I see such obvious harm being done to the common good of God's Church". The Cardinal had himself studied for decades the subject of interreligious dialogue, and was full of praise for Dupuis's book. Dupuis, he notes, is a theologian who always asks first 'What is the Church's teaching and intention?', and always works in conjunction with Church teaching and papal documents.

He concludes: "I consider the Congregation has moved too fast and too soon – on the threshold of the Third Millennium these are the very issues that are decisive for the Church's destiny."

ploring the publicity the affair had been given. He said that the CDF's action was "simply to send some confidential questions to Fr Dupuis."

However, recent past experience would indicate that when the CDF sends such questions, retractions have to be made, a period of silence imposed – and even excommunication invoked.

When Fr Dupuis heard that the Congregation were questioning his orthodoxy he was so upset that he had to be hospitalised for two weeks.

Jim Neilan

### Cardinal Hume seriously ill

Cardinal Basil Hume, who has been Archbishop of Westminster for the past 20 years, wrote two weeks ago to his priests saying that he had been diagnosed with cancer and that it was at an advanced stage. He reassured the priests that he accepted the situation calmly, but hoped that he would be spared to see in the new Millennium. Cardinal Hume is a Benedictine.

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Cardinal Ratzinger replied to Konig, de-

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# On being professional

Once I was helping a friend prepare for a 25th Wedding celebration. We were interrupted by a young visitor who asked us what we were up to. The man's jaw dropped when he heard. "I didn't think anyone did that marriage thing any more," he said. I smiled to myself, wondering what he would make of my wife Maria's parents who had just celebrated their 60th Wedding anniversary!

Later Maria and I were in Belgium at a retreat for families, during which Cardinal Danneels visited. He said he thought marriage was the prophetic vocation of our times. In an age when broken relationships abound, I am certain that living a faithful committed relationship can offer a profound and counter-cultural example to our society.

But what of the prophetic example of priests and religious? We are witnessing a global decline in the number of people serving God in this way. Has the

priestly and religious vocation ceased to be attractive because it has ceased to be prophetic?

Early in the life of *Tui Motu* a thought provoking series of articles appeared written by Sr Stephanie Kitching. It struck me at the time as appropriate that a religious should reflect on the nature of *professionalism* because a 'profession of faith' in Jesus and the values which flow from that faith is at the heart of their commitment. Indeed the very word *profess* is historically associated with religious communities: it implies commitment from the heart. Vows of availability take the 'professional' on a journey down the social ladder to be in vulnerable relationship with people especially loved by Jesus. This may be characterised as a model of solidarity and 'professional closeness'.

Historically, with the emergence of Scholasticism and the rise of the universities, the word *profession* came to be

associated with the mastery of a body of knowledge. Increasingly in our own age professionalism has come to include the notion of social separation and advancement up the social ladder to a place of power, wealth and esteem.

Religious living in community were traditionally cautioned against particular friendships. Such caution arose from an idealised understanding of spiritual love as being universal, impartial and sacrificial. In our own age we have seen the ascendancy of a scientific paradigm which underlines the value of a detached, observing expert. These two notions have combined in an unfortunate way to shape a new understanding of the *professional* as an observer who is a detached dispenser of knowledge, care and help. For such a professional, relationships can never be mutual or reciprocal. This is what we typically call 'professional distance'.

The meaning of the word *professional* has been turned upside down! Jesus chose the path of professional closeness. That's a prophetic vocation for any age. ■

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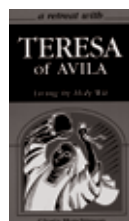


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