Tui Motu

InterIslands

September/October 2003 Price $4

children... our most precious gift

Heeding the cry of the poor

Contents

Cover: Courtesy Caritas Aotearoa

A common feature of the urban landscape in the United Kingdom is to see people begging. They are often young and sit propped up against a wall with their legs in a sleeping bag. A pottle on the pavement invites you to contribute loose change. These sad individuals are a frequent sight in London, Belfast, even in Edinburgh. Significantly, I saw none in York. Perhaps Yorkshire folk are too proud – or more caring.

On the Royal Mile during the Edinburgh Festival you might possibly mistake the recumbent beggars for human sculptures who also lie there, wearing striking make-up and often statuesque in their feigned stillness. The actors seemed more successful in tapping the generosity of the passers-by.

Street begging, like the incidence of rickets, disappeared in Britain with the onset of World War II. During that war the poor in Britain were adequately fed for the first time in history, and there was full employment. The wartime coalition government – following New Zealand's example – brought in universal secondary education and the welfare state. It was not until the '80s, during occasional visits to the UK, that I once again saw begging in the streets. It was one fruit of the brave new world of Margaret Thatcher. Another was the plethora of BMWs, Mercs and Rolls Royces on the magnificent new motorways. Grinding poverty recreated in the midst of the new prosperity.

New Zealand has not been exempt from these social changes, bitter fruits of the new globalism. Sir Roger Douglas saw to that. Poverty became stigmatised, and it was the slashing of benefits probably more than anything else which caused the demise of the last National government.

This month is the fifth anniversary of the Hikoi of Hope. The Hikoi challeng-ed the powers-that-be on various counts: more jobs, public health, poverty, affordable housing, good education irrespective of income. A review of progress on the Hokoi's five 'planks' is surely due. Labour has scored well on jobs and housing; not so well on health and education. But who could deny that in New Zealand – as in most other parts of the developed world – serious poverty exists in the midst of abundance? And that is a scandal.

Aspects of such poverty are the focus of this September issue: a letter to the government from the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission; Mike Noonan's more general reflection on the churches and poverty; finally an appeal by a mother (Lisa Beech) to listen to the voices of needy children. This last is a salutary reminder to providers and politicians that the first and vital step in any welfare reform must be to engage with the needs of sufferers themselves. Some will be crying wolf. But – as Lisa found – often there is profound wisdom to be heard among the voices of those most impoverished. How rarely are they ever listened to – in our society or anywhere!

The experience of Michael Portillo in Britain (as described by Mike Noonan) could well be copied by some of our own political and economic leaders – and I would include those distinguished lay people who are the bishops' advisors on policy and the use of church funds. Here are some questions for us – and them – to reflect on:

(1) *Would you regard the remuneration you receive as no less than you deserve? Would you perhaps see yourself as part of the increasing gap between rich and poor in New Zealand?*

(2) *Do you accept that higher salaries are often paid at the expense of lower wages?*

(3) *Would you be prepared to pay more in taxes to fund welfare for beneficiaries?*

Footnote: also heard on the streets of Britain, the latest acronym for career girls – SARAH, 'single and rich and happy!' But does wealth buy happiness?

Identifying with the truly poor

Mike Noonan looks at poverty in New Zealand society five years after the Hikoi of Hope challenged the government of the time and NZ society to tackle the very real problems of poverty. What progress have we made?

We have many ways of remaining blind. One is not knowing, another is avoiding, another is confusion, another is certainty. In working with poverty, I have met each of these ways of remaining blind in response to poverty both in New Zealand and abroad.

I remember arriving in this country eight years ago to hear the Catholic Prime Minister of the time say: "I see no poverty." I was reminded of the one-eyed Lord Nelson who, on receiving a signal to retire from the battle of Copenhagen, said "I have only one eye, – I have a right to be blind sometimes – I really do not see the signal!"

In recent weeks the BBC has been creating a documentary of prominent British politicians who have agreed to swap places with people who live ordinary lives. I was somewhat delighted to see advance stills of the usually immaculately groomed and sartorially elegant Michael Portillo dressed in the Asda supermarket uniform, having swapped places with a sole parent.

This former cabinet minister is a man who has rarely cooked and who has no children. He had never looked so harassed in his political life and admitted that this was much tougher than taking questions in the House of Commons.

The documentary charts his attempt to manage a low paid working life, get meals on the table, take sole charge of a family of four and manage arguments with a very strong-willed eight-year-old. What a wonderful education for a politician! Just as taxi drivers must get to know their routes, wouldn't it be wonderful if politicians were required to be formed and educated in this way in order to understand the struggles of some of the more vulnerable people they represent?

A paradoxical mix of beliefs may arise for us if we consider poverty with our eyes of faith. As Christians we believe we are called to alleviate poverty. And yet we also have the words of Jesus ringing in our ears telling us how blessed are the poor and that the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them. We might be forgiven for asking – "if we alleviate this poverty, are we robbing these people of the kingdom of God?"

Poverty causes suffering. As Christians we are called to alleviate suffering. We are part of a society which sees suffering as an evil to be removed. But our faith also tells us that suffering is redemptive. We might be forgiven if we were to give up in confusion!

I had a formative experience of such confusion. In my early 20s, I joined a religious order. While preparing to pronounce a vow of poverty, I recognised that my lifestyle since I had joined the order had never been wealthier. My training in the novitiate told me that the vows we were preparing to take – poverty, chastity and obedience – were designed not to limit us, but to set us free to become more lovingly available to all.

One day a homeless man arrived at the door while we, within the house, were sitting down to a large meal. The shock of what happened next reverberates with me to the present day. The Brother on duty did not invite the homeless man in to share in our meal so that we celibates could be lovingly available; he was left outside, alone on the doorstep and given a cup of tea. We never got to know that man or his story. The Church was given a gift which it refused that day.

The Psalms use a word for the poor – *ana*. It means 'bent down'. I understand that as meaning 'bent down' ▷▷

under the weight of poverty, anxiety, social injustice, ignorance and illness. This poverty is not just about lack of money and it may not even be about lack of money at all. There was nothing attractive about their poverty; it was corrosive, soul-destroying poverty and those who endured it would be unattractive too. The *ana* belonged to God because nobody else would want them.

As spiritual thought and reflection developed, it took up the notion of *ana,* that of being bent down, and progressed to the notion of *anawhim* that of being 'bent down before God'. Thus *anawhim* were capable in their simplicity of being poor, empty, bowed down before the fullness of God. In no way was that simplicity – a spiritual attitude – to be confused with the real life poverty which is a scandal before God and has been strenuously rejected by his prophets.

In Dunedin, four years after the *Hikoi of Hope* travelled the length and breadth of the country to cry out against the scandal of poverty, a report was released by Presbyterian Support *How Much is Enough* which detailed the incidence and impact of poverty in the city. The Dunedin City Council took up the implicit challenge by inviting key people and agencies to come together in a forum to discuss poverty. The forum has since developed into the Poverty Action Network for Dunedin/Otepoti – PANDO for short.

I found one aspect of the forum's discussions remarkable, for it illustrated that not only do poor people offend by just being, but even the concept of poverty must be sanitized. At a certain point a Councillor introduced the notion that, in order to attract broader support for the network, we should drop our focus on poverty and focus more on 'well-being'. Poverty puts people off, we were told; it's such an awkward concept, and people can get stuck in the debate about how much money is enough to live on. While that may be true, I believe we need to be 'put off' and scandalized by poverty. Perhaps then we will be spurred to take action to eradicate it.

I have always wondered why the churches are not a constant thorn in the side of government, endlessly appealing, Jeremiah-like, to have the needs of the poor in our midst addressed? Perhaps we can only address what we see and perhaps what we see has been limited by what we have seen. The problem is that if you live in an affluent area of New Zealand, the chances are that you do not know, nor can you imagine the corrosive impact of poverty on peoples' lives. If you're among the many who don't rely on a high income, high-quality housing, education, good employment prospects and convenient access to health services and advice, then the struggle to survive can be all-consuming.

The *Hikoi* announced that it was time to stop simply accepting that life for thousands of people in New Zealand isn't fair and do something about it. I suspect that, five years on from the *Hikoi*, the will to eradicate poverty in New Zealand has yet to be galvanized in ways that will be effective. Only when we begin to cry out loudly for those who are 'bent down' under the weight of poverty, anxiety, social injustice, ignorance and illness will we be fulfilling our prophetic calling as Christians.

To begin to do this, we need to be rooted in prayer and the results of our prayer needs to be moving us on from doing things for the poor, towards identifying with the poor while asking the question:

What would this be like if this were done to me? ■

Tui Motu-InterIslands

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

Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd P O Box 6404, Dunedin North, 9030
Phone: 03 477 1449 Fax: 03 477 8149 email: tuimotu@earthlight.co.nz
Editor: Michael Hill IC, **Assistant Editor**: Frances Skelton, **Illustrator**: Don Moorhead
Directors: Rita Cahill RSJ, Tom Cloher **(chair)**, Margaret Darroch, Robin Kearns, Chris Loughnan OP, Elizabeth Mackie OP, Judith McGinley OP, Kathleen Rushton RSM
Printed by Rogan McIndoe Print Ltd

ISSN 1174-8931

Listening to our children

Social Justice Week 2003 (21-27 September) focuses on children's issues. Caritas worker Lisa Beech writes how listening to children opened her eyes

In the family, which is a community of persons, special attention must be devoted to children by developing a profound esteem for their personal dignity, and a great respect and generous concern for their rights. (John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio)

When *Caritas Aotearoa* employed me to write about children's issues for Social Justice Week, I thought I already knew about child poverty. As a beneficiary, a mother of three and a tenant in a state housing neighbourhood, I had spent most of the past 16 years living and working with beneficiaries and low-income families. I had been to *Work and Income* to advocate for more people than I could possibly count, sometimes with a rushed trip to the foodbank at the end of it when the clock tipped the balance between the wait for a review of decision and the foodbank closing hours.

I had witnessed over and over again the humiliation mothers go through to put food on the table for their children – begging, not in the streets but in government and community services. Current social policies don't seem to be able to deliver a better standard of living to children in families, regardless of the steps many parents take to try to improve their situation.

Over dinner that night I discussed my new job with my children, telling them how pleased I was that the Catholic Church had recognised the importance of listening to what children had to say. They were much more interested in talking about how my new job would affect the family finances. "Will we be rich?" they asked.

"Not rich", I said, though the calculations of reduced entitlements to income related rent, family support, childcare subsidy added to increased costs for childcare and transport already had my head in a spin. "But we'll probably have a bit more money. What do you think is the most important thing to spend

If we had more money I'd like to eat oranges

also sheltering me.

Then, when I returned to my cases of families in hardship, I realised every one of the stories was written from the point of view of the parents. I didn't know how the children in those families saw their situation or what their personal experience of hardship was. So, while researching the Caritas Social Justice Week booklet *Born to us; Children in New Zealand*, I learned to sit down on the footpath and talk to the kids in my street. Their wisdom and their insights

it on?"

I expected *Lotto* dreams of play stations, visits to Disneyland and other unaffordable luxuries. My children were silent while they thought about it. Then they tentatively offered their wishes, like letters to Santa Claus, not certain if they were realistic or even possible. "If we had more money", Lakan (aged 4) said, "I'd like to eat oranges."

"Mum, don't be offended", said Kaisa (aged 10). "The meals you cook us, they're nice, but do you think we'll be able to eat chicken sometimes?"

Datu (aged 4) had his mind firmly set on recreation. "Will we be able to have a holiday, a real holiday, in Levin?" My children think Levin is the holiday capital of the nation, following a weekend stay at the holiday camp with their godparents.

Kaisa went on to outline her greatest concern. For her birthday she had been given a $20 note. She had been using this money to pay for school requests for extra stationery items, school activities and small fundraisers. She had $1 left and didn't know how she was going to keep paying for school items after it was spent.

She admitted that she had been keeping these requests from me, because she had seen how worried I had been over finances and she wanted to protect me from further stress. Like many parents, I thought I had been open with my children about money, but still thought I had sheltered them from the worst aspects of the struggle to live on a low income. I had no idea my children were

▷▷

into their own situations filled me with wonder and humility.

How easy it is to ignore children's rights! For much of the time, children have learned not to insist on them. Children in our street know not to request extras in the supermarket, to complain of a smacking, or to insist that adults listen to them. Their motivation is largely to protect their parents' feelings.

Many of us adults are afraid of recognising children's rights because we feel that maybe giving that recognition to our children takes something away from us as parents. Maybe we have a stereotype in our heads of the belligerent adolescent refusing to give information to authority in the name of youth rights. It's not so much a matter of children refusing to give information to adults, but of our lack of awareness of our need to listen to them.

In my house we have plenty of conversations, but I never really knew how my children felt about money, or about the feelings they had learned to keep to themselves about food and requests from school. ■

The booklet *Born to us: Children in New Zealand* concludes with a vision of the world to which we want our children to belong, based on the image of a table as a central place in a home where children expect to be fed, protected and listened to.

On the family table would be enough food to eat, to keep them healthy and strong. It would be in a warm house, where the family had the security of knowing their home would meet their needs for shelter and warmth into the future. The children's provision rights would be met.

"The children would feel able to come to the table without fear, without concern that mealtimes would erupt into violence. They would know that those around the table loved them and wanted to keep them safe from harm. The children's protection rights would be met.

"The children would be able to talk freely with their families, to express their point of view on family decisions, to talk about things that worried them, and to be part of the solution of family problems. Children would be both seen and heard, secure in the knowledge that people who cared about them listened to them and took them

Born to Us: Children in New Zealand, Published by Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, PO Box 12 193, Thorndon, Wellington

Letter to Rt Hon Helen Clark from Justice, Peace and Development Commission on Child Poverty in New Zealand

The Justice, Peace and Development Commission is very concerned about the economic situation of many low-income families in New Zealand. We were initially encouraged by Budget announcements promising to bring relief in areas such as subsidies for childcare, social services for refugees and migrants, and increased funding for housing.

However, along with other advocacy groups in New Zealand, the Commission was disappointed with the minimal level of assistance in Budget 2003 and the stated intention that only if budget surpluses hold up next year will action to improve family income be considered. We were dismayed at the delay, and the further year of poverty for some children and their families, particularly in light of proven links between low family income, health and societal problems.

Events since the Budget alarm us further. Government income is running ahead of expectations but the economy is slowing. Will budget surpluses be thought strong enough to provide an improvement in family income next year? Can the government afford to fund support for areas as diverse as the Americas Cup Challenge, the deployment of defence forces to Iraq, Afghanistan and the Solomons, the Retirement Fund, AND improve the situation for families when faced with the possibility of an economic downturn in New Zealand?

Over the next few months, the drafting of next year's Budget will begin. We consider that priority should be given to changes to benefit and tax based family income assistance, irrespective of the size of New Zealand's budget surplus. It is false economy to maintain children in poverty. Inadequate healthcare, food, clothing and housing in early life have negative consequences for children and carry a heavy future cost not only for the children and their families but for our whole society.

The Commission agrees with the recommendations in the report *Making it Happen* (Institute of Public Policy at AUT, October 2002, pp6 & 7) which suggests way that New Zealand's agenda for children could be implemented. Recommendations that could be considered for the next Budget include:

- Extending the Child Tax Credit of fifteen dollars per child per week to all low-income families
- Adjusting Family Support and the income levels from which Family Support starts to reduce, to cost of living changes of the past decade
- Placing an obligation on the IRD to ensure families access their tax credits
- Giving all children under 18 access to free health and dental care including after-hour services and prescriptions
- Indexing to the Consumer Price Index to all family-related payments, including health subsidies
- Adopting the Ministry of Social Development poverty threshold as an official measure of poverty
- Monitoring poverty on a regular basis to ensure progress is being made to eliminating child poverty
- Raising the threshold that can be earned by each beneficiary before abatement of benefit, from $80 to $130 to compensate for inflation.

We strongly submit that the Government should address the elimination of child poverty as a priority. Decisions to act should not depend on a healthy budget surplus.

The guilty sex – 1

Bishop Patrick Dunn (letters, Aug 2003) asks that we give males a fair deal. Does he mean the males who stormed Jerusalem on the 15 July 1099, and slaughtered 40,000 innocent men, women and children in the name of Christ? Or does he mean the males who wrote *Malleus Maleficarum* in 1487, and the males who savagely enforced it for the next two and a half centuries.

Or the males who concocted a veritable forest of excommunications in Canon Law which kept the People of God from getting near Christ? Pope John Paul II was not joking when he begged forgiveness for the sins of the Church – the male Church.

Fr Max Palmer, Kopua

The guilty sex – 2

I commend your broad band of articles in the August *Tui Motu*. The subject, the genre and connotations of sexuality are mentioned in five articles. I am impressed by the balance in the articles of Fr Pat Maloney, Paul Freedman and Bishop Richard Randerson.

The Church and its ethics have a lot to answer for in "what is normal sexuality?". As Fr Pat says: "Frankly I don't see a reasoned sexual theology coming from male celibates. Their track record is not good".

Why is this so?

Denis Power, Southland

letters ✍

TM myopic on GM

One attribute that I appreciate in *Tui Motu* is its general openness to diverse points of view. However it seems to me that genetic engineering is one topic about which the magazine appears to be developing a myopic attitude. Your *July* edition carried an anti-G E rallying call from Jeannette Fitzsimons which gave little information or discussion. This achieved an approving nod in your editorial.

In your editorial in the *August* issue you assert that G E violates the sacredness of created life. Mendel, the father of modern genetics, partially sterilized pea plants to ensure that he was breeding particular characteristics into subsequent generations. Was that not genetic engineering? Was it a violation of the sacredness of created life?

The article by Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall in the same issue describes with disapproval the work of Monsanto in developing and marketing G E seeds. The aim is apparently to trap farmers into a dependence on Monsanto-supplied seeds, weedkillers, fertilizers etc.

However, the prostitution of a technical development does not necessarily nullify the development itself. We are told that 80 percent of emails are spam – much of it quite unsavoury. Does that make the facility bad?

It is a notable human characteristic that many will make trivial and often immoral use of processes and products that have much promise. Think of printing, the cinema, television, brewing and wine making, nuclear science.

I note the postscript by Keith Harrison in the *July* number. Particularly relevant is his point about extreme spokespeople giving statements of position rather than the exploration of an issue. Is it too much to ask that we might expect an article, preferably by a biologist who believes in God, giving a more even treatment of the subject of genetic engineering?

Tom Hall

The editor of Tui Motu *is also uncompromisingly anti-Fascist. Is that myopia? His first degree was in biological science with a particular emphasis on genetics and systematics; his last, in theology with emphasis on Creation. You are quite correct: his intuition is to find G E repugnant, both scientifically and theologically.*
If you could find us a biologist who believes in God and writes intelligibly in favour of G E, Tui Motu *would gladly publish.* - Ed.

Australasian Catholic Press Association Awards 2003

Tui Motu received an award at the recent ACPA Conference in Canberra in the 'Best Devotional Article Applying Faith to Life' category:

Highly Commended: *Mum – Why can't I be a Priest?* by Jacquie Lambert

Comments:

"Several entries dealt with explicit issues of Christian beliefs and values in everyday contexts. But this experiential struggle of a woman with her Church is not simply the poignant presentation of a mother's dilemma in responding to her daughter. Instead, she realises its universal significance. The mother relates her own journey in and out of Church communities. She reports her conversation with her daughter without embellishment. It is painful, it is spare. She is shocked by the awareness that it is not simply her own experience that has to be acknowledged but that of her daughter, and of other generations still to come.

This was a story that is steeped in present issues faced explicitly and implicitly by women, children and men today. It is not exclusive to one denomination, but it has ramifications across churches and society.

When I began to read it I was ambivalent about the topic and was ready to put it aside. The urgency of the woman touched me, and reminded me of my own responsibility to subsequent generations in regard to inclusive ministry and worship in the Christian churches."

Congratulations to *NZ Catholic* who won the Bishop Phillip Kennedy Memorial Prize in the newspaper section and was highly commended for their coverage of the closure of COVS.

Greenbelt 2003

Michael Hill

Speaking at the Greenbelt Christian Festival in Cheltenham, England in late August, prominent Green activist, Jonathan Porritt, *made a plea for people who profess the Christian faith to take environmetal issues seriously. Our relationship with earth must have a spiritual base, he asserts. Porritt proposes three ways of looking at environmental problems*

• The earth is sacred

Too often we tend to treat the earth as a lump of inert matter which we can use however we wish, as long as we are protecting our own interests. Until we begin to view the earth as sacred, there will never be a solution to problems of the environment.

This is a difficult concept for believers and atheists alike. Christianity has subscribed to a cosmology which gives to humanity complete and total dominion over the earth – we alone are made in the image of a God who is seen as transcending creation, rather than being 'in and of creation'. All other life forms are material, not spiritual and are 'without souls'. Nature is seen as corrupt because of the Fall of Adam.

This traditional literalist interpretation of the Fall lingers on in an unconscious dualism. Christianity has exalted heaven at the expense of the earth; it has licensed a detachment from the natural world, leading to cruelty and manipulat-ion of other creatures. Those who embrace different values are despised and crushed. Mainstream Christianity has not regarded the world and its creatures as sacred, every bit as sacred as are we humans.

There is of course a long and noble succession of Christian voices who have stood out against such anthropocentrism. Meister Eckhardt, for one, wrote: "Every creature is a word of God; the natural world is our primary scripture".

What we are being asked to do today is to move away from such an exploitative cosmology to a totally different understanding of the natural world. And we need to seek within Christianity the grounds for such a move.

The word 'dominion' in Genesis 2 has licensed Christians to exploit nature for centuries; yet the word can equally be translated as 'stewardship' or 'co-responsibility'. These fundamental biblical texts have therefore to be understood in a new way.

• Humans are part of creation, not apart from it

As a species, humans do NOT stand apart from the rest. Both scientifically and theologically such a stance is ignorant. David Suzuki notes that each breath we take contains at least 400,000 of the Argon atoms breathed during his life by Gandhi! As created beings on earth we are totally interconnected. There is no 'out there'. We are part of the world, not *apart* from it. The moon landing and its famous photography began to make us see the world as one for the first time. Our consciousness started to shift. But how far have we got?

Thomas Berry says: "While we have come to accept our communion with God and with our fellow human beings, we have not yet come to the realisation that this communion includes the rest of the earth... the Body of Christ is ultimately the entire Universe. Otherwise neither the Incarnation nor the Redemption is complete".

And again: "I do not hear much of that understanding of what it means to our faith as Christians to be part of an integrated Cosmos rather than some unique species standing apart from the rest of life on earth."

Berry is not a pantheist, a nature worshipper. He is not worshipping a stone; he is seeing God *in* that stone. (*Panentheism*). If God is *in* all things, then all things are sacred.

• Humans must come to live an environmental faith

This commitment to environmentalism is an essential stance for us, not just an optional extra. We must reflect it in our lives. We can't excuse ourselves on the grounds of our littleness. That's too easy a way out.

Today many world leaders express their Christian belief. But how can we continue to respect a man like George Bush who professes to believe in God, while day in and day out he is systematically trashing God's earth? How can people so disconnect their faith from their behaviour?

We have to confront such hypocrisy. The teachings within Christianity which support the environmental position are abundant. The destroyers are living in denial of their faith. This has to be exposed.

How do we go about effecting change?

Are we talking of a revolution or just another incremental step? Thomas Berry says it is a revolution: "We

are in trouble today because we are between two very different stories. The old account of Creation sustained us and gave us purpose; it consecrated suffering, integrated knowledge, guided education. We knew where we were. The old story made sense. Sadly, we have not learnt the new story. We fail to put ourselves in the context of the steady development of life over 4.5 billion years."

Environmentalism has been a secular movement – yet we are talking about something primarily spiritual. I have spent much time as a member of the Sustainable Development Council. When we talk to politicians we concentrate on the scientific data; when we talk to companies we offer economic grounds. In neither case do we touch the spiritual because of their evident reluctance to be drawn into a values-based philosophical/ethical approach.

I do not believe we can ever dispense with science or good technology or with reason: they are fundamentally import-ant. But they are insufficient to deliver a more sustainable way of life. In our relation with the natural world and in our use of resources there are many radical discontinuities. Injustice and inequity are getting worse, not better. Yet increasing riches do not seem to bring people greater happiness.

We are stuck between two cosmologies. The new is ill-formed and ill-understood. The world's mainstream religions have yet to share in this new story. Our duty as Christians is to accelerate the transition. We are still at the beginning of a new exploration.

There is sometimes a need for incrementalism. The Sustainable Development Commission is immersed in a step-by-step process. But we must know where the steps are leading. And we have to transform our own lives and our relationship with the earth if we want to change the way people

Jonathon Porritt is Chair of the Sustainable Development Commission and Programme Director of Forum for the Future in the UK. His father, Lord Arthur Porritt, was Governor General of NZ from 1967-72.

For God Most High is Awesome

Small birds going about
the business of the day in quiet gardens;
great eagles on mighty wings
searching with gimlet eyes the distant ground for hapless prey;
busy spiders spinning delicate threads that sparkle in the sun
on early spring mornings;
the last fling in the summer lives
of countless trees scattering
tinted leaves in autumn winds;
deep rivers and shallow streams
held in check by grassy banks,
flowing endlessly onwards to wider waters;
turbulent seas whipped by sudden storms,
sending massive waves
to rampage on distant shores;
ancient mountains towering over the earth,
exploring the heavens with sharp peaks,
waiting for time to end;
richly coloured clouds painted by the hand of God, covering western skies
as the sun sinks below the horizon;
the order and brilliance of stars
shining in the dark blue velvet
of earth□s eternal canopy;
the cut and thrust of the natural world,
the fever and bustle of human existence.
All these fill the soul with awe
and call to mind that God most high
is Lord of all the earth
and yet the silence of His Word
lives in the stillness of my soul,
His presence quiet,
gentle and unobtrusive.

Cathy Grant

Green

I will reveal myself to you
You who think so little of yourself at times
Do you not see the changes I have wrought in you?
I allowed you to stand in my presence
In the shimmering of air
In the green and moisture
I allowed you to approach me
To come close to my hiddenness.

Stand tall
Like a strong tree
Tall as a strong woman
Fed by the moisture of my creation
Fed by the earth of my reality
Fed by the love of the one I gave to you
The one who discerned your fears
The one who sent you to me
The one you must let go.

I will be with you
In every moment
Feel me in the air
See me in the greenness
Know me in the love you give and receive
In the sparkle of joy and delight
In the sorrow of partings and grief.
Work with me
Listen to me
Love in honesty and purity.

You will live in the light.
You will grow in love and holiness.
I will be with you.

Jo Kennedy

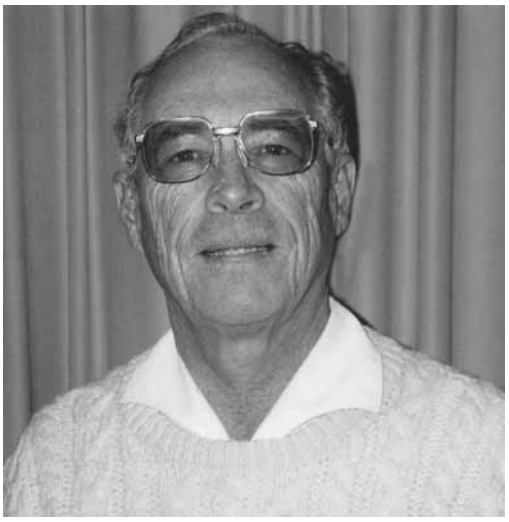
I want to change the world
says my sister
only half wry
and so do I
want to unsanction
unholy
Monsanto
regreen '90 million hectares'
salvage the simple apple
as if
after this Fall
there can be
Spring

Joanna Paul

(Published posthumously. Joanna Paul died in tragic circumstances, June 2003)

Several recent contributions to Tui Motu *have been critical of the exclusion of women from the Sacrament of Holy Orders in the Catholic Church. These have been written with feeling – sometimes in anger, or at least with anguish.*

Bishop Peter Cullinane, in an article divided between two successive issues of Tui Motu, *attempts to respond by looking behind appearances of priestly power or privilege to a renewed theology of church:and thus to illuminate this vexed question.*



Faith Seeking to Understand Why Ordination is Reserved to Men

Articles in the February, April and June (2003) issues of *Tui Motu* on this vexed issue highlight, I think, two things especially, (1) the need for good discussion, and (2) the futility of any discussion based on the premise of *power*.

Needed: good discussion

On this issue, as on any other, the Catholic people are surely entitled to expect their Church to give a proper account of the faith it professes, and therefore reasons which do not merely beg the question (which is what some official explanations seem to do). Let us remember, however, a key characteristic of the history of doctrines: sometimes the Church knows *what* it knows before it knows *why*. In other words, it can take time (sometimes a long time) before it is able properly to account for what it believes. That just goes with being a human community of believers. This is why it can happen that partial reasons and even wrong reasons are sometimes given during the interim.

It also follows that there is a difference between searching for the reasons that clarify the Church's faith, and questioning the faith itself. Comments of the former kind are not a proper pretext for discussion of the second kind. The community's faith can be sure even before its understanding is complete.

The absence of good discussion can only perpetuate the attribution of *wrong* reasons for the Church's teaching, causing both hurt and ridicule. Some medieval claims of innate male superiority seemed bizarre enough. Now we are getting claims of innate male inferiority! As Lynley Hood has said: "To the evolutionary feminists the problem was sexism; to the revolutionary feminists the problem was men" (*A City Possessed*, p. 38).

Even to start from the premise that not ordaining women is a justice issue is to presume that the Church can do so, which is another way of begging the question.

Finally, so long as proper discussion does not take place, the very things that need to be changed – the things that perpetuate a sense of grievance – are not being addressed with any sense of urgency.

It matters

There are some who believe that equality between men and women requires access by both to the same roles, and that to not think so is simply unjust, patriarchal and medieval. There are others for whom equality based on the dignity of personhood is not compromised by men and women having different roles, whether in the work of creation or in the work of salvation.

There are others again to whom it doesn't seem to matter, one way or the other, and life goes on – more or less. I say "more or less" because the truths of our faith are meant to be life-giving. Revealed truth only came to light in the course of what God was doing so that we could "have more abundant life". So, in what way does the Church's teaching that Ordination is reserved to men enrich our lives and our faith? And if it doesn't, why is this?

First we need a common language

The role of ordained ministry is commonly perceived in terms of power, position, status and influence. This

results in others feeling excluded, and wanting to correct the imbalance through the sharing of power, and creating equality based on sameness of opportunity. But, these are the categories of political thought, and they have been leading us nowhere.

There is another way of thinking which identifies power as the problem. And if power is the problem, how could sharing it be the solution? This other way of thinking derives from salvation history. That is where God's purposes are unfolded, and therefore revealed. The contrast is stark: whereas the categories of political thought suggest the sharing of power and equalising, salvation history on the other hand is about overturning, turning the tables on, turning upside down, inverting, bringing down.... It is not about merely redistributing power; it is much more radical than that.

So let us leave our main topic for a moment to look at the language of salvation history.

The language of salvation history

The story of Joseph being sold into slavery is just one of the stories in which God's purposes are revealed, not in the context of virtue and goodness but in the context of sin and injustice. God constantly surprises the chosen people by being present and involved in the circumstances of their history even when it seemed impossible. They were learning that there was a bigger plan. (*It was not you who sent me here but God...* Gen. 45:8). And every glimpse of this bigger plan pointed to a wonderful outcome. Not only were sin and injustice being overcome; they were being seconded to the purposes of their own defeat. The obstinacy of the Pharaohs and the wiles of the Pharisees would serve the same purpose.

This law of turning human calculations on their head and turning evil around on itself reached its apotheosis on Good Friday when evil's greatest hour turned out to be the hour of its definitive defeat. Not only do goodness, life and mercy triumph in the resurrection, but injustice, sin and death are defeated through their own success.

How does this apply to our topic?

Within salvation history we find that power, domination, oppression and alienation were the very hallmarks of sin. They intruded even into the most intimate of human relationships. In the story which pictures sin's entry into the world it is said immediately afterwards to the woman: *he shall rule over you* (Gen. 3:16).

Jesus' mission was to undo sin and reverse its havoc. This mission of reversal would be embodied in the incarnation itself and in his life and ministry:

Though he was in the form of God, he did not regard equality with God as something to be clung to, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death – even death on a cross... Therefore God highly exalted him... (Phil. 2:6-9).

In Christ, "*he* shall rule over you" was being turned into "*he* shall serve you".

Moreover, this symbolism would be continued in those whose ministry has no other purpose than to *make present* his ministry. In them, too, "he shall rule over you" would be replaced by "he shall serve you". It needs to be "he" for the purpose of symbolising this reversal.

So the basis for putting men up for Ordination is the symbolism of salvation history. This makes irrelevant any argument based on comparisons between the natural aptitudes of men and women. What priests *do* could have been done by men or women. But that isn't the point; at least not the point of salvation history.

Even the incarnation in male human nature was significant only for the sake of symbolising Jesus' mission. There was no *intrinsic* reason why the incarnation should be in male human nature, for God is not male. Nor was there anything in human nature that required it, for male is not more like God.

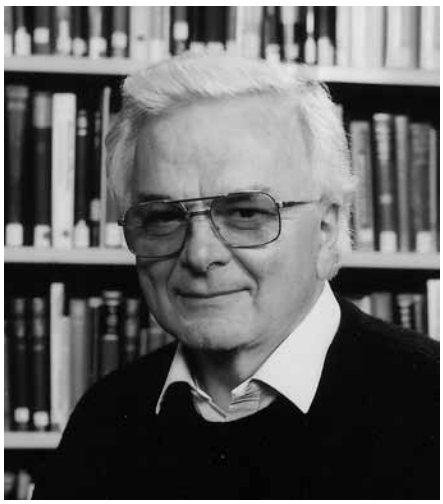
Of course, every Christian *makes present* the life of the risen Christ just by being the body of Christ and living up to that calling. The point being discussed here is *making present* that aspect of Jesus' mission which presupposes his being male for the purpose of turning "he shall rule over you" into "he shall serve you".

The trouble is, of course, people don't always experience in us what people experienced in Jesus. And, it's hard for people to think in the categories of salvation history ("he shall serve you") when what they experience is "he shall rule over you". Yet whenever ministry really *is* experienced as a true icon of Jesus' ministry, it is positively appreciated.

Therefore, the question for all of us, and especially for those who want honest discussion on this topic, is: do we need to abandon the paradigm based on salvation history, or do we need to be even more faithful to it?

That leads to the further question: where does the experience of exclusion and domination come from? What is it that needs to change? That is what we

Sex and the People of God



*Richard Dowden, husband and father, writes – responding to Fr Pat Maloney (*August Tui Motu*) – that 'two becoming one body' should be the basis of our sexual ethics. Has the church has been simply too selective in its use of Biblical texts?*

The original People of God – and our predecessors – were the Israelites with whom God made a formal contract or Testament. After God created Adam, *Genesis* (*2,18*) records: "Yahweh God said, 'It is not good for man to live alone. I will make him a helpmate.'" What "helpmate" means soon becomes clear for God then created Eve from Adam's body and *Genesis* (*v24*) records: "This is why a man leaves his father and mother and joins himself to his wife, and the two become one body". There is nothing here about procreation as such: this is about holy sex.

The Book of *Genesis*, along with the other four books which are collectively known as the *Torah* or the Law, was attributed to Moses and together they formed the guiding principles of the early Israelites, the later Jews and to a greater or lesser extent, the early Christian Church. The basic moral principles were laid down in the Ten Commandments such as "You shall not commit adultery". Adultery is not really about sex but about infidelity – the breaking apart of the "two become one body".

The Law of Moses was quite lenient as regards sex. We find in *Deuteronomy (21, 11-14):* "if you see a beautiful woman among the prisoners and find her desirable, you may make her your wife… Should she cease to please you, you will let her go where she wishes, not selling her for money … since you have had use of her". A man's world maybe, but hardly prudish?

Women now may be surprised to find in *Deuteronomy* (*24, 5*): "If a man is newly married, he shall not join the army nor is he to be pestered at home; he shall be left at home free of all obligations for one year to bring joy to the wife he has taken." Thus his obligation to bring joy to his wife overrode all others. Much of the Law of Moses consisted of rules for the protection and expansion of the race, including the discovery of "rhythm" – a woman was 'unclean' during menstruation and for 7 days after, which neatly coincides with ovulation. For the same reason, I suppose, a man was allowed several wives presumably in different menstrual phases. As well as multiple wives, concubines were allowed for extra sexual pleasure.

The following passage in the beginning of the Books of Kings (*1 Kings 1, 1-4*) seems to have been written tongue in cheek: "King David was an old man well on in years and though they laid coverlets over him he could not keep warm. So his servants said to him, let some young girl be found… she shall lie on your breast and this will keep my lord the king warm. Having searched for a beautiful girl throughout the territory of Israel, they found Abishag… of great beauty". This passage ends: "but the king had no intercourse with her". Like the popular song with the chorus: "Never been kissed! Never been kissed! It's hard to believe that she's never been kissed!"

The Gospel and sexuality

A thousand years later brings us to Jesus, who came not "to abolish the Law or the Prophets … but to complete them" (*Matthew 5, 17*). In the rest of this chapter, Jesus elaborates on this completion. For example, whereas the Ten Commandments said: "You shall not commit adultery" and "You shall not covet your neighbour's wife", Jesus said (*Matthew 5, 28*): "… if a man looks at a woman lustfully, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart" which could be translated colloquially these days as "Don't even think about it!"

But Jesus was not talking about sex or even lust; he was talking about adultery. Adultery is not really about sex but about infidelity – the breaking apart of the "two become one body". When asked about divorce (allowed under the Mosaic Law), Jesus quotes *Genesis* as above, and then adds "They are no longer two, therefore, but one body. So then, what God has united, man must not divide" (*Matthew 19, 6*).

The letters of Paul

Paul is even more explicit in his first

letter to the *Corinthians* (*7, 1-6*): "Now for the questions about which you wrote. …let each man have his own wife and each woman her own husband. The husband must give his wife what she has the right to expect, and so too the wife to the husband. The wife has no rights over her own body; it is the husband who has them. In the same way, the husband has no rights over his body; the wife has them. Do not refuse each other except by mutual consent, and then only for an agreed time, to leave yourselves free for prayer; then come together again …".

A little further along, presumably in answer to a question, Paul says (*vv 8-9*): "There is something I want to add for the sake of widows and those who are not married: it is a good thing to stay as they are, like me, but if they cannot control the sexual urges, they should get married, since it is better to be married than be tortured."

So from the earliest times, sex between husband and wife is not merely for procreation but the essence of their "two in one body" relationship. Paul implies that sex is a continuous requirement, not to be discontinued for any length of time even by mutual consent.

Where Paul says of widows that it is a "good thing" to stay single, he may have simply meant it is "OK" for he also said "let each … woman [have] her own husband". And he said remarriage for sexual pleasure or relief from "torture" is OK too.

Some conclusions

The footnote in *The Jerusalem Bible* interprets this as "Virginity is a higher calling than marriage, and spiritually more profitable". This is the attitude of the church today as indicated by beatification and canonisation being virtually exclusively reserved for virgins and celibates (see Fr Humphrey O'Leary's article in the May *Tui Moto*. Over 1000 beatifications in recent years – other than martyrs – were almost all restricted to celibates, or in one case, to a married couple living together without sex for 26 years – hardly compatible with Paul's teaching!)

If you, like me, are familiar only with the letters of St Paul selected for the readings at Mass, you may not have recognised the passages above from *1 Cor. 7*. You may have been surprised by the "equality" which Paul gives to husband and wife. This is in contrast to the much more familiar passage from *Ephesians, 5, 21-32*: "Wives, be subject to your husbands as you are to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is head of the church… Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her…"

Ephesians was written about a generation after Paul, and has lost the 'equality' which Paul gave to husband and wife. It seems to have been influenced by the Greco-Roman pagan philosophy of the time. It was once the standard reading in the marriage ceremony and fits the "honour and obey" part of the vows. It is no wonder that brides were turned off Paul – but it was not Paul who said it, it was attributed to him later.

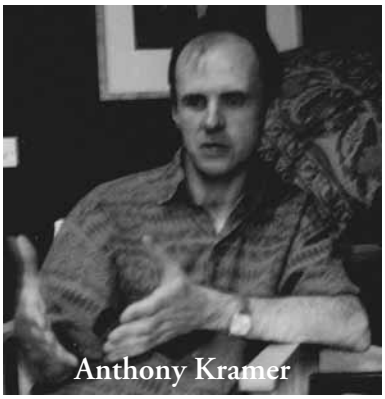
About 1000 years later, a sect appeared called the Albigenses, after the town of Albi, in S France. They viewed sex as essentially evil and so practiced strict chastity. They proselytised widely in the 11th and 12th centuries and were denounced for heresy. After 100 years they died out (well, they would, wouldn't they?), but their puritan ideals were not without influence in the beginnings of the Reformation, and I expect, in the anti-sex attitude of the Catholic Church today.

Sex without love, as in prostitution, certainly happens – but the reverse probably doesn't. Even cuddling a child, nursing a cat or patting a dog has some degree, however small, of sexual stimulation whether noticed or not. The strict avoidance of affection between staff and pupils in a Catholic boarding school, where one might have expected love, is probably a shield against such "temptation by the Devil".

Yet "Anyone who fails to love can never have known God, because God is love" (*1 John 4, 8*). So if celibacy results in this coldness and un-love, how can it be "a higher calling than marriage, and spiritually more profitable" and not the reverse? How many priests and brothers, who could not control their God-given sexual urges, could have saved their charges and their Church so much hurt if they had been allowed to take St Paul's advice to the Corinthians and got married? ■

In the footsteps of Jean Vanier

Tui Motu visits the l'Arche community in Leith, on the outskirts of Edinburgh


Anthony Kramer

Anthony Kramer first came across l'Arche as an 18-year-old, at the first UK community in Kent in S England. He went to visit the community for a week – and stayed seven months. During his years of study he kept in regular touch with that community. Later on, he and his wife were invited to come up from Kent in 1992 to lead the new community in Edinburgh. His term as leader is due to finish in 2004. Both Anthony and his wife Marguerite hope to continue a close association after that.

In the United Kingdom l'Arche communities there is roughly one assistant for each of the disabled members. The majority of community members are full-time, although there may be some part-timers. On a day-to-day basis there may be two or three assistants in the house when there are four or five members with disability. But the numbers will be tailored to the needs of the disabled.

"Normally", says Anthony, "we offer a home for the disabled members, who then may go out for work or other activities (planned leisure). We do not offer those specialist services in the house. Here in Leith we are one community living in two separate houses. We prefer to live in small house groups which make it more home-like and less institutional.

"Having two communities also gives us choice. Indeed when Tom chose a few years ago to go and live in the other house with Gordon, another elderly man, it was perhaps the first choice he had ever made in his life. Since that time he has had strokes and has aged rapidly, and that has reduced both his ability to speak and use signs. We are fortunate at the moment that the house leader here, Alison, is a nurse. It is a bonus to have her here while Tom is particularly needy.

As community leader, Anthony manages both houses. The communities are funded to a large extent by social services via a negotiated contract. They provide money to maintain eight people with special needs living in two houses. "They respect our ethos," Anthony says, "and understand that we have live-in assistants (in contrast with other providers) and have a specifically Christian ethos. The Care Commission is responsible for assessing the quality of care we provide. It's been a cultural shift for l'Arche. We receive public funding and we now have to submit to public scrutiny.

"Sometimes we have to challenge what the Care Commission ask, because we judge it to have no relevance to our particular situation. Often they will waive their demand; at other times we have to negotiate. I suspect however that if the social services were to withdraw their contribution tomorrow, most of what they expect us to do would continue. And we have access to psychiatric and other services as a matter of course. So there are many advantages to being under the state.

"The local committee of trustees takes overall responsibility and oversee all the major legal or financial issues. They also appoint the community leader. The committee is inter-denominational, and that is usual in the United Kingdom. There may be a strong Catholic and Anglican presence, but by no means exclusive. There is a prominent Presbyterian presence here in Edinburgh. L'Arche was founded in Edinburgh through the initiative of an ecumenical contemplative community. Ecumenism is very much at the heart of this venture.

L'Arche as a Christian vocation

"When I first came to l'Arche,' says Anthony, "I was attracted to it, although living in a mixed community was something quite new for me.

"I had been brought up a Roman Catholic, but the faith dimension was much stronger. Here were people living together inspired by the ideals of Christian community, based on the Gospel, trying to build up relationships of quality, learning how to deal with conflict, learning how to use time profitably, dealing with the dynamics of power and authority, dealing with issues of sexuality. L'Arche training has to embrace all this. We have to discover how to cope with disabled people and how to treat volunteers who come in, but are not part of the full-time community. Will the community welcome such people?

"There is a degree of human wisdom which is foundational. As leader I am interested in the dynamics of groups as well as learning to lead as a service to the group. We have to learn constantly to deal with the unexpected, so we have to be very flexible.

"People are often amazed how many different types of forum are convened within l'Arche: we would have at least ten

different types of meeting each month. Most meetings will start with prayer and reflection, followed by a practical agenda. And we are always sensitive to where each person is in their personal journey.

"The primacy of Christian witness for me is to choose to live a simple life. The mark of true community is living simply and putting the quality of relationships first. We learn to look after ourselves, and we hope that our costs at l'Arche are more modest than might be the case in another setting. It is part of our Christian witness.

"Society pleads that the cost of looking after the disabled is too heavy, and abortion is a better alternative. We can show them otherwise. Young people may come here and find it quite a difficult challenge, but they will persevere and learn much. They are touched by the simplicity of l'Arche; they get a glimpse of covenant between people, of the depth of faithfulness which develops over time. This ideal can be lived out within a group. It is a unique experience of relationship.

Young assistant Johanna with Gordon

My wife Marguerite had lived in l'Arche for nine years when I met her. We became attracted to each other, and sought to form another type of covenant in our lives. Then we had to decide whether we wanted l'Arche to continue to be part of our married life.

"There is a subtle interplay between a couple's fidelity to each other and the experience of the rest of the l'Arche community, who will be predominantly single. People are at different stages in their personal journeys – and they have to strive to live together.

"Sometimes married couples have resided in the community house, but generally they need their own space for the integrity of their own relationship. There has to be some degree of separation. So Marguerite and I choose to live locally and come in each day. Carol also chooses to live outside although she is single. L'Arche is flexible, and can still create a community where all find their place.

"Relationships form all the time. That's normal. You can't go against the flow of life. But there need to be norms within the community indicating where the boundaries lie. Especially where there are children, it's usually better for couples to live nearby under their own roof. L'Arche at heart is 'under one roof' but is big enough to encompass some who live outside.

A praying community

"Shared prayer is an essential part of our life. Prayer is the 'space' between the busy-ness of communal living. By word, music and by gesture, something spiritual is shared. Sometimes new members come here who have no notion of prayer as talking to God, or of shared prayer. We had a girl from East Germany who had had no experience at all of anything religious. Or perhaps they have only known formal liturgy and are quite new to a more free-flowing type of prayer.

"I found it quite scary when I first came to l'Arche. I was shy of it. But then I heard one of the disabled members, Jane, talking to God in very simple phrases. 'Dear God, bless Bill who is being grumpy today' – which he was! Here was someone who could talk freeely to God, and I couldn't do that. I expected someone else to talk to God for me! I just used to add 'Amen' at the end!

"But soon everyone learns to participate. Gordon contributes musically with his strong baritone voice. Tom might bring a photograph of his Dad. He always knows what is going on. Ingrid is musical, but she can also do a reading. In the quietness of that space people will say things they would never come out with in any other context. Often the prayer is for someone who they have loved here, but who has moved on. Sometimes the whole community comes together, including the Board and all the volunteers. Perhaps 30 in all. Some of the more 'business-like' people are like I was when I first came, but they are attracted to what they find and they usually stick around."

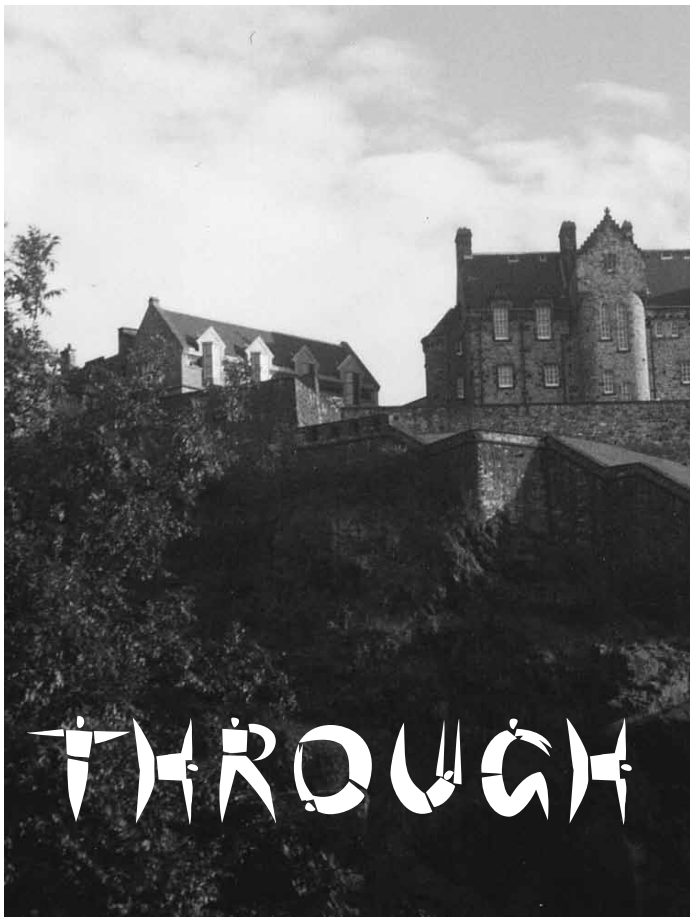
Eucharist

"In Scotland we don't have sectarian tensions, but we have to respect the local religious history. We decided from the beginning to focus on shared prayer and not on Eucharist.

"This was different from what I had experienced in Kent where Eucharist was common to both Catholics and Anglicans, but shared Eucharist was not allowed. We had a problem there in that what we aspired to in terms of community was not being reflected in our liturgy.

"Last year we decided to have Eucharist once in a while, inviting different Ministers to preside. We felt that within Catholicism there had grown up a greater openness to Eucharistic hospitality, although not yet to full intercommunion. The Bishop agreed to this occasional happening – because of the reality of the covenant relationship that already exists between members of l'Arche. So they are all free to receive at Mass.

"But at the moment it is 'one way'only and we cannot receive at, say, the Anglican Eucharist, and this is hard for people to understand. Indeed some will disagree in conscience. So we are still growing and learning." ■

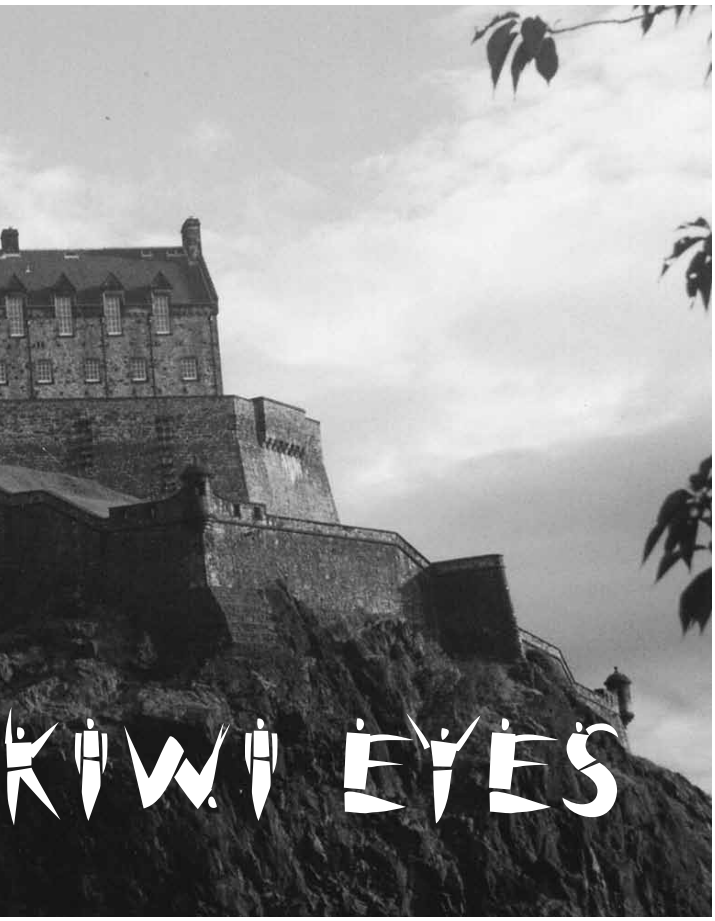


In its 56th year the Edinburgh Fringe festival draws greater crowds than ever, visitors of every age and stage of life from every continent: a polyglot audience celebrating song and dance, comedy and serious drama. The famous Royal Mile is mostly closed off to traffic to provide a stage for street theatre, wandering minstrels, madrigal groups, strumming guitarists by the peck, fascinating human sculptures, curiously dressed agents peddling tickets for one of the hundreds of shows competing for an audience from 10 in the morning until midnight or later.

First the city itself. Anyone coming to Europe for the first time and starting with Edinburgh, will surely be spoilt for most of what they see later. The fascinating old city is an axis stretching from the Castle eminence down to the gracious palace of Holyrood, all surrounded by spacious meadows to enable the city to breathe and its citizens to play; wonderful stone terraces of stately Georgian residences grouped round elegant squares or on streets which even by today's standards are broad, often tree-lined. Even when its population is doubled at the height of the festival there is no sense of traffic congestion, such as you might encounter in downtown Wellington on a Friday evening or swarming round the Auckland motorways almost any hour of the day or night. The 'Athens of the North' simply opens its hospitable arms and embraces the crowds into its innumerable pubs and cafés and onto its broad pavements. As a European capital city, Edinburgh can have no rivals. Paris, perhaps!

What to see: Most fringe events attract quite modest 'houses': so much to see in the hundred and fifty

Royal Mile



Hell! – but once again you did not have to look far for an amazing variety of music and discussion, debate or speaker, many being topclass. All this is free once you have paid to be admitted. It runs over three days: we continued to be blessed by good weather, too warm at times. Clearly for the devotees this is the climax of their year – and they get great value for their efforts to attend.

The final performance of Jerusalem! Jerusalem! was a trial and a triumph. We were given a tent which was far too small for the numbers who wanted to see the play. The lighting and

enclosed space made the stage like an oven, and we had to compete with two pop bands going full bore in adjoining marquees. But the audience was appreciative of the difficulties we were playing under, and they spontaneously joined in the final chorus of Blake's Jerusalem, giving us a series of ringing encores – a fitting conclusion to an extended run of 44 shows. ■

odd venues, with shows queueing up one after another. The sellout events would be a few highly publicised comedy acts; *Twelve Angry Men* was probably the outstanding straight play. For me, 'pick of the pops' was the Soweto Gospel Choir which had the use of a biggish Presbyterian church and never failed to fill it: an hour of continuous music and movement, disciplined yet full of verve and humour.

Concurrent there was also a Film and the Book Festival. The Book Festival attracts top speakers from the English speaking world and is held in a tent hamlet sited in one of the city squares. I spent a couple of delightful hours hearing veteran Labour politician Roy Hattersley, more entertainer than statesman – and the current bestselling writer, William Dalrymple, equally entertaining but also most informative. He revisited the scenes of his master-piece *From the Holy Mountain*. Barefoot and dressed in a scruffy shirt and baggy pants, he looked as if he might have been just ejected from a Damascus mosque. But he can fascinate and charm with the tongue as well as with the pen.

And *Jerusalem! Jerusalem!* Well, we came, we performed and even if we didn't exactly conquer, the quality of perform-ance never flagged and I think the company really earned its four-star review in *The Scotsman*, becoming a serious contender for the Top-vote. That didn't happen. Nevertheless, it was reminiscent of a novice tennis player getting into the last 16 at Wimbledon. We did well – but there were lots of other great acts there as well. After 13 performances in Edinburgh we moved over the water to Belfast and had two excellent evenings in a fine, centrally located theatre. *BBC North* showed a lot of interest and each performance was rounded off with an interview of our author Mike Riddell and a question and answer session.

Finally to the *Greenbelt* Religious festival held each year inside the running track of Cheltenham Race Course, near Bristol. Thirty thousand people all competing for grass space and portaloos may not be everyone's idea of heaven – and for one of the cast at least, it was her idea of

Through the eye of the needle

During July two Auckland teachers, Dermot English and his wife Marie Walker, were invited to join an expedition, organised by the Edmund Rice Centre in Sydney and led by Sean Cleary. Dermot is the DRS at St Peter's College in Auckland, and his wife Marie, a primary school teacher

What was amazing", says Dermot, "is that the trip wasn't cancelled when they found out we were two middle-class teachers with two mortgages and no history of social activism, and no real inclination to head that way.

"It was called a 'Romero trip' and has been held several times in recent years. It consisted of eight days in both El Salvador and Guatemala. During this time we visited such places as the site of the 1989 killing of six Jesuit priests and their housekeeper and her daughter at the Jesuit University in San Salvador, the national Cathedral, sites related to the life and death of Msgr Oscar Romero, and a town which had risen from the rubble of the 'conflicted zone' near the Honduran border.

"In Guatemala we visited the site of the murder of Bishop Gerardi in 1998, the national Cathedral and areas of the country which had suffered the brunt of military strategy throughout the long and painful civil war, talking to diocesan workers, priests, anthropologists doing exhumations of mass graves, and community leaders."

"First stop in San Salvador," says Marie, "was the parish of San Jose de Villanueva, with Mario the parish priest. This was the start of my sleepless nights! It wasn't so much the mouse that ran across my bed, the dogs barking, roosters crowing, village people chatting outside our window, buses screaming past two metres from our room or the zealous evangelist ranting nearby. It was what my mind was being filled with during the day.

"Sean, our interpreter and guide had started our journey with a detailed account of how six Jesuit priests were killed by the military in 1989. We saw the photos of their dead bodies and the rose garden now growing where their dead bodies and the bodies of two women housekeepers were found. We found out about the 'scorched earth' policy which meant whole villages were targeted by the military – 'to kill the fish, remove the water'. We saw the Stations of the Cross in the Jesuit University chapel – hand drawn pictures of people who had been tortured, killed and dumped naked on the side of the road.

"I thought I was relatively experienced with third world countries – packed buses, smelly toilets, street sellers, beggars and the like. I had spent a month in India, travelled alone in Indonesia and lived in Western Samoa for nearly two years. So what was going on? I would lie awake at night defending my position to who? To Jesus perhaps?

"I kept thinking about the camel. You know, the camel, the needle and the rich man. That's such a bugbear parable, isn't it? 'What needs to come off my camel before I can enter through to Your Kingdom?'

Stations of the Cross

"And pacifism and politics? When is it the time to make a stand? The Central American prophet and martyr, Archbishop Oscar Romero, after seeing the people suffer so much, talked of a 'just war'. In Santa Marta village the options were to flee to Honduras or to join the guerrillas. I think of the pregnant woman who stayed behind and was killed, her unborn baby fed to the dogs.

"What," asks Dermot after their return, "was so good about this fantastic trip? That people talked to us honestly, that they shared the emotion of their suffering. We met people who had gone through suffering and had come out the other side, so you know that it can be done. Maybe we didn't meet the ones who had been destroyed by it. We met the ones who had lived the life of Christ and therefore had come out as prophets; they had been crucified and now they are risen from the dead, the same as before but different.

"Christ wasn't recognised by others after his resurrection and that must have been a challenge. I think that some of these people, the risen ones, didn't recognise themselves. Augustino had that slowness and deliberateness of someone who has had a stroke and suddenly realised how important normal communication is. Things are not taken for granted. Every assumption has been met, fought with, defeated, decimated and so there is humility. The world is not how it once was and neither are we.

"Then the massive importance of remembrance, of telling the story. It must be told, and told graphically so that the lessons do not fade and so that everyone knows that what the people did was right, there was no choice but to fight, and so that the young will act again before it is too late if the same evil scourge starts to raise its head again.

"What are you – I ask myself – where do you stand, with whom do you stand? Communist or socialist, community worker and organiser or activist, guerrilla or terrorist or campesino or villager, socialist Catholic or power Catholic. Then the exhumation workers, what they have seen... laying ghosts, spirits, bodies, bones, small coffins to rest, in a hole in a clearing in a forest, in the mountains, in the rain."

Here it ended. My wife, my son. But now I have risen from the dead. They are not here but I am here and so is my country and so we continue to live and so we will continue to be oppressed by those who do not wish to see us. Justice comes from God.

Forgiveness is from God inviting us to participate in what God is. God allows us in and so we can forgive. But forgiveness demands repentance and we will wait, not for vengeance, but for recognition. This happened, these people were slaughtered, the catechists were tortured in the parish house, the women were raped in a concrete block room by the hundred. We will wait and pray to ...something.

"'What was the purpose of the trip,' people ask. The purpose was to hear the stories. Life is about the good, not about happiness. Happiness has nothing to do with it. What of the children who were kidnapped?

I wonder if the stories we heard, the holy people we met... was almost too precious a gift to be put into my hands

"So what conclusions did I come to? I sometimes wonder if the stories we heard, the holy people we met and the experience we had, was almost too precious a gift to be put into my hands. I'm not quite sure why I was given this wonderful privilege. Certainly I was deeply challenged and I loved the trip immensely. It changed our lives." ■

"Romero's death almost seemed inevitable. Once he found a channel where he could see the truth, then he just followed it. He was pushed there by events, by the obviousness of the evil around him. Like Christ he did not have a death-wish, but he knew that he couldn't not speak out.

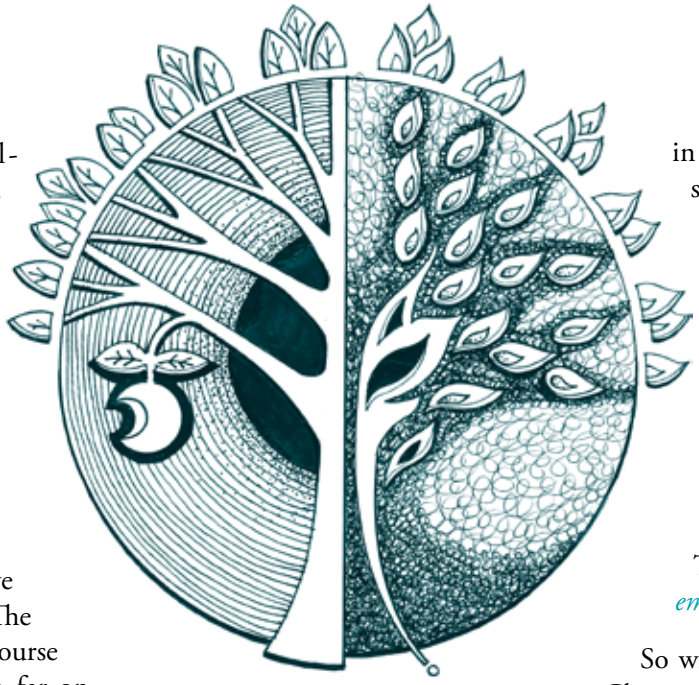
"The woman in the bakery with the 14 children said, 'If we hadn't acted we would have gone insane, it would have driven us mad'. Several of her sons had been in the guerrillas. The woman lost three sons, and her face showed it. She told us that the protests started when a woman from the town was held by the army and raped to the extent that she had several miscarriages.

"Hundreds of people from Santa Marta went to San Salvador and protested and from then on the town was branded as a place of troublemakers. You have to make a stand, and if you don't you're an object of suspicion. The truth is so obvious that if you don't stand up for it then who are you?"

Marie Walker reflects: "One thing I know for sure is how proud of New Zealand I am. I teach at a number of Auckland primary schools as a reliever, and I see the ethnic and class mix working in a real setting. The indigenous of our country share a Treaty with the Crown. In Guatemala it was the indigenous who were slaughtered in acts of genocide. Here we abhor corruption. Let's pray we never change this.

Half Empty or Half Full?

Joy Cowley



I'm not a fan of Fall-Redemption theology, and I don't know anyone who is. It makes God too small and reduces Christ to the same smallness. No matter how we colour the Fall-Redemption picture with sentiment, it still depicts a flawed creation and a God who sacrifices his Son to correct his own error. Is that the God in whom we live and move and have our being? The great lover of our souls? Of course not, and we don't have to go far on our spiritual journey before we realise that this image of God is yet another human project-ion, fashioned largely from our fears.

As we live the abundance of the God of the universe, we notice a widening gap between our experience of the Divine and the old teaching that humankind is inherently evil. Then one day, we make the glorious discovery. We've been looking at it the wrong way. We are not a fallen people at all. We are on the way up. We are evolving. We are the sparks of God growing back towards the Divine Fire from whence we came, and with that discovery comes a new vision, a new freedom, a new celebration. It all seems so simple. Why didn't we see it before?

I think the answer to that question, is that we have to grow into the discovery. Historically, the story of the Garden of Eden was recorded during the Babylonian exile when the Jews were literally a fallen people, faced with probable extinction. But the myth has more to it than that. Early in our journey, we do identify with it. There is something deeply atavistic in us which tells us we are a fallen people, and I believe that we are just that. When we are born our souls leave their spiritual realm – the Garden of Eden. We pass through the gate of incarnation, inhabiting bodies which enhance our sense of separation and loss. That loss is real. That hunger to get back to perfection is real. Memory of whence we came has gone but we cannot accept our state as the animals seem to. We still have within us the taste of the fruit of knowledge and it drives us in our search for our soul's homeland.

It is a very powerful myth and it's not surprising that it shapes the first steps of our journey.

I believe that what we know as Fall-Redemption theology comes out of this early stage of spiritual development and an attempt to make sense of Jesus' life in the context of Judaic ritual sacrifice. I'm sure it was not, as some say, an attempt by the early Christian Church to convert and control people through fear. Such a tactic would never have worked if people hadn't had deep feelings of fear and estrangement in the first place.

The garden of Eden is the *half-empty myth.*

So what's the *half-full myth* for us Christians? I think the story would go something like this. The little sparks we call souls, must leave the great fire of God to become prisoners to physical form. This is the way of spiritual growth. It is also a way of struggle, for there can be no growth without tension. The little sparks, with no memory beyond their immediate physical form, suffer in their search for meaning and from time to time, where the suffering is great, they are given greater sparks, more experienced souls to help them on their journey. Then it happens. To a part of the world blind with pain, comes not just a spark but a living flame of God in human form, to show us all why we are here. This Divine fire comes as the smallest and weakest among us, to walk our paths, experience every struggle that might be ours, suffer the worst kind of death we could expect and then come out on the other side to show us that the death we fear is actually a birth back to our real state.

This for me, is the meaning of the incarnation, the celebration of the

Love One Another

Desmond Smith

The 'homily' on love was so profound as to hurt. It was both short and simple and didn't attempt to teach or to preach. After all, how could it do anything like that when it was given by a prisoner in the assessment section of the maximum security prison at Paremoremo? Characters like that cannot teach law-abiding people, can they?

The occasion was just the usual monthly service and there was no real homily as such. It was only a few words which Jason shared after we had heard a short reading from the Gospel of the day. He spoke in the most moving terms about the extraordinary character of God's love. Its inexhaustible quality was the one which constantly astonished and encouraged him to come back to Christ no matter what had occurred in his life. Naturally, he brought in that part from *Paul's first letter to the Corinthians* which is much requested by marrying couples for their wedding service: *Love really is kind and never rude or boastful, jealous or resentful.*

But, as Jason spoke, it was the patience of love which seemed to leap out. No doubt, knowing the intolerance of prisoners towards each other and their short fuses, he was pointing out how they needed to be more forgiving and accepting amongst themselves. But, the point was not lost among the visitors also. Kindness, delighting in the truth and all the rest of it are not much use if there is not sufficient patience to go with them. Perhaps the fact was that each of us was hearing best what was pertinent to ourselves.

He went straight from *Paul* to that consoling little bit in *John 14* where Christ is speaking to His Apostles at the Last Supper, telling them that "there are many rooms in my Father's house; if there were not I would have told you". For a bunch of prisoners made to feel rejected by society, what could be more hopeful?

Contrary to the beliefs concerning good public proclamation of Scripture, there was no dramatization in this reading. The delivery was, at the one time, both quiet and persuasive. Only a handful of people were present, perhaps half-a-dozen prisoners together with the five or six visitors.

Later, at the quiet time given to individual prayers, spoken or unspoken, love showed through in a practical way. Rocky, one of the other men present, who had spent most of his adult existence in gaol, gave a short history of his life. After the early death of both parents, he was fostered for some time until, at 14 years of age, his foster parents had thrown him out. There was nowhere to go and so the street became his home. The bitterness towards those foster parents was obvious.

However, his prayer alluded to the fact that the foster father had died last year and Rocky asked the Lord to look after the wife who was now on her own. He may have had a life in crime, but when it came to the crunch it was his concern for others that showed through.

At these visiting sessions there is always a good space taken up with singing. And maybe, in this situation, singing really is praying twice. The accompaniment is invariably with guitar, the guitarist being the same Jason who was responsible for the powerful words on love. His playing is never pretentious as he seeks only to assist the singers. That is not to say that he isn't a very capable instrumentalist in his own right.

Yesterday though, there was another prisoner attending who also had a guitar. Well, part of a guitar in truth, for one string was missing. While Jason played the tune, a second melody came through, as Tony plucked an exquisite jazz obbligato to the theme. Then, he asked if we might repeat the hymn, singing only the verses and leaving the chorus to an instrumental solo which he wanted to offer. Later, when it came to individual prayer, Tony declined to say anything, saying that he would let his guitar speak for him.

On the other side of the room, a further inmate was sitting with one of the female visitors and sketching quickly on the back of an old piece of cardboard. After a matter of minutes, without any show of pride, he passed the drawing over, saying he wanted her to have it.

As it happened, the following day was this woman's birthday and Leo's small cardboard present occupied a prominent place amongst her display of cards. The intricacy and skill of the sketch were a joy to behold. It depicted Christ on the cross and the decorative work around the figure was quite astounding.

Love is never boastful or conceited.

So often we don't even recognize it when it's hitting us right in the face. ■

Recently returned from two years' study in Chicago Kevin Toomey OP reports on a culture and religious climate which is startlingly different from New Zealand's

Faith and culture in contemporary America

In the USA the influence of their Puritan origins is still highly significant even today. Americans sit happily within an isolationist frame, yet periodically they need to escape from it. The churches are heirs too of this puritanical tradition, and it influences their own sense of worth and their place in the world. Therefore American religion and culture are often in conflict. In the present crisis over Iraq the majority of the press and the churches may be supportive of the government's war policy, but there are still many forces which react against it – not so strongly as in the '60s, but vocal nonetheless.

In general terms however, there is an alliance between the churches, the government and big business: it is a cultural alliance, and it proclaims: 'we are the best country in the world, we see our interests and we intend to maintain them'. It is a philosophy of confident self-interest. Most empires are like that.

The Catholic church in the USA is part of this. It is wealthy and it depends for its wealth on commercial interests, which support the imperative described above. The Catholic establishment does not want to rock the establishment 'boat'.

The American Bishops issued some excellent documents on peace and the nuclear issue, especially in the '80s. This would not be possible today, partly because of the appointment of more conservative bishops but also because the hierarchy is totally overshadowed by the sexual abuse crisis. So the Catholic laity no longer listen to the bishops in the way they once did.

The sexual abuse crisis is so serious that I for one for the first time in my priestly life felt ashamed to be a priest! It was overwhelming. Bishop Wilton Gregory spoke very courageously, although the document the bishops issued at the time was an overreaction.

Many saw the policy as flawed for that reason. People initially accepted the 'zero tolerance' stance against paedophilia. But it soon became clear that it was unjust to many clergy who were not blatant paedophiles. A priest could be banned for life for allegedly making one remark that could be interpreted as abusive. The Holy See confronted the American bishops on this, and as a result the document issued last year will be revised; there will be tribunals all over the USA to enable there to be proper church courts.

But there has been an enormous loss of trust in the bishops. The people often know their priests and these usually retain the people's trust. The church is not monochrome. In the North East, where Irish and Italian immigration was strongest, the church is conservative. Whereas in California the profile is quite different. In Chicago where I was the clergy are very well educated, and they have a good sense of what is best for church and people. So they are not prepared to kowtow to an authoritarian Archbishop. The corn belt, however, is very conservative, and that would be reflected both in the clergy and the people. But the city of Chicago is different.

The Iraqi war

Bishop Gregory wrote a fine letter to President Bush pointing out Catholic teaching on a 'just war' and saying that the present conflict did not fall within the criteria. Many churches reproduced the text, and it was sent from the Standing Committee of the American hierarchy. It was a good letter although it could have been couched more strongly. Many people I spoke to and many sermons I heard backed up what the bishops said. But the media were solidly behind Bush, and once war was declared then people largely fell into line behind their Commander-in-Chief. In accordance with the national 'psyche', he is their President and so one should be loyal to him.

The President is seen today in the USA as the monarch was seen by us 50 years ago. Even the cartoons are very careful how they portray him. The repartee of the Australian or New Zealand parliaments has no counterpart in Congress. The

Democrats have largely fallen into line and there is no real Opposition. Of course there were protesters among students and others. During a protest march in Chicago the police isolated some groups of protesters, even though the protest generally was very orderly, using police horses. There were two isolated groups of some 200 and 800 people. Many were arrested and badly treated. They were held for several hours; they were accused of obstructing the entrance to a hospital. It was a trumped up charge and it was clearly intimidatory. When the cases came to court there was plea bargaining. The aim was to instil fear into the hearts of the young protesters. The media said nothing about the arrest of 800 people.

The young people who protested were 'over a barrel'. If they didn't give in, the 'conviction' would count against them in their CVs. A blot on your record is seen as a heinous thing: another example of the inherent puritanism lurking below the surface of American society. But the spirit of protest is still alive and three Dominican Sisters have recently been sentenced in Denver for pouring blood over a missile, in the tradition of the Berrigan brothers. People seem to accept stiff deterrent sentencing. In fact the Chicago *Tribune* was supportive of the trio.

The Good News

The Catholic Worker movement and the spirit of Dorothy Day still flourishes. Sadly the younger generation knows little about her. There are extant some wonderful videos of her speaking, interviews. You cannot but sense the simplicity and power of this wonderful woman.

Parish liturgies in the US are often alive and excellent. They use professional musicians supporting the music. I heard one splendid group in an Afro-American parish, and the music seemed just right for those people. Where I was in Chicago, many of the parishioners were workers from a Ford factory. The Easter ceremonies were wonderful, supported by a varied music group including bells. They 'rang the changes' during the Easter liturgies, and it all fitted. I felt very uplifted by the experience.

There are parishes which stand out and are categorised as 'excellent' parishes. Generally it all springs from one priest who has a vision, and he has enabled the people to bring it to reality. There is usually a strong social justice element with active 'outreaches' like a soup kitchen. Other features would be good liturgy, theological and Scripture discussion groups, and so forth. These parishes are quite common, especially in the mid-West and the West. It seems they have heard the message of Vatican II and responded to it. Not that there are not also excellent parishes in the East – but by and large the church there is less enterprising.

There is a huge and continuing Spanish immigration. At first the immigrants are poor, and gather in inner city parishes. But soon they prosper. They are seen as adding something of value to the Catholic scene. There is a chair of Hispanic studies at Boston College, and there are Hispanic students for the priesthood as well as women students. They will be able to continue studying through the medium of Spanish. In church they continue to sing Spanish hymns. And there is ongoing theological reflection on the part the Hispanics have to play in American society and church. These influxes are causing the Catholic population not only to grow but to become increasingly multicultural.

The Americans have a strong sense of their traditions. *Thanksgiving* (in November) is for Americans a wonderful family feast – for Catholics as much as for everyone else. They have special inserts in the Eucharistic prayer and a magnicent special Preface for the feast of Thanksgiving. You hear excellent sermons for *Thanksgiving*.

They also have their local traditions. At the appropriate time of the year each group will celebrate their special times. They like to make traditions by celebrating anniversaries of good happenings. It is a huge enrichment. In good parishes the clergy will enable this to happen. In one parish where I was, there were two resident priests with a Mass count of around 4000. They also have a deacon, a liturgy director, a director of religious education – all paid members of the parish staff. There is a primary school for 1200 children next door to the church.

Of course Mother Angelica flourishes with her *World Evangelical TV* channel. She purports to defend the true faith and uphold Papal authority, but also there is a subtle inclusion of other themes. For instance her group appear to encourage a pre-Vatican II liturgy: they are more Catholic than the Pope! She herself had a stroke last year. But this group is very powerful. They see their mission to correct the creeping errors of the liberal wing. Yet they are not critical of the fund-amentalist extremism to be found among some Protestant groups.

Cardinal Bernadin's memory is revered in Chicago. His writings and teachings are celebrated and developed: especially his doctine of the *Seamless Ethic of Life*. There is established in Chicago a Chair of Vatican II Theology to further this. And the folk memory is growing – of a man who was kind, one who loved his people, who was able to be reconciled with the man who unjustly accused him. It is a heroic memory.

Religious life in the US is going through change. But there are new vocations coming in: many conservative but by no means all. I think it is healthier situation than in New Zealand: probably because the whole scene is much richer. There is a huge range of choice: good and bad, so the need for something to guide them to a wise path is all the greater. Faith is important for Americans. In many other societies today it is sufficient to have material goods. Having possessions is my god. That is not so for Americans. Americans also need God. ■

All Hallow's Eve

Niki Keehan

Did you know that way back in the Dark Ages – in 835AD – Pope Gregory IV changed the date of the feast of *All Saints* from 13 May to 1 November? He changed the date because at the end of the northern spring, in May, there wasn't a lot of food left for the people to celebrate all those saints and martyrs who had died gloriously for the faith. The new date proved very popular with the people.

I like to think that some sensible person, possibly his mother – popes often listened to their mothers – said to him: "listen, Gregory my boy, are you sure you have thought this through properly? What about celebrating the evening before, 31 October. People have been used to celebrating the coming New Year's Eve on their old calendar and the dark festival of Samhain. Are you sure the people will give up that ancient belief?"

And I imagine Gregory might have said: "don't be silly, Mother, I'm a man and I know best! If I tell them to rejoice in the saints and martyrs it will be all right, and they'll have a lovely All Saints Eve, with a combined harvest festival theme. Look how well it has worked with Christmas and Easter".

On the whole it worked very well, the people had enough food to celebrate and feed the pilgrims in the early winter, and they were glad to turn away from the dark beliefs of the past.

But in the 19th Century, the Irish took their folk tales and customs to the melting pot of American culture where someone eventually realised there was a way to make big dollars by commercializing Halloween, exploiting people's fascination with the gruesome and ghoulish, and glorifying a very negative spirituality to a secular society. Halloween as we know it is a corruption of 'All Hallow's Eve', picked up and run with by those who make commercial that which is held dear by Christians.

So who are these saints? The first saints were those recorded by the early church; others like St Patrick and St Anthony have been added in the course of time. Patron saints are asked to intercede for us. Rather like a 'prayer partner', a big brother or sister who is part of the church triumphant in heaven.

When Protestant churches talk about the communion of saints they often mean fellowship of church members and/or members of churches and denominations. The Catholic Church and other traditional churches emphasize that with Christ as the head of the body of the church, the people who make up the church, living or dead, cannot be separated. As the fourth verse of the old hymn says:

O blest communion, fellowship divine!
We feebly struggle; they in glory shine,
Yet all are one in, Thee, for all are Thine. Alleluia!

By all means celebrate on the eve of *All Saints Day*, but think positively of the faith of the people who have gone before us, our own particular 'saints' – family members, those we knew who died in war, our pioneering ancestors and the many people today who are living quiet, faith-filled lives, working in our communities and parishes.

Now isn't that a better approach than the rather sad little Irish story of Jack-O-Lantern which gets a lot of exposure at Halloween?

▷▷

Bloody Sunday

Film Review: Paul Sorrell

The events of Bloody Sunday, 30 January 1972, when 14 civil rights marchers were shot dead in Derry by British troops, and a further 15 wounded, determined the tragic course of history in Northern Ireland for the next quarter century. This film is a hard-hitting representation, in docu-drama style, of the relentless march of events that issued in the massacre. *Bloody Sunday* shows in gut-wrenching detail how two powerful forces – the civil rights protest movement and the British army – became locked into a collision course that could only end in tragedy.

The march organiser and (Protestant) MP for Derry, Ivan Cooper, is played by James Nesbitt who weaves a course through the film with a look of serious determination totally at odds with his role as a happy-go-lucky Irishman in the popular television comedy series 'Cold Feet'. The film makes it clear that the protest movement was committed to nonviolent action, inspired in its struggle to overturn internment without trial by the campaigns of Ghandi and Martin Luther King.

Facing this group are the British troops whose gung-ho attitudes and repeated reference to the marchers as "yobbos" and "hooligans" make confrontation inevitable. They are badly led by commanders who reject local advice aimed at defusing the situation and afterwards shirk responsibility for the killings. The short-term winners from

Jack grew up in a simple village where he earned a reputation for cleverness as well as laziness. He applied his fine intelligence to wiggling out of any work that was asked of him, preferring to lie under a solitary oak tree endlessly whittling. In order to earn money to spend at the pub, he looked for an easy shilling from gambling, a pastime at which he excelled. In his whole life he never made a single enemy, never made a single friend and never performed a selfless act for anyone.

One Halloween, as it happened, the time came for him to die. When the devil arrived to take his soul, Jack was lazily drinking at the pub and asked permission to finish his ale. The devil agreed, and Jack thought fast. "If you really have any power", he said slyly, "you could transform yourself into a shilling."

The devil snorted at such child's play and instantly transformed himself into a shilling. Jack grabbed the coin. He held it tight in his hand, which bore a cross-shaped scar. The power of the cross kept the devil imprisoned there, for everyone knows the devil is powerless when faced with the cross. Jack would not let the devil go free until he granted him another year of life. The year rolled around to the next Halloween, but Jack never got around to repenting.

Again the devil came to claim his soul, and again Jack bargained, this time challenging him to a game of dice, an offer Satan could never resist, but a game that Jack excelled at. The devil threw snake eyes – two ones – and was about to haul him off, but Jack used a pair of dice he himself had whittled. When they landed as two threes, forming the T-shape of a cross, once again the devil was powerless. Jack bargained for more time to repent.

He kept thinking he'd get around to repentance later, at the last possible minute. But the agreed-upon day arrived and death took him by surprise. The devil hadn't showed up and Jack soon found out why not.

Before he knew it Jack was in front of the pearly gates. St Peter shook his head sadly and could not admit him, because in his whole life Jack had never performed a single selfless act. Then Jack presented himself before the gates of hell, but the devil was seething with rage at him and refused to have anything to do with him.

"Where can I go?", cried Jack. "How can I see in the darkness? The devil tossed a burning coal into a pumpkin and ordered him to wander forever with only the pumpkin to light his path. From that day to this he has been called 'Jack-O-Lantern'.

Sometimes he is seen on Halloween. ■

Bloody Sunday were the IRA who are shown doing brisk business after the tragedy recruiting angry young men for the cause.

The film uses documentary-style techniques to enhance its impact. The period detail is impeccable and the subdued colour palette reminded me of faded 1970s photographs. The shaky, hand-held camera style which can so easily degenerate into cliché is very apt here, reinforcing the unrelieved atmosphere of turmoil and confusion and underlining the impression of a whole nation embroiled in turbulence, disorder and fear. The use of shadowy lighting effects and backlighting adds to this feeling; in a scene between Cooper and his wife, the two figures become mere shadows, circling and edging past each other. In this embattled environment, communication of any kind is fatally compromised.

Thirty years on, the events of *Bloody Sunday* are being relitigated and reconciliation sought as part of a new and hopeful peace process. At the end of the film, we are told that the judicial investigation carried out straight after the shooting failed to find anyone responsible. No British soldier was ever punished or disciplined for his part in events, and the two senior officers involved were decorated by the Queen. If Tony Blair's launching in 1998 of a new inquiry into the killings marked one stage in the healing process, this powerful film signals another. ■

Transforming power of love

Hannah's Gift
by Maria Housden
'Thorsons' an imprint of Harper Collins Publishers
Price: hdbk: $34.99 pbk $24.99
Review: Enid Lagan RSM

This story of a little child's irrepressible joy in living and her fearlessness in the face of death is told by her mother, simply and honestly. Nothing is hidden. There is richness and pain, doubt and renewed faith, and over all, an ageless wisdom that has the power to change our lives.

The biography of a little child holds a fascination for most people, young and not so young, but the story of little near-three-year-old Hannah has a special poignancy. At this age when, for most children, life is full and carefree, new experiences just round the corner, Hannah faced terminal cancer, and knew it.

In the opening pages of the story of her daughter's irrepressible joy in living and fearless approach to death, Maria Housden writes, "The truest measure of a life is not its length but the fullness in which it is lived". She describes *Hannah's Gift* as "a collection of memories, a photograph album of the moments that became Hannah's gift to me".

Book Reviews

This is not a read-through-at-one-sitting book even if you can cope with 227 pages at one go. At least, that has been my experience. Instead, it has been one chapter at a time, providing material for reflection – a spiritual teacher, opening hearts to love, compassion, acceptance of life, both for oneself and for others. Often the author ends the chapter with a ray of wisdom.

There was the time when the parents were faced with making the decision about what would be the best course to take for Hannah's treatment. The doctor's advice at the time became a guiding star as they faced alternatives to be considered. "Make the best decision you can with the information you have *at that time*."

As Maria guides us through the stages of her daughter's illness, we are opened to the uncanny wisdom of this little child, her matter-of-factness, her sense of fun, as well as her sensitivity to the suffering of others. We are reading of a child who is her own person, and anyone trying to invade her territory soon realises his or her error. Still, there is a vitality and charm about this little girl that carries you on to the next page while allowing you to savour each event Maria records.

Hannah's Gift is truly a celebration of life fully lived. It gives us renewed faith in the transforming power of love. Read it for yourself – you will not be disappointed, I'm sure of that. ■

Respecting the creating hand of God

Biotech Time - Bomb:
How genetic engineering could irreversibly change our world.
By Scott Eastham
RSVP Publishing Company, 2003
Review: Greg Hughson

Scott Eastham is senior lecturer in the School of English and Media studies at Massey University. As a scholar of culture and communications he has produced a profound and intriguing critique of genetic engineering (GE) drawing on skills from the perspective of his own academic discipline.

The reader is left in no doubt about the intensity of Eastham's personal opposition to GE. He finds it 'repugnant' and and denounces it as a 'rogue technology' which will lead to ecological catastrophies more serious than the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. He believes that supporters of GE have 'forsaken a particular form of intelligence'.

Eastham provides historical support for his central thesis which is that GE technology in the West derives ultimately from the emergence of phonetic literacy, print and the digital revolution.

The early chapters of the book are dedicated to elucidating the historical and philosophical origins of our western culture's capacity to engage in and accept GE. Eastham then proceeds to provide an 'intercultural corrective' to the Western 'alphabetic mentality' by drawing our attention to the language, symbols, and culture of China. He provides a poet's eye view of how Chinese symbols – and therefore the organisms they represent – may be perceived in a more holistic manner.

If we were to apply this same perspective to the whole of creation, we might have greater "respect for the kind of intelligence that enables grass seed to grow grass and the cherry-stone to make cherries". If we were all to adopt this more holistic and respectful way of seeing the world, the implication is that GE (outside of the lab at least) would be rendered philosophically unaccept-able and would cease.

On the cover of *Biotech Time-Bomb* the Chinese symbol for 'respect' is cleverly superimposed over a panoramic view of farmland. We are invited to see our world and each species as 'gifts' to be respected rather than as objects for transgenic modification-manipulation.

Eastham's book is helpful as it seeks to build bridges between different world-views and to encourage dialogue between 'the arts' and 'the sciences. *Biotech Time-Bomb* is a provocative interdisciplinary resource which invites us to explore GE from a perspective far wider than the scientific.

It is not however an easy book to read. It will be most readily assimilated and understood by students of English, History and Philosophy. Those who would benefit most from reading this book, however, will be Science students and Scientists involved in GE research, many of whom are blissfully unaware of the historico-literary lead in to GE technology. This book provides a courageous challenge to the pre-suppositions and thought patterns of those who currently have no philosophical problems with GE. Eastham offers us access to an alternative way of viewing the world which is potentially more holistic and respectful of creation.

For Eastham it is considered grossly inappropriate and unacceptable to disrupt the integrity of organisms through changes to their genetic 'code'. Reading this book will not necessarily change the attitudes of the pro-GE lobby. It may well however help people in this group to understand themselves better and to become more aware that ultimately it is our worldview which will determine our attitude towards GE.

On occasions I found Eastham's approach to his subject overly dramatic and pessimistic. He makes little reference to the positive fruits of biotechnology (e.g. in pharmacy, medicine, food processing, medical research and non-GE agriculture). There are many contexts in which our 'alphabetic mentality' has led to healing and a greater understanding of biological processes. Eastham condemns the human urge to control as "uniformly pathological", ignoring any positive outcomes of this capacity. More support for his anti-GE stance could have been drawn from Maori spirituality and the writings of scientifically qualified opponents of GE agriculture.

Overall however this book makes a timely and thought-provoking contribution to the ongoing complex debate over GE in Aotearoa-NZ. Time will tell whether Eastham's book is prophetic or scare-mongering, or a bit of both.

I personally appreciated the suggestion (based on scientific method) that our country should provide a 'Noah's Ark' GE-free environment 'control' for the international GE-agriculture experiment currently underway. Such a suggestion is very timely, in light of the proposed lifting of the moratorium on GE agriculture here in October 2003. ■

Bateson Publishing Ltd

at Rogan McIndoes

What you always wanted to know about Vatican II

101 Questions & Answers on Vatican II
by Maureen Sullivan
Paulist Press. 133 pages.
Price: $39.95.
Review: Jim Neilan

The biggest, historic, adult education project ever held. That's how one of the participants described the Catholic Church's Second Ecumenical Vatican Council. Now, forty years later, the question is "How many Catholics today really understand what it was all about?"

Maureen Sullivan, an American Dominican Sister, has been teaching courses on Vatican II to university students for ten years and, for those who would like to know more about the subject, her little book is a gem.

In the first two chapters, she describes the reaction to the shock announcement by Pope John XXIII to call a council, and what happened in the four years leading up to it. Pastorally-minded bishops all round the world were enthusiastic, as were theologians and scripture scholars who had been reflecting for decades on the Church's place in a world that had seen so many changes since the previous council in 1870. But many bishops could see no reason for a council; many Cardinals in the Vatican were openly opposed to it. "The church, with its infallible pope, already has all the answers", they said.

To cover the four years of the council sessions in forty pages would seem an impossible task, but the *Question-Answer* format gives readers a surprisingly comprehensive summary of the day-to-day proceedings and the theological debates on which the 16 council documents are based. In this process, many theologians who had been on Rome's *Black List,* became advisors to the bishops.

We are introduced to some of the 2,200 participants of the council and some of the humorous, and not so humorous, incidents that occurred. The first vote to be taken at the council was about using the vernacular language in the liturgy. One cardinal violently opposed to scrapping the Latin Mass was James McIntyre of Los Angeles. But, because he couldn't speak Latin (the official language of the council), and could hardly understand it, he mistakenly cast his vote for the vernacular and walked from the council chamber, dusting his hands and telling a colleague, "Well, I guess we fixed those liturgists today".

In Chapter Seven, Sr Maureen examines what happened after the council ended in 1965, when bishops went back to their dioceses and the Vatican men went back to their desks.

The council was no immediate success story. It demanded such a change of focus that there was bound to be a period of confusion; it gave a self-portrait of the church that lacked the certitude of the pre-Vatican II Church and it acknowledged past failures of all members (including the clergy), it no longer offered the triumphalistic assurance of having the fullness of truth, but saw the Church as a truly pilgrim people.

Too often, changes were introduced without adequate education of priests and people. "What happened to *My Church?"* was a common complaint.

Maureen Sullivan is good at explaining the internal struggles that are still going on between liberal and conservative groups and movements in the church. She looks at inadequate catechetical programmes, the questions of priestly celibacy, the role of women in the church, the unhealthy tension which often exists between Rome and theologians, and tactfully quotes Pope John XXIII: "In essential things, unity; in doubtful things, liberty; in all things, charity."

This book is a timely reminder that Vatican II is the central event in over a hundred years of the Church's life. These council documents, issued by the bishops of the world with their leader, the pope, hold far more weight than individual letters or instructions emanating from the Vatican.

Maureen Sullivan instils a sense of enthusiasm for the significance of the council. In her section *The Legacy of Vatican II* she writes about revelation, faith and the role of theologians in understandable, non-Vaticanese language.

To me, this small book has great value – not only for private reading but also for all types of discussion groups and adult education projects. It can be read by intellectuals without shame and by working men without labour, says one reviewer, and journalist, Robert Kaiser, writes: "it comes across as a lively conversation with her college students – warm, candid, enthusiastic, and extremely well-informed.

I agree. ■

A tale of two cultures

White Mughals
William Dalrymple
Harper Collins 2003
Price $24.95 580 pp
Review: J.M.Hill IC

Anyone who read and enjoyed William Dalrymple's *From the Holy Mountain* is sure to love his latest production. *White Mughals* is set in an age of transition, between a century or more of successful trade with the sub-continent by the East India Company and the eventual establishment of British rule in India after the Napoleonic wars. But it also tells the fascinating story of one man, James Fitzpatrick, British Resident – or Ambassador – to the Nizam of Hyderabad from 1798 to 1805; a dramatic tale of skilful diplomacy and of love and marriage to Khair un-Nissa, a high-born Muslim woman; and of her passionate love for him.

Kirkpatrick totally identified himself with the Hyderabi society which his work had taken him into. He became the close friend and confidant of the Nizam. He spoke the local languages fluently, studied sympathetically both Islam and Hinduism, and when his affair blossomed, he became a Muslim in order to marry the woman he loved.

The story ended tragically. Kirkpatrick died at 41. The two children of the marriage had been sent to England to be educated. Khair was left widowed and alone, and she herself died tragically at 28. Yet for a few brief years their life was idyllic. While such marriages were by no means unknown in the years prior to Napoleon's defeat and the establishment of British supremacy, they were not to happen again for the next 150 years. A time of happy interrelation-ship gave way to the strict and starchy division between governors and governed.

The author makes this comment: "The story of a family where three generations drifted between Christianity and Islam and back again... seemed to raise huge questions about Britishness and the nature of Empire, about faith, and about personal identity: indeed, about how far any of these mattered, and were fixed or immutable – or how far they were in fact flexible, tractable, negotiable.

"For once it seemed that the normal steely dualism of Empire – between rulers and and ruled, imperialists and subalterns, colonisers and colonised – had broken down... The story was far from unusual; the tone of this early period of British life in India seemed about intermixing and impurity, a succession of unexpected and unplanned minglings of peoples and cultures and ideas.

"Since the late 20th Century implosion of Empire and the arrival in the West of large numbers of Indians, most of whom have, as a matter of course, assumed Western clothes and Western manners, this East-to-West cross-fertilisation of cultures does not surprise us. But, perhaps bizarrely, the reverse still does – that a European should voluntarily choose to cross over and 'turn Turk', as the Elizabethans put it – is still something which has the capacity to take us aback."

So speaks a 21st Century Briton. The British have lost power. They can no longer look out across the world and see it as theirs to enjoy and exploit, running the politics of nations, administering their laws and even training their armies – so long as they were 'officered by whites'. A chapter of world history is definitively closed.

In *White Mughals*, William Dalrymple has produced another absorbing masterpiece, the fruit of meticulous and patient research. It took him several years to penetrate the events to discover the motives and desires of the main players. But his scholarship never interferes with the fascination of a love story and the absorbing context of intercultural exploration in which it is set.

The story still has relevance as a study of the way in which access to undisputed power seems inevitably to lead to arrogance, superiority, to separateness and racial taboos; and on the part of those ruled or colonised, armed resistance or craven dependency. Somehow the shadow of September 11 hangs over the writing of this book.

As long as white traders, economic moguls and imperialists claim it as their inalienable right to lord it over other races and unilaterally dictate the way the world is to be, then there can be neither peace nor stability. *White Mughals* should be required reading for the Blairs and the Bushes as well as for

Two weak links in the Labour team

Crosscurrents

John Honoré

Prime Minister Helen Clark is now counting the cost of having two lame-duck ministers, Parekura Horomia and Marian Hobbs, whose portfolios are of major political and economic importance. The Prime Minister seems unwilling to take decisive action against either of them. Michael Cullen is now defending the government on all fronts, but the problem is still there – two ministers completely out of their depth.

The jolly Marian Hobbs, as Minister of Broadcasting, was hopeless. Wisely she gave up the portfolio, only to become Environment Minister in the current administration, and is now having to defend her role in the Corngate Affair. Six months ago she promised that tests on seeds had proved negative, but those test results cannot be found. Her appearance before the Select Committee on Corngate turned into a debacle. Having rubbished Nicky Hager's book on GE crops, she admitted she had never read it and was undecided as to whether she herself would eat GE food. The lifting of the GE Moratorium is fast approaching. With Marian Hobbs in charge, any decision will be suspect.

Just as serious is the fact that Marian Hobbs is in charge of Meridian Energy's controversial $1.2 billion *Project Aqua*. It seems that the Resource Management Act could be invoked to fast track the power scheme. This will please no one and it will give the impression of 'big business' overawing a government department which is in the hands of an ineffectual minister. The fate of the mighty Waitaki river is at stake. Marian Hobbs is not the person to make decisions on such important strategic assets.

The foreshore and seabed issue has been taken over by Michael Cullen. Parekura Horomia's contribution seems to be attending huis on the East Coast and assuring us that he is in good health. Meanwhile, the whole affair is burgeoning into a national debate on ownership. The hot-heads Tariana Turia and Willie Jackson are coming to the fore and a split in the Maori camp is threatened. Helen Clark's cosseting of the Maori vote is turning sour, the Maori members of her party are dividing and the opposition is gaining ground.

The Maori Television Service continues to be a costly shambles with Derek Fox looking for a new job. Parekura Horomia is not providing leadership at government level – on the contrary, his power base is disintegrating, to the detriment of Maori and all New Zealanders. It is time Helen Clark made a few management decisions like sacking incompetent ministers. Michael Cullen cannot do everything.

One death a tragedy

Joseph Stalin once surmised that a thousand deaths was a statistic, but one death was a tragedy. The death of Dr David Kelly has exposed the duplicity of UK premier Tony Blair's government, which is being called to account before the Hutton Enquiry. What is being forgotten is the death of thousands of Iraqi citizens in an illegitimate invasion of a sovereign state in the vain search for weapons of mass destruction.

In order to justify a war that the United Nations and global public opinion did not want, Tony Blair initiated a sustained programme of propaganda and state-sponsored lies. Contempt for international law had already been demonstrated by the ultimatum issued to the Security Council of the UN, when Blair, in support of President Bush, stated that they would act with or without its approval. There was vociferous opposition in the United Kingdom. However, some semblance of a true democratic system has been triggered there in the wake of Dr Kelly's death. The people want to know why he paid the ultimate price for political chicanery.

Alastair Campbell, Blair's Director of Communications, has resigned under a cloud of suspicion. John Scarlett and Jonathan Powell, close advisors of Blair, have claimed no responsibility. Geoff Hoon looks vulnerable and more than half of Britons believe that their Prime Minister cannot be trusted. Now it is the common belief in Britain that the government deliberately misled the country.

But Tony Blair admits to no wrong. Indeed, how could he do otherwise? Spin and hype are synonymous with modern politics. Leaders rarely withdraw from their decisions nor do they apologise for them, however disastrous the consequences.

This is unacceptable in any democracy. The structure of the political institutions responsible for giving ambiguous intelligence in order to justify the Iraqi 'liberation' must be examined. Where does responsibility lie? Politicians like Tony Blair, who used to have a credible public persona yet is turning out to be another self-serving political opportunist, debase the democratic system.

As a result of Blair's support for the war, Britain now finds itself committed to the occupation of a destabilised country, in the most volatile region of the world. The illusion of victory has vanished. The reality of continuing bloodshed and terror remains.

Perhaps the Hutton Enquiry will lay bare the devious and dishonest manoeuvring of venal politicians whose only God is political power. It may even punish the main culprits. Certainly, reputations will be destroyed and perhaps one death will not be in vain.

Demise of an eighteen year old

A memorial service held on the demise of an eighteen-year-old is usually a dismal affair. Not so this one. When those who had shared its life during its almost twenty years of existence gathered recently for a dinner to celebrated the dissolution of the Auckland Consortium for Theological Education (ACTE), the mood was a cheerful one. ACTE might be dead. But the opening of a School of Theology at the university provides good prospects for the future of theological education in Auckland.

Twenty plus years ago there were several theological colleges in Auckland and more in other parts of the country. In all these institutions there was dissatisfaction that there was no public recognition of the studies completed, no degrees conferred. A Catholic priest, for instance, who wished to undertake studies at a New Zealand university, received no credit at all for six or seven years of tertiary work completed and had to enter as a first year undergraduate.

The remedy undertaken in Auckland was for three institutions there to form in 1985 the Auckland Consortium for Theological Education. The Consortium would then explore avenues for gaining degree recognition for studies undertaken at its member colleges.

I have happy memories of serving as one of the observers that the Catholic diocese of Auckland soon named to link with the nascent consortium. After one ACTE meeting a college principal expressed to me his fears that the Catholics were not going to become participants in the Consortium. I assured him that we would, saying that we had first to get our scene in Auckland together. At the recent dinner he recalled the words in which I described to him how the Auckland Catholic theological community then found itself. "We Catholics are all marching to the same tune, but in different directions". We did in fact ultimately get into step, and the Catholic Institute of Theology emerged as a fourth partner in ACTE.

All of this took place at a time when the NZ Council of Churches was being re-shaped as the Conference of Churches with the Catholics taking part for the first time and with the Baptist Union as a result declining to be part of the newly formed Conference. It was for me a warming experience that the college principal who feared that the Catholics might stay out of ACTE was the head of the Baptist theological college. Not all Baptists wanted us kept at arms length. His attitude was typical of the happy partnership in which the consortium was born.

The process by which ACTE achieved degree-granting status by association first with the Melbourne College of Divinity and then with the University of Auckland is too complicated to be set down here. So are the later developments by which the Marist seminary from Greenmeadows came to Auckland, first associating itself with ACTE but later withdrawing from the consortium to form a partnership with the provincial seminary, Holy Cross, when the latter also moved north. The latest stage in the story is that the School of Theology in the University of Auckland has emerged as ACTE's replacement.

Whether a single School of Theology adequately expresses the diverse strands of Catholic and Protestant theology remains to be seen. But our tradition is certainly well represented in the School's inaugural epoch. Of the three key positions, those of the professor of theology and of the directors of graduate and undergraduate studies, two are held by women who belong to Catholic religious orders. Our Church has certainly not been marginalised. ■

Humphrey O'Leary

What's medieval?

Medieval' in modern lingo means antequated, obscurantist, belonging to the Dark Ages. It is a term of derision pronounced by modern man – even sometimes by modern woman – upon the culture and beliefs of an era dominated by religious faith. It also has a purely utilitarian meaning relating to buildings and artefacts constructed between the Classical era and the Renaissance.

The building I had chanced upon, situated several feet below modern street level in the city of York in northern England, was undoubtedly 'medieval'. It is called the Merchant Adventurers Hall and dates from the 1350s. I went down some steps, paid my gold coin and went inside to explore. I found an airy timbered structure of two storeys, the upper cleverly cantilevered to make it more spacious. It was – and in a sense it still is – the meeting room of a guild founded in the 14th Century who called themselves Merchant Adventurers.

They were not unlike a modern Chamber of Commerce: a loose collection of people who sought to make wealth for themselves by trading. They bought wool, hides, lead from local mines and other commodities, and arranged their export to Europe. And they imported all manner of continental produce to sell to the locals. Judging by the size and splendour of the building, it was a lucrative business. I have no doubt that those traders, as individuals, were no less venal and profit-driven than their contemporaries might be today. Nevertheless, when I did a bit of research about how they ran their Guild, I discovered some interesting features.

For instance they fixed minimum prices for their wares. This meant they competed with one another by the quality of what they sold and the service they gave rather than by price-cutting. They thereby provided a 'level playing field' tilted in favour of the small trader. They also legislated to protect their apprentices and established norms and standards for their education, so that the quality of their trading would continue.

What was of particular interest was the use to which the lower floor was put. It was a hospital and refuge for indigent or sick people. These wealthy traders devoted half their building to the 'poor in their midst'. Moreover, attached at the lower level, was a small chapel which still exists. The Guild employed a priest as their chaplain. These people main-tained no rigid distinction in their daily life between their commercial activities and the sphere of God. Their building reflected the whole ethos of medieval society: human and spiritual activities were inextricably mixed. That included caring for poorer citizens.

Exploring this fascinating building gave me a lot to reflect on. Somehow I don't think the ethos of those traders of six centuries ago would have chimed in harmoniously with the values of the Business Roundtable or the Mont Pélerin society of today. Indeed I suspect they would simply write off the attitudes and practices of those Merchant Adventurers as ... 'medieval'. ■

M.H.