Tui Motu

InterIslands

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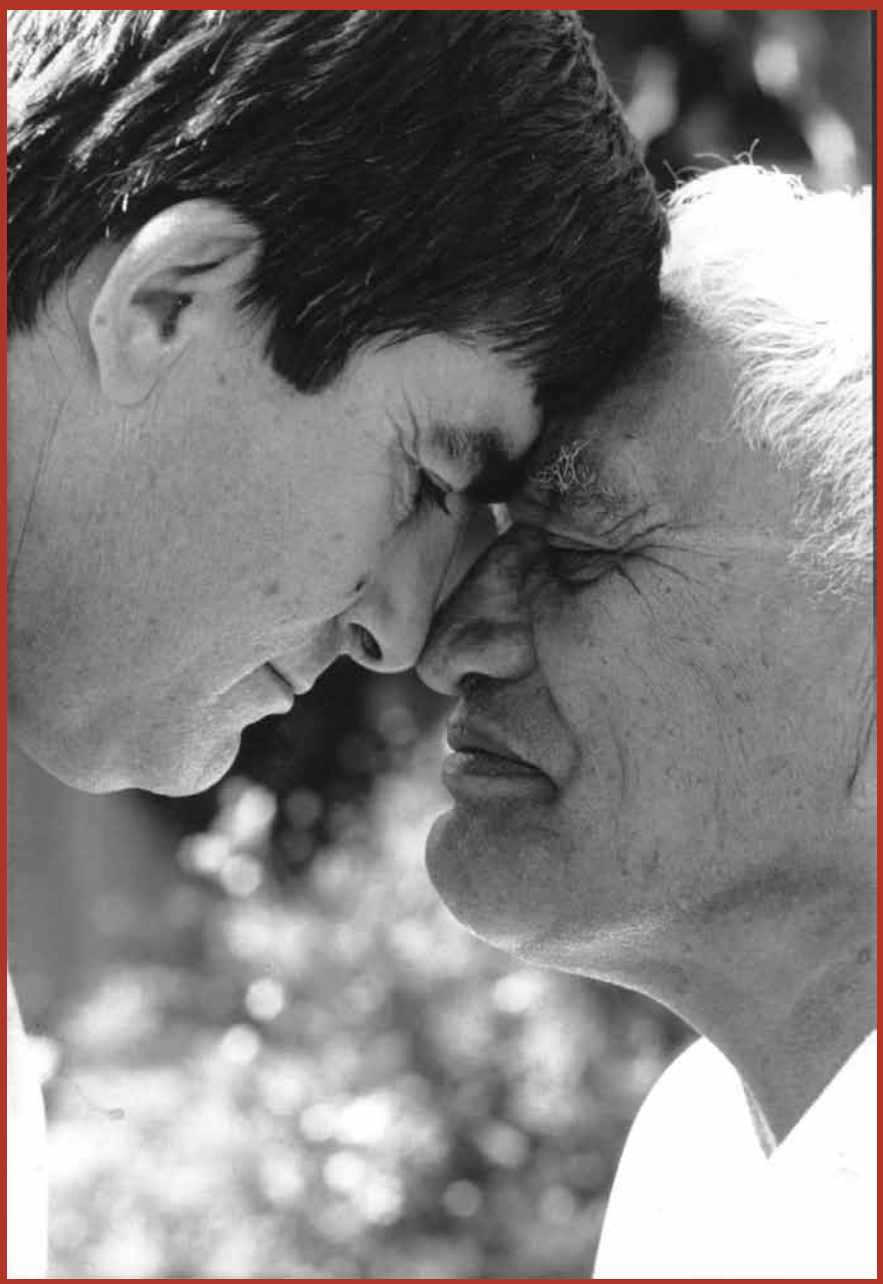

perspectives on our cultural identity

Contents

From the interim editor

Tui Motu has been high on my list of must reads for several years now, but up until late last year I had always borrowed someone else's copy. Then I decided it was time to subscribe myself to give support to a publication, which I believe makes a unique contribution to the religious media in New Zealand. But I certainly didn't imagine that within a few months I would take on the role of interim editor, a job I approach with a strong sense of responsibility. The standards are high! The *Tui Motu* team have vested great faith in me. I hope I can justify it.

I am an Anglican but I believe that when Christians of different denominations have the opportunity to work together in a project like this, they have much to offer one another. The gospel message of love and goodwill also has a greater chance of being seen as relevant in the 21st century when different denominations work together.

In this edition we have collected articles from several Christian backgrounds as you will see, and we focus on different perspectives of the Kiwi cultural identity. We are New Zealanders, Maori, Pakeha, European, Pacific Island, Asian and other (as those official forms put it). But what is our common identity? Do we have one? What could it be? And how does the Church reflect our diversity? Our guest writers examine these issues from various points of view in the first half of the issue.

Ross Hemera is the featured artist this month, he is a contemporary Maori artist and the work we've chosen to illustrate reflects the blended symbolism of both Christianity and Maori spirituality.

The original idea for our theme came from Jim Elliston, so we invited him to write the guest editorial, and he introduces it by going back to the days of Jesus, to see how he communicated his message in the diversity of his cultural landscape.

Amnesty International's 40th anniversary is also marked by Canon Paul Oestreicher. He writes a delightful story which highlights one of those rare moments when you just know that what you are doing is on the right track.

In the second half we get a glimpse of the work of two ecumenical ventures in Hawkes Bay; a refuge and counselling centre in the small rural town of Otane and three spiritual directors working together in the Hastings/Napier area. Sr Pauline O'Regan and her Mercy community continue their articles on the creed. And we have the last in the series by Helen Bergin OP on the Holy Spirit. ■

PC

Front cover:

Fr Alan Roberts,Parish Priest at Plimmerton, and the late Thompson Tukapua (see page 7)

Printed with permission of Thompson Tukapua's

Photo: M.Walker, Morrow Productions, Levin

A culture in process

Jim Elliston

Culture comprises the complex of institutions, myths, rites, laws, beliefs, codified everyday behaviour, value systems and material techniques elaborated by a group of humans.
Umberto Eco

The Jewish people in the time of Christ were in a pretty bad way. The former great nation had been ravaged by internal conflict and wars, its people had been carried off into captivity in a foreign land. Only a minority returned, and they no longer spoke their native language. And to cap it all off they were living under foreign occupation.

They were deeply divided – socially, politically and even doctrinally. At one extreme the Essenes withdrew from the world, at the other the Zealots advocated violent overthrow. There were the religious teachers (Pharisees: mainly laymen) who tended to be judgemental and legalistic, the social leaders (Sadducees: the rich and most of the Temple priests) whose main aim was to preserve their influence, and then there was the majority who just tried to exist from day to day.

But they had two things going for them. First, they knew who they were, with a culture forged through a common history, with a recognised moral code, civil laws adopted (and adapted) from their neighbours, their own institutions and religion, all embedded in a well-developed literature. Second, they had hope – hope in a Messiah who would liberate them.

Jesus was imbued with this culture. Through the way he treated people, his use of examples from their shared life and experience, and his challenging questions, he communicated in a 'language' all could understand. He endorsed many traditional teachings, gave new interpretations to some and added a few new ones.

On occasion Jesus spoke in another 'language'. Those expecting a political leader couldn't understand it but those with a purer faith could. He was not a revolutionary, but He was a subversive. The vision he presented was a threat to the authority of the leaders who had settled for outward compliance rather than the true spirit of the Law.

Jesus was a Jew of his times. And this caused problems in the early Church. For, although He had instructed his disciples – all pious Jews – to "make followers of all Nations", it took a serious crisis before they accepted it was not necessary to adopt Jewish customs in order to follow Christ.

Are there lessons here for us?

The New Zealand of my youth knew itself to be British. England was routinely referred to as 'home' by people who had never been there. Our institutions, customs, values were English and our economy was U.K.-dependent. True, there were small groups of 'non-conformists' but they weren't regarded as significant – including the Maori who "would eventually realise the advantage of becoming like the rest of us".

We are now emerging to a new self-consciousness through a painful process of reflection on our history, a re-evaluation of our international political and economic relationships, and a rapidly developing body of literature, music, fine arts, drama and film that reflects us to ourselves and the rest of the world.

But there is a price, manifested in frequent calls to our politicians to provide 'vision and leadership' and the thirst for spirituality evidenced by the widespread reliance on 'charms' ▷▷

Tui Motu-InterIslands

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

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Response – re Foot and Mouth Disease

I refer to the recent article in *Tui Motu,* titled Foot and Mouth disease – are there things conscience might say to us? (*Tui Motu* May 2001) One of the key points made in this article is accepted. FMD is not usually a fatal disease. Most affected animals recover. (However) all lose condition and many suffer long-term ill effects, such as chronic mastitis, chronic lameness, abortions, sterility and long-term reductions in milk yields and growth rates.

FMD is controlled in many countries primarily because of its economic impacts. It causes a drop in productivity of affected animals, and impacts on trade in animals and animal products. This is not to say that it does not also have welfare implications for affected animals. Affected cattle and pigs may suffer from blisters in their mouths that rupture, leaving their tongues and gums totally raw and experience obvious pain and prolonged discomfort as a result. Similarly lameness from FMD is clearly painful.

In New Zealand's case, any decision to live with the virus in our animal populations would mean the end of our dairy and meat exports. These exports constitute over 40% of New Zealand's export income. It has been estimated that there would be employment risks to over 100,000 New Zealanders.

The article in *Tui Motu* identified an important issue of conscience: that is whether large-scale slaughter of livestock to control FMD for economic reasons can be justified. In the current outbreak in the United Kingdom, about 3 million animals had been slaughtered to the end of May, including about 500,000 cattle, 2.5 million sheep, 100,000 pigs and a small number of goats. Two points need to be made to keep these worrying statistics in perspective: in England and Wales alone about 1.35 million cattle, over 15 million sheep and over 12 million pigs are slaughtered annually in the normal course of events for meat production. In New Zealand over 3 million cattle, over 30 million sheep and over 700,000 pigs are slaughtered annually for meat production. This in itself causes ethical concerns for some people. The major religions active in New Zealand recognise the validity of using animals in this way. The scriptures as quoted by Professor Grey and Rabbi Sherbok caution against causing distress to animals, but also condone the use of animals for meat production. For example, *1 Corinthians 10:25-26*.

Controlling important livestock diseases like FMD is an essential part of producing quality food at affordable prices. Animals slaughtered for FMD control in the United Kingdom are humanely destroyed. These are animals that would almost inevitably have eventually been slaughtered for meat production (even dairying and breeding animals usually end their lives in meatworks).

The impact (of an FMD outbreak) on New Zealand would be extreme. For these reasons we maintain strict border controls to reduce (such a) possibility, and detailed plans are in place to respond to an outbreak. It is essential that New Zealand continues its policy of excluding FMD and of eradicating (it) should it occur on our shores, to protect New Zealand's livestock industries and to protect the lifestyle of all New Zealanders.

It is important to note that every effort would be made to avoid the need for slaughtering the large numbers of animals that have been slaughtered in the current FMD outbreak in the UK. New Zealand's animal disease surveillance systems aim to detect as quickly as possible any incursion of exotic diseases like FMD into our animal populations to limit the impact of the disease, and of disease control measures, on our animals and our economy.

Allen Bryce National Manager
Surveillance and Response Animal Biosecurity

(This response has been abbreviated for reasons of space)

▷▷

and other quasi-magical practices. The adolescent striving for self identity has come to realise the vacuum created when old certainties are left behind.

The Catholic Church has undergone a similar transformation, growing out of its predominantly Irish and French roots into a distinctively New Zealand one. Our Bishops now speak on subjects of national interest, not just Catholic ones; the laity have begun assuming their rightful roles, new structures are evolving.

Our Lord's command to "make disciples of all Nations" requires the church to preach in the 'language' of each culture. But we do not yet have a distinctive culture to which all can subscribe without denying their individual histories and cultural perspectives.

More insidious than cultural imperialism – which heedlessly swamps the minority culture – is cultural romanticism. This patronising approach extols certain cultural expressions from a bygone era without regard to their context, unwittingly ensuring they become museum pieces. A healthy culture is constantly evolving, reevaluating its basic assumptions and adjusting accordingly. Sentimentality is no substitute for disciplined creativity.

Two issues emerge. First, are the institutions of the Church yet sufficiently transformed? Second, is the Church really performing its role of engaging with the emerging New Zealand culture? The challenge is to speak in the 'language' of all our people as well as those of the faith. The Church's role is not to impose its values but to imitate Christ, to lead by example, point out what is valid, clarify what is ambiguous, pose questions and indicate new ways, thus helping in the process of developing a truly New Zealand culture. ■

All responsibility but no power

As members of the Catholic Youth Movement, a million years ago, we were fired with a vision of our role as apostles. We, the laity, as well as the priests and religious, were the Church. Then, it was vision; today it is desperation.

In this journal Anna Holmes emphasises the need for "people who can lead and preach on priestless Sundays". Letters in the London ask why married Anglican priests are acceptable within our church but not married Catholic priests. They even speak of women priests. In the one writer speaks of "the death of parishes". In Christchurch, and maybe elsewhere, by Kevin Burns and Pauline O'Regan, is the programme being used to engender enthusiasm and commitment within our own communities. As lay people we are being exhorted to do more and to accept greater responsibility.

It seems to me that many of us are doing everything asked of us as well as fulfilling our roles in ordinary life. We carry all responsibility but, ultimately, we have no power to change anything significant.

What happens the day we have no single, celibate male to offer the act of consecration?

Christchurch

letters

Diaconate advancing lay ministry

The diaconate has been introduced to the Hamilton Diocese with heartening results not only in the establishment of the Order, but also in advancing lay ministry.

The report did not argue against the establishment of the diaconate as such, but on condition that women be included.

There is good theological and historical material on women in the diaconate and the case should not be argued from a political base.

In the meantime, it is tragic that people would refuse the sacramental grace that comes with ordination to the Order. I would have thought that in this day and age of the Church we could use all the help of the Holy Spirit we can get.

Congratulations

Two women, Pauline O'Regan rsm and Pat Harrison, whose work has been featured in Tui Motu *were appointed Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the Queens Birthday Honours list. We congratulate them both.*

It must have taken some arm-twisting to get Pauline O'Regan to agree to be nominated for the Queen's Birthday Honours. Religious generally have a flair for deflecting such recognition because they are so community orientated, and she would be as good at that as any. But there will be so many folk who will be delighted that she succumbed.

She must be one of the country's best known Catholics. Her contribution to education, social deveopment, and just thoroughly decent citizenship, has been exceptional. No one has to ask "Pauline who ?"

She is one of the most affirming people you will ever meet – of people, ideas, and initiatives, – *Tui Motu* would be just one of a multitude of beneficiaries in this regard. National affirmation of her seems singularly apt: congratulations Pauline and thank you.

A lifetime of giving her time and energy to the community and to the welfare of young people has been recognised with the award to Pat Harrison of Dunedin.

As Principal of Queen's High School for 19 years until her retirement in 1994, Pat's influence is such that there are hundreds of women throughout New Zealand proud to be 'Mrs Harrison's girls'.

Since retiring, she has been a driving force in the establishment of the *Wellness* Centre which works with disadvantaged young people, mainly truants, in order to support them back to mainstream schools (see *TM* Feb 1998). Her overriding philosophy is that of helping young people by removing barriers that prevent them from having a good future.

Beacons of Hope

Helen Fisher, composer, looks at the bicultural journey in the Wellington Catholic Archdiocese and listens to some of the travellers on the journey

Racial tensions fester, the gulf is widening between Maori and Pakeha and this country is heading towards an Aotearoa version of Fiji, Kosovo or Rwanda. Well, that is what *Letters to the Editor* and radio talk back around the country would have us believe. But is that a true reflection of ordinary New Zealanders in 'God's own country'? Do they really indicate a major decline in New Zealand's commitment to honouring the *Treaty of Waitangi*? And, of great concern to Christians, are these racist attitudes seeping into our parish communities?

They...have not felt the shackles of being a minority

We know parishes are meant to be places of welcome to everybody, which includes the tangata whenua. Writing for *Wel-com* in October 1998 Robert Ngaia expressed his thoughts on this topic:

"My hope is to contribute to the acceptance of Maori Spirituality into the 'mainstream' church, and to help eliminate the monocultural values that exist within the church and within society. That is one of the challenges ahead for me and also for the church to come to grips with. The challenge for many in the church is to see that they are oppressive. In my opinion they genuinely cannot see this, because they are in the majority, and have not felt the shackles of being a minority."

Later that same October, people from every parish in the Archdiocese gathered for the Wellington Archdiocesan Synod. Great support was given to some clear, strong resolutions on the issues of cultural diversity and the special place of tangata whenua within each parish. The Synod stated:

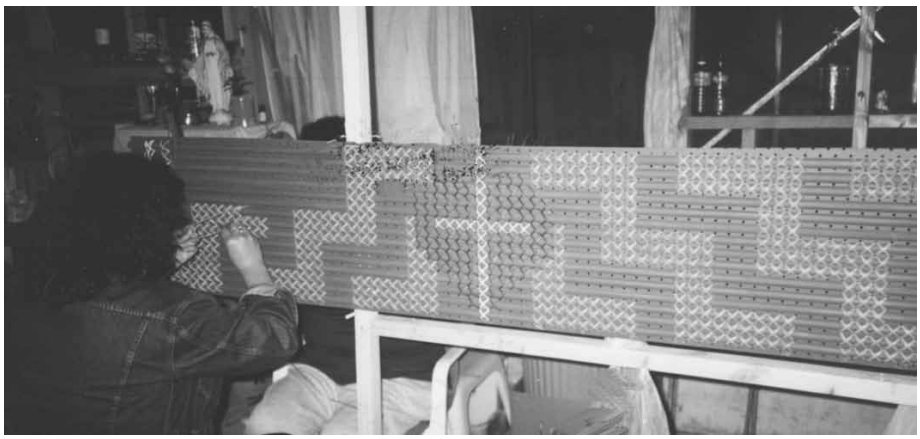
"We the Church of the Archdiocese acknowledge and seek to implement the *Treaty of Waitangi*. We recognise Maori as tangata whenua. We will meet in partnership with them sharing power and control, freeing Maori to make decisions for themselves. We recognise the pain, fear, prejudice and racism that is a reality in our diocesan communi-ties..." The Synod also stated: "That proper recognition of the tangata whenua be given in all liturgies and structures of the Archdiocese. It has a place that is different to that of cultural inclusion of other groups."

It is now almost three years since this Synod and there is still much to do to implement these resolutions. Nevertheless there are some beacons of hope in our Aotearoa Church. There are inspiring individuals and groups who are "walking the talk", who are dedicated to an inclusive church and are relishing the giftedness of Maori and every culture in New Zealand under the korowai of a loving God.

Maori Pastoral Care exists to enable Maori to be fully Maori, fully Catholic

Philip Cody SM, Chaplain in the Maori Pastoral Care team says:

"Maori Pastoral Care exists to enable Maori to be fully Maori and fully Catholic. Our work is to facilitate the process of the bicultural church in schools, colleges and parishes. People impatiently want an immediate



Tukutuku Panel: *Working on the tukutuku panel for the Sacred Heart Church, Petone, 1997. The poutama, 'stairway to heaven', leading to the Sacred Heart and Cross. This forms a portal as one comes into the church and illustrates the message of welcome – that this is a church family which respects culture as a means to portray the Gospel, a message to Maori (welcome to a 'warm' church) and to all. The fuller panels depict the whole story of the journey of Maori and the church, the pain and the life.*

multicultural church, but until Maori are warmly welcomed and feel at home in faith, a key element for the success and richness of the multicultural church is missing.

"How do we achieve this? I would like to quote a Maori response:
• Pray with Maori that more Maori will come into the faith community

• Pray that God will call and anoint Maori lay leaders and Maori Religious and Priests

• Ensure warmth for Maori in church and in the liturgy (this could be a sign of the cross and last blessing in Maori, a hymn in Maori and English, some visible sign in the church to Maori such as a korowai on Mary. Consult Maori about this)

• Invite Maori to support you in the parish. This may be a karanga at the beginning of Mass or at the Consecration

• Expect Maori to bring other Maori if you ask them to do something or join a committee or board of trustees. Maori do not work on their own

• Allow Maori to walk across parishes and denominations to support one another

"One Maori expressed the driving force behind all this when she said, "This is about the Gospel and Faith. The aim is to free the richness of culture for all to celebrate the unity of our faith, to wonder at the many faces of God".

"A story told me by the late Thompson Tukapua illustrates just how important this is. It happened just as he was about to stop going to church where he felt there was no real welcome for him as a Maori. So he said to God "This Sunday is my last Mass".

"That day the priest asked Thompson to come and help him give the Sign of the Cross in Maori. Thompson not only stayed, but lived the rest of his life in utter commitment to the Faith."

They still don't really understand the *Treaty* issues

One Archdiocese parish, predominantly Pakeha, which is walking the bicultural journey is St Theresa's at Plimmerton. Alan Roberts is the Parish priest. I asked him: *Since the last Archdiocesan Synod do you think people are giving appropriate recognition of the tangata whenua in their liturgies and structures?*

Alan: "Some parishes are, but too many are not! The problem is they still don't really understand the *Treaty* issues. To break down prejudice, there needs to be more education for priests and people. There was a good educational pro-gramme here about 10 years ago by the *Catholic Commission for Justice, Peace and Development*. It would be timely to have it updated for parish use. It is certainly much needed today as many people still fail to recognise the unique place of Maori in New Zealand. It is a justice issue that the church must come to grips with.

"It is also an evangelisation issue. We need to understand that Maori who are steeped in their own culture need to feel they belong when they step into a church in New Zealand. Carvings within the Church and Maori language in the liturgy give them a real feeling of comfort. These things are not tokenism, they reflect a parish committed to the bicultural journey.

"A common response to bicultural endeavour in churches everywhere is 'there are no Maori in this parish so it doesn't matter.' But that is not the point. In this land, Maori is the first language, one of two official languages, and the point is: are we welcoming to Maori and are they going to feel at home when they ***do*** come into our churches from time to time?"

Small steps we have taken – almost like the unfolding of the koru

I then talked to Shirley Kelland (Ngati Tuwharetoa) the Kuia at St Theresa's and asked: *When did this parish begin to acknowledge the tangata whenua in its liturgy?*

Shirley: "When I first came to the parish in 1979 there were other Maori people who often thought they would like to have a hymn perhaps. I think you have to wait for the right time for these things to happen. And the right time for us was soon after Father Alan Roberts came here in 1997, because of his speaking te reo. It became obvious to me that he had a deep interest in and appreciation of Maori liturgy. That is an important point, that the parish priest is imbued in the spirit of Maori culture.

"The appreciation of Maori within liturgy will not come if it is pushed onto people. It has to be a gentle thing. You have to wait for the right time, and then I'm sure the Spirit moves and lets it happen, and certainly it has happened here.

"The right time to start here was on Father Alan's first Ash Wednesday in our parish. I was on the Liturgy Committee. I suggested maybe we could have the puutaatara (conch shell trumpet). So at the beginning of the Ash Wednesday liturgy, the conch was sounded and it was answered by a karanga. There was an explanation in the order of service leaflet so people would understand why this was happening: 'This conch sounds to call us to attention. It is answered by the karanga – here, the karanga is a call to the Holy Spirit, using Maori language and bringing it into the Church.'

"We have gone very slowly over the last four years. The gradual small steps we have taken seem to be the unfolding of the Spirit, almost like the unfolding of the koru. I think in that unfurling the Spirit of God's love will be experienced and appreciated."

How is Maori woven into your parish liturgies these days?

Shirley: "We have now come to fully share our gifts. There are some beautiful carvings within the church, for example the processional cross and the waka huia (ciborium) for distributing communion, which have been done by ▷▷

▷▷ another parishioner, Geoff Pryor. For the Parish Sunday Masses we sometimes begin with karanga. We include some Maori hymns. Then we have karanga acclamations at the Elevation. At first there was no response to these karanga, but now everyone sings: *Naumai Haere mai*. When that came together it was really wonderful. After that we sing *I Mate a Hehu Karaiti*.. and at the Sign of Peace we sing *Te Aroha*.

"Most times there is some Maori in the liturgy. It is valued by the whole community. This to me is a thing of great beauty, of great hope, that we do walk hand in hand. When I see young people wanting to learn these things, I feel the hand of the Spirit over us, because I know we are journeying together. Any gifts that we have should be shared and passed on."

Do you find that weaving Maori language into the liturgy has brought more understanding and healing between Maori and Pakeha in this parish?

Shirley: "Yes that is definitely true. More people are now asking for these Maori things in their own personal liturgies, for their weddings and funerals. This is a practical way that people affirm what is being done, when they come full of love to ask.

"We all seem to appreciate and enjoy together the different gifts being expressed in our liturgies. The greatest thing that the liturgy offers is that it teaches us self-confidence. It teaches us to share, it teaches us generosity of spirit, to listen and enjoy each other. Here, our way of introducing Maori into the liturgy, waiting for the right time and moving forward gently has gained a general consensus of support. The openness and trust between Pakeha and Maori in this parish is a great blessing. It is also a step towards healing racial divisions in the wider New Zealand community and living the Gospel message of love and peace.

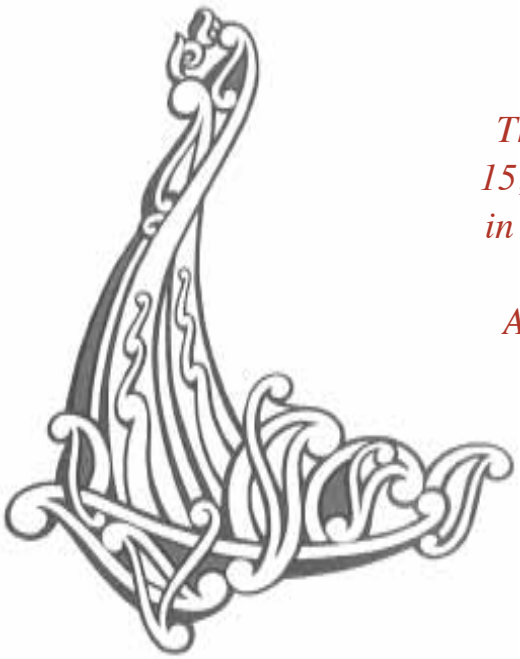
No Reira

The Hongi is a beautiful Maori symbol for everyone in a Church committed to the bicultural journey.

In the powhiri (traditional Maori welcome ceremony), the hongi comes at a significant moment after the whaikorero (speeches) are completed. People have listened attentively to each other; all issues have been brought into the open and have been acknowledged and addressed.

After all this, at last we are ready to hongi. This is a special moment where two people lean forward to each other and press noses, to acknowledge each other's sacredness. It is a special moment of healing, of trust and peace, a meeting of breath and spirit. By this action they say to each other 'Your pain is my pain, your joy is my joy. The love of God brings us together as one whanau, one family. Now at last we are truly ready to share together the Hakari, the Eucharist Feast, to celebrate our union with God and with each other'. ■

Photo: Nicola Dove, Nelson



This illustration by Ross Hemera (see pages 15, 16, & 17) is used in the Liturgy of Baptism in the Anglican Prayer book, 'A New Zealand Prayer Book - He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa'. It illustrates the 'activity' of the water at the moment of baptism.

Who can afford to spend Sunday morning at church?

..asks Nigel Friggens, Computer Manager at Iona College, a Presbyterian Girls' College in Havelock North. Nigel is an Anglican and Synod representative for his parish church. He and his wife have three children who have all been involved in church activities of one sort or another. Nigel also enjoys trout fishing.

On the face of it Kiwi culture is in complete opposition to the nurture and growth of young Christians. Let's face it, for a busy family Sunday morning is the only respite in a hectic week. Saturday's out because that's set aside for sport. To those lucky enough to get weekends, there is the rolling agenda of washing, cleaning, gardening, shopping and house maintenance – not to mention family time at the beach or the occasional lie-in. Who can afford to spend Sunday morning at Church?

Un-churched Kiwis will not receive religious education at school except that provided by the informal or 'hidden' curriculum of life. They may begin to notice that some organisations with the word 'Christian' in them entertain some pretty dodgy politics. Then there are people knocking on doors trying to convert – what's with them? And why are the Catholics and Protestants fighting in Northern Ireland? And what's going on in Israel – bombs and fighter planes? Someone says that the Church of England only got to 'be' so that Henry could divorce and remarry – now if that's not hypocrisy? And what about the Crusades – rape, murder, pillage – in the name of God? Virgin Birth? Resurrection?? Nah, it's too much for me, let's not go there.

The Church in NZ is more than dis-established: it's unestablished – certainly in the minds of the young. Yet, curiously, I have met people of all ages in NZ stronger in faith than I have met anywhere.

For thirteen years, as an ordinary state-school boy, my day started with assembly, which included prayers and a hymn. Each week I learned of Christianity and other religions and discussed social issues in compulsory RE classes. I went to Sunday school (I was not sure why). By choice I became a choirboy and then a server and was confirmed. As a Sea Cadet I attended church parades. Growing up in England, I was surrounded by 'establishment Christianity' and, rather like the fish immersed in water, took it for granted.

As a young adult I felt little need for a parish church. I had adopted some simple principles of life, such as being kind to others and being honest to myself. As I flirted with different -isms I felt secure insomuch as I lived in a society that apparently subscribed to humane – if not Christian – principles. I married a Kiwi on OE. We decided that our children would not be christened as babies – they could make up their own minds when old enough.

Our two oldest children were in primary school when we came to live in NZ nearly 12 years ago. The reality of secular education struck home. How could they choose something they knew nothing about? If I did not teach them how would they learn? I made a conscious decision to start attending church regularly. This decision did not always meet with full support and certain house rules such as 'no TV whatsoever on Sunday mornings' were established to lessen possible conflicts. Sunday services have provided a shared time and spiritual focus. We have had common ground on which to deal with many issues of modern-day life. Not only have we grown in strength as a family but I have also gained a personal fulfilment through reflection and meditation.

So, my renascent faith springs from being a Prisoner of Mother England – in NZ: like a released trout, I have rediscovered fresh water – and have been keen to explore the fast flowing streams and the deep stillness of the lake.

And what have I discovered? Christ, the anti-hero, seems more at home in a dis-established Church. Worshipping God with prayers of thanksgiving and hymns of praise enriches my life. That in NZ there are a host of Christian pop bands and Christian camps. That my Church has begun to address some major issues in biculturalism, gender bias, poverty and sexuality. That the Gospel Truth can be best understood contextually.

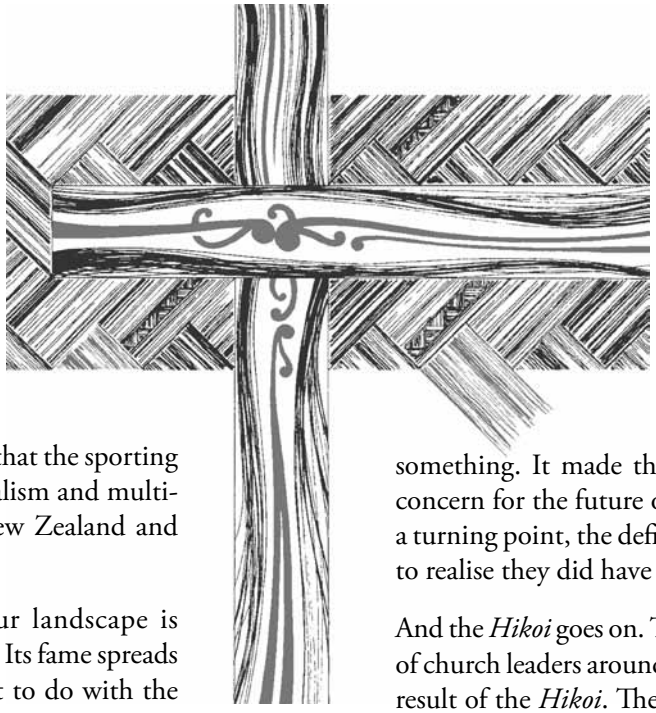
More pertinently, what have my children gained? Without speaking for them, I can state, at the very least, they have gained the ability to choose – as I eventually did.

Kiwi culture is by no means an anathema to the growing of Christians. Godzone is a questioning society and one with a strong sense of social justice. It is in NZ not the UK that I have attended meetings and lectures and read

(Cont'd on p11)

Where can we look for our cultural identity?

How can we reflect it in our churches and beyond our shores?
asks Philippa Chambers



Can you imagine a Kiwi culture without sport in general and rugby in particular?

Like it or not, rugby is probably where the Kiwi identity begins and ends in the global perception. This article is not about sport but I would make the point that the sporting arena is one place where biculturalism and multiculturalism work very well in New Zealand and that is something to celebrate.

The beauty and diversity of our landscape is definitely unique to New Zealand. Its fame spreads far and wide. Landscape has a lot to do with the spirituality of indigenous people and with people who work on and live off the land. New Zealanders do have an affinity with their land and their landscape but it doesn't tell us much about who we are today, living in the 21st century.

So leaving landscape and sport aside as givens of the Kiwi image, I invite you to take a look at your world, ask yourself what gives you hope? How do you reflect your Kiwi identity? What do you love about it? Below are my perceptions, I hope you will give time to reflect on yours.

The Hikoi of Hope demonstrated that the old Kiwi identity is still at the heart of the Kiwi psyche

I look back to the *Hikoi of Hope* as an example of a bicultural and ecumenical event that demonstrated all the best aspects of the Kiwi identity, an identity which sometimes seem to have disappeared. The *Hikoi,* initiated by the Anglican Church and supported by other Churches, demonstrated that those things are still very much at the heart of the NZ psyche. We just need the right buttons to be pushed and we'll stand up and be counted. Many of those who took part had no church affiliation, had never marched in a demonstration before in their lives but saw this as an opportunity to do something. It made them feel less powerless in their concern for the future of their nation. For some it was a turning point, the defining moment when they began to realise they did have a voice, they weren't powerless.

And the *Hikoi* goes on. There are still ecumenical groups of church leaders around the country, formed as a direct result of the *Hikoi*. They meet from time to time with politicians and decision-makers, voicing concerns on behalf of their communities.

I am an Anglican and therefore part of a three-Tikanga church in which Maori, Polynesia and Pakeha are all autonomous partners. This partnership was born 10 years ago next year, after a painful gestation period and birth. It took years of work, listening, learning, hurting, laughing and in some cases walking away. Education programmes were available to all church members. A new Prayer Book was launched which included Te Reo Maori liturgies and Maori art (above and page 16). Many Pakeha Anglicans looked at the *Treaty of Waitangi* properly for the first time and came to some new and unexpected conclusions. They began to feel a sense of responsibility and an understanding of why their Church was moving in this strange direction which felt like separation.

Looking at our church history we could see that the struggle for equal Maori leadership ran almost parallel with the history of governance in New Zealand. In 1984 General Synod appointed a bicultural Commission to study the *Treaty* and make recommendations on ways for the church to honour it. Thus began the process for equality in decision-making

in the church. Finally at General Synod in 1992 a changed constitution was accepted and The Church of the Province of New Zealand, commonly called the Anglican Church, became *The Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia, Te Hahi Mihinare ki Aotearoa ki Nui Tireni, ki Nga Moutere o Te Moana Nui a Kiwa*.

Of course that was just the beginning. There is still is a great deal to be done. But the journey had begun and lands which were Maori in title but administered by Pakeha trusts were returned to their rightful Maori ownership, new Maori dioceses (pihopatanga) with their own bishops were formed and a process of resource-sharing was initiated.

The Pakeha diocesan Synods are no longer enriched with the special warmth and friendship which came with the participation of their Maori brothers and sisters. This has left a huge gap but now there is General Synod, commissions and conferences at leadership level; occasions for joint worship in some parishes and pastorates and occasionally invitations to join in a korero on a marae. On these occasions we can learn a little more about Maori spirituality and why it is important for Maori to be enabled to weave their own indigenous spirituality into their Christian faith. Without that, some say they lose their identity. In the history of Christian mission from the time of Peter's vision (*Acts 10*) it has been the blending of cultural practice that has allowed Christianity to spread.

I do not believe there is any ideal model for success in the bicultural journey. Partnerships of any sort are extraordinarily difficult and good intention is not enough. A bicultural journey is a continuous journey with the possibility of surprises around every corner. Next year the first 10 years of the Anglican partnership will be evaluated and a commission representing all Tikanga will present its findings to General Synod 2002. These will no doubt present another learning curve along the way, demonstrating the need for more listening, more talking, more action and more understanding on all sides.

There is a catch cry around which says 'we are a multicultural nation, lets move on from this bicultural hang up in our churches'. But that view misses the point that people who chose to live in a country other than their own, for whatever reason, usually accept the need to adjust to the culture of their new home. That wasn't the case in the days of colonisation and today we take the consequences. We have to think about that in light of the *Treaty of Waitangi* (which involved two partners). We need to look at the history of our country in which other nationalities have been allowed to become citizens of New Zealand without reference to 'the people of the land' and try to understand it from a bicultural point of view. Then perhaps we can be multicultural.

One of the aspects of the New Zealand identity which excites me and gives me hope for the future is the development and global recognition of artistic talent in this country. Contemporary Maori arts are perhaps the most exciting in the way they have grown and developed out of their traditional art forms since early last century. They burgeoned in the 1990s and seem to be exploding into the new millennium. For instance last month the works of two Maori artists went on display in the 49th Venice Biennale of Art, the oldest and one of the most important international visual art events in the world. They are the first New Zealand artists ever to be invited to show at that event.

Maori theatre, music, film making and writing are also impacting on the global scene. I believe this development of contemporary Maori art demonstrates that Aotearoa New Zealand has reached a new era in the evolution of a Kiwi cultural identity. ■

The illustration by Ross Hemera (commissioned by the Anglican Church) is the title page in the Anglican Prayer Book and was also used as the logo for the Hikoi of Hope. Ross says he incorporated the Christian Cross into the traditional pattern of weaving which symbolises the people of Polynesia. The three motifs within the design represent the three Tikanga (cultures maori, polynesian and pakeha) as well as the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

(Cont'd from p9)

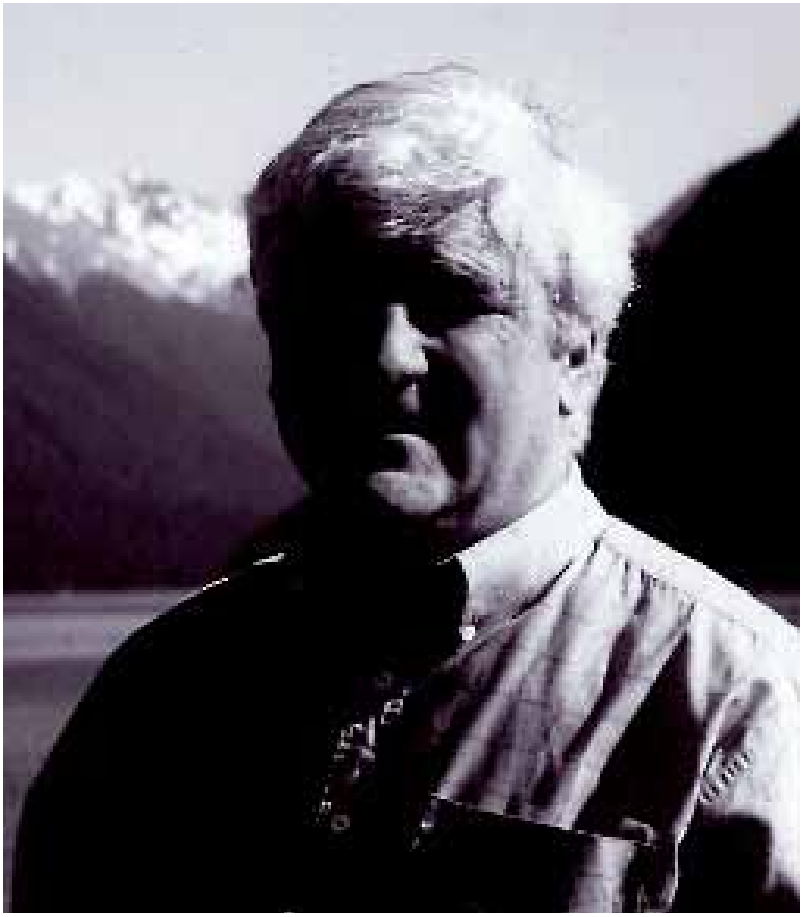
articles and letters in the popular press discussing wide-ranging theological ideas.

But what of the coming generation in secular NZ – will they get to choose the water of life over the air of emptiness? How can allusion and allegory be understood in a world where darkness can only mean the absence of light?

Church schools can certainly be a positive influence but these are accessible only to a few. In the main, for the young Kiwi, the only viable Christian influence (outside the popular media) lies in local parishes, their youth groups and Sunday schools (or is that 'kidz times'?). Christian families need to actively support their church and become part of a regularly worshipping community – that is the only way we can pass on the faith. We can ill-afford NOT to spend Sunday morning at Church. As Screwtape said, "The safest road to hell is the gradual one, the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts." (C. S. Lewis *The Screwtape Letters*, letter 12 (1942))

After the recent broadcast of the BBC series Son of God, perhaps we should replace the "2000 years since what?" signposts with "As seen on TV"! ■

John Bluck, Dean of Christchurch Cathedral is an author, speaker, theologian, academic and an ex-journalist. His new book Killing us Softly – the Kiwi Culture of Complaint *published by Shoal Bay Press is to be launched this month. Here we print with his permission some extracts from his chapter on the New Zealand Identity*



All one people.. *Are we? Really?*

Pakeha people struggle to accept any description of Aotearoa New Zealand as a country of two distinct and predominant cultures. Even the numerical realities of population growth that will leave Pakeha as a minority culture by the middle of the century don't seem to shake the unassailable sense of white dominance that still persists.

Pakeha preference is still to argue that we are all one people, the less separation between us the better, and the sooner we can get together and forget racial and ethnic differences, the sooner these social problems can be solved.

We romanticise ourselves as a people rooted in the identity of the good old days when Maori (though don't ask me for their names and addresses) were content with their (lesser but happier) place. We invent an earlier era when everyone was happy to be plain old New Zealanders together without this racial stuff and everybody was content to be like us. The questions this argument begs are huge. They assume a compliant silence from Maoridom and ignore the shifting variety of names we've used to describe ourselves – Maorilanders, Natives, Colonials, Settlers, all of which are a measure of how anxiously we've cast about in our search to describe ourselves, latching onto all sorts of identities, even when policies of monoculturalism and assimilation reigned.

We claim identities that don't take being Pakeha or Maori as seriously as being male or female, gay or straight, rural or urban, rich or poor, North Islander or South Islander, where I live, who I sleep with and the size of my student loan or mortgage.

But however we deal with constructing our identity as New Zealanders, even if we choose to ignore the question altogether, an anxiety about belonging seems to linger. An NBR – Compaq poll in September 2000 showed 58% of us believed race relations had deteriorated seriously, and we were evenly divided on the importance of the *Treaty of Waitangi* in government decision-making. Perhaps most significant of all for a society that has a long track record in not knowing, one way or the other, when asked in opinion polls, only 4% of us had no opinion on the issue.

Wherever we stand in the bicultural debate, there is a growing sense that it won't go away and that our control over it, as Pakeha, is shrinking. Anxiety about where that bicultural debate might take us surfaces in surprising quarters. You can count on it bubbling up as Waitangi Day approaches each year and whenever a *Treaty* settlement issue looms close, but increasingly it's found where you would least expect it. *Listener* writer Mark Revington produced a disturbing

survey of opinion (Oct 28, 2000, p 19) quoting angry reactions to Maori issues from usually liberal journalist Bill Ralston and habitually left wing commentator Chris Trotter who admits his increasing disenchantment has surprised himself. "Leadership of Maori in New Zealand has coloured the response of a sympathetic Pakeha intellectual like me and a whole lot of my contemporaries. It has coloured the way they begin to perceive things."

While Maori leaders never placed much hope on liberal Pakeha sympathy in the media, even from self declared comrades, the immediate question to ask is what institutions will provide the leadership and framework for the next round of the bicultural debate. The national media organisations are almost wholly bereft of Maori voices within their editorial staffs. Parliament, despite the changes under MMP, still walks nervously around race-related legislation, pulling teeth whenever they threaten to bite. All our major institutions – health, education, social welfare, religion – struggle to join the debate on the front foot, short as they all are of staff with the nerve and the confidence to cope with the issues.

What it is to be Pakeha is constantly evolving, but its always rooted in the legacy of those early 19th century settlers from Western Europe (largely Britain) who came here with high hopes and egalitarian dreams to find a better way. They managed somehow to leave behind some of their baggage of class privilege and were confronted by a natural world that overwhelmed both their imagination and their ability to manage it. They tried hard, against great odds and making great sacrifices, to stay connected with Europe through war and peace, while slowly taking control of their own destiny.

Whatever we are builds on all of that and more, especially as the European connection once synonymous with Pakeha becomes more diluted and remote and the Asian and Pacific face of New Zealand becomes more visible.

Increasingly, the term Pakeha alone does not provide enough precision. One way to achieve that is to hyphenate the term more boldly and freely, like the African American from Harvard University who describes himself proudly as an Afro-Saxon, or the Christchurch sculptor who calls himself 3:125th Ngai Tahu-Pakeha. Interestingly, Maori have long claimed Irish or Scottish genealogy with the same pride as their local descendants. Some Pakeha get annoyed with fair complexioned Kiwis claiming Maori blood yet as Hana O'Reagan told Bill Ralston in a recent interview "No one ever says I've got no right to be Irish."

we need common wells to drink at that will satisfy our thirst for identity and meaning

The possibilities for hyphenating Pakeha are endless and increasingly important if we are to connect with the growing sense of regional identity across New Zealand. Pakeha is still a crucial definer, but we need to add Pakeha - what? without trying to weight relative importance to either side of the equation. In the mathematics of identity, one and one don't often make three.

The basic issues of sovereignty, guardianship and *Treaty* partnership with the tangata whenua have to be worked through whoever we are and wherever we come from if this is ever to become our place, our Te Papa. The search is for a turangawaewae, both as a place to belong where we can stand and speak in the Maori sense, and as a 'common ground' in the way the Anglican Church uses the term. Which leads us into the central body that both cultures can claim equally.

New Zealand has no equivalent of an Upper House in either the English or American forms, or a National Academy in the French style. One model proposed is for a Treaty of Waitangi House to act as a forum and clearing house for those issues, both cultural and political that something like our current Parliament could refer to for guidance and shared wisdom. The discussion on any such model is in its early stages, but as it develops it will show us how urgently we need common wells to drink at that will satisfy our thirst for identity and meaning. It is one thing to be clear about who we are and where we belong as Maori and as Pakeha. It is a much harder call to find that clarity about what it means to be a New Zealander. The clarity will never come by ignoring or sidestepping either of the predominant cultures that shape our society. The only way ahead is through the partnership that the Treaty enshrines and now waits to be decoded and restated for a new century. ■

The significance of Mihi

Christine Teariki, Hastings

Ko Kahuranaki te maunga
Ko Ngaruroro te awa
Ko Takitimu te waka
Ko Ngati Kahungunu te iwi
Tena koutou, tena koutou,
tena ra tatou katoa.

For me, as a Maori woman, wife, mother and grandmother, the above mihi (greeting) helps to define who I am. How does it do this? First of all it is the reo, the language, which defines the uniqueness of being a Maori in Aotearoa, New Zealand. For us, there is nowhere else in the world to go for cultural renewal, this is it.

Secondly, Kahuranaki is the mountain that oversees the Heretaunga plains, and thirdly, the Ngaruroro river is acknowledged as the main, life-giving river that feeds the underground aquifer, thence the whole plains.

Fourthly, Takitimu is the waka that brought Kahungunu's great grandfather to Aotearoa and fifthly, Ngati Kahungunu is the iwi or tribe made up of all the disparate hapu (sub-groups) from the Wharerata hills north of Wairoa, through Hawkes Bay, Dannevirke and Wairarapa to Cape Palliser in the south. Finally, the mihi ends on the note, well, this is me, I acknowledge you – and you – and you – everyone of you.

Every Maori has the right to define themselves along similar lines, making the substitutions where necessary, and every Maori also has the right to choose whether to do so or not.

There are different levels of significance in this mihi. There is the implied whakapapa, there is the spirituality and respect attributed to the land, the river, the history, the people who are guardians for the future of things Maori, and then, like the *Treaty of Waitangi*, recognising and acknowledging everyone else.

By being specific like this, a person is then able to freely move outwards from this base, into the wider community, locally, nationally or globally. What is implicit is the respect for and acknowledgement of the worth of every person with whom one comes into contact. Individual response to this simple mihi will reflect what the Kiwi culture is like.

The negative statistics for Maori in the areas of health, education, social welfare and criminal offending, life expectancy and so on reflect the victim mode of helplessness forced upon us by the prevalent surrounding political systems.

In spite of this, Maori survive. Rather than staying in the negative reactionary mode, some of us choose to use our spiritual heritage from which to gain inspiration and to strengthen our whanau, hapu and iwi bases.

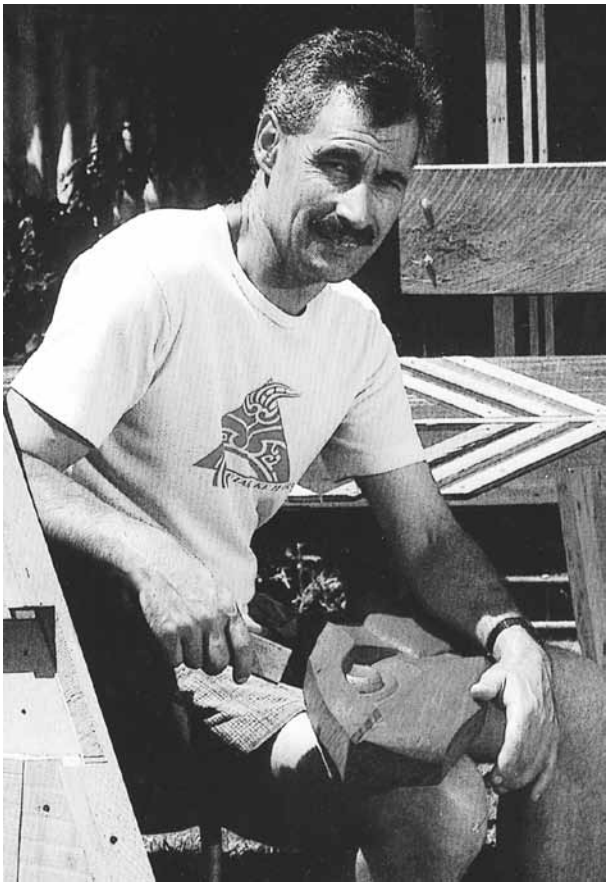
How we do this varies from place to place. Here in Hastings we have:

the Takitimu Performing Arts School which delivered the first degree (the Bachelor of Maori Performing Arts) in Hawkes Bay, and which is the parent body to the Kahurangi Maori Dance Theatre which constantly visits schools all over New Zealand as well as having a permanent base and regularly performing in the U.S.A. and Canada; we have Te Manga Maori, the Faculty of Maori at E.I.T. which has about 20 graduates each year with a B.A. (Maori) and which just began a B.A. (Hons.) degree this year; we have Te Reo Irirangi o Ngati Kahungunu, the Maori radio station which broadcasts what Maori want to hear but never had before; we have about 80 Te Kohanga Reo in Kahungunu and 6 Kura Kaupapa Maori – one of these requires the children to travel 50 minutes each way at some cost to parents; there were over 150 enquiries for iwi scholarships recently for those studying for a degree at tertiary institutions, a good number were double degrees or post-graduate qualifications and we have many individuals and groups doing many unpublicised positive things who just do what they do.

This is just my perspective which does not necessarily represent Maori per se, who have as diverse a range of perspectives as do other cultural groupings, of which there are many.

And how could it be?

Quite simply, each of us would treat everyone else as we ourselves would like to be treated, that is, with acceptance and respect, including the ways we choose to express our spirituality. Being confident in who we are, we would accept, welcome and learn from different ways of doing things which would widen our knowledge base, and rather than treating anything different as a threat, we would celebrate our cultural diversity. ■



Ross Hemera – his art and his spiritual journey

Philippa Chambers

Ross Hemera at work
From the book *Mataora*
Photo by permission Margaret Kawharu, photographer and David Bateman, publisher

Ross Hemera is Head of Department for Art and Design Studies at the Wellington campus of Massey University's College of Design, Fine Arts and Music.

Ross is a contemporary Maori artist, his work is based on traditional Maori values, concepts and symbols, but like a number of other Maori artists today it reflects a new direction in format and expression which explore new creative avenues and incorporate new materials and processes.

Two of the pieces illustrated on the following page were commissioned by the Anglican Church. One is from the Anglican Prayer Book, one is a large sculptured mural which adorns the secretary's office in Neligan House, the Auckland Diocesan office. It is one of a series of three inter-related works. The other work illustrated is *Whakamarama,* a sculptural exhibit at Te Papa.

Ross is of Ngai Tahu descent. He grew up in Omarama near Oamaru in the 1950s. It was when he was a small boy at primary school that he realised he enjoyed and was good at art. There were 6 children in the Hemera family, the only Maori family in the community and at the local school. Two incidents stand out in Ross's memory when he was made very much aware of his Maoriness. "I don't remember how old I was, but it was at school, and one day the word was going round the playground, 'ooh the Hemeras are Maori'. At that point I came to a new and significant awareness that in fact I was Maori and therefore different." Later when at secondary school he went into a shop and the shopkeeper refused to serve him because he was Maori. "I just walked away – to me the shop-keeper represented authority and I couldn't argue with him."

Ross's first memories of 'church' were the weekly Presbyterian services held in the local Memorial Hall which his family attended regularly. He remembers going to Sunday School, and receiving a Sunday school Christmas gift each year. It was always a book of illustrated Bible stories with his name written in it. It was something he looked forward to each year and he still has the collection of those books today. Ross also has a vivid recollection of his baptism. He and his brothers and sisters were all baptised at the same time in the hall during one of the Sunday services. "I felt rather self-conscious but good, I remember the water and I remember the touch on my forehead. I would say it was – awesome ."

When it was time to go to secondary school, the Hemeras had to make the inevitable move to Oamaru so the boys could go to Waitaki Boys High School. Ross remembers that as a time of major upheaval for the family and for him as a youngster. "I felt an apprehension of what the changes would mean. At the same time I was beginning to reflect on who and what I was, spiritually, mentally and physically. Along with other things I began to wonder about God."

At secondary school, Ross excelled in art and sport. He was encouraged by his parents and teachers at art and did very well, well enough to decide to study art at the Otago School of Fine and Applied Art in Dunedin. He graduated with a diploma in 1972.

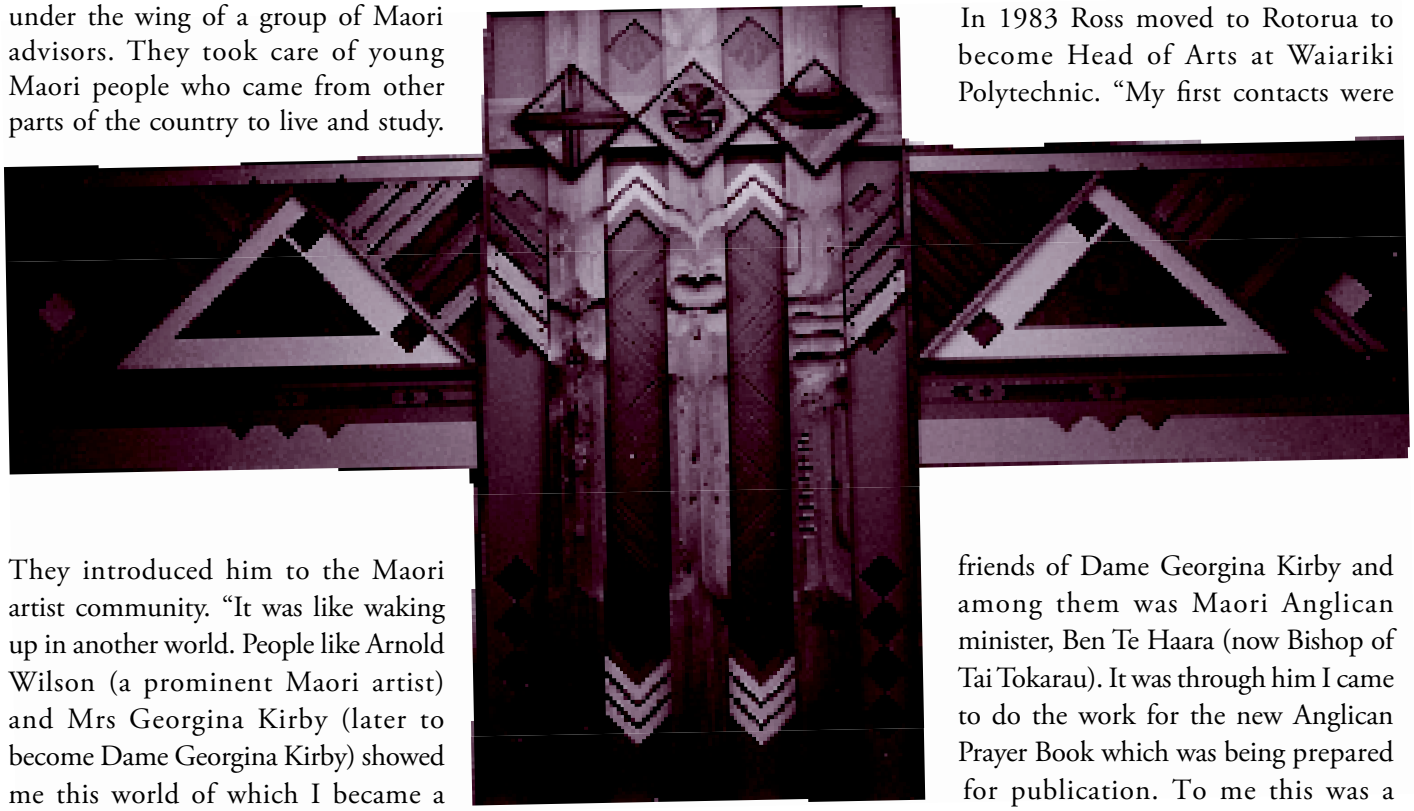
It wasn't until he went to Auckland Teachers' Training College the following year that his interest in Maori art developed.

▷▷

Christian and Maori symbolis

A New Awakening

As soon as Ross Hemera began his studies in Auckland he was taken under the wing of a group of Maori advisors. They took care of young Maori people who came from other parts of the country to live and study.



They introduced him to the Maori artist community. "It was like waking up in another world. People like Arnold Wilson (a prominent Maori artist) and Mrs Georgina Kirby (later to become Dame Georgina Kirby) showed me this world of which I became a part. My artwork began to reflect this awareness." (Both Arnold Wilson and Dame Georgina were members of Nga Puna Waihanga, New Zealand Maori Artists and Writers Society, of which Ross later became an executive member.)

In the early 1980s while still in Auckland Ross began to explore the Catholic faith. He made friends with the parish priest at Sandringham. "He asked me to do some large posters to hang in the church as a means of explaining Bible stories and concepts to young people. I really enjoyed this."

In 1983 Ross moved to Rotorua to become Head of Arts at Waiariki Polytechnic. "My first contacts were friends of Dame Georgina Kirby and among them was Maori Anglican minister, Ben Te Haara (now Bishop of Tai Tokarau). It was through him I came to do the work for the new Anglican Prayer Book which was being prepared for publication. To me this was a great honour, I felt very privileged. I wanted to bring what I had learnt about Christianity and Maori together. That commission led on to the murals in Neligan House. I put the same principles into my work there."

A portrayal of the oneness of the human soul with God at the time of death

From 'A New Zealand Prayer Book, He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa'

Above is one of a series of three murals which adorn Neligan House, the Anglican Diocesan office in Auckland. They all incorporate traditional aspects of Maori design: Whakairo – wood carving – (used to identify ancestral figures); Kowhaiwhai (painted rafter patterns, to do with lineage); Tukutuku, (woven wall patterns).

The background colour is painted light blue, (indicating the spiritual essence of faith). The carved posts, each representing one of the three Tikanga, are totara. The left post symbolises western heritage portrayed through heraldic shapes and flag designs. The centre post represents Maori and incorporates elements of traditional Maori carved patterns. The right post has a wave pattern representing Moana Nui A Kiwa – The Pacific Ocean – Polynesian cultures.

sm blend in Ross Hemera's art

Looking back

Looking back I can identify some of the events in my life that led me to where I am now in my faith and beliefs. A major event was the death of my sister to leukaemia. It had a huge impact on our family, for Mum in particular. I was at art school in Dunedin then. It was not so much my own grief that affected me; it was seeing my mother's grief. It seemed to me that she turned to prayer, and we all supported and followed along with her. I recognised that it was something very important to her and I was glad she had found a way to work through the grieving process. I felt that God was really looking after her.

"Then in 1982 my brother and his wife went to England. While he was over there he took his own life. This was a devastating shock that affected my whole view of life. I could never find answers as to why he did it. At that time I became acutely aware of the value of life and the importance of family." Ross then became even more determined about discovering his Maori heritage and finding strength in it.

Ross looks back to the time he spent in Auckland where through his connections with the Maori community he came to recognise the strong links between Christian ethics and Maori protocol. "They provide a foundation for what we do as people, they provide us with dignity and value. It was after that, that I went to Rotorua and found the support of a Maori community and continued to discover my Maori identity. I found a personal fulfilment in being able to express that identity in my art."

Then came the move to Wellington where Ross took up his present appointment.

"Three years ago my second marriage ended. It was a very emotional time for all of us. But just last spring on a bright sunny morning during a quiet and peaceful moment I found myself gazing out the lounge window. It suddenly occurred to me that the beauty outside, and the serenity I felt inside at that very moment was a sign from God. This prompted my return to regular worship which has given me strength and hope for the future." ■

The Creation story

Whakamarama (Enlightening) was constructed by Ross in 1998 for the Mana Whenua section of Te Papa. The waharoa is a threshold, welcoming visitors and offering them a time to reflect before entering the world of the Maori. This waharoa is called Whakamarama, and it represents Tane, the bringer of light, separating Ranginui (the Sky Father) from Papatuanuku (the Earth Mother) – a time of new beginnings. (Picture and caption Courtesy Te Papa Museum of New Zealand)

In Ross's words: *"Whakamarama illustrates the Maori creation story. It tells of the three dimensions of* ***creation.*** *For me it has parallels with the Christian story of creation and of the Trinity. It is a Creation myth, which gives values and ways of explaining the world. It is a way of understanding how I am connected spiritually and physically to the world."*

Collection of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, (F.004919/07)

In Search of Belief

I Believe in God … after her introduction to a new series in last month's *Tui Motu*, Pauline O'Regan and her Christchurch community continue their walk through the Apostles' Creed

When our community sat down to discuss this chapter of Joan Chittister's book, *In Search of Belief*, we realised that in all our discussions over the years we had never before had a discussion simply on *God*. Who is this God we say we believe in? What kind of a Being is this God? Is there a God at all? We believe in God because we have chosen to do so. Belief itself is a free choice. Some have chosen no. We have chosen yes. We believe because we see a universe that we cannot otherwise account for without the existence of a God.

But our community is made up of women who are well down the track of life and we agreed that the longer we have lived, the more reason we have to believe in the existence of a God. Life itself is our teacher. We know that God is not Death, and yet every loss we suffer gives us a fresh insight into God. God is not Nature, and yet as we see delicate pink blossoms breaking through the hard wood of our apricot tree, we know there is a God.

God is not Human, but we tell each other countless stories of how God is revealed to us through the people we meet every day. Virtually all the important things in our lives do not rely on test tubes to prove that they are a reality. Love cannot be weighed, yet we believe in it. Compassion cannot be grasped, but we experience it. We cannot sketch Fidelity, yet we can see it clearly. All this is so obvious to us that we do not find it hard to believe in the God we cannot see.

Belief in God is the first step, but the next step is fundamental to our spiritual lives – it is simply, what kind of God do we each believe in? We are made in the image of God and we grow in the image of the God we believe in. If we believe in a wrathful God, we ourselves become judgemental; if we treat God as a magician, we want things changed to suit our desires and we fail to make changes in ourselves; if we believe in a God of laws, we sternly expect standards of others that can destroy their faith; if we believe in a distant God, we fail to find the God who lives within us and, as a result, we fail to make God present to others. If our God is a God of love, we become a loving person.

The Father

In our discussion on the title, Father, we agreed that the problem does not lie so much in calling God Father, as in our tendency to call God *nothing else but* Father. It's as if that one title encompasses all the dimensions of the Godhead. What we cease to appreciate is that there can be no limit to the number of titles we give to God in recognition and praise of the beauty of the divine. In the holy book of Hinduism they set out the thousand names of Vishnu – names that range over every beautiful concept in language: Creator, Inexhaustible Treasure, Holder of the Wheel of the Cosmos, Jasmine, Stealer of Hearts, Answerer of Prayers, to name a few.

In our own heritage we, too, have beautiful names for God: to the psalmist God is midwife; to Isaiah, comforting mother; in Exodus, Ultimate Being; in Haggai, a wife; in Luke, a shepherd and a housewife … We have our thousand names. The trouble is that, mystics apart, we never use them. As our community discussed this, we decided then and there what we would do: the Sister whose turn it is to preside over our community prayer chooses a name for God for the coming week to replace the routine use of the title Father.

When Jesus gave us the title Father, he was teaching in the social climate of his time that God wants a loving relationship with each one of us. In the course of time the concept was gradually developed that God was male. The science of the age taught that when a child was conceived, all life flowed from the semen. The woman played no part except to give nourishment to the foetus. If the man was the sole human creator, then it followed that the divine Creator must be male. The logic was sound, the science was wrong. As a community of women, we grieve over the harm that is being done in our own time as so many clerics cling to their concept of God as male and continue to use language in the liturgy that excludes women.

Over 30 years ago the Congregation for Divine Worship directed against using formulas of a past time and said that the prayer of the Church should be such that each of its members be able to *find* and express himself and herself. In 1997 the New Zealand bishops gave an even clearer direction in *their Guide to Gender Inclusive Language in the Catholic Church*. Sadly, their authority in this matter is being ignored far too often.

In our discussion we thanked God that, in a moment of Spirit-filled intuition, the Church changed the sacred words of consecration in the Mass. They removed the exclusive word men in order to prevent women being excluded. The *words for you and for all men* became instead *for you and for all* … If that sacred wording could be changed at one stroke, there is little excuse for those who continue to use exclusive language in the rest of the liturgy.

In the meantime, we continue to believe in God as Father and Mother, and every other beautiful title we can conceive of in language. ■

Ivan the Translator

Paul Oestreicher

Nikodim, Metropolitan of Leningrad and shrewd 'foreign minister' of the Russian Orthodox Church, died dramatically in Rome in the presence of John Paul I. The Pope was himself to die not many days later. If, in Soviet times, any churchman had at least some power, it was Nikodim. Untypically, for an Orthodox prelate, he had a heart for the Roman Church and had written a biography of Pope John XXIII.

Cardinal Suenens brought his body back to Russia to assure the faithful that he had neither been converted to Rome before dying nor murdered in a dastardly Vatican plot. An elaborate funeral was organised on a huge scale. Invitations were issued worldwide.

Robert Runcie, then Bishop of St Albans, was chosen to represent the Archbishop of Canterbury. He asked me to go with him as East Europe Secretary of the British Council of Churches. There was a problem, for I was also Chairman of the British Section of Amnesty International and therefore *persona non grata* to the Soviets. I was refused a visa. In that case, said Robert Runcie to the Soviet Embassy, he would not go either. They backed down. My visa was valid for Leningrad only.

On arrival, Soviet protocol demanded that we be given an interpreter who would also be our 'minder'. Sudden death and many foreigners were not part of the current plan. The professional interpreters had all been assigned elsewhere. So we were introduced to Ivan, normally a translator of books. His spoken English was only just adequate. We liked him. He had never before, he told us, been able to meet Western visitors.

The funeral was unforgettable. Somewhere between 7-10,000 people filled the cathedral, packed in as tightly as in the Tokyo underground. There are no seats in Orthodox churches. We, among the special guests, had a little more breathing space. The ceremony lasted seven hours, including a long address by Cardinal Suenens in French and then translated.

One by one the faithful slowly moved to the open coffin to take leave of their archbishop. Then his fellow bishops, men much older than he, staggered under the weight of the coffin, carrying it three times around the cathedral and then to the grave among some of the great men of Russian history. This, after all, had once been St Petersburg, and is again today.

The next day Ivan went with us to the airport. Bishop Runcie was flying home via Moscow. My flight was three hours later, via Berlin. The VIP lounge provided us all with caviar and vodka. Ivan and I accompanied Robert Runcie and some American diplomats to the steps of the Moscow-bound plane. As we walked back to the airport building, Ivan asked would I invite him to a meal in the international restaurant. It only accepted Western currency and had better food. I was glad to. Ivan might not get such a chance again.

It soon emerged that Ivan's reason had nothing to do with food or money. The Russian restaurant was crowded. This one was not. Ivan took me to the furthest corner.

"I need your help," he said. "I'm required to write a report on you and the bishop for our security service. I'm to report in detail on all I've discovered about you. I don't know what to write. You have said and done nothing worth reporting. Can you help me? What shall I say?" Was this some kind of trap, I wondered. Yet it felt genuine. I smiled. It was strange to be asked to compose a report for the KGB on myself.

"What did they tell you about us?" I asked Ivan, to which he replied "the bishop is nothing special, but you are a dangerous person who must be watched carefully." The trouble was that I had neither said nor done anything that seemed significant. "I'm sorry," I said. "I can't tell you what to write. Just put down all you remember, however trivial. But let me tell you why they think I'm such a threat. I'm the chairman of an organisation in England called Amnesty International." Ivan's mouth fell open. He looked shaken. Had he heard of Amnesty, then?

He told his story. "In 1968 I was a student of English at Leningrad University. The Soviet Union invaded Czechoslovakia and crushed the democratic movement. Some of us felt angry and ashamed. We put up a banner of protest. We were all arrested and sentenced to a long prison term. I would still be a prisoner now if it had not been for a campaign by Amnesty to set us free. How can I ever thank you?"
It was my turn to be amazed. Such an unexpected encounter is a rare gift, a vindication of the efforts of many, many people who care. By this time Ivan had found work translating English theology for professors of the Orthodox seminary. He had not been permitted to complete his studies and was normally confined to his village near Leningrad. On Christian festivals Ivan sent me greeting cards. I sent English novels to the seminary to hand on to him. He had no ready access to English literature.

This is one Amnesty story, one among thousands. Such a surprising person-to-person encounter is a shaft of bright light. And this time, all thanks to the untimely death of an

The Rev Dr Paul Oestreicher, Canon Emeritus and International Consultant, Coventry Cathedral, wrote this article for the 40th anniversary of Amnesty International

A visit to Pleroma – *a refuge and counselling*

Shirley and Ian Duthie bought their early 20th century villa on the outskirts of a Central Hawke's Bay country village because it seemed the ideal place to bring up their family of three sons and a daughter. It was off the main road, quiet and spacious.

That was nearly 30 years ago in the 1970s. Only a few years later the Duthies both had conversion experiences within the Catholic Church and with all the enthusiasm of the newly converted they set about establishing a ministry in their home. They felt 'called' to offer a place of refuge. "We naively believed that we only had to provide enough prayer and love and God would do the rest. We learned the hard way," laughs Shirley. "We found ourselves on the receiving end of some very big problems which stretched us to the limits."

we found ourselves on the receiving end of some very big problems which stretched us to the limits

And that was the beginning of Pleroma (to make whole again). Although it has changed and developed over the years the initial concept remains the foundation of the centre, which provides counselling and time out for whoever may need it. To begin with it was probably more overtly Christian in its ministry. Today, although it is based entirely on the Christian faith of the Duthies and their team (representing several different denominations), they tend to use secular language in counselling unless asked to bring an overtly Christian perspective into the situation.

The early difficulties came mainly as a result of the changes to mental health care and the subsequent numbers of psychiatric patients trying to cope with a new life in the outside world after being institutionalised for so long. In those days there were very few places where they could find the help they needed.

Pleroma had to create strict admission criteria and make it clear that they did not have the resources to provide mental health or addiction rehabilitation. They now have an extremely good relationship with all the local referral agencies and work closely with mental health and addiction agencies.

Much of their work today comes through CYFS and other government agencies and they receive some government funding for those cases. This means they are required to have written policies and procedures by which they are audited every year. Donna Pirini is the co-ordinator and administrator of the centre and she says that although such requirements mean they are less flexible, through them they have grown more professional. By keeping the required records they can also measure their own development.

a refuge in the family home was placing a strain on all concerned

From the start Pleroma was formed as a trust to provide support for the Duthies. It eventually became apparent to the trustees that having a refuge within the family home was placing a strain on all concerned – the Duthies had had two

more 'bonus' children as well as experiencing the grief of a stillbirth – so a two-unit cottage was built on the property for anyone who needed residential time out. In those days the trust also established the Pleroma Christian Bookshop, now well known throughout the country for its mail order services. The aim was to provide funding for the centre and offer a ministry in itself. Today it operates from a rainbow-painted corner shop/ warehouse in Otane just down the road from Pleroma House. It has grown from Christian bookshop to Christian supply centre, retailing and wholesaling Christian supplies and books. It is now run by a separate trust and any profits continue to support Pleroma Counselling.

Pleroma House is supported by Catholic Social Services and now has a branch in Taradale (near Napier), which is centred at St Mary's Catholic Church and uses the parish facilities for counselling. The total team of both centres consists of 12 staff (men and women), including fully trained and trainee counsellors as well as co-ordinators and ancillary staff in both centres. Staff meetings and training sessions are held regularly in both centres.

People come, or are referred to Pleroma from all over New Zealand. The services they may receive include: crisis counselling for adults, children and families; suppport groups for men and women (separately); marriage and relationship counselling; teenage programmes; men's domestic non-violence programmes and a weekly radio programme from a local radio station. There is also the Time Out facility in the residential cottage and directed or non-directed retreats (Shirley is a member of the N.Z. Association of Christian Spiritual Directors). The cottage is also used from time to time by local groups and other churches for meetings and quiet days.

I visited Pleroma House in Otane recently to talk to Shirley and Ian, meet some of the staff and sit in on a training session. The morning began with Communion in the chapel, the one part of Pleroma ministry which remains in the heart of the family home. It used to be the counselling room too, but it was not a suitable environment for all clients, so 10 years ago, the trust built a counselling suite onto the existing house, which has its own private entrance.

the chapel remains in the heart of the family home

Listening to the staff talking, sharing their experiences with one another, seeking support from one another and watching them work through some difficult cases I was impressed by the trust, openness and humour with which they worked together. The counsellors are mostly voluntary workers, some are young professional women, mothers opting to stay at home while their children are young. Shirley said volunteers are usually invited by the trust to join the team because of their Christian commitment and special ability with people. They undertake a two-year training before they have clients of their own. "The cases that come to Pleroma are often very complex and demanding. They cannot be dealt with on the basis of faith and good intention alone." However Shirely explained "we do work from a base of faith, prayer undergirds everything we do and certainly gives us tenacity and insight". Other members of the team added their comments: "When we feel stuck we believe God will give us a way to proceed." "We rely on each other to do the best we possibly can." "We are allowed to make mistakes, and we work in a completely non-judgemental environment." "We get on as a team."

Ashleigh Gardner, Donna Pirini, Shirley Duthie, Sally Fausett

As I drove away from Pleroma, bathed in sunshine as it was, on that autumn day, I had the sense that Pleroma is part of a faith journey, not just for the Duthies but for all those who work there, and possibly for many who come for help. ■

PC

Having a companion on life's journey

Three spiritual directors living and working in Hawkes Bay, describe their ministry for Tui Motu. *Margaret Gwynn has journeyed through the Anglican Church to find her present home among the Quakers. Mary McCann is shaped by the Catholic tradition and is a sister of St Joseph. Joy MacCormick has chosen ordained ministry as an Anglican priest.*

What can spiritual direction offer Aotearoa/New Zealand in the 21st century?

New Zealand society pays little attention to spiritual matters, yet many people feel a great spiritual hunger – a sense that something vital is missing. There is a growing interest in exploring the roots of one's heritage and identity, in Maoritanga, in learning about other world faiths, in seeking greater fulfilment. For people within the Christian tradition there is often a need to find new ways to express faith. Spiritual direction provides a way to explore in a safe, confidential, one-to-one setting.

How we discovered spiritual direction ourselves

Mary: As a Sister of St Joseph, for me an annual six day retreat was a way of life. But it was not until I had the opportunity to make a directed retreat that I discovered the value of sharing my journey with another person. After those first experiences of being companioned, I began to look for someone who could journey with me at the times of my life when I felt the need. There were times when meeting with a companion carried over a long period of time, sometimes it was quite short. They were always very rewarding and helpful times. Perhaps at that time I saw spiritual direction as being important when I had something to work through. I still believe that is a valid approach, but I now appreciate that spiritual direction is for all times of life. God is always challenging me to grow. I need to be able to listen and respond.

Joy: I first came across the term 'spiritual direction' in the early 1980s as I explored membership of the Third Order of the Society of Saint Francis and was required to have a spiritual director with whom to review my spiritual life. A few years later I began to build regular retreats (initially weekends and later seven to 10 days) into my life pattern, and to experience increasingly the value of sharing my questions, doubts and experiences of God with someone who could encourage and/or challenge in a non-critical way. Training for ordained ministry confirmed for me the unique place of spiritual direction in helping people grow in their relationship with God.

Margaret: Eleven years ago I ventured on a seven-day retreat and was given this companion, who helped me explore what was happening for me. She listened, asked questions, offered some suggestions. It was amazingly helpful. But after two retreats like this, I began to want this companioning in my ordinary life as well, partly because my church was not a comfortable place to be, and I often felt very lonely in my explorations. I learned that there were spiritual directors living near me, and ever since I have met regularly with my 'soul friend' for an hour a month.

What has spiritual direction given us?

Margaret: It keeps me paying attention to my relationship with God, and the myriad ways God chooses to communicate with me. Talking about this with someone else makes my experience more real. The effort of trying to put my insights into words leads me to make further discoveries, to reflect more, to take my discoveries into my life. When my faith falters and God seems absent, my Soul Friend helps me to trust and persevere. Many life experiences have been healed – especially childhood struggles, and the influence of parents and teachers on my ideas about God. My 'soul friend' has companioned me through bouts of depression, leaving the Anglican church, moving from Palmerston North to Napier, exploring the Quaker pattern.

Mary: It has raised my awareness of the power of God in the very ordinary everyday things of life. It gives me the opportunity to talk about simple events and find a richness in them I could easily have overlooked – to keep discovering another face of how God is for me and uncovering the person I am called to be. For me, talking things over motivates me to action. I learn what that action needs to be. I find encouragement and acceptance where I am free to journey

and discover and grow. I find that trust in God is deeper than any uncertainty.

Joy: I have discovered that I am not alone in my doubts and questions about some aspects of the institutional church and some of the traditional ways of understanding scripture – scary territory for a priest! I have found encouragement and companionship to 'hang in' when God seemed to have disappeared completely. I have dared to become more honest with God, myself, and others. I have found the courage to continue to explore the boundaries of my faith and discover the boundlessness of God. In our different ways, each of us felt called to this ministry of spiritual direction.

How did we come together?

Once Mary had completed her training, she began working in Hawkes Bay, where she had lived for several years. Joy was feeling a call to deeper involvement in spiritual direction, she moved from parish ministry in West Rotorua to Hastings and contacted Mary. They began to offer 'Quiet Days' to any who wished to come. Some months later Margaret moved to Napier from Palmerston North and the trio was formed.

The three of us continue to offer regular opportunities for quiet reflection. As well as one-to-one spiritual direction, 'Quiet Days' are advertised through church newsletters, libraries and public noticeboards. Each day has its own theme – dreams, forgiveness, new beginnings, creation – and time to relate this theme to one's own life story. Twice a year we offer longer retreats over a week or weekend. Our different backgrounds – Anglican, Quaker, Josephite Sister, our own unique journeys, the way each of us has responded to an inner call – mean that we can offer our combined and individual gifts to others. In the process we are often amazed at how God creates something new from our different parts.

Who comes for spiritual direction?

Some seek spiritual direction because it is a requirement of the groups they belong to. Some come for a short period of time when they have something they want to work through. For some there may be little or no involvement with churches, but they have a desire for some accountability or frame of reference in their spiritual exploration.

For a significant number of others the tension between church teachings/expectations and their own undeniable experience of God is a major issue. They often want to discover and trust their own wisdom and be free to question and express doubt. A frequent comment is "I never get a chance to talk about me and God at church" or "I can say this to you because you are not judgemental". Many are relieved to hear that it is quite normal for the spiritual journey to take us into desert places – this is not their own fault. What do these comments say about churches and their willingness to discuss serious questions about the spiritual journey?

As each of us becomes more secure in our relationship with Holy Mystery, we become more open to other insights and we become less defensive. This builds respect and breaks down barriers as we discover we are indeed all one family. Many people find that spiritual direction also unfolds a deep awareness of the interconnectedness of all things and a new sense of responsibility to restore and renew our planet.

We come to know that "there is a living God at the centre of all, who is available to each of us as a present teacher, at the very heart of our lives. We hold a precious heritage of discoveries, but we, like every generation, must find the Light and Life again for ourselves. And our vision of the truth will be amended again and again" (from the Quaker tradition). A spiritual director can be a loving companion on that life journey of discovery. ■

What is involved in training as a spiritual director?

New Zealand offers two courses:

• *Spiritual Growth Ministries* – a two-year programme offered nationwide, including guided reading and assignments, two residential courses, ten one-day events,two years of practical work under individual supervision and a research project.

For more information, contact
Margaret Dunn,
P.O. Box 300-277,
Albany.

• *SEED* (Spiritual Encouragement through Education and Development), spread over 18 months and offered regionally from Auckland and Christchurch, including guided reading plus two essays, fifteen one-day events, two week-long events, three weeks of practical experience with peer group supervision.

For more information, contact
Judith Crimmins, 26 Albany Rd, Herne Bay, Auckland, or
Pamela Warnes, 12 Chelsea St, Linwood, Christchurch.

Finding a spiritual director near you:

There is a national Association of Christian Spiritual Directors, whose 160 members are trained and have personal supervision. They can be found in all parts of New Zealand.

For a list in your area, contact
The Secretary,
23 Clyde Road, Napier.
Fax: 06-835-2412,
email gwynn@paradise.net.nz

Water and Holy Spirit

In this final of a four-part series linking the Spirit's action with the elements, Helen Bergin explores the relation of the Spirit with the element water

We have reflected previously on the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the elements of air, earth and fire. We now focus on links between the Spirit and the element most commonly associated with the Spirit – water. Most commonly through the celebration of baptism, we are familiar with water connecting us in some way with the action of God.

On a daily and mundane level, the question of water is so often taken for granted. However, when water is at a premium in drought-stricken farming areas of this land, we are alerted. When insufficient rainfall is likely to reduce electricity output, we are warned. When bathing water at our beaches shows signs of contamination, we are notified. Clean, available water is for people in this land, an expectation. Does depicting the Spirit as 'water' heighten our expectation for this gift also?

Water and Holy Spirit

References to the link between 'water' and Spirit are plentiful in the Christian heritage. Sometimes, the links are explicit, often, not. I will suggest four aspects to this relationship.

The first link between water and Spirit occurs in relation to the ritual and significance of baptism. The Spirit's activity points to *the emergence of "a new creation".* Jesus tells Nicodemus that one must be "born through water and the Holy Spirit" *(Jn 3:5).* The letter to Titus also speaks of the cleansing water of rebirth and renewal *(Titus 3:5-6).* Water indicates too that, with the Spirit, a person's inner desires are satisfied. Jesus exclaims "Let anyone who believes in me come and drink!" *(Jn 7:38)*

In later theological reflection, the above points are reiterated. Irenaeus in the second century likens the Spirit to water that moistens the dough, to rain and dew which aid persons to be fruitful and thereby offer something new. *Veni, Sancte Spiritus* in the 13th century invokes the Spirit to cleanse, but also to satisfy the longings of body and heart: "Wash what is unclean/Water what is arid." This aspect of cleansing and renewing is hinted at in Hone Tuwhare's poem *Rain* which, while not addressed to the Spirit, offers similar insights.

The poem concludes:

> But if I
> should not hear
> smell or feel or see
> you
>
> you would still
> define me
> disperse me
> wash over me
> rain

The second aspect is that with the gifts of water and Spirit, *persons are enabled to receive the love of God.* The Spirit's coming signals the possibility of God's love being received within the human heart. Paul says: "the love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit who has been given to us" *(Rom 5:5).*

This theme is often repeated. The ninth century hymn *Veni, Creator* invokes:

> Inflame the light of our senses
> Pour love into our hearts

and later, Mechtild of Magdeburg says:

"It is well for me to thank you, Holy Spirit. . . .Your sweet loving waters, erase all the suffering of my heart, for they come forth softly out of the Trinity" (*The Flowing Light of the Godhead*).

The third aspect expresses *the abundance of the gift* offered. In Isaiah's vision, God says: "I shall pour out my spirit on your descendants, my blessing on your offspring" *(Is 44: 3).* In Joel's prophecy, God says: "I shall pour out my spirit on all humanity " *(Joel 2:28).* We see the fulfilment of such visions in the account of Pentecost when in the reception of the Spirit by both Jews and Gentiles, Luke says: "what you see and hear is the outpouring of that Spirit [the Holy Spirit]" *(Acts 2:33).*

Many spiritual writers stress this theme. Fifth century Hilary of Poitiers says: "The river of God is brimful. We are flooded with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. It is poured into us" (*Discourse on Psalm 64).* Eight centuries later, Meister Eckhart states: "… the Spirit cannot keep from flowing into every place where he finds space and he flows just as extensively as the space he finds there." *Sermon 26.* There is a lavishness about the presence of the Spirit.

Fourth, water and the Spirit together symbolise *a touch of eternity within time.* The fullness of the 'Spirit' occurs at the completion of Jesus' life. Once "Jesus has been raised to the right hand of God" the promise of the Spirit is freely available. In the resurrection of Jesus, all creation is directed to its future union with God. Jesus' life, death and resurrection usher in the final age of history and of creation. The Holy Spirit then fully confirms the hope of life unending for everything that exists. This aspect is foreshadowed in John's gospel where Jesus offers the Samaritan woman the "spring of water, welling up for eternal life" *(4:14).*

One further and original feature about the connection between water and the Holy Spirit comes from writings of Cyril of Jerusalem. He suggests that water adapts itself to the nature of the things which receive it. It becomes what is appropriate to each. Such understanding suggests that despite the visible effects of water and Spirit, both are dependent on their hosts in a free and accommodating manner.

We have suggested that the analogy between water and the Spirit of God is well represented in our Christian story. Both suggest newness of life, cleansing and thirst-quenching, delight and abundance, 'the more' awaiting us. Might such reflection on water, which is often taken for granted in Aotearoa, help raise our sense of responsibility towards this gift and also encourage us to recognise the often-overlooked Spirit in our midst?

As we conclude, let us highlight five aspects that are common to each element and to God's Spirit:

- air, earth, fire and water when linked with the Spirit of God all indicate *livingness and creativity.*
- each points to the *transformation* of that with which it makes contact.
- each connects this present world with *the total mystery of life.*
- each suggests *activity.*

- each is *vital* for life as we know it.

We believe that there is benefit in linking the Holy Spirit with the four elements. Such speaking moors the Holy Spirit in our midst and does not confine her to being "the Spirit who cannot be imagined" or "the faceless Spirit" as theologians Leonardo Boff and Walter Kasper have recently expressed.

The four elements help 'ground' the Spirit in two important ways. *First*, the elements refer to fundamental and vital *processes* of earth's ongoing existence. Does the Spirit not belong here too? *Second*, the elements are *core ingredients* of all creation. 'Earth-spirit' beings encounter God's Spirit from the stance of creatures embedded in matter. Does this not keep the Spirit in touch with the daily physical life of this planet and prevent dialogue about the Holy Spirit from evaporating or being transfixed on a world which has not yet come?

Since the Holy Spirit is known in Tradition as 'God in relationship', related within God's Being and to us, the four elements assist us to know such relatedness. The linking of God's Spirit with these elements has suggested that God is at the heart of all forms of life; that God transforms creation; that God surrounds creation with divine Mystery; that God enables love and freedom, and that God is Indispensable Presence in our world. Such description of the Spirit is not comprehensive. However, it is we believe, most helpful.

We end with words of blessing from Anne Powell, a contemporary poet of Aotearoa. She prays:

> May the Maker of water
> and air and fire
> heal you
> who walk the earth

Blessing

Southern Solstice

At every
cloud-free winter's chance
the sun
slides rainbow sleeves along
new spiders' threads
heaps
snow on alpine-crowded clouds
after rain
gleams pearls along bent boughs
fires diamonds at the tips of leaves
gilds cows and seagulls, lights
water with a silken sheen –
prodigious gifts
in a lean season.

Beatrice Hoffman

Frances Eva Boronia Gregory MBE

Died 23 April 2001, aged 93

Ninety years in 300-400 words! It doesn't convey the 'essence' of Frances. She was always in a hurry and had no time for small talk. If she wasn't officiating at a meeting, she had her knitting needles out, busy making squares for blankets. She was actively working for the Red Cross right up until her death and was still their publicist.

A keen swimmer, she swam in the sea all year round, well into her 80s. Her 92nd birthday was celebrated with a quick 'dip'!

City Councillor, National President of Catholic Women's League, Member of the National Council of Women, Save the Children Fund and Life Member of Red Cross.

One of four children born to Ethel and James Walsh in the Wairarapa township of Pahiatua, Frances received her early education with the Brigidine Sisters. She loved words like 'marvellous' and 'splendid' and these were the words she used to describe her teachers. On graduating from Teachers' Training College in Wellington, she taught at a country school just outside Gisborne, where she met and married her husband, Gordon. They eventually moved into Gisborne, where she gave up teaching to help him in his grocery business.

It was her entry into local body politics in 1962 which honed her skills as a speaker and gave her a platform from which to advance her concerns for women's rights and for those whom she termed the 'underdogs'. She was a great communicator. She wrote up to 20 letters a week – sometimes just notes of concern, appreciation, encouragement, but always an acknowledgement of the dignity and worth of the other person.

She was the first woman to be elected to the Gisborne City Council, where she served six terms – 18 years – and topped the poll at each election. For 15 of those years she was the only woman councillor. "I had to wage a credibility battle with the men. I made sure I did my homework very thoroughly, and was always well prepared before every council meeting."

A small woman, not more than 5ft 2in, Frances commanded attention with her direct, positive way of speaking. She could always 'look outside the square', although she wouldn't have expressed it that way. A favourite saying, "we must be forward thinking", cropped up in many conversations.

A committed Catholic, she had deeply held convictions as to the need to extend the role of the laity in the Church and the role of women. She didn't hesitate to express these views, but always with courtesy and respect, and never in a confrontational way. She firmly believed that if the Church was to have a voice in the outside world, it should make full and intelligent use of the media. Perceived by many as a 'feminist' (Frances disliked labels), she still had this somehow old-fashioned insistence on the term 'ladies' when speaking of, or addressing groups of women.

Frances' mantra was *Get involved in life … get stuck in and make things happen*.

Missed by community, family and friends, Frances is survived by her sons Sefton and Ross, daughters-in-law Rita and Mary, 15 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.

Pat Hampson

The two sides of Karol Wojtyla

Witness to Hope
by George Weigle
Published by Harper Collins,
Price: $39.95
Review: Patrick Maloney

Book Review

I can think of quite a few good reasons why someone would not want to read this biography of Pope John Paul II. In the first place, it's very long, nearly 1000 large format, closely printed pages. It's heavy in the two obvious senses of the word and, let's face it, for most of us who are not familiar with Slav languages, the challenge of coping with the quantity of seemingly un-pronounceable Polish personal and place names is, to say the least, daunting. Just the same, don't miss it! Myself, I am so pleased to have read it.

The author, George Weigle, a seminary-trained layman, is the Senior Fellow of the John M. Olin Chair in Religion and American Democracy, and good friend, I recently learned, of Archbishop George Pell of Sydney. He acknowledges the personal assistance and encouragement of the Pope in writing the book. That, I believe, shows.

I'm pleased to have read it since I fear that otherwise, I might not have sufficient appreciation of a very great man. He must rank as a colossus among human figures of the late 20th century. This Pope has not been generally well accepted in Germany, yet after his visit there in 1996, Chancellor Kohl

is reported to have said: "This is the greatest man of the second half of the century, perhaps of the entire century".

Recently, even George W. Bush quotes Mr Gorbachev in calling John Paul "the greatest moral authority on earth".

The Pope's role in the overturn of Communism in his native Poland and the whole Soviet Union emerges from these pages as pivotal. The story of how that came to be makes rattling good reading. The highlight has to be the account of his first visit to Poland as Pope in 1979. I almost felt sorry for Edward Gierek, leader of the Polish Communist Party, seeing how he and his mates were out-manoeuvred by his fellow countryman.

The author tellingly highlights John Paul's enormous intellect and the depth of his inner life of mystical prayer. We are told how the Pope does most of his writing seated before the Blessed Sacrament. In these days of physical infirmity, he does the same, but with the help of a priest secretary using a laptop. This being said, why is it that this Pope seems not to inspire universal, spontaneous admiration and affection like that accorded his predecessor, John XXIII? While the issue is not directly addressed, the reasons emerge clearly from the pages of this book.

Weigle presents us with the two sides of Karol Wojtyla. On the one hand, we find a man of great personal warmth and charm. We see him breaking the clerical mould of his time, enjoying the company of young people, spending his holidays kayaking with them, sharing dangerously with them during the Communist era the artistic and intellectual challenges of underground theatre groups. He encouraged them to call him *Wujek* (uncle). Many of these friendships he retains to this day.

We see his unique ability to appeal to modern youth, highlighted perhaps in the amazing World Youth Day of August 1993 at Denver, Colorado, where, against all predictions, young people came in their hundreds of thousands. Many of them hiked 15 miles to the venue in the Mile High Stadium.

Here, and in many similar gatherings later, he challenges them, charms them, speaks somehow directly to them. It appears that he recognises that today's young people do not suffer the scepticism, the resistance to faith-sharing as many of their parents do.

Then, we have another side of a man who many find difficult to meet. Karol Wojtyla is, by nature and profession, a philosopher. Not from him the stories from Dickens like his predecessor Pope John Paul I, or the homely little homilies of Pope John XXIII. Even addressing a holiday crowd in the piazza of St Peter's, he would deliver a deeply complex, highly abstract reflection on Christian marriage in a monotone voice and in quite heavily accented Italian. Whatever his qualities, he is no popular presenter.

Our author is at his best when he leads us through the development of John Paul's thinking, beginning from his own student days. He is a Christian humanist. In contrast to the atheistic determinism of his former Communist captors, Karol Wojtyla speaks of the innate dignity of every human being, made in God's image. He insists on our ability to discover truth and to find the truth of who we are in our own human nature. Infused into this is the new dignity infused into us by the Incarnation of God in human flesh. From this he places an extraordinary emphasis on the power and value of human culture. He used this appeal to his Polish, Christian culture to motivate his people to stand up to Communist military might in solidarity, and claim freedom.

If for no other reason, *Witness to Hope* is worth having because of the summary the author provides for a vast selection of the Pope's writings and addresses. Often, they are not easy reading, but Weigle's summaries make them uniquely accessible to the general reader. You may feel you don't like this Polish Pope, but after reading this book, you do have to respect him. ■

Asking the Great Questions

By Mike Crowl

BOOKS

Late last year two large novels for children appeared. J. K. Rowling's fourth Harry Potter book, running to some 600 pages, arrived with enormous hype. The other, anticipated by those in the know, was the third book in Philip Pullman's trilogy, *His Dark Materials.* It's around 500 pages long.

Some Christian groups have had a field day with Harry Potter's witches and wizardry (in the fourth book, the grisly climax even caused alarm amongst some non-Christian parents). Yet Pullman's trilogy has witches and spectres and grisly battles, too, as well as an Inquisitorial KGB-style 'church', the source of much evil throughout the series. The trilogy questions generally accepted theology, but curiously, most Christians don't appear to have caught up with it.

Both Pullman and J. K. Rowling have immense gifts for imaginative writing, for creating fantasy worlds (several in Pullman's case) and for sheer storytelling. Rowling's stories in fact have no real occult/spiritual content: at heart they're boarding-school stories, with loyalty, courage and daring in abundance.

Pullman, however, underpins his story with his own theological myth. In an interview with Ilene Cooper, Pullman spoke about it: "[It owes] something to Gnosticism, but it differs in one essential characteristic. The Gnostic world-view is Platonic in that it rejects the physical created universe and expresses a longing for an unknowable God who is far off. My myth is almost the reverse. It takes this physical universe as our true home. We must welcome and love and live our lives in this world to the full."

Pullman's trilogy takes its name from a line in Milton's *Paradise Lost* (a seminal work for him). It's the story of Lyra, a girl who's grown up as an orphan in a world with names and places and people similar to ours.

However, in this world each human has a 'daemon' – the person's soul or spirit in an animal form – with which they can converse. Lyra's parents ('the parents from Hell', as Gordon Campbell in the *Listener* described them) have wound up on opposite sides of an earthly/heavenly battle. The father aims at nothing less than bringing down God Himself because of the antagonistic attitude of His 'church' to the joys and freedom of human beings. The mother is a key figure in the 'church', a woman of immense resource and power.

God, however, isn't actually God. In *The Amber Spyglass* we learn he was usurped by an evil angel: a transformed Enoch (the Enoch from Genesis, in fact). Pullman, in the Cooper interview, says: "The tradition suggests that Enoch the Patriarch was taken into heaven and transformed into the angel Metatron. He is referred to as the Regent. The word Regent implies someone who rules in the stead of someone who is incapable of ruling for himself. I'm using traditions, but I'm using them in the way that Milton, for example, used the angelic traditions and then invented characters such as Beelzebub. As for my view that the rebellious angels are on the side of good and freedom rather than authority, repression and cruelty, again I'm in a long tradition. William Blake consciously and Milton unconsciously wrote about this."

Pullman sees God as having grown older, basing this idea on the Book of Daniel regarding the Ancient of Days. He said in the same interview: "I'm on fairly solid ground there" – something Biblical scholars might raise their eyebrows at, while literary scholars might disagree with his views on Milton and Blake.

The 'Ancient of Days God' appears very briefly in the last book of the trilogy as a Being so fragile a breath of wind blows him away. There's a hint he probably isn't God at all, but an even earlier usurper. For Pullman, both in real life and in his stories, God has long since gone AWOL. One of the female characters says she realised the rules and regulations were only there to keep the system running after he'd left.

But if Pullman's spiritual thinking is muddled, he's bang on with his human creations. The trilogy presents two truly heroic children (Will, a boy with as much grit as Lyra, is the main character in the second book), who not only fight enormous personal battles, but (in order to rescue the millions of dead) venture into the realm of Death itself.

Pullman, for his own purposes, has us believe the appalling concept that death brings nothing but an endless misery, and it's only through the efforts of these children that the dead are rescued and given 'freedom'. At the end, the two children must sacrifice their deep love for each other in order to restore harmony to the countless parallel worlds.

Through the course of the books several major characters give their lives for the

sake of others, and in the concluding pages two of the worst characters are 'redeemed' by their last great sacrificial act. In view of Pullman's recorded anti-Christian stance, it's unlikely he intends this as a Christian 'laying down of your life for your friends', yet that's how it comes across.

Finally, he revels in the joy of creation – creation itself and its own 'life' are part and parcel of the plot.

Milton wrote: "Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them." Pullman's trilogy is no exception.

How should one 'read' it then? As a wide-ranging fantasy in the Tolkien or C. S. Lewis tradition, where it's also possible to ignore the underlying theology?

It seems Pullman isn't content for that to happen. Without sacrificing his story-telling, he allows didacticism to surface increasingly as the stories progress.

Furthermore, in more than one interview he's made strong comments indicating his intention isn't merely to enthral.

In the NZ *Listener*, he told Gordon Campbell: "I *do* feel an enmity against people of the Lewis persuasion, since they declared war on what I feel is right and good and natural. I am not going to hold back when it comes to hitting them. Moral ferocity? Yes, I'd go for that. I'm glad that is being noted. If I am perceived as anti-Lewis, that's fine by me." On the other hand, he also says: "I've never stopped thinking about these great mysteries of Where do we come from? Why are we here? What does it mean to be good? What happens when we die?"

John Pridrome, reviewing the last of the three books in the *Church Times*, is more generous to Pullman than Pullman is to Lewis. "The only Christian response to this work is to read it once more. The metaphysical premises of the great myth Philip Pullman has created are not those of the Christian story. But long ago George MacDonald taught us that the moral laws of all the universes are the same; and, where the moral base is secure, as in this most wonderful tale, it surely is that the metaphysics can look after themselves."

Pullman might easily be condemned by those whose theological equilibrium he upsets. Yet the value of these books is that he does aim to prove the 'great mysteries'. His answers may not be to everyone's taste; nevertheless he writes with extraordinary skill, verve and compassion. Hopefully, as a result, his readers will be prompted to search deeper for Truth themselves. ■

The Trilogy *of His Dark Materials* consists of *The Northern Lights* (US: The Golden Compass), *The Subtle Knife, The Amber Spyglass.*

Senior management – or mismanagement?

The lack of ability in New Zealand's senior management was again demonstrated in the Air New Zealand fiasco. New Zealand taxpayers lost millions when the directors of AIRNZ decided that the purchase of Ansett Australia was "a great strategic opportunity".

At the time of writing, the manoeuvres of incompetent directors and the machinations of major shareholders could easily result in the loss of the airline itself. About the same time, I received the Annual Report of a company with which I have a modest investment. Both events reminded me of the late Bruce Jesson's description of NZ businessmen as "ageing, inflexible and lethargic". Not a lot has changed.

On page 2 of this Annual Report was a frightening photo of the Board of Directors. There are seven directors, two ex-politicians, three geriatrics, one well-qualified man and one token woman who is the best qualified of the whole motley bunch. I estimate the total cost of the directors' fees at around $200,000 plus perks, such as free lunches, travelling costs and Milo for the oldies.

The Board 'meets regularly', probably to make sure the fees are being direct-credited and perhaps to suggest a small increase (it won't be noticed if expressed in percentage terms of total costs). Then it's on to more weighty matters such as dealing with an investor's letter complaining about too many ex-politicians being given sinecures at his expense. The Annual Report informs me that "the period under review was disappointing", a $1,000 disappointment for me personally. Such Board members, unable to generate profits by their own efforts, are the most vociferous in lobbying for a company tax reduction, in order to disguise their own inadequacies. Anyway, it's time for me to 'think big' and quit the company. I advise all readers to study photos of any Board of Directors carefully. It could save you money.

Crosscurrents
by John Honoré

Victory for Apathy?

The return of the Labour Party in the UK was no surprise. The Government is now effectively what Lord Hailsham described, in the Thatcher years, as an 'elective dictatorship', with a totally ineffectual and routed opposition. A worrying feature of this election was the increasing public apathy in the democratic system and the world-wide disdain for politics and politicians. Within the past year, George Bush was finally declared President of the USA with only half the population bothering to go to the polls. In the UK, only 59% of registered voters exercised their democratic right. This is a world-wide phenomenon.

People, disillusioned by the ability of governments to respond to public needs and cynical of promises made by politicians, forego their right to vote. This trend leads to pressure groups which ignore the possibilities of achieving the public good through the democratic process. They prefer, as in the USA, to seek redress through the courts for perceived grievances. However, the lower socio-economic group has no political power under an 'elective dictatorship', nor the means of pursuing social justice through the legal system.

New Zealand is fortunate in having adopted MMP. There is a greater interest in politics because all of society is represented in the various parties. The Westminster model of government, every now and then, throws up the excesses of the Thatchers and the Douglas/Prebbles and the lies and deceits practised solely to win an election. This is less likely under MMP. Parliament has been curbed by the voting system and a minority government must always negotiate and find partners to have policy passed in the House. The legislative process is much more democratic. Ineffectual or weak ministers can no longer be tolerated and, as we have seen in New Zealand, there are more ministerial resignations.

In order to preserve a truly democratic government, we must be constantly aware of the necessity of exercising our democratic right and being politically active. Apathy leads to "elective dictatorship".

Dangerous Double Whammy

Tertiary education is in crisis. It is being threatened on two fronts and makes a joke of the so called knowledge economy. The stupidity of the previous government's policy of applying the competitive model to education, together with the incompetence of ministers such Lockwood Smith and Max Bradford, have led to a plethora of private institutes and academies syphoning funds from the established universities. These institutions offer degrees of dubious merit and have forced the universities to increase fees to breaking point, in order to maintain their very existence. Moreover, public funding for universities has fallen over the past ten years. This is now a matter of acrimonious debate with no solution in sight.

Added to the funding debâcle is the folly of the student loan scheme. The loan debt is now in the billions of dollars. It has contributed largely to the "brain drain" of young graduates going overseas in order to pay off crippling debt and thus further impoverishing the country. Student loan repayments are now measured in years and will have a negative effect on university enrolments. Why should a young person be saddled with a life-time debt after achieving a higher education? Tertiary education is in need of immediate attention. The crisis is getting worse by the day. ■

Son of God an exciting presentation – but are we any the wiser?

Son of God, a BBC production narrated by Jeremy Bowen, has finished its three-part run and has left us little wiser than when we set out. Fascinating computer reconstructions of the physical environment during the life of Jesus, new information from the many archaeologists who have been working around the Biblical sites and the use of experts in many different areas of historical research, presented us with convincing evidence of the existence of the historical Jesus in a different and exciting manner. But for me, and I suspect, for the majority of viewers, this was not the issue. I believe the majority of viewers in this country are happy to acknowledge the existence of the historical Jesus and do not need a myriad of documentation to convince them.

The question, which this show did not set out to explore, was "What did Jesus have which drew followers to him? What was it about him that attracted the crowds? Why did people from all walks in life and all classes in society look to him for teaching and leadership?"

Even an acknowledged agnostic like Jeremy Bowen, the presenter, could have explored these questions and not compromised his status as an unbeliever. The questions of transubstantiation and resurrection could have been safely left for the believer because the earlier questions of simple belief and faith needed exploration. For me, there was little point in exploring the historical Jesus without examining what it was that made him different.

Bowen was determined to present a strictly rational view of the last days of Jesus and, in the end, it was not enough to lift the show above the pedestrian and give it the momentum to attract a large audience. The presentation probably owed much to the style and content of this year's exploration of the historical Elizabeth 1 in which the presenter, a professional historian, used every device available to knowledgeable users of the medium, to bring his account to life. But we know so much more about Elizabeth, what her contemporaries thought of her, what she liked and disliked and most important of all, she lived only four hundred years ago. This presentation captured something of the magic of her personality, something of the power, complexity and style of her leadership and the result was dynamic and compelling.

For me, the sad legacy of *The Son of God* is that it took us nowhere and it failed to fire. To fire, it would have to have moved away from the detailed evidence of his life to the factors which set him apart. Given the production team's ability to recreate the physical environment of the time, with stunning computer graphics: the magnificence of the temple in Jerusalem, the power and status of the priestly class, convincing snapshots of life of the time, the result should have been much more rewarding.

The last insult to viewers came with the attempt to recreate the face of Christ. This segment had been given much publicity and advertising hype. For casual viewers, whose curiosity may have led them to look only at this segment, the message was flawed and utterly misleading. The head was created by Richard Neave of the University of Manchester using a first century Palestinian skull as the basis for the re-creation. Details of hair were added by Dr Mark Goodacre of Birmingham who used third century images from a Syrian synagogue. It was nothing more than an experiment without any basis in fact, an experiment which provided no reasonable basis for the assumptions made. Perhaps it would have been more useful to have attempted to answer the mystery of why the Jesus movement survived and why other movements, some of them similar and recorded by Josephus, disappeared. ■

Sisters Philomena, Agnes and Stephanie

The Grihinis ...

What the Sisters accomplish in only 10 months is truly amazing

In some of the poorest areas of India, the Sisters' Grihini Schools transform the lives of shy, superstitious and illiterate village girls … and their families!

Leaving their families and sheltered villages for 10 months' education is a shattering experience for girls aged 14 to 19 years. Village walls and rice fields have been their total existence. The prospect of living, learning and working with strangers in some far off boarding school is an unnerving challenge not easily undertaken.

For the first few weeks they are very shy, tearful, homesick and fearful of their new disciplined routine and concentration. Gradually the Sisters' loving concern helps them to accept and cope with the course and to enjoy their new community life. Grihini education is most comprehensive, and what the Sisters achieve in 10 months is nothing short of remarkable.

In this short time, they receive a general education, including reading, writing and simple additions, with sewing receiving a high priority. So does budgeting. Grihinis are taught to know the sources of family income and the advantages of saving through co-operatives.

The girls learn how the land can be utilised to increase food production. There is a great deal of field work where they sow, water, hoe and cultivate a wide range of vegetables, including cabbage, cauliflower, carrots, pumpkin, peas and potatoes. They are taught seasonal cropping, preparation of seed and seedlings, methods of sowing and transplanting, fertilizers and their uses, and crop protection against disease. They gain a basic understanding of the rearing and care of domestic animals: buffalo, cows, goats, pigs and poultry.

Great attention is paid to family health. The girls are grounded in the essential needs of personal and social hygiene, family welfare, mother/child care, preparation of nutritious meals and the preservation of food. Also included is a basic knowledge of common illnesses and their cure.

After 10 months the Grihinis return to their villages exuding a confidence which accompanies achievement. They know their role in the family and their rights as citizens. They have learnt how to deal with many village problems and can now speak wisely on problems relating to village life and organisation.

By living, eating, working, learning and dancing together, shyness, prejudices and barriers of economic status have crumbled. They have learnt to work hard and plan for a better tomorrow.

Children need educated mothers

Only a relatively few girls receive Grihini education each year. Yet tens of thousands of sadly ignorant girls are in urgent need of this wonderful course. The annual cost of training a Grihini is about $100. That small sum of money will ultimately save and protect children's lives in every Grihini-trained family. The whole thrust of this work is so very dependent on outside aid. We need your help. The poor we care for are unable to pay. Whatever you give will be greatly appreciated.

Please make your cheque payable to :

'New Zealand Jesuits in India' and post it to:

Mr & Mrs Tom & Carole Ryan
New Zealand Jesuits in India (Est. 1954)
PO Box 25922, St Heliers Bay, Auckland 1005

I enclose $…… to help provide basic needs for destitute families in India

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