Tui Motu

InterIslands

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The dove of peace torn asunder in Israel

contents

An unholy land

As we write, the 'Holy Land' is riven with unholy conflict. Seldom has the prospect for peace seemed more hopeless. The city of Jerusalem, hallowed in the memories of three great monotheistic faiths, is being torn apart by what is simply a struggle for power and for land. The Pope's pilgrimage of peace at Easter is forgotten in the gunsmoke and the war of words.

President Clinton's final bid for immortality as bringer of peace lies in tatters, America being hopelessly compromised as a mediator by the Jewish lobby in Washington and US preoccupation over world oil supply. The only realistic solution offered is that of the hard-headed *Times* correspondent on *Dateline London* – the two sides should be left to fight it out!

Are these conflicts irresolvable? Is it simply the ultimate recourse of atavistic humanity: to tear each other to bits? Have we learnt nothing from the savage and fruitless conflicts of the 20th Century? Does Jubilee offer no glimmer of hope?

Our leading article this month looks searchingly into these questions. Mike Riddell reports on a recent visit to the Falls Road in Belfast and offers profound reflection. His conclusions are that exceptional leadership, such as that of a Mandela or a Gorbachev, is required to break the armlock of century-long grudge and resentment; that ultimately there can be no peace until injustice is named and, where possible, atoned; and that a Jubilee amnesty, a forgiveness of debt, may often be needed.

Where does the Christian faith come into all this? Riddell says: "The whole message of the gospel is one of reconciliation with God, and we are invited to bear witness to such reconciliation through our own attempts at peacemaking. The historical facts, however, confront us with the reality that Christianity has as often been a cause of conflict in divided communities as a source of healing." As Christians we have much to answer for. We only have to recall recent memories of prejudice, discrimination and name-calling across the religious divide in our own land.

But in terms of commitment to justice and peace there is another sin which afflicts us even at this very time – that of omission. In the 70s and 80s there was huge energy within Christian communities for the public issues of those days. Within the Catholic church at least, this has largely vanished.

So we asked some of those who were involved 20 years ago why they think this has happened. This inquiry forms the focus of this month's magazine. What they come up with leaves several question marks against our church leadership and even more regarding our organs of representation and communication between laity and clergy – or the lack of them. There are grounds here for concern and reform.

One suggestion is that many of the issues of our day are so intangible that people are baffled as to how to tackle them. A nuclear warship was a steel object you could get in the way of; a Springbok footballer was a person you could throw flour bombs at! Whereas global warming is not something you can experience, like sunburn. GM piglets grunt like those born of nature. How can we be so sure that one or other economic system is wrong when the mechanisms seem so abstract? Yet these are huge issues of justice, and they threaten world peace just as much as the 'peace line' in Belfast or the Jewish settlements on the West Bank.

In the discussions in these pages, however, some clear pointers are in evidence. Firstly, bring the issues out into the open: this is one of the jobs of *Tui Motu*. Secondly, movements for ▷▷

Ecumenism and Dominus Jesus

For the last 30 or more years ecumenism has been my passion. I truly believe the deepening of understanding and appreciation of other denominations is essential if Christianity is ever to regain credibility in Western society. Would that the phrase "See how these Christians love one another" could be standard response today from non-believers!

letters

I was therefore totally devastated by the recent declaration from the Vatican entitled *Dominus Jesus*. Anything less Jesus-like would be hard to imagine. It is a graceless, divisive, arrogant and patronising statement in stark contrast to the reconciliatory tone of such documents in the recent past. In bald terms it states that all truth regarding God, Christ and the Holy Spirit rests in the Roman Catholic church and that any church not in full communion with it is defective.

I really do wonder what Jesus himself would make of such a graceless claim made in his name. I suspect he would be put in mind of his own story about the Pharisee and the tax collector praying in the Temple!

The admission that "other religions not infrequently reflect a ray of that Truth which enlightens all men" could hardly be more patronising. How about "often" in place of "not infrequently"? Despite my difficulty in accepting the doctrine of papal infallibility, Apostolic succession, gender discrimination and some pretty horrendous episodes in the history of the Catholic church, I love her dearly, warts and all. Perhaps that is the reason why I find this Declaration so hurtful and self-destructive.

Brian Connolly, Helensville

Media Awards

It is with great delight we heard of the awards made to *Tui Motu*, *NZ Catholic* and *Marist Messenger* in Brisbane. We were particularly delighted to see the success of such a new magazine as *Tui Motu*.

The variety and depth of coverage in this magazine fills a gap in Catholic life in this country and beyond. We also know that many other Christians find nourishment and encouragement in *Tui Motu*... It gives us material that encourages us to take time to reflect, to see life from another point of view and to integrate our faith with the busy world around us.

Margaret Butler OP (for the NZ Dominican Sisters Leadership Team) – *letter abridged*

The editors would like to thank the writers of this and many other letters of congratulation we received as a result of the media awards.

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change arise through small groups of Christian people who gather regularly to pray, debate, inform themselves, and support each other in action. Thirdly, crusades for justice must never be divorced from a soundly based spirituality, lest it just becomes another 'cause' – or an ego-trip.

And finally there is a need for leadership. As we watch our TV screens and murmur our prayers for peace, we could well wonder when Jerusalem might produce its own Mahatma Gandhi or its Nelson Mandela. ■

M.H.

Promoter's corner

You noticed, I am sure, *Tui Motu*'s recent 'victories' in the trans-Tasman awards for Catholic publications. Not Olympic recognition, but competing and winning in the company of our Aussie mates on the gospel trail is a good start, don't you think? It's very encouraging.

More encouraging still though are the occasional stories we hear from within the TM community. Two come to mind. A New Zealand grandmother sent a gift subscription to a granddaughter in Australia. A year later the granddaughter not only was delighted to renew her subscription but paid gift subscriptions for two of her own friends. This is topical as Christmastime comes round again. What gift can compare with one that appears 11 times in a year, new every time?

The other story relates to a prominent parish in Taranaki where a group of women have undertaken the monthly sale of TM at parish Sunday masses as their Jubilee project. What an excellent choice! And I bet they don't stop when the Jubilee year ends. They sound to be the persevering kind.

We find these small victories vastly encouraging as we strive to ensure a future for *Tui Motu*. If you hear some we haven't heard, please write and tell us about them.

Tom Cloher

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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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Casting the first stone

Theologian Humphrey O'Leary CSsR points the finger at those in the Roman Curia who convict others of sin

How merciless and indeed self-serving one face of church leadership can be (see last month's editorial – ***The two faces of Roman Catholicism,*** also the previous month's article by Fr. Pat Maloney – ***How merciful is the Catholic Church ?***), was manifest in the Roman Curia's recent declaration on the import of canon 915 of the *Code of Canon Law*.

This canon states that those "who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin are not to be admitted to holy communion". The eyes of the Curia were fixed on the asserted sinful state of divorced and remarried laity while remaining studiously averted from the possibly sinful state of clergy in high places.

There is ample evidence that manifest persistence in grave sin in the form of abuse of power is a feature of Curial life and culture. But this is an offence about which church leadership is self-servingly silent. We have had repeated Curial statements spelling out the evils of gay lifestyle, remarriage after divorce, certain forms of family planning. When have we heard from the Curia a spelling out of the evils of the abuse of ecclesiastical power?

The wording of the recent statement of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith on the relationships between Christian bodies, *Dominus Jesus,* caused widespread offence. Cardinal Edward Cassidy, president of the Pontifical Council for Christian Unity, has, despite a lifetime spent in the Curia's Secret-ariate of State, retained the admirable Australian characteristics of forthright-ness and honesty. He subsequently came as close as a Vatican official can to saying publicly of his colleagues, "They got it wrong".

Why? Because the Congregation, assertive of its historical superiority over the other branches of the Roman Curia, went ahead with a badly-worded statement without adequate consultation with other branches, much less with the wider church. The Congregation's abuse of authority many would judge as gravely sinful.

Whether or not such an individual instance constitutes sin in high places, it is part of a sinful pattern. Eminent and respectable figures in the Church have called for reshaping of the way in which power is exercised by those at the helm in Rome. Cardinal Hume, Cardinal Konig and Archbishop Quinn are just some of the names that come to mind.

Many see the present practice of Roman centralising and high-handedness as an abuse of power. As such, they judge it a clear case of what the canon means when it speaks of those "who obstinately persist in manifest grave sin". That such conduct is an obstacle to ecumenical progress and for many Catholics a cause of alienation from the Roman primacy are well established facts.

No doubt the senior Curial figures involved would plead innocence, asserting their good intentions and their wish to remain faithful to the teachings and discipline of the church. One could well concede that Curial authorities are free of subjective guilt, conditioned as they are by years immersed in an atmosphere that takes the present system for granted. Their blinkered vision may save them personally from the threat of eternal damnation. But the fact that such individuals, widely believed to be guilty of abuse of power, are allowed to receive Holy Communion, indeed to celebrate the Eucharist, is for many a scandal and a case of double standards that should not be tolerated.

Discernment as to whether or not the current policies and actions of the Roman Curia amount to objective grave sin cannot be left to the Curia itself. Adamant declarations from the Curia that no suspicion of wrongdoing falls on its activities amount only to a plea of not guilty, not to an acquittal. The only body capable of a valid assessment would be a General Council, or perhaps the Synod of Bishops, provided this was acting independently and not under the manipulation of the Curia.

Even the Holy Father himself would not be a satisfactory arbiter, compromised as he is by his close association with the Roman bureaucracy. The lesson of history is that high authorities in the Church have at times in the past been guilty of clearly reprehensible behaviour. There is no reason to assume that this cannot be the case again today.

Abuse of power by those entrusted with authority at the higher levels in the Church is manifestly more serious than continuance in a uncanonical second marital union. The devil had his priorities right when he tempted Jesus not to sexual liberties but to abuse of power. If certain privileged categories of the faithful are exempted from the application of the rules regarding admission to the Eucharist, then the Roman Curia forfeits its credibility and betrays the trust placed in it by the body of the faithful. ■

The Gate of Life
an image of reconciliation

Author Mike Riddell visits the Falls Road in Belfast and brings back some lessons for racial tensions in New Zealand

One month ago I was in Northern Ireland. Together with my wife Rosemary, we were taken on a tour through West Belfast – and in particular along the Falls Road district. The couple who accompanied us worked in that area, attempting to establish Christian communities of reconciliation. She was from a Catholic background and he a Protestant one. We observed many things. The poverty was the most obvious; poor housing, high rates of unemployment, and a lot of alcohol being consumed in the middle of the day. We saw the so-called 'peace line', a towering wall topped with razor wire which marked the dividing line between Catholic and Protestant communities.

The huge murals – or 'muriels' as our guides called them – which covered the sides of buildings were of special interest. The history and philosophy of the so-called 'troubles' were recounted, albeit with a distinctly Catholic and IRA spin. *History is written by the winner*, one proclaimed. We went past a house which had functioned as an IRA headquarters, and were told that two men had been shot dead on the doorstep.

At one point in the journey Terry, who was driving, pulled over to the side of the road. We were outside a cemetery. He was very excited about what he had found there, and lead us to the outside wall. There was an entrance way which had once served as a gate to the Jewish burial ground. Emblazoned over the lintel was Hebrew lettering which read *The Gate of Life*. "Fancy that", he said with a great and hopeful smile, "the gate of life here on the Falls Road." I somewhat cynically noted that the gateway had been bricked up.

We were staying in a house with another young man, Gareth, who was also working for peace in Belfast. He had grown up Protestant, but had just finished his doctorate on the theological roots of anti-Catholicism in Northern Ireland. Gareth was taking a few risks in inviting me as a Catholic to speak to a group of reasonably conservative Protestants. One of the men who attended the seminars which I was giving had served a life sentence for murdering two people in an act of sectarian violence. The man carried the pain of his experiences in his eyes, and was now trying to live his life as an act of contrition for the wrong he had done.

In the Falls Rd area of Belfast slogans and murals are a constant reminder of historical grievances

Gareth's father had been for many years been the head of the fingerprint bureau in the RUC. The children had grown up with the prospect that their father might be shot at any time. Whenever he was late coming home from work, or there was a knock at the door, the family suffered an unspoken anxiety.

Gareth's mother had worked in the Department of Agriculture. Her best friend there was another Protestant girl by the name of Irene Andrews. She'd recently started going out with a Labour politician, Paddy Wilson, who happened to be Catholic. Irene rang Gareth's mother one afternoon to report that she had a date to go dancing with Paddy that night, and asked what she should wear.

By all accounts the pair had a good night out, after which they parked up in some remote spot. Their bodies were found the next morning in the car. Paddy Wilson had been stabbed 30 times. Irene was stabbed 20 times, and had both breasts cut off. The attackers had only intended to kill Wilson, but were apparently incensed to find a Protestant girl with a Catholic. One of the men convicted of the murders was John White. He is now Chairman of the Ulster Democratic Party, and sitting in the new Northern Ireland Assembly.

These stories and experiences crowded in on me during our brief sojourn in Belfast. I was faced with the complexities of the struggle for peace and reconciliation. It is one thing to know that things have gone terribly wrong in Northern Ireland. It is another alto-gether to know where to start in the quest to bring healing and lasting peace. I was confronted with the mountain of obstacles which stand in the way of bringing reconciliation to a religiously and politically divided community. And yet, miraculously, the people of Northern Ireland have made a beginning. It has taken great courage, and much more will be needed if the endeavours for peace are to last.

When we arrived home to New Zealand, we walked into a vigorous political debate which had been initiated by Tariana Turia's statement that Maori had suffered post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of colonisation, and comparing it to the suffering of Jewish people following World War II. Her description of the process as a "holocaust suffered by indigenous people" angered many people, and she was directed by Helen Clark to apologise. Whatever your views on that incident, it was a reminder to me that when we discuss reconciliation in our own context, we cannot do it in the abstract. We too live in a community which faces conflict because of our history. We too have made a beginning toward reconciliation, but have a long way to go to complete the journey.

How to navigate that journey, given our Christian faith and commitment, is the question which confronts us. There can be no doubt that we of all people face the obligation toward reconciliation. The whole message of the gospel is one of reconciliation with God, and we are invited to bear witness to such reconciliation through our own attempts at peacemaking. The historical facts, however, confront us with the reality that Christianity has as often been a cause of conflict in divided communities as a source of healing. We do well then to begin by confessing that although we know the theory, much of our practice contradicts it.

One person who has written compellingly on reconciliation in recent times is the Croatian theologian Miroslav Wolf. His starting point is whether he would be able to embrace one of the Serbian fighters who were attacking his people. His answer was that he could not, although he knew that he should be able to. Fortunately he did not stop there, but went on to write a book entitled *Exclusion and Embrace*. In this he recognises the very real barriers to reconciliation which need to be confronted in order for it to be a political possibility. His primary insight is that pursuing the quest for justice, while a necessary part of the Christian message, may be counter-productive in deeply divided communities.

Instead of beginning with the image of the Exodus from which Liberation Theology has drawn much of its inspiration Wolf uses the analogy of the *embrace*. He draws particularly on the story of the Prodigal Son, and the father's unconditional welcome of his estranged son. Wolf also points us toward the open arms of Jesus on the cross, as he prays for forgiveness for his persecutors. In these images, it is not justice which is primary; rather attention is given to unmerited grace, embrace of the wrongdoer and reconciliation. He is not speaking of 'cheap grace' which overlooks the extent of division between parties, but is stressing the gospel element of unilateral movement toward the estranged.

One of the chief insights of Wolf, I think, is to recognise that reconciliation requires that we find some way of moving beyond the 'otherness' of the stranger. Categories such as 'enemy', 'oppressor', 'terrorist', 'agitator' and even 'victim' are labels which all help us to dehumanise people we have no connection with and make them more distant from us. We must find ways of asserting our own identity which do not see the identity of others as a threat to us. For Christians it will be a case of whether our identity in Christ is seen as being deeper than our other sources of cultural belonging.

I want now to focus on three simple elements of the process of reconciling.

1. Stories of suffering

History might be written by the victors, but it is retold by all the participants. Stories have a remarkable life, and even if they are forced underground for a time, they will generally surface again at some stage in the quest for hearing. In situations of historical conflict, it is common for stories of grievance not only to be passed on, but to become sources of ongoing anger and hatred.

When Gareth's mother tells her story of how her friend Irene was terribly mutilated, the narrative has the power to carry forward a sense of injustice which might easily become a desire for revenge. In divided communities such stories are used to foster violent retribution for perceived wrongs.

What are we to do then? Should we look for a way to silence such stories? Quite the reverse. An essential component of any process of reconciliation is that the stories must be told and listened to. It is important that they are heard by those who are regarded as 'the other side', and not just as war stories to foster tribal identity. One of the most helpful books in the Northern Ireland peace process is called *Lost Lives*. In a non-partisan

"..Christianity has often been a source of conflict in divided communites..."

way, it simply seeks to document the details of every person who has died in the so-called 'troubles' since 1966. The significance of it is that nobody is lost; no-one's life or story is treated as insignificant. It also allows anyone to see the tragedy and pain on both sides of the balance sheet.

But it is in South Africa where the power of being allowed to tell stories has been most clearly recognised. Under the leadership of Desmond Tutu, the *Commission for Truth and Reconciliation* has instigated a process by which those who have suffered under the reign of apartheid are given a public hearing. To a certain extent this has come at the cost of justice, in that many of those implicated in the atrocities described have not been charged with any crime.

It is a risky and ambitious undertaking, but the early signs are that it is doing much to avert the bloodbath which many of us saw as unavoidable. We should never underestimate the healing power in victims being able to gain a hearing for their story of pain, and for the perpetrators to be confronted with it. When we truly hear someone's story, we enter into it and become a part of it. It is no longer possible to distance them as being other than we are.

There may be clues here for our own divided society. Some 30 years ago James K. Baxter pointed out that we have conveniently buried the stories of the Land Wars. "Our forgetting is too like amnesia," he said. "I think the god of death takes charge of us in spite of our innocence. We are unable wholly to opt out of history." This attempt to silence the past has created an inner emptiness, and the way forward requires the retelling of the some of the lost stories.

"Suffering can be creative," Baxter argues, "if it finds a voice." The main benefit of the Waitangi Tribunal may prove to be that it gives aggrieved Maori the opportunity to speak of their sense of loss and injustice. It is unfortunate that this has not taken place in a more prominent and public way.

2. The need for leadership

The major contemporary icon of the type of leadership which is called for has to be Nelson Mandela, who spent 27 years in prison can emerge without being embittered by the experience, and went on to lead his country into a process of reconciliation. His own capacity for forgiving the wrongs done to him has acted as a huge circuit-breaker in the journey toward peace in South Africa. Mandela's dignity, wisdom and quiet strength have enabled him to inspire people of good will within every ethnic community to work toward a vision of a common future.

...a willingness to convert their experience of suffering into compassion rather than hatred

Alongside, we might mention people such as Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi. The common thread seems to be the willingness to convert their own experience of suffering into compassion rather than hatred, and so to represent that possibility for others. In our own context we might look to people such as Whina Cooper and Doug Graham, both of whom sacrificed their popularity for the greater good of reconciliation. Much could be done to improve race relations within New Zealand with the right kind of leadership.

3. The cancellation of debt.

Some older forms of the Lord's prayer had us asking God to 'forgive us our debt'. In situations of historical injustice, no matter how much is done to redress the balance, there will always be some legacy of wrongdoing in the ledger. It is impossible to undo past wrongs, and the consequences of them are never completely addressed through any form of compensation. There will be a moral and spiritual debt due to one or other and sometimes both parties. I suspect there are only two options as to how to handle such debt. Either it is held onto and becomes a source of ongoing grievance – or it is 'forgiven'.

In this season of Jubilee, it seems appropriate to hope for the forgiveness of debt. The major focus of the Jubilee 2000 has of course been the attempt to win cancellation of the economic debt owed by poor countries to rich countries. The philosophy behind it is the undeniably Judeo-Christian concept of Jubilee, in which debt is not allowed to accumulate over time, but is periodically forgiven by those to whom it is owed. When the campaign first began, it seemed naive to imagine that the major financial powers would even consider it. But now some $90 billion of debt is under review, and the campaign is hoping for further progress before the year is out.

In conflict-ridden situations such as Bosnia, South Africa and Northern Ireland – and dare we suggest in our own context – the only way beyond continuing spirals of accusation and retribution is through the forgiveness of a justly-owed debt. Justice and dignity demand that whatever debts are outstanding are fully recognised as legitimate before they may be forgiven. There can be no insistence of a graceful act of this kind, only a plea for it; a plea made in contrition on the part of the wrongdoer. Even then, the relinquishing of just demands requires huge generosity of spirit and largeness of heart from the party doing the forgiving. It might even entail love of the kind we traditionally associate with the self-giving activity of God toward humanity. It is the sort of love which Wolf connects with Jesus and the story of the Prodigal Son.

Perhaps we have a world-wide and historic opportunity at the beginning of a new millennium to make this into a genuine time of Jubilee. A time when the legitimate debts of the past are laid aside for the sake of constructing a new and more hopeful future for humanity. That would indeed be a sign of the work of God within history. Perhaps it would mean that the *Gate of Life* had finally been unbricked, so that we might all pass through. ■

Welcoming back the straying sheep

June MacMillan suggests a Jubilee exercise for evangelising parishes

The first and most important task of the evangelising parish is to seek out those who have been lost along the way. Some people can never quite shake themselves free of the Catholic church and speak unceasingly of it even when they have turned their backs on it. What is it they cling on to day after day while denying any allegiance or desire ever to be involved?

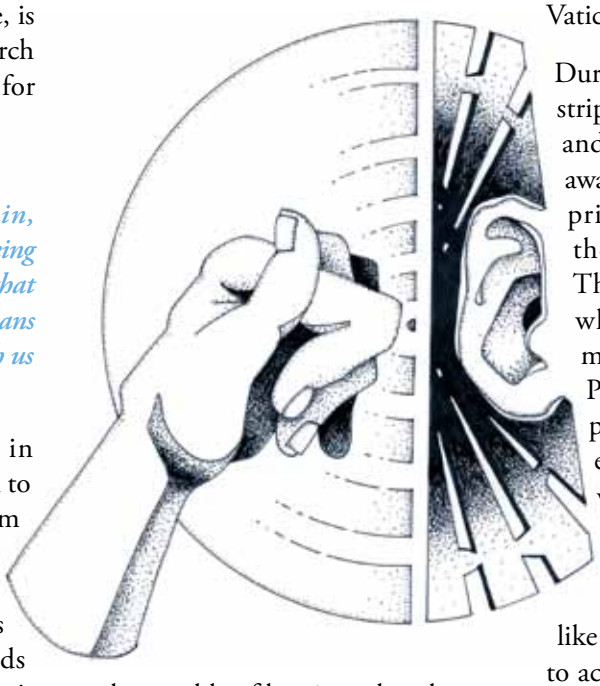
Others would willingly return if there was a way but the door seems shut to them for various unexplored reasons. Still others feel powerless and cannot understand their predicament nor find a way out of it. What is required – more than a theology too influenced by 'oppressor' thinking – is an attitude such as that demonstrated by Jesus in his ministry to wounded people. The parable of the Prodigal, for example, is a far cry from the attitude of the church to those separated from it today, for whatever reason.

Simone Weil wrote:
Two prisoners whose cells adjoin, communicate with each other by knocking on the wall. The wall is the thing that separates them but it is also their means of communication. It is the same with us and God. Every separation is a link.

This is a good example to use in considering many people in relation to the church and its place between them and God. While the church they experience keeps them from a sense of the presence of God it also keeps their focus on God by the wounds experienced in relation to it and their own inability to move on. As a result they are never-endingly knocking on the wall (the church) in the hope of being heard. The task is to turn the wall into a door which will enable such people to re-enter and find just how close God has been to them all the time.

The church is unskilled in the art of listening – and even less able to 'hear' what is being said by the many wall-tapping communicators today. Yet God's Holy Spirit must be lurking somewhere in the cocoon in which the official church is trapped; it will no doubt be the transforming principle which enables the official church to be freed for the service of God's people of the future.

If we are to set up evangelising communities which will be as Christ for the wall-knockers, will we need a different type of training from what is currently available within today's parish? Do we need to go back to the Scriptural drawing board and replan our strategies according to the example of Jesus, who always met those who came his way *where they were at*.



we be capable of hearing what they are saying as they return to us after so long a time in the desert? As the Holy Spirit rescues God's people and leads them back into the fold, can we say that we have put on the mind and heart of Christ well enough to receive them with the warm embrace of the Father to the prodigal son? ■

Where in the Bible did Jesus ever say: "Go and walk a penitential path, and then come back and I will then see if you are acceptable to me." Did he not first heal the blindness or straighten out the crookedness, or correct the attitude of the accuser, before discerning what was their sin and what was some other person's sin, in relation to the one seeking healing? Only when all that had been done did he say, *Go and sin no more!*

In this Year of Jubilee it is to be hoped that a process more worthy of Jesus will evolve as the norm – a process more worthy also of the Kingdom or church community where wholeness and belonging will be found. Are we skilled enough to prepare the territory of the 'Promised Land' for all those who have suffered the hazards of an Exodus journey these past 40 years since Vatican II?

During that 40 years there has been a stripping away of archaic spirituality and also one might say a stripping away of the strength of the hierarchical priesthood which has dominated the Catholic church for so long. There is now a more open forum which allows the laity to have a minimal voice in new developments. Perhaps it is enough to enable the parish community to begin to re-establish itself in a new and more vibrant way. The time is long past when only a few chosen men had the authority to interpret the intentions of God, while the rest like mindless sheep had no choice but to accept their herding principles. The stage is surely set for a journey towards a new blossoming of spirituality.

Can we – 'the church' – be creative enough to develop ways which will allow many to find wholeness, even in the midst of suffering, because we are now a welcoming community? Will

The Springbok Tour was a watershed in New Zealand's social history. And for many, contemporary issues of social justice became increasingly prominent in their lives as believing Christians

Where have all the flowers gone?

Tui Motu carried out a series of interviews with several laypeople and one priest. To each we asked: *where has all the energy for social justice gone, so evident in the church twenty years ago?*

Dunedin accountant Tony Eyre

In 1981 Tony Eyre (*above*) and Yvonne Fogarty were a newly married couple, who became totally caught up in the justice issues which impinged massively on people's lives at the time of the Springbok Tour. Tony and Yvonne moved from Auckland to Dunedin in 1979, and Tony ttook up employment with CORSO.

"Once there," says Tony, "I became involved in the Catholic Commission of EJD set up in 1980. We were at a stage in our life, recently married and newly arrived in a new city, when we were eager to forge links with people and form community with them. We met up with a group of Catholics of similar age who all had a passion for justice. And EJD gave us national links – with people like Fr John Curnow. Meanwhile the concept of base communities was in the air. There was a sense in which meeting together and praying and working together was like belonging to a different parish.

"One of the things CORSO did was to make a film called *Fair Deal* about poverty in New Zealand. Muldoon took exception and the Government removed the privilege of tax deductibility for CORSO donations. A signal was sent out to NZ that CORSO was a suspect organisation. In 1981 there was the turmoil over the Springbok Tour. The National Commission gave a donation of $1000 to HART, which was being perceived as a dangerous organisation. That lit the spark, and it split the church. Bishop Ashby put out a memorandum in defence of the donation. EJD was looked on increasingly askance. If any link could be established with left wing or 'communist' organisations, this was used as a weapon.

"In 1983 we supported Women's Suffrage Day in Dunedin. Because we were seen to be associating with women who held radical views (eg pro-abortion) we were attacked. But it gave real meaning to one's faith – connecting faith with the world we lived in. We would meet together and study the Social Encyclicals. We invited visiting speakers from places such as the Philippines to speak out against human rights abuses.

"I had become interested in the social teachings of the church earlier, in Auckland. Both Yvonne and I were involved in Jocelyn Franklin's adult training programme. Various issues were bubbling up at that time. There ▷▷

▷▷ are so many ex-Catholics in New Zealand who, like myself, had their first formation in justice issues in the Catholic schools in the 60s. The seeds were sown early.

"Yet this work became 'tainted', not because we helped the poor, but because we dared to ask *why* they were poor. A climate of suspicion and distrust was built up. The idea, for instance, of marching against rugby – the Springbok Tour – was a 'mortal sin'.

"In Dunedin the Commission issued a brochure condemning the Tour. At the AGM in 1983 instead of the usual 20 or so people 170 turned up. High passions were expressed. At the election we were all voted off the Commission. Bishop Kavanagh called in Fr McKone and Fr Mahoney and set up a new organisation, and we were all put back on! After 6 months the opposition quietly faded away, so it became business as usual.

"The opposition returned only when a research project was set up on *Sexism in the Church*, which arose out of a national meeting in Dunedin in 1985. The bishops accepted the proposal to go ahead. Christine Cheyne was appointed as researcher. There was organised opposition and a nationwide petition against the project. This survey on sexism in the church was unique to New Zealand. Perhaps only in the US was there was anything like it.

"In 1989 the bishops decided to restructure the Justice and Peace commissions. In effect *Caritas Aotearoa* took over. Many of those who had been active in the 80s felt they had not been listened to in this change, and some went their own ways. The old Commission had been theirs; it belonged to this largely lay group and it was killed overnight.

"Perhaps many of them would have moved on anyway because of new commitments. Nevertheless there was some bitterness and disillusion at the time. It would be interesting to have a reunion of some of those people to see where they are today.

"Recently, speaking to the Catholic University students where our daughter is one of the leaders, I looked back to when I was 19 and we started a prayer group in the parish, which lasted for four years. We met to pray, we reflected and it sometimes led to action. It was the time of the anti-abortion movement and we got involved. We formed a University

Right to Life group and eventually there was a march which involved 10,000 people. I got used to being abused for standing up for what I believed to be a Gospel value. After I got married I found that Yvonne and I were quite different but we influenced each other."

Yvonne continues: "I grew up in a very Catholic family in Dunedin. My Mum was highly influential. My older sister Joan entered the convent and

we were quite different but we influenced each other

that was very influential on me. I was part of *Young Christian Students* (YCS) and became involved in the *Search* movement initiated by Fr Leo Close. It was a personal approach and very challenging at the time.

"I went on a table tennis coaching stint in China and experienced a form of community which I was attracted to. When I came back home and was teaching in Auckland, I joined the community at Newman Hall with Fr Eugene O'Sullivan. I made a decision that I wanted to be either 'in' my faith or out of it. No half measures!

"I was also attracted to the charismatic renewal and lived in the St Paul's inner-city community in Symonds St for a few months, and later at the Grey Lynn Catholic community which was very involved in the parish. I have a vivid memory of Jean Vanier's visit.

"That was where I met Tony. I had to decide between Tony and continuing in the community. Tony was not as comfortable in the charismatic circle. I decided for Tony!

"We got married and we were involved for a while with the St Clare community. Eventually we moved to Dunedin and became immersed in justice issues. I first experienced the tension that that choice involved. Often people become so passionate about the issues that they move away from the church. You need to keep a balance – between prayer and action.

"Being confronted by John Curnow and the social teachings of the church – that was a whole new challenge which I had never previously encountered. Tony embraced it fully. I decided to explore it – and here I allowed myself to be influenced by Tony. Tony and I are very different both in personality and in our faith: Tony is more contemplative where I am more expressive! But we influence each other: that's part of being husband and wife. I had no misgiving about this justice business being a 'gospel work', but you can become so caught up with

the hassles and stresses of it you can lose sight of where God is in it all."

"I felt the tension too," admits Tony. "When I worked for CORSO I became quite cynical. We both became a bit bitter at times over the church – but we never stopped going! When we were challenged by the right wing elements in the local church, we were strengthened by the solidarity of the many people we were working with who supported us."

"Sometimes", says Yvonne, "when you feel 'oppressed' you become stronger and more cohesive. At that time people really supported each other."

"So where has the energy gone nowadays? Some of the issues have actually been 'won'", says Tony, "apartheid, the Philippines, East Timor.

Yvonne Fogarty: '*you can get so caught up in justice you can lose sight of God*'

Things have happened in the last 15 years we never dreamed were possible – like the fall of communism and the anti-nuclear legislation. Maybe it is still happening, only we've moved on a little. Under Pope John Paul there does not seem to be quite the 'call to action' and the encouraging of local communities to get involved that there was during the time of Paul VI. The brakes have been put on.

"The Magisterium no longer seems to be *listening* to the needs of the oppressed people, as at Medellin, so much as *telling* them what is what: it's a different emphasis. When Pope John Paul came to New Zealand we were signatories of a nationwide challenge to him on a number of issues, such as the status of women. We can no longer take for granted that the people in the pew will have a knowledge of Catholic social teachings. That is why I was pleased we could tell our story to the students". ■

Tony and Yvonne and their family are members of Sacred Heart parish, North Dunedin

2. Passion for Justice – home & overseas

Colin Bellett, of Queenstown parish, was involved in the national *Commission for Evangel-isation, Justice and Development* (EJD) in the early 80s. Three people especially impressed him: "Bishop Ashby was a wonderful chairman with a great ability to get the best out of people.

"Fr John Curnow taught us so much about justice and constantly challenged us to get away from the 'head' thing – merely theoretical concepts of justice. He would bring us down to earth. I went with him to a Pacific partnership conference in the Philippines. He was internationally acclaimed as an advocate of the oppressed and the poor, and for setting up the Pacific and Asian partnerships. He never liked simply throwing money at a project, nor did he like the relationship of donor-recipient. His preferred method was the sharing of resources and working to find solutions as a partnership – a 'no-strings-attached' approach.

"The third person was Jocelyn Franklin. I recall an ideological difference between her (with the Auckland people) and the Christchurch group. Jocelyn believed in first sitting down with the people who were suffering and praying for change, whereas John Curnow sought to precipitate change through action. Jocelyn emphasised trust in God: she believed in reflection first, then action.

"I had previously been involved in Charismatic Renewal, but John Curnow was highly suspicious of that. Jocelyn sometimes found John unyielding. He was intolerant of what he saw as 'waffle'. In fact, down south most of those who marched against the Springbok Tour were from the prayer groups.

"Meantime the EJD had opted to fund HART, and this received a withering criticism from the *Tablet*. John Kennedy would blitz us, and this forced us to 'measure up' because we were spending other people's money. I had no difficulty in spending money in this way and it was John Curnow who helped us see beyond the slogans to the real issues. He prompted us to take risks.

"The other hot potato was the women's issue. As long as the women's solidarity group you were supporting was in India or Pakistan that was fine. But helping a women's refuge in New Zealand was supporting the cause of radical feminism. And that was taboo.

"People were comfortable writing a cheque out for famine relief or to feed and clothe the poor somewhere overseas. But, for example, to fund a particular women's group might mean you were perhaps alongside a lesbian group. So we had to argue that it was the common cause we were supporting. There was an ongoing debate as to where the funds were going.

"Later on the change to *Caritas* helped to internationalise aid support: funds were transferred within, say, the Pacific Partnership to help develop a local project. I felt the bishops' initiative in setting up *Caritas* helped give the work an international profile and this forestalled the earlier arguments. ▷▷

Caritas is at the heart of the mainstream church. A project would be proposed, then approved and funded from elsewhere."

Where has the energy for justice issues gone?

"A good example is the protest against the world economic situation, which produces a widening gap between rich and poor. Successive governments have run with the 'market driven' economy. Commentators argue that if we don't go along this track we're destined for Third World status. People find it difficult to get a grasp of such an abstract idea – so the easiest thing is to do nothing.

"I think that to be effective you have to belong to a group which meets regularly and reflects on the issues in the light of the gospels – and then you will begin to recognise the value in any action. And studying the encyclicals is part of that. In the old days we were motivated to keep up with what the church teaches. But you need to belong to a group and go through the see-judge-act process which Cardijn insisted on. This was principally a lay movement in the church.

"St Vincent de Paul's members and Mother Teresa's Sisters do the hands-on charity. They might say: 'let someone else worry about the changing'. People warm to the work they do, and it's easy to recruit for those charities – but not for a justice group. People say: 'it's all a bit too hard! It's beyond our capacity.' You certainly need the solidarity of a group to make any progress.

"Where there is a strong justice group in a diocese, it will reflect, say, on the

a group reflecting on justice issues in the light of the gospels

Treaty. Then it can initiate it in parishes as a Lenten programme. And in our younger days there was the Catholic Youth Movement – and then the CFM (Catholic Family Movement) – and these provided the framework.

Nowadays the world of TV and the computer has lessened people's socialising. People don't come together for serious discussion as they did in our young days. We socialised – but we also reflected seriously on issues. Also, few Catholics today will reflect on the Word of God apart from at the Sunday liturgy.

"On the Diocesan Pastoral Council (Colin has been chairperson) we dealt with many remits which came through from the parishes, and many touched upon justice issues. Over ten years the emphasis came on the Evangelisation thrust. We did not see ourselves as the planners for the future, so much as the channel of communication. Each region had its own needs and priorities. People needed to reflect locally on justice issues as they impact on them. We might advise on what Lenten programme the diocese should support. Or what other programmes parishes needed. There is a group meeting in Gore which is a good model. They are studying the writings of Naom Chomsky, but always in a Scriptural context. It's a good opportunity to extend the discussion ecumenically.

"I also think the church missed a wonderful opportunity with charismatic renewal. There was criticism that they were simply a mob of 'chandelier swingers', but with guidance and with the prayer base they had, they could have been easily moved into basic justice issues. I was certainly proud of the group in Invercargill, because they accepted the commitment to become leaders in their local parish communities.

"I really believe that the *Life in the Spirit* format, even for just a weekend, can motivate people to want to move on in their faith journey. It becomes no longer enough just to sit back. And this I believe, is the way you can energise movements for justice." ■

3. A theology of church founded on justice

Many of the issues." says Jim Consedine, "which were stimulant to the social justice movement of the late 70s and the 80s – the nuclear issue, apartheid, Maori concerns, East Timor – have now become mainstream rather than being simply seen as rebel causes. Social change takes place when small ginger groups succeed in moving these issues out into the mainstream.

"But what has also happened is that the bishops in many countries, including New Zealand, restructured the ***Justice and Peace*** Commissions. Some would say they 'gutted' them. In effect they took away the focus on actually *doing* things. In New Zealand there was no dialogue about this change. It was effectively a mandate from on high. Many of those who had worked in these areas became disillusioned and even walked away from the institutional church. They don't trust church leadership any more. It was a disempower-ment of lay people. The authorities can get away with not consulting the clergy – but they cannot get away with ignoring the laity.

"Meantime the pace of living has picked up dramatically. The market economy leaves people with so little energy. I look around my congregation on a Sunday morning and feel I simply cannot ask more of people today than they are already doing. Everybody is competing in this mad, mad race of life! "The culture is so abrasive and

aggressive. It simply leaves people exhausted. And everyone is affected by this global change. Until we see this it is very difficult to grasp what alternatives the Christian church may offer. The church becomes preoccupied with nurturing itself and looking after individuals rather than promoting alternatives.

"In the Christchurch diocese all the ***Justice and Peace*** groups which had been strong in Bishop Ashby's time, were dissolved. One reason for this was that the women's issue got too close to the bone for the bishops to be able to handle it. The crunch question was; *who is in charge?*; and, in effect, the hierarchy said: *we are, and this is the way it is to be!*

"The justice movement has always impacted primarily on a very small minority. The prophetic thrust comes from the committed few rather than the masses. So, only a few people were affected by the decision. And they have gone their various ways – into politics, into alternative movements outside the church, and so on.

The other thing we need to focus on is where the primary model of church is emerging. The Vatican Council talks of two models. In the great debate which took place there, the *hierarchical* model took second place to the *People of God* model, which was the predominant one.

"The Council Daybook describes how the first document on the church was thrown out by the bishops during the First Session. You can see the development of thought coming: it was like a parliamentary process. But after the Council the bureaucratic mindset took over again and re-established how things were to be – and how the bishops and the national conferences were to act. Even the Synods have become showpieces, not unlike what used to be happen in Moscow during the communist days.

"Round the world however there are emerging committed Christians who follow the first model. The *Ploughshares* activists in the US for example are regularly confronting the real evil of nuclear armaments and the gobbling of resources by the military. This movement is largely spearheaded by Catholics – they are the real 'saints' of our age.

"In Northern Ireland there are groups like this emerging to deal with violence and working for reconciliation. They in no way operate out of a hierarchical model. They have this gut feeling to work for healing the rifts, and the theology is being written as they go. It may be a traditional theology – but framed in a new way. And the same applies in southern Africa. This type of movement cuts across the denominations, because they are all on about the same sorts of issues.

"It's important to recognise that these models of church are not mutually exclusive: they are *both-and* models. Practically everything I have become involved with has been sparked by people doing their own analysis according to their Christian beliefs and often nurtured by the sacraments of the church and the wonderful communities they belong to. So I work in the Catholic Worker movement which is more on the *People of God* model. I work also in my parish – and that's primarily in the hierarchical mould.

"We have two different ways of being church which are not pitted against each other. When people walk away from the church because they have run up against authoritarian intransigence, I am sad because they also are seeing the church only in its hierarchical form, whereas the Vatican Council taught something else. The hierarchical model is there to protect traditional truth and wisdom, which we need to be able to draw on.

"Tragically, the centralised bureaucracy of the Roman church seems to see itself as the *only* model: they think they *are* the church. Regrettably many of the bishops support that view, although there are others wise enough to recognise it's not that simple and they encourage people to remain faithful in spite of Rome. I say to people: *do not focus on those negative things but live your lives as baptised Christians out in your community with your families*. This was the vision of, say, Dorothy Day. I say: *do not become too bothered with rulings and regulations which often are not helpful.*

"The Spirit works in people's lives slowly over a period of time, through debate and reflection, until they come to the point where they can say: *I think this is the right thing to do; I think this is what I believe.* This process of coming to a decision has been guided by the Spirit. The major Council documents would probably have been thrown out at the beginning of the Council – but after three years they were voted through almost unanimously.

at Vatican II the hierarchical model of church took second place to the People of God model

"Sadly, the official Catholic church today still has no processes or structures to facilitate growth among lay people. Where are the assemblies which allow free and open discussion on all the issues which really affect their lives? They aren't there, possibly because of fear – that people may come up with something which is not acceptable to the current mindset in Rome!

"The Spirit is not bound by any of this of course and continues to work in people's lives in spite of Rome! The anti-nuclear movement, the environmental movement are full of people motivated by strong Christian values, and we need to recognise that here is church operating as model One. But I also try to encourage people to be part of both models. If you are not coping with aspects of one model, leave that aside. Get on with the spirituality which is still present.

"I say to people: you are a good example of model One working; but don't walk away from model Two. We still have a lot to learn from it." ■

Fr Jim Consedine is parish priest of Lyttelton, a prison chaplain and a passionate advocate of Restorative Justice

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4. Where has the church gone wrong?

The 60s were a hopeful time" suggests Anna Holmes, "all sorts of things were happening which made people think that change was possible – the women's movement, student agitation, the election of John Kennedy. It was a world on the move and Vatican II was included in this. The church in the 50s as I remember it was quite a dreary place. In the 60s there was an explosion of possibilities – encapsulated in the figure of John XXIII. And Paul VI consolidated many of these changes. In the late 60s I was in East Africa and the church was buzzing – as was the New Zealand church when we returned here in 1974.

"Much of this energy was dissipated when retrenchment happened in the institutional church. The lay assemblies which took place in the Christchurch diocese at the instigation of Bishop Ashby gave rise to great discussion and reflection. Yet the general attitude and behaviour of priests and people were not affected. Some people were ready to run with the social justice proposals but it wasn't allowed to happen. There was a lot of resistance among the priests.

"Bishop Ashby was quite authoritarian, and many of his priests resented that. He also suffered over the number of priests who left at that time, many of whom were among the most dynamic. It was as if the church had been offered a glimpse of a wonderful vista through a crack in the door – only to have the door slammed on its fingers!

"Bishop Ashby was passionately involved in the social issues – the Springbok Tour especially – and that divided the Christchurch diocese. Members of the same family wouldn't talk to each other, or would refuse to go to church, or walked out of church because of something the priest said.

Then, in the mid-80s there was a radical change in economic conditions. The New Right swing economically put a lot of pressure on people's lives and absorbed their energy. It also became extremely obvious that the state could no longer be relied on to look after people when they retired. Financial pressures increased on the average family – and this put extra pressure on the very age group who would otherwise have been most active in the church.

"The advent of Bishop Meeking in Christchurch brought about a clamp down which was extremely destructive: some people simply left the church. The tension for the people – especially in social justice circles – was huge because he closed down practically all the agencies which worked for social justice. There had been disquiet elsewhere about the way Christchurch was, and I'm sure Meeking was sent with instructions from Rome to bring things into line!

as if the church was offered a wonderful vista – only to have the door slammed on its fingers!

"Many of those who left continue to work in social justice fields as 'ex-Catholics'. And some of those were people who had been deeply involved in the church. They usually continue to remain searching Christians. And they continue to hold the social justice teachings they learned as Catholics.

"Another cause of leaving was family members suffering at the hands of the church in relation to contraception or marriage, especially marriage breakdown. Sometimes parents were not merely distressed but bitter about the way their children's cases had been dealt with.

"In my travels I constantly meet people who have suffered because of the way the church is so inept at dealing with adults, especially educated adults. These issues – marriage and contraception – are affecting people all round the world. I remember travelling on a crowded ferry in 1992 with a Bangladeshi villager who became really worked up over a recent Vatican document and cried out: "The Pope does not understand what real families are all about!" Later I met two young German doctors whose concerns were very similar.

"The sad thing for me is that the church still could enable there to be a wonderful community of faith if only it would stop trying to tell people what to do and, instead, do a bit of creative listening. The institution continues to restrict the common ground that people can share: the boundaries are being reduced instead of the windows being flung open – as they were in the days of Pope John. I think the internal changes since Vatican II have been too deep to be reversed. But what has happened is that their effectiveness has been slowed down.

"Clericalism in the Catholic church has a lot to answer for, because it is about the misuse and failure to share power. The present Pope has many good characteristics but he has never changed his style from the time when he grew up in a church in jeopardy. Sadly, in huge areas of Europe the church has now become totally irrelevant to people, and this is affecting us in New Zealand too. When the church began to lose young women, those were the real danger signals. That has been happening since the late 70s. But there are also women today in their late fifties who are also departing. They say: *I can't take any more of being treated as if I don't exist.*

"There are still good supportive communities. The trouble is I'm not sure whether the concept of parish is appropriate any more. Inner city parishes can be welcoming and they will attract members from all over a city. Rural

parishes of course have always been different: the latest stupidity from the *Congregation of the Doctrine of Faith* is a terrible blow to them because the rural community inevitably embraces all the churches.

"With all the Jubilee attempts at healing, one thing the church has failed to do is to reach out to those who have left over contraception or marriage problems. The issue of marriage is critical. I certainly believe marriage as a lifelong state is possible. But the church has to be also a place of mercy and love for people in situations considered to be inappropriate. Such people feel rejected and unloved.

"The priests who left are often unforgiven too. There can be healing for them, but only where bishops allow them to be employed – and some won't. They need to come back and be embraced by a community which welcomes them.

"Because it is so heavily clericalised the Catholic church has never had functioning lay assemblies where these problems can surface. Anglicans and Presbyterians have lay representation where the decisions are made. Whereas we have no common ground, so the institution pretends that everyone toes the line over, say, contraception and marriage. But it's a myth – like the assumption that all priests are celibate. The rules are promulgated as if they were real. But real life is full of failures, and having to be picked up and starting again.

"Forgiveness and reconciliation are part of being 'family'. The communal Third Rite of Reconciliation has been forbidden by the official church! That's a misuse of power! I have experienced some wonderful Third Rites, which have done so much good. Likewise I find it bizarre that forbidding people communion is somehow going to enable them to be 'better church'! It's a sacrament which was given to everybody. If you have a feast, you feed everybody. This ban seems to me a misunderstanding of the meaning of Eucharist.

"Hopeful signs? One sign is that the young continue to search for a place to belong and will still respond to the authentic message of Christ. They don't respond to being told what they ought to think or believe! Many of the people who have left fail to realise that the church today is very different from the church they left. That is the saddest thing of all. There are so many who no longer see themselves as 'church', yet who would probably be quite comfortable in many parishes today." ■

Dr Anna Holmes is a General Practitioner, who came to New Zealand over 30 years ago and has lived and worked mostly in Christchurch

The Dream that wasn't

I had a dream that jumped 2000 years
from the world of the first followers of Jesus
to this cyberspace world.
Where concepts of global networking being common place,
provide new horizons for the challenge
to *take the Gospel to the whole world.*

This world fostered the dream
of an *International Conversation:*
to explore models of discipleship
in structures of communication between countries and people
uniting in service of the Kingdom.

But four years later hopes lie unrealised.
The vision failed to ignite. Why?
Hard to say.
But the dream is dead – stillborn.
It is time to come back to earth.

Yes, earth!
Is this *earth* reality a new 'God' paradox for me?
Is it a time when the proverbial seed
must go into the ground and die
in order to bring forth a new life-giving dream?

Or is it a dead seed destined to do nothing
but to rot and provide humus
for other forms of life?

If so, what kind of dying is necessary for now?
Is new life to come in blind faith
as one cuts the nerve
that attaches every emotion
to expressions of self-interest?
This same self-interest chord,
fiercely protected over the years,
wanting the power to keep every human effort
directed back to its own enhancement.

Is the cost of a wrong choice to be a life
totally outwardly expressed and satisfied,
yet risking the loss of ever discovering
the peace, depth and freedom of one's true identity?

Or, is this a new time to 'let God be God'.
To trust his constant engagement
of selective transformation.
Not only my being, but that being
which is an intrinsic part of the whole
indivisible, ever-evolving creation story.

If so, worldly failure is simply a blip on the divine screen.
And when I relinquish the "never to try again" resolution,
God moves freely to create ways for me to thread
through the tangled human emotions
of real and unreal expectations.

International Conversations of the future
may become manifold in a thousand different forms.
Concepts as such with no restricted entry points
may become the norm.
But nothing withstands the power of the love energy
of an ambitious God
who accepts with joy the 'yes' required
for exploration of new dreams
waiting to be tested in the crucible of time.

Has, or did, the dream fail?
The question is no longer relevant!

Jocelyn Franklin

For better, or

30 years ago Blair Badcock left behind a prosperous and stab
accessible holiday 'bach'. On return he found a country ravage
So why doe

Life's an unknowable journey. If we had prior knowledge of the way-stations, let alone the destination, would we have the courage to start out? I left New Zealand 30 years ago to undertake post-graduate studies overseas and stayed in Australia to make my life there. As part of the generation who absorbed something of the ethos that took the welfare state to its high point in the 1960s, I carried with me a sure sense of what counts as just, as opposed to unjust, social arrangements. No doubt some of that is also due to a strong Methodist upbringing!

Quite unexpectedly, here I am back in New Zealand for good, and at Tom Cloher's urging offer some impressions before they begin to lose their incandescence. There were bound to be changes, but I find there's precious little left from my youth – New Zealand's wonderful natural assets aside – that beckons still. I have been trying to make sense of this loss of those aspects of New Zealand life that I held dear. Even if one discounts the overly sanguine memories of childhood, it is hard to reconcile the economic and social transformation that has taken place with the values that I left New Zealand with half a lifetime ago.

Other societies that New Zealanders like to set themselves against have had to respond, each in their own way, to the same challenges of global economic and social restructuring. Editorial writers in the New Zealand dailies still like to portray it as so, but Australia is no longer the 'Lucky Country'. Too many Australians have had to bear the pain of economic adjustment for that. Yet there is even more that is troubling about returning to the land of my birth after 30 years away.

Naturally, Kiwis abroad keep a fond eye on developments at home, but it comes as a shock to return and find just how much visible damage has been done to New Zealand's institutions and people by the radical reform agenda of the last 15 years. Where other countries have done things by halves, it seems that the leadership on both sides of politics in New Zealand really went out on a limb. In the process of changing the bathwater, New Zealanders have gone as close to throwing out the baby as any other member state of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development(OECD).

I have spent the last 18 months or so travelling back and forth to Australia, pausing to digest from a healthy distance and trying to comprehend the present troubled state of New Zealand. I've read Jane Kelsey and Michael King, Tim Hazeldine and Brian Easton, and Alan Duff and Bruce Jesson, to mention a few, and talked to a smattering of people in public life. All touch on a number of common threads.

Any of the benefits of a more representative system of governance (MMP) have been squandered by political opportunism. The last 15 years in New Zealand have conclusively proven that market regimes are inescapably prone to imperfection, and can fail when applied to health, education, and welfare housing just as ingloriously

as any form of state intervention. The legacy is a loss for the foreseeable future of New Zealand's economic sovereignty, a crisis of confidence with respect to future economic directions, falling living standards, previously unheard of extremes in income and wealth, services that are highly variable in access and quality, racial intolerance, concerns about social cohesion, and the fraying of national identity.

What can a sympathetic outsider's eye pick up to add to this 'home-grown' perspective? One is now struck by how tiny, insular, and vulnerable the New Zealand economy truly is. To put this in perspective, today Australian

r for worse...?

ole New Zealand – lots of small industries, welfare for all, the
ed and divided by 'beggar thy neighbour' economic theorists.
es he stay?

states like Victoria or Queensland are the appropriate economic and social yardsticks for New Zealand *and no longer the whole of Australia* – if it ever really was. This is also true in sports – try as New Zealand might to match Australia in an Olympic medal count. Australian States like South Australia and Tasmania are also slipping behind their counterparts economically, though not necessarily in other important quality-of-life respects. New Zealand has lead its competitors in embracing support for trade liberalisation, the lifting of tariff protection, deregulation of the labour and financial markets, the sale of state enterprises, and the contrivance of markets in the health, education, and welfare housing sectors.

Yet most New Zealanders seem largely unaware of how genuinely radical these policies have been in the translation.

I'm told the public mind was captured when the country was in dire straits in the mid-1980s by ideas imported from abroad without sufficient scrutiny and debate. These ideas on pure markets, public choice theory, and neo-Liberal philosophy, rest uncomfortably with what I took to be core values for New Zealanders. How were people noted for their decency, their common-sense, and down-to-earth steadfastness hood-winked by what amounts to the ideological equivalent of a cargo cult?

Public debate in this country suffers from a degree of closure that simply can't happen in bigger, pluralistic societies. Most New Zealanders remain blithely unaware how poorly served they are by the mainstream media. They are unlikely to read the *Listener*, or *North and South* for their critical analysis and social commentary. What once was a public broadcaster is now just a clone of the other commercial channels. Several editors of the national dailies still appear to take their lead from the Business Round-table and cling to the tired old dogma about deregulation and non-intervention. Radio NZ habitually goes to the trading floor for economic comment these days. That we can support two economic weeklies as conservative as the *Independent* and the *National Business Review* is symptomatic of this deep-seated malaise.

Walking through any of the stores in the Warehouse chain provides a stark reminder of how decimated New Zealand's manufacturing sector has become. Ironically, some of the displaced workers who used to make these goods barely have the wherewithal to buy the cheap substitutes that now flood the market. But even more of the jobs in Thames and Patea have been traded off for *café latte* and BMWs for the smart young set who think the rest of us owe them a living. The wall-to-wall, pastel blandness of the 50s and 60s has been overtaken by a deepening rift between the winners and losers in our urban real estate markets. The 'bach' at the beach has been replaced by million dollar 'retreats' in Queenstown and above the shores of Lake Taupo. ▷▷

▷▷ In endlessly restructuring New Zealand's public service, successive governments have pursued corporat-isation and commercialisation to the point of no return – or so it seems. An ethos of service has been overtaken by competitive instincts. Kafka would wince at Ministerial 'purchase agreements' not too dissimilar from the production targets set by the ministries in highly centralised command economics like the former Soviet Union and China. The privileging of individual choice in accessing public goods has stifled the government's capacity to directly address the needs of local communities and regions. The student loans scheme has yet to be copied anywhere else, and is unlikely to be, despite the best efforts of Aust-ralia's Minister of Education.

Resort to market-related rents for Housing New Zealand tenants, wholesale asset stripping, and the payment of a 'dividend' to Crown Ministers stands alone as a strategy for providing decent social housing. Few New Zealanders appreciate that state housing eventually would have shrunk to between 20-25,000 dwelling units under National. Having put a stop to sales at 58,000 dwelling units, New Zealand currently shares with the United States the indignity of the smallest proportional public rental sector of all the OECD countries.

Having embraced globalisation, such a small, poorly located country can't afford to harbour internal divisions. Nor can the regions afford to pursue separate development agendas. The need for coordination of effort could not be more pressing. Prior to the series of 'Think Big' misadventures in the late 1970s, New Zealand made a pretty good fist of meeting its infrastructure needs considering the size of the economy relative to the size of its land mass. 'Think Big' rightly disillusioned New Zealanders and made them easy prey for market apostles like Douglas and Richardson. Much of the country's investment in strategic expertise has been disbanded. Greater Auckland, especially, is now reaping the costs of neglecting regional land use planning, and failing to properly coordinate future public transport, sewage and waste water disposal and affordable housing needs.

The consequences for Maori and Pacific Islanders of the infatuation with a conservative blend of Neo-liberal philosophy, public choice theory, and economic fundamentalism seem to have been underestimated. The cult of the individual, market idolatry, and the sanctioning of a 'beggar thy neighbour' approach to life are inimical to their communal forms of social organisation, and must be corrosive of their spiritual and cultural values.

Maoritanga cries out for political and business leaders who command respect and can be admired as role models for young Maori

In particular, Maori and Pacific Island males have borne the brunt of unemployment with loss of jobs in manufacturing and packing industries, forestry, and freezing works. The anger and frustration generated by the dislocation in people's lives have found a tragic outlet in the rising incidence of violence towards women and children in the home. Maoritanga cries out for political and business leaders who command respect and can be admired as role models for young Maori. Yet despite the delays in the Treaty settlement process, and a failure sometimes to deliver all that is hoped for, New Zealand has so much to teach Australia about restitution and reconciliation.

While many young New Zealanders are now leaving because the radical experiment has not delivered the opportunities and good life that it promised, for this middle-aged expatriate, properly understanding the transformation has become a condition for remaining and working for a more just society. This is not necessarily about turning the clock back and remaking New Zealand in a likeness of the 'wage earners' welfare state'. Rather, it's about accepting that there are virtues and limits to both sides of state intervention and markets.

What New Zealand should now be striving for after such a robust swing of the pendulum towards *laissez-faire* economic management and public policy is to put as many New Zealanders back to work as possible, and to halt the slide in living standards. The good of a society must always be the end, the economy only the means. New Zealand has had it the wrong way round for the last decade and a half. ■

Marriage or Partnership?

A UK study shows that the practice of 'living together' is leading to a generation of lonely, unmarriageable people. Is it any different here in New Zealand?

Patricia Morgan

Politicians and government bodies these days seem happy to go along with the idea that cohabitation is a kind of folk variant of marriage, without the "piece of paper". It seems that the public agrees. Yet the idea of a good marriage as a goal for life has, if anything, increased in importance, particularly among the young.

To many, cohabitation seems a good way to gain some of the advantages of marriage while preparing for a formal commitment, or just to bide one's time. It is better, they believe, not to get tied up with someone without "testing" them first by living with them. If living together does not work out, breaking up is easy to do. People also believe that trial cohabitation leads to a better marriage, as the necessary interpersonal skills can be built up first.

But the evidence does not support any of this. In fact, cohabitation seems to delay, impede and probably prevent marriage and married parenthood. Since more and more cohabitations end in separation rather than marriage, and since long-term cohabitations are so rare (fewer than four percent last for 10 years or more), this pattern of social behaviour is leaving more people without a partner.

After a first cohabitation has dissolved, many do not try again. For those who do, a second partnership is even more likely to be a cohabitation, not a marriage, and it is even more likely to break down.

But for those who have children within cohabiting partnerships, things also look bleak. Half will end up as lone unmarried mothers because their relationships have dissolved, most of them by the time the child is five (compared with only eight percent of married parents). Formerly married fathers provided income to the mother of their children at more than double the rate of former cohabitants, and the same is true of continued contact with the children.

But despite such depressing statistics, must not long-term cohabitations be at least as successful and happy as marriages since the couple are together because they want to be? Not necessarily. Ninety-two percent of marital unions survive to five years after the birth of a child; those who have cohabited and then married show a 75 percent survival rate five years after a child's arrival, and for those who only cohabit there is no more than a 48 percent chance that they will still be together when their child is five.

Marriages which are preceded by long cohabitations, or where one or both spouses have had multiple cohabitations, also tend to be less happy, with higher levels of conflict. Fewer cohabitants would choose the same partner again if given a second chance, and they tend to rate their relationships as less happy than married people do. Domestic violence has been found to be much more common among cohabitants than among married people.

Evidence now suggests conclusively that marriage is a "healthy environment" – associated with significantly lower rates of illness. Children in families with a mother and her cohabiting partner tend not to do as well as children with two continuously married parents. Men who cohabit have work, sexual and drinking patterns more like those of single people.

Marriage gives people structure and meaning in their lives, a framework for decision-making, and it helps them develop and maintain a coherent set of values and expectations. Cohabitation represents freedom from such demands. Commitment provides aims and a structure for relationships, which carries them forward in bad times and good. It creates something extra beyond the immediate relationship of two individuals, replacing personal objectives by joint goals.

Whatever love the couple have for one another, cohabitation is provisional, without future orientation and does not acknowledge any wider responsibility. It can appeal particularly to those with fewer of the personal skills and inclinations required for a stable or successful partnership. Cohabitants are less likely to be members of groups and organisations, such as the church. They are more likely to make up their own standards of behaviour, rather than being guided by rules or subject to constraints.

Once a low-commitment, high-autonomy pattern of forming relationships is learned, it becomes hard to unlearn. A report from the United States National Marriage Project details how young people expect their future marriages to last a lifetime and fulfil their deepest emotional and spiritual needs. Yet their "singles mating culture" is one of casual sex and low commitment in relationships – "sex without strings and relationships without rings", oriented to men's appetites and interests.

Multiple sexual relationships and bitter break-ups have a negative psychological effect over time and make it difficult for people to find suitable marriage partners. Cohabitation is making a significant contribution to the general crisis in adult relationships, adding to an ever-descending spiral of lowered commit-ment and failed partnerships. It is tragic that the cohabitation experiment, intended to avoid marital breakdown, has led to this. ■

This is an abridged version of an article previously appearing in the London Tablet, *to whom we are grateful for permission to reproduce it. Patricia Morgan is a research fellow at the UK Institute of Economic Affairs.*

Bodyworks – Soulworks

The gym: a parable of the Church or the Kingdom?

Tony Russell

The gym I frequent here in Wellington, *Bodyworks on Thorndon Quay,* is a place that generates a lot of sweat. From 6 am to 9 pm daily it is filled by hundreds of members struggling towards the body fit, the body beautiful, the body athletic. Upstairs, on the mezzanine floor, various Kiwi luminaries mix it with the rest of us: Lomu, wearing his beanie, sweating it out on the cardio machines, the Hurricanes pushing weights, various TV personalities, New Zealand cricketers, the ubiquitous Michael Laws, the Provincial leader of a large religious order, and a galaxy of lesser stars.

Downstairs, large groups - escapees from the nearby government ministries and departments - work out on the main floor to the sound of loud music, battling their way through step, stomp, blitz, pump, jam, Qi-bo and spin. These are not for the faint-hearted, nor for those as Hamlet says of Polonius with 'exceeding weak hams'.

Upstairs again, you can focus on working on your soleus or your anterior deltoids, build stamina on the cross-trainer, or test your energy on a wide variety of machines. It is all great fun, and as what Marx might have called the Lambton proletariat struggle back into their suits and skirts and emerge into the light of common day they all look enriched by the whole performance.

Bodyworks generates not only sweat; it also promotes contemplation. Any group of committed people stirs up comparisons with other such committed groups, the Church in particular. In fact, at first reflection, the gym is an analogy for the Church in many ways, and what happens at Bodyworks seems very close to Soulworks (Church) indeed.

There are the devotees (disciples) who follow a particularly charismatic instructor - one of the most popular aerobics leaders is a youngish mother of triplets (nanny in tow) who is inspiring indeed; in the back room there are quiet and contemplative yoga classes going on; personal trainers, of missionary zeal, encourage the beginners and the weak; fidelity to attendance is high; there are rituals going on everywhere as people focus on what they are doing – or about to do – and the high priests (role models) of athletic achievement and perfection abound.

The gym has a recognisable community of members. There are social events, and a strong sense of achievement and celebration. There is initiation, community, leadership, hope and participation. At first glance it all looks very much like the Church.

However, at a more profound level, the gym is less a parable of the Church and more a parable of the Kingdom. The difference between Church and Kingdom is one which is much teased out in theology. The Church is seen by some as an historically necessary structure which precedes the establishment of the Kingdom. Others opine that what the early Christians expected was the Kingdom; what they got, in fact, was the Church, a vast elaboration of theology, law, ritual, structures, discipline and so on, a lot of it being both unnecessary and even contraindicated in terms of establishing the Kingdom.

Of course, the Lord himself put it quite succinctly: 'the Kingdom is within you'. The Church, in a word, is largely an exterior reality. The Kingdom is of an interior order of things. It is this essential interiority which is so startlingly

manifest in those who are to be found sweating it out in a gym. Let me explain.

Firstly, the gym is noticeably a rule-free society. There is one written rule pasted up (on the cardio machines) which states: *please finish your workout after 12 minutes if other members are waiting to use this machine.* It is observed without objection. For the rest, there are no rules beyond those about common-sense safety. There is no need for a moral theology, a code of law amongst a group that is totally convinced of the value of what it is doing, and totally committed to achieving its purpose.

Furthermore, there is never any indiscipline or bad behaviour in the gym. People go there to perform an activity; there is no messing around. Even slacking off on your own workout is a rare thing. You are there to achieve an end, to do a task which you want to do. And you do it. At that point ethics, moral theology and law go out the window. They are not necessary. The Kingdom will be like that.

Secondly, those who go to the gym are manifestly completely committed to a passionate belief system about health, fitness and physical and psychological well being. Their commitment is essentially future oriented – not just life now, but life in the future, later life. Their commitment is further channeled into strict personal discipline: committed action in the workout and ongoing maintenance in one's life-style: sleep, diet, healthy living, and so on. To write off committed physical exercise as merely physical would be to misjudge the calibre of the inner work that goes into any physical exercise seriously undertaken.

Total inner conviction and absolute commitment – the first hallmarks of the members of the Kingdom – are startlingly manifest at the gym. Young – and older – demonstrate a degree of covenant and persuasion which is remarkable and instructive. The Kingdom will be like that.

Further, there is no overt leadership at the gym, no distinct authority structure. There are those who take up the task of leading, but only temporarily. The aerobics instructors, the personal trainers, those who run the front desk, the owner/manager are all seen (later) doing their own workouts. They too have to put in the hard yards if they are to be participants or part-time leaders. The gym demonstrates one of the most hands-off, benign forms of leadership to be seen. Leadership is by participation and example.

The gym in the ancient world (Greek gymnos = naked) had its own nude democracy. It is noticeable that when people take off their suits and office dress, and don the anonymity of sports wear (lycra, incidentally, is largely a complete no-no) then rank, role and status completely disappear. It is hard to look executive, analytical, governmental or managerial in sweaty shorts and Tees!

The Kingdom too will be without leadership; it will be composed of those who follow 'the Lamb'. When it comes to leadership, the gym can be markedly instructive for both the Church and for Christian communities. Leadership is in the model of 'co-pilgrim'. Only rarely – for an hour at the most – does anyone step out of that role to exercise authority, and only then for the good of others. One then reverts to the role of participant.

Again, at the gym there are no children. A few adolescents do appear now and then, but primarily the gym is 'adults only'. Not just young adults either; there is a goodly measure of more mature folk. This too is indicative of the Kingdom, the community of the mature, the convinced and the committed.

Finally, the gym is remarkable for the degree of mutual encouragement which ebbs and flows there every day. No-one laughs at the beginner, the obese, the slow of foot, the clumsy. Rather there is much good humour and an often amazing willingness to encourage others. This charity is part of a mutual admiration for and affirmation of the efforts of others. Such largesse of spirit, such absence of judgement of others is at the very heart of the kingdom.

While we commonly call ourselves members of the Church we term ourselves citizens of the Kingdom. The differentiation is significant. And while people say that they are members of a gym, it is notable that they most often speak of "my" gym. There is a possessiveness, an ownership of one's gym which is akin to our stake in the Kingdom, in citizenship, in the full enjoyment – here and now – of complete status within an organisational reality.

The Church can be seen as a necessary structure, but a structure which needs continuous deconstruction if the Kingdom is to be allowed to peep through. After all the Church is merely antecedent to the Kingdom - a fact of which we must never lose sight. ■

The Lump

Mary Scully

Friday Night: I'm soaping myself in the bath when suddenly I discover a lump in my breast. My heart jumps. Have I imagined it? I feel it again. It's still there. Silently I berate myself for letting this happen, for not doing regular checks. And yet... perhaps... Tomorrow I'll take time to re-check thoroughly. It might be gone.

Saturday: It's still there, a solid, unmistakable lump. All day, while I'm busy with chores and family, there's an undercurrent of panic and fear going through my head. We're committed to going out this evening, to visit friends. We hardly ever go out on Saturday nights, and tonight my mind is elsewhere. I want to blurt out to the other women: *I've just found a lump in my breast.* But somehow I can't.

Monday: Sunday's over. First thing, ring the doctor and make an appointment for early afternoon, after my morning's work. It doesn't occur to me to not go to school first. As I'm leaving the school grounds at lunchtime, another teacher greets me: *Finished work for the day? Lucky you.* I nod and smile. Lucky?

The doctor examines me with a serious face. Yes, there is a lump. He'll get his wife to make an appointment with a specialist at the hospital. And adds that his wife, the elegant receptionist, had a mastectomy several years ago. She reassures me while making the appointment for Thursday.

Thursday: The days have passed, busy with housework and meals, family affairs, teaching reading and a Guiders meeting. I haven't told the children, haven't talked about it to anyone except Fred.

I drive to the hospital, then wait literally hours in the outpatient clinic. They've forgotten about me. So I chat with an Asian student, and worry with the top of my head about the car that's over-parked. Finally I'm noticed and ushered into the examination room. A student doctor takes down particulars and examines the lump. She's cheerful and I begin to feel better. Then the surgeon has a turn. Pokes and probes, then tells me to get dressed and come into the next room.

The student doctor and a young nurse sit waiting along one wall. The surgeon, behind his desk, comes to the point with little preamble: *I'm 95% certain that the lump is. . malignant.* I'm stunned, can't believe it. I want to cry, to protest, and look quickly at the young women to see if they're watching my distress. They're not. Both are staring at the floor looking so abjectly miserable that I stop feeling sorry for myself and feel sorry for them instead.

I say steadily:*I've been careless, haven't I?* The doctor hastily disclaims this. The lump would be there long before it's possible to feel it. He explains the hospital procedure.

The lump will be removed and analysed while I'm kept under the anaesthetic. If it's malignant, my breast will be removed immediately. I won't know the result until I come to after the operation. He asks if I want the operation next Tuesday or the following one?

– Oh, next Tuesday. As soon as possible.

– Right. Then tomorrow you'll have a chest X-ray and a bone scan for secondaries. The nurse will make an appointment for you.

The sympathetic nurse makes me a cup of tea and tells me more about the operation. I think inconsequently about my new sleeveless dress, not yet worn. No problem, she assures me.

That night I lie awake, my mind in a whirl. I hate my body, hate to touch it, feeling this alien presence right through it. I feel that my life might suddenly end, but I don't want to die. I haven't done all my living yet. I'm not ready to die. Then, as the hours go by, something happens. I begin to see that death is not the enemy, the end of existence, to be feared and rejected. I begin to be reconciled, to accept what comes. By morning, I'm calm, though exhausted.

Tuesday: The day to go into hospital. So much has happened since last Thursday. I've had a chest X-ray, then the bone scan. Despite my fears – would they take samples of bone? would it hurt? – it proved to be a type of all-over x-ray with my bones showing up as green dotted outlines on the screen at the foot of the bed.

Everyone's been supportive. My family, who'll take over chores and cooking. The teachers at school, concerned and helpful. The Brownie mother who's offered to take over the group in my absence, and another, an ex-nurse, who's talked to me for hours about the operation, calming my fears. Yet I've been reluctant to tell people until the last possible moment. All my life, I've turned to prayer for help. Now, I can't pray for myself, and only later discovered that others were praying for me. (Anne, our niece, had her class of children and a prayer group, all praying.)

The mid-winter day is frosty, but sunny. As we call at the library first, for an armful of books, I become aware of the lump tingling, somewhat painful. Then the hospital procedure takes me over – the identity tape on my wrist, my clothes checked and taken away – and I'm into a cold bed in the small ward. The only other occupant, a woman, is obviously recovering from an operation. With tubes and plasma bottles attached, her eyes closed, she looks haggard and unkempt and quite unaware of my presence. I think: *That's how I'll look tomorrow.*

Next, I'm visited by a friendly student doctor. She introduces herself as Heather and says she's been assigned to write my case history. Then I'm alone for a while. Suddenly, the ward sister bustles in and snaps the curtains shut around the other bed. She's followed by seemingly hundreds of doctors and students, who cluster at the foot of my bed. Introducing me as: *She's 48 and still having periods,* Sister whips back the bedclothes and pulls up my nightie, exposing me to all those curious eyes. The senior surgeon, Mr X, advances and gently feels my breasts, his fingers lingering thoughtfully on the lump. The trainee doctors also examine me. Then Mr X says to the first surgeon: *Have you aspirated?*

– No, because I don't think it is a cyst.

– Well, I think you should aspirate now. Sister, will you get a syringe.

My heart, which has been heavy and hopeless, lightens a little. I remember that my GP had said: *At your hospital visit, the lump will be aspirated, and if there's no fluid, it'll be a harmless cyst.* But that hadn't been done then – why not? Sister returns with the syringe. I'm cautioned to lie still, and the needle pricks in. I hear Sister beside me draw in her breath. What's wrong? Did I move? Then there's movement and talking and the doctors all troop out. As he goes through the door, Mr X turns and says casually: *You can go home now.*

So I get out of bed and wonder what to do next. Then Heather comes in to explain to me what I've already deduced. The lump is not malignant, it's a harmless cyst.

One Week Later: I return to the outpatient clinic. The same surgeon examines me again and says there's no need to remove the lump. It has disappeared. He conveys to me his feelings about the incident. He'd been made to look foolish in front of the students. *The lump had changed,* he says, almost accusingly.

Twenty-five years later, I look back on this experience with gratitude. The changed lump has changed my perspectives on living and dying. I'm achieving my ambitions. Our family circle's widened to include marriage partners, grandchildren and rewarding friendships. Ageing has become an opening out, rather than a closing down. ■

Me Myself I
Film Review: Nic McCloy

Hurtling towards what is now known as a "significant birthday" and wondering whether I had made all the right decisions in my life, there was almost certainly some divine intervention in my choice to see this movie.

It is an Australian/French co-production which although it's Aussie through and through, owes a lot stylistically to French cinematic influences. Starring Rachel Griffiths as Pamela (*Muriel's Wedding*, *Hilary and Jacqui*), *Me Myself I* is the story of a woman whose life is not turning out as she imagined it would. Pamela regrets not having married an ex-boyfriend and is convinced that her life would have been much better if she had. Then suddenly she is thrown into a situation in which she has to live the life she would have had if she had married him....

Not nearly as confusing as it sounds, *Me Myself I* deals with some big issues but is at the same time extremely sharp and very very funny. The early scenes are rather dark in their approach but have you on the edge of your seat and willing the characters not to do what they are so obviously intent on doing! When the switch is made to the parallel life, the tone of the film lightens immensely and the twists and turns which the script takes are at the same time thought-provoking and hilarious.

I walked out of this film knowing that the grass isn't necessarily greener on the other side of the fence! A great feeling and a great film. ■

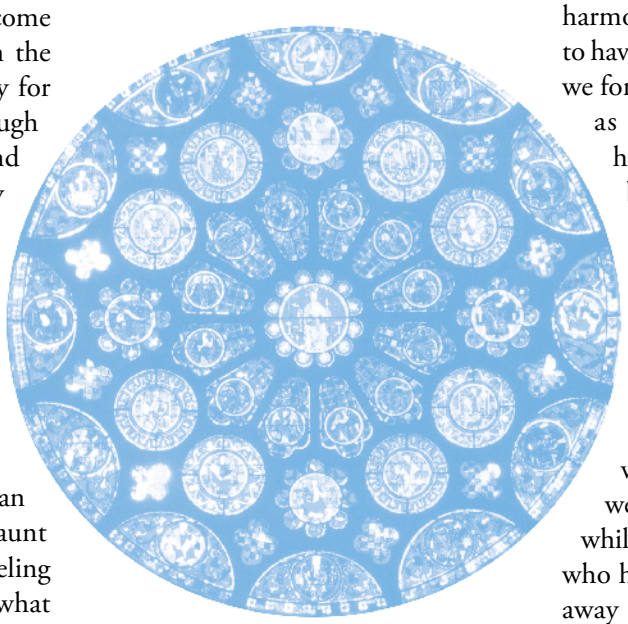
Difficulties – Spiritual and Psychological

Tony Baggot, an Irish Jesuit, discusses a few hurdles all of us must cross on the journey of spiritual growth. Which problems for instance are spiritual – and which are psychological – and how to deal with them?

Many so-called spiritual difficulties are psychological or, at any rate, associated with them. This could happen with a middle-aged man who is feeling frightened and guilty because he has lost interest in religion and Mass, and is experiencing what he never had before, anger towards God. As his story unfolds it turns out that he has become redundant because of cutbacks in the firm where he has worked happily for twenty years. Full of sadness though he is over the loss of his job, and numbed by the sense of insecurity about the future, he has kept a brave face and never let himself grieve away the blocked energy of dejection and of annoyance about the manner in which the changes in the firm to which he had been so loyal took place.

Take another case, that of a woman who, dutifully visiting an elderly aunt every week, often comes away feeling upset and guilty for being somewhat impatient and irritable. So weighed down is she by her own tiredness and efforts to cope with the difficult times she and her husband are going through, that she finds the complaints and demands of the aunt who is a very needy person, frequently more than she can take. Giving herself no credit for all she has done by her care and concern over the years, she blames herself saying that if she were a better Christian, she would control her impatience and frustration.

These two good people, making no allowance for themselves, have separated the psychological from the spiritual part of themselves. For their troubles are not simply spiritual. They are primarily psychological spilling over into the spiritual. Both people are out of touch with what is happening in themselves. Forced spirituality which overlooks the laws of human nature gets them nowhere, and actually deadens the life of the spirit.



Spiritualising

Our spiritual life is not a separate section split off from the rest of living. It is rather the deepest current in the flow of our life which puts us in touch with the Sacred Source of all. This carries a sense of the Holy Mystery which pervades the vast movement of the universe. In the language of the mystics, to those who, in tune with the mystery of life, are keenly sensitive to the presence of the divine being in whom we live, move and have our human being, God is an underground river.

As spiritual human beings our small spirits yearn to be in union with the Great Spirit. This spiritual craving runs through our whole human nature of body, soul and spirit, the three levels of physical, psychological and spiritual energies which interact and interflow with each other. From the centre of ourselves we long to enjoy an inner harmony of these three worlds seeking to have a peaceful steady flow. Too easily we forget that our spiritual experiences as embodied spirits take in our humanity; the spiritual self has to be grounded in the physical body.

Mistakenly we spiritualise what goes on in our lives by referring it to God. While disconnected from our feelings and sensations, we turn to God with the mind while cut off from what is happening in the body. So we pray to be resigned to God's will while denying our anger towards those who have hurt us. We ask God to take away our loneliness without working out of our system its painful energy. Our spiritual self operates through the mental, emotional and physical parts of our human nature.

It has often been remarked that 'holy' people can be very stubborn in that, once they get an idea into their heads, especially about what they consider God's will, they are immovable. Might this not be a case of bringing their own cut and dried mental and emotional and, indeed, bodily rigidity into their spiritual outlook? This is then spirit-ualised and canonised as they seek to remain secure in their

own convictions and positions. Well-intentioned spirituality which ignores or denies the full range of human nature is not sound. Spiritualising glosses over reality. It is an escape from genuine experience and does not bring enduring peace of heart. Real spirituality follows from deep experiences, inner joy as well as inner pain. Then head and heart start to flow together, and in our inmost selves, we experience a sacred kind of truth and reality in our lives.

Acceptance of Self

At the heart of authentic spirituality is acceptance of self. Love of self which is an essential foundation for life may grow very slowly. Many at the commence-ment of the inward journey have no idea of who they are, who the real self is, where it is to be found, or how it could be worth anything. External success and personal qualities or the praise and friendship of others do not fill the emptiness within or enliven dullness of spirit. Love is first of all received from outside self but it has to be taken in to become part of oneself. There is then the spiritual experience of knowing one's own unique worth and dignity.

The origins of difficulty in receiving love frequently lie in infancy and childhood. Spiritualising is not the answer and does not bring lasting healing. A person may believe with the head and try to convince self that she is loved by God but it may not fully take root because she still has inside her a lost child, unhealed and uncared for from the early stages of her life. So she is unable to be open at a deep level of her being. We come to divine love through the experience of human loving. If isolated from self we are isolated from God. Reasoning with ourselves does not mend a wounded heart.

We awaken to our value and beauty as we journey through the dark places of our infant and childhood past, and release the unresolved experiences of rejection, hurt, loneliness, anger and sadness, and discover underneath the wonder and sacredness of the person we actually are. Scripture's words that we are made in the divine image and likeness come alive as we discover that we can mirror God's kindness and goodness.

Gradually there will grow a sense of being lovable simply for ourselves and not just for what we do or what we feel is expected of us. As our hearts let go the blocked energy of stored pain, head and heart will come together. Then spiritual wisdom will rise from the depths of ourselves, properly rooted as we are, in our full human nature. Bit by bit, we will recover our lost power and through this, the freedom to risk being ourselves.

The whole world is a circle. All of these circular images reflect the psyche

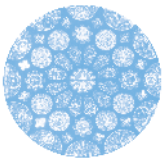
Spiritual Growth

We block our spiritual growth when, even without knowing what we are doing, we are still acting and living out of unresolved attitudes, feelings and patterns of behaviour. A man who is very correct and exact about religious duties may one day wake up to discover that all his choices in life have been made out of fear, reacting out of the anxious knot in his stomach which magnifies and distorts the most ordinary situation.

A woman leading a well-ordered life, trying to do what is right all the time and be available for others, can be horrified that she cannot put down the fury that sometimes comes upon her or check the resentment towards those who appear to take her for granted. She feels very bad in not being the sort of person she would like to be, particularly as she thought she had risen above the dislike and annoyance that take hold of her. She knew that as a child she had a terrible temper but reckoned that she had got over all that once she began to take her spiritual life seriously. Her spiritual growth however must include the discovery and acknowledgment of the disorder that lies within.

While aspiring to lead good lives we have the seeds of all kinds of evil in us. By admitting my darkness as well as my light, I learn to deal with all of myself, not just the pleasant part.

Rather than being a saint or a sinner, I am both saint and sinner. Sin in this context is not just conscious wrongdoing but includes the inner destructive forces that lurk beneath the surface and motivate behaviour. It is not by denying them or shoving them down out of sight that we tackle them. Rather we tackle them by entering into them and releasing their harmful energies. By so doing we bring body, soul and spirit into closer harmony and have the transforming experience of becoming more complete, and inwardly more fulfilled. This is in happy contrast to a negative spirituality in which body and soul are seen to be in conflict. Alienation from our true selves is an inherent feature of human life but our aim is not to have one part overcome the other, but for the two to be reconciled. ■



Rose window, West Front, Chartres Cathedral, France

Next month Fr Baggot concludes by looking at the healing of wounds

Is Naomi really being serious?

Paul Andrews

A twenty-year-old neighbour hanged himself last month, and while you were still reeling from the shock and grief of it, you heard your fourteen-year-old Naomi, in a row with her father, threaten to kill herself. You cannot remember hearing of so many suicides in times past, and are terrified that Naomi's threat may be serious.

No, there were not so many suicides in times past. Observers speak of an epidemic of young suicides. Typically those who die are boys – three times as numerous as girls among 'successful' suicides. But the pattern of 'unsuccessful' suicide attempts reverses this: here, girls outnumber boys by three to one. It may be because girls use less lethal and violent methods than boys, overdoses rather than hanging or shooting.

It is a hard topic to think or write about, like the Crucifixion, only worse. On Calvary, Jesus was able to show love to the end, and forgive his killers. Suicide, by contrast, springs not merely from agony but from despair and often aggression, placing one's own escape above the indescribable pain, guilt and grief that one leaves behind in family and friends.

It is true that a suicide note often urges the bereaved not to blame themselves, and speaks of love for those left behind. It is also true that those who take their own lives are sometimes out of their mind, and show a reduced sense of responsibility. After the event, one cannot assign blame, even on Judas. To feel you are beyond hope, as Judas did, is a matter of intense suffering, although the suffering may not be evident to those around.

Here above all one has to heed Jesus' word: *judge not, that you may not be judged*. God is more merciful than human beings, and more merciful than some churches in times past, which banned the body of a suicide from burial in consecrated ground. The ban grew out of a regard for human life. But the step was made from saying that it is wrong to take one's own life, to the judgmental position of punishing the suicide by excommunication of his body. Like many of us in old age, the church has learned to soften its attitude and withhold its judgment.

Those bereaved by a suicide are victims themselves, suffering in countless ways. They grieve, not merely out of loss, but from the knowledge that their son did not love them enough to survive. There is guilt too*: if I had been more loving, or helpful, he might still be alive.* And there is anger at being so cruelly deserted, but you cannot allow yourself to feel angry at one who obviously suffered so much. Nobody needs the ministry of bereavement counsellors more than those bereaved by a suicide.

For you, however, the worry is about Naomi, who is still alive and well, but has made threats. They have to be taken seriously. What can we do? Some things we cannot control. Suicides tend to increase in a recession (observers have identified a 4percent rise in suicides for every 1percent rise in unemployment), level out in prosperity, and fall in wartime, when aggression can be turned against a common enemy instead of against oneself or one's family.

There are patterns. Usually there is a long history of problems and a period when these problems get worse. Then the young person's way of coping with these problems starts to fail, and isolation sets in. Finally there is a time when all relationships break down and contact is lost with family and friends.

That sense of *isolation* is the sign we must watch for. If someone talks of preferring death to life, she is suffering. It is up to those around her to see her pain and relieve it. Bullying – the sort that isolates the victim in a class at school – can be a trigger for despair and suicide.

Admittedly there are attention-seekers – even young children – who will talk about killing themselves as a way of getting under mother's skin. The horror rightly associated with the notion of suicide has been weakened by exposure to TV; and some young people who talk of killing themselves appear only half aware of the finality of death. They use the threat as a dramatic gesture, like a final curtain-line as you slam the door and exit. They do not appreciate, as adults do, that there is no re-entry.

The warning signs of suicide include talking about it, often in the few days before the attempt. Other signs are a persistent deep depression after the break-up of a relationship, the giving away of prized personal possessions, and an earlier suicide attempt.

What can we do in the face of such a threat? First, drop everything and attend to her, calmly and receptively, in a quiet place, neither arguing nor advising, but listening in a deep way. Secondly, tune in to your own feelings, which will be a guide to what Naomi is feeling, and try to respond to her at an emotional level – nothing reduces her isolation as effectively as this. Thirdly, spend time with her, do not leave her alone, and make sure that there are others around her. Finally, make absolutely clear to her that she deserves to live, that she is precious to you.

And if you feel that nobody in the family is sufficiently in tune with her to help, then look for help outside. ■

Woman of valour

Katrine Brown died in Auckland during August at the age of 86. She was well-known in Canterbury for her ceaseless labours on behalf of underprivileged children and patients' rights – through her role as official visitor to Sunnyside Hospital. We invited tributes from two of her lifelong friends

Katrine Brown with two of her grandchildren (taken a few years ago)

I am writing this as a friend of Katrine and I represent a great number of people who loved and honoured her and who are united in sorrow at her death. She was a great woman – and I mean 'great' in terms of the depth of her wisdom, and the quality of her intelligence, her humour, her courage, her sophistication (in the best sense of that word) and her simplicity of heart.

Katrine was a person who was always looking outwards, away from herself and this interest in and concern for the world was one of her most singular characteristics. For one thing, it made her one of the best-read people I've ever met and it fed her passion for justice and her commitment to do whatever she could to build a more humane and just society.

I feel overwhelmed when I think of *all* that could be said of this many-faceted woman. I'll choose one thing and it's this. Katrine mixed easily with people from all walks of life including those very different from her own. In every situation, she was always *herself*. I can see her in the midst of street kids at 6A years ago, always well dressed, always speaking impeccable English in her precise voice. She had such respect for every person there that she never dressed downward and she never spoke down in the false assumption that it would make her more acceptable to them. People who are really street-wise are quickest of all in discerning authenticity in another person and in return they gave to Katrine their unqualified respect and love.

Years ago, when Katrine was much younger, she was driving a young woman who was in deep trouble with the law. It was a bitterly cold winter's night and Katrine was dressed for warmth. She was wearing that long suede coat that Jessica brought her from New York when she was a student there, one of her snappy little hats and tan boots. Suddenly, out of her gloom, the young woman said to her: 'Oh, Mrs Brown, I do like old ladies who wear nice clothes!' I think she was saying that nice clothes and a Christ-like heart go very well together, as indeed they did in the person of Katrine Brown.

Pauline O'Regan, RSM

In her old age Katrine Brown was to be seen happily pottering in her well-kept flower garden, floppy hat on head, secateurs in hand and fork at the ready. I wonder if she ever reflected on her prodigious work among the most neglected and needy in our society.

In Christchurch she was the founder of '6A' – located at 6A, Victoria St. It became a drop-in centre for those most at risk: alcohol addicts, those on drugs, even petty criminals. In 1971 she said:

"Many young people are innocent victims of the society within which they exist. They have been denied the right to lead a meaningful life. The aim of 6A is to provide them with a sense of security, a sense of justice, a feeling of being wanted and an opportunity to succeed. They must be given a chance."

She devoted countless hours over many years to create such opportunities. There were lay advocates at the Children's' Court, flats and accommodation houses for the young at risk and a range of other supportive services. Skilled counsellors were always readily available.

Katrine was a quietly spoken person, but enormously strong-willed. She was modest and respected greatly by all who knew her. Her services to the community were recognised by her being awarded the QSO which was added to her MBE (Military) for wartime service. She was also a Justice of the Peace.

John Drennan

Revisiting the 'cult' of Celtic spirituality

Celtic Christianity: Making Myths and Chasing Dreams
by Ian Bradley
Edinburgh University Press, 1999.
Price: £ 12.95
Review: Nick Thompson

Celtic Christianity!" muttered a Glaswegian acquaintance. "Send them up to Lewis. That'll give them a taste of Celtic Christianity." For a New Zealand audience I should explain that Lewis (the largest of the Outer Hebrides) is a stronghold of Scots Gaelic, a rather severe variety of Presbyterianism. Anyone who has seen Lars Von Trier's film *Breaking the Waves* will know the score. On the Sabbath the swings are tied up in the playgrounds and the ferries don't run. Except when singing the psalms (unaccompanied) the godly do not dabble in fripperies such as music.

Until recently Ian Bradley was, on his own admission, a somewhat uncritical exponent of the phenomenon known as "Celtic Christianity." In 1993, he published *The Celtic Way,* an anthology of prayers and sources of Celtic spirituality. In 1996, he produced the popular biography *Columba: Pilgrim and Penitent.* His latest work, however, is something of a retraction. "Of all my books," he writes, *"Celtic Christianity,* has given me the most pain and least pleasure to write."

Bradley examines the way in which the Christianity of the British Isles between the 5th and 7th centuries has become a kind of cipher for the pre-occupations and prejudices of later generations. In fact a good bit of what now passes for an authentic record of "Celtic Christianity" is no more than guess-work. We know very little at first hand about this period, but this hasn't stopped subsequent writers from presenting the church of Saints Patrick, Brigid, Ninian, Columba, Kentigern etc. as an "ideal" from which the later church has lapsed.

Exactly what this ideal *is* has depended very much on the tastes of a given writer. St Bede, for example, regarded asceticism, zeal and learning as desirable things. He saw little evidence of these qualities among the English clergy of his own time, but he felt sure that they had once been practised by earlier generations of Christians in Scotland and Northern England. By appealing to the example of the Celtic saints he hoped to shame his English contemporaries out of their sloth and worldliness.

During the Middle Ages, the reputations of the Scottish and Welsh saints were used to secure the in-dependence of the churches they had founded from the neighbouring English church. Saints' *Lives* were also commissioned by monasteries and dioceses to justify the extent of their jurisdiction or the raising of revenues from pilgrimages to a site associated with a saint. The Reformation gave rise to a persistent historical tradition in which Celtic monasticism was portrayed as a victim of an arrogant and legalistic "Romanism" introduced either by Augustine of Canterbury or Anglo-Normans such as Queen Margaret of Scotland.

Current interest in Celtic Christianity and Spirituality can be traced to these earlier revivals, but the present revival also has secular roots. The Celts were appropriated by the 18th century Enlightenment as a model of a kind of tolerant Christian Deism or Pantheism. It was claimed that the Christianity of the Celts had merged seamlessly with the paganism of the Druids rather than suppressing it. For the Enlightenment, the Druids themselves represented an attractive kind of rational, non-dogmatic religion. For the Romantics of the 19th cent. the pagan Celts were also Romantic nature-lovers and they passed this ethos on to their Christian successors. As Bradley points out, even the term "Celt" is a product of this period. It is not one which Brigid, Columba, Bede or Margaret would have recognised.

So in the late 20th and early 21st centuries we have "Celtic Christianity" presented variously as an exemplar of a gentler, greener, syncretist, less authoritarian, more "spiritual" Christianity. St Augustine's bugbear, the British monk Pelagius, is rehabilitated as the hero of a liberal, optimistic Christianity. The devil-ridden austerities of Celtic monasticism are air-brushed out of the picture. Like previous generations, we fall under Albert Schweitzer's indictment: we peer down the deep well of history and see our own reflection at the bottom.

One of the tremendous shortcomings of Bradley's book is that he doesn't suggest a way out of this story of historical concoction. At the end of the book he seems to throw up his hands, concluding that, "If we are to chase Celtic dreams, and history suggests that we always will, better surely that they be about unpolluted waters and intact ozone layers than about having better and bigger relics than the church down the road."

I think a better model for our approach to the Celtic church (or any strand of the Christian tradition) is one of friendship. Friendships often begin when we discover how much we have in common with another person. They only deepen, however, as either of the partners learns to accept and even enjoy the fact that the other is also different. This is not always an easy process, but as friends learn to accept each other's *otherness,* the horizons of both are broadened. The Celtic church has thus far suffered from friends looking for a soul-mate in their own image and likeness. ■

Mission versus individualism and control

The Continuing Conversion of the Church, The Gospel and Our Culture Series
by Darrell L. Guder
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000
US $20.00
Review: Susan Smith

There was a time, not so distant, when Eurocentric churches (and I include the New Zealand local churches in that category) saw the rest of the world as their mission field. The wealth, the longevity, the technological superiority, the educated personnel of such churches, encouraged them to think of themselves as the mission resource centre for the rest of the world. In *The Continuing Conversion of the Church,* Darrell L. Guder, Professor of Evangelism at Columbia Theological Seminary effectively disabuses 'first world' Christians of such a notion.

Guder believes Western society is as much in need of being evangelised as any other part of the world. To explain his position, Guder explores the biblical foundations for mission. He identifies the loss of a missionary enthusiasm as the main reason why Christians can no longer radically witness to the good news of Jesus Christ.

He attributes this loss to the collapse of a young and vibrant preaching movement into an institutional church concerned with control and power, a process that began during the Constantinian era; the subsequent inability of the institution to proclaim the good news in culturally appropriate ways; the loss of an eschatological urgency about the Kingdom of God and its replacement by an emphasis on individual salvation; an emphasis on Christian activism; and finally the church's co-option by the dominant political and economic forces of the day. These factors lead to a reductionism that has proved inimical to the proclamation of the good news at home and abroad.

In the latter part of his book, entitled *The Conversion of the Church*, he identifies strategies that can allow Western Christians to reclaim their missionary vocation and bring the good news to secularised contemporary society. Guder sees this process as happening at two levels.

First, and most important, is the role of the local community which he defines as 'the basic unit of Christian witness', 'the vital instrument for the fulfilment of the missionary vocation of the Church'. The local community is not simply a sociological requirement. It is a theological imperative because it is the local community that can witness to the good news in ways that both reflect and challenge the local culture's patterns of human relationships.

Second, Guder examines the relationship of institutionalised religion to mission. He suggests that certain words constellate around 'institution' – order, maintenance, control, conservative, history, passivity. Another collection is associated with 'mission' – movement, the future, radical, risk-taking, enthusiasm. Guder is not dismissive of the institution, but he suggests that it be judged on whether it serves its missionary vocation given it by God, and whether it incarnates the gospel of God's reign in the world today.

He is convinced that the "cultural captivity of the institutional structures" is an obstacle to mission. Such cultural captivity can be subverted by seeking a congruence between the gospel the church proclaims and its own institutional life, and by the institutional church's openness to continuing conversion. If the church fails to acknowledge its cultural captivity and repent of it, then the exercise of authentic Christian mission becomes difficult.

All this might look like 'mission impossible'. However, Guder is persuasive in his argument that the transforming power of the Spirit can lead us into a theological exploration 'of the critical and complex interactions between gospel, church and culture'. The discoveries that will follow from such an exploration will reveal the urgent mission priorities present in Western society.

Guder's perspective is thoroughly evangelical, but this should not deter Catholics from finding much within *The Continuing Conversion of the Church* that can help them to understand better the inroads that secularism and individualism have for our own church. Nor should Catholics be other than enthusiastic about his strategies for renewal of the church in the West: to critically examine the church's use and abuse of power; and to encourage the growth of vibrant communities prepared to be missionary within their local cultural context. ■

Dr Cullen bites the bullet

Crosscurrents
Selwyn Dawson

Every second Tuesday, hail, rain or shine, a decent sum of money is deposited in our bank account. Our benefit may not be munificent, but it enables us to live as full members of society. To receive it we merely had to live until the appropriate age. Few pieces of social legislation have had such wide and beneficent results for so many as has national superannuation.

More recently we have become uneasily aware that unless something is done soon, our children when they come to retire will find only a pitifully inadequate benefit awaiting them. This will mean not just poverty after retirement but also years of deep anxiety for them during their working lives as retirement looms. Is this the bequest we wish to leave them?

All honour then to the government for grasping the nettle. They could so easily have ignored it. Will Michael Cullen's proposed scheme work? No one can guarantee the future so far ahead. In coming decades, demographics will alter, the world will change out of all recognition, all manner of unforeseen events may prevent future governments from setting aside the surpluses needed to build up an adequate fund.

Yet, taking a deep breath, the government has chosen to act boldly on the best available information. Future governments can grapple with the realities of their own time, but they will not be able to claim that ours failed them by doing nothing. I'm glad the Coalition did not listen to the siren voices of those who, financially able to look after themselves, believe all people should be left to provide for their own retirement, while a skimpy safety net should be enough to cater for the unfortunate and the improvident. There are many reasons why a help-yourself formula would leave many good people economically stranded, unable to save for their own future.

By holding fast to the principle of universal entitlements, Cullen's scheme treats all with equal dignity, and prevents the emergence of a large class of desperately poor people who through no fault of their own have been unable to provide for themselves. That said, I hope Michael Cullen will not see every detail of his draft scheme as sacrosanct, thus turning wholesale acceptance into a party shibboleth. A purely partisan victory would not carry sufficient weight to guarantee its long term future, and future governments of a different colour would feel free to raid the funds at leisure.

Dr Cullen may have to curb his sometimes acerbic tongue, and we can hope that those of other parties and viewpoints will park their political barrows outside the bounds of parliament so that, working through committee processes, they can together contrive the scheme most likely to survive long after present politicians have vanished from the scene. Is that too much to hope from a government working under MMP?

Crocodile tears for Roger

Roger Kerr is miffed, it seems, because he was not invited to the recent Government-business summit in Auckland, whose purpose was to "identify policy initiatives to improve New Zealand's economic performance". Invitations did, however, go to a dozen other members of the BRT; so why then was Mr Kerr's name not among the 97 business people scheduled to attend?

I think I know the answer. He is not himself a businessman, but Executive Director and spokesperson of the BRT, the most powerful, best resourced and best represented lobby group in New Zealand. Roger Kerr, ex-Treasury and articulate proponent of New Right economics, has access to all the media, and always knows which are the right buttons to push to get his story across.

In season and out of season he has pressed the interests of big business like some evangelical faith. We know what he advocates – small government, the sell-off of public assets, tight control over labour, lean and mean business practice, an almost religious belief in the market, low taxation, few restrictions on business, especially the stock exchange, enthusiasm for globalisation in all its forms, restrictions on social spending, caution against business involving itself in anything except the interests of its shareholders.

He claims to speak for the welfare of the whole of New Zealand society. Curiously however, the principles he advocates always turn out to be to the advantage of his well-heeled clients. His brand of economics has little to say about social equity, the burdens of poverty, and the mechanisms necessary for fair distribution.

It's ironic that Roger Kerr backed the recent full-page advert in which some hundreds of exiled young Kiwis pleaded for the government to reconstruct New Zealand economic life so that they could come home to jobs comparable with those overseas. Yet most had moved overseas during a centre-right regime largely putting into practice his own convictions?

Mr Kerr, and other familiar faces and voices not invited to the Forum, need not have worried that their views would be overlooked. Their point of view was well and truly represented and chewed over by a wide cross-section of capable people from all political and economic persuasions. Perhaps in not extending him an invitation, the Prime Minister considered that he should take time off from his constant advocacy, climb a mountain and give other voices a chance to be heard. ■

Kia Ora Kiwi! in East Timor

Sr Mary Anna Baird OP has recently come back to New Zealand after a visit to East Timor: this report is taken from an address she gave on her return.

"First stop Darwin: such a vital stepping stone both to Indonesia and East Timor. The Dominican Sisters there have been hauntingly aware of the bloodletting in East Timor, including the anguish suffered by their own Sisters. Should they go across themselves – or was it better to act as a stepping stone for aid? They decided to stay put and were able to help service the tent city that grew up there during the emergency.

"From Darwin to Dili. A hand-written sign in the terminal proclaims: *Welcome to the newest country in the world.* Met by Sr Pely, a Filipino Dominican who took us on a tour of the burned and gutted houses round which the stench of burnt flesh had hung for weeks. Six postulants welcome us in their few words of English: *We laugh when you come.*

"By chance I met my 29-year-old nephew from Invercargill who is with the New Zealand peacekeeping force. He has a good grasp of the local language and was able to act as interpreter for us. Like his fellow soldiers he has fallen in love with the locals, especially the children, who can be counted on to chant *Kia Ora Kiwi* as our peacemakers arrive in the street. The troops have really hit it off with the local people.

"Next day we visited Soibada, where the Sisters run an orphanage. Travel was by a clapped-out Ute over incredibly rough roads and a river that rose and fell unpredictably. The road took us by clusters of children who waved excitedly at us as we swept through their burnt out villages. Many had lost their entire families, leaving the survivors with nothing.

"On to Aileu where a group of Maryknoll Sisters live. Their work is impeded because their clinic has been destroyed and the people cannot return until there are proper health facilities. However, they have a wonderful garden and are helping the locals to grow their own vegetables (aided by a New Zealand donor who is sending seed).

"The Sisters described to us how they attempted to escape from Dili during the upheaval last year, in the company of three priests. Their two cars were stopped by the militia. The soldiers were so drunk they would not even have remembered killing anyone. One of the priests saved their lives by offering to give the troops one of their cars in return for safe passage back to Aileu.

"They were later flown to Darwin. When we sympathised with Sr Dorothy for the loss of all their things she replied happily that they had not lost their lives. That was what really mattered.

"We were very happy to be able to make the visit and share the courage and the hope, the faith and fun of the local Dominican Sisters. Through their terrible suffering they have won their freedom, even though it is far from being a stable freedom or independence.

"I feel New Zealanders have a great opportunity to help. We were present when boxes of new books, pens and school equipment arrived, and we saw the delight on the children's faces. The Warehouse has since sent clothing for small children, and some Auckland businessmen are raising funds for a suitable vehicle for one of the Dominican missions." ■

Jim Neilan

The torch of the Spirit

The Olympics and recent Sunday readings from *Mark* prompted me to think about commitment. The apostles and disciples – or so it appears – were a lack-lustre bunch. Jesus speaks about his coming death and how do the apostles respond? By arguing about who is the greatest!

Even after experiencing the Resurrection, the apostles were still confused and frightened. What made the difference – and an extraordinary difference it was – was the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost. These tongues of flame made them new people, sweeping aside their fears and doubts, enabling them to let the Spirit come and take control. They then transformed their world.

The Church actually has three terms for what the disciples experienced: the coming of the Holy Spirit, the presence of the Risen Christ and the gift of Grace. Two thousand years later we too have the same access to these experiences of the Risen Christ. It's the Risen Christ, not the earthly Jesus, that made the difference for them and for us.

Thus there is really no point in maligning the blindness of the apostles and disciples when they were with Jesus. The problem with them was they hadn't yet seen the whole picture. They eventually learned that abandoning themselves to the service of the Lord is the key to experiencing the Risen Christ.

The recent Olympic Games provide further thought for reflection. They are a wonderful celebration of God-given athletic prowess. Even more, they offer a glimpse of a new world, one in which all nations live in harmony. They highlight the rewards of commitment and disciplined training as well as the ability to reach for something seemingly beyond one's grasp.

You must have watched the opening ceremony. I was surprisingly moved by the final stages in which the Olympic flame was brought into the stadium and delighted to see those wonderful Australian women athletes of the past honoured.

I was deeply touched at the sight of Betty Cuthbert, three times gold medal winner, coming into the stadium with the Olympic Flame – in a wheelchair. She now devotes her energies to raising funds to counter multiple sclerosis, a servant role indeed. Even super athletes have to come to terms with their own mortality.

After Pentecost the disciples mustered commitment beyond that of an Olympic athlete. We know what they achieved. How do we measure up 2000 years later? If we can heed the beckoning of the Risen Christ with the commitment of an Olympic athlete, then we will ignite something that will burn far longer than any Olympic flame. ■

Michael Pender