Tui Motu

InterIslands

March 2001 Price $4

Earthquake in El Salvador – the cry of the poor

Contents

Earthquake in El Salvador
The cover picture and the picture on page 5 are courtesy of *Agence France Press*

***

The article by Timothy Radcliffe, OP reproduced with kind permission of *Priests and People*

Rend your hearts, not your garments

Lent in the southern hemisphere comes during the waning of the seasons. Autumn colours surround us with a magical beauty but they also herald a dying. Perhaps it is not such an anachronism to practise our Lent at this time of year. Nature is moving us into the season of stripping and dying, the necessary prelude to the triumph of new birth at Easter.

The traditional actions of Lent are penance, almsgiving and prayer. Of the three, Christian devotion has sometimes concentrated too strongly on penance. "What shall I give up for Lent?", I muse to myself on Ash Wednesday. And the liturgy answers back: *Rend your heart, not your garments*. There can be a flavour of vainglory which taints our self-denial. The church has wisely softened its emphasis on physical fasting in favour of a more purposeful sense of penance. Faced with the appalling needs of the world's most needy, sacrificial giving becomes an imperative rather than a mere pious impulse. Self-denial then flows on into almsgiving.

Our leading article in this issue comes from the pen of an illustrious South American theologian, the Jesuit Jon Sobrino. He writes of the recent earthquake in El Salvador with all the force and poignancy of one actually at its epicentre. Sobrino offers us five reflections on such human disaster. These could well be incorporated during Lent into a liturgy such as *the Stations of the Cross*. The article is set out to help that happen. Perhaps such reflection will also prompt us to a generous response to Lenten Appeals.

These thoughts could lead us to another Lenten question. ***Is it sufficient simply to give humanitarian aid*** – or are we not obliged also to penetrate the causes of need and seek to redress those first? If the earthquake in Gujarat, or El Salvador, had happened in New Zealand it would have been no less destructive. Yet we can be sure that, beginning with Civil Defence, the whole resources of the state would have been instantly geared to rescue, to rehouse, to rebuild. This is simply not the case in most parts of the world. In Turkey, two years after the terrible earthquakes there, many survivors are still living in tents.

Sobrino notes sagely that these major disasters have a disproportionate impact on the poor. They live in the most vulnerable places, their suffering is often made worse by neglect or exploitation on the part of the rich and powerful; aid coming from outside is even subverted into the pockets of middle men. Sobrino commends the human resilience and faith of the victims – but does that absolve us?

Much of the rest of the *March* issue is devoted to our third Lenten imperative: prayer. The visit of Benedictine Br David Steindl-Rast provides an ideal Lenten preparation for those fortunate enough to hear him speak. For those who cannot, we are indebted to Sr Sue Cosgrove for interviewing him on behalf of our readers. Br David invites us to renew the quality of our prayer. Spending quality time with God during these weeks helps us evaluate our daily lives and perhaps purify the intentions behind our almsgiving.

Another name cropping up throughout the issue is the celebrated Cistercian writer, Thomas Merton. In many respects a controversial figure, Merton stands out for the way his spirituality grew to encompass the needs of the planet – especially in terms of justice and human rights. It is astonishing that one who chose to follow the contemplative path should have become an icon of the peace movement.

The cry of the poor is the cry of Christ upon the cross. That's a powerful thought for Lent!

M.H.

letters

A path to healing

In your *December* editorial you refer to the protocol for dealing with sexual abuse allegations and say that the bishops were advised to keep the very existence of such a protocol from public knowledge.

When the protocol document, "A Path to Healing", was accepted by the bishops and congregational leaders in April 1998, it was then promulgated as a public document and indeed we refer to that fact in the Introduction on page 4. I fear that your readers will gain the impression that we are trying to keep its existence from public knowledge, when that is far from the case.

The document was accepted for an interim period of three years, after which time it was to be reviewed, and that review is presently being carried out with consultation throughout the dioceses and the religious orders.

I would be grateful if you would inform readers of what is said in the Introduction: "**We see it as a public document that establishes public criteria according to which the community may judge the resolve of church leaders to address the issues fairly and compassionately.**"

Bishop John Dew Auxiliary Bishop of Wellington

Tui Motu *is grateful to Bishop Dew for emphasising the openness now demonstrated by church leaders. Our* December *editorial referred to a time in the early 90s "when a protocol was being drawn up", when strict secrecy seemed to be regarded as essential.*

The dignity of motherhood

In a sermon on New Year's Day the priest spoke on the dignity of motherhood. He said the church gave due honour and respect to the motherhood of Mary but precious little to the dignity of all mothers. For example the church makes no effort to take on board the fact of Mothers' Day – 13 May this year. It would be a rare opportunity to compose a beautiful and uplifting liturgy.

The priest went on to say that if the Catholic church gave the same honour and respect to mothers that Christ gave to his mother, then, who knows, the Catholic laity might even reciprocate with a positive response to the dignity of vocations to the priesthood and the religious life.

Fr Max Palmer, Southern Star Abbey, Kopua

Promoter's Corner

More and more I am convinced that *Tui Motu* readers are a community, that they are more than readers; they are 'doers' too. Instead of recoiling from the recent price increase – modest though it was – many have reacted by adding a donation as well. This makes a positive impact on our slender balance sheet.

You have also responded very promptly to two other needs. Expressions of interest were invited to assist with the work of the board of directors, and more recently we also sought someone to fill our editor's shoes in June and July. In quick order we now have four new directors with a variety of gifts that will help to shape the paper's future, and several talented professionals have come forward who could manage the role of interim editor. We should be able to let you know who that is in the April issue.

It is a good feeling to experience this community character of *Tui Motu*. Our readership is currently the size of a solid country town (2,500). We'd like one day to be a city! but for the time being we are happy to settle for what we are.

Tom Cloher

The man who planted hope

We received several communications telling us more about the origins of the tale of the shepherd-turned-tree-planter, in the *February* issue.

Jean Giono (1895-1971) was a self-taught Frenchman who in his life wrote more than 30 novels as well as short stories, poetry, essays and film scripts. He lived all his life in the town of Manosque, in Provence. In 1953 his American editors asked him to write a short piece on an unforgettable character – and that was the origin of the story of Elzeard Bouffier. At first the story was rejected, so he gave it away to whoever wanted it. Eventually it was published in *Vogue* magazine in 1954, entitled *The Man Who Planted Hope and Grew Happiness*.

Giono believed he left his mark on earth by writing the story especially since he had given it away for nothing. He said: "It is one of my stories of which I am proudest. It does not bring me in one single penny and that is why it has accomplished what it was written for".

The story has been translated into many languages, and has been an inspiration to many people who love trees and wish to encourage the planting of trees. ■

Tui Motu-InterIslands

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

ISSN 1174-8931

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

A few weeks ago El Salvador was devastated by a major earthquake. Jesuit theologian Jon Sobrino from the University of Central America, writes from the heart of the tragedy

Hearken to the cries of the poor

A great tragedy has again befallen El Salvador. The scenes are terrifying – the inconsolable crying for the dead: "My neighbour lost all her five children". The disappearance of entire families: "They all went under with the house." In time we will know how many thousands are dead or wounded or have disappeared, and how much is wrecked, buried under mud. For now, I can only offer five reflections about what has occurred, and what, paradoxically, this earthquake offers us.

• a tragedy of the poor in a country of the poor

The extreme poverty of more than one in two Salvadoreans is exacerbated by catastrophes like this one. The last earthquake was in 1986, followed two years ago by hurricane Mitch. And these came on top of 15 years of repression, war, mass exodus, destruction. Living is a heavy burden, but not for all equally. The earthquake has destroyed houses, but mainly it has destroyed those of adobe and mud. The landfalls and mudslides have plunged people and houses into the earth, but they have disproportionately buried the poor, who are more likely to till the precarious slopes than the fertile plains. The same was true in the war years: those who suffered repression and death were mainly the poor.

the poor are always disproportionately affected

So the earthquake is not just a tragedy. It is an X-ray of our land. Like our cemeteries, our earthquakes expose the wicked inequality of our society and its buried truths. Some tombs are sumptu-ous well-placed pantheons of luxurious marble. Most of the others are almost nameless, gathered without crosses. Both recall the parable of Jesus about the rich man and the poor man, Lazarus, at his gate.

• a tragedy of injustice

The tragedy has natural causes, but the iniquity of its impact is largely man-made. In this new millenn-ium, according to experts, 2,000 million people lack a place to live which has the least dignity and security.

the earthquakes destroy the houses of the poor

When Gustavo Gutiérrez, the Peruvian theologian, wants to shake the complacency of the world, he asks this simple question: "Where will the poor live in the 21st century?" For the past 100 years, our capitalist system has produced precarious shacks that fall down; it scoffs at the poor, who every 20 years lose those shacks.

But the system also scorns the experts. One example: ecologists and technic-ians, both foreign and Salvadorean, warned of the dangers of deforestation in the Balsamo mountains. But, turning a deaf ear, big business built hundreds of houses, and the inevitable happened. With the earthquake came the landslide, and 270 houses were buried under four metres of earth.

• a tragedy which shows the holiness of the living

It is easier to write on death and evil than on life and goodness. But, in the middle of this tragedy, life has carried on regardless: people in long lines, walking or in old jalopies, with bundles on their heads and children grasping their hands – this is the most fundamental expression of life, and of the desire to live. Life bursts forth from the best of what we are and have. Poor people, often extremely poor and with precious little education, put everything they are and have in the service of life, and they often do so because they have little else left.

The poor know they have human rights. When catastrophe befalls them, they know they have the right to be attended to and helped. If that assistance arrives, it is well received, of course; and if it does not come, they complain. But they don't expect much and for that reason their basic reaction is simply to put themselves at the service of others.

yet truly they are sons and daughters of God

In the middle of tragedy the strength of life takes over and in spite of everything the grace of being human is manifested.

Alongside that impulse is solidarity. You saw it up in the Balsamo mountains, to

dig up the bodies. There were hardly any mechanical diggers and it would anyway have been dangerous to use them: their scoops could have torn the flesh.

And so men formed into long rows, passing buckets of earth from one to another, removing thousands of cubic metres each day. They have spent days doing this, their tiredness overwhelming. But they carry on looking for corpses, hoping for some miracle of turning up a body which is still alive.

Alongside them are the committed emergency volunteers from other countries. They are all engaged in the most basic task of human solidarity, human beings seeking out other human beings, picking out those who are alive and burying the dead. And among them the women, unerring in their solidarity, caring for the children in the rubble, cooking and sharing whatever food there is among the tents of the homeless, encouraging above all by their presence, without ever wavering or tiring.

I like to think that in this primary decision to live and to give life is a primordial sanctity. It is not the holiness recognised by canonisation, but a clean heart knows its value. It is not the holiness of heroic virtues, but of a heroic life. We do not know if these poor are holy intercessors, but they move you. They might even be holy sinners for all we know, but they fulfil the primordial demand of creation: they are obedient to the call of God to live and to give others life, even in the middle of disaster.

It is the sanctity of suffering, which operates on a different, more basic, logic than the sanctity of virtue. It might appear overstated, but before those poor people we could adapt the words of the centurion before the crucified Christ: *Truly they are sons and daughters of God.*

• this tragedy shows the compassion that saves

Both inside and outside El Salvador, people want to know what they can do. Some want to know how to send assistance so that it reaches its intended beneficiaries rather than corrupt intermediaries. Others wonder, with justified scepticism, what aid actually achieves. Still others ask what kind of aid is most effective and needed. I am not going to answer those questions. Instead, I want to offer some reflections about the attitude of mind and heart – such as we see it from here – which gives rise to the kind of assistance which is creative and generous, firm and faithful.

let yourself feel the pain of this tragedy

Let yourself be affected by this tragedy. Do not run away from it or play it down. Unless you root yourself in reality, you can help no-one. Let yourself feel the pain of lives cut short and in danger; feel indignation at the injustice behind the tragedy; feel shame at the ruin we have brought on our planet – all this is important. This gives rise to compassion and to putting it into practice, which is what saves us.

Allowing ourselves to be affected is salvific, because it roots us in truth and allows us to transcend the unreality with which we surround ourselves. Allowing yourself to be affected by the disaster can produce solidarity. A family tragedy can bring members together; sometimes it even takes a tragedy to do so.

Put it another way – if not even suffering brings us together, nothing will. For in human beings there are always hidden or dormant reserves which can be awakened by the suffering of others. An earthquake, a famine, the AIDS epidemic – these can bring about an awareness of the human family. Among suffering, crucified peoples there is something which attracts, which can take us out of ourselves.

And so, alongside the ethical obligation to help, appears something deeper and more decisive – the sense of closeness among human beings. The material manifestations of solidarity follow later and, in good time, clothes, food, tents, medicine, money, debt remission, technical support. But the quality of these comes out of seeing something good and humanising in being close to the victims of this world, this giving and receiving of the best of ourselves, this loving each other as fellow sons and daughters of God.

A final reflection on God and hope

In El Salvador there are many kinds of religiosity, but it is on the whole a religious country, even more so in these days of catastrophe. Some – the fanatics – say the earthquake is God's punishment. Others, the majority, turn to God gratefully. *Thank God we're alive,* they say; *with God's help we'll pull through.* Some, faced with tragedy, put ▷▷

▷▷

themselves in God's hands: *Let his will be done,* they say.

What you do not hear is the question which leads to one branch of classical apologetics: *Either God cannot or will not avoid disasters like this.* In either case, it does not make God look good.

so where is God at the epicentre of the 'quake?

But the question keeps returning: *Where is God?* Jesus asks the same question. These days, that question has been partly answered: God is in *El Cafetalón,* a refuge for hundreds of the homeless.

A number of churches have been destroyed in the earthquake, among them the church of *El Carmen* in *Santa Tecla*, where I live. The people, distraught, told the priest: *Father, we no longer have a church.* But the parish priest, Salvador Carranza, answered them: *We've lost a building, not a church. We are the church, and the church depends on us to stay alive.*

Let us hope that solidarity helps us rebuild our houses, but above all our people. Let us hope it helps to repair our roads, but above all our way of walking through life. Let us hope it helps us rebuild our churches, but above all the people of God. May such solidarity bring hope to this people. With it, they can find new ways of believing in their worth. They will certainly give back, in light and spirit, a thousand times what they receive. ■

Jon Sobrino SJ has for many years been a leading writer and teacher among South American theologians. This abridged translation is reproduced by courtesy of the London Tablet.
The five reflections could well be used as a Lenten reflection, especially in associ-ation with the Stations of the Cross

Trick – or Treaty?

*Below is an abridged version of an address given last year by **Sir Douglas Graham** to a Rotary conference in Queenstown. No one worked harder than he did to make the settlement of Waitangi claims work.* Trick or Treaty *is the title of Sir Douglas' book on the Treaty of Waitangi*

Genuine Maori grievance

I will try to describe what Maori grievances are about, why they were ignored for more than a century, why we are doing something about it now, how we are doing it, and what we hope to achieve.

What Maori now believe is:
...that in 1840 they signed a Treaty with the Queen in good faith;
...the Treaty guaranteed they could keep their land and possessions for so long as they wanted;
...that the Crown acted unfairly.

How did the crown act unfairly?

• by failing to ensure they understood the implications of a permanent sale which, at least in the beginning, was a quite foreign concept;
• by negotiating with tribal members who wanted to sell when they had no authority to sell;
• by buying on the cheap from them and onselling at an enormous profit to the settlers so that Maori in effect were bankrolling the country's development;
• by sometimes fraudulently adding to deeds of sale such as inserting the description of the areas purchased after the deed had been signed;
• by promising that reserves would be set aside which frequently never were;
• by treating them as 'rebels' when they set up the Maori King movement to unify the tribes against further sales;
• by invading the Waikato and confiscating there, and later in the Bay of Plenty and Taranaki, millions of acres of fertile land;
• by enacting legislation removing the right to trial;
• by establishing the Native Land Court which could investigate tribal customary title and extinguish it by issuing Crown grants to groups of individuals;
• by deliberately breaking down their traditional structures;
• by failing to provide a forum where injustices could be considered;
• by failing to respect the rangatiratanga of Maori.

Some consequences of the Crown's breach of the Treaty

• Maori have struggled to maintain their customs, beliefs, language, and cohesion as a people;
• they are on the bottom of the socio-economic ladder with poorer health, fewer educational achievements, more unemployment and more prison inmates proportionally than the rest of us;
• that they remain marginalised in their own country.

Now while there were certainly faults on both sides, the simple fact is that all of this is true. Within 25 years of the Treaty being signed there were more settlers than Maori, and within 50 years Maori had become almost landless and threatened with extinction. Even allowing for some contribution to this sad state of affairs through their own action, this hardly was the result they had expected or, for that matter, had been promised. ▷▷

A Reconstruction of the signing of the Treaty. Leonard C. Mitchell, 1901-1971

The three articles of the Treaty of Waitangi

(translation from the Maori version, by Prof. Sir Hugh Kawharu)

• The chiefs of the Confederation and all the chiefs who have not joined that Confederation give absolutely to the Queen of England forever the complete government over their land.
• The Queen of England agrees to protect the chiefs, the subtribes and all the people of New Zealand in the unqualified exercise of their chieftainship over their lands, villages and all their treasures. But on the other hand the chiefs of the Confederation and all the chiefs will sell land to the Queen at a price agreed to by the person owning it and by the person buying it (the latter being) appointed by the Queen as her purchase agent.
• For this agreed arrangement therefore concerning the Government of the Queen, the Queen of England will protect all the ordinary people of New Zealand (the Maori) and will give them the same rights and duties of citizenship as the people of England.

▷▷

What can be done now?

I suppose we can gain some solace from the fact that other countries have had much the same experience or even have a worse history of colonisation. In some countries the indigenous people were hunted down, and in others deliberately exterminated. The question was whether anything should have been done, or for that matter can be done now to make amends, or alternatively could we simply ignore the problem and hope it would eventually go way? Fundamentally we, as did most other jurisdictions, took the second choice. There is no sign of the problem 'going away' to date, – and we are now 150 years on – and the delay has made the task of finding a just solution that much harder.

Well, you might say, this is all very fascinating but why didn't anybody do anything about it before now? Why should this generation have to face the music? The answer to that is that the *Treaty of Waitangi*, as an act of the executive branch of government, is not and cannot be part of New Zealand's domestic law. Laws are made by Parliament – not Cabinet. Therefore the Treaty was never enforceable in the courts – at least until quite recently.

As a result Maori held Treaty rights that were unenforceable and instead had to rely on customary rights to follow traditional customs that were recognised by the common law and were enforceable. These customary rights existed prior to and survived the transfer of sovereignty. They were however very difficult to prove and the courts, at least in earlier times, made the task as hard as possible. Indeed the courts did not finally settle on the form of customary fishing rights, for example, until 1986. For much of the last century and a half, Maori were left to the whim of the government of the day. Any recompense that was forthcoming for the wrong-doing in the past was extremely rare and totally *ad hoc* at that.

Two other problems.

All governments for well over a century believed in assimilationist policies. Maori would be encouraged, and if necessary forced, to become European. It will come as no surprise that there is no record of the view of Maori to this proposal. They were not asked for a view.

During the transition from brown to 'white', governments adopted a largely well-intentioned but nevertheless patronising and paternalistic attitude to Maori. The government would run their affairs for them because they were incompetent to do so themselves.

When it became clear the assimilationist policies were both unnecessary and unwise, quite apart from unfair, the damage caused by an overprotective government became apparent also. It had proved to be a poor trustee. What was worse was that the beneficiaries had become almost totally dependent. The ability to make decisions of major importance requires discipline and determination, but this can be quickly undermined if someone else will deal with every problem that comes along.

In brief, and with the benefit of hindsight, we followed the wrong policies for 150 years. We should have valued the differences between cultures and encouraged a blending from both, rather than seek to crush the life out of one of them.

A new approach to the problem

In the 1970s a change in approach was in the air. The continuing land marches, protests and occupations, particularly at Bastion Point, led to the establishment in 1975 of the *Waitangi Tribunal* to look into the claims against the Crown. Its regular reports have made sobering reading indeed and have exerted pressure on the government to respond.

Then, to assuage Maori concerns that the government's privatisation program would prejudice the ability of Maori to regain lost lands, the government agreed to insert in legislation an obligation to comply with 'the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi'. Now the courts could at last have regard to the Treaty and, when asked by Maori to define what those principles were, the court obliged – as of course it had to do. The result was the courts were now able to hold the government to its Treaty obligations. So pressure came from the courts too.

And in addition to this development in Treaty jurisprudence, the courts also ruled definitively on ***customary rights***. This was occurring simultaneously in Canada and in Australia as well. And if that were not enough to engender some action from government, various international conventions and treaties on human rights, civil and political rights, and anti-discrimination measures began to bite. Governments and political parties, not only in New Zealand but around the world, could no longer ignore the problem. In New Zealand the cry for justice, so long distant, was at last being heard. The *National* manifesto for the 1990 election undertook to address the claims fairly and finally, although like so many manifesto promises, how that would be achieved had yet to be worked out.

And so we began. There were then about 450 claims that had been filed with the *Waitangi Tribunal*. Some had been

researched, some heard and some adjudicated upon. Many had not even started. More were to be filed over the next few years. It was not quite as daunting as it sounds however as some are from different tribes seeking the return of the same land. Others are fanciful. It was clear that a settlement with a tribe might well encompass many claims by individuals from that tribe. Nevertheless it was a real challenge.

We began negotiations with two of the major claimants, Waikato Tainui and Ngai Tahu, to identify what they saw as the issues, while officials worked away on the development of policies. Insofar as land claims are concerned, it is fairly clear they all come within one of three categories. They may relate to the ***early purchase***s where the fairness of the transactions were very much in issue, the ***confiscation*** of the whole of the tribal estate with a stroke of a pen, or loss through the actions of the ***operation of the Native Land Court***.

When it became obvious that this was so and the extent of the culpability of the Crown clear, the government agreed that, in principle, it would accept there had been a basic unfairness in the way the Crown had acted. This obviated the need for overly detailed and costly research, avoided long delays before negotiations could start, and restricted the continuing growth in the number of consultants and lawyers that had developed.

The results so far

To date,

- settlements have been reached which cover more than half the country, geographically helped of course by the Ngai Tahu settlement;
- a little more than half our original estimate of cost has been expended to date – at approximately $600m in the return of land or cash; and
- there are probably 10 or 12 sets of amalgamated negotiations to go.

The settlements

These all take the same form:

- An agreed statement of historical fact and an acknowledgment by the Crown that what happened was in breach of its obligations. This is then followed by a formal apology on behalf of all New Zealanders and an expression of a desire to ensure the future relationship is one of respect and dignity.

There is no need for anyone to feel guilty. An expression of regret that an event happened is not an admission of personal culpability. But the acknowledgment is critical. No settlement can be expected to last, however generous, if it is accompanied by a denial by the Crown of any wrongdoing.

- A 'cultural redress' package. This deals with the return of Crown scenic or historical reserves but with public use and access preserved, and often a joint management regime. The tribe might be appointed special adviser to the Minister of Conservation on certain species of flora and fauna, and there are usually protocols signed so that there is a formal opportunity for the tribe to ensure its views are taken into account.

There are often place-name changes where the Maori name is added to the English. Sometimes there is a vesting of a mountain, such as *Aoraki Mt Cook* in Ngai Tahu, followed by a revesting in the Crown on behalf of all New Zealanders a little while later. Resource management procedures may require the tribe to be notified of any consent application in certain specified areas to ensure that burial grounds or other important sites are not permanently desecrated whether by accident or design. Access to places on Crown land to fish or gather traditional food can also be provided.

- A 'commercial redress' package which normally consists of an agreed quantum. The amount is calculated taking into account the amount of land lost, when and how it was lost (confiscations being regarded as the most serious Treaty breach), whether there was any left, how many members of the tribe there are today, and other considerations. In the result there is a consistency in treatment and one claim is relative to another.

If tribe A had a million acres confiscated and tribe B 100,000 acres, then as a starting point tribe A's quantum will be ten times that of tribe B. The quantum can be expended on certain agreed Crown owned properties or taken in cash or a mixture of both. There is usually a right of first refusal at market value over Crown property that becomes surplus in the future.

To ensure the settlements are final and cannot be relitigated, the *Deed of Settlement* and any supporting legislation ousts the jurisdiction of the courts or the Tribunal to inquire into the claim itself, or the fairness of the settlement, at any future time. And the relativities between claimants is critically important here too. For if a subsequent government were to agree to reopen a settlement and agree to increase the quantum, it would be forced to do that proportionately across all the settlements. The chances of that seem satisfactorily remote.

▷▷

▷▷ Before any assets are transferred, the government must approve the tribal structure to ensure there is full accountability to tribal members. It does not however involve itself in how the funds are invested or used.

No doubt some capital will be lost – indeed it seems one tribe has already experienced this. But the experience to date has been that the capital is invested (often in expanding the land base that is seen as so important) and the income spent on educational grants, health services, marae grants and things like that.

Waikato Tainui is building two endowed postgraduate colleges. Ngai Tahu has put funds *inter alia* into preserving the history and culture of the tribe. Settlements are not designed to relieve the government of its responsibility to provide schooling, health, welfare and other services which is the right of citizenship. Inevitably though, some funds will be used in this way.

None of this would be possible were it not for the public support in general terms for the settlement process. There are of course people who do not agree with any of it. There are Maori too who object vehemently to what is being done because they think – quite mistakenly – that some rights are being extinguished. But generally I believe most New Zealanders accept that there are injustices that need to be addressed. And it is pleasing that all political parties support the settlements even if they may not agree with the detail.

The hope is that by dealing with the grievances Maori will be able to move from grievance to development, the relationship between Maori and the Crown restored, and race relations enhanced as a result. There have been, and there will continue to be tensions as we make progress. Some see the process as divisive but I think that is true perhaps in the short term only.

What is apparent already is the regained confidence exhibited by tribes that have settled to date. They now have something to offer their young people and the preservation of the culture is much more likely with growing numbers of tribal members showing an interest in tribal matters. The more therefore who benefit from the settlements the better it is. We should not spend time trying to decide who is a Maori. A Maori is a person of Maori descent – it is as simple as that.

Nor need we be alarmed when there is vigorous debate within tribes as they work out their own destiny. Maori like to argue issues through – sometimes seemingly endlessly. That is for them.

The rights of Maori people under the Treaty or at common law

Most countries with an English law background respect the customary practices of their indigenous people and the law will uphold them even though sovereignty passed to Britain and a totally new legal regime followed as a consequence. So activities such as hunting or fishing could carry on until they were extinguished by Parliament or lost.

Today I often hear Maori claiming customary rights, which they say every Maori has and unless the Parliament has extinguished them, they are still there. That is nonsense. These rights existed to protect those Maori who are practising traditional customs. Some Maori may have certain customs – others may have others. One hapu of Ngai Tahu have a recognised right to take mutton birds from certain islands. This is a right unique to them – not held by other Ngai Tahu and certainly not by other iwi. So it is not a right held by 'Maori' in the general sense. What is more, if the hapu of Ngai Tahu stopped taking the mutton birds the common law right would be lost.

Customary rights are recognised only for as long as the customary activities are being exercised. Maori who no longer follow any customary practises have no customary rights. Treaty rights are something else. Some say the Treaty merely confirmed the pre-existing customary rights. Others argue that the Treaty demanded recognition of Maori rangatiratanga or authority which, because in theory it challenged the absolute authority of the English Sovereign which was unconstitutional, was not recognised as a customary right. The debate will no doubt go on for many years.

But I do not think the treaty gives Maori the rights that some Maori claim. It did not, in my opinion, create a partnership to jointly govern the country. Nor did it guarantee that Maori would be entitled as of right to newly discovered assets. Nor did it promise that no matter what, Maori would be guaranteed success in whatever they undertook which seems to be at the back of many of the arguments being advanced today.

We have made some modest progress. No one would pretend that what we are doing is perfect, and it is very much an approach unique to New Zealand's circumstances and history. And if we can tidy up the sadnesses of the past that undoubtedly exist, we can then look to the future together with greater hope and enthusiasm. Surely Maori are entitled to this. After all, they were here first.

I will always remember the response of a very elderly kaumatua who was once asked by an American what name Maori used for New Zealand before the Europeans came. After thinking about that for a moment or two, the old man softly replied 'ours'.

Kia tau te rangimarie ki a tatou katoa.
May peace be with us all. ■

Sir Douglas Graham was Minister of Justice, Attorney General and Minister in charge of Maori Affairs in the National Government from 1990 to 1999.

The life of a monk — a beauty that would not let me go

Why do people turn their backs on the world to become monks or contemplative nuns? Timothy Radcliffe OP explores the reasons – and offers suggestions which can apply to all Christians

Benedictine Abbeys have been like oases along the pilgrimage of my life, places where I have been able to rest and be refreshed before carrying on the journey. Everywhere, crowds of people visit monasteries. Why are they there? Some no doubt are tourists who have come to pass an afternoon, perhaps hoping to see a monk, like a monkey at the zoo. We might expect to find notices which say: *Do not feed the monks!*

Others come for the beauty of the buildings or the liturgy. Many come hoping for some encounter with God. We talk about secularisation, but we live in a time marked by a deep religious search. There is a hunger for the transcendent.

Why are people so drawn towards monks? I wish to claim that monasteries disclose God not because of what monks do or say, but perhaps because the monastic life has at its centre a space, a void, in which God may show himself. I wish to suggest that the Rule of St Benedict offers a sort of hollow centre to the monastic life in which God may live and be glimpsed.

The glory of God has always shown itself in an empty space. When the Israelites came out of the desert, God came with them seated in a space between the wings of the cherubim, above the seat of mercy. The throne of glory was this void. And in the representation of the Cross we also see a throne of glory which is a void, an absence, as a man cries out for the God who seems to have deserted him. The ultimate throne of glory is the Empty Tomb, where there is no body.

I will suggest three aspects of monastic life which open this void. and Each of these aspects opens us a space for God. In each case it is the celebration of the liturgy that makes sense of the void. The singing of the Divine Office several times a day shows that this void is filled with the glory of God.

"Not all those who have entered monasteries have quite known what they were looking for. Those who thought they wanted sacrifices have perhaps found sacrifices they did not expect."

Thomas Merton

▷▷

▷▷ A life of no particular value

The most obvious thing about monks is that they do nothing in particular. They farm, but they are not farmers. They teach, but they are not school teachers. They may run hospitals or mission stations; but they are not primarily doctors or missionaries. They are monks who follow the Rule of St Benedict.

Monks are usually very busy people, but the busyness is not the point and purpose of their lives. Cardinal Hume, who was a Benedictine monk, once wrote: *We do not see ourselves as having any particular function or mission in the church. We do not set out to change the course of history. We are just there – almost by accident from a human point of view. And, happily, we go on 'just being there'.* The point of the Christian life is just to be with God. Jesus says to the disciples: *Abide in my love (John 15:10)*. Monks are called to abide in his love.

Our world is a market place. Everyone is competing for attention, and trying to convince others that what they sell is necessary for the good life. All the time we are told what we need so as to be happy: a microwave, a computer, a holiday in the Caribbean, a new soap. And it is tempting for religion to come along and proclaim it too is relevant to your life. Yoga this week, aromatherapy the next. The week after, can we persuade you to give religion a try?

in God
we find the lodestar
of our lives

Monasteries embody a deeper truth. Ultimately we worship God, not because he is relevant to us, but simply because he is. What matters is that in God we find the disclosure of all relevance, the lodestar of our lives. I think that was the secret of Cardinal Hume's unique authority. He did not try to market religion, and show that Catholicism was the secret ingredient for a successful life. He was just a monk who said his prayers.

Deep down people know that a God who must show he is relevant to us is not worth worshipping. A God who has to be relevant is not God at all. The life of a monk witnesses to the irrelevance of God, for everything is relevant only in relation to God. Monks do nothing in particular except abide with God. Their lives have a void at the centre, like the space between the wings of the cherubim. Here we may glimpse God's glory.

– yet a life of surpassing beauty

When I was a young boy at Downside Abbey, I must confess that I was not very religious. I smoked behind the class-rooms and escaped at night to the pubs. If one thing kept me anchored in my faith, then it was the beauty I found there: the beauty of the sung Office, the luminosity of the early morning in the Abbey, the radiance of the silence. It was a beauty that would not let me go.

You cannot argue with beauty's summons or dismiss it. And this is probably the most resounding form of God's authority in this age, in which art has become a form of religion. Few people may go to church on a Sunday, but millions go to concerts and art galleries and museums. In beauty we can glimpse the glory of God's wisdom which danced when she made the world: *more beautiful than the sun (Wisdom 7)*. Goodness summons us in the form of beauty.

beauty
is the revelation of the
good and the true

When people hear the beauty of the singing, then they may indeed guess why the monks are there and what is the secret centre of their lives, the glory of God. It was typical of Cardinal Hume that when he talked about the deepest desires of his heart, then he talked in terms of beauty: *What an experience it would be if I could know that which among the beautiful things of the world was the most beautiful of them all. That would be the highest of the experiences of joy and total fulfilment. The most beautiful of all things I call God.*

And if beauty is the revelation of the good and the true, as St Thomas Aquinas believed, then perhaps part of the vocation of the church is to be a place of the revelation of true beauty. Much modern music, even in church, is so trivial that it is a parody of beauty. It is kitsch which has been described as the 'pornography of insignificance'. Maybe it is because we fall into the trap

of seeing beauty in utilitarian terms, useful for entertaining people, instead of seeing that what is truly beautiful reveals the good.

It is the singing of the liturgy that discloses the meaning of our lives. St Thomas said that beauty in music was essentially linked to *temperantia*. Nothing should ever be in excess. Music must keep the right beat, neither too fast nor too slow, keeping the right measure. And Thomas thought that the temperate life kept us young and beautiful. What the Rule appears to offer is especially the measured life, with nothing in excess, though I do not know whether monks stay any younger and more beautiful than anyone else!

When we hear monks sing, we glimpse the music that is their lives, following the rhythm and the beat of the Rule of St Benedict. The glory of God is enthroned on the praises of Israel.

A life which go nowhere

The life of a monk puzzles outsiders not just because you do not do anything in particular, but also because it goes nowhere. Like all members of religious orders, your lives do not have shape and meaning through climbing a ladder of promotion. We are just sisters and brethren, friars, monks and nuns.

our lives do not have shape and meaning by climbing the ladder of promotion

We can never aspire to be more. A successful soldier or academic rises through the ranks. Their lives are shown to have value because they are promoted to being a professor or a general. But that is not so with us.

The only ladder in the Rule of St Benedict is that of humility. I am sure that monks sometimes nurse secret desires for promotion, and dream of theglory of being cellarer or even abbot! I am sure that many a monk looks in the

mirror and imagines what he might look like with a pectoral cross or even a mitre, and sketches a blessing when no one is looking – he hopes! The shape of our lives is really given not by promotion but by the journey to the Kingdom.

According to St Thomas, formation, especially moral formation, is always formation in freedom. But the entry into freedom is slow and painful, and will include mistakes, wrong choices and sin. God brings us out of Egypt into freedom in the desert, but we become afraid and enslave ourselves to golden calves, or try to sneak back to Egypt again.

This is the true drama of the daily life of the monk, not whether he gets promoted up the ladder of office, but the initiation into freedom, with frequent collapses into puerility and enslavement. How can we make sense of our slow ascension into God's freedom and our frequent descents back again into slavery? Once again, it is perhaps in music that we may find the key.

– yet filled with music and drama

The story of redemption is like a great symphony which embraces all our errors, our 'bum' notes, and in which beauty finally triumphs. The victory is not that God wipes out our wrong notes, or pretends they never happened. He finds a place for them in the musical score that redeems them. This happens above all in the Eucharist. In the words of Catherine Pickstock: "the highest music in the fallen world, the redemptive music... is none other than the repeated sacrifice of Christ himself which is the music of the ever-repeated Eucharist".

Christ freely gives us his body, but the disciples reject him, deny him, run away from him, pretend they do not know him. Here in the music of our relationship with God we find the deepest disharmonies. But in the Eucharist they are taken up, embraced and transfigured into beauty in a gesture of love and gift. In this eucharistic music we are made whole and find harmony. This is a harmonic resolution that does not wipe out our rejection of love and freedom, and pretend they never happened, but transforms them into steps on the journey. ▷▷

A monk is a man who has been called by the Holy Spirit to relinquish the cares, desires and ambitions of other men, and devote his entire life to seeking God. He withdraws from 'the world'. He gives himself entirely to prayer, meditation, study, labour, penance, under the eyes of God.

In order to be free with the freedom of the children of God, the monk gives up his own will, his power to own property, his love of ease and comfort, his pride, his right to raise a family, his freedom to dispose of his time as he pleases, to go where he likes and to live according to his own judgment. He lives alone, poor, in silence.

Thomas Merton

Humility

Humility is least immediately visible to the people who come to visit monasteries, and yet it is the basis of everything. It is humility that makes for God an empty space in which God may dwell and his glory be seen. It is ultimately humility that makes our communities the throne of God. It is hard for us today to find words to talk about humility. Our society seems to invite us to cultivate the opposite – an assertiveness, a brash self-confidence.

How can we show the deep attractiveness of humility in an aggressive world? When we think of humility, then it may be an intensely personal and private thing: me looking at myself and seeing how worthless I am. Perhaps St Benedict invites us to do something more liberating, which is to build a community in which we are liberated from rivalry and competition and the struggle for power.

This is a new sort of community which is structured by mutual deference, mutual obedience. A community in which no one is at the centre, but there is the empty space – the void which is filled with the glory of God. This implies a profound challenge to the modern image of the self as solitary, self-absorbed, the centre of the world, the hub about which everything gravitates. At the heart of its identity is self-consciousness: *I think, therefore I am.*

Letting go

The monastic life invites us to let go of the centre, and to give in to the gravitational pull of grace. Once again we find God disclosed in a void, an emptiness, and this time at the centre of the community. We have to make room for the Word to come and dwell among us, a space for God to be. As long as we are competing for the centre, then there is no space for God. So then, humility is not me despising myself; it is the hollowing out of the heart of the community to make a space where the Word can pitch his tent.

Once again I think that it is in liturgy that we find this beauty made manifest. It is when people see monks singing the praises of God, then we glimpse the freedom and beauty of humility.

The climax of humility is when one discovers that not only is one not at the centre of the world, but that one is not even at the centre of oneself. There is a void at the centre of my being where God can pitch his tent. I am a creature to whom God gives existence at every moment. God gives Adam breath and sustains him in being. At the heart of my being I am not alone. God is there breathing me into existence at every moment, giving me existence. At my centre there is no solitary self, no Cartesian *ego* but a space which is filled with God.

In silence
and in hope,
God speaks
to the heart

By sharing the prayers, labours and trials of our brothers and knowing them as they are, we learn to respect them and to love them...
Thomas Merton

At the heart of the monastic life is the humility of those who recognise they are creatures, and that their existence is a gift. And so it is utterly right that at the centre of one's life there should be singing. For it is in this singing that we show forth God's bringing of everything to be. You sing the Word of God, through which all things are made. Here we can see a beauty which is more than pleasing. It is the beauty which celebrates the burst of creation.

Monasteries are not just places of silence but places of song. This is what St Augustine calls the Song of Jubilation:

You ask what is singing in jubilation? It means that words are not enough to express what we are singing in our hearts. At the harvest, in the vineyard, whenever we must labour hard, we begin with songs whose words express our joy.

But when our joy brims over and words are not enough, we abandon even this coherence and give ourselves up to the sheer sound of the singing. What is this jubilation, this exultant song? It is the melody which means that our hearts are bursting with feelings that words cannot express. And to whom does this jubilation belong? Surely to God, who is unutterable? ■

Fr Timothy Radcliffe is Master General of the world-wide Dominican Order.
Tui Motu *owes its existence in part to his initiative and encouragement*

The splash of the frog

Thomas Merton and Contemplation

Michael Dooley

Old Pond,
frog jumps in –
plop.
(Basho, 17th Century Japanese)

Thomas Merton, the American monk and author, liked this little poem about the frog. In his book *Seeds of Contemplation* Merton wrote that the solitary splash of the frog could become "the awakening, the turning inside out of all values, emptiness and purity of vision... a glimpse of the cosmic dance." And all this with a frog jumping into a big puddle! A *plop* or a *thud* can be very eloquent when it is contemplated.

The attempt to talk meaningfully about prayer or contemplation in everyday life can be compared to handling a slippery fish – or, in amphibian terms, a slippery frog. The more it is talked about and described, the more it seems to slip away. Just when we think we have our prayer life sorted out, we are brought back to earth with a thud. I may get sick; I fall out with a friend; some issue from the past that I hoped I had dealt with comes back to haunt me. Suddenly, I feel like I'm starting all over again.

Merton points out that the problem created by the *thud* is characterised by an egotism. The feelings and thoughts at these times often contain the little words "I" or "me". My concerns consist of a world that has me at the centre of it, all alone. That is part of what Merton called "the false self", which everyone builds up in a greater or lesser degree to be able to face the world.

The religious quest and the goal of contemplation is to shed this egotistic mask and arrive at the "true self" which God has given us. In truth we are not alone. God is with us and in us. The quest for the true self progresses through detachment. The process of detachment is not just for monks, but for all human beings because we are all made in the image of God.

Merton wrote little about his own personal prayer, but his friend and biographer John Howard Griffin gives us a helpful insight. The description may help to explain why Merton liked the frog in the old pond:
"Tom lived in these pre-dawn hours in secret prayer. *The Psalms*. There is that; but also, as he knew, the psalms of the rain, the psalms of the odours and the crackling of fire, the psalms of the stars and the clouds and the wind in the trees – all equally eloquent.

"And also in this context, the psalms of one's coughings and sneezings and coffee drinkings. The psalms of one's sleepings. The psalms of one's heat rash – for in this nothing need be hidden from God, and nothing is lower than any other thing. All things are taken up and become whole in contemplation. One does not waste time sorting them, grading them, evaluating them. They are there as reality – and that is that. They do not offend God, and one does not worry at such times about offending anything or anyone else."

Merton knew the difficulties of practising detachment and contemplation in everyday life. He called himself a paradox. Christ was the centre for Merton, yet he was drawn to the wisdom of the Eastern religions. As a monk he was called to solitude and silence, but was also intensely involved in areas of social concern, protesting about the Vietnam War, racial segregation and the Cold War.

Contemplation was no cosy practice that brought him an easy, quiet path. On the contrary, Merton's journals reveal a man who struggled with the question: *what was God's will for him?* In his honesty he acknowledged the fierce egotism which was such an obstacle to doing God's will.

When Thomas Merton died an icon was found which contained these words: ***If we wish to please the true God and to be friends with the most blessed of friendships, let us present our spirit naked to God.***

Contemplation is of course a simple task, and the paradox is that the simple tasks in life are the ones we make most difficult for ourselves. In the end, if we want a definition of contemplation, then it may well be the practice of presenting ourselves naked before God. We leave behind the clothing we think is so necessary, and become like the frog jumping into the old pond. Plop! ■

Communicat

Sue Cosgrove DOLC talks with B on a lecture and ret

Br David; how would you define prayer?

Traditionally – prayer is called the lifting up of the mind and heart to God. The idea of 'heart' and of God being 'up' are both poetic images. Today we might say that prayer is *communication of the human heart with God.*

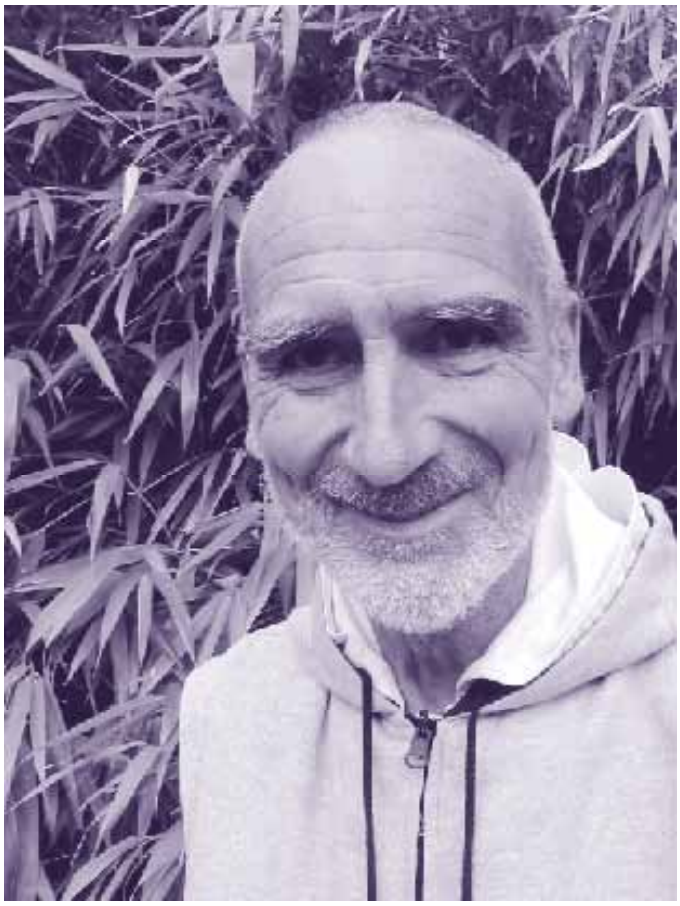
Even the word 'communication' is misleading. Our media experience suggests that there is an absolute gap between the two points which are about to communicate. Communication is building a bridge across this gap. But it always starts on the basis of something the two ends have in common – the same language, for example. There is already communion between the two before they actually start to communicate. Communication deepens and broadens the communion. In this sense, certainly, prayer is comm-unication with God. For before we even start to pray, God is the centre of our own life.

When we pray we simply deepen this communication just in the way friends do who have something in common to begin with. So prayer deepens and strengthens the bonds that unite our heart with God. Immediately we note that this notion of prayer is far removed from simply asking for something from God. Prayer of petition is part of the spectrum, but it should not be seen as the essence. Silent meditation is the essence of prayer because it is truly communion with God.

What would you suggest to people who aspire to get closer to God?

People who want to pray better should look first to those moments in their daily life when they are already praying. I don't mean *saying* prayers; sometimes we *say* prayers – and our heart is somewhere else.

Other times our hearts are communicating with God without saying anything. So, what are those moments of rest in my life which make my heart leap up to God? Those moments will tell you what prayer actually feels like. And that shows you where to start.



Do you recommend that people should find themselves a teacher or guide?

That's an enormous gift. St Francis of Sales says that if you succeed in finding such a person you should treat that person like an angel from God – they are so rare! You have to find someone who not only has a deep spirituality but whose spirituality fits yours. Of course, it may be that you're looking for someone whose blind spot is in the same place as your blind spot!

Personally I'm a bit sceptical about the hope people have of finding a great teacher. But I am less sceptical about finding a friend whom you can talk to about spiritual matters. If you wish to develop your prayer life, look among the friends you already have and try to find someone you can talk with about your prayer.

Most important, I think, is to cultivate your own prayer life by yourself. To do that:

- first, you must set aside a little bit of your time – I'm talking about minutes – every day. It is like learning to use a musical instrument;
- it must be the right time – when you're in the mood for praying;
- but be regular. Settle on a time, and stay with it;
- find some place where you are undisturbed by others;
- then, do whatever helps. It may be listening to music which raises your heart to God. Or it may be just silence. Or, using set prayers, if that's helpful;
- when I'm in a deeply prayerful mood I write my thoughts down, perhaps in the form of a prayer. Later I come back to what I've written. I may not be 'in the mood', but perhaps I can get back into the mood by reading what I wrote when I was in the mood!

What do you say to those Christians who are seeking new expression in their prayer?

There are lots of people who feel the need for new expression, yet without letting go of their traditional home. That's fine. Some churches are more open to it than others. Unless we have that freedom of the children of God, then the framework isn't particularly

ting with God

Benedictine Br David Steindl-Rast reat tour in Aotearoa

Kenepuru, in the Marlborough Sounds

Christian anyway. The churches should nourish us, but should also be happy to let us find nourishment elsewhere.

In our times other traditions of prayer have come within our horizons. Once upon a time Christians would never have even heard about Buddhist meditation or Hindu chanting or Yoga or Sufi dancing. Christians today can find nourishment in these practices without leaving their Christianity behind. What we need is courage to explore – and encouragement from our churches to do so.

At the same time we should remember that something like the *prayer of silence* has been in the Christian churches for a very long time. If we find it anew in Zen meditation, that's simply a new impetus to refresh something we already have. The same goes for mantra prayer or centring prayer. These are Christian expressions derived from other traditions. We should thank God that such a spectrum is now available.

What led you personally to Zen Buddhism; what difference is there to the Christian experience?

When I was a young monk I was invited to talk about monastic prayer on campuses and so forth. There I met monks from other traditions. I asked myself what I had in common with these people. I read D.T. Suzuki's book about the training of a Zen Buddhist monk and was immediately struck by the similarities with our own training. Even down to little details. Yet there had been no historic connection.

I realised that people who want to cultivate 'mindfulness', find the same ways of doing it. I met a Buddhist monk in New York and discovered at once we spoke the same language. I spent time with him, and it was as if we had been brothers all our lives! He invited me to visit his monastery, and my abbot gave me leave. Eventually I spent three years with different Zen teachers.

What I discovered was that the Buddhist and the Christian approaches complement each other. In the Christian tradition there is a lot of talk – in the best and in the worst sense. We always try to explain everything. Yet our deepest experiences may be 'beyond words'. What Zen Buddhists explore is the realm beyond words. Sometimes we may find liturgy has too many words, and we want to slip away and find a quiet place away from all those words! We don't even want to think anything: just to be there and be in silence. That's exactly what the Zen Buddhist monk cultivates: you sink your mind down into the great silence of God.

In our tradition of Three Persons in God we speak of the Father as that great silence out of which the Word of God is born. As Christians we tend to be preoccupied with the Word. Buddhists are more concerned with the Silence. It is an enrichment of our inner life to move that way.

Would you like to say something about your website – gratefulness.org?

I used to say "I'm too old for computers", but here I am, at my age, entering cyberspace! It's an interactive website. We see ourselves building up a community through the net. We hope to draw enquirers into a 'spiral of gratefulness': first stimulate interest; then invite people to inform themselves about spirituality in a more serious way; then share about what they discover by typing in questions or comments. They can tell their own stories or ask questions.

This sharing reaches out into action. When gratefulness reaches a certain depth in your life, you want to do something for others who are less privileged. One example would be when gratefulness for the beautiful world we live in prompts us to clean up our environment. Every week we receive many people who sign in, and we have a team of volunteers who run the website. It has grown to over one hundred pages.

This aspect seems to give a flow-on effect from prayer to other aspects of life.

That is why 'gratefulness' is such a helpful term. Many enquirers are allergic to religious terminology. Gratefulness is something we can share with any human being. And in our most grateful moments our heart is lifted up to what those who use the term will call 'God'. Others will simply say *my heart is lifted up.* Gratefulness integrates our life – body, mind and spirit. It also connects us with other human beings. And it connects us with God.

Finally, would you share your impression of Aotearoa New Zealand?

Everything here is so civilised – even the public loos! Coming from the US you feel you have come from a rough country into a highly civilised one. It shows itself particularly in the way a guest like myself is treated. Also the way you care for the environment – the way things are maintained, the way people are content to make do with what they have instead of being continually greedy for more. I sincerely hope that all citizens of Aotearoa will continue to cultivate such a civilised way of life. ■

Sr Sue Cosgrove is a member of the leadership team of the Sisters of Compassion, Wellington

Un-spirituality. What I need right now?

Once upon a time I thought I had a rich and satisfying religious life. Six or seven years ago, it began to fall to pieces. In these circumstances there are few things I feel less like doing than cultivating a prayer life, let alone exploring Zen meditation etc. As much as anything else my exasperation with the 'spiritual' is directed at myself and at the unreal religiosity that let me escape life rather than live it. When I sit there in Mass, I sometimes feel like someone with a bad hangover back in the pub where he got it in the first place: queasy stomach, headache, moodiness and all!

But the other day I got an email from a school friend enquiring whether I'd 'got over' my Catholicism yet. I sent a terse reply: *no I had not*. The terseness was partly born of irritation at what seemed to be implied: *don't fret, dear, you'll soon grow out of it*. However, my reply was also terse because I found myself unable to explain quite why I hadn't 'got over' it.

I won't attempt an explanation here either, but if we absolutely must talk of 'spirituality' this is the current shape of mine. A few years ago I came across a passage in Luther's commentary on *Galatians* and wrote it down: *Faith is a kind of recognition or, better, a darkness, which sees nothing, and yet in that very darkness sits Christ grasped by faith, just as God sat in the midst of darkness on Sinai or in the Temple*.

Call it a habit of thought, but for all my disenchantment, I can't entirely shake off this 'kind of recognition'; the Christ lurking in the midst of it all. I don't record that hunch with any particular sense of triumph or even relief. Nor do I want to say or think any more about it for the meanwhile.

If I were to pursue that Christ, a renewed bout of religious busy-ness is not the path I would take. Right now what I need is an *un-spirituality*: one that lets God get on with his business while I get on with mine; a spirituality which doesn't strain after the 'spirit' – the grand designs and realities that may or may not lie beyond this makeshift world. I have given up looking for Christ in the hope that in his own good time he will find me. ■

Sydney Smith

Inside the quiet

You could learn a lot
just sitting
watching God take tea with Buddha
in the tent at the top of the world.
They keep the flap open
so you can walk
inside the quiet and cool
and see the small cups that you thought
too tiny for the hand of God
who after all holds the whole world.
That's why God needs to rest
on a cloud of cushions
and contemplate with Buddha
the art of letting go.

Anne Powell

God among the latte lizards

Languishing over a latte. Simultaneously watching the pouring in, the settling, and the pouring out of cafe creatures. Two by two they enter and exit the zoo.

I sit on my perch, reading. Around me the tables are cluttered with conversation, cups, and culinary smells. Cell phones buzz like blowflies.

"God is like breathing," said some mystic. God a verb. So I sat sipping, pondering, and godding.

God as a collective noun came in, looking rather stressed. They clutched their diaries and stridently made for the tables outside. Some animals need space. They talked business and didn't laugh. They're from a mission agency I believe, Protestant variety. God is deadly serious.

God as an adjective was at the table opposite me, energetically devouring a fluffy. Bubbly, giggly, sparkling. Her mother, heaven be praised, was not big on restraint. The little girl was the rainbow every ark needs.

A regular comes over. We were both at a baptism recently.
"Noah would have needed more than two dung beetles." He's been reading.
"Yeah, think about it. 40 days and nights of rain plus 150 of swollen waters.
"Living on board with camels, horses, lions, jackals, goats, guineapigs, wolves, boars, warthogs, ... You would know better than to shovel the stuff overboard, when the waters receded you would need topsoil. Still, that's a lot of work for just two dung beetles. Better make it four."

Don't you love people who deal in practicalities? I still can't get past Noah's God drowning the vast majority of the planet.

Time for a latte refill.

Glynn Cardy

Making connections between God and the community

Jenny Close is a liturgical artist from Brisbane who attended the recent Women Scholars of Religion and Theology Conference in Auckland. At the invitation of the Education Trust Jenny presented a workshop in Christchurch on 'Imaging Lent and Easter' to forty local parish people. Here she talks with Kath Rushton RSM of Christchurch

What do you do as a liturgical artist?
I work mostly in my own parish of Our Lady of Mt Carmel in the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane. I regularly make liturgical installations related to the seasons of Advent/Christmas and Lent/Easter. Occasionally throughout the year I am commissioned to create liturgical environments for church-related conferences or special occasions. I enjoy these commissions because it is a challenge to make a public space, like the ballroom at the Sheraton Hotel, into a sacred space.

...and your background and training?
My first degree was in painting (in the 1970's) and I have always thought of myself primarily as an artist although I have mostly earned my living (and supported my art habits) by teaching part-time. At present I am working sixteen hours per week as a teacher librarian in a Catholic school for kids with learning difficulties. It was during the 1980's that I began to study liturgy and theology. Now I am working on a PhD in theology at Griffith University. My thesis is entitled 'A Feminist Understanding of Liturgical Art'. I became involved in liturgical art through a determination to be of use to my parish community. When I first moved to Mt Carmel I volunteered for practically every ministry, but eventually I found a niche in liturgical art which engaged my talents, satisfied my need for service and fulfilled a need in the community. I think Mt Carmel has a pretty good reputation for liturgy in the archdiocese. There are numerous reasons for this, but one is that people are encouraged to use their talents in the service of the community. Sadly, this spirit of openness and invitation is not always apparent in Catholic parishes.

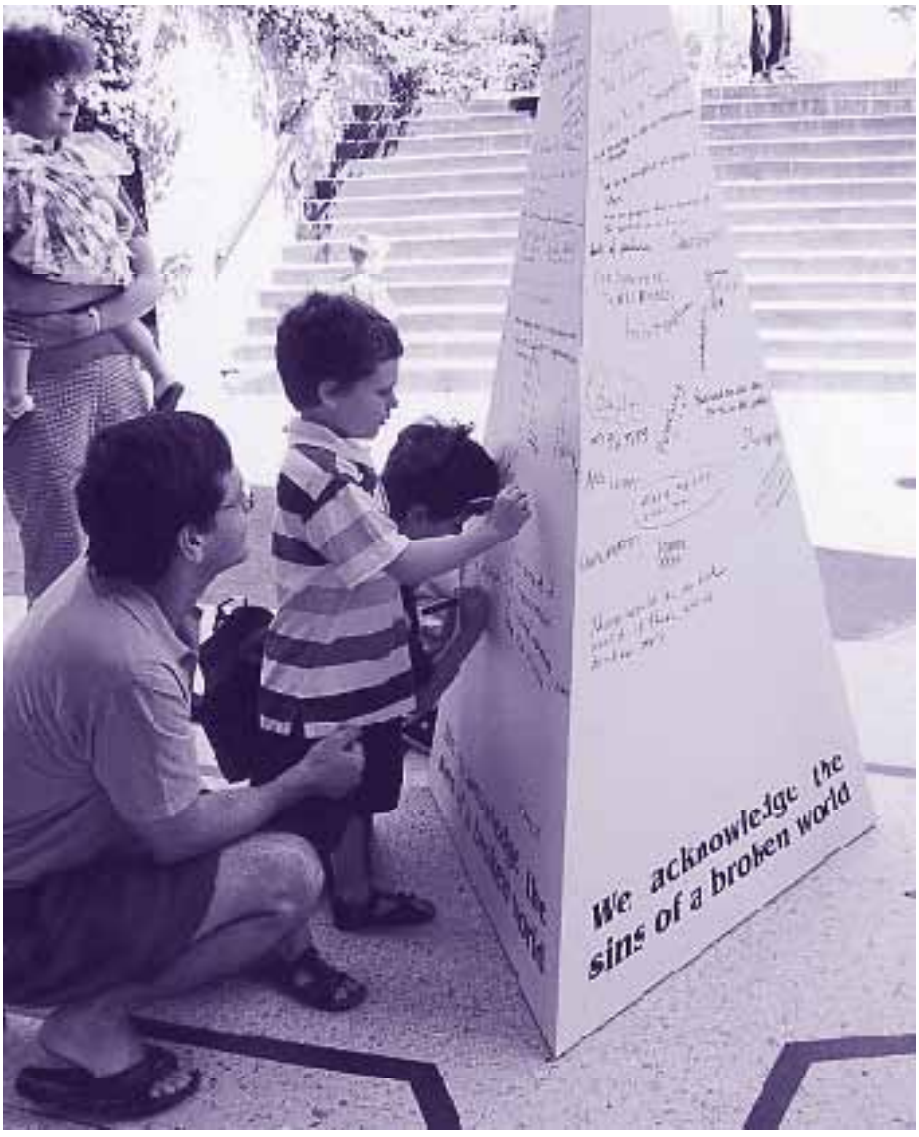
Tell us how you as a liturgical artist contribute to the liturgy of your parish?
As an artist I work from within my parish community as a member. In planning and preparation for a season I work closely with the liturgy committee. Naturally, there are some aspects of my work which are individual, but liturgy at Mt Carmel is very much a community enterprise.

I guess my role as an artist and liturgist at Mt Carmel is about making liturgy so interesting that the members of the community are engaged with the experience from the moment they arrive in the space. My hope is that their experience travels back home with them into their day to day experience. I believe that liturgy can be relevant to real life while at the same time inspiring us to reach outside the mundane for heavenly things. The challenge for me is to make the connections between everyday and heavenly realities. It is this connection which I spend most time thinking about when I plan for a liturgical season.

Can you outline a significant project in your parish?
One of the most exciting years in my recent practice was the year of Jubilee 2000. The turning of the century was a significant moment for most people in the western world, I suppose. For Australians it was the year of the Sydney Olympics and the penultimate year of a century of Federation. It was not all celebration, however, and there were some serious justice issues that arose during that year, for example, Aboriginal Reconciliation and the expunging of third world debt. At Mt Carmel there was a serious attempt to balance celebration with serious reflection.

To pay tribute to the public nature of the year 2000 celebrations I made full use of the forecourt of Mt Carmel church which opens out onto a major public roadway. I marked the floor of the forecourt with the five stars of the Southern Cross. In four of the stars I put blank, white, three sided pyramid shapes. Each pyramid had a phrase which was printed at the base of its three sides. These phrases were used, one each week for the first four Sundays of Lent, as a focus for a community Jubilee/ Lenten reflection. In chronological order the phrases read: "Our dreams for the new era"; "Our fears for the new millennium"; "We acknowledge the sins of a broken world"; and "We recognise the signs of healing in a fractured world." The fifth star was left vacant during Lent, but the Easter fire was burnt there at the Vigil mass.

Every Sunday the community remained outside for the gathering rite among the pyramids. After Mass the members of the community were encouraged to write their comments on the blank sides of a pyramid. Everyone was urged to participate: those too young to write were asked to draw and those who spoke no English were invited to write in their own language. There was no trouble about filling one pyramid each week since the response, especially from children and young adults, was very encouraging.



As each pyramid was filled I added rainbow colours around the comments. I also listed and classified every comment and did a content analysis to identify the recurring major themes. I posted brief notes of the weekly results of this research in the parish newsletter.

A Mass for the forgiveness of sins was celebrated on the Monday of Holy Week and quotes from the pyramid comments were used in the text of the liturgy. In addition, I made four double-sided banners, covered in quotes, which were hung that night in the assembly space. My aim was to make more connections between the inside and the outside of the celebrating space and to draw the concerns of the parishioners into the action of the liturgy.

The pyramid assemblage was the most interactive work I have been involved in. Here was a project in which the community truly participated in the construction and the meaning-making processes of art and liturgy.

What have you learnt over these years of working in this way in your parish?
From the responses to my work in the parish I have learned how much people gain from experiencing liturgy interactively and with all their senses. Proclamation of the Word has always been central to the experience of Christian liturgy so the connection between hearing and meaning is well established. Nowadays we are aware of how differently individuals experience the world and hearing is only one of those ways. I see it as my job to make liturgical meaning accessible through the visual.

I have also learned how the meaning that other people see in my work can differ greatly from my intentions. At times this can be disconcerting, but more often than not, when the viewer reads the artwork through the lens of their own experience, they find unique and fresh meaning. Sometimes I give small snippets of information about the seasonal installations in the parish newsletter, but ultimately I have learned to trust and value the interpretive

How have you combined local symbols with liturgical ones?
As an Australian there can be problems working with liturgical symbols derived from northern hemisphere sources. New Zealand liturgists might feel the same as I do when Christmas is in the middle of summer and the dominant liturgical image for the season is the coming of Christ who lights and enlivens the sleeping and wintry earth.

My job is often to reinterpret traditional images like the advent wreath to make it relevant for my community. I like the idea of the advent wreath because it is a useful way to mark the weeks leading up to Christmas, but I usually take the circlet of candles and greenery apart. I place the candles, each with its own greenery, at four stations around the celebrating space. In this way the assembly gathers within a circle of light.

Making the advent wreath into a gathering circle makes connections with the ancient Bora Ring tradition of the Australian Aborigines. Connections of this kind can be made more explicit in the prayers which accompany the lighting of the candles. My aim is not to copy Aboriginal motifs or traditions, but simply to evoke references.

How is your art project received by people in the pews? Do you encounter resistance from parish priests?
When I first started working in a big way at Mt Carmel there were a few rumblings and negative comments, but now the community is largely accepting and encouraging. I think that is because the way we do liturgy at Mt Carmel really does 'work'. For the most part, when a liturgy is a rich and satisfying experience the community appreciates it. Parents especially like it when their children are drawn to the musical and the visual experiences of liturgy - when there are interesting things to see and do.

At Mt Carmel we have been blessed with Carmelite parish priests. The Carmelites seem to have an affinity for liturgy and great love for our parish. So far I have worked with three Carmelite parish priests and I have found each of them very supportive and open-minded. I have, on occasion, denied their craving for neatness and order in the celebrating space, but usually they cope well with the creative messiness which is often part of liturgical art.

Do parishioners interested in enhancing liturgy through art need to be 'expert' artists?
This is a question that has arisen recently at Mt Carmel, ie whether the liturgy is too professional and excludes ordinary parishioners who are willing but untrained volunteers. I believe that it is a questions of balance between professional leadership and community involvement because they are both important. Parishioners who are armed with goodwill but are liturgically and theologically uninformed generally make poor liturgies, while highly trained professionals who have no real connection with the community can produce sterile performances. I think we at Mt Carmel do get the balance right sometimes, but it is something we need to work at constantly. Our liturgies do arise from the community and that is in our favour: we have plenty of people of goodwill, and a large number of gifted and trained persons have settled in the parish.

What has led you to Ph.D. study?
As a young artist I worked predominantly intuitively with art not really 'understanding', or needing to understand what I was doing. As I grew older that attitude became untenable and unsatisfying, and it was then that I started to study liturgy and theology. There are not many artists in Australia, even those who are commissioned to make church art, who are liturgically and theologically informed. When I came into contact with feminist theologians, especially Dr Elaine Wainwright, who is a New Testament scholar and also my supervisor, I discovered how important it was for women experts to be voices for renewal in the church. Since the 1990's I have felt strongly about the importance of Liturgical Art and I guess my PhD thesis is an opportunity to do three things: to bring understanding to my practice; to draw art and religion into a mutually beneficial relationship in a liturgical context; and to bring a woman's voice to the predominantly male liturgical forum.

What do you hope for in the future?
I suppose my immediate aim is to finish my thesis, and then I want to get it published. I enjoy teaching adults about liturgy, so I want to do more of that. Small group rituals are becoming more important in our communities and I would like to explore their creative potential. I also have a strong desire to work with liturgy on an everyday basis in a parish for a while. This appeals to my nurturing instinct because I think of liturgy as the breath of life in a parish. In any case whatever I do in the future my practice of liturgical art will be the corner stone. ■

Anyone interested in bringing Jenny Close to New Zealand for liturgy work, contact Kath Rushton at P.O. Box 972, Christchurch. email: krushton@voyager.co.nz

The Sea as Revelatory

Susan Smith

Prior to the recent Olympics, a number of commentators spoke of an on-going love affair of Australians with the sea, brought about by the close proximity of most Australians to the beach and to the ocean. The success of the Australian swimmers was also attributed to this love affair. New Zealanders too have this love affair with the seas that surround them, even if it does not ensure the success of our Olympic swimmers!

Summer, even late summer, is a time when many New Zealanders flock to the beach. This may mean journeying to exciting surf beaches like Piha, the more sheltered beaches of the Hauraki Gulf, the wild and isolated beaches of the South Island's west coast, or the gentle bays of Whangaparoa peninsula. There we can 'get away from it all', and find a recreative peace to repair the damage life in the fast track causes. This therapeutic awareness of the sea invites us to reflect on the spiritual significance of the sea.

Recent surveys in Aotearoa New Zealand suggets that orthodox religious belief is declining. This is reflected particularly in diminishing numbers of people, including Catholics, attending Sunday church services. Yet at the same time, more New Zealanders believe in a Spirit immanent in creation or think of the Spirit as a cosmic energy or force.

Can our outings to the seas help us recognise the spiritual and moral possibilities of our time at the beach – especially moral values? A certain egalitarianism can be discerned when New Zealanders gather on their beaches. When we're all playing at the water's edge, it is hard to tell who has come in a BMW or the ubiquitous Toyota minibus. Nor is it so easy to tell who has the designer label clothes and who doesn't. The gap between rich and poor and the other signs of social stratification in our society fade into insignificance.

Family values seems more important. Families of all shapes and sizes play happily together. Junior Chris Cairns tries his hand at demolishing wooden driftwood sticks or beach chair with tennis balls, urged on by enthusiastic parents; volleyballers undeterred by extreme youthfulness or old age punch the ball here and there.

And there is a growing recognition of our need to enter into non-exploitative relationships with the rest of creation. Parents delight in pointing to and explaining the extraordinary diversity of life found in rock pools. We cannot take indiscriminately from the oceans, nor can we light beach barbecues without due respect for our environment. And finally we are urged to care more for our bodies, the temples of the Spirit, by not taking foolish risks with the sun or the waters that lure us.

The immensity of the sea can direct our attention to the Creator God whose gift it is. Most cultures have invested the oceans with a sense of the divine. For Maori in the southern Bay of Plenty, the ocean is one of the children of Rangi (sky) and Papa (earth). In the Poverty Bay area, Moana-nui (the sea) is the daughter of Rangi and his second wife Wainui-atea. Our English word *ocean* is derived from the Greek god, *Okeanos*, identified by Homer as one of the two sources of the universe. In other ancient Near Eastern cultures, the oceans were often divinised and worshipped in the different creation myths.

In the Old Testament there are indications that the Hebrews regarded the seas as the site of God's creation. *Genesis 1:2* tells us that *the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters,* suggesting that it is through the presence of the Spirit that God creates. In *Psalm 104:3* we read that the sea is the site of God's throne.

In the New Testament also there are numerous references to the sea. In *Mark* it is by the seaside that the first disciples are called to follow Jesus, (*1:16-22),* suggesting that the sea is a privileged place for experiencing God's call. There are several ▷▷

Sometimes

Sometimes on nights of bluest winter ice
Or in summer's amber rippled heat
I smell the spirit's hooded gift
And taste the scent of grace upon my sheets.

Then
My soul burns red in darkest fire
And passion flows in blood and gold
Within my heart
When prayer is wrapped in lover's eyes
And God... no more than breath away
Peels back my skin with tender care
And moves within to meet me there.

I bleed with fear and bleed with joy
And with His eyes He names my truth
And with His hands He clothes my flesh
In threads of dreams
And with His kiss He seals my lips in prophet's fire
And with His touch He moves my world
And I am lost within the One
A single spark within the Sun.

Sometimes on nights of fiery thread and hazel moon
Somewhere between my soul's desire
And trembling fear He finds me waiting
And slowly, gently draws the boundaries down.

Jacquie Lambert

instances of Jesus teaching by the seaside. Once, such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat to preach to them (*Mark 4:1*). Many of Jesus' miracles occur by the sea. And even though the sea can be a destructive force, Jesus has power over it and calms its fury (*4:39-41*).

So, if the sea and its beaches are privileged places for experiencing the divine in our lives, perhaps we could be more conscious of the fact as we head for the beach this summer, togs in hand. For most New Zealanders church is not the only place where God is revealed. Indeed, for many it can be counter-productive with its tendency to concentrate on one sense only – hearing – at the expense of sight, smell, touch and taste. Seaside and water experiences can offer more moments of revelation.How can the symbol of the sea speak to us of God? At an obviously visible level New Zealand beaches and seas can help us in our search for a certain egalitarianism. In *Mark* the miracles of Jesus mean that oppressive and exclusive social rules are challenged by the possibility of an inclusive community in which healing and wholeness happen. The miracle stories point to the reality of healing, and we know from personal experience something of the healing quality of our beach and ocean times. And the sheer vastness and solitude of our seascape makes it possible for us to hear God's voice in the roar of the mighty waters (*Psalm 29:3*) or and in the gentle breeze (*1Kings 19:12*).

One of Joy Cowley's verses perhaps helps us understand how our seascape experiences are a privileged way to God and to our sisters and brothers. She writes:

> *This morning we walked along a beach*
> *which seemed to be full of God's aroha.*
> *Sky, sea, sand, they were all alight,*
> *splash and dazzle, sparkle, shimmer,*
> *dancing in a celebration of love.* ■

LIGHTING THE FIRES

Womens Study/ Research Project

There is money available for women within Aotearoa New Zealand who are wanting to undertake a research study or project that fits within the following guidelines:

- empowering women to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, their country and their church;
- affirming women, through shared leadership and decision-making, theology and spirituality, in their decisive contributions to communities and church;
- giving visibility to women's perspectives and actionsin the struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation;
- enabling churches to free themselves from racism, sexism, and classism, from teachings and practices that discriminate against women;
- enabling the churches to take actions in solidarity with women.

Applicants need to provide:

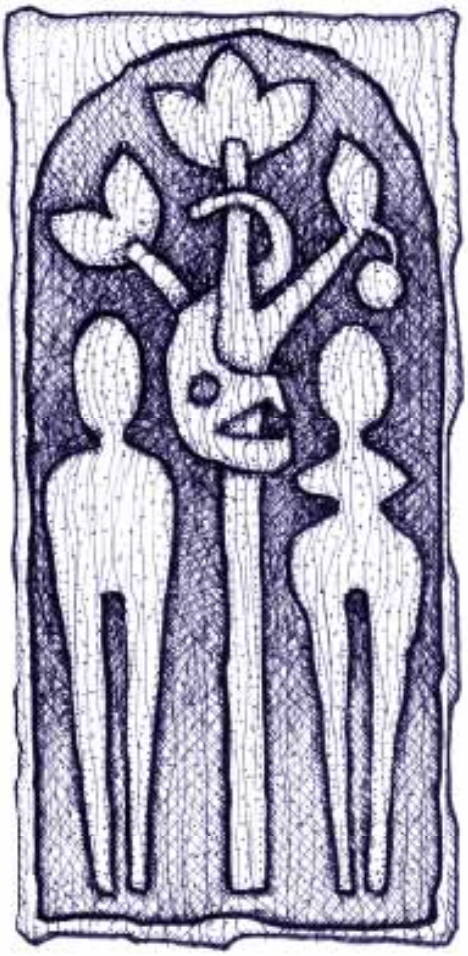
- evidence of appropriate research skills and background experience
- a 500 word description of the research study or project
- names and contact information of two referees
- a proposed budget and timeline

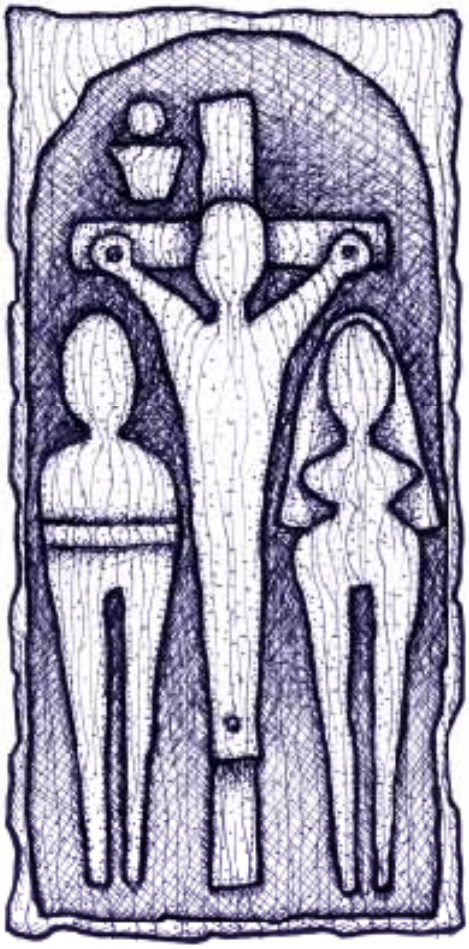
To apply or for further information, write to:

Lighting the Fires, Womens Study Project
PO Box 173, OTEPOTI/DUNEDIN

The Serpent and the Crucified One

June Mac Millan





While reflecting on the Scriptures in recent times I became aware of some interesting parallels in the writings of *Genesis* and *John*, the disciple whom Jesus loved. Both these writings begin with *"In the beginning...."* Both have similar patterns or motifs round the Fall/Redemption story. It's as if its beginning and its completion had been crafted in by the Holy Spirit for a particular purpose. Both patterns have a male, female, or human component, as well as a spiritual dimension which are similar in nature.

My reflecting has also caused me to wonder about the type of temptation which occurred. Somewhere along the way I have picked up, whether by assumption or through the teaching I was exposed to at school, that the temptation was something to do with the physical aspect of humanness. Eating the apple was somehow built into my knowledge base as being sexual in nature. Yet as I reflected it seemed more likely to me that the temptation had to do more with *power over*: 'You will be like God knowing.....' It was a sin of the intellect, a sin of desire for knowledge which caused the fall.

Sacred Scripture is a divinely inspired book, some of which seems more like a recipe for the destruction of humankind than a pattern for its redemption. Aspects of it are inspiring, other parts quite horrifying. All of it is a springboard for new learning and understanding. I often wonder if God really meant us to take the Scripture as gospel, or to use it as springboard to further the evolutionary process of humankind. Certainly in recent times a great flowering of meaning, different from anything previously presented to us, has fountained out as scriptural scholars have gained new insights.

In the beginning, for example, the devil was an unknown entity. In fact we are told that the devil only surfaced in the consciousness of the People of God shortly before New Testament times and was then brought more clearly into focus by Jesus. The serpent present in the Fall scene is identified as the devil in the catechism of Pope John Paul II. Yet was the serpent really the devil or was it merely a medium the devil chose for its purpose? And did the author of *Genesis* choose the serpent as an example because of how it was viewed in the practices of other cultures within the vicinity where the serpent was seen as a symbol of fertility?

If Adam and Eve had no concept of the evil one how could they have sinned? To sin one must have knowledge and freely enter into the process considered to be sinful. What comparison could they make from their previous experience? True, God had told them not to eat of the tree in the middle of the garden and it appears to be the only *No No* imposed upon them. How could they know the consequences of an action when all they had previously experienced was loving care? How do

children today discover the difference between good and evil for themselves, if not through experience?

A whole new insight began to suggest itself to me. The patterns of *Genesis* and *John* held parallels which stopped me in my tracks. In the garden of Eden there were three actors: a serpent (possibly a medium for the evil one) and Adam and Eve themselves. In the garden of Golgotha, which means skull – that place which houses the intellect – there is a similar pattern: the Christ (who used human nature as a medium for God's Incarnational interaction with humanity) and Mary and John. I have always thought of Jesus as the second Adam "who to the rescue came"; perhaps in reality it was John who was the second Adam.

In the garden of Eden it is the tree in the middle of garden which bears the fruit which if eaten will cause death, according to God's instruction to Adam and Eve. In the garden of Golgotha it is the tree of the Cross which stands in the middle of the garden, so to speak, which bears the fruit which, if eaten, will give life. *Anyone who eats this bread will live forever* (John 6:51). Jesus is nailed to the Cross between two other crosses which held a good thief and a bad thief – trees on which the knowledge of good and evil come to fruition.

The original scene is depicted within the garden of Eden, or Paradise, and the second scene without the gates of the Holy City, or Jerusalem. The Serpent speaks to Eve and Jesus speaks to Mary. Sacred art often has the serpent writhing down the tree towards Eve, or in the art of Michelangelo, almost at one with the tree, to converse with Eve. Jesus, on the other hand, in order to breathe or speak, was forced to writhe up the tree towards Heaven, as if reaching out to God for our Redemption.

Satan is a spirit and the serpent is a creature. Here we have an evil spirit using the medium of a creature to turn a man from his God. In Jesus we have the pure spirit of the Godhead using the medium of a human being to turn humankind back to God. The spiritual polarities are clear, and as these polarities are inherent in the human being, the battle was fought at the spiritual level rather than the physical level, even if such a level was not clearly defined at the time of the enactment of the dramas.

The scene at Golgotha took on a new perspective for me. I could now overlay that scene onto the garden of Eden and have a completion. The scene within Eden was perhaps about trust. Adam and Eve were called upon to have absolute trust in God and failed in their task. They were banished from the garden, and an angel with a fiery sword was put in place to make sure they did not return to it. They were sent out to labour, one to produce food, and one to produce new life, in pain, and by the sweat of their brow. I had a shadowy question deep in me. *Did God lose trust in the creation God had seen to be very good, or was it man who lost the ability to trust?* Perhaps it was both. It would be interesting to read the Scriptures with that question in mind.

The garden in which Jesus was to struggle in the very essence of His being to hold onto trust – *Father why have you abandoned me?* – was outside the city. The right to re-enter the garden of Eden had to be won 'outside' where the banished ones still laboured. The Golgotha scene was now an extension of the Eden scene; the fruit on the tree in the middle of the garden, the tree of life, was Jesus. The eating of this fruit gifted one with life forever. The tree of good and evil, the fruit of which had already been tasted by Adam and Eve, was represented by the good and bad thieves.

John does not seem to make as much of the temptation side of things as do the other Gospel writers. He does not have Jesus going off into the desert to be tempted by the devil for example. Rather, Jesus goes off to a wedding feast as if to celebrate the reopening of Eden to God's people, the reunion of God and God's people. In the closing moments of the Crucifixion scene he also seems to indicate that the mystic spiral, or redemptive motif, has been completed, even if it will be repeated many times over in the future. Created humanity can once more be seen as very good in the eyes of God and is back on track.

"Seeing His mother and the disciple He loved standing there" Jesus, beneath the tree of the Cross, addresses them. First his mother – the second Eve – whom he instructed to take the disciple he loved – perhaps the second Adam – as her son, and then the disciple he loved, whom he instructed to take Mary as his mother. And he, the beloved disciple, made a place for her in his home. *After this Jesus knew that everything had now been completed*. The going back into Jerusalem to the home of the beloved disciple was the return to Eden. In hindsight it was also an invitation for us hereafter to eat from the tree of life. We had been gifted with the eternal life God feared Adam and Eve might claim for themselves. Good had overcome evil. The gifting power of the Creator had reasserted itself. The Crucified One was supreme. ■

The Muddy Ground Of God

The Poisonwood Bible, a contemporary novel, provides a lens for critically exploring ideas of church, of mission – and even of God. The explorer is Auckland Anglican priest, ***Glynn Cardy***

When I was growing up in the 1970s there was a particular literary genre, a subset of biography, that could be labelled 'the exploits of missionaries.' Being a young Christian, and attracted by the exotic, I eagerly devoured these religious adventure stories. Looking back at them now is like reading early science fiction. They bravely went where no man [*sic*] had gone before. They believed in divine inspiration, the inevitable right of every action they took - even those that went horribly wrong! They believed God was with them.

All the missionaries were American or European. All those to be "missioned" upon were of a darker skin pigmentation. The missionaries courageously entered the foreign culture, consumed the foreign language, and sought to convince the natives to bow down to their imported, white God. The books of mission exploits never included any socio-political critique, never included any reciprocity with the locals in the search for God, and never, ever, expressed doubt or uncertainty.

Comic books, as many would see these, are not of course written for the purpose of conveying history. They are written to convey mythological messages. So it is a little unfair to tar all missionaries with the same brush. We know from the history of our own land that many had mixed motives. Many grew to respect the indigenous culture. A number grew to be cynical about their role in "civilising" this land. A few even would have owned up to believing that God was here before the white man, nurturing and sustaining faith and love. But not many.

Book Review

One of the novels featuring in many book clubs is *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver. It tells of an American missionary who, in the late 1950s, takes his wife and four daughters to Zaire. He also takes his tyrannical God and his own psychic history - they feed on and destroy each other. Unlike other members of his family he has no interest in listening and learning from the locals. Throughout the time of his mission, for example, he desperately wants to baptise people in the river. To the locals such an action reflects a desire to feed the crocodiles. Finally, towards the end of the book, when a boat full of children capsizes, taking the children to a reptilian death, the missionary and his God are blamed.

The Poisonwood Bible is a wonderful book, with excellent characterisation, and an obvious passion for Zaire. It was no surprise to read that Kingsolver spent some of her childhood there. Zaire can get under your skin - and it has some lovely little parasites that do exactly that! My wife, Stephanie, and I spent nearly a month there a number of years ago and it made a big impact upon us. Most of the country is an enormous jungle basin. Roads are mud tracks, frequently washed away. The health problems seem overwhelming. The despotic Mobutu government and its western puppet-masters kept the country as fragmented and primitive as possible in order to maximise control. Yet in spite of this the people seemed to have an amazing vibrancy.

Kingsolver explores the shifting terrain between righteousness and right. The three surviving children, all forever connected with Africa, each represent different perspectives. Leah is an outgoing, attractive character - passionate for justice, loving of people, and uncomfortable with the privilege and pain that her white skin brings. She has planted herself in Africa. Adah is something of an enigma. Cynical about the motives of men and their machinations, she is a believer in what might be called the ebb and flow of nature and destiny. She is not planted anywhere. Rachel is, ironically, similar to the father she hated - consumed by the belief that the world should revolve around her. She lives in Africa as a transplant who never accepts the body she has been grafted onto. (I think many of us know people like her!)

The book uses these perspectives to examine the issues of colonisation -labelling the poor 'communists' and plundering their houses; neo-colonisation - doing the same thing through providing arms and debt; and the broader issues of culture, power, gender, life and death. What Kingsolver doesn't look at is God. God remains forever wedded to the missionary father - a demanding, punishing, arrogant deity who never learns. Interestingly, Kingsolver tries to keep Jesus alive, separate from this God of self-interest and death, by associating Jesus with another missionary who married a local woman, went about helping people, and taught his parrot to swear.

Most Christians, at some stage, try to reconcile the understanding of God as portrayed by the church with the understanding of God as portrayed by Jesus. It is not difficult to uncover a tragic history of the church persecuting, punishing and plundering in the name of its God. One just has to think of the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Witch-hunts, and the Holocaust. It is so much at odds with the Jesus who said: *Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you...* Some try to excuse this horrific history by saying "times were different then", or "they weren't really Christians", or "the church isn't immune from human failing". But I suspect the terrible acts might be closer to the core of church-think than we want to acknowledge. Kingsolver's crocodile converter might have more in common with mainstream church than with Jesus!

It seems that in its acquisition of power in the fourth century Constantinian world, the church also acquired a belief in the importance of controlling what people believe, a corresponding preference for obedience rather than love, and a readiness to persecute anyone of a different persuasion. The church devised creeds, like the Nicene, in order to distinguish who was right and who was wrong. The creeds made no mention of the ethical teachings that Jesus preached.

One of the things the church has done is to create a boundary between *us* and *them*, *Christian* and *non-Christian*. In so categorizing, the church distorts the meaning of Christian, i.e. Christ-like. The church assumes it is necessary to categorize and that it has the insight and mandate to do so. Jesus' words *Judge not* do not fit with institutional thinking.

The challenge of Jesus to the religious leaders of his day was that they stood between humanity and God, and claimed control of the access points. They policed the frontiers and set up custom posts, letting some in and denying others entry. The church has followed in their controlling footsteps. In labelling people there exists the potential that the *them* can be, even should be, treated differently than the *us*. There is latent violence lurking here.

In the 1990s when mission statements were in vogue, one parish's attempt read "Christ to the Community." While their desire to serve their community was admirable, the assumptions in their slogan were less so. The statement assumed that this church had Christ (God) and the community did not. It did not seem to recognise that God doesn't keep to our boundaries.

There are many people, of different faiths or of none, who try to live lives reflecting the compassion, justice, and integrity of Jesus. There are many ways to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Of the three surviving *Poisonwood* sisters the likeable Leah leads a life grounded in commitment to others. You could imagine Jesus joining her in the mud. The enigmatic Adah offers her genius altruistically to the world through epidemiological research, particularly regarding HIV/AIDS and Ebola. Only with Rachel in her devotion to a fixed view of the world centred on herself, is it difficult to think of any similarity with Jesus. Yet, oddly enough, of the three, Rachel is the only one I could imagine going to church - as long as the services were in English and other expatriots attended!
It's a muddy ol' world. ■

Published by faber and faber: $22.95

Billy Elliot
Review: Nic McCloy

Billy Elliot is a film about a young boy who decides to become a ballet dancer despite living in an English coal mining town during the reign of Margaret Thatcher, a time when life was darker than the mines that the striking workers would normally have spent their days in.

Billy's Mum is dead and his Father is struggling to keep the family together... Add it all up and you could easily be forgiven for thinking this is the plot for a bad Sunday night TV movie - and it so easily could have been but for the talent of Jamie Bell who plays the lead role in yet another moving and funny British film.

Film Review

Bell's portrayal of Billy is mature beyond his years while retaining a very youthful humour. He is a magic actor who steals the show from seasoned pros like Julie Walters, whose chain smoking dance teacher role is a classic. The other outstanding part in the film is that of Gary Lewis, who plays Billy's dad. A hardened coal miner who is on strike, has lost his wife and has to contend with his ageing mother and just doesn't need a ballet dancing son, Lewis's portrayal of Elliot Senior is tough and touching. The political backdrop of the film (Durham during the miner's strike) provides a great contrast for the Billy's dance endeavours. It also provides a superbly crafted insight into life in what was surely one of Britain's darkest periods in the post-war era.

One reviewer I heard suggested this was four hanky film – I can't agree with that but there was definitely a thinly disguised sniffle or two (along with a lot more laughs). I can't imagine anyone not enjoying something about this film (even if it is just the great 70's soundtrack for all you old rockers out there!) Definitely one you could take your Mum to... ■

The curse of Eve redeemed

Women and the Value of suffering: An Aw(e)ful Rowing Toward God.
By Kristine M. Rankka
Collegeville, Minnesota, 1998
Price: $63 approx.
Review: Louise Campbell

A "work in progress" (p.226) is this author's own apt description of her book. This work provides an insightful analysis of current "conversations" around traditional and contemporary interpretations of atonement, evil and suffering. Kristine Rankka's creative retrieval and interpretation of the category 'radical' or 'tragic' suffering, advances this profoundly enriching discussion about the meaning and value of suffering from a Christian womanly perspective. I believe that an encounter with this compelling, sensitive and progressive conversation is firstly a gift to faithful Christian women, but also a gift to the whole Christian community.

Opening this book to skim the Contents is an experience in its own right. It provides a valuable insight into the meticulous care and the constructive referencing of this book, the methodology employed, as well as the persistent and consistent direction in which Rankka takes her comprehensive and scholarly conversation. She frames the aw(e)some endeavour of her work with two of Annie Sexton's poems, *Rowing* and *The Rowing Endeth.*

Rowing, particularly rowing upstream against the current when out fishing with her father, and conversations around the table provide the two memory-metaphors which guide Rankka's explorations around the ***value*** of women's suffering - an interesting difference in itself to the traditional approach of exploring the ***problem*** of suffering. I appreciated both metaphors to describe the experience of reading this book. At times I couldn't return to the conversation fast enough, at other times a dogged persistence was required to continue a consecutive reading of this work; such is the challenge implicit to the vision of this work.

Why focus on women's experiences of suffering? Rankka begins by offering us a few of the gender-specific examples of suffering that occur on a daily basis throughout the world. Her choices are familiar enough for recognition, here in New Zealand. Lower wages for women, precarious employment, massive sexual assault, too often the repercussion of war (as in Bosnia), child prostitution, to medical conditions such as depression, breast and ovarian cancers, and the fear of walking down a street at night. This small sampling alone seems sufficient to justify the discussion of women's suffering as an imperative.

Rankka goes on to couple this reason with the very particular focus that Christian tradition has sometimes accorded women "in which woman is believed to cause and continue evil and suffering, and thus deserves suffering as a just punishment and a means of expiation" (p.69). Untold destructive consequences still persist for women today because of this attitude. Inevitably, therefore, this author is compelled to critique and respond to women's experience of suffering from a theological perspective. As Rankka herself asks: "Where is the 'good news' in all of this? How can we speak of life in abundance (*John 10:10*) when so massive is the suffering of just our own time, not just the past?" (p.36)

Let it be clear, however, that the focus on the experience of women is not to exclude men, who surely suffer too and also contribute in no small measure to the enriching discussion that ensues. It is simply that women suffer differently. From this perspective, then, Kristine Rankka chooses "to explore ways Christians might respond theologically and spiritually in responsible and creative ways to suffering in women's lives" (p.8).

Kristine Rankka uses the metaphor of a house, more specifically the 'house of suffering', to describe the underlying structure that moves us from room to room as she explores the complexities of suffering in our times. Having introduced us to her purpose and methodology in chapter 1, she uses chapter 2 to define and identify some specific features attending the experience of pain and suffering. I was particularly impressed by the way she was able to extract the most salient and familiar features of traditional theodicies to provide an ongoing basis for subsequent discussion.

Chapter 3 provides an articulate survey of selected women's writings that speak about suffering from within a Christian context, then compares the similarities and differences with the way men have theologized this topic. Rankka's original and feminine approach to the discussion of such enigmatic topics as 'the role of suffering' and 'evil' is, quite literally, to put these authors into conversation with one another through their writings. This choice lends both energy and empowerment to the overall conversation of the book. However, it is Rankka's own analysis that creates the continuity, and I must confess to some moments of irritation at the text being quite so ▷▷

A fascinating glimpse of Kiwi Irish

A Distant Shore: Irish Migration and New Zealand Settlement
Edited by Lyndon Fraser
University of Otago Press, Oct 2000
Price: $39.95
Review: Kevin Molloy

This reviewer recalls an invitation made some years ago by a Wellington Hibernophile Michael Bellam to young historians to flush out "that invisible minority", the New Zealand Irish, and give them the place that is due to them in Kiwi history. Bellam's right. Of course, there are gaps in our knowledge of our past. *A Distant Shore* does very well to help overcome that and Bellam would be happy that the young historians are well represented.

Because I was associated once with the *NZ Tablet* RIP, I am used to writing generally about Catholics. This book forces me to consider also the migration of our separated brethren from Northern Ireland.

Now let Angela McCarthy take up the running with her chapter "Private Letters and Irish Women's Migration to NZ". Although Protestant writers frequently declared their Irishness, an Ulster Protestant, Alice Gilmore, was careful to distinguish herself from a contingent of non-Ulster migrants aboard the Auckland-bound SS *Bebington* in 1876: "The most of the passengers was South of Ireland the roughest and worst class of people I am sure ever come here before and nearly all R.C. If you only heard them praying when the thought the were in danger when she used to be rolling about..."

One study shows that migration for 19th century female correspondents was "inherently destabilising", and that "people tore up their old connections". McCarthy, on the other hand, argues that kinship ties played a critical role in Irish female migration and helped to overcome feelings of loneliness or alienation. Reports suggest that these newcomers made a relatively easy adjustment o New Zealand society.

Concerning Protestants declaring their Irishness, I've dived into my home copy of Southland author Georgina McDonald's excellent novel *Stinson's Bush* (Pub.1954). Here's an extract:
"We're from Ireland, the whole lot of us, Dyers and Stinsons."
"From Ireland? I never heard there was much good come from Ireland", said the old man. I'm thinking all these days past it is Scotch you will be."
"Get away with it. I'm as Irish as peat."
"But these people were Scotch people, who settled in Ireland."
"I don't know about history, but it's Irish I am."

And this final gem from *Stinson's Bush*: "Ye'll be an Orangeman, I doot?"
"Poking away at old sores to keep them festering, that's the Orangemen. Best thing for Ireland did they forget Boyne Water and stick closer to the ploughing!"
How's that for a healthy strain of historical cynicism!

Coming from kin who seem to have no compunction about rallying to the cause (one branch of the family had five brothers in the French trenches in WWI), I was intrigued, in Sean Brosnahan's chapter, at the lengths to which some Kiwi Irish Nationalists went to avoid conscription. As Brosnahan points out, Irish issues played an unusually divisive role in New Zealand society between 1916 and 1922. Brosnahan's is one of the best chapters in the book and he has much to say about Dunedin Irish, the Green Ray (guess what?) and lace-curtain shoneens.

I enjoyed Rory Sweetman, too, on Hibernianism in NZ. An outstanding essay, this. It's what you come to expect from the author of *Bishop in The Dock: The Sedition Trial of James Liston*. Helping also to make sense of the raw material of history from a wide spectrum of sources are distinguished historians, Prof Don Akenson, Alasdair Galbraith, Terry Hearn and Prof Patrick O'Farrell.

The editor of *A Distant Shore* is Lyndon Fraser, of Canterbury University. He can be proud of this book. It is a brilliant addition to literature on the Irish in New Zealand. They say there's a little bit of Irish in all of us. That makes for a massive sale of *a Distant Shore*. ■

▷▷ persistently interspersed and illustrated by apposite quotes from her selected authors. Contributions from Pamela Smith, Melanie May, Jean Blomquist as well as Dorothy Solle and Wendy Farley feature strongly and are later joined by Tina Allik and Paul Ricoeur. In less evidence but also integral to these conversations is Karl Rahner.

Chapter 4 places evil in a context that is more inclusive than human fault. Herein lies the critical key: a tragic vision points towards the experience of transformation for the one immersed in the experience of radical suffering. Rankka's excursus on *Job* as an example of a tragic sufferer offers a compelling and fascinating example of how an incorporation of a tragic vision of reality might enhance theological considerations on evil and radical suffering for women.

Rankka concludes her work by outlining some key elements for consideration in the continuing theological/spiritual response to suffering. She names this proposal a 'mystical/political' spirituality. Rankka advocates that a spirituality deeply grounded in each of these poles, has the capacity to move women's reflection on suffering from the private to the communal, interdependent realm. What these writings witness to is "an encounter with God and meaning that, somehow, for each of us, individually and collectively, can transform that suffering which seeks to destroy us.... we can come to an encounter with love, grace, and yes, even with joy" (p.236). ■

NZ deserves better from its politicians

Crosscurrents
by John Honoré

It is the calibre of our politicians that concerns me. Last month, Jenny Shipley announced her new front-bench line-up which she assures us will strike terror into the hearts of government members. She promoted Bob Simcock (who?) and Gerry Brownlee and left the vacuous Lockwood Smith to enrage the opposition benches with his unctuous smile. She hopes that Maurice Williamson was right when he said of her deputy leader, Bill English, that he had neither the "excitement, personality, nor talent" for the leadership. I wouldn't count on Williamson being right.

But now we have Gerry Brownlee, as Education spokesman for *National*, to continue the shambles left by Lockwood Smith and Max Bradford. What qualifications and what experience does he bring to this job? Does a certain talent in woodwork and an elementary knowledge of Maori make him an obvious choice for the position? After a token challenge for the deputy leadership, Brownlee immediately proposed dropping the National Certificate in Education Achievement initiated by *National*. This is political grandstanding at its worst. The educat-ion sector predictably reacted with shock and disbelief.Among school principals, Denis Pyatt said *National* had no understanding of the new qualification, Neil Lancaster said the decision was hypocritical, and Gillian Heald said the decision was uninformed. And this is only in Christchurch. Brownlee's only claim to fame is some boorish performances in the House against the Speaker and his support of Shipley in ousting Jim Bolger. He is unfit for the position of Education spokesman.

The opening of Parliament was again the occasion for personal abuse. Jenny Shipley labelled Helen Clark the "spinster of NZ politics", and Richard Prebble immediately launched into personal denigration, which is his trademark. This time the victim was Phillida Bunkle. It is the lack of talent in the *National* party and the destructive right wing policies of its coalition partner, *Act*, that are becoming a matter of serious concern. This is the opposition that aspires to rule the country. This column has said it before - we deserve better than this.

Mr Goff fudges it

The influence of rugby and the power of money in NZ were graphically demonstrated as being alive and well when the world rugby sevens tournament was held in Wellington. The so called "smart sanctions" of Phil Goff against Fiji went out the window. The rugby union was able to influence Sports Minister, Trevor Mallard, and persuade the coalition to waive any pretence of sanctions against Fiji. Phil Goff can rave on saying "withholding visas would not have stopped them playing" and "would have no effect on Fiji". But the perception and the reality are that Fiji would have been forced to play in a less favourable country (one not enhanced by the image of the All Blacks) and this would have hurt Fiji.

This was followed by the pathetic plea of Phil Goff asking ministers not to look at the Fijians playing, not to attend receptions and not to wave them *Goodbye*. The Christchurch *Press* editorial was correct about Phil Goff; "he has made a mockery of New Zealand's strong stand for democracy in Fiji". But even more sadly, the Labour government buckled under the pressure. It lost the chance to make an ideological stand, and to put to the test those "smart sanctions". And the unkindest cut – Fiji knocked out New Zealand!

Unholy music

I read that Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger considers that rock music, even opera, are unholy distractions from the Christian faith. I can understand what he means. He is probably sick and tired of Julie Andrews and does not want the hills of Rome to be alive with the sound of music. Now, it's rock. What's more, if he hears those three tenors, particularly the large bearded Italian one, sing *Your tiny hand is frozen* again, just when he is signing another Papal Bull, all three will get the 'Song of the flea' in their ear.

Music has been an unholy distraction for me lately. I cannot get through telephone systems to a live operator without being subjected to music which is designed to make me hang up. Try making a telephone booking with *TranzRail*. Many restaurants insist on playing inappropriate music which seems to be designed solely to keep the younger members of the staff happy. No regard for the diners. People don't go to restaurants for the music. Often my first task on arrival at a restaurant is to request that the music be turned down or turned off.

Recently, the worst case of musical distraction was a one day cricket match at the idyllic grounds of Lincoln University, where the national women's team won its way to become the world champions. The organisers had monstrous speakers dotted at ground level around the perimeter of the playing field, inescapable and totally ruining the bucolic atmosphere. Conversation, between overs, was impossible. But for musical distraction on an even higher plane, the good Cardinal should listen to Paul Holmes' latest CD. Now that, is an unholy distraction, par excellence! ■

The born again President

One of the first actions of George W Bush on becoming the new American President was to set up a White House office of faith-based organizations. Billions of dollars will be channelled into these organisations which will be given a primary role in combating social problems. Despite record prosperity homelessness, hunger and poverty are all on the rise in the US.

But many question this new approach to social welfare issues. Michael Brown, director of Boston's *Jewish Organising Initiative*, concedes that the intention is good, but feels Bush is concerned only with changing individual behaviour.

If people "get with God", they will right themselves. People's problems are of their own making. This, says Mr Brown, allows the government to ignore the fact that it is government action (or inaction) that is the fundamental cause of many of the problems that individuals are facing.

Catholic hospitals and social agencies in the US represent a vast enterprise. Their representatives too question the new policy. One comments: "When you invite Big Brother into your life, you can spend your day filling out papers". These are potential practical problems. More serious are some of the philosophical questions being asked.

Are we cynical to question President Bush's motives? Up to the age of 40 there was no hint of a political future. Bush's forays into business resulted in having to be bailed out by his father's friends. Heavy drinking brought things to a head after a party for his 40th birthday. He vowed never to drink again, joined Bible study groups and became a 'born again Christian'.

Bush and his right wing supporters aim to use government to enable religion – more specifically, evangelical Christianity – to transform the nature of American society. Many of the groups represented at the President's inaugural meeting were from evangelical organisations. The few Muslims, Jews and Catholics present were seen as a token gesture to ecumenism. Critics say Bush has put fundamentalist religious faith at the centre of American government.

His anti-abortion legislation has made him popular in many quarters. In a statement issued to the press on his first working day as President he said, "We share a great goal to work towards a day when every child is welcomed in life and protected by law, to build a culture of life, affirming that every person at every stage and season of life is created equal in God's image".

Fine sentiments. But what about the record? Texas boasts the highest number of executions in the country,152 during Bush's term as Governor. Many had been diagnosed as mentally retarded. Emissions from oil wells and industry have made Texas the most polluted state in the United States. While Governor of Texas Bush had the opportunity to bring in anti-pollution laws, but he chose to capitulate to the big corporations which would have suffered from a clean-up.

Michael Brown muses: "If the US government were to adopt a truly faith-based attitude toward our planet – seeing the environment as belonging to God, not the human owners of the property – then we might make real progress in eliminating the causes of pollution. But this is evidently not what the President is proposing".

The whole world may have to confront enormous changes with the return of a Bush to the White House. ■

Jim Neilan

Elizabeth and Helen

A recent TV1 documentary which focussed on the life and times of Queen Elizabeth I made full use of the sense of immediacy which television encourages. The use of the surviving historic houses in which Elizabeth lived, interviews with present descendants of the original Elizabethan owners and the dressing of the actors to 'walk' some of the leading characters, all added to the atmosphere and enhanced the scholarship brought to the presentation.

It was not difficult to draw a parallel between the roles of a Tudor Queen and a New Zealand Prime Minister. Being born to the role did not make the Queen any more secure than Helen Clark. And just as the critics are looking for signs of indecision, vacillation and weakness because the Prime Minister is a woman, so the Elizabethan Royal Council was ever searching to find fault, browbeat Elizabeth into submission and find her a husband as quickly as possible.

Success in either role depends and depended upon a person's political antennae. Elizabeth focussed on individual consultation with her Cabinet so avoiding any opportunity for group bullying; Helen Clark too stresses the importance of individual responsibility and loyalty. The language and the dress has changed. But the really important issues in the business of living are unchanged.

Elizabeth's greatest strength was her ability in selecting key officers of state. It is a rare quality in a leader to appoint strong, able staff whose talents are such that, given direction, they are capable of excellence. Her council enjoyed a close, bantering relationship with her. She gave each a nickname: Walsingham was her 'Moor', Burleigh her 'spirit'. Above all, Elizabeth's appointees were unswervingly loyal. Helen Clark, take note!

The historian, J.S.Neale, writes that Elizabeth "intoxicated court and country, keying her realm to the intensity of her own spirit. No one but a woman could have done it, and no woman without her superlative gifts could have attempted it without disaster."

It would have been unsettling for a preacher in those days to have the Queen in the congregation. Nowell, the Dean of St Paul's, in London, was preaching a Lenten sermon before a large congregation, including Elizabeth. He chose to criticise a Catholic publication dedicated to her and went on to attack images and idolatry. "Leave that!", she thundered, "it has nothing to do with your subject – and the matter is now threadbare".

The success of Queen then and Prime Minister now demanded and demands political cunning, an understanding of power and the limitations of that power, when to cajole and threaten, when to inspire or intimidate, when to reason or command. The management of human beings has not changed much in 400 years. ■

Keith Harrison