Tui Motu

campus ministry

. . . being there for people

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ministry – the good and the bad

Contents

Cover: Otago Catholic Tertiary Chaplains, Amy and Paul Armstrong

Let's start with the good. When you live and work surrounded by 20,000 tertiary students, you have to be conscious of their lifestyle and need for pastoral care. They are no longer children. But they're not yet fully adult either – even though many of them like to think they are.

A university is a very artificial society. The students are virtually all one age group. They form strong, often lasting friendships. But it can be a somewhat irresponsible and self-centred time of life. They, therefore, need good mentors. Wardens, chaplains, tutors, lecturers, proctors – significant adults – all play a vital role in their maturing as persons and as future leaders.

This *August* issue explores the work of some of these mentors. Fr Peter Norris (*pp 6-7*) is in the unusual situation of having been a warden of a University hall – for all of 20 years. The Pope met him some time ago, and was delighted to find Peter working in a secular University. His vocation is in a time-honoured tradition going back to Thomas Aquinas and the great mediaeval universities, usually monastic foundations – the priest helping to form the adult mind and soul.

The role of the University chaplains is likewise a precious and sacred one. Once it was the prerogative of the ordained minister, but now it tends to be a team ministry. Our main interview is with a husband-and-wife team – Amy and Paul Armstrong, who provide the backbone of Catholic tertiary ministry in Dunedin.

Two points stand out in their story (*pp 8-10*). Firstly, the special place given to the ministry of prayer, both personal and liturgical. The spiritual is an essential balance to the intellectual and physical in the growth and maturity of students. Secondly, they bear witness to the warm co-operation which they enjoy with the ecumenical chaplains. In a time of crisis they are all there together for students in need.

Behind Amy and Paul stands Fr Mark, who combines University chaplaincy with many other roles. When we spoke to him, it became evident that his whole exercise of priesthood consists in being a chaplain – being there for people in need. But how does he do it for so many? It is a great grace.

bad news from ireland

The news about clergy this month is not all good. The Catholic Church in Ireland is reeling from a series of devastating reports regarding physical and sexual abuse by religious and priests. In a deeply disturbing article (*pp 12-13*) Daniel O'Leary, himself a native-born Irish priest, reports on the situation. For him, the church he grew up in is finished forever. Whatever grows out of its ashes has to be a completely new creation. The Irish crisis demands our fullest sympathy and concern.

We asked Archbishop John Dew to report for our readers on the situation regarding abuse in the New Zealand church. He agreed and his wise words are opposite. It is good to know that the church now takes this matter with the utmost seriousness.

Faced with such a crisis, the Catholic Church needs to take a long look into the dangers which arise out of the abuse of clerical power, also the risks of imposing celibacy on its priests. Will these form part of the agenda for a future Council? They need to.

M.H.

John Honoré, our long-serving and popular columnist, is very unwell. We ask your prayers for him.

We are most grateful to Jim Elliston, of Orewa (north Auckland), for being willing to stand in for John at short notice.

the catholic church and sexual abuse

Tui Motu invited Archbishop John Dew to comment for readers on the New Zealand Catholic Church's response to the problem of clerical sexual abuse

In recent years, the New Zealand Bishops and the Congregational Leaders have addressed many issues related to clergy sexual abuse and, therefore, the betrayal of trust invested in a priest or religious. Even though much has been done, nobody in authority in the church can ever rest when it comes to ensuring the protection of children and vulnerable adults.

Over the last decade the Congregational Leaders and the Bishops of New Zealand have learned much about the tragic consequences of sexual abuse. In an attempt to address this issue which threatened to tear the church apart, a provisional *Protocol Document* was adopted in the early 1990s. But it was later decided that even more transparency was needed and in 1998 the Congregational Leaders and Bishops published a document of Principles & Procedures, *Te Houhanga Rongo: A Path to Healing*. This was reviewed three years later and updated again in 2007.

New Zealand's church leaders have heard very clearly the call for more accountability and transparency in how we, as leaders, deal with the protection of children and vulnerable adults. We have learned how to address allegations of sexual abuse and follow-up outreach to victims, as well as supervision of those priests and religious charged with sexual abuse. Bishops and Congregational Leaders made mistakes in the past when little was known about sexual abuse and it was commonly accepted that offenders could be rehabilitated. We sincerely regret those past mistakes. We now know that people with illnesses such as Paedophilia (adult attraction towards children) and Ephebophilia (adult attraction towards adolescents) should never be in positions of trust and authority. We know that these are illnesses that can be treated, but cannot be cured.

A basic principle has been that the church's response to sexual abuse by clergy and religious must be founded on acknowledgement of the wrong which has been done to those who have suffered. The church should offer apologies to victims and their families, and seek ways to facilitate healing and reconciliation. The church is now following a plan to work proactively and constantly to hear the truth and to put education and formation in place to prevent further abuse.

A *National Committee for Professional Standards* was established in 2003 and former Police Commissioner, John Jamieson, employed as Director. His role is to conduct an independent review when requested. He has also worked extremely hard to establish best practice, including the review of the *Protocol Document*, and training for diocesan and religious order Protocol Committees. As well, he has promoted research into causes, effects and prevention of sexual abuse. John Jamieson's objectivity is reinforced by his membership in the Baptist congregation, and he has a long history of public service and impartiality in law enforcement. He has ensured that reviews in recent years be conducted fairly, thoroughly and independently.

In the Document *A Path to Healing, Te Houhanga Rongo* the New Zealand bishops invite "all interested persons in the community to work together to find ways to respond more effectively to the evil of sexual abuse within the Church."

Readers of *Tui Motu* are invited to visit the website of the Catholic Church in New Zealand (*see below*) and to become familiar with the section entitled *Confronting Abuse*. We believe that the more people are familiar with our Principles and Procedures, the sooner we will be able to build communities of hope and healing.

I was inspired at a Conference last year by a prayer (***overleaf***) which I offer to all readers in the hope that it will enable us to be communities of trust and hope offering compassionate responses to complainants.

John Dew
Archbishop of Wellington

website: ***www.catholic.org.nz***

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

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brazilian abortion

With reference to your Oamaru correspondent (*July TM*), excommunication means not allowing someone to receive Jesus in the Eucharist.

But neither bishops nor priests – not even the Pope – 'owns' Jesus. I have no qualifications in theology or divinity or canon law, but of this I am certain: Jesus would never say to anyone, "You are not worthy to have me come to you in the Eucharist".

The Pope and his bishops and priests are all deeply loved by God – and no doubt are all really 'nice guys'. At times, however, their judgments sound similar to the Jewish leaders at the time of Christ. They are good at law, but sometimes lacking in grace.

Through their feminine gentleness women would tend to be more gracious than bishops and priests – and even popes!

Lance Bardwell, Dunedin

the future of the church

Is there a purpose to the continued existence of the Catholic Church in New Zealand? It provides Eucharistic services and a wide range of 'amenities' nowadays also provided by other organisations, statutory and voluntary. These activities do not appear to be sufficient to dissuade large numbers of laypeople deserting their heritage.

The church does not seem to attribute any shortcomings of its own to the flight of either clergy or laity – or its lack of influence in the wider community. The only reasons I have seen given seem to condense into one – the 'affluent society'.

letters to the editor

I cannot accept that the church can only thrive in an environment of poverty. After 2000 years the church should be viable and respected in any kind of social conditions. If it is failing in this, it needs to examine its own structures.

Universal education has enabled ordinary people to seek a role in their own governance. Participation in voluntary organisations and their rights as citizens enables them to have a voice and control over their own destinies. But the church clings to the practices of serfdom, excluding the ordinary people on whom it depends from any part of the deliberative or consultative process on what may be termed its 'policies'.

The church is frozen in time and tradition. It does not seem to have a mission, except to keep itself in existence; but the closing of so many parishes and once thriving activities seems evidence that it is preparing itself for an orderly demise.

If the church wishes to retain an effective place in the modern world, it could start by consulting its own laity. If it were to canvas our hopes and beliefs, our ideas and dreams, who knows what treasure it might uncover? (*abridged*)

Donald Lamont, Gore.

transition towns

I have been overjoyed to spot your celebration of Transition Towns in the issue that has Don Moorhead's St Francis announcing its rich and varied fare – a fitting follow-up to the two Otago organic growers (TM *April pp 6-8*).

They share with Transition Towns an underlying consciousness which informs and energises a will to survive. With this consciousness steadily being anaesthetised, our defences against the lures offered by technology have been weakened. It is the triumph of individualism and the breakdown of communal activity.

I was sent Rob Hopkins' Transition Handbook, and while it is a valuable guide to action, I feel more at home with Satish Kumar and Mike Kelly in *Tui Motu*, who go to the core of our problems. Even the Green Party has recently given some vague indication of a need to search out and identify the spiritual background of faith-based approaches to environmental care.

Speaking of roots and branches is a powerful analogy which Kumar uses to demonstrate the need for our actions to be focused on place. It comes naturally to those gardeners who have settled on the land ever since our emergence from the hunter-gatherer era.

The prayer of our church has so far not been touched by this development. Any student of biology knows that the bread Jesus offers as spiritual sustenance contains the whole world that went into its making, with all its abundance and its pain. Contemplation of this could gain the daily communicant a more profound experience of his or her practice.

The day will come I hope when *World Environment Day* will have a rightful place in the church's calendar of feasts.

Frank Hoffmann, Papakura

a prayer for healing for victims of abuse

God of endless love,
ever caring, ever strong,
always present, always just:
You gave your only Son
to save us by the blood of his cross.

Gentle Jesus, shepherd of peace,
join to your own suffering
the pain of all who have been hurt
in body, mind, and spirit
by those who betrayed the trust placed in them.

Hear our cries as we agonise
over the harm done to our brothers and sisters.
Breathe wisdom into our prayers,
soothe restless hearts with hope,
steady shaken spirits with faith:
show us the way to justice and wholeness,
enlightened by truth and enfolded in your mercy.

Holy Spirit, comforter of hearts,
heal your people's wounds
and transform our brokenness.
Grant us courage and wisdom, humility and grace,
so that we may act with justice
and find peace in you.
We ask this through Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

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how violent is *violent*?

Jim Lyons

French rugby player, Mathieu Bastareaud, concocted a story to cover up his drunkenness following the French-All Black test on June 20. He accused up to five locals of beating him up, and this nation which has spawned other incidents of violence towards tourists, believed him. Shamed into telling the truth about what happened at his Wellington hotel early that morning after police threatened to release video evidence, the 20-year-old star player's reputation is in tatters.

Bastareaud's story brought cries of outrage. People felt sorry for the player and the French team. There were concerns that the incident might adversely affect tourism and New Zealand's hosting role for the 2011 *Rugby World Cup*. There were calls for tougher action against thugs. But there was no suggestion that the story might not be true, and this should be our biggest concern.

Violent offending is so much a part of our everyday life that we are no longer surprised when it happens. A photo in the *Dominion Post* (*June 27*) put the situation in sharp focus. The photo shows a male defendant before the court wearing a *Wheel of Fortune*-inspired T-shirt with a highly abusive message minus the vowels. His stance in the dock echoes the sentiment on his shirt. Charged with assault, his appearance screams violence. Could his be the face of New Zealand 2009?

New Zealand has highlighted family violence through discussion over the 2007 revision of the *Crimes Act 1961,* which saw smacking a child made illegal. But there is a sector of society that wants this amendment overturned. During the first week in August, New Zealanders will be asked to vote on a poorly worded referendum. The question: ***Should a smack as part of good parental correction be a criminal offence in New Zealand?*** is aimed at eliciting a widespread 'no' vote which could see the law against using violence to correct bad behaviour overturned.

There is little education about the aims of the referendum and no follow-up education about alternative ways to discipline children (although several websites feature helpful parenting tips). New Zealand has a poor record of violence against children, and ranks towards the bottom of a list of OECD member countries in terms of child deaths from maltreatment.

Policy makers need to start putting children at the centre of their policy and the country needs to support them by voting to throw out this referendum. Only then will the country start to redress the damage done by a culture of violence present on the roads, sporting fields, playgrounds and in homes. Violence is championed in video games and playstations and forms a part of the nation's television diet.

No wonder we are not surprised when a visitor reports they've been attacked by thugs. It doesn't occur to us that they could have made up the story. Violence? *C'est la vie.*

This editorial appeared first in Wel-com: *reproduced with thanks. Fr Jim Lyons is Administrator of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Wellington and a former National Director of Catholic Communications.*

a double jubilee worthy of celebration

Twenty years ago the Christchurch *Catholic Worker* group started and this month is the 50th issue of *The Common Good*. The one has fed the other. Several times a year this broadsheet goes out with stories of the activities of CW groups at home and overseas. Good communication keeps friendships alive and spreads the good news of new initiatives.

It is hard work keeping a periodical like *The Common Good* alive and fresh. The fact that contributions continue to flow in and keep the exchequer balanced is a tribute to loyal voluntary support and the quality nourishment that readers receive.

There are three aspects of the *Catholic Worker* movement which sustains its members long term. One is the religious motivation – a vocation which requires to be constantly fed on the lifeblood of Christ. The second is the emphasis on community. People who are selfless in their giving need support from one another.

The third factor is Jim Consedine, who has for 20 years exercised the best form of priestly leadership to the CW movement. He communicates his passionate commitment to peace issues and restorative justice. In season and out of season, he preaches the non-violent way. By his word he motivates, by his actions he protests, in his prayer he finds and gives inspiration.

May *The Common Good* continue to inspire us for years to come. May the spirit of St Francis and Dorothy Day find its expression in the deeds and aspirations of another, succeeding generation. In a nutshell, may the Gospel imperative of peace and justice continue to be preached and heard and lived. ■

M.H.

true calling

Rebecca Tansley

Dr Peter Norris – academic and priest – has been the popular warden of St Margaret's College, University of Otago, for the past 20 years.

In an employment era where five-year tenures are generally considered long haul, 20 years in the same job is something of an exception. But then, being warden of St Margaret's College – as becomes apparent during the course of an exceedingly pleasant chat with the incumbent, Rev. Dr Peter Norris – is not your average job.

Nor is Norris your average employee. A Catholic priest, he holds two bachelor's degrees, a diploma in teaching, a diploma for graduates, an MA and a PhD from Notre Dame University – all of which makes him eminently qualified to teach alongside his academic colleagues at the University of Otago as, on occasion, he has done. But his true calling, as he discovered in 1989, is the pastoral care and academic support of the residents at St Margaret's College, a role he has diligently fulfilled for two decades, as countless former and current 'wards' will attest.

Norris was destined – or at least he thought he was – to teach at a seminary, until fate intervened rather prosaically in the form of a Presbyterian minister friend who saw the St Margaret's job advertised and sourced the application documents for his co-denominational friend. It might, on the face of it, seem an anomaly: St Margaret's was established in 1911 as a Presbyterian college "for the care and protection of young women", and Norris laughingly recalls how he became *persona non grata* for the then Bishop of Christchurch when he accepted the warden position in 1989. But then Norris has made a point of being ecumenically-minded ever since he was ordained, and one doubts whether an elderly senior cleric would ever stop him from anything he set his mind to.

Peter Joseph Norris was born in Westport in 1950 to a father who worked in the railways and a mother who stayed at home with the kids. He thought a church career would provide him with a means of helping people. He was ordained priest in 1976 and pursued postgraduate study in Christian history. He has conducted research at the Vatican libraries, and even met the Pope Benedict XVI, whom he credits with "total concentration". ("Sixty thousand people around you and it's just like the two of you are in a room by yourselves," he recalls.) Norris is, by many measures, an achiever.

Little surprise that one finds in him an inquiring intellect and a gentle, but steadfast, strength. These qualities lend him a gravitas that is, in turn, tempered by infectious warmth and a genuine interest in people; all traits that have informed his commitment to the college with which his identity has become almost indistinguishable.

"Peter is an extremely caring person, a very able administrator and a true academic," says his former neighbour and long-time colleague Ashley Day, previously warden at Unicol and now warden of Carrington College. "He runs his college superbly. I don't think there'd be any amongst us (fellow wardens) who would spend the same amount of one-on-one time with students that he does."

This personal touch is something Norris believes sets St Margaret's apart from many other colleges. Early in the year he meets with every new resident (although St Margaret's is unique in reserving between 30 to 40 per cent of its places for returning students) to get to know them and discuss their course of study and other aspects of university life. He also retains contact with many former residents long after their time as 'SMAGgies', as they are affectionately known, has ended. He has officiated at the marriage of former residents and has even baptised St Margaret's 'grandchildren' – testimony to the strong family atmosphere that he endeavours to create.

He acknowledges that it has become more difficult to maintain this approach as the college has grown – he has overseen its development from the 150 beds he inherited to its current capacity of 226 – and he believes it will be almost impossible to sustain if the college expands further. Nonetheless, he accepts expansion is probably inevitable.

"Economies of scale are the main driver," he explains. "These days things like health and safety and building compliance come at a huge cost, so the bigger you are the lower the unit cost for amortising that. I'd be negligent if I didn't prepare for expansion in terms of our infrastructure, but I don't want it to happen while I'm still here."

Another of Norris's passions is the provision of rounded educational opportunities for St Margaret's residents, most of whom are *Health Sciences*

students. He sees this as an important role that the college can fulfil.

"The *Health Sciences* first-year course is fairly brutal," says Norris. "It's one of the toughest courses I've seen, so it's easy for the kids to become fixated on grades and for their learning to take on a narrow focus. We aim to provide a more rounded educational experience through our art, for example, the garden, the choir, and we try to get good mentors in. We try to stimulate kids and get them thinking about something different from their studies."

Mentors include regular dinner speakers and guests with whom residents can discuss anything from US national security policy to the spiritual elements of general practice. It's an aspect of life at St Margaret's of which Norris is very proud. Dr David Gerrard, Associate Dean of Medicine for the last 10 years and now *Director of Development and Alumni Relations*, is one of the Sunday evening dinner guests at St Margaret's and attests that the collegial atmosphere there has definitely resulted in many enhanced admissions to second-year medicine.

Recognising the value of humanities-based learning, Norris also supports student-run language suppers where residents practice languages learned at school or overseas. "Just because our kids are doing Health Sciences, I don't want them to let their French or Japanese turn to custard. And languages stimulate them in different ways."

Unsurprisingly, Peter Norris is a fervent advocate for (and prime example of) lifelong learning and he believes travel is an integral part of this process. He encourages students to take advantage of exchange electives and postgraduate study opportunities overseas.

"I've the old-fashioned view that if world peace is going to come, it's not going to be because a lot of elderly gentlemen got round a table, but because people from different places, religions and cultures learn from each other. It's going to be because students

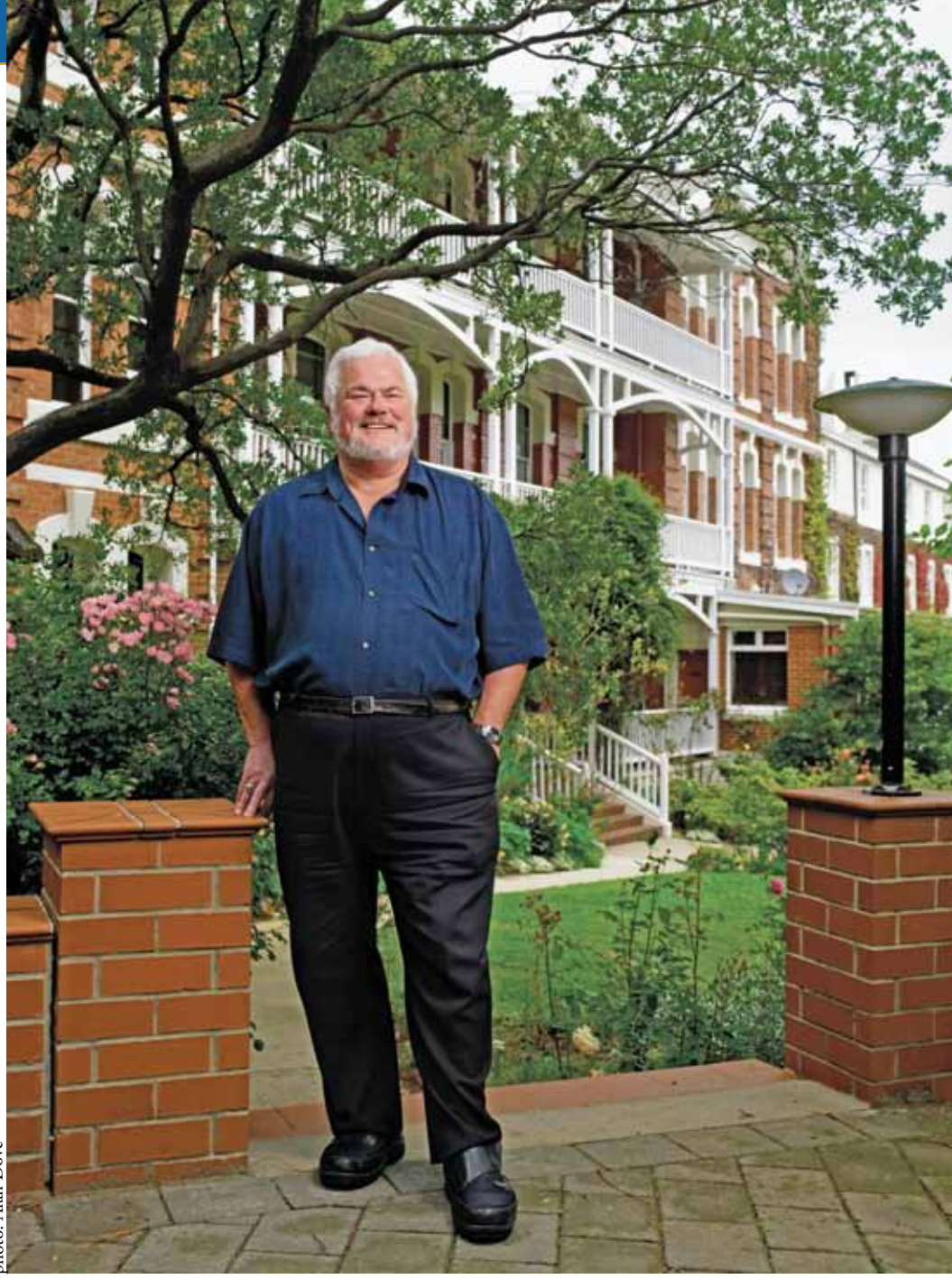

photo: Alan Dove

Fr Peter Norris, in front of St Margaret's College in the University of Otago campus

in places like this have studied together, traveled together and have become friends."

All people, Norris believes, are fundamentally good, a belief regularly reinforced by the young adults he meets in the course of his work, many of whom, he points out, undertake charity initiatives or go out of their way to assist other residents who might be in need of support. "There's a lot said in the media about kids being vandals and so on, but it's really not the case. Of the 20,000 students here at Otago, the problem ones are a very small percentage. It's minuscule really."

So when, one wonders, might the unceasingly optimistic and energetic Peter Norris think about retiring? His response, usually measured, comes very quickly. "When I stop relating to the students. I've told friends to tell me when that happens. I can still joke and it's still a lot of fun. If it stopped being fun that'd be a good sign that I was no longer relating to the students, and if I was getting out of touch then I wouldn't be effective, would I?" ■

This article first appeared in the University of Otago Magazine. Reproduced by kind permission of the editor

Paul and Amy Armstrong are the chaplains for the Catholic Tertiary students in Dunedin Paul looks after the Polytech and the Teachers' College, Amy the university students. Both are part-time chaplains.

finding god on campus

Paul Armstrong is an Aucklander and his wife, Amy, comes from St Paul, Minnesota, in the midwest of the United States.

They first met at a summer camp in the midwest, back in 1995, when Paul was doing his OE. Paul said: "You've GOT to come to New Zealand". Amy said: "We'll see." Unlike Kiwis, midwesterners are not great travellers.

Eventually she came, and they toured around New Zealand together. They arrived in Dunedin, and liked the place. They thought to themselves: "we don't have to live in Auckland."

so how did it all start for you?

Paul: "I was attracted to Dunedin. Amy would probably have preferred Wellington. But to do a Bachelor of Theology, this is where we had to come. So that was our excuse. Since we arrived here, we've really never looked back."

Amy: "I got a job in the Zoology Department, where I still work. We started going to the Sunday evening Mass at Holy Name, which is the students' Mass, and we got to know Fr Mark Chamberlain, the priest-chaplain. At that time Sr Leona Garchow was due to finish after many years as chaplain to the Polytech, and Fr Mark asked us if we'd be interested in becoming chaplains."

Paul: "Both Amy and I were going through personal discernments. Mark had seen that happening. The invitation was like putting tinder to a flame. So Amy started as University chaplain in 2005; I started at Polytech in 2006."

Amy: "I share an office with Fr Mark in the Students' Union and we have the ecumenical chaplains next door. Paul has an office in the Teachers' College."

Paul: "Actually my 'centre' is a bit like my namesake the Apostle. I'm by nature an itinerant. For me, things happens 'out there' and that's where I am."

Amy: "A lot of the job is simply getting to know people and building relationships, so at first I too was out and about a lot. Now, however, I spend more time seeing people in the office."

what do you see as the essence of being a lay chaplain? what are you there for?

Amy: "I had had experience of campus ministry in St Paul, Minnesota. There, it was a model based on community building and prayer – and also creating opportunities for the students to serve in some way.

"At present, we have students helping in the hospital; and some are involved in the 'Best Buddy' programme, which means spending time with young adults who have disabilities.

"People also come to me with problems, so I just have to be available for that. Sometimes people drop in whom I have never seen before. I think they see chaplains as 'safe' – a non-threatening place to go if they are a bit stressed. You have to be there just to listen."

Paul: "A Pastoral Theology paper was sent to us recently about chaplaincy. Two words from it sprang out at me: *presence* and *listening*. The *presence* can happen anywhere and you have to be available to the moment.

"If you are there for people when they need you, then you are being authentic. The people round the campus will spot a mile off if you're not authentic. They will run away and you are wasting your time. At the start you are establishing yourself. And then things begin to happen."

Amy: "Each year seems to be different and bring its own challenge. This year, I'm spending a bit of time with a group of postgraduate women. They suffer loneliness, because their undergraduate friends have all moved on. Most of the students are much younger. They are a lot on their own wrapped up in their books. They've lost their normal support system.

"So we have invented a *Mature Women Prayer and Dessert* night. We come together and share the gospel; we might do a bit of *lectio divina* style prayer, then we share some chocolate cake – and they get to know each other. We meet in the Upper Room in the chaplaincy. They're all Catholics, and sharing prayer together is a great way of getting to know other people at a deeper level."

Paul: "My approach is a bit different. I write poetry and sometimes I share this: and it 'cuts to the marrow' with a person – the right word at the right time. It's like 'letting the light in', as Leonard Cohen says. My spirituality is spontaneous. It just happens.

"I easily develop relationships with people, and this helps me to be able to find the right word which someone needs to hear. I think Paul the Apostle was like that. A woman in the Design Department recently was telling me about an exhibition she was holding. I listened to her carefully – and then reflected back to her what she was saying. It was what she needed to hear. She stopped me later on and told me just that.

"The Polytech staff are very approachable, practical people. They are out and about more – and that's where I bump into them. I spend a lot of time with the staff. The Polytch students come and go. They often work short courses. They do their studies and then go home.

Amy: "University is quite different. The students come here to live. There is a lot of pastoral care – but it might be the man who sells vegetables or the women at the campus shop. The students are a very homogeneous group, all the same age. It's an artificial society, so significant adults become very important. That is why we encourage them to do some sort of service, to take them out of themselves.

"The students get a lot out of the Best Buddy programme. They have to give up their Friday nights to do it. Sometime they too are the lonely ones. They reach out to someone whose disability has made them lonely. Then, they communicate – and something sacred happens. I get a lot out of just watching it happen.

"It's a group process. I remember watching Abel, a student who was very nervous at first. He had never had contact with someone with this sort of disability before. He has just blossomed. The students and the 'buddies' do all sorts of things together. They might go bowling or have a dance."

tell us now about the prayer life of the students

Amy: "I think everyone is naturally prayerful, but not many of us are taught how to pray. For me, I had mentors after I finished Uni who really helped me. I was so grateful for the resources I was given. It's a part of Catholicism, but sometimes it's thought to be for special people only, the high-flyers! I'm passionate about offering prayer opportunities to the students, so that they themselves learn ways that fit them.

"Kids have the gift naturally, but often it gets buried as they grow up. We become too self-conscious. A friend of mine was teaching some five-year-olds. She got them to be silent and listen to God. After a bit she became nervous herself and she stopped it with an AMEN.

"They said to her: *why did you stop when God was still talking?* She asked them: *what was God saying?* One said: *God was telling me to share my toys with my brothers.* Another said: *God said we must love everybody.* A third said: *God just said - GLORY BE!*"

Paul: "Fr Mark often talks about how to pray in his homilies, and conducts retreats in daily life; or he encourages the students individually.

"We also have a part to play in the graduation services. The ecumenical team are all involved. And we help with the students' retreats, which are open to anyone of student age in the city. We might get 20 or 25 at a time, and we use the centre at Warrington.

"Of course we have to be on hand if there is a death – or if a staff member is made redundant, which is a bit like a death. I find myself giving pastoral care even to the Human Resources people, who have just handed out the redundancy.

"All this involves quite a bit of visiting. And of course attending funerals. Those are the formal times. We prepare the services, and we often work together with the ecumenical chaplains. Mike Wright is the Polytech chaplain, and Greg Hughson is at Varsity.

"The chaplains get on really well together. We all bring our own gifts. I think the team here in Dunedin is a model for New Zealand chaplaincy. There has been a long history of ecumenical co-operation – over 40 years, in fact.

Amy: "Sunday evening Mass at Holy Name is the heart of our ministry. It's where we really get to know the students – the high point of the week. It is the most specifically Catholic activity.

Paul: "Lots of the overseas students come on Sunday nights, but that is not a problem to the Kiwis. They all mix in well. The Kiwis are often inspired by the faith of the Asians – especially the Korean and Indian students. The national characters complement each other. Sometimes the different nationalities their own groups, which act as a support when they come from so far.

"Amy does the music on a Sunday night. We meet together regularly with Mark and the student president and leaders."

any special difficulties?

Amy: "Historically we have had to deal with a few students who are very ▷▷

trial by ice

Paul Armstrong thumbs a night ride – and ascends a steep learning curve

The road sparkled in the headlights with the onset of ice. One a.m., the wee small hours of the morning. The moon was out, its half bucket tipping a little coldness down upon our frozen land. Deep and yellow in colour. The stars were crystalline, merrily onlooking our struggle against nature and gravity.

I was seated across from Pat, in his Volvo 56-wheeler double-trailer truck. We were together in that darkened cab, both urging it on up a long and treacherous icy slope. The headlights shone ahead, leaping out to where we were urging the lumbering Volvo to go.

I was calling on the saints, and Pat was urging the truck on – together in one hopeful push to get the lumbering truck to the summit. The truck hesitated, Pat changed down a gear and cursed: *can we maintain it or will we lose momentum*? The stars continued to sparkle, as did the icing up road ahead. The truck shimmied a little.

We waited with bated breath as we had slowed to a walking pace. Would the grit truck get ahead and help us? We crept up the incline. Or would we need to pull over and bunk down the night in the cab – Pat in his wee bed at the back, me slouched in a stiff passenger seat? A long night was ahead perhaps.

Slowly we gained a little more momentum, inching our way through the night. The mighty vehicle began to be released from gravity and ice's tentative grasp. And we moved ahead, incrementally gaining speed. The grit truck and another lighter truck forged ahead of us, giving us tracks and grit to work with. We were going to make it.

And then – we popped out of the lumber we were in, into full stride. The truck leaped forward: we gained the crest of the hill. All the hoping and praying and wondering had come true. No long night in the cab, no waiting until the road de-iced. We breasted the brow and sped cautiously down the flank of the hill, taking the courage of the moment in hand and using a bit of pace to summit the next incline.

We'd done it. Now it was all downhill, through ice and snow to the sparkling lights of the slumbering town. Hope had been on our side. Eventually, we hit the town's limits, and Pat pulled off to the side of the road to allow this grateful passenger out into the cool night air for a thoughtful walk home up another hill.

I was now more aware of the dangers those who drive our goods and services over this long strip of land take on each and every day and night. That night, upon the brow of the hill I saw the exhausting effort they make daily to simply keep our bellies full and our backs warm.

Thank God for those who take to these roads each night; thank God that they travel that lonesome and dark road so that we might have comfort. And thank God I was a quiet witness under a golden moon that night upon a hill. ■

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conservative theologically. They tend to be a bit exclusive, and in the past it became quite divisive. Catholic chaplains in other places talk about this prooblem too.

"The ones who feel excluded would come along to me and talk. They can be made to feel inferior to these others. 'We are told we aren't following the rules properly'. I tell them that Jesus was anything but exclusive and loves everybody. Jesus is our model."

Paul: "They learn best by example. I think they have to be encouraged to think outside that square. Often that exclusiveness breaks down when they mix together. And the others learn some good things, like adoration, which the conservative students emphasise."

Amy: "I had never encountered it until I came here. I thought at first it was Dunedin! But then I discovered it was happening all over the world. It makes me very sad. Fortunately *World Youth Day* was very INclusive. In Sydney the young people all just celebrated their faith together."

Paul: "Chaplaincy is like firing an arrow into the air. You never know what the result will be. That is why you need to be well resourced. I think that's why Mark emphasises reflective prayer. Self-care is highly important and some form of supervision.

"At conferences chaplains will share with us what is happening to them. They say they often wonder what on earth they are doing!"

Amy: "Our lives as chaplains have to be centred on Christ. Our daily prayer is very important. We often pray with Mark and Greg – and the two of us pray together every day. If we didn't pray, we couldn't accomplish what we do". ■

shepherding the shepherds

How do today's busy pastors manage to cope with large parishes and many responsibilities. **Tui Motu** *went and asked Fr Mark Chamberlain*

If Fr Mark Chamberlain were an ambitious man, he would have every reason to be smug. In the few years since he was appointed parish priest of the North Dunedin parish, he has acquired pastoral responsibility for two other parishes, two hospitals including Dunedin Public, and a student campus – the University, Polytech and Teachers' Training College – with a student population of about 20,000. That is a huge responsibility and only a few years ago there would have been at least four priests to do it.

So how does he manage? His response is to immediately go to the heart of the matter. "Our mission is simply the mission of Jesus – to make Jesus known and loved. The pastor's job is to call forth the gifts of the people around him to do this work. Each one ministers according to their call and their gift. They are not 'clones' of the priest. It is the priest's job to shepherd them, to trust them and support them."

The word *trust* he repeats several times. He may be involved in their training. He may have to counsel them, often listen to them and remind them they are not alone. The vital thing is he *trusts* them. He has complete faith in the grace of God working through them.

So how many of them are there in this busy city parish? He has Sr Helen O'Neill, a Sister of Mercy, who is vastly experienced and once was his teacher. He has the two tertiary chaplains (*see pp 8-10*), and he has a dozen or so 'Visitors' who help to look after the hospitals and the sick. And others do parish tasks. All are part-timers, and have been called to do this work alongside their other responsibilities. One is a lawyer, some have families to care for – and there are a few students who help.

Most of them have done, or are doing, the diocesan pastoral training programme, *Walking New Paths,* under the direction of Sister of Mercy Maureen Hanratty. Nearly all of them are women.

He constantly reminds the Visitors – and himself – that people in hospital are very vulnerable. "In our chaplaincy role we have to be constantly aware of our own vulnerability – and trust that what we do and what we say conveys a blessing to these people." Mark himself spends quite a bit of time with the hospital staff, but the Visitors too are in a support role to these key people.

Primarily, however, the Visitors' task will be to call on the sick in bed, to take communion to them, pray with them and spend time with their families if necessary. Mark's shepherding role is to meet with the Visitors and other members of the parish team at least once a month to share their experiences and pray together. When they first start, they may see it as simply 'helping Father', but they soon learn it is a true vocation. It is also a mutual giving. Their own faith is nourished through the faith of the patients.

Mark himself visits the hospital every day, gives the Sacrament of the Sick and is on hand in times of crisis and at deathbeds. At the University most of the hands-on work is now done by the lay chaplains, and it is his job to shepherd and guide them too. Nevertheless, he is often around the campus, since church and presbytery are right in the student area; he will often be stopped in the street by a student who has some need or simply wants a chat.

"The shortage of priests in some ways is a blessing in disguise," Mark says. "It has enabled all these lay ministries to happen. The gifts were always there, but the people were not being invited to use them."

How does he cope himself? Fundamentally, it depends on being faithful to an extended time of prayer and reflection each morning. He also tries to get in an hour's reading every evening – instead of just chilling out in front of the telly. "It's a discipline," he says.

He acknowledges the support from his fellow priests. Fr Peter Norris (*pp 6-7*) often celebrates a Sunday Mass for him. The local priests meet together socially two evenings a week – and each year he likes to escape with some of his own age group to absorb sunshine on the Gold Coast.

"Priesthood is a bit like the *A and E Department* at hospital. There is a variety of demands, some minor, many really serious. You just have to be available when people need you." ■

irish abuse scandal

painful, slow redemption

Irish churchmen and women – and politicians too – should resist attempts at quick closure to the shocking revelations of criminal mental, physical and sexual abuse perpetrated on the country's most vulnerable children. Rather, says Daniel O'Leary, they should spend a lot of time on their knees

It was early on the morning of 21 May that the first emails arrived. Grieving friends were writing about the saddest day for church and state in Ireland. Since then, both friends and enemies of Roman Catholicism have been listing in graphic detail the shameful catalogue of physical and emotional torment, the savage beatings and unbelievable abuse that were endemic to the clerical and political system in the church-run institutions of the 20th century.

On that day *The Irish Times* editorial described the Ryan report – *The Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse* – as "the map of an Irish hell". Unlike some previous documentation, the editorial explained, this account of systematic cruelty could not be denied, or ignored. It was the result of a system that demanded silence through fear, a methodology handed down through several generations of priests, brothers and nuns.

Most commentators pointed to that deliberate silence as the most serious failure of both church and state. This was the kind of silence that has outraged the victims of abuse. It is the unspoken collusion with darkness, they believed. It is institutional power at its worst – the prolonged, corrosive cover-up to save its own face at any cost. They spoke of a country "burning with fury".

These are very hard, even terrifying, words, and a first instinct is to react defensively, to emphasise the unquantifiable treasures of the church's goodness. But that is not the way to go just now. For the church today, it is the time to listen to an awful truth. The contents of the Ryan report, the depth of feeling among Catholics across the world, are almost too much to bear or to believe.

how could such high ideals become so shockingly debased in a holy institution?

Deeply disturbed leaders of church and state are searching for the sources of this terrible inhumanity. How could such high ideals in the pursuit of spiritual perfection become so shockingly debased in a holy institution? How could those men and women, the great majority of whom entered their congregations and seminaries with a loving determination to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, descend to such levels of behaviour?

Having acknowledged the valiant work of the church in Ireland, *The Irish Times*' religious affairs editor Patsy McGarry wondered whether "a dark theology of fallen human nature with a propensity to evil allowed a climate where such viciousness could be constantly visited on children". This may well be at the root of some shameful behaviour in our ailing church.

Studies have revealed that Catholics in the United States, who were brought up to believe in the God who punished people eternally in hell, were the most likely to vote for the Iraq war, and to support the use of torture to protect their country. How did we ever expect to erase in later life the indelible traces cut into small souls by those visions of unending torture at the hands of a judging deity? Such a poisoned cradling was bound to produce a damaged harvest.

Albert Einstein reminded us of two pertinent truths for today. One is that "the surface is the last thing to collapse". Everything can seem to be going well; we're holding it all together during a bad patch; God will see us through. Then one day the very surface collapses because its hidden support turns out to be rotten. The publication of the Ryan report marks the collapse of a religious surface in Irish life.

The other truth Einstein held was that "the mindset that causes its own inner collapse can never carry the seeds of its own renewal". The necessary paradigm shift we long for cannot happen only from within any more. A new source, maybe from a place as yet unknown to

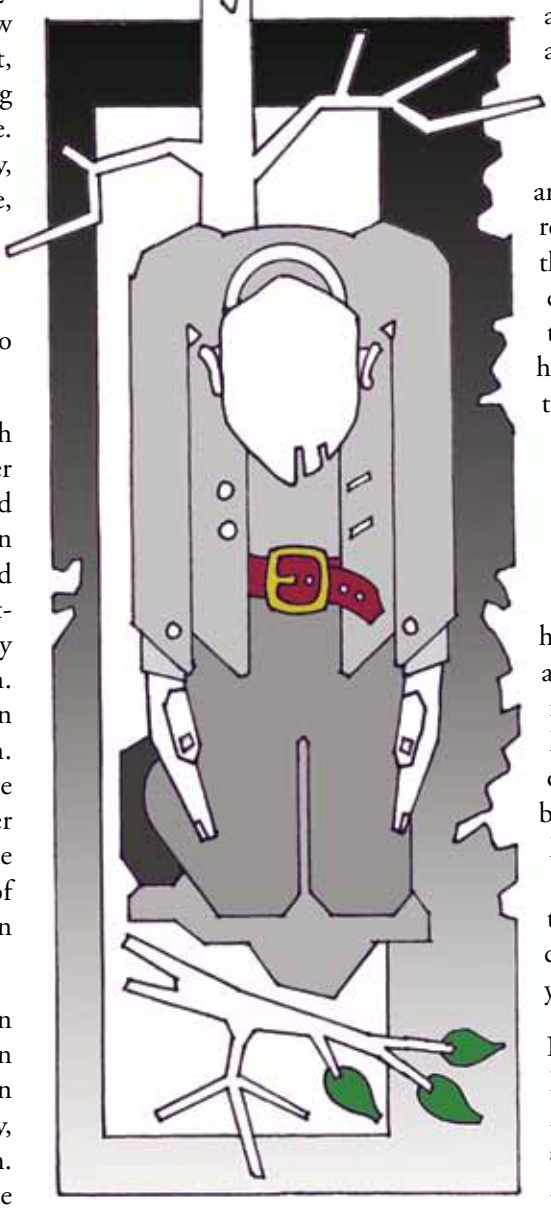
us, must be found for another start, a new healing, a new hope. Otherwise, in systemic thinking, left to itself, the organisation will clone itself back into business as usual.

That is why many fear that religious and state leaders are now pushing too fast for closure without learning any vital lessons. What alarms them now is that in the wake of the recent report, church leaders are already looking anxiously for a premature closure. The experience of an abuse, they say, that has turned you into a depressive, unemotional father, a hopeless alcoholic, a suicidal introvert, just cannot be set aside like that. Regaining a lost trust takes ages. Too many take the pain to the grave.

Whatever the outcome, the church needs to spend a lot of time on her knees now, preparing for some kind of death out of which it can be born again, reclaiming the innocence and the powerlessness of its servant-leader. The fault line runs deeply through its length and breadth. It runs so deeply that often it can scarcely be perceived from within. That is why its redemption will be both painful and slow. Wherever and whenever it is called for, the church needs to replace a heart of stone with a compassionate one, an arrogant heart with a humble one.

When a community becomes an organisation, when law rather than spirit rules, when the mystical vision is lost to the moralising mentality, then dreadful things can happen. Dominative control replaces the ministering presence of Jesus; authoritarianism replaces a personal inner authority. Clericalism is about power; priesthood is about service. But it is the prophetic that is needed now. We need charismatic leaders as well as functional ones, transparent leaders rather than organisation men.

Otherwise self-preservation and scapegoating become all-important. This is evident when the church forgets to first weep with the broken victims before explaining and defending itself. It all depends where one's treasure is! There is a necessary waiting time – to feel the shame of the abused, to hear in our soul the abandoned lament of theirs, to stay in that place of utter confusion



and desolation – and even then, we will never even remotely glimpse the awful anguish they will carry to the grave.

As we bring to a close the *Year of Paul* we remember one of his finest attributes – his courage. Courage for God's broken little ones to learn again to hope, for the church to face its sins, for the guilty ones to search into their own hearts, and for all of us to acknowledge the part we are playing, by our silence, in the whole sorry story. Paul could not keep silent when truth was compromised. For him, as for Jesus, his power lay in his utter transparency.

Reconciliation has little meaning while anger rages. For how can repeatedly abused people ever forgive the church? How does a humiliated, human/divine institution forgive itself? Can people trust the church any more to critique itself deeply and rediscover the authentic meaning of the reign of God? What processes can be set up to begin the slow path to courageous conversations? And how do we all make sure that we are trying to work together in the spirit of a real love of truth?

"I have never heard my name," a victim told the abuse Commission. Is this when angels weep? May that terrible cry to heaven never be heard again from any of God's children, especially from those placed in our care in homes, schools and parishes. "Oh do not grieve, my beautiful and beloved child. My heart breaks with love for you. You are breath of my breath and pulse of my pulse. Even though no one has told you, or called you by name, listen closely to your own small heart."

Nothing is ever completely hopeless. If we doubt that then indeed all is lost. Sooner or later, grace will always find a way to enter in. And in that, at least, we can trust. ■

Daniel O'Leary, a priest of the Leeds diocese, is based at Our Lady of Grace Presbytery, Tonbridge Crescent, Kingsley, Pontefract, West Yorkshire WF9 4HA.

Lucy Ellis is a New Zealander with a six-month Rotary Cultural Ambassadorial Scholarship to study the French language, in Senegal, West Africa

Lucy with little brother Moussa

the sinbads of Senegal

I'm living in a Senegalese host family and studying four to five hours a day. Hopefully I can express just a fraction of the sights, smells and sensory delights of this continent called Africa!

Kiwis can be found in just about every corner of the world. We are *voyagers par excellence*. But since my arrival here in Senegal, I'm pretty sure I've been holding the fort in this corner of the world, having not spotted a single Kiwi even amongst all the ex-pat ranks. However, a certain dear friend Divy has come to relieve me!

Divy and I have known each other for a few years now I think, having a great fantastic bunch of uber-special, mutual friends in Wellington. So – more than just a compatriot.

Divy has been here three weeks and is working as a missionary in Thiès, 70 km from Dakar. She called me up last Sunday: "Lucy, I'm in Dakar…!!" I quickly dropped everything and rushed over for a good few hours of nattering and appreciation of that Kiwi accent. With the exception of the occasional Kim Hill Radio NZ podcast recommended by my Mum, and the voices of my family, I've been deprived of any Kiwi accents…

Dakar – first impressions

On the question of work struggles, I've been learning a lot about a major issue here in Senegal…

It's often said that the US is the land of the American dream. In Africa, it's Europe that holds such an Eldorado status. The issue of clandestine emigration to Europe (mainly to Spain) heavily afflicts Senegalese society – and not only among the poorest echelons. Even among the families and social milieus of my professors and my Senegalese friends, the temptation to make this desperate, sometimes fatal, almost always unsuccessful journey tempts very, very many. One of my host sisters is "working in Spain"…

In 2007, the university in Dakar published an extensive report in collaboration with the *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation* on the issue of clandestine emigration. Instead of trying to explain it myself, I've translated one of the telling articles below:

barça ou barzakh – succeed or perish

Barça ou Barzakh, meaning 'make it to Barcelona or perish' has become a litany in the discourse of the Senegalese. More prosaically, for the young Senegalese, it's a question of adventure, of the gamble to make it to Europe or to die with a clear conscience knowing that 'at least I tried'. There's no shortage of young desperate adventurers ready to make the supreme sacrifice, finishing as martyrs in the depths of the ocean.

The enthusiasm and determination found amongst the clandestines that disembark at the Canary Islands (Spanish territory) are in stark contrast to the multiple difficulties that they encounter during the traversal towards Spain. The three most pressing difficulties that await them are the risk of traversing the sea by *pirogue* (nothing more than a large canoe-like boat, probably overloaded), the terrible conditions in the retention camps in Spain and the fact that their odyssey is most likely going to end in repatriation. Even if some thousands have been able to put a foot on mainland Spanish soil, there remain hundreds of drownings also.

Luc André Diouf, spokesperson for the *Association of Senegalese* from Las Palmas considers the number of deaths to be in the thousands, estimating that there are perhaps 4000 to 5000 bodies at the bottom of the ocean. "It's a suicide!", he cries. Even if there is controversy over the exact figures of disappearances, (the Spanish Minister of the Interior, Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba is sure that there are no drownings along the coast of his country while the Canary Island authorities claim that 590 corpses have been found), it's evident that there are plenty of clandestines that never make it to Spain.

Piled by the dozens, sometimes more than a hundred in the flimsy little pirogues, the clandestine emigrants can't move at all and are forced to remain in the same uncomfortable posture for the entire journey. This explains why certain emigrants can hardly walk during the first few days of their arrival. The voyage takes between seven to ten days, without considering that many boats often digress and take as long as two weeks to arrive at the Canary Islands. Having finished this traversal, the emigrants begin their Spartan life in a retention camp.

the 'why' behind their flight

I'm going to list some more of the causes behind the movement… not exhaustive and sometimes overlapping, but hopefully it'll give readers an idea.

• Family struggles exert social pressure upon the youth, especially on the oldest, inciting in them the need to 'take care'

of the family. "When you're the oldest, the success of getting to Spain is a task of which the single foundation is the desire to ensure your family can get by…", explained one repatriated emigrant. When one considers the endemic malnutrition, difficulty of access to basic social services, and the general social enclavement and isolation that prevents many from healthy human development, it's no surprise these youth want to make a better life for their families.

• *a sense of pride* and wanting to refuse the humiliation… "If I have to die in the forest, may it be in the jaws of a lion." In other words, if I'm already in dire straits, let's make a worthwhile effort so I can die with dignity, saying that 'I tried'.

• *the image of the Europe*, considered like a country of Cockaigne where you can earn money rapidly and without much effort. The proliferation of European-originating TV programmes, movies and the like – not to mention the ostentatious living of those who do get lucky and bring their new-found wealth back to Senegal – render any arguments of economic logic useless in the face of these young people, desperate and often intoxicated by the material possibilities.

• *lack of stable revenue* and the demise of once thriving fishing villages.

• *anxiety over the uncertain future* in a country where the government is seeking an accelerated economic growth to the detriment of the smallest – called upon to 'disappear', as it were. In addition, the invasion of cheap Asian products renders many domestic markets untenable.

• *lack of a political will* to seriously re-orientate the national economic base (agriculture, tourism, fishing, education and formation), or to put to work the sector-based policies that overflow the desks of government ministers.

• *lack of political stability* at a sub-regional level creates a disequilibrium at a socio-economic level that pushes the youth to abandon their country to go in search of a living on other continents.

• *prostitution and human trafficking.* Foreign prostitution in Europe occupies 75 percent of the global market, of which 50 percent of Africans sell for between 7000 and 8000 euros. These young women originate from Nigeria, Ghana, Cameroun and Senegal and often their families are under contract with the trafficking networks themselves.

some conclusions

The solutions to this phenomenon are deeply-rooted and there is no silver bullet. In my humble opinion, while shorter-term initiatives are important, it is only the solid investment and long term development of these nations that will quell this movement. The youth have to be convinced that life here is worth living. That includes both push and pull factors – both reducing the illusions and improving the social and economic realities.

Globally speaking, I think it also requires the general recognition of the cultural and social alienation and discontent that comes from increasingly consumerist lifestyles, that underlying inhumane malaise. In the West, we're starting to wonder: "Is this all there is? Just stuff?" Is there some way that the old found wisdom of the African continent could wisen it's young to not fall into the same deeply unsatisfying consumerist traps?

The development, the progress of Africa cannot be defined simply by following the well-trodden – and at some points saturated – path of those in the developed world. Using the benefits of the West (technology for one) with a tempered caution to their downfalls, there is so much beauty and untapped energy amongst the cultures, peoples and land of this continent.

Why, oh why, do so many African youth want the glitter, bling and plasticised cheap imitations? The irony… all the Toubabs buy all the 'natural, authentic, local' jewellery… all the African lasses buy the plastic, imitation Gucci, Armani, Louis Vuitton, and the tight, bright, stretchy, 'sexy' clothing! Maybe it's just just a question of humans always seeking their 'exotic'…?

Anyway, that's my little dash of social and cultural analysis for the week – feel free to critique it. It's no treatise, just some random stream of consciousness! ■

By kind permission of Lucy Ellis, who invites readers to visit her blog for further information www.lucyinafrica.wordpress.com

A year ago, Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand and Christian World Service ran a joint appeal for Darfur to help millions of people affected and uprooted by civil war. One year on, the situation is still difficult.

In South Sudan the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) negotiated in 2005, which put an end to the north-south civil war, is insecure.

Here, staff from Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand look at some current efforts to provide humanitarian relief.

reaching

in Darfur and S

water - a path to new life

Liam Hockings and Martin de Jong

In the darkness that characterises Darfur to the outside world, water is something that brings life – in more ways than one. The Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) programme, with which *Caritas Aotearoa* works, has picked up water supply and sanitation services in three camps serving 150,000 people. Such services, combined with hygiene promotion has saved many lives in Darfur.

Hygiene promotion and water services focus particularly on women and girls. Women and their daughters are most likely to develop the knowledge in the family about health – they are the ones who get water and educate the children in matters to do with hygiene.

Fatima's experience illustrates the changes brought by the NCA programme. Eleven-year-old Fatima lives with her family in Khamsadageig camp, home to 19,000 displaced Darfurians. Established in 2005, it is one of the oldest camps in Darfur. As the oldest of five siblings Fatima helps her mother fetch the family's water every day. Together they collect at least 80 litres of water for cooking, washing and other daily needs.

"It's much easier for me now that the water is closer to my 'home' in the camp", says Fatima. "I have many friends and we have time to meet and play because it's easier for us to collect water before going to school or play."

She scarcely remembers her village, but her mother tells her that getting water there was more difficult – they had to walk for at least an hour to get clean water.

The success of the water, sanitation and hygiene programmes is shown by the fact that no outbreaks of acute watery diarrhoea or generally water-borne diseases have been recorded in the immediate past in the camps of Zalingei, despite the overcrowded conditions.

Such access to clean water and the reduction of water-related diseases increases educational opportunities for young girls in Darfur. A UNICEF study indicated girls are more likely to attend school, if water is available within 15 minutes from home rather than one hour away.

Bringing water closer for women to collect also helps protect them from violence. Women make up the majority of displaced people and are most vulnerable in a humanitarian crisis.

Water points in Darfur also help to break down barriers. NCA reports that children collecting water interact with each other regardless of tribe or social status. All children, whether from the local host community or

out — South Sudan

the IDP camps, can come and collect water – friendships are formed that transcend tribal divides.

Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand supports work in Darfur through *Caritas Internationalis*, which is part of an ecumenical relief effort led by NCA. The NCA Darfur Emergency Programme – headed by New Zealander Wayne Mitchell – also involves local organisations Sudanaid (*Caritas Sudan*) and the Sudan Council of Churches. The programme is supporting 300,000 people in South and West Darfur with health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation activities, agricultural advice and more.

When the federal Government expelled 13 international aid agencies from Sudan in March this year, more pressure fell on those that remained. Sadly, one of the local agencies within the NCA programme, the Sudan Social Development Organisation (SUDO), was also shut down by the government. ■

Photos: Paul Jeffrey/ACT-Caritas

hopes for peace in the sudan

Martin de Jong & Tara d'Souza

In south Sudan, *Caritas Aoteoroa New Zealand* works with its Irish counterpart *Trocaire* in Bahr-el-Ghazal on rural livelihood projects.

Trocaire Officer Carol Nyamu related how, at a gathering of community representatives who had returned home after the civil war, she posed the question: "What is it like for you now (after the peace agreement)?"

Amid scattered responses of general relief, an old man – a *payam* or district chief, said heavily: "This peace is killing us", putting words to what many felt but were afraid to say. Four years on from CPA, the South Sudan Government are yet to provide basic services to far-flung communities connected only by nominal roads, with no power and little access to water.

Trocaire works through local organisations such as the *Hope Agency for Rural Development* (HARD) to build rural livelihoods. In Bessaliyah, Nick and Tara met Zolen, a Ndongo chief who invited us to sit awhile with him in a shady village grove.

"It is the end of the war", he says. "We do not have to flee our homes because we don't know when the bombs will strike. But now we have to fight hunger. We Ndongos are agricultural people; we work with our hands but we have not been able to become self-sufficient. Previously I could not grow enough to keep my family fed, now with the (HARD) programme helping us, we may even have a surplus."

HARD *payam* co-ordinator Cleto showed off a demonstration plot where sorghum, sesame, beans and groundnuts are planted in tandem to balance soil productivity and are rotated seasonally. HARD supplies tools and trains local blacksmiths to make them, including the "moloda", a simple and effective hoe.

Asuntha lived in the forest for a long time during the war; when she returned, she built a simple "tucal" (a round mud hut with thatched roof) for herself and her grandson. She cultivates the plot of land adjoining her house, grows a few vegetables and cares for her grandchildren, some of whom are in school. She is trying the planting method she learned from HARD and hopes it will give her a bumper crop. Her dream? "I will build a better house when I have some money", she says. "One made of bricks and safer for my grandchildren."

Photo: Caritas

Sudanese Catholic Bishops and *Caritas* are agreed on the need for better co-ordination of humanitarian relief; also on the need to work with other churches and Muslims. The CPA (peace agreement) must be made to work, requiring not only genuine commitment by the Sudanese governments, but also support and monitoring from the outside agencies. The south and Darfur are interlinked. If the CPA cannot be made to work, the situation in Darfur will also worsen. ■

Breastfeeding and the role of La Leche League

Tui Motu *interviews Anne Devereux who has spent much of her life as an advocate of breastfeeding*

origins

La Leche (la laychay) is a Spanish word, meaning 'milk'. The *La Leche* League had its humble beginnings in 1956 when a group of women at a parish picnic in Chicago were discreetly breastfeeding their babies. They were members of the American equivalent of the *Christian Family Movement* (CFM) – the *Couple to Couple* League. One or two of the women present asked: "How can you breastfeed? I was not able to."

Why were the women not able to breast-feed? Not from choice, but because of routines imposed in hospital, along with unrealistic feeding and sleeping schedules once they were at home. The mothers found that with these schedules they were restricting their babies' access to the breast and inevitably produced insufficient milk to nourish their babies. So they became reliant on artificial baby milk.

The Chicago mothers shared information and set it down on cyclostyled sheets. These became the basis for a book, *The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding*, and of a global organisation which now offers support in over 60 countries. The name "La Leche League" was chosen because 50 years ago even to speak of a woman's breast was considered indelicate in polite American society.

La Leche was immediately intelligible to the Spanish speaking Americans and became a 'respectable' word for the English speaking mothers. The name also commemorated the shrine to *Our Lady of La Leche* – "Safe Delivery and a Bountiful Milk Supply" – in St Augustine, Florida. In the mid '60s, Dr Karen Pryor wrote an article for the *Readers Digest* on the benefits of breastfeeding. Her article produced a world-wide response and helped to put *La Leche League* on the global map.

One of the women, Mary White, was married to a doctor. They could both see that 'medicalisation' was interfering with various aspects of pregnancy, labour and the ways that mothers gave birth. Postnatally, the schedules imposed by the hospital tended to upset the natural rhythm both of the mother producing milk and the baby seeking the breast. Mothers usually went home with free artificial baby milk which contributed to the normality of 'formula' and the claims of formula marketing companies.

breastfeeding

A new-born baby is 'hardwired' to breastfeed. At birth and for many weeks afterwards he is able to find the breast unassisted if placed skin-to-skin on the mother's chest. Unless the baby receives this skin-to-skin contact from the very first – like 'getting to know you' – he misses out on the basic progression of self-attachment. If this does not take place the baby can sometimes have great difficulty 'latching on', as its instinctual biology becomes disorganised.

In the maternity facility of the 1950s and indeed well into the '80s, babies and the mothers were routinely kept apart at times during the day and night, so the mother was unable to observe and respond to her baby's cues. Often a mother would be placed on medication to help her sleep through the night, and this inhibited her ability to respond to her baby. Babies were brought into their mothers every four hours during the day – a real barrier to successful breastfeeding when one realises that new-born babies require frequent suckling in order to access *colostrum* and to stimulate the mother's milk supply. The baby's stomach at birth is initially the size of a marble, so 'a little and often' is recommended.

Colostrum is the name for the first milk the baby receives from the breast, and is described as the 'first immunisation'. It provides a large amount of the antibody secretory IgA which protects the baby's gut from invasion by harmful bacteria while allowing 'good' bacteria to grow, as well as factors which encourage the development of the baby's immune system. In the early days and weeks, because of its small but slowly increasing stomach capacity, a baby needs to be breastfed at least eight to twelve times in a 24-hour period.

how does la leche league (LLL) work?

The essence of *La Leche League* is the one-on-one help a woman receives from other mothers in learning how to breastfeed. Traditionally, children would have grown up in families and societies where breastfeeding was the accepted norm, as they would have been surrounded by women who were breastfeeding their babies and children.

Essentially *La Leche League* offers mother-to-mother support and information for women who wish to breastfeed using a peer support group setting. There is a social benefit to women meeting together at a time when they are sharing the same experience. When a woman moves away from her extended family, perhaps going to live in another city where she knows no-one, a group like this can be a lifesaver for her.

La Leche League leaders are accredited, after a period of reflection on their own mothering and breastfeeding experiences, combined with reading, study and discussions with a support leader and mentor. All leaders are volunteers, and the information they provide at mother-to-mother support groups and by telephone counselling is free. LLL groups also have extensive libraries of information about breastfeeding, mothering, parenting and nutrition.

The late James P Grant who was Executive Director of UNICEF felt so strongly about the benefits of breastfeeding and breastmilk that he said: "Breastfeeding is a natural 'safety net' against the worst effects of poverty... It is almost as if breastfeeding takes the infant out of poverty for those first vital months in order to give the child a fairer start in life and compensate for the injustice of the world into which it was born…"

my own experience

Before the birth of our seventh child in 1970, I read an article about *La Leche League*. It talked about the value of breastmilk, but more importantly it outlined how the human breast worked and how mothers could continue to breastfeed until their babies were weaned. I was impressed by what I learned, especially as the commonly held view at that time (and probably now to some extent) was that a busy modern woman with a large family would not be able to breastfeed.

In the 1970s, babies were usually with their mothers in the maternity ward, although many were sent to a central nursery at night and then brought to their mothers in the morning. Often the babies had been given formula during the night, and this tended to interrupt the natural rhythm of mother-baby responses. It was difficult (and time-consuming) to be part of a quiet revolution which questioned an established way of doing things.

I was accredited in 1972 to facilitate breastfeeding mother-to-mother support. For a time I served on the International Board of *La Leche League* and was intrigued by the highly successful peer counselling work being accomplished among impoverished and dispossessed women in Latin America and Africa, often helping mothers who were illiterate in their first language. The breastfeeding counsellors went out into remote rural areas to help mothers to breastfeed and generally improve children's health status. The best peer counsellors are mothers from the same culture, the same age and community as those they are helping.

In 2002, a colleague and I completed the *Peer Counsellor Programme* administrator training course through an internationally sponsored scholarship programme. We then wrote our own NZ curricula: one for teaching Breastfeeding Peer Counsellors and another for teaching Peer Counsellor Programme Administrators.

Now I usually teach once a month, basically wherever a District Health Board or Primary Health Organisation want a Peer Counsellor Programme established. My role is to train the administrators, most of whom are community workers, lactation consultants, midwives and childbirth educators. Many participants come from Maori and Pacific Island services and, at the completion of the training, go back to their communities with more breastfeeding information, eager to establish breastfeeding mother-to-mother and father-to-father support groups.

Gabrielle Palmer in her book *The Politics of Breastfeeding* states: "If a multinational company developed a product that was a nutritionally-balanced and delicious food, a wonder drug that both prevented and treated disease, cost almost nothing to produce and could be delivered in quantities controlled by the consumers' needs, the very announcement of their find would send their shares rocketing to the top of the stock market. The scientists who developed the product would win prizes, and the wealth and influence of everyone involved would increase dramatically. Women have been producing such a miraculous substance, breastmilk, since the beginning of human existence, yet they form the half of the world's people who are the least wealthy and the least powerful". ■

For further information about local LLL groups and accredited leaders, and associated breastfeeding activities and resources go to www.lalecheleague.org.nz
www.pcp.org.nz

Margaret K Darroch (1929-2009)

Paul G Shannahan sm

Eloquent', 'regal', 'gentle' were some of the words used to capture the spirit and life of Margaret Kathleen (Graham) Darroch who died surrounded by her family at her home in Havelock North on 4 July, 2009. Born in Otago, Margaret treasured the education she and her sisters received from the Dominican Sisters in Dunedin.

She was an avid reader, with an independent frame of mind but not one that imposed its views on others; rather she was always interested to listen to the other point of view. It is not surprising that she willingly came onto the board of *Tui Motu* as she was engaged in the issues of the day, particularly those involving social justice for minority groups. Her university training in the home sciences gave her the skills she needed in her particular passion of enabling women to reach their full potential.

But most knew Margaret as a good listener and wise companion. She had a welcoming, non-judgmental manner that drew people into sharing confidences be they issues of faith or family. With her husband Frank she raised six children with all the demands that were made in the fast changing youth culture of the 1960s and 70s. Margaret steered a wise course keeping balanced in her cornerstone of faith. She was rooted in the sacramental life of her various parishes for all the 52 years of her marriage.

Her quiet dignity, her underlying strength and willingness to be available to others meant she always had people about her and made her sought after in community guidance work. As one parishioner said: "she was so regal, a real mass of dash that made me feel in awe of her. Yet she was such a good listener, so competent. She was just so impressive".

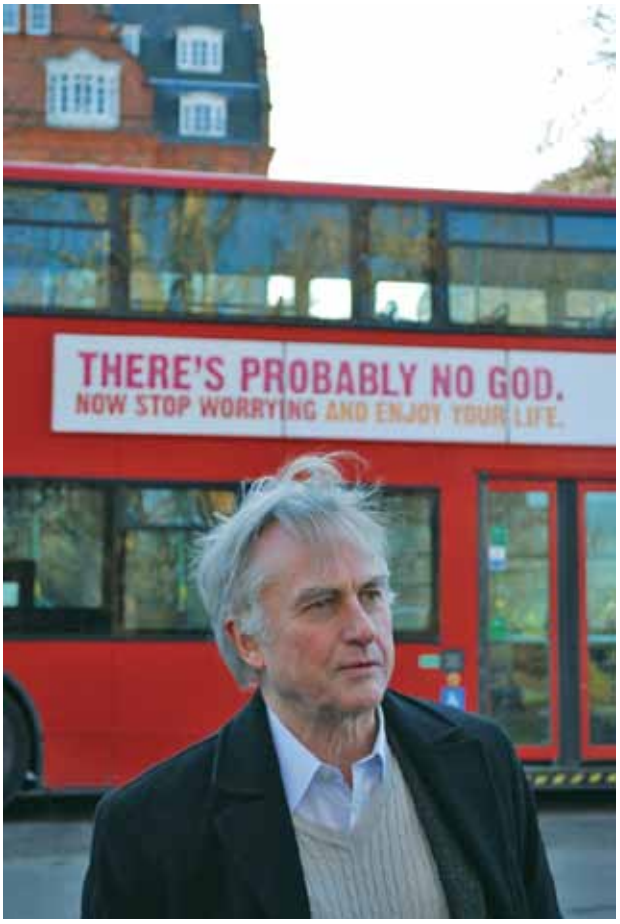
Margaret experienced more than her fair share of pain and loss in her life, but it never ground her down. Her sense of humour was another of her attractive attributes.

Many in Hawke's Bay experienced her empowering and her loyal loving friendship not least her surviving husband Frank and family of Barbara, Roger(deceased) Philippa, Andrew, Peter and Matthew. ■

invigorating faith

How exactly do we invigorate or grow our faith, our belief and relationship with God? Like a plant, faith needs to be nourished. In my case nourishment comes from reading. People, both young and old, face many challenges to their faith.

Richard Dawkins, a world renowned Oxford scientist and evolutionist has made it his life's work to turn everyone into atheists. I for one find his emotive writing hard to take seriously. For every measured thoughtful argument, there is a stream of savage abuse of the Catholic Church and believers. When I went into the local library to find one of his books so that at least I could say "I have read one Dawkins", I found it leaning up against a book by another eminent scientist, Francis Collins. Thank you, Richard Dawkins, without you, I would probably not have found Collins.



Francis Collins is an even more world renowned scientist than Dawkins in terms of benefit to humanity. He is a Yale graduate, a biochemist, physician and a geneticist with a background in physics and mathematics. He headed up the international group of scientists working on the *Human Genome Project* to map the complete genetic material of a cell. This group of scientists worked for over a decade to map human DNA, all 3 billion letters of it. DNA is the hereditary code of life that is found in each and every cell.

In 2000, Bill Clinton, US President, announced the completion of the first draft of the DNA Code: "Without a doubt, this is the most wondrous map ever produced by humankind… Today we are learning the language in which God created life. We are gaining ever more awe for the complexity, the beauty, and the wonder of God's most divine and sacred gift" (*Collins, 2006, p.2*).

Francis Collins began as an atheist, but through his discoveries in medicine and science, his belief and faith in God came to life and flourished. He wrote *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief (2006),* on which this article is based. In this book he looks at the origins of the universe from the Big Bang more than 14 billion years ago, the discoveries of the different scientists throughout the ages, different belief systems, different theories and the evidence that, he suggests, supports our belief in God. Collins argues that humans cannot expect to understand God fully in human terms because God is supernatural – above the things of nature.

But we should understand and marvel at the sheer beauty, elegance and symmetry of God's work and have deep faith in God, as the loving Creator "who communes with His people through prayer and spiritual insight" (*p.210*).

Early this year *The New Zealand Herald* showed a photograph of a red double-decker London bus with a large slogan printed on its side: *There's probably no God. Now stop worrying and enjoy your life*. Richard Dawkins, supporter of the campaign, is shown standing beside the bus. This was printed on about 800 buses in response to Christian slogans in London's Underground telling people to repent or face 'torment in hell'.

The caption to the photograph is "FRESH VIEW: Richard Dawkins wants people to think again about God." Good idea, because in the end the lived experience of people will always tell out against someone else's theory. That is what happened to Francis Collins. It can happen to you and me as well. So – eat your heart out, Richard Dawkins.

Frances Townsend

would jesus smack a child?

Glynn Cardy

Children throughout most of recorded history have been seen as the property of their fathers, similar to women and slaves. It was the father in the ancient Roman world who determined whether a child would live or die. It is estimated that 20-40 percent of children were either killed or abandoned, with some of the latter surviving as slaves. A child was a nobody unless the father accepted him or her within the family. It was girls who were more often the victims of this rejection.

This is the context for the story of Jesus overriding the objections of his disciples and blessing children. In *Mark*'s Gospel (*Mk.10:13-16*) Jesus takes the children in his arms, lays his hands on them and blesses them. These are the bodily actions of a father designating a newborn infant for life rather than death, for acceptance not rejection. Scholars think there was a debate going on in the early Christian community about whether to adopt abandoned children, with some leaders staunchly opposed. *Mark* aligns Jesus with adoption. Jesus was good news for children.

Children in the ancient world were generally viewed negatively. They were physically weak, understood to lack moral competence and mental capability. The Christian notion of original sin as developed by Augustine underlined this negativity and provided the imperative to beat the child in order that it grows up aright. Further, Augustine saw no distinction between a child and a slave. The discipline of slaves had always been more severe than for freeborn, even to the extent of the availability of professional torturers to

photo: Mary Ann Bishop

do such physically demanding work. The doctrine of original sin was bad news for children.

History generally has been bad news for children. In ancient times children in many cultures were victims of ritual sacrifice, mutilation practices, sold as slaves or prostitutes, and were sexually and physically abused. In the Middle Ages abandonment and infanticide were common. It was common too for children as young as seven to be sent away as apprentices or to a monastery. Severe corporal punishment was normative. The apprentice system continued into the 16th and 17th centuries. Although the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance saw changes in how society viewed children, abuse was still common. The Industrial Revolution was also bad news for children. They were made to work in mines, mills and up chimneys for 14 hours per day – and of course punished if they didn't work hard enough.

Slowly though changes came. The Enlightenment of the 18th century drew heavily on writers such as Locke and Rousseau. It was an age that challenged the orthodoxy of religion, seeing a child as morally neutral or pure rather than tainted. In response to the wider economic and social changes of the Industrial Revolution there arose a philanthropic concern to save children in order that they could enjoy their childhood. The 20th century understanding of child development evolved in the context of falling infant mortality rates and mass schooling. With these changes also came an emphasis on children's rights culminating in the UN *Convention of the Rights of the Child* in 1989.

The Bible generally has been bad news for children too. In the Book of *Proverbs* we read "He who spares the rod hates his son" (*13:24*), and again "You shall beat him with a rod and deliver his soul from hell" (*23:14*). For the most part the Bible is unsupportive of non-violence and children's rights, or for that matter the rights of women and servants.

Throughout history it has been considered self-evident that all people were not created equal. Only men, particularly those of wealth and high-class, were considered fully human. Women, slaves, servants,

and children weren't. Being less than fully human they belonged to a man. They also needed to be corrected and disciplined by that man or his surrogates. Physically punishing and beating children, women and servants has been normative for centuries.

Men administering such punishment were not considered to be errant or criminal. From time to time there would be those who acted brutally and cruelly and most societies and religions admonished them for it. In 13th century England, for example, the law read, "If one beats a child until it bleeds it will remember, but if one beats it to death the law applies".

In this context it is helpful to understand the *Crimes (Substituted Section 59) Amendment Act 2007* as deleting an escape clause for the brutal and cruel. The question in the upcoming referendum, whether a smack should be a part of good parental discipline, however raises the broader issue of the acceptability of New Zealand's culture of physical punishment of children.

Those who administered the violent correction in times past were usually thought to be well-meaning and understood their actions to be a necessary part of their responsibilities. In times past supposedly well-meaning men thought they were entitled to physically discipline their strong-willed wife. Likewise in times past many masters thought beating an uppity servant was necessary. When the laws changed preventing such things the husbands and masters decried the loss of their rights. Likewise this upcoming referendum is a cry from those well-meaning adults who see their right to use violence on their children being eroded.

Today in New Zealand we are in the midst of a cultural change. It is similar to the change regarding the rights of women and the rights of slaves and servants. We have ample evidence from paediatricians, child psychologists, and educationalists about the detrimental effects of any violence meted out upon a child by an authority figure. Although society has sought to restrain and punish adults who are brutal and cruel, it has also condoned a culture of medium to low level violence towards children.

Christianity has been complicit in this, citing selective texts from the ancient past, and giving them a divine *imprimatur*. With an adult male God it has implicitly supported all the human male 'gods' in their homes and workplaces to the detriment of others. With the destructive doctrine of original sin the church has harshly dealt to children and other supposed inferiors. Yet the only texts Christianity has regarding children and Jesus show its founder to be unfailingly kind, compassionate, and non-violent. He never smacked anyone.

From the practice of spirituality many Christians have learnt that what they do to others, in effect they do to themselves. The kindness offered to others does something to one's own soul. Similarly hitting or hurting others is detrimental to one's own spiritual well-being. It harms one's capacity to love.

kindness offered to others does something to one's own soul... hitting or hurting others harms one's capacity to love

We know from psychology that one method we humans adopt to minimise the self-harm of being violent towards others is to categorise the recipient of the violence as in some way deserving of it. There are numerous examples of women, gays, and people of non-European races being categorised as intellectually and morally inferior in order to justify the physical or institutional violence meted out upon them.

In recent decades science has discovered the impact of childhood experiences on brain development. Whether an adult is generous and loving is determined not only by their genes, but also by how they have been treated as an infant and young child. When a baby is cuddled, treated kindly, played and laughed with, their brain produces certain hormones. On the other hand when young children live with fear, violence and insecurity their brain produces excessive levels of different hormones such as cortisol. These hormones influence which pathways develop in their brain – its architecture and the adult's ability to be kind and considerate or angry, sad and distressed.

Cultural change is always hard work. The evidence for the need to change may be there, but we adults like the certainty of what we've known. There is a sense of security in replicating the past we know, even when we have been harmed by it. There is also a sense of fear that the unknown future may be detrimental to our family and us. Will our children prosper, respect and love us when we raise them without the threat of physical harm?

There is overwhelming evidence that violence has the capacity to change relationships and individuals for the worse. All violence produces fear, and fear is the antithesis of love. We have stopped sanctioned beatings in prisons, psychiatric hospitals, workplaces, and schools, and towards wives and partners. History is changing. Children, maybe the most vulnerable of all the vulnerable, are last.

The real question with the upcoming referendum is *do we have the courage to create a violence-free society?* ■

Glynn Cardy is Vicar of St-Matthew-in-the-City and Archdeacon of the Anglican diocese of Auckland

What the witnesses saw and heard

Michael Hill

the 'Jesus of History'

There is a story in the Gospel of *Mark* (*10,40-52*) about a blind beggar near Jericho who has his sight restored by Jesus. Like many of the encounter stories in *Mark* it is told in vivid detail. What is unusual is that we are told the man's name: "Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus". Why is this man named when so many of the characters in the Gospel stories remain anonymous?

A recent visiting scholar, Richard Bauckham of Cambridge University, suggests an answer which changes the way in which we may judge the historical accuracy of Gospel accounts. Bauckham notes that the use of a name in the Gospels, which otherwise adds nothing to the story, is an indicator that that person was an ***eyewitness***: "the named persons themselves became members of the early Christian communities and told the stories in which they appear," he says. "... It was from Bartimaeus himself that *Mark*'s narrative of his healing came..." The Gospel passage concludes, significantly, that Bartimaeus *followed* Jesus along the road (*v 52*).

This intentional 'name-dropping' was common in histories written in the ancient world. One example Bauckham quotes is the famous incident of Julius Caesar crossing the Rubicon – a crucial historical event. In his own writings Caesar never mentions this. But in Plutarch's history it is described in some detail, and the name *Asinius Pollio* is dropped into the story. Asinius is there not because he contributed to the action in any way, but because he was the crucial eyewitness.

Bauckham emphasises the importance of such eyewitnesses in the formation of the Gospels. The most important were 'the Twelve' who accompanied Jesus from the beginning of his public ministry. They are listed by name in *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*.

In the Book of *Acts (1,15-25)* Peter describes in detail the replacement of one of them, Judas Iscariot. Two candidates are chosen "out of the men who had been *with us the whole time that the Lord Jesus was living with us*". In other words they had to be eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry and teaching.

the Jesus of testimony

Bauckham rejects altogether the distinction sometimes made by scholars between the so-called 'Jesus of history' and the 'Christ of faith', implying that the Christ we believe in as Son of God and basis of our Christian faith is only vaguely connected with a shadowy historical figure living in First Century Palestine. Bauckham proposes instead that we should be talking about the *Jesus of testimony*: that is, "Jesus as he was perceived by those who were closest to him and who participated in the events to which they later bore witness".

The single most important of these witnesses was the Apostle Peter. The way Peter is introduced into the Gospel of *Mark* indicates that he was the principal eyewitness in that Gospel (and for *Matthew* and *Luke* too, since much of their material derives directly from *Mark*).

Only the Passion narratives, which are related in great detail in all four Gospels, demand another main source, since the male disciples – including the Twelve – ran away very early in the piece. After that, the names which crop up most prominently are the women – Mary Magdalen etc, and the text states that they *saw* Jesus on the cross; they *saw* him die; they *saw* where he was laid in the tomb; they *saw* the stone rolled away and the young man sitting there. The repetition of the word '*saw*' reinforces the sense of people who witness events. Other names who can be taken as witnesses include Simon of Cyrene and, later on, Cleophas on the road to Emmaus.

the fourth gospel

But what about the Gospel of *John*, which never lists the Twelve by name. Scholars have long considered it the last to be written, and many have cast doubt on the eyewitness authenticity of much of its contents. The most extreme of these deny that any of the words of Jesus in *John* were actually spoken by him.

Bauckham proposes, however, that this Gospel is the only one actually written by an eyewitness, the so-called

Beloved Disciple who appears several times in the text. Indeed, the material in this Gospel differs markedly from the other three, suggesting a principal witness quite independent of Peter and the Twelve.

The reflective and interpretative nature of *John* would fit well with a witness who had spent a lifetime reflecting on his memories and the words of the man who had changed his life. The accounts are more personal in *John* precisely because the person writing them down actually saw and heard them himself.

This theory of Bauckham's is not echoed by other scholars, but that may well be because so many contemporary scholars are still under the influence of the *Form Critics*, the dominant school of Scripture study in the early 20th Century. More will be said about these later.

Another group of witnesses, who probably contributed much of the material in *Luke* not derived from the Gospel of *Mark*, are the women who accompanied Jesus (*Lk 8,2-3*). Women in the Roman world were not generally regarded as reliable witnesses, but this was hardly the case in the early Christian communities, since it was women who spelt out the details of the Passion and Resurrection narratives, as we have already seen.

the oral tradition

Most scholars agree that the four Gospels were written at least 40 years after Jesus' death – even 50 or 60 years. So what happened in between? The guess is that the memories of Jesus, his words, actions and teachings, were kept alive by oral transmission. The disciples constantly told stories about him, and these stories eventually chrystalised into what scholars call the *kerygma* or teachings of Jesus Christ. When the early Christian community met for the 'breaking of bread', these teachings would be repeated. Out of them eventually the four written Gospels grew up.

Bauckham does not deny this process. However, he insists that as long as there were eyewitnesses still alive their testimony would remain paramount. The writing down of the Gospels in the 60s and 70s of the First Century happened precisely because the eyewitnesses were starting to die off.

the form critics

Between the world wars in Germany a school of Biblical scholarship grew up around the German scholar, Rudolph Bultmann. They taught that if you want to understand the Bible you must identify and understand the 'literary form' in which a particular passage or book was written.

In the Old Testament, are the stories of *Job* and *Jonah* true – in the sense that *did they actually happen?* And if not, what is the religious value of such texts? Are they allegories or parables? The Form Critics proposed answers to these questions and began to establish basic ground rules for Biblical criticism.

They have contributed greatly to our understanding of Hebrew history and sacred writing. The trouble arises when their theories are applied to the New Testament. They concluded that the early Christian communities developed their own ways of processing the tradition, adding to it according to the circumstances of their own time and place.

The 'forms' they identified were miracle stories, parables, sermons and so on. The written Gospels present us with the *Christ of faith*. The Form Critics treat the words of Jesus as if they were mere folk traditions. The historical Jesus tends to fade into obscurity.

Bauckham dismisses this as grossly exaggerated. Forty – even 50 – years is not a long time for people to remember crucial or calamitous events. Oral tradition in primitive societies (such as the Maori) places great emphasis on passing on such traditions accurately.

Bauckham calls these remembered events *oral histories.* In many societies the care of this tradition is often entrusted to elders – especially those who witnessed the events themselves. In other words Peter, surviving members of the Twelve, the Beloved Disciple, the women witnesses, would all have been revered authorities. The witnesses who still survived would have been the first to be consulted when the Gospels were written down.

Psychologists who study human memory confirm that people remember salient events of long ago very clearly and accurately, even if details may become muddled. Such memories survive best when they are frequently rehearsed, as they would have been in the early Christian communities.

Parallel passages in the Gospels demonstrate this. The basic structure of of an event or story is the same in each account. Only the details differ – and sometimes these details may indeed reflect the peculiar situation of the community from which that Gospel comes. A good example is to compare the parable of the wedding feast in *Matthew* (*22,1-14*) and in *Luke* (*14,15-24*).

All this is very reassuring for people reading and praying the Gospels today. We know that the Jesus we meet in the pages is the genuine article. The message is his. The words are, for the most part, his too. The way history is written and the way people remember have reinstated the Gospels as reliable accounts of Jesus Christ, Son of Man, Son of God. ■

penniless priest for president

Shay Cullen writes from the Philippines of a reforming priest who could become the next President

Is he a priest, prophet or president-to-be? These are the questions that are surrounding the public announcement by Pampanga governor, Father Eddie Panlilio, that he will seek the Presidency of the Philippines.

He won an extremely popular mandate as governor of Pampanga in 2007 in a phenomenal election that narrowly dethroned the bid of the powerful Pineda family clan, a close ally of President Arroyo. The decision of the highly respected priest is very courageous. He entered the political arena as a means to bring the church's moral and social teaching to bear on corruption in the province – the politically approved and spread of the sex industry and illegal gambling.

The city of San Fernando and Angeles city and surrounding towns are flooded with trafficked and prostituted women and children, some as young as 11. The widespread availability of child pornography, cyber sex dens and foreign sex tourists that are embraced and feted as economic saviours, has shocked the good people of Pampanga.

The people elected as governor Father Ed, whose prized worldly possession is a 1999 model motorbike and an old battered car. They were not to be disappointed. He eliminated corruption in the provincial tax collection office and in construction projects and poured the money into education, health and social welfare for the poor. This infuriated the entrenched political lackeys that ruled every town and village.

Following his announcement to run for president last 18 July, Archbishop Paciano Aniceto spoke of his deep disappointment and objection at these plans that will require the governor to apply for a dispensation from the priesthood. The archbishop told the media: "He is drifting from his original priestly mission. A priest is a servant of the City of God, not of the city of man".

The church leaders have been rightly urging the Catholic laity to *evangelise politics* and make Christian values and social teaching a driving force in national policy. What no one could foresee was that the laity would choose a priest to lead them in that evangelical quest. This rare uncorrupted man of God who is free of debts to family or party, tycoons and multinationals, church or clergy or any earthly power, is a powerful attraction for many Filipinos that hunger and thirst for social justice and honest government.

They want such a candidate to be president. He is the one candidate that is the nightmare of all the rest. ■

award to new zealand hymnwriter

Shirley Erena Murray, NZ hymnwriter, has been made a *Fellow of the Hymn Society* in the United States and Canada, in recognition of her contributions as hymn writer to the international community of congregational song.

This award was announced at the 2009 Conference of the Hymn Society, taking place late July in Northfield, Minnesota, U.S.A. Gillian and John Thornley, spokespersons for the *New Zealand Hymnbook Trust*, welcomed this significant honour, and said it was certain to be warmly endorsed by church and community people in New Zealand.

two outstanding contemporary churchmen

My Struggle for Freedom: memoirs, Vol 1
Hans Küng
London: Continuum, 2008

A Pilgrim in a Pilgrim Church: memoirs of a Catholic Archbishop
Rembert Weakland OSB
Wm Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, Mi; 2009
Review: Kevin Toomey OP

Earlier this year, someone dropped the first volume of Hans Küng's autobiography, *My Struggle for Freedom: memoirs, Vol 1* (*London: Continuum, 2008*) on my desk. It makes fascinating reading. The events of the Second Vatican Council, which Küng attended as a *peritus* (an expert theologian), take up a large part of the book.

He lines up the battle between the bishops and the Roman Curia. The bishops, led by those coming mainly from Northern Europe, sought to bring about the *aggiornamento* ('bringing up to date') which Pope John XXIII asked for in his opening speech to the Council. Küng recounts in passionate detail how these bishops are opposed at each turn by members of the Curia, who sought to preserve the way things were before the Council.

In Küng's view, Pope Paul VI was too lenient in accommodating himself to the views of his curial officials, thus bringing about compromises in the Council's documents with which the church is still dealing. This is one viewpoint in an ongoing debate between bishops and Curia.

However, it is a timely historical document because it puts a viewpoint which has not been given the airing it deserves in recent years. The views of Pope John Paul II on the way in which the church should be governed have slowly predominated, hardly surprisingly given his 27 years as pope. I have yet to read the Küng sequel, *Disputed Truth: memoirs, vol 2*. But I am sure it is compulsory reading for all with an interest in the history of Vatican II and the way in which the institutional church has developed since then.

Surprisingly linked with Küng's memoirs is an equally compelling read, the autobiography of an outstanding pastoral leader, Archbishop Rembert Weakland OSB, Archbishop of Milwaukee 1977-2002. Its narrative recounts a childhood steeped in poverty and the very Catholic story of his becoming a monk of the archabbey of St. Vincent, Latrobe, Pennsylvania (during which time he trained in classical piano and music, so as to teach in the archabbey's school).

We follow his meteoric rise to becoming Archabbot of his own monastery at the early age of 36, and Abbot Primate of the world-wide Benedictine confederation by the age of 40. The story continues with Weakland's successful initiatives to bring the 1500-year-old Order into line with Vatican II.

Through a blur of whirlwind trips around the globe, Weakland gained new insights and the confidence of Paul VI, who personally asked him to become the archbishop of Milwaukee at the age of 50, an unusual role for a Benedictine monk. His panoramic view of the Catholic world and of the internal workings of the Vatican was a preparation given to few, and served him well as the rich background to 25 energetic years as bishop.

Sadly, his last days as bishop were clouded in shame and darkness. The archbishop was 'outed' in 2002 as the result of a short friendship made in 1979 at the beginning of his episcopate, when he was struggling with grief over the death of his mother and the loneliness of his new high responsibility. In this moment of weakness, Weakland trusted a younger man who later reinterpreted their relationship and demanded money from him. The explosive effects of this incident, dealing with broader issues of homosexuality, are recalled with dignity and a refreshing honesty in the first chapter of this book.

This book is easy to read. From time to time, my attention flagged when there was too much attention to detail – often in order to paint the fairest picture of events and provide a mine for future church historians. However, Weakland's gifts as a theologian, liturgist, musician, mediator, teacher, bishop and pastor, and as chair of the team of bishops which produced the US Bishops' document *Economic Justice for All*, are clear.

The narrative is full of memorable anecdotes of people and events. I loved his thumbnail portrait of Father Pedro Arrupe SJ, the saintly and charismatic superior general of the Jesuits from 1965-83. Arrupe dealt with changes in the Society at one of its most difficult moments of transition. He was most able and yet anguished by what was happening. This paradox is shown in his saying: "When authority is the problem, authority is the least capable of solving it." How true!

The most notable feature of this book is the nuanced and frank way in which Weakland describes the office of bishop in a mid-West US archdiocese in the late 20th century: his struggles to be true to the church and his own theological viewpoints, his difficulties in relating to the Vatican and sometimes to his brother bishops, his love for the people of his own diocese and the opposition which this sometimes produced; his courage in facing current justice and peace issues and collaborating ecumenically with Christians of all denominations.

Particularly important is his description of how the bishops of the United States found it politic not to continue trying to teach their people through the methodology they developed of inculturating difficult questions,

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▷▷ e.g. the ethics of nuclear weapons and the place of women in the US church; and how the teaching authority enjoyed by bishops' conferences was finally whittled away in 1992 by Pope John Paul II's motu proprio *Apostolos suos.* These two themes serve to underline and complement Hans Küng's description of the titanic battle between the bishops and the Roman Curia at the Vatican Council.

Putting Küng's and Weakland's writings together it is clear to me that this struggle of minds reached its climax in this 1992 document. Roman centralisation of church teaching was complete. How this question will be dealt with in the next 50 years may be the *leitmotif* of future memoirs of other key theologians and bishops.

Küng and Weakland approach life in quite different ways: Küng, full of self-confidence, fearless in the belief that his way is correct; Weakland, more measured and balanced, giving his own interpretation with finesse. Both give me a broader sense of church, and encourage me with their uncanny ability to ask important questions and to dialogue with others of diverse opinion towards solutions to complex situations. This, I think, is a crucial path forward in today's world and church. May you enjoy reading these books as much as I did. ■

meandering around human frailty

Original Sin – a cultural history
by Alan Jacobs
Review: Mike Crowl

Alan Jacobs is an author I enjoy – his *The Narnian* (a combined life and discussion of C S Lewis) was superb. *Shaming the Devil*, a book of essays, wasn't just written well, and readable, and wisely, it looked clearly at the promises and limits of the modern era.

So when I discovered his latest book, *Original Sin*, was available, I ordered it on interloan to see what it was really about. Well, of course it's about the title topic, but in the process we're given the chance to ramble through a number of highways and byways that sometimes seem to have only a limited connection to the subject.

For example he opens with Six Stories, in which we are acquainted with the Locrians, three characters from Plato, King David and Bathsheba, a disciple of Confucius called Xún Zi, the Yoruban religion, and the New Guinea people called the Urapmin. All this in 20 pages. And this is merely the beginning. Famous names, infamous names and a number of names that meant nothing to me all weave through these pages, and in every case Jacobs makes their stories intriguing enough to keep us reading, even if at times we wonder quite why we're reading about them.

Early in the piece there's a good deal about Augustine, as you'd expect, (and a little less about Paul). Augustine is almost the backbone of the book – and rightly so; his name pops up again and again whether Jacobs is discussing Coleridge, Southey and Robert Owen, or Pinker, Dawkins and Rebecca West.

Jacobs isn't writing a book on the theology of original sin. It isn't always clear to me, however, quite what he is writing. His subtitle of a 'cultural history' leaves him the latitude to digress, and consequently the book lacks some of the tightness of his other tomes. He always comes back to his theme, but some of his subjects take off with such a life of their own that they may well have started out as essays that Jacobs has decided to draw together under one umbrella.

And while he's a believer in original sin, and is perhaps surprised that so many people have thought there's some better alternative explanation, he doesn't firmly bring a conclusion to the why of original sin. It seems to be a reality in our lives, but how did it actually get into us, and why did it? Avoiding theology to a great extent means that the reader is left understanding that Jacobs is convinced about it, but doesn't essentially manage to convince us.

All that aside, this is a fascinating, if discursive, look at one of the much-maligned doctrines of the Church. The conclusion Jacobs comes to is this: you may hate the idea of original sin, you may think it's old-fashioned, that Augustine was a ranter and a prude, and that life would be better without the concept; but in the end, like it or not, original sin seems to be woven into the fabric of our beings. Better get used to it. ■

a world smothered by affluence

Living Beyond the "End of the World": A Spirituality of Hope
Margaret Swedish
Orbis Books, 2008
Review: Mary Betz

If you are happy as a middle class Kiwi, then *don't read this book*! I enjoyed it – despite its challenge to drastically cut my consumption and scale down my life. As well as providing an overview of the dis-ease of the planet (to 2007), its strength is the attempt at a new synthesis of ecology, social justice, feminist theology, Christianity and life.

The first few chapters are safe enough. I thought, "ho-hum, another bad news catalogue of a gazillion examples of environmental devastation – some global but with heavy emphasis on the United States". There are a good 60 pages of rapid-fire reporting of hurricanes, droughts, floods, melting icecaps, thawing permafrost, wildlife extinction, fisheries collapse, deforestation, insect infestation, decline of fossil fuel reserves, water scarcity, soil depletion, desertification, food supply shortages and the false salvation of biofuels. I was feeling very depressed and wondered how she dared subtitle her book *A Spirituality of Hope*.

Then the author quoted economist Robert Heilbroner, "Suppose we… knew with a high degree of certainty that humankind could not survive a thousand years unless we gave up our wasteful diet of meat, abandoned all pleasure driving, cut back on every use of energy that was not essential… would we care enough for posterity to pay the price of its survival?... What if we knew that global warming and ecological destruction would cause the collapse of human societies and the deaths of billions of people unless we did all those things? Would we care enough to pay the price by altering our lives?"

We have spent all the interest from the earth's bank account and are rapidly spending its capital. For everyone presently on earth to live as we do would require five planet earths. And by 2025 we will be not six billion people but nine billion people. As Swedish puts it, "Being better off is killing us." Our ecological footprint is about ten times that of people in developing countries. Clearly our way of life is unsustainable and as sinful as our failure to share the earth's resources with the poor and with our children's children.

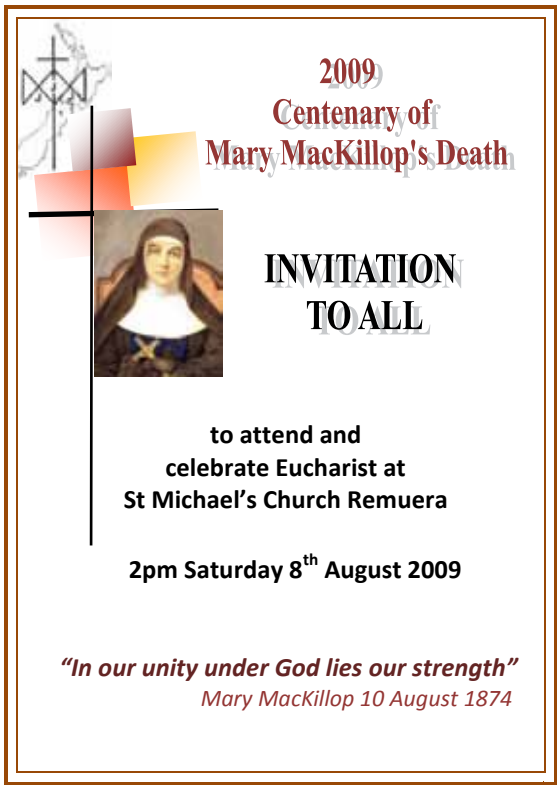
The second half of the book is what really engaged me, with its challenge to live a central tenet of Christianity: *love your neighbour as yourself*. If all the present and future billions of people are my neighbours who have the same right to survival and human dignity that I have, what am I doing living as I do? The richest one percent of the global population owns 40 percent of the world's wealth – and many New Zealanders are in or near that one percent. The poorest 50 percent of the world's population own only 1.1 percent of the earth's wealth. How can I face my children's children if I don't do what I can to ensure the Earth will still have a liveable climate with enough water, food, forest, and resources for future generations?

Our affluence, the author reminds us, hasn't made us happier. Our pursuit of money often leaves us bereft of two of the most important sources of human fulfilment – relationships and leisure. We attempt to satisfy with material things what are essentially social, psychological and spiritual needs. In so doing, our lives have gotten out of balance with our Earth, and will almost certainly destroy life as we know it if we do not change.

Just as the Copernican revolution changed our understanding of earth's place within our solar system, a new shift is needed as we understand that humanity is not the centre of creation. We need the Earth for survival, but it does not need us. In the words of Thomas Berry, we must go about "reinventing the human presence on the Earth." We are called to turn to a new understanding of God who cares for the whole cosmos as well as humankind, and new way of life that will allow Earth to heal and its majority people to rise out of poverty.

It will be the hardest thing we have ever done, but this is the task of our era – to find ways to restore the balance of our species with the earth, to cut our consumption and live beyond the end of the world as we have known it. The miracle of the loaves and fishes must be repeated in our own day, so that with what each individual, community and nation has, there will be enough for all. Margaret Swedish chooses, not despair or indifference to the challenges we face, but a creative ecological and Christian hope.

She says, "Our lives have taken on new importance… We can hardly waste another day." She speaks with the urgency of ushering in God's reign – let's hope, as she does, that we have the will to bring it about. ■



the encyclical on social justice

Some had feared – and others hoped – that Benedict's new Encyclical on Catholic Social Teaching would repudiate the essence of *Gaudium et Spes* – the Vatican Council's document which committed the church to real engagement with the world, as against a detached concentration on the 'spiritual'.

Pope Benedict has shown himself to be firmly in the tradition of the Council. Not only has he articulated a theological criterion that underpins all Catholic social teaching; he has expressed it in terms that even an atheistic humanist could appreciate. There is an inseparable union between the church's roles of spreading the Gospel and working for social justice.

"The whole Church, in all her being and acting… is engaged in promoting integral human development," says Benedict, adding that *"authentic human development concerns the whole of the person in every single dimension."* Truth - the practical recognition of, and response to, reality – is an essential component of charity, without which it would be more or less a pool of good sentiments, "helpful for social cohesion, but of little relevance."

The key is the phrase 'integral human development', Christ being the exemplar.

Caritas in Veritate covers many factors that are cause for concern. Benedict is a radical thinker who, in the process of reconciling opposing perspectives, creates a platform for co-operation across the board.

Obama speaks out

In Egypt President Obama recently spoke respectfully about the positives of Islam, but criticised governments that repressed their people, practices that repressed women, and those who perpetrated violent actions often the name of God. He also admitted that the USA had once interfered in the internal affairs of Iran, helping to overthrow the legally elected Prime Minister (Moussadiq, replaced by the Shah). Reports suggest that his words have been favourably received in the Muslim world.

In Africa, he was similarly forthright about corruption. "Your future is in your hands", he said to the Africans. It is refreshing to have a world leader who speaks the truth clearly, with balance, and does not indulge in empty platitudes, threats or boasting.

Crosscurrents
Jim Elliston

the more things change…

A recent report from the *Manufacturers' and Exporters' Association* says its members are doing their job of trying to make a profit by producing goods for export, thereby earning revenue for New Zealand and helping to restore the economy by reducing unemployment and overseas debt. The problem is that the Australian-owned banks are taking advantage of the current situation to make good profits at the expense of the businesses that desperately need loans at reasonable rates. The upshot is damage to our country

Citing volatile exchange rates, lack of real inter-bank competition and the tax-haven status of real estate as contributing causes, the CEO John Waller calls for regulators to "create a framework whereby these actors improve the economy as well as pursuing their own self-interest".

Some suggestions are to boost the hitherto much maligned Kiwibank to provide real competition for the other banks, and to introduce some form of capital gains tax. He explains that the growing demand for credit resulting from investing money in unproductive areas such as real estate is offset for the borrower by inflation increasing the value of the asset. However, our rising interest rates encourage more overseas money to become available for banks to lend: exchange rates increase, our exports become less competitive and so on, so the country as a whole suffers.

Mr Walley's suggestion sounds rather like Pope Benedict's: "Economic activity cannot solve all social problems through the simple application of commercial logic. This needs to be directed towards the pursuit of the common good, for which the political community in particular must also take responsibility."

Over the past year private banks have been propped up by hundreds of billions of taxpayer dollars, and deposit guarantees. Now we learn:

- A group of leading Australian economists urged their Government to create a version of Kiwibank.
- Goldman Sachs in the USA has made 'a surprising profit' and will resume the former practice of paying millions in bonuses to staff.
- The *Guardian Weekly* reports that soaring profits by UK banks are leading to a resumption of hefty bonuses and backsliding from former agreements to regulate the derivatives trading that lay at the heart of the crisis.

Why are banks doing so well? Governments need to raise money to cover the costs of the bailouts – the banks do the fund-raising. Those remaining have fewer competitors.

No state on its own can bring international finance under control. An individual country cannot control the market forces, so there is need for some form of international body to oversee the financial world. As Benedict puts it "the limitations to states' sovereignty imposed by the new context of international trade and finance require a re-evaluation of their role and powers perhaps through new forms of engagement, to address the challenges of today's world". ■

the plight of divorced and remarried catholics

Cardinal Carlo Martini, the retired archbishop of Milan, wrote in a recent book, We're All in the Same Boat, of finding new ways by which those who have divorced and entered a second marriage could be admitted to the reception of Holy Communion. He was echoing what many other bishops had already said.

"You ask me what I think about denying the sacraments to devout Catholics who are divorced. I was very happy about the goodness with which the Holy Father recently lifted the excommunications of the four Lefebvrite bishops. Along with many others, however, I think there are lots of other people who feel marginalised in the church, and we have to think about them too. I'm referring, in particular, to those who are divorced and remarried.

"I'm not talking about all such Catholics, because we must not favour flimsiness and superficiality, but rather promote fidelity and perseverance. Nevertheless, there are some such Catholics who are today in an irreversible and innocent state. In fact, they've taken on new obligations to children from a second marriage, and there's absolutely no reason for going back; indeed, such a choice would not be wise. I believe that the church must find solutions for these people.

"It's important that the whole church reflect on these cases, and, guided by the Pope, find a solution."

The opportunity to reflect in this fashion on these cases has existed several times in recent years. In this, New Zealand bishops have played a notable and honourable part.

Before the Oceania Synod in 1998 at least three of them publicly called for a rethink of the current practice. "Priests", said Bishop Leonard Boyle, "who work with Catholics in irregular marriages are frustrated at being able to do so little. Let us look at the question: is there another way? Let us look afresh, not look at the past answers." Bishops Owen Dolan and Pat Dunn made similar appeals for a reassessment.

The opening days of the Synod on the Eucharist four years ago saw topics which had been long taboo being aired as real problems, and concrete remedies being proposed. Again a New Zealand bishop played a prominent and honourable role in this. Archbishop John Dew of Wellington spoke of the need for a rethink of the rules that exclude divorced and civilly remarried Catholics from receiving Holy Communion. His remarks caught world-wide attention and were echoed by many other participants.

In both instances the post-Synodal document put together by the Pope proved a grave disappointment. The call made by Archbishop Dew and others was not mentioned. Not that nothing was said about the divorced and remarried. The document that followed the Oceania Synod clearly indicated that the Pope knew about their plight.

There was talk of "disrupted families", of the "sad reality of marital breakdown and divorce" and of "those who have drifted away from the church, perhaps because of painful experiences". But there was not the slightest indication that part of the remedy for these sad situations might lie in a reconsideration of the church's position on remarriage after marital break-up, much less of the adoption of the oikonomia solution practised by the churches of the East. It was as if no significant members of the hierarchy had raised these issues for reconsideration.

Let Cardinal Martini have the last word. "These are among the subjects that need much more reflection and conversation. They sometimes surface in the Synods of Bishops, but there's no follow-up. The problems, however, are real, and we need a public discussion about them." ■

Humphrey O'Leary

Humphrey O'Leary is a canon lawyer and Rector of the Redemptorist community in Auckland

A Mothers Journal...

Umid answers our knock at the door – opening up a wide smile and open door.

"Aye – andar aye! Jute yahan rakho!. Uper ajo!" We leave our shoes at the door and climb rickety stairs.

We met Umid as we walked back from the bazaar a couple of days ago. The 45 minute walk along a dusty road made us all hot and tired. Umid sat with us in the shade beside the Chenab river – the late afternoon green-grey of melting glaciers rushing down hill – it wafted a breeze cool with memories of snow over us.

I find Umid and I are the same age – but her children are 12 years ahead of ours. She can read a little. The time she went over the 4000m high Rohtang pass that separates Lahul from the rest of India, she found those big towns on 'the other side' noisy but interesting. As we turned up to our place she called out: "Tomorrow I am on water irrigation duty – so come for tea the day after."


Kaaren Mathias

Three-toothed Jalori smiles and crawls around the wooden floors of Umid's house. My nine-year-old moves to look out the window and take a photo. The snowy mountains are framed and way below are green green fields of potato, peas and barley.

Umid carries in a rounded pile of *sathu* – roasted barley flour, mixed with clarified butter and sugar. Beside it burns a stick of incense. She explains this Lahuli welcoming ritual – after flicking some crumbs to acknowledge the ever present God-with-us, we each take a pinch and eat it. As we sip cups of hot sweet milk and dunk biscuits, Umid sews onto each of our tops a handmade rosette of dried marigold leaves. She had made it in the winter while the snow lay deep outside.

Hospitality. Making space for the unexpected visitor – the stranger. I savour Umid's welcoming ritual and wonder how good I am at welcomes and hospitality. I have received this lesson a hundred times and still I need to learn it again. It seems I learn very slowly.

Be present. Don't calculate. Make lots. Share the best that we have. Enjoy ritual. Make an occasion of welcome. Acknowledge to all that God is with us...

We walk home through the gloaming and wild field flowers – warm inside and decorated out. We have been honoured guests. I am deeply grateful to be here. ■

Kaaren Mathias and her husband and four children are living in a remote valley in the Himalayas – setting up a new community health programme and enjoying the company of the Lahuli subsistence farmers living fully present in each season.

'salt of the earth folk' who live around us.