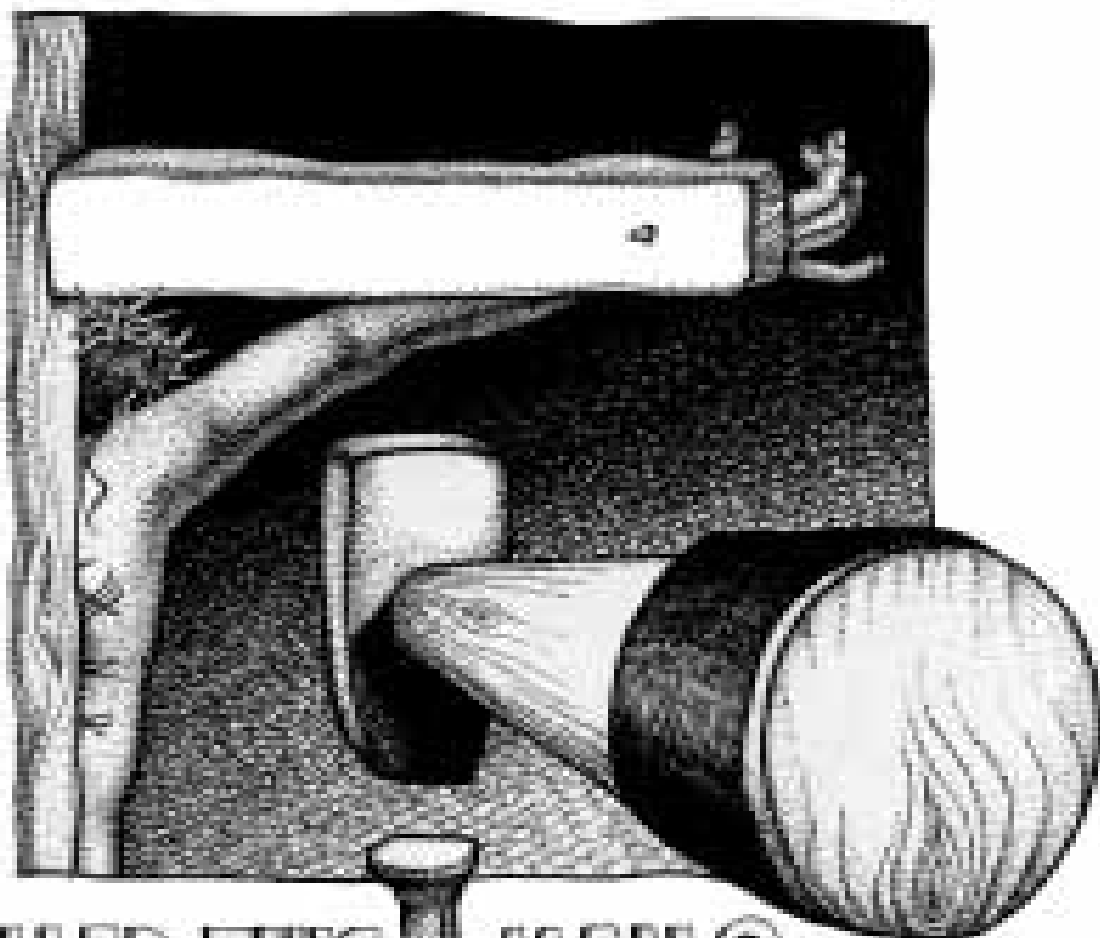
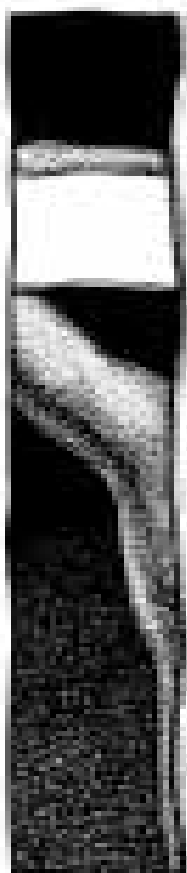




Tui Motu

InterIslands

March 1998 Price \$4



WHO KILLED THIS MAN ?

- anti Semitism and the Christian story
- focus on priestly ministry
- *bring 'em home, Jenny!*

Prophetic voices

Lent is the time of year when the liturgy cries out to us to rend our hearts, not our garments. We make no apology therefore if this Lenten issue of Tui Motu contains strong meat rather than sweetmeats. No one would dispute, for instance, that the Holocaust, the systematic murder of six million Jews, stands out as the supreme crime of this Century of blood and iron. But behind the history of Anti-Semitism (see articles on pages 22-26) lies an appalling implication that it is our theology, our Christian faith and tradition more than any other single factor which led to the pogroms, the persecutions and the gas chambers of Auschwitz.

It is one thing to name the culprit, another to beat one's breast in anguish and self-accusation. As Trish McBride suggests on another page (20-21), it is not enough to seek and receive forgiveness unless there is a fundamental change of heart on the part of the transgressor.

Christians of all denominations failed to speak and act against the Fascist "Final Solution". One suggested reason is that the prophetic tradition in the Church had fallen silent: the Old Testament was held in low esteem by many Christians especially in the Catholic Church. Traditionally it was the prophet's role to speak out against injustice, to identify the demonic and fearlessly take rulers and high priests to task for their failure to listen to God's Word and implement it. The Lenten readings from Jeremiah, supreme scourge of the complacent, are timely. In the 30s the voice of Christian prophecy was tragically muted.

What of today? How do today's prophets fare? One has only to think of the treatment meted out to Leonardo Boff and to many others closer to home to realise that this lesson is not being learnt within the Church.

We make no apology, therefore, in publishing articles from two priests from Auckland (one of whom a year ago resigned the active ministry in order to marry): they address challenging words to some basic issues of the contemporary Church — the role of the laity, celibacy, the supply of priests, vocation. Like Bishop Stecher (see February issue), these men are writing not in anger but in love. They rejoice in all the graces and achievements of their many years of apostolic work. They speak with concern for the future of their Church and the need of the people to be fed. They must be heard and heeded. They are the prophetic voices of today's Church.

Is this an act of disobedience: to write in this way — and to publish it? Some will think so, because there is a long tradition within the Churches of absolute and unquestioning loyalty. Roma locuta est... The silence of Pius XII during the Jewish massacres was paradoxically the voice of Rome speaking. Do we never learn?

The fundamental meaning of obedience means to listen to the Word of God. Often the true word of God is to be discerned first in the hearts and voices of God's people rather than in the hierarchy. In this respect the recent Instruction on the Laity which came from Rome is a disobedient document. It has failed to listen, to heed the cries of the people. Worse, it woefully disregards the malaise afflicting the Western Church. It is a classic example of attempting to rearrange deckchairs while the barque is sinking. It echoes once again that culpable denial of the prophetic voice which caused the horrendous abuses of our age to be ignored, of which the Holocaust was simply one terrible example.

M.H.

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Bring 'em home, Jenny!

Jim Consedine

New Zealand should recall its troops from the Gulf. We have no right to be waging war against Iraq. This war is immoral and clearly sinful in the light of Church teaching.

The Churches should be loud in their condemnation of New Zealand's commitment to this war. We have a tradition of nearly 2000 years of teaching against war. For the first three centuries, no Christian was allowed to take up arms against another human being. If a Christian was drafted into the Roman army, that one had to resist and take the consequences. Many were executed for disobeying orders, martyred for their faith.

With the alliance of the Church and the Constantinian empire in 313 AD, the Church compromised and sought grounds to amend its traditional pacifist stance. Eventually it developed a just war theory which allowed for four strict criteria to be met if one was to consider going to war. Failure on any one point meant that for Christians the war was unjust and sinful. The four grounds were:

- one side must persist in committing an injustice, allowing for legitimate self defence
- all peaceful means for settling the dispute must have been exhausted
- there must be due proportion between the gravity of the injustice and the damage which the war would do
- there must be a reasonable hope of success

This war fails on each of the four principles. Firstly, Iraq is not the only country with biological and chemi-

cal weapons. That Saddam Hussein is an evil despot, ruling via an elite, goes without saying. Indeed he is a tyrant, subjugating, oppressing and murdering many of his own people. But he is only one of many tyrants in the world, some of them created, nurtured and sustained in power by western governments. He is not threatening any country. If he is deposed, he could equally be replaced by someone just as bad. His problem is that he has oil and lots of it. He also has control over it. That is what makes him different. The West needs his oil, to protect 'our way of life', as George Bush said in 1991.

Secondly, all peaceful means had not been exhausted at the time New Zealand committed troops. Further to that, due proportionality will not exist. There was no due proportionality in the United Nations forces' conduct of the 1991 war, with thousands of Iraqi civilians killed in massive bombing raids. It certainly was a great war though for Western arms manufacturers. Finally, how can there be a reasonable hope of success in this war when the objectives are so unclear? The ruling elite remained in charge after the last war. What is there different about this one?

Mrs Shipley is wrong when she suggests that Saddam is the greatest threat to world peace since Hitler and that this another Chamberlain/Churchill scenario. History has not obviously been her strongest subject. Does she not remember what the US government and its allies did for over a decade to Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia? Has she never heard of Pol Pot? Mao Tse tung? General Suharto? Idi Amin? Leonard



Breshnev? They have all lived since Hitler and killed tens, if not hundreds of thousands of people.

There are many refugees from Saddam's tyranny now resident in New Zealand. Many have spoken out against our involvement pointing out that it will not be the Iraqi elite but the ordinary people who will suffer. Regrettably, Saddam has not been the only one waging war against the Iraqi people. More than half a million have died from UN imposed sanctions since the 1991 Gulf war. The New Zealand government has supported the maintenance of those sanctions. We stand indicted as supporters of a genocidal policy. These sanctions are clearly against the moral teachings of the Church, as the Pope has repeatedly pointed out. For eight years he has begged for a more constructive approach to relations with Iraq. We prefer to listen to the spirit of darkness, rather than the word of God.

Thirty five years ago, Pope John XXIII declared 'It is becoming humanly impossible to regard war, in this atomic age, as a suitable means of re-establishing justice when some right has been violated'. (Pacem in Terris, #127) How much more applicable are those sentiments now. ■

(Written in mid February)

letters



A breath of fresh air

Congratulations on an exceptionally good February issue of Tui Motu. What I like particularly about the publication is its independence, its openness, its willingness to air both sides of an issue. Few Catholic publications are really willing to hear what grass roots laity are saying – most are interested in giving only the official Church line. We do not have to agree, but we need to hear what Church members are thinking and saying.

Thank you in particular for publishing The Instruction, then responses from lay people, from Humphrey O'Leary and from an Austrian Bishop. The whole free discussion gave me a lift because for a long time I have bottled up strong, often hostile feelings about the Church. I have felt angry, hurt and sort-of-abused, and helpless in trying to bring about any change. I had lost hope

that such freedom was possible within the current leadership and structures of the Church. Again, thank you.

Allan Devlin, Lower Hutt

Laity left floundering

I am sorry Fr John Bland sees Margaret Hebblethwaite's article on the Laity (Nov issue) as negative and divisive, though I can understand his reaction. For myself, I am grateful to Margaret Hebblethwaite and Ron Sharp (Feb) for clarifying my thinking and giving me encouragement to continue to live fully as a lay person within the Church. After reading the Vatican Instruction I felt deeply rejected and, for the first time in over 40 years as an adult Catholic, I seriously questioned whether I should remain in the church. This I question no longer, but I am still unhappy about the document. Obviously where there are abuses these must be corrected, but such a negative approach, and so blanket in its prohibitions...is this necessary? Is there really something intrinsically wrong with a lay person preaching a

homily occasionally? Working in a Retreat Centre for several years I have, like Peter Brett, frequently done so and people have told me what a joy it is occasionally to hear from someone who approaches the Scriptures from a life experience similar to their own.

Priests do a wonderful job preaching every Sunday, and on many other occasions throughout the year, but surely to allow a lay person to speak occasionally, without creating a special and artificial spot for them, is no threat to the priestly office. What happens to our parishes and the other works of the Church if laity submit to the Instruction and retire from any responsible church activity?

To work 'with' rather than 'under' our priests was, I thought, one of the great blessings of recent years, and how sad to see what appears to be an attempt to destroy this and 'put us in our place' again.

Elizabeth Nicholson, Christchurch

Rosary House Spiritual Life Centre Retreats

Arrival - 5.15pm

Opening - 7.30pm

Closing

10.00am

"THE SEED MUST DIE"

April 9-11

Team

Through death to life: Celebrating and participating in the Easter mysteries of Passover, Passion and Resurrection.

ST THERESE OF LISIEUX: Doctor of Confidence

April 17-24

Fr Carl Telford SM

The Church, in proclaiming St Therese a Doctor of the Church, has given sanction to her as a wise and sound spiritual guide for our times; as one who rediscovered in the Gospel its message of confidence in the love of our gentle God, who shows the importance of love in the Church and being childlike in our prayer. This retreat aims to break "the statue of the sentimental": Therese and discover the real woman of great faith, courage and love.

SPIRITUALITY IN OUR LIVES

May 19-26

Fr Mark Chamberlain

& Team Becoming aware of the movement of grace within, in order that we may recognise the holy in the ordinary.

PERSONAL DIRECTED RETREATS (Max 6 days)

August 18-25

Sr Margaret-Anne RSM

Fr John O'Connor

& team

"LIFE'S HEALING JOURNEY"

September 1-10

Team

A journey towards the healing of life's hurts. This retreat is a blend of meditations on the humanity of Jesus, of input on the normal and necessary grieving/healing process, private time and individual accompaniment.

"PROMPTED BY THE SPIRIT"

September 29-October 6

Fr John Allardyce SM

Reflections on the love of God as manifested by the Holy Spirit in the preparation for the Great Jubilee 2,000. This retreat will focus on the action of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian.

"IGNATIAN SPIRITUAL EXERCISES"

November 10-19

Team

A video series on the life of St Ignatius Loyola. The invitation which he extends to you is that you use his story and his spiritual techniques to help you discover your own story and delight in its many layers of meaning.

PERSONAL DIRECTED RETREAT

December 9-18 (Max 8 days)

Fr Mark Chamberlain & Team

For bookings or further information Phone (03) 378 1298 or Write to ROSARY HOUSE
SPIRITUAL LIFE CENTRE, 15 Dublin Street, Christchurch 8001

Cries from the Heart

Last year six Catholic priests left the active ministry in the Auckland diocese. The effect on priests and people alike has been little short of devastating. Many feel a sense of betrayal. Others are asking searching questions about the nature of priestly ministry and the present disciplines of the Church. Tui Motu talks to two men who have each served in the priestly ministry for over thirty years. One has chosen to leave; the other to stay — but their concerns are very similar

Dennis Horton, ex-Editor of Zealandia speaks out about his leaving the pastoral Ministry — “It was like a death”, he says..

A year ago I was preparing a homily for Christmas knowing that after 30 years of ministry this would be the last time I would proclaim the gospel and preside at Eucharist. Today as I write I am looking forward to my first Christmas with the woman I love, who is now my wife, and her four children. As we arrange the crib and decorate the tree for our Christmas as a family together, I am conscious of the huge changes that have happened in my life over the past year, and how wonderfully God keeps on coming, taking flesh once more in the humanness of our lives, with the promise to make all things new.

For as long as I can remember I always wanted to serve God and God's people as a priest. I grew up in a family where faith and worship were as natural as the air we breathed. My parents, both devout Catholics, were always happy for me to keep the idea of priesthood

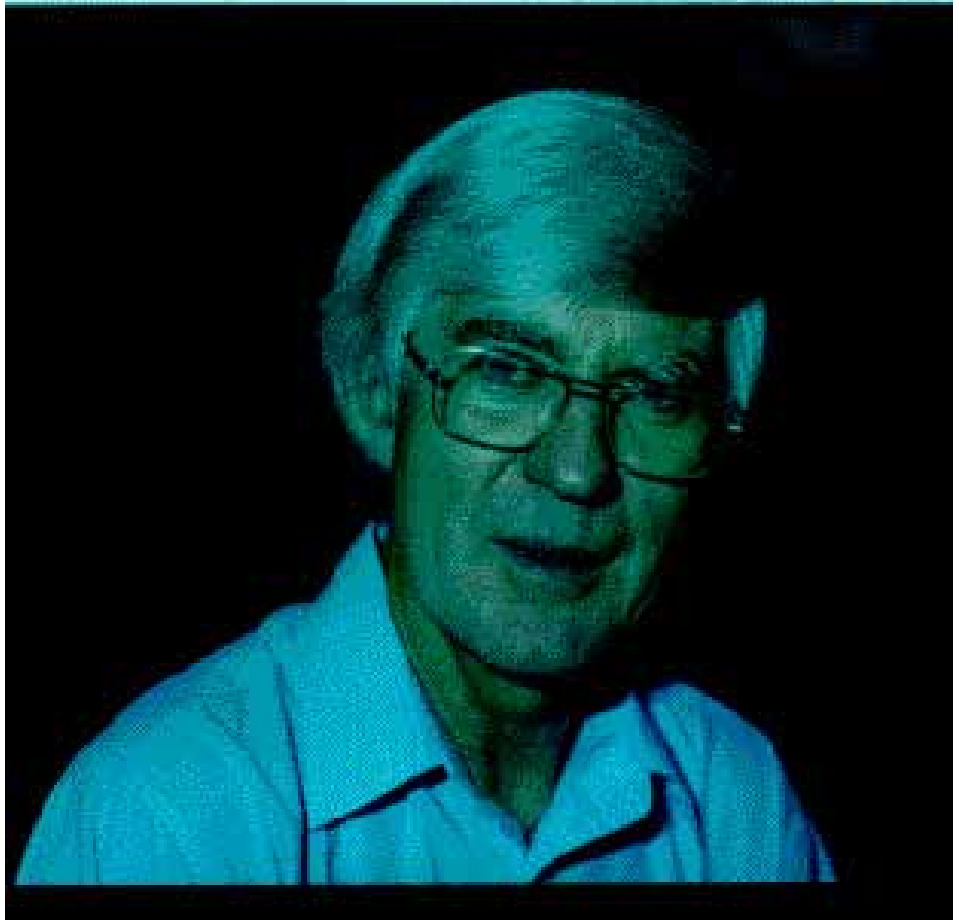


photo: Paul Freedman

as an option, and the priests and teachers who were such significant figures in my childhood and teenage years gave me every encouragement to follow the call. I completed my intermediate and secondary schooling at the same small single-sex Catholic school, and began my studies in philosophy in 1960 at the national seminary in Christchurch.

Looking back on those formative years I have to say that while I grew up in a family where I was always secure and well loved, I was in many ways immature. Despite a close relationship with

my only sister, 18 months my senior, I had little awareness of the opposite sex. Adolescence came and went without any serious attachments: I never knew what it was to date a girl, and had no reason for thinking I had missed out for not having done so. So, when I was faced with having to commit myself to life-long celibacy at the age of 22, my decision was based on a very limited experience of life and an awareness of sexuality and my own needs which was in some respects undeveloped and inadequately formed.

I can see now with the gift of hindsight that my commitment was to priesthood, not to celibacy. I accepted celibacy as a condition to serving as a priest. And while I struggled to remain faithful to the letter of the law as far as the celibate state was concerned, I never succeeded in finding the spirit which would have turned this state into a liberating gift for myself and others. The result was that I lived for more than 30 years with the shadow of uncertainty about my own sexual identity; it made me cautious of close relationships, inclined to hold people at a distance, and hesitant to offer advice to those who came seeking guidance. There was a piece of my life which remained painfully incomplete; a dark corner which I kept hidden away and papered over, while I busied myself with the rest of my ministry, hoping that the gap would not show.

I am amazed now at how quickly the shadows have gone. The experience of loving and being loved has brought a wholeness to my life that I recognise as redemptive and as part of God's creative plan. I have also seen that the call to be fully and completely human is our first and fundamental vocation, and that to serve as a priest should never mean a denial of one's growth as a person. I feared that this is what was happening to me — and, I suspect, to many other priests of my generation. With marriage has come not just wholeness for the present but a new confidence about the future. I no longer worry about becoming dependent on alcohol as a substitute for love and companionship, or about growing increasingly self-centred or isolated from living on my own. I am grateful for someone who has come to know me almost as well as I know myself, who relates to me as a person rather than to my role, and who confronts and challenges me as well as sustaining me with her love.



I grieve at being unable to proclaim the Word for my sisters and brothers, and to break for them the bread of life in the Eucharist. But I am glad to have found a job that involves an element of pastoral care: my proclamation of the gospel has become more a matter of deeds than of words.

I am sad, too, that when the time came for my wife and I to celebrate our wedding and to ask God to bless our love, it was the Anglican Church rather than our own which welcomed us with joy and made us at home, on that occasion and since. Such are the ironies of Canon Law that while my wife, whose first marriage was not recognised by the Church, was free to marry in our tradition, without a Papal dispensation I was not. And I am struck by the paradox that while Anglican priests in Britain have been recently welcomed into the Roman Catholic Church and, after reordination, allowed a ministry in our communion, I find that my marriage excludes me not only from exercising my ministry but also from receiving the Eucharist within my own tradition. I found myself wondering where Christ stands in the face of such judgment.

The experience of having to leave the priesthood I knew and loved, and to move into the unknown, has helped me see how God sometimes comes to us only when we have left what is familiar and safe, and have embraced the darkness. I have learnt, too, that many Catholics, both clergy and lay, have difficulty in separating the role of priest from the person who exercises it. As a Church we are not so good at affirming our priests simply as human beings, or at challenging them to personal growth and wholeness. Indeed, so long as they remain faithful to their ministry, we are sometimes ready to tolerate situations which are ultimately destructive of priests themselves and abusive of those whose lives they touch.

As far as the process of laicisation is concerned, I am reluctant to set out on a path which may end in repudiating my years of priestly ministry, and implying that perhaps I should never have been ordained at all. I have no doubt that God was at work in my life then, as now, and that there have been abundant blessings for which I and many others are able to give thanks. On the other hand I would wish that my own Church

might acknowledge the integrity of my decision to leave, the goodness of the love which my wife and I now share, and my deep desire to be reconciled and in communion with the community I have lived in and worked for so long. If these can result from my seeking laicisation, then I am willing to request that the process begin.

What prompted me to write this was, in part, a suggestion from the canon lawyer in my own diocese who passes on requests like mine to Rome. Writing my story was to be a way of helping that process begin. But

Dennis Horton lives with his wife, Michal, and her four children in a leafy street in central Auckland. He has exchanged the formality of a parish house for the comfortable clutter of a family home. For Dennis and for Michal it has been a huge transition.

“It’s been a death”, Dennis says. “I had to leave a world I knew and loved, and God seemed to be leading me into darkness. The climax came on Holy Thursday when as a priest I had to renew my commitment to the bishop, and I realised I could no longer preach the gospel with a divided heart. As a priest I was called before all else to live the truth; and I knew that to pursue that meant a death. Celibacy was no longer the option I thought it was: it had become a denial of the humanity God meant me to have”. For Michal too it was an extremely stressful period: she was concerned for Dennis who was suffering deep anguish, yet she was convinced of the rightness and goodness of their relationship.

Later in the year while on retreat, Dennis meditated on St Paul’s call to freedom: “in Christ, through his blood we gain our freedom.. (Eph 1,7)”. He shared the ambiguity of his situation with some of his fellow priests — and he found he was by no means alone. He knew after 30 years of priesthood he had to leave.

I sensed as soon as I began that this was not just my story. It’s the story of a Church in transition and a form of ordained ministry which must also be open to change. Too many good, committed Catholics have told me that they share my sorrow and support my choice, for me to think that I am alone. By God’s grace celibacy may always be a gift that enriches the life of the Church; but only when it is chosen, by those mature and sure enough to make that choice freely. To be a real choice it must be selected from a range of options: at the present time it is that range of

Should he seek laicisation? “To say that I should never have been a priest was like a repudiation. Could I honestly cast myself in the guise of a penitent when, though there are things I deeply regret, there is nothing for which I feel I should have to repent?”

The greatest pain for Dennis has been severance: the loss of valued relationships — and especially his exclusion from the eucharistic community which has been the centre of his life. There were friendships which did not survive when his role changed. But after a period of numbness and uncertainty the two of them feel blessed to have been welcomed by a loving Anglican community at St Matthew’s. He misses the opportunity to preach, but he is content to be part of the eucharist even though he can no longer preside. To have to get an ordinary job has also been a salutary experience: he is happy there is some pastoral care of people with mental illness in his new work, and he would certainly welcome a more pastoral role.

Looking back Dennis feels strongly that a married priesthood in the Catholic Church should have been possible, and should be made possible in the future. Diocesan priests do not take a vow of chastity like religious. He does not deny that celibacy as a total giving of self is a legitimate call, but he is convinced that being married could be of enormous help in parish ministry.

options which is lacking.

I can see clearly that my ministry could have been greatly enriched, had I been supported as a priest by the tender, healing love that sustains me now. My prayer has been that my own pain and struggle in recent times will help to hasten a change that so many of us see as essential, if Catholics are to have the priests they need. May the Christ who took flesh to save us help to make our Church more human, more willing to see God in the reality of our human love. Come, Lord Jesus! ■

Michal spoke with feeling of the predicament of women who form a loving relationship with priests. Although the situation is open to abuse, this was never her experience. “Dennis has not got an abusive bone in his body!” The greatest cross was having to witness how the moral dilemma threatened to destroy the man she loved. Secrecy became a huge burden which simply had to be endured. For her children the change has been an Easter experience. They had seen their mother going through great misery: now they can rejoice at all the good that the marriage has brought.

Both Dennis and Michal deeply regretted the fact that the Church is missing out on so much loving energy because of a ruling of Church law. They felt that if it were an option for a priest to serve either as married or as celibate, then the true nature of the gift of celibacy would stand out all the more.

“All those things within me”, said Dennis, “which were waiting to unfold themselves have now done so. I am certain it has been a call from God to move this way. I feel that taking the step has been a part of my journey as a priest. My best homily has been to move into the unknown, into the darkness. What I have done may be seen by some as a denial of my priesthood: I see it as the most authentic step I have ever made as a man of God.” ■

How can our Christian Assembly Survive?

Peter Murnane, thirty years a Dominican priest and currently Chaplain at Auckland University, looks in anguish at many issues in today's Church, particularly with regard to ministry and priesthood.

For Peter, the decision is to stay in the ordained ministry: nevertheless, for him too it is cry from the heart.

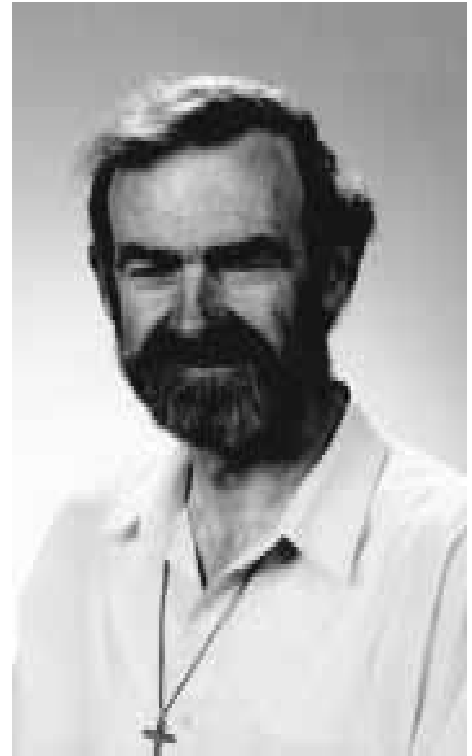


photo: Godfrey Boehnke

The evening before his burial we came together for the Rosary around Andrew's coffin. A lovely, peaceful gathering in which we shared memories of Andrew, and prayed for him. As we were finishing the setting sun found a narrow crack between two buildings and surprisingly blazed through an open door into the church, flooding us with gold. It was a parting gift from Andrew on his journey to God's presence.

As I drove home the transparent summer dusk was so calm that it made clear even my troubled thoughts. For my brief encounters with Andrew in life and death had brought to the surface some long-brewing difficulties about our Christian Assembly — and in particular, how power is frequently misused in our Church.

When I first met Andrew he was already a sick man. A loyal, long-time Catholic, his marriage had failed, but he had never

sought an annulment. Eventually he had found a beautiful relationship with his present partner. Facing death, he had worried that this might cut him off from God. Recent Instructions from Rome would indicate that he should abandon his partner before he could receive the Eucharist. As we discussed this, I told him I could never imagine Jesus turning away a person in his situation. God, who is Love, who came to us in Jesus, is more interested in repairing bridges than putting up barriers. The relief and understanding that dawned across Andrew's face I will never forget. Just as he was, he took his part once again as a full member of the Christian Assembly.

Last week I listened at length to a woman shocked and hurt by her pastor's departure from parish and ministry. He was tired, daunted by the size of his task in the Assembly. His conscience led him to quit his good work as a priest. At a crucial moment in his life he also found the love of a

good woman but the real causes of his departure dated from long before he met her. He is only one of six good and talented priests from our diocese who have recently stopped working as priests; one of more than 100,000 priests who have put aside their leadership of the Eucharistic Assembly since

*more than one
hundred thousand
priests have
put aside their
leadership*

the Vatican Council 32 years ago. Are we to lay the blame on these men? Or could there be something wrong with the Assembly itself?

Whenever I get talking in depth to parents they often speak with deep concern about their children who never come to Mass. "How can we get them to come

back to church?” But again we need to ask ourselves: is the fault all on the young people’s part, or are we maintaining the wrong sort of Assembly? Not only priests and young people, but countless thousands of adults have chosen to walk away from their parish Assembly. One does not have to listen for long to hear their stories of hurt, caused not just by unfortunate mistakes of pastors or bishops but by the structures and rules of the Christian Assembly itself.

I believe the Spirit of Jesus is present in the people who gather in our Assembly, in the readings, in the Eucharistic elements and in the priest. Assembled

the Spirit of Jesus is present in the people

together, we are Christ’s body. None of us should ever have to opt out! However, the pain caused by wrong ways of doing things has forced many to leave. It is smug to say that just because we remain we are in the right.

I have worked as a priest for 32 years, and I hope to continue this rich, rewarding involvement in people’s lives until I die. After 14 years working in parishes, ten of them as pastor, I have chosen to move out of parish ministry. I have seen and shared in a lot of good in the parish ministry, but I have to ask myself whether this kind of Assembly, based on geographical divisions with each unit under the full legal control of one priest and one bishop, is the best way for us to “be Christ” in our times. Could the problem be that we have here a system which is outdated – even corrupt?

Our friend Andrew died of melanoma. After a time of struggle his body was no longer capable of housing his spirit, which then left it. Has our assembly reached a similar condition? Has dis-organisation reached such a pitch that a particular Assembly – or even the whole organism – can no longer house the Spirit of Jesus?

What may be the evidence that our Assembly itself may be like a body suffering from cancer?

Symptom One: For many centuries the clerical class has deprived the rest of the baptised of what is rightfully theirs. This has done much damage, but the worst result is that today about half of the worldwide Assembly of the Catholic Church is regularly deprived of the gift Jesus gave to all: the Eucharist celebrated by each local Assembly. Why is this? Because human rules forbid any to be ordained to preside at the Eucharist except highly educated, celibate males.

Symptom Two: For hundreds of years most regional Assemblies (dioceses) have been deprived of their right to appoint their own leader. During this century one local Assembly, Rome, has appropriated that right to itself. Recently there have been some notorious blunders in Rome’s appointments, but even when good men are appointed they are still not allowed the “collegiality”, the properly shared power, that Vatican II promised.

Symptom Three: When human beings struggle for justice the Spirit of Jesus is at work. “Blessed are you who hunger and thirst for justice (Matt. 5,6)”. Yet through the centuries our assembly has often acted against such people, fighting rearguard actions against the first expressions of modern science (the condemnation of Galileo) and against the first modern stirrings of democracy (those who struggled against aristocratic privilege during the French and Russian revolutions). Possessing much property itself, the Church has generally taken sides with the propertied classes in Latin America and in the Philippines. Not least, Rome’s attempt to ignore or suppress the wisdom of married couples who need a reliable means to limit family size, might yet prove to be one of the greatest injustices our Assembly has perpetrated.

Symptom Four: We have all been reduced to silence, forbidden even to debate the contemporary question as to

whether women can be ordained to lead in our Assembly. In some respects our Assembly has become totalitarian – in a way alien to the memory of Jesus.

The malaise is now so deeply entrenched that either we have stopped noticing it, or we do not have the courage to speak the truth about it. This is the way a family reacts when one of its members suffers from alcoholism; embarrassment makes them deny it to themselves and cover it up from others. I have met innumerable Catholics who would like to make these and many other criticisms, but who are afraid, or do not know how to begin, to speak out.

These words will upset some people. So did the words of Jesus in his own local Assembly (Luke 4,14-30). He declared that his mission was “to bring liberty to captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free”. When he challenged his listeners that God was not with their assembly, their admiration turned to hatred and they tried to kill him.

I write these words in the spirit of love for truth which moved Paul to criticise Peter, the first Head of the Christian Assembly (Gal 2,11). So how can we help to enable our ancient Christian Assembly survive? Here are a couple of practical suggestions:

- join a group of people who meet regularly to pray and discuss the Scriptures in the context of their lives
- join one of the large-scale movements for reform. An example would be the We Are Church movement (see Tui Motu Sept 1997).

As we sat together around Andrew’s coffin still bathed in golden light, suddenly the light went out. The sacristan, in his concern to make secure the building we were in, had failed to notice the gift being given to the little group of worshippers inside, and slammed the door shut through which the light entered. ■

Mary and Jubilee 2000

Legion of Mary members from all over the Waikato gathered for a mini-Congress before Christmas.

Rasika Fernando put together these ideas gleaned from the discussions



Members of the Asian praesidium of the Legion of Mary, present with one of the speakers, Msgr Bill Duggan, at the mini-Marian Congress in Morrinsville, last November

What is special about the Jubilee year 2000? Pope John Paul calls it a celebration of “praise and thanksgiving for the gift of the Incarnation and the Redemption”. We celebrate Christ’s birth each year at Christmas; this Jubilee is an occasion therefore of special grace. Mary’s role, for Catholics, is crucial. Throughout her life Mary portrayed humbleness and subjection to God’s will: “He looks on his servant in her lowliness” (Magnificat). The Pope has reiterated that “veneration of Mary, properly understood, does not take away from the dignity and efficacy of Christ, the one Mediator”.

Elizabeth asked Mary at the Visitation: “Why should I be honoured to be visited by the mother of my Lord? (Luke 1,43)”. Nearly 2000 years later we are still honoured by the visitation of the mother of Christ. Apart from apparitions at places such as Guadalupe, Fatima and Lourdes, there is an everyday role whereby Mary “visits” us through the example of her life. During the Congress discussions this role of Mary was evidenced in three principal ways:

- the Holy Spirit working through Mary. As spouse of the Holy Spirit Mary brings us close to God through her intercession. Jesus performed his

first miracle at Cana at her request. She walked alongside Christ to the cross of Calvary: her promise is to be present and walk with us on our journey. She is amongst us where prayer and thanksgiving are being offered, especially through the Mass and the rosary. If we are a stranger in a new town, Mary is there when there is “no room at the inn”.

The discussions called for Mary to be invoked in Christian families as a role model in the home. To welcome Christ, to live in simplicity like the family of Nazareth: these seeds of the presence of the Spirit can be sown in the hearts of the young through the faithful example of parents. In the wider world

*her promise is to
walk with us on our
journey*

it becomes necessary to bring the good news of Christ into homes via TV, radio and the Internet. This is desirable, but a practical way is in giving gifts and greeting cards for Christmas: is Mary present with Christ — or is God’s image displaced by a dazzling decoration or a creature from another world?

- Mary and the Cross of Christ. The faith of Mary was tested through a piercing sword (Luke 2, 34). The psalmist had proclaimed that God would make the Christ “a king as his ancestor David”, whose kingdom would never end. At the foot of the cross Mary is accepting her Son reigning in another sense. She took up the suffering upon herself, accepting God’s will and, even more, becoming the mother for all generations. Mary was present with the Apostles at the beginning of the Church on the day of Pentecost: she is ever present with us today waiting to bring us closer to God through the suffering of Calvary as through the joy of Bethlehem.

- Mary and faith expressed in service. Pope John Paul called Mother Teresa “an unforgettable witness to faith and love”, in seeing Christ in every person she met, embracing them and serving them. She was following the example of Mary in her humble service of motherhood. A Jubilee resolution for Christians might be to listen to the needs of others in the manner of Mary heeding the needs of Jesus. ■



Tairua Summer

God's Spirit hovered over the water
as the silk edge
of ocean
slides onto shore
over the wide sands of Tairua.

God said "Let there be light"
and there was light
so the children dance
across the burning beach
screaming like seagulls
into the sea.

Let the waters come together
into a single mass
mould the shape of the land
and the direction of the traveller's
tread.

Let the dry land appear
from the waters
and Mt Paku strains
skyward in the encircling tides

God said "Let the earth produce"
So the pine trees sigh in the wind
while the sharp manuka clings
to the clay
and the flax flowers
tighten into seed.
God made the greater light to

govern the day
umbrellas uplifted
along the belly of the bay
beacons of shade
on the burning dunes.

And the smaller light to govern the
night
the moon floats silver
and still
in the black mirrors of ocean.

God said "Fill the waters of the sea"
so the fishers fling their lines
to the flashing waters
and we scour the rocks
for shellfish.

"Let the birds multiply upon the
earth"
and the kingfisher streaks
into the sea
while seagulls fall
upon the remains
of a picnic.

God said "Let the earth produce
every kind of living creature"
even the family dog
who is prohibited on the beach
during daylight hours.
Male and female he created them.

Lovers lie lip to lip
and thigh to thigh
creating their own heat
while tempting the sun
to an excess of burn.

Be fruitful and multiply
between the flags parents
cry out in panic
as their children return
reckless to the ocean

And so it was
a family fans out
from the beach
leaving the sea to fill
the vacuum.

God saw all that was made
abandoned sandcastles
sink
in the summary waters
of high tide.

A solitary oyster catcher
eyes the end of summer
with a prey of his own
and it was very good

On the seventh day God rested.

Jenny Collins

A Theology of Forgiveness

Trish McBride

We know Christians are ‘supposed’ to forgive. It’s what we expect of ourselves and others who have been injured. As the hymn says: ‘It is in forgiving that we’re forgiven’. But is it really that simple?

For forgiveness to be necessary, there has to have been an injury, occurring within a context or relationship. Injuries cause distress from slight to severe; they can be isolated, repeated or constant; with effects that are brief to life-long. The degree of intentionality varies: was it accidental, or fully and consciously malicious? A stranger steps on your toe in a bus and apologises. Most would find forgiveness easy here. A child accidentally breaks a treasured vase. It saddens, but is unlikely to wreck the relationship. A drunk driver kills a teenage son. Now we are getting into the tough areas. A man finally talks about being sexually abused as a boy. Do we recommend prompt Christian forgiveness here? A husband beats his wife three or four times a week. Is she really supposed to forgive seventy times seven?

What is the outcome of forgiveness? How can we tell whether we’ve ‘done it’? There is a spectrum of possibilities. At one end, total restoration of the previous loving relationship, or indeed its strengthening. This is what we need

from our God, and it can happen between human beings. But there are many Christian people who, as well as carrying ongoing pain and trauma, have an extra load of guilt because, despite desperate attempts to do so, they are unable or unwilling to forgive in this way. It may be just too dangerous – physically, emotionally, mentally or spiritually. Perhaps what our gentle God asks of them is simply an eventual desire to not bear a grudge, rather than doing further violence to themselves by forcing reconciliation. This is forgiveness too!

I believe urgings to forgiveness have been misused by the church, unwittingly or otherwise, as a patriarchal tool to prevent social analysis and change. Until very recently women who mentioned domestic violence in the confessional were urged to ‘forgive and try harder’. Who gained? Certainly not the victims! ‘Forgiveness’ and returning to the relationship aborted any hope of justice, or even safety. It took the secular world to produce the healing ‘Good News’ of Women’s Refuges and

Rape Crisis Centres, and to highlight the reality of the cycle of violence and ‘reconciliations’. No wonder they list the Church amongst the ‘institutional supports for battering’!

Living in safety, and maintaining or regaining one’s dignity as a child of God are basic human rights. God did not urge the enslaved Hebrews to forgive the Egyptians – Moses was called to challenge oppression, to lead them out of Egypt to a land of freedom. Sadly, I have listened to many women in violent relationships who have not heard this Good News. They have only heard that turning the other cheek and forgiving seventy-times-seven are what God and the Church require of them. Yet it is ‘obvious’ to most that this cannot really be what God wants. How to resolve this conflict between scriptural injunctions and ‘normal’ common sense?

A key is found in the Kairos Document (1985), issued by a group of South African theologians in the apartheid era: “Biblical teaching on reconciliation and forgiveness makes it quite clear that nobody can be forgiven and reconciled with God unless he or she repents of their sins. Nor are we expected to forgive the unrepentant sinner... As disciples of Jesus we should... promote truth, justice and life at all costs, even at the cost of creating conflict and disunity..”. Repentance means redressing any power imbalance and demonstrating lived change, not simply apologies and promises. Only then, if at all, is restoration of relationship even a possibility.

Accountability, justice and prevention must be considered. New Zealanders were moved when the Tongan community forgave the Samoan driver who had killed one of their children. It was surely deeply healing to the young man. Nevertheless, he was still required to pay the official legal penalty.

A friend of mine, believing it was ‘the Christian thing to do’, many years ago ‘forgave’ the relative who sexually abused her young

son, on his assurance it would never happen again, and chose not to involve the police. When she occasionally met the perpetrator she gave him a family kiss, despite her revulsion at what he had done. She has since agonised over what seemed like her share of responsibility for this man later abusing several other children. Not for another 15 years did he have to face up to the justice system and prison. In rational terms, of course, she is not responsible. As his serial offending demonstrated, initial reporting may not have protected other children.

and abuse. Unfortunately many such people have been further damaged by well-meaning Christians urging forgiveness as the solution to problems experienced after an injury. These are then compounded by the victim's guilt at not being able to forgive; or by straining at premature forgiveness by denying damage and pain, and suppressing appropriate anger. This can produce a worse state than before. Often in church circles the expectation is voiced that victims of sexual abuse, including that perpetrated by clergy,

God's healing way. Our faith is built on remembering – "Do this in memory of me". We must remember tendencies to serial crimes and the crucifixions of war, of the Holocaust, to break patterns and experience authentic resurrections.

Desperately trying to forget is not a healthy option: we have to establish accountability, see justice done and work through our pain and anger before considering whether it is safe, possible or even desirable to resume or restore a relationship. The task may simply be learning to live without bitterness and vindictiveness – for these corrode the heart, mind and body. God wants us healed of damage inflicted on us by others. As part of that process, which may be long, we will surely be guided by the Spirit of Truth and Compassion to an eventual release of the perpetrator into God's hands, without doing further violence to ourselves.

Forgiveness, then, varies in its outcome, and is likely to be a process rather than an event. It is a delicate plant, to be gently nurtured, not forced. When and if conditions are right, it will flower in its right season! Until then, God's healing is to be found in being gentle with ourselves. ■



Her anger has finally surfaced, and is now directed not only at the abuser, but at the Church from which she had heard no alternative framework to deal with this sort of scenario. 'Forgiveness' and 'reconciliation' without justice, or where repeat offending is likely or possible, are simply counter-productive. They do not further the reign of justice and compassion!

Our Maker knows all about the intricacies of human-beingness. We are learning more. As research into trauma progresses, we are discovering more about what is genuinely healing to victims of injury

'should' eventually forgive their abusers. This community-imposed 'spiritual' agenda can however actually impede the healing.

It is imperative that the human processes involved in healing from trauma be acknowledged in Church teaching, for example in Sunday sermons. Simplistic teaching on the necessity for Christian forgiveness can mean people leave Mass more burdened than they came. In a recent homily: 'If they haven't forgotten, they haven't forgiven'!!! But it is neither possible nor appropriate to forget the traumas of our lives; to have further burdens laid on us for remembering ('and therefore not forgiving') is not

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The Fly

C Grant

Nothing troubled John. His success in life had come to him through his own unaided efforts and being a self-made man, he was proud of his success. He was critical of the 'drop-outs' in society and had no time at all for the so called 'dole bludgers'. He had been a war correspondent at one time in his career and as such had travelled the world. The things he had seen had inured his soul to human suffering and in order to retain his sanity, he had had to close his mind to the immense brutality of war.

That was all a long time ago now. This was different. A friend of his, a newspaper correspondent, had offered to take him to Africa to where he was being sent to report on one of the latest crop of refugee camps which had sprung up as a result of civil war in a remote part of the continent.

John was shocked by his own reaction to the impact of what he saw on that first day. He had been completely unprepared for the flies which settled on the filth all around and on people too devoid of energy to move. They crawled incessantly over the children lying inert in their mother's arms.

They were attracted by sores on emaciated bodies, they covered pale wasted faces, attacking scabs on cracked and encrusted lips; they clustered around eyes to which they were drawn by thick yellow pus exuding from under closed eyelids. When they attempted to settle on him, the guard on his feelings collapsed. He was disgusted and suddenly felt physically sick. He had to get away!

He remembered having seen documentaries in the past about refugee camps. He had hardly been touched by them. All they had done was to provoke the thought in his mind that 'something ought to be done about those people'!

All at once he became acutely aware of the eyes of the people, especially those of the children who seemed to be gazing at nothing and appeared to be beyond caring whether there was anything to see or not. Huge, dark, expressionless eyes in sunken sockets. They were the eyes of people cheated of every shred of human dignity and utterly devoid of hope. They bored through to his very soul. The need to get away suddenly became urgent. Their stay had been short but to

John it seemed to have lasted a lifetime. Tom had come to get a story, well, he had got it and now it was time to move out.

Some time after his return from Africa, John walked into a church hardly aware of where he was going. He had not entered one in years and was filled with an unexplained nostalgia. But as soon as he was confronted by the large wooden cross above the altar, the questions embedded in his soul for so long rose again to the surface of his mind. What did the carved figure represent? A martyr to an impossible cause or a god of ancient myth? Suddenly he was roused from his reverie, a fly had settled on his hand. He looked and saw more flies buzzing lazily around the cool interior of the church. His

gaze returned to the crucifix. There he saw only senseless human suffering and he had had enough of that!

He wondered if flies had settled upon the dying man represented by the carved figure?

Had they crawled over the bleeding broken skin of his immobilised body?

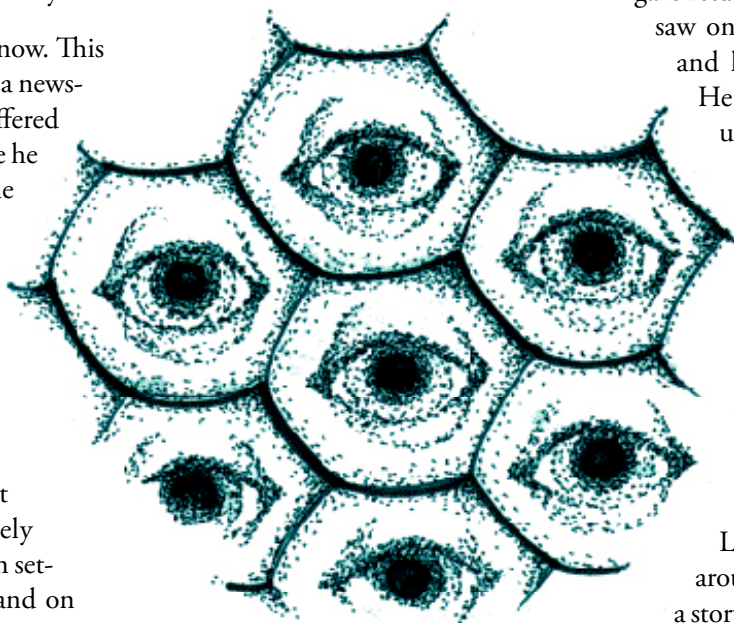
Gathered on his face, his mouth, his eyes?

Out of the blue he felt the return of the nausea that had overcome him in the refugee camp.

Later as he wandered restlessly around the town, he remembered a story planted in his mind when he was a child. Not the one that had told him that the Son of God had died for him; he had rejected that idea early in his

early teens. No, it was something about a command to love one's 'neighbour' which had been followed in his mind by a question. Slowly it came back to him. Who was he supposed to regard as his neighbour apart from the person who lived next door?! Damn the fly! The uncomfortable questions kept on coming and it dawned upon him just how much he had missed the point of all those early instructions which he had so casually dismissed as unrealistic.

As time went on he realised that something within himself was changing. No bright light, no voice from heaven. Just a fly that had settled on his hand! He sought out a priest soon after that and discovered that confession was called reconciliation these days. "Appropriate", he thought, in view of his sudden need to come to terms with himself. The fluency of his words surprised him as he offloaded the hardness that had built up within him over the years in the face of human suffering. When it was over he knew that he would never be the same again – God had caught up with him, simply because of a fly! ■



A Man Singing

Jenefer Haig



Nathanael Rosenzweig is moving in far regions of outer space. Freed from the limits of time, weight and distance, he lives in the eternal present and no part of the unending Universe is beyond his reach.

Long ago he was a Professor of Astrophysics at a Polish University: now, since he has passed from time to eternity, he can satisfy his curiosity about the origins of matter, as he beholds great spiralling galaxies, new worlds exploding into existence, old solar systems collapsing into black holes: quasars, black dwarfs, brown dwarfs, suns, moons, planets, comets – a celestial fireworks display of ever-changing marvels. Watching, he is beginning to understand the dynamics and chemistry of the very process of creation.

His earthly life ended sadly: he was removed from his post at the University and sent to the Warsaw Ghetto, when the Nazis invaded Poland. From there he was herded into a cattle-truck with hundreds of his fellow Jews, and transported to the death-camp at Auschwitz, where because he refused to fight for his share of the miserable food ration. He died of disease and starvation before his turn came for the gas chamber. He still remains himself, Nathanael Rosenzweig, and can remember his former life though some of it he prefers to forget.

As he contemplates a huge upwelling of matter, waiting to see how it will evolve, a tiny speck, that seems to be moving, catches his eye. “Whatever is that?” he wonders as it appears to be approaching

him and eventually, for it moves slowly and with difficulty, comes near enough for him to recognise it as a human being – of sorts. Something about it repels him and he would like to put a few hundred years’ distance between himself and whatever it is, but he senses that it is painfully trying to reach him so he stays where he is. Now the figure is near enough for him to see that it is a small man wearing the rags of some kind of military uniform: there are a few shreds of silk medal ribbons on his chest; from one of them dangles the rusted remains of an Iron Cross. His feet stick out through the split and worn leather of what must have been jackboots, now tied on with strips torn from his shirt, making him look quite grotesque. He smells revolting, too. Well, where can you find a bowl of water to wash with, in Outer Space?

The apparition is now near enough to speak to him: “Are you Nathanael Rosenzweig” it croaks feebly.

He is surprised to hear himself called by name. “Yes, I am. Who are you?”

There is a long pause. At last the reply comes in a whisper: “Adolf Hitler”.

Stirred by unpleasant memories, Nathanael longs to escape from this repulsive creature, but when he looks into his eyes he sees the weariness of a man who has suffered six million deaths, and he cannot bring himself to leave him.

Adolf falls on his knees before him. “Please” he begs, “please, Nathanael, don’t go away. I can’t enter eternity until

every Jew who died by my orders has forgiven me. I’ve asked every one of them, and they all have, but I could never find you; you were always so far away.”

“You mean they’ve all forgiven you – all six million of them?”

“Yes – in the end – they did. You are the last one.” He began to sob, “I’ve been looking for you for thousands of years.”

Nathanael bends down and gathers the smelly little wretch into his arms. “I forgive you, brother.”

At once the little man changes; the rags and the smell disappear and he becomes weightless, timeless, free and beautiful. The scent of flowers surrounds them and the weary eyes begin to shine. The two blessed immortals, as they now are, smile at each other: there is no need for words. They stay thus for a moment – or a year, or an age – it matters not; then the other is gone and Nathanael resumes his travels. As he moves, he seems to hear the voice of a man singing: he turns to see who it is and finds that it is himself. ■

I’m Sorry (Matt. 8:3)

*Jesus touched him –
and he was healed.*

*Tender touch –
disarms tears
heals brokenness
seals love.*

*Restores
affirms
consoles
soothes.*

*A silent covenant of our humanness,
the touch of warm hands
anoints,
FORGIVES.*

Allan Devlin

A way out for street kids in Brazil

Renata is 14. It is Saturday afternoon and with two other young women of her age she is conducting a session on personal hygiene for 22 youngsters aged 11 to 19. Renata and her friends are AMIS (Adolescent Multipliers of Information), trained for the task by the House of Passage, a Christian World Service partner in the north-eastern city of Recife, Brazil.

CWS Projects Secretary Elizabeth Mackie observed the group in the barrio (suburb) of Coqueiral and was deeply impressed. "There is much international publicity about the street children in Brazil, the reality of their plight and the difficulties they face," she says. "While the killings and the abuse of the children on the streets go on, increasing numbers of programmes seek to deal with the problems, but the House of Passage preventative work is quite brilliant."

Coqueiral is typical of Brazilian slums, where large numbers of people are crammed into a small area, with minimal facilities. The people subsist by petty trading or setting up roadside food stalls. Violence is a normal way of life: six people had been shot in the week before Elizabeth's visit.

The AMIS session is one of 11 such programmes with eight more planned. The AMIS, with backup from older women educators, encourage the participants to form their own groups and establish a group identity. The girls attend two classes a week for eight months, actively participate in lessons and discuss the future plans and activities of the group. Thus the House of Passage achieves its aim of moving into areas where the consequences of poverty, overcrowding and violence mean young girls risk ending up on the streets. But with good information,

peer support, adult points of reference and access to services they would not normally know about, the girls' first choice will not be the street. The groups help them sort out their problems and shape their own lives.

The House of Passage's main activities are concentrated on two centres, one of which is a day-care house for girls who come straight from the streets or from violent homes. It provides a sheltered, loving, structured environment and a range of health programmes and general education. Its purpose is to encourage

the youngsters to see they have other options in life.

The second centre provides for those who have already made decisions about changes in their lives. They receive training in hairdressing, computing, catering, commercial sewing, crafts etc, and are assisted in finding employment. A third House of Passage centre takes care of the administration and the training of women to become educators of the teenagers. There is also a small safe house.

Christian World Service

I have a nice house!

Reina is a baker in the small town of Tipitupu, in Nicaragua. She used to make and sell bread from one bag of flour a week. With a loan of 2000 cordobas (NZ\$320) she developed her business and was then able to improve her house. Instead of mud, tin and cardboard she now has a house with a concrete floor. "It's not a palace," she says, "but it's a nice house."

Two years ago she took out a second loan, which was due for repayment in 1998, but she has already paid it off last year. The loan enabled her to buy a van so as to distribute more bread. Now she has a third loan for a second van.

Her husband, seeing how well she was doing, left his job driving a taxi and signed on with her. She now employs ten people and uses 40 bags of flour a week. "I have been able to send my four children to school," Reina says. "One is even doing

computer studies — and I have a nice house!"

The small loans scheme, called Prestanic, started through the solidarity of some US citizens who disliked what their government was doing to Nicaragua. They set up an ethical investment trust for people to invest in the development of Nicaragua, and over the years the fund has grown to US\$5 million. The only criterion for loans is that they go to people who would not get loan funding from banks. The repayment schedules are based on the nature of the activity and the rate at which it will return a profit to the operator. Overall the program currently holds 985 loans, benefiting 13,000 people. It is also a good example of partnership between the Christian World Service of New Zealand and the Council of Evangelical Churches in Nicaragua. (CWS)

Blessed are you poor...

Woe to you rich...

Michael Campbell-Johnston is a Jesuit who is director of the Jesuit development service in El Salvador. This article is taken from an address he gave last year in London

Is there any solution for the continuing injustices at national and international level: for the ever-widening gap between poor and wealthy, both within countries and between them? More than a billion people live below the poverty line; 34,000 children die daily from malnutrition in a world that could easily feed many more than its current population with existing resources; a fifth of the world's inhabitants receive four fifths of total world income while three fifths receive less than 6 per cent; by the end of this century a third of Latin Americans (that is, 170 million people) will live in poverty and another third in what the experts describe as chronic poverty or misery. It is scandalous that the fortunes of the world's 358 wealthiest people are equivalent to the combined revenues of countries accounting for 45 per cent of the world's population and where 1,300 million human beings are living without the basic necessities of life. Planet earth, rent asunder by such divisions, is heading for shipwreck.

And in guise of a solution, since the collapse of Communism a new spectre is haunting not just Europe, but the entire world: the spectre of unrestricted economic growth accompanied by the neo-liberal mechanisms needed to generate it – globalisation, privatisation, deregulation. In its name, the Group of Seven and the international financial institutions they control impose harsh structural adjustment programmes on debt-ridden and defenceless nations which have no option but to accept.

The results are predictable: the dehumanising of people, of workers, of the marginalised; the cutting back of essential social services, especially in health and education; the preferring of safety nets to comprehensive programmes; the submission of morality to the dictates of the market; the promotion of individualism, consumerism and structural unemployment. It is argued that in the long run the lot of the people will improve. But, as Lord Keynes once pointed out, in the long run we are all dead.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that at the 1990 meeting of Latin American bishops in Santo Domingo, Pope John Paul described these structures as “perverse”. He has returned to this theme several times since.

In my part of the world (El Salvador) the United States is planning to build a wall along the Mexican frontier to keep out the poor from Latin America. One is reminded of what Bishop Hunthausen of Seattle said some years ago about nuclear arms: “We have to begin by rec-

ognising that our country's overwhelming array of nuclear arms has a very precise purpose: it is meant to protect our wealth. The United States is not illogical in amassing the most destructive weapons in history. We need them. We are the richest people in history”. The arguments often advanced in “Fortress Europe” about curbing the rights of immigrants are not all that different, even though they may be couched in more diplomatic terms.

Last year, the 18 Jesuit provincials of Latin America and the Caribbean wrote a joint letter on neo-liberalism in Latin America. They make it quite clear that a system which excludes the majority of its citizens from its benefits must be considered immoral and contrary to a Christian concept of society. It must consequently be rejected by Christians who should work for its replacement.

What alternatives?

But what alternatives are there? Funding agencies such as CAFOD, Christian Aid and OXFAM are working hard and with great commitment to help Third World non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to bring a modicum of prosperity or development to poor and oppressed communities around the globe. On the whole, both NGOs and funding agencies do a good job, ensuring that the money goes where it is most needed and is spent cost-effectively in an attempt to promote sustainable self-development. But all the funding added together is a mere drop *in the ocean when compared with the massive amounts being plundered from*



the Third World in a deliberate and systematic manner through unjust market structures, international financial institutions or multinational corporations.

The so-called aid of First World countries to those in the Third World is one of the major myths of our time, a lie presented in a hundred ways to disguise the truth of what is really happening;

The Latin American provincials speak of a change of heart, of different values, habits and attitudes, well aware that this is a high price to pay. Ignacio Ellacuria, assassinated eight years ago while rector of our Jesuit university in El Salvador, used to speak of a “civilisation of poverty”. He argued for some sort of leveling-down process, since the planet does not have sufficient resources for everyone to live like Europeans or North Americans. As Gandhi said

message is no more popular now than it was when Jesus first preached it. It runs counter to a world beguiled by self-centred human fulfilment, extravagance and soft living, a world that prizes prestige, power and self-sufficiency. In such a world, to preach Christ poor and humble, who came to serve and not to be served, is to invite scorn, persecution and even death. Yet it was precisely through his powerlessness and poverty that Christ saved the world.



Survival of the fittest as everything goes – including politeness and the awareness of over-consumption

namely, that the aid is flowing in the opposite direction; that wealthy nations are continuing to live off the backs of the poor and exploit them with impunity. The massive net transfer of resources from the poorer countries to the wealthy, whether through debt repayments or the inequalities of global trade, is surely the single greatest scandal of our age.

One sometimes wonders if the aid-giving agencies and NGOs are anything more than a sop to the conscience of hard-bitten governments or corrupt elites whose sole concern is to milk the cow to the last drop. The wealthy and powerful in both worlds seem to be saying: yes, we want justice and a better life for the poor, provided that present power structures don't change and our own living standards are not threatened. Something much more radical is required if things are to improve.

when asked if a newly independent India would now attain British standards of living: “It took Britain half the resources of this planet to achieve its prosperity. How many planets do you think a country like India will require?” If a society based on abundance and consumerism cannot be universalised, it must be considered a false solution, a moral aberration that makes the overall situation progressively worse.

But could one seriously envisage any politician advocating a lower standard of living for his or her constituents and then being elected by them? Yet one of the central themes of the Gospel is the danger of riches. However much learned exegetes may try to squeeze the camel through the eye of the needle, Christ is uncompromising on this point. Wealth is seen as an obstacle both to the free development of the individual and to the building of the kingdom. This

A call to conversion

Even if we reject this message on religious grounds, external circumstances may well force us to accept its truth. Eduardo Frei, when President of Chile, once said: “We must help the poor in order to save the rich”. Perhaps self-interest or indeed self-preservation may turn out to be stronger incentives, though even these are still rejected by those who should know better. How typical that at a G7 summit meeting, President Clinton had the effrontery to present the American economy as a model for imitation while, at the same time, along with Canada and Japan, resisting calls to limit carbon dioxide emissions by a mere 15 per cent before the year 2010. But whatever our motivation, the crucified peoples of Latin America and the Third World in general are calling us to a conversion whose first step is to look at our world through their eyes and begin to understand it in a different way.

Is it too late? Some analysts argue that we have already lost control. Half of the 100 largest economies in the world are not countries but transnational corporations under the control of no one but themselves. Try to pin them down in one place and, like jellyfish they will ooze into another in the relentless search for maximum profits. There doesn't seem to be any alternative but to try and face it before it really is too late. I believe we must start looking for salvation not from the wealthy and powerful nations of the North, but from the weak and impoverished peoples of the South.

Mary, Herald of the Word of God



*On March 25 we
celebrate the feast of the
Annunciation. In this
reflection Helen Bergin,
OP makes a connection
between Mary's YES at
the Annunciation and her
presence at Pentecost. The
Word of God which comes
in private is for public
proclamation – by her and
by us*

Many of us will be used to visualising the feast of Pentecost in images of fire, wind and tongues. How many of us, though, are used to considering Pentecost as the completion and fulfilment of the feast of the Annunciation? At both events, recorded in Luke's writings, Mary is present. I would like to reflect upon her role in each of them. Let us begin by suggesting that from the moment Mary says "Yes!" at the Annunciation until the Christian community is overflowed with the Spirit at Pentecost, a new age is beginning. In scriptural terms, we call this the 'Messianic era'. I wish to highlight four aspects of similarity between these two events.

First, in the Annunciation and at Pentecost we are witnesses to the powerful Presence of God. In each case, in some unexpected way, God offers Godself to human beings and comes extraordinarily close to us. At the Annunciation, Mary who is suddenly addressed by an angel, is invited to rejoice because "God is with her!" At Pentecost, there is a sudden sound of violent wind, and God's presence is suggested as tongues of fire come to rest on the heads of eleven apostles, a number of women, some relatives of Jesus, and on Mary, his Mother. Both the Annunciation and Pentecost depict God's coming into the heart of a particular event in some way that is unusual, yet which is received by those present in audible or visible forms.

Second, both events manifest God overshadowing the people. Mary is told by Gabriel not only that the Holy Spirit would come upon her but that the Power of the Most High would cover

her with its shadow. This shadow may be likened to the special cloud (shekinah) from the First Testament where God covers the people with divine presence and protection. Mary's ancestors, especially the lowly people of Israel, were said to have hoped that God's previous moments of tangible presence to them might one day be revealed once and for all as ultimate Presence through one of their own people. That privilege was now being offered to Mary.

We learn at Pentecost that the wind filled the entire house so that each person was affected. Later in that same story Peter reminds the small group, and those outside the house, that it had been prophesied that when the new era came God's Spirit would be poured out on all people – women and men, slaves and free. In fact, the Spirit was liberally given to all at Pentecost. Both events testify to the special overshadowing action of God in these particular situations.

Third, participants on both occasions experience empowerment. Mary is invited to bear a son, the son of the Most High – God’s Son. Through God’s assistance she accepts. The disciples at Pentecost, receiving the Holy Spirit, are gifted with special languages to communicate the Good News to everyone. On hearing the disciples’ message, it is said that 3,000 others (also empowered by the Holy Spirit to hear in their own language) turned to God and were baptised.

Fourth, both the Annunciation and Pentecost teach us about discipleship. In each event people are asked to respond to an invitation which is initially very difficult. Mary is disturbed by the angel’s address. She searches for the meaning and even the feasibility of the angel’s invitation that she is to bear the Son of God. At Pentecost, the people witnessing to the disciples’ speaking in tongues are bewildered, amazed and perplexed. Like Mary, these people inquire about the meaning of what they are witnessing and experiencing. On hearing Peter’s account about Jesus the Nazarene, they ask what they must do and how they might respond. One aspect of discipleship is that it is a gift and a continuing invitation to respond with some sort of action to a God whose voice is not immediately or always clear.

An interesting corollary to this element of discipleship is that at the Annunciation it is God, through the angel, who is calling Mary not only to be Mother, but also to undertake a special role as disciple. Throughout Jesus’ public life, Mary is seen to learn about discipleship in relation to her own personal following of Jesus. At first, mothering her Son into life was central; later, she learns that it is He who is the Life, and she becomes his disciple in service to the Word of God and to the Reign of God that he preaches. At Pentecost, it is the Spirit who urges the crowd to respond as disciples of Jesus.

From the Annunciation to Pentecost, discipleship has become more particularly linked with Jesus, the one whom

Mary bears and for whom she then stands aside.

What are we to make of these two events when we reflect on Mary of Nazareth today? At the Annunciation, Mary opens up for humankind and for the world of all times the depth of God’s love. In attending to the word of the angel and in mulling over the consequences of what she hears, Mary says “Yes!” and enables the greatest of all words, God’s Word, to be released into our midst. The Word is spoken into the world as a defenceless and wordless child (St Augustine).

In person and in speech Mary brings forth God’s Word

In this event, is not Mary exemplar of the prophet? In person and in speech, she is the one called to bring forth God’s Word. In Luke’s picture of the Annunciation, this extraordinary event seemingly takes place with Mary encountered alone by an angel – and yet, she speaks and acts on behalf of all her people. Such a powerful, if apparently solitary and intimate event has universal implications.

When we look to Pentecost, we learn that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was together with the community, praying. In this later event, Luke records nothing that Mary speaks. No doubt she, like others in the gathered group, receives the power of the Spirit. However, on this occasion Mary is not central. The Word is taken up by Peter and others who communicate it as the life-giving message about Jesus’ life, death and resurrection.

On the completion of Jesus’ earthly life, the Holy Spirit is being newly offered as a fulfilment of Jesus’ promise to his friends. The Spirit once again enables God’s Word to be heard by its recipients in a transforming way. Things start hap-

pening once the Word is really heard. Mary was the first to hear, accept and enfold the Word at the Annunciation. At Pentecost she is present as faithful witness to the continuing and universal expression of that Word. This event signals the movement out from the apparently private world of the angel’s Annunciation to Mary to the public world of Jerusalem with its multi-ethnic and multi-religious inhabitants. Pentecost reveals the dispersion of the Word by means of a community which has Mary in its midst. Though the principal human agent at the Annunciation, Mary, at Pentecost, recognises the agency being taken over by many others. Perhaps her presence now is as encourager, animator and witness to the fruitfulness of the Spirit’s having acted in the past, doing so now in the present, and, in hope, for all ages to come.

If Pentecost is indeed linked to the Annunciation then Pentecost reminds us of the significance of each person’s response to God. Which one of us has never marvelled at the turns our lives have taken because of some decision for God made at an earlier moment in our life, or in the lives of family members gone before us? Mary’s initial decision to embody the Word on behalf of humanity led ultimately to the preaching everywhere of the Word-made-flesh after the life, death and resurrection of this Word, Jesus.

The climax of her response is seen when at Pentecost the influence of this Word-made-flesh is seen to pass beyond the confines of the Jewish people. Her “Yes!” becomes universal and links her with God’s universal saving will. Perhaps Mary’s role at Pentecost can be likened to that of ‘keeper of the Word’ – a woman gratefully recalling her intimate participation in the Spirit’s creative work on behalf of the Word some years earlier; and now, at Pentecost, gratefully and joyfully witnessing to the breaking forth of that Word in new and explosively different ways. ■

Who Killed This Man?

Anti-Semitism and the Christian Story

“Let us pray for the perfidious Jews” — only a few years ago that was the way Christians prayed. Methodist scholar Terry Wall traces the history of anti-Semitism right back to the time of the Apostles — and asks some challenging questions about attitudes and ideas today



What is anti-Semitism? According to Hyam Maccoby (Church Times, 1992) it means simply Jew-hatred. Anti-Semitism is not just a form of racism, because modern Jews are of very mixed blood. “Jews”, says Maccoby, “are a people with a common history and religion: this is what unites them: not any claim to pure racial descent”. A Christian writer, Edward Flannery, observes: “The distinguishing mark of anti-Semitism is a hatred or contempt and a stereotyping of the Jewish people as such”.

Anti-Semitism has a very long history within Christianity. No sooner had Christianity been officially established in the Roman Empire by Constantine

via the Edict of Milan (C.E. 312) than a reversal started to occur with the persecuted becoming the persecutors. Often it was the Jewish people, then widespread throughout the Empire, who became victims.

In the year 388 a Christian mob led by their bishop burnt down a synagogue in Mesopotamia. The Emperor Theodosius intervened insisting that the synagogue be rebuilt and the bishop brought to justice. St Ambrose, then bishop of Milan, protested that the power of the Empire should be used to serve the progress of the Christian faith, and he threatened the Emperor with excommunication if he did not retract the decree protecting synagogues. A synagogue, said Am-

brose, was “a home of unbelief, a house of impiety, a receptacle of folly”.

Within the writings of the Fathers grew up a phraseology of contempt. Jews were denounced as “a wicked sect”, an “abominable people”. At the heart of this attitude was the sinister accusation against the whole Jewish race of deicide. They had refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah and put him to death on the Cross. Anti-Jewish rhetoric was more severe in the East. St John Chrysostom (349-407) bade his people to have nothing to do with Jews, who were a degenerate people because of their “odious assassination of Christ”.

During the Dark Ages the Jews in Europe were quite well treated — until the preaching of the First Crusade in 1096 which launched an unprecedented pogrom against them, especially in Germany and France. Jewish communities were attacked by the Crusaders, and men, women and children were butchered if they refused to be baptised. It is recorded, however, that many bishops defended the Jews and often hid them against the Crusaders. It is thought that more than 10,000 Jews were massacred.

This was the beginning of an intermittent persecution. Jews were accused of being the embodiment of the Devil and Antichrist. They were expelled from some German states as early as 1012, from Paris in 1182, from England in 1290 and from Spain in 1492.

As a young man Luther attacked the Catholic Church for dealing with Jews as if they were more like dogs than human beings. But his attitude soon changed when he saw that no Jews were attracted to conversion. He la-

belled Judaism as a religion of the Law in direct conflict with the religion of Grace established by St Paul. Luther's attitude in fact served to reinforce a deep-rooted prejudice against Jews in many European peoples.

Much of this came from the fact that Jews were practically the only non-Christian minority which persisted in Europe; but there was also the "Shylock" image arising from the fact that whereas the Church forbade usury, Jews did not believe that their faith prohibited them from lending money with interest. So they became prominent in the banking and financial professions.

However, there can be no doubt that underlying Christian persecution of the Jews throughout the centuries was the accusation that it was the Jewish race who had put Jesus to death. Rosemary Radford Ruether describes anti-Semitism as "the left-hand of Christianity" (Faith and Fratricide 1974). If we affirm salvation through Christ, then we find ourselves denying salvation through Judaism. It is a principle of 'either-or'. She writes: "Possibly anti-Judaism is too deeply embedded in the foundations of Christianity to be rooted out entirely without destroying the whole structure".

The Holocaust

Hitler carried out a systematic policy of eugenics and euthanasia on people who did not measure up to his ideal of Aryan racial purity. This led inexorably to anti-Jewish pogroms such as the Kristallnacht, to Buchenwald and Auschwitz. Six million Jews were exterminated in the death camps, including one and a half million children under the age of 13. It is recorded that 80 percent of Jewish scholars, rabbis and full time teachers of the Torah alive in 1939 lost their lives as part of the so-called 'Final Solution'. These are cold statistics. But the story of Anne Frank has helped succeeding generations to get inside the mind of an innocent Jewish victim, to see the slaughter as the murder of one individual human being — but repeated six million times.



How responsible were Christians for this unimaginable crime against the Jewish people? Hitler's philosophy of racial purity has its own ruthless logic — but it is profoundly pagan. Nevertheless the slaughter was condoned by thousands of people who had been conditioned by centuries of prejudice. "When asked by two bishops what he was going to do about the Jews, Adolf Hitler replied that he would do to them exactly what the Christian Church had been advocating and practising for almost two thousand years" (Long Night's Journey into Day by A.L. and A.R. Eckhardt). Another writer, Harry James Hargis points out: "Adolf Hitler, a baptised Catholic, who was never excommunicated by the Church, implemented a policy of total destruction because, and only because, he was able to: only because people willingly co-operated in individual and mass murder... Who were the Christian clergy who spread dishonest theology about the Jews or kept silent while aware of the atrocities?" (His Shadow of Auschwitz).

And McAfee Brown comments sagely: "If Jesus had been in Auschwitz, he would not have been found among the Christians; he would have been among the Jews who were the victims... And this, not because of a free decision to align himself with the victims. Simply because he himself was a Jew" (Messenger to All Humanity).

"Before the war I avoided everyone who came from the other side, from Christianity. Priests frightened me. I dreaded all contact with them. I feared being kidnapped by them and baptised by force. I had heard so many rumours...

At school I sat with Christian boys of my age, but we didn't speak to one another. We had nothing in common. I knew them to be capable of anything: of beating me, of humiliating me... seizing my skullcap without which I felt naked. My dream back then? To live in a world completely Jewish, a world where Christians would have scarcely any access. Awakening in the ghetto, I discovered in myself a feeling of exaltation. I didn't know it was only a step, the first, towards a small railway station somewhere in Poland called Auschwitz"

Elie Weisel: Recalling Swallowed-up Worlds.

How Can the Christian Church Respond?

◆ First: in patience and humility the Christian Church must engage its own history and listen to the experience of Jews suffered at the hands of Christians. It must reconsider its understanding of Judaism.

◆ Second: it must purify its liturgies, especially during Holy Week. The Canadian Catholic theologian Dom Gregory Baum states that the Holocaust has revealed to Christianity the “dark power of its own symbols”. The Christian community produced an ideology that made Jews look faithless, inferior, set apart, with no honoured place in Christian lands.

◆ Third: Christians have a profound lesson to learn even from the very sufferings of the Jews in the Holocaust. In Auschwitz it is recorded that because of the evil that surrounded ‘God’s People’, rabbis put God on trial for not keeping the divine side of the Covenant, and found God guilty. And then these rabbis called the people to devout prayer. This tradition of asking questions of God when disaster strikes, when life seems unjust, is a tradition of Judaism that we see in the Book of Job especially.

Darrell Fasching sees the great weakness of Christianity in Germany, and in Europe generally just before the Holocaust, was that it limped along on this one

leg, of trust and obedience, and it never encouraged the faithful to question or protest. It is critical to the renewal of Christianity to regain the prophetic heritage of the Jewish Scriptures so that it can expose the idolatrous and the demonic. Can, he asks, Christianity return to its Jewish roots to relearn the meaning of faith and chutzpah, which he translates as “holy audacity”? (From Narrative Theology after Auschwitz).

After the Holocaust the world — of Christians as of Jews — can never be the same again. ■

Footnote *This article is a summary from a much longer piece entitled **Anti-Semitism in Christian History** by Terry Wall, in the **Methodist Theological Review** January 1997.*

Lynne and Terry Wall live in Takapuna and look after the Methodist church and community. Beyond their parish duties they have a common interest in Jewish-Christian relations and especially the causes of Anti-Semitism — and what Christians can do about it.

Lynne has a Doctorate in biblical studies. Terry came into the ministry after a career as a secondary teacher. His special interest is in Church History, and his commitment to the problem of anti-Semitism arose through the influence of John Pawlikowski, a Catholic scholar, whom Terry met while studying at CTU in Chicago.

Lynne and Terry see the origins of anti-Semitism within the Christian tradition as going right back to the very beginnings. The rupture between the Christian and Jewish communities is to be discerned not only in Acts but also in the gospels of John and Matthew. Phrases like “His blood be upon us and upon our children”, the identifying of Pharisaism with hypocrisy: these strands in the gospel tradition appear to consecrate an attitude of disdain and condemnation against Judaism.

Terry thinks it is essential to see Christianity less as the daughter of Judaism, rather as her twin sister. The first con-

flicts were a sort of sibling rivalry, but the rhetoric of early family feuding was taken out of context and later became pernicious. The debate of church versus synagogue was written into the gospel texts themselves as if Jesus himself had said and done these things.

An interpretation of history grew up that all that was good in pre-Christian Judaism was absorbed into Christianity. The Church became the New Israel. The Jew became an outsider in the Christian world, held in contempt. Sometimes Jews were faced with the choice of forcible baptism or being driven out of their homeland.

The seeds of the Holocaust were sewn in the long tradition of persecution of Jews at the hands of Christians. Indeed the Holocaust itself has been a salutary lesson of exactly how evil human beings can be. It is a happening of our own “enlightened” century.

Lynne and Terry see this sad history as a challenge for Christians to put their own house in order. Liturgically it is essential that everything which denigrates Jews as a people or portrays Judaism in a negative light must be eliminated. But it is in our theological thinking that the real revolution needs to happen. For instance, the Covenant which God made

with the Jewish people has not been revoked. We have to acknowledge that Judaism itself is salvific and continues to be. The prophets and the Deuteronomist constantly reminded the People to accept the “stranger in your midst”. The Jews themselves within the tradition of their sacred writings were constantly being called back to a wider view.

The Christian caricature of “the Law” has been to see it as a straightjacket, identifying fidelity to its precepts as a form of narrow legalism. But the Jews see it quite differently and this is something we Christians need to learn. To a devout Jew the Law is a way of life. The Torah is God’s gracious way, and therefore to cherish and observe its precepts becomes a delight. One of the aspects which will need to be thought through afresh is the contrast drawn first by Paul, between Law and Grace.

The First Testament is our common heritage. Many Christians have neglected its wisdom to their cost. In particular we may have missed out on so many aspects of God, of the prophetic tradition and of the reverence for the Torah which we can share with our Jewish cousins. ■

French Catholics Formally Apologise

On 30 September 1997, at a ceremony on the site of the Drancy deportation camp near Paris, high-ranking Catholic churchmen made a public apology for the French Church's attitude towards Jews during the last war.

The symbolic force of clasped Christian and Jewish hands recalled other great acts of reconciliation – Chancellor Willy Brandt kneeling in front of the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial in 1970, President Francois Mitterrand and Chancellor Helmut Kohl standing silently side by side at Verdun cemetery in 1984, and President Jacques Chirac admitting,



"The Torah is God's gracious way.."

on July 16, 1995, France's "collective offence" in organising the rounding up of Jews at the Vel d'Hiv stadium exactly 53 years earlier.

Much had already been done to bring Jews and Christians together before the ceremony. But on this occasion the French Catholic hierarchy made a clean breast of what happened in the past and publicly repented.

German, Polish and French bishops have now acknowledged their wrongs. This only makes the silence of the Vatican all the more deafening – and paradoxical. In the presence of Jewish leaders at Castelgandolfo, in Italy, in September 1987, the Pope promised he would draw up a statement on the Church's responsibility for anti-Semitism and the Holocaust. Ten years on, he has still not

put his name, on behalf of the Church as a whole, to a document similar to those signed by French, German and Polish bishops.

Until his 1987 pledge, the Pope's initiatives had both amazed and irked the Jewish community. They included the canonisation in 1981 of Father Maximilian Kolbe, a notoriously anti-Semitic Pole who died in Auschwitz, and the beatification in 1987 of another Auschwitz victim, the German philosopher Edith Stein, a Jew who became a Carmelite nun.

The Pope, who talks of a "new evangelisation", is suspected of wishing to "Christianise" places of great Jewish suffering, and of interpreting the holocaust as the fulfilment of the mystery of Christ's crucifixion and resurrection. Amazingly, when visiting Auschwitz in June 1979, he described it as "the Calvary of the contemporary world".

There is now little point in raking up old grievances. No Pope has done as much as John Paul to reform the Catholic Church's teaching on Judaism. In 1986, he was the first Pope to visit Rome's main synagogue and express his "horror" at "the hatred, persecutions and manifestations of anti-Semitism that have occurred, no matter what the period or who was responsible".

He told the Jews: "You are our favour-

ite brothers and, in a sense, our elder brothers." He went to see Jewish communities in every country he visited, knelt before the Hebrew-inscribed memorial at Birkenau, and became, in December 1993, the first Pope officially to recognise the state of Israel.

And yet there remain lingering doubts about the Vatican's ability to take its self-criticism to its logical conclusion. The entire history of the Jewish people is one of acceptance and rejection. French Jews have not forgotten that only a century after being described by the Convention as "citizens like other people", they became embroiled in the Dreyfus affair, which itself was followed – less than 50 years later – by the Vichy regime's exclusion of the Jews.

The latest rapprochement between Jews and Catholics is significant. Surprisingly, most of the social and intellectual moves to that end since 1945 have come from the grassroots rather than, as in this case, from the Catholic hierarchy.

No doubt the Pope's desire to pay his debt to the Jews is sincere. But he knows his Church is by no means ready to accept such a step unanimously. Reform has failed to reach everywhere. This is true of Poland, for example, and the middle East, where Christians dread any gesture by the Vatican that might look like a concession to Israel.

The Vatican's current silence is ascribed by some to the impossibility of "objectifying the unobjectifiable". Might it not then be better to keep quiet rather than expatiate on the sufferings of others? Such a view is bound to be trotted out again in the wake of the Drancy ceremony. But talking about the past will never be in vain, because there will always be revisionists and future generations tempted to forget. ■



Living in Mystery
 By Ruth Burrows
 Sheed & Ward Ltd
 Price: \$25

Review: Elisabeth Nicholson

This is the first new book from Ruth Burrows for several years and I approached it with some apprehension, having loved her earlier books but finding others too heavy, too depressing (though the fault was probably mine). At the beginning of *Living in Mystery* she explains this gap in her writing: "The longer I live the more I experience that God is Absolute Mystery, and as I grow in perception of this, I perceive also the sheer simplicity and unity of life. There is thus an increasing sense of 'unknowing'.... However, this sense of 'unknowing' annulled any desire to write, for what was there to say? Recently, it dawned on me that this very insight is important and needs to be communicated..." This, and her total belief in Jesus as the revelation of God's love.

her life, from a sensitive, fearful child, bewildered by the mystery of life and of herself, through years of adult life made difficult by her own acute sensitivities, struggling with fear and pain to accept reality, to "the old woman I now am" who can say with Karl Rahner "the incomprehensibility of God is the definitive blessing" yet "Through Jesus I know that the Holy Mystery is not something but someone... I believe it is the Christian vocation, through its faith in Jesus, not merely to cut deeply through life's waters but to abandon ship, so to speak, and surrender fully to mystery".

To live in that Mystery is not an easy option; it entails letting go of our cherished notions of God, of being naked before the Mystery, aware that nothing we can do can earn God's love. We are powerless, relying on nothing but Jesus and his revelation of the Father, and that is not a comfortable state. "Human goodness is a consequence not a cause of the holy Mystery's self-gift to us", says Burrows. Of course what

we do matters, matters profoundly; "As Christians we must face up to our responsibility for the whole" but so often our good deeds are done for very mixed motives, to propitiate God, to bolster our own ego. "How unhappy we feel, how fearful, when we cannot see ourselves as good, when our supposed virtue crumbles, when our profound weakness is laid bare!"

Trust, even a little trust, is the one thing necessary. The parables of Jesus reveal this clearly if we come to them with open minds and our eyes on what Jesus is showing us about his Father. For example, the wisdom of the dishonest steward (Lk 16:1-8) lay in his knowledge of his master, his trust that his huge concessions would be honoured. I found the chapters on the parables among the most rewarding in the book.

I loved this book and found it most helpful, one to be cherished and re-read. It is well and clearly written, simple, though not easy reading, not comfortable – but enormously worthwhile. ■

Ruth Burrows has come full circle in *Vashti's Voices*

*A journal exploring
 theologies for a just future*

Published by Women's Resource Ctr, Auckland

Review: Jasmine Poole

In true Christian tradition the feminist theology journal *vashti's Voice*, laid to rest in 1991, has been resurrected. Now *Vashti's Voices*, the six-monthly periodical aims to 'provide a forum for ideas, dialogue, creative expression and research... to help foster the ongoing development of theologies, particularly feminist theologies, that reflect our context in Aotearoa-New Zealand, moving us beyond patriarchy.'

Having missed the early publications I was glad of the outline of *Vashti's* beginnings by such early contributors as Janet Crawford and Mitzi Nairn, whilst the current editorial team provide insight into its reformulation by publishing a selection of email conversations.

The influence of electronic communication continues in "Thank Outfields for God", also a compilation of email discussions following Carter Heyward's visit, whilst Kate Bell provides a thought-provoking argument for menstruation to be incorporated into our spirituality and regarded as a chance to 'retreat' into the divine. Deborah Broome discusses the

Church's role as footnote 'with the marginalised, with those at the bottom of society' and Jenny Harrison (in dialogue with a 1980 article by Jo Pelly) life at St John's College.

Josie Dolan's article reflects on her experience of India whilst attending the AMOR conference. I inwardly warmed to her definition of Eco-feminism as being 'not so much anti-hierarchical/patriarchal' as 'for interconnectedness and for life'.

Articles on life as a queer christian, women's ordination within the RC Church, and an extract from Hilary Mather's address to the tenth anniversary celebrations of the Women's Resource Centre together with a variety of poems, research notes and book reviews complete the text, whilst there is even a word game on Biblical Women for those of us who are mothers, youth workers or young at heart.

I was impressed with *Vashti's Voices*, both the quality of the articles and poetry submitted and the usefulness of book reviews and conferences advertised. The editorial board and the contributors both reflect ecumenical perspectives and a variety of life experience and interests. It represents a refreshing feminist and contextual approach to a range of issues within contemporary Aotearoa-New Zealand. I await the autumn issue on 'The Church and Violence' with anticipation. ■

Courtesy WRC

Vows: Nuns and Priests Speak Out
By Denis Edwards
Penguin Books (NZ) Limited
Price: \$24.95
Review: Sandra Winton, OP

This is a book which doesn't seem to know quite where to land. The cover depicts the lower half of a black-robed male figure with beautifully polished shoes clutching enormous rosary beads as if about to lash them across the legs of some unfortunate miscreant. The title VOWS screams out in red across the space between his knees and where his sexual organs might not supposed to be. "Nuns and Priests Speak Out" it goes on to titillate us. We might suspect at worst a revelation of scandals of the cloister or at best some exploration of how New Zealand people have actually experienced the living of the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience. But the book does neither more than superficially.

Denis Edwards has interviewed thirteen women and men who are either religious or priests or who have been for a time in their lives. These are interesting people and they might well have had very provocative things to say to us all about the issues of sexuality and community, about money and possessions and about the attempt to lead one's life by obedience to something other than personal gratification. Denis Edwards does allow them to speak for themselves and about themselves, but for me, failed to ask them the kind of questions which might have deepened the exploration and challenged them to bring out some of the deeper issues.

The interview format is less than satisfying in that it leads to what is to me the book's other main faults: unsubstantiated generalisation, occasional banality, a disjointedness and lack of explanation for a reader who might not know the territory and a less than satisfying use of language. This does give a sense of

people speaking unguardedly but in most cases does not make for very satisfying reading.

The best thing about this book is the opportunity it gives to come in contact in a fresh way with some remarkable, gospel-living New Zealanders. To me it was a pleasure to feel the energy, vitality and unflagging commitment of those religious who have made the step of living their option for the poor. The interview of Anne Hurley and Paula Brett Kelly particularly struck me this way. Judith Couper and Susan Boland gave pictures of contemporary religious life. Some readers may just enjoy hearing people they know or have heard about, like Bishops Pat Dunn or John Mackey, Pauline Engel, Joan Timpany or Bernard Dennehy speak about their lives and concerns, whether biculturalism or Catholic education. But on the whole, the book does not live up to the potential of its interviewees and skims the surface. ■



Nicola McCloy

It's Oscar time again. Nominations are out and the movie business is rattling with the news that Titanic has equalled All About Eve's 1950 record of 14 nominations. But what are the Oscars really about?

To my mind, as a fan of the small budget, high impact film, the Oscars are not so much about the quality of the films being made but about the amount of money being pumped into the Hollywood movie industry. With Titanic eclipsing Kevin Costner's bomb

Oscar Time

Waterworld as the most expensive film ever, it is not surprising that Titanic has garnered so many nominations and awards.

Oscar night is not generally one for surprises, although this year's nominations do hold one or two surprises. The nomination of The Full Monty for best picture is a breath of fresh air among US box office beasts such as LA Confidential and As Good As It Gets. Another surprise is that the nominees for Best Actress are, with one exception, all British: my pick for the nod being Judi Dench's wonderful portrayal of Queen Victoria in Mrs Brown. The Best Actor award is dominated by screen legends with Robert Duvall, Jack Nicholson, Dustin Hofmann and Peter Fonda all vying for the statuette. A heart pick on this category would see Peter Fonda

picking up the award, but I imagine Jack Nicholson will get it.

I will certainly be glued to the TV on Oscar night. However, I confess that my real motivation is to see who's wearing what, to hear how many people thank everyone including their Fifth Grade elocution teacher, and to see if, just for once, a losing actor/actress fails to smile and clap graciously and throws a tantrum instead: I live in hope!

My own Nicola Awards for the year's best would look something like:

Best Actor: Pete Postlethwaite in Brassed Off

Best Actress: Judi Dench in Mrs Brown

Best Supporting Role by a Football Team: Arsenal in Fever Pitch

Most Over-hyped Marketing Ploy: Spice World

Best Picture: Brassed Off equal first with Fever Pitch. ■

How to access information on theology

People often ask about the best ways of obtaining religious and theological literature. Bookshops are an obvious source, and New Zealand has lots of excellent Christian and general bookshops around the country. But while it is fairly easy to find devotional materials and books on topics of current popular interest, the problems arise when you try to dig deeper, especially when it comes to scholarly research.

The Internet

Many dedicated 'cyber-freaks' cling to the notion that "it's all out there on the Internet". Most theological materials are not — and probably never will be. Experienced users of the Internet are all too aware of electronic wild-goose chases that never quite come up with just what's required. Nevertheless, there are some excellent gateway sites that will lead you to considerable quantities of reliable material with a minimum of bother. Try, for instance:

the Institute for Christian Leadership (<http://www.iclnet.org>); High Places in Cyberspace (<http://scholar.cc.emory.edu/scripts/highplaces.html>) or Catholic Resources on the Net — (<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/people/spok/catholic.html>.)

Libraries

Access to good local library resources in New Zealand varies quite a bit, depending on where you live. But do check out your public library — you may well be surprised at what they have to offer. You may be lucky to have access to a University or other tertiary library; if there is a theological library in your

area, ring them and ask about access and possible borrowing privileges. Most libraries participate in the nationwide Inter-loan system and can usually locate an item held in another library, obtain it (or in the case of a periodical article, obtain you a photocopy), and lend it to you — often within a few days. The system is efficient, but always ask about possible charges if you are requesting numerous items.

The Hewitson Library

The Hewitson Library at Knox College in Dunedin has an increasing number of postal borrowers. Membership is available to anyone living in New Zealand. All you need do is request a membership card. You can ask for a specific title or just about books on a particular subject. "Have you got anything on Hildegard of Bingen?" We can do searches on our CD-ROM database, and find and send you copies of journal articles. There is no subscription, but we will ask you to refund postal and courier costs and reimburse us for computer searching and photocopying.

If you would like more information about this library please contact the librarian by phone, fax or e-mail — or by post.

Phone: 03 473 7156; fax: 03 473 8466

e-mail (hewitson@rivendell.otago.ac.nz)

Post: Hewitson Library, Knox College, Arden St, Dunedin.

Barbara Frame

Librarian, Knox College.

Tui Motu is happy to advertise services such as the one above, if the information is sent us in the form of a concise article.

Haere mai — te papa tongarewa!

As a parochial southerner, I am one of the many who mutter derisively when I hear Paul Holmes say “Those were our people tonight”, knowing full well what he means is: “Those were the people we Aucklanders find vaguely interesting today”. Te Papa Tongarewa’s “Our Place” had me wondering whether this is a museum for all New Zealanders or a giant celebration of where the money is.

With around 60 hours of exhibits to see, opening day provided a mere taste of the delights that Te Papa has to offer. It is a smorgasbord of New Zealand culture, art and history. The traditional museum of the past, that ill-lit, dusty crypt of relics in endless glass cases, silent and forbidding, is put to rest by Te Papa. The museum is vast, well lit and full of interactive games, sound and colour. Education and entertainment walk comfortably hand in hand throughout the building.

Also walking comfortably together at Te Papa are New Zealand’s cultural groups. The opening day included performances by cultural groups ranging from the Tokelau Islands to Poland. The diversity of New Zealand’s cultural background is also reflected in the museum itself. Te Papa reflects the history of Maori, Pacific Islanders and Europeans and how they have combined to make the country we know today. One of the museum’s highlights is a huge copy of the Treaty of Waitangi surrounded by listening posts which reflect various views on the Treaty. This is just one example of how the museum manages to take the contentious and divisive and turn it into something inclusive and informative.

There were two features of the museum which stood out to me as signs of the commitment of Te Papa Tongarewa to reflect a New Zealand lifestyle. These were the marae and Bush City. The museum’s marae is, in my mind, the heart of the building. The marae’s meeting house is a stunning meeting of traditional Maori carving and contemporary design. One of the most fascinating things about the marae is the fact that it was built not only by Maori artisans but also by representatives of other peoples of this country.

The outdoor nature of New Zealanders is reflected in Te Papa’s Bush City. This is a piece of native bush in the middle of the city complete with bushwalk, waterfalls, caves and, my favourite, a sturdy chicken wire swing bridge. The walk provides a refreshing interlude from the busy atmosphere of the museum itself and serves to make those of us partial to the wide open spaces more than a little homesick!

Although the opening day of Te Papa provided only a glimpse of the treasures on display and the adventures in store at the Museum, my first impressions are certainly very positive ones. The challenge for Te Papa to live up to its name and be a place for all New Zealanders has been well and truly met. The Museum of New Zealand is a credit to all of those people whose visions have combined together to create a

wonderfully unique and truly inclusive experience. Te Papa is truly our place, a place of which all New Zealanders can be justifiably proud.

Nicola McCloy Wellington journalist

Te Papa, Our Place, our new national museum and cultural treasure house, has opened on the Wellington



waterfront. The festivities surrounding the opening were enjoyed by many thousands of New Zealanders who could now see themselves through a new mirror and take enormous pride in who they are. It was impossible in a single visit to absorb very much of what was on display. To cope with the richness and diversity of the displays as well as the excellence of the presentation, one could only resolve to make many return visits.

The building, whatever its architectural merits, is spacious and grand, which befits its purpose of recording and relating who and what New Zealand people have been — and now are. Our history and heritage are lavishly displayed with the centrepiece being the founding document, the Treaty. The racial diversity is presented as a celebration, and this will hopefully be a healthy counter to the negativity of racial intolerance. Maori, European, Polynesian and Asian migrant peoples are given the space to have their stories told in ways that are accessible to all, as well as reflecting the best that scholarship can provide. Tragedies, triumphs and failures are part of every nation’s history and are to be interpreted in terms of the fashioning of national identity.

Of particular note, I thought, is the treatment of our flora. The walk through the native bush outdoors, carefully crafted to be similar to the pre-European Wellington foreshore, is most remarkable. A great deal of effort has succeeded in creating rock forms, caves and water courses covered exclusively by our native bush. Families will no longer have a problem of worrying if the younger ones are getting bored, as a variety of relevant and appropriate activities are on hand beside the exhibits, adapted to the needs of children. Much of the information is accessed by state-of-the-art computers which clearly appeal to children.

To see Te Papa is a ‘must’ experience for everyone who visits Wellington or who lives there. A visit to the new National Museum leaves one affirmed as a New Zealander and resolved to return and delve more deeply into our national experience to appreciate “who we are”.

*Joan McFetridge Director
Catholic Education Centre Wellington*

Hawkesby's departure an ominous sign

The disarray apparent in the delivery of TV3 News is evidence of the greater dysfunction at the heart of New Zealand television in the process of 'dumbing down' the news. Softening the impact of news by having two presenters reduces the information aspect so that it offers more entertainment for the viewers, and the programme becomes an exercise in 'infotainment'. Commentators throughout New Zealand have been puzzled by TV3's decision to alter a successful format. For me, John Hawkesby is the ideal news reader — mature, authoritative, courteous and steady. He is not a journalist, his opinions are not known, sought or offered; and he simply provides a credible framework in which news items are presented.

The change was announced by TV3's director of news and current affairs, Mark Jennings, in the week preceding Hawkesby's resignation. "We're already clear winners in the news presenting wars," he said. "For the past three years in a row Hawkesby's superior credibility and talent has been recognised by the industry and the viewers, winning Best News Presenter more often than any other broadcaster in the history of NZ television. These changes", he continued, "build on that recognition, introducing a new format to consolidate and extend the appeal of 3 News to more viewers nationwide."

The key to understanding the enormous blunder made by Jennings and his bosses at Canwest is to be found in the last sentence. TV3 with John Hawkesby was starting to look like serious news and moving away from the frothy offerings on One, something that 'real people', the viewing masses, apparently don't want. Viewers who like serious news delivered in a responsible manner are seen by the television administrators as part of a minority of the cultured elite, a danger to the matesmanship of good blokes which ratings put at the top of

the viewers' wish lists. TV3, an independent operator owned by Canwest Global System, is a successful commercial venture, whose news format was steadily attracting a loyal following. It has now fallen prey to the basic market principle of trying to beat the opposition at their own game.

It's a great pity. TV3 had better, more thoughtful and more responsible coverage in general than TV1, but without the first-class presentation which John Hawkesby was able to give, it will now lack the necessary framework for success. Even the changed weather format with Graeme Sinclair is much less successful as he lacks the flair and panache of his predecessor. Their claim to better technology, new digital cameras, steerable, live-eye microwave dishes in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch and their round-the-clock news coverage, becomes irrelevant if there is a decline in quality of the main news hour. It was interesting to read of the self-congratulatory reports from TV3's headquarters and of the phone calls they had received praising the change. Media reviewer Paul Smith appeared on camera to note that the change to John Campbell would be appealing to the under 39 age group and that this was a positive move, while we viewers were assured by the management that the news readers brought us the added bonus of being journalists. But do they? Each is important, each contributes to the success of the other, but to be really successful they cannot be merged. The news reader supplies the continuing framework for a great range and variety of items, giving the viewer the stability of a familiar face and voice, providing a secure comfort zone and encouraging people to stay with the channel.

Deregulation has not seen a winner emerge in the popularity stakes. The shy emergence of a different news approach has now been scrapped in

favour of being more competitive, while TVNZ is a popular channel in name only. As each channel is geared to make as much money as possible for its owner, word has leaked out that the Coalition Government is contemplating the sale of both TV1 and TV2. If true, this offers an alarming prospect. The greater choice we have enjoyed with the advent of Sky and other independent operators has not brought about an improvement in the quality of programmes. There are simply not enough good programmes to go round.

The future of this country's television depends very much on government policy. The prospect of restructuring the system which had been promised has not taken place. Given the apparent public apathy over the issue, being lulled into a compliant state by a steady dose of pap from the box, one wonders if anyone cares. Do any people care if the Government's philosophy is essentially materialistic and philistine, though heavily veiled in the meretricious use of comfortable words like "freedom, individual enterprise, responsibility and self-fulfilment"?

Somewhere along the road we have become an apathetic, uncaring society, only reacting to the artificial stimulants of shock, horror and scandal periodically and temporarily injected by the medium of television, which meanwhile steadfastly ignores the more awkward and deeper questions about the ends and quality of government and the state of our national culture.

We are used to hearing that this Government and its predecessors should have kept a public service channel. But does anyone really care? If we have the government we deserve, perhaps the reason is that we are an uncaring society: a society which thrives on bread and circuses, which has lost its brains and is in danger of losing its soul. ■

Keith Harrison

World News

PNG Drought Crisis

Extreme drought, frosts and forest fires in Papua New Guinea and in Irian Jaya have left many of the people destitute and facing starvation and disease. Hundreds have already died and no solution to the crisis is yet in sight. Even if the rains do come it will take months, even years, to rehabilitate the farms. In the meantime people must rely on benefactors to provide money for relief supplies, medicines and shelter.

An Appeal has been launched sponsored by the Christian World Service along with partner churches. Donations may be sent to Box 22-652 Christchurch (phone 0800 747372)

(CWS Update February 1998)

Bishop Stecher Replies

A letter by Austrian Bishop Reinold Stecher in which he was critical of both Vatican and Papal policies (see February Tui Motu) has generated 1200 letters in response. Some 50 of the writers were indignant at what he had written, particularly the section concerning priests applying for laicisation.

In a subsequent letter the Bishop has defended his criticism, pointing out that under the present Pope the waiting period for laicisation has increased from two years (under Paul VI) to ten years or more. "Failing in celibacy", writes the Bishop, "does not mean failing in faith. As a priest I have absolved adulterers, apostates, thieves and murderers. But I could not, and still may not, give absolution to a priest who has married."

Justifying his stinging attack on the Pope he quotes Canon Law that "it is not only the right but sometimes the duty of the faithful to make plain to their pastors what their opinion is about things which are relevant to the Church".

Asian Monetary Crisis

Asian countries have been blamed for the collapse of their economies, but a recent article in the Washington Post asserts that the crisis was triggered by external agencies.

Four Years ago the World Bank lavished praise on the economic management of the very countries now under attack. They became 'El Dorados'. Greed was rampant; investment money poured in, but those who should have advised caution (the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the US Treasury etc) did nothing of the kind. Obvious signs of corruption, mismanagement and chicanery among the borrowers was overlooked.

Now the IMF plans to impose draconian conditions on the debtor nations, but it is the ordinary people of these countries who will have to pay through austerity, unemployment and bankruptcies. There are no indications that those controlling the international financial systems are prepared to examine their own conduct or take any blame for the

Asian economic debacle.

(CWS Update)

Jubilee 2000

A meeting is due to be held next year in Birmingham, England, of the 'G7' — the governments of the world's richest economies and those who make the rules which effect the citizens of all other trading countries.

Jubilee 2000, a coalition of aid agencies including Catholic charities such as CAFOD, is asking people to come from all over Britain to form a human chain encircling the meeting place of G7 on 16 May. It plans to present hundreds of thousands of petitions calling for a remission of unsustainable debt in the world's poorest nations. It says the chain will not be broken until the G7 Summit acknowledges its message. The appeal for the remission of such debts has been a principal call by Pope John Paul as a practical means of celebrating the Jubilee. ■

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PostScript

I'm feeling frustrated at the moment — firstly because I've been asked to comment on the government's proposed Code of Social Responsibility without having seen it or the questionnaire linked to it (despite its promised arrival in today's post), but more seriously because it looks set to implicate all New Zealanders in making changes to our welfare system that will be both far-reaching and potentially very damaging to our most vulnerable citizens.

It seems the questionnaire asks in effect whether we think apple pie and motherhood are good things, whether parents ought to care for their children, or whether, more insidiously, a domestic purpose beneficiary's success in keeping her child at school should determine the level of benefit she receives. Sadly, our policy maker's seem unable to think two steps down the track. A moment's reflection tells us that the stress of having to manage on a reduced benefit will further undermine such a person's ability to retain her child in the schools system.

I should like to ask some alternative questions — addressing issues that impact on the welfare of families. Should the government buy another frigate or spend that money on health and education? Should more health funding be directed to shortening hospital waiting lists or to salary increases for top

health-sector executives? Are you happy with a situation where some New Zealand families now enjoy fabulous wealth while others cannot even afford decent accommodation or food and clothing for their children? Or — putting the responsibility firmly back on the shoulders of government — should the government provide everyone who wants to work with a job?

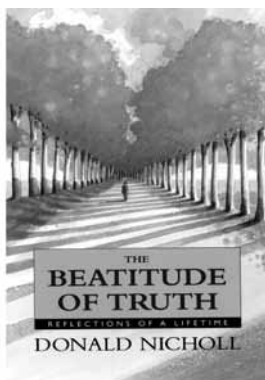
Like the official ones, these alternative questions would all gain a predictable response from the questionnaire-filling public. The government would not dare ask them, since they don't fit the political and economic agenda set by them, or by pressure groups like the Business Round Table, whose hand can clearly be discerned in the Code. As I write I have before me two articles from local newspapers written in the last few days. The first states that the local Budget Advisory Service is experiencing a huge increase in its workload, with demand up by 50 percent above normal in December and January. The second reports record levels of pre-Christmas demand in city foodbanks, with low earners as well as beneficiaries seeking help. Perhaps a little Lenten fasting would bring Jenny and Winston back to the real world ordinary people live in!

Paul Sorrell

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