



Tui Motu
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Light in darkness

It is difficult to conceive a more threatening scenario than that which hovers over us in the closing months of the second millennium. Pollution, the pillaging of non-replaceable resources, global warming, the ever-worsening plight of a billion of the world's poorest; and possible world recession on the heels of the collapse of the prosperous economies of South East Asia.

Closer to home we are told that after 14 years of fiscal reforms the country is deeper in the red than ever; the poorest 40 percent are actually worse off; many Maori and Pacific Islanders in particular have been reduced to the status of a permanent underclass. Meantime the coalition government totters on the brink of collapse, beset by internal squabbles and failing confidence. How important is it therefore for all Christian people, indeed all who care for our country and its people, to become involved in the *Hiko of Hope*, being organised for the month of September by the Anglican Church as a fruit of their recent Synod (see page 5).

During July many of New Zealand's Catholic theologians and thinkers gathered for a week in Palmerston North. Global, racial and social problems were looked at in a theological context – but beneath it all was a profound echo of the Anglican experience. This surely is for us the challenge of the Year of Jubilee (see pages 6-10), to discover and to implement instruments of hope for our troubled times. In *Leviticus*, every 50 years there was a declared time of amnesty and rest – or that, at least, was the theory. Pope John Paul has especially made his own this theme of Jubilee 2000, as a time not only of renewed faith and ecumenical hope but of practical alleviation of the suffering of the poor of the world through the cancellation of Third World debt.

But telling other people what to do is never enough. The spirit and impetus of Jubilee needs to start 'at home'. What gesture of amnesty, of forgiveness and reconciliation, can we expect from the Catholic Church as its personal celebration of the Year 2000? There are all too many hurt and estranged people on the fringes of the Church, waiting to be welcomed back. One thinks immediately of separated and divorced Catholics who are in some form of canonical irregularity, priests who have left to marry. Many are innocent of any fault, yet they are relegated to the margins. Some have strayed – only to discover that their sin appears to be unforgivable.

Another voice at Palmerston North reminded us of perhaps the greatest obstacle of all. Anglican Bishop George Connor from the Bay of Plenty made a substantial and welcome contribution to the deliberations. And he uttered a memorable *cri de coeur* when he expressed his own personal pain at being an "excommunicated person". Surely there is material here for a wonderful gesture of reconciliation which can only come from Rome itself.

Alas, the signs are ominous. A recent Papal Letter (see p 31) appears to follow the hardest line yet during this pontificate against any whose thinking appears to deviate from the most stringent orthodoxy. Cardinal Ratzinger in his commentary on the *Letter*, singles out the ordination of women and the validity of Anglican Orders as among the non-negotiables. History will no doubt place these recent declarations alongside the *Syllabus of Errors* (Pius IX) and the anti-Modernist oath at the beginning of this Century (Pius X). John Paul in his final years seems to be 'out-Piusing Pius', to the consternation of Catholic commentators the world over. Good, fervent people wring their



Reaping the Whirlwind of the Economic Reforms

In September 1984, on the eve of what turned out to be a decade of radical economic reform, the Labour government convened a three-day Economic Summit of business, trade union and community leaders. One of the speakers was Fr Brian Sherry, representing the Council of Christian Social Services. He had this to say:

For too long have the policy makers acted in a utopian manner, believing that all New Zealanders would ultimately benefit from the decisions they were making. It has been our belief that those decisions would trickle down beneficially for all New Zealanders. That does not happen, and there is no evidence to demonstrate that it is ever likely to happen.

These were prophetic words. For some time now, a wide range of church and community groups have reported a huge increase in poverty and insecurity among their people. Policy makers have dismissed their complaints as unreliable anecdotes, but now statistical studies are appearing that measure the validity of their concerns.

In 1995, for example, the Poverty Measure Project of Bob Stephens, Paul Frater and Charles Waldegrave showed that absolute poverty had doubled between 1984 and 1993, from

▷▷ hands in despair and are simply appalled at the mixed messages coming from Rome. Bishop George Connor, it seems, is going to have to wait a mighty long time.

M.H.

4.3 to 10.8 percent of households. Now a new study by Professor Srikanta Chatterjee of Massey University confirms that the gap between the rich and the poor widened considerably between 1984 and 1996.

In an awful piece of symmetry, Professor Chatterjee's research shows that the top ten percent of the population in 1996 had 30 percent of the economic pie (up from 26 percent in 1984), while the poorest 30 percent were living on just ten percent of New Zealand's income (down from 12 percent in 1984).

The initial response from government was to say that we should not be concerned with these growing disparities as long as it produces a bigger pie. After all, a smaller share of a larger pie may still leave everyone better off. In fact, this has not been the case in New Zealand.

Instead, combining Professor Chatterjee's data with New Zealand's aggregate income growth suggests that the lowest-income 40 percent of New Zealanders had less spending power in 1996 than they did in 1984. The poor really have got poorer during the reforms, as the rich increased their wealth.

Although attention tends to focus on these two ends of the income distribution, the widening gap suggests



that it is middle New Zealand where the structural problems lie. The reforms saw the end of many middle-income, middle-skilled jobs, and this has polarised the economy into the state we are now in.

The initial signs are that the government will ignore this latest piece of research, just as they have ignored report after report from church and community groups about the impact their policies are having. The Minister of Finance, for example, is promising a cut in the top income tax rate as a priority for his government. Those who have benefited most from the reforms are to receive still more.

It is time to say, enough is enough. As Fr Sherry said fourteen years ago, there is no evidence that trickle down is ever likely to happen. The current direction of economic policy has failed us. It must be changed. ■

Dr Paul Dalziel is Reader in Economics at Lincoln University

letters



Fr Michael Morwood

In your July issue, Greg McCormick claimed that because bishops (on both sides of the Tasman) had expressed dissatisfaction with Michael Morwood's answers to important questions, "the ball is now in the bishops' court". I do not think it follows that when bishops exercise their pastoral role they must then assume the theologians' role. However, I am happy to accept the challenge.

Obviously, both pastors and theologians need to measure new ways of expressing the faith against what the Church has already declared the faith to be. I do not think Morwood's efforts, despite his commendable intentions, measure up; nor are they new. In order to ensure Christ is seen as truly human, Morwood feels it is necessary to reinterpret his divine identity in a way that is ultimately no different from how all of us can share God's life. He also acknowledges that if Christ is divine only in a way that we can all be, then the doctrine of the Trinity is not necessary. It becomes a kind of option.

Wearing my pastor's hat, I say:

- The Church preaches One who was like us in every way except sin, but that unlike the Baptist and many another who was "a man sent by God", in Christ we meet One who was sent by God to "become man".
- The sending of the "Son": by the "Father", and the sending of the Spirit by both imply a distinction of "persons" in

God, which was implicit in the faith of the first Christians before it came to be articulated in later categories; (so what, if that didn't happen until later!)

- The Church's Creeds and all the history behind them, the Church's doxologies and all her liturgy, the sheer wonder and unsurpassed hope to which they witness, are all based on this understanding of the Incarnation. How the Church prays is what the Church believes. Any lesser faith is also a lesser hope.

Morwood seems to be particularly scandalised by the Church's teaching on original sin, or rather, by what he thinks is the Church's teaching. Nothing modern science teaches stands against our belief that sin entered the world historically through human choices; that sin added something to the experience of death that St Paul would later call its "sting", and that by assuring us of God's forgiveness, Christ took away that sting. Even if the Incarnation was not ultimately dependent on the event of sin, either way the heart of the Church's teaching on original sin is still our dependence on Christ for everlasting union with God.

And is it so hard – *especially* in the modern world – to distinguish between the religious truths enshrined in the Genesis stories, and the stories themselves, the mythopoeic packaging? Does modern science give us a better way of conveying what cannot be adequately expressed in any form?

So what, if modern people cannot picture God "up there" and the Incarnation as a "coming down". Does not the

religious educator's role include helping people to appreciate both the limits and the value of those mythopoeic symbols which convey the mystery of human life and salvation better than the exact sciences ever could? At the end of the day our changing cosmologies only touch the story forms, not the truths they enshrine, just as Christian art has a variety of ways of depicting the same truths.

If we are to help modern people to believe, I suggest we need look no further than the experience of love. Every manifestation of genuine love, in all its humanness – from smiles to ecstasies, from the quiet sacrifices people make in their homes or reaching out to the lonely, vulnerable and anxious; to the deeds of justice, peace, mercy and reconciliation; from the cooing of an infant, to a child's arm around another's shoulder, to the quiet presence of ageing spouses to each other; and all the other language of love, whether in silence or song, are all **sacramental signs** of a Love not yet fully revealed!

If, as Greg McCormick suggests, the ball is in my court, I would want to point to the mystery of love as faith's *sign of credibility*. I would want to tell the whole world to notice love in every one of its manifestations, whatever people's beliefs or circumstances. I would want to remind Christians of their vocation to give love its name and name its source, and to show in their lives that love is never defeated, not even on Good Fridays.

Even though none of this depends on any particular cosmology, I am sure it is a more useful place to look. I think it is also at one with all that is best in

P J Cullinane, Bishop of Palmerston North

Oprah Winfrey

Thank you for a great magazine. Regarding the "Media Comment" from Keith Harrison in the July issue headed 'Welcome Back Kim': I agree that "in this country no one can hold a candle to Kim Hill".

However, may I please ask him to re-evaluate his comment regarding Oprah Winfrey as a "crass presenter". In defence of Oprah I ask if Keith is aware of the "Angel Network" set up by Oprah to encourage all people to assist in a variety of 'good

works' from helping homeless families to struggling students. Has he heard of her Book Club where she has encouraged millions to read and re-educate themselves.

Amidst the variety of 'trivia topics' she has excelled in her love and support of abused men, women and children. I do believe she is sincere in her desire to share her love of others in exactly the place she finds herself in this world. I wish more of us could do the same.

Iris Mullen, Rothesay Bay

Receiving Communion through Intinction

In respect of the article on "Receiving Communion through Intinction" in your July issue, I am sorry that the author appears to hold the view that people only do this "through fear of picking up infection". While I normally take the cup of the Precious Blood with joy, I have occasionally used Intinction – but only when I myself have had an infection and have been anxious not risk passing this infection on to others!

Tony Ryan, Lower Hutt

It was very reassuring to read this article on Intinction by Humphrey O'Leary in the July issue of Tui Motu. As a Minister of the Eucharist I had always felt a slight discomfort when communicants dipped their host in the chalice. It seemed to me to be a casual approach to the Precious Blood and I seldom had time to say the words "The Blood of Christ".

The article has helped me to be much more positive in offering the Cup to the people who wish to dip the host, even to the point of withdrawing it from the outstretched hand and making a proper, eye-contact offering of the chalice as I do with those who wish to drink from it. It is interesting to note that most of the people who receive the Blood of Christ in this way are of an Eastern culture, although others do it if they have a cold or a cold sore. Not all Ministers wipe the cup as thoroughly as one would like, but I have never heard of anyone yet becoming ill from receiving the chalice.

Jenny Wilson, Ellerslie

Thirty Pieces of Silver

I read with interest retired Judge Bill Mitchell's review of Anthony Molloy's book, *Thirty Pieces of Silver*. I am concerned that the last sentence of the last paragraph of the review could have left some doubt about the cogency of Dr Molloy's argument. The sentence reads "But the Serious Fraud Office and the head office of Inland Revenue looked at some dealings which the author condemns without finding fault with them". Dr Molloy points out in the book that three other Tax Advisor lawyers plus a Judge agree with his view.

There is a need to keep a balance in these issues. Balance however, is not served by selective editing of information. Russell McVeagh, McKenzie, Bartlett & Co., the firm at the centre of the book, must be given the last word on the cogency of Dr Molloy's arguments. After Dr Molloy has accused the firm of any number of breaches of the law a spokesperson for the firm has come out and said they will not be suing him.

Michael Nicholas, Christchurch

Hikoi of Hope

You are invited to join a nation-wide initiative by the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, walking on Parliament to tell the Government and the nation that the level of poverty in our country is intolerable.

Five Planks for the Hikoi

- ☐ Real jobs
- ☐ A public health system we can trust
- ☐ Benefit and wage levels that move people out of poverty
- ☐ Affordable housing
- ☐ Accessible education

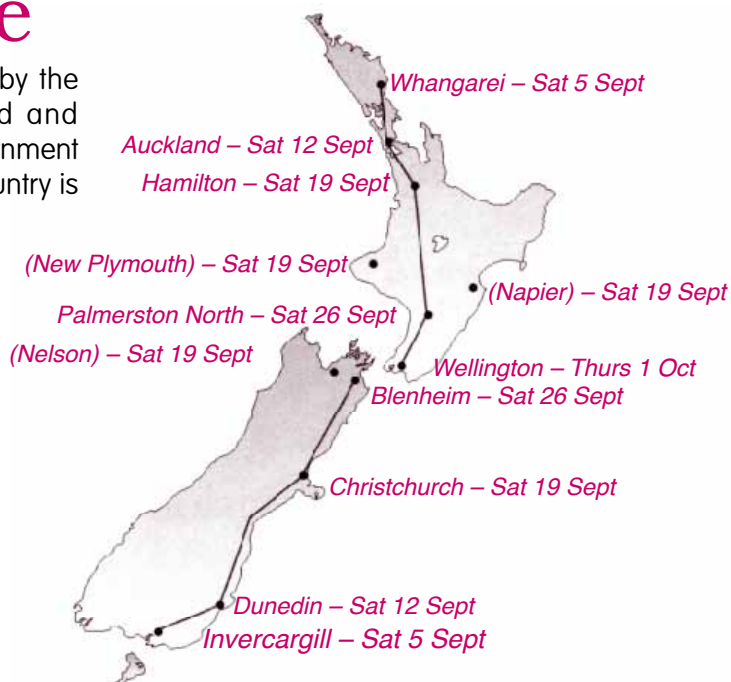
Who can join

All people and groups who support these aims are welcome to show that support by joining in

What and When

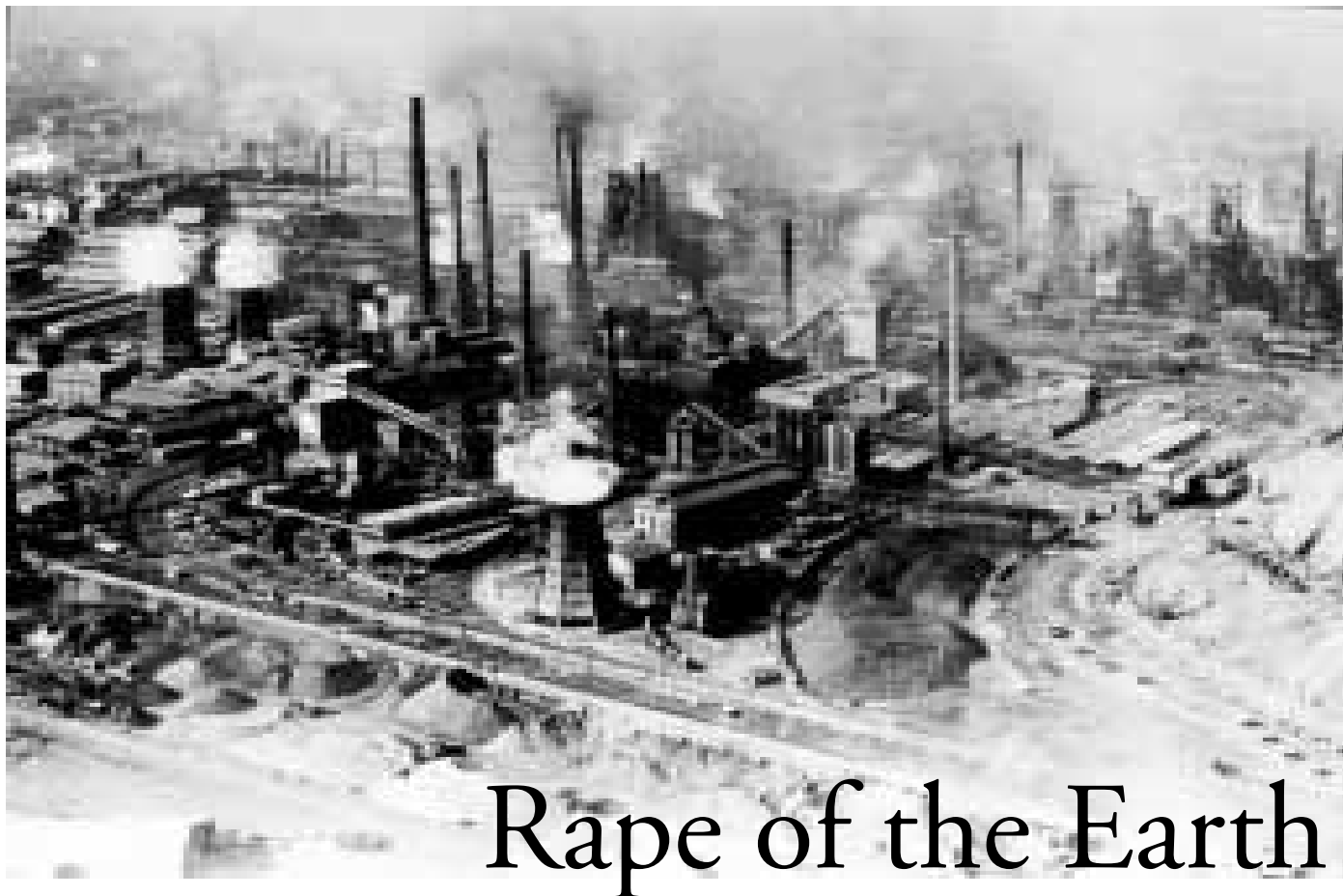
The Hikoi will consist of three kinds of activity. Please support what you can.

- ☐ Walking from the extremities of New Zealand through September 1998, to converge on Wellington on October 1
- ☐ Activities and events in towns along the route to highlight the issues at the focus of the Hikoi. This will include large groups gathering and walking through the key towns.
- ☐ Gathering in Wellington at Parliament grounds on October 1



Map:

- Main route
- () Simultaneous activities in other centres



Rape of the Earth

*Massey University
lecturer and poet,
Scott Eastham, looks
at our war-torn and
ravaged earth and
proposes solutions in
terms of peace and an
increase in wisdom*

or Americans, global warming would go through the roof.

Quite sober current estimates put human extinction only 50 years away at the present velocity of Western-style 'progress'. By the same token, we know also that we cannot go back to a pre-modern life style, nor would most of us want to. Arcadia is lost to us. Yet a mounting chorus of voices suggests that "cosmopolitan localism" represents not a new system but a real range of alternatives. Rather than playing in the global arena of propaganda illusions, a new dream is needed, or at least a way out of the labyrinthine nightmare of history.

(3) The War of the Worldviews

A third kind of war, in some ways even more difficult to encompass or endure, seems to have been spawned by the modern era. It is the war of the Gods, by which I mean the conflict of fundamentally incompatible worldviews which is today cutting to the very heart of our

sense of the real. The "one God" has by all accounts faded into the background over the past five centuries, but the monism latent in monotheism – one Truth, one Church, one Empire – has translated all too easily into the cultural monomorphism of the modern era, with its one scientific Truth for everybody, its one model of Development for all the world, and lately its one Medium – the computer – masquerading as a multimedia revolution; one global Market with its single fetish, the almighty Dollar.

What is needed here is a new or renewed depth of religious experience – a re-enchantment of the world, a new sacralization of the relations between people and peoples, and a direct contact with the Divine, the depth dimension of Mystery at the roots of the real, so long obscured by monolithic institutions and ideologies. To save the world, we have first to save her soul – the World Soul, *anima mundi*. If we cannot in the long run rely on the Earth's own powers of

The revered Zen teacher Suzuki once diagnosed our present-day predicament as a war of the three worlds – the divine, the human, and the ‘natural’. “In the West,” he observed, “Man is against God, Nature is against God, and Man and Nature are against each other.”

Conflict is built into the modern worldview at every relevant level of our experience. People are pitted each against all and all against each, humans take a warlike stance toward the very earth that sustains them, and the ultimate values people are willing to live and to die for – the Gods, so to speak – have so long warred with one another that they seem to have little strength left to intervene in human or terrestrial affairs. The modern predicament, in this view, is just the shambles left by this war of the worlds.

“Modernity” is a catch-all phrase broadly implying a series of social, psychological, religious and technological changes that began about 600 years ago, after the Black Death and the pointless Hundred Years War decimated the population of Europe. Modernity stands for quantitative scientific methods replacing the virtues of faith; industrial power and production supplanting hand labour and guild-regulated crafts; rationality and empirical evidence over traditional authority; individual rights and a sense of self instead of a monolithic and hierarchical society: in short, complexity replacing simplicity. More narrowly, the modernity in question is usually taken as the accelerated technical ‘progress’ which led from the harnessing of fossil fuels and electricity in the 19th Century to the moon landings and medical miracles, computers and videos and genetic engineering of the 20th.

I would like to bring this ‘modernity’ into focus as the construction of a *conflictual* worldview. It is an aggressive, colonialistic, indeed warlike worldview in several dimensions. I would summarise this vision of modernity here as three kinds of war:

(1) The famous economic ‘war of each

against all,’ today the reigning dogma which removes the state from the economic sphere, allowing the ‘market’ to determine all values. It is propped up by the pseudo-scientific doctrine of social Darwinism.

(2) A colonial war against Nature, perceived as dead ‘objects’ and ‘resources’ of no value until turned to human purposes. It also is tied to the biases of modern science, and leads directly to present-day ecological crises.

(3) The war of one culture against all others. It is the secular successor to monotheism, the one God of universal provenance turning in our time into the cultural monomorphism of one rational scientific Truth, one media Net, and one global Market.

(1) The War of Each Against All

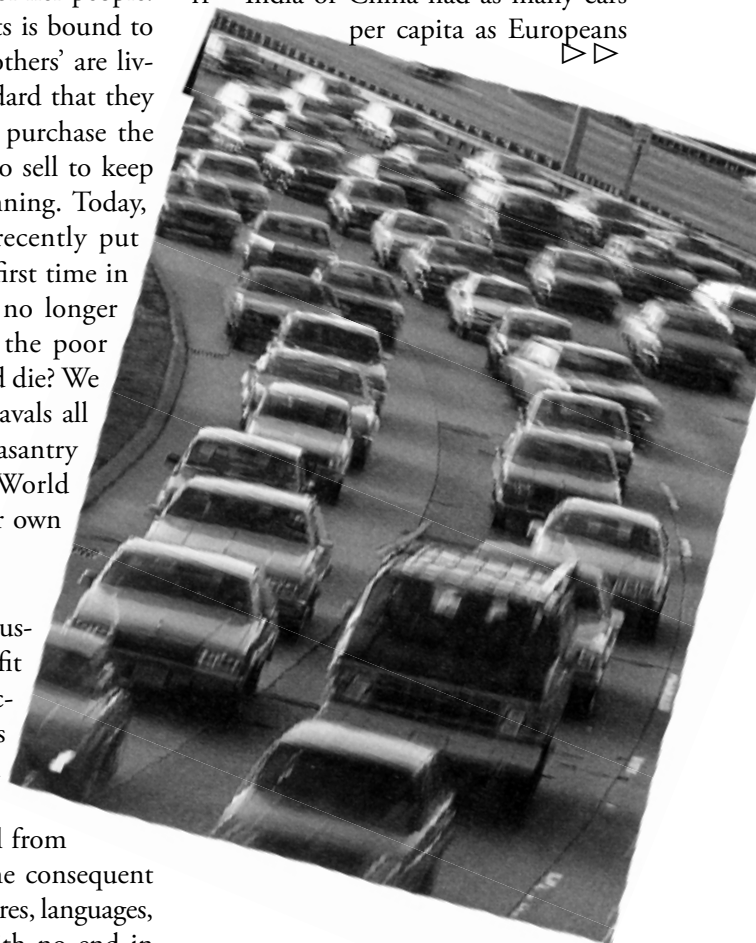
The global economy today dominated by transnational finance and transnational corporations amounts to exploitation as a system. It tests two kinds of limits: the Earth’s ability to sustain abuse, and the patience of her people. A system based on profits is bound to explode as soon as ‘the others’ are living at such a lower standard that they can no longer afford to purchase the commodities you need to sell to keep your system up and running. Today, as Edward Goldsmith recently put it, the rich have for the first time in history discovered they no longer need the poor. But are the poor just going to roll over and die? We see their answer in upheavals all around us, from the peasantry of the so-called Third World to the urban poor in our own neighbourhoods.

To put it in a nutshell, injustice is built into the profit motive itself. The ‘structural adjustment’ policies of the World Bank and the IMF have insured the steady flow of capital from South to North, with the consequent destruction of entire cultures, languages, and ways of life, and with no end in

sight. Economics, we are told by the media day in and day out, is the new order of the world, “the only game in town”. Everything in the world has become a mere commodity to be bought and sold for profit.

(2) The War Against Nature

Another kind of conflict has accompanied civilization all through its ‘modern’ phase, which we now see for what it is: a 500-year colonial war against Nature herself, a war against this very Earth upon which we all stand or fall. We have polluted the classical four elements of the world: water, air, earth and now even the sunlight (nearly lethal from ozone depletion). We have eaten, used up or burned off very nearly every mineral, chemical, vegetable or animal species we’ve laid our hands on, and we seem to have no intention of stopping this mad plundering until it stops us. *Global village means global pillage*. If the rest of the world used paper at the rate it is used in the United States, there would not be a tree left standing in a year. Or if India or China had as many cars per capita as Europeans



home, then local exchange. Regional economies thrive within natural boundaries, like any healthy organism. Our modern concept of a vast global economy governing all other human values is, in a word, cancerous. Cancers are cells which have lost their homeostasis, their self-regulating power; they recognize no limits to growth, and they are lethal. You cannot oppose the global 'system' within another global system; as soon as you accept that abstract, systemic 'worldview' as the arena, you have lost. Only here, only now, – with Sky and Earth, Rangi and Papa, collaborating, in focus and in harmony – will every flower and sheaf of new wheat bring hints of new hope. Sooner or later, New Zealanders will cut loose from Northern time-keeping and assemble a proper Godzone Calendar. Juliet Batten has recently made a splendid start with her book, *Celebrating the Southern Seasons – Rituals for Aotearoa*. Batten evinces both reverence and understanding as she melds native Maori traditions with both Celtic and Christian customs. And of course it all begins right about now, just after the Winter Solstice, with the return of the light. You can feel the changes in the air...

Wisdom: Autumn Leaves

In the pre-modern world the word *scientia* had a wider provenance than it does today: it meant simply knowledge. Ultimately, knowing meant placing all the data of experience in a pyramid of values, the Great Chain of Being, with God (the Lord as King) at the top and the entire natural and social order down below. It was monism, a single order which tended to harden into a fixed view from the top of the pyramid. Meanwhile, a revolution in worldview was stirring down below in the gritty particularities of experience. Modern science emerged from this rebellion by refining but also reducing the meaning of *scientia* to a set of controlled empirical and experimental procedures for generating objective data about the world. The price paid was a dualistic split between the knowing subject and the object known, with all the attendant

modern alienations.

Agribusiness, for example, focuses on maximizing productivity by applying industrial techniques to farming. From this point of view, it is simply 'rational' to maximize the production of milk or lean bacon by feeding cows and pigs meat-and-bone meal made from animal renderings – it's all just protein, isn't it? Humans turned cattle into cannibals

to meet market demands, but failed to notice until it was too late that cannibalism can transmit the insidious spongiform encephalopathies which have now turned up with alarming frequency in the human food supply. Before there were mad cows, there were farmers driven money-mad by the demands of the marketplace!

THEOLOGY SYMPOSIUM

During July about 60 people gathered from all over Aotearoa – New Zealand at the Pastoral Centre in Palmerston North to attend a theological Symposium on *Hope*, sponsored by Caritas. Auckland's CIT was well represented as were the Religious Education teams from five of the six dioceses. There was a good mix of lay and religious from many congregations. Bishop Peter Cullinane was unobtrusively present, ever supportive.

Principal overseas speaker was Sr Mary Collins, Professor of Religion and Religious Education at the Catholic University of America. Sr Mary opened the conference on the Sunday evening by emphasising that the Vatican Council had defined Christians as a pilgrim people of hope. Pilgrims take with them something of the past yet are constantly striving for the new. This transcendent yearning for the 'yet to be' is often kept hidden by Christian people today because they live in a secular society.

As Church people we inherited from St Augustine a sense of the hopelessness of the human situation, and this turned many people off Catholicism. But Augustine lived at a time when the civilised world was falling apart: for him the only hope lay in the City of God which was to come hereafter. Whereas the Old Testament prophetic tradition, while confronting contemporary evils, never lost sight of the Covenant: what God achieved for the people during the Exodus long ago, God would do again. God's People longed for the return of a Messiah who would restore the lost hopes of the people. And when Jesus came he offered precisely that: a kingdom of hope which is beginning even now among people of faith and hope and love.

Having launched the meeting on a hopeful note the rest of the week developed on a series of related themes. One of these was the biblical one of Jubilee: the opportunity for liberation, for repayment of debt and for reapplying principles of justice to the structures of society. A day was spent on Creation themes; a day on inculturation and ecumenism; a day on the social gospel and its grassroots application. However, in spite of the rich variety of input and wide-ranging debate, the principal theme of hope was never far away. For all present a salutary preparation for the Year of Jubilee in two years time.

Scott Eastham's was one of many excellent papers heard at the Symposium. Tui Motu hopes to reprint excerpts of other papers in forthcoming issues.

regeneration and renewal, we might as well give up now.

A Threefold Response

Modernity boils down to a war of the worlds; the cosmic, the human, and the divine dimensions of reality are pitted each against the others. Although it will take on myriad shapes and cultural forms the alternative is obvious: peace, reconciliation, harmony – not only between peoples and warring states, but also and above all between these three constitutive dimensions of human life and experience: “Heaven, man, earth, our law as written/not outside their natural colour” (*Ezra Pound*). In a word, the alternative to modernity is *peace*. By this I mean to outline a three-fold response to the three fundamental conflicts of modernity outlined earlier – three strands of hope.

Cooperation Not Competition

The fundamental premise of social Darwinism is that life is intrinsically an arena for conflict and that competition is the engine of evolution. War is no longer glorious, or heroic: if we have learned anything from living through the bloodiest century in human history, it is that war does not lead to peace.

In *The Way*, Edward Goldsmith tackles head-on the insidious neo-Darwinian rationale for competition by showing that competitive behaviour only characterizes ecosystems in what is called their “pioneering” stages. Your front lawn, for instance, is a pioneering ecosystem – stripped of all that was there before you moved in, every blade of grass must fight a constant battle with the weeds. But once things settle down, Goldsmith observes the climax ecosystem is a model of dynamic, cooperative equilibrium between all its diverse life-forms, each embedded in complex nets of interdependence with all the others. Is this not why old growth forests like our own native bush have such an ineffable feeling of peacefulness about them?

The road before us today appears to be forking; one way is the bio-engineering approach, ready to plan and calculate

and genetically program the future of everything from agribusiness to human cloning. The other ecological approach seeks mainly to more deeply understand what is happening with the soil and plants and animals with which we share this world, so as to integrate human activities more harmoniously with all these other life-cycles.

If we assume competition to be the basis of social as well as biological life, then

“There are two kinds of religious people – those who think sex is good for the crops, and those who do not.”
(*Ezra Pound*)

the variably-sensed ‘duration’ of human experiences in favour of a single frame of temporal reference.

The Earth is not monochronic. Properly attuned, calendar festivals co-ordinate human social rhythms with the rhythms of the Earth in a profound way. Earth time is polychronic, and vividly local. It is tied to traditional values, mythologies, and customs – all of which collaborate in the spirit of celebration. This collaboration entails not only people working together, but working with all the elements of creation. Ritual in its deepest sense is world renewal. This, the poets know. If we do not offer the sacrifice tonight, the sun may not rise tomorrow morning.

Once upon a time the change of seasons heralded the rites which celebrated life, fertility and, yes, sexuality. The pagans were the *pagani*, the country folk who stubbornly preserved all these old ways, in the face of the emerging technological and imperial juggernaut of city-culture, ‘civi’-lisation.

Economy once meant order in the

that’s the kind of world we construct for ourselves. Then we become corporate predators and free market privateers, and the society we inhabit becomes an arena reflecting this narrow, selfish, brutal Social Darwinist view. If, instead, we assume that co-operation is at the basis of both social life and ecological viability then that, too, becomes the kind of world we inhabit. Suddenly our ‘higher’ feelings, the admonitions of religion and the promptings of conscience, begin to make sense.

On the *Holmes* programme, the Dalai Lama on a visit to New Zealand pointed out that peace never comes from victory – which only lasts until the vanquished have regained their strength – but rather from mutual understanding. Although he cited examples, including Chinese journalists and intellectuals now taking up the Tibetan cause, the entire notion apparently remained quite opaque to interviewer Holmes: “And will you continue your fight?” he asked at the last. We know very well that if the human species is to survive on this planet, we’re



going to have to take the ‘co-operative’ view of human nature a good deal more seriously.

Calendar Festivals

We forget the timing of festivals at the local roots of any humane way of life. Rhythm is the most basic human experience. Life on planet Earth consists of many intermeshing rhythms – the pulse in our veins, the rhythm of breathing, the alternations of day and night, rain and sun, and the four seasons. Centuries of clock-time have taught us to ignore





If things keep going in this direction, our progeny may look upon us as the last indigenous people, that is, the last generation of genetically unaltered humans to know what the natural world was like before we turned it into a batch of bioplasmonic commodities for global markets.

Wisdom in practically every tradition stands for the paradoxical coincidence of opposites – of subject and object, self and other, I and thou, inner and outer, male and female, part and whole, etc. – not in an undifferentiated monistic unity, but in nondual interdependence. One may draw from the history of religions that wisdom is that participation in Mystery that is called the ‘mystical’ experience – sometimes partly susceptible to reason after the fact, but never reducible to reason alone.

Wisdom is distinct from both information and knowledge in another respect: it cannot be manipulated. Wisdom is not powerless, but eschews the blandishments of power, especially the Faustian temptation to manipulate knowledge in order to attain or retain power. Wisdom is notoriously paradoxical. To seek wisdom is to begin finding it. To claim to possess wisdom merely indicates that you’ve lost it. Wisdom, in every case and in every tradition, indicates the clearest path to peace. It is also the guide to the ethical life and the holy life and the good life, and yet this is a ‘way’ that is always spontaneous and wholly unpredictable. People today mistake mysticism for something vague, visionary or delusional. But centuries of human experience suggest otherwise – the possibility that humans are capable of a *direct awareness* of reality.

Consider for a moment the humblest, a common or garden event: you touch an object, let us say a leaf falling through the

crisp autumn air, spinning down from the sky to the earth. You hold out your hand and catch the leaf in mid-air. You become aware you are in touch not only with the ‘piece,’ but with the whole – first perhaps the tree from which the leaf just fell, then the forest that once surrounded the tree, then the whole of the natural world. In the blink of an eye, the ‘object’ is lost in the myriad connections that constitute it. You are touching not only leaf or tree or nature, but the entire universe. At the same time, you have forgotten yourself. You are no longer just a person standing in time and space holding a leaf suspended between the sky and the ground. You are a human being in touch with the whole of nature. More, you are simply consciousness intersecting the living cosmos. At any rate, you are conscious, but ‘conscious’ neither of the leaf nor of yourself. You may return to yourself. Maybe the leaf is still in your hand, or maybe it has fallen to the ground, indistinguishable from a thousand others.

This experience totally transforms your life. Something at once humble and momentous has happened. Nothing can

ever be quite the same. Life has acquired an ineffable ‘savour’ it never seemed to have before. You find yourself at peace about it all, at least for the time being. That ineffable something *more*, that is the beginning of wisdom. There is no question about it. You may never be able to put your finger on it, it may never befall you again, you may never catch – or be ‘caught’ by – another such splendid autumn leaf, but this experience has irrevocably transformed both you (the subject) and the (objective) world around you. In a word, everything is *new*.

Wisdom is at once a recognition of the limits of our knowing power, and something *more*. It is an awareness which consciously participates in that integrity, that wholeness and centredness, by which it comes to understand that all things cohere. You cannot know the knower, but you can to a degree *become* the knower.

Contemplation, in the etymological sense means bringing together what has been sundered. Peace is not simply the absence of conflict, a lull between wars, but engages the full polarity and creative vitality of life itself. The contemplative attitude, as the *Bhagavad Gita* puts it, is to take delight in the wellbeing of all beings.

Wisdom? It’s all around you; everywhere, and nowhere – that is to say now, here – in particular.

“There is no key to reality,” Abhinavagupta is said to have told one of his disciples, “and none needed.” “Why not?”, asked the disciple. “Because,” replied the sage, “it’s not locked.” ■



Conversation with a prophet of Baal

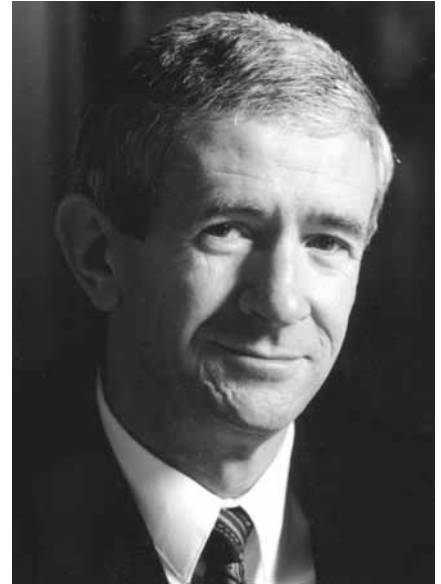
Mr Roger Kerr (pictured right) works with a small research and secretarial staff in an austere but adequate suite of offices on the Terrace in Wellington. He is the Chief Executive of the Business Roundtable, which comprises some 60 Chief Executives of New Zealand's leading firms. He has had this position from the start in the early 80s when at the initiative of Doug Myers and Ron Trotter the Roundtable was established. "However", Mr Kerr hastened to add, "if I don't measure up they will dismiss me". The principle of hire and fire applies equally to the Chief Executive and Mr Kerr rejoices in this fact.

He is a quiet, gentle-mannered person and speaks with that intensity of feeling of a prophet of the faith of economic rationalism which he single-mindedly espouses. He came to this job after ten years in Foreign Affairs and ten in the Treasury. The Keynesian atmosphere of the 70s had led to stagnation in New Zealand's economy. New Zealand was overdue for a prescription of deregulation. The Business Roundtable was set up in 1984, to be a think tank of economic reform, running parallel to Treasury but independent of it – and economic deregulation became a principal goal.

Its basic philosophy is the creation of wealth by sound economic management, to seek smarter ways of running the country as a business enterprise. The Roundtable seeks good social outcomes from its economic measures, but Mr Kerr freely admits that its aim is the material well-being of the citizens, and his concern is not their spiritual or aesthetic well-being.

Are these policies not dependent on the creation of a pool of unemployed and disadvantaged people?

Not at all. He sees no reason at all why there should be unemployment of 6-7 percent. In a well-functioning economy there will be jobs for all. The demand is there: it is simply a question of creating a market which will use people's skills fully. This is being achieved at the moment in the UK and the US, where unemployment is down to an unprecedented level. In the early 90s New Zealand also was moving in the right direction and he is confident we would be up there among the leaders if the economic reforms had gone on. "Instead, at the moment we're taking a teabreak", he says.



But taking Telecom as an example, large numbers of skilled people have lost their jobs in the interest of higher efficiency, and none of the wealth accruing from this seems to have gone into helping those people back into jobs.

Mr Kerr was adamant that 80 percent of Telecom workers would have found other employment in the burgeoning telecommunications industries. He did not say what happened to the other 20 percent. The best hope for struggling economies throughout the world is soundly based economic rationalism. He acknowledged the harm being done by "cowboy capitalism" in some countries. But, he claims, the more open the economic system the more even the distribution of wealth. He would cite Taiwan, HongKong and Singapore as being exemplary cases. Probably the worst scenario would be Brazil.

*How long do you mean to
hobble first on one leg then on
the other? If Yahweh is God,
follow him; if Baal, follow him.'*

1 Kings 18, 21

What about the claim that deregulated economies bring ever-increasing polarisation of personal incomes? A recent statistic claims that the top one percent of earners in the US gross the same as the bottom 90 percent – with nine percent in between.

Mr Kerr simply denied the validity of that figure. He acknowledged that there will always be disparities of wealth because that is what a free market produces, but he is adamant that in the free economies here is a long-term trend towards greater equality as people gain the skills and start to reap the rewards.

Last week on a Kim Hill interview you defended Rod Deane's 7 figure salary as being a just return for his skills. Can you ever justify someone receiving an income 50 times that of the lowest paid worker?

If an executive of Rod Deane's calibre is not paid at that level then he will be lured offshore where he would get such a salary and New Zealand would lose its top brains.

▷▷ ***But what about the Mondragon system where the***

Putting the Spotlight on the Economics of the New Right

*Jim Elliston looks into the mind of Roger Kerr
and finds there the shadow of
Friederich von Hayek*

and enables it to promulgate its values and attitudes, whether judged desirable or not. At any given time a majority of the population hold a certain minimum set of values, standards of conduct etc to be part of the natural order of things. As changes occur over time these values can be modified, or even rejected – at first by a minority, and then by the majority. Some examples would be the role of women in society, the ecumenical movement, our view of the colonisation process in New Zealand etc.

In the wake of the social, economic and religious upheavals in Europe over the past five centuries, the focus of religious belief changed from personal salvation within a divinely ordained, static community to that of a direct, individualist focus. For many in the commercial middle classes personal responsibility, respect for authority, thrift and hard work resulting in worldly prosperity became a

sign of God's favour. As religious belief declined this understanding of duty became the criterion of good citizenship and personal worth.

Hayek rejected the notion that people are subordinate to the state, but he also undermined the notion of *community*. What he leaves us with is a collection of individuals whose relationship with others seems akin to a commercial contract. Many of the 'traditional conventions' he holds necessary actually spring from people with a strong sense of community. By actively undermining their sense of community, the neo-liberals undermine people's adherence to those values.

The fundamental weakness in his theory is his assumption that *freedom* is the source of all values. As air is to life, so free will is to human virtue – it is essential but not the source. The *human person* is the source, the core

value. As Nelson Mandela can attest, the human spirit can survive lack of freedom, whether physical or economic, albeit with great difficulty. If liberty is placed above fraternity instead of being tempered by it, both will die. Hayek sees peace, justice and liberty as "the three great negatives" rather than positives, underpinned by charity.

In conclusion, can I give a personal practical example of contemporary Christian social teaching?

A few years ago I fell on a city street, injuring my knee. Passers-by carried me to the footpath and called an ambulance. The orthopaedic surgeon told me three things: a break necessitated immobilising the knee; muscle damage required it to be exercised; doctors do not heal people, nature does. He didn't throw me out to let nature take its course, nor did he keep me in hospital. He provided some simple equipment and explained how I could assist nature meet its contradictory needs. Healed, I returned the equipment six weeks later. ■

differential between the highest and lowest earners is set at four to one?

"If anyone wants to set up a Kibbutz in the free system we are advocating that would be fine. If you could run an alternative to Telecom with lower wages for the top executives, then such an enterprise having lower costs would prevail – and that would be fine too."

But Mr Kerr continues to deny that the *laissez faire* system always has – and always will – create major disparities of wealth. "Look at what it was like when Larnach was establishing himself 100 years ago. The poor were much worse off." He did not think it an unfair comparison to use feudal societies as a yardstick.

Mr Kerr is serenely confident in the infallibility of a non-

interventionist system. The statistics are there, he says, to support these views. Not everyone has arrived there yet, and looking around the world economies gives you a "snapshot" view. But given time and faith, we will all get there.

I drank up my tea and left. I had supped politely with the prophet of Baal. There had been an exchange of views but no real meeting of minds. I was reminded of the witticism of the Rev. Sydney Smith, Dean of St Paul's, as he witnessed two fishwives arguing vehemently from the top windows across a narrow London street. "Those two will never agree. They are arguing from different premises."

One day the devil was walking with a friend when they saw a passer-by pick up something from the ground and look at it intently. "What has he found?" asked the devil's friend. "He has picked up a piece of the truth," came the reply. The friend said, "Aren't you distressed; aren't you appalled by such an awful accident?" "Not at all", replied the devil. "It is a great piece of luck for me. Now he will go home and make an ideology out of it."

In recent years the Business Roundtable has made statements and imported speakers on many topics of social concern. They show an interesting unity. Some commentators have noted a biblical resonance in much of the language used, others accuse BRT of promulgating a 'new religion'. This unity reflects the philosophy of econo-

Hayek undermines the notion of community. What he leaves us with is a collection of individuals

ever be produced by deliberate arrangements". Government's main purpose is to inform individuals what is the sphere of responsibility within which they must shape their own lives, limiting itself to the enforcement of "universal rules of just conduct".

There are two essential components; belief in individual responsibility and a free market. He acknowledges that our sense of justice will often revolt against the impersonal decisions of the market, "a combined game of skill and chance wholly beyond our control". Work is valued only by its usefulness to others – which "stands in no necessary relation to the anything which we could appropriately call the worker's merits and still less to his needs."

It follows that the preservation of individual freedom, defined as "freedom from the arbitrary power of others", is the primary good. But the idea of freedom "from the despotism of physi-

cal want... by relaxing restraints of the economic system" is "merely another name for power". There is only a justice of individual conduct. There is not a separate 'social justice', which of its nature "implies the state granting rights to some which are not available on equal terms to others".

However, he sees "no reason why a society which, thanks to the market, is as rich as modern society should not provide, *outside the market*, a minimum of security for all who in the market fall below a certain standard." Also essential is submission to traditional conventions, "genuine social growths" which evolved over time to establish "flexible but normally observed rules that make the behaviour of other people predictable in a high degree". We must submit to them unless we have definite reasons not to.

A contentious – and misunderstood – notion is that of *individualism*. Hayek holds that individuals are the ultimate judges of their own ends, for no one can perceive the needs of the whole of society. As far as possible their own views ought to govern their actions. This is the essence of the individualist position, not the assumption that human beings are selfish or ought to be. However, it is legitimate for like-minded individuals freely to band together for a common goal. He warns that extensive government control produces a psychological change, an alteration in the character in the people over one or two generations. "The important point is that the political ideals of a people and its attitude towards authority are as much the effect as the cause of the political institutions under which it lives". This is the theory behind the drive to dismantle the 'welfare state'.

Evaluation

It seems to me that there are many aspects of Hayek's teaching which have merit, but it has some fundamental flaws which make it dangerous to adopt uncritically. The last point, concerning psychological change, holds one key to understanding those flaws.

There is an essential aspect of human nature which gives a society stability

mist Friedrich von Hayek, founder of the Mont Pelerin Society (to which BRT Executive Director Roger Kerr belongs), collaborator with influential American new-right economist Milton Friedman, and reputed guru of Margaret Thatcher.

Von Hayek

Von Hayek's political and economic theories were strongly influenced by Fascism and Communism. In reaction to their totalitarianism he stated that "it is almost self-evident that individual freedom is the source of all values". For Hayek even democracy does not guarantee freedom. He rejected both democratic socialism, which he saw as leading to totalitarianism, and conservatism, which is "paternalistic, authoritarian and seeks to retain privilege."

His central concept is that in ideal conditions "a spontaneous order of human activities of much greater complexity will form itself than could



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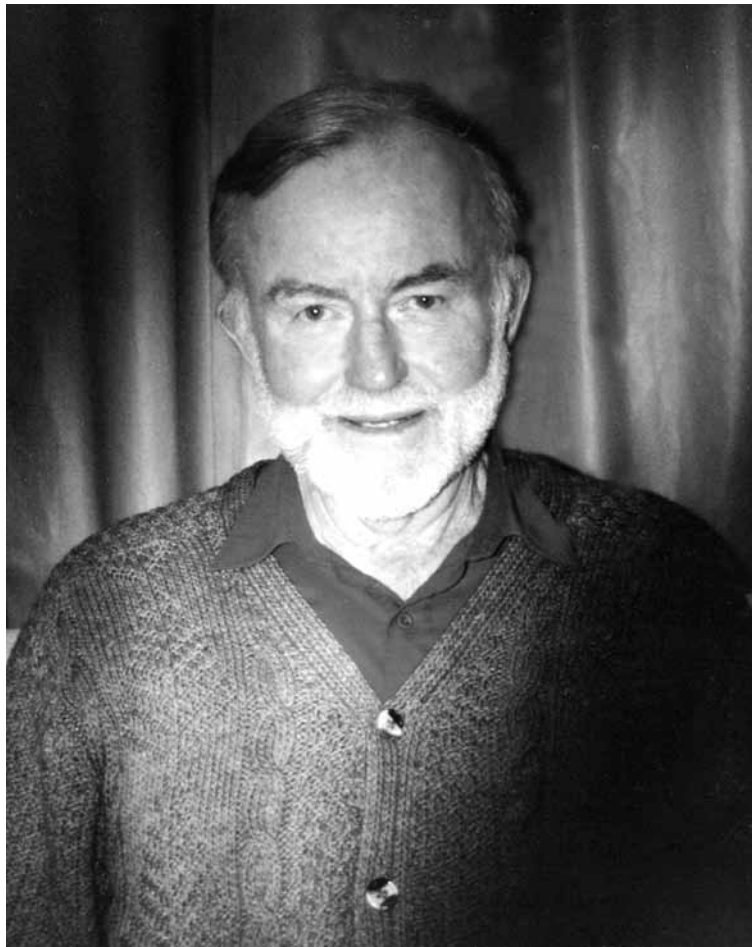
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Inspirational * Timely * Practical

Option for the Poor...

On the 20th anniversary of Bastion Point veteran campaigner, Fr Terry Dibble, throws down a challenge to the Church



...what is the Catholic Church doing?

and exploitation may well be exposed in the light of the role of the Catholic Church in East Timor in its support of the people's quest for independence from Indonesia. At the time of the Indonesian invasion in 1975, around one third of the people in East Timor were Catholic. Today, Catholics form nearly 90 percent of the population. The reason for this remarkable commitment of the people to Catholicism is the courageous solidarity shown by the Catholic community in the struggle for freedom. Under the leadership of Bishop Belo and his predecessor Bishop Lopes, the

Catholic Church has been a consistent sign of hope to the people.

The situation in East Timor is a great deal more drastic than in New Zealand. Nevertheless, the growing discrimination against the poor in New Zealand, through the imposition of harsh policies combined with the fostering of a wealthy elite, is an injustice that calls for concerted action. The NZ Catholic Church can show solidarity with the poor of this country, as well as with the people of East Timor, by devoting resources and people to the struggle for

a just society.

Steadily declining congregations point to the perceived irrelevance of the Church in the lives of people as they grapple with a rampantly materialistic world. Unless the Catholic Church of Aotearoa/NZ consciously and publicly makes a clear preferential option for the poor, the future of Catholicism will be little more than an historic curiosity. ■

On 25 May last I joined many others at Bastion Point to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the eviction of the Ngati Whatua tribe and its supporters from their ancestral land. The anniversary emphasised the triumph of the tribe in recovering its against the forces of the State. Memories also returned of the brutal display of State force to effect the eviction. As we watched arrests being made and buildings crushed we had been immersed in a deep sadness, a smouldering anger and utter powerlessness. Events proved the eviction to be a pyrrhic victory for the State.

Standing on 'The Point' at the anniversary, those feelings of sadness and anger reignited in my mind as I reflected on the current state of Maori in Aotearoa/New Zealand (NZ). Despite triumphs, such as the return of Bastion Point to Ngati Whatua, the recognition of the Treaty of Waitangi and success of claims to the Waitangi Tribunal, the statistics concerning the well-being of Maori steadily decline.

The recent Government report "Progress Towards Closing Social and Economic Gaps Between Maori and Non-Maori" states, "There is no denying that Maori experience poorer educational outcomes, higher unemployment, lower income levels, lower rates of home ownership and poorer health than non-Maori... The evidence presented in this report does not provide assurance that the economic and social gaps between Maori and non-Maori are closing. Of greater concern is that the statistics do not provide any signals that there is an impending change in the situation". The policy of 'mainstreaming' support for Maori in Government Departments, established in the early 90s has proved disadvantageous.

Many families of other ethnic groups, including Pakeha, are also caught in the poverty trap. Beneficiaries and low income people are powerless to reduce the growing gap between themselves and those whose wealth steadily rises. The overall trend indicates that since

the beginning of re-structuring of the economy in 1984 only ten percent of the population are better off.

Among the memories at Bastion Point was the support and influence of various Church people during the struggle for the land. Catholics were prominent among those supporters. Today the question has to be asked: "In the desperate plight so many New Zealanders find themselves in, what support do they get from the Catholic Church in the struggle for a more just society?"

Many Church communities run Food-banks and provide for the immediate needs of hungry families, the St Vincent

never have the poor and marginalised had a greater need of solidarity

the coming of the reign of God?

The one structure capable of co-ordinating a struggle for justice among Catholic communities, the Justice, Peace and Development Commission, was dismantled in calculating fashion. Its successor, the Justice and Peace arm of Caritas Aotearoa, is a mere caricature of the Commission. Under the former National Commission, the six dioceses had groups of people committed to the objectives of Justice and Peace. Some were more effective than others, but all were capable of rising to a challenge.

Today, a few Catholic people, with little support, struggle against a tide of blatant oppression. Where is the rallying cry coming from a Church which has signalled a preferential option for the poor?

(Is. 45, 8)

The failure of the Catholic Church in Aotearoa/NZ to meet the challenge of greed

de Paul Society being prominent in this work. Is there a correspondingly effective mobilisation of people and resources to support the struggle to redress the growing economic imbalance in our society? There are isolated Catholic groups who strive to do battle with principalities and powers of evil that currently prevail. Where is the co-ordinated conscientisation and praxis demanded by Catholic Social Teaching?

There has never been a time in living memory when the poor and marginalised have had greater need of solidarity against the imposition of State manipulated poverty. Our politicians and bureaucrats freely speak of less Government, privatisation, the Free Market, de-regulation and tax reduction all in the name of wealth creation. The affluent have never been more privileged.

By contrast, the heavy hand of State surveillance, benefit reduction, economic mismanagement causing unemployment, Workfare, so-called Market Rents and contrived low wages are a constant harassment in the lives of the poor. Recent campaigns aimed at uncovering benefit fraud imply that deceit is widespread and involves huge sums of money. In fact last year 243 people were convicted of benefit fraud. Although many overpayments are investigated, only a minority are proved to be fraudulent. Economic necessity is often found to be at the root of benefit fraud. People are driven to fraud simply to provide essentials for their families. Meanwhile Housing New Zealand makes substantial profits, much of which comes from struggling families.

What is the record of the Catholic Church in standing out against this tyranny? A statement here, a submission there, a seminar or two. Indeed, some small groups bravely battle away, but where are the organised campaigns that originate from a passion for the Common Good and prophesy

Gaze of the



Artist and theologian, man and woman: two believers express their Marian faith in paint and in words. Tui Motu chose Donald Moorhead's "Gaze of the Eternal Mother" as our August cover, since 15 August is the patronal Feast of New Zealand. We invited comment both from the artist (below) and also from Ann Gilroy, a New Zealand woman theologian (right)

I call this painting *The Gaze of the Eternal Mother*. It depicts the glorified Virgin. She is crowned – but she is not in earthly form, with a veil.

Mary was often depicted by artists clothed in green with a purple veil. The Church specified the colour to use. For Emperors it was purple, very rare and expensive. Green was the earthly colour and represents humanity. The traditional blue for the Madonna came later. The Greek icons did not use blue.

I have painted Mary with red hair. For me red hair denotes a feisty women, someone of spirit. I wanted to get away from the 'simpering Madonna' image. It was a conscious decision. I wanted her to be a majestic, regal figure.

My background was Presbyterian – and now Anglican. As an artist I became immersed in the traditional ways Mary was portrayed – most poignantly in the *Pieta*. Mary's role was also heightened with the music especially the antiphons, the *Stabat Mater*, the *Magnificats*. Within such music was the exaltation, the rhapsody and the sadness of the sorrowing Virgin. Music declared its influence in my life.

I don't go along with the theory that the whole Marian thing is a counterbalance to the patriarchal, hierarchical aspects. There are dogmatic, rational things the Church declares about Mary.

Being brought up as a Presbyterian, some of my own community of faith were admitting that Protestants had 'thrown

out the baby with the bathwater'. We needed to rethink. Not necessarily to go as far as the Romans – but to give Mary due prominence in the Communion of Saints.

In this painting I used my own mother as the starting point. I think people's faith often reflects their relationship with their father and mother. I consider myself blessed to have had wonderful parents. I have always been aware of the Creator God as I went along my spiritual journey. It was my earthly family – so personally enriching – that connected me with the Communion of Saints.

For many people your relationship with your mother comes into focus at the moment of death. *Pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death*. Here Our Lady's role is the archetypal mother. There is a relationship between me and this person – and out of it comes hope.

Personally I take the Marian tradition seriously, but she doesn't dictate my prayer life. She enriches it. A book that has influenced my thinking is C.S. Lewis' *The Great Divorce*. He says the afterlife is where you become more real. The blades of grass in heaven really cut you! The Madonna has had 2000 years of 'getting sharper'; she is no longer the simpering Madonna. She has got rid of her veil and has a bob haircut. She becomes more real for me that way. ■

Eternal Mother

It is well to reflect that the Assumption of Mary was instituted as a universal dogma in the Church only after World War II despite it being held among the faithful from the earliest centuries. In the 1950s, after the years when millions of men, women and children were killed, disabled and dispossessed, a feast celebrating Mary could appear as a comforting mantle over a wounded world. Maybe we needed Mary, the universal Mother, to console us after

the rope had just been killed by Christians in the concentration camps and this portrayal of Mary pretended that she was not a Jew. What was up with us? Why did we escape into romanticism? What is hopeful and transformative for us now in the belief of the Assumption of Mary?

Two aspects of the feast strike me as thought provoking. The first is in the challenge to live in this earth now so that there is a heaven at the end of our lives. This Feast is an which is trans-formed into our heaven. Our bodies are the gift of ourselves and Christian teaching warns us against thinking that we will be better off without them.

Our bodies are part of the eco-system and we are to live in this earth doing as little damage as

tradition focuses on Mary's motherhood – mother of Jesus, of God, of the Church – it is timely to focus not just on the mother, but on the woman. If we maintain Mary's motherhood as our only focus we can perpetuate the patriarchal understanding of women's prime function as the production of children, particularly of sons.

For too long, Church and culture have limited women's roles to mother or non-mother. Today, women consciously try to express their identity in many types of relationships and roles, only one of which is motherhood. Woman-ness is expressed in diverse ways. The image of Mary, woman disciple moving between earth and heaven, can encourage us to recognise and affirm women's identity, discipleship and ministry in every area of life and Church. The symbol of Mary's Assumption can challenge our imaginations to go beyond the prescribed horizons and create the diversity of possibilities for life now and in the future. ■



The Dormition of Mary in bronze by NZ Artist, Ria Bancroft

the horrific evidence of our inhumanity to one another. In New Zealand and other allied countries we were in the throes of a post-war baby boom. If we could believe that Mary the Mother was in heaven with Jesus Christ, then maybe we could hope that we would control our bloodthirstiness to within humane limits.

The romance surrounding the feast is suspicious however. Most Assumption paintings depict an elaborately draped, blue-eyed Mary floating into the sky surrounded by cherubs. Doesn't it strike you as a funny way of representing this feast? Most of the Jewish women of Eu-

possible to ensure that we do our part in providing for the continuance of the earth. The Assumption of Mary's body into heaven presumes that life after death is in some way both continuous and discontinuous with this life. After the war experiences of destruction and the discovery of the modern evils of the atomic and nuclear bombs which threaten both earth and heaven, Mary in a body-friendly heaven is a source of hope and a warning to us not to destroy ourselves. Do we still believe this?

The second challenging aspect of this Feast is Mary's depiction as a of God. When the overwhelming weight of our



Ann Gilroy, RSJ is Dean of the Catholic Institute of Theology Auckland

Seeking the elusive Self – Thomas Merton's desert journey

*Michael Dooley gives his opinion
why Thomas Merton deserves the
current upsurge in popularity*

with his baptism into the Catholic faith, entry into the strict Cistercian order of monks, life as a hermit and his last journey in 1968 to dialogue with Eastern religions.

Coupled with this search for an external identity was his inner quest. Merton wrote about all of this in his honest and eminently readable style. His journals may well be his most important legacy because they provide the personal chronicle of one man's slow and at times torturous journey from what he terms the false self to the true self. What then is Merton's concept of the true and false self? Merton sees the spiritual life as concerned with the identity given to us by God. He refers to this identity as our true self. Our own perception of this identity has been distorted and this is the false self. A recurring motif in Merton is the image of discovery. We discover ourselves in discovering God, and discover God in discovering our true self. In *Seeds of Contemplation* he writes: "For me, to be a saint means to be myself. Therefore the problem of sanctity and salvation is in fact the problem of finding out who I am and of discovering my true self."

The false self has an illusory nature: "My false and private self is the one who wants to exist outside the reach of God's will and God's love – outside of reality and outside of life. And such a self cannot help but be an illusion." The false self is like a mask which hides a beautiful identity underneath. We create such masks in reaction to the world and people we deal with. In psychological terms the mask includes the defences that we develop. In the early part of our life it is healthy to build up our ego so that we can face the world. In the second half of life however, the task is to move beyond this mask and uncover our deeper identity. The dismantling of this carefully constructed mask can be a painful and demanding process.

When Merton describes the uncovering of our true self, he is emphasising that holiness is not the addition of something new. We are born with our true selves given us by God. Along the way, however, we have come to depend on the false self as our reality. The struggle is that "we are not very good at



recognising illusions, least of all the ones we cherish about ourselves."

Merton's spirituality could not be called individualistic; it included a great concern for humanity and issues of social justice. His writing tried to help people recognise their true selves, because he believed that to see ourselves as we really are is to discover God in ourselves and in each other.

The final word can be left to Merton's own experience of the true self. In *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* he relates an experience he had on the corner of a busy street in Louisville. "I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realisation that I loved all these people... I suddenly saw the secret beauty of their hearts, the depths of their hearts which neither sin nor desire nor self-knowledge can reach, the core of their reality, the person that each one is in God's eyes. If only they could all see themselves as they really are." ■



The Bishop, the ant and the little boy

Dom Helder Camara



In the full bus, packed to overflowing actually, everyone's attention was drawn to a small boy holding a scrap of wood with extreme care. One lady couldn't bear it any longer and asked him why he was being so careful about this worthless scrap of wood. He explained, 'I am taking a little ant for a ride. She's my great friend. It's her first trip in a bus.'

Who would ever have thought the kid could have so much poetry and kindness in him! I couldn't keep my eyes off him. When he got off the bus, I got off too. I felt that here was someone I could really talk to. I explained that I too was very fond of little ants. And I told him about the only time when the ants and I had ever been at cross-purposes.

One night, our little ants at home gobbled up our rosebush. Next morning, I caught Sonja, a little red lady-ant and one of the cleverest I ever met in my life. I didn't squeeze her angrily – for God preserve me from anger! But I did hold her with a certain firmness. Her little foot was trembling and her heart was beating fit to burst.

I asked her why they had gobbled up my rosebush in a single night. Miss Sonja replied, 'Do you think you're the only person to like roses?' At first I was taken aback, but then retorted, 'Eating seems a funny way of loving!' At which Sonja nearly made me die of shame by asking, 'Isn't that what you do at Holy Communion?' I apologised to her and set her free, carefully putting her back on the ground.

For the next three days, all the ants looked at me askance. Unable to bear this any longer, I called Sonja and asked her to help me. And this is how, by means of Sonja, I taught the ants to smell the roses instead of eating them. I explained to them that kissing roses goes on all over the place. But not up here in Nordeste – we just smell them.

I invited the little boy who was taking his ant-friend for a bus ride to come and visit our garden one moonlit night, and see all the ants climbing up the rosebush and smelling the roses. The child didn't react like a grown-up: he wasn't surprised, he didn't disbelieve me. He thought it was great!

So I then told him how, one day, I met a young ant called Claudia, who was limping. We were in the garden at home. With her permission, I turned her over on her back to see what was the matter with her tiny foot.

So it was that Claudia for the first time saw the sky – for ants are just like us – go, go, go, run, run, run, never pausing to look up and gaze at the sky! On seeing the sky for the first time, Claudia lay open-mouthed with amazement and delight. I soon realised there was no point in asking her about her foot. She wasn't listening. She was looking at the sky.

I told the little boy as he got into another bus carrying his ant on the bit of wood, 'If you come to my house one moonlight night, you may very well find the little ants lying on their backs with their heads in the grass, gazing at the moon.' ■

(A Thousand Reasons for Living)

Lately I have found great spiritual sustenance in reading the journals of Thomas Merton. I have not been alone in this because the popularity of the writings of this American Cistercian monk have undergone something of a resurgence in recent years. Part of the attraction is the way in which he honestly describes his own search for spiritual identity.

Merton's life journey clearly involves an external search for identity. It began in France in 1915 with a Bohemian, non-religious upbringing followed by flirtations with atheism and communism at Cambridge university. The search continued

Michael Dooley is Director of Holy Cross College Formation Centre, Mosgiel

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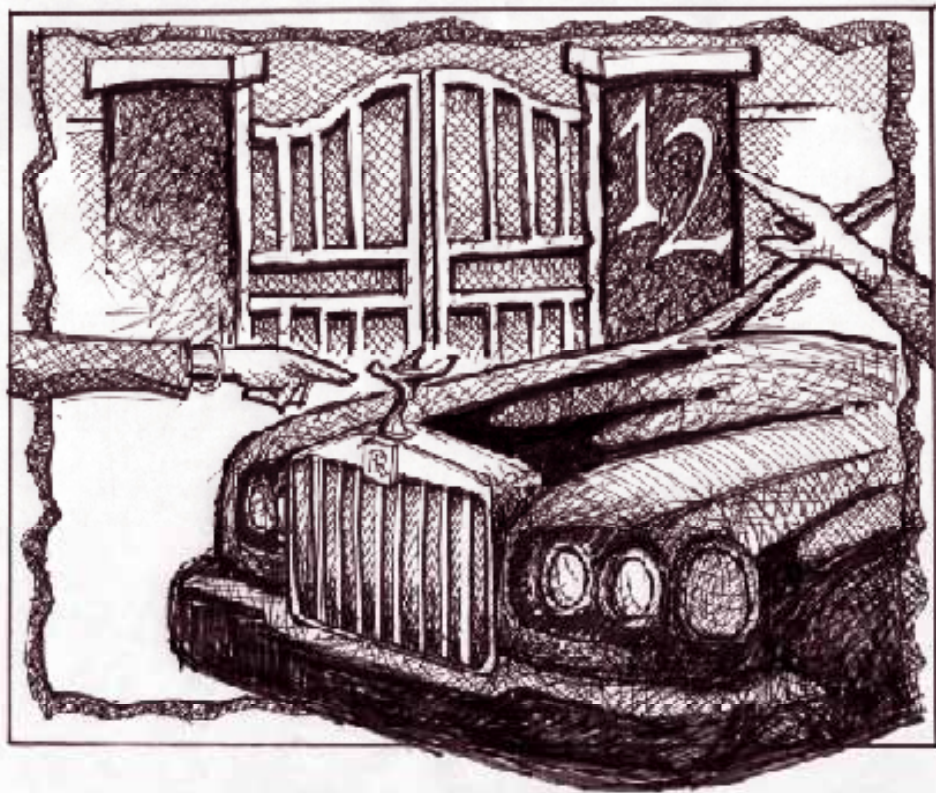
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Junketing with the Rich and Famous – *nearly!*

Pauline O'Regan tells a tale of mistaken identity which happened during her visit to Europe in 1979



My friend, Lorraine, and I were in London. On this particular occasion, we had been invited to have lunch with a friend whose husband was posted at the New Zealand High Commission. Her family and mine had a long history of friendship and we were connected by marriage. On the phone, she had given me detailed directions about how to get to their home in Kensington and it was, in fact, a comparatively easy exercise. The house number was 12.

When we arrived at No 12, there was a Rolls Royce parked outside. What would the New Zealand taxpayer have to say about *that*, we asked each other. As we turned in through the gates to walk up the drive, a young man fell into step beside us. He'd materialised out of thin air. I assumed that he was one of the older children of the family. He was tall, handsome and muscular and I could see a marked resemblance to his mother's family. "Well," said I, "it's easy to see that you're a member of the Fogarty clan." I rang the doorbell and he stood beside us.

A man in his 30s answered the door and

I decided that he must be Janice's husband whom I had not previously met. He was not. But before that had been established, I had reached out and wrung his hand and generally announced our arrival. It took some seconds for it to sink in that we were being kept firmly at the door. It seemed that no one was expected for lunch that day. But I was adamant. Janice had rung me the day before. She was expecting us. It took more time again for me to hear the news that no one by that name lived at this address. The older of the two men put a series of questions: what suburb? what street? what number? I pulled the crumpled bit of paper from my pocket and everything tallied. But the fact remained that this was not the house that was expecting two New Zealanders for lunch.

I explained that our friend would be known at the New Zealand High Commission. The two men had a whispered conference and came to a decision. They would ring there to find out where we were supposed to be. They invited us to come inside while we waited.

It was at this point that the full realisation dawned that we were most definitely in the wrong house. The New Zealand taxpayer could not possibly be financing this residence. To say that we had never seen anything like it is an understatement. We had not even imagined anything like it. To begin with, the place was like an enormous florist shop. The carpets under our feet were huge, embroidered squares, Persian or Turkish or whatever part of the Orient, we had no idea. Original paintings hung on every wall, most of them unknown

to us. But there was no mistaking the luminous Rembrandt magnificently framed, that hung over the massive marble fireplace. Lorraine crept across the carpet on an exploratory expedition and reported that it was encased in burglar alarms. I did not have the courage to move from the edge of my chair. We found ourselves whispering to each other. It was Lorraine who perceived that everything in that large reception room was brand new: the suites of furniture, the chairs, the tables, the drapes, the cushions, the carpets...

It must have taken some time to get a response from the High Commission because it was several minutes before the two men returned to the room. Yes, they had confirmed our identity and yes, we were expected for lunch – but not at No 12. It was at No 21. I was appalled. How could I have inverted those two numbers? I couldn't wait to get away. But our hosts, by this time, had become the very soul of hospitality. They invited us to have a cup of tea. They wanted to know all about New Zealand. We were already late for our lunch, but our national pride was suddenly engaged and we rose patriotically to the challenge. They asked us questions about pools of boiling mud, about high-country sheep stations, about our ski fields. It's said that everyone becomes an expert a hundred miles away from home and we were twelve thousand miles away! We

enthusiastically shared our knowledge and no doubt, our ignorance as well. We found ourselves describing the hypnotic powers of heading dogs, the mysteries of volcanic geology and the superiority and beauty of our ski fields. They told us they hoped to go to New Zealand some time and as it seemed obvious that they could afford it, we urged them not to delay and earnestly assured them they would not be disappointed. As tourist promotion goes, it was a virtuoso performance.

Finally, with many expressions of thanks and much shaking of hands we took our leave accompanied as far as the gate by the handsome young man. We ran the rest of the way to my friend's house, aware that we were embarrassingly late for the lunch appointment. Janice received us very graciously, but admitted that she had begun to wonder what had happened. We had no option but to tell her of the mistake I'd made. We explained how kind the people of No 12 had been to us in finding out her address and sorting things out. It was at this point that she stood stock still with the serving dish in her hand. Had we said, No 12? She was incredulous. Were we actually telling her that we had been inside the house at No 12? Yes, we'd said 12 and yes, we'd been inside their house for the last half hour. She said, "I don't believe this!" and then for no apparent reason she went into gales of

laughter. No 12, it seemed, was the talk of the street. Some people, she assured us, would have given an arm and a leg to get a glimpse of the inside. For the past fortnight they had all been watching Harrod's vans coming and going. They were, she said, beside themselves with curiosity. We had been, she told us dramatically, in the new London house of Rod Stewart!

Rod, it seemed, was not yet in residence so it was decided that we had been received by two members of his entourage – the older man must have been his manager and the younger one a security guard. And so it went on. We had brought our luncheon conversation with us. The teen-age members of the family had been entertaining friends upstairs. When they heard the news, they came down and gathered around us regarding us with a kind of awe, wanting to know every detail. However had we managed to do it? Had we planned it? Had we any idea how tight the security around that place was? They were obviously amazed that two such unprepossessing people had pulled off such a coup. We were celebrities once removed. As I looked at their faces the words of the old song came to mind: 'I danced with a man, who danced with a girl, who danced with the Prince of Wales!' Here, undoubtedly, was the material for a new book on how to become famous without really trying! ■

A Thought...

How will this lovely old Mother Earth mourn us when we've gone?
We seem hell-bent on abusing Her till we can't exist here ourselves.
She has the time to recover and to carry the sad memory of our passing.
She will blossom and evolve, give birth to new forms,
unfold potentials our kind will never mingle with.
The glory of what might have been a partnership,
denied by greed and lust and wanton, ignorant disregard.
The wounds we've made will heal,
but best without our interference or our help.
In aeons to come, our every trace obliterated, perhaps She'll try again
to draw forth a loving awe-filled, awesome partner
or maybe rest content to nurture those who do not rape, exploit and poison.
She has nursed so many through their fragile beginnings
and borne them to their inevitable end.
It might have been – or could it still be – different for us?
And yet every single solitary one of us who ever was – still is – and always will be image of the God
who risked to give us freedom and enjoined us to "cultivate and take care of" the Earth.

Henry Shepherd

*Jocelyn Franklin
(pictured right)
discovered a lay
vocation in the
Church 50 years
ago.*

*In 1998 she still
advocates the See,
Judge, Act method
of Canon Joseph
Cardijn*



...then and now

What was it that really impacted on you and changed your life as a young adult?

I joined the Catholic Youth Movement in the late 1940s and became a full-time worker for the Church in the 1950s. The greatest influence for myself and many others was Dr Reg – later Bishop – Delargey. Over the years we were to benefit from his dynamism, his experience, especially with youth, his capacity for friendship with people from all walks of life, his understanding of the world scene with roots going back to his study days at *Propaganda Fidei* in Rome. I remember his warmth and spontaneity and his deeply pastoral spirit. He has been described many times as a “gospel Christian”. I hope someone will capture his life in a book one day.

The idealism of the *Catholic Youth Movement* was high. The CYM was the New Zealand equivalent of the international *Young Christian Workers (YCW)*. YCW was founded by the famous Canon Joseph Cardijn, in Belgium in 1912 and was officially recognised by the Church in 1925. I was fortunate to meet Cardijn when he visited here in 1958 (*pictured opposite*): he was a dynamic, sparkling character with a wonderful breadth of vision.

I think one of the strengths of the Cardijn movement was that he never established a cult – with everything being referred back to himself as Founder. Our immediate point of reference was: *What would Christ do?* I have a couple of favourite quotes from Cardijn: “I am 80 years old and every year I am getting younger!” And “We

are always beginning. YCW has to be born again in parishes, regions, dioceses, countries”.

Likewise, through Dr Delargey we were never allowed to think of the CYM – or any organisation – as the be-all and end-all of the Church. He would remind us that one day CYM would disappear and it wouldn't matter. We were a pilgrim Church. I recall being publicly corrected by Dr Delargey when in a talk I used a great deal of *you should* and *you have to*. He bluntly reminded everyone that God has no conscripts! God is love and gives everyone their freedom.

The justice movements that you helped to found led you into quite a bit of conflict, didn't they?

I was involved in founding the Catholic

Lay Training Centre in Auckland in 1976, and this operated until 1988. It was the time of the angry and turbulent 70s. The Vatican Council gave us a growing understanding of the Church as the People of God, and encouraged us to become immersed in various movements for Social Justice. Through the methodology of structural analysis we became more sophisticated in understanding how our society works. This was an extension of the 'inquiry' method which is foundational to YCW. Diversity on political and social issues was often seen as a threat and created bitter divisions in and out of church structures. The late Bishop Brian Ashby and Fr John Curnow, both of Christchurch, were strong leaders. Some saw the conflicts we were led into as bad for the Church. I think it demanded of us all the readiness to struggle through the contradictions and the negatives to what was to become the priority for the poor, in whose name it was said that we were all working. It was a good time and a privileged time. It was also a very hard time, and often I was tempted just to walk away from it all.



Visit to NZ of Msgr Cardijn (1958) – l to r: Jackie Brebner (Wright) CYM Girls' President; Jim Anderton (CYM Boys' President; Bishop Delargey; Msgr Cardijn; Maria Meersman (YCW International)

A special frustration for me was the *Caritas International* meetings in Rome. It was evident that the bulk of the project work was handled by women – yet no women were allowed on the top executive Board. It takes time to change structures and it took ten years to have a woman appointed to that top body.

And the Training Centre itself? Tell us how it worked.

I saw it as a marriage between the

Cardijn process of *See, Judge, Act* and Ignatian spirituality. The social agenda depended on prayer, the study of Scripture, personal inquiry and the atmosphere of friendship. We did not set out to create communities. We invited people to come and reside with us for one or two years. The concept was that of a Pilgrim Church. We asked: "Is there anything you need for your journey?"



Catholic Youth Movement Reunion, Auckland 1996. Groups from five decades gathered round Cardinal Tom Williams and Bishop John Mackey. Msgr Terry Leslie (front r) was also a prominent figure in the early days of the CYM



and “Is there anything you wish to leave for others on their journey?”

It was a situation of mixed flatting for eight persons with rent and costs shared equally. The residents kept their jobs. Up to 30 people would join us in the evenings for contemplative prayer, Scripture, social action. Residents might arrive with a fridge – but then they could walk back out the door taking the fridge with them!

During those years there was some fragmentation in Church circles: many became involved in charismatic renewal; others were swept up into particular ‘issues’. The year we started the Centre was the year of Bastion Point: often half our number were up on the Point while the others waited at home wondering if some of the group would end up in prison. Our group covered the political spectrum and I think this accorded well with Cardijn’s ideal. Political and social issues were hotly debated but the ideas of others were always respected.

So what has this life of service taught you about the lay vocation in the Church?

It is a life of “loose affiliation”. There are no fixed institutional models. For me it has been a call to celibacy; I could not have done many of these things if I had

been a married person. I have given my life to God and this has meant a lifetime’s commitment. I believe we come to a crossroads in our spiritual journey: if you don’t make a commitment and go down one path you run the risk of remaining a spiritual adolescent – always keeping your options open. Looking back over 50 years this commitment has coloured all the choices I made. As a layperson you haven’t got the security

What is good is that now laypeople are there at the heart of the Church by right

of tenure of a Religious. In a sense you have to ‘gamble with God’, because you know the Church will not require you to stay in one job for ever.

One huge ‘plus’ has been my love of theology: I have been constantly challenged by these ideas and it has led me into an incredibly rich life and continues to do so. What is good is that now – as opposed to 50 years ago – laypeople are there in the heart of the Church *by right*. That development is part of the Church’s wisdom. I also believe there is a specifically feminine contribution to Catholic spirituality. It is our task to discover our unique and distinctive

identity. We have had to struggle over the years for women to gain recognition and opportunities in the decision-making bodies of the Church, but we are getting there.

And your hopes for the future?

I want to continue creating a Cardijn/ Ignatian leadership programme, since without proper training people are powerless against the powerful anti-Christian pressures of the present social environment and a climate which stifles the religious and symbolic nature of the human person.

I would like to see our Church foster love and pride in our country and culture, creating something which is at once beautiful and “gospel reflective”. I want people to be proudly ‘New Zealand’, as well as proudly Christian. And I would like to see more older people joyfully experimenting with new ideas for rituals and sacraments. There are 75,000 Catholics over the age of 60 in this country. What a powerhouse we could become, producing new forms and organisations and activities.

We need to challenge each other to start in a new place. I’m bored stiff with the old clichés and political slogans and guilt trips about misuse of “option for the poor”. The *modernity* that Scot Eastham speaks about (see pages 6-10) is a huge challenge. What are we waiting for? ■

Were you once a member of CYM? YCS? YCW? CFM?

An Invitation:

To explore a new nationwide movement of Lay Christian Adult Formation

Two national inquiries will provide the agenda for an International Conversation and could be held at the same time as the 75th anniversary of International YCW in May, 2000. Interest already shown in USA, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, South Africa, Philippines and Hong Kong

If you are interested please fill in the form and send

The Secretary, Catholic Lay Training Centre,

P O Box 47 402, Ponsonby, Auckland

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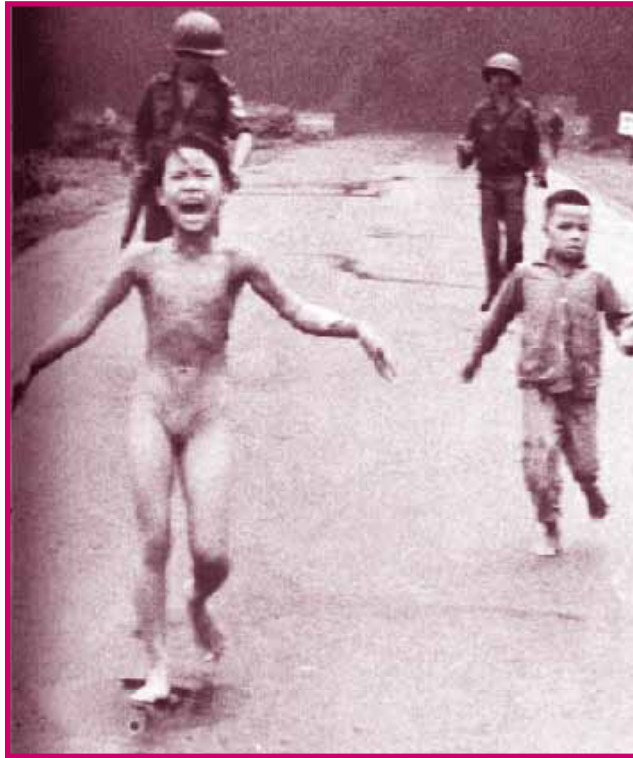
March of Reconciliation

John Carde, Catholic Military Chaplain from Wellington, went to the war in Vietnam as part of his job. Twenty-five years later he helps to exorcise the demons

War profoundly affects the psyche of all those who fight. Victor or vanquished, all carry memories and scars which linger below the surface of the mind for the rest of their lives. Boys go away to war. Months and years later they return as mature men, their characters honed by comradeship and deeds of courage; their memories seared by fear or by deeds of shame. Sometimes they are barely recognisable as the men who went away. “Who’s the man in bed with my mum”, asks the child who can scarcely remember the father who went away to war.

Often enough they return heroes. They can hold their heads high. But that was not the case for those who went from New Zealand to fight in Vietnam. When they returned the welcome was muted. One who went through the whole experience was Fr John Carde. He went as a chaplain, and he vividly describes the feelings of the returned veterans. “Often they were ignored or misunderstood. They felt themselves less than worthwhile people. For the most part they were professional soldiers doing their job, and few of them at 19 or 20 understood the political implications of what they were engaged in.

“Jungle warfare has its own special scars. Patrolling in the bush meant long hours with nerves taut as bowstrings because of the threat of ambush”. John should know because both he and Ray Stachurski, the other Catholic chaplain,



accompanied the soldiers on their bush patrols.

“We were a very well trained body of men, and had much lower casualties than the other nationalities: 35 killed altogether in a force of over 4,000. The real cost has been since. More than 400 of those who returned have died before the age of 50, and some by their own hand. What has been denied these veterans has been to be able to look back with human pride on what they did.

“Every two years we would have a reunion, but this year we decided to organise a parade through the streets of Wellington with a view to healing the traumatic wounds that continued to fester. It couldn’t have been held earlier because of the opprobrium. It gave us a

An important ingredient of the reunion weekend was the presence of Kim Phuc, the napalmed girl of that infamous war photograph. After intensive hospital rehabilitation she discovered the Christian faith, and now spends her life trying to bring about reconciliation, which she soon saw to be an integral part of her new-found belief. She started at the beginning. She first forgave the airman who destroyed her village, and who was the cause of so much personal suffering for herself and her family. She and the pilot keep in touch with each other in what must be one of the world’s most poignant friendships.

chance to talk, to surface those haunting memories – or just to be present. Fifteen hundred gathered from all around New Zealand, and some hundreds came over from America and Australia. It was not a triumph. It was a way of communally laying to rest a nightmare which all feel but few can utter. And a few protesters – but it was right they should be there too.

“The people of Wellington turned out in their thousands and cheered – yet none of us felt that it was intended as an approval of that war or any other. One veteran said: ‘Now I can die in peace’. Another: ‘I had never cried before, but today I cried for the first time’. The parade has been a ‘oncer’: it won’t happen again. But for those veterans of Vietnam who marched, they can once



▷▷ again feel themselves to be people of worth.”

John Carde draws two lessons for himself from this experience. First is the importance of a *rite of passage*. “People need rituals. Even going to Athletic Park to cheer on the All Blacks against the Springboks is a ritual. It has a quasi-sacramental value in people’s lives. And if that’s true for a game of rugby it has been far more the case for the Vietnam procession. The citizens

of Wellington gathered and gave us an ovation. A terrible memory with all its associations of guilt can be buried – hopefully, for good. It has been a liturgy of reconciliation. People have to have really deep feelings in order to be able to celebrate – or to grieve.

“The other thing for me is the value of chaplaincy. Chaplains are there standing alongside the combatants. But they are not seen as belonging to the establishment. They have a unique status because

officers or ordinary ranks can dump their deepest concerns at the chaplain’s door and know they will be heard; they won’t be judged; and their secrets will go no further. It is a wonderful ministry, and worth all the sweat and tears.”

Msgr John Carde is Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Wellington and parish priest of Mt Victoria parish, in the central city.

Bernard Haring CSsR – a Personal Memoir

Bernard Haring, one of the most influential moral theologians of modern times, died last month at the age of 85. I was fortunate to have studied under him during the 60s at the Alphonsianum, the Roman University of the Redemptorist Fathers. I had previously been trained as a ‘confessor’ – as was the Church’s custom in those days: learning to judge on whether actions were sinful and whether they were venial or mortal. The emphasis was on obedience to laws, divine, natural or Church laws. There had been little reference to the Scriptures, the sacraments or the great themes of Christ’s love, grace or the Holy Spirit.

Haring’s theology cut right across this legalistic approach. He believed and taught about an all-embracing, loving and forgiving God. He saw the job of the moral theologian as helping people find ways of responding to this loving and forgiving God.

As a young Redemptorist priest Bernard had been conscripted into the German Army as a medical orderly. He was forbidden to minister as a priest, but he ignored this and acted as pastor, doctor and friend not only to German soldiers but to French, Russian and Polish civilians. “What most influenced my thinking about moral theology”, he wrote, “was the mindless and criminal obedience of Christians to Hitler, a madman and a tyrant. This led me

to the conviction that the character of a Christian must not be formed one-sidedly with an overriding emphasis on obedience, but rather by a discerning responsibility, a capacity to respond courageously to new value insights and the readiness to take risks.”



He had no patience with those who saw obedience to laws as the number-one virtue. If a student talked that way he would pound his rostrum and plead: “Can you not understand that you must be disobedient to a law which is itself being disobedient to a higher good – a higher value?”

During Vatican II there were attempts to prevent him being a member of the team drafting Council documents: he was labelled the ‘red Herring’ by his opponents! However, he did become one of the major influences especially on the documents on

Priestly Formation and *The Church in the Modern World*. These documents themselves enshrined his teaching that moral theology “should show the nobility of the Christian vocation of the faithful, and their obligation to bring forth fruit for the life of the world. (*Priestly Formation* 16)”

After the Council Haring continued to speak out on issues such as contraception, remarriage after divorce, priestly celibacy and the lack of Church involvement in the promotion of peace and justice – issues that brought him into conflict with authorities. On a visit to England he described the two interrogations he had suffered during his life. The first was by the Nazi SS., the second by Cardinal Ratzinger and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. Haring said the SS. were “better informed, more polite and far less frightening!”

One of his last statements was a commentary on Pope John Paul’s catchcry: “No more war!” “The future of the Churches”, he said, “depends on the choice of commitment to justice, peace and the safeguarding of ecological equilibrium. Basically it means simply a day-to-day following of Christ the redeemer, the reconciler, the non-violent servant who frees, heals and unites all people of goodwill.” ■

Jim Neilan is a graduate in Moral and Pastoral Theology from the Alphonsianum, Rome

No Room at the Inn – a Caritas Report on Housing in New Zealand

Marilyn is a solo mother with two young children living on a benefit. One of her children has a disability. She lives in a rented house. Only one room is curtained, there is no wall insulation, and the hot water system is unlagged. When winter came on her power bills soared so that Marilyn was unable to pay them. Her power was cut off, as was her phone. This meant she was unable to contact Income Support, and had to leave the door open since people could not reach her by phone.

When the case was brought to the notice of Catholic Social Services they were able to give her immediate assistance by way of food parcels and arrange a grant for curtaining from the Energy Efficiency Fund. They have also been able to pay her phone and power bills so that services can be reconnected. This case is one of many afflicting the lowest income group in New Zealand and illustrates the cycle of deprivation into which they can easily become trapped.

What to do nationally about the Marylins? Louise May, of *Caritas Aotearoa*, highlights the reform of state housing legislation in 1992 as the chief culprit. The most economically marginalised members of our communities, she says, are finding it more and more difficult to meet the cost of a state house rental. So people turn to desperate measures to keep a roof over their heads: two or more families crowding in together; some families staying long-term in emergency accommodation intended for short term relief; others resorting to caravans, cabins, garages, even tents.

The effects of this style of living are beginning to show up in other areas, notably health and education. A recent report of the National Health Commit-

tee clearly indicates that substandard housing is linked to the deteriorating health condition of many poor people. Providers of community services report increasing demands from people who cannot afford food and other basic essentials. With the change to market rates for state housing, the cracks in the system have become gaping holes through which more and more people are disappearing.

Last year there was a move to change Government policy via the *Housing Responsibilities Bill* which proposed that state rentals be set at a level no higher than 25 percent of a household's income. Had this become law, the positive flow-on effects would have been felt immediately. Most state tenants are currently paying well above the 25 percent. A recent report from the Ministry of Maori Development shows that in 1996 58 percent of Maori paid more than one quarter of their income in rent. Almost half Maori households are in rental accommodation, and some pay as much as half their weekly income in rent.

There were 59 submissions in favour of the Bill – and none opposed. Committee members were visibly moved by the tales of struggle recounted about families in real hardship. A whole raft of problems surfaced: overcrowding; ill-health; insecurity of tenure; reliance on foodbanks; effects of inflation; shortage of low-cost accommodation; the special difficulties faced by the disabled; and maintenance issues. The Bill received the support of ten petitions. One was put together by *Caritas* and gathered over 8,000 signatures.

Despite all this the Bill failed to make progress past the committee stage. The Committee's conclusion at the end of



Photo: Brendan O'Brien

the Report consisted of two sentences, recommending that the Bill not proceed because new initiatives have been put in place and the effects of these would need time to assess. Little wonder that the community becomes disillusioned when Select Committees respond in such a manner.

We have had six years to assess the effects of the housing policy established by the 1992 Act. As a means of ensuring that all New Zealanders are housed to a level sufficient to maintain health and well-being, the Act has simply not delivered. What can be done? More people are needed to support community projects, such as *Just Housing*, promoted by *Pax Christi*. The public needs to be made fully aware of the disastrous housing situation as well as the failure of concerned citizens to obtain redress through statutory process.

Meanwhile how many Marylins will continue to fall victim to a cruel and unworthy national housing policy. ■

Tui Motu acknowledges the work of Louise May, of *Caritas Aotearoa*, in gathering the material for this article.

A True Disaster Movie

Godzilla

Review: Nicola McCloy

Nuclear testing in the Pacific, a bumbling French secret service and a potential political time-bomb. Sound familiar?

No, it's not New Zealand in the 1980s. Surprisingly, it's a big budget Hollywood remake of the age old Japanese comic classic, *Godzilla*. Apparently, the marketing budget for the film exceeds the production budget which explains the plethora of *Godzilla* merchandising invading every corner of your local shopping centre. So, does the film live up to its expensive hype? Sadly, but predictably, it doesn't.

The film's storyline is flimsy at best. Nuclear tests cause a lizard to mutate. Lizard heads straight for New York (narrowly beating several meteors, earthquakes and tsunamis which are

set to trash New York this movie season!) On his way to New York, the lizard wreaks havoc in various picturesque locations. Boy scientist meets girl journalist. Lizard trashes New York. Lots of guns and special effects. Boy and girl fall out. Lizard evades the military. Boy and girl save the day. Textbook stuff, which is not rescued from banality by acting, scripting or special effects.

At around two and a half hours, *Godzilla* was far too long. Tighter editing and scripting could have seen a 90-minute upbeat and pacey film. Unfortunately, the movie began to drag after about 40 minutes. The film's only high point is a hilarious portrayal of the French secret service and their *penchant* for decent coffee and croissants.

Godzilla's sole standout performance came from Matthew Broderick, as dozy scientist, Nick. Broderick managed to eke the maximum out of a lame script and stereotypical role.

In essence, though, *Godzilla* is a true disaster film. It's a film – and it's a disaster. ■

Christianity – through Arab Eyes

Christianity in the Arab World

By El Hassan Bin Talal, Crown Prince of Jordan

Continuum, New York

Price: \$35 approx.

Review: John Buckner IC

This slim volume which has a foreword by HRH The Prince of Wales, is intended to “brief Muslim and other Middle Eastern readers of English and Arabic on the nature of Christianity and Christian religious institutions, with particular emphasis on the historical development of the Eastern Christian tradition in the Muslim Arab milieu, and the standing of Christians in Arab society today.” First published by the Royal Institute for Inter-faith Studies in Amman, Jordan, it is a “Muslim Arab leader's appreciation of, and tribute to, Christian Arabs.”

It deals with Christian belief showing its development and vicissitudes especially over the early centuries. The author shows himself to be very knowledgeable about the Christological controversies which were fought out in the Middle East, the aftermath of which was partly responsible for the ease with which Is-

lam took over the whole of the Middle East and Northern Africa.

Until the rise of Islam in the middle of the seventh century almost all that area was solidly Christian, but apart from ethnic problems there was constant strife between the Orthodox Christians and those whom the Byzantine Empire considered as non-Orthodox subjects. Because of the pressures and the persecutions, Islam when it came was almost a welcome relief, especially in Egypt. Perhaps it gave back to the ordinary people a simple faith refreshingly free from complex philosophical and Christological arguments.

This book cannot be recommended as a totally trustworthy account of Christian belief and practice; even lesser lights in the hierarchy than Cardinal Ratzinger would balk at giving it their *nihil obstat*. But on the whole the Prince has not done at all badly.

I found the most interesting part to be his treatment of the Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches that are present in the countries he is concerned with. This he does well, though I do not have the knowledge to vouch for

its accuracy. He sheds a lot of light on an important part of Christianity – and even Catholic Christianity – of which we Latin Church Catholics can be very ignorant. Amongst other points he brings out the great contribution which the Arab Christians have made to Arab nationalism and progress.

The confidence he expresses in the future of Arab Christians in their native lands has not been shared by all of the Christians themselves. The large number of these who have emigrated indicates that. ■

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Jesuits in Outer Space – *but don't be put off by that!*

The Sparrow

By Mary Doria Russell

Black Swan, London

Price: \$24.95

Review: Mike Crowl

Does a good book need yet another review? Yes, because even the best books need all the help they can get to reach potential readers. *The Sparrow*, first published in 1996, comes with extracts from reviews printed inside its front cover. For once I can agree wholeheartedly with them.

Don't be put off by the fact that this novel is presented in science-fiction guise, with necessary scientific discussions. And don't be put off by the offensive language that turns up, often in the mouths of some of the Jesuit priests who appear. I don't know if real Jesuit priests talk this way, but it would be a shame not to read the book because of this. And don't be put off if it seems as if the author is taking just a touch too long to get you to the climax – she allows herself nearly 500 pages to do so. The book gets better as time goes on, and the writing improves.

That's the negatives out of the way. So what is this book about? The basic plot is simple enough: a group of travellers from earth, including four Jesuit priests, take themselves to a planet in the Alpha Centauri system in the early 21st Century in order to discover the source of the first definite signals from outer space that show there is life elsewhere. They meet other beings, something horrific happens, and only one of the travellers returns. The rest of the book is taken up with a private investigation by the Jesuit order to discover what went wrong.

Hanging upon this basic plot, however, is a much more interesting theological question: can a man who knows he is in love with God go through the most horrific pain, both physical and emotional, and come out of it still believing? This question occupies the bulk of the book in one form or another. Russell keeps the answer at bay, along with the discovery of the real horrors, until the final pages. In spite of seeming to let us know the end when we're still near the beginning, it's only gradually that we approach the real answers to our question, and from two different angles

– before and after the main events, as it were. At first the hopping back and forth between the 2020s and the 2060s takes as little getting to grips with. Let me recommend that you persevere.

Russell imagines a world and peoples similar to ours, yet in detail much different. Part of the book's charm comes in working through what it must be like to discover something totally new. The actions of the Jesuits here reflect the experience of Jesuit priests in previous centuries when they travelled to exotic lands, learned new languages and customs and found themselves affecting the lifestyles of the native peoples both by intent – and through ignorance.

And the other aspect of the book is that, unlike many authors of sci-fi (and also much religious fiction), Russell assumes that her readers have brains that will delight in the complex information she gives her characters to discuss, as well as hearts that will respond to the difficulties and struggles the characters endure. Russell herself is no slouch; like her hero, she is a linguist and speaks six languages. She has also trained as a palaeontologist and has written scientific papers on subjects ranging from bone biology to cannibalism. I've just seen on the Net that a sequel to this book, called *Children of God*, is now available. I'll be reviewing that too, as soon as I can lay my hands on a copy.

An Alternative to Consumerism

The following story was told at a seminar recently held in Thailand: A visiting industrialist was horrified to discover a fisherman lying by the side of his boat in the afternoon, smoking his pipe.

"Why aren't you fishing?" he demanded.

"Because I've caught enough fish for today."

"Why don't you catch some more?"

"What would I do with them?"

"Earn some more money. Then you could get a motor on your boat, go further out to sea and catch more fish. That would bring you enough money to buy nylon fishing nets. More fish – more money! Soon you would have enough for two boats, perhaps even a fleet of boats. Then you would become rich like me."

"What would I do, then?"

"Why, then you could sit back and enjoy life."

"What do you think I'm doing now?"

(CWS Update July 1998)

Our reviewers

Nicola McCloy is a writer and journalist, living in Wellington

John Buckner is a Rosminian priest, rector of a community in Dunedin

Mike Crowl is a bibliophile and proprietor of a Dunedin bookshop.

A Lesson in Maori History

Keith Harrison

James Belich set out to give viewers a fresh look at New Zealand history in the series called *The New Zealand Wars*. From the criticism he has received and the anger which the programme has generated, he has certainly succeeded in reawakening public interest in our past. He has achieved well on several fronts. First, he is an academic who is capable of communicating with people. Secondly, he persuaded NZTV to run it on prime time from One on Monday in addition to receiving substantial funding from NZ On Air.

The five part series has been a resounding success, reminding me of a series done on famous battles by the BBC. A retired general fronted the series, bringing each confrontation to life with the enthusiasm and skill born of successful practical experience. Belich has managed to balance the skills of social historian, military analyst and commentator in a manner which has made the programme accessible to the widest possible range of viewers.

Belich has been accused of rewriting history in order to show the Maori in a better light, of cultural revisionism and of displaying a political correctness which has obscured the reality of the past. It doesn't take long to check other sources of New Zealand historical writing to discover that the facts have always been there. It is to his credit that he has done much to help us come to terms with our past. He also tries to get inside the mind of the Victorian reporter or commentator.

He illustrates Maori skill and bravery very well in his description of the Taranaki war and then of the British invasion of the Waikato. The use of the modern *pa*, mass produced by the Maori during the Taranaki war, allowed flexible and fluid lines of defence which

were easily abandoned when facing a concentrated thrust by the British; followed by a rapid re-grouping so that the lines of defence could be held. In the largest action of the New Zealand wars, in July 1863 Governor Grey's army of about 14,000 men, the largest and best equipped New Zealand had ever seen, allowed the British General Duncan Cameron to maintain pressure on the Kingites. Their army of barely 2000 used the flexible lines of the modern *pa* to hold Cameron at Meremere for three and a half months. Outflanked by water, the Kingites dispersed and re-grouped forming the second line at Rangiriri where the British gained possession by misusing a flag of truce.

Cameron's aim was to defeat the Kingites with one decisive blow and he believed his opportunity had come in

*James Belich has done
us a real service by
showing how creative
Maori have been in the
past in problem-solving*

ing and could act as a model for other services. She stresses the fact that the day is past when central government can simply decide by itself what is good for Maori.

Subsidies and job creation programmes alone are not the answer. Maori must be given the chance of coming up with the solutions themselves. Perhaps James Belich has done us a real service by showing how creative Maori have been in the past in innovative problem-solving and in meeting life-threatening challenges when they were in control of their own destiny. ■

late April. The Kingites had built a *pa* on the coast – the *Gate Pa* – and Cameron brought up his crack troops and a vast concentration of artillery to smash the opposition once and for all. He did everything right, according to James Belich, mounting a bombardment which may have been the heaviest in history up to that time. The assault was repulsed with heavy losses, leaving Cameron with the conclusion that the modern *pa* presented an insoluble problem.

The more subtle pressures of the Native Land Court and the confiscation scheme achieved what the war failed to do. Criticism directed at the programme appears to be based on prejudice and an inability to accept the fact that the Maoris demonstrated they were experts in warfare. Belich was critical of both sides, apportioning blunders and mistakes where he saw them. He has not rewritten history but has reappraised in a careful and scholarly manner the whole conduct of the wars.

During the time this programme was going to air, a report was released by *Te Puni Kokiri*, the Maori Development Ministry called "Closing the Gaps". Because of the atmosphere of political uncertainty and speculation about the Coalition Government, the report has made little impact on the media. It mirrors the latent racism stirred up by the Belich programme.

The statistics show that in employment, wealth, health as well as other areas the gap between Maori and non-Maori has widened since the late 1980s, reversing a decades-long trend of slow but consistent progress. National List MP Georgina Te Heuheu uses the example of the success of the *kohanga reo*, noting the involvement of Maori parents. This inclusion, this involvement, she believes, is an approach which needs to be employed in other forms of school-

Overseas News

Roman Document

On 30 June an Apostolic Letter *Ad Tuendam Fidem*, "For the Defence of the Faith", was issued by Pope John Paul. No English translation was provided, but the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Cardinal Ratzinger, circulated a guide for interpreting the document. The aim is to extend the list of Church teachings to which Catholics must give assent if they are to remain in full communion with the Church.

Modern Catholic teaching has recognised a 'hierarchy of truths' – from the most solemn declarations of faith such as the dogma of the Assumption of Mary, down to theological opinions and formulations which have received approval from the Magisterium. Hitherto there has been room for debate among theologians on these 'lesser' truths. The Apostolic Letter seems to change this. Ratzinger gives examples of teachings that would not formerly have been classified as 'essential':

- priestly ordination restricted to men
- Anglican Orders declared as 'absolutely null and void'.

He says that such teachings "belong to the dogmatic and moral area, which are necessary for faithfully keeping and expounding the deposit of faith, even if they have not been proposed by the Magisterium of the Church as formally revealed."

The Papal Letter incorporates this new approach into Canon Law so that theologians – indeed any Catholic – can now be "punished with a just penalty" for dissenting not only from the infallible teaching but from any definitive teaching. "Whoever denies these truths", says the Cardinal, "would be in a position of rejecting Catholic doctrine and would therefore no longer be in full communion with the Catholic Church."

A comment by Cambridge University Theology Professor, Nicholas Lash, on the Letter and the Cardinal's commentary points to an interesting dilemma. Ratzinger says the teaching of Pope Leo XIII that Anglican Orders are "absolutely null and utterly void" must be accepted as definitive teaching; and that anyone who does not accept this is "no longer in full communion with the Church." How is it, then, asks Lash, that Popes John Paul II – and Pope Paul VI before him – both presented stoles, which are accepted symbols of sacramental priesthood, to distinguished Anglican clerics, visiting Rome. Has Ratzinger excommunicated the Pope?

Catholics and Lutherans Agree

Catholics and Lutherans are closer together now than at any time since the Reformation. This is the opinion of senior members of both Churches in statements following a 30 year study into the central issue in dispute between Martin Luther and the Catholic Church: the question of Justification – how much our human efforts play a part in God's redeeming plan for us.

At a press conference Cardinal Cassidy,

President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, said that the two Churches' Joint Declaration was "one important step forward although it does not pretend to resolve all the issues that Lutherans and Catholics need to face." It will be "an enormous encouragement to the whole ecumenical movement," he said.

Hope for East Timor

The East Timor Independence Committee, Auckland, has asked the NZ Government to call on Indonesia's new President Habibie to support the rights of the people of East Timor. "It is crystal clear what people want – a chance to determine their political future in a referendum, an end to a terrifying military presence in their country, and the release of their jailed leader, Xanana Gusmao." It is impossible to be sure how many political prisoners remain in jail in East Timor. Human rights groups have documentation for around 200, but that is thought to account for less than half of the total.

(Nettalk, Free East Timor Coalition, July 1998)

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This letter should never have been written

The Pope, with the formidable backing of Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger who is head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, has issued an apostolic letter effectively shutting down debate on topics such as women priests. It defines the limits of dissent in order to strengthen papal teaching. I have to pose the question: is the Pope in his frailty being manipulated by the Cardinal, and is the use of the term “non-infallible teachings” appropriate? Do I really care?

The idea of infallibility was first defined in 1870 at the First Vatican Council, as a guarantee against error in matters of dogma and morality. It was also the time of that splendid Catholic historian and philosopher, Lord Acton, who hated Papal temporal power and its misuse. He wrote: “There is no worse heresy than that the office sanctifies the holder of it.” The Council defined that the

Pope is held to be infallible when he pronounces solemnly on faith or morals – but the recent letter can hardly be placed in that category.

The Pope, in whom authority of rule is vested, is otherwise not immune from error, nor is any Catholic. Because a Pope is a Pope there is no reason to judge his behaviour differently. I cannot accept that we are no longer to debate on such contentious issues, under threat of punishment by a “just penalty”. The imposition of punishment for dissent seems both unnecessary and dangerous.

Such autocratic behaviour prompted Luther’s attack on the Church’s authority in the 16th Century. There is a persistent problem of credibility associated with pronouncements from the Vatican, because the language is so inflexible and sectarian. Without debate and the right of dissent, the Church is

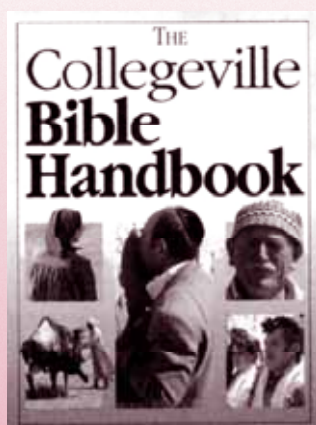
making a mockery of divine law and Christian values. The Reformation decimated the Catholic Church. The stifling of debate in the modern Catholic Church threatens to do the same thing.

Christian belief is not nurtured with dogmatic and doctrinal assertions from a dubious power base. The threat of punishment to stifle dissent seems an excessive measure and risks alienation from Rome and all it represents. The Pope is entitled to rule over the Church as long as he provides this justice.

Frailty, manipulation and the abuse of power are implicit in the publication of these documents. The person who authorised such an edict, or is responsible for it, shares the guilt of the person who supposedly sins against it. Yes, I do care – for an aged Vicar of Christ, who seems to need our prayers desperately.

John Honore

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