Tui Motu

InterIslands

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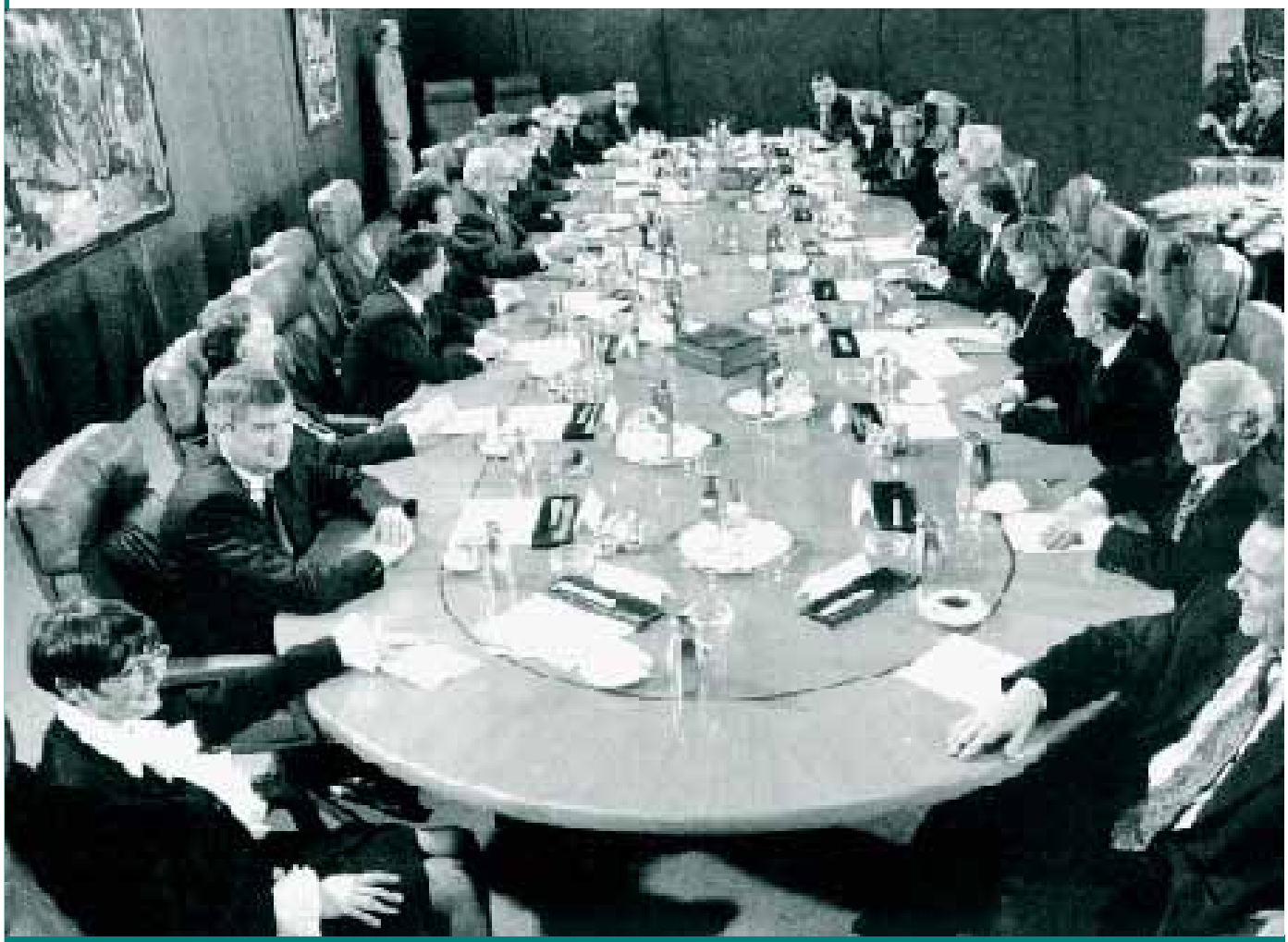

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Live Justly!

Few would dispute that justice is for Christians a fundamental virtue. And while I may like to define it as the pound of flesh I expect from someone else, I do not have to spend much time mulling over God's Word before coming reluctantly to another definition: justice is what I owe to others – to my neighbour, to people in general and to God. Justice therefore is a very active and a very comprehensive virtue, but in the words of the philosopher Emmanuel Levinas, it starts always in the eye of the other.

This month justice crops up quite often in the pages of *Tui Motu*. There is a review, by retired Judge Bill Mitchell, of Anthony Molloy's book *Thirty Pieces of Silver*: one lawyer evaluating another lawyer's scathing criticism of a celebrated New Zealand legal firm. Brian Edwards asked Molloy how come he had not been sued for libel: there was one possible answer – that he might be unimpeachably right. In our society we pay our lawyers and accountants handsomely. In return we expect scrupulous honesty and painstaking fairness. In short, we expect justice – and from none more than the people who dispense it..

In more global terms there are two articles dealing with the way humanity grapples with its perennial sin – human greed. Jim Elliston looks at Mother Teresa and Bishop Helder Camara, and sees a place for both in the war against want. A bit closer to the bone for all of us is the extraordinary confessional story of businessman Michael Phelan (*Come Down Zacchaeus*). He takes the lid off business ethics, challenges the Church for her lack of guidance, but nevertheless acknowledges that ultimately each one of us is personally responsible for the way we use our talents, and in listening to God's Word on our knees we will find the answers which sometimes our pastors are ill-equipped to give.

And what about the Church herself? People outside – or inside – may well point the finger and say: *Physician, heal thyself!* The *Focus* section of the magazine looks at the workings of Parish Councils, and points to consensus government as the desirable way to go. Yet few would deny that the Church can be just as subject to arbitrary and authoritarian decision-making as any human organisation. The danger with Church people is they can too easily delude themselves into thinking their opinion is God's – and their decisions are stamped with a divine sanction.

We could well ask ourselves within the Churches what sort of employers we are? What sort of equity exists between the living standards of some clergy and the working conditions of those, especially lay employees, who give unstintingly because they believe it as a service given to God. What happens when those workers lose their jobs or have their salaries cut? What court of appeal is there? In short, the Church needs to be just as accountable for her administrative actions as any public corporation – indeed more so.

Nothing has sullied the Churches' image in recent times so much as the spate of cases of sexual abuse – but perhaps the most shocking aspect has been the covering up, even to extent that some very warped individuals were allowed to offend and offend again. The gravest injustices have been perpetrated, and one factor has been the power invested in people of God – and sometimes viciously misused.

Lawyers, business people, politicians, priests: the parable of the talents applies to all of them. And the yardstick for fair dealing must be the yardstick of justice. *Live justly; love tenderly; walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)*

M.H.

Life after Pauline

Goeff Orchison

Australia today is a nation deeply uneasy about its future.

Sure, Prime Minister Mr Howard and Treasurer Mr Costello can produce statistics to show that the present Liberal-National coalition government has done much to restore the country's economic fortunes, but the discontent that is widely felt cannot be assuaged by their political rhetoric and point-scoring. The reality is that people generally do not think things are better. The issues are not all related to the economy either: there is a real sadness among many people that a significant proportion of their fellow Australians, the Prime Minister being one, seem unable or unwilling to come to grips with the nation's past treatment of its indigenous people.

As a result of this turbulence a political party by the name of *One Nation*, a misnomer if ever there was one, has managed to turn the political scene in Australia upside down overnight with its seat-snatching performance in the Queensland state elections. Politicians, especially federal ones, along with Australia's mainly city-dwelling population, are scratching their heads wondering how Pauline Hanson's political party could have caused the furore it has, not just on the front pages of newspapers and on TV news in Queensland, nor even in the metropolises of Sydney and Melbourne, but far more importantly in the capitals of South-East Asia, in the United States and in the United Kingdom.

Why any politicians representing the major Liberal, Labour and National parties would be at all surprised at the voter backlash, much of it from rural and regional Queensland is a surprise in itself. People, especially outside the capital cities of Australia, are hurting and hurting badly. Understandably, in an environment where politicians keep telling voters that things have never been better, but where the evidence in ordinary homes and on battling farms is difficult to find, discontent has well and truly overtaken discernment at the ballot box.

The Queensland vote was not irritation of the by-election kind, when voters often feel inclined to give the government of the day a kick in the pants mid-term. It has the potential to be serious, long-term, national stuff, because the economic rationalists, among others, have given the Australians serious, long-term problems.

There is a fair chance, for example, that if you live in a small country town you are unemployed, particularly if you are young. Services you use such as banks may have moved; local businesses are closing; the roads are deteriorating; even Sunday Mass may have become only a once-a-month occasion. Towns are dying in rural Australia, while politicians are telling people that things are "just fine – no really they are, just trust me!"

The national leaders of 11 major Churches hit the nail on the head in a statement they released last month. They acknowledged "signs of growing anxiety, suspicion, even fear in this country". They said serious divisions have appeared in the community. The unease was being fed by a number of factors, among them the pace of change, and marked and growing inequities. "When jobs, money and services appear to be dwindling, our compassion, generosity and respect for each other can diminish too. Voices that call forth resentment, racism and hate receive a hearing Australians normally would not give them".

Enter *One Nation* – and what some describe as its quaint and nostalgic values of leading Australians back to the good old days of the 50s, when Australia was riding on the back of its sheep, migrants were migrants, not Australians, the blacks were not so rowdy and demanding, and TV along with lots of other issues was black and white. The reaction of ordinary people, such as the Queensland voters, was understandable, as the Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane conceded, but hardly conducive to good order or to stable government.

The rise of *One Nation* says more about the way in which the major political parties continue to reflect total indifference to large numbers of the people they are supposed to serve than it does about Mrs Hanson's divisive, dangerous and downright air-headed policies. Pork-barrelling their way out of the situation will not help the major parties relieve the deeply felt malaise. Australia desperately needs strong and compassionate leadership. It speaks volumes about what is available when so many people turn to the likes of Pauline Hanson. ■

Geoff Orchison is editor of the Catholic Voice, *the monthly newspaper of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn*

letters

Preaching the Commandments

The Gospel passage from St John for Pentecost refers to Jesus saying to his disciples: "If you love me keep my commandments, for these are not mine but those of the Father who sent me".

One presumes that these are the Ten Commandments the Father gave Moses on Mt Sinai. These commandments are the basis of our human behaviour for all time.

How seldom do we hear of these from our pulpits or our Catholic press!

Norman Guscott, Lower Hutt

Dissent

In the *May* issue E Pickering exercises his right to express his total acceptance of authoritarianism. He asks, via *Tui Motu*, to dissent from your view of the authority of the Church.

But in the next breath he denies *your* right to dissent – via *Tui Motu*. In other words, authoritarianism is good, but totalitarianism is better.

Ever heard of freedom of speech, E Pickering?

Kevin Gallagher, Waikouaiti

Islam Religion of Peace

Your article in the *June* issue, *Islam – Religion of Peace*, would deceive many people, as Islam rejects the peacemaker, Jesus Christ, Son of God.

Many people desire peace, and that is a worthy attitude. As Christians we know that only through Christ of Nazareth, Son of God, can we receive true spiritual peace. It is important to know that the prime spiritual power of Islam is anti-Christ. The Koran, the bible of the Muslims, specifically states that Jesus Christ is not the son of God, effectively denying his divinity. .

Mohammed is the prophet of Islam and woe betide any who speak against him (as your article on Islam indicated). They are in spiritual darkness and deception, until the Holy Spirit reveals Christ to them as Messiah, the anointed Son of God and Saviour.

As a magazine, you are often critical of the Catholic Church and by publishing articles on other religions, perhaps unwittingly you sap the belief in the supremacy of Christ. We live in an age with a marked lack of the fear of God.

However, I do enjoy writers such as Jan Ogilvy and Ronald Rolheiser, who uplift the kingdom of our God.

Dick Frame, Napier

Articles published in Tui Motu *reflect the mind of the writers, not necessarily Editorial opinion. We accept responsibility for printing an article such as* Islam Religion of Peace, *which is informative and promotes dialogue rather than confrontation. Ed.*

Why people go to Mass

The *June* issue of *Tui Motu*, letters column, has galvanised me to action. Kevin Gallagher has clearly shown his colours.

Patronising – (*Tui Motu*) is a "nice mix of protest and piety".

Sexist – "Middle-class matrons in 'mostly pakeha' parishes elocuting the Scriptures at Mass is bad enough...".

Uninformed – "Real people go to their parish church to hear Mass, not their social superiors".

Sorry, K Gallagher, real people go to Mass to participate in the liturgy, celebrate the Last Supper and experience community as a people of faith – both men and women – equally.

H McKenna, Bay of Plenty

Congratulations...

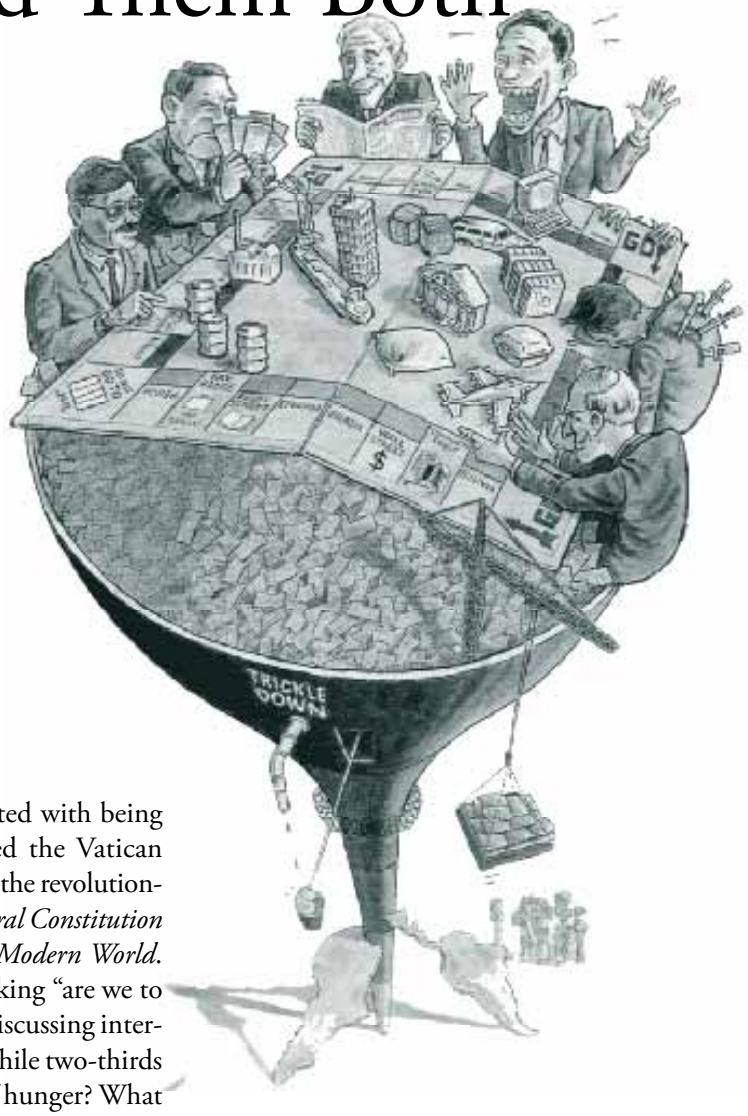
on the *June* issue, a whole level above any previous one in its completeness, assurance and solid treatment of good topics. With that standard and interest *Tui Motu* will be contending for best religious publication in a wide area,

Peter Land, Kaikohe

Hiccup: *Tui Motu* apologises to K Gallagher of Waikouaiti for a bad error

Mother Teresa and Helder Camara – We Need Them Both

Sometimes people set up Helder Camara against Mother Teresa. But is this fair, asks Jim Elliston? They both have a message of social justice to tell



When Mother Teresa died last year some articles in the press contrasted her unfavourably with Archbishop Helder Camara. I think they missed an important point. The Church's core role of preaching the Gospel to all requires a language that has many component parts so that it can be understood by its hearers. For this reason both Mother Teresa and Archbishop Camara have some very practical lessons for us in New Zealand today.

Helder Camara was a pivotal figure in the Latin American Church which was changing from uncritically supporting a highly traditional, autocratic society into playing a leadership role in the struggle to address the human needs of the vast majority of its people. He expressed the problem thus: "When I gave to the poor they called me a saint; when I asked why they were poor they called me a communist".

He is an interesting figure for an associated reason: he is credited with being the one who galvanised the Vatican Council into producing the revolutionary document *The Pastoral Constitution on The Church in The Modern World*. Helder Camara kept asking "are we to spend our whole time discussing internal Church problems while two-thirds of humanity is dying of hunger? What have we to say about the problem of underdevelopment? Will the Council express its concern about the great problems of humankind?"

As Secretary of the Brazilian Bishops' Conference, Camara used his position to gather his counterparts from other episcopal Conferences into an existing study group concerned with 'The Church of the Poor'. His activities struck a chord with three influential Cardinals, also attuned to the severe social and pastoral problems of large industrial cities – Suenens, Montini and Lercaro. They too were uneasy about the way the Council was proceeding and were looking for an umbrella theme to unite the various documents being prepared for consideration by the bishops.

Out of this dialogue grew the Council's celebrated Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*. This document was unique in the history of Church Councils because of its openness to the lessons to be drawn from the contemporary world, rather than the traditional approach of handing down pronouncements from on high. It signalled the beginning of the final phase in the process of breaking

away from the feudal, self-centred, triumphalist and European Catholic focus of Church leadership and manner of doing things.

What is the Church's role?

There persists a widespread mentality among Catholics that the Church should ignore matters outside private morality. Many Catholics would approve the reported statement of Fr Robert Sirico, who has twice been invited to New Zealand by the Business Roundtable: that the Church should stick to its core role of teaching people to be morally better and helping organise community agencies to meet the needs of the poor – thus reducing the Church to an administrative arm of the community.

Camara, when in Rome for the Council, had asked: "Is the shortage of priests the greatest problem of Latin America? No! Underdevelopment". After the Council he soon became well-known for his actions on behalf of the peasants in his diocese. His pastoral approach was not simply to exhort the poor to be good but actively to assist them in their search for living conditions that would enable them to feel they were human beings who had some worth. This, of course,

When I gave to the poor they called me a saint; when I asked why they were poor they called me a communist

put him offside with the propertied class. The parable of the sower and the seed has some relevance here – it is difficult to feel that God loves you when your life is without the experience of human love and hope.

At the heart of the prevailing ethos amongst our political and business leaders today is a focus on something that is often good in itself, but is not a core virtue. It was recently articulated by Roger Kerr (*N.Z.Herald,* 26.9.96) who quoted approvingly Nobel Economics prizewinner Gary Becket: "The great economists of the past believed that a market economy was not simply more efficient and produced more output than other economies. In addition, a market economy makes people more self-reliant, more independent and more moral in the fundamental sense of being able to take care of themselves instead of being dependent on governments and others for support".

Although these statements contain a lot of truth, their formulation is very misleading. The implication is that it is morally uplifting and character-building to battle through life relying solely on one's own resources. Being in need is always the result of personal fault or misfortune; the way society is structured is irrelevant. Such a viewpoint leaves it to individual 'charity' to lend a hand

Up to the death of Pope Pius IX in 1878 leadership of the Church was essentially Europe-focused; it had not come to terms with the fact that feudalism was being replaced by a more democratic and industrialised society and that the world order in which the Church reigned supreme over all secular affairs no longer existed. Religious teaching since the Reformation, as R.H.Tawney wrote, "had tried to moralise economic relations by treating every transaction as a case of personal conduct, involving personal responsibility. In an age of impersonal finance, world-markets and a capitalist organisation of industry, the Church's traditional social doctrines had nothing to offer.." *(Religion and the Rise of Capitalism 1926,* p 188).

Leo XIII, who prior to becoming Pope in 1878 had been involved in encouraging trade unions, laid the foundations for a gradual change towards a more outward-looking Church leadership, opening up to non-Catholic scholarship and seeing social problems as more than just matters of personal morality. Pope Leo issued the first of the great social encyclicals, *Rerum Novarum,* in 1891.

This movement to meeting with the modern world in its own terms reached its climax in the drafting of the Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*. This document was shepherded through the Council by four bishops in particular. Cardinals Suenens, Lercaro and Montini (later Pope Paul VI) were in charge of dioceses in large industrial cities. They recognised

Helder Camara, Archbishop of Recife, Brazil

that the social and pastoral problems in such an urban culture were impervious to appeals to personal morality alone. And Bishop Helder Camara from Brazil prodded the bishops into addressing pastoral issues affecting all peoples, not just Catholics.

After the Council Pope Paul issued a challenge to local churches to apply the social principles of *Gaudium et Spes* to their own national and local situations: "It is up to Christian communities to analyse the situation proper to their own country... in order to bring about the social, political and economic changes seen in many cases to be urgently needed" (1971). One practical consequence was the establishment after Vatican II of diocesan and national Justice and Peace Commissions.

to the needy; the idea of 'social justice' becomes a myth perpetrated by those jealous of the possessions of others. Unfortunately, some who argue for social justice may give just that impression.

If it is true that independence is morally superior, competition must always outrank cooperation. If being self-sufficient is judged to be the moral ideal, it follows that those lacking self-sufficiency are morally and socially inferior. All the great ethical systems sought to root virtues in one basic virtue; Immanuel Kant proposes *duty* to be the fundamental virtue, and this appears to be reflected in much of contemporary thinking. The argument goes like this: it is our duty to be thrifty, hard-working, productive members of society – the dutiful are morally superior to those who dodge their responsibilities.

Some people are tempted to judge Mother Teresa as a supporter of the conservative wing, and to contrast her unfavourably with Helder

her work in India was politically radical and quite subversive of the social orders

Camara. This is a superficial judgment, not supported by the evidence that her work in India was in fact politically radical and quite subversive of the social order. India has some exemplary laws reinforcing human rights, but where traditional contempt for the lower castes, the destitute, and women persists – coupled with basic human reluctance to relinquish positions of power – then, a fundamental injustice is not compensated by mere passing of laws.

Teresa, after being sent to India by her Religious Superiors to teach the young that there was a better way, decided that she should show that way through example: by living amongst outcasts and relating to them as fellow humans who were valued simply because they were human. In so acting she began to break

through religious, cultural and social barriers and attitudes, and succeeded in touching not only her poor, but many of those who were actively or passively contributing to the problem.

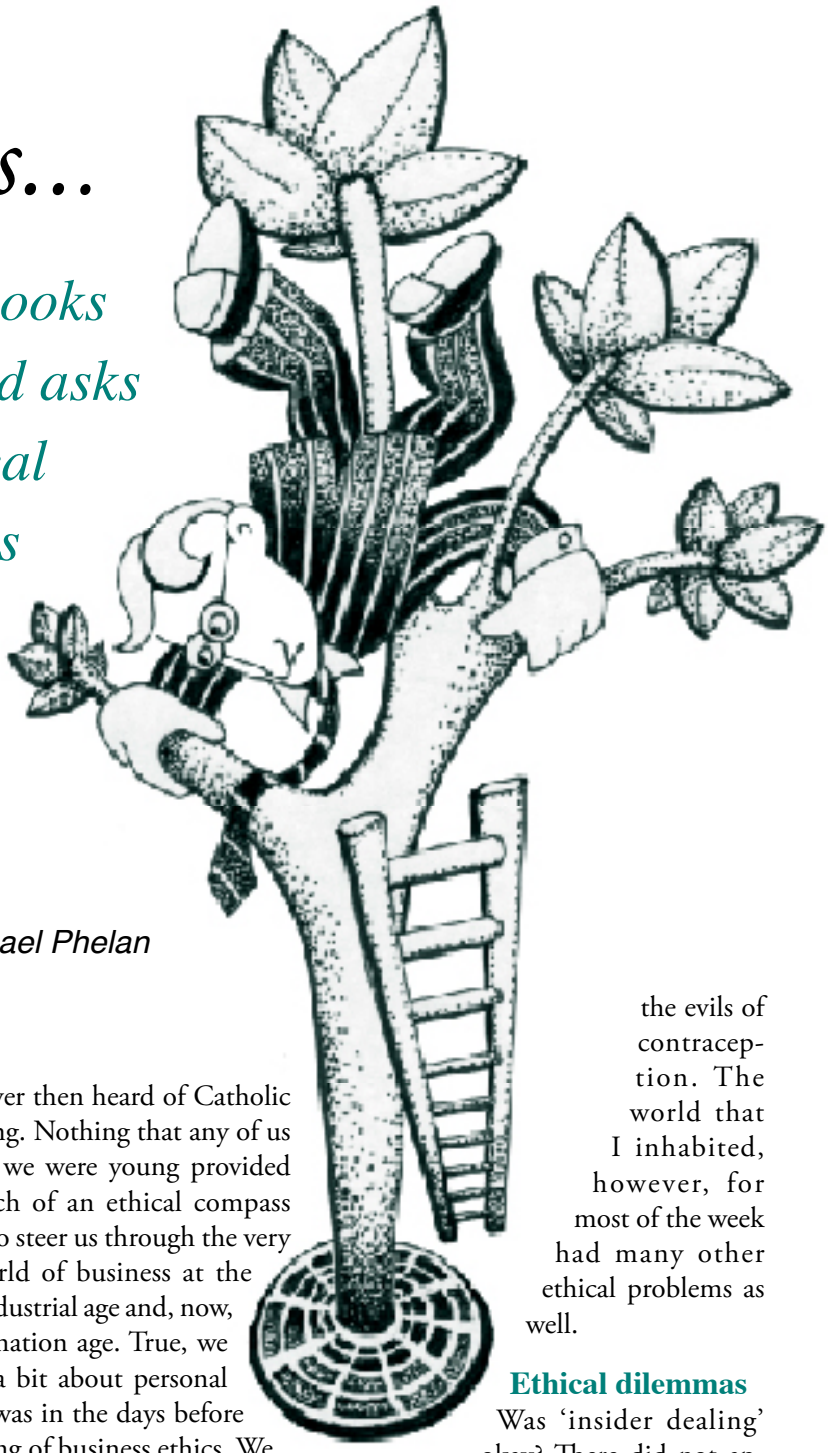
Once when asked why she was so well accepted, she replied "...because I converted nobody". In other words, by her manner of living she spoke to the goodness dwelling in the hearts of those she came in contact with. It is important to realise that she (and the 4,000 others she inspired to lead similar lives) ministered mainly to those adjudged worthless: daughters turned into financial burdens by the dowry system and rejected by their families, crippled sons unable to generate income, lepers, the destitute in the final stages of dying – people who could never be mobilised into a force for social change.

Teresa established a counter-culture of small communities which acted both as an example of what could be and as a condemnation of what is. And while it is paramount to 'build the fence' at the top of the cliff, those lying injured at the bottom still need an ambulance. It would be quite wrong to attribute to her the social awareness of Helder Camara; it would be equally wrong to ignore the fact that sometimes an action performed for one purpose can have a wider effect than that imagined; whatever her intentions, Teresa's actions were politically radical and subversive of the social order.

Many people have been inspired to emulate Mother Teresa, and she continues to be influential in our own country. But New Zealand society is also in desperate need of people who can speak the language of Helder Camara; who will respond to the challenge of Paul VI: "It is up to Christian communities to analyse the situation proper to their own country... in order to bring about social, political and economic change". ■

Come down Zacchaeus...

A British businessman looks at his life in the City and asks himself some hard ethical questions. He thinks it is the business of the Church to challenge business people with her social teaching



Michael Phelan

In my teens the teachers at my Jesuit grammar school taught me that there were mortal sins other than murder – those of the flesh. A kindly priest helped out by further advising me that it was sinful to even glance at the pictures of ladies' corsets that then decorated the advertising panels of the London Underground. Poorly delivered and sometimes unprepared sermons and advice from the confessional completed my Catholic moral formation.

Swinging sixties in the City

My business life started in the wide and wicked world of the City of London at the beginning of the swinging 60s. The golden calf of the square mile was money. The thrill of the chase made the adrenaline pump. Although I tried to follow the teachings, as I perceived them, of the Church in personal morality, I had never then heard of Catholic social teaching. Nothing that any of us learnt when we were young provided us with much of an ethical compass with which to steer us through the very complex world of business at the end of the industrial age and, now, in the information age. True, we knew quite a bit about personal sin but this was in the days before much teaching of business ethics. We all had to grow up, think like adults in our business lives and find our own ways, but for many of us our religious education had remained stuck in childhood. Church teaching, for most of us, failed then and perhaps now, to connect with our human experience.

As a newly married young partner in a City broking business in the late 60s, I heard many sermons at Sunday Mass on the evils of abortion and even a few on the evils of contraception. The world that I inhabited, however, for most of the week had many other ethical problems as well.

Ethical dilemmas

Was 'insider dealing' okay? There did not appear to be any victims of such activity. Was heavy entertaining to gain business any different to bribery? Was it right to encourage young colleagues to wine and dine clients heavily in the pursuit of business? All of our competitors did it then! We would lose business if we didn't entertain! What duties of care did employers have for their staff in a high-pressure sales environment? Many colleagues' marriages broke up because

of their business lifestyles. Some of my then colleagues died of alcoholism. More recently, a few of our successors have died of drug overdoses. Why did we recruit women as clerks and secretaries but only young white males as trainee brokers? Somehow we never found suitable women or non-white men to be highly paid brokers!

Going international provided the business and me with other dilemmas. Should we pay 'kickback' in a European country where it was the way that all the local brokerages did business in that market? Or should we perhaps deal through a correspondent broking company, who would pay the kickback thus enabling us to keep our clean reputation, but still do the business. Was it okay to receive some of our brokerage into a Swiss account so that our correspondent broking company in another European country could pay kickback to corrupt dealers in some of their client banks? Should we open a profitable subsidiary in the apartheid State of South Africa? Should we arrange barter transactions with some corrupt third world government agencies and businesses? These were some of the easier matters on which to decide.

Changing from a partnership – where ownership and management had been in the same hands – to being a publicly quoted company provided new challenges. Now the owners or shareholders were different to the directors and managers. Company law said that our primary responsibility as directors was to the shareholders. Was this morally right? What about the employees? Were they not stakeholders in the business? Could we afford, or was it right to keep on expensive, loyal and long-serving employees who were no longer putting enough brokerage on the sheet? Was it right that early leavers got such a poor transfer value from the company pension scheme? We always obeyed the law and the stock exchange rules. Should we be doing more? If so, we were damaging the interests of the shareholders. If I wanted to improve matters, how could I carry my colleagues, most of whom were materialists of the highest order?

Perhaps I climbed the corporate ladder then because I was fairly ruthless and decision-making was never a problem for me. I took whatever time was available to consider a serious matter carefully and then made the decision.

What I learnt on Sunday

Of course I remembered the Ten Commandments and all of the Church's laws. But the Church on a Sunday was a very different world to the one in which I worked during the week. It was more than easy to put Church and business into separate and watertight compartments. Nothing much that the priest in the pulpit had to say seemed to be relevant to my experience of working life. The clergy appeared to know little of my world. None of them appeared to have any fiduciary responsibility or accountability to the laity for the management or pastoral care of their parishes.

The dichotomy between Church and business could also be seen in Catholics who were pillars of the Church at the weekends but whose business practices were quite amoral. On occasions the institutional Church even gives papal knighthoods to ruthless and hard-hearted businessmen who have been generous to it. Sad to say, many of the Church institutions' employment practices, particularly with regard to nuns and lay people, appeared to be very poor and unprofessional. To an ordinary Catholic business person, the two worlds of business and Church just did not appear to connect.

Although I thought about and pondered on the ethical dimensions of the decisions that I had had to make in my business, my understanding of how to love my neighbour in the late 20th Century had not developed. I knew only a little of our rich heritage of official Catholic social teaching.

Structures of sin

A few years ago in the States, I met Thomas Kennealy, author of the book from which the film *Schindler's List* was adapted. He told me that when doing the research for his book, he came across plenty of senior German business people who lead blameless and very moral personal lives, were churchgoers and model family men. Yet, they actively collaborated with the Nazis in the use of slave labour in their businesses. The irony for Kennealy was that Schindler, the bad Catholic, adulterer and fraudster, was one of the few who risked his life to help the persecuted Jews. That for me sums up a dilemma for business people. Like a latter-day Pharisee, you can be a good and respected person at the local church and yet lead an amoral life in business, which is perhaps a part of a structure of sin.

Building a business conscience

Starting with so little education in Catholic social teaching or business ethics, I had to work hard on the moral dimensions of my business decisions. For me the juxtaposition of the twin concepts of solidarity in the horizontal plane and subsidiarity in the vertical became very powerful in both my business and political life.

In my late thirties, I returned to the practice of my youth – daily Mass. Over a time this produced great changes in my approach to business life – it now started to come together with my faith. The daily service of the Word and the Eucharist helped to sensitise and extend my conscience in business, personal and social matters. During meditative prayer some of my particularly difficult moral judgements in business matters were fitted into place. Morning Mass strengthened my resolve to try and do what was right in business during that day. From the daily readings of the Scriptures I was challenged to see the need for Christian morality in my business decisions. All of this in turn led me into more spiritual reading and consideration of the structures of sin and what in my small way I could do. Subsequent reading

on creation and liberation theologies, Catholic social teaching and spirituality, all contributed to my personal synthesis of good Christian business practice and political action.

It became clear to me as my business conscience was strengthened by prayer and the sacraments that knowing what was right was not always enough. In a pluralist society with colleagues whose moral codes were quite different to my own, the art of what was possible also needed serious study. In the search for the Kingdom in the City one had to be a good political operator in the boardroom.

Naming social sins

Many of my City colleagues in the 60s and 70s, including the Catholic ones, had racist and homophobic views when it came to staff selection. I remember when Enoch Powell came to talk to a crowded City market association meeting on floating exchange rates; he got a standing ovation from all but a handful of us. I sat in my chair because I knew very well that the ovation was because of a general feeling that 'Powell is right! The blacks should all be sent home!' Yet during all those years, I never heard a sermon about the sinfulness of racial prejudice or discrimination.

In our affluent town some time ago a meeting sponsored by the local churches was arranged by *Church Action on Poverty* and a poster went up on our parish noticeboard. Some Catholic parishioners protested at this perceived attempt to introduce politics into the Church and wrote on the noticeboard accordingly. When are the wealthy in church on Sunday challenged about the poor in our society? The institutional Church's failure to name social sin has to my mind contributed to its apparent irrelevance to many of our young people, who are just starting their careers.

The ethical demands of a new age

During the Industrial Revolution the majority of priests in Britain lived with their poor congregations in the poorest parts of the cities. They were in touch with and understood the working and domestic lives of their parishioners. Their successful and relevant pastoral strategies grew out of this knowledge and experience.

Now we are going through another period of great change – the so-called information age. Technology is advancing more and more rapidly. The nature of employment has changed. No longer is a job for life the norm. Most working people will change jobs many times in their lives and all will have to continually develop new competencies and skills. Many parishioners may have to face unemployment or underemployment in their middle age. Delayering of tiers of management and the development of information technology have all led to a very changed job market.

That said, more and more Catholics are now in positions of responsibility in big organisations and others are running small and medium-sized businesses. Business and professional people need pastoral help. The business and professional consciences of our people need to be sensitised and extended by means of Catholic social teaching.

Today's pastors need to know more about the lives and problems of their people. Seminary training should provide today's new priests with some academic background to the great changes that are taking place in the business and working lives of their future parishioners.

The ordination of mature married people would add considerably to this experience within pastoral ministry. Some business and political ethics should be taught in seminaries. Today's good pastors are not social workers or business consultants but they do need to understand the needs of their flocks.

In an increasingly complex world adult Catholics in business and other walks of life need a better educated clergy to challenge and educate them in Catholic social teaching as well as personal morality. The language and symbols of church ritual and teaching need to speak to today's laity about the social and personal problems that they face in their daily lives. ■

(kind permission of Priests and People*, London)*

OFFRAMP ARK

Laetitia Puthenpadath

You sat still like a sage facing the rising sun, under the archway of the trembling offramp; you seemed at home, contented to be where you were, like an honoured guest seated at a banquet table.

Your face had a tranquil, knowing expression, that contrasted with the thunderous thud of traffic overhead; as if you had come to terms with life and love, and had journeyed beyond the agendas of current life.

You ingeniously transformed the ugly impersonality of an ethos that spoke of the distortions of the day; Your little anchorage had an air of cosiness, that winter storms couldn't marr in all their fury.

Your unpretentious heaven in its sensitive beauty, seemed a symbol of graciousness amidst the cloud of exhaust fumes; cinererias bloomed all around you in heartful mirth, created purple patterns, reflecting gaiety against dark concrete.

You marked off your sanctuary with persistent care, as if to wall off your refuge from the pestilence without; your holy citadel had no room for modern clutter, only the creatures of the earth were welcomed in.

But then I wondered about my shaky perception. Am I seeing you through my illusory, romantic spectacles? Seeing only what I want to see, to save me from the pain, emanating from your homelessness, your stark isolation? Too disturbing to my spirit, your utter displacement, that made an undeniable rover out of you. Am I not part of this heartless, indifferent world, which had turned away its cold, calculating face from you?

Many a sunrise happened, while I gazed from the fast lane, to greet you silently and affirm our commonality. And one day you were no longer there; vanished your ark with no trace, mute concrete forms stared at me.

O stranger! whom I befriended from a fast gliding distance! How you became the focus of my early morning ruminations! I grieve the absence of your tangible presence, under the dim, forboding shadows of the offramp arch.

"I needed the freedom to explore my faith..."

Neil Darragh, Principal of CIT, with Kathleen Brockliss(seated) and Ann Gilroy (Dean)

"Available and valuable" is how two past students describe their study experience at Auckland's Catholic Institute of Theology. Pastoral Worker Kathleen Brockliss and Catholic School Principal, Mark Barratt, are enthusiastic about the opportunities offered by the Institute.

Kathleen, married – a mother and a grandmother, is currently the Pastoral Worker in the East Coast Bays parish in Auckland. She graduated from C.I.T. in 1997 with a Bachelor in Theology. She had already completed the national *Walk by Faith* programme but felt she wanted to know more. "I needed to really find God for me. I needed the freedom to explore and work things out for myself. That's what C.I.T. gave me. There was never any doubt what the doctrines were but we always had the freedom and the support to ask questions, like why do we teach this and how did we get to this position?

"Scripture was the big discovery for me. There was great satisfaction in studying it at the degree level. To discover the deep meaning and to realise how it is the foundation of all that we believe. The study really enhanced my faith. What made it more exciting was to study with students of other Christian traditions and other religions."

A special feature of study at the Catholic Institute of Theology was the atmosphere of hospitality. "All the students enjoyed the atmosphere at C.I.T. I think the experience of being accepted and included has carried over in my attitude to my work in the parish. I want people to experience what I experienced. That feeling that we are all walking the journey of being the Church. And to be part of it you have to be accepted as you are and included."

Mark Barratt also enjoyed the inclusive atmosphere. "I studied at several different academic institutions and C.I.T. is by far the most student-centred I've come across. Staff were very available to students. A lot of effort went into making the process easier for busy teachers trying to fit in extra study." Mark has completed both a Graduate Diploma and a Masters Degree in Religious Education at C.I.T. One of the benefits he gained was the chance to "thrash out ideas and issues with other teachers and the parents and people of the Church in Auckland. Through the study and the relationships with other students I feel I can now recognise different points of view and understand others. As well as deepening my own faith, study has helped me understand others and their faith. This is a tremendous advantage to me as a teacher and a school principal. I found that at the Catholic Institute they had a hold of the big picture. To have credibility your value base has to show through in your practice. This happens for me every time at C.I.T."

Both Mark and Kathleen are graduates but they have not left the Institute behind. In fact they have taken it with

Mark Barratt

them into their work places. Both are enthusiastic users of the Continuing Faith Education courses that the Institute offers. These short courses cover a wide range of topics from Scripture and Liturgy to leadership skills for the parish. Topics can be studied as a one-off or various combinations can be added up to complete one of the several Certificates that the Institute offers.

For Mark, now principal of Monte Cecilia Primary School the courses are a great resource for in-service training for his teaching staff. They are also an opportunity he can recommend to parents who want to update their own religious education.

In the East Coast Bays parish Kathleen has organised several of the short courses for her parishioners. But instead of taking the people to the Institute, C.I.T. presenters have run the courses in the parish. This not only solved any transport problems but allowed people to discuss and explore topics in their own place with others they know well.

Being a resource for parishes is one of the main objectives of the Institute of Theology. Principal, Neil Darragh, states that "we are here to be a resource for the Church so we aim to make theology available to as many as is practicable. This means that we are focused on three major activities. One is to make sure that the lecturers of the Institute are involved in ongoing research in their subject areas. We do this to increase the value of the teaching that we offer and to meet the high standards that the University sets for its teachers. A second focus is to make our resources easily available for Adult Education, and especially ministry formation in parishes. A third focus is to be a resource for teachers in Integrated Schools."

Come the end of the year the staff will add to this busy program a shift of venue. The Institute will be changing its parklike surroundings at Marcellin Hall in the suburbs for the bustle of city life. Newman Hall, the Catholic University Centre in the central city, is to become the Institute's new home. While this will make the whole enterprise more available to University Students and to the city, the Institute looks forward to continuing their mobile service to others by making their courses available in other convenient locations around the diocese. ■

St Luke the Evangelist, from a 13th Century Armenian Manuscript

Reading the Bible in Aotearoa Today

How can studying the bible relate to real life, asks Sandra Winton?

These last few months I have been studying a paper in scripture at University. Three days a week I have left work and hurried among the midday traffic, eating my sandwich while stopped at the lights, to sit in a room full of people learning about the fourth gospel and some of the epistles. At times it has felt unreal, a world apart from the daily lives of the people I meet in my work at Catholic Social Services, from their struggles with their own lives, with their children, their marriages, making ends meet and paying the power bill. So why do it?

It has to do with my belief that the scriptures are indeed a source of life, my wanting to read them with whatever accuracy modern scholarship can give. And there is something of a tenacious belief that these writings can speak in this time and this place.

The questions surrounding this are very large. Why should 20th century, space-travelling, computer-age people read a book that has emanated from agrarian, peasant, nomadic societies? Why should New Zealanders at the other side of the globe be concerned with eastern, Semitic, Greek writings? Why should modern women read books embedded in patriarchy? When the real issues that keep us awake are the Asian financial crisis, fears about whether we and our children will be cared for in illness, whether we will have jobs, houses and any control over our futures, our helplessness in the face of the suffering of more and more poor people in our country – what on earth can an ancient book have to say to us at all?

We are told that the Bible is God's Word. If we shake off its familiarity, this is an extraordinary claim. When we think of the transcendence of God, how could we dare to claim that words on a page could be God's speaking to us? Alongside the tradition that has led Christians to say many things about God, there exists another tradition of the mystics which says that anything we say about God is more untrue than true, so far does the divine exceed human comprehension. This led Thomas Aquinas to say at the end of his life that all he had written was mere dust.

And can we trust this book anyway? Those of us who heard Dr Jim Veitch speaking on TV at Easter may wonder what is left, when people like him tell us that the New Testament is so influenced by Greek thought that we can't be sure it tells us anything accurate at all about Jesus. Is not the book we hold in our hands but one among many translations of ancient manuscripts and scrolls, translated in and out of Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic, sometimes patched together from oral traditions and influenced by layers of editors? The sense of the bible as an entity, a solid, received whole, seems to slide from our hands.

How then are we to read the bible as God's word while being people of our time and place? There are, of course, passages where writers speak out of a profound enlightenment about God and the meaning of human life in God. But the reader who goes to the bible seeking this kind of direct wisdom more often than not comes away puzzled or confused. To read the bible directly as 'God speaking to me' or 'God speaking to us' can be simplistic at best and dangerous at worst.

Historically such a reading has contributed to much that our age repudiates. A reading which places Christian people in the shoes of the Israelites being led out of Egypt reinforces a sense of entitlement to the lands of indigenous peoples and contributes to their destruction and misery. A reading which sees certain races as 'chosen' over others feeds into the mentality that created apartheid. A reading which sees humanity as placed on earth to 'subdue' it has underpinned the destruction of the planet and its life forms. Readings uncritical of the patriarchal society which produced the biblical books have reinforced the subjugation and misery of women.

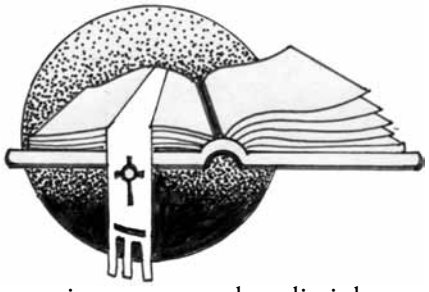
Travelling to my scripture classes I found it hard and finally impossible to switch off from the one to attend to the other. But perhaps this was not a bad thing. It highlights the way I want to read the bible today. I want to read it fully aware of my own life, of my time and of my place. This makes it, not a reading of some ancient texts, but an encounter with the living word of God.

Let's take for example the central story of the Hebrew Bible, the Exodus story. This is not just a simple story about rolling back the waves, nor a metaphor for the individual spiritual liberation of the Christian. It is an understanding of the real history of a people and their liberation. And it went on to become a story about war and dispossession, as the freed slaves took over the land of the Canaanites. Of them the Book of Deuteronomy instructed the chosen people, *you must utterly destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them and show no mercy to them* (Deut. 7:3).

It is not surprising that a Native American writer, Robert Warrior, says he is unable to read this as a story of liberation: "I read the Exodus stories with Canaanite eyes," he says. Nor should we lay aside the history of his people when we read the Exodus. Whether it is Palestine today or East Timor or the aftermath of past colonization, we can no longer sit in our churches and hear in a purely spiritual sense. Yet the bible has its own counter statements; eg Amos reminding the people of Israel they are not the only nation liberated by Yahweh: *Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor, and the Syrians from Kir?*(*Amos 9:7*).

So, if my studies have taught me anything at all it is this: the people who wrote the various books of the bible did not leave aside their own times and concerns to write out of some timeless, eternal connection with the changeless divine. They wrote out of their own context, its perspectives and its limitations. I need to understand this context as well as I can. This means reading back into the situation out of which various books of the bible were written. This is a risky project, since the further scholars have gone with it the less certainty many of them seem to find.

Despite all the controversy, scholars do not deny that the writings of the New Testament were produced in the years following the death of Jesus of Nazareth, and reflect not only what his followers believed about him but also the difficulties they themselves faced – persecution, internal division, theological controversy; debates about how to live in the community of believers whether in the pagan world or the Jewish religious context. None of this sounds too far from us. Their solutions differed. So while the letters to *Timothy* and *Titus* advise that women should be kept in their place, be silent in the assembly and stick to the domestic sphere, *John* depicts a community of equals, where women



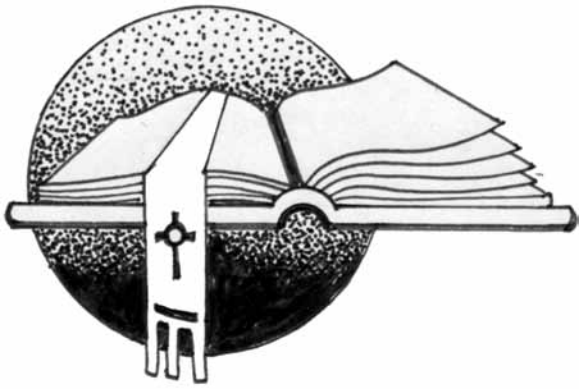
are witnesses, apostles, disciples and theologians. With its many books and many perspectives the bible does not present a one-eyed look at the truth. The one canon contains many views, some of them limited. To encounter God's word is less like hearing a definitive solution proposed than entering into conversation with a person. It is more like meeting *The Word* than answering all the questions.

Readers of today, like the readers and writers of the first Christian centuries, continue this dialogue with the scriptures. What do I mean by this? Perhaps an example will help. The parable of the labourers in the vineyard comes to mind (*Matt 20:1-16*). In days of the Employment Contracts Act this depiction of workers standing all day waiting to be hired is not as far from our experience as it might have been ten or twenty years ago. The fact that each worker is paid a full day's wages whether they have worked all day or a mere couple of hours sits ill with the trade's union principles on which my father raised me. All the more then does it underline the parable's message about the senseless, above-and-beyond generosity of God to each one. This parable could take us deeply into an understanding of human need and equality that would challenge the dominant ideology of our times.

But the parable takes us further. Labourers in the Palestine of Jesus' time lived a less than subsistence existence. They never had enough to be able to marry or have children. Their working life expectancy was two to three years. They were probably in this plight because they had been forced off their land by larger landowners. Now the story starts to sound less comfortable. In this context, who is the landowner to speak of doing what he likes with what he owns? Is this a picture of a God or of a human forgetting who is the owner of the whole world?

At the end of the parable the workers' plight is not changed at all. The next day they will have to line up again. Such a parable might turn our eyes to the plight of workers. It might cause us to ponder the human dignity of work in the light of the core gospel truth that Jesus died for all, and the Exodus experience that God calls all peoples to liberation. Groups of workers hired at different hours of the day bring to mind the different waves of races who have migrated to these shores, their rights and their needs? When some are being grossly exploited in work and housing we might well ask who is the landowner. Is it God – or is this employer to be judged by the God who looks with compassion an all? Again might not our whole country seem like a day labourer waiting in line for multi-national companies to hire us – or perhaps find cheaper labour in Asia or the Pacific?

To read such a parable with eyes open both to its context in its own time and to the realities of our own lives is to ask of it uncomfortable questions. In its turn the parable asks us uncomfortable questions. We wrestle with God's word and God's word wrestles with us. Perhaps one of the most important things in my scripture course was the very thing I found most difficult - crossing over from everyday work to study. And that's a journey I must make daily if I'm to read the bible in Aotearoa today. ■



Jesus the W

Jesus said to some of the Jews, "You search the Scriptures because you think you will find eternal life in them. The Scriptures tell about me..." *(John 5,39).* In this statement, John's gospel reflects the early Church conviction that the meaning of Jesus and his message can not be separated from the story of God's dealings with people, recorded in the Scriptures. Of course, the 'Scriptures' Jesus knew, and through which he came to self-understanding, were more or less those Hebrew writings we know as the First (Old) Testament. But it remains true today that it is through the Bible, through the First and Second (New) Testaments together, as the record of God's special activity in the world, that we come to know Jesus.

Certainly, we come to encounter Jesus in life, worship and tradition. It is this encounter that confirms the authority of Scripture. However, Jesus cannot be known in these things without the Scriptures. Recognising the role of Church and Scripture in making Jesus known, doesn't lessen our need to ask: *Who is this Jesus we know?* For Christian faith to be authentic, it must be the Jesus of the Scriptures we encounter and come to love.

How can we guard against making Jesus in our own image? Church teaching is a vital guide, but at the level of personal commitment we must enter into Jesus' story ourselves. That means knowing the story. The Bible is not a repository of 'abstract truth,' something to be mined by preachers to justify their own preconceived messages. The Scriptures are not writings from which Christians may stand apart, or use pragmatically. The Scriptures challenge us personally. They reveal the reality of God who draws us into the story the Bible tells. Jesus found his reality in the Scriptures by discovery that the story they tell is his own. Similarly, the Scriptures become our story too inasmuch as Jesus becomes our Lord, through the Scriptures. Through them, Jesus' story also becomes our reality.

Today, the world needs Christians who not only know Jesus' story, but live in it and bring its transforming life to the concrete conditions of human experience. The Church is charged to take the liberating good news of Jesus to the world. (*Matt 28:18-20)* The character of that good news has a definite form. Jesus' story is not something we may mould to suit our purposes. Chapter 4 of Luke's gospel records Jesus' programmatic announcement of his mission.

Jesus went back to Nazareth where he had been brought up and, as usual, he went to the meeting place on the Sabbath. When he stood up to read from the Scriptures, he was given the book of Isaiah the prophet. He opened it and read,

Good News for Computer Buffs

Electronic Bible sales from the Bible Society in New Zea land's Scripture Distribution Department have increased by over 1000 percent each year for the last two years – and the trend for this year is for an even greater increase! *Electronic Bible* is computer-speak for bibles which come entirely on computer disk – usually CD-ROM – and which can be searched, researched, copied and printed out.

"In the *Nelson Electronic Bible Reference Library*, or in the *Logos Library*, for example, you can get up to 14 separate full bible translations and over 60 bible reference books on a single CD-ROM disk, and find anything from any or all of them instantly on your computer screen," said John Jennings, Scripture Distribution Manager for Bible Society.

There are now over 20 English bibles, 500 biblical reference books, commentaries, handbooks and dictionaries, and many other works available on CD-ROM from a variety of publishers. Because they are so fast to search for a word, phrase or topic, and so easy to copy any text into a word processor, these collections provide the bible student access to an immense library in a fraction of the time and cost of printed books. As well as the "classic" titles from St Augustine, Moody, Bunyan, Matthew Henry and the complete 38-volume Early Church Fathers, modern books such as the *Jerome*, *IVP* and *Harper*'s commentaries; reference works by Wiersbe, MacArthur, Hayford, Stanley and McDowell; and bible dictionaries, maps, photos, and handbooks – all of these resources can now be accessed electronically, simply and economically, with a mouse click.

Language resources are also available – Hebrew and Greek lexicons; the Hebrew and Greek texts themselves; Vine's Expository Dictionary, Strong's Dictionary, Kittel's Theological Dictionary – and much more. Bible translations in

ord of God

The Lord's Spirit has come to me, because he has chosen me to tell the good news to the poor. The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers, and to say, "This is the year the Lord has chosen."

Jesus closed the book, then handed it back to the man in charge and sat down. Everyone in the meeting place looked straight at Jesus. Then Jesus said to them, "What you have just heard me read has come true today." (CEV)

By quoting *Isaiah 61,1-2* and applying the Scripture to himself, Jesus deliberately claims that the story of God coming to be with humankind, so that there will be justice, peace and liberation from oppression, is being fulfilled in him.

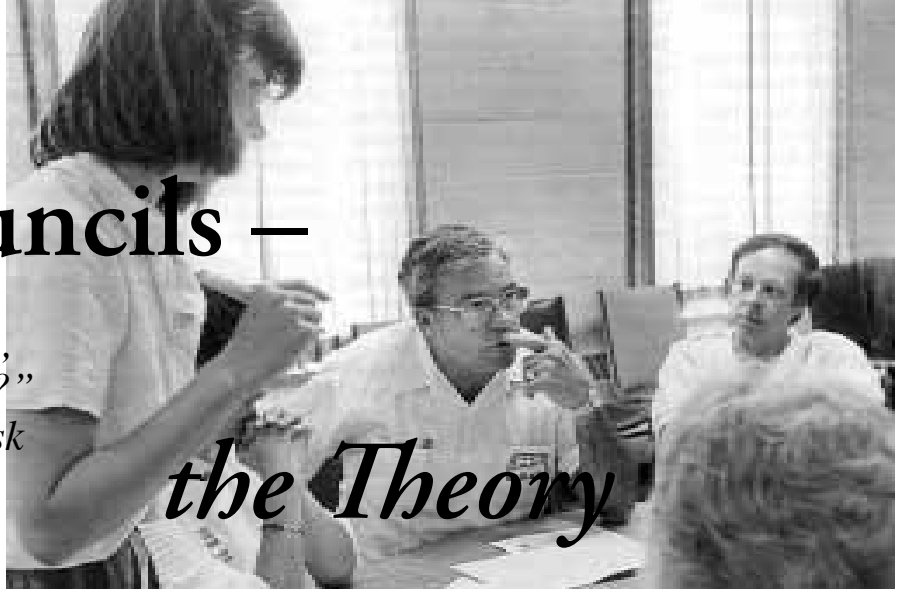
The story of God's coming to be with humanity has a formative focus in the liberation of the people of Israel from the oppression of Pharaoh. Yahweh speaks out of the burning bush, revealing that the one who addresses Moses is not only the creator of heaven and earth, but also the intimately, personally involved God of history. Yahweh tells Moses, "I will be with you..." *(Exodus 3.12)* and indeed in Israel's journey through the desert from slavery to the land of God's promise, God goes with them as a cloud by day and a fire by night.

Scripture presents the exodus story as the context in which the character of God, as the God of justice, mercy and liberation, is revealed, and in which God's people are called to participate. The theme of this narrative forms the substance of, and justification for, the prophets' call for faithfulness to Yahweh, a faithfulness in which justice, mercy and liberation are the fruits of God's presence. Out of the inadequacy of Israel's response to the prophetic call arose the expectation of the '*day of the Lord*' when Yahweh would come and establish God's personal rulership of justice and peace throughout the earth.

Jesus – Emmanuel, 'God with us' – proclaimed 'the year the Lord has chosen' ie the year of Jubilee, (see *Leviticus 25*) leaving 'the day of the Lord' *(Isaiah 61.2)* unstated. Yet Jesus unmistakably identifies himself with that day as he comes to the Temple to confront the corrupt establishment *(Mark 11..15-18*). It was this act that galvanised the powers that be to have him killed.

Therefore, the cross which is at the centre of God's new Covenant with us in Christ has its context only in the story of God's purpose to establish justice, righteousness and liberation. The righteousness that is made available by Jesus' death and the liberation that comes from his resurrection can neither be separated from the central story of the Scriptures, nor from the Church's mission to bring that liberation and justice to the world. ■

This page has been put together by the Bible Society of NZ for Bible Sunday, 12 July. The article is by Scripture Use Consultant, Gavin Drew



Parish Councils – the Theory

"A Church going backwards, or a Church going forwards?" – a question we may often ask ourselves. And the answer may well depend on one key group of people

This group goes under various names – but the term *Parish Council* usually identifies it. Vatican II rediscovered the concept as far as the Catholic Church was concerned. But Catholics didn't need to reinvent the wheel: they only had to look over the fence to see councils functioning happily enough within other denominations. Perhaps we need then to look first at how the Presbyterians and the Anglicans govern themselves at the local level – and then turn our attention to how the Catholics are getting on.

Presbyterians – a conciliar model

Tui Motu talked first to the Reverend Denis Povey, a Presbyterian Minister of many years' experience, now serving at First Church in Dunedin. The Presbyterian Church is led by *elders,* who are ordained to the office of rule and oversight in the church. One of these elders is ordained to ministry and is sometimes described as the "teaching elder", although some on the Catholic wing of the Church would claim more for the office of minister.

The local parish council is called the *session*. Each congregation has its own session, and it is the local congregation which is the fundamental unit of the Presbyterian Church. All power in the Church belongs to the local congregation: superior courts can't order a congregation how to operate. The General Assembly may, for instance, require a letter to be read everywhere – but that is the extent of its power over the local body. If there is any conflict in the local congregation, then the Presbytery (or local assembly) is called in.

A new elder is ordained by the session: both the minister and an elder of the session lay their hands on him/her. An elder is normally elected for life. The minister, however, is placed in the congregation by the Presbytery, which confirms the 'call' made by the congregation to the candidate and inducts the new minister. The new minister's task will be to work with the session. The minister acts as moderator of the session, but has only a casting vote in its deliberations. Even if the minister has care of several churches there is normally only one session per minister.

The essence of Presbyterian governance is 'bottom up' rather than 'top down'. The elders are the active laity of each congregation and they are thoroughly involved in the task of 'overseeing' the church community. Co-responsibility is of the essence of the way the Church is constituted. The Rev Denis pointed out that this ideal of the 'separation of powers', which is so characteristic of the way the Presbyterian Church governs itself, was adopted by the Americans when they put together their Constitution in the 18th Century.

Parishes usually have a cell structure so that each member of a particular congregation can have an elder to whom they may go. Part of the duty of elders is to do parish visitation; in the main women elders are better at this than men. So the elders have a pastoral as well as a governing role in the parish.

The Anglican model

We then paid a visit to Jean Marchant, of St Martin's parish in Dunedin and a long-serving member of the parish council, to see how parish government takes place there. The Anglican Parish Council is called the *vestry.* It consists of eight or nine elected members, who come up for election each year but usually stay for a few years. The vicar is ex-officio and is normally the chairperson.

Key personnel are the two wardens. The *Vicar's Warden* is appointed by the vicar and acts as his/her right hand and confidant. The *People's Warden* is chosen by the people for the very important role of acting as intermediary between priest and people – a troubleshooter to whom people go with their pastoral needs and problems. The People's Warden will indicate where help is to be found.

The vestry budgets the finances of the

a leader and a teacher – a shepherd first

parishes, and has the final say on how money is spent and on administrative matters. But in pastoral matters the vicar has the central role. In Jean's view pastoral care is the vicar's primary responsibility: he/she is the shepherd first, and also leader and teacher. The vicar is appointed by the local bishop although there is a consultative process involving four consulters from the parish appointed by the vestry. During the time when there is no vicar the People's Warden has to hold the parish together.

In the Catholic Church parish councils are a much more recent phenomenon, and there is no strong tradition yet governing how they operate. *Tui Motu* spoke to Colin Bellett, of Arrowtown in Central Otago, who is chairperson of the Diocesan Pastoral Council. Colin was first involved with the parish council in Georgetown, Invercargill. The need for a council there grew out of the prayer groups some years ago. A series of workshops were run by Fr Tom Curran from Holy Cross Seminary: from the start the focus of the Parish council was ***pastoral.*** Maintenance functions were looked after by sub-committees.

Colin is insistent that starting each meeting with prayer is essential to focus the pastoral character of the council. A perfunctory setting aside of the prayer time is not good enough. Sometimes people say "it's Father's job". Colin does not agree. He likes to see a couple of members of the council preparing the prayer time before each session. The chairperson's role is vital here: to set the meeting in the context of prayer. Without that prayerful context there is a danger that the business will become bogged down in 'nuts and bolts'.

Often it is good to spend time preparing a 'mission statement' for the council: this can initially have a profound effect on the way it eventually works and that vision can last until there is a change of personnel. It is all too easy however for a council to drift back into just being a business meeting.

A problem within the Catholic Church is the status of the parish priest. Sometimes there is no functioning parish council. This may be because of lay apathy or lack of initiative. The priest may excuse himself by saying : "The people don't want one". Colin thinks that priests often don't realise the power they wield. Pastoral decisions are made in isolation without the council being consulted. It may not be deliberate, but it happens. For instance, a letter may go out or a decision taken by the parish finance committee which has pastoral implications, yet the council may not even be aware of the letter's existence. Apathy arises when people do not come forward to serve on the council. The priest has to get on with running the parish, and finishes up making the pastoral decisions on his own.

Talking to Colin made us realise how vital it is for a new parish council to receive some sort of formation, so we concluded our survey by going to see Sr Noreen McGrath, a Presentation Sister who is a religious education adviser in the Dunedin diocese, but is also in much demand for the work of council formation.

The Parish Council, Noreen insists, has a primarily **pastoral** function: it's title should be Parish Pastoral Council. From the start they need to acquire a vision of what the pastoral needs of the parish are and how they are to be met. They need to ask themselves what are the hopes, dreams and fears of the parishioners. While they have to deal with immediate tasks, the broader vision must never be lost sight of. Noreen thinks that a PPC should set itself four attainable goals each year. But then they have to acknowledge that their job is not to meet the people's needs themselves; they are there to "make disciples": ie to enable the people to meet their own needs. They are the 'heartbeat' of the parish: their job is to discern and reflect. They have to themselves acquire today's model of the Church viz. an evangelising community.

Thus, in Oamaru over the last five years the PPC has enabled the people to commit themselves to major projects: a Parish Mission, holding a Jesus Seminar, starting the Alpha programme and setting up Passionist family groups.

(continued overleaf)

Three issues – mission, leadership and membership – raise important questions for councils. Councils uncertain about their own mission may waste time trying to do too many things and not accomplishing anything well.

Councils unclear about consultation may wrongly believe they are the final decision maker, only to have the rug yanked out from under them with a reminder that they are consultative only. And councils who select members without thought for the criteria of membership may wind up with people ill-equipped for the council ministry.

•Co-ordinating committees is a day-to-day administrative task. Pastoral planning is future-orientated. Co-ordinating and administrating attract one kind of council member. Planning attracts a different kind. The differences between the two create tensions that are hard to avoid.

• Good pastors do not know everything – and they know it. They desire to maintain the unity of the council, a unity as intimate as the vine and the branches. They often put aside their prerogative as pastoral leader and defer decisions until they and their councillors are of one mind and heart. When a pastor seeks consensus he has chosen to delay a decision until all are agreed. He persists in consulting until there emerges a single, communal sense of the matter at issue.

•Pastors want advice of those whose opinions are well-informed and trustworthy. The best advisers are those who thrive in a group, who prepare for meetings and take time to listen; who can synthesise the judgments of others, and who can express themselves prudently and concisely. Mary Bennet McKinney says: if a pastor wants wisdom, he must find the wise. They are the people who have the time, the desire and the ability to serve on a council. ■

(from *Today's Parish*)

Parish Councils – the Practice

Alan Roberts (pictured right), Parish Priest of Plimmerton, looks at the practicalities of running an effective Parish Council – as experienced in Levin a few years ago

If there is a general dissatisfaction with parish councils (and I believe this to be true) then the dissatisfaction is much the same across the board. "We don't seem to be getting anywhere – long meetings, going over the same old ground, rubber stamping the parish priest's decisions, council decisions not taken on board".

The frustration of trying to work with parish councils, of ensuring that it would be meaningful to them as well myself as parish priest, led me to question at depth and above all ask 'why?' For me the frustration arose some years ago, mainly I think, from the fact that council had no clearly defined role and method of operating that was understood and accepted both by council and the parish team.

The very first thing was to keep the council within the bounds of the pastoral life of the parish. (Hence the term *'pastoral council'* is more appropriate.) Other committees would be responsible respectively for those works that normally take place within parish. Therefore, our definition was as follows: *The purpose of pastoral council is to discover a vision for the parish, to take it to the parish and ultimately become the caretakers of that vision.*

A good council will be of immense emotional support to the official pastoral team. If we work alone and do not share a common enthusiasm for the mission, we can easily lose sight of our vision. This model aims to provide a sense of team among the official parish workers and the pastoral council.

When a council has been formed, the members' first task is to discover their common longing – what is in the heart of each of us for this community? Therefore, it will be necessary to spend time praying and reflecting until this becomes clear. If we do not know what we want, nothing will happen. But when we do, "*and my words remain in you, you may ask what you will and you shall get it." (Jn 15:7)*

Having arrived at this point the council can now draw up their mission statement. It may be something like this: *St Joseph's parish community is committed to the person of Jesus and his teaching. Therefore we are called to live justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with our God. (Micah 6:8) so that we might become effective witnesses of the Gospel.*

(continued from previous page)

The process is cyclic:

Prayer is the starting point, and the priest needs to encourage this aspect of the meetings. The pastor's role is crucial. He exercises leadership by getting behind the PPC, enabling them to function properly and see that the resources are made available. He can lead the people by example regarding the importance of prayer and reflection. If the PP is a dictator, then the PPC wont function.

The composition of the PPC is important. In small parishes it is not easy to persuade people to make themselves available. They should not be there primarily as representatives of different groups in the parish: their function is to represent the **whole** parish. Their role is to incarnate the vision of Jesus and Jesus' mission to the people of the parish. They have to have time and energy to give to this pastoral care of others. Inevitably their vision will start to expand beyond the immediate needs of their own parish.

Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, Anglicans alike: they are all Christian people on about building local parish communities. One person cannot achieve that alone. The growth and health of the body depends perhaps more than anything else on the group of dedicated Christians at the centre – on the parish 'heartbeat'. ■

The council is now ready to look outwards and ask the first question: *Where is God at work in this parish?* If asked sincerely it will be ensured that there exists genuine respect for the efforts of those who have gone before. It is arrogance to believe that "now we'll get the show on the road!" But it is good that there is an enthusiasm for new growth. The council may see God at work in those preparing children for First Communion, the RCIA, the newly formed justice committee, the creative liturgies, etc. Because so many work without much acknowledgment of their efforts, the council should make it a priority to affirm what they see to be the work of God within their community.

Writing to a group to thank them, to encourage their efforts, to offer appropriate support – this affirmation will bear enormous fruit. I believe that the work of **affirming** is the single most important thing a council can do in order to develop the vitality that people long for within their parish. The mistake I think is when a council asks "what can we do?" rather than "what is already happening?"

Alongside this stage is the process of looking at the essential things that make up parish life, such as Liturgy, RCIA, Justice, etc. The question here is "how are these committees doing?" What should be noted is that council's role is not to do these jobs, but to see that they are done. so accompanying this, the question can be asked: "where do we need to build?"

It is not the role of council to think up every good idea for the parish. If someone wants to start a Scripture study group, presuming this person possesses certain skills, let them go to it. Affirm this by inviting him or her to the council meeting so they can share ideas. This develops a common sense of purpose and thinking and avoids the practice of everyone 'just doing their own thing'.

While looking at the weaknesses in a parish, it should be remembered that Rome wasn't built in a day. It takes time to establish community. Reform in some manner will always be happening. Sometimes, weaknesses just have to be tolerated and one must wait until the right people come along and offer their services. At times too, people provide terrible stuff for a while, (eg in Liturgy) but then, suddenly things click and the creativity lights up. It is a mistake to stop the efforts of people just because they are imperfect. Encouragement and support will generally bring goodwill to fruition.

> We must move away from the idea of power

So, along with the parish team, it is appropriate that councillors share in the *discernment of ministries*, ie. "what gift does this person possess that will serve our community best?" I think it is better if people are chosen to serve rather than just volunteer. This point may cause some debate, but certainly gaps are often filled by asking particular individuals and affirming the gifts they are known to possess. Often, people are just waiting to be asked, or perhaps don't believe in themselves enough to come forward. And therefore the person who is quiet and unassuming is sometimes the one to look at very carefully. It is amazing how much talent is just sitting there and comes to fruition from a word of encouragement.

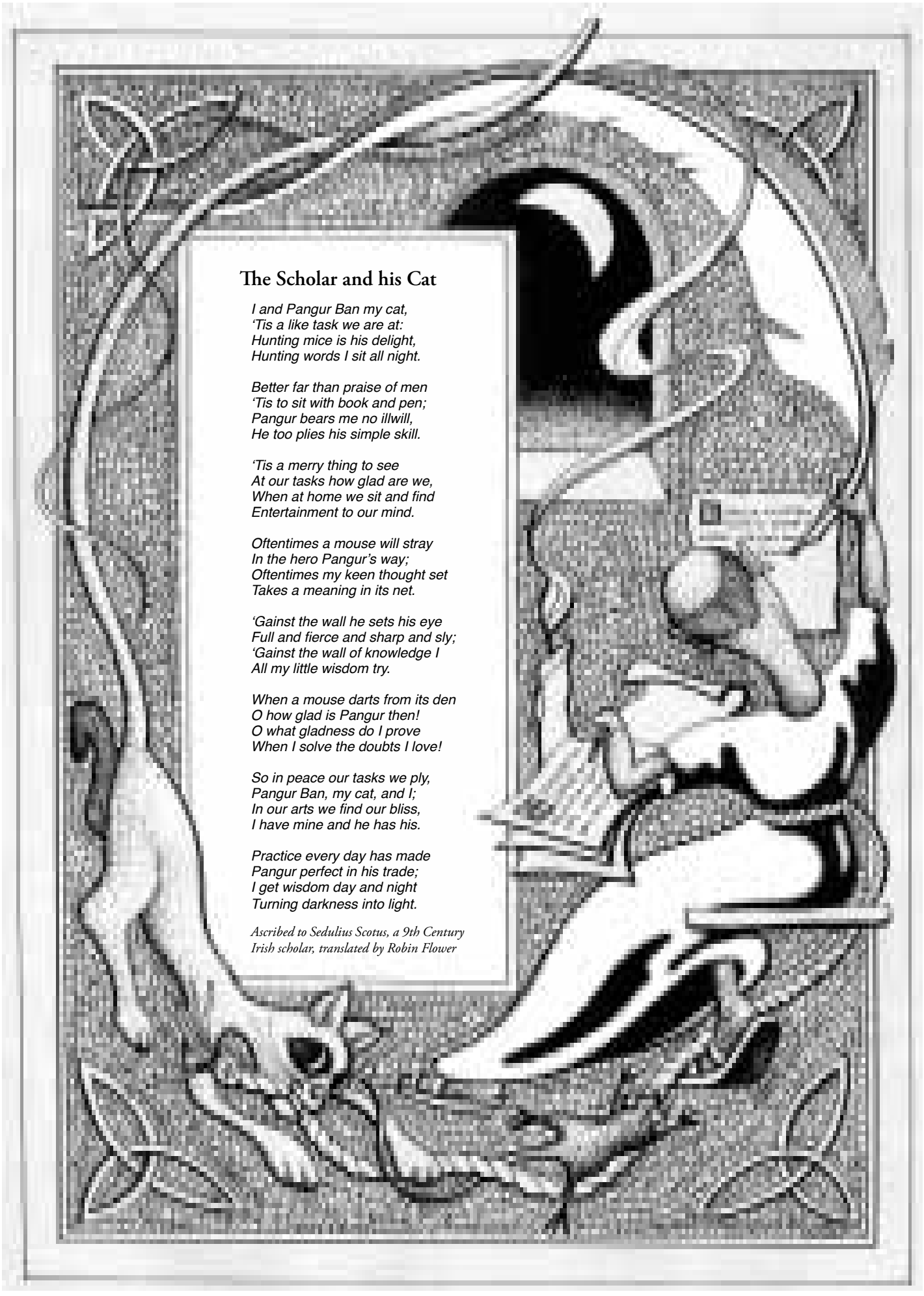
If the concept I am attempting to explain here is to be understood, then it must be realised that a pastoral council is not about power. In this model, committees exist in their own right. It is for the council to offer support and encouragement. We must move away from the idea of power. Council and committee complement one another and are working together. Therefore it is necessary that each one understands the role of the other.

Council is about empowering, clearing the way for the vision to become reality. It certainly exists to guide and to pastor by keeping an eye on developments, but it is also there to keep alive a collective longing for this community to reflect the Kingdom of God. ■

How Council meetings might run

Each council must design their own structure for meetings, allowing room for flexibility. The following may help those using the principles in the main article:

- Council meets weekly for one hour, extended by half an hour if needed.
- The opening prayer is a reading of some or all of the coming Sunday's reading. A short discussion/reflection on what these readings have to say to us in our role as Councillors. Silence, shared prayer follows. Members take turns at preparing this. (About 20 minutes).
- In the first few meetings, council will need to 'cast an eye over the parish'. The agenda will come easily for many weeks. In this they should keep in mind the question: "What is going on here that shows that the spirit is at work?"
- At each meeting just one item is on the agenda. Councillors must put their concerns on the agenda and refrain from bringing them up from 'out of the blue'. The person responsible for the item will speak to it for a few minutes, then the chairperson asks each one to comment. Ideas, proposals etc are written up and the conclusions drawn.
- The next week's agenda is agreed on, the proposer stating briefly as to what s/he would like us to be thinking about in the coming week. An appropriate parishioner might be asked in to speak to this.
- Finish up by swapping news, especially anything from the parish team; a closing hymn – and a cuppa. ■



The Scholar and his Cat

I and Pangur Ban my cat,
'Tis a like task we are at:
Hunting mice is his delight,
Hunting words I sit all night.

Better far than praise of men
'Tis to sit with book and pen;
Pangur bears me no illwill,
He too plies his simple skill.

'Tis a merry thing to see
At our tasks how glad are we,
When at home we sit and find
Entertainment to our mind.

Oftentimes a mouse will stray
In the hero Pangur's way;
Oftentimes my keen thought set
Takes a meaning in its net.

'Gainst the wall he sets his eye
Full and fierce and sharp and sly;
'Gainst the wall of knowledge I
All my little wisdom try.

When a mouse darts from its den
O how glad is Pangur then!
O what gladness do I prove
When I solve the doubts I love!

So in peace our tasks we ply,
Pangur Ban, my cat, and I;
In our arts we find our bliss,
I have mine and he has his.

Practice every day has made
Pangur perfect in his trade;
I get wisdom day and night
Turning darkness into light.

Ascribed to Sedulius Scotus, a 9th Century Irish scholar, translated by Robin Flower

Sometimes at Mass a communicant will approach the person ministering the chalice indicating they wish to dip the Host in the Precious Blood and receive in this fashion.
Some dioceses in New Zealand do not allow it. So what is the situation? Redemptorist priest and Canon Lawyer Humphrey O'Leary suggests a few pointers

Receiving Communion through Intinction

The motive of people who receive this way is hygiene, not wishing to drink from a cup from which a number of others have just drunk. The considerable number of communicants who come up for communion but receive only the Host may be a further measure of those who would like to take the Precious Blood but are repelled by what they see as an unhygienic way of doing so.

Is receiving the Precious Blood by intinction basically acceptable? The answer is clearly *yes*. Intinction is the normal method of communicating in the Eastern churches, both Uniate and Orthodox. Our own western missal includes intinction among the possible ways of receiving under both

It is a clear-cut act of proffering, of ministering the chalice, not a situation of self-service

kinds. The words of the Lord, *Take and drink,* indicate that drinking from the chalice is the preferred way to receive Communion. But the fact that the Western Church for a millennium refused the laity the use of the chalice shows that these words of Jesus are not to be taken as an absolute command. There are five considerations brought forward for outlawing the growing practice.

Intinction is unnecessary because there is no danger of contagion drinking from a common cup.
Production of reputable scientific evidence will not quiet apprehensions. Evidence about the harmlessness of drinking from a well-wiped chalice will not be enough to make every single communicant feel at ease drinking from a common cup. Not that a well-wiped cup can be guaranteed on all occasions. It is not easy to wipe both the outside and the inside of the lip of the cup swiftly and efficiently between each administration of the chalice. The well-wiped chalice of which the medical evidence speaks may be a quite rare phenomenon. The danger of contagion in drinking from a common cup can be debated. The conviction of some that there is a danger is an indisputable fact that must be given due weight.

Intinction performed by the communicant goes against the notion of the church ministering of the Precious Blood
We are talking of a mode of intinction somewhat different from that envisaged in our missal. The missal spoke of the minister being the one who dipped the host in the chalice. Is the newly developing practice an unacceptable act of "self-service". Not so. Most who have ministered the chalice have faced the situation where a communicant approaches them indicating that they wish to dip the Host in the chalice.

If one is not motivated to shake one's head and refuse the communicant reception of the Precious Blood, the spontaneous step is to proffer them the chalice so that they can dip the Host into it. It is a clear-cut act of proffering, of ministering the chalice, not a situation of self-service. Anyone who thinks otherwise would seem to manifest their lack of experience of what actually takes place. The one who dips their Host in the chalice is being ministered to, first in the reception of one species and then of the other.

We have only recently, after centuries of neglect, re-established communion under both kinds, using the optimal method, drinking from the chalice. Let us not move backward from that.

Certainly it must be consistently made clear that to take the chalice and drink from it is the preferred method of communicating. Intinction is a less satisfactory mode of communicating. But having been dogmatic in the West for ten centuries that the laity could not receive the Precious Blood in any fashion at all, becoming modesty should restrain us from suddenly insisting that one and one only method of communicating is permissible, ruling out consideration of other possibilities. The revisers of our missal had, in 1969, to make rulings on intinction without any western experience. Today we are gaining the experience on which later legislation can be based.

Whatever else, this is a practice for which church law gives no permission.

All very true. But we belong to a Church which, unlike the legal system of our civil society, puts a high value on *custom*. It places it alongside ecclesiastical legislation as one of the twin foundations of any legal situation. Custom is a bogey that legislators and tidy-minded appliers of legislation wish would go away. It is not easy to determine when custom has reached the stage of being established, not easy to be clear about the uprightness of those actions contrary to the law that are bringing into being a legitimate custom. But with all its difficulties, its character as a grey area, custom is a long-standing and officially recognised way in which ecclesiastical laws are changed or over-ridden.

Custom is a bogey that legislators and tidy-minded appliers of legislation wish would go away

As customs form, bishops may prefer to remain silent rather than come out in explicit approval of new developments. But the possibility is always there that practices not in strict accord with the prescriptions of ecclesiastical legislation are the legitimate actions through which the law is being changed. In its discipline of custom, the Church recognises that a Christian community can, under the authority of its bishop, secure changes in legislation, even legislation enacted by the highest authorities in the Church.

Just why is the rejection of this new form of intinction currently so firmly entrenched in local liturgical and diocesan thinking? Is it a matter of power? Are the clergy determined that they and they alone will decide what initiatives are to be taken in liturgical matters? Is the fact that this is an initiative of the laity a strong argument against it? When this possibility was put to one priest member of a diocesan liturgical commission, he reacted with surprise and with disbelief that such a suspicion could even be entertained. Christian feminists, who have long talked about the extent to which they have seen a male clergy as keeping power in its own hands, would not consider this suspicion unreasonable. Unacknowledged motivations are a part of human life, including church life. To reflect at times on the hidden motives behind one's expressed motives is a healthy exercise for all.

In practical terms, what is a minister of the chalice to do when approached by a communicant who indicates a wish to dip their Host in the Precious Blood?

The answer has to come not from church law but from moral theology. Someone is proposing to participate in a liturgical action that is recognised by the Church, namely, intinction. Their mode of doing so can, despite its critics, be deemed acceptable.

But this procedure is not authorised by ecclesiastical law. Moral theology consistently teaches that, while they are not lightly to be disregarded, ecclesiastical laws can be broken for a proportionate reason. We seem here to have such reasons. On the part of the communicant, for considerations that are at least subjectively overwhelming, they have no other path to receiving the Precious Blood. On the part of the minister there is the fact that they would be acting against the very nature of communion in refusing to minister the sacrament to an otherwise worthy recipient. Ministering to the occasional communicant by intinction would not hinder normal administration to others by presenting the chalice to be drunk from. We have a proportion between a relatively minor law and the reasons that would justify occasional failure to comply with it. In terms of traditional moral theology the conclusion would seem to be that the practice may be tolerated. Along with this must at all times go steadfast proclamation that the desirable way to communicate under both species is to drink from the chalice. ■

The PM and the Bible

"The Ten Commandments, summarised in the great commandment, are the base for political work." So says Norway's new Prime Minister, Mr Kjell-Magne Bondevik. "I try to read the Bible every day... My wife and I also attend a regular Bible study group and this offers a chance to go more deeply into biblical texts in a more systematic way."

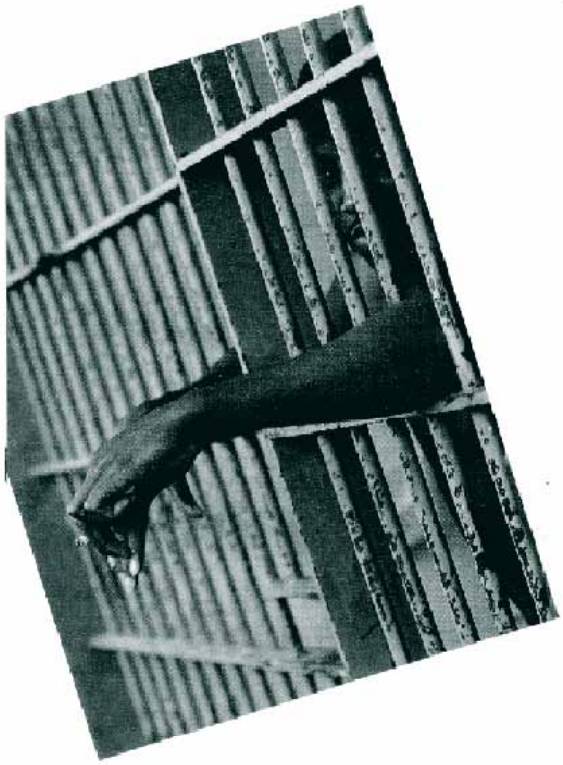
In the political arena Mr Bondevik says he relies on his Christian faith. "It's a source of confidence and calm, offering strength to my daily work. I've never found a direct solution to a political problem through the Bible, and I believe one should be careful not to look for such solutions. However, the Bible offers ethical principles of major importance to politics.

The Bible is a message for time and eternity; it should rank above the many and various political documents and as an expression – a revelation – of God's message to us human beings, nobody should ignore it."

(N.Z. Bible Society)

Someone inside there loves me

Desmond Smith



The psychological assessment wing of a prison is not the most encouraging place for visitors. One can only imagine how discouraging it must be for inmates.

Our Sunday services there were not likely to produce great charismatic outbursts of faith. They were decidedly low-key, with prisoners wandering in and out, usually with a cup of coffee in their hands. Musical accompaniment was provided by one inmate with a borrowed guitar which was not always quite on pitch or in the right key. Normally there was a Scripture reading with a few words spoken about it by the leader for that day. Then it was back to another hymn, frequently chosen from among a predictably favoured list.

Communication with those who attended was invariably difficult. When visits occur only once a month, it is hard to remember individual names, never mind personal details. Yet, surprisingly, the few prisoners who turned up each month seemed to look forward to it – no doubt for the change of company as for any other reason.

Things went on much as usual on the Sunday morning in question, with another hymn about to be sung, when out of the blue one of the prisoners suggested we should have a testimony. Not only did he suggest it, but he nominated one of the other prisoners to give it.

Now this nominated man was certainly one who regularly turned up, but he sang very little and never opened his mouth when it came to offering a prayer. He had suffered some cerebral damage in an accident, and found difficulty with speech and in the use of one arm and hand. Allied to that he was not exactly an example of sartorial splendour or of general cleanliness.

The last thing one would have expected was for him to agree. Yet he struggled slowly to his feet and hesitantly began to express his feelings about a God to whom, by his own admission, he seldom spoke. He didn't talk much, and some of what he said was so mumbled as to be almost unintelligible. But, just before he resumed his seat, he quite unembarrassedly said: "I know someone inside there loves me... and that's all I have to say".

Little did he know that he was re-echoing to perfection the words of Job: *I know I have a living Defender... and he will set me close to him*. And there were further links with the 14th Century author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, in the sense that "if you experience him or see him at all, insofar as it is possible here, it must always be in this cloud".

Up to that moment the service had appeared to be dragging on inexorably to a very dull conclusion. No scope, it seemed, for any change. But then, the Holy Spirit doesn't need a lot of room to move. And move the Spirit did, in the hearts of all of us who were fortunate to be present for this testimony. There was a concerted movement to join hands and say together the *Our Father* as a fitting end to our privileged experience with God in that place. ▪

Welcome back, Kim

Keith Harrison

There is nothing on the air waves to equal the Kim Hill mornings from National Radio. Commercial Radio, with its mindless talkback and its garrulous empty-headed disc jockeys, provides a background noise for those who don't want their minds to be engaged in the issues of the day. Television's talkback equivalent is the sport of watching other people bare their souls to Oprah Winfrey or some other equally crass presenter. There is no prestigious or authoritative television personality capable of commenting on the political or social fabric of this country who can hold a candle to Kim Hill.

How many people across New Zealand must have been listening on that first Monday morning of her return from overseas. That familiar voice telling us she wasn't sure which button to press. But we knew that was her little joke. She always knows which button to press, which question to ask, when to be sharp, incisive, inquisitorial; when to listen, when to be quiet and when to wait. She brings an intellectual honesty as well as an intellectual strength to her role as interviewer, combined with a pragmatism which appears to avoid any kind of grandstanding or posturing. This honesty is the reason why some prominent politicians will not appear on her show and why that Pooh-bah of an ex-politician and pretentious writer, Jeffery Archer, took exception to her style. Of course she makes mistakes, goes off on a tangent and occasionally makes us unreasonably mad, but that is par for the course. She has carved out a position for herself as the undisputed Queen of the Airwaves, the person we tune to when there's a national crisis, scandal or disaster, because we know she'll tell it as it is, ask the right questions, probe the politicians and make the bureaucrats sweat, if that is what is needed. I hope that she is never tempted to run a television show. She has too expressive a face, displays too much emotion and reveals herself as a very tactile person. A television interviewer must present a much more neutral, almost bland image in a situation where all the nuances of vocal expression, of pause, of hesitation and of subtle innuendo are lost against the confusion of so many visual images.

Ian Fraser has been the most successful of our political interviewers but he is shut out, denied a place because of cost-cutting measures. The result is that we have almost nothing to fill this gap. This was highlighted in a recent *Backchat* programme from *TV1* when Donna Awatere was asked about her new book on education. Alliance spokesperson Sandra Lee was asked to comment and the result was a meaningless piece of political grandstanding. Since he has become Editor of *Metro*, Bill Ralston seems to have lost some of his old fire; he was content to let the discussion drift and failed to control it adequately. Donna Awatere is a powerful and charismatic speaker who presents a convincing case for improving Maori education. It is labelled Act's policy but it is Donna Awatere's personal commitment. She sees, in a voucher system combined with bulk funding for schools, a way for Maori, a term she equates with the under-privileged, to escape the ghetto, to be empowered to choose a place of learning. Her figures for under-achievement, for school failure, in South Auckland, are alarming. Unless a solution is found soon, the result can only be a more dysfunctional and fractured society than we have today.

In this discussion Sandra Lee took the Post Primary Teachers' Association stance – a blind opposition to change without being able to give reasons to justify her argument and the programme moved on, after about 10 minutes, without further exploration of these issues. The failure of many of our secondary schools is turning adolescents into street fodder. We have an education system which is resistant to change and innovation, backed by a teacher union which has locked its members into a siege mentality where there appears to be a preference for protecting failure rather than encouraging experimentation.

The day after this item went to air in *Backchat*, well outside popular viewing times, there was a lengthy interview on Kim Hill's programme with two American educationists who had been studying the state of *Tomorrow's Schools.* It was a revealing and rewarding discussion in which the academics responded frankly to a range of searching questions. It was a programme which made Bill Ralston's rather half-hearted efforts to discuss some of the same issues, pale into insignificance. He had not done his homework, did not show the same understanding of the basic issues as Kim Hill and was not given enough time to do justice to the topic.

The subject of bulk funding, voucher systems and the quality of education in our secondary schools is only one of many issues which could be explored in a lively current affairs programme, hosted by an able commentator. The sad fact remains that while we have the issues to be explored and the people who could present such programmes, we have second rate television managers who, in spite of over-blown salary packages, are failing to deliver basic current affairs and social comment to their audiences. The brief slots in *60 Minutes* or *20/20* can hardly be called investigative journalism. A recent attempt by the *Assignment* team to pin down Act and discover coherent policy was a good beginning, but it only scratched the surface. The team could have done with double the amount of time and given each member the scrutiny given Mr Jennings. Indeed, television time is the enemy of the producer with a message to get across, an issue to explore or a politician to pin down – *Tempus edax rerum* (Ovid) ▪

Passion in a tube skirt

The Wedding Singer
Review: Nicola McCloy

It's 1985. The world is in the grasp of the Rubik's Cube and Miami Vice is the height of good television. Shoulder pads are the must have fashion item and Madonna is the vamp tramp du jour.

This is the world of *The Wedding Singer.* The film centres on the life of Robbie (Adam Sandler), who fronts a covers band that play weddings, and Julia (Drew Barrymore), a waitress in the reception hall where Robbie works. The film itself is your average boy meets girl, girl is engaged to someone else, boy falls for girl... you get the picture.

Ordinarily I would steer clear of American romantic comedy but the fact that this movie is set in the 1980s made it irresistible to me. As a teenager in the 80s, this film was enough to send me hurtling back to the bad old days when social success depended on whether or not you owned lace gloves, a tube skirt and the latest Duran Duran album. Although the plot was entirely predictable, *The Wedding Singer* managed to keep my attention by cleverly using a great soundtrack (Culture Club fans – this one is a must!), fabulous costuming and enough 80s kitsch to last a lifetime.

The scripting was tight and several scenes had me roaring with laughter. The humour of *The Wedding Singer* managed to steer the film well clear of the usual Yankee saccharine dross that we have all come to expect. Favourite moments in the film include Robbie's two brattish nephews, his music lessons and the final scene which sees that ultimate 80's rocker, Billy Idol, play a good fairy. Marvellous stuff!

While not by any stretch of the imagination a great film, *The Wedding Singer* is funny enough to keep it from my ever-growing movie junk heap. It is likely to appeal most to those of us who remember the 80s, their fashions and their fads with fondness. If you ever wished that you had kept your rubber bangles and your collection of Spandau Ballet tapes, then this one is for you. ■

Lawyers in the Dock

Thirty Pieces Of Silver
By Anthony Molloy QC
Howling at the Moon Productions Ltd
Price: $34.95
Review: Bill Mitchell

Mr Molloy writes about some film and bloodstock investment partnerships of the early 1980's, with emphasis on the part the solicitors played in these schemes. The front cover has this warning printed in red:
"This book contains some of the gravest allegations ever made in a New Zealand book. Please remember that none of the people named inside should be considered guilty of any crime unless judged so in a court of law."
The Equiticorp prosecution a few years ago illustrates the point of this warning. Six of the Company executives, and their solicitor, were charged with offences of dishonesty. Several of the Company men were found guilty, but the solicitor was acquitted, even though he had done some work on the unlawful transactions. The court, at the very least, had a reasonable doubt on the vital question whether he was dishonest, or just a person who carried out instructions in good faith on behalf of clients intent on fraud.

Mr Molloy has strong views on legal ethics, and backs his statements on that topic with a wealth of authority. Absolute integrity is basic for lawyers, so they can be trusted "to the ends of the earth". Applying this to a number of situations, he calls for:
•full disclosure of material facts by lawyers to people who rely on them
•strict observance of rules about conflict of interest
•honest discovery in civil cases, and not denying opposing parties' access to documents by omission from lists, misleading descriptions, or improper claims of privilege
•use of court proceedings, or threats of action, only to deal with issues between the parties to the particular dispute, and not for the sake of negotiating leverage for the benefit of others.

He condemns tactics of attrition where people with claims which ought to be tried in court or recognised by settlement, are driven out of the arena by long and expensive manoeuvres on preliminary matters, so that they cannot persevere to a hearing on the merits of their case.

He calls on the courts to award heavy costs against people who abuse procedures in these ways.

The schemes described in the book were set up as "special partnerships". These have two very different types of partner. One group comes under the normal rules of partnership; they are able to control the business, and they stand to share both profits and losses. The others, the "special partners", have no active role. They put money into the venture on the basis

▷▷ that they will share any profits, but will not be liable for losses beyond the amount they have agreed to invest. They lose that protection and become liable for losses if they play an active role. Income tax rates were high in the early 1980's and people were attracted to these schemes by the prospect of savings in their personal taxes, derived from costs incurred by the partnership in its investment projects. They expected also that their investment money would be managed wisely, to safeguard the capital and produce income. Many were disappointed.

Some of these partnerships financed films. The author says that the costs of some films were inflated improperly so as to produce false losses or expenses which the partners were able to use to save tax. He says also that some investors had their profits diverted fraudulently into other hands.

Other partnerships invested in racehorses. Without the knowledge of the special partners, the horses were bought through an overseas company controlled by partnership people. That company then sold them on to the partnership at higher prices so that secret profits were made at the expense of the investors.

Complicated off-shore company structures were used making it difficult for investors to establish the facts to prove that their funds had been handled dishonestly. Even when claims were commenced in court, opposition over discovery of documents created huge problems and forced many claimants to drop out because they could not afford to persist to trial.

Mr Molloy has read widely. He quotes sources as far apart as Plato and Humpty Dumpty. The detail of some transactions can be hard to grasp but the language is plain and, at times, even colloquial. The general picture painted by the author should emerge well enough, even for readers who do not want to make the effort required to master all the detail.

Ethical standards in high finance fell apart in some quarters in the years leading up to the 1987 crash. The book quotes overseas writers who say that in their parts of the world some lawyers, especially in the largest firms, allowed market forces to undermine their professional integrity. The book raises the question whether that also happened here.

I am sure that one or two partners in a large firm, acting improperly and keeping clients in the dark about it, would often be able to hide any misconduct from others in the firm as well – at least until serious trouble came their way. Malpractice by one or two can give a bad name to the firm as a whole. The challenge for innocent partners is to deal with it decisively as soon as it comes to light so that professional standards are maintained.

Anyone interested in ethics for lawyers in the commercial field should read this book. Lawyers themselves could use it to make sure their own standards have not slipped under the pressures of the market place.

I cannot fault Mr Molloy's statement of general ethical standards for legal practice, though it must be said that the rules about conflict situations can sometimes be difficult to apply and the line between legitimate pre-trial activity and the oppressive tactics of attrition is not always easy to draw. Readers must decide for themselves about the allegations he makes. We are told that some investors persisted with claims and were paid out. But the Serious Fraud Office and the head office of Inland Revenue looked at some dealings which the author condemns without finding the same cause for concern.■

Bill Mitchell is a retired District Court Judge

Serious questions – inadequate answers

Tomorrow's Catholic: Understanding God and Jesus in a New Millennium
By Michael Morwood
Melbourne: Spectrum Publications, 1997. Pp. 146
Price: $22.50
Review: Greg McCormick

Much of what is happening in the Catholic church today can only be understood as symptomatic of a struggle to come to terms with the implications of Vatican II, itself an attempt on the part of the Church to assert the significance of Catholic Christianity in the midst of a rapidly changing world. It is not surprising, therefore, that 30 years after the Council Catholics are still divided, often bitterly, over how Vatican II is to be understood and implemented.

Michael Morwood's book is addressed to Catholics bewildered and confused by the changing face of the Church, especially those who, in Morwood's words, are searching for a "religious world view and spirituality relevant to the new millennium." On the face of it, then, this is clearly a worthy project; few today can deny the fact that many Catholics desire to become better acquainted with the foundations of their faith, the Scriptures, the Catholic tradition and teachings of the Church, not to mention those of other faiths or none who, disenchanted with the shallowness of consumerism and its sparkling array of transient goods, yearn to discover a depth to their existence. Unfortunately, however, *Tomorrow's Catholic* does not quite meet the challenge.

I say this with considerable hesitation for there is much in this book to be commended. It is clearly and simply written, easy to follow and obviously speaks engagingly to ordinary Catholics in terms that they might readily appreciate. This is no small accomplishment for any theologian, and Fr Morwood should have our gratitude for making the effort at all. At many points I found myself in sympathy with his position, especially his description of the collapse of traditional religious culture and its wide-reaching impact on church life today. But the antidote prescribed by the author for the current malaise affecting the Church is, I think, part of the problem, and not its solution.

The difficulty is that the reader is presented with what can only be described as a caricature of Catholic doctrine; we are told that adhering to this picture of the tradition is the source of our present difficulties, and that the solution is to be found in radically re-thinking that picture in such a way that the old and outmoded images and beliefs of the past fall away in favour of a contemporary faith in tune with modern cosmology and liberal, middle class values.

This perspective governs much of Fr Morwood's discussion of revelation, the divinity and humanity of Jesus, and the Trinity. Much more could be said about the way these topics are dealt with, but space does not allow a more detailed criticism. The paradox of Morwood's position, one of which he seems quite unaware, is that having rightly criticised the mechanistic and Deistic world view which led to the image of a distant, uninvolved and occasionally 'intervening' God, we are told that the solution to the problem is to adopt the perspective of modern science and cosmology (i.e., the world view more 'relevant' to our own lives) as the framework within which theology and spirituality can once again flourish. In effect, we are to exchange one scientific paradigm (the Newtonian, mechanistic) for another (quantum, process), coupled to an optimistic belief in human progress, reminiscent of Teilhard de Chardin. It can be doubted, however, whether the modern post-Einsteinian scientific framework is any more capable than its mechanistic predecessor of providing us with the meta-narrative to which the Church should conform itself in its desire to be relevant.

This book has incurred episcopal displeasure on both sides of the Tasman. From a theological perspective this is perhaps understandable. But the fact remains that Fr Morwood has put his finger on a number of crucial issues. Many otherwise well educated Catholics are still largely in thrall to distorted and damaging images of God, and it is not obvious that the numerous programmes of renewal and adult education have succeeded in improving this state of affairs. If bishops find *Tomorrow's Catholic* flawed that is, of course, their business. But people will continue to search for the answers to the questions so acutely posed by Fr. Morwood, and their aspirations to deepen their appreciation and understanding of Catholicism in the light of our world need to be treated with the utmost seriousness and respect. The ball is now in the bishops' court. ■

Greg McCormick is a Dominican priest who lectures in theology at the University of Dunedin

The not-so-comfortable Jesus

The Jesus I Never Knew
By Philip Yancey
Zondervan Publishing
Price: $25 approx.
Review: Patrick Maloney

I lived well over forty years on this earth before it occurred to me that the birth of Jesus contained more than a whiff of scandal. Mary and Joseph had to contend with the very real stigma of a child born out of wedlock to an unknown father, very much an unplanned pregnancy. Not much hint of that in the Christmas cards I exchange every year! I'd read Daniel-Rops, Maurice Meschler, Prat, Archbishop Roberts, Ricciotti and others who had written the life of Christ. All good, inspirational in their way, but all I now see as portraying a conventional Jesus, a Jesus who corresponded to purified versions of the Old Testament with which we were presented when young. How is it our author asks, quoting from Dorothy L. Sayers, "how is it that the church has very efficiently pared the claws of the Lion of Judah, certified Him as a fitting household pet for pale curates and pious old ladies"?
Philip Yancey is an American evangelical journalist and teacher. This book is not a biography of Christ. Instead, it is reflection on key aspects of his life and teaching which peels away the patina of convention and leaves us with a portrait of Jesus which is not only fresh but almost frightening. He is the only author I have read to give a sense of how uncomfortable Jesus was to most of his contemporaries. Nowhere in his book does he treat this more effectively than in his chapter on the Beatitudes. The sub-heading is *Lucky are the Unlucky*. What sense could Jesus' hearers have made being told that it was good to be

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Overseas News

Indonesian bishops speak out

The Catholic bishops of Indonesia met with the new President, B.J.Habibie, last month and demanded a "thorough and total reform" of the country.
They condemned the abductions and torture, attacks on students, looting and pillaging, and called for the punishment of military personnel who had slaughtered students and others calling for reform. The bishops also asked for the legal restrictions on trade union activity and press and academic freedoms to be revoked.

Famine in the Sudan

In London recently Sudanese Bishop Caesar Mazzolari thanked the aid agency CAFOD for raising over a million pounds to help people facing starvation in S Sudan. "We in the Church", he said, "are in the best position to know where food is really needed because we are always with the people".
But the Bishop was critical of the British Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short, who had said the aid agencies should concentrate on long-term development work and leave the local government to provide emergency funds. "When we end the war", said the Bishop, "we can begin long-term progress – proper sanitation, health centres, schools, roads. But you can't ask a person on the brink of death to dig a well or to build a road. Development is the second phase".

The Pope in Austria

Before Pope John Paul's visit to Austria (19-21 June) the head of the Austrian Bishops' Conference said that everything in Cardinal Groer's sexual abuse case must be brought out into the open without any excuses being made. The Cardinal, former Archbishop of Vienna, resigned last year following accusations of misconduct with novices 20 years previously.

The Church and Slavery

A statement issued by the bishops of one-time French possessions in Africa, Latin America, the West Indies and the Indian Ocean region have described slavery as "an enormous collective sin", and has acknowledged that the Church "which was then considered to have almost official status as the state religion" must bear its share of the blame.
This admission has been welcomed by Church leaders in France.

Dialogue in Pakistan

Less than two weeks after Bishop John Joseph took his own life in protest against Pakistan's blasphemy laws (see June issue of *Tui Motu*), Christian and Muslim leaders met the country's President in an effort to ease the tensions between their two communities. The President offered his condolences at the "tragic demise" of Bishop Joseph and gave assurances that the problems of minorities would be settled amicably. He recalled that the Koran teaches Muslims to respect their Christian brothers. Two days after the meeting the Pakistan press reported that a commission for inter-faith dialogue was to be set up to promote tolerance. It will have 20 members: ten Muslims, four Christians, two Hindus and two from the Sikh and other minorities.

Lies about Nuclear tests

In December 1997 the official archives of the French Centre for Nuclear Testing were briefly accessible to the public. Before they were hastily resealed by the Minister of Defence, a French journalist, Vincent Jauvert, was able to consult official documents which confirmed that for 30 years the nuclear authorities had lied when they insisted the tests in the 1960s had been totally clean, that no inhabited island near Mururoa had been contaminated and that conscripted workers were never exposed to nuclear radiation.
A recently published book citing accidents and unexplained illnesses among the people of these islands confirms Jauvert's findings. The Minister of Defence, Alain Richard, has now publicly admitted that there was fall-out in the test islands and even on Tahiti.

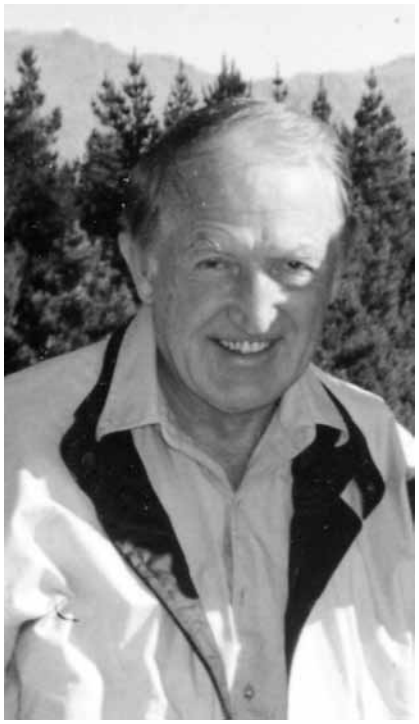
(Christian World Service)

Grieving Parents

A new book Not out of Mind by Althea Hayton just published in Britain claims that "pregnancy loss is now recognised as a true bereavement". It consists of common sense suggestions and religious services for Christians grieving for the loss of an unborn or newly born infant. ■

▷▷ poor, when they really knew poverty, grinding poverty? What sense could they make out of being told that they should be meek and mild under the boot of Roman soldiery? The people were shocked and scandalised, of that I have no doubt. So many of his followers then and since have been trying to water down his meaning. Yancey does not. Being poor really is an advantage. God really does have a special care for the weak and disadvantaged.

There is a lot of C S Lewis, whom he frequently quotes, in his thinking. He is something of an American Shusaku Endo. His Christology is perfectly orthodox – there is no watering down of Jesus' humanity or divinity. Some Scripture scholars may be concerned that there is no special attention paid to the differences of how Jesus is portrayed by each of the evangelists. He seems to read each pretty much at its face value. But then, so I believe, do most people who pray from the Gospels. I believe many will find through this book a revelation, a new discovery of what they had earlier assumed to know well, but never really did. After all, as the book's title tells us, that was the writer's intention.■



Promoter's Corner

Reluctant though I am to contribute to 'millennium fever' I have to tell you that the number 2000 is a very sensitive one for *Tui Motu*. More accurately it is a critical number because until TM's circulation reaches 2000 it stands to figure amongst those who have loved and lost; and while it is encouraging to be loved by a lesser number (like 1400, our present circulation) that will not ensure its survival.

Hence this 'corner' is somewhat more important than it looks, for the conversation that takes place here (and its consequences) may eventually decide whether TM will become a lasting star, however small, or a fleeting meteor.

To date the response to publicise TM by speaking at Sunday Masses has been modestly successful, especially in the Auckland and Christchurch dioceses, but another initiative is emerging as equally important: presenting *Tui Motu* for sale once a month after Mass. There is no doubt that some people prefer to buy a copy to taking out a subscription. A number of parishes around the country are getting the chance to do so because individuals are having 12, 10, 6, or even 4 copies sent directly to them; they offer them for sale and send the proceeds to our TM office. (Note that once again this initiative causes no administrative hassles for the parish. Some parish priests will remember the days when every week they were unofficial agents for both *The Tablet* and *Zealandia*!).

Being outside the church with a bundle of papers on a Saturday evening or a Sunday does not have instant appeal to our retiring Kiwi natures, but it should have appeal to the apostolic character bestowed on all of us by baptism and confirmation. A paper with a commitment to peace and justice is, after all, a gospel enterprise.

In summary, TM is getting there but not fast enough to stop our accountant from feeling nervous and speaking to us quite severely. Of course both the editorial staff and board directors all have dreams of some benefactor(s) offering extraordinary help, but in the meantime it will be those who volunteer to give their time and energy to promoting TM that will carry the day.

Thanks to all who have responded to this column. Please continue to send me any ideas that you might have for the progress of *Tui Motu* C/- 26 Hopkins Crescent, Kohimarama, Auckland 5: Ph. 09 521 1342

Tom Cloher

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Bringing the Pol Pots to Justice

In mid-June officials from all 185 members of the United Nations met in Rome with the aim of setting up a permanent International Criminal Court (ICC). Its aim would be to bring to justice the likes of Pol Pot, Idi Amin, Pinochet and other perpetrators of genocide and crimes against humanity.

"We have few weapons to promote the rule of law," says Mary Robinson, former Irish President and now UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. "This Court will tell the worst violators that they can run but they can't hide. There will be a day of reckoning".

It is half a century since the Nuremburg trials. Attempts to set up an international court were mooted and abandoned during the period of the Cold War. But a new urgency has arisen in the 90s with a shift from international to intra-state conflicts, such as the break-up of Yugoslavia and the appalling massacres in Rwanda. *Ad hoc* attempts to bring those responsible to justice have been largely ineffective. Something more solid is needed.

Among the guidelines proposed for the Court are:

- crimes covered would be war crimes, genocide, forced transfer of pop-ulations, gender and sexual crimes.
- investigations and trials would be initiated by an independent Prosecutor when a national court is unable or unwilling to deal with the accused.
- police in states supporting the Court will be obliged to arrest accused or convicted military or political leaders.
- any country supporting the Court can offer prison facilities.
- the indictment would name individuals, not governments.
- the Court will be located in The Hague.

Among the objections already made are questions regarding the Court's independence: what power of veto will states have; will the Prosecutor need the approval of the Security Council; will the Court be dominated by the West?

New Zealand has earned respect from the international community in the arena of peace-making and peace-keeping. It is astonishing that this initiative has aroused so little public discussion or media interest. What does our own Department of Foreign Affairs have to say? And what do we, the people, think? ■

Jim Neilan