

# TUI MOTU InterIslands

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## Climate Action

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## Manaakitia te Taiao

**NEIL DARRAGH** on Christians' need to take climate action

**JEANETTE FITZSIMONS** urges methane cuts immediately

**TOM GIBSON** says dairying needs to change

**CHARLIE MONTAGUE, MICHAEL KRAMER, SUSANA SUISUIKI,  
JACK DERWIN** and **JULIA SPELMAN** speak out for the environment

**PLUS: BISHOP MICHAEL DOOLEY** shares his discernment

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## EDITORIAL

### Fronting up to Change

September has always marked the beginning of spring, the season that promises to fulfil our hopes for life with bulbs, blossom and longer days. Yet, increasingly, there's an out-of-kilterness to the seasons, an unpredictability to our weather and, around the planet, a new ferocity in storms, floods, fires and droughts. We've been warned by scientists that global warming has reached dangerous levels and if we continue to ignore it, Earth will be unable to support human life into the future. This is why the UN Sustainable Development Goal 13 is for world-wide, urgent climate action. And as Neil Darragh highlights, it is also why Christians need to be at the forefront — as our Church leaders are urging us to be. This 230th issue explores what climate action means.

There's a change in our cultural climate, too — a widespread distrust and disgust at the Church after the many revelations of child abuse and cover-ups. That's why, when I saw a recent issue of the *Otago Daily Times* bearing the mile-high headline "It's indefensible" — followed by "Catholic bishop asks the city for forgiveness" — I felt a new hope that our Church leaders are finally getting it.

Bishop Michael Dooley is new in the job, but his actions highlight the symbolic value of a leader asking the public — not just the Church — for forgiveness. It's the response we expect from preachers of the Gospel. As necessary as it is to say "sorry", to ask for forgiveness is potent. It assumes that there is something to forgive and someone to forgive. It assumes also that those sinned against — children and families — will decide the terms of forgiveness. And further, it assumes that the penitent will fulfil these terms.

Child abuse and its cover-up are crimes and sins and we need satisfactory, on-going responses, both legal and religious. Some terms of forgiveness have surfaced already around the world — that Church leaders apologise, that the bishops give their resignations to the Pope (as those in Chile recently did), that institutions bearing the names of abusers and those who covered it up be renamed, that compensation be given, that the Church be included in the New Zealand investigation into child abuse in institutions, that child protection safeguards are scrupulously adhered to — others will follow. Bishops need to comply as quickly, justly and publicly as possible. The world needs to see and hear conversion again and again. But this is for a magazine issue another time.

For now, we thank all the contributors whose faith, generosity, reflection, research, writing, art and craft give us a thoughtful and challenging issue.

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As is our custom, our last word is of blessing. ✨



# Bridle King-like Power



**T**here is a story in the Bible that tells of a king who saw a woman he fancied. Though she was already married he wanted her, and so he took her. And in time she became pregnant. He then tried to cover up his crime by duping her husband, and when that failed he had him murdered.

Eventually the king was found out and was confronted by a prophet. This prophet, Nathan, told a tale of a rich man who took the poor man's one little ewe lamb. The king's response was: "The man who has done this deserves to die!" And Nathan replied: "You are the man!"

We call this story "David and Bathsheba", but the narrator and Nathan, reflecting the patriarchal world they live in, see it as the story of David and Uriah (Bathsheba's husband). For them, the king's offence was not against the woman but against the "poor man". David had taken the "property" of another man — and not just any man, but one of David's 30 elite soldiers. Just as we see in the world of US politics today, abusing women is one thing, but abusing the trust of the military is something else.

For the last two years the soap opera called "Donald Trump Hits Washington" has played out across our media, providing for some entertainment, for some elation and for others despair, even shame. It is easy for us as Kiwis to cynically

laugh at it all. It is easy to feel sorry for those Americans who are highly embarrassed by President Trump's policies and behaviour. And it's easy to slip into thinking that in the long run all will be well once this bizarre "Apprentice" presidency is over.

Trump's behaviour is not unknown among those with egotistical pretensions of grandeur: denying the veracity of any reality or perspective other than their own; seeing their personal welfare as synonymous with the country's welfare; and being unencumbered by any moral compass other than that which will maintain their power. We can see reflections of these behaviours in the leaders of Russia, China, and North Korea, and many kings and emperors past. They are behaviours that can lead to wars, and much suffering for innocents.

These king-like pretensions also coalesce with the patriarchal notion of strength and potency, exemplified in what the prophet Nathan called "the taking" of women. This "taking" is not just about sex — primarily, it is about power and image. The "grabbing" interview Trump had with Billy Bush in 2005; his alleged affairs with Karen McDougal following the birth of his son Barron, and with the porn star, so-named Stormy Daniels, is all about that blend of patriarchal power, ego and need to exhibit male virility.

Such "takings" are often the purposefully "badly-kept-secrets" of presidents and kings. The secrets are

purposefully badly kept because such "takings" are part of the misnamed "strength" that many of us (and not just men!) want in a president and king — even those among us who purport to have a Christian morality! We, public, are often beguiled by these big, strong, male leaders with bravado and wealth and arrogance and beautiful women in their train.

But let's be clear — these power-imbalanced "takings" are also, covertly and sometimes overtly, violent — primarily against the women so taken, and those who fear being taken, and all who care about these women. These "takings" are also violent towards, and violating of, the ideal and experience of mutual, loving, giving, costly, trusting, long-term relationships between couples. In short, they are an affront to the sort of love our faith promulgates.

It is hard not to read this ancient story of King David and his abusive lust for Bathsheba, and not hear the resonances with "King Donald". The questions, then and now, are how to read the texts and how to bridle the power of "kings" in order that their violence is curtailed, and fewer people come to suffer. ❄



**Glynn Cardy** is the Minister in Presbyterian Community of St Luke, Remuera-Newmarket, Auckland.



# FOR GOD'S SAKE TAKE CLIMATE ACTION

NEIL DARRAGH discusses why Christians should be in the forefront of climate action.

Christians are used to the idea of practising self-restraint for the sake of others or for a higher good. Yet the self-discipline required for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases — principally carbon dioxide (mainly from the energy and transport sectors), nitrous oxide and methane (mainly from livestock) — plus big changes in how we use our land, is a bigger undertaking than most of the self-restraints we have been used to.

The proposed Government Climate Change Commission will be set up some time next year. This substantial, Government-instigated effort to solve a major environmental

issue is a bold step forward for New Zealand. The practical focal point for dealing with rapid and destructive climate change is the transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

All this will require widespread public support — not just in words but through large, probably uncomfortable, changes in our lifestyles. It is an objective that will need a strong ethical commitment from the public if we are to do this fairly and without coercion.

## Where Do Christians Stand?

Where do, or where should, Christians stand in the range of public

support for this objective? I have a sense that Christians are spread across the spectrum of New Zealand opinion, neither better nor worse than most. If this is true it should astonish us! By the year 2050 the difference between contributing to atmospheric pollution on the one hand or actually reducing it on the other will be stark. My guess is that future Christians looking back at us here in 2018 will be amazed that we did not see the fundamental contradiction between believing in a Creator God and continuing to lead lifestyles that contribute to rapid and destructive climate change.

"I believe in God Creator of heaven and earth" is a fundamental Christian belief. Most Christians repeat it often in the first sentence of the traditional creeds. To destroy, to vandalise, or to overuse other

created beings beyond their capacity to regenerate, demonstrates a non-belief or at least a disregard for the God who created them.

Fundamental to the Bible is the belief in a Creator God. This belief does not come just from the creation stories in the book of Genesis that most of us already know about. It is a theme that runs through the whole of the Old Testament. The New Testament continues it by telling the story of *recreation* in the life of Jesus Christ and the invitation to all his disciples to become active contributors to a *new creation*. A human-centred reading of the Bible has sometimes led us to believe that only human beings are included in the “kingdom” (reign, realm) of God championed and activated by Christ. Yet how could we have fallen for the idea that the billions of years of God’s creative energy before human beings even appeared simply don’t count?

### Just Human Beings or the Whole of the Earth?

Still, we do have to deal today with the lingering assumption that being Christian is to do with personal salvation, or building the Christian community, or social justice, while our relationships with the rest of God’s creation need not concern us much. By the late 20th century, if not before, it became clear that this assumption is wrong. Human activity is destroying many of the beings and processes of planet Earth. We have become vandals in God’s garden. We are not just eating the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, we are poisoning the air and the soil around it.

Nearly all New Zealanders now know about and are concerned about environmental issues, especially the effects of rapid climate change. It seems though, that for many Christians, environmental issues are peripheral to their Christian beliefs. Either we don’t take environmental issues seriously enough to require a change in our lifestyle, or we do take environmental issues seriously but don’t see that this has much to do with Christianity. As a wise observer

of human behaviour recently said, when we see more bicycles than cars in the church carpark on Sundays and more bicycles than cars at clergy gatherings we will know these people do actually believe in a Creator God.



*Contemporary environmental issues are no longer just a peripheral concern in Christian ethics but have become central to it.*

Human beings have always had violent relations with other living beings within the planet Earth. We use them for food, clothing and shelter. But by the end of the last century, the over-consumers among us had shifted from being users to abusers. Vandalism and pollution have become normal. Contemporary environmental issues are no longer just a peripheral concern in Christian ethics but have become central to it. This has caught many Christians, including priests, ministers and pastoral leaders, by surprise. Our parents did not teach us this; we did not learn about it in religious education classes when we were young. And we still do not hear it very often in church on Sundays.

### What Do Church Leaders Think?

At the international level, and for several decades now, Church leaders have called attention to human responsibility for any human actions that affect the wellbeing of the natural world – the need for restraint and reduction. Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople, was one of the

earliest to draw attention to the close link between the economy of the poor and the ecology of the planet in Orthodox theology. He called Christians to become spokespersons for an ecological ethic in which the world is not ours to use for our own convenience. It is God’s gift of love to us and we must return this love by protecting it and all that is in it.

The World Council of Churches’ 2012 mission document, *Together Towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes*, re-affirmed the stance that humanity is not the master of the Earth but is responsible to care for the integrity of creation. God’s love does not proclaim a human salvation separate from the renewal of the whole creation.

In his 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home*, Pope Francis called us all to an “ecological conversion”. We are used to the idea of “conversion” – a change of mind and heart. But this call is to an ecological conversion. This is a call to stand for an “integral ecology” which respects all the environmental, human and social dimensions of the planet. A major part of this encyclical is concerned specifically with climate change.

A high-level, international document, *The World is Our Host: A Call to Urgent Action for Climate Justice*, from the Anglican Communion Environmental Network in 2015 called upon political, economic, social and religious leaders to address the climate change crisis as the most urgent moral issue of our day.

That’s the international view. Back home with us is where it really counts. Every one of us is either increasing or lessening our current emissions of greenhouse gases. There is still a real possibility of us being thrown out of the Garden of Eden, but a downward change of lifestyle would be the better option. ❄️



Neil Darragh is a pastor, writer, and theologian. He is a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Auckland with a long-term interest in the impact of the Christian Gospel in New Zealand society.



**T**he government was seeking New Zealanders' input recently to its ground-breaking Zero Carbon Bill which will set a target for emissions, appoint a commission to advise it and set budgets for progressive emissions reductions on the way. This article addresses the targets.

### Interpreting the Policy

The policy is zero net emissions by 2050 — a simple aim, but actually quite complex to interpret in practice. Its various possible interpretations will lead to vastly different climate outcomes. And there are a few issues to consider.

First, that “net emissions” means that carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) captured from now on by increased forestry can be offset against the emissions from, for example, burning fossil fuels. There are problems with that — such as the need to provide for possible destruction of those forests in fire or earthquake or pests and diseases — and the risk they will not be replanted after harvest.

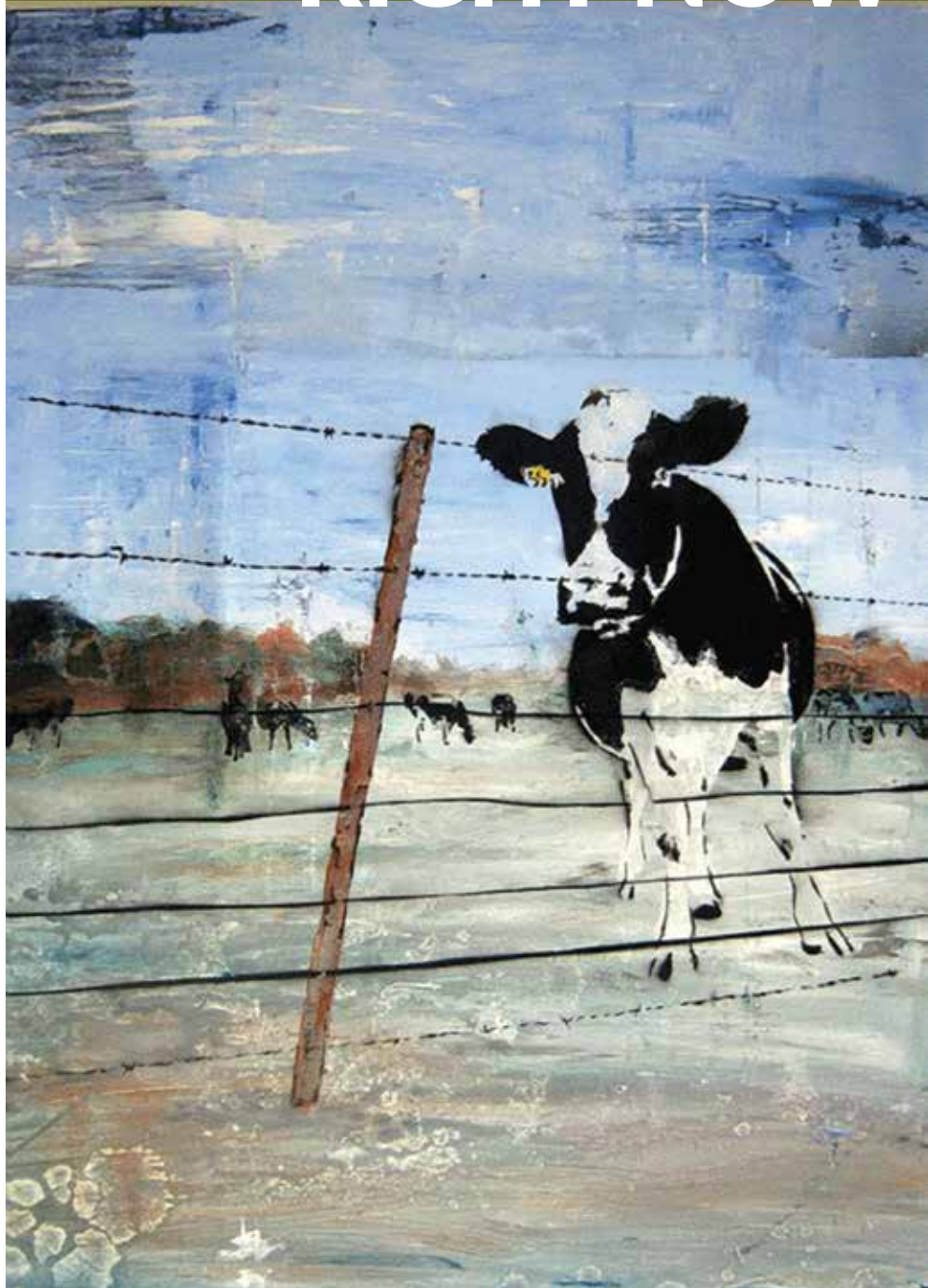
Second, the distant target of 2050 — an arbitrary date with no great climate significance — disguises the fact that what matters is not the date we finally stop emitting, but the track we take to get there. Rapid reductions now, taking advantage of all the easy options right away, then slowing down the rate when things get harder, will warm the climate less by 2050 than waiting till the last minute, then taking extreme action. If our goal is zero by 2050 it is the total amount of carbon put into the atmosphere by then that matters.

### Three Options

So what then will “zero” actually mean? There are three options:

1. Zero emissions by 2050 for carbon dioxide only. This is clearly not serious — carbon dioxide is only half our emissions and we can't expect the energy sector to do all the heavy lifting.
2. The “two basket approach”: zero emissions for long-lived gases (mainly carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide) and stabilisation for short lived gases (methane).
3. Zero emissions for all gases.

# CUT ✂️ METHANE EMISSIONS RIGHT NOW



**JEANETTE FITZSIMONS** explains how short- and long-lived carbon gases affect global warming and why we need to cut methane emissions hard and fast.

## Best Option for Environment

Option 3 at first seems the most environmentally responsible, but in fact I support the second option — based not on politics, but on science.

Methane is a much more powerful greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. The initial warming from a pulse of methane is 120 times a like quantity of carbon dioxide. Growth in methane emissions will do more short-term damage than growth in any other gas.

On the other hand, methane degrades much faster than carbon dioxide, which stays around, continuing to warm the atmosphere for thousands of years. The methane cows belch today will be largely gone by 2050\* leaving only a small residue of carbon dioxide, which should nevertheless be counted.

If methane levels in the atmosphere are stable, then as today's emissions decay their impact will be replaced by tomorrow's emissions.

## Target Level for Methane Emissions

The question then is: stable at what level?

The Government-prepared discussion paper has been less than helpful by not addressing the level at which methane should be stabilised. This has allowed Federated Farmers to argue that we can cut by just 5 per cent — back to the 1990 level — then stabilise. That would be disastrous.

Methane, even with its short life, currently contributes a third of our warming emissions, and it must come down, fast, along with all other gases.

Officials preparing the discussion paper commissioned two economic models, from Vivid Economics and New Institute of Economic Research (NZIER) respectively. The NZIER report modelled a two-basket system where short-lived gases (methane) were reduced to 55 per cent of 1990 levels by 2050. No reasoning is given for this number. I've asked for some

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\* Methane degrades exponentially into a small residue of carbon dioxide, with a half life of about 8.6 years. Three-quarters of its 100 year warming potential occurs in the first 17.2 years; after 50 years any residual methane is insignificant.

scientific advice on how a safe level might be set, but in the end this is a job for the Climate Commission.

## Cut Methane Levels Hard and Fast

What matters is moving fast to cut back methane emissions to a much lower level, then holding them at that level. The longer we delay methane cuts, the further we will have to cut.

Meanwhile, across the world an unspecified and large amount of methane is leaking from melting permafrost. Only slowing the rate of warming will stop this, which makes it all the more important to address the emissions we can do something about.

*Until we accept that the overriding goal must change from economic growth to sustainability, the climate bicycle will be pedalling forward with one foot and backwards with the other.*

## How to Make Cuts

While changes in animal diets can help reduce methane release, we cannot avoid addressing animal numbers which are unsustainable on many levels, including land use, water quality and milk processing emissions. Reducing the number of cows will reduce emissions of both nitrous oxide and methane, and raising the remaining animals less intensively, feeding them better on grass and reducing input costs of fertiliser, feed and pharmaceuticals can increase profitability for farmers.

Methane emissions also come from natural gas leaks from the fuel system. Fracking in Taranaki and gas leaks from oil drilling both contribute to this. They add significantly to the warming from the carbon dioxide produced by burning the gas.

I would put them in a different basket from biological methane: they should go to zero along with all fossil fuels. Old gas wells may need to be managed for some time to prevent such leaks adding to methane in the atmosphere.

## Urgent Action Needed

So to summarise, I am arguing for the "two basket approach" for short and long-lived gases, but only if methane is first cut, deeply and fast, to a level supported by science, and if fossil methane is put in the same basket as the other fossil fuels.

While we need urgent reductions in all gases, there is room for different paths to zero.

I actually see nitrous oxide as being most urgent. It has risen fast in recent years, driven by hugely increased inputs of nitrogen fertilisers (urea). There are ways to reduce it — along with cutting urea, these include better management of wet soils, keeping cows off pasture when wet, and the reduction in herd numbers.

I support a levy on nitrogen fertilisers, to encourage less intensive farming and a shift to more organic systems, with the money going into assistance for the farming transition.

There are many easy wins for transport which could be implemented quickly while maintaining mobility, but we can't expect fast reductions in emissions from steel and concrete.

Government can't escape the fact that targets and budgets are useless without action. This framework needs support from fast action to keep fossil fuels in the ground by stopping new coal mines and oil and gas drilling, legislating for efficiency standards (most especially for motor vehicles), and stopping all new big motorway projects. Otherwise emissions will continue to climb.

Finally, until we accept that the overriding goal must change from economic growth to sustainability, the climate bicycle will be pedalling forward with one foot and backwards with the other. ❄

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**Jeanette Fitzsimons** CNZM is a renowned environmentalist, a former co-leader of the Green Party, and manages an organic farm in the Coromandel.



# DAIRYING NEEDS TO CHANGE



**TOM GIBSON** looks at the changes in dairy farming and says that while farmers love their land they need to keep making changes to protect the environment.

**T**he Ministry for the Environment report, *Our Fresh Water 2017*, painted a grim picture of our freshwater environment. It confirmed what we already suspected: that native fish species are under threat, that there is wild variation in water quality across the country and that the way we use land has a huge impact on fresh water. Dairy farms are singled out as major water polluters because of the nitrogen — used

intensively as a fertiliser — that finds its way into supply. Today, there is a call for herd sizes to be reduced and even for the abolition of dairying in some South Island districts.

I've worked in the dairy industry all my life. I have seen firsthand the many benefits of dairying in Aotearoa: the jobs it provides, often in regions with few opportunities; the wealth it has created, which has been reinvested in local communities; and

the fellowship that has been fostered by what is an especially cooperative style of farming. And I know that farmers are farmers because we love the land. But I also know that we in the industry must understand and comply with the 1991 Resource Management Act. And regional councils need to police regulations so that farmers no longer damage the environment. There are many competing ideas out there about



how practices could be improved, but everyone in the industry — farmers, councils, even consumers — agree on one thing: we need change.

## Polluting Water and Air

Because dairying pollutes both water and air, change will need to be two-pronged. First, we need a breed of cow that discharges less methane gas, a greenhouse gas that damages Earth's atmosphere. And we need to be able to produce the same amount of grass using less nitrogen and phosphorus, both of which cause serious damage to our water resources. We need information, too, about which soil types will produce the least run-off into waterways.

Some claim that modifying the way we farm isn't enough — that we need to reduce the number of cows. Former Minister for Primary Industries, Nathan Guy, said that the focus should be on increasing the value rather than the volume of the dairy product. In his view, this would be a double win: farmers would garner the same profits from fewer cows, and fewer cows would mean less damage to the environment.

## Change in Attitude

Eighty-two years ago, everyone living alongside the Kaupokonui Stream used it as a sewer. Farmers, the two Kaponga cheese factories and the township all discharged effluent directly into the stream. After school, we children at Kapuni watched, fascinated, as the frothy waste whey floated past when the factory staff released it into the river. And from the same river, Māori regularly worked the riverbed for eels — taken by the sackful — to smoke.

Nobody thought twice about this damage to the river — it was just how it was. But when the state of our waterways became a concern, the community took action. Now the Kaupokonui Stream has been restored thanks to the Taranaki Regional Council and the surrounding farmers. At the river mouth there is a popular summer settlement and the river is rated swimmable. Bathers have no complaints and appear to prefer the river rather than the Tasman Sea for their recreational swimming.

Remarkably, this river services the highest density of dairy cows not just in New Zealand, but possibly in the world. Change is possible, and it isn't too late — rivers can be cleaned up in just a few decades — we hope.

*I know that farmers are farmers because we love the land. There are many competing ideas out there about how practices could be improved, but everyone in the industry — farmers, councils, even consumers — agree on one thing: we need change.*

## Development of Dairying

Before World War II, herds were much smaller, and manned by more staff than today. With plentiful labour and no wash-down pumps, cowshed effluent could be collected by wheelbarrow and dumped in some inconspicuous place until the annual "dung spread", when it was carted onto the paddocks in a konaki, spread and then harrowed. The yard was cleaned by bucket and broom, and, thanks to small concrete settling ponds, farmers would shovel the effluent out every few days. Most farmers were reluctant to discharge effluent directly into streams. Small herds helped, too, as cows spent less time in the shed.

The post-war period saw rapid expansion, refinement and scientific development in New Zealand's dairy industry. First, farmers began to test cows for milk weights — meaning they could measure the quantity of butterfat. Then, artificial breeding transformed herd development and meant that a national database of the industry was developed. After a massive eradication drive, New Zealand herds became the only herds worldwide to be certified as free of tuberculosis. New Zealand became known everywhere as a large-scale provider of quality milk products, delivered on time. The marketing team at the New Zealand Dairy Board

was able to tell the world that the dairy farms in Aotearoa-New Zealand produced dairy products more efficiently and with less harm to the environment than any other country.

## The Current Threat

New Zealand has a proud history of dairying, and for much of this history it has been a world-leader in environmentally sound farming practice. But this is seriously under threat. The *Our Fresh Water 2017* report tells us what we already knew anecdotally: that New Zealand's waterways need urgent action to restore them and ensure they remain unpolluted.

What is needed is cooperation between government, who make regulations, the councils who enforce them, and the farmers who comply with them. I have seen this work successfully in my own region, Taranaki. Here, the Taranaki Regional Council has policed the Resource Management Act since its inception in 1991. But it has done so in the spirit of cooperation — working with the farmer rather than against the farmer. After 50 years of working cooperatively with other Taranaki farmers and Regional Council, I am now very proud to see our local streams and rivers have been fenced and planted on both sides. The native shelter we have planted over the rivers makes them clean, cool and beautiful.

Dairying is a cooperative style of farming — dairy farmers are accustomed to working together for mutual benefit. After a lifetime of working in the industry, I am certain that this spirit of fellowship and cooperation will be applied to restoring our waterways and that farmers will find novel and workable ways to keep them clean. Like all New Zealanders, we love the land — it gives us our livelihood, after all — and we recognise that urgent change is required. ❄️

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[www.bertelsencrenshaw.com](http://www.bertelsencrenshaw.com)  
Instagram: @markcrenshaw.art



**Tom Gibson**, retired dairy farmer and former director and chairman of regional and national dairy industry organisations, is involved in his local and Church community.





# WHY ACTION IS URGENT



I watched an Al Jazeera documentary recently called *The Cut* about female genital mutilation (FGM) in northern

Africa. At first, I felt I was watching something horrific but which was far from home and disconnected from my work on climate action in New Zealand. But then the narrator pointed out that when crops fail, as they do more and more with climate warming, there is an incentive for fathers to marry their daughters away. Suddenly, our failed vegetable plot in our flooded

**Charlie Montague** is an Otago University student and climate campaigner with 350.org the Global Catholic Climate Movement.



back garden in South Dunedin connected me to my sisters overseas. I am lucky that a failed garden has no bearing on my future. But in Somalia, daughters are often seen as commodities and at the age of 14-15 are married to older men in exchange for livestock. When crops fail this can happen to even younger girls. And those who have gone through FGM are "worth" substantially more livestock.

It's true that climate change affects us all, however, women and girls are impacted on two different axes. First, they experience the harm of climate change as human beings. Second, they're impacted by male violence, commodification and exploitation. With climate change this *manifests* (excuse the pun) in many different ways, from early marriage to increased domestic violence during heat waves.

Jacques Cousteau's 1956 film *The Silent World* captivated many at the time and since. In the following years, Cousteau revealed the beauty

of the marine environment on big and small screens, showcasing pristine ecosystems and new discoveries. In 2017, only 61 years later, David Attenborough presented *Blue Planet II* a similarly wonderful celebration of the marine world. However, Attenborough's most important message was not one of joy, but one of deep concern.

**Michael Kramer** is a biological scientist in marine and coral reef ecology. He enthusiastically collaborates with his fiancée to encourage positive change in their limited spare time.



Both *The Silent World* and *Blue Planet II* reveal what is "under the surface" literally and figuratively. Although Cousteau was one of many advocates for environmental protection and despite numerous attempts to raise awareness since, a whole range of issues and problems have been blissfully (or actively) ignored by individuals and governing bodies. It is now apparent that we can no longer turn a blind eye to our impact on the world. It inspires most of us to ask: What can we do?

I have seen our human impact on the marine world first-hand. I have felt disheartened, cynical and thoroughly gloomy, but I am still hopeful that we can make a difference. I think that if each of us is curious, caring and makes mindful choices we can begin to restore our damage.

Kia ora and Talofa lava, my name is Suzanne but to my family and friends, I am Susana. I am the Marketing and Communications

Manager for Pacific Cooperation Foundation, a non-governmental organisation which focuses on building cooperative relationships in the Pacific region around hard issues.

We recently hosted the Pacific Wave Forum with two other Pacific-based regional organisations and invited private sector representatives from all over the region to come together to discuss solutions for non-communicable diseases and climate change finance. I think having a public/private

**Susana Suisuiki** is a Kiwi-born Samoan "blended Pasifika style" — Samoa, Niue and Tonga. Susana is a parishioner at St Pius X Church Glen Innes, Auckland.



partnership is effective in addressing issues such as climate change because governments cannot do it alone.

The number of natural disasters caused by climate change has increased in the Pacific region over the last few years. The governments of the Pacific nations affected received disaster response funds to assist their recovery measures. The most recent was the Government of Tonga which received US\$7 million for relief efforts following Cyclone Gita. They received also an additional US\$3.5 million from the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Company (PCRAFI) based on insurance cover against tropical cyclones.

Disaster risk finance products available to governments, including contingency funds from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, are currently limited to mitigation and post-disaster recovery efforts.

The Forum Economic and Finance Ministers Meeting (FEMM), held in Palau this year, supported a call by the





Early marriage reduces the girls' time in school. Family pressures around food and health resources can result in women and girls being sex trafficked. Regional militarism and war result in specific abuse of females — rape, forced pregnancy and living situations without maternity care.

We know that learning to read improves girls' lives most significantly. When women and girls have that tiny bit of power, they choose to have fewer children. And as pregnancy complications are the leading cause of death globally for girls aged 15-19, according to the World Health Organisation 2017, this choice is life-saving.

I believe prioritising the well-being of women and girls worldwide is crucial in stopping catastrophic climate change. If we treat women and girls with kindness and compassion,

we will treat Earth in the same way. I believe Lierre Keith, writer, feminist and environmentalist, that the basic rights of girls are crucial to the survival of the planet. It's fair to say: *something other than the climate needs to change.*

What can we do? Get involved now! In small things like fundraising for charities such as Caritas which support girls' education, or for Richie Hardcore's programme helping men reform themselves from violence. Speak to others about the connections between our lives in New Zealand and climate impacts worldwide so people learn that climate change is a human problem, not merely the climatologists' challenge. And in harder but essential things such as making substantial changes in our attitudes and lifestyle for the good of Earth. ❄️

We need to be curious about where our purchases come from, about how they are grown or made. And curious about where our waste is going. We need to actively seek information about what to do to protect life and how to do it well.

We must care about how our actions affect the environment, both directly and indirectly.

We need to make informed decisions. Our day-to-day decisions help to shape our world and we need to be intentional — from our simple choices about what product to buy, to our harder choices such as who to vote for. We need to give our support to the people who make wise decisions on behalf of us and for the whole world.

Meeting the UN Global Goals for climate action will not be easy to achieve across the world, but the alternative

will be far more difficult, even disastrous, for all of us. I'm constantly striving to improve the environmental impact of my own life, and I'm encouraging those around me to come on board too. I know that if we keep being curious, caring and making informed choices, we will reduce the damage we do to Earth.

I am inspired by Wendell Berry's words: "I am speaking of the life of a man who knows that the world is not given by his fathers, but borrowed from his children; who has undertaken to cherish it and do it no damage, not because he is duty-bound, but because he loves the world and loves his children." ❄️

private sector for an economic risk assessment and recovery model for the business sector to better inform, plan and prepare business communities on loss and damage.

In the Pacific Wave Forum's session on climate change finance, there were discussions on a range of topics including: the scale of disaster risk financing available in the region; financing flows in-country post disaster; connectivity to the private sector; key barriers that limit private sector engagement; and innovative methodologies to improve private sector accessibility to disaster risk finance.

The Forum drafted recommendations to present at the Private Sector Dialogue with Forum leaders this month in Nauru. One of the recommendations is to strengthen collaboration between development partners and public/private sector stakeholders in the disaster and climate

change sectors.

As a young professional, I know that Pacific private/public sector representatives are not the only ones taking action on climate change. A youth-led movement 350 Pacific, works across 15 Pacific Island nations, organising and facilitating workshops to educate and empower youth. They participate in UN climate negotiations.

I strongly feel that although the Pacific region knows that it is vulnerable to the effects of climate change, they are resilient. It shows in their proactive approaches — banning single-use plastic bags, challenging fossil fuel industries and drafting recommendations to be presented at high-level meetings with global leaders.

I'm passionate about climate action and encourage all people to take to heart the catchphrase that has become a mantra throughout the Pacific region: "We are not drowning. We are fighting." ❄️



GLYNN CARDY writes how prayer can shift our thinking of God and our relationships with all life in planet Earth.

**W**ritten prayers are always fraught. They are our attempts to verbalise the ineffable, or at least our approximations of how the ineffable touches our lives. They contain our hopes, our guesses about God and at best some poetry. Maybe that's why the Psalms are still so popular — particularly when sung.

Of course, addressing a personal God who is “above”, “in heaven” or somewhere other than earthed, brings a set of problems. Such language can locate God off the planet, and separate God from the planet, like a potter is separate from the pot. It also, as in the potter/pot analogy, assumes that God shapes and fixes, or doesn't fix, our planetary problems.

I think there are ways to honour the transcendence of God without resorting to separatist language. Just as I think there are ways to honour the immanence of God without reducing God to a mirror of our human needs.

But many of the old prayers address the Mr Fix-it God. And in the absence of a fix it is not illogical to blame God for not cleaning up the ecological mess our planet is in. (If you follow the negatives of that sentence).

### Thinking God Differently

This prayer from Portugal, which is thought to be several centuries old, is different from how most of us think about God.

*I am the heat of your hearth on the cold winter nights,  
the friendly shade screening you from the summer sun,  
and my fruits are refreshing draughts quenching your thirst  
as you journey on.*

*I am the beam that holds your house,  
the board of your table,  
the bed on which you lie,  
and the timber that builds your boat.*

*I am the handle of your hoe,  
the door of your homestead,  
the wood of your cradle,  
and the shell of your coffin.*

*I am the bread of kindness and the flower of beauty.*

*Ye who pass by, listen to my prayer: Harm me not.*

The first three stanzas, and maybe the last, seem to be about wood. The “I am” is wood. And the point of the prayer is that wood, for the author, is all-pervasive, and by implication evokes both wonder and thanksgiving. The last sentence is an ethical directive to fellow humans to “do no harm”.

It is tempting to think the fourth stanza doesn't fit. For how is wood the bread of kindness and the flower of beauty? Can wood be kind and beautiful?

Why I like this prayer is that, while appealing to the poet in me, it leads me to appreciate wood and the culture from



which this prayer arose. It is to see God in beauty, and beauty in God; to see God in kindness, and kindness in God; to see in wood the pencilled writing of the Divine connectedness.

### Facing Our Damage

Just like silent prayer, written prayer doesn't have to start with “Dear God” — like a letter to a grandparent. It can begin from any number of perspectives; it's where it leads that matters.

Of course the last admonition “to do no harm” no longer cuts it. It's like that provocative prayer of Michael Leunig's: “Father do not forgive them... for they now know precisely what they do.”

We now know that not only have we harmed the planet — cutting, using, polluting and exploiting vast areas of land, sea, and sky — but we have harmed beyond the point of repair. We now know we have destroyed whole species. We have believed we have a biblical mandate to subdue



the Earth and use it, abuse it, as we wish. We now know this is a destructive theology, and a theology that has nurtured the worst of “developers” and “entrepreneurs” and the greed within us.

### Praying to Be Restorers and Repairers

Yes, we need to do no harm. But we also need to restore and repair. As a modern prayer says:

*We need to find the means to repair,  
not just the tears in our own lives  
but the tears of the Earth,  
the tearing apart of relationships.*



Those relationships are among the whole range of inhabitants of this ecological system called planet Earth. And to do this repair we need all the science, skills and resources we can muster. For we have gone so far that even our own species is under threat.

Like church prayers that used to refer to all people simply as “men” and God solely in the masculine pronoun, we need a gentle revolution where our inter-species dependency (like the wood prayer) is acknowledged and our future caring for one another is acknowledged.

### Entering Into Relationships of Creation

Another reason — maybe the main one — that I like the old Portuguese prayer, is that it invites us into a different world in order to think like, be like and pray like wood. This is what the best spiritual disciplines do: they invite us out of our egotism, our smallness, our circumscribed world, to

a journey into a vast otherness, in order that in time we return to know ourselves and our world afresh.

We can try praying this prayer with a piece of wood in our hand. Say it aloud twice, or thrice, or more. Allow our minds to journey into the world of wood. And then, in silence, try to stay there for a little while. The ancient wisdom that the health of our forests will determine the health of our human communities is not to be ignored.

At their best, polytheistic worldviews, like Māori theology, invite us into symbiotic relationships. A number of iwi can recount how in times past tohunga and craftsmen would enter the forest, “the realm of Tāne”, to seek out a tree suitable for a purpose — say to be made into a waka — and then by karakia discuss the matter with the spirit of Tāne, protector of the forest, balancing human need with the need of the ecosystem. For many there was an unspoken understanding that the health of the tribe was dependent on the health of the forest, and that we humans needed to assist Tāne as kaitiaki (protectors) of this relationship.

### Being Grateful

Some of the prayers I write are blessings. Blessings are a way to enter into written and spoken prayer beginning from the premise of gratitude. The following blessing is woven around the divine connectedness we have with wood, the bush and the life it nurtures.

*May we be blessed  
by the song of the wooded glen,  
singing green, singing hope,  
lifting our spirits,  
if only we can hear.*

*May we be blessed  
by the boughs of the forest,  
overshadowing, protecting,  
calming our souls  
if only we let them.*

*May we be blessed  
by the God who holds  
the ‘is’ and the ‘not yet’,  
the pain of rampant destruction,  
and the hope of vulnerable seedlings.*

*So come, sit, listen, be...  
in the nest of the bush,  
opening ourselves to the mystery  
of the way, pace, and prayer of trees,  
and their blessing.*

Amen. ❄️



**Glynn Cardy** “These days I drink coffee with rice milk, go to the gym and to St Luke’s Church. Rituals like these are important. As are family dinners and saying grace. Grace is such an interesting word. I pray I will always be attentive when she whispers in my ear.”



## ISAAC to ABRAHAM

*Dear Dad,*

I don't know how you lived to such a great age in perfect health. My eyesight is starting to fail. I need to write while I still can. I am a father of fine twin boys. It didn't happen immediately. But I prayed and God blessed us. The wife you sought for me has proved all I could desire. When Rebekah stepped down from her camel it was love at first sight ... but being a father has not been easy. I didn't know this when you were around.

I will be frank, Dad — there were times when I wished you were different. You had many matters to attend to but for one who desperately wanted children you gave us little of your time. Ishmael was 13 before you took any notice of him and then it was to cast him out. I woke one morning to find my big brother had vanished. I missed my playmate and his mother. Hagar was young, fun and caring; in retrospect a woman of insight. I heard from the servants that you sent them away

Rosalie Sugrue is an author and lay preacher who has led hundreds of services. Her meditations have been used in New Zealand and internationally by Protestants and Catholics.



because you wanted me for your heir. It made me feel special until I realised it was not me — myself — you wanted, it was me — son of Sarah. Everyone knew Sarah was head wife. You didn't need to banish Ishmael and Hagar into the cruel desert.

But now my sons are almost grown I know being impartial is difficult. I was determined to be a better father than you but I confess a weakness for my elder son. Esau is such a delight — impetuous, daring and a skilled hunter. His brother has no heart for hunting. Jacob has brains all right but is a mother's boy.

I longed for you to take me hunting. That day when you sharpened your knife and told me we were going on an expedition was the best day of my life. My heart soared at the prospect of us having father-son time. I watched with such excitement as the men cut firewood and you saddled the donkey. Two wonderful days of camping out and then just we two climbed the hill to make a sacred sacrifice. I felt so proud that you considered me big enough to carry the wood. But you kept glancing back at me with a troubled look. I saw tears in your eyes. I couldn't understand. Was I failing this test of manhood? Had I let you down? You didn't look at me again until I noticed we didn't have a sacrificial lamb. I was reassured by your reply. But when the altar was built I saw a new wild look in your eyes. You seemed obsessed by some mission. You spoke to someone who wasn't there. I was frightened, but this was the only thing you had ever asked of me. I didn't struggle when you bound me. I wanted to appear brave. God always came first with you.

Did you have any idea of my terror? My hero let me down in the most devastating way possible! But, your God did not let you down. When I saw your attention diverted by a ram, your God became my God. It took me a long time to trust you. Eventually I grew to see you as a man of faith with capacity for human love. You truly loved my mother. When she died it wasn't just a tear in your eye, you wept floods. You sought a cave suitable for a fine burial. You could have taken that cave but you paid the market price.

And it was there, dear Father, where Ishmael and I buried you. Yes, Dad, we brothers became close again. God dealt kindly with Hagar and Ishmael is father to twelve princes. I'm telling you this because I know you were torn by the frailties of human love. I fear my frailty will come between me and my wife. No one is perfect but you taught me we can all trust in the perfect love of our God.

*Rest in peace Dad.  
Your loving son,  
Isaac*

Painting: *Isaac Bears the Wood for His Sacrifice* by James Jacques Joseph Tissot (Jewish Museum, New York)



# IDEALS, FAITH AND PERSPECTIVE



For over 25 years, I lived in denial of God's existence, even though I was brought up in a thinking, liberal Christian household and was an enthusiastic campaigner for Christ. But over time I rejected the existence of God in favour of the Trotskyist revolutionary project of building a communist world based on the overthrow of capitalism and its exploitative and irrational set of economic and social relations. This brought me into the orbit of the International Bolshevik Tendency, which I actively supported in the 80s and 90s.

However, seven years ago I sustained a major stroke which robbed me of my mobility and independence. All the advice I had was that I would never walk again and live the way I'd been used to. It came to my mind that to be truly restored would require Divine intervention. This realisation was reinforced one evening when I received a feeling of immense reassurance from God that everything was going to be all right and that sometime in the future I would be totally healed. I had no alternative but to reconnect with my earlier Christian beliefs.

It was beyond the remit of communism to restore me either physically or spiritually. Communism could put someone into a new suit, but it couldn't put a new person into a suit. Only spiritual rebirth could instill in me a source of hope and faith. Spiritual rebirth beckoned. In fact, I'd already decided that the prospect of global socialist revolution was less likely than the second coming of Christ.

I realised that I would need to

confront some of the key political principles that had governed the larger part of my adult life. In reflecting on my reborn Christian faith, I accepted the total package: salvation through Christ and a consequent putting on the mind of Christ in humility and respect for others, with a less aggressive desire to evangelise. I adopted a more contemplative approach.

*I think that the attributes of a Christian society, as evinced by Jesus Christ in his many parables, are at odds with the imperatives of capitalism — with its hunger for profit at the expense of human need.*

I found that Christian principles are entirely compatible with promoting and defending human rights, providing for the social inclusion of all people irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, abilities and migrant status. I think that the attributes of a Christian society, as evinced by Jesus Christ in his many parables, are at odds with the imperatives of capitalism — with its hunger for profit at the expense of human need.

So what of the Russian revolution now almost 100 years ago? It was a world-shaking event of historic proportions. It was the first attempt by a team of revolutionaries to construct a truly socialist order. They were motivated by a desire to

establish a humane world order based on a planned economy centred on the principle of meeting human need for sustenance, shelter, education and the like. I still recognise as genuine the early motivations of Lenin and Trotsky in attempting to rid the world of inequality and oppression.

But there is a yawning gulf between those visionaries and the self-serving careerists and usurpers who succeeded them, erecting a brutal tyranny headed by Stalin. The cause of the degeneration was the result of many factors — notably the exhaustion and devastation of the Russian civil war. In many people's eyes now, communism has become synonymous with Stalinism. But just as Christianity can be confused with the Inquisition or other atrocities committed in Christ's name, which have nothing in common with the Jesus of the Gospels, so, too, it is true of the communist project. Karl Marx wryly commented of the Church of England of his time that it would rather suffer an attack on 38 out of its 39 Articles of Faith than on one thirty-ninth of its income!

I think that our broken relationship with Creator God causes us to fall into self-serving, self-interested patterns of behaviour. This can undermine even our most noble of goals and principles. We need God's help. Ultimately, it seems to me that it is in living authentic Christian lives that we will free the world of tyranny and oppression. ❄



**Mike Gourley** lives in Wellington, where he was a broadcaster and educator. He worships with the Wellington parish of St Thomas's in Newtown.

# The World Council of Churches is 70



**The WCC is celebrating 70 years of ecumenical endeavour. Five writers from different Christian denominations share their involvement.**

I visited the World Council of Churches only once. I was struck by the chapel in the ecumenical centre with its simplicity, openness and symbolism. The streams of water depicted in the mosaic floor had a striking resemblance to the braided rivers of Te Waipounamu, land of my birth. The streams are distinct and separate and from time to time floods link the disparate strands into larger connected masses of water. This is a powerful image of the ecumenical movement: distinct Christian traditions, moving separately on their distinct paths, all formed through the waters of baptism, all moving towards the same ocean of God's love.

The WCC has carried this vision faithfully for 70 years. It calls all of us to respect one another and our individual denominational traditions, to reverence one another and the paths on which we walk side by side and to deepen our relationships so that we can speak and act as one in our very divided world. Respect, reverence, relationship are for me the three Rs of ecumenism.

I have been privileged as a Roman Catholic to enter deeply into ecumenical life through Christian World Service and through the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand. The former took me into the work of Churches round the world as they strive to bring peace and justice to some of the poorest and most disadvantaged communities on Earth. The latter came onto the New Zealand scene as an extraordinarily creative gift of the Spirit, challenging us to greater inclusion, a search for consensus, a thirst for justice – especially to the indigenous people of this land – and a yearning for greater unity.

The Conference did not survive but the spirit lives on in this land through women and men who continue to work together as Christians for the good of all peoples and the care for all creation. Pope Francis suggests that "unity is achieved by journeying. When we pray together and collaborate together in proclaiming the Gospel and in the service of others, we are already united." ❄️

**Elizabeth Mackie OP**, former assistant editor of *Tui Motu* magazine, is the Congregational Leader of the Dominican Sisters.



One of the joys and privileges of my 40-year ministry has been my involvement in the World Council of Churches (WCC).

I have just returned from representing the New Zealand member Churches at the Central Committee meeting in Geneva on the WCC's 70th anniversary. A particular highlight was Pope Francis's visit and message: "Dear brothers and sisters, I have desired to come here, a pilgrim in quest of unity and peace. I thank God because here I have found you, brothers and sisters already making this same journey." It was also notable that four members from North Korean Churches attended.

Three words sum up why I consider the WCC important and its impact on me: unity, justice and peace.

On 23 August 1948 the WCC was created in Amsterdam as a visible sign of Jesus's prayer: "Father, may all be one ... so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (Jn 17:21). To meet in Central Committee, or at a WCC Assembly, is to sit with people from almost every country and Christian denomination in the world and feel "at home". We learn, grow and experience the depth and breadth of God's love as expressed through the Christian Church.

But unity is not an end in itself. Ecumenism and mission are closely intertwined. The Church was given Good News to tell and we share that best when we are united.

While the WCC is not an aid or development organisation its work and influence make a difference in the world. It is encouraging to look back over 70 years and reflect on the influence of the ecumenical family in matters of justice and peace. For example, the Program to Combat Racism and the move toward peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula today. The WCC speaks for the voiceless, seeks justice for vulnerable and marginalised peoples and advocates for peace in every troubled spot on Earth. It accompanies the indigenous people of the world in their quest for justice. It walks with those living with disability. In walking a pilgrimage of justice and peace for all the WCC is reflecting the heart of God (Is 1:17).

In New Zealand we may underestimate our significance on the world stage. But many Churches around the world are grateful to the New Zealand Churches for accompanying them on their journey.

This two-way blessing of Church to Church is a reason for rejoicing in this 70th anniversary. ❄️

**Rev Ray Coster** is the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand.





**A**s I reflect on the World Council of Churches, two significant experiences come to my mind.

The first goes back to a war-time experience. I was invited to attend a Presbyterian-Methodist Young Men's Easter Camp at Waikanae near Wellington in 1942. I was only 16 then. One of the speakers was Rev Bob Thornley who was described in the camp programme as "just back from the famous Amsterdam World Conference". Bob Thornley, in private chats and in public speeches, shared his experience of the founding of the World Council of Churches. I caught the ecumenical vision at that time and have been a loyal supporter of WCC since.

My second experience happened 30 years later. During that time I had attended numerous WCC meetings, met WCC leaders and guided staff members around the country. But it

**A** long-time staffer sat in an airport lounge in India and said in reply to a colleague who asked him what it was like to give your life to the World Council: "It feels like being sent into space and not ever helped to find a way of landing back on Earth."

Thirty years after returning to New Zealand after my 10 years on the Council staff, I still feel as though I haven't landed properly, let alone succeeded in anchoring that ecumenical experience back home.

For a while it was easier. The Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand flourished like a beautiful flowering plant – then died. My own Anglican Church, having killed off the Plan for Union, made some brave noises about ecumenical action and mutual recognition of ministries. But those sounds spluttered and faded and the long winter of ecumenical retreat

**I**'ve always believed that to be Methodist in Aotearoa is to be ecumenical.

Belonging to Taha Māori within the Methodist Church and growing up as a rangatahi, we were encouraged to envisage and work towards an oikumene that was inclusive, diverse, interconnected and faith-filled. Our own Methodist bicultural journey set a standard for how we chose to be sisters and brothers in Christ in this land, and despite the many challenges along the way, we were committed to growing together, not only as Methodists, but also through our membership with other ecumenical bodies.

With this understanding I first travelled to Geneva, Switzerland, to take up my work with the WCC. I began as an intern in 1995 with the Programme to Combat Racism (Indigenous Peoples' Desk), and then in 2001 was appointed Programme Executive with the Education and Ecumenical Formation team.

What was so special about my time with the WCC is that it gave me the opportunity to work alongside member Churches around the world. Like us at home, these Churches sought to live out an ecumenism that was contextual, relevant, and that had at its heart a profound desire for transformational encounter. One of the greatest strengths of the WCC has been its ability to provide the ecumenical space where such transformational encounters can occur. From its very first assembly in 1948 – when it said of its membership "we intend to stay together" – the WCC has continued to build a fellowship of Churches who stand shoulder to shoulder in critical solidarity, while calling each other to visible unity.

On a personal level I have been moved to witness the reconciliation and healing that can occur when Churches together can speak truth to power and set themselves on a journey towards justice and peace. I consider it the greatest privilege to have been able to serve with the WCC and in some small way contribute to its legacy of worldwide ecumenical engagement. ❄



## World Council of Churches

was not until 1975 that I received an invitation to attend a World Assembly. So, along with other delegates, I travelled to Nairobi, Kenya for the 5th Assembly. It lasted for two-and-a-half-weeks. I attended inspiring rallies, bible studies, group discussions and acted as secretary of a committee. After the Assembly I reported back to the New Zealand Churches: "I give this report with a deep gratitude to God for a rich experience of Christian fellowship and for the opportunity to learn afresh that Jesus Christ frees and unites."

I have attended other notable WCC meetings, but the Nairobi experience stands out in my memory despite the fact that it happened in a very different era over 40 years ago. Since then, while I have never had such an experience as that in Kenya, I have been able to keep in touch with the fresh challenges and thinking that the WCC is bringing to the new world of this century. ❄

followed. And when the sun breaks out as it occasionally does, the news goes unreported – like the recent visit of Pope Francis to the WCC headquarters which was ignored by our media.

Despite all that, there are still signs of real collaboration at local Church level. The interfaith movement shows the most exciting promise, as does a stirring of eco-theology.

But the international ambitions and energy of the World Council don't inspire Church leaders as they once did.

The desirability of a movement that embraces all Christians and finds common ground with all people of faith is more urgent than ever. But the trigger to reignite that movement in Aotearoa remains elusive. The old dream is yet to find a landing pad again.



Rev **Angus MacLeod** came from Edinburgh to New Zealand in the 1950s to minister in Baptist churches including Oxford Terrace Church in Christchurch.



Rev **John Bluck** was the Anglican Bishop of Waiapu 2002-2008 and is a writer and author of several books.



**Tara Tautari** is a Senior Parliamentary support person and represents the Methodist Church on the Board of Christian World Service.





# Reading to My Kids

When they were little I read  
to them at night until my tongue  
got tired. They would poke me  
when I started to nod off after twenty pages  
of Harry Potter or Lemony Snicket.

I read (to them) to get them to love reading  
but I was never sure if it was working  
or if it was just what I was supposed to do.

But one day, my daughter (fifteen then)  
was finishing *Of Mice and Men* in the car  
on our way to basketball.

She was at the end when I heard her say,  
No, in a familiar frightened voice  
and I knew right away where she was.

*"Let's do it now," Lennie begged,*

*"Let's get that place now."*

*"Sure, right now. I gotta. We gotta,"*

and she started crying, then I started crying,

and I think I saw Steinbeck

in the back seat nodding his head,

and it felt right to me,

like I'd done something right,

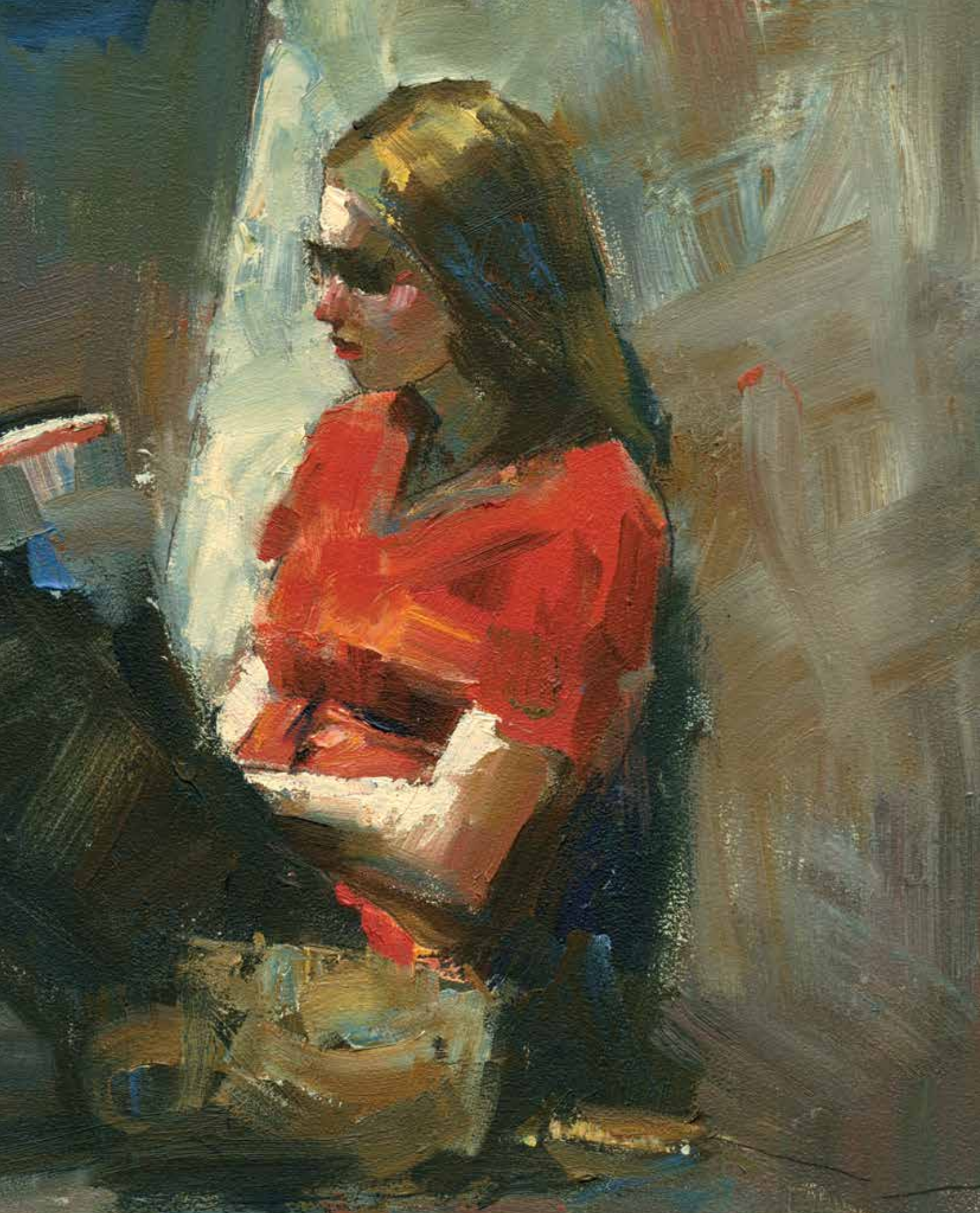
and I thought to myself, *Keep going,*

*read it to me, please, please, I can take it.*

—Kevin Carey

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# Will you accept?

## MICHAEL DOOLEY reflects on his appointment as the Bishop of Dunedin and how the experience has given him a new appreciation of discernment.

**M**y first reaction when I was invited to write a reflection on my discernment process of becoming bishop was that it would be a very short article! I calculated that the time between getting the news of my appointment as bishop and my accepting it was no more than 10 minutes. After further thought I realised this was a superficial summary of what was going on. That 10 minutes was one small part of a process. There was in fact a wider communal dimension of discernment of which I was not aware at the time. My individual decision was important but not paramount.

Many people asked me about how I was appointed bishop and what the process was like. Bishop Colin Campbell in our Dunedin diocese had submitted his retirement and we were waiting for Pope Francis to appoint a new bishop. After 18 months of waiting we were getting impatient, and especially so Bishop Colin, who had to carry on as bishop until his successor was named. I was aware

that I, along with a number of other priests, had surfaced as a possible candidate.

### The Phone Call

When I received a message on my phone in February to ring Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Martin Krebs, the Pope's representative in New Zealand, I felt rather sick. I realised that in the next few hours my life could change dramatically. As I was in Wellington at the time, the Nuncio asked to see me. Once I was seated in his office, he informed me that Pope Francis had appointed me as Bishop of Dunedin. His next question was: "Do you say yes?"

I bought some time by putting forward my reservations and suggesting that there were other priests who could be more suitable for the job. But he came back with the same question: "Do you say yes?"

### The Response

At that point I accepted that there was a lot more to this discernment

process than my making an individual choice. There had been months of consultation and gathering of information — none of which I knew about. And all this work had led to this appointment. In that moment I recognised that my own fear of the unknown was a poor excuse to derail the wider process of discernment that had involved the wider Church community. So, at the end of those 10 minutes I was able to say "Yes" to the Nuncio — and I was surprised at how peacefully I could say it.

### Encouraged by Support

During the next nine days I had to keep the appointment confidential and I waited with considerable trepidation for the day it was made public. Again, when the news broke I was buoyed by a sense of peace that came from feeling the genuine prayerful support of so many people. I received numerous texts and emails which gave me a strong feeling of being uplifted by so many people supporting me behind the scenes.

### Leaving the Well-Known

One of my concerns on being made bishop was leaving the life of a parish priest. There's a saying: "You don't go to the seminary to be a bishop" — and





*I am very aware  
that these are  
challenging times  
for us to proclaim  
the gospel message  
but we have many  
talented and faithful  
people in our  
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up the challenge.*

that I entered the process later. I cooperated with the discernment of the faith community who over some time and after consulting many people, came to the decision.

I'm re-evaluating the community dimension of discernment and I've realised this process offers us an opportunity in our diocese. For example, at this time the Church wants to involve more people, especially young people, in mission and to encourage people to discern their vocations. We expect people to make personal decisions and to initiate their own involvement without giving them encouragement. I've been thinking: imagine if as a Church community we put time and effort into discerning our community needs as well as who in the community would be able to do the work to meet them. We could research possible candidates and choose from them, relying on the Spirit to guide us. Then we could go to the person and say to them that, after long deliberation, we have appointed them to a particular role and invite their response: "Do you say yes?"

Far from coercing the person to take up a role, we are offering them the fruits of our community discernment. We will be letting them know that we as a community want them because we believe they can do it and we need them. I know it is a powerful affirmation to be told that the community has discerned and is inviting you to accept their discernment. And unless we are proactive, we may be waiting a long time for people to take up roles in the Church.

I have only just begun the journey of bishop and I have already learnt that this is not a lone pilgrimage — I have a crowd of people with me. And it is an exciting journey as we will discern God's will together. ❁



**Michael Dooley** is the 7th Bishop of Dunedin. He grew up in Winton and after ordination in 1989 has ministered in the Dunedin diocese.

it's true. My focus for nearly 30 years was parish life and pastoral care of a local parish. I am still negotiating within myself this change in role but as I have begun travelling around the diocese visiting the parishes and schools I'm beginning to make the shift from a parish to a diocesan way of thinking.

I really enjoy my contact with parishes and schools. As bishop, I offer pastoral care in much the same way as a parish priest should. Local parishes and schools are the face of the mission of Christ and my role is to support and encourage them in continuing that challenge.

### **Trust in God**

In one of my first visits to a primary school the teacher asked if any of the children had a question. A girl, about eight years old, asked what my priorities were as bishop. The seriousness of the question from someone so young surprised me and I knew I had to answer honestly. I replied that my priority at the moment was to make sure that I am a good follower of Jesus. I realise that if I have my priorities right discerning them through my prayer then they will guide me well in deciding on the priorities of the diocese, which we

will need to set together. I am very aware that these are challenging times for us to proclaim the gospel message but we have many talented and faithful people in our diocese and I look forward to working with them in taking up the challenge.

I chose the motto "Trust in God" for my crest, which will be a constant reminder for me in ministering in this role.

### **A Wider Discernment**

I began by saying that I was initially reluctant to write an article on my discernment process of being appointed bishop. Perhaps my reluctance came from thinking of the six years I had at the seminary, where a great deal of time and effort was spent in discerning the call to priesthood. Looking back, I was encouraged to engage in a lot of self-analysis and focus on my individual call. I wonder how much this model of discernment has been influenced by the individualism and self-autonomy that is so strong in our society today? Or is it true that there are different ways of journeying in discernment — each suited to a different call?

I was loathe to admit that my own conscious discernment time was 10 minutes but now I accept

# Like a Child

KATHLEEN RUSHTON shows in Mark 9:30–37 that childlikeness, not childishness, is a quality of discipleship.

Jesus often turned the world upside down. Perhaps most remarkable and shocking was when he presented his disciples with a child to learn from and imitate as a model. In the ancient world, a child had low status within the family and community. Exactly how this gesture and the words of Jesus challenged accepted values is not easy to express. For someone outside the family to “welcome” a child was to set aside their own self-importance and adult status. Although children were loved, they were regarded as nobodies without rights. Life was precarious. Infant mortality was sometimes 30 per cent of live births. Of those who survived 60 per cent died before they were 16.

## Humility

The disciples were arguing over who among them was the greatest. Jesus responded: “Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” For him the most insignificant are the greatest. He put

his arm around a little child (Mk 9:36) — the child a model of radical humility. He loved children, indignantly rebuking the disciples who wanted to send them away because the grown-ups were busy with serious, important concerns: “Let the children come to me; do not stop them” (Mk 10:13–14).

What did Jesus see in these children? He saw what his reign-of-God-family was all about: “for it is to such as these that the reign of God belongs” (Mk 10:14–16). Jesus loved children because they were vulnerable, nobodies or overlooked and they were open and sincere, not hypocritical. They were trusting in an amazingly spontaneous way. Jesus drew his strength and confidence from his childlike trust in God. This was at the core of his spirituality.

Albert Nolan in *Jesus Today: A Spirituality of Radical Freedom*, writes: “Those who treat Jesus as central to their spirituality tend to make him the object of their spirituality rather than a person who had a spirituality of his own from which we might be able to learn something.” Jesus’s





spirituality was “behind what he said and did, what fired and inspired him”.

### Childlike Trust

Jesus recognised in children the total, unquestioning trust he had in God. In this sense he was exceptionally childlike — which may not be our usual image of him. We tend to give Jesus exalted titles and refer to him in prayers, images, hymns as an all-powerful king of kings and a mighty saviour. But seeing the childlike in Jesus is neither demeaning nor suggesting he was weak, naïve or immature.

Although Jesus felt fear faced with the prospect of suffering and death in Gethsemane, he was fearless about what others — the Scribes, Pharisees, chief priests, Herod or Pilate — could do or say about him. John Simpson reflecting on Llew Summers’ image of “Jesus Before Pilate” notes how Jesus “appears childlike in proportion and in appearance” and has “the quality of innocence and intimations of innocence.”

### Sense of Wonder

A sense of wonder is a quality in a healthy child. Children find everything new and surprising — awe at seeing the sea for the first time, mosses growing in cracks in the pavement, scurrying ants, flowers to smell and colours to name. Adults can let their wonder dull.

It is clear from the gospels that Jesus had a deep sense of wonder — he was a mystic and poet. We hear his wonder when speaking of the miracle of the seed which grows unseen and quietly by itself as the farmer slept. The mustard seed grows “into the greatest shrub of all and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in shade” (Mk 4:26-32). He marvelled at the lilies of the field whose beauty, he said, outdid Solomon and all his finery (Lk 12:22-23).

Albert Nolan says wonder happens when we are swept away by the consciousness of mystery — watching buds burst into flower; contemplating the uniqueness of fingerprints and DNA; discovering the interconnectedness of everything in the universe which has been expanding for 13.7 billion years from a tiny, compressed state.

*The attributes of childlikeness are deeply human and of permanent value — humility, sincerity, trust, freedom from care, a sense of joy, wonder and playfulness. In contrast, childishness is to hold on to those temporary qualities of childhood which are immature or stem from inexperience or ignorance.*



*Jesus before Pilate, First Station of the Way of the Cross, by Llew Summers in the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, Christchurch. Used with permission.*

### Playfulness and Joy

We associate laughter, playfulness and joy with childhood. Children love pretending and imitating — playing at being grown up — father, mother, doctor, nurse, driving an aeroplane or car. They laugh when adults pretend and play with them. Jesus watched the play-acting of children in the marketplace when they disagreed among themselves about dancing and playing the flute (Mt 11:16). He noted the gulf between the child’s playful pretending and the hypocrites’ deceptive pretending.

Unfortunately, we can lose our sense of playfulness in adulthood. Yet Evelyn Underhill in her classical work on mysticism says humour and playfulness are essential to authentic spirituality. And Jesus’s love for children is at variance with portrayals of him as seriously dull.

### Beyond Childishness

There is a great difference between being childlike and being childish. The attributes of childlikeness are deeply human and of permanent value — humility, sincerity, trust, freedom from care, a sense of joy, wonder and playfulness. In contrast, childishness is to hold on to those temporary qualities of childhood which are immature or

stem from inexperience or ignorance.

We can hold onto an immature image of God and childish trust believing that God is like Santa Claus who will manipulate the world if we “ask him nicely”. This is not the childlike trust Jesus had in God. Jesus’s trust enabled him to work fearlessly in solidarity with “the least of the least”.

In our time, the problems of Earth and children are no laughing matter. We realise that we have exploited Earth dangerously. And that millions of children deprived by poverty, malnutrition, violence, war and sexual abuse have had their childlike qualities extinguished. Jesus embracing a little child reminds us again of the preciousness of every human life regardless of how small or insignificant. Jesus’s sense of wonder highlights the preciousness of Earth. When we allow ourselves childlike trust in God and contemplate the mysteries of creation, we will participate fearlessly in God’s great work with hope. ❄

23 September – Mark 9:30-37  
RL 25th Sunday Ordinary Time  
RCL 18th Sunday After Pentecost

Kathleen Rushton RSM lives in Ōtautahi Christchurch where, in the sight of the Southern Alps and the hills, she continues to delight in learning and writing about Scripture.





# BURNING SAND SHALL BECOME A POOL

## Isaiah 35:1-10

- 1 The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom; like the crocus
- 2 it shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing.  
The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon.  
They shall see the glory of God, the majesty of our God.
- 3 Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.
- 4 Say to those who are of a fearful heart, "Be strong, do not fear!  
Here is your God. Who will come with vengeance,  
with terrible recompense. God will come and save you."
- 5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf unstopped;
- 6 then the lame shall leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.  
For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;
- 7 the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground  
springs of water;  
the haunt of jackals shall become a swamp,  
the grass shall become reeds and rushes.
- 8 A highway shall be there, and it shall be called the Holy Way;  
the unclean shall not travel on it, but it shall be for God's people;  
no traveller, not even fools, shall go astray.
- 9 No lion shall be there, nor shall any ravenous beast come up on it;  
they shall not be found there, but the redeemed shall walk there.
- 10 And the ransomed of our God shall return, and come to Zion with singing;  
everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness,  
and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

ELAINE  
WAINWRIGHT  
suggests that the  
poetry of Isaiah offers  
the human community  
an incentive to change  
our behaviour towards  
Earth's community  
and commit to  
ecological conversion.

**T**his month we are celebrating the Season of Creation from Creation Day, 1 September, to the feast of St Francis of Assisi, 4 October. The Season is an invitation from our Churches to focus more sharply on our created or material world that includes the other-than-human with the human. All are created, all are material. This focus is necessary in order that we shift our consciousness to automatically



embrace the other-than-human. We are not there yet!

The Isaiah 35:4-7 text is the first reading for the 23rd Sunday of the Year and a gift for our reflection during the Season of Creation. The entire poem of Isaiah 35:1-10, from which the four verses of the First Reading are taken, show the Earth-consciousness of the poet/prophet very explicitly. It is a consciousness which we are endeavouring to inhabit also.

### Time and Place

Two key aspects of an ecological consciousness to guide our reading are attentiveness to *time* and attentiveness to *place* — in our own lives and in the biblical texts with which we engage. The time is that of Isaiah, an eighth-century prophet. His oracles are collected in the first 39 chapters of the much longer collection of Isaiah in our Bibles. Isaiah is called to preach and prophesy to Judah, the Southern Kingdom (Is 6), at a time of political threat from the north. The place is the built environment of the city of Jerusalem (Zion). The prophet also draws the other-than-human reality into his preaching challenging a people who have abandoned God. We hear this in the poignant opening verses of an earlier Isaian oracle: "Let me sing to my beloved my love song concerning his vineyard" (Is 5:1).

### Offering a Vision of Change

Isaiah 35 is the last great oracle of this eighth-century prophet (or perhaps, as some scholars suggest, from a later prophet that found its way into the concluding section of the First Isaiah — Is 1-39). The dominant theme characterising this prophetic oracle is "reversal". We hear this in the opening verses where deserts blossom and wildernesses rejoice. The prophet offers a vision of hope — a vision which can be ours today. We can ask ourselves: What signs can we see of deserts blossoming or wildernesses rejoicing? Are they a material reality somewhere in our lives and our world now? Or are they what we simply hope for?

The prophet in Isaiah 35

uses poetry as the medium of his message. While we can read prose that confronts with stories of desertification, the making of wildernesses, poetry can reach into our hearts. We recognise the voice of the prophet speaking in evocative poetry to ancient Israel certainly, but also speaking to us today. And we hear contemporary prophets urging us in this same genre.



*If we are to ward off the imminent destruction of precious ecosystems and species, the human community must be responsible for the reversal.*

### Vision of Hope

Both ancient and contemporary poets use reversal to face us with the devastation of Earth and all Earth's living being:

Strengthen the weak hands,  
and make firm the feeble knees.  
Say to those who are of a fearful heart,  
"Be strong, do not fear!" (Is 35:6-7)

And just as it was difficult for ancient Israel to stay strong in the face of their impending political disasters, so too, is it difficult for us today to stay strong in the face of impending ecological disasters.

### Commitment to Ecological Conversion

"Be strong, do not fear!" We need these calls to rise up in many different contexts and in many different languages. If we are to ward off the imminent destruction of precious ecosystems and species, the human community must be responsible for

the reversal. We must be strong in our commitment. We must be forthright and hold our elected leaders responsible to the Paris Agreement, by way of example.

The prophet says: "God will come to save", but not as an interventionist actor. God will come and save as the one who stands with the entire Earth community in its journey toward right relationships.

In Is 35:5-10 the poet/prophet offers a new vision of restoration to the community. As in Is 35:1-2, the vision of restoration has water at its heart:

6 For waters shall break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert;  
7 the burning sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs.

Water and access to water is necessary for all that lives, and hence is one of the most central aspects of our ecological crisis. The need is not new in our time, as the words of the prophet indicate.

The vision that the prophet Isaiah writes is as appropriate for us in our days of ecological crisis as it was for the people of Judah in eighth-century BCE. During the Season of Creation we're invited to be attentive to the word being addressed to us through our scriptures as well as through our lives. Our times confront us daily with imperatives to ecological conversion. Through our conversion we will know and experience the incredible diversity and complexity of Earth, respect its creativity and live in right relationship with all as we co-create the future of this planet.

May this Season of Creation provide opportunities for the restoration and development of right relationship within the Earth Community. ❁

See <https://seasonofcreation.com> for more detail and resources for each of the Sundays during the Seasons of Creation.



**Elaine Wainwright** is a biblical scholar specialising in eco-feminist interpretation and is currently writing a Wisdom Commentary on Matthew's Gospel.



**T**he fundamental problem with climate change warnings is that they are often oblique. They talk about future generations — but at an abstract point in time. Terms such as rising sea levels and melting ice caps sound vaguely dramatic — and unspecific. And when something specific is invoked — like a one-and-a-half degree rise in global temperatures — it can sound like a welcome present from Mother Nature. In scientific terms, any negative consequences can appear frustratingly complex.

However, if your country of residence is Kiribati, with an average elevation of two metres above sea level, then the implications of climate change are far more threatening and present. Its 100,000 odd residents don't have time to watch sea levels encroach and conquer the little

land they have. Kiribati is likely to become the first entire nation to be completely wiped off the map due to rising tides. The I-Kiribati will never return to their homeland because it will have disappeared.

This is why Kiribati purchased a chunk of land in Fiji in 2014 and why it plans to begin transplanting its entire population there in 2020. To its credit, Fiji appears to be willing to welcome its Kiribati neighbours. Filled with small low-lying nations, such as Tuvalu, the Marshall Islands and Niue, it's no wonder that the Pacific is significantly more proactive than the rest of the world when it comes to the climate.

But it's not as easy as just relocating people to dry land. For the Pacific Islands, the threats of climate change are ongoing and developing. For every inch of sea-level rise, the freshwater table is reduced and the small amount of land they have to grow food dwindles even further.

And it's not just land that is affected. As ocean temperatures rise and sea currents change, so too will

the migratory patterns of the region's number one resource: tuna. These fish will move into deeper seas and different territories, demanding larger boats to catch them, and ultimately rendering local fishermen powerless to make their living and feed their people.

The problem is serious: it could potentially decimate the entire tuna industry that Pacific nations rely so heavily on. The majority of the world's tuna comes from the west central Pacific region and of that two-thirds from small Pacific nations. When those tuna are pushed out of these states' Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) due to this migration, Pacific Islanders will lose their primary means of survival.

Already aid-dependent countries will have few if any means of self-determination, and will be even further crippled to deal with rising tides. When Kiribati moves in its entirety to Fiji, will it be able to remain in control of its EEZ? If not, how will the country survive after it evacuates its own shores?

The Pacific, of course, will not be the only area affected, but it will be one of the first to be impacted so comprehensively by the changing climate. If a few hundred thousand people in the Pacific seems negligible to policy makers now, will they be able to ignore it when climate refugees begin tallying in the millions?

Bangladesh, for example, is the eighth most populous country in the world and one of the most densely filled. Already a serious flood that can cover as much as 60 per cent of the country's land is unleashed every five years and future predictions for the country are grim. A three-foot rise in sea levels, predicted to occur in the next half-century, would submerge a fifth of the country and displace some 30 million Bangladeshis alone.

Given all this, we would be wise to take the climate threat in the Pacific seriously. The harm done on the region climatically will be the first indication of what's in store globally, and we now have a much-needed call to action. Finding a way forward for Kiribati today will be the first step in combating the changing climate of tomorrow. ❄️

**Jack Derwin** is a freelance journalist and writer recently returned to Sydney after working in Spain.







# CRISIS BURDENS THE YOUNG

**T**he Government recently announced the phasing out of single-use plastic bags, citing a desire to look after the environment and to safeguard New Zealand's clean, green reputation. Given how bleak the news cycle can be, it is heartening to hear good news stories like this one. I have been wondering whether this story is a sign of further change to come. It is a largely symbolic policy but it could prompt further consideration of some of the bigger challenges that climate change presents.

Recycling has become a normal part of life for many New Zealanders. But since China stopped taking certain recyclables earlier this year, much of the plastic that Kiwis think they are recycling is instead going into landfill. Piece by piece, we don't notice our heavy reliance on plastic and packaging. But the images of waste lined up, ready for landfill, are grotesque and unforgettable. On that scale, climate change and the enormous challenges it presents can be overwhelming. Focusing on small wins such as ending the use of single plastic bags is necessary — but we have to be careful that it doesn't distract us from the big picture.

The big issues can't be simply solved by individual actions. To really address the systemic causes of the climate change crisis, we have to be prepared to challenge ourselves, each other and the Government on the big questions. It is only through collective action that there's any chance of making a meaningful difference.

We know that here in New Zealand some of the big issues are our heavy economic reliance on the agricultural sector and our continued use of fossil fuels. On the energy front, New Zealand is fortunate to have a great spread of renewable energy options but it is important for us to move towards 100 per cent renewable energy even if this isn't as cost effective to start with. For those who are in a financially stable position, investing — perhaps collectively

— in electric cars is a way to ensure that those with privilege bear the cost of the technological changes. As well as moving towards clean electricity, we need to consider land use. New Zealand has a long, proud history of agriculture, but agriculture also accounts for a large portion of our greenhouse gas emissions.

Transitioning dairy, sheep and beef farms to other forms of land use will require significant public support. We will need a collective commitment to change: without it, the Government will not act to make the changes that are required for the future.

Each of our communities — our families, our neighbourhoods, Churches and schools — can commit to make the changes that are within their sphere of influence. Getting rid of plastic bags, using public transport, eating less meat and more seasonal produce — these are all part of the lifestyle shift. And to make change beyond our own households, we need to engage with our local and national politicians and community leaders to support and encourage action.

Young people did not ask to be burdened with the climate change crisis but it is my generation (and the ones to follow) who will have to deal with the worsening consequences. Communities of faith have a powerful role to play as champions of change and I hope that the collective voice of these communities can be harnessed to demand urgent, systemic action. ❄️



**Julia Spelman**, of Ngāti Hikairo descent, is a barrister at Pipitea Chambers in Wellington. She helped to found JustSpeak and is now Chair of the Board.

## Sir Brother Patrick Lynch: A Life in Education and New Zealand's Integrated Schools 1976-2016

by Bee Dawson

Published by Wairau Press, 2018

Reviewed by Eleanor Capper

BOOK

The Private Schools Conditional Integration Act 1975 was a benchmark for Catholic education in New Zealand. The negotiations for its implementation were due, in no small part, to the efforts of Sir Brother Pat Lynch FSC. The two Forewords written by Labour's Helen Clark and National's Jim Bolger give testimony to this.

As well as tracing the history of integration, this book provides an insight into the life of a teaching brother, one of a legion of Religious priests, brothers and sisters who built, governed and taught in Catholic schools prior to the Integration Act. Despite the fact that Catholic schools were under-resourced, their strength was in the solid education they offered.

Over 40 years Pat dealt with 15 Ministers of Education — from Les Gandar in the 1970s to Hekia Parata during 2011-2017. His strength lay in his ability to dialogue with those in government no matter which party they represented. It was when he was principal of De La Salle College, Auckland that Pat first realised the wisdom of building sound relationships with politicians. He took pains to congratulate ministers on

excellent interviews and give them feedback from other principals, because he thought that ministers needed encouragement in their arduous workload.

The book ranges from Pat's early teaching career through his various leadership roles, from president of the Secondary Principals' Association of New Zealand (SPANZ), to CEO of the New Zealand Catholic Education Office and to his being knighted for his service to education in 2014.

Those who have come into the Catholic Education system since the Integration Act will find this book an insightful story of what took place, the difficulties, the dialogue with the various political leaders and the outcomes. While some of the names mentioned in the book have been assigned to history, the importance of the negotiations which resulted in such a fair deal for Catholic schools cannot be underestimated. And by giving the history of these negotiations, this book will help to negate some of the misunderstanding about the origins of the Act and its effects.

Like Sir Pat, I taught in primary and secondary schools both before and after integration and I can recommend this as a book which, despite a few inaccuracies, is very readable. We owe a debt of gratitude to Pat and others who have worked tirelessly for the benefit of Catholic education in its struggle for equality. ❄



## Saints and Stirrers: Christianity, Conflict and Peacemaking in New Zealand 1814-1945

Edited by Geoffrey Troughton

Published by Victoria University Press, 2017

Reviewed by Liz Remmerswaal Hughes

BOOK

*Saints and Stirrers* gives a unique overview on New Zealand history from that rare viewpoint — Christian peacemakers. It is a collection of papers from the 2015 "Peace Not War Shall Be Our Boast" conference, offering insights to a wider public. It is the companion volume to *Pursuing Peace in Godzone: Christianity and the Peace Tradition in New Zealand* edited by Geoffrey Troughton and Philip Fountain. Troughton hopes that *Saints and Stirrers* will open fresh thinking about the traditions of dissent and the critique of national mythologies, many of which have been emphasised during the last four years by activities marking the centenary of World War I.

The 10 chapters include discussions by Māori and Pākehā, church leaders and lay people from many denominations. The contexts include early colonisation and missionary work, the mid-19th century New Zealand Wars and World Wars I and II.

In contrast to the more known story of Parihaka, the

book introduces stories of Samuel Marsden and Te Waharoa in the 1800s, illustrating the influence of pivotal messages of peace brought to Māori by the early missionaries.

It examines the religious faith of war resister Archibald Baxter during WWI and the experiences of the Seventh Day Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses during WWII.

In the final chapter we read of the trial of Reverend Ormond Burton when he identifies a key aspect of peace initiatives: "I ask you to acquit me — not that I may be saved from imprisonment, but that something more important than myself shall live — the real freedom to think and to speak as conscience dictates."

I found it fascinating to read of the struggles of those who stood up for peace so long ago, as well as chilling to realise that today we need peace witnesses more than ever. We need the Christian Churches to unite with other groups in opposing militarisation and war.

*Saints and Stirrers* is a valuable contribution to our New Zealand history. It could be too academic for a general reader, and I would have liked an introduction to each chapter to unify the theme, but I am certain that those who read history and those who have a passion for peacemaking will enjoy it. ❄





## Pursuing Peace in Godzone: Christianity and the Peace Tradition in New Zealand

Edited by Geoffrey Troughton and Philip Fountain

Published by Victoria University Press, 2018

Reviewed by Mike Kelly

BOOK

**P**ursuing Peace in Godzone follows Geoffrey Troughton's previous title: *Saints and Stirrers: Christianity and Peacemaking in New Zealand 1814-1945*. It tells recent and contemporary stories and poses questions for our time when we face the tension of pacifist versus martial and religious versus secular. The authors stress that peace is not merely the opposite of war — it is "fundamentally about flourishing, wholeness and well-being".

The book is a collection — mostly stories — about peacemaking efforts. Some deal with big issues such as the beginnings of the Christian Pacifist Society and the wide-ranging participation in the decolonisation of southern Africa. Readers may be surprised at just how much New Zealanders and Churches were involved. Garfield Todd, Michael Lapsley and John Osmers were Kiwis and there was widespread involvement in the 1981 Springbok Tour.

I found the stories of individuals most enjoyable. I loved George Armstrong's account of the development of the peace movement, especially the anti-nuclear crusade. He described the gradual evolution of the mainstream Churches from seeing themselves as "chaplains to the nation" to "prophets at the gate". As a consequence of the debate in churches, the evangelical focus began to change to Jesus's

attitude to peace in the Gospels, and to embrace a wider community including the "un-churched". So the Peace Movement, though still linked to Christian foundations, encompassed a broader range of values than expected.

Adi Leason's account of the Ploughshares Movement's attack on the spy mechanism at Waihopai in 2008 is fearless, gently humorous and steeped in Catholic theology. At the time not everyone felt comfortable with the three men's protest and claim that their action came from following Jesus and their commitment to justice and peace. Maybe it is still a bone of contention in some places. But Adi's account certainly challenges us to ask questions about peace.

John Chote's story about the community at St Joseph's Catholic Church in Wellington with its Suzanne Aubert chapel is a fascinating exploration of how architecture, history, art, faith and the commitment of a brave community were brought together in a deeply Christian icon of peace.

As well as the stories, three scholars discuss the questions: Do Christian New Zealanders accept immigrants more readily than non-Christians do? Do they accept Arabs more readily than non-Christians? Do they accept same-sex marriage more readily than non-Christians? Are they more committed to peace even at times of war?

The book is worth reading just for the discussion of those questions! ❀



## Thought for Food: Why What We Eat Matters

by John D Potter

Published by Bridget Williams Books

Reviewed by Jill McLoughlin

BOOK

**W**e are saturated with information about healthy living. There are fad diets of all descriptions and conflicting advice about what we should or should not eat. This can be confusing. As someone who has an interest in health and well-being, I found John Potter's *Thought for Food* informative, interesting and compelling.

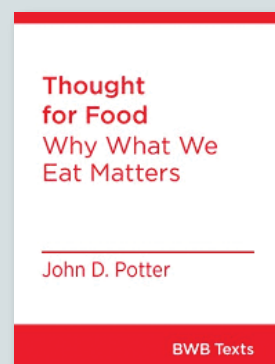
Potter, an award-winning health researcher, provides an authoritative and scientific perspective on food and health, for humans and for Earth. He notes that we no longer depend on former skills as foragers, gatherers, scavengers, hunters and fishers for our food. We have a mismatch between our evolutionary history and the way we live and eat today. He says that while our biology has changed little over the years, our diet — with its domination of sugar, saturated fat and alcohol — is very different from that of our ancestors. This opens us to an increased risk of disease. We have a steady rise in obesity rates and increases in chronic diseases including cancer.

Potter explains the research showing our current diets are not only harming our health, but are also devastating our environment. He cites examples of the effects of contemporary agriculture on the environment and how our food choices impact the air, rivers and climate.

He urges us to shift our diet towards that of early human beings. Our bodies are adapted for a plant-rich diet. He gives simple and practical ways for doing this. His book motivated me to commit to a healthier eating plan.

I agree with Potter of the need to educate our young people about buying, preparing and presenting fresh food. And we all need education about food, agriculture, trade and other areas around how our food gets to the table. Actually, Potter recommends that we have conversations about how to restructure the way we live, work and earn so that everyone has enough. Healthy food should be affordable and available to all.

*Thought for Food* is only 119 pages and is an easy read. I heartily recommend it to those interested in the planet's health and our own. ❀



## Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God

by Kelly Brown Douglas

Published by Orbis Books, 2015

Reviewed by Moeawa Callaghan

BOOK

The “Stand Your Ground” (racist) culture in the USA and the entrenchment of that culture in law in many US States are best described in this book as a morphed form of lynching and crucifixion. The book explains how culture and law, replete with religious legitimisation, have been effective in blaming and convicting young black murder victims for their own murder. Their crime? Being black.

Kelly Brown Douglas didn’t want to write the book. She had been deeply affected by the 2012 killing of 17-year-old Trayvon Benjamin Martin. But who better to write a critical narrative such as this? First, she is a mother who prays every time her young black son leaves the house that he will return alive and safe. She prays in sympathy with those mothers who have lost a child to the Stand Your Ground culture. Second, she is a race theorist. She articulately traces the history of the Stand Your Ground culture from its very early Germanic and Anglo-Saxon beginnings through to the US today. Be prepared — the quotes from early US leaders will distress you!

Douglas is a theologian at the Episcopal Divinity School, New York. She critiques Christianity’s part in perpetuating the Stand Your Ground culture and the theology that rationalised its existence. To illustrate, Douglas outlines two opposing theological interpretations of the Exodus story.

One story justifies “Manifest Destiny” and belief in a chosen people and their right to ownership of land and bodies. The other is a belief in God’s choosing to free people from circumstances that are contrary to who God created them to be.

Douglas presents an ecclesial perspective on the Stand Your Ground culture, asserting that the nation and the Churches can no longer refuse to talk about

race. Now is the time to live in God’s time and to create that new heaven and new earth.

Overall, this is the story of a mother’s weeping for justice. As Douglas was writing the book Michael Brown was killed — yet another young man. The book is confronting and intensely disturbing as the narrative strikes at the heart of Christianity’s colonial history and associated continuing injustices. The book is also a story of hope, inviting contemporary Churches into truth-telling and challenging injustice. For readers in Aotearoa the book urges us to face the dark side of Christian history and to respond in faith to create a just new world. ❄



## Island Time: New Zealand’s Pacific Futures

by Damon Salesa

Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2017

Reviewed by Sandy Leaitua

BOOK

*Island Time* begins with the statement: “Auckland and New Zealand are becoming more Pacific by the hour.”

This immediately piqued my curiosity — I read on hoping to find out what this might mean for us all. It’s a bold statement by author Damon Salesa but is supported by the fact that the chief port of entry for Pacific peoples is New Zealand maternity wards — and this is signalling a very different future from what we may have expected.

The book traces Pacific migration to New Zealand over the past 50 years and shows how the increasing Pacific population will continue to shape New Zealand as a “Pacific island” with a strong Pacific-based identity.

Salesa explores the past and continuing changes in our country’s demographic across the platforms of economy, housing, education and politics. He identifies the many

societal changes which have occurred over the last half century, and shows how these changes have mostly gone unnoticed by New Zealanders.

One chapter, “A Tale of Two Cities”, gives an insight into racial segregation in Auckland. I found it gripping reading but also confronting. We have accepted segregation as a norm for 50 years, but we are now beginning to see change, especially in relation to housing and education.

This is a far-sighted book containing food for thought about the future. Our country is changing and we are developing a real Pacific identity. It’s a book I recommend to all readers as it describes our own families in the near future. ❄





## The Nature of Things: Rediscovering the Spiritual in God's Creation

Edited by Graham Buxton and Norman Habel  
Published by Pickwick Publications, 2016  
Reviewed by Neil Darragh

BOOK

In March 2015, approximately 120 delegates met in McLaren Vale, South Australia, to explore the theme of “rediscovering the spiritual in God's creation”. The chapters of this volume are made up of 16 of the papers presented at that conference. In addition it contains an introduction by the editors, Norman Habel and Graham Buxton and an epilogue by Canadian theologian Heather Eaton.

At the end of the conference the participants produced a document which they have called “The Serafino Declaration” (after the name of the conference venue) which seeks to give an outline of the varied perspectives and more focused challenges that came out of the conference.

Most of the chapter contributors will already be familiar to people involved in creation spirituality or ecotheology. The majority are Australians, but also included are theologians from North America, England, South Africa and

New Zealand: Vicky Balabanski, Graham Buxton, Emily Colgan, Ernst M Conradie, Celia Deane-Drummond, Denis Edwards, Anne Elvey, Patricia Fox, Anne Gardner, Norman Habel, Mark Liederbach, Terence Lovat, Mick Pope, Dianne Rayson, H Paul Santmire, Robert (Bob) White and Mark Worthing.

The chapters reflect a diversity of perspectives relating to the spiritual in God's creation and are collected into five parts centred on the themes of 1) God's presence in Creation, 2) Spirituality in Creation, 3) Suffering in Creation, 4) Wisdom in Creation, 5) Eco-Readings in Creation.

The nature of this volume as a collection of conference papers means that readers are best to approach it as a mosaic of various aspects of creation theology rather than a continuous presentation of a developing theme.

One of the very helpful qualities of the volume is that it will bring readers up-to-date with the kind of discussion currently going on in the area of creation theology and spirituality. It does assume, though, that readers already have some familiarity with theology or spirituality at tertiary level. Such readers will find it both informative and challenging. ❄



## Pulpit Radical: The Story of New Zealand Social Campaigner Rutherford Waddell

by Ian Dougherty  
Published by Saddle Hill Press, 2018  
Reviewed by Michael Hill

BOOK

Rutherford Waddell was born in Northern Ireland around 1850. He first studied English literature in Belfast, his passion being for 19th-century British writers including George Elliot and Robbie Burns. After theological studies at Queen's University and ordination to the Presbyterian ministry in 1876, he set out with his young bride Kathleen to minister in New Zealand, initially in Christchurch before being called to Dunedin in December 1878.

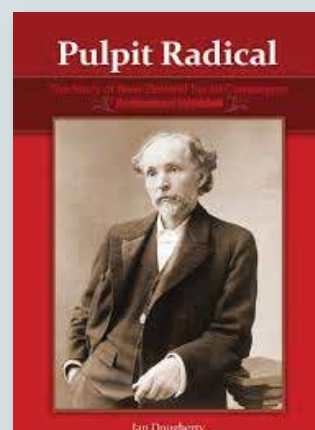
The parish of St Andrew's was the scene of his labours for the next 40 years. It included areas of dire poverty, and his experience among poor families prompted his famous sermon in August 1881 on “The Sin of Cheapness”. Waddell eloquently described the plight of shop girls, barmaids and seamstresses who laboured long hours in miserable conditions for pitiful remuneration — sometimes as little as two shillings a day. It was a classic example of sweated labour.

His plea for a living wage and decent working conditions echoed throughout the colony. It brought about the founding of the Tailoresses' Union of NZ, a world “first”, followed by legislation to limit working hours and raise the minimum wage. Waddell's thesis was that although wealthy manufacturers — and he named them —

bore much of the blame, the root cause was the general public's passion for bargains, especially cheap garments, which increased competition and drove down wages.

Waddell's efforts for social justice included equal pay for women doing equal work to men, promoting temperance, improving education and providing libraries and, with his wife Kathleen, founding free kindergartens. He campaigned for penal reform, advocating “indeterminate sentences”: society needed to reform criminals rather than simply incarcerate them. Waddell was a deeply religious man and his faith and preaching were the springboard for good works and social reform. He was an advocate of women's suffrage, gained in New Zealand in 1893.

Rutherford Waddell's extraordinary achievements have been neglected in New Zealand history writing, but that is being remedied. *Pulpit Radical* gives a well-documented and meticulously researched account. It is well presented, but could have been improved by further editing. For instance, it includes at least 25 photographs of Waddell — which is surely overkill. Sometimes the text becomes laboured with too many examples. However, Dougherty is to be commended for a scholarly presentation and lovers of biography and history will appreciate this book. ❄





## The Wife

Directed by Björn Runge

Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

FILM

**W**ith a strong ensemble cast headed by Glenn Close, *The Wife* offers the audience a distinctive and ironic take on the old saying: “Behind every successful man there’s a woman.”

When distinguished New York writer Joe Castleman (Jonathan Pryce) is rung in the middle of the night and told that he’s won the Nobel Prize for literature, he and his wife Joan (Glenn Close) jump up and down on the bed for joy. But is his success as singlehanded as he’d like people to believe? Does his wife’s contribution amount to something more than the endless round of domestic chores and childcare duties necessary to keep the “great man” bound to his desk?

While the main action is set in a plush hotel in Stockholm on the eve of the prize-giving ceremony, the personal and literary relationship between the couple is fleshed out through flashbacks. These date from the time when Joe was a university writing teacher and aspiring author, and Joan a talented student whom he seduced, leading to divorce from his first wife, Carol.

The other key characters are their son, David (Max Irons), a moody, self-entitled young man who is also a wannabe writer, and Nathaniel Bone (Christian Slater), Joe’s would-be biographer who wheedles his way into the confidences of mother and son in the hope of finding some marketable dirt on Joe.

For most of the film, Joe and Joan are involved in one long sparring match. Hot-tempered and ambitious, Joe has repeatedly cheated on Joan in more ways than one. For all her self-effacing charm, Joan is increasingly unwilling to play second fiddle to a man and a writer whom she has come to see as a fraud.

*The Wife* asks pointed questions about the devaluing of female creativity, women’s continuing subjection to men

(even in the 21st century, although the film is set in the 1990s), and the reasons for their complicity in such situations. One of the most telling scenes is set at a 1960s book launch for a female author, who convinces the youthful Joan that there’s no future in being a woman writer: “If you can find anyone to publish your book, no-one will read it.”

Despite some heavy-handed touches, *The Wife* raises some important issues about creativity and artistic attribution, and is (mostly) engrossing and entertaining. It’s worth going to see for Close’s performance alone. ❄️

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by Susan Smith

people are caring for grandchildren and making school lunches. Where would we be without superannuants?

### "Combat Ready" Is Misguided

Isaiah 2:4 tells us that God's ways involve turning swords into ploughshares. God's ways are certainly not the way of New Zealand First. In the interests of making New Zealand "combat ready", Ron Mark is replacing our ancient Orion aircraft, which have done wonderful service, with four P-8 submarine surveillance aircraft. I know the Orions need replacing, but the replacements will cost the taxpayer \$2.3 billion. Do you think the Chinese government will be shaking in its boots for fear of us? No doubt the American and Australian governments will welcome this reincarnation of the ANZUS Treaty thanks to the arbitrary decision of a tiny political party which gained 7.2 per cent of the general vote in the 2017 elections. In a radio interview with Leighton Smith in July, Winston Peters spoke of the dangers of "all sorts of cloistered, arrogant, self-centred people [who] might be the controlling feature of our future". Was he describing himself and Ron Mark and their decision to provide "toys for boys" rather than opting for better salaries for those working in the health and education sectors? ❄

### Volunteering

Here in Northland, neighbourhood communities, hapū, forestry companies, councils, businesses and DOC are working to care for our national icon, the kiwi. One important way this happens is through making safe a swathe of land that runs from Mangawhai, south of Whangarei, through to the Aupōuri Peninsula in the Far North. Known as the Kiwi Coast, this initiative to protect the kiwi is the work of more than a hundred communities. It is estimated that there are around 10,000 kiwi in Northland now. Those numbers are the result of hard work — so what is involved?

First is predator control. Last year over 25,000 possums, 24,000 rodents and almost 2,000 mustelids were trapped, mostly by property owners working as volunteer trappers. And equally important is a predator-free environment for young kiwi. In Whangarei, Matakōhe Island provides a safe environment for young kiwi who are brought there to live until they weigh 1.5 kilograms. Once they've achieved this weight, young kiwi should be able to withstand stoat attacks. However, dogs that are unsecured at night can and do cause death in the kiwi population. Finally, throughout Northland, people are involved in tree-planting to ensure kiwi-friendly environments.

Although government, council and private organisations are essential in ensuring the welfare of kiwi, none of this could happen without the contribution of hundreds of volunteers. Volunteers may be tree-planters, weed-eradicators, trappers, or compilers of reports for government and council agencies to

ensure adequate funding.

I am struck by the number of superannuants involved in these tasks. Of course, there are others, too, and it is wonderful to see families working and enjoying tree-planting days. But it is great to see superannuants involved because they can be perceived as a privileged group. They had free university education, adequate health services for their needs and — lo and behold — they can stop working when they are 65, and the state will support them thanks to the next generations who are heavily taxed.

If we look around our communities, we see that superannuants are not all holidaying in the sun. For example, they are active in the manifold tasks that Vincent de Paul groups undertake in our parishes, they are staffing hospice shops, they are working as remedial volunteer teachers in their local schools. The Men's Sheds are busy making stoat traps. Our older



**TUI MOTU InterIslands**  
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

*Tui Motu - InterIslands* is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual, social and ecological issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-Church and inter-Faith dialogue is welcomed.

The name *Tui Motu* was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.

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We welcome letters of comment, discussion, response, affirmation or argument of up to 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters, while keeping the meaning.

## CANCEL THE BAN

I suggest that the Church's total ban on artificial methods of birth control in marriage should be cancelled. That would allow people to control their fertility and preserve their affection with peace of mind and avoid the stress and strain which can accompany the present regime. This would call for responsible parenthood which Vatican Council II and the Papal Birth Control Commission both expected.

*Bill Mitchell, Auckland*

## WOMEN DEACONS

I fully agree with Max Palmer's letter "Dialogue on Women Priests" TM August 2018.

Further to this I have a question. What has happened to the Commission set up by Pope Francis in August 2016 to look into the question of women deacons in the early Church. Were they ordained or not and what work did they do? Two years seems a long time to come up with an echoing silence.

*Barry Smyth, Whangarei*

## SECOND THOUGHTS ON BIRTH CONTROL

In response to Bill Mitchell's letter about birth control (TM July 2018) maybe the Church already has reconsidered. In a letter to the Congress of German Bishops in August 1968, Pope Paul VI expressed the hope that "the lively debate aroused by our encyclical *Humanae Vitae* may lead to a better knowledge of God's will". It is surely noteworthy that Pope Paul saw the lively debate about the encyclical (and not the encyclical itself) as the channel for the knowledge of God's will. Does this perhaps imply second thoughts, reconsideration? It is worth bearing in mind that Vatican documents up until very recently were written with a Mediterranean mindset. For such a mindset "saving face" is extremely important. So it is unlikely that the Vatican will front up anytime soon and admit incorrect teaching or error. After all, in the case of Galileo they waited about 300 years. But Cardinal Martini in an interview 25 years ago acknowledged that the Church's teaching on contraception had been expressed inadequately. And he spoke confidently of the Church's ability, guided by the Holy Spirit, to present a teaching that is "adapted to reality". More recently the Dominican theologian Timothy Radcliffe summed up very aptly the general moral situation: "The Church will only be a cradle of gospel freedom if we are seen to stand beside people, supporting them as they make moral decisions within the range of what is possible, rather than making decisions for them."

*Jim Howley, Auckland*

## END OF LIFE CHOICE

The highly emotional debate over parliament's End of Life Choice Bill risks clouding two important components: respect and honesty.

This is not a debate between good

and evil. It is motivated by a desire to alleviate suffering. At issue is the means by which this is achieved. Respect is vital. Please acknowledge goodness on both sides, and the fact that no one enjoys either witnessing or experiencing suffering.

Respect those who want to end their suffering or that of others. And respect those who want to help them achieve their goal, from whatever side they speak.

The Bill's greatest weakness is that it is not honest:

- I cannot freely choose to end my life. I need approval, or permission. I need to be judged as someone able to choose. The Bill does not give me the right to die which means my "choice" is very limited.
- I can be given permission if my life is likely to end within six months. But who will give such a diagnosis? Making an end of life choice based on assumption or guess is far from honest practice.
- There is dishonesty in speaking of "assisted dying" when death occurs following a deliberately prescribed drug or other means. Such an action kills!
- There is dishonesty in not recording the death for what is really was, "assisted dying" [see Clause 25]. Such deception sets a dangerous precedent.

We all need to be honest by owning as fact that, if we legitimise "assisted dying", we are legitimising suicide. How then can we show concern at the current escalation of "youth suicide" or suicide at any age?

Whatever your stand, treat everyone involved with the utmost respect and be honest in your approach. The future of our society requires nothing less.

*Fr James Lyons, Wellington*

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## Looking OUT and IN

### Starting out.

#### Taking small steps.

#### Doing what I can.

I arrive at Haji Aafa's shop armed with a sheaf of five broken umbrellas.

Haji Aafa repairs kerosene stoves most of the year, with umbrella repairs a seasonal sub-specialty in monsoon. He immediately puts aside the fiddly umbrella handle he is mending to survey the unwieldy tangle of nylon, mould and broken umbrella spokes lashed onto my backpack. One by one he assesses each umbrella, checking his spare parts. And then, in neat Urdu handwriting, he adds up the costs for repairs and spare parts to declare that repairing all five umbrellas will total Rs400 (NZ\$8.79). I agree to the price, and he carefully ties up our umbrellas and attaches a tag. "They will be ready by Sunday afternoon."

My life, almost daily, seems to offer me choices that are vexed and morally complex. On waking, I wonder if I should go cycling to strengthen my legs after recent knee surgery, or spend time helping my daughter with clarinet practice. At work, I query whether to spend time writing a

project proposal which could assure funding so our team can continue to work with communities for mental health, or instead sit in the community with a person with psycho-social disability who is lonely. In the evening, do I read a book that can inform, entertain or inspire me, or visit my neighbour who is always keen for me to come and admire her nine-month old granddaughter?

This week, I travelled to the other end of India to teach a session in a course training junior academics in researching health equity. But was this trip a wise use of carbon or time? The return trip meant I spent six hours flying and another six hours in taxis. At the same time, the inequalities in India related to caste, gender, geographical disparity, educational opportunities and access to healthcare are stark. The research evidence to support the need for policy and programmes has been almost entirely absent, meaning building capacity for pro-equity research is urgently needed.

On my way home through Delhi I stayed a night at my cousin's comfortable, air-conditioned home, rather than visit our friends in a slum

who would have loved to see me after many months. I chose to get a good night's sleep. Instead, I could have chosen to build my relationship with friends who are disadvantaged by all the structural causes of injustice I had been teaching about on the course.

For help with all my daily decisions and priority-setting dilemmas, I could seek discernment in the Scriptures. But then in many ways I love that the Gospels are not prescriptive — that I have to search my heart to find answers to these daily dilemmas. It seems like loving God and loving my neighbour is probably more about who I am than what I do. Perhaps Haji Aafa has got it right — attending to the work that comes to him with full attention, patience and good humour. I, too, can choose to start each day without too much hand-wringing. I can take small steps, starting with the work in front of me. Do what I can. ❄️



**Kaaren Mathias** and her family have recently returned to work and life in India after a six-month sojourn in the clean and peace of Aotearoa.



As gently as snowflakes fall,  
may compassion melt in us  
so we see Earth's struggle  
and for the sake of our children's children,  
change our ways.

From the *Tui Motu* team