

# Tui Motu

*April 2001 Price \$4*



*by your cross and resurrection  
you have set us free*



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**Cover Picture:**

*The Millennium Cross, presented by the Christian churches to the people of Dunedin City. The blessing of the Cross and reception by Mayor Sukhi Turner took place on 25 March.*

**Photo: Reg Graham**

## Bearing the cross

On Good Friday all Christians gather round the cross of Christ. While it is true that it is the Easter triumph of Jesus over death which is central to our faith, it is also true that the cross was the means, and it symbolises for Christians the totality of God's love for humanity, sin notwithstanding. Representations of the cross were rarely found among early Christians. Crucifixion was such a horrifying and ever-present reality to the church of the catacombs, they did not need to be reminded.

Later, however, it became the supreme symbol, and the Celtic cross on our Easter cover is particularly appropriate to our New Zealand Christian heritage because it is precious to Irish and Scots alike. The cross is a sign which at once combines the vertical – connecting the world to God, and the horizontal – the wide embrace of the welcoming arms of Christ. In *John* we read Christ's words: *When I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all people to myself (John 12:32).*

For all humans, not only for Jesus Christ, the cross represents the unavoidable crises on the road of life, wherein we either fail or come through battered and redeemed. In this issue our chosen theme is one of the most serious and devastating crosses in the lives of many people – and for society as a whole: **the abuse of alcohol**. We went to various people for stories, people who often have to pick up the pieces caused by alcoholism. We focussed especially on young adults.

From this sampling it was possible to draw certain conclusions:

- alcohol misuse is still a huge problem in New Zealand society
- the young, especially young adult males, are most vulnerable
- they are pressured by a macho culture often associated with rugby and heavy beer drinking
- for a minority this will lead to medical

problems and to crime

- the advertising style and pressure by the liquor industry has a strongly negative affect.

During this sampling of opinion it seemed incomplete not to include the liquor industry itself. We approached Speights, the local brewers in Dunedin. We were referred to the parent company, Lion-Nathan in Auckland. A response was received from Mr Graham Seatter, a Lion Nathan spokesperson. He did not respond to the questions listed above and simply defended the efficacy of current Speights advertising. Speights sales last year grew by 18 percent in a declining beer market. "Our Speights TV ads are well received", says Mr Seatter, "...they are widely regarded as humorous and full of 'southern values' and certainly we have no evidence that they have been regarded as offensive".

Mr Seatter also chose to ignore our question: *Do you see your company as having a social responsibility? Do any of your profits go back to helping the casualties of alcohol abuse?* But the answer is implied above. The beer companies see it as their job to produce and sell liquor as profitably as possible. Their advertising is successful in so far as it boosts sales. Any negative social consequences are someone else's problem. Like Pontius Pilate they wash their hands.

In the *Divine Comedy* Dante would relegate those he deemed social pariahs to special parts of Hell. I wonder where he would place today's liquor barons and their advertising lieutenants. I think we might find them alongside the gun runners, the drug pushers, the casino operators and all those others whose activities compound human misery. The words of Jesus are apt: *Causes of failing are sure to come, but alas for the one through whom they occur! (Luke 17:1).*

M.H.

# Easter on Brighton Beach

**I**t's a chilly wind that comes in off the Pacific at this time of the year. It bites deep into my bones as I take my daily walk on New Brighton beach on the eve of Holy Week. I know it's still Lent, yet my thoughts are of Easter.

It comes to me that Easter life is not always the shimmering light of brilliant sun on the white crested sea caps, the sort that makes our whole body tingle with excitement, leading us to want to punch the air with exuberance and shout *alleluia!*. Easter life can be much more subdued, much more mundane, more ordinary.

The beach does that to me. It speaks always of life and energy, renewal, and it's more about finding new energy and new life amidst the often chilly breezes that form a natural part of our everyday lives.

Which is more like it really was that first Easter day. The women up at the crack of dawn and off to do chores at the tomb, only to find it empty. The puzzle at what they found. But then back home for chores to be done, linen to wash, husbands and children to feed. Routines to be followed. I'm not sure they had much time to sit around and contemplate the meaning of the Great Event.

It was much the same later. The long six mile walk to Emmaus was a pretty ordinary affair. The meeting with the Risen Jesus was different, and the disciples certainly returned in high excitement to Jerusalem. But the various subsequent meetings were also in pretty ordinary surrounds - in a garden with Mary, on the beach with the fishermen, in the upper room with the apostles.

I think we need to consider where it is in life we meet the Risen Christ, because we rarely do so in a state of high mysticism or with huge emotion. It seems that we are much more likely to regularly meet him in the everyday events of daily life. We cannot repeat the words of the disciple: "they have taken him away, and I don't know where to find him". We know where to find Christ. He is all around us in life. Christ is present at the dairy, in the workshop, at school, in church, over the back fence. He is especially present when we meet him in the poor, when we reach out to a neighbour in need.

Too often we fail to see Christ where in fact the gospels tell us he will be. He closely identifies with the hungry, the dispossessed, the lame, the blind, with those who mourn or are in prison. He identifies with those who work for peace in the world, who help heal, reconcile,



confront injustice and love suffering humanity. He is present every time we truly love one another, as John's gospel reminds us.

We really don't have to look very far. The seeds of his presence are right within ourselves. Prayer is simply getting in touch with those seeds and letting them grow. The Risen Christ is available to all if only we really want to meet with him. People sometimes say "would we recognise Jesus if he came back among us?" The Christian answer to that is that he never left us. He simply took on a variety of forms and gave us the gift of faith to see him in that variety.

We don't need to be in the mountains, walking the shimmering white sands or in an exotic forest with nature to experience God. We can meet the Risen Christ in the garden, over a meal, in a thousand and one different places. Even on a chilly beach in early April, when his life and energy refresh the soul and set it free to live and love afresh. ■

*Jim Consedine*



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

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### The dignity of motherhood

What are we to make of the letter entitled “the dignity of motherhood” (*Tui Motu* March)? “If the Catholic church gave the same honour and respect to mothers that Christ gave to his mother... we might have more vocations to the priesthood and the religious life.”

Is that what womanhood is about – producing priests? Let us honour women because they are women, and they produce wonderful daughters and sons, many of whom are not priests. In the same issue is a great article on monks (by Timothy Radcliffe). Fine. But their way of life is similar to that of many women – prayer, liturgy, routine humility, study, penance, labour – under the eyes of God.

*Jill Heenan, Whangarei*

## letters

### Accurate Bible translations

I must disagree with much of what Jenefer Haig wrote in her letter “Inaccurate Bible translations” (February *Tui Motu*). She takes no regard that modern translations of the Bible are written for specific times and audiences. The CEV was written for young audiences using a vocabulary of 1000 words, who have no idea what “swaddling clothes” might have been and don’t care.

Far from being more “palatable”, the authors want it to be understandable. I take my CEV along to prayer meetings because it is so easy to read aloud in an impromptu way. I dispute that it is inaccurate – it has functional equivalence, not slavish ‘word for word’.

For private devotion and study I use my *Jerusalem*.

It seems to me that Ms Haig thinks that God handed down the Bible in *Douai* form and it should never be changed. Some Protestants think that the *King James* version is the only Bible, too, and reject what was used for the first 1500 or so years! Modern biblical scholarship has much to teach us, particularly from the Dead Sea Scrolls. Ms Haig should wake up and look before she leaps.

*Glen McCullough, Wellington*

### Cartoon objectionable

I wish to record my objection to a cartoon which accompanied an article on religious women in the February issue.

*S.M de Pazzi, Auckland*

### Promoter’s Corner

Nothing promotes a paper more than the quality of its contents. In this regard the March issue was exceptional. One parish sold 12 copies at a *weekday* Mass! And – wait for it – one metropolitan parish sold 85 copies at Sunday Masses. Events like these tell us that *Tui Motu* is moving into a new era.

Not such a good time for the editor to go absent overseas for a couple of months, you might think. But on this occasion you might be wrong, as we have a highly experienced and committed person to take his place.

Philippa Chambers is a journalist with a proven track record, first with the *Hawkes Bay Tribune* (now *Hawkes Bay Today*). Later as editor of *Circle*, the magazine for the Association of Anglican Women in New Zealand, then as editor of the Waipu Diocesan Newspaper.

She must be an Anglican, you think – and you are right. The editorial staff and directors of *Tui Motu* rejoice in this. She is a constant and committed reader of the magazine. She understands its character and values its editorial policies. We are in good hands.

*Tom Cloher*

## Millennium Cross

Those travelling south on State Highway 1 through the centre of Dunedin can hardly now avoid seeing to their right a splendid Celtic Cross, cut and carved from solid Indian granite. The inspiration for it came from a regular meeting of Christian ministers from the Otago Peninsula area, as they protested at the almost wholly secular celebrations planned for the new Christian Millennium. Their idea of building a cross was taken up by an already existing *Christian Millennium Committee* representing a wide grouping of Dunedin churches.

The Celtic cross form was chosen, so recognising that many of Dunedin’s first European settlers came from Scotland and Ireland. The great circle of the cross represents eternal life. The weave and spiral

patterns represent the rhythm and flow of the seasons and of life itself. They came in time to signify the movement from death to life. A fish weave pattern has an obvious Christian meaning as well as recalling a *koha* of fish from local Maori to one of the arriving ships. Twelve human figures represent the Apostles.

Inscriptions on the cross base record this incident as well as the story of the voyage and arrival of the early settlers from the British Isles to Dunedin.

*Pat Maloney*



The Millennium Cross viewed looking towards the city centre. The spire of First Church rises as background. Photo: Reg Graham

*..you bring forth food from the earth,  
and wine to cheer people's hearts..*

Psalm 104

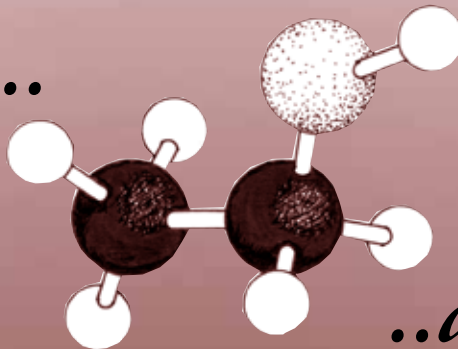
*Wine, true begetter of all arts that be;  
Wine, privilege of the completely free;  
Wine the recorder; wine the sagely strong;  
Wine, bright avenger of sly-dealing wrong,  
Awake, Ausonian Muse,*

*and sing the vineyard song!*

Hilaire Belloc: *In praise of Wine*

Wine as a cheerer of the human heart is as old as civilisation. While alcohol is forbidden to Muslims, its use as a beverage is found in most cultures. Wine has an honoured place in Christian history, since it was not merely drunk by Jesus himself but was the chosen species for the Eucharist. Nevertheless, in human history alcohol has been a mixed blessing

*focus on..*



*..alcohol abuse*

Tui Motu spoke to four people whose professions have brought them in contact with people who are the victims of alcohol abuse. Here are some of the points they make:

- *"of all the drugs alcohol causes the most social disharmony ... it is our most abused drug"*

#### the social consequences

- *"for every dollar the government takes in excise tax, the taxpayer has to pay up another dollar mopping up the negative consequences".*
- *"if alcohol abuse could be controlled, not only would it mean less crime but you could drastically reduce hospital beds".*

#### the commercialisation

- *"many rugby teams are sponsored by the beer companies... They want to tie into that macho male image..."*
- *"these firms with their sponsorship are taking advantage of very vulnerable young adults. They seem to have no social responsibility"*

#### the effects on young people – the most vulnerable group

- *"the age young people start drinking – it's getting younger"*
- *"there's a culture of drinking, and I see a sort of desperation about it"*
- *"a factor is the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, contracted when the youngsters are inebriated"*
- *"in this atmosphere you get date rapes... They have to live with the knowledge they were so out of their minds that this awful thing happened to them"*
- *"..and the worst scenario is that some become acutely depressed and even suicidal"*



# 1. *“a cold-blooded manipulation of large sections of the population..”*

*Dr Robert Crawford was for many years Superintendent of Queen Mary Hospital, Hanmer Springs, New Zealand's most important centre for the treatment of alcohol and drug abuse.*

When I first came to New Zealand in the 70s alcohol and tobacco were the problem drugs. Whereas now alcohol abuse is rarely found on its own; instead we have ‘polydrug’ abusers. For instance, by taking alcohol and cannabis together you get a heightened effect. The two drugs reinforce each other. These various drug combinations also have all sorts of unknown effects.

There is a political background as well as a public health background to all this. Governments seek to control alcohol misuse by licensing regimes and by tax. What has really taken off in recent times is the commercialisation of alcohol sales. We are in the media age, the age of massive advertising of alcohol products.

It saddens me to see Sir Doug Myers, the chairman of Lion Nathan, portrayed as a guru of sound modern business practice. Yet his fortune is founded on addiction. In this country 9 percent of drinkers consume 60 percent of alcoholic liquor – and these are conservative figures. I would guess that it might be nearer 5 percent of the population consuming 80 percent of the product. These are the problem drinkers who have made Myers rich.

Not so long ago there were no alcohol sales in supermarkets: now wine and beer are sold without restriction. The immense resources of the liquor industry have targeted this expansion over many years. Now they have succeeded. It allows them to market their product to greater numbers of people than ever before.

Yet if alcohol abuse could be controlled, not only would it mean less crime but you could drastically reduce hospital

beds. For every dollar the government takes in excise tax, the taxpayer has to pay up another dollar mopping up the negative consequences. The taxpayer is subsidising the alcohol industry dollar for dollar. What is happening is a cold-blooded manipulation of large sections of the population without any thought to public health issues or the misery being created.

The situation has hardly changed since Victorian times: “drunk for a penny; dead drunk for tuppence”. Except that these days if the breadwinner becomes incapable through alcohol the family doesn’t actually starve. There are state benefits available to them.

**Alcoholism.** As regards the so-called ‘born’ alcoholic, the genes have to have the ‘right’ environment in which to flourish. For instance, orthodox Jewish culture has a very strict proscription against the use of alcohol apart from perhaps a glass of wine with a meal. Among orthodox Jewish communities in Europe, there was no alcoholism. But when they emigrated to America and elsewhere and became separated from their parent culture, gradually their levels of alcoholism rose until they approximated those of the general population.

So, nurture, I think, is more important. As long as the capitalist establishment

pushes liquor sales very strongly, that is certainly going to affect those with the wrong genes. The biggest consumers of beer in New Zealand are males between the ages of 18 and 24. Most will settle down later to more moderate consumption. But a proportion won’t, and they become the problem drinkers with an ongoing addiction problem which may be beyond their control.

What does help these people stop? Typically it is some sort of personal crisis, like a marriage break-up or loss of one’s job. This produces a sort of spiritual shift. A good development in the last 20 years has been the advent of treatment centres and out-patient clinics. So that now there is a great deal of help at a much younger age than used to be the case. It’s rare these days to find someone with chronic alcoholism where there have not been attempts to assist them.

A very good way is through employee assistant programmes in the workplace. There are avenues of assistance available so that it’s not necessary to dismiss an expensively trained employee but, rather, assist them to recover. These ‘broad brush’ programmes have a broader focus than simply addiction. They will look at any problem which interrupts an employee’s regularity or their productivity. An employer will say to the person: “You’re not performing. I don’t know why, but I’m going to



The Deanery, in central Christchurch, is a private detoxification and treatment centre. Its aim is to intervene before an

*..now there is a great deal of help at a much younger age than used to be the case..*

alcoholism sufferer reaches rock bottom. It claims to have a success rate which is ‘unrivalled’.

send you to the employee assistance counsellor. He's going to help you find out." The union representative is kept informed, and there is no intention to sack the person at this stage. But he or she has to be assisted to sort themselves out.

Young women also are drinking more in these times: they go especially for these 'spirit-mixes'. ALAC (the Alcoholic Liquor Advisory Council) are very concerned about these drinks. They are a quite deliberate ploy on the part of the liquor industry to sensitise young people to alcohol and get them hooked. The tobacco industry has proceeded in exactly the same way, working hard to get round the protective laws which have been enacted.

**The 'booze' culture.** When I first started working in New Zealand 30 years ago I was struck by the high levels of anxiety among many people, and it seemed to me associated with the pioneering, immigrant population. When I arrive in a new country I have to make it or lose it on my own efforts. There is nothing to sustain this except my own efforts, and this easily produces a background

of anxiety. Alcohol reduces this anxiety, because it concentrates you on today and takes you away from worrying about the future. It produces that glow – but it also contains the seeds of its own destruction.

In the 60s during the hippie revolution it was honestly thought that if you took LSD or cannabis you would 'make love, not war'. This was a myth. It was really a 'spiritual bypass'. In the same way alcohol is simply an escape. If people go to a party with the pure intention of being happy, then they will be happy. The drug distorts what is likely to happen. But if they go for reasons of escape, alcohol will equally distort the level of anxiety.

**Family background.** There are modern studies which try to discover those antecedent circumstances in a person's upbringing which are more likely to lead to cannabis or alcohol abuse. Parental discord has been found to be one of the biggest factors. If parents have some way of resolving their differences and there is harmony in the home, then drug abuse is less likely to happen later. At the other end of the spectrum high levels

of parental discord seem, 20 years on, to produce the group where the heavy drug users come from. Parental discord seems to be a strong conditioning factor.

A man called Rutter in the UK has investigated factors for *not* becoming delinquent and building up resistance to adversity. He found that a young person who makes a positive relationship outside the home – at school, with a neighbour, a scoutmaster or guidemistress – such healthy friendships show the young person that there are other ways of dealing with personal relationship problems than rowing or fighting.

In more general terms I am personally very exercised by the bad effects that contemporary management theories have had on society today. People are encouraged to seek the fast track to success, to find the magic solution to their problems, instead of valuing diversity and coming to appreciate that there are many ways to arrive at a good, balanced life.



## 2. "You're not a real bloke unless you drink our beer".



*Tui Motu went back to Constable Paul Chamberlain of the Ashburton Police, who runs the successful DARE programme in mid-Canterbury. (See Tui Motu October 2000.) In the earlier interview too, Paul stressed the problem of teenage drinking.*

From a policing viewpoint, of all the drugs alcohol causes the most social disharmony. It is pushed to a huge extent commercially by big companies. Once alcohol was a '*no no*' in TV advertising, but in recent years when smoking advertising was banned, alcohol advertising grew in its place.

To young people TV is such a powerful influence. The TV ads are very clever, especially the beer ads. The message is: *Unless you drink beer, you're not a male in this country.* There are lots of examples. For instance, taking the girl friend a dozen cans of beer instead of a dozen red roses. The macho content of beer advertising is consistent. And the ads are often professionally made and very entertaining.

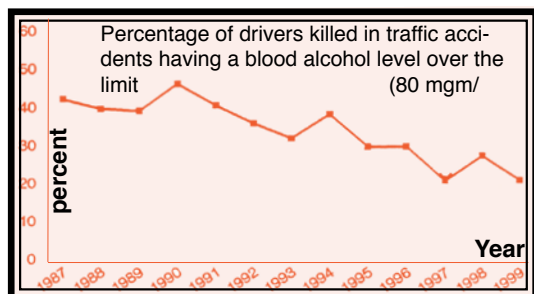
The companies claim they are targeting adults. I tried a survey on the impact of these ads on young people (11-13 year-olds) in the classroom. They would recite the jingles and name the ads – and I would stop them when they got up to 40 different ones. On the parent evening, the adults would struggle to get to 20 or 30! So who are they targeting? Spirits these days are often branded to look like a soft drink and are very attractive to youngsters, especially the girls.

Across New Zealand alcohol-related crime, especially among the young, is rampant. In fact if we eliminated crimes committed under the influence of alcohol, we could halve the frontline police force overnight. In one survey in >>

▷▷ my area, out of 100 arrests 80 had been 'under the influence'. These people were intoxicated, and alcohol was a major factor in their offending.

Apart from drink-drive offences, domestic violence is often escalated by alcohol. Usually the male becomes angry and violent in a way he would not otherwise be, except for the fact he'd been drinking. Another category is damage to property: public gardens, mailboxes, street signs, broken windows. The youngsters do things under the influence they would never do normally. Excitement and bravado are part of the scenario. It also provokes fighting in public places.

**I**n my first weeks in Ashburton I had to attend three fatal car smashes with five people killed. One was the direct result of alcohol. Attending these accidents and then go and tell the family that their loved one isn't coming home – that's the motivator behind the drink-driving campaign. And the campaign *has* been successful.



The percentage of dead drivers who had a blood alcohol level over the limit has come down from 40 percent in 1988 to about 20 percent last year (*see above*). Police have got tougher. The drink-drive ads have become more explicit. Now when we go into a Fifth Form we get a very strong response: 'Don't drink-drive!'

These days it's often 40-year-olds who are picked up with high blood alcohol, whereas a lot of the youngsters have got the message. Nevertheless, if a 40-year-old who has drunk too much gets into a car, he will deliberately drive more slowly. Whereas the youngsters still have that bravado and think they are bullet-

proof! They'll jump into the car – no seatbelt – and fishtail down the road to entertain their mates.

Both are likely to have a crash because alcohol is a depressant and slows down your reaction times. The difference is the young person will be travelling at 140 km/hr when they hit the power pole, and they will kill everyone in the car. They think they can drive better, whereas the body is receiving all the caution messages slower. Alcohol is a 'feel-good' drug for most people – but in reality, it's a depressant.

Another worrying fact is the age young people start drinking – it's getting younger. The younger ones copy the older. And since the legal drinking age has been lowered to 18, it is now the 14-16-year-olds who want to copy their elders. Even 13-year-olds!

Role models are also very important at that age. It's very difficult for parents to forbid 17 or 18-year-olds from drinking. They see themselves as adults, so they put pressure on their parents. And there are still adults who think that "a few beers after rugby won't hurt". This puts pressure on the good parents who are really trying to set standards. Kids will always be tempted to experiment. But if the role-modelling is good there's a much better chance of them coming through unscathed.

The real trouble is that alcohol is a 'god' in our society. If you publicly preach the evils of alcohol there's a strong lobby

who will write you off immediately. You're condemned as a 'wowsers', and sadly, behind this attitude lie many of the sports clubs, especially the rugby clubs, who accept hard drinking as the 'bloke-ish' thing to do.

As regards rugby, the ironic thing is that no professional player would risk drinking while in training for fear of losing their contract, if nothing else. They will always replenish on water or a soft drink – at least until well after the game. Many of our rugby teams are sponsored by the beer companies, and this reinforces the connection. They want to tie into that macho male image.

Drinking among young women is on the increase. Beer consumption may have gone down – but spirit drinking has gone up quite dramatically. One reason is that young women prefer to drink spirits. At incidents where the police are involved, they may find young intoxicated women provoking the males to mix it with the police. Among the girls at school you will often find a similar bravado that you find among the males. The boys may admit to drinking a dozen cans of beer at a weekend binge – but the girls may drink an equivalent number of these spirit-mixes, which contain 5 percent alcohol.

The good news is there is a growing stand among these youngsters against drink-driving. And there are always those who choose not to drink. Yet the fact remains: *alcohol is our most socially abused drug.* ■

## Philippa – a case study

Philippa first presented herself for counselling at her parents' request 12 years ago because of truancy, minor burglary and discipline problems, both at home and at school. Her mother, Carol, described herself as a teenage rebel. Following the death of her own mother when she was 23 years old, Carol herself suffered some reactive depressive behaviours that were recurrent following the birth of two of her three children.

Philippa – one of those children – was neglected; she was also bright, resentful and reacted to any con-straining idea or discipline. In therapy, she learned to relax and talk about herself without fear of correction or criticism, and thrived on the acceptance she was receiving. Counselling, however, costs money and was duly ended.

Two years later Philippa left home and moved to another city where she found work and joined a party-





### 3. “the student was so drunk he tried to fly across the Leith”

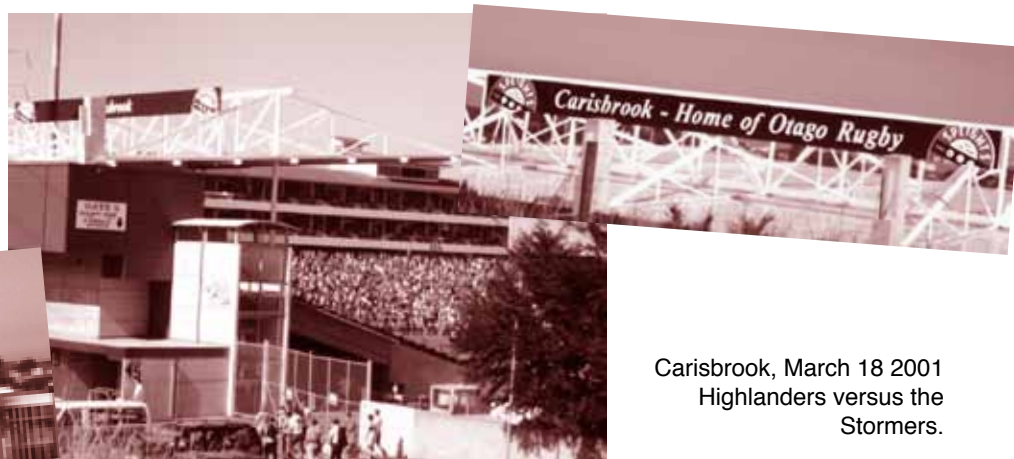
*Dr Peter Strang worked for many years at the Student Health Centre at Otago University*

Alcohol has always been an issue with our young people. There was heavy drinking when I was a student. But because there is so much more pressure on today’s student

brought to bear on students to do things they normally wouldn’t do. It may be students from previous years, some young people who seem to delight in propagating the ‘macho’ image. It’s certainly tied up with sport, with rugby especially. For the first few games of the year I wouldn’t go near Carisbrook: the terraces for these opening matches are

It is in this atmosphere you get date rapes. Young women turn up to Student Health pregnant, with no idea who was responsible. The guy possibly has no idea either. He may snap out of it and look back on it as a learning time. But the young woman doesn’t get away with it. Normally she will go through a termination.

**..getting  
the subliminal  
message**



Carisbrook, March 18 2001  
Highlanders versus the  
Stormers.

population – to pass exams, to get a job, student debt – they tend to escape from desperation through alcohol. In fact a lot of students get into trouble especially in their first years at University. If you look at the statistics, it drops off after that.

There’s a culture of drinking, and I see a sort of *desperation* about it. If you don’t participate in initiation ceremonies you are regarded as a ‘nerd’. It’s hard to stand out against it – pressure is

places to avoid. The streets are littered with broken glass. I know – I get the punctures!

Unfortunately there are also people who come to University because they have nothing better to do. They can’t get jobs – but they aren’t really suited to serious study. There are some very anxious young people – not sure of themselves, wanting to be part of the group. There is huge peer pressure just to be ‘in there’ and doing what everybody else is doing.

We would see 80-90 of these each year among the students – and these are the ones we know about. These young people have to live with the knowledge that this awful thing happened to them. It’s a challenge to their sense of self, to their sexuality. It’s so demeaning of the human spirit and to their dignity.

These young Varsity students are still adolescents. They are going to do a lot of growing up in the next few years. My concern is that they ‘stuff it up’ before they even get there – like the poor young woman who was killed in that wild escapade on Baldwin St recently. They seem to lose all sense of self-control or restraint. I remember young guys who tried to fly across the Leith, they were so drunk. They injure themselves, they get involved in fights. There are assaults. We see the injuries. There may be a court case. And the worst scenario is that some become acutely depressed and even suicidal.

A young man came to me and said he wanted to train to run a marathon.

going peer group. Again she felt accepted and often got drunk. Sex, drinking and parties became for a time the happiest period of her life. Debt, casual prostitution, violence and loneliness followed this, until eventually she returned home – 26 years old and alcoholic.

She remembered the counsellor she had been to many years earlier. He was someone she had felt safe with. He referred her to a short-term, residential detoxification programme,

and she began a long-term process of existential therapy. This encourages people to consider the meaning of the choices they have made.

Philippa again started to recover control of her life with occasional relapses, but now with reliable, consistent acceptance and a deepening self-awareness. For the first time in her life she preferred to talk to men without first having sex with them. She became more gentle and began to care for her current partner. ■



***The morning after –  
outside a student flat  
during orientation week***

▷▷ I said he would have to stop heavy drinking. He said: “What’s that got to do with it?” He was not even aware. Sometimes we find their liver functions are impaired, so they are incapable of any level of sporting achievement. “But I’ve got to go down to the pub with my mates. I can’t stop!” It is so sad that they cannot be different.

Some will finish up with alcohol problems later. They will become addicted. The concern is if you learn to deal with stress by recourse to drink – if this is the way you get a ‘high’ – then it’s a very unfortunate pattern you have established in your life. You can get away with it perhaps when you’re younger.

Often enough the rugby players who don’t move on to another sport will continue drinking heavily. They just go to seed and age prematurely. There is this great build-up before a game. When they get older they start to play sport vicariously. The thing which used to be associated with sport – keeping fit – is not there any more. Only the heavy drinking.

Alcohol is pushed onto students commercially. Buy so many plants at the Garden Centre for your student flat – and they give you vouchers for beer, as a sweetener. These firms with their sponsorship are taking advantage of very vulnerable young adults. The beer companies seem to have no social responsibility. Some Halls of Residence have a high sense of responsibility for their students. They have a buddy system with senior students setting the tone in the Hall. All that is excellent.

Another factor is the spread of STDs which are contracted when the youngsters are inebriated. Chlamydia is the main infection – and it’s now very common among students. It would make a huge difference if alcohol were only used in moderation, because when they’re sober, nearly all of them are good, responsible citizens.

Binge drinking is the curse, because there is huge social pressure on vulnerable individuals. Keeping your mates is all important. By the time they get to third or fourth year it all changes. They are more focussed; they know what their goals are; they are determined to put the bad experiences behind them.

But then there are the serious casualties. There are a number of suicide situations, often linked with alcohol. Alcohol is a depressant and those who are depressed and seek relief in alcohol, just become more depressed. The ‘good authority’ which warns you of the danger signals,



#### 4. *“I’m a man. I can handle the grog”*

*It’s a few weeks after orientation and chaplain, Leona Garchow, speaks with feeling about the predicament of some of the younger Polytech and University students.*

Students are subject to intense advertising pressures, tempted by offers of cheap liquor and lured into the pubs to enjoy a ‘happy hour’. The pubs get them in for an hour with cheap liquor and then tempt them to stay on.

goes out the window when you start drinking. It’s made worse if the student is already, say, on Prozac. On its own Prozac may do a lot of good for a depressed person. But don’t mix it with your drinks! The combination of Prozac and heavy drinking can be disastrous.

But you have to change their culture. Here’s a scenario.

I say: “you are not going to sort out this problem – tiredness, not coping or whatever – until you change your drinking habits.” They say: “what’s that got to do with it?”

“How much are you spending?” “\$80-\$90 a week.”

“Do you think even \$50 a week may be too much?” “No, it’s what I’ve always done.”

“I suggest you should be spending no more than \$10-\$20 a week. Are you in debt?” “Yes, I owe a thousand bucks to someone.”

“Do you think you could cut down? I think you’re depressed. But I don’t want to give you any medication until we’ve dealt with this problem first.”

We work on it like that. Six months later, perhaps with counselling, you see them come round the corner. They are no longer in debt. Their bodies are healthier. And they are no longer depressed. They will pass their exams. It’s very gratifying to see that vicious cycle being broken. They have grasped the nettle. And that makes it all worth while. ■

There is an element of bravado with first-year students. They may come from out of town. During orientation they go to a party. They are lonely and don’t know anyone. Everything is strange. They feel the need to get in with the group – and they start drinking. Some may never have had alcohol before, although most have had plenty of experience.

If they get into trouble they don’t often come and ask for help. Some may lack

self-esteem, and they can't stand on their own feet. They need the group – and whatever the group does, they will do. Peer pressure is still very strong at this age. They are in transition time, having just left school. It's a new and exciting situation – on the surface. But in reality, deep inside themselves they can be quite frightened and homesick. "How am I going to get into this scene. Everyone seems to be drinking – so I'd better join them."

For boys it seems to be a macho thing: "*Look at me. I'm a man. I can handle the grog*". But for the girls it is more wanting to belong, wanting to be part of it.

If they get into a group where alcohol is not part of it, they'll be fine. And that has been the usual experience in CathSoc. At first I used to worry going away on camps. But alcohol on the camps has never been a problem. They might have a few beers, but they have never abused it. The group is already formed. They have each other. They don't have to act silly to prove themselves. They're secure.

Lowering the drinking age to 18 seems to have made the 18-year-olds about the campus more arrogant about their drinking. Before they had to hide it. So the police are getting a lot more trouble from them.

The Halls of Residence seem more responsible than they were in not encouraging alcohol as part of the orientation rituals. But it still happens. The wardens take a real responsibility for the students.

Outside the Hall situation, if the students haven't learned to live moderately they are out of anyone's control. And this for many is where the trouble starts. The only sanction seems to be at the end of the year when they

fail their exams. If they offend and the police take action, the court may say "we cannot risk ruining this person's career by giving them, a conviction". But why should they be exempt? Other people would not get that latitude.

There are a lot of Asian students, and they are shocked by the drinking habits on campus. One young Asian said: "if we want to celebrate we do so by eating round a table and celebrate together". They cannot understand the heavy drinking here in New Zealand. Drink is not in their culture: it isn't the way their

young people celebrate. And they don't feel safe on the streets at weekends because they get abused by other students, presumably because racist attitudes are triggered by drink.

It is all part of the attitude of our society. What needs to happen is that it becomes equally acceptable to bring food or soft drinks to parties. Whereas at many students' parties you would be regarded as a 'wimp if you didn't bring grog'. For Asians the focus is on the food. For young New Zealanders the focus is on drink.

The girls are very vulnerable to the 'spirit-mixes'. If they are vodka-based, they can be lethal, because the girls don't realise they are drinking anything very strong. As a result some have been raped or become pregnant. There is a 'keep yourself safe' campaign which is fact encourages so-called 'safe sex'. But, I ask

myself, is there not another way? What about one's own self-worth and the dignity of the person. These are issues too – as well as merely 'keeping safe'.

There are lots of students who have the sort of principles which protect them against these excesses. But what of the rest? They come here and they are going through this crucial transition in their lives. Often parents and adults don't know what to do. They are overwhelmed and don't know how to protect these very vulnerable young people.

This could be true also with the University authorities. Do they really know what's going on? Do they want to? Are they concerned about the level of student debt, for instance? Is it easier for the Vice Chancellor to concentrate on the University making a profit than be preoccupied by human problems like these? Is there a void out there where no one is taking responsibility?

Finally it comes down to one's dignity and self-respect. Some students will take so much alcohol on board that they get to the state they don't know what they're doing? They may become violent or damage property. If they do these terrible things, what does it do to their self-worth? They feel bad about themselves. They become failures. But it is the failure of society that we are not giving them the self-respect and dignity which is their due. ■



Leona Garchow is a Dunedin Sister of Mercy. The flyer reproduced on this page is typical of what comes through Tui Motu's letterbox.



# Easter Hospitality

Anna Holmes

*The house was tiny, with mud floor and walls and a flat roof. A donkey was tied up by the door. There were rows of pumpkins ripening on the roof.*

*The family came out to greet us. The eldest son offered water to wash our hands. The next son held a basin to catch it, while his brother poured a stream of wonderful cool water over our dusty hands.*

*Meanwhile their mother made tea. Fresh mint went into the tall teapot. Then tea leaves. Then the cone of sugar was unwrapped from its blue paper and the end chipped off by the sugar cutter. Then the boiling water was poured on. We were offered stools to sit on - the rest of the family sat on the ground. Tiny cups of hot, sweet tea were handed to us.*

*After this welcome we were able to do the work we had come for. The eldest daughter had tuberculosis and needed her medicine which we delivered each week.*

In traditional societies, even today, hospitality is practised towards all strangers. They are welcomed and made comfortable. It is very humbling to be given food when you know your hosts have a hard and hungry life. It gives a completely different meaning to Eucharist as the source of life. It is thought-provoking to be given water to drink or wash your hands with, which you know has been carried many hot, dusty miles by your hostess and her daughters.

Hospitality brings to mind a warm welcome to each unique person, good food and conversation, being healed and forgiven, a sense of being part of the family or community. Hospitality is the essence of Christian behaviour. Jesus was hospitable to all. He included those excluded by institutional religion - women, foreigners, lepers, tax collectors, the sick and the dying. He fed, nurtured, healed and enabled them to grow in body, mind and spirit. His ultimate act of hospitality was giving himself in the Eucharist.

Our first human experience of hospitality is in the womb. There we

are nurtured, enfolded, fed, and enabled to grow to birth. After birth, all over the world, new babies are held close to the heart and looked at from a distance of about 15 centimetres. This is exactly the distance newborn infants can see. The new baby is fed, cuddled, washed, clothed, talked to and listened to.

Babies who are well-loved in their early years are totally at home with themselves and their world. They experience it as a hospitable place. It is wonderful to see them humming or singing their way round the garden - prayer in action. Very soon they want to share hospitality with others. They cuddle and feed those they love, just as they are cuddled and fed.

*language can be  
hospitable when it makes  
people feel at home  
and comfortable*

Language can be hospitable when it makes people feel at home and comfortable, or it can be oppressive and make them feel stupid or ignorant.

Language may be a means of obtaining and maintaining power over others. Professions like theology and medicine develop languages only the initiated can understand. One of the astonishing things about the language Jesus used in the gospels is that even quite young children can understand it.

In the early church open hospitality was also practised. The house churches of the First Century fed those who came to pray. The new church reached out to any who wished to belong. In the Middle Ages hospitality was a prime monastic virtue. Even the buildings of monasteries and convents were hospitable. The church and accommodation for visitors or pilgrims was always at the front. On the major pilgrim routes, and particularly in the Holy Land, the religious orders also built hospitals for sick pilgrims.

What has happened in the intervening centuries to the practice of hospitality in the church? The church institution often seems more intent on keeping people out than welcoming them in. Many church buildings do not make people feel comfortable and at home. Rules which have little to do with the message of Christ induce guilt rather than a sense of belonging.

Children are refused baptism because their parents are not regular church attenders. Yet the very fact that people ask for their children to be baptised means they are open to discussion about spirituality. It provides an opportunity for making them welcome, which may lead the parents to return to the church community. People do not miss church just because they are lazy or indifferent. In the current economic climate they may have to work on Saturdays and Sundays.

In the gospels no one was excluded from the feeding miracles, yet there must have been many who were there only to see Jesus the wonderworker. Some of those were converted. Divorced and remarried people and their families are deeply distressed by their exclusion from the Eucharist. It does not make logical sense to deprive someone of a source of spiritual nourishment because they are not considered good enough.

Fellow Christians are wounded by their exclusion from Eucharist. Most Catholic marriages in New Zealand have a non-Catholic partner. It is shocking that married couples belonging to different denominations suffer because they may not receive communion together. It sets one sacrament, marriage, against another, Eucharist. This makes no logical sense since all sacraments are of God.

The Vatican refuses to allow the community ('Third') rite of reconciliation which is well attended, and insists on the individual rite which is hardly attended at all. The church refuses a treatment for spiritual dis-ease which is acceptable, and substitutes another that people will not use. Yet sinfulness always has a community aspect, and acknowledging sinfulness in community is most appropriate. It is often the beginning of personal change. This is the basis of the movement for

Restorative Justice now being promoted in New Zealand.

Formal church documents are written in language which is incomprehensible to most people. The language of liturgy often uses outmoded forms of address and images which do not relate to the lives of people. Much liturgy and many prayers still use exclusive male language about God and in addressing the congregation. It is almost as if exclusive language marks out the most 'faithful' Catholics. For many women today this is unacceptable. For some it is so painful they will not attend such liturgies. At the very least, it shows discourtesy to the women in the congregation by making them invisible and unnoticed. At worst, it is a deliberate attempt to control and demean them.

Such practices in the church delight in excluding people from the body of the faithful. They reflect a mindset well described in the gospels, of those who were rich, well-connected, respected, and who rejected strangers, women, the poor, the needy, the sick and the dying.

**H**ow are families welcomed in parishes? Most churches are not very tolerant of small children. Ones where the priest invites them to blow out the candles and walk with him down the aisle after Mass are few and far between. Many Catholic

primary schools insist on payment of a 'free' offering. If these 'offerings' are not made, the offending parents are harassed by the parish priest. No wonder the numbers of young families attending church are reducing rapidly.

Some Catholic parishes have no welcome for strangers in their midst.

### *divorced and remarried people are deeply distressed by their exclusion from the Eucharist*

No one greets visitors at the door, gives them a Mass book or liturgy sheet, and tells them what this place can offer them. A few parishes have a monthly or quarterly gathering after Mass and feel that is enough. How many parishes are hospitable and tolerant to the mentally ill? How many welcome foreigners or refugees?

How many really poor and deprived people do you see at an average Sunday Mass? Is it distracting from the business of praying to have people who disrupt the service or have to be fetched and taken home? Yet there is one inner city church where the Mass is often co-led by the priest and a member of the congregation, who conducts the responses. Nobody looks cross or tries to lead him out. In that parish everyone is made to feel at home.

Lent is a time for examination of our consciences and review of our behaviour. We should all reflect on how we practice hospitality - who do we exclude by our words and deeds, in our families, in our work, in our community, and in our parishes. Easter is a time for new beginnings. We should ponder on how we can include those who have felt excluded, hurt, damaged or demeaned by us or our church. Hospitality is love shared freely with others. It is not an optional virtue for Christians. ■





# John O'Donohue

## Irish Priest, Philosopher, Poet.

*John Hunt, Presbyterian Minister in Papanui, Christchurch, caught up with John O'Donohue in Christchurch recently. He sent Tui Motu this appreciation of the visit.*

John O'Donohue has a spirited presence. He sparkles with a passion for life. He has charm and grace. He is quite tall, with bright eyes and a wispy beard. His words flow, leaping and dancing like an Irish mountain stream.

I met him first in 1993 when he led a programme on Iona. At that time he was a parish priest in the diocese of Galway; his bishop allowed him time for his writing and teaching. The popularity of his book *Anam Cara* (Bantam 1997) has drawn him into full-time writing. Later publications are: *Eternal Echoes*, *Echoes of Memory*, *Person Als Vermittlung* and now *Conamara Blues* (Doubleday 2000).

He brings to his writing the clarity of thought and careful use of words of a philosopher (His doctorate from Tübingen is on Hegel.) and he brings the imagination and lyricism of the Celt.

We have seen in the history of our Faith a tension between the rational and the charismatic. John O'Donohue's great gift is to hold the two together. While affirming intellectual, critical rigour, he honours imagination and narrative. He tells a beautiful story concerning his ministry to a young woman who was dying, his search for words 'for a raft to take her where she was going'.

At the heart of the Celtic vision is relationship. The Celts delighted in the Trinity itself as relationship. They could see we can know the Creator in our relationship with the creation. We relate to the natural world with a spirit

of awe and wonder and thankfulness. As we engage with the rhythms of the natural world: the light of the morning following the darkness of the night, the spring following winter, the tide turning, so we know the resurrection following the crucifixion. We have the faith that we are in God's care and we will make our way through whatever troubles us to well-being.

John O'Donohue is concerned that many people live increasingly in virtual worlds, spending much of their lives in cyberspace. He alerts us to God's presence in the world around us, a presence we know through our senses: hearing, tasting, seeing, smelling and touching. His poems are at once sensual and spiritual.

He speaks of asking a new mother to tell

### **Fluent**

*I would love to live  
like a river flows,  
carried by the surprise  
of its own unfolding.*

him the story from conception to birth. His beautiful sensitivity, perceptiveness and empathy is revealed in the poem which emerged.

### **The Nativity**

*No man reaches where the moon  
touches a woman.  
Even the moon leaves her where  
she opens  
Deeper into the ripple in her womb  
That encircles dark to become  
flesh and bone.  
Someone is coming ashore inside  
her.....*

We may have in John O'Donohue the tradition of the bard, the carrier of the vision, the spirit, the heart of the people. In his writing he has the blending of penetrating thought and evocative images; he has the marrying of theology (which he describes as 'dismantling idolatry') and the earth; he has a catholic (all embracing) spirituality. His song is one our old world longs to hear. ■

### **The Rosary**

*As though the music of the ocean  
had come to shelter  
on the home hearth  
dreaming of itself  
in the selfsame dream  
from a far distant region  
in buoyant ease  
between the fill and fall  
of waves of Hail Marys.*



# Lord of the Dance

*Albert Moore looks at Sydney Carter's famous hymn Lord of the Dance and shows how dance is a universal way of expressing faith – but especially the Easter leap of triumph by Christ. Albert Moore is retired Professor of Religious Studies, Otago University.*

*Dance, then, wherever you may be;  
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.*

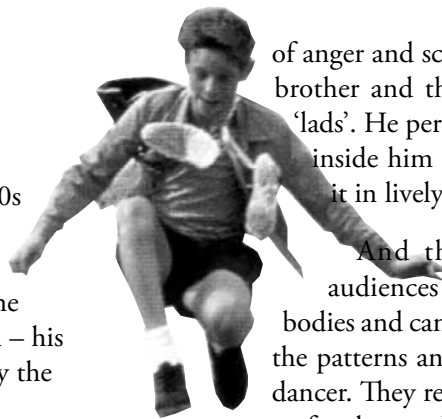
This is the refrain of a well-known song from the 1960s by Sydney Carter which has become one of the great hymns of the 20th Century. It is original and daring in the way its verses tell the biblical story of Jesus as the Christ. It is Jesus who tells his story in the first person – his coming to dance on earth, his rejection as shameful by the holy people, his burial and his ongoing life:

*I am the dance and I still go on.*

Here is the Resurrection message of Easter proclaimed by means of the powerful metaphor of the dance. Why does this song continue to exert such an appeal? Here the writer himself helps us to find an answer. Sydney Carter (born 1915) is a British poet and folk-singer who belongs to the Anglican church and also served in the Friends Ambulance Unit in World War II. Through working with Greek refugees he experienced the joy and uplift of Greek dancing. As his interest in folk-singing developed, he drew on an Appalachian folk tune which had been used for religious dances of the Shaker sect in USA, for his song *Lord of the Dance*.

Now in his eighties, Carter, in a recent interview, reaffirms his feeling for the dance: "I'm pretty wobbly with my knees, but basically dance is not just the physical thing; it is the whole thing inside you. Dance is the agony as well, life and death... The dance is the thing, music and art, pictures, falling in love and out of love. They are all a sort of dance."

This deep inner appeal of the dance may well account for the popularity of a currently new feature film *Billy Elliot*. It tells the story of a boy in the troubled 1980s in a run-down Tyneside mining town in the north of England. He finds he wants to be a dancer, and this conviction develops in face



of anger and scorn from his father and older brother and the local expectations for real 'lads'. He persists because of this deep urge inside him and his real ability to express it in lively expressive patterns of dance.

And this is surely what cinema audiences recognise; for we all have bodies and can empathise with the rhythms, the patterns and lively inventions of the dancer. They represent life and vitality, inner freedom and outgoing expression of 'body

and soul'.

We may sense a similar delight in watching some sporting activities, both live and on TV. The skilful interplay of a team is almost a dance choreography, while also allowing for daring movements by individuals. (Indeed, the connection with NZ rugby football has been made by the Black Grace Dance Company in its energetic and humorous work *New Religion* at the Otago Festival of the Arts, October 2000.)

*The dance appeals  
to the life, freedom  
and creativity  
within all of us.*





William Blake: The Risen Christ

### In the Beginning was the Dance

A great scholar of the world's religions, Gerardus van der Leeuw, emphasised that the dance is universal and all-embracing because it is the most elemental of the arts: "To dance one needs nothing, not paint, nor stone, nor wood, nor musical instrument; nothing at all except one's own body". The art of "beautiful motion" is the oldest of the arts. God is movement and love. The dance is a reminder of the primal creation and the ongoing creation of new things, new possibilities, with freedom and diversity.

*I danced in the morning when the world was begun  
And I danced in the moon and the stars and the sun*

### The Risen Lord of the Dance

Other arts have developed in association with the dance and are used to express the message of Easter – new life and new hope. The poet-artist William Blake two centuries ago portrayed the Risen Christ like a dancer springing up – "with a wonderful gravity-defying lightness of movement... cutting a swathe of human radiance as he rises" (Jean Hagerstrum). Of course the Resurrection cannot be a subject of literal description and Blake's watercolour is an imaginative expression through his visionary art. Yet it conveys important insights. On the one hand the Risen Christ is released in the universe with joy and freedom. On the other hand he still is

*Dance is the whole  
agony as well,*

*Lord of the*

shown in the recognisable bodily form of the earthly Jesus. His hands are nail-pierced, his eyes "touched with wonder and suffering". There is continuity recognised by his disciples as well as by followers of later times who experience signs of his spiritual and ethical presence. The resurrected body is taken up into a new universal level and becomes the harbinger of universal human promise.

*They cut me down and I leapt up high;  
I am the life that'll never never die.  
I'll live in you if you'll live in me;  
I am the Lord of the Dance, said he.*

### Lord of the Dance in India

In the Hindu tradition since antiquity the great god Shiva has been revered as Nata-raja, Lord of the Dance. Myths tell of his creating the world by the rhythm of his cosmic dance and of his revealing the rules of sacred dance. So he is patron of the temple dance-halls and his image is featured in performances of the classical dance tradition, Bharata Natyan. The famous image depicted here is rich in symbolism from this Hindu tradition. The flame-lit circle is the cosmos, but it



Shiva Nataraja – Hindu  
'Lord of the Dance'



the thing inside you –  
life and death

## The Dance

is only the changing scene of play and Shiva has the power to destroy and recreate it. He dances, calmly poised at the centre, trampling over the little demon of ignorance. The gestures of his feet and four arms bring reassurance of release from illusion and the individual heart's union with the centre of the cosmos.

This classic Hindu image of the dancing Shiva has been re-  
visioned by a modern Indian Christian artist and thinker,  
Jyoti Sahi (born 1944). Based in the Catholic church and in a

village community near Bangalore  
in south India, he continues to  
develop Christian art and church  
design that relates to indigenous  
Indian traditions in new ways.  
The Christian mission is one of  
celebration, liberation and joy; and  
Christ is the dancer who steps over  
human divisions and fears. This  
can link with the joyous dancing  
figures of Indian art. Jyoti has



depicted the prophet

Elijah “wrapt in the flame  
of God’s fiery dance”.  
In graphic designs and  
woodcuts he depicts  
Christ dancing on the  
waters and, finally, Christ  
on the cross as a dancer  
with arms outstretched to  
the cosmic circle.



In answer to criticisms that he is minimising the real suffering  
of the Cross, Jyoti emphasises the joy and liberation which  
here encompass and transcend agony and death. The image  
of Shiva is grand but static with its four cosmic arms. In  
contrast, Jyoti sees Christ as a human dancer with two arms,  
more like an ecstatic tribal dancer; experiencing joy and pain,  
he is a dynamic Lord of the Dance.



Jyoti Sahi: Christ as Lord of the Dance in his Passion

### Dance and Christian worship

In the past the dance has often suffered neglect, even rejection,  
in the Christian tradition. But readers of *Tui Motu* will be  
aware of the creative lead given by dancers and choreographers  
such as Shona Dunlop MacTavish (see references below). It is  
important to see this within the whole range of the arts. John  
Williamson has shown well how Christian liturgy involves and  
integrates all the arts – drama, poetry, dance, music, opera,  
the visual arts and architecture.

*“And I’ll lead you all, wherever you may be  
And I’ll lead you all in the dance, said he.”*

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# Those who dance pray twice

*Tom Cloher interviews Jennifer de Leon,  
a passionate advocate of liturgical dance*

St Augustine is reputed to have declared “Those who sing, pray twice”. Jennifer de Leon, one suspects, would express this rather differently, probably “Those who dance, pray twice”. From earliest Christian upbringing, to “dance in the temple of the Lord”, has been her ambition. It explains her abiding interest in liturgical dance.

Aiming for high standards of professional excellence propelled her to Wellington to London to Toronto to New York to Seattle to Sydney. In the 70s opportunities first occurred for liturgical dance during *Youth for Christ* programmes in Wellington. Gatherings of 2000 and more witnessed praise for God in dance. Later in London she encountered an ideal formula for liturgical dance when she became a member of The *Cedars of Lebanon*, a professional liturgical dance company supported by a cathedral just as the choir was.

overall theme. Attentive and involved audiences testified to the professionalism, reverence and verve of the performance.

“Now”, says Jennifer, “we are about to present our new work for 2001 – *Rising* – a mystical journey of growth, hope, giving-in and beginning again. It is about birth and rebirth. It begins with silence and poetry by Christian mystic and feminist writer, Luci Shaw. As actress Theresa Woodham chants and sings the dancers Jennifer De Leon, Hannah Gadd, Caz Johnston, Margie Vaz and Iris Wegmueller enter the space – the *Rising* begins. Music is by Philip Glass.”

Jennifer dreams of a time when *Poyema* may have a permanent attachment to a city church and be a continuing part of its liturgical life, and where a core of dancers can be retained to ‘dance in the

*Rising* will be performed on 26th, 27th & 28th April, at 7.30pm, The Crypt, St. Paul's Church, 28 Symonds St. Auckland Central. Tickets are \$12.00, \$8.00 conc. and \$6.00 children. Booking recommended, limited seating. Ph. 09 3761 671.

On return to Aotearoa discovering similar patronage was not so easy but it did not deter her. In 1986 Jennifer was instrumental in establishing *Poyema*, the country's first professional liturgical dance company. (*Poyema* derives its name from Ephesians 2,10 – “God's work of art”.) Its programme has not been continuous as funds have not been available to retain dancers on a full-time basis. It has been nonetheless industrious and consistent. In Auckland the company has presented liturgical dance concerts at Holy Trinity Cathedral, St Benedict's, All Saints Anglican, St Matthew's in the City and St Luke's Presbyterian, also at St Paul's Anglican Church, Kamo, and St Michael and All Angels, Christchurch.

A recent presentation, *Leaving Eden*, involved music, dance and commentary to celebrate the dawning and blossoming of creation. Five separate dances expressed different facets of the



*The Dance*  
My daughter dances with God in her toes  
treading light upon the floor  
spinning  
weaving  
journeying and lifted by grace  
arms spread and circling  
wings to fly  
watched by laughing angels on bookcase and bed  
their eyes aflame with joy and passion  
they move and sing to her music  
and they watch  
as my daughter dances with God in her toes

Jac quie

# Our Churches need Easter images of Hope

Desmond Smith

One of the binds about shifting house is that all the rubbish you've collected for years has to go somewhere. And that usually means a garage sale or the tip. Then there is the hassle of making new acquaintances, finding the right places to shop and establishing different people networks. Right in among them too is the problem of sorting out a new place to worship.

It is then that you start to notice how overpoweringly sorrowful we are as a church. So many blank walls at the back of the sanctuaries with only a single massive great cross to adorn them. It could be that the modern tendency to opt out of church attendance is caused, at least in part, by the dire images we project of death and suffering.

That can't have been the way the early Christians saw it, or nobody would have joined the new lot. What attracted them from the beginning was the *hope* they gained by believing in the Good News preached by the apostles. In many other parts of scripture, but especially in the *Epistle to the Romans*, the first followers of Christ's way were encouraged to put their trust in God and to "rejoice in hope" (*Rom. 12:12*). Now there's not much hope in a cross displayed on its own. It simply implies death in a most terrible form. Without the Resurrection the cross of Christ has no meaning; it is simply a symbol of death. As Paul puts it "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is useless and your believing it is useless" (*1 Cor. 15:14*).

So what are we doing without the Resurrection image in the sanctuary?

For one thing, we are certainly not passing on the sort of Good News that would have attracted new members 2000 years ago. What people seek to make them happy today is not that much different from what it was 2000 years ago. All of us need hope to survive. Surely, the very least we should aim for in God's house is to give encouragement to everyone who comes to hear the

glory which was to follow the Cross, as is seen in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*: "Let us not lose sight of Jesus who leads us in our faith and brings it to perfection. For the sake of the joy which was still in the future, he endured the cross, dis-regarding the shameful of it" (*Heb. 12:2*).

After all, the Paschal Mysteries on which the whole of our faith is based, comprise the Death and the Resurrection of Christ. One might draw an analogy here with the normal form under which we receive the Eucharist, stopping with the consecrated bread. The analogy could be carried further in the sense that the Body cannot exist without the Blood. Similarly the Death of Christ makes no sense without the Resurrection alongside it.

But of course, just as we would not receive the Precious Blood and leave out the Body of Christ, so we could not possibly acknowledge the Resurrection without the presence of the Cross. To remove the Cross from the centre of our worship would be unthinkable. What we as a Church should ensure is

that we express the full Good News in the silent message which is proclaimed in the sanctuary. It was only after the Resurrection that we became a Church, not after Calvary. We were commissioned to evangelise by a Risen Christ (*Matt. 28:19-20*), not by the dead Jesus. So let us see the Risen Christ in the sanctuaries of our churches, just as was recommended by Vatican II. ■

Illustration: The Risen Christ as dancer by the Indian Christian artist Jyoti Sahi (see pages 16-17)



Christian message. And that means in the visual sense as well as the auditory one, because what we see affects us as much as what we hear.

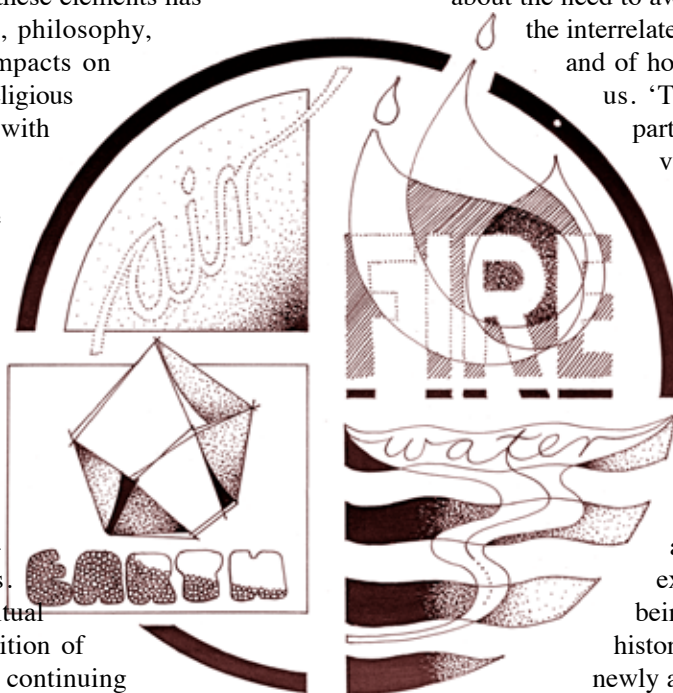
If the first thing we need to see on entering God's dwelling is a scene of the total rejection of the God-man, without any notion of the final outcome of his life, who are we kidding that this is Good News? We humans yearn for an image of hope, for something to look forward to when the stuff of life is done. Even Jesus, on whom we model our lives, needed the reassurance of the

# The Holy Spirit and the four Elements

*In the first of four articles on the Holy Spirit, Helen Bergin explores the connection of the Spirit with Air*

Attempts to describe the Holy Spirit have always been difficult. This series of four short articles will explore the benefits of linking the Holy Spirit with the elements - air, earth, fire and water. Study of these elements has an ancient history in science, philosophy, anatomy. Today, this study impacts on areas of astrology, health care, religious traditions. We will make links with the Christian story.

From the perspective of the Christian story, several things suggest the value of such reflection. First, within the Hebrew tradition recorded in the First Testament, and specifically in the Christian tradition recorded in the New Testament, the Spirit, as we will show, is mentioned at significant moments in connection with the four elements. Second, in the liturgical, spiritual and theological Christian tradition of the past 20 centuries there is continuing connection of the Spirit with them. Third, in regard to reflection on the nature of the Holy Spirit, images of air, earth, fire and water bring something graphic into our minds and imagination. Perhaps they can balance images of the Spirit as 'unknown' or 'faceless' and thus help to reclaim the Holy Spirit for us.



From the perspective of the earth and of humanity, I believe that the connecting of the natural elements with the Holy Spirit has two advantages. First, there is a consciousness today about the need to awaken in human beings a sense of the interrelatedness of the planet's life-systems and of how they support, feed and sustain us. 'Technological' human beings in particular are beginning to relearn the value and necessity of respecting the 'common' earth. Also, there seems to be a corresponding need within the human family to recognise that a 'spirit' dimension to life is beyond our manipulation and is necessary for the healthy well-being of all life on this planet. Especially is this so for human beings.

An awareness, thanks to science and technology, of the often excessive demands made by human beings on the earth at this period of history is a call to human beings to look newly at the air we breathe, the earth we tread, the vibrant energy within the earth, the water we take for granted. Material life will not continue without the basic elements. And, interestingly, each of these foundational elements can also point beyond themselves to suggest something of God's Spirit. We begin with the element of air.

## Air and Holy Spirit

In Auckland last September, the City Council sponsored a campaign to reduce vehicle pollution from unacceptable levels of gas emissions. A free telephone hot-line prompted 30,000 citizens to report vehicles displaying excessive emissions. Owners of faulty vehicles were required to repair damage, initial funds being offered by the Council to assist in the clean-up. Such anti-pollution measures will continue. So what has all this to do with talk of the Holy Spirit?

There are three aspects about air which may offer some understanding of the Spirit of God.

- First, *life-giving forces within animate creation depend on air or breath.* We are familiar with the beautiful Maori tradition in which formal introductions conclude with welcomers and guests being invited to share the common breath of life in a ritual known as the *hongi*. Such ritual acknowledges the indispensability and giftedness of our common air and breath.

Hebrew and Christian sources often stress the link between the life-sustaining aspect of air and God's Spirit. In the First Testament, the term *ruach* describes spirit, wind and breath. In Genesis there is the "divine wind sweeping over the waters" (*Gen 1:2*). In Psalm 33, the *breath* of YHWH's mouth creates the heavens and all their array. Each speaks of God's creative actions. In Psalm 104, death occurs when YHWH takes back the *spirit*. Such creativity, however, is not confined to YHWH's



initial and ongoing actions. In extreme cases, breath restores life, as seen in the image of the valley of bones. YHWH says to Ezekiel,

**“Prophecy to the breath: prophesy, mortal. Say to the breath ‘The Lord Yahweh says this: Come from the four winds, breath; breathe on these dead, so that they may come to life!’ I prophesied as he had ordered me, and the breath entered them; they came to life and stood up on their feet, a great, an immense army.”**  
(Ezekiel 37: 9-10)

In the New Testament, the linking of breath with the Spirit is seen in Jesus’ death, resurrection and gift of the Spirit. In dying, Jesus gave up his *spirit*. (Jn 19:30) After the resurrection, He *breathed* on the disciples saying ‘**Receive the Holy Spirit**’ (Jn 20:22). Both actions signal newness - the formation of the Christian community.

Tradition also uses these images to indicate new life. In the 12th century, Hildegard of Bingen exclaims: **“I am the supreme and fiery force which has kindled all sparks of life and breathe forth none of death and I judge them as they are”** ( *Bk of Divine Works*).

Whether linked to Jesus or to disciples centuries later, the Spirit is seen as the stirrer into life. So basic is breath to life that 13th century Mechtild of Magdeburg announces: **“Lord, Holy Spirit, you are my breath.”** However, life needs also to be supported. A 20th century prayer from Taizé catches this aspect of the Spirit: **“You breathe in us on all that is inadequate and fragile.”** Fundamentally, *air* and Spirit initiate and continually sustain life, sometimes in face of death.

- A second link between air and Spirit refers to *the invisible nature of both*. Jesus instructs Nicodemus about God’s Spirit by using the image of wind. He says: **“You must be born from above. The wind blows where it pleases; you can hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”** (Jn 3:7-8)

The invisible, elusive nature of air and Spirit suggest activity, of which effects are only gradually recognised. The Tradition too glimpses, rather than clearly expresses, the life of God’s Spirit. In the 20th century, theologian Edward Schillebeeckx likens the Spirit to the wind **“that you do not see but which moves everything, keeps it alive and makes it vibrate”** (*The Johannine Easter*). Similarly, poet Edwina Gately reflects: **“Restless, stirred, We strain to glimpse The Infinite Beating and breathing about us.”**

(*Spirit-Power*)

- A third interrelated aspect of Spirit and wind or air is *their uncontrollability*. Human inability to fathom the path of the wind is often disconcerting. God’s

Spirit is free. James K Baxter, 20th century poet of Aotearoa, said of the Spirit:

**“You blow like the wind in a thousand paddocks**

**Inside and outside the fences**

**You blow where you wish to blow”**

(*Song to the Holy Spirit*)

In summary, in order to speak about God’s Spirit, the image of ‘air’ is superbly suitable. If creation is to be held within the mysterious, rather than the controlling presence of God, images of air, breath and wind signal life upheld by God, life open to surprise.

We began by describing one city’s efforts to reclaim pure air. Why? We desire a healthy life. Might not this present-day focus on ‘air’ help us also reclaim a sense of the divine Spirit in our lives? ■

Helen Bergin, OP lectures at CIT, the Catholic Institute of Theology, Auckland. We are indebted to CIT who have determined to widen their apostolate by publishing some of their work in *Tui Motu*



## Mercy Health Care Conference

Waipuna Conference Centre, Auckland

June 22/23

### Sustaining Life in a World of Limits

As the financial costs and moral risks of hi-tech medicine continue to soar, Pope John Paul presents “health for all” as a primary duty for the international community and a challenge for believers. (Message for World Day of the Sick 2001). The focus of this conference will be on how Catholic health and aged care can offer a vision that upholds the dignity of every human life, while setting realistic limits in the care it provides.

#### Keynote speakers include:

Dr Bernadette Tobin, *Plunkett Centre for Ethics, Sydney*

Dr Gerald Gleeson, *Catholic Institute of Sydney*

Dr Neil Darragh, *Catholic Institute of Theology, Auckland*

Dr Jacqueline Allan, *Royal Commission on Genetic Modification*

Jan Nichols, manager, *St Joseph’s Mercy Hospice, Auckland*

Dr Rod MacLeod, *Mary Potter Hospice, Wellington*

Please mail details of Mercy Health Care Conference 2001 to:

**Conference Organiser, Te Tairere Oranga, Box 109 025, Newmarket**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

**Te Tairere Oranga Sisters of Mercy Auckland Charities Limited**

## Some impressions of Br David

In the March issue of *Tui Motu* we printed an interview with Benedictine Br David Steindl-Rast, who was on a lecture and retreat 'tour' of New Zealand. *Tui Motu* gathered together some comments and reflections from some of those who heard him.



### About Br David himself

"One of the truly wise people I have met in my lifetime – he has a presence which drew me to want to know more."

"It is this great pool and peace of tranquillity! He seems a person unable to be ruffled. That evening there was a TV programme about stress and how to deal with it. I felt that a day with Br David was worth many TV programmes about stress. He has a deep security: there is nothing stressful about him."

"I also read the interview with Doug Myers in the Sunday paper, where he said that all his money had not made him happy and he couldn't cope with all the side effects of wealth. Whereas here was Br David with nothing in the way of worldly possessions – yet he has everything! He has a sense of wonder which makes him live right now in the present."

"It was his wisdom: the way he turned things upside down so that I could see familiar things again in a new light. For instance, on Ash Wednesday he covered prayer, fasting and almsgiving – but he turned these traditional notions on their head."

### What did he say which was so memorable?

"He connected all those Lenten ideas. If you have a 'passion' for prayer, it spills over into *compassion* for others. Almsgiving is the old word for serving others. Prayer on its own has no teeth. Fasting on its own is just dieting. But Br David sees prayer as flowing into fasting – and the more you pray the more you hear the needs of the poor."

"He also talked about fasting in terms of the negatives – the three sins of the

monks – lust, anger and sloth. *Lust* is clinging on to things, clinging to the past. *Anger* happens when you are future-oriented – but are too impatient for it. And *sloth* is failing to pay due attention to the present – being easily distracted, being unfocussed, being lazy."

"The impatient people need to become patient and the lazy ones need to become passionate. The lazy person for instance may be reluctant of becoming a *doer*, but at least they can raise questions."

### Mindfulness – or gratefulness?

"It all comes down to what Br David calls **mindfulness**, which means being fully present to what you are doing and fully available. You don't have to be obsessed by routine. But there are little rituals in life which make you mindful."

"You cease living 'on automatic' and focus more on what you are actually doing. We can all live in such a routine way that we miss out on all those sensory delights along the way, which are really bits of God in everyday life. Br David insists we need to do these routine things mindfully. Gratefulness is an awareness which springs up in us when we are mindful of what we are doing. And that is the heart of prayer."

"With people, when you are present to someone with total concentration – when you are **mindful** of them, then there is no past. There is no future. You are simply in the present moment."

"One of the distinctions he made was between what we *need* and what we *want*. What we need is beauty, poetry,

music. Our souls need beauty. You can achieve this at home perhaps by clearing away the clutter. That may be your 'fast'! Outside, we need green spaces, not just buildings."

"To fast is to speed up – to speed up one's inner life! You become the person you truly are by a process of finding God inside. And how can you find God within yourself if you are so preoccupied with things, with desires, with anxieties about the past, with yearnings for the future? Fasting is ceasing to be lazy. Fasting means shedding these preoccupations, especially the one which holds you most firmly, so that you can find God where God is all the time – within yourself."

"The journey of discovery in life is to get to know who you really are – but there in the centre of yourself you're going to find God. If you don't acknowledge that reality, then you will project it onto something else and call God a being outside you."

### I believe in God – the Father (from the Christchurch seminar weekend)

"Br David's idea of God is so inspiring, and his belief that poetry is best able to explain the mythology and mysteries inherent in the concept of a Superior Being. He spoke of the 'Father Almighty', not in the sense of the philosopher's God but as a 'loving father' so that I can trust in the power of God's love. The philosopher's god needs to be proved, is impersonal and becomes the subject of endless conjecture and argument."

"It is only the context of God being

*loving father* that gives meaning to everything, even to pain. All suffering in the world is also borne by this God, who took human form and experienced what we experience.

“Br David believes that poetic expression carries the full weight of religious conviction by appealing to and empowering the imagination. The mystic experience is basically poetic. The first expression of religious insight is myth. When this is used in the context of spirituality, it is the poetic expression of profound insight.”

“The creation myth has three elements, according to Br David. The Creator is there from the start. Secondly, the matter out of which everything is made, is as close to nothing as possible, like dream matter. Finally, the connection between the two must be as intimate as possible.

“A Christian’s concept of a supreme God of love falls naturally into place here. Poetry, which is at the heart of all mythology, finds its function in providing verbal imaginative models.

The Psalms, the Old Testament and the Gospels are full of examples.”

*In an interview with Mike Crean, of the Christchurch Press, Br David had some observations to make about the current state of the Catholic Church.*

“The church structures are now crumbling under our eyes. The form of some structures is no longer compatible with the inner life force Jesus set in motion. The church as an institution has become more and more centralised in the hands of the Curia in Rome and a very few people. It has reached a point where it is no longer compatible with the spirit of Jesus.

“The institution is modelled on monarchy, and monarchies are finished. Sooner or later, this model will go. The Vatican Council 40 years ago recognised the problem. It sought to decentralise power by increasing the autonomy of bishops and changing the role of the Pope from monarch to coordinator. However, in recent years the changes of the Vatican Council have been reversed.

“I do not like the rigidity of it. The church has refused to tackle such issues as the role of women. The sooner we open the sluices for gradual change, the less pressure there will be. My concern is not to rock the boat. The structures are tottering anyway, so we should not push them. Let’s use the time we have to strengthen the spirit.

“A revitalisation of individual and community spirituality will develop its own structures. These may not involve the traditional pattern of clergy, parishes and dioceses. Families and groups of people can worship and meditate without clergy. In some countries and in most centuries, people maintained the faith for years in this way. If it must be again, it will be.

“Strengthening the spirit requires people to go back to the origins of faith and look inside themselves, through meditation, for a personal and intimate relationship with God.”

Final section courtesy Christchurch Press

## A saint with a Kiwi connection

*Stephen Lowe investigates a distinguished ancestor and finds it a rewarding spiritual quest*

Parents have a lot to answer for! Imagine being landed with ‘Marmion’ as a middle name. That is what I was given at an aunt’s insistence! But why Marmion? Joseph Marmion, or Dom Columba Marmion – as he is better known, was my great-grandmother’s uncle, a distant relative who was in the process of being beatified when I was born. Nonetheless, Marmion was a name that needed to be buried, especially as my schoolmates quickly adapted it to Marmite or Marmalade. For me, Marmion was a vague figure somewhere in the family tree who had written books. It was not until I entered

the seminary that I started to take a more active interest in my distinguished namesake and actually read him.

So who was he? Joseph Marmion was born in Dublin in 1858 and studied for the diocesan priesthood in Dublin and Rome. Returning to Ireland he was appointed as a curate to a Dublin parish, and later as professor of philosophy at Clonliffe seminary. He soon established a reputation for holiness and practical charity in his parish and chaplaincy work.

While in Rome Marmion first felt called

to become a Benedictine monk. In 1886 Marmion entered the Benedictine Abbey of Maredsous in Belgium where he was given the religious name, Columba.

*I became a monk, he writes, because God had revealed to me the beauty and greatness of obedience.* Marmion realised what we so easily forget, that true happiness is found in being in union with God, in truly living what we pray, *Thy will be done.*

In 1899 Marmion was appointed as Prior to a new foundation in Louvain, and spent 12 years there as spiritual director and professor of theology. His

▷▷





spiritual reputation grew, and he was much in demand as a confessor and as a preacher of retreats. His search for holiness never prevented his enjoying life or people. He was renowned for his humour. He told a Belgian friend that his countrymen could tend to be rather dour and overserious. "In Ireland the birds sing *chirrup*; in Belgium they sing *cheer-up*."

In 1909 Marmion was elected Abbot of Maredsous, a position he held until his death in 1923. As well as being responsible for the community of over 100 monks, with its associated humanities college, trade school and farm, Marmion continued his spiritual direction and retreat preaching. His secretary prepared his spiritual conferences for publication and these writings made him the most influential Catholic spiritual figure in Western Europe. His books include *Christ the Life of the Soul*, *Christ in his Mysteries* and *Christ the Ideal of the Priest*.

They are not easy reading particularly to today's reader. One difficulty is his heavy use of the Vulgate, the Latin Bible. His theology is very much pre-Vatican II. Yet those who persevere will find a unique blend of theology and spirituality that draws heavily on the Scriptures and they will find in Marmion an excellent spiritual guide.

As a young priest, in spite of having no memory of the Mass in Latin, I found his work, *Christ the Ideal of the Priest*, inspiring. Increasingly today we hear

people talking about spirituality, but it is often a spirituality disconnected from theology. Likewise theology can become an arid study if it does not gain life in spirituality. Marmion manages to blend the two together and present them in the context of our celebration of the liturgy.

In the early 1950s Cardinal Montini (later Pope Paul VI) encouraged Maredsous Abbey to initiate his beatification process. Almost 50 years later I set off to Rome for his beatification. I had arranged to meet my uncle and Margaret, a friend of his in Rome. Despite Uncle Joe's age nothing was going to stop him from attending the beatification. He got to Rome, but sadly he didn't get to the beatification – he died the evening before, just after I had left him. I have no doubt that through the prayers of Don Columba, Joe got a front seat for the beatification!

Meanwhile, for Margaret and me, the 'fun' was just beginning. It took two police officers, a detective and a captain of police six hours to investigate Joe's death. This included a ride for me in an Italian police car at breakneck speed through Rome to collect my passport. Then it took a further nine hours and a call to Foreign Affairs in Wellington to have Joe's body removed.

At 9.30am the mortuary police did remove Joe's body, and then it was a quick sprint by taxi across to St Peter's for the beatification I had come so far to attend. As Pope John Paul emerged at one of the ends of St Peter's square, I entered the other having not shaved, slept and not having had much to eat. I had no translation to follow the proceedings. The seats were all gone. I couldn't get anywhere near close enough to receive communion, and the 40 degree heat for a two-hour plus Papal Mass was just too much. After it was all over there was no sign of Joe's companion, Margaret, their tour party, or the three New Zealand priests I was supposed to be with to celebrate this great feastday for our family. I went to MacDonalds by myself before going to bed. (Thankfully

there were two further Masses over the next couple of days that I was able to concelebrate, so I felt I really did celebrate the beatification).

For me the high point of the Mass was not the unveiling of the five newly beatified saints (one of whom was Pope John XXIII). It was the sign of peace. No one around me gave the sign of peace in English; there were a multitude of languages but everyone was smiling. For me it was a great experience of the church. Here we were, pilgrims from all over the world, pilgrims together seeking a path to holiness: the holiness we were celebrating in those being beatified. .

In past years there was a custom of naming children after the saints, placing before them a witness, a patron, someone whose worth is found in the God they sought. Perhaps more than ever we need to recapture something of that tradition – and maybe Marmion as a middle name isn't so bad after all!

*Stephen Lowe is a priest of the Christchurch diocese. He is parish priest of Timaru North*

Bible society Ad  
(on disc)

## The Hutt Valley Jesus for Mark

I see you, tagged upon a wall  
newly painted, plush and posh;  
or on the rickety fences  
of state and temporary housing –  
both, the yearning cry  
for the lost limits of freedom.

Or, more sombrely, I see you  
hanging in a silent little church  
hanging, hewn from the struggle  
of families finding a faith  
they knew once shaped them.

Why, for too  
long, have I not seen  
the cry of yearning  
shown in your shoulders drooping,  
bruised purple and pointless?  
Your presence there, stark and still  
and on a daring knight's road,  
checks the superficial spring in my step  
and the trafficking clamour of thought  
based on the lure and the glitter  
of illusions on sale and bargained for –  
delusion that leans towards  
the barking madness of despair.

“Where the f... are you?”  
tagged on a rubbish bin  
and scrawled across my heart  
scratches the silence of your presence.  
It is there in the embryonic dark  
of stillness lit crimson with love,  
that you wait for me, patiently,  
till sheer exhaustion and blistered feet  
– in ill-fitting shoes from a sale –  
draw me back to the pregnant quiet  
of my own heart, now bruised with yours.

But light comes, without description.  
It has no colour I can tell of,  
but for the necessary colour of pain.  
Light, the surprise of grace  
with love in its wake –  
Light comes, a night's dream  
born of a yearning shared.

Surprise is the way of grace  
and you can but glimpse it,  
in the audacity of a dahlia  
flared for the morning sun  
or the bright green of totara tips  
reaching for the cloud no longer there.

Light with love in its wake  
is more full-bodied and round  
in the valleyed hills where shadows  
now defined, draft hope.  
This subtle light is marked by a field  
of freshly mown grass sweet  
with the necessary humus of decay  
and, fragrant and revealing, awakens me  
to the earthiness of friendship.

And light returns me  
– it is the surprise of grace –  
to the quiet dark where love is born,  
to the Friendship that can't be fully told  
but is more than felt or known;  
at last, in the stillness of your Presence  
– after tagging faith's shape for now –  
I am no more confined, and without bounds,  
am truly freed by the limits of Love.

Kevin Dobbyn fms  
Thursday's child,  
01.02.01

### ***Aphrodite!***

*You were sent by God once.  
When you came,  
We whose souls were always one,  
Remembered the joy of creation.*

*Now look at you!  
Narcissus at best!  
Trampled under those who,  
nameless,  
clothed in suits of profit,  
would make you pay for plastic breasts!*

Susan Frykberg

***In the dark***  
winter sweet  
assaults guests  
universe  
of yellow  
star-spangled  
tiny buds

Jane Simpson

# Kate has stopped working

*Paul Andrews is a Jesuit priest and psychotherapist  
working with young people in Dublin*

Kate's mother looked for help on the grounds that in the last two years, her affectionate and clever twelve-year-old had given up working at school, though she was still as lively as ever. Between that and her husband's drinking, mother was at her wit's end.

Part of her knew that the two belonged together. Ian's drinking and Kate's nose-dive at school. She was tempted to try all the remedies that had nothing to do with Kate's problem: test her eyes and her ears, test her for allergies and watch her diet, have her 'assessed', set up weekly contact with her teacher, use rewards or punishments for schoolwork, sit beside her at homework, get her extra help, give her a quieter place for homework, tell her off at home for idling at school, buy books on study habits, talk about changing school, or changing to another teacher, threaten her with boarding school, etc. As she tried the remedies which implied that Kate was to blame, she knew that the real problem was outside Kate.

Ian's drinking habits had changed in the last two years. Under stress at work, he began to go for a drink on the way home, and gradually this had taken over his evenings. He could not see, but his wife could, that his life was becoming unmanageable.

He was powerless over alcohol. He was lying on in bed in the morning, looking for an early drink to clear his sore head, grumpy at breakfast and at work, sometimes late for work, no longer interested in the small problems of the family, defensive about his evenings, ingenious in thinking of excuses for having a drink, prickly about any suggestion that he had a problem.

At the same time he was keeping up some appearances, fairly faithful to his

St Vincent de Paul meetings, though they always ended in time for a jar; on good terms with the parish priest, but with a garrulous affability that his wife knew was false.

Alcoholics Anonymous have charted the pattern clearly but Kate could not see any pattern. She could see that the father she loved, who was devoted to her, and reliable, was no longer reliable or devoted. He was always making excuses for not going to functions like the concert where she might be singing – that would interfere with his evening's drinking, though he did not give that excuse.

He could still be his old funny self in the evening before he went out – he was in good form at the prospect – but there was a false note about it. When sober, he was mawkishly sentimental, and lavish with promises of treats to come. When full of gin, he was a different person, an ogre, abusive and violent towards his wife, bad-tempered and impatient with the children, shouting, blaming, unpredictable, and, for Kate, terrifying.

His wife was worried enough watching this, seeing the household money disappear in the pub. It was much worse when Kate, her most promising scholar, started to bring home disastrous reports from school. It was tempting to try to solve her school problem as though it had nothing to do with Ian's drinking. That would be missing the cause of her idleness.

Kate was using most of her mental energy below the surface of her mind, worrying about home. She was preoccupied, absent-minded. She still loved to lose herself from her worries with some activity, like a concert, that drew her energies totally. The dull routine of school could not do that.

Could you imagine a Bosnian girl, in a Muslim town under Serbian bombardment, settling down to learn irregular verbs or tackle maths problems, as the bombs crash around her and her homeland is destroyed? The underlying fear absorbs all her energies.

Kate's anxiety was like that. At some level she knew her world was coming apart. She could not confront her father, because she had not the evidence, but she knew she had somehow lost him. She saw her mother's stress and found her short-tempered. Because mother seemed to blame her for bad work, she blamed herself.

What could be done? The root of the trouble was Ian's destructive, out-of-hand drinking, and that would not change till he acknowledged it. He needed help in achieving this: help from family, friends, priests, business colleagues, AA or other; above all, as AA constantly stress, help from God who is our strength when we are weakest. Even then the job was only beginning; Ian had to work at his sobriety even harder than at his drinking.

If mother had gone to Kate for comfort and support against Ian, she would put her in the uncomfortable position of being an ally against her father. What she needed was to share mother's recognition of where the problem lay, stated not in anger but in love; and to have some hope of remedy.

Children of alcoholics suffer from a terrible isolation, and from anxiety at the sudden changes of mood in someone they love. This is not a rare experience. Kate's mother identified her problem, not in Kate's working habits, but in Ian's drinking habits. Once that was faced, she could shed her guilt and start to cope. ■



## A scholarly look at contemporary Christian marriage

*Becoming Married: Towards a theology of marriage from a woman's perspective*

By Patricia Mullins

St Pauls Publications NSW

Price: \$24.95 (Aust.)

**Review: Colleen Costello**

Eileen Silbermann's *The Savage Sacrament: A theology of marriage after American feminism*, published in 1983, had a significant impact on me. Confusion and guilt were replaced by resentment and sadness, with the realisation that my story was not unique and that neither we (my husband and I) nor God owned our marriage of 30 years. The church with its absolutes and theologies (which ignored the key considerations of the lived experiences of those most intimately concerned) owned the Catholic marriage.

Always a journey, marriage is an all-embracing experience. This book (17 years on) offers a refreshing model with two self-sustaining adults in a relationship flowing with the tension of equal dignity for both partners.

The basis of Patricia Mullins' *Becoming Married* is formed from the dissertation for which she was awarded a PhD in theology in 1988. It is a scholarly text with an impressive bibliography covering the disciplines of psychology, theology and feminist thought, in addition to over 30 Vatican documents. References are supported by the interspersed responses of 279 Australian Catholic married women. If all this suggests a heavy read, don't be put off – the language and concepts are not difficult and will surely resonate with all those endeavouring to experience God and discern life-giving options in the marriage relationship. The text explores several of the interlocking aspects of marriage, paying particular attention to the situation of women.

Beginning at *Genesis*, the author illustrates how tradition of Scripture and church has been used to structure the life of women in marriage. In its 2,000-year journey the church has been slow in advancing its attitude. Patrilineal theology has espoused a model of marriage where the woman finds fulfilment in her service of others.



### Book Reviews

The need for self-sacrifice has been a primary teaching.

Church rhetoric has moved on from insisting on the primacy of the husband and subjection of the wife (Pius XI, 1930) to mutuality and complementarity of the couple (John Paul II, 1988). The partner mutuality of contemporary Catholic teaching is founded on the concept of complementarity, with women in their "primacy of love and self-giving" complementing the needs of men.

The expectation that women will caretaker the relationship for the sake of harmony can result in a state of guilt and confusion with little sense of self-hood, prompting Mullins to postulate that Catholic marriage theology constructs a God who discourages self-nurturing.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) describes a married couple in a "unity beyond union in one flesh which leads to forming one heart and soul". Patricia Mullins argues that marriage as ultimate unity denies the value of difference, and reinforces the inherent power and authority of one (party) over the other. Love and intimacy require self-awareness and self-affirmation, whereas a relationship based on dominance and dependency prohibits a clear sense of self.

Acknowledging that sexual intercourse, even in marriage, has not had 'good press' in spiritual circles, Mullins devotes a substantial section to this, and in so doing promotes the move towards a spirituality and a theology of sexual intercourse, based on the concept of mutuality through which God is perceived and experienced. Sexuality is central to being human, and whereas both sexuality and humanity have been promoted as opposed to Godness, the author claims that it is only in celebrating our sexuality that we can fully embrace being human.

Wherever the conjugality of marriage is addressed in statements from the Catholic hierarchy, it is coupled with the imperative to procreate. Where Catholic teaching insists that the unitive and procreative significance of the marriage act be not broken, conflict between these two values is the common experience of most Catholic couples. Mullins suggests that the assumption that an outside body (church) is better able to regulate the moral decisions of two adults committed to love and receive children, is to treat them as children and is patriarchal in the extreme. Today, it is acceptable for all people in the church to interpret Scripture from differing perspectives, in the light of life experience and the conviction of inner truth.

Mullins suggests that, surely then, the documents of the Papal magisterium are also open to interpretation. These insist that every act of sexual intercourse "be open to the transmission of life" – life-giving. 'Life-giving' can surely be interpreted as a profound affirmation of the dignity of the human person – life-giving – and therefore unitive with life interpreted more broadly than merely biological. Sexual relations between two self-sustaining adults invite growth and enrichment of each person and are, accordingly, life-giving.

The model of marriage offered focuses on the couple relationship. Through children and the community, the journey is extended beyond the couple relationship. Held up for consideration is the paradigm shift from the vision of marriage as a giving of one's life to another (in reality, more often the woman's situation) to marriage as an acceptance of one's vocation entered into, and lived out, in sexual encounter with a sense of self-actualisation. A marriage relationship offers the possibility of a deep encounter with life and with God. There are as many different ways of living marriage as there are many ways of being with God. The potential of marriage exists in the desire and ability of both partners to journey across time and become married.

This book is a must for those prepared to risk the journey and those in pastoral work who wish to try and gain an appreciation of women's reality ■

## The 'compassionate' philosophy behind George W Bush

*Compassionate Conservatism*

by Marvin Olasky

Freedom Press, 208 pages plus appendices

Review: Jim Elliston

Shortly after his inauguration President George W. Bush established the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Initiatives. This was the first of several steps to introduce *Compassionate Conservatism*, promised in a speech given in July 1999. The framework of his policy had been worked out over the previous five months by a group of scholars and policy analysts that included the author.

Writing in a folksy style, journalism professor Olasky outlines six themes, reinforced with four chapters of practical examples encountered on a tour with his 14-year-old son, and lists ten requirements to ensure successful implementation.

He gives excellent advice on step-by-step implementation and evaluation of programmes at the local level, and argues convincingly that the Constitution allows for a religiously neutral or secular state, whereas the current interpretation is secularist. But he has no problem with state funding for groups that use religion as a condition for help.

Olasky discerns the following mind-sets: liberals (= the state alone has responsibility), social Darwinians (= idleness and other forms of vicious indulgences are hereditary, so let Nature take its course), social workers (= it is the system alone that produces the poor), and conservatives (= teach individual responsibility, get government out of our lives). Olasky proposes a middle way, allowing people to direct a portion of personal tax to a chosen charity. Bolstered by reduced bureaucracy and a strong work ethic - conservative and free-market ideals - he (and Bush) look to a culture change regarding government action.

This is a very important book (U.K. Opposition leader William Hague has promised a Conservative government will move in a roughly similar direction), but it is superficial with regard to social analysis and theology. Olasky rightly laments the decline of social capital (the values citizens possess and the linkages we make through churches, civic clubs, fraternal organizations etc) but ignores the part played by the Friedmanite economic system, which values people only by their economic usefulness.

The theological themes are twofold. The first amounts to: God, who through faith, can change the hardest of hearts. The second is a claim that *Compassionate Conservatism* dates from earliest

Jewish and Christian times, but religious vows of poverty eventually resulted in idleness and indiscriminate charity, which encouraged dependence. Thanks to Luther and Calvin the encouragement of business was seen as a compassionate act. A third Reformation is needed.

The author is a Senior Fellow of, and the enterprise was funded by, the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Freedom. When in N.Z. as a guest of the Business Roundtable the Institute's founder (1990), Father Robert Sirico, said churchmen have no right to meddle in business affairs for the core role of churches is to organise community groups to meet the needs of the poor thus reducing them to organs of the state.

Expect aspects of *Compassionate Conservatism* to appear in the policies of certain political parties, with

## The best place on earth

*Marralameda: the best place on earth 1989 to 1999*

By Chris Watkins

Available from 17 Mottram St, Christchurch  
Price \$10.00

Review Michael Hill IC

This 50 page booklet describes the history of one of Christchurch city's little miracles, itself a wonderful story of faith. Marralameda is a community of intellectually disabled people, the extended family of Anne-Marie and Roger Pike. Its inspiration came from the visit to Christchurch in 1977 of the famous French Canadian Catholic layman, Jean Vanier, founder of l'Arche.

But the story really goes back a lot further to the family home of Anne-Marie in the early 70s. She grew up in a home with an ever-open door, and from an early age she became used to sharing her home and her parents with the children whom they fostered. When her father died in 1971, Anne Marie with her newly-wed husband Roger, determined to continue supporting her widowed mother in her fostering work. So they bought the house next door.

Vanier's visit opened for the Pikes a wider horizon of hope. They became involved in the *Faith and Light* movement, an offshoot of l'Arche, which catered for the faith needs of disabled people.

At last in 1989 Marralameda was born when they officially took in their first two residents, Ann Miller and Margaret Bowring, both sufferers from Down Syndrome. Since then the story has been of steady growth - from a community of two to 18, from one suburban house to a cluster of five.

The booklet tells the story and records the names and events of the ten year history. But it also breathes for the reader the spirit of Marralameda. Anne-Marie and Roger and their many helpers have tried to live the gospel imperative of loving and caring for people whom the world tends to sideline. Their ideal is beautifully summed up in a sentence from their 'Philosophy statement': *There is no hierarchy of importance at Marralameda. Each person in the community is accepted as they are and valued for who they are; their gift is precious to the community. Each person is accepted as the 'light of Christ'.*

A truly inspiring book - it tells of the 'good news' in action. ■

## Fruitful commentary on John of the Cross

*John of the Cross*  
*Doctor of Light and Love*  
by Kieran Kavanaugh  
The Crossroad Publishing Co  
**Review: Hilary Swanson, RSM**

The author admits that it takes a certain amount of daring to write a commentary on a writer as rich and profound as St John of the Cross. But Kieran Kavanaugh has the skill and the learning to dare such a work. He spent many years editing and translating John's works from the original Spanish into English. He also has the added advantage of being able to interpret the Saint's writings against a background of Carmelite tradition.

The first chapter, "A Troubadour of Divine Love," focuses in an informative

yet relaxed style on John's life, with some interesting facts not usually known. I was astonished to learn that he had travelled an estimated 16,000 miles in his lifetime. Travels that involved not only the founding of monasteries but also the basic work of constructing them. Also, that the first edition of John's writings was in 1618, but the Spiritual Canticle had to be excluded since it would have appeared like a disguised commentary on the Song of Songs.

The three major poems are quoted and commented on, intermingled with other lesser known poems, which at first, I found a little confusing. I was expecting only one poem to be discussed at a time, but the author has introduced a more challenging approach. Topics on aridity,

initial contemplation, quietism, the will and the emotions and many others are commented on, using extracts from *The Ascent*, *The Dark Night* and *The Living Flame* as well as the minor poems. There appears to be a natural crossing over and dipping into all of these works without diluting the message.

An interesting feature of the book has been the finding of some lesser known poems. *The Romances*, an incredible poem in itself, deals with an imagined dialogue taking place in the heart of the Trinity.

The print throughout is clear and even. Although John's words are indented and bolder, it is not a format that makes for difficult reading. This is not a book for a *John of the Cross* beginner, but for those who have already been introduced to his teaching and who wish to further their appreciation of his spiritual doctrine. ■

## Being aware of God in daily living

*Silence on Fire*  
by William Shannon  
The Crossroad Publishing Co  
Price: \$49.00  
**Review: Elisabeth Nicholson**

William Shannon is a Merton scholar, a teacher of theology and a priest. He is also a man of prayer and has a great desire to share his understanding with others.

What he terms the prayer of awareness is his particular field. Not quite contemplation (which Shannon holds to be a special gift from God, though one given more often and more readily than we might expect) but something which disposes to contemplation - something for those on the path to contemplation.

Most of us, he maintains, are victims of spiritual apartheid, we separate God and ourselves living our real lives, into different compartments. What the prayer of awareness does is open us up to what already exists, the constant presence of

God in whom we live and move and have our being. It is not a prayer of thinking about or talking to. Awareness or attentiveness, says Shannon, reduces the distance between me and what I am aware of.

This awareness of God comes from and flows into awareness of people and of all creation. One of the important ways to dispose oneself for this type of prayer is to live in the now, focussed on the present moment, whether one is washing dishes, walking, or listening to a friend, to do it fully and with total awareness.

All this sounds anything but simple, and I confess that at times I found this book quite difficult to grasp, at other times it seemed to take too long explaining something very basic and I am still not quite sure just what audience the author had in mind.

However, that said, I am extremely glad I read this book, it has made a real

difference to my own prayer. It may at times seem a little pedantic but I believe it is very much worthwhile. ■

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## Giving the People's Bank a fair go

Jim Anderton's kiwi bank is getting the reluctant approval of the Labour Party and should be given serious consideration by New Zealanders. The idea carries a lot of historical baggage which clouds the issue. But behind all the political grand-standing, the implications of a fully New Zealand owned bank are worth considering.

In the mid 80's, *The Bank of New Zealand* fuelled the speculative frenzy which followed the Douglas/Prebble financial deregulation. Corporate failures, many involving BNZ loans, led to the 1987 share market crash. The BNZ required two government bail-outs, \$600 million by Labour in 1989 and \$720 million by National in 1990. The innate fear of another bank collapse raises the question again as to whether the state should be a banker. In 1988, Jim Anderton resigned from the Labour Party in protest at the privatisation of the BNZ and formed the New Labour party which was based on old Labour principles.

The new bank would compete with other banks for customers and profits. What is so bad about that? It is worth remembering the nationwide protests at bank closures, the increase in charges and the massive profits of foreign-owned banks (\$1.6 billion in 1999). These led to the idea of trying to roll back the sale of New Zealand's assets and to retain profits in New Zealand. The funding of \$80 million to set up the new bank seems inadequate. *NZ Post*, a very successful SOE, will need all of this just to bring its outlets up to banking standards of safety and to install the necessary technical equipment.

The whole affair has very significant political overtones. The Alliance, by proposing the new bank, is pulling the Labour Party away from the centre. The days of privatisation and the selling of assets are over. The idea is a reversal of a decade of right wing market

### Crosscurrents

John Honoré

fundamentalism and an admission that a fairer society can only be built on a more equitable share of the financial cake.

The reluctance of Labour to accept Jim Anderton's proposal is due to political pragmatism. Labour is high in the polls. It does not have to concede too much to its coalition partner and would prefer to be without the risk of a new bank. Jim Anderton seems to be the con-science of Labour. His proposal is pure left wing ideology. MMP is alive and well. I hope New Zealanders will consider a 'people's bank' with genuine interest and objectivity. It could be worth the effort.

### TVNZ backs down

TVNZ has reinstated the BBC World Service, after summarily deciding to axe it and replace this excellent world class programme with infomercials and repeats. A strong public outcry has forced a retraction.

This back-down relates to some very important aspects of public broadcasting, namely, quality and identity. The outcry is an indictment of the quality of TVNZ's news presentation, which has no depth or coverage of any consequence, and is presented in small 'sound-bites' for the benefit of advertisers.

The presenters, some of them grossly overpaid, have about as much appeal as Lockwood Smith. There is a lack of social comment, no political debate (because that might bite the hand that feeds them) and an emphasis on lurid petty affairs which is the result of the dumbing-down of TV news. Therefore

viewers, with recorders, depend on the overseas content of TV to keep themselves informed.

The government has talked to TVNZ about having less advertising but it still demands the dividends which TVNZ supplies to the tune of over \$30 million a year. The accountants and the economists in the bureaucracy dominate public service and programming. In this latest case, the BBC was considered too expensive. It was cutting into profits, so out it went.

Good TV news coverage is secondary to dividends. It is obvious that TVNZ management has no idea of its public obligation and totally underestimates the intelligence of viewers. It is hamstrung by government ambivalence and as a consequence, it lacks a positive identity. Is TVNZ a profit making SOE or is it a public service? It is time somebody decided one way or another.

### A bargain for who?

"The Warehouse – where everybody gets a bargain". I sometimes wonder about competition. Darwin proved that natural selection can destroy life in competitive struggles. There is something Darwinian in the world of business where deregulation and market forces lead to closures and the survival of the few. 1400 people are losing their jobs at Deka, K Mart stores are in trouble, and no one would consider starting a business remotely near a Warehouse store.

A large amount of Warehouse stock comes from China, manufactured by an unregulated, underpaid labour force, making it impossible for New Zealanders to compete. A hugely successful enterprise now dominates the market. Ironically, we are back to where we started. There is no competition. The other part of the Darwinian theory is that in an interdependent family, members survive by adapting to each other. From a business point of view, 1400 people have not survived. I sometimes wonder whether I am really getting a bargain at the Warehouse. ■

## Decade to Overcome Violence

**A** bold idea that began at the WCC's Eighth Assembly in Harare, Zimbabwe in December 1998 has become a reality. Sunday 4 February 2001 saw the formal launch in Berlin of The Decade to Overcome Violence: Churches seeking Reconciliation and Peace. Beginning with a service of worship in the bomb-scarred Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, and concluding with a candle-lit procession to the Brandenburg Gate, the WCC's Central Committee pledged to work together to end violence and build peace.

A message from the WCC Central Committee stated, "We gather at the end of one violent century to generate hope for the new one we enter. We come together from the four corners of the earth aware of the urgent need to overcome violence that pervades our lives, our communities, our world and the whole created order. We launch this decade in response to a deep yearning among our peoples to build lasting peace grounded in justice."

At the church service that began the day the group committed itself to work for a culture of non-violence and to overcome the violence of people's lives

as well as challenge all the separations of race, gender, age or culture, striving for justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

The launch then turned to the House of World Cultures, where throughout the afternoon displays, music, dance, theatre and speeches were featured.

Jose Ramos-Horta from East Timor described poverty as one of the main sources of the world's violence. He called for further effort to write off the debt of the poorest nations and went on to say, "If the rich and not-so-rich who manufacture weapons were to stop selling them to the poor countries, and the leaders of the poor countries, instead of dreaming that with weapons they can stay in power, stop wasting money on weapons and divert it to education, or to provide clean water to the people, yes in ten years from now this will be a much better world."

The *Decade to Overcome Violence* is:

- an opportunity affirm the unity of all God's people and commit ourselves to reconciliation.
- a call to explore ways to overcome the spirit, logic and practice of violence.

- a forum to work together for a world of peace.
- a time to analyse and expose violence and to act against it.

An idea that will take shape through the involvement of individuals, groups, communities and organisations.

**P**rior to the launch of the decade an extensive discussion on issues of overcoming violence took place in a plenary session of the WCC's Central Committee.

Aram I (Catholicos of Cilicia) moderator of the WCC's Central Committee, had earlier caused a stir when stating that 'violence as a last resort' is an option that cannot be rejected. He stated that the Bible is ambiguous about violence and non-violence. His view that in some circumstances violence may be justifiable proved controversial, and was challenged by some Central Committee members.

A public issues paper on the use of armed force in support of humanitarian purposes met with a mixed response. Bishop Aldo Etchegoyen (Methodist, Argentina), said there may be good reasons for an armed humanitarian intervention, but in the end it can bring violation of human rights. "Military intervention for good reasons does not help reconciliation and peace", he said. ■

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## Housing the needy

The housing policies of this government have given people hope – especially returning to income-related rents for state houses. Likewise their latest initiative, the *Healthy Housing* project. Because poor families could not afford rents this led to overcrowding, and that affects people's health adversely. The Otara Health Group discovered a correlation between adult overcrowding and meningococcal disease. They also noticed an increased incidence of rheumatic fever and tuberculosis.

The government took note of these health reports. This new scheme enables existing houses to be enlarged and be better ventilated. The intention is to rebuild 250 houses in South Auckland alone. I know one family with five children living in a two-bedroom house: the boys in one room, the wife and the

girls in another, and the father sleeps on the living room floor. It was all they could afford and it was near school.

Extending a house like that will give them four bedrooms and two bathrooms. Moreover they will pay exactly the same rent. They will pay no more than a quarter of the family income, whereas previously it was what the market dictated. Previously, rents had risen beyond the reach of poor families because of the market.

There are still some having to put up with these high rents in privately owned rental housing. But at least these too have some hope of getting a state house. The system of allocation for those waiting ensures that those in serious need can expect to be in a house within a couple of months. When nearly all the families are housed and have enough money to

live on, they can start to get on with their lives happily. It all adds to social stability – especially in communities where 'family' is so important. Where there is over-crowding, people move more frequently round their extended family. This makes the social structure unstable and seriously affects children's education.

To government I would say: persevere on the track you are on at present, charging income-related rents, building more houses; but also listening to what communities are asking and offering.

To the church I would say: we appreciate the charitable support provided. But we would like to see the church fighting more for justice. We should be ashamed that in a prosperous country we have allowed poverty and ill housing to become the norm for a considerable section of the community. ■

*Anne Hurley*

Anne Hurley is a Sister of Mercy working in Wiri, South Auckland

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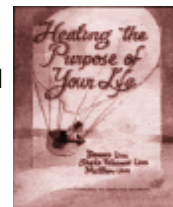
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