

Tui Motu

InterIslands

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Pentecost

the irrepressible Spirit

Joey often pops in on his walks around the city, for tea and a chat about life and religion. Mid-afternoon he caught me revelling in the May design, the hot pink cover and everything fitting in. He began describing his experiences of God, scrambling for words in his pentecostal vocabulary before succumbing to images, gestures, and finally the silence of a mystic — there weren't enough words. His telling tingled with his memory of "thick presence", "fantastic light" and "of being caught up" into a oneness of goodness and love. Those moments had erupted through his illness and still carry him through his ups and downs.

This is the living Spirit pouring out, energising as differentiation, autopoiesis and communion in the evolving universe, as Teilhard de Chardin discovered, and breathing in the variety, uniqueness and community of our domestic part of the world. As Joey found when running out of words to portray his experiences, as Mike Riddell reminds us in his article "The Dangerous God" and as our hot pink cover shows — prose

only partly expresses the experience and mission of the Spirit. We find ourselves pushed towards awe, surprise, delight, dancing, colour, music and poetry in Spirited choreography.

We learnt to recite the seven gifts of the Spirit over our porridge as children but as catechism answers they never held the allure of the night sky, the abandon of ecstasy or the desolation of absence. Nor did they have the feel of kindness, the support of advice or the generosity of faithfulness. They changed from cardboard to real through experiences like Joey's, through attentiveness in the day-to-day, through relationships and through starkness and suffering. Every aspects of our lives is grist for the Spirit as Joy Cowley writes in "Breath, Fire, Love" and we are connected to every living thing in the cosmic web of love as Ilia Delio suggests in "Mango".

Two issues invite our attention in this Pentecost edition. The first is the issue of wages. John Ryall explains why a living wage is necessary and outlines the work of the Living Wage Movement in New Zealand and elsewhere. And Ted

Richards describes his experience of work in his first jobs out of school.

The second issue is the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement which New Zealand, Australia and 10 other countries are negotiating. While the goals were to relate in a neighbourly way around trade, the secrecy now surrounding the negotiations and the details being leaked are causes for alarm. Joshua Freeman outlines how TPP would allow drug companies to hamstring the Government's decision for our health system. Cecily McNeill persuades that this agreement is no good for our country. What would happen if we didn't sign the agreement? Jane Kelsey, Professor of Law at The University of Auckland responded to that question recently saying: "Nothing would happen to us. We would be free to pursue trade and to make our own decisions as now."

This is a taste of the Pentecost edition. Enjoy reading it through to our Team's last words of blessing. ■



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inspired by our young

Rob Ritchie

I spent a week with a group of young people “wwoofing” (volunteer work — associated with the world wide organic farming movement) on a *whānau*, extended family, initiative focussed on restoring an old hospital facility built on *whānau* land. As *kaitiaki*, guardians of the land, their dream is to create a “*puna*”, a spring, where *whānau* (Māori and Pākehā) can gather, rest a while and “drink some good water”.

At the end of the week the young people offered me a ride home, some four hours away. It was an unforgettable trip. We discussed most of the things which really matter: music, comedy, faith, culture and identity.

Reflecting on how they'd lived and worked alongside the *whānau* I believe I witnessed a Treaty partnership that really begins with the idea of *whanaungatanga*, *manaaki* and *awhi*. This simply means a mutual sense of belonging, sharing and caring for each other on life's journey.

The movement towards our bicultural future seems hopeful. This group of young people represents a generation well acquainted with the Treaty of Waitangi — something unheard of half a century ago. Thanks to the schools, families and church

Pākehā chefs and volunteers and a concert by professional and amateur musicians and dance performers.

For some Pākehā who had lived in the area for 25 years and longer it was their first visit to the marae and their first event hosted by Māori. For some



Haka-Powhiri by Andrea Eve Hopkins. [Used with permission]

communities in which they were raised, their familiarity with Māori culture was obvious to everyone sharing in the community venture.

The same *whānau* hosted a Matariki celebration (Māori New Year) on their local marae. It included *pōwhiri* a traditional welcome, an explanation of the marae, a display of traditional artefacts and crafts, a twelve course finger-food dinner provided by

Māori it was the first time Pākehā had catered for them on their marae.

Surely such expressions of relationship and partnership are welcomed and needed. Then those on both sides of the Treaty will move comfortably in each other's worlds. ■

Rob Ritchie is retired at Hokitika and trying to renovate his home to conform to tikanga Māori.



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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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God-image could exclude people

I read with interest Fr Max Palmer's letter re attitude changes for the better (March, 2015).

I note he did not mention his neighbour's (Australia's) attitude to the dignity of their human people. Certainly in 1967 Australian Aborigines were at last regarded as "people" and had to assume the human mantle of being considered as being created and fashioned in the image and likeness of God! (Bit hard to do immediately when you have never been considered a "person"!)

I wonder if our attitude that we are created in the image and likeness of God, (i.e. usually white, middle class, clean, literate and generally "nice"), has contributed to the way we have and are treating people who don't come up to our image of God? Perhaps we have made God into our image and likeness.

Margaret White, *Yandina, QLD*

hopeful yearnings

In appreciation of the Thomas Merton and peace articles in the recent *Tui Motu*:

If just half the people
who said
"I will" — did.
The world
A paradise
indeed
T'would be
compassion
kindness
a living force of goodness
to envelop the globe
& rain from heaven
peace without end.
Amen

Bronwen Muir, *Waiheke Island*

general deported

Tui Motu readers will have been heartened by news that the beatification of Archbishop Oscar Romero, murdered in El Salvador in 1980 by right-wing government agents, is progressing. Wendy Kissel (*TM*, April 2015) is not alone in recognising how important this will be for the church in El Salvador and indeed for all Catholics

who have enthusiastically embraced the gospel challenge of making an option for the poor.

Wendy's thoughtful article coincided with the news that former El Salvadorian general, Eugenio Vides Casanova, has been deported from the United States to El Salvador. The general has been linked to the murder of three American Catholic sisters and one Catholic laywoman in December 1980, and although El Salvadorian amnesty laws mean that he will not be tried for his crimes against the people, it is good that the Obama administration is reversing the protection afforded such men by previous American governments.

Susan Smith, *Onerahi, Whangarei*

getting out of poverty

Pope Francis — Anna Speaking was a wonderful, open honest letter to Pope Francis. On the paragraph "questionable biology" I was reminded of Melinda Gates, one of the world's great philanthropists, who has started clinics for women all over the world on birth control. She thinks, and I totally agree with her, that too many people cause problems on planet Earth. The main one being poverty! Poverty is extreme for the poorest people — those in Africa being among the worst. Yet they have leaders who send their children to schools in England and America and have holiday homes in Switzerland. What are they doing to help their own people? They have plenty of money! The western world is always being asked to give more. Everyone I know is giving as much as they can in their time and money, and then some. Unfortunately, unless we break through very old religious and patriarchal cultural dogma and the shocking treatment of women in over half the world, nothing is going to change. It is always the women and children who suffer most.

Susan Lawrence, *Auckland*

A bit lost in France

Thank you Roger Collins, Dunedin, for noting the geographical slips in Colleen O'Sullivan's article (March 2015). Yes, Thomas Merton was born in Prades, almost 1000 km from Picardy. — Editor

letters to the editor

We welcome comment, discussion, argument, debate. But please keep letters under 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge, while not changing the meaning.

We do not publish anonymous letters except in exceptional circumstances. Response articles (up to a page) are welcome — but please, by negotiation.

time to act on the message

Elizabeth Mackie's guest editorial in the April issue I found to be a splendid one focusing poignantly on the plight of the homeless in Iraq. The fourfold message from the Iraqi people is without doubt a sad and plaintive cry from the collective hearts of these displaced persons who are living in shocking conditions which are so foreign to us who live in a stable and peaceful country that enjoys a high standard of living. As the editorial says we should listen attentively to these voices of the displaced which is the first step on the way to helping them. The next step is to take up in part, or in whole, the suggestions set out in their message. One's heart goes out to these suffering people who are so deserving of our assistance. The challenge is there to our consciences to do something, however small, to ease the plight of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank you Elizabeth for drawing our attention to the suffering of those innocent victims in Iraq. The ball is now clearly in our court!

John N. Vincent, *Dunedin*

closure of mana recovery

Trish McBride

Last year new mental health strategies led to Capital and Coast District Health Board axing their funding to a number of mental health-related agencies including Mana Recovery, an award-winning charitable trust. Mana Recovery has supported the rehabilitation of people with mental health issues since 1996. During Passiontide this year I accompanied people who were living the way of the Cross knowing that their work-place, Mana Recovery, was going out of existence.

Mana Recovery began when the long-stay wards at Porirua Psychiatric Hospital closed. It developed a work-skills programme around light assembly work and recycling of plastic and paper. There were also literacy, life-skills and art lessons which culminated in an amazing exhibition in 2011. Some trainees recovered slowly and moved on to independent employment. Many couldn't. Some recovered sufficiently to become supported staff in paid jobs within the organisation. They were then "off the benefit", "normal", and freed from the hassles of dealing with WINZ.

As workplace chaplain to Mana Recovery I became accepted as someone who would listen, which proved useful for staff and trainees. I had the easy job. The skilled staff managed the day-to-day wellbeing of the clients, including any challenging behaviours. Mine has been a profound journey of discovering the wisdom, courage, generosity, community and compassion that the trainees and supported staff have amongst themselves. Some people have been "in the system" for 30 years. They know one another as whānau, family. I recognised that the horrific childhood experiences of many had triggered their illness, violence, and devastating marginalisation.

One told me he'd been introduced to glue sniffing aged seven, and since then he'd called his glue bag "my mummy". Another worked hard on the recycling, because "it keeps the sea cleaner and saves the fishes". Others, sent as intellectually disabled little boys to a Catholic institution, were sexually abused there. They were still having nightmares 40 years later. Some of the women had been sexually abused too — in and out of hospital. And many more.

Specifically spiritual conversations happened only if initiated by a trainee. When

there was a death, we would have a *karakia*, prayer time, for that person and the others who'd gone before and for comfort for those who were left. They'd wonder who would be next. They knew they were vulnerable. They probably didn't know that NZ statistics indicate mental health clients have 15 years lower life expectancy than the general population.

Requests for a *karakia* time grew more regular till we met weekly. After my brief prayer focussing on God's unconditional love for each one, they could speak their own prayers. It was always moving. Prayers for basic and deep needs, for families, for "people worse off than us". A short discussion followed, on topics like how having friends helped, and what having Jesus for a friend might mean. Bonds grew between those who attended. It could be challenging: "My pastor says I have a demon of schizophrenia. Will you exorcise me?" My reply: "I can't do that, sorry, but I can pray for peace and healing for you." "I want to say the Catholic prayers, not the Protestant prayers ... Hail Mary, full of grace ..." That took ecumenical tact!

Now the training and the lawn-mowing units have closed for good. Trash Palace, Mana Recovery's recycling shop where more of the people are employed, closed in April. There may be some good-hearted employers out there who can give supported employment to people who can work hard but have variable health. There is a future, but it's uncertain and unforeseeable. I'd spoken of Easter hope for the new, the unexpected, emphasising that people are never redundant, only positions.

A letter in the *Dominion Post* in response to the closure announcement made the point: "Another blow for the people on struggle street who deserve as much support as possible. How many 'golden handshakes' to departing health board CEOs could have been better directed to helping the real people in our society. The 'hard knocks' these people experience through life just keep on knocking."

Ongoing discussions with Porirua City Council and other agencies now offer a glimmer of hope that a new operator can be found for Trash Palace, but if, when, and with jobs for how many affected staff, are all still unknown. May these discussions be Spirit-fired! ■



the dangerous God

Mike Riddell suggests Pentecost is an invitation to be awake to the Spirit in the “entire crescendo of creation”.

Mike Riddell

“When we are alone on a starlit night, when by chance we see the migrating birds in autumn descending on a grove of junipers to rest and eat; when we see children in a moment when they are really children, when we know love in our own hearts; or when, like the Japanese poet, Basho, we hear an old frog land in a quiet pond with a solitary splash — at such times the awakening, the turning inside out of all values, the “newness,” the emptiness and the purity of vision that make themselves evident, all these provide a glimpse of the cosmic dance.” — Thomas Merton

This paean from Thomas Merton reveals the gift of the Spirit to humanity. In Pentecost we celebrate the miraculous opening of eyes (to see tongues of fire) and ears (they heard in their own language). It is the consummation of a long wooing of humanity; the unveiling of the constantly creative and transformative presence of the divine within the world we all inhabit. God is not distant. God is in our midst — “Heaven is with us when you are with us” (James K. Baxter’s *Song to the Holy Spirit*).

As John V. Taylor surmises in his wonderful book *The Go Between God*: “All faith in God is basically a way of ‘seeing the ordinary’ in the light of certain moments of disclosure which have been the gift of the Holy Spirit.” The Spirit — undoubtedly the unitive feminine anima of the Trinity — opens before us the grace-charged splendour of creation. Under her touch, we discover there is nothing mundane: our eyes and ears and hearts are opened to encounter the divine chorus that never ceases.

This pouring out is neither partisan nor restrained. It is a gift to humanity, not one controlled by the church. In reading the story of Pentecost, it is the observers from

every corner of the known world who see and hear. While the church may seek to constrain the Spirit, we know that she blows “inside and outside the fences / you blow where you wish to blow”. Given human attentiveness, we discover with Hopkins that “the world is charged with the grandeur of God”.

**Poets and mystics
teach us to recover
the innocence that
reveals beauty.**

Pentecost is not so much a time to consult theologians or preachers, as to turn to poets and mystics. They teach us anew to recover the innocence that reveals beauty. With Hopkins we can appreciate that “nature is never spent ... because the Holy Ghost over the bent / world broods with warm breast and with ah! bright wings.” Dylan Thomas leads us to understand that “the force that drives the water through the rocks / drives my red blood”.

It is also a season to contemplate how this gift is tarnished and trodden in our midst: “all is seared with trade; bleared, smeared with toil”.

The child’s wonder within us — the ability to truly see, hear, feel — is so soon extinguished by the accumulation of cares. Our senses become numb, our hearts leathery, our imaginations barren. Practicality smothers wonder, timetables rob us of focus, duty excludes awareness. So easily we find ourselves outside creation, staring through a grimy window at a world subdued.

withdrawing

How do we recover the gift of Pentecost? One strategy is withdrawal. It was, after all, when the disciples had drawn aside that they experienced the Spirit. In our complex contemporary lives, it becomes necessary to tune out the static of entertainment in order to hear the pure music of the spheres. The clamouring voices of television, seductive advertising, propaganda, talk-back radio — these asphyxiate any responsiveness within us. We are indeed “amusing ourselves to death”.

In the bright city, it is difficult to see the stars. Light pollution from all our sources of artificial illumination washes out the night sky. But I recall staggering outside in the hills beside the upper Taieri River, beaten down almost to the ground by the



Reflect by Mark Gee. [Used with permission. www.theartofnight.com]

weight of the stars overhead. There was a heaviness of awe that pressed down, an unbearable majesty that invited surrender. The cause of this encounter was simply that for this time, there was nothing between us to mask it.

turning toward

But as well as turning away, there is a turning toward. The turn toward contemplation. Merton describes contemplation thus: “It is that life itself, fully awake, fully active, fully aware that it is alive. It is spiritual wonder. It is spontaneous awe at the sacredness of life, of being. It is a vivid realization of the fact that life and being in us proceed from an invisible, transcendent, and infinitely abundant source.”

Such a turn is not necessarily one of asceticism and monastic isolation. It is the simple renewal of humanity that enables us to notice what is around us. The pause to

examine the structure of a leaf; the listening to a fragile morsel of bird-song; the time to sit with a dying friend; the mischievous sparkle in a child’s eye. These things are neither rare nor expensive. That is the nature of the world — we are surrounded by gratuitous beauty.

Our friends here are the artists. The best of them — painters, musicians, poets, sculptors, dancers — celebrate that beauty in their work, and invite us to look and hear with them. They open portals to understanding, so that we might engage the aesthetic of love. These warriors of gentle revelation remind us that any moment, any place, any person, can become for us the locus of a divine energy that will transform us and bless us.

Our God is one who makes the first move toward us. But God invites, lures, beckons. God does not invade, overwhelm, or compel us. God awaits response, longing for encounter but

never demanding it. Throughout all of our world, all of our history, all of our humanity, the Spirit dances. She teases us into life, love, wonder. There is no compulsion to be aware of her; only the opportunity.

Pentecost is a season of enlivening and renewal. It is an invitation to open our eyes and see; to unblock our ears and hear. The entire crescendo of creation is the womb in which we have our being. Some of us may need to be led outside our walls to participate in it. Possibly it will require those who profess no faith to show us how to embrace the cosmic dance. It could potentially lead to ecstasy. God remains dangerous, unable to be contained. Blessed be the Spirit, who leads us into life. ■

*Mike Riddell is a theologian,
writer and filmmaker
living in Cambridge NZ.*

brother mango and eternal life

Ilia Delio reflects on the death of her cat and her belief that they will be entangled forever in God's embrace.

Ilia Delio OFM

We had to put our beloved cat, Mango to sleep. His illness erupted suddenly. One day he refused to eat and the next day the same. It was so unlike him, an orange tabby who loved a dish of tuna. I took him to the vet and was stunned by the news: Mango had abdominal cancer and would last only another week or two. As we watched our beautiful four-legged companion become progressively weaker, a radical life and death decision was becoming imminent. On a winter Tuesday afternoon, when the sun was setting amidst a cloudy sky, we placed Mango in his carrier and tearfully drove to the Veterinary Clinic. The

they say, is history. Once inside the house, Mango had found himself a real home. He was not a lap cat but a faithful one, almost dog-like. He answered the door, welcomed people inside by rolling over, and showed up like clockwork for his two square meals and midday snack. He liked to sleep in the chapel and often joined us for prayer in the evening. Mango was real presence. And it is his presence that is sorely missed.

do animals have souls?

Recent trends in ecology and theology have prompted questions about non-human life such as, do animals have souls? Do animals go to heaven?

revealed *haecceitas*, his own “thisness.” Scotus placed a great emphasis on the inherent dignity of each and every thing that exists. We often perceive individual things through their accidental individual characteristics (eg, size, shape, colour) but Scotus calls our attention to the very “thisness” of each thing, the very being of the object which makes it itself (“this”) and not something else (not-that).

Haecceitas refers to that positive dimension of every concrete and contingent being which identifies it and makes it worthy of attention; that which can be known only by direct acquaintance and not from consideration of some common nature.



Soul existence is expressed in the language of love. I don't think that Mango loved me in the same way that I loved him, but his presence touched my soul in a way that, sharing life with Mango enriched all of life.

young woman doctor was extremely sympathetic to our impending loss and gave us time to say our “good-byes” to this white and orange ball of fur who stole our hearts.

We rescued Mango eight years ago after we began to notice a small white head with two funny ears bobbing up amidst the ivy in the backyard. One day we put a bowl of milk on the back step and the rest, as

Theologically, we can address these questions as intellectual ones, drawing upon various concepts to sustain our ideas.

Without becoming entangled in theological discourse, I want to say quite clearly, Mango was ensouled. His soul was a core constitutive beingness, a particularity of life that was completely unique, with his own personality and mannerisms. To use the language of Duns Scotus, Mango

If *haecceitas* is that which is known by direct contact, then *haecceitas* best describes “soul.” Thomas Merton wrote: “God utters each living being as a partial thought of himself.” Each living being gives glory to God by its unique, core constitutive being. Soul is what God first utters in every incarnation of the divine Word. Divine love pours itself out in otherness and comes into space-time existence

through the life-giving Spirit. To be a creature of God is to be brought into relationship in such a way that the divine mystery is expressed in each concrete existence. Soul is the mirror of creaturely relatedness that reflects the vitality of divine Love.

brother mango

I did not have to wonder whether or not Mango had a soul; I knew it implicitly by the way he listened to me talk to him, the way he sat on my chair waiting for me to finish writing so he could eat, or simply the way he looked at me — eye to eye — at the start of a day. Soul existence is expressed in the language of love. I don't think Mango loved me in the same way that I loved him, but his very presence touched my soul in a way that, sharing life with Mango enriched all of life. In the spirit of St. Francis who called all creatures "brother" and "sister", we called Mango "brother Mango" and included him as part of our community.

fields of love

Teilhard de Chardin realised that the prime energy of the universe is love, unitive energy that unites centre to centre, generating more being and life. Love is not a thought or an idea. It is the transcendent dimension of life itself, that which reaches out to another, touches the other and is touched by the other. When we do not share in the fields of love; when we do not feel the concrete existence of another, we can easily abstract the other into a number, a data point, or even a joke.

When we recounted Mango's rapid decline to a neighbour, the flippant response was: "Hah! Your first community death!" Without direct contact of core being, without love, a living soul can disappear into the vapours of intellectualism, and we wind up constructing a world of hierarchical ontology, of lesser beings over greater beings, a ladder of existence in which the human alone stands before God. An intellectualising of love can lead to hardness of



Monte Murphy by Nancy Tichborne, and left *On the Watch* by Carolee Clark (www.caroleeclark.com). [Both used with permission.]

heart that can be harder than any rock, as Bonaventure wrote.

love makes us something

The death of Mango has impelled me to reflect on what matters most in life, what breaks the human heart and what nurtures the deep, relational dimension of all life.

"If I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing," St. Paul wrote (1 Cor 13:3).

Love makes us something; it makes us alive and draws us into the dynamism of life, sustaining life's flow despite many layers of sufferings and disappointments. The person who cannot love cannot suffer, for she or he is without grief, without feeling, and indifferent.

If God is love then the vitality of love, even the love of a furry creature, is the dynamic presence of God. Hans Urs von Balthasar spoke of the vulnerability of God's love: "It is God's going forth into the danger and the nothingness of the creation that reveals [God's] heart to be at its origin vulnerable." Out of the fullness of God's self-giving love, God shares in the pain and suffering of the world. God bends low to share our tears out of a heart full of mercy and love — and we are caught up in God's embrace.

entangled forever

Divine love bending low is what gives the *haecceitas* of every creature a mark of eternal endurance. Every creature is born out of the love of God, sustained in love and transformed in love. Every sparrow that falls to the ground is known and loved by God (cf. Mt 10:29); the Spirit of God is present in love to each creature here and now so that all creaturely life shares in cosmic communion. Bonaventure said that Christ has something in common with all creatures and all things are transformed in Christ. Heaven is where all tears and sufferings are wiped away, where each life is opened to the unlimited, divine creative love and a cosmic communion of all created life is realised in the fullness of Christ.

As I reflect on Mango's death, his *haecceitas* and the mystery of love, I have no doubt that his core love-energy will endure. His life has been inscribed on mine; the memory of his life is entangled with my own. My heart grieves for my little brother, my faithful companion, but I believe we are intertwined forever and shall be reunited in God's eternal embrace. ■

Ilia Delio OFM is the Haub Director of Catholic Studies and Visiting Professor at Georgetown University.

breath, fire, love!



Joy Cowley

Breathe! Be aware of your breath! Breathe again, filling your lungs, your body, with life. Then breathe out into the world. Know that the air you exhale contains minute particles of you, gift to the person sitting next to you. Extend that thought! You are sitting on a crowded bus. Everyone on that bus is God's unique creation, a spiritual being on a human journey. Everyone connects by a web of breath whether they are aware of it or not. Our breath is actual touch. Our breath makes us belong to one another.

Now push your thinking further. In both Hebrew *ruah* and Greek *pneuma* the words for breath and wind also mean spirit. So what do you imagine happened to Jesus' last breath on the cross? When he said to his Father, "It is finished!" was he

referring to the end of limitation, imprisonment in a cage of flesh? And did his final sighing breath float away as spirit, growing in freedom until it was a wind-storm released in that upper room?

on fire with love

The timing was exact. On a day that celebrated the law given to Moses, the Spirit of Jesus brought the new law of love. We are told of the way people were changed. That the Spirit of love blew right through them. It set them on fire with love. It was not a timid experience. What they felt, was not the sort of love that was needy or made conditions for itself. This love was a freedom without boundaries.

Their hearts glowed with it, their minds were filled with light, and when they spoke in the language of love, everyone understood and marvelled at how these people had changed. They were radiant with new life.

We all know the "before" and "after" stories. We, who read the gospels with the benefit of hindsight, have experienced frustration with those disciples who just didn't get it during their master's mission on earth. Their egoic vision of Jesus made his teachings seem incomprehensible. They were competitive, judgemental, fearful and generally as thick as bricks. When Jesus needed them most, they ran away. Yet, in

Painting: *Illumination* by Mary Southard csj. [www.MarySouthardArt.com]

the Acts of the Apostles, we see the disciples enduring extraordinary hardship to bring the love of Jesus to the world.

making space

What was the difference? Jesus the Christ was with them in a new way. He was no longer confined to one human body in a set place and time. His Spirit was free to make a home in all who made space for him, and he dramatically transformed lives.

In all who make space for him — it's as simple as that, isn't it? It's about being available. The Spirit of God is transforming lives, and Pentecost is ongoing for us. Like those folk gathered in the upper room, we are present and holding out our lives like cups to receive him. I'm aware that we don't have to "do" anything. Love replaces the old law. Love doesn't demand conditions, nor does it demand that I leave a part of myself behind as payment. It took me a long time to discover this. Knowing Jesus is not about changing myself but simply making space for his Spirit to be at home in me. It is just about making room and allowing Christ Jesus to make that change we call "transcendence".

It has been said that God walks behind us, picking up those parts of our life that we choose to discard. I like that image. The imperfection and failure that I tried to leave behind in my desire to live a "good" life, was, in fact, God's treasure, the true gold of my life story. It was precisely that part of me, and not ideas about my "goodness", which was open to divine growth. Carl Jung put it another way: "Befriend your shadow". Embrace your darkness and watch it turn into the light.

Whatever images we use to describe the process, we come back to Jesus who preached the message of love until it made him so unpopular that "good" people killed him. Those obsessed with their own virtue, he called "whitened sepulchres, tombs painted on the outside but corrupt

within." They seem harsh words until we realise that this judgement was not about the imperfection but the refusal to acknowledge it. Of the woman who wept while anointing Jesus' feet, he said: "She loves much because she has been forgiven much." This woman had not tried to disown her story. She had embraced her shadow and it had turned into the light of divine love.

claiming our whole story

When I join my friends at ongoing Pentecost, I find it helpful to look beyond specific personalities, to the principles involved. After all, the shadow and the light, the slayer and the victim, the Pharisee and the loving giver, are in each of us. It seems to me that Jesus spent more time talking about this, than anything else — the need for me to claim my whole story and bring the entire person to the God who made me. When that understanding moves from my head to my heart, there is profound relief coupled with a deep sense of the oneness of Jesus and our loving Creator. Love does not judge. It is I who judge myself. If I don't claim the wholeness of my story, I will then project that judgement onto other people. In my head, I may even project it onto God.

So how do we reclaim those parts of our story that we felt we needed to discard?

When I reclaim story, I usually find that what I tried to throw away as unworthy, actually contains the voice of God. This is apparent in the recurring patterns in life. The lesson that is ignored or put aside, will come back again and again, each time stronger until I pay attention to it. Whatever that particular lesson is, it will be about growth and it will involve moving away from the shadow of fear and into the light of love.

held in the web of love

I believe that God does indeed, walk behind us, gathering bits of discarded story and giving them back to us. When we accept them as gift, we discover the truth of forgiveness. The woman who anointed Jesus' feet with her tears was able to give him love because God has shown her how to forgive herself.

All of this is my Pentecost journey. I pray in gratitude for the wind of movement and the fire of love, gifts



Muri Beach by Caz Novak [www.caznovak.co.nz]

of Spirit. I pray that my capacity to receive will be increased alongside the capacity to give. I give thanks for those people who have been a presence of Jesus' Spirit for me, and I ask for greater awareness of the connection between breath and Spirit, and the way we are all held in a web of love. ■

*Joy Cowley is an honoured
New Zealand writer and poet.
She is now also engaged
in retreat work.*

the right thing to do

Michael Fitzsimons talks to John Ryall about the Living Wage Movement and why it is moral argument rather than legislative force that is critical to its long-term success.

Michael Fitzsimons

John Ryall, National Secretary of the Service and Food Workers Union, is a champion of the Living Wage movement and is impressed with how it has evolved.

"I think what is different about the history of this movement from other progressive movements is that it doesn't just complain about injustice, it doesn't just say, 'inequality is bad, the government should do something about it'. It is a way of working positively with employers, introducing a concept and working towards implementation. It's saying that inequality is bad for everyone, not just the poor but the rich too, in terms of the society we want.

"Let's start with the concept that the wage you get for work should be enough to give you a standard of living by which you can participate in society. Participation means not having to work 70 hours a week, being able to attend school functions, or your church on Sunday. These are values we've shared a long time in this country, but like the rest of the world we lost them in the 80s."

living wage needed

The Living Wage is currently set at \$19.25 per hour, significantly more than the minimum rate of \$14.75 per hour. The amount has been calculated by researchers from the Family Centre Social Policy Research Unit, and is based on the needs (food, transportation, housing, childcare etc) of a symbolic "average" family with two children and two adults, one adult working full-time and the other half-time. It is the income necessary for real people to lead decent and modest lives and is broadly applicable to all workers.

Being paid the Living Wage would be a big step up for hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders who are currently in the workforce. Figures from 2013 show that 47 per cent of Maori workers and 55 per cent of Pacific Island workers are on less than the Living Wage. Nearly 230,000 young workers are paid below the minimum wage of \$14.75 per hour.

In New Zealand it is accepted that the wages hundreds of thousands of Kiwis earn are insufficient to live on. To varying degrees, successive

governments of different political hues have subsidised low-income wages through tax and benefits transfers. It's an arrangement we have grown accustomed to, despite its not working very well. Even with the top-ups, one in four children in New Zealand deemed to be living in poverty has a fulltime wage-earner in their household.

The Living Wage movement is about changing that depressing reality. The very simple idea that people should be able to live on what they earn is striking a chord, here and internationally.

uptake in UK

In Britain, Citizens UK have mobilised a large amount of support for the Living Wage movement.

Says John: "Citizens UK got thousands and thousands of people active, and the London City Council to adopt it. They got the backing of quite conservative politicians — the current mayor Boris Johnson is a big supporter. He goes out every 12 months to announce the Living Wage increase, surrounded by both corporates and community organisations. Even Prime Minister David Cameron commented that the Living Wage was an idea whose time had come.

"Another big breakthrough in the UK was the London Olympics. Citizens UK has been active for a long time and around half of UK city councils are Living Wage employers. When the Olympics arrived people said they wouldn't support the rebuild of East London unless the Olympic Committee agreed that everyone who is contracted to the Olympics was a Living Wage employer. So they agreed, and you had the Hilton Hotel chain, Holiday Inn, McDonalds, everyone who wanted the London Olympics sticker in their window, all sign up to



A delegation of Wellington faith, community and union leaders in 2013, preparing to present to the Wellington City Council on the need for the Council to become a living wage employer.

it. It's been a struggle to keep some of them maintaining it since, like McDonalds, but it gave the movement a shot in the arm."

movement active in NZ

It's less than three years since the movement began in New Zealand and progress has been encouraging, says John Ryall. "Overseas movements have taken a long time to get where we are at."

Living Wage Aotearoa New Zealand has groups in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. It has a board, with representation from the unions, faith-based groups and community organisations. The Wellington City Council decided last year to pay its directly-employed staff the Living Wage, the Christchurch City Council has asked for a report on the cost of implementing it for their city and the majority of the Auckland city council boards have endorsed it.

Surprisingly perhaps, small businesses are leading the way in becoming Living Wage employers, says John.

"Maybe it's because smaller businesses are closer to the ground, or less corporately driven, with more family involvement. We have groups like Thames publishers in Wellington, a family printing business, and the Mexican restaurant La Boca Loca in Miramar, which I think does it because they like the concept associated with their business. There are a number of other small businesses on the road to it — it's the larger ones we have more difficulties with."

Cereal manufacturer Hubbards has agreed to become a Living Wage employer within three years and the Warehouse, while not an accredited living wage employer, can see the benefits in adopting part of it.

Generally, though, businesses don't want to be leaders, says John. And neither do the politicians who, though they can't argue with the concept, don't see it as their priority.

"Phil O'Reilly, the head of Business NZ, has said that the only responsibility



John Ryall

of business is to pay the market rate and create jobs where possible," says John. "That's their only moral obligation. We think that's a pretty low bar. Overall it has been the church people and faith-based groups that have been the most active around this issue, with the Anglicans being particularly active.

living wage a just wage

"The key concept of a Living Wage corresponds with Catholic ideas about the 'just wage', which has been Catholic social teaching since the *Rerum Novarum* encyclical in 1891. We'd be pretty happy if the Pope and the Bishops Conference here in New Zealand supported it."

Of course churches can feel challenged by the idea of a Living Wage because they operate as business organisations too, and in many cases are not Living Wage employers.

"The Catholic Church runs a whole lot of schools, for example, which are not Living Wage employers. We've

had boards of trustees interested, but only a couple of them have picked up the living wage. We ask all boards to explore the concept. A lot of retirement homes are Catholic, Presbyterian, or Anglican-run, too, and they struggle to pay the Living Wage because of their government funding.

"But becoming part of the movement allows them to work closely with other organisations to build up momentum with funders. If you can't do it now, make it your goal. Get into a moral and ethical discussion with your funders. Churches should be leaders on this issue, and they shouldn't just be quiet because there's a Catholic school that doesn't pay the Living Wage. This issue is a part of Catholic social teaching, and even if not all Catholic organisations are doing it, the idea is out there that it's the right thing to do."

sharing the value

Right now the big drive is to mobilise a lot of people around the moral argument that people should be able to earn a wage that they can live on. The question is whether you want to be a good citizen and a good employer, or not.

"The Living Wage movement is not going to be an industrial arm-wrestle because the people mainly affected by it have no industrial power at all. The purpose of this movement is to create a climate where the concept of the Living Wage and its philosophy can become a shared value.

"We are patient. We'll keep putting it on the agenda and get more and more people involved. Our model here in New Zealand is the anti-nuclear movement. Everyone is proud that we're nuclear-free, but we forget that that started off as active groups of people persuading councils to become nuclear-free cities and towns. People might have thought that Nuclear Free Wellington sign by the airport was pretty stupid, but it got people thinking, and its time came pretty quickly." ■

Michael Fitzsimons is a project manager, publisher and writer for FitzBeck Creative.

Stages of Involvement

1. Organisations sign up to say they agree with the concept of the Living Wage
2. Organisations become an official member of the Living Wage movement. This includes a small fee and allows you to receive news, notice of meetings and upcoming campaigns.
3. Employers go through a process to become accredited Living Wage employers. They receive a registered logo that can be used in company promotions.

my gap year

Ted Richards reflects on his gap year experience in the workplace and finds he has developed significant values.

Ted Richards

I left St Peter's College, Palmerston North, at the end of 2013. Then during 2014 I worked in both the AFFCO freezing works and as a ski lift attendant on Mt Ruapehu earning the money that I needed to go to university in 2015 — and arguably should have earned in a part-time job during high school. The experience gave me a sense of how many other people live. It influenced the way that I believe people of differing socio-economic positions might interact to create a productive and sustainable society and meaningful lives for all citizens.

problem with getting a job

Ironically, my “working year” started with 3 months of unemployment. My first discovery was that work is increasingly hard to come by and more often than not it really comes down to who you know, rather than what you know. During those three months I applied to work at Higgins Contractors, the Internal Revenue Department, a dentist, all the big chain fast food outlets, several cafés and every supermarket and supermarket distribution centre in my city area. Finally, through a family connection I got a job at AFFCO. I found that increasingly, employers require experience. To someone who has never had a job, this made entering the workforce incredibly difficult. My colleagues and I found ourselves in a catch 22; requiring a job to get the experience that would get us a job.

Having at last found work, my year finally “began”. I spent three months at the freezing works before the season ended, and I was laid off over the winter. I had already organised work for this time so I moved to Tongariro National Park and began



Just finished de-icing at Ruapehu

work on the Mt Ruapehu ski fields. I spent three months there and polished off my year with another three months at the freezing works.

focus on money

I noticed two main things during this time. First and foremost was the focus upon money. I quickly realised how lucky I was to be at AFFCO, where the base rate sat at around \$21 per hour. I acknowledge that I was living from home and so was able to pocket sums

that my mates at MacDonald's could only dream of. But a quick glance at my fellow workers and I knew that life still wasn't easy for those who were receiving a “living wage”. However at RAL (Ruapehu Alpine Lifts), where there was no union, we received the minimum wage and two dollars more an hour if we participated in the de-icing of lift structures. At AFFCO, because of the union, there was an obvious concern for people's livelihoods, whereas this was absent at RAL.

focus on working conditions

Secondly, there were huge differences in working conditions. Both were largely physical, tiresome jobs. Work at the meat works was tedious and I was injured several times due to pressures of efficiency and lack of experience. I noticed it wasn't necessarily about danger either. While I actually injured myself more at the meat works, I was at much greater risk of death up the mountain with the real threats of hypothermia and falling from lift structures. The difference in the work environments was the focus. At RAL, the focus was on people, creating an atmosphere of fun for customers to have "the best day ever". In stark contrast, AFFCO's focus was primarily upon quality and quantity, which created an atmosphere of grim seriousness, or panic, if something was out of order.

workers and bosses

However, there were two key things which linked both jobs. First and foremost were the people. At both jobs they were/are amazing, stunning and friendly. They were/are what made the boring days bearable and made the great days great. At the base/worker level of the organisation it was these interactions which held the company together, despite what the supervisors would tell you. At both jobs it was the people which made it feel like a family.

Secondly, both jobs were similar in the level of regard given to the CEO and board members. AFFCO is owned by Talley's, so the fact that they had recently finished building a \$120 million dollar estate and spent their time flying up and down the country in their helicopter, tended to irritate the workers.

Likewise, the fact that the chairman of the board who ran RAL got his position by buying large amounts of shares in the company, spent a disproportionate amount of time skiing with his wife and company guests and skipping the queues, tended to infuriate the employees there too. It was the dissociation of these leaders from their actual workers which was the real problem.

Both the "higher-ups" I encountered were clearly unconcerned with the people who actually ran the company.

what mattered for me

Finally, this year caused me to reflect on where the focus is, and where it should be in our jobs. In both my jobs, the focus was primarily based upon the monetary success of the company. This led to an atmosphere of neglect of the employees and conditions that were adverse to the employees' health. Yes, there is always going to be risk when using a knife to cut up a cow, or when working atop a freezing cold mountain. But the level to which employers treat

their workers as a disposable, replaceable commodity I found a concern. Yes, it may not be profitable for a company to pay workers a higher wage, but in reality, people are not born for the sole purpose of working for the benefit of "the company".

what stays with me

My year left me with a distinct sense that something is definitely out of balance in our workplaces. This experience left me wondering why we are in a situation where the majority willingly allow themselves to be exploited and find themselves trapped in an abusive system.

However, this year has allowed me to experience how life can be, and is, for many. It has given me gratitude for the fact that I have the opportunity to pursue a higher level of education and find an occupation which I am truly passionate about. It has also instilled a sense of awareness and from that responsibility. I feel it is my (and our) responsibility to help shift the primary focus of our lives. Should the focus be money? I have found and feel it should be people.

He aha te mea nui o te ao?

He tangata. He tangata. He tangata!

What is the greatest thing on the earth?

It is people. It is people. It is people! ■

*Ted Richards is studying Health Sciences at
The University of Auckland.*

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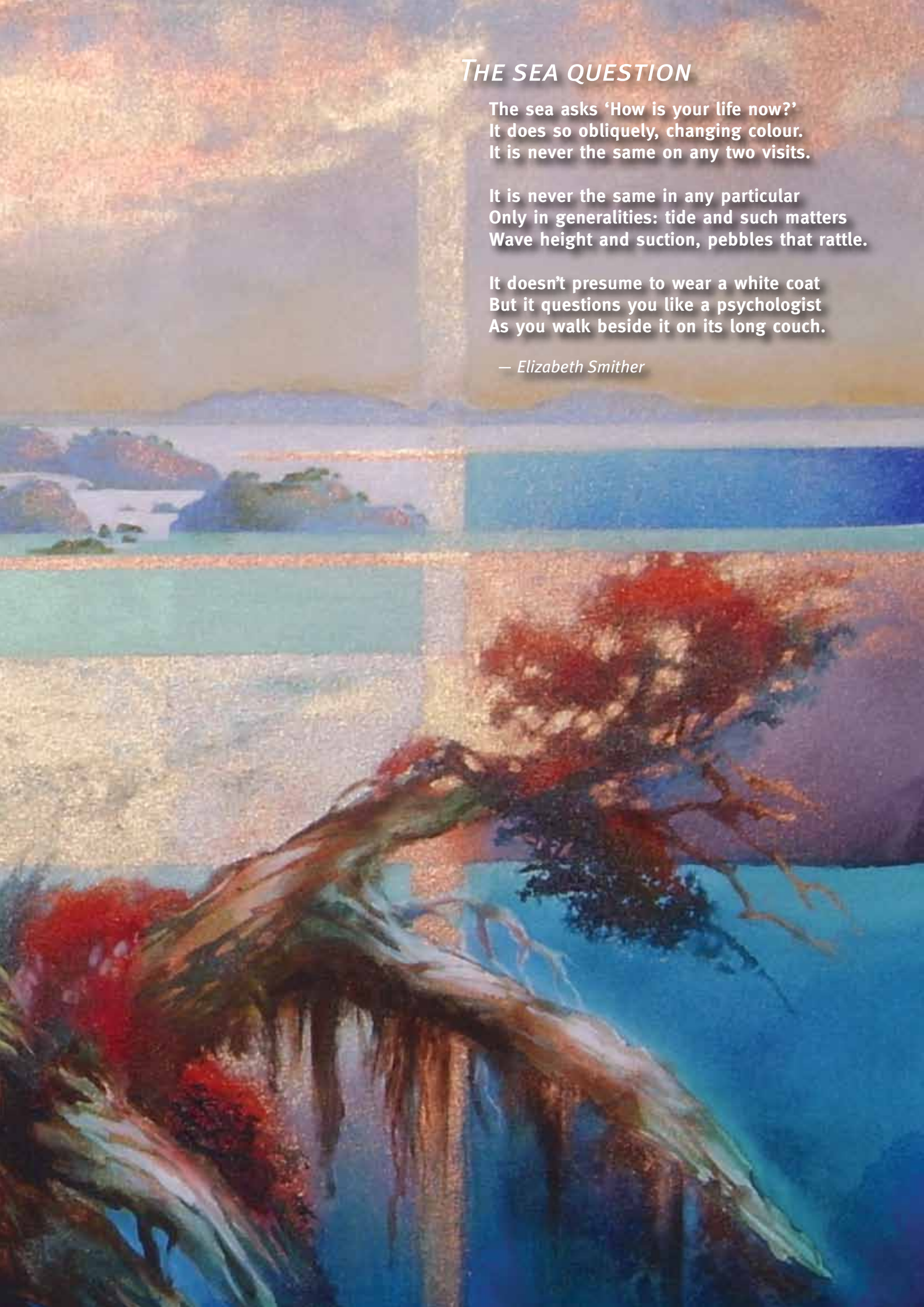
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Pohutukawa Evening by Harold Coop [www.newzealandpainting.com]

The background of the page is a painting. In the foreground, a large, gnarled tree with reddish-brown foliage leans over a body of water. The water is a deep blue. In the background, there are more trees and a body of water under a sky with soft, warm colors. The painting is done in a style that uses visible brushstrokes and a rich color palette.

THE SEA QUESTION

The sea asks 'How is your life now?'
It does so obliquely, changing colour.
It is never the same on any two visits.

It is never the same in any particular
Only in generalities: tide and such matters
Wave height and suction, pebbles that rattle.

It doesn't presume to wear a white coat
But it questions you like a psychologist
As you walk beside it on its long couch.

— Elizabeth Smither

feral music and the Spirit

Peter Murnane shares how children helped him shed his self-consciousness in making music.

Peter Murnane OP

One of my grandmothers was a gifted bush musician. She played piano, violin and accordion at many a country dance around Warrnambool, Victoria, but I knew her only as a tired but dignified old lady and never heard her play.

In over-crowded primary schools of the baby-boom that followed WWII, I was never taught to make music. The two Catholic schools I attended were run by hard-working Mercy Sisters who taught classes of fifty children the basics of grammar and mathematics, and some history and geography, for all of which I am enormously grateful. They collected our sixpences to pay a woman to teach us a few songs for the end-of-year concert, but it was beyond them to give us even basic lessons on the octave-scale or how to make music from it.

hearing but not seeing

It was much the same in the three State Schools to which my mobile childhood exposed me, except for the fourth grade in the tiny school at Childers Cove. Headmistress Betty Abrahams taught all its thirteen pupils and I happily remember the weekly class when she thumped the old piano and we sang songs from *The School Paper*. They included a Welsh tune that proclaimed “Wales, Wales, sweet are thy hills and thy dales”, The “Ash Grove” which haunted me and a beautiful Dutch folk melody that concluded: “... down the grassy pathway that leads to my home”.

I had already tasted the pleasure of music when, aged five or six, I would hear on the radio songs that we now call, Country and Western. Their melancholy could wrench a child’s heart: “There’s A Bridle

Hanging On The Wall” (its owner had died) and “Old Shep” (a faithful dog). Radio music moved me, but I never saw anyone actually making it, so was not inspired to want to imitate them, as are children brought up among musicians.

During the 1950s, from the Sunday night radio I drank in the mostly trashy songs of the Hit Parade and could still, should the need arise, sing many of them in full. I had hardly heard of classical music, let alone enjoyed any. At the De La Salle Brothers’ secondary school, talented Brother Gerard shaped us into singing beautiful multi-part Latin and English church pieces. As older teenagers a lay-teacher bravely invited us at lunch-time to hear records from his classical collection and we were captivated by gems from Mozart, Beethoven, Grieg and Mahler.

learning to play music

Fast forward to my thirties, when I wished, not for the first time, that I could actually play an instrument and humorously resolved that before I turned 40 I would learn one, or die in the attempt. At that time a Sister was teaching our novices to play the recorder, so I obtained a cheap plastic instrument and joined her classes. I would then borrow her *Recorder Handbook* and retreat to the squash-courts, lock myself away and squeakily learn a new note every afternoon.

Even before I was half-fluent, I was delighted to find that the tunes in my head from primary school and earlier would leak out through my hesitant fingers, and I could even echo newly-heard melodies, like some large, plastic-beaked parrot.

My fingers were quite clumsy: I would hit the note beside the one I

was reaching for, then quickly correct myself. Worse, my brain was inhibited by shame at making mistakes, and by imagined criticisms from anyone listening. But I continued to play with third-rate skill, relying on Chesterton’s wonderful inversion of the work-ethic principle: “If a thing is worth doing, it’s worth doing badly.” In a little green book I collected alphabetically the best melodies, folk, classical or pop, that had lodged in my head over the years and soon had several hundred, without even starting on the hymns.

playing in privacy

I had splashed out and bought a good treble recorder, but when travelling still carried the smaller descant and played it whenever I could find the nearest thing to solitude. A friend noticed the instrument and asked



where I played it, thinking that I belonged to some classical recorder group. She was amused that I played mostly on lonely roads and behind hedges, where nobody would hear.

But our habits change through the years. Living in crowded cities, I seldom found opportunities to play. I still carried the recorder out of nostalgia, but at the end of a holiday I would see it lying, unused, at the bottom of my case. Even when I moved to the Solomon Islands, I hesitated to resume playing. There was surprisingly little solitude and a serious lack of hedges. As the only white face on our island I was already exceptional without making myself the local freak who filled the lovely, short evenings with extraordinary noises.

Then one day, 74 years old and relocated to Honiara I determined to begin again. On one of my regular walks along the beach I took the recorder, found a spot that I thought was reasonably far from habitation and sat on a rough log seat. I had not completed the first tune before two, five, 10 chocolate-coloured children emerged from nearby bush and stood watching, enthralled.

making music for others

I was pleased to find that even before a growing and appreciative audience the melodies flowed more freely than ever before. Despite lack of practice, there was new ease and skill. I would even find myself improvising, carried by the music in a mildly ecstatic joy.

Where does this come from? My fingers can hardly have become newly flexible. Has my ageing brain shed some of its earlier inhibitions? Is it the fruit of deeper peace coming from meditation? I now play at home more, suspecting that rather than annoying people it may even add to the peace of the community. I was moved to hear one student describe it as “beautiful”.

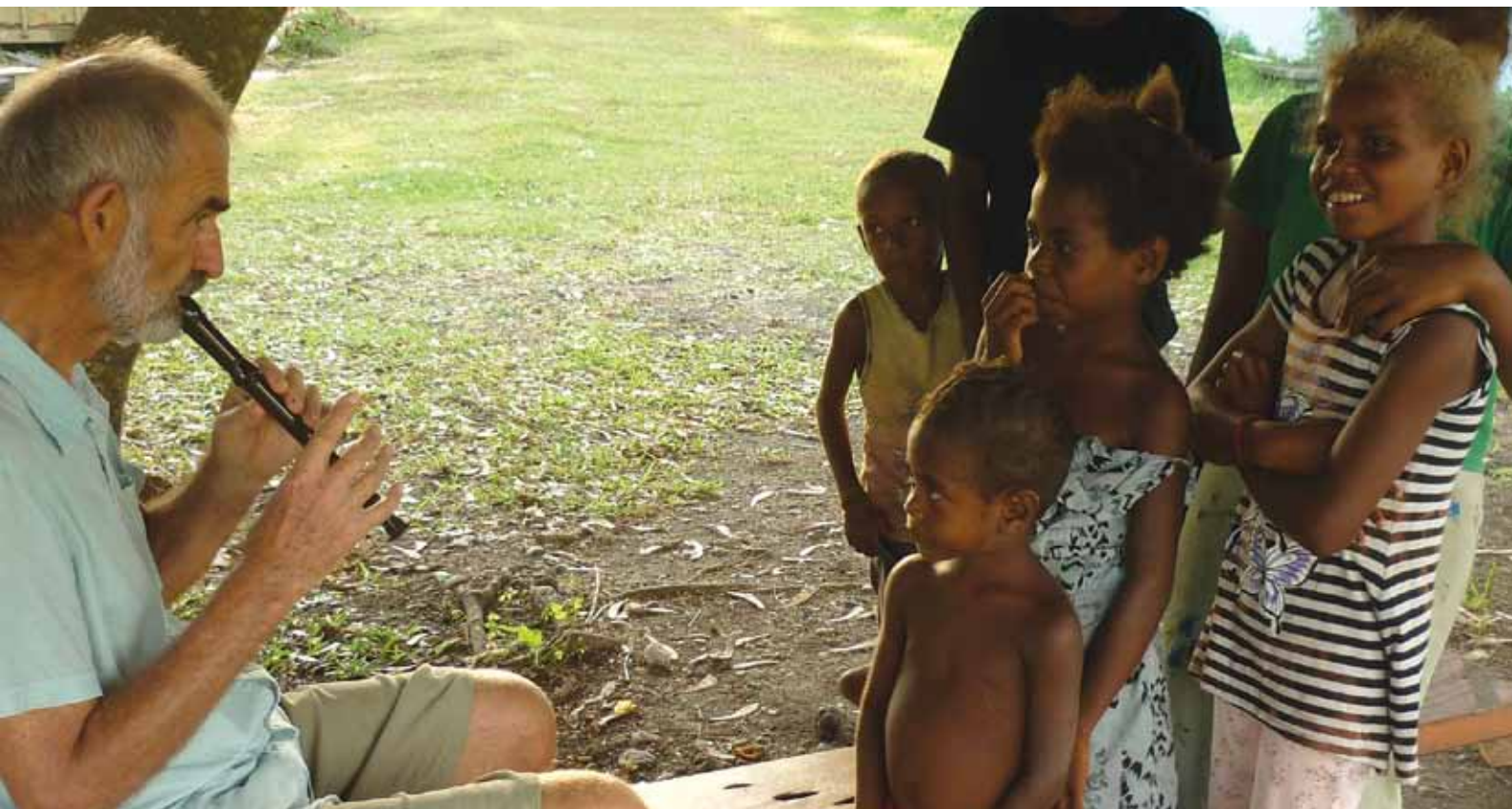
The *blockflöte* has taught me that stuff we make ourselves brings more joy than mass-produced stuff that others foist upon us, not for our good but for their own profit. On the local beach, even while doing my best to play Grieg’s “Solweig’s Song”, or Brahms’s “Lullaby”, or perhaps the Quaker hymn “How Can I Keep From Singing”, I would observe the children around me playing happily with their few home-made toys: little

cars or trucks made from plastic bottles expertly cut and folded, fitted with wheels carved from the soles of discarded jandals (thongs/ flip-flops). Around Melanesia discarded jandals are also used to beat rapidly on a popular percussion instrument resembling pan pipes, home-made from varied lengths of bamboo or PVC piping.

It is astonishing that we have gifts like music; or hands, lungs, brain and tongue but sad when we don’t respond to inspirations nudging us to use them more fully. If we ponder for a few moments — or decades — where our gifts come from, we might begin to understand a little better the Spirit that guides this awesome universe like wind moving through a flute. If we love using our gifts, how much more that Spirit, boundless Love, must enjoy giving them to us. ■

Peter Murnane OP lives in the Dominican Friars formation house in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

[Photos by Emmanuel Kiria]



an ecological reading of the gospel of mark

In this fourth part in the series Elaine Wainwright uncovers the subversive message in the parable of the sower in Mark 4:1-9

Elaine Wainwright



Lake and shore of Galilee

It could be easy to think that the familiar “parable of the sower” is simple to read ecologically. Certainly it is rich in materiality with seeds, birds, soil, a sower and many other aspects. As readers we will find that the finely woven interconnections of habitat, human, and holy give depth to this parable.

place – sea and land

Two opening verses before the parable begins can easily be overlooked but they weave together the materiality and the sociality of the human/other-than-human. Mark 4 begins “in place” — Jesus began to teach “beside the sea”. However the social nature of “large crowds” gathered around him is firmly linked to this place. The relationship between text and context is highlighted further when Jesus gets into “a boat on the sea”, sitting there to teach while the crowds are “beside the sea on the land”. The boat, the sea and the land function to create meaning. They give relational authority and power to Jesus. They both separate him from and yet relate him to the crowd on the land. As readers we are drawn into the interconnections in this habitat and we need to attend with all our senses to the narrative that will unfold.

listen

Jesus’ opening word: “Listen!” — alerts our sense of hearing. The disciples in the text and we, the listeners to the text, are invited to listen/to hear and so engage our bodies in the act and art of listening. To ensure that the listeners are responding by bringing their bodies to the hearing of Jesus’ parable, the narrator follows the imperative, “Listen!” with the word *idou* (often translated “behold”) which is the marker of something of importance. Listeners are now doubly attentive and the parable begins: “A sower went out to sow”.

sower and sowing

“The sower” in the Markan text may be imagined in a number of ways. He or she may be a slave or tenant farmer on one of the large Herodian or Roman estates that were becoming more numerous in first century Galilee. She or he might also be imagined as a self-sufficient small farmer, a member of a farming family. Each would have been intertwined in their social fabric in different ways but would have shared the understanding of the seasons with their rhythms of time for planting and for harvesting. The sower is engaged in the work of sowing. The type of seed is not specified. It is likely to be wheat

or barley, the two most common agricultural products of Galilee in the first century. An attentive reader will notice how the material and social embedded in the story reveal the ecological texture of Mark’s gospel.

The seed seems to have been thrown by hand rather than carefully planted in rows. This links the sower to the process of planting in order to grow grain to feed the family, the animals and also to have seed for the following year’s planting. However the pressure on farmers or tenants to produce abundant harvests for exports for the Empire also lurks within this world that the parable creates.

The parable draws the reader into the ecosystem, or ecocycle, of sower and seed. Birds take up the seeds on the pathway and are fed. Weeds take up their ground-space so there is insufficient room for the sower’s seed in some places. The sun with the wind and the rain, elements not explicitly named in the text, enable the seed to grow but if the root is not deep enough, some plants will wither under the sun. Others will be choked out by plants which are not useful in the agricultural cycle. The seed that falls on the prepared soil produces richly. An ecological reader will pick up on the network of living

and non-living materials in the hybrid habitat — from sower, to seed, to bird, sun, earth/soil, weeds and thorns.

first century grain farming

Stephanie Nelson, a classical scholar, says that “because farming is inescapably a part of human life it may provide a clue to what is most basically human, and so a clue to our place within the cosmos.” Jesus, the parable teller, and his audience would have been thoroughly familiar with the agricultural system of first century Galilee. In this teaching by the sea Jesus invites listeners/readers to attend to the processes all around them. They would have known the prolific nature of grain given the right conditions. As well they would realise their need for such abundance in the face of the Roman taxation on a small farmer’s grain or soil.

Varro, a first century BCE scholar and agricultur-
alist, notes the variety in yields: tenfold in one district, fifteen in another, even a hundred to one near Gadara in Syria (Varro, *On Agriculture* 1.44.2). Pliny, the Roman naturalist, proclaims that nothing is more prolific than wheat giving yields of 150, 360 and 400 (*Natural History*, 18.21.94-95). However, as Pliny’s figures in particular are in the context of impressing the emperor, such figures may be exaggerated. Moldenke and Moldenke, who have studied plants of the Bible, suggest that a yield of about 20-fold can be expected of a crop of wheat in the Levant but that good soil and certain strains might produce 60 or even 100 grains each.

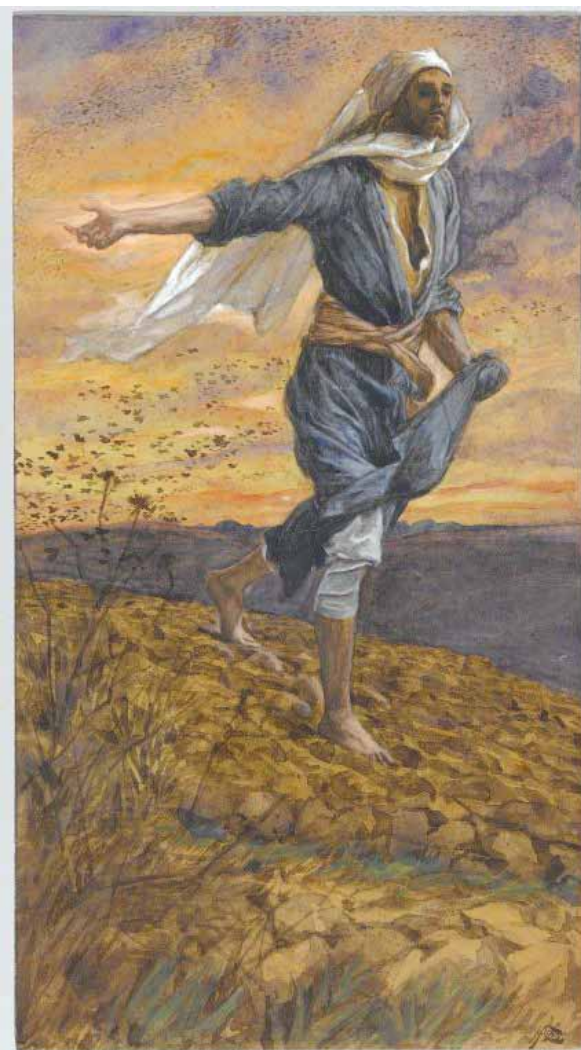
Many interpreters of this parable view the yields to be extraordinary — especially at 60 or 100. However it seems that these extraordinary yields are more descriptive when we consider the first century agriculture encoded in the text.

God's abundance

The subversive aspect of the parable lies elsewhere. Again materiality and its symbolism can assist us to discover it. On the two-sided coin minted by Agrippa I, the Roman-appointed ruler in Galilee 37–44 CE, are three ears of grain containing multiple seeds springing from one stalk. Like the seeds of the parable, they symbolise the fertility of the land. However on the coin their abundance is attributed



to Agrippa’s reign indicated by the royal umbrella-style canopy and the inscription on the obverse of the coin, “king/ *basileus* Agrippa”. But the material context of Jesus and a



The Sower by James Tissot [Brooklyn Museum]

first century audience is embedded in the parable and proclaims not the *basileia*/empire of Rome — but the *basileia* of God/the holy (Mark 1:15).

Jesus’ parable draws listeners/readers into the complex world of the more-than-human in which multiple participants, including the human, are interwoven. Two different cosmologies are implicitly in tension within the parable and the network of associations it evokes. First there is that of the emperor and his representatives, whether a Herodian king in Galilee or landowners supporting the imperial system, who are claimed to be the source of abundance. On the other hand, the parable offers a more complex system of intertangled elements that intersect in the process of sowing seed. The surprise is that there is an ecology that can produce abundance. It is, however, hybrid, consisting of multiple participants. Jesus simply invites reflection on, or attentiveness to, the richness of habitat/human/holy and what such attentiveness will allow us to hear: “Let those who have ears, let them hear.” ■

Elaine Wainwright RSM is an independent biblical scholar.

TPP not good for us

Cecily McNeill explains why the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement would give too much power to multi-national companies at the expense of government legislation for the well-being of their citizens, cultures and environments.

Cecily McNeill

The biggest free trade deal ever seen between New Zealand and 11 other Pacific Rim countries including the United States and Japan is nearing completion. If it goes through, the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP) would cover a trade bloc of some 800 million people and control almost 40 per cent of the global economy.

The negotiations have been shrouded in the utmost secrecy but, thanks to leaked information, a growing number of people, including the chief justices of New Zealand and Australia, are angry about the TPP. In March thousands of people took to the streets in more than 20 towns and cities around New Zealand in protest, particularly at the power the Agreement would give transnational companies to sue individual countries.

NZCTU Economist Bill Rosenberg has called the TPP “anti-free trade” and Jane Kelsey, Professor of Law at Auckland University, has accused the government of reneging on its promises to safeguard regulatory rights and protect public policy exceptions.

In fact, if the TPP were to go through, the already yawning gap between the haves and have-nots in our society could widen further and faster.

ISDS process flawed

In March the leaking of the Agreement chapter which dealt with the controversial investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) process, led Jane Kelsey to protest that contentious clauses in that chapter concerning special rights for foreign investors, were unchanged

from an earlier version. She pointed out the lack of protection of the government’s right to regulate against attacks from foreign investors.

As well there was no provision for restricting capital flows in a financial crisis, nor any effective exceptions for public policy areas such as health, environment or culture.

“Such flaws should be fatal to the deal, especially when US corporations are responsible for more investment disputes than any other country,” Jane Kelsey wrote in the *New Zealand Herald* 27 March 2015.

She cited a “litany” of recent cases, where investor companies sought hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation because a country’s own regulations were causing damage to their profits. This has produced a “groundswell of resistance” to ISDS.

“The French and German Governments have said they won’t accept ISDS in the parallel deal being negotiated between the US and the EU. That follows disputes against Germany involving phasing out nuclear power plants and climate change mitigation measures.”

investors more protected than governments

The website itsourfuture.org.nz outlines the litigious activities in other countries of some companies which operated in New Zealand. For example, Veolia, the company that ran Auckland’s train system, recently sued Egypt for US\$80 million for, among other things, raising its minimum wage.

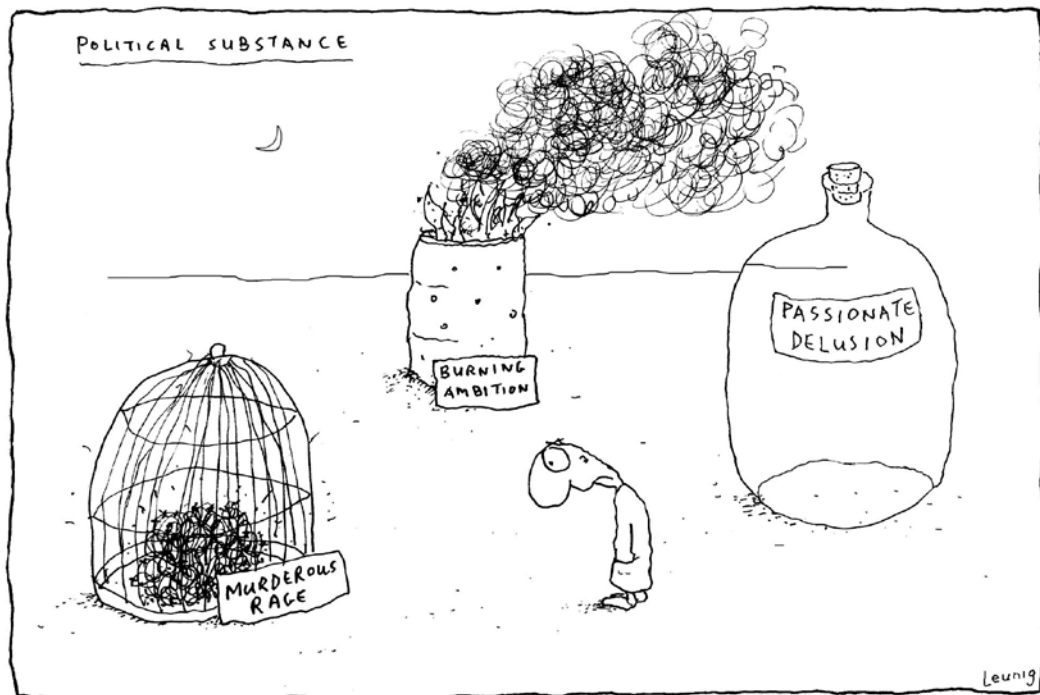
Newmont, the goldmining company operating in Waihi, recently launched a billion dollar claim against Indonesia for a regulation requiring the domestic processing of raw materials. This forced Indonesia to concede special exemptions for the corporation from the new mining law.

Sean Flynn of the American University Washington College of Law said the ISDS chapter should be subjected to the most rigorous and open debate. He wrote in an email: “The TPP included a new footnote — not previously released as part of any other investment chapter — clarifying that private expropriation actions can be brought to challenge ‘the cancellation or nullification of such [intellectual property] rights’, as well as ‘exceptions to such rights’.

“Any time a national court — including in the US — invalidates a wrongfully granted patent or other intellectual property right, the affected company could appeal that revocation to foreign arbitrators.”

Last September NZ chief justice, Dame Sian Elias warned of the damaging effects of ISDS on sovereignty and democracy:

“It is feared that Investor State Dispute Settlement processes will undermine capacity to regulate the banking and finance sector or control environmental impacts. It is conceivable that human rights based determinations of domestic courts may similarly give rise to claims. Quite apart from impact on domestic sovereignty and constitutional issues, these disputes impact



potentially upon the rule of law within domestic legal systems.”

few benefits for nz trade

Opponents are questioning the government’s involvement in the TPP. On signing a free trade agreement with Korea in March, Trade Minister Tim Groser said improved access to international markets through free trade agreements was a key component of the Government’s Business Growth agenda.

“Supporting our exporters is crucial to creating new jobs and boosting incomes for New Zealanders.

“This Agreement secures the long-term future of New Zealand exporters to Korea whose international competitors were benefitting from Korea’s other FTAs. It reduces barriers to trade and investment, provides greater certainty about the business environment and ensures our exporters remain competitive in each other’s market.”

But the agreement has scrapped tariffs on fewer than half of New Zealand’s exports to Korea. While it might progressively phase out tariffs “on 98 per cent” of the trade, this excludes important New Zealand exports such as milk powder.

The Government counted as “particular success stories” the removal of

wine tariffs of 15 per cent immediately and the removal in five years of 45 per cent of tariffs on kiwifruit.

Bill Rosenberg says the problem with the Government’s goal of significant access to the US market for New Zealand’s dairy products was that this access was likely to be restricted because of US domestic interests. The US recognised that NZ could produce at prices considerably lower than its own producers so the US domestic market needed protecting. “They’re scared of Fonterra, basically.”

On the other hand, the US dairy industry was becoming a successful exporter in its own right and increasingly competitive with New Zealand, so the value of the US market to New Zealand was falling.

The same situation would likely apply to any agricultural export access to Japan and Canada as both are keen to protect their traditional agricultural sectors. The US has conceded it was unlikely to gain free access to the Japanese market.

TPP anti-free trade

With trade said to be covered in just five of the Agreement’s 29 chapters, opponents might well wonder at the vigour of the government’s pursuit of the Agreement. The US was more interested in intellectual

property and enhancing the monopoly afforded by protections, hence earning Bill Rosenberg’s “anti-free trade” criticism.

The US wanted to extend the copyright period from 50 to 70 years and to introduce strict laws governing infringement of copyright. This would include the length of time medicines were protected by patents, which would prevent cheaper “generic” copies from forcing the price down.

The rules governing State Owned Enterprises were also in contention, with the US wanting SOEs to act commercially rather than in the public interest.

secrecy favours investors

Despite secrecy surrounding the negotiations denying information to parliament and the public, representatives of some US companies have been able to scrutinise the documents for clauses which affect them. The “regulatory coherence” and “transparency” provisions of the Agreement would give these companies the right to be part of the decision-making. They would be able to influence decisions and limit the degree to which their activities were regulated. This would interfere with governments’ powers to regulate to protect their own people in public policy areas such as health, education and the environment.

With so many flaws and so much power gifted to ethics-free transnational companies, the TPP could be the biggest deal New Zealanders never wanted. ■

Cecily McNeill is a free lance writer and editor and was most recently the editor of Welcom.

Michael Leunig cartoon used with permission.

TPP and our health system

Joshua Freeman outlines how the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement would threaten the health of New Zealanders.

Joshua Freeman

Negotiating trade agreements may sound harmless enough but it's no longer just about tariffs and quotas. Over the last few decades negotiations have expanded deeply into domestic policy. The focus is on eliminating "behind the border barriers" or "technical barriers to trade", which effectively include any labour, environmental or health laws considered onerous by foreign investors. The problem is that what are considered "barriers" by investors are often also crucial domestic policies needed to protect people from important health threats. For countries like NZ, the risk of compromising health protections during negotiations is high, because where tariffs are already low (as they are in NZ); "technical barriers to trade" are the main bargaining chip.

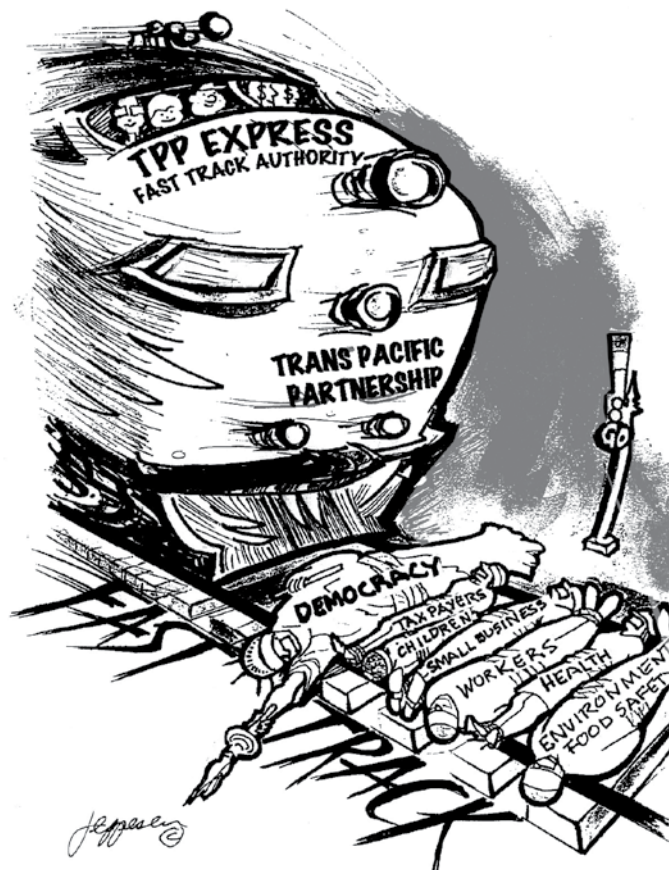
secret even after signing

This alone should make kiwis feel uneasy about the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) — a huge agreement currently under negotiation between NZ and 11 other Pacific-Rim countries. But we really ought to get concerned when we consider the intense secrecy of the negotiations. Rather than negotiations becoming more transparent as their scope has expanded, they have become increasingly secretive. This has reached the point where for the TPP, draft negotiation documents must be kept from the public for a further 4 years after the agreement is signed.

Even more alarming is that those same documents — so carefully guarded from the public — have been provided already to hundreds of lobbyists for the world's most powerful transnational corporations. In contrast, health and human rights agencies have had to rely on leaks for information, reflecting the deep power imbalances inherent in the negotiation process.

Like all legal documents, the fine print is crucially important for fair public debate. But for the TPP the final text won't be provided to the public or independent health organisations until after it is signed. At that point, regardless of public opinion or expert analysis, there will be no opportunity to make further changes. In fact, once signed, even the NZ Parliament will be powerless to prevent ratification by Cabinet.

It is because of these democratic loopholes the EU ombudsman recently ruled that draft texts of the Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) — the European equivalent of the TPP between the EU and the US — should be released to the public prior to signing.



The same should be done for the TPP. Particularly when we consider its far-reaching consequences. It would effectively lock in place an enforceable, over-arching legal framework for all NZ's future laws and regulations for generations to come. In light of this, it seems crazy that the TPP could come into force with fewer checks and balances than we require even for passing regular legislation in NZ.

health professionals worried

Health professionals concerned about the TPP have therefore had no choice but to join the dots using past agreements and leaked draft chapters in order to evaluate likely health impacts of the TPP. Recently a group of Australian researchers published a systematic health impact assessment (HIA) which concluded the TPP would reduce medicine affordability and reduce the ability of government to regulate tobacco, alcohol and food labelling policies.

rise of medicine prices

They concluded medicine affordability would decrease due to the massive expansion of patent monopoly rights for pharmaceuticals revealed in the leaked Intellectual

Property Chapter. This would reduce access to medicines, particularly for low socioeconomic groups. In NZ this would be a disaster — exacerbating health inequities and slowly squeezing the health budget to breaking point. But in developing countries where people with conditions like HIV rely on generic medicines for survival, it would be a matter of life and death. For instance, under patent, the price of a Hepatitis C drug is \$84,000 but it can be purchased off patent for just \$300. The usual argument is that high prices are needed to recoup research and development costs, but for this drug, those costs would be recovered in just a few weeks.

PHARMAC hampered

In NZ medicine affordability would also be affected by impacts on PHARMAC. PHARMAC is an agency with an international reputation for negotiating affordable medicines for New Zealanders and it's no secret it's under threat by the TPP. Although we have assurances that concessions won't be made on the "fundamentals" of PHARMAC — this doesn't mean very much — the bargaining power of PHARMAC could still be substantially undermined.

future health laws threatened

The other major health concern is that foreign investors would be given new rights to sue the government in offshore tribunals in response to new health laws or policies perceived to threaten "anticipated future profits". Under existing agreements these lawsuits have been initiated in response to a whole range of legitimate health regulations and policies. These include tobacco companies suing Australia and Uruguay for cigarette plain packaging legislation, a pharmaceutical company challenging a Canadian court ruling on patent law, and cases filed by toxic waste and fossil fuel companies in response to environmental health standards and bans on toxic chemicals. Over the last decade the number of these cases has increased tenfold, but even just the

threat of litigation has a "chilling effect" on government decisions. A striking example is right here in NZ — even before the TPP is signed — where legislation on cigarette plain packaging has been delayed until the outcome of the case against Australia is known.

The Australian researchers concluded the TPP would handcuff governments in policy areas like tobacco, alcohol and food labelling, but the full range of health risks is much more extensive. Effectively the TPP would stifle innovation in health policy and prevent a precautionary approach being applied to any newly identified health threats. In other words, all new health policies would be required to meet an unreasonably high burden of proof before they could be introduced without fear of reprisal by foreign investors. This would amount to a huge tilt of the playing field favouring corporate profits over the health needs of ordinary New Zealanders.

limp safeguards

Reassurances have been given about "safeguards" against these cases, but just a couple of weeks ago, a leak of the latest TPP Investment chapter was far from reassuring. It showed that even the very weak legal safeguards included back in 2012 have been further hollowed out to replicate agreements responsible for some of the most alarming historical rulings.

Furthermore, none of the underlying flaws in the tribunal system have been addressed. The tribunals continue to lack transparency, rights of appeal and the systems of precedent required of our domestic courts. Even more importantly, they continue to be affected by conflicts of interest, with adjudicators who sit in judgement alternating as paid litigators on behalf of corporate clients.

let's now act together

So what can we do about all this? Not much if we act in isolation, but collectively we have enormous power. For the TPP, the next couple of months are critical. In the next month or so, the "Fighting Foreign Corporate Control Bill" will come before parliament — a member's bill proposing NZ not sign any agreement allowing investors to sue the government. This bill needs your support. My advice would be to keep a close eye on the "It's Our Future" website (<http://www.itsourfuture.org.nz/>) now and regularly over the coming weeks, for practical ideas and suggestions about what you can do to support this bill and to resist the TPP. ■

Dr Joshua Freeman is a member of the New Zealand Climate and Health Council.

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spirit – poured out in living water

Kathleen Rushton traces the images of water and light in the Johannine Pentecost readings - John 7:37-39 and John 15:26-27, 16:12-15 or 20:19-23 - as symbols of the pouring of the Spirit.

Kathleen Rushton

We had followed the path to the source of the north branch of the Riwaka River where water emerges from the rock via a cave, into a deep, clear, astonishingly beautiful, spring-fed pool. Towering above us were huge moss-covered rocks that had tumbled down the Tākaka Hill perhaps thousands of years ago. Below us was Te Puna o Riwaka. This *wāhi tapu* or sacred place of the people of Te Ātiawa and Ngāti Rārua has special mana or status, for from here springs *waiora*, the waters of life. For generations this has been a place of healing. If what can be seen filled me with awe so does what cannot be seen.

Ross McDonald, aged 83, one of five divers who first charted what lies beyond the spring and was among those gathered in 2013 to mark the 50th anniversary of their historic dive, described what they found.

After descending into the pool the divers entered a hole, swam about 30 metres, rounded a corner, surfaced, climbed up a waterfall and dived down again to swim a further 50 metres. Reaching a ledge, they climbed up into a huge cathedral-like space about 30 metres in diameter and 6-7 storeys high. Then they plunged through waist-high water until after about 40 metres the cavern narrowed into tiny unpassable passages. Beyond that spot, caverns starting from an undisclosed place, may enter the larger cavern ahead through a dry entrance.

water flows out

Rock, spring, source, water flowing, what is unseen ... evoke a favourite passage in John's gospel — the mysterious verses of Jn 7:37-39. Traditional interpretation, such as the *Jerusalem Bible*, translates Jn 7:38 as if the believer is the source of living water. Another possible translation, called the christological interpretation, sees the living water as flowing from within Jesus.

If we interpret the water symbol within the twofold pattern of symbols in John's gospel, the first level of meaning concerns Jesus and the second level concerns disciples. For example: "I am the light of the world" (Jn 8:12), applies to Jesus and then follows something about disciples: "Whoever follows me ... will have the light of life."

festival of tabernacles

Rich symbolism surrounds the Festival of Tabernacles (in Hebrew, *sukkoth*; in English, shelters, booths, tabernacles or huts). During the Festival time people slept and ate in small, flimsy huts in memory of the forty years the Israelites lived in tents in the wilderness. There is also a special relationship to the Temple in Jerusalem at this time because the dedication of the first Temple built by Solomon took place at Tabernacles (1 Kings 8:2). The natural world and the agricultural rhythm of life were integral as this Festival was celebrated in the northern autumn (September-October) with celebrations which accompanied the grape and olive harvests.

Prayers were offered for winter rains (water), so necessary for fertile crops the following year, and for the renewal of sunlight (light).

If early rain fell during this time, it was regarded as an assurance that God would send abundant rain. This hope was acted out in a solemn ceremony. On the seven mornings of the Festival, a procession set out for nearby temple hill and the fountain of Gihon, the source of the Pool of Siloam. A priest filled a golden pitcher with water while a choir repeated: "With joy you shall draw water from the wells of salvation." (Is 12:3) The procession returned to the temple through the Water Gate accompanied by crowds carrying Festival symbols: in their right hand twigs tied with a palm (representing branches used to build the huts) and in their left hand symbols of the harvest. Once in the Temple, the priest poured the water into a special funnel from where it flowed into the ground.

Jesus was in Galilee near the time of the Festival of Tabernacles (Jn 7:2). In the middle of the celebrations he went up to the temple and taught (Jn 7:14); he cried out as he taught there (Jn 7:28) and he cried again proclaiming: "If anyone thirsts ..." (Jn 7:37). Jesus said to them: "I am the light of the world." (Jn 8:12). He was teaching in the treasury of the temple (Jn 8:20) and went out of the temple (Jn 8:59). So the Temple and Tabernacles, with its symbolism of water and light, are the background for Jn 7:1-8:59.

living water

On the last day of the Festival, Jesus cried out: “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me.” The imagery of thirst as longing for God is well known (Psalms 42:1-2 and 63:1). In Jn 7:38 translations use “heart” or “side” or “breast” for *koila* but it means literally “out of his belly”. For Hebrews, the belly was the seat of deep human emotions.

Depicting Jesus as the giver of living water (Jn 4:13-14) and as the rock (Jn 19:34) recalls a whole series of OT images. From the rock God gives water to the people in the desert (Ex 17:6; Ps 105:41). Water comes out of the Temple (Ezek 47:1-12) and heals the holy land. Living water comes out of Jerusalem, the holy city, and heals the whole earth (Zech 14:6-11). Against this background, Jesus “cried out” claiming to be the life-nurturing living water for which the pilgrims prayed. He stood and cried out (Jn 7:37) as Wisdom in Proverbs stands and sings out her invitation (Pr 1:20 and Pr 8:2-3).

Spirit pouring as living water

The gift of the Holy Spirit poured out is identified with “rivers of living water” to be received by believers in Jesus. At this stage in the gospel, however, they were not yet ready because Jesus had not been glorified (Jn 7:39). The Baptist reported that Jesus had received the Spirit already (Jn 1:32-33). Jesus had assured the woman of Samaria that the hour for “worship in spirit and truth” was already at hand (Jn 4:23-24). In the farewell discourses, Jesus promises the Spirit (Jn 15:26-27, 16:12-15) which is given when “he bowed his head and handed over the Spirit” (Jn 19:30) to the women and the beloved disciple near the cross. When water flowed from the pierced side of Jesus on the cross it evoked the “rivers of living water” flowing from the rock. Jesus was giving birth to the new people of



Te Puna Riwaka

God, the Church. Re-creation continues when later Jesus “breathed on them” saying: “Receive the Holy Spirit” (For Jn 20:22 see *Tui Motu* April 2015).

The imagery of springs of living water flowing from the rock leads deeply into the mystery of Jesus who gives the Spirit. Living water is necessary to sustain all forms of life in *Papatūānuku*, Earth. As theologian Linda Gibler says: “Creation is water-drenched. All living beings on Earth are born of water — in oceans or ponds, within eggs, seeds or wombs.” Every river has its *mauri* or life force.

Māori people identify with their local river. Rivers link with the ancestors.

How does the gift of the Spirit, imaged as the pouring out of “rivers of living water”, inspire Christians to live in ways which value the vital gift of water? And how might Christians understand water as a symbol of their longing for God and as free gift — endangered and yet necessary to sustain all life? ■

Kathleen Rushton RSM is a scripture scholar, involved in adult education and is a keen tramper.



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new look at chastity

Celibacy and Soul: Exploring the Depths of Chastity

by Susan J Pollard

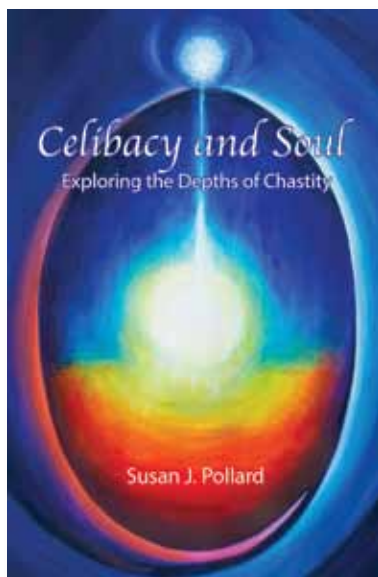
King Fisher Press, 2015

Reviewed by Katrina Brill RSJ

"Celibacy is not for everyone. It frees you for love, for vulnerability, for surprise, for unanticipated friendships. It's not an end in itself," explains one of the 28 sisters, nuns, monks, brothers and priests who participated in Susan Pollard's research into the experience of living the vow of celibate chastity.

Interweaving every chapter are the "real life" experiences of the participants. This gives the impression of a dialogue between the participant voices and the content Susan Pollard draws from mythology, mysticism, philosophy, literature, Christian spirituality and analytical psychology. Looking at celibate chastity through the window of these different strands and of archetypal images makes this book different from other books I've read on chastity. While at times I was almost overwhelmed by the language of mythology and psychology, the author constantly lured me into encountering new insights in the experiences.

The underlying theme of *Celibacy and Soul* is that celibate chastity is an evolutionary process. The book itself is structured to reflect the transitional times of the "four movements" in the path to maturity. The author calls for a re-visioning of the vow of chastity as a journey of ongoing intimacy with God and with others, rather than of having virginity as an exclusive goal. With Diarmuid O'Murchu she suggests celibacy is a "vow of and



for relatedness". One participant put it this way: "My heart has been stretched, moulded and shaped and I became celibate. It has been a process of becoming celibate over the years. It is a process in which something happened to me ... I guess it is a freedom to love."

Susan Pollard is a Sister of St Joseph living in Adelaide. She is a Jungian analyst trained in Zurich and practises in South Australia. She has lectured for 20 years on analytical psychology and religion. Her book came out of her own struggle to understand her commitment to celibate loving and a desire to hear others' experience. She acknowledges that some survey participants were disenchanted but she chose to focus on those who find meaning and contentment in celibate chastity.

This book will have particular interest for women and men Religious. It may also have appeal for those who live a celibate life by choice or circumstance. I believe this book will be affirming and helpful for many striving to live celibate chastity meaningfully. ■

a carer's diary

Fraying: Mum, Memory Loss, the Medical Maze and Me

by Michele Gierck

University of New South Wales
Press, 2015

Reviewed by Ann Nolan PhD

Fraying is a story written in an informal tone in diary form which describes a daughter's journey in dealing with her mother's multiple medical problems and memory loss due to Alzheimer's disease.

Both mother and daughter's lives are changed when memory loss is diagnosed and the daughter undertakes and commits to accompanying her mother to the myriad of medical appointments and social service agencies in their shared desire to enable her mother to remain independent in her own home.

Unlike some accounts of carers of persons with Alzheimer's, this book does not explore how the person with memory loss perceives and describes how she experiences changes to herself and how to make sense and meaning of the deterioration this brings. For such an account you might well read *Keeper: a book about memory, identity, isolation, Wordsworth and cake*, by Andrea Gillies (2010), set in Scotland.

Gierck focuses very fully on her own experience of caring for her mother. She is continually swamped by information and attends various kinds of medical appointments in her carer capacity to get the very best care she can as her mother's advocate. She describes in detail her frustrations, her sense of being inundated with tasks and things to organise and manage. She writes of her anger as well as her positive reactions when things go well

chronicler of the poor

The Salt of the Earth

Directed by Wim Wenders and
Juliano Ribeiro Salgado

Reviewed by Paul Sorrell



or a breakthrough encourages her to continue to survive well.

Both mother and daughter grow in closeness, love and share laughter along the way until the end. The author distances herself from her catholic upbringing while her mother remains a devout catholic. In the last few days of her mother's life both mother and daughter pray together, a "powerful, so full of grace" experience for the author.

The originality of Michele Gierck's book *Fraying* lies in her tenacity and grim persistence not to be overwhelmed by what she describes as the "tentacles of the aged-care beast" as well as her preparedness to provide information and resources she found helpful in the Australian setting.

For a very informative book about dealing with dementia written from a New Zealand perspective, try Dr Chris Perkins's, *Dementia: A New Zealand Guide* (2004).

Gierck's very personal account will appeal to readers who find themselves new caregivers to know that they are not alone and that it is very reasonable to have feelings and reactions which may come with dealing with what can feel like uncharted waters in the medical and social health-care world. ■

Many readers will be familiar with Sebastião Salgado's striking images of Brazilian goldminers swarming like ants in vast open-cast pits: brown, muddy "toilers of the earth". Sometimes pigeonholed as a "social photographer", Salgado was exposed to liberation theology in his native Brazil as a young man and his work shows great empathy with people struggling to survive in conditions of abject poverty and hardship, especially when viewed en masse.

Salgado's training as an economist — he worked for the World Bank for a time — showed him "the way the world works" and gave him an understanding of the movement of goods and people across the globe. This experience stood him in good stead in chronicling the genocide in Rwanda and the Congo in the 1990s, when large groups of starving refugees were constantly on the move, hounded from one impoverished halting place to another. These photographs — and others, such as his workers and migrants series — go beyond mere documentation; they are infused with Salgado's compassion for humanity and his deep desire to make the plight of the poor and the rejected known to an international audience.

This utterly absorbing film is co-directed by German heavyweight Wim Wenders and Salgado's son Juliano. The resulting network of family connections and friendships is foregrounded in the film, although Wenders himself keeps a low profile, sharing the narration with the older Salgado. Sebastião's father is also interviewed, on the farm where he grew up with seven sisters and which was devastated following years of drought. The story of Sebastião's early projects is told through high-quality images, often reproduced from his beautiful books. Others — such as his journey among a remote indigenous tribe in Brazil and his exploration of arctic wildlife — are captured by Wenders's cameras.

Salgado's latter years have marked a turning point in his development as a photographer. Moving away from chronicling disaster and despair, his most recent project, "Genesis", seeks to show the earth as a Garden of Eden, a place of hope and the promise of restoration. Nowhere have these ideals been more powerfully realised than on the Salgado family farm, painstakingly replanted in native trees and today a flourishing oasis. True to Sebastião's generous spirit, the property has been gifted to the nation as a national park.

I'm very glad I watched this film. Rather than the aesthetically oriented treatment of a famous photographer I had anticipated, *The Salt of the Earth* revealed Salgado as a man with a passion for justice and a burning heart for the world's poor. ■



Crosscurrents

Jim Elliston

islamic female theologians

The proliferation of women who are theologians, both lay and religious, since Vatican II is having a beneficial impact on the Catholic church. It now seems Muslim women theologians are increasing in number. Iranian Shahrzad Houshmand Zadeh, a professor of Islamic Studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome (and mother of three), is qualified in both Catholic and Islamic theology.

In a recent interview she lamented the fact that fundamentalism is fuelled by ignorance: "It is time to read the Qur'an with new eyes. And women play a decisive role in this. The moment of female Islamic theologians has come, they are an antidote to extremists." She added that there are many today, calling themselves "Muslim feminists", from Iran to Morocco, from Tunisia to Indonesia and Europe.

She said: "Of the 6000 verses contained in the Qur'an, fewer than 10 can be interpreted as justifications of violence. And yet there are those who take advantage of the ignorance of the faithful, twisting these few lines to persuade them to perform evil actions." A major problem is the existence of Koranic schools that receive financing from abroad "where the focus is on memorising the Qur'an, without an informed and responsible reading thereof ... less than 20 per cent of the world's Muslims have Arabic as their mother tongue. This means interpretation of the verses will be the prerogative of a few, while the masses will be open to manipulation ... While for Islamic theologians knowledge of Arabic is essential in order to ensure a correct interpretation of the Sacred Texts, the content can be communicated in any language."

future of workers

How should we judge progress? A recent New Zealand Herald described how robots are expected to take over a large portion of jobs currently done by human beings. This seems a great idea if people are released from the drudgery of repetitive tasks. And we have seen how industrialisation has created new, more interesting jobs and raised living standards for many.

The flip side, however, is the trend towards fewer jobs together with a requirement for much higher skills, which condemns many to unemployment — a more soul-destroying effect than menial tasks.

With fewer people working, how are businesses going to sell their goods, make profits, etc — let alone be concerned about the vast impoverished masses?

new church direction

In March Pope Francis celebrated the second anniversary of his election. That month also saw the completion of the main task his fellow cardinals entrusted him to carry out, namely, the cleaning up of the Vatican finances — a source of scandal and embarrassment for some time.

It appears some cardinals didn't realise that in electing Francis they also gave a platform to what might be called the "Apareceda programme" which the pope is implementing — currently a cause of heartburn among conservatives, and probably also among some liberals before too long.

Pope Benedict had begun to address the multi-faceted financial task, but the old-boys' network proved too much. All the white-anting and the so-called Vati-leaks added to his Papal burdens. Some observers believe the chaos revealed by those disclosures influenced his decision to resign.

Over the past year there was

increasing activity aimed at undermining Cardinal George Pell, Francis's man chosen to finish the job. Francis backed him and won.

To me, this is an instance of Pope Francis's sound managerial skills. Cardinal Pell is a theological conservative; he has publicly opposed Francis's line on the Synod on the Family; he's a supporter of the Latin Mass, and is a climate change sceptic. However, he had the financial nous and personal fortitude to carry out his allotted task. So, unlike many Vatican appointments where personal relations prevail, Francis chose a man suited to the task.

At a more basic level the principles Francis has endorsed through Cardinal Pell are instituting an entirely new form of governance for the Holy See. There is now a system of checks and balances in Vatican operations that reflects the highest international standards for transparency and accountability.

It seems obvious from the increasing reports of dissatisfaction with the direction Francis is leading the Church that many didn't realise he brought with him a theological outlook developed by the South American bishops which had culminated at their general meeting at Apareceda in 2007.

According to Austen Ivereigh in his biography of Francis: "If Francis perplexes Europeans and North Americans long accustomed to thinking in liberal-conservative terms, it is because he uses a lens and a language that come from outside those categories ... In essence the 'theology of the people' rejected liberal and Marxist categories." Francis judged them "ideological colonisation" which negates a people's culture and history. He advocates engagement with people in their real life situations. "His approach is shaped by nationalism and culture, rather than social sciences." ■

blood, sweat and teardrops

Cavaan Wild

Same shirt, different day.
He wore that shirt for 5 days.
A working week for the unemployed moving couch to couch 'cause his Mum kicked him out.
Time is money; the lack of both is the root of all evil.
No one ever gave you either.

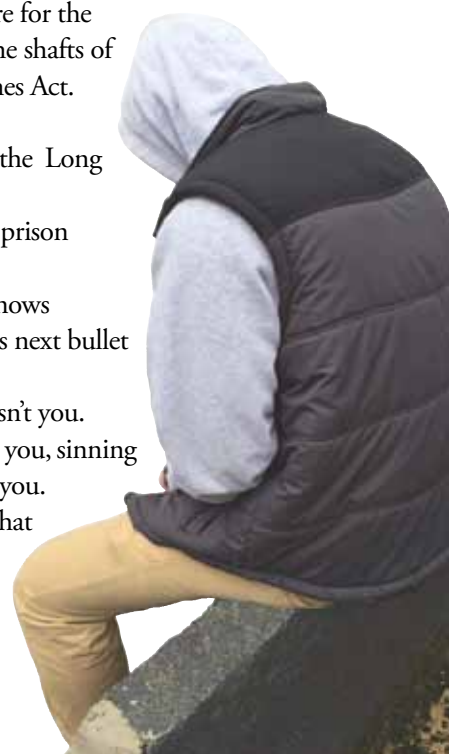
The prospectus for a prospect is enticing if NCEA isn't for you, truancy officer long gone,
Ministry of Education says he has better things to do.
But you don't.
You're sitting on a couch bleached by the weather and older than the long white cloud.
You assume this position of despondency like many young men and women before you.
Trying to get what's yours — be that a criminal record.

Regardless of colour we are all painted with the brush of inclusion. We want something to identify with.
You're monochrome, blue or red foot to head
and all you have to show for it is a minor criminal record and a pregnant girlfriend.
You know you won't make money.
Nobody repped a colour for a reasonable salary, feasible mortgage and a down-payment on a Corolla.
No interest from the opposite sex, save at 2:30am on a cold street when you're alone and nobody's picking up the home phone and you're three streets over from your house but a very long acre from where you want to be.
You knew the path you chose would lead to a multitude of

dead ends, police stations,
parole offices penitentiaries and PD vans.
God defend our prisons full of young men and women, all having their day under the halogen tubes of the District Court.
In the bonds of incarceration we entreat you to consider the consequences of your actions and the long lasting effect they will have on your victims.
But recognise that the effect of my time in prison will be far longer lasting. I don't care for the triple star, guard me from the shafts of personal strife and the Crimes Act.

God defend my Land of the Long White Cloud,
long WINZ queue, shorter prison sentences and gun barrels.
God knows and the devil knows but you don't know that this next bullet is for you.
But thank the Lord that wasn't you.
Just another young man like you, sinning and failing to stay alive like you.
I only pray to the Lord that won't be you. ■

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a Mother's Journal

by Kaaren Mathias

A few weeks ago I had a high speed mid-air collision with another woman on a basketball court. I landed badly and ruptured two ligaments on my right knee. After my left knee's fracture

last year, being back in a knee brace I'm looking ahead to months of rehabilitation and surgery beyond my present low mobility. I'm scared about fitness and future prospects for tramping.

A friend in Auckland invited me to go beyond the pain of now and reflect on the place of my knees in my whole life. Here's an ode to my knees:

Knees

You knobbly, mid points between my belly and the ground
rarely noticed, you just quietly go about your job
keeping me on my feet and getting me to the next place.

Have I ever stopped to tell you
how much my life's happiness and functionality
rely on your quietly and humbly doing your job?
It is time for you to get some air-time
and notice
and even a bouquet.

You two knees
for the last several decades
have smoothly bent and straightened
supporting me silently through the mundane tasks
of daily life:
to get me out of bed each morning
to get me to the floor to play with my babies
to stand me back up again to cook the dinner
to pedal me on my bicycle to work
to walk me down the road to buy vegetables
to saunter me through bush with a backpack
to grittily kneel on an old wooden pew for prayer.
Every day, faithfully, you have brought me back
home again
walked me up the stairs and gently bent and lowered me back into bed.

You two knees
have supported me silently in moments of intrepid
action too -
kept me standing as I led my first workshop in Hindi
stalwart as I discussed strategies for child survival.

You kept me upright on many days tramping on
treacherous ground,
crossing glaciers, fast rivers and high peaks.

But the only times you were noticed
were those blips of knee injury and distress.
I see the scar on Knee Left from a hockey stick
attack on a high school field.
And poor old Left Patella - broken twice in cycle
accidents
aged 15 and 45 years.
So of course Left Knee is pretty clunky now but
chugging along trying to be dutiful
getting me from here to there.

Now Knee Right always strong and slick
has her time of distress.
You need special exercises and supports.
Time for healing.

O God
may I be kind to these knees.
Be kind to myself
and remember to notice, appreciate
and be grateful for
all things that faithfully
do what is asked and required
with quiet cheer. Amen

*Kaaren Mathias lives with her family in
North India. She works in community health
and development.*

*May beauty
like water on parched ground
seep through our messiness
germinating orchards of love.*

From the Tui Motu Team