

# Tui Motu

## Easter invocation

Kua ara a te Karaiti,  
he pono tonu, kua ara a ia!  
Christ is risen,  
he is risen indeed!

Come, Easter's new light:  
chase away the darkness  
that threatens to enshroud our world.  
Ignite in us a flame  
to warm hearts that have grown too cold  
to trust in love's power.

Come, living water,  
promising never to run dry:  
replenish our puna, the wellsprings within,  
that by recognizing our true worth,  
we may work to uphold the dignity  
of those the world has left behind.

Come, wheat grain springing green  
from the dark womb of te whenua:  
teach us to lose life so we may save it,  
to find joy in giving, in bearing one another's burdens,  
rejoicing whenever life imperilled is set free.  
Let us become the bread we break for the life of the  
world.

Kua ara te Karaiti i te mate:  
kua horahia te aroha!  
Christ is risen from the dead:  
love is come again!  
Alleluia!

## Contents

2	editorial
3	promoter's corner <i>Tom Cloher</i>
4-5	letters
6-7	Guernica – symbol of the modern era <i>Albert Moore</i>
	<b>focus on Christian community</b>
8-9	An unattainable ideal? <i>Mike Riddell</i>
10-11	Family based communities <b>a Tui Motu interview</b>
12-14	The prophetic vision of Peter Maurin <i>Nicholas Drake</i> – <b>interview</b> with Nicholas Drake
15	Eucharist & community <i>Pauline O'Regan RSM</i>
16-17	Seasons – <b>a poem</b> <i>Emily Watson</i>
18-19	Threshold of spring – dark night <i>Diane Pendola</i>
20	<b>poem:</b> manifesto for a simple life <i>Diane Pendola</i> <b>hymn</b> of the month Shirley Murray
21	Anzac day reflection <i>Mike Marshall</i>
22-23	response – An offender's story <i>Peter Frost</i>
24	Travelling with a teaspoon of oil <i>Glynn Cardy</i>
25	Letting go (2) – de-skilled fathers <i>Paul Andrews SJ</i>
26-29	<b>Reviews</b> – oratorio, films, books <i>Jennifer Shennan, Mike Crowl</i> <i>Michael Hill</i> <i>IC, Tom Cloher</i>
30	Crosscurrents <i>John Honoré</i>
31	New rules needed for making saints <i>Humphrey O'Leary</i>

**Cover:** The poem-karakia is by Dennis Horton, to go with the Postscript (p 32)

**Seasons:** The poem on pp 16-17 by 9-year-old Emily Watson is "her own unaided work", says her aunt who sent it to us.

## Peace be with you . . .

Jesus' Easter greeting to his followers has a special ring this year. The cessation of hostilities in Iraq has enabled us to celebrate the Resurrection of Christ without our TV screens being besmirched by images of war. Social turmoil, looting and religious fanaticism continue, but at least the killing has virtually ceased.

What lessons have we learned? Saddam Hussein has gone, but the world is still none the wiser – as I write – whether the *casus belli*, the destruction of Iraq's supposed weapons of mass destruction, was simply a pretext. The mightiest power in the world unleashed its armies in defiance of the United Nations. The Arab world is outraged, and many of America's erstwhile allies remain dismayed and unconvinced.

What hope is there for future world peace, so ardently prayed for by Christian leaders? For me, a poignant moment during the Passion reading on Good Friday was when Peter in the garden took a sword and struck the ear of the High Priest's servant (*John 18, 10-11*). Jesus at once says: "**Put your sword back into its scabbard!**" Matthew adds: "**...for all who take the sword will perish by the sword**" (26,52).

Up to the time of Constantine Christians took these words of Jesus literally and espoused non-violence. Rome was conquered for Christ by the Word, not by the sword. But this absolute became compromised in the course of time, especially as the Church took over many Imperial roles, such as lawmaker and even political power-broker. The use of force was permitted, even if circumscribed by careful *caveats*. No 'just war theory' could ever have sanctioned the recent Anglo-American invasion and bombing of Iraq.

While the first priority for aid and reconstruction must go to victims of violence, in Iraq or Palestine, in the

Congo or wherever the innocent suffer, we should also spare a sympathetic tear for the ordinary people of America. They too are victims – of war hysteria carefully orchestrated by a leadership, whose hands are stained in blood. The Oscar winning documentary *Bowling for Columbine* seeks a reason for this, and finds it in the endemic violence and cult of the gun which haunts contemporary America (*review* p 28).

On another page we print the *cri de coeur* of an ordinary American woman (pp 18-19), who pleads eloquently for a total change of outlook for her people. "The old vision is killing us", she cries. America is going through a 'dark night'. She is speaking not just for her own nation. It is an appeal which might apply to the whole Western world. Greed, consumerism, materialism and aggression are steadily changing our beautiful planet into a waste land. Instead of focussing the spotlight only on the United States, we need to apply the lessons equally to ourselves.

### Christian community

Another insistent message of the post-Easter readings is the call to community. "*The company of believers*", we read, "*were of one heart and soul, and ... everything was held in common.*" Christian community is the focus of this *May* issue. All those who have written have had experience, not always happy, of trying to form or live in community beyond their own households.

Are the ideals which the Apostles preach ever attainable? How do they fit with the desire for freedom and individualism of our age? Do we need to address the imperative to share with and care for one another, before we attempt the much larger task of establishing peace and a just world order?

One for whom these two issues were unbreakably linked was Mahatma Gandhi. He is rightly acclaimed as the

father of modern India, the world's most populous democracy. But his legacy to humankind is much broader.

- Very early in life Gandhi read and took to heart the Gospel ideal of non-violence. Turning the other cheek became for him an uncompromising principle.

- He also resolved to renounce material possessions and live a life of utter simplicity. This included manual labour, doing his own laundry and spinning his own yarn.

- Village life was his ideal. He dreamt of an India consisting mainly of self-supporting villages. He desired to reverse Western industrialisation.

- He advocated a classless, egalitarian society. He wanted to see the Hindu caste system abolished. And he was an advocate of the social and political

equality of women.

- He tried to live what he professed. He wanted India's leaders to do likewise, from the Governor General down! "No leader of an independent India", he said, "will hesitate to give an example by cleaning his own toilet box".

Tragically, his vision of a united, independent India – with Muslim and Hindu, Sikh and Christian living side by side – was not to be. The independence from Britain he campaigned for for much of his life, was brought about in a sea of blood and violence, eventually engulfing Gandhi himself.

Nevertheless, his legacy remains as an inspiration for millions. Interestingly, it was the carnage of the World Wars and the invention of the Atomic Bomb which finally convinced him that the

non-violent way was the only future for humankind. And in view of subsequent history, who could disagree?

Mahatma Gandhi prayed daily and fasted, observed regular times of silence and practised voluntary chastity. He remained a devout Hindu even though he read the Koran daily and based much of his philosophy of living on the Gospels. He wrote: "If Christians would really live according to the teachings of Christ found in the Bible, all of India would be Christian today."

If we live in harmony, if we love and support our neighbours – Christians or Muslims, Kiwis or Americans, black or white – then the future peace of the wider world is assured.

M.H.

### Promoter's Corner

**T**ui Motu is looking good don't you think? Content, layout, cover design, all combine to make it looking as professional as most of the publications at the supermarket checkout, but it sometimes worries me that TM's spruce appearance may convey the unfortunate impression that we are in good financial shape.

Occasionally someone suggests that it would be more fitting if TM looked as if it needed help. That would be a sad way to garner support and unworthy of an enterprise that strives for excellence. We can't dress our authors in rags. They're too good for that.

Sadly enough the source of most of our financial pressure currently stems from no less a public 'favourite' than *NZ Post*. Its postal charges to us have increased 11 percent in the past year, far and away above the inflation rate. When all of the product must travel by post, it's an important budget item.

We really do want to avoid increasing the price of TM. It may be worth more, but we don't want to make it less accessible

to those for whom four dollars could be a cut off point.

On the other hand some of our readers have the very welcome habit of rounding off their subscriptions, adding a few more dollars to their cheque; we even have one superannuitant who virtually doubles the subscription due, affordable no doubt. Such unsolicited gifts are vastly encouraging budget-boosters.

Sorry to be going on about money, but the stuff seems inescapably necessary. The bankruptcy court is not yet casting its beady eye on us. We don't have too many options: reduce our costs (we've done that!), increase our circulation (we're doing that, but with only gradual gains), and receiving additional donations.

At five years of age, TM might expect to be still a dependent, but she is very grateful to all who make her less so.

Tom Cloher



ISSN 1174-8931

**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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Printed by Rogan McIndoe Print Ltd



## Pastoral ministry 1

I read with interest the articles in your *April* edition on pastoral ministry. I believe the Church at present is facing a crisis and this could be a crisis that leads to death or new life.

If we look at the setting up of pastoral areas and the training of lay people for pastoral responsibility with one foot in the camp of control while trying to find new answers for new situations I believe we are doomed to fail. The role of the baptised is full and active participation, but still we want to single out some for special tasks such as pastoral leaders. We do this without asking ourselves what role will all the Baptised have in the parish?

The principle of subsidiarity states that "a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its function," therefore why do we continue to deprive the baptised of their function? Yes, we should train people for pastoral leadership but their role should be first and foremost to lead others to discover their own particular gift or charism and to enable them to use them in the service of the Kingdom of God. We have the personnel – we are just not using them.

I am also concerned by the merging of and clustering of parishes which I believe is in danger of becoming a forerunner to centralisation, that in the end it will be one large parish which will deprive people of the church where they live.

I believe that we should foster a multitude of small faith communities within all present parishes and support them to support and minister to one another. Christian communities such as these could be encouraged to spring up in all neighbourhoods, becoming a leaven in the communities where they live. These communities would not need to have leaders put on them from outside, but would rely on the gifts of each member of the group, and would select for themselves the appropriate people for a specific task, along the lines of what is happening in the Australian Parish of Caloundra.

## letters

Then we could develop a structure that would be able to bring them together and would enable them to access resources. This would make each individual baptised member of the group responsible for the mission of the church. The alternative is to replace one hierarchical system with another, leaving the Baptised to abdicate their responsibility for the building up of the Kingdom of God, once again; this time, over to a pastoral team.

I believe we need to be creative and let the Holy Spirit lead us, but we are not trusting enough that the Holy Spirit lives in all the baptised rather than a few chosen ones.

*Teresa Homan, Upper Hutt*

## Pastoral ministry 2

The latest issue of *Tui Motu* is still maintaining the "can't be put down" standard. I was interested in the articles on clustering, and the greater issue of educating people in liturgies of Word and Eucharist. Here in Levin we have had this event every Monday morning for the last 15 years or so and any other weekday when a priest is not available. We have a series of liturgies which covers the whole liturgical year, and we have two or three ministers of the Eucharist to lead these. The one sad fact is that while the average attendance at weekday Mass is about 30, the normal attendance at Monday liturgy is about six or eight. Why is it that people see liturgy of Word and Eucharist of far less importance, and therefore not worth the effort of attending.

Maybe this is one job of education that our clergy should be doing now, before clustering comes into general use in most dioceses.

*B Kelly, Levin*

## Ordination of women

I understand Jacquie Lambert's torment (*February*) over the ordination of women. In our very secular society that shows scant regard for any tradition or authority (including that of the church), it can be hard to understand the reasons why the church has definitively decided not to ordain women to the priesthood.

The argument I find most convincing is that Christ ordained no women and neither did his apostles. Not even the pre-eminent Christian of the times, Mary the Mother of God, who ranks well above all popes, bishops and human priests, was ordained to the priesthood.

In the 2000 years of the church, there is no tradition of women priests. No one should be upset that the priesthood is closed to women, because there are plenty of other callings in the church open to women. Mother Teresa is perhaps the pre-eminent Catholic of our times, who achieved great holiness and spread the gospel in a particularly profound way. Her femininity did not prevent her rising to lead a large multinational order, shouldering a responsibility and reaching more people than most priests could ever dream of.

Take heart that there is at least one other noble calling not open to women and that never will be, that of husband and father. It is through a profound understanding of the divinely created nature of fatherhood that has led the church to decide in favour of continuing the tradition of a male priesthood.

There is little point in relitigating this issue, because Pope John Paul II has spoken definitively (*Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*) "I declare that the Church has no authority whatsoever to confer priestly ordination on women and that this judgment is to be definitively held by all the Church's faithful."

The real issue remains: *do we accept the divinely established authority of the Church or not?*

*Chris Sullivan, Pakuranga*

*Tui Motu welcomes letters to the Editor, but requests that where possible writers keep to 200 words, although they may be abridged*

Although not a Roman Catholic I have been reading *Tui Motu* for about a year and enjoying every line of it. It therefore came as a bit of a shock to read "Going Organic" (*April*). As the interviewees are Massey graduates I wonder how such errors crept in.

- **Acid fertilisers?** Rock phosphate, potash and urea certainly are not. Super may be made with acid but it is not itself acid. Think of the benefits it has brought to the high country previously eroding but now growing grass and rabbits.
- **Anaerobic soils.** I do not see how soil wetness and abortion are related.
- **Vaccination** has brought perhaps more benefit to the human race than any other discovery. Since the time of Louis Pasteur smallpox and poliomyelitis are two of the many diseases that have

become rare.

- I would point out that **poisoning** the rats on Kapiti Island has greatly enhanced the bird life and is contrary to the message of *Silent Spring*.
- Any soil expert will tell you that **encouraging earthworms** is a good thing, and the old DSIR Soil Bureau did much work on them. The importance of not letting your soil get too acid was a major point, and lime addition is widely used by farmers.
- Conventional farming is linked to the weather? .. or **climate**, as the author says. Our climate has not changed. Dry years and wet years have always been around. Ask Joseph, of Egypt!
- The desire to have **Biogrow labelling** to increase income and hence increase the

cost of food is not to be recommended when much of the world is hungry.

- **Compaction of the soil** is often due to heavy stocking and substitution of cattle for sheep will increase the problem. I would suggest Mark use more lime to encourage the earthworms.

- Finally, I put it to Maureen that the **banning of DDT** has lead to a huge increase in malaria causing deaths to thousands. Was it worth it?

*R Allbrook, Hamilton*

*(Others may wish to respond to these scientific objections. However, two 'facts' generally accepted by the scientific community are preference for biological over chemical control and global warming. Ed)*

## Final war protest



Photo: Paul Sorrell

On Saturday 13 April, the final protests against the Iraq war took place in various New Zealand cities. The picture (*above*) shows the culmination of a peace march to the offices of Dunedin North MP, Pete Hodgson.

A petition was presented calling on the government not to become involved in Iraq while occupied by Anglo-American invading forces. It also requested that the government apologise to the Iraqi people for the continued imposition of sanctions

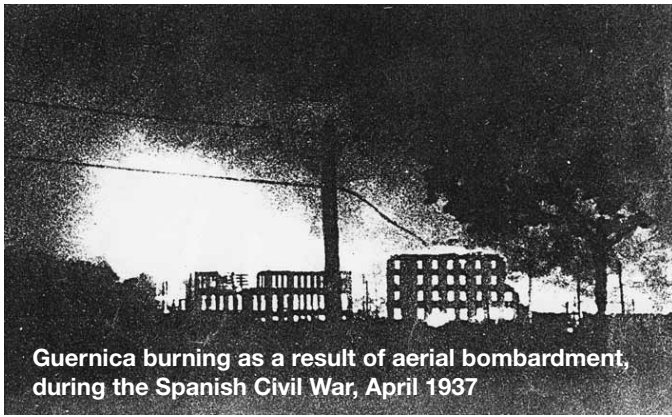
over the past 12 years which have caused the deaths of thousands of children.

Green MP Rod Donald earlier stated that public opposition to the war had helped keep New Zealand neutral. Another speaker warned people against being persuaded by media reports that the invading forces were welcomed by the ordinary Iraqi people. They hated Saddam Hussein... "but the United States invasion was even more unpopular". ■

## Wairua Oranga

We are not alone  
 When the memory of a loved one  
 Fades  
 And blends with nature  
 To become  
 The splendour of a sunset  
 The caressing feel of a stream  
 The warm embrace of a fire  
 On a cold lonely beach.  
 When sadness as tears  
 Melts  
 With the snowflakes  
 To nurture new life  
 We know  
 We are not alone.

*Bill Walters*



Guernica burning as a result of aerial bombardment, during the Spanish Civil War, April 1937

# Guernica – symbol of the modern era

*Nothing illustrates the obscenity of modern warfare  
more than the mass destruction of civilians and cities by aerial bombing.  
Picasso painted his great mural of Guernica in 1937 in protest at the very first example.  
Albert Moore describes the genesis and message of Picasso's masterpiece  
and applies its message to recent events*

They were only practising at Guernica. But it was pretty successful in showing what could be done by the latest techniques in 'saturation bombing' of a small, defenceless town. In its crowded market centre on a fine spring afternoon of April 1937, three hours of bombing reduced the town to rubble.

Guernica was the ancient religious capital of the Basque people in northern Spain. In the midst of the destructive Civil War of 1936-7, the Basques had supported the Republican government and even gained a brief period of political independence.

On the opposing side, Franco was determined to give the Basques no quarter despite the Vatican urging him to negotiate. Instead he made use of his Fascist allies with their new German planes equipped for incendiary bombing and machine-gunning of the fleeing populace. Of the town's population of 7,000, inflated by some 3,000 refugees, an estimated 1600 were killed and 900 injured.

There was international outrage at this act of terror. Franco's Nationalist government covered up with lies and disclaimed responsibility. Interestingly, the German government eventually apologised for the atrocity in 1998.

The wider lesson, alas, was learned by the Allies as well as the Nazis during World War II, which followed less than three years later. Saturation bombing of Dresden in 1945 followed shortly by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, would each wipe out around 100,000 lives. Guernica turned out to be a practice run for later essays in mass destruction.

## The artist's response: Picasso

Pablo Picasso was born a Spaniard in 1881. From 1904 he lived and worked in France – in Paris and Cannes – for the rest of his life. He continued to identify with the Republican socialist cause and with Barcelona and the Catalans. So, as an internationally famous artist, he was commissioned to paint a mural for the Spanish pavilion at the 1937 World Fair in Paris. Picasso quickly found his focus through his outrage at the horrors of the Spanish Civil War, summed up in "*Guernica*".

**the most monumental and  
celebrated work of social and  
political expression in our time**

In a couple of months he worked through and developed his designs to complete a very large mural painting, measuring 3.5 metres high by 8 metres long. Catalysed by the artist's hatred of war and compassion for the victims of violence and suffering, the painting has been called by art historian E.B. Feldman "the most monumental and celebrated work of social and political expression in our time".

On the one hand this painting (*see right hand page*), in black, white and grey, has the sense of a contemporary news report of a disaster, or even the action scenes from a 1930s newsreel. On the far left one can detect a burning building and an agonised mother with a dead child. There are the shrieking gestures and dismembered limbs of victims, under the harsh glare of an electric light. But on the other hand the painting does not explicitly depict Guernica or the enemy bombers.

Rather, it shows the effects of war in the pain and fear of its victims. Hence it is able to evoke our own feelings of outrage and compassion for the sufferings of humanity in all such concrete situations.





The bull: symbol of brute power

Of particular significance are the symbols of the bull and the horse, which long fascinated Picasso from seeing Spanish bullfights. Going back to that fabulous bull-monster, the Minotaur of ancient myth, Picasso made a series of etchings during the '30s on this theme. The bull is often a figure of brutal power inspiring terror. Yet this is not always the case. In the bullring the horse and toreador may be gored, but in the end the bull suffers also.

Picasso was reluctant to confine his symbols to a single political theme. When asked in an interview about his images, he did say that the agonised horse (*above right*) represented the people and the bull (*above left*) brutality and darkness. But he did not identify the bull solely with Franco and Fascism. His overall concern was to evoke compassion for the victims of the Spanish tragedy.

### War – then and now

Picasso drew attention in this mural to the individual sufferings of the victims of war. We still need this message. In the 66 years since Guernica, war has developed new forms of mass destruction. World War II evolved into 'total war' with the saturation bombing of cities, the destruction of buildings and the slaughter of civilians.

Moreover, this can now be done in a more impersonal way. Electronic and automated controls have evolved alongside

more penetrating and destructive 'precision' bombing. One can watch the events of war on a TV screen with a mixture of horror, excitement and a curious detachment. It is almost like a video war-game running through its options with 'high-tech' efficiency.

**T**he Anglo-American invasion of Iraq ended the effective rule of

Saddam Hussein in four weeks. The struggle was not prolonged, and casualties were light in comparison with other recent wars. It is, however, ironic that the number of Iraqi casualties (according to American figures) approximate to those killed in the Twin Towers – and most were innocent civilians. Talk of a "quick victory" and a "just war" can cover a host of unanswered questions and ambiguities.

It is here that the message of Picasso's "Guernica" along with the wave of peace protests across the globe point to a more Christian and humanitarian solution. Spaniards, for instance, were outraged that their Prime Minister fell into line with Bush and Blair – and one comparison made was with the massacre of the innocent at Guernica.

Maintaining peace internationally will require global co-operation and this has to come through the United Nations. Compassion must go with understanding and untiring efforts for the rebuilding of the lives of suffering humanity. Can any political action ever justify the wanton slaughter of human beings? ■

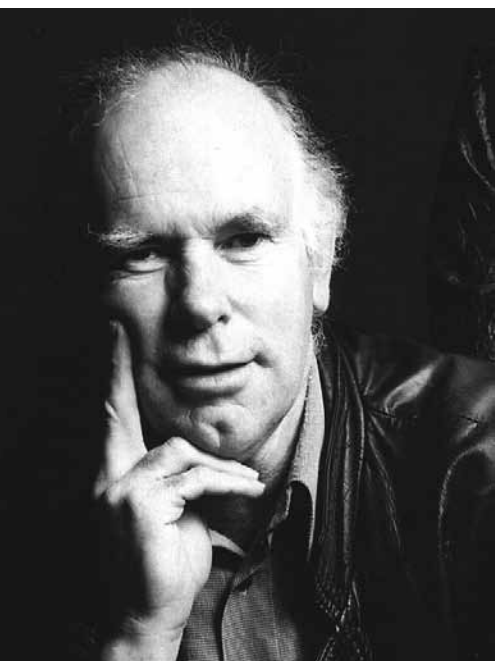


Picasso: sketch for mural



Pablo Picasso: *Guernica*, the mural he painted for the 1937 World Fair in Paris. It shows the artist's horror at human suffering caused by the first-ever aerial destruction of a town in N Spain during the Spanish Civil War

...the believers were of one heart and soul; no one claimed private ownership of any possessions, as everything they owned was held in common (Acts 4,32)



## An unattainable ideal?

*Mike Riddell discourses over various attempts to establish communities based on the Gospel ideal. Many failed. So how do we as Christians respond to this call to love?*

Community is to Christianity what apple pie and motherhood are to the United States; symbolic of Utopian contentment, seldom challenged, and largely illusory. As the West continues its steady historical march into extreme individualism, the call to recapture something of the gospel tradition of communal living is often proffered as an urgent counterpoint. But is that sincere cry anything more than a romantic dream?

I must confess to a lifelong intrigue with notions of community. It began in the days when James K. Baxter was based in Jerusalem, prowling the country with his reports of a place of human warmth and acceptance. When Prime Minister Norman Kirk announced his 'Ohu' scheme, I was quick to register my interest. The proposal promised grants of Crown land to organised groups who were invited to model themselves on Israeli kibbutzim. As far as I know, all of them failed.

A little later I washed up in the rainforest surrounding Kuranda in northern Queensland, where a group of ragtag hippies had established a community of sorts. There we lived in primitive and drug-assisted innocence, swimming naked in the river to the amusement and keen interest of daily trainloads of tourists. My ambivalence to the new way of living was probably marked by my finding a private corner of the forest in which to erect my tent.

It was while I was in Kuranda that news reached me that Baxter had died. I was disbelieving and deeply shocked. It seemed as if something of his communal dream died with him. By that time, of course, his own community at Jerusalem was in disarray and he was deeply depressed. Was it the dream which was flawed, or simply his attempt to attain it?

That question has dogged me through various other attempts at communal living in my life. I spent a year living in intentional community with other Christian people, which extended to the sharing of all income and expenditure. At the end of the period I was bruised, weary, disillusioned; but still committed to the ideal of community, which as a gospel touchstone seemed unassailable.

As I've grown older, I've increasingly come to doubt the value of the huge

amount of emotional energy which goes into the maintenance of visible communities. They often seem to demand more than they deliver, and frequently produce emotionally scarred people who become bitter in contemplation of failed hopes. Those that survive do so only through the limitation of personal freedom by relatively severe rules.

Christian history is of course replete with various expressions of communal living. From monastic orders to the wild-eyed Anabaptists of Munster, there have been continuing attempts to flesh out the injunction of Christ that we 'love one another'. Frequently the ventures are motivated by a desire to provide some sort of witness to the unconditional and communal love which streams from the heart of the Trinity.

This makes it all the more distressing when such experiments bear witness not to divine love but to human foibles. What is proposed as a sign of hope in a jaded world easily becomes a cause for despair by those on the inside, and for indifference or bemusement from the surrounding world. Such disappointments may become counterproductive by suggesting that there is no alternative to a rigid individualism, of a kind we are totally familiar with.



But simply because the ideal is not often realised, it doesn't necessarily follow that it is misguided. Love of enemies is rare as well, but this should not deny our attempts to approximate it. Christ often asks more of us than we are capable of achieving, as the *Sermon on the Mount* clearly demonstrates. There is undoubtedly something about the gospel which moves in the opposite direction to the tide of individualism.

The challenge for us may be the particular form that communal values might best take in order to give expression to Christian love. Often it has been assumed that the truest expression requires the living together in close proximity of people who are devoted to and base their life upon Christ. The philosophy behind this seems to be that those involved might thereby mutually reinforce their faith and so produce a more vivid representation of it.

Thus many Christian communities are Utopian and countercultural. They start from a position of challenge to existing values and patterns of human society. The more closed and insular such communities are, the more they stand in judgment of the people they exclude. And the open ones, such as *Jerusalem*, tend toward gradual dissolution generated through the very acceptance they seek to model.

Theologically, the question becomes that of the relationship of the kingdom of God to the existing human community. Are we called to build working models of a kingdom life which is always (by definition) beyond the reach of ordinary sinful people, in the hope that it might provide inspiration? Or can there be some more fruitful encounter between the gospel and the masses?

A suggestion along the latter lines is provided, ironically enough, by James K Baxter himself. In a remarkable unpublished document entitled *A Handbook for the Christian Militant*, he outlines a radical vision of faith and humanity. Written in the early part of 1972 (the year he died), this

manifesto draws together many of the threads of his earlier thinking.

In it he equates the kingdom of God with what he terms "the fully human society". Baxter recognises that this will always be beyond human capacity. "But it begins on earth. If we do not spend our bodies and souls labouring here for the wholly human society, then Heaven could have no meaning for us. Heaven is Divine and human community." The argument presented is that the call of faith in Christ requires us to work at building community not among ourselves, but among all people everywhere.

In the light of this demand, Baxter declares the churches (including the Catholic church) to be 'sects'. In other words, they are opting out of the divine movement within the broad populace in order to pursue their own narrow ends. Christian people have yet to learn their true vocation: that of being servants and "to construct the fully human society". Community is an ideal not to be enacted merely in the presence of the surrounding population, but rather among the members of it.

If it is difficult to achieve communal life among those whose lives are suffused by faith, then the attempt to build it among a secular populace may attract a certain cynicism. But Baxter, I think, is onto something with his deeply Christian humanism. His vision of what God is seeking to do in the world is at once broader and deeper than that which is often proffered by the churches.

Social and political activism, in his vision, become clear expressions of Christian faith, if indeed they are devoted toward communal and compassionate ends. The goal advanced by Baxter is not that of making a constantly fragmented society into the kingdom of God, but rather of slowly working to transform it in that direction. In this way the task is not the building of communities so much as community. By so doing the Christians become servants to *te morehu* (the people).

Given the isolation and marginalising of so many in our 'community', the devotion to strengthening bonds of belonging, participation and justice can be seen as a continuation of the incarnational movement. The aim in this scenario cannot be to have everyone living under the same roof, nor indeed to be nominally equal in some communitarian sense. Rather it is to foster and nurture those strands of human connection which already exist between people, and to resist whatever divides them.

In the zeal of my youth, it seemed to me that the call of Christ was away from the murky world of human endeavour, and into some bright pristine future. As the years have passed, that ambiguous sphere of human commerce and relationship has come to represent for me the world which God so loved. If I dream of community still, it is the hope of ordinary people beginning to recognise their responsibility to and for one another. That is a dream still remote, but also intimately close. ■

*Mike Riddell is a Dunedin-based author & theologian, with a special interest in the writing and thought of James K Baxter*

## Bible Society ad



# Family based communities

*Tui Motu initiated a dialogue with a Catholic couple, who prefer to remain anonymous, on the general theme of Christian community. For the purposes of this article we will call them Brendan and Carol.*

Early in their married life Brendan and Carol were inspired to go overseas and work for a few years on a mission station. For most of that time they lived and worked with a mission-ary priest and a small community of religious Sisters.

The inspiration of this time spent in a Christian community has remained with them over many years. At one stage it motivated them to go in with other couples in a shared venture. Although eventually this did not succeed, their experience has led them to reflect on what factors underlie the formation of lay Christian communities and what are the pitfalls.

What follows is the fruit of their reflection on a lifetime of seeking the community ideal.

## Christian community – a profile

Some time of shared prayer is essential to the health and growth of any Christian community, but it shouldn't be too rigid. There should be a commitment to try and meet daily for some time of prayer and Scripture reflection. It is equally important to socialise and participate in shared activities together, such as games, music, outdoor activities and hobbies. It is also hugely 'bonding' to regularly enjoy meals together.

As early as possible in the life of a new community, its purpose, vision and hopes need to be established. Is it simply to live a life together of 'caring and sharing'? Or to create a good environment for the families involved?

While these are very desirable, they cannot be seen as the long-term objective. It's necessary to have some defined outreach planning to avoid becoming inward-looking and self-

centred. The group must develop in practical ways its *mission* or reason for being – or it will eventually see no reason to continue.

## Hospitality

One vital aspect is the offering of hospitality. While this does not have to be completely an 'open house' arrangement – in the sense of offering accommodation and meals at any time – visitors must always feel warmly welcome. Invitations to meals and/or accommodation, even when inconvenient, are often a test of the commitment of community members to be truly hospitable.

In our experience this sometimes caused difficulties for some who might be easily unsettled by unexpected arrivals. For a time we were offering hospitality to people who were simply in need of 'time out'. You had to be prepared not only to share your table but also prayer time – as well as a sympathetic ear. A 'come and see' approach is to be recommended, inviting people to come and share prayer, study, retreats, arts, music, crafts and other interests.

It is usual and desirable in lay communities for members to work at their regular outside employment, unless of course there is some form of farming or industrial enterprise at the heart of the venture. Naturally, the general chores should be shared as in a normal family. Often, visitors can create a lot of extra work, and there is a danger that some members will be left to do more than their fair share.



Sharing Eucharist is most desirable if the local priest is willing. Ecumenical groups, however, could find it to be divisive unless it is handled with great sensitivity.

### Writing a contract

We would most strongly advise having a clear and legally recognisable ownership agreement for any property bought or occupied by the community. As in marriage, break-ups are always possible, and things can become unpleasant if safeguards are not put in place from the outset. Members should always have the freedom to withdraw with dignity and minimal financial disadvantage, if they find that they cannot continue to live in the community.

At the same time, fairness must prevail, and the community must be given adequate time and opportunity to recompense those leaving, otherwise the premature leaving of some members might force a property to be sold to settle debts, thus making it difficult for the community to continue to function.

Ideally, we think individual families should have their own separately-owned property, or else simply pay a rental to whoever has capitalised the venture. Of course, day-to-day living expenses require some pooling of funds, as they would in a flatting situation.

If the above points are kept in mind there is no reason why a mix of marrieds, singles, children and religious would not work well. However, it is better always to have separate households for the natural units. Parents must take full responsibility for the guidance, care and discipline of their own children. Mixed theologies and ages generally would be an advantage and mutually helpful.

Community living is not easy. Single people in religious life work hard at close community living and still find it demanding, even after years of effort. The challenge is greater when lay people, used to many years of independent living, are suddenly expected to live closely together.

Experimentation and honest respect for the sensibilities of all members can determine how frequently and how closely a lay community can be expected to 'muck in' together.

### Community leadership

Christian Communities often form around 'charismatic' figures. These can be successful if great care is taken to ensure it doesn't lead to domination and rigid rules – recipes for ultimate disaster. Sometimes insecure personalities are drawn to such strong leaders, and in fact derive some comfort in being told how to live their lives. But how can that lead to their growth?

If, however, a charismatic leader is blessed with a healthy dose of wisdom and humility – a *St Francis* type – then the whole community may greatly benefit. With any group that wishes to share closely, it is essential that each person's gifts be recognised, encouraged and respected. We are blind if we don't see giftedness and potential in each individual. Inevitably there will be those who are good organisers, and tend to take a lead in developing and sensing the direction of the group.

The larger the group, the more the responsibility for management needs to be entrusted to one who is recognised as having the ability to deal with the practical, day-to-day issues. But care must be taken not to place *all* the power in the hands of one or two people. Most decision-making should come by way of general consensus.

It is healthy if members have frequent, well-planned meetings to deal together with all the main issues affecting them. All must be given an opportunity for the free expression of their hopes and dreams, bearing in mind that the clearest vision and the greatest sense of God's leading may rest with the least expected member. It might be the 'David' of the group, whom no one thought had anything worthwhile to offer.

It is wise to have someone independent of the group, but respected for his/her counsel and wisdom, who could help

in the event of major disagreement or simply offer advice from their own experience. Someone with legal or accounting skills would be valuable even during the formation time.

### Relations with the church

The community should be actively involved with the local church, offering to serve with their various talents. Running retreats or prayer/scripture groups would be options if the skills were there. A completely different focus for work might be a place to work on the land, promoting organic growing, care for the earth etc. Before all else, a Christian community should stand clearly for justice and peace, and be seen as a very caring body: a place of welcome and hospitality.

### Conclusion

Generally, those contemplating forming community must have more than just a romantic notion of a blissful life together. There are likely to be great difficulties in making the adjustment to any form of communal living. The older the members, generally the more difficult the transition.

Each person must be quite prepared to make major concessions, be prepared to move right out of their comfort zones. You have to be willing to accommodate without complaint the odd and annoying habits of just about everyone else in the group. This will take courage, tears and much dogged perseverance, a lot of commitment and prayer. There is a huge risk of it all *not* working out as planned.

In our case, although the journey was painful and sometimes seemingly disastrous, new directions were discovered amongst the ruins. We are ever thankful for the growth and blessings we experienced despite all difficulties. The crucial factor is finding other couples and individuals who are prepared to make the same sort of sacrifices to achieve the common purpose. Maybe the journey and the effort to be as faithful as possible to God's leading is more important than achieving the results we expect. ■



# The prophetic vision of Peter Maurin

*Auckland music teacher, Nicholas Drake, records the principles put forward by Peter Maurin, who in 1933 with Dorothy Day, founded The Catholic Worker movement in the USA*



Aristide Peter Maurin (1877-1949). Brought up in France, he lived most of his life in Canada and the USA

**P**eter Maurin (1877-1949) was the co-founder and philosopher of the Catholic Worker movement. He developed a social programme based on the gospels and their exploration by St Benedict, St Francis and medieval Irish monks, amongst others. A prominent feature of his thought is the Catholic philosophy of personalism.

Personalism has two aspects. On the one hand, it means that every person has immeasurable intrinsic value; on the other hand, it means that we are each personally responsible for every other person. This philosophy contrasts both with individualism and collectivism.

Peter's program was simple:

- Christians should practice hospitality. Each Christian household should have what St Jerome called a 'Christ's room', so that strangers can be welcomed, and help extended to those in need. Each parish should have a House of Hospitality, which should only exist to take care of the overflow from people's own homes.
- Christians should establish farming communes where they practice manual labour and study, where "scholars become workers and workers become scholars", engaging in "cult, culture and cultivation".

- Christians should have round-table discussions "to keep trained minds from being academic", and "to keep untrained minds from being superficial".

Peter saw the Gospels and the radical action of the saints not as impossible ideals or otherworldliness, but as practical solutions to the world's problems. In a society based on greed, individualism, and violence, and characterised by war, destitution, meaningless work, loneliness and addiction, he saw the Christian principals of voluntary poverty (living simply), non-violence, helping others at a personal sacrifice, and refusing to cooperate with unjust structures as eminently efficacious. He saw the medieval monastic model of community, hospitality, study and living on the land by a community's own labour as a solution to unemployment, de-personalising cities, industrialisation, production for profit, and centralised control. He believed it was unnecessary to wait for a revolution – we can begin to live in a revolutionary way whenever we like – building "a new society in the shell of the old."

**O**n the surface, Peter's ideas may seem hopelessly impractical, but I believe, especially in the light of the alternatives, that they really work.

It may seem unrealistic to expect people to practice hospitality, welcoming strangers in need into their homes. But how practical is current practice? People in trouble are shunted from one institution to another, often from an early age, an impersonal and humiliating experience which leaves the person, in the end, alone and dependent, despite the best intentions of those involved –

and I am glad they are there. Institutions simply are not capable of loving people.

Living in a house of hospitality, I find it difficult to summarise the difference between queueing up with 40 people that you don't know to be given a plate of food by someone you don't know, and being a welcomed guest in someone's house where you sit around the table and share a meal with people and talk. But I think you know what I mean. If you go to a nightshelter or a soup kitchen, it is striking how little people even look at each other – most seem isolated and wary.

As long as we continue to live disengaged from our communities, snugly ensconced in our private homes, people who don't fit society's criteria for privilege will remain alienated and uncared for. And with a change in philosophy from rugged individualism to gentle personalism, there will be no criteria for privilege.

Likewise, farming communes (what Peter Maurin called "Agronomic Universities") may seem impractical, but in fact this is basically the village model which has worked for thousands of years and continues to be the way of life for billions of people. There is a limit to the size of a meaningful community – one in which each person can have a say, and know and be known by the rest of the community. Gandhi believed that democracy could only exist in India if power was devolved to the village level.

In addition, there is a limit to the size of any community that does not ruin the environment – the modern city is far beyond that limit. The nature of work is also a factor. In cities, work

is mostly the production, marketing, distribution and sale of goods and services that are unnecessary and harmful. The neighbouring countryside supplies the cities, and agriculture is practiced in a way and on a scale that is environmentally ruinous.

Voluntary poverty is as radical a departure from current thinking as to be simply incomprehensible to many. However, it is clear that the way of life in countries like Aotearoa cannot exist for most of the world's people, if the human race is to continue to exist for much longer. We have to choose between excess for some and destitution for others (along with environmental catastrophe) or a simple sufficiency for all. As the saying goes, there is enough for everyone's need, but not for everyone's greed.

*Nicholas Drake  
(pictured right) has for  
three years been living  
out the Catholic Worker  
ideal, establishing and  
running, in Sandringham  
in Auckland, a 'house of  
hospitality' on the lines  
advocated by  
Peter Maurin*

**Nicholas, you have started a Catholic Worker house. What exactly does that mean?**

The *Catholic Worker* movement is one of small communities that try to practise the basic gospel values of hospitality, the works of mercy and non-violence. They have no formal structure or even leadership, nor are there formal connections between *Catholic Worker* communities.

However, along with the community in the Hokianga, I produce the paper called *The Radical Christian*, and I'm in touch with communities in Christ-church and overseas.

**T**he beginning of all social change will be round-table discussions, whatever form they take. When we begin to talk, in our neighbourhoods, churches, workplaces and homes, we begin to learn, as Peter said, "how things would be, if they were as they should be... how a path can be made from things as they are as to things as they should be".

In recent years there have been UN reports which stated that without radical change there will be no humans alive in 100 years – and that by 2032 there will be billions of people alive on the earth, but the environment will be so thoroughly destroyed that life, according to one report's editor, will be so horrible as to be not worth living.

E.F.Schumacher believed that we are

approaching a 'great convergence' – between the practical imperatives of survival and the wisdom of the great prophets and sages, long-regarded as having admirable motives, but no sense of reality. In this he was preceded by Peter Maurin who articulated this convergence, and indeed showed how a path can be made from things as they are, to things as they should be. ■

*This article first appeared in March in  
The Radical Christian. Reproduced with*



Nicholas Drake, Auckland based 'Catholic Worker', at Te Whiti House

**In building a Christian community, what sort of problems have you found?**

I should explain that this is not an 'intentional' community. I am the only person in Auckland who calls himself a 'Catholic Worker'. The other people who come here don't share a common ideal; they usually have nowhere else to go! They often have nothing in common, and no intention of doing things in common.

In a sense, this *Catholic Worker* house should not exist! With tens of thousands of Christians in this city, should there

ever be eight people living in this five-bedroom house, with one on the sofa and one in the shed? Everyone is welcome here, but should this be the only place where such people are welcomed?

One difficulty is for different people to make a home together when most have been very independent, owning their own home or living in boarding houses, or isolated in some institution. For most, it is their first experience of something like sharing a flat.



▷▷ Another difficulty for me personally is that an overwhelming number of people needing attention come through here. There is almost no interest among Catholics in being directly involved in the house: few people are prepared to live with persons who are the slightest bit odd.

So the workload is greater than one person can handle. I live on the edge of emotional and physical breakdown... sometimes beyond it.

### What kind of people have lived here?

Some are quite able to look after themselves, but cannot find anywhere to live. There is just not enough affordable accommodation around. Many are homeless because of their difficulties with an addiction. They may be in recovery and need a house that is alcohol and drug free. Some are refugees. Among those with mental health problems, some just need a friendly environment to live in, while others are unable to look after them-selves in basic ways.

### Te Whiti house has been going for some time. Has it been successful?

I don't believe in the concept of "success". In the gospel there is no certain level of achievement. The most important thing is to be moving forward, trying to be true to one's ideals. This implies constant failure! If I thought I had achieved a goal, my standards must have been far too low!

If it were not for this house, there are people who would have nowhere to live except the street. It has enabled some to make significant changes for the better in their lives. I don't think it has done anyone harm, but who knows?

Today, two people were here by coincidence, who were here nearly two years ago. Their visits were quite a nice sign that it has been important to some people in the long term.

Most people who live here treat me with respect and some caution because I am in a position of real power. I decide who can have a home here, although leadership here also means doing what needs

to be done, cleaning the toilets etc. Some people have lots of bad things to say about me when they leave.

### How does the house manage financially?

The idea is that everyone who lives here will share the costs, but in practice many turn up with absolutely no money. That's why they are here! I make up the shortfall from my credit card, and we rely on donations to pay off my share. There has never been enough. When I reach the limit of the credit card, I go begging. Next year the landlord is raising the rent from \$450 per week to \$600. That will be the end of this house, as far as I can see.

### Finally, why have you named your house after Te Whiti?

Te Whiti and Tohu led the community at Parihaka in the 1880s. Hospitality was practiced there; it was a refuge for people who had been made homeless. They practiced non-violence among themselves and towards their oppressors. ■



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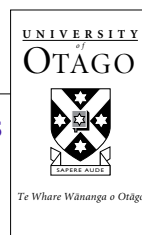
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...they were holding their goods in common so that no one was in want... and they ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God... (Acts 2,44-46)

# Eucharist and Community

*Pauline O'Regan describes her experience of parish community – and finds it fulfils much of what the Book of Acts prescribes*

I am writing this on Holy Thursday, a day of heightened awareness of the place of the Eucharist in our lives. Eucharist is the well-spring of spiritual water that gives ease to our abiding thirst for union with God and with one another. Love of God and love of one another! They cannot be separated.

We might sometimes wish that love of God were not tied so irrevocably to love of our neighbour. But, Jesus insisted that it be so. It's surely for this reason that this great sacrament of love finds its home in the heart of community – and the community in which we most often celebrate the Eucharist is the parish.

Recently at a Lenten reflection the Scripture reading was from chapter 2:43-47, of the *Acts of the Apostles*. It described the new life that the early Christians were leading. These people would still have had the words of Jesus at the Last Supper ringing in their ears: "Do this in memory of me". They were already celebrating the Eucharist at their gatherings. The Scripture passage says that *they were holding their goods in common so that no one was in want and they ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God...* Was this the reality or was it an ideal? I believe it was the reality.

To much greater spiritual profit, however, I began to ask, what about the Christian community to which I belong two thousand years later? Does the Eucharist transform us as it did them? The answer is an unequivocal "yes". Our parish is a mixture of nationalities and races whose paths would scarcely have crossed, apart from the Eucharistic gathering. It includes people of Irish descent, people who came in the '50s from Holland and Britain, a few Asians and South Africans and a majority of Samoans.

Any one of these groups could keep themselves apart from the others, but the miracle is that they do not. The Samoan people came into a small, mainly European parish in big numbers and they could have swamped it. Instead each group is deeply respectful of the other. We are very different from one another and yet we are one. I doubt if the early Christians could have done better.

The 21st Century version of holding our goods in common can be seen in virtually every car arriving on Sunday full of people: neighbours, the elderly, the frail, those without a car, everyone gets a ride to Mass. We eat together often and talk together, we celebrate together, we acknowledge the achievements of our young, we make stumbling efforts to speak the other's language, we share our goods with ease.

If I am ready to offer this as the reality of Aranui parish – and I do – why should I doubt the account in Chapter 2 of the *Acts of the Apostles*? ■

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## Summer

Summer with her royal beauty, shines down upon the world.  
 The bright sun greets us, ready for a season of hard work.  
 As I gaily skip along the long, dry grass,  
 I hear the birds singing sweetly to praise the world.  
 The rose buds open, showing bright colours to the world,  
 while the trees prefer to grow and show their fresh, green leaves.  
 I see the butterflies and bees that hum and flutter past me, Nature's beauty.  
 Everything is growing, life is blooming,  
 and all wind, snow and rain is washed away.  
 Summer is a time for outdoor fun, relaxing at the beach, swimming in the pool,  
 laughing, playing and partying with friends and relatives.  
 Nature is at its best.

## Spring

Slowly but stealthily the rain, wind, hail and snow,  
 is pushed away by the saviour spring.  
 Birds arrive, and sing to welcome and to praise.  
 Green leaves have grown on the trees,  
 while roses fight the frost.  
 In a few days the whole world turns to look in amazement,  
 spring has arrived, joy has arrived, fun has arrived!  
 The sun spreads its golden hands to hug the earth,  
 warming it and lighting it.  
 We all skip outside to play, spring is now knocking winter off its feet.  
 Only the pure breath of the wind billows the curtains,  
 and only fog lies in the air.

Flowers blossom, birds chirp, sun hugs, wind breathes, we party.



## Autumn

Autumn is a time to prepare for winter, as the howling wind says so.

Autumn is proud; of her warning of winter and her strength.

The now beautiful golden leaves are knocked off the trees,  
leaving them bare and deserted.

The birds have flown off to somewhere warm,  
some, like the Shining Cuckoo fly the hard and long migration to  
seek for spring.

Mice burrow into leaves and fall into a peaceful sleep,  
to wait for Spring when the air will be warm, the sky blue.

The rose heads fall off in dismay, and the flowers droop.

I shelter outside, a thick jacket on, and a scarf wrapped around my  
neck,

as I help Dad pick up the fallen leaves.

Autumn shows her power.

## Winter

Winter, the cold and lonely season,  
shows her mighty strength by knocking the world off its feet.

Although the lightly fallen snow is just pure magic.

As I lie in bed, with the warm covers pulled over me,

I hear the wind whistling through the bare trees,  
and the heavy pattering of raindrops on the roof.

As I look outside while reading one day,

I see the green grass covered with frost,  
and the wind breathing deeply onto the earth.

Even down the chimney and through the cracks under the floor,  
the wind still trespasses to our house.

No sound of the birds singing,

some animals have hibernated or migrated, to feel the warmth  
happy dreams of the coming spring.

Winter is power and fury.

Spring is the saviour and our number one friend.  
Now after spring has finished showing its beauty,

Emily Watson (9 years old)



# At the threshold of spring – dark night



We are at the threshold of spring, and we are at war. We, the people of the United States, have allowed our government to pre-emptively strike Iraq

with the full strength of our military force. I ask myself the question: “Where do I go for guidance at this time? Where do any of us go? Where do we find a sense of empowerment for influencing the direction of a future fraught with peril? Where do we go for hope, for forgiveness, for a new vision?”

Both my mother and my father are practising Catholics. They each attended church services on Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, that time set aside for fasting and prayer in anticipation of the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus. At my mother’s newly built suburban church holding over 2500 people, there was standing room only. Normally, Catholic churches are only filled to overflowing these days on the major holydays of Christmas and Easter.

But these are not normal times. American Catholics, all over this country, showed up on the first day of Lent to fast and pray. My guess would be that these people inhabit

the full spectrum of opinion about the justification of war with Iraq. I imagine, if Jews and Muslims, Buddhists and Taoists, Hindus and the whole range of faith traditions had their equivalent to Ash Wednesday at this moment in history, we would see the same human need expressing itself: a need for fasting, for prayer, for repentance. We are touching something here that is not sectarian but universally human.

*heartbreaking to cross  
ourselves with the ashes  
of children crucified*

On Ash Wednesday Catholics receive ashes on their foreheads and hear the words: “remember that you are dust and unto dust you shall return”. In more normal times it might seem a quaint if not archaic ritual.

These are not normal times. These are times to remember the earth we come from, to remember the earth we threaten with our weapons of mass

destruction, the earth that gives us breath and receives our death. I’m reminded of the ash that covered our land after the wild fires that devastated our forest three years ago. These ashes connect me to the millions of acres that have burned in the western United States since then: in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Idaho and California. These are the ashes of the earth burning beneath the effects of rising temperatures, the earth threatened across all of her beautiful expanse by global warming.

They are also the ashes of Americans cremated in the inferno of the Twin Towers on 9-11. The ashes of children incinerated by American bombs – in the past and now, in Iraq. They are the ashes of every violent death by war, by retaliation, by domination. We contemplate over 100 million deaths, most of them civilian, in the 20th century alone, and we choke on ashes.

It is heartbreaking to remember the ashes: to mark ourselves with the ashes

of 30,000 species reaching extinction this year; to cross ourselves with the ashes of children crucified in Israel and Palestine; to immerse ourselves in sackcloth and ashes in the hope that we might yet turn the tide of our human history from war to peace, from justice to mercy, from hatred to love.

As talk of war with Iraq was heating up, I woke one morning from a dream with this question in my mind: *What coherent vision can you live for?* The old vision is killing us. The prevailing vision is one we kill and die for.

Against this backdrop the dream asks: *What is the vision you can live for?* What can you give to your children, to humanity's children, to all earth's children, including the children of the animals and the fish and the birds of the air? It is an important question for us to ask ourselves. In the presence of the ashes, in the devastating wake of old visions of tribe, nation, religion and race, what is the integral vision we can live with?

I don't think the dream's question means there is just 'one' vision, because as soon as my (one, true) vision clashes with your (one, true) vision, conflict looms and war again looks inevitable. No, the dream asks me in a very personal and particular way. And in my own personal and particular way I struggle to respond. I invite you to do the same.

Thomas Berry has said: "the universe is not a collection of objects to be exploited but a communion of subjects to be revered." This begins in relationship, in respect, in the recognition of the right of every being to exist, to flourish, to unfold the depths of its own nature.

And yet, right here at the threshold of this new vision, are the ashes of the old. Here I come face to face with my own participation in the objectification of the 'other', whether human or non-human. Here I come face to face with my own exploitation of the people, the animals, the trees, the rivers and the mountains with whom I share this

world.

I know, to pass over this threshold my heart has to break. I must grieve the loss of so much beauty, of so much innocence, of so much of the world soul. There is a stripping that is being asked of me, and I think particularly of us, the wealthiest and strongest and most powerful people in the world.

This is what brought people to church on Ash Wednesday. A deep part of us knows we need to fast from power, privilege and consumption. We know that somehow our comforts and our cars and our gadgets are at the expense

*the universe is a  
communion of subjects  
not a collection  
of objects*

of people who do not even have enough to eat. We feel a need for repentance. We feel the need for forgiveness.

One of the great spiritual teachers in the western mystical tradition is St John of the Cross. He speaks of *the dark night of the soul*, a narrow passage in a person's spiritual journey in which consolation and comfort is stripped away. In this darkness all of our concepts of God and Goodness and Truth are pruned, and we feel dispossessed of our ideas, attachments, possessions; in short, of everything we have come to identify as ourselves. Yet it is precisely here, in this very darkness, that the ungraspable Mystery reveals itself to us.

We as a country, as a people, could be entering this dark night. And though it terrifies us – because our very lives and security and sense of who we are as a people is threatened – it also holds great promise. If we embrace this night in an attitude of trust, in a spirit of fasting and prayer, willing to let go of what is false and open to a deeper and yet to be known Truth, then our true nature as a people and as a collective force for transformation can awaken.

I am hopeful. The Christian insight into the mystery of suffering, death and resurrection gives me guidance. It gives me a way to recognize those aspects of human life that are misery and crucifixion. But it also affirms these do not need to have the last word. What seems so thoroughly pervaded by death and despair can be undone, transformed, made new.

If we are willing to go through the stripping, to feel our grief, to repent of our complicity with exploitation and the devastation of our planet, then there is the possibility of that dawning of a new heaven and a new earth, where the lion lies down with the lamb, where no one any longer hurts or destroys on God's Holy Mountain: this Sacred Earth. ■

*(The author, Diane Pendola, is co-founder and co-director, with Teresa Hahn, of Skyline Harvest, an Eco-Contemplative Centre in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains in Northern California)*

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## manifesto for a simple life

walk lightly on the earth  
let the water flow freely in its course  
let the heart feel the softness that it feels  
let thoughts rise and sweep the tops of trees  
let thought fall silent  
notice the bars, barriers  
the way energy is trapped  
recycled

release  
soften, let go  
do not cling  
there is nowhere else to be but here  
there is no more important thing to do

but love  
here, now  
the bird's flight  
the grasses waving in the breeze  
your own sweet breath  
the sweet flesh of those you love

who love you  
who are here today only

there is nothing to prove  
nothing to earn

the swallows build their nest  
of earth and water  
bake it beneath the sun  
line it with the down of their own feathered beings  
bring to birth  
tend and feed and teach to fly  
and let go  
they follow their own true nature  
unfailing  
listen

listen to the direction coursing in your blood  
your bones  
you know the way to go  
there is no one to tell you  
but everything  
echoes the knowledge of your soul  
wind water sun moon stars earth

listen  
you do know

diane pendola

## Hymn of the Month

### *O Christ who by a Cross*

**O** Christ who by a cross made  
peace your sign,  
you give your peace in water,  
bread and wine:  
O Spirit Christ who is our  
spirit's home,  
teach us the secret of the true shalom.

We speak of peace when  
in our hearts we war  
and, unforgiving, keep our  
grudges sore,  
we promise peace, while yet  
we strive to win,  
and in our enemy see not our kin.

Two deaths now face the starving  
and the fed,  
the blinding bomb, the simple  
lack of bread;  
with riches of the earth  
at our command,  
from weaponry to welcome, turn our hand.

The selfishness which is our  
human curse,  
the arsenal of hatred which  
we nurse,  
all are dispelled when in our  
hearts we say:  
"There is no way to peace  
– peace is the way"

Murray

Words © Shirley

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# An Anzac Day Reflection

*A reader, Mike Marshall, wonders at the myriad ways  
human beings kill and mutilate each other*

Many many years ago in a fairground in Spain, my friend's blonde wife resisted the temptation of one of the local romeos whose deep and meaningful line of chat-up consisted of pinching her bum. Her husband leapt, James Bond like, from the speeding dodgem car to defend both his wife's virtue and bottom and was confronted by the young dude plus a number of his friends, who felt they had been dishonoured by the rejection. With only a moment's hesitation to tighten my sphincter, I joined my friend in Custard's Last Stand. Oh yes, when it comes to physical violence my spine is the consistency and colour of custard. I mention this story as it is the only, and very small, occasion I can recall that I have ever put myself in the way of harm for A Greater Purpose.

Every year at the time of Anzac Day I try and come to grips with the sacrifice of those who, knowingly or unknowingly, offered to genuinely put themselves in harm's way for a global purpose. As a child in the '50s, I snuggled up beside my father each Sunday morning before church, and asked him again to recount the stories of his war in North Africa and Italy, which he neither excused nor glamorised. As a child of the '60s growing up with peace and love, I listened to Dylan's "Masters of War" and rejected outright those who instigated and waged war. In the '80s, as a child burying his father, I was surprised, humbled and grateful when my father-in-law, a pilot in the J-force, dropped a poppy into the open grave, and saluted. And recently, in the '90s, I joined the increasing numbers who attend the Dawn Parade to honour and remember

those who served.

On Good Friday in the year 2000 my family and I, walking in Wellington, saw four skydivers trail orange smoke as they descended towards Te Papa. We headed that way even though we had only 'done' Te Papa two days previously. Now, however, there was an exhibition featuring various aspects of our armed forces outside the museum. Like a number of others, I was particularly engaged by a large Maori soldier who explained a display of land mines.

As there were children present, considering the subject matter, he chose his words incredibly well. He showed us mines that can explode in every direction, and those that explode in one, those that need tight wires or slack wires to detonate and those that are set at head height for those soldiers who are looking down. There was one jolly device which looked like part of Dr Who's Tardis. This little sucker leaps out of the ground and explodes at groin height. He said it is not meant to kill, but apparently is used against "caring armies", since it takes two people to carry the maimed soldier, so you have taken out three people from the conflict.

Two days before, inside Te Papa, I looked respectfully at World War 1 weapons. You could be dead from the bullets of a Vickers machine gun 3 km away before you heard the sound of the gun being fired. And then there was the biplane where the gun was fired in synch with the propeller rotations so the said propeller wouldn't be shot off. I ended up with an overwhelming sense of astonishment at the inventiveness with which humanity has, over the years, found ways to kill and mutilate itself. The irony was not lost that Good

Friday commemorates the death 2000 years ago of a man who preached love and tolerance. He was executed by a torturous mix of asphyxiation, hypothermia, loss of blood, outrageous physical cruelty and shock. Three years later, once again the Gulf War becomes a television special where we can watch the experts analyse the play, complete with action replays, and describe, with state-of-the-art computer graphics, the amazing technology that controls a new generation of smart bombs. The cost of one of these things could feed and shelter... how many people?

On a number of levels I have many questions and no answers. I haven't got a ready solution to combating the forces of megalomaniacs who want to commit genocide or Presidents who are waging wars on terrorism with a side bet on oil supplies. I don't know how New Zealand can get the best value for its defence dollar. I reel in disbelief at the gun lobby in the States who say that guns don't kill people, as another murdered school child is buried. I ask why there is a plethora of Play Station games in which shooting people is the major motivation. And I also find the Easter Bunny shoot in Otago incongruous: I don't have an answer for humanely controlling pests, but I know I don't like violence and I don't like guns, whatever their incarnation.

And so, in the year 2003, as we celebrate the new life of Easter, and rightly honour the Anzacs, I am left wondering what kind of world would the Anzacs or the man on the Cross be wanting us to live in, three years into in this new millennium. ■

## Response – An Offender's story

He would lie there at night feeling the mounting tension. Would he come? Would he come quietly into the bedroom late in the evening after the house was quiet. Would he? Would he be touched, would he feel his hands, smell him, hear his voice, almost a whisper, would he come tonight, or would he be just by himself, alone, tonight?

Could he get up, go to his mother? No, she would be cross. "Go back to bed, I'm tired. What are you doing up anyway?" No, best not to – mother didn't like hugs, she didn't seem to like anything much about him. "You're dirty, you smell, where have you been, don't touch me, keep your paws off, go outside."

Dad was always away at work. He worked nights, and was asleep in the morning; you had to be quiet in the morning. Dad was different, he didn't growl all the time, he did like hugs, but not around mother for some reason. He seemed withdrawn around her, but he would come late at night and give hugs, sometimes. He missed his older brothers, they had left home, it wasn't much fun now.

School was good. He had friends among the other boys, and the priest was okay. The nuns were more like mum: they ordered him around a lot. They didn't seem to like him, or the other kids, except the favourites. If he got things right they seemed surprised; if he got it wrong they punished him.

One day the priest had rescued him from a cupboard, dried his eyes, and taken him home. He seemed to spend a lot of time in that cupboard. After the priest had left his mother had hit him and said stuff about being embarrassed. Dad came that night and hugged him. Dad seemed to think he was asleep. He pretended he was, it seemed better that way...

When he became a priest himself years later, Mum was pleased. He had never seen her pleased before. Dad was dead now; he wished he was still around. He needed to talk to Dad. He was worried about the boys in the school, he was worried about a lot of things. He was worried about the

touching he found himself doing with some of the boys. He hadn't wanted to at first but he felt such strong feelings they seemed to overwhelm him.

He felt just as lonely at night now as he had when he was at home, and Dad wasn't around any more. Dad had never touched him like that; Dad had just hugged him like he loved him. Dad would hug him now and that would feel reassuring, but Dad was dead. He prayed about it, he pleaded with God really, "Stop me, somehow, please".

It didn't work. Sometimes it seemed like some of the boys sought him out, looked for something from him. He was confused. He wanted to be as good as the others. Most of the other priests seemed confident, self-assured, mature, better than him. They wouldn't understand; they would be shocked. He couldn't risk that. He found fault with some of these people and strove to be cleverer than them...

It was hard to believe he was wearing a mitre and standing before the congregation, *his* congregation, in the cathedral. How had he got here? Others seemed very impressed with him. They spoke of dedication and of sensitive pastoral care, and of deep understanding of the human condition. People appeared to be genuinely fond of him, and he seemed genuinely humble. Being humble had never been difficult for him – he was humble. He knew how fragile humans are. He could use this knowledge.

He knew about secrets and other men who felt as he did. People outside his secret life said he was wise, and he understood this. He knew he sounded wise, and he knew he could be kind, but not always. He knew anger and fear as well. He knew he was wrong, sinful, guilty. He repressed these thoughts just as he repressed the memories of some truly abusive encounters. Some days he wished it would all stop. He had changed in many ways and not at all in other ways. He still felt lonely; he wished his Dad had not died so long ago.

## ▷▷ Indications

This story, made up from people's experiences, contains aspects of lesser known realities about the behaviours known to psychology as paraphilias. There are certain personality, behavioural, and neurological elements in the profiles of persons affected in such ways. It is worth noting them.

A person does not have to be sexually abused to learn to seek 'inappropriate' affection. Simple neglect from a mother or father will be pre-conditioning. He will have low self-esteem. The number of older brothers in a family is also pre-conditioning.

Psychological and physical abuse from both female and male teaching orders is pre-conditioning. The child cannot be responsible for this. He cannot be responsible for any neglect or abuse he suffers, and is therefore not responsible for being a victim of either genetic or behavioural predisposing factors in his life. He is responsible for recognising the presence of these things and for seeking help.

Sadly, some persons who have sought help have been repudiated, and returned isolated and still ignorant to the environment of their offending. The offending remains intolerable. An institution, like a society, has a duty of care and prevention that needs to be applied both morally and legally. The paedophile may be intelligent, resourceful, and even kind. He may be able to gain the trust of families and may do genuinely altruistic things. He will use these skills at times to benefit only himself. His (or her) 'needs' and self-delusions are a hazard to all potential victims.

Proper recognition and constraint of paraphiliac persons is vital but need not be undertaken without compassion.

An institution in which persons have access to children can afford to be aware of the diagnostic criteria for

paedophilia. They are as follows:

- (1) The person must have experienced, over a period of at least six months, recurrent, intense sexually arousing fantasies, sexual urges, or behaviours involving sexual activity with a prepubescent child or children (generally age 13 years or younger).
- (2) The person has acted on these sexual urges, or the sexual urges or fantasies cause marked distress or interpersonal difficulty.
- (3) The person is at least 16 years of age and at least five years older than the child or children in (1) above.

*Note:* One should not include an

individual in late adolescence involved in an ongoing sexual relationship with a 12 or 13-year-old.

It is helpful to understand that the behaviour has addictive characteristics. The person will not of their own accord be able to resist temptation. Consequently, assurances and/or instructions to desist will not be successful. Changing the environment, church or country will merely relocate the offending. The person involved must be prevented from perpetration and helped. An institution needs to be aware that this may involve conviction and professional care. For the undisclosed person, seeking help is vital.

*Rev Peter R Frost B.Th MNZAC, is a Presbyterian minister and psychotherapist in Dunedin*

**Rogan Mcindoe Ad – to be made up by Tina? Stephen?**



# Travelling With A Teaspoon

## a parable...

Glynn Cardy

A certain shopkeeper sent his son to learn about the secret of happiness from a wise man. The lad wandered for many days and finally came upon a beautiful castle. It was there the wise man lived. Rather than finding a 'saintly' man though, the lad, on entering the main room of the castle, saw a hive of activity: tradesmen came and went, people were conversing in the corridors, a small orchestra was rehearsing, and there was a table covered with mouth-watering food. The wise man conversed with everyone, and the boy had to wait two hours before it was his turn to be given the man's attention.



The wise man listened attentively to the lad, but told him that he would have to wait to hear the secret of happiness. He suggested the boy explore around the palace and gardens and return in two hours. "Meanwhile, I want to ask you to do something", said the wise man, handing the boy a teaspoon that held two drops of oil. "As you wander around, carry this spoon with you without allowing the oil to spill."

The boy began climbing and descending the many stairways of the castle, keeping his eyes fixed on the teaspoon. After two hours he returned to where the wise man was.

"Well," asked the wise man, "did you see the Persian tapestries that are hanging in my dining hall? Did you see the garden that took the master gardener ten years to create? Did you notice the beautiful parchments in my library?"

The boy was embarrassed, and confessed that he had observed nothing. His only concern had been not to spill the oil that the wise man had entrusted to him. "Then go back and observe the marvels of my world," said the wise man.

Relieved, the boy picked up the spoon and returned to his exploration of the palace, this time observing all of the works of art on the ceilings and walls. He saw the gardens, the mountains all around, the beauty of the flowers. Upon returning to the wise man, he related in detail everything he had seen.

"But where are the drops of oil I entrusted to you?" asked the wise man. Looking down at the teaspoon he held, the boy saw that the oil was gone.

"Well, there is only one piece of advice I can give you", said the wise man. "The secret of happiness is to enjoy all the marvels of the world, but never to forget the drops of oil on the teaspoon."

The wise man in the parable is familiar with some of our realities. He is busy with multiple demands!! He is not a 'normal' wise man. Usually in stories the wise are in a serene state, seemingly unimpeded by demands and expectations.

Furthermore the wise are quite detached from wealth and live in poor surroundings. Neither is the case in this parable. The question is therefore posed: "How does one remain wise while living with responsibilities and possessions?"

The lad who is seeking happiness undergoes the teaspoon test twice, and fails both times. The first time he is completely focused on the oil. That teaspoon symbolizes his inner world. He tries to engage with the outer world, the wondrous world he meets in the castle and its grounds, but can't shift his focus from his inner world.

The inner world, the soul, certainly needs to be cared for. This is the place where the ground of love is prepared, where dreams take root, and where hope is watered. Yet when the inner world becomes one's sole preoccupation it leads to self-absorption. In churches we sometimes get people who are so totally engrossed with their own spiritual journey that they overlook (sometimes purposefully) the world around them. Their faith is all about them and God. They nurture that teaspoon to the detriment of everything else. They begin to believe the teaspoon is everything.

The second time the lad undergoes the test he is alerted to the outer world. He generously and hospitably welcomes new thoughts and feelings. But in doing so he overlooks his own soul. The outer world is noisy, busy, and demanding. It is also often colourful, interesting, and exciting. It wants our attention. Indeed it wants our adherence to the latest product it is peddling. These products are often good, and so we go along.

I had a friend who lived almost solely in the outer world. He was gregarious and welcoming. I imagined him running a great pub. He listened to and discussed life with all and sundry. But I was never sure who I was talking to. Was I talking to him or to the person he was last talking to? Did the spinning merry-go-round of his life have a centre? Or was it all spin?

*What does it profit a man or woman to gain the whole world and lose his or her own soul?* (Mark 8:36)

The parable reminds us of the importance of both the outer and inner world. It reminds us of the importance of our interaction with the subcultures and issues of our time and the importance of our own soul. God is in and through both. It reminds us that neither can be dispensed with, and that both are vitally important to our own happiness and to the happiness of our world. ■

Adapted from Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*, New York: Harper Collins, 1998, p.32-34

# “the only father I have..”

Paul Andrews

## De-skilled fathers

*Why won't he answer my phone-calls?* Five-year-old Oliver was weep-ing. It did not matter that his father had never married his mother, nor that their relationship had broken up in violence. What mattered to Oliver was that the father whom he loved did not seem to have a place for him in his heart and mind. He spoke with that strong simplicity of a child, and the terrible realisation that you cannot force other people's hearts. Oliver phoned his dad regularly. He persuaded his mother to take him across the city to knock on his father's door. But the phone calls hit the unresponding wall of a voice-mail, and the front door remained closed.

I knew the father, and he was not proud of himself. He had married once, had children who loved him and kept in touch with him. That marriage had broken when he started to hit his wife. The same violence broke his love affair with Oliver's mother. Now he had a third lover, and it was squeezing little Oliver out of his life. He liked to think he was no good for Oliver, that the boy would not miss him. If only he could have seen the tears of that boy!

Especially after a break-up, the man may well feel de-skilled, an outcast in the family's eyes, unworthy of the children. But he is the only father they have. They may fight him and be angry with him, but at some level they yearn for him. Much of their future depends on how well he can continue to love them and be a father to them, seeing them regularly, making no promises he cannot keep faithfully, telling them nothing that is not the truth.

It is not only separated fathers who feel de-skilled. Jim's father was kind, hard-working, organised. He had made a good home for his wife and twin sons, and you might say he lived for them.

They were his world. He persuaded his wife to take a job outside while he became a stay-at-home father, constantly improving the house, cooking the meals, keeping the place spick and span. As little boys, the twins delighted him; they were loving, lively and high achievers. In their teens they continued to work hard, but at art rather than the subjects (science and maths) in which Dad had excelled. They became more bohemian, were not always home for the meal which their father religiously prepared every evening. His ambition for them, in collars and ties with high-earning jobs as computer boffins, was so different from what he saw in them. Jim began to feel what many boys feel: *I cannot please my father. He does not like me as I am.*

Jim was right. His father was unable to grow with his sons. He increasingly lived in the past, in his tidy vision of how he had wanted things to be. He became an anachronism, facing backwards, wanting to go into reverse. He felt threatened by the young man who sometimes wore an earring and was back late at night: unremarkable behaviour in a 20-year-old, but his father saw it as a sign of Jim going to the bad, told the son he was becoming an alcoholic and a criminal. He nearly turned him into one. In a completely avoidable development, Jim healed his misery at home by drinking too much on his own.

Jim was no prodigal son. He was loving, industrious, creative, fond of both parents. His one crime was to follow his own dream instead of his father's. The tragedy would have been avoided if his father had only remembered his role. Like any father of a teenager, he had run out of the rewards and punishments that had worked with little boys. He could still control money, though that mattered less as Jim began to earn for himself.

Above all he could still bless. His approval still mattered to his sons: not necessarily approval of their conduct or style, but rather the sort that says: *You are always my child. I am on your side.* Jim's father would have felt that too weak. He wanted to control, not just to bless. He had not moved from being the father of ten-year-olds. He lived in the past and it no longer worked.

This man thought himself Christian, religious. Some religious duties, like Mass on Sundays, he performed faithfully. But if he had looked for help from the Gospels, he might have studied the father of the Prodigal Son. Out of all the scriptures, that story offers the best human picture of fatherhood. He is not a particularly effective father: he does not, cannot save his children from their own mistakes. The younger son squanders his money and bring shame and sorrow on the family. Then, when he turns back towards home with a prepared speech of apology, he finds it superfluous. His father falls on his neck and blesses him. Anyone who thinks it is a religious duty to coerce other people, even one's own children, into good behaviour, should meditate on that parable. What matters for God is not the control of behaviour, but the power of a parent's blessing.

That is the nightly examination of conscience for parents: to ask about each of the children: *Today, did I bless more, or criticise more? Does he/she go to bed knowing that I treasure them, that they please me?* If the put-downs and criticisms outweigh the stroking, then you are far from the kingdom of God. ■

*Fr Paul Andrews is a psychotherapist based in Dublin. He has visited and worked in New Zealand*

## Bach choreographed to fine effect

J S Bach: *St Matthew Passion* Auckland Choral Society **Review:**  
Jennifer Shennan

The Auckland Choral Society drew large and appreciative audiences to the two performances of Bach's mighty *St Matthew Passion* in Trinity Cathedral, Parnell in early April. The ACS was founded in 1855 making this their 148th season. What an immense contribution to the spiritual and musical experiences of Auckland city that represents!

Assembling the necessary musical forces for this particular work (choir of 180, orchestra of 35) presents a huge challenge and it is therefore less often performed than the smaller-scale oratorios, including Bach's *St John Passion*. This season was directed by Peter Watts who, in a brave new move, invited Mary-Jane O'Reilly to choreograph a dance dimension into the production.

I say 'brave' because such a venue poses problems of staging and visibility. The choice as to which music sections should be danced to, the casting of particular characters and the setting of their movement style, all offer considerable challenge to any choreographer approaching a work inherently so dramatic, and so familiar to vast numbers of people. Three soloists of contrasting character and presence, and an eight-member chorus with dignified and beautiful movement, formed the cast. Inventive lighting lent a dramatic atmosphere and the simple lines of white and beige costumes were a perfect choice.

So, did this turn out to be the known and loved Bach oratorio with dancers merely running around making irritating and distracting noises (as reported by the *NZ Herald's* music critic)? Or was it an experience offering new insight into the music? Or did it contribute spiritual significance to the Gospel story?

Many I spoke to had come with open hearts and minds and could give a resounding 'yes' to the last two questions. For me a number of images remain indelible, including that of an inspired young novice dancer clad in white, leaping and flying

as though the soul escaping from a crucified Christ – before being lifted high and carried away by the chorus, his stiffened body in the shape of a wondrous Cross – to the breathtakingly beautiful chorale "Commit the way to Jesus"

The compositions of Bach, as well those of Handel, Purcell and much of Mozart, are imbued with driving rhythms, dynamic vitality and exquisite cadences of the well-known dance forms of their day (such as the menuet, sarabande, loure, bourree, allemande, chaconne and passacaglia). The mood and emotional expression, rather than the original patterns and specific steps, of those early dances can inform the spirit of the music for the performers who follow their intuition.



Kilda Northcott was the personification of Mary Magdalene with alabaster jar of finest fragrant oil and the struggle of her emotional involvement with Jesus. The aria "Grief for sin", with its rhythmic grace and tension of a menuet, saw Northcott in a sublime performance. As Judas, Bruce Hopkins was powerful in his panic. As Peter,

Moana Nepia was withdrawn into the torment of his betrayal.

In the Islamic tradition of Sufi dancing priests, like the dervishes of ancient Turkey, the dancers turned and whirled in a ritual of spiritual devotion that mirrored the earth revolving around the sun and rotating around itself. The dervish's arms were lifted high, the right palm facing





## Destined to be leader

*Whale Rider*

directed by Niki Caro

Review: Mike Crowl

**W***hale Rider* arrived on a strong promotional wave, and is everything it's cracked up to be – and more. It's also emotionally draining.

The story is straightforward enough: an old man in a line of leaders is bitter about not being able to pass his leadership onto his first-born son, and, as a result, has rejected him. The son's wife has twins, a boy and a girl, but dies in childbirth, along with her son. This baby boy was to have been the new leader, and his grandfather is unable to accept instead that the baby girl might be 'the one.'

She becomes the unwanted child – unwanted by the grandfather, although he does take her home to care for her, and mostly unwanted by her father, who's grief-stricken by the death of his wife, and from thereon spends a good deal of time away. He's an artist, but like everything else in his life, this counts for little in the eyes of his father, because the only thing he should have been was the Leader.

But the simplicity of the story isn't the point: the emotional pull between the grandfather and granddaughter is enormous, with a huge tension between his refusal to see her for what she truly is and her persistence and resilience in the face of his obduracy. Then there's the tension between the father and the first-born son (played marvellously by Cliff Curtis, for all his relatively brief screen-time), and yet another kind of tension between the father and the second son, who goes from being an average-sized teenager in the first scene to an overweight, unmotivated character in the rest of the movie. Only the grandmother acts as a wedge between her husband and everyone else, and remarkably manages to support everyone in the ways they need.

upwards, towards the heavens whence grace descends – the left palm facing down, so as to guide that flowing grace to the ground on which humans dwell.

Northcott led the group of dancers in the profoundly moving final chorale "In tears of grief dear Lord we leave thee". In an exquisite out-breath, just as the final note was sounding, arms outstretched in expression of grief, her palms fell into the same position as that of a turning dervish. The resonance of that single, simple gesture – revealing humanity's need to believe in a divine force – seemed to find a particular global poignancy this Easter. ■

*Photos by Sheena Haywood*

The acting is uniformly good: Keisha Castle-Hughes as Pai has a wondrously luminous face, with dark melting eyes and a real normalcy about her: even though we know she's the potential leader, and that she has a sense of mission, she remains a down-to-earth kid. Her prize-winning speech in the later stages of the movie, during which she fights to overcome her tears, is a remarkable piece of work. Cliff Curtis shows a warm, compassionate side in this movie, playing the role of a genuinely tender man who's unable to break the yoke his father has placed on him. Finally his daughter must stand in his stead.

The grandmother, played by Vicky Haughton, is full of warmth and depth, and holds all manner of lives together in a way that's mostly unappreciated. And Rawini Paratene does wonders with a difficult role – required to be stern almost constantly, to be off-putting, to be the leader who isn't good at the job yet knows he must do it, to be severe to the children in his care. Not only does he constantly turn Pai aside, either because she's a girl, or because she's broken a tapu, or because she will persist in being herself, but he even gives the brush-off to one of the best pupils in his school because the boy's allowed himself to be beaten by Pai. It's a remarkable performance in that we remain sympathetic to the man while gritting our teeth with frustration at his single-minded dogmatism.

The last movie to focus as strongly on a Maori community was the minor masterpiece, *Ngati*, in 1987. *Whale Rider* is a tighter film, with better acting, even though it also has some amateurs in the cast. Like its predecessor, it draws non-Maori viewers in, giving us a means to empathise more effectively with the people with whom we share this land. ■

### Develop your Facilitation Skills

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# The Paranoid society

*Bowling for Columbine*

Review: Michael Hill

The curious turn of phrase used by United States weapons inspectors pre-war in Iraq – that they were looking for a ‘smoking gun’ – will cease to be a surprise to anyone seeing this excellent, Oscar-winning documentary. In a society apparently infatuated with the use of firearms, what else would one be looking for? The American obsession with guns is relentlessly exposed by Michael Moore over two hours of interview, reconstruction, newsreel footage and cartoon. Moore’s style is reminiscent of the shabby, shambling TV detective Colombo, as he prises out one devastating admission after another under the guise of apparently naive, disingenuous questioning.

Last year, over 11,000 people were killed in the US by firearms. This compares with a few dozen in other Western societies, including near neighbour Canada. There is a most enlightening sequence where Moore visits Windsor, Ontario, just across the St Lawrence river from Detroit, whose skyscrapers dominate the skyline. It’s a small city, but the police chief could barely remember when they had had a homicide there through shooting.

Some youngsters, asked by Moore why Canadians never seemed to shoot each other, were quite bemused to find a reason. They too watched bang-bang movies; they too had easy access to hunting firearms. One reason suggested from the US side for the culture of violence was racial tension. Yet Windsor has a 15 percent coloured population. Moore did some sleuthing and discovered another fact about the inhabitants of Windsor. They don’t bother to lock their homes. It seems they don’t need to.

Canadians and Americans freely cross from one side of the river frontier to the other. Yet on one side people fortify their homes like fortresses and are about a hundred times more likely to be slain by a gun; on the other is a society outwardly similar, speaking the same language, watching the same TV channels, yet having a totally different attitude to guns and violence. Canadians simply don’t choose to use them on each other.

The film, however, does imply that the media acts as a catalyst. TV newscasts in the US were constantly saturated with stories of shootings; indeed the percentage coverage had gone up at a time when more effective policing had brought about an overall reduction in violent crime.

The title of the documentary refers to Columbine High School, in Littleton, a suburb of Denver, Colorado, where a couple of years ago two students went into the school with

handguns and pipebombs, and killed one teacher and 12 fellow students before turning the guns on themselves. Dozens were injured, including one student now a paraplegic. That morning the two boys had been at the bowling alley with their mates. The 9 mm ammunition they used was freely available at the local K Mart store.

Immediately following the incident the National Rifle Association chose to hold a convention in Denver. Its national President, movie icon Charlton Heston, passionately defended every American’s right to bear arms. In an interview at his Beverley Hills mansion – itself resembling a miniature fortress – Heston defended himself to Moore by citing the Second Amendment to the US Constitution.

Yes, he sleeps with a loaded gun under his pillow. Moore was ushered in to take a peep. Why? As an American citizen, Heston was exercising his God-given right to choose. No, he had never suffered a home invasion or robbery. Nor could he find any justification for the appalling insensitivity of the NRA meeting in Denver while the people were in shock over the Columbine slaughter. Heston simply mouthed the shibboleth “multiple ethnicity” as the basic cause of continuing violence of US society. It was the spectre of coloured intruders which seemed to justify his need to be armed.

Moore has no hesitation in linking this paranoid infatuation with guns and shooting with the present actions of the US government leading up to the invasion of Iraq. The one consolation is the fact that this documentary was ever made and that it was awarded an Oscar. Freedom of speech and comment is still honoured.

Billions of US dollars are being lavished on weapons of mass and indiscriminate destruction so recently being rained down on the people of Baghdad. The US government could and should spare a few million to research the link between the Bush war, the Columbine massacre, the cult of the gun in America and the Second Amendment to their Constitution. There is clearly something very sick at the very soul of American society, a sickness which threatens the well-being of the whole planet. ■

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## Rocking the boat: giving the laity their rightful place

*Restoring the Laity's Balance to an Unsteady Church* By John Vincent Broadbent Firstbooks 2002 **Review: Tom Cloher**

**R***estoring the Laity's Balance to an Unsteady Church* may seem a rather fulsome title but it accurately states this book's underlying thesis: that realistic lay participation in church governance is the best hope for its better future.

Fourteen chapters are presented in four parts. They trace the voyage of the church over two millennia. The image of the Barque of Peter is apt enough, as many perilous oceans have had to be negotiated, and even an occasional shipwreck sustained. That it remains afloat is in itself some considerable evidence of divine guarantee.

The first part observes the early Church with its experience of shared apostolic authority, acceptance of diversity for unity's sake, and its devotion to Sacred Scripture as the fundamental source of belief. These first two centuries manifest closely-knit communities whose formal leadership is elected from their midst, thus confirming the bishop as ultimate but not the sole source of governance.

Part 2 examines a period during which political, spiritual, and liturgical factors placed enormous strains upon the original model. More authoritarian leadership emerged, reflecting the experience of becoming the state religion under Constantine. Roman centralism begins to prevail. Laypeople become subjects rather than fellow citizens of the Church.

Part 3 witnesses the paradox of powerful lay people appropriating church governance, unbalancing the church by making appointments through exercise of temporal power. To escape such extremes the church resorted to increased centralisation. The impact of the Reformation generated a similar reaction. The Council of Trent with its

stream of regulations accentuated the exercise of central control.

This defensive stance changed little until the dramatic shift effected by the Second Vatican Council, reintroducing as it did 'the people of God'. A shared church is proposed once more only to be threatened by the renewed dominance of the Roman Curia. Part 4 concludes on a more hopeful note, introducing the concept of 'the hierarchy of truths', a formula to effect a less absolutist, more participatory style of governance.

**C**hurch governance is identified as to-day's critical issue, lamentably evidenced by the failure of leadership to deal with sexual abuse involving clergy, particularly in the United States of America. The incidence of abuse, though shocking, is less so than the failure of church leadership to deal with the crisis effectively. It has exposed the good name of the church to international ridicule and has raised a justifiable question: if laymen and women were formally included in the church's highest counsels, would such situations be dealt with differently?

Such representation does not propose that they become the ultimate decision-makers. That remains the responsibility of formally constituted leaders. Theirs is the charism of leadership, but it needs to be supplemented by the charism of teachers (theologians), and the charisms of administration and prophecy (faithful Christians) to fully convey a sense of what is right: *sensus fidelium*. This is the coalition of gifts most likely to 'restore balance to an unsteady church'.

Broadbent's primary concern is pastoral. His credentials in this respect are unquestionable, as significant parishes throughout the country can testify. This inspires his work as historian, a role for which a lifetime of reading, teaching, and reflection has prepared him. His critique, consequently, while fudging nothing, is invested with compassion

for a Church that, being incarnate like its adherents, will forever reflect human shortcomings of one kind or another. This should not surprise us, but all church membership should expect a standard of church governance sufficiently competent and willing to apprehend problems and deal with them, without having whistle blowers from the civic order demand that we do so.

Two contrasting perspectives on policy and governance are particularly illuminating (*pp.* 167-170). Each perspective has merit. If some reconciliation is not achieved between them, we are in for a turbulent Century. They sum up the tensions many Catholics experience today.

This is no bedtime story, nor are the issues raised. You may need to wrestle with some of it as I did. Broadbent does not talk down to his readers. It is comprehensive; no theological, social, or cultural stone is left unturned, although a future edition could benefit from the inclusion of an index and a re-working of chapter titles. It is also purposeful and challenging. Whether you agree or not with its final conclusions and recommendations there is no doubting what they are. ■

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The American invasion of Iraq is under way, leaving anarchy in its wake. The occupation of that benighted country and the rape of its resources now begin. The most powerful military machine that the world has ever seen has crushed a country already in tatters, a country ruined by constant war, by the despotic rule of Saddam Hussein and by 12 years of American and British sanctions. What an ignoble conquest! Thousands of Iraqi citizens have been killed or maimed. Iraq's cities and holy sites have been levelled, and its infrastructure destroyed once again. What a hollow victory!

What now for America and its imperialist government? The reasons for waging war have been proved a lie. It is a joke to suggest that Iraq posed a threat to world peace. Links to Al-Qaida have not been proven. Weapons of mass destruction have not been discovered. What has been proved is that America will force regime change on anyone whom it considers a threat. This is the new law of power – pre-emptive war with no foundation in international law and supported by erstwhile allies who have been coerced or threatened. This is America's first war under the new rules. It now threatens other sovereign states and *ipso facto* endorses Israel's subjugation of Palestine.

It is all good news for the American war industry. It has been able to test its weapons of mass destruction on the flesh and blood of civilians. The new bombs have decimated cities. The Republican Party is writing contracts with American corporations to produce more bombs and to submit prices for the post-invasion reconstruction of Iraq. No other countries need apply. Market forces rule.

There will be no American embassy in the world which will not be barricaded and guarded around the clock. These embassies will be the focus of protest

## Crosscurrents

by John Honoré

Bush's much touted *coalition of the willing* is beginning to have second thoughts, now that Syria has been accused of having weapons of mass destruction. Rumsfeld's 'new Europe' is nervous. Poland is embarrassed that some of its soldiers were seen helping to raise a US flag in southern Iraq. Other dynamic coalition partners like Latvia and Lithuania are keeping their heads down.

Under the most pressure is the Spanish

### No Olé Olé for José

Prime Minister, José Maria Aznar. This former tax collector has backed the wrong side, according to 90 percent of Spaniards. He suddenly appeared on the world scene in photos and on TV, sandwiched between Bush and Blair. He was omnipresent – Washington, New York, Camp David, Mexico; and finally in the Azores for the last photo opportunity. Spain seemed as astonished as the rest of us. He was the picador goading France and Germany, hoping to turn into the matador and settle accounts with Saddam Hussein.

Aznar, like Blair, has staked his political career on the war. He has hopes of being President of a stronger EU Commission. He set his goal and pursued it with single-minded purpose. His use of the Iraqi war in order to promote Spain into world prominence has backfired. His unforgiving countrymen are calling him 'the dwarf with the moustache'. This is not a good image. There is no *Olé Olé for José*.

groups and malcontents. Would-be terrorists will target all that is American, from ambassadors to hamburgers. Americans can but weep at this debased image of their country.

In view of the fact that George W. Bush constantly invokes the language of the Bible, perhaps he should read *Isaiah 1.16,17*; "Cease doing evil. Learn to do good, search for justice, discipline the violent, be just to the orphan, plead for the widow."

### Whence is that knocking?

I can tell Macbeth, with certitude, that it comes from those giant Italian coffee machines operating in the cafes of New Zealand. The knocking starts as soon as our customary order is given. "One long black and a cappuccino, please."

The operator then starts the battle to subdue the machine in order to produce the coffee. A cacophony of sound erupts. The loud bangs of the filter being emptied fill the room. The machine cranks up and loud noises come from some mysterious transformation of the water supply. This, somehow, is mixed with air which hisses ominously in the process. Just when the machine seems to be winning, a lever is pulled or a switch thrown and with a scream, coffee comes jetting out from a thin tube. Then the harassed operator has to deal with the milk. More fulminating sounds, hisses rising to the scale of high C and the stuff has not even been put into the cups yet. At last, there is a final whimper from a beaten machine and a triumphant flourish from the operator who is shrouded in steam.

I totter away with my order, deafened but just hearing the next client utter the dreaded words, "Two cappuccinos, please". I have to agree with Macbeth. When he ordered coffee for Lady Macbeth and himself, he complained, "how is't with me, when every noise appals me?" ■

# New rules needed for making saints

The BBC is not the usual source from which we glean suggestions as to candidates for canonization. But, Alistair Cook, veteran *Letter from America* commentator, had it right when he suggested the Church should look at canonising Dr Carlo Urbani, the Italian medico who was the first to identify SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) but who tragically himself died of the disease. We raise to the altar martyrs for the faith. Why not also martyrs for charity and for dedicated service in a helping profession?

As he lay dying, his wife could see him only through a glass screen, speak to him only through a microphone. His words to her were, "We must not be self-centred. We must think of others. You know that well". These were sentiments, she said in an interview after his death, she well understood.

The present Pope has engaged himself in an unprecedented way in canonizing and beatifying servants of the Lord. He has speeded up the canonization process. Less time and fewer miracles are required in some cases. The cause for Mother Teresa was opened in 1999, two years after her death, and she will be beatified in October this year, warp speed by church time. John Paul has canonized close on 500 saints, beatified well over a thousand, well above the total number so recognised by all the popes of the past four hundred years.

If you are a lay person, do not count on being beatified unless you are a martyr. With a handful of exceptions, all those honoured by the Church for anything except martyrdom have been priests and members of religious institutes. Unless perhaps you are like the beatified married couple, Luigi and Maria Quattrocchi, who did not sleep together for 26 years.

On April 12 in a ceremony taking place in presence of the Holy Father 16 candidates were cleared for beatification or

recognised as having practised heroic virtue. Seven of the 16 were priests, eight were members of religious institutes. Ten of these were founders of such institutes. That the 16th person was a married man and the father of eight children is explained by the fact that he was Emperor Charles the First, last monarch of the Austro-Hungarian empire, after whom the Pope's father, a former officer in the imperial army, named his son Karol – Charles.

A key chapter of Vatican II's *Constitution on the Church* is entitled. "The Universal Call to Holiness". Tragically we see no reflection of this in the canonization policy of the past 25 years. The roll call says that to become a saint you must become a priest or a religious. Putting it bluntly, the canonization policy amounts to a blatant rejection of an important teaching of the Council. Cardinal Ratzinger should have attended the ceremony and tugged at the Popes's arm, saying "Holy Father, I really do not think you should proceed with this ceremony. It conflicts with your duty as guardian of the Faith."

Many of those recognized have been founders of religious institutes, mostly ones of quite local interest. Such institutes want the affirmation of having Father Founder or Mother Founder declared a saint. They have the funds and the institutional longevity to make it possible to pursue the complicated and expensive process of securing Church recognition. The simple rule that a group could put forward a priest or religious as a candidate only after they had successfully promoted the causes of three laity would have prevented the imbalance. Tragically neither this or other

**Humphrey O'Leary**

*Fr Humphrey O'Leary is Rector of the  
community in Glendowie, Auckland*

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## Karakia for a world in turmoil

It's Good Friday morning. Autumn sunlight suffuses the patterns of Mercy artist Gael O'Leary's stained glass, its ponga fronds presaging growth and newness for all life's stages, its dancing cross transmuting into dazzling movement even before the eye can fix its shape.

The chapel starts to fill half an hour before the service is due to begin; it takes all that time for the residents of the home and hospital to get there. Some walk in unaided, heading for their accustomed places. Staff assist others, walking frames parked in easy reach and wheelchairs manoeuvred into spaces between our chairs. Some are joined for the service by spouses and family; one sits on the floor, leaning back against her father's legs.

About 40 of us are welcomed by the Sister of Mercy who leads the liturgy, offering a time of quiet reflection on the Christ who gave his life for his friends,

and whose cross reveals a love stronger than death. The scripture readings, shorter than the Passion that most congregations will hear later today, tell the same story, of God's faithful servant who bears our load and whose wounds have the power to heal, and of the wheat grain that dies to yield a rich harvest. Our prayers of intercession link us with a wider world, crying for peace and an end to pain. Iraq isn't mentioned, but we feel at one with the people of that war-torn land as the burden of our humanity unites us to theirs.

The cross for our veneration was made three Lents ago by the rest home's handyman, from wood salvaged from a building site. It's heavy to hold, and its broad beam has to be carried with care along the rows of seats and wheelchairs. But all want to touch it, press it to their lips, joining with the one life-and-death struggle that gives meaning to our own.

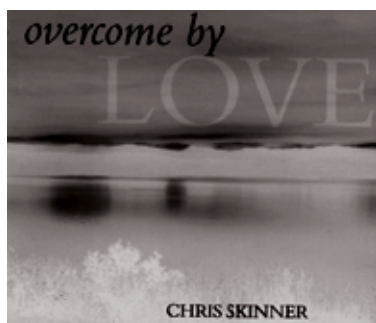
Communion follows, as we share the

bread broken for the life of the world. "The Body of Christ", says our presider, pausing for one who seems confused about what to do; "it's communion." "Thank you, dear," the resident replies as she reaches out to take the wafer in a moment of faith-filled recognition – a flash of remembered light in a world now mostly seen through a glass darkly.

The service ends as it began, residents returning to their rooms and the rest of us to our larger, busier worlds. But each of us has been enriched by this time together. God is still at the heart of our world, wanting to embrace our humanity and transform it by a love without bounds. We do not have to wait for Easter; it waits for us. But only an encounter with the cross lets us grasp its truth. ■

*Prepared by Dennis Horton for Te Tairere Oranga Sisters of Mercy  
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