



Tui Motu

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O Wisdom ...

Come Teach us the Way of Truth

Wisdom is a rare and precious commodity. 2000 years ago God became human in the person of Jesus, and in him the spirit of divine Wisdom became visible and accessible. At Christmas our faith invites us to "raise our eyes to the mountains", to step aside from the endless round of buying and selling, of business and noise, and contemplate the event of the birth of Jesus. It is an invitation to drink at the wells of wisdom.

The prophets and sages had looked forward to the coming of a Messiah, sometimes described as a warrior leader, another David, but with a more convincing validity in the Wisdom books as "a breath of the power of God" (Wis 7,25) — or, as transcribed by Hildegard of Bingen, "a feather on the breath of God". During Advent the Church yearns for a rekindling of that bright promise of a world made new which the coming of Christ brought.

It is rewarding to reflect a moment on the people in the gospel of Luke who herald the birth of Jesus. The shepherds are the guardians of the earth and its creatures; the Magi those whose task it is focus the wisdom of the ages onto the complexities of the present; Anna and Simeon represent the contemplative and the prophetic traditions. Absent are the rulers, the money-changers, the powerful and the wealthy.

The underlying theme of the Christmas story is joy and peace. It is a time to wonder again at the sheer beauty of the world God has made for, its creatures — not forgetting the ox and the ass — and its people. Wisdom teaches us that God's love for us is eternally reflected in them. Bethlehem also gives us a task — to sow the seeds of peace. Peace in the Christian sense, as Gerald Pillay writes on another page, is not just absence of strife. It is a constant striving for harmony, for balance, for justice and forgiveness. Again Wisdom, seen in the smile of newborn child, can teach us the power of non-violence.

God is also inviting us this holiday time to shift our collective focus off the squabble and din of politics, to cease being competitive and aggressive in our workplaces — and simply to rest, be thankful and to rejoice in the company of friends. Next year we must prepare ourselves for a new leader, a different voice, in the corridor of power. We have invited readers from across the country to comment on the advent of Jenny Shipley. Their responses make interesting reading. She has seized power with a clinical swiftness which would have delighted Napoleon. Can she wield it with a little more wisdom than some of her recent predecessors? Surely part of our Christmas prayer must be that she will.

M.H.

The Board and editorial team of *Tui Motu* wish all our readers, contributors and helpers a blessed and peaceful Christmas — and prosperity in 1998

FRONT COVER: The icon of the Nativity was painted by Christchurch artist, Philip Lawrence. Philip learnt to 'draw' icons from a Secular Franciscan artist while living in a Monastic Community in Arkansas, USA, founded by the Christian singer, John Michael Talbot. He and his wife Barbra are now living in a Franciscan based House of Prayer in Christchurch where Philip continues his icon ministry.

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Learning from a child's joy

Several years ago, just before Christmas, a young mother shared with me how one of her joys of motherhood was that she got to see Christmas again through the eyes of her three young children: "It brings back the simple joys that I no longer have as an adult, but that I once had as a child. It is so beautiful to see and experience Christmas through the eyes, the anticipation, the excitement, and the innocence of my own children. It is like being a child again myself."

She found the joy of Christmas again, vicariously, through the happiness of her children. Most of us are not so lucky. As we get older, lose our naivety, filled with the neuroses and angers of middle and old-age, experience, failure and death, we become daily more hardened and cynical. When this happens to us as adults, it is not so easy to experience the simple joy of Christmas. Too much inside us, and around us, protests. It is not easy to be an adult and still have the capacity for simple joy.

So what do we do about Christmas? This feast is, after all, about simple joy, about childlikeness, about a baby, despite our many sophisticated, adult attempts to connect it and its message to the rawer, more adult, questions of life – wounds, divorce, injustice, neurosis, anger, alienation, and death. Christmas though is not Good Friday. That's another feast, a day with a different meaning. On Good Friday, all of us wounded,

unhappy adults get our chance to luxuriate somewhat in the brokenness of it all. But that is not what Christmas is about and we should not try to turn Christmas into Good Friday.



Christmas is not about Jesus' death, it's about his birth, and birth needs to be celebrated in a manner quite other than death. Our children know this. We need, at Christmas, to look into their eyes to see what we should be doing.

At Christmas trust the child more than the theologian (especially the theologian who is on a crusade to deconstruct the simplicity of Christmas, and the element of birth and joy, and turn this feast into a statement of anger and unrest). Listen to that particular theologian on another day, but keep him or her silent at Christmas. Let the children speak then. Better yet, let them scream and shriek with joy as they open gifts and plunge headlong into the Christmas pudding. That is the theological statement that more adequately expresses the theology of Christmas.

And we, the adults, need to listen to that statement, as did the young mother whom I quoted above. We must let the joy of our own children be a prophetic statement. Their naive, unbridled joy

can be the voice that, as Sirach says, turns the hearts of parents towards their children. If we want to let the feast of Christmas prophetically unsettle us, I suggest we might best do that by looking at the joy of the very young as we might look into a mirror and, in that, see how unchildlike and how unhappy, we sophisticated adults have become.

One of our adult slogans about Christmas is, in fact, right: *May the peace*

of Christ disturb you! However, at Christmas time, where it should most disturb us is precisely in our itch to disturb everybody else. Christmas offers us a rare permission: to be happy.

Do not be afraid to be happy. Light the candles. What our children feel at Christmas, however dark and inchoate that knowledge may be in them, is the truth of those axioms. They can teach us about Christmas and, as W H Auden once put it: It lies within our power of choosing to conceive the child who chooses us.

Ronald Rolheiser

*Rejoice in the Lord always – again I say rejoice. The Lord is near.
Phil 4,4*

A Tale of Two Women

Jenny Shipley – some opinions

I have never met Jenny Shipley face to face so I can only comment on my impressions of her through the interviews she has given on radio and television. She always strikes me as completely self-controlled and calm, with an unflappable ability to stay focussed on the issue, even when under heated attack by her opponents. As a result of this I think she comes across as cold and lacking compassion at times. Perhaps this is not surprising since it seems that most of the women who survive the “political old boys club” have had to adopt male ways of communicating to be heard. She strikes me as having the potential to be a really strong and credible leader having watched her handle the health portfolio, which has been the political ‘undoing’ of many of her predecessors. I think her ability as a leader will well and truly be tested in the next few months as her critics watch to see how she handles the difficulties of an uncomfortable coalition government. I think she stands as a strong role model for younger women. I can only say that it is to her credit and a clear indication of her strength of purpose that she is going to be New Zealand’s first woman Prime Minister and one of the youngest politicians ever to get there.

Katie O'Connor, Southland

A Woman Prime Minister? Does sex make a difference? Should it? We have had in the past good, mediocre and poor male Prime Ministers. Personally, my ideal Prime Minister is someone like Golda Meir and my *bete noire* someone like Margaret Thatcher. Jennie Shipley has arrived with the reputation of being tough, right-wing and lacking in compassion. I am trying to withhold judgement but must confess to being apprehensive.

Brita Mordaunt, Christchurch



I feel somewhat ambivalent about our new Prime Minister designate, Jenny Shipley. She is a hard woman to come to grips with and while lacking the bombast of some of her male colleagues is so silky smooth and self assured in all her actions that it leads me to an almost automatic distrust. That aside, she obviously has a keen intelligence and one would imagine she would be a formidable opponent. While she will be our very first woman Prime Minister, her sex, at least on this front, seems to be of little importance. In fact, one would suspect the National caucus merely felt she was the best “man” for the job.

Annie Gray, Auckland

Jenny Shipley’s installation as Prime Minister is not without irony: our first woman leader, she apparently qualified for the job because she had “more balls” than the incumbent male. A blow has been struck for androgyny, not for women. Britain’s Margaret Thatcher and Israel’s Golda Meir destroyed any lingering illusions that women bring to politics some intrinsic good by virtue of their gender. Anyone hoping for a more compassionate style of Government under Jenny Shipley would do well to remember that she personally drove two of the most damaging social policies (the competitive/contract-driven health reforms and the 1991 benefit cuts) we have seen this decade.

Cate Brett, Christchurch

New Zealand is set to have a woman Prime Minister. As a concept, I find this pleasing. The reality, however, is more than a little worrying. Jenny Shipley has proved to New Zealanders time and time again, that she is a politician who is willing to make decisions without considering their effects on the people she purports to serve. She is the embodiment, in my view, of what is wrong with New Zealand politics. Politics has become increasingly about personalities and power-plays at the expense of the quality of life of New Zealanders. While I have no doubt that Mrs Shipley will be a very able Prime Minister, I hold little hope that the change in leadership will have any positive impact on the people of this country.

Hillary Hoffman, Wellington

Ireland’s New President

A Presidency which will run from 1997 to the year 2004 and bridge this century and the next has been undertaken by Mary McAleese, the newly elected President of Ireland. The eighth holder of this office since the foundation of the State, Mrs McAleese is the second woman and the first Ulster-born person to be elected to this position. Mary McAleese topped all the opinion polls from the start of the election campaign and won with the biggest winning margin in the history of Irish presidential contests. Her outstanding qualities which include sharpness of intellect, clarity and fluency of expression, strength of personality and of will, combine to make her a formidable candidate. The Presidency is a largely ceremonial office but is important in terms of symbolism and leadership. As a potent symbol for Northern nationalists at the heart of the Southern state, Mrs McAleese’s commitment to democracy and her rejection of political violence must underpin the peace process.

President McAleese’s background provided her with an eminently suitable preparation for her new role. Born Mary Leneghan in Belfast in 1951, the eldest

of nine children, she was reared in Ardoyne, a largely Loyalist area of the city. The young Mary attended St Dominic's High School on the Falls Road, becoming head girl in her final year. She graduated at the age of 22 with an honours degree in law from Queen's University, Belfast. Called to the Northern Ireland bar in 1974, this high achieving young woman was appointed the following year Reid Professor of Criminal Law in Trinity College, Dublin. The following year she married Martin McAleese, a dentist who also hailed from Belfast. Today they have three children, Emma(15) and twins, Sara Mai and Justin(12). In 1994 Professor McAleese was appointed pro-vice-chancellor of Queen's University, in Belfast, the first woman and the first Catholic to hold that prestigious position.

President McAleese's commitment to Catholicism is, as one commentator described it, that of "a person proud and secure of her own beliefs (with) the intelligence and the imagination to dialogue with other traditions and experiences in Irish society". Over the years, her commitment took visible shape in her work, for example, as a tutor to the Corrymeala Centre for Reconciliation, as a journalist for the Catholic Communications Institute and as the chairperson of the editorial board of a recently launched religious publication, *Ceide*. She was appointed adviser to the Catholic Bishops' delegation to the New Ireland Forum in 1984. Just last year she served as a member of the Catholic five-person delegation to the Northern Commission for Contentious Parades. The new President has been labelled a conservative Catholic yet she has not been slow to express her support for the cause of women priests and her dismay at the prevalence of patriarchy in the institutional Church.

Efforts during the election campaign to brand her as a supporter of Sinn Féin were comprehensively refuted when it emerged that she had been involved in the Redemptorist Peace Mission. This



commendable initiative was actively working to create a situation in which a ceasefire could take place. President McAleese is nevertheless willing to dialogue with those of equally sincere and firmly held views. Her nationalism should be seen by Unionists as welcoming and inclusive rather than threatening. Unionists by and large remain cautious and defensive, sceptical of her ability to build bridges between the different traditions in the North.

This theme of building bridges embraces not just the North and the South, but the comfortable and the struggling, the young and old, the modern and traditional, urban and rural communities. Ireland's new head of state, born in one jurisdiction and from a minority community, has herself transcended the barriers which for too long made such an achievement appear unattainable.

A new light burns in a window of the President's residence. It will stand as silent witness for the next seven years to the life and work of a woman who has invited people from "across this island, North, South, East and West" to work with her to create "a wonderful millennium gift to the Child of Bethlehem whose 2000th birthday we will soon celebrate – a gift of an Island where difference is celebrated with joyful curiosity and generous respect..." ■

Cait Mulligan, our Dublin correspondent, is a Holy Faith sister who worked 30 years in NZ

Child Labour

The world media picked up the story about Pakistani children working long hours for a pittance sewing leather footballs to be sold at top of the market prices in Britain. Child labour can embrace a range of situations from children helping for a few hours in the family business or farm, through to child prostitution. UNICEF believes that of the quarter of a billion children affected, half are working full time and most have no opportunities for education. Merely passing laws banning unacceptable practices would achieve nothing unless resources are made available to address the resulting shortfall in family incomes. The British government is negotiating with FIFA (the international Football Association) and world sporting industries to boycott supplies of footballs produced by child labour.

Organ Transplants

Moral theologians generally agree that doctors may choose to discontinue medication as well as technical measures such as respirators and intravenous

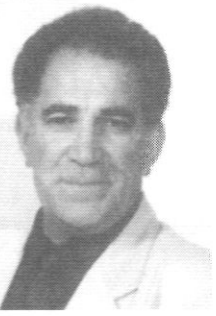
nourishment when a patient is in a "persistent vegetative state". Now, an influential group has proposed that it should be lawful to give lethal injections to these patients in order to improve the standard of organ transplants. The group thinks that once a decision has been made to allow a patient to die, consideration should be given to saving the lives of people on transplant waiting lists. If the patient is allowed to die naturally, organs could become less suitable for transplanting. Helen Watt of the Catholic medical research unit, said: "seriously ill people should not be treated as organ banks. The end does not justify the means".

Islamophobia

Islamophobia is now a word commonly used by members of Britain's Muslim community – with 1.5 million members, the largest ethnic minority in the country. Discrimination is being fuelled by sections of the media presenting the "mad mullah" image for all followers of Islam. The Navy refused to employ a Muslim seaman with the excuse "where would they pray to Mecca on a submarine?"

The Global Village — do Indigenous Peoples Get a Say?

Manuka Henare (left) examines how the global market offers a threat and an opportunity to Pacific peoples



Nineteen years ago I was a member of a Maori group that hosted a *Workshop on Race and Minority Issues* in Auckland. Representatives of 15 minority groups from 11 countries in Asia met as part of the struggle to assert our fundamental rights — communal and people-orientated rather than individual. At that time **development** was the big idea promulgated by international and national organisations, intellectuals, business people and politicians. Development had become a theory and a practice; and it was said that there were peoples, societies, nations and areas of the world that were either 'developed' or 'undeveloped'. Behind the fine words and expressions of good intent development was something done *to* people rather than *with* people.

The Workshop report was decisive: "For the indigenous and other minority people in Asia *development has no meaning — it is not our word*. We do not accept development as understood, interpreted and imposed on us by dominant groups. We do not want it, as it alienates and disintegrates our people. It destroys human values so precious to us. The materialistic view of life predominant in this process leads to self-destruction; therefore we do not want it.

"We want our way of life, our view of land and family, our languages and cultures to be recognised. We want to be recognised as human beings with freedom and the right to shape our own destiny in our land. We should be free to be what we want to be".

It is conservatively estimated that there are 305 million indigenous peoples in the world, and about 255 million are to be found in Asia. In the Pacific Islands there are seven million living in 24 island countries. The indigenous people of the Asia-Pacific region identify themselves as religion-centred cultures, and religion continues to be an active part of our lives. A Buddhist critique is offered by Sulak Sivaraksa (1981): The religious approach is concerned about maintaining the balance of nature so that material goods are used to supply basic human demands. This in order that people may use their inner potential for the benefit of the wider society and for the benefit of the whole

globalisation

... not our word

universe. The materialist approach depends on the market demand or on the planners. People are used as means to meet demands. We will need to identify whether globalisation as proposed by the West is driven by a materialist agenda.

How is globalisation perceived

Fundamentally globalisation is conceived as an economic agenda where globalism and economism converge to become a programme of transformation for the rich and powerful societies of the world. The APEC programme involves 18 member countries whose combined GNP in 1994 was US\$13 trillion. This represents about half the world's total annual output and about 46% of the world's total merchandise trade.

For many, however, globalisation represents a much wider vision than the economic. There is a philosophy of globalism which involves a new consciousness of the world as a single place. There is a growing awareness of the world as a continuously constructed environment. It is more than a development in international relations. The theory argues there are two contradictory processes of homogenisation and differentiation; a complex interaction between localism and globalism; and powerful movements of resistance against the globalisation process.

I believe the workshop of 1978 would have reached the same conclusion on globalisation as it did on development: *it is not our word*. It is the word of dominant groups who would use it to serve their economic and political interests, and their religious, cultural and philosophical purposes. The world view is dominated by the economy and its marketplace.

So what can be done?

Dean Howard Smith, the American Mohawk academic, believes that for indigenous peoples in industrial economies business can be a means of cultural survival and development. One strategy is to focus on one's locality and survive. Another way is to look to the horizons and see the transfiguration of the world we know.

John Naisbitt, a management commentator, has some intriguing observations about globalisation and what he describes as the global paradox (1994):

- the bigger the world's economy the more powerful the smaller players
- as the importance of nation-states recedes more of them are being created
- as the global economy gets larger the component nation players get smaller.

He argues that the nation-state is dead not because they have been subsumed by super-states but because they are breaking up to smaller and more efficient parts. This raises possibilities for indigenous communities.



A Maori perspective

Recent African studies suggest the micro-economies of indigenous peoples contain within them a social security system, one which the state will not necessarily provide. Hyden (1980) describes these as an *economy of affection*. Often in agrarian situations there is an invisible economy in which the affective ties based on common descent and residence prevail. This economy maintains cultural integrity and supports the kinship system of the people, allowing for the redistribution of a limited range of goods, services and cash.

The so-called free market is an economic framework within which most

indigenous peoples like Maori must survive, hopefully to prosper and develop according to our respective aspirations. Present unemployment levels within the region are at unethical and immoral proportions for any just society. Maori must consider the possibility of consciously developing a distinct business sector — but a sector operating within its own economy, an *economy of affection*. Employment creation ought to be the focus of Maori business enterprises. This priority of people over capital and investments does not mean that the need for capital and investments is to be ignored, but rather that they are means towards an end.

A Maori understanding of an economy comes from our history in the Pacific and our understanding of Creation and its purpose. All resources (*taonga*) are something of value and like life forces are derived from the supernatural world. The criteria that underlie Maori thinking are:

- a reverence for total creation as one whole
 - a sense of kinship with other beings
 - a sacred regard for the whole of nature and its resources as being gifts from the spiritual powers
 - a sense of responsibility for these *taonga* as the appointed stewards, guardians and leaders
 - a distinctive economic ethic of reciprocity
 - a sense of commitment to safeguard all Nature's resources (*taonga*) for future generations. (*Waitangi Tribunal* 1988).
- It is the harmonising of these things that represent the challenge of the future. The humanising of Aotearoa New Zealand's political and economic institutions and structures will be the Maori people's greatest contribution to the

present and the future.

Maori of New Zealand, as do other indigenous peoples, offer an alternative world view and approach to that of the West. Part of that approach is a cosmic world view that can inform us about nature and the use of resources, about the unity of material and metaphysical worlds, and about being human in the cosmos. For Maori, the universe is not a closed system, but rather it is a cosmos forever unfolding. *I te kore, ki te po, ki te ao marama*: "from out of the primal power of the cosmos, through the night into the world of light" (Shirres 1997). This religious cultural world view is relevant to any discussion on economics and politics and may help focus a new light on globalisation and APEC. ■

Manuka Henare is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Management Studies and Labour Relations at Auckland University. The paper from which these excerpts are taken was first delivered to an international Conference in July.

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Go.. ..teach



...preach (Mt 28,19)

Patricia Stevenson, RSJ works in parish ministry in the Nelson area. In this article she puts the question: "What do we mean by GOOD NEWS?" – what exactly is evangelisation?

When I lived in Wellington a regular sight was a woman who stood on the corner outside the Post Shop. She was dressed in black – an old-fashioned black coat, an even more old-fashioned black pill-box hat, the kind with the veil; and her black hair was tightly restrained. Her face was even more severe than her costume. She was witnessing, as her prominently held Bible declared. Occasionally she was joined by others, and a man of the company would proclaim a text from scripture upon which he would elaborate, quite often a message of damnation. Most people going about their business would dodge around them, careful not to make eye contact.

At an earlier time when I lived in the country I got caught in a gravel skid and went off the side of the road turning the car on its side against a tree trunk. The seatbelt ensured that I got out of the car with damage only to my pride and my nervous system. I had to wait until a tow truck came to pull me back onto the road. Just a few minutes after

the accident a Maori man (I never got round to asking his name) and his son drove up. He parked his car with the heater on and invited me to sit in it till the tow truck arrived. He and his son waited on the road chatting to each other. The warmth of the car and the quiet time allowed me to recover and I was then able to drive the car home. It had not been badly damaged.

These two incidents came to mind when I began to reflect on the big "E" word. Evangelisation. It is not difficult to decide which of the two examples above represents good news. We all know what good news is. Good news is something that brings about change. It raises up the spirit, it gives new heart, it comforts, it gladdens. To be 'good news' as my saviours were to me is to be the answer to the question posed in the gospel, "What do I do to gain eternal life?" (Lk 10,25)

Now in Jesus' story the Samaritan didn't finish his comforting of the injured man by looking for some affirmation of his

goodness. He probably thought no more about it, as I'm sure my Samaritans did. Both people did what they did because they saw a need. Being 'good news' to others is for Christians as natural as breathing.

So, what is evangelisation? Why is it necessary? Surely it is a mockery of the mission of Jesus if we see it as increasing the numbers of those baptised. It is not so that we can look at the census figures and feel a warm glow that we are in the first three – still ahead of the atheists! Evangelisation is necessary because good news is becoming hard to find. In a recent newspaper there was a story of a bus driver who, when attacked on the road, found not one Samaritan out of a city with two cathedrals and hundreds of churches. He was astonished and saddened. Was it just bad luck? Wrong place, wrong time?

Evangelisation is necessary when a group of women who seek to belong to a church which practises the love it professes are pilloried or trivialised by

those who see themselves as defenders of the faith. Debate is good news; constant destructive criticism or intolerance is bad news. Evangelisation is necessary when we plan an ecumenical service and decide that it will have to be a Liturgy of the Word because of the *problem* of communion. We believe that the presence of Jesus in the Word can be shared with other Christians but not the Eucharistic presence. In the Dogmatic Constitution on the church, our spiritual leaders said, "... in the sacrament of the eucharistic bread, the unity of believers, who form one body in Christ, is **both expressed and brought about**" (LG 3). We are working at the expression but failing somewhat at the "bringing about".

*"in the sacrament unity
is both expressed and
brought about"*

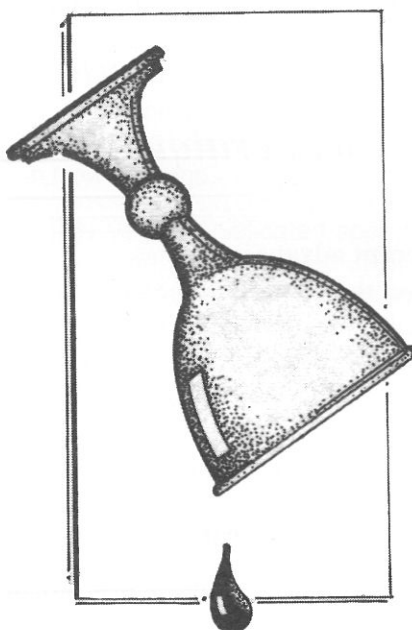
LG 3

Evangelisation is necessary when the baptised bypass the study of the scriptures to put their energies into promoting private devotions.

The command to go forth and make disciples is about multiplying good news. The more true disciples there are, then the more people there will be to heal the sick, visit the imprisoned, share bread with the hungry, comfort the dying, raise up the downhearted. In the beginning of the 7th chapter of *Mark*, we have an interesting story. Some Pharisees and some experts in the law make a special trip from Jerusalem to tackle Jesus on an important point of tradition, the **washing up!** Jesus' response is masterly. "You have made a fine art of setting aside God's commandments in the interests of keeping your traditions."

Can the same be said of us? At the same time as we are praying earnestly for more

people to embrace the gospel we are watching a steady trickle of the lay and ordained baptised leaving active ministry. Some to be sure will seek a community which confirms their giftedness and they will flourish again; others because they have experienced precious little good news in their lives have lost heart. We can't just dismiss these evangelisers as dissidents or heretics because it's easier than listening to their stories or debating the issues raised.



One of the most striking things about Jesus dealings with people was his ability to help the rigid by pointing to an alternative view which was just as valid. When his disciples were criticised for breaking the Sabbath by taking ears of wheat and rubbing them between their palms Jesus retorts, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his disciples were hungry? How he entered God's house and ate the holy bread which only the priests were permitted to eat? He even gave it to his men." The story ends with the classic saying, "The Sabbath was made for the people, not the people for the Sabbath". (Mark 2,23-28)

Are there any other "sayings" that we have got back to front? We need to take

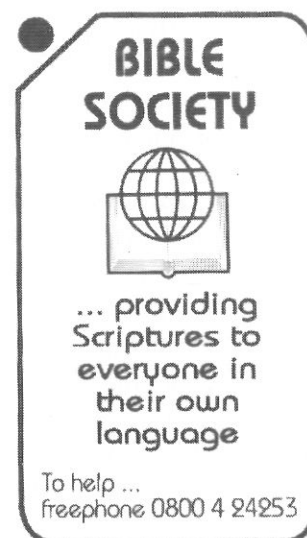
a good look at our attitudes to customs and practices that over time have taken on the patina of the sacred. The document, *The Church in the Modern World*, concluded by saying that the Church itself could not be excused from reform. "Such a mission requires us first of all to create in the Church itself mutual esteem, reverence and harmony, and acknowledge all in legitimate diversity; in this way all who constitute the one people of God will be able to engage in ever more fruitful dialogue, whether they are pastors or other members of the faithful. For the ties which unite the faithful together are stronger than those which separate them." And then the paragraph concludes with a call which could be

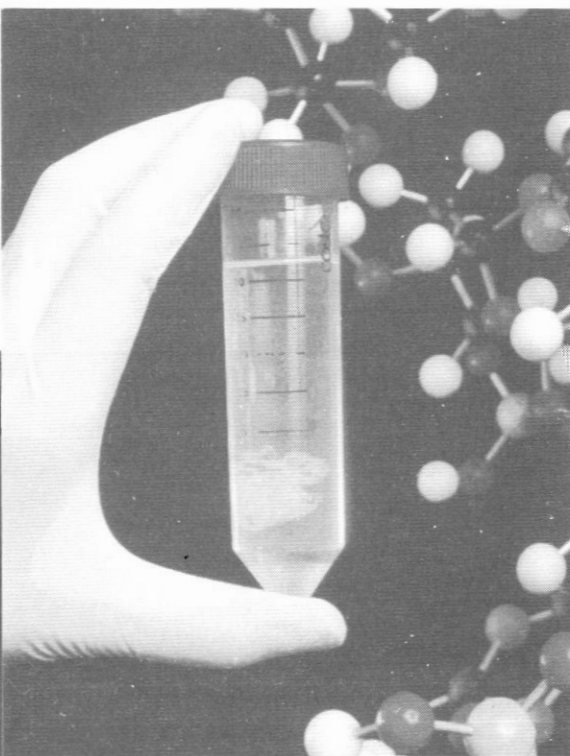
*You set aside God's
commands for your own
traditions*

Mk 7,8

the mission statement of all parishes: "Let there be unity in what is necessary, freedom in what is doubtful, and charity in everything." (GS 92)

This is truly good news. ■





Brave New World —

An ethical dilemma currently impacting on our world is the rapid advance of birth technologies. Tui Motu has invited two eminent Catholic doctors, John France (below) and Anna Holmes (pages 12-13), to write on these crucial issues and provide an ethical critique

Around one in eight couples of reproductive age in New Zealand will experience difficulties at one time or another in achieving a pregnancy. About half will seek medical advice, and of these 30 percent will respond to simple, low cost treatment, while the remainder will require referral to specialist services. Infertile couples are no longer left with childlessness or adoption as their sole options.

We now recognise that about 40 percent of infertility cases are due to a male factor such as low sperm numbers, poor sperm mobility or presence of sperm antibodies. Artificial insemination with husband's sperm (AIH) has been tried for many years; — with limited success since the quality of the semen is frequently poor. For at least 40 years AID (insemination with normal donor semen) has been a standard method of infertility treatment. One semen sample from a donor can be divided into a number of fractions, stored in liquid nitrogen, where it will remain viable, and used for several different couples. The liberalisation of society's views has seen a greater public acceptance of AID, but there remain obvious fundamental ethical concerns.

Recent advances

Over the last 20 years new microsurgical techniques have enabled surgeons to repair damage to the internal genital tract: blocked Fallopian tubes in women and blocked epididymis or vas deferens in men. On 25 July 1978 Louise Brown was born in the small English town of Oldham. The significance of Louise's birth is that her conception occurred outside her mother's body. This first successful pregnancy from *in vitro* fertilisation (IVF) heralded a new era. It gave us the term **assisted reproductive technology** (ART). Since 1978 the total number of IVF babies born throughout the world exceeds 200,000.

The initial application of IVF was in treating infertility caused by diseased or blocked Fallopian tubes. The IVF procedures bypass this part of a woman's reproductive tract. Later, reasons for its use were extended to include unexplained infertility, endometriosis, and the male partner having a low sperm count.

Three crucial steps are involved in IVF: egg pick-up; fertilisation and embryo transfer. In the normal menstrual cycle usually one egg

develops to maturity and is released from the ovary at ovulation. In an IVF treatment cycle, however, the first objective is to obtain as many mature eggs as possible by giving the woman fertility drugs to hyperstimulate her ovaries. During the period of stimulation her response is carefully monitored by hormone measurement and ultrasound visualisation of the ovaries. Close to the time of ovulation the maturing eggs are 'harvested' by needle aspiration guided by ultrasound. On average, eight eggs are obtained by this pick-up procedure.

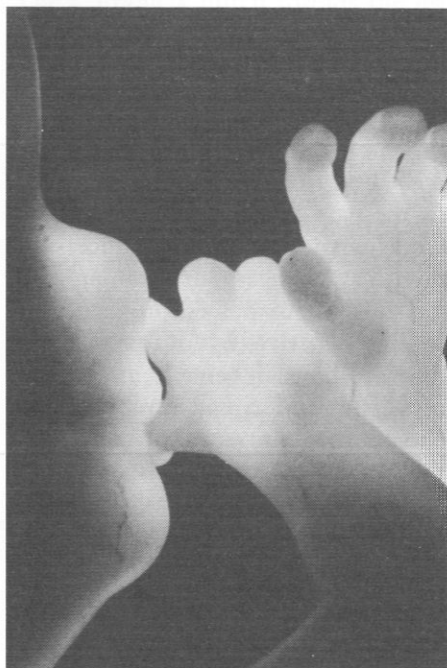
The eggs are then transferred into culture tubes containing a specially prepared medium. The semen sample is washed and processed, and the fraction containing the best quality sperm is collected. Approximately 50,000 sperm are added to each culture tube and the fertilisation process left to proceed. An attempt is made to fertilise all the eggs unless the couple wish otherwise.

On the second day after pick-up the embryos from the fertilised eggs are ready for transfer into the mother's uterus. Success rates are improved if more than one embryo is transferred, though the chance of multiple pregnancy — twins or triplets

Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART)

— is increased. The decision on how many embryos are transferred rests with the couple, but the maximum number in New Zealand is three. Excess embryos are frozen and available for subsequent uterine transfer if the first attempt fails. In some countries surplus embryos can be donated for research. Pregnancy rates average 14 percent per treatment cycle.

A most successful recent advance is **intracytoplasmic injection (ICSI)**: a single sperm at the tip of a micropipette is injected directly into the cytoplasm of the egg. The subsequent steps towards pregnancy are the same as for conventional IVF. This advancement has revolutionised the treatment of male infertility. Men who were previously considered unable to father a child now can do so by means of ICSI.



In vitro fertilisation opens reproduction to a variety of possible parent relationships. An embryo can arise, as is normal, from the fusion of a wife's egg and her husband's sperm (or those of partners in a *de facto* relationship). Embryos, however, can also result from the fusion

Four new areas of research

(1) Freezing and storage of eggs. Up to now the egg, being less robust than the sperm or embryo, has not survived freezing and thawing; but new understanding of the biology of the egg suggests a solution to that problem is imminent. This makes the practice of freezing embryos unnecessary removing the associated ethical and moral concerns.

(2) Pre-implantation diagnosis of abnormalities. A single cell can be removed from an eight cell embryo without affecting subsequent development. Tests on this cell will identify the sex of the embryo as well as abnormalities such as Down's syndrome and certain inherited disorders (eg. cystic fibrosis). The present purpose of this early diagnosis is to identify and discard affected embryos. Pre-implantation is currently not available in New Zealand.

(3) By very sophisticated sperm sorting the sex of a baby can be pre-determined. The first application of this is likely to be with families with a history of sex-linked inherited diseases.

(4) **Cloning.** With the birth earlier this year of a lamb called Dolly, a clone of a six-year-old ewe, the ability to clone a human child has become a real possibility. Church and political leaders immediately condemned any possible application to the human, and in many countries legislation or directives banning human cloning (at least temporarily) have been enacted or imposed.

of the wife's egg and her husband's sperm, or a donor egg and the husband's sperm. The embryo could be donated to the couple. Surrogacy pregnancy is a further option. There is an infertility situation to match each of these variations. For example, a young woman may have non-functional ovaries, an older woman may be post-menopausal, a woman may have no uterus, or a couple may each have a major infertility problem.

Assisted reproductive technology has enabled many couples in New Zealand and hundreds of thousands worldwide to have the children they wished for but otherwise could not have. In this respect ART has achieved much good. However, separating normal sexual intercourse from the reproductive process has created major ethical and moral issues. These include:

- IVF itself: reproduction outside normal sexual intercourse
- the involvement of a third party in the reproductive process in the donation of sperm, eggs or embryos
- the moral status of the embryo
- embryo freezing
- the perpetuation of male infertility by use of ICSI
- surrogacy
- experiments on embryos
- cloning.

In the following article Dr Anna Holmes will discuss some of these concerns. ■

Associate Professor John France is Director of the Research Centre in Reproductive Medicine at the University of Auckland School of Medicine

Who is my mother, my brother,

ART, Incarnation and Ethics for Advent

Dr Anna Holmes discusses the ethical issues raised by the new birth technologies and makes a plea for continuing moral dialogue



Advent is a time of rejoicing with children as we remember the gift of Jesus to the world. Children remind us that followers of Christ must be alive with hope and joy. For some people Advent and Christmas are a time of sorrow, a reminder of their infertility. To them Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ART) may seem an answer to prayer, enabling children to be conceived where there was no hope.

Assisted Reproductive Technologies are outlined in the article by John France. Children may be born of parents who have died, or whose potential for reproduction has been destroyed by disease or age. Children may be born to same sex couples or single parents. Genetic diseases can be prevented by replacing the affected genes or selectively aborting infants who carry the disease. The Human Genome Project, an international effort costing billions of dollars, aims to identify all the human genes in DNA. Other uses of this project include putting human genes into animals to produce organs for treatment of humans, like the heart valves being grown in pigs.

Ethical Issues

Ethics is the activity in which concepts, assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, reasons, arguments and relationships underlying moral decision-making are examined critically. Ethics is not about easy answers but about continuing moral

dialogue. It is about the pursuit of good moral decisions in the light of changes in society and technology.

I believe it is crucial that the debate and discussion about ethics in ART and genetic manipulation is kept of those involved in promoting it. They do not appear to reflect on the wider issues it raises. They think that if a process is possible and may be useful it should go ahead. Technology and science are immensely seductive and powerful for our culture. Videos of injecting sperm into eggs, already being shown in secondary schools, may persuade people that the mystery of life is solved. The idea that humans need to reflect on what they are doing in a context that is longer than a few years and wider than the individual or the culture is not considered. This is the difference between wisdom and knowledge.

Medical Ethics

Traditional medical ethics involved four main principles - do no harm; do good; respect the autonomy of the patient (which means inform the patient and obtain their consent) and act with justice towards all people. Justice may be based on fair distribution of resources, respect for rights of people, or respect for morally acceptable laws. Justice in health always involves balancing costs, benefits and needs of one group of patients against another. Do the costs of ART or the Human

Genome Project outweigh the benefits? Who will get ART funded by the state?

The rights, responsibilities and potential of each person need to be taken into account. This is often a matter of balancing the potential good or harm, the rights and needs of one person against another. This is particularly important in the case of ART where up to six people may be involved in a pregnancy: the infant, the biological donors of egg and sperm, the social mother and father and a surrogate mother whose womb grows the infant.

ART and the meaning of children

In the past children were a gift from God. Technology which produces children may change their meaning from gift to right or possession. Children, whether conceived by ART or normally, have no choice in being born. Sacrifice of self for others can only be a free choice, so infants cannot consent to their own abortion. ART usually produces several embryos and these raise important questions. How are these dealt with? The cost of storing embryos raises issues of how long are they stored and who owns them? What happens to the "spare" embryos?

ART may alter the meaning of blood relationships in societies: when eggs, sperm and womb are donated, then who is my mother, my brother, my sister? This will have enormous impact on those cultures where individual meaning is based on knowing who your an-

my sister?

cestors are and where you come from. Current evidence suggests that ART children, even where the eggs and sperm are donated, are as psychologically healthy as children born normally. We do not yet know what the long term effects are.

Christian Ethics

Christian ethics are summed up in the commandment to love God and love your neighbour as yourself. The Christian message, that God loves, keeps and continues to create all that is, makes sense of an evolving world in which change has possibilities of good and evil - order and chaos. Freedom of choice is an essential part of what it means to be human. This increases human responsibility to make choices only after careful reflection, in the light of understanding and faith in a loving God.

The Catholic Church forbids the use of any assisted reproductive technologies, even when using the eggs and sperm of a husband and wife who cannot otherwise conceive. ART are wrong according to the Church, because they interfere with the normal sexual relationship of a couple and lead to abortion. Freezing of embryos is forbidden as disrespectful of human life. All killing of embryos is the destruction of a human person and totally forbidden.

Conclusions

Clearly there are many ethical conflicts of interest in ART and genetic manipulation. In ART the production of spare embryos, the use of embryos to treat adult diseases, the destruction of abnormal embryos and embryo experimentation are but a few. ART could lead to "designer babies" or clones for spare parts. In IVF two or three embryos are usually implanted. Twin or multiple pregnancies have a risk of prematurity, so embryo reduction, killing of embryos in the uterus, is now offered.

Advent

Advent — Arrival.

*We wait for the flavours and focus
of Christ-coming:
peacefulness and joy,
justice-making, love
and red wrapped boxes of ginger.*

Advent — Arrival.

*We wait for the silent feet
of camels
and the clatter of Kaimanawa
startled on the Desert Road
of summer holidays.*

Advent — Arrival.

*We wait for the gate
to open,
urging us to step into our place
in the story
and the mystery
that calms and troubles the world.*

Anne Powell

As knowledge about the human genes increases there will be more moral issues to reflect on. Identification of people at risk from genetic diseases may be used to refuse insurance or increase insurance premiums. They could also be used to force abortions so that those who choose to continue pregnancy with known abnormalities will have no state support.

As long as the teaching Church forbids all use of ART and genetic manipulation it does not keep the debate alive. It may make the Church as irrelevant in this area as it now is in contraception. Dialogue has to continue in a way that understands and respects the scientific and human position while maintaining a search for wisdom.

The difficult questions, in the light of Christian ethics, need to be asked for each new discovery: does this process reverence each person? Does it care for the most vulnerable? Does it lead to growth and freedom? Or oppression? Is it open to political or economic manipulation? Who benefits, who loses from it? Does it reveal a new way of loving God? Finding the balance of ethical actions in such a complex world is a continual process of debate and wise seeking of truth in an evolving world.

One of the difficulties of our age is that God has been presented as good and

loving, yet the problem of innocent suffering continues. The Church says that God enables people to live with suffering, but the expectation of people is that technology will relieve suffering. Those promoting ART and gene therapy say it prevents the suffering of parents or "disabled" infants, yet there is no adult "treatment" that involves killing the patient.

It is not possible to use reasoning from an earlier time for the needs of this one. In the past creation seemed ordered, with God in charge of an obedient universe. Our present understanding of creation does not show an orderly universe, but one in which order and chaos coexist. In such a universe the idea of a God who governs each action of creation does not make sense at all. The presence of a loving God revealed in the incarnation, passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, is a perfect model of chaos and order existing together.

Advent is the time before Christmas giving each person "womb space" to reflect on the astonishing coming of Jesus to recreate a world where all are beloved sisters and brothers.

How amazing to reflect that Jesus' birth was not by a normal relationship of mother and father! ■

Christ — Prince of Peace



Professor Gerald Pillay (left) looks at shalom, the biblical notion of peace — and finds in it a transforming force for good

One of the most intriguing of the many World War stories is that of the custom on Christmas Day for soldiers on both sides of the war who had for weeks on end been locked in battle, spontaneously to cease fire and go over to the enemy to share Christmas pudding and a drink. Though not sharing necessarily a Christian faith these soldiers had a sense that in some way fighting seemed inappropriate on this day. For a little while at least they declared peace.

This century has seen more wars and on a scale never seen before. In our time, quite understandably, peace has come to be associated with war. "Peace making" has become a highly sophisticated programme of mediation between warring countries or groups among them. Consequently, peace has come to mean "the absence of war."

In South Africa, during the struggle against the evil political system that the

world has come to know as "apartheid", Christians often were ambiguous about the meaning of peace. Those who were not the victims of the injustice of the system often cautioned against opposition to the state, preferring to protect the "peace" and not to destabilise the system. This group meant well but in keeping the peace they also took the line of least resistance to evil thereby confirming it. In the end, they removed the possibilities for real peace. Another group at the other end of the political spectrum, out of frustration with the intransigence of the apartheid system and its violent intolerance with any opposition, believed that the only solution was to take up arms. This position was one of understandable desperation yet in using violence to stop violence it fuelled it. Minds and hearts shaped in violence, even when the fighting ceases, remain scarred. Hence, it is not merely a sociological matter that violence has not abated in South Africa even after

peace was declared and the great miracle of political freedom happened.

It is noteworthy that the word for peace in the Old Testament (shalom) means 'wholeness' or 'intactness'. It includes the idea of creating peace between warring parties but it means more. If shalom only meant creating a truce, then the Hebrew word for "treaty" would have been used. Scholars have debated the different nuances of meaning the word has in both Old and New Testament passages, pointing out it has both a relational and material meaning. The former referring to the creating of peace between people or groups in conflict, and the latter to peace as concrete benefits and blessings such as wealth and good health. In the Old Testament the word for peace is used in at least three ways: as a cliché in greetings, about 20 percent in references

*true peace must
have its source in
God*

to the absence of conflict and about 60 percent in contexts meaning completeness, maturity or well-being.

There are at least three usages in these biblical passages that are noteworthy for our purposes: first, since God, in the theology of the Old Testament, is the one who establishes and maintains well-being and cosmic order, any true peace must have its source in God. If peace is merely the result of human resolution or enlightened politics, it is always vulnerable to the vagaries of the self-interests of one or other party to the agreement. History is full of the results of human fickleness in this connection. The greeting "shalom", therefore, is more than just a wish for someone's prosperity and health. More deeply, it

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is the bestowing of God's blessing and protection. Second, in some Old Testament contexts it was the false prophet who gave the shalom when there was injustice in the land. The true prophet says there can be no shalom where there is injustice. Third, even when peace is used in the context of physical or material well-being it is often used for communal or group blessings rather than merely benefits for an individual.

All three aspects gain special significance in the New Testament passages dealing with peace especially those "Christmas" texts. Texts such as Eph. 2,14 and Heb. 7,2 connect well known passages such as Isaiah 9,6 "For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given; the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called 'Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace'" with Christ. They explain what the angels could possibly have meant by their announcement "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth." Col 1,19f, for example, states the matter succinctly: "For in him was the fulness of God pleased to dwell and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven making peace by the blood of his cross..." Peace and reconciliation are inextricably linked and given cosmic scope by bringing together heaven and earth, but remaining grounded in a simple and unpretentious act in history (the Christ event.) It is God who is the initiator of this peacemaking.

through peace-making enemies become friends

Modern society, and even the "post modern" configuration of it, has failed to come to terms with this Christ-event not because this age is more advanced and knows more, or because it is "secular" and is indifferent. It fails to grasp its meaning because the event itself was so ordinary and God's action so simple. It took a nondescript Hindu who read the Bible with fresh eyes to rediscover



Mahatma Ghandi, the great Indian, who promoted active non-violence as a means of achieving a just society

in our century the power of this ordinary action of God. Among the many influences on Gandhi during his formative years in South Africa was his discovery of the Sermon on the Mount which made a seminal contribution to his programme of non-violence. Acting on the premise that the end never justifies the means, Gandhi shaped his philosophy of Satyagraha, "truth force", as a counter to physical force. He discerned the power of redemptive suffering and the possibilities of peace-making as political action whereby not only justice and righteousness are achieved but enemies are converted into friends. He understood that at the heart of human society, even its politics, is the spiritual quest to ennoble the human spirit.

In early Christian literature there was no concept of a non-theological or religiously neutral peace. The Christian understanding was clear that there can be

no peace outside Christ. What is unique in this proclamation is that in Christ the future hope of peace took concrete form in the present within history; the infiniteness goodness of God is present in time and space and is available to everyone, particularly the poor, the sinners and the outcasts. It is the proclamation of healing, wholeness, intactness and health for the whole earth and the whole human family divided against itself. It is the announcement of a new possibility.

It is for this reason that the greetings expressed in almost all the Epistles in the New Testament are not merely wishes for prosperity, well-being or health. They explicitly link the gift of the grace of God with peace in Christ. When Christians wish others the "shalom" they seek for them wholeness through the grace of God and the peace made real in Christ. Shalom! ■

This beautiful early English poem relates an imagined dialogue between Joseph and Mary as they await the birth of Jesus. Translated with commentary by Dunedin writer, Paul Sorrell

O Joseph, how did you come to believe what before you feared? How indeed? He whom Gabriel announced would be the Christ to come is born of her by the Holy Spirit.

O my Joseph, son of Jacob, kinsman of David, that great king, you must never sever our firm affection and reject my love! Suddenly I am deeply troubled, robbed of my reputation, for about you I have heard many distressing things and wounding speeches, hurtful sayings—and to me they speak insults, many painful words. I shall pour out my tears with a grieving heart. God can easily heal the sad thoughts of my heart, console the miserable one.

O young woman, maiden Mary! Why are you grieving, crying out in sorrow? I never found fault in you, or anything suspicious or any sin committed, yet you speak these words as if you yourself were filled with every sin and crime. I have suffered too many evils from this child-bearing. How can I refute the destructive talk or find any answer against hostile people? It is widely known that I gladly received a pure young woman from the bright temple of the Lord, free from stains, and now

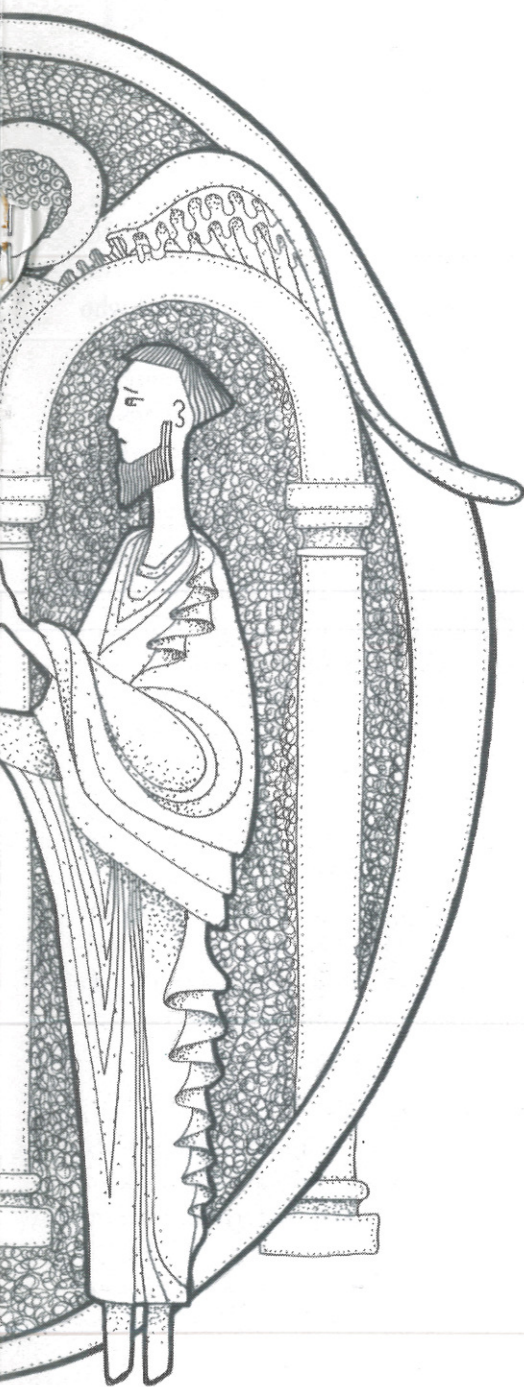
everything is turned upside down by I don't know what. It does me no good either to speak or stay quiet. If I tell the truth, then David's daughter must die, killed with stones. But it's more serious for me to conceal the crime - a perjurer shall go free, hated by all the people, a criminal among the folk.

Then the young woman revealed the true mystery, and said: "I speak the truth through the son of God, saviour of spirits, that I still don't know any man through cohabitation, anyone on this earth, but to me was it granted, young in my home, that Gabriel, heaven's archangel made me a greeting. He said truly that the Spirit of heaven would light me with radiance, that I should bear the Glory of life, the bright Son, mighty child of God, shining King of glory. Now I am his temple, built without blemish; in me the Spirit of comfort has made a home, so now you can let go of all your bitter sorrow. Say eternal thanks to the great son of God that I have become his mother, yet still a virgin, and you are called his father by the world's reckoning. Prophecy had to be truly fulfilled in his own person."



This remarkable dialogue between Mary and Joseph forms part of a longer poem known as the *Advent Lyrics*, found in the Exeter book, a manuscript miscellany of Old English poetry written out about the year 1000 AD. Each of the poem's twelve sections is based loosely on one of the great 'O' antiphons sung at Vespers in the monastic Office during the season of

y are you GRIEVING



Advent, before and after the *Magnificat*, Mary's great song of praise to God. The poet selects twelve of these antiphons. The position of Mary is crucial to the mystery of God Among Us, and she is given much coverage in the poem in her role as the Christ-bearer. Two whole sections (lyrics IV and IX) are based on Marian antiphons, and she figures frequently in other lyrics. In addition

to his liturgical sources, the poet draws on a wealth of traditional typological imagery regarding Mary, showing how the language and figures of the Old Testament find their fulfilment in the New. In lyric IV we learn that through her Christ-bearing role Mary has become the new Eve, wiping out the ancient curse of her forbear and restoring the female sex to a place of honour. 'The hope is given us', says the poet, 'that blessing may now rest on men and women alike'. It is no surprise then that the poet chooses to conclude lyric VII with an affirmation that Christ in his coming has fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament, just as his mother fulfills many of its images and figures. The dramatic dialogue between Joseph and Mary in lyric VII moves from a highly-charged emotional situation of fear and confusion to a tone of serene acceptance and joyful affirmation. The antiphon on which it is based — which was only recently discovered in a collection of liturgical texts put together in about 790 AD by the English scholar Alcuin of York — indicates this remarkable transition from 'fear' to 'belief' most succinctly. The situation of the poem is based on *Matthew* 1,18-21, the Gospel reading for the Vigil of the Nativity in the Divine Office:

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit...'

The dramatic possibilities inherent in this story were elaborated in homilies and apocryphal gospels in a tradition known as the 'doubting of Mary', but which we could just as well call the 'confusion of Joseph'. In this tradition Joseph is seen wrestling with the humiliation that his wife's premature pregnancy has brought upon him, until enlightened by the angel Gabriel.

The dialogue begins abruptly with Mary's impassioned response to Joseph's dismissal of her — he clearly knows nothing of the divine origin of her pregnancy, which has brought only abuse and distress to both of them. Joseph's reply is equally emotionally charged, and full of contradictions and bewilderment. He begins by praising Mary for her previous blameless life, and then pours out all his anxiety and confusion about the scandal her condition has caused: 'and now everything is turned upside down by I don't know what'. He finds himself in a dilemma: if he brings her condition to the attention of the legal authorities, she will suffer the cruel penalty of the Jewish law set down for such cases; if he keeps quiet, her seducer (called a 'perjurer' in the text) will go scot free! He seems more concerned to preserve the dignity of his own reputation than anything else.

Mary's reply cuts through these contorted emotions, dispelling all the tension accumulated so far. For the only time in the poem we hear the voice of the narrator, gently alerting us to the 'true mystery' to be revealed. Here Mary — rather than the angel of the biblical version — becomes the messenger to Joseph of God's good news, and fear and doubt are swept away as the great truth is made known in a few simple words of humble serenity and enraptured wonder. ■

Waiting for the Unexpected God

Reflections for the Season of Advent

Damien Wynn-Williams

For the Sundays of Advent the liturgy puts before us a magnificent selection of readings from the Old Testament, each marked by a tone of confident expectation and promise. When read alongside the corresponding Gospel readings, they prove to be a rich ground for meditation on the significance of Christmas.

This year (Year C) the OT readings are taken from four different books (*Jeremiah, Baruch, Zephaniah* and, *Micah*). What they have in common is that each is addressed to 'people in exile'. Each is in the form of a prophetic oracle proclaiming an end to servitude and oppression.

Whether or not these texts referred originally to particular deportations that can be dated historically, they undoubtedly had a particular relevance for Jews in the centuries before Christ. Even after the 'return' from Babylon and the rebuilding of the Temple in 515 b.c.e.,

the Jewish people remained subject to whatever Superpower was dominant at the time. Psychologically and spiritually, if not geographically, their exile continued. Not only the Jews of the Diaspora, but even those in Palestine, longed for an end to their state of servitude, for a time when they would truly be able to experience freedom in a society governed according to Yahweh's law.

The One Who is to come

The yearning that underlies these oracles of salvation is the desire that 'God's kingdom might come' — that God's will be done on earth as in heaven! From the perspective of Jews yearning for justice and for the peace that only God can give, the figure of king David of old naturally functioned as a symbol of God's rule. So, even long after the Davidic dynasty had come to an end, Jewish aspirations for freedom and independence were expressed in terms of a new David, another 'anointed' (Messiah), who would rule justly as God's representative. Somehow, the prophets insisted, even though David's family tree had been toppled, God would cause a new shoot to spring up. As Jeremiah puts it, "God would cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David" (Jer 33,5).

This expectation of a new David who would rule in God's name might naturally evoke images of military power and prestige. But our Advent readings remind us of the 'God of surprises' whose weakness is stronger than human strength (1 Cor 1,25). One of the great paradoxes that the exiles had to learn was that before the restoration of the Davidic dynasty can take place, it must go back to its humble origins. The anointed one would be found, not within the mighty walls of Jerusalem, but in an insignificant village. "But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah, who are one of the little clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to rule in Israel" (Mic 5,2). As with the choice of David in the past (whose origin is from of old), once again God's ways would surprise human expectations.

The absent God

To the exiles it appeared that their Yahweh had abandoned them. "Zion said, The LORD has forsaken me, my Lord has forgotten me" (Is 49,14). In contrast to the glorious days of old, God seemed now to be absent. So we see in the oracles of salvation another remarkable paradox. It is precisely in their destitution that the exiles experience the presence of God. Zephaniah proclaims, "Rejoice, daughter Jerusalem... the king of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst" (3,15). The problem of God's absence is as much as anything a lack of vision. This is implied in the well-known text of Isaiah which lies behind the traditional nativity scene. Here God is depicted as accusing Israel as being more stupid than dumb animals: "The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its



Adoration of the Magi, by Taddeo Gaddi. Florence, 14th Century

master's crib, but Israel does not know; my people do not understand" (Is 1,3).

In their despondency the exiles not only failed to recognise God's presence in their midst, but also lost sight of their own self-worth as sons and daughters of the Great King. They needed once again to recognise their status as a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. "Take off the garment of your sorrow and affliction, O Jerusalem, and put on forever the beauty of the glory from God. Put on the robe of the righteousness that comes from God; put on your head the diadem of the glory of the Everlasting" (Bar 5,1-2). Though they feel abandoned and rejected, the exiles are repeatedly reminded that they are Yahweh's bride and consequently they bear God's name, *Righteous Peace, Godly Glory*.

In the world.. the world received Him not

The unexpected 'hiddenness' of the Messiah is a theme that is developed in the Gospels. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him (Jn 1,10). To be able to recognise God's anointed one a certain 'littleness' is required. Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it (Lk 18,17). This is the 'lowliness' exemplified by the one who would give birth to the Messiah, she who would henceforth be called blessed by all generations (Lk 1,48). To Mary the angel could justly reiterate the ancient oracle of salvation, "Rejoice, favoured one! The Lord is with you".

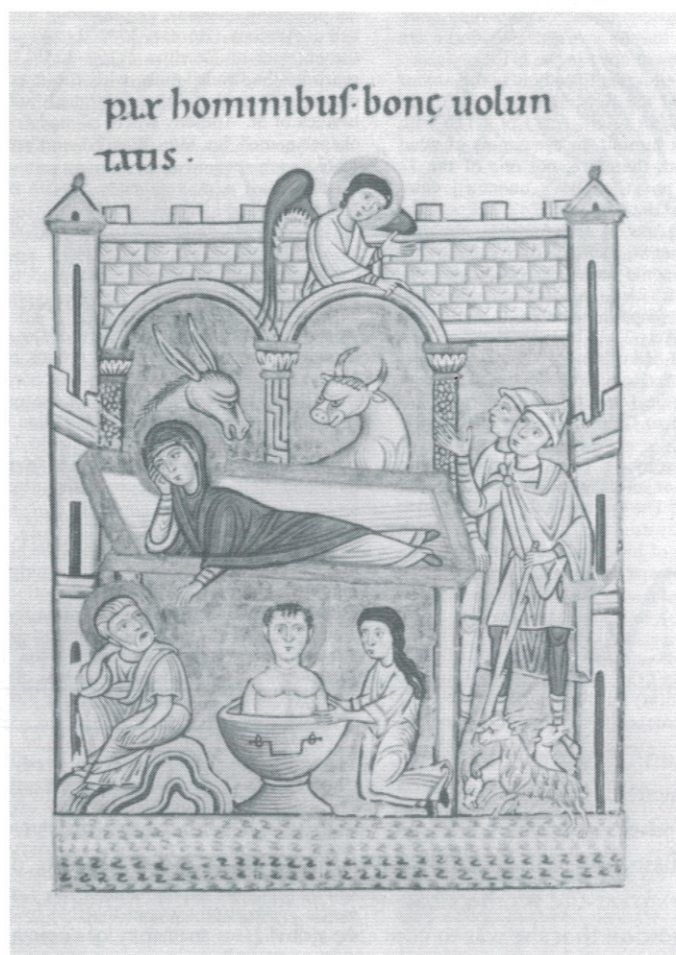
In her openness to God's presence Mary can be said to exemplify the Church as it should be. Her representative role is the subject of two provocative texts in the Office of Readings during Advent. In the words of Isaac of Stella, "what is said in a particular sense of the virgin mother Mary is rightly understood in a general sense of the virgin mother, the Church...

The ox knows its owner and the ass its master's crib

In a way, every Christian is also believed to be a bride of God's Word, a mother of Christ, his daughter and sister, at once virginal and fruitful." In a similar vein, commenting on Mary's role as mother of the Messiah, St Augustine says, "A soul that believes both conceives and brings forth the Word of God... Christ has only one mother in the flesh, but we all bring forth Christ in faith."

Where is Christ to be found today?

Where, we might ask, is the Messiah to be found in our world? How are we to give him birth? To adapt the words of a Jewish Rabbi, it could be said that "every believer has within himself or herself an element of the Messiah which must be purified and matured. The Messiah will come when the Church has brought him to the perfection of growth and purity within themselves."



*Nativity from an 11th Century lectionary from Salzburg.
Peace on earth to those of good will*

In its 'exile' the Church can still be blind to His presence. In practice we are often scandalised that Christ is to be found in the company of 'tax collectors and sinners', among those who make us feel uncomfortable or insecure. Perhaps as we approach the end of the millennium, when church attendances appear to have fallen so drastically, we need to ask again *who is Church?* and to avoid the mistake of attempting simplistically to identify the institution with the 'Kingdom'.

To celebrate Christmas demands of us a willingness to recognise Christ even in those whose company we would prefer to avoid — whether in the person of the hungry and destitute, or the alien, or the socially unacceptable; or simply those who ask awkward and unwelcome questions. In short, truly to celebrate Christmas is not merely a matter of commemorating the birth of Christ in the distant past. It entails also a continual process of transformation into the likeness of the One who came not to be served but to serve. ■

Dr Damien Wynn-Williams is a priest of the Dunedin Diocese and lectures in Biblical Studies at the National Seminary. His special interest is in the Old Testament



Wild Cyclamen

Cathy Grant

Mary had wondered about that day for a long time. Had there really been an angel? Could it have been an illusion caused by the brightness of the rising sun? And the voice – had she actually heard a voice or had it all been in her mind? And from where had those deeply disturbing words come? She was not yet married and yet there had been the suggestion that she was to conceive a child. She remembered thinking how could that be so, since her relationship with her betrothed was chaste. She wondered now if she would have agreed quite so readily to whatever it was that was being asked of her, if she had understood then what it all meant? Did she understand even *now* that everything seemed to be all over?..

The time for her to give birth had come all too quickly. The Roman Census ordered by Caesar Augustus had meant that Joseph was compelled to travel to Bethlehem to register and of course she had to go with him. At the end of the journey she was tired and fearful for the welfare of her unborn child. They had been unable to find suitable lodgings but were offered the use of a stable for the night. It was at least warm and had a clean supply of hay.

Some hours after they had settled the child had been born. In the clear midnight sky the stars were shining with unusual brightness. One star in particular had outshone the rest and had attracted the attention of shepherds who

were tending their flocks nearby. Some found their way to that humble place where Mary and Joseph watched over their son, and once inside they had knelt and gazed in awe at the tiny child lying in the straw. When they left, Joseph had stepped outside to take a breath of air. He had almost trodden underfoot the tender blooms of cyclamen growing wild beneath the olive trees. The memory of seeing him as he reappeared beside her with a bunch of the flowers in his hand and his look of love as he laid them gently beside the sleeping infant in her arms, brought a fresh stab of pain to her heart.

Mary stirred from her reverie. It was all over now, the child grown to manhood was dead. Blood from his wounds stained her gown as she held his limp body in her arms for the last time. Turning over the baffling events of his life her love for him welled up strongly within her. It was the source of her pain. After his body was taken away, John took her to his home to be cared for by his mother. When he came back later that day, he held in his hand a small bunch of flowers which he put with loving care upon her breast as she lay in the cool room.

Wild cyclamen! Memories of Joseph and the mysteries surrounding Jesus' birth came flooding back. Suddenly it came to her that the events of his life had all been part of an immense plan. It was as if her being had suddenly been filled with a new spirit of understanding.

The Coming

Could it be that Jesus was the Saviour for whom her people had been waiting for so long? Was it really possible that to her the privilege of giving him life, had been given? Again she thought of that day so long ago and the meaning of it all began to break through. Still clasping the flowers she repeated the words of the prophet: "*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the one who brings good news.....*" Sleep came gently as the words faded on her lips. ■

Reflection on (Jer 1:1-10) *I Knew you Before you were Born*

The knowing and the call come before our birth. We are known from eternity – known by the universe, held and created in the womb of the universe. Even when entirely alone we are known, by the universe and the greater unknown, by the mystery we call God. One is part, held by and birthed in the creative force of the whole cosmos, every cell every part of being. This is a great mystery that we must wait for and yet bring about. We must forge a unity with this creation, this creative force and allow knowing to be brought to birth.

The condition of sin, essentially a separation from this knowing, sends us on fruitless journeys of wasted energy. We have to come back to knowing who we are and where we come from. In the time of mountains our coming and going is fleeting – but a second: yet before time, in the mind of God. Not just in the mind but in the womb of God, the womb of the universe. Already we existed, we exist and will exist in the place of creation, continuously being created and continuously being known and birthed. A mystery I know and yet do not yet know.

Mary Horn, OP

of Everlasting Love

Naupapa: a view of Christmas

Caroline Leaf

I am a woman whose *whakapapa* is Maori, English, Scottish. My strength of identity is Maori, my faith is Catholic. Following the signposts that guide my footsteps, I offer my view. Christmas is a time of celebration, of Christ, the *Taonga* and Woman, the vessel of Christ's birth.

Collectively women may, at Christmas time, reflect on, experience, bemoan, or celebrate birth and its meaning in their lives. Women experience a variety of

changes, physical, emotional, spiritual, at the time of birthing. Even after 11 years I can clearly recall the sensation of peace and awe at the first skin on skin touch with my child.

But, December 25 is the anniversary of Christ's birth. The celebration of life is continuous. Every Mass attended, every Eucharist shared is in celebration of God's gift of life and death to humankind – Christ.

CHRIST MASS TIME – AROHA

*Beside you, sitting on the steps –
an envelope of peace,
from you.*

*A phone call –
sounds of peace,
from you.*

*Loving thoughts –
a sense of peace,
from you.*

*A child is born –
a gift of peace,
from you.*

*KO KOE KO AU KO AU KO KOE
to be as one,
a partnership with you.*

A SENSE OF TIKA

On not Believing the Christmas story

Sandra Winton

Incredulity. That's what I saw in her eyes. Incredulity. She was 12 years old and her name was Veronica. She was sitting at the back of my after-school religion class in a village in Melanesia and I was telling the children the story of the birth of Jesus – the inn, the stable, the manger... and she was looking at me in *total* disbelief.

It wasn't that God would stoop so low, or become too small. It was just the thought of a baby being born in such a situation.

I thought of the birth of her own little sister just two years before. The father, an older man, had died. The family was poor – a thatch hut, dirt floor, cooking on stones, raggy clothes. And the baby was born. At once all the women in the village gathered, made hot food, collected baby clothes and the little things a baby needs, talc, nappies, safety pins, baby pants... And we all had a little celebration – hot, sweet tea, baked yams.



And everyone said it was a beautiful baby. And someone said, "You must call her Daniella, after her father". Nobody moved a muscle. There had been great gossip about who really *was* the father. But the moment passed, the child was named, and there was no more talk.

So no wonder Veronica could not believe in the story the way it was presented in the catechism lesson. In her world no baby was born without a welcome, a village of women to provide for it.

I suspect that the women of that small village of Bethlehem were no different. Miriam's baby got his name, his few clothes, a bit of food and women to rejoice at his birth and admire him with his mother.

How sad it is that in our country and our time babies are born without these things. Babies born to be dumped in a public toilet because some girl is too ashamed. Babies born and taken home by some woman alone because her family are not there any more. Babies born not in a stable for a few days, but a garage, a caravan, an overcrowded room – and for years. I wish we were all incredulous about such things. I wish we could have communities of acceptance, of forgiveness, and small enough to know when there are a couple of homeless strangers in town. ■

Life in Cambridge...

for someone from Down Under

Sr Joan Hardiman OP took the chance, en route to a job with Pax Christi International in Brussels, to spend a term at the Margaret Beaufort Institute in Cambridge, England.

And who was Margaret Beaufort? She was the mother of Henry VII, the first of the Tudor kings, and she was a significant woman in Medieval England. Her influence is particularly noteworthy in the ancient city of Cambridge. She founded Christ's College and St John's College as well as a chair of Divinity in the University. In recent times when a Catholic group was invited to become a member of the Cambridge Theological Federation the name *Margaret Beaufort* was chosen because of her strong identity with Cambridge, with theology and with Catholicism.

One day a few people in Cambridge were chatting together over coffee discussing the ecumenical Theological federation that is working so well there, when someone said: "What a shame

there is no Catholic body within the Federation!" And from that casual remark a vision grew. The federation already comprised Anglican, Methodist, United Reformed and ecumenical members; it is currently offering membership to Jewish and Russian Orthodox communities. It is a lively, complex group aiming to provide resources for the mission and ministry of the whole Christian Church.

The Institute started life four years ago with just two students. Currently there are 22 members — and they come in all shapes and sizes: old and young; laywomen and religious women; some live in and others live out; some come for just a couple of days a week. We are from varied backgrounds: Canada, America, Latvia, Iceland, Uganda, Ireland, Holland, Jordan, Australia and

New Zealand — as well as some from sound British stock. The response suggests that a real need is being fulfilled. Dr Margie Tolstoy, Director of Studies, delights at this development: "I am filled with great optimism", she says, "as I see women of all ages returning to study together. They study theology seriously and they enjoy it".

"The key thing about studying in Cambridge," thinks Toni Askin who worked for many years in London as a social worker, "is the great wealth of academic resource made available to all students — accumulated knowledge, skill and enthusiasm". The system is thorough and the range of subjects wide within the fields of Scripture and Theology. Lecturers are experts in their fields. The demands of seminars, supervisors and individual tutorials ensure a high achievement rate and the low drop-out for which Cambridge is noted. It's a stimulating challenge.

Then there are the treasures of the University Library: ancient bibles and even fragments from a third century papyrus of the Gospel of John. It was written in Greek and is quite easy to follow. Everything is done to enable students of the Federation and the Divinity Faculty to use these opportunities well. The first week was given over to inductions, introductions, meetings with staff and Faculty, tours of libraries, Colleges, chapels, halls, systems.

The oldest College in Cambridge was founded in 1284, by the then Bishop of Ely — for "worthy but impoverished fellows" who were the scholars. The Colleges today, and their students, look far from impoverished. Many are fairly basic and simple enough, but others are grand and ornate, exhibiting magnificent architecture and workmanship. However there are still beggars sitting around in the streets.

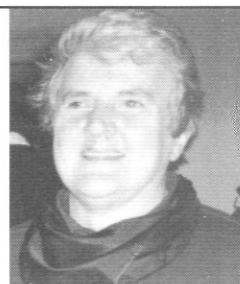
Next door to us is Jesus College, built on the site of an old Benedictine Convent. Parts of the convent building are still in use today. It appears as if in

its day it housed a large community. From Margaret Beaufort Institute we can look over the road into the beautiful gardens and grounds of Sidney Sussex College, once a Franciscan monastery. Oliver Cromwell was a student there, and his head is buried somewhere in the grounds. In his heyday Cromwell kept his army's horses stabled in the magnificent Chapel of Kings' College. When in recent years the panelling was removed from what was once the sanctuary area of the Chapel, graffiti painted in red by the soldiers came to light.

Parks are sometimes called "pieces". As in Parker's Piece — after the original Nosey Parker. Apparently Parker used to go nosing around at the time of the demolition of the monasteries. He was checking up where any particularly fine pieces of stonework or wood carving were being taken to, and what claims were used to obtain them. The original Hobson of "Hobson's choice" was also a Cambridge man. He hired out horses: the customer either had to take the horse Hobson had prepared — or go without!

All in all, within Cambridge, within the Theological Federation and especially within Margaret Beaufort, there is a sense of reaching out and reaching forward, energised and strengthened by reaching back into a long heritage of history, study, faith and people. ■

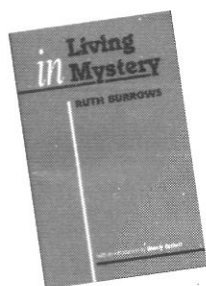
There are lots of amusing things for a newcomer to England. I had heard that it got dark by 4.30 in the afternoons, but fondly imagined it only happened for a couple of days round the shortest day of the year. But goodness! it sets in a good six weeks before the shortest day. Catching the sun is a serious occupation. Then there are the oddities of language use: eg. a marking on a map "permissive passage" (the mind boggles!); (on the road) "heavy plant crossing" — images of an outsize gooseberry bush toddling across; "alarmed doors" and "part time signals", and the rest.



Many of the news items on the radio have a familiar ring to a Kiwi. Like impending tertiary fees of £1000 to be paid by parents; falling educational standards; debate about tobacco company sponsorship; habilitation programmes for young offenders instead of imprisonment. One is left wondering: are the British following us — or we the British — or are we all wandering round in circles!

Living in Mystery

RUTH BURROWS



"The longer I live, the more I experience that God is Absolute Mystery..." states the author in this, her long-awaited new book. "...There is thus an increasing sense of 'unknowing' even though, as far as I can see, I do grow in wisdom and understanding... this 'unknowing' annulled any desire to write, for what was there to say?" Then it dawned on her that this very insight was an important one to be communicated.

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Use and Abuse of Power in the Professional Relationship

In her second article, Sr Stephanie Kitching focusses on the power balance between carer and client

"You know, Kim, I have been seeing my minister for some months for guidance, but somehow I seem to feel less able to be myself than I used to. Sometimes I even find myself wondering who is benefitting from our conversations."

There could be a number of different reasons underlying the feelings of this person but one of them, to which all ministers need to be attentive, is the issue of where the balance of power lies in their professional relationships.

Society bestows privilege on professionals. They are able to direct the flow of events which determine the relationship, claim professional discretion, and control the choice of time and 'rewards' accorded to the client, and they can be acknowledged for their status. Likewise, society fosters compliance and co-operation in the parishioner or client, asking of them deference and a certain conformity in order to resolve their problem. This conditioning begins in childhood in how we learn to approach those of a higher status and continues throughout life. Because of this, the professional relationship always carries the inherent possibility of ministers misusing their power.

Power is about strength and vulnerability, and is more a process than an entity in itself. It may be put on a continuum from exploitative, to manipulative, to competitive, to nurturing, to integrative. When the use of power in a professional relationship is situated in the

nurturing and integrative end of the continuum then the life of the person being ministered to will be enhanced and the person will experience a new sense of well-being and self esteem.

In their book *Seasons of Strength* (1984 NY Doubleday) E & J Whitehead describe five faces of power: Power On, Power Over, Power Against, Power For

relative to each other. A person does not have power except in relation to another person, and in a specific context. Likewise a person is not vulnerable except in relation to another person, in a specific context. The professional by virtue of her or his position has more power than those he or she serves. It is the parishioner or client who is more vulnerable. This is true in all



and Power With. The power we experience or face in ministry is Power For. Power For means being strong for others in their vulnerability. Sometimes ministers may experience a sense of dominance. This calls for care for the needs of others and responsibility for them, while clearly recognising one's own needs and wishes. If the minister is not careful, it is easy to slip into taking care of, or being paternalistic, which may eventually lead to controlling the parishioner or client.

Power and vulnerability change according to the context. They are

professional fields but especially in medicine, law, religion, teaching and psychotherapy.

In a parish it is not long before one becomes aware of the inequality in social and financial resources. Joe, an unemployed parishioner, is living on the income margin, while Mary, the minister, is assured of regular meals and comfortable housing. The very fact of one's ecclesial status can create a power differential between lay and ordained, even between lay and ordained ministers. This of itself can lead to significant tensions on parish teams.

Other resources causing a power imbalance in ministry may be such things as gender, age, race and sexual orientation; or physical, psychological and intellectual resources. In the supervision process ministers become more open to the play of power in the professional relationship, and are able to exercise prudential discernment in the decisions they make.

It is vitally important for the Church professional to acknowledge there is a power differential in the ministerial relationship. There is a temptation to deny its existence and to say we are all equal as sons and daughters of God. But, if ministers deny or even minimize their power over those whom they serve, there is an immediate danger that a violation of the professional boundaries will soon emerge.

Ministers build strong and healthy professional relationships when they respect the trust of those whom they are serving, and do not exploit their clients' dependency needs to satisfy their own needs for attention, acceptance, success and pleasure. They follow the lead of Jesus, the one who knew himself and his needs so well that he did not use others who were more vulnerable than he was. Exercising self-restraint and respecting the dignity of those they serve will bring only positive results for professional ministers, lay or ordained. Their parishioners will be able to participate more fully in the mission of the Church so that the strength of the parish and of the whole Church, the People of God, will be enhanced.

For the minister who does not deal with power issues in the ministerial relationship, boundary violations will occur, for "boundary violations grow out of our struggles with power and our negation of its significance". (M.R. Peterson 1992) ■

The last article of this series will address boundary violations and their consequences

The Power of Jesus

"Call forth your power, Lord; come and save us!" So we pray during the season of Advent in the Prayer of the Church.

Jesus, God in human flesh, is the exemplar for us in his understanding and use of personal and social power.

If we read the gospels looking at Jesus' attitude in his relationships with others, we find him acknowledging others constantly, empowering them to take a fuller command of their own life while not wanting anything in return, except in their lives. Even on the cross he roused his power to offer words of comfort and life to those crucified with him and to those who accompanied him at the foot of his cross. He did not condemn their neediness and did not seek to alleviate his own at their expense. Jesus' words give hope and his touch heals. He uses his power to heal, not to bind.

In spite of being male in a society where to be male was to be a member of the patriarchal powerful class, Jesus challenged that society in his friendship with the outcasts, and with women such as the Canaanite woman, and Mary and Martha. He opened the eyes of his listeners to their misuse of power in their condemnation of the woman taken in adultery while they made no mention of the man she was with. He invited his followers to imitate him when he gave them an example in his washing of their feet the evening before he died, anticipating the extent to which true power – which is always in the service of others – would go, even to death for the other.

In our ministry with others, can we do less?

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Do you see this woman?



There is an old adage: “Seeing is believing”. It does not always hold true in the gospels. Seeing can lead to believing — but not necessarily. American Scripture scholar Barbara Reid OP (pictured left) explores this question in Luke 7, 36-50.

The interaction between Jesus and the woman is not the main plot of the narrative; it is the interaction between Jesus and Simon. The whole story hinges on Jesus’ question in v.44: “Do you see this woman?” This challenge of Jesus to Simon arises from Simon’s misperception: “When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this (ie the actions of the woman) he said to himself, ‘If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of a woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner’”.

Two perceptions are intimately related: what Simon sees in the woman and her interaction with Jesus determines how Simon sees Jesus. Simon is clear about what he sees: she is a sinner — and Jesus is not a prophet (v. 39). The question the story poses is: *can Simon see differently?* Can he see what Jesus sees: a forgiven woman who shows great love? If he can see her this way, then he may perceive Jesus aright: not only a prophet but as an agent of God’s forgiving love.

Seeing and believing

First, in the opening chapters of the Gospel the mere sight of the child Jesus turns people to God. In *Luke 2,20* the shepherds, after seeing the newborn Jesus, “returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen”. Second, Jesus declares that his mission, in part, is to bring “recovery of sight to

the blind,” as he says in the synagogue in Nazareth (4,18). The stories of Jesus healing people who were blind are more than accounts of physical healings. The ability to see properly is symbolic of the capacity to perceive and respond properly to Jesus. The man in Jericho who had been blind (18, 35-43) illustrates well the desired response. Having received his sight he responds as a disciple: he followed Jesus and gave glory to God.

There are also those who are not disposed to believe on the basis of what they see in Jesus. Herod is a case in point. Seeing based on curiosity or sign-seeking falls far short of the mark. Or take the parable of the Good Samaritan. When the priest and the Levite each saw the man who had been robbed they passed by on the other side (10,31-32). Only the Samaritan traveller “was moved with compassion at the sight” (10,33).

Throughout the third Gospel, then, seeing Jesus and his deeds leads some people to believe, but others not. And this is the theme of the section which precedes the episode in the home of Simon the Pharisee. That dinner party comes on the heels of the inquiry of the disciples of John the Baptist to Jesus, “Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another? (7,20)” Jesus replies: “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind regain their

sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the good news proclaimed to them” (7,22).

What Simon sees

And so we come to what Simon the Pharisee sees and the question of whether that can be changed. As happens most often in this Gospel, Jesus’ way of getting people to see God’s realm as he does is through parables. And so Jesus replies to Simon’s perception of the woman as a sinner by telling a parable. What Simon sees frames the parable of the two debtors (vv 41-43). When presented with the matter in parable form Simon easily judges rightly. If Simon still does not see the link between the parable and the woman, Jesus recites what he sees: “When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but she has not ceased kissing my feet since the time she entered. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment. So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love”.

The choice lies before Simon: can he let go of seeing her as a sinner and see, rather, her great love? If so, then this will also enable him to perceive Jesus correctly — he is a prophet. In the end,

does he? We don't know. As with all good parables the story is open-ended. It invites the reader to take up the challenge presented to Simon and be converted to Jesus' way of seeing.

Look again

Faced with the question: "Do you see this woman?" it is surprising how many commentators and translator's reinforce Simon's initial perception of her, and never move beyond that. A sampling of titles is revealing: *The Pardon of the Sinful Woman*; *The Woman Who was a Sinner*; *A Sinful Woman Forgiven*; even *The Sinful Woman from Magdala*! None has thought to point the reader to the way Jesus perceives her: *A Woman who shows Great Love*. Verse 37 does clearly say the woman was a sinner, but the imperfect tense has the connotation "used to be": she is no longer the sinner she once was. That she has been forgiven before this dinner party is clear. How or why the woman's sins were forgiven is not narrated. Commentators never discuss what might be the type of sins Simon Peter has committed when he says he is "a sinful man". The usual presumption is that this woman is a prostitute. She need only have been ill, disabled, or have contact with Gentiles to be considered a sinner by all in the city. Her work may have been in one of the trades considered unclean, like dyeing. That any of the women who responded positively to Jesus were prostitutes is mere conjecture. The greater probability is that women who followed Jesus or dined with him were not, in fact, prostitutes, but were so maligned for overstepping ideal societal roles.

Loose Hair — Loose Woman?

Some find proof of the woman's prostitution in the details of her loosening her hair, possessing an expensive alabaster flask of perfume, and emptying out on Jesus' feet. There is no indication that this woman's loosened hair connotes adultery,

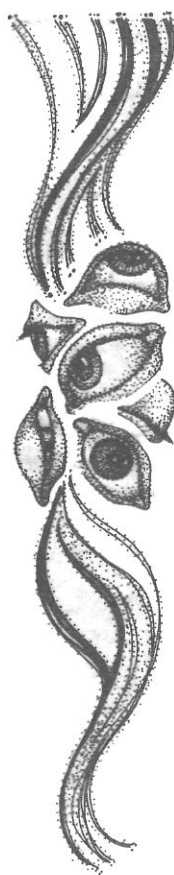
shame or uncleanness. We might simply say that the woman's gesture of wiping Jesus' feet with her hair simply signifies that her tears were not premeditated and that lacking a towel, her hair was the only means at hand for drying Jesus' feet. What of the expensive alabaster flask of ointment? That the woman possessed such attests to her wealth. But prostitution was not the only source of wealth in antiquity. A woman could acquire money by working on her own or sharing her husband's work.

An Image of Christ

It is possible to envision the symbolic action in another direction. Does not her pouring out the expensive ointment out of love prefigure Jesus' pouring out his precious life-blood (22,20)? In fact, this story has a number of thematic connections with the death of Jesus:

- she is assured salvation in 7,50 just as the repentant criminal is in 23,41-42
- her tears stand in contrast to those of Peter after denying Jesus (22,62)
- her kisses contrast to the betraying kiss of Judas (22,47)
- her position at Jesus' feet is the stance of a servant (cf 22,26-7).

The woman exemplifies one who responds properly to Jesus and whose actions mirror his own. The key question, not only to Simon but to the



modern reader, is "Do you see this woman?" In the narrative, not to see the woman and her actions properly is not to perceive Jesus and his identity correctly. The story is open-ended: there is yet hope that Simon's vision can be corrected. And for us?

The modern reader, too is challenged to look again, as we have become more aware in recent years of the way in which the lenses of our social location — gender, race, nationality, age, class, religious denomination, culture — influence how we see the biblical text and how we interpret it.

This story in Luke can serve to challenge our prejudgments and stereotyped views of women that can blind us to the identity of Jesus. Simon's ability to perceive Jesus correctly rested on his ability to change how he saw the woman. Jesus invited him to move from seeing her as a sinner to seeing her as a woman who loved greatly.

This story can today invite those blinded by patriarchal perspectives to change the way in which they see women. If they can be moved to see women as well as men as fully made in God's image, fully embodying the Christ, and fully endowed with the Spirit, then the way is open for the identity of Christ to be perceived. Then is the way open for the positive response of discipleship. Then can seeing be believing ■

Peace Booklet for Middle East

Fifty thousand biblical booklets are being produced by the Bible Societies in the Middle East for distribution next Easter. The peace booklet, produced in both Arabic and Hebrew, offers a selection of Scriptures on the subject of peace. The booklet also addresses the issues confronting peace and conflict resolution in a culturally relevant way, with Scripture texts that will have a deep significance, being closely tied to the historic Bible lands. The booklet will be meaningful because this is the place where Jesus lived and challenged the people of his day to turn the other cheek, walk the extra mile, love their enemies. (Bible Society)

he poroporoaki ki a Michael Shirres

*He poroporoaki tenei ki a koe e te tino
taoka o te mate, te tino ponoka o te Atua.
Haere atu ra i ruka i to waka whakapono.
Kua mutu te mamae a to tinana
No reira, haere to wairua ki te Ao Wairua,
Ki te Ao Mamae Kore,
Ki te Kahui Ariki o te Huka Tapu
Haere, haere, haere.
Haere to wairua ki te Puna Matataki,
Te wahi tapu o te Waitohi Rakatira o Kai
Tabu, Kati Mamoe, me Waitaha hoki.
Piki ake, kia tae atu ki te Tihi Kahuraki
o Aoraki Mauka Ariki
Rere atu ano i raro o ka parirau o te Manu
ariki
Kia tae atu koe ki te Paepae o Matariki,
Te Putahitaka o Rehua
Te Rauroha, te Kaika tuturu o Io Matua
Kore.
Noho mai ra koe i roto i te aroha me te
rakimarie o to tatou Matua Nui i te Raki.
Takoto, e moe, e okioki.
Kati!*

*Ka huri noa ahau ki te pukapuka 'Te
Tangata', he taoka tino ataahua mo tatou
katoa. No reira, apiti hono, tatai hono,
ratou te huka mate ki a ratou, ka moe.
Apiti hono, tatai hono, tatou te huka ora
ki a tatau, a, tena tatou katoa.*

Te Tangata—The Human Person

By Michael P Shirres OP
Accent Publications (NZ)

Price \$28.50

Review: Maurice Gray

Te Tangata holds special pride of place for me as a priest and teacher of Maori philosophy and theology. This is the only book I have read to date that explores Maori spiritual wisdom in such depth and conveys it with such clarity. The text is informative and easy to understand, taking the often profound and inter-related concepts and weaving them together in a way which captures the reader's interest. Michael's research, gained from both written sources and the knowledgeable experts who became his mentors, has obviously been a lifelong process, as the quality of his finished work illustrates. He writes knowledgeably about concepts such as tapu and noa and the three tiers of genealogy inherent in Maori tradition,

and he elucidates the indivisibility of the Creator God, the natural world, and humankind with a style that is admirable.

I recommend this text as an important and essential resource for teachers and students of Maori theology and spirituality at all levels. Michael's contribution to the collection of knowledge on these subjects will provide an opportunity for scholars, both now and in the future, to further explore the depth of Maori cosmology, theology, and cosmogony and their applications in a modern context.

*No reira, ko te korero o te Whare Kura o
Te Ao kohatu e pa ana ki te kaupapa
matauraka tuturu o te Atua, mate atu he
tetekura, ka ara mai ano he tetekura. No
reira, e Pa, haere atu ra ki te moe i roto i
te aroaro o to Atua i tenei ra, i tenei po,
haere, haere, haere e te ponoka o te Atua.
Kati!*

Courtesy The Common Good

Journey's End

A poem for the life of Michael Shirres O.P.

*I am the way:
It made no sense
to walk alone
So he travelled the road
to Emmaus
With someone stronger
and became a blessing.*

*The truth:
Sometimes silence speaks
more clearly
than words can tell
Sometimes silence spirals
my soul
to its source.*

*And the light
lies to no-one
Its source revealed it falls
through shadow
into shining
And we reach the centre knowing
God is there –
And he found rest.*

J.M. Collins, Oct 1997



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Counselling Issues and South Pacific Communities

Philip L Culbertson (ed)
Accent Publications (NZ)
Price \$30

Review: Susan Smith RNDM

This book will prompt pastoral workers to recognise that traditionally they have worked out of a "monocultural, monochromatic" mindset which fails to recognise the multicultural nature of contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand. Philip Culbertson, editor of this collection, is an American-born lecturer in Pastoral Care at St John's College, Auckland. He notes that the model of pastoral care most often used is the white Western individualistic paradigm. This collection includes many Polynesian authors who criticise the use of such a model for Pacific Island communities, which are socio-centric rather than ego-centric in their understanding of human development.

These authors emphasise how their pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial

histories have shaped their cultural identity. They are concerned about the situation of young Pacific Islanders growing up in a highly individualised, Western society, and they note the pivotal role of the Pacific Island churches as carriers and preservers of culture. The challenge is how to hold on to their traditions while taking advantage of the economic, educational and political institutions of the Western world. The situation is particularly acute for New Zealand born children as they receive conflicting messages from school, TV, from their churches and elders. Feiloaiga Taule'ale'ausumai notes "being bicultural does not strictly belong to the Palagi or the Samoan culture because one belongs to both". Compromise is needed.

Winston Halapua examines the poverty of Tongans living in New Zealand and is prompted to "examine critically the theological basis of our inherited pastoral care". He recognises the inherent racism in government policies which allow Pacific Islanders right of entry into New Zealand when it suits

local economic needs, and then tries to repatriate them when there is an economic downturn.

I found the sections dealing with Pakeha culture less challenging probably because I am more familiar with the material. Anglican Bishop Peter Atkins, Nan Burgess (on pastoral care in retirement) and Neil Darragh all make contributions. Warwick Pudney and Fran Peavey dialogue about gender roles. Reading Neil Darragh's exploration of four virtues of Pakeha spirituality — respect, integrity, participation and fairness — I felt that if we were to take up the challenge of living these out, then many of the difficulties examined by Maori and Pacific Island authors could be resolved.

The book is pleasingly ecumenical and it is well laid out. I would have appreciated a contribution from Fiji, since in Aotearoa we have both indigenous Fijians who are Christian and a Fijian Indian community. The enthusiasm of all who attended the book launch on 15 November indicates to me that this

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....a few of my favourite things

Kathleen Doherty's pick of books for 1997

I commented to a friend recently that the pile of books waiting to be read was getting out of control and something – probably the housework – would have to go. He in turn told me of Groucho Marx saying that he couldn't give his girlfriend a book as a present: she already had one! Wouldn't that make life simple? Wouldn't that make life boring?

It is always exciting when one's list of Ten All-Time Favourite Books has to be rearranged to accommodate a newcomer. There was never any hesitation about admitting *The Bickersteth Diaries 1914-18*, (Leo Cooper, London, 1995), the very personal story of an English family in the Great War. The Bickersteths were in the upper-middle-class segment of society, Public School and university educated, with a strong ecclesiastical thread running through the generations and a generous sprinkling of Bishops. Four Bickersteth brothers went to war, three returned. They all wrote home, two of them penning long and frequent letters which their mother pasted in a scrapbook along with her own comments and newspaper clippings of the day. More than 70 years later a nephew of the officers and the chaplain edited the family treasure for publication.

cont'd from p29

book should be thought of as Volume One. Hopefully it will not be too long before Volume II appears.

I believe that *Counselling Issues* is an important text for students. It should be compulsory reading also for those working in the appropriate government departments: police, social workers etc. Philip Culbertson is to be congratulated for bringing these papers to a wider public. ■

This is a poignant and touching book because it is so very personal, the letters never intended for other than the family's eyes. It tells of war in all its aspects, the patriotism, the fear, the doubt, the humour, the blood, the death.

In one of those precious escapes to normality which often miraculously seem to happen in the mayhem of war, three of the brothers met up for a happy afternoon just two days before the youngest was killed in the carnage of the Somme. They all wrote to their mother about the joy of being together; the young officer's letter arrived after the news of his death. The chaplain's account of meeting his brother's unit and then going to the waste land where his as-yet-undiscovered body lay, reading the burial service and scattering earth to the four points of the compass is heart-wrenching, impossible to read – hard enough to remember – without tears.

The Bickersteth Diaries is a most valuable addition to the body of war history and memoirs and a magnificent example of the value of individual contemporary reactions to huge world events.

For those of us who have reached what Victor Hugo called "the youth of old age" – an interesting way to view turning 50 – Mary d'Apice has written *Noon to Nightfall: a journey through Mid-life and Aging* (Collins Dove, Melbourne). It is not a new book, published in 1989, but is most relevant only when one reaches a certain stage and is therefore ever-fresh. Mary d'Apice is a doctor, psychotherapist, spiritual director and educationalist. She is also a Sister of the Religious of the Sacred Heart and was in New Zealand earlier this year running seminars for Religious and others on the

challenges and risks involved in making sense of one's life in its second half. Based on Jungian philosophy, *Noon to Nightfall* offers a holistic view of aging, giving emphasis to the spiritual and emotional development which can take place. It is thought-provoking, enlightening, and very positive.

Personal History by Katherine Graham (A A Knopf, New York, 1997) is a wonderful read, the autobiography of the woman who could well be described as having brought down a President. As publisher of the *Washington Post*, she had enough faith in the integrity of her reporters to publish their account of the Watergate break-in (and later to publish *The Pentagon Papers*) which lead to the departure from office of President Richard Nixon.

This may have been the pinnacle of her publishing career, but the personal story is of triumph over the odds, the story of a woman who took over as publisher of the *Washington Post* after the suicide of her husband who had succeeded her father as publisher. She had little business experience but compensated with a great passion to succeed and an ability to gather wise advisers, and now at 80 reflects on a life which literally changed U.S. history.

I read Jill Paton Walsh's *Knowledge of Angels* (published 1994) as a warm-up to her later novel *The Serpentine Cave* (1996). It is impossible to compare two such different novels, but the earlier one is more memorable, a beautifully crafted tale exploring the question of whether the knowledge of God is innate in humankind, or is learned. The writing is lyrical and richly textured, the era and setting not specific, making the message universal and eternal. The question posed, and the manner of its debate, stayed with me quietly but insistently for weeks after I had finished reading.

Also memorable – four copies given away as presents so far – is *Reading in the Dark* by Seamus Deane, shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1996 and winner of the Guardian fiction prize. It is a delicate evocation of childhood set against the political upheaval of Ireland in the 1950s and 60s. The best comment on its worth came from my brother-in-law who said that when he finished reading it he had to make a real effort not to go back to the beginning and read it again. He's saving it for later.



Living at the Edge: Sacrament and Solidarity in Leadership

By Bishop Penny Jamieson
Mowbrays, London. 200 pages.
Review: Mike Crowl

The summary on the back of this book gives the impression that Dunedin's Bishop Penny has written mostly about power, and how an "outsider", particularly a woman, may use it in an institution with a patriarchal outlook. Bishop Penny's own introduction gives a better idea of the book's content, however, than the back cover.

Living at the Edge deals with many aspects of modern Christianity. The rarity of being a female Bishop is only one of them. Having understood that she had a vocation as a parish priest and having achieved that vocation, she felt thoroughly satisfied with the role. She had little expectation of climbing further up the hierarchical ladder. God's plans for her were otherwise, and she was thrust into the limelight in a way that is still very rare.

There is much personal reflection in this book, both in the autobiographical sense and in the sense in which the newness of the role (a woman as bishop) brings reflection on many things that have been taken for granted. Not only is the woman remaking the job, but the job is remaking the woman, and both of these are continuing processes. Bishop Penny is not the sort of person, from my reading of the book, who can quickly pontificate in decision making. She says herself she is slow to decide about matters, a factor which has often torn at the patience of her fellow priests, both male and female.

For her the Bishop's role is one that, "despite all the theory, is worked out in the detail of dealing with particular

questions and especially those that are perceived as strains on unity; it has both a theological and a practical import."

The issue of gender surfaces continually of course. From my male point of view she writes with compassion, mostly, and wisdom, usually! She says at one point: "the challenge to women in Christian leadership is not to eschew strength, but to reorient and redefine it, authentically and appropriately, with a firm foundation in Christian tradition and spirituality. I am sure that when we do this we will find that the vaunted 'new thing' is not so new after all, but has rather been buried beneath centuries of male definition. The exploration of this redefinition is a sub-text running through this book."

There is value in reading this book right through, but more value, ultimately, in using it for long-term reflection of the various issues Bishop Penny deals with. The book is well laid out for "digging into", with the many subheadings in each chapter making the topics very accessible. *Living at the Edge* is a book not merely for priests but for lay people — and not just Anglican lay people. ■

Price (Otago Church Bookstore): \$32.95

..curioser..!



Early Christian mosaic from the basilica of St Praxedes, Rome.
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