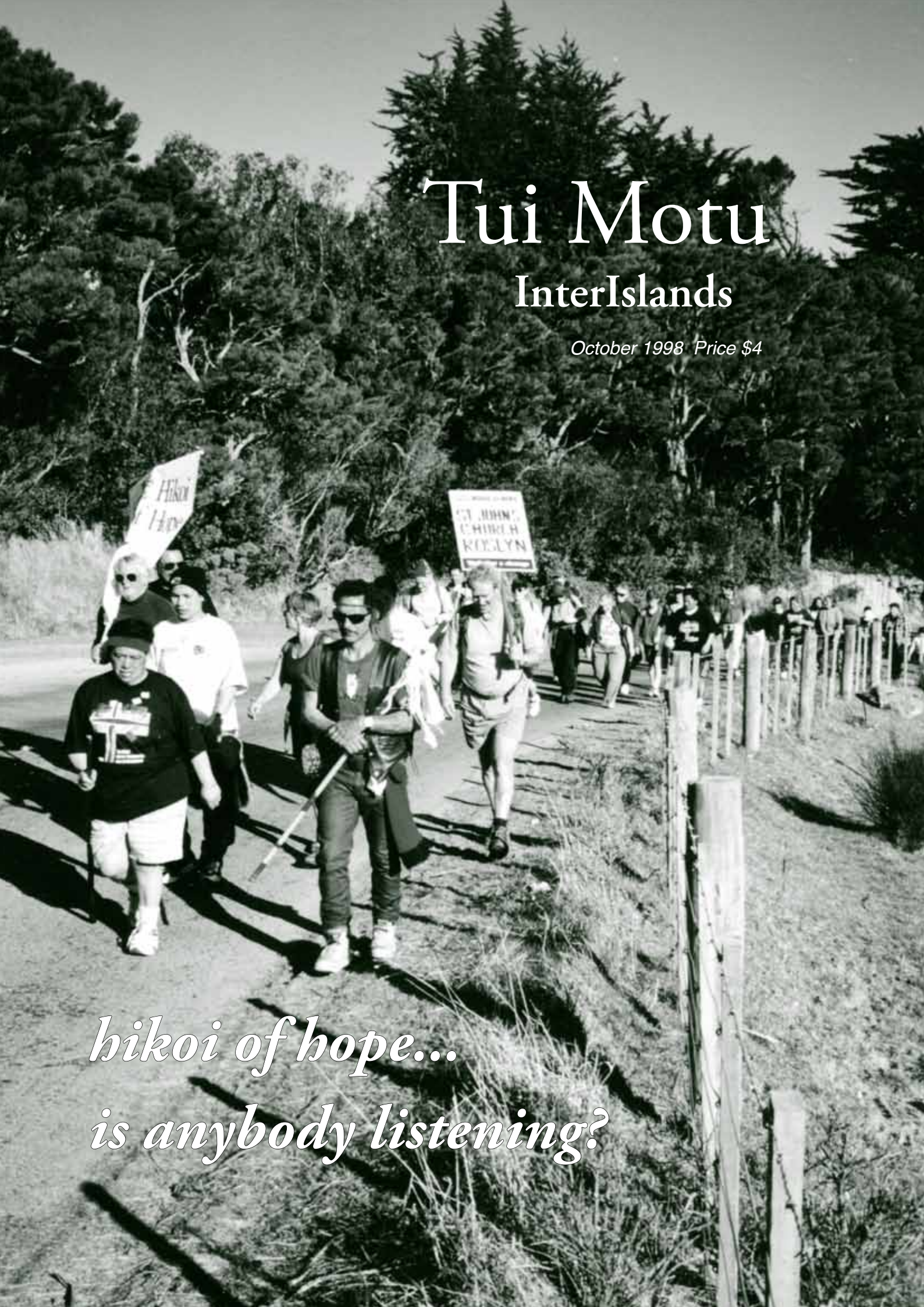


# Tui Motu

## InterIslands

October 1998 Price \$4



*hikoi of hope...*  
*is anybody listening?*





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**Cover photograph:** (Jim Neilan)  
*On the road to Wellington – the hikoi of hope ascending Mt Cargill, north of Dunedin, 12 September*

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## Is anyone out there listening?

Walking on the *hikoi of hope* to demand a just future, has been an experience shared by many New Zealanders from Cape Reinga to the Bluff during the month of September. Some, the strong and committed, persevered all the way to Wellington. Many more, who lacked time or physical strength, gave what they could: a few miles, a few hundred yards, making a banner, tooting a car horn in support. For everyone who took part it was a memorable, spiritual experience – a sense of solidarity with decent people of this land who have had enough of the economic claptrap ladled out to us by successive governments and are demanding a halt to the progressive impoverishment of 40 percent of our countrymen and women.

This issue of *Tui Motu* will concentrate on the *hikoi* (pages 5-13). It will look at its five planks. It will celebrate its idealism, look into its theology, and also attempt a response to the petulant question of Minister Roger Sowry: *what can you suggest to make things better?* It is easy to propose and debate specific policies; it is far more difficult to provide a recipe for a renewed moral leadership – to restore to us the quality of life squandered over the last two decades, bartered away like our birthright for a mess of economic potage. Dunedin Mayor Sukhi Turner, in an impassioned speech welcoming the *hikoi*, singled out the ideal of an “egalitarian society”. That means a place where everybody matters, where there are no politically or economically privileged people, where co-operation and mutual service prevail over competition and economic aggression. We print Mrs Turner’s address opposite.

Will anybody listen? What about the 60 percent who have benefited in terms of better jobs, higher incomes, more opulent lifestyles over the past 14 years? They are the people of ‘middle New Zealand’. They did not

seem so much in evidence on the walk. Dare I ask – are they listening? If they pray at all, perhaps their prayer is to “thank God we are not as other men” – dole bludgers, whingers, overstayers, or simply the redundant and the ‘losers’ in the economic ratrace, like those people out there wasting time and energy on the *hikoi*. It is the prayer of the Pharisee in the gospel.

There is another group who also need to listen: the gnomes of the Treasury and the barons of the Roundtable who have dictated our economic policies. For too long their focus has been primarily on the creation of wealth – for themselves. They no doubt take comfort that from the abundance of their table fare, some crumbs will fall into the laps of the disadvantaged – and there is a gospel echo in that scenario too!

The Anglican Church and all who have supported the *hikoi* are to be commended for starting what could be – hopefully will be – a new chapter in our history. It arises from the classic task of Christians of all ages, from Thomas More, to William Wilberforce, to Suzanne Aubert: to point to the gospel imperative of Jesus Christ and ask those who shape our society whether they are heeding it and following it.

And this is precisely what the *hikoi* is asking of the leaders of our society; the lawyers, the accountants, the economists and the politicians, the managers of industry, Roger Kerr, Bill English, Mrs Shipley, Bill Birch: *is it God you want us to worship – or Mammon?* Are we to continue on the gadarene stampede of individualism, materialism and consumerism – or is it time for a change, time once again to put people first and GDP second, to put jobs first and profits last, to put social virtues before the idolatry of economic rationalism? In other words, is it time to say that *enough is enough*? *M.H.*

# Welcome to the hikoi!

On behalf of the citizens of Dunedin I welcome the *hikoi of hope* to our city. I welcome the people who are willing to take action, to positively act to turn our country around from the social dysfunction which is so apparent in our society. This march gives us renewed hope – hope in the goodness of all people.

Welcome to a city with a proud history of social justice. Not far from here, a century ago, Rev. Rutherford Waddell railed against the sin of cheapness, against the exploitation of vulnerable workers. It was this articulation of injustice, perpetuated by the powerful and greedy, that galvanised the tailoresses to form the first women's union in this country, to fight for just and fair wages.

Once again the worst excesses of the capitalist system are with us. People are weighed down under the yolk of power and greed. I came to this country 25 years ago. I came from a country riddled with an entrenched class system, inequality, Himalayan gaps between rich and poor, grinding poverty that no one was willing to tackle. When

I arrived in Dunedin in 1973 I saw a social paradise. An egalitarian ethos, opportunities for everyone to access education, health and social security. People from different walks of life socialised together and treated each other with respect.

What has happened to all this in the ensuing 25 years? Our social cohesion has unravelled since 1984. Power, greed and selfishness have taken over. We have, in a short time, developed a class system. The gap is ever increasing between the rich and the poor, and some of the rich and powerful like it! I should know: in my job I move among the powerful and the wealthy. I meet Cabinet Ministers, power brokers, officials, consultants, who have no sense of social justice and are unconscious of the inequities that are so glaringly obvious to all of us here today.

Managers are dictating to and silencing workers. The powerful and the rich continue to preach market forces, restructuring, downsizing, rationalising. They preach the global economy, competitive pricing and bloated salaries



Photo: Liz Price

for the top-dogs. They have opened our economy to the vultures. Their hunger for power and money is insatiable.

The grip of this mind set has to be broken – and it will not be easy. But you – battlers for a decent society – have given us hope. You will raise the consciousness of fellow New Zealanders. You will take the message from the length and breadth of our country. You will galvanise decent New Zealanders to fight for a better deal for everyone.

Thank God for your efforts! We must struggle to remain a democracy and assert the power of the people. ■

*Sukhi Turner*



## Promoter's corner

Dear *Tui Motu* people,

A friend commented once that speaking on the radio is an eerie experience as you cannot be sure whether many – or any – people are actually listening. I have to say that writing a column like this is not dissimilar since the fan mail it elicits is unlikely to give the postie a hernia.

When *reading* a column like this perhaps your reaction is similar to mine: "that's a good idea but obviously there are lots of people better placed than me to do something about it". The revelation for anyone reading this column is that it actually does mean you. You are interested in the progress of TM – or you wouldn't be wasting your time reading this.

Every subscriber is a promoter by definition, but there are four additional options, not necessarily in ascending order of difficulty:

- telling the parish community about *Tui Motu*, which means a two-minute presentation before the last blessing on

Sunday (all materials available from the address below).

- being prepared to accept and offer for sale X numbers of the magazine outside the church once a month.
- offering additional financial support if your resources make that possible.
- coming up with new ideas we haven't thought of.

I will warn the postal services that pressure will soon be put on

26 Hopkins Crescent,

Kohimarama,

Auckland 1005

(Ph: 09 521 1342; Fax: 09 528

*Tom Cloher*

## letters

### One reward for all

I enjoyed Sandra Winton's article in the July issue but wondered if Sandra would consider the explanation of the parable of the labourers in the vineyard as I understand it.

The vineyard is not really a vineyard at all but it is metaphorically our life on earth. The denarius as a reward is entry to the Kingdom of Heaven. The labourers are of course mankind. What Jesus says in the parable is that all labourers in the vineyard can attain entry to the Kingdom of Heaven irrespective of when they started working for their reward. This means that the Apostles who followed Jesus and the children of 1998 are on equal footing. Those who repent at the last moment may obtain the same reward as those who have followed faithfully all of their lives. As such this is the great parable of HOPE for all Christians, a wonderful comfort for all of us.

With due respect, Sandra, I think that you are away off the track on Matt 20:1-

16 when you seek to relate the parable to the Employment Contracts Act. I am sure that your trade union father would also be happier that everyone has a chance, irrespective of his/her start in life.

*Alister Young, Kingston*

### Support from de Mello

It was bad enough for the Roman Watchdogs to forbid discussion regarding Women Priesthood but now they seem determined on self destruction with the notification on Anthony de Mello. Suicide is a Cardinal Sin I believe.

We will risk the "gave harm" as my friends and I continue to find support by Anthony on our faith journey. If his books disappear from the shop shelves I trust people are buying them and reprints will be necessary.

*Br Kenneth, Wellington*

### Don't bash the Pope

I was disappointed to read your editorial in the August issue of *Tui Motu* where you criticised the Pope for his stand on the ordination of women and the validity of Anglican orders. Is it really necessary to have women priests? Are there

not many other fields where women can excel? Is the Anglican Bishop Connor 'excommunicated' if he hasn't been a Catholic? Many Anglican ministers have joined the Catholic Church, so why can't he? Relaxing regulations and conditions may be the easy way to resolve a situation but ultimately it is not always the right solution.

As for those you say are hurt or estranged, I am sure no one would be turned away from the Church – rather they would be welcomed back if there were effort on both sides.

Have you read or heard of Our Lady's appearances to the visionaries in Medjugorje for the last 18 years? She commends the Pope for the great work he has done in bringing peace and unity to the world and recommends that we support and pray for him in his very arduous task – where he needs all our support – not criticism, especially from within the Church.

*Mosgiel*

The Editorial quoted Bishop Connor's actual words. He lamented being excluded from Catholic Eucharist because he is an Anglican. So do I. –Ed.

### THE TYRANNY OF ECONOMICS

The dawn light changed the mountain into a wizard;  
The aged wise sage in silver grey,  
seemed sent with a prophetic errand to the land,  
to challenge the tyranny of the money dragon.  
The land slept on; what a reckless slumber!  
While the medusa form of dollarism  
enthroned itself and spread its tentacles  
into every aspect of the land's life and being.  
Sticky tentacles of market economy and profiteering,  
slithered into governing councils all throughout,  
choked healthcare and housing for the commonfolk,  
cutting off the vital airflow of humaneness.  
Seeing eyes, heeding ears and softened hearts,  
awakened by the call of the prophet,  
assembled to face the hideous despot  
in its very seat, the market place.  
Enraged dollar, spun spells of money-maze,  
too intricate and subtle to tread,  
who among us is the innocent babe?  
Who knows how to tame the economic beast?

*Laetitia Puthenpadath*

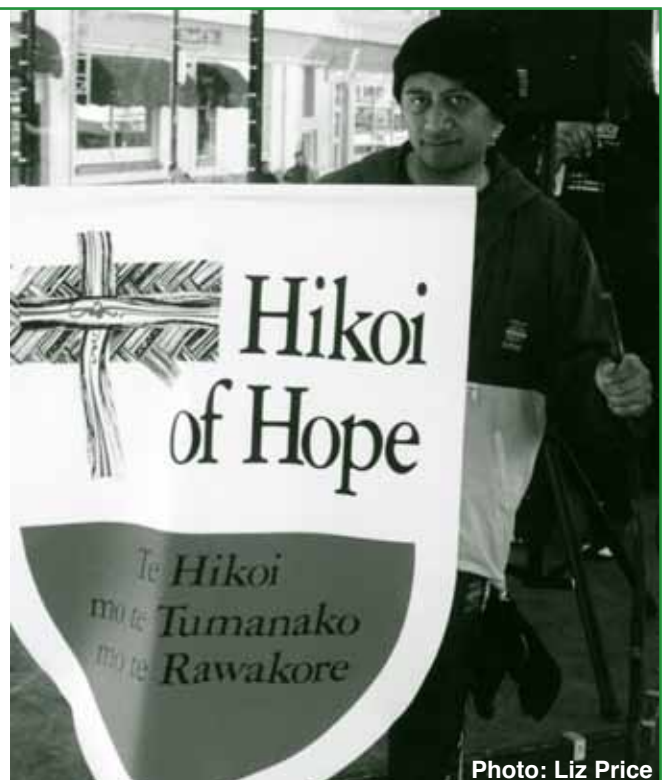


Photo: Liz Price



# *hikoi of hope*

## *– let's walk for a change*

Photo: Jim Neilan

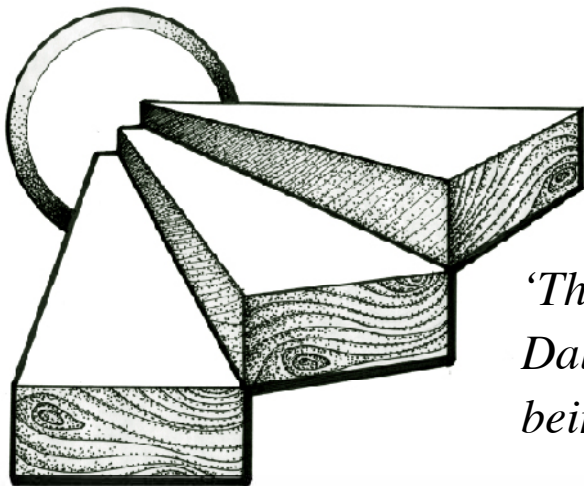


Bishop Penny Jamieson and Rev Canon Turi Hollis, representing the Bishop of Te Waipounamu leading the *hikoi of hope* into the Octagon, Dunedin



Photo: Robyn Skelton

*hikoi* marchers converging on Wellington from all corners of the country. Above: the march in Princes Street, Dunedin 12 September



## 1. Real Jobs

*'The jobs are just not there to be found'. Paul Dalziel and Jane Higgins see unemployment as being the fundamental social issue*

The five planks of the *hikoi of hope* are all related to each other, but it is no surprise that the call for real jobs appears first in the list. In any market economy most people achieve a decent standard of living while contributing to the well-being of their community, through productive and

secure employment. Such opportunities are being denied to thousands of New Zealanders as the *hikoi of hope* marches on to Wellington.

In June 1998 the Household Labour Force Survey recorded that 143,000 people were officially unemployed –

or 7.7 percent of the labour force. A further 83,000 were considered jobless without being counted as officially unemployed, while 125,000 wanted to work more hours. Adding up these figures reveals that nearly one-fifth of the New Zealand labour force is either jobless or under-employed.

This would be bad enough if the problem was equally shared. Current trends, however, are producing more and more households with no adults in paid work, at the same time as there are more and more households with two or more adults receiving a wage or salary. Further, some communities have been especially hard-hit by the economic reforms, creating regions that are now described as job-poor as a result of business closures.

Government responses to these distressing figures have tended to focus on the large number of jobs that have been created since 1991 – about 230,000 in total. This ignores some important points. First, the working age population has increased by 240,000 over the same period, so that the rate of job creation was not even sufficient to keep pace with population growth. Second, it is clear that the jobs being created are not providing for the productive and secure employment called for by the *hikoi of hope*.

This can be documented by noting that New Zealand had fewer full-time jobs in 1997 than ten years earlier

### ***New Zealand had fewer full-time jobs in 1997 than in 1987***

(1,085,200 compared with 1,104,200 in 1987), for example, and fewer jobs in manufacturing (257,000 in 1997 compared to 305,500 in 1987). The disappearance of middle-level, blue-collar jobs as reflected in these Quarterly Employment Survey figures, has left a gaping hole in New Zealand's employment landscape.

These trends are not accidental, but are the outcome of government policy that has sacrificed middle-income jobs in the name of economic reform. Further, the government refuses to accept any responsibility for addressing the problem directly. In the words of the 1998 Budget speech, the government is instead "working to create an

environment in which New Zealand firms, as well as the ordinary New Zealander, make the best decisions for themselves". That is, the government sees its role as simply providing a stable environment (stable prices, fiscal balance, free markets) in the expectation that individuals will then meet their own needs for employment and income. This hands-off approach by government to the problems of joblessness and under-employment is precisely the attitude that is being challenged by the first plank of the *hikoi*.

Indeed the challenge goes further. A large number of recent initiatives by the government put the blame for unemployment on the unemployed themselves. The benefit cuts in 1991, the exclusion of beneficiaries in the tax cuts of 1996 and 1998, some of the language of the *Code of Social Responsibility*, Income Support's *Beyond Dependency* conference and 'dob in a beneficiary' campaign, and now the new work-test provisions of the community wage scheme – all these have been designed to put more pressure on people to find work. But the jobs are simply not there to be found. The fact that there are 125,000 already in paid employment who want to work more hours, reveals the hopelessness in the current environment of a strategy designed to penalise people for being out of work.

The *hikoi of hope*, therefore, calls for an alternative strategy, based on the government being an active participant in the creation of new employment opportunities. The organisers of the *hikoi* do not say themselves how this alternative strategy should be shaped – and nor should they, for the *hikoi* is not intended to be a political programme but rather a message for politicians across the political spectrum. It is not hard, however, to put forward a solid rationale for the government to adopt a more active role in creating real jobs, nor is there any shortage of suggestions about how to proceed.

The essence of the market economy is people specialising in particular skills

and exchanging the fruits of their labour with each other. Economic development means drawing more and more people into this network of exchange, raising living standards as each person's work becomes more productive. But the system is vulnerable to economic forces that tend to concentrate wealth and income, while pushing some workers to the periphery with nothing to sell but their unskilled labour in excess supply.

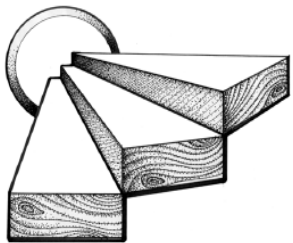
### ***government to adopt a more active role in creating real jobs***

In order to maintain the economic system as both strong and inclusive, what is required is the rapid reintegration of people, communities and regions that would otherwise fall by the wayside. Only the government, with its democratic mandate and its extensive capacity to co-ordinate both human and material resources, can undertake this task. So, like the shepherd caring for stray sheep (*Matthew 18: 12-14*), the government's primary concern should be with those on the margins of the economy – the very opposite of the 'trickle down' theory driving current policy.

Different countries have different ways of implementing this role. Some adopt strong retraining and re-employment labour market programmes; some provide monetary compensation to people who lose their jobs as a result of economic reform; some are involved in public sector job creation schemes; some sponsor major investment projects in job-poor areas. People of good will may disagree about the best way forward for New Zealand, but these alternatives – and others – could be explored in our context. The *hikoi of hope* urges us to begin this debate, for the status quo is no longer an option. ■

Dr Jane Higgins lectures in Sociology at Canterbury; her husband, Dr Paul Dalziel, is Reader in Economics at Lincoln





## 2. Benefit and Wage levels that Move People out of Poverty

Jenny is in her 30s, a mother of three ranging from three to 11 years, living in rented accommodation. She is separated and has been nearly two years on the DPB.

“Living on the benefit makes it really hard because I don’t like my kids to do without. I make sure I pay for my children’s activities, especially at school, because if they can’t participate they get bullied about it. I try to make sure my kids get pocket money, but sometimes I can’t give it to them and they resent it when I can’t. My economic situation determines what high school my kids will go to, because I can’t afford transport. My kids have to be able to walk to school.

“I budget extremely carefully. For instance, we eat cheap food. We don’t eat meat much: we used to have meat every day – and ice cream. But they are luxuries now. We always have rice, pasta and potatoes in the house... I shop very carefully. I look out for all the supermar-

ket specials and decide which one has the best deals, then I catch a couple of buses and take a backpack to carry the groceries home...

“I’ve sold possessions – it’s a matter of looking round the house to see what you don’t need. I’ve had to re-define what I mean by ‘luxuries’. For instance, we only buy second-hand clothes now...

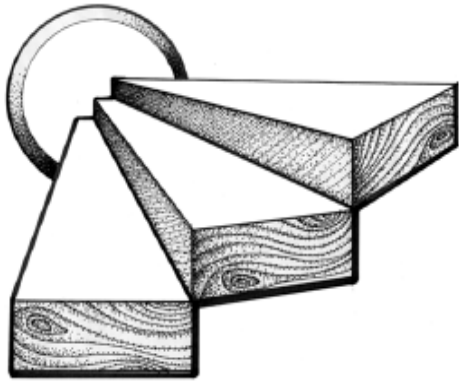
In 1990 the Salvation Army distributed 4,000 food parcels. This year it will be 65,000. That, says Major Campbell Roberts, shows how much poverty is on the increase. The greatest deprivation is in urban areas, where there are no jobs and soaring living costs, partly because of market rentals.

“Policy makers are simply out of touch,” says Roberts. “They don’t consult the people on the ground who are daily dealing with the problems arising from increasing poverty. There is no shortage of ideas but in launch-

“I put off going to the doctor. I wait to see how serious things are. I remember when my daughter had to go to hospital, I couldn’t afford to eat while she was there... Even though I’ve given up a lot, I still donate once a fortnight to the church for the poor, because what goes around comes around.”

Jenny cannot see the Community Wage making life any easier for her. ■

ing the community wage scheme the government is showing a doctrinaire approach. For instance, compulsory work schemes do not work. They need to be voluntary, the work must be purposeful and a key factor must be that unemployed people who come into these schemes should be given work skills and habits that will enable them to compete for a job afterwards. The government would be better off putting more resources into schemes that actually do work, such as TOP (the Training Opportunities Programme) or into Project Green”. ■



### 3. A Health Care System we can Trust

Anna and John Holmes

Over the past ten years the people of New Zealand have lost trust in their health system. The *hikoi* is about a health care system that is affordable, accessible to all and trustworthy.

*What are the characteristics of a 'health care system we can trust'?*

Such a health care system will provide good personal and population health care, well coordinated and accessible when needed.

Personal care provides safe, accessible maternity care. There is ready access to health care for children. Care in emergencies and after accidents is well coordinated and available to all. Community based health care, general practitioners and medicines are available to all. There is home help for those caring for the frail at home.

There may be a wait for hospital treatment when it is not urgent. Urgent hospital treatment is available on need. It provides accessible mental health care for people who need it. It also provides comprehensive care for the elderly. Care of those terminally ill is available in homes, hospices and hospitals in accordance with the patient's needs and wishes.

Population health care is also essential. Many infectious diseases result from poor housing, overcrowding and poverty. New Zealand has one of the highest rates of meningococcal disease in the world. Food and water borne diseases result from poor food handling and personal hygiene. Tuberculosis numbers are increasing, particularly among those below the poverty line, yet patients are expected to pay prescription charges for the drugs to treat it. Its treatment

benefits the whole society not just those with the disease. A caring society would ensure free medicine for infectious diseases which can spread to the wider community.

We have worked in New Zealand for 32 years. During that time the health system has changed from one which cared for all from the cradle to the grave to one which provides service "to improve health outcomes and enhance the health status of the people it serves". The range and quantity of services has been reduced even though some new ones have been introduced. Waiting times for outpatient appointments in many hospital clinics have been in-

*the idea that compassion is an important part of health care seems to have been lost*

creased as well as waiting for surgery.

Health management used to be organised by clinicians who knew what medical conditions meant for patients and families, but the new managers have no clinical understanding or empathy. There has even been an attempt to change the name of those who are ill from "patients" (those who suffer) to "clients" (those who wait on politicians in power). This may explain the change in attitude of some members of staff.

The idea that compassion is an important part of care seems to have been lost. Patients are seen as demanding more than their 'rights' when they come anxious and in pain. If they are elderly they are seen as somehow less deserving

of care. Many wards are staffed with nurses who are inexperienced because it is cheaper to employ relieving nurses than pay experienced and skilled ones. Many junior hospital staff are employed from overseas on short contracts which makes it impossible to build a culture of care.

Patients are now kept in 'holding wards' and not admitted to the hospital from the emergency department until their investigations are complete. If they are not thought to be ill enough to be admitted they are often sent out late at night, regardless of their age, pain, or how far they may be from home. It is an indictment on care, when patients are sent out to rural homes, without informing their general practitioner, and with no medicine, at weekends. One patient was even told to remove stitches from her own abdomen!

It is tedious having to harass doctors in hospitals to see patients. About 15 to 20 percent of referral letters seem to get lost. Patients have to be asked to tell their general practitioner if they have no appointment within a month, to ensure those needing urgent treatment get it. Having to write sentences like "I will hold you personally responsible for the care of this suicidal patient", because the patient had been in and out of hospital three times in two months without any adequate clinical care from the hospital, becomes very irritating.

It is difficult to understand how politicians can support a 'booking' system which aims to 'return' 20,000 patients to the care of their general practitioner. These people are only referred to the hospital when the general practitioner



cannot deal with their problem. It is infuriating that access to funding for palliative care in the community takes six phone calls until the right person in the funding authority is found. Next time a need arises, that person has usually disappeared in yet another re-organisation.

It is extraordinary that the Government refuses to accept the results of repeated social studies of New Zealand that access to education, work, good housing and primary health care actually do make a difference to health status. The recent Social, Cultural and Economic Determinants of Health in New Zea-

land from its very own National Health Committee fell on deaf ears. The policy machine of the present Government trundles on, demanding that mothers are retrained for the job market rather than looking after their children, and that those on sickness benefits must also be retrained and work 15 hours a week in the community if there are no paid jobs. This demand is stressing some very fragile people at present.

The editor asked us to speak of signs of hope. Free consultations for under sixes are good for children and for parents. They allow time to be spent on educating and enabling parents to

feel confident. They are, of course, now under threat because of the economic downturn. It is a sign of hope when a surgeon says he is an advocate for his patients. Righteous people accused him of subverting the system - but is the system subverted to provide needed care? It is a sign of hope when people all over New Zealand are prepared to walk on a *hikoi* to challenge the Government's social policy. It suggests we are all responsible for the care of our sisters and brothers. ■

John and Anna Holmes are medical practitioners working in Canterbury

## A Theological Reflection

Will Hope become that double-edged sword and succeed where peaceful dialogue has failed? Will Hope be enough to penetrate the demonic ideology of free-market forces, founded on the principle that selfishness is a virtue?

From the beginning the Christian Church has embraced Jesus' vision of a *kingdom of God*. It is a truth underpinning all that Christianity stands for, the fundamental norm that makes Christianity unique: unique, not in the sense of apart from, but in what it has to share with the other great religions and with all people who embark on a spiritual journey of life.

This vision of society is oriented not towards domination, overlordship or control, but towards service, shepherding and 'Kingship' – which I prefer to rename *kinship*. It is an invitation to a new world order, marked by relationships of justice, love, peace and liberation. Although once neglected by the Church, it is appearing anew, global in its embrace, practical in its applications. It includes many of the current religious dreams of humankind – and transcends them.

The Christian Church exists to bring into being this kingdom/kinship. Today it strikes a chord with the hopes and aspirations of an emerging world consciousness. It is what Teilhard de Chardin was speaking of when he said that the world will give its soul to whomsoever offers the greatest hope.

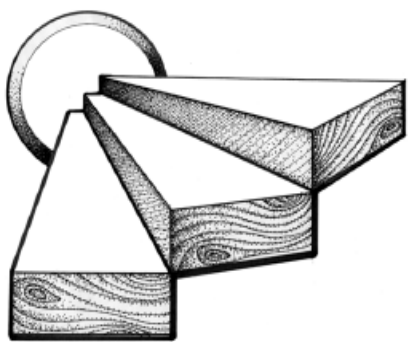
Seen in this context the *hikoi of hope* is more than just an engagement with injustice, with the New Zealand government's love affair with narrow economic goals at the expense of people's happiness. It is an encounter of the Church with the world of our time.

It is the proclamation of the gospel as Good News for the poor.

The Anglican Church has struck a vital note among other Christian denominations. Dogmatic accountability is no barrier, since justice, peace and love are the common hopes of all Christian people. The theme of the *kingdom* as it unfolds in history touches the lives of individuals, communities and peoples. All can respond to it without feeling threatened, because it speaks to our innermost potential. The kingdom is the Christian Church walking for and with every person who is hungry and thirsty for the fullness of life. It is the absolute opposite of the human compulsion to control, exploit, subdue and dominate. These structural 'sins' alienate us from the deeper needs we have as human beings. But in the kingdom of Christ, kinship, interdependence and interconnectedness are rediscovered. We are challenged to become co-creators of the earth alongside the Spirit of God.

The short term aims of the *hikoi* are the restoration of a more equitable distribution of wealth, health, employment and housing. It summons our leaders to a change in direction so that our people may grow in stature. The long term aim is the coming of the kingdom, in which humanity participates in the making of a better world, rather than seeking merely to master it. This is a *kingdom* in which all things are interconnected and all parts are interdependent, and everything is joined together in harmony into one whole Body of God. ■

Ron Sharp, Motueka



## 4. Affordable Housing

*Market rents for state housing has proved a social catastrophe. So says Sr Anne Hurley RSM, who is a community worker in Wiri, Manukau City*

Housing is something most of us take for granted. Sure, we all have hassles and worries with it from time to time, but for the most part we are quite secure about the fact that we will always have somewhere to live. This is no longer a reality for an increasing number of New Zealanders.

Homelessness is not new to New Zealand. It also existed at the beginning of the century. One of the first Government interventions to deal with the problem was in 1907, in response to the public outcry caused by a cholera epidemic. The outbreak was blamed on poor housing. However, it was not until 1937 when the first state house was built that government intervention was in any way effective. From then on, state houses with rents at 25 percent of the tenant's income, and low interest loans provided by the government of the day, ensured that New Zealand was a relatively well-housed nation.

This persisted until the beginning of the 80s. The sale of state rental units to the tenants had begun. The stock of state houses decreased by about 30,000 units

*most tenants have experienced a big rise in the amount of rent they are expected to pay*

from approximately 84,000. Not surprisingly, homelessness began to surface as an issue again. In the larger metropolitan areas there were insufficient houses to house families who needed them, and as people began to leave the cities

to return to rural areas, the inadequacy of much of the housing stock in those regions became evident as well.

After 1984 there was a brief lull in the advance of homelessness. A government house building programme, which brought the housing stock back to 70,000 units, and some innovative lending schemes which addressed home ownership in both the cities and rural areas, were beginning to make a difference. But this was shortlived.

Since 1991, housing policy has been driven by free market ideology. Direct supply of subsidised housing and mortgages has been replaced by market rents and interest rates, and an Accommodation Supplement. And so most tenants have experienced a big rise in the amount of rent they are expected to pay as the Accommodation Supplement has not covered the increase in rent. In many instances tenants are paying over 50 percent of their meagre incomes in rent. This means that families do not have enough money for other basic necessities such as food, clothing, medical expenses and power. Houses are not heated, even in winter. The rise in the number of families presenting for food parcels is evidence of insufficient money.

The introduction of market rents has had several other effects. Not only has the subsidised rent risen to the market level, but market rents have also risen. Seemingly, rents and subsidies have risen in tandem. Only recently has the market reached a plateau in Auckland. For a while, buying a second house to rent out was a "good investment", with returns which exceeded those banks

were offering. Thus the housing market has been indirectly privatised. Landlords are being paid to provide rental accommodation for low income families, and there are no checks and balances on what the accommodation is like. Money which could be used to build houses is being used to subsidise landlords.

*children's health and education are suffering; Third World diseases are appearing*

For many families the pressure has become too great, and they have left their tenancies to move in with relatives. This helps both families for a while, until a different pressure causes the overcrowders to move on. In the meantime, state houses are empty because they are too expensive. Children's health and education are suffering. Third World diseases are appearing again. People are being driven into a hopeless cycle of poverty.

Twenty years ago – even ten years ago – this was not the case. Even if there were insufficient state houses to house all those who needed them, there was always the hope for a family of getting one. The rent used to be affordable, and the expectation was that a family could rent a house for as long as it needed to. Is it too late to return to what has been a proven solution? For the sake of the poor of New Zealand it is to be hoped that the answer is a resounding ! Then we can take our housing for granted. ■



# Initiatives of Hope ... on the Housing Front

*Just Housing* is an Auckland based initiative to provide high quality, low cost housing for people in serious need. It was launched a couple of years ago by *Pax Christi* in co-operation with the Community Housing Association of Aotearoa-New Zealand.

A recent case which received some TV coverage involved a family who had been in and out of emergency housing. They had tried to raise the deposit to buy a state house. *Just Housing* became involved. The husband helped in the construction and erection of two houses, one of which the family have since moved into.

There is a 3 week training scheme which aims to involve clients in putting together these 'panellised' houses.

The rent they will pay for a 3 bedroom dwelling is considerably less than the market rate for a state house. The rent is worked out so as to be affordable by such families (25-30 percent of their weekly income, which may include an Accommodation Supplement). Income



*Just Housing* Project: framing of a house almost complete

from rent goes back into the Community Housing Fund and is then recycled to build more houses.

Unlike state housing the tenants will have acquired an asset because the equity is shared between them and the Trust. In the case cited above the Manukau People's Centre helped the family through some times of irregular income and with budgeting. After about

ten years their house will become effectively rent free.

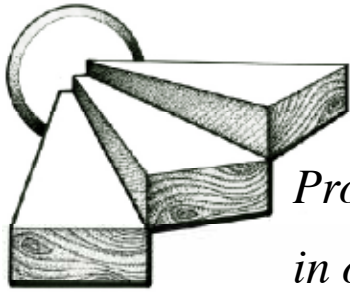
*Just Housing* so far have built four houses on land they own in Manurewa. The Te Atatu parish have also loaned them building land which will be rent free for the first 15 years. Similar schemes to help house poor people are envisaged for Maori areas in Northland.

In 1990 the Glen Eden Catholic parish decided to take action on the housing shortage. Their plan was to finance the purchase of a house, rent it out and after a certain time, to present the tenants with a deposit, saved from the rent, which would be put towards the purchase of their own house. Initially a group of 70 or 80 families pledged enough money to be able to raise a \$15,000 deposit on the house. The pledges were of the 'bottle of beer per week' order, about \$4-5.

Next, a smaller group of families committed themselves to cover the \$200 per fortnight payments on the mortgage. Kevin McBride, of *Pax Christi*, commends this as a way a comparatively well-to-do parish can support a substantial initiative on the housing front. ■



*Just Housing* Project: building a house panel



## 5. Accessible Education

*Professor Ivan Snook highlights the growing inequalities in our educational system – and suggests some remedies*

**I**t is clear that many schools in this country lack the resources they need. A major effect of the reforms of the past ten years has been a growing gap between schools that are well funded and those which are not. *Savage Inequalities*, a book by Jonathan Kozol, has documented the yawning gap between rich and poor schools in the United States. Small wonder that there is the same yawning gap between high achieving schools and low achieving schools. Students in well funded schools score among the highest in the world on tests of achievement, while those in poorly funded schools score as badly as children in Third World countries.

Current policies are encouraging similar developments here. There is, for example, the rising cost of state education.

**a growing gap between schools that are well funded and those which are not**

A survey by the *Consumer Institute* showed that over the past five years fees have risen by 66 percent for primary and 56 percent for secondary. The highest primary fee is now \$110 and the highest secondary fee is \$400 (or \$900 for a family). Schools in the wealthiest areas charge the highest fees and have payment rates of 90 percent or more. Schools in the poorer areas charge the lowest fees and payment rates were as low as 30 percent.

The inequalities are accentuated by the growing reliance on business support. The *Telecom* system by which users nominate a school for donations is very

unfair. In Palmerston North, for example, the secondary school which draws on the wealthiest section (PN Boys High) received last year \$58,897 while the 'poorest' school (Queen Elizabeth College) received \$12,998. Boys High recently opted into bulk funding to gain an extra \$250,000, and a few weeks later received a community grant of \$100,000 for the covering and heating of the outdoor pool.

Some months ago the *Sunday News* published the fees of a large number of private schools. Fees over \$7000 were not uncommon.

The fees at Kings College, Auckland, are more than \$9000. In 1997 it received \$27,508 from *Telecom* and \$1,251,404 in government subsidy. The donations from wealthy Old Boys are not publicised. (This year the government grant to all private schools has been substantially increased.)

**T**here is urgent need for an enlightened funding formula in which salaries are paid centrally on national scales and in which equity is the yardstick for operational and capital grants.

State schools should not be able to charge fees, and money from overseas students and donations should be deducted from the government grant. All schools should be funded fairly on the basis of need and not on the wealth of the community they serve.

**W**hile fair allocation of resources is necessary for a high quality system, it is not sufficient by itself. (That is why extra money does not automatically translate into improved learning.) In addition to fair and adequate funding the following changes are needed:



Young people marching for their future on the hikoi of hope



(1) Curricula should not give detailed matter to be ‘covered’ but should define core concepts; teachers should teach for depth of understanding rather than for breadth of coverage.

(2) Assessment should be used as an opportunity to improve teaching, not as data-gathering for comparisons between schools.

(3) Teacher training must improve particularly in the depth of knowledge which teachers have of the subject matter to be taught.

(4) Teacher assessment should be carried out by competent peers, and should focus not on control but on improving standards.

(5) School policy should be directed towards providing more opportunities for teachers to plan together, and for teachers and students to work together for lengthy periods of time in devel-

oping a deeper understanding of the subject matter and of the relationship between subjects.

(6) The school should be developed as a cooperative community in which all (Board, principal, staff, students) make decisions and work together to foster in-depth understanding.

(Based on the work of *Linda Darling-Hammond*, a leading American researcher.)

It is sad that current policies work against all these desirable changes: schools are unequally funded and some are desperately poor. Far too much attention has been paid to defining “learning areas” to be covered and “skills” to be acquired, at the expense of depth of knowledge and critical thought. The divisive campaigns on bulk funding and on new policies for principals

have driven wedges between teachers, principals and Boards. Competition in teacher education has led to the shortening of courses and the serious neglect of subject matter knowledge. The assessment of schools and teachers has been carried out in a controlling and punitive way. Policies of ‘choice’, assessment regimes and ‘performance pay’ encourage competition where co-operation is imperative.

High quality education will require a reversal of almost all current policies and a determination to create schools which are based on the best knowledge at present available, with truly professional teachers working in cooperation with communities and students for the promotion of understanding and of critical thought. ■

Neville and Marion Cheyne are active members of the Salvation Army in Invercargill. They became the ‘elders’ of the 20 or so marchers who formed the core of the *hikoi of hope* on the first leg of the southern journey from Bluff to Dunedin. Neville says he is neither a walker nor a trumper, but when the idea of the *Hikoi* was broached he was determined to be a part of it.

Why? Neville is all too conscious of the growing level of suffering and deprivation in New Zealand society. He feels strongly there must be a way of overcoming it. He rejects totally the attitude of ‘blame’ which is growing up. Too many people, he feels, are caught in a poverty trap which is not of their making. But if we don’t find an alternative way now, poverty will become institutionalised and we will create a permanent underclass in our society.

For Neville the *hikoi* has come as a ray of hope. He made up his own mind to march, thinking that his wife Marion would stay at home. But he

was delighted when she too decided to accompany him. In many respects it has been like an Emmaus journey. The pair set out from Bluff with some apprehension, thinking it would be a great sacrifice. In fact they encountered nothing but enthusiasm, support and hospitality along the route. “We received royal treatment”, says Neville.

“We slept on maraes, we were billeted in vicarages, in manses and in Catholic presbyteries. In Edendale five of us were looked after by an 80-year-old Anglican lady; in Mosgiel I stayed with an 83-year-old retired Anglican vicar. I received a wonderful sense of the churches united to support this initiative of compassion. We really discovered Christ in all the people that we met. We had set out in love, and all the way along we encountered these powerful feelings of peace and love.

“Indeed it was far more of a spiritual experience than I had expected. We stopped regularly for times of prayer and quiet. Our arrival was like a signal for the churches to gather and worship together. We encountered no hostility and overwhelming support from peo-

ple passing in cars. There was a very prayerful Maori group with us and we were welcomed onto the marae in various places. It was as if we were representing the poor people of New Zealand – and that is the way people saw us and welcomed us. But I am conscious that it is the Maori people especially who are suffering.”

“In Balclutha we were looked after by Sr Benedict, a Catholic Sister, and we prayed together in the beautiful new Catholic Church. When we got to the outskirts of Dunedin, in Green Island, we were met by the Mayor, Sukhi Turner, who walked with us; she took a prominent part on both days and spoke eloquently in support.

“My personal hope is that this movement will not become too political. If we sow in bitterness and anger, then we will reap what we sow. Like St Paul what we want to spread is love. As a people we New Zealanders need to walk together again as people of compassion.” ■

# Distinguished Theologian resigns the priesthood

In September the celebrated Dutch Mill Hill priest, John Wijngaards, announced that he was leaving the priestly ministry because of a conflict of conscience with Rome. Fr Wijngaards studied in Rome in the 60s gaining a Doctorate in Theology and a Licence in Sacred Scripture. He lectured in India for a number of years before becoming Vicar General of the Mill Hill Fathers (1976-82). In recent years he has been director of the *Housetop* Communications Centre in London.

He is best known to Catholic lay people for his books on prayer and spirituality, such as *Experiencing Jesus*, and the videos produced by *Housetop*, such as *The Seven Circles of Prayer* and *Prayer in the Family*, both widely used in New Zealand.

Wijngaards writes: "Over the past decades I have become increasingly uncomfortable with the official Church's decrees concerning sexual doctrine and ethics. Married couples are forbidden the use of contraceptives, even if applied with discretion. Obligatory celibacy remains arbitrarily imposed on clergy of the Latin Rite in spite of the spiritual anguish thus inflicted on many priests and their flocks. Homosexual partnerships are discriminated against. And – the last straw as far as I am concerned – women are barred from ordination to the priesthood in spite of there being no proven objections from either Scripture or Tradition.

"The official teaching emanating from Rome in these matters has done and is doing great damage to the Body of the Church. Millions of believers have stopped attending the Eucharist on account of it, turning for spiritual consolation elsewhere. The teaching authority has lost its credibility even



among loyal pastors, who often struggle to limit the damage inflicted, by offering their faithful a more sensitive pastoral guidance than Rome does. Most alarming of all is the inevitable corruption Rome causes in all levels of responsibility in the Church by forcing on all a complicity of silence.

"Bishops and Bishops' Conferences fail by not challenging Rome publicly. Theologians and Theological Institutes fail by not standing up for what they believe to be the truth. Parish priests fail by not reassuring the faithful from the pulpit. Religious superiors and seminary professors fail their students by leading them into an establishment that will inhibit their autonomy and responsibility."

Wijngaards details his own conflict with *The Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith* following the 1976 document condemning the ordination of women.

He goes on: "I have always considered it my duty, as a theologian and a priest,

to pursue the truth as I perceive it after careful study and reflection. Vatican II states: 'all the faithful, both clerical and lay, should be accorded a lawful freedom of inquiry, freedom of thought and freedom of expression, tempered by humility and courage in whatever branch of study they have specialised' (*Gaudium et Spes* 62).

"Since I perceive Rome's ban on women's ordination as not legitimately founded in Scripture or Tradition, not arrived at after proper consultation in the Church, harmful to ecumenism and highly injurious to the spiritual well-being of the faithful, I feel bound in conscience to continue voicing my sincere opposition".

Since the Apostolic Letter *Ad Tuendam Fidem*, issued on 30 June (see *Tui Motu* August issue pp 31-2), states that anyone holding that women can be ordained is 'no longer in full communion with the Catholic Church', John Wijngaards decided to resign from the priestly ministry. He says: "I can no longer represent the official Church while disagreeing with it on such a fundamental matter. I want to stand on the side of those men and women who are so casually and unjustly dismissed by the Vatican. It is only by distancing myself now from the institutional Church that I can extract myself from the guilt of taking part in a conspiracy of silence".

Wijngaards concludes by insisting he intends to remain a conscientious and orthodox Catholic, and respects the position of bishops, priests and religious who gallantly continue in their ministry in spite of their disagreement with Rome. "I salute my Mill Hill comrades and colleagues with whom I have shared so much labour and joy." ■



# *“I just wanted to hug somebody..”*

*Mary MacAleese speaks out on the Omagh bombing, but finds her hope for the Peace Process reinforced*

**M**ary MacAleese, President of the Republic of Ireland, had close connections with the people of Omagh, where the Real IRA bomb exploded two months ago. As Vice Chancellor of Queen's University, Belfast, she had been responsible for setting up outreach facilities in the small Ulster rural community.

“When I heard of the tragedy,” she said on a BBC interview, “all I wanted to do was to just be there to hug somebody. I knew those people so well – decent ordinary everyday people in a small Northern Irish rural town.

“There was an almost holy silence about the place.. I think Omagh was a very blessed place to be in the aftermath of that awful tragedy. There was so much evil visited upon the people. But how they responded! Not just the people of Omagh itself – all of the Island responded – and that global unity, that goodness that it provoked, just reaffirmed for me the triumph ultimately

of goodness and love; that they are so much more capable of transforming the landscape of our world.

“I would never have questioned the validity of the peace process. Omagh was meant to be a test of the peace process – and the hope of those who planted the bomb was that the process would be so fragile that it would be obliterated.

“What was truly astounding was to realise that this little fragile plant that is the peace process, was tested very sorely by Omagh. That came across to me so strongly – the sense of transcendence. We were Nationalist, we were Unionist, we were Catholic, we were Protestant. We were all of those before and after. But after Omagh it was so obvious that we had transcended all of those differences. After the Referendum we were realigned. On the one side were the YES people; on the other side you had the NO people. And in the YES camp it's a very broad church! There are still a lot of things that separate us – but more



important than the things that separate us, what transcends it all is the sense of purpose the YES people have of driving forward the peace process.

“It has been so malevolent. Those who use violence believe that violence creates winners and losers. My experience of living through the violence of the North of Ireland is that everybody is a loser.” ■

*From an interview with Tim Sebastian on BBC Hardtalk*

## **An intolerable burden**

New Zealand's Catholic Bishops' Conference has issued a strong statement on Third World debt, entitled “An Intolerable Burden”. The bishops note that the debt of some countries has reached amounts that are impossible to repay. For instance, in Sub-Saharan Africa countries spend four times more in debt repayment than on the healthcare of their people.

The bishops call for the remission of such unsustainable debt. In terms of Catholic social teaching, they say, the right to private property carries an inherent moral responsibility to ensure that others do not lack what they need for human life and dignity. ■

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## Shapes

*Taranaki is my mountain.  
Waiwhakaiho is my river.  
Ngamotu is my standing place.*

*I grew  
up there  
under the leisurely eyes of cows.*

*Once when I was little I cut my eyebrows off  
with scissors.  
"My God!" yelled Mum  
"they'll never grow again!"*

*Back then  
a daring thing to do  
under the eye of the mountain  
watchful  
like God  
behind a cloud.*

*Anne Powell*

## Your Kingdom Come

*I heard your kingdom come today  
No mighty wind to split the rocks  
But birdsong after days of rain  
That burst upon the new green world  
Declaring life's embrace again.*

*I saw your kingdom come today  
No fire following the wind  
Nor falling stars or blood-red moon.  
Instead a grateful smile of thanks  
Which far outweighed the little that I gave.*

*I felt your kingdom come today  
No quakes to move a mountainside  
But peace, found in a still small voice  
That filled with joy and hope, a voice  
Which promised that for all who care  
Your guiding hand is ever there.*

*Karen Pronk*

## Song of Rejoicing for the Return of Spring



**R**ise up in praise my soul  
Sing out your joy  
For Spring has returned  
And Winter is left behind.  
Be filled with hope and gladness  
Like a blessing from the Lord.

Sing out your joy to God  
Rise up in praise  
For a light shines in the darkness  
And the cold earth is warmed.  
See in the opening flower  
A blessing from our God.

Rise up my soul in praise  
Sing out your joy  
I am full of hope in your presence  
And death holds no fear.  
For Springtime renews the heart  
Like a blessing from my Lord.

*J.M. Collins*



*Worldwide faith – or just a fringe Jewish sect? That was the choice facing the early Church, and it was Paul pre-eminently who cemented that choice – launching the Church on its universal mission. English Scripture Scholar Tom Deidun looks at the tensions and solutions of early Christianity and points out how much those tensions are still with us.*

In Rome there are two particularly famous basilicas: St Peter's and St Paul's. St Peter's stands full in the panting heart of Rome; St Paul's stands outside the walls. This is a rather good commentary on history, since Peter has traditionally stood full in the panting heart of Catholicism, but Paul has always been to some extent 'outside the walls'.

Paul's epistles have lain at the heart of Protestantism from the time of Luther, whereas for most Catholics they remain a little bit strange; and we are not helped by the fact that we mostly read them in the form of short snippets scattered here and there throughout the lectionary. Yet Paul's epistles have a vitally important message for all present-day Christians, and not least for Catholics.

First, we have to get back to the *real* Paul and to his *real* historical context. The real Paul did not direct his teaching against

a degenerate medieval Catholic piety, as Luther thought; nor was he seeking, as Luther was, a 'gracious God' to bring peace to a troubled conscience. But we must also leave aside the 'Catholic Paul', the Paul who emerges from the *Acts of the Apostles*. *Acts* was written a generation or so after Paul, when the dust had settled and circumstances had changed.

The author of *Acts* has knowingly or unknowingly robbed Paul of his distinctiveness. He has made him a rather bland establishment-man instead of the turbulent and provocative figure which his epistles show him to have been. In *Acts*, Paul is a good law-abiding Jew who wouldn't dream of rocking the boat – he even circumcises Timothy (whose dad was a Gentile) to avoid upsetting the Jews; in *Galatians* Paul makes much of the fact that he absolutely refused to circumcise the Gentile Titus when conservative Jewish Christians put pressure on him to do so. The early period of passionate conflict in which



Paul fought bitterly to protect his worldwide mission from the encroachments of Jewish Christianity has been turned into a period of serene co-operation and friendly compromise. We are left with a Paul without conflict in a Church without tensions.

**I**n fact the period in which Paul lived was a period of incomparable crisis for the Church. The issue was this: granted that the Church had embarked on the Gentile mission, must it therefore relinquish its Jewishness? Most Jewish Christians were convinced it was absurd and intolerable to admit Gentiles into the People of God without requiring them to live by the terms of the Jewish Covenant.

Paul, for his part, was convinced that to impose the Jewish law on Gentile converts was to defeat the purpose of the Gentile mission. It would distort the Gospel, making it an essentially Jewish affair. Jesus Christ would not be lord and saviour of all humankind but a Jewish Messiah inextricably linked to Jewish law and culture. What was at stake for Paul was the universal outreach of the Gospel, and how passionately he fought for it against all comers – even against Peter. Was Christianity to be a worldwide religion embracing all nations on the sole basis of faith in Christ, or was it to be a sect on the fringe of Judaism?

This conflict produced two of his major epistles: *Galatians* and *Romans*. But other epistles – especially *1 and 2 Corinthians* – show that Paul had other problems. To them too Paul passionately proclaims the message: Jesus means *unity*, all barriers must be removed to secure it.

### Letter to the Galatians

Paul had preached the Gospel in various parts of Galatia, and founded Christian communities there. But very soon after Paul's departure from Galatia, rival missionaries moved in. They preached what Paul described as 'another Gospel', one which perverted the Gospel of Christ. These missionaries came from Jerusalem, probably sponsored by

James, having the sympathy of Peter. They taught the new converts of Galatia as follows: 'You can't be Christians unless you are children of Abraham, unless you are circumcised and observe at least parts of the law of Moses. The Gospel Paul preached to you was incomplete and unfaithful to his mandate'. The Galatians were impressed: bookings for circumcision increased; calendars with 'days and months and seasons and years' marked in red for legal observance were included free with the *Tablet*; and kosher food was all the rage.

*"...neither Jew nor Greek,  
neither slave nor free,  
neither male nor female..."*

'Stop!', Paul thundered; 'Stop, stop, stop! If you allow yourselves to be circumcised, Christ will be of no advantage to you... you are cut off from Christ, you have fallen away from grace!' So impatient is he that he omits the usual courtesies at the beginning of his epistle, and gets straight to the point: 'Paul. Apostle. Stoppit!' *Galatians* is an angry letter, and sometimes crude and abusive.

For all his wrath, Paul does muster some very solid arguments:

- Of course you have to be a child of Abraham to be a Christian... but not to be circumcised and observe the law of Moses.
- You have received the Spirit, not through the law but by surrendering in faith to the Gospel I preached.
- Jesus Christ has created a new humanity transcending all former distinctions: "... neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, no longer 'male and female'!"
- My commission is from Christ, not from Jerusalem.

In Antioch Jews and Gentiles lived together on an equal footing. When Peter came, at first he joined in. But when James sent his heavies from Jerusalem, you couldn't see Peter for dust. He was off to the kosher restaurant. So I confronted him in public. 'Peter', I

said: 'you're a cad. It's *Jesus* that matters, not your kosher food. And Jesus means *communion*, not setting up barriers between Jews and Gentiles.'

What an interesting and vivid glimpse into the early Church! Fancy Paul rebuking the Pope – and in public too! Who does Paul think he is – Hans Küng, or someone? And fancy Peter getting it wrong – but that was before Popes became infallible!

St Thomas Aquinas later explained that Peter's sin was only venial – the *One Hail Mary* type of sin. Luther thought otherwise. Peter's sin was "certainly mortal, for it was against the Gospel and the salvation of souls. When the Pope errs, it is the Christian's duty to oppose him openly..." So there you have it! The Protestant interpretation of the Antioch incident was as tragic as the Catholic one had been amusing.

### Letter to the Romans

Turning briefly to *Romans*: Paul is no longer angry but serene and meditative, sublime, majestic, awe-struck and jubilant, as he contemplates the wonder of salvation. Paul's purpose is to give the unity of Jew and Gentile a positive theological basis, and this he does by showing how religious distinctions are undercut by the universal tragedy of sin, yet completely transcended by God's saving design in Christ. "There is no distinction: all have sinned" (Ch.3) All distinctions have been rendered obsolete in the newness of Christ's Spirit.

*Romans* has had a colossal influence on Christian thought. Note how frequently Paul uses the words **all** and **every**. They show Paul's passion for ecumenism – his yearning to embrace all humankind in the Gospel of Christ, and his rejection of all the barriers of religious particularism. In Ch 5 Paul presents Christ as the 'new Adam': as *all* shared the tragic destiny of the first Adam, so *all* are co-involved in the glorious destiny of Christ. Christ is not a second Moses but a second Adam. Like Adam, he is the origin of a common humanity (in Christ's case, a new, transformed

humanity).

Paul utters a jubilant assurance that “all will be well... and all manner of things will be well”. He is convinced that salvation is God’s work, and that sin is no ultimate obstacle because God is able to exploit even sin in order to increase the wonder of his grace: “God has enclosed *all* in disobedience, so that he might have mercy on *all*.”

## 1 Corinthians

*1 Corinthians* has a different scenario. It is not now the Jew/Gentile question but divisions in a particular Gentile community. Although the scenario is different, this epistle also contains an impassioned plea for unity. Scholars think Corinthian Christians were only semi-converted, and mixed their Christianity with a type of pagan religiosity which we call *gnosticism*. Gnosticism is the belief that the world (and the body) is evil and that salvation consists in some kind of superior wisdom – an inward enlightenment – which enables the spiritual élite to escape into the realm of the Spirit.

Paul calls the Church the *body of Christ*, equipped by the Spirit for mutual love and service. The Christians at Corinth had apparently formed themselves into rival fan-clubs, supporting different preachers: ‘I am a Paul-person’; ‘I am an Apollos-person’; ‘I am a Cephas-person’. Paul cries: “Is Christ divided?”, he asks. Paul’s question is still relevant today.

In Chapters 12-14, Paul sets forth what it is to be a Church. What, asks Paul, is the meaning of spiritual gifts in the community? The Corinthians prized the more flamboyant gifts – especially speaking in tongues: if you possessed such gifts, you belonged to the élite. Paul responds by spelling out the nature of the Church.

- It is the *body of Christ*. Like all ‘bodies’ its members have different functions, different contributions to make to the welfare of the whole. Diversity is of the essence. Without diversity, there can be no unity in the Church.
- Each member has been endowed by



The Basilica St Paul's-outside-the-Walls, Rome (built over the tomb of St Paul in 386 AD)

the Spirit with a gift for the good of the whole body, and there is no one without.

- These gifts must not be judged by their flamboyancy but by their use for community
- The substantial gift of the Spirit is humble love, in imitation of the Crucified.
- The *sole* purpose of spiritual gifts in the community is to enable each to contribute to the building up of the whole in reciprocal love, encouragement, instruction and practical service. When this happens, the Church is completely what it should be: the body of Christ – the tangible presence of God’s reconciling love in the world.

Paul’s picture of the Church is quite different from our own. No clergy and no laity; no bishops and priests, no hierarchy: just a community of bap-

tised persons united in mutual service through their equal possession of the Spirit. There is no monopoly of gifts and functions, and no superiors and inferiors. At one point Paul says, “God has placed in the Church first apostles, then prophets, then teachers, etc. etc.” But this is not a hierarchy of office, for none of these functions was institutionalised.

It can be very instructive for Catholics to see that in the earliest growth of Christianity Christians had some very non-Catholic ideas of what the Church should look like. Catholics should remember that in their ‘ecumenical’ relations with other Christian Churches.

1. Do Catholics have a passionate desire for unity among Christians?

2. Are we afraid, like the Jewish Christians who opposed Paul, of losing our

Cont’d p20

# Church: a Reconciling Community ... or is it?

*In the September Tui Motu Neil Darragh, Principal of Auckland's CIT, cast a quizzical eye over the Church as a eucharistic society: are our eucharistic liturgies hopeful; do they change us as people? In Part 2 of his address, which we summarise here, he looks at another sacrament – Reconciliation – as a ritual and as a community seeking to become what it professes to be*

*Reconciliation* implies the transformation of community and society. No one particular ritual described in the New Testament is specified as the means to accomplish this reconciliation. Over the centuries the Church developed a number of rituals of reconciliation though the usage and style changed from time to time.

The focus of this article will be on the *hopes* characteristic of a Christian community, and on those that specify the Christian community's role in the wider society.

## **What Reconciliation is not:**

The liturgy of Reconciliation seeks to draw us into a wider pattern of life. It is **not...**

- a linear pattern where we cannot escape from our past
- a pattern of unpredictability where we seek to placate a capricious higher power
- a pattern whereby we are never held to account for what we do
- nor the regular and inescapable beat of numbers in a register



(Cont'd from p.19)

## What Paul might ask us

Protestant? And what about Paul's view that there is no longer male and female?

4. Is not the priest at Mass who refuses Communion to a non-Catholic acting like Peter at Antioch? Should he not have the courage to follow the example of Paul?

5. Has the ordained minister in our Church come to absorb *all* the charisms, so that most of the body remains virtually passive: instead of a mutually enriching symphony we are all content to be entertained by a one-man band?

6. A bishop once said, "Of course the Catholic laity are priest-ridden; and the priests are bishop-ridden, and the bishops are Pope-ridden. And the Pope is ridden by the Holy Spirit." How Pauline



is this view of the Church – and how far have we moved away from it?

7. Would Paul be allowed to preach in our Church? ■

identity? Do we presume that a united Church must have a Roman Catholic character, just as Paul's opponents assumed there could be no Christianity which was not Jewish in character?

3. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, no longer 'male and female': for you are all one in Christ." Do we not quite happily subscribe to the view that there is Catholic and

[Mosaic pictures of Ss Peter(l) and Paul(r), Basilica of S Praxedes, Rome]



of accounting, where everything will have to be paid for.

- nor a system of vengeance.

- nor is it a state of the sinless, where only the perfect can belong to the Church, where the Church itself is holy and does not need to repent.

### *What the ritual of Reconciliation is:*

Reconciliation is a rhythm of life where the consequences of the past can be forgiven and overcome, where conversion is possible, and where the future is neither inevitable nor unpredictable but is responsible and faithful.

In Church tradition we can discover two themes:

(1) **Compassion.** God is compassionate. God forgives. So we too must be compassionate not only towards one another but to other people and all living beings. Being compassionate and being treated with compassion is a transforming experience for human persons and communities. Compassion rejects the alternative stances suggested above, namely, fatalism, unpredictability, the non-existence of evil, the strict accounting for every action, the law of vengeance, the righteousness of the pure.

(2) **Discernment.** Discipleship includes a continuing search for those actions and attitudes that connect us into God's life, turning us away from those which do not – in other words, discerning good from evil. The Christian community sets standards and boundaries for its behaviour and its membership. Unless it does so the community loses its Christian identity, its connections into the life of God, and its capacity to give witness to the wider society of a transformative life-style.

Reconciliation may be understood as the interweaving of these two principles of compassion and discernment. It is a process rather than a state to be achieved. This transformation will have occurred – and will continue to occur – when the Christian community is able to embody within itself these twin principles of compassion and discernment. Does our Church look like a community that has been practising liturgies of reconciliation for centuries, and does the actual

symbolism of our current liturgies express the kind of transformation that I have described above?

### **The Church as a Reconciling Community**

Could we accurately describe the Church as a community that searches for reconciliation, but at the same time requires a commitment to conversion?

Yes and no. There is a recognition that the Christian community should be as inclusive as possible, but that it must also be able to discern between good and evil. There are

*thresholds* in the Church where behaviour and attitudes are recognised

as becoming unchristian. And

there are ways back for those who have crossed those thresholds. There are,

however, problem areas. These include significant differences

of discernment between Church authorities and large numbers of Church members, deciding

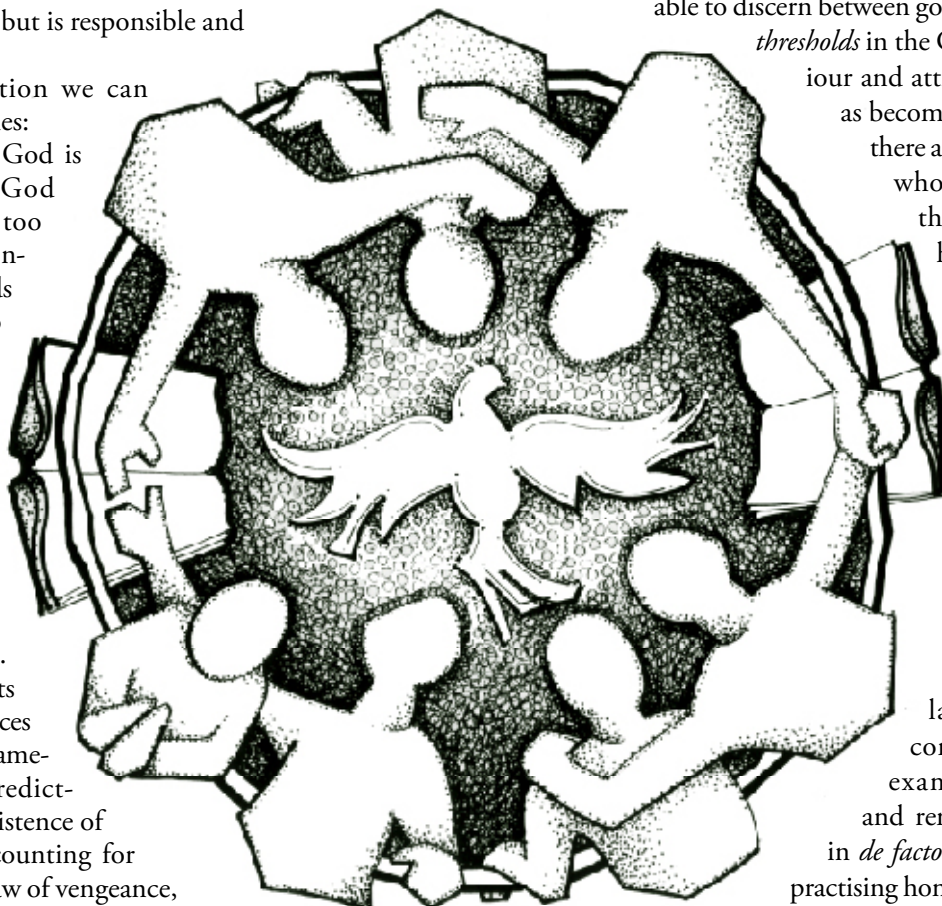
when reconciliation is appropriate. An example would

be some sexual relationships between consenting adults: for

example, the divorced and remarried, those living

in *de facto* sexual relationships, practising homosexuals, those practising

artificial contraception.



Other people, however, seem to get off Scot free! People with high level involvement in structural injustice, people engaged in business practices which result in serious inhumanities towards other enterprises or cause unemployment, people who engage in public or private corporations causing health hazards, depressed housing, or discriminatory education. In such cases Christian reconciliation seems to operate very much more easily with scant reference to any discernment requiring conversion and responsibility. A third difficulty is where the Church itself in its own institutions practises discrimination particularly in the forms of sexism, racism and authoritarianism.

In society Church leaders are sometimes recognised as having a capacity to mediate and reconcile in conflicts and disputes between persons and groups outside the Church. But there is no major impact on the wider society in this crucial area where the Church places so much importance. The Church is particularly incapable in those areas where it is widely

known to practise discrimination (sexism, racism, and authoritarianism).

### Ministry

*Is there a commitment in the Church to develop appropriate leadership and ministries in this area of reconciliation?*

The answer here can be only partly positive I think. Church leadership in the Catholic Church is chosen from among celibate males. Qualities of compassion and discernment are optional. Church tribunals arbitrate just solutions to conflict, but tend to be overwhelmed by marriage annulment cases. There are ministries that deal with the recovery from grief, and ministries that attend to bi-cultural and multi-cultural relationships in Church and society.

### Reform of the Church

The Church itself continually needs forgiveness. This is not simply a declaration of humility, of lack of faith within faith, a confession that we are all sinners. It has the immediate implication that the Church itself is in need of reform both in the personal lives of its members especially its leaders, and in its institutional and structural forms, ie in organisation, its

community. The practice of this Rite has dramatically diminished over the last three decades. This is possibly a diminishment of the sense of sin, but may more likely indicate a change in discernment of what is sinful and particularly of what is seriously sinful. It may also represent people's unwillingness to submit to clerical control over the discernment of sins – or a drop of confidence in priests' ability to do this.

*What kind of Church or outreach could be expected as a result of the faithful practice of this rite?*

We could expect a Church whose members have all experienced the transforming effects of compassion in their own lives so that they are not over-demanding nor dysfunctional in their relationships with one another; who can easily show compassion to others in a way that transforms others and eases their burdens. We could expect people to be acutely aware how their actions can be harmful to others; aware of strategies of deception by which love becomes possession or self-interest, where sin begins to blind the once discerning eye. People who recognise discrimination and prejudice; who are truthful to themselves and who tell the truth to others; who stand for institutions and public policies that also do not practise deceit or self-interest.

The practice of this rite can also have unexpected and unintended consequences. It can produce people who have never known the compassion of God, only a settling of accounts; people who do not take a thoughtfully discovered responsibility for themselves, their Church, and their society, but rely solely on the decisions of authority figures for what is right and wrong. Perhaps most seriously, it can produce a Church where all discernment of Christian life and mission is made through the particular lens of the ordained ministry.

Overall I suspect this liturgy does not have very much effect on the Church or its mission to society. It provides too open an opportunity for dysfunctional clerical control of people's religious lives. However, it does provide opportunity for very wise priests to influence the lives of Church members at the deepest personal level, and for themselves to be influenced by the deepest penetrations of divine love.

## Liturgies of Reconciliation

use of property, its interpretations of foundational documents, its rituals and its liturgies

I propose to deal with the two major sacramental liturgies of the Latin Catholic Church: the individual rite and the communal rite. For our purposes here I treat the third official rite (*Rite for reconciliation of Several Penitents with General Confession and Absolution*) as a minimised form of the communal rite.

### Rite One: Individual Reconciliation

This rite is essentially a one-to-one interaction between the minister and penitent. Its practice can often indeed express both compassion and judgment. It may release the penitent from the shackles of the past and convert that person to a new future in freedom and responsibility. It can similarly transform the minister in gratitude for this encounter with humility and grace-filled conversion. It is a personal encounter allowing for a Scripture reading that is quite personally focused. It allows a process of reconciliation and growth to occur through the interaction between recipient and minister. When this happens the ritual of Reconciliation is hope-filled.

It can also, however, suffer from distortions. The more common ones are: trivialising sin, scrupulosity, lack of amendment, faulty judgment on the part of the minister, clericalisation of discernment, and the privatisation of sin with little responsibility from or towards the com-



## Rite Two: Communal Reconciliation

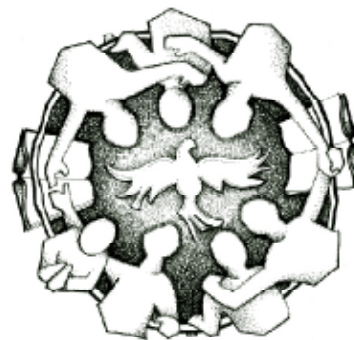
In this rite, within communal prayer and reflection on Scripture, there is opportunity for personal acts of reconciliation between the ministers and individual persons. It thus combines both the communal and the personal and can indeed bring about transformation through both compassion and discernment. It allows a more generous use of Scripture as a measure against which we can judge our lives. It acknowledges the communal dimensions of both sin and forgiveness, witnessing to one's belief in a compassionate God and one's own sinfulness. Structural as well as personal sin is acknowledged. It prompts us to be brief and discerning in the confession of sin.

But this ritual too can suffer distortion:

- losing much of the communal characteristics of this rite and turning it into an individual confession;
- using Scripture simply to proclaim God's compassion and not to re-examine our lives;
- by the clericalisation of sin.

Neither this liturgy, nor the first Rite, in its current symbolism addresses in any robust way the corporate conversion of the Church whether in its own internal life or in its mission to the world. However, liturgies of Reconciliation do show the Church has boundaries of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. It has standards. These liturgies require change, not merely a celebration of God's compassion. People participate

in a Recon-ciliation liturgy because they are disciples, and that makes demands on their behaviour outside the ritual action. The communal form has more potential for uncovering areas of good and evil not previously noticed. Unhappily, this does not seem to occur very often.



### Boundary ritual – or healing ritual?

Reconciliation acts as a *boundary* ritual in the sense that it shifts people from being outside to being reconciled within the community. It thereby controls the conditions of return – and may even refuse it. It also acts as a *conversion* or *spiritual healing* ritual when it acts to aid the process of change from an undesirable to a desirable state. The boundary function emphasises more the role of the leader, the ordained priest. In the healing process other ministers are likely to become involved – counsellors, spiritual directors, listeners, kin with special talents in reconciliation, retreat teams, support groups of various kinds, family encounter movements, etc. The effectiveness of the current symbolism may depend on which function we emphasise.

### In what sense then are our liturgies of Reconciliation hopeful?

For individuals reconciliation rituals can be immensely hopeful and in that sense transformative. They can also be quite seriously harmful. In both cases this results from the intimacy and depth of the personal encounter between the minister and the seeker of reconciliation. But in the wider sense of the *transformation* of community and society, less can be said. This is because in the contemporary Church these rites are not practised very much. Their potential for transformation remains, particularly for Individual Reconciliation with its one-to-one interaction.

*Are there signs of hope?* The symbolism of Communal Reconciliation must carry the major burden of hope if it is to influence the Christian community as a whole – and through it the wider society. There are liturgies of Reconciliation in which reflections on Scripture will change how people define sin. When given by people who are not clerics it can prompt a different understanding of what constitutes sin from the traditional clerical one.

There are liturgies of Reconciliation which do achieve a feeling of common bond with a compassionate God; in which individuals, by publicly walking forward, powerfully proclaim both their admission of sinfulness and their trust in God. There are liturgies which include alternative gestures of individual confession or allow the opportunity of confession to non-ordained ministers. These various attempts at improving the symbolism are not always successful. With trial comes error. But they are signs of hope that our symbolism can be transformative.

Here again, as in the case of the symbolism of Eucharist, I ask that we search and we name the signs of hope in our symbolism of Reconciliation. ■

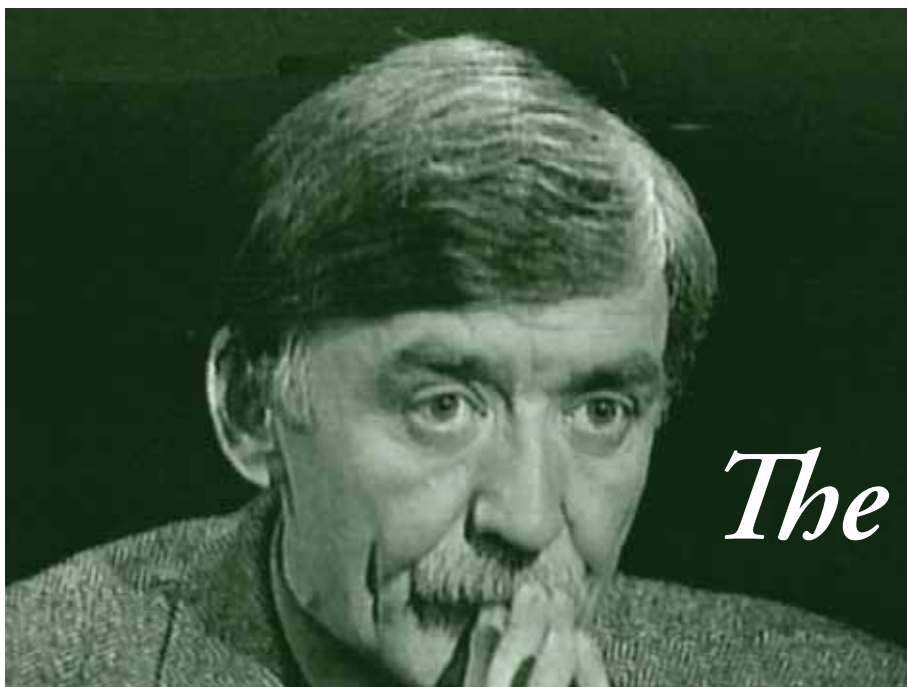
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# *The Informer*

**Kathleen Doherty**

**M**emoirs of IRA killers-turned-informers are about as common as memoirs of kamikaze pilots: the very nature of the profession is not conducive to survival let alone to calm reflection.

Sean O'Callaghan is a survivor, although given the fanaticism of the IRA, one wonders for how long. Now on the run and based, presumably, in England, without a fixed address, without a bank account, without his family – his former wife and their son, his subsequent girlfriend and their daughter – unable to return to Ireland, he keeps one step ahead of his former colleagues who, he knows, want him dead. The publication of his story, *The Informer*, will have done nothing to ensure a quiet life. It has raised his profile and launched him on the publicity interview and speaking circuit while exposing the workings and methods of the IRA he once killed for. It is the work of an exceptionally brave and committed man.

It is also the work of a driven man, who is single-minded and passionate in his condemnation of the IRA. He describes it as “a bitter form of tribalism and no amount of fancy words ... will make it something noble or decent”. He has only contempt for its leaders, including Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, now active in the peace process, who

are “...a different breed... possessing a hardness that is almost beyond the comprehension of most British politicians and southern Irish nationalists.”

This was not always Sean O'Callaghan's view. There was never any doubt in his mind that his place was in the Provisional wing of the IRA when it split from the Marxist “official” IRA in 1969. He was just 15, living in Tralee, market town of Kerry in the south-west of Ireland, where memories of the Civil War which followed the War of Independence were still alive and festering.

***the IRA are a different breed, possessing a hardness beyond the comprehension of politicians***

His father's family, Catholic, Nationalist, was steeped in hatred of the British presence in Ireland. The older O'Callaghan was still a member of the IRA which “dreamed romantic but deadly dreams of driving the British out and establishing their Irish Republic by

any means.” Sean thought at first that the dwindling band of IRA veterans – his father and uncle had been interned at the military camp outside Kildare in the 1940s – were a touch “silly and old fashioned, like Dad's Army”, but later came to respect their place in the history of the struggle.

With the idealism of youth Sean O'Callaghan envisaged the provisionals as the popular front sweeping away partition and the British presence and leading to a Socialist republic. For five years he was totally committed to the cause as a full-time volunteer, becoming an expert in the making and use of explosives, in charge of training in the use of small arms and mortars, recruiting others to the cause.

His family never questioned his long absences from home, he told them nothing so that they would know nothing when the police questioned them. When he came home after a night of cleaning an arms dump secreted in a local farmer's grain store, his father simply said “I know where you've been tonight. Be careful.” It was the only time the two ever came even near to being close: in spite of the common cause there was a huge gulf between them that was never bridged.

Three deaths were significant in Sean O'Callaghan's life: each marked a change of direction and a development in an increasingly complex personality.

The first was in 1974. O'Callaghan, aged 19, was instructed to kill Detective Inspector Peter Flanagan of the Royal Ulster Constabulary Special Branch, stationed at Omagh, Co Tyrone. (Ironically, Omagh was the scene of the Real IRA's horrific bombing two month's ago in which 29 were killed, with a similar number seriously injured.) He had no hesitation in carrying out the order. He believed that he was fighting in a just cause, and people being killed was an inevitable consequence. He dispatched Peter Flanagan in the bar at the Omagh pub where he spent every lunchtime, pouring eight bullets into him as he scrambled to escape.

In a recent BBC *Hardtalk* interview (why, TVNZ, do you play such gems in the middle of the night?) he describes himself as totally calm at the time, anxious only that the deed be done "quickly and efficiently". It was a cold-blooded killing, the first and last O'Callaghan



ever carried out. Afterwards the thought which was to haunt him flashed into his head – "You're going to have to pay for this one day" – but he dismissed it as totally preposterous: he felt he had not committed a crime, a sin; he had no reason to feel guilty.

Yet, in spite of the justification which, as a young man, he was able to produce so glibly, the feeling of unease grew. Within a year he had resigned and left for England, "sick to the back teeth of the whole squalid murderous nonsense". O'Callaghan had come to the realisation that he had been involved in a war which was between Catholics and Protestants, not against the British. He saw the Provisional IRA as a Catholic defence organisation, and he wasn't even a practising Catholic.

England provided a time of reassessment and work. O'Callaghan met and married a Scottish woman, and returned to Ireland with the germ of the idea that the only way to combat the IRA, which he now regarded as "the greatest enemy of democracy and decency", was from the inside. The murder of Lord Mountbatten in 1979 was the trigger for him to make contact with an officer in the Gardaí, establish himself as an informer, and re-join the IRA.

Then began the most dangerous and lonely period of his life. Outwardly he was a high-ranking member of the IRA and of Sinn Féin. He was made officer in charge of Southern Command, whose area of operation covers 19 counties, and as such became a member of Sinn Féin's National Executive. He was elected as a Sinn Féin candidate to the Tralee District Council. He discussed kidnaps and bank raids and bombings and murders with IRA colleagues and

passed every bit of information on to his Gardaí contact. He even assisted in IRA investigations into operations which had been foiled, managing always to divert attention from himself. Because his role as an informer was known only to his contact and two high-ranging officials in the Gardaí headquarters he was often arrested and held as a suspect in opera-

**You're going to  
have to pay for this  
one day**

tions which he had planned and then informed on.

He could speak to no-one about his double life. To his family he was still a committed member of the IRA. His wife, who had given birth to their son, was unhappy about his involvement and the marriage broke up. He lived, as he explains it, entirely within his head, spending most of his time with people he despised, always having to be another person. It is sobering to think that an observer at this time would have seen only a high-ranking IRA terrorist; only O'Callaghan and three men in the Gardaí knew that he was that most hated figure in the IRA eyes: an informer.

His reputation within the IRA as a man who was totally trusted and prepared to go to any lengths for the cause was confirmed when O'Callaghan was recruited for the 'England department' and was assigned to murder the Prince and Princess of Wales by placing a bomb at the Dominion Theatre in London where they were to attend a Royal Gala. . He went to the extent of casing the theatre, seeing where a bomb could be placed near the Royal box, and then foiling the attempt by a neat piece of double-crossing which meant he had to leave England before the date of the concert: it is a piece of magnificent intrigue.

By now O'Callaghan had a girlfriend and a baby daughter and was again getting sickened by the increasing horror

*cont'd overleaf*

of IRA activities. The third significant death was that of Sean Corcoran, also an IRA informer, who was killed by his IRA colleagues in spite of O'Callaghan's warning to the Gardaí that his life was in danger. He felt betrayed and helpless that he had little influence on whether or not his information was used. Again he left for England and a life outside the IRA, but again the passion for working against the organisation surfaced; in 1988 Sean O'Callaghan walked into a police station and gave himself up, confessing to the murder of Peter Flanagan 14 years earlier. The small voice telling him that he would have to pay for that crime had proved to be right.

O'Callaghan was in various English and

Irish jails until the end of 1996. Even then he managed to inform, glean plans from other IRA inmates, passing them on to his contacts. When his sources of information dried up he sought interviews with journalists and wrote articles for newspapers exposing IRA philosophies as flawed and running counter to the peace process. He was freed after serving eight years.

O'Callaghan's story is as full of tension and intrigue as any spy novel, and written with fluency, never more so than when he is condemning the IRA which he joined with such enthusiasm when 15. It is clear that the passion which one associates with terrorists was never present in the young O'Callaghan. He had been a cold, efficient killer; now his

passion has emerged in his opposition to the IRA, his assessment of the nature of the organisation causing him to fear for the success of any peace process unless the people of the Irish Republic give the IRA/Sinn Féin nowhere to hide. A lasting peace based on such a development would be the final triumph of a man who is giving his all. ■

*The Informer*  
by Sean O'Callaghan  
Bantam Press  
Price: \$44.95

## Once Were Warriors ...Aussie style

Film

*The Boys*

Review: Nic McCloy

*The Boys* is one of the few Australian films in recent years that hasn't fitted into the *Strictly Ballroom-Muriel's Wedding* 'look aren't we good at laughing at ourselves' mould. Despite starring Toni 'Muriel' Collette, one of Australia's finest comedy actresses, the film is far from funny.

It is a poor white, Sydney take on the themes of *Once Were Warriors*. *The Boys* is an extremely bleak, bordering on psychotic reflection on family violence. Based around an extremely dysfunctional, single-parent three-adult-sons family, the film is a frightening snapshot of the power a criminal mind can have over others. The basic plot of the film sees the eldest brother of the family released from jail. With his release the lives of those around him are turned upside down, with sickening consequences.

Not by any stretch of the imagination is this an enjoyable film but definitely a well-made one, that gives an interesting portrayal of life on the seedy side of Sydney. An indication of the disturbing nature of the film being that at least 30 people walked out of the screening I went to. It is hard to know who to recommend this film to. If you enjoy gritty, realistic and at times frighteningly violent films, then this one's for you. Definitely not one for the faint-hearted.

All in all, *The Boys* is cleverly made, well scripted and very engrossing. However, it is let down by some fairly hammy acting, and a slow moving story line. One very telling point about Australian film, which to my mind speaks volumes, was that a key Aboriginal character was played by a Maori actor. When it comes to portraying the underdogs of Australian life, something tells me they've got a long way to go... ■



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## ...introducing a new series on young people

Paul Andrews is a Jesuit priest from Dublin who loves coming to New Zealand to fish. While here last year he also looked after a small city parish where his wisdom and his wit charmed the parishioners.

There is another side to Paul Andrew's life. He is a practising psychotherapist and director of a special school and child guidance clinic in Dublin. During his time here he worked with child psychotherapists and parent educators as well as speaking to parents' groups. The fruit of his wisdom and experience has gone into a wonderful book called *Changing Children*. As you might expect from an Irishman, the book is full of stories. Paul has kindly allowed us to print a series

of excerpts. We offer these to readers in the hope they will help all of us better understand the young people of our time.

In the introduction Paul writes: "It is always a privilege to watch a young person grow up and blossom. This generation of parents, probably more than any past generation, has had to face a kaleidoscope of change in the appearance and bodies of their children, in their language, intelligence, values, in their exposure to countless new stimulations and opportunities, in their range of style." As a sampler we have chosen the story of Lara and how she relates to her father.

Printed with the author's permission and due acknowledgment to the publishers, Gill and Macmillan.

As a man without children, I have often watched fathers with envy, and I am unsure whether the envy is stronger over their sons or their daughters. It is intriguing, almost heart-stopping, to watch them with gorgeous, princess-like little daughters; but it does not last. Many years ago I was invited into a family where the daughter, Lara, was mentioned as a problem.

She was the eldest in the family, and as she turned into her beautiful teens, her father, who had seen her as his princess, was baffled by the change. She would reject his advice but quote what she had heard from some young friend down the road. She obviously preferred to be out of the house than in. From being a dutiful daughter, she seemed to her father to have become something of a monster, looking to a wild bunch of friends for her style in clothes and make-up (tending towards the outrageous), her language (often rough or obscene), her morals (at least as expressed in her conversation) and her centre of gravity.

That at least was how it looked to father. He sat down once with his wife, Lara and myself, and each tried to say what they liked about the other, without ifs or buts. Lara had no difficulty: despite the difference in age and style, she liked her mother for her warmth, her father for being a strong and responsible provider, and for all the fun

she used to have with him. But when her father tried to say what he liked in Lara, he could not finish a sentence positively. She can be good company – but she is never in the house. She is bright and intelligent – but she does no work and she's wasting her brains. She is pretty – but look what she's doing with her face and hair and clothes.

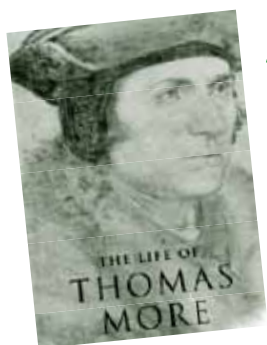


In the comfortable suburb where they lived, the teenagers formed a large, noisy, visible group, and Lara found a welcome among them. The old wisdom is that teenagers look to their peers for matters of style and appearance, and to their parents for more lasting values. It seems to be generally true, but it is not always obvious to the parents, because lasting values do not show on the surface, whereas

lifestyle does. 'Style' of conversation often means holding forth on matters of politics, morals, religion, in a way that deeply offends parents.

What her father eventually did was heroic. He gave himself three weeks – his wife went along with him on it – in which he would hold back any criticism or comment on Lara, except to compliment her. It meant letting all sorts of annoyances pass unremarked. It gave him a space in which to sort out the trivial from matters of deeper concern. He found that most of what annoyed him was trivial, details of dress, appearance and conversation that changed even in the trial period he gave himself. He saw how much of Lara's posturing was just experimenting with style, trying to find what was really her. He found that she could still be a delight to him, she could still be funny and great company, though her quickness and sophistication often made him nervous.

Lara had in fact given up any hope of pleasing her father. She had unwittingly accepted the role of being a disappointment to him, a thorn in his side, and was beginning to find pleasure in her ability to annoy him. Now she discovered that she could still please her father, and in a different way from when she was a little girl. He could accept her as different. Her meaning for him had changed. ■



*The Life of Thomas More*

By Peter Ackroyd

Chatto & Windus

Price: \$49.95

Review: Jim Neilan

## The King's good servant – but God's

Watch for this book's title in the 1998 Book Awards!

This is a masterly new biography of Thomas More: family man, lawyer, judge, knight, Speaker of the House, Lord Chancellor, Saint. Writer, poet, humanist – the last Catholic intellectual of pre-Reformation England.

Ackroyd tells the story of More in a way which makes you feel he not only knows the facts about More and his times – he really knows the man himself. He follows the story of More's life, setting it in the atmosphere of late mediaeval London. We are taken right inside the house of the prosperous and influential More family. We accompany young Thomas to his school, and later, to Oxford and to Lincoln's Inn. We follow his outstanding legal career, culminating in his appointment as Lord Chancellor.

Ackroyd shows an extraordinary knowledge of the history of the great city, re-creating the vivid sounds and colours of the festivals and holy days of the liturgical year, all too soon to be obliterated by the Reformation.

More's first wife, Jane, died at the age of 22 after having four children. He then married Alice in 1511. Their household was known for its warmth, its humour and its lively conversation as well as its deep piety. Unlike many of his contemporaries More never chastised his children. He regarded women as the intellectual equals of men and took the

education of his daughters seriously, much to the amazement of his friend Erasmus. It was said that More's daughter, Margaret, was the best educated English woman of her time.

Ackroyd sees no real conflict between More's success and his spirituality, between his ambition and his penitence. There was no contradiction in wearing a hairshirt beneath the Chancellor's velvet robe. It is not easy for the modern reader to understand how much religious, secular and political affairs were interwoven in Catholic England.

As a lawyer More saw human law and justice as a reflection of the law of God. He truly believed the king to have a divine mandate to rule. The customs and traditions of a thousand years were an expression of God's plan. "He embodied the old order of hierarchy and authority," Ackroyd says, "at the very moment it began to collapse all round him."

Luther's ideas were an assault on the very principles by which More's life and career were guided. Luther spoke of judgment "according to love – without any law books", while Thomas insisted on "the identity of the Church and law". The language which More used in his writings against Luther was far from 'saintly'. A commentator notes: "his attacks on Luther were remarkably intemperate, even by the standards of his own time. In their coprophilic vulgarity they were rivalled only by Luther's own excremental execrations!"

In contrast, More's break with King Henry VIII was slow and cautious. More avoided all confrontation until it became unavoidable. On the scaffold he would ask those present to "pray for the King that it may please God to

give him good counsel", protesting that "I die, the King's good servant – but God's first."

Thomas and Henry first met when they were both about ten years old; Thomas was a frequent visitor to the royal household. He wrote the official Coronation poem in 1509, and Henry knighted him in 1520. The two exchanged gifts as late as New Year's Day 1535, but by May of that year Thomas realised he could no longer support the King's actions. Ackroyd's narrative gains momentum as it describes the events surrounding the annulment of Henry's marriage to Catherine of Aragon and his rift with the Pope. The courtroom scene of More's trial, written in screenplay-style dialogue, becomes real edge-of-the-seat stuff!

Some readers may at first be irritated by the rather frequent Latin quotations (perhaps we should remember that More would have used Latin as much as English in his everyday life) as well as some direct quotations in 'olde English'. But these are minor blemishes, and should in no way lessen our appreciation of a truly wonderful book. ■

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# The Scandal of the Cross

*This is my Beloved Son* – Aspects of the Passion

by Oliver Treanor

Publisher: Darton, Longman & Todd

Price: \$42

Review: Peb Simmons

The coloured reproduction of Salvador Dali's 'Christ of St John of the Cross' on the cover of this fine book, is no accident. Even though it presents a tidy, bloodless Christ suspended above a tranquil harbour scene, the grasping curve of the nailed hands does betray subtle agony. The author immediately connects with this portrayal by commencing his book with a quotation from *The Dream of the Rood*. 'A rood was I raised up; I bore aloft the mighty King/The Lord of heaven. I dared not stoop.'

From this beginning he draws the reader into an exposition of the true gift – and the awfulness of that gift – Christ: God the Father's only Son, given to a terrible Death, for the Redemption of all humankind. In the manner of a skilful weaver, Fr Treanor flawlessly draws his theological, spiritual, human and poetic threads, back and forth between the four Gospel presentations of Christ's Passion and Death. This appalling story unfolds, initially from the stark recordings of *Mark* and *Matthew*, to the gentle Holy Spirit perception of *Luke*, concluding with the Resurrection-focused Passion of *John*.

Whilst reading this book, I could not help but feel irritated by the so-called scholars of the *Jesus Seminar*, who, in attempting to unravel the mystery of Love Divine, and because, in scientific terms, it cannot be made to make sense, create implausible answers which denigrate the mystery and majesty of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

By contrast, this book startles, awakens, inspires and evokes personal grief for indifference, sin and callousness of heart, to a far greater depth than is usual in the communal Good Friday liturgy. "But his cross scandalises us, we avoid it as much as we can. Faith and un-faith, belief and unbelief, acceptance and non-acceptance co-exist even in the best. Intellectual recognition of Calvary does not always reflect fidelity in the heart" (p.106).

Here is language devoid of sentimental pieties. Sometimes stark, and yet so true that the reader is overwhelmed by the eternal, pulsing love of God the Father for His beloved Son, and – for us. "The grace of the crucifixion is not meant for some amorphous mass of anonymous humanity: it is aimed at each individual human being, however undistinguished" (p.122). Our salvation was something God could not, would not let go.

The writer is broad in his scope, generously linking with Scripture, and in reference, ranging from the earliest Christian history to St Maximillian Kolbe and Blessed Faustina

Kowalska in our own time. The Passion, Eucharist and the Mystical Body are each lifted up with refreshing vigour: "to cut oneself off from the life of the Church, to stay away from the Eucharist and the sacraments, not to hear the gospel nor exchange the sign of peace, nor contribute to the communal life of charity, is a sad thing... One is missed when one is not there" (p.146). The humanity of Jesus is tenderly linked with the humanity of Mary, with Peter and the disciple whom he loved. Special short chapters are given to exploring the relationship of Peter and Mary to Christ's Passion.

In conclusion we are brought full circle – the Garden of Eden, the Fall and the Garden where Jesus was buried, the gateway to the Resurrection. "The moribund sun is setting in the west. Already the paschal fires of Christendom are burning. When the morning sun rises again in the east it will bring the Light that shines forever" (p.232).

If I have any criticism it is the lack of an Index, this scholarly book deserves one. Fr Treanor's prose is simple, yet poetic in that we are caught in his words and do not wish to be released. To anyone seriously seeking to understand more deeply the all-embracing gift of the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, this book is highly recommended. It would be of particular value for reflection during Lent, or while on an Ignatian style retreat. ■



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### Ministry Madness

How many New Zealanders are aware that the Special Needs units attached to our schools are in the process of being disestablished. Students who need extra help, supervision and guidance, have until now been catered for by dedicated and specially trained staff. In a typical high school of about 1000 students the unit will have access to physiotherapists, occupational therapists, clinical psychologists and psychiatrists.

The aim in such a unit is to enable these students to be absorbed into main-stream classes, a process which varies greatly according to individual needs. The students have the security of a caring place within a large school where their needs are known and understood, and where their integration is carefully monitored.

In recent weeks the Principals of these schools have been informed that these units are to be disestablished in their present form and that the staff administering them may have to reapply for their positions. Are they to be re-engaged as itinerant teachers in a system organised by a designated cluster of schools? It appears that no thought has been given to the accountability or the lines of responsibility which are part of the in-school structure built around the Special Needs unit. The new organisation would deprive needy children of the security and trust which is vital if they are to develop and grow within the system and would greatly weaken the ability of the teachers to monitor and evaluate their progress.

Behind this move is the continuing drive to 'rationalise' services, reduce duplication and save money, regardless of the consequences. It is a philosophy which, in placing the disadvantaged at even greater risk, endangers and threatens the stability of society as a whole. It is ironic that government policy as expressed through the Ministry of Education should demonstrate such a callous disregard for the basic needs of the most at-risk group among young

### *Introducing a new feature...*

*Crosscurrents is a monthly commentary on current affairs in New Zealand.*

*It replaces our previous TV column but will sometimes include Media comment.*

*by Caliban*

people.

### School Closure

What happens to young people whose personal lives are so damaged that they cannot cope at all in the ordinary school or classroom? In Dunedin over the past decade, such children have been sent to Highcliff High School, where dedicated and skilled teachers have worked to turn their lives round. For many such children, time out in a smaller scale environment, experiencing the kind of focus such a school can bring, has given them the chance they need to come to terms with themselves, so that they can take their place again in a main-stream school. Highcliff received a glowing report from the Education Review Office for the standard and quality of their education delivery to these students, whose needs would be the greatest in any of our schools. That was last year. This year the school has received notice that it too is to be disestablished in its present form, and that the Special Education Service will become responsible for the administration. Why? Because it is an anomaly. It is a stand-alone school with its own Board of Trustees and not an attached unit or part of a

main-stream school.

In spite of its acknowledged success, in spite of receiving the strongest possible support from the city's High School Principals and in the face of receiving unstinting praise from the ERO, the school is to be closed. It does not fit the model devised by the Ministry. In fact it could have been a model for the Ministry – but that would have been too simple. The school is successful, delivering beneficial outcomes for its community and, in the end, providing a benefit for society. But that seems to be too much for a Ministry which has had a history of backing failure and denigrating success.

In this case the Ministerial bureaucrats have decided to prop up the most dismal failure of all its enterprises, the Special Education Service. With an overload of educational psychologists who are trained to analyse learning problems, this service is being handed the responsibility of guiding schools in dealing with severe behavioural problems. Given this Service's inability to respond quickly to crisis situations, its reputation in the school community for inadequate and unsatisfactory analyses of the problems placed before it, the prospect is a bleak one.

At a time when youth services need as much resourcing and strengthening as is possible, the Ministry, in an act of irresponsible folly, has shown clearly that it cares nothing for the underprivileged and disadvantaged youth of this country. Many of these students are handicapped by their lack of family support, through physical or sexual abuse; they are the casualties of our urban society. Such children were referred to by the late Fr John F. X. Harriott: "Caring for them requires endless patience, tireless energy, sensitive attention over long periods of time... How we treat them seems in some wise to be our own and our society's acid test. In them, as in the Child of Bethlehem, we see camouflaged the native value of humanity itself – helpless, vulnerable, possessing nothing." If this is indeed the acid test, the Ministry

## Overseas news

### The Oceania Synod

New Zealand bishops will be attending a Synod for Oceania in Rome at the end of November. It will also involve bishops from Australia, Melanesia, Polynesia and Micronesia. About 27 percent of the population of Oceania is Catholic.

In preparation, the Vatican has asked for responses on a series of topics, and the bishops' replies have contributed towards a Working Document as a basis for the meeting. Topics include problems of communication and pastoral care; negative aspects of materialism and individualism as they affect this region; property rights of Australian Aborigines and New Zealand Maoris; as well as scandals involving the clergy, notably accusations of sexual abuse.

### Loggers cause landslide

On 18 August 225 people were killed in a major landslide in North India. The village of Kailash-Mansarovar was swept down a steep hillside into the river Kali. Among the victims were 60 Hindus on pilgrimage to the village which is near the Tibetan border.

A spokesperson for the Indian Bishops' Conference, Fr John Vallamatam, has blamed illegal logging which caused the slide. He called on the government to take action against those who interfere with nature in a dangerous way.

### Delayed parenthood

A new problem in bio-ethics has been raised in Britain by a couple who plan to freeze an embryo for implantation at some time in the future.

The woman who is 32 would like to carry on her banking career for a few more years and then have the baby. She wants to avoid the risks associated with late pregnancies, such as an increased possibility of Down's Syndrome. The couple's doctor says they are a serious-minded pair who are not embarking on this course in an irresponsible way. "This is an extension of family planning," he said. "It is to do with a couple choosing when to start their family."

A research fellow at a London Catholic Institute for the study of medical ethics has responded: "The child is being seen as just another object to be acquired when it's convenient. The 'manufacture' of a child in this way carries connotations of 'ownership' and 'quality control'".

### Death of Refugees' Champion

One of the victims of the recent *Swissair* crash off Nova Scotia was Pierce Gerety, an American who had devoted much of his life to championing the world's refugees. Educated by the Jesuits he started training for the priesthood in Paris. But while there he met Marie de la Soudriere, so he left the Jesuits, went to Mexico and eventually married Marie. They worked together for Catholic Relief Services in India.

After a time working as a lawyer in New York Pierce and his wife set off again to help Cambodian refugees in Thailand. From 1982, as a member of the UN Commission for Refugees, he worked in Sudan, Pakistan and the Philippines. From 1994 he worked as director of the Commission's Central African section, spending much time in Somalia. He was fearless in negotiating with both war lords and rebel leaders to get access for aid to the tens of thousands of refugees in those countries.

An Amnesty International official stated that Gerety "was difficult to work with at times, but this was because he set high standards. In negotiations he was never aggressive, but took the approach that certain things like human dignity were non-negotiable." ■

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## Sex, lies and videotape

What is truth?" asked Pontius Pilate, and washed his hands. The impulse to wash one's hands of the truth is as old as efforts to justify and possess it.

The truth by degrees to which we have been subjected from the United States has assumed the proportions of a badly assembled soap opera. The great American public is being assaulted by versions of Presidential truths after the delivery of the full frontal lie. That a nation and its President should be caught up in an issue which is as trivial as it is sordid tells us as much about the people of America as it does about the President they elected.

American society feeds off talk shows and evangelical extremism. There are more than 1000 such shows across the United States, many evangelical. Talk show hosts typically take an extreme right-wing view – or, as their support-

ers would say, a good, old-fashioned approach – to the main issues of the day, revealing a growing harshness in American society which is giving way to a marked lack of compassion.

There will be little sympathy across America for this President who has achieved so little in office and whose sexual and ethical behaviour has so often been questionable. The economy has continued to perform but that has little to do with him. Four years ago at the height of the Rwandan war the Clinton administration sat on its hands for 12 weeks and stood by while terrifying images of tribal slaughter filled our television screens. A senior official of the administration felt moved to say: "Rwanda was on your television screens, but not on our diplomatic radar screens."

The English language has taken a beating as Clinton and his spin doctors have described their definition of 'sexual relations'. Perhaps the 'contrition offensive' which the President is

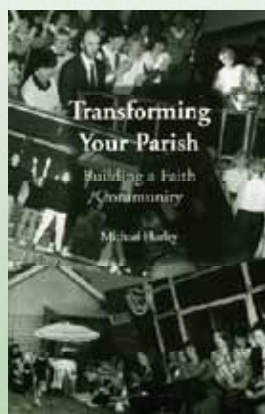
presently indulging in, may work. The depths were plumbed when Clinton churned out another little homily: "I hope that millions of Americans are, in a way, growing stronger because of this." Clinton's words typify a politician who is wedded to a dishonest course and seeks refuge in suitably shamanistic language to wow the peasants.

The image of Clinton we are left with is of a man who would submit to any indignity to stay in office. I was reminded of the words Winston Churchill used to describe Ramsay MacDonald: "I remember, as a child, being taken to the celebrated Barnum's Circus, which contained an exhibition of freaks and monstrosities, but the exhibit I most desired to see was one described as the 'Boneless Wonder'. My parents judged that the spectacle would be too revolting and demoralising for my youthful eyes, and I have waited 50 years to see the boneless wonder sitting on the Treasury Bench."

*Keith Harrison*

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