TUI MOTU
InterIslands

Australasian Religious Press Association
PUBLICATION OF THE YEAR
2016

Independent Catholic Magazine
Issue 210 November 2016 $7

Caring For Our Common Home

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EDITORIAL

Learning to Share Our Common Home

The earth shifts suddenly beneath us when we realise that humans are not top dogs on Earth but share the planet with other Earthlings as a common home. Immediately the implications of our well-honed attitudes and behaviours of superiority appear in sinister relief and we can no longer ignore them. We'll find the challenges to change are like foothills to the mountains — going on and on. Yet as our writers and artists show, conversion to this new viewpoint is not just hard work but an adventure.

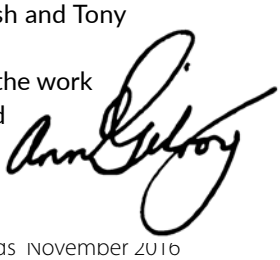
It's like bringing home the first baby — or maybe triplets. Suddenly we're parents — all at sea. We're rocking in a topsy-turvy life juggling inexperience, sleep deprivation, emotional instability, lack of personal time, constant demands, well-intentioned advice and mountains of washing. Yet we're convinced it's worthwhile. We're absorbed by a ferocious love as our little scraps take firm root in our home and we move over and learn to share.

The work of mercy of caring for our common home calls for such personal and communal effort — and it's urgent. As our young writers Jenny Mitchell, Kieren Perkins, Joshua Meikle and Jack Derwin warn, the human damage we are wreaking on Earth and Earthlings is too momentous to overlook. Neil Darragh describes us as unrivalled exterminators of other life and polluters of the elements that sustain our life. And we know it's true.

Yet, just as we welcome our new triplets as family members rather than as home invaders, so too we can expand our ecological love as inclusively and with equal motivation. We can fall in love with Earth and with the amazing, teeming and evolving life on Earth and learn to share all over again.

It is gratitude for the providential generosity of Earth — mirroring the Creating Spirit — that will sustain our efforts as Annichje Riemersma and Ron Sharp remind us. It is in encountering other beings face-to-face that we will learn to respect, share and protect our common home as Judith Curran shows. It is in contemplating the beauty of sweeping vistas and minute gnats that we fall in love as Mary Betz writes. It is in earthing ourselves in the ground that we will grow in humility, reverence and restraint Robin Kearns advises. It is in research, action and reflection, and community effort that we will graft change into obstinate systems as Dugald MacTavish and Tony Spelman demonstrate.

For all the contributions in this issue — the work of writers, artists, poets, photographers and craftspeople — we are grateful. And you'll find our final word is of blessing. ■



INTEGRITY AND COHERENCE
in Public and Private Behaviours

In recent weeks we have seen "scandals" of private lives played out on the public screen. In the New Zealand context, the conduct of sportspeople whom our children look up to as role models, displays less than model behaviour. What is the response of a parent in this situation?

In pondering this question I was drawn to the role model of Atticus Finch in Harper Lee's, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Set in 1930s America the book explores deep-seated racial prejudice when Scout's lawyer father, Atticus, represents Tom Robinson, an African American accused of raping a white woman. The part this book had to play in the civil rights movement is obvious.

Less obvious is Atticus's example of the importance of transparency. Miss Maudie Atkinson comments to Scout that Atticus is the same in his house as he is on the public streets. When Scout encounters hostility about her father's decision, she asks him why he is defending Tom. Instead of explaining that he had no choice, Atticus says he has to defend Tom Robinson so he can live with himself, represent his community, remain in a relationship with God and retain his parental authority. Later when Scout sees her father in full flight during the trial she is reminded of Miss Maudie's observation and comes to understand a little more of her father.

The reality is we all make mistakes and fail to live up to expectations. It should make no difference that the person under scrutiny is a public figure or that the events occurred behind closed doors. Atticus's gift to us is to aspire to consistent transparency.

Above all else we need to be able to live with ourselves. To know that we are genuine — people true to our beliefs. To know when all is quiet, when we can hear the voice that speaks within our soul, that we can rest easy.

The reality is we all make mistakes and fail to live up to expectations. It should make no difference that the person under scrutiny is a public figure or that the events occurred behind closed doors. Atticus's gift to us is to aspire to consistent transparency.

We must also be able to hold our head high in our community, whether we live under the unforgiving glare and immediacy technology brings us or simply at school pick-up or a trip to the supermarket.

We must also be able to come before our ever-loving and forgiving God, without the gnawing anxiety that we have not been entirely true to ourselves and others.

Finally, for those of us who are parents, Atticus acknowledges the need to retain the authority to guide our children and those who look up to us. Just as the inhabitants of Maycomb County are brought under Scout's scrutiny, so too our children will see through our hypocrisy.

In considering the antics of those with the misfortune to have their private mistakes written large for the world to see, we can acknowledge to our children that we have all done stupid things, said unkind words and made mistakes. Our conversations can discuss the implications of the actions without being censorious or judgemental. We can emphasise that what matters is how we respond — to acknowledge that what happened was not acceptable, to apologise, to seek support and to try to make sure we do not find ourselves in the same position again. All this is important to restore the relationships that have suffered.

While Atticus gives deeply personal reasons for his need to live out his convictions, anyone who has read *To Kill a Mockingbird* would agree our world needs more people like Atticus Finch. Like him, we can influence one another and support our children to develop and live up to personal and community integrity. ■

Meryn Gates lives with Michael and their three children in Wellington. For relaxation she likes to curl up in the sun with a good book.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING *and* CARE FOR THE EARTH

Painting: *Trickle Down Effect* © Peter Geen http://www.earthseagallery.com Used with permission.

NEIL DARRAGH explains why care for Earth is an essential part of Catholic Social Teaching and is at the centre of a larger vision of integral ecology.

The question put to me as a focus for this article is whether *care for the Earth* is part of Catholic Social Teaching. And does care for the Earth have anything to do with the *works of mercy* that have been the theme of *Tui Motu* magazine issues through 2016?

Traditional Works of Mercy

The corporal works of mercy are a long established Christian tradition of love in action: feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, visit the sick, visit the imprisoned, bury the dead. But *care of the Earth* is not on the traditional list.

This list of works of mercy derives from the scene of the last judgement in Matthew's gospel where people become the inheritors (or not) of the kingdom of heaven on the basis that "I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me" (Mt 25:35–36).

Extending the Tradition

At some point in history "bury the dead" was added, and so Matthew's six became the seven corporal works of mercy that are commonly used today. We might like to add "freeing the slaves" (in last month's issue of *Tui Motu*) as a good modern extension of visiting the imprisoned. Pope Francis has recently proposed that *care for the Earth* should also be added to the list. A few decades ago we did not think we needed to *care for* the Earth. It was just there for us. But so much of the biosphere has been so badly damaged recently by the ruthless efficiency of human technology and the huge increase in the number of human over-consumers that we clearly do need to exercise care and "mercy" today.

Catholic Social Teaching Developing

What has come to be called "Catholic Social Teaching" is a more recent but now important Catholic tradition (with parallel traditions in other churches and in ecumenical documents). This is a collection of Christian teachings with essentially the same focus as the corporal works of mercy — love

in action — but formulated in a more substantial and more structural way suited for industrialised society. Both of these are relatively short formulations of Christian beliefs put together in a package, so to speak, so that they can be easily remembered and easily applied.

Is *care of the Earth* part of Catholic Social Teaching then? Is it a central Christian belief that all Christians need to commit to, or is it just a green option for some? And if so, how did it get there because it wasn't there when I first started learning about Catholic Social Teaching some decades ago?

Catholic Social Teaching was originally a body of teachings brought together as part of the Church's response to the massive social injustices of 19th century industrialised Europe. It has grown and adjusted since then, mainly by adding more recent teachings of the popes from Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical *Rerum novarum: On Capital and Labour* to Pope Francis's 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home*.

Caritas New Zealand lists the principles of Catholic Social Teaching as: Human dignity (made in God's image), Solidarity (walking together), Preferential option for the poor and vulnerable (protecting those in need), working for the Common Good (the good of each and all), Subsidiarity (empowering communities), Participation (everyone with a part to play), Stewardship (being responsible guardians of the Earth). (See: www.caritas.org.nz/catholic-social-teaching).

"Stewardship" i.e. being responsible guardians of the Earth, is the latest addition to these principles. It barely appears at all in the documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). It appears occasionally in the official documents of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI. It is central but with a changed focus in Pope Francis's 2015 encyclical *Laudato Si': On Care for our Common Home.*

Catholic Social Teaching, like the corporal works of mercy, is a tradition that is continually undergoing development as the church interacts with a changing world. *Laudato Si'* is notable for two major changes in that tradition.

From Stewardship to Care

Firstly, the key image is no longer that of "stewardship" but "care for our *common home".* This might look like a simple change of images, but is in fact a major change of attitude. The image of the *steward*, while it includes the sense of responsibility under God, is essentially that of "manager", that is, human beings in charge. But human beings have already proven themselves corrupt and inadequate managers. The image of *care for our common home*, on the other hand, implies that humans, however powerful, are only one of the many species that make up the planet Earth and are just part of the planet's larger eco-systems and processes. The planet is a common home for all of us. We are inter-dependent. We need to play our part with respect and restraint. We give care and we receive care from other beings in this planet.

Perhaps the most important spiritual exercise we can undertake in this age is to practise compassion for the other living species and processes of Earth. In doing so we may learn how much so many other Earth beings already care for us.

Need for Integral Ecology

Secondly, in *Laudato Si',* care for the Earth is no longer just one among a list of principles of social justice. A particular feature of this encyclical is its insistence on the close connection between environmental issues and social issues. We can't solve one kind without the other. A decline in the quality of human life and a decline in the quality of the natural world around us go together. What is needed today is what this encyclical calls an "integral ecology" which respects all the environmental, human, and social dimensions of the planet.

Essential – not an Option

Is care for the Earth an essential element of Catholic Social Teaching then? It certainly is now. Nevertheless, we may already be moving to another stage of development where *care for the Earth* is no longer just part of Catholic Social Teaching. Rather, Catholic Social Teaching is itself becoming part of the larger vision of an "integral ecology" with *care for our common home* at its centre.

Let us not become too starry-eyed or over-enthusiastic, however, about our role of "care" or "compassion/mercy" for the Earth. Human beings kill other living beings — animals, plants, insects, living soils, living oceans, even the atmosphere — for food and shelter. We could not survive otherwise. It's just that we have become so very good at it and so very unrestrained, that it will take a huge effort of ethics for us to control our ability to destroy other beings. Humans are probably the most ruthless and efficient predators the world has ever known. Certainly more ruthless and efficient than predatory raptors and T-Rex. We are also the most destructive herbivores. No other species or eco-system can survive our onslaught unless our compassion overcomes our self-interest.

We have learnt to practise compassion for suffering human beings through the traditions of the works of mercy and the teachings on social justice. Perhaps the most important spiritual exercise we can undertake in this age is to practise compassion for the other living species and processes of Earth. In doing so we may learn how much so many other Earth beings already care for us. ■

Neil Darragh is fully occupied as a priest, writer and theologian. He lives in Auckland and is currently the Chair of the *Tui Motu* Board.

CONTEMPLATING BEAUTY and **PROTECTING** CREATION

MARY BETZ **describes spirituality and prayer grounded in appreciating and working to preserve creation.**

As soon as she could toddle she played under the branches of an old oak tree, admired the blossoming redbud and dogwood, fled from snakes and poison ivy — all the while serenaded by crested cardinals and mourning doves. Soon she was investigating swamps where red-winged blackbirds called from bulrushes, polliwogs metamorphosed into frogs and mosquitoes abounded. Later she biked to the riverbank, pine forest and patches of wild blackberries. In winter she listened to the snow crunching under her skis, watched for small animal tracks and gazed down at valleys from mountain ridges. In summer she was immersed in birdsong, the unfolding succession of wildflowers and the mysterious lives of beaver, porcupine and wood warblers. It was all wondrous.

She tried being a "good Catholic" in the formal sense but she couldn't stay focused during long-winded prayers and rituals and then suffered quiet guilt at not maintaining a recognised discipline of prayer. She left the Church in early adulthood finding that it did not connect with her life. And she spent her days-off from her environmental work traversing snow-bound mountains and paddling among seals at sunset, asking God what life was all about.

After a time she felt drawn back to the Church and was asked to write her spiritual autobiography. She worried about explaining that she didn't pray. But a life-changing revelation was in store. All the time she had despaired of mastering prayer, a different kind of prayer had found her. That prayer was of being in communion with the natural world. It was a well-known prayer in the Christian tradition, practised by desert fathers and mothers and mystics throughout the ages; but the Church had all but forgotten it.

Contemplating Creation – A Spiritual Work of Mercy

When Pope Francis established the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation earlier this year, he also took the astonishing step of designating the care of creation as both a spiritual and a corporal work of mercy. Drawing on *Laudato Si'* to illustrate how caring for our common home can be spiritual, Francis said that we are called to a "grateful contemplation of God's world" which allows us "to discover in each thing a teaching which God wishes to hand on to us." Several times he harkens back to "the two sacred books" of the early desert contemplatives: the first book is the book of creation and the second is the book of the scriptures. He quotes Pope John Paul II who also spoke of God's "precious book, 'whose letters are the multitude of created things present in the universe.'"

To read and pray God's first sacred book, we need only spend time in solitude with creation. The late Benedictine, Bede Griffiths, tells us how this is done: "I walked out alone in the evening and heard the birds singing in the full chorus of song . . . A lark rose suddenly from the ground beside the tree by which I was standing and poured out its song above my head and then sank, still singing, to rest . . . Everything then grew still as the sunset faded and the veil of dusk began to cover the earth. I remember now the feeling of awe which came over me. I felt inclined to kneel to the ground, as though I had been standing in the presence of an angel; and I hardly dared to look on the face of the sky because it seemed as though it was but a veil before the face of God."

Through such contemplation or *visio divina*, we are led more deeply into the mystery of God and to profound gratitude for the beauty, magnificence and bounty of creation and Creator: "Through the greatness and beauty of creatures one comes to know by analogy their maker" (Wisdom 13:5). Practising this spiritual work of mercy as often as possible grounds us both in God and in the Earth and energises us to practise care of creation in its corporal form.

Protecting Creation – A Corporal Work of Mercy

Immersion in and gratitude for beauty changes how we feel, think and act. It forms us for the other work we have to do "to build a better world." As Francis says: "If someone has not learned to stop and admire something beautiful, we should not be surprised if he or she treats everything as an object to be used and abused without scruple. If we want to bring about deep change, we need to realise that certain mindsets really do influence our behaviour."

Practising the spiritual work of mercy of contemplating creation as often as possible grounds us both in God and in the Earth and energises us to practise care of creation in its corporal form.

We bring about deep change in ourselves by our time in creation, and deep change in the world with "simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness." The more we see beauty and interrelationships between insects, flowers, birds, forests, atmosphere and oceans, the more likely we are to care for them. Our current lifestyles, often adopted without reflection, can harm ecosystems and the life they support. Francis lists specific actions to care for creation, adapted here for Aotearoa New Zealand:

- ✓ Reduce use of petrol cars and airplanes
- ✓ Eat more plant-based meals
- ✓ Source food locally, seasonally and ethically
- ✓ Minimise water consumption (and hence wastewater)
- ✓ Limit use of paper and plastics
- ✓ Turn off electronics overnight and lights when not in use
- ✓ Care for the natural environment, including planting trees
- ✓ Reduce consumption and consumerism (Ask: "Do I need this?")
- ✓ Reuse, clean, repair whatever possible
- ✓ Recycle everything feasible; compost food scraps

The interconnections between human well-being, the health of our planet, our spiritual practice and life-styles are very clear now. Exploring the connections and taking action is crucial.

Being with God in Creation

While each of us discovers God in a myriad of ways and places, Francis has called our attention specifically to the need to allow God to meet us through creation. In our part of the world we have ready access to natural beauty where we can just contemplate. I sometimes hear friends say: "I spent a lot of time working in my garden and I'm just going to sit and look at it now." And: "I see these trees every day but only by really gazing at them do I realise their intricacy and beauty."

Francis reminds us that the whole world reveals God to us: "The entire material universe speaks of God's love, God's boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God." And immersed in God's beauty and love we feel an invitation to change some of the ways we relate to this beauty in order to protect and sustain it. Poet Mary Oliver puts it like this: "And have you too finally figured out what beauty is for? And have you changed your life?" ■

Painting: *Rain over Somes Island, Wellington Harbour*, by Libby Kemp. © 2015. Used with permission

Mary Betz is a writer and spiritual companion with a background in ecology, theology, justice & peace, and spirituality.

TAKING POPE FRANCIS'S TEACHING TO HEART

Living Sustainably in Our Common Home

There are parallels between St Francis, who understood that all creatures of the world can live in harmony, and Pope Francis. Pope Francis refers to "interconnectedness" several times in his encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, teaching that we do not own or govern Earth but that we are part of it. Essentially he is explaining the responsibility that God gave us as stewards of Earth. Francis is encouraging us to be more responsible protectors of God's creation. This relates to Catholic Social Teaching on the Common Good, which means that our actions must benefit not just ourselves but those who will stand where we stand now in 50, 500 or 5 million years. This makes me wonder why we are using Earth's resources in such a wasteful, unsustainable way.

Sadly, climate change affects the poorest people most severely. For example, Kiribati, our Pacific island neighbour with a population of around 100,000 people, expects that due to rising water levels, within the next five years the people will have to migrate to a safe place to live. Pope Francis recently met with the President of Kiribati to discuss the issue. His encyclical reflects his concern, using the words of the NZ Catholic Bishops: "What does the commandment 'thou shall not kill' mean, when 20 per cent of the world's population is consuming at a rate that robs the poor nations and future generations of what they need to survive?" (NZBC 2006).

That 20 per cent of people are consuming 80 per cent of the world's resources is grossly unjust. As Pope Francis says: "The emptier a heart is, the more he or she needs to buy, own and consume."

Laudato Si' gives many different examples of the ever-growing global poverty gap. I think the Pope intends to make us realise that while we obsess over which brands we will wear or model of iPhone we own, there are people in our world without basic resources, such as clean water. What I find even more shocking is that the gap isn't occurring just in third world countries. According to the *Child Poverty Monitor* 305,000 Kiwi kids live in poverty and three out of five of them have been living in poverty for over seven years. New Zealand is a developed country. We're rich in resources and have great leaders, so there is no reason for this type of issue. Yet we continue to live within our bubble of daily life and fail to reach out to those who need us most.

One of Jesus' recurring messages was to love others, particularly those in need. How can we identify as living by Christian teaching if we're not following this simple instruction? Pope Francis says we must live wisely, think deeply and love generously. But this is not possible if we continue to look at the world through a false lens. If we lived wisely we wouldn't consume and waste at the rates we do now. If we thought deeply we would spend our time seeking solutions to these global problems. And if we loved generously we could bring that 29 per cent of Kiwi children and their families out of poverty.

It can seem like an unachievable, overwhelming task to restore the damaged environments all around the world. I felt rather overwhelmed just reading *Laudato Si'*. But Pope Francis reveals that sometimes it is the smallest changes, such as using energy efficient light bulbs, recycling and monitoring our waste — that can make the biggest difference. And changing our attitude towards the environment can make a positive impact — realising that the sun rising daily, rain and snow and plants growing in the ground giving us food, are miracles to be respected and treasured. As St Francis said: "Start by doing what is necessary, then do what's possible and suddenly you are doing the impossible."

It is timely for us to become involved in actions that reverse poverty and climate change by building better relationships and becoming more aware of the world around us. We will then be truly loving our neighbour and loving our common home. ■

Jenny Mitchell, 17, is head girl of St Peter's College, Gore, and plans to study history and communications at Otago University. She is a passionate singer-songwriter and performer.

JENNY MITCHELL, KIEREN PERKINS and JOSHUA MEIKLE
share what they have learned from Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'*.

We are Members of the Community of Earth

In *Laudato Si'* Pope Francis calls humanity to move from an anthropocentric worldview to one that is communitarian and which protects the most vulnerable in our community. Pope Francis reminds us that we must recognise and act on the gospel conviction that all of creation is interconnected.

Genesis says that God created humankind in God's own image to be in relationship with God and with all other creation. We find in this creation story the stewardship model of care of creation — which humanity has severely misinterpreted. God gave humanity dominion over the Earth but humanity has often confused the word "dominion" with "domination".

As a result of our misinterpretation of the meaning of "dominion", humanity has become anthropocentric, believing that the Earth and everything in it was created for humanity alone. By way of example, consider the current problems with water quality in our South Island rivers. For decades farmers have been told to raise production and to increase fertiliser application rates, which has led to run-off entering rivers. At the same time ever-increasing amounts of water from the rivers have been diverted for irrigation and other purposes and so changed the water levels. Although environmental damage was never intentional, it has been a direct consequence.

Pope Francis calls us to change and leave behind our destructive ways of living where we consume more than the environment can provide. The Pope invites us into a deep conversion to become a communitarian society that betters the lives of poor people and understands its relationship with all creation on the planet. We cannot reverse the results of climate change without stopping the wrongs we are committing towards the global poor — people and other life. ■

Kieren Perkins, 17, is at Verdon College, Invercargill. He is on the Invercargill City Youth Council and on the College Board of Trustees. He wants to enter politics.

Developing a Care-of-Earth Spirituality

Pope Francis is encouraging Christians to include the protection of the environment in our spirituality. I think *Laudato Si'* fills a theological hole in the environmental movement. Pope Francis says: "It can be said that many problems of today's world stem from the tendency, at times unconscious, to make the method and aims of science and technology an epistemological paradigm which shapes the lives of individuals and the workings of society". He sees a need for a theological grounding for our lives, which on its own is a significant message, but in context of the ecological focus of the document, establishes why as Christians we need to care for the environment.

There is an inherent link in *Laudato Si'* between human welfare and and a healthy environment. Pope Francis addresses some of the abuses that humans have imposed on the planet, especially those by businesses in order to increase profit margins. A significant cause of today's environmental crisis is not only big companies' damaging impact on the environment, but also the way most people, particularly in the Western world, consume materials and produce pollution. Pope Francis clearly links these actions of individuals and companies to ecological well-being. He goes further, linking ecological well-being inextricably to human well-being. He discusses how those who will be most impacted by ecological damage are the poor.

I think the Pope is pointing to where we might begin solving our current ecological problems. We need to deal with actions in society that endanger the planet, such as consumerism and the pursuit of profit by the wealthy. And alongside we need to work to increase the quality of life for those suffering in the world, which is another core Catholic teaching. ■

Joshua Meikle is a student of Kavanagh College, Dunedin. He enjoys history, physics and music and hopes to study these next year at University.

Aerial view of Kāwhia

Sharing VALUES in our ECOLOGICAL CONVERSION

TONY SPELMAN suggests that our ecological conversion will be shaped in the conversations between Māori and Western worldviews.

Pope Francis talks of the need for ecological conversion in *Laudato Si'*. He says that "human beings and material objects no longer extend a friendly hand to one another; the relationship has become confrontational" (par 106, p 79). Francis's language challenges us to deal more positively with the notion that the most important stories about the origin of the world and the universe, its nature and purpose, are not centred on humans.

Thomas Berry, ecologist and priest, came to a similar conclusion saying that the old story around these big issues no longer works. We have to construct a new story and that will be about relationships across the whole of the natural order. This involves humans relinquishing our position of dominance and control over the world.

In Aotearoa we might say that if we adopted the position of *teina*/learner for ourselves rather than that of *tuakana*/mentor, the re-formation of existing relationships between the human community and the wider world would improve and could eventually come right. A failure to change our position as a species in this wider field of relationships will continue to intensify the confrontation between ourselves and "nature", the rest of creation.

But there is another part to this picture. When we really take *Laudato Si'* on board, we find ourselves in a very new space within the human community. As *Te Ao Māori*/Maori worldview is increasingly becoming part of the thinking and acting of ordinary New Zealanders, we are all gifted with the opportunity to construct and tell an enhanced human story in new ways in our place.

The neat and tidy intellectual infrastructure that currently supports knowledge acquisition from a western worldview perspective, is becoming less useful for many situations we now find ourselves in. There are problems of meaning when knowledge is segmented and problems when things are disconnected when they shouldn't be.

Valuing Land and Sea

In the world of my *iwi*/tribe in Kāwhia, on the North Island west coast, we have an issue of whether or not we should mine for minerals. This discussion generates considerable feeling among my *whānau*/extended family.

Key themes are the need to show respect for the *whenua*/land and the *moana*/sea across the generations. So too, is receiving the economic benefits from the resources in our *rohe*/territory. Part of our identity relates to our attachment to our *whenua* and *moana*. So close is this relationship that we believe that if we damage them, we damage one another as well. The key to this situation is the concept and practice of *kaitiakitanga*/guardianship of the land, interpreted into the 21st century. This is tied closely to our *mana whenua* responsibilities for the health and sustainability of our *whenua* and *moana*. So how is this different from a western worldview perspective on the matter?

Cultural Worldview Differences

Environmental legislation typically regulates what we can and can't do. It describes rights of access and the freedom to conduct our affairs without unreasonable constraint. However, the rationale for proceeding with development projects comes not from the law but from the worldview perspective that underpins behaviour and practice with respect to the

environment. The motivation might be economic, or social or community based. A western worldview allows people to segment the various dimensions and develop them with considerable autonomy.

Te Ao Māori does not segment in this way. It is highly relational and comprehensive across the whole of life and covers the relationship between the human community and the wider living world in a way that is different from a western perspective. For example, *whakapapa*/genealogy can take us across the whole of *Te Ao Māori* looking at many levels of relationships. *Whanaungatanga*/sense of family connection also operates on a wide canvas, although it is still possible to work with it in concrete ways as well. It is the basis for our understanding of the *teina* and *tuakana* roles in the created order and not just in terms of family history.

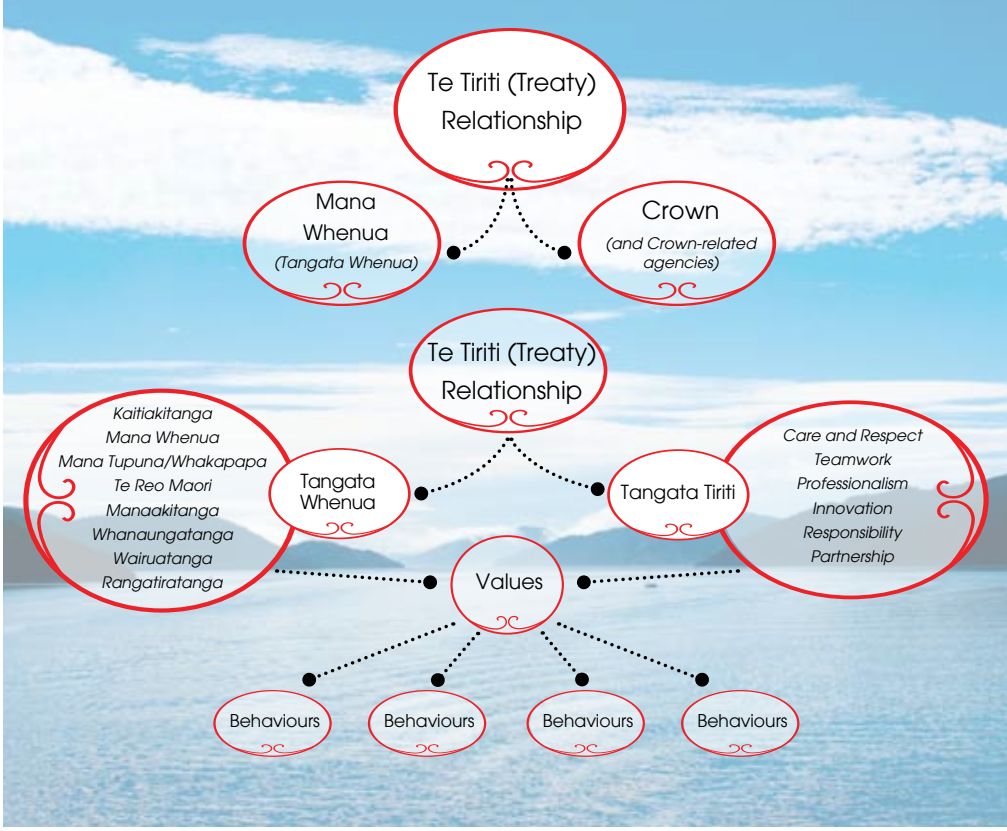
Understanding worldview difference as cultural difference enables us to distinguish the world views of *tangata whenua*/people of the land from *tangata tiriti*/people of the Treaty. Working with cultural difference rather than sameness is critical to the building and maintenance of a mutuality that can be found in *Te Tiriti*/Treaty of Waitangi.

Land, Sea and People Inseparably Connected

Back to the mining. Ngāti Hikairo's concerns about mining are cultural. Specifically, the worry with mining developments is that they can alter the relationships people have with the land and the sea. There is a danger that when these relationships are ignored or trampled on, there is a threat to our very sense of "self". This means that if someone rides roughshod over my relationships with the wider world they threaten my identity as one who defines himself in terms of those relationships.

An alternative to the above involves modifying the "business as usual" approach to our relationship with the environment and together developing our capacity to see it in terms of a much wider set of relationships than we do currently.

This would involve developing the cultural relationship between *tangata whenua* and *tangata tiriti* through specific discussion of the meaning and significance of key elements of both worldviews, as *tangata whenua*, as *tangata tiriti* and both together. Bringing a *tangata whenua* worldview dimension into the mainstream picture in Aotearoa can be done. This, combined with a positive commitment to applying relationship disciplines relevant to *Te Tiriti*, can lead to a working balance between the two worldviews.



Design by Sandy Leaitua.

Working with Both Worldviews

Currently there are a number of organisations and groups engaging with two different worldviews in their work and there is useful modelling around that endeavour. The work is reliant on a *Tiriti*/Treaty of Waitangi Relationships Framework, which is used by people to explore their different perspectives, understand more of each other's views and then support creative change, moving us from "difference" to "shared action". This approach works well. It could be used more.

The diagram sets out two pictures. At the top is a view of the fundamental *Tiriti*/Treaty relationship between *Mana Whenua* and the Crown. The relationship lines up key components of a *tangata whenua* and *tangata tiriti* worldview in an organisational setting, leading to engagement and a creative analysis of values from both worldviews that underpin a selected task.

This analysis leads to a shared view of a common expression of values and how these can be used to scope changes in behaviours and processes as well as systems and structures.

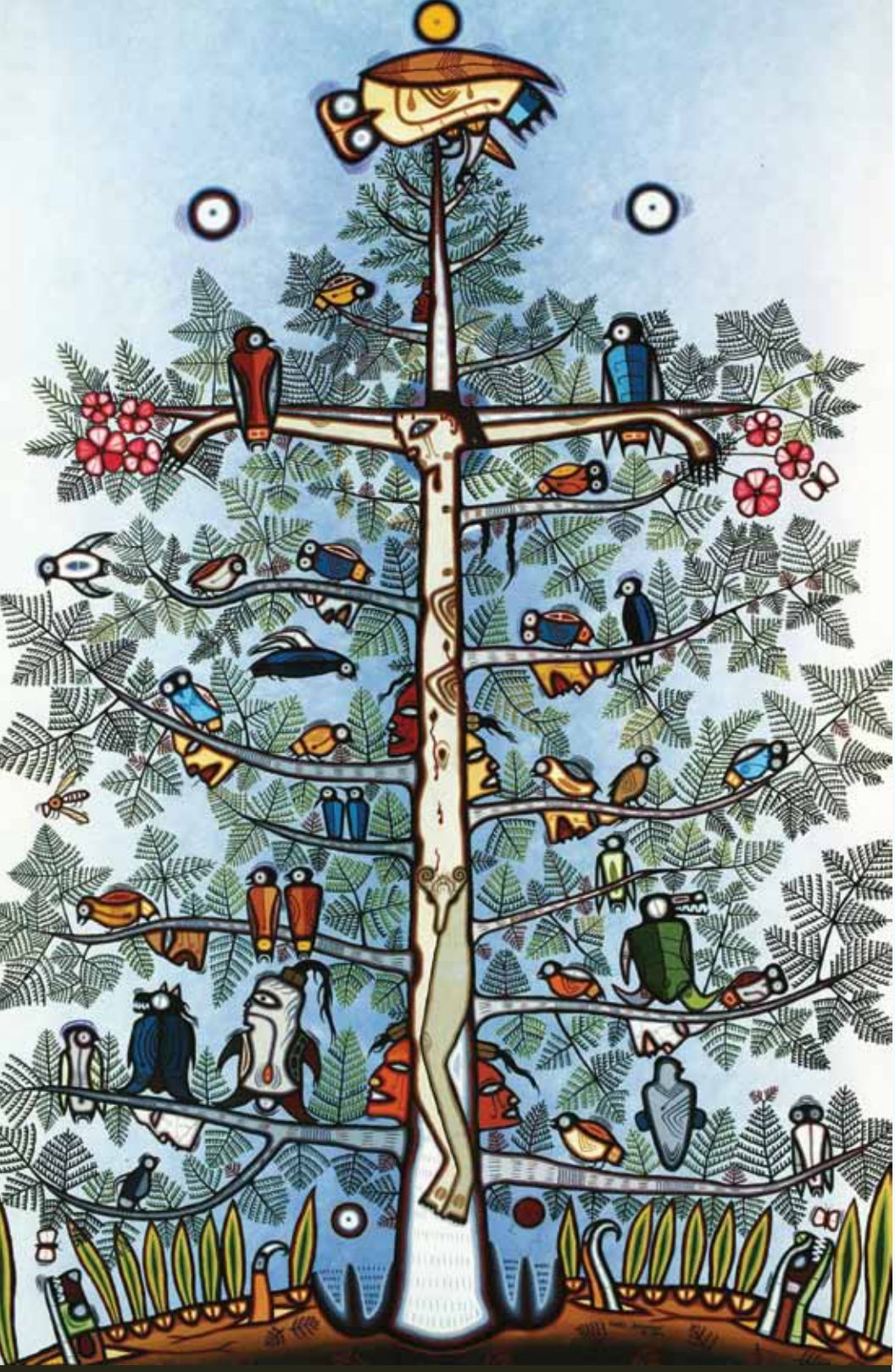
This analysis needs to be done in such a way that both parties can see, in any change proposals developed, a link back to their respective worldviews.

When we manage change progressively across the communities and organisations we work in, we will in time change the baseline values of our collective culture in Aotearoa; some Western values will go and some *tangata whenua* values will emerge, shaping all our lives across the cultural gap.

Once we accept that this is our task and our future, then we can approach change using an action/reflection process and integrate it piece-by-piece into a different view of how we live, how we work and how we relate both to each other and to the created order.

This will go a long way towards turning "confronting relationships" into those characterised by mutuality and respect, a clear sign of ecological conversion in practice. ■

Tony Spelman lives in Tāmaki Makaurau and belongs to Ngāti Hikairo ki Kāwhia. He works with organisations trying to operate in more Māori ways.



Walking Gently In The EARTH

ROBIN KEARNS plants tomatoes and reflects on Earth's mercy and generosity.

It's the first day of spring and my thoughts turn like clockwork to tomatoes. Red fruited globes of fruity flesh that defy the category of vegetable. To be plucked in the warmth of the summery new year, weeks away from this rainy Auckland spring. I find myself "earthed" by the urge to plant and grounded by memories of earlier crops. The seedlings bring on recollections of our kitchen window sills lined with ripening tomatoes, plucked early to forestall the peck-holes of blackbirds.

I earth myself through gently digging holes for "Sweet 100s" and "Beefsteaks", both versatile enough for vegetarian cooking. With soil pressed around the delicate seedlings, I turn attention to the tenacious "dirt" under my fingernails. A badge of honour, perhaps, as I return to work and jot words on the laptop.

Yet, once inside, with hands washed, what was once soil is now dirt. How quickly we can shift the valence of things and vilify the richness that brings life! Soil one moment, dirt the next; delicate plants growing in what we deem to be the wrong place become weeds; intriguing insects with a propensity to dine on "our" plants are pests. As anthropologist Mary Douglas says: "Dirt is just matter out of place."

Earth Being Merciful to Us

So what might it mean to be merciful towards the Earth? Perhaps that is the wrong question. Maybe it would be better to begin by asking how the Earth is merciful to us. For the ground on which we walk never seems too downtrodden to yield growth, even if from the cracks in the pavement. And how much more it offers when tilled with care and fertilised with compost. Perhaps, too, there is another beginning point in considering the Earth and mercy: acknowledging that all that

sustains us comes from a holy trinity of soil, light and water.

I often watch Catholics making the sign of the cross with all the care of a casual fly-swatting exercise. What if, as part of grace before a meal, we slowly and deliberately crossed ourselves saying: "We give thanks for soil, light and water . . . and ask forgiveness for when we crucify the earth"? To do so would link an acknowledging of Christ as centre of our lives with gratitude for the God-given elements that have sustained the food before us.

The Living Tree

I am reminded of a powerful image by Anishnawbe artist, Blake Debassige, from Manitoulin Island, Ontario (the world's largest freshwater island). In this 1982 painting he depicts Christ on a cedar tree set against a bright blue sky. The crucified figure blends into the contours of the tree and is depicted as both male and female. Perhaps his starting point was that some biblical verses refer to the cross as a tree. What is striking is that this is a living tree, rooted in the earth and populated by a multitude of birds at rest and play in its branches. Snakes — symbolically vilified in Christian tradition — are almost smiling in the grassy ground below. The crucifixion cedar — chosen both for its beautiful form and medicinal properties — is in flower. Butterflies and insects fly around it. Although Jesus hangs crucified, it is a tree of life not death. Overall it suggests, as in the title of Neil Darragh's book, our home **in** (and not **on**) the earth.

What else can we read from this image? First, the artist challenges us to dissolve the separation of our religious imagery from the natural world. For Christianity there is no greater symbol of the link between Earth and mercy than the cross itself, anchored as it is in the ground on which we walk. Second, in showing mercy to the Earth (as well as, of course, to others), we come to know not only Christ the human saviour but also the cosmic Christ; the one who, in the words of Teilhard de Chardin, brings all into One.

Debassige's painting suggests we walk lightly in the Earth and acknowledge the ultimate connectedness of all.

A core value of mercy is compassion, whose root in Latin is *cum patior* — I suffer with. While the Earth is not a sentient being *per se*, we can still foster a disposition of compassion for the degradation and loss of life and life-giving capacity, in and on the Earth, through ravages of pesticides, over-harvesting and other exploitation.

Oh that all would be humble and return their food waste to the earth, showing mercy to its source. For we can feed the soul through feeding the soil.

Becoming Earthed

And so, after another spring shower, I wonder how those tomatoes are doing. Busy, beneath the soil surface, I imagine the seedlings tentatively extending tiny hair-like roots.

I wonder too what it might mean if we regarded "earth" as a verb as well as a noun: a doing word to take us from contemplation into action? Electricians talk about "earthing" their systems to ensure safety by making connections to the ground. Perhaps we too need to earth ourselves, to complete and make secure our spiritual circuitry by reconnecting with the earth.

So it is time to leave the laptop again and do pilgrimage, to see how the seedlings are bearing up to the breeze. I pass nikau growing above where our children's *whenua*/placenta was placed and give thanks for the gift of the connection between placenta and land in *te reo*. In one word, *whenua*, Māori have gifted us with a deeply symbolic offering; a statement of belonging that bears fruit in identification with place.

I see a blackbird scratching for worms in the compost bin. It is no coincidence that there is a connection between humility and humus, that organic matter comprised of decayed plant material, providing nutrients and allowing the soil to retain water. Oh that all would be humble and return their food waste to the earth, showing mercy to its source. For we can feed the soul through feeding the soil.

Bare feet on the wet grass, I return inside again, reminded of James K. Baxter's account of walking barefoot along the Whanganui River Road: "I learn my religion through my feet ... *Te Atua* speaks to me through my feet." It is time we walked gently in the Earth, remembering our place.

Through the challenge of a living cross planted in the Earth and through the thrill of watching seedling tomatoes grow, we might ask: Who walked on this land before us? Who planted it, slept on it, was born on it and died on it?

Have mercy, Oh Creator, when we
fail to show mercy to the ground
beneath our feet;
let us grow wise through watching
what grows;
let us give thanks for living trees
when many have only walls and
fences.
Let us be grateful for the Earth
which faithfully offers returns on
care and mercy shown. ■

Painting: *Tree of Life* by Blake Debassige (Manitoulin Island, Ontario, Canada) Location: Anishinabe Spiritual Centre (Espanola, Ontario, Canada). © Used with permission.

Robin Kearns is passionate about wild places and innovative music. He lives in Mt Albert, is married to Pat Neuwelt and affiliates with non-parish Eucharistic communities.

Meeting Living Beings in Our Common Home

JUDITH CURRAN tells how her collaboration in filming documentaries is making a difference and encouraging us to protect the oceans.

Nearly 30 years ago I was lucky enough to discover a pathway that would be the beginning of fulfilling my dual dreams: to be a writer AND make a difference to the planet. At the time, my desire to "save the world" was still relatively unformed, although its origins were probably visible to my family in my tendency to rescue any injured animal (birds, mice, ducks, spiders) I could find and attempt to rehabilitate and return to their wild life.

Introduced to Damage to Sea

In the late 80s after dabbling in journalism I was offered a job as a researcher on an important international television documentary series called *The Blue Revolution* — about the oceans of the world at that time, examining humans' relationship with the sea in the past, present and future. This was an extraordinary adventure for me; physically, as I spent many months travelling the world with a film crew; professionally, as it was during this production that I realised this was what I wanted to do; and spiritually, I became very connected to all things oceanic — the wildlife, of course, but I also became very aware of the burgeoning threats of what was in store for our planet if we didn't stop abusing our oceans.

After that my career for a time was very much aligned to film-making about the oceans. In the 90s I spent many months in the Coral Sea, the Pacific, the Tasman Sea and in the ocean around the Baha peninsula off Mexico, directing underwater documentaries about coral reefs, great white sharks, tiger sharks, other sharks and lots of other marine species.

Again the adventure was something I could only ever have dreamed of, learning to become a "shark-prodder" (a person who uses a pole to prod sharks away if they came too close to the cinematographers filming underwater), visiting remote coral cays to film the spectacle of thousands of baby turtles hatching and making their first run to the ocean, and learning how to transform these images into compelling stories.

Power of the Visual Story

In 2001 I joined Dunedin-based Natural History New Zealand (NHNZ) as a producer and since then there have been lots of other genres of films (in my 100+ hours of programming for many international television networks) but often tapping into a very strong theme of conservation that was appearing in many of my wildlife films.

It's important to note that the conservation message was rarely overt. Television networks around the world for the past few decades have generally been reluctant to address the "C" word (conservation) in any of their programming. "Too depressing for the audience" was the reasoning, as well as "boring". Entertainment was key. However, I realised it was still possible to produce an entertaining wildlife documentary — with very charismatic animal characters to

engage the audience's emotions — and the next thing they are reaching out to learn more about the animals and the habitats themselves, including the threats that these environments might face.

Telling the Story of Our Seas

In 2012 NHNZ pitched a series to TVNZ about the oceans around New Zealand. This was the first time in a while that we had conceived a series specifically for a New Zealand audience. The cost of producing these wildlife shows was usually outside the budget sizes available for NZ television. TVNZ agreed to take the series and our broadcast funding agency, NZ on Air, also agreed to fund the series. So *Our Big Blue Backyard* was born.

I must admit to a sense of trepidation when I was asked to take on this series as Executive Producer. Any underwater series is notoriously difficult with the challenges of unpredictable animal behaviour, weather and visibility. We had a reasonable budget but were still limited to relatively short shooting periods so my team had to learn quickly how to be smart in the field.

But we pulled it off and after many months shooting at six different locations around New Zealand, and then the intense process of editing the films, *Our Big Blue Backyard* went to air on TVNZ 1 in November 2014 — for six Sunday evenings in a row. The response was overwhelming and surprised even the network, I suspect.

Well over half-a-million Kiwis watched this first series every Sunday night. Kids and teenagers put down their electronic gadgets to watch with their families. People talked about the series — on buses, in taxis, at workplaces, on the radio, in cafés, in schools — even marine scientists loved the series!

Hardened television reviewers could not believe their socks had been so comprehensively knocked off by the exploits of marine animals. The *NZ Herald* reviewer struggled to understand how he had become so emotionally involved with a female octopus!

It seems our spectacular photography and entertaining story-telling had struck a chord in the hearts and minds of Kiwis about their connection with the marine environments which surround us — all 15,000 kilometres of coastline — and reminded them of how fascinating the lives of our sea creatures are, from the most charismatic animals right through to the most mundane.

Stories that Grow Appreciation

Several weeks after the series had finished on air, TVNZ confirmed they wanted a second series — this time *Our Bigger Blue Backyard*. NZ on Air agreed to fund it again and so began another 18 months of production, filming in the Kermadec Islands, sub-Antarctic islands, White Island, Banks Peninsula, the Chatham Islands and Fiordland. It is currently showing on NZ television on Sunday evenings.

But here's the thing — aside from being a ratings hit, the first season of *OBBB* has since been used in classrooms around the country by teachers wanting to educate and enthuse their kids about ocean conservation. I've been asked to speak on panels and to audiences around the country in a context of protecting our oceans and their inhabitants. The Department of Conservation has been a huge supporter of the series. Without their help and immense cooperation we couldn't have pulled this off. The Ministry for the Environment asked if they might screen a trailer at an event at the New Zealand embassy in Washington DC recently, in their attempt to highlight the importance of new marine reserves around New Zealand.

Another very powerful organisation called *The Pew Charitable Trusts* requested that they screen our episode about the Kermadec Islands for their board members in Washington DC, as they have been working with our Government for years, advocating the establishment of a sanctuary there to safeguard critical species and support healthy ecosystems in the region for generations to come.

Our *Big Blue Backyard* series is not at all political. The "C" word is not mentioned. These documentaries do their job by telling entertaining and compelling stories that are fascinating, sometimes funny and sometimes a bit sad (there's always a little bit of tragedy in the natural world) but I think they also make Kiwis feel immensely proud when they watch, and it's a natural progression to feel passionate about protecting what is so special.

That to me is immensely gratifying — creating lovely films and making a difference. ■

Photos: Spotted Black Groper, Kermadec Islands [Ross Funnell]
Chatham Albatross nesting on the Pyramid [Braydon Moloney]

Judith Curran is an executive producer at NHNZ in Dunedin and the driving force behind hours of documentary television.

ERODING OUR LANDS OUR LIVES

Photo: The effects of sea level rise in Malaita Province, Solomon Islands. 2016. Courtesy of Caritas.

MARTIN DE JONG tells how communities in the Pacific are coping with rising sea levels.

Over the last three years, Caritas has been listening to the environmental challenges being faced by our partners and communities across Oceania. We have heard that more Pacific communities are facing coastal erosion and coastal flooding as storms and king tides (higher than normal tides) bite harder due to an overall rising sea level. Average global sea levels are now 20cm above 1900 levels and are estimated to rise another 20-30 cms by 2050. Due to regional and seasonal variations, sea levels in the Pacific are generally rising about 10 per cent above the global average. We also heard about the efforts the people in these low-lying islands are making to remain in their homes, the place where their ancestors are buried, the place they are connected to. These are some of the stories from people facing the reality of sea-level rise in our region.

Coastal Flooding in Kiribati

Kiribati is one of the key nations under threat. Former President, Anote Tong, bought land in Fiji, initially to grow food for his people, but also with a mind to using it as a refuge if people needed to abandon their atoll homelands. However, the people of Abaiang Island — one of Kiribati's most at-risk atolls — have been living with the impact of higher seas for about 15 years.

In January 2016, the Kiribati Caritas Youth Group from Tarawa visited Abaiang to run environmental workshops and assess the situation. They found eight of Abaiang's 17 villages badly affected by coastal erosion, regular flooding at high tides, or salinated water. Tebunginako village has relocated entirely, except the church and *maneaba* (meeting house), which will relocate once more funds are raised to supplement government funding.

"Tebunginako has been devastatingly eroded," said Kiribati Caritas Youth Group leader Boore Moua. "People in this village were tending to move inland because their community was totally destroyed."

Rising seas impact food supplies too, as eroding shorelines destroy coconut and breadfruit trees, or saltwater gets into root systems. However, parish priest for Abaiang, Father Buutonga Nakuau, supported by Caritas, has got young people planting coconut trees to replace those that have died off or been washed away. "Everyone on Abaiang will benefit from this project," he says.

The Caritas Youth Group is also planting mangroves to defend their coastlines. When Boore was asked why youth in the group are planting mangroves, he answered: "Because I don't want to leave my country. I want to stay … I am connected to this land. My grandparents are buried here. For me this is my home. Youth are planting mangroves because they want to stay.

"I have to plant it – in order to maintain the food, the healthy environment, healthy species, healthy fish, many fish. So that's the reason I should maintain as a caretaker of this land for my grandchildren."

Concrete Local Action for Tokelau

New Zealand has special responsibility for Tokelau as a territory moving towards greater self-government. Its three atolls are home to 1,400 people who are facing coastal erosion which is impacting food security, especially taro and root crops.

"There is concern that some of the

trees we depend on, like coconut and pandanus, are being eroded," says Moses Pelasio, the Pulenuku (Mayor) of Fakaofo Island. While they are planting more trees to protect the coastline, the main focus currently is on building a sea wall to protect the smaller village of Fenua Fala.

"We are trying to protect our island from big waves. Especially our big infrastructure like hospitals and schools," says Moses. A wall of gabion baskets, filled with rocks and stones, built in the 1980s didn't really work. So they are building their own concrete wall, with help from a certified builder living on the island.

"All I was interested in was building the sea wall to protect our island and infrastructure," says Moses. "We are just tired of people coming from outside to do a report. We do it ourselves and hope for the best." He says a similar wall built to protect the main village of Fale has remained intact for 10 years now.

Sea Level Rises Around Solomon Islands

But coastal erosion and sea level rise is also affecting larger and more mountainous places in the Pacific, such as Solomon Islands, Samoa and Papua New Guinea, and they also report losses of coconut, pandanus and swamp taro over the past year.

In Solomon Islands, Father Peter Hou from Guadalcanal says his people depend on swamp taro, but because of sea-level rise "they no longer use these places to plant swamp taro because now all the swampy area is mixed with salty water and this is why the swamp taro are no longer growing."

Elsewhere, Modesta Hasiau of Hautahe Marau in eastern Guadalcanal says her people have been planting swamp taro after seeing many of their coconut trees fall into the sea over the last six years. But people are not sure how long the swamp taro will last, as coastal erosion continues to worsen.

"It is sickening to watch our shores slowly eaten away by the sea … what will happen in the next decade? Will the place we call home still be the same or will it soon perish due to sea-level rise?" she says.

This concern for the future troubles many in Solomon Islands. Liborio Maemauri, a maintenance man and woodwork trainer for Auki Diocese, lives on an artificial island offshore from Auki township. Built 50-60 years ago for shelter, fishing and to escape from tribal conflicts, he says with the "big change" in the sea, they are having to build up the island more regularly with additional stones.

Elsewhere around Auki Harbour on mainland Malaita, people have been building up the level of the ground around them or moving to higher ground if they have the money.

"People are trying their best to move to the next level … they are not feeling good about this situation. People are living in fear. We don't have any plans from the government. We don't know what their next move is," says Liborio.

Youth worker, Starling Konainao, lives on similar artificial islands in Lau Lagoon elsewhere in Malaita. Faced with coastal erosion he says: "We went to our old people and asked them: 'What was the natural habitat here before you guys came and stayed here?' and they said: 'Oh it was mangroves'. So we did plant mangroves and most of the mangroves that we planted died because other people in the village didn't believe in this thing. But a couple of them survived, and they did actually stop the coastal erosion … when the tide goes back, it actually does hold the debris."

They persevered with more plantings which have brought back fish and birds to the area. The mangroves also provide firewood and the larger variety provide fruit as a food source.

We Can Take Action

Through three years of research for our Pacific environment report series, Caritas has learned about a range of responses to coastal issues — from natural and artificial defences, to raising the land and relocation. But we are yet to see a comprehensive overall monitoring of the situation. In the absence of comprehensive data, we recommend that an appropriate regional body maps specific communities and locations affected by coastal erosion or rising seas.

Caritas also calls on Oceania governments to prioritise the short and long-term needs of vulnerable coastal communities through sharing information and working with communities on immediate coastal threats and long-term predictions.

We ask the New Zealand and Australian governments to allocate sufficient overseas aid funds to help people impacted by coastal erosion and sea-level rise adapt to the changing conditions. We also call on the global community to protect people forced to relocate because of climate change and environmental degradation. ■

Martin de Jong is Advocacy and Research Advisor for Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand and the lead researcher/writer of the annual *Caritas State of the Environment Report for Oceania.*

Caged Bird

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips his wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a bird that stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped and
his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

The free bird thinks of another breeze
and the trade winds soft through the sighing trees
and the fat worms waiting on a dawn bright lawn
and he names the sky his own

But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom. ■

By Maya Angelou. From *And Still I Rise*.

White Heron photographed by Paul Sorrell © Used with permission.

Advocating for the World We Want to Live In

DUGALD MacTAVISH looks back at his long commitment and advocacy for the protection of the environment and says it is now a job for us all.

I've been thinking about my own environmental and ecological commitment, why I care, what motivates me, what gives me hope to keep going and why it is important to pass the message on.

The agreement in Paris in December 2015 by 200 countries to limit climate change, was a global acknowledgement that our current way of life is unsustainable. Profound environmental and social challenges include global ecological overshoot, climate instability, looming resource scarcity and inequitable concentrations of wealth and opportunity — shades of the four horsemen of the apocalypse perhaps?

Realising We're Causing Damage

Those challenges are so deep-seated and urgent that the task of re-establishing some sort of balance with the planet seems daunting. There are also many factors working against change. Climate change, for example, was called by Massachusetts Institute of Technology's John Sterman: "the perfect storm for public confusion". The science is difficult to comprehend and the scale of the problem puts it well beyond the scope of experimentation, powerful vested interests are working aggressively to confuse the public and discredit the science, and the issue strikes fear, anger, denial, helplessness and/or despair in the general public.

Furthermore, our human story till now has been a very different one. In the words of Genesis we have been fruitful and we have multiplied and we have exercised dominion over all the earth. We have believed in improving our lot. It seems inconceivable that we could have got it all wrong — and moreover, that it's our fault.

Consistent Hard Work

Preparing for this article I looked back at earlier articles I had written and I was struck by their optimism. Whether it was persuading the local council that simple septic tanks were preferable to a conventional sewerage system discharging to a stream, or fighting for protection for the land surrounding the Moeraki Boulders, I was convinced that putting sound information in front of people would lead to logical outcomes.

In similar vein, having realised the implications of fast approaching limits with such resources as fossil fuels and a stable climate, we arranged for the best experts to inform our town residents, certain that this would lead to a more resilient community better prepared for menacing times ahead.

To show personal commitment, our family decided to live in place, use solar energy sources, eat from our garden and farm and dump our car — and prove that life can still be fun! I remained confident that the logic of that model would be immediately apparent and would spread.

Further battles involved trying to persuade councils (again with experts) that there are risks to the life-supporting capacity of our rivers, from overstocking and excessive water extraction. Therefore we should set precautionary limits to maintain the many benefits we receive from healthy rivers. Similarly, after NZ signed up to containing global warming to two degrees, we tried to persuade local councils and the government to talk about how we're going to contribute fairly to meet that standard.

Failed to Convince Everyone

Over the last fifteen years, in association with various groups, we have given all these ideas and others a good tilt. It's true that there has been a win or two, but overall, in spite of our best endeavours, we have very little to show for them. The Earth is our one home, and inexorably, humankind is strangling the goose that lays our golden eggs. Why are we being so stupid? There are three aspects which I have come to think are particularly influential.

Aspects Driving Failure

The first is that we have created an economic system that is stable only when it is growing, even though this is possible only while the energy supply is expanding. Yet whether this is the best model for us is rarely questioned because it lies outside the mainstream worldview and is rarely questioned, because we are so embedded in the *status quo*.

Surely what we need is an economy that permits us to live fulfilled lives, whether or not it grows. However, marketers cleverly sway our values, desires and worldview so that we are committed to lives of consumerism — and hence economic growth. On the other hand, there is no shortage of scientific voices calling for restraint if we wish to hear them.

Second, our preferred measure of the economy is the Gross Domestic Product. This deals almost exclusively with money transactions and excludes essential components like biodiversity and ecosystem services, energy from the sun, the unpaid labour for homecare and community service, and the social and intellectual capital created by the vast network of voluntary associations. These are all essential for community function and wellbeing. So if half the economic equation is missing, it leaves room for mistakes, conflict and false dichotomies. Do we really have to choose between farming and healthy, swimmable rivers?

I think the pathway to transformation is for each of us to re-examine our own "deeply held values" and act on them . . . in the process we will expand the common ground and merge the social narratives that currently prevent us working effectively together.

The third is our three-year political arrangement, where political survival prioritises short-term over long-term goals. But most of the deep ecological issues are emerging over much longer timeframes and will take similar periods to be corrected, if that is possible at all. So long-term issues are not vote-winners, even though history tells us that these slow, underlying trends must be contained for civilisations to persist.

Living Schizophrenically

The result of these factors is that much of our behaviour becomes schizophrenic. On the one hand we sign treaties to limit carbon while on the other we continue to promote highly carbon-intensive activities at home. While we may know rationally that something is true, deep down we cannot accept that it could really happen — and so we act as if it's not true. This cognitive dissonance enables people to live quite happily holding entirely contradictory views. None of us is immune. On an ideological level, this might provide some explanation for the schism that has opened up between mainstream economics and mainstream science.

Changing our Framework

These psychological, social, economic, political and other factors come together to create the framework by which we live. So to stop trashing the planet, we need to start changing that framework. The first step surely is to change our goal from the fantasy of endless growth. We need to reconform with what economist, Kate Raworth, calls the "safe operating space" situated between ecological limits and providing for everyone's basic needs.

Changing our framework is a huge challenge, but I remain optimistic. Roger Douglas implemented bold and deep structural changes to our economy virtually overnight. So, given sufficient conviction, we can do it for our planet. We now need equally uncompromising measures to reduce carbon steeply and adapt accordingly.

We Need Courage and Commitment

I think the pathway to such transformation is for each of us to re-examine our own "deeply held values" — those which make us fully human and which we share as a species — and act on them. These will differ somewhat, but in the process we will expand the common ground and merge the social narratives that currently prevent us working effectively together. How often do people say they realise again what is important in life after a traumatic personal experience? That's the kind of crisis re-evaluation that gives the momentum and courage to make the hard calls so desperately needed. It will result in mercy for the planet, and perhaps also earn its mercy for us. Indeed, species survival depends on it, and it is our generation who will decide. What more incentive do we need? ■

Photo: *Moeraki Boulders, Koekohe Beach* by Sheila Thomson

Dugald MacTavish is a *Wise Response Inc* committee member and works in water resources engineering from his home in Moeraki, North Otago.

Mothering with Mother Earth

ANNICHJE RIEMERSMA shares her surprise at the bonds that have developed among the women and children in their gardening playgroup.

We call our weekly gardening playgroup for mothers and children at the Korimako Centre in Invercargill "Nourished by Nature". We can truly say it is holistic because we leave each time feeling whole in every sense. We've been nourished by nature and by one another.

Starting the Group

We started the group because we felt the need for a more healthy, sustaining lifestyle. As mothers we play a huge role in our own families, in the surrounding community and even for future generations, by sharing our skills and knowledge of how to take care of ourselves and Mother Earth. We embrace this role.

Our initial desire was to grow fresh, organic vegetables and create a space for our children to learn to explore their emotions, social interaction and, of course, nature. We had no idea that the group was going to become so vital to our week. It really does nourish us physically, emotionally and spiritually. It has become more important for us than we could ever have dreamed.

Some days the children prefer to explore the forest, play hide and seek, climb, check out the beehive activity, find flowers and bugs, feed the chooks and, of course, play with water. We teach them to respect nature, to treat bugs, flowers and plants with care and love.

Children Get Stuck In

While we work in the gardens the children come to help, carting weeds to the compost bins in little, red wheelbarrows and collecting our harvest. We show them how to plant seeds and how to nourish and grow them to provide us with food. The children often pick up spades and busily work the soil alongside us. As parents we know the importance of these occasions of role-modelling and teaching.

Some days the children prefer to explore the forest, play hide and seek, climb, check out the beehive activity, find flowers and bugs, feed the chooks and, of course, play with water. Their little hands pick apples and pull carrots as they know their tummies will be nourished by these. We teach them to respect nature, to treat bugs, flowers and plants with care and love. Throughout these mornings our children are learning to nourish friendships and relationships, negotiate their emotions and test natural boundaries.

Nourishing of Body and Spirit

We look forward to sharing a pot-luck lunch after finishing our work outside. It's always a feast of wholesome food and treats. We often experiment and exchange new recipes and our children are introduced to new foods, including what we have harvested that day. All the time we are learning about another of nature's bounty — edible weeds.

Our group has grown from providing vegetables for our families and activities for the children, to also nourishing us emotionally and spiritually. We share the troubles and triumphs, tears and frustrations in our lives. We listen to and support one another and have grown very close over the last 18 or so months. We've discovered that we are all from the same "tribe" — share similar values and connections — and as we gather each week we embrace this commonality and grow in confidence and wisdom.

Ritual and Relationships

Dominican sister, Judith Robinson, has created a special feel around the land at Korimako. It is a safe, sacred space where we connect with Mother Earth and ourselves by simply working and nurturing the *whenua* with organic, permacultural and biodynamic principles. I find it energising and cleansing when touching and working with the soil and plants. We are often bare-footed and the children love to run around with as few clothes on as possible.

Strangely enough in the last two years we've scarcely had a day when we were forced indoors. We seem to be blessed with some sunshine, if not beautiful weather. Our Southland climate makes for great growing conditions. It is wonderful to watch the seasons change and to celebrate the beauty and continuity of nature with our children.

We entrust the *whenua*/soil with our intentions by writing our goals and dreams on pieces of paper and burying them in the wildflower garden. As we watch the flowers grow and feed the bees, we feel our dreams and intentions also growing and manifesting. This shows the children the power of such actions, especially when done as a group.

Over the months as we have deepened the connection to ourselves, the group and the *whenua*, we are noticing that we are moving in rhythms — including the rhythms within ourselves as women, with one another and in harmony with Mother Earth and the planets. By recognising these rhythms and noticing how they affect our bodies, emotions and spirits, it becomes easy to accept the differences in our needs.

We find it important to acknowledge and nurture our needs and to be kind to ourselves, because the "outside" world can be very busy and burden us with high expectations. So we encourage one another to sit in the sun while breastfeeding, take a walk through the forest or the peace garden, have a lie-down inside, work quietly alone in the garden, or join the gardening group in hearty discussions.

Drawing on the Relationships

Sometimes looking at us working in the garden, I become aware that women have been together like this for thousands of years. It feels powerfully special, that something so seemingly simple, could be as important for our spirits today as it has been for women through the generations. I feel connected to those women who have gone before us and perhaps this is another way of passing on wisdom.

I have observed that our group of women has grown in gardening skills and knowledge — and in trust, confidence, happiness and direction in our lives. And as well, we have a whole group of new friendships. Our children are learning to socialise, play and garden, and are also watching and emulating their mothers. I feel this is incredibly important for the future of humanity and Mother Earth and it means we are achieving more than we ever believed possible. ■

Photos by Judith Robinson OP

Annichje Riemersma is a mother, gardener, farmer and lover of nature. She intends to study environmental management next year.

CREATION
Reveals God

RON SHARP reflects on the shared spiritual journey that turned the family into organic horticulturists.

I have been on a faith journey that has brought me to a new awareness of my relationship with God and with all other creation. When I was in my early 20s, the debate in theological circles was an engagement with the theory of evolution versus creation as the literal interpretation of the Genesis creation stories. I found that the idea of evolution expanded my image of God immensely. Instead of a transcendent, out-there, up in heaven, dominating, disciplinarian judge, I began to respond to God as the Father image Jesus spoke of in the gospels and with whom St Thérèse of Lisieux related.

Then I encountered Teilhard de Chardin who had a most stimulating influence on my faith. Teilhard opened me to the God within, the Spirit energy permeating all creation, the evolutionary life-force of the universe, the ever-unfolding whole-making Creator. Creation grew to be for me a revelation of God's identity.

Charles Darwin's theory of evolution and Einstein's theories of relativity in the physical universe, initiated a cosmic upheaval on science, history and culture. What we had seen as a static, secure, stable and unchanging universe became apparent as dynamic, changing, novel and creative. As Teilhard claimed, the universe was in the process of coming to be through the God-driven energy of evolution. This excited me deeply.

Change in Life-Style

Then 30 years ago my wife and I set out on an adventure into the world of "small is beautiful". Edith had grown up in a three-storied house in a lovely Swiss mountain village but it was right on the main road and had no gardens or back yard. Her dream was to have access to land to grow things. She imagined growing food in soil — that marvellous medium of creativity, macro/micro worlds of teeming activity.

At the time I, too, was ready for a change being disillusioned with the effects of the industrial revolution that were causing damage and ecological woes, from pollution and consumerism to exploitation and rape of *Papatuanuku*, Mother Earth. So we travelled south and bought a smallish property. I knew that buying and trying to live off our 1 ¾ acres near Motueka, a rural town in the north of the South Island, was going to challenge our survival skills.

Change to Organic Growing

At the time Motueka was surviving on the seasonal economy of tobacco growing and orchards. However, the tobacco industry was under threat of closure and uncertainty and fear of economic collapse filtered through the lives of most in the town. The particular agricultural economy of tobacco required by market forces had depleted good husbandry of the land.

We experienced first-hand the poverty of chemically-fed soil that had been growing the one crop for 40 years. Tobacco had leached the life from our ground. Our first crops reached maturity but had little substance. So we initiated a programme to enrich the soil, feeding it each month according to the Māori moon calendar. In the first instance we spent three days collecting enough biodegradable materials from our neighbourhood to build 10 huge compost heaps. Gradually our land responded to soil enhancement, producing crops with more vigour, strength and flavour. We worked by hand, using machinery once or twice a year as a last resort, and found a plentiful supply of old hand tools in tobacco growers' drying sheds.

We had two large tunnel houses and initially grew zucchini for income along with orchard work in season. We fed the zucchini with chemical fertilisers. They grew so fast we picked twice a day. By our third year we diversified to offer more choice to the summer holiday-makers.

When we decided to grow totally organically we got a shock to find how long it took zucchini to grow in naturally compost-fed soils. It took Mother Earth's/God's evolutionary time to restore her depleted body in our plot. We felt grateful for her perpetual giving, even in her worn-out state. It was so good to feel that we were part of her recovery. The new crops and fruit trees began to produce — weakly at first, but tasty and sweet. Edith found ways of preserving — cellaring, bottling, freezing, pickling and dehydrating. She never wasted a jot. At various times we had goats for milking, a horse for manure and a pig. We still have chooks wandering around the orchard.

Community Involvement

We were a one-car, no-TV family of four, living four kilometres from town. This situation was ideal for biking. In order to cut down on my carbon footprint, I used the car only when parcels were too big to carry home on the bike.

And this new way of living has given me time to participate in the local community. We became active members of the Motueka local moneyless economy, which enables us to exchange and trade goods and services without money. Transactions between members are recorded as credits and debits, which are used for trades. There are limits on how much above or below zero a trader can go. The partners in each exchange negotiate the value of the deal.

We felt grateful for Mother Earth's perpetual giving, even in her worn-out state. It was so good to feel that we were part of her recovery.

I have just completed five years on the Wellington Archdiocesan Justice, Peace and Development Commission. Over the years I have served on a number of local boards and committees — the Employment and Enterprise Centre, the Abel Tasman Education Trust catering for suspended High School students and helping unemployed young people into work, the Motueka/Tasman Mentoring programme and am a founding member of the Motueka Community Gardens.

The highlight of my week during the school term is the two hours I spend at the central Motueka School supporting dyslexic children with learning difficuties. For several years I have attended Te Atarangi Māori *Te Reo* classes and am discovering a beautiful spiritual *taonga*. All of this reflection and activity has fed my desire for wholenesss and communion — to be immersed in the life I am part of and to feel that we and the God of the unfolding universe are in the realm of co-creating.

Enabling the Dream to Continue

I am 80 now and for several years our family has grappled with the issue of ageing. Three years ago we made an informal agreement with a young woman who had a horticultural degree but no means of buying land. She now works most of our ground and a tunnel house for her living and we are relieved of the heavy work of the property. In this way Edith and I can keep our hand in the dirt but at our own pace and whim.

I'm convinced that the way to greater cosmic wholeness is evolution to inner wholeness. Our relationship with God, continuing the work of Jesus through the life of the Spirit, is evolving toward greater unity and communion. If we allow the Spirit to free us from fears, anxieties, desire for power and control, we can live in the risen Christ who empowers us to participate in this new creation. As Pope Francis says: "The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development, for we know that things can change. The Creator does not abandon us . . . " ■

Ron Sharp and Edith live in Riwaka near Motueka. Their two children and families also live in the district.

Reading Luke 8:4-8 Ecologically

ELAINE WAINWRIGHT points out all the players in the parable of the sower and invites readers to listen and reflect on the ecological message.

Painting: Parable of The Sower by Miki de Goodaboom ©. Used with permission.

Luke 8:4 When a great crowd gathered and people from town after town came to him, Jesus said in a parable: 5 "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell on the path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. 6 Some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered for lack of moisture. 7 Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it. 8 Some fell into good soil, and when it grew, it produced a hundredfold." As he said this, he called out, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!" NRSV

What a rich year and how challenging the Year of Mercy has been. It has been marked with two proclamations that will shape our living of mercy into the future. On 18 June, 2015, as we looked toward the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis promulgated *Laudato Si'*, an encyclical letter on ecology and climate. Then almost as a climax to the movement he had begun, this year on the 1st September, World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, the Pope pronounced an eighth corporal and spiritual work of mercy: care for our common home.

Pope Francis has invited us as Earth citizens with all other living beings with whom we share our common

home, to recognise that we have an ethic of care for our home, an ethic of right relationships within the fabric of this home.

We do not have to look far to see the effects of our failure to care: violent storms are ravaging many lands, devastating the landscape and endangering all living beings; precious resources, like water, are being wasted through lack of care or unethical usage; temperatures soar; and many species are threatened with extinction because their habitat is destroyed. The human community faces many ethical challenges in caring for our home.

In the series of articles that I have contributed to *Tui Motu* magazine over the past two years, I have invited us to read our sacred story, our gospels, in a way that can shape a new mindset necessary for and supportive of care for our common home. Luke 8:4-8 provides a text for a new ethical reading that can shape the consciousness necessary to underpin our care for our common home.

World of the Sower

Jesus' parable begins with a focus on the human character, the sower. But we know the sower exists within the rich hybridity of habitat. There are birds and rocks and thorns, good soil and pathways made by human habitants. The ecological reader is invited into the story world that holds together habitat, human and holy. Another way of saying this is that the reader is drawn into the ecological texture of the text. It is this texture that we will explore as shaping our new consciousness.

The readers' attention is drawn to the "sower" at the beginning of the parable. But the very designation associates the person inextricably with other material elements, namely "seed". As readers, we are told nothing more about the sower. However, being attentive to elements encoded in the text from its origins, readers may imagine the sower as slave or tenant farmer on one of the large Herodian or Roman estates which were becoming more numerous in first century Galilee. On the other hand, s/he may have been a self-sufficient small farmer, member of a farming family. The sower would have lived attentive to seasons, with their rhythms of time for planting and for harvesting.

Seed, Sowing and Growing

The seed itself is not identified specifically but is likely to be wheat or barley, the two most common agricultural products of Galilee in the first century. The opening words of the parable draw readers into the interconnectedness of habitat and human, inviting ecological readers to be attentive to both in text and contemporary context.

The parable draws the reader into the ecosystem or ecocycle of sower and seed . . . Birds take up the seeds . . . Weeds take up their groundspace . . . The sun, with the wind and the rain . . . The seed that falls on the soil prepared for it produces richly.

The seed seems to have been cast rather than carefully planted in rows but either way it appears to have been hand-sown, linking the sower intimately to the process of planting with the goal of growing grain to feed family and animals and to have seed for the next year's planting. The pressure on first century Galilean farmers or tenants to produce abundant harvests so as to develop exports for the Empire also lurks within the world that the parable creates, as do similar relationships in many contexts today.

The parable draws the reader into the ecosystem or ecocycle of sower and seed. Birds take up the seeds on the pathway so that they are fed. Weeds take up their groundspace so that there is insufficient room for the sower's seed in some places. The sun, with the wind and the rain, elements that are not named, enable the seed to grow. However, if the root is not deep enough, some plants will wither under the sun and others will be choked out by plants that are not useful in the agricultural cycle (although they may have uses not explored in the parable). The seed that falls on the soil prepared for it, produces richly.

All this functions metaphorically within the parable which captures a network of actants in this hybrid habitat—from sower, to seed, to bird, sun, earth/soil, weeds and thorns. The reader/hearer is invited into this world.

The Political Aspects

Jesus, the parable teller, and his audience would have known the agricultural system of first century Galilee, the importance of the soil and its various types for particular crops. They would have known too the prolific nature of grain, given the right conditions, as well as the desired harvest in the face of the Roman taxation on a small farmer's grain or soil. The ancient agricultural writer Varro notes the variety in yields: tenfold in one district, fifteen in another, even a hundred-to-one near Gadara in Syria (Varro, *On Agriculture* 1.44.2).

Listeners would also have been familiar with an alternative cosmology captured on a coin of Agrippa I who governed Judea in the first century (three ears laden with abundant grains springing from one stalk). It proclaimed the emperor, rather than the soil, as the source of abundance. The ecological texture of the text interweaves the material, the socio-cultural, the economic and other features.

Jesus simply presents these complexly woven worlds in which multiple actants, including the human, are intertwined. Two different cosmologies are implicitly in tension within the parable and the network of associations it creates. First there is that of the emperor and his representatives, whether a Herodian king in Galilee or landowners supporting the imperial system, who are identified as the source of abundance. On the other hand, the parable evokes a more complex system of interwoven elements that intersect in the process of sowing seed. The surprise is that there is an ecology that can produce abundance. Jesus simply invites reflection on, or attentiveness to, the richness of habitat and what such attentiveness will allow us to hear: "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!". ■

Elaine Wainwright RSM is the Executive Director of Mission and Ministry for the Mercy Sisters in Australia and Papua New Guinea. She is a biblical scholar of international repute.

YOU WILL BE WITH ME

KATHLEEN RUSHTON reflects on the brief conversation between two dying men, Jesus and his companion, in Luke 23:35-43.

The Year of Mercy that began on 8 December 2015, ends on the feast of Christ the King, this month. During this Year we have contemplated and experienced the mystery of God's mercy, of being mercied (literal translation of "shall have mercy shown to them" Matthew 5:7) and discovered anew the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, including Pope Francis's eighth work, to care for our common home. The reading for the end of the Year of Mercy, Luke 23:35–43, has a significant two-verse dialogue between Jesus and another condemned person.

"With me"

"Then he (the wrongdoer) said: "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus replied: "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23: 42-42). In this exchange in Luke's gospel we have the last words spoken by a human being to Jesus. And Jesus' last words to a human being in his pre-resurrection life. How we treasure the last words of one we love.

The wrongdoer is the first person with the confidence to address Jesus in familiar terms for nowhere else in any gospel does a person address Jesus as "Jesus." Elsewhere his name has qualifications suggesting reverence, for example, "Jesus Son of God" (Mark 5:7; Lk 8:28)) or "Jesus Son of David" (Mk 10:47; Lk 18:38). Raymond Brown describes the wrongdoer as having "disciple-like spontaneity." Disciples are distinguished by their willingness to accept Jesus' invitation and to follow him spontaneously. However, the wrongdoer does not wait for an invitation. He anticipates the words of Jesus to disciples: "Ask and it will be given to you." (Lk 11:9).

This dying companion asks Jesus to remember him. And Jesus offers much more, for he not only saves but shows intimacy by including him as a disciple. At the last supper, Jesus says to the twelve: "You are those who have stood *with* me in my trials." Because of this he promises them that they shall eat and drink at his table in his kingdom (Lk 22:28–30). Jesus promises the wrongdoer that he "will be *with* me." Being with Jesus, suggests he will share more than Jesus' company in paradise for like the twelve he will share in his resurrection. Jesus begins with "Truly (Greek text, *amen*) I tell... " which gives solemnity to that which follows. Nothing can separate Jesus' dying companion from God's loving mercy.

Luke Adds Hope

Luke reshapes the abandonment and rejection of the execution scene in Mark's gospel to one of hope and forgiveness. He inserts Jesus' prayer of forgiveness (Lk 23:34). The people who stood watching are contrasted with the religious leadership who scoff, the mocking soldiers and the other wrongdoer. They deride Jesus with variations of: "Save yourself." In contrast, "the other" (Lk 23:40) does not specify what "save" means. He owns his wrong-doing and acknowledges the justice of the punishment. His is the fourth acknowledgement of Jesus' innocence (Lk 23:40; 23:14, 15, 22).

During his trial Jesus is clothed by Herod and his soldiers in "a splendid (white) garment" which suggests his innocence (Lk 23:11). The word *lampros* meaning radiating or shining is translated as splendid, white, elegant or rich. Australian scripture scholar, Michael Trainor, suggests that Jesus died still clothed in this garment — Jesus is "accompanied to his place of death by Earth's wood and becoming transfixed to it; now he is clothed in Earth's linen."

Ancient Context

Luke calls those crucified with Jesus by a generic term meaning an evildoer, criminal or malefactor (*kakourgos*), which has an unambiguously criminal sense. We find this word three times: the two are led away to be crucified (Lk 23:32); they are one on his right and one on his left (Lk 23:33); and one of them derides Jesus (Lk 23:39). Mark and Matthew call them bandits or revolutionaries (*lestai*). Luke uses this word when Jesus protested at his arrest: "Have you come out with swords and clubs as if I were a bandit?" (Lk 22:52); when the Samaritan fell among bandits (Lk 10:30); and when in cleansing the temple Jesus accused the sellers of making God's house into a den of bandits (Lk 19:46). Only John calls Barabbas a bandit.

Although crucifixion was used as punishment by many ancient peoples, there are very few descriptions and these come from Roman times. No ancient writer wanted to dwell on this cruel practice. In fact, the most detailed accounts are the gospel passion narratives. The frequency and the brutality of crucifixion as a tool of Roman oppression has been diminished by the tendency of Christians to theologise away its horrors, or particularise it to Jesus alone. This hideous form of execution threatened men and women. Men

are recorded as being punished by crucifixion (defeated armies, piracy, threat to male leadership) and 22 cases of women's crucifixion have been traced (violating the rights of a husband, sacrilege, child abuse, sorcery, extermination of a race/kinship group, punishment for abortion).

As Jim Consedine points out in his recent article (*Tui Motu* Sept 2016:4-5), prisons are a recent phenomenon. Punishment of offenders at the time of Jesus was in the hands of those who could impose penalties as they saw fit. In the case of crucifixion, the caprice and sadism of executioners were given full rein. The emphasis was on shame and public humiliation. Burial, an act of piety for Jews, was denied as the body was left for scavengers.

Feast of Christ the King, 20 November

Re-membering

What does the request of Jesus' dying companion mean for the Christian community today and for the condemned ones we call prisoners? Mary Rose D'Angelo says: "re-membering conveys together the ideas of bringing what has been hidden out of the shadows of history, of putting together what has been dismembered and of making someone a member of oneself, of a community or the tradition in a new way."

As death approaches, Jesus completes a final act of liberation which recalls his ministry declaration in the Nazareth synagogue: good news is given to a poor one, the captive is released and the oppressed one goes free (Lk 4:18-19). Jesus' emphatic "today" points to now and links this incident with moments of salvation or revelation in this gospel story (Lk 2:11; 4:21; 5:26; 13:232–33; 19:9; 22:34, 61).

What does this means for us who live in a country with one of the highest rates of imprisonment in the developed world? Officially, the ministry to prisoners is through the Prison Chaplaincy Service of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCSANZ), which Churches formed to take responsibility for the appointment and management of prison chaplains under contract to the Department of Corrections. The Catholic Bishops Conference works closely with PCSANZ to provide Catholic Chaplaincy in all prisons. However, Corrections now defines chaplaincy in a much narrower role than previously, which means a funding decrease.

James K. Baxter recommended: "Bail people out of jail, visit them in jail, and look after them when they come out". We need to make our mainly middle class parishes into an environment in which released prisoners who had discovered their faith in prison would feel welcome, as long-serving prison chaplain, Mary Kamo said on her retirement.

The end of the Year of Mercy reminds me of words I found at the end of my Camino pilgrimage: "The end is the beginning". The end of the Year of Mercy is a new beginning of seeing and living through the lens of God's mercy. In Jesus' reply to his dying companion, God breaks into a situation that seems beyond mercy and hope. This is our encouragement. ■

Painting: *St Dismas the Good Thief* by Bradi Barth © www.bradi-barth.org
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Kathleen Rushton RSM tends her vegetable garden, walks in the hope her feet will allow her to tramp again and delights in learning about Scripture.

FILLING IN THE GENDER DIVIDE

a GEN-Y perspective

There are many ways to define feminism and pages that could be written about the historical narratives that form the gender equality movement. For the sake of simplicity, I like to use the definition of feminism as the "movement for social, political, and economic equality of women and men". There have been important gains made in women's equality, including the right to vote, access to higher education, reproductive healthcare, workplace opportunity and political representation. But there are still many inequalities to be rectified. According to the Ministry for Women the New Zealand gender pay gap sits at 11.8 per cent, a clear, measurable economic disadvantage. There is also the matter of the atrocious statistic that one in five women will experience serious sexual assault in her lifetime and one in three will experience some form of domestic violence.

Feminism is often talked about as a women's movement which does not welcome men's participation. It is my firm belief that in order for true gender equality to be achieved, it is crucial to have everyone on board. As Elizabeth Nyamayaro of the *HeforShe* campaign aptly says: "We cannot achieve an equal world with half the team sitting on the bench".

As basic rights have been achieved for women, the ways that we address equality are becoming more nuanced and we are beginning to see the subtleties of how women are routinely discriminated against. This more nuanced conversation, particularly with the new spread of information via social media, has opened up conversational space for men to be advocates for women's equality in everyday life.

So how is this achieved? In particular, how do we engage our younger generation of men to become advocates for gender equality? The *White Ribbon Campaign*, introduced by the United Nations Development Fund for Women in 2004 and contributed to by various government agencies over the last 12 years, is a great example of an initiative that uses strong male role-models to advocate for men taking a stand against the discrimination of women. A strong quality of this campaign is the focus on targeting clearly negative behaviours such as domestic violence, as well as the more subtle forms of discrimination such as gender stereotyping and "locker-room banter" that reinforces negative behaviours towards women.

The peer-to-peer learning model is an effective community engagement strategy, which addresses the problematic power dynamic of primarily Pākehā government organisations advising communities on the improvements they need to make.

I recently attended an anti-violence conference that strongly advocated for a community approach where everybody in the community is expected to contribute a small amount to the violence-free-community cause. This could be by learning to recognise the signs of violent relationships, knowing about safe spaces that they could refer someone to within the community, learning to be an ethical bystander and being willing to step up if they see behaviours that are of concern. This community model is more effective than organisations, such as local NGOs and the police holding full responsibility for the prevention of violence.

Similarly there are many different ways that men can influence the behaviour of other men. This could be by letting a mate know that jokes about sexual violence are neither funny nor appropriate, making an effort to challenge gender stereotypes by taking on more responsibilities for housework and childcare, and by role-modelling respectful behaviour.

As a starting point it can be transformative to listen, really listen, to the experiences of women and to reflect on how our lives differ from those of men. Most women in one way or another are always adjusting their lives to lessen their chance of being assaulted. This might mean to avoid walking home alone at night, making sure that a friend knows the details of where they are going, or being conscious of the clothing they wear and the impression it may give. These constant adaptations can be so ingrained that women don't recognise them as ways to protect themselves. Making the space to listen to the lived experiences of the women around us will give a deeper insight into the existing inequalities. It will also create a jumping off point for ideas about how we can be allies in the quest for gender equality. ■

Louise Carr-Neil, an Auckland native living in Hamilton, is passionate about gender equality and human rights. In her spare time she enjoys running and vegetarian cooking.

Open-cut coal mine, Hunter Valley by Max Phillips (Jeremy Buckingham MLC)

We Risk Scarring the Land Forever

Greyish-brown dirt blows across the road where I'm standing and for a few minutes it's impossible to see more than a hundred metres ahead. I can feel myself breathing in the dust; I can even taste it. I'm not in the middle of the Australian desert. I'm standing in one of Australia's premier food and wine regions — the Hunter Valley.

What the tourism board doesn't tell us when advertising this picturesque part of New South Wales, is that it is now home to many of the state's coal mines. Having driven just two hours on the freeway from Sydney, I find myself standing next to one of these opencast mines, trying not to breathe in the sediment blowing off it and towards the neighbouring towns.

The communities in the Hunter, and indeed in many parts of Australia, have uncomfortable relationships with mines. On one hand they boast that they create jobs and boost the local economy. On the other, they can permanently destroy the local environment, displace communities and make conditions almost unlivable in towns close-by.

The locals I spoke to told me how the mine impacts on them. They can no longer drink the rainwater from their tanks because of the pollution. Dust and grime deposits cover everything and make them feel a long way from the "fresh country air" that once pervaded their region.

While the effects of open-cut mining on this one community may be extreme, it emphasises the sacrifices we make in the pursuit of profit from our natural resources. It is an important reminder that there is real and irreversible damage being done to the very environment we rely on for food, water and life. And while Australians living in cities might be blissfully unaware of the effect of the mining boom on the countryside, that ignorance needs to be changed.

From the sky, the Hunter Valley open-cut mines appear as deep scars on otherwise fertile, green land. When the cacophony of drilling now invading residents' homes and the glare of the industrial lights end with the closedown of the mining operations, the farmland will never recover and the abandoned moonscape will remain long after we're all gone. As an indigenous elder said to me during my visit to the Hunter Valley: "When the land's gone it's gone forever".

Australia is certainly not alone in this respect. New Zealand has shared an uneasy relationship with mining over many decades. The Tui mine in the Kaimai ranges is a startling example of how mines can often cost more than they contribute. It has taken 40 years and almost $23 million to try to remediate that toxic site.

I acknowledge that mining can make a significant contribution to our economies and employment opportunities. But I also ask: "At what cost?" With the end of the mining boom well on its way and with the efficiency of renewable energy ever improving, it is time to make the transition to a more sustainable future.

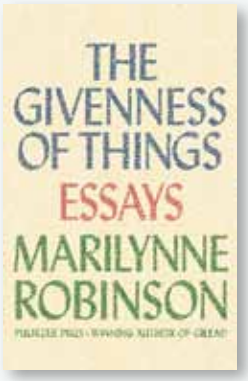
We must ensure that the existing mines are wound down in a responsible and sustainable way, and that mining companies are held directly accountable for every possible kind of rehabilitation of the land. Failing to do so will mean that the short term economic benefits of mining will dissipate, leaving local communities in the lurch surrounded by unusable and unsightly land populated by abandoned mines.

The efforts then to rehabilitate the land will take centuries. It could well be an uncomfortable time of reflection and a permanent reminder of the decisions, and the mistakes, we made. ■

Jack Derwin is a journalist, freelance writer and pending graduate plotting his return to Latin America.

The Givenness of Things: Essays

By Marilynne Robinson
Published by Virago
Reviewed by Jane Higgins



This book is a tapestry, finely woven in many places, a little roughly pulled together in others. The thread of gold that runs through the fabric is Robinson's musing on the mystery and sacredness of creation as a whole and of the human person in particular.

In her musing, Robinson stands on the shoulders of a host of thinkers from times past, particularly John Calvin, who is clearly her lodestar. She brings to light writing that will be little known to many people, and offers a rewarding glimpse into the history and thought of the Reformation. There is a wonderful chapter on the religious context and culture of Shakespeare's world (*Servanthood*) and some fascinating reflections on the person of Christ (*Metaphysics and Son of Adam, Son of Man*). Other chapters ponder contemporary society in the United States, rationalism and current developments in scientific thought.

There is almost no modern scholarship here, deliberately so. Robinson seems to be profoundly disappointed with most areas of recent scholarship whether in biblical studies, theology, the arts and humanities, economics or science. This sense of disappointment pervades the whole — Karen Armstrong has called the book a "magnificent lamentation" and parts of it certainly are. Parts of it are also simply angry.

Robinson takes aim at rationalism and many branches of science, dismissing them as reductionist, but throughout these essays she runs the risk of reductionism herself. She writes about "the neuroscientists" as though they were unanimous on the nature of consciousness and the brain; she asserts that "theologians and scholars of the modern period" offer a "gravely impoverished" vision of Christ, as though they are singular in their understanding, and she claims to have met many Marxist academics but never to have encountered "a single one" who had read Marx. This last made me smile, but I also wrote: "Really?" in the margin. Perhaps it's in the nature of polemic to speak generically and perhaps it signals the depth of her lament, but I found these sweeping accusations wearying.

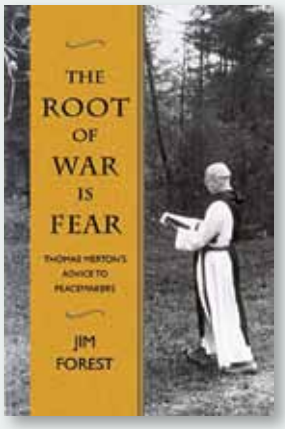
What I will take away from this collection, however, are Robinson's glorious descriptions of the mysteries of the cosmos and her delight in the "encounter of a unique soul with a forgiving God". This is a book for those who want to ponder deeply the nature of divine mystery, but beware if you are a scientist, or a biblical scholar (or a Marxist academic). ■

The Root Of War Is Fear:
Thomas Merton's Advice to Peacemakers

By Jim Forest
Published by Orbis Books 2016
Reviewed by Eleanor Capper RSJ

The Cistercian monk, Thomas Merton 1915-1968, a man of prayer and inspiration for many, was also a man of dialogue, promoting peace between peoples and religions. He addressed the burning social issues of his day, particularly the threat of nuclear war, racial injustice and the war in Vietnam, which put him out of the mainstream of Catholic opinion of the time.

The author, Jim Forest, came to know and engage with Thomas Merton in the 1960s, through Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Community, and then through the emerging Catholic Peace Movement. Using correspondence and infrequent meetings, Forest traces Merton's spiritual struggle as an advocate of peace, disarmament and nonviolence. Merton never felt at home with arguments trying to establish the ethical limits of violence. He preferred the Gospel centred on love of God and neighbour, with "neighbour" meaning whoever is standing in front of you — friend or foe.



I found this book compelling in the light of what is happening today. Yesterday's "cold war" has evolved into today's "war on terrorism". What Merton wrote half a century ago remains timely. How can we be better peacemakers in today's world? The book traces the evolving movement for peace during Merton's lifetime and demonstrates the deep spiritual roots that culminate in a decision against using war as a way of settling international disputes.

Pope Francis, speaking before both Houses of Congress in Washington DC in September 2015, described Merton as one of four Americans he especially admired. And the Church is to re-examine the concept of a "just war" — and move away from it. As Pope Francis said: "You don't stop an aggressor by being an aggressor. You don't stop a conflict by inciting another conflict. You don't stop a war by starting another war."

I recommend this book for those appalled by the violence in our world today. It impels us to believe in the power of love. As Merton reiterates: "We must recognise that our being itself is grounded on love: that is to say that we come into being because we are loved and because we are meant to love others."

Forest shows Merton as a peace-making monk challenging the rule of fear, a door-opener and guide to a more contemplative spirituality, one that emphasises that fear need not rule our lives. ■

Captain Fantastic

Directed by Matt Ross
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

Whatever else Captain Fantastic may be, it's a film about the clash of ideologies and lifestyles in the 21st century, and a stimulating one at that, as the animated discussion I had afterwards with fellow theatre-goers demonstrated. Whether it entirely works in cinematic terms is also a matter for debate.

The first half of the film is very lively and introduces us to a most unusual family — father Ben (played by Viggo Mortensen) and his six children live in a remote forest in the Pacific Northwest, where they pursue a spartan but high-thinking lifestyle. Determined that they won't be exposed to the decadent, consumerist values of urban America, Ben subjects his brood to a home-schooling regime that includes martial arts and mountain climbing as well as quantum mechanics and highbrow novels such as Middlemarch and The Brothers Karamazov. They are like the von Trapp family on steroids.

Despite Ben's commitment to his children's education, his attitudes can verge on the ludicrous (in one scene, following a food raid on a supermarket, the family celebrate Noam Chomsky's birthday) and some of the children begin to resent his uncompromising anti-capitalist zeal. While oldest son Bodevan has flourished intellectually under his father's tutelage, he conceals the bundle of acceptance letters he has received from Ivy League universities. Shielded from any involvement with the opposite sex, his fumbling reactions to the romantic attentions of a girl in a trailer park where the family are camping, make delightfully painful comedy.

The second half of the film is a road movie, dominated by the family's mission to recover the body of their deceased and much-loved mother, Leslie, and give her the Buddhist-style cremation she stipulated in her will. To do this they must venture into the heartland of the Beast — the Big City — and rescue her from the clutches of her wealthy, conventional Catholic parents.

Things go predictably wrong, and various encounters and adventures are had along the way. Although there are plenty of laughs, the issues at stake are too serious for the film to be labelled as a comedy. In some ways, Captain Fantastic is a parable of America's besetting culture wars, albeit taken to extremes. Whether or not the ending supplies a satisfactory resolution of the issues canvassed in the film is up to the audience to decide. Recommended, although with reservations. ■

CROSSCURRENTS

Jim Elliston

Banksy graffiti in Bethlehem.

Israeli Fascism?

Israel can rightly claim to be the only democracy in the Middle East. Why then, are there suggestions that the army should mount a coup to save the country from ruin? In the *National Catholic Reporter* in May Drew Christiansen and Ra'afat Aldajani outlined Israel's serious situation.

In 1968, after Israel's 1967 illegal military occupation of the Palestinian Territories, Professor Yeshayahu Leibowitz of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem warned of an existential threat to Israel from the occupation, namely the corrupting of both Israelis and the Palestinians, undermining the very foundation of the Israeli state. The 50th anniversary of the occupation will be in 2017.

On Holocaust Memorial Day this year in Israel, the army's Deputy Chief of Staff, Major-General Yair Golan, said that the country was beginning to resemble Germany's political scene of the 1930s with the emergence of Hitler's Nazi party "and finding signs of them here among us today in 2016."

Prime Minister Netanyahu has gone into coalition with an extremist party, raising international concern regarding increasing unpredictability.

This was followed by the resignation on May 20 of Defense Minister, General Moshe Ya'alon due to his "strong disagreement on moral and professional issues with the prime minister, a number of ministers, and several MKs (members of the Israeli parliament)."

Burkin' Mad

There is a common human tendency to expect others to conform to our idea of correctness. In August we were confronted with the ridiculous spectacle of small, seaside-town French bureaucrats ordering women to remove parts of their clothing — their burkinis — in the name of public order.

In this case an appeal was made to a law, the original intention of which no longer exists, a hang-over from the 18th century French Revolution's denying any public place for religion.

The extreme reaction against the wearing of the burkini has no logical connection with the fear of religious influence on society. Rather it is an expression of intolerance — anti-Muslim.

The rise of Hitler's Nazism was assisted by a widespread desire for social order, inflamed by anti-Jewish sentiment. The support currently garnered by Donald Trump, who appeals to multiple prejudices, results from resentment at severe social disparities caused by the unwillingness of both USA major parties to face current realities.

Israeli Peace-Maker

"If your dreams exceed the number of your achievements, you're young," said Shimon Peres, 93, in July this year. "Peace is not perfect," he quipped. "It's perfect when you compare it to war . . . If I have saved the life of one child, that would be the greatest thing."

Following the death in September of the former Nobel Peace Prize joint winner, who came to appreciate some Palestinian points of view, Pope Francis wrote: "I was deeply saddened to learn of the death of His Excellency Shimon Peres and I wish to convey to you and to all the people of Israel my heartfelt condolences ... As the State of Israel mourns Mr Peres, I hope that his memory and many years of service will inspire us all to work with ever greater urgency for peace and reconciliation between peoples. In this way, his legacy will truly be honoured and the common good for which he so diligently laboured will find new expressions, as humanity strives to advance on the path towards enduring peace." ■

TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

Tui Motu – InterIslands is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge, and contribute to its discussion of spiritual, social and ecological issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-church and inter-faith dialogue is welcomed.

The name *Tui Motu* was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.

ISSM 1174-8931
Issue number 210

Address:
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We welcome letters of comment, discussion, response, affirmation or argument of up to 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters, while keeping the meaning.

We do not publish anonymous letters except in exceptional circumstances.

ARTIST'S RESPONSE

The magazine (*TM* Oct 2016) arrived and I thank you for sending it. It looks wonderful. I am honoured to be on the cover.

Steve Cavallo, New Jersey, USA.

QUAKERS AND ABOLITION

Thank you for the excellent issue 209, October 2016. We all need to wake up to the many instances of slavery we unwittingly participate in every day. There was one part of Michael Hill's piece on the slave trade which struck a discord. "Even the Quakers were for a time supporters of the trade: they needed the sugar to make their chocolate". I found this comment disrespectful to the Quakers as they were to the forefront of opposing the trade. In America the Quakers were for a time divided over it because of sugar trade requirements, but it was short-lived. In Britain Quakers were a majority in the organisation set up to abolish the slave trade. The Quaker influence in abolishing the slave trade needed to be acknowleged, rather than brushed off as supporting it "for a time". I do not think that many people know of the social and environmental contribution Quakers make to their local and national communities. They do things quietly without fanfare. I apologise to my Quaker friends and thank them for their hospitality both at the meeting house and in their home.

Jenny Wilson, Masterton.

WAR BABIES

The book review, *Mothers' Darlings of the South Pacific* (*TM* Oct, 2016) brought back memories of an American soldier my husband and I met nearly 40 years ago, who had fought in Vietnam. The same story happened there. In every war there have been babies born whose father they will never know. There are babies born who think they know their father because if a woman got raped and then found herself pregnant, she would never tell her husband. It's never a man's fault. It's always the women's fault and that attitude still goes on today in half the world.

Susan Lawrence, Auckland. (Abridged).

TRADE AID NZ CHOCOLATE IS SLAVERY FREE

Alice Murray rightly points out that the chocolate industry is one of many employing slave labour and sometimes child labour. I should like to remind *Tui Motu* readers that Trade Aid New Zealand is the world's first fair trade organisation to manufacture 100 per cent fair trade chocolate. Cocoa bought at a fair price is imported from a group of farmers in the Caribbean and made into chocolate at the Trade Aid factory in Christchurch. The sugar used is also a fair trade product. You can eat chocolate and support the Trade Aid movement which enables small family farmers and producers around the world to improve their lives by trade. Neither child labour nor slave labour is used by farmers selling products to Trade Aid. So, as Alice says, let's be willing to pay that little extra for a treat we can eat with a clear conscience. For information and the location of Trade Aid shops and stockists: www.tradeaid.org.nz

Margaret Shanly, Whangarei.

ISSUE MAKES AN IMPACT

What a great edition you have produced with the latest issue on slavery (*TM* Oct 2016) Terrific. Well done!

Jim Consedine, Christchurch.

MESSAGES FROM READERS

I wish to add my congratulations to the many who have expressed their delight in the recent acknowledgements of the excellence of your magazine *Tui Motu*. You can be justifiably proud of this publication. We always enjoy its interesting and forward-thinking articles, its glossy and colourful presentation.

Therese Wilson, Brisbane – and many other readers.

Looking OUT and IN

"Now I am confident to go out and walk in our community without anyone else."

"My dream is that I can learn enough skills to work in a beauty parlour."

"I have discussed with my parents that as I am earning some money as a domestic maid, then please will they let my younger sister complete studies until 12th class."

"I really want to go back to school and get my 10th class certificate."

A couple of days ago I was sitting with others in our team working in community mental health, meeting some of the young women who have recently participated in our four month girls' resilience programme. These young women had all been prematurely pulled out of school by their families for a range of reasons.

Nearly all of them wish they could have completed their schooling. Although I am really glad that these young women are hopeful and feel more confident and skilled than they were before our *Nae Disha* (New Pathways) programme, I came away feeling sad and overwhelmed. The reality ahead for the huge majority of young people in this land is really quite grim. Our efforts feel like trying to empty the ocean, a teaspoonful at a time.

More than half of Indians are under 25 years old. (The last time this statistic was true for New Zealand was in 1901.) I notice the young age of the population everywhere I go. On the metro in Delhi last week I looked around at the 120 or so people sharing the carriage with me and saw only young faces. In my mid-forties, I was likely the oldest person present.

Data reflecting the educational attainment reached by the majority of young people lights a fire in my belly. Only 56 per cent of young people complete ten years of schooling and in the poorest 20 per cent of the population, fewer than 13 per cent of girls complete 10th class. In fact, the

average years of school completed for children from the poorest 20 per cent of the population in 2005 according to Harsh Mander, was just 2.9 years.

While perhaps a few have the opportunity for tertiary education and can find employment opportunities in India's much vaunted information technology sector, the majority of young people who gain any employment wind up in monotonous low-paid jobs, in the informal sector with no job security.

"I can't decide whether to study journalism, or anthropology, or YA (young adult) literature or media studies next year at university. It's all too interesting."

"On our school hike in the Himalayas next week we're not allowed any devices except e-readers. I've downloaded five books from the Auckland library already."

My own teenagers get amazing opportunities for learning and personal growth. Their futures and horizons are bright and completely different from the majority of our compatriots in India. We live cheek by jowl with people with hugely different horizons and daily reality. Urmila and Prema, our two closest neighbours, don't have one book in their homes. Neither of them can read a newspaper.

What do I do with these stark and sober inequalities? What do any of us do? What basis do the young women in *Purani basti* (Old slum) have to hope for a positive future? How do I carry enough hope to write funding applications for our work in youth resilience when I look at the numerous obstacles young people face for participation, employment and education? A scriptural verse shared by someone I met today straightens my backbone. From the book of Micah we are reminded:

"What does the Lord God require of you, but to do justice, love generously and walk humbly with your God."

I'll stop angsting and quietly keep going with what I have to do. Small teaspoonfuls at a time. ■

Kaaren Mathias lives in north India and works in community mental health in Uttarakhand state and for the NGO Emmanuel Hospital Association.