Tui Motu

InterIslands

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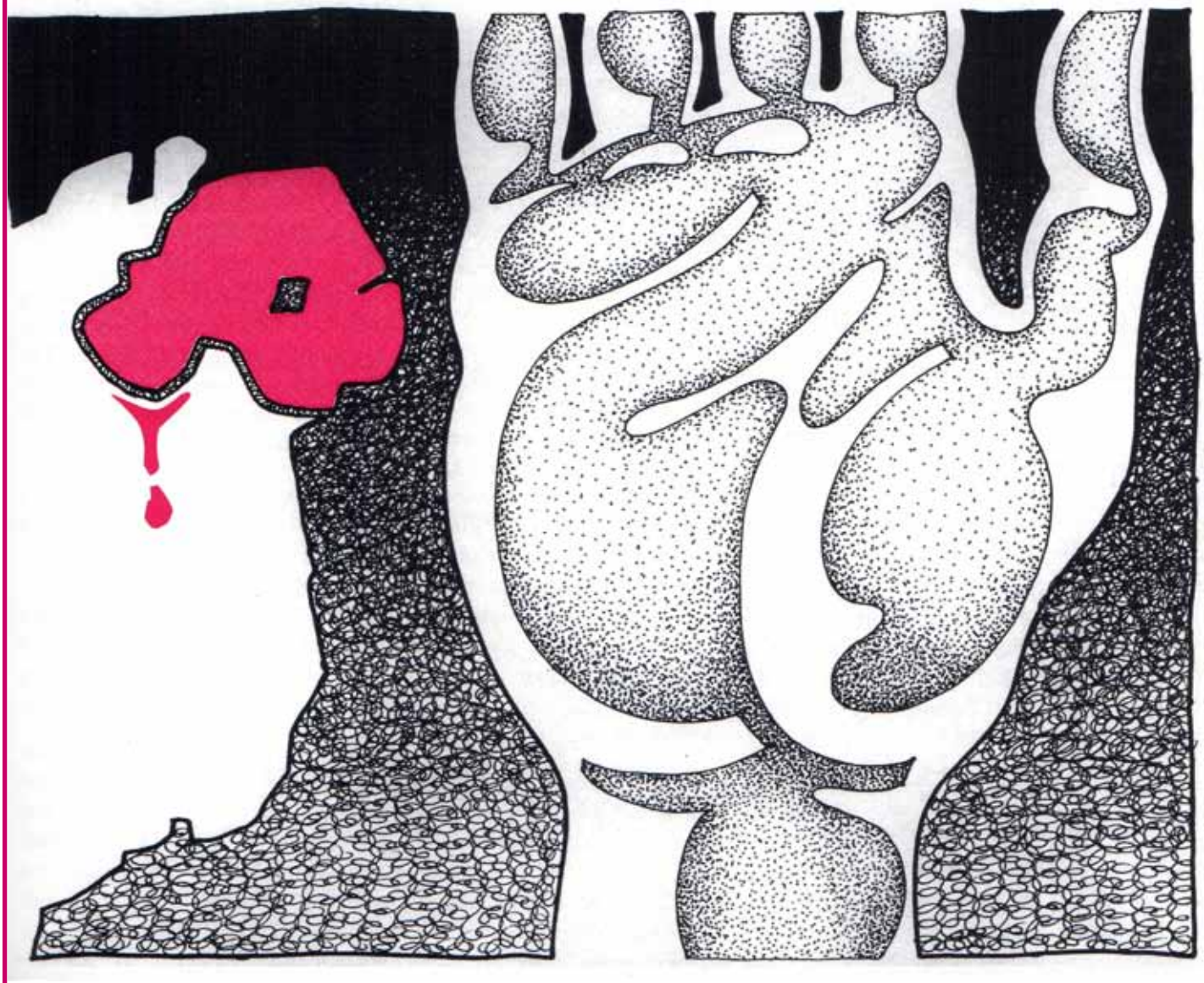

+ peace at last in Ireland
+ focus - three wise men
+ when does art become sacrilege?

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The "Red Hand" of Ulster is the traditional Unionist symbol of Northern Ireland. It originates from the rebellion against the English of "Red" Hugh O'Donnell in the 17th Century.

Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd
P O Box 6404, Dunedin North
Phone: 03 477 1449

Editor: Michael Hill, IC
Assistant Editor: Frances Skelton
Illustrator: Don Moorhead

Directors:
Tom Cloher
Annie Gray
Elizabeth Mackie
Judith McGinley
Paul Rankin
Patricia Stevenson

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No single event has made this Easter so much a time to rejoice as the peace accord in Northern Ireland. Looked at from afar it is all too easy for us to miss the deeper meaning behind this most blessed event. We may see it as another inevitable stage in the letting go of Ireland by Britain, another sunset to the end of Empire. That is certainly one aspect. More profound, however, is the ending of civil conflict. Civil war means brothers at one another's throats, neighbours perhaps for generations nursing the grievance of past wrongs and vowing that eventually those wrongs will be repaid in blood. Perhaps the greatest tragedy has been that these terrible animosities were between two avowedly Christian communities.

If the Stormont agreement is to succeed it will happen because the common people, too long victims of terrorism and oppression, are now so deeply committed to peace that they are determined to make it happen. In an interview with *Tui Motu* last September Lady Eames, wife of the Church of Ireland Primate, said the people of Ireland had had their fill of violence and yearned for a settlement which would preserve what was sacred to their traditions. She acknowledged that religion had been an ingredient in the conflict — but insisted it must be part of the solution.

Another cause of conflict has been social division. Northern Catholics were poor and in a minority: often they were denied access to jobs and were discriminated against politically. Economic imbalance fortified by religious difference makes a fruitful recipe for conflict and bigotry.

But now, because of the Common Market, the Republic has become prosperous. It is the North that looks to be the poor relation. Dublin has cleaned the grime of centuries off its gracious architecture and has become one of the cultural capitals of Europe: the place where the young love to gather to sing and dance and talk into the night. The Celtic revival has given a spiritual boost to the Irish religious tradition which goes back long before the divisions of the Reformation. There are real prospects for a glorious future for the Emerald Isle and its people: whether it is to be a united future will be for the ordinary people to determine in the course of time.

There a few lessons to be learnt from this whole process:

• that agreement becomes possible when people cease hurling insults and slogans at each other and start to **communicate**. The British have had to climb down off their high horse, admit their mistakes and treat with the Irish Government on equal terms. The Irish on their part have had to renounce their claims to sovereignty over the North. The rival factions in the North have been dragged kicking and screaming to the negotiating table — and made to listen to each other instead of to their lunatic fringes. The Americans have proved to be the 'honest broker': an essential mediating role in such a deep-rooted conflict.

• that the solution to political, social or religious difference is rarely to be found in partition which simply sets divisions in concrete, but by setting up a just, multicultural society which honours the rights of minority groups. Christians should be to the fore in guaranteeing that those minorities are being cared for.

• that there can be no coming together unless major causes of discrimination and injustice are addressed first. Where there are major differences in economic opportunity between peoples, there is little hope of harmony. Regional development in Europe, targeting economic aid to the most depressed areas, has been a hidden bit vital ingredient in the peace process. Here in New Zealand 'Regional development' is a concept scarcely understood by our market-obsessed political leaders.

Indeed there are many lessons to be gleaned for our own increasingly divided land from what has happened in Ireland this Easter.

M.H.

A Society crying for the Spirit of Mercy

It seems a pity that something that *sounds* so good should be so profoundly disquieting. You'd think that a booklet with the title *Towards a Code of Social and Family Responsibility* would be received with unreserved gratitude – as indeed it should, if only there were not so many obvious pointers to what its true agenda might really be. Even when you read it with an open mind, accepting it for what it claims to be, with no attempt to analyse its content, you can scarcely avoid the feeling that something quite essential to the common good is missing. What is it that is lacking in this carefully crafted document? It is surely that fundamental human quality that we call mercy – mercy as defined in the original Hebrew understanding of that beautiful word, where it is given four distinct strands of meaning:

- *leaning over and reaching out to someone*
- *suffering with and sparing, out of pity*
- *providing comfort like a mothe*r
- *relieving someone, stopping their groans by helping them to breathe*

Sadly, much of what is implied in the Social Responsibility booklet is completely at odds with this understanding of mercy. There is no leaning over and reaching out to those people who are in the greatest need; there is no sparing, out of pity; no comfort; no help to breathe in the stifling environment of poverty that chokes their lives. There is nothing but reproach, as though what the poor are suffering were their own fault. It is, in fact, a classic example of that well-tried political stratagem for deflecting attention from the shortcomings of government policy. You simply blame the victim. Blame the poor for their poverty. It is almost too easy to do. Your targets are people who are too demoralised and too powerless to make a stand on their own behalf and too caught up in the struggle to survive to recognise that they are being used as political scapegoats. The real tragedy happens when the rest of us are seduced into taking up the cry against them.

This government document takes up the constantly repeated contention that we have an enormous welfare dependency problem in this country. The implication is that by cutting benefits, people will become more responsible for their own lives and solve their social problems with minimum help from government. The whole argument is an unqualified fallacy and it should be challenged at every turn. Who is there who does not read every day of factory closures somewhere in New Zealand, be it car assembly plants or clothing firms or freezing works, each leaving a trail of hundreds of lost jobs? Or perhaps, it's just small firms, each with a few employees, which can no longer carry on? Who could dare to say when they hear these things that the workers themselves have created this problem? Who could dare to suggest that they should not go on a benefit to sustain their families? Who could seriously deny that the fault lies, not with the workers but with the economy? Bill Clinton got it right, "It's the economy, stupid!"

But you will look in vain in the social responsibility questionnaire for space to make any adequate comment on the state of the economy. The document chooses to disregard the economy and concentrate instead on the so-called dependency of working people. Poverty, of course, is not even mentioned. We are being asked to accept that our social problems of unemployment, poor health and hopelessness are not the fault of the economy, but rather the fault of individuals and families who do not take proper responsibility for their lives.

When we see the demoralising effects of all these things on people who, through no fault of their own, have to live on a benefit, we are seeing all over again the cruelty of the playground, where the powerful victimise the weak. Most of all, we see a society crying out for a spirit of mercy; the mercy of the Hebrews, the mercy of Jesus, the mercy of God. ■

Pauline O'Regan

letters

Be fair to Christian martyrs!

McAfee Brown's "sage" comment quoted in your March issue is an insult to the many Christians who also suffered and died in the Holocaust. Most of them were arrested for their stands, not their ethnicity. Does Terry Wall *(Anti Semitism and the Christian Story)* claim that Christ was not with fine men like Maximilian Kolbe and Dietrich Bonhoeffer who gave their lives for others and for their principles? My late husband was a German political prisoner who suffered unspeakably and never compromised or lost his faith. He was a Christian and the grandson of an Ashkenazim Jew, equally proud of both his inherited traditions.

Attempting to endlessly apportion blame for historical events, personal or societal, is fruitless. For the future to be better we must learn from the past, and move on. It is only in "letting go" that we are healed. Christ belongs without exception to the whole human race. He showed mercy to all on the cross, even to those who had hurt him most.

Marina Middelplaats, Wellington

Virgin in the Condom

The notorious *Te Papa* exhibit brings up questions about the nature of art and also definitions of freedom versus license. But I think the main question is: was insult intended? Considering all the evidence, I am sure that it was, just as I am sure that the noisy demonstrations would have given the artist some satisfaction.

I remember words from Mahatma Ghandi: "When I see a man doing good, I seek to be like that man. When I see a man doing evil, I look to my own heart". I think that this is a good time for us all to reflect on the amount of respect we afford the sacred images of other religions.

Joy Cowley, Picton

A dissenting voice

I have read the March issue of *Tui Motu*. It is clear that you do not accept the teaching authority of the Church or its hierarchical structure. In these circumstances if you were honest with yourself you would do the right thing and resign from the priesthood.

The recent instruction regarding extraordinary ministers is not saying anything new–refer *Inaestimabile Donum*10 which has been in existence since 1980. You will have noted that the instruction is binding on all Catholics. You have no right or authority to peddle your dissent round the country via *Tui Motu.*

E Pickering, Raumati Beach

The Assembly is ailing

When I read Peter Murnane's article on the ailing Assembly in the March issue, I almost cried with relief that these things are being brought into 'the public cognitive arena'. It is so – I have seen it for myself. The image of the Assembly as a terminally ill body no longer capable of housing the Spirit of Jesus rings so true, as do the situations he identifies, where not only is the Spirit not housed, it is actively quashed!

As an institution which has claimed to speak God's mind, truth and will, the Assembly has a lot to learn – and humility must be a priority. God is not confined – even to Christianity. I love Edwina Gately's poem which begins:

God ran away when we imprisoned her
and put her in a box named Church

Teaching people to recognise God in all that is life-giving is, I believe, the best service that can be rendered both to them, and to the God who is like our best friend, only more so!

Trish McBride, Wellington

Promoter's Corner

Circulation describes the economic health of a magazine as well as it does our physical health. Poor circulation is no use to either. To be fair to *Tui Motu* though, it's a question of limited, not poor circulation. It's just not sufficiently 'out there' yet, however much it needs to be.

The challenge is typical of a new venture. It needs to be known and supported, but it has limited resources to fund advertising and publicity. So like many another worthwhile enterprise we volunteer to do what we can't pay for.

In my case this has taken the form of a two-minute introduction to *Tui Motu* before the last blessing at Sunday Masses ending with an invitation to anyone present to leave a name and address on the clipboards provided; a complimentary copy is subsequently sent to those who do, together with subscription details and a reply-paid envelope. In their home and at their leisure they decide whether to subscribe.

At two large city parishes in Auckland 103 and 173 persons recently left names and addresses in response to this approach. It is clearly an acceptable one but it obviously needs to happen elsewhere and preferably sooner, not later. Would you be prepared to do this?

Too difficult? Not really: every parish priest thus far (nine parishes) has willingly co-operated. I have available a copy of the introductory paragraphs that appear to go across quite well. The only other job is to send the lists on to the *Tui Motu* office. This approach does not lay any extra jobs on parish administration; it is courteous, leaving listeners free to list their names or not, and eventually to subscribe or not; it works.

Please contact me if you feel that you can join our promotion team (currently numbering three!). It's probably the best way we have of spreading the good news we believe *Tui Motu* to be.

Tom Cloher (Director, Promotions)
26 Hopkins Crescent, Kohimarama, Auckland 1005

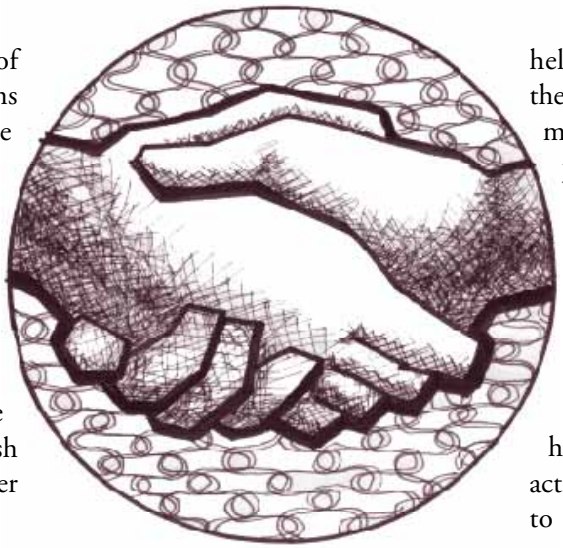
A Wondrous Achievement

Of all days in the year, Good Friday was perhaps the most appropriate for the Peace Process in Northern Ireland to inch its way to its conclusions and to agreement.

Thirty years of agony, 21 months of tedious and painstaking negotiations along with many false dawns, gave way that day to real hope that Ulster might at last escape history's chains. Described by John Hume, leader of the SDLP, as "a very Good Friday" and by Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, as "a day we should treasure", Good Friday 1998 may, in time, resonate in the collective memory of future generations of Irish people just as the year 1798 or Easter 1916 has done for us in our time.

On 10 April this year, at the traditional time of three in the afternoon, people throughout the country had celebrated the Lord's Passion in chapels, churches and cathedrals. Shortly after 5pm they listened on radio and television to Senator George Mitchell's glad words, "I'm pleased to announce that the two governments and the political parties of Northern Ireland have reached agreement". Many tears of relief greeted this news. It seemed incredible that Ireland could, at last, know true Easter peace and joy. Through a final balancing of concessions and with both traditions letting go of old prejudices and animosities, the moment came when once and perhaps the most important time ever, Ulster said Yes. In formal terms, the new accord opened with a declaration of Support, stating, "We, the participants in the multi-party negotiations, believe that the agreement we have negotiated offers a truly historic opportunity for a new beginning".

Politicians in the South saluted the vision and tenacity of the parties, and the infinite patience of the talks' chairman, George Mitchell. In the Republic's press praise was expressed too for the officials and advisers who laboured with untiring energy and great imagination. Nor



was the contribution of ordinary people overlooked. Individually and in combination, they consistently supported the process, urging those in authority to build peace.

The Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Desmond Connell, speaking at Easter morning Mass, said of the negotiators: "They have confronted with courage the historical accumulation of grievance, misunderstanding, profound and conflicting personal aspirations and loyalties and the fear of weakness in upholding precious tradition." He prayed that their hearts might remain open to one another in generosity, that they might forgive and that they might accept sacrifice for the sake of the peace which people desire. Dr Walton Empey, the Church of Ireland Archbishop of Dublin, thanked God that the politicians from all the many strands of politics both in Ireland and Britain, had their strenuous efforts crowned with success. "So often much cynicism about our politicians is expressed by not a few citizens in our society," he said, "but I hope that even they will recognise the courage, skill and determination exercised by them on this occasion."

While the results of the opinion poll held in the South and in Britain in the immediate aftermath of the Agreement offered high hopes of a lasting peace, euphoria alone will not carry through assent. Sixty one percent in the republic and 73 percent of Northerners will vote Yes, according to the *Irish Times/Guardian* poll published 16 April. The process of endorsement cannot be taken for granted. Dissident fringe groups have already expressed, in word and action, their opposition to change and to the possibility of reconciling two exclusive concepts, the United kingdom and the United Ireland. They will need to be engaged through persuasive political dialogue to respect diversity and to yield on the absolutism of their positions.

What has been achieved is a beginning. Now the real work is getting under way. With it are interwoven the hopes and dreams and prayers of all who have lived for too long with ghosts of the long-distant past and of yesterday. ■

Cait Mulligan CHF

Sanctions, Bombs and People

In February Timothy Radcliffe, Master General of the Dominicans, found himself on visitation to Iraq with the threat of American bombing hanging over the country. He calls it a 'bitter-sweet visit'.

The visit to the brethren and sisters in Iraq had been planned long before the crisis. It was providential that it was now that I and my regional assistant Fr Daniel Cadrin could pass a week with them, as they waited for the bombers to arrive. The only way to enter Iraq during the embargo is a 15-hour drive from Amman to Baghdad across the desert. It is like entering a high security prison, and we wondered, as most people going to prison do, when and if we would get out again.

It took four hours to cross the frontier, even with the help of a young Iraqi Dominican who was returning home after finishing his studies in France, and the lavish distribution of cans of Pepsi Cola, which appears to be the local currency. Then as throughout the trip I was astonished by the exquisite courtesy of everyone I met. Never once was I reproached for being British, although our aircraft carrier was waiting in the Gulf to add its bombs to those of the Americans. What would it have been like for an Iraqi coming to Britain if there had been one of their aircraft carriers waiting in the English Channel?

When we arrived in Baghdad there were few signs of defensive preparation. The Iraqis discovered during the Gulf War that there is little that one can do against American bombs. The city waited, vulnerable and apparently unprotected. Even more surprising was to find the brethren building a new priory, to accommodate the postulants for the Order. It was a sign of hope to see the workmen completing a building that might easily be destroyed within a week. The young architect explained that the building was intentionally a symbol of what the people were suffering. It looked as if it were cracked open, fractured, and yet strong. He explained that it represented a people who are crucified and yet hope for healing.

Before we arrived in Iraq I had shared in the general obsession with news of the latest developments. In Istanbul we had listened to every bulletin of the BBC World Service, wondering when the denouement would come. Yet we found the people we met in Iraq were less concerned about this. Long years of suffering, the war with Iran, the Gulf War, the seven long years of the embargo, had pushed them to deeper levels.

A Dominican Sister told us: "We are ground down, exhausted, by years of death. Since the Gulf war, 600,000 children have died of malnutrition and a lack of medicine. We live with death." Somehow these years of deprivation and isolation have eroded such minor questions as to whether one might die next week because of a bomb from the air, or in 10 years' time from another cause. The real question was whether after death there is life, and whether there is a God who hears us. It was as if the embargo had sometimes seemed to shut out even God. The nuncio, Mgr Giuseppe Lazzarotto, told me that when he asks for support for projects from international aid agencies, he is refused unless it is for food or medicine. But, as our Sisters told us: "We are not animals such that it would be enough to have a full stomach. What this people hunger for more than anything else is a world of hope."

Every Monday more than 1,000 young people come to the theology classes offered by the Dominican brethren in Baghdad. Almost as many come to the priory at Mosul, in northern Iraq. These are Christians of every denomination, drawn to study the Scriptures, to argue about Christology and the doctrine of the Trinity. Meanwhile the world was waiting for the bombs to fall.

In the north of the country we found a flourishing movement of Dominican laity, in the villages populated by Chaldean and Syrian Christians. They gather in each other's homes every week to study the word of God. Faced with life or death they can no longer be satisfied with superficial answers. What does God have to say to us, they ask?

All over the country we found that Christian communities were weakened by emigration, especially to the United States, both paradise and enemy. Yet we met one young man who, having got as far as Morocco, decided to come back. His village is just a few miles from Nineveh. He told us that he was like Jonah. Though he tried to flee, he knew he must return and share with his people their fate and his hope in Christ.

One of the faces I will always remember is that of Sr Olga, young and strong. She is an Assyrian Christian. They are usually called "Nestorians" by the Catholics, though this is a name that they dislike. She felt called to religious life, although there have been no communities of religious in her Church for centuries. Because she trusted that we would not try to "capture" her for the Catholics, she asked one of the brethren to help her in this new venture. When she made her vows to her bishop, this brother preached, the first Catholic priest to do so in an Assyrian church after centuries of hostility. She and her little group of novices visit the mental hospitals and prisons of Baghdad as a sign of the God who has not forgotten.

We feasted with our Brothers. They had managed to find a few bottles of wine. "All this must be drunk before you leave", said Fr Yussuf. We knew that they had spent more than they could afford, and that when the French provincial came next month there would be nothing left for him. In Mosul, we visited the house of formation of the Dominican Sisters, filled with young postulants and novices. Since it was hard to come by the ingredients to make a cake, they performed a dance in which each one represented some element of the cake that they would have liked to make, the cream, the almonds, the wheat that they did not have. Then they put on the traditional clothes of their villages and we danced and sang until we were exhausted.

It is not possible here to discuss their perception of the political situation. I can only say they shared the perplexity which I have found throughout the Arab world, that in the name of civilisation we would even contemplate so barbarous an act as to attack this people. How could we, in the name of peace, consider launching a war that would probably bring devastation to the region for years? It seemed as if with the fall of Communism we had lost our traditional enemy and needed another. Iraq was chosen. As in an old-fashioned Western movie, the hero must find the enemy and kill him, again and again.

When we drove back across the desert to Amman, I thought of the words of Isaiah to the exiles in Babylon: "In the wilderness prepare a way of the lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God." We followed much the same route that those exiles took when they went home, and it was certainly straight and flat. But I did not feel as if I was going home. I felt sad and almost guilty to leave these people, Christian and Muslim, to their fate.

Now it seems they have been spared attack, at least for a while. The world breathes a sigh of relief. We can think about something else now. But for the Iraqi people the old and long struggle continues, to survive under the embargo, to hope for a future. ■

Courtesy of the London Tablet

Stop the Sanctions now !

"The US/UN sanctions against Iraq have killed over a million and a half people since their imposition", says Ramsay Clark, former US Attorney General who leads a delegation this month to bring badly needed medical supplies to Iraq, in direct defiance of sanctions. "It's the clearest form of genocide.. it is incumbent on us to challenge the sanctions and bring medicine to the people of Iraq. The only way to stop the human tragedy is to completely lift the sanctions."

Nidhal Mohammed, an Iraqi woman engineer working in Auckland, describes the situation in her country:

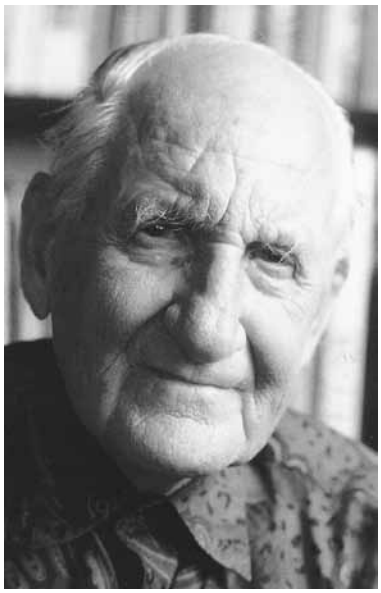
"Problems in Iraq started as shortage of food and medicine and gradually increased to become shortage of all essential life requirements. Now food and medicine are scarce and very expensive. Many Iraqi children born since the Gulf War have never tasted many kinds of fruit.

"Hospitals make do with what is available.. operations are carried out without anaesthesia. Maintenance of all public services such as telephone cables, water and sewage lines and their attached equipment, public transport, streets etc have all been brought to a halt. Unemployment has increased up to 80 percent, and even for those who are employed a month's wage is not enough to buy a kilo of wheat. Diseases, suicides, madness, depression, crime and all other social diseases have increased to a frightening degree. Some Iraqis have already given up. A man has killed his family, 3 children, wife and himself because he does not want them to suffer any more.

"All sanctions prove is that it is a savage way to kill civilians. It is an illegal action against human rights and should be stopped."

Contributions to help buy medicines for Iraq to Joyce Brown, Pax Christi
PO Box 68 419 Newton Auckland

Three Wise Men



Rev Selwyn Dawson

Canon Paul Oestreicher

Fr Tom Fahey

Last month Tui Motu spoke to three people who between them have spent 150 years in the service of Christ – a Catholic priest, a Methodist minister and one-time Moderator, and an Anglican Canon. Each of them looks at the Christian vocation with a critical eye; each radiates an Easter hope

Sixty years ordained — and Fr Tom Fahey is still a very active part of the Dunedin diocese, looking after more than just penguins in the little communities of Macandrew Bay and Broad Bay on the Otago peninsular. Looking back over 60 years of service as a priest he sees much to be thankful for, a world and a church that has changed beyond recognition — but he also sees many challenges for the priesthood in tomorrow's church.

"At Holy Cross before the war we were trained by rote learning. There was no library. We were cut off from communication with the outside world, so the clergy became an enclosed system. The students themselves sorted out one another's vocations: there was a lot of trust.

"Every year there used to be a large gathering at the College for the Feast of Christ the King: family, friends, local people. It was a tradition. One year however one of the Profs observed a student having his photograph taken with some girls. That was the last time the feast was celebrated! A lecture was given to the students that night and we were told: 'Think what she will be in the grave – worms! Women are a temptation!'"

The church's attitude to women in those days was often lamentable. Fr Tom recalled that at his own ordination his father was invited to have dinner with the bishop, while his mother had to go out into the town to find fish and chips. He remembered a priest saying to him once: "No woman will get into my sanctuary

without a broom in her hand". It was Vatican II which gave women a place in the Catholic church.

Tom always wanted to be a priest. An early mentor was Fr Scanlan, the much beloved pastor of his native Lawrence — a very kindly man and a great influence. In the years before the Vincentians came he had been a Professor at Holy Cross: he was zealous for the welfare of the students. "Liston had been the rector, but Liston's idea was that if you ate too well, you didn't study too well — the brain needed to be deprived of food. But Scanlan really looked after the students".

In 1938 Tom was ordained early and sent to complete his studies in Rome in the company of Fr Jack Pound (now in semi-retirement at St Mary's, Invercargill). Before then Tom had never been further from home than Oamaru. "In Rome I saw the universality of the Church".

One of his richest experiences was going to Brussels to study the Young Christian Workers at the training institute set up and run by Canon (later Cardinal) Joseph Cardijn. "Cardijn was the most revolutionary thinker in the Church this century," said Fr Tom. "He anticipated the base Christian Communities. He had no great master plan to redeem the youth of the world. His idea was to get small groups of young workers together and listen to them. Cardijn was an eloquent man with tremendous enthusiasm – a 'political animal'. His aim was to educate the workers. Not go in as a do-gooder to save them – but educate them to save themselves." Cardijn's famous catchphrase was 'See! Judge! Act!' Start with the situation as you see it (social inquiry); use the gospel as the standard on which to judge (gospel inquiry); and then decide on appropriate action. Fr Tom sees Cardijn's method as no less valid today than in the 1930s.

And what sort of church was Fr Tom ordained into?

In the New Zealand church of that time the priest had unquestioned authority. It was a church of sodalities: Holy Name, Children of Mary, Catholic Women's League. One of the aims was to bring about more frequent communion. The rule of the sodality was that communion was to be received by the members monthly. "Everyone went to confession beforehand. So one Saturday evening you would see all the men of the Holy Name Society going to confession. People would often make up sins — the 'laundry list'!"

As for preaching, the priests received a schedule of sermons once a year from the bishop. There was a three-year cycle: the Creed; the Sacraments and the Commandments. Everybody preached the same things. There was no challenge. Fr Tom sees only good in the way Scripture has been given a central place once again in the Catholic church's mission. But he fears that many priests still have a rigidity and want to go back to the way things were before Vatican II. "We haven't got rid of clericalism yet".

So how does he see the church of the future?

"The most significant thing to happen since Vatican II has been the decline in priestly vocations. Who am I to interpret the work of the Holy Spirit? What has happened since Vatican II is that the laity have taken notice — studying Scripture, catechetics; looking on the church with a different view. When I visited Maynooth (the main seminary in Ireland) a few years ago I saw 200 students preparing for the priesthood — and 500 lay students. It seemed to me there was a message there.

"We are faced with the situation that for every priest who dies, there is a parish without a priest. Is the church going to die — or are we going to find another way? There are two ways the clergy can look at it. They can say: the people are trying to get in behind the altar and push me out — or they can rejoice. The four years I spent at Tapanui (1990-94) were a wonderful revelation to me. The people were responsible for everything. I said to them: 'Before I came you have been a church community. I am asking you if I can join your church community while I am living here'. It was a turning point for them and for me. They told me later, 'No priest has ever spoken to us like that'.

"You have to give people some hope they will have the Eucharist — and that looks to be the major problem. But the early church didn't have a problem with supplying presiders. If the church was established they prayed and found a presider. So who laid hands on the person: the community — or the bishop?"

What about priestly celibacy?

"I believe celibacy is a gift. Thank God I had it. I can see the advantages of it, the freedom it gives me. I have never wanted to be married, but on the other hand I have never holidayed with my fellow priests. You become part of many families. I have had great support from women in my life, and they have had great support from me. I had a gift and I thank God for it. Impose it on a person who has not got that gift — and you're asking for trouble".

At 83 Fr Tom is still fit and active. His priesthood has brought him many friends and much satisfaction. But he still has a sharp eye on today's needs and demands. "It's clericalism that bothers me!", he cries. He looks back on his long life with serenity and with a characteristic twinkle in his eye. When he speaks of the church of the future his voice gains an extra energy: he is a person full of hope. ■

Fr Tom celebrating 60 years of priesthood with family and friends

A Man for All Seasons

"A voice still heard and heeded in the secular wilderness" — Annie Gray talks to the former President of the Methodist Church and of the National Council of Churches

Selwyn Dawson – pastor, preacher, writer, theologian, former head of both the New Zealand Methodist Church and the National Council of Churches – is, at 80 years old, a man who maintains an intellect many half his age would envy and an unerring sense of right and wrong. While he may no longer have a pulpit to preach from, his retirement sees him reaching a far wider audience than regular church-goers, offering a glimpse of God to an increasingly secular world through his insightful, beautifully honed, articles and "think" pieces in both the national and local media.

He has been referred to as "the conscience of Auckland", an accolade he dismisses as "much too big a claim", only noting that sometimes he raises his voice to put the other side. And the other side appears to be that of the individual whose role in society has been undermined by the growing dominance of market forces and the ideological right. Selwyn Dawson's friend and neighbour, the writer and broadcaster Gordon McLauchlan, says he can't speak highly enough of the man. "He is one of the most remarkable people I have met in life, a genuinely modest man and a genuinely decent man."

And this decency and clear thinking has not been silenced by age, illness or retirement. After his 40-odd years with inner city ministries around New Zealand Selwyn Dawson is still a voice being heard in the secular wilderness. He writes a regular column in his local community newspaper along with articles for the New Zealand *Herald, Metro* and *North and South* magazines. "At a time when you (can) fade out and lose your voice, I have had a wider audience. I am not a gifted person theologically but I have found I can write in such a way to communicate with non-church people. Sometimes the church talks to itself."

Selwyn Dawson's life within the Methodist church began in Japan as a chaplain with J Force. On his return he and his wife Enid (with whom he will celebrate his 50th wedding anniversary this year) went to Porirua where they set up a number of new churches. A stint on Auckland's North Shore and then a ten-year sojourn with the Central Methodist Church in Christchurch's Durham Street followed. The years here until 1972 saw him develop a strong friendship with Bishop Brian Ashby. Back in Auckland he joined the Pitt Street Methodist Church, another inner city ministry, and until his formal retirement in 1982 he was at the Glen Innes Anglican-Methodist Parish of St Mary's. The Dawsons remain in the area and still attend the church. They have four children and 10 grandchildren.

The time in Auckland also saw Selwyn elected for two terms (from 1974 to 1980) onto the Auckland City Council. While he is modest about his achievement as a councillor he says he tried hard not to betray his own personal beliefs and philosophies. "I steered clear of attempting to represent religion and ... while I think I was always regarded as a token liberal ... I think I kept them aware of the social function of the council." He recalls sitting alongside Cath Tizard whom he says taught him a great deal about the nature of politics.

So what of the future of Christianity in New Zealand? Institutionally he is not keen to make any predictions but says anyone would be foolish to write off the continuing influence and presence of Jesus. "Secularism, which in the Western world has secured such a hold, has such terrible deficiencies. It is not able to answer the deep, personal needs of human beings. In one form or another, religion will keep raising its head. People who imagine the secular condition of the Western world is the last word, do not know their history."

secularism cannot answer the deep personal needs of human beings...

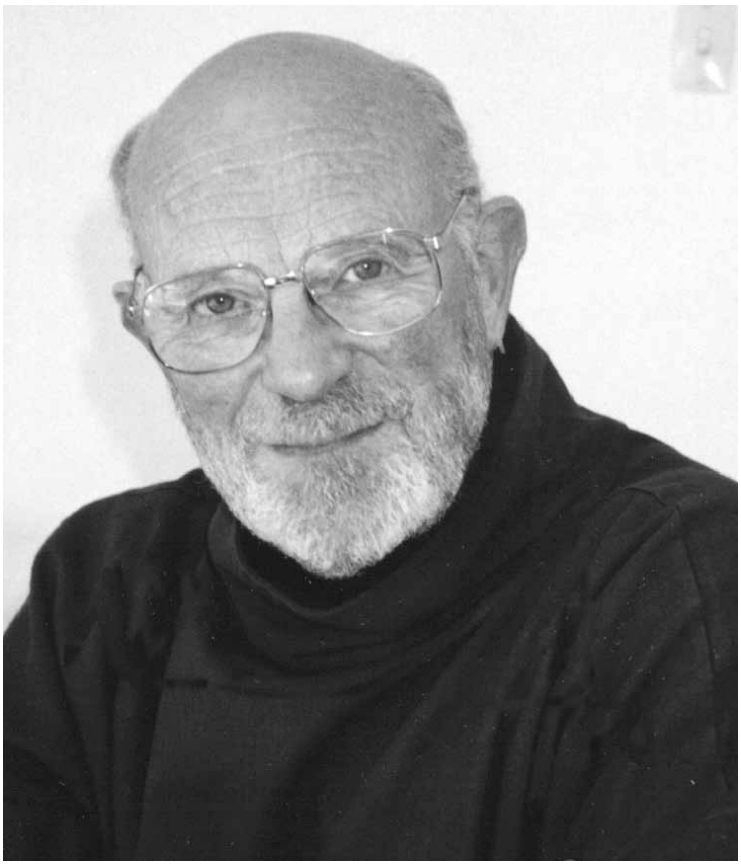
However, he says the institution of the church has got to change. Today's denominations were built up in times of what might be called Christian dominance, and now, when faith is exercised by people as of choice often against the popular tide, the structures will have to change to express the modern nature of the church. "The other thing is the church will never go back to rigid denominations before the ecumenical movement and the second Vatican Council.... there are movements of history that are movements of God." He says the Christian faith has to have structures but the structures have to be very flexible or else they become prisons. "If they refuse to be flexible the revival movements will shatter them."

He points to both the Protestant faiths and the Catholic Church noting the movements pushing for priestly celibacy and women as priests. "I honour the present Pope. He is a magnificent man, but he belongs to yesterday in some attitudes ... you can't keep the door shut against movements of the spirit permanently."

Selwyn Dawson sees any form of fundamentalism, whether in the church or political arena, as a danger pointing variously to the Moral Majority in the United States and politically to New Zealand's move toward the right and toward market dominance. While in the past we have seen the excessive dominance of state over individual or excessive individuality over the well-being of the state, any decent society does two things. As well as preserving the welfare and the freedom of every individual it also preserves a wholesome society "without which no satisfactory individual life can be lived". He points to the swings in the pendulum which, unless heeded, can mean the reaction is a violent one. He sees no solution except a hope than an awareness will grow that if politicians are considering only economic indices and not the continuing damage they are doing to large sections of the community "they are flying with one wing. Behind the philosophy they have is the concept that the state needs to cut down to size. One by one (areas) have been stripped down or sold off. "But if the little guy has not got the state to stand up for him and watch over his interests he is left to the mercy of the soulless market."

Selwyn Dawson doesn't see himself as a theological academic but describes himself as a "GP" – his years of ministry in the inner cities meaning he has had to keep working and thinking to meet the challenge of the pulpit. He is a greater believer in balancing faith with reality and quotes the need to pray with the bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other. To quote one of his own articles on the relevance of God and religion today which was published in *Metro*: "No proofs can indeed be offered, but the rewards of faith, exercised in the teeth of doubt, can be immense." ■

Auckland journalist Annie Gray is a member of Tui Motu Board



"So do you believe God deliberately shaped your life with all these influences to make you a missioner for peace?", I asked

The Canon smiled and reflected for a moment. "I believe firmly in free will. I believe we choose to follow the invitations of God – or not. It's a sort of dialogue between God and the human spirit."

Prophet of Peace

Forty years ago when the Cold War was at its most intense a motley crowd of politicians, trades unionists, Pacifists, church people and hundreds of ordinary men and women converged at Easter on the Atomic Weapons Research Centre at Aldermaston 50 miles west of London. It was the first of the Aldermaston marches and the beginning of CND — the campaign for nuclear disarmament in Britain. Among the marchers was a young New Zealander, Paul Oestreicher. Paul had left home a few years earlier to study in Europe, had been ordained to the Anglican ministry and was serving his apprenticeship as a curate in a parish in London.

Forty years on Canon Paul is still Vice President of CND, but he is keeping the anniversary on the other side of the earth, celebrating his retirement from active ministry by catching up with his roots down under. So many events and factors in his background seem to have prepared him for a lifetime dedicated to God's work and the cause of peace. His parents escaped from Germany in 1938; Paul's father was of Jewish extraction. They settled in Dunedin where his father practised medicine. The family found a special welcome among the Quakers, and these were a powerful influence on Paul's childhood.

In 1955 Paul went to Germany to do postgraduate studies. His tutor was a man called Helmut Gollwitzer who had been assistant to the famous Pastor Niemoller, one of the very few Christian churchmen to stand up to Hitler. Gollwitzer himself had been 6 years a prisoner-of-war under the Russians, where part of the regime had been to attempt to brainwash the prisoners to Marxism. Back to England to prepare for ordination; ministry in the east End among immigrant Jews and West Indians — and Aldermaston. Then a call to work for the British Council to set up the Eastern European desk to build up contacts behind the Iron Curtain.

Following a prompting of the Spirit, Paul decided to become a Quaker. The Church of England rejected (by the

narrowest of margins) the proposed corporate reunion with Methodism. Paul was greatly grieved by this and as a sort of gesture to show his belief that no Christian denomination has a monopoly of truth he decided to follow his parents and join the Quakers, while remaining an Anglican. The Anglicans in Britain found no problem with this, though it did raise a few Quaker eyebrows.

It was the fact that he was a Quaker which was held against him when in 1986 he had been invited to return to New Zealand to become Bishop of Wellington. The Wellington Synod voted for him. After much soul-searching he and his wife accepted the call. Then two of the other New Zealand bishops blocked it. That door was closed; yet immediately another one opened which proved to be the climax of his life's work for peace.

He was made "International Director" of Coventry Cathedral. It was an ecumenical position: his predecessor had been a Scottish Methodist. It entailed being a sort of Ambassador-at-large for peace. Coventry Cathedral — and much of the inner city — was destroyed by German bombing in 1940. After the war the Cathedral was rebuilt but with a special emphasis on peace and reconciliation. The city was twinned first with Keil, then with Dresden: both German cities heavily damaged by the RAF during the Second World War. ▷▷

On 7 August 1945 I was a 13-year-old schoolboy in New Zealand. That winter morning we asked our physics master how it was possible for one bomb, the day before, to turn the whole city of Hiroshima to ashes. He was one of our best and most respected teachers. He told us of Lord Rutherford, the great New Zealand physicist and his atomic experiments at Cambridge that had now evidently led to the harnessing of such unimaginable destructive force. But I will never forget his words as the lesson ended: "Boys, either we now learn to abolish war — or war will abolish us".

By the late '50s I was a young curate in the East End of London. What could I do to avert the threat of the Cold War, now at its height, turning into a nuclear holocaust? My place that Easter was not only at the altar praying for peace but on the Aldermaston Road. Aldermaston, then and to this day, is the cradle of Britain's potential to contribute to the end of life on this planet.

So with my wife, our daughter in a pushchair, we marched with thousands of others whose hearts beat for the survival of the world's children. At the head, pipe in mouth and in his black cassock, strode out Canon John Collins, Dean of St Paul's. With him walked Michael Foot (later leader of the Labour Party). The Rev. Donald Soper, Moderator of the Methodist Church, writers and playwrights were at the head of the march. But the thousands, old and young, who year by year converged on Trafalgar Square were not an intellectual elite but simple, ordinary, caring people. Yes, Quakers and the principled pacifists were there. So were a handful of Communists and their fellow travellers, enough for the hostile media to smear the thousands who would gladly, had it been possible, have carried the same banners in Moscow.

The campaign for Nuclear Disarmament declined but survived too, to revive, with even greater numbers in the early 80s, now a Europe-wide movement, even daring to surface precariously east of the Iron Curtain. The politicians too were beginning to listen to a frightened world. Reagan, animated by a patently sincere Gorbachev, said 'yes' to the first stage of nuclear disarmament. The crisis had passed. The Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty commits Britain and all its signatories to the eventual abolition of all nuclear weapons. A judgment of the World Court now backs that process.

Illusions of great power are still Britain's and France's problem. "Bomb Iraquis if their leader makes a bomb — and cling to ours!" Sadly the CND in its fortieth year is still needed. It has the better argument, but it has yet to win it. Never again, given our fearsome knowledge, will our world be safe. The long road from what Aldermaston still symbolises is no long term recipe for human survival. We did not march 40 years ago in vain. The road may still need our hearts and minds and feet.

Paul Oestreicher

▷▷Coventry and its new Cathedral became an agency of support wherever reconciling ministry was happening throughout the world. For instance, it helped in the founding of the Corrymeela Community in Northern Island, an ecumenical initiative for peace. During his own time in this position Paul visited Southern Africa frequently and was even expelled by the Afrikaans Government.

"Peace and Justice can be very uneasy bedfellows", he says. To follow the dictate of Christ to love one's enemy can be a very lonely path. People throughout the world involved in the struggle for peace often lead very lonely lives, What they need is our support and encouragement. This is what Coventry tries to provide: To be present wherever reconciling ministry is going on".

One of the turning points of his life in the peace movement was the false spring of 1968 in Czechoslovakia. Alexander Dubcek had tried to provide Communism with a human face. The Russians moved in and overthrew the Dubcek government by force. The Peace movement was split asunder. Paul was expelled from the Christian Peace Conference because he protested against the injustice of the Russian action. The crushing of the Prague "spring" was for many people the end of a dream: the creation of a just Socialist society and the idea that Communism could have a human face.

The Peace movement has often suffered these tensions. Paul sometimes found his fellow peace activists to be more belligerent than members of the armed forces, many of whom in his experience are, in his words, "much more lovable people"! That is why he considers it important for Christian people to exert influence. For instance Desmond Tutu has had a profound influence on the journey towards reconciliation of President Nelson Mandela. The Archbishop's personality has had a huge effect in overcoming racism. He is so clever — a fact that infuriates his white opponents — yet he has that impish simplicity which is disarming.

"I the Lord speak peace,
peace to my faithful people
who turn their hearts to me."
Love and fidelity embrace,
peace and justice kiss.
Fidelity sprouts from the earth,
Justice leans down from
heaven.

"In you own life", I ask, "has there been a conflict between your priesthood and your politics?"
Paul smiled sadly. The conflict has been between the calls of his family, his wife and four children, and the all-consuming demands of an active apostolate. Paul can well appreciate the call of many priests to be celibate. In his own case there had been a cost. He has not always been able to give enough of himself to his family, and his own daughter had been deeply resentful when a few years ago, at the age of 19, his adopted son took his own life. Nevertheless Paul did not agree a priest should never get involved in politics. When Desmond Tutu was accused of being too political he said, "I don't know which bible they've been reading!" Now Paul has retired from active ministry, so he has to get used to "being rather than doing". Coming to New Zealand for a leisurely six months is part of the strategy; also to introduce his wife to his native land.

"And so, how do you find your native land after over 40 years away?"
Beautiful, yet sad. It was sad to return to a land where now you had to lock your door when you leave your house. That was not as it used to be. It seems that in the New Zealand of 1998 it has become 'every man for himself'. This country had been a pioneer in building the Welfare State: now she had become a pioneer in abolishing it.
Paul recalled the joy his father felt in being able to practice medicine back in the 40s and 50s without having to worry about charges. That same Health Service is being demolished and its running taken over by Business Studies graduates. "I grieve for what has happened here in New Zealand."

Nevertheless he sees a great opportunity here for the churches. The challenge is going to be to reconstruct social democracy. The Christian ethic teaches us that society needs to be co-operative rather than competitive. He recommends that we in New Zealand should examine the letter issued last year by the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales, clearly setting out Christian social teaching for post-Thatcherite Britain.

One problem he sees in New Zealand is the apparent irrelevance of the Christian voice. Britain is hardly a Christian society, yet Christianity still permeates every layer of British society. Men like Cardinal Hume, the Orthodox Archbishop Bloom, the Archbishop of Canterbury are public figures, and when they speak people listen. When the Anglican bishops here issued an excellent statement regarding the Iraq situation no-one took any notice. It went unreported. The media seem to be entirely secular.

One thing he is really enthusiastic about is the Maori renaissance, and he is pleased that the Anglican church especially has played a significant part. He very much likes the new Anglican Prayer Book. And he's impressed by the fact the laity seem to have been well prepared to exercise leadership in the liturgy.

After a lifetime striving for the cause of peace Canon Paul Oestreicher fully deserves a holiday in the sun and a good rest. Somehow, though I wish it for him, I doubt whether his restless spirit will allow him to hang up his boots just yet. ■

Michael Hill

The Invitation

It doesn't interest me what you do for a living:
I want to know what you ache for, and if you dare to dream of meeting your heart's longing.

It doesn't interest me how old you are:
I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love, for your dreams, for the adventure of being alive.

It doesn't interest me what planets are squaring your moon:
I want to know if you have touched the centre of your own sorrow, if you have been opened by life's betrayals or have become shrivelled and closed from fear of further pain! I want to know if you can sit with pain, mine or your own, without moving to hide it or fade it or fix it.

It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how much money you have:
I want to know if you can get up after the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done for us and/or for the children.

It doesn't interest me who you are:
I want to know if you will stand in the centre of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what you have studied:
I want to know what sustains you from the inside when all else fades away. I want to know if you can be alone with yourself, and if you truly like the company you keep in empty moments.

(*Oriah Mountain Dreamer.* Indian Elder, May 1994)

When does Art become Sacrilege?

The Virgin in the Condom has outraged many Christian people as well as others who simply see it as bad taste. Whether or not you think so much energy should be spent on something so trivial, the fact is that controversy sparks discussion and provokes questions about the meaning of art: it demands to know when the unconventional becomes sacrilegious.

There is nothing new in this. Michelangelo's nude figures in the Sistine Chapel provoked outrage in the Papal Court. The artist got his revenge by caricaturing the official who tried to censor his work putting him among those being thrust down into Hell and giving him ass's ears!

Tui Motu *invited comment from its own regular contributor, Dunedin artist Donald Moorhead.*

Gaze of the Eternal Mother

Crude provocative art has been with us for many years, notes Donald Moorhead. Early this century a mass-produced urinal bowl was exhibited and called *Fountain*. The modern art world says the art is in the idea; it has little to do with the craftsmanship. The idea is intended to evoke a response from the observer. The *Virgin in the Condom* evokes a response: it might be termed powerful art, because of the response it has produced.

But do you approve of it? Is it good art?
I find it disturbing. It would be horrifying to call it good art. Whereas the *Fatima Madonna* by the same artist is quite graceful and non-provocative.
The artist is a person of faith: by making her artistic statement public she is laying herself open to criticism. All artists do that. Simply by putting it in the public arena, one takes the risk of people taking offence.

The Gallery chose to exhibit the *Virgin in the Condom*. In that sense the Gallery was being selective. By sticking to their guns they are inviting artists to compete in outrageousness. I cannot approve of that. In my opinion by choosing this work for their very first Exhibition the Museum has done a very foolish thing.

So what about your own art? What criteria do you use?
I always start with a concept. I want to create something classic which will last, something of my own making that arrests the viewer. Personally I am not into

The Nativity – Tui Motu

'shouting'. I like to create something which you can look at and meander through: something meditative, something you can live with. In my opinion the *Virgin in the Condom* shouts. But will it last?

Can we look at an example — your *Behold the Lamb of God*.

This tries to celebrate an aspect of Mary which is totally away from traditional Marian art. As an artist I have been immersed in traditional Madonnas, and I love them. I come from an Anglo-Catholic tradition. My work arises out of the context of my own personal faith. Here I am trying to recapture the Mary of the gospels. Therefore, Incarnation is of the essence of this painting. We are flesh. In the Incarnation God is enfleshed. Mary is enfleshed too. So I paint her in this way.

, Christmas 1997

I try to paint a beautiful picture. Water symbolises both cleansing and ecstatic joy: the sheer joy of simply splashing around. This is a very human thing. So the infant Jesus is shown throwing his tiny arms about!

It is a Nativity painting. So it focuses on the Christ-child — who is destined in a sense always to remain a child, for all eternity.

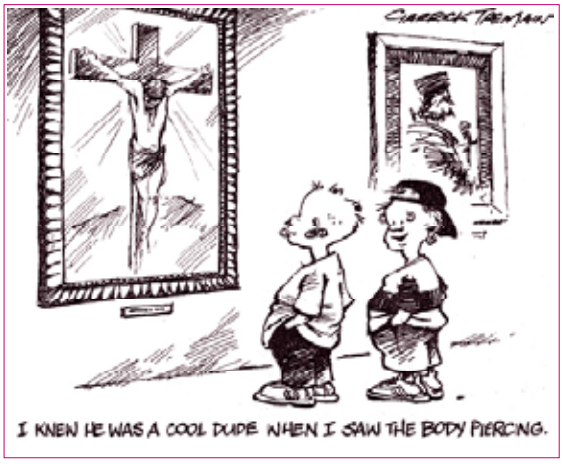
I have painted it as a triptych showing past, present and future. John the Baptist represents Old Testament prophecy pointing towards the coming of Christ. The Madonna and Child is in the here-and-now. On the right hand side is Jesus, the eternal Christ-child of the future.

Did you see Garrick Tremain's Good Friday cartoon? What about that?

The cartoon shows the incongruity of two kids making comments out of the depth of their ignorance. It shows their ignorance of faith — and that is how society is these days. I think the offensive aspect is that children should be left so ignorant.

If people's faith is so fragile they feel threatened either by *Virgin in the Condom* or by Tremain's cartoon, what does that say about their own faith? My reaction to them is: your God is too small!

No, I think that God will be having a good laugh at Tremain's cartoon. ■



From the Otago Daily Times, 11 April. Reproduced by courtesy of Garrick Tremain

See also page 18 ▷

Dream Rising

Souls awaken.
And oh!
Their sounds grow round and round
in thin alleys
where smells of tamarind and
cinnamon and almonds
seep into clothes.
Till in my dreams
it seems
I am woman of Jerusalem.

By Damascus Gate
an old Arab
hawks eggs and breads
from a box on a bicycle,
his face ravined
with loss of land.
Till in my dreams
it seems
I am a place to stand.

The tomb guard
is a man
upright and grand
as a piano.
His ivory hands
hurry people along.
Till in my dreams
it seems
I am a song
bright in the breast of a lark rising.

Anne Powell

Spiritual Awakening

I woke up today
from my soul-less slumber
I shed a tear today
for a life I now have
I felt the feeling
My spirit sang a song
A rhythm, a melody
A tune to let me know
there is a meaning to it all
Dance the dance of life
You hold the world in
your hands
You should know the meaning
to it all
Feel the energy
And just let it be

Simon Baird (18

The Sacred Place

I search for the sacred place
In the glade, by the stream,
On the high rocky ridge,
But the spirit has threaded away
through the trees,
Flowed away with the water,
Blown away with the wind.

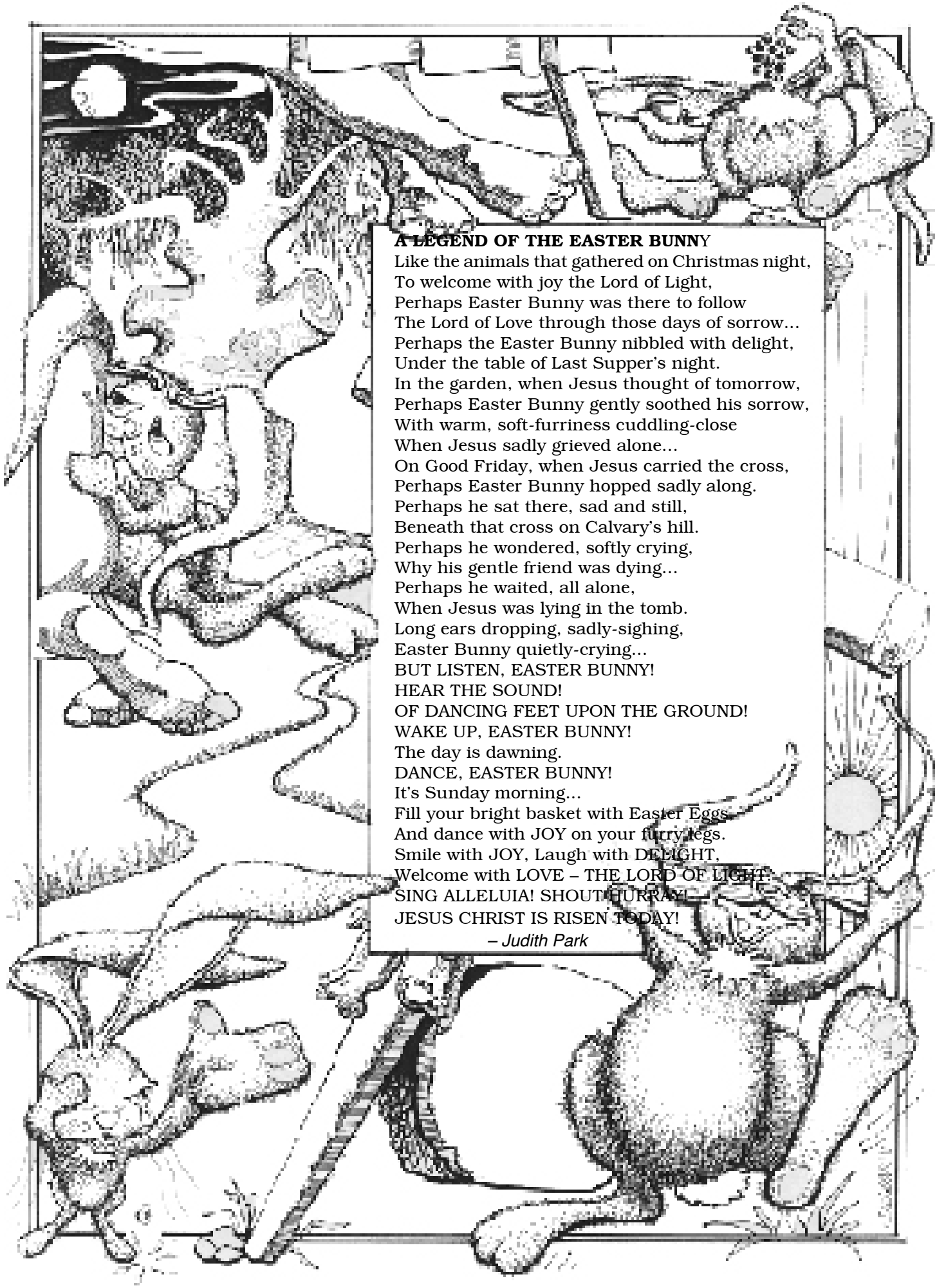
I scan the star-decked sky,
Look into the eyes of friends,
I stand before the altar,
But the spirit is consumed,
absorbed, departed
Into the mist and darkness,
Out of reach, beyond sight,
eluding imagination.
The once sacred places are
deserted
And I am abandoned.

If I search no more,
Still my reaching,
silence my seeking,
If I wait, only wait,
Shall I discover the sacred place
again?
Not there, but here,
Here, closer than my hand,
my eyes, my thought.

Penelope Whitaker

Probably the very earliest representation of the Crucifixion is a blasphemous graffiti found in the middle of Rome in what is thought to have been a school building. It dates from the second Century. A man with the head of an ass is strung up on a cross and underneath is the inscription crudely scratched on the stone:

ALEXAMENOS WORSHIPS HIS GOD



A LEGEND OF THE EASTER BUNNY

Like the animals that gathered on Christmas night,
To welcome with joy the Lord of Light,
Perhaps Easter Bunny was there to follow
The Lord of Love through those days of sorrow...
Perhaps the Easter Bunny nibbled with delight,
Under the table of Last Supper's night.
In the garden, when Jesus thought of tomorrow,
Perhaps Easter Bunny gently soothed his sorrow,
With warm, soft-furriness cuddling-close
When Jesus sadly grieved alone...
On Good Friday, when Jesus carried the cross,
Perhaps Easter Bunny hopped sadly along.
Perhaps he sat there, sad and still,
Beneath that cross on Calvary's hill.
Perhaps he wondered, softly crying,
Why his gentle friend was dying...
Perhaps he waited, all alone,
When Jesus was lying in the tomb.
Long ears dropping, sadly-sighing,
Easter Bunny quietly-crying...
BUT LISTEN, EASTER BUNNY!
HEAR THE SOUND!
OF DANCING FEET UPON THE GROUND!
WAKE UP, EASTER BUNNY!
The day is dawning.
DANCE, EASTER BUNNY!
It's Sunday morning...
Fill your bright basket with Easter Eggs.
And dance with JOY on your furry legs.
Smile with JOY, Laugh with DELIGHT,
Welcome with LOVE – THE LORD OF LIGHT.
SING ALLELUIA! SHOUT HURRAY!
JESUS CHRIST IS RISEN TODAY!

– Judith Park

Heavenly Abodes and Human Development

Burmese Nobel Prize-winner, ***Aung San Suu Kyi*** (pictured below) *compares Buddhist and Christian values, and shows how these may be applied to human development.*

I sincerely believe that all peoples and creeds can co-exist in peace, that whatever our race or religion, we can all learn to agree on certain basic human values essential for the development of human society.

The goals of Buddhist development are "equality, love freedom and liberation: the means of achieving these lie within the grasp of any community — from a village to a nation — once its members begin the process of reducing selfishness. To do so two realisations are necessary: an inner realisation concerning greed, hatred and delusion; and an outer realisation concerning the impact these tendencies have on society and the planet".

Buddhists speak of four 'heavenly abodes' or divine states of mind: *metta* — loving kindness; *karuna* — compassion; *mudita* — sympathetic joy; *upekka* — equanimity.
Upekka means much more than equanimity in the conventional sense and is beyond the attainment of ordinary human beings. The other heavenly abodes however are well within our reach and germane to the ideal type of development, whether termed Christian or Buddhist.

1. Loving kindness.
While Buddhists speak of *metta*, Christians speak of Christian love. Both refer to disinterested love, a love that seeks to give and to serve, rather than to take and demand. Inherent in the concept of this kind of love is understanding, sympathy, forgiveness and courage. A Father Damien or a Mother Teresa give tender care to those whom humanity in general find physically repugnant, because Jesus had shown love and kindness towards the rejects of society, the lepers and the insane, the sick and the lame.

The Lord Buddha too set examples for the application of loving kindness. Once the Lord Buddha and his cousin Ananda came across a sick monk lying in his own filth and tended him. Then the Lord Buddha called the other monks together and admonished them for neglecting the sick brethren and taught them it was more important to care for the sick than to care for him, the Buddha himself.

Development projects should be essentially humanitarian labour on varying scales. Whether it is distributing milk powder to malnourished children or building a mega-dam, it should be done with people in mind, people who need the balm of loving-kindness to withstand the rigours of human existence. Projects undertaken for the purposes of upping statistics or for love of grandiosity or praise, rather than for the love of human beings that can be hurt, minds that can be damaged and hearts that can be bruised, seldom succeed in fostering the kind of development that enhances human life.

Once during my years of house arrest one of the people who were, shall we say, 'taking care of me' said in an accusing tone that I was "always on the side of the people". Yes, I said, that was so, because I would always stand by those who were weaker; they were the ones who needed support. But, came the query, what if the weaker side were in the wrong? In that case I said, I would try to correct them with *metta*. Later I asked myself what one would do if *metta* did not succeed in correcting those who were weak but patently in the wrong. The conclusion I arrived at was that one would have to work at perfecting one's *metta* because perfect *metta* cannot fail!

In practising Buddhist *metta* meditation, we start by directing *metta* towards ourselves, wishing that we might be happy and be at peace. Then we direct *metta* towards our benefactors, those who have helped us. Then we move on to loved ones. From loved ones we move on to those we regard with negative emotions. Successful *metta* meditation should result in a state of mind that embraces all beings with loving kindness, favouring neither oneself nor others,

2. Compassion. But what about self-sacrifice which demands that one puts others before oneself? This is where compassion — the second of the heavenly abodes — comes in. What causes men and women to leave comfortable homes and give up lucrative positions to go out to bleak, even devastated lands for the sake of bringing relief to people of an alien race or creed? The motivating factor is surely compassion, which has been defined as "the quivering of the heart in response to others' suffering, the wish to remove painful circumstances from the lives of other beings".

There is a solid core of common sense to Buddhist teachings. That is why compassion is but one aspect: the other aspect is wisdom. Compassion must be balanced by wisdom, and wisdom must

be balanced by compassion.

"Once there lived a dragon at the foot of the Himalayas, a fierce dragon king that breathed forth fire and smoke and reduced creatures to ashes with his incendiary glare. He was, not unnaturally, the terror of all who dwelt in that region. One day when the dragon was in one of his less amicable moods, a *bodhisattva* came by. The dragon king proceeded to give a fine display of his propensity for violence, no doubt imagining he would succeed in terrifying the holy one before reducing him to ashes. To his surprise the *bodhisattva* showed no fear but instead gave him a brief sermon on the virtues of non-violence and compassion. The dragon king was instantly converted to the path of non-violence and decided that never again would he harm any being under any circumstances.

"In an ideal world that would be the happy end of the story. But ours is not an ideal world. When it dawned on the children who lived within the vicinity of the dragon's lair that the fire-breathing monster had ceased to bristle with pyrotechnic ferocity, they began to touch the dragon king. On finding how docile and patient the dragon had become, the children handled it more roughly. Eventually the children got into the habit of ill-treating the dragon, making life a misery for him.

"When the *bodhisattva* came by again the dragon king complained how unhappy he had become since following the path of non-violence. The *bodhisattva* replied that this had come about because the dragon had not balanced compassion with wisdom: when the children became unruly, he should show his fire to stop them proceeding to cruel actions. The dragon king's failure to balance compassion with wisdom had been harmful both to himself and to the children, who had been turned into little bullies by his excessive forbearance".

In an ideal world, the kind of world we would like to develop, compassion would be met with compassion: as the dragon king became tame, the children would have become tender. But that is not always how it happens. In the planning and implementation of development programmes the correct balance between compassion and wisdom has to be constantly sought.

3. Sympathetic joy. Where there is loving kindness and compassion, sympathetic joy (*mudita*) naturally follows. The fruit of successful development projects should be the greater happiness of the beneficiaries and the reward for those who planned and implemented the projects should be the *mudita* that rejoices in the good fortune of others, free from envy and ill will.

Fundamental to the kind of development that enhances the quality of life is **justice**. If there is true loving kindness that regards all beings with equal benevolence and there is compassion balanced by wisdom, surely justice will not be lacking. And it will be the best kind of justice — tempered by gentle mercy.

Sulak Sivaraksa suggests that a truly developed city may not perhaps be "distinguished by a multiplicity of skyscrapers but by the values attendant on its growth: simplicity, comfort and respect for the community of life around it. People would enjoy a simpler, healthier and less costly diet. Animals would no longer be annihilated at the rate of half a million per hour merely to be an option on every menu. A new work ethic would be to enjoy our work and to work in harmony with others, as opposed to getting ahead of others and having a miserable time of it".

There are people who think the worth of a society is measured by its material wealth and by impressive figures of growth, ignoring the pain and injustice that may lay behind them. But then there are those who believe that development must be measured in terms of human happiness, of peace within the community and of harmony with the environment. We come back to loving kindness and compassion.

Paradise on earth is a concept few people believe in any more. But we can certainly seek to make our planet a better, happier home for all of us by constructing the heavenly abodes of love and compassion in our hearts. Beginning with this inner development we can go on to the development of the external world with courage and wisdom. ■

"Without love, human society is in a very difficult state; without love, in the future we will face tremendous problems. Love is the centre of human life." *(Dalai Lama)*

1 - Cries from the Heart

Responses to Denis Horton's March article

Stagnation is not an option

Dennis Horton's experience of leaving the priesthood as being "like a death" (*Tui Motu,* March) echoes in many respects my own experience in leaving the ministry just over ten years ago after serving for 17 years. My own memory is that it was like a complete mental and spiritual breakdown. The priesthood is more than a job. Combined with celibacy it is a total way of life. Leaving it is more than changing one's livelihood: it is departing from everything that has given one's life its meaning and purpose.

"Breakdown leads to breakthrough" may appear a facile statement, but in my case this has been true. An image that keeps recurring for me is taken from the title of a book called *Diving Deep and Surfacing.* Leaving the ministry was like diving into the abyss with a sense of reckless abandon. It took four and a half years to bottom out, and since then each year has been a gradual re-emergence and a re-establishing of myself in a new way of life. Like death, there is only one way to go and that is through it. There are no short cuts.

In the case of many priests who leave, a relationship with a woman is a catalyst in the process. It is fortuitous that love is so often blind, for the agenda carried into such a relationship is enormous and requires an extraordinary amount of courage and perseverance on the part of both to see it through. Our training did not equip us for the world of relationships. The whole psycho-sexual

Letters to the Editor
On leaving the priesthood

The church is strident on justice, but strangely muted on matters of fairness and equity. I suspect the church is simply not able to distinguish the elements. Justice is no more about fairness than equity is about equality.

I was deeply moved by the plight of Denis Horton. So often I have seen the church fail people, fine servants, because they responded to the cries of their own humanity. Many fine people the church has driven away for the want of a modicum of kindness. There is no more desolate death than to be treated in life as one who never existed — "Denis Who??"

To this day my wife and I are profoundly grateful to a caring, sensitive hospital chaplain who by wise counsel and comfort lifted her spiritually and led her through the trauma of serious surgery and deep spiritual need at the time. When that same man called out in his own need his colleagues spurned him. He married a nurse from that hospital and, I think, fulfilled his life. But the cost was complete ostracism. He was a dead person as far as the church was concerned. What a waste!

How many who could have gone on to serve the church in some capacity have been wasted in the same way? So it was that Denis was left for dead by the very people who should have had the courage to reach out to him. So too will the church be left for dead if it does not soon address these issues of simply humanity, fairness and equity.

John Drury, Christchurch
(*abridged*)

The article by Fr Denis Horton touched me deeply. In my own parish we have lost three priests in the past five years. One has married, one is about to marry, and one has become an Anglican priest. These men were fine priests who had each given many years to the church.

I think it quite disgraceful that men of their calibre are treated in the punitive fashion that Denis Horton describes. To prevent an ex-priest from taking Communion is both un-Christian and a source of scandal in itself, adding heartache to the pain of resigning their positions in the church. Is the Sacrament of Matrimony less than the other six? The rule of celibacy is a church law, made by those who prefer to keep priests under the control of the church, not respected as men who are fully adult and admired for the work they do

Is it a financial matter? Would married priests cost more? Very probably. We know St Peter himself was married and that many of the leaders of the early church had wives and children. When did celibacy become an essential part of the structure of the church — and why? I feel for Denis Horton and all other priests who have suffered under this cruel rule. Where is the gratitude for the many years of service they have given?

As for the parishioners who feel "betrayed", why should this be so? None of my friends felt that way when our much respected parish priest resigned and married. We were happy for him and wished him well in his marriage. To lose 30 years' experience in the church he served so well was a fault of the present rules and regulations. No other employer would be allowed to treat an employee in such a fashion.

J. A. Parkinson, Woodlands
(*abridged*)

development that is the passage of the average young man, we by-passed; the result being we are often totally naive in relating closely with women. When I came out I recall vividly my way of relating to the world was that of a 17-year-old, the age at which I entered. It was as if I had been locked in jail all those years and had just been set free.

Many in Auckland may feel a sense of betrayal at the six priests who have left in the past year or so. At the same time the situation gives Catholic people the chance to grow up. The call to holiness is universal and not dependent on the clergy, despite the special function they have. Those who left are men who I know gave their all to the church. I recall myself at the time feeling I could no longer be a caretaker for a community that was still shell-shocked by Vatican II. It was too large a burden to carry. The people who wanted to move ahead eventually gave up in frustration at the slowness of change and walked out. This is not to pass judgment on anyone. The church is of its nature an organic system and can only move from its centre. By nature it is conservative, and it is only when the conservative in it wakes up that it will really move.

I can empathise too with Peter Murnane in his decision to stay in the ministry and at the same time carry on a supreme juggling act between being authentically where he is and balancing the many contradictions that are apparent in the church. Whether the decision is to leave or to stay it must be a free decision.

Above all it must be a **now** choice, not one based on a decision or a ceremony in the past, nor one based on a sense of obligation to others, be they family or the wider Catholic community. If people are hurt, so be it. One ultimately answers to God alone. The choice, whatever it is, calls for a ruthless honesty and truth. Those who leave deserve appreciation for the work they have done and prayerful support in their decision. Those who stay need to be committed to birthing a new church that transcends the spiritual, social, intellectual, sectarian and ethnic boundaries in which it has become trapped. Clericalism is a hangover of the past. Like the elder brother in the parable of the Prodigal Son, there are no plaudits for simply hanging in there. Stagnation is not an option.

Peter Murphy

2 - Social Responsibility Document

Various comments on the Government's Questionnaire towards a Code of Social Responsibility have been received, official and unofficial. A selection is printed below. They are invariably critical of the Code

Statements from Cardinal Williams and Bishop John Dew

We welcome a debate on 'values'. Catholics are familiar with values — another name for virtues. At the heart of such discussion is the common good.

The values proposed in the discussion document focus on individual responsibility for self and family. This focus leaves out important notions:

• the link between responsibilities and rights.. With the duty of living life decently comes the right to a decent standard of living: to food, clothing, health care, work, education and so on.

• as people of faith we believe we are one family, sisters and brothers of each other, with God as our Father. Each has the personal responsibility to respect the dignity and rights of every other person.

We are citizens, not simply consumers and taxpayers. Citizenship involves the crucial principle of solidarity and the search for the common good.

(continued overleaf)

(continued from previous page)

The Bishops restate the five principles put together in 1993 by Church leaders:

• structures in society exist to serve the well-being and the dignity of every human person, not the other way round;

• human beings are interdependent; a fundamental concern of government must be support for the family and for the well-being of children;

• the purpose of government is to provide conditions where each person is enabled to respect the rights of others, and where each can enjoy freedom and fulfilment in the religious, economic, political and cultural life of the nation;

• work is a means whereby people take responsibility for their lives and their dependents, and contribute to the welfare of others; therefore full employment must be the basis of any government's economic strategy;

• the moral measure of any government is how the weakest are faring.

NZ Association of Social Workers

Regarding the Code the Association observes in its newsletter:

• the research design (of the Document) is inadequate and masquerades as a serious attempt by the government to be informed by selected citizens; it seems far more like a public relations exercise for more cuts to benefits and social services; it seems to focus on moralising about the behaviour of the poor, as opposed to genuine social research for the benefit of the whole country.

• The experience of social workers is that their clients are not requiring more sanctions against them but are needing better provision of housing, employment, health and income support. In the meantime they need social services to assist them deal with the lack of state services. Social workers are often stretched beyond their limits dealing with the human fallout from government funding cuts.

The association wants a more socially inclusive society, not one where the division between 'haves' and 'have nots' is made wider by arbitrary sanctions. ■

A Guide from Caritas

Caritas Aotearoa has issued its own guide to answering the questionnaire. In particular, Caritas lists some expectations which citizens have a right to expect in a just society:

1. Looking after our children. Wages and benefits need to be at a sufficient level where all parents can provide for their children adequately. (Refer the UN Convention on the Rights of a Child, which NZ signed in 1993)

2. Pregnancy Care should be available free of charge to all. Low income earners and beneficiaries should have transport to venues where such care is available.

3. Keeping Children Healthy. Plunket Line needs adequate funding. Healthy housing should be available to all parents at a cost they can afford.

4. Learning for the Under Fives. There should be provision of fully resourced, affordable, quality pre-school education in all areas including outlying communities.

5. Getting Children to School Ready to Learn. Parents need adequate time at home. Reducing or eliminating a person's benefit because a child plays truant will not help ensure those children get to school ready for learning.

6. Young Offenders. A reduction of parental resources may actually inhibit parents' abilities to support and rehabilitate their children. Parenting courses should be made more readily available and affordable.

Greater resourcing is needed for crime prevention and habilitation services for young people and children at risk.

7. **Sharing Parenthood.** In the case of families where the parents are separated, work income and benefit levels need to be adequate to allow non-custodial parents to have regular access and quality time with their children.. and provide financial support.

Labour laws and employment expectations must be reviewed with a view to enabling employees to have a more balanced lifestyle with adequate time to be with their children and families.

8. Training and Learning from Employment. Tertiary education must be equally accessible to all.

People on sickness or invalid's benefits — and beneficiaries with dependants — should not be forced to undertake job search or training.

9. Work Obligations and Income Support. To assist beneficiaries with dependants to find adequate and meaningful employment, a subsidy for childcare (up to 14) should be introduced. Beneficiaries doing part time work who have dependants should not be forced to accept full time work, since they have duties towards their families and need to properly care for them.

10. Managing money. Budget advice must be freely available to beneficiaries, and needs to be better resourced and publicised.

11. Keeping Ourselves Healthy. Those on low incomes should be able to afford good health care. The health of the nation is improved by healthy, appropriate and affordable housing; adequate income; healthy work environments.

Mental health services need to be resourced to a level where they can provide free, immediate and effective service.

Note: *The above is a summary of a much longer document which is available from Caritas; PO Box 12-193 Wellington 6038.*

Findings of a Family Discussion Group

The Code of Social Responsibility consists of one group of people setting up standards for others, while ignoring their own responsibilities. It is a political document. What inspires this Code are the gurus who travel round the world, like Robert Sirico, reinforcing a New Right dogma. It appears that the Business Round Table is bent on bringing right-wing Catholics on board with them. But the Church leaders fortunately are seeking different mentors.

The Document categorises people as 'deserving' and 'undeserving' — as if there were two distinct groups in society: taxpayers who contribute and beneficiaries who receive. In fact people move in and out of these situations. Many beneficiaries are themselves contributors: caring for children, doing community voluntary work.

The word "dependency" has undergone a development in meaning. Once it simply meant that employed people were 'dependent' on their employer, who had a responsibility for their welfare. But the meaning has become debased and now has a negative connotation. Yet everyone at times in their lives is dependent. Once upon a time it was accepted that a person out of work received a benefit until they could return to normal employment, when they would be in a position to repay. But now no one is trusted to receive now and pay back later: they must pay back **while** they receive.

The holder of a DPB is presently expected to return to work when the children reach seven — but how many suitable 9-3 jobs are there? The question is: can they satisfactorily care for their children **and** return to work, especially if they are solo parents? The impetus now is to get back into the workforce; this is unreal when jobs are very hard to find. Indeed we are looking ahead to a future when there will be fewer and fewer jobs. This increases the number of the disempowered: they feel a sense of failure because of the demands and expectations of those with work. People on low incomes often feel very isolated simply because they cannot afford to move about.

When benefits are targeted there is a danger that the recipients will become scapegoats. A universal child benefit paid to the caregiver would help all those who care for children, for the sick and elderly etc. This would be better than a targeted benefit which is divisive even though few abuse it. In justice there needs to be some sort of universal wage — or at least a universal care-givers benefit.

Benefits at present are not adjusted to inflation. The so-called explosion in welfare costs is largely due to inflation. The real increase is relatively small. Likewise it is stated that there are "more jobs" — but there also more people of employable age. The fact is that for many people the jobs are not available. Many people work long hours, having more than one job etc — while others have no paid work. Work has become increasingly unevenly distributed. One's 'living' is still tied to one's work — even though many are deprived of the chance of working.

Another recent change is that a family now needs more than one income to give adequate support. Some benefits became inaccessible because people were required to estimate their income in advance. If they underestimate they are constrained to pay back some of what they have received — but it is already spent. Rather than risk this, they do not bother. The Department of Social Welfare is often backward in letting people know what they are entitled to: this reticence appears to be a deliberate cost-cutting exercise. ■

A Group Response

We do not have confidence in

- the process that led to the content of the Discussion Document
- the balance of information and views that the Document is likely to draw from the NZ public
- the ability of those responsible to evaluate the Document.

While the Document does highlight some of the important issues a community needs to be concerned about, it is **not** about social responsibility...

It demonstrates no recognition of the fact that there is a direct relationship between the power an individual or group holds within society and the social responsibility that corresponds with that power. In other words, that those with more power (in terms of wealth and social status) are the ones who have correspondingly greater obligation and ability to practice social responsibility. This Document in fact seems to be an attempt by those in power to abrogate their social responsibility to those with the least power in our society — this is a gross and shameful abuse of that power.

A "secure and confident community" (*Discussion document*) will only eventuate when that community is founded on just and equitable social and economic structures, a sustainable relationship with the land and its resources, and is led by eminently wise women and men whose values transcend self and individual interest.

(St Peter's Parish, Beckenham)

I Never Met Anyone Like Her!

Joan Elizabeth Waters — a Personal Memoir

Joan Waters died of cancer on 5 February, the eve of Waitangi Day. She will be remembered as a brilliant teacher, a prison reformer, a social activist, an eccentric — and a mentor for her many young friends. She was born in Waiuku in 1939, the youngest of six children in a strongly Irish Catholic family. Both these words — Irish and Catholic — are central to the way Joan saw herself. Ireland and Irish characteristics, good or bad, were a topic on which she never tired.

In her younger days she often talked of becoming a journalist, and in fact for some years she was Auckland correspondent of the New Zealand *Tablet*. However, it was as a teacher that she ended up earning her living, and it seems the direction of her adult life was very much influenced by the time she spent in Kenya in the early 1960s.

At the age of 22 she went off to Kenya as a missionary, to teach young Africans at a teacher training college run by some Irish nuns. She had a wonderful time there and made lots of friends among her students and their families, becoming fascinated by Kikuyu culture and tradition. Among many stories she told was one about a weekend trip up country to some celebration with a group of African male friends. On the way back to Nairobi they were stopped by a group of armed white men who took exception to a blond, white woman in the company of black men. They were in real danger. Joan, although terrified, fronted up to them, until eventually help arrived and they were able to move on and report the incident to the police. On her return Joan was reprimanded sternly by a disapproving Reverend Mother, not because of the very real danger to her life, but for the non-existent threat to her virtue from her young friends!

For the rest of her life Joan maintained an interest in different people and different cultures. It was not merely academic: it was accompanied by a sensitivity to any racial or cultural inequality. Throughout her career she fought passionately for equal rights and dignity for all.

In spite of frailty of health Joan lived life to the full — as a list of the main organisations via which she carried on her work for justice, will testify. She was secretary of the Auckland Council for Civil Liberties, a committee member of the Howard League for Penal Reform, a foundation member of Project Paremoremo, a committee member of CARE and a foundation member of HART.

In addition she worked for the rights of political prisoners in Northern Ireland through the H Block committee. In support of this cause, as recently as March 17 last year only a few weeks before being confined to a wheelchair, she marched with an *Information of Ireland* protest group at the St Patrick's Day Parade and argued with the police who challenged the group's right to join the Parade. Later she phoned me gleefully to say: "I'm just writing a letter to the police assuring them I was not drunk and disorderly on St Patrick's Day!"

A lot of what Joan accomplished is now a part of our history

Over the last 12 months I spent a lot of time with her as she reminisced on her work as a social activist: Bastion Point, 1981 Springbok Tour protests, her 'sit-in' of several hours outside the *Herald* Editor's office until he agreed to print a press release on prison conditions. A lot of what Joan accomplished is now a part of our history.

Of all her many causes the one Joan looked back on with most satisfaction was Project Paremoremo. The Maximum Security Prison was opened in 1969; her work covered four years in the early 1970s. Her main concern was D Block, the isolation block supposedly for the most dangerous prisoners, where the treatment was brutal and restrictive with no educational or religious opportunities, and where riots were common. Joan met and became friendly with some of these men, all Maori and Pacific Islanders, most in fact not serious criminals: she was shocked by the conditions.

She battled with the authorities to bring about change, bombarding officials and members of parliament with letters, gaining access to lawyers and people of influence. A booklet produced later highlighted Project Paremoremo as the group which "had achieved more in the shortest time than any other group in the history of NZ." Joan commented: "My forte was a dull and deadly accuracy." She succeeded where many others failed because of sheer hard work and meticulous research, making sure of her facts, writing and re-writing press releases and submissions.

As a social activist Joan Waters was certainly a success story. But what was it that motivated her? She loved to analyse other people's interactions and motivations. Joan would never waste a phone conversation with "hello" or "How are you?" It would be: "Now, I want you to explain this to me." Looking back on her own life she subjected herself to the same self-analysis. She was convinced that her compelling need to work for justice came from her Catholic faith, and it was all simply a matter

of right and wrong, which her Catholic upbringing had taught her.

Another achievement, a more private one, was the influence she had on her young friends, many of whom she had taught, all of whom she continued to advise and support. These young people are her living legacy. After she died some of them shared memories of her, and I noted down the following: "She was such a mentor!.. I've never met anyone like her.. she had such strong moral values.. she knew right from wrong.. her instruction and ideals will remain with me all my life."

Her faith and principles stood her in good stead in the last few months of her life. She told a story about being visited by two Jehovah's Witnesses. On being greeted by her in her wheelchair, hearing of her cancer and being assured that she read her Bible regularly, they offered to give her their particular insights into heaven and hell. Joan replied: "I'm not interested in heaven or hell; all I'm interested in is doing the right thing."

To many people Joan appeared eccentric. She was a familiar figure walking the streets of Papatoetoe with a mass of frizzy hair, wearing jandals and a scarf. In action she appeared something of a firebrand. But as a friend I found her a genuinely caring person, loyal and supportive. I always felt the better for talking with her, even when we disagreed. She was a woman of keen and perceptive intelligence, with great determination and strength of mind, a lively sense of humour and an ability to enjoy herself. Life was never dull when Joan was around. She has left a huge gap in the lives of many people.

Joan Waters (1939-1998). Taken during the 70s

May she rest in peace.

Margaret France

Fr Jan Dijkman MHM

Jan Dijkman, parish priest of Wiri in South Auckland, scholar, friend of the Maori, catechist and lover of the word of God, died last month after a long struggle with cancer. Fr Jan worked for many fruitful years in the Maori apostolate in Auckland and also as part of the Religious Education team. He was Director for a few years during the 80s.

He was an outstanding atechist, someone who could bring the word of God to life in a wonderful way. He had the gift of engaging his listeners and bringing them on board what seemed to be an adventure of discovery: making the Scriptures come to life, applying them to the reality of one's daily existence, and making it all a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

He had not received any special training in the Scriptures. Simply that the Mill Hill Fathers gave their missionaries a month's sabbatical for each year of service, and Fr Jan made a point of using this invaluable time to immerse himself in Biblical study. It is an opportunity which could and should be made available to any priest or teacher of the faith. I recall one teacher after experiencing a weekend course with Jan saying: "If the bishops had any sense, they would take this man out of his administrative duties and send him round the country giving people the sort of experience with the word of God we have enjoyed."

He was a gentle teacher, with a quick wit and a ready smile. He spent his priestly life happily here in New Zealand so far away from his native Holland. We are grateful for the privilege of having known him and imbibing a little of his wisdom. ■

Michael Hill

Fr Jan composed his own funeral service, and put a strong emphasis on Baptism, which was always his favourite among the Sacraments. The Exodus reading about the birth of Moses took him back to his own childhood and baptism: *The reading speaks of birth and threats of death, of a basket — coffin or ark? Cries for help — a helping hand. Waters that save or waters that drown. Caring family ties and royal adoption.. all the time a destiny in the making.*

On the second reading from *Romans* he commented, prophetically: *Although we are joined to Christ's death through baptism, the baptismal journey is not completed until we personally experience death.*

Institution in crisis:

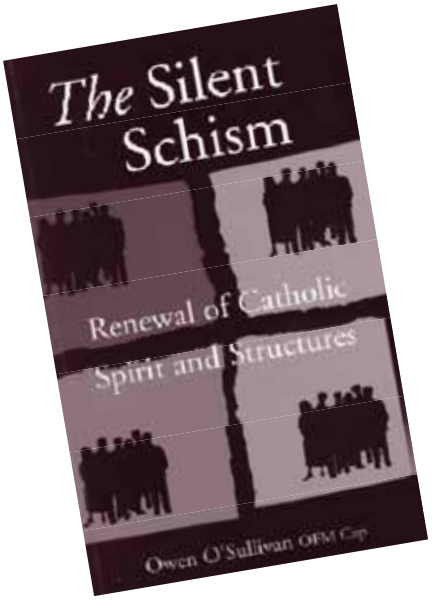
The Silent Schism: Renewal of Catholic Spirit and Structures
by Owen O'Sullivan OFM Cap
Gill and Macmillan
Price: $55 approx.

The Threshold of the Future: Reforming the Church in the Post-Christian West
by Michael Riddell
SPCK
Price: $49.95
Review: Michael Hill IC

Once upon a time books about the church by church people usually fell into the category of Apologetics: a description of what the church is, or should be, according to a theological ideal. Such writing was intended to define or help build up the faith and loyalty of believers. The marks of the church would be discussed, its scriptural origins; there might be references to the church as a "perfect society".

These two books about church, by authors with a New Zealand background, differ utterly from such a classical genre. They both treat the institutional church as a patient in a terminal state of illness. Yet they are both written from 'within the family': they are far from being hostile assaults from outside. They see the situation as grave, critical — but not without hope. It is a happy coincidence that they should appear about Eastertime, when we have just journeyed with Jesus through failure and cruel death to the surprise and the explosive joy of the resurrection. Indeed this resurrection hope is a thread underlying the shock diagnoses which leap out from virtually every page of both works.

The two books are written from a similar critical standpoint; they are well-written and easy to read; authoritative and well-documented. Yet they could not be more different. Owen O'Sullivan is an Irish Capuchin who served in New Zealand some years ago but whose recent experience has been African missions, particularly in Zambia. He focuses exclusively on the church he knows. For him the fatal disease is the Catholic church's misuse of power. Michael Riddell writes from the Protestant tradition – primarily Baptist – and he



sees the malaise in more general terms: a betrayal on the part of all the main churches to be faithful to the radical call of Christ. Reading the two alongside each other is a good deterrent from the alluring temptation to look over the wall to pastures which seem greener: if institutional Catholicism is so corrupt, perhaps things will be better in the Anglican communion or with the AOG. The fact is we are all in the same boat: mainline Christian churches are losing numbers at the rate worldwide of some 50,000 per week. Catholics are foolish if they think that this fatal haemorrhage is something happening elsewhere. The lessons and challenges of these two books are relevant to all of us who care for the future of the mission of Christ.

O'Sullivan begins by examiningfour 'models' of the Catholic church (not the Dulles models): the church as successor of the Roman Empire; as a sacred society separate and alternative to the modern state; as a sort of one-party state; as a crusading army. He notes aspects of each of these in the contemporary church, but concentrates on one common characteristic: "their structures, channels of leadership, authority and commun-ication are essentially of the top-down variety, without an adequate comple-mentary element from the bottom up (p27)". For O'Sullivan the damning indictment is that this top-down character is not only unrelated to the democratic age we live in: it is opposed to the life and teaching of Jesus as revealed in the Gospel.

Inevitably this indictment falls most heavily on the style of rule of the present papacy. One example he explores in some detail is the way in which the appointment of bishops during the 20th Century has become more and more concentrated in the hands of Rome. Even 30 years ago the wishes of the local church seem to have been far more influential in the choice of a new leader than now. The book also deals critically with many of the problems assailing the Catholic church at the present: the position of women, the lack of vocations, democracy – or the lack of it; conscience and marriage matters.

What is impressive about O'Sullivan's style is the wide sweep of his interest, the sureness of his historical touch, his effective use of anecdote. For instance, he speaks of his own experience as a pastor in Africa, and describes how he discovered that the most self-reliant and mature lay leadership arose in those parts of his mission he visited least. The reader is nudged into wondering whether the so-called vocations crisis in

fears and hopes for the Church

the church is not rather a real opportunity for an educated laity to take on the leadership which is its due!

Just when the reader thinks that the narrative is about to wind down and spend a few final pages in summary, O'Sullivan explodes his bombshell. The urgent surgery which an ailing church needs is to get rid of the Vatican. He hastens to remind his readers that throughout the book his reference to "Rome" or the Vatican refer to the Roman Curia, the City-State and the College of Cardinals; not to the papal office which he accepts as given us by Christ and therefore of the church's essence.

Compared with *The Silent Schism, Threshold of the Future* is like examining a piece of modern sculpture after looking at one of Bernini's flamboyant extravaganzas in St Peter's. It is a more down-to-earth style, looking at the Christian church in a post-modern world, with special focus on the Protestant churches, yet with obvious application to all mainline Christian bodies. Riddell paints on a much broader canvas. He always has an eye to the needs and aspirations of the human person in today's or tomorrow's context. It is a study for the end of one millennium, yet full of hope for the future. Riddell looks to Scripture for an answer to the present calamitous situation and focuses specifically on the story of Peter and the conversion of Cornelius in *Acts* Chapter 10. Peter the Jew was faced with yet another crisis of faith. The mission of the gospel of Christ meant the creation of a society which would leave behind the community of the Jewish covenant and circumcision. Peter was being invited to close the door on so much that he loved. It meant a death to his religious past, a stepping out again onto the waters of a dangerous, unknown future. To enable him to take this step he had not only the memory of the firm touch of Jesus' hand but also the fire of the spirit within him. The church is faced with exactly the same challenge at this moment of destiny at the end of the second millennium. The old ways and structures are irrelevant or in need of radical restructuring.

Yet Riddell is full of hope. If Christians can only have the courage to 'step outside the square', to embrace the modern world with all its frailties and apparent godlessness, then the Spirit will be with us and the Gospel will not fail to be heard. But the church of the future will be quite different from what we have known in the past.

Riddell makes a particular appeal to the need people have in this post-modern world to belong, to have community. This is something the church must work to provide just as Peter and Paul set up the first Christian communities. He quotes a few examples from his experiences among alternative church communities in Auckland.

While reading these sections I thought of the Christian base communities of the third World, also of the success in our own corner of Catholicism of the Passionist Family Movement. Small cells of believing people under lay leadership which exist to sustain and promote the living out of Christian values in a world which is in desperate need for precisely that – countercultural yet highly relevant.

He also notes that chaplaincy in its broadest sense is a paramount opportunity for Christians to be a rich and hidden leaven in a secular society. To achieve this the churches need to train suitable people and that may mean a radical redistribution of funds away from bricks and mortar: instead, investing in people.

Both these books challenge your complacency: they are 'naught for your comfort'. Yet what is consoling is their genuine call of hope. The message of Christ is by no means dying. It is the speaker system which is due for drastic overhaul – if not for total replacement. ■

What future for TVNZ?

Keith Harrison

Easter, the festival which is pivotal to Christianity, passed with almost no acknowledgement on our various television channels. This was in stark contrast to National Radio and Concert FM in which there was a strong Easter focus demonstrating their ability to meet the spiritual needs as well as the intellectual needs of their listeners.

Easter Day had an extended *Praise Be* entitled *Easter in Otago – 150 Years On.* This was an ecumenical service from Dunedin's First Church conducted by the Minister, Rev Denis Povey. It was well done but was relegated to the margins of the day at 8.30am.

The only discussion which took place was on Holmes on Good Friday. I find it intriguing that the producers of the Roman Circus which Holmes has become can't abandon their gladiatorial ambitions for one programme. We are officially a Christian country with a national ethos based on Christian values, and the programme could surely have examined the strengths of the Church today instead of having Jim Veitch ridiculing belief in the Resurrection. Shots of children in a Catholic school being questioned about their beliefs were obviously meant to portray brainwashed children who have been indoctrinated by the Church. The intention, on this most holy of days, was obviously to show that Christians are clinging to an outmoded set of archaic and unfashionable beliefs. It was only the children's innocent faith which shone out from this meanest of offerings on Good Friday.

And just as our television masters are afraid to acknowledge spirituality in human affairs, so they seem to have difficulty in finding programmes which make us laugh. We are still tentative about laughing at ourselves and at capturing the humour of those around us. *McPhail and Gadsby* have often succeeded in holding a mirror up to our society and have given us moments of great fun. In general they have failed to sustain such humour, almost as if they are afraid of what they have created. As a people we tend to have a rather laid back, dry and laconic sense of humour which was well caught by Fred Dagg and the late Barry Crump. But the eccentricities of individuals are not as much a subject for humour as they are in Britain.

It is not easy to forget the sophisticated humour of a show like *Yes, Prime Minister,* in which its success is due in no small part to the manner in which its bureaucrats parallel rather than parody reality. Many of the plots were real stories which were supplied to writers Anthony Jay and Jonathon Lynn by top officials, whereas our humour is often based on the comparison between the practical man or woman and the person who can't handle the situation.

We have many political situations which could be parodied and we have the writers waiting to have the opportunity of writing them down and weaving them into a story. It is therefore alarming to hear of the report from *NZ on Air* Chairman, David Beatson, that there has been no increase in locally produced programmes. "Few developed countries have such a low level of local content on their free-to-air TV Channels as New Zealand," he said. "America enjoys over 95 percent, Britain has over 80, Canada 60 and Australia 55. New Zealand has only 21 percent local content and one quarter of New Zealand programming is repeats."

If our writers are to survive and if we are to see adequate local programming which would include home-grown humour, we are in desperate need of some kind of Charter to protect and nurture our culture. We must continue to pressure our MPs in the hope that some appropriate political action will be taken to rectify the situation.

Major changes are taking place in Television New Zealand. Neil Roberts, their flamboyant director has resigned after a less than flattering article appeared in the latest *North and South*. At the same time the public has been rather coyly informed by TVNZ chairwoman, Rosanne Meo, that the Corporation had hired Australian firm McKerlies to "carry out strategic direction" work. She denied that this had any bearing on a possible sale while Trevor Mallard, Labour's State Services spokesman, reported that treasury had spent a six-figure sum on a "scoping" study by investment banking firm Ord Minnett. This study recommended TVNZ should be sold in its entirety.

It is danger time for the future of television in this country. The politicians appear to have forgotten the promises made at the time of coalition and look as if they're ready to accept a sale. TVNZ management is clearly in disarray and has lost direction with the defection of key executives and an accusation from Roberts that the chairwoman, Rosanne Meo, had interfered in the editorial process. TV1, in spite of all the re-structuring and re-organisation, still represents much of what middle New Zealand wants from the medium. If it could be saved as a public service channel, with all the licence money which is now distributed and dissipated by *NZ On Air* directed into it, with limited advertising arranged around a show instead of tailoring everything to the advertising, it would be an economically feasible project. All we lack is the political will.

I wonder how many of us would be passionate advocates for such a project. Or shall we turn up our toes, lie back and allow it to become the bland pap which is currently fed to the world through the Murdoch Empire. "Let them eat cake," was Marie Antoinette's frivolous and mindless answer to a plea for bread. Television New Zealand is treating its public in the same way and unless they take a radical change of direction, they too are heading for the same inevitable end. ■

Child sponsorship
The discovery that some children in Third World Countries individually sponsored by New Zealanders had actually been dead for many years, has left many benefactors questioning the value of this kind of charity. The Catholic agency *Caritas* and the ecumenical *Christian World Service* do not support child sponsorship; they seriously question the ethics of marketing a message of 'one dollar, one child', focusing on the desire of people to have an emotional commitment to a particular child.

Elizabeth Mackie, Projects Secretary for CWS, says, "We find that poor communities care for and look after their own children — provided they have the resources to do so". Donations to CWS and Caritas are channelled into resources for communities rather than for individual children. *(CWS Update)*

Missionary murdered in Bihar
Another Catholic missionary has been murdered in the Bihar province of Northern India. Br Luke Puttaniyil was killed while bringing a truckload of medical supplies and clothing from Calcutta for the poor. In March a priest was stabbed by a group of masked men in his church compound. No arrest has yet been made for the beheading last year of a Jesuit priest who worked among low-caste people in the town of Hazaribagh.

Hans Kung back in favour
In an extraordinary move a high ranking Vatican Cardinal has praised controversial Swiss theologian Hans Kung. Twenty years ago Kung was declared "no longer a Catholic theologian" because of writings on issues such as infallibility, birth control, women priests and compulsory celibacy for priests.

On March 24 Cardinal Angelo Sodano, the Vatican Secretary of State, said that Kung had demonstrated "faith in the river of goodness and mercy, of solidarity and willingness to help, which springs from the gospels and runs through 2000 years of Christian history".

Fr Kung, who claims he has always followed the Vatican Council, said this is "a sign of hope for the church... a signal that either now or in the future we can have an orthodox Papacy without excommunicating and silencing theologians".

Cause of Pope John
Preliminary stages in the canonisation process of Pope John XXIII have been completed. The next step is for the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints to give approval and declare the former Pope, already looked upon as a saint by many people, as 'Venerable'. This could still take some years.

Repenting the Spanish Civil War
Next year is the 60th anniversary of the ending of the Spanish Civil War. A proposal that the Spanish bishops ask forgiveness for the Church's support of the regime of General Franco's Fascist dictatorship has caused a difference between the country's two Cardinals.

Cardinal Varela of Madrid says that many Catholics worked hard to oust Franco and achieve democracy and "the rest should be left to historians and the judgment of future generations." But Cardinal Carles of Barcelona is in favour of some "gesture of reconciliation" regarding the Church's collaboration with the regime of General Franco. The Vatican agrees that some statement should be made but prefers to wait until the year 2000 rather than linking it with the anniversary.

Third World Debt
The Archbishop of Canterbury has declared that Third World debt raises "sharp moral questions". The combined debt of sub-Saharan African countries has reached US$235 billion. He criticised the World Bank and the IMF for the unequal terms imposed on poor countries. The Archbishop urges support for the Jubilee 2000 campaign for cancellation of unpayable world debt, calling the year 2000 a 'kairos' moment, a moment of truth. ■

Russian Seafarers – A Moral Dilemma

The abandonment of 89 Russian seafarers in Lyttelton is a moral issue as much as it is a political or economic one. The facts are fairly clear. A New Zealand Company, Abels Fisheries, contracted five jointly owned Russian-Liechtenstein trawlers to fish. Unfortunately for the crew, Abels had no quota. The ships were arrested by the Ministry of Fisheries and the court ordered the seizure of the ships as part penalty. Abels conveniently went into liquidation, leaving the men high and dry without $1.1 million in wages.

There are four parties to the court action. The men want their wages, the Ministry of Fisheries want their ships, the Immigration Department want the Russians back home, and the Lyttelton Port Company want the wharves vacated.

This is the moral dilemma. The Lyttelton combined Churches Committee, in a letter to the High Court, has stated clearly that the principle of the Common Good should be the guiding principle. In their opinion the Russian seafarers are in far greater need than either of the ministries or the port company.

The men have been abandoned on our shores. They came in good faith, left their families behind and have been badly treated by a local company. They have lived for months, with little money or food, no electricity and little hope. Some have been sick. Their very survival depends on the humanity of New Zealand. Legally the ships now, by court order, belong to the Crown. But the Crown is not a piece of metal. It consists of the legal representatives, both elected and employed, of the people of New Zealand. That's us, folks.

The moral question to be faced is, does providing justice to these men by paying wages due take precedence over collecting fines? The short answer is, yes.

This type of situation will not be the last of its kind now our coastal waters are crewed by ships flying all sorts of flags of convenience. Whose moral responsibility is it to protect the sailors? Since it was the government which changed the rules and threw these enterprises to the market winds, it is clearly they who should take final responsibility for overseas workers when these operations collapse.

It is time for the appropriate government authorities to sell the ships, pay the men their wages and fly them back to Russia to their families. With the eyes of the world upon us nothing less will be honourable, moral or acceptable. ■

Jim Consedine