Tui Motu

InterIslands

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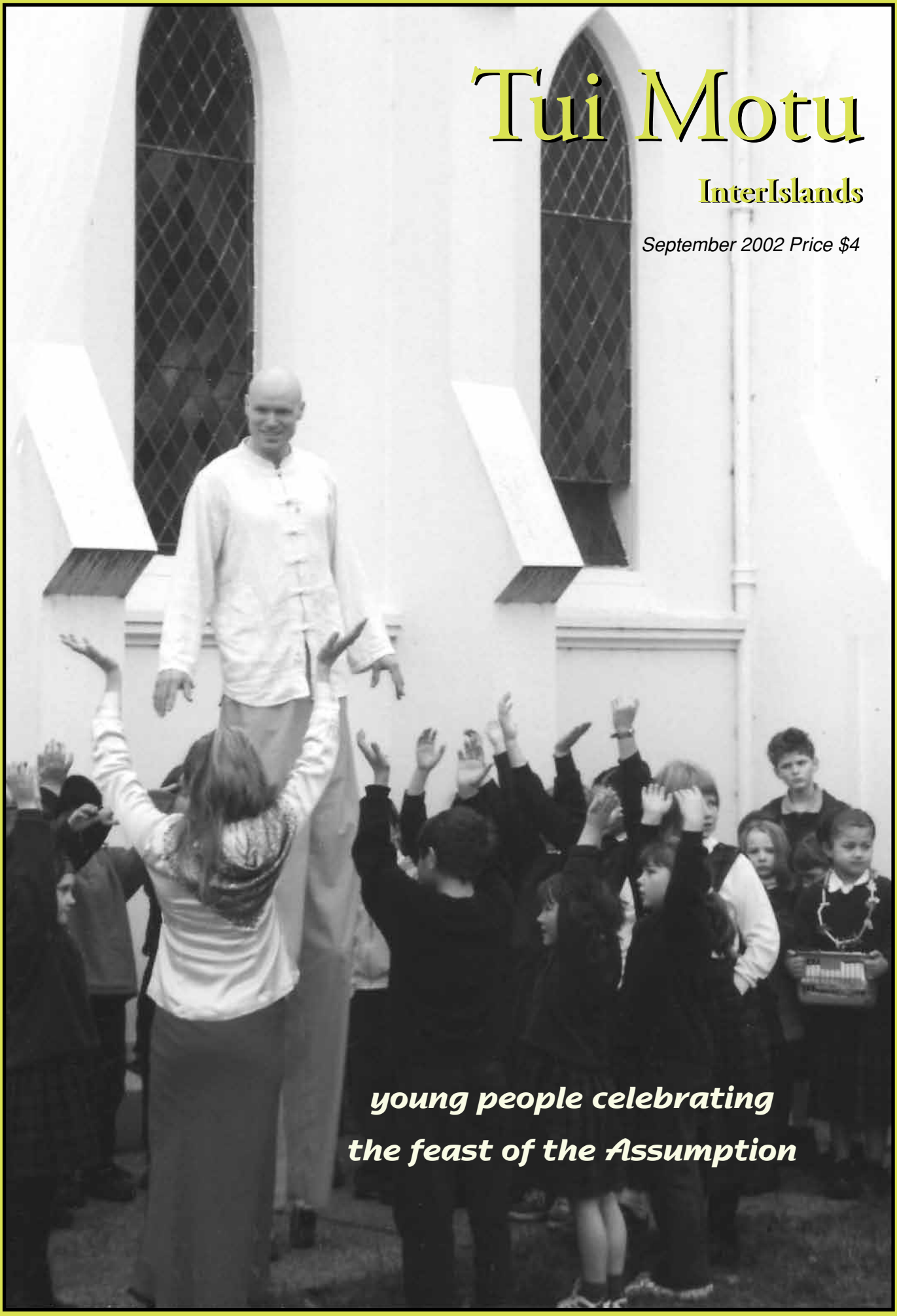

young people celebrating the feast of the Assumption

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Cover picture

Stilt walkers depicting Jesus and Mary lead a procession of pupils from Sacred Heart School, Dunedin, on the feast of the Assumption, 15 August.

The musical celebration in mediaeval style was composed and directed by Susan Frykberg for a *Worship and the Performing Arts* Theology Project at Otago University

To whom the kingdom belongs

The plight of Palestinian children in the Gaza strip and in the West Bank settlements, makes sobering reading. The Israeli blockade has left one in ten children under five severely under-nourished. Worse, a sense of hopelessness and hatred is being nurtured – the seed-ground for yet another generation of suicide bombers. There is no greater indictment of the continuing policy of the successive Israeli governments than the suffering of those innocent children and families. Behind Ariel Sharon stands the unwavering – and seemingly unconditional – support of President Bush, not to speak of the feeble and ineffectual protests of other great powers.

This is but one example of the way the so-called 'civilised' world treats its children. Starvation, abuse, illiteracy, the grinding poverty of sweatshops and stinking slums: this is the present experience of millions of children the world over. No joy, no hope, a reduced expectation of life, little love, apocalyptic neglect. In an age of unparalleled wealth and human achievement, there is no greater scandal.

Jesus constantly encouraged little children to come close to him. He touched them, he spoke to them gently, he healed them. Their innocence and trust were their passport to the kingdom. This issue of *Tui Motu* has many articles about young people. There are stories of children being rescued from situations of deprivation, social and educational. Adults – many of them volunteers – who do this work are surely following a gospel imperative. These are the often unsung stories of good news which balance the catalogue of woes listed above.

We also have a lead story from America (*see page 5-8*) of a young person's faith journey. We hope many young people will read it, and use it as standard for measuring their own faith experiences.

At the same time we read a sobering challenge from veteran educationalist Ivan Snook. While his main theme is an indictment of Catholics to measure their attitudes against the social justice calls of the Gospel and of recent popes, there is also a strong call to our church schools to examine their values and priorities.

Schools today are inevitably caught up in a crucible of competing demands. Caring parents inevitably have high hopes for their children. They put pressure on schools to succeed. And rightly so. At the same time the com-petitive nature of business and the workplace spills over into the running of those schools.

These influences can easily upset the balance of a healthy and Christian educational environment. The Gospel is not about gaining a competitive edge over others; in fact, the word *excellence*, so beloved of educators these days, does not appear very often in the Bible, which tends to talk more about sin and how to repent it! Jesus urges us to care for the least successful. Mutual love, mercy and justice are key biblical themes. They should be reflected strongly in our schools if they are to merit the name 'Christian'.

A focus on achieving high standards for ourselves should never distract us from the wider picture. The poor of the world are starving; the children of the poor receive none of the advantages our own youngsters take for granted. Their idealism to share their riches needs to be challenged and channelled.

Many years ago a young man about to leave school came to me for advice as to how spend a few months before going to Varsity. I arranged for him to take on volunteer work with youth in one of the worst twilight zones in Britain. The tales he had to tell were hair-raising – what we would nowadays term a 'wake-up call'. But I have never forgotten his comment afterwards to his old class-mates. "Whatever I do in life," he said, "I hope I will always be able to give back something to people as unfortunate as those guys are". He had tasted the reality of the Gospel of Christ.

M.H.

Balancing – over puddles

***B**alance*. First it was art. The art of walking across the log, the make-shift bridge, that straddled the puddle. It was the fun part about going to school. We learnt that our arms, stretched perpendicular to our bodies, aided the traverse. No gym lessons from age five for us.

Secondly, balance was a weapon in the parental arsenal. It was one of those words used when wishing to restrict the excesses of offspring: "You need some balance in your life, boy! Going out with so-and-so is all well and good, but don't neglect your sport, your other friends, and your family." I suppose they meant well. But it always sounded like they wanted me to slow down and go at their pace. "Be like us" was what I heard.

Thirdly, it was politics. Wheeling and dealing allegedly for the good of all. The backroom tasks of building a majority in order that a piece of legislation proceed. Balancing the central tenets of the good idea with the peripheral compromises needed to bring votes. It was pragmatic. Achieving a balance often restricted the excesses of any one ideology. Such was my early intro-duction to the word. Not a particularly positive introduction, but not irredeem-able either.

Nowadays I still use it. Sometimes as a weekly time-sheet. You know... making time for work and leisure, activity and inactivity, strangers and friends, laughter and solemnity, prayer and parties, music and silence. ***For everything there is a season***, (*Eccles 3:1*). A number of the self-help health and spirituality books are into this sort of balancing. As a lifestyle it has much to commend it.

One needs to be careful though. Should love be balanced with hate? Should healing be balanced with hurting? I think not. This sort of 'balanced life' can also feed – and be fed by – the prevailing individualism in Western societies. Can we really live healthy lives if our planet is sick? Do we just cocoon ourselves from the needs of those whose problems seem larger than we can fix? I think not.

So, I use balance not only as personal time-sheet but as a way to think about our world – about ecology, injustice, and poverty. I heard of some parents who gave their children $1.50 pocket money each week. A third was to be spent on presents for friends and family. A third was to be was to spend on themselves. The final third was to be spent on strangers in need (i.e. a charity of some description).

The unanticipated outcome was that a knowledge wave broke upon the family. With 33 percent of their income headed to unknown destinations, the children rapidly read up on national and international helping agencies and debated the merits/demerits of each. *Greenpeace*, *Oxfam*, and *Habitat For Humanity* were the eventual recipients.

Generosity is something that must be modelled, learnt, and practised if we are ever to heal our planet. Children need to see adults doing it. Selfishness doesn't seem to need the same attention. It seems to be in the air our society breathes. (Yet I would be concerned if it was altogether absent.)

I have been privileged to live in the United States of America. It's a great country and people were very generous towards me. Anecdotally this generosity seems to be the experience of many travellers. Yet it is a country where the poor are expected to help themselves. And if they don't, or can't, they seem to receive little.

America is also a country that, proportional to GDP, gives very little money for overseas aid and development work. Where they do 'invest' is in expanding their global market. There seems to be little selflessness about it.

Why is there a wonderful generosity exhibited by America on a personal, individual level but not on a national or international level? Where is the balance? We, too, need to encourage generosity not just on the local level but in the policies and practices of our government both here and overseas.

Far from seeing Western nations balancing upon the child's log, trying to serve their own needs as well as others, the non-Western, majority world by and large see them sitting in their own puddle and taking what they can to augment that puddle. ■

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Tui Motu-InterIslands

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Tui Motu-InterIslands is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual and social issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-church and inter-faith dialogue is welcomed. The name *Tui Motu* was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.

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Any five years of life can pass like a flash, but none like the first five. For the individual it's a semi-conscious haze. There's little awareness of time. We line up for meals when we're hungry, go to bed when we're tired, and then one day we go 'unwillingly to school'.

Parents looking at the same five years are more conscious of time passing but are nonetheless astonished when the youngster they remember carrying around the house waves to them tentatively as she enters the school gates 'a few months later'. Families reach for the photograph album from time to time to make sure it all happened.

Fives years tracing the birth and development of a spiritual enterprise is similar in time but not much else. *Tui Motu* was born in 1997, but only just; some feared she would be still-born, such were the slender resources surrounding her entry into the world of Catholic publications. Large helpings of faith and hope, boosted by sufficient charity, ensured her survival.

The initial challenge presented us with a paradox that we still live with i.e. choosing independence makes us very dependent! By choosing editorial independence we were thrown back on whatever resources we could muster. We had no entitlement to support from formal church channels, nor had we the right to expect any, but it did launch us upon a tenuous path not trodden by many.

In the English-speaking world the only independent magazines I am aware of are *The National Catholic Reporter* in the United States and the London *Tablet*. Not that we rate ourselves in such august company but it underlines the exclusivity of membership in the 'independence club'. At a recent conference in Australia I heard a delegate describe the rise and fall of a similar venture in the land of the big brother. Are we pushing our luck to imagine that Aotearoa can manage it if the Aussies can't?

There are better questions to ask. Is there really a need to have an independent Catholic magazine available to the New Zealand reading community? *Tui Motu* says "Yes". It is useful and salutary to have wide-ranging discussion about how to interpret the circumstances of our time in the light of faith; this may occasionally be explorative, even adventurous but deserves space and welcome.

Our editorial masthead puts it well enough:

Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.

A receptive climate providing the opportunity to question, and even to be critical, is as much a condition of growth for the church as any other institution.

The real challenge is not proclaiming why we have a right to exist, but to assemble resources to ensure that we continue to do so. Our current assets can be simply described. Our editor is a gift from the Rosminian order; his market value we shudder to think about. The assistant editor migrated from the North Island to make her talents available in Dunedin, and receives a modest salary for doing so; their combined skills have placed the content and presentation of *Tui Motu* in the first rank for magazines of its kind. Prizes of many kinds testify to this in addition to constant compliments from readers.

The Dominicans have graciously made available the premises that houses *Tui Motu* in the midst of Otago University. A host of local volunteers facilitate the proof-reading, packaging and posting process that looms up each month.

At some stages removed we have volunteers throughout the country who act as salespersons after Mass on Sundays. Then there is a board of directors, nine in number, who meet twice a year, striving then and at all times, to advance the progress of *Tui Motu*.

Not least, readers, we greet you. Along with the editorial staff you are *Tui Motu*. We invite you to celebrate the fifth birthday and to negotiate the next five with us. Spiritually we are in reasonable shape; perseverance against odds is difficult but graceful.

Economically, we could be an accountant's nightmare. We have a wonderful product everyone keeps telling us that – but we need to sell more of it; for two reasons, first it makes better apostolic sense to place the magazine in more hands than less, and second, every sale gives us a better chance in the development stakes.

Above and beyond all our best chance resides in the solidarity that has characterised the (ad)venture of *Tui Motu*. Thank you for your contribution to that. More of the same please.

Tom Cloher, chairperson of the Tui Motu *Board, resides in Auckland*

Asking the right questions

What's it like for a young person to be a Catholic in the United States today? This essay, from Anna Nussbaum of Colorado, won the Commonweal *Younger Writers' Contest in 2001. It first appeared in* Priests and People

Being Catholic doesn't give me the answers, but it does give me the questions.

In mathematics one must accept certain axioms, certain truths. Most important, one must accept the theoretical concepts of a point, a line, and a plane. Their existence cannot be proved or dis-proved, but they are the be-ginning of understanding geometry. My instructor explained, "You can't prove anything from nothing... When you write a dictionary, if you don't have any words, you can't define any words."

We are a generation trying to write a dictionary of belief without words. Spoiled. Confused. Unwanted. Unformed. We have no place from which to begin. But faith persists, and all around me I find believers.

What makes my friends tick?

Dallas Thompson's head is never unplugged. He sits in the back row of journalism class wearing headphones. As the heavy metal crescendos in his ears, he scribbles down his thoughts on scraps of paper, thoughts which will later become 'zines' (home-made magazines). He seems to write in time to the music. The music pouring from the earphones is loud; we listen in, though we cannot make out the lyrics. But Dallas' mind makes sense of the noise. In it he finds prophets who preach truth. I wonder if, for him, silence is noise.

Dallas is a believer. He distributes vegan literature, and in the animal-product-free lifestyle he finds commandments and a strict code of conduct. He bathes once a week. He lives simply. He uses his earnings to buy high-priced organic foods. He recycles his plastic juice bottles, and every day he carries a lunch box to school. He carries a lunch box when other hard-core kids eat hamburgers and French fries and carelessly leave their cardboard trash behind.

With other vegans, Dallas feels less alone. He knows, intuitively, that there is more to life than leisure, and he seeks ultimate meaning in a dairy-free diet. He tells me he wants to have the words *Vegan for Life* tattooed across his chest. "I'm not gonna pussy out and become a vegetarian like so many vegans do," he says. "I believe in veganism."

Like me, ***Tim Ross*** is an International Baccalaureate (IB) diploma student. Our classes are rigorous and we are tested by international standards. Our exams are sent across the globe. The first-born son of strict Republican parents, one a nonpractising Jew and the other an atheist who was raised Presbyterian, Tim gets top grades in the hardest classes. He wins at international science fairs.

He wants to go to Columbia University and then train to become an astronaut. He wants, more than anything, to make his parents proud. So he works hard. He takes a Russian-language class at the local community college, competes in debates, volunteers, and builds, builds, builds his résumé, as we all do. Tim is a decent guy. I envy his transcript.

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▷▷ During his Freshman year, Tim was baptised at *Radiant Assemblies of God*, a local fundamentalist church, six months after he joined its youth group. But his devotion dwindled and he no longer believes in Christianity. He's too smart, that's all.

As he matured, the youth group didn't, or wouldn't, mature with him. They were still preaching about why you shouldn't kiss on the first date, and doing 'trust falls', while Tim was struggling with the existence of the Trinity and with materialism. There wasn't enough at *Radiant* for Tim, who always demands more from life. That church was too dogmatic. It never encouraged inquiry.

In Tim's eyes, intellectuals are seldom believers – and never fundamentalist Christians. And anyway, Tim has a new rite of initiation to anticipate. Getting into Columbia University will be very much a salvific event for him. Columbia is for the élite, the chosen, the few. Tim will have earned a place among them and his life will, someday, be worth remembering.

For now, all of his value can be typed onto an application and stuffed in a manilla envelope to be scanned in 15 minutes by a member of the admissions department. He seeks ultimate meaning within the boundaries of logic, intelligence, and achievement.

Katie Cline is a dancer, or at least she used to be. I met her in study hall. She went to a boarding school for dancers, but a year later returned to public high school. I guess she didn't make the cut. Still, she tends to her body religiously. She is anorexic: never eats a complete meal, and never gains a pound. She always carries a water bottle. Her legs are invariably smooth. Her skin is exfoliated and hydrated and immaculate.

If she lets her discipline lag, she will no longer be recognisable as who she is: a dancer, and a member of the club. Katie doesn't go to church, but she still tries to win converts...
"Anna", she says, "I can show you how to make a diet for yourself that you can live with." And, "Really, you should stretch at least half an hour every morning; it's the only way..."

It is a kindness. Katie is sharing with me the orthodoxy behind her actions, the wisdom that guides her every step. Without her practices she wouldn't be who she is. Dance has trained her, and disciplined her. Katie seeks ultimate meaning in her body and in dance.

Can everything be understood from and through them? Can they transcend one's individual life? And are they strong enough to build a life on?

I'm at a party. A lot of people are drinking and, after a few beers, they have announced that they will not raise their children in a religious tradition. (*I've noticed that when people are drunk they like to talk about God.*) "I would just never do that to my kids," one says. "I'd let them decide for themselves about God. I wouldn't force it down their throats."

They are passing on to their children the only religion they know, the religion of choice. This is a faith that makes them feel, as one of them says, "not really a part of any culture", that is, except a part of the consumer culture. They will raise their children to have choices. To survey the goods and choose the best buy.

For my peers, religion is but one choice in a world of choices. For me it is my beginning. It is the very soil in which I was planted. It is what happens every day. It is the prayers I say, or don't say. It is the questions I ask, the rituals I do. It is my parents.

It is Sundays and holydays of obligation. It is the seasons. It is the source of frustration. It is dinner-table conversation. It is bad singing. It is my siblings. It is my identity. It is my limitation. It is the lens through which I was taught to see. It is my culture.

I still choose every day, as my friends do. But I choose knowing that God expects something from me, and wondering what it is. I was raised Roman Catholic and that will never change, though it has changed me.

Are these faiths enough to last us a lifetime?

I have two dear friends, Avi and John. ***Avi Goldman*** is Jewish. After his mother died of cancer, Avi was very angry at God. Still, he celebrated his *bar mitzvah*. His father and sister don't practise. He goes to temple alone. For two years after Avi's mother died, his father took him and his sister around the world. They slept in a tent and got around on public transportation. Avi was 11 years old at the outset and turned 12 on the trip. He has ten journals from that time.

Avi wasn't raised to be religious, but Indonesia, India, and Thailand turned him into a passionate boy and a believer. He struggles with the particulars, but still seeks to live a life of faith because he witnessed so many believers in his journeys and saw, first-hand, the limitlessness of God's creation.

John Smith used to attend *Bethany Brethren* Chapel. He doesn't talk about his faith with me or anyone else at

school. Mostly, he just lives it. His mother and sister dress modestly. His family doesn't own a television set or a secular music collection. He misses jokes about sitcoms and rap music. When I am a guest at his house, at dinner with his family, the boys pull out the chairs for all the ladies, even their little sister.

The three of us – John, Avi, and I – are an unlikely trio. A conservative Protestant, and a reform Jew, and a Catholic feminist – sounds like the beginning of a bad joke. I am considerably more rebellious than the two of them, neither of whom dates. It's true that outside of school we often hang out with different crowds. But we are still the best of friends because we are involved in a never-ending conversation.

We share a common vocabulary of faith. We laugh with each other. We speak freely. I have more in common with Avi and John, with Muslims and Mormons, than with those who feel that every religion can be purchased, or returned for a full refund. Or with those who believe that every religion can be discarded on the basis of logic. Or with those for whom diets, or achievements, take highest priority.

Avi and John understand what believing is like. They understand its limitations, its frustrations, and its beauty. The three of us have words with which to discuss our lives. We compare and contrast customs, and discuss philosophies. We have each chosen a spoke of the same wheel to follow. It seems that we will each arrive at the centre eventually if we continue on our paths.

A walk in the hills

Avi turns to me in the library and asks me if I'll go for a hike with him. I am glad for an excuse not to do my homework. We drive to the mountains and start hiking the Mount Cutter Trail in Cheyenne Canyon. We make small talk, but I keep thinking about a friend's abortion. Avi asks me what I am thinking about it.

Avi is pro-choice. It's hard to have this conversation; most people just avoid talking about abortion. It's too painful. As soon as friends become sexually active, almost everyone knows someone who has had an abortion. I need to speak, but don't know what I think or what I should say. So that day I tell Avi I think we, as a community, can do better than abortion. I tell him that abortion degrades women, and kills children, and haunts my friends. It haunts me.

I tell him it asks too much of young girls. I tell him society forces girls and women to feel that they should take part in this honour killing; that remaining childless protects their integrity, their choices in life. I tell him all this, feeling that my Church hasn't done enough to stop it, or to prevent it, or to change it. I tell him all this knowing that I am a part of the problem, and that I have not been there to help. It feels good to speak about it even though I know how strongly Avi disagrees.

The air is thin and crisp. We hike faster until our breathing becomes laboured. The conversation winds its way to the top of the hill and off the trail. It climbs over rocks, and runs down the gravel to the road. Finally, Avi understands where I am coming from. I say something like "every life is sacred". He says, "Yeah. You're right. But I don't think I could live it... I mean the real world doesn't work that way... If it was my girlfriend, I'd still want her to have the abortion."

Avi believes abortion is right in a wrong sort of way. But even if it is wrong, he can't live it, this belief, all alone. The society tells him it's supposed to be that way: ***one person, one choice***. It's supposed to be true that the continuation of a pregnancy is every single woman's choice, but it's not. Husbands, bosses, boyfriends, bills decide. And, alone, we choose out of desperation and, well, loneliness.

Being Catholic doesn't give me the answers, but it does give me the questions. It gives me courage to ask hard questions because I'm not alone. "What if your best friend got pregnant tomorrow?" Avi asks. "I don't know," I answer. "I guess she'd have the baby."

Easier said than done, but not impossible. In the lonely, fend-for-yourself world, maybe it is impossible. But in a family, a community, a friendship, a tradition where 'these things happen', where miracles happen, where you are worth more than your résumé, anything seems possible. Where wine is turned into blood. Where forgiveness happens.

Where the rich housewife and the homeless man drink from a single cup. And a dead man was resurrected to ascend into heaven. Where people, however flawed and foolish, believe, everything seems a little more possible. If this community can believe that the dead will rise again, can they also believe that the child of an unmarried teen mother can be loved, can be valued, can be good?

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Otago Youth

Four years ago Tui Motu *featured an initiative in Dunedin city to rescue young people dropping out of school. It was a classic example of intervention 'at the cliff top' – the community seeking out and assisting some of its most vulnerable members. Recently the project was revisited. We found it had grown and developed*

The *Otago Youth Wellness Trust* has now been in existence since 1995. The original focus was on young people who tended to drop out of the school system. Primarily through a system of mentors, these individuals are helped to regain some self-esteem and, hopefully, return comfortably into the educational system.

Seven years on, says its founder, retired Secondary Principal Pat Harrison, the focus is still on youth who play truant from school but its scope has broadened. The Trust now gets referrals from the Mental Health system, from CYPS, from GPs, direct from families – or even from young people themselves.

"As a community based agency," says Pat, "we are flexible enough to respond quickly to a new situation or need as it arises." In 1998 the agency dealt with 169 young people from the Dunedin city area. Now they are handling over 300 cases. There is now a properly constituted learning centre for young people unable to cope in normal schooling. These are not 'special needs' children, as much as 'normal' children whom the school system cannot contain.

Pat Harrison thinks the whole community gains from this exercise. The mentors find they learn and gain as much as they give. People recognise that these youngsters have become marginalised because of upbringing or some psychological trauma; they are, therefore, as much entitled to what society can offer as a 'normal' child from a stable home.

One of the principal benefits is that a community conscience is being built up. Indeed the community, Pat Harrison contends, comes to welcome an opportunity of being involved in such a socially valuable exercise. ■

Holy Thursday

One Holy Thursday the church lady asked me if I'd come up from my pew and have my feet washed. They needed someone from my demographic. Why not? I thought it would be fun. I sat on the stoop between a deaf Hispanic man who looked homeless and an elderly Polish immigrant who struggled with his shoes and socks. I looked out at the congregation. I saw some kids from my high school. I saw all their stories. The one who had to come. The one who came alone. The one who came because he loves the pomp, the kitsch, the culture of it all. The one whose mother is so depressed that she didn't get out of bed that day or the day before that or the day before that. The one whose mother is dead.

They were all singing this sweet, haunting melody: ***Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est.*** The Polish man sat like a child on the step with his pants legs rolled up. When his turn came, one priest held his hands gently under the man's little white and blue legs, the other poured clear water over his bony old feet and yellowing toenails. Then the bishop leaned down and kissed the man's feet as he had kissed mine. The man wept, moaned, and cried out.

Moral axioms make mathematical axioms seem simple. No axiom is proved, so it requires imagination. I walk out into the night. Clean feet. Light heart. Maybe it was the singing or the quiet, or the men on the stoop, or the babies sleeping, but my eyes feel open. Open to see miracles.

I look up and see the black sky, and the big white moon. I close my eyes and see the pews and the sea of people. I'm not alone, and under this sky seems a big enough place to begin. ■

Wellness Trust

This Tui Motu *interview was with Maria Noonan who is Co-ordinator for the Otago Youth Wellness Trust*

Over the past four years the spectrum of referrals to the Otago Youth Wellness Centre has become much wider. In Dunedin, several alternative education programmes cater for young people with learning difficulties. There are, however, some children for whom this doesn't seem to work. Often they have been through the alternative programmes before they come to the *Otago Youth Wellness Centre*.

What we are basically working on is their ability to relate to people. Sometimes they do not even know what it is to *belong*. What we aim to do is restore them to a point where they can return to the school system and fit in again. They may have had a history of family breakdowns or other traumas. What they have lost is the ability to connect normally with society: our task is to restore it.

these young people have lost the ability to connect with society – our task is to restore it

The staff who deal with these young people need to be highly skilled. They are either trained teachers, occupational therapists or social workers. We also have a psychologist who works alongside them. The salaried staff do the assessments and carry out one-to-one learning programmes. We receive funding from Health, Education and Welfare, because the problems we are dealing with impinge on all these areas.

We also have mentors and tutors who are volunteers. The mentors are trained by us for their task, and we provide professional supervision for them. The mentors are adults of all ages. We always need to be careful to match a young person with his/her mentor. The relationship needs to be stable, and we need people who are really interested in the students.

Because of the fragmentation of society generally, what we try to achieve is to bring people together to help one another in ways that will be mutually beneficial. The mentors and their friends and families come to understand the serious deprivation these young people in our world are suffering, at the same time helping them escape from their predicament.

There are two distinct groups who come to us. There are those who have been in the system but have failed to cope because of, say, a serious mental health breakdown. They need an adult alongside them helping them back into a pattern of learning, perhaps also helping them choose what they might do with their lives eventually.

The second group are sufferers from ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder) who, unless very well managed, will usually fall out of Secondary School because they cannot cope. They often have behavioural problems. They have become experts at pushing boundaries, and school systems tend to be too inflexible to cope easily with them. We often find they have other problems. They may have missed out on vital steps in their learning, or they cannot process information properly.

Some are the victims of a change in funding policy for Secondary Schools. These days the grant tends not to cover these cases. They drop out because schools haven't the resources to cope with them. The situation may be compounded by a difficult home situation or a mental health problem as well. They often have multiple disabilities. Their social interaction skills are lacking, they do not understand the rules, and they may lack an ability to think abstractly. ▷▷

▷▷ Sometimes they come to us at a younger age – 13 to 14 – than most young people in our care. Initially we resisted taking children of this age because we knew they were missing out on the vital socialisation which a school offers. But High Schools are reluctant to take them on or, if they do, they drop out early.

We have seven or eight young people altogether in our 'special education' group varying in age from 13 to 17. When they first arrive they can scarcely relate at all to other children. They always have individual tuition, but we hope that in time they will move on to working in a group.

The first part of our task is to assess a young person's needs, then we have to provide the skilled people to meet those needs. We are teaching them how to 'walk' again. The success is that some have gone back to school successfully or are now in stable employment. Those in jobs are not lost to the learning process: they will be able to come back.

many of these children have basic problems in relating to one another

Over all we have an equal number of boys and girls passing through. More girls in the older group, more boys in the younger group. This is because young boys are more likely to 'act out' their disability early on – so we pick them up at that stage. We pick up the girls later on.

The incidence of mental health problems among children is increasing. There are multiple causes: increased fragmentation in society; children suffering from grief because of a loss of parent or a family break-up; others have been abused or treated cruelly. Some children survive all this, but many don't. Using alcohol or drugs compounds the problem. So they may have serious problems at home and they are living in a world which is less supportive of them outside the home. The causes are complex.

In an earlier generation most people grew up in a 'village' situation, where society was intact and supportive. It was not that there were not problem kids. But parents received support from a more stable social environment. Even now, if the school atmosphere is stable, caring and supportive this may make up for for deficiencies outside, and you can expect a reasonable outcome. Unfortunately many of these children have moved from school to school, or from place to place, and have never settled down anywhere.

Some cases

Case One: Chris. Chris came from the country; he had moved around a lot; his background was fragmented; he had 'changed' parents; he had spent a lot of time out of school; after three weeks in school in Dunedin he became violent. So he came to us and we have had him 18 months.

Progress has taken time. At first he was very wary. In the first year there was little success. But now, says Maria, I can see something I would never have imagined possible: a capacity for leadership. Recently he challenged the behaviour of a new student. A year ago he would never have been able to do that. He can now make friends.

At first he was very angry although for the most part it was on the inside. He could never wait for anything. But he has overcome this, and one good influence has been his work experience. He has discovered that he likes cooking and he's good at it.

He has become calmer; he relates with people; you can joke with him. One thing he can do now is reflect on the way he was. He has discovered self-esteem. It is difficult for us to judge how much his deprivation was shaped by his upbringing or by limitations in his basic ability to reason.

Case Two: Emma Emma suffers from what is known as Asberger's Syndrome. Up to 15 she was eligible for special

All people are gifts

Maria Noonan, and her husband Mike, spent 17 years working in *L'Arche* communities in Britain before coming to this work with the Trust. She sees a difference in the sense that *L'Arche* is a community where the disabled people live together in a family situation. Yet there is a similarity in that these young people are learning to live with one another, learning to live again in community.
The experience of *L'Arche* taught her to understand how profoundly disabled people also relate to other human beings – but also to appreciate that whatever their handicap, these people are a gift to others and a gift to us. It is the same with those who come to the *Wellness Centre*.
It is a lesson that a very individualistic and fragmented society needs to learn – the giftedness of others. *The Otago Youth Wellness Centre* is one agency which helps people to discover this again.

support at school. With support from Day programmes and the Correspondence School she was able to make progress academically, even passing School Cert subjects. But when she turned 16, this support ceased. She came to us this year, and her learning has been totally one-to-one. She is regular in her attendance. She will probably make academic progress, but her social behaviour is still pretty basic. She still has a long way to go.

By the time she is ready to go to Polytech there will be help available to her. But at present she is in a 'gap', and that is what we are filling for her. She would love to go back to school – and we may be able to support her to go back part-time.

The first term she was with us she learned very little. But once she learned to relax and be at home with us, she has started to make progress. We have to be very patient with people like Emma.

Our awareness of people dropping out as soon as they get to High School has moved us to look at anticipating the causes earlier and targeting students at Intermediate School. We applied for and have received Innovation Funding from the Ministry of Education to research this. So we are seeking to become more proactive.

What we are discovering is that many of these children have basic problems in relating to people. Or they have something radically amiss with their learning ability. They may become quite skilful in concealing or avoiding their problems. What we have to do is to follow them down their blind alleys until we discover where the block is. Then we can make a start in the healing process. ■

Being a mentor

Stacey O'Regan is a postgraduate student at Otago University. She has done a community and family studies degree course. She mentors for the Wellness Centre programme.

I want to work with youth after I qualify, so I saw mentoring as an opportunity to get some voluntary experience. I did a month's training at the end of 2000 and was matched up with Diane then, and we have remained together ever since. Normally you spend one year with a student, but I had such a positive experience with Diane that the two of us decided to keep it going this year and the Wellness Centre were happy about that.

Diane was 14 when we started and was in Form 4. She had been referred to the *Wellness Centre* because her elder sister had been mentored. There was a perception that she too might be at risk. I think she was the right age. She's no longer a child and old enough to know what she wants.

We meet up once a week, usually after school every Monday. I pick her up then because the time suits both of us. We might spend a couple of hours together, then I drop her back at home.

My role as I saw it was to build a positive relationship with Diane and simply 'have fun' together. I aimed to support her at school and in her life generally. It took a while for us to build up this relationship of trust which is so important.

One reason I was matched up with Diane was that we had a few interests in common, like swimming. So we often went to the pool together. Or I could take her places she hadn't been to, and give her new opportunities. We would go to movies or ice-skating. But it doesn't need to cost a lot of money. Often the most valuable time was simply being together at my flat.

As the year went on she grew to confide in me a lot, and I was able to give her advice. At the end of the year her father was killed, which was a terrible tragedy for her. I was the first person she called, so I was there for her at the funeral and when she was grieving. The experience I already had in my social work training came in very useful.

During the year and a half I have seen a real change for the better in Diane's behaviour. She now has clear goals as regards a possible career. As time has passed she has grown in confidence and now has a wider circle of friends. So soon I won't be needed any more!

At the start the *Centre* gave us training for a couple of hours each week, preparing us for what to expect and what to do if you encounter a tricky situation. They screen us and visit home, then they introduce us to our student. We have ongoing supervision monthly and we meet and share ideas and experience with other mentors.

At the beginning we have to make all the running while a relationship is being built. Then suddenly one day Diane started to call me. A real friendship was being cemented. The Centre are careful to match us, so that usually seems to work.

Most of the mentors I know are students, so not too far removed in age. But there are older mentors too. Varsity students often have the time.

It just seemed right for me to be a positive role model for this young person. I count myself lucky to have been a part of Diane's life at this crucial stage for her. For me the reward is to see her grow as a person. And she has become a friend. You know that you have helped make a difference.

And I have learned a lot about how to build relationships. I found how important it was to include her family as far as possible – to always let them know what was happening.

Being a mentor has been a really positive time for me – and I think, for Diane too. ■

*Professor Ivan Snook (*pictured right*) puts out a challenge to Christian churches*

I was hungry and you fed me, sick and you cared for me, homeless and you sheltered me." These words are probably among the best known in the Gospel and for 2000 years they have been seen as the defining marks of the Christian: the Christian is one who serves others. The official Church too has tried to be true to this: it has set up hospitals for the sick, schools for the poor, hospices for the elderly, and orphanages for those without family.

It was not until the 19th Century, however, that the world came to realise that poverty is not a natural event like earthquakes, storms and volcanic eruptions. It is, rather, a direct result of human greed. People are poor because powerful people have made them so. The poverty of Africa comes largely from colonial powers which took natural resources and paid the workers almost nothing. The poverty of 19th Century workers in England, which Dickens portrays in his novels, arose because factory owners saw workers, not as human beings, but simply as ***hands*** (and called them so).

In the area of health, for example, it came slowly to be realized that people were unhealthy because they worked long hours in unhealthy conditions and went home to wet, cold and rat-ridden houses beside which ran open sewers carrying disease. Only when govern-ments saw the link between such poverty and the social situation, were advances made. And yet, early in the third Christian millenium, in many developing countries things are as bad as in 19th Century Britain and are deteriorating in most developed countries including our own.

In the 19th Century the Church came to realize the connection between poverty and social policy, and there began the series of letters from popes beginning with Leo XIII and continuing to Pope John Paul. The consistent theme has been that governments, church and people must tackle the root causes of poverty – and the sickness, homelessness, and lack of education that go with it.

This message of justice has by and large been ignored. Catholics are known as people who oppose abortion, artificial contraception, homosexuality and euthanasia – and now the use of embryos for research. We are not known as people committed to social justice. One could be forgiven for thinking that the message of the Church is: ***at all costs get people born; after that it does not matter what happens to them.***

There is little evidence that this strong teaching of the popes ever penetrated very deeply into the consciousness of the church in its daily life. From the 1930s onwards, however, the lay apostolate movement took up the tradition of social justice. The Worker Priests movement and Catholic Action had some success until the Vatican found fault with them. The Young Christian Workers, under Joseph Cardign, spread throughout Europe, the USA, Australia and New Zealand. In South America, Liberation Theology tried to redress the bias of the official church towards the wealthy and the dictator. Rome quickly moved to suppress that too.

In each age changing economic conditions demand that the Church change its understanding of social ethics, of poverty and of justice. It seems to me that the present age is no exception. Since the 1970s there has been a strong revival of Economic Liberalism in which people must look out for themselves and the state must not do much to help those who fall by the wayside.

The official Church – Pope and bishops – has continued to remind Catholics of the demands of social justice, but little of this has penetrated to the pews, and the actions of the Church seem more and more in line with the economism, the individualism and the manager-ialism of the wider ideology. Account-ants and managers have replaced theologians and pastors. The active movements of the 1960s and 1970s have vanished, and youth gather to worship in ways which make them feel good, not challenged, and to discuss their individual feelings, not the enormous needs of the world. Even many members of religious orders retreat more and more into comfortable 'evangelisation' in place of justice, and into managerialism in place of service.

An unjust world

That this ***is*** an unjust world seems incontrovertible. The power of the IMF, the World Bank and the multinationals is far greater than any elected government especially of a small country like New Zealand. Although there are rich nations and poor nations, there is also enormous poverty in the rich nations and enormous

wealth in the poor. The life expectancy of men in Harlem, New York, is lower than in Bangladesh. Since the economic revolution of the 1980s the gap between rich and poor in New Zealand has risen faster than anywhere else in the world.

Business Roundtable chairman Murray Horn recently stated that "New Zealand must do more to fight poverty". Not by increased benefits or (good heavens, no!) higher wages, but in more economic growth and more opportunities for the poor to start up their own businesses. As he puts it so blandly: "Economic growth is the tide that lifts all boats". Tell that to the men of Harlem in the richest country on earth: tell that to the factory workers of Indonesia who work for a few cents an hour, 14 and more hours a day, in 'Asia's economic miracle'.

The claim that this is an unjust world seems self-evident. That it is so is not the result of impersonal happenings but of the conscious actions of real people acting out of self-interest and the inaction of the rest of us who let it happen and profit from it.

Ideology and youth

In her 1991 Budget, Ruth Richardson announced an agenda for a new form of moral education to take place throughout all the institutions of the nation. Universities and polytechnics were to be transformed from communities of scholars into businesses; academic leadership and collegiality were replaced by management and hierarchy; students with commitment to knowledge and service were changed into apprentices for industry, shackled with debt.

We were all encouraged to look out for ourselves, and idealism became a sick joke. The leadership in selfishness was to be provided by our business and community leaders as they sought ever increasing financial rewards for themselves and reduced payments to others. The education community was cynically divided by policies of choice and competition, and by bulk funding in particular. Even the Church was not immune: its own leaders began to talk 'managerialese', money came to dominate all decisions, and there was, I believe, a steady retreat from the social justice tradition.

In 2000 the Hillary Commission reported: "There is a new generation coming through which is self-centred and acquisitional, even hedonistic. These New Zealanders accept competition and thrive on the values of survival of the fittest. They often delay leaving home and starting families, and have relatively high disposable income which they seek to spend on exciting leisure opportunities. The driving question for them is: ***what's in it for me?***"

The conclusion: "We should reflect emerging values by presenting volunteerism as a self-interest, not an altruistic activity – think commercial models, not community models. As participants they expect high levels of service and value for money." That is to say, forget appeals to altruism and service which no longer get any traction with the young, and appeal to their self-interest.

The Catholic Church's failure

I have seen no evidence to show that those who come out from Catholic schools are any more altruistic or socially concerned than their mates from secular or other Christian schools. Indeed, some of those who deal with young Catholics in the tertiary scene say that young people from our schools are even more determinedly self-serving and non-involved than the wider population. This is only a subjective impression, but it should lead us to look honestly at the role of Catholic schools.

Do our schools further the cause of social justice or do they serve the market economy and so support inequalities and injustices? A major irony for me is that not so long ago young women from our convent schools attributed their social justice concern to the Sisters who taught them. Is it the case that a by-product of the move towards full lay staffing has broken this connection with the social justice tradition?

In the 1960s, sociologist Antony Spencer wrote: "Something very odd has been happening since World War 2 ▷▷

Last year the Marketing Department at Otago University identified seven social/political profiles in New Zealand society:

1. **Pragmatic strugglers** (11.8 %); these are politically conservative, and have a negative outlook on the social scene.
2. **Educated liberals** (10.3%); these are progressive and egalitarian and enjoy variety and celebrate diversity (they are also ageing and reducing in number).
3. **Success driven extroverts** (13.2%); these value free enterprise and are actively ambitious (one might call them 'Ruth's children').
4. **Those with traditional values** (18.8%); conservative but particularly family and community oriented.
5. **Social Strivers** (13.1%); these are conformist and other-directed; they worry about what the neighbours might say.
6. **Accepting mid-lifers** (19.4%); these live on the outskirts of social life – they observe rather than partake; and they accept the status quo. There is obviously nothing they can do to make a difference.
7. **Young pleasure seekers** (13.5%); the 'Generation Xers' whose philosophy is 'live for today with no political or social concern'. This was a NEW group which hadn't shown up in previous surveys.

It is also worth noting that the crime rate took off soon after the beginning of the economic revolution and peaked in the early '90s Much of the blame must be laid at the door of the 'quiet revolution' with its theme of 'every person for themselves'. Certainly the late Laurie O'Reilly, then Commissioner for Youth, was convinced that "the upsurge in youth crime and despair had its roots in the economic and social upheaval of the 1980s and 1990s".

in New Zealand. The Catholic Church, fundamentally committed to the poor, with a strong and coherent social doctrine, has been getting ever closer to the élites in New Zealand society, instead of seeking to integrate better into the the wider society."

In 1975, after a century of agitation from the Church, the government passed the ***Integration Act*** which enabled Catholic schools to survive by becoming part of the state system. But, rather than throwing in its lot with the state schools, many of which are now struggling in the way our schools used to be, the official Catholic education wing has thrown in its lot with the prestigious and well-resourced private sector, some of whose schools are also now integrated.

Whereas in the 1970s the Catholic schools were suffering from lack of money, it is now more likely to be state schools in lower socio-economic areas which struggle. It is plainly unethical for our integrated schools to turn their backs on the state system and suck up to private and élitest schools.

A further source of worry is the growing involvement of business in schools. It would be of value to look at the extent to which Catholic schools have embraced 'Enterprise Education/ Business Education', i.e. explicit indoctrination in the self-serving values of the world of business with no concern for the effect on workers or on communities. Schools cannot serve two masters: they cannot serve the business ideology and social justice. No Catholic school should be involved with these programmes.

The parish situation

In most parishes there is a dullness which seems to be intentional. With a few significant exceptions the justice message is constantly gutted; when the readings scream out for it (talking for example about oppression and poverty and the call to service) some minor aspect is focused on. I look at the programmes offered by diocesan centres for adult education: they are all about *me:* my prayer life, my relationships, my personal and cosy God. Parish youth groups offer young people a similar diet of privatised religion: *me, me, me.* Thus we have the valium function of religion: its role is to dull our pain, help us forget the miseries of the world and go off for another week feeling good.

In church circles I find the talk of incorporated companies, directors and CEOs disturbing. I am sure that there are good reasons for it. I read in a recent newsletter that such companies are very different from profit-making companies and that must be so. But what needs doing is not just helping out the poor and the 'marginalised' but in asking *why* they are poor and marginalised, and that will often entail challenging the very basis for social and political decisions. That will make the Church much less popular and less likely to attract government funding.

the valium function of religion – to dull our pain, forget our miseries, and go off for another week feeling good

The health system has been thrown open to competition, and this (contrary to the dogmas) has driven prices up beyond the pocket of most unless they have health insurance, and under the profit motive, those who need it most have to give it up because of the ever rising premiums for the aged. All this is a failure of social policy.

What needs to be done by informed people in the health sector is to continually fight for an inclusive health system. A government could easily solve the problem of 'lack of hospital beds', the shortage of doctors, as well as the problem of 'lack of funding for schools' and the lack of housing. All that is needed is the will – and public support.

A revolution of outlook

What is needed within the Catholic Church is a revolution of outlook. Time was when the faithful made financial contributions which were used to serve the parish, to contribute to education and other good works. The real works of the church were left to the religious orders who, one way and another, succeeded in keeping their institutions financial. But so much has now been taken over by the state and non-religious voluntary groups which provide emergency housing, look after the dying, and care for people in their homes.

In the new model, the churches should, I suggest, put aside a substantial proportion of their income for various good works. Parish councils might then give their attention to these activities rather than their normal inward-looking stance. I heard recently of a poor parish (income $8000 per year) which received bequests amounting to $60,000. After meeting to discuss various uses, the parish under the leadership of the parish priest decided to give it all to Caritas for rebuilding in East Timor. This is most unusual. Schools too should be involved if we are to turn around the flight from justice in our youth.

The ***NZ Bishops' Millenium statement*** says this: "It is time for us here in Aotearoa New Zealand to renew our option for 'for the poor and outcast', to understand again that we do not walk apart. The people of God are not a people of privilege... We must find the voice to resist the growing inequalities that are a feature of our society... We must concern ourselves at all levels with unemployment, inadequate housing, substandard healthcare, extremes of wealth and poverty."

The rhetoric is admirable: what is needed now is action. ■

Ivan Snook lives in Palmerston North. He is Emeritus Professor of Education from Massey University

Is mercy alive and well in our schools?

Simon Roughton, a Wellington Catholic teacher heard Professor Snook's challenge at the Mercy Charities Conference in Auckland. He offers this response.

I am writing this in an attempt to give a positive perspective on this world that we share. I currently hold the position of Director of Religious Studies at St Catherine's College, in Wellington. The College is certainly a microcosm of Church and society. There are 300 students from different social and economic backgrounds. It is a college where the students have a strong sense of community and belonging. The concept of mercy is very much part of the reality of the students' experiences.

Professor Snook gave us a grim picture of the world in which we live. However, I cannot help but think of the story of the man who left the town he was living in, and upon meeting a wise woman on the outskirts of the city, asked of her, "what are the people in this town like?" Her reply: "what were they like where you have just come from?" The man replied, "they were mean, nasty, and self-centred". To which she replied, "So you will find them the same in the next city".

manaakitanga, aroha,
care for the sick, elderly and oppressed
justice, respect

Another traveller, asked the same question, replied: "They were fantastic: warm, generous and willing to help each other. In fact I was sorry to leave". The wise woman replied: "You will find them the same in the next city." The glasses we wear affect our perception.

There is no question that there is a lot of hurt and pain in our community and world. As I write this I am aware of numerous incidents in our society that have caused people to question the concept of justice – incidents such as the terrible murders of two innocent children in England and the horrific abuse done by certain people in positions of power. However, I believe it is worth bearing in mind that these incidents are done by people making choices, not by a society at large.

Secondly, I do not believe we are a society spiralling in on itself. Inhumane acts and marginalisation of groups within society has happened throughout history: at the same time we have had women and men who inspired others to action.

I agree with Ivan Snook's comment that we need action. The Church does need to be counter-cultural to the notion that the *I* is greater than the *We*. Our schools are part of the Church, and they respond in significant ways to the call of justice and mercy.

At St Catherine's, our students this year have been particularly strong in their commitment to justice. I have been constantly humbled and impressed by the level of energy that they put into promoting mercy and justice. The commitment to the work of *Caritas* has been high, their practical work in retirement homes has been exemplary.

They have constantly searched for new ways of demonstrating caring for others in need. Recently they took the initiative starting breakfasts for those students who for whatever reason were unable to get breakfast at home.

On a symbolic level, raising the level of understanding of Mercy values has been achieved by the Year 13's creating a school badge that they gifted to the school. The central element of the badge was a hand with a koru spiral. Each digit represented values that they saw as important. They were manaakitanga, aroha, care for the sick, elderly, oppressed, justice, and respect. Each student in the college was given one of these badges, which incidently they fundraised to pay. It has been a significant consciousness-raising exercise.

Has the Church made mistakes over time and been swept along a tide? Undoubtedly. Churches as institutions face the difficulty of any large organisation – they are not equipped for rapid change. The impact of the changes that have been occurring is still being assessed. It takes a long time for cultural change to occur.

Professor Snook spoke of *Mercy in an Unjust World*, backing it with a range of statistics, concluding there is little to have hope for or to celebrate in our world. I challenge Professor Snook to spend time with our young people and to see the enthusiasm for life and interest in others that they offer.

I believe our commitment to justice is like the stone that is thrown into the middle of a still pond. The ripples go out in ever-expanding circles. Each act of mercy that students do will have a positive influence in our community. If this is the case, we are well placed to deal with any negative effects that consumerism is throwing upon us. Our students continue to develop a well-informed conscience on the importance of mercy and justice. ■

When we were walki

On Pilg

I am walking to Santiago,
But that was then, and the bones of men,
Walled up, were walking still.
By the light of the great sun,
I watched them go,
And by rain-light and wolf-light, they pressed on,
As we were walking to Santiago.

And the mountains came and went,
With snow and bitter winds
And eagles but a touch away,
Rocks where little birds ended their pilgrimage
In nets and the gasp of guns,
When we were walking to Santiago.

There were days of mud and cold and hunger
And uncertainty, when all hope was for shelter
And all that eyes could see
Was the horizon,
And all that ears could hear
Was the sound of footfalls,
As we were walking to Santiago.

Then there were days when nightingales sang,
And cuckoos called. There were rocks
Where small green lizards basked
And frogs sang in a foreign tongue.
And storks disdained us
From their apartments in abandoned belfries,
As we were walking to Santiago.

When we were walking to Santiago
I wondered why the rage of such multitudes
Left us only whispers as a guide.
The ghosts that clanked ahead
Were lost in darkness, where I had expected light.
Blind to their vision,
My feet fell always on the endless ground,
As we were walking to Santiago.

One day I fell
When we were walking to Santiago.
Strangers helped me stand and then walk on.
A stranger in a shabby suit,

Doug and Gail Bayne from Motueka, on the pilgrim route to Santiago de Compostella, in NW Spain

If you are retired and comfortable, here's a suggestion to stir you from your cosy rut. Go on pilgrimage to Compostella – 800-plus km on foot. That's what Gail and Doug Bayne did.

They were on holiday in the south of France and happened upon a little town in the Pyrenees called St Jean Pied-de-Port. They spotted a pilgrim hostel with the scallop shell over the door. As they came away, Gail said: "I'd love to do that journey one day". Doug and Gail are Methodists, and the scallop shell emblem is precious to them. As Christians they see themselves as part of a pilgrim people. So, just three years later, there they were back in St Jean ready to start. Altogether they walked 650 km in 40 days (*see map opposite*). Normally they walked for three days and then had a rest day.

For Doug and Gail it was a contemplative journey. Every night they would take turns reading a chapter of Scripture to each other. Gail remembers details in an intense way that would never happen in ordinary life. As pilgrims they were living very simply, carrying the absolute minimum. "The richness was in the way

ng to Santiago

grimage

In some crowded city, seeing us lost, bone-tired,
Thinking us thirsty, gave cold water, all he had,
So we might walk on.
At a lonely place, a nun gave blessing and embrace,
To hurry us along,
As we were walking to Santiago.

So we went, under the sun, over bleak places,
Past bad dogs and storms of lightning
And red dust.
Past weariness, anxiety and sickness,
Past the kindness of strangers,
Beneath the eye of God,
Past the hospitality of grubby bars
And all the good wishes of an alien way;
Coming at last, on the fortieth day,
To Santiago.

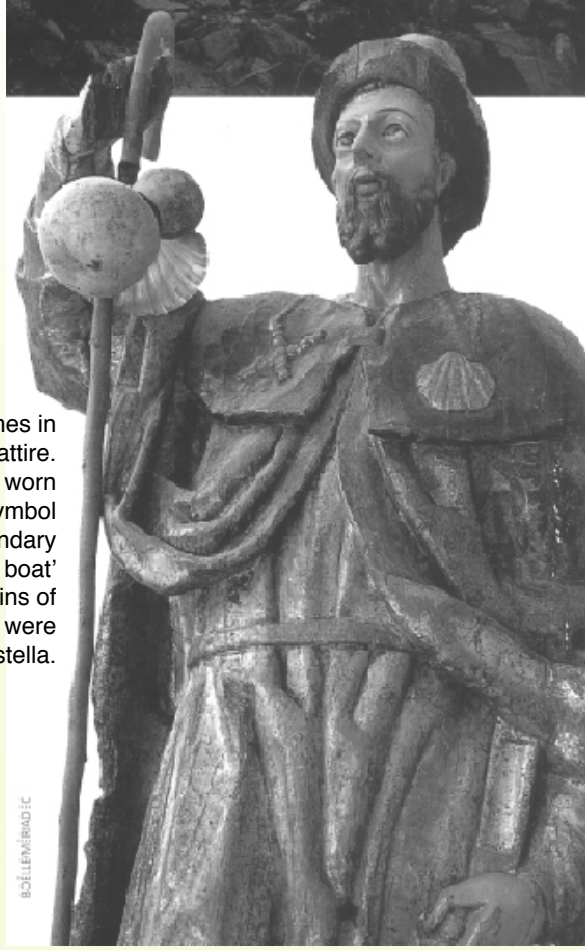
Above the field of stars, the great cathedral
Leaned against the clouds.
Within the shadows there, were crowded
The bones of a dead man and
the singing of the quick.
And a stone that spoke to touching hands
And a jubilation that I could not touch,
And the vast silence of an elsewhere God
When we had walked to Santiago.

Later, we crept like mice
Back to that empty holy place
And brought to mind the face
Of the nun at the crossroads,
The man in the shabby suit
And the help of strangers' hands,
The busy barman bringing the gift of food,
And all those calling out along the way
To be remembered at Santiago.

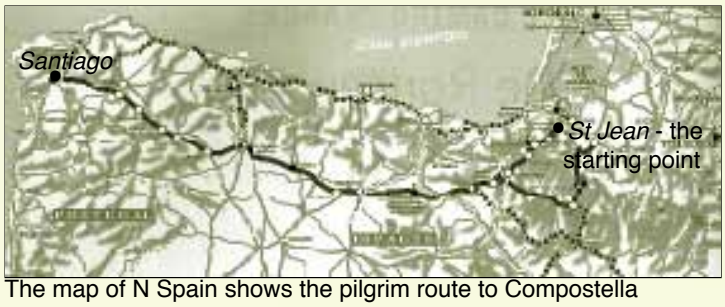
That was years ago
And I
Am still walking to Santiago.

Doug Bayne

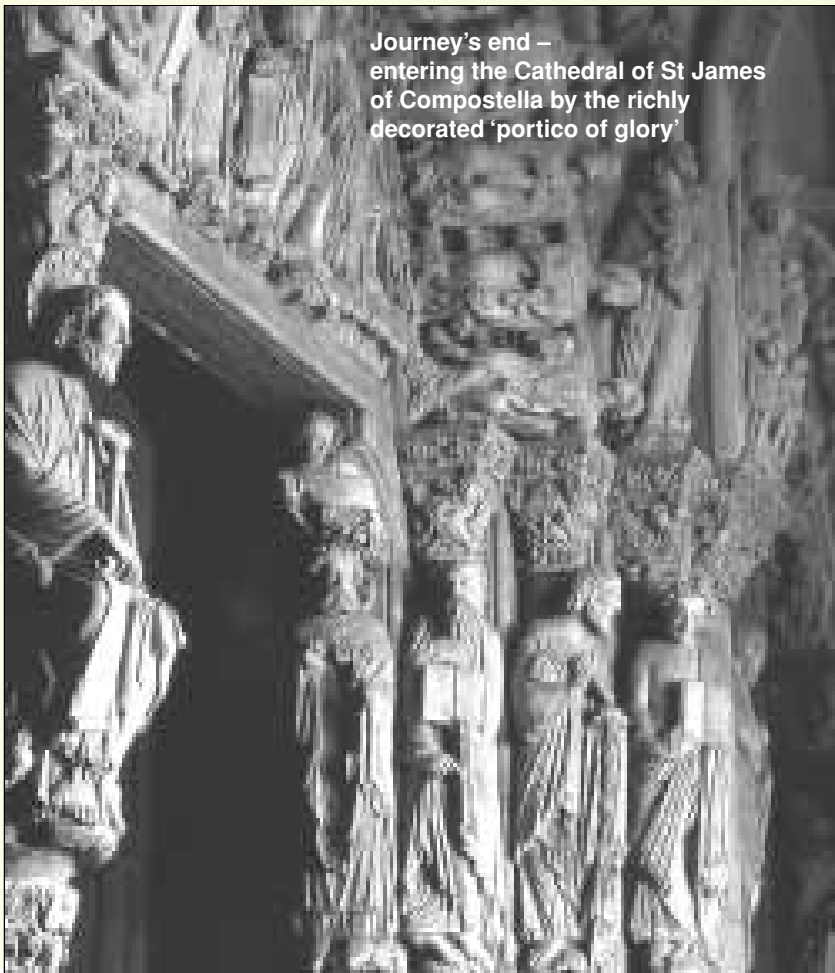
we related to people we met", says Gail.
For Doug, time on pilgrimage seemed almost to stand still. Every moment had its own meaning. There were days of hard physical struggle, but it was that which eventually brought great satis-faction and a sense of accomplishment.
Arriving at Santiago and going into the Great Square in front of the Cathedral was a wonderful climax. They did the 'pilgrim things', hugging the pillar and putting their hands into the 'hand place'. Doug drew the line at hugging statues! But they concluded their pilgrimage by visiting the shrine of St James and thanking God for all the wonderful people they had met on the way. ■



Statue of St James in pilgrim attire. The scallop shell worn by pilgrims is a symbol of the legendary journey by 'stone boat' whereby the remains of James the Apostle were brought to Compostella.



The map of N Spain shows the pilgrim route to Compostella



Journey's end – entering the Cathedral of St James of Compostella by the richly decorated 'portico of glory'

Walking with the parables

Sandra Winton OP introduces the first of a series of reflections by different authors on the parables of Jesus

From the earliest Christian communities, there has been a double pull in the Church – to firmness, definition and law on the one hand and to freedom, inner knowing and inclusivity on the other. The former is well represented in the *Letters to Timothy and Titus,* where the faithful are reminded about order in worship and adherence to custom. The latter flowers particularly in the Johannine writings, which honour the discipleship of a Samaritan woman and the centrality of personal connection to Jesus and his Spirit.

Like the cyclists we saw pedalling during the Games, like each of us in our own lives, the Church goes forward by balancing from side to side. When the hill is steeper or the race more intense, the swaying is accentuated. On a tricky corner, or for a brief run, the cycle can be held reasonably steady for a time. But only for a time. That's how it runs.

In the face of attempts to rein in, define and exclude, it is always good to remind ourselves of the creative freedom of mind and action of the Jesus we follow. This creativity is very fully expressed in the parables. Working as they do, with image and symbol, analogy and contemporary observation, the parables are on the opposite lean of the bike from a catechism. They use language in its most flexible form, not its most precise. Even as Jesus spoke them they were memorable, exciting, and puzzling. Hearers could go away with new understandings or with old understandings disturbed. This is why the parables lend themselves to being read as freshly, creatively and originally in Aotearoa/New Zealand today as they were spoken in Palestine.

This month, musician, massage therapist and creation spirituality teacher, Cecily Sheehy OP, reflects on one parable: *Mark 4:26-29.*

He also said, *"This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man throws seed on the land. Night and day, while he sleeps, when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know. Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. And when the crop is ready he loses no time; he starts to reap because the harvest has come."*

This is one of those 'stop worrying' parables. Life is living itself – in the seed, in you, me, everything, and everyone. What a great release! Fancy this being like the kingdom of God. How many times and ways does Jesus have to tell us: the seed is growing by itself: the flowers are utterly beautiful – they come forth, look gorgeous for a while, then die. The birds fly in the heavens, nest in the trees, sing and chant for no reason, not one of them falling to the ground unnoticed.

We humans believe we are in charge and have to seriously plan the rest of our lives. Have you noticed that most of our concerns have either happened, and are therefore not happening now, or else they might happen in the future, and so are not happening yet, (and seldom if ever happen as we predict)?

Thomas Berry (theologian and geologist), says that the universe took a great risk in evolving beings with a mind that could reflect on the past, look forward into the future, and make decisions about honouring or 'having dominion over' the rest of the world. We seem to spend a lot of our lives in one or other of these states (past or future), seldom marvelling at the only moment ever to be experienced – NOW, always now.

Life is indeed a mystery. While the seed is going through all its miraculous processes, *"how, we do not know" (Mk 4:27)*, we often only worry about the future, becoming anxious for what could happen, and praying for a better life.

What can we learn from this tiny parable? This is where I give up. To allow life to unfold in me, day by day... to ponder without judgment, or longing for it to be different – this is too difficult. Shouldn't we help the seed along, have a look to see if it's OK, add something to the soil so that it will hurry up and mature?

God's time is not our time. *"Of its own accord the land produces first the shoot, then the ear, then the the full grain in the ear" (Mk 4:28).* As I write, my friend is in hospital, in a post-operative state. When she prepared her calendar for 2002, did she say: 'Oh I must take some time out for surgery in late June?' No, of course not. Life is living us. *"When the crop is ready we lose no time" (Mk 4:29).*

Just by pondering, I have grown to love this little parable, and seen it with new eyes. It may be totally different for you. I wasn't ready to see what I see now when I was young, but no matter. We are either a shoot, or an ear, or a full grain in the ear. God is not watching, from a distance, as the song says. God, or Life, or Being is living us right now. What a gift!
Thank you Jesus. ■

It was only an accident. . .

Ron Sharp, *a horticulturist in Motueka, makes his own parable reflection out of a real life incident*

My wife had an accident in our car the other day. The car was an old 1979 model that our insurance company valued at a thousand dollars. A young student was unable to control his car on the slippery road and slid into ours as he braked suddenly. It all turned out to be a chance for our family to have a conversion experience, to get us to talk about our relationship with material things we 'own'.

Mum was shaken; she felt that the burden of deciding what to do over 100 km from home was left to her because our teenage young people and their two friends did not feel competent to help her. Two wagons stopped with three persons in each. They were going in the same direction and would pass our place. One driver suggested that one of his passengers could go with his neighbour so that he could take our five in his car. They all squashed in along with their gear and the loose odds and ends from our battered car that had to be left on the roadside.

When our family held our debriefing around the dinner table the following day, we decided that God was stirring our inner spiritual selves to revisit our direction. We saw the whole affair as a miracle. Even the young driver and slippery road were the angel announcing a chance for us to realign our values. The archangel was the drivers and their wagons who stopped and arranged to get us home.

We decided to write a letter of sympathy and support to the young student and a thank-you letter with some family-made gifts to the people who brought us home. We were, and still are, uncertain about where the insurance companies fit into the picture. Are they part of God's plan to save us from anxiety over the number of hairs on our head, or are they preventing us from living like the birds of the air and the Son of Man, who has nowhere to rest his head?

As the accident was happening I was reading the July issue of *Tui Motu* and the wonderful stories of *Challenge 2000*. My mind boggled at the miracles of the blind seeing, the lame walking, the dead being raised and the poor having the gospel preached to them. I rejoiced that our Church

was not dead, after all. Christ is alive in the Kittys, her youthful volunteer helpers, assisting sisters, supportive priests and in Dale Harrison 'knocked off his horse' by his twin brother's murder.

Then suddenly it struck me that God is in the ordinary, too. We are all Christs, we are all miracles, the perpetrators of accidents, 'criminals', disasters, 11th Septembers, terrorists, USA's terrible reaction, Israel's hard-nosed power applications, because they shake us into conversions. They are wake-up calls to reassess our values, attitudes and prejudices to call us to grow, to change.

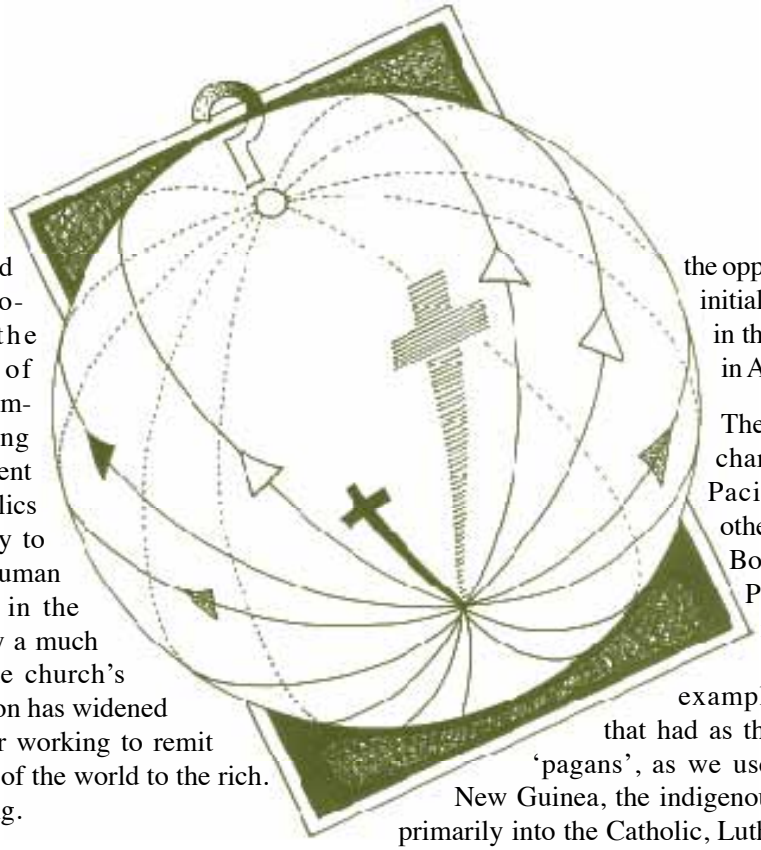
I sit at my parish Eucharist the day after the accident. As the bread is carried to the table I see *Mrs* or *Ms* mother bearing her child, *Mr* father labouring for the sustenance on the family table, the young devouring them both in growth, the orchardist tending the trees, the engineer welding a machine, the manager planning a new strategy or restructure, the rubbish collector, the counsellor, the nurse, the accountant, lawyer, judge, jurist, politician or local body councillor and all the living and breathing of our planet with her gener-ous abundance transformed for life by human touch.

Then, as the red wine, pressed from squashed grapes, processes through our parish, I see the mother in labour, the redundant father, the spent life of the elderly, the orchardist in his spray space-suit with poison raining around him, the engineer missing a finger or two, the bankrupt manager, the emphysemic waste worker, the counsellor who thinks s/he's making no difference, the nurse beholding death, the child slave, those who are paid less than one dollar a day, the executive who lost her partner, our earth damaged by waste and pollution; and the blood, sweat and tears that awaken us to justice and drive us into new eras, as the Spirit within the universe evolves Her way into the Oneness of God.

Then comes the moment of Consecration in which we are all uplifted into our centre, become divine, and my heart breaks into a cry of "Wow!!" The miracles of an accident and *Challenge 2000* and a new step taken and every living thing blossom into a glimpse of THE WHOLE. n

Mission Today

Susan Smith



Conversations and sometimes controversies about the theology and practice of mission in the Catholic community have been surfacing in a variety of ways in recent years. We learn that Catholics continue to give generously to those situations of great human suffering and oppression in the world; lay people now play a much more important role in the church's mission; the scope of mission has widened to include peace-making or working to remit the debts owed by the poor of the world to the rich. All this is cause for rejoicing.

On the other hand, there is discussion – sometimes acrimonious – about different *theologies of mission* in Catholicism. For example, in 1998 the Vatican censured the work of Indian Jesuit Anthony de Mello, accusing him of relativising the faith. It initiated an investigation of Jacques Dupuis, Belgian Jesuit, who had spent many years teaching theology in India and is currently teaching at the Gregorian University, Rome. Two years later, in 2000, the Vatican document *Dominus Jesus* argued against unnamed theologians who questioned "the universal salvific mission of the Church, the inseparability – while recognising the distinction – of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of Christ and the Church, and the subsistence of the one Church of Christ in the Catholic Church."

Some Vatican officials were concerned about the strident tone of *Dominus Jesus*. Cardinal Cassidy told an Italian paper *Corriere della Sera*: "neither the time nor the language of the document were opportune". Bishop Walter Kasper, Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, said that while he agreed with the basic principles in the document, it lacked "the necessary sensitivity."

Closer to home, New Zealand Catholics learnt a short time ago that the bishops were winding up the activities of the Catholic Overseas Volunteers. The establishment of COVS after Vatican II had offered Catholics, particularly lay Catholics, the opportunity of overseas mission initially with other local churches in the Pacific region, but latterly in Africa, Asia and the Americas.

The ongoing political turmoil characteristic of some of our Pacific neighbours raises other questions about mission. Both the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea probably represent successful 19th and early 20th century examples of missionary efforts that had as their goal the conversion of 'pagans', as we used to call them. In Papua New Guinea, the indigenous population was baptised primarily into the Catholic, Lutheran and Uniting churches while in the Solomons, the Anglican and Catholic churches emerged as the two numerically superior communities.

Yet in recent years both countries have been ravaged by political unrest, economic mismanagement and ethnic violence. I appreciate that some of the causes for this lie well outside of church life; the fact remains the Christian message does not seem to have informed the lives and activities of many who assumed leadership roles in either country. What, therefore, did mission achieve?

The Second Vatican Council defined the Church as missionary by its very nature (*Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church*, no. 2). I offer six possible ways of understanding mission. There are other ways, but those I have identified seem pertinent in the context of Aotearoa New Zealand.

• Mission as expansion

After the discovery of the Americas in 1492, and particularly in the 19th century, the missionary task became associated with imperial expansionism. This tended to produce an emphasis on the expansion and growth of the institutional church. Popes and bishops gave priority to the church's *missio ad gentes* – a missionary effort directed to those who had not yet heard the good news. The church thus became established in the newly acquired colonies of imperial rulers. A new church was founded where it had not yet been planted.

Europeans journeyed to the uttermost ends of the earth to bring the good news in European dress to non-European peoples. The initial proclamation of the good news to Maori in the 19th century is a classic example of this approach to mission. However, in the case of Aotearoa New Zealand, by the middle of the 19th century both Catholic and Protestant churches were more concerned with ministry to the growing settler community rather than with mission to Maori.

In recent times many local churches in so-called 'Third World' countries questioned the appropriateness of a Christian message mediated through a Eurocentric lens. Many contemporary European missionaries are likewise uneasy about a European theological imperialism that has accompanied – and in some instances still accompanies – the proclamation of the good news.

• Mission as retention

Throughout the Western world, even in the United States, institutional religion is in decline. Likewise, in a country as traditionally Catholic as Poland, there is increasing evidence that church attendance is going down now the church no longer faces overt political oppression. Here in Aotearoa New Zealand, we know only too well that our young people are no longer fronting up, nor indeed are many of their parents. Concern over this decline has prompted church leadership to encourage parishioners to participate in programmes such as RCIA, the Alpha Programme, or Renew. These programmes have as their goal the growth of the institutional church.

• Mission as pastoral ministry

This expression of mission is the most familiar to us even though it is changing. Until Vatican II, pastoral work was usually associated with the priests of the parish – they visited the sick, married people, comforted the bereaved, were involved in youth ministry, marriage preparation, prison and hospital chaplaincy work or parish visiting. In these days responsibility for parish ministry belongs much more to the parish community as a whole – lay eucharistic ministers bringing communion to the sick, married people rather than only priests being involved in marriage preparation work, baptism preparation and so on.

• Mission as cross-cultural ministry

COVS was one expression of cross-cultural ministry because it involved members of one local church going to work with another local church. Thus, a Catholic from Auckland could be asked to work in the Wewak Diocese in Papua New Guinea. But cross-cultural ministry also occurs when priests from the Philippines come to work in Aotearoa New Zealand as chaplains to the various Filipino communities resident here; and even to work in parishes where pakeha are the majority. Such globalisation of ministry is likely to increase rather than decrease. A possible problem is that movement of priests from one part of the world to another can imply a somewhat narrowly sacramental understanding of mission.

• Mission as liberation

Since the 1970s this approach has captured the imagination of many. It has most obviously manifested itself in Third World countries, particularly Latin America, where it led to the poor seeking to become agents of their own liberation rather than be recipients of charity from those better placed economically and politically. It has prompted some Catholic groups to make an option for the poor. Groups such as *Pax Christi* actively engage with those who have no political voice or economic clout.

Generally speaking, such activity does not have as its direct goal the growth of the institutional church. Instead it sees the church's role as being in solidarity with other people of good will, effecting change that will hasten the coming of the reign of God. Mission as liberation is often regarded with concern by important sectors in the institutional church. But it can seem threatening to those who prioritise mission as expansion of the church or retention in the church.

• Mission as reconciliation

Today, theologians are writing and talking about mission as reconciliation (not, however, in the sacramental sense). There are numerous examples in the contemporary world of economic conflict, ethnic conflict, religious conflict, political and military conflict. Because it is God's will that the whole cosmos be reconciled in Christ (cf. *Col 1:20*), the present state of un-reconciliation offers an important entry point into mission. Like mission as liberation, it does not have as its immediate goal the growth and wellbeing of the institutional church.

Bishop Desmond Tutu's work in South Africa on the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* provides one important example, as does the work of *Sant'Egidio* community in Rome. Its members have been involved in peace-making work with different warring factions.

Conclusion

At the risk of simplifying a complicated issue we can say that the institutional church is more preoccupied with mission as expansion, retention and pastoral ministry. These expressions of mission are usually directed by bishops and priests who invite lay people to share in this mission. Mission as liberation and as reconciliation do not tend to be major preoccupations of the institutional church. Generally speaking, it is lay people and religious women and men who are the movers and shakers in these areas.

The challenge today would seem to be how to hold in creative tension mission as understood as the growth and wellbeing of the institutional church, and mission as understood as hastening the Reign of God in the wider community through involvement in overcoming the sufferings endured by so many. It is my belief that were we to be blessed with such creative tension, then mission as church growth would come about organically rather than through organised programmes. ■

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Do I need to go to bed to show I love him?

Jack Dominian

Why do young people start having sex? Firstly, there is no doubt that as a result of the sexual revolution, society and the media bombard the young with erotic and romantic stimulation. Secondly, there is a general drop in importance of religious prohibition. Thirdly, the link between sex and procreation has all but disappeared, and with it the main platform of Christian teaching for 2,000 years has gone.

The failure of Christianity to produce a credible alternative morality for sex to the link between procreation and sexual intercourse is serious and one of the biggest defects of Christian moral teaching. Retreating to the past, to fundamentalism or to obsolete teaching is no answer. Research by the *Social Exclusion Unit* has discovered that the reasons for starting sexual intercourse include curiosity, popularity, real or imagined peer pressure, the desire not to be left behind, being in a relationship, fear of losing boy or girlfriend, the need to feel loved and the belief that sex equals love, and media influences that glamorize sex, alcohol and drugs.

In the absence of an adequate education, young people, particularly boys, feel pressure in their bodies to have sex. Here, Christianity is particularly responsible for its inadequate sexual education*, but society as a whole is also at fault. The last 50 years have seen widespread biological sexual education, but no teaching on feelings and emotions that are the key to understanding sexual intercourse. There are two responses to sexual curiosity. One is to experiment; the other is to appreciate the richness, mystery and sacredness of sexual intercourse *and to wait until this is realisable.*

The world has trivialised sex. The churches have been slow, afraid, confused and hesitant to explore this rich divine gift. Parents, teachers and youth leaders are left without guidance, and a much more penetrating and authentic understanding of sexuality is needed before these groups will be listened to. The result is a vacuum that the young fill as best they can.

Causes of casual teenage sex

Curiosity. After curiosity comes *having the opportunity* for sex. This is rampant. What with parties, school and the use of the motor car, there is no shortage of opportunity.

Real or imagined peer pressure is a very real entity. Adolescents are rebelling from parents and pursuing their autonomy. They want to be considered adult, mature and experienced. Smoking, drugs, alcohol and sex have become the symbols of adulthood. The answer to this is a right relationship between the teenager and parents which allows autonomy, and yet is one in which the parents retain respect and are listened to.

The desire not to be left behind is again very real. The teenager and the adolescent are people in a hurry. They want to become adults in double-quick time. Sexual intercourse is what adults do. Losing one's virginity is a sign of adulthood. What is needed is an education to show that what adults try to do is to love one another.

Sex is part of the process of loving one another. Young people need to link adulthood with love and not necessarily with sex. The instincts with which they are endowed do not make them persons. Reason and love do, and an education that does not prepare for feelings is dismally inadequate.

Some young people try sex because they think they are in a loving relationship.

*Dr Dominian's book is written for a British audience. In New Zealand the Catholic Church has endeavoured to respond to these problems especially through the CFLE courses.

Their minds are filled with romantic thoughts. Falling in love is one of the most frequent reasons for having sex. "I love him/her" is the commonest excuse. There is no doubt that love is the most complicated human experience.

Infatuation and falling in love

Falling in love is a complex of sexual attraction and affective attachment, but that is also the basis of infatuation. We cannot easily distinguish between infatuation and falling in love, and young people often have sex when they are merely infatuated. Genuine love needs, in addition to sexual attraction and affective attachment, emotional and social compatibility.

We need to know whether we are really suited to each other before we can confirm that we are really in love. There is no easy way to test between genuine love and infatuation. For young people reading this passage the crucial test is whether you would want to be with this person for the rest of your life.

The boy or girl who is threatened that their friend will leave if they don't have sex is under pressure and emotional duress. The fear of being alone, of never finding another friend, or of being rejected are real psychological entities.

Self-esteem is the key to the necessary resistance. Traditional Christian teaching emphasised the power of the will to resist temptation. We know now that self-esteem is the key to resist temptation. Self-esteem gives the young man or woman the robustness to cope with rejection and/or temporary aloneness with the conviction that if they feel and are lovable, then someone else will come to replace those coercing them.

Other teenage pressures

Everybody needs to feel loved, including the adolescent and especially the deprived adolescent. It has been well documented that boys and girls who have had an emotionally deprived childhood either through poor parenting, being brought up in an institution or through marital break-down, are particularly hungry for affection and are more ready to have sexual intercourse early. Those who are deprived emotionally are particularly prone to becoming pregnant. A baby gives them the feeling of being wanted and needed.

The influence of the media is also undoubtedly very great. It glamorizes sex, and we are bombarded by sexual messages. These messages trivialise sex because they portray sexual attraction without the elaboration of affective attachment and personal compatibility. Nor do they give a clue to the inner world of sex. The bombardment of sex from the media will continue in the immediate future. What is needed is a strong religious and educational counter-influence.

Finally, we have the youth culture of *alcohol and drugs*. There is no doubt that alcohol reduces inhibitions and allows sexual intercourse to take place in the most unpromising circumstances. Control of alcohol is something that parents and other supervisors can exert and in this way can help safeguard their teenage children. The same can be said about drugs.

What the church needs to teach

The link between sex and procreation, important as it is, is no longer the prominent thrust and reason for sexual intercourse. The main reason for having sex is the initiation and facilitation of love. Christianity has to get this message clear. The prohibition of fornication is not enough.

But that does not mean that its meaning is obsolete. As in so many other areas, Christianity has to unpack its language. With reference to teenage sex, *why is it wrong for adolescents to have sexual intercourse?* The answer "*Because the Church says so*" has very little influence. Sexual intercourse is there to seal a loving relationship, which is more than falling in love.

Biology does not equip us to provide love in a relationship. This is why the isolated one-night stand bears no relationship to the presence of love. Beyond biology, we need a loving bond or attachment. We need a third element in place – a harmony, compatibility and suitability of the personality and that takes time to discover.

It is a strong belief in conservative circles that contraception has facilitated early and easy sex. A document, *Teenage Pregnancy* from the *Social Exclusion Unit*, states that between a third and a half of sexually active teenagers do not use contraception at first intercourse. The point which is not appreciated is that a great deal of sexual activity is prompted by impulsive, instinctual behaviour which is not easily open to rational processes.

The key to reducing unloving or immature sex is not the banning of contraception. That belief is a myth, tenaciously clung to by those who are unable to move forward in understanding sexuality in terms of love.

Changes in social habits can only be achieved through the education of the meaning of human behaviour. The link between procreation and sex persisted for 2,000 years because it made sense of human behaviour. It no longer makes sense, and we have an obligation to young people to make sense of sex in terms of person, relationship and love. We have to show them that losing one's virginity is not a sign of maturity. It is not a hurdle to be negotiated.

We have to show that coitus is the beginning of a journey of personal love, which is the key to interpersonal survival and is a mystery. The Church needs first of all to understand interpersonal love and convey this message ceaselessly, and parents and teachers must unpack the message.

The body is the site of the holy. Holiness is love in relationship, and that is the Trinity. ■

Giving the world what it needs

Headmaster Christopher Jamison went to Chile and found a successful lay movement in Catholic schools

In one of the poorest suburbs of Santiago is a school where no monks or nuns have ever worked, yet which offers a way of education based on the Rule of St Benedict. San Lorenzo is one of three remarkable secondary schools in Santiago set up by lay people where at the beginning and end of each day the lay head leads those who wish in singing the monastic offices of lauds and vespers. I visited it last year partly to answer a question: ***do these schools have something that religious schools worldwide can learn from?***

The lay people are members of *Manquehue*, Chile's fast-growing lay Benedictine movement. Manquehue (pronounced *Man-kay-way*) means "Place of the Condors" and is the name of a mountain that rears high over the smart suburb of Vitacura on the other side of town. It was here that the founder of the Manquehue Apostolic movement (MAM), José Manuel Eguiguren, first read the Scriptures using the traditional Benedictine method of *lectio divina,* that unhurried reflection on the text which characterises the monastic way of life.

It was 1977, and Chile was in the depths of the Pinochet dictatorship. Then a single student (he is now married with five children), Eguiguren's personal life was confused. "I was 25 and undergoing a crisis", he recalls. "Nothing seemed to make sense to me. Then a Benedictine monk handed me the Scriptures and taught me to read them in such a way that it seemed as though Jesus Christ himself was revealing himself to me, risen and alive, shedding light on my life and filling it with meaning."

But this was not a sudden conversion. "Although I clearly remember that day when I first turned up at the monastery, this new awareness was a gradual thing. I would head up to the monastery almost every day where Fr Gabriel, with endless patience, would make time for me, answer my questions, share my anxieties and help me listen to the answers that God's Word provided me with. All this went on for three years."

By then José Manuel was a teacher. Asked to lead a confirmation group, he was at a loss. "All I did with them was what Fr Gabriel had done with me: take the Bible and set about discovering how the Word of God speaks to each one of us individually.

"Their response was remarkable. We soon became filled with ideals. We wanted to do things, change the world. We became friends, very good friends. We decided to organise ourselves and we called ourselves the Manquehue Apostolic Movement after the school we all belonged to, *Manquehue School*."

Twenty-five years later, MAM is a canonically recognised lay association with some 900 members, of whom 25 are lay oblates, men and women, some celibate and some married. The movement's work includes a single-parent mother hostel and adult education, but its most visible expression is in the schools.

In between these two poles, the most obvious feature is *lectio divina,* the monastic way of reading Scripture as discovered by José Manuel. In the movement's schools, *lectio* classes are part of the core curriculum for students aged 12 to 14, after which it is voluntary. At 16 they can become *lectio* group leaders.

Lectio Divina

A traditional way in which monks prayed the Word of God. In the days before printing, one monk would read the Monastery Bible to the assembled community.

A method of praying Scripture developed, consisting of four stages:

reading – *the passage is read slowly – and perhaps more than once. I immerse myself in the text*

meditation – *What is this word saying to me? I may concentrate on one word or phrase. What is the context for me today?*

prayer – *I pray to God, asking for specific graces*

contemplation – *I quietly rest in God.*

"Simply reading the Word, however, is not good enough in itself", explains José Manuel. "What is needed is for the Word to be brought home to each person. We must remember what the Ethiopian eunuch in *Acts* said to Philip about the Scriptures: ***'How can I understand if I have no one to guide me?'*** (*Acts 8:31*).

"This is where the tutors come in. In our schools the tutors must play Philip to the students. A tutor might be a senior student, a former student or a younger member of the movement. Tutors are assigned to a specific group and build up a strong, personal relationship with them over time, concerning themselves with their wellbeing."

The divine office, *lectio*, peer tutoring: these are some of the key elements that make up the Manquehue school, combined with other features such as community service which are found in all Christian schools. The three secondary schools run by the movement function in different socio-economic contexts with a total of more than 3,000 students aged four to 18, and a kindergarten has recently been established, all since the founding of *San Benito* College in 1982. So in 20 years a group of lay people have created a network of new schools with distinctive Benedictine traditions.

So what can others learn from this Chilean experience? The movement has set up an international seminar called the Cunaco Group, after the Chilean *hacienda* where the group first gathered; this seminar comes together annually to promote the mission to evangelise according to the Rule of Benedict.

At a Cunaco Group meeting, the key question facing all Catholic educators was well expressed by a North American abbot: "Will our schools give the world what it *wants* or what it *needs*?" The way the Manquehue schools handle that question is creative but demanding. First, their schools are owned and run by a lay association, with diocesan approval. The lay character of the schools includes not only the management (the head is always an oblate) but also the trusteeship and governance which is entirely in lay hands.

Secondly, this lay association is not an

has Manquehue something that schools worldwide can learn from

ad hoc group but an organisation that has at its heart a core of oblates who work and pray together with a monastic commitment, without being monks or nuns. Lay governors and school managers who feel frustrated by the clerical structures of dioceses and orders might welcome the first point, but how many lay people are ready for the second? The Benedictine dedication of this core group of oblates fosters "what the world needs" and saves it from being overwhelmed by "what the world wants".

In the meantime, many Benedictine schools around the world are taking up the Manquehue style of *lectio*, including the peer leadership. This, I believe, is a vital step to ensure that listening to God lies at the heart of the school. As church historian Eamon Duffy commented: "Our culture sets an enormous value on the quick fix". He sees the Benedictine tradition as challenging this approach through "the ruminative, meditative work of the monastic liturgy, and the practice of *lectio divina*, the slow, reflective brooding over the tradition, which must surely underlie the education offered in monastic schools. The Church has never needed so urgently this sort of deep grounding in its inherited wisdom."

How will lay people in other countries emulate the commitment of the Manquehue oblates? Or is all this a gift of God only to the Chilean Church? ■

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My Mum

... a Christmas letter from a grown-up daughter to her mother who is terminally sick

Dear Mum

There is so much to say and I want to say it now and to you – and not to others when you are not here to hear it. One of my first memories was one day when I decided to help you by bringing in the milk bottles. I must have been about four I think. I thought I was being so good as I perched them all on a tray and began the delicate walk in from the letterbox. Now if only those steps had not been there at the front porch because, as you guessed it, they jumped out and tripped me up and over went the tray and all the milk bottles smashed. I was scared so ran as fast as I could down to Carol's and safety.

Not sure what I thought you were going to do to me, as I can't ever remember being smacked. Anyway, sure enough, the phone rings for me to go home, and there is Mum not incredibly angry – although Lord knows you should have been – but there with a hug and a 'never mind' and a 'why did you run away?'

Another day I lost my shoe at school and decided to come home for lunch. Don't think you were working then as you were home. In both these cases I learnt one of the most valuable lessons of all. You can't run away from things. Coming home did not find my shoe, but going back the next day with my Mum did find it. Once again, I can't remember you being angry, just enforcing that it had to be found and I had to go back and do it. What valuable lessons! They have carried me through many a time when I have wanted to escape from situations or people, but had learnt from an early age that that was not the way to go about life.

As I grew older I knew you would always be there for me and it didn't matter what I did you would always love me. As a teenager I really tested this, wanting to do it all my way or no way. I was strong-willed and opinionated and very black and white. I know there were times when I made it very difficult for you, but still you kept coming back for more!!!

I look back now and thank you for allowing me to become the person I needed to be and not what you wanted. Especially, I thank you for allowing me to make my own mistakes and never once saying I told you so. As a young adult when boys came into the picture and I started going out at night, I remember the trust you had in me. Never did you say be 'home at such and such a time', seldom did you interrogate me as to where we were going or where we had been. All the time I knew you trusted me to do the right thing. Mum, I can tell you now that that trust was not ill-founded. As I grew up, because of your belief in me, I had a maturity and responsibility beyond my years. I knew right from wrong and as a consequence was pretty tame on today's standards. As a child of the '70s, this type of upbringing was so important as every party we went to at that time was full of drugs and lord knows what else. With my strong nature, knowing right from wrong and being aware of how disappointed Mum and Dad would be if I did anything stupid, I was never tempted to even try the alternatives.

Because we were allowed to have a drink at home alcohol was never a temptation. I would be lying if I said as an adult I hadn't had a few binges in this direction!! But because it wasn't a novelty, it never got out of control. I can honestly say that it was my upbringing and the fact that I always knew you were relying on me to do the right thing that got me through my teenage years unscathed.

As an adult, I have had to learn to live away from family and to see how the other half live. Every day I thank my lucky stars for the Mum and Dad I had. I thank you for the sacrifices you made for me that gave me a good education. Every day I experience the benefit of this as I make my way in the world and am able to hold my own.

I thank you for going out to work to give me and the rest of us kids the things we would not have had if you stayed home. Thank you for always putting us first. Thank you for being there for me, no matter what.

So Mum as we move towards another Christmas, hopefully not – but perhaps your last – I want you to know once and for all how much I love you. You are not only my mother but also the person apart from Kelvin that I most enjoy spending time with. You are my best friend, you are happy for me when times are good and comfort me when I am sad, you are proud of me when I do well and supportive when I make mistakes.

Have a very happy Christmas, and never forget how important you are to me and how grateful I am that in the lucky dip of life I won first prize, the greatest Mum in the world.

Merry Christmas. I love you.
Your daughter, Anne

PS Kelvin sends his love and reckons you're a pretty good mother-in-law too. ■

Fr Brian Kelly (1931-2002)

Brian Kelly died still at the helm of his busy and populous South Auckland parish of St Mark's, Pakuranga. A friend says of him: "Brian showed in his life you don't have to read Greek to be a good priest!"

Fr Pat Holland, his schoolmate and seminary companion as well as lifelong friend, spoke these words at his funeral:

A newly appointed priest once asked his parish priest what he would like him to do. "Just be about," came the reply. Brian Kelly had the happy ability of 'just being about' – for his family, his friends, the parishioners, for his fellow priests and bishops.

A priest friend called on him just prior to his death. He commented on the fact that Brian was watching TV at 10 o'clock in the morning.

He replied: "I'm waiting for the scratchings." Brian had an ongoing relationship with the TAB. He would at times 'cover the field', backing both favourites and outsiders. More importantly, he 'covered the field' with the parishioners, supporting the regular attenders but with a mind and heart also for outsiders.

In his room close by him was an ashtray and his breviary. He was a man of prayer. He was in touch with life. He had the ability to tell a good story; he was a great homilist. It is significant that he was the one chosen to launch the RENEW programme in the Auckland diocese.

Fr Brian was a little man with a big heart. He was good at sport and never talked himself up. The *Auckland Herald* death notice read: "We admire his humanity, humility and wisdom."

Maureen Hammond was pastoral assistant at St Mark's and says this about her parish priest of many years:
Fr Brian was the 'boss' par excellence – and dear friend of mine. A truly humble and wise man. A man of prayer – his breviary and inclusive language psalm book always at hand beside the ashtray.

"That was okay... quite good" were his words of approval and affirmation. His voice raised only when watching the Sky Sports channel.

For 12 years Brian has been a Sunday night dinner guest at my place. Sunday nights have changed for me now, and these words of Frank Anderson's song keep coming to mind:
The Word you have spoken has nourished our hearts.
Now the Word comes to you!
Welcome home!

Fr John Pound (1915-2002)

The phrase that springs to mind when I think of John Pound is that he always had an 'adequate self-image'. He made this 'adequate self-image' an art form. He had a charm that would melt all aggression, and he made you feel the priesthood was a good place to be.

Wherever he went he landed on his feet. People felt privileged to serve him. When he was parish priest of Mosgiel in the '60s he had the nuns sprinting round him in ever-decreasing circles. And later on, in North Invercargill, he had a succession of curates who felt similarly blest to learn from him. They all enjoyed him.

He enjoyed life. Rotary, Probus, Operatic, Repertory theatre, the *A Capella* choir – he loved them all. And whatever happened to him was always far more sensational than if it happened to you or me. In fact, he loved words like 'sensational', 'disaster'. For everything that happened within a stone's throw of him was a living drama.

He once proclaimed, in the presence of an important official from Rome, that he ought to be made a Monsignor. Evidently such aspirations should be carefully concealed. He delighted in this apparent neglect, and, in any case, he always acted as if he were a Monsignor already.

However, he was not just some kind of clerical comedian. He was a man of great judgment. In search of down-to-earth advice, you would never get better. He was an acute observer of the human scene, and while he frequently dined out on the strange foibles we all have, he thoroughly knew the human condition.

What impressed me most about him was the way he had of being a priest. Whatever you say about his bouncing self-confidence, he would never have thought of attempting to leap the barrier between the profane and the sacred. His devotion to the Mass, his duty in the confessional, and his priestly presence in the house during his retirement was an inspiring witness, creating valuable time and space for others who had to be out and about.

More than once I have heard him lead the rest of us in prayer, and the formula he preferred was 'Father-God'. Not 'Father'. Not 'God', but 'Father-God'. Fr John would expect to be received through the pearly gates with a minimum of delay; but as he approached the very presence of God, he would be joyfully on his knees.

John Pound was a good priest, and a unique, thoroughly rounded character. A real human being ■

(From the funeral homily of fellow Dunedin priest, John Stone)

A treasury of New Zealand poets

Candlewick Kelp – poems by Jane Simpson

With Our Eyes Open – edited by Kathleen Gallagher and Peb Simmons

Spirit in a Strange Land: a selection of New Zealand spiritual verse – edited by Paul Morris, Harry Ricketts and Mike Grimshaw.

Review: Mike Crowl

Reviewing a book of poetry – let alone three – is akin to reviewing individual paragraphs in a novel. There are so many distinct moments, it's difficult to deal with them all.

Let me start with the shortest of these three books, Jane Simpson's *Candlewick Kelp*, which as a bonus includes some wonderful wood-block prints by Michael Tuffery. Simpson might be regarded as a minimalist: her book is barely 30 pages long, a number of the poems hardly make it half-way down the page, and few lines contain more than three words. Some of the poems feel like short-hand notes.

For all their brevity, the poems' depths aren't quickly plumbed. This isn't to say they're obscure – they're not – and anyway, there are helpful notes at the back. Only one piece left me standing outside: *dribbling down*, where the names printed in boxes are from a Taubmans' colour chart.

I guess this has to be taken as a piece of fun, a kind of game with a collection of serendipitous words. *Candlewick Kelp* is a small book worth spending time on.

With Our Eyes Open is a larger kettle of fish. Two of the poets, Kathleen Gallagher and Peb Simmons, tell us that poets from around Christchurch with a common Christian perspective were invited to pool together poems which spoke to different areas of the human condition.

The unnamed sections of the book are divided by superb colour photographs by Stefan Roberts. This leaves the reader to work out (or ignore) the theme linking each group of poems. And while the introduction presents the Christian faith of the poets, there is only marginal verbal evidence of it in the poems. These poems are Christian in the sense that they uphold the belief that the world and all it contains is the Lord's. Thus, they range comfortably over the whole of nature in its detail, and humanity in its relationships, seeing all of these as sacred and holy. This point is summed up in Diana Neutze's words: "we have to be in the right place/ at the right time/ ever on the lookout/ for the aura of holiness/ four little sparrows haloed with light."

What is striking to me about the collection is the maturity of the work. Certainly, the poets are mostly long-established but not necessarily nationally-known writers, so you'd expect them to understand their craft. The assurance and strength in the writing not only affirms what the introduction states, that poetry in New Zealand is having a renaissance, but also shows that New Zealand poets have now built their own place and are standing confidently in it.

Besides those already mentioned, the book includes work by Jennifer Barrer, Peter Crothall, Michael Harlow, Eric Mould, James Norcliffe, John O'Connor, Jane Simpson (only one repeat from her other book), and John Weir.

Spirit in a Strange Land is the largest of the three collections, and defines spirituality in a wider sense than the Christian one. Although many of the poets wouldn't call themselves Christians, they continue to use Christian symbols to express themselves. New Zealand is often seen as a secular society with little concern for the spiritual. Yet if poets speak the truth, then the spiritual is alive and well, albeit in a variety of forms. Secularism appears to dominate, but spirituality isn't ready to throw in the towel.

We would expect to find some old favourites here, and do: Baxter's *Jerusalem Sonnets*; R.A.K. Mason's *Judas Iscariot*, *On the Swag*, and, *Footnote to John ii 4*, Joy Cowley's *Nativity*. But there are plenty of surprises: Denis Glover, Gary McCormick, Sam Hunt, C K Stead, Brian Turner, Charles Brasch and Bill Manhire all make appearances, and there's even a poetical argument between Baxter and the media's spokesperson for spirituality, Lloyd Geering, which first appeared in the *Critic* back in 1966.

Many of these poets don't argue for the traditional religion; some have bitter words to say about it. However, the collection's underlying theme is that there are far more searchers after truth amongst our well-known poets than we might have expected, and that their searching in poetry gives us ▷▷

Form book for the Papal Stakes

Conclave: The Politics, Personalities and Process of the Next Papal Election
By John L. Allen, Jr.
Published by Doubleday
Price: $37.95
Review: Jim Neilan

If you would like to have a bet with Dublin bookmaker, Paddy Power, on who will be the next pope, you'll find his website (Paddy's!) on page 159 of this 231 page paperback.

However, the author insists that, even though he offers a list of his top 20 candidates, his aim is not to produce a handicapper's guide for the next papal stakes. He aims to present the issues, the pressure groups and the people at the heart of the matter when the world's cardinals gather to elect the next successor to Saint Peter.

John Allen is well equipped to write on this subject. He lives in Rome and, as the Vatican correspondent for the American *National Catholic Reporter*, has many inside contacts. His weekly column is read avidly worldwide by those who are not content with the *authorised version* of Catholic news in the Vatican's *L' Osservatore Romano.*

His section on the history of the papacy, with emphasis on the last four pontificates, illustrates the extraordinary diversity of the popes' personal strengths and weaknesses, their theological and political leanings and how they chose to exercise their power.

His explanation of the procedures, which take place from the time of a pope's death until the election begins, includes many fascinating details. This is the time when the world's cardinals come to Rome and the lobbying begins. Allen tells some not-so-inspiring stories of this aspect of previous conclaves. He identifies the broad lobby groups, which will be at work in the next election.

He sees the most important issue as collegiality – wresting some of the power from the Roman Curia. The Vatican, contrary to the spirit of the Vatican Council, has become progressively more centralised, especially under the current pope. Cardinals will need to decide if they want this to continue, to slow down, or to be reversed.

Before voting begins, the cardinals will also be summing up each other's views on issues such as inter-religious dialogue, sexual morality rules, bio-ethics, the role of the laity and women. Individuals are identified as to where they stand on these.

Most of the cardinals have been appointed by John Paul himself. But Allen doesn't support the *stacking the deck* theory. Conclaves full of cardinals appointed by the deceased pope do not elect photocopies of the man who named them. More often, the opposite holds true.

A long pontificate inevitably produces frustrations as well as accomplishments. A modern pope is called to be an intellectual, a politician, a pastor and a media superstar – an impossible task – and so, inevitably, some aspects of the job will be emphasised at the expense of others. As an example, globetrotter John Paul (a darling of the media) often leaves many day-to-day details to others, signing what is put in front of him without studying the small print.

The author's chapter on *How the Conclave Works* moves systematically through the major moments so we can understand what is happening and what it all means. This phrase, to me, sums up the book. It is a captivating, easy-to-read guide to an event which is going to have worldwide impact. Six thousand journalists are expected in Rome and TV networks have been jostling to find the best spots for a shot of the white smoke announcing, *We have a Pope*!

Allen makes only two predictions: the first, that the next pope will not be an American. The second agrees with a joke currently doing the clerical circuit: John Paul asks God when there will be peace in the world. "Not in your lifetime," the Lord replies. Then he asks when there will be another Polish pope. "Not in my lifetime," God answers.

John Paul, of course, may still have the last laugh. When he beatified Pope Pius IX last year, he said: "I hope he will let me reach the years of his pontificate." That would mean 2010. By then, many of the hot favourites will be too old to be eligible.

But don't let this put you off reading the book. ■

▷▷ a moving insight into where we are as a people. This is a collection that shows our common human need for something beyond our material selves. The editors have chosen to include a couple of early hymn texts, one of which is also our national anthem. Poetically, it might have been better to include some contemporary hymns, since New Zealand is renowned for its present-day hymnwriters. That quibble aside, this is a marvellous and wide-ranging collection. ■

Mike Crowl is a NZ Freelance writer

Candlewick Kelp – published by the Poets' Group, Christchurch, Price: $10
65 Birdwood Ave, Beckenham, Christchurch 8002
With Our Eyes Open – published by Chrysalis Seed Trust, Price: $26.95
Spirit in a Strange Land – A Godwit Book, published by Random House, NZ.,Price: $39.95

America under George Bush – the new 'rogue state'

Crosscurrents
John Honoré

It is now a year since 3000 innocent people lost their lives in the twin towers of New York. September 11 will no doubt be commemorated in a 'son et lumière' ceremony attended by George W. Bush and as many world dignitaries as can be mustered. This is as it should be. However, what is also necessary at this time is an assessment of what progress has been made in understanding the root causes of the disaster and an acknowledgement of the US response to September 11. Osama bin Laden – wanted "dead or alive" – remains at large, a shadow who, having escaped Bush's "infinite justice", is becoming a cult figure.

The roots of terrorism existed long before bin Laden. It should not be forgotten that the US was involved for 40 years in a crusade against Communism, and now it is a crusade against terrorism. Bush's "war against terror" rallied the American people behind him but has left Afghanistan, the victim of massive modern technological warfare, a devastated war-zone which is fast reverting to a faction-ridden terrain of petty warlords. The West is already turning its back on the seemingly insoluble problems of governance and the rehabilitation of that wretched country.

George W. Bush continues to assert US military power in the world and threatens to punish those who refuse to bow to his "war on terror". His Middle East military base, Israel, under the leadership of Ariel Sharon, continues to harass the Palestinians with loss of life and property. Arafat responds in kind and both sides call their opponents 'terrorists'. Bush now asks that Arafat, democratically elected by his own people, be deposed.

Now Bush has plans against another sovereign state – Iraq. The sabre-rattling is intensifying, and the threat of a US invasion of Iraq seems to be getting closer by the day. It is almost an obsession among the White House hawks, who control Bush's political agenda, to keep war at the forefront of American minds. It masks the stench of corporate corruption and America's dependence on Middle East oil. When will George W. Bush be seen for what he is – leader of the most powerful nation on earth which is rapidly becoming the 'rogue state' of the world?

The loss of life directly attributable to Bush's "war on terror" numbers many more thousands than were killed in New York. The continuing sanctions against Iraq have claimed many more childrens' lives; Afghanistan's casualties and the on-going war in the Middle East have rendered Bush's peace attempts as farcical. Let us also remember these souls on September 11.

Election 2002 – report card

New Zealand's general election has been decided, and in many ways the result has been a victory for MMP and a defeat for the major centre-right party, *National*. Helen Clark has stitched together a coalition with Peter Dunne's *United Future* Party and Jim Anderton. The latter will be remembered for having trashed the left wing which allowed Clark to move to the right.

The new coalition is shrewd politics by Clark because it is a definite move to the centre-right. Dunne will be fractious, but Clark is now able to ignore the *Greens* and assure herself of power for another three years without a left-wing partner. It has nothing to do with the good of New Zealand. It is pure political manoeuvring. Further, Clark has shut out *National* from the centre-right and made that party directionless with no defined political boundaries to appeal to voters.

The *National* Party took a drubbing from which it will be hard to recover. I still like to believe that it was abandoned for two reasons, although political pundits may disagree. Firstly, people remembered the appalling policies of the '90s. The selling of state assets, such as the Bank of New Zealand, sold in 1992 for $850 million, is but one example. Its market value is now in excess of $5 billion and it is in foreign hands. Then came the disastrous reconstruction of the public health service and the ill-conceived student loan scheme. The "mother of all budgets" and the broken promises on superannuation further distanced the *National* Party from political reality.

Secondly, there is the complete lack of talent in a party whose members still have the mentality of being "born to rule". It is a case of 'the safer the National seat the thicker the candidate'. Consider some of those whom Michelle Boag probably would have liked to off-load: Roger Sowry ex brat-pack, Clem Simich, the two Carters, Lockwood Smith and Murray McCully, the so-called Party strategist, who has now lost two elections for *National* (I won't elaborate on his record as Minister of Housing).

I am being harsh, but Bill English will have to seek new talent (not old talent like Don Brash) and rebuild a party which had a honourable record before 1990. He is paying for the ruinous policies of nine years in the hands of ministers who were ideologically driven but with no idea of the consequences of their actions. I genuinely wish him luck because he seems to want the challenge. ■

Surprise! Surprise dot com

I had the surprise and pleasure recently of seeing for the first time my own name on the World Wide Web. I was conducting a search, seeking material relating to family history. Since there have been numerous "Humphrey O'Leary's" in New Zealand. What would a search for that item bring up?

My genealogical search was successful. But the surprise was a page and a half dealing with an article I myself wrote four years ago.

Adoremus Bulletin, the journal of the (American) Society for the Renewal of the Sacred Liturgy, took issue with an article that I had published in New Zealand on "Receiving Communion Through Intinction". Intinction is one of the four ways of receiving the Precious Blood authorised in the post Vatican II Missal. (The other three are drinking from the chalice, using a tube and having the celebrant employ a spoon.) I had contended that it was a minor and readily defended departure from the prescribed mode of intinction to have the communicant rather than the minister dip the Host in the Precious Blood.

The issue remains a live one today. Though communion under both species is widely available in New Zealand, many receive only the Host. The reason seems to be hygiene. People do not want to drink from a cup from which others have just drunk. We are an age far more conscious of contagion and infection than our predecessors in the faith. Yet at least some dioceses frown on the communicant dipping their host in the chalice.

Adoremus rubbished my contention. What I had written was "an excuse for disobedience of almost any sort". Even more amazing was my idea "of the role of custom not to protect traditional practices but as a device to erode them". This was dismissed as "simply nonsense".

My critic was obvious ignorant of the basic principles of Canon Law. It is the officially acknowledged role of custom not merely to introduce new laws but also, on occasion, to do away with existing ones. To remove the restriction that only the minister may perform the act of intinction is quite within the realm of custom. Canon law, for all its bad press in some circles, can at times be liberating.

One path to a remedy lies in the future. We live in an age of advanced and increasingly miniaturised technology. Let us produce a small, handheld device that, after each communicant has received, the minister of the eucharist applies to the lip of the chalice. The device would, by one of several currently available technologies, securely cleanse it of every impurity. Then others could drink from the chalice without fear of infection. But the advent of such a solution remains for the moment the dream of technophiles like myself. Presently we are stuck with the problem.

Without doubt, communicating under both species by drinking from the chalice is the preferred mode. But let us remember that for more than a millennium the Church forbade the laity under any circumstances whatever to receive the Precious Blood, and allowed whole nations to move toward schism and heresy rather than rescind the prohibition. It smacks of the same intolerance to contend that there is only one way of receiving under both species. Surely we are in a period of intermediate steps and provisional solutions rather than of black and white answers.

Oh, yes, what was the New Zealand publication that printed the article my critics, here and abroad, did not like? What could it be but *Tui Motu!* ■

Fr Humphrey O'Leary's earlier article on Intinction was in Tui Motu *July '98.*

Molokai

What's in a name? In 1981 on my way back to New Zealand to take up a teaching post in the seminary I had the good fortune to spend a couple of days at the leper settlement on the island of Molokai, Hawaii. There I had occasion to ask myself again to what extent I owe my vocation to my namesake, the Belgian priest Blessed Damien de Veuster. Since boyhood I had been proudly aware that we were related – my maternal grandfather and godfather was himself the grandchild of Damien's first cousin; my mother has told me how as a girl she watched her father walking close to King Leopold when Fr Damien's remains were brought back to Belgium in 1936.

When I saw David Cox's film *Molokai* in the recent Film Festival, all sorts of memories of this visit came back. I remembered celebrating Mass in the little church of St Philomena with three elderly women who because of their disfigurement had remained at Kalaupapa virtually all their lives. The film depicts well Damien's enormous energy. In the bush near the settlement I had been shown a huge, lined pit in the ground which Damien had dug out to provide a decent water supply for his outcasts. Today the reservoir is now almost overgrown.

In the film one sees the pali or cliffs which separate the settlement from the rest of the island. Twenty one years ago I had retraced the exhausting climb down and back up this barrier. Today I appreciate all the more how terribly isolated and abandoned Damien and his fellow exiles must have felt. No wonder he was so impatient with the authorities, both ecclesiastical and civil, when they wanted him to remain quiet and uncomplaining.

Besides evoking memories, the film *Molokai* provokes questions about ourselves today. Though leprosy can now be effectively treated by drugs, fewer than 20 per cent of the estimated 15 million who suffer the disease today receive regular treatment. Many are still stigmatised and abandoned, as occurs in mainland China.

In Damien's day leprosy was erroneously regarded as a consequence of sexual promiscuity – in the film we witness the humiliation Fr Damien has to undergo because of this prejudice. The example of Fr Damien challenges us to examine our response to the victims of AIDS which, like leprosy in Hawaii in the 19th century, is sweeping like a plague through Africa today.

Since 1981, most of my time as a priest has been as a seminary teacher. Thinking of the story of Fr Damien, I remember how he would write to his older brother Fr Pamphile in Belgium, urging him to leave his academic work and come and help in the missions as he had originally intended. I hope that my recent return to full-time parish ministry will receive Fr Damien's blessing!

Damian Wynn-Williams

Fr Wynn-Williams is parish priest of Forbury, Dunedin