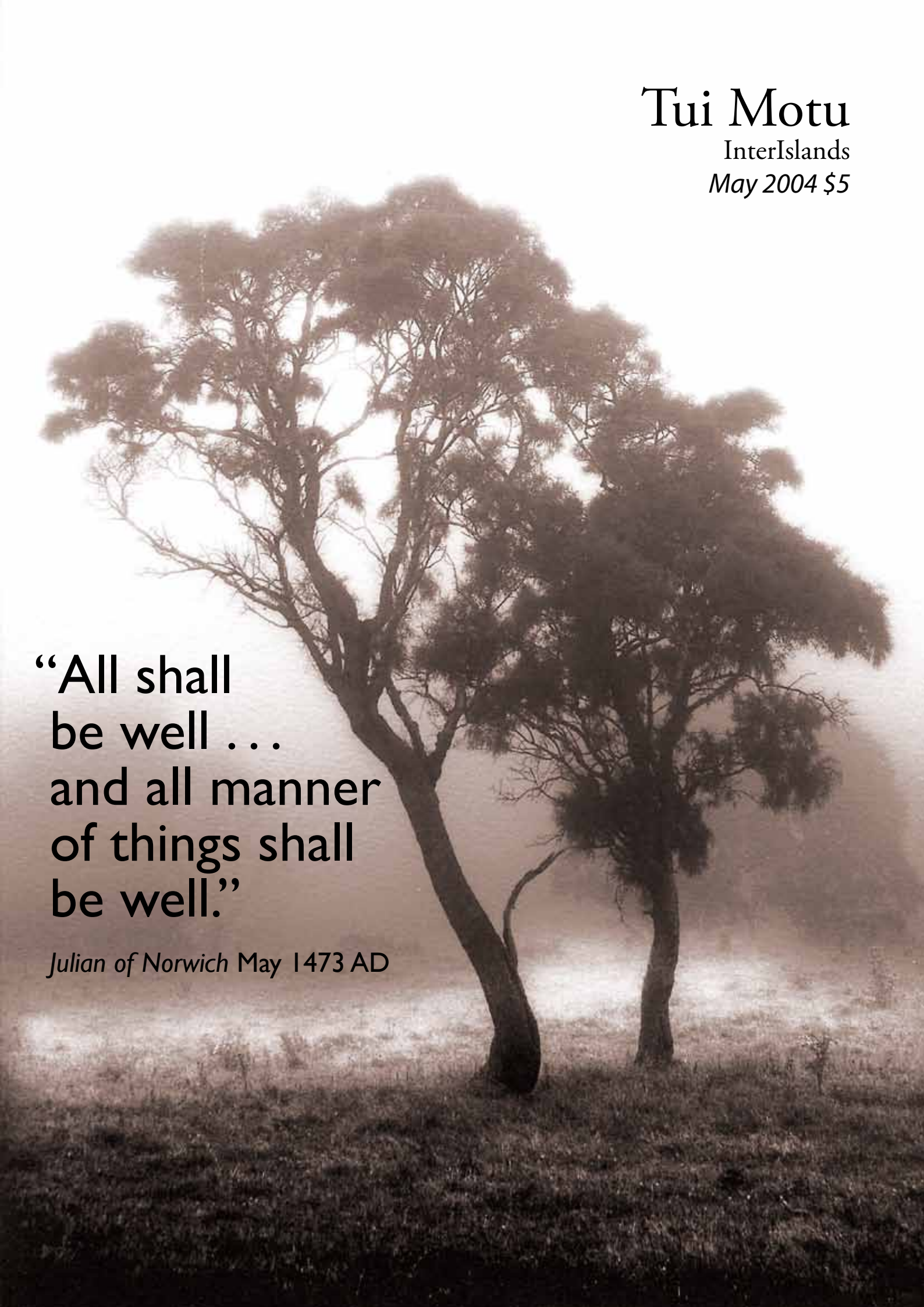
Tui Motu

InterIslands

May 2004 $5



Contents

Our thanks to Reg Graham for the Cover photo and the photo on pp 16-17

All Shall Be Well

This year I took part in a parish group, following the Caritas Lenten programme. It was one of those rare occasions when you experience a faith community at its best. Indeed such an experience takes you close to what the original faith communities of the early Christian church must have been like. There is friendship and a high degree of trust, of humour and of patient listening. But what distinguishes such a group from any gathering of friends is that we were sharing and being nourished by a common tradition of faith.

Our world, our Western world in particular, is hungry for such nourishment. Opposite, Fr John Broadbent speaks of the yearning of many young people for spiritual experience. He points out the blind alleys such a search may lead them down. But he also rejoices at the role theology can play in 'the market place' – on the University campus, in the public arena, in the media. Sound theology helps the seeker come to grips with a tradition of faith, and meet with generations of great Christian minds who grappled with the eternal problems of faith and tried to apply them to their own world.

But what these young searchers do not seem to have anything to do with – not initially at any rate – is the institutional church. They cannot see its relevance and they are turned off by its formalism and dogmatism. The appalling condition of the world these young people are facing, simply intensifies their need for such a search.

War, violence, disease, AIDS, mass poverty and starvation, international terrorism, the threat of a world ecological crisis: these are enough to make any searcher for truth despair. It is a bleak landscape, a wintry prospect – yet one which for the faith-filled Christian brings echoes of the time of waiting for Christ to rise again.

Julian of Norwich is one of the very great Christian luminaries whose wisdom contributes richly to the Christian tradition. She too lived in a decadent and threatening age. The Black Death swept through Europe, decimating the population like the AIDS pandemic today. The church of her time was corrupt and worldly. Yet the message she preached – and preaches – is one of glorious optimism. ***All shall be well*** – because in her prayer and her life she constantly encountered the hidden goodness of God.

Perhaps the crises which the Catholic church along with other mainstream Christian groups is suffering, will eventually be seen as a necessary purging. For until the church rids itself of its clericalism, of its reluctance to empower the laity, of its preoccupation with petty legalism, its demeaning of women, then it will appear ever more irrelevant to the hungering multitudes. This is the challenge a new bishop, a new Pope, a new Council will undoubtedly have to face.

M.H.

Young people in search of meaning

Tui Motu interviews Fr John Broadbent

David Tacey, a Catholic layman who teaches literature and spirituality at La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia, has systematically followed up a statistic published in the London *Tablet* to the effect that although only 10 percent of Britons claimed allegiance to a church, 71 percent claimed to have had a religious experience or to be interested in spirituality. Sociological surveys in many parts of the Western world have confirmed this trend. It seems that many people nowadays search for a spirituality without feeling the need for organised religion. Much of what Tacey has discovered is published in a book called *The Spirituality Revolution* (Harper Collins 2003).

He surveyed many hundreds of young people, and his research confirms a great thirst for God but a real aversion for organised religion. In analysing the predicament of these youngsters he notes two serious dangers: being attracted on the one hand to religious fundamentalism; on the other, to New Age spirituality, magic, tarot cards and the like. You could call these 'short cuts to God'. Yet what they really are needing is a tradition to latch on to, a theology – although in the beginning most would never acknowledge that. The churches have failed to recognise this and don't really provide for it.

But like all journeys of mystical search, these young people have to go through a 'purgation' stage, which the tradition helps them to bear. A sign that they are on the right track seems to be that they eventually move on to areas of social concern. They then start to show a deepening interest in theology, and this seems to be the motivation behind many young people seeking to do theology papers as part of their degree studies. Tacey contends that the churches need to recognise this and provide a haven where these young people can find a tradition and be comfortable in it. For they too are discovering that the fruits of the 18th Century Enlightenment which so dominate our culture no longer satisfy them.

John Broadbent recently published a book called *Restoring the Laity's Balance in an Unsteady Church*, and during April he gave a well-attended seminar in Christchurch – *On Reclaiming Vatican II* – on this theme. He notes an unsteadiness in the contemporary Catholic church which he puts down to a general dissatisfaction that the institutional church has failed to implement the directives of Vatican II. In the first four centuries the faithful elected their bishops and even the most autocratic of pastors habitually listened to and consulted their people. Whereas both the new Code of Canon Law and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* give a different message: that the governance of the church belongs to the hierarchy. The people are simply bystanders. The message is: 'we run the church and theology is our business, not yours. We are here to help you go out and be apostles to the modern world.'

The term ***Magisterium*** has been narrowed down to mean an authority exclusive to the Holy See and the hierarchy. Whereas St Thomas Aquinas said the Magisterium consisted of two chairs: that of the ***bishop*** and that of the ***theologian***. In the final analysis the bishop had the deciding say. Since the Reformation, church teaching, especially from the Jesuits, has veered towards making the Magisterium the exclusive prerogative of Pope and bishops; and since the 19th Century the Holy See has reserved to itself the power of appointing bishops. In other words, progressively there has been greater centralisation. The laity who are trying to live a Christian life in the world are barely consulted, let alone brought in.

Hierarchy of truths

A second major issue is the obscuring of the notion of the 'hierarchy of truths'. Who decides which truths are more important and which are less?

The Catechism, for instance, offers a 'level playing field', failing to distinguish what is central from what may be less important. Tacey's findings show that young people are not interested in being loaded down with a lot of detail which has come down and accepted as 'Tradition' – whereas in reality, such matters are just traditions, with a small 't'.

A good model for dealing with this problem was provided after Vatican II in the Theological Commission, which included theologians, sociologists and psychologists – a wider group. Such a group could examine the whole complex of Tradition and traditions and help establish a hierarchy of importance. Then, they might propose it to the Pope and Bishops for their sanction. This follows the way things were in the Middle Ages with the two 'chairs'.

Where does the 'Tradition' come from?

In the first four Christian centuries the people elected their bishops. However, Gnostic communities grew up which developed variations causing bishops like Irenaeus of Lyons, in the second half of the second Century, to seek to define what precisely constitutes the Catholic tradition as handed down from the Apostles.

Irenaeus proposed three building blocks: the *Rule of Faith*, which became the Apostles' Creed; the *Canon of Scripture*; and the *Bishop* himself, elected by the people but accepted and ordained by bishops from neighbouring Christian communities. Later, Vincent of Lerins put forward the ideal that Catholic truth consists in those things which are believed 'everywhere by all Christians in every age'. The reality, however, has never been quite that simple!

The Bishop of Rome was recognised as being successor of Peter and became a sort of final court of appeal. But the way the church operated in those days was much freer than today. It was fairly democratic. The laity had a considerable say in the way things were run. There was no centralised control.

Later, the great Councils reflected the universality of the church, which they did effectively as long as there was no pressure 'from above'. However, at Vatican I Pope Pius IX leant on the bishops to vote for Papal Infallibility. And of course he had appointed most of them, which was unprecedented. The situation is much

Maori-Pakeha relations 1

Congratulations to Sr Tui Cadigan (*Tui Motu* March) who described 'difference' so clearly in her Waitangi Day address in the Christchurch cathedral. Sadly however, the threatening tone of her last paragraph did not allow for hope. What an opportunity was missed to draw on the Gospel and tradition which provide the basis for Christians to honour the dignity of every person and to respect 'difference'.

With such a focus this address could have been a positive commemoration of Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

J Scott, Paraparaumu

Maori-Pakeha relations 2

There has been an ongoing atmosphere of appeasement towards the Maori population for many years and this has accelerated in the past six years. It is in fact depressing that successive governments have been sincerely working through the mire that is Treaty settlements, and their thanks have been continuous abuse.

When you remember that the government means us, that means we have been subject to continuous abuse. In Crosscurrents (*March* issue) John Honoré provided an intelligent, balanced analysis of what has occurred and why Dr Brash's message has been so popular.

To Tom Cloher and to Sr Tui Cadigan (*March* also) I pose one question. Why is it that an academic, not particularly charismatic leader of what we all regarded as a dead and buried political party, in a speech to a Rotary Club during the summer holidays, has been able to create a wind of change in New Zealand politics which, other than Rogernomics, I have not seen in 40 years of being a voter?

The answer is he has touched the hurt that many people, Maori and Pakeha, and all those other immigrant races as well, have been feeling for many years. Whether or not Dr Brash wins an election, and whether or not we agree with what he stands for, he has done the whole country a service in bringing this issue to the fore.

Bill Hinckley, Tawa (***abridged***)

Sunday obligation

It is with regret that we read in the article on Lay Leadership, by Jim Elliston (*March* issue), the phrase "fulfilling the Sunday obligation was a spectator sport". It is both ignorant and arrogant to mock the past.

Many millions of people through the centuries have worshipped Our Lord in the Eucharist, irrespective of the language or the personality of the celebrant, and they are worthy of our respect. Do not let us forget the debt we owe to all the faithful who have gone before us.

Brita Mordaunt, Elisabeth Nicholson, Christchurch

Afghan refugees

Please pray for the Afghan boy refugees in Australia who are on Temporary Protection Visas. You will remember "A Tale of Two Brothers" (*Tui Motu* December 2002). These two boys have already had to put in their applications to stay in Australia, even though their visas do not run out until August. Others are expecting interviews with the Dept of Immigration. The interval between these interviews and a decision is quite unpredictable and a time of fear and anxiety for them.

These young people are very cheerful, well-mannered and freindly. I cannot bear to imagine them back in the dangers and chaos of Afghanistan.

Pam Green, Queensland

Passion of the Christ

I cannot dispute your claim that the violence against Jesus is historic fact. What I do dispute is the perceived need to be so explicitly detailed so as to deepen our faith. True, saturated with violence in films, many have become immune to the reality of pain. But it is a mistake to give us ever stronger doses to make an impact. Violence (or sex) in film has had a greater impact when it was expressed in visual metaphor rather than in drawn out explicit detail which the purveyors of sensation and titillation like to indulge in.

I have difficulty accepting the interpretation of Jesus' very real

---

the same now, since the present Pope too has been there for 25 years, and he too has appointed most of the present bishops. Vatican II, as well as being divinely guided, was a good human process: the bishops produced an outcome which they would never have dreamt of at the start – because they listened to each other.

Theology in the University

The value of theology in the University today is to try to help the young to discover the Tradition in its simplicity and in its essence. That is what the young are seeking. There are now chairs of Theology in Otago and Auckland, which means that far more students take papers in theology, as well as religious studies, than was once the case. At Victoria, there has been a rooted objection to theology as such being taught, since it went against the secularist tradition in education. You can study religion, of course, as a human phenomenon, but that stands quite apart from faith. Every religion will provide answers to the human quest, but there is no preference given. You make up your own mind.

Theology, however, is an investigation into revelation. The human search is for that transcendent 'something' which most people call God. Organised religions in the process of time have been so encumbered with political or sociological trappings that the young have no time for that. They want to be free to do their own investigation. But they need to be receivers of revelation, and this is where Tradition comes in.

All religions involve such a search, and in all traditions there is this purgative, self-emptying struggle, which has to be gone through before the searcher arrives at that mystical moment when God takes you over! And an inevitable consequence is a developing concern for the predicament of others. What is problematic in all this is the place of the institutional church. It may be that a young person seeking after truth feels he or she

Msgr John Broadbent is a priest of the Wellington Archdiocese. For many years he has been a lecturer and writer in Church History

Faith seeking to understand why . . .

An article in *Tui Motu* early last year had asked: if there is a reason why the Church can't ordain women, would somebody please tell us what it is? A perfectly fair question. With that question in mind, I wrote my article under the heading "Faith Seeking to Understand Why..." Is there some way of making sense of this "hard saying"?

Such seeking is premised on acceptance of what one seeks to understand. This is very different from trying to 'prove' what has not yet been accepted. So, where was the 'force of (my) argument?' There wasn't meant to be any: the Church's teachings aren't proved by force of argument.

The real problem is that it is not enough for the Church's teaching to be right; it needs also to be credible, and some of the Church's practices impair that credibility. That is why the burden of my article was about what needs to happen for this teaching to become credible. That, I suggest, is what we all need to work on as we 'seek to understand'. In the meantime, our minds, too, need to be satisfied if our faith is to be reasonable.

And so we look beyond a particular teaching to the bigger picture of the Church's own credibility, manifested in the faith of its saints – what the Church meant to them (in spite of everything). On that premise it becomes possible and reasonable to believe. And then, through believing, move closer to comprehending. Such is the dynamic of faith. We need to get caught up in it lest, not believing, we never come to understand.

This teaching's meaning is not about any differences between the natural aptitudes of men and women, or any other comparison between men and women. It is about the symbolisms God has been using in the unfolding of salvation history. Is that where we are all looking for it?

Peter J Cullinane, Bishop of Palmerston North

We are grateful to Bishop Cullinane for initiating this debate. The correspondence is now closed

suffering often given out by teachers of religion, which in my view is flawed exegesis of Scripture. Did God really need to punish his own son? Was the purpose of the Incarnation really to have someone take the beating which is rightly deserved by us? My belief is that Jesus has come to live among us and show us how to live. The crucifixion then makes firghteningly logical sense.

Frank Hoffmann, Drury

Women's ordination

For a long time now I have felt called to minister to God's people. In answer to that call I led groups, went to courses and generally laboured in the Catholic vineyard. At some stage, however, I felt that there was more I could be doing, and that opportunities in the Catholic Church for this were few and far between.

So I moved out of the Catholic Church and became a Presbyterian. A radical move, no doubt but one I felt called to make. The Presbyterians welcomed me with open arms and before long I was leading groups and conducting services, including communion services, around the district and in the main church. For me it was a time of great fulfilment and joy. This is what I wanted to do and people seemed to respond well to my ministry.

But, as often happens later in life, the call back to the Catholic Church became stronger as time went by and I rejoined the church after about ten years absence. The local congregation welcomed me with limited enthusiasm. No doubt they wondered how long I would stay this time.

Retirement from teaching gave me the opportunity to volunteer for parish work, but this has not been taken up. I watch with dismay as our little parish dwindles in support, numbers and enthusiasm. I am an overeducated, underworked laywoman. The people here must go to Mass in neighbouring towns, except for a once-a-month Mass. The children must go elsewhere for their preparation for the sacraments. The liturgical services have lapsed for want of Eucharistic ministers willing and able to undertake the task. To me it is sad that lay women are not given the approval of the church to fill the gaps that the shortage of priests has caused.

What will it take to convince our church hierarchy that gender should not be a barrier to ministry? In the meantime, the people go hungry, the priests we have got are overworked, and people like myself must just sit and watch it happen.

Peg Cummins, Reporoa

letters to the editor

We welcome comment, discussion, argument, debate. But please keep letters under 200 words. The editor reserves the right to abridge, while not altering meaning.

Response articles (up to a page) are also welcome, but need to be by negotiation.

How can we be sure that when we invest, we're not making money at the expense of the poor?

Jim Elliston attends an Auckland conference on Socially Responsible Investment, and finds there many signs of hope, not least the setting up in New Zealand of a Council for Socially Responsible Investment

What is ethical, or 'Socially Responsible' investment? At the inaugural conference of the Council for Socially Responsible Investment, held on 1 March 2004, Bishop Richard Randerson set out the issues as follows:

- Some companies view corporate responsibility in terms of distributing a portion of their profits to charitable groups and community organisations. How a company applies its profits is a separate issue from how it construes its basic purpose.
- Company Directors are responsible to ensure the company survives. Trustees must invest prudently to ensure optimal returns. Do these goals automatically exclude responsibility for social and environmental well-being?

He then quoted two contrasting views:

- "Few trends could so thoroughly undermine the foundations of our free society as the acceptance by corporate officials of a social responsibility other than to make as much money for their shareholders as possible", says Milton Friedman (*Capitalism and Freedom*).
- "The advanced thinking on ethics is that a company is not just there to make money; it is there to make money as an end product of serving society well." says Rodman Drake, an Australian CEO. Research indicates that corporations following socially responsible objectives perform at least as well as those that do not.

The goals of the Conference, said the chairman, Dr Robert Howell, were "to inform New Zealanders about some of the important issues for our world underlying the SRI framework, obtain a public profile for CSRI with the New Zealand community, bring together some of the key stakeholders in New Zealand who should be concerned about socially responsible investment, develop relationships with overseas groups, and identify some ways of developing during the next 12-18 months."

The day's highlight was the quietly spoken but inspirational opening address by Sr Pat Wolf (*see below*). In the course of an historical overview of a similar movement in the USA she gave practical examples of how to effect social change, appeal successfully to the values of those interested only in making profits, work constructively

Sr Pat Wolfe rsm

During a break at a meeting the Provincial Superior spoke to a young religious sister: "Pat, I'd like you to go to a meeting on ethical investment." "No point. I know nothing about the subject." At the next break the Provincial repeated her request, and received the same reply.

At the end of the meeting she came back and said; "Pat, I really would like you to go." "Oh dear – she's giving me an order." "I went. It trans formed my life", said Sister of Mercy, Pat Wolf.

The young high school geography teacher is now Executive Director of a group of 275 Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish institutional investors; it includes various denominations, religious orders, pension funds, foundations, health systems, and dioceses with combined assets of about $US110 billion. They are joined in furthering their mission by social investment firms, unions, municipal pension funds, and now, even universities, handling $US 110 billion in investments.

in an ecumenical environment, and gain the respect both of faith communities and big business – and show how tackling a local issue can have international repercussions.

In 1971 US involvement in the Vietnam War gave rise to a strong anti-war movement; the Civil Rights movement of the 1960s had ended legalized segregation; the women's movement had taken hold; liberation theology was introduced to the Christian community, and the Roman Catholic Church was implementing the results of the Second Vatican Council.

It is out of this social and ecclesial context that several clergy from the Protestant denominations raised concerns about whether their invested retirement funds were making profits from the Vietnam War and the system of racial apartheid in South Africa.

To address those concerns they formed the *Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility* (ICCR) in the USA. They didn't know it then, but they also founded a movement. The group's first social policy shareholder resolution was filed in 1971; it called upon General Motors to withdraw from South Africa.

Vatican II had urged Catholics to think ecumenically, and in 1973 Catholic religious orders began to join ICCR. The increasing involvement of the Catholic community also coincided with a deepened consciousness of the integration of faith and action epitomized by the 1971 World Synod of Catholic Bishops' document *Justice in the World* which stated: ***Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.***

A major step was completed in 2003 when a guiding document *The Principles for Global Corporate Accountability: Bench Marks for Measuring Business Performance* was published. It is the fruit of nine years' work by eight faith-based shareholder groups and Non-Governmental Organizations throughout the world.

Bench Marks is designed to promote positive corporate responsibility. It states expectations of corporate behavior based on internationally recognized standards and norms and the experience of individuals and organizations in many parts of the world. It summarizes the elements of sustainable business practice.

The document is divided into three categories:
Principles: a statement of business philosophy fundamental to a responsible company's actions.
Criteria: particular company policies and practices that can be compared for consistency with the Principles.
Bench Marks: specific reference points of measurement to be used in assessing the company's performance in relation to the Criteria.

For example, in the section addressing the contract supplier system, (the structural dimension of globalization that drives corporations to move from country to country to obtain low cost labour), it states:
Principle: The company accepts responsibility for all those whom it employs either directly or indirectly through contract suppliers, subcontractors, vendors or suppliers.
Criteria: The company has strong codes of conduct for vendors and suppliers which includes, but is not limited to, child labour, forced labour, harassment, non-discrimination, healthy and safe workplaces, freedom of association and the right to bargain collectively, sustainable living wages and benefits, hours of work, the environment, supportive social and physical community infrastructure and monitoring mechanisms for compliance.
Bench Marks: The Company clearly communicates to its suppliers, vendors and licensees the company's code of vendor/supplier conduct and its process of enforcement. Violations of the code are effectively addressed. Cancellation of contract is used only as a last resort.

Sr Pat gave examples of successful action by ICCR, including one concerning apparel company GAP. After six months of letter-writing and face-to-face discussions with the company, GAP agreed to explore independent monitoring at Mandarin International, a factory in San Salvador where labour violations had been discovered and where GAP products were made.

The Independent Monitoring Working Group was established with representatives of ICCR, GAP, and Business for Social Responsibility. The IMWG assisted GAP in defining independent monitoring and identifying key religious, human rights and labour rights groups in San Salvador to monitor the Mandarin factory and oversee the rehiring of workers previously fired for attempting to form a union. Subsequently four local non-governmental groups formed the Independent Monitoring Group of El Salvador and began monitoring Mandarin in 1996 and now monitors a number of factories in El Salvador where GAP sources its labour.

GAP is the first company to agree to develop an independent monitoring mechanism for its contract suppliers. Other companies have hired auditing firms to monitor compliance with codes of conduct, but GMIES was the first independent monitoring group working in the apparel sector made up of local non-governmental organizations which knew the local culture, language, factory context and also had the trust of workers.

This major advance in supplier monitoring and corporate accountability came about because ICCR brought GAP into the process. GAP used its influence to help improve working conditions because shareholders pressed the company for accountability. Finally, local groups with the skill, dedication

and expertise to identify problems that needed to be addressed were engaged. Today there are independent monitoring groups in Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua in Central America.

In a videotaped interview Peter Butler, of *Hermes Pensions Management*, presented a completely different focus. He heads a team of 45 responsible for shareholder engagement, corporate governance and voting in all the 2,400 public companies in which Hermes' clients invest world-wide. His unabashed commitment to increasing shareholder value caused some participants to query the justification for his inclusion among the speakers.

Hermes' approach to stewardship is based on a fundamental belief that companies with concerned and involved shareholders are more likely to achieve superior long-term returns than those without: ***when you can't sell you have to care.*** This involves, inter alia, having a clear and comprehensive view of good governance that is well communicated, and behaving properly and predictably as an owner, with a focus on activities that support long-term value creation.

He sees corporate social responsibility as part of corporate governance; it is linked to the way that the company is directed and controlled. Corporate governance includes remuneration, transparency and social, ethical and environmental issues. It requires participation in policy debate, institutional co-ordination, and relations with regulators etc who set the framework for business activities.

I suggest that both the approach outlined by Pat Wolf and that of Peter Butler are compatible with the comment by Rodman Drake quoted above. Peter Butler would have 'street cred' among the disciples of Friedman.

Among other speakers was Jeanette Fitzsimons, co-leader of the Greens. David Cunliffe, Associate Minister of Finance was guest speaker at the dinner. Papers on a variety of related topics were delivered by the Chief Executive N.Z. Super ('Cullen) Fund, Paul Costello, theologians, investment specialists, environmentalists, social activists and others, and interventions from the floor included a request that the Council work to abolish the capitalist system.

This was a significant event for social justice in New Zealand. The Council is fortunate in having such a wealth of overseas experience to draw on, but it must be tailored to our situation. As financial journalist Rod Oram noted, there is a major difference between New Zealand and the UK and US, where a substantial portion of the economy is dominated by Shareholder/Public Companies. In New Zealand Private Companies, Maori Trusts and Cooperatives play a significant part.

Sr Pat observed: "I think it's quite remarkable that after 32 years ICCR continues as an ecumenical organization. I believe that we have survived and thrived for several reasons:

- First, we agree to work on issues that we hold in common. Our work emphasizes commonality, not our differences.
- Secondly, we have retained a singular focus; that is, we use our privileged position as institutional investors to hold corporations accountable, and to advance the cause of justice with a particular emphasis on the oppressed, impoverished, and exploited. All of our members are long-term investors who are dedicated to this mission.
- Third, the people who are the faces of corporations have come to respect the moral voice of the faith community. At one time we were considered frivolous and naïve, but no more.

Also, corporations have come to learn that many issues we identify as cause for concern and change, such as global labour standards and the accessibility and affordability of life saving drugs, have moved from the margins of public debate to centre stage.

Dr Robert Howell summed up: "The conference brought together a mix of religious and non-religious people with a wide range of theological, philosophical and moral beliefs, but who had common concerns about the major challenges to our environment and international society." ■

Copies of the conference papers and presentations are available from csri@xtra.co.nz for $15 plus postage: you need Adobe Acrobat Reader.
The website is www.csri.org.nz.

Council for Socially Responsible Investments

A summary of the main aims of CSRI:

- informing N.Z. investors that ethical, sustainable investment is a realistic and practical option;
- assisting with practical guidelines, giving practical advice, creating a venue for dialogue, providing a way for common action.

Major issues include:

- a validated definition of what is acceptable corporate social and responsible behaviour, dealing with the capability and sustainability of our earth, how stakeholders (including owners, employees and local communities) should benefit from their involvement with companies;
- the role of the board of an organisation and its relationship with its stakeholders (governance) and how the board is to publicly account for carrying out this role.

The church and the sexual revolution

Luke Timothy Johnson

The first of two articles, first published in Commonweal and reprinted with permission. Changes in American society described are echoed throughout the West

The consequences of the sexual abuse scandal in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States continue to unfold. On the surface, the crisis is about sex. Beneath the surface, the crisis is about the church's teaching authority. The crisis of the last year and a half is only the most dramatic example of how questions about authority and sexual morality have become intertwined over the past several decades, and how together they threaten the integrity of the church.

Many conservative Catholics blame the bishops for failing to teach and for ceding their authority to therapists and lawyers, and blame homosexual priests for failing to keep their vows. They think the ordination of "manly men" will go a long way to restoring integrity to the priesthood, and thereby to the church. They call for reform, but only of morality. There is no need to debate the issue of a male celibate priesthood, because, it is repeatedly declared, all that is needed is "fidelity, fidelity, fidelity," as Richard John Neuhaus (editor-in-chief of *First Things*) and George Weigel (author of *The Courage to Be Catholic*) have written.

Readers of Neuhaus and Weigel, two of the more prolific and outspoken Catholic commentators on the scandal, will find in my analysis some points of similarity as well as a basic agreement on the need for the church to recover holiness. I differ sharply from such observers, however, in the lessons I draw from the crisis. Conservative thinkers argue that the crisis demands no fundamental change in church teaching or structure. They deal with the crisis by isolating it. They see it involves both sex and power, but they connect them only superficially. Nowhere in Neuhaus's and Weigel's writing on the crisis, for instance, is there any awareness that God may be calling the church through the cataclysmic changes of recent decades to a more fundamental consideration of what fidelity really means. Does it mean only the fidelity of believers to the hierarchy, or does it demand, more fundamentally, the fidelity of the entire church to the living God?

Because I believe that God is speaking to the church through the present circumstances, and calling the church to a more fundamental reform, I think it is necessary for us to distinguish the accidental and the essential in Catholic teaching, and to discern more accurately the ways in which issues of sex and power must be addressed if the church is to bear a truly prophetic witness in the world.

The church's prophetic teaching

Over the span of my lifetime, official church teaching on sex has remained both severe and consistent. When I was a child, the church forbade masturbation, divorce, adultery, fornication, abortion, and artificial birth control. Male and female members of religious orders took a vow of chastity and ordained priests were obligated to celibacy. As I approach the age of sixty, none of these positions has been substantially modified.

This Catholic sexual ethic is, moreover, countercultural within an American society that, over the same sixty-year period, became ever more profoundly individualistic and pervasively sexualized. In this cultural milieu, the church's teaching on sexuality can be regarded, in important ways, as prophetic. It speaks of a vision of the world defined by God over against practices that distort creation.

Demanding fidelity in marriage challenges a contemporary ethos in which easy divorce testifies to the erosion of a sense of mutual obligation and covenant. Insisting that religious and clergy be celibate is a witness to the power of the resurrection against a culture whose lust for pleasure and acquisition proclaims that this mortal existence is the only life to be had. Restricting licit sexual activity to marriage declares that sexuality is first meant to be covenantal and mutually responsible, not an exercise in personal gratification. Most striking, the church's unwavering stance against abortion stands in the classic prophetic tradition of the protection of the powerless. The church's sexual teaching can, in short, be regarded as a necessary moral challenge to American culture.

The teaching of any religion on any moral subject, however, must always involve more than words from a pulpit or statements in the press. Teaching is real and convincing only to the extent that it is actually embraced by believers, embodied in their practices, coherently and consistently expressed by the community of faith.

The reception of Catholic sexual teaching by Catholics themselves--both clergy and lay--is an essential ingredient of that teaching. Only to the degree that moral teaching is expressed by the attitudes and

actions of Catholics themselves can it challenge anyone. Only if a prophet's message is clear, consistent, internally coherent, and corresponds to the prophet's own manner of life should a prophet be heard. It is precisely here that a profound change has occurred over the 60 years of my life, a change that has compromised and perhaps even discredited the church's sexual teaching.

Before taking up my argument, I should make two disclosures. First, I am a lifelong Roman Catholic. My five older siblings have a total of 24 children. I was a seminarian at 13, a Benedictine monk for nine years, a priest for three years, and have been a married layman for 28 years. My wife, Joy, and I have seven children, ten grandchildren, and three great-grandchildren. I am therefore not a detached analyst but rather speak as an all-too-sinful participant in the changes I describe.

Second, my report as a participant-observer is more anecdotal than statistical. There are certainly exceptions and countertendencies to the ones I describe, but I think my overall perception is nevertheless accurate. Many young Catholics today, for example, are seeking a return to the ethos of the preconciliar church, but even that reaction is defined by the dramatic social changes of the last half of the twentieth century.

That was then

From 1940 through the mid-1960s, Catholic teaching on sexuality was remarkably consistent. More impressive, in the United States it was embodied by a clergy and laity who wore their rigorous sexual code as a badge of honor. The prohibition of artificial birth control, of divorce, of premarital sex, and of mixed marriages marked Catholics, we fondly thought, as the serious Christians. Protestants had capitulated to Freud and Kinsey and Americanism in general.

Practicing Catholics not only obeyed the strict sexual teaching of the church, they extended that teaching through attitudes and actions that comprehended the minutest aspects of everyday life. Humorous and bitter memoirs of growing up Catholic recall how the prohibition of fornication, for example, led logically to a complete semiotics of modesty in dress that was spelled out by highly specific norms, from loose blouses to nonreflecting shoes. Modesty was so internalized that the possibility of becoming an occasion of someone else's sexual arousal--called "impure thoughts"--was taken as seriously as actually having such impulses oneself.

The Legion of Decency's ranking of films was more than a list tacked to the bulletin board. It provided a guide to moral discernment in the home. I vividly remember an argument between my mother and my teenage sisters when I was around eight years old about viewing Joan of Arc. My sisters argued that it was about a saint. My mother countered that it starred Ingrid Bergman, who had abandoned her husband; attending this film would countenance adultery and divorce.

Catholics of my age well remember the totalizing character of the Catholic ethos of the '50s. Devotion to Pius XII and to the Blessed Mother, abstaining from meat on Friday, keeping the eucharistic fast, avoiding blasphemy (any use of "Jesus" without bowing the head), masturbation, and impure thoughts were all pretty much at the same level of obligation, woven together in a single, unquestioning and unquestionable fabric of belief and practice, of fear and love, of resentment and pride.

Weekly confession on Saturday afternoons punctuated our lives. Yes, it was terrifying to acknowledge every impure thought and act. In adolescence, who can keep count? Still, it all made sense, not least because the confessional line each Saturday included family and friends and neighbors. Catholics, we told each other, were unlike Protestants also in this respect: Protestants had--and needed--psychotherapy. We had the confessional.

Catholic sexual mores during those years marked the church as an immigrant religion out of step with an America whose postwar affluence and freedom saw Hugh Hefner and Marilyn Monroe give way to more spectacular and sinister entrepreneurs of sex. Yet Americans also paid a certain respect, reflected in Hollywood's cautious and usually positive portrayal of Catholic priests and nuns, to the Catholic insistence on remaining aloof from the sexual mainstream.

Catholic sexual mores may have been alien but they were impressive. The priests portrayed by Bing Crosby and Spencer Tracy in the 1940s were virile, socially confident, unequivocally committed to the good of humanity. The portrayal of nuns (Deborah Kerr in *Heaven Knows, Mr. Allison*, and Audrey Hepburn in *The Nun's Story*) were notable for the seriousness with which religious vows and the desire of religious women to seek God's will were taken. Hollywood producers were neither Catholic nor particularly moral, but they knew that Catholics voted at the box office.

This is now

One way of measuring the seismic shift in the practice and perception of Catholic sexual teaching is to view more recent Hollywood portrayals of Catholics. When not simply silly (Whoopi Goldberg in *Sister Act*) or horrifying (Meg Tilley in *Agnes of God*), the presentation of Catholicism tends toward the puerile (Keeping the Faith, Dogma). It's not just films. In live and televised drama, characters are presented positively when they struggle against Catholic teaching and negatively when they conform to it.

Stand-up comics, a disproportionate number of whom seem to be, in the current phrase, "recovering Catholics," treat traditional sexual teaching as self-evidently ludicrous. Religious

women are, in comedic routines, systematically held up for ridicule. In a world of pervasive political correctness, Catholics are among the few safe targets for mockery.

Attacking Catholic sexual mores, however, seems increasingly arbitrary and even irrelevant. Most of the young people in a comedy club laughing at jokes about sexually neurotic nuns have never met an actual nun, much less had one for a teacher. The formerly monolithic Catholic sexual ethos has all but disappeared. American Catholics now divorce about as often as non-Catholics. Catholics are not notably better at avoiding adultery and fornication than non-Catholics. Young Catholics sleep together before marriage with little sense of "living in sin." Masturbation is of course practiced as often as it ever was, except that few now confess it as a mortal sin.

With clear conscience or not, married Catholics practice artificial birth control. Enough Catholic women have abortions to make post-abortion counseling and reconciliation a substantial ministry. Vocations to religious orders demanding chastity are scarce. As for a celibate priesthood, the lack of vocations has once again made the United States a missionary country.

If Catholic sexual teaching includes the willing reception, glad enactment, and unquestioning proclamation of that teaching by Catholics themselves, then that teaching is now far less coherent, consistent, and clear than it was in 1950. Catholics themselves simply don't believe it or practice it.

A time of turning

How and why did American Catholics change their behaviour and their minds about sexual morality? I think the shift can be traced to factors both external and internal to American Catholicism. The clue to understanding this transformation is the fact that Catholics in America truly became American at a moment when America itself was undergoing a startling cultural revolution.

It has become a cliché to "blame it on the '60s," but the cultural changes effected in the United States from the middle of that decade to the present are not trite. Doubtless, a more adequate analysis would show unsuspected complexities and ambiguities, but it would also show that the transition itself was real and profound.

At least six elements help explain what happened in the cultural upheaval of the 1960s.

- First, it was a period of ***sustained material prosperity*** unparalleled in human history, one that produced both the microchip and a reliable birth-control pill, and seemed to make possible a war against communism abroad and against poverty at home.

- Second, the ***sexual revolution*** swept first across college campuses and later into homes and elementary schools. Masters and Johnson brought the orgasm into polite company. Alex Comfort brought *The Joy of Sex* to the local bookstore, with drawings that a decade earlier would have required a brown wrapper. Post-pill and pre-AIDS, sexual activity was preached and practised as a matter of fun and freedom. Increasingly, sex and procreation were seen as quite separate concerns.

- Third, ***commerce*** embraced the sexual revolution through the media, above all in advertising. As movies and rock 'n' roll tested the boundaries of sexual expression, each risky extension of sexual frankness was domesticated with breathtaking speed by television. By the beginning of the 21st Century, every form of sexual exploitation, including soft-core child pornography, had been adapted by advertisers. As for hard-core pornography, it has become the most lucrative branch of film making, and parents must make a special request in motel rooms to keep such films from being offered to their children. Pornography and prostitution are for sale on the Internet. The distinction between using sex to sell things and selling sex has virtually disappeared.

- The fourth element was the impact of the ***political scandals of the 1960s***, especially on the Boomer generation, whose outsized path through life has had such a disproportionate cultural effect. The late 1950s and early '60s encouraged among the young a sense of political optimism. Involvement in the civil-rights struggle, the Peace Corps, and the war against poverty could make a difference.

Subsequently, the assassination of the Kennedys and Martin Luther King Jr., the secret war in Asia uncovered by *The Pentagon Papers*, the Watergate cover-up, had two profound effects. One was the emergence of widespread political scepticism, even cynicism. America emerged from a cocoon of political naiveté. More and more Americans saw that politics was about power and power was most often self-interested, and that politicians lied out of both habit and choice. The other effect was a shift in the sense of what was morally essential. The Eisenhower generation had cultivated sexual propriety but had winked at racial, class, and gender inequities. The Boomers (before AIDS) saw nothing wrong with sexual promiscuity, so long as the right social issues were engaged. This was a dramatic and little-understood shift in moral consciousness.

- The fifth element was the ***women's movement***, which drew upon and extended each of the other elements. An economic prosperity based on labour-saving technology freed women from domestic servitude. The pill liberated women from the constant threat of pregnancy and childrearing, enabling them to pursue careers once reserved to men. The sexual revolution saw women as well as men seeking sexual adventure apart from commitment. At the same time, women's bodies were simultaneously glorified and degraded through the media's marriage of sex and commerce. In response, many women concluded that if all politics is personal, everything personal is also

political. The validation of women's experience required the demystification of patriarchal structures constructed for the suppression of women. Women translated the equation of private and public morality into an advocacy of the legality of abortion, so that the killing of a foetus was interpreted in terms of "women's rights over their own bodies". In short, the women's movement, the most controversial and threatening element in the cultural revolution, forced all Americans to recognise that sex is also always about gender, and that our ideas about gender have much to do with social and economic power.

• Finally, the 1960s saw the birth of the *gay and lesbian rights* movements. The relatively small portion of humanity whose identity had always been defined by others in terms of deviance discovered its right to speak for and to define itself. As a result, more and more Americans discovered that they or their children or their spouses or their priests were homosexual. And what should they think or do about that?

These six elements of cultural revolution are, in moral terms, a mixed bag. America's material prosperity brought obvious blessings but also shaped an entitled population. Political cynicism and detachment have undermined civic participation. The pill gave women freedom but its long-term health effects remain uncertain. The sexual revolution, however inevitable, had disastrous consequences on several fronts. The sexualisation of identity in the media has coarsened the American soul.

Yet it was past time for Americans to mature politically, past time for moral consciousness to embrace the social as well as the domestic sphere, past time for women and homosexuals to receive full recognition of their humanity and place in the world. However we might evaluate the effects of each of these changes individually, the more important point is that they occurred simultaneously, and over a very short period of time. In combination, they profoundly altered American culture.

This social analysis is pertinent to how American Catholics now view sex and sexual morality. First, this cultural upheaval occurred at the very moment when American Catholics finally felt themselves to be fully enfranchised as Americans. Second, it coincided with the greatest cultural upheaval within the Catholic church since the sixteenth century, generated and symbolised by the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). ■

Luke Timothy Johnson is the Robert W. Woodruff Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Candler School of Theology, Emory University.

The Bible Society in New Zealand, along with 135 other national Bible Societies, is celebrating 200 years since the establishment of the very first Society in the United Kingdom in 1804. The story of the foundation goes back to a young Welsh girl's desire to own a Bible. Her wish was so great that not only did she save her money over many months, but when she had saved enough, she walked many miles to the nearest village in order to buy her Bible.

The clergyman who gave it her spread the story round his colleagues, and later on at a meeting in London one of the group, on hearing of the need for Bibles in Wales, exclaimed: "If for Wales, why not for the world?" And so the story of Mary Jones' wish and her sacrifice to obtain her very own Bible was the inspiration for the beginning of an amazing, continuing and growing work of God through worldwide Bible Societies.

By the end of 2003 the full Bible had been published in 414 languages. A total of over 2300 languages now have some part of the Scriptures, and these include over a thousand which have the full New Testament. It is estimated that there are over 6000 distinct languages spoken throughout the world.

Last year in New Zealand the Bible Society supplied 20 prisons with almost 2000 Bibles. The most popular version among prisoners is the Good News version, followed by the NIV and CEV versions.

This year national Bible Sunday will be celebrated on Sunday 18 July. The Bible Society, to celebrate the bicentennial year, is also instituting a Bible Week from Monday July 12 culminating on Bible Sunday. "With a week of celebrations we can get among the people of our nation, offering them the hope and faith that we have found in the Christ of the Bible," said Murray Grindley who is the organiser.

What is '*being indigenous*' in Aotearoa/New Zealand today?

Pat Sneddan

Earlier this week I called a cab to go to town .The driver made to head off in a direction that I didn't expect. ***"E te alu ifea?*** (*Where are you going?*)", I said in my best and only Samoan. He nearly leapt out of his seat hearing this from a palagi, and we both fell about laughing. "How had been his morning?" I asked. "Busy", he replied, "taking people to the cricket test at Eden Park".

"Oh.. the Pakeha hui," I said. "What do you mean?" he responded with eyes raised. "Well it goes on for five days, everybody gets fed at least twice a day, there's lots of controversy, for long periods nothing seems to happen and then, suddenly, people seem to be at each other's throats. In the end they shake hands and mostly it ends in a draw. Sounds like a hui to me!" I said. He had the grace to chuckle.

There's only one place in the world where that conversation could have taken place and be understood inclusive of all the cultural nuance. That place is here. What therefore does it say about belonging?

I want to stay with Eden Park. My great grandfather, Alexander Nesbit Snedden was one of six Auckland businessmen who in 1903 purchased the swamp, drained it and turned it into a sports ground. Such has been our continuous connection over four succeeding generations that when members of our family played at Eden Park – either rugby or cricket – it was hard to escape the feeling that with this sporting whakapapa we had home advantage!

Now not all Pakeha have this same sense of ownership about our country. Last week I read one commentator suggest that Don Brash's speech at Orewa tapped at a very emotional level the sense of Pakeha feeling strangers in our own land. In short we need to reclaim our sense of belonging.

Brian Turner wrote recently in the *Listener* asserting a deep and intimate Pakeha connection with the land, a connection denied he believed by many Maori, including Ranganui Walker, to whom he was responding. When Walker says, "I have been here a thousand years.You arrived only yesterday," Walker very clearly denies a similar depth of feeling to almost everyone else. He rails against a relentless presumptuousness about the way in which non-Maori feelings for land and water are dismissed as less heartfelt, less sensitive, less spiritual .

So am I, as a Pakeha, indigenous? Well, yes and no. For me, to claim my 140 years of direct ancestry here is a source of pride and this is my home. But can I fairly claim to be indigenous in the same way as Maori who have been here from around 1300 AD? To do so would be to sideline 500-plus years of Maori experience prior to my forebears' arrival. Not only would that be unfair it is unfactual, and if there is one matter that we need to do today is to stick to the facts.

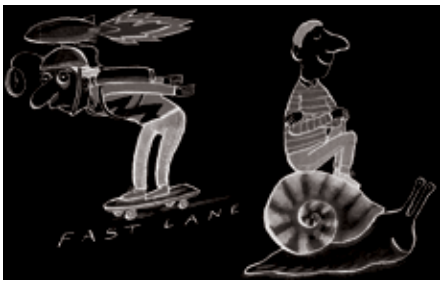
But nor do I wish to tug my forelock in this matter. As Pakeha we claim our belonging through being descended from the settlers who agreed the Treaty. On one side of my family my migrant ancestors arrived at Port Albert near Wellsford in the 1860s. They became farmers. At the Port Albertland wharf there is a plaque thanking Ngati Whatua for their assistance in settlement and acknowledging that without that they would not have survived.

Today we are shaped by a set of cultural reflexes toward the land, our environment, and as the taxi driver conversation shows the interaction between Maori, Pakeha and Pacific peoples exists nowhere outside this place. For the vast majority of us, we no longer have a bolthole to escape to anywhere else in the world that accepts us as their own.I have visited the heart of my Irish and Scottish roots and except for the most surface of acknowledgement they did not see anything of themselves in me nor me in them.

I am here in Aotearoa New Zealand for good because I have nowhere else to go. And I am content with that. And it is this concept that so many of us post-Treaty migrants have emotional difficulty with. We passionately and intuitively know we are not strangers in our own land, but we are unresolved as to how to describe ourselves.

Resolving this will help us deal with this current debate. At present my observation is that Pakehas (and for that matter many new migrants) look at the Treaty as being

Living in the Fast Lane



Jonathon Porritt

Much has been written over the centuries about the Mevlevi Order of Dervishes (better known as the Whirling Dervishes), founded in 13th century Persia by the Sufi poet and mystic, Jalalu'din Rumi. For many, the kind of prayer, fasting and sacred dance associated with the Whirling Dervishes epitomised the pursuit of the knowledge of God through ecstasy and intense devotion.

Today's fast moving secular societies have thrown up the polar opposite of the whirling dervish phenomenon, in the shape of millions of people spinning frenetically from experience to experience, driven by an insatiable thirst for the new, for the next, for the neural numbing of life lived as one long shopping spree. The emergence of today's increasingly sophisticated information and communications technologies has set these dervishes spinning ever faster and furiouser.

I'm increasingly persuaded that speed may in itself be as much the enemy of a sustainable future as the reckless consumption that powers our global economy. They are, of course, closely linked. An essential attribute of our contemporary model of progress (in which consumption substitutes for quality of life or personal contentment) is that the faster you can do something, the better it must be. *Eat faster, get the news faster, communicate faster, date faster, mate faster*: life in the fast lane is the aspiration of countless millions, regardless of the career crashes and life-wrecks that litter that particular lane.

Far from improving the quality of our working lives, there is growing evidence that this is just making us more miserable and more stressed. Money can buy us goods and services undreamed of in previous centuries, but it can't buy us love or meaning, or at least not for long and not reliably. The pursuit of financial security is often associated with declining quality of life in much of the West, and the latest study from the United Kingdom Economic and Social Research Council on modern employment trends indicates a rising dissatisfaction with working life over the past decade.

Oliver James summarises a mass of research on the psychology of affluent societies, concluding that the rates of depression, suicide and drug dependency are increasing because the competitive pressures of modern life combine to produce unhappy, tense and rancorous personalities. He goes on to assert that "the closer a nation approximates to the American model of a highly advanced and technologically developed form of capitalism, the greater the rate of mental illness amongst its citizens."

Why might that be? In the teeth of a generation of amoral relativists, the Chilean economist, Manfred Max-Neef, has argued that it's possible to identify a number of core human needs that are common to all cultures and all societies: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, identity, creation, participation, leisure and freedom. What differs from culture to culture is the way in which we choose to satisfy those needs – the 'satisfiers' that we favour at both a societal and an individual level. Our most pressing problem in the rich world is that we've lost the knack of distinguishing between genuine satisfiers and the kind of 'pseudo-satisfiers' that leave the need unmet, our lives unfulfilled. Fast-lane living ranks high in any list of pseudo-satisfiers.

But is it fair to single out today's information and communication technologies as a principal cause of this societal debacle? There's a simple test. On one side of your mind-map of how the world works, summon up (in a completely non-judgmental way) all the things that drive the wheels of commerce and material progress: efficiency, markets, productivity, growth, just-in-time delivery, doing deals, marketing, financial controls, taking risks, making money and so on. On the other, summon up (in an equally non-judgmental way) all the things that might be said to generate real quality of life: friends, children, food, music, having a good time, sport, hobbies, supportive and safe communities, gardening, reading, and so on.

---

not *our* Treaty but *their* Treaty, a method of leverage for resolving Maori claims. So, once we finalise their grievances, the relevance of the Treaty will be no more.

How much more satisfying would it be if we all claimed and acknowledged our own sense of belonging, different but authentic to its core? Then this discussion would be quite different. The Treaty would become *our* Treaty and our behaviour in relation to the principles of that Treaty would be inclusive not exclusive.

Pat Snedden Email: sned.pub@ihug.co.nz
PO Box 47-086, Ponsonby, Auckland
See also letters for comment on Pat Snedden's article on the history of Maori-Pakeha relations, published in the April issue of *Tui Motu*.
Pat Snedden is an Auckland businessman with an interest in social justice and racial issues

Self-evidently, today's new technologies are comprehensively implicated in speeding up the wheels of commerce in the pursuit of material progress. That is where they add the greatest value, and simultaneously set the dervishes of mass consumption and crude materialism whirling just that bit faster. At the same time, they do of course also impact on our pursuit of a better quality of life, especially in the fields of personal communication, entertainment and recreation. But the 'added value' is significantly less; the real enduring value on this side of the balance sheet still resides in the quality of our relationships rather than the virtuosity of the technologies we may use to support and enrich those relationships.

Let me put it more provocatively: the greater the enduring human value we derive from something, the less benefit today's technologies have to offer; the more something has to do with material consumption and spinning the wheels of commerce, the greater the benefit such technologies may confer. If we subscribe to the view that the balance of our lives today (between commerce, consumption and materialism on the one hand, and culture, community, love and nature on the other) is profoundly distorted, we then must pick up our share of responsibility for that devastatingly destructive imbalance.

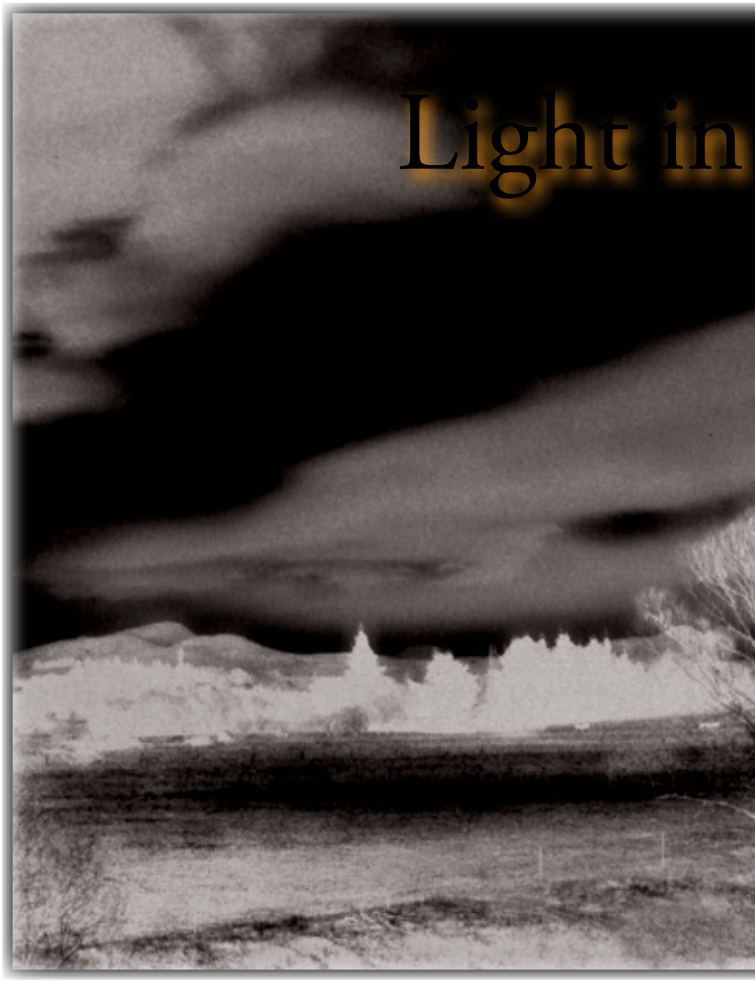
This is so unfashionable a view as to guarantee accusations of neo-Luddite, technophobic fuddyduddyism. But the contemporary debate about sustainability circles intriguingly around the tension between dynamism and constancy. How, in a genuinely sustainable society, will we simultaneously nurture those aspects of human nature that make us uniquely powerful in evolutionary terms, such as a hunger for change, our insatiable curiosity, our pioneering spirit, our ability to manipulate nature, and so on, and those aspects of human nature which depend on a different rhythm – cultural continuity, stable communities, time for reflection and spiritual devotion, an enduring, symbiotic relationship with the natural world, with its very different cycles, seasons and time-frames?

In truth, I cannot see today's technologies as balancing agents in managing that tension. Indeed, I believe they are deeply implicated in the lies and illusions involved in propagating the 'benefits' of living faster, all too seductively selling the untruth that speed is a satisfactory surrogate for genuine contentment and quality of life. Wherever today's latter-day Rumis may be found, I very much doubt they'll be spending much time on the internet. ■

Jonathon Porritt *is Programme Director of* Forum for the Future*, a United Kingdom environmental agency. The article and cartoon courtesy of* Resurgence *magazine.*
Illustration: ***Axel Scheffler***

I want
to write about faith,
about the way the moon rises
over cold snow, night after night,
faithful even as it fades from fullness,
slowly becoming that last curving
and impossible
slither of light before the final darkness.
But I have no faith myself
I refuse it the smallest entry.
Let this then, my small poem,
like a new moon slender and barely open,
be the first prayer that opens me to faith

David Whyte



I want to write about faith. I want to write about that quality of heart, mind and soul that is open to the 'more' of what is possible; to the 'more' of who I am and who I might become as a human-being in love with the world. I want to write about this time of year, the darkest time of the year when the sun is obscured by cloud and rain, when the earth herself conspires to obstruct the sun's warmth from penetrating my frozen land and heart.

I want to write about faith, about the way the moon rises over cold snow, night after night. I want to write about this time of the world, this time of history when faith shrinks in the grip of a looming shadow. Hatred, revenge, despair is on the ascendancy. War, genocide and geocide bring the planet and the human race to survival's brink.

I want to write about faith, about the way the moon rises over cold snow, night after night, faithful even as it fades from fullness, slowly becoming that last curving and impossible slither of light before the final darkness. I want to write about faith as I look into the terror of a final darkness.

I no longer know on what or whom I call for help. Do I call to Jesus, to Christ? Do I call to God, to the intelligent force that brought the universe into being? Do I call on the wind, the sun, the moon, the earth, the stars? Do I call on the light? Or do I call on the darkness itself, the unknowing, faltering cry of my own heart? There is only the calling, the crying out. The object of my longing recedes, a transitory mist evaporating against an open horizon: all that space; all that open, open space.

But I have no faith myself. I refuse it the smallest entry. Instead I attempt to secure myself. I can feel the way my walls are built. Beginning in fear I attempt to secure my borders and nurture an ideal of self-sufficiency, or isolation, or control. Within my gates idols are carved by my hand, by the hands of family, tribe, country, religion, ideology. I sever myself from the whole. This severing could be called sin. This rending away from the web of the real could be called delusion. This sundering of my radical inter-connectedness could be called *samsara*. It could be called faithlessness.

Philosopher and theologian, Raimon Panikkar describes faith as existential openness towards transcendence, or if this seems too loaded, more simply as 'existential openness'. He says that the experience of faith is primal for the human being. It is constitutive of what it means to be human. It is not to be identified with belief. I can wall myself off with my beliefs. I can

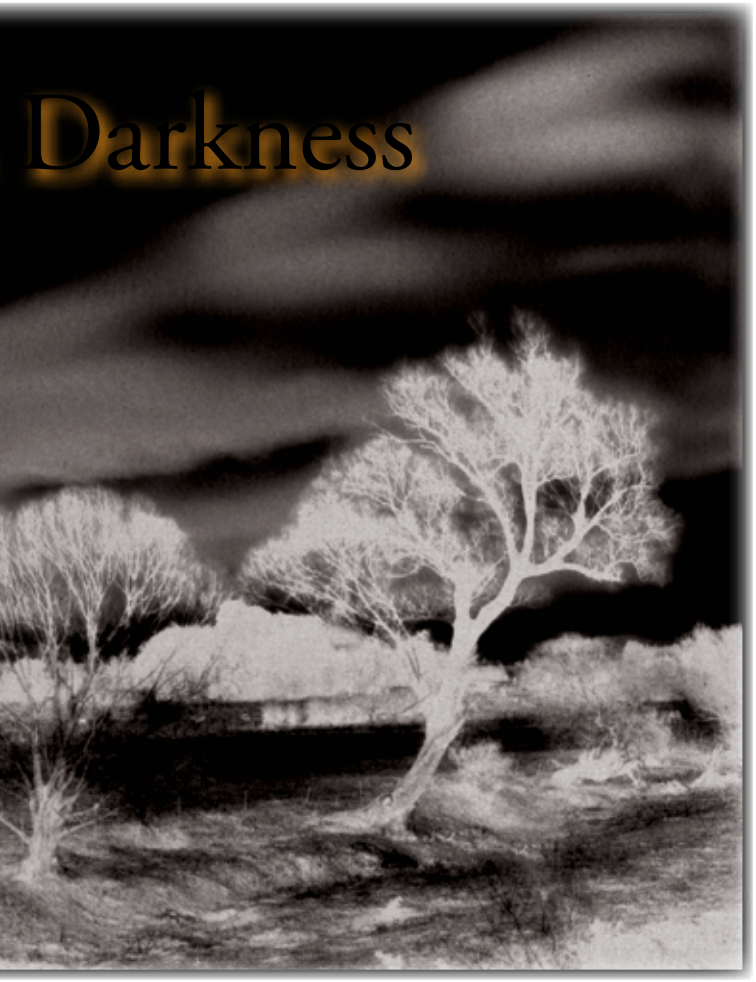


photo: Reg Graham

make of my religion an exclusive claim to truth. I can make of my ideology an absolute right to rule. I can war and kill and do violence in defence of my beliefs. And in the process I can refuse faith the smallest entry.

From time immemorial, during this darkest time of the year, the winter solstice, human beings have celebrated the promise and the presence of the Light, even in its hiddenness. They have proclaimed that in the midst of darkness a light shines forth. And if we could free ourselves from the tyranny of the literal and open ourselves to the power of symbol and the truth of myth, we might find the possibilities of a new way of being human dawning this very day in the birth of a divine child; revealing divinity in the very depths of our human nature, reverberating through our entire cosmic body.

It seems to me imperative that, in faith, we open to the possibility that we humans can change. Yes, war and violence and bloodletting have marked our path for millennia. And almost every war can trace its roots to religious belief and moral justification. It seems we have made little progress in quelling our human desire for power, domination and revenge. And for the non-combatants of the world we appear to be in an accelerated regression. For example, in World War 1 90 percent of those killed were military; in World War II, 50 percent; and in Viet Nam, only ten percent (90 percent of those killed were civilians). One can only imagine what the outcome of the present war in Iraq will be on the civilian population.

It is clear that we must change. As Panikkar asserts nothing short of a radical *metanoia*, a complete turning of mind, heart and spirit will meet today's needs. As Thomas Berry says we must re-invent the human. If we want to survive, if we want to leave a habitable planet for the generations to come, we must turn in faith toward that open horizon of possibility where we can envision ourselves living in peace and harmony, with freedom and justice across every culture and religion, for every creature and person.

In David Whyte's poem, the moon rises against an open horizon by which the moon itself becomes intelligible. The snow-covered landscape is illumined by its light through the graciousness of the unseen, which lies beyond appearance. And then there is that moment when that last curving and impossible light is itself absorbed into the darkness.

This is the moment in which I find myself, at this time in my life, at this time in our world. The light no longer appears, nor the objects illumined by the light. I am left looking into all that open, open space. I am left with my bare awareness, my naked longing, and the infinite possibilities of the new, the more, inherent in the spaciousness before me. Let this then, my small poem, like a new moon, slender and barely open, be the first prayer that opens me to faith. ■

Diane Pendola

Where Many Rivers Meet, poems by David Whyte, (Many Rivers Press, 1990). *Cultural Disarmament, The Way To Peace* (1995), *A Dwelling Place For Wisdom (1993)*, by Raimon Panikkar, (Westminister John Knox Press)

Eucharist and the freedom of the Spirit

Neil Darragh

It is easy to see the c
between the Eucharist
Holy Thursday remem
last meal of Jesus with his d
and has provided a norm fo
how Christians gather for
Eucharist, Sunday after
Sunday. Good Friday and
Easter Sunday celebrate
each year Jesus' passage fro
death to resurrection. Eu
celebrates daily, and especia
Sunday, that same passag
death to resurrection.

In the flow of the liturgic
we are now on the wa
towards Pentecost. If it i
easy to see the connectio
between Eucharist and Ea
of the connection betwee
and Pentecost? Eucharist
be more about Easter t
Pentecost. And if that is the case, this is a good time to worry about whether there is something missing in our understanding both of the Holy Spirit and of Eucharist.

Pentecost is a feast of dancing flames and strong winds and many languages. It is a feast of diversity that laughs at human attempts to control the divine Energy and bend it to their own schemes. At the same time it is also a feast of unity. It declares to us that many cultures and languages can all gather in a common understanding of the witness of the apostles. It is a celebration both of diversity and of unity, but it is the diversity that seems to have disappeared into the background of our Eucharists.

Pentecost is a feast of the Holy Spirit, do not know where it comes from or where it goes", Jesus says to Nicodemus(*John 3:8*). It is a divine Spirit that cannot be grasped by human hands but which can strengthen and energise the human spirit. It cannot be grasped or controlled by human plans but it upholds and moulds the diversity of the human community.

At the opening of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), Pope John XXIII caught the imagination of the Catholic world by calling for a new Pentecost, a new opening of the church to the winds blowing through the world, a new opening to the Spirit. Something very strange has happened to the Catholic Church since then. The Second Vatican Council is just history to most people today. But many of those who lived through it and its impact on the New Zealand church have an unpleasant feeling that it ffered a slow but relentless down in the years since. more to the Spirit than we . The Eucharistic Prayers of oman Rite now invoke the more than they used to. But ll on the Spirit mainly to the offering of bread and nd to unify the church under lers. Not much here about flames and strong winds! pray more to the Spirit but our Sunday liturgies ar that while a spirit of unity welcome a spirit of diversity searched and fingerprinted n entry.

Second Vatican Council augurated a liturgical reform th the idea of updating the liturgy and encouraging active participation by everyone. It wanted to move away from the situation where the priest 'said' Mass and the people 'attended' the priest's Mass. Hence its insistence that people abandon the old rules and adopt the new ones. The result was some quite substantial changes in participation. But an insistence on the new rules also meant an insistence on a new uniformity.

Following the spirit of Vatican II, one of the ideas that has been talked about a lot both in official church documents and in theological reflection is ***inculturation***. This term is intended to indicate that the Gospel message is not bound to any one culture but is expressible in any living culture. It is an invitation to cultural diversity among Christians. But the idea of

inculturation is one that has been more talked about than put into practice. Liturgical authorities have been much more focused recently on maintaining central control than implementing inculturation, and this in practice means a lot of uniformity.

Nowadays, in New Zealand, we have little pieces of liturgical inculturation and lots of uniformity. From a single language, Latin, used in the Roman Rite throughout the world in the period before Vatican II, we now have a variety of languages, but nearly all of the prayers we commonly pray during the Eucharist are translations from the Latin. Effectively, what we have is a vernacular translation of the Latin prayers. This is translation, not inculturation.

In most New Zealand parishes, inculturation consists largely of some Kiwi informalities and local idioms as substitutions for or additions to the quaint-sounding translations of old Latin rhetoric that not even someone trained for seven years in a seminary can quite feel at home with. New Zealand priests and liturgy leaders tend to de-formalise the awkward pomposity of the Roman rubrics and the English translations of the Latin phrases. But that is about as adventurous as most priests are prepared to be. Ask the question: *Do you follow the Roman rite*? The answer is almost always 'Yes'. But ask, *What New Zealand inculturation have you implemented in Sunday liturgies?* and the answer is more likely to be a blank look of incomprehension.

Let us dwell for a moment on the strange case of liturgical language. The change from Greek to Latin as a liturgical language seems to have happened first in Latin-speaking North Africa from whence it travelled to Rome and became strongly influenced by the eloquent oratory of classical Roman Latin. In the early Middle Ages there was some influence from Frankish and Germanic cultures, but from then on the Roman Rite seems to have developed an immunity to any other language styles. The elegant but now dead oratory of Roman classical culture altered the Greek Christian liturgy and has been a major determinant of the current New Zealand liturgy.

But there is no trace in this New Zealand liturgy of the equally elegant, sophisticated and still living oratorical styles of the Maori, the New Zealand Irish, the Samoans or the Tongans. In its English translation, this immunity has now been extended beyond oratorical styles to everyday English usage such as its inexplicable resistance even to gender-inclusive language. And our liturgical leaders are more focused on dealing with the sad case of the *Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship* than on developing a New Zealand liturgy that communicates in intelligible New Zealand English.

There are nevertheless some good bits and pieces of inculturation and sparkles of diversity glinting through the blanket of uniformity. To my knowledge, the best of these are the Samoan and Tongan investments in liturgy. The power of harmonic singing and of vibrant earth colours are perhaps the most remarkable. Less well known but even more remarkable is the power of graceful movement in liturgical dance and processions. These elements of inculturation do not conflict in any flagrant way with the official Roman Rite, but they do alter its timing and shift the balance of its parts enough to make us rethink our liturgical theology, and they do shift some of the liturgy's sacramental power from the sanctuary back into the body of the church.

Maori inculturation seems to have been more cautious, but elements of mihi and karanga and the people's participation in the remembrance of the dead have begun to make the move towards a Maori liturgy that is more than just a Maori translation of the Latin. The recognition of other liturgical leader roles such as that of the katekita as well as the priest also begins to acknowledge the liturgical significance of established Maori protocol.

The poor performer here is Pakeha culture. The Kiwi informalities noted above do sometimes bring about warmth and an engagement of the congregation but, as nearly everyone can attest with examples, they are a very mixed blessing in the grasp of the unskilled practitioner. The Pakeha traditions of equality and participation might be a better place to start. The imperial roots of the Roman practice of the mono-presider should at least arouse some disquiet in the Pakeha congregation. The single mono-presider at Sunday Eucharists, week after week, and year in year out, is not only a failure in liturgical communication but a dangerous narrowing of the diversity of God.

What then of the Eucharist and Pentecost? If we have lost the connections between Eucharist and Pentecost it is probably because we have missed the Spirit's manifestation in a diversity of cultures and languages and our desire for unity has collapsed into uniformity. If so the failure here is not just a liturgical one. If Eucharist is the 'source and summit' of the Christian life, it patterns our hearts and minds to deal with the key issues of life. Pakeha Christians might be expected to be alerted through their liturgical life to deal with the current public debates about ethnic and cultural diversity and the search for national consensus.

But if our Eucharists themselves know only a universal uniformity, they disconnect us from public life and the movements of the Spirit there, or worse they reinforce the temptation to mono-cultural uniformity. Similarly, in ecological debates, diversity is a fundamental value within the interconnected unity of planet Earth.

Fr Neil Darragh is a theologian and author, and is parish priest of Geln Innes , Auckland

Dead Man Walking

Glynn Cardy

Easter celebrates resurrection. Many Christians believe that a dead man, Jesus, walked out of a grave and in a supernatural body appeared to his disciples. Yet many Christians don't believe that. For them resurrection means something else.

Whale Rider is a good news story. On the east coast the Whangara people believed their presence dated back a thousand years to a single ancestor, Paikea. Paikea escaped death when his canoe capsized by riding to shore on the back of a whale. From then on, Whangara chiefs, always the first-born, always male, had been considered Paikea's direct descendants. Pai, an 11-year-old girl in a patriarchal culture, believes she is destined to be the new chief. But her grandfather Koro is bound by tradition to pick a male leader.

Whale Rider in a broad sense is a death-to-life story. It is about the resurrection of a tribe. Their leader, Koro, is old. The tribe is being pushed about by the currents of rural decline and flight of the young. It feels as though they are slowly dying and the old ways with them. Then Pai is born. More despair. She is no he. There is no male heir to lead them.

Resurrection stories have a surprise, or transcendent, factor that pushes the participants to think past their own prejudices. There might be no male heir but is leadership dependent on gender? It is the young girl, Pai, who has the spirit of Paikea. The resurrection, a process more than an event, happens as Koro and the tribe come to realize this.

In the movie there is a scene where Pai rides a whale. This is the 'dead man walking' parallel. This is a miracle scene, a creation of the Special Effects Department. This is the event that symbolizes her power and mana. Pai has risen from the death of prejudice and claimed her place forever as leader of the tribe.

Now, is this miracle scene necessary? Would Pai have risen anyway? What is more important: the miraculous event or the process of becoming leader?

Some would say that a resurrection event, a miraculous whale ride, was necessary for the miracle of a woman leader to happen. One wouldn't have occurred without the other. Event created process.

Others would disagree. The process, the gradual dawning that Pai was their leader, was happening regardless on any special effects miracle. Indeed this gradual dawning was the real miracle. Maybe the event, the literal whale ride, came about in retelling of the story? Maybe as Koro saw the compassion of Pai in helping the stranded whale re-enter the deep, later storytellers would have Pai riding the whale? Process created event.

The backdrop to this argument is the fact that 11-year-old girls don't ride whales. For us to believe in the power of this story are we required to disregard our rational and scientific faculties and embrace something beyond sense?

On the other hand, the world and God are incredible and there are many things we do not know. Maybe an event did happen? Maybe it didn't? Possibility is not limited. Maybe we need to keep an open, albeit skeptical, mind whilst celebrating the real miracle, which is Pai herself and the restoration of her tribe.

The issues raised by the whale ride are not dissimilar to the arguments regarding the resurrection of Jesus. Some would say that a resurrection miracle was necessary. An event needed to happen. The dead Jesus had to come back to life in a supernatural bodily form. It was necessary in order for the disciples to believe in the power of his message and mission.

Others would disagree. Jesus coming back to life in a supernatural form didn't happen. Simply, dead men don't walk. The power behind the birth of the Church was the power of Jesus' life, and the spirit of that life lived on in his disciples. The resurrection was the interaction between Jesus and his

disciples and the continuation of that relationship despite his execution. It was a process that happened within the believing community, which began before Jesus' death and continued after it.

Others would say, maybe. Maybe a miracle happened. Over a period of time, years probably, different key disciples could have experienced a supernatural occurrence. We don't know whether this happened because there are limits to our knowledge. God sometimes acts outside of our knowledge. Regardless of whether this miraculous event happened or not, the real miracle is that his early followers continued to work for the dream of love, justice and mutuality.

There are many Christians of great intellectual and moral integrity who hold to the view that an 'event' was necessary, just as there are many Christians, of similar integrity, who hold to the 'process' and 'maybe' positions.

In the biblical accounts Jesus' resurrected body is quite distinct from a normal human body. The risen apparition was not a resuscitated Jesus. In one account, for example, his close friend Mary Magdalene didn't recognise him. In other accounts he walks through walls. Paul puts his own experience, many years later, of a heavenly voice on the Damascus Road on the same level as the appearances to Mary, Peter, and the others.

It begs the question then, "What is resurrection?" In the ancient world any Semitic or Greco-Roman soul could appear to the living, still bearing the recognizable form of the body. Any soul could pass through closed doors, give advice, and vanish. Did Jesus appear to and instruct his disciples after his crucifixion? So Patroklos appeared to Achilles, Samuel to Saul, the elder Scipio to his grandson, as did numerous others. Did the risen Jesus eat a meal with his disciples? Any soul could and often did with friends and relatives.

While some scholars will say various features of the apparitions of Jesus were unique, the questions still remain: How does a resurrection event, whether or not it was unique, explain the birth of Christianity? Is a paranormal event the basis of Christian faith? If a resurrection event didn't happen, but a resurrection process did, would the way most Christians practice their faith change?

Whale Rider is the story of a community revitalized by the emergence of an unlikely leader. It is a resurrection story. Around the bravery, persistence and vision of Pai, the tribe was restored. In the retelling of that story audiences on the other side of the world stand and clap. The spirit of Pai touches their hearts.

Are not the biblical resurrection accounts similar? They are wonderful stories of restoration and empowerment that encapsulate the revitalization of the early Christian community. Through these stories the spirit of Jesus has moved the hearts of people in varied times and cultures, and still does so today. Jesus is known when we offer shelter and share food. Jesus is known when we embody his life – when we act justly, show compassion, and open our doors and hearts to those in need. Without community and justice divine presence remains unrecognizable both in the 1st century and the 21st. ■

Glynn Cardy is Anglican priest at St Andrew's, Epsom, Auckland. This article with minor amendments was published in the New Zealand Herald at Easter and occasioned some highly critical correspondence. Discussion of how precisely the disciples experienced the risen Christ has always been lively and controversial. But such debate need not influence faith in the Resurrection or its fruits in the Christian life.

A Christian Jew: journey of faith

Helen Bowen

I read with interest Michael Hill's editorial about the film the Passion of Christ. Mel Gibson will not admit to having a racist agenda but the film may give rise to inflaming prejudice as you say. I thought it might be of interest to tell my story.

My father was Jewish and my mother is Anglican. They could not agree about our religious upbringing so my experience of church was when I went to church with other families. I was not baptised or christened. I remember going to a bible camp with a friend at around age ten and can still recall the words of songs which were a very enjoyable part of the experience. I learned some aspects of religion when I stayed with my Seventh-Day Adventist cousin, but it was all something of a mystery.

My children attended the Rudolf Steiner school, and through the anthroposophy I developed a love of the spirit world. I studied in groups for some years. I started Jungian analysis and further explored the spirit within. Interestingly, I have enjoyed the ritual and mysticism of the Catholic church when I attended Mass with friends.

Five years ago on Holy Saturday, I was encouraged by my friend Jim Consedine to take the somewhat unusual step of baptism at the age of 42. I learned through Jim that Jesus of the New Testament taught a way of non-violent love of friends and enemies. This was one aspect of Christian teachings that felt right to me.

I then was fortunate to be able to witness forgiveness in the context of my work as a restorative justice facilitator. Restorative justice allows for victims, offenders and their families to put a face to the offending and the harm that emerges as a result. The process means that every person has to take responsibility for their past actions and for their conduct at the meeting. The offender becomes humanised through a process of disclosure, and the victim shares stories of the harm that caused their suffering with those present.

Photo: Permission Hoyts

The process allows us all to deal with our shadow. Anglican priest John Sandford describes the shadow:
"If you are standing in the light, you will cast a shadow. But unless you turn and look at the floor behind you, you will not be aware of the dark shadow following you. The shadow is our angry side, our weakness, our sickness, our primitiveness, our sensuality, our rebelliousness, our inferiority – whatever it may be about ourselves of which we are most afraid and would rather not face."

I witnessed traumatised, disempowered victims metamorphosise into people who could hold their heads up and move beyond the pain. I witnessed so many moments of transformation of people at the depths of despair who faced the person who had brought chaos into their lives. I saw in people a deep need to connect. Out of witnessing that need emerged the seeds of a strong faith. I now trust in a faith that has become a fortress. When all else is not going well, my prayers and seeking a connection within myself, bring me back to God.

I believe that I had to learn to experience Christian faith. It was never forced upon me. I had never personally experienced discrimination or hatred of other faiths. Most of all, I have learned that faith in God sustains me when all else fails. My prayers seem to transform the way I experience life. When I am down I seek sustenance from my prayer life. When I am happy, I feel grateful. My faith is like a warm extra layer of skin which I can no longer do without.

I am fortunate to witness Christian acts of compassion, love, joy and forgiveness in my work. Of course there is also fear, hatred, envy and racism. The process of restorative justice feels like a more human and honest connection between people.

It allows people to do the right thing. It allows for fears to be disclosed and shared. It makes crime a community concern rather than something that happens to others. The threads that emerge from this experience are that alternatives such as sharing and compassion, rather than scapegoating and revenge, may offer hope in an otherwise hope-less world.

So where does this leave my Jewish heritage? My father's grandfather was a Polish Jew who fled Europe in the 1860s and ended up in New Zealand via Canada, the United States and Perth. The family moved from Auckland to Napier where there was no synagogue. My impression is that from the 1940s the religious aspect of their lives was suppressed. It feels to me that Judaism was talked of very little and that while

the food was mostly kosher, there were no celebrations of the Jewish festivals. So Judaism is a fleeting impression for me.

I came to Christianity freely and with joy. This freedom has allowed me to learn about Judaism and be loyal to my Jewish ancestry. I have huge respect for Viktor Frankl and Ette Hillesum who could see that fighting hatred with hatred was never going to advance the cause of Jews.

Here is a poem I wrote for Viktor Frankl after visiting the Sydney Jewish museum last year.

Viktor

Jewish
angst
I thought to
myself
If anyone
Ought
To be

Angst
ridden
those souls
who left
behind
children,
ought to be
those who
made choices
to rise above
the depth
of teutonic hatred

Viktor
Viktor Frankl
my hero
is
the human face
of choice
ultimate choice
to survive and
overcome
and come
out the other
side

smiling.

Troubadour in Mexico

Cecily Sheehy

Over the holiday period I spent nearly six weeks in Baja California, Mexico, in the mission town of Loreto. I was struck by the contrasts between our 1st World New Zealand and this 3rd World town.

Jesuit Missionaries came to Loreto in 1697 and founded missions there and up and down Baja. The Franciscans followed for a short while and then Dominicans, all from Spain. The Loreto mission finally died with the Dominicans in 1868. By then, the Indian population was decimated drastically by disease brought in from which they had no resistance.

However, the Catholic faith is alive and strong, with the unquestioning simplicity of 3rd World counries. I was deeply moved at the quiet faith of these people. I have never been drawn to statues in churches, but I tell you, the statues in the Loreto Mission church moved me to tears. Remember Our Lady of Sorrows? There she is clothed lovingly in black material and 'beseeching heaven' for her people. On a lighter note there is the travelling mother. She is in white with a wide-brimmed hat, carrying her basket and her little baby.

In Loreto there are only two main streets paved. All the others are dirt roads. The footpaths can be dangerous for the unwary! No-one wears seat belts or locks cars. I didn't see any late-model vehicles. Old four-wheel-drives and trucks are quite common. You look after yourself because there is no health insurance and no rest homes. Who will bail you out if you get into trouble? Who is able to? There are a number of retired Americans living there, by no means standing out, and contributing where possible.

I had taken with me 20 recorders (kindly subsidised by Piano Traders) and spent most school afternoons teaching recorder and keyboard at the Internado, a Gov ernment-funded Hostel for poor children who come in from the country to attend school. These children have very little – or nothing. Again the contrast with most of our children. These ones will probably not move beyond primary school except for the few chosen to go on to secondary education. But what then?

It was quite an experience teaching music in Spanish! Much waving of hands and miming. The little keyboard girls helped me to say what they thought I was trying to say in my appalling Spanish. Most of the recorder players were boys – no more angelic than any boy you have ever known!!

We had a little concert at the end. The other teachers and helpers were full of gratitude. They really appreciate anything done for, and with, these beautiful and seemingly happy children. ■

Telling fibs

Paul Andrews

Can you remember when you first told a lie? It was probably more a half-truth than a full lie, and it was told to avoid punishment or to gain some small treat – maybe an excuse for homework skipped, or a fib to get an extra sweet (I didn't get one on the first round) – what we used to call an officious lie, something made up more to gain an advantage than out of malice.

A wise observer of children remarked that language serves desire before it serves truth. That is true not just of children. All day long we hear or watch loud advertisments that serve the huckster's desire (Buy this!) rather than truth. Insurance companies claim to offer peace of mind, when anyone in business, transport or other services knows that the demands and the cost of insurance are a menace to our peace of mind. Alcohol firms claim to be helping your health, when in reality they are filling the hospitals and morgues.

We learn to live with advertising lies, and take them with a grain of salt. It is harder to face deceit in close relationships. Words come too easily. Love is shown not in words but in deeds. I see mothers as they kiss their children goodbye, or end a phone call, whispering I love you, in the style borrowed from TV soaps. At what age does that sort of thing lose credibility? Five? Or seven? By the time they are 12, few children will accept it. Language is an unreliable guide to the reality of love, most of all in the tragedy of break-up, where promises have been broken. In the disillusion that children so easily feel then, they are impressed not by the fluent words of parents, but rather by the evidence of behaviour – if father or mother does something that cannot be explained by habit or self-interest, but only by affection.

Words were never as freely available as today. The Internet is rife with people who will design greeting cards and formulate wishes for you. There is an industry busy at making us feel guilty if we do not send prettily printed sentiments to selected targets on Mother's or Father's Day, St Valentine's, Hallow E'en, even Love-your-pet Day. How real is all this?

Because the words and sentiments are borrowed, they are partly untrue; they reflect not so much you who send them, as the manufacturer's wish-writer. The half-truth is recognised, most of all within a family.

Teresa found it hard to cope with her 19-year-old daughter Anne who fought constantly and physically with her younger sister, and smoked all over the house, despite the protests of her asthmatic mother. Come Mother's Day, Anne gave Teresa a rose and a pretty card with hearts and love messages. You know what I want for Mother's Day, said Teresa. I want you to stop smoking, and I want you to get on with your sister. Those are the only presents I will accept. Nothing else is a sign of love when you refuse those. It has never been so easy to say and send pretty sentiments. But they are garbage if one's life says something different.

Sometimes what you experience in the family is in stark contrast with what the outside world sees. Last year I had heart-wrenching calls from Christine about her husband Eddy, who was gradually driving the family to despair. He was drinking steadily and uncontrollably. In a household where money was scarce, most of the family's resources were going down his throat. Whether sober or drunk, he was abusive to his wife, and bitterly hostile to his children, especially to the eldest son.

What made this specially hard to bear was that the outside world had no notion of what the family endured. Eddy was at daily Mass and Communion, a respected member of the parish, often called on as a reader at Mass. Among his pals he was clubbable and full of crack. It was through the shattering of this facade that help came for the family. A friend of Eddy discovered, almost by accident, what was happening at home, confronted him, and triggered a change which took time, but which worked. The gap between the pious parishioner and the drunken home-bully was gradually closed.

It was that gap, between the mask and the reality underneath, between the lips and the heart, that brought the strongest words from Jesus – about Pharisees, honouring God with their lips while their heart is far from him, whited sepulchres, dirty cups that are clean only on the outside.

To end with the opposite: Finbarr was going to buy a Lotto ticket when his friend Jack asked: Buy one for me too – I'll pay you later. So Finbarr bought two tickets, and that night one of them won $200,000. Finbarr sent the winning ticket straight to Jack. He was clear in his own mind which of the tickets he had meant for Jack, and had no hesitation in honouring his decision. If all Irish hearts were as true as that, we would have a wonderful country. ■

Paul Andrews is a Jesuit priest psychotherapist living in Dublin. He has visited and worked in New Zealand

Reflecting on Luke

Susan Smith

In Luke 9, Jesus begins to prepare his disciples to become leaders, capable and willing to continue his mission of healing and preaching. Earlier, in Luke 4:16, Jesus had begun his public ministry in Galilee by praising two famous OT prophets, Elisha and Elijah, who ministered to two Gentiles, the widow of Zarephath, and Naaman, the Syrian. By referring to these two prophets, Jesus indicates that his mission would extend to Gentiles as well as Jews. This angered the people of Nazareth who sought to kill him. From the beginning then, Jesus' ministry is a cause of division, and, as the next four chapters indicate, he is accepted by the ordinary people and outcasts, and scorned by Israel's religious and political leadership.

In 9:1-17, we have three stories of leadership in action. First, Luke describes Jesus giving the Twelve power and authority to preach and heal, a task they enthusiastically embrace. Second, we hear of Herod, whose execution of John the Baptist marks him out as an example of despotic and cruel leadership. Third, Jesus feeds the five thousand, despite the protests of the Twelve that he dismiss those who had gathered around him. In this miracle story, Luke's language "took ... blessed ... broke ... gave" directs our attention to the Last Supper. Another link to the Last Supper occurs when Jesus asks the disciples to serve the people. But prior to that in 12:37, we read of a master who waits on his servants at table. At the Last Supper, Jesus will wait on his disciples. The feeding in the desert, and these two later stories are indications that meals at which Jesus presides are characterised by inclusion and service.

Such gospel texts present us with challenges to our more commonly accepted understandings of leadership. For Luke, leadership is about prophetic action on behalf of the Gentile/outsider, about feeding the hungry, and about service. Let's reflect for a moment on the words and actions of two of our present political leaders as they endeavour to gain votes at any cost.

We have one leader to whom some are ready to attribute messianic significance on the strength of one speech and no actions on behalf of the poor, and whose aim is to gain control of government through capturing the vote of the Pakeha majority. We have another who wants to remain in government through the clever use of a rhetoric that seeks to placate all, but which looks as though it will fail the minority, and moderately satisfy the majority.

Is it coincidental that on the one hand, one of them holds that religion and politics have nothing to say to each other, while the other has publicly affirmed her agnosticism? ■

Dr Susan Smith is a Mission Sister who teaches Biblical Studies at the School of Theology, University of Auckland

Michael and Maria King

May they rest in peace

Photo: Reg Graham

Naturally enough, Michael King was one of the speakers at Janet Frame's memorial service in Dunedin. He recounted a story which may have carried more portent than he realised. Apparently, some months earlier Michael and his wife, Maria, had a visitor at their home in the Coromandel. Michael left the room to look for a painting which was under discussion, leaving Maria and the visitor talking in a room with large windows facing onto native bush. When he returned some 10 minutes later it was to find them in a state of high excitement, eager to tell him what he had missed. A morepork had flown out of the bush and perched on a tree near the window, peering through it for several minutes as though searching for someone. It had flown off shortly before Michael had reappeared.

That evening, Michael rang Janet Frame and told her of this strange visitation, pondering its significance. They both agreed it was a portent of death; a sign that someone would soon be taken. Their discussion concerned whether it was for Michael or Janet, both of whom lived with the prospect of potential demise. Michael was of the opinion that it was clearly for him – the bird had come looking for him, after all. No, said Janet, it couldn't find you, and so went looking for someone else. She concluded that it was a message for her. "Perhaps it was for me... we'll see" she said.

In the end they were both right, dying within a few months of each other. How strange and tragic that this couple whose lives had become bound in friendship should also be united in death. They represented two quite different yet equally significant tupuna of New Zealand's writing community. In the space of one summer we lost the two great stanchions of our literary abode. While Janet entranced us with her impossibly beautiful and mysterious use of words, Michael guided us gently and compassionately toward the truth of self-discovery.

The most valued legacy of Michael King is the insight that the destinies of Maori and Pakeha people are inextricably linked. As a young reporter covering Maori issues for the Waikato Times, he instinctively understood that there was a deep and dangerous need for reconciliation in our community. His subsequent writing career has built a bridge over troubled waters; one that is capable of carrying much traffic should we make use of it. The superbly written *History of New Zealand*, with which King's oeuvre came to an untimely conclusion, should be required reading for all who influence our nation.

Michael had the rare gift of combining a critical academic approach to history with literary grace. Fundamentally, I suspect, he was an irrepressible storyteller. And he understood the social and cultural importance of telling the right stories at the right time. I, along with many other Pakeha, will be forever indebted to Michael for his guidance in understanding what it means to be a member of "New Zealand's second indigenous culture". It is his writing that has convinced me that we can only inhabit our identity when we understand our past.

The other taonga which he has gifted to us are the biographies of our people. From the lives of Te Puea and Whina Cooper through to those of Frank Sargeson and Janet Frame, Michael has lovingly and accurately recounted the stories of important cultural figures. It is my deep regret that his desire to write a biography of James K. Baxter never eventuated. When he died, he was planning to write his own memoirs. Now that will be the task of someone else to write his story, who will surely acknowledge Michael King as a nation builder.

One of the best descriptions of Michael's contribution is contained in his own words, where he describes the role of the historian as "to absorb the past, identify in it what is of continuing importance by way of values and experience,

a friend, Reg Graham, writes. . .

I was driving from Otoupere on the Coromandel to Wellington – a long day's drive. I had just left Michael and Maria at their idyllic home on the inlet and was considering their turbulent last year. Michael had emerged from radiotherapy with a clear sheet and Maria was still suffering terribly from advancing MS; she had had no remission since its onset 2 years ago. But both were amazingly cheerful and positive about the future.

I had driven down after some business in Auckland to pay my first visit to Michael's bolt-hole – we always seemed to spend time together in Auckland, Wellington or Dunedin, and it was great to see Michael on his home territory. We had spent four hours the previous evening over dinner in Whangamata celebrating his cancer release and talking to people, discussing future books that we might undertake (I was Michael's photographer, a sort of replacement for his loss of Robin Morrison who had worked with him on earlier publications), and enjoying good food and good humour.

It brought to mind the many meals we had shared with Michael in Dunedin – he loved to be with friends and to share intelligent conversation and laughs, where he always became the marvellous raconteur with the extraordinary memory for the details and absurdities of life in New Zealand. He was great company.

I knew him for only nine years but our friendship had grown over that time and during that short visit to Otoupere he had insisted that Judith and I should plan to return for a couple of weeks later in the year – he would arrange for a nearby cottage for us so that the four of us could explore some of his beloved Coromandel. That was two weeks before the crash.

---

and then to communicate these things to a contemporary audience by way of saying, 'This is what we've done that we can be proud of – or *not* proud of; these are the values of our forbears that provide helpful signposts for directions for the future. In this way good history absorbs the past, but at the same time creates new orientations for the present and foreshadows the future.'"

Mike Riddell

Mike Riddell is a prominent NZ author

a fellow-historian, Fr John Broadbent, writes. . .

The young man from the Plimmerton Convent and St Pat's, Wellington, has shown to all that a Catholic education does not prevent one from becoming a first-class New Zealander and even more, a first-class scholar and a reputable historian. Michael King had that elusive and remarkable gift of explaining history and making it interesting to the average person in the street.

He also had that prophetic perception of getting into the psyche of the present-day New Zealander, Maori or Pakeha, and saying how it felt. This drew criticism at times from both sides which can often be a way of discerning one has hit the target. His swansong of the Penguin *History of New Zealand* has etched his name in our Hall of Fame.

May he and his lovely wife rest in peace.

Fr James Lyons, Upper Hutt, writes. . .

The tragic death of historian and author, Michael King, has silenced a voice that spoke with genuine insight and remarkable integrity, and with deep affection for the land of his birth, Aotearoa-New Zealand, and for the people of that land, both Maori and Pakeha.

In the 1990s he accepted an invitation from the national office of Catholic Communications to write a history of Catholics in New Zealand. The book, *God's Farthest Outpost*, was published in 1997. As Director of Catholic Communications at the time, I worked closely with Michael on the project. His open-mindedness and the non-judgemental approach produced a work of lasting significance. He wrote with wonderful sensitivity to the many strands of thought and outlook that give life to the diversity that is Catholicism, while maintaining the highest standards of scholarship and impartiality in his work.

Michael King proudly acknowledged his Catholic origins, seeing them as one of the foundation pillars that upheld meaning in his life. This shone through in his approach to people, particularly his respect for the individual.

He instinctively knew there was a unique story in each person that, when told, would add a thread to the tapestry of creation, revealing the artistry of the Creator. Through his love of history Michael King became a master storyteller. We needed him. We cannot but miss him.

Hope for the eternally young

Miles to Go – a book to make you laugh out loud
Pauline O'Regan
Penguin Books 2004
Price: $35
Review: Anna Holmes

This is a wonderfully hopeful book. If you are over 60, go and buy a copy for yourself. If you are younger, go and buy one for your 'olds' and read it before you give it to them.

So many books about growing old are fretful, sad, or relentlessly looking to the past. This one looks at the processes of ageing, looks backwards, forwards and sideways. It is a wise and very funny book ideal for reading aloud. It is not a book to read in bed if your bed partner wants to sleep.

It raises all the spectres of old age, takes a good, hard and witty look at them and lays them to rest in a way that is extremely comforting. Pauline has some excellent tips on what not to do for your funeral. She does not leave out the loneliness of growing old. She recounts the pain of moving house after thirty years and the difficulty of making choices about what to keep and what to let go. It is not that the problems of age are dismissed, simply that they are brought into proportion with the rest of life and thereby lose their terror.

I loved her creative suggestion of using the disability allowance:
"I think it's a real disability not to be able to see what is sprouting on your chin. The fear that you might be growing a mini beard could bring on panic attacks which could seriously affect your mental health. Could we not claim for chin waxing? My GP appeared to give this some consideration, but finally she thought not."

She gives clear and accurate description of macular degeneration, the commonest cause of poor vision in New Zealand. It is a devastating disease for people who enjoy reading and writing. She then suggests where to get help and how it can be coped with. One of the things Pauline was forced to do when her sight deteriorated was learn how to use a computer. She demystifies computing in a way that might well encourage others to have a go. I really warmed to her description of *Word* and its bossy *Office Assistant* (I also get very cross when it criticises my spelling and grammar.)

As well as discussing the problems of old age she also talks about the advantages. She reminds us that having six or eight decades of living leaves us with more wisdom, stories, experience and sometimes, more tolerance. She discusses the reality that if you survived living in less cosseted times you have built up a good immune system and do not need to go in constant fear of illnesses.

The stories in this book, as in all her previous ones, are rich and varied. I particularly enjoyed her encounter with a taxi driver who complained about the stirrers who were protesting about the war in Iraq when she had just left the march. I also liked the tale of her accidental visit to Rod Stewart's house in London. I could well imagine the baffled bodyguards being completely overwhelmed.

She finishes with a chapter on her own spiritual transformation:
"I count it as the most basic part of my spirituality that I see everyone as my brother and sister... I'm not claiming there's anything singular about my spirituality, it's just that I'm old and I want to testify to the way it has transformed my life. What happens is that this conviction of spiritual kinship with every other person helps one to reach out in friendship and then

comes the wonderful discovery that every single person is worth knowing.

"Change is like cholesterol. They tell me there is good cholesterol and bad cholesterol. And there's good change and bad change. If any proposed change in the future seems to be a good one, then I'll most surely embrace it. It will do for me what all past change has done. It will call on what resources I already have and it will call out new gifts I don't even know I have. Most of all it will ask me to place my complete trust in God's abiding love for me....."

Wide-ranging review of contemporary film

How Movies Helped Save My Soul – finding spiritual fingerprints in culturally significant films
by Gareth Higgins
Published by Relevant Books 2003
Price: $29.95
Review: Mike Crowl

Having been a film buff for as long as I can remember, and having written my own views on what films were about and whether they were worth seeing for almost as long, I approached Gareth Higgins' book with enthusiasm. It's one of a number produced in recent years acknowledging that God speaks out of the arts – literature, films, painting and the theatre – sometimes even art that confronts or repels us.

Higgins aims to show that films are far more than entertainment: they speak philosophy, they speak spirituality, they speak morality. Sometimes they give human beings hope in a world where hope seems impossible; other times they fail to show hope when it's under their noses.

This is a book I only dipped into at first. Initially I wasn't as enthusiastic as I'd hoped I'd be, but I enjoyed it more the more I dipped. Higgins, an Irishman, writes like I imagine he talks: at a rapid-fire pace which can leave his readers behind. Sometimes he gives a good synopsis of the film's story, and that's helpful; other times he just assumes we know what he's talking about.

I struggled with some of his choices, though he's good at making a strong case for movies that are ugly on the surface. He doesn't say that every movie should be regarded as presenting positive moral lessons; some of them are like those Old Testament stories we're not supposed to emulate. There are films that require a strong stomach, films in which the foul language is so pervasive, and the sexual content so in-your-face, that it can be difficult to see the makers' moral intent. Magnolia, The Fight Club, The Exorcist are cases in point. Nevertheless, Higgins argues well for all of these.

Unlike many of his generation (he was only 28 when he wrote the book), Higgins is wide-ranging in his tastes and has seen many films – some of them several times – that made an impact before he was born. You won't agree with everything he says – especially if you've seen some of the films he discusses – but you will be intrigued by his insights, and enthused to go out and rent at least half the movies he promotes in order to re-view them through Higgins' eyes.

The book is laid out in sections relating to themes, so it's a great pity there isn't an index of the films discussed. While some are easy to find because they get several pages, others only have a brief paragraph to themselves. ■

Palestinian tinderbox

Crosscurrents

John Honoré

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict seems insoluble, but where should our sympathies lie? Given the most coverage are the suicide bombers from the Palestinian side who inflict death and destruction, but with the ultimate cost to themselves. The Israelis are depicted as fighting Bush's "war on terrorism" as they continue to target the Hamas leadership with helicopter gunships and guided missiles, financed with American money.

What is demonstrated by the suicide bombers is the ultimate despair to which the Palestinians have descended. The one thing every human being has is the gift of life – and hope is the foundation of that life. Hope entails living in a community that shares the expectation of a future. There is no future when children must throw stones at tanks in defence of their land.

Ariel Sharon, as leader of Israel, has removed the possibility of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East by extinguishing all hope from the Palestinians. They are now reduced to sacrificing themselves for what they sadly believe might be some gesture that will spark world-wide outrage at the suppression of their people.

When Israeli leaders accuse the Palestinians of terrorism, the world at large would seem to believe them. But who could be more terrorist than the Israelis who openly encroach on Arab lands, destroy Arab homes, rob Palestinian banks of millions of dollars and kill Arab men, women and children in the name of Bush's "war on Terror"?

The setting aside of the rule of law, under the guise of pre-emptive war, has weakened the fabric of civilised society which can only exist under the rule of law. Sharon's implicit message to the world is that he will, if necessary, leave Gaza in ruins and its citizens either dead or homeless refugees. The White House response of being "deeply troubled" is nothing but a platitude, unworthy of the most monopolistic country on earth. What is more, the US vetoed a UN Security Council resolution which condemned the killing. But world opinion, strongly influenced by US, seems to remain on the side of the Israelis and is unwilling to heed the Palestinians' desperation.

Ariel Sharon's political career has been built on violence and confrontation, including the Lebanon in 1982 after which he was indicted for war crimes, and his controversial visit to the al-Aqsa mosque in 2000 which triggered the present intifada. Since then Sharon has authorised the assassination of over 400 Palestinians, constructed a wall of monolithic proportions to enclose the Palestinians, and bulldozed hundreds of homes, olive groves and fruit trees in the Gaza strip, thereby destroying the social fabric of a benighted people. There is no hope for peace or even life for the Palestinians. They do not possess helicopter gunships and missiles. What other response is left to them but suicide bombing?

Israel's targeted killing of a paraplegic Palestinian is a tragedy. Sheik Ahmed Yassan was the personification of the poor and disenfranchised in the Gaza strip – a man handicapped and half-alive – the living proof of the hopelessness of the Palestinian people. The murder of Yassan has left the world a graphic symbol. The remains of a wheelchair represent all those paralysed in the presence of an occupation which defies the rule of law and the basic tenets of humanity. Despite George W. Bush calling Sharon "a man of peace", the world must accept the fact that he is a terrorist.

Meanwhile Bush, distracted by Iraq, and seeking re-election at home, has put aside international law in order to please American evangelicals and the Jewish lobby. He has endorsed Sharon's policy of assassinating Palestinians and has gone even further. Bush has unilaterally determined that Sharon's Israel need not abide by UN Security Council resolutions, which call on Israel to withdraw from Palestinian territories seized in the June 1967 war. He backs Israeli plans to annex large blocks of the West Bank in order to include illegal Jewish settlements. He describes Sharon's plan as a "historic and courageous act". This has effectively put aside the 'road map for peace'. Vast areas of the Palestinian West Bank will now become Israel, thanks to President Bush.

Both Israel and the United States refuse to even negotiate with Yasir Arafat, the Palestinian Authority president, because he is now the next target for assassination. Further, Bush rejects the right of Palestinians to return to what is now Israel.

The Palestinians are being terrorised by Sharon and rendered homeless by Bush. Israel's annexation of settlements effectively ends hope for a future Palestinian state that includes the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Together, Sharon and Bush have completely destabilised the Middle East. They are the real terrorists, because they seek to obliterate the very existence of an entire people. Ironically, both men's political future is uncertain, as is that of Tony Blair who has endorsed the Bush/Sharon pact. Blair is guilty by association. Their crimes are terrorism, violation of the United Nations Charter and violation of international law. Worst of all, they wage war against a helpless civilian population. Terror is now legitimate for the US and Israel. ■

Pastoral need versus church law

Humphrey O'Leary CSsR

Liturgical law plays a positive part in our lives, fostering good performance of the liturgy. Just sometimes it provides us with problems. On certain days of liturgically high level, we are told that funeral Masses or marriages are ruled out. Yet on more everyday grounds, they may be highly suitable days.

Good sense can often solve the problem. Some years ago Rosmini Father Gerry Cooke died suddenly in Christchurch on Monday in Holy Week. A funeral Mass in the cathedral on Holy Thursday morning (Mass of Oils had been already celebrated earlier in week).was the obvious timing. The administrator of the cathedral and other clergy took the initiative in making arrangements.

There was no discussion at any time from anybody that 'Funerals are forbidden on Holy Thursday'. The Requiem Mass went ahead and the cathedral was nearly full. The Rosminians were able to celebrate the Easter mysteries bereft, but consoled that Fr. Gerry had been fittingly farewelled. And they had received support and pastoral care from fellow priests.

Things do not always go so smoothly. I was told of a practising Catholic couple who had a daughter with partner and one child. The partner had no religious background at all, indeed his parents were unchurched, bemused, possibly hostile. The boy came to the parents-in-law saying the young couple wanted to get married, wanted a Catholic ceremony and in church. But for various reasons involving the boy's family, the only suitable day was Holy Saturday. The priest was prepared to go along with this, especially as his judgment of the pastoral situation was that the boy was seeking a worthy outcome and was sincere. He suggested they use a chapel sometimes used for daily mass, never for Sundays. Small enough for the marriage party. Not too 'churchy' as might put the groom's parents off. The use of this chapel would not interfere in any way with Holy Week services in the nearby church. But the parish priest in whose ambit the chapel lay, refused permission. The Catholic parents were deeply disappointed.

The church has long since foreseen situations like this and has provided a remedy for them. Unlike civil law, canon law has the unique arrangement of dispensation. This, canon 85 tells us, is the relaxation of a merely ecclesiastical law in a particular case. One cannot get a dispensation from the divine law – an advance permission to lie, steal, or injure another. But candidates for ordination who can provide good reasons can have the prescribed time of preparation shortened. Religious superiors whose contribution is still needed can find their time of service extended.

Originally such dispensations had to be obtained from Rome. Later, bishops were provided with lengthy lists of matters from which they could dispense. This has been improved on. In the wake of the Second Vatican Council the diocesan bishop was in 1966 empowered to dispense in a particular case from any law of the church, barring only a small list of reserved matters. Canon 87 enshrines this authority.

Marriage on Holy Saturday was obviously one of the matters regarding which this power could be exercised. It was fully within the bishop's authority to dispense from the prohibition of having a marriage on that day. Certainly, relaxation of liturgical restrictions of this kind are precisely matters the Church had in mind in empowering bishops to act with wisdom and consideration in granting dispensations from the law.

"We should like here to pronounce the epilogue of the war – please God, of all wars! Here, in forgiveness, we should like to re-establish the brotherhood and sisterhood of all humanity; to wed liberty and love to Christian peace.
"May the lamp of brotherhood ever shed its bright and holy light at Monte Cassino."

(Paul VI)

Monte Cassino

It was at Monte Cassino that in 529 St Benedict wrote his famous Rule. Monte Cassino is the cradle of Western monasticism. The abbey church stands on the peak of a mountain dominating the ancient town and commanding the road north to Rome.

In February 1944, at the height of the famous battle the Allied Command ordered the monastery to be destroyed by bombardment, since it was seen to be a perfect observation post for the German defence. Some monks and many civilian refugees were killed. The ruins were stormed by the Polish troops on May 18 and the road to Rome opened.

The battle of Cassino was one of the bloodiest conflicts of the war. From the esplanade in front of the monastery five cemeteries can be seen in the valley below – British, Polish, German, Italian and Commonwealth. In New Zealand history the battle has come to carry a prestige similar to Gallipoli in World War I.

The monastery was rebuilt by the Italian governemnt after the war, and rededicated by Pope Paul VI in October 1964. The Pope reminded the audience that the great Benedictine motto is *Pax*, (peace). "Here," he said, "we find peace, like a precious treasure, in safest keeping". The Pope also declared St Benedict the patron saint of Europe. ■