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Tui Motu

InterIslands

LIVING WITH THE STARS

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REFORM IN CHURCH REQUIRES TRUTH, PATIENCE AND TRUST

NEIL DARRAGH, MASSIMO FAGGIOLI

STOP TRAFFICKING

ANN GILROY

OVER 50 YEARS A PRIEST

JAMES LYONS

July 2023

Matariki — Remember, Celebrate, Resolve
Manawatia a Matariki

INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC MAGAZINE

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- Exploring the Biblical Heavens** 4
Mary Betz
- Matariki in the Southern Hemisphere** 6
Claire Ryan
- Living Spirituality with the Seasons** 8
Anton Spelman
- Building Trust.** 10
Neil Darragh
- Synodality Is Continuing the Council** 12
Massimo Faggioli
- Human Dignity Is Not for Sale** 14
Ann Gilroy
- At Home with Mohammad** 18
Zain Ali
- Understanding Co-governance** 20
Anaru Eketone

SCRIPTURE

- Sowing and Growing God's Kingdom** 24
Kathleen Rushton

COMMENT

- Editorial** 2
Ann Gilroy
- Loved One with Dementia** 22
Marilyn Wilkinson
- Passionist Family Group Movement** 23
Paul Traynor

COLUMNS

- Moral Courage and Optimism** 3
Patrick Snedden
- Growing in the Community Right Here** 26
Shar Mathias
- Cross Currents** 29
Jane Higgins
- For What It's Worth** 32
Bruce Drysdale

REFLECTION

- When Did You Know?** 16
James Lyons

REVIEWS

- Book Reviews** 21, 27, 28
- Film Review** 28

LETTERS

- Letters to the Editor** 31



COVER PHOTO

Gazing into the Heavens
by Isaac Ibbott on Unsplash



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Editorial

THIS MONTH WE celebrate Matariki — our glimpse of the Matariki cluster of stars near the horizon at dawn — with a national holiday. Though it's a new celebration for the nation, it has been a tradition for many iwi to mark the beginning of Māori new year. Matariki appears in the southern hemisphere sky around the time of the solstice. The darkest days are passing; the new growing season emerges as the hours of daylight increase.

Matariki hui/gatherings of extended family focus on whanaungatanga/relationships — with loved ones who have died and joined the ancestors, with one another, with all in whenua/earth and sky, with the past, present and future.

As well as remembering loved ones who have died in story and waiata/song, those gathered celebrate being together by feasting on kai/food harvested from the gardens, forests, rivers and sea of the whenua before the deepest cold set in. A third aspect of the hui is planning for the future — anticipating the Spring planting of crops, preparing for the health and security of the community, discussing the furthering of relationships in this land and beyond.

The threefold focus of the Matariki Tradition — remembering the past, celebrating the present and planning for the future — is the basis of our national celebration. It makes sense to pause and let the stars remind us of our reliance on Earth's seasons. We can be dissociated from our dependence on Earth in daily life — we think more of the supermarket as a food “producer” than gardens, farms, orchards and oceans. Or, we turn on the light and can work indoors — even when it's pitch black outside. But Matariki is an opportunity to focus our reliance on and responsibility towards Earth and Earth's community once again and to think about our relationship with the Divine source of all creation.

It's taken us a long time to enculturate the celebration of Christmas in summer here. Even though there is no mention of winter, cold or snow in the Gospel stories of Jesus's birth, we kept the customs and images that European Christians developed for the northern hemisphere mid-winter Christmas. Maybe Matariki will develop into our mid-winter celebration when we gather to remember with love and gratitude those we've lost from our family, neighbourhoods and country and whose lives and spirits enriched our communities. When we celebrate gratefully the harvests of food and the harvests of friendship and love. And when we critically examine and plan for the health and security of all people and life in Aotearoa. As the star guided the magi to Bethlehem and the new life of Christ Jesus, Matariki might become our reminder to recommit to developing life, gratitude and love in Aotearoa.

We thank all the contributors to this issue for sharing their writing, art and craft. They have given us a feast of reading and reflection.

And as is our custom, our last words are of blessing.



Moral Courage and Optimism

DANIEL ELLSBERG DIED last month. He stood out as a man of conscience and courage when he leaked the Pentagon Papers in 1971 that showed the United States government was lying about the catastrophic progress of the Vietnam war. At the time his actions were described as traitorous by those who had something to hide. He was charged with violating the Espionage Act but these charges were dropped when government misconduct was revealed.

Daniel then turned his attention to the aversion of nuclear war. In an interview with the *New York Times* just months before his death he said: "My work of the past 40 years to avert the prospects of nuclear war has little to show for it. But I wanted to say that I could think of no better way to use my time, and that as I face the end of my life, I feel joy and gratitude."

I think he is right. A life of activism doesn't guarantee success in its objectives, but without a clear moral purpose and the courage to act it is difficult to see how we can make change for the better, even if the job remains unfinished.

In Aotearoa, we have our general election in October. I think we need Daniel Ellsberg's sense of optimism and moral courage as we consider how we will vote. What are we looking for in those we elect? I find myself open to the prospect of voting differently this time.

I think the big ticket issues for this election relate to the care we take with one another. This means well-funded health, housing and education services and a social delivery system that supports the vulnerable. This will require fairer and different taxation from now. Which of the parties will be brave enough to talk about tax increases or a change in our tax settings?

Can we look at the environmental challenges and agree that we all need to take responsibility? Care of the environment is not only the responsibility of the farming community but all of us who use cars more than we need

to. The impact of the cyclone has been a wake-up call this year — but we've had plenty of other indications that all is not well. We can't keep saying these are one-in-120-year events when we have had several in the last five years.

Who is brave enough to campaign on reducing poverty? This can be an unattractive narrative, especially if we think that people have to be more ambitious and self-reliant. If the government needed to set the Covid wage subsidy at \$586 for a full-time worker, then surely this should also be where benefit levels are set?

Will we see a maturity — insight and knowledge — in the way parties address Te Tiriti issues, or will the marginalisation of Māori be used as a vote-winner? Will the older generations take heed of the enthusiastic take-up of te reo among the younger population?

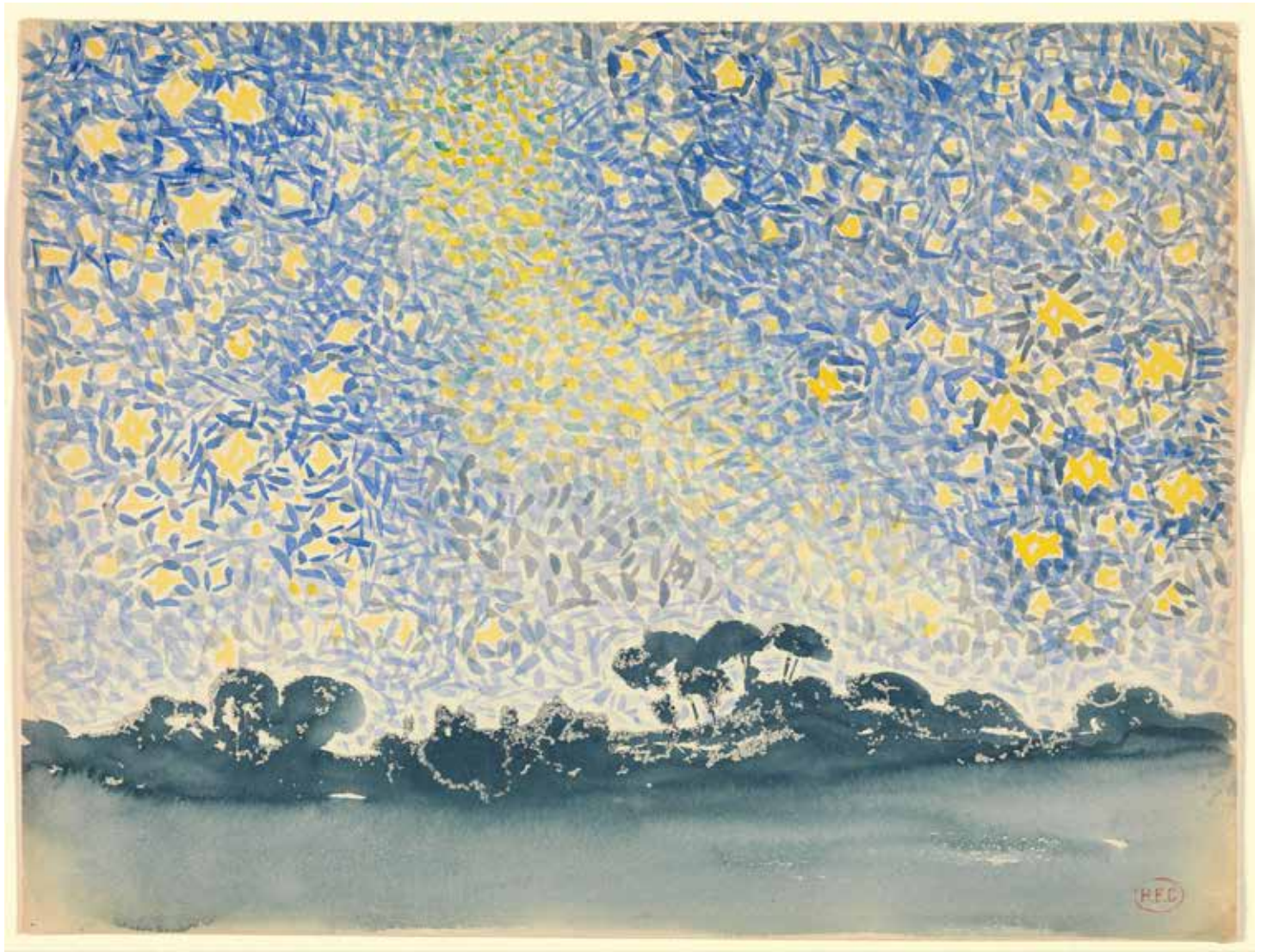
Who can best demonstrate the policy settings necessary for our ongoing economic prosperity? Do we think business operates with unnecessary constraint making it difficult for genuine risk-takers to prosper? Are we going to make it easier for young people to house themselves?

We are fortunate to live in a society which allows for dissent — we can vehemently disagree with others and still go about our business. We are free to question authority, to inform ourselves and to follow our consciences. This freedom is a precious asset; using it for the common good is a responsibility of our citizenship. Long may it continue. ✦

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Patrick Snedden works with Odyssey House in drug rehabilitation and with Manaiaakalani in education in Tāmaki Makaurau.





Exploring the Biblical Heavens

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Mary Betz discusses how in biblical times people found revelations of God's relationship with creation in the stars.

The Ancient Cosmos

IMAGINE WE BELONG to an ancient Semitic people and live sometime between 1000 BCE and 150 CE, roughly the time in which the Scriptures were written.

We share our earth with plants, animals, land and water, all created by God. Our earth is flat and enclosed in a dome called the firmament, on whose ceiling the heavenly bodies — sun, moon and stars — move according to times and seasons. God created these heavens, too, whose dome has windows through which rain, snow, frost, hail and dew can descend. On the other side of the dome is the heaven above the heavens, where God is enthroned. Above this highest heaven are the chaotic waters of the cosmos which surround the earth, and which God pushed back at creation.

Stars and Heavens in Scripture

The Scriptures make hundreds of references to the stars and heavens, many of which attempt to explain how and why the stars and heavens exist, and what they signify. Genesis, Psalms, Jeremiah and Wisdom, for example, tell us the heavenly bodies give light to day and night, and

command the seasons. In Genesis God creates the heavens and in Psalm 147, God numbers the stars and calls them each by name.

Demonstrate God's Power

In Job 9:8-9 the heavens demonstrate power no one has but God:

"The sun, at God's command, forbears to rise, and on the stars God sets a seal. God and no other stretched out the skies, and trampled the sea's tall waves. The Bear [Big and Little Dipper], Orion too, are of God's making, the Pleiades [Matariki] and the Mansions of the South [southern constellations]."

Show God's Emotions

The heavens reveal God's emotions. They bend, move or shake when God is angry, especially against injustice. In Judges, the heavens roll up like a scroll; in Isaiah 13:13 God shakes the heavens in anger; in Jeremiah

51:16 a tumult of water pours from the heavens when God thunders. In 2 Samuel 22: 8ff King David remembers:

“The foundations of the heavens trembled
they quivered because God was angry ...
God bent the heavens and came down.”

In the Psalms and Isaiah, the heavens also show God’s care for humanity. In Isaiah 40:22: “God stretched out the heavens like a cloth, spread them like a tent for humans to live in.”

Give Witness

Like earth, the heavens are called upon to be witnesses to the presence and actions of God and humanity.

Psalms 96:12-13:

“Let the heavens be glad, let the earth rejoice,
let the sea thunder and all that it holds,
let the fields exult and all that is in them,
let all the woodland trees
cry out for joy,
at the presence of God.”

In Jeremiah 2:12 the heavens are called upon to express horror at the oppression and corruption of the people of Judah:

“You heavens, stand aghast at this,
stand stupefied, stand utterly appalled.”

Open to God’s Presence

The heavens open for visions or manifestations of God. In Genesis 28:12, the heavens are pierced by a ladder of angels in Jacob’s dream. In Ezekiel 1:1 heaven opens for Ezekiel to see a vision of God, and in all four Gospels the heavens part for the Spirit to descend on Jesus at Baptism. In the Acts of the Apostles the heavens are thrown open so that Stephen can see a vision.

Show Signs of the Day of God

In both Old and New Testaments prophetic oracles and apocalyptic writings, about the coming of the “day of God”, are full of references to signs in the stars and heavens. Isaiah 13:10 is an oracle against Babylon:

“For the stars of the sky and Orion shall not let their lights shine;
the sun shall be dark when it rises,
and the moon not shed her light.”

The apocalyptic writings in Ezekiel, Joel, Daniel, Mark, Luke, Matthew and Revelation all warn that the stars will be darkened, fall or be disturbed. In Matthew 24:29 “the sun will be darkened, the moon will lose its brightness, the stars will fall from the sky and the powers of heaven will be shaken.” But these signs also herald coming restoration. In Isaiah, God will create new heavens and a new earth, and in 2 Peter, after the sky vanishes in flames and the earth is burnt, God will bring about eschatological renewal.

Starlike Qualities

Angels and humans, both good and bad, are likened to stars. In Daniel 12:3 those who instruct others in virtue will shine as brightly as the stars. On the other hand, in Judges 19 the wicked are like stars “wandered”

Matthew 2:2ff chronicles the journey of wise men from the east who follow a rising star signifying that ruler’s birth.

Stars and Heavens in the 21st Century

Our cosmology today is vastly different from that of ancient biblical writers. The ancients could see only 6,000 stars, while today’s astronomers estimate there may be over 200 billion trillion stars. In contrast to a domed, flat earth, we know Earth as a planet revolving around a sun which is one of 100,000 to 400,000 billion stars in our Milky Way galaxy — itself one of perhaps two trillion galaxies in the universe.

Curiously, we retain ways of speaking that the ancients would recognise. We speak of God in heaven and going to heaven after death. We may look to the sky or raise our arms to “heaven” when we pray. We sometimes speak of dead loved ones as angels or stars in the sky.

Science points to the origins of

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**“God stretched out the heavens like a cloth,
spread them like a tent for humans to live in.”**

.....

from their courses, and in Jude 13 false teachers are like falling stars (or angels) in an eternity of black darkness. In Revelation 1:20 the seven stars are angels of the seven churches Jesus holds in his right hand, but in Rev 9:1 a star falling from heaven symbolises a fallen angel.

God’s Promises

Finally, the stars are signs of God’s promises. In Genesis 15:5 Abram is challenged to count the stars, if he can, for his descendants will be even more numerous — a promise which echoes down through the Scriptures. Numbers 24:17 heralds the coming of “a star of Jacob” who will be a ruler.

our solar system in the dust of stars which exploded billions of years ago: in faith language — God is continually re-creating the universe. Gazing at the stars evokes infinite wonder and awe at the cosmic forces which form and re-form our galaxies with their stars, planets, nebulae, black holes — and the mysterious dark matter which seems to comprise 90 per cent of our universe. Within this magnificent incomprehensibility, we are privileged to exist, in communion with all creation and its ultimate source whom we call God. ✧

Landscape with Stars by Henri-Edmond Cross (Henri-Edmond Delacroix) Robert Lehman Collection, 1975 The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Mary Betz is a writer with a background in ecology, theology, justice and peace and a proud grandmother. She is grateful for the cooperation of her husband Peter Hassan in this article.





Matariki in the Southern Hemisphere

Claire Ryan tells how starwatchers in different parts of the Southern Hemisphere have related to the star cluster we call Matariki.

AS A CHILD I puzzled over the calendar. Why did we celebrate New Year in the middle of summer? Surely it made more sense to do so when spring was on the way, not autumn? Then our teacher told us that people from the north had brought their calendar to us. So, could I now blame my ancestors for the calendar that did not fit our seasons? Before they left their land, their language and their loved ones forever, they celebrated New Year in winter, when the Pleiades rose at night.

It is not surprising that people from the South also developed calendars based on observations of our own skies and our own seasons. It is equally not surprising that the fuzzy blob of stars we know as Matariki, an open star cluster clearly visible on a clear winter's morning, should play an important part of that calendar since it rises so close to winter solstice.

Peruvian Tradition

In Peru, the seven stars are known as *Qullqa* (the storehouse). Their rising over Cusco marks the start of the Quechuan religious festival *Quyllu Rit'i* (bright white snow) associated with the upcoming harvest and the new year. In many Andean cultures, the stars we know as Matariki are associated with abundance because they rise each year at harvest time.

Easter Island Tradition

The discovery of a Rapanui Rock Calendar and archaeological research shows how closely Easter Islanders followed both the Pleiades (which they called Ariki Mau, represented by a turtle) and nearby bright orange star Aldebaran (easy to see here, too). Archeologists found six boulders containing a model of Ariki Mau. There is an old story told of a god, with the assistance of Aldebaran and Sirius, breaking a bright star into six pieces, similar to the stories told by some iwi here.

Rarotongan Story

In Rarotonga, the name Matariki is also used. Given the geographical position of the islands, 21 degrees south, they had the best of both worlds (or is that hemispheres?).

The people marked the winter dawn rising of Matariki as a sign that the spirits of the year were departing.

The summer dusk rising of Matariki was the start of “extravagant rejoicing”. Here, too, is the story of the god Tane, hunting Matariki with his crafty cronies Mere (Sirius) and Aumea (Aldebaran). Matariki hid in a stream. Mere drained it, so Matariki fled. Tane was so frustrated about Matariki’s escape that he threw Aumea at it — smashing Matariki into pieces. That is why Aumea now regretfully follows Matariki.

Samoa Tradition

In Samoa, the cluster is known as *Matali'i* or *Li'i*, the eyes of the chiefs. It was a time for fishing the annelid worm, a delicacy known as *palolo*, which only emerges from coral reefs for two or three days. This was historically marked by great celebrations, a dedicated time for families and feasting. This tended to be in October-November, more of a northern time, perhaps because Samoa is only 13 degrees south of the equator.

Interestingly, however, the traditional Samoan name for June was *Palolomanu*, July *Palolomua*, and August *Palolomuli*, suggesting an old wintry link to the highly-prized food.

Australian Aboriginal Stories

Finally, there are many links to the

seven sisters in the indigenous cultures of Australia. While there are variations, the underlying theme is constant: a story of forbidden pursuit, strong desire, a daring escape, magic and the everlasting bonds with family represented by close-knit sisters who stay together and rescue each other.

One dreamtime story is that the seven sisters were sky people who came to earth and were chased by men — but they beat the men with their digging sticks and escaped. In another version, they were pursued by the shape-shifter Yurlu in the form of a snake. The sisters threw the snake away and it flew to the horizon. They escaped to the sky where they became stars.

Māori Stories

Long ago, astronomical knowledge gave rise to all these stories. I shared some of the Matariki stories of Aotearoa in *Tui Motu* last year.

“Matariki” means “eyes of god” and may refer to the *pūrakau* or story of *Tāwhirimātea*, the god of wind and weather, who when he discovered that his siblings had separated his parents *Ranginui* and *Papatūānuku*, tore out his eyes and threw them, in rage, into the sky, landing on his father’s chest where they remain, preserved and protected forever.

Another *pūrakau* is that the brightest star in the cluster is the *whaea* or mother, surrounded by her family.

As agriculturalists, Māori have planned their years by the rising of stars in the morning. The “heliacal rising” (meaning “becoming visible just before sunrise”) of Matariki heralds the New Year, just as it does in cultures across the Southern Hemisphere, as the time when the short wintry days will start to become longer.

Not all iwi celebrate at the same time, some beginning on the first new moon or full moon after Matariki rises

and some celebrating *Puanga* (the star *Rigel* in the constellation *Orion*) where that star is more visible than *Matariki*. (See: Claire Ryan “Matariki ABC” *TM* June 2022).

Remember, Celebrate, Resolve

As we mark Matariki this year, maybe you and your *whānau* could discover and share the Matariki stories of your *tūpuna*/ancestors, grandparents, be they from the north or the south.

As you spot these glowing little stars in their watch, shining with gladness, maybe you and your *whānau* could also ask: “How do we bring the gladness of spring to others?” ✦



Finding Matariki:

At 6 am on 14 July Matariki will rise north-east. A straight line between planet Jupiter/Hine-i-tiwaka and Marama/the Moon will reveal the open cluster two-thirds of the way down. Alternatively, a straight line to the left of Orion’s Belt Tauru (the base of the pot) leads directly to Matariki.

Artwork: *Matariki* by Jane Riley ©
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Claire Ryan is a District Court Judge, a Scripture scholar, astronomer and coach, adjudicator and support of the World Schools’ Debating Championships.



LIVING SPIRITUALITY WITH THE SEASONS

Anton Spelman *reflects on spirituality that develops from understanding the interconnectedness of all things.*

I WASN'T BROUGHT UP with Matariki but when I first encountered it I saw its importance as a way to understand how we can engage with the “whole” world from the perspective of Te Ao Māori. What is wondrous is that this approach deals with the scientific complexity of a Western view of the night sky in ways that take us further and deeper into the meaning of it all.

When we approach Matariki from the perspective of Te Ao Māori, we realise the strategic importance of the change in season — from autumn to winter at this point in the year. Gardeners among us will especially appreciate the seasonal changes: the fruit is picked, the leaves have fallen, the vegetable garden assumes a smaller presence as the food from the summer months has matured and has been harvested.

OUR INTERCONNECTEDNESS

The focus of our gardening experiences seem to relate just to us, but we can in fact contextualise them on a grand scale, enabling us to locate ourselves and our relationships in a variety of places within the world's complex infrastructure. Our experience of the vastness of our interconnectedness derives from who we are.

INTERRELATIONSHIP OF ALL

These days I think of that interconnectedness in terms of a worldview such as Te Ao Māori. I have spent nearly half a lifetime trying to understand cultural difference and how our differing worldviews affect the way we relate to one another. When I tell people this, there's sometimes a touch of criticism or dismay in their response. They say something like: “Isn't it a shame that you couldn't find something more practical to do with your life, something that would be helpful to people and communities?” I bite my tongue — I've learned that there's a strong relationship between how we manage our differing worldviews and how we manage for the common good.

As part of our response to the environmental crisis, we are moving to a more comfortable acceptance of the interconnectedness of everything in the world we live in and beyond. Some worldviews handle this better than others.

INFLUENCE OF WORLDVIEW

We know that worldviews are pragmatic guides that help us acquire knowledge to live well. We often behave as if our worldview represents the ultimate truth on the fundamentals of life and, therefore, should never change. We draw confidence from this (wrongly) and believe we can know, with certainty, about the origin of our world and how it works. This can result in competitive behaviour and the wielding of power, for example, in the strategic implementation of British imperialism in the early 19th century, followed by the roll-out of the colonisation process in Aotearoa. Our inheritance from all this is Western worldview values embedded throughout the infrastructure of central and local government.

In the history of Aotearoa from the time of settlement, our collective inability to deal with differences in our various worldviews has retarded the development of proper relationships throughout our society. To this day,

it is unclear where we could go to find the type of worldview analysis that is needed to properly engage and resolve some of these matters. The longer we tolerate this gap, the more entrenched becomes the domination of a Western worldview in our public life.

Many people are working to change this. There have always been lots of little fires burning all over the country to address the question of how we can deal with worldview difference. Unfortunately, a lot of this work is done in isolated groups without the benefit of widespread collegial support. This limits the effectiveness of many initiatives and sometimes leads to failure.

The notion that everything in the world is related to everything else is, of course, a baseline position in Te Ao Māori. Currently there is fresh impetus coming from Tangata Tiriti who have engaged the issue from the perspective of a relationships philosophy that is designed to save humanity from extinction.

Some argue (incorrectly) that there is a strong match between the two worldviews on this question. However, if this line of thinking is





seemed more committed to litigating his position or remaining in disagreement with one another rather than coming to a shared view on church business. He asked them to take their discussions to a higher level of principles and values. When they engaged the issues between them in this way, Francis observed with amazement the emergence of very creative solutions under the guidance of the Spirit.

When I was young I had always heard the saying of Jesus: “I am the way the truth and the life” (Jn 14:6) as a kind of authoritarian ultimatum — either it was his way or the highway. It is, therefore, a huge relief to be able to apply worldview difference methodology to the text and to revisit such an important statement. Rather than seeing this as a code of compliance, I am now able to describe the world in terms of an encounter with the presence of God — God present throughout the universe in all its different parts.

When we approach the universe relationally and understand God’s presence in the whole of the natural order, we come to see God in the same way that we see the world around us.

There are many significant implications of this way of thinking for current practice in the Christian Churches. If we can get comfortable not being the focal point of God’s presence in the world, our witness will be more about openness towards God as God continues to be.

Also, I am pleased to be able to reconnect with the phrase “I am making all things new” (Rev 21:5) and to experience the joy of knowing that this is how God can be present in each one of us. For me at least, understanding God in this way is directly linked to the workings of Matariki. What a gift to the people of Aotearoa! ✦

Hands of Comfort: Connections Bring Life by Melani Pyke © Used with permission www.melpyke.com

AS ... OUR RESPONSE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS, WE ARE MOVING TO A MORE COMFORTABLE ACCEPTANCE OF THE INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF EVERYTHING.

pursued, it becomes another attempt to assimilate a Māori perspective within the mainstream. The Western approach to this question relates to knowledge of the world and its different segments. If we look at this through the lens of Te Ao Māori, we see that it is primarily not about knowledge. It is about being and we approach this via the mechanism of whakapapa. It is true that there are relationship philosophies operating throughout both processes. However,

they work differently in each world.

UNDERSTANDING GOD’S PRESENCE

In his book *Dare to Dream*, Pope Francis proposed a new approach to deal with discussions between warring Cardinals, each of whom

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BUILDING TRUST

Neil Darragh *discusses the need for truth in society and that promoting truth and trust is the mission of the Church.*

THE CHRISTIAN CHURCHES today find themselves in unfamiliar but fertile new territory in the politics of today's pluralist democracies. In the past, organized Christianity's relationship with political rulers has varied from living under persecution to living in compromised collusion with Christian rulers. The growth of pluralist democracies in the 20th century has opened up new possibilities for the Churches'

participation in the wider society, participation with minimum persecution and minimum collusion. Today in the 21st century, Christian Churches are still in the early stages of revising their mission in this new kind of society.

DEMOCRATIC FAITH

Christians are committed by their biblical foundations to the evolving realm/reign of God. At a practical level, this means being committed

to the good functioning of society, the wellbeing of people and planet. The opportunity for contributing to this realm of God is much greater in pluralist democracies than it ever was in conditions of persecution or collusion.

In these circumstances, Christians are called to what North American theologian Jonathan S Kahn calls a "democratic faith". The practice of democratic faith includes the ability to bring together the different faith-

based commitments that coexist and often compete in a democratic society. This is a faith that drives the risky work of building trust within that internally diverse society.

Today, trust-building has become an important mission objective for faith communities and Christian Churches. Without trust, democratic societies are liable to break down into rules and mechanisms for more enforced accountability, more spying on one another, more demands that someone be punished, more secret police, more lying and more control of information by populist dictators who propose themselves as solutions to this breakdown.

DEMOCRACY UNDER THREAT

Yet today, democracy itself is under threat. Telling the truth, building trust, has become more important than in earlier centuries because of the way information can spread easily and rapidly through modern communications media. The simple lie can spread widely, very quickly. False information, disinformation, and misinformation! Information is everywhere and easily accessed. But whose information can we trust?

In the April issue (TM Issue 280, 2023), Peter Healy alerted us to the lies and cover-ups, the “bright green lies” and “green-washing”, that continue to sacrifice people and places in the name of industrial growth and progress. And in that same issue, Ann Hassan’s interview with Sanjana Hattotuwa calls our attention to the recent and exponential growth of disinformation networks in Aotearoa New Zealand. Governments have perhaps been more aware of the necessity of trust in democratic societies than the Churches. In Aotearoa New Zealand, recent policy documents (eg, *The New Zealand Public Workforce Strategy 2020-2025*; and *The Ministry of Health Annual Report 2020-21*) have acknowledged and underlined the need for trust in government. Trust is usually understood here to mean that the actions of government departments should be transparent, accountable and responsive to public participation. The New

Zealand Treasury’s Living Standards Framework names trust as one of the 10 key components of well-being.

PERSONAL BETRAYAL

On a more personal scale, simply lying about other people, “outing” and “cancelling” other people have come to be readily believed even if there is no evidence for the truth of an allegation. I know at least two people who are very good at lying (and a number of others who try it but are not very good at it). At first encounter it is a shock to meet people who treat lying as something normal. They probably tell the truth sometimes, perhaps often, but after a while, it’s simpler just not to trust anything they say. One lie is covered by another lie. Trust disappears.

Most of us have at some time experienced betrayal by people we trusted. Some acts of betrayal are very hard to forgive and reconciliation

CHRISTIANS ARE CONCERNED ... WITH BUILDING TRUST IN SOCIETY WHERE THE TRUTH, TRUST IN ONE ANOTHER, OUR PUBLIC AND CIVIL INSTITUTIONS, HAS DIMINISHED.

might not be possible. Judas’s betrayal of Jesus may have been one of these. Or at least Judas saw it so.

The call to Christians, though, is that even if a particular betrayal of trust may never be restored, it should not prevent us from continuing to build trust in our other relationships. So trust-building continues with other people, in other places, and in other ways.

BUILDING TRUST IN SOCIETY

Democratic faith, however, goes beyond the interpersonal level.

Christians in the modern world are not concerned with just telling the truth ourselves, but also with building trust in society where the truth is not expected and where trust

in one another and our public and civil institutions has diminished.

Christian Churches and organisations are presented today with a new challenge, that is, to promote truth and trust in our societies.

Regrettably, the Churches are not innocent here. They do not begin from a neutral platform. The failure to protect children and vulnerable people from abusers, and especially the attempt by some church leaders to cover up the abuses, means that the Churches begin from behind the starting line. More than that, the task of being transparent, accountable and responsive to public participation is only very slowly becoming important in church policy and practice.

TRUTH BUILDS TRUST

Organisations which rely upon trust for their good functioning or even for their existence, are particularly vulnerable to the temptation of lying. Churches are especially reliant on trusted leadership. If that fails, then their mission fails and their very existence comes under threat.

However important it may be to repair this failure through “safeguarding” measures and however important it may be to restore trust within the Churches themselves, this should not turn us in upon ourselves and leave us there.

Building trust and promoting truth-telling in our whole society is still a vital element in the mission of the Church. Yet there is no room for naivety here. Only wisdom will do. And the old methods of discernment — including cooperation, negotiation, and opposition — still apply in the practice of a democratic faith. A democratic faith seeks to bring together the varied voices of our society. What has changed is the importance of this practice in the context of the exponential growth of disinformation and lies. ✠

Mass (a liturgical-inspired painting full of passion) by Neil McBride © Used with permission www.neilmcbrideart.co.uk

Neil Darragh is a pastor and theologian in Tāmaki Makaurau. He is a member of the CIT theological research group. His latest book is *But What Is the Church For?* (2022).





SYNODALITY IS CONTINUING THE COUNCIL

Massimo Faggioli warns against unrealistic and impatient expectations of Pope Francis's project to reform the Church.

WE ARE NOW just a few months away from the October 2023 assembly of the Synod on the "synodal process". A second assembly is scheduled for October 2024. This is a momentous time in the life of the Church and the expectations of many Catholics are very high. Looking back from an historical perspective, when we try to figure out such expectations for the synodal process and, in the long run, synodality, an immediate and natural term of comparison is the Second Vatican Council.

Joan Chittister, the well-known Benedictine Sister and author, addressed exactly this issue recently. She looked at the relationship between synodality and Vatican II, not in theological language or concepts, but in terms of results.

The title of the article — "Nothing really changed after Vatican II. But synodality may make a difference" — captures the argument Chittister tries to make. "Whatever changes the people had wanted from the 1962-

65 Second Vatican Council were, it seemed, formless, silent, lost in the bustle of a busy Church frozen in a medieval mind. Instead, after 400 years without a council of reform, the kinds of changes the people had expected from this council lay yet in Rome, drying in wet ink there and largely ignored here," Chittister says.

Synodality: the Vehicle that Finally Delivers?

She blames John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and the bishops for the failure to implement Vatican II, but argues that the undermining of the Council started even before these two popes began making episcopal appointments: The bishops from around the world who attended Vatican II voted yes for all of its documents, but once back on home soil, many simply ignored them. Few, if any, priests taught the council documents to their congregations. And few if any priests admitted that they themselves had not bothered

to read the documents. Oh, a few Churches redesigned their confession boxes and a few more took down the altar rails, but really, other than that and the move to the vernacular in all liturgical events — nothing much did happen. Most of the changes were window dressing.

But Chittister says synodality may be the vehicle that finally brings about all the changes that Vatican II promised but never delivered. This time, Pope Francis is having the faithful themselves become part of the agenda-making process before the synod even convenes. The laity has been invited into the intellectual theology of the Church.

This time, the laity themselves have been deemed to determine what topics must be considered — married priests, genderism, marriage theology, equality, women priests, whatever. They will be allowed to speak to what 99 per cent of the Church rather than the 1 per cent, its clerics, allow to be heard.

Mistaken Historically and Theologically

I have the greatest respect for Joan Chittister. Not many have done what she has done to keep the trajectories of Vatican II alive. She has changed a lot of lives for the better.

Chittister makes a number of valid points: the disappointments about ecumenism, the dismissal of the role of women in the Church, the absence of lay ministerial life in many parishes.

Much of this is painfully true in many places. At the same time, her reading of Vatican II (at least as she describes it in her latest article) is profoundly mistaken and misleading from both an historical and theological point of view.

This carries serious risks as we approach a key moment in the "synodal process".

Council Did Change Catholicism

Historically, the Council did change Catholicism, despite the shortcomings in its implementation.

It's a complicated picture, and one that is still being drawn: what worked and did not work on a global scale; different stages in the council's reception in different parts of the world (or even in the same country); failures that cannot be attributed solely to the papacy or the clergy; the time span needed to measure the effects of a council like Vatican II.

The widespread impression from the Anglo-American point of view is that, while Vatican II changed Catholicism's relationship with other Christian denominations, world religions and the secular world, it failed to fundamentally change the Church's internal dynamics and institutional structures of power.

Council Changed Church Theologically

But Vatican II also changed the Church internally, from a theological point of view, in ways that we now often minimise or take for granted.

The question is how synodality can pick up the thread of Vatican II, together with hierarchical and collegial dimensions in the life of the Church.

A synodal Church will redefine those hierarchical and the collegial

aspects, not remove them.

This renewed form of Catholicism is still in part amorphous. It is taking shape before our very eyes, and there is no clear canonical or ecclesiological script for us to follow. But we know that there is a compass for this journey, and it is the Second Vatican Council — not just what its documents said (or failed to say), but also what the reception of Vatican II has taught us from 1962 right up to our own day.

Expectations of Synodality

To any given reading of what happened at Vatican II and its effects corresponds a set of expectations from synodality.

Synodality can change the Church, but not overnight.

The Synod assembly next October — the first of the two on synodality — is not likely to make any ground-breaking decisions. We must be prepared for the long haul. In a Church that has become an integral part of the global media show business, managing expectations has become much more important than before.

Discernment is needed for expectations, too, and this is much more difficult because their dynamics are very different from those of a spiritual conversation in a synodal gathering.

The expectations surrounding

WE KNOW THAT THERE IS A COMPASS FOR THIS JOURNEY — THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL — NOT JUST WHAT ITS DOCUMENTS SAID (OR FAILED TO SAY), BUT ALSO WHAT THE RECEPTION OF VATICAN II HAS TAUGHT US FROM 1962 RIGHT UP TO OUR OWN DAY.

Those who see the Council as a disappointment or a failed revolution are likely to look for a reenactment of that revolution. But that is even more impossible today than it was back then.

On the opposite side, those who — with a certain amount of *schadenfreude* — see the present situation of the Church in the secularised West as evidence of the failure of Vatican II, are likely to grab this opportunity to try and abrogate the developments of conciliar teaching, beginning with the liturgical reform.

Preparing for the Long Haul

If we see the Council as a failure, and synodality as a chance to repair that failure (or worse, to avenge it), then we are bound to fail for sure.

synodality are a delicate issue for another reason. When John XXIII died in June 1963, the cardinals elected Paul VI precisely because he was in favour of continuing and completing John's Council.

But if too many of the current cardinal-electors are frightened or alarmed by the Synod on synodality, they may vote for someone at the next conclave who is eager to bring Francis's project to a halt. ✎

Joan Chittister Article:

www.tinyurl.com/4kbmcx7

Massimo Faggioli's Full Article:

www.tinyurl.com/yta9d8wz

Massimo Faggioli is a Professor of Theology and Religious Studies at Villanova University, USA. His latest book is *The Oxford Handbook of Vatican II* (2023).



A black and white photograph showing a person's hands holding a small, light-colored teddy bear. The person is wearing a dark jacket and jeans. The background is dark and out of focus, suggesting an outdoor setting with some foliage.

Human Dignity Is Not for Sale

Ann Gilroy discusses the implications of the *Global Report of the Trafficking in Persons 2022*.

30 JULY IS World Day against Trafficking in Persons — an industry Pope Francis described as a “scourge against human dignity”. In 2015 he challenged the world: “each, according to his or her own responsibilities, is called to combat modern forms of enslavement. From every people, culture and religion, let us join our forces.” And there is a concerted effort to stop trafficking and slavery by the United Nations, individual governments, NGOs, Churches and many other groups — but it’s not enough.

Measuring Achievement of Targets

The United Nations has three Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) that include multiple targets to eradicate trafficking, notably under SDGs 5, 8 and 16 on gender equality, decent work and justice. But the *Global Report of the Trafficking in Persons 2022*, published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in January 2023, states it “captures our world at a fragile tipping point”.

The Goals are to be achieved by 2030 but we’re falling behind in meeting the anti-trafficking targets.

True, there appear to be gains

— in 2022, for the first time in the 20 years the UN has collected data, the number of persons trafficked decreased. But are the strategies and global cooperation at government level shutting down trafficking? The report says: “No”.

Pandemic Drained Resources

“Pandemic-related restrictions on movement and business operations may have at least temporarily reduced some forms of trafficking, including trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and cross-border trafficking. Nonetheless, the decreases in detected victims have largely been registered in low and middle-income countries — countries with justice, social and health systems that have struggled to cope with Covid and its fallout and may not have the resources to respond to trafficking challenges.”

Crises Escalating Trafficking Risks

“As law enforcement and public services were under increasing strain, pandemic restrictions may have also driven some forms of trafficking to more hidden locations, potentially increasing the dangers to victims and making it less likely they could come to the attention of the authorities.”

Overall, there is little evidence to suggest that the threat of this crime has diminished with the drop in detected victims, and many reasons to fear that Covid, crises, conflicts and the climate emergency are escalating trafficking risks.”

Hannah Ellis-Petersen and Ahmer Khan reported in the *Guardian* in June that in almost every village in the Sundarbans, West Bengal — an area in India regularly affected by destructive cyclones — there are girls, and sometimes boys, who have been abducted and trafficked. Some managed to escape but at least half are still missing.

The recurrent climate disasters in the area have left the people poorer than ever. “Into that vacuum of vulnerability, human traffickers have come in their droves, luring people with promises of jobs, marriages or simply better living standards.

Once trapped, the victims are mostly forced into sex work or bonded labour, sold as brides or even used for organ and blood trafficking.”

Convictions for Trafficking Down

The findings of the *Global Report* suggest that “our institutions are too often failing to detect and protect

trafficking victims, and to give them justice. The global slowdown in the number of convictions for trafficking in persons – decreasing since 2017 – further accelerated during the pandemic, falling in 2020 by an alarming 27 per cent over the previous year.”

Victims Rescuing Themselves

“More concerning still, a review of adjudicated trafficking cases found that most victims rescue themselves – instead of being proactively identified, they escaped exploitation by coming forward on their own.

The analysis also found girls and women are three times more likely to suffer explicit or extreme violence during trafficking compared to boys and men, and children overall are two times more likely to be subjected to violence than adults.”

Traffickers Prey on Vulnerable

“Traffickers prey upon the most vulnerable. Many millions of people have been left behind as crises have reversed hard-won development gains and resulted in record displacement. Deprived of opportunity, social protection and other support, women, children and men in every part of the world are being left at the mercy of traffickers.”

The Report notes that traffickers are finding new ways to circumvent countries’ protective measures and pivot to take advantage of the vulnerable in crisis situations.

Labour Trafficking in Aotearoa

New Zealand cannot afford to be complacent – a recent *Sunday TVNZ* programme highlighted cases of modern slavery and trafficking in Aotearoa. We need to be alert to cross-border trafficking for labour.

We have a labour shortage, exacerbated by the pandemic, that is being filled by overseas workers. The government started new visa schemes designed to reduce exploitation, such as the Accredited Employer Work Visa (AEWV) scheme.

These, at least, clearly outline the responsibilities of employers and workers and provide pathways for workers to get help if they are being exploited. They also provide

immigration and police tools for stopping the offending.

But RNZ reported in June that over 100 Chinese workers who arrived on the AEWV scheme were left jobless and without pay. This indicates the vigilance required by Immigration New Zealand (INZ) to prevent workers from being defrauded and abused by traffickers posing as labour export agents and exploitative employers.

The then Minister of Immigration Michael Wood emphasised the power the community has to stop such corruption continuing. “The ‘key thing’ is giving affected workers the confidence to come forward ... We’ve got to also make sure that

the responsibility on businesses to take action if they become aware of modern slavery or worker exploitation.

Need to Include Sex Slavery

One area of slavery that is not included in the Act is in-country sex slavery – of New Zealanders within New Zealand. Sex slavery is when somebody forces or coerces another person to sell sex and have somebody else profit from it.

Dr Natalie Thorburn, a researcher of sex slavery in Aotearoa, strongly disagrees with the Minister of Immigration that there is already legislation for prosecuting offenders in the Crimes Act.

Thorburn says that “cases of

“Each, according to his or her own responsibilities, is called to combat modern forms of enslavement. From every people, culture and religion, let us join our forces.”

through our community networks, through our community leaders, we give these people the confidence that it’s OK to come forward if you’re being exploited; the system is here to help you.” The Migrant Exploitation Protection Work Visa (MEPV) is in place to enable migrant workers to leave exploitative employment situations and remain to work in this country.

Proposed Modern Slavery Act

And the government is working on legislating a Modern Slavery Act, which was to be passed before the General Election this year. It was in the portfolio of the Minister of Immigration Michael Wood who has resigned. We need to encourage the new Minister Andrew Little to give this work priority.

This proposed Modern Slavery Act focuses on migrant labour, putting

sexual exploitation rarely go to court and when they do the toughest penalties are rarely used ... Sex slavery is not an industrial issue, nor is it a sex work issue.”

It belongs in a Modern Slavery Act and addressed there would give urgency to identifying and stopping this kind of offending. We do not want sex slavery continuing in New Zealand.

The Global Report called on the world to do better – and we can, together. We need to keep the fire alight under this issue: become informed, keep our eyes and minds open and give moral support to those working at the coalface to preserve universal human dignity.✦

Read Report: www.tinyurl.com/nmccpvak
Watch: www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/sunday

Image by AnnintheUK on Shutterstock.com

Ann Gilroy RSJ is the editor of *Tui Motu* magazine. She is a member of Talitha Kum Aotearoa, part of the international movement against the trafficking of people.



When Did You Know?

When did you know you would be a priest?
When did you first hear the call?
I've pondered these questions for 50+ years
and the answers aren't there – even now.

I just know in my heart I've wanted to be:
in the struggling and straggling
of the caravan of faith
journeying with the People of God.

I've touched lives in countless ways
and they've certainly touched mine.
Indelibly.
Serving each other in good times and bad
we've loved fiercely as true lovers do.


I've knelt beside you in the pain of loss
of a partner of 60 years
of twins at their birth
of work and livelihood...

I've smiled with you sharing your news
that you'd found the love of your dreams.

I've witnessed deep moments of passion
and stood between darkness and light
when an argument flared, or despair came to stare
and we prayed it would turn out all right.

You've opened your home to my visits
welcoming me as family;
At school your little ones have been as my own
and I've thrilled to see faith in God lovingly sown.

It's at table I've felt my true purpose
In the presence of the One who calls all;
Holding bread in hands trembling in wonder
at the weightlessness of love
and the weightiness of patience
as I stammer and stutter my way to the Lord.



Knowing I'm known and loved,
though frail and fallen and bruised,
the gift of my life becomes clear.
'Thank you' is all I can utter
while the eyes of my heart release tears.

When did you know you would be a priest?
When did you first hear the call?
The answers don't matter.
The questions aren't real.
My journey in life says it all.

James B Lyons
Priest of the Archdiocese of Wellington
Ordained 2 July 1967

Image by Josh Eckstein on Unsplash



AT HOME WITH MUHAMMAD

**Zain Ali reflects on spirituality
for living well with others.**

I AM ATTENDING a workshop at St Francis Retreat Centre in Auckland. We break for morning tea and I head

outside into the sunshine. It's been raining for almost two weeks; the warm sun and blue sky are a welcome relief. I walk out into the garden area, and notice at its centre a tall palm tree. I pause and take in this magnificent tree with its evergreen fronds. A *hadith*, an anecdote about the prophet Muhammad, comes to mind: a believer is like a palm tree. This *hadith* does not elaborate on why a believer is like a palm tree, it is left to us to fill in the details. Maybe believers should aim to be like a palm tree: upright, strong and resilient — even magnificent.

If we view spirituality as what gives us meaning and purpose, then the palm tree can be seen as a parable. When I was in the Middle East, the palm tree struck me as a miracle. The palm tree thrives in the heat and dryness of the desert where little else grows. It provides shade, and if it is a date palm, it yields delicious fruit. In the unrelenting harshness of the desert, the palm is a source of life, shade and sweetness.

Our world can at times be unrelentingly harsh, and the believer, like the palm, is a source of life, shade and sweetness — not only for



themselves, but for others. This is emphasised in another *hadith* in which Muhammad is reported to have said: “The best among you are those who bring the greatest benefit to others.” A believer is a spiritual oasis.

There are other ways in which we may think about spirituality. I came across a recent article which outlined five spiritual practices that increased well-being. These five practices reminded me of how Muhammad lived his life.

MEDITATION

The first practice is meditation. Studies suggest that meditation helps us to become more self-aware, especially of our feelings and emotions, and this can help us better engage with the world around us. Muhammad, prior to his prophet calling,

spent much time in meditation in the mountains around Makkah.

AWE

The second practice is the experience of awe. We may feel awe while watching a sunrise, or listening to music, or perhaps looking up into the starry night sky. The vastness and timelessness of the geography around Makkah may also engender a sense of awe. Muhammad meditated among the mountains of Makkah. The panoramic view from their peaks is breathtaking. We can feel the smallness of our own being against the backdrop of a truly vast desert,

which is peppered with tall mountains and deep valleys.

FORGIVENESS

The third practice is forgiveness. There are a several verses in the Qur'an that encourage forgiveness:

“Let them pardon and overlook. Would you not love for God to forgive you? God is Forgiving and Merciful” (Qur'an: 24:22).

God is forgiving; we also should forgive. Forgiveness is not always easy, especially when we have been deeply wounded and scarred. Muhammad chose forgiveness toward the people of Makkah, the very people who had harassed and ruthlessly bullied the early Muslim community into exile. When Muhammad returned to Makkah, the Muslims were stronger and could have exacted revenge — yet the prophet chose to forgive his enemies.

COMPASSION

The fourth practice is compassion. One way to think of compassion is to view it as a response to suffering, to empathise with and to help relieve suffering. Several prophetic anecdotes come to mind. In one, Muhammad notices a young boy who seems very sad. He asks the boy's older brother why he is sad. It turns out that the boy's pet bird has died. At this point, Muhammad approaches the child and consoles him. In another anecdote, Muhammad speaks about a woman of ill repute who climbs down a well to get water for a dog dying of thirst. “God,” he says, “forgave her sins completely due to this act of compassion.”

GRATITUDE

The fifth practice is gratitude. This involves acknowledging the blessings, great and small, in our lives. The Qur'an invites us to show thanks:

“When God brought you out of your mother's womb, you were empty of knowledge. But God gave you eyes

and ears and hearts, in order that you may give thanks” (Qur'an 16:78).

According to one *hadith*, Muhammad is reported to have said: “He who does not thank the people is not thankful to God.”

The practices of meditation, awe, forgiveness, compassion and gratitude are evident in the life of Muhammad and within the broader tradition of Islam. Importantly, these practices are not unique to Islam. They exist across several traditions. These practices can also be embraced even if someone doesn't see themselves as being religious.

HUMBLE AND UPRIGHT

There is another way in which I have come to understand the spirituality of Muhammad, and this has been through personal experience. I had the opportunity to visit the prophet's mosque in Madinah, a city several hundred kilometres north of Makkah, which is where Muhammad is buried. The mosque is a magnificent marble structure, with an iconic evergreen dome atop Muhammad's tomb. The mosque is filled with arches, and viewed from a certain angle the arches line up to form an endless corridor filled with arches — it's like looking into infinity.

As I sat in the prophet's mosque, reflecting on the meaning of my faith and trying to come to terms with who Muhammad was, I began to feel as though I were floating on a beautifully calm lake. As on the surface of the water, gentle waves of light rippled through my being. I felt I was in the presence of Muhammad, a man deeply at peace who radiated gentleness and light. I felt drawn into a meditative state, wishing that I could stay and never leave this oasis.

I am reminded of Rumi, who said: “If there is light in your heart, you will find your way home.” Here, I was at home with Muhammad. May God's peace and blessing be upon him. ❖

Turquoise Palms by Erin Hanson © Used with permission www.erinhanson.com

Zain Ali lives in Tāmaki Makaurau with his family. He is an honorary academic at the University of Auckland.





BEFORE WE discuss co-governance, we should consider the criticism of how undemocratic it is to have a small, unelected, but powerful group with an inordinate amount of influence over central and local government. But, enough about Federated Farmers, let's have a look at co-governance.

There are at least three types of co-governance.

The first relates to tino rangatiratanga in article two of the Treaty of Waitangi which the late Moana Jackson translated as the right for Māori to identify those things that are important to us and our right and obligation to protect them. An early example of this form of co-governance was the Tongariro National Park board set up in 1894. It consisted of three government representatives and one Ngāti Tūwharetoa representative to oversee the administration of the park.

The second form is often associated with article three of the Treaty, to include a Māori voice to improve

Third Type Has Māori Representation

These examples are the softest versions at the lower end of the co-governance continuum.

The next stage on the continuum is where Māori are a minority, but are able to have a variety of voices. The Bay of Plenty Regional Council has had three Māori constituency councillors for nearly 20 years ensuring a variety of Māori voices. We could also include the Māori parliamentary seats here, where Māori are democratically chosen by Māori, and need to be supportive of Māori values. If we didn't have this process then to be elected to Parliament the Māori person would instead have to be acceptable to the majority of Pākehā voters.

The middle of the continuum are governance boards aimed at equal representation between Māori and non-Māori.

In the 1990s, the Dunedin Safer Community Council experimented with a governance group of five elected tauīwi (all peoples) and five Māori, three selected by mana whenua and two elected by maata waka (those outside their tribal area).

Issue 283 / July 2023

Waikato River Authority being established, to restore the health of the river. Since 2010 it has had a co-governance arrangement with five members appointed by iwi and five by the Crown.

Auckland also has an equal co-governance of reserves on 14 volcanos, with six appointed by mana whenua and six appointed by the city council. This is the model the Three Waters legislation looks to implement in its proposed co-governance.

Māori Majority

The next stage on the continuum is governance models where Māori hold a majority of the positions. The most well-known case is the board responsible for Te Urewera, originally set up with four Crown and four iwi representatives but changing to three Crown and six iwi members.

Māori Board with a Pākehā Member

The final part of the continuum is

Māori governance boards that might include a Pākehā member. These are often Māori land incorporations owned by hapū that appoint or elect an outsider because of their particular skills such as farming, financial or legal experience.

So co-governance as a concept is not new. What is new is that it is starting to appear in places where Pākehā have had a monopoly of power and influence in the past. While some examples of co-governance seek equality in social outcomes, where these 50-50 arrangements are appearing are when Māori want to protect the environment for the future.

We have seen the mess made of the waterways and unsustainable

practices on productive land. If you go to any hui discussing these issues you will always hear people arguing passionately for environmentalism and sustainable development, not for the benefit of themselves, but for the benefit of our mokopuna, our grandchildren. The greatest accountability for the state of the planet we will leave behind is to our grandchildren.

And if it hasn't happened already, it is very likely that our grandchildren are increasingly also your grandchildren. ✦

Credit: This article was first published in the *Otago Daily Times* 19 June 2023.

Auckland Cones by Mark Wooller ©
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Anaru Eketone is from the Ngāti Maniapoto and Waikato Iwi and is an Associate Professor in Social and Community Work at the University of Otago.



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Reviews

Kōtuku Shining Flight: Poems 1979 - 2022

By Kathleen Gallagher

Published by Pūkeko Publications with Wickcandle Press, 2022. (NZD 39)

Reviewed by Patricia O'Donnell

Kōtuku Shining Flight is much more than a book of poems. It is four books that together span over 40 years of the author's writing life. Sprinkled among the poems are diverse vignettes and grand stories that give a warm, honest glimpse into her Irish Catholic whānau, her grounded spirituality and many social and political issues of this time.

What a delight to read these poems, though I would suggest they be digested slowly. Allow them to seep down into the hearth of your soul. Some will disturb your conscience, some will have you chuckling, others are deeply nourishing and inherently sacred.



Prepare to shed a tear.

As you read and re-read your will hear a voice that is astute, contemplative, heart-strong and deeply honouring of people and place. These are wisdom poems born here in this land, familiar and mysterious.

Poetry is not everyone's cup of tea and not every poem in this collection will be your cup of tea, but I would be surprised if you don't find yourself returning repeatedly for a top-up so that soon these poems will be going everywhere with you. ★



Loved One with Dementia

MY HUSBAND PETER and I live apart. This is not our choice but it is right for us at this time. It was heart-wrenching to realise that I could no longer care for Peter myself and that we would not share the same bed, enjoy the same silence, have the same experiences in the way that we had in the past. It felt as though life was unravelling and 20 years of companionship was ebbing away.

Really? No. There were surprises in store!

I don't visit Peter. I go to be with him. Each week I go when I can for us to continue our dance of togetherness and join together in the rhythm of his life. I meet the angels who shower him with love and who dance with him in ways I was not able to. We revel in each other's

company and find new ways to share our lives.

Peter loves to go out. When he first went into care it was a blessing having time to picnic together. Off we went to sit watching people boating, walking, running, joining with them in appreciation of the outdoors. There is no rush. It's fun to watch.

Yes, life is a dance if we let it be. Being in a rest home, not being able to do what we used to do, should not restrict the delight we can still have in life.

Peter and I still dance in each other's hearts. Someone asked me if Peter remembers my visits. During the Covid lockdown he did go downhill and the staff were worried. At that time we could not phone him and of course we were not visiting. When we connected once again Peter's spirit lifted. Peter may not remember my visits in his head but he remembers them in his heart. He is happy and at peace.

Recently I had a health blip and was not able to be with Peter. We talked on the phone. When I could visit again my spirits rose and I felt new. Only then did I realise that we each need the other for our dance to be complete. Life is both giving and receiving.

Worship is important for us both. I like to be with Peter for worship and when the priest comes to offer the Eucharist. This is our deepest dance and connects us to the Ultimate. This renews our spirit and allows us to focus on the essentials in life which are

not physical or material. Sometimes the tears run down Peter's face. The Spirit has touched him.

Peter's career was in National Radio (now RNZ National) and mostly as an announcer with Concert FM (now RNZ Concert). He is deeply musical and when not doing other things he is happy in his room letting classical music fill him and feed his soul. This passion is a wonderful gift.

Rest homes are not places to avoid. They can be filled with angels in many guises — a caring community with each member seen as special. ♦

Old Couple by Lucie Mizutani © Used with permission
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Marilyn Wilkinson lives contemplatively encouraged by mystics such as Eckhart, James Finley and Thomas Merton. She was a Presbyterian Deaconess and now worships in the Catholic Church.





IT'S NOW 35 YEARS since the Passionist Family Groups started in Paeroa. At the time, parish priest Phil Purcell quoted Nathanael's reply when Philip declared he was going to follow Jesus: "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" (Jn 1:46) Father Purcell said: "Such a remark may well be directed about Paeroa when people are told that the Passionist Family Groups had their New Zealand beginning right here, and then a few days later in East Coast Bays in Auckland." Paeroa is a small rural town on the Hauraki Plains.

"As parish priest," Purcell continued, "I am grateful for these groups and wish them well. Long may they be part of our parish life."

The Movement started in a Sydney parish led by Passionist priest Peter McGrath 50 years ago. It hoped to connect families for support in their faith and family lives — as "a family for all". From that beginning, the movement spread across Australia, New Zealand and to other countries.

Typically each group has around 24-40 people including children. In making up groups an effort is made to match children of similar ages and have a cross section of adults so that the group resembles an extended family. People of the various cultures are included in Groups across parishes.

The emphasis is on building relationships and creating a sense of belonging. Groups are encouraged to gather once a month for a low cost or no cost activity. You can imagine the variety — pot luck meals, picnics, dress-up nights, games. It is about developing friendships and support as a family.

Passionist Family Groups can be found in parishes in every diocese of New Zealand. Charlie and Maggi Gribble have been the parish coordinators of the movement in Paeroa for some years. They have been influential in the growth and endurance of the movement. Parish coordinators get to know the people in the groups, make connections from group to group, listen to stories and welcome anyone who comes into their community. They embody the aims and goals of the movement:

To share our Christian values;

To live and love like the early Christians;

To give example to and involve our children in Christian sharing;

To build and promote community within the parish; and to support one another in times of need and celebration.

We marked our 35-year milestone with a celebration starting in Paeroa with Passionist advisor Fr Brian Traynor from Melbourne and parish priest Mark Field presiding at Eucharist with the family groups. Then the celebration moved to East Coast Bays with Brian again presiding with Fr Emile Frische and the family groups there. It was a time to remember all those who have been involved and have supported the Movement through the years. We remembered, too, former members and friends who have died. In each celebration

we delighted in acknowledging an abundance of memories and people.

We're experiencing a post-pandemic climate now — parish church attendance has dropped and fewer families with children are involved — and I've heard the suggestion that Passionist Family Groups may have had their day. I'm not so sure. The aims of the Groups to build communities of trust, that support families day-by-day, are still needed. Passionist Family Groups develop a sense of being family to one another, and the faith dimensions help us to see God at work in the ordinary experiences of our lives.

Recently, two parishes relaunched Passionist Family Groups and 70 families signed up. We realise that if we think belonging to Church only involves saying prayers and having discussions, we risk overlooking the more urgent call of Jesus that we care for and support one another. And we'll overlook the renewal of synodality that Pope Francis is calling the Church to — of walking together. Fifty years ago when Peter McGrath founded the Passionist Family Group Movement he said that "Passionist Family Groups don't take away the pain and struggles of life. Rather, they help us to live as followers of Jesus Christ."✦

For more information:
www.passionistfamily.org.nz

Paul Traynor is the National Coordinator of the Passionist Family Group Movement. His role is supporting and encouraging connections among groups in parish communities around Aotearoa, New Zealand.





Sowing and Growing God's Kingdom

Kathleen Rushton discusses the parable of the sower in Matthew 13:1-23.

AS WE READ through Matthew's Gospel we can see how Jesus's identity as Emmanuel, God-with-us, and through his words and actions we encounter God's presence and empire (*basileia*). In Chapters 11-12, we read how the religious elites do not recognise that Jesus is ushering in God's empire (*basileia*) and they oppose his ministry. We come to see that God's empire is opening a division.

Chapter 13 addresses the division. Those who do not receive God's *basileia* are so inclined not because of

failure by God or Jesus, but because of their own sinfulness and the Evil One's actions. Those who experience and welcome "the empire of the heavens" (literal translation) are affirmed.

The divisive impact of God's empire is central to Chapter 13. The word "reign/empire" (*basileia*) is found 12 times in the chapter: eight as "the empire of the heavens" (Mt 13:11, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47, 52), three times by itself (Mt 13:19, 38, 41) and once as "the empire of their Father" (Mt 13:43).

God's Empire

Biblical scholar Warren Carter explains that God's empire is shown in the words and deeds of Jesus and is God's gracious gift, initiative and

action. It resists Rome's empire. And so it is divisive in that some welcome God's empire while others resist what God offers. God's *basileia* is "disruptive and disturbing, reversing previous commitments, imperial structures, practices and priorities, while creating a new way of life which counters dominant societal values." God's empire conflicts with and competes with the devil's empire. While God's *basileia* is partially realised, for many life remains unchanged. God's empire will be fully present when it is established among all, including Rome's empire.

Biblical Parables

The seven parables in Chapter 13 confirm the growing presence of God's empire. Although already we

have encountered several parables in this Gospel, the word “parable” appears for the first time in Mt 13:3 and then 11 more times in this chapter. “Parable” comes from the Greek word “to throw alongside” and suggests a comparison in which one thing (God’s empire) is set beside something else. These short stories often begin with a comparison: “The empire of the heavens is like ...” (Mt 13:31,33,44,45,47).

God’s empire is compared with everyday life situations familiar to Jesus’s listeners. The stories of the parables contain a surprise or twist that forces listeners to reconsider an aspect of the status quo in light of the comparison to God’s empire. Parables are rarely explained because their open-ended structure requires listeners to wrestle with their meanings. However, the parables of the sower (Mt 13:18-23) and the weeds and wheat (Mt 13:36-43) in this chapter, are exceptions.

Parable of the Sower, Seed, Soil and Harvest

Each “character” in the parable offers a different insight: the sower, the seed, the soil or the harvest.

The sower represents God or Jesus while the seed is the word of God (Mt 13:18-23). When we read the parable from the point of view of the sower, the emphasis is on his acts. He sows seed indiscriminately, casting it wildly onto every type of ground inviting everyone to accept the word regardless of their potential to accept it (cf. Mt 5:45).

“Let anyone with ears listen” (Mt 13:9) recalls the *Shema*’ (“Hear, O Israel.” Deuteronomy 6:4-5) which faithful Jews pray daily. While the unique relationship between God and Israel is acknowledged, Jesus extends the invitation to all.

When we focus on the seed, we can see its reliability in yielding a harvest even though at first this seems impossible. It is a reminder of Isaiah 55:10-11, where God’s word accomplishes its purpose even when it falls on deaf ears. Such a harvest, assures us that the seed will bear fruit eventually in unimaginable ways and proportions — just as the amounts

of a hundredfold or 60 or 30 in the parable exaggerate the abundance of the yield. This theme of harvest — in this parable and in the three following — emphasises the unstoppable expansion of the empire of God.

When we consider the path, the rocky ground, the thorns and the good ground, it’s clear that three-quarters of the seed comes to naught. This ratio highlights that work in God’s mission does not always yield the hoped-for results. The type of ground influences how the seed is received.

Transformation of Our Hearts

The empire of God is concerned with human hearts. According to our readiness, we receive the word

The stories of the parables contain a surprise or twist that forces listeners to reconsider an aspect of the status quo in the light of the comparison to God’s empire.

which will transform our hearts. Jesus reminded the disciples that they know the mysteries of God: “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the empire of the heavens.”

Jesus quotes two verses from Isaiah: “You will indeed listen but never understand, and you will indeed look but never perceive. For this people’s heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes, so that they might not look with their eyes, and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and turn and I would heal them” (Is 6:9-10). Jesus states that “this people’s heart has grown dull” (Mt 13:15). On the other hand, the disciples are blessed because their hearts comprehend Jesus and his message (Mt 13:16).

Soil of Our Hearts

The good soil of the parable would

have been as well known to Jesus’s first listeners as to gardeners, farmers and horticulturists today.

In Genesis 2, we have the poetic description of humanity’s intimate relationship with fertile soil. The Creator sculptured the earth creature (*‘adam*) from the dust of the ground (*‘adamah*). “Groundling from the ground” or “earthling from the earth” is a translation of this poetic Hebrew description of humanity’s intimate relationship with the soil. The Creator placed the “groundling” in the garden to “till and keep it” — to cultivate and care for it. This caring extends to the soil as much as to the garden.

We can think of the care we give the physical soil so that its fertility is not depleted. And we can think

metaphorically of the soil of our hearts in which grows the word of God. Both need nurturing. Farmers and gardeners today understand seed and soil in much the same way as those who first heard Jesus. A timely harvest is not guaranteed but can be threatened by rain, drought, barren soil — and also war, climate change, cyclones. But with hope and confidence in God’s mercy and love, we can heed the promise that the scattered seed of the Word “will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Is 55:10-11). ♦

Reading for 16 July: RL 15th Sunday of Ordinary Time; RCL 7th Sunday After Pentecost

The Sower at Sunset by Vincent van Gogh (1888)
Courtesy of Commons Wikimedia
Collection of Kröller-Müller Museum

Kathleen Rushton RSM is a Scripture scholar and author of *The Cry of the Earth* and the *Cry of the Poor: Hearing Justice in John’s Gospel* (2020).



GROWING IN THE COMMUNITY RIGHT HERE

“WOW! THIS IS so barren,” I think as I bike home over the asphalt of Dunedin’s industrial area. But then I look closer. In every crack in the footpath and gutter are flashes of green; leaves thriving exactly where they are.

This reminds me of the concept of Benedictine stability. Stability is a vow taken by Benedictine monks and nuns as a lifelong commitment to stay with their same community in their same monastery — rather than move from place to place. As one article I read put it: “Stability means growing where you’re planted”. Just like those weeds in the footpath.

This concept felt challenging and countercultural to me for several reasons. Firstly, I’m surrounded by university classmates and friends who think that our main purpose in life is to get ahead by getting a good job, whether in Aotearoa or overseas. But when I finished my undergraduate degree, I wanted to stay in Dunedin for my friends, my Church, for the kids I volunteered with and for the place. I felt as if I had to justify my choice to stay, as if my reasons for loving being here were less important than having the best career.

Stability seems impossible in my reality. I’ve moved lots between countries, cities and houses throughout my 23 years — my experience is unlike Benedictine stability. So it is fascinating to think about stability in my own life and understand what it could mean. How might I live stability in my own context?

Being in my 20s is not a stable season of life. Jobs come and go, friends move around, and many aspects of life feel transitory and unstable. As I discussed this with my Church — four of us in our 20s, others with families and some of retiring age — I thought about what it would



mean to be a person of stability in the instability of my life.

While I don’t know where I might live next year and which friends will be around, I can recognise that I’ve been blessed by others’ stability. For example, my godparents, who have been based in Ōtepoti Dunedin for decades, have given me a place to stay many times through the years, and their checking in on me in my unsettled times has helped me feel connected to where I live.

It isn’t that we need to live in the same place our whole lives; Jesus was nomadic compared to the Benedictines. I can be a person of stability if that means growing where I’m planted. It’s inevitable that I’ll keep moving flats, but I can embrace the place where I’m living while I’m here. Rather than thinking constantly of the

next way to get ahead, as a person of stability I can be invested in my neighbours and in the community. I can enjoy the beach nearest to me and love the friends I have, even knowing that some will leave and others will come.

Stability will help me think about how I can make the community I live in better, because it is where I am at the moment. Right now for me, practising stability is choosing to be rooted in the soils of Ōtepoti and to grow with Christ in this place. This is where I’m planted now and where I hope to grow. ✦

Shar Mathias writes, explores the mountains and enjoys cooking. She is an ecologist and lives in Dunedin.





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Reviews

Becoming Pākehā: A Journey Between Two Cultures

By John Bluck

Published by HarperCollins NZ, 2022. (NZD 40)

Reviewed by Jenny Dawson

As I read John's Preface, I remembered Ingrid in a Treaty education group about 35 years ago. Her brother was a challenge to her because — in John's words — he was bewildered, sad and angry with "all this talk about Māori and Pākehā".

I don't know if he would read this book, but I hope by now he and many others would be open to considering the issues which are so well set out in it. John is clear: the journey is unfinished and there are no easy answers.

Becoming Pākehā is very readable. Part One could be

memoir, but becomes more in the context of the book's next three parts: the first offering analysis; the second considering friendship (including bicultural couples); and the third, the difficulty of moving towards a shared future. For the future, John has hope, tempered with the trenchant observation that "Pākehā and Māori worlds grow ever more separate, in silos defined by wealth and the lack of it."

I highly recommend *Becoming Pākehā* to anyone interested in the present and future of this unique country, even Ingrid's brother, because the writing style carries the reader into thinking deeper. ★



Walking with Pope Francis: The Official Documents in Everyday Language

By James H Kroeger, MM

Published by Orbis Books, 2023. (USD approx 20)

Reviewed by Julia Scarf

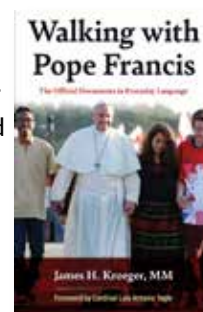
James Kroeger has bravely taken 10 pivotal documents by Pope Francis and condensed them to their central insights. The outcome is a highly accessible text. The documents include: *The Light of Faith*, *The Joy of the Gospel* (*Evangelii Gaudium*), *The Face of Mercy*, *On Care for Our Common Home* (*Laudato Si'*), *Rejoice and Be Glad* (*Querida Amazonia*) and *Christ is Alive*. These writings cover many varied topics of Church teaching.

Pope Francis writes with tenderness and forthrightness.

Anyone who does not have the time or confidence to read the full encyclicals will find this book is ideal. Each chapter is broken into bite-sized, easily digested sections.

I was moved by Francis's images and ideas, including "an incarnate memory", and an "unbroken chain of witnesses". This made me contemplate how faith and understanding synthesises the truth in our lives and is passed from generation to generation in an authentic way.

Walking with Pope Francis is compelling and thought-provoking. I think it deserves to be read slowly — maybe a chapter a week to give time for reflection. It would be perfect for a book club or study group to unpick the ideas together. ★



War in Ukraine: Making Sense of a Senseless Conflict

By Medea Benjamin & Nicolas J S Davies

Published by OR Books, 2022. (USD 28)

Reviewed by Marie Venning

War in Ukraine aims to "make sense of a senseless conflict". Whereas our bewilderment has been nurtured by propaganda and media coverage which is predominantly pro-Western and pro-Ukrainian, Benjamin and Davies give objectivity. They don't whitewash Russia's crimes or criminal invasion. They emphasise the facts — supported by ample footnotes.

The authors contextualise the war. After the end of the Cold War "the US Military-Industrial Complex and NATO ... took advantage of the collapse of the USSR to expand their military dominance." Then, from the Cold War period

through to 2014, conflict in Ukraine grew into civil war. The 2015 Minsk II peace agreement succeeded in bringing the worst fighting of the civil war to an end but ultimately failed when Russia intervened.

The writers hold that there were two simultaneous wars in Ukraine. One resulted from Russia's military intervention in Ukraine's civil war in February 2022 in which Russia was the aggressor. The other was a broader geopolitical conflict between the United States and NATO on one side and Russia on the other, in which the US and NATO were the instigators and the more aggressive parties. It is indeed "a senseless conflict".

I recommend *War in Ukraine*. It is professionally researched and, I think, trustworthy. ★



Reviews



UK, 2022 — 6 episodes, streaming on TVNZ+
Alex Cary (writer), Nick Murphy (director)
Reviewed by Paul Tankard

For writers of on-screen dramas, the Cold War is the gift that keeps on giving. Throughout the 1950s, '60s and '70s, British government officials Burgess and Maclean, Philby and Blunt — known as the “Cambridge four” and for many people still household names — were successively found to be Soviet spies. This account is based on the 2014 book by Ben Macintyre.

After Burgess and Maclean absconded in 1951, and before Sir Anthony Blunt was exposed in 1979, the “third man” and the *Spy Among Friends* is Kim Philby (Guy Pearce), who when the series opens in 1963 is an agent for MI6 in Beirut, but around whom were long-held suspicions coming to a head. Fellow agent Nicholas Elliot (Damian Lewis), a longtime friend of Philby, is sent from London to extract a confession from him. Before a statement could be signed, Philby is on a cargo ship heading to Moscow.

When Elliot returns to London, he is comprehensively de-briefed for MI5 by Lily Thomas (Anna Maxwell Martin), a fictitious character, apparently, and a sort of surrogate for the viewers, assisting us to figure out what's happening when, and who is or isn't spying on or betraying whom. MI5 investigates MI6, and the CIA is watching both.

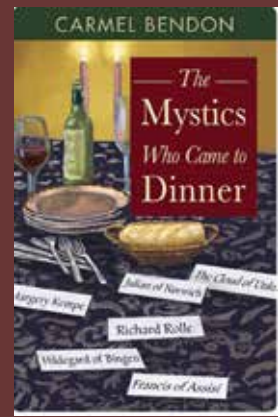
The series itself is like an investigation, shifting back and forth over two decades, and not only between London, Beirut and Moscow, but also Istanbul and Ohio. There's a lot of talk, but also plenty of excitement: chases, bombings, raids and a massacre. The question we're considering throughout is what did Philby do, or think he was doing.

Some of these limited series seem as if the makers of them first write a consecutive narrative, then cut it up so as to get to the end in the most round-about way possible. It keeps viewers watching, but it's very easy to get confused. Every time we watched an episode we re-watched the previous one, so ended up seeing it all twice. This is not a complaint.

The colour palette reminds us of post-war rationing and the world before colour TV. The interiors and particularly the complexions of all the actors make it look as if they drink too much and don't get enough sunlight and vitamins.

The three lead actors are terrific. Martin is understated, cool and compelling. Lewis is controlled, wry, deeply attached to Philby but baffled and angered by him; and as Philby, Guy Pearce is charming, a bit ruthless, but also naïve and vulnerable. It's difficult to see him as an enemy to the British way of life, as he loves so much of it: music-hall, cricket, pubs and clubs. Philby is never going to be at home in Moscow, and he knows it.

A Spy Among Friends is a patient and elegant study of loyalty and of a time in which, for better or worse, patriotism was not entirely foolish and friendship counted for something. And betrayal is, at least, not recommended. ★



The Mystics Who Came to Dinner

By Carmel Bendon
Published by Orbis Books, 2022.
(USD 22)
Reviewed by Ruth Mather

On a cold, wet night, six medieval mystics arrive at 21st-century Annie's house for a dinner party. Hildegard of Bingen is first to arrive, immediately taking charge. Next comes Francis of Assisi, whom Pat the dog quickly latches on to. Margery Kempe and Julian of Norwich arrive next, followed by Richard Rolle. Finally the author of the *Cloud of Unknowing*, or “Cloud”, appears.

As with any good novel, I was drawn into the story as a participant and felt as though I, too, was at the dinner party with these mystics. This is more than a novel, giving accurate historical details on the mystics' lives and quoting from their works. Carmel Bendon presents the unique personality of each mystic. Of the ones I know, it felt like meeting old friends. Over soup, mains, dessert and coffee they share their spirituality, theology and insights.

I loved this book, finding it nourishing of head and heart. It has aroused my curiosity about those mystics I did not know. Bendon's final line ensures the teaching of these mystics will not be forgotten! If you are hungry of spirit, this book will feed you. Come join the feast! ★



Cross Currents

by Jane Higgins

"EVERY BAPTISED PERSON is called to actively participate in the life and mission of the Church, starting from the specifics of one's own vocation, in relationship with others and with the charisms given by the Spirit for the good of all." So Pope Francis recently described the synodal Church. He continued: "We need Christian communities in which space is enlarged, where everyone can feel at home, where pastoral structures and means foster ... the joy of being and feeling co-responsible." (Link to article below.)

Francis observed that some have accused the synodal process of creating "a mess". In response, he pointed to Pentecost morning: "Total disorder. And who provoked that mess? The Holy Spirit."

"The great enemy of [the synodal] process," he said, "is fear."

Fear of mess, fear of change: often these emotions involve a fear of losing control, especially when that control has been tightly held for centuries, as is the case with a clericalised Church.

We see this elsewhere, too. Our social media feeds are full of outrage from people accustomed to being in control who are now being

encouraged to share that control.

There are the car drivers, used to controlling the roads, objecting to the development of well-designed cycleways and pedestrianised streets.

There are Pākehā accustomed to the blanket use of English on the airwaves, and in official documents and signs, objecting to sharing those spaces with te reo Māori.

There are those who react with fury over the outworking of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in everyday life through, for example, structures of co-governance. And yet Te Tiriti, this founding document of our nation without which we wouldn't be a nation, is exactly about sharing control.

Often, fear is at the heart of these reactions. Politicians exploit this, of course, especially now that we are in an election year. But what, really, is there to be afraid of? Children able to bike to school because their cycleways are safe? Bilingual road signs? The wisdom of iwi whose traditions and ways of knowing have a deep understanding of our land and waterways?

Te reo Māori is over 800 years old and is unique to our land. It puzzles me that those who are so vocal about

the evils of a globalised world are so opposed to the expression of a language that is uniquely local.

Pope Francis encourages us to "walk in history at the pace of the Spirit". For Jesus's disciples this meant embracing disorder and difference, and crafting from that a community. And it must have been a diverse community: think of all those languages they were suddenly able to speak!

What might this mean in Aotearoa? The celebrated cartoonist, Michael Leunig, once said that when he starts a cartoon he picks up his pen, draws something, looks at it and thinks: "Oh, what a mess I've made!" But he pushes through that feeling of failure and creates drawings of delight and wisdom. Novelists, likewise, write what is well-known to them as "the awful first draft". Creativity starts in what might seem to be mess and disorder. It starts with a loss of control. It's only through embracing that and being prepared to explore, even when we are afraid, that we create something wonderful. ✧

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TUI MOTU InterIslands
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Letters to the Editor

We welcome letters of comment, discussion, response, affirmation or argument in the spirit of the magazine of up to 200 words.

Opinions in letters are not necessarily those of the Magazine.

LEARNING OUR HISTORY

Clare Curran wrote “When Hobson arrived in New Zealand he declared the South Island to be *terra nullius* – the indigenous people to be non-human” (TM June 2023).

“Non-human”. To be fair, Hobson didn’t actually say this; Clare is saying she understands the term *terra nullius* to imply this. It is a legal term, its meaning in Hobson’s time being that the people living in that place did not have a government that was recognised in international law. Hobson’s personal belief is probably summed up in his concluding statement at the end of the Treaty signing: “Now we are one”. (You can’t make a treaty except with another human.) The previous day had been spent discussing the terms of the Treaty, and discussion among Māori went on well into the night. The next day 44 rangatira signed the Treaty on behalf of their hapū. Copies of the Treaty were then taken around the country. At 29 locations around the coast of the North Island another 433 signatures were added, and between the Marlborough Sounds and Foveaux Strait another 56 signatures were added at six locations. Not every rangatira signed, and some didn’t sign until July.

Hobson also had the Anglican Mission at the Bay of Islands print 200 copies of the Treaty in te reo to be distributed among Māori.

On 21 May Hobson declared the South Island *terra nullius*. To understand why he did this we have to keep in mind that this is 1840. There is no internet, radio, telephone, weather forecasts. To get a reply to

information sent to London could take up to 18 months (by which time the situation has probably changed anyway). The authorities in Sydney, under whom Hobson was working, considered there was no law they could use that would enable them to punish crimes committed by Europeans living in New Zealand – which was what the Māori chiefs were asking them to do. The fastest communication over any distance was by ship, but once a ship left port, Hobson had no way of knowing where it was, where it had been, how many chiefs had signed the Treaty, until that ship returned to port. And there was some urgency. Reports had been made of a French colony to be established at Akaroa, settlers from the NZ Company colony at Wellington were now showing interest in land across Cook Strait. To do anything positive, there needed to be one law that applied across all New Zealand. *Terra nullius* made that possible.

People in 1840 made mistakes – just as we do today. We have to recognise that harm was done – cumulatively, serious harm – but we cannot re-write history; accusing them of things they did not do.

[See: *Tangata Whenua* by Atholl Anderson, Judith Binney and Aroha Harris (2017) dealing with the Treaty pp220-224 and putting it in context between p190 and p227.]

Tony Williams, Tāmaki Makaurau/
Auckland

NOT THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

Clare Curran (TM June 2023) said that New Zealand was colonised according to the Doctrine of Discovery. This has become the “received truth” of our history. Unfortunately, it is an historical myth, perhaps popular because it tells a story that reinforces “progressive” anti-Christian biases and pre-formed beliefs about the premeditated evils of the colonisation project. Dr Paul Moon (Professor of History, Faculty of Māori Development, Auckland University of Technology) debunks this idea. He says that the Doctrine of Discovery (a Catholic Papal Bull of

1493) was not the basis for Britain’s colonisation of New Zealand in policy or practice. Anti-Catholic Britain would not have used a Catholic promulgation; by the time Cook reached our shores the Doctrine was over 250 years old and in abeyance; there is no mention of the Doctrine in any British document relating to Cook’s arrival, or later formation of policy around settlement, Treaty and colonisation. It’s simply not there. By saying that the Doctrine was the basis of colonial practice, people are saying what they want to believe, or have been led to believe. There is now a perverse virtue to be gained by exaggerating the evils of our past, and by extension, ourselves. (An honest account of our history would recognise the evils that transpired, as well as the good on all sides, without setting up one side as the “arch-villain”.) Bad history makes for bad practice, which will not heal our current problems, and may yet make them worse.

Forrest Chambers, Levin/Taitoko

NOTE: CHURCH HAS RESCINDED THE DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY

Message from the New Catholic Bishops Conference endorsing the Vatican’s rescinding the Doctrine of Discovery on 30 March 2023:

“The Catholic Bishops of Aotearoa New Zealand have been carefully considering calls in recent years by Māori leaders for the Catholic Church to reject the Doctrine of Discovery.

‘In the 21st Century we abhor the kind of belief that one group of people is superior to another and reject it absolutely,’ the bishops say jointly today (31 March 2023) in welcoming the Vatican’s repudiation of the Doctrine.

‘We say to the Māori leaders who asked us to reject the Doctrine and to all other people of this country that we reject it absolutely and without reservation. Such a doctrine has no place in our world and should not be part of any discourse about this country’s future directions.’

See: www.catholic.org.nz/news/media-releases/doctrine/

For What It's Worth

I USED TO have a lovely garden but after a couple of years of neglect, of warmer, wetter seasons and recent cyclones, I now live in a messy jungle that could be hired out as the setting for a remake of *Jurassic Park*. One day, when time allows, I plan to restore the garden to its former glory. In the meantime, I satisfy my environmental conscience by claiming that my crowded small section is probably capturing more carbon than my personal footprint produces.

(My carbon-footprint is probably quite large as I deliver flowers/plants Auckland-wide in my ageing, petrol-engine van. Oh, to be able to afford an EV!)

Soon after moving to this locale, I helped plant trees along the street – mostly tōtara, with flowering cherries to accent the corners. Nearly 20 years on the cherries are long gone (bowled by reversing vehicles or shrivelled by dry periods). By contrast, the tōtara thrive and are now 10 metres high with solid trunks and wide welcoming branches.

This ordered green belt interacts with my jungle-garden by sprouting many tōtara seedlings in the garden's untended areas. These gifts are dug up and given to friends, sold on Trade Me or styled as bonsai and added to my collection

– thus sequestering a little more of the absorbed carbon.

I'm embarrassed by my overgrown garden and proud of the tree-lined street, but many and varied birds, lizards, insects and invertebrates are happy to enjoy both and are unconcerned by the tidiness status of either. Is there a lesson here somewhere?

Matariki may shed some (star)light on my confusion and nature's profusion.

One of the smallest, sometimes overlooked, members of the Matariki family is Hiwa-i-te-rangi, the wishing star. Sitting just above Waitī and Waitā (the twins responsible for fresh and salt water) Hiwa-i-te-rangi could be the vital conduit for the spiritual gifts of the other stars of the constellation. Traditionally, Māori would use this star to set their desires and direction for the year ahead – what Pākehā might call New Year's resolutions. Hiwa-i-te-rangi both inspires and enables: resolutions, aspirations, dreams and actions to sustain the environment. Right now, the whole of humankind needs this hopeful inspiration

and impetus for change!

Zechariah is a prophet who, like Hiwa-i-te-rangi, is small and often overlooked but offers powerful wisdom for our time. Speaking of God's plan to bring messianic hope and universal peace, the prophet proclaims: "For I mean to spread peace everywhere, the vine will give its fruit, the earth its increase, and heaven its dew. I am going to bestow all these blessings on the remnant of this

people. Just as once you were a curse ... so I mean to save you, for you to become a blessing" (Zech 8:12-13). Notice the remnant people are themselves saved by becoming a blessing for others. In our present situation, surely, the remnant of the planet (and we) will be saved when we change our cursed/controlling ways and bless the earth by enabling nature to take its course. "The vine will give its fruit, the heaven its dew" even (or possibly, better) without us.

Combining the "ever ancient, ever new" inspiration and wisdom of Hiwa-i-te-rangi and Zechariah, I am better equipped to relate appropriately to the earth – knowing when to work with her and when to simply let her, and her creatures, be. ♦



Noon or Garden Behind a House by Vincent van Gogh (1888) Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

Bruce Drysdale is the chaplain at ABI, a facility for rehabilitation for people with serious brain injuries, and combines floristry with his role as a wedding and funeral celebrant.



Our last word

In our winter darkness
may blessings of remembrance,
togetherness and resolve
energise, guide and light us –
like the stars.

From the *Tui Motu* Team

