

Tui Motu

InterIslands

Issue 294 | \$7

July 2024

HUMAN TRAFFICKING & SLAVERY NOW

KEVIN CLEMENTS, JEANETTE ATABELO,
STUDENTS AT BARADENE COLLEGE

MORE ABOUT SYNODALITY

MANUEL BEAZLEY, THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN

THE TREATY & EARLY DEMOCRACY

ANNE SALMOND

Oppose Slavery Again
Kore ake he Taurekareka

CONTENTS

FEATURES

- Conflict, War and People Trafficking** 4
Kevin Clements
- Clothes Shopping Raises Questions** 6
Students, Baradene College
- Spending and Saving in Our Common Home** 8
Mary Betz
- Talitha Kum: Rise Up Against Human Trafficking** .. 10
Jeanette Atabelo
- Synodal Virtues: Courage to Change** 11
Thomas O'Loughlin
- My Experience of the Synod** 12
Manuel Beazley
- Food and Community** 14
Lilly Johnson Interviews Mark Lemalu
- Te Tiriti O Waitangi and Democracy** 18
Anne Salmond
- Highlighting Unjust Structures** 20
Kate Day
- Pilgrims on the Road of Love** 22
Zain Ali

SCRIPTURE

- Mary the Tower** 24
Kathleen Rushton

COMMENT

- Editorial** 2
Ann Gilroy

COLUMNS

- Prioritising Truth and Justice** 3
Clare Curran
- Learning about Disabilities** 26
Shanti Mathias
- Cross Currents** 29
Jane Higgins
- For What It's Worth** 32
Rosemary Riddell

REFLECTION

- In Every War** 16
Anne Powell

REVIEWS

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

LETTERS

- Letters to the Editor** 30



COVER PHOTO

Sleeping Children – Keep Them Safe
by Dreamimagi from Pixabay

FSC

OUR NAME *Tui Motu InterIslands*

Tui Motu is te reo Māori (Māori language) meaning “stitching the islands together”. We pronounce it: to-ee maw-to.



www.tuimotu.org



@Tuimotu



TuiMotuInterIslands



@Tuimotumag



Editorial

WE'VE PASSED THE shortest day. Over the coming weeks we can look forward to earlier sunrises and a gradual lengthening of the days. We're used to light making our lives easier, safer, warmer and more visible to others. And while the dark offers us rest and privacy, it also veils dubious goings-on “under cover of darkness”. In public life we're always exploring ways to penetrate this cover to prevent criminality escalating. For example, we're alerted to danger by the police helicopter in the night and we see its powerful beam tracking a car on the motorway or a neighbourhood disturbance. We imagine that whatever crime was happening under cover of darkness was exposed in the light and the offenders apprehended. But it takes vigilance and resources to uncover what is being hidden deliberately – perpetrators who are seeking out the dark.

The multi-billion-dollar industry that profits from the trafficking and enslavement of people operates under the “cover of darkness”. The cover may not be night, but a dark maze of inhumanity, corruption, greed, desperation, amorality, inhibition and violence. We can't see this maze of evil because it is camouflaged by distractions aimed at preventing us from bearing witness. But we can't afford to be distracted. As Christians we need to be wide-eyed and critically discerning of how evil develops. We can heed Jesus's advice to those who were prepared to reject the disciples' message: “Be as wise as serpents and innocent as doves” (Mt 10:16).

A first step in wisdom is to become aware and informed. Liberation theology integrated Paulo Freire's concept of “conscientisation” into its practice in the Latin American church. This involved developing, strengthening and changing poor people's consciousness of their relationship with God. They discovered that God does not will people to live in poverty. Rather poverty is a condition caused by the social, economic and political structures that favour the rich and oppress the masses. That called for all people of God – poor and privileged – to work together for liberation by changing unjust structures. That work continues! If we are aware of the contrast between the global environment that “allows” slavery and God who has a preference for the poor, what can we do with our information?

A further step can be to persist in asking questions. Is the provenance of what we buy slavery-free? How can we provide alternatives for those caught up in trafficking? In war? In poverty? What organisations are effective against trafficking?

And we can make noise about slavery being opposed to human rights and to Christian beliefs. As we grow in wisdom more options will come to light and we will better see a way out of the darkness. Most importantly we can keep heart – we're together in God's mission.

We thank all our contributors whose writing, art and craft make this July issue a thoughtful read.

And, as is our custom, our last word is of encouragement and blessing.



Prioritising Truth and Justice

I'M AN AVID podcast listener. It started during Covid when we were all taking daily walks. I spent the first lockdown in 2020 alone (except for three cats) and while mostly content with my own company, having another voice in my ear, especially when walking, was companionable and increasingly served a purpose.

It was around this time that I'd begun thinking about writing a crime novel and was hungry for insight into motive and behaviour of a certain kind of perpetrator. This quest continued into the minutiae of police procedures and forensic smarts that could lead an antagonist to hunt down "the perp".

Unsurprisingly, my podcast choice was and remains mostly true crime. In this I'm like many others. On the Spotify platform, around a quarter of the 5 million podcast titles are in the true crime genre.

But I'm quite discerning. I focus on podcasts that are either driven by a tenacious journalist determined to shine a light on a historic cold case that police have dropped or sidelined, or that deconstruct and analyse real cases, profiling behaviour and identifying the red flags to prevent murders. You could call them activist podcasts. Often they are intent on re-opening a case or pushing a law change.

In relative terms, podcasts are a newish medium. They are downloadable or streamed live from a platform accessible via an app. They rely on the internet for distribution and promotion.

In New Zealand, as in most countries, they operate in an unregulated environment which then relies on the discernment of the listener to determine their veracity. Most of the podcasts I listen to are produced by or affiliated with established media outlets.

So although the medium of delivery is new, the skillset and professionalism that sits behind these podcasts draws its power from legacy media and plain old-fashioned good journalism.

An example is *The Teacher's Pet* — a 2018 crime podcast published by *The Australian* newspaper. Investigative journalist Hedley Thomas looked into the disappearance of Lynette Dawson in 1982, and meticulously uncovered

evidence ignored or never pursued by police, resulting in the arrest and subsequent conviction of Lynette's then husband, prominent footballer and teacher Chris Dawson, for her murder. The sweeping under the carpet of Lynette Dawson's disappearance for so many decades is just one of many instances of women mysteriously disappearing in suspicious circumstances in Australia. *The Teacher's Pet* podcast has also resulted in a police strike force looking into claims of sexual assaults and student-teacher relationships at high schools mentioned in the podcast and has been credited with encouraging more women to come forward to give evidence.

Another example is BBC Scotland podcast *Who Killed Emma?* Journalist Samantha Poling forensically deconstructs the deeply flawed police investigation into Emma Caldwell's murder highlighting a clear suspect, resulting in public pressure and an eventual conviction. The investigation of her murder is one of Scotland's longest-running cases, with 19 years between her death and the perpetrator's imprisonment in 2024 for a minimum term of 36 years. This was followed by the announcement of an independent public inquiry into the police handling of the investigation — putting the spotlight on the misogyny of a police culture that refused to protect sex workers from killers.

These examples demonstrate the critical power of objective, professional and methodical activist journalism which serves to highlight deep systemic flaws and persists in the quest for truth and justice. I'll keep supporting this kind of journalism, hoping that by lending my ears I'm working to reject systems which prioritise protecting themselves rather than seeking truth and then justice. ◀

Photo by Lightfield studios/Shutterstock.com

Clare Curran, former MP, is a committed advocate and representative on social justice issues and a writer of novels.





CONFLICT, WAR & PEOPLE TRAFFICKING

Kevin Clements outlines how war creates chaos in which the unscrupulous operate exploitatively with impunity.

ACCORDING TO THE Book of Revelation, the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse are conquest, war, hunger and death. These apocalyptic characters are present in far too many horrific wars at the moment. The wars in Sudan, Gaza, Ukraine and Myanmar, for example, are all casting a deep and bloody stain on each country and a challenge to our common humanity. But each of these wars is also generating a fifth horseman — namely a complete breakdown in social and political order, economic well-being, food security, and a collapse of basic education and health services and ineffective policing. The removal of these services makes the preservation of human dignity almost impossible and people living in war zones are confronted with existential dilemmas that all of us living in more peaceful environments never have to face.

PERIL IN DISRUPTION OF SOCIAL ORDER

In these challenging circumstances, normative order is stretched and often disappears as individuals focus on survival. The anarchic conditions that are left generate intense human vulnerability and create ripe conditions for the direct exploitation of frightened and hopeless individuals.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, for example, generated millions of refugees who left their homelands for uncertain futures in the rest of the world. Those who chose to remain were and are confronted by abnormal conditions that test their basic values and the taken-for-granted normative expectations of peacetime. It is in response to these tumultuous conditions that unscrupulous individuals engage in human trafficking, enslavement and the sexual exploitation of both women and men.

According to the most recent International Labour Organization (ILO) study, there are an estimated 49.6 million people currently living in modern slavery around the world. This alarming number includes 27.6 million in forced labour and sex trafficking and 22 million in forced marriage (ILO, Global Estimates of Modern Slavery, 2022).

As the Russian war continues in Ukraine, Israel continues its attacks on Gaza and bloody conflicts in Myanmar and Sudan worsen, the conditions for exploitative trafficking are ripe. There is a long history of increased trafficking risks in times of conflict.

ECONOMIC VULNERABILITIES EXPLOITED

Trafficking is relatively easy in war conditions because war

intensifies social, emotional and economic pressures on all those caught up in or escaping from it. War and conflict generate vulnerabilities which create ripe conditions for sexual abuse and labour trafficking. Aside from the physical destruction of lands, resources and buildings, there is additional damage to all economic sectors. Populations in war face food and fuel shortages, increased unemployment, homelessness and more.

Traffickers prey on this economic vulnerability by promising safe migration routes from the war zone, new jobs, safe housing or essential food. In the absence of a normal economy, desperate people search for alternative livelihoods and in the process frequently find themselves trafficked. This nasty business is enhanced by a breakdown in law and order and many incentives to engage in criminal behaviour.

CONFLICT RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The presence of armed groups and a plentiful supply of small arms and light weapons provides coercive capacity for the traffickers to press individuals into forced labour or sexual bondage. Being faced with armed gangs, militias and unscrupulous soldiers, individuals are often willing to trade entrapment and bondage for basic necessities and the illusion of companionship and momentary security.

This gives rise to what the United Nations calls Conflict-Related Sexual Violence (CRSV). This is a subgroup of general trafficking but is focused on sexual slavery and exploitation and includes rape (specifically prohibited by the United Nations as a weapon of war) sexual slavery, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilisation, forced abortion, forced prostitution, forced marriage or any other form of sexual violence.

This conflict-related sexual violence speaks to the specific vulnerability of women but it also includes sexual crimes against men, girls and boys. CRSV generates high levels of personal trauma and often results in severe stigmatisation and an inability to return to normal social and political life after conflict.

The horrors of this behaviour often mean that individuals who experience such violence are even more vulnerable to predatory traffickers.

CRSV continues to be used as a means of torture and a war tactic in various countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria and Gaza. In all these countries, CRSV has led to very serious violations of human rights but because of widespread social breakdown the perpetrators are rarely brought to account and continue to operate in chaotic environments with absolute impunity.

In Afghanistan, for example, women and girls are sold or forced into marriage and reduced and kept in slavery by Taliban forces. In Myanmar, the Burmese army and different militias engage in sexual slavery against the Rohingya. In Libya and Yemen, armed groups and transnational traffickers rape and sexually enslave amid a deepening humanitarian crisis.

DIFFICULT WORK CONDITIONS FOR AGENCIES

In these disorganised contexts it is very difficult for humanitarian organisations and the United Nations to prevent trafficking, protect and assist victims of trafficking and to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators. So the gruesome business continues, building on the fear, vulnerability and despair of all those caught up in conflict.

PERPETRATORS NEED TO ACCOUNT

Becoming aware of the problem is the first step towards developing mechanisms for investigating CRSV. But the forensic research that raises awareness is not helpful unless there are mechanisms for bringing perpetrators to account in tribunals that are capable of prosecuting and punishing those who engage in these crimes against humanity.

The obvious institution for this kind of justice is the International Criminal Court (ICC). Its mandate is to investigate, prosecute and try individuals accused of committing the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole: the crime of genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression.

PROBLEM THAT USA IS NOT A MEMBER OF ICC

CRSV is certainly a crime against humanity and a war crime and the ICC has been successful in prosecuting individuals who have committed such crimes. The United States is not a member of the ICC, however, and doesn't recognise its jurisdiction. This provides some cover for perpetrators (especially those under the wing of the US) to continue their criminal behaviour. And the ICC does not have resources to prosecute all those who are committing trafficking or acts of sexual violence.

NEW ZEALAND HAS A PREVENTION ROLE

It is important, therefore, that religious groups, civil society actors, Interpol, national governments and the United Nations focus more attention on this reprehensible behaviour so that trafficking and sexual violence can be eliminated.

The United Nations has made a good start on this. In 2010, the General Assembly adopted the Global Plan of Action to combat Trafficking in Persons and established a Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking Persons. This urged governments worldwide to take coordinated and consistent measures to defeat this scourge.

Let's focus attention here in Aotearoa on ways in which our Government can help promote these initiatives so that we stop New Zealand being a destination for any traffickers; and begin the challenging task of preventing trafficking globally; and providing support for victims so that they might resume their place in normal society free of the stigma and trauma of being trafficked or sexually violated. ✦

Photo by Anatta Tan/Shutterstock.com

Kevin P Clements is the Director of the Toda Peace Institute. He was the founding Professor of the National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Otago University.



Clothes Shopping Raises Questions

Year 12 students at Baradene College, Auckland write about their awareness of modern slavery in the production of cheap, readily available fast fashion clothes.

WHEN I WAS around 10 my family and I watched a documentary about fast fashion in industries like H&M. This documentary opened my eyes to what other kids who were younger than me at the time were facing, and I got passionate about it, and I would get angry and annoyed at anyone who would have an H&M bag. My aunty came around one time with an H&M bag and I got angry at her until she told me that I buy from fast fashion brands too. This shocked me because I didn't realise that many companies exploit their workers and I went into a deep dive of researching about it. As I got older my awareness of these issues got clouded and just died out, until it was brought up again in my Year 12 Religious Education class. As we learnt more about how the victims of exploitation are being stripped of their human dignity, my eyes were opened again. As a Catholic, I know that every human is made in the image of God, so no person should be treated like those victims are. I have tried to make changes in my shopping habits but it just feels so hard because so many affordable companies exploit their workers and there are always scandals going on. So it's hard to make a change when all I want is, say, a nice and affordable shirt, but that nice shirt comes with the cost of people's lives. I do try my best to act with the little things I do like donating my old clothes and buying second-hand.

Katie O'Connor

I FEEL MODERN slavery in the 21st century is fuelled by the lack of patience we have today. We want things instantly and cheap, without thinking about the consequences. I became aware of this when Shein's popularity skyrocketed and that Temu was launched and sponsored the Rugby World Cup. These platforms were normalised, and people were reluctant to see the consequences and the damaging effects it has on those behind the production. Unless you have the money to buy products that are made with no slavery involved, it is impossible to find affordable clothes, which is another reason why people turn to these platforms. The fast



Shein E2wear Women's Contrast Color Star Print T...
100+ sold recently
NZ\$15.95



fashion industry is insanely large and there isn't much a single person can do. Therefore, as Catholics, we should come together and plan movements and actions we can do or take. We can begin with the most important rule we could ever learn: "Treat others how you would like to be treated." We are all made in the image of God, as equals. Once we start acting like this, then change can begin to occur. Approaching these issues can seem difficult, so keeping human dignity in the forefront of our thinking can make all the difference.

Jessamyn O'Brien

I FIRST BECAME aware of modern slavery when I was about 12. However, I first really understood it when I was about 16 when my dad and I were watching a documentary on factories in China. Although there weren't many words as the documentary mainly focused on the inside of the workshops, my dad and I quickly understood the severity of the situation involving modern slavery. Multiple people who worked at these factories talked about how they weren't getting paid that day because their boss didn't want to pay them, or they didn't get enough done to be paid. The jobs are advertised as a quick way to make money when that really isn't the case. People working within these sweatshops and factories are abused physically and verbally daily, and are paid well below a living wage and often don't have another choice, because without this they wouldn't be able to afford to live. As a Catholic, I have the same perspective on this as the Pope and that is that slavery is "a crime against humanity". It is cruel and wrong and if everyone committed to make a change, it could be done. Raising awareness, educating, and not buying from stores such as H&M, Zara and Temu is the first step and are things that everyone can do — including people my age. The next would be enforcing harsher punishments on the people caught conducting modern slavery by creating more laws that protect people that are vulnerable to these types of situations.

Caitlin Lawrence



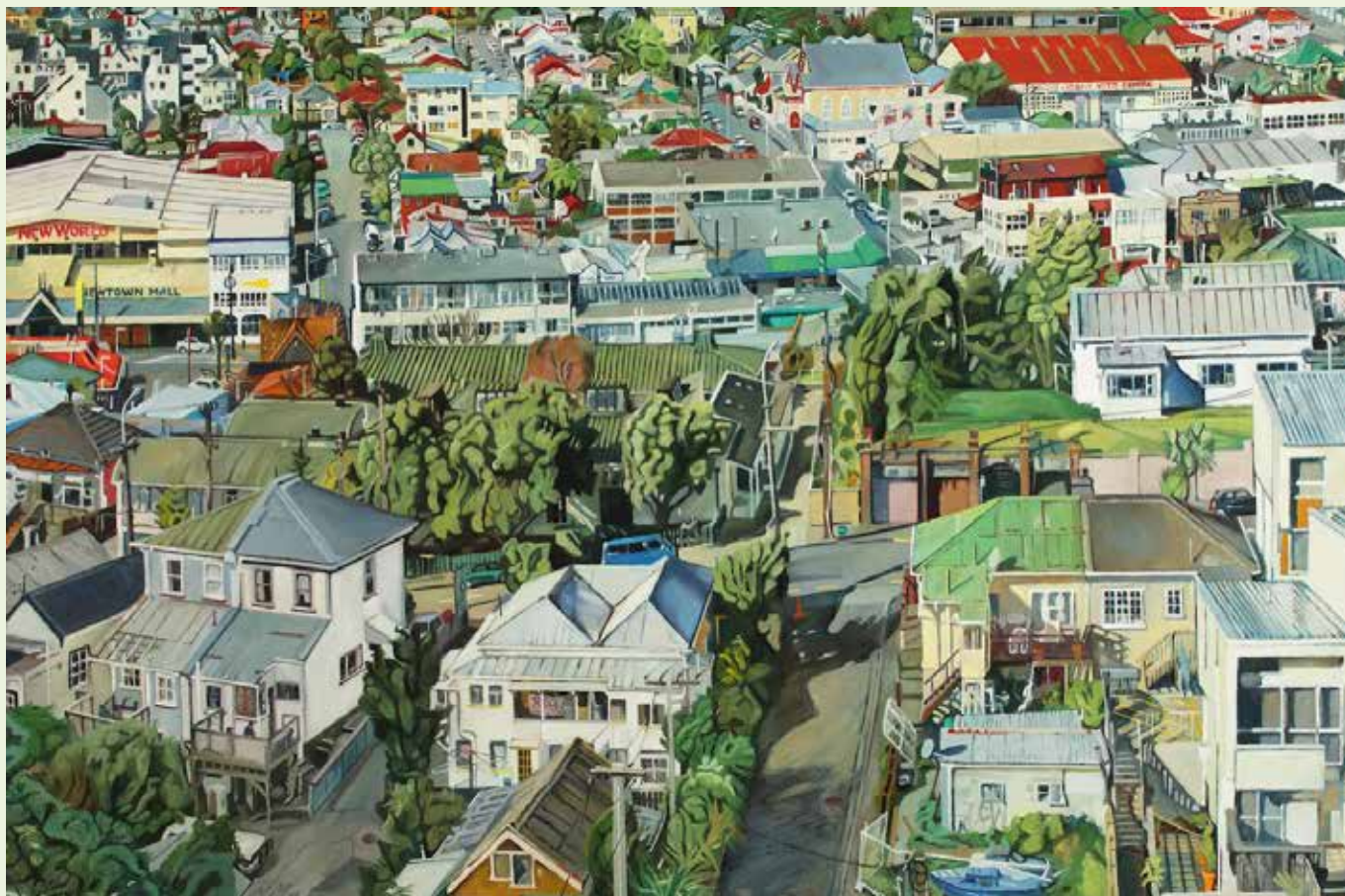
WHEN I WAS younger, the image I held of a slave was not a modern one. In fact slavery seemed to be a thing of the past. It was only when I grew up and learnt more in school that I realised slavery and exploitation are still very prevalent. Learning about the fast fashion industry, the impact it has on people's lives, and the abuse people suffer because of it, made me aware of the fact that anything you own could be a product of slavery. As a young woman still in high school, I don't have a lot of power to help these people, but naturally as a teenage girl the biggest role I likely play in this issue is as a consumer. It led me to think about where I shop, but it seems so daunting when companies are not always transparent about the origins of their products. How can you be sure what you're wearing is ethically made? I still don't have the answer, but I avoid shops such as Shein, and other notorious companies. The Catholic Social Teaching on human dignity illustrates how all humans have an innate dignity, as we are made in the image and likeness of God. In Religious Education, we're applying Catholic Social Teaching to this issue, and it's really broadened my understanding. I found it interesting and surprising to learn someone had been convicted of having slaves in New Zealand. This made me realise slavery is a lot closer to home than I thought.

Alice McLaughlin

MODERN SLAVERY AND human trafficking is an issue that is happening all around the world and here in Aotearoa too. People's rights are being violated; they are being treated as a commodity. Through my Religious Education class I was able to learn about supply chains and traces of modern slavery, for example, how a jacket itself might not be made through slavery but the zip might be. Even though it may not seem like it, young women can do many things about modern slavery. Getting educated about it or raising awareness about modern slavery/human trafficking ensures that people are aware that modern slavery is going on right here in NZ, and that is a violation of people's basic human rights. You could donate to an organisation which is focused on helping those who have just come out of situations of modern slavery, providing them with food and shelter and helping them get back up on their feet again. One action I am taking to help stop modern slavery is to reuse and recycle. This is sustainable and reduces the demand for new goods that might have been produced using slave labour. By small and effective actions, we can reduce worker exploitation and contribute to creating a more ethical world where human dignity, human rights, and fair labour practices are valued.

Molly Walsh ♦

Photo P7 by Rio Lecatompessy on Unsplash



SPENDING AND SAVING IN OUR COMMON HOME

Mary Betz *discusses how developing ecological economics is essential for the common good of Aotearoa and for Earth's community.*

NOT SO LONG ago, just the word “economics” in a book or article title would make me run a mile. But as I read more, I learned to see economics as more than theories and numbers. We can think of economics very practically as its literal translation from the Greek, “management of the household”— which could be our own home, our city, nation, or world. Our households use money, but also human creativity, energy and choice — as well as the food, clothing, housing materials and energy that come from Sun and Earth.

While resetting our understanding of economics, let's also broaden our understanding of ecology. As an ecologist, I studied how all kinds of creatures related to one another and their physical environments. In an integral ecology, we count humans as “creatures”, too, with all our complex social, economic and ecological interactions.

Ecological economics, then, is the art and science of how Earth and all its creatures can better be in relationship with one another, living as we do, in one household.

THE STATE OF OUR HOUSEHOLD

We don't have to look far to understand that our environment, including the human family, is in trouble. “Natural” disasters like hurricanes, atmospheric rivers, flooding, heatwaves, drought and wildfires are increasingly made worse by our cravings for more consumer goods and overuse of fossil fuels. Consumerism and disregard for Earth have caused us to pollute freshwaters and oceans, deplete soils, deforest our land and release excess carbon, resulting in rampant climate change and loss of fellow species.

Not only do we need to reverse the ecological damage we have caused, we must also address the inadequate food, housing, healthcare, education and income suffered by so many people. The richest 1 per cent — that includes most of us readers — own 46 per cent of global wealth while the poorest 53 percent own 1.2 per cent (IMF and Oxfam).

Inequality is implicated in many of our social ills including mental illness, drug use, obesity, violence and other crime, school incompletion, distrust of one another,

endangerment of democracy, economic stability and ecological degradation (Wilkinson & Pickett, *The Spirit Level* and Raworth, *Doughnut Economics*).

Our massive social and environmental problems can drive us to hopelessness and paralysis. But what power do we have to alter seemingly inescapable trajectories?

CHALLENGE OF LAUDATO SI'

The state of our “household” — our common home — led Pope Francis to write his encyclical, *Laudato Si'* (2015). He asked us to heed these cries of Earth and the poor. In 2021 the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform was launched, with seven goals which point us toward the radical changes needed to transform our world. The third of these goals is ecological economics.

Delving into ecological economics can help us address ecological degradation and economic inequality by enabling us to make ecologically and socially just choices in the economic decisions we make in our homes, workplaces and nation.

Some of the actions suggested by the *Laudato Si'* Action Platform for practising ecological economics are ones we are familiar with but need to integrate more diligently into our lives, like lending, repairing and recycling our consumer goods, and sharing what we make or grow.

CONSCIOUS CONSUMERISM

Other actions involve research and reflection, prompting us to question, for example, how we consume. Is the kwhla timber for my deck and the palm oil in many of my purchases (from margarine and biscuits to cattle feed for my beef) produced sustainably — that is, in a way that is good for land, air, water and people?

Can I reduce carbon emissions by buying locally produced goods? Can I limit my meat intake and transport myself in ways that limit the use of fossil fuels?

Are my shoes, clothes, electronics and food manufactured by companies that pay a living wage and have fair working conditions? Websites like UK www.ethicalconsumer.org and Australian www.ethical.org.au can help.

Taking a “total cost of ownership” approach to consuming requires us to consider environmental and social impacts over the life of our purchases, from growth or extraction of their primary materials through all phases of manufacturing, transportation, storage, point of sale and eventual disposal.

It's a big ask, but web searches can be eye-openers with regard to the manufacturing practices of the oil, mining, agricultural, forestry and clothing industries in the production of our consumer goods.

ETHICAL INVESTING

Ethical banking, investing and insuring also need our attention. Where do banks, insurance companies, KiwiSaver and managed funds keep our money?

At www.mindfulmoney.nz we can find out if our KiwiSaver or other funds are invested in companies with

unfair labour or environmental practices, or produce weapons, fossil fuels or tobacco. There we can choose options that avoid harmful use of our money, or “impact investments” which invest in renewable energy or other positive development.

For banks and insurance companies, we can search their websites or make phone calls to find out where their funds are invested.

A “TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP” ... REQUIRES US TO CONSIDER ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACTS ... FROM GROWTH OR EXTRACTION OF THEIR PRIMARY MATERIALS THROUGH ALL PHASES OF MANUFACTURING, TRANSPORTATION, STORAGE, POINT OF SALE AND EVENTUAL DISPOSAL.

While most of us instinctively act when those near us need food, care or transport, it takes a little more effort to act on behalf of those far away who are affected by what we buy and where we keep our money.

Spending and saving without knowing the ecological economics behind supply chains or company investments can keep Chinese clothing factories or New Zealand dairy plants burning coal, or contribute to the million African children working in dangerous mines for our electronics.

CHANGING OUR GOALS AROUND MONEY

Our faith provides the framework of values we know as Catholic Social Teaching to help us practise ecological economics. If we truly believe in the common good, solidarity, the protection of the poor and vulnerable and the care of our Earth, we will let go of the idea that we must maximise our money, instead using the money we have in a way that provides for our families and futures, yet also promotes the well-being of other human beings and our Earth — or at least ensures we do them no harm.

In 70 years of Sundays in Catholic parishes, I have never been asked to think about how my spending and saving habits affected people around the world, or challenged to think about whether my values translated into how I used my money.

The first question for anyone who wants to be part of transforming our world is: What are my values? If they include peace and justice, then we do have the power as well as the responsibility to integrate social and ecological values into how we manage our time, energy, talents and money? ♦

Newtown from Adelaide Road, Wellington

by Marianne Muggeridge © 1300 x 900mm Oil on canvas
Painted from life Used with permission
www.mariannemuggeridge.nz

Mary Betz lives in Waitākere, West Auckland, and is a writer with a background in ecology, theology, justice and peace. She has two daughters and is a proud grandmother.





RISE UP AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Jeanette Atabelo shares her experience of the Talitha Kum General Assembly in Rome.

I TRAVELLED TO Rome with Marist Missionary Sister Catherine Jones in May for the Second General Assembly of Talitha Kum, a global network against the trafficking of human persons. Women Religious established the network 15 years ago but now there are many members – myself included – who are not Sisters.

I've been a member of the Dunedin branch of Talitha Kum for the last five years. We've focused on raising awareness about trafficking and modern slavery. In Aotearoa, several cases of worker exploitation and slavery have come up in our courts in recent years. Our branch of Talitha Kum has focused on activities for church people and the general public, and we've connected with other community groups who are also working against exploitation. I'm a secondary school teacher and last year I organised a week-long awareness-raising project in my school.

The General Assembly was centred on the theme "Journeying Together to End Human Trafficking: Compassion in Action for Transformation." You can imagine the mix of people – 173 delegates from 90 countries from every continent, women and men Religious, lay people, different languages, young and old, survivors – all committed to eradicating modern slavery and human trafficking and the recovery of survivors.

Many delegates were working at the coalface with victims and survivors of trafficking and exploitation in their countries. They shared their experiences and we listened to one another, acknowledging the support received from Talitha Kum's strength as an international network of networks.

Human trafficking and exploitation are complex issues needing many strategies to combat their influence. I was both horrified at what I learned and encouraged to keep on with our work in New Zealand. We heard how the rates of trafficking, the ways of trafficking and the corruption around trafficking, are rising. And, how the impacts of war and climate change are forcing more and more people from their home countries in search of safety and opportunities elsewhere. For many, safety is a mirage because disruption and social upheaval creates cover for traffickers to prey unimpeded on disoriented, desperate and vulnerable women, men and children.

This is the challenge for all of us in the Talitha Kum networks. We listened to powerful testimonies of individuals who have survived slavery. These survivors begged all people to walk the path of dignity and ensure that no one is left behind. We heard from an 80-year-old Sister who has worked against trafficking for 50 years in Lebanon. Throughout that time she has seen wave after wave of refugees come into her country from the wars in surrounding countries. She has not lost hope and continues with other Talitha Kum members to stand against exploitation. Opportunities to connect, share insights and strategise with these and other delegates meant we quickly learned the significance of solidarity and collective action for addressing the complex and evolving issues around human trafficking.

At the Assembly we renewed our commitment and forged a comprehensive five-year plan to combat modern slavery. We have three priorities for the next years. The first priority is to make systemic changes in the face of new vulnerabilities. The second is to have a holistic, survivor-centred approach and the third is to broaden our collaboration and partnerships with others also working against trafficking in its various types. Each network will work on the priorities specific to their situations.

Talitha Kum New Zealand focuses on raising awareness in church and society about human trafficking and modern slavery. We have three groups – Auckland, Wellington and Dunedin – and are always pleased to welcome new members. ✦

For more information:

Talitha Kum website: www.talithakum.info/en

Talitha Kum YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/@TalithaKumUISG

To join a Talitha Kum Aotearoa New Zealand Group contact:
Noreen McGrath PBVM: nora.c@xtra.co.nz

Jeanette Atabelo, a Religious Education teacher at St Kevin's College, Oamaru, is passionate about social justice issues and enjoys gardening and fishing.



Synodal Virtues: Courage to Change

THE LAST MOMENT in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* is deeply disturbing — the characters do not move! They remain just as they are. Nothing happens. A theatre-goer is left with the eerie fear that this is just going to go on and on and on. Worse, it might start all over again — a long circle, closed and closing in. There is no escape!

The coming second session of the synod in October — and all our discussions of synodality — can evoke similar fears.

For some, there is the suspicion that it will all end in nice words, a few pious platitudes, and one of those dreary “post-synodal documents” written by the various departments of the Vatican and signed off by the Bishop of Rome. We have seen a dozen of them since Vatican II. They are not remembered; no one can name them, nothing has changed. But we have seen problems multiply and somehow knew that both John Paul II and Benedict XVI really wanted the older paradigm of Church to be continued.

But ...

Right now there is a deep desire for fundamental change in the Catholic Church and many feel we will simply miss the boat: it will all return to where it was — and the prospect is decay and death.

Others — as one can see in many of the episcopal documents relating to the synod that have already been issued — are just longing for it all to be over!

In October there will be a complex series of debates, but again, this may be a substitute for action. It will avert the deep changes to a lifestyle of clericalism that fits like a comfortable old shoe and will not disturb a hierarchical vision of the Church that makes extravagant claims to being the will of God.

Surprisingly, most seem to realise that the old certainties of “Christendom” where the Church — or, at least, its clergy — were the parallel sacral authority system to the state has somehow gone and is now well past its sell-by date.

The last vestiges of unofficial theocracies (such as Ireland and Quebec) have been swept away. Indeed, what was left of Catholicism as a “brand” has been scuppered by the revelations of clerical abuse towards children and the vulnerable, and by shocking stories of church-run orphanages and schools. In a few places there are still episcopal conferences — such as Spain and Italy — trying to hold off the deluge, but if they even glimpse the media by accident they must know that the battle is lost.

But ...

Let us remind ourselves of two factors about human life that used to get a chapter each in textbooks on conversion and grace.



First, we can know the good — or recognise the bad — and still not have the energy or willingness to set out on the path of repentance, *metanoia*, conversion. This truth of moral theology was recognised proverbially in the phrase: the road to Hell is paved with good intentions. In the classroom it was pointed out that here was the realism of Christianity in contrast with the idealism of Plato. It was not simply enough to know the good, we need a special energy to actually embrace it. That energy was named as grace — but it is actually the Holy Spirit's empowerment.

Second, even if we set out to make amends there are all sorts of intermediate problems that have to be overcome. The classic old example was the person who wanted to give up smoking and then might have to face ridicule when she or he refused the offer of a cigarette. The intention to quit was real, but the accidental problems on the way could prove the stumbling block — and this required courage. Courage is the virtue that we need to do the good when there are roadblocks to be overcome. Courage flows from grace, but is actually the Spirit, the Paraclete, the Comforter, that is the source of Christian courage.

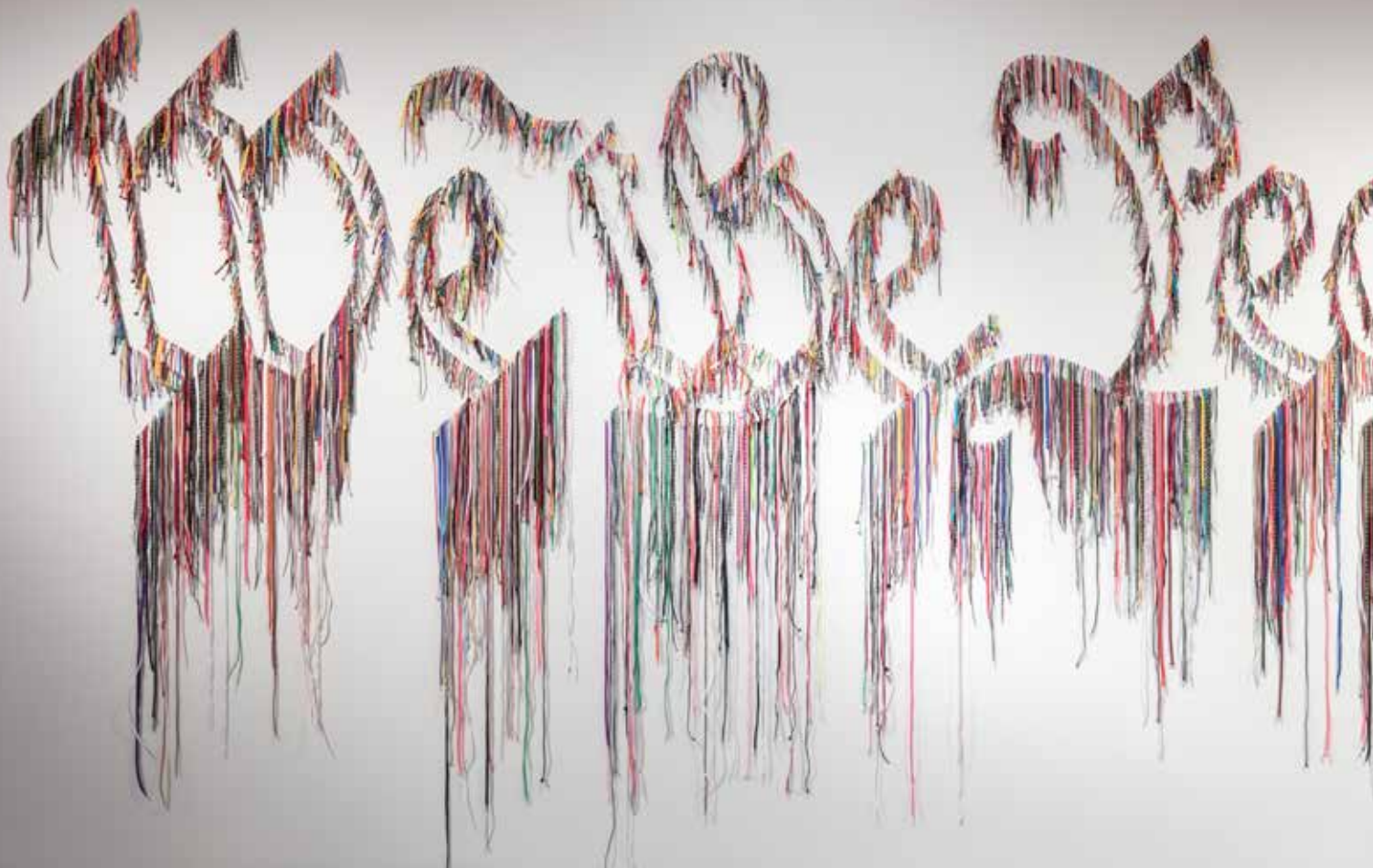
Courage to Change

Change — with its inherent rejection of the past and openness to the uncertainty of the future — is always difficult. Religion as a force within human societies is inherently conservative: its rituals enact the group's memories, its values are rooted in a tradition from the past, and its specialists (ie, its equivalents to Christian clergy) are seen as guardians who root the present in the group's antiquity. Christianity as a religion, of its nature, tends to default to this attitude to itself and to society.

But Christianity also claims that it is something new — a new time, a new age, the beginning of a new creation. This radically challenges its nature as a “religion” and it is the work of the Holy Spirit making us the living presence of the Christ in the world. Alas! A human religion with its certainties and its pomp is awfully attractive. The Spirit's small voice can so easily be lost in religion's noise. Listening needs courage. ◀

Thomas O'Loughlin is Professor Emeritus of Historical Theology. His latest book is *In Christ Now We Meet Both East and West: On Catholic Eucharistic Action* (2023).





MY EXPERIENCE OF THE SYNOD

Manuel Beazley *was one of the three people from Aotearoa who took part in the Universal Phase of the Synod on Synodality at the Vatican in October 2023.*

I ARRIVE AT St Peter's Square to join an ecumenical prayer vigil before the start of the Synod Assembly. Through the sea of people I immediately notice the towering figure of Wellington's Archbishop Paul Martin — "tall Paul". I proceed towards him. Not long after our meeting, Fr Dennis Nacorda (Catholic Parish of Wairarapa) joins us, he too having spotted tall Paul. We take a selfie and send it back home. This Universal Phase of the Synod on Synodality, of walking together, has begun.

Following a vigil, some 300 synod participants are taken to a retreat centre in Sacrofano, about 30 kms north of the Vatican. The retreat allowed space and time for the Synod participants to meet one another and spend time in reflection. Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP has been assigned the task of delivering the talks to Synod participants which will set us on our road ahead.

RETREAT FOR PARTICIPANTS

As we gather to hear Fr Timothy's first talk, I become increasingly aware of the magnitude of what has been asked of me. I start to enumerate the scores of people back home who would be more fit for the task of participating in this Assembly. But then I hear Fr Timothy's first words:

"We are radically incomplete ... and we need each other." My feelings of inadequacy and incompleteness give way to a great sense of hope and freedom, knowing that all of the participants of this Assembly are incomplete and can only find our completeness when we are *syn hodos* — on the road together.

The mealtimes at the retreat were what I would imagine the first Pentecost to have been like. A cacophony of voices spoke in various tongues. Could this be a portent that this Synod will become a new Pentecost? I certainly hoped so. My own Māori sensibilities were awakened during our meals. There is something special about sitting down with someone to eat. A Māori saying is: "He wairua tō te kai." There is a spirit within what we eat and with those we share it with.

After the three days of the retreat, we returned to the Vatican for the opening day of the Assembly. Thousands of people gathered to ask the Holy Spirit to guide the church and in a special way to guide the work of the Synod. I took solace in knowing that God has sent the Spirit as Helper and Guide; for certainly that help and guidance would be needed in abundance for the next four weeks!



LITTLE CIRCLES

Following Mass we entered St Paul VI Hall, colloquially called the “Aula”. The Aula is an auditorium used for various gatherings including many of the larger audiences given by the Pope. The entire front section of the Aula had been cleared of seats to accommodate the 450 or so people involved in the Assembly.

Large round tables were positioned in the cleared section of the Aula, each seating around 10-12 people. The round tables are a marked difference to the arrangement of the usual synod hall located on an upper floor of the Aula. In that setting, participants are seated in an amphitheatre style and seated according to rank. At the first session of this Assembly we were told that our sitting around a table, visible to each other and at the same level, communicated the basic premise that every voice was equal, reaffirming the equal dignity of our Baptism.

We were assigned groups according to languages and according to the topics of our preference drawn from the *Instrumentum Laboris* — the working document for the first session of the Assembly. The groups were called *circoli minore* — little circles. If you didn’t speak Italian, Spanish, French or Portuguese, then you were placed in an English-speaking group.

The English-speaking groups were the most diverse. The groups I was placed in included people from Continental Africa, Germany, Australia, India, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Myanmar, USA, Ireland, Poland, Ukraine,

Malta, Papua New Guinea. In one group I was placed with a familiar face: Archbishop Paul.

SPIRIT-FILLED LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Our group conversations employed the methodology of “A Conversation in the Spirit”, a process which involved taking a focusing question around which we held three conversations. We were exhorted by Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich, the Relator General of the Synod, to exercise “courageous speaking and gracious listening” when holding these conversations.

As well as listening to the voices of those at the table, we were also reminded to leave space to listen to the Spirit. Many times through the conversations we paused as a group for several minutes of silent prayer and reflection, calling on the guidance of the Spirit in our conversations.

IN-BETWEEN TIME

The process required a considerable amount of stamina. One full cycle of the three-round conversations took an average of three days. We were working five full days of the week and a half-day on Saturdays. Sundays were always free, but we were encouraged to celebrate Eucharist in a parish in the suburbs of Rome. Our other “free” days were taken up by activities such as visiting and praying in Roman catacombs.

TREASURED EXPERIENCE

Some media reports both at the time of the Assembly and in the weeks after, spoke of discord, walk-outs and shouting matches. I, perhaps, was at the other Assembly!

The conversations I took part in were characterised by respectful engagement, robust discussion and a genuine love for the church. We didn’t agree on everything we discussed — but then total agreement was neither expected nor the goal of the Assembly. Not many institutions in Earth, if any, could do what the church did that month: bring together people from all corners of the globe and hold us in an embrace that kept us united.

I feel immensely privileged to have been asked to attend the Assembly. The four weeks in Rome provided me and perhaps all who were following the Synod an opportunity to see the catholicity of Christ’s Church. When I think back to the first session, the very best part was the ability to come into close contact with Catholic leaders from all over the world. The fruit of our work last October will percolate in the mind of the church in preparation for the second Synod session this year in October. ✦

We the People (2011) by Nari Ward

Made with shoelaces 96 x 324 inches © Nari Ward Studio

Used courtesy the artist and Lehmann Maupin, New York, Seoul, and London, and GALLERIA CONTINUA Photo by Wes Magyar

Manuel Beazley is Vicar for Māori in the diocese of Auckland, and co-ordinator of the Māori Pastoral Care Plan. He has previously served as a youth minister.





Food & Community

Lilly Johnson *talks to Mark Lemalu about the community dinner that he and his family help serve for people in her local area.*

A MUM FRIEND learned about the Birkdale Community House hosting a dinner for our local community. She suggested that we take our children along that evening as a play date. As an exhausted parent of two preschoolers any excuse not have to think about dinner is something I'll jump at. That was how we came to meet Mark Lemalu and his family. Mark brings his four college-aged children from the other side of the bridge, 40 mins in traffic, to serve food at the community dinner on Mondays. They were holding signs on the roadside welcoming us and inviting others to join the dinner. Our children immediately gained attention from other volunteers, who would often whisk the babies away so we mothers could have a bite untethered. Our children loved the attention and the dessert. I've been going along most weeks, when I can, and thoroughly enjoy meeting new people in the local community and having a meal cooked for me. I was intrigued about the people who supplied the meal and talked to Mark about his family's involvement.

What's the project all about and why in this part of Auckland?

LIFE Community Kitchens started in 2015 through a partnership with LIFE Community and Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board. Community is one of the four pillars of LIFE Church — Church, Community, Business and Kingdom. There are now 11 LIFE Community Kitchens across Auckland, with three of them on the North Shore — in

Northcote, Beach Haven and Birkdale. These Community Kitchens serve the people of these communities, offering help and hope through hot meals, fellowship and bringing the reality of Jesus to life.

How did you get involved?

Our kids were serving in different areas in church and as a parent, I felt that revelation to walk alongside them in serving. There was a call put out on our LIFE Church Facebook page for drivers and I put my hand up. I've been serving here for just over a year now. The best part is that with our kids attending St Paul's College and Marist College, the expectation to fulfill their service hours is completed here in a space they love.

How has the venture gone so far?

It's been very, very good. There has been growth, too. When I started, it was just Beach Haven but we now serve at Birkdale on the same night. What I love about the Monday serving is that it uplifts me and this carries me through the rest of my week. Our kids also get to connect and serve in another community, and this encourages them to be brave and kind.

What kind of feedback do you hear?

The gratitude is always there and there are many who so appreciate a place to sit and share a meal with others. Some are not just hungry but also lonely. Some need a good meal

and a night off cooking. And some do not have a faith but come to know Christ through good food and conversation. A memory I cherish was seeing my kids walk some of our elderly community members into the hall. They held umbrellas to shield them from the rain and listened to them share about their day. One lady said she "felt like a celebrity".

Who is involved with you?

We have a team of people from our church and the wider community who come together to bring our Community Kitchens to life. These people cook, drive, connect, serve and much more. And I've had the privilege of driving and serving alongside my children, too.

How does it all work?

LIFE Community Kitchen cooks and serves up to 1,800 meals a week across 11 locations. The dedicated, passionate team of staff and volunteers consistently run all the operations from pantry to plate for 48 weeks a year.



Has it been what you expected?

Yes, and more. I knew it would be rewarding to help others and I've enjoyed connecting with new people every week. Both the people coming to serve and the people we get to serve are awesome.



Do you have worries about it?

Maybe just being able to meet the need.

There have been many times when our kitchens have been so full, but by the grace of God we have been able to feed all who come through.

How do you get the food?

Our food is sourced through the generosity of our LIFE Community which is one of the pillars of LIFE Church along with donors, sponsors and other funders.

How do you let people know about the venture?

LIFE Community Kitchens uses different social media platforms, word of mouth and we also have our amazing volunteers who hold up our signs to bring people in off the street.

What gives you and others involved the energy to keep going?

The values of our church are a foundation that we draw strength from. Being a place where everyone who comes through our doors feels a sense of "belonging". A place where once people connect, share, eat and have fellowship

they can begin to believe in the reality of who Jesus is and hopefully follow him. And finally, that all who come through our doors will "build" on their faith and encourage others to do the same through their commitment to live on purpose. Being the hands and feet of Jesus is an honour and a blessing. It is listening to people's stories, breaking bread together and sometimes offering prayer. Just being a welcoming and safe space for people helps to keep me going. And being able to show my kids what a cheerful heart serving looks like. Something I pray and hope they will teach their future children.

Why is giving food so important to you?

Because we are one of the families in need of this meal. I know what it's like to be vulnerable and to accept help with humility. The courage that it takes some of our



new families to just come in and say "yes" to the meal is inspiring. And I love that our kids get to see other perspectives of not just receiving the blessing of food but of being able to bless others.

What have you learned is the key to community building?

I think it's people willing to say "yes". "Yes" to serving with cheerful hearts. "Yes" to sacrificing time or energy. "Yes" to showing up. "Yes" to breaking away from isolation. "Yes" to connecting and fellowship. "Yes" to giving and even "yes" to receiving. And kindness. Being kind costs nothing but can mean everything. 💎

Dinner by Victoria Sukhasyan © Used with permission www.sukhasyan.com

Mark Lemalu and Merita have eight kids. They live in Botany Downs, East Auckland, and support their kids in academic, sports and cultural activities. They're involved in church and community.



In every war

He is the child in every war.
His eyes look down the barrels of guns.
His hands clutch the round of toys.
His mouth opens
and closes to hold cries.

He remembers the open mouths of small birds.
He thinks of the flight of the mother
thinks of the worm out early.

He is the child in every war,
His nose smells the comfort of jasmine.
His ears hear the tears of olives.
He is the child of every war.

By Anne Powell ©

From: *Enough Clear Water* (2001)





Photo by Anas-Mohammed/Shutterstock.com



Te Tiriti o Waitangi & Democracy

In this second part of the series, Anne Salmond considers the role of the Te Tiriti o Waitangi in New Zealand's emerging democracy.

LAST MONTH WE looked closely at the language of the Treaty, and how Māori understood it at the time. According to our understanding of Te Tiriti, when each rangatira signed the parchment, they forged their own alliance with Queen Victoria. In the Northern Wars that followed five years later after Treaty promises were broken, some rangatira and hapū fought with British troops, while others fought against them. The same thing happened in the Land Wars in the 1860s.

Treaty Is a Multilateral Agreement

Rather than a bilateral partnership between “the Maori race” and the Crown, then, Te Tiriti is a multi-lateral agreement in which each rangatira and their hapū gave kāwanatanga (the right to govern) to Queen Victoria, while retaining their tino rangatiratanga (the independent right) to manage their lands, ancestral treasures and relationships with the Crown.

At the same time, the Indigenous inhabitants of New Zealand with their tikanga were placed on an equal footing as persons with the inhabitants of England. In this arrangement, the mana of all parties is respected.

Te Ao Māori More Democratic than British Rule

Is this compatible with democracy? I would say so,

absolutely. Indeed, in 1840, life in te ao māori was in many ways more democratic than it was in Europe. As Frederick Maning, an early settler in the Hokianga, observed, “The natives are so self-possessed, opinionated, and republican, that the chiefs have at ordinary times but little control over them, except in very rare cases, where the chief happens to possess a singular vigour of character to enable him to keep them under.”

Or as Francis Dart Fenton, a distinguished judge of the Land Court, remarked: “No system of government that the world ever saw can be more democratic than that of the Maoris. The chief alone has no power. The whole tribe deliberate on every subject, not only politically on such as are of public interest, but even judicially they hold their ‘komitis’ on every private quarrel. No individual enjoys influence or exercises power, unless it originates with the mass and is expressly or tacitly conferred by them.”

Māori Women Inherited Land

At a time when European married women did not enjoy property rights or the vote, Māori women inherited land from their parents and grandparents, and female rangatira and tohunga exercised considerable influence.

Children in Iwi

Contrary to contemporary *Once Were Warriors* myths, too, European eyewitnesses reported that family life in Māori communities was generally affectionate and children were cherished.

For instance, according to Samuel Marsden, a leading missionary who visited New Zealand for the first time in 1814 (and could never be accused of being a “bleeding heart”): “I saw no quarrelling while I was there. They are kind to their women and children. I never observed either

with a mark of violence upon them, nor did I ever see a child struck.”

In 1840, the trader Joel Polack wrote: “It is not uncommon to see young children of tender years sitting next to their parents in the councils apparently listening with the greatest attention ... They ask questions, [and the chiefs] answer them with an air of respect, as if they were a corresponding age to themselves. I do not remember a request of an infant being treated with neglect, or a demand from one of them being slighted.”

British Law Severe for Women and Children

In the United Kingdom on the other hand, discipline through the criminal code and in everyday life was harsh and often very violent. Under the doctrine of “coverture,” women and children were legally “covered” by their husbands and fathers, who were entitled to use corporal punishment as a form of discipline, and married women had no independent property rights.

Class System in Force

The King or Queen was the head of state, and governance was shared between the House of Lords, the “upper House”, and the House of Commons. This reflected a powerful class system. At that time, the franchise was limited to men — and only men with a certain amount of property. In 1833 in England and Wales, for instance, only about 1 in 17 men who lived in towns and 1 in 24 men in rural areas had the franchise, while in Ireland, about 1 in 26 urban men and only 1 in 114 male country dwellers could vote.

Māori Loss Under British Law

For all of these reasons, Article 3 in the English draft of the Treaty, in which the Queen of England gave the Indigenous inhabitants “all the Rights and Privileges of British Subjects”, was not really much of a gift.

Under English rule, like the Highland Scots and the Irish, *tāngata Māori* — especially women — lost many of their ancestral freedoms, and any idea that the Treaty introduced modern democracy to New Zealand is mistaken.

When the first election was held in New Zealand in 1853, for instance, only men had the right to vote. They had to be British citizens, 21 years old or more, and as in Britain, own property over a certain value.

That excluded most Māori whose land was held in common by kin groups.

The right to vote was extended to all Māori men in 1867, who elected four Māori MPs to the House of Representatives; and to all European men in 1879.

In 1893, women, including Māori women, finally won the right to vote in national elections. This world-leading shift came about in part because Māori women enjoyed leadership roles and property rights at a time when these were denied to European women.

Challenges to Multi-lateral Equality of the Treaty

Given this historic background, there are many ironies in current debates about democracy and the Treaty.

Under the Queen’s promises in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, a

democracy might have emerged in New Zealand that was freer, more accountable and more just than that in Britain at the same time.

Instead of peace and tranquil living, however, there was war followed by large scale confiscations of land and harsh cultural repression.

From that time until now, the promise of equality for Indigenous persons in New Zealand has not been delivered, as contemporary statistics attest.

In Te Tiriti, the honour of Queen Victoria and her descendants is at stake, along with the *mana* of the *rangatira* who signed it. In 1975 when the Waitangi Tribunal was established to try and make amends for this dishonourable history and uphold the Queen’s promises, that was democracy in action supported by the wider electorate.

Under the Queen’s promises in Te Tiriti o Waitangi, a democracy might have emerged in New Zealand that was freer, more accountable and more just than that in Britain ... Instead ... there was war followed by large scale confiscations of land and harsh cultural repression.

Throughout our shared history, there have been intermittent struggles between those who try to uphold the Treaty of Waitangi and the honour of the Crown, and those who wish to disregard its promises.

When hapū have united to uphold their *mana*, in the *Kīngitanga* and *Kotahitanga*, for instance, this has almost invariably been in response to radical breaches of Te Tiriti — from the time of the Northern Wars and the Land Wars to the present.

It’s important to understand this dynamic. While Te Tiriti itself is a multi-lateral agreement between the various *rangatira*, their hapū and Queen Victoria, the Crown has always found it convenient to try and deal with hapū in larger groupings, whether as *iwi*, *iwi* groupings, “the Māori race”, or the “Māori people”.

At the same time, when Treaty promises are broken, hapū leaders join together to defend their people. The greater the threat, the wider the net is cast in forging these alliances.

This process is very visible in New Zealand at present, and in next month’s article I’ll consider the dangers of bi-racial framing and how wise government might operate in times of rising tensions. ◀

Battle of Ōhaeawai by Cyprian Bridge (ca 1845 460 x 610mm Oil on canvas)
In Fletcher Trust Collection Used courtesy of The Fletcher Trust

Anne Salmond, ONZ, DBE is Distinguished Professor of Māori Studies and Anthropology at the University of Auckland and an award-winning writer.





Highlighting Unjust Structures

*Co-director of Common Grace **Kate Day** explains why it is necessary to dismantle the unjust structures which prevent New Zealanders from accessing basic resources in this country.*

IN THESE BLEAK winter months Jesus's call to "love your neighbour" lands differently. I think of the couple sleeping rough in a business doorway. The woman in her 80s wrapped in blankets because her house is as cold as a fridge. These neighbours cannot access the basics.

Unjust Electricity Profits

Electricity is a basic. We rely on it to stay warm, cook dinner, power our devices and keep the lights on. It shocked me to learn that last year 6,540 New Zealand households were disconnected because they did not — or could not — pay for electricity. For many people, electricity is unaffordable.

Meanwhile, according to *Consumer NZ*, in the year to August 2023 four generator-retailers made a combined profit averaging \$7.4 million every day. They do not share this wealth.

Instead, when the companies disconnect households that can't afford to pay, they're allowed to charge them a disconnection fee and a further fee to reconnect them. These fees can total over \$300 and they add to debt or, in some cases, extend a household's time without power. They are a penalty for being poor.

Injustice in Access to Electricity

That 6,540 households were disconnected in a year is only part of the story. That figure excludes households on prepay electricity, many of whom disconnect regularly when their credit reaches zero.

As many as 30,000 households use prepay. Often it is the only way they can access electricity as they are locked out of other power plans because of poor credit scores. Despite the vulnerable nature of this group, prepay electricity has been found to cost more (although the companies involved now say that's no longer the case).

Disconnections of households on prepay are not even recorded. As health researcher Dr Kimberley O'Sullivan reports: "We have no idea how many households are sitting without electricity and for how long."

Electricity Authority Not Serving Poor

"Penalties for being poor" should not exist in a society where we love our neighbours. Jamie, a mother of four and prepay power customer, put it eloquently in a 2022 TV interview: "It should not be a privilege to have power."

These problems exist because the Electricity Authority, which sets the rules for retailers, has not done enough

to protect households struggling with electricity prices. They have not done enough because the voice of those within the electricity industry has been much louder than the voice of “ordinary consumers” — particularly the most vulnerable consumers.

Public Structure Is Unjust

This is a “structural injustice” in our country — a rigged system that is not serving our neighbours or our collective interests. And it’s an area where social justice challenges Christians.

“Penalties for being poor” should not exist in a society where we love our neighbours.

I belong to Common Grace Aotearoa — an organisation founded in 2023. It’s a community of Christians across Aotearoa contributing to the common good by helping to transform unjust structures in our society. We work by equipping and organising our members to run advocacy campaigns alongside the wider community and civil society to advance specific policy solutions. We focus in the areas of climate, economic justice and Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Action for Justice for Electricity Access

We have teams of volunteers working in these areas. To respond to energy hardship, we are calling on the Electricity Authority to ban disconnection fees; ensure prepay prices are fair; and introduce mandatory consumer protection rules for power companies. We have already seen some success.

Earlier this year, the Electricity Authority committed

to introduce binding rules for power companies from 1 January 2025. They also published disconnection statistics for the first time in nearly two years. These are exciting developments but so much more needs to be done.

Our team is currently researching disconnection fees to understand exactly what companies charge and how they justify these fees.

Action for Justice for Earth’s Climate

Our climate team is calling on the government to stop subsidising big polluters with free carbon credits in the Emissions Trading Scheme (see: www.endfreecredits.nz).

Action for Honouring Te Tiriti

To support efforts to honour Te Tiriti o Waitangi, we are offering a free video workshop, “Belonging in this Land: Treaty Basics from a Christian Perspective”, that already has been taken up by over 100 church communities (see: www.treatyandbelonging.nz).

We know that with enough New Zealanders working together for the common good we can analyse and dismantle oppressive and unjust structures. ✦

We invite readers to sign our
energy hardship petition at
www.everyoneconnectednz.com

Join our community at: www.commongrace.nz

Hope by Marise Rarere © Used with permission Prints are available:
email — marise.rarere@gmail.com

Kate Day (Pākehā) lives in Wellington with her husband and two preschool children. They are part of St Tom’s Anglican Church in Newtown.



Review

Shaping the Assembly: How Our Buildings Form Us in Worship

Edited by Thomas O’Loughlin

Published by Messenger Publications, 2023 (USD 49)

Reviewed by Jo Ayers

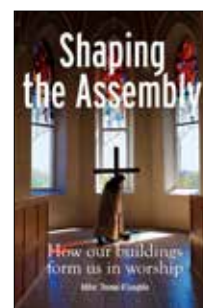
Thomas O’Loughlin (frequent writer in *TM*) edited this collection by liturgists, theologians, artists, architects and parish practitioners, including several from Aotearoa and Australia. His quote from Winston Churchill explains the power of space to influence our theology: “We shape our buildings, and then they shape us.”

Each chapter provokes reflection on liturgical space as a context for worshipping. Our challenge is to build new churches and change existing worship spaces to reflect and develop the faith of the church for today. Liturgical spaces need to reflect and invite the equality and participation of

all the baptised who are gathered.

The writers give examples of how different communities reinvented their existing spaces to make a theological statement about themselves in relation to God and the world in which they live. They acknowledged that making changes to liturgical space can be difficult. However, a strong theme was that churches need to be a sign that God is present and active in our world, shown by interaction with and services to the communities in which they stand.

Anyone with an interest in the development of a liturgy for a synodal church will value this book. ★



PILGRIMS ON THE ROAD OF LOVE

Zain Ali shares his experience of making the Umrah, the minor pilgrimage in Makkah, with his wife.

.....

IT'S JUST PAST midnight and we're in Saudi airspace heading towards the northern city of Madinah. As the Oman Air plane banks left then right we catch glimpses of the city lights below. I have been to Madinah before, but this time there's an important difference: my wife is sitting beside me. We've been travelling for almost 24 hours. Leaving Auckland, we first went to Malaysia, then on to Muscat, Oman. We adventured in Muscat, exploring the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, a seaside Souk, a heritage museum, before heading to a little café to try camel meat — surprisingly tasty, much like New Zealand lamb.

MADINAH

So, as our aircraft approached Madinah, pleasantly exhausted after a happy journey, I look over to check on my wife. There are tears in her eyes as the city below comes into full view. She waited all her life to see this. This

is where Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, is buried, and once we land we plan to head to the Prophet's Mosque. The Prophet's Mosque, or *masjid an-nabawi* in Arabic, is a grand structure with delicate and intricate Islamic art, lush green carpets and long corridors with archways that appear to stretch into infinity. The crown of the Mosque is its green dome, marking the spot where Muhammad is buried.

To my surprise, I found this second visit to Madinah more affecting than my first. As soon as the plane landed, I felt a distinct shift in my wairua — the kind of change you feel when you see a good friend after a long absence. It was almost as though the wairua of Madinah, the wairua of Muhammad reached into me with a warm and welcoming embrace.

My wife and I spent a week in Madinah. My primary role was that of tour guide which I quite enjoyed. With my basic knowledge of the city

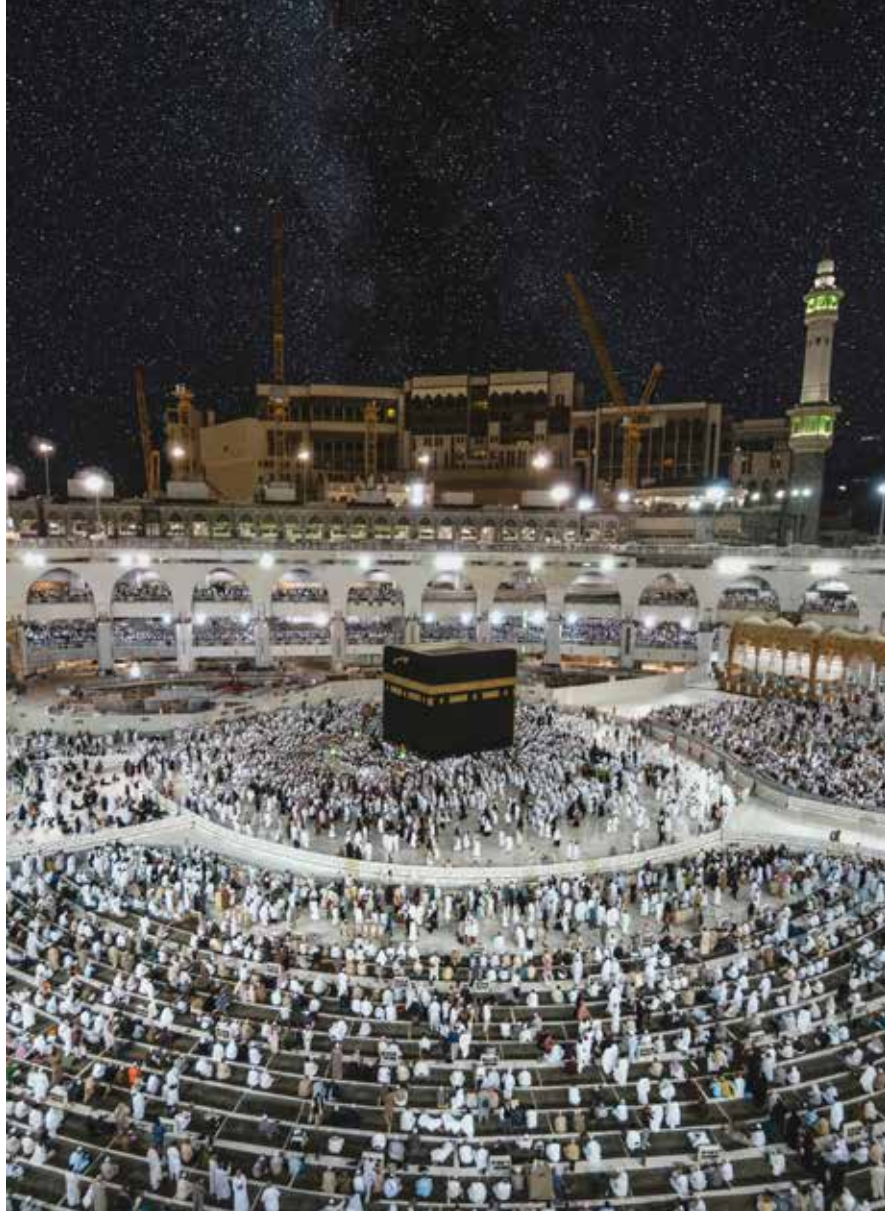
I was able to guide my wife around the Prophet's Mosque and to various historic sites in Madinah. And with my rudimentary Arabic I even helped her bargain with the local merchants.

PERFORMING THE UMRAH

The main purpose of our visit to Saudi was to perform the Umrah, the minor pilgrimage, and this involved travelling approximately 600 kms south from Madinah to the city of Makkah. This journey is easy enough, especially on the high-speed train, which travels at 300 kms per hour!

Makkah is the site of the Great Mosque, the focal point of Muslim worship. At the centre of the Great Mosque is the Kaaba, the black cube. Muslims all over the world pray toward the Kaaba. Our belief is that Abraham helped his son Ishmael build this structure as a place of worship and as a place for pilgrimage.

What's interesting about Makkah is that, according to Arab and Muslim



tradition, its founding figure is Hagar, the second wife of Abraham. The wife who was once a servant and who was cast out into the desert — the unchosen. Arab and Muslim tradition mirrors the Biblical narrative about Hagar's sojourn into the desert, and her subsequent plea to God for help. Her infant son Ishmael would die in the desert if God did not intervene. God hears her plea and provides her with a spring. Within Muslim tradition this spring is called the Zamzam, and it is located not far from the Kaaba.

The Zamzam is still an active water source and there are water stations throughout the Mosque where we can drink a cupful. There is a beautiful prayer that is said before taking a drink:

"Allah, O God, I ask You for knowledge that is beneficial, provision that is abundant, accepted deeds, and a cure for every illness."

Zamzam water is refreshing especially when temperatures hit the 40s. Drinking this water is also a ritual associated with Umrah, the minor pilgrimage.

Other rituals include walking seven times around the Kaaba and walking seven times between the two hills, Safa and Marwa. These rituals are intended to retrace the footsteps of Abraham and Hagar. It is said that in her search for water for her infant son, Hagar walked and then ran between Safa and Marwa hoping to find help from their vantage points.

These rituals are also part of the major pilgrimage known as the Hajj.

THE HAJJ

The Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam. The other four pillars are the Shahada (the declaration of faith in God and Muhammad), Salah (Prayer), Zakat (Charity) and Sawm (fasting). Hajj becomes compulsory when you are physically able to carry out the rituals and when you can financially afford to make the journey. The Hajj has a number of added rituals again related to Abraham and Muhammad. For example, there is an animal sacrifice which commemorates Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son. Pilgrims also spend nights in

the desert in much the same way as Muhammad did when he performed the Hajj. Nowadays we have tents with air-conditioning and pilgrims can dine at the many food vendors and ice cream trucks around. My wife and I intend to perform Hajj one day, Inshallah ("God willing") but we'll need to save for the trip. The minor pilgrimage is cheaper, and gives us a taste of the Hajj.



CHANGES IN SAUDI

Saudi has made it easy to go for Umrah. On this trip I felt that Saudi is slowly pivoting away

from its dependence on oil and looking to build an economy on tourism, especially religious tourism, information technology and agriculture. At the airport, most of the immigration officers were young women fluent in English, as were the staff at the train stations.

PILGRIMS ON THE ROAD OF LOVE


Our experience at Makkah and Madinah was deeply moving. The journey drew my wife and I closer to each other. I had impressed her with my skills as a tour guide — a bit like being on an extended date. We've been married for 20 years and in that time we've had our highs and lows and some very real stresses and strains. Now, our relationship feels renewed. The shared experience of the sacred softens us, softens our wairua, and it has helped us to be humble with each other. Here I think the words of Rumi are apt:

"Would you become a pilgrim on the road of love? The first condition is that you make yourself humble as dust and ashes." ❖

Photo P22 by Izuddin Helmi Adnan on Unsplash

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





the Catholic Shop

Your best range of in store and online religious gifts and church supplies

373 Manchester Street, Christchurch
Monday - Friday 9.30am - 4.30pm
Saturday 10.00am - 1.00pm

www.thecatholicshop.nz

03 366 2853 catholicshop@cdoc.nz thecatholicshopchch



1-Companion-Mary Magdalene with Joanna and Susanna



2-The One Sent-Mary Magdalene with Jesus, the Christ

Mary the Tower

THE WOMAN WHOM we know as Mary Magdalene or Mary of Magdala has been a figure of religious and artistic inspiration for Christians for nearly 2,000 years. In the Gospels, she is a disciple of Jesus and a key witness at his crucifixion and resurrection. In the Western Church, her role and character changed and she became known as a penitent prostitute. In art, she is often portrayed naked, covered only with her long hair. In the history of biblical interpretation, Sandra Schneiders points out that there is tendency to "sexualise, demonise and trivialise biblical women." I offer the following reflections on Mary whose feast day is 22 July.

"Mary called Magdalene."

We associate Mary with a town. There is, however, no archaeological evidence, at the time of Jesus of the existence on the shore of the Lake of Galilee, of a village called Magdala. The village, on the site known as Magdala today, came into existence only during the 4th-5th centuries as the Christian pilgrimage movement grew.

Until the 6th century, there is no mention in early Christian writings that Mary came from Magdala. "Magdalene" does not indicate location — rather it is a nickname.

In Luke-Acts, when people are "called" by such nicknames which express a quality or attribute regarded as characteristic of the person, it is because they are named in a special way by Jesus or others. In Luke, she is "Mary, called Magdalene" (Lk 8:2). This title is similar to "Simon, called

Peter" (*petra*, Acts 10:18, 11:13). *Petra* means rock in Greek.

Historians Elizabeth Schrader and Joan Taylor draw on early church writings where, in Aramaic and Hebrew, *migdala* means a fortress, watchtower, stronghold or elevated pulpit. *Gadal* (Hebrew) means to be great/large, to grow, become great or important, promote, make powerful, praise, magnify, do great things.

Early theologian Origen of Alexandria (c185–253), refers to Magdala as meaning "Mary magnifying" and to her "magnification". In 412, Jerome wrote: "And Mary, properly 'the Magdalene' — who, because of diligence and ardent faith received the name 'of the tower/tower-ess' — deserved to see the risen Christ before the Apostles."

Mary the Tower (*Maria ē Magdalenē*) is a witness to the crucifixion (Mt 27:55-56; Mt 14:40-4; Jn 19:25) and, either alone or with other women, she is the first to experience the resurrected Jesus (Mt 28:1-10; Mk 16:1-11; Jn 21:1-18). Luke names her as the Magdalene Mary (*ē Magdalenē Maria*, 24:10). So we are better to avoid translations which presume that Magdala is Mary's place of origin.

Women Ministering

In the four Gospels, Mary the Tower, and other women in the movement, "ministered" to Jesus and the disciples. In Luke 8:3, for example, we read about Mary and other women "who ministered (*diakoneō*) for them out of their resources." The Greek word *diakoneō* means "to minister." In the context of women, its meaning is obscured as when the NRSV translates *diakoneō* not as "ministered by" but as "provided for them".

Mary Christians today are uninformed about Mary's



3-Apostle to the Apostles-Mary Magdalene with The Beloved Disciple and Peter

faithful discipleship and ministry. Among the reasons for this is a common misreading of Luke 8:1-3 which states that "the seven demons had gone out her." For first-century people, this meant that she had been healed of a serious illness. It did not mean that she was sinful, let alone that she was a sexual sinner. Illness was often attributed to evil spirits in the way that we talk about germs or viruses today. The number "seven" symbolised that her illness was either very severe or chronic.

Religion of the Empire

When Emperor Constantine made Christianity the religion of the Roman Empire in 312, a cultural conflict emerged for the Christian community which had been meeting and worshipping in the private space of house churches where women's leadership was acceptable.

Constantine's change freed Christians to worship in public, but it also meant that women's leadership would violate Roman social codes of honour and shame.

The Council of Laodicea (363-364), a regional synod of about 30 clerics, suppressed women leaders. The memory of Mary the Tower as a strong, faithful disciple and proclaimer of the resurrection began to degrade into describing her as a repentant prostitute and public sinner.

In the Western Church, Pope Gregory the Great (540-604) conflated Mary with Luke's unnamed sinner (Lk 7:36-50) and Mary of Bethany (Jn 11). He placed emphasis on her role as a sinner which paved the way for the denigration of the female body as well as for distancing Mary from her apostolic commission and ministry.

In contrast, in the Eastern Church, Gregory, Patriarch of Antioch (571-593) made no such conflation. He emphasised Mary's witness to the resurrection and has poetic praise and recognition of the apostolic commission given to her by Jesus.

Liturgical Texts Today

Both the revised post-Vatican II *Roman Missal* and *Lectionary* present Mary Magdalene as witness to the resurrection on her memorial day 22 July. The Gospel proclaimed on that day is John 20:1-2, 11-18.

There are no references to Mary being a repentant sexual sinner as there were in the 1962 edition of the *Missal* of Pope John XXIII. In that edition the Gospel proclaimed was Luke 7:36-50, the story of the unnamed anointing woman whose sins Jesus forgives.

While the official liturgical texts no longer "sexualise, demonise and trivialise" Mary Magdalene, traditional artworks and uninformed preaching can keep this denigration of Mary alive in the popular imagination.

Apostle to the Apostles

In 2016 Pope Francis elevated the July memorial of Mary Magdalene to that of a Feast, to enable her "to be celebrated liturgically like the rest of the apostles" and evangelists.

The decree *Mary Magdalene, Apostle of Apostles* says: "Mary Magdalene is an example of a true and authentic evangeliser, that is an evangelist who announces the central joyful message of Easter ... It was with good reason that the Angelic Doctor [Thomas Aquinas] applied 'apostolorum apostola' to Mary of Magdala, for she is the first witness to the risen Christ and announces the message of the Lord's resurrection just like the rest of the Apostles."

This links the church once again to the early Christian communities who knew Mary the Tower, as an important leader and as the first proclaimer of the resurrection. In those times she had been known as: "*Apostola Apostolorum*/Apostle to the Apostles"; "Companion of the Lord"; and "*Isapostolas*/Equal to the Apostles".

Our liturgy and contemporary scholarship are restoring our understanding of Mary the Tower as a significant early Christian leader. Many of us are ingrained with images and ideas about Mary the Tower which have neither historical nor scriptural foundation. But if we become aware of how the sexualising and demonising of her in artworks overshadows how she is presented in the four Gospels and in the *Roman Missal* and *Lectionary*, we will come closer to the truth: Mary the Tower as "Apostle to the Apostles". ♦

Feast of St Mary the Magdalene, 22 July

The Succession of Mary Magdalene (Triptych 2007) by Janet McKenzie ©
Used with permission www.janetmckenzie.com
Collection of Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, IL USA

Kathleen Rushton RSM, Scripture scholar, teacher and author, lives in Ōtautahi/Christchurch. Her latest book is *The Cry of the Earth and the Cry of the Poor: Hearing Justice in John's Gospel* (2020).



LEARNING ABOUT DISABILITIES



I RECENTLY MANAGED to slice open the sole of my foot on some oysters at a beach. I spent the rest of the weekend hobbling; biking to avoid putting weight on my foot, limping up steps and resting. The 5-minute walk to meet friends at a restaurant suddenly seemed a great distance. I became conscious of my body and wondered how noticeable my limp was.

My foot healed fast, but I'm holding on to the memory of the experience of how a temporary, minor injury shifted the world around me.

Disability affects us, sometimes temporarily, sometimes permanently and in a major way. It affects people in our families and workplaces. One in four New Zealanders lives with some kind of disability and while our data around disability has improved over time, there's still a lot we don't know about the numbers of people with visible or invisible barriers to enjoying full access to society. If we want all people to flourish, then we must care about disability rights.

Whaikaha, the Ministry of Disabled People, was formed in 2022. Recent limitations in funding mean it has capped financial support for people who care for disabled members of their whānau, including covering respite care and travel costs. Significantly, the changes reduced decision-making within whānau about how to spend allocated funding, with decisions instead being made by the Ministry. The disabled community was appalled not only at the changes themselves, but also at the way they were communicated, with then-Disability Issues Minister Penny Simmonds claiming that funding was being misused by carers for "massages, overseas travel, pedicures, haircuts." Although Whaikaha received a boost in funding in the government's May budget — about an additional \$220 million per year over five years — much flexibility for families has been lost.

As member of the Disabled Persons Assembly Chris Ford wrote in an opinion piece following the budget, "disabled support changes are not the only government policy that have impacted on this country's disabled community" (ODT, 1 June 2024). The disabled community experiences, like all in Aotearoa, the stressors in the health system, such as a return to the \$5 co-payment for prescriptions and under-resourced emergency rooms; access to emergency housing; support services in schools and universities; challenges to Te Tiriti.

I'm inspired by the work of theologians of disability, who give us new ways to imagine what inclusion in the community truly looks like when disabled people have what they need to feel fully included. Although there are many biblical stories of people being healed of a disability, particularly by Jesus in the Gospels, theologian Nancy Eiesland in *The Disabled God*, reminds us that Jesus

presented his injured — disabled — body to the disciples. Paralysis or blindness were not metaphors in the scripture stories, but realities that limited the people's participation in their communities — these limitations were imposed by people, not God. This is as true now as it was in Jesus's time. My own small experience started my awareness of what it's like to live with a disability. It made me realise that I have lots to learn about the personal, familial, political, economic and social aspects of full inclusion in society for those people living with a disability. It made me realise, too, that it's solidarity with disabled people as brothers and sisters, not pity, that I need to develop. ✦

Shanti Mathias, twin to Shar, lives in Auckland and is a journalist for *The Spinoff*.



STRIDE ORTHOPAEDICS



- Ethical and faith based
- Collaborative team approach
- Innovative patient care
- Paediatric orthopaedics
- Affordable nurse practitioner
- Hip preservation surgery
- General orthopaedics
- Sports and post injury care
- Precision hip and knee replacement
- Patient centred empathetic care

A: Specialists @ 9, Level 2, 9 Caledonian Road, St Albans, Christchurch

T: 03 968 3402 E: admin@strideorthopaedics.co.nz

W: www.strideorthopaedics.co.nz

SPECIALIST TEAM-BASED RESPECTFUL INNOVATIVE DEDICATED EMPATHETIC

Reviews

Enacting Integral Human Development

By Clemens Sedmak

Published by Orbis Books, 2023. (USD 30)

Reviewed by Gerard Aynsley

Sedmak's latest contribution to the field of Catholic Social Teaching (CST), *Enacting Integral Human Development* is the result of a huge amount of research. He draws on a wide array of studies, theories, his own experience and, most importantly, lived examples to draw out the complexities and possibilities of enacting Integral Human Development (IHD) – working for the good of all people, across all areas of their lives.

Sedmak approaches IHD from a variety of vantage points, considering the subtleties and challenges of IHD and illustrating how the various principles of CST come

into play. While there are numerous examples of destructive development where human dignity has been devalued, his many positive examples of IHD in action ensures the book has a hope-filled orientation.

Reading this book has certainly stretched my thinking, challenged me to think more critically and urged me to consider the role I may play. I particularly enjoyed the extensive introduction, Part One “A Dignity-Centered Approach” and his insights in the epilogue. Other sections are rather more specialised, aimed at those engaged in development projects and those involved in policy making. Nevertheless, while the language is at times technical and the analysis somewhat dry, Sedmak's regular use of real-life examples keeps the book grounded. ★



Undoing Conquest: Ancient Israel, the Bible, and the Future of Christianity

By Kate Common

Published by Orbis Books, 2024. (USD 22)

Reviewed by Mary Betz

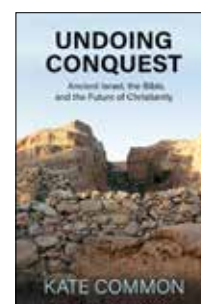
Undoing Conquest is a fascinating and readable trip through the Middle Eastern late Bronze and early Iron Ages, when the Hebrew exodus and conquest of the promised land were most likely to have taken place. But did they?

Kate Common summarises recent scholarship which suggests that the people of Israel most likely arose largely from within Canaan itself during multiple “exoduses” from Canaanite city-states then under oppressive Egyptian rule. These “proto-Israelites” settled in the more remote Palestinian highlands. Some 500 years later, Judeans

who had witnessed Israel's demise by Assyria wrote the dramatic origin stories to give their country strength, pride and hope.

The book draws on the research of historians, archaeologists and biblical scholars who weigh the evidence from archaeological digs, comparative linguistics, cultural artifacts, and biblical texts. The jury is still out, but the archaeological evidence seriously challenges Old Testament accounts like the Book of Joshua.

Re-examining Israel's origin stories can shed light on ancient roots of the present conflict in Palestine, as well as on the way in which Christian nations have normalised violence and conquest from the Crusades to colonisation. ★



History of New Zealand and Its Inhabitants

By Dom Felice Vagglioli (1896)

Republished by Otago University Press 2023. (NZD 50)

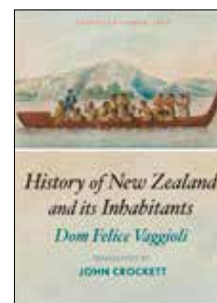
Reviewed by Trish McBride

This is a book whose time has come! Vagglioli was an Italian Benedictine missionary priest in New Zealand between 1879-1887. Once back in Italy, he compiled his notes and earlier historical research into this book first published in 1896. It covers the period 1600 to 1893. Vagglioli keenly observed British Colonial policies in Aotearoa and their effects on Māori. So scathing is he about what he saw, that the British Government suppressed the book and forbade its translation. John Crockett discovered Vagglioli's manuscript in the Auckland Diocesan archives and translated it in the 1990s. This is a republication of that

first translation.

Vagglioli documents many colonial treacheries and brutalities – far more than I had heard of. So many villages wiped out, so many promises broken! How could Māori converts to Christianity possibly reconcile what they'd learned with what that Government inflicted on them? There's an understandable Catholic bias, but the objectivity of the main theme is clear.

Crockett's translation and, presumably, the original, are very readable. In these days of our coalition Government, this book should be required reading for all MPs. Meanwhile, it will encourage deeper understanding of Māori trauma and deprivation, and inform any who wish to extend their knowledge of the history of Aotearoa. ★





Ripley

Directed by Steven Zaillian
8-part Series (Netflix, 2024)
Reviewed by Paul Tankard

The 1955 novel *The Talented Mr. Ripley* by Patricia Highsmith is a disturbing and suspenseful story that has inspired many adaptations. The latest version, an eight-part limited series on Netflix, gives the story a haunting and

visually compelling treatment.

It's 1961. There are two locations: most of the drama unfolds in the beautiful Italian village of Atrani on the Amalfi Coast. But it opens in New York, where Tom Ripley (Andrew Scott) is a petty criminal, who is mistakenly or at least innocently engaged by a rich man to track down his son, Richard "Dickie" Greenleaf (Johnny Flynn), who has gone to Italy to live and paint. Ripley finds Dickie in Atrani living a pleasantly worry-free life of low-key bohemianism. He has a sort of a girlfriend, an American wannabe writer named Marj (Dakota Fanning). Ripley immediately sees a range of opportunities, and begins to install himself ever more deeply into Dickie's life. The question is, how far will he go; the answer seems to be, as far as he can.

The whole thing is unsettling, from the privilege and

opulence of the lifestyles upon which it is centred, the antiquity, intricacy and slight decadence of the setting and culture in which it unfolds, to the weirdness of the scheming and narcissistic title character, Tom Ripley. Andrew Scott does a great line in maniacs. He is amoral and friendless, in some ways replaying his role as Moriarty, nemesis to Benedict Cumberbatch's Sherlock. But in fact most of the characters are a bit weird. The decorative Dickie and Marj are rather toying with life, and their lack of direction, responsibilities, connections or talent provides the talented Mr Ripley with freedom to weave webs around them, setting them up so he can ensnare them when occasion permits. The only person to ask hard questions of or about Ripley is the ambiguous Freddie, whose non-normativity licenses him not to take things for granted. Ripley senses from the first that Freddie is dangerous, and is ready.

There's an insistent craftedness to the production's aesthetic. It is filmed in crisp and luminous black and white, which draws our attention to textures and surfaces. The drama takes place against an obsessively detailed background: the weather, landscapes, architecture, clothes and furnishings fill the screen and commandeer the attention, as if to counterpoint the absence of straightforward motive or even emotion.

With its slow pace, and underlying tension, it's rather like an objet d'art, inviting us to view it from a variety of angles, but hinting that something more than aesthetics needs to govern the lives of individuals and shield us from chaos. ★

John 1:5 Society

"The light shines
in the darkness,
and the darkness
has not overcome it."
love, hope & healing.

cbm
christian blind mission

Leaving a legacy of love, hope & healing.

Leaving a gift in your Will is one of the most impactful things you could ever do. It allows your love to live on, to help build an inclusive world in which all people with disabilities living in poverty, enjoy their human rights and achieve their full potential.

Without the compassion of kind people like you, many children and adults in the world's poorest places would miss out on sight-saving operations, life-changing health care, and access to education and livelihood programmes that can help lift them out of poverty. A gift in your Will will continue this vital ministry for generations to come.

To leave a Gift in your Will, call **cbm** on 0800 77 22 64, or scan the QR code using your mobile phone camera, or go to www.cbmz.org.nz/bequests





Cross Currents

by Jane Higgins

THE SUNDAY AFTER the Budget was announced, while walking the dog along the Ōpāwaho riverbank in Ōtautahi, we came across a group of volunteers finishing a morning spent planting native trees and shrubs. There were young people and older people, parents and children, all turning the riverbank into a beautiful track, not only for humans and their dogs, but also for birdlife and the tuna (eels) in the river. Lunch was being set out. Someone called everyone together with a cheerful “Kia ora koutou”, spoke a short karakia, then said: “Come and have some kai and a kōrero”. So simple. So joyous.

This was heartening after a gloomy week. There are many things in this year’s Budget that are a cause for huge concern — choices to enrich the well-off at the expense of those who are vulnerable, the scaling back of social services that are a lifeline for many, the extractive view of te taiao, our common home. It’s a Budget that is striking for its lack of compassion and its lack of interest in the common good.

The riverbank encounter made me realise that something else was

missing from it too: this Budget suffers from a profound lack of imagination. Alongside a significant cutting back of investment to address climate change, there has been a major reduction in the funding of scientific research. This includes research on climate, biodiversity, nutrition and health, as well as many other issues that affect the well-being of humans and other species with whom we share this planet.

A lack of imagination is not a minor or fanciful problem. The only future the current government seems able to envisage is of 1950s New Zealand. We see it in the attacks on Te Tiriti, in the refusal to acknowledge the urgency of the climate crisis, in the expectation that we can continue to build our economy on resource extraction — mining the land and the seas, drilling for oil and gas — and that we should build roads at the expense of climate-friendly transport.

With a vision like that, why bother investing in new knowledge? We’ve been to the 1950s already and we know what it’s like. Auckland University scientist Frédérique Vanholsbeeck, on the website

ScienceInsider, describes the Budget as moving New Zealand “away from a knowledge-based economy like never before. It is not a budget set to invest in our future.”

The future I saw being lived out on the riverbank was very different. It’s one in which people work together towards a genuinely green transition for our economy and society, a transition that recognises and honours mātauranga Māori, the knowledge and understanding of our land and waters that tangata whenua have developed over many centuries.

That deep, ancient knowledge, together with new knowledge, about our changing world and our place in it, is vital for enabling us to imagine and work towards a liveable future. Essential to that is what Pope Francis has called science’s ability to creatively wonder and ask “why”. In that space, urgent questions meet human ingenuity and problems get solved. There is much we already know about how to make the green transition. There is more that science and mātauranga can show us. Closing the door on that is a betrayal of our future. ✦



TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

Tui Motu magazine provides Catholic, as well as ecumenical and inter-faith perspectives and discussion on current issues in church and society. It acknowledges its role in honouring and fostering relationships arising from Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It focuses particularly on issues affecting Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific. Its intent is to promote the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, engaging faith and the world through informed, thoughtful comment and discussion for a general readership. The magazine publishes 11 issues per year in print

Editor: Ann L Gilroy RSJ
Assistant Editor: Ann Hassan
Design & layout: Lilly Johnson
Proofreader: Christine Crowe
Printers: Southern Colour Print

and regular digital postings on social media. The magazine invites contributions from writers of Catholic and other Christian traditions or faith backgrounds, who can offer our readers insights which resonate with the Gospel as it affects us today. We value diversity and seek contributions which are representative of our church and our society: Māori, Pākehā, Pasifika, other cultures, a range of ages and genders, lay and ordained. We offer feature articles, interviews, reviews, poetry, comment and opinion on theology, spirituality and history, as well as on ecological and social justice.

Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd,
52 Union Street West,
Dunedin North, 9054

Postal Address: PO Box 6404,
Dunedin North, 9059

Phone: (03) 477 1449

Email: editor@tuimotu.org

Email for subscriptions: admin@tuimotu.org

Bank: BNZ 02-0929-0277471-00

Board of Directors:
Louise Shanly (Chair) Judith McGinley OP
Cathrine Harrison, Agnes Hermans,
Adrienne Gallie RSJ

ISSN 1174-8931
Issue number 294



- **Family**
- **Employment**
- **Relationship Property**
- **Wills and Trusts**
- **Conveyancing and Property**
- **Enduring Power of Attorney**

Please contact us if you require assistance with any of the above practice areas. We would be delighted to help you.

AROHA
FUNERALS
a time of love

*Caring for you with
warmth, honesty and
compassion*



Phone 0800 276 420
www.arohafunerals.co.nz

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Invite you to our annual

RETREAT DAY

led by **Trish O'Donnell** spiritual accompanier

Centred around the theme

● **Aroha Mai**

Forgiveness: Thread by Thread

Reflection on becoming a repairer of relationships through exploring forgiveness

SATURDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2024

9.30 am—4.00 pm

Aldersgate, 309 Durham Street (Chester St parking)

Cost \$55.00 Incl Morning Tea & Lunch
give dietary requirements on registration

Register by 31 August 2024
confirm payment to Helen Warren
helenterry9@outlook.com, 021 133 5132

Payment 0317-07004-3199-00
by internet banking Include your name and ref RETREAT

Enquiries Anne-Marie Pike 027 2272471
rogerandannemarie@hotmail.com



Letters to the Editor

THE EDITORIAL (TM May 2024) focuses on liturgy reforms of Vatican II. In the 1980s I lived in Waihi and worshipped at the Catholic church there. It was a modern post-Vatican II building in a geometric shape. It had two tables up front — one for the liturgy of the word, the other for the Eucharist. It had no fixed pews, kneelers or altar rails. There was a side chapel for reconciliation with a distinctive stained glass window of the boy Jesus and St Joseph working at the carpentry bench and had the Waihi pumphouse in the

Letters Continued

background. The tabernacle was in this side room.

I visited the Waihi church a couple of years ago and was horrified to find the stained glass window had been moved to elsewhere in the church, and a tabernacle inserted into the front wall. How had an architect-designed, post-Vatican II church been desecrated in this way? Who gave permission? Did any local people object? Perhaps people who are part of that community can provide answers.

Fiona Green, Kirikiriroa/Hamilton

TAKING SIDES IN WAR NO HELP

With regard to "Know the Agenda" (TM May, 2024) I decided that taking sides is a loser's game. To whom and how we give our support in war ought to be for the needy, given impartially. While not disputing Geoff Hansen's data, the USA has wealth that should any of us have that we might do the same to protect our beliefs, our future.

And other super powers have destroyed lives and freedoms by other methods. India desires Hinduisation. At what cost? China suppresses Muslim beliefs and practices of its Western province through destruction of families and individual freedoms, concentration-camp style. One would be naïve to think North Korea didn't receive support from Russia and/or China.

Why does China sail into Filipino waters, build islands in the South China Sea, desire to control Taiwan? Wasn't it a loan from China that contributed towards major violence in Sri Lanka? Has not Russia sponsored Hamas, Syria and Afghanistan violence at times and resisted the freedoms of neighbouring countries, whatever the cost to them? Does the US want to be a Napoleon and run Russia, or allow others the right to choose their future? Russia's bombing of neighbouring

Ukraine out of fear its neighbour joins NATO can hardly be applauded.

No one comes out of war without scars. Taking sides is a loser's game. Pray for peace, support the needy, remain impartial, while supporting rights to defence.

Lita van Bunnik, Te Awa Kairangi ki Uta/Upper Hutt (abridged)

CHILD NOT SHOWN MERCY

Anna Nicholls (TM May 2024) describes the practice of service with compassion as a hallmark of the Mercy charism. Although this was not the author's intention, unfortunately this article brought sharply to my remembrance the Mercy nuns who taught without compassion in the Catholic schools I attended. As a child of immigrant parents, I was not able to understand what the nuns were saying so I got hit for not obeying and humiliated in front of my classmates over many years until I learned the English language. This had a profound effect on me and I am still receiving therapy for that and other experiences during my childhood.

I now teach adults and the Mercy Sisters taught me what not to do when dealing with learners who had distressing experiences in the school system. I am able to show my learners deep compassion due to my own experience. Compassion is being alongside another in their pain and I wish I was shown that compassion and kindness as a school child.

Name withheld on request

RESPONSE TO LETTER ABOVE

I was saddened to read of this writer's distressing experiences when she was at school. I am very sorry that she did not experience the compassion and kindness that every young child ought to receive from her teachers.

Should the writer or any other reader of *Tui Motu* wish to do so, we are ready to engage with them in addressing and responding to their experiences of hurt and distress resulting from the actions of any member of our congregation. We may be contacted at safeguarding@mercy.org.nz

Sue France RSM Congregational Leader

SUPPORT FOR NON FOSSIL-FUELLED CARS

Anthony Williams's letter (TM May 2024) states that overall the environmental footprint of the electric car is greater than a standard car. I disagree; while battery technology is still such that making a car battery has environmental impact, it will only improve.

In addition, in his statement that we would need to replicate all the power stations built here in the last 100 years he forgets that renewable energy sources, such as solar panels on our roofs and wind farms are a far cleaner potential source of energy.

The truth does set us free; the challenge is to avail ourselves of the whole truth, which is not easy, and we could also look at longer term consequences of our choices.

I fully agree with him that we should ask ourselves if we really need more of anything, but at the same time we could ask ourselves if time-honored practices, such as using fossil fuels, are always the best, given our growing knowledge of their effects on humanity and of safer alternatives.

Karen Pronk, Tahuna/Glenorchy

PARTICIPATING IN CHURCH

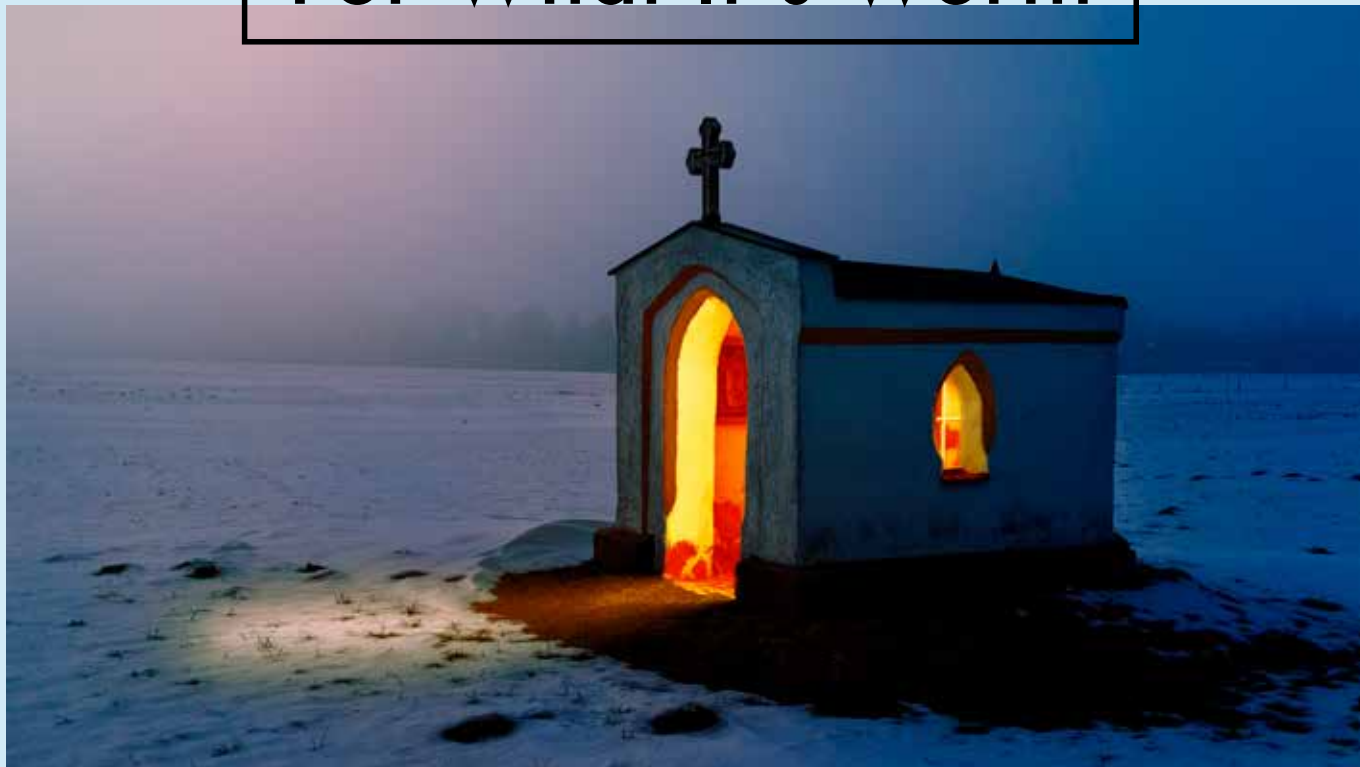
My experience accords with Neil Darragh's view (TM June 2024) that it's very rare that a local church actually practises the core values for participation as outlined by the International Association for Public Participation. This rarity accords with my experience of working both in local churches and in the public service and non-government organisations during the last 70 years. However, my experience of working within the Three Tikanga Anglican Church in Aotearoa shows me that she comes closest to those core values.

Michael Blakely, Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland

APOLOGY FROM EDITOR

My apologies for the mistake in the writer's name of "Open letter to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu" (TM April 2024). Steve Liddle, not Steve Siddle, wrote the letter.

For What It's Worth



LAST SUMMER WHEN Otago Central Rail Trail riders descended on Otūrehua and its surrounds, I looked out the window one day and there was a trailer walking down the side of my property — and not heading to my front door. I was a bit bemused and went outside to see where this woman was off to. We had a friendly chat and it turned out she had come to see the chapel in my garden, thinking it was a public space. After she got over her embarrassment, I gave her a tour and explanation about how and why it came to be there. She offered some advice about selling lavender and honey from the space and off she went.

I don't want to set up any business, or tours, or wedding venue opportunities, however creative they might be. My white wooden chapel is nestled in its surroundings and sits there as a sacred space for prayer and contemplation. It has a red roof and, at the top in the belfry, a small bell with a long thin rope to the ground. Pull the rope and the sound is more of a tinkle than the solemn toll of larger church bells. But it was a thoughtful gift from a friend who had stayed with us and posted a small parcel with the words "just what the chapel needs".

Of course there's an altar and a harmonium, some books, a chair and a prayer stool which Mike built and used every morning. My knees are a bit creaky for that now, but the chair is one to sink into and slow down and think. I read recently these words: "Unless you sit with it and feel the emotions, what are you healing from?" I've always been one for doing rather than being and this season of my life has challenged that in many ways. From coming to terms with the loss of my husband and daughter, to accepting the end of a judicial career that brought so much fulfilment, it hasn't been easy to sit with the pain, unpack it and explore what's there. Much easier to wash the kitchen floor. Much

easier to allow the clichés to roll off the tongue: "Well everyone has it hard, you're not the first to suffer."

But there in my chapel with its white unadorned walls and indefinable sense of calm, it's okay to sit and do nothing, close my eyes and focus on the One whose peace I seek.

There's a lovely answer that musician Nick Cave gave to a man who'd written to him heartbroken about the world and fearful that God now felt absent. Nick replied: "We humans are our own howling voids, cracked and beautiful things pierced by light. Faith is not something we find, it is bestowed upon us ... there is no need to find your way back. You are already there."

On some days in the chapel, that's enough for me. ✦

Rosemary Riddell lives in Otūrehua, Otago. She is the author of *To Be Fair: Confessions of a District Court Judge* (2022).



Our last word

May we rise
to join those around the world
working to impede trafficking
and recover the enslaved risen Christ.



From the *Tui Motu* Team