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Coronation and Church
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Monarchy and Church
Rangatiratanga me te Hāhi

INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC MAGAZINE

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Editorial

I Vow to God ...

THE SPECTACLE OF REGAL and ritual pomp surrounding King Charles's coronation is intended to capture our imaginations. Though the ceremony hasn't been performed for 70 years, it won't be unfamiliar to us. Much of it follows the pattern of our own liturgical experiences. Westminster's will be more polished, the main participants more extravagantly vested and bejewelled than we're used to, but we'll recognise the Scripture, prayer and hymns, the giving and receiving of vows and the blessing. These aspects are familiar because the pattern for Charles's oath of office and crowning is similar to our own renewal of Baptismal promises during the Easter liturgy. And they're similar to the vows couples take at their marriage ceremony, religious take at profession and priests take at ordination. These promises, vows and oaths commit us to one another in particular ways. Their purpose is to sustain community life for the common good of the human family. We focus our love towards our partners, whānau, neighbourhood and beyond, not just for the day but for the long haul.

The dynamics (real and imagined) of rivalry, hurt, evil and neglect within the royal family are familiar to us as well. Most families and communities cope with similar sufferings every day. We know privilege does not innoculate against them. But we've learnt that some behaviours can heal relationships and others will stoke division and separation.

Charles will vow to be a uniting influence — even though his oath is focused towards Christians, as Peter Lineham discusses in his article. As head of the Commonwealth he must listen to and encourage the hopes and efforts of all member countries to increase the quality of community life and the equitable sharing of resources within their nations. Equally, he must encourage collegiality within the Commonwealth.

This will require commitment. No doubt Charles and the British government will have to address the trauma that their history of exploitation and slave trafficking has left in some member countries. The way te Tiriti o Waitangi is working to address the injustices of those representing the Crown in our history suggests what is possible when fairness, responsibility and respect for all in the community are the focus of the negotiations.

We can hope that when Charles kneels and vows to God his service to community the echoes of the oath will reverberate in the hearts and minds of all leaders around the world reminding them of their own promises when taking office in Church, government or institution.

We thank all the contributors, whose research, writing, reflection, art and craft, crown this issue with insight and beauty.

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

The Art of Civil Disagreement

ON THE 25 MARCH, at Auckland's Albert Park, I participated in a protest against Posie Parker's rejection of transgender rights. She was due to speak, but was drowned out by a cacophony of whistles, banging pots and pans and horns. The protestors were mostly in their 20s and 30s. Many clearly identified as transgender. They were not going to give Posie Parker the chance to negate their life course. She had civil rights, but denigration of their rights was at risk so their response was loud, joyful, chaotic and continuous noise.

Being free to have your voice heard is our democratic right but this right is not wholly unfettered. For the Christian it comes with a moral injunction that might be best expressed: "First, do no harm."

We live in a data-saturated universe. Nothing escapes public scrutiny but that scrutiny is now paper-thin. In 1970 a mention on page three of the *NZ Herald* was a triumph because the editorial scrutiny was so tough. An angry Facebook post today can reach unimaginable numbers of people who are free to scrutinise without any kind of editorial assessment. This communication free-for-all is rapidly changing the nature of civil discourse and there are no guiderails sufficiently sophisticated to keep up.

"First do no harm" seems an impossible adjunct to this avalanche of online noise. But it doesn't have to be if we start young enough.

My experience with the Manaiakalani Education Trust shows this is possible. It supports over 30,000 learners in 120 schools to be Cybersmart — aware and responsible online.

Cybersmart empowers our learners as connected digital citizens. When their learning is visible and accessible, anytime, anyplace, at any pace, our young people learn to make smart decisions and understand that every time they connect, collaborate and share online it combines to create their digital footprint. This is all about engaging young people online in behaviour that elevates positive actions. Each Cybersmart category includes learning concepts that are critical to enabling our young people to make smart decisions when learning, creating and sharing online. These learners are trained to be digitally competent at a young age in a way that can keep them safe and engaged with the world.

But what of our contestable adult discourse? How do we manage heavy disagreement in an environment where "truth" is in the eyes of the beholder?

We faced this dilemma as a District Health Board during the pandemic. At a Board level there was significant contest as to how to manage the pandemic outbreak. There were national decisions made by Ministers to be implemented but every DHB had local conditions that required their own responses.

Inescapable was the confrontation with racism. In the mix was the vulnerability of Māori and Pacific communities whose historic experience with pandemics had been disastrous.

Thus we were faced with a genuine contest of ideas with critical consequences. Lives were at stake. Our response was to adopt a process of "radical democracy". We agreed to hear all voices before any decisions were made. We would be guided by the evidence. We needed to be frank and direct in our communication. In the end we would vote on the action to be taken.

This had a bumpy start as the control of the pandemic was very uncertain. Indeed the contest of ideas was fierce but we stuck to the rules. As the pandemic unfolded, confidence in one another grew. Votes that were initially heavily contested became unanimous over the next two years as the pandemic ebbed.

The message I took from this was clear. Act with integrity, be prepared to listen to what you don't want to hear. Make your own judgments. Don't give up. And trust in humanity to deliver in even the most difficult of circumstances.

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

Power & Service

Nicholas Thompson *reflects on the potential of monarchies to use violence at the expense of service to their people.*

THE FINALE OF GILBERT and Sullivan's *Pirates of Penzance* (1879) is gloriously silly. The eponymous pirates have defeated a bumbling police constabulary sent to arrest them. But just as the pirates' triumph seems assured, there's a plot twist. The vanquished police sergeant commands the pirates to "yield in Queen Victoria's name". The pirates immediately comply:

We yield at once, with humbled mien,

Because, with all our faults, we love our Queen

In some productions of *Pirates*, this is when a ludicrously outsized Union flag drops across the back of the stage. Then, in a further twist, the operetta reveals that the pirates aren't common criminals but "noblemen who have gone wrong." The chorus responds with patriotic vigour:

No Englishman unmoved that statement hears,

Because, with all our faults, we love our House of Peers.

In case it's not already clear, this is satire. As in the other Savoy operas, W S Gilbert's primary targets are English snobbery and hypocrisy.

Before the pirates are revealed to be noblemen, the police hunt them down; afterwards, the pirates' crimes are brushed off as adolescent indiscretions: "Peers will be peers, and youth will have its fling."

Monarchy and the Public

But Gilbert's skewering of the class system goes deeper still. Despite the pirates' profession of love for their queen, Gilbert's audience knew that England's affection for its monarchs was negotiable.

Two centuries earlier, the English had executed one king and then deposed and exiled another.

The British press had mercilessly lampooned the flaws and excesses of Queen Victoria's predecessors, George IV and William III.

Not even Victoria was spared. Her retreat from public life after the death of her husband Albert in 1861 drew pointed questions about the usefulness and expense of her monarchy. In an era of political and economic revolution, 19th-century monarchs perched uneasily at the top of their national hierarchies.

Monarchy and Politics

But the British monarchy survived, and part of its success lay in its

increasing (if sometimes only apparent) disentanglement from the grubby business of politics.

The British constitutional theorist Walter Bagehot (1826-1877) distinguished between what he called the "efficient" and "dignified" parts of the British constitution.

The efficient part was where the better sort — the landlords, bankers and industrialists — struggled for power.

The dignified part was the public display of the monarchy and House of Peers. Bagehot worried that the efficient part would alienate the common people, but hoped that the pageantry of coronations, jubilees, royal weddings and state openings of parliament would command their loyalty, love and awe.

Monarchy As Spectacle

During the later years of Queen Victoria's reign and throughout the 20th century, there was a concerted push to embellish the spectacle of the monarchy. This was often achieved by "reviving" rituals that made the monarchy look more ancient and thus more inevitable. Bear this in mind as breathless royal correspondents anatomise the coronation ritual on 6 May.

Augustine's Word on Kings

But back to pirates. In the fourth book of his *City of God*, Saint Augustine (354-430) tells a story about pirates kidnapping Alexander the Great. The captive Alexander asked the pirate king what he hoped to gain through a life of crime. The pirate king said he was doing the same thing as Alexander, but "because I do it in a little ship, I am called a robber; because you do it with a great fleet, you are called an emperor." Augustine asks rhetorically: "Take away justice, and what are kingdoms but big criminal gangs, and what are criminal gangs but little kingdoms?"

At first glance, it's hard to disagree with Augustine's question. If you take away the rule of law, you have a kleptocracy like Putin's Russia. But Augustine thought that every human government, even the best one, must take on some of the qualities of a pirate kingdom.

Humans, he argued, were incapable of true justice. Each of us wants everyone and everything to serve our interests; we all want

to be autocrats of our own little autocracies. If the opposite ever happens, it's because grace has broken into the world, turning humans from selfishness to unselfish love of God and neighbour.

But more often, Augustine thought, the violence of little pirate kings is kept in check by the violence of bigger ones.

He was utterly clear-eyed about the violence of his Christian Roman empire: Rome's boast of bringing peace to the world meant only that it had terrorised everybody more effectively than its predecessors and rivals.

Augustine admitted that it was a blessing for everybody if unselfish people took up public office to serve others; he was genuinely grateful for a good Christian emperor or an honest judge. But he thought that even these rare officials couldn't wholly exempt themselves from the threat or use of violence.

No matter how conscientiously they dedicated themselves to the pursuit of earthly justice, good officials would always have to confront pirate kings — be they big ones like Putin or little ones operating in homes, streets, places of work and parliaments. Here, even the most virtuous officeholder might be forced to meet violence with violence, coercion with coercion. As W S Gilbert's pirate king observes:

> *But many a king on a first-class throne*
> *If he wants to call his crown his own*
> *Must manage somehow to get through*
> *More dirty work than ever* I *do.*

W S Gilbert's pirate king bellows that "it is, it is a glorious thing, to be a pirate king!"

I'll watch the coronation in a more ambivalent frame of mind. As pundits itemise the royal family's connections with the military, and Britain's increasingly threadbare political class cloaks itself in the mantle of Bagehot's "dignified constitution," I'll find it hard to forget what Augustine has written about the coercion and self-dealing baked into all human communities, from criminal gangs to Christian empires.

But I'll also keep an eye out for words and signs that point in another direction: the possibility of grace and the good that can be done when people set aside personal glory to work in the service of others. In a world troubled by dead-eyed tyrants and vainglorious conmen, those would offer a welcome glimmer of hope.

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WHEN CLERGY ACT LIKE KINGS

Susan Smith *discusses the relevance of the feast of Christ the King at a time when Earth is threatened as our home.*

THE CORONATION OF Charles III might raise questions about the meaning and relevance of the monarchy in our society. Even more, we might rethink Catholic devotion to Christ the King. As Samuel warned the people when they asked for their leader to be a king: "A king will lord it over you…" (1 Sam 8:11-18). And certainly Jesus's life and leadership had no lordly trappings. Luke tells us that Mary laid Jesus in a stable because "there was no room for them in the inn" (Lk 2:7).

How things changed for those who became "vicars of Christ". From the middle of the 8th century through to 1870, popes ruled as sovereign monarchs over the Papal States, which extended over much of the central part of Italy. From the Middle Ages through to the early 20th century the sartorial elegance of Europe's kings and emperors was often eclipsed by the monarchical dress of popes. Even until 1978, popes were carried around by 12 men on a ceremonial throne, a sedia. This pomp is a far cry from the man on a donkey making his way into Jerusalem.

The papacy lost the papal states in 1870 when Italy became a unified nation and the papal landholding was drastically reduced to a small acreage surrounding St Peter's Basilica. The pope was the "prisoner of the Vatican," a situation that was redressed when the Vatican signed the 1929 Concordant with the fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, whereby the Vatican State was formally established. At 0.19 square miles, Vatican City is the smallest nation in the world.

CHRIST KING OF KINGS

In the first year of his papacy Pope Pius XI (1922-1939) instituted the feast of the Solemnity of Christ the King. What lay behind this decision?

Although WWI was over by 1922 Europe was still suffering horrific consequences: thousands of people were displaced and on the move in Middle Europe, the 1918-19 influenza pandemic had caused the death of millions, and there was a widespread fear of Communism, particularly among Catholics. Furthermore the Church was losing influence. The numbers going to Sunday Mass was dropping and a drift away from the Church was becoming apparent.

Pius XI believed that a feast that pointed to the superiority of Christ over all earthly rulers, most of whom were not doing a great job, might be

a good move. Other major Christian denominations, such as Lutheran and Anglican, also welcomed the idea of a greater awareness of Christ's kingship over all.

MONARCHICAL CHURCH A DISTORTION

This month we will see many repeats of the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla in Westminster Abbey, London.

It may seem benign but for centuries the British Royal Family in their various incarnations — Norman, Tudor, Stuart, Orange, Hanoverian, Windsor — has overseen the enslavement of millions, the oppressions of millions and the acquisition of wealth that is unimaginable to lesser mortals. History suggests that kings, emperors, tsars, kaisers or pharaohs never really have the interests of their subjects at heart.

Sadly, our Church has long been tolerant of its more highly ranked clergy taking on the character of monarchical government, and so we talk about papal thrones and palaces, of cardinals as "eminence" and of "princes of the Church".

Fortunately, Pope John Paul II stopped the practice of popes being carried around on a sedia, and just as fortunately, Francis has not reverted to Benedict's practice of wearing ermine trimmed capes. But clericalism is still "lording" it over the laity.

Earlier this year, Pope Francis decided that it was not a good look for him to holiday at Castel Gandolfo, a summer property purchased in 1596 — today a 10-minute helicopter ride from the Vatican. Francis is consciously seeking to rid himself of kingly trappings and privileges. Instead of a papal summer residence, the castle has become a centre dedicated to environmental research.

In a January interview, Francis explained: "Castel Gandolfo was a bit of a court. In June, the court was moving there, as from London you go to Scotland … It's that kind of court idea. It's the last absolute court in Europe." His vision for the papacy is to "remove all appearance of court and to give it what is really a pastoral service" (*NCR*, 8 March 2023).

COSMIC CHRIST OF SCRIPTURE

The refocusing of the papacy and Church on its pastoral purpose suggests that we could rethink the feast of Christ the King.

The leadership of nations is still problematic but even more is the threat of humanity's behaviour to the rest of God's creation. The environmental degradation of Earth is accelerating — as events in our own country have demonstrated.

Rather than Christ the King, the image of "Cosmic Christ" points to Christ's care and love of the whole cosmos. We find this Christological perspective in three important New Testament texts.

There are more signs that important sectors in our Church, conscious that the Cosmic Christ permeates all matter as energy, would love a Solemnity of the Cosmic Christ to be celebrated annually.

"With all wisdom and insight he has made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fullness of time, to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Ephesians 1:8-10).

"Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers — all things have been created through him and for him. He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:15-17).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being" (John 1:1-3).

These three texts describe the pervasion of the Cosmic Christ in all creation. Einstein's theory of relativity means that we know that all matter is a type of energy, that the real world is energy. Teilhard de Chardin believed that this energy was a Christocentric energy.

Franciscan theologian Ilia Delio, in her extensive study of Teilhard, came to the understanding that this realisation changes everything: "Matter has become a holy thing and the material world is the place where we can comfortably worship God just by walking on matter, by loving it, by respecting it. The Christ is God's active power inside of the physical world" (2010).

Perhaps in our increasingly threatened cosmos, celebrating the Cosmic Christ as a solemnity might be more appropriate than celebrating Christ the King.

Today the concept "kingdom" has so many negative connotations. Remember Jesus responds to Pilate: "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here" (John 18:36).

There are signs that the Church still likes some of the trappings associated with the kingdoms of this world. But there are more signs that important sectors in our Church, conscious that the Cosmic Christ permeates all matter as energy, would love a Solemnity of the Cosmic Christ to be celebrated annually instead.

Art: *The Coronation of Charlemange by Pope Leo III* by Raphael Santi (1517) Wikimedia Commons

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The Church of England and the Monarchy

***Peter Lineham** describes the relationship between the UK government and the Church of England in which Charles III makes his coronation oath.*

ENGLAND IS A WORLD of anachronisms. The state which pioneered representative government and political responsibility maintains the trappings of nobility and monarchy when most other European states have rejected these. The greatest of these anachronisms is the entanglement of the monarchy with the Church of England. It makes no sense, and yet it remains firmly wedged in the symbolic world of British tradition.

Coronation Oath a Symbol

The Coronation potently is at the heart of the link between Church and state. At the coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953, the archbishops of Canterbury and York officiated at the service and presented her with the terms before she swore the coronation oath:

"Will you to the utmost of your power maintain in the United Kingdom the Protestant Reformed Religion established by law?

"Will you maintain and preserve inviolably the settlement of the Church of England, and the doctrine, worship, discipline, and government thereof, as by law established in England?

"And will you preserve unto the Bishops and Clergy of England, and to the Churches there committed to their charge, all such rights and privileges, as by law do or shall appertain to them or any of them?"

The history behind these questions makes it unlikely the words will be changed when Charles III is enthroned.

Monarch as Supreme Governor of Church

Ironically it was the Pope who conferred the title *Fidei Defensor* (Defender of the Faith) on Henry VIII — the expression of the religious aspect of the British monarchy. But Henry VIII did not defend the faith, he transformed it to a body forced to authorise his divorce, and from his day the monarch has been the supreme governor of the Church.

Church Self-Governance

At the time of the Reformation, Parliament rather than the Church's Convocation was used to redefine the doctrine and order of the Church

of England. In 1919 parliamentary legislation at last authorised the Church to govern itself, although Parliament refused to authorise the 1928 revision of the Prayer Book.

Church Role Today

Since 1969 the Church has been governed by its General Synod and parliament has not been inclined to interfere. But the appointment of bishops is made by the monarch (or in effect the Prime Minister's Department) since 26 of them sit in the House of Lords.

In 2007 the method of appointment was amended, so that the Church presents two names to the Prime Minister and the first name has so far been selected. So the established Church has slowly evolved into relative independence, but it still plays a privileged role in English life.

Established Church a State Church

This idea of an established Church — recognised by law as the official Church of a nation — goes back to the time of the Emperor Constantine and the Catholic Church still holds a parallel role in some states. The original Protestant Churches of Northern Europe have largely retained their role as state Churches.

In the Nordic countries the relationship has been changing in recent years, with Finland reducing the role of the Lutheran Church in 1867, Sweden secularising in 2000 and Norway in 2017.

In the UK, the Irish Anglican Church was disestablished in 1871 and that of Wales in 1920, and the Church of Scotland has always operated differently. Debate over the nature of the establishment regularly surfaces both in the state and in the Church, especially now when so few people attend church and when political leaders can be of any religion.

Church's Role in Coronation

The Coronation, however, shows that symbolically the link is still strong. The most astonishing aspect of this is the anointing of the monarch. Under a gold canopy, the monarch removes their royal robes, revealing a plain white garment. The monarch is then anointed with holy oil on hands, breast and head. (No changes are likely this year, for the anointing oil has already been sent from Jerusalem.) The anointing is essentially like the ordination of priests. The hymn *Veni, Creator Spiritus* is sung, and the words used in 1953 were:

> *Bless and sanctify thy chosen servant ELIZABETH,*
> *who by our office and ministry*
> *is now to be anointed with this Oil,*
> *and consecrated Queen:*
> *Strengthen her, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter;*
> *Confirm and stablish her with thy free and princely Spirit, ...*

Certainly, other religious groups will participate in the 2023 ceremony, but according to palace statements the ceremony will be "rooted in long-standing traditions", it will also "reflect the monarch's role today and look towards the future."

So the key rite will be administered by the Church of England. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have recently, in a pastoral letter, told their congregations that: "The Church of England has the great privilege of a role at the heart of our national, local and community events.

That also means we get to work in partnership with those around us — so do consider reaching out to other communities, traditions and groups and doing something together."

No Change to Oath

The King commented years ago that he preferred to be "defender of faith" rather than "defender of the faith", but the monarch is inevitably a traditionalist and technically, it would require a parliamentary agreement to change the nature of the oath. Perhaps it is impossible for monarchy to exist without a religion willing to sacralise it.

These days less than 3 per cent of English people regularly attend the Church of England, and over the past few years the Church of England's role in British society has steadily reduced.

There are awkward issues for the state church, for example, over same-sex marriage. An MP introduced a bill into the British Parliament a few weeks ago "to enable clergy of the Church of England to conduct same-sex marriages on Church of England premises", overriding church regulations.

Perhaps it is impossible for monarchy to exist without a religion willing to sacralise it.

He argued that "The monarch is its Supreme Governor; its bishops are appointed by the monarch on the advice of the Prime Minister and sit in the other place; it runs thousands of schools across England. With those privileges of establishment comes a duty to serve the whole nation—to be there for all citizens."

It is troubling when a national Church is out of step with its nation. But Anglicanism tends to survive. At the end of March there was a further debate in the House of Commons on Christianity in Society.

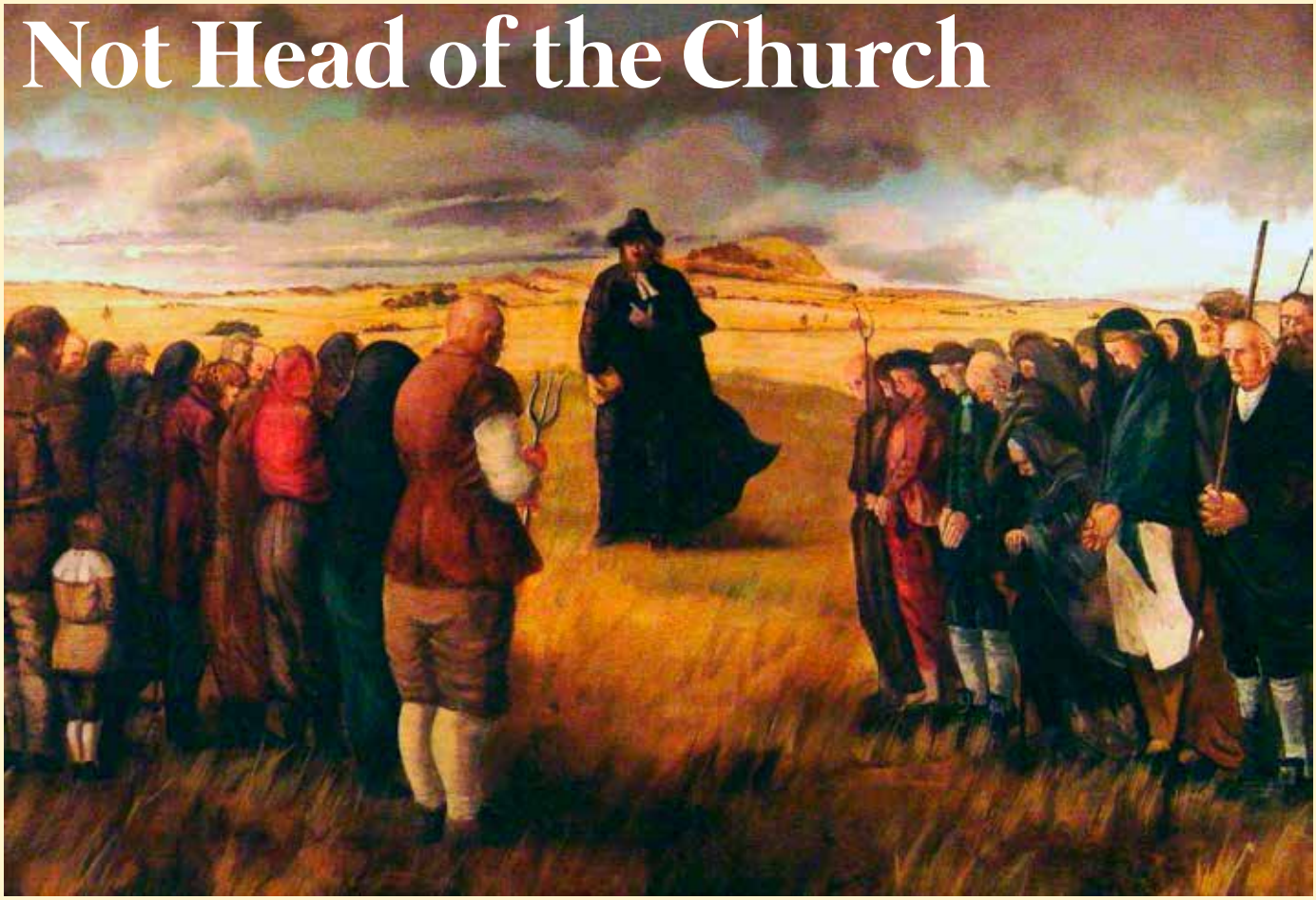
The resolution passed was rather anaemic: "That this House has considered Christianity in society". Regrettably, here is the paradox of a privileged Christian Church in a secular society struggling to have an authentic Christian voice when it seeks to speak into the world of politics.

The Anglican Church in New Zealand lost its established role in 1856 and operates completely independently from the state. Yet it, too, tends to shy from political comment, preferring the pastoral to the prophetic.

Art: ***Westminster Abbey with a Procession of Knights of the Bath*** by Canaletto (1749) Wikimedia Commons

Peter Lineham is a historian, who taught and researched at Massey University, and has written extensively on religious history in Aotearoa.

The King Is a Member Not Head of the Church



Peter Matheson traces the history of the relationship of the Presbyterian Church to the monarchy.

IN THE WAKE OF the French Revolution (1789-1799), Irish Catholics and Presbyterians joined hands in the Society of United Irishmen. Theirs was a struggle for democratic rights and the overthrow of the Anglican Ascendancy in Ireland. This is an interesting, often forgotten, chapter in our history. Their rebellion was easily crushed at the time but the recent coronation of Charles III reminds us that Catholics and Presbyterians have often shared a similarly conflicted relationship to the monarchy.

Christ Is Head of the Church

The 16th-century English Reformation began with Henry VIII elbowing out the Pope to pronounce himself the "Head of the Church" by Divine Right. In retrospect how ridiculous this was! In Scotland the Reformation was a grassroots movement which broke with the papacy and developed a predominantly Calvinist national Kirk but owed nothing to regal support. In the vivid language of the day Andrew Melville argued: "Thair is twa Kings and twa Kingdomes in Scotland... Chryst Jesus the King and his Kingdome the Kirk." The secular kingdom was ruled by King James. But within the Kingdom of the Church James was a mere subject. Fighting talk!

Resistance to Royal Interference

A foolish attempt in 1638 by Charles I to impose English patterns of worship and governance on Scotland led to thousands of Scots signing a famous National Covenant opposing the interference of the Stuart kings in the affairs of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Following the wider Calvinist tradition, the National Covenant emphasised the need for the Church to retain its spiritual independence from the monarchy. As the Covenanters (those who'd signed the Covenant) held, Christ should be the sole Head of the Church.

The King persisted and the Covenanters became involved in the grim English Civil War on the side of the Commonwealth (Parliamentarians) against the Royalists. However, they did not approve of the execution of Charles I when the Parliamentarians won.

After the Restoration of Charles II in 1660 a time of persecution of the Presbyterians was ushered in. Hundreds of Scottish ministers were dismissed for refusing to renounce the National Covenant. It became common for services to be held in

secret out-of-the-way places like barns or in the fields, as parishioners shunned the new ministers imposed on them. Unbelievably, attendance at these "conventicles" could be punishable by death and hundreds of sincere worshippers were also deported overseas.

During these "killing times" some Covenanters renounced the monarchy altogether. Certainly, the bitter experience of persecution by the Stuart monarchy during the Covenanting period, of the 17th century, ensured that the Church of Scotland has wanted nothing to do with a monarch as Head of their Church. Equally unacceptable was the Lutheran idea of the ruler as the Supreme Bishop.

Preserving the Autonomy of Church

In this period of history the Church was different from today's worshipping and pastoral communities. At that time the Church controlled just about everything in society: education, poor relief, family life. For all the folly of the Stuart kings, with their fantasies about Divine Rule — a political doctrine in defense of monarchial absolutism — we need to remember that the motives of the Covenanters were not always saintly either. There were power grabs on all sides!

Presbyterians have not been anti-monarchical in principle. Similar to the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, experience had taught them that the integrity of worship and doctrine could only be safeguarded if the autonomy of the Church was preserved.

Today we can see the disastrous results when church leadership takes its cues from the state as in Putin's Russia. Russian Orthodox Patriarch Kirill appears to endorse Putin's war on Ukraine and has no critical independence of thought. (We need to remember that Orthodoxy, for all its wonderful liturgical and theological resources, was untouched both by the Reformation and by the Enlightenment.)

Those conservative US evangelicals who hang on to the coat-tails of Donald Trump's "America First" populism similarly fail to keep Church and State separate. So achieving proper church-state relations is not an abstract or theoretical question. When Erastianism runs riot — when the Church simply does what it is told by the state — the consequences can be dire.

I suspect we will have a range of opinions about the significance of Charles III's coronation. When we consider that the first Charles was beheaded and that Charles II was feckless, the very name "Charles" is not inspiring. And we may think that there are more important issues pressing upon us at this time than a coronation.

There's something compelling about the … Catholic and Calvinist view that the Church has a prophetic calling which goes beyond the parish gate to embrace the whole of life.

Church to Uphold the Common Good of All

To sum up. The monarch does not have a role in the Church of Scotland or the Catholic Church. When the Church of Scotland's national assembly or synod meets, the royal representative may attend and sit in the gallery, but cannot take part in the proceedings. The monarchy as a decorative ornament, perhaps. The Anabaptist tradition, seen in contemporary Mennonites — which champions a separatist ecclesiology, often pacifist and unworldly — may seem attractive. But there remains something compelling about the mainline Catholic and Calvinist view that the Church has a prophetic calling which goes beyond the parish gate to embrace the whole of life.

For a long time, of course, Catholics in Aotearoa were discriminated against because of their Irish ancestry and allegiance to the Pope as head of the Church rather than the monarch.

It is interesting to reflect that initially most of the Otago Presbyterians were from the Free Church of Scotland, formed in the Disruption of 1843 when a third of the ministers broke away from the Church of Scotland to form the Free Church. Denied the right to call their own ministers, and lorded over by aristocratic patrons, they walked out of their traditional churches and challenged the law of the land, a sort of re-run of the 17th-century Covenanters. Like Catholics, then, Presbyterians have been accustomed to being at odds with the powers that be.

I imagine that Catholics and Presbyterians in Aotearoa today rarely give much thought to church-state issues as we have no "state church" here — although the Anglican Church can take precedence on public occasions. The real "monarch" today may be the social media, allied to free market economics. Maybe the more pertinent issue in New Zealand is the role of the Church in society in upholding the common good for all and critiquing populist conspiracy theories. The Salvation Army's *2023 State of the Nation* report is a sobering reminder of the need for the prophetic role of the Church. And to take action on child poverty, ethnic discrimination, racism — open and subterranean — and disinformation.

Words alone will not overcome these blights on our national life. Maybe we need a National Covenant around the human dignity of everyone despite our differences in gender, race, social economic status, religion, health and political affiliation. Maybe we could recover the revolutionary élan of the United Irish men and women and take action together.

Artwork: ***Covenanters' Conventicle on Loudon Hill*** unknown artist Wikimedia Commons

Peter Matheson is a peace activist, a Church historian, Emeritus Professor of Knox Theological College, Dunedin and author.

RISE WITH COURAGE

Mary Betz recommends that we work together with the courage and resolve of the Spirit to reduce the climate chaos in our world.

A FEW MONTHS ON from the two cyclones and a massive atmospheric river which wreaked havoc in northern and eastern parts of the North Island, I feel a brokenness in our land, and a sadness in our people.

Our climate, rivers, hillsides, weather, roads, power, communications, livelihoods — even our homes — no longer seem stable, reliable or predictable. Those most affected throughout the country suffer trauma, and struggle to rebuild their lives. Even we who are merely inconvenienced have developed a mistrust of rainstorms, hillsides, and low-lying areas. And we think twice, now, before visiting family or friends in the damaged areas, or planning a holiday.

A Final Warning

This upending of our lives could be one last wake-up call. Last month the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) issued its clearest and most dire report yet: "The pace and scale of climate action" is insufficient to keep climate warming to 1.5C or even 2C in the coming decades.

We are on track for 1.5C warming by the early 2030s, and 3.2C by 2100. The latter would be a literally unmitigated disaster for our planet and many of its species, including our own.

Today our planet is 1.2C above its pre-industrial ambient temperature. We have already seen the destruction and heartache caused by this seemingly small change. Each incremental degree upwards will bring more extreme heatwaves, drought, rainstorms, cyclones and flooding, causing more and more destruction of homes, farmland, livelihoods and infrastructure and resultant trauma on humans.

Climate change has exposed millions of people around the world to escalating food insecurity and water scarcity.

Increases in human displacement, disease, mortality, trauma and loss of livelihoods have resulted from extreme climate events.

The regions most affected have suffered 15 times more human mortality than regions like our own that have been less affected.

All this sits alongside a precipitous decline in biodiversity — the demise of thousands of species and loss of critical forest, tundra and wetland ecosystems around the globe. Recent research has also signalled an imminent collapse of ocean systems

because of melting Antarctic ice sheets.

Two Gaps in Response

What has happened? The IPCC report highlights two gaps. First, despite some successes at various annual COP (Conference of the Parties) meetings of the countries that signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which came into force in 1994, there is an "emissions gap" between individual countries' pledges for global carbon emissions reductions by 2030 and the reductions needed to keep warming to 1.5C.

Second, there is an "implementation gap" between what most countries have pledged, and policies and legislation that would enable reductions to be made.

Aotearoa's Gaps

Our country suffers from both these gaps. The Climate Change Commission and the climate change minister have long admitted that our emissions pledges are less than our fair share toward keeping global warming to 1.5C.

An even greater gap results from our colossal lack of political will to stay a course on policy and legislation that would enable Aotearoa to meet even our inadequate emissions pledges. Cases in point are the extension of petrol tax cuts and the politically expedient dumping in March of the biofuel mandate, clean car and social car-leasing schemes and lower speed limits.

More importantly we are not reorienting our economic system to a "circular economy" in which all we make or extract from Earth is fully reused in non-polluting ways. Our declaration of a climate emergency has not been followed by plans to tighten building standards, put solar power panels on rooftops, fix the Emissions Trading Scheme, or encourage transitions to sustainable agriculture and forestry.

The Spirit Is with Us

This month we celebrate the feast of Pentecost when we recall how the Holy Spirit transformed Jesus's fearful disciples. It's not that the Spirit wasn't already working in the world — she had been hovering over the deep since the time of creation. She impassioned prophets and writers of wisdom. But after weeks of their retreating from the world, working through their sadness and uncertainty, and in prayer, the disciples were empowered with a Spirit-filled fearlessness to act in ways that would transform their world.

I wonder if we are a little like those early disciples. Our rapidly changing world can frighten, overwhelm, and paralyse us. Perhaps we, too, need some time away to listen to ourselves and the Spirit, and come to clarity about what we are called to do in this era of climate chaos. Jesus's early followers set about reforming themselves as community, including caring for their poor. Our task today is nothing less than the transformation of all Earth's community.

The Challenge

This is clearly a mammoth task, involving change at many levels.

Individually we can attend to our own household's carbon emissions: eating less meat; using public transport, walking and cycling and opting for renewable energy sources; being mindful of emissions when purchasing vehicles, and of battery disposal when using e-vehicles or solar panels; but mostly by making do with less and with used and recycled items.

Corporate change is often the hardest, because most companies operate with a profit motive first and foremost, and only when that is threatened will they respond to customer demand for greater ecological accountability.

We can demand (in correspondence and in our consumer choices) ecologically sound products and packaging, and a switch from fossil fuel use, as well as fair pay and conditions by companies themselves and in their supply chains.

Governments have a responsibility to ensure the common good. This means legislating especially with the poor and vulnerable in mind, against gross inequality, and also safeguarding the health of our planet.

A humanly liveable Earth will not survive without policies designed to nearly halve our carbon emissions by 2030. This requires governments to legislate in ways that will make it easier, and in some cases, mandatory, for individuals and companies to make environmentally sound choices — and our advocacy to make sure that happens.

Celebrating Pentecost

It is easy to be overwhelmed with the immensity and urgency of the changes we need to make. It helps to remember that we don't have to do everything at once, or on our own. Every step is valuable. And the Spirit goes before us, in the many agencies, communities and people who are already working in many ways to "renew the face of Earth".

As we celebrate Pentecost this month, let's mark it — not just as a birthday — but as a turning point that recommits us to living in ways that will enhance and not destroy life, and to the vigilance needed to guide governments and corporations to do the same.

Artwork: ***Unprecedented*** by Diane Burko © Used with permission www.dianeburko.com Instagram: @dianeburko

Mary Betz is a grandmother and a spiritual companion and has a background in ecology, theology, justice and peace.

From Makkah with Love

***Zain Ali** shares his experience of Umrah, the minor pilgrimage, and participating in the prayer and rituals of the holy places.*

IT'S 9.30 IN THE morning, the sun is rising quickly, and the temperature is heading toward the mid 30s. I am on the summit of Jabal al Nour, the Mountain of Light, 10 km northeast of the holy city of Makkah. The rock formations at the summit create a shaded area, there's a cool breeze and the desert heat is barely noticeable. This is where Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, would spend time in meditation. This is also the location where he claimed to have experienced divine revelation.

The view is breathtaking. There are several mountains and deep valleys in the area. The landscape is rocky, dry and dusty. I find it deeply confronting — like coming face-to-face with something primordial, a leviathan of sorts. The landscape is as unrelenting as it is unforgiving. I have a newfound wonder and respect for the desert people who inhabit such areas.

I look toward Makkah in the distance, where according to Arab lore, Hagar and Ishmael settled after leaving Abraham. They must have been a resilient pair to have made a home here. I say a quiet prayer for Hagar, the founding mother of Makkah, may she be blessed. I pray also for Sarah, may she be blessed.

I try to recall the very first verses of the Qur'an revealed to Muhammad here. I struggle to recall the Arabic — it's odd because I'd learned the verses as a child and I remembered them clearly when I began my ascent only an hour ago. As I concentrated, breathing the cool desert air, the verses slowly returned:

"Iqra bismi rab bikal lathee khalaq, Khalaqal insaana min 'alaq. Iqra wa rab bukal akram. Al lathee 'allama bil kalam. Al lamal insaana ma lam y'alam."

"Read with the name of your Lord who created, who created man from a clot. Read, and your Lord is most gracious, who imparted knowledge by means of the Pen. Who taught man what he did not know."

As I recite them, I am overcome with awe. I feel the smallness of my being, atop a mountain within this vast desert landscape.

The Quranic verses serve to magnify that feeling, and yet they remind me that I matter. I am the *alaq*/clot whom God cares for. It is no wonder, that Muhammad felt completely overwhelmed when he heard those words. He rushed home to his wife in a state of fear and perhaps shock.

Kindnesses on My Journey

I feel also a deep sense of humility. My journey to Makkah was far

from smooth. It was the kindness of strangers that got me through difficult situations. A taxi driver patiently helped me find my accommodation in the dead of night; without his help I would have likely slept on the streets.

An airport staffer would have continued insisting on a visa and not let me board my flight, if a gentleman had not uttered the word "transit" at just the right moment. Being in transit meant I didn't require a visa.

Another man on the highspeed train kindly bought me *karak* tea.

A Saudi immigration officer engaged me in conversation and asked in fluent English about New Zealand and whether it was beautiful. I replied in Arabic: "*Nam, jameel jiddan* — Yes, beautiful indeed." She smiled broadly, no doubt tickled at my basic Arabic.

Unity in Diversity

At no point during my journey was I quizzed about my beliefs or political inclinations. The Muslim community is incredibly diverse — ethnically and culturally and theologically and politically. This diversity is seen in the many mosques right here in New Zealand.

There are mosques with Indian, Arab, Somali and Afghan majorities. mosques that serve Sunni Muslims and others that serve Shia Muslims. Some mosques are conservative, others more family-oriented.

Unity in Faith and Ritual

Being at the Grand Mosque in Makkah with the *Kabaa*, the black cube, at its centre — these differences seem to matter little. As I walk around the *Kabaa*, I am shoulder to shoulder with men and women from around the world, and when it was time for prayer, we all stood together. I couldn't tell who was Sunni or Shia, rich or poor, conservative or liberal. The ritual of *tawaf*, the walk around the *Kabaa*, is wonderfully unifying.

The American civil rights activist Malcolm X wrote about his experience of being in Makkah. Before his journey he'd felt there could be no brotherhood between whites and non-whites but the rituals of Makkah changed his views:

"During the past 11 days here … I have eaten from the same plate, drunk from the same glass and slept in the same bed (or on the same rug) while praying to the same God with fellow Muslims, whose eyes were the bluest of the blue, whose hair was the blondest of blond and whose skin was the whitest of white. And in the words and in the actions and in the deeds of the 'white' Muslims, I felt the same sincerity that I felt among the black African Muslims of Nigeria, Sudan and Ghana. We are truly all the same — brothers."

Experience of Faith Family

I was in a heightened state of alertness on my own journey — concerned for my well-being and slightly suspicious of those around me. However, as I sat and meditated in the Grand Mosque in Makkah, and in the Prophet's Mosque in Medinah, which houses Muhammad's tomb, I could feel a sense of camaraderie, that we were all family; saints as well as sinners.

There were folk from every stratum of society, including many with disabilities. It was heart-warming to witness a young man push his father in a wheelchair, and humbling seeing another family with their young daughter in a wheelchair. I felt myself let go of my caution and suspicion and shift toward an outlook of love. It was okay to be close to those around me, to have their interests at heart, even though they were strangers.

Love Blooming in the Desert

I can only imagine what it would have been like for our faith ancestors in the desert: Abraham with his family in the desert, Moses and his people wandering there, and for Muhammad trying to build a community of faith.

The desert is at once terrifying, beautiful and awe inspiring. It is a place that can turn all into strangers. It is a humbling place — our smallness is painfully apparent and also our incredible potential.

It makes me think about how our existence is paradoxical: we are insignificant, yet the depth and richness of our consciousness is truly remarkable; we have a common origin, yet we are also strangers to one another.

Perhaps Rumi was onto something when he said: "Love is a stranger and speaks a strange language."

Photo: Rabah al Shammary on Unsplash
Above: Haidan on Unsplash

Zain Ali lives in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland where he is an honorary academic at the University of Auckland.

The Tūī

You meet the dawn bright handsome chatty
eager to start your day's work
just like him whom we loved dearly
taken from us with so little warning.
Are you God's gift, an angelic being of beauty
with your gleaming coat and joyous song
sent to comfort us and mark his continuing presence in our bereft lives?
A special gift added to the memories on our table?
He was treasured, irreplaceable. A joy in our lives
How blessed we were in the years he was with us
those special years spanning but a part of the seven ages.
The times shared, joyous, noisy, loving and yes sometimes troubled
when we could comfort him.
Why? The question without answer
But we believe he is in his heavenly home
welcomed by family and friends
some known some unknown to him in this life on Earth.
We will see him again when we too are called from our present world
and so we rejoice in talking to you every day
keeping him close to us.

By Norman Elliott

This reflection stems from the sudden and unexpected death of our grandson Liam in February 2022 from a genetic condition that had been diagnosed only a few weeks before. Liam was 23 years old, much loved by his whole family. He was a former student at Sacred Heart College in Auckland and was working as a builder's apprentice. For many months following his death a tūī frequented a cabbage tree outside our house. We came to call him "Liam".

REFORMS AN UPHILL STRUGGLE

***Massimo Faggioli** discusses what Hans Zollner's resignation from Pope Francis's child protection commission tells us about the Vatican's fight against sexual abuse.*

THE SYNODAL PROCESS that Pope Francis has launched to make the Catholic Church more transparent and credible is entering its crucial phase. But his pontificate presently risks losing momentum in its fight against sexual abuse and its promotion of a new culture of accountability. This is the upshot of the recent resignation of Hans Zollner, his fellow Jesuit, from the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM).

The German priest is a theologian and psychologist. He's also a leading safeguarding expert and one of the most respected figures in the Church's response to the clergy sex abuse crisis. That is due largely to the work of the Institute of Anthropology — Interdisciplinary Studies on Human Dignity and Care (former Centre for Child Protection), which he directs at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome.

Zollner is not the only person to point out problems concerning the PCPM in the last few months. Francis created the commission in 2014 and last September he appointed 10 new members to the body. But in the first eight years of its existence the PCPM was in something like an institutional limbo. That changed on March 22 when the pope issued the apostolic constitution *Praedicate Evangelium* and made the PCPM part of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith. But it's still not clear what this will mean for the commission's efficacy and authority within the Roman Curia. However, there are now more doubts about that than there were one year ago.

The purpose and strategy of the PCPM remain unclear because the very role of the Roman Curia, other Vatican institutions and the legal system per se remain unclear in the current pontificate.

The Catholic Church, in fact, has just started to deal with the abuse crisis from a magisterial, theological and legal point of view. As frustrating or shocking as this might sound, we are still in the early days.

AN EPOCH-MAKING CATACLYSM

The sex abuse crisis must be seen as one of the epoch-making cataclysmic series of changes in the history of the Church.

To give just one example, at the time of the most earth-shattering event in the history of the modern papacy, the collapse of the Papal States in the 19th century culminating with the loss of Rome to the Italian kingdom in 1870, there were more than 15 different Vatican tribunals exercising the Church's jurisdiction. There were also the courts of law at the local level. It is not surprising that during his long pontificate (1846-1878), Pius IX eventually had to make the reform of the criminal justice system a major priority.

The response to the loss of the Papal States took decades to take shape, between the reform of the Curia in 1908 and Vatican Council II (1962-65). It will also take decades to

deal with the sex abuse crisis.

The reaction of the institutional Church has always been slow, because it follows a logic of accumulation and superimposition of new structures on top of old structures — not of replacing old structures with entirely new ones.

The Church's reaction looks even slower now because of the subjugation of all institutions to a mediatisation that helps give voice to the victims. This has had mixed effects on the efforts of those who try to bring about change.

Moreover, the abuse crisis has put enormous pressure and strain on the Catholic Church's legal system. It has raised a number of new issues.

For instance, how to balance the presumption of innocence with public fury over the heinous crimes of sexual abuse, especially of minors; how to exercise papal authority to hold bishops accountable and at the same time respect the fact that, from a sacramental point of view, the pope and the bishops are peers, and "resigned" bishops and cardinals are still members of the episcopal college.

These are enormous problems that are changing delicate systems that the Church has continuously calibrated over centuries.

They are problems that are also destabilising the ecclesiology of Vatican II. This would be an enormous burden for any pope — and Francis inherited this problem from his predecessors.

PAPALISM HAS INCREASED

But then there are some choices the 86-year-old Jesuit pope has made that must be analysed for the way they have dealt legally and "politically" with the abuse crisis.

His response to the scandal has augmented the rate of papalism in the Catholic Church at the expense of other collegial bodies supposed to help the pope in his ministry.

Francis wants to have a synodal Church, but the collegial nature of the work of the Roman Curia and of the College of Cardinals has not improved in the last 10 years. As Cardinal Walter Kasper wrote in the preface to a book recently published by Bishop Giuseppe Sciacca, canon lawyer and former secretary of the Apostolic Signatura: "The process of removing bishops from office is a serious matter that the early Church conducted in a synodal way; it cannot be an administrative act, but presupposes a collegial action."

No matter what Vatican II's *Constitution on the Church (Lumen Gentium)* says, the bishops now look more and more as franchise managers working on behalf (or by delegation) of the Apostolic See, and not true pastors in virtue of the sacramentality of their episcopal ordination. They also appear tragically weakened in their figure as fathers of their people and friends of their priests.

In the Church's legal system, in the last few years there has also been a twist with the submission of the Roman Curia to the jurisdiction of the Vatican State — a sort of inversion in that relationship between the Vatican City State with respect to the Apostolic See: the Vatican State is supposed to be just a servant, and not the master, of the Apostolic See.

Some of these uncertainties in the legislative activity of Francis's pontificate are visible in the situation that made Hans Zollner decide to resign. The PCPM does not have a well-defined mandate and mission in the wording of *Praedicate Evangelium* (art 78).

More than a year after its publication there is no clarity on the relationship between the PCPM and the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith.

In his statement explaining his reasons for resigning, Zollner said he was "unaware of any regulations that govern the relationship between the commission and the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith."

There is no clarity on the relationship between the PCPM president and the cardinal-prefect of the doctrinal office, nor on the relationship between the PCPM president and the same commission's secretary.

> The bishops now look more and more as franchise managers ... and not true pastors in virtue of the sacramentality of their episcopal ordination.

NEW PROBLEMS FOR THE VATICAN COMMISSION

Praedicate Evangelium cannot by fiat solve a problem that was evident from the start.

Marie Collins resigned from the commission in 2017 because of what she called the doctrinal office's "resistance" to its work. It is still unclear how the commission and the dicastery will work together. Then there are new problems.

Other prominent former members of the PCPM, such as Baroness Hollins and Sister Jane Bertelsen, have made their concerns public about the remit of the PCPM. They,

too, have questioned the wisdom of placing the commission within the Vatican's doctrinal office.

However, instead of dealing with those pressing concerns, the PCPM is now engaging in new — and more than daunting — tasks.

The PCPM president Cardinal Sean O'Malley recently revealed one of them when he quoted a message from the pope (dated 8 March) to participants at the Second Latin American Congress on the prevention of abuse, which took place in Asuncion, Paraguay.

"He [Francis] recalled how the Pontifical Commission or the Protection of Minors has the role of overseeing the proper implementation of *Vos Estis Lux Mundi*, so that abused persons have clear and accessible paths to seek justice," O'Malley said.

But, so far, the PCPM has refused to comment on individual cases, such as that involving the 78-year-old Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard. The now-retired archbishop of Bordeaux (France) was — and still appears to be — a member of the very Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith of which the PCPM is part.

He admitted last November 2022 that he committed "reprehensible" acts of a sexual nature against a 14-year-old girl some 35 years earlier. (Ricard revealed this after the statute of limitations had expired according to the French penal code.)

More importantly, canon lawyers have doubts about the PCPM's competence and authority to "oversee" the implementation of *Vos Estis* for the entire Church, let alone the fact that this seems to have created further legal chaos. This exposes the PCPM to a kind of liability, potentially from anyone in the world, that was not there before.

CORRECTIONS NEEDED

There is no doubt that Pope Francis has raised the awareness throughout the Church about the plague of sex abuse. And he has tried to implement courageous institutional and legal reforms. Cardinal O'Malley has also brought ecclesiastical credibility to Francis's reform efforts, and in key moments he has forcefully helped the pope adjust his message (such as during the papal trip to Chile in 2018).

But at this time, it's clear that these efforts need corrections. The "papal patriotism" that has made many Catholics defend Francis from the unprecedented attacks against his legitimacy (included an attempt to unseat him with an instrumental use of the case of former cardinal Theodore McCarrick) cannot ignore the legal and institutional inconsistencies that the Vatican response to the abuse crisis still shows.

The papacy now lives and dies by public and media events, but the Church also needs a systematic and consistent approach to the role of the law and its institutions.

Read more at: www.tinyurl.com/5n7dn776

Photos p18: Riccardo De Luca/shutterstock.com
Above: Alessia Pierdomenico/shutterstock.com

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

Let Your Life Speak

I GREW UP IN Christchurch as a Quaker. As was customary in Quaker homes, I read a series of picture books about Obadiah, a cheeky Quaker boy growing up in a Quaker community in 18th-century Nantucket Island, USA. Obadiah had flaming red hair. Teased by his big brothers Moses and Asa, he was, in turn, mean to his little sister Rachael. Obadiah and his family were "plain Quakers" meaning they abided by strict dress codes of long skirts and bonnets for women and wide brimmed hats for the men. And more incredible to me as a child was that everyone in Obadiah's Nantucket community was also Quaker.

Unlike Obadiah, Christchurch was not a community of Quakers. In fact, I twigged early on that being a Quaker might not be a great thing to mention at school. Being part of any religion was foreign to many kids in my class. But even by religious standards Quaker was tough to explain. Quakers did things in silence, although people in the meeting might individually and spontaneously rise to speak to "give ministry". But Quaker is not a "meditation group" either — it's not an Eastern Religion. It has its roots in Northern English rabble-rousers of 1652 rather than revelations under the Bodhi tree.

In our Christchurch Meeting children had Sunday School while the adults went to Meeting for Worship. There were lots of families attending. Quakerism was not often taught explicitly to children in these sessions, but more implicitly as a way of life and doing things. For example, when I was about 11, I remember learning about the Travis Swamp Wetland — a wild area in the north of Christchurch that was threatened with "development". We made posters with pūkeko and cabbage trees, imploring that we "Save Travis Swamp". The connection of the activity to Quakerism was not explicitly explained. The educational style was on showing by example as there is a fear of "indoctrination".

A highlight of the Quaker calendar was Summer Gathering, a week-long camp where Quakers from around the country would descend on a high school campus or scout camp in some rural New Zealand town. For the week of Summer Gathering we were immersed in all things Quaker. Though not the style of Obadiah's time, you could definitely spot the uniform — rainbow tie-dye jumpers, "Nuclear Free Pacific" T-shirts, sensible socks and roman sandals!

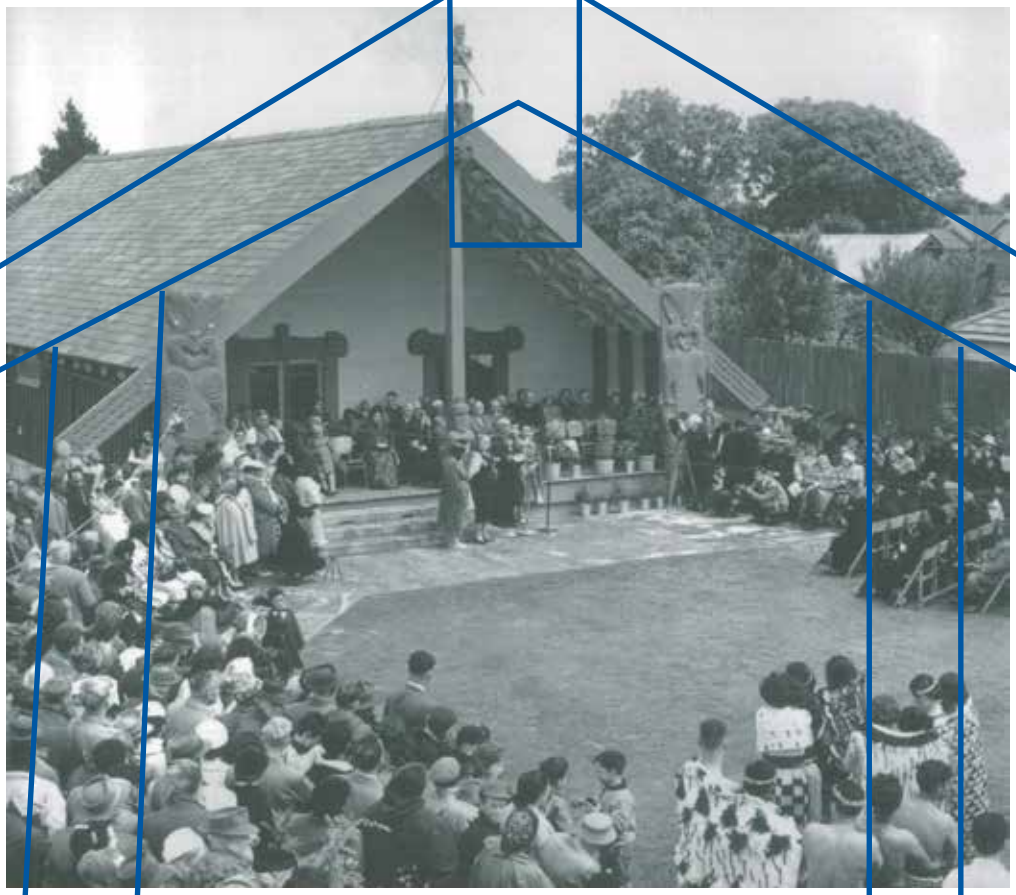
We had huge communal meals three times a day and workshops and discussion groups for the grownups. Children would roam around in packs, swimming in the waterhole and checking in on their parents once or twice a day.

Evenings were fun — we had group games, adults pretending to be wizards, giants and elves and sensible Quaker ladies showing their sillier sides. The concert on the last evening finished with everyone singing "Dear Friends" in the dark. We would all hold hands singing in a round and moving in and out of a giant spiral. When the spiral ended the round also finished and for a few moments the entire group stood still in silence connected to one another by holding hands. Though not explicitly explained to us, the experience was a spiritual communal act.

These 1980s camps showed Quakers' forward thinking. When many New Zealanders were falling in love with shopping malls and the stock market, we were taking part in seminars on the Quaker response to the Treaty of Waitangi, prison reform and peace issues and eating sprouted lentil salads and lemon verbena tea. At the time it was definitely not cool and made me cringe as a youngster, but it makes me proud of my Quaker community today.

The Quaker upbringing gave me core values such as integrity, doing what you say you'll do and striving for a fairer, more equal society where all people are treated with respect. I have a lifelong curiosity and respect for other people's religious experiences, and a sense of peace around different experiences of God or a higher power. I've learned the best way to be a Quaker is to preach not with words but by example, or as Quakers like to say: "Let your life speak."

Charlotte Gordon now lives in Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland with her husband and three children. She works for Belong Aotearoa, an NGO that supports migrant and former refugee communities.



FINDING HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Claire Kaahu White tells the story of the Rehua Hostel and Marae in Christchurch where young Māori found a home, community, apprenticeships and further education.

REHUA MARAE, tucked away in beautiful native bush in the central Christchurch suburb of St Albans, exemplifies the working partnership between mana whenua (people of the place) and mātāwaka (iwi from other areas) that has endured over its 60 years of existence.

Hostel for Young Māori Women

The story of Rehua did not start with the marae, or indeed with the Māori boys' hostel, which was part of the Māori Affairs Trade Training Scheme. In 1952 the Christchurch Methodist Central Mission, led by the Reverend Wilf Falkingham, opened a hostel for young Māori women in the suburb of Richmond.

The government supported the establishment of such hostels, which were often managed and run by Church social services. Hostels offered safe, clean, affordable accommodation. On the flip side, the state needed labour to support the post-war economy and Māori women were a previously untapped source of workers.

Changed to Accommodation for Young Māori Men

Rehua Hostel, named by Kāi Tahu kaumātua (elder) Henare Te Ara Jacobs, changed focus and direction in line with new government policies. In 1954 it became a hostel for young Māori men who were selected as trade apprentices. When the government was actively encouraging young Māori to leave their rural papakāika (original homes) and move to the cities, to be integrated into urban Pākehā society, this pilot scheme, the first of its kind in Te Waipounamu (the South Island), acknowledged that the new arrivals would be more likely to succeed if they stayed together.

Promising Young Men Selected

The initial criteria for the annual selection of 20 boys were a minimum of two years secondary schooling and a rural background. Very few South Island boys made the cut. Most came from the so-called reservoir areas of Te Tai Tokerau (Northland) and Te Tai Rāwhiti (the East Coast) — Wairoa in particular; the rest hailed from rural papakāika across Te Ika a Maui, the North Island. Many of the boys — the youngest were only 15 — had never been away from home and the trip to Christchurch was both terrifying and exciting. Most travelled the long distances by bus and train, then took the overnight ferry to Lyttelton. Some came in small groups, many on their own.

Welcomed by Kāi Tahu Elders

A Council of Elders, made up of Kāi Tahu kaumātua

from the local Canterbury hapū of Kāi Tūāhuriri, Kāti Wheke, Kāti Irakehu, Kāti Moki/Ruahikihiki and Kāti Huirapa, helped with the governance of the hostels. Their manaakitaka (love and hospitality) helped the boys to feel at home in their strange new surroundings. Most of these kaumātua were also community and church leaders.

Churches Open Further Hostels

In the 1960s three more hostels opened: Te Kaihanga in Upper Riccarton was run by Anglican Social Services, Roseneath House for Maori Girls in Merivale, run by the Anglicans until Presbyterian Social Services took over, and Te Aranga in Ōpawa, run by the Catholics and then the Anglicans.

Because the government subsidy was woefully inadequate to operate and maintain the hostels, the Churches supported them with fundraisers and donations of food, furniture and furnishings. Rehua had extensive gardens and a chicken run. The boys loved harvesting kaimoana (seafood) from the local beaches and rivers.

Successful Church-Government Partnerships

The success of the trade training scheme and the hostels was very much due to the collaboration between Kāi Tahu kaumātua, the Churches, the Department of Maori Affairs' welfare officers, the tutors at the Christchurch Technical Institute, the Department of Labour and the apprentices' employers. In the hostels, the matron and master acted as surrogate parents and took their responsibilities for the boys' pastoral care very seriously.

It was not all work, however. The boys loved going into town, to parties, to the movies and to dances. Many of them married local girls, Kāi Tahu and Pākehā. They joined local rugby and sports clubs and a number became coaches and representative players. They had their own culture group and would perform to raise funds and, though it was not compulsory, most attended church on Sundays. The Rehua boys went to the Methodist church on Cambridge Terrace.

Marae Opened

In 1957 Rehua Hostel moved to larger premises at 79 Springfield Road. Three years later, a fully carved wharenui (meeting house) Te Whatumanawa Māoritanga o Rehua, was built, giving the boys a place that was truly their home away from home.

Terry Ryan's Long Involvement

Terry Ryan arrived at Rehua in 1966 when he started a job in the newly established Māori Land Court in Christchurch. From the beginning he demonstrated strong leadership skills: he was made head boy of the hostel and soon proved himself indispensable. After the end of the hostel subsidies and the winding down of the trade training scheme in the 1980s, Terry was still there working alongside the kaumātua, as the marae became the focal point.

Labour of Love — the Story in a Book

The old boys stayed in touch and still meet regularly today, though their numbers are diminishing. With this in mind, in 2015 Terry approached me to write the history of Rehua's first 50 years. The Rehua trustees approved the project and we got to work.

My adoptive mother, Mirian Jones, was the first matron of Roseneath and I had spent the first three years of my life there. I am Kāi Tahu, from the Kāi Te Atawhiua and Kāti Huirapa hapū through the Kaahu and Te Raki whānau. The hostel community is strong in Christchurch and those ties bind all of us.

For five years Terry and I wove the story together, with the help of many wonderful people. Terry had cared for the archives and we had some superb photographs. He also suggested many men and women who had been involved with Rehua, to whom I talked. Sadly, by the time our book Te Pou Herenga Waka o Rehua went to print six of my interviewees had died.

MANY OF THE BOYS — THE YOUNGEST WERE ONLY 15 — HAD NEVER BEEN AWAY FROM HOME AND THE TRIP TO CHRISTCHURCH WAS BOTH TERRIFYING AND EXCITING.

Terry devoted his life to Rehua. Its story is as much his as that of the hostel and the marae. He was thrilled when we launched the book at the end of the Covid restrictions. Dr Terence John Ryan died in October 2022.

Ko koutou kā poupou o Rehua
Ko te kōrero te pou
Ko te aroha te pou
Ko te whanaukataka te pou
Ka whakairia ake ki ruka ki kā pātū o tēnei whare
hei oraka takata, he oraka wairua
Ka tū tonu ko Rehua
Hei āhuru mōwai mō tātou katoa.

Contact Claire Kaahu White (claire.white@xtra.co.nz) for enquiries about the book: *Te Pou Herenga Waka o Rehua: The Story of Rehua Hostel and Marae — The first 50 Years*.

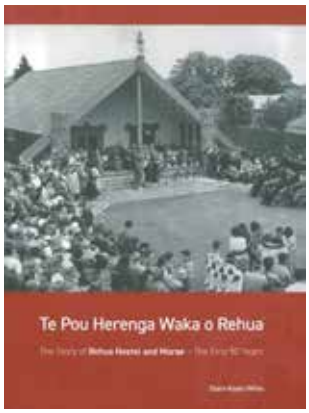


Photo: Book cover

Claire Kaahu White (Kāi Tahu) grew up in Christchurch, studied at Canterbury University and is a writer, photographer and art collector. She lives in the Hokianga with her partner Paul. They have three children.

Do Not Be Troubled

Kathleen Rushton discusses John 14 and the significance of disciples understanding their part in God's work.

THE EARLIEST CHRISTIANS would have recognised John 14 — part of Jesus's long farewell address (Jn 13:31-16:33) — as a well-known form of speaking by a leader about to die. In the address Jesus expressed deep concern for the well-being of the group and for individuals after his death. He announced that his death was about to happen, stressed that relationships were to continue and talked about the good things that were to come as well as the hard times ahead.

Jesus's words at the supper of the early 30s are recorded in John's Gospel for the community of the 90s — a community probably in the Roman city of Ephesus. Many of them had suffered for their belief in Jesus. The focus on Jesus's encouragement to "believe into" him and "finishing the works of God" is as relevant for us as it was to this early Christian community.

Forming Hearts

Jesus is intent on forming the hearts of his disciples. He recognises their lack of understanding and is mindful of their feelings and responses as they are facing times of hardship and uncertainty.

He begins and ends by reassuring the disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled" (Jn 14:1, 27; cf. 16:6, 22). The word translated as "troubled" means "stirred up" and was used earlier in the Gospel to describe Jesus's own inner agitation and emotional distress at the death of his friend Lazarus and now at his imminent death.

"Believe Into" Is Dynamic

Jesus appeals to the disciples' hearts: "Believe into God, believe into me" (Jn 14:1, 12). The Gospel Prologue (Jn 1:1–18) gives the clues about what will unfold in the Gospel. It begins: "to all who received [the Word], believed in *(pisteuein eis)* his name, he gave power to become children of God." What Bibles translate as "believed in" means "believed into". This expression, which is repeated 34 times, is one of this Gospel's favourite phrases. It is not found anywhere else in ancient literature.

The Evangelist writes about

discipleship as actions. Although "faith" and "belief" permeate John's Gospel, the nouns themselves are not used — instead, actions illustrate faith. In the Middle Eastern world faith and belief, fidelity and faithfulness bound one person to another. They are sentiments coming from the heart, the centre of a person's being. They are the expression of social and emotionally-rooted values of solidarity, commitment and loyalty.

"Believing into" is dynamic. Raymond Brown describes it as "an active commitment to a person and in particular to Jesus … it involves much more than trust in Jesus or confidence in him; it is an acceptance of Jesus and of what he claims to be and a dedication of one's life to him." This means a willingness to respond to God's demands as they are presented in and by Jesus.

Believing "Into" — A Work of God

"Believing into Jesus" is a work of God required of all who seek to follow him (John 14:12). That this verse begins with Jesus saying: "Very truly (Amēn, amēn) I tell you …" indicates that he is telling us a significant truth. Believing into Jesus means becoming like him and doing what he does — disciples "will also do the works that I do" (Jn 14:12).

Throughout this Gospel, there are 28 references to the work(s) of God and Jesus, to God and Jesus working or to disciples, including us today, working with God. In participating in God's mission, Jesus reaches out to those on the fringes of society and religion (Jn 7:49); the physically marginalised (the sick man by the pool Jn 5:1-15); the beggar born blind (Jn 9:1-41); and the geographically marginalised (the official Jn 4:46-54); the woman of Samaria (Jn 4:4-42). Believing into Jesus requires a dedication of our lives to him and working with him.

"Believing Into" — Today

Believing into Jesus, believing into God, gifts us with the ability to live with unanswered questions, paradox and mystery — balancing knowing with unknowing as we seek with Jesus to complete the works of God by responding to both the cry of Earth and the cry of the poor in God's evolving, unfinished universe. Richard Rohr explains: "That's the heart of the mystery of biblical faith — the ability to live without knowing."

It can be fruitful for us to shift our focus from a search for answers to an affirmation of mystery. Novelist Ken Kesey advises: "If you seek the mystery instead of the answer, you'll always be seeking. I've never seen anyone really find the answer. They think they have, so they stop thinking. But the job is to seek mystery …" He suggests we plant a garden in which strange plants grow and mysteries will bloom! The need for mystery is greater than the need for an answer. If we move towards certainty about mystery and what it is, we stop the process of growth and living with faith, hope and love into the questions.

Our Experience of Death-Resurrection

The way we are saved by the death and resurrection of Christ is by walking through our own death and resurrection. The important word here is "and". We are not usually told about how to live the resurrection or even how to go there. We recognise death and have rituals surrounding it. But we may not recognise and celebrate resurrection in the same way. It can be in the new life of spring, the love of pets, the delight of family, a baby's first steps and the beauty of the natural world. Resurrection surrounds us everywhere all the time.

But Richard Rohr reminds us that resurrection is always tempered by the fact that it does not last and not everyone experiences resurrection all the time: "We all have to walk through the valley of death, and through solidarity we are with others in their pain as they do so."

We are there with others as we watch the evening news, as we see the destruction experienced in our country and elsewhere through climate change, as we see Palestinians removed from their land and homes, as we see refugee camps.

Rohr describes our balancing act: "We have to stay in both the dance of death and the dance of resurrection. We can hope and pray any one day, or through any one period of our life, that God leads us to both resurrection and the valley. There is no other path."

Lectionary Reading for 7 and 14 May

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

FULLY TOGETHER

"JESUS WAS JUST like us because he was fully human," says our pastor. I'm sitting in church on an autumnal afternoon trying not to drift off in the evening light filtering through the western window. The sermon is about Jesus's death. But I'm distracted by the "fully human" comment.

I grew up going to church and have heard countless times that the whole mystery of Jesus is that he was fully human and fully God. That he was both, not human with a few godly superpowers or God with a human face. This belief is a central tenet of Christianity and something I have been taught my whole life.

But today I'm not thinking about the theological meaning of Jesus's "both-ness". I'm thinking about how Jesus's both-ness reflects my own. When people ask me where I'm from, I have a little spiel down pat: "My ancestors are New Zealand European and South Indian, and I have spent about equal portions of my life in India and Aotearoa." Saying I'm half from Aotearoa and half from India is true in some ways, but it feels reductive.

In the last few years I've come to understand myself as being fully from both places with the complexity that brings. Being fully both feels expansive. If Jesus is entirely Divine and entirely human, me being entirely Indian and entirely New Zealander seems less of a stretch. Of course it's not just about where I am from. There are other facets of my wholeness, my identity, that feel important to me. I am a wāhine, a sister, a daughter and a friend. I love reading. I'm a mountain biker, a cook. I love the natural world.

And Jesus was not just a Messiah and the Christ. He was also a son and friend, a Jew, a Galilean, a carpenter, a fish expert. He enjoyed an evening walk, he felt compassion and relished public speaking. All the facets of my identity, my passions, talents and my foibles — my whole self — are what I bring as a follower of Jesus Christ. Ultimately, though, my key identity is in Christ. In my both-ness and all-ness, I am included in the diverse and mysterious body of Christ.

My mind wanders back. The sermon is continuing: our pastor is discussing how Jesus is quite an ungodly kind of God, which is a difficult contradiction for us to understand. I am not as sure though. I am fully Indian and fully New Zealander and fully Christian. Having Christian as my key identity is expansive, not reductive. I don't have to be able to argue the theological niceties of the mystery of Jesus's divinity and humanity. But I can be grateful for how it changed the history of the world.

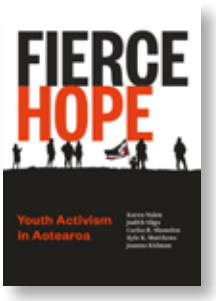
Our service is coming to a close and I take a moment to look around me at the people in my church — each with different and complex identities. We are of different ages, from different places and have a wide range of talents. This diversity is enriching. It means we each contribute to the body of Christ differently. And above all, we are united in being fully part of God's family, with the gift of belonging and the commitment to change the history of the world for the better — in our own way and time.

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

Reviews

Fierce Hope: Youth Activism in Aotearoa

By Karen Nairn, Judith Sligo, Carisa R Showden, Kyle R Matthews and Joanna Kidman
Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2022 (NZD 40)
Reviewed by Celia Costelloe



Fierce Hope is the culmination of a research project (2018-2021) into six youth-led activist groups – Protect Ihumātao, JustSpeak, ActionStation, InsideOUT Kōaro, Generation Zero, and Thursdays in Black. The collective work of these groups "offers a radically different sense of what the future might look like."

The authors carried out 143 interviews with 90 participants aged between 18 and 35, as well as engaging with each group in other, diverse ways. The hours spent telling of the work of each group and its meaning for New Zealand society, has been phenomenal.

I enjoyed the way *Fierce Hope* is written. It's not a paraphrased report. We hear the activists' voices loud and clear, speaking honestly about their personal highs, lows and the sacrifices made. Julia from JustSpeak, described the emotional toll of activism: "It does actually feel quite hopeless … It can feel really, really hard and isolating at times, too." And there is satisfaction in working as a team for social justice. Siobhan, from Generation Zero, remarked: "While I see myself as insignificant, I see that together we can become significant."

Fierce Hope documents the work of six groups working at a specific time in New Zealand history, reminding us that social transformation is impossible without action and hope. ★

They Called Me a Lioness: A Palestinian Girl's Fight For Freedom

By Ahed Tamimi and Dena Takruri
Published by Penguin Random House 2022 (USD 27)
Reviewed by Lois Griffiths

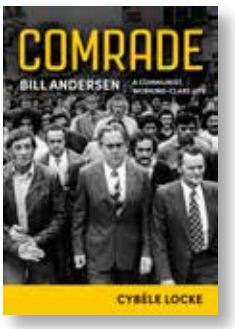
"We have a school, a mosque, a little market and a gas station. Most important, we have each other. The 600 residents of my village are all related by blood or marriage, part of the extended Tamimi family." So begins Ahed Tamimi's story of growing up in Nabi Saleh under Israeli occupation. The occupation forces Palestinian children to grow up early. Ahed's father was often away, under arrest for protesting an illegal Zionist settlement on the village's land and water resources. He organised weekly non-violent protest marches which received media attention and grew.

The Israeli Defence Forces reacted violently, even breaking into houses and throwing tear gas into them. Ahed's 15-year-old cousin was shot in the head at close range. When two soldiers started to break into her family's property, Ahed stood up to them telling them to go away and she hit one of them. Ahed, just 16, was arrested, tried and imprisoned. However, the "slap" was caught on video and went viral and the incident became a cause célèbre.

They Called Me a Lioness is more than the story of one person. It's the story of a people who love life and who want to live in freedom from occupation. It's well worth reading. ★

Comrade Bill Andersen: A Communist Working-Class Life

By Cybèle Locke
Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2022. (NZD 50)
Reviewed by Susan Smith



Comrade tells the story of Bill Andersen, Communist powerhouse in New Zealand's trade union movement from 1941 through to his death in 2005. His early experiences as a seaman, and his horror at British colonial cruelty towards young Yemeni boys in Aden in the 1940s awakened in him a passion to ensure justice for working class peoples. Leninism provided him with a philosophy in which to ground his actions. By the 1970s, he recognised that Māori and working-class women, among the economically and politically disenfranchised, should also be partnered in their struggle against colonialism, capitalist-friendly governments and big business. While different National governments had always sought, and still do, to discredit trade unions, from the 1980s onwards so, too, did Labour governments with their commitment to Rogernomics — a practice that continues today though in a more subtle and covert manner. Though social media may enjoy describing Jacinda Ardern as communist, the handouts during Covid to big business demonstrate the mixed allegiances of the sixth Labour government.

Comrade is packed with detail that can overwhelm sometimes but it succeeds it demonstrating the enormous challenges faced by Māori, Pākehā and Pasifika working-class communities yesterday, today and tomorrow. ★

Reviews

All Quiet on the Western Front

Directed by Edward Berger
Available on Netflix
Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

As a member of the Archibald Baxter Memorial Trust, I have often reflected on the First World War. Archie rejected all war as an abomination, and saw this conflict as a scrap among the crowned heads of Europe for which working families would pay a heavy price in blood. He was determined not to be transported to the other side of the globe to kill people he had no quarrel with, men who were his brothers.

Many of Archie's concerns are reflected in this much-awarded, made-for-Netflix film based on the 1929 German novel by Erich Maria Remarque — a book infamously banned by the Nazis.

Remarque was responsible for many of the tropes familiar to us in anti-war films — the joy of the new recruits, eager to win a share of glory at the front; the appalling conditions in the trenches; the suidical charges across No Man's Land to gain a few metres of ground; the cameraderie of the soldiers and their brief savouring of joy among the horror; generals dining in luxury while ordinary soldiers die in heaps, choking on mud and gore.

This nightmare landscape is traversed by Paul Bäumer, a gentle, well-educated German youth with a boyish, sensitive face and a capacity for friendship.

The film shows how the war progressively desensitises him so that by the end there is little to differentiate him from a homicidal killer. Having repeatedly stabbed a French soldier in a waterlogged shellhole, Paul collapses on his enemy's breast sobbing the word "comrade".

What makes this anti-war classic rise above its numerous successors is its attention to telling detail. Men baling out a flooded trench with their helmets. Collecting identity tags from the dead, which soon grow into piles. A shattered room full of young soldiers who took off their gas masks too soon. A scarf gifted by a French girl to one of the soldiers, passed around the troop like a trophy, becomes a potent symbol of the feminine comforts of home, the love of mothers, sisters, wives and fiancées.

All these details and so much else in the film underline the dominant theme of futility — the utter pointlessness of a war that creates nothing but desolation and death and, for a Germany forced to capitulate under French terms, little hope for the future.

Squaring up to the waste and chaos of battle, yet understated in its portrayal of the human side of war.

All Quiet on the Western Front is worth a reflective evening in front of the box. ★

Cross Currents

by Jane Higgins

What does it mean to "belong and participate" in society? It's worth thinking about this now that the new rate for the living wage has been announced. The Living Wage Movement Aotearoa NZ defines this wage rate as: "The income necessary to provide workers and their families with the basic necessities of life. A living wage will enable workers to live with dignity and to participate as active citizens in society."

That word participate is important. It means that you have the income to, for example, socialise with friends, join a community group, go as a family to church or to a community fair. It means that your child can go on a school camp with the rest of their classmates, and that you can be active in making your neighbourhood a better place. It means that you have access to transport, to the internet, to the common life of your community, city and nation insofar as you wish to be involved.

Participation is a core principle of Catholic Social Teaching. People have "a right and a duty to participate in society" and "a right not to be shut out from participating in those institutions necessary for human fulfilment…"

This language has history in Aotearoa. The Royal Commission on Social Security (1972) stated that "the aims of the system should be to enable everyone to sustain life and health, and to ensure that everyone is able to feel a sense of participation in and belonging to the community." The Royal Commission on Social Policy (1987) stated that the standards of a fair society include "a standard of living sufficient to participate in the community."

The 1991 welfare reforms of the then National government (which drastically cut welfare benefits) took aim at this. The Change Team on Targeting Social Assistance wrote at the time: "The important shift is away from a commitment to income support at a level so that recipients could 'belong and participate' in society … to a modest safety net…" Despite recent increases, benefit levels have not yet returned to a level that restores this basic right.

But we have not lost the idea of participation. It's one of the five principles of the Wellbeing Economy Alliance (WEAll) — a global collaboration of people and organisations working together towards a well-being economy. We are a part of this movement through WEAll Aotearoa.

And the idea persists in the living wage, also a global movement. In Aotearoa the Living Wage movement is a broad-based alliance of over 100 community, faith and union groups. Currently, over 300 employers and three city councils are Living Wage Accredited.

The updating, in April, of the living wage rate was a five-yearly event. The Family Centre Policy Research Unit calculated the rate afresh using the latest data sets. (In between such reviews, the wage is updated annually based on average wage rates.) The new hourly rate is $26, higher than the new minimum wage of $22.70.

By September, accredited employers will be paying the living wage to carers, cleaners and other service workers — the people the pandemic reminded us were essential to the well-being of our society. We've been committed to making this right of participation a reality before. It's good to see it beginning to happen again.

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 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 and regular digital postings on social media.

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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 social justice and ecology.

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Letters to the Editor

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

The editor reserves the right to abridge longer letters while keeping the meaning.

Opinions in letters are not necessarily those of the Magazine.

SPEAK OUT FOR JUSTICE

I'm outraged at the reporting (*The Press*, 10 April) of Israeli's violent intrusion on those praying in Al Aqsa Mosque during Ramadan (and the holy time for Jews and Christians). The headline was: "Palestinian worshippers have scuffled with Israeli police inside the Al Aqsa Mosque". Other media sources elaborate, with eyewitness reports and photos, of beatings and stun grenades, of broken overhead windows, of injuries and arrests. The brutality of the Israeli forces against worshippers should shock the outside world. If this sort of thing, a violent police raid during worship service, had happened in the Vatican or Westminster Abbey it would have been fully reported and very strongly condemned.

Lois Griffiths, Christchurch/Ōtautahi

DOES IT MATTER?

I could not agree with the sentiment in the Letter from Anne Hurley (*TM* March 2023) expressing dissatisfaction where the bread is not consecrated at that Eucharist. I believe that Mass is a ritual where a willing person can take time to be present to God, whether that is facilitated by readings, music, silence, or being with others who are of like mind. In the Gospels Jesus speaks very strongly about those who put rituals and practices first. I don't believe it matters to God in the least whether we "participate fully in the mass by receiving communion consecrated as part of that mass". Perhaps Jesus saying: "Do this in memory of me" was a suggestion that sharing one's food and carrying out other acts of love were the way to live as God would like us to live.

Karen Pronk, Glenorchy/Tahuna

UNBORN LIFE *(abridged)*

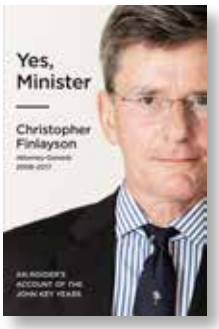
I have an alternate view to some of David More's in "Clearer Guidance Needed" *(TM* March 2023). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states: "A person who procures a completed abortion incurs excommunication." Obviously this includes a culpable father, etc. I have no legal competence but prefer to rely on God's law and the law of common-sense for the definition of when life begins, rather than Section 159 of the Crimes Act. It doesn't take a law by a public body, church or pope, for something to be wrong. Look to God's Word eg, Psalm 139, and to scientific evidence. It is ridiculous to refer to an innocent unborn baby as any sort of aggressor. Surely it refers to criminal acts. Use of the word "foetus" is another trick to detract from the humanity of a baby. An ectopic pregnancy is a tragedy for all concerned. However, sometimes we are called to heroic actions due to tragic situations such as risking your life to save someone. Two examples: St Gianna Mola who died in 1962 in Italy and Riahanna Truman, a 20-year-old, who died in 2020 in Hawkes Bay. Both refused treatment because it endangered the life of their unborn babies who are now living.

Peter Minor, Kirikiriroa/Hamilton

Reviews

Yes, Minister: An Insider's Account of the John Key Years

By Christopher Finlayson
Published by Allen & Unwin, 2022. (NZD 37)
Reviewed by Ann Hassan



Yes, Minister is the political memoir of the Hon Chris Finlayson, senior minister in the John Key-led National Government and New Zealand's Attorney-General from 2008-2017.

It is a professional rather than personal memoir. We are not privy to the details of Finalyson's early life, nor invited into his psyche, nor are former colleagues slandered salaciously.

But *Yes, Minister* is no tedious account, and the man is revealed as well as the politician. Whatever you think of his politics, Finlayson is shown as articulate, witty, occasionally biting and uncompromising, and with an abundance of good sense.

This good sense is compelling. When Finlayson offers a prescription for the National Party's selection and training of candidates, the bullet-pointed list seems inarguably prudent, and would have prevented some of the nightmare MPs of the last few years. And when he (a Catholic) comments on the building and rebuilding of two cathedrals in post-quake Christchurch, Anglican and Catholic, he again sounds eminently sensible: "Why they cannot join forces and use the same cathedral escapes me [...] the Catholics are now going to spend huge resources on building their own cathedral — a waste of money in my opinion."

Finlayson is respected especially for his work as minister for Treaty of Waitangi negotations. It's easy to see why: *Yes, Minister* reveals him to be a pragmatist with a keen sense of justice — alas, a rare combination.

For What It's Worth

IT IS THE Easter season and thoughts of resurrection are front of mind and somehow seem more poignant this year. This is probably because I have recently lost two dear friends — one of whom has been a significant part of my spiritual journey for nearly 50 years. In my grief it is comforting to remember that both these good people entered fully, joyfully and generously into life before death, so I am in no doubt that they will soon be just as positively and lovingly involved in resurrected life.

Someone who has come into my life much more recently (and literally by accident) has also stimulated a yearning for deeper understanding of resurrection. Kim (not her real name) is an elderly person who has a traumatic brain injury (TBI) caused by a fall in the home. Very soon after she started her TBI rehabiitation Kim was keen to attend the simple church service I lead on Sunday mornings. She is not of any particular faith background — her family's spirituality is simply to honour the ancestors — but she did attend a Christian school as a young child in her country of birth and a very firm love of God has remained with her and exudes from her in the joyful way she warmly greets, and takes an interest in, all around her. One Sunday I forgot to light the candle which I always explain represents the presence of God in our gathering. At the end of the service, when I apologised, Kim replied: "It doesn't matter — the light is inside you." A spark of resurrection maybe?

The residual effects of Kim's TBI are now more to do with motor ability than mental or psychological problems. I was delighted, therefore, when one Sunday as I asked her if she was coming to church Kim replied: "Oh yes! But I might be a little late as I want to walk." Soon after she arrived — nurse holding one hand, stick in the other — but definitely no wheelchair and definitely a step toward resurrection.

Despite English being her second language, Kim is always keen to take her turn at reading the Scripture texts with which, I assumed, she was relatively familiar. I realised I was wrong when Kim struggled over the word "resurrection". She asked me about it afterwards and I realised it was not the pronunciation that was the problem but the very concept. Kim scrutinised me intensely as I stumbled through an explanation of resurrection until suddenly her eyes lit up and she said: "Oh, it's like the phoenix."

Now, I'm not sure how safe the ground is when we use the constructs of Greek mythology to explain basic Christian beliefs, but, at least this concept moved us passed the often made mistake of describing resurrection as "coming back to life". The phoenix after all, does not come back to life but is rather a new creature born from the ashes of the old. So, agreeing that this was similar I inquired a little further about her understanding of the phoenix. I learnt Kim's (real) name, in her own language, means beginning again — "like the phoenix" she said.

Perhaps this is why Kim is doing so well with her rehabilition — a process which is always a series of little resurrections.

I now delight in Kim's intense interest in the Gospel and her expressions of child-like wonder, awe and surprise as it is proclaimed. I am privileged to experience the Gospel anew as I see it through her "beginning again" eyes.

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

Our last word

May we encourage our leaders in seeking wisdom and committing to service
Spirit of Hope

From the *Tui Motu* Team