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Tui Motu

InterIslands

August 2024

DIGNITY FOR ALL
DAVID MORE, GRACE MORTON

RELATIONSHIPS IN SOCIETY & CHURCH
ANNE SALMOND, PETER LINEHAM, WAYNE TE KAAWA, MARY THORNE & OTHERS

GOLDEN LOVE
JAMES LYONS

Extending Our Relationships
Whakawhanui ana I o Tatou Patahitanga

INDEPENDENT CATHOLIC MAGAZINE

CONTENTS

FEATURES

SCRIPTURE

COMMENT

COLUMNS

REFLECTION

REVIEWS

LETTERS

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OUR NAME *Tui Motu InterIslands*
Tui Motu is te reo Māori (Māori language) meaning "stitching the islands together". We pronounce it: to-ee maw-to.

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Editorial

THE MILGRAM EXPERIMENTAL series of the 1960s was designed to test people's willingness to obey authority even when their obedience caused suffering to others. The recruits were told that the experiment was to measure the effects of punishment on learning ability. They were to give the "learner" an electric shock if they gave a wrong answer and to increase the voltage of the shock with each wrong answer. Unbeknown to the recruits, the shocks were fake and the learner was an actor. The recruit could see the effect of the shocks on the learner and most wanted to stop the jolts immediately. But each time the recruit wavered over giving the shock, another person — an authority figure wearing a white coat — instructed them that the experiment *required* them to follow instructions.

Milgram expected the recruits to swiftly rebel and refuse to jolt the learners — and some did. But 65 per cent of recruits continued to obey the authority figure to the maximum voltage. After debriefing all the recruits, Milgram concluded that fear of authority and the wish to cooperate with authority kept many of the recruits from disobeying despite seeing the harm they were doing. He divided the recruits into three categories: those who obeyed but justified themselves; those who obeyed but blamed themselves; and those who rebelled. He concluded that so entrenched is obedience to authority it may void personal codes of conduct. Uncritical obedience is dangerous.

I suspect the final report of the Royal Commission into Abuse in State Care and Faith-based Institutions from 1950 to 1999 confirms that as a society we have much in common with the findings of the Milgram experiment. It showed that we disbelieved the victims and survivors of "care" facilities and believed the authorities. We blamed the victimised because of their culture, family situations, language and disabilities. We avoided the truth. We looked away from the suffering and neglect of children in our country. The Report reveals that as church and state we failed the Gospel and our responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi for the love, care and protection of children through their lives into adulthood.

How do we learn to face the truth? In the 60s, Vatican II highlighted the place of our "informed conscience" in making moral decisions — grappling with moral principles beyond the level of the primary school catechism. Informing our conscience requires reflection, discussion and weighing-up to develop heft for critical decision-making in new situations. It needs to be honed in a community that understands obedience as listening for the truth rather than as being compelled to submit. It needs us to extend our relationships so that the "least" is as important as the "greatest". And at this time, it needs us to be prepared to rebel steadfastly against any shortchanging, revictimising, disbelieving and misinforming that "authority" may introduce in the wake of the Report. This is the challenge of the Gospel and the Treaty in these times.

We thank all the contributors to the August issue. Their articles, reflections, comments, art and craft inform us about where and how we can extend our relationships.

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

Dangerous Decisions

A PUBLIC SERVANT'S role is to support the legitimate government of the day because the people have spoken with their vote. The people have elected them to be in charge. So what happens to a public servant when the legitimate aspirations of your employer compromise you morally and professionally?

We have seen this playing out recently. The Whatu Ora national director for public health, the most senior public health clinician in the country, provided the coalition government with advice opposed to the repeal of the smokefree generation law. He said that success in reducing smoking rates was on target for generating the most significant reduction in smoking behaviour in our history. The repeal of the smokefree generation law caused a moral and ethical dilemma for his continuing in the role.

Some elements of this story are evidential and undisputed. Smoking rates have been dropping for several years. Smoking causes one in four cancer deaths. Smoking has been proved to be most effective in shortening the life expectancy of Māori and Pacific citizens through the exposures to carcinogens causing cancer. In general, if you smoke you die earlier.

Although life expectancy for Māori and Pacific citizens has been rising over the last decade, it is still persistently short — by seven to eight years — of the life expectancy of our Pākehā citizens.

So we might have thought that every party would embrace the introduction of a public health law that shifts smoking off the table for the large part of the younger population, thus increasing their life expectancy. After all, that was where all the evidence for the law was pointing.

The national director of public health certainly believed that. He emphasised that the oath he made as a doctor committed him to do no harm. In the words of the oath: "I shall do by my patients as I would be done by; shall obtain consultation whenever I or they desire; shall include them to the extent they wish in all important decisions; and shall minimise suffering whenever a cure cannot be obtained, understanding that a dignified death is an important goal in everyone's life."

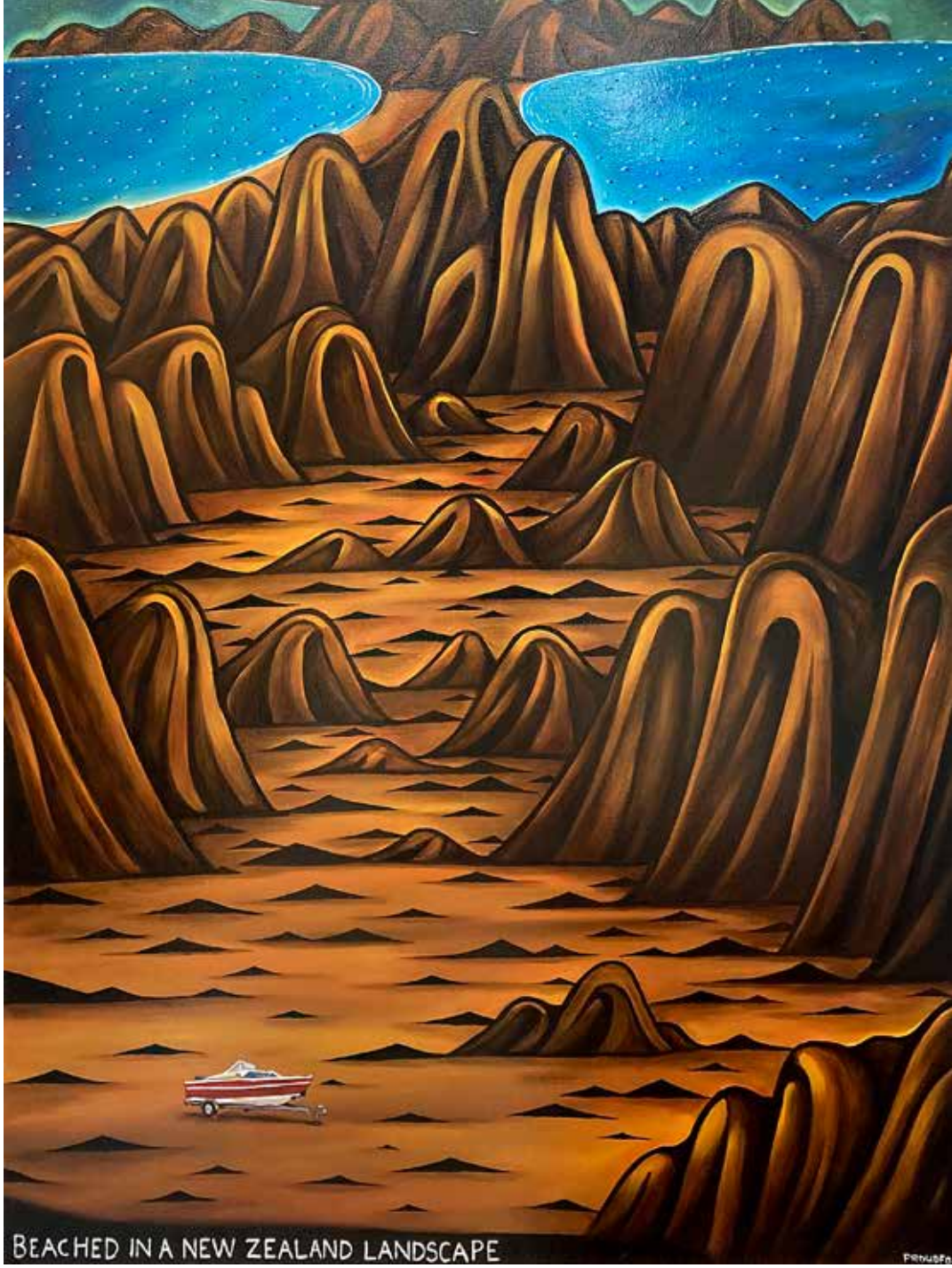
Even the Ministry of Health's Smokefree Aotearoa plan is clear about the health consequences of smoking:

- Smoking causes one in four cancer deaths in New Zealand.
- It is a major cause of blindness, with about 1,300 people in New Zealand having untreatable blindness due to current and past smoking.
- If you are pregnant, inhaled smoke is a poison that enters your bloodstream and passes through the placenta to the baby. These poisons harm your baby's health.
- Smoking increases the risk of developing cancers of the lung, oral cavity, pharynx, larynx, oesophagus, pancreas, cervix, colon and rectum (colorectal), stomach and bladder.
- Smoking increases the risk of developing diseases of the urinary tract, pelvis, bladder and digestive tract.
- 40 per cent of all strokes in people aged under 65 years are caused by smoking.
- 40 per cent of heart disease in those under 65 is caused by smoking.
- Smokers have two-to-three times the risk of having a sudden cardiac death (when the heart suddenly stops beating) than non-smokers.

But politics is not simple; nor, often enough, is it based on evidence. In order to stitch together a coalition government post-election, a deal was done to do away with the smoking reduction law at the behest of the New Zealand First party. Faced with government or no government, the three parties, National, Act and New Zealand First, made an agreement to say "yes" to this major smoking law reversal. Right now, the director remains in his role, and the Minister of Health who fully supports abandoning smokefree generation legislation is himself a doctor and is Māori.

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

RECEIVE, ASSIST, PROMOTE AND INTEGRATE



David More *discusses the problems "501" deportees from Australia face in New Zealand and invites communities to welcome the strangers.*

THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT recently chose to harden its attitude to deporting New Zealand citizens who had offended while living in Australia. A person may be deported under section 501 of the Commonwealth Migration Act 1958. Hence, deportees are called "501s" on their arrival in New Zealand. The Act was amended in 2014 to enable the Immigration Minister to cancel visas for non-citizens if they do not satisfy the Minister that they pass the character test. The test is determined essentially by the extent of criminal behaviour shown by the potential deportee, but it includes "if the Minister reasonably suspects having regard to the person's past and general conduct, the person is not of good character." As the discretion is with the Minister, the government of the day can alter the degree of conduct needed to justify deportation.

It may now be a badge of honour for the one in five Australians who claim convict ancestry, but their government is intolerant of non-citizens who today exhibit the same conduct that had their ancestors transported. What is similar is that the Australian government has the same disregard for the families of those who are deported as the English courts showed to those transported.

No Relationship with Aotearoa

The majority of those deported have little, if any, association with New Zealand, as many migrated to Australia with their parents as young children. All leave behind family in Australia. One 501 had never previously set foot in Aotearoa, having obtained his New Zealand citizenship through being born in the Cook Islands. Notably, all 501s learned the criminal conduct that

brought about their deportation while living in Australia — otherwise, they would not have been granted visas to enter Australia in the first place.

So, what are our hospitality obligations to 501s? There is an understandable anger with Australia for deporting their criminals to New Zealand, and anger at offending by deportees after arrival here, but the 501s are still New Zealand citizens. They are a cross between migrants and refugees, forced against their wishes to live in a country of which they are nominally citizens, but to which they feel no sense of attachment. Coupled with this, the vast majority have spent time in Australian prisons, and without support and assistance, statistics have shown they will reoffend following their deportation to New Zealand.

As I write this, I learn that a 501 has just been sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of an Auckland dairy owner he robbed.

Pope Francis Highlights Standard

What can we do? I think the answer is contained in a statement by Pope Francis in a recent interview broadcast by CBS News on 20 May this year, when in answer to a question on migration, he said: "For an immigration policy to be good it must have four things: for the migrant to be received, assisted, promoted and integrated. This is what is most important to integrate them into the new life."

I think there is little doubt that in his answer, the Pope was applying to immigrants our Christian obligations to welcome strangers, clothe the naked, and take care of the sick and those in prison (Matthew 25:43). So, how does New Zealand rank against Pope Francis's four criteria?

Aotearoa Fails on Promoting and Integrating

501s are subject to the Returning Offenders (Management and Information) Act 2015. Under this Act they are described as "Returning Prisoners". They are subject to the standard release conditions of a prisoner released on parole in New Zealand, plus any special conditions imposed by the court after their arrival. The standard release conditions include obligations to report to a Probation Officer and advise residential address and employment. There are no rehabilitative provisions in the Act.

I think we clearly rate a pass in receiving 501s, possibly in assisting them, but a definite failure in promotion and integration. I am not sure that just visiting those in prison who have reoffended will convert this into a pass.

We will need to do more.

Act Needs Amending

The Returning Offenders (Management and Information) Act needs amending as it is not fit for purpose. Australia started deporting 501s in numbers at the start of 2015. To deal with this, the Act was introduced into parliament on 17 November 2015 and was passed into law on the same day, receiving the Royal assent on 18 November. Like most legislation passed under urgency, it is deficient.

Refugees arriving in New Zealand are housed in the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre for a period of five weeks and complete an orientation programme.

There is no reason why 501s, who have no family in New Zealand, cannot be treated similarly. If 501s are to be subject to standard parole release conditions, any special conditions should be imposed by the Parole Board, who should meet with each 501 and determine accommodation and employment/benefit arrangements.

Who Will Stand with 501s?

In the absence of any body advocating on behalf of 501s, individually and as a Church I consider we have a moral obligation to endeavour to persuade the government to amend the Act. Mark Mitchell, the Minister of Police and Corrections, needs to be reminded of his criticism of the Labour Government in 2022, when he said in relation to a police report on 501s: "It is a complete failure on the Government's part to make sure they know who these people are, what they're doing and to put effort into reintegrating them."

Amendment could be done by the Catholic Bishops Conference, ideally in cooperation with the leaders of other Christian churches and Faiths, making representations to the government and/or through a petition to parliament.

The Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation Society (PARS), founded in Dunedin in 1877 as the Patients and Prisoners Aid Society and now spread throughout New Zealand, includes offenders returning from Australia among the people it supports. PARS works with a number of organisations, including Anglican Action, Presbyterian Support Otago, the Salvation Army and the St Vincent de Paul Society.

The mission of Vincentians is: "to work to provide person to person, practical and effective help to those in need; sharing their burdens and joys; sowing seeds of hope, and promoting human dignity, justice, and self-sufficiency." Parishes could encourage their members to offer practical support to 501s through their St Vincent de Paul Society conferences.

The support needs to be similar to that already provided to migrants and refugees, with an emphasis on integrating 501s into their New Zealand community. For those who have reoffended following their deporting, parishes within a reasonable distance from a prison can be asked to provide members who can form a roster of prison visitors.

The need is now, and the time is immediate. As of 30 October 2023, 3,058 501s have been deported to New Zealand since the 2014 amendment to the Australian Migration Act. More than 1,800 — just under 60 per cent — have offended since their arrival. Our hospitality towards these strangers is needed so that they can belong among us.

Beached in a New Zealand Landscape by Dean Proudfoot © Used with permission www.deanproudfoot.co.nz

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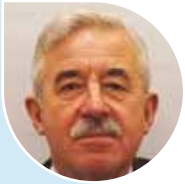

Democracy that Binds Us Together

In Part 3 of her series on Te Tiriti o Waitangi and democracy, **Anne Salmond** *considers the perils to democracy in Aotearoa today and how we can choose good and inclusive leaders.*

IN RECENT TIMES Te Tiriti has often been recast as a binary pact between Māori and Pākehā rather than a set of multi-lateral alliances between Queen Victoria and the rangatira of the various hapū.

This kind of bi-racial framing has its dangers, however. Global studies of a process called "pernicious polarisation" have examined how self-interested parties may play upon such divisions to amplify their power.

Identities — political, ethnic or religious — may be reduced to simple binaries: Left vs Right, Democrat vs Republican, black vs white, Catholic vs Protestant, Iwi vs Kiwi. The middle ground becomes a battle ground (sometimes literally); moderate voices are silenced, and those with cross-cutting loyalties are cancelled. This undermines good governance by making parties less likely to compromise, or to reach a consensus.

If left unchecked this kind of polarisation can split societies, devastate nation states, wreck their economies and destroy the lives of their people.

Threats to Aotearoa Democracy

No country is immune from this kind of politics. After the 2020 election in New Zealand, for instance, when Labour won an absolute majority, the government engaged in unilateral decision-making that accentuated existing social cleavages — central vs local government, rural vs urban communities and Māori vs other New Zealanders in relation to Te Tiriti, for instance.

In their turn, other political agents played upon these divisions. While in the past, genuine grievances and structural disparities have been addressed with bipartisan support through the Waitangi Tribunal, equal opportunities programmes or the creation of Ministries to address the needs of women, Pacific Islanders and Māori, some politicians now depict these as forms of privilege, stoking popular resentment.

In the face of rising tensions, strong democratic checks and balances are needed. In New Zealand, those inside Parliament include the scrupulous avoidance of conflicts of interest, opportunities for public input and informed advice, select committees and cross-party cooperation on matters of national importance.

Those outside Parliament include a politically neutral public service, independent bodies such as the Ombudsman, the Auditor General, the Waitangi Tribunal and the Climate Change Commission, a free, independent press, an independent judiciary, and universities as "critics and conscience" of society.

Checks and Balances Weakened

In recent times, however, almost all of these checks and balances have been weakened. Inside Parliament, urgency has been used to avoid public input and rigorous debate; Ministers are awarding themselves powers to make unilateral decisions; and cross-party cooperation on matters of national interest is uncommon.

Outside Parliament, the investigative role of the press is being undermined by the rise of social media where misinformation freely circulates; the impartiality of the public service has been compromised by direct Ministerial controls; the statutory role of universities as "critics and conscience of society" is challenged; and politicians are attacking the judiciary and independent bodies including the Waitangi Tribunal and the Climate Change Commission.

At the same time, increased inequality in power and wealth, along with lobbying and the private funding of political campaigns, undermines democratic checks and balances. If wealthy citizens, corporates and think tanks can gain disproportionate influence through media campaigns, lobbying and campaign donations, and policies can be purchased as part of the electoral process, that undermines public trust in good governance.

Balance Collective Responsibility and Individual Freedom

A combination of these risks and failures has led to a catastrophic collapse of faith in democracy in many countries around the world, with authoritarian regimes a common outcome. A wise and just government would seek a balance between collective responsibility and individual freedoms, rather than seeing these as ideological opposites. Both are fundamental to a thriving democracy.

Balance Relationships

Polarisation around ethnicity or "race" is also dangerous. Unilateral decision-making — in whatever direction — sparks the resentment that ignites "pernicious polarisation". Discussions that exclude the descendants of the various rangatira and hapū who signed Te Tiriti, or the descendants of the incoming settlers, are cases in point. Te Tiriti is a relational pact, and all parties involved in its promises must be respected. Once again, it's a question of balance.

Transparency Needed

A wise, just government would also pursue long-term policies aimed at delivering thriving landscapes and communities across Aotearoa New Zealand. In the wake of Cyclone Gabrielle in Tairāwhiti, we saw how an unholy alliance between lobbyists, politicians and extractive industries can play out, when forestry waste swept downriver destroyed roads, bridges, fences, paddocks, orchards, vineyards, homes, livelihoods and lives.

A wise, just government would also conduct its business out in the open. Like many others, I think that the links between politicians, lobbyists and funders in New Zealand are too opaque at present. It would be good to know, for instance, where the funding for the current, multi-stranded and very costly campaign to rewrite Te Tiriti o Waitangi is coming from, when this is channelled through groups that are not currently required to report on their sources of income. The same applies to campaigns to weaken anti-smoking policies and environmental protections.

Listen to Local People

With well-designed processes, democracy can work at pace, and trading freedom for speed is dangerous. Furthermore, as we've seen in Tairāwhiti, destroying the environment for short-term profit is economically, as well as ecologically, self-destructive. It is also the opposite of localised democracy, where local people have a real say in decision-making. Under such a regime, the likelihood of conflicts of interest is obvious. No government, I think, should be trusted with this kind of power.

Highlight and Discuss Polarising Tactics

Democracy is under siege in many countries, and the stratagems being deployed are well documented. Although the authors of studies of "pernicious polarisation" offer no silver bullet for combatting its threats to democratic checks and balances, they warn that responding in kind with vilification and reprisals only speeds up the process.

Rather, they suggest casting light on such devices and those who deploy them; greater transparency and oversight of links between funders and politicians; and the deliberate strengthening of the middle ground through bi-partisan policy-making, with wide civic engagement that reaches across ethnic and other boundaries, and well-moderated, inclusive conversations about divisive matters, in citizens' assemblies or on marae, for example.

Choose Leaders Who Will Unite Us

Instead of trying to divide us, we need leaders who will look far into the future, listen to the people, take the best strands of our ancestral legacies and weave us together.

There are many examples of this kind of leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand. Think, for instance, of the multitude of charities across the country that work across these boundaries, caring for those in need, restoring local landscapes, supporting the arts and sport and strengthening community networks. Or the marae that in times of crisis, whether floods or earthquakes, open their doors to the wider community, so that people have food to eat and a place to sleep. Or the catchment groups where people from different backgrounds come together to heal our waterways.

This is democracy at the flax roots and grass roots, led by people trusted by their peers, who know how to make a positive difference. It is the opposite of top-down, divisive politics where self-interest rules and power and wealth are highly concentrated.

A number of community-based leaders have made their way into Parliament, across the political spectrum. I hope they will stand tall, and fight for wise, just governance in New Zealand — the kind that cares for land and people, and binds us together.

Dragged into Colonisation by Kahea Blain © Used with permission www.kaheablainartist.com

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Anglican Bi-Cultural or Tri-Cultural Constitution

Peter Lineham *explains the reasons for the three tikanga structure of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa and the Pacific.*

HOW CAN A church become genuinely bi-cultural? What should this look like? How can a church engage with the cultural circumstances of its time? There are various solutions, but one of the most radical must surely be what the Anglican Church in New Zealand adopted with its "three tikanga" structure, put in place in 1992.

From Extension of Church of England

The original constitution of the Anglican Church was something of a historic landmark. Initially Bishop George Augustus Selwyn was sent to New Zealand in 1841 with letters patent (the standard legal form for all royal appointments) issued by Queen Victoria as head of the Church of England in New Zealand. So colonial Anglicanism was simply an extension of the state Church of England. The funding for his appointment came from the Church Missionary Society (which funded the Māori mission), from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (a Church of England organisation which supported colonial churches) and the Colonial Office of the government of the United Kingdom.

To Anglican Church

But when New Zealand became self-governing in 1856, the New Zealand parliament declined to recognise a state church or to pay its share of Selwyn's support, so Queen Victoria could not take responsibility for appointing future bishops. The British Parliament failed to pass a bill recognising the Church of England in New Zealand. So Selwyn brought together lay and clergy leaders of the New Zealand church to stage a friendly coup d'état. In 1857 at a meeting in St Stephen's chapel in Auckland, they "by voluntary compact" adopted a constitution as an independent self-governing church, and adopted a structure where people needed to place themselves on a roll as Anglicans, and then elected representatives of the laity as well as clergy and bishops comprised the government of the church.

No Leadership Role for Māori

That constitution worked well for 140 years, but it had one very serious problem. Despite the fact that guiding the Māori church was a key part of Selwyn's role, no Māori

played any part in the constitutional discussions, and there was no role assigned to Māori Anglicans, except as ordinary members. By and large the development of Māori Anglicanism was of little interest to the settler church, except in the diocese of Waiapu covering the Bay of Plenty and the East Coast (Tai Rāwhiti), which was initially a Māori-speaking diocese.

Māori Bishop of Aotearoa

This was long a bone of contention for Māori Anglicans, who had a powerful lay advocate in Sir Apirana Ngata. After Māori began to depart the church and follow the religious organisation of Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana, there was a campaign led by Ngata to appoint a "Bishop of Aotearoa". The compromise solution adopted back in 1928 was the creation of a strange sort of bishop, a Māori Bishop without a diocese, who had no jurisdiction except as an assistant to any other bishop who requested assistance in caring for Māori Anglicans.

Very distinguished Māori served as bishops, although the first, Frederick Bennett, was surely chosen because he was very much in a Pākehā mould. Even so, at least one Bishop refused to permit him to minister in his diocese.

It was the debate over the Treaty of Waitangi in the 1970s and 1980s which forced a change. In 1978 after lengthy debates well-recorded by Hirini Kaa in his book *Te Hāhi Mihinare*, the Bishop of Aotearoa was made responsible in cooperation with the existing bishops for all the Māori and Māori ministry in the country. Bishop Huihui Vercoe was elected as the fourth Bishop of Aotearoa under these rules in 1981.

Bi-Cultural Commission Established

This did not seem a good long-term solution, for what belonged specifically to the Māori church? The Waitangi Tribunal was at the time familiarising New Zealanders with the concepts of partnership and bi-culturalism. A leading academic, Whatarangi Winiata, proposed that the General Synod establish a Bi-Cultural Commission to review whether the principles of the Treaty were embodied in the church. The Commission reported back in 1986, and proposed a further commission to review the church's constitution. That commission drafted a new constitution, in which the church was defined as two parallel structures, with separate regional dioceses on both the Māori and Pākehā sides, which only met together at General Synod level.

New Structure: Three Tikanga

That was the structure approved in 1990 and which came into effect in 1992, but at the last moment a separate parallel structure was created for Polynesians, reflecting the fact that the Diocese of Polynesia (covering Fiji, Tonga and Samoa), did not have an obvious home in a bi-cultural church. So these became the three tikanga, or "cultural streams": Māori, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Polynesia. Initially there was one archbishop over the whole church and teams of bishops, but in 2006 it was agreed that each tikanga would have its own archbishop.

The approach has revolutionised the Māori Anglican world. Every diocese has now provided the Māori tikanga with churches served by many Anglican clergy, although most of them are part-time, given that their congregations are small and poor. Although the move to the three tikanga had limited impact on the majority of Anglicans, Māori clergy and congregations moved to the new tikanga, individual Māori could choose where and with whom they worshipped, and some Māori clergy chose to remain in their existing dioceses.

Anglicans were increasingly conscious of the Māori aspect of their tradition, and the remarkable *New Zealand Prayer Book* (published in 1989) provided bilingual liturgies and recognition of Māori martyrs. Yet ironically there was less working together at the ordinary level, as Māori worked hard to build up a very fragile Māori church in the face of growing bitterness among many of their own people at their exploitation at the hands of the colonial state and the church.

Most Effective at General Synod Level

The major interaction of Māori and Pākehā occurs at General Synod level. Here it can be forceful. Māori Anglicans have been insistent that they should be treated as equals, and the constitution requires their voices must be heard for any measure to be agreed. Any of the three tikanga are permitted to call for a caucus by tikanga at the General Synod. At this point the Synod separates into these three groups, whereas in normal discussions, voting is by diocese. Māori church leaders are sensitive to any appearance of racist thinking by the church, but the exercise of their concern may appear to the Pākehā dioceses as a form of reverse racism. There is great need for listening across tikanga boundaries, but at present this is only really experienced at synod level.

The General Synod this year heard a call for a further revision of the constitution, and a key concern has been to what extent the resources of the church should be shared out, given that the Māori dioceses are very poor and have few paid clergy.

Questions Raised

There has been some criticism of the new constitution in international Anglican circles. In South Africa, Anglicans resisted the pressure to create an apartheid church regime. Some churches asked if there was any theological basis for this division on the basis of ethnicity. I think we must say that the opinions are still divided about the structure. The exercise of leadership by Anglican Māori has clearly given them a much greater sense of self-responsibility, but the challenge is to make this work for extension of the church among the peoples of Aotearoa and for justice and peace in this nation.

Kōwhai Lake Taupō by Diana Adams ©
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Peter Lineham is Emeritus Professor of History, Massey University, who has written extensively on religious history in Aotearoa New Zealand.

ENABLING COMMUNITY

Mary Thorne *writes of the invitation to Pākehā to move into a reciprocal relationship with Māori in Aotearoa.*

WHEN I THINK about all that mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) can contribute to Aotearoa New Zealand, the appropriate response of Pākehā can only be humble, grateful receptivity. Māori cultural revitalisation enriches all our lives. It gives Pākehā opportunities to look at life through another lens and learn more about the land we live on. Our challenge is to perceive clearly our own need and to learn — not how to be Māori, but how to be Pākehā within a reciprocal relationship between equivalent partners.

Awareness of Colonial History

I am proud and grateful to be tangata Tiriti/people of the Treaty. I am a Pākehā person of Irish ancestry and I feel that I belong in this land because of a covenant treaty relationship entered into nearly 200 years ago, Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

Throughout my adult life I have gradually awoken to the deep meaning and implications of this relationship. Awoken, too, to the extent to which this beautiful partnership has been violated, so its potential is yet to be achieved. Part of this is realising that my own ways of perceiving and making sense of the world are particular and limited by my cultural context. Many times I have found myself thinking the world was one way, only to discover it just isn't — but I can learn to be in touch with the world in different ways.

Understanding Pākehā Culture

Pākehā culture, in common with all the cultures of the world, is a set of unconscious values, assumptions, ideas and images learned by individuals from birth and held so deeply that they are essentially unquestioned. They make up the shared worldview of a group of people and constitute what is regarded as normal. Our culture, predominantly a white Western worldview woven from many strands, holds much that is beautiful but also attitudes which inhibit right relationship in partnership and cause harm to Aotearoa.

All well-functioning relationships depend on good self-knowledge on the part of the participants. As we draw nearer to the 200th anniversary of the signing of our founding treaty, it is important that we do the work of critical reflection on Pākehā culture and prepare ourselves to finally understand what we must change in order to achieve equitable and just relationship with our treaty partners.

It's hard work to bring to consciousness the attitudes that underpin our thinking and action. It takes courage and humility to question what we have previously taken for granted. We can be resistant to the openness required for change. Personally I have found the Pākehā Project a way of undertaking this journey with inspirational companions. But together we can all undertake the work of exploring the space of restoration. How can we build a movement from a new place, working with compassion, not blame and shame, for self and others, AND ensure accountability and responsibility?

Destructive Systems and Structures

All of Aotearoa recoiled in grief and

horror at the violence perpetrated in two mosques in Christchurch in March 2019. The extreme white supremacist mindset that prompted the mosque shootings highlighted racism in our country. Casual colonial racism perpetrated in our country every day creates a climate for racism to thrive. The subtle, racist off-hand actions and comments experienced by Māori and others impact people's lives and contribute to racist systems.

Systemic injustice is almost always invisible, embedded in everyday social structures, normalised by stable institutions and regular experience. We have to accept that a deep vein of white superiority is inherent in Pākehā culture and pops up in all of us at times. We need to interrogate carefully our judgements and projections, even our good intentions "to help" or "fix". We've grown up in a culture that is strongly infused with the values of independence and self-sufficiency and it's easy for us to tend towards arrogance and resist the reciprocity of serving, caring or teaching that keeps relationships healthy. In working for a more just society, I've discovered that my conception of society has sometimes been too shallow and too narrow.

Give and Receive

I find myself thinking about the words in The Servant Song: "Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my servant, too." They capture what is crucial in the relationships Te Tiriti calls for. I've often acted out of my well-meaning, white Western worldview of having stuff to give, both goods and guidance. This has blinded me to recognising that there's space and emptiness in my spirit where new insights can grow and cultivate a balancing receptivity in relationships.

Christian theological thought on the evolving universe is highlighting a fundamental fact about human existence: we are part of the web of life and exist in interdependence with all other beings, human and nonhuman, and all is in the process of becoming. Prophetic advocate for the Earth community Thomas Berry wrote that we hold the universe in our beings just as the universe holds us in its being. He says that, as we are moving into a new mythic age, a new paradigm of being human is emerging — and it may be painful and disrupting. This relational theology resonates with te ao Māori (Māori worldview) and can open new pathways towards mutual understanding.

I think we could be on the brink of a change in Te Tiriti relationships in Aotearoa. Perhaps the vision conceived at Waitangi in 1840 is, after a long and difficult gestation, finally being birthed. I love the metaphor of birth. When a birth is imminent, parents prepare, making themselves ready and receptive to the newborn. They have prepared clothes in which to wrap the baby.

At this time we can think of ourselves as new parents ready to wrap Aotearoa, formed by Te Tiriti o Waitangi, in joy, gratitude and huge respect for its complexity and beauty, its justice and potential to thrive. For this we must have the courage, devotion and willingness to undertake the hard work that is the lot of new parents. In short, we have to be head-over-heels in love and committed to this newly formed taonga so that we have the energy to protect and foster it, and wrap it in the solidarity of a covenant relationship.

I look forward to what more is possible as we continue on this collective path of ensuring Māori have the space and resources they need to re-energise their cultural traditions and reconnect with their lands. And I look forward to Pākehā coming together to learn more about Te Tiriti o Waitangi and finding ways for it to guide the constitutional shape of our country. This is the way to a more just future for all of us.

We have the collective power to imagine and achieve this. Together we can be radically just, radically honest and radically powerful — that is being in love.

Cape Reinga by Marion Towns © Used with permission www.mariontowns.co.nz (Original 54 x 74cm Rembrandt and Sennelier soft pastels on black Rives paper, $2,250 unframed $2,650 framed)

Mary Thorne lives on the Manukau Harbour, is a former prison chaplain and is enjoying time with family and her grandchildren.

ACTION NEEDED TO PREVENT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Grace Morton *describes how New Zealand needs to improve anti-trafficking and exploitation legislation and processes to ensure that all people here are treated with human dignity.*

THERE ARE AN estimated 50 million people around the world who are currently being trafficked, enslaved or exploited. This is unacceptable and for the last five years Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand and other organisations have been urging the government to make substantial efforts to address it. In June, the 2024 Trafficking in Persons Report (TIP) was released, providing an updated assessment of our government's actions against human trafficking, and once again highlighting the need for urgent action. Of the 50 million people currently being trafficked, enslaved or exploited, 28 million are in the Asia-Pacific region, and 8,000 are right here in Aotearoa New Zealand, according to the Global Slavery Index.

In the TIP Report, governments are ranked on a tier system, with a Tier 1 ranking signifying that positive progress is being made.

Aotearoa New Zealand has been ranked only at Tier 2 in the TIP Report for the fourth year in a row. This means that our government is not doing enough to address human trafficking, though it is making some efforts to do so.

Aotearoa is a destination country for human trafficking and exploitation, and these crimes have been happening in our communities for decades. In 2024, human trafficking and exploitation are increasing, and we need to be taking decisive action against them.

What Is Going Well?

The TIP Report highlighted that some positive progress has been made. For the first time in our history, an adult victim of sex trafficking was identified in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This identification is proof of the growing recognition that sex trafficking is an issue in this country, and hopefully will help more people receive the support they need and see justice served for sex traffickers.

There has also been improved training on the different forms of human trafficking and exploitation due to growing synergy between government officials, frontline workers such as police, support services and advocates.

What Needs to Be Improved?

There are significant gaps concerning the prosecution of traffickers, protection of those who have been trafficked, and prevention of future trafficking and exploitation.

Prosecution

According to the TIP Report "the government maintained inadequate anti-trafficking law enforcement efforts". Our legal processes are letting down some of the most vulnerable groups in our society through ineffective legislation and weak criminal sentences.

To prosecute for human trafficking, there must be proof that coercion, force or deception were used to carry

out the trafficking. However, current international law on human trafficking recognises that to charge someone for the trafficking of children, there is no need to prove that means of coercion or deception were used, based on the recognition that children cannot provide informed consent to exploitative practices.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, the current definition of human trafficking requires proof of coercion or deception regardless of age. This causes difficulties in charging for child trafficking, leading to a lack of action against this horrible crime.

We are also seeing weak punishments for migrant worker exploitation. Recently a Tauranga man, Jafar Kurisi, was convicted of exploiting multiple migrant workers. Investigations found evidence of mistreatment such as withheld wages, and of Kurisi forcing up to 20 workers at a time to sleep on the ground in his garage.

Kurisi had a previous conviction for exploiting migrant workers in 2017 yet was given only 12 months home detention for the recent conviction. He was also made to pay $80,000 in reparations to the workers, despite underpaying his victims an estimated $120,000 over the period of exploitation.

Not only do these lacklustre punishments offer minimal justice for the victims, but they serve as ineffective deterrents against future reoffending or against others carrying out similar crimes.

Protection

There continue to be inadequate support systems in place to offer trauma counselling, rehabilitation and reintegration into society for people who have been trafficked or exploited.

The pathways to access support in Aotearoa New Zealand are convoluted and confusing, deterring individuals from reporting cases of trafficking and exploitation.

Human trafficking and exploitation often happen in our own cities and increasingly are being conducted online.

One of the prioritised recommendations from the TIP is to "establish an NRM [national referral mechanism] or formal referral mechanism to ensure victims — including New Zealand citizens — are appropriately identified as trafficking victims and referred to services, even if they choose not to participate in criminal proceedings or a criminal case does not move to prosecution."

Trafficking strips victims of their dignity and voice. To restore dignity and agency to victims, we need a well-resourced referral pathway that enables people who have been trafficked or exploited to feel confident coming forward and feel reassured that they will be believed and assisted.

Prevention

Another key area of concern is that despite investigations and prosecutions concerning the exploitation of migrant workers, there has been a lack of effective action taken to address the gaps in our employment processes and ensure that migrant workers are being fairly treated moving forward.

Aotearoa New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer (RSE) Scheme has been identified as lacking proper checks on employers, enabling the exploitation of seasonal workers. While our government has expressed interest in expanding the scheme, they first should address these issues. This would include ensuring that both employers and employees are informed of their rights and responsibilities, conduct regular reviews, and implement effective reporting mechanisms for workers to report exploitation safely without fear of consequences.

Taking Action

Addressing human trafficking and exploitation can seem like an overwhelming task, but we all have things we can do to uphold human dignity and bring about positive change.

The TIP Report noted that there continue to be misconceptions about human trafficking and exploitation. There are still assumptions that human trafficking must involve cross-border movement, and therefore only affects foreign nationals. In reality, human trafficking and exploitation often happen in our own cities and increasingly are being conducted online.

Misunderstandings of these crimes are dangerous as they harm efforts to stop human trafficking and can prevent people who have been trafficked and exploited from receiving justice. By being educated about the many forms of trafficking and exploitation, we can work to break down misleading preconceived ideas of how and where trafficking and exploitation take place and face the realities of the abuse happening in our own communities.

You can join Caritas in advocating for legislative action to address human trafficking. This might be writing to your local MP asking them to support changes to the definition of child trafficking in the Crimes Act, or to call for the establishment of a national referral pathway.

While we continue to push for changes in legislation and policies, we need to be building welcoming communities that make people feel safe and supported. In the face of crimes that are isolating and traumatic, we can offer solidarity, care and prayer.

Photo by Osarugue Igbinoba on Unsplash

Grace Morton is an Advocacy Analyst at Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, living in Te Whanganui-a-Tara Wellington.

PŌHUTUKAWA STAR FOR REMEMBERING THE DEAD

Wayne Te Kaawa *shares the Matariki traditions he grew up with and how the Pōhutukawa star in the cluster influences his remembering the dead in this winter season.*

THE NINE STARS of Matariki have risen in the early morning sky this winter, signalling the start of the new year in the Māori calendar. Remembering the dead is an important concept in the Matariki traditions. What can we learn from Matariki that can inform our Christian beliefs and practices?

My tupuna (ancestor), Hāmiora Pio, a well-known Roman Catholic katekita (catechist) between 1865-1887, was quoted by Elsdon Best as naming the seven stars of Matariki and linking them to the environment. My early memories of this cluster of stars came from stories of my ancestors studying the stars at the top of a hill that was their observatory, not far from where we lived. As children we learnt songs and haka that contained references to Matariki.

Checking on the Vulnerable

Matariki always rises in mid-winter, the coldest weeks of the year. In my young years when Matariki rose it was a sign to check on the welfare of the elderly, the ill and the vulnerable in our community, ensuring they were well cared for.

When I became an ordained minister, Matariki became associated with death as some of the elderly and ill would pass away during the cold Matariki months. Most of my week was occupied with tangihanga with not much time left for other ministry activities. For me, Matariki meant and still means care for the people and burying the dead.

Two Additional Stars

While attending an evening education session with Professor Rangi Matamua in 2017, I heard for the first time of two new stars. Professor Matamua added the stars Pōhutukawa and Hiwa i te Rangi to the Matariki seven. These stars were new to me and I immediately began researching them.

Seven of the Matariki stars are linked to the environment but Pōhutukawa and Hiwa i te Rangi are not connected in the same way.

Hiwa i te Rangi is connected to the hopes people have for the future.

Pōhutukawa, the focus of this article, is the star that reminds us to remember those who have died within the last 12 months.

Pōhutukawa and Dead Becoming Stars

This new Matariki narrative described how when the people saw the star cluster for the first time in the early morning sky, they would begin to weep and call out the names of those they had lost in the last year. This practice is primarily about the living, the star being a touchstone in people's grief allowing those who have suffered a loss to take stock of where they are in the grieving process. It is a pastoral opportunity for those still in mourning to release more of their sorrow in a safe way, while putting a name to their grief.

This tradition surrounding Pōhutukawa also offers a view of what happens to the dead in the afterlife. When Matariki appears, the dead are gathered into a great waka in the night sky which takes them away to be stars. The message of Pōhutukawa is that the dead will be cared for in the afterlife.

I'd never known this information and I've found it helpful in my pastoral responsibilities. The tradition around calling out the name of a loved one and weeping helps us in the grieving process to release more of our grief and to let the loved one go.

Journey of Dead to Hawaiki

I grew up with the story that when a person died their wairua began the journey back to Hawaiki. Wherever the person died and was buried they would begin their journey from there to Te Rerenga Wairua (the Leaping-off Place of Spirits, or Cape Rēinga) which is situated at the northernmost tip of the country.

I had an uncle from the far north community of Te Hapua who verified this as being more than a story for his Te Aupōuri people. He told me on many occasions that after diving into the water the wairua of the person would emerge at Manawatāwhi (Three Kings Island) where they would get a final glimpse of Aotearoa before beginning the long and final journey to Hawaiki.

Hawaiki or Hawaiki-nui are the Islands of Rangiātea and Tahaa in the Society Islands where some of our tupuna came from and from where they began their migration to Aotearoa. An important site in Rangiātea is Taputapu-ātea, regarded as the most sacred site in Polynesia. The next island over is Bora-Bora where I have links through marriage. Due to these connections this story calls to my heart, my wairua, my soul.

After Death

Matariki and Hawaiki provide two different versions of what happens to the dead in the afterlife. The Christian tradition offers another view that is based on scripture, church teachings and tradition. This comes in various forms — some believe that when you die you go straight to heaven for the final judgement; some that you go into a holding pattern in the spirit world until judgement day; and others that your wairua stays with the physical body to be raised on the last day for judgement.

Those who argue for a particular view will find a biblical reference, church teachings, traditions and practices to support their argument.

I think the challenge is to allow each tradition to inform other traditions. Some commonalities include practices of remembering and caring for the dead by naming them and grieving for them as a community. They include pastoral responses for caring for the living to release them from grief and allowing the dead to journey into the afterlife. Regardless of whether it is the Pōhutukawa star traditions, biblical teachings or Church traditions, they all make it clear — death is not the end and we remain connected.

The biblical and Hawaiki stories both have a theme of the dead returning to their origins. In the Hawaiki story, the wairua returns to the point of origin of Māori people.

In the Genesis creation stories the source and origin is God (Gen 1-2). St Augustine speaks of the Trinitarian God active in the biblical creation stories. And, as in those stories, at some point people will find themselves standing before their God, their Creator. In this way we can say that in death we have returned to our point of origin.

For the rest of this winter and when we mark the rising of Matariki next, we can reflect on how we can remember and reconnect with the dead while letting them go. How we can care for the living and care for the dead, how we can allow gratitude and memories to deepen the meaning for our lives and guide our wairua on the journey of life and, after life, into the source and origin of our lives.

We can allow these new stories, concepts and practices to shape our hope that our loved dead will influence us in our lives.

Pōhutukawa by Robin Slow © Used with permission
www.kuragallery.co.nz/category/artists/robin-slow

Pōhutukawa connects those who are deceased. The work has been constructed from two canvases to create a manu tukutuku form. The kites were used to connect the living and those who had passed.

Wayne Te Kaawa is is an ordained Presbyterian minister and former Moderator of the Presbyterian Māori Synod and Ahorangi of Te Wānanga a Rangi.

The Love That Made You One

Fifty years ago I witnessed your “I do!”
Your personal “Credo”.
The moment you told the world you believed
Your love for each other would last a lifetime.

And so it has.

Togetherness sparked your travel on a path unknown
Requiring seeds of courage and hope
Sown to harvest patience, kindness and forgiveness.

You made enormous efforts
Your “I do” covered a deafness deep within
To send you spinning into a game of catch-up
Till the hold-all of love shared a truer face.

Then you knew. You grew. And the years flew.

I give thanks for the privilege of being among your years:
    marvelling at the gifts your love created,
    rejoicing in your partnership
        as you took on life together,
    thrilling as your tears became smiles,
        through your “whys?” and disappointments.

Love has been your shield and your guide
A shelter and a sure compass
Sealing your faithfulness
Setting a course for golden years.

Though the path remains unknown
Your hope is well secured knowing
The God that gifted you with each other
Still companions your journey.

Believe the peace in your heart
Treasure the joys within each day
Be grateful for the wonders still to come
Keep singing the love that made you one
Fifty years ago.

By James B Lyons

In grateful celebration of a golden wedding.

Photo by Anas-Mohammed/Shutterstock.com

Beauty of the Welcoming Table

Thomas O'Loughlin *discusses the significance of gathering around the table for liturgy and for life.*

THE IDEA OF a table does not readily conjure up the same emotions as of an altar. Most of us link "table" with the kitchen and "altar" with religion. But in our Christian history and identity the two are one. In the psalms we hear that the Lord prepares a table for the people (Ps 23:5) and the altar in the temple in Jerusalem was the Lord's table served by the people. For Paul, Christians sharing in the table of their fellow believers was sharing in the table of the Lord — and sharing in the Lord's table means sharing with others at that table. The table became the focal object among the early Christians. As Pliny (108 CE) noted, all Christians seemed to do was gather for a meal and sing hymns. Why was this a problem?

The answer lies in the fact that in every other kitchen and dining room in the Roman Empire there were not only tables but also altars. The Greco-Roman world, apart from Judaism, constantly linked consuming meat and sacrificial altars. Romans had altars to the household gods — "the Lares" and "the Penates" — and on these altars they placed a little sacrifice every day and at every meal.

The problem for Christians, when it was known that they neither had altars in their houses nor used them, was that they were suspected of being subversive people, of being atheists. Christians replied with two strategies. The first was to point out that they needed neither sacred groves nor altars because God the creator could be invoked everywhere within God's creation. The other, more accommodating but less theologically precise, was that of Ignatius of Antioch (after 160) who said that they had altars: their tables.

Consequently, in our church buildings we have structures shaped like tables that we call "altars". We forget that this designation is a theological interpretation of what happens at the table around which Christians gather. We link "sacrifice" with "altars" in our imaginations, and usually overlook that the Christian offering of praise to the Father and the Anointed One takes place at a table.

"Liturgy" seems a sacred word belonging to the world of

temples and sacred sites: we think of attending liturgy, we study it as rituals, we think of it as an object. But *leitourgia* is the term for collective service — it refers to our collective activity as a group possessing a common identity, vision and purpose.

Liturgy is not something that "I take part in". Rather, I join together with other Christians in a common activity of praising God the Father, whose care I ask for, and above all giving thanks *(eucharistia)* for God's wonderful works and creating and redeeming us. The community's engagement in this task is their liturgy.

Liturgy used to take place in the temple, but now it takes place wherever two or three gather in the name of the Christ (Mt 18:20). In Christ we encounter God's presence manifested among us, and, through him, with him and in him, at his table bless and thank the Father. The sacred location of our sacrifice in spirit and truth (Jn 4:24) is sitting next to our sisters and brothers at a table.

This shift is from temple-space marked off as "apart", to an ordinary space. In the ordinary space we recognise God's presence as the defining characteristic both of Christian liturgy — we do not need a specific sacred site — and of our confession that Jesus is the Word made flesh, among us as an individual human being. We need, therefore, not only an incarnational model of liturgy, but also an incarnational model of the beauty of liturgy.

New Understanding of Beauty

But this shift to an understanding of beauty, in line with who we confess Jesus to be, is problematic for many Christians. Down the centuries, we have made a massive investment in having special "sacred" buildings, buildings that stand apart from the ordinary and the everyday. We've used a buildings-based approach to beauty.

If we look at a baroque sanctuary, we see the same fascination with gorgeous detail that we see in a Hindu shrine. And, for many, the notion of beauty is beauty at the liturgy in the form of elaborately decorated vestments or exquisite metalwork in vessels. This is aesthetic beauty — beauty that we look at.

Ontological Beauty — Quality of Being Authentic

But there is also beauty that is a quality of that which is genuine, of that which leads us towards our fulfilment, of that which is free from pretence, of that which is truly in harmony with the incarnational love that God shows in Jesus. This is ontological beauty, which we betray if we concentrate only on aesthetic beauty. What does this ontological beauty "look" like?

There is no easy answer to this but we can note certain pointers to the pursuit of ontological beauty and the liturgy.

First, and foremost, we acknowledge the wonder of the ordinary: God is present in the whole of creation and the Word has pitched a tent among us — human beings are the temples of the Spirit (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19; or Rom 12:1). That a dinner table can be the place of the sacrifice of praise, our thanksgiving in Christ, may seem underwhelming but if we cannot discover God there and act as God's People there, then what does "worshipping in spirit and truth" mean among us?

Second, there must be beauty in our acting that is in accord with our encounter with God in creation. To gather at the Eucharist is to share in the life of God at that table, but if we share in the divine, we must share with the human. Just as we are forgiven and so must forgive, so sharing in God's life means sharing creation more fully with human beings. Anything less makes our liturgy a sham — and the false is alien to the true and the beautiful.

That a dinner table can be the place of ... our thanksgiving in Christ may seem underwhelming but if we cannot discover God there and act as God's People there, then what does "worshipping in spirit and truth" mean among us?

And third, we must enact a true vision of the universe we preach: the liturgy must exhibit welcome, forgiveness, bearing one another's burdens, and remind us that liturgy spurs us to action for our mission as Christians.

Beauty, of whatever kind, transcends the facts and figures of the material. It is a constant pursuit rather than a possession and will only be "attained" at the eschaton.

Every artist knows this when pursuing aesthetic beauty: the next work will be "closer".

I knew a parish priest whose delight was to make "his" church beautiful: he decorated, adorned and added yet another layer of gilding — but there was always more to be done.

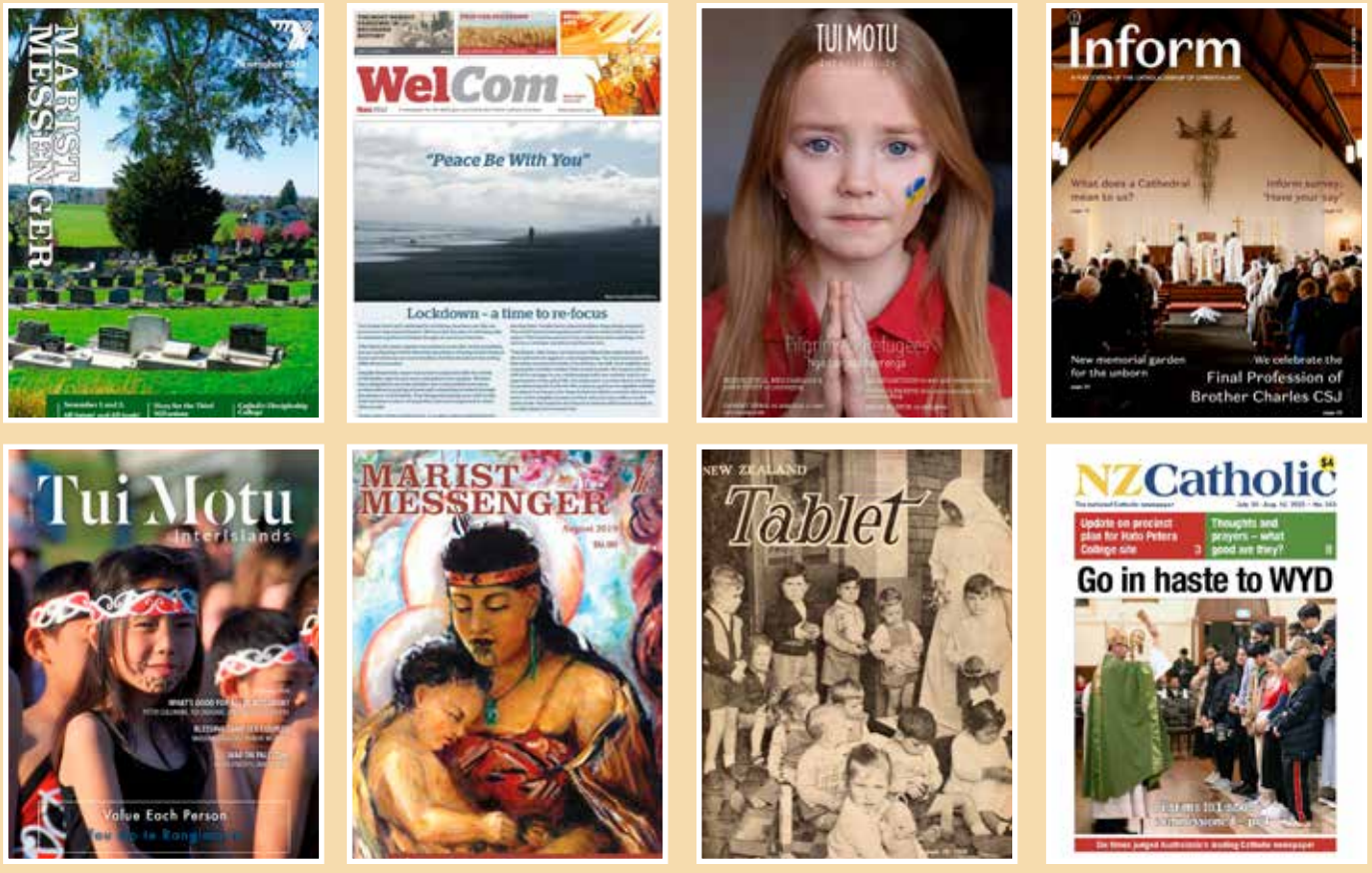
Beauty as a quality of our action as those among whom the Logos has pitched a tent is likewise a quest: the perfection of liturgy will be in the court of heaven. But it is a quest on which we embark here, not among sacred precincts or gilded altars, but with welcoming tables, shared loaves and generous shared cups.

For us, as followers of the Christ, "the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him" (Jn 4:23).

For a fuller version of this article see: "The Welcoming Table, the Beauty of the Temple and the Disciples of Jesus" in ***Worship*** vol 98, Jan 2024: 76-84

Gathering Around God's Table Wall hanging in a Community House in Salvador, Brazil

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



Print Serves Mission Model of Church

Peter Cullinane *responds to New Zealand Catholic media professional and stalwart Pat McCarthy's open letter about the demise of* NZ Catholic *as a print publication and in which he proposes establishing a state-of-the-art Catholic online news and information service, accessible on a range of devices, online platforms and social media. McCarthy argues that with most New Zealanders now receiving their news online, the shift to digital media makes sense. He believes that a dedicated Catholic online news source would build the identity and confidence of Catholics; provide an authentic image of the church which Catholics would be proud to share; show Catholics we have good news stories to tell; and reach out to inactive Catholics who have no contact with a parish.*

Dear Pat

I think it is great that you are offering your expertise in publishing at a time when decisions will have long-term pastoral consequences. I welcome the opportunity to enter the conversation.

You give an informed account of what is happening in the world of media. The turn to online media is here to stay, and the church will do well to take proper advantage of it. As a means of communication it has much to commend it. I would like to supplement what you have said.

You refer to people's increasing mistrust of news programmes. In New Zealand, mainstream TV channels have been presenting news as a form of entertainment, that being their way of trying to get and hold people's attention. But that form lowers people's expectations. What they get becomes what they want, and what they want becomes what they get — a general dumbing down. Whatever the other reasons for the demise of the print media, I think one reason has to be our more pressured way of life, which leads people to look for what they can get more quickly, but in fragmented form and without depth. This in turn feeds into the broader cultural habit of not thinking very much about what is being said, and becoming more vulnerable to commercial and political spin, and various ideologies.

I also think there is a naïve self-assurance and elitism in the assumption that "everybody" can manage digital

communication. Presumably this improves with time. But it is not helped by the mindset behind that assumption. Those who are technologically savvy do not easily make allowance for those who are not. This mindset showed up notably in those who organised the 2018 national census, and their self-assurance back-fired on them — to give but one example of what still happens daily. Businesses, such as the banks, use this technology for cost-cutting, and their services to customers are becoming increasingly impersonal. However, one thing is the use of digital technology and another the misuse of it. Your own proposals envisage professionalism in every best sense.

You say, as others do, that "most Catholics in NZ already receive most of their news about the Catholic church from online sources …" I suggest they are not "most Catholics"; they are "most of the ones who are interested in finding news about the church." Our pastoral obligations go beyond them to include those who do not take the initiative to look for church news. These may well be the majority. I even wonder if Jesus's figures are out of date: he spoke of leaving the 99 to search for the one that was missing; today, the more or less missing are the 99.

I want to plead that this matter should not be a matter of either online or print. It needs to be both. Research done by the NZ Catholic Education Office under Brother Sir Patrick Lynch some years ago found that the outlet from which most Catholic people get their news about the Church was not the pulpit or parish newsletters, not the bishop or diocesan communications, not Vatican radio — but simply the Catholic schools. I can believe those findings are still relevant because the school is what parents are interested in! Their children's schools trigger their interest.

That was the reason why Cardinal Tom Williams and I asked that the Catholic schools were to have first claim on the Wellington-Palmerston North Catholic paper *WelCom*, the remainder going to the parishes. This original plan is still honoured in some places, but where it isn't, this is presumably a distribution problem, whether in delivery to the schools, or in the need for teachers to make sure the kids take copies home. I don't think we should give up on that original purpose because a paper lying around the house — as well as having a longer life than the air waves — can be picked up casually, and the reader finds herself or himself reading news that they would not have gone looking for. I find it hard to believe that Catholics who have limited contact with their parishes will be turning on their devices to find Catholic news.

By "Catholic news" I include bishops' statements and popes' teachings and informed comment — but more than that: the spread of general information about what church activities are happening (in parishes, dioceses, and world-wide) contributes to the ongoing spread of a Catholic culture, within which people are able to recognise their Catholic identity — even if they are not practising regularly. I wonder what percentage of that kind of news will get on to online media; or how attractively, compared with a well laid-out page.

Catholics who take the initiative to look for Catholic news online are already interested, and perhaps even have some idea of what they are looking for. Catering for these Catholics is important, but it goes no further than a "maintenance model" of church. On the other hand, reaching out to those who need some catalyst to trigger their interest depends more on a "mission model" of church. Which are we to be?

We are not dealing simply with alternative ways of reaching out to the same people. We are dealing with the difference between people who are looking for Catholic news and will tune in; and others who are not looking for Catholic news and for whom we need to walk the extra mile. I fully realise that financial resources come into any re-consideration of what we should be doing. Pastoral and financial considerations both belong. But when opportunities to reach Catholics with whom we have little other contact are limited, the pastoral considerations merit a certain priority.

So, Pat, I dare to hope your piece might be a good discussion starter. Limited discussion of such a matter behind doors is not good pastoral practice, and is not even good Catholic ecclesiology. Even the ancients said: *nihil de nobis sine nobis* — if it's about us, then not without us! And consultation needs to ask not only for people's personal preferences (maintenance model), but also how they think the news should reach their neighbours (mission model). And, of course, it would be supremely ironic if a consultation were to take place only online.

Whakapaingia,

Peter

For a copy of Pat McCarthy's letter email: patmccarthymedia@gmail.com

Bishop **Peter Cullinane** is a theologian and the former bishop of Palmerston North. In "retirement" he continues his pastoral ministry.

HE TANGATA
THE PEOPLE

Rosemary Riddell *shares how reconnecting with friends helped her through a wave of unexpected grief while she was travelling.*

Green Dress by Joy Goldstein ©
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THERE HAS ALWAYS been something enticing for me about the thought of overseas travel. Maybe it comes from living on a small island in the middle of the Pacific, or, more likely, growing up with a desperate desire to see life beyond our shores. My first overseas experience (ubiquitously known as the "OE") was to be Fiji at the age of 17 with a school group. When it clashed with a speech exam, and my speech teacher wryly asked me how I thought I was going to fit in my LTCL, I was gutted. I knew in my heart I couldn't go and I thought, as you do at 17, that I would NEVER travel.

As it turned out I left our shores at 20 bound for England, met my husband Mike, a fellow traveller, and the rest is history. We lived in Switzerland for nearly three years with a young family and travelled as a couple on many occasions. In June, I took my first solo trip back to Europe. It turned out to be a plunge into grief. Everywhere I looked there were couples. Sitting alone at dinner, I saw the maître d' fawning over tables of four while I remained invisible. Walking around churches and castles, the splendour was lost on me with no one to share it with. In fact what saved the trip was the encounter with friends around England and Northern Ireland.

It seemed everywhere I went I felt like a tourist not a traveller. But connecting again with friends, some after a decade, was rich with laughter and tears. We talked about our faith, what we'd lost and gained. We reminisced about those now gone.

We laughed deep belly laughs as we remembered who we were all those years ago. We peeled back the years and prodded and poked at our lives. Oh, it was fun. And I learned afresh the Māori answer to that question: "What is the most important thing in the world?" He tangata. It's people. Wherever they are, however often or not you see them.

People. We are a weird collection of hurts, hopes and heroics. But we are also unique and however we measure ourselves or others, I know in my heart that God loves us and that is enough. Albert Einstein nailed it when he said: "Everybody is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid."

It's all about measuring ourselves by the right yardstick. I went on holiday as a widow, not even consciously aware when I left home that it was my measure. It was only when I saw myself as a cherished friend that my view expanded, I relaxed and the delight kicked in. I came home a grateful traveller with a head full of memories and a heart full of thankfulness.

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

For What It's Worth

A VIDEO CLIP doing the internet rounds recently showed school students reacting to a holographic image of a whale breeching right in front of them out of their gymnasium floor! The spectacular sight, a mind-boggling tribute to modern technology that demanded quite a few replays, turned out to be a fake.

Also recently, a nephew invited my sister and me to a dawn-watch of humpback whales migrating along the coast of Coolangatta. As we stood on the largely deserted beach, many whales passed us — blowholes spouting as they rose and fell just beyond the breaking waves — some giving a little flap of a fluke or tail and a couple further out managing a small breech. It was a much less spectacular sight than the bogus hologram but, somehow, far more rewarding, uplifting and lasting — and certainly real! Witnessing these taonga in their natural environment was a spiritual event. There is something about seeing things as they really are that is stimulating, challenging, even life-changing. A transfiguration experience, maybe.

The depiction of Jesus's face in Luke's account of the transfiguration is much less dramatic than in Matthew's "shining like the sun" account. Luke simply states: "As he prayed, the aspect of his face was changed" (Lk 9:29). The disciples Peter, James and John had seen Jesus many times before and in different situations but somehow this time was different. Maybe what they were seeing for the first time was Jesus as he really is — the presence of God. This has a profound effect on the way they see everything else — even themselves. Maybe when we truly see reality, we see God and are able to look at everything as God does, seeing all as good, full of promise and hope for growth toward fullness of life.

Last week I was encouraging "Joel" during his physiotherapy session. Although I have come to know him quite well (he has had a long stay in rehab as is a regular participant in our Sunday church service), I had only ever seen him in his wheelchair, usually bent over as he has difficulty holding his head up and manipulating his left side. Being physically impaired by his brain injury at such a young age, he is often angry and depressed. So it was something of a transfiguration experience to see Joel standing erect, walking (with the aid of two physios and a frame) and smiling with joy at the prospect of liberating movement and, with his head held high, proud of his achievement. Later, when we had the opportunity for a chat about the walking experience, I remarked, "I didn't realise you were so tall." Joel raised his head (without needing the usual encouragement to do so), drew himself up in the chair and, with some pride, said: "I'm six foot two — taller than my dad." Seeing himself, and being seen, as he really is — a tall, strong, young man — rather than the broken victim of an accident, enabled new enthusiasm and confidence in growth and change — for both of us.

Psalm 139 would suggest God sees us similarly and encourages in each of us a transfigured appreciation of our own reality.

"God you examine me and know me, you know if I am standing or sitting … whether I walk or lie down ... It was you who created my inmost being … I thank you for the wonder of myself, for the wonder of your works … guide me in the way that is everlasting."

Photo by Guille Pozzi on Unsplash

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.

Bread of God Gives Life to the World

Kathleen Rushton *explains the significance of Jesus's use of bread and flesh in John 6:51-69 for our understanding of food for life and the ritual of Eucharist.*

CHAPTER 6 IN the Johannine Gospel is the counterpart of the Last Supper accounts in Matthew, Mark and Luke. John's action-narrative pattern unfolds in the feeding of the crowd (Jn 6:1–15) and a boat trip (Jn 6:17-21) followed by the "the bread of life" discourse (Jn 6:26–71). Each of the narratives has layers of symbolism including the focus of this article on the meanings of "bread" and "flesh".

RADICAL NATURE OF BREAD

When Jesus declared: "I am the bread of life" (Jn 6:35), he gave a human grounding to the Eucharist. "Bread" is a specific element of food as well as a general name for food, as in "we earn our bread by the sweat of our brow". That humans need bread (food) to live, that we are not the source of our own life, signifies our deep interdependence on all other life. We need something from outside ourselves to stay alive.

In claiming "I am the bread of life," Jesus invites us to reflect on the radical nature of bread and reveals the meaning of Jesus for human life. We go beyond what we see and touch into discovering and celebrating the mystery of Jesus.

Our food is produced by work — the expending of energy. The use of a meal — eating food together — as the Eucharist, shows us what Jesus does in his life, his self-giving death and his sacrifice (from Latin — "to make holy").

It links us to God's evolving universe in which bread (food) comes to exist — the ecosystems of sun, rainfall and soil along with the human actions of tilling soil, harvesting, transporting, buying, selling and baking produce food — and satisfies our hunger.

"FLESH" GREEK: *SARX*

In John 6:51 Jesus said: "I am the living bread that that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

In John, "flesh" *(sarx)* refers to the true humanity of Jesus. His coming is not expressed as a birth, or as male person *(aner)*, or a human person *(anthropos)*, but that Jesus became "flesh" (*sarx* Jn 1:14). Australian biblical scholar Dorothy Lee explains: "It is not the maleness of Jesus that has symbolic significance in this [Johannine] worldview but rather his embodiment in material/human form."

"Flesh" is a core symbol in John's Gospel, occurring 13 times in five sections: in the Prologue (Jn 1:13-14); the dialogue with Nicodemus (Jn 3:6); the Bread of Life narrative (Jn 6:51-56, 63), the Tabernacles Discourse (Jn 8:15) and the Prayer of Jesus (Jn 17:2). They echo the Old Testament's view of the human person as an undivided whole. It differs from the Greek philosophical division of the human person into body and soul, a dualism which later influenced Christian thought.

BOUNDARY OF FLESH BLURRED

While it is clear in Genesis that "flesh" refers to human persons,

such as "flesh" is circumcised (Gen 17:11,14) and man and woman are "one flesh" (Gen 2:24–25), in John the "Word became flesh" blurs this boundary. In ancient and biblical writings, "flesh" has a range of meanings which link human persons with other living creatures.

The word "all" is often inserted, so that God's relationship with ongoing creation becomes one with "all flesh". In the flood story, the focus is on "all flesh" (Gen 6:13–22; 7:15–16) and the covenant is made with "all flesh" (Gen 9:8–17). In the Psalms, God sustains "all flesh" (Ps 136:25) and "all flesh" praises God (Ps 145:21).

Whatever the degree of difference from other animals may be, it is our evolutionarily developed bodies that are the bearers of human uniqueness. This embodied existence confronts us with the realities of vulnerability and affliction.

FLESH AND BLOOD

A further layer unfolds in John 6:51-59 when Jesus speaks about "flesh" (six times) and "blood" (four times). In the OT and in the Jewish world of early Christianity, these words "flesh and blood" refer to one who suffers a violent death (Ps 79:2-3; Ez 32:5-6). The use of "flesh" and "blood" in this section of John evokes the violent death of Jesus indicating, as in other discourses in John, movement towards his death.

"TO EAT"

"To eat" has multiple meanings. Jesuit Jerome Neyrey explains that when Jesus repeats that he is "the bread of life (Jn 6:48; 6:35), the "living bread" (Jn 6:51) and that one must "eat" (Jn 6:50) to have life, the meaning of "eating" is "believing". Just as "seeing is believing", so, is "eating".

Jesus's words evoke Wisdom in the OT who prepares a banquet for her disciples (Proverbs 9:1-9; Sirach 24:19-22). "Bread" there means wisdom or teaching and to "eat" means to study or learn. So, if "bread" can be teaching, then "eating" means "believing".

But to "eat" means also to "consume food". When Jesus says: "The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh" (Jn 6:51), he makes a bold statement. The food and drink will truly be eaten: "for my flesh is true food and my blood is true drink" (Jn 6:55). Neyrey explains: "But it is not literal flesh and blood of which Jesus speaks but substances that nevertheless are both chewed and drunk, as are bread and wine at a meal."

"UNLESS"

The use of "unless" in John is significant. It suggests the choice of being part of a group or not. Just as eating together at a meal confirms our belonging to a group, so Jesus commands his disciples to participate in a group ritual action: "Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Humanity and drink of his blood, you have not life in you" (Jn 6:53).

"Unless" contains a demand as when Jesus speaks about birth from above and by water (Jn 3:3,5), a special belief (Jn 8:24), washing by Jesus (Jn 13:8) and abiding in the vine (Jn 15:4). We are either transformed in status or confirmed in membership by these "unless" demands.

GOD'S "GIVING" THROUGH JESUS

Jesus said: "For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (Jn 6:33). Those listening are thinking of ordinary food like manna. Jesus emphasises that Moses "gave" but "my Father in heaven gives you true bread" (Jn 6:32). God's "giving" is present and ongoing, accessed through Jesus.

At stake is the mystery of the incarnation. Jesuit Scott Lewis says that we must assimilate Jesus as we would food, allowing his life-giving presence to become the very fibre of our being. This is echoed in the Eucharist offertory prayer: "The fruit of the earth and work of human hands, it will become for us the bread of life … fruit of the vine and work of human hands it will become our spiritual drink."

Reading 11 and 17 August: John 6:51-69

Before and After by Pat Nielsen © Used with permission www.patnielsen.org

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

MEDITATING ON WORK & LEISURE

I RECENTLY DID a quite unnecessary thing. I sewed a simple cotton shopping bag. My flat, like most flats, has a stash of shopping bags collected from supermarkets and various outlets and we don't need more. And buying fabric and sewing a bag is slower, more expensive and entirely unnecessary.

But there was something satisfying about watching the bag come together, cutting the fabric, lining my stitching up evenly in seams. I'm not an accomplished sewer, and since finishing my bag I've noticed how even the stitching is on the other bags I use. It's made me realise that skill goes into the work of making the things I own — work undertaken by people whom I never acknowledge.

I don't suffer many inconveniences in my life. As I write this, I'm sitting in a plane, getting somewhere a hundred times faster than I could have by foot or horse just over a century ago. This convenience comes at a cost. The bags I buy for just a few dollars, with their impressively uniform stitching, were made by others far from me who were probably paid very little. The global supply chain ensures I pay next to nothing for the labour of another person. I'm conscious of this: I try to live as ethically as I can — biking as my primary form of transport, choosing to fly infrequently, op-shopping for my clothes and buying in-season veg. But these aren't great sacrifices for me and my life is still extremely easy.

I'm sewing my own bag from curiosity and because I have leisure time — but the process of making it has made me aware of the convenience I enjoy when I buy a bag. I've done this before, trying my hand at other old-fashioned and less efficient activities to remind myself of the work and skill behind the things I buy. Knitting socks was fiddly and I ended up with awkward holes, but it made me appreciate my many pairs of bought socks. Preserving fruit has lined my flat's shelves with beautiful jars, and makes me think twice about cans from the supermarket. Growing spinach in the garden shows just how convenient the vegetable shop really is.

If I made all my things from scratch with the lack of skill I have, I'd have little time for anything else. I certainly wouldn't finish my Master's thesis! For me, the value in making things the slow way is in the kind of meditation time it gives me. It highlights the injustice in our world. Most of us in this country have leisure time — time off from work. In contrast, the global trade in trafficking and slavery of people for work ensures the ongoing suffering of millions forced to work to produce "things" for us. And it highlights my need to respond, not just to accept the situation as "normal".

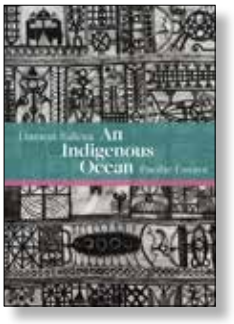
As I crochet, the stitches slide off my hook, and the yarn slips over my fingers in a repetition almost like saying the rosary. I pray for the end of this injustice. And, also, I gird my energy for my studies and to sign that petition for justice I saw, to contribute to the poverty relief collection at church and to listen again to my flatmate's invitation to volunteer in the better neighbourhood project. Maybe I won't keep the blanket I'm crotcheting for myself but give it to someone who needs it more.

Shar Mathias lives in Ōtepoti/Dunedin where she is engaged in postgraduate studies at the University of Otago.

Reviews

An Indigenous Ocean: Pacific Essays

By Damon Salesa
Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2023. (NZD 50)
Reviewed by Mary-Ann Bailey



An Indigenous Ocean is a series of essays about the evolving history of the Pacific Ocean and the impact on it of colonisation. It's a difficult but rewarding read.

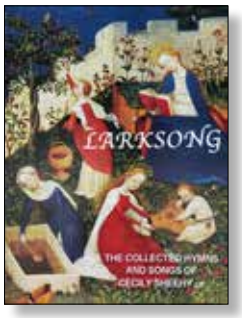
Salesa places the Pacific in its global context, but as well as this wider perspective, he also includes the stories of individuals in indigenous communities of the Pacific. Pasifika women Emma and Phebe Coe's story of the late 1800s is fascinating, and more my kind of read.

Salesa describes the impact Europeans have had in the Pacific. Most New Zealanders are aware of the story of colonisation in Aotearoa but maybe not of other Pacific countries. I enjoyed reading about Pacific countries, the Indigenous people's contact with Europeans and their evolution to the present day. *An Indigenous Ocean* has widened my understanding of the Pacific and begun to identify my place as one of European ancestry in a Pacific world.

An Indigenous Ocean is well worth reading if you want to understand your place in our world. I suggest one essay at a time. I know I will be dipping into it again. ★

Larksong: The Collected Hymns and Songs of Cecily Sheehy OP

By Cecily Sheehy OP
Published by NZ Dominican Sisters, 2024
(NZD 49.50 p&p included)
Reviewed by Amy Armstrong



Dominican sister Cecily Sheehy composed the collection *Larksong* over many years. She was influenced by her time with Matthew Fox's Creation Spirituality programme in Berkeley, California and her many years in the classroom.

The very evening I received Cecily's hymnbook, I headed to the piano and started plucking my way through the songs. My immediate reaction was "How refreshing!" I had met Cecily once after Mass and found her frank and spritely manner just that — refreshing. We'd laughed about how difficult it can be doing parish music because you can never please everyone. But this collection of Cecily's music will touch a wide range of people.

The hymns touch on important aspects of our church often missing at Mass — the feminine image of God, children and families, Papatūānuku, meditation, being who we are created in God. As a church musician and spiritual director I felt filled with the Spirit when I played and sang Cecily's songs.

Her songs have a simple yet deep message. They are playable, easily learned and, conveniently, come with CDs that make teaching and learning even more easy. This collection will be useful, and is I think "a must" for schools and parishes. The title, *Larksong*, suggests an invitation to delve into a melodious adventure.

Larksong is available from: domfinancenz@gmail.com ★

From Paper to Platform: How Tech Giants Are Redefining News and Democracy

By Merja Myllylahti
Published by Bridget Williams Books, 2023. (NZD18)
Reviewed by Gerald Scanlan

In this short book, Merja Myllylahti lays out her strong argument: that tech giants, especially Google and Facebook, have radically and (probably) permanently altered the way in which news is gathered, produced, disseminated, sold and consumed. While less convincing about the impact on democracy, she offers evidence that the news media's ability to function as the "fourth estate" has been weakened by the impact of Google and others.

The book is meticulously researched and referenced, with fascinating insights into the shift in the way people now consume news and where they find it (or it finds them). Myllylahti provides a comprehensive account of the ways in which traditional media, new media and the global tech platforms are entangled and, arguably, codependent.

With the demise of Newshub, the government's decision to proceed with the Fair Digital News Bargaining Bill and the emergence of AI-based search tools, the future of traditional news media in a digital age remains highly topical and uncertain. Myllylahti's framing of the issues and up-to-date data offer a useful primer for readers seeking to understand New Zealand's changing media landscape. ★

Review

Freud's Last Session

Directed by Matthew Brown (2024)
Reviewed by Paul Tankard

This is the second feature film about the literary scholar and fantasy novelist C S Lewis, the first being the 1993 "biopic" *Shadowlands*, which starred Anthony Hopkins as an older Lewis. In this film, set decades earlier, Matthew Goode plays a younger Lewis meeting Sigmund Freud, weeks before the latter's death. In a nifty role reversal, the aged Freud is here played by Sir Anthony Hopkins.

Perhaps I should get my "C S Lewis expert" observations out of the way first. 1) Lewis was not "Professor Lewis" in 1939; 2) no one ever called J R R Tolkien "John": he was Tolkien (or Tollers) to his friends and Ronald (the first of the two R's) to family; and 3) there is no evidence whatsoever that Lewis ever met Sigmund Freud. So the film is not a biopic, but a fantasy or a thought experiment. In those terms, I found it very successful.

These two thinkers are brought together so that the Jewish atheist and the convert to Christianity can talk. It is a very talky film and there is nothing in it for people who don't like conversation.

The only one of Lewis's religious books that he had published at this stage is *The Pilgrim's Regress* (1933), in which he satirises Freud and Freudianism. Lewis has been invited by Freud to his home in London, and comes by train from Oxford, ready to defend himself. He is wrong-footed to find that Freud has not read the book. But Lewis has read much of Freud, and Freud in turn is surprised by Lewis's sceptical intelligence, that he shares Freud's doubts, but not his dogmatism. Freud mocks religious leaders and institutions, who Lewis describes as easy targets. They are pleased with each other's sense of humour. Freud is dying and they minister, as doctor and scholar, to each other.

Whatever you think of psychoanalysis or orthodox Christianity, this is a tale for today. When extremists "cancel" or — a natural extension — murder each other, here we have two deeply serious thinkers, both skilled in the arts of disputation, whose work reflects complex and challenging life experiences, who differ intellectually as regards almost all matters of importance, who meet and dispute with kindliness, humour, mutual commitment and respect.

And although the script is not at all an evangelistic tract, it does insist that it is the propositional wisdom of Christianity that makes it interesting, or even amenable to discussion. ★

Cross Currents

by Jane Higgins

THIS HAS BEEN a year of elections. In around 80 countries, more than half the world's population have had, or will have, an election this year. Some have been deferred amidst conflict while others have been "free and fair" in name only. But, as the year rolls on, these elections do tell us something about the state of the democratic world.

In the media, much has been made of the upsurge in support for populist nationalist parties. And while these parties have come to power in some places, in others the centre has held and progressive parties have fought back.

In India, Narendra Modi's nationalist BJP lost the outright majority it had enjoyed for a decade and an opposition alliance had a strong showing. In the European parliamentary elections, parties of the nationalist right made significant gains but parties of the centre prevailed. In France, in an astonishing turn-around, nationalist parties seemed headed for an historic victory, only to be swept into third place behind a progressive/left alliance and Macron's centrist party. And in the United Kingdom, 14 years of Conservative party rule came to an end with a Labour victory, albeit with the entry into their parliament of the populist Reform party.

Nationalism hasn't swept all before it, but it is clearly on the political map. Its trademark policies prioritise antipathy towards immigrants and a call to defend "our" values, often cast in religious terms. Nationalist parties across Europe warn that "our Christian heritage" is under threat. In the United States, political support for Christian nationalism is on the rise: the most recent example is a Louisiana law requiring public educational institutions to display the Ten Commandments in every classroom.

What drives this? Part of the answer may lie in the failure of our economic system to deliver the prosperity it promised. Part of it is basic racism. It's easier to direct anger for economic failure towards immigrants than towards the powerful. It's easier to blame the brokenness of things on a failure of democracy than on a failure of the economic system. Faced with the challenges of a rapidly changing world, it's easier to feed nostalgia for a golden past that never existed than to get to grips with reality.

In Aotearoa, attempts to use this political playbook are unfolding somewhat differently. At a political level, anti-immigrant language is muted. It has been strong in the past in relation to Pacific migrants. Recently, its clichés in our political discourse have been turned on the Indigenous people. But Te Tiriti is a major stumbling block to efforts to import this style of populism.

Meanwhile, attempts to claim our increasingly secular nation for Christianity are unlikely to gain traction. And, interestingly, religious tolerance features in our founding document. Article 4 of the Treaty was a late addition, included at the prompting of Bishop Pompallier, and not added in writing to the main treaty documents. Nevertheless, it was agreed to by the signing parties and states that: "The Governor says that all faiths — those of England, of the Wesleyans, of Rome and also Māori custom and religion — shall all alike be protected by him."

Tolerance and resistance to racism have a long history here. Te Tiriti gives us a strong foundation on which to forge our own path.

TUI MOTU InterIslands
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

Tui Motu magazine provides Catholic, as well as ecumenical and inter-faith perspectives and discussion on current issues in church and society. It acknowledges its role in honouring and fostering relationships arising from Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It focuses particularly on issues affecting Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific. Its intent is to promote the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, engaging faith and the world through informed, thoughtful comment and discussion for a general readership. The magazine publishes 11 issues per year in print and regular digital postings on social media. The magazine invites contributions from writers of Catholic and other Christian traditions or faith backgrounds, who can offer our readers insights which resonate with the Gospel as it affects us today. We value diversity and seek contributions which are representative of our church and our society: Māori, Pākehā, Pasifika, other cultures, a range of ages and genders, lay and ordained. We offer feature articles, interviews, reviews, poetry, comment and opinion on theology, spirituality and history, as well as on ecological and social justice.

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Letters to the Editor

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

Opinions in letters are not necessarily those of the Magazine.

MORE TO THE STORY

Professor Salmond's article (*TM* June 2024) was helpful in confirming what many of us know already. Māori Rangatira never ceded sovereignty, but as the Crown offered to govern the lawless foreign settlers wherever they settled (on legitimately purchased lands), Māori authorised this governing not expecting the government in England to change. But in 1852 Parliamentary power was given to the New Zealand Company (and other) settlers — to the very people Māori were needing protection from.

For almost two decades after 1840, Governors worked within the "rules", governing only within the purchased blocks while Rangatira governed their hapū, until 1858 when the New Plymouth settlers convinced Governor Brown to take the Waitara Block, unlawfully by force. Correspondence between officials in New Plymouth smugly talks of the Governor "getting Māori sovereignty". This is unsurprising as the Plymouth Company of New Zealand/New Zealand Company policy

toward Māori was to make them landless and subjugate any survivors — which is why Māori today are landless and impoverished.

Missing from Salmond's article is an explanation of why there is an absolute power imbalance now. Article 2 guaranteed Rangatira the right to govern their own people, lands, etc. So why is there an oppressive settler government crushing hapū and Rangatira by theft of land and resources of most hapū?
Ray Watembach, Ōtākou/Central Otago

DOM FELICE VAGGIOLI'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

I appreciated the review (*TM* July 2024) of the re-published *History of New Zealand and its Inhabitants* by Dom Felice Vaggioli OSB, long suppressed by British colonial authorities. As your reviewer observed: "This is a book whose time has come!"

Readers may be interested, also, in Dom Felice's autobiography, *A Deserter's Adventures*, translated also by John Crockett, this time from an unpublished Italian manuscript and published also by University of Otago Press in 2001. A conscientious objector, Dom Felice "failed to report for military service" in the Duchy of Modena and was posted outside the territory, serving in New Zealand 1879-1887. A man of keen observation and independent mind, this "deserter", as he called himself, remains a valuable observer-witness to the colonial regime in the 1880s. The translator and the Otago University Press may be commended for bringing his adventures and observations back to light.
Simon Rae, Ōtepoti, Dunedin

ARUNDHATI ROY'S DREAM IS SURELY OUR DREAM

The Indian government is threatening to prosecute award-winning writer Arundhati Roy because of political remarks she made 14 years ago about Kashmir. This is the age we live in. Writers, commentators and investigative journalists in many parts of the world are in grave danger if they anger the powerful. But Arundhati Roy? Speaking of her activism she said: "The only dream worth having, is to dream that you will live while you're alive and die only when you are dead." Which means: "To love. To be loved ... To never get used to the unspeakable violence and the vulgar disparity of life around you. To seek joy in the saddest places ... To never simplify what is complicated or contemplate what is simple. To respect strength, never power. Above all to watch. To try and understand. To never look away. And never, never to forget."

In December last year, she spoke about the war in Gaza. "The solution cannot be a militaristic one. It can only be a political one, in which both Israelis and Palestinians live together or side by side in dignity, with equal rights ... Please — for the sake of Palestine and Israel, for the sake of the living and in the name of the dead, for the sake of the hostages being held by Hamas and the Palestinians in Israel's prisons, for the sake of all of humanity — stop this slaughter."
Lois Griffith, Ōtautahi/Christchurch

MARY MAGDALENE

I enjoyed Kath Rushton's article on Mary Magdalene (*TM* July 2024), particularly the image of her as the Tower. Readers may also be interested to research the *Gospel of Mary*, a 2nd-century document on Mary Magdalene's special relationship with Jesus and her leadership in the earliest days of Christianity. It contains an account of Peter's objection to accepting her teaching: "Did He really speak privately with a woman and not openly to us? Are we to turn about and all listen to her? Did He prefer her to us?" At which Levi/Matthew rebuked Peter and stood up for Mary. A significant moment in the leadership of women in the earliest days! (See Gnostic Society Library: www.gnosis.org/library/GMary-King-Intro.html) There are a number of other fascinating early Christian documents apart from those selected for our New Testament Canon. It's good to explore our origins.
Trish McBride, Te Whanganui-a-Tara/Wellington

THANK YOU FOR MARY THE TOWER

The July issue of *Tui Motu* was a welcome sight in my mailbox. I cannot speak highly enough of how much I treasure this publication. *Tui Motu* is the only magazine I read cover to cover and find myself both nourished and challenged. It is impossible to single out one contributor, as all add up to making this publication well-rounded and based on the real world. The format and artwork is very appropriate and I love the photo reflections. However, I wish to especially commend Kathleen Rushton for her faithful monthly pages. I really appreciate her scholarly approach to Scripture and also the way she gives a fresh perspective and opens up new meanings for me. "Mary the Tower" was outstanding. I shall celebrate the Feast of St Mary the Magdalene with great enthiusiasm — what a woman!
Sue O'Connor, Ka-Muriwai/Arrowtown

HOPE FOR SYNODALITY

How truly inspiring and comforting it was to read Thomas O'Loughlin's article (*TM* July 2024) and then as a bonus the very informative one by Manuel Beazley. I have had great hopes of a new direction for the church ever since synodality was mentioned, but I was truly losing hope. Now my hope of a church that is willing to pull up the tent-pegs and move forward has been given a boost. With the help and inspiration of the Holy Spirit surely we can see the Kingdom of God come amongst us in all its fullness. Thank you *Tui Motu* for keeping us informed.
Peg Cummins, Tauranga

Our last word

Open our eyes, minds
and hearts
to the invitations
beckoning us
into new relationships,
Loving God.

From the *Tui Motu* Team

cbm
christian blind mission

Murray Sheard (CEO, **cbm** NZ) visiting a WASH club in Nigeria.

Please help provide clean water...

cbm's Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) project aims to build on the incredible progress made over many years to combat Neglected Tropical Diseases such as River Blindness.

The programme also provides education to primary schools, including setting up WASH Clubs and installing hand-washing stations.

Clean water from boreholes is vital to a community, but many existing boreholes are often found broken and in need of repair due to age. The addition of wheelchair ramps make the task of gathering water more accessible to people with disabilities.

Please will you prayerfully consider sending a gift today, to help WASH away the misery of Neglected Tropical Diseases in the world's poorest places.

To learn more about Christian Blind Mission NZ **(cbm)**, scan the QR code using your mobile phone camera or go to www.cbmnz.org.nz/wash

www.cbmnz.org.nz
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