Tui Motu

InterIslands

September 2001 Price $4

Christian mission today

working together

listening and learning from one another

Contents

Acknowledgment to the London Tablet ***for printing excerpts from an article on the Alpha Programme by Fiona Campbell, from their 4th August issue.*** ***See page 18***

Cover picture:
Introducing our theme for the month we are grateful to seminarian Quentin Haughey for the use of his fine photographs, taken during a five year stint at Aitape, Papua New Guinea. COVS workers helped the local people in rebuilding after the tsunami in 1998. See article on pages 8-10.

Who needs to hear the Good News?

This month's focus is Mission. It is many years now since France, first daughter of the Church, source of so many Catholic missionary con-gregations, was itself declared a mission field. The tide of secularisation has had a huge impact on the whole Western world. The European nations, which in the 19th Century proudly sought to carry the Good News to the ends of the earth, are now in desperate need themselves of re-evangelisation.

Yet Christianity has continued a rapid growth in the Third world and not necessarily at the hands of missionaries from Europe or America. There is a healthy change in attitude on the part of Europeans who go to share the Gospel of Christ overseas. Edwina Gately went to Africa as a young woman enthusiastic to take God to the Africans. Instead she discovered a God she had not known – the 'warm, moist, wet, salty God' of the tribal peoples. For Quentin Haughey likewise (*pages 8-10*), the experience of COVS in Papua New Guinea was a huge enrichment of personal faith.

So there is still room for people today to go overseas and share their faith and their skills with other peoples. If they go with a generous heart they will receive the hundredfold.

But a greater challenge remains much closer to home. Who will mission our own friends and neighbours who have forgotten who Christ is or who perhaps have never experienced a God of love? Who will be the modern-day Paul of Tarsus for Waipukurau or for the Areopagus of Molesworth Street?

Day of decision

For Helen Clark's government, perhaps its most critical decision is imminent. Will we go the GM way – or will we follow Sri Lanka and 'go it alone' among the nations, following absolutely the clean, green path?

The temptation to compromise is huge. Commercial farming interests, the pharmaceutical and biotech industries, and no doubt the Mayor of the West Coast, will all speak with a united voice. ***There is no other way***, they will say – echoing the famous dictum of Margaret Thatcher. The Royal Commission has already implied there will be little harm in going so far – with appropriate safeguards.

The decision is a vital one because once we open the doors to GM products there is no going back. The goalposts are shifted for good. It's like a mutated species: something new and totally unpredictable is being created. We are facing an ethical dilemma quite as crucial as the birth of atomic power. Opening the door to GM is like opening the door to bubonic plague.

For this reason we give pride of place in this issue to Scott Eastham's profound and carefully argued essay on the Human Genome. His call is clear. We cannot afford to leave these decisions to the scientific experts. We certainly cannot afford to bow weakly to commercial pressures.

There are massive biological as well as ethical arguments against giving a carte blanche to GM. Public opinion has to be engaged. We have to inform ourselves fully. If Helen Clark says 'no', it should be because there is a healthy and well-informed public consensus backing her, including the voice of the churches. Do not fail to read and carefully ponder the leading article opposite. ■

M.H.

The Human Genome: Map is not Territory

Scott Eastham

Not so very long ago, sequencing the Human Genome was hailed as the Holy Grail of biology, the Rosetta Stone of life itself, and the greatest scientific advance ever. Just recently, however, our expectations from this research have been drastically lowered.

It turns out humans only have 30-40,000 genes, less than half the expected number, and they don't seem to explain very much after all, at least not by themselves. Another few years, we're told, and another few billion dollars, will be required to figure out how genes interact with one another, and how the proteins they generate come to form either positive traits or debilitating illnesses.

Disappointed? In 1990, DNA pioneer James Watson claimed that 'decoding' the genome would tell us all there is to know about being human. Of course he was drumming up public money for the project at the time, but when he said: "Our fate is in our genes", many people believed him.

Over the past decade, accordingly, the gene became a master metaphor in our society. Beyond the mechanisms of health and disease, it has been used to 'explain' everything from genius to learning disabilities, from family breakdown to homosexuality, from social privilege to sociopathic violence, from obesity to depression. It has also been used to 'explain away' traditional forms of guilt and responsibility: "My genes made me do it."

The myth of the all-powerful gene supports a conservative view of society, where there's not much room for humans to be reformed or transformed, and therefore not much that can be done about poverty or inequality or injustice – except of course to re-engineer those genes. All through the 90s, 'nature' trumped 'nurture' at every turn, leaving us at the mercy of a totally deterministic view of the world.

What does it mean when the most extensive – and most expensive – scientific undertaking of all time nets us so very much less than promised? It means scientists will have to scramble to keep their funding. "The biology is all in the proteins," *Celera Corp* chief Craig Venter now tells us. You can almost see all the venture capitalists lining up to add some proteins to their bulging portfolios.

But the real dilemma cuts much deeper. ***Who are we***, anyway? Wasn't the Human Genome Project supposed to tell us? Well, not really. The genome project has produced a map, an abstract description, an important 'view' – but hardly the whole picture of what it is to be human. Map is not territory, and it would be dangerously short-sighted to mistake the genome map for the whole 'territory' of being human. So where do we look now?

Scientists ask the 'objective' question: ***What is a human being?*** All their methods and metaphors stem from looking at human beings as 'objects' of inquiry. The answer would then be the sum total of all their results. Thus – humans are those peculiar animals which talk, think, build, make love or make war, reproduce according to certain patterns, make a mess of their environment, and so on. But isn't something missing?

Humanists ask the 'subjective' question: ***Who am I***? Human beings are not only the objects of inquiry: they are also the inquiring 'subjects'. The human being is 'us'; it's 'me', and 'I' want to know not just the number of my genes, but 'who' I am. Human beings seem to be these peculiar creatures whose under-standing of themselves is part and parcel of who they are. Consider the rich moment when a child discovers her own name, her unique identity – that it is she and she alone who is called by her name, or by the words "I love you". Hardly the same as being identified in a computer by your IRD number!

There is a third kind of question, which Western culture is only lately learning how to ask. We might call it the 'other' question, or the question of the other: ***Who are you***? Our very notions of ourselves come at least partly in and through interaction with others. None of us stands totally alone; there are always 'others'. They may appear differently to each of us – as black and white, women or men, rich or poor, English-speaking or not.

These 'others' have a right to their own ideas, just as 'you' would in their place. ▷▷

Tui Motu-InterIslands is an independent, Catholic, monthly magazine. It invites its readers to question, challenge and contribute to its discussion of spiritual and social issues in the light of gospel values, and in the interests of a more just and peaceful society. Inter-church and inter-faith dialogue is welcomed. The name Tui Motu was given by Pa Henare Tate. It literally means "stitching the islands together...", bringing the different races and peoples and faiths together to create one Pacific people of God. Divergence of opinion is expected and will normally be published, although that does not necessarily imply editorial commitment to the viewpoint expressed.

Tui Motu-InterIslands

ISSN 1174-8931

Independent Catholic Magazine Ltd P O Box 6404, Dunedin North, 9030
Phone: 03 477 1449 Fax: 03 477 8149 email: tuimotu@earthlight.co.nz

Editor: **Michael Hill IC,** Assistant Editor**: Frances Skelton,** Illustrator**: Don Moorhead**

Printed by John McIndoe Ltd

▷▷ Today, no single viewpoint, no culture or religion or academic discipline can claim to have the whole answer to the question of who we are. 'I' am incomplete without 'you'.

I suspect Watson and Crick, who added the double helix of the DNA molecule to our cultural lexicon, made a category error when they labelled it a 'code'. A code is an arbitrary system of signs, with a one-to-one correspondence between the sign and what it signifies (*red* means *stop*; *green* means *go*). Nearly half a century later everybody expected a one-to-one correspondence between genes and the traits they 'encoded'.

Instead, we are only now finding out that the relationship is much more complex. Indeed, the only adequate analogue for what goes on in the labyrinth of the DNA helix is language itself. Unlike some, I do not feel moved by these gigantic gaps in our gene knowledge to proclaim a 'God of the gaps'. I am struck, however, by the 'revelation' emerging from this research that the 'word becomes flesh' quite literally in the coiled DNA of our cells.

In a very real sense, we *are* language, from our genetic substructure all the way through our entire cultural superstructure. And we don't just exchange information, we *communicate.* Language is always more than a system of arbitrary signs. It is more because it includes the speaker and the hearer as well as the message and the medium. It includes me, and it includes you, and our relationship can never be totally predicted or controlled because it is free, spontaneous, creative … in a word, it's *alive.*

By the same token, geneticists are now taking a second look at what they previously called 'junk DNA' – the seeming gibberish of spacer regions and repetitive DNA sequences. Nature just doesn't build wasteful or useless structures. It may turn out that the entire genome project managed to classify only the verbs (the 'action' words which build up proteins) and forgot that you also need nouns and all the rest, to actually say (or read!) much of anything.

We are dialogical creatures. Each of us is a unique bundle of articulated relationships. We are the physical precipitate of a genetic dialogue going on at the cellular level for millions if not billions of years, the social outgrowth of an historical dialogue going on at the level of human culture and language for millennia, and the psychological nexus of a dialogue that includes all our families, friends, ancestors and, to some extent, everybody on the planet.

Plainly, we need to deepen and broaden that dialogue. Maybe we have too readily allowed the scientific narrative to monopolise the story of what it is to be human. A society that leaves such fundamental issues as human cloning, stem-cell harvesting, or transgenic hybridisation to the 'experts' is already a technocracy, not a democracy in any meaningful sense of the word.

Our social and moral coping mechanisms seem to be very slow in keeping up with these technical advances. This 'inertia' of traditional value systems is not all bad; it means that these are weighty issues which are going to require a considerable pause for reflection.

Until the modern era, after all, most traditional peoples believed they were descended from gods or heroes or angels. Now we blandly accept the news that there's barely any discernible genetic difference between human beings and laboratory rats. Maybe we need to hear from those other cultures, and try out some of those other ways of being human, before modern science is given the last word on the evolution of *homo sapiens.*

With the recent *Royal Commission on Genetic Modification*, New Zealand managed to squander its one golden opportunity to set an ethical standard for the rest of the world by creating a 'GE-Free' zone in these islands. The Commission's recommendations amount to little more than an official rubber stamp for current practices. Maybe dollars and cents will always triumph over common sense in the public domain.

Each of us is capable of responding to such questions in many ways. One thing we can do is stop deferring to the technical 'experts' and begin what will have to be a long and deep and deeply human conversation on the meaning and implications of these unprecedented technologies. Such a conversation takes these issues away from the technocrats and puts them back into human hands – but it starts much closer to home: *What is a human being? Who am I? Who are you?*

For answers to these questions, we can only look to one another. What do *you* think about 'engineering' human DNA? Can *you* see any difference between 'creation' and this kind of technical 'invention'?

In America, where technology seems to outrun ethical reservations every time – think of guns, let alone Atomic Bombs – speculators are already racing to stake out and buy up chunks of the genome map in hopes of one day striking it rich with a cure for cancer, or ageing, or whatever. Here in New Zealand, we ought to be talking about this outside – in our homes, on the streets, in the pubs and churches and universities, as well as at the polls. If we do not raise all those other questions now, it may very soon be too late.

The next steps we make in the study of human genetics are crucial. We must be very careful, because some of the possible applications and outcomes – new viruses, germ-line intervention, transgenic chimeras – may well be irreversible. And then our descendants will look back upon us as the last generation or two of genetically unaltered human beings who still had a choice. Here's an interim proposal: Let's not write the epitaph for *homo sapiens* before we have a little better idea just 'who' that most peculiar creature might really be. ■

Scott Eastham is the author of several books on technology and human values, including Nucleus, The Media Matrix, and most recently EyeOpeners, a collection of short essays published last year in New Zealand. He currently lectures in English & Media Studies at Massey University.

Evangelisation . . . taking the Gospel to the ends of the earth

The focus in the August Tui Motu *is on the imperative of Jesus to take the Good News to all peoples. What does this mean in the year 2001? What did it mean to the great Apostle Paul? First, historian Mark Noll looks back over a century of evangelisation*

At the beginning of the last century two great world Mission conferences were held: in 1900 in New York and 1910 in Edinburgh. The context was the consciousness of the huge spread of Christianity during the previous 100 years and the expectation that this would continue on in a new century. During the 19th Century Christians had grown from one quarter to one third of the world's population – at a time when the world's population as a whole was itself growing rapidly. The energy had come from vigorous Catholic and Protestant missionary endeavours on the back of the political and economic expansion of Europe.

The perception was that Christian faith would continue to expand as a largely Western European or a North American venture. It was presumed that Christianity would continue to expand as part of the spread of civilisation, Western civilisation. Confidently Christians in 1900 looked to the new century for 'more of the same'.

Now – one hundred years later on any Sunday during 2001 – there will be more Christians going to church in China than in the whole of Christian Europe. There are more Presbyterians in church in Ghana than in Scotland; more Anglicans in church in Tanzania than in the UK; more AOG worshippers in Brazil than in the USA. In the United States itself there are more non-English speakers at church than ever before in history, even during the great period of immigration. Likewise in Paris the churches which are packed are full of Africans; and in London, of West Indians.

this Sunday more Christians go to church in China than in Christian Europe

Christianity has become a global religion – but in a vastly different way than would have been anticipated in 1910. The expansion has taken place predominantly in the Southern Hemisphere. Whereas in 1900 over 80 percent of Christians belonged to Europe and North America, now it would be nearer 40 percent.

Meanwhile there has been a dramatic decline in Christian practice in Europe and in European 'satellites', like Canada, Australia and New Zealand. ***How did all this happen?*** What were the phenomena which lead to such a seismic change?

Five factors can be singled out:

• A longing for 'real' religion, manifested in various ways, corresponding to the accelerating commercial and communications revolution. Fewer people rely any longer on traditions of the past to give meaning to their rapidly changing lives. Instead they look for a religion which directly touches their lives even while old frameworks are breaking down.

Catholics, for instance, increasingly go on pilgrimage to shrines such as Lourdes or Medjugore where they seek the direct hand of God in physical healing. Protestants, for their part, hunger for the direct touch of the Holy Spirit. So we see the birth of Pentecostalism: increas-ingly people speak of receiving the 'baptism of the Spirit'.

• During the first half of the century Western Europe, the heartland of traditional Christianity, went through a 'self-immolation' during two world wars. The world looked on at the startling contrast between the supposed glories of Western civilisation and wholesale destruction on a scale that had not happened in Europe since the 30 Years War two centuries earlier. Then the Treaty of Versailles turned away from principles of altruism towards a glorification of self-seeking nationalism. ▷▷

And inevitably there was a loss of coherence of traditional Christian faith in Europe itself.

• Meanwhile, far away from Europe new Christian movements arose, often inspired and led by indigenous visionaries and preachers. In 1910 in a Liberian prison, for example, William Wadé Harris claimed to receive a vision from the Angel Gabriel. He went on to become a typical leader of independent Christian movements in Africa, revivalist in character, calling people to baptism and a more upright life.

Converts flocked to the mainstream churches inspired by Harris, but some formed their own new churches. No longer was the initiative exclusively with the European missionaries. Instead what was being preached was *a gospel for Africans interpreted by Africans.* The Ratana church would be a local New Zealand example of the same phenomenon. China exhibited many such movements between the two world wars.

a gospel for Africans interpreted by Africans

• Running alongside these new independent movements was a massive effort directed to translating the Bible into native languages. The proliferation of these vernacular Bibles may be the single most important factor in the indigenisation of Christian faith around the world during the last century.

In New Zealand, Maori Christians were touched by the stories of displaced peoples in the Old Testament which, as with the African slaves in the United States, reflected their own situation. African Christians were delighted to find Abraham or Solomon enjoying more than one 'wife'. Reading the Scriptures prompted an advance among these peoples in directions that Westerners did not always expect.

Sometimes these new indigenous leaders encouraged movements for independence against European dominance or central control by the state. The first Anglican Indian bishop, Bishop V.S.Azariah, spurred on the acculturation of Christianity in southern India. And in North East India Baptist missionaries brought about a remarkable growth of Christian churches among the tribal peoples who resisted the British. In South Korea also, Christian communities flourished as anti-Imperialistic forces opposing Japanese hegemony. Mission churches grew into maturity, ceasing simply to be receivers of Western insights but becoming engines of expansion. Those who had been 'missionised', themselves grew to become missionaries.

the US has always promoted a people's type of Christianity

• The example and influence of the United States becomes paramount. Since World War 1 the US had become increasingly involved in the affairs of the world outside. It began to replace Britain as the centre of energy, of funding and of missionary personnel, particularly Protestant. But also the American Catholic Church was coming to a maturity and became a source of missionary activity.

The United States has become the paradigm breaker in 20th Century Christian development. In Europe, secular movements tended to cause society to move away from traditional Christianity. But in the US this pattern was reversed. Churches there have no official government link; they are never 'established'. The US has always promoted a people's type of Christianity. Middle-class men and women were empowered by social change to become the agents of missionary endeavour. Methodists and Baptists especially came to transcend class divisions – so that in contrast to Europe, US churches have not lost the working classes.

In America the driving force within church communities was personal charisma, not inherited status. The interpretation of Scripture was more important than the learning and tradition of the centuries. American Protestants are low church, entrepreneurial and biblicist. These traits were exported throughout the world and were imitated throughout the world. They served to empower ordinary people to live and preach their faith to others.

So, the rise of America in the world provided an impetus to Christian growth *from below*, in contrast to a more subservient hierarchical model established during the earlier European era.

Developments from 1950-2000 which impact on Christianity

Of many developments the most important are singled out:

1. Revitalisation of the Roman Catholic Church. Of two billion Christians in the world, one billion are Catholics. The problems Westerners have with modern Catholicism – regarding gender and sexuality – are not the concerns of the rest of the Christian world. For them the dynamics released at the Second Vatican Council are far more significant: notably a turning away from a 'Christendom' vision in favour of opening up the Church to the world as an agency of liberation. Pope John Paul II, a non-Italian emerging from beneath the rubble of collapsing Communist regimes, speaks a persuasive new-and-old message received with great attention across the world.

an end to the divisions of the Reformation and Counter Reformation

One aspect is the rapprochement between Catholics and Protestants in most areas, signalling an end to the divisions of the Reformation and the Counter Reformation.

2. A precipitate emptying of European Christian churches. This did not mean that Christian visionaries from these

traditional roots ceased speaking: one thinks of the transnational influence of writers like C. S. Lewis, or even Tolkien. Perhaps these writers were themselves liberated by the collapse of the 'Christendom' paradigm.

3. Decolonisation and retreat of Western Imperial regimes. This allowed newly Christianised people to choose which aspects they and their children would follow. This was accompanied by a resentment against Western missionaries continuing to come in. More important, however, was the consequent indigenisation of Christianity. By 1984 there were over 7000 independent Christian denominations across the whole of the African continent.

Guidance and dictation from Western authority virtually ceased. In China indigenous Christian churches survived under the Maoist oppression and have subsequently risen again: one aspect was the deportation of virtually all Western missionaries. Christianity often serves to bolster community family life during a period of political uncertainty and economic hardship resulting from decolonisation.

4. The Cold War and its ending. During the Cold War Godless Communism could be counterbalanced by the Christian West, but once Communism collapsed there was no longer any reason for having 'Christian' political parties. It had been Christianity which had provided the contrary values to atheistic Communism. And this was no longer significant.

Eastern Orthodoxy meanwhile has emerged as a significant historical force. The weak survives while the strong collapses. Over all, ideology has given way to economics as the key international concern.

'Uncle Sam' is no longer publicised around the world as the bulwark against communism; rather, America is seen as the home of Wall Street, the mainspring of the world economy.

5. Globalisation. Consumer culture, sport, music etc. are now parts of a global entity. The new global economy has created unimagined prosperity cheek by jowl with unimagined poverty. Religious ideas and practices too become global. Prominent revivalist preachers tout their message around the world even though the relevance of this message in some local conditions is highly dubious.

6. The impact and engagement with other world religions – Hindu and Muslim influences especially. We are seeing a parallel with the 6th and 7th centuries when the rise of Islam confronted Christianity.

7. The displacement of peoples. Just as the movement of German peoples during the 19th century brought a spread of religious ideas, so today we are seeing Asian and African migrations carrying religious ideas with them – often a source of great new vitality. One thinks of the new Korean churches in the United States and elsewhere.

The longing for God among people continues everywhere: the need to connect the life stories of individuals, families and tribes with the life-story of the Universe. This surely is the human cry to which the Gospel announcement is the answer.

the answers for the future of Christianity will come from the new Christian peoples themselves

The future of Christianity

1. The Christian world will need to become more aware of what is happening elsewhere. Especially will the West need to respond to the great vitality of the Christian East and South. It is a totally new situation – the focus of energy is now located somewhere else from Europe. In Rome, the next conclave will have a majority of non-Western cardinals.

2. Christian growth is taking place fastest in places where poverty, disease and social dislocation is greatest. The great questions addressed by the Christian faith will always impact also on commerce, society and public questions. The social gospel is relevant. For instance the AIDS pandemic will surely call forth answers and strategies from the new African Christian churches.

3. New unprecedented theological challenges will surely arise. For instance Africans and Chinese are preoccupied with the impact of the Gospel and grace not only on themselves but on their ancestors: for them, identification with one's ancestors defines you as a person. For Polynesians likewise.

So what will the Christian message of hope do for those of an earlier time who never heard it? The answers will surely come from the new Christian peoples themselves, not from the West. Theology will preserve the best of the old Christian orthodoxies while remaining open to these new questions.

4. What response will Christians in the West find to their post-Christian society? A revival is urgently needed – but not of old-fashioned Christendom, in the way advocated by the new Christian Right in America. Christian society can never be reconstructed as it was. The integrity of the Christian faith will need to be combined with an openness to the world as it is.

Western church and Western society has squandered the great gifts given by Christianity, a process which now urgently needs to be reversed. ■

Mark Noll is a prolific author in Church History and is McManis professor of Christian Knolwedge at Wheaton College, Chicago, Illinois

Receiving the hundredfold in PNG

Quentin Haughey spent five years in Papua New Guinea working for Catholic Overseas Volunteer Service. In 1995 COVS were looking for someone to manage a mechanical workshop in PNG; Quentin fitted the bill. He is now at Holy Cross Seminary, Auckland

Aitape lies in the north-western corner of PNG in what is known as the 'Sundown province'. It lies quite close to the border with Irian Jaya which is part of Indonesia. But the logistics of communication are so difficult that Aitape is isolated from any of the political tensions. There are no roads joining it to the Indonesian border, and access is by sea or by plane. There are two airstrips, one left over from the war.

Aitape is the headquarters of a diocese, which services some 25 out-stations, staffed by religious or catechists. The diocese stretches inland from the coast along with a few islands offshore and has more that 20 priests, although some are getting on in years. The diocese is still run by the Franciscans (Friars Minor), an Order which arrived there in the early 1900s. Most of the missionaries are Australian although a few are Italians who came in the -50s when the missionaries were expelled from China.

I initially went there for a two-year contract, but it stretched out to five, and I came home finally in March 2000. When I first arrived the place was very run down, so it took time to turn it round. There had been no development for many years, so it was a bit depressing.

I was the only 'international' in the actual workshop, but there were others with me working in the mission – builders, electricians, doctors. They was a variety of nationalities: Germans, Dutch, Australians. They came and went while I was there. Two of them who had left, came back again to help rebuild after the tsunami in 1998.

The mission in Aitape

Being part of the church is integral to the local people's lives. The hospital was built by the church and is supposed to be funded by the govern-ment, but the church has to subsidise it. The diocese also has its system of schools. There's a government high school outside Aitape, but the church schools by and large are better run. The secondary school in Aitape, St Ignatius', is one of the most highly rated in the country.

The church sets out to nourish the body of the people as well as the soul. This is done in a very tangible way by addressing the physical needs of the people as well as the spiritual. My job at the workshop fitted into this integral picture. My work was to supervise the machine shop which included a welding section. They would make things like trays for the backs of trucks. They made trusses for local buildings. It was light engineering work as well as maintenance work. We imported new gear and part of my work was to train the locals to use them. Patrick (*shown above with his family and with Quentin*), a national who worked with me, is now in charge of the welding work.

The missionaries have been there one hundred years and now 80 percent of the people are Catholics. In Aitape four of the priests are Papua New Guinean nationals with one of

Papua New Guineans are very expressive people. They like ceremony – lots of singing and dancing. It makes liturgies very colourful and attractive

the Franciscans. There are also many religious Brothers and Sisters.

Papua New Guineans are very expressive people. They like ceremony. At Mass there is a lot of singing – and dancing on occasions. It makes the liturgies very colourful and attractive. They turn up in good numbers and participate enthusiastically. Their faith is strong. The Franciscans sowed the seed of a deep Marian tradition, and they will happily have Marian devotions in their camps.

For me it was a rich faith experience, not just in their prayer but in their day to day living. Their family values are most impressive. In the past the women have been badly treated. The men tended to treat their womenfolk as chattels, as if they belonged to the men. But the culture is changing, and I think this is one aspect where the European and Christian influence has been good.

One of the Australian Sisters, Sr Françoise, has been active there for many years. She was matron at the hospital and is now the Family Life Officer, teaching the women family planning among other things. She is extremely highly respected among the people. She is training a national couple to take over her job in time. There was a Dutch female doctor, who likewise was greatly esteemed for her work. Seeing women in these roles has helped a change of culture – that women are the equal of men.

The 1998 tsunami

I was at my house in the evening with a couple of friends. The house is about 200 metres from the sea and well above sea level. There was no warning. Earthquakes happen frequently; we had a couple of shocks that evening. One was quite strong and shook things around on the shelves. I remember thinking: 'That was a ripper!'

About a quarter of an hour later we suddenly heard a roaring sound and people screaming as they came running past the house. Aitape was just on the fringe of the tidal wave. It washed over the road and ran up our driveway, but didn't get into the house, and Aitape itself got off virtually scot free.

The water penetrated inland several hundred metres. Up the coast there's a 'bar' – a sandspit with a lagoon on the land side. The sandspit was between 50 and 200 metres wide and three kilometres in length. There were villages all along it which were wiped out. Most people were washed into the lagoon but some bodies went out to sea. About one in four of the population was drowned.

Some of the people thought it was a punishment from God because there had been desecration of statues in that area. So there is still a bit of superstition. The whole area affected lay within our diocese.

The survivors managed to get a boat out, motor down and raise the alarm. When daylight returned we found bridges had been washed out so it took us until the next evening to ferry people from the worst areas back to hospital. By that time some of the 'choppers' arrived with supplies to help. ▷▷

The people fled into the bush, and part of the problem was trying to persuade them to come back to the beach where they could get help. We were busy for several days in the actual rescue work; after that the workshop was in heavy demand keeping vehicles running and in rebuilding work. We had to provide foundation piles for rehousing (*see right*).

The people were naturally reluctant to return to the coast to live, so the infrastructure of schools and health centres had to be built inland in the bushcamps where they now are. At the present time the people return to the beach for a couple of days at a time to fish. But the fear is that they may try to return there to live. These tsunamis have happened before along that coast. The trouble is of course that they love the sea. They are fisher people by tradition. Life in the bush is a lot tougher than along the coast.

leaving for the one of the outstations – Fr Norbert and crew

The COVS experience

When I first arrived in PNG I was quite shattered by what I found. The place was so run down. During the first few weeks I simply wanted to get out of the place. But Miriam Broad, the Director of COVS, told me to stick it out for three months. That was excellent advice.

It takes time to get used to the climate and the culture and the work circumstances. You don't know anybody, so it's tough initially. But soon I was really touched by the people and became content with doing a worthwhile job. And I made friends 'for life'.

Before I went to COVS I had attended a *Come and See* weekend at Holy Cross, Mosgiel. My parish priest encouraged me to go and have a look. But then one Sunday Miriam arrived from COVS and put on a display after Mass. So I went that way instead – the 'softer option' perhaps!

But COVS is also a vocational experience. What you receive from it is far more than anything you give. It's a people experience – a faith experience. I found the generosity and sincerity of the New Guineans simply amazing. I was a richer person for it – for sure! Those five years were the most worthwhile of my life.

My decision now to go on and try my vocation for the priesthood was fostered by being in PNG. The joy of working with those people was what prompted me to stay there. I have now what I call my Papua New Guinea family, as well as my family here. It was hard saying goodbye and it has given me friends for life.

You think you are going to do all the giving – but it doesn't work out that way at all. You receive the 'hundredfold'. The support and infrastructure from COVS were really excellent. They were always concerned for your welfare. All in all it was a most positive experience. ■

Cook Islands children dancing a welcome.

For over a hundred years the Picpus Fathers and the Cluny Sisters have overseen the Catholic Missions here.

Now it is the turn of the New Zealand Marists

Times are a-changing in the Cooks

Tui Motu *interviews Br Ray Kelleher SM, who went to the Cook Islands a few years ago at the invitation of Bishop Stu O'Connell. He found a changing Mission scene*

The Cook Islands were originally evangelised by the London Missionary Society in the early 19th Century. They set up the Cook Islands Christian Church, and are still the dominant group. This church is run by local pastors and deacons, but there are no ordained ministers.

Catholicism arrived in the Cooks with the Dutch Picpus Fathers in 1896. At one time there were 15 Picpus priests. Now three remain, all in their 70s. Br Ray says they are very dedicated men who really care for the people, and in turn they are loved and respected by the islanders. They have been more than happy in recent years to work under a Marist bishop.

"It's been a lonely life for them," says Br Ray, "since they work singly in their own parishes on different islands. They have built up their mission stations through the work of the schools they set up and through trained catechists. The catechists are all male. The islanders would have a real cultural difficulty in accepting a female catechist by herself. But in practice the catechists often work as husband and wife teams.

"The priests have often been very practical men. Fr Edwin, for example, on the island of Atiu, has always made furniture, tables and chairs, for his people. There would scarcely be a home on Atiu which doesn't boast an example of Fr Edwin's work. Good furniture has helped the islanders develop better hygiene and homecare."

The Picpus Fathers were followed within a year by the Cluny Sisters, who established St Joseph's school in Rarotonga which continues today. There are still six Sisters working there: four on Rarotonga and two on an outer island. Two teach at St Joseph's and two look after the elderly and handicapped. There are quite a number of Cook Island Cluny Sisters, some working in New Zealand.

When the Marists arrived a few year ago they realised that not only were they taking the place of the ageing Picpus Fathers – they were of necessity having to adopt a different missionary strategy. One reason is that the old-fashioned type of missionary no longer exists. But another reason is that the old model failed to build up an indigenous clergy.

The New Zealand Marists see themselves as having an interim presence in the Islands and this has meant a new strategy:

• to develop and expand lay church ▷▷

Br Ray Kelleher (right), in relaxed holiday mode, with the Editor

leadership among the people
• to maintain the training of catechists
• to establish a central Marist community, not only to run the local parish but to pay regular visits to the outlying islands.

There are Catholics in all but one of the 13 inhabited islands which make up the Cooks. Nassau for example is very remote and has no airstrip and has never had a resident priest. When one of the local clergy, Fr Catiano Paulo, went last year it was the first visit by a priest for nine years. The Government boat was calling in to service a local election, so Fr Paulo took the opportunity. In five days he was able to administer all the sacraments apart from Ordination! There are about 50 Catholics altogether, being cared for by the catechists.

In the Cook Islands the family structure of society is very important. Each island community is like an extended family. This makes it very difficult to move catechists around. They become wedded to their service to a particular island community.

Creating a local clergy is not easy because culturally the notion of a celibate priesthood is unacceptable. The Islanders respect celibacy in Europeans but find it very difficult for themselves. Ideally, one would need to ordain an 'elder' from each extended family, preferably when his family has grown up and moved on. Already there is a precedent where a widower has been ordained. An indigenous priesthood will need much local community support.

Br Ray himself has been called on to employ his considerable gifts as an administrator, managing the Catholic educational system and looking after the plant. There is one secondary college, Nukutere College, run by Christian Brothers from New Zealand.

The islanders attach great importance to getting a good education, and the College aims to produce leaders in the community with sound Catholic values. Finding competent teachers, especially for religious education, is a challenge for the College. Eventually it must rely on local supply, which has been most adequate for recruiting village catechists.

The schools receive some government funding. Br Ray says that they are basically 'in partnership' with the Education Ministry, which recognises that the Catholic schools have been a hidden subsidy to the Island society for over a hundred years. At present the schools receive 75 percent of salaries and operating costs. This excludes Religious Education costs and main-tenance of the buildings.

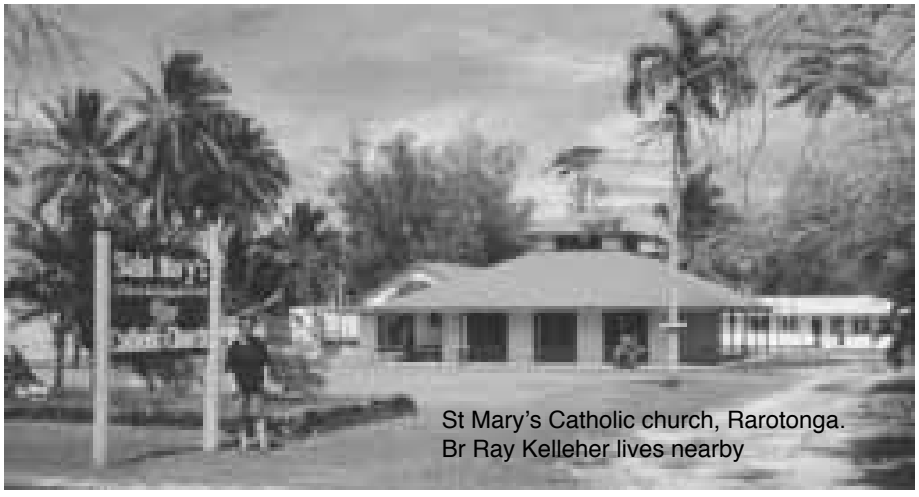
These arrangements went through the Cook Islands parliament unopposed, and it is hoped that in time the grants will be 100 percent. The Island schools are looking to adopt some of the policies and structures of the Catholic system, such as Boards of Trustees and a discipline policy which does away with corporal punishment.

One current project is to rebuild St Joseph's, the primary school which has been under the care of the Cluny Sisters since its foundation 100 years ago. The present building was put up after World War 2, partly funded by Bishop Liston of Auckland. The building, says Br Ray, is well past its 'use by' date. Window frames hang loose, and the weather-board is a constant source of fast food for the insect population.

In 1998 Bishop O'Connell decided to rebuild, and it is hoped to make a start this year. Fundraising is proceeding, but there is still a long way to go. Donations can be sent direct to ***Bishop Stuart O'Connell, P.O.Box 147, Rarotonga, Cook Islands.***

The missionary aim of the Marists is "to facilitate change in a sustainable church". They are pledged to start nothing which cannot continue after the Marist presence ceases. Inevitably, therefore, a primary emphasis is put on adult education.

Local vocations are going to be essential. Currently there are two men in training. The difficulties which celibacy poses in the Islands, was raised at the Oceania Synod – but there was little evident response from Rome. ■



St Mary's Catholic church, Rarotonga. Br Ray Kelleher lives nearby

"*The Apostle*" – terracotta relief by sculptor Ernst Barlach (1925) The artist succeeds in conveying Paul's zeal to carry the Good News to all people

Missionary extraordinary

Paul of Tarsus springs out of the pages of the New Testament as the unique agent of the spread of the Gospel. He was afire to win people for Christ.

For Paul, the call of God in Christ Jesus is a call to all peoples, in all places, at all times

Is the mission work we see in action in the church today biblical?

The main missionary we see in action in the Bible is Paul. He made three famous missionary journeys, or *safaris* as we would call them. Before these journeys began there was no church in the areas under consideration. The three journeys took ten years in all.

The first journey, beginning about 47 AD took him through the region of southern Galatia. The safari took in about 1200 miles in all. There were just three missionaries – Paul, Barnabas and John Mark. These three had a territory to evangelise the size of a large East African diocese. Paul preached in one place, Lystra, for six months and in another, Iconium, for some time, and then left the country, his work finished.

The second journey (*see pages 16-17*) took place between the years 50-52 AD. With him on this journey went Silas, Timothy and Luke, four missionaries in all. This was an even longer safari than the first, perhaps some 2600 miles. He went to Macedonia, preached in Thessalonika for five months, in Phillipi for a shorter length of time, then laboured for one and a half years in Corinth.

The third journey came between the years 53 and 57. As many as ten different missionaries are mentioned. This was a safari of about 1400 miles. His main point of attack was Ephesus. He preached the Gospel for two and a quarter years and then left.

Not only were the churches established in these provinces, Paul was satisfied that his work was completed there. What would we do if we applied this biblical criterion to our work today? After one hundred years in East Africa we are still here – 1951 of us, counting only priests; we do not consider our work finished. There is something definitely temporary about Paul's missionary stay in any one place. There is something of a deadly permanence in ours.

Paul evangelised just a few centres in each province and considered his work done. We do not consider our work finished until we have fairly inundated a section with missions – placing mission stations a few miles from one another.

We might not agree with St Paul's general missionary strategy or his overall method. At least we have to admit that our work, in this respect, is not biblical. When I began to work, there were 33,000 Catholic missionary priests in the world, and together with our Protestant brethren we could claim to have evangelised 18 percent of the world...

Suppose instead of 33,000 missionaries of the type we have known, we had *one* thousand of the mind of Paul, convinced of the method of Paul. I wonder what proportion of the world would be evangelised. ■

From Christianity Rediscovered: an Epistle from the Masai, *by Vincent Donovan (SCM Press 1978)*

St Paul's Idea of Christ

John Buckner

Even a cursory reading of *The Acts of the Apostles* and of St. Pul's letters is sufficient to show that Paul gave himself totally to Christ and to spreading the Good News. It follows that in order to understand Paul's letters we have to know who Christ was for Paul. ***How did he understand Jesus Christ?*** Why was he so willing to endure so much in his efforts to spread the knowledge of Jesus Christ?

An endeavour to answer these questions is one of the reasons Fr Jerome Murphy O'Connor O.P. wrote a book some years ago on the pastoral anthropology of St Paul entitled *Becoming Human Together*. I found the chapter 'Christ the Criterion' particularly interesting.

As the author points out, it is only natural that in seeking to understand Christ we move from the known (ourselves) to the unknown (Christ), and this is usually how writers have explained the humanity of Christ. He writes: "..the portrait of Jesus that emerges is conditioned principally by the subjectivity of the author who creates a hero in conformity with his own aspirations".

For Paul, being baptized and becoming a follower of Jesus Christ means a transformation in our lives and a new outlook on Jesus and on all our fellow human beings. "He died for all, that those who live might live no longer for themselves but for him, who for their sake, died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer" (*2 Cor 5:15ff*).

The context was that his Corinthian converts were accepting as an ordinary and natural way of life the sort of behaviour which they had accepted before they became Christians. But Paul writes, "if anyone is in Christ he is a new creation; the old things have passed away, they have become new" (*2 Cor 5:17*). They now have a new standard to live by and that standard is the love of Christ. He is our model.

Our belief is that the person Jesus Christ is fully divine and fully human, the one person has two natures. Over the centuries one nature has been emphasised to the detriment of the other in response to theories which have attacked one or the other. It has gone back and fore. About 50 years ago the balance was evened out after a period of putting too much weight on the divine side and diminishing the human. We need to be faithful to both.

When dealing with the human nature of Christ, most writers have taken the line that if Jesus is not like us then he is not human; therefore we look at ourselves in order to understand Jesus. But Fr Murphy O'Connor asks whether in the eyes of Paul Jesus was a man just like us. Was his human nature exactly like our human nature?
His answer is that it was not.

Writers exclude from Christ those elements of humanity which seem to them to belong to fallen human nature. "But", writes Fr Jerome, "how do they know which elements belong to fallen human nature and which do not?

"Objective observation of contemporary humanity can never result in a portrait of humanity as such. The best it can produce is a portrait of fallen humanity which is inapplicable to Christ, because he was without sin. . . In consequence, any attempt to discern the distinctive features of the humanity of Christ in terms of our actual humanity is foredoomed to failure."

The head of an Apostle
Hypogeum of the Aurelians, Rome

In *Romans 5:14* St Paul writes that Adam was a type of the one who was to come. St Paul did not look to contemporary human nature to teach about Christ, he looked to Adam. Before the fall Adam had human nature as God the Creator intended his human creatures to have. This intention of the Creator failed with the fall of the first Adam, it came to fruition in the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

The New Testament is clear that Jesus was completely free of all taint of sin. This gave him the right to the incorruptibility which was to be the privilege of humanity and lost at the Fall. Christ, however, emptied himself taking on the condition of a slave (*Phil 2:7*). Christ made this choice.

The contemplation of this and the death that followed from this choice led St Paul to write: "The life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me" (*Gal 2:20*). That is why he could write: "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer" (*2 Cor 5:15ff*).

Paul expected not just high standards from his converts, but a love and self-giving which knows no bounds. Impossible? Not in Paul's estimation. They have been reborn to a new existence in Baptism. In that experience they have become images of Christ who has shown them that love by living it. ■

The women's bookclub discusses Paul

Throughout the country groups of women meet monthly to discuss a book they have read. Sandra Winton imagines such a group debating the writings of Paul of Tarsus.

Sophie: Well, since we are all here, I'll kick off. I must admit that I was surprised when this writer turned up on our list. To be quite honest I haven't read him seriously for years. I think it's all that convoluted thinking. Seems to get further and further away from real living.

Marie: Yes and this being struck by lightning and falling off your horse is OK, but for most of us life is in the living day by day. That kind of drama and idealism seems very much a young man's thing to me. What do you think, Jo? Maybe I'm sounding old and cynical.

Jo: Well, I must say that I do respond to some of the idealism. There's a pure vision he's trying to hold on to – a vision of a new way of living where old structures that excluded some people from the community or placed them in subordinate positions were to be done away with. I always love that bit from Galatians, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus". That must have been stunning to the people of his time.
And for me there is a lot in it still. Today's world seems so pragmatically devoted to money, business and technology and there are these devastating inequalities. I need some ideal to hold on to. I want it for my children. I don't want to think that just because someone happens to be poor or disabled, born in Africa, gay or female that his or her life is of lesser value. I want to hold onto something like this. I know he was saying it for his religious culture, but it is far reaching.

Petra: Yes, he has this amazing vision of grace. It's hugely liberating if you think of it in the religious culture – that belief that life is not about being good and earning love but that life and love are freely given, in a way that is beyond anything we can imagine. That makes the job of the churches not to keep people in line and make them be good but to tell them that they are already of great dignity in the eyes of God and about the fullness of life that is possible for all of us. Especially for church women who have been brought up with such strong messages about being nice and good and proper and serving, this is immensely freeing.
I think that was the vision Paul came to after all those years of keeping the pharisaic laws and pulling people into line. It was a total turn-around for him. No wonder it blew him off his horse and blinded him. And the thing that I admire is that he *did* keep on living it. In all the toil and danger, in the squabbles and discouragement, among the terrible pressure to pull the new vision and the new religious communities back into what was familiar, this very challenging vision did come down to us.

Patricia: I read somewhere that he was trying to keep a balance. Some people thought the new religion was like other wild, even orgiastic religions in the Greek world of his time (and the new Christian groups did attract some people like this) and others saw this as a danger that could bring persecution.

Marie: I think you are being too kind. It was more than danger from outside. There were those inside too who opted for structure and hierarchy. Maybe they felt it was necessary to keep the movement going but something very precious was sidelined along the way.

Sophie: You can see that in the letters. I think that's some of what I find hard. The sliding away from the vision, like the bits about women being quiet in church and how they should do their hair.

Jo: Aren't some of those pieces thought not to have been written by Paul at all? Some of them are in later letters written by his followers.

Marie: Yes, and some of them aren't.

Jo: And the bit about women wearing their hair up. I read somewhere that that was a symbol of women's prophetic power and dignity.

Marie: That may be so. I've read some of those studies too – and complicated they are! But it saddens me that even in the letters thought to have been written by Paul, there is this struggle between his vision of grace and freedom and this pragmatic need to preserve old structures of power and authority. And those structures kept women from taking their full place in the Pauline communities, as they seem to have been able to do among John's followers.

Sophie: Well, I must admit that sounds very familiar. The churches make statements about women's equality and in practice… But it's time to draw our discussion to a close. Jo, you seem to have a feel for him. What do you say?

Jo: I think Paul lived in the rough and tumble of church and society - as we do. I imagine him like a swimmer holding up his bundle of letters as he is swirled down a river of history. He was a part of patriarchy and patriarchy was in him, of course. The miracle is that he managed to get across the river with his letters wet and torn yet still containing the precious words. It's the same message as we see in the life of Jesus, the possibility of equality, of liberation for all people and all creation, of grace really.

Marie: So, what's our book for next month?…

Athens – the Parthenon. The Areopagus where Paul debated is nearby

In Journ
– the missions

For the first-time reader of the *Acts of the Apostles* it could come as a bit of a shock to see Paul in chapter 22 uttering the proud words *Civis Romanus Sum* – "I am a Roman citizen!". He didn't buy the title – he was born to it.

Being a Roman citizen by birth meant that Paul would have been fully at home as a part of that mighty empire which reached from Africa to the remote shores of Britain and Gaul. Although his spirit was first and foremost Jewish, Paul must have had a feeling for and under-standing of things Roman far in advance of his fellow apostles. So I believe it is much to the advantage of anyone wanting more insight into his mind and spirit to be acquainted with what is still left of the remarkable areas in which he lived and laboured.

The Christian faith was born and nurtured in the extended period of peace and stability begun in the reign of Augustus Caesar (27BC-14AD). This period is known as the Peace of Augustus. Under his canny leadership trade flourished, good civil government was set in place, and the whole empire was drawn together by a high-class road network extending about 50,000 miles, large parts of which exist to this day.

For all the dangers and trials Paul suffered on his journeys *(2 Cor11),* it is doubtful whether he could have even attempted them in much earlier or later years. Paul travelled many of them, the Via Apia, the Via Salena and the Via Egnatia, which ran 500 miles from northern Greece to modern Turkey and is still the route followed today.

Roman roads lasted because they were well engineered from gravel and stone. Greco-Roman cities have lasted, in part at least, because they were constructed in stone. Those fortunate enough to visit them are left with an acute awareness that the physical world of the early Church was made of stone.

See overleaf for the site of Paul's trial before the Gallio (*Acts 18:12-15*)

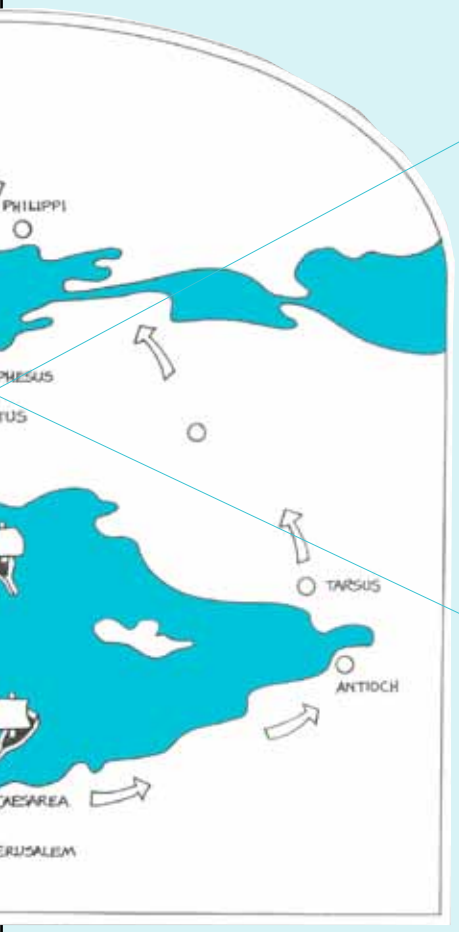
Paul was an indefatigible preacher of th travelled tirelessly around the Eastern M Jew and Gentile into the new Christian com churches which lasted long beyond the m The map follows the route of Paul's seco as described in *Acts*.

Fr Pat Maloney, Dunedin based theologia his own impressions of following in the fo

Photos cour

neyings often
s of Paul the Apostle

The temple columns at Miletus. At Miletus Paul made his famous speech of farewell (*Acts 20:15-37*)



Paul's home town of Tarsus, a Roman city, was in his own words "no mean city". The remains of a handsome Roman temple survive. Further south, along the Adriatic coast of modern Turkey, there are still the gleaming marble and stone remains of cities Paul knew.

Most prominent of these is Ephesus, in Paul's day the third greatest city of the Empire. Paul was here over two years. One solitary pillar, 30 metres high, is the only remains of the Temple of Diana. When Paul saw it first, he may well have gasped in admiration at its splendour and beauty. It was indeed one of the wonders of the ancient world.

Often, he must have come along the magnificent Arcadian Way which led from the port to the city centre. You, too, could do so, and marvel at the remains of the marble pavement and the elaborate colonnades which flank it. So, too, today's pilgrim can walk into the Grand Theatre, an amphitheatre which seated 24,000 people (*see below*). Paul ▷▷

The Amphitheatre at Ephesus

e Gospel of Jesus. He
lediterranean, bringing
nmunity. He established
emory of their founder.
ond missionary journey

n, describes in the text
ootsteps of Paul

tesy Aidan Cunningham (pages 16-18)

▷▷ knew it only too well. He was very nearly lynched there by angry devotees of the goddess Diana. Perhaps on occasions he felt a tinge of regret that, as a Jew, he couldn't make use of the many luxurious bath-houses around the town. He may even have used the public latrine with its stone seats. And everywhere you stood and looked, there was stone.

In darker moments it may be that Paul's mind went back to the even more splendid display of building stone that he saw on the Acropolis in Athens. Millions still look up in astonishment at the beauty of the Parthenon (*see p 16)*, and Paul certainly would never forget his cool reception from the stone benches of the Areopagus.

By contrast, mention of Corinth might have brought a wry smile to his lips, perhaps like that of a parent in regard to a loved but fractious child. Certainly he would have remembered the great stone 'bema' or platform where he stood before the governor, Gallio (*Acts 18:12-17 illustration above right*) .

It seems that he must have seen the stone-clad stadium where the famous Isthmian games were held every two years. Twice Paul refers to athletes racing. Probably he would not have watched the sport, since as a pious Jew, he would have disapproved the nudity of the competitors.

Corinth is hot, and the great expanses of stone in the temples, the theatres, the markets, the law courts and the streets would have made it unbearable in the summer. Even now, the sweating visitor feels the same.

These Adriatic cities in the past, as well as the present, radiated a special beauty, a magical combination of uncompromising clear skies and clear light, shimmering blue seascapes and elegant stone cities. To the visitor from the green pastures and wooded hills of New Zealand, they are breathtaking, lovely, exotic and somehow a little unreal. Not so for Paul. He may have felt Jerusalem was 'unreal', but not the Adriatic, for this was his home. ■

Evangelisation today – is Alpha the answer?

Suddenly it's everywhere! Alpha, the Christian introductory course that calls itself "an opportunity to explore the meaning of life", has become the main evangelising tool of the Christian churches. ***So writes Fiona Campbell.***

Alpha itself was devised by evangelical Anglicans under the inspiration of Nicky Gumbel. The course is extraordinarily successful and radically simple in formula. Basic doctrine is presented in a witty and interesting way and discussed in a group setting.

In churches and rooms across the world people have supper, attend a presentation on a Christian theme, and then discuss what they have heard. Finally they sing a few hymns and pray. After ten sessions they go on a weekend away together to experience the Holy Spirit. Many of them become Christians; some leave without converting.

A Catholic Alpha course lasting two years has also been introduced by Catholic Evangelisation Services. This consists of a similar programme but with the addition of two years of talks to acquaint people with Catholicism.

But is Alpha about Jesus Christ – or is it a Nicky Gumbel fan club? Those who have attended are unanimous here is no hero-worshipping. Nicky Gumbel is considered a charming, likeable man at his best when talking about others, rather than a great spiritual leader as such.

Many people love Alpha and find their commitment to Christianity through the course. Fans come from all walks of life and generally glow with peace and happiness. Hilary, 34, a scientist, is one example. She was a lapsed Catholic, who went on the Alpha course and refound her faith. She is now back as part of the parish, committed to several group activities. Jenny describes herself how as a 'cradle Catholic' she started to question whether she really believed in Catholicism. "Having done Alpha I found the answer to many of my questions. It was such a good course I took it back and ran it in my parish with great success."

There are some dissenters. One says: "Intellectually it irritated me – subtlety sacrificed to clarity." For my own part I have a suspicion Alpha may be formatting large numbers of Christian clones who want a bit of meaning to go with their comfortable lifestyles.

However, there is a definite lack of efforts at evangelisation in the Catholic Church, despite the fact we are clearly called to spread the Gospel by the Bible and the Pope. Alpha is providing an excellent tool to fill the gap. ■

In Search of Belief

I Believe in Jesus Christ... *Pauline O'Regan and her community continue their credal journey following Sr Joan Chittester's recent book. Jesus Christ not only reveals God to us but also what it means to be fully human*

Jesus posed two penetrating questions about himself: Who do *others* say that I am? Who do *you* say that I am? The answer to the first gives us the Jesus who has been the subject of theological debate in all ages. It is the question that Church Councils have grappled with in the face of challenges to the person of Jesus in the changing thought of every century. But the second question, Who do *you* say that I am? takes us straight to the gospels to find the Jesus we want to know and love.

We decided that we could not possibly record all the reasons for our love of Jesus so we settled for one: we loved the Jesus who fed the five thousand, improvident lot that they were, away from home all day and scarcely a bite of food amongst the lot of them, the undeserving poor if ever we saw them, not to be encouraged, unworthy of charity let alone of largesse. We love the Jesus who made no judgment of them, issued no rebuke and fed them for no other reason except that they were hungry. We love this Jesus who always made love his first priority, above all legality, all rules, all rites. This is the Jesus we want to follow, the Christ of whom we are a part.

I Believe...in the only Son of God

These words relate to the question, Who do *others* say that I am? They are words carefully devised by the Councils of the early Church to rebut certain heretics of the day. The Gnostics who were alarmingly popular among Christians, taught that from the Supreme Deity there emanated a multitude of lesser deities of whom Jesus was but one. He was neither a real human being (they hated the flesh) nor was he really God. In the face of this, the Church had to firmly establish that God is One and that Jesus was both truly human and truly God. They chose these words, not to define a biology of Jesus or God, but to emphasise the close bond of intimacy that existed between them that was unique to them alone and set them completely apart from the gods of the pagans.

The Creed is saying to us that if Jesus who was human had such an intimate relationship with God, then we who are human can have one also.

I Believe...(in) Our lord...

In this part of her book, *In Search of Belief,* Joan Chittister describes her first visit to St Peter's in Rome. On the floor of the nave were etched the length of the naves of all the other great cathedrals. The nave of the Basilica of St John Lateran would come only thus far, the Hagia Sophia would fill just this much of St Peter's nave and so on. It was the most blatant piece of ecclesiastical one-upmanship she had ever seen. It is a classic example of what happens when divine power is curdled into human power. Jesus is Lord, but Jesus lorded it over no one. He was as truly Lord when he lay bleeding on the cross as he was when he rose triumphant from the dead.

Jesus had no earthly power whatever, but he spoke as one having authority. He demonstrated unequivocally that his kind of authority has no need of the trappings of power. Jesus is *our Lord* – the Lord without a vestige of lordliness.

Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit...

The Creed does not tell us *how* Jesus was conceived, it simply tells us that he was conceived by the Holy Spirit. God did not despise the human state but exalted it by pouring out the Spirit in human form to become a human being like us. God could have chosen to come on earth by any of a multitude of ways, but chose to be born of a woman as every other human being is born of a woman.

That Jesus *was conceived by the Holy Spirit* is not a negative comment about human sexuality. Its implication is infinitely more positive and infinitely more important. His conception imbues human sexuality with a divine quality because by taking human form, God is infusing *every* aspect of human-ness with a divine dimension. That the divine did not reject the human stands as the highpoint of the Christian tradition challenging centuries of dualism even within Christianity itself. Matter and spirit constitute a single whole.

The Creed makes this point to answer every heresy that says otherwise, be it Gnosticism or Jansenism or Puritanism or any other ism that tries to tell us that the spirit is holy and the flesh is not.

▷▷

Shouts and Whispers

Good Shepherd Sister Caroline Price reflects on the experience of Genoa during the G8 Summit. The world's press focussed on the violence – but the true lesson was different

As we sat on the ground outside the Church of San Antonio in Boccadasse, Genoa, in the heat of the day we shouted our slogan (*see opposite page*). As we prayed and fasted 33 hours inside the Church we raised a whisper to our God with our mantra:

Send forth your word, Lord, and let there be light.

The time in Genoa was full of challenges, questions and reminders. How would my presence there make a difference, as part of a group committed to a non-violent prayer and fast for 33 hours? What impact would we have on the deliberations of the G8? What impact would this experience have on my lifestyle? At one point, as we walked along the beachfront after the violence in which a young man was killed, the acrid stench of burning garbage filled our nostrils. My friend said, "You know, the ones in need of conversion are the ones bent on violence. How do we reach them?" How indeed?

How was it that I was in Genoa? I live and work in Rome, a member of my Congregation's Generalate community, and as the International Secretary for Justice and Peace for the Good Shepherd Sisters. Our commitment to debt cancellation has been a strong focus area in recent years. As a coordinator for Justice and Peace work in Rome, I network with other religious groups working to eliminate poverty and debt. The Congregation of the Good Shepherd Sisters is a member of the Africa-Europe Faith and Justice Network (AEFJN) and we collaborated with them and with the SEDOS Working Group on Debt and the International Promoters for Justice and Peace based in Rome in planning 33 hours of Prayer and Fasting in Genoa. Thirty-three of us went to Genoa, where we were committed to a non-violent protest in order to raise awareness of the crippling debt.

Some months before we had compiled a "Debt Cancellation Manifesto to the G8". Over 90 religious congregations and organizations had signed the Manifesto and sent it to their members. I knew that Good Shepherd Sisters in different parts of the world, including 250 students from Bagio, Philippines and our Sisters in Ethiopia and Kenya, had signed and sent copies of the Manifesto to the G8 leaders. I had received support messages from our contemplative Sisters and communities throughout the world pledging solidarity and support with us in Genoa. These messages went to Genoa with me.

The word 'sanctuary' doesn't spring to mind when I think of protest marches, but the small church of San Antonio, perched on a point above the sea, was just that during the prayer and fast. San Antonio is surrounded by a small fishing village on the outskirts of Genoa city. It is a beautiful spot. In earlier centuries it would have been a strategic location for fishing and surveillance of sea and land. And during the prayer and fast, Boccadasse became a strategic centre point, an anchor, a harbour and a living sign of inter-religious unity in Genoa.

High above the main altar hung the image of the 'Campesino' Crucified Christ from Chile. Dressed as a poor peasant, the figure of Christ reminded us constantly of the poorest peoples

▷▷ ***Born of the Virgin Mary...***

Who was this woman called Mary? We will find the truest answer in Scripture. Despite all the apparent devotion to Mary, despite all the statues of her in our churches (perhaps *because* of some of them) we have not served her well. Too much devotion, not enough Scripture. For one thing, we have placed such an extraordinary emphasis on the virginity of Mary that we have tended to ignore her other remarkable qualities.

What of the Mary who, acting outside the strict religious systems and traditions of her time, did not take the message of the Incarnation to the priests for legitimation, did not even seek advice from Joseph, but received it herself and acted on it, with pure trust in God, ready to face criticism, rejection and ostracism. What of the Mary who, having brought Jesus into the world to begin his private life, catapulted him into his public life at Cana even though he said he wasn't ready? What of the Mary who was present with the apostles at the descent of the Holy Spirit when the church was born. What are the implications of that for women in the church? The sweet maiden of the downcast eyes and delicate pink and white features is not the Mary we find in Scripture. There we find a woman of strong will, strong faith, a strong sense of self and deep spiritual stamina. Hail Mary! ■

of the world and their cry for the debt relief. "The debt is one of the nails that holds Christ on the Cross," said Julian Filochowski, director of CAFOD, UK. We were gathered to pray and fast for the removal of the nails, so that Christ could be taken down from the cross.

On a large map in the church we penciled in the places in the world where the Good Shepherd family were in solidarity with us. The map became dotted with pins, representing religious communities and groups as far away as Australia and Argentina who were praying and fasting with us. Outside, the quilt patches of those in Italy who have died of AIDS stretched along the promenade, a pertinent reminder of the AIDS pandemic in Africa.

The front facade of the church was decorated with a brightly coloured mural in the form of a cross and depicting a couple tending their land under tall palm trees. They are surrounded by the beauty and abundance of creation. Brightly colored butterflies and daisies made of the same fabric decorated the church doors. *Drop the Debt* appeared in four languages. For me it was a symbol of hope.

What do we want?
Drop the debt!
When do we want it?
NOW!

The violence on Friday afternoon, some of which happened along the promenade from the church, left car windows smashed, large green refuse containers overturned and set on fire, and any waste containers along the beachfront upended and smashed. I thought, what did waste containers have to do with the G8? When we walked after a night of prayer in the church, the local council street cleaners were out cleaning up and removing the remaining waste containers. After the march on Saturday, and at the end of the prayer, as we walked along the beachfront the rubbish, broken glass, sticks and food strewn across the roads was ankle deep. Even potentially recyclable paper placards from supposedly concerned activists were left strewn about.

In the middle of Friday night, the light of 50 candles formed a spiral of hope. We wanted to greet the dawn with our light of hope, but the wind was too strong, so we formed a spiral of light in the church. Only a small group prayed at 3-5am, but they prayed in hope for peace and a new dawn. As we took a walk in the fresh morning air, the soft light of a new dawn bathed the sea. What would the new dawn bring?

The 'new dawn' brought hundreds of people to Boccadasse on Saturday morning. It seemed that many who wanted to participate in the big demonstration were looking for a place to anchor themselves. Boccadasse as a place of prayerful and peaceful protest was drawing them. There was nowhere else safe for them to gather.

The arrival of hundreds of people meant the organizers at Boccadasse needed new strategies to deal with the situation, especially as the whole march was to travel past the church later in the day. Our group was committed to maintaining the prayer throughout the day. We were free to join the march if we wanted. The violence of Friday afternoon, which appeared to catch police and the Genoa social Forum (GSF) by surprise, had unnerved the GSF. Our core group attended a meeting at the GSF and when they returned at 2am, we met to work out strategies for the day ahead.

At a meeting with CAFOD later in the morning, specific activities took shape. CAFOD had prepared the 2-hour prayer period from noon to 2pm, just at the start of the march. They had invited a group of drummers from Ghana. CAFOD had decided that the 500 people from the UK who had managed to reach Genoa would not join the march. The threat of violence was too risky, and so they would now take part in a two-hour 'sit down' protest outside San Antonio.

The relatively small number of people bent on violence hijacked the protest march and the media, and diverted critical attention from the real issues. The media coverage of the violence was extreme. The work of the G8 was relegated to a back page, and a small article covered the *Prayer and Fast* at Boccadasse. Some sections of the media need to face some very difficult questions. Why such a focus on the violence? Does the legitimate peaceful protest of over 100,000 people mean nothing in media terms? Does violence sell newspapers?

From 2 to 3pm we sat in the heat of the day on the hard ground, spending 10 minutes in silence followed by short speeches and witnessing. We learned that Adrian Lovett from *Drop the Debt* campaign was to meet with Prime Minister Tony Blair at that time. Inside the church the prayer went with a local Islamic group and the Evangelical community of Genoa leading services while outside protesters sat and observed silence. It took three hours for the whole march to pass by Boccadasse. Overwhelmingly the marchers were peaceful, chanting and singing. Yes, the violent ones were there, and some of the Boccadasse organizers handed out bottled water as they went past, but the huge majority were non-violent ordinary people concerned about the effects of globalisation, the debt and the seeming indifference of the world's eight most powerful nations.

Reports filtered in that violence had broken out in the centre of the city. We prayed for the young Italian man who was shot by police and for the policeman who shot him. We prayed and sang and 'whispered' through the rooftop of Boccadasse the words: *Send forth your word, Lord, and let there be light* until we could believe that they could be heard above the anger. Not empty words – for nothing about the experience at Boccadasse was empty. But words of hope, of wisdom, of courage in the face of so much hunger, suffering

Giving people space

Paul Andrews

Do you know what gives a gander indigestion? The sight of another gander on his patch. There are not many things I love about winter, but one of them is the daily treat of watching hundreds, perhaps thousands of Brent Geese grazing (yes, they eat grass) on the green around us. They left us in April for their summer home in Bathurst Island, Canada, but they will be back in November, and by Christmas they will have moved up from the bird sanctuary in Bull Island to graze on the big lawns behind and in front of Manresa Retreat House. We are privileged to be their hosts, these large, placid, companionable birds that waddle close to us, so little do they fear humans. But the sight of a heron will scatter a whole field full of them in a thunder of wings.

As you watch them more closely, you see families and other relationships. The gander is larger than the goose, and is a jealous guardian of his mate and goslings. He keeps them in a cluster; any encroaching male is chased by the home bird, who charges at the invader with a straight, swollen neck, honking and furious. It never comes to blows or blood. The intruder retires and grazing resumes. If you look at a flock feeding on the lawn, the first impression of kindly, peaceful birds changes to something much more like a human family at table. There are squabbles going on all the time, mostly about territory. Geese, like people, cannot share a patch for long without finding something to argue about. They differ from us – and can teach us a lesson – in that they have ritual and harmless ways of settling their arguments. Rows are never serious enough to interrupt a meal, and they never lead to bloodshed or serious breakdown of relationships. It is clear that the geese **know** when an argument is serious or a danger is real. At the menace of a heron or fox they fly away.

Human children are sometimes less sure. I know a couple with young children. Peter, the father, runs his own business, which stresses him out. He was reared in a family that argued and bad-mouthed one another all the time, but stayed together. Peter grew up accustomed to rows and blaming such as might cripple others. He comes home from work with frazzled nerves. Rose, his wife is a blessing for him, placid and insightful. When exhausted Peter gives out about stains on the table, or a mess in the living room, Rose can absorb it and speak the truth to him only when he is ready for it.

The first time I met them together, they seemed to be at war half the time. Peter's style was fiercely critical. He has improved over the years, but he often sounds as though he is about to storm out the door. And his seven-year-old daughter Annie reads it that way. She is intelligent, and has seen enough children's TV to be warned about families that break up.

Last week she did something that astonished her mother. Annie offered Rose a look at her special book, in which she draws and writes and collects bits of pictures and poems, about friends, kittens, dolls and little-girl themes. As Rose paged through it, she came on a picture of a naked lady, well drawn, from Annie's pencil. Beside it, in careful writing, was the legend:

If your marriage is in trouble, ask your husband or wife for sex and it will be better.

When Rose asked about it, Annie insisted that sex (by which she understood getting undressed and kissing) would make things better. Later, in confusion, she tore out the page and threw it away.

Showing Rose the book was an eloquent gesture. Annie had witnessed enough verbal violence to be convinced that *the marriage was in trouble.* As young children will, she thought hard about how to remedy it and prevent a break-up – her friend at school was the victim of one. Somewhere, on TV or radio, she picked up this adult-sounding phrase and treasured it. Now she knew the remedy and could tell her mother. It did not indicate a precocious interest in sex, but rather the responsible and anguished reaction of a bright daughter to the fear of her parents separating. In fact Annie is misreading the marriage. It is stronger than it seems. But her action taught Peter and Rose something about the impact of harsh language on a child. Peter resolved to watch his tongue more, and be aware of the children.

Even adults can find arguments too stressful to bear. I remember an unusually attractive young couple: Gerry, the husband, had grown up in the same sort of argumentative family as Peter above. He experienced rows and loud voices as the small change of everyday family living and thought nothing of them. Susan, his wife, was more fragile. Her alcoholic father had abused her, verbally, emotionally and physically. She left home, married the handsome Gerry and quickly produced two daughters.

Under the pressure and stress of his own business, Gerry gradually relapsed into the loud-voiced, argumentative style he had known as a child. For Susan this was deeply threatening. It terrified her, and awakened such traumatic memories that she began to see her father in Gerry. He did not realise the danger until too late. One day he came home to find she had gathered up their babies and left him. He was utterly devastated, swore he would change his ways, and that he had never suspected the impact of his language on her. When they met for counselling, Susan was unbending. All she wanted was to finalise the separation. Keep them in your prayers.

Back to the grazing geese. When they find an angry gander defending his territory with loud honks, they give him space. There is no blood on the carpet, no expelling or separation, simply an adjustment to the other. We could learn from them. ■

HYMN OF THE MONTH

The NZ Hymnbook Trust is offering hymns as samples for Liturgists to look at. If parish liturgy people are interested in public use, then these hymns are subject to the usual copyright regulations.

This month's hymn was written and composed by Judy Mills of Hawkes Bay and is particularly fitting for anniversaries, occasions such as weddings and funerals and for worship in general.

26 God of the past

God of the past, we sing our thanks
for all that's brought us to this day,
changes, choices,
journeys made,
friends who've beckoned us
the Jesus way.

God of today, we seek your strength:
gift us with laughter, warmth and light,
songs for sighing,
courage for fear,
hope that breaks through
the longest night.

God of the unknown years to be,
Spirit who moves on waters, still
shape our vision,
lift up our hearts,
lead us in your loving will.

Tune WHANAU O WAIAPU
Reproduced from *Faith Forever Singing* by permission The New Zealand Hymnbook Trust, P O Box 2011, Raumati 6450

Ecumenical Project on Disability Issues

Planning has begun for a first-time ever national conference to explore the issues of disability, spirituality and faith, to be held in Wellington in the second half of next year. It is for people who have a connection to disability (through personal experience, work/ministry, close relationships) and an interest in spirituality and faith, whether that is through formal or informal structures.

A planning group – people from a range of spirituality and church/faith backgrounds, the majority of whom have a disability – are keen to know what themes and issues people would like to explore at such a gathering. Possible topics to be covered include justice, pastoral issues, theology, spirituality, the search for meaning, church structures, bio-ethics, honouring stories, cultural and bicultural issues.

The gathering has the support of the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand. For more information and to register your interest, please contact: The Conference, 54 Military Rd, Northland, Wellington, or email: vterrell@actrix.gen.nz or phone/fax Vicki Terrell 04 934 3792.

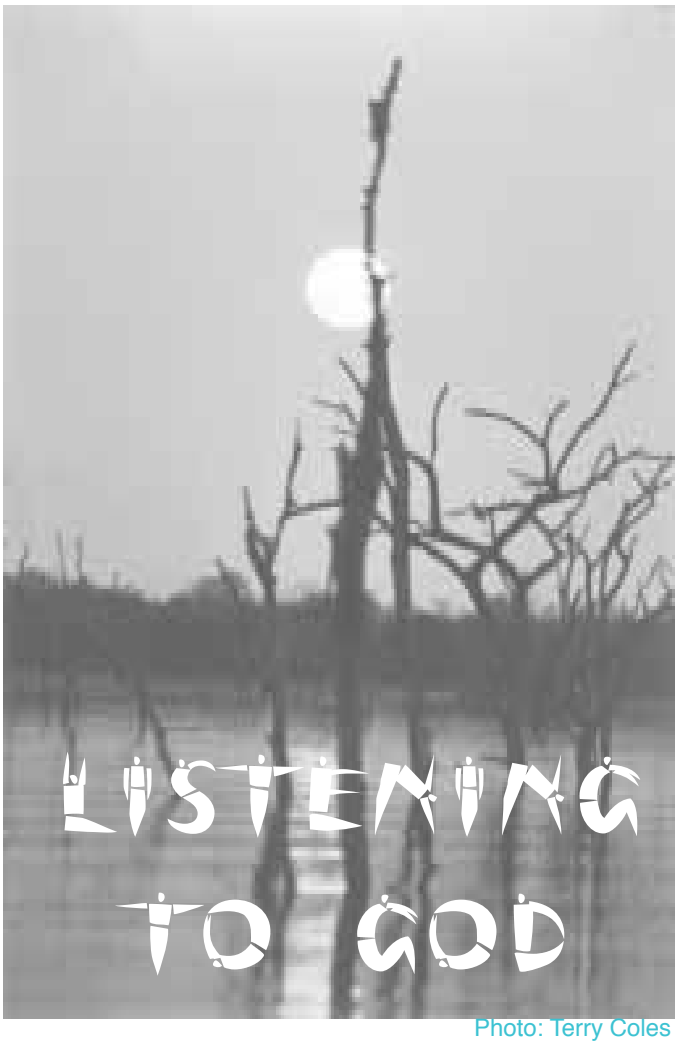


Photo: Terry Coles

At a recent spirituality workshop, participants were invited to describe the kind of prayer that was meaningful to them. Most had a degree of reaction against the word 'prayer', for two main reasons. It carried a history of association with a stage of journey that was in the past, and the word itself was about asking. So then they were asked what word they would use instead of prayer, to describe those sacred moments of interaction with God. A couple said 'meditation'. Many of the others said 'connection'.

Connection. I liked that. I also like the old word 'prayer' because it has very comfortable associations that go back more than 60 years, to a child kneeling beside her bed reciting "Gentle Jesus meek and mild, look upon a little child..." that was the seed of prayer which grew through many words and degrees of awareness to today's experience of connection with God.

For most of us, the growth of the prayer habit happens naturally. From the early days of talk strewn with 'please' and 'thank you', there develops an appreciation of prayer as listening, as stillness, prayer as a waiting on God. I came to this stage in my late 20s, not knowing what silent prayer was, only that I needed it. It seemed that a good starting place would be some books on meditation and contemplative prayer, so I started with the Religion section of the local library.

Some of you will be smiling and nodding. You know what I encountered – exercises to do with posture, breathing, stilling the mind, focus, avoiding distraction. I lit incense and candles. I played soft music. I kept my spine straight and tried to hush "the monkeys chattering in the tree tops". It was hard work, and under it all there seemed to be a gentle and amused voice saying, "any room for me in all this?"

There were times of connection which I didn't recognise as prayer, moments of being lost in a starry night, or the pearls of dew on a cobweb or the eyes of a newborn child. I took for granted the ongoing sense of 'presence' in my work. when I was tired or feeling small, I could curl up in the arms of a great mothering God, return to what seemed like a a pre-birth state, and go to sleep. But none of these things were 'prayer'. I guess I was the little fish swimming in search of the ocean.

I'm glad to say life is simpler now, and so is prayer. How I pray usually depends on the moment. Talk is not formal. I can argue with God, sometimes get angry, but mostly the words are simply "thank you" or "I love you". Listening is a matter of ongoing awareness. If I could give a formula for the process, it would be something like this:

- *Prayer is intention. It begins with a desire for God, a leaning of the heart*

- *Prayer is the present moment: It's a 'now' experience. Too often we live like ghosts, our minds in the future or past*

- *Prayer is a sensate experience. It's not a cerebral experience but a way of seeing beyond sight, touching beyond touch, listening beyond hearing. To be present to beauty, is to be present to the abundant giver*

- *Prayer is gratitude. Even if we are offering words of earnest petition, those words are presented in a cup of gratitude*

This is prayer which works for some of us, but not all. It's important to respect our differences and to seek the kind of prayer that best nutures us.

There's a lovely story about prayer which comes from the Russian Orthodox tradition. It's about three monks who had lived for years on a small island on a large lake, out of touch with the rest of the world. One day the bishop decided to pay them a visit. Almost as soon as his boat touched the island, the bishop realised that these monks were very simple fellows, living like peasants and with no understanding of liturgy or church tradition. Their only prayer was: "You are three, we are three. Lord have mercy."

The bishop decided that he would spend the day teaching them some of the prayers of the church. For this, the monks were deeply grateful.

As evening approached, the bishop boarded his boat, promising to return before too long, to teach them more prayers. He had not gone far from the island, when he saw three lights behind the boat. Small at first, the lights rapidly increased in size. As they came near, the bishop saw that they were in fact the three monks running across the water. "Oh please!" they cried. "We have forgotten those beautiful prayers you taught us. Can you tell us again?"

For a while the bishop couldn't speak. Then he replied, "Go home and pray as you've always done." ■

Joy Cowley

Hiroshima Day
the Avon River, Christchurch
6 August 2001

there's candles in white paper lanterns
burning on the water
there's no wind
only when Elsie's granddaughter stands
a single breath of wind comes
and blows the oldest banner down
the singing plays like water out across the air
people gathering again by the water
again and again and again
so that it will never happen
again
ever
standing together
like rain
and sky
and sand
and dust
over the years
paddling chanting marching floating out into
Lyttleton harbour together
against the United States nuclear-powered
warship
putting our bodies on the line
again and again and again
tending the flame here
with our own hands and feet
carving out the peace
over the years
so it burns a hole in the armour
so they don't come here anymore
so other people
light flames in other places
so the single candle
turns into a river full of flames
burning

Kathleen Gallagher

A 'Heretic' in from the Cold

Antonio Rosmini as a young man: (*G Craffonara*)

Antonio Rosmini is a name which doesn't mean much to most New Zealanders. He has a boys' college named after him on Auckland's North Shore, and there are Rosminians working in other parts of the country. The fact that Rosmini has suddenly been rehabilitated by Rome after 150 years means little to us. Who was he – and why was he in disgrace? Is it another, more recent, 'Galileo case'?

Rosmini may be largely unknown in the English-speaking world, but in Italy he was – and is – 'big time'. He has been called the Italian Newman. If anything, in Italy he is more eminent than Newman is in England, because his impact was not only in church circles, but also in philosophy and politics. Although a priest and religious, he was one of the founders of modern Italy, a great Italian patriot. And that is probably where the real trouble lay.

Antonio Rosmini-Serbati was born into an established northern Italian family in 1797. In a well-rounded education, he showed a particular interest in philosophy which led on to theological studies at the University of Padua and ordination to the priesthood in 1821. Eight years later he founded the Institute of Charity, familiarly known as Rosminians.

His prolific writing on a wide range of theological, philosophical and political topics was the cause of the controversy which came to be known as the 'Rosminian Question'. In his book *The Five Wounds of the Holy Church,* Rosmini suggested changes such as a vernacular liturgy, reform of clergy education, consultation with the people about the choosing of their bishops and a reform of the temporal and political powers of the Church.

He also championed the idea of a united Italy. In the mid-19th century Italy, as we know it, did not exist. There were a series of independent kingdoms and regions, including the Papal States ruled over by the Pope. Rosmini spoke out against the Austrian state's dominance over the church, and supported the idea of a confederation of Italian states, a united Italy. At first the Pope, Pius IX, shared this view, but he then had an abrupt and politically disastrous about-face which alienated him from many Catholics.

Rosmini was to pay dearly for the ideas he promoted. He had angered the politicians who adamantly opposed unification. And conservatives within the church, influenced by a group of Jesuits, mounted a campaign against him. There was a spate of rumours, accusations and anonymous pamphlets suggesting grave errors in his theology and philosophy.

Pius IX set up an inquiry and, as a result, would not agree to any charges of heresy. But Rosmini died in 1855, and his post-humously published works were picked over. Forty Propositions taken from his works were condemned in 1887 in what has been described as one of church history's most shameless cases of character assassination. Some of these were produced by stitching together unrelated sentences, taken out of context from various parts of his writings.

Now, Cardinal Ratzinger, head of the *Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith*, has declared that "the meaning of these Propositions as understood and condemned by the decree, in reality do not belong to the authentic position of Rosmini". But there is no apology or admission of error from the Vatican. The new document states that Rome was right to condemn the Propositions – simply, that they should not have been attributed to Rosmini. "The problem was not in the thought of Fr Rosmini, but in its interpretation".

One Rosminian expert has commented that the Congregation does not go far enough since the original decree condemned the Propositions from Rosmini's works "according to the mind of the author". Only a complete vindication can reverse this. It seems odd to try to justify condemning an author because there is a danger of his being misinterpreted by others.

So is it an exercise in saving face? For over a hundred years, Rosmini's works have been 'off the list' of study material for Catholic teaching establishments. And this is the man of whom the Italian President said in 1955: "Antonio Rosmini was one of the most original and significant thinkers that Italy and Europe produced in the 19th century." Many of the changes he suggested for the Church remained unheeded until the Second Vatican Council.

Will Rome's 're-think' mean a change of attitude towards Catholic theologians who today find themselves in much the same position as Rosmini did 150 years ago? The condemnation of 1887 was an attempt to shut down theological inquiry which was judged to be too worldly. What about today's theologians who, in their love for the church, try to express the Gospel in a way that can be understood and make a difference in today's secular world? Or will theology remain a 'ghetto activity' tightly controlled by an authoritarian Congregation of the Roman Curia?

A stain has been removed from Rosmini's reputation. But a writer in the London *Tablet*, commented: "someone should remind Cardinal Ratzinger and his colleagues that it's not enough to regret past sins – there must also be a firm purpose of amendment". ■

Jim Neilan

Pius XII on trial

Hitler's Pope: The Secret History of Pius XII
John Cornwell
Penguin Books 1999
Review : Michael Hill IC

John Cornwell is an investigative journalist, who in his own words "was convinced that if the full story were told, Pius XII's pontificate would be vindicated". Cornwell was thinking especially of the accusation that the Catholic church has often been on the side of right-wing dictators. And more specifically, that Pius XII had by his silence and inaction contributed to Jewish genocide under Hitler. To write this book he was given access to Roman archives – particularly, material gathered for the beatification process – "reassuring the archivists that I was on the side of my subject".

The result is an indictment. Eugenio Pacelli, Pope Pius XII, is arraigned in dock by Cornwell and convicted. Cornwell accuses Pius of being anti-Semitic throughout his life. "Pacelli," he says, "displayed a secret antipathy towards the Jews, evident from the age of 43 in Munich, both religious and racist, a circumstance contradicting later claims that he respected the Jews and that his wartime actions and omissions had been performed with the best of intentions" (p295).

Pacelli failed to back the German bishops during the 1930s in their protests against anti-Semitism. When he was Secretary of State in 1937 he strove to water down the effects of Pius XI's angry encyclical against Hitler's policies, and when in 1939 the dying Pope sought to write a condemnation of anti-Semitism, Pacelli saw to it that the document never saw the light of day. During the war Pius resolutely refused to condemn the Nazis by name for the terrible crimes they were daily commmitting against the Jews.

And when the Jews of Rome were rounded up under his own nose as it were, Pius still demurred from protest because, in the author's opinion, he preferred order in the streets maintained by the German military to chaos precipitated by Communist partisans. It was only a few months before the fall of Rome to the allies, and there can be no doubt of the Pontiff's burning desire to preserve the Eternal City from the ravages of war.


Eugenio Pacelli in Berlin 1934

It is little wonder that Cornwell's book has been so bitterly attacked by the postulator of the cause of Pius XII, Fr Peter Gumpel. And his historical skills were severely criticised by the *Tablet* reviewer, Eamonn Duffy. Yet even if the reader may have serious misgivings about this author's objectivity, the fact remains that Cornwell is seeking to illuminate one of the principal scandals of 20th Century Catholicism. The book is full of fascinating detail; it is very well documented; it is absorbingly written. And it leaves a huge question mark against the character of one of the most important Popes of our times.

Pius XII and the rise of Hitler

In the February issue of *Tui Motu* an article by the late Donald Nicholl (first written in 1975) asked the question: why did the Catholic – or any Christian – church fail to act to stop the rise of Hitler? Nicholl suggested various answers, in particular the fear on the bishops' part of exposing their flock to persecution. What Nicoll fails to mention, Cornwell regards as the principal factor – the dominant influence of Pacelli, Apostolic Nuncio in Germany from 1917-1929 and Pius XI's Secretary of State during the years of Hitler's rise to power.

During his years as Nuncio Pacelli sought to negotiate concordats with the German states with a view to bringing the Catholic populations under the control of the new Code of Canon Law. He wanted to protect the rights of Catholics to worship freely and to run their own schools. In return he was quite happy to give away having Catholic political parties. On coming to power in 1933 Hitler, too, quickly saw the advantage of sealing a concordat between Germany and the Vatican, on the lines of the Lateran Treaty which Mussolini had signed with Pius XI only a few years earlier. For Hitler it would effectively neutralise any possible opposition from Catholics as well as giving an aura of respectability to National Socialism.

The negotiation of the concordat from the Vatican side was the work of Pacelli over the heads of the faithful, the clergy and the German bishops. The powerful Catholic Centre Party, which had stood in the way of Hitler's rise to power, was sacrificed. The German bishops were bidden to withdraw their opposition to the Nazis: previously any Catholic who became a member of the National Socialist Party was excommunicated.

Why did Pacelli use his authority so effectively to emasculate Catholic opposition to Hitler? Fear of Bolshevism was one reason. Protection of the rights of the Church, especially the school system, was another. But Cornwell quotes persuasively from one contemporary who perhaps penetrates more deeply into the mind of the man who was to become Pius XII. Heinrich Brüning was a Catholic politician who had risen to become Reich Chancellor in 1930. Brüning has this to say: ▷▷

▷▷ "Pacelli believed that success (in the negotiations with Hitler) could only be obtained by Papal diplomacy. The system of concordats led him and the Vatican to despise democracy and the parliamentary system. Rigid governments, rigid centralisation, rigid treaties were supposed to introduce an era of stable order, of peace and quiet.

"...Behind the agreement with Hitler stood not the Pope but the Vatican bureaucracy and its leader, Pacelli. He visualised an authoritarian state and an authoritarian church, directed by Vatican bureaucracy... Catholic parlia-mentary parties were inconvenient to Pacelli and were dropped without regret."

This is the judgment of one closely involved in the process. Brüning risked his life in opposition to Hitler and survived only by escaping into exile.

Pius XII and the Holocaust

Even more damning is the evidence Cornwell brings of Pius XII's silence during the war when the Nazis launched their so-called Final Solution – the elimination of Jews across Europe. There is little doubt that by 1942 the Vatican was well informed of what was happening. Pius had striven to appear to be the 'Pope of Peace', to be impartial in a conflict which he bitterly deplored. But when the news of the Holocaust began to leak out, pressure was brought to bear on him, especially from Britain and the USA, to denounce the mass slaughter of innocent Jews. He stayed silent.

The British Ambassador to the Holy See stated: "The Pope's silence is defeating his own purpose, because it is destroying his prospects of contributing to peace". A Jewish historian has commented that a public condemnation of the mass extermination of Jews over Vatican radio would have been believed whereas the broadcasts of the Allies were often shrugged off as war propaganda.

The nearest he came to a specific condemnation was in the Christmas broadcast of 1942: *Humanity owes this vow to those thousands of thousands who, without any fault of their own, sometimes by reason of their nationality or race, are mark-ed down for death or gradual extinction.*

Why was the Pope not more specific? The desire to be impartial? A fear that any specific condemnation could make things a lot worse not only for the Jews but for German Catholics? There is evidence which Cornwell cites that Hitler had a plan to kidnap the Pope rather as Napoleon had done. So was it fear?

Cornwell's indictment is more severe. "We are obliged to conclude that his silence was more to do with a habitual fear and distrust of the Jews than a strategy of diplomacy or a commitment to impartiality." In other words Pius acted as he did because he was anti-Semitic. "He was", Cornwell concludes, "Hitler's pawn, he was Hitler's Pope".

Was Pius XII a saint or a monster?

If Cornwell's judgment is to be believed, then Pius was a monster who should not even be considered for canonisation. Yet clearly none of his contemporaries thought of him that way. Remote perhaps. An ascetic. Living in an ivory tower.. possibly. Listen also to the judgment of the British Ambassador who was locked up in the Vatican during the darkest days of the war: "Pius XII was the most warmly, humane, kind, generous, sympathetic and incidentally, saintly character that it has been my privilege to meet" (Sir Francis Osborne, quoted p 381).

If on the formidable evidence 'for the prosecution' presented by Cornwell we are to pass interim judgment on the character of Eugenio Pacelli, it would be wiser first to place in critical focus the system he was reared in and which came to possess him. Pius XII is a prime example of Vatican triumphalism, born of the so-called 'Black Nobility' of Rome, reared in the shadow of the aristocratic Leo XIII and the autocratic Pius X. He was handpicked for fast track promotion, a Monsignor at the age of 28, an Archbishop and prince of the Vatican diplomatic corps at 41.

The Vatican of Pius XII was – to some extent, still is – the last surviving example of a European royal court. The ceremonial, the lifestyle, the decor, even the apparel are all calculated to create a rarified atmosphere belonging to absolute monarchy. However humble and ascetic the occupant, the papal throne Pius occupied was more suited to the style and power of a Louis XIV than to the successor of Peter the fisherman. The Vatican bureaucracy existed, and exists, to perpetuate this system.

But it was not only the trappings of royalty and absolute power. Pacelli himself was a European aristocrat. Brüning was absolutely correct in pointing to his utter disdain of democracy and the modern political process. It is difficult for us today, living in a stable democracy, to understand the mindset of people who see themselves as born to rule, who have no understand-ing of processes of consultation or election, who find no problem with unbridled autocracy. Yet such a person was Pius XII. It was under him that the appointment of bishops in the Catholic church was exclusively reserved to Rome. As pope he 'exiled' his successor, Montini, to Milan because he was suspected of being too sympathetic to socialism.

A final and fair judgment of Eugenio Pacelli will need to see him in the context of his times, of the Vatican cocoon that he inherited, as well as of counter-Reformation Catholicism which had been for centuries at odds with liberal European thinking. Of crucial importance will be the full opening of the Vatican archives covering the vital period when Pius is accused of being an accessory to the Jewish Holocaust. By keeping a lid on the archives the Vatican is at this very moment denying Pius a 'fair trial'.

Cornwell has passed sentence. Pius was "not a saintly exemplar for future generations but a deeply flawed human being". It will need a fairer and more balanced account of the life of Pius XII to establish how true is this severe judgment. In spite of Cornwell the jury is still out. ■

The Bang-Bang Club: Snapshots from a Hidden War
Greg Marinovich and Joao Silva
Pub: Basic Books (A Member of the Perseus Books Group) New York. 2000
Review: Kathleen Doherty

War, violence and famine come into our homes with such regularity by way of television and newspapers that they are losing their capacity to shock. Instead they are absorbed with the cornflakes or the evening meal – unless such things affect us personally very often we do not "see" them.

There are some images however which sear themselves into our brain – the little girl screaming with the pain of napalm burns from the days of the Vietnam War, the protestor standing in front of the advancing tanks in Tiananmen Square, the starving child being stalked by a vulture at the height of the famine in the Sudan. Such images can haunt us, affect the way we view the world and on occasions spur us into some sort of action to remedy the wrong.

Imagine, then, the effect that facing violence and cruelty and danger day after day can have on the men and women behind the cameras. So often they pay a high price for bringing the news to our screens and newspapers and included in that price is the nagging question: what responsibility does the photographer have to intervene, to change the outcome of the situation being captured on film? And what is the ultimate motivation for getting dangerously close to the most violent and horrific conflicts – is it to record the outrages for the millions sitting comfortably at home, or is it to satisfy a craving for excitement by being in the thick of the action while keeping the moral high ground as "only a recorder".

In the first years of the '90s when the apartheid regime in South Africa was in its final bloody death throes, four young photographers appeared to be always on the spot when the violence – the 'bang-bang' – was at its worst. Hung about with cameras, ready to take huge risks to get close for the best shot, they became known as the *Bang-Bang Club*. These four were individuals whose lives sometimes overlapped. Their strongest link was forged by their questioning the morality of what they were doing, and their recognition that the camera was never a filter which protected them from the worst of what they saw, but rather that many of the images were burned on their minds as well as on their film.

The book is the joint work of the two surviving members of the Bang-Bang Club, Greg Marinovich, South African-born son of parents of Croatian extraction, and Joao Silva, born in Portugal but resident in South Africa since the age of nine. The other two have died. Ken Oosterbroek was killed while covering an outbreak of violence in a black workers' township near Johannes-burg; three months later Kevin Carter, his life increasingly tortured by memories and drink and drugs, committed suicide.

This is a shocking book. There are descriptions of brutality witnessed through lenses which will make you ashamed of being a member of the human race. And you will wonder how it is that the main preoccupation of someone witnessing such brutality is to ensure that the camera is changed so that both slides and prints are available for the two news agencies which will buy his work.

The most horrifying photograph in the book is the one which won Kevin Carter a Pulitzer Prize. Taken while he was covering the famine in the Sudan, it shows a skeletal little girl crouched on the ground, while feet away a vulture waits. The picture was immediately seized on by aid agencies raising funds for famine relief, and its emotional impact had the desired effect of opening wallets. But then came the questions: what had Carter done about the situation? did he scare the vulture away? did he pick up the little girl and carry her to safety? what was her eventual fate?

Carter's answers varied as time went by – first he did not know what had happened to her, then he claimed to have seen her get up and walk to the feeding station nearby. But it was clear that he had done nothing to save her. The public was not impressed, even though this picture more than any other had raised awareness of the need for funds for famine relief. Dealing with the moral dilemma caused by this situation, among others, and haunted by the violence of many years of being constantly close to conflict, Kevin Carter took his own life.

Greg Marinovich struggled with the question of the photo-journalist's responsibility. He wrote of his feeling of impotence while photographing the famine in Somalia in 1992, as he watched through the lens as a father closed the eyes of his last child, who had just died in his lap, and walked away. "Good pictures. Tragedy and violence certainly make powerful images. It is what we get paid for. But there is a price extracted with every such frame: some of the emotion, the vulnerability, the empathy that makes us human, is lost every time the shutter is released."

One is left with the question: does the public's right to know justify such damage to the messengers? What are we doing with the information they give? If they give it only to satisfy our vicarious curiosity, the price is too high. ■

The continuing agony in Palestine

Crosscurrents
by John Honoré

The war in the Middle East escalates as the Palestinians resort to the only weapon at their disposal against Israeli tanks – suicide bombers. Young boys, who have no future in their own homeland, are recruited and indoctrinated with the idea that their death is not suicide but martyrdom and that their reward will be in heaven. What an incredibly sad perversion of the sanctity of human life. This is modern terrorism in its crudest form and it highlights the desperation of a benighted people. Arafat is in an awful dilemma of being unable or unwilling to stop the Hamas militants and so the Israeli military machine rolls out once again in retaliation.

A frightening insight into this conflict in the Middle East was given at a panel discussion held last month in Christchurch between a distinguished academic, Professor Marc Ellis, resident in USA, and Dr Yossi Olmert from Tel Aviv, whose brother is the Mayor of Jerusalem. Both speakers are Jewish. The latter, Dr Olmert, displaying a blind and blinding patriotism, blamed the Palestinians for having sabotaged the Oslo Accord and the peace talks at Camp David. With breathtaking intransigence, he claimed legitimate ownership of all the territories in dispute and confirmed the continuation of hostilities against the Palestinians.

This man, who lectures at the University of Tel Aviv and advises Government departments such as the Ministry of Defence, is the new age militant Israeli surrounded by helicopter gun ships and claiming a God-given right to all the lands from Tel Aviv to the Jordan river. He contends that Israelis are morally blameless and the Palestinians have created their own statelessness. He does not see anything irrational in this. The displacement of the Palestinians and the destruction of their homes will continue.

Professor Ellis, author of a book of essays *Revolutionary Forgiveness* which calls for ecumenical dialogue and a halt to the demonisation of the Palestinians, was all but drowned out by the unstoppable ranting of Dr Olmert. Professor Ellis's message was a humanistic one which, sadly, had not the slightest effect on Dr Olmert.

Professor Ellis pointed out that the Israelis' aggressive retaliation against the Palestinians alters the legitimacy of Israel. If Jews were justified in their need for a nation state, the 1948 War was an example of a struggle defying the odds and the 1967 War a response to the Holocaust and a return to Jerusalem.

What then can be said about the invasion of Lebanon and the bombing of Beirut? Whatever the horror of the Holocaust, it does not excuse or exonerate the current persecution of the Palestinians by the Jewish State. By what moral or political standards are the Palestinians expected to lay aside their claims to a national existence, their land, their human rights? Because of their very presence, the Palestinians challenge Jewish hegemony and are the primary victims of Jewish militarism.

At that panel discussion, Professor Ellis's address seemed the biblical voice in the wilderness. And all who attended now know why there is war in the Middle East.

A Maori TV Channel?

At the risk of being considered 'politically incorrect', I suggest that the new Maori TV channel being proposed for next year is purely and simply a political ploy and a complete waste of taxpayers' money.

Readers will remember the shambles of Aotearoa Television and the misspending on the part of directors. It is the use of tax revenue to broadcast to a minority group that is so galling, when that very group suffers from a lack of funding in housing and health. There is no empirical evidence that TV is an effective medium for promoting the Maori language. The set-up costs are in the vicinity of $30 million and three years from now, Maori TV will cost $55 million a year to run. This is half the estimated cost of running a national channel, as vaguely described in Marian Hobbs' Charter.

The structure and future of TVNZ continues to be uncertain, with digital broadcasting now being dropped because it is too costly under the present funding arrangements. We have already lost 'free to air' public broadcasting of major sports, such as rugby, because TVNZ was outbid. Yet now there is enough money to establish a Maori TV channel. Will it have national coverage? Has the public been consulted? Where has $55 million come from? Marian Hobbs waffles on about the future of public broadcasting with the directive in the charter for TVNZ to target the regions and support regional broadcasting. TVNZ will be underfunded and marginalised while more and more money will have to be thrown at Maori TV.

There has been very little media comment on the subject because no one wants to be 'politically incorrect'. Even the National Party is in favour of Maori TV which is a sure sign that no one wants to alienate Maori. It is the spending of taxpayers' money for political gain. Maori TV is being foisted on the public without proper debate. It will be another publicly funded white elephant. Maori housing and health need every cent of an extra $55 million. ■

A prophet crying in the wilderness

Professor Marc Ellis, a Jew by race and Professor of American and Jewish studies at Baylor University (see opposite page) was interviewed for *Tui Motu* in Christchurch by Kath Rushton.

Professor Ellis distinguishes three strands in contemporary Judaism: the Zionists who justify the imperative of Israeli militarism; the 'dissenters' who criticise the methods used by the Israeli leadership but nevertheless accept the legitimacy of the Jewish state; and the 'Jews of conscience' who reject the whole notion of a Jewish state.

It is these Jews of conscience who are the true heirs of the prophetic tradition. In the main, "they are secular Jews," says Ellis, " ... they flee the Jewish world even as they act and organise against Israeli policies of displacement and occupation... For these new prophets, a level of hypocrisy has entered Jewish life from which there is no recovery".

Ellis offers an interesting historical analysis of the Jewish situation. Contemporary Zionism is at the stage of Christianity after Constantine. "The Judaism", he says, "which is presently practised in Israel and among the Jewish leadership in America, parallels the ties that Christianity has had in nation-states after it was elevated from a persecuted sect to a state religion...

"In concrete terms Jewish Constantinianism means that no matter what agreements Israel finally signs with the Palestinians, justice will be distant and secondary. At any moment Israel can declare another emergency, real or imaginary.. Jewish dissidents are permanently within a cycle that they did not begin and cannot control."

In such a context Ellis sees any ethical protest as doomed to failure. "For how much more can ethics be challenged than the wholesale dislocation of the (Palestinian) people, aerial bombardment of defenceless cities, closures of towns and villages for weeks and months at a time, assassination squads and torture legitimated by the courts?"

Nevertheless, as Ellis told Kath Rushton, "to be faithful to the Jewish Covenant today you have now to be a dissenter in terms of Israeli policies towards Palestinians. We as Jews are doing something that was done in different times in history against us: that is, oppressing another people. The prophetic voice needs again to be 'unsealed'."

The Palestinian martyrs, he says, are martyrs for justice, just as the Maryknoll Sisters were martyrs for justice, not for the spreading of Christianity. Therefore, the Palestinian martyrs are truly martyrs within Jewish history.

So where are ßthe grounds for hope? "Jerusalem", he says, "is the 'broken middle' both for Jews and for Palestinians – broken, because both peoples have suffered. If they can come together in that 'broken middle' they could have a different way of regarding each other, no longer as 'other', but as intimates in a common journey forward." This, he calls *revolutionary forgiveness*. The memory of suffering can be carried into the future, and then memory changes. "The sense of isolation and suffering is diminished as you travel together towards the creation of a new reality".

Finally, Professor Ellis returned to the role of the prophet. "At this point in our history only the prophets can point the way forward. Their power is limited, to be sure, and the cycle of violence will, at least for the foreseeable future, continue. In this cycle more Palestinians, and some Jews, will die.

"These deaths will be accompanied by the delay of freedom for a people and the destruction of a long and eventful history of suffering and struggle. The prophets have no power to grant this freedom or to salvage this history, only to witness to the possibility of another way that joins Palestinians and Jews in a bond that brings forth life rather than death". ■

Asking the fundamental questions

At the end of the day, was the much touted *Catching the Knowledge Wave* conference held in Auckland last month much more than a tax-funded $750,000 fizz? Organisers had prepared three core themes:

Innovation and Creativity
– Bringing it all Together
People and Capability
– Increasing Knowledge for All
Social Cohesion and the Knowledge Divide
– Improving the Quality of Life

To the casual observer they all seem to be very important things to consider. But we need to read beyond the print to see not so much what is said in these titles, but what is not said.

There were at least four major areas that are not explicitly covered as major topics that needed to be addressed if this was not to be yet another 'feel good' seminar that bypassed important topics:

- Firstly, how would new knowledge protect and enhance the common good?
- Secondly, would the need to recognise the centrality of a holistic spirituality nurtured in community to sustain good living, be addressed?
- Thirdly, in a society which marginalises experience and the elderly, what place would wisdom have in the new order?
- Finally, with mother nature posting warning signs everywhere, how could we better protect our fragile environment and practice sustainable levels of consumption so that everyone has a fruitful place on God's earth?

We do well to pause and ask basic questions about this latest new dogma, the knowledge economy. Like many modern concepts, it is being presented as a new way to salvation. But fundamental to any acceptance of such a slogan are such questions as: who is presenting it? For whom is it being presented? Who will benefit?

Does better knowledge for all mean a better life for all? Who, out there, is asking about the wisdom required to actually use new knowledge well? Information is one thing. But knowledge implies truth based on wisdom. Who is drawing a distinction between new information and new knowledge?

Some other basic question went begging. Do we have the wisdom to handle any new knowledge? Where is the debate regarding underpinning values for its use for people's benefit? Is 'the marketplace', where the bottom line is the profit margin, the place to decide such matters?

The point I am making is that we are running huge risks in presuming to build the future without wider public debate upon what values we want that future to be built and how we are going to live in that future. These are questions of philosophy, theology and spirituality which I do not see being addressed adequately anywhere. They seem to have been pointedly ignored at the conference.

They are not new questions. But they are important questions that are generally shut out of mainstream discussions by a dominant consumer culture which has found no place for such queries to be asked, much less answered. We are paying a huge price for such ignorance in our time.

From that perspective, the conference seems to have been an expensive 'feel good' exercise that missed tackling some of the most fundamental questions. That was a pity. ■

Jim Consedine