

# TUI MOTU

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## BE HOPEFUL KIA TŪMANAKO

ANNE SALMOND, ANTON SPELMAN & ZAIN ALI  
on community relationships

SANJANA HATTOTUWA  
on challenging disinformation

SUSAN SMITH  
on praying the Rosary



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## EDITORIAL

### Go On with Hope

**B**e hopeful! We're focusing on hope because of our need for the energy of the Spirit at this time. It is easy to feel paralysed by the many urgent needs in the world, or disgruntled with the affairs on the home front, but inertia and ill temper will not further the interests of community. To build community and join in the work of the Gospel for the common good, we'll need to retain our critical judgement while resisting the urge to spiral into a pit of discontent.

We're not working alone. Think of the response to Queen Elizabeth II's death. I read a criticism that the Queen's funeral service was underwhelming — no different (music aside) from the liturgy that anyone would have in an Anglican church. But that was the strength of the Church service. After her death was announced, we'd had non-stop retrospectives of the Queen's life — stories of the individual. But the Westminster service underlined the kinship of all the baptised — all of us belonging to the body of Christ. Elizabeth lay in the sanctuary as a Christian who had lived her vocation. We recognised this and in the liturgy we thanked God for her and committed her into eternal love. The Queen's death wasn't a tragedy because at 96 the writing was on the wall. Her funeral service can remind us of our own call.

In the days before the Queen's funeral, we learned of several mass graves discovered after the retreat of Russian troops from the city of Izium in Ukraine. Those children, women and men were killed and their bodies dumped and hidden as the refuse of war. That is tragedy — rightly causing anguish, heartbreak and anger. Their humanity, let alone their kinship, was denied by the perpetrators. Yet, their families, their nation and most of us rose up appalled. They are our kin — and more challenging — so, too, are their executioners.

If the Queen's death can renew our commitment to Gospel living, then the Ukrainian deaths radically test our belief in global kinship. It's a truth that challenges our readiness for revenge and retaliation. We must respond to the atrocities — but we can't return fire with fire and certainly not invite nuclear fire. This is when we realise that it's not easy being Christian every day — but it is easier with the support of others who share a commitment to the kinship of God in Earth. This is where we trust in the creativity of the Spirit gracing our world. We live in the hope that God is with us and we look for and support creative life-affirming responses to death-dealing situations. We encourage one another to be hopeful.

We thank all our contributors to this issue whose writing, reflection, art and craft offer us different perspectives.

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

# PINK SHOES

## in the Church

People in central Auckland this month were greeted with an intriguing piece of performance art protesting suppression of women's rights in the Catholic Church. From the Kate Sheppard Suffrage Centenary Memorial at Khartoum Place down into the heart of Queen Street and then up Shortland Street to St Patrick's Cathedral, more than 500 Catholic women laid down their pink shoes in silent protest at their exclusion by their own Church. Their poignant stories, attached to the shoes, spoke of lives of service and faith trivialized by an outdated and outmoded institution that welcomed their service but denied them equal decision-making rights.

Their point was clear. These women have had enough. Surprisingly, their local bishop agreed. In a letter to the convenors of the group, Bishop Steve Lowe expressed considerable support: "So thank you for your prophetic hikoī to the Cathedral today which is ultimately a call to respect the dignity that flows from being created male and female in the image and likeness of our God. Your voice today echoes the voice of women throughout the world, who are part of the current synodal process, and are calling on the Church to reflect the inherent dignity of women in the leadership of the Church . . . May we have the courage not to get stuck in structures that are not necessarily of God."

He signed off with a lovely line: "Together may we be docile to the movement of the Holy Spirit who is active in all the people of God as She invites the Church ever more forth on the way to the Kingdom of God."

This doesn't seem to me to be polite language, designed to pacify the objectors. The gender of God is not a typo. This is an intelligent invitation to go further — to find out where this challenge takes us next.

We could start with conversations generated by the shoes on the street. People were intrigued. Complete strangers stopped in their tracks and read the captions attached to the shoes. Not just one of the captions, but two and three and four sets of shoes were examined. Then people look around: "Who's doing this?", they wondered. And that's when the really interesting stuff happens. There's a chance for connection, conversation. People ask: "How can it be in this day and age that women are excluded? Why do people put up with it? How come they just don't walk away?"

Occasionally as I walked the shoe-line looking for reaction, someone would provide a verbal blast about God wanting it to be this way and those who don't agree being heretics. In every case this was a man.

Let's talk about the creative women behind this artistic protest. These are passionate women who spend much of their time outside their working lives looking to make our Church more hospitable to their



daughters and sons. These women are highly educated and theologically literate, historically loyal but fed-up with the slowness of positive change for women and the barriers to full participation. They are hanging on because they are older and they see a value in loyalty, even when they dispute leadership.

These women can be stropky. They are all Pākehā. The 10.30am Eucharist crowd at the Cathedral is mostly not. Indeed the ethnic diversity is spectacular. But the Pākehā are mostly gone, simply dots in the pews pulsing with a different set of worldviews and cultural appreciation of their Church as an institution.

Is this a clue? Are we struggling to win the argument for gender equality in the New Zealand Church because there are not enough of us Pakeha to prosecute it? Could it be that this horse has bolted and that Pākehā Catholic women in particular have already walked away in large numbers?

Might it be that the notion of gender equality itself is a cultural construct that doesn't have purchase in the Catholic worshiping experience of migrant communities of Aotearoa? Are we Pākehā in a minority to hold this view?

I'm not certain of the answers, what to think or what to do, but I suspect we ought to take Bishop Steve Lowe at his word. ☀

**Patrick Snedden** lives in Tāmaki Makaurau. He is taking a sabbatical after finishing his role as Chair of the Auckland District Health Board. He wrote *Pākehā and the Treaty*.





In 1990, Pā Henare Tate, a well-known priest in the Hokianga, wrote a beautiful article about Te Tiriti for *New Zealand Geographic*. In it, he discusses the tapu and mana of each person, which springs from the life force (mauri) of the world itself — the sun, moon and stars, the earth (Papatūānuku) and sky (Ranginui), the ocean (Tangaroa) and forests (Tāne).

"Te wa — the journey of life," he says, "is filled with opportunities to address the tapu of our fellow travellers". There are three ways to do this, he adds: "through tika (justice), pono (integrity, or faithfulness to tika) and aroha (love)."

In his article, Pā Tate describes the marae as a place where hosts and visitors, men and women, ancestors and descendants come together to acknowledge the tapu and mana of others. In the rituals that follow, the tapu of the visitors is lifted: "Visitors (manuhiri) have their own tapu, of course, but in this context they are foreigners, an unknown quantity. Who can tell whether they are friend or foe? . . . The kuia calls her greeting. In some situations a warrior issues a fiery challenge and lays down the wero, dart. The visitors respond according to the protocol of the marae with korero (speech) and waiata (song), after which the hongi (embrace) lifts the tapu, erasing the status of 'manuhiri' and making the visitors one with the tangata whenua — the people whose turangawaewae (identity) is at that marae. The visitors are now hunga kainga (people of the house). They share their hosts' hospitality, protection and mana."

### Te Tiriti Was Not Implemented

In 1840, he argues, when Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed, the incoming settlers were seen as manuhiri: "The Treaty was a vehicle by which the designation of manuhiri could be lifted. However, though the document was signed, the treaty was not implemented. Tika and pono were violated, and aroha fled."

Instead of tika (justice), there was injustice; instead of pono (integrity, truth) there was deceit; instead of aroha, there was betrayal.

### Acknowledgement and Encounter

In his article, Pā Tate insists that the only way forward is through acknowledgement and encounter. Without this, "injustice will never be truly resolved. Like a whale, it will disappear for a time, only to surface again seeking the pure oxygen of tika, pono and aroha". Only when acknowledgements are given, and injustices are resolved, can the manuhiri become hau kainga, at home in the land.



## INJUSTICE IS LIKE A WHALE

Rather than defining Te Tiriti as "a partnership between races", perhaps it could be visualised as a meeting place where different groups of New Zealanders come together to resolve injustices and seek peace with one another, writes ANNE SALMOND.

### Waitangi Tribunal Started Well

When the Waitangi Tribunal was established in 1975, many of these lessons were taken to heart. The Tribunal itself included both Māori and non-Māori members in a roughly equal balance (although this is no longer the case), and Tribunal hearings were held on marae. Because many eminent kaumātua and kuia were involved in the hearings, values such as those expressed by Pā Tate helped to shape the Treaty settlements.

At the same time, lawyers were deeply involved on both sides of the debates, and legal framings helped to shape the Treaty settlement process. No doubt this was proper, since Te Tiriti itself was signed in large measure to bring rongo (peace) and atanohe (tranquil living) to indigenous persons and incoming settlers who in 1840 were "living without law".

### Polarised into Two Races

Over time, however, as lawyers and the law became increasingly dominant in the Treaty process, other New Zealanders were set aside. In part this was influenced by the canonical "Lands" case judgment in 1987, in which Sir Robin Cooke and his fellow judges in the Court of Appeal rewrote Te Tiriti as a "partnership between races", or "between Pākehā and Māori", or between "the Crown and the Māori race".

On the one hand, the concept of "race" was introduced, although it is



nowhere to be found in the text of Te Tiriti. This is a colonial idea with an ugly history, associated with slavery, genocide and the dehumanisation of others, and utterly inimical to respecting their “tapu and mana”.

As it escaped into the public arena, the idea of “two races” inevitably invoked racial framings on both sides. At the extremes and online, these are becoming increasingly toxic and dangerous, a process described by political scientists McCoy and Somer as “pernicious polarisation”: “In polarising settings, people who hold moderate opinions and maintain interests and identities that cut across the dividing line are increasingly ostracised, diminishing any chance of dialogue between opposing groups.”

### Different Approach Needed

This is flatly contrary to Pā Tate’s account of the way groups are bound together during the ceremonial exchanges on marae.

On the other hand, the idea of Te Tiriti as a partnership between “the Crown and the Māori race” marginalises most other New Zealanders from the Treaty relationship.

The intent of Te Tiriti, however, was to uphold the tapu and mana of all parties — the Rangatira, the hapū and tāngata māori (indigenous persons), with their tikanga, and the incoming settlers.

In the text of Te Tiriti, the role of Kāwanatanga — the government — is defined as a kai-wakarite (mediator, facilitator), to resolve disputes, ensure balance and to seek peace and tranquil living for all parties. It is not supposed to take over the exchanges.

Above all, the resolution of injustice under Te Tiriti requires acknowledgement and encounter “on the ground”. Yet at Waitangi Tribunal hearings, it is very uncommon to see non-Māori members of the local community present, and hearing the stories of past and present hurts and harms that must be addressed before justice can prevail.

By themselves, the Crown and its lawyers cannot create the “pure oxygen” of tika, pono and aroha that is required to resolve these injustices. That is a responsibility of the wider community.

Racist attitudes do their damage at school, in the courts, in supermarkets and shops, at the local bank, in parties, on talk-back, online and in families — at the flax roots and grass roots of our small, intimate society.

### Acknowledge Tapu of Everyone

In her speech at Tūrangawaewae in July, the Prime Minister spoke of the need for leadership, and a vision that allows most New Zealanders to embrace Te Tiriti; and I agree. At present, however, this is not happening. Something has to change.

Instead of defining Te Tiriti as “a partnership between races”, or “between the Crown and the Māori race”, perhaps our leaders can take us on a journey that “acknowledges the tapu of our fellow travellers” and binds us together, in a spirit of kinship and mutual understanding.

**The resolution of injustice under Te Tiriti requires acknowledgement and encounter “on the ground”. Yet at Waitangi Tribunal hearings, it is very uncommon to see non-Māori members of the local community present, and hearing the stories of past and present hurts and harms that must be addressed before justice can prevail.**

Rather than seeing the Treaty as a “bridge” across a chasm of misunderstanding, in the spirit of “pernicious polarisation”, perhaps Te Tiriti can be visualised as a meeting place where different groups of New Zealanders come together in a spirit of tika (justice), pono (truth), and aroha to share ideas, resolve injustices and seek peace with one another.

Instead of working towards separation, maybe we can try to “live together differently”, respecting the tapu and mana of others.

As Pā Tate suggests, our vision of the future might be like a marae where all of our children and grandchildren, in all their differences, can find a place to stand, a turangawaewae of the heart. 🌅

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**Dame Anne Salmond**  
an anthropologist,  
environmentalist and writer,  
is a Distinguished Professor at  
the University of Auckland.







# Living into a New Beginning

ANTON SPELMAN shares some of the questions he faced in deciding to move home and settle in a new region of Aotearoa.

**O**n May 23, 2022 I was given the keys to my new home in Ōtaki. I have begun the start of a new life following the death of my wife Ruth after 43 years of marriage and 28 years of living in Tāmaki Makaurau. When mourning the death of a loved one, it is very difficult to identify when the experience of loss begins to subside, making way for earlier feelings to re-emerge, a sign of resilience and a readiness to continue with life.

It was only at Christmas 2021 that my daughter and son-in-law put it to me that I should relocate to Ōtaki to

live nearer to them.

At the time it seemed a novel if somewhat random thought. It was also unsettling. Was I not doing as well as people had said? Why would I go to live in Ōtaki when I know no one there besides immediate family? Do they know something about my future that is hidden from my eyes?

## Reaching the Decision to Move

One day I wrote down all the things that I do as a retired person of 71 years. There were a lot of items on that list in no order of importance. Then I considered each project and

identified whether it was important and could only be done by me, important but could be done by others or not important. After some agonising I accepted that most of what I do is important but it could be done by others. My wife had tried to tell me this on many occasions over the years but to no avail; the perfectionist in me is very strong.

Friends and family were universally in support of a move to Ōtaki. Only I seemed to be unsure. But the more I thought about it the more strongly I came to think that I had probably finished my work in Auckland and that

it was now time to put the boat out to sea one more time.

### How I Live Here Matters

Now I am in Ōtaki, living next door to my daughter and son-in-law and my two-year-old mokopuna. I ask myself: "What now? I'm certain that it's right to be here but unclear about where that takes me next.

### Thinking About Context

As I ponder these matters, I am reminded that the key to understanding anything always begins with a consideration of context, i.e. thoughts, feelings and approaches that we bring to situations we find ourselves in and to decision-making. I was brought up to value highly the uniqueness of each person. While it was core thinking in a Western worldview, I had another worldview as well, Te Ao Māori. In my early days it was not as widespread as it is today.

Currently, I see many worthwhile initiatives in place to support cultural development, Treaty relationships development and change at a personal and community level. I have worked in all these areas since the late 1980s and I believe that we are more than ready to build on the goodwill developed thus far and engage the constitutional conversation about our governance arrangements from a foundational Tiriti relationships perspective.

A constitutional conversation would open up new ways to manage our common life together and would improve our efforts to implement environmental justice. The scoping of that conversation is complex, not because of the legal ramifications of change in the way we make laws and the laws themselves, but because our experience of dealing with cultural difference is still at an early stage of development. If we compare how we learn and acquire knowledge from a Western worldview and the same process in Te Ao Māori, it will give some idea of the problem facing us.

A strong theme in relation to knowledge acquisition from a Western worldview perspective

is that if we wish to know about something, we put a fence around it and focus mainly on that segment.

For example, until recently we thought we could control the environment and that we had every right to do so. The Western values underpinning this position relate to the perceived autonomy of the individual. But the climate change crisis shows how limiting this position is.

However, Te Ao Māori holds that identity is best understood in relation to the group. When seeking to acquire knowledge in Te Ao Māori, we locate ourselves firstly within the whole and then we explore particular matters of interest but always in relation to the whole.

**I'm focusing on developing an ability to express my collectivist self and transform the individualism I have grown up with ... there is a spiritual oneness that could flow from it.**

Both worldviews emphasise context before analysis. A Western worldview approaches the subject of knowledge by separating it from its context whereas Te Ao Māori insists that context remains present and connected to the way knowledge is understood and communicated.

In the Western tradition, knowledge is expressed propositionally and supported by a culture of individualism. In Te Ao Māori, knowledge is expressed relationally and supported by a culture of collectivism.

### Honour Integrity of Both Worldviews

I am a collectivist by nature. I was brought up with a hybrid mix of both worldviews and as I sort out the question about what I am supposed to be doing in Ōtaki, I remind myself that the two worldviews under discussion are equally valid and of equal value. When we honour the integrity of both worldviews in this way, we unlock energy for the rigours of change management that await us.

There are significant benefits in taking this course of action. These relate to reconciliation but extend beyond, to reveal new ways of living together in communities and with the natural world.

This will help us in a recovery of

mana and a renewal of our common life. It will be sustained because, by consensus, we will have altered the values base and the way we articulate our values. We will ensure that there is a place at the table for everyone.

### Becoming More Collectivist

At a personal level I have a strong desire to be authentic as I manage changes that I need to make. I'm focusing on developing an ability to express my collectivist self and transform the individualism I have grown up with. I would also like to see that my children and wider whānau are equipped to address their own development needs in this area.

And there is a spiritual oneness

that could flow from it. For Christians to acknowledge the wairua from Te Ao Māori would be a significant advance in our understanding of what the body of Christ looks like in Aotearoa.

As I move around Ōtaki in collectivist mode, I find myself less interested in gathering information about things. Instead, I practise opening myself up to the influence of the people I meet. And as I become aware of interconnections that otherwise might pass me by, I am surprised at how liberating this is even though I don't know the detailed interconnectedness of life around me, especially those connections I cannot see.

But more importantly, I feel more grounded as a person in relation to who I am. This is what I am supposed to be doing in Ōtaki so I am happy to report — so far so good! 🌞

Painting: *Three Men Talking* by Graham Berry ©  
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**Anton Hikairo Spelman**  
lives in Ōtaki and  
belongs to Ngāti  
Hikairo ki Kāwhia.  
He has three sons a  
daughter, and their  
partners and mokopuna.







# DISINFORMATION'S DARK DESIGNS

SANJANA HATTOTUWA describes the challenge we face from the effects of disinformation in undermining our trust in democracy.

“Gradually, then suddenly.”  
— Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*

“Il faut cultiver notre jardin”  
— Voltaire, *Candide*

Jawaharlal Nehru in his speech on the cusp of India's independence from the British in 1947 spoke of India's tryst with destiny. A year later, and in the wake of India's independence, Sri Lanka — then called Ceylon — was granted independence as well. Today, it's an open question as to how both countries have managed to overcome postcolonial legacies and grasp the nettle of their democratic potential.

It's likely Nehru's tryst today would have been with disinformation as destiny, defined by the dangerous designs of demagogues. For decades, my home Sri Lanka and South Asia have suffered from a democratic deficit that predated social media and was amplified because of it. We've seen, heard and read the media reports of violent upheaval. But this article is about a lesser-known phenomenon I've likened

to a cancerous growth, like a digital Novichok introduced over time by influential voices, that eviscerates civic relations, electoral integrity and democratic institutions.

This phenomenon, increasingly spoken of in New Zealand, is disinformation — a term that can be defined academically, though I often choose not to. Voltaire's quote, above, calls us to tend to our gardens. It's a metaphor I use frequently, likening democracy to a complex ecosystem like a forest, requiring constant care and conservation for survival.

For me, coming from a country teetering on the precipice of a failed state, the role, reach and relevance of disinformation in damaging democracy isn't merely an academic pursuit. It is a lived and situated experience. Sri Lanka today is facing intergenerational harms on account of policies pursued by populist leaders, and over the past decade, their manipulation of social media to capture, manipulate and sustain a subscription — nay, an addiction — to misleading narratives

actively shaping attitudes, beliefs and perceptions.

## Disinformation

Disinformation's design is a curious one — necessarily public, and yet often impervious to critical study, with complex webs of deceit beneath what's presented as benign, caring or dispassionate.

Scholars sometimes call this phenomenon a dark signature, shaping partisan, prejudicial perceptions through the strategic seeding of content and commentary designed to appear as authentic. What's powerfully presented by influential voices — from politicians to priests — as just, urgent, ordained or necessary to overcome complex challenges, is in fact thinly-veiled expedient, populist narratives aimed to secure parochial gains and political authority.

## DISINFORMATION'S DAMAGE IN SRI LANKA

In Sri Lanka, even knowing this doesn't help inoculate society against the harmful effects of disinformation,



which is now endemic and a disease defying cure.

All this of course was present prior to social media, contributing to the systemic violence of the country I grew up in. However, after around 2010, the initial promise of social media to help democracy quickly turned into a more injurious scaffolding, amplifying harm, hate and harassment. Where we find ourselves today, as a country and society, is due to disinformation's interweave with a political culture that eviscerated our social fabric.

### **ROTEAROA CANNOT BE COMPLACENT**

This is usually where many in New Zealand take some comfort, believing that geographic distance from war and a fundamentally different community, culture and context protect this country from the ravages that tore mine asunder.

In response, I can say that a high-trust society, where citizens don't expect disinformation's dark designs to ever take root, is far more vulnerable than a country where public institutions have always been weak, which counterintuitively results in a citizenry less reliant on them and thus somewhat better able to navigate democratic deficits.

My argument goes back to Voltaire and Hemingway, who noted that tending to what grows in a garden needs to be a proactive process, and they warn us that what may appear remote and distant often comes about quicker than expected.

### **DEMOCRACY IS NOT A CERTAINTY**

The expectation that democracy will simply endure is a widely held but misplaced belief — even in New Zealand.

The historically low turnout at local government elections, or the lack of interest in Board of Trustee elections in schools, even when fascists and neo-Nazis present themselves as candidates, or those with clandestine connections to conspiratorial disinformation networks, suggest many citizens can't see threats to democracy for what they are today, aside from how they will evolve in the future.

Social and political relations founded on the assumption that individuals mean and do no harm, is no longer a valid basis to appreciate what's going on. The capture of institutions through entry points offering the least resistance is the thin edge of a wedge aimed at weakening social cohesion, fundamentally changing public institutions and policymaking.

### **DELIBERATE FOSTERING OF TOXIC OPINION**

Part of what disinformation targets is political culture. But what the pandemic has highlighted is the inequality and inequity dividing communities.

Consistently, research finds a few influential individuals and insidious networks adroitly producing divisive narrative frames to influence social and political structures to a degree greater than the sum of their membership. These efforts are succeeding.

More visible today in New Zealand than a year ago, for example, is the degree to which antagonism seeded on social media is on public display — from frothing expletives screamed and livestreamed to social media while first blocking and then following the Prime Minister's vehicle convoy, to the vulgar, vicious and deeply misogynist abuse targeting her in public meetings, which is by order of magnitude worse online.

This terrible toxicity extends to other female MPs, Māori wahine, the LGBTIQ+ community, visible minorities, refugees and immigrants.

The hate and harms I now study daily in New Zealand ecologies of disinformation are more violent and sustained than those I studied for doctoral research at Otago University around significant social, and political violence in Sri Lanka since 2018.

### **DISINFORMATION UNDERMINES TRUST IN COMMUNITY**

None of this suggests New Zealand is guaranteed a fate that mirrors the tragic condition of home. But there's a lot that's unravelling, at pace. And therein lies the rub.

Responses to disinformation, or post-pandemic information disorders

discoverable in the public domain and reported in the media are invariably linked to the March 2019 Christchurch massacre, and more broadly, terrorism. But though there's overlap, the study of disinformation is fundamentally different from the prevention of violent extremism, or terrorism.

Disinformation isn't stochastic — there's nothing random about it; it isn't unpredictable. It is an everyday performance, with a script constantly adapting to domestic, and international developments, perfecting the delivery of division through networked choreographies that waltz around existing laws, regulations, policies and policing.

There's a metronomic cadence to content production, strategically geared to keep subscribers very angry, or sad, for longer periods during the day, and every day.

Sustained states of heightened emotion shape psychosocial consequences which impact relationships, from the personal to the political. Radicalisation pathways are created — pathways that policymakers and parents aren't even aware of, but which young people who are part of anti-vaxx networks risk being tempted by and exposed to.

None of this is good for democracy. All of this, and much more, forms the basis of what I now study in New Zealand, which even a year ago, I didn't expect would be a Rorschach blot that was like the stain of disinformation back home. But recalling James Baldwin on racism: "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

We must confront disinformation for what it is, does and has designs around. New Zealand's social cohesion depends on it. 🌞

Painting: *Disinformation History* by Paul Lachine ©  
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**Sanjana Hattotuwa** is a Research Fellow at The Disinformation Project, New Zealand. His doctoral research was on social media and information disorders.





# STRUGGLE, RESILIENCE AND HOPE

ZAIN ALI shares how the ways he learnt to cope as an Indian immigrant youngster in primary school have become lifelong values infused with Qur'anic wisdom.

**T**he ground felt cold under my feet, a very strange sensation. I was at my cousin's home, and we were in the backyard playing soccer. Earlier that day, we had caught a flight to New Zealand from Fiji. This was the 1980s, not long after the military coup in Fiji. My parents had made the heart-rending decision to leave Fiji for good and to resettle in New Zealand.

The cold beneath my feet was an odd sensation, and it would be at primary school that I would learn about the word "chilly" — not the same as "chilli" at all, in fact the very

opposite. Words such as winter, fog, heater, jumper and electric blanket quickly became part of my vocabulary. I enjoyed the frost, walking along the school fields early in the morning, scrunching across the grass, then looking back to see my shoeprints across the ground.

## **Facing the Prejudice of Children**

That first year of primary school in New Zealand was a steep learning curve. I learned more new words: kiwifruit, Mars bar and K-Bar, Doctor Who, Coronation Street and after-school cartoons.

Aside from me and my sister, there were perhaps three other Indian students at our primary school. Soon enough I also learned the phrase "curry muncher". It was meant to be a "put-down", though I never understood why. Yes, I ate curry, but no I didn't munch curry — you can munch an apple but not a curry. But I understood curry was something strange to my classmates, and at times I felt embarrassed bringing Indian food to school.

There was also a joke: Why shouldn't Indians be allowed to play soccer? Because they'd build a dairy



every time they got a corner! At the time I didn't get the joke but eventually I did and it still makes me smile. I shared this joke with my own school-aged children recently. They laughed, then groaned. Times have changed: Indian restaurants are aplenty and very popular, and there are many Indians who love and play soccer.

I also became familiar with another word at school – bullying. I experienced bullying from a fellow classmate, usually during morning tea or lunch time. On one occasion we got into a scuffle after he put me into a headlock. A teacher stepped in and word got to my parents about what had happened. The teacher thought the scuffle was all my fault – luckily my parents were there to advocate for me.

### Learning to Cope

As we moved from winter to summer, my parents did two things that helped me become more resilient. They got me into martial arts and bought me a cricket set.

Through martial arts I learned about self defence and also got to hang out with a great bunch of youngsters. And the cricket set was a friend magnet – there was nothing like lunchtime cricket to make new friends. Oddly enough, Ralph Macchio in *The Karate Kid* and Dipak Patel in the New Zealand cricket team also struck a chord. It gave me hope to see folk who were much like me do well.

### Struggle, Resilience and Hope

I soon discovered that the themes of struggle, resilience and hope figure large within Muslim tradition. The early Muslim followers of Muhammad were at one time outcasts, rejected by most within their society. Muhammad preached about returning to the God of Abraham, but many disliked this message. The people saw themselves as descendants of Abraham, but they were not keen to believe in one God. The Arabs of Muhammad's time were polytheists – believing in many gods. Islam really irked them and they decided to hound and bully the Muslims.

Muhammad was forced to leave

his hometown, Mecca, and head to the northern city of Medina. A number of Muslims also headed to Abyssinia, the precursor to modern day Ethiopia, which at the time had a Christian King. Muhammad felt that Muslims would be safer in Christian lands.

What's interesting about this phase in early Muslim history is that the Qur'an appeals to the First Testament figures of Joseph and Moses as reminders.

Joseph, or *Yusuf* in Arabic, is alienated from his family due to the scheming of his brothers. He finds himself far from home, but God is with him, and he becomes a respected member of the Egyptian royal household.

**"I don't want to have a heart that is boiling like a volcano. A volcano has anger, fury, rage ... I want a heart that is full of love and care, and full of mercy."**

Moses, or *Musa* in Arabic, speaks truth to power and confronts pharaoh face-to-face advocating for his people and speaking out against injustice. Importantly, God is with him; God parts the sea so that Moses and his people can escape into safety.

God is with Joseph and Moses in their exceptionally difficult circumstances. They experience heartbreak and exile. The Qur'anic advice is that "God is with those who are patient" (Q 2:153).

Patience, or *Sabr* in Arabic, is emphasised throughout the Qur'an as a defining feature of believers. In addition to patience, forgiveness is also important. When Muhammad returned to Mecca the residents there were afraid that the Muslims would exact revenge on them. And having returned to Mecca much stronger, the Muslim community were in a prime position to do so. But Muhammad spoke of forgiveness toward the people of Mecca. Revenge was set aside.

### Teachings Continue Today

The message of the Qur'an and the example of Muhammad reverberates in our world, even to us in Aotearoa. Consider the example of Farid

Ahmed, who lost his wife Husna in the 2019 Christchurch Mosque attacks. Following this tragedy, Farid forgave the perpetrator. He said: "I don't want to have a heart that is boiling like a volcano. A volcano has anger, fury, rage . . . I want a heart that is full of love and care, and full of mercy." He also spoke about gratitude and patience: "I am determined that if life becomes bitter in the future, I'll be patient. And if it becomes sweeter I'll be thankful to God and thankful to others."

I have been fortunate to have good parents. From them, perhaps through them, I have been able to learn about resilience and hope. This has been reinforced by our Muslim tradition as well. Our family

has good friends. At a recent event they made provision for there to be halal food for us. This meant a lot: we were not treated as outsiders and strangers. Instead, we belonged – we were neighbours.

My wife and I also try to pass on these values to our children. Our youngest son enjoys martial arts, but at a recent grading he failed to achieve a pass. This was hard on him but we encouraged him to keep practising. Sure enough a few weeks later his sensei gave him a pass, much to my son's delight.

I am reminded of a line from Rumi: "If everything around seems dark, look again, you may be the light." Our faith in the God of Abraham isn't always easy, but when times are dark, it is very much a source of light – keeping our lamps burning, turning our darkness into light. 🕯

Painting: *Beach Cricketer II* by Claire McCall ©  
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# PRAYING the ROSARY

SUSAN SMITH writes that the Rosary is a prayer for the whole Church and not to be appropriated for purposes contrary to Gospel living.



In 1954, while I was in the fourth form at school in Lower Hutt, a major focus of life in Term One was preparing for Irish priest Father Peyton's Rosary Crusade, part of the Church's wider Marian celebration. A year earlier, Pius

XII had ordered a Marian Year to celebrate the centenary of the proclamation of Mary's Immaculate Conception.

In the 1950s, the Rosary seemed integral to our Catholic identity. At both primary and

secondary school we said the Rosary every day and processions where we prayed the Rosary were part and parcel of life. We all had Rosary beads, often festooned with medals, particularly the miraculous medal, and we had collections of holy pictures of Mary appearing to Bernadette at Lourdes. The Sisters who taught us, whether they were Mission, Mercy or Josephite, wore extra-large Rosary beads as part of their religious habit.

At home, devotion to the Rosary saw our family kneeling down after our evening meal and praying the Rosary together because, as Father Peyton told us: "The family that prays together, stays together."

## APPROPRIATION OF THE ROSARY

Older Catholics will recall that the 1950s was about the Cold War, and praying the Rosary was thought to save us from Communism.

There was a big political agenda behind all this, and I learnt much later that the CIA had funded Father Peyton's Rosary crusades in Latin America in an effort to diminish the appeal of left-wing political parties – better a right-wing dictatorship in Cuba than a left-wing dictatorship. The Vatican said "no" to such funding in 1966. Apparently, Father Peyton is now en route to canonisation as Francis declared him "Venerable" in late 2017.

## ORIGINS OF THE ROSARY

There are different traditions as to how the Rosary originated. Some say that Mary appeared in an apparition to St Dominic in the 13th century, while others attribute its origins to a German Carthusian, St Dominic of Prussia (1382-1461).

Whatever, by the 16th century, the Rosary became the prayer *par excellence* for Catholics after the resounding Catholic victory over Turkish Muslims at the naval battle



of Lepanto in 1571. Victory was not only attributed to Don John of Austria's ability to out-manoeuvre the Turks, (see G.K. Chesterton's narrative poem, *Lepanto*) but also to Catholics praying the Rosary. Unsurprisingly, two years later, Dominican pope Pius V established the feast of the Holy Rosary to celebrate the Catholic victory.

In 2002 Pope John Paul II added what he called the Luminous mysteries — the Baptism of Jesus, the wedding feast at Cana, the proclamation of the Gospel, the Transfiguration and the institution of the Eucharist. The Luminous mysteries are also Christological although I am not sure how commonly they are prayed.

The Rosary, with its 150 "Hail Marys" seems to have evolved as a prayer for those who could not read and pray the 150 psalms of the Divine Office chanted by monks and nuns. In an age when most people could neither read nor write, it was a wonderful way whereby Europe's illiterate masses grew in their understanding of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and the pivotal role of Mary in these events.

However, despite the strongly Christological and biblically-based emphasis of the different mysteries of the Rosary, except for the Assumption and Crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven, the Rosary tended to be categorised as devotional, and by Protestants as a Marian devotion.

After Vatican II, with its emphasis on reclaiming the Bible as foundational for our spiritual lives, the Rosary became less significant for some Catholics.

### POLITICAL CO-OPTION AGAIN

At the same time, for other Catholics, the various apparitions of Mary and the teachings she imparted during them, grew in importance. It was also becoming apparent that enthusiasm for Marian apparitions and teachings was associated with Catholics with a more traditional theology and right-wing mindset.

Historically and contemporaneously, Mary was seen as a saviour

in the Church's struggles against her enemies — the Ottoman navy at Lepanto, Communism in the 20th century and more recently and disturbingly in the so-called "culture wars" that seem to be causing immense damage to the Church in the USA. Given our Kiwi propensity to follow what is happening in the USA in both society and Church, I wonder if we need to acknowledge that what is happening in the American Church could happen to us tomorrow.

In a recent article in *The Atlantic* ("How Extremist Gun Culture Is Trying to Co-opt the Rosary", 15 August 2022), Canadian author Daniel Pannetton pointed to the

**There will be many who have waited with a dear family member or friend on their last journey. How often has the dying person requested they say the Rosary?**

discouraging ways politically and theologically conservative Catholics were taking over this wonderful prayer to support them in their efforts to reverse the changes mandated by Vatican II, and to ensure the dominance of white, male patriarchal culture. So, gun control is a "no, no."

The article directs attention to those media savvy Catholic traditionalists who reject Vatican II teachings, who show their rifles and machine guns draped with Rosaries, who encourage an extremist masculinist culture, and who are fanatically "anti-woke" — that is, opposed to anything that suggests social justice and care of creation are integral to being disciples of Jesus.

This and earlier politicisations of the Rosary are a disaster for contemporary Catholics.

### ROSARY IS PRAYER FOR ALL

It concerns me that ultra-conservative Catholics such as Steve Bannon, former political strategist for Donald

Trump and currently on trial for his role in the January 6 Capitol attack, have taken over a traditional prayer that belongs to all of us in order to bring about political goals that have little to do with Catholic social teaching.

I can accept that perhaps after Vatican II, it was simple enough for us to subscribe to the position that the Rosary was part of the devotional spirituality that could be replaced by a more explicitly bible-based spirituality. Yet in reflecting more on the Rosary, we can see it is biblically-grounded and provides a wonderful way of prayer. Its rhythmic recitation can allow the prayer to move into deeply meditative prayer that is both Christological and Mariological.

There will be many who have waited with a dear family member or friend on their last journey. How often has the dying person requested they say the Rosary? Many of us will have read accounts of Catholics imprisoned for their religious beliefs. Deprived of anything to read, they could still pray the Rosary.

To finish on a more personal note. I remember some years ago being on a yacht with another of our Sisters. Both of us saw ourselves as feminist, committed to liberation theology, so out with devotional spirituality and in with biblically-based prayer of a liberationist type. Anyway, our yacht ran into very difficult sailing conditions once we had left the safety of the Hauraki Gulf. The smaller mast and sail at the stern disappeared, never to be seen again. We were truly worried although the captain did not seem so concerned. Eventually we were blown into the safety of Fitzroy Harbour on Great Barrier. My Sister companion and I discovered that we each had been praying the Rosary fervently during our near escape from drowning. 🙏

Photo by James Coleman on Unsplash

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# At This Time

Students from John Paul II High School in Greymouth share some of their concerns.

## Deciding for the Future

**R**emember back when you were five years old, and somebody asked you what you wanted to be when you grew up? You were adamant that you would be an astronaut, or a doctor, or you were still deep-rooted in your dinosaur phase and just wanted to be a stegosaurus. Now that most of us have realised our childhood dream job is nothing more than a pipe dream, it's suddenly a lot harder to answer that question. I used to be so sure of my future. I was going to be a veterinarian. I was comfortable with that because I didn't really understand what it entailed. Now that I am older, I appreciate how difficult it is to make this decision. This often leaves me frozen for fear of making the wrong choice, and I'm not the only one. Most of us are unsure and have no idea what we are going to be doing in two years' time, but that's okay. It's okay to not know what you want to do with your life right now.

The last 12 years of our lives have been carefully planned by other people, and then suddenly, we are handed the reins. It feels like getting into the driver's seat with no licence. We are faced with harsh realities, like the expenses of any path we take: rent, tuition fees, transport and the ever-rising cost of living. Most of us are just worrying about whether we will pass the next math internal. We have enough on our minds without having to decide the course of our whole future. Don't worry, it's OK not to know.

Parents, teachers and influential people in your life may try to convince you that you need to have your life plan sorted by 16, because this is how things were done years ago, but times have changed. They don't realise that all that time and effort of deciding on a job is wasted if you don't know your interests. If we are forced to decide our whole future when we have no experience, we will have nothing to base our choices on. One in three New Zealand university students drops out of their degree. This goes to show the societal pressure of leaving school and going straight to university isn't having the desired effect. Imagine getting halfway through a degree and feeling as though all that time has been wasted. In the end, the person it will most greatly affect is yourself. You can't live your life to please others; what's the point?

Furthermore, parents have a massive influence on our career choices. If you decide your future job at 16 or earlier, chances are, it is not really your decision. 71 per cent of teens say their political and social ideology is very similar to that of their parents. What you think you

want to do may not be of interest to you at all — just to your parents — but you feel inclined to choose it anyway. Many parents feel entitled to input into their child's career choice because they feel like they know best; or that they deserve a say after all they've done for you, but it is completely up to you how you live your life. Choosing a career as a teen will be hard. None of us has the real-world experience to know our true interests and even if we know now, it could easily change in a few years. Think back to that dream job when you were five years old, is it still the same?

Since most of us are unsure of what our ideal future would look like, we should consider taking time after finishing school to decide. Not jumping straight into the first stage of your career gives you a chance to gain practical knowledge that will round your character. Immersing yourself in new environments and experiences also positively affects neuroplasticity; the ability of the brain to form new neural pathways and connections which, coincidentally, improves things like logic and decision-making. Students who take a gap year are often more mature and driven than those who have come straight from school. That is if you want to go to university. There are so many other options. You could get an apprenticeship, go to polytechnic, enter the Defence Force, it's up to you. Gap years can give you the life experience you need to make the right choice for your future. Employers are not looking for knowledge in their potential employees, they are looking for real world skills: teamwork, problem-solving, communication. These are gained from life experiences like travelling, working, or exposing yourself to new things. The knowledge we gain may even give us a new perspective and a better understanding of what we want to do.

Additionally, what you decide now does not have to be your job for the rest of your life. Most New Zealanders move away from their initial career path. We need to realise that changing career paths does not mean you have failed; it means you have gained a life experience and used that to discover your passion.

Stop letting other people decide your life for you. We are almost adults now, take responsibility! Make your own decisions. Choose your own path. Live your own life; but take your time. It's OK not to know what you want to do with your life. 🌻

*Maia Grosser, Year 12*



# Living with the Weather

In my cosy house high on a hill, I wrap myself in a fluffy blanket and shiver at the cold as I grumpily navigate my way across my messy room to the window. Unhappily, I stare out the tinted glass as thunder roars ominously and trees sway violently in the wailing wind. The sky is a mottled blanket of dark grey and purple clouds. Being inside is boring, the Wi-Fi died half an hour ago and my sisters are playing card games. Boring, boring, boring. The best I can do is watch the weather like a meteorologist and count the lightning while my siblings argue. Torrential rain hits the roof with a deafening rumble, drowning out the horrific screeching. Below the house, the paddocks are a stormy sea.

Muddy water with rough rolling waves crashes into fallen trees. There has been too much rain, the riverbed that was empty last week now engulfs entire paddocks. The bumpy gravel road is now a grade-five river, and the sun is nowhere to be seen. Wistfully, I remember the hot dry weather of last week, how I hid from the hot sun and wished for rain.

Golden grass seeds danced in the dry summer wind while a tui sang a melodious song from the leafy green canopy above. A mischievous gust of wind teased and tugged at my old straw hat as I searched for a place to hide from the merciless sun. Once a suitable location was found — under an old broadleaf tree with expansive gnarled roots — I threw down my plastic bag and myself onto the

cool shaded ground. A decision I regretted immediately. Tree roots and rocks met my back with gusto and grass and dirt stuck uncomfortably to my legs. My legs, I discovered, were a shocking patchwork of alternating red and white. I'd applied my sunscreen unevenly again. "People as pale as me shouldn't go out in sunny weather," I thought as I sat up and dusted myself off. Reaching for my discarded bag I grabbed it and pulled out a half-empty bottle of lukewarm water. The water was gone in seconds as I greedily gulped it, not allowing a single drop to go to waste.

Outside my shady sanctuary, the sun was relentless. The world has turned on the sepia filter. Crunchy burnt yellow grass covered the once green paddock and bordered the dusty red gravel road. A roaring rumble echoed throughout the farm as a dusty red ute raced down the bumpy gravel road creating a thick trail of orange dust that blew in the wind. Thick clogging dust that made me sneeze and cough like a 50-year-old smoker as it covered me and the paddock in a layer of fine orange dust like a smattering of dirty snow.

Across the burnt dusty paddock sat a painfully empty riverbed covered in dust from disuse. Longingly, I stared at the dull rocky patch while remembering the twinkling clear blue water and the shock and relief of ducking under during a stinking hot day. How I wished for rain. ☀

Charlotte O'Reilly, Year 12

# Social Media Stupidity

"Social Media spawns so many 'geniuses', that it must truly be a blessing! And you have to believe me, because according to a quiz on Facebook, I'm smarter than Einstein!" This type of unchecked, uneducated, unruly behaviour is why social media remains pointless. We, as Generation Z, have the world's knowledge at our fingertips. It takes mere milliseconds for articles written by the greatest minds of our time to appear on our screens and yet we form biased, ignorant opinions and attitudes on various topics, simply because we read a post on Twitter. But do we ever do more research into the subject? Do we consider alternate views? Do we even stop to think?

We cannot bring ourselves to do anything more than click and scroll. We can't possibly afford *such* an effort! Yet, we feel obliged to inform, educate and explain *everything* to the poor, unfortunate persons we think might not understand regardless of our own level of knowledge and understanding of the subject. The comment section is always there when you need to complain or rant — you don't need to *know* what you're talking about. We scroll, click, scan, scroll; an endless cycle leading us further down the rabbit hole. Hours race by without the blink of an eye, effectively wasting our days and nights. So many high school students can't bear to separate themselves from their beloved "cells" for even a moment, constantly posting pictures and sending snaps. Cellular slaves and slumberless sleeps.

It doesn't stop there. Not only does it take our time, it

actually saps our spirit. Our empathy. Our humility. And our humanity. People can't have intimate, meaningful conversations or personal interactions with one another anymore because they turn to the internet and their Facebook "friends" instead, causing social isolation and eroding empathy. Multiple studies have found a strong link between heavy social media usage and an increased risk of depression, anxiety, loneliness and more. We can see the "perfection" of false lives and feel inadequate.

With the lack of face-to-face communication, so much is lost. Without facial expressions or tone of voice, how can we tell the true meaning behind a message? Our understanding of emotions exits leaving us scavenging for the scarcest scraps of sympathy, if even that. People can say what they want, when they want, to whom they want without having to face consequences. Cowards can be brave because, unfortunately, we can't punch someone through a screen, no matter how much we want to. "The good thing about social media is it gives everyone a voice. The bad thing is ... it gives everyone a voice," says digital analyst Brian Solis.

I believe Social Media could truly be a blessing if we taught ourselves to use it correctly and behave properly. So next time you pick up your phone: find the facts, think it through, elevate empathy and then, only then, should you start typing. ☀

Anja Schoeman, Year 10









## THE POCKET

He knocked  
and she called him into the dark  
where she sat in her long skirt and apron.  
'Why are you in the dark?' he asked.

'That I am not,' replied the old woman  
'for I have with me  
in this apron pocket  
fifteen lights —  
fifteen dazzling lights  
each one a mystery.'

Her fingers feel the pocket full of light  
in the dark place of the house  
each bead a story.

By Anne Powell ©

In *The Edge of Things*. The Cuba Press, 2018

Photo by De Visu/Shutterstock.com



# LOVE ALL OUR NEIGHBOURS

THOMAS O'LOUGHLIN recommends that Christians support the United Nations work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals as they express social and ecological justice.

Christians need to find a moral common ground with others. The 17 Sustainable Development Goals proposed by the United Nations — which in its most basic role is a promoter of human dialogue — have specific interest for Christians.

That they have been so widely adopted by countries makes them a common language of morality, uniting countries, cultures and people across the world. It is worth listing the 17 UN goals and noting how they overlap with the work that Christian faith calls us to do.



## END POVERTY IN ALL ITS FORMS EVERYWHERE.

Some Christians have not embraced the preferential option for the poor as part of the mind of the Christ — and some have even tried to characterise it as but Marxist ideology — but our belief that “God does not show partiality” should lead us to see achieving this goal as basic to our practice of discipleship.



## END HUNGER, ACHIEVE FOOD SECURITY AND IMPROVED NUTRITION AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE.

Hunger is inseparable from poverty, and food security is the only way to ensure that hunger and famine are not recurring. Moreover, food security is a key to promoting peace between countries, and so a work of the peace-makers (Mt 5:9).



## ENSURE HEALTHY LIVES AND PROMOTE WELL-BEING FOR ALL AT ALL AGES.

It is the will of God that we should have life and have it to the full (Jn 10:10) and this supposes health which itself is seen as a gift of God and a blessing. The image of caring for the sick has animated the churches’

action from the story of the good Samaritan to Pope Francis’s image of the Church as a field hospital.



## ENSURE INCLUSIVE AND EQUITABLE QUALITY EDUCATION AND PROMOTE LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.

We are not merely passive receivers of a divine code, but beings who grow in wisdom and knowledge. Down the centuries, teaching has been a basic Christian vocation and we need always to recall that Jesus was addressed as “rabbi” and he invited his students (“disciples”) to be involved in lifelong learning.



## ACHIEVE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS.

For many officials in the Catholic Church the notion that women cannot preside at the Eucharist is a fundamental. The fact that the equality of women with men in society is one of the discoveries of our time might encourage them to revisit the notion of inequality that is inherent in the notion of *ordo* (hence “ordination”) derived as it is from the Roman imperial class structures, while also recalling that words such as *pontifex* and *sacerdotium* are not Christian in origin but borrowed from late Roman religion (as are purple soutanes). We can indeed now borrow some good ideas from the marketplace, just as we have borrowed some daft ones in the past.



## ENSURE AVAILABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER AND SANITATION FOR ALL.

That this is basic to our humanity should be obvious to us in that we invoke the image of “a dry weary land without water” (Ps 63:1) to describe our dependence on God.





**ENSURE ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, RELIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND MODERN ENERGY FOR ALL.**

We cannot claim to care for creation and not want that energy to be sustainable. We could see this Goal as a particular and specific expression of an aspect of our vocation as Christians in the world in that we see each person as a neighbour to be loved.



**PROMOTE SUSTAINED, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC GROWTH, FULL AND PRODUCTIVE EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK FOR ALL.**

To those who want a “spiritual religion” which looks away from socioeconomic questions, we should recall the words of the Prophet Zechariah: “Do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor” (7:10). Justice in the workplace is part and parcel of the Christian vision.



**BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROMOTE INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE INDUSTRIALISATION AND FOSTER INNOVATION.**

Every act of innovation, every act of building, is an acknowledgement of human dignity, and for us, as Christians, a sharing in the infinite creative work that holds all in being.



**REDUCE INEQUALITY WITHIN AND AMONG COUNTRIES.**

Pope Paul VI famously said that development is another word for peace. We cannot proclaim our vision of God — and that every human being is created in God’s image and likeness — and not want to reduce inequality within and among countries. This was a Christian goal (even if one we often forgot) long before it was an UN goal.



**MAKE CITIES AND HUMAN SETTLEMENTS INCLUSIVE, SAFE, RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE.**

Cities can be places of human flourishing — and Christianity emerged and spread as an urban religion — but they can also be “dark satanic mills” where human beings suffered during the first industrial revolution. We need to think more about what is our moral vision, as Christians, of what is a healthy, ecological, human-valuing city.



**ENSURE SUSTAINABLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION PATTERNS.**

For Christians, Earth is a gift from God in which we work with skill, ingenuity and respect. This has been a theme of Catholic Social Teaching for well over a century, beginning with *Rerum Novarum*.



**TAKE URGENT ACTION TO COMBAT CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS IMPACTS.**

Bearing witness to the truth is basic to Christian living; and its opposite, to willingly hide or obscure the truth, is the basis of sin. We now have the serious problem of “climate change deniers” — some in prominent Church positions — and still others who do not see this as impinging on “religion”.



**CONSERVE AND SUSTAINABLY USE THE OCEANS, SEA AND MARINE RESOURCES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

Given our need to be wise and active carers of creation, this Goal is but a specific — and important — instance of our mission within creation.



**PROTECT, RESTORE AND PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE USE OF TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEMS, SUSTAINABLY MANAGE FORESTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND HALT AND REVERSE LAND DEGRADATION AND HALT BIODIVERSITY LOSS.**

This Goal can be read against the poetic vision of every living thing — plant and animal — as coming into existence at God’s bidding (Gen 1).



**PROMOTE PEACEFUL AND INCLUSIVE SOCIETIES FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDE ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL AND BUILD EFFECTIVE, ACCOUNTABLE AND INCLUSIVE INSTITUTIONS AT ALL LEVELS.**

In 2007, Benedict XVI said we need to: “Eliminate the structural causes of the dysfunctions of the world economy and correct models of growth which have proved incapable of ensuring respect for the environment.” It was repeated by Francis in *Laudato Si’*.



**STRENGTHEN THE MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND REVITALISE THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.**

The vision of the Christ is that we be peaceful and peace-making (Mt 5:9) and seek to collaborate with all people of goodwill. As early Christian wisdom put it: “Whatever is true, honourable, just, pure, pleasing, commendable, excellent or worthy of praise, think about these things ... and the God of peace will be with you” (Phil 4:8-9). ☀

Photo: Flooding in Pakistan [Wikipedia Commons]

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## It's about Reconciliation

**I**n July Pope Francis made a penitential pilgrimage to Canada and to the unmarked graves of the Indigenous children who had died of abuse at Catholic Boarding Schools. At these schools the children were raised as "white" and forbidden to speak their native languages. Francis viewed the graves and apologised and asked forgiveness of the Métis, Inuit and First Nations people as part of his pilgrimage of penitence.

Returning to Rome, Francis gave an in-flight press conference. One journalist, who was Indigenous, asked Francis about the Doctrine of Discovery. The Pope did not appear to know what it was, asking: "What is it?"

The Doctrine of Discovery lurks in international law to this day. It began as a series of Papal edicts issued in the 15th and 16th centuries in order to manage conquests of the New World during the European "Age of Discovery". Initially, Portugal and Spain were in dispute over "who got there first" in claiming rights over the Americas and Africa. The erroneous doctrine *terra nullius* was used. It maintained that there were no people inhabiting the lands the Europeans "discovered" — literally there was no one living

in the new worlds. So the European countries — Portugal, Spain, England, France, Belgium — claimed these territories as their own. Any dispute was settled by the Vatican.

The Doctrine of Discovery was underpinned by the European Christian belief that the natives living in the newly discovered territories were "pagan" — they were subhuman and did not have souls. There was no understanding that the many indigenous peoples had inhabited their lands for thousands of years, nor of their sophisticated systems of living in the land. Today we can see how this belief and its working out through colonisation has wrought terrible harm to indigenous peoples around the world.

It is critical that the Doctrine of Discovery is rescinded formally because it still stands as Catholic Church law and in the Constitutional law in many countries, including Aotearoa. All the papal bulls that underwrite the Doctrine are part of the ecclesiastical law of the Church. The Doctrine has encouraged the Church's engagement in gross injustice and rescinding it would be a step in the path to reconciliation.

The fact that Pope Francis admitted that he did not know about the Doctrine of Discovery is appalling. The Canadian bishops announced that they "reject and resist the ideas associated with the Doctrine of Discovery in the strongest possible way" and called on the Church to issue a new statement on it. We could have expected that Francis would have discussed it with Canadian Indigenous people. Certainly the media showed numerous banners bearing the call to "Rescind the Doctrine of Discovery" during his visit. We can wonder which Vatican department failed to brief Francis properly, thus contributing to the diplomatic failure.

Since Francis's pilgrimage, commentators have said that the Doctrine of Discovery no longer applies. Some claim that the Vatican II document "Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity (*Ad Gentes*)" replaces the Doctrine. The Decree certainly offers a different approach to evangelisation but it did not rescind the doctrine — it did not say it was wrong.

There are also technical arguments as to why Pope Francis did not use the word "genocide" to describe the widespread death of so many Canadian Indigenous children in residential schools. Again it seems as if the Church is not taking full responsibility for the past and for the erroneous beliefs that allowed children to die in numbers and be buried in unmarked graves.

In May 2012 the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues addressed the Doctrine of Discovery, acknowledging that it had been used for centuries to justify the seizure of Indigenous land and the subjugation of the people, and said it must be repudiated by the United Nations. The Holy See's permanent observer did not follow with a call for the rescinding of the Doctrine.

Now is the time for Pope Francis to act. That would liberate aspects of constitutional law in many countries. It would mean that Indigenous Sovereignty is no longer subservient to that Church law — which was the situation before the colonisers arrived! 🌻



**David Tolich** was a member of the Auckland Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and a member of the National Evangelisation Justice, Development and Peace Commission.

Photo by Gary A Corcoran Arts/Shutterstock.com





## That All May See

**R**iver Blindness is a parasitic infection spread by flies that live near fast-flowing rivers. It causes severe skin irritation, itching and leads to irreversible blindness.

Imagine thousands of painful parasites crawling under your skin, making their way into your eyes, gnawing away at your optic nerve, slowly stealing your sight and eventually making you blind.

This is the harsh reality for millions of people living in sub-Saharan Africa who are affected by a Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) called Onchocerciasis, or commonly known as River Blindness. NTDs infect more than one billion people in the world's poorest communities of which Africa has the highest burden. They thrive in impoverished, tropical regions where there is poor sanitation, unsafe drinking water, numerous insects to spread disease and little access to health services and Government support.

River Blindness is spread by the bite of infected black river flies that infest sub-Saharan Africa, where more than 99 per cent of River Blindness occurs. Worldwide 36 million people are blind, yet 75 per cent of blindness is preventable or treatable.

In Nigeria, an estimated 31 million people are at risk of blindness, and a

variety of debilitating and disfiguring skin conditions caused by River Blindness where the disease carrying blackfly parasites are still rife.

The parasites bloom into hundreds of thousands of baby worms. They knot up together into lumps you can feel just under your skin. People rub and rip at their skin, until it becomes thick and rough. They call this Elephant Skin. Even worse is Leopard Skin, where the suffering is so bad, sufferers cut at themselves with knives, hooks and sharp spoons. Then the parasites go for the eyeballs. Gnawing at everything, they chew

through the optic nerves. The person's eyesight dims and fades. This blindness cannot be reversed.

Approximately 90 per cent of NTDs can be treated with medicine. Adults and children, like Kabiru (in photo and below) need sight-saving medicine annually to kill the parasites and help protect their eyes from the unbearable itching and loss of sight caused by River Blindness.


Through the generosity of Christian Blind Mission (cbm) supporters, the medicine is delivered by cbm-funded field workers to people at risk of being bitten by the blackfly and contracting River Blindness.

Christian Blind Mission is an international Christian development organisation, whose work includes delivering life-changing medication, support and surgeries to people disadvantaged by poverty and disability. cbm aspires to follow the teachings of Jesus in Luke 10:27: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself." ☀

For more information visit:  
[www.cbmnz.org.nz](http://www.cbmnz.org.nz)

**Murray Sheard** has worked in international development for over 15 years and is the Chief Executive Officer of Christian Blind Mission New Zealand.






**cbm**  
christian blind mission

"I want to be just like Daddy,  
...except for being blind."

Adults and children, like Kabiru, need sight-saving medicine annually to kill the parasites and help protect their eyes from the unbearable itching and life-long loss of sight caused by River Blindness.

To learn more, scan the QR code using your mobile phone camera or go to [www.cbmnz.org.nz/masu4](http://www.cbmnz.org.nz/masu4)



YOUR GIFT  
x7  
MULTIPLIED

Kabiru (aged 10) guides his blind father Masu





# A MEDITATION ON JAMES

CHRISTOPHER HOLMES writes that there is much to encourage hope, especially for us in Aotearoa, in the New Testament Letter of James.

**T**hese are tough times for many in Aotearoa. The cost of living is rising. Rents and home prices are

outrageous. Social mobility is basically non-existent. Inherited wealth functions as the great dividing line between the

“haves” and the “have nots”. There is no capital gains tax on investment properties. The financial chasm between those who own the rental houses and those who rent them grows wider. There is a distance between the “working classes” and the “professional classes”. Beneath a veneer of prosperity, many are struggling for the basics.

There are multiple causes for this predicament but I think that the fundamental reason for the current state of our society is because we have forgotten about God. Recently, I have been working my way through the New Testament book of James — a hard book to read. I suspect one reason why we hear so little of it is that James says a lot about the perils of being rich. James also talks about the importance of taming the tongue. We might think: How are these two points related? And how does this hard-hitting book encourage resilience and hope at this time? Let me explain.

## Christians Trust in God

God matters more than anything else for Christians. The first thing that James says about himself is that he is “a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Jas 1:1). The Christian believer is a servant of God and so trusts God, especially when we “face trials of any kind” (Jas 1:2).

We have all, whether in the Church or not, found these last few COVID years a trial which has called for resilience. Christian faith encourages resilience, but in what way? As James says: “Faith



produces endurance" (Jas 1:3). The resilient endure, yes, but they do so in relation to God who is good and the wellspring of our faith.

James says to those who are "lacking in wisdom" to "ask God, who gives generously and ungrudgingly" (Jas 1:5). And to "ask in faith" (Jas 1:6). God's wisdom, when received in faith, helps us to discern the difference between truth and lies. We'll explore this in a moment.

### Wealth Isolates

Christian faith has much to say about the dangers of wealth. The New Testament is unremitting in its condemnation of the wealthy who oppress the poor.

James notes "the rich will disappear like a flower in the field" (Jas 1:10) and "will wither away" (Jas 1:11). James addresses this because wealth takes our attention away from God and from one another. Wealth isolates. And there is nothing that exacerbates our vulnerability more than isolation, whether it be from God or one another. Indeed, wealth and busyness go hand in hand. Both destroy resilience, diverting our attention from God and our neighbour.

### Love Builds Resilience

Resilience has in the end to do with God. What makes us resilient and resistant to the lies in our consumer culture? In short, love. God is love, and all love comes "from the Father of lights" (Jas 1:17).

James writes that the one who endures temptation "will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him" (Jas 1:12). To these words — "to those who love him" — we must turn again and again.

### Loving God Gives Endurance

When we love God we receive the gift of endurance. When we love God — and not possessions — we keep ourselves "unstained by the world" (Jas 1:27). When we love God and receive God's promises in faith, we develop serious spiritual stamina which ultimately fills us with hope.

### Loving God Gives Hope

Hope is not a platitude or banal optimism because it has to do with God. When we trust God and do what God commands, we see ourselves clearly. We see that we need forgiveness. When we let go of sin, we let go of its first fruit, which is death. Hope triumphs over death and it makes us resilient and resistant to temptation.

Furthermore, hope makes us resistant to the desire for riches. Hope also fortifies us against the desire to speak thoughtlessly and to slander others. "Let everyone be quick to listen," says James (Jas 1:19). When we listen to God speak to us through Scripture, we become people with whom God is pleased. We see those around us not as obstacles to

**Wealth takes our attention away from God and from one another. Wealth isolates. And there is nothing that exacerbates our vulnerability more than isolation, whether it be from God or one another.**

overcome but as those whom God loves in and through Jesus Christ. We see the shocking divisions in our society as caused by poor policies as well as hearts that are far from God and isolated from their neighbours.

### Listening to God Gives Wisdom

As we fall deeper in love with God, James suggests we no longer exalt busyness but rather a life of listening to God with a view to doing what God commands. This develops resilience and gives birth to hope. God gives wisdom so that we can discern the difference between truth and lies. Truth anchors our hope, generating resilience to consumer culture's lies.

There is nothing better than listening to God. When we listen to God, and do what God says, we experience Jesus's promise of new life — "eternal life". This is in contrast to

the life that consumer culture peddles is no life at all.

If we trust in God's love we must "rid ourselves of all sordidness and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls" (Jas 1:21). When we welcome the "implanted word" we are opening ourselves to the gifts of love — resilience, hope and wisdom which benefit ourselves and the community. When we have a pure heart, we see God, and there is nothing better than God!

### Loving God and Loving Others

To fall more deeply in love with God is a good for the community because in loving God we have a sense of priorities. We discern that the pursuit of wealth is empty and isolating from the community. We become "slow to speak, slow to anger" (Jas 1:19). We no longer see and judge others as obstacles or irritants but as neighbours and gifts of God.

Bridling the tongue is a great way to quiet the heart. A tamed tongue quenches the desire to exalt ourselves or speak ill of others. This discipline slows us down and helps us recognise that the desire for status, wealth and control over others ultimately gives birth to death. The "implanted word" of our Lord Jesus Christ gives birth to the life that is truly life (Jas 1:21). This is a hopeful life.

James offers a costly but profoundly life-giving programme for resilience and hope at this time. We must love God and love others, curbing our desires to control others materially, physically or verbally. As lovers of God we become servants in our communities — "believers who are lowly". As James writes: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world" (Jas 1:27). ☀

**Christopher Holmes** is Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of Otago.



**L**uke's Gospels has three remarkable parables in which female characters image God. In one, a woman hides yeast in the bread dough; in another, a woman searches for a lost coin; and in a third, which we shall explore, a widow resisting injustice confronts an unjust judge. The Christian tradition has generally downplayed and overlooked these female images of God by removing them from their ancient context.

Jesus is near the end of his journey from Galilee to Jerusalem when he tells the parable of the widow. When the Pharisees question him about when the reign of God will come (Lk 17:20-37), Jesus tells a parable full of irony (Lk 18:2-5).

Many interpreters say that the verse before the parable (Lk 18:1) and the three verses after it (Lk 18:6-8) were added later. This means that Luke, or later editors, tried to tame this unconventional woman by reshaping her in a docile, acceptable role of a woman who prays unceasingly. After all, there is nothing threatening about a widow who prays all day. But in the parable, neither the widow nor the judge conforms to expectations.

#### THE JUDGE

A judge who does not fear God (Lk 18: 2, 4) is a poor judge. He ignores the ancient codes of honour and shame. He embodies the abuse of the Torah: "Consider what you are doing, for you judge not on behalf of human beings but on God's behalf ... Now let the fear of God be upon



## RESISTING UNJUST STRUCTURES

In her commentary on Luke 18: 1-8 KATHLEEN RUSHTON presents the widow as deliberately resisting injustice which challenges interpretations of this parable as an exhortation to prayer.

you; take care in what you do (2 Chr 19:6-7; Deut 24:17).

In the portrayal the judge becomes even more unsettling. God is the very opposite of this unjust judge: "... God will not ignore the supplication of the orphan, or the widow when she pours out her complaint" (Sir 35:14-19).

In ancient societies, widows were structurally victims of economic and social injustice as well as legal manoeuvrings. Those who first heard this parable would

have known that judicial decisions could be bought and favoured influential people. Attempts at exploitation are named in the widow's cry: "Grant me justice against my opponent" (Lk 18:3).

#### THE WIDOW

Biblical references to widows are usually mentioned with orphans and foreigners — vulnerable persons without resources. There is great concern for widows and warnings about violating their rights (Deut





27:19; Isa 10:2).

The widow portrayed in the parable is not poor and defenceless. She goes into the public place of the courts which is the arena of men. She fronts up to the unjust judge crying out her demands. She “kept coming” relentlessly and assertively pursuing her case. The judge “later says to himself” that: “this widow keeps bothering me” (NRSV; “pestering me” in JB). Such translations weaken the Greek word which literally means “presents me with work/hard work/trouble”. And they verge on stereotypical and sexist labelling of a woman who

moves beyond expected behaviour.

The final incongruity is that a powerful judge trembles before a seemingly defenceless widow who might give him a black eye (18:5)! The Greek verb *hypōpiazein* translated as “she may not wear me out” (NRSV) or “worry me to death” (JB) is a boxing term which literally means “to strike under the eye.” Its figurative meaning is “to slander” or “besmirch a reputation.” The outcome is that in order to save face, the judge does justice for the widow.

#### BIBLICAL TRADITION OF PERSISTENT RESISTANCE

The injustice done to the widow is twofold. Her opponent is most likely a relative who should have protected her. She is, also, the victim of an unjust judicial decision which denies her rights. The parable says several times that the judge refuses to act.

In the Old Testament, laments address both those who inflict such injustice and those in whose midst such injustice occurs. Scripture, and the parable itself, present this double injustice to the widow as structural. God intervenes against structural injustice.

**To understand this parable, we need to understand that it is less about a model for personal prayer, and more about resisting structural injustice – forcefully and repeatedly, if necessary.**

The widow's persistent resistance is reflected in the biblical tradition. In a previous parable, Jesus explains that seed which falls on good ground “bears fruit with persistent resistance (*hypomonē*)” (Lk 8:15). In the Book of Revelation, persistent resistance enables the faithful to choose the values of the reign of God rather than those of the reign of Rome.

#### PERSISTENT RESISTANCE TODAY

The parable of the woman who resists injustice is puzzling. It has often been interpreted as an encouragement to persistent prayer, but must we petition God so relentlessly to be heard? And will God grant justice only to shut us up, or save embarrassment?

To understand this parable, we need to understand that it is less about a model for personal prayer, and more about resisting structural injustice – forcefully and repeatedly, if necessary.

John Paul II's encyclical *On Social Concerns* names structures of injustice as “structures of sin” that “are rooted in personal sin, and thus always linked to *concrete acts* of individuals who introduce these structures, consolidate them and make them difficult to remove” (par 36). This term is seldom applied to situations of our contemporary world where “the collective behaviour of certain social groups, big or small, or even of whole nations and blocs of nations ... are the result of the accumulation and concentration” of many personal actions.

“Structures of sin” persist because those “who are in a position to avoid, eliminate or at least limit certain social evils . . . fail to do so out of laziness, fear or the conspiracy of silence, through secret complicity or indifference; . . . [some] take refuge in the supposed impossibility of changing the world, and . . . [others] sidestep the effort and sacrifice required” (par 56).

#### PROPHETIC HOPE

The widow images God by shedding light on our individual responsibility to confront the reality of the structures within which we live, choose and act. “Crying out to God day and night” against social and environmental injustice describes the life of believers: facing injustice, naming it, denouncing it before the powerful, and working together across boundaries with the patient power of persistent resistance which comes from hope in God's nearness. Such hope never gives up on taking steps to create new structures of grace.

This parable has liberating potential showing that women, as well as men, fully give flesh to God's mission in the face of interlocking structures of racism, sexism, military power, economic poverty and other structural injustices. ☀

Artwork: *Protest* (discarded clothing and textile remnants, 22 x 22 inches) by Linda Friedman Schmidt © Used with permission [www.lindafriedmanschmidt.com](http://www.lindafriedmanschmidt.com)  
Instagram: [lindafriedmanschmidt](https://www.instagram.com/lindafriedmanschmidt)

16 October: Luke 18:1-8  
RL 29th Sunday of Ordinary Time  
RCL 19th Sunday after Pentecost

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







# I LIFT MY EYES TO THE MOUNTAINS

I live in Te Wai Pounamu (South Island), not far from the Alps and visit them often on weekends and holidays for tramping, biking and skiing. I frequently climb smaller hills around my home in Ōtepoti. I've been thinking recently about what draws me to the mountains, and what I'm learning in the mountains about who I am in God's kingdom.

Primarily, I see myself as acting in the kingdom of God. Spending all my time in the mountains would probably make me too used to them. In fact my visits are not without ethical conflict. I drive to the mountains — which is at the expense of the planet — and I am privileged to have the money, time and the physical health to enjoy them. Yet time in the mountains also helps me more fully participate in God's kingdom.

Mountains lift my mind to God as creator. There is something amazing about how they have been sculpted by forces of nature over thousands of years, yet in winter are blanketed by snow which can last only a few weeks. The sheer scale of the Alps opens me

to better comprehend God's enormity and beauty. I lift my eyes to the mountains — our Creator who makes mountains into life cares about the minutiae of our lives and thoughts.

Most areas in the mountains are accessible only by foot, meaning they can be quiet and isolated. In a mountainous place, without daily work obligations and habits of distraction, I am better able to make room for reflection and prayer. These times often restore me and refocus my attention on what is important among the many activities that make up my daily life. There is biblical precedent to the concept of balancing times of restoration that equip us for our ordinary lives. For example, Jesus is recorded several times in the Gospels as drawing away from crowds of followers to pray, such as in Matthew 14. When I go for an afternoon run or tramp, I'm making space for reflection, too.

Reflection in the mountains does not just restore me, but also gives me joy. This year I have been able to do a lot of skiing. I began by falling over and over ridiculously in the snow, but through practice I am getting better, and I enjoy doing it with dear friends. The fun fills me with zest for life and gives me a concept of God's sense of humour.

Yet mountain adventures are

not always easy or fun. They can be cold, dangerous and death-dealing. Adventuring in them can bring injuries and fear. In my own experience of tramps or runs I have been physically and emotionally exhausted. Learning how to cope with the mountain's challenges has helped me build my skill and resilience and carries over to an ability to cope with challenges in the rest of my life.

Visiting the mountains has become a part of my faith journey, not a holiday from it. I'm restored and energised by appreciating God's creation, reflecting and experiencing joy — I hope it helps me to engage more fully with the tricky issues of climate change, injustice and inequality in our society which are the challenges of God's kinship. Learning to deal with challenges in mountain settings helps me deal with other challenges — just as dealing with challenges in ordinary life probably helps me deal better with the hardships in the mountains. Time in the mountains helps me do what we are all trying to do: prioritise what is important. I find that by recognising God's hand in the awesome and the ordinary, I'm given energy to keep following the way of the cross in God's creation, the kinship of all in creation. ☀



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



# REVIEWS

## Raiātea

by Claire Kaahu White

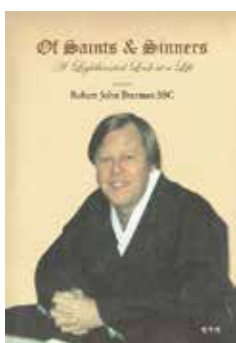
Published by Motuti Marae Trustees, 2022.

Reviewed by Susan Smith

One of the dreams of Pā Henare Tate was to establish not a museum, but rather a treasure house, where tāonga that told the story of Māori Catholicism in North Hokianga would be preserved for future generations. As Pā Henare said: "Raiātea is something more than a museum, it is a puna, a source of knowledge, inspiration, education and well-being for my people." The hāpu at Motuti wanted to name the treasure house, Tamatea, after their tupuna, but they had not reckoned with Dame Whina Cooper who insisted that it

be named Raiātea. As Pā Henare said: "She's our kuia and precious to us."

Claire Kaahu White and her team are to be congratulated on *Raiātea*, which tells the story behind the building of Raiātea at Motuti, close to the final resting place of Bishop Pompallier and Pā Henare. The text is informative, while the photos collected by so many over the years put the reader in touch with the history of Māori Catholicism in North Hokianga. *Raiātea* is a wonderful account of Pā Henare's contribution not only to Māori Catholicism, but to indigenous peoples elsewhere and to Pākehā Catholicism. ☀



## Of Saints and Sinners A Lighthearted Look at a Life

by Robert John Brennan SSC

Published by Bitture Books, Seoul, 2021. (NZD 29.99)

Reviewed by Mary-Ann Greaney

New Zealander Bob Brennan arrived in South Korea as a newly ordained Columban priest in 1966. Aged just 25 he spent the first two years in language school before launching into ministry. His memoir, *Of Saints and Sinners*, is his story of missionary discipleship, told with humour and sensitivity.

Bob has received a number of honours: in 2012 he was awarded the Seoul Metropolitan Government Award for Social Welfare and in 2014 the Asan Foundation Grand Peace Prize, which came with NZD 450,000 which Bob poured into his ministry with the poor. In 2020 he became a Korean citizen — before this he was an honorary citizen.

In 1973 Bob collaborated with parishioners to start a Credit Union. He was the first rector of the Initial Formation Programme for Korean Columban seminarians. Bob has set up and is CEO of a variety of organizations that support and transform the lives of people who have been evicted from their homes due to "progress". Well known as a social activist, he has been evicted six times from his own home.

Most will find *Of Saints and Sinners* a fascinating account of a Columban's ministry in contemporary Korea. ☀

## Ireland and the Magdalene Laundries

### A Campaign for Justice

by Claire McGettrick, Katherine O'Donnell, Maeve O'Rourke, James M Smith and Mari Steed published by I B Tauris, 2021. (NZD 56.37)

Reviewed by Cecily McNeill

I admire the writers of this harrowing account of the way young pregnant girls were treated by orders of nuns in Ireland for most of the 20th century. This exhaustively researched book should come with a warning — beautifully written but not an easy read because its subject matter is up there with the Catholic Church's greatest scandals pertaining to child abuse, aided and abetted by the State. In fact the book highlights the many ways in which Church and State work together to hide the

injustice in their practices towards the marginalised.

Nearly 50 pages of notes to the 200 pages of text show the documentation of the workings of religious sisters in the laundries even to the unmarked graves exhumed in search of an identity.

The five authors have interviewed many of the survivors and their families — their goal, to convince the Irish government of the State's responsibility for the abuse that occurred in the laundries over decades. No apology has been forthcoming.

Critics of New Zealand's own scandal, Gloriavale, will find an echo here as well as the families of the many punished by the Church for falling pregnant before marriage and those interested in constitutional law. ☀





# *The Quiet Girl*

Directed by Colm Bairéad

Reviewed by Paul Sorrell

**W**hat do we owe our children? What does a child need to thrive? These and many other questions are raised in this meticulously crafted Irish film that is relentlessly clear-eyed and unsentimental in its approach to issues that concern us all. Based on the novella *Foster* by Claire Keegan, the film is notable for its Irish Gaelic dialogue, although the characters slip into English readily enough when the need arises.

Cáit — the quiet girl of the title — is living with a clutch of sisters (I was never sure quite how many) in a rundown farmhouse in rural Ireland in 1981. Her mother is at the end of her tether — harassed, exhausted, resentful of her feckless husband who is drinking, smoking and gambling the family's money away. A negligent husband and father, the only thing he is good at is producing ever more children.

With another one on the way, Cáit is sent off to spend a few weeks with her mother's cousin Eibhlín and her husband Séan. While Eibhlín welcomes her new charge with open arms, at first Séan is distant, even resentful. Yet this dairy farming couple is in many ways the opposite of Cáit's birth family: conscientious and houseproud, and involved in their local community, as we see in scenes ranging from a friendly card game in their kitchen to a wake held for a neighbouring farmer whom they had gone out of their way to help.

Yet this family, too, is nurturing a deep sadness. When Eibhlín asks Cáit if she'd like to go with her to the well on the farm property, Cáit asks, disturbingly, if this is something that she'll have to keep a secret. "There are no secrets in this house," answers Eibhlín — words that will come back to haunt her, and us as well.

Shot in an unusual square format, the film unfolds in a

series of short scenes or vignettes. Like Cáit, encountering her changing — and often baffling — world, we are asked to create the connections between them for ourselves. Hoarding her words, painfully shy and introverted, yet possessed of an almost luminous poise, the figure of Cáit stands at the heart of this profoundly moving and unsettling Irish drama. Despite — or more likely because of — the utterly devastating final scene (this is not a film for those who demand happy endings), *The Quiet Girl* will stay with me for a long time to come. ☀

## **PEACE** that the World Cannot Give Silent Retreat 16-19 January 2023



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Led by Kath Houston, a Director of the  
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Or contact Linda Polaschek **020 4797955**



# Cross Currents

by Jane Higgins



**B**eing good ancestors: this idea resonates with many people in the context of the climate emergency. It's a foundational principle among Indigenous communities and is now gaining widespread acceptance as people recognise the dangers of short-term thinking in relation to our use of resources. Being a good ancestor means rejecting the short-term thinking that has been "business as usual" in our political and economic systems for years. In terms of climate change, short termism can be catastrophic for future generations. It is a form of colonising the future.

Climate change needs both urgent action and intergenerational thinking. The urgency confronts us daily. The devastating floods in Pakistan have affected 33 million people, 1 in 7 of the population. Over 1,000 people have lost their lives and a massive one third of the country has been inundated.

Both Caritas Aotearoa and Christian World Service are running appeals for Pakistan at present. These agencies work with partner organisations in Pakistan, that is, with locals who know what's needed. If you are considering a donation, these are reliable agencies for getting assistance to those in need.

Meanwhile, in Aotearoa, flooding at the top of both our main islands has caused major damage and disruption. This winter has been the wettest on record (by a significant margin) for Nelson and its environs. The Maitai river cascaded down Nelson streets, slips destroyed roads, hillsides and walking tracks and

dozens of homes were red and yellow stickered. The damage reminded me of the earthquakes here in Ōtautahi a decade ago. It is damage that will take years to fix, but the next deluge may come much sooner than that.

What of long-term thinking? Communities the world over are engaged in collective action with future generations in mind. Sometimes we don't realise just how many people care. In a recent peer-reviewed article in the journal *Nature Communications*, researchers announced the results of a nationwide survey in the United States which found that respondents significantly underestimated how much their compatriots cared about

climate change and supported green policies. While polls indicate that up to 80 per cent of Americans support climate policies, the average American estimates that proportion at only about 40 per cent. This was the case regardless of respondents' political orientation, education, age, race, media preferences and income.

This research suggests that we are in danger of overestimating how many of our fellow citizens are in the camp of denial and delay. If we know that others are similarly concerned, that others also want to be good ancestors, it's easier for us to take collective action. The voices of denial and delay are loud but they are fewer than we might think.

There is action we can take right now. If you haven't yet voted in the local body elections, please do. Take a look at who, among your candidates, wants to be a good ancestor, and intends to promote policies accordingly. These elections are important because cities and regions are at the forefront of the fight for climate justice. They are more agile than nation states and more connected with local communities. Change at the local level is possible and powerful. Let's vote for our tamariki. Voting closes at midday on Saturday 8 October. 🌅



**TUI MOTU InterIslands**  
The Independent Catholic Magazine Limited

Tui Motu magazine provides Catholic as well as ecumenical and inter-faith perspectives and discussion on current issues in church and society. It focuses particularly on issues affecting Aotearoa New Zealand and the Pacific. Its intent is to promote the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, engaging faith and the world through informed, thoughtful comment and discussion for a general readership. The magazine publishes 11 issues per year in print and regular digital postings on social media.

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

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

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

Opinions in letters are not necessarily those of the Magazine.

## YES TO WOMEN PRIESTS

In her letter opposing the ordination of women (*TM* August 2022), Kaye Kenrick refers to the symbolism of the Church as the Bride of Christ the Bridegroom. She says this symbolism is lost if the priest is a woman. This is the position taken by the American theologian the late Cardinal Avery Dulles, who wrote as the reason for reserving priestly services to men: "The priest at the altar acts in the person of Christ the Bridegroom."

With respect, this position misinterprets Christ's words to his disciples at the last supper. If he had said: "Do this in my name" there would be merit in the argument of only a man standing in Christ's position. However Christ said: "Do this in memory of me." There is a distinct difference. A woman can commemorate the first consecration of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ just as readily as a man.

**David More, Dunedin/Ōtepoti**

A few years ago I listened as the Bishop implored us to pray for vocations in the Church. At least half the congregation was automatically excluded. Kaye Kenrick believes that the Roman Catholic Church is becoming indistinguishable from other Churches. I think it's time for Christian churches to become more similar. I know many wonderful Anglican women priests. Most of them are older women who have experienced marriage and motherhood. They have so much to offer the Church. Rather than splitting the Church, the ordination of women priests may help to bring it together. I also have an issue with the confessional. Girls and women who have suffered abuse at the hands of men don't want to

make their confession to a man, and would feel so much better talking to another woman. After all, God is neither male nor female. And I would like to add that I have often raised a glass of wine with my priestly friends of the female persuasion.

**Helen Carver, Dannevirke/  
Tāmaki-nui-a-Rua**

## STEWARDSHIP CONCEPT STILL VALID

Thank you for *TM* Issue 274 "Loving Earth's Community| Aroha to Hapori o te Whenua" and the assemblage of inspiring articles it has. In particular I enjoyed Sarah Hart's description of their pastoral situation in "Learning to Farm". It was so honest and her readings from the Hebrew scriptures gave an added dimension to the piece. Could you follow up with Sarah in another year and ask her to describe their current situation with any successes and failures they might have had in the light of all factors she sets out?

**Graeme Siddle, Palmerston North/  
Te Papa-i-Oea**

Kathleen Rushton and Tony Watkins wrote in the September issue that we should do away with the concept of stewardship and should "see ourselves as integrally related in love with creation".

This may be true when we consider creation as a whole, but when we consider that most of us have a small patch of creation that we have to look after, the concept of stewardship aptly applies. Sarah Hart writing in the

September issue and most farmers in the TVNZ programme *Country Calendar* obviously have a relationship with and love for creation as advocated by Kathleen, but they see themselves as guardians or stewards who want to pass on their farm to their successors in as good or usually better shape than they received it. Who would argue with that? For these farmers and for urban dwellers like me, our natural, human-made and community environment, which we should "see ourselves as integrally related in love with", forms an important responsibility of *oikonomia*, or stewardship in our little patch.

**David Williams, Wellington/  
Te Whanganui a Tara**

## SHARE INFORMATION

Thank you so much for seeking out and sending me the article about co-governance by Chris Finlayson. I loved it when I read it initially in *Tui Motu* (Issue 272 July 2022). I found it enlightening! But then, as we head into the local government election in my home town of Gisborne, the issue of co-governance is a key feature in our local elections and I am finding people very uninformed of the term and fearful of the concept (as Chris Finlayson says). I want to share the article with friends and people I discuss the election with. It is balanced and factual so I don't believe those I share it with could be offended — just educated. This is another example of how wonderful, life-giving and relevant *Tui Motu* is.

**Tracy Robinson, Gisborne/  
Tūranganui-a-Kiwa**



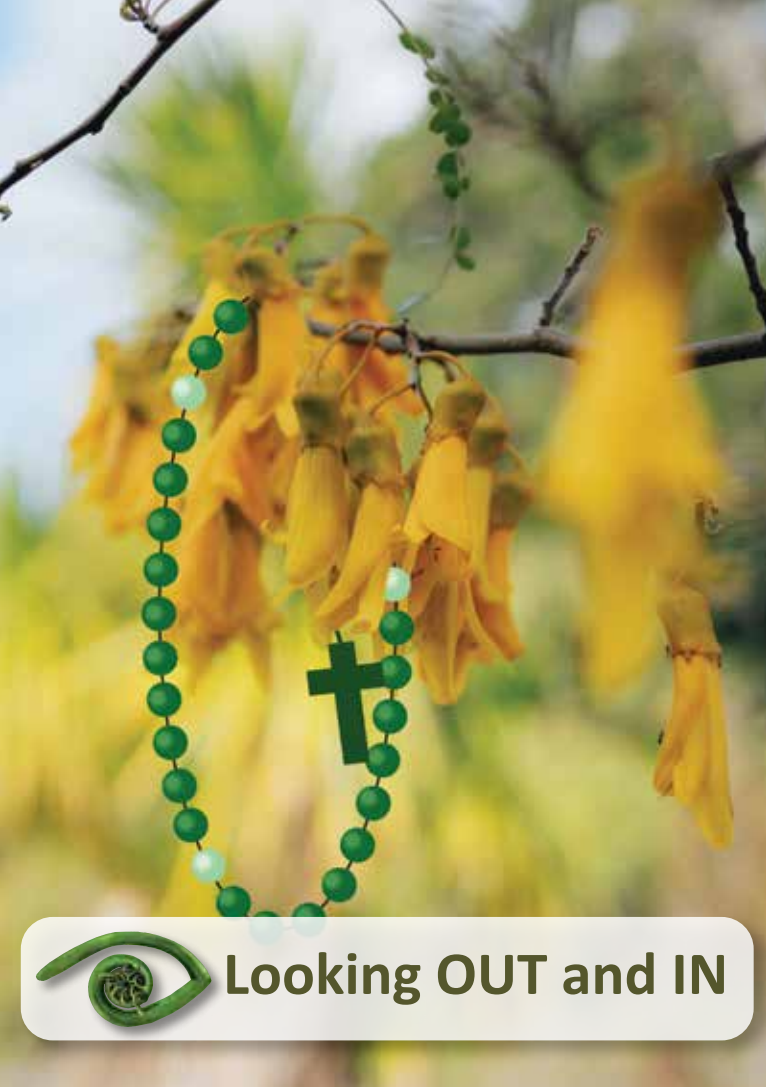
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## Looking OUT and IN

**A**s I watch the gleaming gold of a setting sun, and the chaotic scatter of yellow kōwhai flowers in our neighbours' garden, I am reminded of a regular Friday evening gathering, also golden, far away in Lima 30 years ago.

In the early 90s I travelled and volunteered in Latin America for a year. I lived spontaneously and dreamed in Spanish. My biggest transformation was re-shaping my faith in God. By the time I finished high school, I had already concluded that the Genesis story of creation was more myth than history. This felt like huge rebellion from the faith of my family and Church.

In Latin America, the heretical beliefs gathered pace. So much of the Old Testament didn't align with the message of Jesus: stories of vengeance and violence; Moses calming God down when he wanted to kill all the Israelites; human trafficking; tribalism; misogyny. And then even the Gospels jarred. How is remarrying after divorcing sinful? Where were the women?

My faith dinghy was springing leaks on all sides. Who to believe if the Bible wasn't my highest authority? Where was truth to be found? Where could I belong? Who could be my faith community? I was in the middle of a stormy sea with no mooring or land to move towards.

After months travelling the torpid scrublands and brassy greens of Central America, Colombia and Ecuador, I arrived in the grey smog of Lima. I was to spend the next eight weeks working at the *Casa Hogar de Madre Teresa de Calcuta* (Sisters of Charity). Time with grounded people pragmatically practising faith was just the mooring I needed.

In the mornings, Hermana Maria del Mar and I would handwash the soiled nappies of the 40 children with severe disabilities living at the Casa. In the afternoons we played games together and sang songs. Maria del Mar was unperturbed by my questions about the Bible and instead went about loving God and our 40 little neighbours. Friday evenings at the Sisters' house were a regular prayer gathering for the Hora Santissima (the most holy hour). Here we revered that Palestinian young woman who had said "Yes!" and brought about God's will on Earth. Over and over we prayed the Hail Mary in Spanish.

Kneeling in prayer, a Protestant New Zealander, I joined the eclectic gathering of nuns, volunteers, street kids and well-heeled matrons. We had spent the day working together and now were silent as we gathered in a circle. There was generosity and welcome. If I had stopped to think about whether I was praying to Mary or through her to God, I would have tripped over quickly. Thankfully, praying the Rosary, I managed to turn off the train of thoughts.

Then and now, the Rosary didn't really make sense to me. Yet a message came through to me in those weeks in Lima. It pushed past my geeky biblical doctrine and seeped past my bio-medical science frameworks. It soaked into my bones. This message is as true in Ōtautahi today, for a weary mother looking out the window as the setting sun alights on kōwhai flowers. Faith doesn't have to be all boxed up and seamless. God unrelentingly welcomes and loves me, all of us. ☀

Photo by Douglas Bagg on Unsplash.

**Kaaren Mathias** lives in Ōtautahi. She cooks naan on a barbeque, forages for free fruit, mentors public health doctor trainees and talks to friends in India.



**Bless us with knowledge  
that nurtures our capacity to discern  
and emboldens us to act justly  
so that we become real neighbours  
and without fear admit our mistakes,  
encouraged by love that makes all things possible  
God of Hope.**

From the Tui Motu Team