SOFiA Newsletter 165 April 2023

Exploring Values, Meaning and Spirituality

Stonehenge

Stonehenge, an ancient stone circle on the Salisbury plain, has fascinated and intrigued generations. The Auckland Museum is currently displaying an impressive account of it, revealing the current theory based on the latest archaeological investigations. (Well worth a visit and the exhibition is open until 25 April.)

The dimensions of Stonehenge are impressive. Its earliest form consisted of a wide circle of bluestones that were brought 233 km from West Wales. The main design appeared about 2500 BCE. The big sarsen stones each weigh about 25 tons and came from 32 km away. They needed to be shaped and the lintel stones needed a notch to fit them on top of the vertical stones. This required considerable engineering expertise and the coordinated, painstaking effort of many people.

Until recently, the dominant theory was that Stonehenge was some kind of calendar or celestial observatory, based on the fact that it was aligned to the summer solstice in one direction and the winter solstice in the other. (On the summer solstice, the sun rises over the Heel Stone. Conversely, on the shortest day, the sun sets over the Heel Stone.) however, modern research has established

that Stonehenge is but part of a much larger whole, consisting of a wooden circle at Durrington Walls, Stonehenge itself, with the Avon river between the two and ceremonial avenues connecting both. Stonehenge is the realm of the ancestors, while Durrington Walls is the realm of the living. People came together for celebrations from a wide area. Excavations have revealed bones sufficient for animals to feed 1,000 people. While we can only speculate about the content of any ceremonies, Stonehenge weaves together heaven and earth, the living and the dead into a single all-encompassing whole.

Wilfred Cantwell Smith in his book *Towards a World Theology* argues that our approach should be "earth wide and history long." In other words, all views currently in the world and all views from the past are relevant when we set about doing theology. Only trouble is, we are indoctrinated in the idea that our job is to establish the one and only true and correct doctrine and to characterise all others as false. A truly encompassing "world theology" would include voices from other cultures as well as from the distant past, such as Stonehenge, ancient Egypt, and Aztec culture. Arguing against any of these voices would be like arguing for Mozart against Bach or Shakespeare against Milton.

Stonehenge is regarded as the largest burial place in Britain during the third millennium BCE. Probably over 150 people were buried there. Imagine taking part in the ceremonies at the time. Your friends and relatives come together from all over Great Britain (we know that some even came from the Scottish Highlands) bringing with them young animals to be sacrificed in the feast. You come together on the other side of the Avon, in the domain of the living and participate in a ceremonial walk from Durrington Walls to Stonehenge. There the dead would be buried and you would be close to all your ancestors. Death is like the setting of the sun, which Stonehenge marks through its alignment to the winter solstice. In this way, you and your ancestors are part of a larger whole that encompasses both the living and the dead and connects human culture with nature and cosmos.

The Editor

De-Growth

I want to begin by considering our present economy. For the past 40 years, like many other Western countries, New Zealand has practised a **neo-liberal economy**. The economy is seen as a perfect entity separate from society, government and the environment. Markets are efficient and should therefore be used for everything. Distribution of income is ignored, all unemployment is seen as

voluntary and ethics are irrelevant. This theory refuses to discard any failures or take any responsibility for damage caused.

The result has been the biggest extractive operation the world has ever seen. Wealth is extracted from the economy and funnelled to the top 1% of the population. Natural resources are plundered, biodiversity plummets and the planet becomes dangerously unbalanced as we breach four of the nine planetary boundaries and threaten the rest.

Our current economic system cannot function without growth, so most of our politicians are clinging to the idea that we can change without changing, carry on our current lifestyles and continue to grow our economy. But prioritizing economic growth is a recipe for disaster. We must change the way we live. Here in New Zealand we have just experienced how unbalanced our planet has become. It is clear that we cannot go on transgressing planetary boundaries. We have to learn to live within planetary limits and also meet human needs for a satisfying life.

How are we to prioritize human wellbeing and ecological sustainability? How are we to change the way we live?

Some argue for **green growth**, relying on clean technologies to clean up our environment but mostly continuing as we are. In fact, it will take more fossil fuels than we can access to create the green technology needed, and green growth is still growth. Technological innovations are not sufficient to make the magnitude of changes needed. Energy alternatives are too small and too slow to meet the crisis. Not a single one of our major systems (agriculture, construction, transport, forestry, waste management) is sustainable.

Perhaps it is time to learn about **degrowth** significantly reducing the amount of energy and raw materials we use to live well. Most people, as well as the planet, would be better off with a degrowth future, provided we share equitably the resources we can use sustainably. (The richest 1% netted 66% of global wealth created in 2021-22. 50% of human impact on the living world is attributable to the richest 16% of us).

With DeGrowth, low income countries would be encouraged to continue to grow their economies in a sustainable way. Rich countries would be urged to offer job guarantees and a shorter working week, dramatically scaling down energy and resource use. Instead of expenditure on armed forces and the automotive industry, there would be more focus on renewables, public transport and the planned contraction of unnecessary production.

15 principles are suggested:

- Those making decisions about resource extraction should be those most impacted by those decisions
- Remain within the regenerative capacities of renewable resources
- Circularity – everything produced must be able to be recycled
- Socially useful production – what is not needed should not be made
- Small, not-for-profit co-operatives
- Produce local, consume local
- Technology as tool, not master – controllable, reversible and easily intelligible
- Work less, play more
- Economic valuation informed by social and moral values
- Strategic resources managed as commons
- Provision of goods, services and amenities needed for the satisfaction of needs should remain outside the market domain, organised by government
- Sufficiency for all, excess for none. Any surplus used to benefit the worse off
- Simple lifestyle
- Less stuff, more relationships
- Joie de vivre enjoying nature and culture

Is this a fantasy? Some say the idea that if we bake a smaller cake, the poorest will get a bigger share of it has never happened in history.

However, the market-based growth-dependent, technology approach has also failed. And the increasing floods, fires, earthquakes and cyclones are leaving us little choice. We cannot simply go on mending bridges and roads and living in flood-prone areas. We must transform our societies, by undertaking a huge, rapid, immediate, planned reduction in the scale of human activity.

One immediately effective tool is **Universal Basic Income**. If this was implemented, people would be freed to give up jobs they see as pointless or wasteful. Some families would decide they don't need two incomes. So UBI would contribute to economic contraction. Some researchers estimate about 50% of jobs are pointless. (Think advertising, trade in out-of-season foods, shipping identical commodities in opposite directions, the weapons industry, fast fashion, private jets and luxury yachts). If we abandoned these, we would quickly cut emissions and slow the economy.

Orderly de-growth is the key not only to minimising climate change, but also to meaningful work and fulfilling lives. It would take political courage, but Covid showed us that slowing down would be good. The only way to persuade politicians to make the necessary changes is for large numbers of us to call for it.

If you feel daunted by this proposal, in the 1960s New Zealanders consumed one third of the energy used by a person today. Yet that period is not remembered for deprivation. Back then economic

activity was about meeting basic needs – shelter, food, health services, safe transport, escape from drudgery.

Think what life would be like if we all had security regarding housing, health care, education, nutritious food, meaningful work. Think what life would be like if all could work fewer hours and have more time for personal interests. Think what life would be like if we did away with unnecessary goods such as luxury goods, private jets and yachts, fast fashion, advertising. Think what life would be like if we took the climate emergency seriously and withdrew subsidies for fossil fuel and implemented controlled reduction of fossil fuel use over a decade. Think what life would be like if we had a progressive wealth tax to fund these programmes.

Isn't degrowth an idea worth taking seriously?

Margaret Gwynn

Our Wounded Body Politic

The article below is reprinted from SOFiA, the UK Sea of Faith newsletter, with permission. It was submitted by Beverly Smith.

This winter of 2022-23 has shaken our society and awakened us to a situation in which the lives and welfare of millions of our fellow citizens are seriously at risk. As one who professes to be a follower (not a worshipper) of Jesus of Nazareth, I hear constantly in my heart words of his which I consider to be his most beautiful: "I have come that you have life, and have it to the full" (Jn 10:10). He did not come to found a new religion. He came to share our lives, to tell us that we are loved and together we can make life like a kingdom of peace, justice and joy (Romans 14:17). Today's situation is in danger of being one of death in abundance, a low hallmark of what it is like to live between hope and despair today in the sixth largest economy on the planet.

We live in an era in which things important to a healthy polity are in decline, not to say, fast deteriorating: ecosystems, quality of life, standards in public life, equality, human rights, decent pay, secure work conditions etc. Elections come and go. Nothing seems to change—except the offices of prime minister and chancellor. The gap between rich and poor, powerful and powerless has deepened. Government, be it here or elsewhere in the West, functions at the behest of social media billionaires, giant transnational corporations and banks, and vested interests of various sorts, personal or institutional.

Without realizing it, we have made a Faustian bargain with the unholy trinity of industry, science and technology. By misusing them we have become lords (and ladies) of the universe. We enabled ourselves to dominate the earth, to disembowel her of her wealth and treasure, to bend her rivers, to empty or pollute her oceans. We worship ourselves at the altars of Mammon, Mars and Moloch, triune gods of our conquest and power. Sadly, our Enlightenment Age intellect lost awareness of the intrinsic sacredness of creation and its beauty. Even a skewed reading of our sacred texts justified our rapacious relationship with our earth.

Our Culture

Thanks to the appearance of organizations like Friends of the Earth (1969) we have gradually realized that we have lit a bonfire of our vanities. Our relationship with the earth has given rise to a culture which has put its faith in the false gods of science and technology. It ciphers its hopes in terms of economic growth at the cost of exploiting the earth and of impoverishing those great

majorities whose lives depend on a just and equitable relationship with the earth and with all human beings.

Culture is a whole way of life, lived in family, neighbourhood community, the town or city, in close relationship to the earth and the wider society. The experience creates a process of spiritual and intellectual development. Thus develop society's values, customs, beliefs and symbolic practices by which men and women live together in harmony. And from the experience of harmony among citizens and of harmony with nature emanates a body of artistic and intellectual achievement.

Our culture, then, is about our spirituality as a people. It is an organic expression of the values and beliefs by which we live and which we cultivate as something to be prized. It is also about the god or gods to whom we render cult.

Over the centuries since the Enlightenment, the rise of the Industrial Revolution and the gradual desacralization of nature we find ourselves in a cultural void and a historical impasse. This is due to a materialistic canker, composed of greed, unbridled ambition, hubris which has insinuated itself into the way we do things and into the way we think and feel about them.

Our 'Precariat'

The vast number of strikes, the crisis in the NHS, the soaring cost of living all indicate a frayed cohesion. We are witnessing the rise of a 'precariat', a huge mass of people made vulnerable by their experience of 'precarity'. Dorothy Day wrote of precarity as a feature of the radical poverty she sought. But precarity is dangerous. It imposes living life on a knife-edge.

Income, employment, migration status, access to health care, social interaction have become life or death issues, leading to chronic insecurity. And it does not help the frame of mind of the precariat when they see extreme, in-your-face displays of wealth everywhere, especially in Westminster.

Our precariat has been increasing in size since at least 2009. They have been living under a political and economic regime whose unifying theme has been Austerity. This has meant that the quality of life of the great majority of this country has deteriorated to, in some instances, a grave extent.

Austerity has been exacerbated by the war in Ukraine. Millions of families face staggering amounts of domestic debt. Our low wage economy is unsustainable. Even when there is a breadwinner in the household, bills for heating and cost of living in general are too burdensome.

Our politicians have spoken of "levelling up". The promise, empty thus far, has garnered lots of votes for the Conservatives. No progress has been made due to the importance given over the last year to the power struggles and sectarianism which have come to dominate the Parliamentary majority.

Former Prime Minister Gordon Brown has written vociferously on the subject of precarity. He has prognosticated a "winter of destitution" in which millions of children could tumble into poverty. He foresees the food bank as a core element of social welfare and economic survival with charity as its motivation.

Poverty has become a sort of fifth horseman of the Apocalypse which unveils the cruelty and viciousness of an economic model which pushes to the precarious edge of existence the lives and well-being of millions. It is small wonder that last year at least 271,000 persons were homeless in England on any given night. 123,000 of them were children. Our political leadership speaks principally of growing the economy, ignoring the presence of millions who suffer under the lash of the present economic model. I am reminded of those who mourn (Mt 5:4). They dream of a new model, a new politics. They ache for God's new day.

The Big Lie

This island is a beautiful country with its picturesque landscapes, iconic towns and cities and varied geography. The British are by and large talented, well-educated, tolerant and inclined to let be. But we are in a terrible economic shambles and we are badly governed.

This goes back to the rot that has infected our political culture. Perhaps its most egregious manifestation is what I often call The Big Lie. It would be tempting to name and blame one or two politicians most culpable of domesticating the Lie in Westminster. But if we go back a decade or so we recall the scandal of 'cash for questions', 'cash for contacts' and MPs' expenses scandal. The Lie has grown since. More recently there have been frontal attacks on the truth with the Lie, as it were, lit up in Christmas lights and neon. Partygate is a sad atrocious example.

The Lie has also infected the House of Lords, called 'House of Sleaze' by one commentator. There are at last count 785 peers. Each peer receives a daily allowance of £332 every time he or she attends a session. Many are there because they have shown concern for the good governance of our society. Others are there due to their relationship with politicians and the parties articulated by cash and contacts. The honours are tainted. One Tory party chairman, quoted by Ian Birrell in inews, admitted that "once you pay your £3 million pounds, you get your peerage". Even Boris Johnson in his journalism days wrote on "the putrefaction of the honours system".

Sadly, our political culture has been corrupted by power and greed. The Lie has been ensconced at the core of our governance. The word "ethical" has been expunged from the Parliamentary code with barely a word of objection raised. Only recently has an ethics advisor been appointed after many months of waiting. Of course, he has no power to prosecute, but he has delivered in the case of Nadhim Zahawi.

Incredibly, the persistent lying has become a wake-up call. The last few years have seen the rise of various movements and organizations insisting on telling their truth. These manifestations uncover a wide range of human experiences of grievance and violence: sexual and gender-related, racial, economic, environmental and age-related. The truth-tellers insist on being listened to and are willing to be disruptive and risk being prosecuted as criminals.

Justice and Truth

In his inaugural address two years ago, President Joe Biden invoked Saint Augustine when he said the "a people are a multitude defined by the objects of their love". What are the common objects of our love? Are they not values and ideals like justice, honesty, integrity, equality, solidarity, generosity, truth, harmony and peace? And could we not add that those who come to our shores, even in small boats, also esteem those values and ideals? I shudder when politicians share their sick-souled dreams of planeloads of refugees being transported to lands where we can easily forget them and abandon them to their fate very often determined by people traffickers.

We shall do well to keep Augustine's questions before us. What objects of love will bring us into harmony? Can we sustain civic peace that does justice even though there are deep, real differences between us, especially environmental, sex and gender, racial and social. Britain's imperial past tempts us towards domination and glory, to punch above our weight. We still hear colonial echoes of phrases like "watermelon smiles" and "women looking like letterboxes". Will we let our disagreements and our unaddressed prejudices sever our bonds of affection?

We long for justice, but justice is intimately related to truth: the truth of our real situation, the truth of virtue and probity, the truth of the human person, the truth of equity and, for some, the truth of God whose voice can still be heard in the sighs and clamour of the poor.

That truth has almost vanished. Our political leaders have made that fact abundantly clear. We love the idea of truth and we respect our truth-tellers. But we tend to filter out the harsher truths and hear only those which flatter our false sense of who we are.

Truth cannot take sides. It does not conform to 'cancel culture' nor support its wars. Its critical faculty exposes the lies on all sides of the social and political divide. The more recent political and social movements have raised the issues of truth which leads to justice. Our political leadership has not been receptive and, through legislation, seeks to quell the passion for truth and justice, thus silencing its voices.

The follower of Jesus of Nazareth might ask not only what is the truth, but also who is the truth. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6). The way has been bloody and tortuous, leading to a cross of various shapes and forms. The truth has been bludgeoned, tortured and suppressed. Yet its standard still flutters in the wind of falsehood, prevarication, cover-up and deafness. It still stands "reeling but erect" (Chesterton). To live by the truth is to live life in abundance.

Biblical Tradition

The Bible is our foundational text. In it we read of a God who saw and heard and felt the misery and oppression of an enslaved mass of people. God became the god of the history of their long march to freedom and a new land—march not yet culminated. Jesus of Nazareth is a son of that history.

He inherited Israel's prophetic tradition. A prophet is one for whom the concern for God's holiness and concern for justice for the poor are one and the same concern.

Jesus appears in Nazareth, among his own, and announces good news to the afflicted and poor. He is sensitive to the vision of Isaias. He saw God doing something new (65:17-25). God will create a new Jerusalem to be Joy and his people to be gladness. There will be no more weeping over an infant recently born who dies within days. Workers will build their own houses. Farmers will till their own fields. They will be free of empire, of bloodsucking landlords, of exploiting employers.

Joy will be Jesus' particular gift. He says in John 15 that he told his friends the things he did so that their joy would be complete. Paul caught sight of the vision when he describes the coming reign of God as comprising "justice, peace and joy" (Rom 14:17).

Besides being of the prophetic line, Jesus belonged to a legal tradition which had framed a law of Jubilee. The law decreed the liberation of slaves and indentured servants, the forgiveness of debts, the restoration of lands lost by failure to pay creditors and a year's rest for land exhausted by constant cultivation (Lev 25 and Deut 15).

This recalibration of society is a challenge to us trapped in the quicksand of an economic model which, for instance, will grant to earners of one million pounds a tax rebatement of £55,000, equivalent to the average yearly pay of two workers.

Final Thoughts

One of the many things I learned from my experience of Peru (1967-1989) and of grappling with Liberation Theology is that the primary aim of politics is the protection of the vulnerable. Our biblical tradition is clear about that. In Psalm 72 we read,

"The king rescues the needy who call to him,
And the poor who have no one to help…

From oppression and violence he redeems their lives,
Their blood is precious in his sight".

A political leadership whose goals are growth and political control is a hollow entity which will crumble to sawdust when confronted with the death and destruction it has wrought. The Book of Proverbs tells that, "To me belong good advice and prudence…by me monarchs rule and princes do what is right…." (8: 14-16).

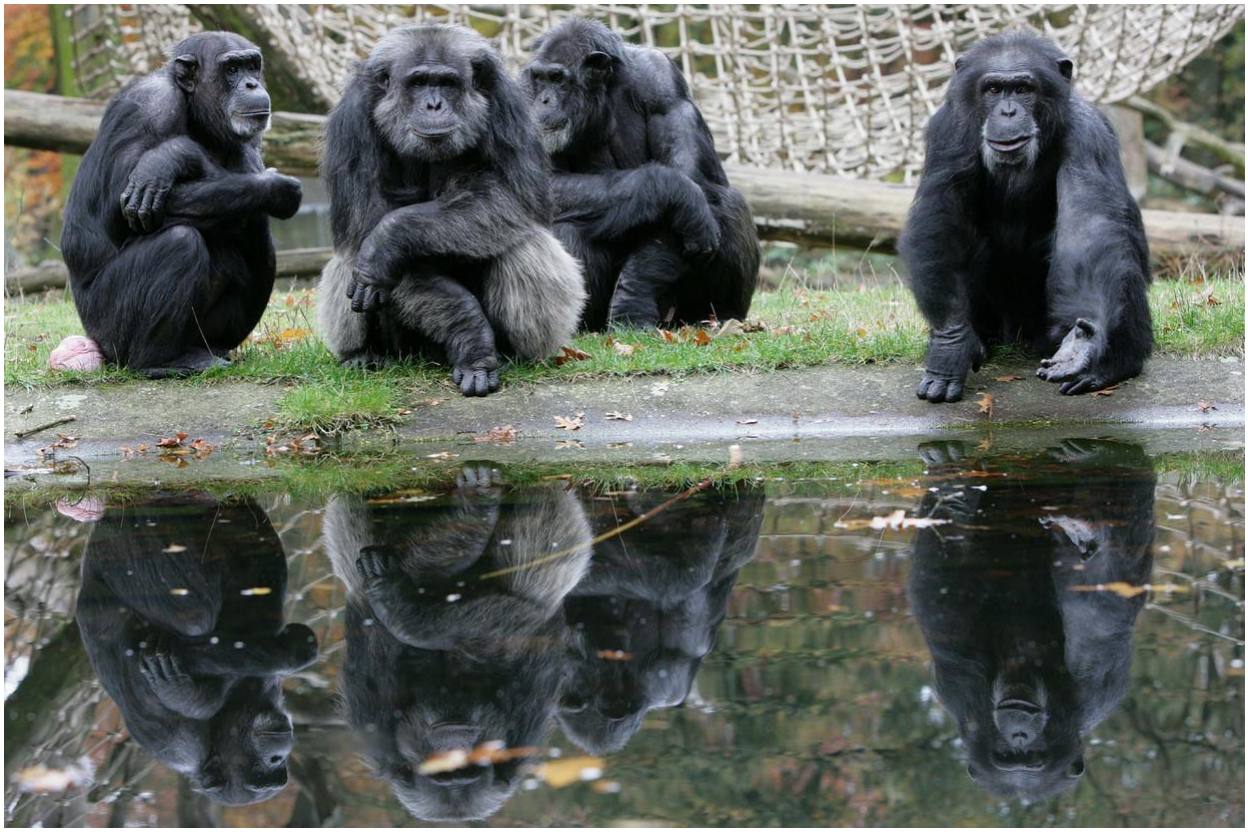
As a people we have been deprived of good upright governance. Sleaze has taken over. The rampant evil is not the outcome of serious maladjustments which lend themselves to tweaking and reform. The evil is cultural and systemic from its head to its heart and to the narrowest capillary. W. B. Yeats in a prophetic moment wrote ages ago: "…the centre cannot hold…The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity…."

The historical task of radical change will rely for engagement on those who can think and act systemically, beyond structures for the dispensing of charity or assistance. We need good people who are politically savvy. Only thus might we avoid an apocalyptic calamity. "Whom will I send?", asks Yahweh of Isaias.

It says somewhere in the Book of Wisdom that hope lies in the greatest number of wise people. Where are they?

Frank Regan

Morality from the Bottom Up



Morality has generally been regarded as the domain of philosophers and theologians. In other words, it is a rational endeavour and philosophers (and perhaps theologians) would therefore be the best at coming to correct conclusions about what is right and what is wrong. Morality is also thought

to be a uniquely human construct, with animals assumed to simply follow their instincts with no sense of right and wrong.

Frans de Waal is a Dutch primatologist who provides a powerful challenge to the above assumptions. His life's work has been to study the behaviour of primates and by extension, of humans also. He has published as least nine books, and the thoughts below derive from *The Bonobo and the Atheist*, published in 2013. He is a master of clear communication and I've become a fan of his because of his convincing critique of several pet theories, such as those of the new atheists, Skinnerian behaviourists and those who try to explain altruism away when looking at it from an evolutionary perspective. He is also critical of those who think our natural inclination is evil and it is only our moral will that restrains us, what he calls 'veneer theory.'

Scientists must carefully design any experiments carried out on animals. For example, it makes no sense to explore an animal's facial recognition of humans; better to test the ability on their own kind.

The assumption that animals have no sense of fairness is rebutted by the following simple experiment. Give an ape cucumber pieces as a reward and there is no problem. But give another ape alongside a grape instead and the first ape becomes angry, throwing the cucumber away and rattling his cage. Evidently the animal thinks it unfair that another individual is rewarded with a grape, which tastes so much better than the cucumber. You can see this in the Youtube video listed below.

De Waal's conclusion is that apes have a basic sense of right and wrong. Apes will get other apes to reconcile after a fight. Good behaviour is often based on a desire to have a good reputation in the group. This includes an altruistic desire to help others, for example an unrelated younger female chimpanzee helps Peony, who has arthritis, up into the climbing frame to join others for a grooming session.

I find his critique of the new atheists refreshing. He sees no reason to get angry and aggressive about the non-existence of God. This is like 'sleeping furiously.' Science and religion were not antagonistic in our past; rather both worked together. Scientists, far from being purely neutral, objective creatures, often have 'confirmation bias' and are as likely to want to hear that they are wrong as they are to like finding a cockroach in their coffee.

Interspersed among such thoughts are interesting reflections on Bosch's intriguing painting *Garden of Earthly Delights*. Although it is in the tradition of portrayals of heaven and hell it seems to be more aligned to this-worldly consequences. Rather than a Hell, the right-hand panel of the triptych portrays this-worldly consequences of evil, not primarily of those portrayed enjoying pleasure in the middle panel, but for example a pig in nun's costume, trying to get someone to hand over his earthly wealth to the church.

We have an intuitive sense of right and wrong. This is something internal, not imposed from above. De Waal welcomes a science of morality but is deeply skeptical of Sam Harris's call for science to determine human values. Morality comes, not simply through rational reflection, which is a later rationalisation of what we intuitively feel, but from our evolutionary background as social animals, which gives us reciprocity (giving rise to a sense of fairness) and empathy (giving rise to compassion).

For more, check out the following TED talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=le-74R9C6Bc.

Book Review: Becoming Pakeha – a journey between two cultures, by John Bluck.

Publisher: HarperCollins (2022) 296 pages

This is an important book for all New Zealanders to read, with the General Election in October putting race relations in the spotlight. While written with a depth of academic research and writings, the personal story of the author's life in the first eleven chapters, titled Walking Between Two Cultures, is a very readable introduction.

Parts Two and Three, titled Where We Are and Ways Ahead, covered in another eleven chapters, provide a historical framework for the history of the bicultural journey from earliest European settlements to a multicultural Aotearoa New Zealand today. The final Part Four, Finding a Shared Future, is a summary in two chapters: 'The landscape has shifted' and 'Aotearoa as it just might be'.

John Bluck's life straddled diverse worlds, not common in the life of the typical ordained church leader. He's been a journalist, radio broadcaster, editor to two major church newspapers, tertiary lecturer, communication director with the World Council of Churches in Geneva. In the church he's led rural parishes and senior episcopal roles, ending as Bishop of the Anglican Diocese of Waiapu based in Napier.

His post-graduate studies in Cambridge, Massachusetts in the late 60s, threw him 'Into the cauldron' (Chapter title) of the Civil Rights movement. He was present in Chicago in 1968 when Mayor Colin Daley allowed troops to turn their guns on protesting youth. In the 70s, working with the World Council of Churches, he experienced the furore created by the council's Programme to Combat Racism. This international exposure to racial conflict prepared him well when he came back to New Zealand in 1984.

In the two middle Parts, the author discuses key issues in our bicultural journey, illustrating what he describes in the Preface in these words: 'This is a book about the discomfort of being Pakeha; how

they might live with that, get used to wearing the name until they find a better one, learn to laugh about it, and even to relax and enjoy it.'

To illustrate this approach, mixing the edgy and the humorous, I take Chapter Fifteen, 'Call me by my name'. Bluck's opening words: 'Compared with Pakeha, Maori are very clear about where they belong and who they are collectively. They never have to debate what to call themselves as Maori, iwi by iwi. Pakeha, by contrast is an ambivalent name.' He continues to explore the Maori origin of the name they gave to people of the other culture, describing it as a 'gift' from Maori to Pakeha. 'And to see the word as a gift makes all the difference. In Maori lore, the giver continues to share in the benefit of a gift that's been given. By accepting the name we accept a connection and an ever-evolving meaning.' Using 'New Zealander' as an alternative name is just running away from the realities of living in Aotearoa.

A quotation from Michael King's earlier and important book, *Being Pakeha* (1985), is supportive of a Pakeha 'symbiotic relationship to Maoritanga'. Bluck's acknowledgement, given in the Introduction, to other books and research papers, reminds us of his role as 'journalist'. His sources are listed at the end of the book in the Bibliography of around seventy titles.

Cultural influences that enrich Pakeha and Maori include places and memories, sharing of food and music. Born in Nuhaka, where his father ran a trucking firm, he recalls tradesmen's sheds, school bus shelters and old cream stands, 'richer and more important than Pakeha imagine'. There is the generous feeding that Maori give to Pakeha, now reciprocated by Pakeha, quoting *Edmonds Cookery Book* as 'the Holy Bible of feeding each other properly'. And, at the end of a sometimes fractious gathering of Maori and Pakeka, the band struck up and a vocalist moved among the tables as he sang 'Bill Bailey, won't you come home'. He writes, 'The music had an electrifying effect on everyone and the tone of the conversation that night suddenly shifted, thanks to an imported song. It didn't rely on everyone agreeing but spoke to the humanity we shared, and sparked a new desire to listen to each other.'

Chapter Fifteen concludes with comment on women's use of language in building relationships. I quote in full, as it illustrates a strong confessional note, thoughtful self-analysis, as an undercurrent throughout this autobiography: 'So much of the work on Pakeha identity has been framed in male terms, as Jock Philips' significant work, *A Man's Country?* (1987) made clear. Men of my era, especially those whose understanding of women was formed in the boys' boarding schools, have had to be reconstructed and we're still a work in progress. My wife has had to make that a lifelong task, and I've been helped, nudged and sometimes booted along by women parishioners, students and staff colleagues wherever I've worked. I've had to watch not only my language but also to rewrite it, and to know when to stand back and shut up. I'm learning, not well enough yet, because I'm surrounded by old, white men like myself who find this bicultural debate deeply troubling. I want to say to them: remember we had to reinvent ourselves to be able to work and live respectfully and happily with women, to trust and be trusted by them. Maybe Pakeha have to go through something similar with Maori.'

Chapter 17 titled 'Promises, Promises' is a succinct historical summary of the Government's breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi, from its signing in 1840 to the occupation of Bastion Point in 1977/78. It concludes with the story of Hone Heke's chopping down the flagpole at Kororāreka (later Russell) in 1844. Bluck writes, 'Pakeha history has portrayed that as an act of violent aggression against the Crown. No mention is made of the fact that he owned the flagpole and had erected it to fly the flag of the United Tribes of New Zealand, a Confederation of Maori tribes based in the Far North. Once the Treaty is signed, the flagpole was used to fly the Union Jack, much to

Heke's displeasure. He saw the Treaty being dishonoured and wrote to the governor: 'I cut down the flagpole firstly because it was mine, and secondly because it had neither breath nor bones/blood and could feel no pain.'

The second part of this chapter discussed the key role played by the missionaries in early Pakeha relations with Maori, and the deep spirituality on both sides, underlining the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi - as much a religious covenant as a legal document. This early partnership lies behind the drawing up, starting in the 1980s, of new ways of restoring a broken relationship. Bluck gives brief coverage to constitutional changes in the Anglican Church with three tikanga (obligations and conditions) in 1992 – Maori, Pakeha and Pasifika. More on this topic warrants other writers and researchers – telling the parallel stories of constitutional changes in the Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church and Catholic Church, not to leave out the stories of smaller Christian groups such as the Quakers. This revisit and enrichment of our dual histories is well underway and is finding readership in new publications.

This reviewer has always wondered why the secular media has not noticed and covered the pioneer work empowering Maori to exercise greater autonomy within their European colonial churches. This has led to varied models for partnership in ministry and mission, including self-governance for Maori. There are many lessons to learn, errors to avoid, and mutual blessings to share.

The final Part Four titled Finding a Shared Future gives the reader two chapters covering twenty-five pages. John Bluck's projections, based on what is happening now, are overall hopeful. Topics include the growth in those speaking te reo, talented Maori having a public presence as journalists and columnists on radio and TV and in newspapers, in music performances and recordings, and as visual artists in carving, weaving, and clothing designs. Twenty-nine Maori politicians in Parliament! Maori and Pakeha are talking much more together, especially in policy and action discussions and legislation in Parliament aimed at bridging the gaps. The work has begun on a new bicultural history, reflecting the diverse iwi stories along with a similar diversity of European and multicultural stories. What a rich resource for education from early schooling to a myriad of lifelong learning!

The edgy topic, currently haunting our air waves and polluting our relationships, is the recent digital arrival in cyberspace, 'an ugly feature of our landscape'. John Bluck writes of 'those that wear the racist label deliberately, even proudly, as a chosen and deliberate attitude aimed at those less powerful and privileged. They must be named and shamed. There are others who give racist offence out of ignorance, misguided beliefs, years of being surrounded by people who think it's okay, even funny. Getting such people to change is more about education than accusation and shaming, helping them see the destructive effect of their words.'

There are key names quoted, whose contributions over recent years are thoroughly deserving of wider readership: Moana Jackson, Judge Joe Williams and Dame Anne Salmond are key Maori names. Jackson's contribution to *Imagining Decolonisation* (Bridget Williams Books 2020) is a good place to start. The chapter 'The landscape has shifted' includes wise words from Moana Jackson:

'(Moana) Jackson suggests the way ahead might not be so much about decolonisation as an "ethic of restoration", whereby we all work on finding the truth about our part of the story. That would involve rebalancing and rebuilding relationships between the cultures, restoring their independence and, in his words, rekindling faith in the "ought to be" in this land, to draw upon the same land-and-tikanga-centred way of ordering society that was envisaged in Te Tiriti.

How we talk about each other and hear each other's stories will make or break our bicultural future. It will do what Ngati Kahungungu call mahi tuhono – the work that brings people together. Jackson

has the qualities that this restoration work involves: the value of place and protecting the land, of tikanga that shape how we ought to be living here, of community and belonging and balance in relationships and of conciliation building a consensual democracy. There's nothing threatening about that list, nothing that isn't as good for Pakeha as it is for Maori.'

John Thornley