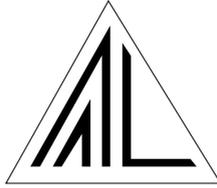




Australian Journal  
of **Liturgy**

VOLUME 15 NUMBER 2 2016





AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF LITURGY

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of **Liturgy**

VOLUME 15 **NUMBER 2** 2016

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Photo: St Francis Xavier's Cathedral, Geraldton.  
(Photo: Angela McCarthy)

# Australian Journal of Liturgy

## Volume 15 Number 2 (2016)

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## Editorial



The cover photo of this issue is of St Francis Xavier's Cathedral, Geraldton, Western Australia. The west boasts of two distinctive ecclesial architectural gems; the monastery town of New Norcia with its Spanish Benedictine influence, and the work of Monsignor John Cyril Hawes who designed and built Geraldton Cathedral along with many other works throughout the Midwest. On 3 September 2016 the Monsignor Hawes Heritage Centre was opened adjacent to the cathedral to honour the work of Hawes as well as to make available to the public historic

material ranging from hand-made models of his churches to plans, sketches and letters. Hawes was present in Australia from 1915 until 1939 and during that time he worked tirelessly to provide churches for many communities in this remote part of Australia. The major works are the cathedral and the Church of Our Lady of Mt Carmel and Saints Peter and Paul in Mullewa completed in 1927. There is also a priest's house adjacent to the church which describes in stone his ascetic lifestyle.

St Francis Xavier's Cathedral was seriously in need of restoration and the State Government provided a considerable amount of money through the Royalties for Regions project. Further funds were provided by Lottery West and the Diocese of Geraldton. The Hon Premier, Colin Barnett, opened the Heritage Centre and the restoration of the exterior of the cathedral. As you can see in the photo, this also includes a new labyrinth in the large gathering space in front of the cathedral. From this space stairs lead down to the Heritage Centre which includes a café and piazza. Since the precinct is on the main street into the city of Geraldton, Cathedral Avenue, it will be a popular stopping point for tourists in the future. The interior of the cathedral is yet to be restored but the Federal Government promised funds for that project before the last election.

Other works by Hawes extend from Carnarvon, north of Geraldton, down to Bindoon which is 80km north of Perth, and then east to Yalgoo which is around 200km east of Geraldton. In the summer this is difficult country but Hawes was inspired by the landscape. He was firmly convinced that this particular landscape was akin to Romanesque architecture, not Gothic, as was the preferred style in his time, particularly among the Irish Catholic clergy.

In his welcoming address Bishop Justin Bianchini outlined how the diocese and Australia should honour the gift of Hawes' work.

1. By maintaining and conserving the buildings for the purpose for which they were built as well as for heritage' sake.
2. By conserving and displaying the plans and artefacts from which these buildings emanated.
3. By recording and promoting the history and memory of the man / architect behind the plans.
4. Being inspired by the Christian Faith which permeated the life of this extraordinary man - and was expressed through his architecture and his selfless giving.

This project also included a contemporary religious artwork. Following submissions from local artists, the Fuse Art Collection from Carnarvon was commissioned to provide an artwork for the foyer of the building which is between the café and the museum. Sabrina Dowling Giudici is the leader, with Anton Blume who is a digital artist and Bonni Ingram who is a local Aboriginal artist. The combination of the three artists has produced a remarkable triptych which hangs in the foyer and was blessed at the opening. It is titled: *Dolor Spes Sanatio Redemptio*. Should you wish to take an unusual holiday, the wild flower season in spring is by far the best time of the year to visit as it can be extremely hot in the summer.

This issue contains two articles of some length and both of them are relevant to our conference that will be held in January 2017. They both relate to worship under the Southern Cross. The first article is by Dr Libby Byrne from La Trobe University. She was recently awarded a Highly Commended Prize of \$5000 for her work in the Mandorla Art Award. Libby explains in this article how she came to produce the work and how it is grounded in liturgical prayer and season in the Australian landscape.

The Mandorla Art Award is a national art award held every two years that focusses on a scriptural theme. It encourages artists to respond to that theme and therefore develop a language of art that encourages the viewer towards different insights into the scriptural passage and in that sense enlivens us to more deeply experience the Word of God. The recent Award held in Perth in July 2016, focussed on the theme of "The Resurrection". There are many scriptural passages both from the Old and New Testaments that speak of Resurrection and the 44 finalists in the Award each gave a rich and varied view of this complex religious belief. The finalists were judged by Rev Dr Tom Elich from Brisbane, Dr Petra Kayser from the National Gallery of Victoria and Prof Ted Snell who is the Director of the Cultural Precinct of UWA.

The winner of the \$25,000 Award was Megan Robert, a textile artist from Sydney. Her work, "The Bread Basket at Emmaus – then Flesh returned to Word" was created from the pages of three bibles which she rolled individually and sewed into a basket. Here is her description of her work:

In trying to raise Jesus and give him life, I created his death.  
Every page of the Bible taken out and rolled up. It can't be used as intended, the text cannot be understood. Words of Jesus lost, gone.  
Like Cleopas and his friend, the script they knew had become undone.  
Jesus came, and on their journey he stitched their undone script back together, the rolled up pages of words of death opening up in a new way. Death was giving birth to Life.  
But the scriptures were still not enough, they needed to 'eat' Jesus to know that he was alive.  
This artwork is not enough either....you need to eat the Bread of Life, to know the real art within.  
Take and eat, this artwork has been broken for you.



"The Bread Basket at Emmaus – then Flesh returned to Word" by Megan Robert. Paper and thread.

The basket was machine sewn with red thread to represent the flesh and blood of Christ. Around the top there are five gashes to represent the five wounds of Christ. As a basket it also reminds us of the very basic necessities of life, something in which to carry our bread, and from that very basic human need comes the real need for the life given us by the Eucharist that was only possible through the Resurrection.

The other Highly Commended winner was Camilla Loveridge from Perth. She emphasised that her art practice was a way of experiencing God.

Creating art is essential to my being. Painting and drawing bring me the most intense pleasure, and it is in artmaking that I feel connected to my core, to God and to humanity. In the process of creating, the moment is suspended and nothing else is important to me. This intense experience of being present and profoundly happy is my gift from God, and one that I am compelled to share.

It is through my artwork that I feel I can help draw others to the beauty of God's creation. Trained as a printmaker, I have developed a passion for rich visual language expressed through mark making, and I am drawn to marks that surround us, as well as marks that are created in art. In recent years I have moved into painting and find that my works have become more layered and nuanced, and maintain evidence of beginnings whilst recording also investigations and toil. With sweat and deliberation I excavate and rework the surfaces of my work. This process engages me completely in the moment, and exposes my emotional state to a greater consciousness.

I have found that the Mandorla Art Award has provided me with a unique opportunity to express my experience of God, through the biblical themes I have been challenged to interpret. The integrity of the artmaking process, research and contemplation of scripture have magnified for me that my arts practice is my experience of God. My hope is that through this artmaking I can share my experience with others and draw them into this particular union.

The People's Choice Award is sponsored by the Benedictine Community of New Norcia where the acquired artworks are housed and exhibited in their museum and gallery. This \$2000 Award was won by another Melbourne artist, Julie Davidson, who also regularly exhibits with Linton and Kay Galleries in Perth and this is where the Mandorla Art Award has been exhibited in 2014 and 2016. She has previously been a finalist in the Mandorla Art Award and first entered in 1996. When asked how she approached the theme she responded with this description:

I spent time examining the scriptures and listening to podcasts of sermons based around the theme. I also had friends just back from a trip to Jerusalem with photos of the area and the tomb. The difficulty I found was not in trying to come up with an image but in having to decide between a flood of different ideas. I've spent years referencing Renaissance religious art, particularly the altarpiece and the use of drapery and dramatic light. It has allowed me to feel connected to the church's vast field of historical images. I wanted to use traditional images from a contemporary viewpoint - as if I were placed there in the tomb at that moment.

The runner up in the People's Choice Award was Anh Do. While best known as a comedian and a refugee from Vietnam, he is also an artist and in 2016 exposed his fresh style in his ABC TV program "Anh Do's Brush With Fame". On the voting slips for this Award there is an opportunity for comments and some of the comments for Anh's work were: "Inspiring, uplifting, humbling. Just a beautiful interpretation", "A moment in time", "Rich in colour, it inspires me a lot", "Use of colour, texture and light is wonderful!", "Profound theological question about the resurrection!", "Evokes the depth and hugeness of Jesus, his death and resurrection", "Loved the refreshing commentary describing his relationship with the story of Jesus".

All of the finalists' artworks can be seen on the Mandorla Art Award website:  
<http://www.mandorlaart.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Mandorla-CATALOGUE-2016-1.pdf>

The second article is from a New Zealand historian who has been researching the ritual action of Takahi Whare, the prayers in a house after death. Of particular interest was her description of the action of the Maori people as being one of blessing and cleansing, not something destructive. Jane Simpson then traces the emergence of these traditions from pre-settlement days and their inclusion in various liturgy and prayer books. This is very interesting in relationship to our conference theme: Worship Under the Southern Cross.

This issue has a call for short papers for the conference and there is a rich bed of ideas among you all that can be expressed in that format. The Council looks forward to receiving submissions.

australian pastoral musicians network

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David is the director of The Emmaus Center for Music, Prayer and Ministry, is the Animator for the Taizé' Prayer Community at Cretin-Derham Hall in St. Paul, Minnesota, and is the executive director of *Music Ministry Alive*, a formation institute for young liturgical musicians.

David has written over 25 books in the areas of liturgy, religious education, youth ministry and spirituality and speaks and performs at conferences and events throughout the world. This will be his first visit to Australia since 1991.



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# Resurrection: A Daily Navigation

Libby Byrne



**Libby Byrne** is an art therapist who considers herself privileged to offer specialised support services for people to honour and reflect on life and death experiences in Palliative Care and Trauma Recovery. She is currently involved in the work of academic teaching in the Master of Art Therapy Program at La Trobe University. Her PhD study with the University of Divinity was a Studio Based Theological Inquiry into ‘Healing Art and the Art of Healing’, with a focus on the experience of living with multiple sclerosis (MS). Contact: E.Byrne@latrobe.edu.au

## Introduction

Speaking of the experience of praying with the icons of Christ, Rowan Williams says, “You cannot paint a picture of a simple act of God... You can only show the effect of God’s action.”<sup>1</sup> To imagine how to paint the effect of the Resurrection is an inherently theological task and it is a task for which the artist is well prepared. Imagination “bring(s) to mind that which is not directly and currently present to the senses” in order to make a distinct contribution to perception and reason.<sup>2</sup> The artist relies on imagination to make material connections between things that may have previously been separate.<sup>3</sup> The artist who employs a material practice to address a theological question is therefore attempting to engage their imagination to see what we may have missed in regard to a theological question or concern. This form of theological inquiry is an attempt to *see* what God may be saying and doing with regard to the question under consideration through a “wholeness of reality that imagination is feeling after”<sup>4</sup> In this paper I will describe how I have applied this method of inquiry within my studio practice to consider the effect of God’s action in

<sup>1</sup> Ibid. 23.

<sup>2</sup> Jeremy Law, “Theological Imagination and Human Flourishing,” in *Theology and Human Flourishing: Essays in Honor of Timothy J. Gorringer*, ed. Mike Highton, Christopher Rowland, and Jeremy Law (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2011). 281.

<sup>3</sup> Anselm Kiefer, “Anselm Kiefer in conversation with Tim Marlow “ (The Royal Academy of Art London, 2014).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 9.

the Resurrection as an artwork is developed and takes shape. I will consider how the practice of reflexivity nourishes the making of theology and address the contribution that *making*, *being with* and *seeing* art can offer in the liturgical life of the artist, the viewer and the wider church.

## Reflexive Studio Practice

In wondering about how to paint the effect of God's action in the *Resurrection*, many well-known and even well-worn images come to mind. Images of stones that have rolled away, light that shines from within the darkness, an angel appearing in the place of the risen Lord – and so the list goes on. It was important to acknowledge the impact of these images on the way I had previously thought about the theology of Resurrection and equally important to remember that my intention in addressing the question in the studio was to be open to the development of a fresh image, a visual reading of the Resurrection that was contextually situated in Melbourne, Australia, 2016. It was therefore important to employ a reflexive approach to my studio practice and my engagement with this liturgical season.

A reflexive studio practice is characterised by the gathering of thoughtful and critical reflections and actions for the purpose of bringing to light the underpinnings of our practice, our assumptions, biases and perspectives.<sup>5</sup> It is a method of working that seeks to stand back and see what is happening whilst wondering – *why is this so?* It engages an artist with multiple levels of experience, welcoming seemingly disparate ideas into the practice and requiring the artist to stay with them until the ways in which they are connected become evident. To be reflexive involves thinking from within experiences. It requires a willingness to make aspects of the *self* strange in order to stand back from assumptions and habitual thinking and notice what may have been previously missed.<sup>6</sup> When practiced within the studio, reflexivity involves the habit of taking time to think with materials in order to make sense of what can be known about the question being researched. Making sense, however, is not necessarily the same as knowing. Reflexive practice does not necessarily assure answers to our questions. Indeed, true reflexivity can result in the discovery of what cannot be known and is required to cultivate theological imagination.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Cora Marshall, "A Research Design for Studio-Based Research in Art," *Teaching Artist Journal* 8, no. 2 (2010): 78. In order to make this assertion Marshall cites work by Green, Eisner, Gardner, Sullivan, Hoffman-Kipp, Artiles and Lopez-Torres; Weber.

<sup>6</sup> Gillian Bolton, *Reflective Practice* (London: Sage Publications, 2005): 9-10.

<sup>7</sup> Medi Ann Volpe, "'Taking Time' and 'making sense': Rowan Williams on the Habits of Theological Imagination," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 15, no. 3 (2013): 348.

Adopting a reflexive practice in the development of this image was therefore one way of ensuring that I could work with both freedom and discipline to sift the ideas and images that sprang from the lectionary and my own lived experience throughout this particular liturgical season.

## A Spiritual Discipline

To ensure my focus on the effect of God's actions in the Resurrection, rather than be seduced by imagining the act itself, I decided to make a drawing and work with the form of an abstracted landscape. The process was designed to record the effects of the movement of God through my own Lenten experience leading toward the Resurrection. It was therefore important to attend to the work as a spiritual discipline.

The practice of contemplative prayer that springs from the traditions of the Desert Mothers and Fathers of the 4<sup>th</sup> Century embraces a perpetual movement between action and contemplation. Richard Rohr describes the movement between action and contemplation as an art form in itself, underlying all other visible art forms.<sup>8</sup> Evelyn Underhill identified the relationship between art-making practice and contemplative practice in 1915 saying that, "The artist is no more and no less than a contemplative who has learned to express himself."<sup>9</sup> Underhill goes on to suggest that the artist has the ability to surrender their own need to see things in a particular way and see things for their own sake. In this sense, the contemplative practice of making art in the studio is an inquiry into reality, into the way things are, as much as into the way things could still be.

Attending to the work this way required a commitment to work on the painting each and every day from Ash Wednesday through to Resurrection Sunday. The goal for the work was to show the effect of God's action in the Resurrection with materials found in the studio, throughout a particular period of time. A daily recording of the development of the work was made by routinely photographing the work at the end of each session. Once the drawing was complete, the photographic record could be printed and collated to track the growth of the drawing and the growth of my theological and spiritual understanding of Resurrection. Gathering these prints together within the format of an unbound book and then sharing them with the public would be an ecclesial move toward nourishing the body of Christ with the fruits of the inquiry.

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<sup>8</sup> Richard Rohr, *A Lever and a Place to Stand* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2011). vii

<sup>9</sup> Evelyn Underhill, *Practical Mysticism* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1915). 17.

## Prayer, Sacrament and Grace

The process began with a commitment to seeing the practice as Prayer, but over time it became evident that the process was also characterised by experiences of Sacrament and Grace. Prayer, Sacrament and Grace are all qualities of experience that speak to a range of human experiences and engage us relationally with the 'Other'. Speaking from his experience as a theologian and poet, Rowan Williams highlights these qualities as essential when working to see God with and through icons. In the light of the difficulty that has historically surrounded the use of images and icons within the Christian tradition, Williams suggests that when we approach the matter of painting Jesus with an attitude of prayer and adoration, "the image that is made becomes in turn something that in its own way radiates...light and force".<sup>10</sup> In this way Williams is able to describe icons as "human actions that seek to be open to God's action."<sup>11</sup>

In a similar but different way, art therapist Catherine Moon claims that prayer, sacrament and grace are at the heart of her therapeutic work with people. Moon notes that these particular elements of the Christian belief system address the interaction between the human and the divine and give her glimpses of how to understand the effects of this interaction within the world as she works with the impact of human brokenness. The formal process of painting an icon and the making of art in a therapeutic setting are very different vehicles of engagement but the activity of prayer, sacrament and the gift of grace within these different practices creates a milieu in which the action of God within the world is made visible in a myriad of ways. Whilst the icon leads the believer into the presence of Christ, the therapeutic process enables Moon to see the presence of Christ in those with whom she works.

In my own practice of making art, I work with materials to make the invisible actions of God, visible in specific and particular ways. As I make art I am therefore engaging in a task that in some senses will always be unfinished. Susan Sullivan suggests that, "To say that art-making is a practice indicates from the outset that the task of art is unfinished."<sup>12</sup> Rowan Williams goes further to suggest that in making art, "The artist not only uncovers what is generative in the world but also what is generative in him or herself, the alignments or attunements that make possible an art that is more than repetition or imitation. The artist discovers her own unfinishedness in the work."<sup>13</sup> To work in this way therefore requires me to relinquish control and assume a presence with the work that is an attitude of prayer, openness to the sacramental nature of the task and reliance upon Grace.

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<sup>10</sup> Williams, *The Dwelling of the Light: Praying with the Icons of Christ*. xvi.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.* xvii.

<sup>12</sup> Susan Stewart, *The Open Studio: Essays on Art and Aesthetics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2005). 17.

<sup>13</sup> Rowan Williams, *Grace and Necessity: Reflections on Art and Love* (London: Continuum Books, 2005). 162.

## ***Making, Being with and Seeing Art***

In his work *The Dwelling of the Light*, Rowan Williams considers what can be learned from praying with an icon of Christ painted by Maximus the Confessor in the seventh century. In the making of this artwork about the Resurrection, Williams notes that Maximus was considering what it would mean to see Christ as the one who is able to bridge divisions. Williams suggests that the original artwork is the result of material thinking - Maximus *working out* his theology with regard to the place of the *Resurrection* within a church that was divided. Once released into the world however, the icon offers a similar but different opportunity for those who study it. The icon enables viewers to consider the way that they think about the effect that God has in the world as they see the resurrected Christ literally bridging the divide between light and dark, good and evil. The questions that this image provokes can be harbingers of spiritual and theological growth. The meaning that is contained within the artwork is not static, not fixed in place by the artist, but continually open to revision and reconsideration as it is apprehended by multiple viewers who spend time *being with* and *seeing* the work. Indeed, with each viewing the meaning of the work is enriched.

Mikel Dufrenne suggests that art continues to affect us because it acts in depth, inviting us “first of all to be and not immediately to do.”<sup>14</sup> This is a good description of the unfolding dialogue between viewers and icons. The icon created by Maximus continues to affect us as it invites us to be: to be with this image of Resurrection and with ourselves, in Christ, in the moment of seeing.

Although it is not a figurative piece depicting the key players in Christ’s *Resurrection* and has not been produced in the way that an icon is painted, my work with this theme functioned to facilitate an opportunity for viewers to take the time to be with a revised or reconsidered image of Resurrection. In the same way that Maximus developed the icon in response to his desire to work something out, my drawing was a place in which I could *work out* my own experience and thinking about Resurrection theology. When the image began on Ash Wednesday it was a response to a felt need to make a mark. The materials that were on hand in the studio were simple but they were also ready to be picked up and engaged. The surface was stretched linen and having been prepared some weeks earlier it was waiting to be used. I had recently discovered the existence of water soluble graphite and having purchased some in a recent *buy-up* of supplies, was waiting for a reason to explore the possibilities with something new.

Moon suggests that when we work with materials that are readily available, *making do* with whatever is at hand, art making takes on the qualities of prayer. She reminds

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<sup>14</sup> Mikel Dufrenne, *The Phenomenology of Aesthetic Experience*, trans. Albert A. Anderson, et al. (Evanston: North Western University Press, 1973). 65.

us that in making do with whatever is at hand we are, “Laying claim to who we are in order that we might come to understand the possibility lying dormant in our strong, frail, hurting, harmful, fearful, courageous selves.”<sup>15</sup> When it comes to art materials, linen and graphite are staples, having been routinely and even religiously used throughout the ages. The possibility that was lying within the dormant linen and graphite held the capacity for them to communicate something about the ordinary experience of Resurrection that was to unfold within this Lenten Journey. The discipline of attending to a daily practice of drawing through the lectionary was a spiritual discipline that sprang from and then was subsumed by the call to prayer.

Dufrenne’s invitation ‘*first of all to be and not immediately to do*’ was present each time I photographed the work. Finding time and space to be *with the* emerging image was an integral movement in being prepared to return to the work the following day, ready to do. In this sense the process of downloading, editing and selecting a digital photograph to represent each day was an opportunity to *be with* the experience and the emerging ideas. I did not print any of these images until after the drawing stage of the inquiry was completed. It was liberating to know that in this time of drawing all I could do was be with the work as it took shape and wait to see what would happen next.

Responding to the question that was posed by the Mandorla Art Award required me to live into the liturgy within my studio practice. This is to say that my practice became a ritual that was focussed around the lectionary as it progressed through the days of Lent toward Resurrection. In this way, the prayer that was my developing artwork was my voice, connecting me with communities of other Christian people who were also following the lectionary and prayerfully preparing to live into the Easter story in their own way.

“Prayer has a social nature, a communicative function.”<sup>16</sup> Working alone in the studio might seem to be a solitary practice and yet the act of making marks with materials has an essentially communicative function. In speaking of the silence that is found within painting Jean-Louis Chrétien says, “The essential silence of painting is a communicative, radiant, and cordial silence, which invites us to live within it.”<sup>17</sup> And yet within the silence Chrétien also considers that, “To create is to cry out.”<sup>18</sup> Herein we find the essence of prayer – the silent cry that is offered by way of communicating with the divine and connecting us with God’s faithful people throughout the ages. This silent cry for connection is the art of prayer. “For we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words” (Romans 8:26).

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<sup>15</sup> Catherine Moon, “Prayer, Sacraments, Grace,” in *Spirituality and Art Therapy: Living the Connection*, ed. Mimi Farrelly-Hansen (UK: Jessica Kingsley, 2001). 32.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Jean-Louis Chrétien, *Hand to Hand: Listening to the Work of Art* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2003). 19.

<sup>18</sup> *The Call and the Response* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004). 18.

In many ways the drawing was shaped by community as much as it was shaped by the artist. In the larger sense the forms that I found and lost within the drawing were a response and an offering for the community who were following the chosen lectionary readings this year. These readings and this pattern of tradition had a powerful capacity to inform the development of the work. My role as an artist was embedded within this larger community and tradition and in this way the work was responsive rather than initiatory.

There were however, moments in the development of the work that I was strongly aware that the image was becoming deeply personal and maybe more reflective of my own desires and needs than the larger task at hand. This was first apparent when the image reminded me of a painting that had been part of my recent PhD inquiry. The place near the edge of the water was reminiscent of the image 'A Coracle Appears' (2015) which had been a place of comfort (Fig.1). All the images are in colour in the centrefold. In order to ensure that the new image was a useful response for a larger audience, rather than a comforting reminder of my own personal journey, I needed to make a dramatic shift and find a way to make this aspect of my self strange.

The following day I covered the delicate graphite markings of Page 11 with white gesso to ensure that once again the landscape was a strange place of discovery rather than a known source of comfort (Fig. 2). Throughout the days of making there were cycles that emerged at regular intervals, where the recognition of something familiar and personal would lead me to obliterate the image before I became too enmeshed or connected. In the first 30 days these moments occurred every five days or so (Fig.3).

I managed to sustain the rhythm of recognition and loss for these days but it was inevitable that my embodied engagement with the scripture would lead to the image itself becoming embodied. Joy Schaverien contends that when the artist relinquishes the desire or attempt to produce a pre-conceived image and follows the lead that is offered by each mark upon the canvas, conscious and un-conscious processes combine to produce an embodied image.<sup>19</sup> The meaning and elaboration of the image is not immediately accessible with words and Schaverien claims that "The impact of such an image is in Wittgenstein's sense, 'ineffable'"<sup>20</sup>

I became aware that the image had become embodied when I realised that my pattern of letting go of the image after five or six days had changed. Between Page 29 and 38 the image became a place where I wanted to stay. The image was an expression of something for which I had no words, but which resonated strongly as a place of belonging. The line that had previously designated the horizon at the top of a

<sup>19</sup> Joy Schaverien, *The Revealing Image: Analytical Art Psychotherapy in Theory and Practice* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 1999), 87.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

mountain range became the edge of a watery place. My perspective was transformed and I found myself in an intimate place that was diffuse with mystery. It was tempting to stay in this place and develop an image that was in my view, beautiful.

Gadamer proposes that “The ontological function of the beautiful is to bridge the chasm between the ideal and the real.”<sup>21</sup> In saying this he is proposing that an encounter with beauty is an assurance that the truth does not lie too far away, even as we may find ourselves surrounded by disordered extremes and imperfections. The image that carried me from Pages 29 – 38 was indeed such a bridge. The assurance that it provided led me to think seriously about finishing the piece on Palm Sunday (Fig. 4) and starting another painting to take me through Holy Week.

As I wrestled with my desire to stay on the bridge between the ideal and the real I was challenged by the call to move on with the rhythm of the lectionary. In the tension of this decision I became aware of a resonance with Jesus’ own experience as he journeyed toward the cross. As he prayed in Gethsemane Jesus expressed a deep desire to stay rather than move on with the rhythm of the passion. “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me” (Matthew 26:29). My own desire was to allow the emerging image the chance to be beautiful, particularly as I planned for an audience to see what I had made. On Palm Sunday curves of light swept down from the sky toward land and sea, singing with the praise of the crowd, “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!” (Luke 19:38). There was beauty in this image that compelled me and asked me to stay.

Brett Whiteley notes in his journal in 1972, “The curve is the most beautiful of all forces”. The curve in the light of the sky spoke of the presence of a force of energy, but the beauty of this force of energy was something that reminded me of the need to leave the sense of the ideal and proceed into the place of reality. As much as I longed for this arc to be the crescendo of the work, this was not Resurrection. This image was the bridge that would lead me toward the reality of Resurrection. The beauty that Whiteley had noticed in the force of a curve was evident in the capacity for this image to hold me in a moment of *seeing* and *being with* the chasm between the ideal and reality, but Gethsemane and Golgotha lay ahead and needed to be both encountered and embraced.

In contemplating how to approach this reality I had some aesthetic concerns. I was concerned about losing the strength of the curve in the sharp, angular experience of the crucifixion. It was also hard to imagine how such a small canvas could contain such a big story. It was at this time that I was surprised by grace in the form of the gift of a ticket to experience Pierre-Laurent Aimard’s performance of Olivier Messiaen’s,

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<sup>21</sup> Hans Georg Gadamer, *The Relevance of the Beautiful* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). 15.

*Vingt regards sur l'enfant-Jésus* at the Melbourne Recital Centre. Whilst completely unexpected, this gift was timely as it was held on Palm Sunday. Until that time I had been completely unfamiliar with Aimard and Messiaen's *Vingt*. Whilst my experience of this performance was somewhat of a *blank canvas*, my commitment to reflexive practice in making this artwork was very much present as I attended the performance.

Within this place I was deeply aware of the capacity for dissonance within the music to hold the breadth and depth of the cycles through which we all journeyed. The magnitude of the story did not overwhelm because of the unexpected rhythms and sounds that held us within each moment. I was reminded of the cycles within the artwork that I had been producing. I could hear and see that it was the glimpses of attention to detail contained within a much larger experience that sustained us all, performer and audience alike. It was very clear after this experience that I had decided to continue with the same canvas, rather than starting something new.

As I left the Recital Centre on Palm Sunday I knew that Holy Week could not exist in isolation. It is a period of time that is shaped for and by the larger story of the Resurrection. Aimard's use of dissonance in the performance encouraged me to continue to welcome dissonance in the artwork. It was interesting to note that when the music was in a place that felt settled or even *just right*, I had a strong desire to capture that which seemed to be both real and ideal. It was however when we were poised in those moments, suspended over a chasm as it were, that we were already being prepared to move beyond this bridge from what we perceived as ideal into a new reality. Beauty that was entwined with loss and grief was the place where I was finding life.

In this struggle with loss and desire, I was still trying to imagine how I could possibly fit the rest of this saga into one drawing. As I returned to the studio on Monday I was able to sit with the material presence of the drawing and I realised that this is the essence of the Resurrection as I encounter it within my own life. In the Resurrection, the breadth and depth of the God's great story somehow finds a place within the comparable minutia of my own human story. With all of this in mind and with the Aimard's performance of Messiaen's *Vingt* now resonating within my bones, I was able to continue to work this small drawing. Staying with the small and now dense artwork was one way to stay with the reality of the effect of God's action in the work and in the world. Obliterating the watery place ultimately led to the emergence of new life (Fig. 5).

On the Tuesday of Holy Week the lectionary reading was from John 12. These particular words spoke clearly to me. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24).

There was a drop of underpainting that resonated with the shape of a seed and amplifying this in the drawing gave me an anchor point in the journey that lay ahead (Page 40, Fig. 5).

In the days between Good Friday and *Resurrection* Sunday the image changed shape many times. From the darkness of the crucifixion there began a resurgent move toward new life with a force that was almost violent. Salt and rosemary were rubbed into an open wound in the surface and the image threatened to disappear entirely. Williams describes the actions of Christ in the *Resurrection* as affecting all things. Everything is changed and reorganised in the actions that begin on the cross and unfold in the tomb. Glory is “brought down into the middle of the realm of death so that death may be swallowed up.”<sup>22</sup> In the studio the powerful force of the arc descends into this chaos to reconcile all that has happened and give birth to order in these final hours of making (Fig. 6).

The final image holds all of these movements. We can see the effects of God’s action as the angular forces of the crucifixion are bathed in a powerful arc of grace. The violent reshaping of life and death reconciles God and humankind in an image that is both wounded and completely whole (Fig. 7).

## An Ecclesial Movement from the Studio to the Wider Church

Is it time to consider how this individual response makes a contribution to the life of the Church? “The act of creating empowers us to have a say in how we will shape and respond to the suffering and hope within us.”<sup>23</sup> In developing work that responded to the lectionary throughout Lent and the Holy Week, I was able to as Catherine Moon suggests, “have a say” in how I shaped and responded to the suffering and hope of that liturgical season. The discipline of creating each day through that time was a discipline that connected me as an artist with the wider church as we prayed and worshipped through this liturgical time.

Offering the work to the wider church within an exhibition such as the Mandorla Art Award, was an invitation for the body of Christ to participate in *seeing* the work and thereby *knowing* more about the effects of God’s action in the world. *Seeing* however, a way of *knowing* that involves much more than visual perception. Paul Fiddes suggests that “there is a seeing that is an embracing of the world in all its bodily reality.”<sup>24</sup> Fiddes is referring to a *haptic* mode of seeing that involves touch and the immersion of all the bodily senses. There is a long tradition of haptic vision in Christian faith

<sup>22</sup> Williams, *The Dwelling of the Light: Praying with the Icons of Christ*. 37.

<sup>23</sup> Moon, “Prayer, Sacraments, Grace.” 37.

<sup>24</sup> Paul Fiddes, *Seeing the World and Knowing God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013). 212.

and practice which leads Fiddes to suggest that there is a mode of seeing the text that is also a reading of the text.<sup>25</sup> Art can offer a visual field of reference in which we are able to see what the text is saying, locate our own experience and make connections between time, place, practice and the traditions of faith. In this way art has the capacity to affect the way in which we make theological judgements about the questions that emerge in ordinary living.

Presenting this particular artwork in the form of an unbound book meant that viewers were free to engage in this haptic mode of seeing as they leafed through the pages and touched the work. As they touched the work, so the work touched them.<sup>26</sup> In this way the showing of the work was an opportunity for the wider church to read this artwork as a translation of the lectionary enabling the consideration of images that illuminate the possibility of difference and dissonance within the effects of God's action in the *Resurrection*. The images once displayed within the Christian community therefore have the capacity to shape the way we think about the question of Resurrection within our everyday living of the liturgy in ways that resonate with our bodily knowing. The image offers a way of *living into* the liturgy and allowing ourselves to be reshaped and reorganised by this haptic seeing of the Resurrection.

## Practice-led Theology

Art has a significant knowledge-producing role and as can therefore contribute to the actual making of theology rather than simply the illustration of it.<sup>27</sup> In his work *Found Theology*, Ben Quash proposes a method of theological inquiry that requires a commitment to the development and transmission of theology that is found rather than made. Quash offers the modes of searching and finding as a helpful procedure for engaging scripture suggesting that "To live in the Spirit of wisdom is to inhabit God where one finds him – where one finds God in Scripture and where one finds him in the world and in history."<sup>28</sup>

Quash argues that this form of theological exegesis requires a leap of imagination and creativity that is *responsive* rather than *initiatory*, thus reflecting the presence of the Holy Spirit.<sup>29</sup> The artist who is *seeking to find theology* in the studio is working with materials that are able to disclose new knowing about the question, even as they are culturally situated in a particular time and place. The attention that the artist pays to the practice of making art in the search for theology is therefore located in the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid. 215-16.

<sup>26</sup> Chrétien, *Hand to Hand: Listening to the Work of Art*.

<sup>27</sup> Paul Fiddes, "Concept, Image and Story in Systematic Theology," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 11, no. 1 (2009): 5.

<sup>28</sup> Ben Quash, *Found Theology: History, Imagination and the Holy Spirit* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013): 9.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 29.

material and theoretical space between what has been previously known and what may be discovered. It is important to note that Quash considers the act of finding to be not wholly within our own hands, but the result of “placing oneself in the way of grace”.<sup>30</sup> Thus the artist who seeks *with* the materials in the studio works with a spirit of participation and waits in anticipation for the expansion of new perceptions and ideas, rather than designing them from a position of authority.

To be helpful for others within the life of the church the artist must be willing to employ a reflexive practice – that is to engage a willingness to make aspects of the ‘self’ strange in order to see what is really there. In doing so the artist risks seeing the buried self. Working in this way enables the artist to re-consider the shape of images that are evoked within the liturgy. This is co-operative work that relies upon a mutual engagement between the artist and the process, led by the Holy Spirit and supported by grace.

## Conclusion

In the development of this particular artwork, *seeing* through the experience of prayer, sacrament and grace created a milieu in which I was able to first acknowledge what *Resurrection* is not. In doing so I was free to imagine how else the effects of this action of God could be made visible. The need to hold onto an embodied image was subsumed by the imperative of the calling to understand the *Resurrection* through the process of working with materials. In this way the artist works for the wider community and contributes to the communal expression of liturgy. This requires the gift of grace and a reliance upon the Spirit. “The Spirit helps us in our weakness” (Romans 8:26).

“The resurrection, remember, is an *introduction* – to our buried selves, to our alienated neighbours, to our physical world. It is because of the resurrection that we can befriend all these, as Jesus takes our hands and holds them in his.”<sup>31</sup>

This description of discovery that is inherent in the *Resurrection* is deeply resonant of my experience of living into a liturgical rhythm within my Reflexive Studio Practice. *Seeking, finding* and *making* theology with the materials that were at hand in the studio was not only an introduction to my buried self but an opportunity to reconsider the theology that shapes my relationship with the divine and with the body of Christ. The work revealed an image of *Resurrection* that was held within the arc of experience such as described by T.S. Eliot:

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid. 54.

<sup>31</sup> Williams, *The Dwelling of the Light: Praying with the Icons of Christ*. 40.

The end of all our exploring,  
Will be to arrive where we started,  
And know that place for the first time.<sup>32</sup>

This inquiry into the Resurrection reveals that this is indeed such a place (Fig. 8). In comparing the photograph taken on the first day with the last, it was clear that the horizon has somehow managed to assert itself within the very same position. The imprint of light in the right hand side of the foreground is still a leading line for the viewer, but in the final days the darkness has emerged most powerfully. The hint of darkness in the sky that sits on the horizon on day one has taken on the qualities of an open wound, a tomb or even the place from darkness is issued. The whole scene is illuminated by light that sweeps down in an arc from the top left hand corner resonating strongly with movements that are only tentatively suggested in the first image.

To return to this place after 48 days was a complex and intricate journey that relied upon the commitment to a practice of daily navigation. The practice itself was possible because of the stability and containment provided by this one small drawing, the materials that were simply at hand and the continuity created by a string of manageable encounters over many days. The image is also the result of the courage to risk. The courage to risk leaning into the process and pushing through the moments when it would have been possible to settle for what was good, but ultimately less than Resurrection. Free from the burden of expectation with regard to how the image should look when it was finished, I was able to engage with the practice of *'learning to be, before needing to do'*. It was in this arc of evolution between contemplation and action that I was able to surrender to effects of God's Resurrection action in the world and in doing so, discover some form of completion in the minutia of the work itself.

Refer to Page 91 for Figures.

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<sup>32</sup> Thomas Stearns Eliot, *Four Quartets* (London: Faber & Faber Ltd., 1959).

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# Prayers in a house after death: The Takahi Whare and the question of evidence

Jane Simpson



**Jane Simpson** is an independent religious historian, based in Christchurch, New Zealand. She has taught social history and religious studies in universities in Australia and New Zealand, and has articles in international journals and chapters in books. She is also an editor, writing tutor, hymn writer and a poet. Her poetry collection, *A world without maps*, is to be launched in November 2016.

**T**he Takahi Whare is a rite unlike any other in the Christian tradition. It has origins in the ancient Polynesian past, but was published only in the mid-1960s, as a liturgy for Catholic Māori. In the last 25 years it has travelled throughout the world in the waka (canoe) of a prayer book written by New Zealand Anglicans (1989).<sup>1</sup> ‘Te Tikanga Karakia mo te Takahi Whare’ (Prayers in a House after Death) has since been adapted for use in many other contexts. The Takahi Whare,<sup>2</sup> literally meaning to ‘trample the house’, was part of the tangihanga, the complex rituals for the dead in Māori religion. Suppressed by Protestant missionaries, together with all other rites to do with the dead, it nonetheless survived as an oral tradition, preserved through a nineteenth century independent Māori prophetic movement. From the 1960s and 1970s, Catholic<sup>3</sup> then Anglican<sup>4</sup> Māori and Pākehā produced *Pukapuka Karakia* (prayer books) of distinctive liturgies, which could be used by the whole Church, through diglot Māori/English editions. Through Māori Christianity the Takahi Whare has been offered to uncounted householders, whether Māori or Pākehā, Christian or not, to cleanse and re-hallow a home that has been touched by death. In the later twentieth century its use was extended to the cleansing and blessing of a house in which there had been a suicide, murder, rape or domestic violence.<sup>5</sup> Cleansing a house spiritually has enabled many families after a death to return to their home and take up their life again, or, for people moving house, to make that house their home.

<sup>1</sup> The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia, *A New Zealand Prayer Book, He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa* (Auckland: William Collins, 1989), 871-876.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this article the term Takahi Whare is capitalised, unless the sources cited use lower case.

<sup>3</sup> Mill Hill Missionaries, *Pukapuka karakia o te hāhi Katorika*, ([n.p.], [196-?]). A copy was kindly given to the author by Fr. P.M. Ryan, who compiled it.

<sup>4</sup> Church of the Province of New Zealand. Diocese of Waiaapu. *He tikanga karakia mo nga wa katoa*, [Napier, N.Z.]: Te Pihopatanga o Waiaapu, [1980], 51-53.

<sup>5</sup> Author interview with the Rt. Rev. Brian Carrell, 20 August 2015.

The Takahi Whare was traditionally conducted by a tohunga (priest or religious expert) or by the elders. As soon as possible after the tangi, the elders took the principal mourners back to the house where the deceased person had lived, which may not have been where they had died. Singing karakia (chants or prayers), they entered the house with the mourners to ward off all that was evil and harmful. Observing many hui (gatherings) and takahi whare in the late 1960s, the anthropologist Anne Salmond notes that it served two purposes, ‘to drive out any lingering traces of the dead man’s spirit, and to purify the house for further occupation.’<sup>6</sup> In Catholic theology, Fr P.M. Ryan notes that its purposes were to welcome mourners back from the valley of death into the living world and assure them that ‘all the evil influences had been scared away and the angel of peace had come to dwell with them.’<sup>7</sup> The tapu of death was lifted in a very noisy part of the ritual, when the elders and mourners started to takahi whare, to ‘trample’ the house. The priest encouraged people not to be shy, but to tangi parare (wail) as they went from room to room, touching the walls.<sup>8</sup> Salmond notes that the elders sprinkled ‘sacred water’ from a leafy branch. The kuia (elderly women, female elders) wailed to drive away any kēhua (ghosts). The Takahi Whare has been variously described in English as a ‘tramp-tramp’, ‘de-lousing’ or ‘driving out the devils.’<sup>9</sup> In a recent handbook of Maori tikanga (customs or practices), Hirini Moko Mead has divided what was regarded as one ritual into a two-stage process, the first to clear away (the whakawātea) followed by the takahi whare.<sup>10</sup> With the tapu of death now lifted or removed,<sup>11</sup> the house was cleansed and purified and ready for further occupation. A fuller discussion of the Takahi Whare follows in the Literature Review.

This article seeks, first, to establish what is known about the Takahi Whare, using published sources, both primary and secondary. Only then will it be possible to critically examine the claim made by those who were the first to publish the Takahi Whare, the authors of Catholic and Anglican prayer books from the 1960s and 1970s, that it is a pre-contact rite. No primary sources have yet been found to establish its use within Māori Christianity in the nineteenth century. The literature review will identify the gaps in current knowledge and will also allow for a consideration of negative evidence. In such cases the absence of evidence does not prove that the Takahi Whare did not exist as a practice. The discussion of sources is structured both chronologically, from the earliest European contact, and by discipline. Second, Protestant and Catholic missionary frameworks will be examined to enable inferences

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<sup>6</sup> Anne Salmond, *Hui: a study of Māori ceremonial gatherings* (Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1975, rev. 2004), 186-187. See the literature review below for Patrick Hohepa’s account in 1964.

<sup>7</sup> Personal communication with Fr P.M. Ryan, 16 March 2016.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Hui*, 186.

<sup>10</sup> Hirini Moko Mead, *Tikanga, Living by Māori Values* (Wellington: Huia, 2003), 49-50.

<sup>11</sup> The most common verbs in English that are used to collocate with tapu are: to raise, lift or remove.

to be made as to whether the Takahi Whare survived the missionary period. If it survived, to what extent did Māori adapt it, in response both to their experience of missionary Christianity and to changing circumstances, including the loss of their land? Third, the article assesses the implications of the acquisition of literacy for the continuation of religious traditions which were transmitted orally. Fourth, claims about the ‘conversion’ of Māori to Christianity, on the one hand, and of the subsequent indigenisation of Māori Christianity, on the other, will be evaluated. Lastly, the article tracks the development from the exclusive use of Latin rites translated into Māori to the inclusion of indigenous songs, prayers and rites in *Pukapuka Karakia*, Catholic Prayer Books, from 1847 to the first that were published after Vatican II. The transmission of the Takahi Whare orally from the 1850s to the 1950s is the subject of a separate, forthcoming article.

## The concept of tapu

The most important evidence for the Takahi Whare being a pre-contact rite, rather than a later development, is that it is rooted in the concept of tapu. Archaeological evidence has dated the arrival of Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand to the early 1300s CE,<sup>12</sup> and tells us much about their material culture and some of their tikanga (practices). However it throws little light on which religious rites they brought, in particular the tangihanga, those following death. In the centuries before first contact with Europeans, Māori beliefs and practices were fluid rather than fixed, as the first ethnographers had assumed.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, the concept of tapu, shared with other Polynesian peoples, remained a constant. This concept did not exist in the culture of the coloniser, but would later become part of western anthropological frameworks of ‘taboo’ and sacred space. In contrast to the dualism pervading western thought of sacred and profane, particularly after the Enlightenment, the Māori religious concepts of atua, tupua, mana, tapu, noa and mauri harmonised spiritual realities with physical ones. Each aspect of life was related to every other in a vision that unified the whole of existence.<sup>14</sup>

Tapu is a richly nuanced concept in the Māori worldview. Henry Williams’ first edition of the Māori Dictionary (1844) gave three meanings: first, under religious or superstitious restriction, affecting persons, places and things; second, beyond one’s power, inaccessible; and third, a ceremonial restriction, quality or being subject

<sup>12</sup> This is much later than the date of 800 CE given for landfall until the 1980s. For a full scientific report see: Jacomb, C., Holdaway, R.N., Allentoft, M.E., Bunce, M., Oskam, C.L., Walter, R. and Brooks, E. “High-precision dating and ancient DNA profiling of moa (Aves: Dinornithiformes) eggshell documents a complex feature at Wairau Bar and refines the chronology of New Zealand settlement by Polynesians”. *Journal of Archaeological Science* (2014) 50: 24-30.

<sup>13</sup> Angela Ballara, *Taua: ‘musket wars’, ‘land wars’ or tikanga? : warfare in Māori society in the early nineteenth century* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2003), 414.

<sup>14</sup> Michael King, *The Penguin History of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin Books: 2003), 139. Atua (ancestor or god), tupua (the supernatural), mana (authority, spiritual power), tapu (restriction), noa (common, free from tapu) and mauri (life force). For fuller definitions, see the online Maori Dictionary, <http://maoridictionary.co.nz>.

to such restriction.<sup>15</sup> A later edition added the meaning ‘sacred’. In 1974 Jean Smith explored the meanings of tapu removal in a range of ceremonies.<sup>16</sup> Maori Marsden in 1992 defined tapu in contrast to its ‘opposite’, noa, and the profane. A person or object placed under the patronage of the gods was thus removed from the sphere of the profane and put into the sphere of the sacred. A person became untouchable; an object was no longer available for common use.<sup>17</sup> This binary approach has since been questioned. Michael Shirres went back to Māori writings in the 1840s and 1850s to reconstruct the meaning of tapu. Its primary meaning was not ‘forbidden’ or ‘restricted’; rather, was a positive concept, which he defined as ‘being with potential for power’. The primary tapu were intrinsic, tapu in themselves. Restrictions were ‘extensions’ to that tapu, and therefore extrinsic.<sup>18</sup> Māori Catholic theologian, Pā Henare Tate, drew on this earlier manuscript material and contemporary theological understandings to posit the primary meaning of tapu as ‘being-in-itself’.<sup>19</sup>

## Literature review

The latest online search tools were used to try to locate references to the Takahi Whare going back to the nineteenth century, in both primary and secondary sources. Te Puna, the National Library Catalogue of published and archival material,<sup>20</sup> yielded no results, even accounting for misspellings such as takahe (a rare, flightless endemic bird). Papers Past, an online resource, gives access to digitised newspapers from the nineteenth century, published in English or Māori.<sup>21</sup> Many references were found to the tangihanga, but none for the Takahi Whare, of which it is a part. The New Zealand Digital Library (NZDL) has an area to search Niupepe (Māori newspapers). References were found to ‘takahi’ and ‘whare’ as individual search terms, but not to ‘takahi whare’ as a phrase. Victoria University of Wellington established a New Zealand Electronic Text Centre<sup>22</sup> and the University of Auckland has a collection of early New Zealand Books online.<sup>23</sup> Some texts discuss Māori religious practices, but none refers to the Takahi Whare. Lastly, over the last 20 years a number of universities have provided open access to their students’ digitised masters and doctoral theses. Likewise, these yielded no matches. The latest search methods, then, have yielded no evidence of the Takahi Whare.

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<sup>15</sup> H.W. Williams, *Dictionary of the Maori language* (Wellington: Government Printing Office, 1985), 385. First ed. William Williams, *A dictionary of the New Zealand language* (Paihia, N.Z.: C.M. Society, 1844).

<sup>16</sup> See Jean Smith, *Tapu removal in Māori religion*. Polynesian Society (N.Z.). Journal. 1974 [i.e.1976], *Memoirs of the Polynesian Society*, no. 40.

<sup>17</sup> Maori Marsden, “God, man and universe: a Maori view,” in *Te Ao hurihuri : aspects of Maoritanga* (Auckland: Reed, 1992), 121.

<sup>18</sup> Michael P. Shirres. *Te Tangata: the human person* (Auckland: Accent, 1997), 33.

<sup>19</sup> Henare Tate, *He puna iti i te ao mārama = A little spring in the world of light*, (Auckland: Libro International, 2012), 61-73.

<sup>20</sup> <http://natlib.govt.nz/librarians/te-puna/te-puna-search>

<sup>21</sup> <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz>

<sup>22</sup> <http://nzetc.victoria.ac.nz>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.enzb.auckland.ac.nz>

*Tangata whenua: a history* (2015) is a magisterial study of Māori history from pre-contact to the present, using the latest scholarship in a number of disciplines.<sup>24</sup> It has nuanced discussion of such issues as the impact of literacy among Māori and its relationship to conversion to Christianity.<sup>25</sup> It discusses the continuation of pre-contact practices, such as the tangihanga and hahunga, which involved exhuming the bones of the deceased, scraping and coating them with red ochre then storing them, where no enemy could desecrate them. These are cited as evidence of the lack of missionary effectiveness, but there are no references to the Takahi Whare.<sup>26</sup> We need, then, to turn to accounts by the first Europeans to have contact with Māori.<sup>27</sup>

The first takahi associated with the removal of tapu recorded in Aotearoa New Zealand was on 19 April in 1773, when Captain James Cook's ship, the *Resolution*, was anchored at Tamatea (Dusky Sound). The tapu was removed, in this case, from the ship rather than from the whare of a person who had died. J. Forster record that Cook, eager to engage with Māori for the first time on that voyage, had tried every method he knew to persuade a 'secluded family' to come on board. After several days a man and girl came alongside the ship. The man broke off a green branch, struck the main shrouds of the ship with it, and 'declaimed' a karakia. Once on deck they stamped on it several times.<sup>28</sup> Salmond concludes that this was 'most likely' the enacting of the trampling (tahaki) ceremony used to drive spirits away from a place. Afterwards Cook took the man and girl below decks to his cabin for breakfast, but neither ate, 'presumably because they were still tapu.'<sup>29</sup> In this case two different kinds of tapu seem to have been involved; the tapu of entering an unknown space, which became noa after the takahi, and the tapu the man and girl had gained by gathering knowledge, as they saw for the first time items of furniture, boat construction methods and many other aspects of European material culture.<sup>30</sup>

From the time of first encounter, Europeans speculated about Māori religious beliefs and practices. The following discussion focuses on death, tapu and secrecy. Cook found no place of public worship or overtly religious gatherings, but did not put this

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<sup>24</sup> Atholl Anderson, Judith Binney, and Aroha Harris, *Tangata whenua: a history* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books), 2015.

<sup>25</sup> See also Vincent O'Malley, *The meeting place: Māori and Pākehā encounters, 1642-1840* (Auckland: Auckland University Press), 2012.

<sup>26</sup> O'Malley confirmed in a personal communication with the author, 1 August 2016, that in the course of his research, he had not come across the takahi whare in either the secondary or primary literature.

<sup>27</sup> See Anne Salmond, *Between worlds: early exchanges between Māori and Europeans, 1773-1815* (Auckland: Viking), 1997.

<sup>28</sup> See J. Forster in Michael E. Hoare (ed.), *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster, 1772-1775* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1982), II:259.

<sup>29</sup> *Between worlds*, 57-58.

<sup>30</sup> I am indebted to NekenekeiteRangi Paul, Kai-takawaenga Māori, Māori Resources Librarian, Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury, for this observation.



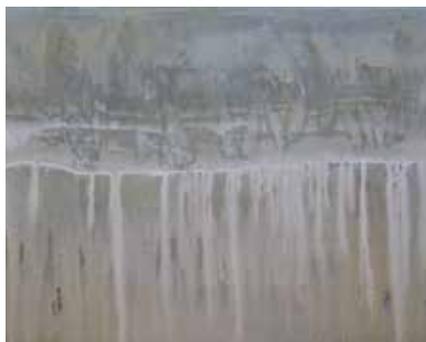
Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3  
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Figure 3



Figure 4  
The embodied image becomes a place to stay.  
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Figure 4  
The embodied image becomes a place to stay.



Figure 5



Figure 6  
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Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

down to secrecy.<sup>31</sup> In 1801 William Smith, a missionary familiar with Polynesian languages,<sup>32</sup> concluded that there was no uniform practice to dispose of the dead; in the north, they were buried in the ground; in the south, they were thrown into the sea. Since no grave was to be seen in the country, he posited that ‘the inhabitants affect to conceal every thing relating to the dead with a sort of mysterious secrecy’.<sup>33</sup> John Liddiard Nicolas, who travelled around the country in 1814 to 1815, attributed the lack of clear external signs of Māori religion to tapu, in which ‘all their religion and morality may be said to consist’.<sup>34</sup> Chief Heke had resisted close lines of questioning by Duperrey on his visit in 1824.<sup>35</sup> However some chiefs, like Ruatara, were prepared to speak about supernatural experience and did so in highly poetic terms.<sup>36</sup> The Takahi Whare, whether at the start of the ritual, as the tohunga or elders and family members moved into the house, or inside as they beat the walls, trampled the floor and wailed loudly, confounded European notions of overt/secret practices and public/private space. The argument from secrecy, however, still has currency. Jamie Belich commented in his award-winning book, *Making peoples*, that ‘Māori kept some religious teaching secret, guarding their magical powers from strangers and rivals. Europeans did not.’<sup>37</sup>

A two-volume work by Elsdon Best, *Māori religion and mythology* (1924 & 1982), is indisputably the most comprehensive study of Māori belief and practice published in the fledging discipline of ethnography in New Zealand.<sup>38</sup> Best had cofounded the Polynesian Society with fellow amateur ethnographers S. Percy Smith and Edward Tregear in 1892, when it was believed that Māori were heading for extinction.<sup>39</sup> Deeply concerned to document pre-contact beliefs and practices, they formed the *Journal of the Polynesian Society* to share their findings. Although contributors wrote decades after colonisation, they assumed they were recording ‘pure’ traditions. This is particularly so in Best’s assertion that Māori, before missionary contact, had developed the concept of a ‘Supreme Being’, known as Io.<sup>40</sup> He constantly referred to the ‘neolithic Māori’, although the Tuhoe people he studied in the Urewera had

<sup>31</sup> J.C. Beaglehole (ed.), *The journals of Captain James Cook on his voyages of discovery, The voyage of the Resolution and Discovery, 1776-1780* (London: Hakluyt Society), part 1, 72.

<sup>32</sup> Smith had been a missionary in Tahiti, until evacuated by the London Missionary Society. Salmond, *Between worlds*, 252.

<sup>33</sup> Salmond, 546, n.82. She notes that Smith had seen ‘etabu’ in the village of Heke, the main rangatira of this district, which were probably sepulchres, 278.

<sup>34</sup> *Tangata whenua*, 164 n.18 citing Nicolas, *Narrative of a voyage*, vol 2, 65.

<sup>35</sup> Andrew Sharp (ed.), *Duperrey’s visit to New Zealand in 1824* (Wellington: Alexander Turnbull Library, 1971), 41.

<sup>36</sup> *Tangata whenua*, 164.

<sup>37</sup> Jamie Belich, *Making peoples: a history of the New Zealanders, from Polynesian settlement to the end of the nineteenth century* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2001), 166.

<sup>38</sup> Elsdon Best, *Māori religion and mythology: being an account of the cosmogony, anthropogeny, religious beliefs and rites, magic and folk lore of the Māori folk of New Zealand*. 2 vols. (Wellington: Govt. Printer), Dominion Museum Bulletin, Part I, 1924; Part II, 1982.

<sup>39</sup> Peter Buck (Te Rangi Hiroa), “The passing of the Māori,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 55 (1924), 362.

<sup>40</sup> For a discussion of such problems of evidence, see Jane Simpson, “Io as Supreme Being: intellectual colonisation of the Māori?,” *History of Religions*, 37, no.1 (August 1997), 50–85.

been in contact with Pākehā society for more than 50 years, and most followed the teachings of the Ringatu Church. Despite many years of intensive study, Best found no Takahi Whare. This is corroborated in a major monograph on Best.<sup>41</sup>

The Takahi Whare was first recorded in the early 1960s as a result of work among Māori communities in Northland by Pat Hohepa, a linguist and academic. Hohepa published a detailed account of it given him by ‘an old sage’. At the house a ‘group of elderly women’ were to ‘takahi-whare (“tramp-house”), to walk across the whole property, some over the lawns, some through all the rooms of the house, some around the fruit trees and gardens, weeping, wailing, and calling for the dead woman.’ The sage explained that it was ‘removing the tapu of death from the area’ and ‘making the dead person’s spirit (wairua) leave the familiar surroundings of this world.’<sup>42</sup> The night after this period of ‘official gloom and despondency’ was a light-hearted affair, te poo-whakamoemoe, ‘the night-causing-sleep’, also translated as ‘the-night-causing-bethrothal’, as marriages were sometimes arranged.<sup>43</sup> R.S. Oppenheim’s *Maori Death Customs* (1973) notes that not only were the dead of a tribe ‘permanently tapu’, but so were ‘their homes, burial places and property.’<sup>44</sup> Although, by the 1970s, the religious aspects of the Tangihanga had been replaced by ‘Christian ceremonies’, the ‘basic elements’ of the gathering remained, including wailing, the open coffin in the meeting house, and vigorous debate.<sup>45</sup> After the burial service, the Takahi Whare was conducted in ‘some areas as an additional ceremony’ and was attended principally by the kinsfolk and local residents. Oppenheim claimed: ‘it appears to have no equivalent in the contact period ceremonial.’<sup>46</sup>

Anne Salmond has provided the most detailed account of the Takahi Whare yet published in her award-winning book, *Hui*, based on doctoral research conducted in the late 1960s.<sup>47</sup> The book has a bibliography but no references, so it is neither possible to locate the people and places where she found the Takahi Whare, nor establish the ‘earlier times’ when a building, in which a death took place, was burned.<sup>48</sup> This indeterminacy leaves the reader to infer that the practices described are survivals of pre-contact rituals or were adapted in response to Christianity. The Takahi Whare she records has no specifically Christian features, whether of language, symbols or symbolic action. The sprinkling of water was a standard way of removing tapu in

<sup>41</sup> Jeffrey Paparoa Holman, ‘Best of both worlds: Elsdon Best and the metamorphosis of Māori spirituality = Te painga rawa o ngā ao rua : te peehi me te putanga kē o te wairua Māori’, PhD thesis, the University of Canterbury, 2007. Also see his book: *Best of both worlds: the story of Elsdon Best and Tutakāngahau* (North Shore: Penguin, 2010).

<sup>42</sup> Patrick W. Hohepa, *A Maori community in Northland* (Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1964), 116-117.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 117.

<sup>44</sup> R.S. Oppenheim, *Maori death customs* (Wellington: Reed, [1973]), 120.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>47</sup> Anne Salmond, ‘Hui – a study of Māori ceremonial gatherings’ (PhD diss. Anthropology, University of Pennsylvania, 1972).

<sup>48</sup> Salmond, *Hui*, 186-187.

a 'deconsecration ritual', which could include eating food or drinking liquor, both regarded as noa, the opposite of tapu. A beer party in the house could serve the same purpose, if no expert elders were available; the use of alcohol shows European influence.<sup>49</sup> After the Takahi Whare itself was complete, the Christian minister could conduct a church service. Thirty years later an account by Hirini Moko Mead shows evidence of a process of christianisation. The church service was no longer an optional add-on: 'the ceremony itself consists of a church service in which a minister cleanses the house with water and prayers, or the whānau may use a traditional tohunga, or both may be employed.'<sup>50</sup> Mead provided a bibliography, but no references.

A pioneer of Religious Studies in New Zealand produced a standard reference work on Māori religion, which includes a detailed description of the Takahi Whare. James Irwin's *An Introduction to Maori Religion* (1984) draws on his ministry as a Presbyterian minister among Māori from 1941.<sup>51</sup> He had been able to write down the oral traditions of a number of elders, who had been born in the 1860s. His aim in the book was to show how 'the underlying beliefs of pre-European Maori religion are still present in the very warp and woof of contemporary Maori society.'<sup>52</sup> This is nowhere clearer in his assertion that the pre-European Māori believed in a Supreme Being, called Io.<sup>53</sup> He makes no claims as to the origins of the Takahi Whare, which he refers unusually to as the 'Takahia Whare', using the suffix -ia, to show the use of the passive voice, literally 'to be trampled the house'. The Karakia Takahia Whare (ritual for trampling a house) cleansed away the tapu of death and any malign influence. He noted that it was increasingly being held at a time to suit the family, rather than at dawn at the end of the night fast. Significantly, Irwin distinguished between the corporate/individual and the public/private; the Takahia Whare differed from most purification rites, in that it was carried out by the tohunga in public and for the family or community involved, rather than on an individual basis for the person concerned.<sup>54</sup> As in Salmond's account, a tohunga or kaumatua (senior male) conducted the ceremony, rather than a minister. Likewise, there are no specifically Christian features. The group followed the tohunga into each room, where he recited the appropriate prayers and sprinkled water. At the end, all drank a cup of tea and the visitors left. The house was now noa, free of any malign influence associated with death, and the family was also free. The unveiling of the headstone took place a year later.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 187.

<sup>50</sup> *Tikanga, Living by Māori Values*, 143.

<sup>51</sup> James Irwin, *An introduction to Māori religion: its character before European contact and its survival in contemporary Māori and New Zealand culture*. Series: Special studies in religions; no. 4 (Bedford Park, S. Aust: Australian Association for the Study of Religions, 1984).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., vii.

<sup>53</sup> For a full critique of this, within the disciplinary context of the emergence of Religious Studies, see Simpson, "Io as Supreme Being".

<sup>54</sup> *An introduction to Māori religion*, 31.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 58-59.

New Zealand church historian, Ken Booth, has set the Takahi Whare in a national and international context of liturgical reform in the Anglican Church from the 1960s. Three new funeral rites in *A New Zealand Prayer Book, He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa* showed the impact of Māori culture on the Anglican Church and the wider society: the commendation of the deceased to God's care, the Takahi Whare and the unveiling of a memorial stone a year after a death.<sup>56</sup> Most recently, the Rt. Rev. Brian Carrell, a key member of the New Zealand Prayer Book Commission from 1965–89, provided a personal reminiscence of its work as it sought to craft new Anglican liturgies to reflect changes in society and meet contemporary needs. Work started on the Takahi Whare in 1980.<sup>57</sup> Among Catholic historians of liturgy in New Zealand, Joseph Grayland has noted the profound impact of Vatican II,<sup>58</sup> but scholars have yet to assess the significance of Christianised Māori rites, such as the Takahi Whare, for Māori-Pākehā relationships.

## Missionary frameworks

Among both Protestant and Catholic missionaries, pre-existing frameworks about the relationship between Christianity and indigenous cultures shaped the response to Māori religion, from outright rejection to a willingness to accommodate some practices. The Church Missionary Society (CMS), founded in London in 1799, came directly out of the Evangelical Revival and its humanitarianism. Civilising came before evangelising. While the CMS 'demonised' Māori for cannibalism, it also sought to protect them from the worst evils of European colonisation. It followed the pattern already well established in other parts of the British Empire, to teach indigenous peoples the scriptures, catechisms and prayers in their own language, rather than English.<sup>59</sup> Since the languages of the Australian Aborigines and Māori were wholly oral, this would mean building an orthography from scratch, before there could be any teaching of the gospel in the native tongue. Samuel Marsden, Chaplain of New South Wales and CMS agent, had tried unsuccessfully to civilise and convert the Aborigines. In contrast, he described the Māori as 'a very superior people in point of mental capacity'.<sup>60</sup> Among the three settlers Marsden sent in 1814 to found the mission in New Zealand was a school master, Thomas Kendall, an ardent evangelical from Lincolnshire, whose task it would be to produce alphabets, numbers, word

<sup>56</sup> Ken Booth, "The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia," in *The Oxford Guide to The Book of Common Prayer: A Worldwide Survey*, eds. Charles Hefling and Cynthia Shattuck (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 338.

<sup>57</sup> Brian Carrell, *Creating a New Zealand prayer book: a personal reminiscence of a 25 year odyssey 1964-89* (Christchurch: Theology House, 2013), 48, 49, 58. An official history of the New Zealand Prayer Book by Geoffrey Haworth is due to be published in 2018.

<sup>58</sup> Joseph Grayland, *It changed overnight! Celebrating New Zealand's liturgical renewal, 1963 to 1970* (Auckland: Te Heparā Pai, 2003).

<sup>59</sup> D.F. McKenzie, *Oral culture, literacy & print in early New Zealand: the Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Victoria University Press / Alexander Turnbull Library Endowment Trust, 1985), 12.

<sup>60</sup> ADB, online. <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/marsden-samuel-2433>

lists and sentences, and a grammar.<sup>61</sup> Civilising was tied to a 'general improvement in the simple Arts' and 'moral and industrious habits,' leading to conformity to a 'British artisan prototype.'<sup>62</sup> The Ngā Puhi, however, used and adapted those skills that fitted into their own existing practices. Within eight years, the CMS had come to the conclusion that only the Gospel could civilise the 'heathen.'<sup>63</sup>

Anglican and Wesleyan missionaries took the discontinuation of pre-Christian practices as evidence of Māori having laid aside their 'old superstitions' and therefore of their having been converted to Christianity. However, the continuation of rites to do with the dead provided a graphic reminder of the hold of the old religion, even on those Māori who attended mission schools and observed the Sabbath. In 1835 the Rev. William Williams noted with triumph the end of the hahunga.<sup>64</sup> Following the decision of Rewa, the Bay of Islands chief, Māori would henceforth be buried according to European custom, their bones staying in the ground.<sup>65</sup> Writing of the years 1839–41, Williams claimed that 'the whole fabric of native superstition was gone.'<sup>66</sup>

The Roman Catholic mission started in New Zealand in 1838, with the arrival in Kawhia of Bishop Jean-Baptiste Pompallier with priests and brothers. Pompallier's missionary principles were to respect Māori culture and learn the Māori language. He spoke at least four languages: French, Latin, Māori and English, and in that order. Catholic priests and brothers, free of family responsibilities, were able to visit many villages and accordingly had much closer contact with Māori than was possible for Protestant missionaries. When they came to different places, they built Roman Catholic belief around existing tikanga (practices) and avoided seeing Māori ideas as anti-Christian simply because they were non-European.<sup>67</sup> While the Anglicans denounced the haka and Wesleyans the practice of tattooing, Pompallier took a gradualist and flexible approach. Priests were to distinguish between 'very bad things, extremely bad things, and slightly bad things; others which are neither good nor bad in the eyes of God, others finally which are slightly good, extremely good and very good.'<sup>68</sup> This willingness to accommodate pre-contact practices meant that the Takahi Whare was more likely to survive among Catholic Māori communities. Anglican missionaries, for

<sup>61</sup> Alison Jones and Kuni Jenkins, *Words between Us – He kōrero: First Māori-Pākehā conversations on paper* (Wellington: Huia, 2011), 195–96

<sup>62</sup> William Williams and Jane Williams, *The Turanga journals, 1840-1850: letters and journals of William and Jane Williams, missionaries to Poverty Bay*, ed. Frances Porter (Wellington: Price Milburn for Victoria University Press, 1974), 41–42.

<sup>63</sup> *Turanga Journals*, 42–43. This is before Henry Williams, given credit at the time for the change of approach, took control of the mission.

<sup>64</sup> *Hui*, 193. Elsmore attributes the declining use of hahunga to changed social circumstances, due to the peace brought as a result of accepting Christianity. See Bronwn Elsmore, *Mana from heaven: a century of Māori prophets in New Zealand* (Auckland: Reed, 1999), 17, 20, 22.

<sup>65</sup> *Turanga Journals*, 50.

<sup>66</sup> *Turanga Journals*, 46.

<sup>67</sup> Rory Sweetman, "Catholic Church", *Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/catholic-church> (accessed 8 July 2016).

<sup>68</sup> Jessie Munro, *The story of Suzanne Aubert* (Auckland: Auckland University Press / Bridget Williams Books, 1996), 64.

their part, tarred Catholics with the same brush of superstition with which they tarred Māori, associating them with ritenga (ritual), as opposed to whakapono (a faith or religion), when Pompallier sought the protection of all faiths at the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840.<sup>69</sup>

## Literacy, religious texts and orality

Māori quickly became highly literate in their own language. Kendall's *A grammar and vocabulary of the language of New Zealand* (1820), itself a collaborate effort,<sup>70</sup> and the literacy in te reo Māori (the Māori language) it enabled, laid a foundation which would transform many aspects of Māori life.<sup>71</sup> Daily study of te reo created an insatiable demand for texts among 'te Mihinare', as Māori Anglicans were known. Catechisms, small primers, prayer sheets and scripture portions were printed in Sydney and sent to the CMS mission. William Yates' translation of a catechism from the *Book of Common Prayer* was the first book to be printed in New Zealand. The complete BCP, affectionately known as *Te Rawiri*, was published in 1838 and quickly ran out of stock. By 1837 the complete New Testament had been translated and was printed by William Colenso at Paihia.<sup>72</sup> By 1845 there was at least one Māori New Testament for every two Māori people.<sup>73</sup> It was not until 1868 that the first full Māori Bible was printed, particularly important for Māori, as they identified more with the Old Testament than the New. The Wesleyan Missionary Society, which had set up its first mission station in New Zealand in 1823 at Kaeo, near Whangaroa Harbour, soon produced catechisms and hymns in Māori, which were also printed in Sydney.<sup>74</sup> By the late 1830s the demand for texts had spread from the far north to the south of the South Island, to Waikouaiti, in Otago. Māori taught Māori and missionaries coming into new districts found that the 'Word' had gone on before them. Informal instruction soon led to the creation of a new role of Māori as 'Native Teachers'. They were to play a central role in the wave of conversions from the mid-1830s through the 1840s. The standard explanation by historians, notably Gordon Parsonson, was that conversions were testament to the motivation of Maori to acquire literacy; that

<sup>69</sup> See Jane Simpson, "Honouring religious diversity in New Zealand education after the Treaty of Waitangi, 1840–77," in *Mapping the Landscape: Essays in Australian and New Zealand Christianity; Festschrift in Honour of Professor Ian Breward*, eds. Susan Emilsen and William W. Emilsen. Series: American University Studies IX, History, v.193, (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 332-352.

<sup>70</sup> Kendall, four Māori who had taught him, and Professor Samuel Lee, the oriental linguist at Cambridge University. See *Words between us*, 162, 195-196.

<sup>71</sup> Atholl Anderson, Judith Binney, and Aroha Harris, *Tangata whenua: a history* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2015), 193-194.

<sup>72</sup> *Tantanga whenua*, 195-196.

<sup>73</sup> *Words between us*, 200, citing H. M. Wright, *New Zealand, 1769-1840: early years of western contact* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1959), 53.

<sup>74</sup> Philip Parkinson and Penelope Griffith, *Books in Māori, 1815-1900: an annotated bibliography = Nga tanga reo Māori: nga kohikohinga me ona whakamarama* (Auckland: Reed, 2004), 34-35.

Christianity was ‘incidental’.<sup>75</sup> Such dualistic interpretations have made it difficult to understand how Māori adapted both Christianity and literacy to their own purposes.

From 1838 Protestants faced competition with the arrival of Bishop Pompallier and establishment of the Catholic mission. The first collection of Catholic texts, *Ako marama*, was published in 1843 and 2000 copies printed, followed in the same year by an expanded edition.<sup>76</sup> Translations into Māori from the Latin needed Bishop Pompallier’s imprimatur. The first Māori Catholic Prayer Book was published in 1847 at Kororareka and translated by Father Claude Baty. *Ko te ako me te karakia o te Hahi Katorika Romana, Catholic prayer book with catechisms, hymns, and the Gospel of Matthew* ran to 600 pages and also contained a calendar, instructions, various prayers, 23 hymns, observances, a list of Popes and the Burial service.<sup>77</sup> Given Pompallier’s missionary principle to build faith around existing tikanga, and given the high levels of literacy among Catholic Māori, it might be thought that, alongside oral transmission, the logical place to find indigenous Christianised rites would be in a Catholic Prayer book, a *pukapuka karakia*. Distinctive Christianised karakia or waiata (sacred songs) that had developed among Māori Catholic communities were first included the Māori Catholic Prayer Book in 1858. The fourth *Ako marama* included a few hymns and 12 waiata.<sup>78</sup> Further editions of the Prayer Book, incorporating new material, were published in 1861, 1879, 1880 and 1888, when the Mill Hill Fathers took over publication from the Marist Order. That edition, *Ko te pukapuka karakia poto o te Hahi Katorika Romaaua*, has morning and evening prayer, the Mass, devotions including the Rosary and the Stations of the Cross, a catechism and 39 hymns.<sup>79</sup> Some waiata are in diglot Latin / Māori. The prayers for the dead were translations from that section in the Mass.<sup>80</sup>

Māori moved with ease between oral culture and the world of print. Invariably, there was cross-fertilisation between orality and literacy. Before the introduction of the written word, Māori, from their origins in Polynesia, had found a wealth of alternative means to order raw chaotic reality. Writing something down enabled different kinds of thought processes; encouraging reflection upon its possible meanings. Relative time, place and person in an oral culture became fixed in the written or printed word, so that possible meanings became accessible to others in the same form. Oral tradition, by contrast, has infinite, untraceable variations, not able

<sup>75</sup> G.S. Parsonson, “The Literate Revolution in Polynesia,” *Journal of Pacific History*, 2 (1967), 39-57.

<sup>76</sup> Catholic Church, *Ako marama o te Hahi Katorika Romana ko te pou me te unga o te pono = A long pastoral, with statement of Catholic doctrine, catechism, and prayers* (Okihetari: 1843).

<sup>77</sup> *Books in Māori*, Entry 327, 172-173.

<sup>78</sup> Catholic Church, *Ako marama o te Hahi Katorika Romana* (Auckland: 1858).

<sup>79</sup> Catholic Church, *Ko te pukapuka karakia poto o te Hahi Katorika Romaaua* [i.e. Romana], Auckland: He mea ta e. [sic] H. Perete i Hoterani Tiriti, 1889).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

to be captured by print.<sup>81</sup> To reverse the argument about the ‘civilisation’ brought by the colonisers, McKenzie asks: ‘what is it about literacy and books that makes these technologies so inadequate to cope with the complex realities of a highly civilized social experience which the Māori know but which the literate mind too readily and reductively perhaps tried to capture in the book?’<sup>82</sup> The question has direct relevance to the survival of pre-contact religious practices. Could the Takahi Whare, of which there is no extant evidence from this period, have been such a ‘highly civilized social experience’? Such practices continued to be memorised and handed on orally.

## Pre-contact rites in indigenous Christianity

Māori were neither passive recipients of literacy nor of missionary Christianity. They turned literacy to their own purposes, writing complex legal letters to defend their rights to their land, guaranteed under the Treaty of Waitangi.<sup>83</sup> Rather than pre-contact religious beliefs and practices being supplanted, abandoned, erased or displaced, as missionary accounts portray, they were extended. Elsmore has argued that Māori were not so much ‘converted’ to Christianity, as that they chose ‘to add on to their own beliefs those aspects of the other religion which suited them.’<sup>84</sup> O’Malley argues that Christianity became ‘incorporated into the schema of Māori beliefs.’<sup>85</sup> From early on, Māori debated Christian teachings and weighed them assiduously, choosing those that resonated with their existing worldview. The stories, parables and genealogies in the Bible and Christian prayers and hymns ‘struck a rich vein of cultural identification.’<sup>86</sup> The Hebrew scriptures told of prophets who had direct communication with a God who intervened. In the scriptures, Māori saw their own concepts and tikanga, as CMS translators had used Māori words rather than transliterations of the English: tapu for holy or sacred, karakia for prayer and atua for God. Terms, which in Greek or English connoted a sharp divide between the body and the spirit, had been translated into words and concepts deeply grounded in the Māori worldview, which embraced the material and physical worlds.<sup>87</sup>

Research on the process of indigenisation in Māori Christianity suggests how pre-contact rites of tapu removal, including the Takahi Whare, were practised and adapted in Māori communities in the colonial context. Pre-contact, the karakia and rituals required in everyday life were available to most people. Others were known only to an elite, tohunga trained in whare wānanga (houses of learning). Well into the nineteenth

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<sup>81</sup> Martin Edmond, *Zone of the marvellous: in search of the Antipodes* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2009), 13.

<sup>82</sup> McKenzie, n.19, 15-16.

<sup>83</sup> *Tangata whenua*, 196.

<sup>84</sup> Bronwyn Elsmore, *Mana from heaven: a century of Māori prophets in New Zealand* (Auckland: Reed, 1999), 17.

<sup>85</sup> For a discussion of the historiography of conversion, see Vincent O’Malley, *The meeting place: Māori and Pākehā encounters, 1642-1840* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2012), 162-195.

<sup>86</sup> *Tangata whenua*, 196.

<sup>87</sup> *Tangata whenua*, 201.

century the tapu system continued to suffuse Māori society. When tapu was disrupted, life could go on only if the accepted rituals for removing tapu (whakanoa) were used.<sup>88</sup> O'Malley has noted a further stage, when Māori started to use new karakia to remove tapu restrictions, rather than traditional ones. These were 'Christian karakia', or perhaps more accurately, 'Christianised karakia.' These were used along with new, Christianised forms of whakanoa in a house after a death.<sup>89</sup> Nonetheless, tapu was still being removed. Only much later would some religious movements regard many traditional religious practices as incompatible with Christianity and reject the concept of tapu, in particular the movement that sprang up after the visions of Tahupōtiki Wiremu Rātana (1873–1939) in 1918. While Rātana was steeped in the use of Māori language and metaphor, he rejected tapu, tangihanga and carving, along with tohunga-ism and tribalism.<sup>90</sup>

### The Mill Hill Fathers: oral traditions and prayer books, 1888–1990

This last section touches on ideas to be developed in a later article. After the land wars of the 1860s, a number of independent prophetic movements arose among both mihinare (Anglican Māori), who wanted to separate Christianity from the distortions of Protestantism, and among Catholics, where Christianised oral traditions had survived. Some of these movements took root in regions where Catholicism had been strong. Unpublished evidence suggests that it was through one such movement that the Takahi Whare was preserved and transmitted orally down the generations to the 1950s.

In 1886 a new Catholic mission to the Māori started, with the arrival in New Zealand of Fathers from the Society of Saint Joseph of the Sacred Heart, known as 'The Mill Hill Fathers', after their missionary college in London, founded in 1866. The aim of the mission was to provide pastoral care that was consistent with Māori customs and culture. Most of the priests came from Germany and the Netherlands. All became fluent in te reo Māori. Their task was to reawaken the dying Catholic mission in the old heartlands of the Hokianga and Bay of Plenty.<sup>91</sup> When the Mill Hill Fathers trained katekita (catechists) to teach their own people, they did not exclude Māori indigenous traditions when these were not regarded as antithetical to the Christian faith. In their work among different Māori communities, they took the opportunity to speak to kaumatua and kuia about the oral traditions handed down to them. However the 1888 edition of the *Pukapuka karakia*, which the Mill Hill edited, had no Tangihanga or Takahi Whare, whether drawn from traditional sources or

<sup>88</sup> See Jean Smith, *Tapu removal in Maori religion*. Polynesian Society (N.Z.). Journal. 1974 [i.e.1976], Memoirs of the Polynesian Society no. 40.

<sup>89</sup> *The meeting place*, 191–192.

<sup>90</sup> Michael King, *The Penguin history of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2003), 336

<sup>91</sup> *Tangata whenua*, 346.

Christianised ones. Neither does it contain Māori services which may have developed directly out of Latin rites, such as the Blessing of a Home as people came to live in it, later called the Whakatapu Whare.<sup>92</sup> Although it is not possible to verify the inclusion the Tangihanga and Takahi Whare in the edition published fifty years later, because it has been lost, subsequent editions confirm their absence.<sup>93</sup> It was not until 1944 that the next Māori Catholic Prayer Book came out.<sup>94</sup> Among its 16 services, there was none in which Māori had intertwined their own traditions and spirituality with their Catholic faith. Similarly, the 393-page 1958 edition had no Takahi Whare.<sup>95</sup>

In 1954 a particularly enterprising young Mill Hill Father, originally from Merseyside, arrived in New Zealand. Fr. P.M. Ryan had undertaken a total of nine years' theological study in Durham, Brabant in the Netherlands, and finally at the Order's college in London. Ryan, later affectionately known among Māori as 'Pā Mick', trained katekita, exercised an itinerant ministry in different Māori communities and later became a leading lexicographer.<sup>96</sup> Early in his ministry Ryan came across the Takahi Whare and was able to trace it back three generations to founding members of an independent prophetic movement. Because it involved the lifting of tapu, it was unlike anything in Roman rites, including exorcism. Ryan did not regard the removal of tapu to cleanse a house spiritually, a practice that pre-dated the introduction of Christianity in New Zealand, as anti-Christian.<sup>97</sup> In the Māori worldview, concepts of bad, sin and evil were much more nuanced than in Christian theology. In about 1965 the Takahi Whare was published for the first time. By this stage the Mill Hill Fathers had been publishing *pukapuka karakia* for nearly eighty years. The prayer book Ryan compiled, *Pukapuka karakia o te hāhi Katorika*, was the first to include distinctive Catholic Māori rites to do with death. These were in te reo Māori. The Mass, hymns and daily prayers were in diglot Māori and English or in English only.<sup>98</sup> Rubrics, when given, were in English and set in italics. The lifting of tapu was understood. The complete booklet ran to 132 pages. Unusually for a prayer book, it had no imprimatur from the bishop, approving its publication for public or private use.<sup>99</sup> There were three different prayers that could be used to bless the house of a person who had died. First, the Whakatapu Whare ('to make sacred a house'). This was based on the Latin rite in the *Rituale Romanum*, which provided for an initial and an annual blessing of a house.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> See below.

<sup>93</sup> Catholic Church, *He pukapuka karakia o te Hāhi Katorika* (Wellington: Catholic Church, [193-?]).

<sup>94</sup> Mill Hill Missionaries, *He pukapuka karakia o te hāhi Katorika*, (Wellington: Catholic Supplies, 1944).

<sup>95</sup> Catholic Church. Diocese of Auckland. *Ko te kaiarahi ki te oranga tonutanga : he pukapuka karakia me te ako poto o te Hahi Katorika / na te Epikopo o Akarana i whakaae kia taia tenei pukapuka.* (Tilburg, Holland: He mea ta e A. Reijnen), 1958.

<sup>96</sup> Ryan studied Māori at the University of Auckland, 1969-72, *New Zealand's Who's Who Aotearoa*, (Auckland: Alister Taylor, 2001), 771. His *A dictionary of modern Maori* was privately published in 1971 and has remained in print ever since.

<sup>97</sup> Personal Communication to the author from Fr P.M. Ryan, 9 June 2016.

<sup>98</sup> *Pukapuka karakia o te hāhi Katorika*, [196-?].

<sup>99</sup> Code of Canon Law, #826, 827.1.

<sup>100</sup> Roman Catholic Church, *Rituale Romanum*, 1886, approbatio 7 August 1886.

As in the Latin rite, the priest moved from room to room, calling on God's blessing.<sup>101</sup> In the Māori service, God is not addressed in trinitarian terms, but in a traditional and inclusive way using 'atua': 'He tapu, he tapu, he tapu te Ariki te Atua kaha, te Atua mana,' ('Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might.') The Māori text expresses the collective voice in one person praying, rather than one individual to God.<sup>102</sup> The prayers of blessing were said outside the house and then at the main door, in the bedrooms, in the bathroom, in the kitchen and in the lounge. The booklet provided two short prayers to bless a house after a funeral: the 'Whakatapu Whare Tangihanga' (Blessing of the place where the bodies of the dead have been laid), and the 'Inoigna ki a Hato Mikaere Arekahere,' (Prayer to Michael the Archangel), which resonated with Māori warrior traditions.<sup>103</sup> As the Prince of the heavenly host, St. Michael was called on to 'thrust down to hell Satan and all wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls.'<sup>104</sup> Ryan compiled this prayer book and self-published it.<sup>105</sup> He soon became a one-man printing operation and produced subsequent versions in more convenient pocket-sized editions.

For Ryan the critical change in acknowledging indigenous rites came as a result of Vatican II, with the authorisation in every country to use vernacular languages and also to infuse them with local usage. In 1965 the Mill Hill Order received official approbation from Rome for the Sacraments' translation from Latin into Māori.<sup>106</sup> Traditional prayers and rites used by Catholic Māori communities, hitherto transmitted orally, could now be deemed to be free of error and officially published. Ryan sought and gained from Bishop Takuira Mariu the imprimatur needed for the Takahi Whare to be officially used in public services. In the second prayer book he compiled, *He ritenga karakia me ngā Himene mō te Tangihanga me te Nehunga: Funeral Rites Prayers Hymns Readings for times of Mourning*,<sup>107</sup> the component parts of the Takahi Whare were brought together to make a cohesive whole under the title 'Ko Te Takahi Whare.'<sup>108</sup> The texts themselves could not be separated from indigenous understandings of faith. The whole book is in diglot format, so it could be understood by Māori and Pākehā not fluent in te reo Māori. Ryan personally saw *He ritenga karakia* through to publication, as typist, type setter, editor, printer, bookbinder and

<sup>101</sup> Church of the Province of New Zealand. Diocese of Waiapu. *He tikanga karakia mo nga wa katoa*. ([Napier, N.Z.]: Te Pihopatanga o Waiapu, [1980]), 49.

<sup>102</sup> I am indebted to NekeneketeRangi Paul for this observation.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 47, 76.

<sup>104</sup> This translation is from *He tikanga karakia*, n.d., 42.

<sup>105</sup> The two previous *Pukapuka Karakia* had been published by Catholic Supplies in Wellington and by Mill Hill in the Netherlands.

<sup>106</sup> *Nova Zelandia. Interpretatio Maori Probatur seu Confirmatur E Civitate Vaticana, die 10 Septembris 1965*. The main translators for those were Pa Aterea (Fr. Andreas Zangerl of Pawarenga) and Pa Teo (Fr. Theo Wanders of Panguru), Personal Communication from P.M. Ryan, 21 April 2016.

<sup>107</sup> Mill Hill Missionaries, *He ritenga karakia me ngā Himene mō te Tangihanga me te Nehunga: Funeral Rites Prayers Hymns Readings for times of Mourning*, n.p., n.d.

<sup>108</sup> *He ritenga karakia*, 39-42, cf. *Pukapuka karakia*, 46-49, 76. Fellow Mill Hill Father, Pā Henare Tate, wrote the service in the section from the blessing of the grave to the Takahi Whare .

edge cutter. Three thousand pocket-size books were printed, using an old Gestetner to keep costs down. Ryan sent them to all Māori missionaries working in the Catholic Dioceses of Auckland and Hamilton. The booklets quickly sold out.<sup>109</sup> It was this text which was consulted in the 1970s by Anglican Māori and Pākehā, as they worked towards the publication of *A New Zealand Prayerbook / He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa*.<sup>110</sup> Ironically, the Takahi Whare is known throughout the world primarily through this Anglican prayer book, rather than through its Catholic progenitor, which is still self-published.<sup>111</sup> The Catholic rite remains more war-like, and perhaps more distinctively Māori. The priest and family takahi, 'tread through' the house, to chase spirits away. Tūpuna katekita (catechist ancestors) valued it highly, because they knew that the Archangel Michael was 'a warrior to support them in their struggle against evil spirits.'<sup>112</sup> The addition of a haka, 35 years after publication of the first Takahi Whare, affirmed this ancient Māori warrior tradition.

## Conclusion

This article has established, through argument and inference from the available evidence, that the Takahi Whare is a rite which pre-dates European contact and missionary Christianity. The prime evidence is that it involves the lifting or removal of tapu from the house of a person who has died, tapu being a concept shared with other Polynesian peoples before Māori came to Aotearoa New Zealand. Pompallier's missionary principle to build faith around existing tikanga meant that the Takahi Whare continued to be transmitted orally and was practised in Catholic Māori communities through the nineteenth century. Christian waiata were included in *Pukapuka Karakia* for the first time in 1858. Despite the culturally-sensitive ministry of the Mill Hill Fathers among Māori from 1886, indigenous Christianised rites were not published until 1965, after Vatican II, when they were deemed to be free of error and were officially sanctioned. That the Takahi Whare was not written down for nearly two centuries can be interpreted positively, that Māori did not want to restrict it within the confines of the printed word.

The Takahi Whare gives us a fascinating glimpse into developments in Māori Christianity in the post-contact and post-colonial eras. From the 1850s it shows evidence of the indigenising of faith among Christian Māori, both in the Catholic Church and independent prophetic movements. From the 1980s it reveals a twin movement; it became Christianised, in the sense that clergy could now lead the Takahi Whare, formerly restricted to tohunga and elders. Christian elements were

<sup>109</sup> Personal communication from Fr P.M. Ryan to the author, 16 March, 21 April 2016.

<sup>110</sup> Personal communication from the Rt. Rev. George Connor, 14 March 2016.

<sup>111</sup> Mill Hill Missionaries. *He tikanga karakia me ngā Himene mō te Tangihanga me te Nehunga: Funeral Rites, Prayers, Hymns, Readings for times of Mourning* (Auckland: Mill Hill, 1990. 2014 printing), 31-34.

<sup>112</sup> *He tikanga karakia*, 34.

absorbed into it, rather than it being a separate service afterwards. In the Catholic and Anglican Churches, where the Takahi Whare was first published, the movement has been in the opposite direction, towards the embrace of indigenous understandings of faith, pre-eminently seen in the use karakia to remove tapu. Lastly, the Takahi Whare challenges both western culture and the pattern of most tapu removal ceremonies in Māori communities. While in western cultures the home has been seen increasingly as a private space, and in Māori culture most purification rites were for an individual and conducted out of public view, the Takahi Whare was conducted by a tohunga in public and for the family or community involved, rather than for an individual. This unusually noisy ritual of prayers in a house after death has yet to claim its place in Aotearoa, among both Māori and Pākehā.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### **An Apology Liturgy**

I read recently of an Apology Liturgy to LGBTIQ People inspired by Pope Francis' call for an apology by the Church (26 June 2016). The ecumenical liturgy took place on 30 July 2016 at St Joseph's Church in Newtown in inner suburban Sydney. Those who were present described the liturgy as a 'profound and moving' experience. As liturgists, we already know the power that carefully chosen words, gestures, music, and symbol carry, and the power that good liturgy possesses to be a moment of healing and hope for those who hurt.

On current indications, the national debate about marriage equality or same-sex marriage has the very real potential to further hurt and cause damage to members of the LGBTIQ community. Perhaps celebrations of this liturgy in different places can be further experiences of healing and renewal for all members of our various communities. The text of this liturgy can be found at PeterMaher.org. The organisers are keen for this liturgy to be used as widely as possible.

### **Website**

Most of the work involved with the transfer of the management and maintenance of the AAL website to Catholic Communications in Melbourne has now been completed. Catholic Communications already undertake the layout, print and distribution of the *AJL*. As we get used to the new website, there are some minor corrections to be made but most of these are cosmetic. If you have not visited the website for some time, please check out the new look: [www.liturgy.org.au](http://www.liturgy.org.au)

### **National Conference**

The National Council continues to focus its energies on the forthcoming Conference next January. Our keynote speakers – both local and international – are now confirmed.

By this stage, you should have received via email a conference flyer with details of booking and accommodation. If you have not received a flyer as yet, please let us know. The early-bird booking period ends on 11 November this year. The Conference theme: ***Worship under the Southern Cross*** seeks to examine what our worship should look like in the Southern Hemisphere. What do our first peoples teach us? What can we learn from our Asian and Pacific neighbours? Elsewhere in this edition of *AJL*, there is a call for short-papers for the Conference. I know a number of chapters have already been examining the Conference theme - maybe there is a short paper in one of these presentations or discussions? The National Council will consider short paper proposals at its December meeting – please give some thought to how you can further explore the theme through a short paper.

I wish you every blessing and peace for Advent and Christmas: I look forward to seeing you in January.

[Anthony.Doran@cam.org.au](mailto:Anthony.Doran@cam.org.au)

## **2017 CONFERENCE - CALL FOR SHORT PAPERS**

Conference participants are invited to prepare and present short papers during the conference. These papers may

- provide insight into ongoing research;
- reflection on particular liturgical practices;
- insights into developments in liturgical theology;
- reports on actions taken by denominations, publishers and other bodies in liturgical fields;
- completed artworks in the liturgical field; or
- exploration of the processes involved in developing particular liturgies, liturgical art or music.

It is hoped that the short papers prepared will reflect the theme of the Conference: *Worship Under the Southern Cross*, when possible. The format of the presentation of short papers is:

- Lecture 30 min
- Questions 15 min

Short paper proposals must be presented to the Council of AAL by 15 December, 2016. Please email them to the Secretary [liturgy.australia@gmail.com](mailto:liturgy.australia@gmail.com)

# FROM THE CHAPTERS

## **New South Wales** – Doug Morrison-Cleary

We are looking forward to hosting everyone at the National Conference in January next year. We are excited to be able to move the conference out of a capital city and into the beautiful Hunter Valley. Preparations are moving forward and we have just appointed one of our members, Stephen Millington, as Conference Manager. He brings considerable organisational skills to the task of putting on an excellent conference. If you need to contact him about any aspect of the conference, his email is: [millingt@alphalink.com.au](mailto:millingt@alphalink.com.au)

We are still meeting as usual and we continue to work through Vatican II: Reforming Liturgy, edited by three of our AAL members. Our March meeting, discussing sacramentality and the Church as sacrament, was a great example of the depth of discussion we have in our chapter combined with the wonderful breadth of backgrounds. Every chapter meeting finishes with a wonderful meal of pizza and conversation at a local pizzeria.

Our next meetings will be held at the Mount St Benedict Centre, off Hull Road, Pennant Hills on the third Wednesday of November at 4:30pm. All are welcome to join us. The Chapter Convenor is Doug Morrison-Cleary and you can contact him via email: [presbyter@hildormen.faith](mailto:presbyter@hildormen.faith)

## **Queensland** – Marian Free

Our regular trip to the “north” had to be cancelled this year so sadly we may have to reconsider this way of including the members in that region in our meetings. We meet again on the first Tuesday in October at which we will continue to discuss the Conference theme. Our final meeting (and often the one with the most attendees) is our Christmas dinner. Members who find our usual time slot difficult are often able to join us for this event which makes it a great time of fellowship and discussion.

We welcome all visitors.

AAL-Q now has a dedicated e-mail address, [aal.qld@gmail.com](mailto:aal.qld@gmail.com)

## **South Australia** – Alison Whish

The SA chapter is rejoicing that several new members have joined our chapter. We are now looking a much more ecumenical bunch. Our next meeting will be on

17 November at 4.30 pm when we will continue our discussion of “The Eucharist: origins and contemporary understandings” by Thomas O’Loughlin. It has been providing us with material for some good discussions. This will be our final meeting for the year and so we will conclude with a meal together at the pub down the road. Visitors are welcome, contact Alison, [roy@uniting.com.au](mailto:roy@uniting.com.au)

### **Victoria** – Garry Deverell

The Victorian chapter has met three times this year, with attendances averaging a pleasing 12-15 people. A range of speakers have helped us reflect on aspects of the liturgical universe, including Nathan Nettleton on the history and theology of Baptist worship and Tom Knowles on liturgical dimensions of the Pope’s recent encyclical on the environment. In March Garry Deverell took over the Convenorship of the chapter from Antony Doran. This will be Garry’s second turn as chapter convenor, the first being at the time of the last Melbourne conference. The chapter was pleased to congratulate Robert Gribben on his life membership, conferred at the Brisbane National Conference in January.

The final meeting of the Victorian chapter for 2016 is on 9 November from 4.30 to 6.00 pm. The venue is St Francis’ Church Pastoral Centre, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. Guests and visitors are welcome. The best email address for the Convenor is: [garry.deverell@monash.edu](mailto:garry.deverell@monash.edu)

### **Western Australia** – Angela McCarthy

The WA Chapter meet approximately 5 times per year with a final meeting normally held at the Benedictine Monastery in New Norcia, two hours’ drive north of Perth.

This year we have had reflections on the conference and on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli. In our last meeting there was a reflection on two articles from our journal AJL volume 15 no. 1 Our next meeting will be held in New Norcia at the Benedictine Monastery on 5 November where we will discuss the two articles in this issue that deal with worship under the Southern Cross.

One of our members, Chris Kan, is currently doing his research Masters on the transition to the vernacular in liturgy in the New Norcia Benedictine Monastery community. This is of great interest to our members.

The West Australian Chapter welcomes guests and new members. If you would like to attend please contact the Convenor, Angela McCarthy on [angela.mccarthy@nd.edu.au](mailto:angela.mccarthy@nd.edu.au)

# BOOK REVIEWS

Book review by **Garry Deverell**

## **Review of Barry C. Newman, *The Gospel, Freedom, and the Sacraments: did the Reformers go far enough?* Eugene, Oregon: Resource Publication 2015.**

Reviewing books is a deeply personal activity, and my very visceral response to this book by Mr. Newman is clear evidence of the fact. For I did not read this book as I have read most every other book, in a mood of calm excitement at the unfolding of new storylines, characters or patterns in the history of ideas but, rather, with grimaces, facial contortions, and verbal exclamations of bewilderment. All of which is to say: I struggled long and hard to find in Mr Newman's text anything terribly interesting or exciting to write about.

*The Gospel, Freedom, and the Sacraments* uses the device of a fictional dialogue to prosecute its case. 'GB' is a person who has recently come to some kind of Christian mind about life, though he has not been baptised and is nervous about any kind of ceremony or ritual because of way these things had been misused in a pseudo-religious 'cult' with which he had become involved. Through mutual friends, 'GB' is referred to 'TS', who is some kind of Christian pastor and an amateur scholar. Throughout the book, 'TS' (who represents Barry Newman, I'm sure) helps 'GB' to decide what he really thinks about the place of baptism and the Lord's Supper in the Christian life as a whole. It helps, of course, that GB is amiably predisposed to TS's way of thinking.

TS's way of thinking might be summarised in this quotation from fairly late in the book:

I think that the early Christians did what we all like to do. We want to simplify the matter of righteousness and if we can latch onto something relatively simple, a ceremony or ceremonies, participation in which grants us spiritual benefits, we will do so. Having the ceremony mysterious and only able to be conducted by authorities also seems to help . . . And to make the matter one of necessity is all to the good. Necessity means obligation, and conformity to that obligation results in people feeling that they've achieved something' (p. 312).

Most of the book is given over to a forensic (and, to this seasoned theological reader, unduly tedious and atomistic) reading of various New Testament texts which have been traditionally associated with baptism and Eucharist *in order to demonstrate* that

neither Jesus nor Paul put a great deal of store in ritual. The important thing for any Christian, according to Mr Newman, is that we recognise the grace of God in Jesus Christ and seek to give due attention to the outworking of that grace in our social and political lives. 'Ceremonies' are nice, but they are neither here nor there in helping people to become real disciples of Christ, which is completely and utterly a matter of grace rather than of 'works'. Ceremonies are clearly 'works' in Newman's schema.

Most readers of this journal will have recognised, by now, that Mr Newman has never read any genuinely systematic or liturgical theology. Not one major work in either of those fields is referred to in the entire text. His is a theology which recognises only one authoritative source, the bible, and even that must apparently be read in a non-theological way. For Mr Newman's approach to scripture is deeply reductionist. He appears to believe that the stories recounted in the gospels or the Acts of the Apostles record the kind of history one might capture if one were 'there' with a video-camera! Because of this - because he is unable to see that the text is being shaped by the poetico-theological imagination of the authoring communities in question - he invariably concludes that 'ritual' language is 'only' metaphorical, referring primarily to the orientation of a believer's mind and heart rather than to actual rituals or ceremonies done in the body. The mistake here is that of the gnostics, that early Christian heresy: it is only the mind that matters, right thinking. We do not need ceremonies if our thinking is pure. At best, rituals are for the weak-minded. They are not to be understood as a means of grace in any sense.

Obviously I beg to differ, along with the vast majority of thinkers, poets, mystics, saints and ordinary Christians down through the centuries. Within the discipline of liturgical theology, I would like to affirm the truth of John's gospel: that the Word must become flesh. Flesh certainly includes mind, and as a theologian I am obviously a fan of intellectual faith. But it is clear from the New Testament itself, as well as from the Fathers and also the Reformers, that the mind of Christ to which any community is called to aspire, is fundamentally formed by what we encounter in that drama-rendered-body that we know as ritual. In ritual the story of the gospel, the long dialogue or covenant between God and human beings, is rendered body in a way that imitates the Spirit-becoming-flesh or the Incarnation itself. That is why I can affirm that Christians are most themselves in ritual worship. There the most fundamental reality of our covenantal relationship with God is performed and made real in a way that is able to convert both our imaginations and our actions in the whole economy of life. In that perspective, 'ceremonies' actually ARE necessary. They are a primary conduit by which God's grace forms us into Christian disciples; they are the hinge-reality in which all of the broken dualities of life are broken down and reconciled: body-spirit, word-action, past-future, ethics-imagination, God-human, etc.

Mr Newman is clearly uncomfortable with the Reformers insistence on keeping the sacraments as an indispensable means by which the grace of God is activated in human beings. He is even more uncomfortable with the way in which the Fathers and the New Testament utilise the poetics of type and metaphor in order to break down any clear distinction between mind, heart and bodily practice. This discomfort is, of course, as deeply modernist as it is gnostic. But it parades itself as the authentic teaching of the New Testament. Which is bewildering in the extreme.

Perhaps, therefore, the very visceral, bodily, protest I experienced as I read Mr Newman's book is indicative of what the book ultimately seeks to repress: body, imagination, story, drama, poetry, God becoming flesh and dwelling amongst us, full of grace and truth.

**Benson, Robert Hugh. *Lord of the World*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Christian Classics, 2016. 1907.**

Pope Francis has said of this book: “I advise you to read it”. With that advice I duly obeyed! Keeping in mind that it was originally written in 1907 gives a necessary background for absorbing the book. It is a dystopian novel, a genre that is very popular in our contemporary times in the arts, particularly literature and cinema. Pope Francis used this text to explain in an interview what he meant by “global colonization”. His concern is that through the influence of secularism, human worldliness and the vanity of humankind, the world could become subject to ideologies that are not life giving, but deadly to who we are in our relationship with God and who we are in our own understanding.

It is a novel that holds its characters in a tight storyline but one still has to keep in mind the date of the original writing. The character of the President of the world and his mysterious comings and goings are reminiscent of monsters that damaged our world in the twentieth century and so Benson’s dystopian view of the future is uncanny in its accuracy. The President, Julian Felsenburgh, remains a mysterious character, with no specific detail to show his humanity. His effect on masses of people is well established but the reasons beyond mass hysteria seem scant. He is able to manipulate the minds of people in by his remote, but total, power.

Oliver and Mabel Brand are characters who are caught up in the upheaval of the world. Oliver works for the British Government and becomes party to the move from separate countries to the amalgamation of all the world under one President. Mabel is side-lined by this change, her voice not understood or even heard, and she makes a decision about her own life, supported by the State but unknown to her husband. Keeping in mind that this novel was written before women in Britain had the vote helps the reader to understand the treatment that Mabel receives and the attitude to her concern about the directions in which world politics are travelling. She witnesses the violence of untamed humans when it is supposed to be behaviour driven by humans who see themselves as God.

This particular edition of the novel has introductory material that is very valuable. Marc Bosco SJ leads with an introduction to the novel and to Benson’s life and conversion to Catholicism. Michael P. Murphy offers a theological reflection that places this book in the developing understanding of a transvalued society. The underlying theistic structure of society’s understanding of itself is changed into one that acknowledges that there is no transcendent source of life but rather “God is Man”. Everything that is noble, that is beautiful, is the best of human nature and therefore

there is no need for a belief in any transcendent Being. The third piece of introductory material is a brief biography by Martyn Sampson. He outlines Benson's life and his transition from the Anglican Church, in which he was ordained by his father who was the Archbishop of Canterbury, to embracing Catholicism. There does not seem to be any clear cut reason for this migration but he was in good company at the time.<sup>1</sup>

The story line focusses on the decline of Catholicism and belief in the transcendent and therefore the acceptance of human life as having no other goal than itself. The principal characters embrace the change but Fr Percy Franklin resists and makes important contributions to the Church's understanding of what is happening by reading and documenting everything available. It is hard to imagine, in an era dominated by the World Wide Web and its concomitant electrical technology, how his management of information could be so thorough and communicable. In the final chapters the use of a technology that seems to be Morse Code is very interesting. As the Catholic world shrinks and the notion of deity is totally absorbed into the human person, other characters are vehicles of the interpretation of that new version of the world and eventually become the victims.

The scenarios that Benson paints with his words uncannily relate to events and people of the twentieth century. For example, the best of humanity's attributes are expressed through sculptures that take on names such as Maternity. These are then imposed on all communities and replace Christian images altogether so that adoration is centred on the best of human attributes but this demand does not cure humanity of the worst of which it is capable. The two main characters mirror each other in human likeness but are diametrically opposed in philosophical and religious direction. They both become leaders and then have to eventually face off in an apocalyptic event. It takes place in a backwater of the world (in 1907), Nazareth. The symbolism of the choice of this place is profound.

The Latin texts used in the final chapter might not be accessible to contemporary readers, but in Benson's time they would have been familiar to religious people, part of their commonly sung liturgical repertoire. The final scenes are charged with energy and have a powerful conclusion – which I will not spoil!

Pope Francis urges us to read this book because, as with all good literature, it can enable us to think through the societal and philosophical changes today that the powerful impose upon the powerless. It also draws us to contemplate our future as Church in an increasingly secular world.

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<sup>1</sup> Marc Bosco SJ lists the following: G.K. Chesterton, Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, Edith Sitwell, Muriel Spark and Ronald Knox as some of the British intellectuals who turned to Catholicism.

**T.J. Wray. *Good Girls, Bad Girls of the New Testament*. Lanham Boulder New York London, : Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.**

This book holds valuable homiletic material. Wray has explored the lives of women in the New Testament through the Scriptures themselves and expanded their stories and background by using other historical sources. She has presented a view of women who were named and unnamed, and, importantly, their presence in the New Testament that enriches the theological narratives.

Wray begins with a good outline of life under Roman domination. All of the New Testament people live and die under Roman imperial rule so Wray's treatment of the context is valuable as we try to understand the actions and voices of these people. Women's most important role was as mother and so Wray certainly offers careful interpretation of how the power of God is seen through mothers, and especially barren mothers, who bear children through divine intervention. It is a patriarchal society and this social condition is expressed in the Bible through the narratives. Not all of the women however, are totally dependent and powerless. Two such women are Mary of Magdala who is able to help finance Jesus' ministry and Herodias who is able to manipulate Herod and demand the death of John the Baptist.

The book is divided into two parts. The first part is about "Sisters, Sinners and Supporters" and includes Mary and Martha from Bethany, the Great-Granddaughters of Herod the Great, the adulterous woman in John's Gospel, the woman with a twelve-year haemorrhage, Mary Magdalene and Tabitha. Herod's Great-Granddaughters (Bernice and Drusilla) and Tabitha do not receive much 'airplay' but their narratives and the enduring lessons that can be taken from their stories are indeed worthwhile. Tabitha was a widow in Joppa, named as a disciple, which is an important detail, and raised from the dead by Peter (Acts 9:36-42). There are only two women who are raised from the dead in the NT, Tabitha and Jairus' daughter. Tabitha (her Aramaic name) is also called Dorcas in Greek. Wray indicates that this suggests the presence of Gentiles in her Christian community. She was one who cared for the poor and the image of the grateful widows, for whom she cared, showing to Peter the garments that she had made for them is a special detail. As with the raising of the widow's son by Elijah and the Shunammite woman's son by Elisha, they are all laid out in an upper room which is evocative of Jesus' final meal and its connection to the resurrection.

Wray's treatment of Mary Magdalene is one of the best I have read in recent times. Even though, in June 2016, Pope Francis raised her to the level of apostle and her feast day to the level of a liturgical Feast, the erroneous tradition of her as a prostitute lives on. The error in the first instance was from the pen of Gregory the Great in one

of his homilies where he conflated gospel stories of an unnamed woman in Luke and Mary the sister of Martha into the Magdalene narrative. She was however, not a public sinner, but a woman of means who was not named after a man but after a town, Magdala. The error was maintained and developed into a cult in the middle ages mainly through biblical illiteracy. Mary was a faithful disciple of Jesus' Galilean ministry and helped to support him along with some other women. It would have been socially impossible for her to have done that if she were young and marriageable but Wray suggests that she was an older, wealthy widow providing support for Jesus and his group of missionaries. While this is speculative, it is also sensible in relation to the cultural context of the time.

The second part of the book is about "Mothers, Murderers, and Missionaries". Among the mothers there is, predictably, a beautiful treatment of Mary of Nazareth and Elizabeth. The stories of both women are contextualised in the culture of the time and Wray gives very careful attention to the details of the texts and the characterisations that can be drawn from the gospels. Removing many of the encrustations that have grown around these stories over time, Wray's treatment is refreshing.

In this section there is also a description of Prisca (called Priscilla in Acts) and her husband Aquila, and their friendship and partnership with Paul in missionary activities in the early years after the resurrection. In their teamwork there is a wonderful model for contemporary people. In the early years of Christianity women were treated with the same respect as Jesus had shown and were leaders and fruitful missionaries. Into the second century this began to evaporate and once Christianity became the religion of Emperor Constantine in the fourth century women were thoroughly sidelined.

Two of the 'bad' women who are detailed in this section are Herodias and Pilate's wife. Their personal power due to their relationships with powerful men is of real interest. Herodias has been criticised by John the Baptist because she is Herod's brother's wife but now married to Herod. John points out that this is wrong and she is keen to have him out of their lives. At a party her daughter Salome dances for Herod and his important friends and when he promises her 'anything' she asks her mother's advice and demands John's head on a platter. Pilate's wife on the other hand has sometimes been seen as a saint as she tells her husband to free Jesus as he is innocent. Wray offers two different interpretations. The view of Pilate and his wife as saints was developed in the second century but the original texts suggest otherwise.

Pilate was notoriously vicious, as noted in non-bible texts, and his wife is obviously literate and has a voice as she is able to send him a note during the trial of Jesus. She calls Jesus a righteous man which can be interpreted as one who is convinced of his 'rightness', not righteous as in 'innocent'. This takes the narrative in a very different direction and her advice to Pilate is that Jesus is a threat and must be eliminated.

Wray's treatment of the stories of these women gives clear insight to the first century world and is therefore valuable background for homiletic discussion on our liturgical texts. It is also a very accessible book and would be valuable for parish discussion groups as well as those interested in biblical times and its relevance to us today.

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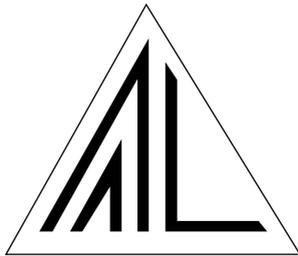
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