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## Consequences of Colonisation—Waitangi 2009

Robert Consedine of Waitangi Associates

It is not hard to conclude that many major problems in New Zealand society go back to our failure to honour the Treaty and colonisation. The question is why, in our public debates, is this such a threatening statement for some to acknowledge?

In 1840 New Zealand became part of the British Empire – an empire built on slavery, the slave labor of the industrial revolution and the dispossession and subjugation of indigenous people throughout the world. It is an empire which created mass starvation in Ireland and India, concentration camps in South Africa and Kenya.

The British Empire was also the biggest drug pusher the world has ever seen. Opium was the world's single most valuable trade commodity in the 19th century. This trade was promoted and controlled by the British Empire.

Consequently as the late Michael King sums up the present is 'a complex outcome of acculturation, military defeat, land confiscations, contradictory legislation, population displacement, racism, personality conflicts and continuing cross-cultural misunderstandings.' The corporate media continues to ignore the impact of New Zealand's colonial history on the present.

The negative social statistics of Maori are the statistics of dispossessed peoples – and they are global. It is no accident that the 300 million indigenous people in the world belonging to 5000 indigenous groups in 70 countries 'are nearly always disadvantaged relative to their non-indigenous counterparts. Their material standard of living is lower, their risk of early disease and early death is higher, their educational opportunities are more limited, their political

participation and voice more constrained and their lifestyles and livelihoods they would choose are very often out of reach.' Whilst poverty also plays a strong part in this, it is also enough to be simply indigenous to live with these outcomes.

52% of the men in prison in New Zealand are Maori, 58% of the women in prison are Maori. It is no accident that most prisoners in New Zealand jails are also poor. In a land of plenty, their poverty in itself is a crime. Since 1987 we have doubled our jail population. Are we safer? I don't think so. Our commitment to building more jails is based on the naïve belief that we will be safer; this is a tribute to our complete lack of imagination. It also reminds me of the best definition of insanity I know – keep doing the same thing in the same way, and expect a different outcome. ... ..

The gains for Maori in the last 30 years have been significant however it is worth remembering and honouring the fact that every gain has only been achieved through struggle, and with courage. The words of the slave abolitionist, Frederick Douglas remain as true as when he uttered them in the 19th century 'power cedes nothing without a demand – it never did and it never will.

Just as the men could not envision a world where women voted, slave-owners could not envision a world without slavery, and whites, a world where blacks had civil rights, so our society struggles to envision a world where power, is successfully shared in the way anticipated in the Treaty. We have the opportunity of honoring the Treaty in our time. We are not short of vision. The Treaty is about relationships. Those who signed it envisaged Maori and Pakeha living peacefully together – sharing power and resources. That vision has not changed. ... .. See [www.waitangi.co.nz](http://www.waitangi.co.nz)



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## Another World is Possible ... Only If

And  
compassion  
is the key.  
No interest  
in doctrinal  
formulations,  
very little  
interest in  
the afterlife  
most of those  
religious leaders  
(Buddha,  
Muhammad,  
Jesus, Confucius,  
Lao Tzu,  
the prophets  
of Israel)  
were just  
concerned with  
living fully.  
All this  
is very  
different from  
the way  
people conceive  
of religion  
today.

Karen Armstrong  
Author of *The  
History of God*

For the second time I participated in both the World Social Forum (WSF) and the World Forum of Theology and Liberation (WFTL). This year the two forums gathered on the edge of the Amazonian rainforest, in the northern Brazilian city of Belém. The reason for gathering at this particular site was to highlight the urgency of the ecological danger we face. To be there was to name that the physical, biological, ecological reality was in fact a moral, ethical, missiological crisis that we who are people of faith and good will must take seriously.

Both the WSF and the WFTL were about hoping, dreaming, envisaging and seeking to contribute to *another possible world*. Yet neither forum indulged in naïve dreaming but grounded their sense of the future in a very concrete analysis of the present. Because any dreaming is not credible or even viable unless it engages with all that has shaped our present reality.

To talk about ecosystems, ecology, and care of creation intrinsically includes talk of human beings and the social, economic, political and cultural realities we have constructed. Because humans are part of the ecological matrix, and not separate from or above it, any analysis, theologising or plan of action must include the more than six billion people (possibly levelling off at around 10 billion in time to come) attempting to find adequate food, shelter, education, employment and happiness. Any engagement with these issues must also weigh heavily the twin facts that we live on (in) a resource limited earth, and that the way we distribute earth's bounty is horrifically skewed to benefit only a small percentage of humanity (and we in Aotearoa are amongst the privileged few).

So whatever the ecological issue, be it global warming, deforestation, pollution, or whatever, all are fundamentally about the priorities and values that shape the way human beings structure their personal and collective lives.

We continue to do this in spite of the *golden rule* found in each of the great religious traditions. Love of neighbour, compassion and justice towards the neighbour in need and commitment to this very neighbour as much as to ourselves, is at the heart of what humans name as of God. Our sense of God,

the One we claimed to be motivated by, cancels any sense of *us and them*. No matter where the neighbour is they are us and we are them.

Yet we continue to be very tribal. Yes, even in our so-called civilised western countries. Instead of traditional tribalism, we have developed a strange bipolar sense of tribe. At one level our horizon and allegiance focuses on ourselves and our immediate family and the goal is to get ahead. On the other level we have bought into a self-centred sense of nationalism that even when we as a nation connect with others overseas often it's about being seen to be a good global citizen or about benefitting our businesses at home.

To move beyond seeing others as *them* requires a deliberate cultivation of compassion, particularly a political compassion that seeks justice. I use the word *deliberate* as I see that to move outside those allegiances shaped by the horizons that we have requires a conscious choice to move. It requires a conscious choice to risk being in a new space where we are able to meet, engage, dialogue and be touched at a deep level by the experiences of injustice of those who have been *other* to us. This is what the liberation theologians call the first step of solidarity and the first step in living out God's constitutive option for the poor.

The WFTL attempted to expand our horizons and allegiance one step further. Not only do we need to deliberately cultivate compassion for human beings in need but also we need to do this for the rest of creation. Creation has an intrinsic value as it is the primary revelatory space of the Creator and that value is harmed when we damage and pollute it. So to deliberately express compassion for the earth and all within it, to stand in solidarity with particular damaged parts of the earth as well as with it in its entirety, and to opt for the earth, is to see the earth as us and we as it.

And we can only do this if we are open to an ongoing and thoroughly *integral* conversion to the One who is compassion. Only then is *another world possible* for the Amazonian rainforest, for the scarred and polluted lands and rivers, for the species at risk and for human beings ourselves.

**David Tutty** *Pax Christi Aotearoa-New Zealand*

## *A Small, Local Step towards Another Possible World*

The January meetings of the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland and of the World Social Forum in Belem, Brazil were large meetings of noted leaders of business, politics, academia, NGOs and community agencies, dominated by the current financial crisis and the need for change. In one, this meant adjusting existing systems to preserved their competitive base, private direction and rewards for the successful; in the other, renewing the struggle to replace an inequitable market with systems giving a better life to all while preserving a threatened environment.

The same preoccupations gripped a gathering of Auckland Pax Christi members on 7 March at Joan Hardiman's house on the shores of the Manukau. How can Pax Christi address a financial and economic breakdown threatening peaceful relationships among peoples and with the environment?

Joan opened the day by reading Mark's Gospel account of the Transfiguration. After comments on its meaning, we recollected some life-changing event experienced in any or all of our five senses. Two moving, evocative poems, recollection of near-death, healing, birth and rebirth events, times of heightened consciousness, profound change in life-style and a sense of one-ness with all of Creation were shared, showing how all of us can have 'transfiguring' experiences awakening us to the fullness of life revealed in this glimpse of the life of Christ.

Next, we reviewed philosophical fashions down the ages, beginning with the 'dark ages,' when thinking and philosophy focussed on God and Faith. Later, the 18<sup>th</sup> century saw an 'age of enlightenment', when the human being replaced God at the centre and reason took precedence over faith. Its leaders, the first 'ad-men', convinced of their own importance, supported the overthrow of the monarchy in France, the brave new world of liberty, fraternity, equality and the new age of industrialization. Later 'masters of modernism', Karl Marx (dialectical materialism), Sigmund Freud (control by the subconscious) and Friedrich Nietzsche (nihilism), and two destructive World Wars, ushered in a period of Post-modernism, ruled by individualism, the self-constructed identity and, later, the possibility of creating a virtual reality, represented in the Mall. Choice is unlimited and everywhere, success is everything and failure, even tragic, is "Whatever!"

How has the Christian Church, successor of Peter and heir of Jesus Christ, responded to these trends? In a range of ways, from traditionalism and fundamentalism to 'bricolage', a supermarket approach to Christian teaching. And it faces other challenges relating to human experience: concern for now and for the planet, pluralism, cultural diversity and declining in social influence. Also, our planet is endangered, consumerist, exploitative capitalism is collapsing and the discredited, post-modernist underpinning to both is past its 'use-by' date.

To finish, we had to find Pax Christi's responses to this time of crisis, particularly those arising from scripture and Catholic social teaching.

We concluded that while various philosophical fashions prevail from time to time, the remnants and seeds of others are always present, ready for revival and renewal. Traditional community-based world-views persist among indigenous, small and alternative life-style communities, based on sustainable, living experiences and a deep creation-centred and transcendent spirituality - unmoved by European modernism and post-modernism, giving hope to a West sickened by chemical-based, infertile, non-biodegradable consumerist ways. Identity through genealogy and history, community obligations and service, life and fertility-preserving traditions all counter the signs-of-the-times decline of selfish, death-dealing life-styles, as do fair-trade and human rights norms in Western-based fora like the United Nations.

Pax Christi can take heart in the past success of other small-beginnings: anti-slavery, prison-reform, arms-reduction and feminist movements. We can apply scriptural teaching to the Crisis, applying it in our own lives and sharing it with our communities, incorporating interfaith, unity-in-diversity and care-of-the-planet principles in every context. The Crisis is also a time of opportunity and hope.

At the end of the day, we in Pax Christi have within us the spirituality and potential to reject the failures of the past and renew the task of bringing to all the fullness of life which failed systems have denied them. Thanks for everything, Joan.

**Kevin McBride** *Pax Christi Aotearoa-New Zealand*

*... we are all pagans in varying degrees of conversion ...*  
**Alfonso Nebreda, Missiologist**

## The Need for Moral Imagination

Climate change has been on the global agenda now for at least two decades. Nevertheless, and despite significant international efforts, greenhouse emissions have not yet been reduced. In fact, all indicators are that carbon emissions will increase over the next decade or so. Why is this the case?

Current initiatives to find answers to these questions are thwarted by at least four factors. Firstly, there is a need to recognise that levels of consumption and the use of energy, also of fossil fuels, are still rising amongst the consumer class alone. Affluence leads to inertia and a voluntary simplification of lifestyles seems to fall outside of the desire of the consumer class. Secondly, the global human population is predicted to rise from the current 6.7 billion to around 9 billion in 2050. In 2008 alone 139 million babies were born, while 57 million have died, so that the population increased by 82 million. Thirdly, the rapid expansion of the economies of China and India can scarcely be halted. Fourthly, the hope and aspiration of the world's poor is to attain the standard of living that they observe amongst the affluent.

The levels of consumption enjoyed by the affluent therefore raise serious questions of global justice. It can only be sustained at the expense of others – the poor, coming generations and other living organisms. It would simply not be possible for the planet's entire human population to replicate the lifestyle of the affluent centre, given their environmental/carbon footprint. The solution cannot be a system of consumer apartheid that upholds affluent binge habits but denies the poor a decent standard of living. The affluent who wreaked environmental havoc so that they can attain a comfortable and healthy lifestyle clearly cannot caution others not to seek a comparable standard of living because that would jeopardise ecological sustainability.

To grasp the extent of the problem, it is important to see the necessary information on climate change is readily available on the basis of numerous scientific reports. Moreover, it is often claimed that technical solutions are available to curb human-induced climate change. There has been no lack of appeals to take the necessary steps. The reports of the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change have received maximum media coverage. However, to address climate change will demand more than what science and new technologies may offer. That is illustrated by the situation that many countries with a well-educated and well-informed population remain reluctant or unable to meet the moderate targets stipulated in the Kyoto protocol.

This poses another set of crucial questions: How would it be possible to muster sufficient political will from all over the world to address climate change? Such political will is only possible on the basis of voter support and pressure. This begs the question how the habits, opinions, attitudes and consumer aspirations of voters all over the world can be shifted away from the American dream of increasing prosperity towards sustainable alternatives? How, for example, can consumer resistance against higher energy prices be addressed? This will clearly require a far more widespread reorientation in civil society. Here the role of civil institutions (including churches), opinion formers, role models and the media will be crucial. However, how can the media's support for economic growth on the basis of a plethora of advertisements be re-orientated towards sustainable goals? The most crucial and also the most difficult transformation will have to take place in the economic sphere, in the world of industry and business, but also in the corporate world of finance, investment and various forms of insurance. Here the interests of company directors and share holders spur on the dream of infinite economic growth on a finite planet.

*(continued on page 5)*

It is much easier today to exchange ideas without travel.

We can read about each other's worlds  
and gather all the facts available on print,  
without having to touch and see the pain and hope  
in the eyes of real people within these situations.

It is nigh impossible to touch each others hearts and minds  
unless we do interact with our physical realities such as the insertion  
[immersion/exposure] experiences can avail to us.

Some courage is required to undertake such journeys together.

**Beatrice Churu, Tangaza College, Nairobi**

"Reflection on WFTL II Nairobi 2007 Insertion Experiences"

## The Need for Moral Imagination

That the problem is highly complex becomes apparent when one realises that even those of us who have developed an acute environmental awareness often find it difficult to translate such an awareness into appropriate forms of action. All too often environmental problems seem so daunting and overwhelming that it is difficult to know where to start. There is a lingering gap between knowing that we face serious ecological problems and acting on this knowledge in our own personal, social and political choices.

The underlying problem is clearly not just a lack of information or planning. It is the liberal fallacy to assume that information and education is sufficient for moral action. It is less a problem of know-what or know-how that of know-why and know-wherefore. This may help us to see why human-induced climate change point in the direction not merely of an *economic* or an *ecological* crisis but towards a deeper *cultural* and *spiritual* crisis. It is not merely a matter of agreeing with a memorandum spelling out some common values and listing desired actions either. The problem is one that cannot be addressed merely through more *information*; it will require a process of moral *formation*.

In my view the challenge that climate change poses, is best understood as one of moral imagination, moral will and moral leadership. It is a matter of moral vision. Or to put this in other terms: The question is whether “a different world is possible” – as the 2005 World Social Forum in Porto Alegre famously professed. Can we imagine a world without oil? Can we envision the strategies to transform the energy basis of the entire industrialised economy within approximately 40 years?

This begs further, tougher questions: Where can alternatives to industrialised neo-liberal capitalism be found – alternatives that will be able to *generate* sufficient wealth (as adequately as industrialised capitalism) that will be able to *distribute* such wealth more equitably (as introduced in various forms of socialism that presuppose such generation of wealth) and that will help *redefine* our very understanding of what

wealth entails (as proposed in the so-called “new economics” movement)? How can these three aims be reconciled with each other? It should be noted that the failure to address this question typically leads to a priority allocated to the first aim, namely economic production, in the hope that prosperity would be safeguarded on this basis and that this will have a trickle-down effect so that the poor will eventually share in the production of wealth. Even though this would not be sustainable, the alternatives seem far less palatable. This is exactly why climate change poses a problem of moral imagination.

Several observers have recognised the potential of the world’s religious traditions to offer the necessary inspiration, spiritual vision, ecological wisdom, ethical discernment, moral power and *hope* to sustain an ecological transformation. Religious traditions can offer the mystic motivation and enthusiasm for earthkeeping projects that no other secular or government initiatives can muster on such a wide scale. Religious traditions can provide what science cannot: they promise, not only meaning, but also survival power, deliverance, healing, wellbeing. Religions can help shape our attitudes in both conscious and sub-conscious ways. Religions provide basic interpretive stories of who we are, where we come from, and where we are going to. Moral formation typically takes place within faith communities.

Can the various religious traditions muster sufficient moral power and vision to turn the tide, to show a path out of the downward spiral of environmental degradation? Indeed can religion truly make a difference? It seems clear that this will require nothing less than a transformation of each tradition (preferably in terms of each tradition’s own heritage and particularity).

**Professor Ernst Conradie**  
*Department of Religion and Theology*  
*University of Western Cape*

(Extract from a paper delivered to the Southern African Missiological Society, January 2009)

Our God  
is the  
God who  
takes sides,  
and I  
would  
say this,  
and there  
are those  
who would  
like to say  
that God  
is neutral.

No, no, no!  
God is  
notoriously  
biased!  
God is  
notoriously  
biased  
in favour  
of the  
weak,  
in favour  
of the  
hungry,

in fact,  
God is  
biased in  
favour of  
sinners!  
which  
upsets  
a lot of  
people.

Desmond  
Tutu

## *We must build communities steeped in living environmental justice*

First, let's accept the challenges sustainability presents despite the fact that it will hurt. It might cause some guilt. However, we need to understand guilt, in this case, is a strategy that sanctions oppression. Guilt does not help us if we live our lives in its meandering miasma. To counter this, a key goal is building a community in which we are willing to risk. This takes time, energy, and honesty. It also means learning to stop employing defense strategies and rationales before we have come to know and appreciate the collective wisdom we are amassing about how to live sustainable lives. We often tend to think that this will always be gruesome work—perhaps we focus too much on the Fall. Rather, in facing the pain and the guilt, we will learn that our life giving living is far richer than the pathetic master narratives we tend to cling to. Our richness is found in creation which may be a more apt and profound spiritual and theological resource; a more just way to order our lives morning by morning and day by day.

Second, we must work together in the time that we have to put into place new patterns of understanding and analysis. These patterns will require a lifetime of practice beyond who we are now. One way to begin this new work is find at least one thing we can commit to that will be a life long commitment to sustainable behavior, thought, and ideology and then to do it every day—perfectly and imperfectly. The point is not success. The objective is commitment and striving for consistency.

Third, we must stop collapsing sustainability into environmentalism that can beget an essentialist swamp that blinds us from seeing the ways in which creating sustainable ways of living must be combined with influencing the political process by lobbying, activism, and education in order to protect natural resources and ecosystems.

Fourth, we must take an uncompromising look at our social locations and the ways in which we are a socially constructed being. This is in response to the rampant individualism that marks contemporary United States life where you often hear sentences that include “I am not personally....” You or I may not personally be doing anything, but socially we are doing a great deal. None of us are in the world all by ourselves. Each of us can do something to live more sustainable lives and we can demand that our governments and our religious institutions begin to address the need for sustainable living on deep structural levels and not content ourselves with individual strivings.

Fifth, we must realize and accept that no one of us can do this work alone and no one is the unsurpassable expert on

sustainability and the environment. This means recognizing that failing to live with and through a deep respect for creation, the gift we have been given as being created in God's image makes us susceptible to incredibly destructive and seductive uses of power as domination and subordination that you have in ethical reflection.

Sixth, as individuals, we must be willing to be changed, grow, admit *our* participation and *our* resistance to sustainable living in the communities of the classroom, the church, the society, the academy, the society. It is far too easy to project onto others that which we do not work on within ourselves. The realities that shape environmental racism depend on such projections to help maintain the status quo. To broaden ourselves as people we must be willing to look within as we recognize that we are also social beings in communities of communities.

Finally, you must give ourselves permission to be tired and weary. But to also find ways of renewal so that you can be a creative and healthy participant in dismantling oppressions. Burned out, bitter people do not bring in justice. I am not talking about perfection here—I'm a Baptist. I'm talking about what we call in Christian ethics, the everydayness of moral acts. It's what we do every day that shapes us and says more about us than those grand moment of righteous indignation and action:

the everydayness of listening closely when folks talk or don't talk to hear what they are saying; the everydayness of taking some time, however short or long, to refresh ourselves through prayer or meditation; the everydayness of speaking to folks and actually meaning what ever it is that is coming out of our mouths; the everydayness of being a presence in people's lives; the everydayness of speaking out about the daily environmental injustices that go on around us and to work with others to build sustainable living spaces in by inch if we have the everydayness of continuing to educate others and ourselves about living in sustainability because we have a hope for a future seething with justice, love, and mercy; the everydayness of sharing a meal; the everydayness of facing heartache and disappointment; the everydayness of joy and laughter; the everydayness of facing people who expect us to lead them somewhere or at least point them in the right direction and walk with them to create a healthier world; the everydayness of blending head and heart and soul; it's the everydayness of getting up and trying one more time to get our living right for “the future started yesterday and we're already late”

**Emilie Townes** *Yale Divinity School WFTL Presentation Jan08*

Revelation outside Christianity, is of course, a fruit of the Spirit. Naturally it is accessible only to those of us who really believe that the Spirit speaks not only within Christianity but also in the world outside Christianity.

All the evidence of modern history, in fact, is that the Spirit has indeed been speaking very powerfully in the world, outside the boundaries of institutional Christianity.

It is to our shame that many—possibly most—of the great moral and political advances of modern Africa came from outside the Christian churches, or at least without any explicit reference and debt to them.

*Patrick Ryan,  
MillHill Missionary, Kenya*

## A Christian Perspective on Inter-Religious Dialogue

The following five perspectives must be embodied in a new way by those who engage in inter-religious dialogue.

1. Our world has become much smaller. Many factors have brought this about: technology; the information highway; the knowledge explosion, cross-border migration, the use of the English language, sport and leisure activities, multinational corporations, humanitarian intervention by the international community, and the like.
2. This has contributed to a greater global awareness and multiculturalism. The single Euro-American culture that had begun to dominate in the latter half of the 20th century is now being replaced by an acceptance of cultural self-determination by others.
3. Global consciousness is replacing the more limited consciousness of one's own ethnicity, gender, language, religion, and national borders. The limitations of clerical, patriarchal values and models of thought and action must be questioned, and the feminine must be given its full value.
4. Christianity can no longer be identified with Western civilization; non-Christian cultures in the South may be closer than the West to the Christian ethos.
5. The Spirit is constantly at work outside the boundaries of the institutional Christianity and its churches. The corollary is the requirement of openness to enrichment from other cultures and religions. Genuine pluralism should be cultivated; the religions and cultures of others must be a source of learning.

*Patrick Ryan, MillHill Missionary, Kenya*

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**... .. Jon Sobrino ... ..**

**Jesuit theologian San Salvador**

*Neither the life nor the death of Jesus  
is understandable without his struggle  
against injustice and the reaction of the unjust.  
Or, in more positive terms, his life and death  
cannot be understood without his love for  
and defense of the oppressed  
and without his struggle to turn  
that oppression around in real life.*

We Pray

...

O God  
Your  
dream  
is for  
another  
possible  
world.

Touch  
our  
dreaming,  
shape  
our  
dreaming,  
so that  
we are  
inspired  
to give  
flesh  
to your  
dream.