**10. Full Circle**

John Paterson, Bishop of Auckland, had invited me to act as locum priest for a year at St Michael’s, Henderson as we considered longer-term ministry options. Henderson is a lower income suburb in West Auckland, and in January 2000 Jackie and I moved into the vicarage, a lovely old wooden house surrounded by trees, grass, and the nearby Henderson stream. Pukekos and ducks wandered over the lawn, barked at fiercely on occasions by Joshua, our dog, who always took care not to get too close.

Our year at St Michael’s was delightful with a warm and down-to-earth group of parishioners. We met up again with my first vicar from Papakura days, Herb Simmonds, now retired with his wife Margaret. As work on the Royal Commission[[1]](#footnote-1) gathered speed from mid-year, my life was spent commuting during the week to Wellington while being on deck in the parish on Sundays.

The church fair one Saturday was a memorable occasion, and in marked contrast to a fair at an upmarket private school in Canberra. The Canberra fair traded holidays on the Gold Coast, cases of wine and ale, dinners at posh restaurants, bonsai plants, ski equipment and the like, and raised $60,000.

Henderson was quite different. One dad was buying sausages off the barbecue for his family for only $1 each. A Samoan bought up all the vicarage silver-beet to feed the family. Ordinary people worked hard to make cakes and marmalade, grow plants and make clothes, and ordinary people whose lives don’t revolve around restaurants and champagne were grateful to buy things that simply kept body and soul together. The proceeds amounted to $3000, but as one parishioner said: ‘We don’t do this to make money so much as to offer something to others.’

The monthly vestry meetings had some amusing moments. In a fit of energy Jackie had decided the borer-ridden internal doors of the vicarage needed treatment. She sent them off to be stripped of their varnish, after which we applied anti-borer solution and rehung them. At vestry next month the treasurer queried an invoice from Jack the Stripper. I suggested he put it down as vicarage entertainment.

West Auckland had its own unique system of time-measurement. In 1994 a time capsule was put down by the water wheel near the historic Mill Cottage. Installed by the Waitakere City Council, the brass plaque stated:

THIS STONE MARKS THE PLACE WHERE A TIME CAPSULE IS BURIED COMMEMORATING THE 150 ANNIVERSARY OF THE HENDERSON DISTRICT.

THIS CAPSULE IS TO BE OPENED AT THE HENDERSON DISTRICT BICENTENNIAL

 IN THE YEAR 2094

I pointed out the 50-year discrepancy to a volunteer at the historic Mill Cottage. Unaware of the error, she felt that with the plaque now set in stone change was unlikely.

In October 2000 the bishop invited me to accept appointment as Dean of Auckland at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Parnell. It was the third time of asking, the only position I had ever aspired to, and the first time I had been in a space to accept. I had turned the post down in 1990, being newly appointed as the Anglican social responsibility commissioner. Soon after we arrived in Canberra the post was vacant again, and Sir Paul Reeves visited to convey the invitation a second time from the bishop. Again the timing was not right. In 2000 the way was clear, and Jackie and I prepared to move to Parnell. We felt a special induction service was not called for and, in a five-minute ceremony at the start of the Advent Carol service, I was duly installed. Bishop John asked me to take on an additional role as assistant bishop in the diocese, and I was so elected in 2002. It was good to support John, but my main role was as dean.

Coming to the cathedral brought me full circle. On 13 June 1957, in my final year at Takapuna Grammar School, I had been present at the laying of the foundation stone of the new Holy Trinity Cathedral. The date marked the centenary of the signing of the Anglican Church’s[[2]](#footnote-2) constitution at St Stephen’s chapel in nearby Judges Bay, under the leadership of the Bishop of New Zealand, George Augustus Selwyn. One hundred years later I was part of a large diocesan procession of bishops, clergy, lay-readers and altar servers, all robed and crossing Parnell Road from the original St Mary’s cathedral to the site of the new cathedral. The Bishop of Auckland, John Simkin, laid the foundation stone with several of his masonic brethren, each in full regalia and wielding trowel and cement.

Returning as dean 44 years later was special. I had been ordained both deacon and priest in St Mary’s on its original site. Construction of St Mary’s, a fine piece of Gothic architecture in wood, began in 1886 and St Mary’s was in use as Auckland’s cathedral church from 1888. In the 1960s construction of the chancel of the new cathedral commenced, a lofty Gothic structure in brick in use from 1973. Rae Monteith, cathedral dean from 1949 to 1969, had been the driving force in the building of the chancel.

Eighteen years passed before the construction of the nave began in 1991. During this time a visionary proposal was put forward that ‘Old St Mary’s’ be lifted from its foundations and rolled across Parnell Road, turned through 90 degrees and placed adjacent to the new cathedral. In the face of much opposition the shift took place in 1982, Parnell Road being closed one Saturday while this huge historic church inched its way to its new site. Today Old St Mary’s is a treasured part of the cathedral precinct. Many requests for weddings and funerals come from individuals and families with historic associations with the old cathedral.

In 1991 construction of the Holy Trinity nave commenced under the leadership of John Rymer. John had followed Rae Monteith as dean in 1970 and, retiring in 1990, took on oversight of the nave project. It had been decided not to continue the Gothic pattern of the chancel but rather to blend ancient and modern by building a nave in contemporary design with extensive use of stained glass and symbols appropriate to the 21st century. Such a dramatic shift in design aroused much controversy but architect Professor Richard Toy’s plan was adopted and the nave completed in 1995.

The theme of God’s creation in the context of Aotearoa and the South Pacific is told in the great west window by Nigel Brown. On the nave’s Parnell Road side nine windows by Shane Cotton depict early parts of the biblical story with Maori imagery, while on the harbour side a further nine windows by Robert Ellis portray with Maori and Polynesian influences the coming of the Gospel to Aotearoa New Zealand. The baptismal font comprises four pieces of sculpted glass by Auckland artist Ann Robinson. Weighing a tonne, it softly reflects the ambient light, especially when refracted in the early morning through the brightly hued aroha (love) window.

The nave altar is of native kauri and was built for the celebration of a papal mass in the Auckland Domain during the 1986 visit of Pope John Paul II. In a moving ecumenical gesture, the Roman Catholic Church gifted the altar to the new Anglican cathedral. Today it symbolises the warm relationships between the cathedral churches of Holy Trinity and St Patrick. Father Bernard Kiely, the administrator from St Patrick’s, and Bishop Patrick Dunn, became close ecumenical colleagues, with the two congregations sharing in worship on Ash Wednesday each year, and at other times.

As dean I felt Holy Trinity was one of the great treasures still to be discovered in Auckland. Today it is heartening to see the increasing use of the cathedral not only for services of worship but for concerts, forums and school visits, as well as by pilgrims and visitors. The current dean, Jo Kelly-Moore, has energised and enthused the cathedral congregation around her. Together they have raised the funds for a major programme to reconstruct the two organs, build a new chapel beyond the high altar and form a covered connection between Holy Trinity and Old St Mary’s.

Jackie and I came to the cathedral following some very public in-house divisions. A clash between the dean and the director of music, along with a shortage of operating finances, caused a dispute that spilled over into the congregation, leading to the departure of the director of music in 1998, and the dean in 2000. The cathedral also had an accumulated operating deficit of $200,000. Disputes between cathedral deans and music directors are legendary, so my first call after being appointed was to Peter de Blois, the new music director. We enjoyed a warm and collegial relationship throughout my time there. When Jackie and I moved into the deanery much healing work had been done through the pastoral skills of a priest couple, John McAlpine and the late Jenny Harrison. Congregational rapport was quickly rebuilt and the operating deficit cleared over a five-year period.

I was greatly blessed with creative staff members Sarah Park, Catherine Thorn and Jayson Rhodes who came as newly ordained clergy to the cathedral. Sarah has great liturgical skills and working with her on the traditional three-hour service on Good Friday was always an inspiration. Jenny Chalmers and Michael Smart were senior members of the team, handling much of the pastoral work along with baptisms, weddings and funerals, of which there were many.

Michele Roberts joined our team as an assistant priest in 2006 and made a major contribution in establishing a Mainly Music group, a programme of music and dance for very young children which also provides a community meeting space for mothers and other caregivers. From my office on St Stephen’s Avenue I could see the steady trickle of young mums with pushchairs up and down the road to the shops. With a group of parishioners Michele gathered the equipment and seeding finance necessary to support the group. Within three months more than 55 families had signed up with, unheard of in church circles, a sizeable waiting list.

Officiating at funerals was a most significant ministry. When the deceased is of ripe old age there is sadness, but acceptance of the timeliness of the death, and a celebration of a life well lived. By contrast funerals for young people are poignant and challenging. I recall the funerals for three young adults who had died, one by suicide, one from a car accident and one who died inexplicably over night with no known symptoms. The impact on families and friends was huge. Alongside the trauma of deep grief are questions of ‘Why?’, and ‘Where do we look for consolation and hope?’

Sometimes a family plumbing the depths of spiritual searching gave an implied message that ‘we don’t want anything religious’. Of the hundreds who came to such funerals many were in the same space. The essential truths of Christian faith are not well known today, but there is no shortage of caricatures and Sunday School pictures literally interpreted. I was every bit as anxious to avoid those as were many in the congregation.

I sought to speak of God not as a divine miracle-worker or architect of illness, accident or natural disaster, but rather as a mystery of love that encompasses and upholds us. Vulnerable to the darkness and light of human living, we are yet surrounded by love in the midst of grief. The experience of the two disciples on the Emmaus Road[[3]](#footnote-3) has always helped me in dealing with grief. Here were two people devastated by Jesus’ death who experienced a stranger walking with them along the way. They did not recognise who it was. There was no instant transformation from grief to joy. But as Jesus became known to them in the breaking of the bread, new hope and life appeared. Grief can last a long time but, sustained by a love which is both human and divine, its pain can diminish and be replaced by the flowering of a future with new meaning.

In July 2005 Prince William attended a service at the cathedral while on his first official visit to New Zealand. The All Blacks were playing the Lions at the time but I felt it wise not to refer to the rugby. Instead I reflected on the Treaty of Waitangi and the continuing bonds between the Queen and this country, while acknowledging the multi-cultural and multi-faith nation Aotearoa now was. It being just three days after the London Underground bombings in which 50 people had been killed, I expressed how our hearts went out to the families of the victims, the injured, and to British visitors to this country.

After the service I escorted the prince to the door where two lines of school-children fanned out in a V- shape. I wondered which line he would go down and noted the disappointment on the right when he headed to the left. The warmth towards him was palpable when from the end of the left flank he moved over to the right to greet all the young people there. We presented him with an inscribed copy of *A New Zealand Prayer Book* to mark the occasion.

My reference to a multi-faith and multi-cultural society fitted well with an inter-faith dialogue in Jogjakarta, Indonesia in December 2004. I was part of a New Zealand government delegation of twelve from different faith groups. Sponsored by the Indonesian and Australian governments, with support from New Zealand, the conference brought together 124 delegates from 10 religions and 13 nations in South-East Asia and the South Pacific.

‘Clerics vow action on terrorism’read the post-conference headline in the *Jakarta Post*. Growing concern over threats to peace and security in the region spurred the initiative for this event. In his opening address Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono stated the concern succinctly: ‘When ethnic and religious prejudice is compounded by economic and political rivalries, as well as by mutual grievances deemed unforgivable, the resulting situation can be explosive.’ Prime Minister Helen Clark was a driving force in the dialogue, believing that religious groups could play a leading role in building bridges between diverse communities in peace, development, security and education.

The global population today is made up of Christians (33 per cent), Muslims (22 per cent), Hindus (15 per cent), Buddhist (6 per cent), other religions (10 per cent) and no religion (14 per cent). While religion has often been claimed as the basis for crusades and holy wars, past and present, delegates were of the view that such claims could never be justified. That view had been strongly stated in 2003 by an international panel of experts on terrorism, meeting in Norway, which declared that suicide terrorism was not caused by religion, even although extremists might claim religion as a rationale.

Instead, said the panel, terrorism more often resulted from rapid social, political and economic changes, or other forces that left minorities with a sense of exclusion from access to power or economic opportunity. Oppression of religious or cultural minorities can also be a potent driver. It was the unanimous view of the conference that no religion could properly be used as a basis for terrorist activity. Religions share a belief in one God or spiritual reality, one human family on earth, and a commitment to unity, justice and peace for all, irrespective of country, culture or creed.

The conference schedule at Jogjakarta was tight and I had been invited to chair the final plenary session to produce a conference statement. With the clock ticking, and faced with 124 delegates from different nations and religions, some of whom had no English, this was a formidable task. Things were not helped by the Australian delegation which seemed intent on raising points of order about the process. Since the final draft statement had emerged from three days of intense consultation, I ruled process issues out of order, a move supported by the majority which allowed us to reach agreement.

The New Zealand delegation recommended to government that we develop a national statement on religious tolerance and harmony, along the lines of similar statements in Indonesia and Singapore. We also recommended programmes to inform and educate New Zealanders on religious and cultural diversity. In the 1950s, when Auckland was largely Pakeha and Christian, it seemed natural to see faith exclusively through the eyes of Western Christianity. But Maori urbanisation, the influx of Pacific Islanders, and recent waves of new citizens from Asia, Africa and Europe have led to a society where Pakeha now number less than 65% of the total. Different languages are heard in the streets. Mosques and temples are scattered among the churches, which themselves accommodate multi-lingual congregations.

We cannot be complacent. The desecration of Jewish graves in Wellington and Auckland, the rising influence of the religious right and the National Front, hate mail directed to Muslim leaders following the 11 September attacks in New York, and the anti-migrant attitudes that thread through much of our popular discourse are signs that prejudice and ignorance lie close to the surface. So while ‘clerics fighting terrorism’ makes a good headline, the role of healthy religion in peace-making is significant. A paper from the World Council of Churches at the time of the Yogjakarta dialogue said:

Contacts and relations of precious trust and friendship between people of different religions, built quietly by patient dialogue during peacetime, may in times of conflict prevent religion from being used as a weapon. In many cases such relations may pave the way for mediation and reconciliation initiatives.

Three weeks after the inter-faith dialogue in Indonesia, that nation and others nearby were devastated by the tsunami on Boxing Day 2004. As the shock waves continued into the new year, I thought New Zealand should make some national observance of this tragedy which affected not only the immediate victims of the tsunami but many of their families and friends in New Zealand. The recent inter-faith dialogue underlined for me our unity as human beings across faith and cultural boundaries.

I proposed that Holy Trinity Cathedral should host a multi-cultural and multi-faith memorial service. Having proposed the service I promptly left town and went on summer vacation cycling the Otago Rail Trail. I was very grateful for the organisation undertaken by my priest colleague, Catherine Thorn, keeping in touch with her by cell-phone as she made arrangements with Government, faith leaders and the community at large.

The service on 16 January 2005 took place under national flags hanging above the cathedral altar and in the presence of Prime Minister Helen Clark, Governor-General Dame Silvia Cartwright, 16 consular representatives from different nations, 23 members of Parliament and a congregation of 500 comprising many nations, races and faiths. Leaders from Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, Jewish and Christian faiths joined together in the service, each contributing a prayer or reading from their own tradition. Children from Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia and Thailand lit candles. One minute’s silence was observed at 1.59pm, three weeks to the day since the tsunami hit the Indonesian shore.

In her address the Prime Minister said that ‘this catastrophe has seen human beings reaching out to one another on an unprecedented scale. The common humanity of people has shone through at this time of great adversity for so many’. I addressed the tragedy of the tsunami, as well as the rationale for holding an inter-faith service in a Christian cathedral:

There is but one God, who is the God of all who inhabit this fragile planet on which our life depends. That God has been expressed in different cultures, different scriptures and different creeds. The insight from Indonesia was that good faith has a firm centre and open edges, enabling us to affirm the convictions that have given us life, while being open to the convictions and insights of others, and able to work together in a common cause.

Because God is one, all who walk the face of this earth are one, part of one global family. The images of the tsunami that have shocked us these last three weeks have shown us that in Aceh and Phuket, in India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia, the needs and aspirations of people, wherever they may be, are essentially the same : to cherish those closest to us, to be part of a family or whanau which gives us love, to find a place to live with food to eat, health and education for our children, to have work which gives meaning to our lives and offers service to others, to be free from conflict and war.

It is with that unity of belief, and this newfound unity with members of the human family of whom we knew little before the tsunami, that we gather today. We pay tribute to the unprecedented numbers of people from many nations who have lost their lives in this disaster. We remember those who are still missing, some of whom may never be found. To those of you who grieve for loved ones today we extend our love and compassion, and pray with you that you will know the strong presence of a God who cares.

We also at this time reflect upon the nature and presence of God. ‘Where was God in this disaster?’ many have pondered. It has been suggested that the tsunami was an act of God, but what sort of God would inflict such misery on untold thousands of innocent people? God does not cause natural disasters. Natural disasters are the result of forces that have ready scientific explanations, in this case the shifting of tectonic plates on the Earth’s surface.

God is found rather in the worldwide outpouring of compassion and generosity that has followed in the wake of the tsunami. God’s love is seen in the help which victims have offered one another, in the doctors and aid workers, police and armed services personnel who have poured in from all over the world, in the responses of governments, and most of all in the extraordinary generosity whereby ordinary people have offered financial assistance.

This love is part of all religious traditions, and indeed of all humanity at its best. A Muslim saying goes: ‘Prayer carries us halfway to God, fasting brings us to the door of his palace, and almsgiving procures us admission.’ Compassion for the poor lies also at the heart of Buddhism, Judaism, Sikhism and Hinduism. In today’s Gospel reading of the three travellers[[4]](#footnote-4), it was the one who turned aside from his journey to assist the man beaten up on the side of the road who was commended for doing that which was pleasing in the eyes of God.

The service was well received but I received letters of concern from some who felt the Christian faith was compromised by worshipping alongside people of other religions. The point is an important one. Belief in Jesus as the Son of God is central to Christianity, but others are just as passionately committed to the faith and culture in which they have been raised.

My belief in the uniqueness of Jesus is in no way diminished by engagement with peoples of other faiths. The service in the cathedral was not one where elements from different religions were poured into a melting-pot and some bland lowest common denominator emerged. Each faith leader prayed or read from his own tradition which was not compromised. Binding us together was our shared humanity and compassion for people who are part of one human family, a compassion arising out of different religions. For me inter-faith encounters have enriched rather than diminished my own Christian faith. The Muslim insight quoted above is fully compatible with a Christian understanding of the divine love, but brings a fresh perspective to it.

The Jogjakarta recommendation to formulate a statement on religious diversity for New Zealand was followed up by Joris de Bres on behalf of the Human Rights Commission. I was part of an inter-faith working group that consulted widely, and Paul Morris[[5]](#footnote-5) produced successive drafts that led to the publication in 2007 of a statement *Religious Diversity in New Zealand.* The statement carried forewords by Dame Silvia Cartwright in her capacity as chair of the National Commission for Unesco, and by Prime Minister Helen Clark, who wrote: ‘It is my hope that the statement will help all New Zealanders, of whatever faith or ethical belief, to feel free to practise their beliefs in peace and within the law.’

During the consultation process, debate arose about whether or not New Zealand is a Christian nation. New Zealand has a 200-year history of Christian faith, and about half the population define themselves as Christian. But the ‘Christian nation’ tag ignores the religious perceptions of Maori who preceded European settlement by hundreds of years. Nor does it acknowledge the multitude of other faiths in New Zealand today, especially after a half century of multiple migrations.

New Zealand is also a secular state with no official religion but creates space for all religions to flourish in an atmosphere of freedom. The free expression of religion in the lives of citizens has the capacity to shape for good the values, attitudes and policies of society. Nonetheless the drafting group felt it important to acknowledge the historical contribution of Christianity without giving preference to any religion above another. The statement began:

Christianity has played and continues to play a formative role in the development of New Zealand in terms of the nation’s identity, culture, beliefs, institutions and values.

It went on to scope contemporary religious diversity and the positive roles played by other faith communities. Different faiths work together with government and other groups, including the non-religious, to achieve policies of non-discrimination, freedom of expression, multicultural awareness in workplaces and public services, and education in schools about different religious, spiritual and cultural traditions. Many programmes throughout New Zealand aim to foster positive awareness of our multi-faith and multi-cultural society.

In a joint statement in May 2007 the Anglican and Roman Catholic bishops affirmed the statement, saying they applauded the way it grappled with ‘our realities as a multicultural and diverse community in these islands’. They also said:

From our own faith position we cherish freedom of thought and freedom of religious expression, both for ourselves and others. This is inherent in our understanding of the Christian Gospel as a gift that is freely given, to be freely experienced and freely received in a climate of freedom itself.

The statement has no legislative force but is an aspirational expression of the kind of nation we can choose to be.

Early in 2000 Bishop John Paterson invited me to take on the chairmanship of the Selwyn Foundation, the Anglican aged care agency in Auckland with several residential facilities. It was a daunting prospect. The Foundation was in disarray with the director for the last 15 years about to retire, the chairman having resigned after only two years along with half the board, and the agency losing $2 million a year.

I had no ready solutions in mind but decided to start by interviewing personally all the board members (including those who had resigned) and key staff members. I felt we needed to establish a new clarity and unity in purpose, find new board members and a new director, and take steps to balance the books. We were fortunate to recruit as director the Rev’d Duncan Macdonald, an Anglican priest with a background in social services and in the Accident Compensation Commission. He brought skills which blended compassion and care with the management acumen required for a large corporate body.

Working with Duncan on the finance side was Fred Pau and under their leadership the situation was turned around. Selwyn was greatly overstaffed: through an incremental programme of voluntary redundancies a large loss was turned into a significant annual surplus. I made it clear that there was to be ‘no watering of the orange juice’: quality services were to be retained.

The surpluses have allowed the foundation as a not-for-profit body to develop new services of outreach in local communities. Board member Sally Naulls has worked with 40 Auckland churches to establish programmes for the elderly with social events, meals and contact with a community nurse. Funding has been made available for aged care partnerships with Maori and Pacific Islanders through the churches. New aged-care facilities have been built and other agencies blended into the Selwyn network.

In New Zealand today privately owned aged-care facilities are mushrooming and good profits are to be made by caring for those who can afford it. The Selwyn Foundation’s mission is to seek out the many who cannot afford adequate care in their older years and to provide for them on the basis of human need, a vision inherited from the founder, Canon Douglas Caswell, 60 years ago. An old black-and-white film is often screened at foundation events. Named *Indictment,* the film documents Canon Caswell’s work as city missioner in the 1950s and has graphic footage of people living in Ponsonby in run-down housing, without adequate water supply, heating or toilets, often hungry and socially isolated.

It was Caswell’s engagement with the community that motivated him to provide a better place for people in their older years. Sir Robert Kerridge showed the film in his chain of cinemas over several weeks and a concerted effort led to the building of the first accommodation, Selwyn Village, at Point Chevalier. Since then the foundation has grown into a highly successful organisation, but as chair Ialways asked how well we were addressing the needs of the 21st century counterparts of the aged poor who figured in *Indictment.* That film is a dramatic reminder of the Church’s history and its ongoing challenge.

In 2003 I was approached at the cathedral by two women who wanted to see the beginnings of Christianity in New Zealand suitably commemorated. On Christmas Day 1814 the Rev’d Samuel Marsden of the Church Missionary Society preached at Oihi[[6]](#footnote-6) in the Bay of Islands from the text: ‘Fear not! I bring you glad tidings of great joy.’[[7]](#footnote-7) Marsden had come to Sydney in 1794 as a chaplain to the convict colony with a brief to establish a mission in New Zealand at a suitable time.

At Parramatta he established a small farm and invited Maori to come and spend time gaining skills in farming. One of those who crossed the Tasman was Ruatara, a Ngati Torehina chief whose home was the Rangihoua pa on the far northern shore of the Bay of Islands. It was Ruatara who in 1814 invited Marsden to ‘come to my place’ and it was there that the historic sermon was preached.

The two women who came to see me were the Rev’d Patricia Bawden, now in her 80s, who has had a vision for 50 years of Oihi as a place for pilgrimage. With her was a local landowner, Diane Paterson, equally committed to the project. Following that meeting Iwas invited by John Paterson to chair the Marsden Cross Trust Board, an ecumenical body set up to take the vision forward. Twenty hectares of land were acquired adjacent to the Cross and the Rangihoua Pa. It was very moving in January 2013 to see Hugh Rihari, a descendant of Ruatara, and John King, a descendant of the missionary John King who came with Marsden 200 years earlier, wielding shovels together as they turned the first sods for a commemorative project.

The project involves a semi-circular and open building of welcome, Rore Kahu[[8]](#footnote-8), along with a series of historic panels stationed along a path leading down to the Cross. The Rangihoua Heritage Park was opened by the Governor-General, Sir Jerry Mateparae, on 21 December 2014. Four days later, on Christmas Day, an ecumenical bicentennial service of worship was held by the beach adjacent to the Cross.

Rangihoua is already a place of pilgrimage for young people and other church groups. This will increase, as visitors from New Zealand and around the world arrive by road or boat. Rangihoua commemorates the roots of Christianity in Aotearoa New Zealand, as well as the forming of an enduring partnership between Maori and Pakeha. It predates the Treaty of Waitangi by 25 years and is an important part of our history, and future.

Reflecting on my years as both bishop and dean, I have felt vocationally most at home as dean. Bishops have an important leadership task but administration, committee work and pastoral care of clergy and parishes can stand in the way of a community-facing ministry. Maintaining harmony too often precludes prophetic action. As dean I valued the freedom to develop a public profile through preaching, articles in the *New Zealand Herald,* and through radio and television. I based what I said in public around many of the themes I have outlined, aiming to address the underlying issues of faith, personal values, social ethics, justice and compassion.

1. See Chapter 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Known then as the Church of the Province of New Zealand. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Luke* 24. 13-35. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. *Luke* 10. 25-37. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Professor of Religious Studies at Victoria University of Wellington. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In 2014 the NZ Geographic Board recommended the earlier name of Hohi for the site. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. *Luke* 2.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Rore Kahu means ‘soaring eagle’, the name of the hill on which the building stands. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)