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Letters ...

Catholic Physicians' Guild

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Letters...

Letter from New Zealand

It has been a depressing year, but I gather that many other countries feel the same. Inflation continues at about 16 percent, the Stock Exchange Index has fallen by 15 percent, our vital foreign trade has been in the doldrums, and unemployment is up to 5.6 percent of the work force. This may not sound high to Americans, but it is our highest figure since the Depression. Devaluation is just around the corner.

The population is static, an unprecedented experience for us. The birth rate is at the lowest figure on record (15.8 per 1,000) and the illegitimacy rate the highest (22.5 percent of all births).

But certain areas of the national life are booming — abortion, divorce, vasectomy, de facto unions and adultery, violent crimes and racial disharmony. For the first time in a century, Maori activists, aided by some white "liberals," have begun a campaign of violence and police hatred based on alleged injustices in land rights. Some have crossed the Tasman Sea to stir up the Australian aborigines over similar issues.

In the early decades of the 1800s, the Maoris outnumbered the white settlers about 100 to 1. About 1880, the annual growth rate of the population from natural causes and immigration ran at over 25 percent for almost a decade. These were boom years — so much for the "population explosion" doomsday melancholics. As with all Polynesians, they lacked acquired immunity and the 1917 flu pandemic, along with subsequent pulmonary tuberculosis, almost wiped out the Maori race. Since the 1930s the Maoris have thrived and now their rate of natural increase is twice the white rate.

Their main racial pathologies are obesity, gout and hypertension. Maori

women smoke so much that they have the highest rate of lung cancer in the world. All this is now blamed on the white majority as evidence of racial discrimination.

The quinquennial census showed that the Catholic Church, after years of steady growth, has actually fallen in numbers from 15.3 to 14.3 percent. The other main Christian religions are Anglican (Episcopalian), 25.7; Presbyterian, 16.7; Methodist, 4.7; Baptist, 1.6. The total Christian churches number 70.7 percent. Within living memory that figure has fallen from about 98 percent.

If I may add a personal note, the Anglican dean and I have concocted a plan to erect a 40-foot high statue of "Christ of the Ships" on a reef in Auckland Harbor. It is a striking design in white bronze. The Christ, garments windswept, with one arm outstretched, palm down, appears to be calming the wind and the sea, and at the same time blessing the ships and small craft that will sail nearby. It would cost about \$1 million, but, like the Statue of Liberty, it would make the harbor world-famous and it would turn men's minds daily to Christ.

The storm of opposition and abuse aroused by our project has been overwhelming. It has revealed a great hatred of the person of Christ. Even worse, all the main church leaders except the Catholic and the Salvation Army have opposed the statue on the grounds that "It would have been better for the money to have been given to the poor" (shades of Mary Magdalen); "it is a graven image and therefore forbidden by Exodus"; "it should have shown Christ as a Maori, not a Jew"(!); and "modern people do not believe in Christ."

If Auckland turns it down, we shall offer the project to Sydney. Or even Alcatraz.

— H. P. Dunn, M.D.
Auckland

Dear Sir:

I very much regret the review of Conrad Baars's *Feeling and Healing Your Emotions* (Logos, 1979) by George Maloof, M.D., which appeared in *Linacre Quarterly* (February, 1982).

I have combed the review several times to discover a resemblance between the views of Dr. Conrad Baars and his co-author colleague Anna Terruwe, and Dr. Maloof's representation of them. It unfortunately appears that Dr. Maloof is vexed with something in the general work of the late Catholic psychiatrist, but it is difficult to discover the source of the irritation displayed in the general tone of the review. As a long-time student of the writings of Baars-Terruwe, I must say that I cannot find the source in the actual texts.

The most serious omission in the review is the failure to recognize that Drs. Baars and Terruwe have presented to Western civilization in its decadent phase and to the Catholic Church in crisis a remarkable and profound achievement: a highly developed theory of human neurosis based on a reinterpretation of the psychology and anthropology of St. Thomas Aquinas, including a radically new understanding of the phenomena of deprivation and repression.

As indicated in the Vatican's special recognition of the work of Dr. Anna Terruwe, the Baars-Terruwe synthesis offers perhaps the most fruitful avenue for exploring the Medusa-like evils of our time—psychic and moral—and the most clearly demonstrated clinical and cultural remedies for them. Such a comprehensive challenge, backed as it is by extensive successful clinical experience, deserves more than this cursory and prickly response which only nags at the edges of the central theses.

I do not intend in the short space of a letter to take up each of Maloof's inaccuracies, omissions, and detrac-

tions; but I do wish to point out that his interpretation of the Baars-Terruwe view of the role of the human will in the personality fails to meet the facts of the case. There was no neglect of the will in Baars's theory or practice. The careful reader will find there, however, a much-needed understanding that the natural good for man demands movements of the will supported by and in harmony with the motor drive of the emotions. It is through this consonance that both will and emotions find their rational perfection. As Aquinas taught, the will is an *appetite* for the good. It is not, unless it is so perverted by Jansenist tendencies, an isolated muscle to be developed in opposition to the emotions; as Baars points out, that way lies repression.

It is even more unfortunate that the review appeared on Baars's deliberately popular exposition of his views for a wide audience after Baars-Terruwe had published a volume for professionals, *Psychic Wholeness and Healing: Using ALL the Powers of the Human Psyche* (Alba House, 1981). Publication schedules being what they are today, this was perhaps unavoidable. In view of Dr. Baars's death in October of 1981, however, now would be an appropriate time for a comprehensive review of the Baars-Terruwe contribution. Permit me to suggest that *Linacre Quarterly* devote a longer essay or, indeed, a whole issue to the views of this heroic man whose career from Buchenwald to his years of selfless service to the unaffirmed has yielded rich insights in the context of a luminously whole vision of the human psyche rooted firmly in Christian anthropology.

— R. Kenton Craven, Ph.D.
Lancaster, Ky.