

A Report on My BCM Internship, Winter 2012

By Talitha Fraser

The *kete* (right), a Maori woven basket, has power as a symbol for a container of knowledge and wisdom.

Weaving evokes strong feelings of unity and togetherness: of the people into their families and tribes and as a nation, and spiritually, of all of creation into a single indivisible living wholeness. Much of this ancient symbolism originates in the story of *Tane-te-Wananga* who obtained for all humankind the three *kete* of knowledge from *Io*, the supreme spiritual power. Thus there are three sources of knowledge: the experience of our senses, our understanding of what lies behind our senses, and the experience we have, particularly in ritual, of our oneness with each other and with the past.



Early on I was taken by a saying they have here at BCM: “Follow your lights...” It is an encouragement to do the thing you think is right, the best way you know how. This has felt like a renewing theme of the past two months here in Oak View, as I have been privileged to be immersed into the life, work and discipleship journey of BCM.

I learned that the Chumash are the local Indian tribe here, became somewhat familiar with the chaparral landscape, and heard the story behind the cabin’s name “Croatan West.” I tried spaghetti squash, tomatillo salsa, and chipotle, and learned the patient art of distilling homemade brandy and Elaine’s great salad dressing recipe. I learned about animism, restorative justice, panentheism, the value of women’s voices, primitivism, hermeneutics and what a watershed is. I heard Bible readings and prayer in Hebrew, Greek, and German (as well as Maori), learned the words to new songs and found myself starting to say “*hokey Dinah*”! Through Ched’s teaching at the Bartimaeus Institute, I learned about the socio-political context of Mark (then) which has offered much to think on for my own socio-political context (now).

These are broad brushstrokes of the landscape that has been the setting for some good work:

- on myself: developing skills in self-awareness, some formative work in cultural identity and some deconstructive work in the same;
- for BCM: such as picking up some planning for the Institute around logistics, playing a backstop position on webinars, establishing a common network of folders transitioning to Dropbox; and

- connecting to the broader movement. It was a pleasure to intern with Jeremy Siegrest, Julia Baker and Chris Gataski (*right, with Ched and Elaine*); meet the “Hodge Lodge,” the Abundant Table women, the BCM Board, Bartimaeus Institute participants and visiting friends.



I watched educational DVDs such as “At the River I Stand” and the Veterans of Hope interviews, and read Robert Ellsberg’s *All Saints: Daily Reflections on Saints, Prophets, and Witnesses for Our Time*. I see that while I am just one strand of the weaving, there is a place for each of us in the whole, and there is strength and encouragement to be gained in drawing on the wisdom of those who have gone before.

We have a blessing we say to one another in our Urban Seed community in Melbourne:

You are God’s servants gifted with dreams and visions,
 Upon you rests the grace of God like flames of fire.
 Love and serve the Lord in the strength of the Spirit.
 May the deep peace of Christ be with you,
 the strong arm of God sustain you, and
 the power of the Holy Spirit strengthen you in every way.

My *kete* feels blessed with the abundance of these different ways of knowing, and I am very grateful for the time I have had here. I look forward to the ongoing journey of unpacking the *kete* of bread for the Way - for myself, for my community in Melbourne and for whatever that might come to offer the broader movement. My blessings on you all and your work. *Taurikura (have peace, be prosperous, and be free from distraction)!*