

# TOUCHSTONE

E whaia ana te putaketanga o nga whakapono mo tenei ao hurihuri  
EXPLORING FAITH ISSUES FOR TODAY



## Church service mourns, celebrates tsunami victims

Stories and photos by Cory Miller

*On October 11, political and church leaders entered Waitakere's Trust Stadium in West Auckland, followed by the flags of Tonga, American Samoa, New Zealand and Samoa.*

"We are gathered to honour those taken by 9/29, when earthquake and tsunami changed the course of history," said Avondale Union Parish minister Rev Asora Amosa, one of the organisers of the service.

The service was held during Lotu Tamaiti – White Sunday – the day the Samoan community recognises the value of children. Tragically it served as a poignant reminder of the many children who were victims to the Tsunami's strength.

Despite their loss, thousands came to celebrate the lives lived and the lives left to live. The service was a sign of the people's hope, a light to lead them out of the dark tunnel of grief so that they can come together as the people of God. It was a service full of prayer and song, of mourning and of celebration. It was a time to remember and honour the victims of the four countries.

Long lists of victim's names were individually read out by the leaders of the church. Each name read created a sobering image of the person that once was, their life and their potential, all that

had been so tragically swept away.

The reality of devastation became more apparent with the raw footage provided for the service by TV3 and TVNZ. The images that flashed across the screen were stark reminders of the damage inflicted by nature. The suffering of the survivors was evident as they waded through the rubble and the remains of their island community.

The stadium was silent as Vai Taufua spoke of how he had found eight members of his family amongst the rubble. Many were moved to tears at the images of people carrying away tiny, unmoving bundles of young ones.

One woman spoke the heart wrenching words. "God gave me a husband and children and now he took them back".

A recovery worker spoke of his emotional strain "It was very hard, because you can see their faces, see how they fought for life."

One survivor reflected on how the beauty of the ocean had forever been destroyed for her. "I don't want to see the ocean anymore."

High Commissioner of Samoa to New Zealand Asi Tuitaga Semisi Blakelock gave an emotional speech about how the people of Samoa have been challenged by devastation beyond anything they have seen before.

"The depth of grief and desolation

are beyond words to describe. However amongst the grief is hope strengthened by our faith and resilience as a Christian nation," he said.

Prime Minister John Key spoke of how the idyllic island paradise he had visited was now unrecognizable. He shared words of condolence and support to the Samoan community.

"In remembrance and hope we gather today. The Tsunami has changed forever the lives of thousands. You face the hardest of all tasks; grieving for loved ones. You face the hardest of all responsibilities; cherishing and celebrating the lives of all your loved ones."

"From the worst of events we see the best of human spirit and this is seen in the outpouring of support that ordinary New Zealanders are giving to their friends in the Pacific," the Prime Minister said.

He shared his hopes of seeing this same spirit in the months ahead, as the New Zealand community works together to restore Samoa to what it once was.

Church leaders echoed the sentiments of John Key. They said the Samoan spirit will indeed rise up from the rubble. With the deep love that they have for each other they can build themselves up

"We must continue on with our lives, by living our lives fully, may the lives lost not be lost in vain. In remembering 9/29 may we live life to the full," said Asora.



*The service to remember those lost in the tsunami fell on White Sunday, the day Samoans highlight the value of children.*



*Prime Minister John Key offered words of condolence and support to the Samoan community.*

# Climate change activists ring alarm bells



Members of the Mornington Methodist congregation were set to ring their church bell 350 times on October 24th to get people to think about global warming.

**Church groups and young people were set to be at the forefront of a worldwide day of activities to raise the alarm about global warming in New Zealand and around the world.**

Climate change activists headed by the group 350.org designated October 24th

the '350' day of global action. On that day there were thousands of events in more than 150 countries focused on the numbers 3-5-0.

The significance of the number is that scientific consensus says we need to reduce the carbon dioxide concentration in our

atmosphere to 350 parts per million if we want a planet similar to the one on which civilization developed and to which life on earth is adapted.

350.org says faster arctic warming and other early climate changes have led scientists to conclude we are already above the safe zone at our current 390 ppm. They say unless we are able to rapidly return to 350 ppm this century, we risk reaching tipping points and irreversible impacts such as the melting of the Greenland ice sheet and major methane releases from increased permafrost melt.

350.org is an international campaign dedicated to building a movement to unite the world around solutions to the climate crisis. It says the October 24th day of action was to be marked by nearly 3800 events in 163 countries.

Climbers on the slopes of Mt Everest were to raise 350 banners. The entire cabinet of the government of the Maldives had been taking scuba training so they could hold an official underwater meeting on the day to pass a 350 resolution.

The day was also to be marked in the Holy Land. On the Israeli shore of the Dead Sea activists were to use their bodies to make a giant human 3, in Palestine a

giant 5, and on the Jordanian shore an enormous 0.

Among the events that were scheduled to take place in New Zealand at the time Touchstone was going to print was a silent inter-faith vigil for prayer and meditation in Christchurch's Cathedral Square while the cathedral's bell tolled 350 times.

In Dunedin a group of churches – Knox Presbyterian, First Presbyterian, Mornington Methodist, and St Paul's Anglican Cathedral – also agreed to ring their bells 350 times.

One of the spokespeople for the event is South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu. He stated that South Africans showed that if people act on the side of justice, they have the power to turn tides, and now it is time to start turning the tide of climate change.

Desmond Tutu said Buddhist monks and Muslim congregations are joining in the same kind of hopeful actions. People in almost all the nations of the earth are involved. It's the same kind of coalition that helped make the word 'apartheid' known around the world.

For more information see: [www.350.org.nz](http://www.350.org.nz).

## NZ Samoan community rallies to support tsunami victims

By Cory Miller

**"I have no doubt in my mind that the Samoan people will move on, they will come together as a community to rebuild," says superintendent of the Methodist Church of New Zealand's Samoan synod Rev Tovia Aumua.**

When the magnitude 8.3 earthquake created a tsunami that swept onto the shores of Samoa, American Samoa, and Tonga on September 29th, it took the lives of some 190 people, about 150 of whom were Samoan nationals.

The disaster generated waves of grief that reached Samoan communities throughout the Pacific.

"The impact on the people here is huge," says Tovia. "They never dreamed that such a thing would happen. The whole community is in disbelief at the scale of devastation.

"Every time they talk about it they are reduced to tears, physically, mentally, the implication of this disaster is enormous."

The tsunami hit hardest those who lost parents, siblings, spouses, children and family members. Lucky ones came through with injuries, however many others were

not so fortunate. One woman lost 14 members of her family.

The stories were horrific and the grief was raw. Many were unable to speak of their loss but the strength of the Samoan community in the face of tragedy was evident.

Members of Sinoti Samoa rallied together to support their loved ones in the islands. A collection drive was set up with churches in Auckland and Manukau serving as donation centres.

People were asked to provide money but also practical items, such as food, clothing and tools that can be used in recovery and rebuilding.

The response from the community was huge. Local shipping companies donated containers and services free of charge. Methodist Mission and Ecumenical offered funds to help pay for transport. The Connexion also set up a fund for people to make monetary donations.

As synod superintendent Tovia provided pastoral care. He was part of a group of church leaders who

arranged the memorial service held in West Auckland on White Sunday.

"It was an emotional Sunday" he says. "The majority of victims lost were children, and White Sunday is the day we honour our children.

"I am unable to describe the feelings of the people. I have simply shared my feelings with the people of Sinoti Samoa passing on the messages of condolences received from the various synods."

Support from the Church and people around the world will help his people to look to the future and rebuild, Tovia says.



Tovia Aumua.

## Churches in bi-cultural effort to mark Boyd incident

**In December the Whangaroa community will hold a remembrance event to mark the 200th anniversary of the Boyd incident, a major conflict between Maori and Pakeha that strained the fledgling relationship between the two cultures.**

A bi-cultural group has organised the remembrance, which seeks to heal strains between the Maori and Pakeha communities and the descendants of those involved in the incident.

Local churches have taken part in the organising and will lead the karakia (prayers) and blessings that will be an integral part of the events. The remembrance takes place December 4th-6th in Kaeo and Whangaroa.

The circumstances that led to the sinking of the merchant ship Boyd, the killing of its crew, and then the reprisal killing of innocent people the following year are still the subject of debate and discussion.

In December 1809 the Boyd arrived in Whangaroa Harbour (north of the Bay of Islands) from Sydney to pick up kauri spars. The events that followed in Whangaroa Harbour at that time and in the Bay of Islands the following March resulted in the deaths of more than 200 Pakeha and Maori.

Fourteen years after the so-called Boyd massacre, the first Methodist mission in New Zealand was established in Whangaroa.

Rev Dr Robyn McPhail is the minister of the Kaeo-Kerikeri Union Parish. She says the Boyd Remembrance has been a bi-cultural initiative that has involved the local runanga of Whangaroa.

Early in its planning stages the Boyd

Remembrance Committee invited local churches to be involved. Robyn and Anglican Tai Tokerau Bishop Rev Kito Pikaahu have taken part in the planning.

"The event will be similar to ANZAC day. It will remember and honour those who were involved," Robyn says.

"Betsy Broughton was a young child on the Boyd and one of a handful of people who survived the incident. She settled near Sydney and had 17 children. Many of her descendants, who now carry the family name Throsby, will be present for the remembrance."

The Remembrance will begin with a formal powhiri on December 4th, followed by a memorial service and hakari (feast) with formal speeches and activities on the 5th. It will conclude with an interdenominational religious service on the 6th.

Robyn says a church subcommittee has organised the ecumenical service and the karakia that will take place throughout the event. The churches will also be involved in a hikoi of whakanoa that will bless the sites where incidents took place.

"Prayer will be an integral part of the remembrance, not an add-on," Robyn says.

Methodist president Rev Alan Upson, vice president Lana Lazarus, and Presbyterian moderator Rt Rev Graeme Redding will take part in the remembrance along with the representatives of other regional, national and international organisations.

For more information visit: [www.boydremembrance2009.co.nz](http://www.boydremembrance2009.co.nz).

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# Uniting Congregations weave Forum of bright hues

*The leaders of Uniting Congregations Aotearoa New Zealand (UCANZ) both refer to this years biannual Forum in Wanganui as 'the friendly forum'.*

Co-chairs of the UCANZ standing committee Rev Marilyn Welch and Geoff Donovan say the atmosphere at the Forum, which took place October 1-4 in Wanganui was very positive. They think those who attended felt included and went away with a sense of being well-resourced by the workshops and discussions.

Perhaps the constructive mood was shaped by the theme of Forum 2009, which was 'Weaving Threads'. Forum delegates were encouraged to bring a piece of thread or material that could be incorporated into a weaving and they learned how to weave and make braid.

Another contribution to Forum's good vibes was no doubt the presence of young people. A talented group of young puppeteers from Te Atatu Union Parish provided light moments and a group of young adults doing a week-long stint of 'servant hood' volunteer



*The theme of weaving provided both theory and practice at UCANZ Forum 2009.*

work at the Wanganui City Mission was also in attendance.

On the final night of the Forum a panel of youth workers from the Methodist, Anglican and Presbyterian Churches – Te Rito Peyroux, John Heberton and Carlton Johnstone – discussed young people in the church and what congregations can do to

support them and attract them. After their presentation the young volunteers from the Mission joined buzz groups to talk with Forum members about their experience in the Church.

The keynote speaker for Forum was the Anglican bishop for Taranaki Bishop Philip Richardson. Philip discussed some of the

Anglican Church's creative initiatives in Taranaki. Not only have these supported community development, in many cases they have promoted ecumenism.

Presbyterian moderator Rt Rev Graeme Redding was at the Forum for an evening. He gave a presentation that addressed the role of the church in our pluralist society and the changing ecumenical landscape.

In another presentation police inspector Fiona Prestidge discussed the NZ Police Christian Support Network, which connects Christian police staff with one another. Fiona talked about some of the similarities between policing and being Christian but also some of the tensions that arise when the culture of policing clashes with Christian values.

Whereas the purpose of UCANZ is not primarily business, it is a venue where work is done. Among the tasks of Forum is to elect the members of the Standing Committee. This was done, and outgoing co-chairperson Janet Taege was farewelled, as Marilyn now takes her place.

## UCANZ chairs urge Partner Churches to clarify oversight

*The in-coming heads of Uniting Congregations Aotearoa NZ (UCANZ) would like to see the mainline Protestant churches work towards more ecumenical cooperation and better define their relationship with Uniting Congregations and Joint Regional Committees.*

At its biennial forum in Wanganui last month, UCANZ elected Geoff Donovan and Rev Marilyn Welch to be the co-chairs of its Standing Committee. They will carry out that role for the next two years.

Geoff and Marilyn both say they were heartened that the leaders of UCANZ's five partner churches met twice over the past year to discuss their oversight of Uniting Congregations.

In June, two representatives of each of the five partner churches, the moderator and executive secretary of the Presbyterian Church, the president and general secretary of the Methodist Church, and the bishop for ecumenical relations of the Anglican Church, a member of the Commission of Ecumenism of the Anglican Church and designated representatives of Christian

Churches NZ and the Congregational Union met regarding UCANZ. In September they or their representatives held a second meeting.

"It is important that UCANZ works out how it can be relevant in the 21st century and that the partner churches better define what partnership means. In the short term, it would be very useful if the partners come to a shared understanding of what it means to be the church of oversight for a Cooperating/Union Parish," Marilyn says.

"The partners have different perspectives on what oversight means. What tends to happen is the church with oversight does oversee what is going on in the parish but does not maintain regular contact with the other churches in the partnership.

"Therefore the church with oversight sometimes acts unilaterally, for example, on such matters as buildings or appointing new ministers. In fact, the church with oversight has a responsibility to lead the dialogue with partner denominations."

Geoff agrees and says he would like to see the partner churches not only consult

one another but consider carefully how all major decisions affect Uniting Congregations as well as the partner churches.

"Consultation is not a bad thing. As Uniting Congregations we are very interested in seeing people working together. The fact that the heads of the churches have met together is very positive. We hope they will develop trust and continue to meet," he says.

Once better understanding is achieved at among the top leaders, the next step is to foster better understanding of Uniting Congregations in regional bodies – dioceses, presbyteries, and synods. Part of the problem is that younger people with no experience in the Uniting Church movement are now coming into positions of leadership at these levels.

Marilyn observes that it is the responsibility of the UCANZ and its Joint Regional Committees to educate them, and the impetus for this has to come from Standing Committee.

"Uniting Congregations are one of the few visible manifestations of the ecumenism in New Zealand. We want the

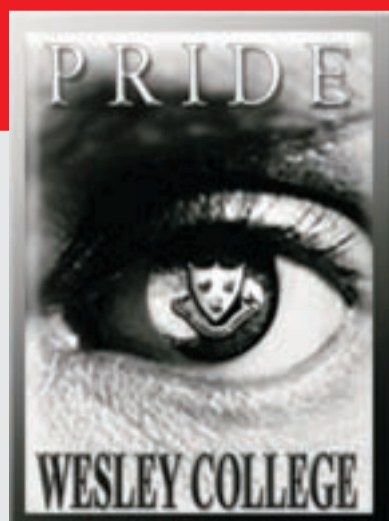
partners to be aware of how their actions impact on us. At the same time, we recognize that the ecumenical movement is far wider than us. We are one small branch of the ecumenical tree."

This will be Geoff's second term as co-chair of Standing Committee. He says the co-chair model was cobbled together at UCANZ's last Forum in 2007, when Janet Teague was asked to be chair and agreed to serve but only as a co-chair.

"I agreed to serve with her, and it has worked quite well. Because I live in Wellington I was able to attend some of the leaders' meetings without the need for Janet to travel.

"It is my hope that Marilyn will serve two terms. If we continue with the co-chair model, I will leave after this term but her second term would overlap with a new chair. That way we would maintain continuity."

Geoff is a public servant, currently with the Treasury. He attends Johnsonville Uniting Church. Marilyn is an Anglican priest in the Auckland Diocese. She is currently the Bishop's chaplain for diocesan pastoral support and archdeacon for Hunua.



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## We need a dialogue

To the editor,

It may be helpful for the wider Church to consider a code of ethics for small groups. This way the wider community can have confidence in what is happening when their loved one attends.

So here are some thoughts:

- The aim of the group has a clearly stated purpose and goal and is seen to 'build up the body of Christ'.
- There is also a clear time frame for the group to achieve its purpose and goal.
- Each participant is seen to have their own unique personality and wisdom and are not

defined by the group leader but make their own contribution to the whole.

- Each person in the group represents a wider community of family and friends and these are respected.
- Physical and emotional boundaries are respected.
- The confidentiality of the group is not to be held to when there is professional misconduct.

Are there any other comments regarding group ethics?

*Anne Stephenson, Kapiti*

## Alternatives to alcohol

To the editor,

Making alcohol easy to obtain through a large number of outlets has contributed to binge drinking. Soft drinks do not seem good enough for a lot of people these days when they socialise.

Where do they get their money for binge drinking? They should be learning to save money for the future instead of spending it on alcohol.

Respect seems to have been forgotten. If children were taught to respect themselves, their parents and other as well as to obey the law, it would help them become respectable citizens. This is what is needed at the start of their lives.

If they attend Sunday school and Church it would benefit them and help stop alcohol parties.

*Noline Johnson, Dargaville*

## Literal view of connecting

To the editor,

I was reading the August 'Touchstone' and saw the article written by Ron Gibson, the vice president of the Methodist Church.

Unless I misunderstood what he meant, he stated that the Garden of Eden was the "greatest of all Biblical myths".

Now that presents us with a bit of a problem. If there was no Garden of Eden, there could have been no Adam and Eve, and if there could have been no Adam and Eve, there could be no original sin. If there is no original sin, there would be no need for a saviour.

The Bible warns us that false teachers will

preach about 'another' Jesus and a different gospel (2nd Corinthians 11:4, and 1st Corinthians 15:45). "And so it is written, the first man, Adam, was made a living soul, the last Adam (Jesus) was made a quickening spirit."

Also read Matthew 7:15-23. Verse 23 states "And then will profess unto them, 'I never knew you, depart from me, you that work iniquity'."

I would also point out that there is no 'x' in 'connection' and no such word as connexional. Try 'connecting'.

*Ed James, Russell*

## Jesus didn't teach dualism

To the editor,

Conference can be so hard on us: Not enough time for in depth discussion; too easy just to show up and take up positions and not to deal with issues. When people are polarised they focus on defending their position, real discussion stops and progress is frustrated.

I hope Len Schroeder's article in the October Touchstone helps. There is a great hunger among folk wanting the authentic voice of Jesus and a religion relevant to the 21st century. This is one not seduced by the dualism of parallel universes, the natural and the supernatural.

Much of what I hear said in the name of our Lord Jesus, he never taught. It is heretical. It is superstitious supernaturalism mixed with Greek dualism, mostly from Jesus' time but with a medieval mix.

In the 2000 years since the crucifixion, the church has moved on. The church today is more ready than ever to hear what Jesus really taught and why.

It's time we distinguished other voices from Jesus'. If it's a dualistic voice, it's not Jesus. He didn't teach dualism. He taught the intimate and immanent relationship with His Abba, 'his parent', not birth parent as he pointed out at just 12 years.

It's a relationship that shakes the foundations of theism, and raises humanity into the divine and holy – transcendent with him while firmly grounded in incarnation.

In order to teach his ideas in his multicultural world, Jesus chose the language of religion;

maybe he didn't have much choice. I doubt that it serves us well today. The churches' progress now depends on how well we use the language, terms and concepts that the Humanities have given us in the past century. Some reactionary expressions of Christianity try harder than ever to be dualistic not realising that they betray Jesus.

In the first century the gentile doctrine of the incarnation began to form. They thought God sent Jesus down to earth. But, didn't his followers experience God in him?

Wasn't it more that Jesus brought God down to earth – teaching enfleshment in us as it was for him? Surely we're not obliged to commit to a doctrine that the early church got around the wrong way, a doctrine of separation reinforcing dualism and not the intimacy and immanence of the relationship that Jesus taught.

We need to remember that all was perfectly natural to Jesus since his natural was big enough and didn't leave room for a supernatural. He calls us into his kind of natural and its empowerment and liberation. If we feel dependent on supernaturalism, we've probably been exposed to a heresy in the name of a 'modern' God. But not to what Jesus taught.

While we need to get Jesus' teaching right, we mustn't move on so fast people feel alienated. Good evangelicals will take people with them as Jesus did. It will be great if the evangelicals and liberals get together at conference and talk.

*Bruce Tasker, Mt Albert*



## KITCHEN THEOLOGY

### Taking off the apron

By Diana Roberts

*When I pack for a visit to my children and their families, I always make sure that I tuck my apron into the bottom of my bag, ready for action in the kitchen.*

Grannies are good in the kitchen: good at tidying the bench, washing the messy saucepans, making the gravy, and cooking the old family favourites. But then the young ones say: 'Come on, time to take your apron off and sit down. It's our turn now'.

They cook Thai or Mexican, or maybe something from Donna Hay or Jamie Oliver. It's good to sit around the meal table and enjoy the food so competently and lovingly prepared, and know that they value and practise the skills that are part of the family tradition.

It's important to give them space to do it their way, using their own recipes, techniques and equipment. It's important to learn to take off the apron and sit down, still ready to respond to questions like "Is allspice the same as mixed spice?" and "Can you keep an eye on this for a minute?"

This year's Methodist Conference is the last I'll be fully involved in. I've been a member of the Council of Elders for several years. I have sat through all the business of Conference, observing and reflecting. I've listened

to the familiar voices of the veterans of many Conferences, confident, understanding the procedures, knowing the ropes. I've watched nervous newcomers struggling to find courage to speak for the people they represent.

After this year I'll be taking off my 'Conference apron', and maybe it's time for some other old hands to think about making space for new members to express new visions and bring new skills. The wisdom and experience of long-term members will remain rich resources available to everyone.

It's time too for me to take off the apron that is this Kitchen Theology column in Touchstone. My first contribution appeared in the first issue, in May 2001, and my last will be December 2009.

Able and lively theologians all around the country are cooking up a new and vital spirituality that satisfies the hunger of this place and time. There are many different ways of exploring God's call to us, and unless we let go and move on, new ways cannot open. "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains just a single grain." (John 12:24). Take off your apron, sit down, and see what happens!



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## The servant church and inclusion

By Ron Gibson

I would like to reflect on two themes that have been at the forefront of my experience over the past 12 months. They concern the need to rediscover the 'servant church' and what it means to be an 'inclusive church'.

Job is a good starting point because in the alleged dialogue or argument with God, poor old Job is put in his place very firmly. God makes it very clear to this complainer that the world is God's creation and that people like Job – read the people of Israel – are the servant of that creation, not its master.

The following chapters go on at great length until at last God challenges Job with the words: "Is it for a man who disputes with the almighty to be stubborn? Should he that argues with God answer back?" With suitable humility Job replies: "What reply can I give thee, I who carry no weight?"

So finally, if reluctantly, Job gets the message that humility is preferable to arrogance: serving is required rather than being served. It was a message that had to be re-learned time and time again.

By the time we get to the era of Jesus,



the religions of the day were certainly not the servants of their believers but more often than not the tyrannical masters of the people's lives. The priestly class were anything but servants. They dispensed largesse and favours as well as being the gate keepers of people's access to God (or the Gods). Leadership was very

much in the authoritarian mode. We should think about the latter in viewing the culture of contemporary church.

Imagine the dismay when a new prophet turns up who inverts the entire religious and social order with the proclamation that the last shall be first and the first shall be last. Rather than proclaiming their righteousness, both people and priests should walk humbly, seek forgiveness, become as little children before God, and wash the feet of the outcasts.

These were the expected duties of servants or slaves. Were the followers of Jesus expected to become like servants or slaves? In a nutshell, yes! This was what was revolutionary about the teachings of Jesus: "whoever wants to be great must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be the willing slave of all".

The letter to Hebrews implies another aspect of leadership in a faith community. The clue lies in the words: "So it is with Christ: he did not confer upon himself the glory of becoming High Priest; it was granted by God". In other words, we are all here through grace.

Grace only empowers us if in a spirit of humility we become the servants of the most weak and vulnerable, and put the well-being of others ahead of our own. Leadership must divest itself of the trappings of power and authority and learn how to become servant leaders. None of this means an attitude of servility or false modesty. It means an attitude of respect for others, for their integrity as persons, their beliefs, their cultural values, and their spiritual journey.

Becoming as little children is a metaphor for describing an attitude of wonder and humility when confronted with God's unconditional love. It is a metaphor for describing an attitude of acceptance towards others.

In a servant Church, inclusion means that those who stand outside our fellowship are equally to be included in our compassion and outreach. Having found inclusion ourselves, we need to reach out to include everybody and anybody whether

or not they are members of our particular faith community.

This is the Gospel of Jesus, where he made it very clear that his ministry was to the outcasts of the day and not to the righteous. This is a demanding Gospel that requires us to be inclusive in our behaviour towards others.

If the contemporary Church is to succeed, then our theology needs to embrace the vision of a shared faith in which all participants are treated with equal regard, and which affirms the authenticity of their claims to equity, inclusion and justice.

Within a faith community such as this Church, we all want justice, sustainability, well-being, and the things of the spirit. In the passion for these needs, we encounter the one whose love knows no limits, who offers us unconditional grace, who brings new life out of death, and who challenges us to be unconditional in our inclusion of others.

While we come to break bread and share our meal with our immediate friends, we need to remember the challenge of Jesus to step outside the safety of these four walls and break bread with the untouchables who stand outside. Everyone has a place at the table.

## My spiritual journey

By Hilda Bak

My spiritual journey  
By Hilda Bak

My Sunday school teacher insisted that Jesus was tempted just like we are. I felt that being the Son of God surely made a difference. That was the first time I questioned what I was taught. The next disturbing event came with the revelations of the Nazi slaughter of 6 million Jews, as well as Gypsies. This was done, not by some faraway heathen nation, but by a Western European Christian people, who produced Goethe, Schiller, Beethoven, Bach and others.

I read that, as they were driven into the gas chambers, the Jews recited the Shema, 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one'. As one said, with typical Jewish humour, God is on holiday. How could a loving God, who counted the very hairs of our heads, ignore such prayers in such circumstances? How could God let the plot to kill Hitler fail and the plotters be hung

with piano wire? Where was God's justice? What was the point of praying to a God out there? And yet the teaching of Jesus of Nazareth continued to attract me.

As part of a sociology course, we studied comparative religions. All human beings seem to ask similar questions. Maybe the answers reflect different cultures, histories, even geography. We were all seeking to explain the unfathomable and find ways to live together.

There can only be one Creator or first cause, whether you accept the Big Bang or the stories in Genesis. If I had been born in Burma, I would have been a Buddhist and the ways of Western Christianity would have appeared strange. We all understand best those ways which we learned from babyhood – they seem natural!

In the Northern winter of 1951, I was sent to Coventry, literally. The centre of the city had been bombed

badly. Temporary shops had been built around the burnt out shell of the cathedral, and the busy commercial life continued. One lunch hour, I wandered into the ruins.

If it is true that stones can echo events, then I should have heard the heavy drone of loaded bombers, the wail of air-raid sirens, the ack-ack guns, the ringing of the bells of the fire-engines, the thud of bombs, the roar of flames, the whoosh of water, and the crash of falling timbers. There was none of that.

Instead, I experienced the most incredible sense of peace, a peace for which I know no adequate words. I think it was the peace that Jesus meant when he said, 'My peace I give to you', peace that is at the core of all existence.

The silent Quaker Meeting appealed to me. When the group centres down, I believe, they touch that inner core of peace. Two Quaker phrases also appealed: 'There is something of God in everyone', and

'It speaks to my condition'.

With the advent of John Robinson's 'Honest to God', I began to read more of modern theology. It was great to find other people had similar doubts and queries, and find whole groups who wanted to hear what Lloyd Geering had to teach.

My present position is that God – the primal cause, the going-onness of all that is, the ground of all that is – is through all Creation, immense and unfathomable. And that it is possible to find this in ourselves. I believe some remarkable people show the God within. They include Jesus of Nazareth, the Buddha, Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama, Aung San Suu Kyi, and Martin Luther King. Surely the Creator is too great to work only in a few people in a small area of creation. Evil remains a problem but I like John Spong's idea that we are not yet fully human, we are still evolving. I hope it is true!

I cannot claim, as Emily Bronte

did, that no coward soul is mine but her words do have profound meaning:

*With wide embracing love  
Thy spirit animates eternal years,  
Pervades and broods above,  
Changes, sustains, dissolves, creates,  
and rears.*

*Though earth and man were gone,  
And suns and universes  
ceased to be,  
And Thou were left alone,  
Every existence would exist in Thee.*

*Admittedly, I do not know all the  
answers, probably never will, but it  
is an exciting journey and I am very  
happy to be on it.*

Hilda Bak grew up attending the Methodist Mission in Rochdale, Lancashire. She has attended the Methodist Church in New Plymouth since 1981. She organises a discussion group and the church library.

## More women to acknowledge

To the editor,

The article on ordained women in the Methodist Church in the October edition of Touchstone did include a mention of Rev Edith Little.

Edith trained first as a deacon and then as a presbyter in a home setting style in her home parish, Johnsonville Union. She then served there, first as a deacon and then as a presbyter.

Later she was minister in the Paekakariki Parish. In 1988 she was vice president of Conference. Eric Laursen was president. Edith died on June 6, 2007.

It could be that she was not included in the list in Touchstone because she did not train at Trinity Theological College. She was certainly one of the first trained in home-setting style.

The article relates to the first 25 years from when Phyllis Guthardt entered Trinity. No mention is made of the women who entered after 1984. There are a number, for example, the group of deaconesses who were ordained and people like Judith Parkes and Robyn Westaway.

There could be a further article them.

Bob Andrews, Nelson



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# trinity

methodist theological college

*te ha o te hihi karoa*



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*'o lo'o mumu ai le agaga'*

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### 2. MUSIC AND WORSHIP

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### 3. CREATIVITY, IMAGINATION AND MINISTRY

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### 4. THE BIBLE AND THE EMPIRES, 950–586 BC

11 June IN206

### 5. THE BIBLE AND THE EMPIRES, 500–2 BC

12 June IN207

### 6. HOW TO READ THE GOSPEL

16–17 July IN208

### 7. GENDER ISSUES IN MINISTRY

13–14 August IN104

### 8. THE MOANA FACE OF CHRIST

11 September IN203

### 9. MOANA ECO-THEOLOGY

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A selected team of tutors plan each event to create a resource rich learning environment. The backdrop of Trinity College Intensives Programme is deepening knowledge and spirituality, so there is always a devotional aspect somewhere within each event. The Intensives are part of Trinity's commitment to lay education through its ministry development programmes. Further resources—available only to registered participants in each intensive—are located in the tcol online classroom.

Most intensives start on a Friday evening, 7.00–9.00 pm and return for a Saturday session 9.00am–3.30 pm. Intensives can come to Synods, Districts, Parishes and Rohe.

## SURVEY OF GREAT MINDS

A new Trinity College Certificate course (MD200) exploring some of the great thinkers of the world who have influenced Christian thought and history. Sundays 3.00–5.00 pm: 14 March, 11 April, 16 May, 12 June, 18 July, 15 August, 12 September, 10 October at Trinity College/The College of St John the Evangelist. Join in the unique setting and atmosphere of the Chapel and come prepared because thinking is allowed. Open to all.

## WINTER SCHOOL 2010: 'THEOLOGICAL DILEMMAS'

Led by Rev Dr Jim Stuart, Theological Dilemmas is a new Trinity College Certificate course (MD201) to be held in Christchurch. Open to all interested, it will be held at the Connexional Offices at dates and times to be advised.

## SUMMER SCHOOL 2010: 'GENESIS & SCIENCE'

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To find out more phone Trinity College at (09) 521 2073.

## OTHER TRINITY COLLEGE PROGRAMMES

Lead Worship programmes go from strength to strength with groups completing Lead Worship Year One in Greymouth, Blenheim, Hastings, Warkworth, and Takapuna.

The work done in Palmerston North by Rev Philomeno Kinera and John Thornley organising the three phases for New Zealand Lay Preachers registration has been greatly valued by the College. And the participants in that course, Aseneca Chapelle, Katherine Chisholm and Jessica Rabone have been trail-blazers to a new and valuable curriculum for lay education. Enrolments in the Diploma in Practical Theology are now closed with 4 continuing ministry candidates, 3 new ministry candidates and 6 private students. This is the largest gathering of Trinity College students into a single programme for a very long time. The tcol online Moodle classroom is gathering momentum and many Diploma and Trinity College certificate courses, including Intensives, will become available during 2010. And the new block course/intensive learning approach enters its first phase in November 2009, with the paper Introduction to Practical Theology, led by the Principal.

## Lay worship leaders called and guided

*The New Zealand Lay Preachers Association is looking for fresh blood. As the number of ordained clergy drops, churches are looking to lay people to lead worship and provide pastoral support in many parishes, and the Association would like to see more young people come forward to serve as lay leaders.*

The NZ Lay Preachers Association (NZLPA) is an ecumenical association of lay people who have been accredited to lead worship. Members are drawn from the five negotiating churches – Anglican, Christian Churches NZ, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian.

NZLPA president Mary Stanton says lay leaders are ordinary men and women who have responded to a deep sense of God's call. They lead ministry in churches where there are vacancies, ministers on half time appointments, or full-time ministers on leave. Some serve in a variety of parishes and travel long distances.

Lay leadership is an important tradition in Pacific Island churches and there are a number of long-serving Pacific members of the NZLPA.

"The Association has the responsibility to accredit lay leaders," Mary says. "Some lay leaders work for many years in their local congregation without being accredited and have excellent skills. But we encourage people to get accredited because it is a public recognition that they



NZLPA president Mary Stanton (right) presents lay preacher Jackie Langdale-Hunt a certificate for 50 years long service.

have a reasonable level of theological training.

"It is not difficult to become accredited. We do an initial assessment of the lay leader and make some recommendations for training, perhaps through one of the theological colleges or distance learning programmes.

"We might recommend some work with young people or other groups in the church if the person does not have much experience in that area. Later the candidate leads an assessment service."

Mary says to become a lay leader you can deepen your knowledge of the scriptures by reading and taking an accredited study programme; gain experience in public speaking and leadership; and then ask your parish to recommend to the NZPLA that you

become a lay preacher in training.

The NZLPA serves as a national support network for lay leaders. Members receive its quarterly publication 'Word and Worship' and are eligible for a limited number of book and study grants.

The remuneration lay leaders receive can be a bone of contention. Payment for services varies among parishes. At a minimum, lay leaders are meant to receive enough payment to cover their travel costs. Some congregations pay more than this, some less.

Mary says often the major denominations don't take huge notice of lay preachers. She suspects this will change in future.

The Presbyterian and Methodist Churches are currently in different stages of restructuring themselves. She believes lay leaders will be more significant in these and other churches in future, and the NZLPA can help ensure new people who do come forward to serve to take on the role have the qualities that are required.

"If you are 45 years old, and thinking forward to the gifts you will bring to church and community when you are in your 60s and beyond, lay preaching is an option," adds Mary. "There are all sorts of exciting courses available through distance training providers such as the Ecumenical Institute, Otago University and the Bible Colleges."

## Words for worship from NZLPA

*A trove of ideas for lay worship leaders is one way to describe 'Word and Worship'.*

Editor Dr Colin Gibson says the varied content of the New Zealand Lay Preachers' Associations' quarterly publication includes poems, art, sermons, contemporary hymns, and articles on a host of topics.

Colin says most contributors to Word and Worship are Kiwis from various denominations, though some articles come from the US, the UK, or Australia.

The aim of the publication is to provide lay worship leaders practical information or material they can use in services. Colin says he tries to find material that is lively and provocative.

"Articles cover a very wide range; everything from the Muslim faith, to data projectors, to the layout of church buildings, to how to take up collection during a service."



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\*Bible Society New Zealand research 2009

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Young volunteers from Wanganui City Mission, including Hawhiti Thompson from Christchurch (right), joined in discussions about young people in the Church at the recent UCANZ Forum.



From left: Filo Tu, Te Rito Peyroux, and Lute Taufalele led a group of young people who took on a week of volunteering at Wanganui City Mission and shared their thoughts with the delegates to the biannual Forum of Uniting Congregations last month.

## Changing face of youth ministry

**Smaller congregations, new technology, and easier travel have contributed to the changing nature of youth ministry in New Zealand.**

Methodist Tauwi youth facilitator Te Rito Peyroux says while youth activities in many

Pasifika language congregations continue to draw huge numbers, fewer English-speaking congregations now have traditional youth groups. Rather, young people now belong to a variety of other formal and informal groups, some of which are linked together

by social networking technology. "It is rare to see youth groups limited to a single congregation today. The increasingly common trend is for young people to form connections and networks with other young people from other congregations or from outside the

church, based on shared interests, experiences, friendships and commonalities.

"Often in smaller congregations, the numbers of young people regularly present aren't enough to maintain a traditional type of youth group, so alternative youth ministry connections and support become even more vital. Those who look beyond their congregation often meet other young people at Conference, camps, other congregations, or even at interest groups at their schools or universities."

Te Rito says these days many synods are organising activities that attract young people from a number of their congregations. For instance, Auckland Synod holds a monthly youth service that regularly attracts up to 50 or so people from congregations in and around the synod. These services are often held at Aotea Chapel, and the congregation there has formed its own 'youth group' (with the average age of the members in this youth group being in their mid to late 40) that very enthusiastically and warmly hosts these often informal, collaborative youth services.

The situation is quite different in the Methodist Church of NZ's Tongan, Samoan, and Fijian congregations. They continue to have more formal youth groups, youth choirs, and other activities, often for both junior and senior youth.

Broader gatherings such as Methodist Youth Conference or the National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC09) that took place in Melbourne, in January also present opportunities for young people to meet, establish

friendships, and be challenged, and encouraged.

Te Rito says that after these types of youth events it is common for young people to keep in touch through social networking sites such as Bebo, Twitter and Facebook.

"The Internet makes it easier to open up and stay in touch with people beyond your family or congregation".

For example, when the young Christchurch Tongan man Alani Ngauamo passed away in August, a page was created for him on Bebo and those who had known him from church events around the country were able to remember and pay tribute to him.

One of the things Te Rito learned by attending NCYC09 was the value of young people doing practical things in the community. This was one of the motives behind her collaboration with Wanganui City Mission to create the SeRVNT-HOOD programme. This programme brings groups of young people from around the Connexion to serve in the Mission for a week at a time.

"A thriving youth ministry is not limited to building up the number of young people in the church, or directing more young people into full-time church ministry. A thriving youth ministry focuses on building up young people and enabling them to be active and successful in whatever they do, wherever their gifts and talents lie, whether that is in music, dance, writing, public speaking, using modern technologies, pastoral care, or hospitality. The Church still has an important role in doing this", Te Rito says.

**He's done the research on what young people seek in church, and now he's putting it into practice.**

In April the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand appointed Dr Carlton Johnstone its first national youth ministry development leader. Carlton took the job soon after completing his PhD in sociology.

In his doctoral research he examined the experiences and attitudes of young people who maintain active involvement in church. Carlton says most of the academic research on people in their 20s and 30s (often referred to as generations X and Y) argues that they find churches irrelevant, rigid and out of touch.

"The claim is that generations X and Y are interested in

spirituality, not institutional religion. But that is not the whole story. There are networks and peer groups of young adults who belong to local faith communities.

"I was interested in why they are still going to church and the types of connections and disconnections that lead them to leave one church and attend another."

Carlton says there is less and less denominational identification among young people. Young people will move between denominations to find a faith community where they feel comfortable and sense a good 'fit'.

Among the things that attract young people to a particular church are music, preaching, and demographic relevance, i.e., the presence of other young people.

"There are some interesting changes at different stages of life. In adolescence some young people are attracted to the singing and worship at Charismatic-Pentecostal churches.

"Their music serves a different function. It is emotional and provides adolescents a sense of transcendence. As they become older they increasingly critique the lyrics. The emotional experience is no longer enough, and they may feel they cannot sing some words with integrity.

"Young people who have switched from a mainline Protestant church may be drawn back there because they appreciate the liturgical tradition or the sentiment expressed in the hymns.

"The same is true of preaching. Pentecostal preaching is more

motivational. As young people mature many are looking for preaching that allows them to increase their understanding of the Bible and theology and leads them to a connection with their community."

The fact that young people seek out congregations with other young people poses a problem to aging congregations.

Carlton says if a congregation wants to attract young people they must ask themselves what kind of faith community they must become.

"Young people are not going to stay if they do not feel welcome. To attract them a congregation may have to make some commitments and sacrifices. It could come at a financial cost. It may mean you have to make changes and stop

doing things you like to do and start doing things you don't like to do."

Appointing a youth worker to facilitate changes is a good strategy, Carlton suggests. But doing mission and evangelism among young people is hard work and requires support.

"A youth worker cannot do everything. Their role is to equip and facilitate the training of volunteers. You have to have the right person in that role. You can't just find a student. To become a good youth worker requires experience and training."

Carlton says his role in Presbyterian Church is "cultural change agent". He helps congregations explore how they can engage with young people and ask what kinds of communities they need to become to support emerging generations.

## Fresh faces renew Pitt Street youth group



Youth leaders at Pitt Street Methodist Church constantly seek new ideas to enhance their ministry.



Ronnie Matafeo says it can be difficult to keep youth involved in church when there are so many other activities vying for their attention.

**Children and youth bring life to the church, says Jenna Johnson-Aufai.**

Each Sunday at the Pitt Street Methodist Church up to 15 children and teenagers gather under the guidance of Jenna and co-leader Ronnie Matafeo. Through their weekly gatherings at the central Auckland church, they are making friends on a journey to faith.

This year there were intentions for those aged 13-17 years to form the youth group. However due to the small numbers within this age bracket a decision was made to amalgamate the youth group with the school aged children to create a larger group.

Today the young people of Pitt Street are in a period of transition. Former members of the youth group have become young adults but, with growing numbers of younger people in church, there is hope the gap can be filled.

During services at Pitt Street children and youth play have the opportunity to come to the front and participate in discussion with the presbyter. They are drawn into the adult church and are recognised for the contribution they make to church life.

Jenna and Ronnie say it is a struggle to maintain youthfulness in the church. Young people are readily distracted by other activities that appear more attractive. Some are drawn away from the traditional Sunday service to the evangelical churches that provide a contemporary and socially attractive place of worship.

The child and youth ministry at Pitt St Methodist Church is attempting to combat these distractions by challenging children and youth to enjoy

church. Through the supportive leadership of the church they are constantly seeking new ideas to enhance ministry provided to their youth.

"You need to be persistent," says Jenna. "Don't be disheartened because numbers are small. As they get to know each other they become genuine friends."

Many of the children and youth who attend Pitt Street are brought by their families but hopefully through the activities and social interaction they will learn to enjoy church and come of their own free will.

"I want them to willingly come to the church. They are still young, still growing and need to develop their faith. They need to develop a familiarity with Jesus and his character," Jenna says.

As they grow beyond their teenage years into adulthood, Jenna hopes that they will become people of Christ.

"I want to instil in them the basic biblical values. I want them to understand and to get to know the passages of the bible, and carry this through to their day to day lives."

She believes it is important for them to understand the teachings of Jesus and reflect this in their behaviour. "I want them to become grounded and to develop a relationship with God. They need to see the bible as something more than a book, to consider it as a foundation for a relationship with God."

Over the past year Jenna has seen the children and youth grow in confidence and come out of their shells. They have become vibrant and added colour to the life of the church, reminding the adult congregation of innocence through their uncomplicated view of life.



## The fleeting life of Felix Archie Dent

By Peter and Robyn Dent

**Our son Felix was born at Christchurch Women's Hospital at 1.15pm on Monday 14 September seven weeks premature. He'd previously had a reaction which had left him with a seriously lowered platelet count, so when his brain haemorrhaged, his blood didn't clot. He was left with enormous brain damage, and we were informed that he wouldn't survive.**

We had three and a half days with our beautiful boy, and he finally slipped away from us at 3.40am on Friday 18 September 2009, after about 10 hours of apnoeas. He'd been kept comfortable with morphine, and kept hydrated but his system didn't really handle milk formula.

We made the decision to take him home with us that afternoon, and he spent the night at home in the little crib we'd been given (while our two-year old twins remained with their grandparents for the night).

On Saturday 19 September, John Rhind Funeral Directors brought a tiny white casket over, with a lovely flower arrangement on top. Felix had his second and final night at home with us, in his open casket inside the cot in his room. After a simple funeral ceremony at home on Sunday with our army minister friend, Kirstie McDonald, Felix was taken away for cremation.

Our angel is now in a beautiful, engraved wooden urn (with a mother-of-pearl teddy bear on it), in his room, with all of his things that he had with him in hospital. He is incredibly missed by his mum, dad and grandparents. He was probably the most photographed baby in history.

We are lucky to have had a wonderful team at the hospital. Our family and friends, and the entire Methodist Connexion have been wonderful since Felix's passing - flowers, cards and emails have all been gratefully received. We'll never forget our gorgeous boy.

Peter Dent works in the Christchurch Connexion office of the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

## Leave a Lasting Legacy

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William James

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## Listen-up to learn and love

*One of the scribes asked Jesus, "What commandment is first of all?" The first words of Jesus in reply are not, "You shall..." but, "Hear, O Israel".*

In every generation God's people need to listen carefully. To do so is an act of love.

But the history of the people of God over the past 3000 years is about them hearing or not hearing a word from God. God cannot communicate with his people in word and worship if their trust and love is disengaged.

Can God's people be other than a befuddled lot if they disregard learning of him? We need to hear and hear and learn again as our lives move towards our Omega.

Important teaching and guidance that is not heard properly is pointless. True faith and love seek understanding.

In the gospels where Jesus says "Let anyone with ears to hear listen", obedience is expected of his hearers. Standing behind the great

commandment of Christ is the Hebrew word *shema* that means both to hear and obey.

There is good reason for those who will hear to listen well. During a new day, or in another place, a reheard word can possess the power to resonate with new meaning and relevance. Jesus was aware of this when he re-presented "old" words from the sixth chapter of Deuteronomy.

For his first century audience Jesus took into account the inroads Greek ways of thinking had penetrated the east. So to reinforce the totality of commitment demanded by the commandment Jesus added "loving God with all one's mind" to "loving God with all your heart, soul and strength".

Jesus fulfilled the Hebrew torah by re-presenting and applying it in relevant way. Such is the task of all who share his ministry today.

In his delivery of the great commandment Jesus also specifically

taught that by loving God his people are not released from their social obligation to love their neighbour.

He quoted from the 19th chapter of the priestly book Leviticus. To love God with everything we have to offer; totally and with the intensity of our whole being, causes love to spread out in ever increasing circles to embrace our neighbours.

The great commandment is a summons to holiness; to live with the holiness of God revealed in Christ as wholly loving.

We need to hear and hear again, to search for meaning and direction in what is re-presented to us in written and in spoken word, and song. In our land we are privileged to sing the songs of our saints. They re-present for us God's teaching grace, our hopes and prayers, our praise.

Printed here is the last and hitherto unpublished hymn written by Joy Dine. We thank the Reverend Mervyn Dine for his kind permission to publish it.

### The Great Commandment

*Teach me to love you with all my heart,  
Reshape my life to your design,  
To serve with open and willing hands,  
Allow your light to freely shine.*

*Teach me to love you with all my soul;  
Forgiven, may I now forgive,  
Released from ev'ry resentful thought,  
With fresh compassion learn to live.*

*Teach me to love you with all my mind  
And not to shrink from honest doubt,  
Explore and probe with integrity,  
To search for truth, then live it out.*

*Teach me to love you with all my strength,  
Attentive to my neighbour's need,  
Reflect your self-giving love for me;  
Then shall your will be done indeed.*

Joy Dine (1937-2001)  
Tune WOV 453

## Confronting the remnants of Christendom

## CONNECTIONS

By Jim Stuart



*I spent the last two weeks of September prowling around some of Scotland's historic sites. I visited well-preserved castles, discovered the beauty of massive*

*stone churches and abbeys, wandered down the narrow streets and alleyways of Edinburgh and Stirling, viewing the monuments of an often conflicted past.*

In a way, I was looking for the places and paths of my ancestors. Being a Stuart visiting Scotland I suppose carries a special interest. As social historian, Iain Moncrieff, once wrote, "From the end of the Dark Ages, the Stewarts have been numbered among the most important families in Christendom... their blood has passed into every ruling family in Europe." As a Scot

I met along the way put it, "They have a lang pedigree".

I visited the ruins of Melrose Abbey, a Cistercian Abbey founded in 1136. In its prime it was one of Scotland's most magnificent abbeys. However, the abbey was sacked in 1296 by the army of Edward I of England. It was rebuilt and sacked again in 1322 by Edward II's army. Robert the Bruce helped the monks rebuild the abbey once again, but it too was destroyed by the army of Richard II of England in 1385. Once again the abbey was rebuilt only to be set afire in 1544 by Henry VIII's army. The Protestant Reformation brought a final demise to the monastery in 1590 thus ending almost 1000 years of Cistercian monasticism at Melrose.

From Melrose, I journeyed to Iona and discovered a similar story. Columba, with 12 disciples, landed on Iona in 563 CE bringing Christianity to Scotland. A follower of St Patrick, Columba travelled where he could no longer see Ireland as

an act of penance.

In the years that followed Columba developed Iona as a base from which he and his monks engaged in outreach bringing Celtic Christianity to Scotland. In spite of regular attacks by the Norsemen, the work flourished. A Benedictine abbey was built followed by the nunnery for the Order of Black Nuns. By the time of the Reformation, Iona had become a thriving centre of the arts with beautiful carvings, manuscripts, Celtic crosses and the final resting place of 48 kings of Scotland, Norway and France.

In 1561 in response to the Reformation the Scottish Parliament passed an Act which decreed "the demolishing of all the abbeys of monks and friars, suppressing whatsoever monuments of idolatry were remaining in the realm". Both the abbey and nunnery were sacked, the library pillaged and many of the treasures of art and literature destroyed. Fortunately, the Book of Kells was saved and taken to

Ireland. The abbey wasn't restored until 1965 due to the vision of the Rev George Macleod. So much for Christian tolerance and understanding.

The story of intolerance was repeated at other places I visited. The remnants of Christendom seemed to tell the same painful story: a story of continual suffering inflicted by Christians on other Christians. The same story I suspect is told in other countries where Christianity has taken root. There were times for me when the weight of past Christian history was almost too heavy to bear.

If as John Wesley once said, "Love is the end, the sole end of every dispensation of God", then those of us who call ourselves Christians need to remember our past and become more determined to make love the heart of everything we do. The love of God provides the best impetus to work to end the violence that encircles the world.

## Uniting Congregations get weaving, build ties

By Robyn Daniels (UCANZ Administrative Assistant)

*The focus of the Uniting Congregations office and Standing Committee for some time has been on 'Weaving the Threads' Forum which took place in October.*

We have spent time discussing ideas, planning, organising and generally ensuring that the venue, accommodation and the food were arranged. The speakers were organised to give their time and their expertise to ensure there was something informative and exciting for everyone.

For me it was a great weekend. I got to meet many people, who had just been names in my data base, or I had talked to on the phone. It is nice to remember a face that goes with the name.

I talked to some parish secretaries and treasurers about the mundane ongoing requirements of their jobs

(and mine). To me one of the great things about Forum or any sort of conference gathering is the networking that goes on in an informal way during the event especially when most are staying at the same venue.

I learnt to make braid in the weaving workshop, a skill I can pass on to my grandchildren when they have nothing to do. There was also a loom set up with some interesting weaving and I learned more about that.

I went to the workshop on change and learnt that there are eight steps to change management: 1) Establish a sense of urgency, 2) form a powerful guiding coalition, 3) create a vision, 4) communicate that vision, 5) empower others to act on the vision, 6) plan for short-term wins, 7) consolidate improvements and keep the momentum for change moving, and 8) institutionalise the

new approaches. I also learnt that it is fine to have fun on the way.

One of the highlights of the Forum was seeing the young people in action on Saturday night and meeting the team that were on the Servant Hood Programme run by Shirley-Joy Barrow, City Missioner in Wanganui. It is good to know there are such energetic, motivated and highly committed young people around who give us great hope for the future.

Another highlight was hearing Bishop Philip Richardson talk about the exciting changes that are taking place in Taranaki, both in the Anglican Church and ecumenically. It is all about building relationships with the community, with the town councils, with the parishes, with groups within parishes and with young people. It is about meeting people where they are and finding out their hopes and dreams, building

relationships and working together for a better future.

Uniting Congregations executive officer Rev Peter MacKenzie has been taking building relationships seriously as he travels around the country meeting people in parishes and at Joint Regional Committee meetings getting to know our people better. Hopefully parishes are also getting to know Peter better and gaining a better understanding of Uniting Congregations and the help that can be provided from this office. As I write this Peter is travelling to Canterbury and will be visiting Gisborne and Hawkes Bay next month.

Peter has been encouraging the Partner Churches to meet together to build on those relationships so that Uniting Congregations can grow and change to meet current needs with the blessing of all concerned.

## Distance theological education tailored for Kiwis rural and urban

*The Ecumenical Institute of Distance Theological Studies (EIDTS) provides theological and ministry education by distance learning to students throughout New Zealand at an affordable price.*

EIDTS director Very Rev Bruce Hansen says most of the Institute's students are mature people with commitments in their parishes and communities.

"I admire what they achieve. Studying by distance learning is not easy. Study has to be fitted around work, family, parish, and other commitments.

"However, our students' learning is related to and informed by their other experiences. This gives a well-grounded and integrated understanding of the ideas and concepts developed in their study.

"We allow students to spread their study over a number of years and to choose subjects that relate to their particular interests and the roles they hold in their parish and community."

Methodist president Rev Jill



*The students and tutors from a course on pastoral theology. Students who study with EIDTS tend to be mature and involved with family, work and church.*

van de Geer says EIDTS is an important part of the educational structure of the Methodist Church. "Its delivery is very user-friendly, particularly for those living away from the main centres, and the quality of the tutors is exceptional."

Bruce says EIDTS is ecumenical in that its Board includes representatives from the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches and the Salvation Army. Its tutors are drawn from all these churches, and there is no restriction on the

religious affiliation of its students. The teaching does not follow any particular denominational doctrinal line.

"Coming back to study after a number of years or picking up subjects they have not studied before can be difficult for some people. To assist with this, EIDTS offers short residential schools in January to help students over that first hurdle. This enables them to get themselves underway on the course, meet their tutor in person, and link with other students" he says.

Methodist lay preacher Garth Cant has experienced EIDTS from several vantage points: acting director, course assessor, and New Testament 101 student.

"I have two vivid and colourful images of EIDTS," Garth says. "One is the scattered community of scholars, both tutors and students, each in their home place, linked together by distance education. The other is the once-a-year graduation ceremony where Board, teaching faculty, graduating students and their whanau gather together in Bishop Julius Hall in Christchurch."

Bill Bennett, from the Diocese of Waiapu, is tutor in Rural Ministry Studies. He says his students come from places like Winton, Foxton, and Opuia. Some are people new to rural ministry, some people who have lived a lifetime on the land.

"The theology and the practice of rural ministry and rural church are intertwined. One of the tasks in the course has a focus on the sorts of crises that can happen in rural places – flood, fire, or serious

road accidents. We work through that and then craft a resource to match the crisis: perhaps a liturgy; perhaps a poem or painting; perhaps a counselling kit."

EIDTS registrar Sue Haley is the voice on the 0800 number, and the helping friend at the end of the email. She says the Institute is magnificently ecumenical. One tutor is Catholic, and one is Baptist.

Garth Cant says those who come from co-operating parishes lift our energy level, the Methodists and Salvation Army are subversive, and the Presbyterians keep us in order.

In 2010 Residential Schools will be offered to students beginning Biblical Studies and Theology along with a School for Homiletics and another for Pastoral Theology.

For further information or assistance contact the Academic Registrar, PO Box 12-286, Christchurch 8242 or phone 0800 667 969.

## Typhoon, tsunami and earthquake

*The tropical storm that devastated Manila and other parts of the Philippines on September 26th was quickly followed by the tsunami that devastated coastal American Samoa, Samoa and Tonga.*

Then even more people lost their lives in the magnitude 7.6 earthquake that struck West Sumatra on September 30. Tropical storms then hit Vietnam and Cambodia and rains and earthquake aftershocks continued to play havoc in our region.

It has been a challenging time.

Christian World Service through ACT International (Action by Churches Together) responded immediately in the disaster zones.

In the Philippines the National Council of Churches distributed supplies, even though some staff found their own homes under water. The churches are still helping those in need with basic supplies and clean up. General secretary Fr Rex Reyes has sent thanks for the prayers and support.

Within the Philippines there is growing criticism of inadequate town planning in Manila, home to 11 million people. Since the 1970s university studies and the World Bank had warned of potential disaster from inadequate drainage and the accumulation of rubbish but successive governments failed to act. Combined with the lack of preparedness, this often left local churches as the only source of assistance for millions mired in mud and homeless.

In Indonesia the earthquake left

few with the resources to meet their needs. Water supplies, homes and medical facilities were destroyed. ACT International partners quickly sent in emergency supplies and medical support while local parishes provided food and shelter. ACT partners continue to distribute food, blankets, tents and medical supplies. The region is going to need significant assistance to rebuild, however.

"Long after these disasters have slipped out of the headlines, ACT International partners are there helping local people rebuild their lives. The more assistance we can give to them the bigger difference they can make," says CWS director Pauline McKay.

In the Pacific rebuilding and recovery is a critical issue. CWS is appealing for funds to help the National Council of Churches in Samoa and partners in Tonga respond. It is keen to develop better disaster preparedness in the region, especially given the changing weather patterns associated with climate change.

In Tonga the Community Development Trust is providing education on climate change and planting coastal land to protect people from future flooding. The Pacific Conference of Churches is also increasing training and assistance.

The tremendous response to the devastation of Samoa and Tonga has been welcomed by Christian World Service.

"Each day we receive reports of another church organising a

special concert or fundraiser to support the victims of the tsunami.

These tremendous examples of NZers reaching out to their neighbours in need," says Pauline.

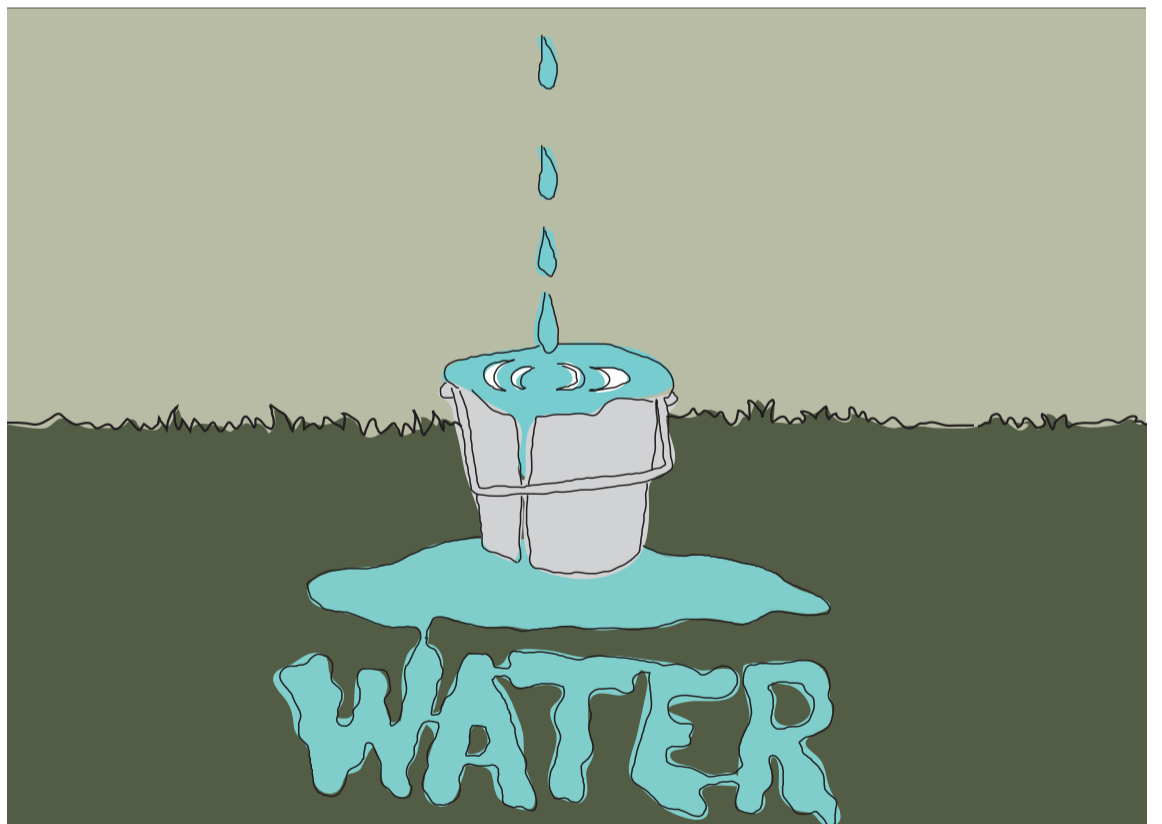
"It is a disaster that has touched New Zealanders and people understandably want to give whatever they can. However CWS knows that in most disasters clothes,

toys and foodstuffs are not the best way to respond.

"Money is usually the best form of assistance. Locals can decide what is most needed and involve local businesses. Partners have told us that this gives them a strong place to stand when negotiating with the many groups that offer help. It also means that funds are

available for local people to rebuild their communities themselves and in doing so be part of their own recovery process."

CWS is asking for continued support for all these appeals. Please send donations to PO Box 22 652, Christchurch 8142 or donate online at [www.cws.org.nz](http://www.cws.org.nz).



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*People who lost their homes in the Sumatra earthquake recycle bricks to rebuild.*

## Ratana the Prophet

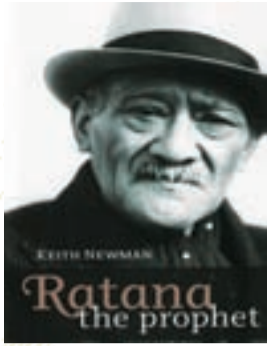
*This book provides the reader with a concise historical perspective of where Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana's work and religious movement sits in the story of 'church' in Aotearoa. Ratana was a visionary, healer, prophet and politician and this book is his story.*

Ratana was raised under Methodist teachings but redefined himself due to the social changes Maori were experiencing. In time, he was seen as a prophet.

The early part of Newman's book provides readers a glimpse of his visionary encounters. You could be mistaken into thinking you were reading fantasy because it is written from personal accounts and the story-telling sounds magical, as was its intent.

Newman also details the healing attributes and influences that flowed from Ratana's visions. Perhaps the author felt this aspect of Ratana's legacy was less well known and has not been given the credence that it deserved.

Ratana's sense of mission went further abroad than just the shores of New Zealand. For me a highlight in this account are the attempts he made to visit overseas countries to forge relationships with key political figures in his search



of the Ratana movement's theology.

As the book progresses you get a sense of the growing numbers of Maori, pan-tribally, who flocked to the movement. Initially Morehu (Survivors) were drawn by the healing powers of the prophet. During the Great Depression, Ratana the farmer helped hundreds work and sustain the emerging number of followers. His Movement was seen as a haven for hard working Maori from the tip of the North

of ways to help Maori people gain social justice, whilst still preaching to and healing the crowds gathered around him.

The encounters Ratana had revealed symbolism and prophecies. The sign of Carmellia, te Whetu Marama Tohu, and temple symbolism are three significant elements that Newman illustrates, to show their importance and their place in the establishment of

to the Chathams. His work was well respected in the corridors of power, notably through his alliance forged with the Labour Party.

Throughout his book Newman has provided black and white and coloured photographs that provide an insight to the people and places surrounding Ratana's life. These illustrations aptly depict the social realities of the times.

Pioneering Methodist ministers Rev A.J. Seamer, Rev Robert Haddon and G.I. Laurenson are quoted early on. It is refreshing to read their opinions about the social and political reforms the Ratana movement instigated.

If you haven't already grasped, I recommend this book. The factual information is concise, its context is relevant for us today in knowing our history, and it is beautifully presented making it easy reading.

This book brings together a wealth of information otherwise unknown about the Ratana movement and how the man Ratana lived and shared his visions. Newman has helped dispel many misinterpretations about Ratana the prophet.

Keith Newman  
2009, Penguin, 264 pages  
Reviewer: Marama Hotere

## A Monk in the Inner City: the ABC's of a spiritual journey

*This is a relatively small book, a slim manual that is not difficult to read. Kownacki relates with great sensitivity the stories of life in the raw on the streets of Erie, Pennsylvania and her experiences amongst the poor and needy through more than 40 years of her journey as a Benedictine Monk.*

She writes in the Polish tradition with book sections prefaced by each letter of the alphabet, each item beginning with the alphabet character pertaining to it: 'A' for 'Abandoned places' and 'Angels.' Although simply written and presented, it is a work that will take some time for the reader to digest and appreciate fully.

Each section of this book is a vignette of life, sometimes extracts about Sister Mary's own upbringing and family life, and sometimes stories of her day to day encounters.

There are two themes that I felt seemed to run through this book, contextualising 'church' and stories of injustice. The author tells one story of how a guest at the local soup kitchen corrected her when she commented to one of the



the needy. God is found in many places, not necessarily in the buildings we know as church, sometimes in the people we interact with, sometimes in the giving and sharing of resources, talents and time.

There are many stories of injustice shared in this slim volume. One in particular suggests that we could go a long

way to righting injustice if we could tithe our time. That would mean that for around four hours a week we could give time to those less fortunate than us and in so doing we hear their stories and gain insights into their lives.

That may alter the way in which we see the world, and the ways in which we act and react to poverty and need. The hope, Kownacki suggests, is that we learn more about why this present state of poverty, of desolation, of disconnection exists and then we may find ways to alleviate injustice around us.

This is a devotional book that offers stories of hope. Through her stories Sister Mary Lou will take you to the streets. Her stories will make you chuckle, make you cry and sometimes force you to put the book away so you can think through and process how you feel before being able to move on. It is an insightful piece of work that is best savoured and then shared, one teaspoonful at a time.

(Review copy courtesy Pleroma Christian Supplies)

Mary Lou Kownacki  
2008, Orbis Books, 155 pages  
Reviewer: Arapera Bella Ngaha

## The Case for God: What Religion Really Means

*Armstrong begins her latest book with the provocative claim "We are talking far too much about God these days and what we say is often facile".*

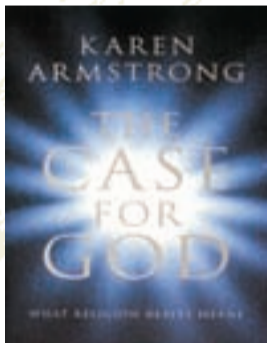
In part this is directed at the writings of modern atheists Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens and Sam Harris, whom she labels "fundamentalist atheists". Armstrong claims "Like all religious fundamentalists, the new atheists believe that they alone are in possession of truth; like Christian fundamentalists they read scripture in an entirely literal manner and seem never to have heard of the long tradition of allegoric or Talmudic interpretation or indeed the higher criticism....(They) all equate faith with mindless credulity."

But her concern has a far broader base – that those of us who claim to believe in God have forgotten what belief actually means. In recent centuries, she says, we have lost the ancient understanding that to believe or to have faith means not to give intellectual assent to an idea but to be passionately committed to a cause or a person.

Religion, according to Armstrong, is very hard, life-changing work. It is a practical discipline calling for ethical action.

She begins her epic exploration of religious thought with primitive religious ceremonies such as the coming of age rituals where a terrifying encounter with the divine provokes radical life changes, a new birth into adulthood. This she claims is the essence of religion, "truth acquired by practical action".

The following chapters exploring religious thought in



systems and offer their essence to her readers in one or two pages is perhaps her greatest gift.

She introduced me to an altogether more palatable Augustine who insists that "Whenever the literal meaning of scripture clashes with reliable scientific information, the interpreter must respect the integrity of science or he will bring scripture into disrepute."

Armstrong reminds us that science and religion have been at loggerheads far less than we imagine, and that Augustine's principal of accommodation meant, for example, that Copernicus' discovery that the earth was not the centre of the universe was actually supported by the church. Sadly, she laments this approach to scripture has been lost over the last few centuries and it is the rise of such things as creation science that has given the new atheists so much ammunition.

First Testament times and the early years of the Common Era may well seem a re-read for those who have read her book The Bible – A Biography.

We are next introduced to a bewildering array of Christian, Jewish and Moslem thinkers. At times I found myself bogged down but Armstrong's ability to digest highly complex thought

However, there are other modern and post modern thinkers whom Armstrong believes offer the thinking Christian firm ground to stand on. I was particularly taken with her analysis of Jacques Derrida's thought where he affirms what he calls 'the undeconstructible'.

This is not an absolute because it does not exist, yet we weep and pray for it. He uses justice as an example: "Justice is an undeconstructible - something that is never fully realised in our daily life but it informs all legal speculation. Justice is not what exists; it is what we desire. It calls us; it seems sometimes within our grasp, but ultimately it eludes us. And yet we go on trying to incarnate it in our legal systems."

God too, is just that sort of undeconstructible, says Armstrong and, for me, this is the most convincing argument of the book.

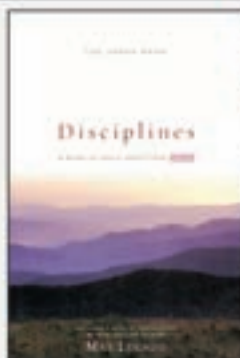
This was definitely not a book for bed time reading. I found I needed to be wide awake and digest it in smallish chunks. It challenged me, not least to read for myself some of the great minds she introduced me to. Already this book has found its way into my own faith exploration and as a result my sermons. I'm sure it will continue to do so for a long time.

Does it produce a cast iron case for God? No, if we are looking for someone/something we can analyse and give mental assent to. Yes, if we are looking for an encounter that is hard work but life changing.

Karen Armstrong  
Bodley Head 2009 376 pages  
Reviewer: Alison Molineux



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## ON SCREEN

A film review by Rev Dr Steve Taylor

'Blessed' is a gritty exploration of parenting today. Directed by Australian independent film maker, Ana Kokkinos and starring three Australian actresses (themselves real-life mothers Miranda Otto, Deborah-Lee Furness, and Frances O'Connor), Blessed is a disturbing exploration of the mother-child journey.

The movie is structured in two halves. The first half follows seven children through no ordinary Melbourne day, growing up through the complexity of child abuse, shoplifting, multi-ethnic relationships, breaking and entering.

The second half follows the mothers of these seven children through the same day. Waif-like Miranda Otto is superb. The mothers are equally adrift; seeking to parent amid the complications of their own histories and insecurities, mortgage struggles, gambling and drug addictions. All are bound by a fierce, if sometimes poorly expressed, love for their children.

The movie is an adaptation of the 1998 play, 'Who's Afraid of the Working Class?' It sits alongside recent creative works including the Australian novel 'Slap' by Chris Tsiolkas and the New Zealand TV



series 'Outrageous Fortune'. All explore the black-jeaned world of the working class. All are probing portraits of what it means to be human today, with specific reference to parenting.

The movie works. This does not make it any easier for the viewer, particularly those who raise teenagers in our contemporary world. A common charge

levelled against the church concerns our ability to reduce parenting to sugar coated platitudes. By and large, our pews tend to be warmed by middle-class bottoms. Christianity is more known for its condemnation of solo parents and the alcohol addicted. Blessed invites us to get a more honest, more working-class grip on our reality.

From a Christian perspective, Blessed sits well alongside a book like 'Family Fortunes: Faith-full Caring for Today's Families', by authors and parents, John and Olive Drane. This book, like the movie, explores parenting today. Both remind us that parenting is always an expression of our light as well as our dark sides, and it is best nurtured by communities that bless, with encouraging love, rather than glances of condemnation.

The word 'blessed' is a peculiarly Christian word. It is the word whispered

to the mother of Jesus, firstly by an angel and secondly by an older parent named Elizabeth. It is the repeated introduction to the well-worn Sermon on the Mount.

Some 20 centuries later, 'blessed' is now being cinematically applied to mothers. Not in a Hollywood, happily-ever-after-ending world but in a perfect-parents-not-allowed world. As such the movie is Biblically consistent. Parenting for the mother of Jesus was no easy task. The Beatitudes begin as words spoken to the peasant poor, to the persecuted and the patient, to the meek and those who mourn.

In a climatic scene in Blessed, a mother, faced with the unbearable pain of losing two children she loves, is reduced to describing herself as blessed. Such is love. It is costly. It is human. It is open to abuse and distrust. And yet without it, we are less than human. Such is the privilege of being blessed.

Rev Dr Steve Taylor is senior pastor at Opawa Baptist Church and senior lecturer, School of Mission and Ministry, Laidlaw College, Christchurch. He is the author of *The Out of Bounds Church?* (Zondervan, 2005) and writes regularly at [www.emergentkiwi.org.nz](http://www.emergentkiwi.org.nz).

For the last quarter of the 2009 Lectionary the Old Testament readings have been dipping into the Hebrew books known as the Wisdom Literature - *Psalms, Proverbs (also Lamentation & Ecclesiastes)*, or The Writings - when including *Ruth, Esther, Job, Song of Solomon (also Jonah & Daniel)*. The Writings present faith concepts through wise sayings and poetry, or by a story. If your parish follows the lectionary you could hear all the lines below read in church between August and Advent.

## Bible Challenge

God of hosts \_\_\_ my prayer  
My heart \_\_\_ with a goodly thorn  
The Lord lifts up those who are \_\_\_ down  
\_\_\_ is better than silver or gold  
Who listens to me will \_\_\_ secure  
A good wife is more precious than

H  
E  
B  
R  
E  
W

RSV  
Ps 84:8  
Ps 45:1  
Ps 148:8  
Prv 22:1  
Prv 1:33  
Prv 31:10

The way of the \_\_\_ we perish  
He comes \_\_\_ like a bridegroom  
What is your \_\_\_ Queen Esther...  
...it shall be \_\_\_ you  
Turned from sorrow \_\_\_ gladness  
In all this Job did not \_\_\_ with his lips  
When the morning stars \_\_\_ together  
Heard with my ear but now my eye \_\_\_ thee

W  
R  
I  
T  
I  
N  
G  
S

Ps 1:6  
Ps 19:5  
Est 1:2  
Est 7:2  
Est 9:22  
Job 2:10  
Job 38:7  
Job 42:5

For now the winter is  
...the time of \_\_\_ has come, and...  
the voice of the \_\_\_ is heard

A  
N  
D

SS 2:11  
SS 2:12  
SS 2:12

Even if death \_\_\_ me from you  
Naomi had a kinsman named  
He is winnowing \_\_\_ tonight  
Bring the \_\_\_ you are wearing  
He shall be to you a \_\_\_ of life  
...and a nourisher of \_\_\_ old age

P  
O  
E  
T  
R  
Y

Ru 1:17  
Ru 2:1  
Ru 3:3  
Ru 3:17  
Ru 4:15  
Ru 4:15

hear, overlooks, bowed, favour, dwell, jewels; wicked, forth, petition, granted, info, sin, sang, sees; past, singing, lured/dove; parts, Boaz, barley; mantle, restore, your

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## Pacific Trade negotiations to start

Pacific Island Forum Leaders meeting in August announced the beginning of negotiations for a new free trade deal, an extended Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations (PACER Plus). General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches, Fei Tevi, and Maureen Penjueli of the Pacific Network on Globalisation (PANG) accused the Australian and New Zealand governments of using concerted pressure to launch negotiations before Pacific Island nations were ready.

Pacific Island negotiators had adopted a more cautious plan for negotiations but Australia and New Zealand seem intent on pushing for an agreement that is compliant with World Trade Organisation (WTO) standards. While a few nations are already members many are not. A hasty agreement based on free trade principles is likely to have a high cost for little return.

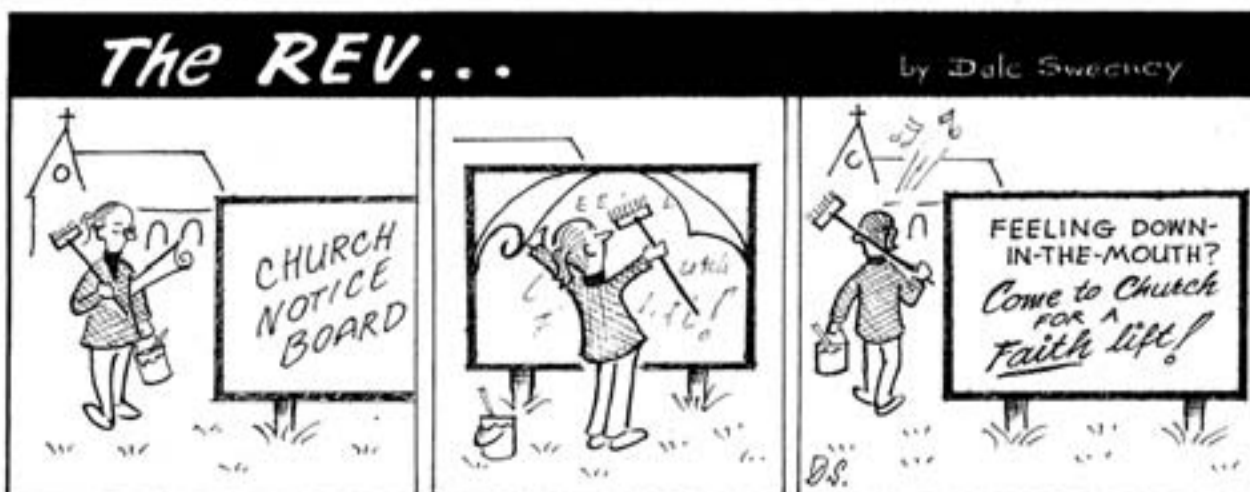
Both Australia and New Zealand already allow relatively open access to Pacific goods. The PACER Plus negotiations will include trade in goods, trade in services (including temporary working arrangements), investment rules, intellectual property rules, government spending and economic cooperation.

"There are huge risks for Pacific nations in this agreement. Governments will lose revenue and have to cut services for people, as well as control over their natural resources and some of their cultural traditions," says Gillian Southey, campaign coordinator for Christian World Service.

"At a time when the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Murray McCully, is making much of the need for 'sustainable economic development' in the Pacific this agreement may cut our neighbours off at the knees," she adds.

Fiji is also being excluded from negotiations although according to University of Auckland's Jane Kelsey it has a legal right to be present.

New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs is calling for submissions on New Zealand's negotiations in PACER Plus by November 16. CWS will make a submission. For background information contact CWS at [cws@cws.org.nz](mailto:cws@cws.org.nz) or to make a submission see [www.mfat.govt.nz](http://www.mfat.govt.nz)



# Young People

## Safe place to hang out for Ashhurst youth



At the beginning of the year Rev Philomeno Kinera decided to re-establish a youth group in Ashhurst to enrich the lives of youth in the area through the teaching of Christian values.

This vision was supported by the local Ashhurst Methodist Church so we decided that we would meet monthly. At our very first meeting (sometime in June) six young people were involved. Fast track four months later to the 18th of September.

The re-established Ashhurst youth group gathered together again for their usual monthly meeting. The group says the gathering was particularly exciting as they had invited some local young people to attend with their parents, and all in there were about 26.

The meeting was to inform them of what the group is about and to re-invite them. They had a fun evening of food, table tennis, board

games, singing and just getting to know each other.

The feedback was positive as everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and many indicated that they would be interested in joining the group. This dream became a reality with the input of two youths from Ashhurst – Richard and Moana and their parents Christina and Joseph Fifita.

Members of the Ashhurst youth group thank Philomeno, her husband Jeff, and Jessica Rabone for their time, guidance, enthusiasm and support. They also acknowledge Ashhurst steward Heather Fairless for her help and lending her musical talents for the night.

The young people say they have faith that this initiative will grow into something that will help the young people of our community through the direction of the Holy Spirit.

## Jeune again: young musician's second CD of sacred songs



Samantha Jeune (left) has recorded a second CD of sacred songs to raise money for the Canterbury Charity Hospital with the help of her sister Alannah.

Encouraged by the success of her first album, 'In My Father's House', 15 year old Christchurch soprano, Samantha Jeune, has recorded a second CD of sacred songs. Called 'Grant Us Thy Peace', this CD is also a fundraiser for the Canterbury Charity Hospital. Earlier this year Samantha was able to give the Charity Hospital \$4,000 from the sale of "In My Father's House" and she hopes "Grant Us Thy Peace" will raise a similar amount.

Samantha is joined on Grant Us Thy Peace by her 17 year old sister, Alannah, whose trumpet and recorder playing features on many tracks. Accompaniments are provided by Graham Hollobon on pipe organ and Alison C. Holden on piano. All these musicians have gifted their time to make this CD for the Charity Hospital.

Recorded in the girls' family church, familiar songs include O Rest In The Lord, Jesu Joy Of Man's Desiring, How Beautiful Are The Feet (from Handel's Messiah), Schubert's Ave Maria, Faure's Pie Jesu and The Lord's Prayer.

Both Grant Us Thy Peace and In My Father's House can be purchased for \$25 each from: CD For Charity, PO Box 29403, Fendalton, Christchurch. Please make your cheque payable to Samantha Jeune.

To hear excerpts from both CDs please visit [www.cdforcharity.org.nz](http://www.cdforcharity.org.nz). To find out more about the Canterbury Charity Hospital please visit [www.charityhospital.org.nz](http://www.charityhospital.org.nz).

# Kidz Korna!

This month we are out and about, hearing what some of our churches' children have been doing. Children from Melville Methodist Church in Hamilton have visited a farm, while those from Wesley Tauranga and St John's in Hamilton East spent a day at the zoo. All had a great time together!

## WE ALL WENT TO THE ZOO TOGETHER

A group of 20 children and young people from the Waikato-Waiariki Synod spent a day at the Hamilton Zoo during the school holidays. Opinions varied as to which animals were favourites:

Some said the giraffes: "The giraffes were best because I got to touch one." "It was the first time I'd seen one!" "They were really tall!" One young person was intrigued how they sat down, by folding their long legs underneath them.

One or two kids were fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of the tiger; others enjoyed the cheetahs. The white rhinos were also popular because they were very big and muddy, with long horns (except the baby!).

The monkeys were a favourite because they were funny. The chimps were very interesting as we watched them at feeding time, and saw how they let the strongest leader take the food

first.

Some preferred the golden colour of the cats and the red panda. And what about the lemurs and the geckos? Well, maybe we will just have to go back another time!

It would be great to hear from other churches about what their kids are doing.

When kids from Wesley Tauranga and St John's, Hamilton went to the zoo they saw the zookeeper feeding the lemurs.



## COME FOR A VISIT IN THE COUNTRY

Melville Kid's church was invited to Marjory William's home for a different way of being 'Kid's church.'

She has a beautiful home with a great rural outlook off Peacockes Road on the edge of Hamilton. She loves to have people visit and offers great hospitality.

Five children and nine adults ate together and explored the farm. They fed bread to the sheep and watched lots of lambs playing around. Some of the sheep came right up to the fence but the lambs were shy.

The kids also had an opportunity to feed the hens and roosters. Marjory has a special hen, who lays green eggs and each child was given one to take home. There was a chance to decorate cup cakes with icing and lollies. And we talked about different aspects of farming



Marjory and children with the sheep.

and had pictures to make a collage of the history of farming, which will be continued on another Sunday at Kid's Church.

## BOOK REVIEW Twilight

Written by Stephanie Myers  
Reviewed by Shannon Taylor

Twilight, is a romance written for the teenage audience. When Isabella Swan moves to a small town called Forks, she meets the handsome but quiet Edward Cullen. Bella falls in love with him, but is sure he is hiding something. As she gets closer to the truth, and Edward, she puts herself in serious danger.

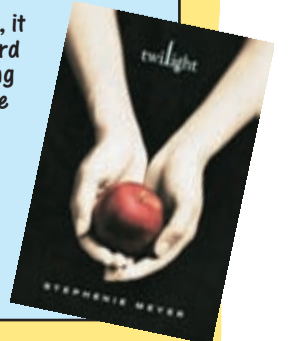
Although the main themes of Twilight are around romance, there is lots of action too. There are some scary bits that keep the reader on the edge of their seat, and it moves at a decent pace.

Twilight describes Bella's everyday life in quite a lot of detail. Her relationship with her dad and peers at school are carefully recorded, as well as her relationship with Edward.

Although Twilight is a love story about a vampire, it is appropriate for older children. Bella and Edward are very passionate, but there is not anything inappropriate, and Edward and his family are 'vegetarians' - they don't eat humans!

Another merit for Twilight is its originality. Romance is easy to make into a cliché, but Myer has made Twilight unique.

Overall, I enjoyed Twilight. It is fast moving, original and appropriate for high school aged children.



Puzzle solution: The answers to the puzzle in the October Kidz Korna were:-

DAVID	ANGELS	NAZARETH	ISRAELITES	EMMAEUS	LUKE
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The first letters make the word: DANIEL.

## Stoke Methodists kick up their heels for anniversary



Cutting of Stoke Methodist's 160th anniversary cake: (from left) Charlotte Williams, James Ferris and Ruth Gribble. Charlotte is 94 and James is 15.

**Celebration was the order of the day when Methodists in Stoke, Nelson, marked 160 years of Methodist history in the area last month.**

In 1849 Rev Samuel Ironside and Rev Williams Jenkins preached at the opening of Stoke Methodist's original Ebenezer chapel in "Brook Green" as Stoke was then known. The site of the original church, together with surrounding land, is today's Isel Park.

During the weekend of September 4th-6th past members of the 5th Nelson Girls' Brigade (Stoke Methodist) held a reunion, when lots of memories of happy times were revived.

A dinner was held for 80 past and present worshippers at which several past members recalled happenings from the past. On the Sunday the present minister, Rev Gary Clover led the service, when the congregation gave thanks for

the 160 years of witness and service of Methodism in Stoke.

Former minister Rev Max Hornblow preached, and eight other ministers assisted with readings, prayers and celebrating Holy Communion. At the service the Sunday School children put up a paper chain with 160 links, each with a verse of Scripture on it. This celebrated the numerous groups that are active within the Church and community.

Following a celebratory lunch the congregation was led to Ebenezer Garden in the heart of Stoke, which was the site of the second and third Methodist churches, where a short blessing was held. A short walk followed to the entrance of Isel Park, near the site of the original 1849 Ebenezer chapel, where a Dawn Redwood tree, with a commemorative plaque on a picnic table nearby, was dedicated.

It was good to trace a connection from the present day back to the Wesleys – even if a bit tenuous. The great great grandfather of two young women at the celebrations had attended early services at Brook Green. He was David Norgate, and his wife often read the scripture and her brother used to raise the tune with a tuning fork.

Stoke Methodists were known for their noisy worship as they sang heartily. Mrs David Norgate's forebears were personally acquainted with John Wesley, so some of Stoke's early Methodists can trace their roots right at the beginning of Methodism.

## Methodists and Anglicans break bread together in Te Awamutu

*On the last Sunday in July the church doors of the St John's Anglican Parish of Te Awamutu were all closed. Why? Because the congregations were worshipping with the Methodist Parish of Te Awamutu, Pirongia and Otorohanga at their Te Awamutu church.*

The combined service in Te Awamutu was based on the Methodist Anglican Covenant signing service held in Mangere in May. It was a significant local get-together and the mood was one of celebration and warmth.

Anglican vicar Rev George Allanson, Methodist presbyter Rev Maureen Calman and priest assistant Rev Keith Storey led the worship. Methodist Deacon June Higham played the organ and conducted the singing group.

The service included a Methodist singing group, an Anglican choir, readers from both congregations, a Samoan scripture reading, an Anglican lay person leading the prayers, as well as representatives from both congregations participating in 'Affirming the Covenant'. The singing was rousing and the worship was energising if the conversations afterwards were anything to go by.

After listening to a chapter from Joy Cowley's book 'Snake and Lizard' (called appropriately enough Taking Down Walls), the children produced two friendship wreaths, one wreath for each



Kids live out the spirit of the covenant in the children's activity corner.

church to keep. They made the wreaths from multi-coloured cardboard cut-outs of their hands and decorated them. The six children ranged from two to 12 years old and present a range of backgrounds including Samoan, Australian and Kiwi. They worked in the Children's Zone at the back of the church.

Two of the children demonstrated what the adults were talking about in the service. At the beginning of the service two one-and-a-half year olds (one Australian, the other Samoan) weren't quite sure what to make of each other. By the time the Covenant was affirmed, they were holding hands at the back of the church. At the offertory they came forward with the adults. They had become new friends.

Instead of the sermon both George and Maureen reflected on their backgrounds. Both have roots in Methodist and Anglican traditions. Of interest to the

congregation was that both were influenced by Methodist grandmothers, even though they both eventually became Anglican priests.

George thanked the four Methodist organists who regularly help out in the Anglican Parish. Maureen commented on being 'borrowed by the Methodist Church and not given back yet'. She expressed the grief she felt that her Methodist colleagues' ministries were not recognised by the Anglican Church at present whereas her ministry was acceptable in the Methodist Church. This covenant is a step towards changing that.

Afterwards in good Methodist and Anglican tradition, an ample lunch was shared.

The two parishes will continue to work together in many ways.

## Marvellous Methodist Ministers' Moustaches in Morley

METHODIST ARCHIVES

By Jo Smith

*"Morley" as William Morley's book A History of Methodism in New Zealand, is affectionately known round the Methodist Archives, is crammed with photographs of people involved in the Methodist Church in nineteenth century New*

*Zealand.*

Published in 1900, it is a veritable who's who of New Zealand Methodist ministers and those individuals who worked to establish Methodist churches throughout the country.

Last year, we were inspired by the New Zealand Electronic Text Centre's publication of

photos on their website to celebrate Movember. They were taken from the Cyclopaedia of New Zealand, which was published only a few years after Morley.

November (the name is a combination of 'November' and 'moustache') is held to raise awareness and funds for men's

health issues. Moustache growing competitions, usually for fund-raising purposes, take place during the month.

The fashion for moustaches with no sideboards or other facial hair such as beards, dates from the 1880s. In the group photograph of those attending the Canterbury Synod in 1896, the

younger fashionable attendees can be clearly distinguished from those who still have the beards and side whiskers of their youth.

We combed Morley for the best and bushiest moustache but found it hard to decide between the final five: Reverends Beggs, Harrison, LM Isitt, FW Isitt and Lawry.

