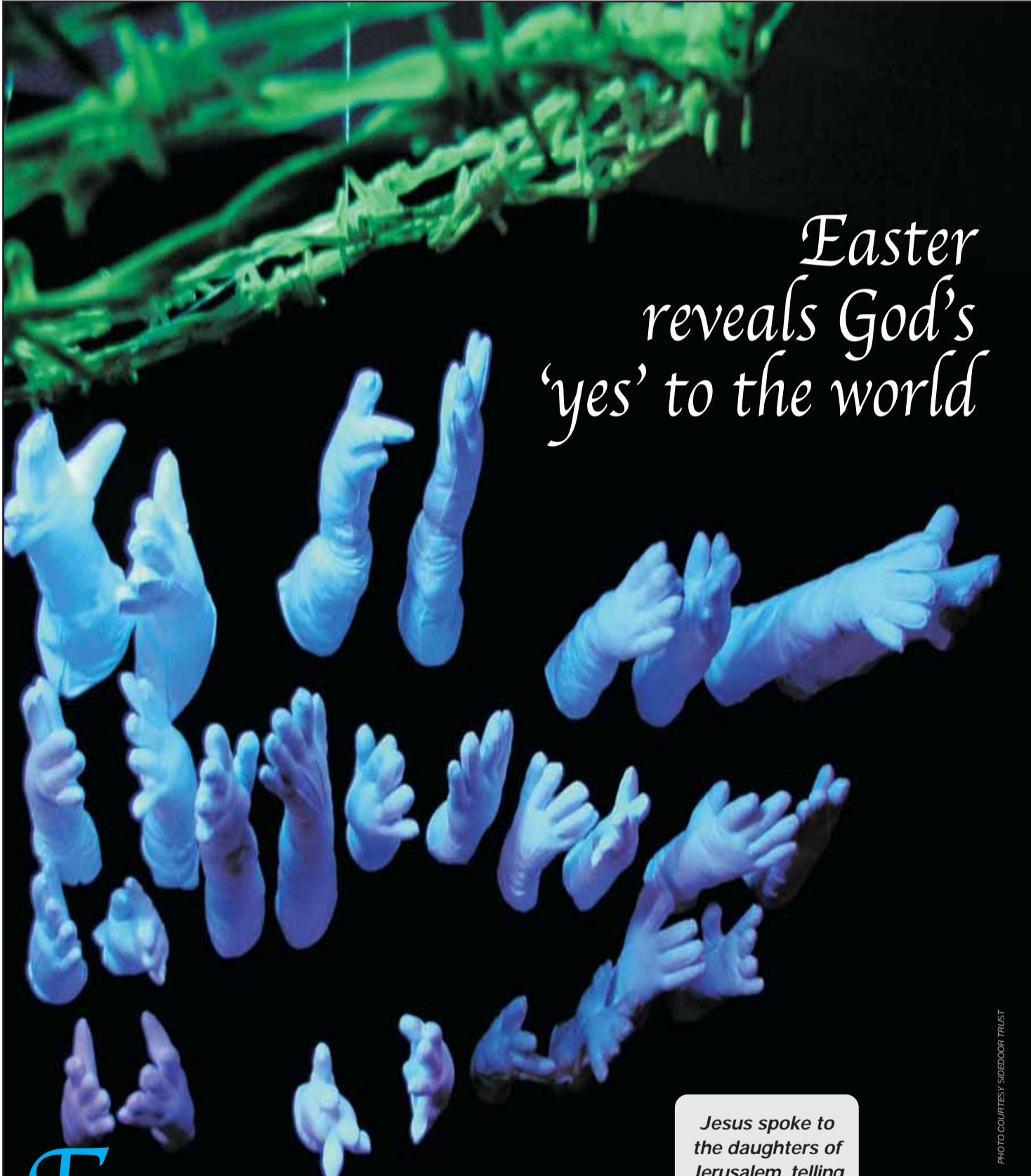


TOUCHSTONE

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



Easter reveals God's 'yes' to the world

Jesus spoke to the daughters of Jerusalem, telling them not to mourn for him but for themselves (Luke 23:28).

PHOTO COURTESY SIDEDOOR TRUST

Fvery Easter the Side Door Arts Trust in Christchurch puts together an art installation to help people contemplate Jesus Christ's final journey, death, and resurrection. Often these are based on the Stations of the Cross, which commemorate the hours leading up to His death on the cross.

Peter and Joyce Majendie are the driving force behind the Side Door Trust.

They design their installations to be contemplative but also contemporary. Their Easter

exhibitions have taken the traditional format of the 14 Stations of the Cross and reworked them with modern materials into interactive, multi-sensory experiences.

Among the Stations they depict is Jesus' address to the women of Jerusalem as he is being led to the place of his crucifixion. They wailed and mourned for him but he told them to weep for themselves and their children.

Joyce says this is a very meaningful instance for her because Jesus provides women the means to set themselves

free from the traditional roles and restrictions society places on them. Following Him is

not an easy path, however. This is conveyed in the image of white evening gloves reaching out for the crown of thorns, gloves that will likely be ruined if they grasp the crown.

Another Station of the Cross is the judgment of Jesus. In one Side Door installation this is depicted as 100 pairs of shoes looking down on the

fallen king on a chessboard. On one side of the chessboard there are footprints, where the observer can stand.

Peter says it is intended to let people contemplate what their own role might have been in the death of Jesus. The presence of the chessboard suggests we all play a lot of games with ourselves over what we profess our faith to be and what it is in practice.

For an Easter reflection by Rev Mary Caygill, see Page 7.

Science and religion in harmony says award winning scientist

A co-winner of New Zealand's inaugural Prime Minister's Science Prize says religion and science are complementary ways of seeking truth.

Dr Jeff Tallon believes religion is concerned with the most fundamental truths we can hold, whereas science is concerned with understanding how the universe works.

Last month Jeff and fellow scientist Dr Bob Buckley received the PM's Science Prize for their work in the field of high temperature superconductivity. They are affiliated with the Crown Research Institute, Industrial Science Ltd (IRL) and have started two companies to market products that have emerged from their research.

Superconductivity is the phenomenon whereby some radically cooled materials conduct electricity with no resistance or energy loss. The earliest superconductors discovered operate at the temperature of liquid helium (-269°C). In the 1980s Jeff and Bob discovered a ceramic compound that superconducts at comparatively warm temperatures (-163°C) and makes it possible to use liquid nitrogen as a coolant.

After patenting their discovery, they and a team of scientists and engineers at IRL have refined the technology for industrial use.

Jeff now has a number of other research projects on the go. One is exploring ways to use nanotechnology to quickly read DNA.

"We are also establishing a new centre that will carry out research at extreme conditions such as high pressure, high magnetism, and very high or very low temperatures.

"One of the projects addresses the possibility that the origin of life was in undersea volcanic vents, known as 'black smokers'. We will examine the behaviour of the molecules of life in the high pressure, high temperature conditions that exist in black smokers."

It is ironic that Jeff is involved in research that could show how life spontaneously arose because he thinks the great improbability of such an event points to the hand of the Creator as the source of life.

"We have no idea where life came from. Even atheist scientists such as Richard Dawkins say the event has such low probability we have no idea how it occurred.

"To calculate the probability of the random origin of even one protein requires us to think in terms of billions of universes over billions of years. And human beings are made up of a hundred thousand different proteins."

See Page 2

Christianity and science not at odds

From Page 1

Jeff's own view is that God created everything we see and everything about us, and science is the means that we can use to discover how he did it.

"Scripture provides no answers about the mechanism of the universe. Science is the only means we have to understand it.

"Christians must have confidence in science. There is no atheistic agenda in science. Science asks what is true about the universe, and we need to be comfortable with whatever truths science turns up."

This includes evolution, which Jeff says is the best explanation science now has for how life has developed on earth. While evolutionary models cannot explain everything, they do integrate the evidence we have from fossils, geology, genetics and biology.

"While science focuses on what is true, the religious project is more concerned with underlying truths," Jeff says.

"These include that God purposefully created the universe. He did so with a view to create human beings, with whom He can have a relationship.

"This is the most fundamental truth we can enjoy as humans. For me this means recognising God is my creator. This is part of my daily being. I live it out by reading scriptures, praying and following Jesus."

He agrees with Galileo, who said that God created two books. One is the Scriptures and one is nature, and



Jeff Tallon

they cannot contradict each other – if they are properly understood.

It is vital therefore that we properly understand the Bible and recognise those parts of it that are history, those that are poetry, and those that are allegory. Applying scientific disciplines

such as history, archaeology, dating and linguistics can help us achieve this.

For example, recent archaeological evidence confirms the existence of Nebo-Sarsekim, who is mentioned in the Book of Jeremiah as one of Nebuchadnezzar's officials during the siege of Jerusalem.

"I am an orthodox evangelical Christian. I hold to the claim that God was incarnate in Jesus, and that Jesus was the fulcrum of human history. The whole Christian project follows from that. Our ethics and values follow from our relationship with God.

"So whether these historical claims are true or not is important. We can use our scientific tools to understand these Biblical claims.

While Jeff sees no contradictions between science and religion, he says recognising the interplay between them depends on being open.

"We cannot take a rigid approach to the Bible. We should not say something science has discovered cannot be true because of a literal reading of the Bible.

"We should not engage in blind faith but rather pursue a faith underpinned by objective knowledge."

Church volunteers a blessing to whole community

Far from being inward-looking and focused only on their own church group, church-going volunteers are part of society's powerful, invisible safety net.

The Australian company NCLS Research has found that church attendees are more likely to be volunteers than the general community (57 percent vs 35 percent). In addition, volunteering within congregations is strongly related to volunteering beyond it, with many people volunteering in both the congregation and the community.

NCLS Research director Dr Ruth Powell says this is because of widely-known Christian messages about helping others in need. "Church attendees are reminded of those messages and most churches provide structured opportunities for volunteering, such as congregation-based activities in welfare and social justice.

"In fact, the middle-aged, well-educated female churchgoer is very likely to be one of Australia's many volunteer heroes."

Information about the voluntary activities of church attendees across Australia was collected as part of NCLS Research's National Church Life Surveys in 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006. An analysis of that data was published last year in the Australian Journal on Volunteering.

The findings showed that churchgoers not only contribute to their own groups but also to communities generally. As well as the fact that overall rates of volunteering were higher among Christian church attendees than for the general population, these rates were relatively stable across the years.

Among the strongest findings is that volunteering within the congregation is not an obstacle to volunteering in the community; indeed, quite the contrary.

Examining denominational differences in volunteering within and beyond the congregation, they found that, after demographic differences were taken into

account, Pentecostals volunteered more hours within the congregation and Catholics (on average) volunteered fewer. Mainstream Protestants had much higher rates of involvement in community groups.

Australia's Productivity Commission released a report in February that found that 4.6 million volunteers worked with not-for-profits (NFPs) with a wage equivalent value of nearly Aus\$15 billion.

NFPs have reported that the costs of recruiting, managing and training volunteers are rising. Minimum qualifications, occupational health and safety, food safety, security checks, and public liability insurance added to those costs.

But the Productivity Commission found that values such as the belief in the importance of helping others are important motivators for volunteers. This means recognition and continual reinforcement of the valuable contribution volunteers make is valuable in retaining their participation.

Although 80 percent of volunteers in a recent survey reported that 'knowing that my contribution makes a difference' was the most important factor in the decision to volunteer, 36 percent had not received any recognition for their work in the past month, suggesting an avenue for organisations to improve retention of volunteers.

The Productivity Commission found that young volunteers are more likely to volunteer as a way to build their skills for future job opportunities, to support organisations with a clear mission that is attractive to them, and in roles supporting young people.

Older volunteers contribute more hours and therefore the aging population is projected to increase volunteering. However, NFPs will have to accommodate the changing desires of the baby boomer generation, who want flexibility and roles related to their skills or interests, to access these resources.

Could a super presbytery alter Northland's ecumenical ethos?

By Paul Titus

To overcome shortages of people and resources the New Zealand Methodist and Presbyterian Churches are moving toward larger regional administrative units. In some parts of the country consolidation has taken place, in others discussions are underway.

Now, moves to create a Presbyterian super presbytery that would encompass Northland, North Shore, Auckland, and South Auckland have raised some concerns about how it will affect Cooperating Ventures (CVs) in Northland.

Northland is home to 19 Union or Cooperating parishes, most of which have Presbyterian and Methodist components. By contrast there is just one straight Methodist and two Presbyterian parishes in the region.

The ecumenical nature of the church life there has led to a somewhat unique structure of governance and oversight. Churches Together in Northland (CTN) is an ecumenical body that serves as Methodist synod, Presbyterian presbytery, and Uniting Congregations' joint regional committee.

CTN is made of a number of work groups and is led by a three-person presidium, which includes Methodist superintendent Rev Peter Williamson and Presbyterian Rev Peter Dunn. The work

groups handle such tasks as ministry and pastoral care, finance, property, and social issues.

Peter Williamson says CTN and its work groups work very well, and is part of the identity of the region's churches. There is anxiety about how effective it will be if Presbyterian input shifts to the super presbytery.

"There could be financial consequences, and questions about oversight and pastoral care.

"Northland is a conservative region theologically, and it has been difficult to find suitable Methodist presbyters for appointments. There has been a drift toward Presbyterianism in the region, and this might make it difficult for Methodist oversight."

Peter Williamson says larger regional administrative structures may, in fact, work well. It is possible that a new Presbyterian super presbytery will be mirrored by a Methodist super synod with similar boundaries.

He is concerned, however, that the super presbytery has been presented as a fait accompli and there are still many issues to be worked through including what degree of regional autonomy Northland will have.

Peter Dunn says the attraction of super presbytery is that it would ease the lack

of resources and isolation the Northland churches face. It would make it easier to handle difficult problems such as complaints and judicial reviews.

"It could have financial consequences. We might end up paying more to the synod than we have to the national church but we would expect to get more in return, such as regional mission enablers or other resource people we do not have at present.

"There are strong local regional relationships in Northland and I would expect them to continue under a super presbytery. CTN has created a sense of close collegiality, and I think if we can maintain flexibility in regards to governance we can allow the CVs to continue functioning well," Peter Dunn says.

Creating larger regional administrative bodies could also allow Northland CVs to develop stronger ties to CVs in Auckland, he believes.

It seems clear that Northland people want to maintain some sort of sub-region to exist within the super presbytery. It could involve some delegated authority to Northland-based work groups, particularly in relation to property and some areas of ministry oversight.

Executive officer of Uniting Congregations Aotearoa NZ Rev Peter MacKenzie says if a super presbytery is

created, some committees should be retained in Northland for local expressions of church.

"The situation in Northland is only as special as that in Wairarapa, the West Coast, and Gisborne, where isolated rural communities have developed similar ways to work together. They are unique solutions to unique local characteristics. CTN is not unique in that regard.

"Both the Methodist and Presbyterian churches are moving toward larger regions, and I would despair if that comes at the expense of such arrangements in rural areas. Certainly some things are best done in cities but we should not have all our planning driven by city situations," Peter MacKenzie says.

Former moderator of the Presbyterian Church Very Rev Garry Marquand was one of the authors of the proposal that Presbyterian Assembly passed that has led to the creation of larger synods. He says super presbyteries are not imposed from above but they are negotiated and emerge from local initiatives.

Garry believes CTN will not cease to exist and that all parties are committed to maintaining Northland's ecumenical ventures.

At least half of its members would have to agree if CTN is no longer to carry out the role of presbytery. CTN will hold its next meeting on May 15th.

Tongan families unite to form Papakura church

By Cory Miller

A Tongan man's search for a place to worship in his neighborhood of Papakura has led to the founding of a new church.

When Tongo Vaiangina, a member of the Tongan Methodist Tokaima'amanga Parish in Otara, moved to a new family home in Papakura last year he found there was no local congregation.

He met others in Papakura who were not going to a church due to the absence of a Tongan congregation. "There were others I met who were not attending church either," Tongo says.

Without a church to go to they felt that there was nowhere for them to worship God, a place of fellowship for their people was needed, says Rev Vaikoloa Kilikiti. "Their aim was to let the people know God," he says "They wanted to be a good people."

Together with his brothers, Tongo decided to hold family prayers in their home. Other Tongan families in the

neighborhood were also invited to share in fellowship with the family.

"I wanted to create a church for those who were unable to go, to have fellowship with our people," says Tongo. "We went to our homes to have prayers and to find God."

The small gatherings expanded to include others until it became too big for the family home. Together these families helped to bring together the foundation for a new church.

With their home bursting at the seams, Tongo approached Vaikaloa for advice about where to house his growing church.

Though the people would have been welcome to attend the Otara Parish, they knew that the distance would be a deterrent for many families. A site for worship was needed in Papakura itself.

With Vaikaloa's support, Tongo approached the Tongan synod superintendant to discuss the possibility of

establishing a new church in Papakura.

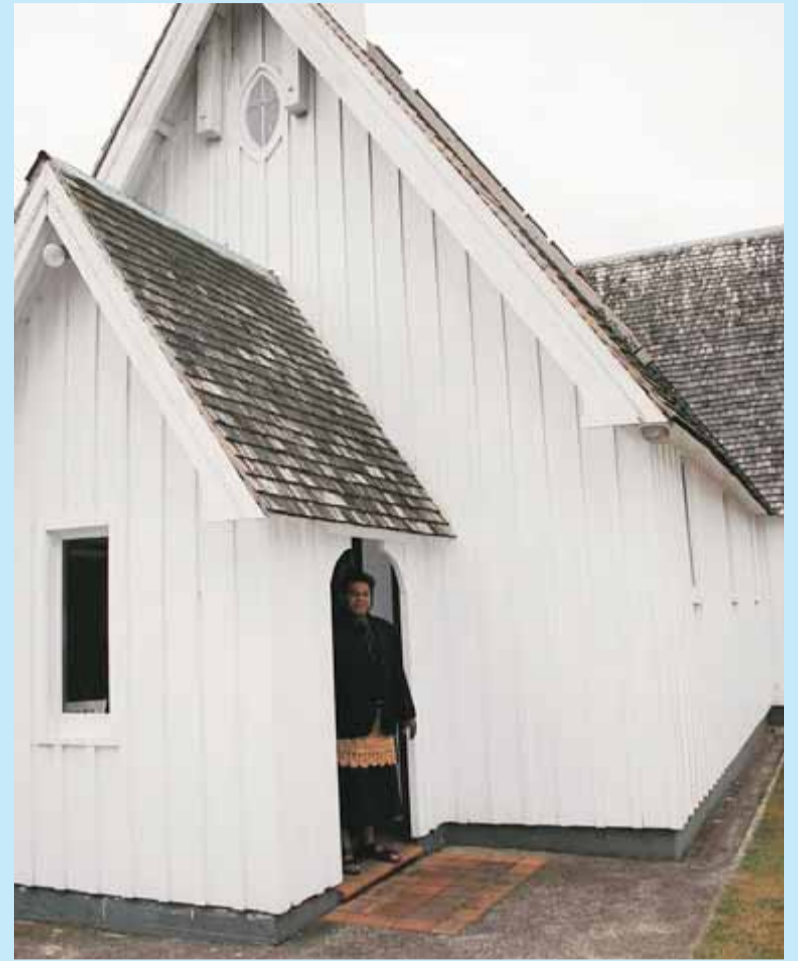
Though they were unable to have a new building of their own, they were able to use a local marae and the Papakura Anglican church for worship.

With all parties in agreement a commitment was drafted and signed by the members of the new branch. They held their first service as an official church on the 29th of November, 2009.

The new church was recognised as a branch of the Tongan Congregation in Otara. "They are an extension of our church," says Vaikaloa. "Once a month we gather together as one congregation in Otara to take communion."

Each Sunday up to 50 people gather for prayer, song and fellowship in the Tongan language in Papakura.

"The future for this small but growing church can only be good," says Vaikaloa. "Where there was no Tongan Church before, there is now a strong group of people who have found their place of worship."



Tongo Vaiangina's initiative led to the creation of a new Tongan congregation in the Otara Tongan Methodist Parish.

Resources to refresh your church

Rev Andre le Roux is out to refresh the Methodist Church.

He says lay leaders and presbyters in many congregations are struggling to find the inspiration and energy to carry out their mission at a time when society no longer values church attendance. To help them find fresh reserves of enthusiasm and provide new ideas Andre is preparing a series of resources for parish and worship leaders.

"At present we are working on two main things. One is leadership resources for leaders' meetings. The other is '10 Minutes on a Tuesday', and it consists of suggestions and ideas for worship," Andre says.

"Traditional expressions of worship are becoming increasingly irrelevant to most New Zealanders and the vast majority of young people find church boring and completely alien to their needs and world view.

"In many places we have aging churches with a 'small church' mentality. Some parishes struggle to maintain current attendance levels, others find it impossible to support presbyteral ministry due to a lack of money. If we are to ensure that we still have a church in 20 years time we must find a way to bring down our average age."

He believes a part of the solution is the creation of small groups that could fulfill a mission task or meet to grow faith, express ministry, or give pastoral care. This will affect how churches express themselves in worship, mission and leadership.

"Helping people think differently about church will require inspiration, motivation and practical 'we-can-do-that' resources that take the local church's context into consideration. Empowering presbyters and parishes to work through these challenges will breathe new life into our church."

Many presbyters are stretched just trying to keep the church alive. The thought of finding more time and energy to research and implement new styles of ministry may be more daunting than helpful.

'10 Minutes on a Tuesday' is Andre's effort to fill that void. They are bulletins

sent out in a weekly email and posted on the Methodist Church website – www.methodist.org.nz – under the 'Ministry' tab or at <http://refresh.methodist.org.nz>.

They offer up themes, readings, preaching points, prayers, hymns, visual aids, and suggestions for PowerPoint presentations to get worship leaders' energy flowing. Andre says they are intended to spark creativity.

"The first series provides themes for the whole of Lent. There is something for each Sunday so it provides a holistic approach and sense that we are travelling together."

For example, the '10 Minutes' bulletin for Palm Sunday reminds worship leaders that the day is our last opportunity to celebrate before we face the cross. It suggests ways to use palm fronds to celebrate the good things of life. This could be done by weaving crosses or bracelets from palm fronds. It provides some reflection about the place of celebration in the Church, and lists some prayers, songs and hymns that focus on celebration.

Andre says the material in his '10 Minute' bulletins come from a number of sources. Some of it he dreams up himself, others come from combing through Internet resources.

Similarly his leadership resources provide local church leaders devotional thoughts and practical skills they can use to lead parish leaders' meetings. They provide means for leaders to advance their personal discipleship as well as activities or conversation points that can be used as part of church meetings. A major focus will be on skill development.

"They are based on the questions God asks us. The first is based on the question God asked Adam and Eve after they ate the

fruit and realised they were naked – Where are you?" Andre says

"It went out to the parishes in January so leaders could discuss where they were and where they would go with the year."

Andre says feedback from the first instalments of the '10 Minute' bulletins and monthly leadership resources have been extremely positive.

He has lots of ideas for other types of resources, such as DVDs, and innovative fresh expressions of ministry he would like to develop. However, Andre's own energy levels are limited these days.

He has been diagnosed with a type of cancer for which, at this stage, there is no treatment. He has had radiation and a type of chemotherapy but to little effect. However, he remains hopeful that a way forward will still be found.

For more visit: refresh.methodist.org.nz



Have your say about Touchstone

This month the Methodist Publishing Board is carrying out a review of Touchstone. The review will look at how the paper is produced, and some congregations have been asked to hold focus group discussions to critique its content and layout.

The Board also wants to hear from any individuals who would like to share their thoughts about Touchstone. What do you like about Touchstone? What do you dislike? How would you change it? Does Touchstone meet the needs of your parish?

Send your ideas and suggestions by the end of March to Methodist Publishing Board chair Rev Mark Gibson at stmarks7@clear.net.nz or c/o 27 Remuera Ave, Christchurch 8022.

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Dawkins, science and faith

As a professional scientist, I welcome debate on the interaction of science and religious faith. They form two great pillars of human understanding in the modern world, informing and underpinning all our legal, social and democratic structures.

Sadly, Richard Dawkins' derisive dismissal of religion, promotes a stark monolithic world view where science alone is presumed competent to adjudicate on all matters. These views do a disservice to both science and religion. The collateral damage is great – encouraging unwarranted scepticism about

science and its perceived agenda, as it does of religion.

I wish to affirm another view, where science rightly informs religion and religion rightly informs science. Nothing in modern scientific discovery or understanding has negated the central claim of theistic religion that this ancient and marvellous universe is the product of the purposeful mandate of a Creator, who we, in our limited understanding, call God.

This insight alone should moderate all our understanding, all our discourse, all our conduct.

Dr Jeff Tallon, Wellington

The Mission and the Treaty

To the editor,

It was with great interest I read of the celebrations at Mangungu on February 12, marking the 170th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi.

My late husband Desmond William White's great-grandfather, John White, age 13, would surely have been present, as was his sister, Jane, age 5, who was Rev Donald Phillip's great-grandmother.

They were the niece and nephew of the early Methodist missionary, William White, and lived at the mission station at that time.

It was exciting to read of the events of that day 170 years ago, with the 69 rangatira signing the Treaty in front of the 3000 Maoris gathered there. What an impact that Mangungu Mission must have had. And what an impact that Treaty has had!

Joan M White, Mt Maunganui

God doesn't love everybody

To the editor,

The popular proclamation 'God loves everybody' is not found in the Bible. On the contrary, for example, God destroyed all the people of Sodom with burning sulphur because of their grievous sin.

God told the prophet Nathan that he had withdrawn his love from King Saul. God told the prophet Malachi that he loved Jacob but hated Esau.

Jesus said that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son so that whosoever

did not believe in him would perish, presumably in eternal fire, like the rich man who neglected the beggar Lazarus. He then said that unbelievers would remain under condemnation, under God's anger (see John 3:36).

Jesus did not add 'you may sin as much as you like, God still loves you even when you are in hell'.

God's common grace, his care for the planet he created for us, benefits us all in this life. The rain falls on the first and the unjust.

Ivan Harper, Tauranga

Good read

To the editor,

The March edition of Touchstone was a great issue - from the piece on Liberation Theology, the book reviews, the centenary of Mission, the situations in Papua New Guinea

and Haiti, and the battle over fermented and unfermented wine. The wine issue aside, there seemed to be a strong theme of social justice and acting Jesus' message through-out.

Graham Howell, Wellington

Thank you, June

To the editor,

It is always good to receive a letter. Over the years I am one of many who have received the Methodist Diakonia Fellowship Newsletter three or four times each year.

These letters were started by Sister Betty Yearbury as a means of keeping us in touch with each other and went out the Deaconesses, Deacons and other interested people.

When Betty found it necessary to give up this task June Gibson, herself a Deacon, took it up and has continued it ever since. June's

first letter to us is dated 1st March 1990! That letter contains Deaconess news from around the Connexion, and concludes with a devotional thought, a pattern June has continued in subsequent letters.

Now she is laying down her pen, and this letter is to say how much we appreciate her 20 years of letter-writing to keep us in touch. She has succeeded admirably and her letters will be greatly missed.

Thank you, June.

Beverley Pullar, Nelson

Bigger piles of good rubbish

To the editor,

I support Shirley Bridge's interest in "simple things at hand that have a big beneficial effect" (letter to editor, February 2010 Touchstone). However, I wonder at her association of human perversity with "spending much time and energy trying to solve big issues that are often beyond our ability to solve".

It is true that big issues often seem quite daunting; however, there are many ways to influence such issues. For instance, the CWS website outlines a number of opportunities, and

organisations such as Greenpeace, Amnesty International and a range of environmental organisations provide other avenues. These organisations can actually have an impact at the level of global power politics through the United Nations and other avenues.

While it may require some effort, it is important that people of good will engage with these larger issues, otherwise they are left to others who may not have the greater good at heart.

Gray Southon, Tauranga



FROM THE BACKYARD

Pay attention

Gillian Watkin

Most mornings I take a walk around the garden not to do anything other than look and to listen. This isn't a working time, it is a time to reconnect with the garden and the outside world.

So often we have to rush into appointments or tasks without giving our brains time to fully engage. I find plants that have popped up unexpectedly reminding me I am only part of the planning and planting.

I well remember the late Colin Leadley surprising us townies in a home-setting course at Trinity College with his description of his weather diaries and the things he needed to watch out for as a good farmer. The keen observation and collection of data enabled him to choose his daily work well.

I learned from that conversation. Now I know that in our little bit of land, quiet contemplation and information gathering provides a lead to sound maintenance and growth. While home gardening is about caring for each plant and farm cropping is something much, much more complex, in both small and large the quality of conditions and growth are important.

Pay attention. Are the words a command, or an invitation to a deeper way of thinking and exploring? At school it could be the call of harassed teachers but for me now, paying attention is one of the most important of all spiritual practices.

Throughout the Gospels Jesus is recorded as saying: 'Listen' as he began a story. His stories were of

being alert to the coming of God's realm. He talked with an agricultural community and reminded them of good farming and planting practices, reminded them that they watched the sky and the weather. In that same way they could attend to their faith and belief.

In early Christian times the creeds were written after much debate. They come to us through the ages but in the myriad of languages they have moved through since then, the meaning and the understanding of some words have changed. The words 'I believe' which today generally mean 'I hold this to be true' in those earlier times meant something like 'I pledge allegiance to'. If we pledge allegiance, we pay attention and order our lives in a way that gives honour to that allegiance.

Judy Reeves writes about the craft of writing. She points out that paying attention has to do with slowing down. It has to do with staying in the 'Now' and being mindful in your daily life. She says that when you pay attention you also notice what matters to you. In paying attention we give time to discover what it is we give honour to in our lives.

The leaves are beginning to turn, the mornings are colder, and our daily work will change. Life is like that. In my experience, it is much easier to live well if we take note of what is happening around us. Paying that mindful attention is a reminder of what a privilege it can be to care for our little bit of planet.



I am writing on the day that marks the 150th anniversary of the start of the Land Wars of Taranaki. On March 18th, Prime Minister John Key formally began the Treaty of Waitangi

settlement negotiation process with Te Atiawa iwi at Owaē Marae in Waitara.

The local newspaper has begun a series of articles and the Museum has opened an exhibition entitled 'Te Ahi Ka Roa, Te Ahi Katoro Taranaki War 1860-2010, Our legacy – Our Challenge. A lot of groundwork has taken place for this time of Taranaki awakening.

It is much the same in my study. No wars other than with paper. But in order



After the groundwork is done

to have things at my fingertips I had to change my filing system from that of a parish presbyter to that of a president. With a few days free of travelling the job is now done, and I have laid the groundwork for a greater efficiency.

Rev John Roberts and vice president Lana put a lot of groundwork into preparing their trip to the Solomon Islands on behalf of the Mission and Ecumenical committee. But cyclone Ului may have changed their plans. To borrow a phrase, the best laid plans of reverends and vice presidents...

The groundwork for Easter was laid out long ago. We can't say with any certainty just when it all began, as the Bible writers express a range of theologies.

There is some consensus, however, that Jesus became clearer about his path ahead through the course of his three year ministry. His ministry formation however, started long before his time of public healing and teaching. John's Gospel for one, points to a beginning before the time we know as The Creation. That's a long time coming!

We followers can get caught up in a flurry of activity that springs from nowhere and sometimes returns to the place it came from. The Methodist Church of New Zealand has prided itself in being pragmatic, suiting its governing to the conditions of the day.

Someone remarked to me that "the church has been re-structuring for 25 years." But like Jesus' ministry, I think changing the structures started long before

that. Much depends on the groundwork.

On a quiet morning I watched the sunlight gradually slide down the hall wall as the sun rose higher. Exhausted by perfectionism I'd given up and noticed the world about me. Gardens have a fallow time and for everything there is a season. I'm inclined to forget that.

The church season of Lent is a time of spiritual waiting, groundwork for Easter, and a time of watching in wonder at what comes out of the waiting! The mystery of the resurrection comes out of the groundwork of God's grace and love. So in anticipation of Easter Sunday, I hope you find time for some spiritual groundwork and quiet space to get in touch with God.

May your Easter rejoicing be filled with God's Spirit.

Rev Alan Upson

THE BIG WEDNESDAY SYNDROME

Time to speak up about inequality

By Michael Dymond

We are now well into the new year. What will 2010 bring for you? Perhaps you have resolved to walk more, if you can walk; or eat less chocolate, if you could afford chocolate; or call more people on the phone, if only you could find it, or ...well the list could on.

For me, it seems enough to resolve to be content with what I have. You might detect the irony in that. It is a self-fulfilling prophesy in a way, eh?

But it stems from a deep conviction that it is in our striving for the bigger, better, latest etc. creates an induced discontent. I call it 'the Big Wednesday syndrome', and it is from this that we have brought our world to a place where the gap between those who have and those who have not is now so immense as to seem to be incapable of closing.

Once upon a time, in the 1950s and 1960s, New Zealand was an egalitarian and more equal society, now 50 years on...well, we're not.

A recent book, 'The Spirit Level' by Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett uses more than 30 years of international social research and statistics to show that most 'dis-eases' in developed countries stem from inequalities within and between those countries. These dis-eases include imprisonment rates, poor child learning levels, teenage pregnancies, mental illness and so on. All these are more prevalent in countries with high inequality of incomes.

New Zealand shows up usually in the top five of the

most unequal countries! Are we shocked? Well, we ought to be. Are we surprised? We should not be. It has been long known, for example, that in times of high employment, rates of burglary and theft crime go down, and the explanation has been that when you have money from a job you don't need to steal.

Now there is a sound scientific base to support this. When there is a more equal distribution of income, the gap has lessened and dis-ease goes down too.

So why do we keep on just dealing with the symptoms? Why not take steps to reduce the wide gap between the richest and the poorest? Over the past two decades, governments of the left and right have ignored this connection. Perhaps this was because the research had not yet been brought together and published but more likely because, in an economy driven by market forces and the mantra of 'growth', the result is always to enrich the wealthy at the expense of the poor.

You may be asking 'why is Michael bothering his head about this?' Indeed some will say that politics and religion should not be mixed. In this case, I reply that the person who composed that saying was very likely one of those most likely to benefit from a church that was compliant and quiet.

Did Jesus go quietly? Did the prophets of old keep their peace? It is time to speak up about the things that are going wrong. And that gives you a great field to play in!

Public apologies not necessarily repentance

By Ken Russell

Phil Heatley may be currently licking his wounds on the back benches but he has one distinction that may afford him consolation. It is being said he is the first cabinet minister in the MMP era to resign in the face of his prime minister's insistence he need not do so.

Mr Heatley committed no sackable offence. His was, in the eyes of his peers, no more than a misdemeanour, a naivety, a minor error of judgment. John Key went so far as to call his attempt to charge the cost of a family holiday and a couple of bottles of wine to the taxpayer a "stupid" act by a Minister who should have known better. Yes, indeed.

But the Whangarei MP was inconsolable, his grief palpable in a public apology that left nothing and nobody out. To the Prime Minister, to his party, to his constituents and to the people of New Zealand, he was totally, totally sorry.

It is, of course, a fashionable thing to do. The list of celebrities and VIP's saying sorry is growing exponentially. Gordon Brown, Kevin Rudd and our own John Key have all said 'Sorry' in a big public way for the sins and errors of the past – the export of thousands of unwanted children, the appalling oppression and exploitation of the Aborigine people, and breaching the Treaty of Waitangi in dealing with 24,000 members of the Te Arawa tribe.

The big apology is in vogue, and democratic leaders, irked by the frequency with which the sins of the fathers continue to haunt the business of contemporary government, may well continue to find a tad of public contrition carries with it electoral benefits.

But sadly, among the chorus of high profile apologies filling our screens these days, few can claim the moral high ground. There was Rodney 'Perks-buster' Hide, Bill 'Not-a-good-look' English, Hone 'I'm-entitled' Harawira, Tony "I-lashed-out" Veitch. These are just a few of those who have riveted our attention with shame-faced apologies tendered with lashings of humble pie.

Already 2010 is shaping up as a record year for big-time apologies, none bigger than the world head of Toyota, bowing and grovelling before the US Congressional Committee, imploring forgiveness for making millions of potentially lethal unstoppable cars.

Just as big on the NZ scene was Telecom's \$7m CEO Paul Reynolds, pleading for understanding of his firm's XT network failings.

I was fascinated by the comment of columnist-mayor Michael Laws in the Sunday Star Times. The normally acerbic Laws might have been expected to

feast on the pickings of the Heatley resignation but instead he rose to praise him. From an environment where politicians, of all people, are appallingly bad at accepting responsibility for mistakes, blaming departments, systems, and any other mitigating circumstances they can find, Laws said Heatley stood out from the pack. "He accepted he had done wrong. No equivocation. No justification. That took an inner moral compass... Phil Heatley has restored his honour."

Yes, and at some considerable cost. Half his lucrative salary, his place in cabinet, demotion to the back benches, and more than a little derision from hard-boiled colleagues, all of which is bad medicine for any politician with an eye to his future.

What Laws didn't say is that Heatley makes no secret of his Baptist affiliation, and the hard decision, one that has puzzled John Key and all the political media no end, would have been taken in a lonely, brutally honest confrontation with his God.

As it happens Judy and I have been enjoying DVD episodes of John Mortimer's 'Paradise Postponed', the quirks and quarrels of the family of liberal Anglican rector Simeon Simcox. In a move that confounds the family, Simcox names Leslie Titmuss as the sole beneficiary in his will. Titmuss was born into a working class family, but what he lacked in breeding in class conscious England he made up for in huge ambition, a compelling desire to "make something of himself."

Ruthless, heartless and driven, Titmuss takes every advantage of the Simcox inheritance, becomes wealthy, successful, and a minister in Maggie Thatcher's cabinet. In an unforgettable scene, having driven his wife to an early death, Titmuss sits at breakfast with his young son home from his exclusive boarding school, each at opposite ends of a long banqueting table. It is time for some well-chosen fatherly advice. "Son," he says "never apologise, never, ever."

True to his own advice, Titmuss faces the greatest crisis of his political career with lies built on lies. He has alienated family and friends by his insatiable ambition, a hardened shell of a man determined never, ever, to apologise.

This Easter it is timely to note the difference between apology and repentance. I don't know the man but MP Phil Heatley appears to understand the difference. It is a difference of fundamental importance. Apologies can be shallow, stage managed, artificially emotional and tearful.

Repentance takes longer. It is a turning around. It gives rise to faith. And from even one act of genuine repentance, so it is written, there is joy in heaven.

Originally published as a Connections article in the Dunedin and Blenheim Parish weekly bulletin.



Young people from 17 Tongan congregations throughout Auckland met, mingled and competed at a sports day last month.

Church sports day draws Tongan youth

Several hundred Tongan young people gathered in feisty competition one Saturday early in March to play netball, touch and volleyball. The sports day was aimed at uniting the youth of the Tongan Methodist Church.

They came from 17 Tongan congregations throughout Auckland, and gathered at the Te Atatu sports field.

It began with a burst of colour and noise as everyone marched around the field to the tune of a bass band.

The day was organised by a committee made up of representatives from each church.

"The sports initiative is a new one that has been put together for the young people," says event organiser Osai Kupu.

The day was centred around their vision to unite the young people in the church and to draw them closer to God.

The church often offers programmes that are based around worship, singing and spirituality. However the youth are not always interested in such programmes.

The committee thought that sport would be one way of attracting the youth back to church. "Sport is attractive to many young people," says Kevin Metuisela of the Ellerslie Methodist Church.

The day was designed not just for athletes but for everyone who wanted to take part. "We want to help the youth to grow. We

want them to work as a team and to find fellowship with each other and with God through sport," says Osai. "The aim was to teach them to glorify God, through their talent."

"We want to encourage the gifts that they have in sport and to utilise it in a healthy manner. We encouraged them to give it a go, even if sport was not their strength."

Though there was a competitive spirit in the field, winning was not the focus of the day. "It was an event where we all came together to have fun, win or lose," says Kevin.

A change in energy was evident by the finals. "It was exciting to see the competition and everyone putting all their effort into the game," says Kevin. "It was highly entertaining, I enjoyed watching the talent."

The day was a success with the high number of people that came. There were new faces and old faces bringing a lot of talent onto the fields.

Bonds of friendship were formed between the youth of the various churches. "I saw many of the young people interacting and getting to know each other well," says Kevin.

In light of the day's success, Osai hopes that the sports day can become an annual event. "I would like to see us build on this year's success and make it bigger and better in the following years for the youth."



The Tongariro crossing provided both a physical challenge and spectacular evidence of God's power in the lava flows and craters.

Eco camp brings young people closer to Creation

By Richard Storey

If they can get out there and see it for themselves, young people will become passionate about God's creation.

This belief spawned Tongariro Eco-Adventure, a camp run jointly by Scripture Union and the Christian environmental organisation A Rocha Aotearoa NZ.

A Rocha is an international organisation that is helping revive the Church's concern for God's creation. A key reason for its effectiveness is that A Rocha brings people into direct experiences of creation, in the context of a Christian community that acknowledges the Creator.

These experiences can be life-changing. In some countries – e.g., Kenya, Portugal and Canada – A Rocha branches have field study centres that can give people such experiences.

A Rocha NZ doesn't have such a centre so it teamed up with Scripture Union to run a youth camp. Scripture Union was delighted to add an ecologically-focused camp to its range of adventure camps. It has a strong environmental ethic and a focus on discovering God through the experience of camping outdoors.

In January, nine teenagers and six leaders arrived at Scripture Union's Crusader Lodge at the foot of Mt Ruapehu to spend a week exploring Tongariro National Park. The goal was to experience the biological and geological wonders in the park, and reflect on what they can teach us about the Creator.

The approach was to be like Jesus, when he spoke of the lilies of the field. By carefully observing creation, we can understand God's character and the relationship God desires with us.

The theme for the first half of the week was that God knows and cares for every living creature he has made. We explored the diversity of alpine shrubs and forest trees at the foot of Mt Ruapehu, examined the invertebrate life of the local streams, and learned to recognize the calls and fleeting glimpses of native forest birds.

In evening Bible studies we discussed God's covenant involvement

in his world and his covenant involvement in our lives. Later we shifted our attention to the greatness and power of God, a fitting theme when you're sitting on an active volcano!

The Tongariro crossing was a highlight for many, both for the physical challenge and for spectacular evidence of God's power in the lava flows, craters and steaming fumaroles. With a grand view over the plains we discussed mountains as a type of 'thin place' where people go to meet with God in prayer, and we used the mountain crossing as a metaphor to discuss our personal walk with God.

The following evening, with God's splendour on display in a brilliant night sky, we spent an hour admiring the sweep of the Milky Way, inspired by Louie Giglio's wonderful DVD 'Indescribable'.

No Christian camp would be complete without considering how we should respond to God's great love, and no discussion of ecology would be complete without considering how we should care for the planet. So, we finished the camp discussing our vision for God's future kingdom and how each of us might play a part in it.

We put our faith into action by helping two Department of Conservation wardens to check and re-set stoat traps along the Whakapapa River, part of DoC's programme to protect the endangered blue duck (whio).

Judging by the enthusiasm of campers and leaders, the Tongariro Eco-Adventure was a resounding success. This was due to the combination of Scripture Union's experience in community-building in camp settings, A Rocha's wide knowledge of the local ecology, and the emphasis both place on Bible reading and prayer.

We are looking forward very much to running Tongariro Eco-Adventure again next year, and possibly adding other A Rocha-Scripture Union joint camps in the future.

Richard Storey is chair of A Rocha Aotearoa NZ. He works as a freshwater scientist in Hamilton.



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On-line clippings promote justice and peace

By Cory Miller

A 91-year-old man with a passion for justice has become Internet savvy in order to share information with growing network of readers.

It all began six years ago when Arthur Palmer began collecting and sending articles to four friends via the Internet. In the years since his email list has grown to 28 people.

Each week he spends hours looking at on-line newspapers and searching Google from his Blockhouse Bay home, searching for articles that dig deep into the issues of the world.

"I am looking for things that are not likely to see print in New Zealand, trying to get to the guts of issues," he says.

Arthur says he has found the ability of the Internet to let us see comments on world events within moments of their occurrence remarkable. "It's worth a few frustrations with technology to be able to pass these stories on to others"

Every Wednesday Arthur sends two to three of the most significant stories to the people on his email list.

"There is such a huge mass of printed matter that demands our attention that one has to be sure that any addition is welcomed," he says. "I have sent articles to Helen Clark. She replied to me three times, twice in agreement, once she disagreed."

Rev Barry Jones has been receiving Arthur's emails for at least four years and has found them to be an invaluable resource. "I have incorporated quotations from what he has sent me directly into my sermons. Arthur has saved me from doing the long-haul search myself."

Arthur is looking for compelling stories that help him understand people

and situations. "When I am looking for articles I am trying to gain insight into what is happening in the world. I look not just for what has happened, but to why it has happened."

To some extent Arthur says his articles are selected based on his own biased views of the world. "I select based on my prejudices I suppose but I try to look for articles that will shed light on issues such as terrorism, climate change and the war in Iraq," he says.

With these articles Arthur hopes to give people a gentle nudge and bring them with him in his fight for change. "It is important to listen to those who tell of their pain, to feel something of that pain ourselves and to think about whether we are the cause of the pain," he says.

"I am looking for articles that can highlight and show what needs to happen to strengthen the forces that make for peace, social justice and creative endeavor and make clearer what is standing in the way. I hope this may inspire us to be more than just well-informed bystanders".

Arthur uses several online news sources, British newspapers, The Guardian and The Independent as well as a US paper called The Common Dream. Their writers are the ones whom Arthur feels succeed at bringing to light issues in a convincing manner. "I don't always agree with everything that they publish, but their writers are more thoughtful and insightful than most," he says.

"They help us to look behind the despair and to believe that a better world is possible."

EASTER REFLECTION

He has been raised

By Mary Caygill

Popular songs have been telling us for years that the most powerful words in any language are the words which express the conviction, 'I love you'. And the songs are very nearly right. These words change lives. But the Church believes that there is another and equally brief message which is even more powerful and which is responsible for even greater transformations.

"He has been raised." (Luke 24:6) 'He has been raised' – words almost beyond belief to their first hearers. Almost beyond belief to us as well. Contrary to all prior experience and against all expectation, the man Jesus, who had been publicly executed, certified dead and decently entombed, has been raised. He is no longer to be found among the dead. He is not there; he has been raised.

It was this same announcement which created and energised the church.

It is this announcement which is shared throughout Christian churches worldwide again this Easter Sunday, however it may be celebrated and in what language, which still has the power to bring new life and new possibility to birth within individuals and communities.

They are strange words to have had so much power. Words that cannot be proved or disproved.

Words that are simply there, a bald statement of an event, a claim, a challenge, an affront, a comfort, a demand, a power. They are there to be believed or disbelieved.

As Christians we lack the means of knowing what physical event lay behind the announcement. We will never know the how of resurrection. But we do not lack the means, in faith, to recognize or celebrate its authenticity and truth.

It is not simply that an influence has survived, that a memory has been preserved, that an inspiration from the past can still stir us. Rather, we stand in a rich succession of people through the ages who have been moved to acknowledge that that Jesus, the one who was dead, now meets them, now challenges them, now leads them into the future.

The church's claim with respect to the resurrection is wrought out of its continuing experience with a living experience of a



"What shall I do, then, with the one you call the king of the Jews?" Pilate asked them. "Crucify him!" they shouted (Mark 15:12-13).

Christ embodied and encountered in the everyday, rather than out of some mere sentimental attachment to its ancient traditions.

Where the church is alive, it is alive because it believes that its Christ has been raised and is alive and accessible through a living relationship which can then be modelled in a pattern of other relationships – one human being recognising their essential connectedness and interdependence on another human being.

Resurrection, if you like, is as an act of God whereby Jesus is released from the confines of that long ago historical past so that he can genuinely be available to his church and the created world.

It is God's yes to the world.

It is a yes to the continuation of the qualities and values portrayed in Jesus which are to live on in embodied form to be enacted in the everyday. Word and deed remain inseparable.

Resurrection thus is indeed the feast of possibility.



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Director of Radio Methos in Abidjan Lydie Acquah sees the radio station as a means to combat poverty and empower people in Cote d'Ivoire. UMNS photo by Tim Tanton.

Radio that matters for those who need it most

A new radio station in the Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire) funded by the United Methodist Church serves as a tool to promote spiritual growth and combat poverty by sharing information about health, agriculture and employment.

We in the developed world take for granted the ability to get the information we need to make informed choices regarding health, deal with the weather, grow good crops, or handle an emergency.

In countries such as Cote d'Ivoire electricity and the Internet are unreliable, many people cannot read or write, and roads are often impassable. Radio can give poor and isolated people the power to communicate, become better educated, and even transform their lives.

Radio Methos (also called Voix De L'Esperance, the Voice of Hope) will fill a niche in Cote d'Ivoire by providing holistic programming, as opposed to solely evangelical messages, which makes up most of the country's religious broadcasting.

During the first half of the past decade Cote d'Ivoire suffered a civil war and tensions are still high. Peace and reconciliation are greatly needed to heal the country. Radio Methos aims to be a means of peace building and reconstruction.

The fight against malaria demands education about prevention and treatment. Radio Methos can also provide a way to spread this knowledge.

Women suffer greatly in war, often victimized through rape and abuse. Radio Methos wants to help women to regain their

dignity and find their true worth.

Reaching young people is a priority for station director Lydie Acquah. Programmes she has developed include 'A Cry In the Night', presented by the United Methodist student union, 'Eden', a show on marital issues, and 'Living Environment', about maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The station aims to shape content around the community and its needs. For the station to be successful, audiences must hear programs created in their social context, and delivered in their languages.

But broadcasting good information is useless if people cannot receive it. If electricity is nonexistent and people, particularly women and children, cannot afford batteries then radio programming aimed at assisting the poor will go unheard.

Therefore another aspect of the initiative to bring radio to the people of Cote d'Ivoire is to self-powered radios developed by the Freeplay Foundation. The Foundation's 'Lifeline' radios are relatively inexpensive and low tech enough to be operated by children.

Lifeline radios can operate either by solar power or a hand crank. They are sturdy and will operate under harsh conditions and rough handling, even in climates of dust, heat and high humidity. They are also bulky and boldly coloured to discourage men from taking them for their use.

Women will thus have the opportunity to listen to community, educational and Christian radio programmes.

NZ churches edge towards Christian unity

By John Roberts, Mission and Ecumenical secretary

New Zealand church representatives continue to move ahead in their efforts to establish a national ecumenical entity that will promote the visible unity of the church. A year ago I referred in Touchstone to an ecumenical winter following the demise of the Conference of Churches in 2005. The new initiative that is now underway signals that we may be entering an ecumenical spring.

The discussions have not been without some tension. Some of those participating in what is now called the National Dialogue for Christian Unity have questioned the use of the word 'ecumenical' as it has negative connotations for them. For others that word has rich and meaningful associations and has long been part of their tradition.

There have been questions about accountability of the dialogue group. Some thought it should be accountable to the National Church Leaders Meeting. Others thought it should be independent of that gathering and accountable to the churches represented in the dialogue. There was an issue around participation in the dialogue and the inclusiveness of the group. The dialogue was originally a Methodist initiative and the early meetings gathered together representatives of churches that had participated in the ecumenical movement in the past.

These issues have now been resolved. The word 'ecumenical' will continue to be used alongside the word 'unity'. The word 'unity' is preferred by the evangelical and Pentecostal representatives in the dialogue.

Representatives of the churches participating in the dialogue are responsible to their own national church structures while the dialogue group as a whole is accountable to the structures and courts of the participating churches. Other national church leaders are free to join the dialogue group at any time.

The dialogue has opted to be open and inclusive. This has resulted in Assemblies of God and the Wesleyan Methodist Church joining the dialogue. They sit alongside Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Christian Churches NZ, Methodist, Presbyterian, and Salvation Army representatives.

The first meeting of the dialogue group was held in June 2008. Since then

there have been another four meetings. At the February 2010 meeting a document Towards a Theology of Christian Unity was further discussed and some additions made. It is considered to need no further attention at this time. So there is now an agreed theological platform for the ongoing discussions.

Attention has turned to a draft document on terms of reference for an ongoing ecumenical entity. One term that has been suggested for this entity is Commission of the Churches for Christian Unity. Use of the word 'commission' is not yet settled. Others prefer an alternative word such as 'forum'.

There is agreement that the basis of the new entity be "a gathering of churches that confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and commit themselves through the Holy Spirit to fulfil Jesus' prayer 'that they may all be one so that the world will believe', to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

Immediate and longer term goals for this new entity have been identified. There are two short term goals. The first calls the churches to deepen their fellowship with each other so as to express more visibly the unity of the church. The second calls the churches to work together towards the fulfilment of their common mission of worship, witness, proclamation and service in the world.

There are eight longer term goals that both broaden and deepen the immediate goals. They include: developing existing relationships between the churches; giving expression to koinonia (or sense of community) among the churches; sharing and receiving the gifts each church has to offer; joint initiatives; the exercise of prophetic leadership; and promoting relationships with non-member churches and people of other living faiths.

Other draft terms of reference are still to be considered by the dialogue group. There are also some suggestions on how to begin to implement the immediate goals. This could start with confessional sharing, the churches getting to know one another theologically. An intentional multilateral dialogue exploring the meaning of unity, the church visible and invisible, authority in the church, scripture and tradition, evangelisation and mission, could follow.

WCC reports on Kiwi ecumenism

In 2009, the Methodist Church of New Zealand invited representatives of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) to attend Conference and meet with other NZ church leaders to gain an understanding of the ecumenical relations here.

It was the first WCC staff visit in 15 years and the first visit ever of a CCA general secretary. Their visit included meetings with representatives of the Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Methodist and Christian churches as well as leaders of ecumenical bodies.

The WCC representatives were Douglas Chial and Tara Tautari. In their report they say in every encounter there was a genuine witness of Christian unity.

"The ecumenical movement in Aotearoa New Zealand is far from extinct. Though there are some significant challenges to be faced, there is every reason to remain hopeful that the unity shared in Christ will become more and more visible in Aotearoa New Zealand."

Douglas and Tara observe that New Zealand is a highly secularized country with

an increasingly diverse population due to migration from the Pacific and now Asia. Though the country is quite secular, evangelical and Pentecostal churches are growing.

Their report says there is a sense of sharp division between 'ecumenical' and 'evangelical' churches. The growing church communities of Pacific Islanders and Asians seem less impacted by secularization

Within every mainline church there is a trend toward a congregational polity and identity.

"The member churches describe their greatest challenge as 'holding the church together'. There is a financial struggle often related to diminished income and sometimes to the up-keep of patrimony. There is a shift in some churches towards a more 'conservative' theological voice.

"The ecumenical priorities of the churches are each very different. Some member churches have done significant work in establishing bilateral agreements on theological and pastoral issues, helping the churches to formally recognize one baptism, one faith and common forms of ministry,

i.e. the Anglican-Methodist Covenant."

Douglas and Tara say in addition to personal contacts, joint activities and common liturgical celebrations, contact between churches is maintained through regular church leader meetings.

"The churches are currently considering a proposal to establish a Churches' Commission for Christian Unity as a platform for ongoing theological ecumenical dialogue. This would supplement the existing regular meetings of heads of churches and ecumenical development work.

"The proposal highlights a mission-shaped unity that seeks to respond to God's purpose in Christian unity and recognizes the value of ecumenical space in fostering mutual accountability between the churches.

"The movement is no longer held together under one umbrella but under many tents. This presents new challenges for fellowship as it is currently understood by the churches.

"For example, inter-church covenants and even Cooperative Venture congregations are not necessarily seen as expressions of fellowship or relevant to the wider

ecumenical movement, when in fact they are."

Their report concludes that trends toward the secular, non-institutional and congregational indicate that the future for Christian unity will somehow be grass roots driven.

There are lay networks in NZ that are not necessarily engaged in the current ecumenical conversation, but appear to have great potential, i.e. prayer movements, women's groups, youth groups and families.

Douglas and Tara observe that divisions between 'ecumenicals' and 'evangelicals' in NZ seem severe. Primarily a conservative/liberal division, the division is exacerbated by unhelpful stereo-types. There seems to be not one ecumenical platform that offers real opportunities for more than superficial and strained relations between the two camps.

And they conclude that more programmatic contact and visits would lead to a stronger sense of fellowship through participation in the WCC. NZ churches would be willing partners to receive invitations, host meetings or receive visits.



Christchurch Mission works smarter through partnerships

Partnership is becoming increasingly common in the Christchurch Methodist Mission (CMM). The Methodist Mission has found that outcomes for children, young people and families improve if services are integrated, coordinated and flexible.

The Mission is part of a very strong community and voluntary sector in Canterbury. It is a sector that meets together, collaborates together, and plans together. Strong partnerships and alliances have been formed over many years and are the key to restoring the health and sustainability of communities.

The challenges and barriers that many members of our communities face are connected. They include unemployment, low levels of education, low incomes, poor health, isolation and inadequate housing. Children often have poor school attendance or challenging behaviour and are involved with youth justice.

People in poor neighbourhoods face multiple problems that hinder families' efforts to be self-sufficient and successfully raise children. These can include poor facilities and playgrounds in disrepair, and economic barriers such as limited employment opportunities and little affordable housing. Poor neighbourhoods may also suffer from social decline such as crime and a lack of trust

among neighbours.

These challenges and barriers defy easy answers. Only by combining the knowledge, skills, and resources of a broad array of organisations can we hope to address them.

In addition to providing an integrated, holistic approach to providing services, partnerships also allow us to avoid duplication. It is therefore a more cost-effective way of using limited resources.

Some of the Mission's partnerships include:

Men on a Mission

This programme was developed in partnership with The Salvation Army Hope Centre and was piloted in late 2008. It is designed to reduce social isolation for men and focuses on healthy lifestyles, relationships, employment and self care.

Budget Blitz

This is a budgeting programme which is run in community settings and in partnership with other agencies. A course has been held for young mothers at youth support services centre Waipuna Trust, at the Deaf Aotearoa offices, and at Holly House. In 2010 we will also run the programme at Work and Income offices.

ParentWorks

This long-standing specialised parenting programme was



One Mission partnership is a community garden where people grow vegetables and learn skills.

developed to support parents whose children are in care. ParentWorks was initially

developed in partnership with Home and Family Society and the University of Canterbury. Over

the years staff from Child Youth and Family, Plunket and a Family Court lawyer have consistently been involved with the programme.

Community Garden

A partnership between the Methodist Mission's Aratupu Preschool and Nursery and Wai-Ora Trust led to the development of a community vegetable garden. The community garden provides parents with skills and knowledge as well as an opportunity to grow vegetables for their whanau.

Partnership Community Worker

A new collaboration with Partnership Health and the Methodist Mission is the creation of a partnership community worker who operates alongside a group of medical practices and ensures families/whanau have access to relevant health services.

Right Service Right Time

Right Service Right Time is an innovative way to deliver services. The aim is for every child, young person and family to get the right service at the right time, whatever their circumstances. Methodists Mission is working together with other agencies to

- create an easy entry point to social services;
- ensure necessary intervention takes place before children and families reach crisis point.

Childcare centre raps against poverty

The Masterton Christian Child Care Centre is making noise about poverty.

Rise Against Poverty (RAP) is the Child Care Centre's latest response to the needs of its community. As a venue for adult classes, parenting courses, community gardens and social worker outreach, the Centre has a finger on the pulse of the needs and interests of parents and families.

The Child Care Centre is an initiative of Lansdowne, St Lukes and St James parishes. They have on-going roles in the management team and assist with reading and other activities at the Centre.

It was started some years ago to provide a preschool for lower-income families who would not otherwise have the benefit of the learning and social interaction that preschools bring. Fees are less than other preschools with costs kept down through the low rental church premises. Fundraising drives have enabled an upgrade of the facility and its playground.

The Centre is vibrant with networks and initiatives. 'The Other F Words' is a new parent education initiative with a focus on Fun, Food, Family and Fitness. Education courses include re-entry into workforce, baby massage, driver education and parenting.

Fathers and grandfathers are part of the equation. A men's shed gives a chance for men with skills in woodworking and maintenance to pass these on and to share their tools. A new community garden has been fenced by fathers and parishioners.

The gardens were started with funds from the local primary health organization and are part of a healthy eating programme. To raise the profile of healthy eating the Centre invited the three Wairarapa mayors to a cook-off –

each was provided with a food parcel from which to prepare three meals. The main comment was that it's pretty hard to cook enticing meals without fresh vegies!

Last year, Donna Laing and Francis Dearnley, the two social workers at the Child Care Centre, noticed that benefits were no longer covering families' expenses. They called a meeting of community groups, and they began Rise Against Poverty (RAP). They agreed that things are getting worse for families, especially those on benefits.

Housing is the biggest challenge with no low rentals since the Housing New Zealand stock in Masterton was sold. The trust that bought the houses charges market rents and there is no emergency housing for men in the town.

RAP is finding ways to keep the bills lower for vulnerable families. Stopping the cold is a big issue. A curtain bank provides the means to cover windows and reduce the escape of warm air. Stockpiling fire wood is another strategy, and Vincent de Paul has helped with this.

Another project is to help and encourage young mums to use reusable cloth nappies. RAP is also working with the city council to plant fruit trees in verges rather than ornamentals.

Francis says, "We haven't solved the problems. We are trying to make the mayors and local people aware. We are talking about submissions and approaching our MP."

This Child Care centre is linking up with a raft of agencies in Masterton and RAP is only the latest of its efforts to link health, education and social services and make them work together for families.

Leave a Lasting Legacy

"The greatest use of life is to spend it for something that will outlast it."

William James

- A bequest to the Methodist Mission Aotearoa is an investment in the future.
- A bequest enables the Methodist Mission, in partnership with your legacy, to provide opportunities for change and social justice within our community.
- A bequest in conjunction with the Methodist Mission ensures that the tradition, integrity, security and practical strengths of the Methodist Movement will work in conjunction with your gift and your memory.

To ensure your legacy lasts longer than footprints in the sand, contact:

Ruth Silverstone

Convenor, Methodist Mission Aotearoa
23 Tarbottons Road, ASHBURTON, 7700.

Phone: 03 307 1116

Email: bilverst@xtra.co.nz



Trust in the power of the Spirit

As we think of the period during which Jesus was seized by the forces of the High Priest, tried in his court, and then sent to the Roman governor for the sentence of death to be carried out, we naturally think of his close disciples and their reactions to these events.

We cannot help seeing that there was a kind of division in their understanding of what was happening. Although Jesus had warned them that he would have to endure great suffering and even be put to death (e.g., Matthew 16:22-3; Luke 9:23), they had responded that this must not happen. Peter especially had said this forcefully, and Jesus had rebuked him.

Also, there had just been the triumphant entry into Jerusalem when the crowd hailed him as the Son of David, and many people must have believed that he was about to fulfil the prophecies and bring peace and victory to the people of Israel – presumably

with a host of angels, as clearly he did not have an earthly army.

But as the disciples became more aware of the hostility of the Jewish religious authorities, who feared that Jesus would overturn the comfortable relationship they had built up with the Roman authorities, they began to fear that something terrible would happen.

Peter, who had been acknowledged as a leader among the apostles, asserted that whatever happened he would stay with Christ and suffer with him (Matthew 26:30-35). Jesus said that during the night to come Peter would deny him three times before cock-crow, which Peter vehemently contradicted.

But when the great crowd with swords and clubs came, led by Judas, to seize Jesus, all the disciples fled into hiding except Peter and John, who went to see the trial. John was known to the High Priest's people but Peter was allowed in on John's recommendation (John 18:15).

Peter, presumably for fear of being arrested himself, denied three times that he was a follower of Christ, thus fulfilling Christ's prediction. When he heard the cock crow, he remembered what Christ had foretold and wept bitterly.

Although Christ had told the disciples that he would rise from the dead, they clearly did not expect this to happen. When he appeared to them they were at first incredulous but he convinced them that it was really he himself who had risen, and he would soon show them how they were to bring about the spread of the kingdom.

John relates how Jesus particularly asked Peter to testify that he loved him three times, presumably to mirror the triple denial (John 21:15-19). We should take this as an outstanding example of God's forgiveness to a human being who has fallen short of the promise he has made.

We can surely remember this to

comfort ourselves when we fall short of promises we have made to him, as surely we have all done at some time.

Peter made up for it by the tremendous work he did for God afterwards. When the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples at Pentecost, he gave the first Christian sermon. He stood up courageously to the High Priest, who arrested him for preaching and healing in the name of Jesus (Acts 5).

Finally, after many years' work in spreading the knowledge of Christ to many parts of the world, Peter was crucified just outside Rome, according to tradition. He could not have done any of these things if he had died with Christ as he had originally declared he would do.

His original denial of Christ undoubtedly taught him to rely on and trust in the power of the Spirit. May we learn from his example to do the same.

The audacity of faith

LIBRARY OF FAITH

By Jim Stuart



The year was 1963. I was an ecumenical student studying theology at Tübingen University in Germany. Europe was still recovering from the devastation of the war. The ecumenical movement was flourishing. At the initiative of Pope John XXIII Vatican 2 was opening the windows of the Catholic Church.

Germany was still divided into east and west by the infamous wall. The civil rights struggle in the USA under Martin Luther King was intensifying. In November of that extraordinary year, President John Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas, Texas.

It was also that year that a Swiss colleague gave me a copy of a book entitled in German *Wilderstand* and

Ergebung by Dietrich Bonhoeffer one the leaders of the Confessing Church in Germany during the war. Its English title *Letters and Papers from Prison*, hardly captures the anguish and struggle of Bonhoeffer's time in Gestapo prisons from April, 1943 until April 9th, 1945 when he was executed.

I took the small book to my one room flat and stayed up all night reading. It opened for me a new window of understanding, not just of Germany and the war but especially of what it means to be a Christian in a world deeply divided and torn apart by greed and power.

In 1937 Bonhoeffer was called by the Confessing Church to head up an 'emergency seminary' for young ministers. The Confessing Church had emerged in response to the rise of Hitler and the Third Reich. While teaching there Bonhoeffer published another of his books, *The Cost of Discipleship*, which was a powerful critique of what he called the "cheap grace"

being offered by the established churches, in pre-war Germany.

Over time Bonhoeffer became deeply involved in the resistance movement against Hitler. As a consequence he was forbidden by the Gestapo to lecture, write or give any public speeches.

One Monday in April, 1943 the Gestapo arrested Bonhoeffer and took him to Tegel prison in Berlin where he spent the first 18 months of his confinement. In July 1944, there was an unsuccessful attempt on Hitler's life and the Gestapo believed Bonhoeffer was indirectly involved in the plot. He was moved from Tegel prison to the Prinz Albert Strasse prison, then to Buchenwald prison, Schönberg prison and finally Flossenbürg where he was executed by hanging.

Letters and Papers is a remarkable book containing his letters to his parents, his fiancée, and some of his close friends plus some of his prayers, poems and reflections on his life and witness in prison.

What emerges is a penetrating insight into the life and faith of an extraordinary human being and his courageous response to the catastrophic events outside his prison cell.

Bonhoeffer was only 39 when he was executed. On New Year's day of 1945, the last of his remarkable life, he wrote a poem he entitled simply 'New Years – 1945'. The last lines of the poem hang in my study to remind me of what it means to follow in the way of Jesus Christ whatever the cost.

"While all the powers of good aid and attend us

Boldly we'll face the future, be what it may.

At even, and at morn, God will befriend us,

And oh, most surely on each new year's day.

This little audacious book continually reminds me that the Christian faith must engage the world and be lived with courage.

SUDDEN SHOCKS AND CHANGING SEASONS

By Rev Peter MacKenzie,
UCANZ executive officer.

Wellington was struck with a sudden tornado-like wind last week and my garden suffered for it. One casualty was my windbreak fence. Along with that lying on the ground I also had to harvest my sweet corn a little earlier than planned – every plant was flattened.

That was a sudden change but there is also the gradual change of autumn taking place in the garden. Plants are shooting into seed, some are finishing their fruiting season, and the leaves are starting to dry out.

In my role as executive officer for Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand (UCANZ) I get to see the wider vision of our churches and experience the storms and changing seasons. There are times when I am called in to give advice on how to pick up after a storm – confidence shattered, communication broken, trust blown away.

At other times I offer advice on the gradual changes taking place – an ageing congregation, tighter budget, burden of property. In nearly every case change is essential if new growth is to occur. The real challenge is to identify the changes that can make a difference in a new season and finding new enthusiasm for the vision.

Cooperative Ventures are not alone in facing the storms and seasons of parish life. In fact, for some a form of cooperation is to find a solution to the issues they face. Working together is seen as a stronger option than struggling alone.

In many areas this means parishes are making connections with each other to provide a firmer foundation for mission, both within and between denominations. The Presbyterian and Methodist regional courts are also finding new ways of working together – trying to work

smarter, not harder.

Coming together, however, does bring some challenges. As Cooperating Ventures have discovered, there has to be give and take when congregations decide to share a faith journey. What they have also found is that, by coming together, an even greater diversity is encouraged.

Parishes (and regional courts) that unite are forced to ask hard questions about what is important, what has become unnecessary, and how to rebuild community. In asking these questions other people often feel able to participate.

There is now a new season for ecumenical cooperation. This season is not like the 1960s where there was a vision for just one church. Rather, this is a time when diversity is acknowledged and each person's place within the garden is affirmed.

There will be new partnerships

formed between denominations, cultures, generations and theologies. But to really work congregations have to have confidence in their own sense of being and then accept that other congregations are different. Only then will the garden begin to bloom again and the storms quickly forgotten.

So what is UCANZ doing about all this? UCANZ Standing Committee meets at the end of March and on the agenda will be discussions on parish oversight, regional court structures, reporting processes and reviewing the Guide to Procedures. These are ongoing discussions and won't be concluded at this meeting (and probably not even this year).

We need to find ways to be the church in today's environment and allow each congregation to express its own sense of mission and purpose irrespective of their denominational background.



Alexis Carmeye lost her home and niece in the January 12th Haitian earthquake.

Life in devastated Haiti

By Greg Jackson

Leogane used to be one of Haiti's largest cities. At the epicentre of the January 12th earthquake, it now it looks like Hiroshima after the nuclear bomb.

We visited Leogane as part of a fact-finding tour with Christian World Service's global partner, the ACT Alliance. As CWS media officer I was seconded to provide ACT Alliance general secretary John Nduna media support and advice.

Leogane and the surrounding rural areas have not received nearly the support that has gone to Port Au Prince though the damage was much worse.

Estimates are that about 90 percent of all buildings in Leogane collapsed in the earthquake with up to 30,000 dead out of a former population of 100,000.

We were humbled by the apocalyptic landscape of Leogane before heading off into the nearby countryside to meet people surviving in post quake uncertainty.

Off the main road and a mile or so down a road rough even by Haitian standards we found a small settlement that is supported by an ACT Alliance team of two, headed up by George Fernhout.

People there include those with no homes, damaged homes, and homes intact that people are too afraid to live in.

George's aid work is completely bottom-up, driven by what the local people have identified as their immediate areas of need. They say their three priority areas are food, shelter, and water and sanitation.

Food is coming from aid supplies for the moment; water is available and relatively easy to get thanks to a high water table. Shelter, both immediate and future, is the key problem.

He takes us to meet a local committee that leads the cluster of displaced people. The effective day to day control of things is vested in these Haitians picked out by their own communities to liaise with any available help.

We then meet some of the locals, starting off with the unique and charming Mother George Bouvais, aged 90.

Mother George is sitting in the shade in what is left of her family compound. Her daughter, Edner,

had a heart attack during the quake and is still in hospital.

Before the quake there had been seven family members in one house and nine in the other. The houses are now wrecks and the family squats in shelters on their land.

Mother George's story gives a snapshot into what had already been a hardscrabble battle to survive before the quake. She and Edner are both widows; nobody in the family had a job or income.

"All my family were in need of help, and it is only thanks to the help from you people since the quake that we are still alive," she said.

Next stop is an optimistic stallholder with a tiny range of clothes and items set up by the side of the road.

Mimose Louis tells us that she is living in a temporary shelter here because her own house is totally collapsed. Her family of eight are all alive and share a basic tent shelter they have built while she tries to make some money from the stall. They have some food, a mattress and a tarpaulin.

Asked what she wants from aid support she says simply, "Somewhere to live again".

We then meet Alexis Marie Carmeye, who shares her tent with her family members. They are all supported by money sent home from relatives working overseas. She too has lost her home in the quake.

"I was out when it hit. I ran home to find my daughter and husband coming out of the rubble like ghosts they had so much dust on them.

"My niece was 15. She was hurt when her school collapsed on her. We put her on the back of a pickup with other injured and they went into town for help.

"There were so many of them lined up that they just put them on the sidewalk in a long line. They dropped her off at 6pm and she lasted until 10pm, when she died."

Like the vast majority of Haitians we met, all the women in this story were gracious, open and willing to share their lives. Having heard their stories we are inspired to renew our efforts to help these women and millions like them in Haiti.

Christian World Service's Haiti Appeal is still open and welcomes further contributions.

Make the switch to Fairtrade



Christian World Service is inviting churches to swap their normal tea, coffee and sugar suppliers for Fair Trade Fortnight, held this year from May 1st to 16th.

Resource material for those wanting to host A Fair Cuppa is available from Christian World Service with information about purchasing supplies direct from Trade Aid.

"We want more churches to switch to Fairtrade this year as part of their commitment to live more justly. It may be a little more expensive but it is an investment in the lives of some of the world's poorest farmers and their families," says CWS campaigns coordinator Gillian Southey.

Fair Trade Fortnight is being celebrated for the fourth year in Aotearoa New Zealand to promote awareness of this growing new market. It is coordinated by the Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand of which CWS is a founding member.

Between 2008 and 2009 Fairtrade retail sales increased by 50 percent across Australia and

New Zealand. This sharp growth reflects the growing recognition by shoppers that they can help small farmers by making a deliberate choice for Fairtrade.

Earlier this month the first Fairtrade branded bananas sourced from the El Guabo Cooperative in Ecuador appeared on some North Island supermarket shelves, and Trade Aid products are now available on line.

Goods bearing the Fairtrade mark come with the guarantee that small farmers get a fairer price for their harvest. As members of a cooperative they receive additional support on growing and marketing crops like coffee, and the whole community benefits through the premium that is spent on agreed priorities like education. The scheme is guaranteed through a rigorous international system.

CWS and Trade Aid offer a joint Fair Trade Church scheme to make the swap to Fairtrade permanent. So far more than 50 churches have joined the scheme.

For more details contact CWS, PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8142 or at cws@cws.org.nz.

**FAIRTRADE
FORTNIGHT
2010
THE BIG SWAP
1-16 MAY**

More than 50 churches have swapped to fairtrade tea and coffee, helping millions of small farmers and their families.

WILL YOU MAKE THE SWAP TO FAIRTRADE?

CWS invites you to join the Big Swap during Fair Trade Fortnight 1-16 May.

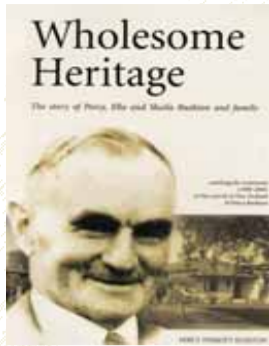
For resources on hosting A Fair Cuppa or to become a Fair Trade Church contact:
Christian World Service
PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8142
PH 0800 74 73 72, cws@cws.org.nz
For more information see www.cws.org.nz



Wholesome Heritage – The story of Percy, Ella and Sheila Rushton and Family

Rev Percy Rushton has chronicled the story of a family that holds a significant place within the life of Methodism in Aotearoa New Zealand. The publication was launched for the centennial (1909-2009) of the arrival in New Zealand of the author's father, Percy, the founder of a family that today numbers about 166 descendants.

The young Staffordshire farmer felt a calling to ordained ministry but tough economic times meant that he looked instead to the British colonies for his future. A meeting with William Shepherd Allen, a visitor to England, whose return to New Zealand was imminent, was the impetus for Percy's departure for the Antipodes. When Percy arrived, Mr Allen, MP and Methodist lay preacher, offered the young man employment on his property near Morrinsville, and encouraged him to develop as a lay preacher and farmer.



Ella's death at 52 was devastating for the family. Percy married Sheila Andrew, and an eleventh child was born.

The author gives an account of the early days of dairying in the district, and the growth of the local settlement. He

Christian faith and the love of farming were the shaping and sustaining forces in Percy's life. The land he bought at Tatuani in the Morrinsville area rewarded his hard work by becoming a productive dairy farm. He met Ella Perrott at a Methodist church picnic, married her, and together they raised a family of ten children.

describes farming techniques and recalls the impact of the Depression years and World War II. His main focus is the life of the family: each member is profiled, there is a tour of the homestead, and recollections of 'fun and games'. Substantial chapters chart the development of the farm, and discuss the family's involvement in local church activities.

A fine collection of photographs presents portraits and family groups, the farm, the community, the many weddings and the centennial celebrations. Appendices provide genealogical information and a bibliography.

'Young' Percy has done the family proud, and his history will be treasured by them. Other readers will find much to enjoy and honour in this story of a good Methodist man who lived out his Christian principles and gifted them to his descendants.

*By Percy Rushton
2009, Highwarden Publications, 144 pages
Reviewer: Diana Roberts*

Eternal Life: A New Vision – Beyond Religion, Beyond Theism, Beyond Heaven and Hell

It is possible, at least from a relentlessly logical point of view, that everything the church has believed for centuries, what the martyrs died for, and what motivates thousands of people every day to become Christians is a big mistake. It is possible, I suppose, that the theologians really are engaged in some kind of big conspiracy to keep us from understanding what they all know, that the gospel is a charming fairytale that needs to be discarded or reinvented in order for us to grow up. It's logically possible... It's just not very probable.

It's also possible that Bishop Spong is just someone who has lost his faith but does not have the intellectual courage to admit it. In his new book he nails his colours to the mast.

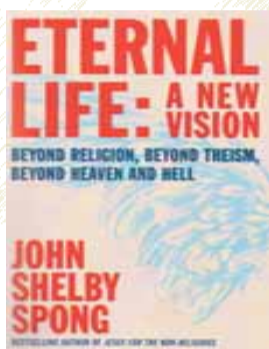
He writes: "There is no supernatural God who lives above the sky or beyond the universe. There is no supernatural God who can be understood as an animating spirit, Earth Mother, masculine tribal deity or external monotheistic being. There is no parental deity watching over us from whom we can expect help. There is no deity which we can flatter into acting favourably or manipulate by being good. There are no record books and no heavenly judge keeping them to serve as the basis on which human beings will be rewarded or punished.

"There is also no way that life can be made to be fair or that a divine figure can be blamed for its unfairness. Heaven and hell are human constructs designed to make fair in some ultimate way the unfairness of life. The idea that in an afterlife the unfairness of this world will be rectified is a pious dream, a toe dip into unreality. Life is lived at the whim of luck and chance, and no-one can earn the good fortune or luck and chance" (pg 107).

You will recognise the fighting words, and the underlying assumptions, for example, that faith is about reward for good behaviour. Has he read Paul? Does he know about grace? Has he any inkling of the parable of the Prodigal Son?

This extended quote is a fair summary of the first third of this book. You can work out pretty easily for yourself which sticks he uses to thrash out each of his points. Woven into his sideswipes at simplistic beliefs are more basic complaints, and here the second third of the book begins.

There he describes his conversion from a Bible Belt fundamentalist naiveté, in which Darwin posed a huge threat to his faith, and where racism besmirched not just the people who practice it but the Bible from which they claim to take



church's (or most other religions') claim that this is not all there is.

This is maturity, according to Spong. Realising this frees us from the supposed bonds of Old Religion into a new world of which he appoints himself the new teacher.

But it is not new. Not at all original. Not at all unfamiliar to anyone who has read much theology.

My basic argument with Spong concerns his assumption that the world he experiences is all there is. Spong's is a relentlessly material world, a world of dimensionality that can be measured and reproduced, that can be understood in our current Western mindset.

His baseline premise, as he retells the gospel story, is that the only thing different about Jesus was some kind of God-consciousness his followers subsequently expressed in heightened language to express a deep spiritual truth. (That truth, incidentally, is that we are all gods or can become gods. Not a very original claim, and hardly one to change anyone's life.)

He dresses it up, e.g., "the Christ-path is above all else a human path, the sign that the doorway into God is always the sign into our own humanity" (p183) but the tenet is very familiar to anyone who has read any of the critics of Christianity.

Convinced that the stories of fire are myths...or in his words "meaningful stories", Spong is like a fish, who apprehends that wetness is the only possible reality and cannot conceive of dryness. He cannot imagine anything other than that which he has personally experienced or can explain for himself.

The New Testament's claim is that Jesus was different, that he stood in some way that neither we nor they fully understood alongside and in creation. The miraculous and the incomprehensible, far from being a literary device that

their ideas. He then proceeds to cheerfully throw the baby out with the bathwater: if parts are untrue, why none of it is!

The last third of the book, where his thesis is revealed, I find the weakest of all. His conclusion is, unsurprisingly, that eternal life is just being remembered. There is nothing personal, nothing outside our existing reality, nothing of the

point to some deeper truth, were signs and wonders that we might believe this.

The gospel story is of God working towards an ongoing relationship with us through Jesus Christ. We have a record of this in the Bible that we have to work to understand. It is perhaps a lifetime's work, one illuminated by the lives of many men and women of faith through history, one where we stumble and fumble and gradually come to understand what that divine relationship means.

I appreciated the chance to read this book, if only to try to understand why people go to hear him and Richard Dawkins. These two really do sit in very similar places, though one draws a pension and the other an artillery barrage from the Church. Both have a certain appeal if you find a world of certainties and absolutes important, if you have been burned by fundamentalist crudities, and if the difficulties of understanding the Bible get in the way of a relationship with God. There are other solutions to this, ways of reading the Bible that are not a crude dismantling of the Jesus story or of people who have experienced God through history.

Ultimately Bishop Spong offers nothing of value in everyday life, nothing of hope, nothing beyond criticism of the Church's faults. For all his claims to a new spirituality, there is nothing spiritual in his offering, nothing but pop psychology overlaid with self-help language.

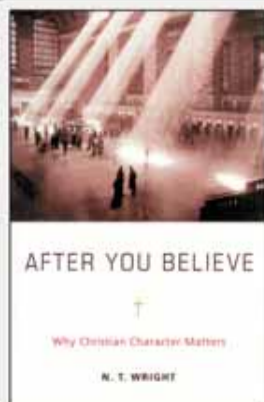
In contrast, I think of people who have received the Gospel with joy, who receive inklings of that unknowable reality in near death experiences, who have overcome addictions and destructive behaviours and prejudices because they understand themselves in relationship with a God who loves...and there's none of that to be found anywhere in this.

At the end of the day, Spong's god is too small and too human. His god is a reflection of his own tastes and perspectives, his own vision and lack of it.

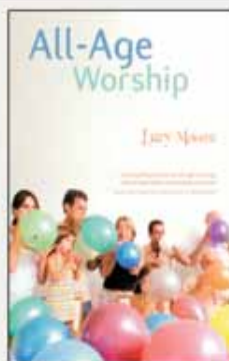
I suggested earlier a metaphor of a fish who couldn't understand dryness...it was actually a tadpole. It changed one day, metamorphosed into a frog and hopped out onto dry land, using lungs and breathing air. Still wet, it was able to hop up to the bonfire on the beach whose existence it had denied.

How close it went to the fire depends upon how tenaciously it held to former beliefs and understandings, or how humble it was in the face of things it could never have understood underwater.

*By John Spong
Harper Collins, 2009, 288 pages
Reviewer: Alan K Webster*



After You Believe
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ON SCREEN

It should work. Computer animation should be perfect for bringing to life a masterpiece of literary nonsense, otherwise known as Alice in Wonderland. Especially in the hands of a seasoned Hollywood director (Tim Burton) and a genuine Hollywood star (Johnny Depp).

It should work. Sadly, it didn't, not for the 12 year old, nor her accompanying father.

Tim Burton's Alice in Wonderland is a playful reinterpretation of themes and characters from Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and the sequel, Through the Looking-Glass (written by Charles Lutwidge Dodgson under the pseudonym, Lewis Carroll).

Alice, now grown up, faces a marriage proposal. She finds herself caught between family expectation and personal dreams of freedom and adventure. Fleeing the decision, she finds herself falling down her childhood rabbit hole, returning to a wonderland filled with painted roses, competing Queens, a grinning Cheshire Cat and a Mad Hatter. Yet her search for identity continues, for if she is the real Alice, she is fated to fight the fearsome Jaberwockie.

And so, for 108 minutes, Alice struggles to find her true self. The film is thus a mirror of her adult world, her

search for the real Alice.

Perhaps this is why the film struggles to work. It fails to find an audience. If it's a kids movie, why weight it down with adult themes? If it's a children's fantasy, why create scenes that remain too scary for those needing parental guidance? As a kids book, how do you overcome that common cliché in which an innocent child falls into a world of fantasy?

The redeeming features are few. They include the acting of Johnny Depp (well known for starring roles in The Pirates of the Caribbean saga, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and Chocolat), who is a superbly sinister and clearly Mad Hatter.

Another is the cinematic wonderland of stunning visual effects. (Although audience response to the 3D version remains mixed.) Scenes like the Mad Hatter's tea party, in which Alice shrinks and expands, all the while surrounded by unchanging characters, are compelling pieces of cinematic creativity.

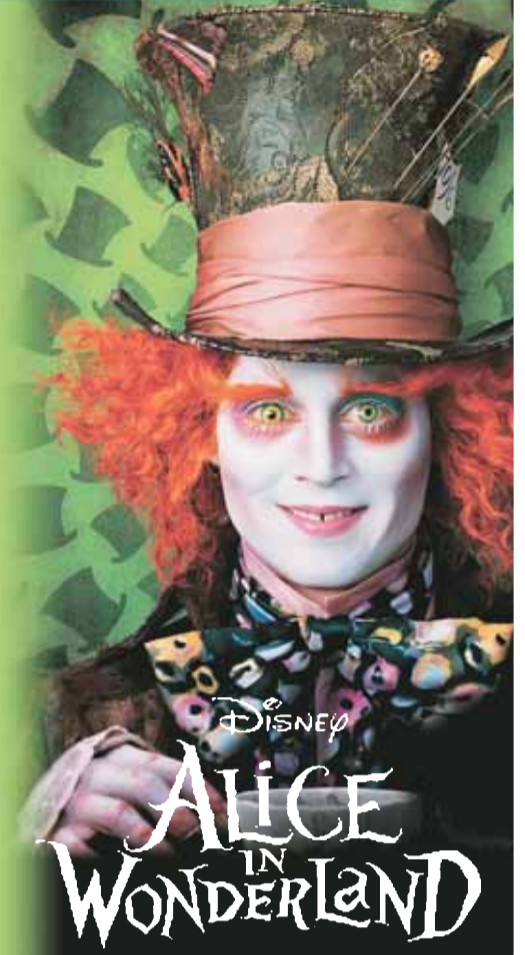
Yet a film is the sum of more than the stunning effects or the best efforts of acting A-listers. Without a coherent plotline, Alice in Wonderland simply wobbles toward a cinematic rabbit hole. It looks fantastic, but ends up tumbling into incoherence.

Alice in Wonderland fantastic facts file

- The original book has been translated into 125 languages and has been adapted to the big screen 24 times.
- The book began life as a story told to bored kids during a punt up the River Thames.
- Kiwi viewers might note the use of a koru, not as a symbol of new life, but amid a dark sinister forest setting.
- Well known 'Alice' phrases now in common usage include the lines "Off with his head" and "Curiouser and curiouser".
- Mathematical concepts are ingrained in the book.
- In Chapter Eight, where three cards paint white roses red, may be a reference to the Wars of the Roses.
- The author was a church minister. So would this make this piece of literature "Christian"?

Rev Dr Steve Taylor is director of Missiology at Uniting College of Theology and Leadership, Adelaide, Australia. He is the author of *The Out of Bounds Church?* (Zondervan, 2005) and writes regularly at www.emergentkiwi.org.nz.

A film review by Rev Dr Steve Taylor



EASTER FROM LUKE'S GOSPEL

Easter is an Old English word based on *Eostre* or *Eastre* – the goddess of spring. The word east – place of sunrise also comes from this root. *Spring* and the *Resurrection* both celebrate new life so early Christians combined the two festivals and called the event Easter. As we are in Year C of the Lectionary this month's challenge comes from Luke.

Fill in the gaps with nouns from Luke chapter 22 of the Good News Bible.

Bible Challenge

the Festival of Unleavened
the lambs for the Passover
follow him into the
took his place at the
I will not drink this
The leader must be like the

___ E ___
___ A ___
___ S ___
___ T ___
___ E ___
___ R ___

verse
(1)
(7)
(10)
(14)
(18)
(26)

Just as my ___ has given me
the twelve ___ of Israel
separate the ___ from the bad
I have prayed for you,

F ___
R ___
O ___
M ___

(29)
(30)
(31)
(32)

Peter answered, ___ I am ready
without ___, bag, or shoes
Is it with a ___ that you betray
he shared the ___ of criminals
went to the Mount of

L ___
U ___
K ___
E ___
S ___

(33)
(35)
(47)
(37)
(39)

an ___ from Heaven appeared
sweat was like ___ of blood
Shall we use our
the house of the High
the ___ of the law met
we ___ have heard

___ G ___
___ O ___
___ S ___
___ P ___
___ E ___
___ L ___

(43)
(44)
(49)
(57)
(66)
(71)

Answers: Easter from Luke's Gospel
bread, meal, house, table, wine, servant, Father, Father, tribes, good, Simon, Lord, purse, kiss, fate, Olive, angel, drops, swords, Priest, teachers, ourselves

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GOLDIE COLLEGE NEEDS A REBOOT

While computers can be a pain in the neck, in this day and age it is a bigger pain in the neck to be without them. This is the problem faced by Goldie College.

Run by the Solomon Islands United Church, Goldie College sets a high educational standard and has produced a number of Solomon Island leaders. Goldie College students have been sought after by many employers including the government.

However Goldie College Principal, Tito Mamani, says that at Forms 6 and 7 levels the college is now behind other national secondary schools in pupil computer literacy. The college has four computers provided by the government but with classes of 40 pupils that is inadequate.

Consequently Goldie College pupils now experience difficulty in using computers when they go on to tertiary education or seek employment. It has become very important for the College to set a high standard in computer literacy.

The school badly needs a well equipped computer lab with a reasonable number of computers for pupil learning and use.

To address this situation, Methodist Church of NZ Mission and Ecumenical has launched an appeal to raise funds to help outfit a computer lab at Goldie College, and to purchase more computers.

You can send donations for the Goldie College computer equipment appeal Rev John Roberts, 22a Penney Avenue, Mt Roskill, Auckland 1041.

Cheques should be made out to Methodist Mission and Ecumenical and accompanied by a note stating it is for the Goldie College Computer Appeal. Methodist Mission and Ecumenical is registered with the Charities commission so you can claim a tax rebate on the donation.



LEADERS BAND TOGETHER... IT'S TIME!



Sinoti Samoa youth leaders met last month for a full-on weekend of workshops and fun.

By Mataiva Robertson
A wise person said "If you fail to honour your people, they will fail to honour you. And it is said of a good leader that when the work is done, the aim fulfilled, the people will say, "We did this ourselves".

On the weekend of March 19th to 21st, Sinoti Samoa Tupulaga (Youth) held their first leadership retreat in Auckland. The leaders of each church youth group within Sinoti Samoa including Hawkes

Bay, Auckland, Taranaki, Wellington and Manukau all came together to learn, reflect and grow as youth leaders.

This gathering came about due to a need identified by the youth for training in this very important area.

It was a pretty full-on weekend with four workshops led by various people from within the Methodist Church of New Zealand:

1. Self awareness and balance – TeRito Peyroux (Tauivi

youth facilitator);

2. Relationships and responsibilities – Rev Aso Samoa Saleupolu (Director of Tauivi and Pasefika ministries);

3. Choices and concerns – Filo Tu and Edna Te'o (Sinoti Samoa national youth liaison officers - NYLO);

4. Mission and outreach – Rev Nigel Hanscamp (director of English speaking ministries).

We also had two practical activities. First was at the Auckland

Secondary Schools Polynesian Festival in Manukau.

The task was to interview youth about what makes a leader and whether it is important to have leaders. We were also asked to observe the roles of leaders through watching performances at the PolyFest.

The second activity involved role-playing situations where different leadership styles were used. The 'Taeao Fou' youth from Mangere Central Methodist Parish were invited to join camp and observe and give their opinions about the different types of leaders portrayed and which leader they wanted and could relate to.

The different leadership styles were the self centred, paternalistic/father figure, and by the book leaders. It was very interesting to see what Taeao Fou youth decided was the type of leader they preferred. They also blessed the campers with a performance.

This weekend could not have been possible without the support of the Sinoti Samoa leaders – the superintendent and ministers – as well as other Church leaders and

the organising committee.

Other key people were the director of Pasefika ministries, chaplains and the support people David Palelei and Matila Muliaina.

Also, of course, the leaders and other youth representatives. And last but by all means NOT least - our Heavenly Father.

Edna Te'o says "We were so blessed to see the fruits of our dream for this weekend and how it has encouraged, inspired and empowered our youth in doing God's mission".

May God's name be praised in everything we do.

"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" 1 Timothy 4:1.

If you have any great programmes happening within your church please feel free to drop me a line and let us all journey together. Touchstone's Youth Channel is open to all... so share what is happening in your neighbourhood, or your concerns and issues.

Email me at mdrobertson08@gmail.com or text 021 734 694. Be blessed.

Kidz Korna!

KIDZ @ ST MARKS SOMERFIELD

Welcome to April's Kidz Korna. We are now celebrating Easter, the most important Christian celebration. It reminds us that Jesus gave his life for us and is still alive even though we cannot see him. However, if we look around us we can see our wonderful world that God has created. When I was a little girl we used to go for a 'Thank you to God' walk. We would look around us and find lots of things to say thank you for - trees, birds, flowers, sunshine and rain, clouds in the sky. Why don't you try doing that on your way to school?

We live in God's wonderful world.



St Marks kids put on dramas and have made up their own music.

and Moses. The highlight of each year is the Christmas drama on Christmas Eve.

With only a few rehearsals and a borrowed sound system with clip-on microphones for each actor, the quality of these productions has been very good. A lot of effort is put into finding really interesting dramas that offer a fresh angle on the birth of Jesus. Last year the play was based on a school visit to an exhibition of Rembrandt's paintings of the Incarnation.

But the St Marks children do a lot more than drama. They wrote a song about Zaccheus, and helped compose a Creation Symphony with each child playing an original piece to express their feelings about one of the days of creation. They also have an unfinished painting of Noah and the Ark.

Once or twice every term we also have a fun social event. The most recent was a fish 'n chip games evening attended by 14 kids and young people and eight adults.

On Anzac weekend we plan to have a sleepover in Akaroa for the older children. One of the highlights of this will be a walking rally around the streets of Akaroa!

On a recent Sunday no one in the children's group at St Mark Methodist Church in Christchurch wanted to go home when church was finished! They were having too much fun floor playing a board game called the Cana Challenge'.

Their presbyter Rev Mark Gibson created the board game as part of the February focus on the story of Jesus at the wedding in Cana. This was the very first time it was ever played and everyone wanted to see who would finish first.

A lot of importance is put on creativity, fun and story in the children's ministry at St Marks. Every month the congregation explores one of the great stories of our faith.

This includes the children's group, which nearly always has adults and the presbyter involved in it.

The children's group has rehearsed and performed quite a few original dramas based on such stories as Jesus in the Wilderness, Cornelius, the Good Samaritan, the Widow's Offering, David and Goliath,



Children and friends play the Cana Challenge Board Game.

THIS MONTH'S PUZZLE

Try again! Last month we printed the word sudoku with the wrong shaped boxes. Here is again the right way...
 Enter letters into the empty squares so that every row, every column and every 3x2 box contains all the letters from the word CARING.

N	A			C	I
I		G			A
				I	
	N				
A			I		R
R	I			G	C

EASTER QUIZ

- 1) Who went to the tomb on Sunday morning?
- 2) What did the angel say to the women?
- 3) Who did the women run to to tell their news?
- 4) Where did Jesus tell his followers to go to meet him?

Camp launches young people on path to leadership



A youth camp for Waikato churches presented workshops to help them discover their leadership skills.

Mild mannered teenagers transformed into dynamic leaders. This was the goal of an ecumenical youth camp that a group of Waikato churches held at Waihi Beach at the start of the school year.

About 50 people – 27 young people aged 10 to 13 and their mentors – attended the weekend event at the Anglican Te Rau Aroha campsite.

Among them was a group from Chartwell Cooperating Parish in Hamilton. Chartwell presbyter Rev Anne Mills says the young people from the

congregation are 'Leaders in Training'. They have committed themselves to work with a mentor from their church for a year. If they do so and they meet six criteria they will become 'Transformers'.

The weekend programme was led by the coordinators of the Presbyterian Church's Kids Friendly programme, Jill Kayser and Lorraine Morgan. A critical part of the weekend was to provide the young people workshops and other opportunities to explore their own gifts so they can decide what they have to offer others.

"We want the children to decide what to offer the congregation rather than for us to ask them to do take responsibility for particular tasks," Anne says.

"They could for example decide they want to offer hospitality through doing morning tea or run the data projector. Our group has decided to sponsor a World Vision child so they are doing regular fund raising. This was their suggestion.

"They are also organising a treasure hunt for Sunday school in which the clues tell the story of Easter. In fact we have to rein them in so they don't overload themselves with commitments."

The camp was a successful and fun start to the Transformers programme. Young people made new friends and learned new skills that will help them become leaders.



The members of the former St Johns and St Davids Methodist congregations brought prized objects from their churches to place in their new home, Papanui Methodist Church.

One door opens, another shuts

Last month Christchurch North Methodist Parish held a bittersweet service.

The worship service at Papanui Methodist Church marked both the opening of that congregation's refurbished building and the closing of two other congregations, St Davids and St Johns.

The decision to consolidate the three congregations in one site was not an easy one and it took several years to work through, says parish steward Patricia Teague.

"We are an aging and shrinking parish, and St Davids and St Johns are older buildings. We felt it would be a better use of our assets and allow us to do a better job of ministry if we focused on building," Patricia says.

Despite many of its members getting on in age, Christchurch North Parish is very outward looking.

It runs several outreach programmes including Handiscope Centre for the disabled, and a jigsaw puzzle library used by about 80 families, many of which have children with coordination or concentration difficulties.

It holds weekly musical programme for preschoolers and a series of musical matinee concerts for the community. And it organises the 'Touch of Class' linen sale to raise money for a local charity hospital.

Patricia says the St Davids property will be sold by auction and the St Johns property will become home to Christchurch's growing Fijian Methodist Congregation.

"The sale of St Davids has allowed us to do some alterations to the Papanui Church building that will make it a more flexible site. The Church had a sloping floor, and it has been levelled and carpeted. We have replaced the pews with chairs."

Patricia says a few people have dropped out of the parish since St Davids and St Johns have been closed, but most have made the shift to Papanui. They have brought with them some prized items from the two churches.

Another good thing about operating at one site, she observes, is that presbyter Rev Saikolone Taufa is now less stressed because he only has to lead Sunday worship at one site.

The Great Cambridge Cover Up

Cambridge Union Parish has made a notable contribution to Operation Cover-Up, which provides blankets to orphanages and others in need in Eastern Europe. The Parish's knitters made 13 blankets between September 2009 and March 2010.

Convenor of the knitting group, Rosaline Civil says about 20 women in the Parish knit for Operation Cover-Up. Several of them belong to

a wider Cambridge community Knit and Natter group.

Rosaline says the church-based knitters have been going for about four years. She is very grateful to the Cambridge Union Parish Op Shop for its support. For the past years the Op Shop has used one of its community grants to buy knitting yarn for the group.



Cambridge Union Parish knitters: Back row (l to r): Margaret Gover, Vivienne Carr, Jean Prouting, Jenny Folkerts, Earleen Hancock, Vi Barton. Front row: Ros Randle, Vera Treble, Peg Amies, Ruth Greer, Isobel Fraser, Nancy Wallace, and Rosaline Civil. Photo by Bryan Jenkins.

Remembering Rev Doug Burt, great friend of Auckland Archives

METHODIST ARCHIVES

By Jill Weeks

After Auckland Archives were moved from the central business district to 409 Great South Road in 1992 along with other departments of the Methodist Church, there was a great deal of work to do to create order to set out and arrange the many boxes of parish material, books, photographs and other treasures.

The volunteer helpers in the Archives then numbered six or seven experienced workers and they willingly tackled as much as possible but there were also many inquirers and researchers who needed help. Into this busy area, we welcomed Doug Burt.

Rev Douglas Howard Burt had entered the Methodist ministry in 1949. He served in many parishes around New Zealand. Upon retirement he had accepted the care and oversight of the philatelic collection bequeathed under the will of the late Reverend Harry Voyce, deposited with the Auckland Archives.

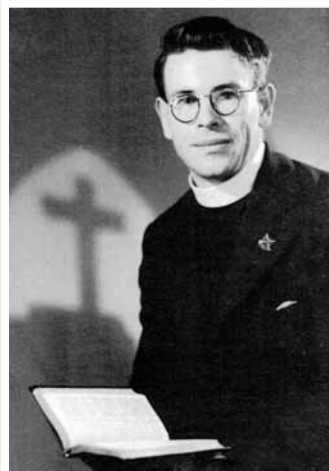
Having only just begun his retirement, it was a great sadness when his wife Phyllis

died in a tragic accident. Doug then suffered a stroke and on recovering went to live in one of the Aldersgate apartments in Mount Eden.

We were glad when he felt able to travel to the Archives on Tuesdays, when this was possible and begin helping with some of our work. As the months went by, it seemed he was relaxing and beginning to enjoy being part of the team.

His interest in New Zealand history was obvious and he was a great source of help when some researcher needed information about the areas where Doug had served.

One of his special concerns was with those who had served as lay preachers –



Rev Douglas Howard Burt

'home missionaries' – and he undertook the daunting task to list everyone who had been involved, even if their service had not been completed. We have been left with a great resource, thanks to Doug's meticulous work.

Another special treasure is the result of a tour taken with Dave Roberts, who also helped in the Archives. They visited and photographed all the churches included in William Morley's 1902 History of New Zealand Methodism.

Before Doug left the Archives he had begun to work on a topic that was very close to his heart. This was 'Saddlebags and Navvies' about the Methodist mission to railway construction workers of the

North Island main trunk line, 1895 – 1908. Happily, this was completed and published by the Wesley Historical Society before Doug showed signs of failing health and went to live in Apirangi Village in Te Kauwhata, Waikato.

As well as these particular writings, of course, Doug contributed much to the work of the Archives and improved knowledge about areas of New Zealand that was needed. He was a delightful raconteur with a gentle humour and a great deal to tell us of his service in many parts of New Zealand.

Best of all, he had a way of quietly talking about his faith journey, sometimes passing on short prayers which he had written. We missed him so much when he could no longer travel to be with us but we were glad he was nearer to his family and being well looked after.

Doug Burt died at Aparangi Village, on January 25th. His funeral was held at Huntly Co-operating Parish.



Ko e ngaahi Potungaue Talavou & Finemui 'e 16 'i he Laka Fakaava 'o e Sipoti Tapuaki Games.

TAPUAKI GAMES

Vahenga Ngaue 'Aokalani/Manukau

Ne lava lelei 'a e 'aho sipoti "Tapuaki Games" 'a e ngaahi Potungaue To'utupu 'o e Vahenga 'Aokalani/Manukau 'i he 'aho 6 'o Ma'asi 2010 'i he Paaka Te Atatu South. Na'e kau mai ki ai 'a e Potungaue Talavou 'e 16 mei he Vahenga Ngaue pea kuo fakahingoa 'a e 'aho Sipoti ni ko e "Tapuaki Games".

Ko e toki me'a fakafiefia mo fakamafana mo'oni 'a e tokolahi 'a e ngaahi to'utupu na'a nau kau mai ki he fe'auhii pea mo e kau mamataa – pea toe 'amu atu foki ko e tokolahi 'a e ngaahi matu'a na'a nau lava ange 'o poupu ki he fanau.

Na'e kamata 'a e 'aho 'aki ha laka 'a e ngaahi timi sipoti pea na'e tataki e laka 'e he kau ifi 'a e Siasi Onehunga pea ko e ouau fakaava na'e fakahoko ia 'e Faifekau Mosese Manukia. Na'e fakahoko foki 'e he talavou ko Luatangi Vatavei ha lea fakalotolahi ki he to'utupu fekau'aki mo e kau 'a e 'Eiki ki he mo'ui 'a e tokotaha sipoti. 'Oku 'ikai sola 'a Luatangi, he ko e taha pe ia mei he to'utupu 'o e Vahenga Ngaue 'Aokalani/Manukau na'a ne va'inga 'akapulu 'i Siapani 'o ne kau atu 'i he timi 'akapulu fakafonua 'o Siapani he ngaahi

ta'u lahi.

Ko e ngaahi va'inga na'e fakahoko 'i he Sipoti ni ko e Voipolo, 'Akapulu Malemale (Touch), mo Netipolo pea 'i he kamata leva 'a e fe'auhi sipoti na'e mahino 'aupito 'a e tokolahi 'o 'etau fanau 'oku nau taleniti'ia he sipoti.

'I he Volipolo, na'e kalasi 'e ua 'a e va'inga 'a ia ko e kalasi 'a e Tamaiki Tangata mo e kalasi 'a e Tamaiki Fefine. 'I he kalasi 'a e Tamaiki Tangata, na'e fainolo ai 'a Ponsonby mo Epsom. 'I he kalasi 'a e Tamaiki Fefine, na'e fainolo ai 'a New Lynn mo Glen Innes

'I he Netipolo, na'e kalasi 'e ua 'a e va'inga 'a ia ko e kalasi 'a e Tamaiki Fefine Lalahi (Senior Girls) pea mo e kalasi 'a e Tamaiki Fefine Iiki (Junior Girls Under 18's). 'I he kalasi 'a e Tamaiki Fefine Lalahi, na'e fainolo ai 'a Ponsonby mo Henderson. 'I he kalasi 'a e Tamaiki Fefine Iiki, na'e fainolo ai 'a Dominion mo Epsom.

'I he 'Akapulu Malemale, na'e kalasi 'e ua 'a e va'inga 'a ia ko e kalasi 'a e Tamaiki Tangata Lalahi (Senior Boys) pea mo e kalasi 'a e Tamaiki Tangata Iiki (Junior Boys Under 18's). 'I he kalasi 'a e Tamaiki

Tangata Iiki, na'e fainolo ai 'a Ellerslie mo Papatoetoe. 'I he kalasi 'a e Tamaiki Tangata Lalahi, na'e fainolo ai 'a Dominion mo Ellerslie.

Kau Ikuna he Ngaahi Sipoti

'Akapuku Malemale Tamaiki Tangata Lalahi - Ellerslie. 'Akapulu Malemale Tamaiki Tangata Iiki - Ellerslie. Netipolo Tamaiki Fefine Lalahi - Ponsonby. Netipolo Tamaiki Fefine Iiki - Dominion. Volipolo Tamaiki Tangata - Ponsonby. Volipolo Tamaiki Fefine - New Lynn.

Na'e foaki foki 'a e sila Sportsmanship Shield ki he Potungaue To'utupu maau taha, fiefia taha, tauhi taimi lelei taha, mo faka'apa'apa ki he kau fakamaau mo e kaungaa va'inga fakatou'osi, pea na'e ma'u ia 'e he Potungaue To'utupu 'a Mangere (Lotofale'ia). Na'e foaki ia 'e he Faifekau Mele Suipi Latu fakataha mo e ngaahi ipu mo ngaahi sila ki he ngaahi potungaue na'a nau 'ikuna 'a e ngaahi va'inga taki taha pea na'a ne fakahoko ai pe mo e ouau tapuni 'o e Tapuaki Games 2010.

Tau nofo fakana'una'u ki he ta'u 2011.



Ko e ongo timi 'Akapulu Malemale Tamaiki Tangata Lalahi 'a Ellerslie mo Dominion 'oku nau fe'iloaki 'i he hili 'a e tau fainolo. Na'e 'ikuna 'e timi Ellerslie 'a e fainolo.

Mei he Tesi 'a e Faifekau Sea

FAKAFETA'I, KUO TOETU'U 'A E 'EIKI, KUO TOETU'U MO'ONI, HALELUIA!!

Fakatauange ke ho'ata 'i he mo'ui 'a e kakai Metotisi Tonga he tapa kotoa pe 'o Aotearoa kuo toetu'u mo'oni 'a Sisu. Ke ha 'a e 'imisi 'o Sisu Toetu'u 'i he 'etau lea mo e to'onga kae 'uma'aa hotau va mo hotau kaungafononga, 'i api he famili mo e kainga, 'i he siasi, 'i 'apiako, ngaue'anga pea mo 'etau fekau'aki 'i he komiuniti.

'Oku ou talamonu atu moe lotu ki he aofangatuku 'o e ngaahi 'Apatanga Pekia kotoa pe, KE TO E 'OFA 'i he ngaahi lotofale 'o e Siasi pea ke tau fakaakeake ai 'i Laumalie pea tala ai 'a Kalaisi Toetu'u 'i he 'etau mo'ui faka'aho.

'Oku ou fakamalo atu ki he Vahe Uelingatoni mo e ngaahi Kolonia Metotisi 'i hono 'ataakai 'i he lotu mo e ngaue totoivi ne mou fai 'otau Ikuna ai 'ia Sisu 'i he 'uluaki fakataha Vahefonua 'o e ta'u ni 'i Fepueli. Fakafeta'i ki he 'Eiki 'etau mataa 'a e fakatahataha mo e ngaahi feohi'anga fakalaumalie, melino mo fiefia. Fakamalo atu he ngaahi hiva ne mou teuteu 'o fai'aki 'etau fakalangilangi 'Otua pea pehe foki ki he ngaahi tepile 'ilo laulotaha ne mou fai hono tokonaki mo teuteu 'o makona mo malohi ai 'a e kau fakataha mo e kotoa 'o e kau 'a'ahi.

'Oku tau fakamalo foki ki he fakafefie lea 'o e Vahefonua, Faifekau Toketa Siotame Havea 'i he'ene ngaahi ako, lotu mo e poupu kuo tau ta'imalie ai. Fakatauange ke hoko pe kotoa eni ko e tapuaki ki he 'etau fononga pilikimi 'oku fai mei taimi ki 'Itaniti.

Na'e lava lelei 'i he Sapate 21 Ma'asi 2010 'a e fakanofu 'o Faifekau Kepu Moa ko e Faifekau Pule 'o e Vahenga Ngaue Kosipeli 'i Christchurch. Na'e lava ai foki moe polokalama ako 'aho kakato 'o e kau Taki Lotu 'o Gisborne na'e fakahoko 'i he 'Ofisi Lahi 'o e Siasi, Connexional Office he Monite 22 Ma'asi. Ko hono teu 'i e kau Taki ni ke nau tauhi 'a e Vahenga Ngaue Tonga 'i Gisborne 'o a'u ki ha taimi 'e toki fakanofu ai ha Faifekau Pule ki he Vahenga Ngaue ni. Koe fakaiikiiki 'e toki fakakakato 'i he kaha'u vave ni mai.

'Oku ou fakamalo atu ki he ngaahi ngaue kotoa pe 'o e kuohili, ko'eni, moe kaha'u 'oku mou fai ma'ae 'Otua 'o ngaholo ai e Vaka 'o Hono Siasi 'i he Vahefonua Tonga O Aotearoa. Ke 'O'ona ai pe 'a e Langilangi mo e Kololia. 'Oku ou tu'a'ofa atu mo e lotu hufia.

Setaita Tokilupe T. Kinahoi Veikune.

Potungaue 'a e Kakai Fefine Tonga 'o e Siasi Metotisi 'o Nu'u Sila

Na'e fakahoko 'a e Fakataha 'a e Vahefonua 'a e Kakai Fefine Tonga 'o e Siasi Metotisi 'o Nu'u Sila (TDNZMWF) he 'aho Falaite, 26 Fepueli 2010 'i he holo 'o e Siasi Wesley-Taranaki, Wellington.

Ko e fakataha fakakoloa eni pea ko e fuofua fakataha eni 'a e Palesiteni fo'ou 'a e Potungaue, Silila Kilikiti, 'a ia kuo ne fetongi mo hoko atu 'a e toenga 'o e ta'u ngaue 'e tolu 'o e Palesiteni malolo, Seini Mafi Filiiai, kuo ne foki atu ki Tonga mo hono famili ke hoko atu 'a e taliui ki he ngaue 'a e 'Eiki mo e Konifelenisi SUTT.

Na'e kau ki he fakataha ni 'a e Faifekau Sea VTOA, Faifekau Setaita Kinahoi Veikune ko e Palesiteni 'o e Potungaue 'a Fafine 'a 'Aokalani-Manukau, kae 'uma'a 'a e ngaahi hoa 'o e kau faifekau, kau setuata, mo e kau fakafongua 'e 38 mei he ngaahi Potungaue 'a Fafine 'i he tapa kehekehe 'o Nu'u Sila ni.

Ne mahino mei he ngaahi lipooti ngaue ne a'utaki mai ki he fakataha'anga ni 'a e ngaue 'osikiavelenga 'a e kau fefine fakakolo mo fakasiasi 'i hono ngaue'ia 'a e ngaahi polokalama kehekehe 'a e potungaue 'o hange ko e Kaluseti, Akotapu, Ako Tohitapu, 'A'ahi, kae 'uma'a hono fakalele 'a e ngahi Polokalama Tokoni kehekehe. Fakafeta'i e ngaue!

Ko ngaahi Ngaue ki he kaha'u 'a e potungaue 'oku kau ai 'a e polokalama Semina Fakafeitu'u 'a ia 'e fakahoko he 'aho Tokonaki 29 'o Me 2010 pea ko hono kaveinga ko e "Kau Fefine Fetauhi'aki Fakakovinante mo Sisu" (Women's Covenant Relationship with God) pea ko e fakakakato eni 'a e polokalama mei he Palani Ngaue 2009/2010. 'Oku takitaha fua fakafeitu'u pe 'a e fakamole fakapa'anga 'o e polokalama ni pea

'oku 'i ai 'a e 'amanaki lelei 'e malava pe 'e he ngaahi potungaue 'a fafine 'o fakahoko lelei 'a e taumu'a ngaue ni.

Na'e toe tufaki ai pe foki mo e Palani Ngaue & Patiseti 2010/2011 (fakaangaanga) ke foki atu mo e kau fakafongua 'o talanoa'ia pea ke toki fakafoki mai ki he Fakataha Fakata'u, Falaite 6 'Aokosi 2010, ke fakapapau'ia ai. Ko e Palani Ngaue ni 'oku kau ai 'a e fokotu'utu'u ke fai 'a e Po Hiva Fakafeta'i 'i 'Okatopa 2010 pea mo e 'Apatanga ke fakahoko he ta'u 2011 ki Aokalani.

Na'e tali foki 'e he fakataha ke to'o 'a e \$1,000.00 Special Project mei he patiseti lolotonga 2009/2010 'o 'ave ki he NZ MWF pea ke ngaue 'a e Komiti Pule ki hono vahevahe mo fakahingoa 'ae pa'anga ni ki he ngaahi Projects kehekehe'ae NZMWF.

Na'e fakafiefia foki ko e ma'u fakataha 'a e kau fakafongua mei Tauranga pea na'a nau lava mai mo 'enau kole mo 'enau faka'amu ke fokotu'u ha'anau Potungaue 'a Fafine. Ko ia, ne tali lelei 'e he fakataha ke kau 'a Tauranga 'i he Polokalama 'A'ahi 'a e Komiti Pule pea ke fai eni 'i he faingamalie vave taha.

Ko hono fakakatoa, 'oku 'I ai 'a e fakamalo loto hounga 'a e potungaue ni ki he Faifekau Sea VTOA 'i hono teuteu'ia 'o e Polokalama Ako ma'ae kau Faifekau, kau ngaue mo e kau taki lotu 'a e Vahefonua 'a ia na'e fakahoko 'e Faifekau Siotame Havea pea 'inasi ai 'a e kau fakafongua 'o e feohi'anga TDNZMWF. Fakafeta'i e ma'u kolola lahi pea fakafeta'i he ma'u fakahinohino lelei he 'oku 'aonga ia ki ha'a fafine 'i he ngaue mo e fetakinima fakataha 'oku tau fai 'i Hono Sino-hama'i ka ko e Siasi Tapu 'o Kalaisi.

Siniva Vaitohi, Sekelitali.