

# TOUCHSTONE

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

## Prostitution law reform – the consequences

By Paul Titus

*In June, 2003 Touchstone examined arguments for and against the decriminalisation of the sex trade prior to Parliament's vote on the Prostitution Reform Bill. The bill passed into law by the thinnest of margins.*

*Now, seven years later, we re-examine the issue to see what changes it has brought.*

Groups who work with prostitutes are very supportive of the Prostitution Reform Act (PRA). In their view, it gives sex workers better access to health care, more control over their work conditions, and a greater ability to refuse clients.

They say it has created a better, more open relationship between sex workers and the police, and police confirm this is the case.

Those who oppose the reforms are concerned decriminalisation sends the wrong message to young people, and that it could open the door to sex trafficking in New Zealand.

### **Working conditions**

The NZ Prostitutes Collective (NZPC) supports the rights of sex workers and educates them about minimizing the risks of the job. The Collective helped draft the PRA, and its leaders say it has improved the health and safety of those in the industry.

Christchurch coordinator of the NZPC Anna Reed says before the reforms the police could use possession of condoms or literature about HIV-AIDs to build a case of prostitution. Under the Act, sex workers and their clients are required by law to use a condom.

The reforms also give sex workers more say over how they conduct their business. It gives them the right to refuse to serve a client and it enables them to work individually or with one or two partners from a private residence.

"Under the law change workers have the right of refusal to turn down clients. Previously in brothels they could be fined if they turned down a client. While there is always room for improvement, workers are now more able to stand up to bad managers," Anna says.

"The ability to set up owner-operator businesses gives workers more control of their hours and conditions, and the competition puts pressure on brothel managers to pull their socks up. And when there is more transparency in the industry it has less appeal to the criminal underworld."

While figures vary in different centres, research suggests about half of all sex workers operate from brothels, about 40 percent from private residences, and about 10 percent are street workers.

### **Violence**

Despite these improvements, prostitution is still a dangerous occupation. Since 2005 three prostitutes have been murdered in Christchurch, and when this article was being written newspapers carried headlines about

the disappearance of Auckland escort Carmen Thomas.

National coordinator of the NZPC Catherine Healy cautions that incidents such as these should not create unrealistic standards for the sex industry.

"It would be fantastic if violence was not present in human relations but it is. If a husband kills his wife we do not hear the argument that marriage should be banned. The same is true of other industries. When a taxi driver is killed, no one says we should get rid of taxis."

Detective senior sergeant David Harvey is in charge of policing the Christchurch central business district. This includes Manchester Street, the most visible street prostitution scene in the city.

David says prior to the PRA the prevailing attitude among the police and the community was that prostitution was a victimless crime and prostitutes were largely left to look after themselves.

Since the reforms, spurred on by the high profile murders of sex workers, the Christchurch police made a decision to work more closely with the NZ Prostitutes Collective.

"Since that time our philosophy has changed. We accept that sex workers have the legal right to ply their trade like any other person within society. They have a right to make complaints and those complaints should be investigated robustly," David says.

"I believe we have developed credibility and trust after we have conducted a number of good investigations in which we have treated them professionally. I think the girls started to realise police were interested in the robberies, assaults and sexual violations that were happening to them.

"They could see that if they passed us information about someone suspicious we would do something about it."

Anna Reed cites the case of former policeman Nathan Connolly as an example of cooperation between sex workers and police that would not have been possible before the PRA. Nathan was convicted in November of misusing his authority to get sex from a prostitute.

See Page 6

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Detective senior sergeant  
David Harvey

## Mission and Unity – remembered, celebrated, explored

By Rev Barry Jones

*It is said that a week is a long time in politics. Then certainly 100 years is a long time for ecumenism! In June 1910, 1200 representatives from missionary agencies based mainly in Europe and North America met in Edinburgh for a World Missionary Conference.*

On June 18th and 19th 100 people from several denominations gathered at St John's Theological College, Auckland for a conference to mark the centenary of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference. The title of this conference was 'Mission and Unity', and the emphasis was to explore these themes in the 21st century.

Four presentations reflected on the past. Church historian Dr Alan Davidson looked at the missionary and ecumenical journey from Edinburgh 1910 to Auckland 2010. Biblical scholar Dr Lynne Wall looked at the biblical insights underlying the zeal and enthusiasm of the missionary movement in 1910.

Church historian Dr Janet Crawford noted that of the 1200 representatives at the Edinburgh Conference only 200 were women. She focused on the contribution women from New Zealand have played in the missionary movement. PhD student Te Aroha Rountree discussed Maori interaction with Christianity from 1814 to 1900 as well as several additional writings exploring a more contemporary Maori perspective of Christianity.

The other five presentations focused on aspects of contemporary mission and unity.

Retired bishop John Bluck suggested hospitality might be the basis for a new stage of ecumenism. An excerpt of his talk can be found on page 7 in this issue.

One of the issues facing New Zealand churches is Pacific and Asian immigration that started in the 1950s. It raises a new set of questions about mission. A panel of three speakers addressed these questions

from a Pacific migrant perspective. They were Tongan Roman Catholic Filipo Motulalo, a NZ-born Samoan Rev Maua Sola and PhD student Joan Alleluia Filemoni-Tofaeone.

Addressing the issues from an Asian perspective were Rev Cheng Cheen Khaw, a fifth generation Chinese who came from Malaysia, Rev James Lee, a Korean is a senior pastor, and Yukiko Wakui Khaw from Japan.

National youth development leader for the Presbyterian Church Dr Carlton Johnstone addressed the challenges young people have of being witnesses today.

Dr Keith Rowe gave the final presentation, which focused on interfaith dialogue. He quoted the Catholic Theologian Hans Kung, "There can be no peace among the nations without peace among the religions and there can be no peace among the religions without dialogue." Keith concluded his address by saying that "Interfaith dialogue should never leave us unchanged."

Three important concerns emerged from this conference for me:

- It showed that wrestling with issues regarding the mission of the church is more productive when we do it together as churches and not in isolation from one another.
- It revealed the commitment of people from various denominations to coalesce around issues that are vital for the wellbeing of our world, a sort of 'pragmatic ecumenism.'
- It will help to restore confidence in dialogue across denominational lines on issues relating to mission and unity.

At the end of the Conference tribute was paid to Rev. John Roberts, Secretary of the Mission and Ecumenical Committee, for the initiatives he took in organising this Mission and Unity Conference and the leadership he gave as the conference chairperson.



Lynne Wall



Te Aroha Rountree



The All Partners Consultation drew church leaders from 60 countries to discuss the future mission of the world's Methodist Churches.

## British Methodists host int'l gathering to rethink mission

By Paul Titus

*How can the world's Methodist Churches work together to transform a world beset by inequality, war and ecological destruction?*

This was one question the Methodist Church in Britain (MCB) posed to a gathering of 200 representatives of Wesleyan/Methodist Churches from 60 countries. The consultation was held in London, June 21-24 as was part of the MCB's celebration of the centenary of the 1910 Edinburgh conference on mission.

Methodist Church of NZ president Rev Alan Upson was one of those who attended the consultation. He says it was an impressive event that underscored how interconnected the world's people are in the 21st century.

The gathering concluded that by combining their people, financial and intellectual resources, the world's Methodist Churches can support one another and address global problems.

The title of the consultation was 'Reimagining Future Mission' and it focused on four key themes in the Methodist heritage: evangelism, economics and power, migration and hospitality, and government and Church.

Participants were asked to speak about their experiences in their churches and to take part in structured discussions.

"The British Methodist Church and the British Missionary Society made a substantial investment to bring us together," Alan says. "It was an amazing gathering. All those present were from Churches with on-going ties to the British Conference.

"This included churches in Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean, Canada, Asia, the Pacific and even Eastern Europe. The grand opening in the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster included a small orchestra that played 'The Heavens Resound' from Haydn's oratorio The Creation and a Ghanaian choir who really lifted the event and made it a celebration.

"In typical Methodist fashion, the brilliantly played orchestral recessional music was a bit lost in the noise of conversation, and it is perhaps best not to remember the title in light of the event – Walton's 'Crown Imperial' march.

"Not only were we racially mixed,

we came from a range of theological backgrounds. Nevertheless we had the spirit of Christ in common and we celebrated that in prayer, Bible readings, and lots of singing."

Alan says the consultation revealed how far we have moved from our colonial past in the last century.

"In essence the British Church was saying 'Come and help us. We don't have all the answers'. It was as if the parents gathered their teenagers around and said 'Tell us what life is about'. It was exciting.

"Mission used to be from North to South and from West to East. In the 21st century, it is from everywhere to everywhere. We have even moved beyond partnerships, which are based on one-to-one relationships. Now we are all interconnected in so many ways."

Alan says the consultation focused on big picture issues and practical ways to achieve God's mission by working together, though it did not get specific about particular projects. One suggestion that was well supported was that Methodist Churches could combine their financial resources to create a kind of world Methodist bank.

"The event showed me that New Zealand Methodists should take heart. We are coming to terms with our colonial history and we have much to share with the world. This includes financial resources but also the way we share power in the Church."

In its summary of the event the MCB says God's spirit is calling Methodists to

1) Enrich relationships between churches by valuing one another's gifts and theological perspectives and by working together on global issues such as justice, migration and climate change.

2) Exchange people between churches and support people by training and scholarships.

3) Use financial resources responsibly and responsibly through investment and loans as well as developing self sustainability. This also includes better use of communication technology; encouraging fair-trade; and developing a code of good practice for using money transparently and accountably.



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## Church, community leaders call for limits on alcohol

By Hilaire Campbell

*Everyone knows New Zealanders like a drink but the fallout from too many has led to a Law Commission report calling for tougher liquor laws.*

On 11 July, a group of prominent citizens including church leaders, former governor generals, and prominent figures in the Maori and Pasifika communities petitioned the government to act on its recommendations.

Convener of the group is Sir Paul Reeves, churchman and former governor general. He says the report addresses law and order, public health and economics. "It seeks to change the way in which society orders itself and constructs laws to function."

Sir Paul is of Te Atiawa descent; he lives in Auckland and belongs to "many communities". He's not a teetotaler. He has a glass of wine with his wife (he calls it "a kind of communion"), and he did his time in shearing gangs and playing around with the lads. But he feels the stories he hears about alcohol are different today and worse.

"A taxi driver in Courtney Place told me it's common to deal with bunches of young girls drunk from 'pre loading' early in the evenings. A 16-year old choked on his vomit and died. There's an assumption that everything we do in this country needs substantial amounts of alcohol to accompany it."

Sir Paul is all for regulating the sale and marketing of alcohol.

"The Law Commission's plan is backed by WHO. It comes with scientific proof that the brain doesn't mature till the early 20s. Youth are at risk because the damage is permanent but the market is cunning. Alco pops are fizzy and they say you are cool, but they have more alcohol than some wines."

Public health advocate Sir Mason Durie is another signatory. He says it is a huge report but it boils down to five main points.

It recommends raising the buying age for alcohol, raising the price, making alcohol less accessible, restricting advertising, and knocking back blood alcohol limits for drink drivers. The 5+

plan also includes treatment for habitual, usually older drinkers.

"It's not a new debate," says Sir Mason, "we've been talking since 1999, when there was significant law change. The drinking age was lowered to 18 and convenience stores were allowed to sell alcohol. Places like South Auckland, full of the most vulnerable people, Maori and Pasifika, were deliberately targeted by the liquor industry."

"Their style of drinking and their age is a concern. Every day you read in the Herald of binge drinking school kids, violence, and car crashes. But the culture is widespread: sports clubs, New Year's Eve, now the Undie 500. You won't solve it by addressing individuals. It must be regulated. Fewer liquor outlets for starters.

"In the past we used the law to detain people for tuberculosis treatment. We've taken the lead with smoking, which has caught on with parents but we're not so good with alcohol."

Sir Mason says it's a dilemma for the government but it's a balancing act. Overseas studies show that higher taxes

on alcohol can increase problems.

"The report is a reminder that the debate is not settled and that we need to move forward for health reasons."

Sir Mason has been honoured for his services to public health and Maori health. He trained as a psychiatrist in Montreal where he was influenced by a case study on the effects of alcohol on health.

He has said we are like the four walls of a house – his *whare tapa wha* model. If you take one side out, be it emotional, social, spiritual or physical, the rest suffer. And Maori are especially susceptible. Any solution to the current problems around alcohol must consider these things.

Sir Paul says so far the government has kept quiet about the Law Commission's report but it will make a legislative response to the recommendations.

"The question is whether it fiddles round the edges or makes fundamental changes that lead to fundamental changes in behaviour. It's better to start anywhere than nowhere."



## Competition dangles prizes for NZ pipe organ photos

*Many New Zealand churches feature large and visually arresting musical instruments – pipe organs. Now you can win some serious prizes by submitting photographs of them to an unusual competition to help mark the 2011 Golden Jubilee of the New Zealand Association of Organists Incorporated, known as ORGANZ.*

This competition aims to generate a diverse collection of photographs of New Zealand organs, or organ-related subjects, to provide images for the ORGANZ Golden Jubilee Calendar, which will be

published to celebrate this milestone, and to generate funds for the educational and development activities of ORGANZ.

Appropriately it will be an anniversary calendar; one that will not show days of the week and is intended to be used to record such things as birthdays. It will therefore be able to be enjoyed year after year. The competition will also provide an archive of images of New Zealand organs.

The competition has no entry fee and there is plenty of time to produce stunning images as the closing date is not until February 2, 2011.

There will be three main prizes: first \$1000, second \$500, and third \$250. A third of the profits of the sale of the calendar (after costs) calculated one year after its launch will be distributed amongst those entrants who have had images selected for the calendar, based on the number of their images that have been used in the calendar regardless of size.

The remaining profits will be used by ORGANZ for its educational and development activities. Each entrant who has an image selected for the calendar will receive two free calendars.

ORGANZ will appoint

a panel of judges whose decision will be final. The judges will be seeking images that are visually striking and demonstrate the diverse world of the organ in New Zealand. The identity of entrants will be withheld from the judges.

Competition conditions and the official entry form can be downloaded from the ORGANZ website [www.organz.org.nz](http://www.organz.org.nz) or by emailing: [secretary@organz.org.nz](mailto:secretary@organz.org.nz) or by post from: The Secretary, ORGANZ, PO Box 132, Whakatane 3158.

## Charter for Compassion gaining momentum

John Roberts

Mission & Ecumenical Secretary  
*Discussion of the Charter for Compassion is taking place all around the Methodist connexion.*

The charter began with religious scholar Karen Armstrong who was offered a "wish that would change the world", by a sponsoring organisation (TED). Karen proposed a Charter for Compassion that would embrace the universal notion of justice and respect for all and would be owned by the world's major religions.

Karen's wish was granted and funding provided to get the drafting of a Charter for Compassion underway.

Representative leaders of the major world religions met, received online suggestions for inclusion and finalised the Charter, which had its world launch in November 2009. A New Zealand launch took place at the Ponsonby Mosque, Auckland. The Methodist Mission and

Ecumenical agency discussed the Charter at its March 2010 meeting. It sent out the Charter, along with background information, to the wider Methodist Church via the synod groupings for discussion and response. Synods have been requested to provide their responses by 13 August.

Nelson-Marlborough-West Coast Synod says "A number of parishes in the synod have been using this material along with Karen Armstrong's presentation to TED. All members feel that it is a great initiative and we wholeheartedly affirm and support the bringing of this charter before Methodist Conference 2010."

Some other synods have indicated they will discuss the Charter at their August meetings.

An article about the Charter appeared in the February issue of Touchstone and a piece has been published in the Auckland Methodist.

Mission and Ecumenical has put out an occasional paper on the Charter that Colin Gibson has reprinted in the lay preachers journal together with Shirley Murray's hymn written in response to the Charter. The Charter has been explored at Auckland District youth services, and was raised in a discussion on interfaith matters at an Auckland supernumeraries gathering.

Members of the Liberal Society e-mail network report that they have talked about the Charter in sermons, with positive responses and requests for copies of the Charter.

Many who engage with the Charter find that it resonates with much of their own thinking. One has said, "This could be the answer to many of the world's woes – worth a great try anyway." They are looking forward to it being presented to Conference for affirmation.

*The Evangelical Network invites Methodist artists once again to submit their work for*  
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enquiries to [beckmeth@clear.net.nz](mailto:beckmeth@clear.net.nz)

We will be meeting on Sunday evening for a light meal and entertainment with the Liberal Society, at Double Shotz Café, 138 The Square, Palmerston North from 6 p.m. and \$20 per head for a light meal. Please indicate to Rev Alan K Webster or Eric Laursen your interest so that we can cater intelligently

## Investment review on track

To the editor, The Investment Advisory Board, as requested by Conference 2009, is continuing the review of the Guidelines for Socially Responsible Investment on behalf of the Methodist Church of New Zealand. The Board has requested responses by 31

July 2010. The response provided by way of the open letter published in the July edition of Touchstone will be considered alongside the other responses received.

*Hugh Garlick,  
Investment Advisory Board Chair*

## Rio Tinto unsuitable partner for Methodists

To the editor,

I was one of the people who asked that my name be recorded at Conference 2009 because I dissented from the Conference decision to reject three recommendations on Socially Responsible Investment presented by the Mission and Ecumenical Committee.

I continue to be concerned that the church appears to be comfortable with what I consider to be irresponsible investments. For a church that constantly claims to be committed to social and environmental justice we have some extremely suspect business partners.

In particular it is appalling that we continue to enjoy the toxic fruits of the mining giant Rio Tinto. Despite their slick PR campaign through which they claim to be an ethical and responsible employer and good neighbour, as well as a protector of the environment the truth is very different.

Their history of colluding with oppressive governments against workers and local communities is one thing; but they continue to operate in ways that are destructive to life, social justice and human rights in numerous locations around the world.

The Norwegian government has recently pulled all its investment in Rio Tinto because of this shameful track-record.

A class action complaint on behalf of the people of Bougainville is now in the U.S. federal court and alleges that Rio Tinto committed crimes against humanity, war crimes and racial discrimination, as well as violations of international environmental rights, among other atrocities, in its efforts to establish the Panguna Mine. This mine is now closed and was the central issue behind the uprising in Bougainville.

For over a decade the giant company has been fighting against this legal challenge, seeking to have the complaint dismissed. However the Obama Administration has refused to side with the company in its legal argument, and has cleared the way for the suit.

This is only one example of this company's track-record. I use it because of our church's historical links with Bougainville. But go to West Papua, Cameroon, Madagascar, Indonesia, Namibia, California and controversies rage over their operations.

Rio Tinto is in reality a giant under-miner of many of the things that the Methodist church says it stands for. How much longer will we continue to be partners in crime with this unethical company? What do our actions as a church tell others about the words we say?

*Mark Gibson, Christchurch*

## Charity perpetuates poverty

To the editor,

Ken Rae's letter and Lorna Black's article (Touchstone, July) both touch on the same issue. How can we as Christians operate in today's society and what type of society do we want to advance?

It seems to me that many Christians have coned themselves into believing that their charity helps, when at best it meets immediate need while maintaining the structures which disrespect those in need.

This concept is described well by Paulo Freire as "false charity". False charity constrains the poor to "states of fear and subjection". The poor are fearful of speaking out in case the powerful make their plight even worse.

False charity fails to recognise that the solutions lie within the poor themselves and that the poor are such because of some innate failing in themselves. Rather, the poor are such because the rich make them so. Freire argues by freeing themselves of poverty, that poor

release the rich too.

The failure to deliver on the message in Luke is within us all. I, as a well-educated beneficiary, and my friends and fellow Christians who maintain the type of structures embodied in, for example, residential property ownership.

Who gains from the poor state of state housing? Who gains from private residential rentals and the wickedly high rentals private landlords charge which result in beneficiaries needing to beg for hardship assistance?

Until, to quote Lorna Black, "we behave accordingly" in relation to understanding it is a lack of resources not solutions that keep the poor in poverty. And it is we collectively who deny them resources and respect. When we maintain our authority by providing food to food banks we have failed in to heed Luke's message.

*Graham Howell, Wellington*

## Waihopai explained

Two correspondents in the June issue were critical of the actions of the three Christians involved in the Waihopai spy base incident.

The secular media, as usual, highlighted the sensational nature of this story. They failed to explain in depth the motivations of the people involved, or provide information on the role of Waihopai.

In the May 2010 publication, 'Just Peace',

put out by the Social Justice Commission of the Anglican Church, there is an article titled 'Why did we invade the Waihopai spy base?' by Father Peter Murnane, a member of the trio. It is warmly recommended.

Free copies of this issue can be obtained by emailing: [justice@anglican.org.nz](mailto:justice@anglican.org.nz).

*John Thornley, Palmerston North*



## FROM THE BACKYARD

### Get grounded

*Gillian Watkin*

*The view from the backyard changed recently as we relocated to Auckland for a short time for family reasons. I had left the sharp frosty cold for the solid steady rain and I coped with mud all around.*

On my first night in Auckland I was pleased to see the local paper carrying a story about the Avondale Union parish's partnership with Lifewise and with Manukau Tech in a community garden and entry level horticultural course.

A call to Rev Vai Ngahe got me the grand tour. The project is located at the Rosebank Community Church. I had been an industrial chaplain on Rosebank Peninsula in the 1980s and was well aware of the lack of services for residents and the hundreds of workers who poured into the area each day. I thought that the church was well placed for creative mission.

The Peninsula is now a major industrial hub of Auckland city. Historically its fertile volcanic soils nourished the market gardens that supplied the needs of a growing city. Back in Hawkes Bay we are faced with the debate on whether to zone prime fertile land as residential or industrial. I guess in early Auckland the factories just arrived, no resource consent required.

It was a good afternoon talking with Vai who revealed the vision of his small innovative congregation. They started a community garden behind the church, in a place that had been used as a rubbish dump.

Gardens around the church have been recreated, and the grass in the front, which had been used as a parking lot, was fenced off for the use

of children and the community. It is a well used front lawn with beautiful old specimen trees, including a Magnolia Grandiflora and the biblical Cedar of Lebanon. At Christmas time the trees are lit up to provide a focus for Christmas in a community without a commercial heart.

In the middle of winter the taro plants and silverbeet were flourishing but the best crop will be the young unemployed locals learning to garden in a Manukau Tech horticultural class on site.

Vai and I had a wide ranging conversation and it turned to 'ground'. The church talks often about land and many have compiled their land stories. That is human history of land stewardship but the ground beneath our feet is made holy by our own reverence and reflection on relevance.

Over the past two months we have driven back and forth from Hastings to Auckland. We pass churches, many standing in a wide section with mowed grass used for car parking. Over the years I like many of you have sat through countless meetings deciding what to do with church buildings but I don't remember any which focused on church grounds.

In colonial times land became a commodity. But thinking about the ground – that point of connection between us and the planet we travel on – could provide a fresh vision.

We have land history (the past) and property schedules (the present). Imagination provides a ground plan for planting the future: fruit trees for passers by, trees for a bird corridor, vegetables for locals. What possibilities await.



*I, like others, want things to go my way. I was reminded at Heathrow, on the Underground escalators, and on the English roads of the Bible verse, 'My ways are not your ways' (Is 55:8).*

In the countryside and motorways the upgraded Audi was a dream. But in town, in diesel-saving mode, the engine stopped when the car stopped. Pushing in the clutch started it again. Imagine the nightmare of crawling through a little English village with the street made one-way by parked cars.

In York, our careful navigating upset by a diversion at the ancient city wall, Kerry and I came upon 'rising bollards' - in Taranaki Rugby colours. The bollards let buses and taxis through, but not our Audi. Lost, with just one way to go, this thing came out of the ground right in front of us. But there, right to our left was a side road, with the big 'P' sign - the very parking building we'd been looking for.



## My way, the highway, or God's way

Rev Alan Upson

Days before, the All Partner's Consultation met in the Britannia Conference Centre, Canary Wharf, London. Made up of 70

Connexional leaders from around the world, all were having to accommodate other people's ways of doing things. One bishop squeezed past those waiting at the hotel lift to be first in, (as I suppose it was done where he came from). He stood in the middle of the lift waiting for the doors to shut only to find others piling in and asking him to move into the back corner to make room.

Imagine getting this gathering to come to a mind within four days to advise the British Conference about how to re-vision their future mission. We were well guided by British Methodist Church's secretary for external relationships Christine Elliot (a Kiwi Londoner). You can read all about it by going to [www.methodist.org.uk](http://www.methodist.org.uk) and entering All Partners Consultation in the index.

Meanwhile on the other side of the

world, in Tonga, the open speed limit was 65kph and people drove over the roundabouts at Nuku'alofa. Some say it's faster to walk than drive and find a parking place. Vice-President Lana heard Revd Dr 'Aho, President of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga explain, "If living in New Zealand and affiliated to a particular Church, you are under their regulations."

Later, in speaking to the huge Tongan gathering, Lana spoke of those attending from Aotearoa, saying, "She did not stand alone." She acknowledged the superintendent of Vahefoua and the large contingent who had arrived as part of Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa. Methodists are everywhere but how they do things changes according to where they are at the time.

Have you ever watched the wheels go up THREE times in a flight? The first was when VP Lana and I left Auckland following the funeral in Papatoetoe for André le Roux. The second and third times were in fog over Napier before the plane

diverted to Palmerston North. We got back to our Hastings motel units at 1:30am to catch up on sleep before the Sinoti Samoa breakfast at 7:30am later the same morning, followed by the day's business session on Saturday.

Dinner in Napier that night provided by Kathleen and Abeje Dixon for VP Lana, invited guests and myself, was all first class. However there was disagreement on the way (in the upgraded Rav 4) on how to get there, partly because of the president's 40 year memory regarding the main route into Napier. Over that 40 years, as in the world-wide Methodist church, things had changed. The Vice President was remarkably calm though she still drove in the wrong direction after looking at the map.

We might all want things to go our way, but VP Lana and I are of one accord in advising that God's way, in whom we live and move and have our being, is better.

## Alan K Webster responds on Spong

*In the April edition of Touchstone, Alan Webster wrote a review of Bishop John Spong's most recent book, 'Eternal Life: A New Vision Beyond Religion, Beyond Theism, Beyond Heaven and Hell'. It provoked one of the largest numbers of letters to the editor, as any single item Touchstone has ever published.*

*Here Alan responds to some of the points raised in those letters.*

Wow! What fun. I seem to have stirred some debate, which is good and what everyone wanted. A few points to keep the pot boiling:

1) I have heard Bishop Spong speak years ago now, and I think he's shifted a long, long way from then. I have read and appreciated bits of his earlier books but Paul Titus asked me to review his latest, 'Eternal Life: A New Vision'. Now why would he ask the superintendent of the Evangelical Network to review a book by Spong? Maybe he expected me to disagree with it?

2) I appreciate and value many of my liberal colleagues without necessarily agreeing with them. It is possible, especially in the Methodist Church, to disagree strongly and still respect people.

It gets interesting though. Do I respect all people I disagree with? No, I don't: I really have no respect for the beliefs of skinheads, racists, ultra-fundamentalists, or ultra liberals. The church that made excuses for supporting Hitler had lost its faith somewhere. They were no longer about the gospel and someone had to point that out. (Please note: I am not saying that Bishop Spong is a Nazi!).

3) My faith no longer includes a picture of God always protecting me from harm so to that extent, I suppose I have 'lost some faith'. But it's intriguing to me that what seems to have annoyed most people is to suggest what I am sure Spong would happily say: that he no longer has the sort of faith that many (most?) Christians have. That doesn't make him a lesser human being but it does mean, surely, that it is true to say he's lost his faith.

4) I loathe the idea of Christian faith being a list of propositions and I find some credal statements a bit difficult because of that. I love the breadth in the Methodist Church that, for example, intentionally shares power and resources, and intentionally embraces diversity. But it is still true that someone can shift so far from basic propositions that they are no longer Christian.

I'm not saying this makes them murderers, communists, sub-human or anything: just that it is possible to no longer be a Christian when

you abandon all the propositions that are Christian. It is my belief, based on carefully reading 'Eternal Life' that Bishop Spong has actually done that, and I wanted to point that out. I don't think that's condemning him. Surely given his sub-title, his chapter headings, his basic argument even he would embrace that?

5) Three of the five critics who have responded to me hadn't actually read the book yet were still upset by my review. Personally, I'd not hitch my star that blindly to any human being, let alone a theologian.

6) I have a deep respect for many of my liberal colleagues, some of whom worship in my congregation, some of whom in the wider church I have learned much from and enjoy working with, arguing with, sharing with. Many have a faith that I can recognise and honour, that carries them through difficult times, that makes a difference in their communities, that doesn't throw out everything they don't understand as being 'myth' or 'church propaganda'.

Even as I say that their understanding of faith wouldn't be enough for me, I can see that it is for them, and I can honour that. Some of this is a difference in temperament, a heart and head thing; sometimes it is a result of experiences along the way. Some of my liberal colleagues have had bad experiences with fundamentalist literalism. I have had bad experiences with nihilism. It's not fair to either group to attribute characteristics of extremes to anyone.

In a former life I was sometimes called a liberal. I now find I'm labelled quite differently, and I find labels to be less and less useful. However: as an evangelical I believe that the Christian Church of which I am a member has something that is Good News (gospel) to the world, good news about relationship with God revealed in Jesus.

I actually don't think that evangelicals have a monopoly on that at all. And I do accept that one role evangelicals are called to in Te Haahi Weteriana is to constantly remind the church of that, and of its implications in, for example, stationing, mission, future planning, and in those moments of existential angst that we all have.

8) Finally, I chose to become a Methodist because I love the opportunity to minister in a context where we recognise that the Spirit of God is at work in more ways than can be expressed by one point of view. I have no words for how much I value that.

*Keep it coming!*

## Do justice to their memory in bronze

By Rev Donald Phillipps

*If ever we needed reminding of the importance of the Wesleyan Mission Station at Mangungu, Hokianga, it was provided by the spectacle of more than 1000 people gathered to celebrate the 170th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty there on February 13th 1840. More signatures were gained for the Treaty at that time and place than anywhere else in New Zealand, including Waitangi itself.*

Near where the marquee was set up in which those celebrations were conducted there stands a granite cross, erected by the Church in 1927 to mark the centenary of the beginning of the Mission in New Zealand in 1922. Among the engravings on the cross is a list of those who served as missionaries on that site from 1827 until the Mission was closed 30 years later. It's a roll call of the famous, so far as our Church history is concerned.

But in 1927 the Church had a somewhat stricter view of which names should be included and which excluded. Only those who 'died in the work', to use a saying still common in those days, were inscribed on the granite. Three men who also spent time there as missionaries were omitted. One of these, Charles Creed must have been left out simply through an oversight, because he did die in the work, though in New South Wales.

Two others, William White and Gideon Smales, were, to all intents and purposes, lost to the memory, probably because they both resigned from ministry. During the years in which they did serve, however, they made their mark, and they deserve better from us. So far as William White was concerned this omission was corrected in the 1960s when a new bronze plaque with his name added was placed over the former record.

The attention of the Wesley Historical Society was drawn to the anomaly of Gideon Smales' omission some time ago, and the Society decided to take the matter up. This is



*An effort is underway to add Gideon Smales' name to the plaque commemorating those who served at Mangungu Mission Station.*

not as simple as it sounds because the NZ Historical Places Trust now manages the site and regards Mangungu as a national treasure. It must grant permission for changes of any sort to structures or artefacts. It did eventually grant permission, noting there has already been a change to the 1927 monument.

Bronze plaques of such a size (about one metre square) are expensive things, and the best quote available for a new plaque, installed, runs to approximately \$3000. That's quite a sum, among all the other claims on the Church's funds. Fortunately the Gideon Smales (St John) Church Trust has offered \$500, and the Wesley Historical Society is considering a like amount.

It is a matter of justice that the Church honour all those who served it, for longer or shorter periods, in this formative stage in its history. With the addition of the names of Charles Creed and Gideon Smales, there will be, on this historic site, a true record of the men, who, with their wives, began such a great work.

If you are encouraged to offer financial support for the project please remit your contribution to the Methodist Church Office, P.O.Box 931, Christchurch - identifying its purpose with the word 'Mangungu'.

How good it would be to have a new plaque in place for the next Treaty Day at Mangungu, 13th February 2011.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE – What can YOU do?

*The Waitakere Anti-Violence Network says family violence is a serious problem in New Zealand.*

Statistics show that most New Zealanders will be personally affected by family violence, or will know someone who is. For example:

- One in three women experience physical or sexual violence from a partner in their lifetime (WHO study);
- 10 children are killed every year in New Zealand by a family member;
- Nearly half New Zealand's homicides are family violence;
- Half all violent crime in New Zealand is family violence (kidnappings, abductions, assaults);
- 84 percent of those arrested for family violence are men.

Crisis services, such as police and social services that support victims and perpetrators, get involved after family violence has happened. The people who are there when it's happening are you and me and others in our families, neighbourhoods, workplaces and communities.

We know that when someone dies as a result of family violence, the people in the victim's life did know that something was wrong but didn't realise the situation was

serious and didn't know what to do about it.

Family violence is preventable. The focus of the It's not OK Campaign for 2010 is 'How to Help'.

### At Church

Family violence happens in all types of families irrespective of race, income, religion or age. Some families in your church community will be experiencing family violence.

People listen to and confide in people they trust – people who are in the same communities and networks.

Noticing signs of abuse can be distressing and confusing. Here is how you can help.

### Violence can be:

- Physical. Have you noticed bruises on a woman's or child's arms or legs?
- Verbal. Does one of the men make jokes that humiliate his wife and put her down in front of others?
- Emotional. Has a man told you not to listen to what his wife says because she's mad?
- Threatening. Is your friend overly fearful for the safety of her children or her pets?
- Isolation. Is your friend not able to join in church activities?
- Financial. Does your

friend's husband control all of the money in the family? Does she have enough for herself?

- Sexual. Has your friend had unplanned pregnancies?
- Intimidation. Does she seem anxious and afraid all the time?

Domestic violence is damaging and dangerous whether or not there is physical violence.

It is certainly not safe to ask a woman about what might be happening at home in front of her partner. Perhaps you can find a quiet, safe place to talk.

### What can you say?

- I've noticed that something is wrong. Is there someone in your family that you are frightened of or who is hurting you?
- I'm glad you said something. Can I give you the number of someone who you can talk the whole thing through with?
- You can ring support services any time, even if you decide not to today.
- It's not your fault.

### What not to say:

- You have to leave now. – Very often there are many good reasons why it is difficult or unsafe to leave a relationship.
- Why do you let him treat

you that way? – The blame lies squarely with the abuser, not the victim.

- I wouldn't put up with that! – You don't know how you would respond.
- Just be a better wife and he won't get upset – It is his behaviour that needs to change not hers.

Leaving an abusive relationship is difficult and may take a very long time. Survivors say that support without judgement is the best kind of help.

### Contact numbers

If you are worried about a person's safety ring 111 and ask for the police.

If you are in West Auckland to get help phone:

- Viviana 09 836 1987;
  - Pacific Island Safety and Prevention Project 09 832 2555;
  - Tika Maranga 09 833 9653.
- Sometimes a person may not want to call a support service when you mention it to them. This is ok, they can always get the number from you later on. Perhaps you could offer to be with them while they ring for support.

Leaving an abusive relationship can take a long time. Your ongoing support will make a real difference to your friend feeling safe and supported.

## 'If today was a fairy tale' – remembering Andre Le Roux

*Last month Touchstone printed Rev Andre Le Roux's reflection on hope. Andre discussed what it means to have hope in the face of a terminal illness.*

Andre concluded that hope comes from being loved. "We find hope being nurtured not by outcomes but by presence, by being loved... To be loved is to have hope," he wrote.

On June 13th, Andre succumbed to his illness.

Andre started the Wesley Diverse Youth Group at his Papatoetoe congregation. The youth group says he continues to inspire them. One member of the group, Shrutika Gunanayagam, wrote this poem to express how the young people of the congregation see him.

*If today was a fairy tale  
I'd be flying high  
Nothing would be sad  
I wouldn't want to cry.*

*If today was a fairytale  
I'd be at Youth on Friday night  
You'd be acting like a kid – so into it  
Man, you were a sight.*

*If today was a fairytale  
We'd play Leggie, or Benchball  
Or Stingers, or Hugoo  
Or that Chair Game that no one  
knows the name of.*

*If today was a fairytale  
We'd be doing something crazy  
Getting put in a coffin  
Eating dog food, maybe.*

*If today was a fairytale  
You'd be dressed up like a gangster  
Making a fool of yourself  
When you're meant to be a minister.*

*If today was a fairytale  
We'd be in the band together  
Sometimes it was just us  
When no one would come 'cause of  
the weather.*

*If today was a fairytale  
You'd still come on Sunday  
Waving that South African Flag  
Just because they won the game  
yesterday.*

*If today was a fairytale  
You'd call me at home  
We'd talk awkwardly for a bit  
Before I gave my mom the phone.*

*If today was a fairytale  
I'd text to say 'Hello'  
And have to wait hours for your reply  
Because you were so slow.*

*If today was a fairytale  
You'd still have your beard  
It wouldn't be hard to look at you  
It wouldn't be so weird.*

*If today was a fairytale  
You'd still be here  
I'd talk with you, laugh at you  
I'd know that you are near.*

*But today's not a fairytale  
Because those things aren't real  
I don't feel good, or happy  
I do want to cry.*

*Because today is what is real  
It's now, it's here  
So am I  
But you aren't.*

## Prostitution law reform - supporters and critics

*From Page 1*

Debbie Baker works with Streetreach, a Christian-based confidential support service for those involved in Auckland's sex industry. Streetreach tries to address what has happened in a woman's life that makes them turn to prostitution but it does not try to convert them.

Debbie says she was initially against the prostitution law reform but now supports decriminalisation. Nevertheless, she would like to see amendments to the law so the industry is more actively policed.

"There are still bad brothels out there. They pressure girls to go with clients when they don't want to. Some don't keep good records. Some hire under aged girls," Debbie says.

### Numbers in the industry

Critics of the PRA said it would lead to an increase in the size of the sex trade.

A provision of prostitution reform legislation was that its effects were reviewed after five years. As part of that review, research conducted by the by the University of Otago School of Medicine found that the number of women working as prostitutes has increased some but not dramatically.

In Christchurch, for example, the researchers estimated there were 375 prostitutes in 1999, 392 in 2006, and 402 in 2007, an increase of about seven percent. The research did identify a shift from

brothels to private operations while the percentage engaged in street prostitution remained unchanged.

Streetreach's Debbie Baker says her own observations indicate the number of prostitutes working in Auckland have increased since the reforms.

Manukau City Council has taken aim at what it sees as a negative consequence of the PRA, increased street prostitution at several locations near residential areas in Papatoetoe, Manurewa and Otahuhu.

Senior policy advisor Manoj Ragupathy says since the law change behaviour of street prostitutes has become more outrageous and aggressive. The city council has unanimously supported a bill before Parliament that would give Manukau the right to ban street prostitution and impose a \$1000 fine on those who break the law.

Debbie is strongly opposed to the city council's move. She says it is political grandstanding by the council and a silly law that will "victimise victims".

"Streetreach and the Prostitutes Collective have worked with the street workers to get them to comply with requests that they do not work in residential areas, work where there are lights, and cut down on noise.

"It is silly to fine street workers because they will simply have to go out and do more work to pay a fine," she says.

### Under aged sex workers

Lobby group Family First says the PRA sent a message to young people that society condones sex work. National director of Family First Bob McCroskie says there is some evidence the number of young people in the sex industry has gone up but it is hard to quantify.

"This law was passed by politicians who were out of step with most New Zealanders' views. We would prefer to see a system where buyers are prosecuted, which has been successful in Sweden," Bob says.

In regards to under aged sex work the PRA prohibits people under 18 from sex work and it increased penalties on those who organise under aged women to work for sex and those who pay for their services. The young women themselves are considered victims and it is not illegal for them to sell sex.

The government's 2008 review of the act found it has not increased the number of under aged women in sex work. David Harvey says as far as he can tell the number of under aged sex workers in Christchurch has not increased.

NZPC Auckland coordinator Annah Pickering points out that young people who engage in prostitution are often runaways who sell sex as a last resort.

"The problem is not sex work itself. It is the reasons that those young people are not in school or

with their families. With decriminalisation, it is easier for social agencies to get access to young vulnerable people."

### Sex trafficking

Trafficking is defined as transporting a person within or between countries for sex work with some element of coercion or deception.

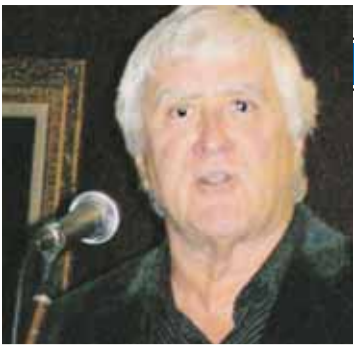
Under the PRA, it is illegal to compel a person to provide sexual services for money. Only Australians are legally entitled to travel to NZ to work in the sex trade.

The government's 2008 review found no links between the sex trade and human trafficking.

Bob McCroskie says there is anecdotal evidence that trafficking is occurring and some women are being brought to New Zealand from Asia for sex work. He cites the recent case of a Malaysian woman was forced to very work long hours in an Auckland brothel after the owner took her passport.

The Prostitutes Collective says the Malaysian woman's case illustrates the benefits of the reforms because other sex workers informed the police about the situation. They say if the industry was forced underground, trafficking would be more difficult to detect.

Supporters of the Swedish law, which prosecutes the buyers rather than the sellers of sex, say it has given the authorities the ability to limit trafficking significantly more than in other European countries.



## Reinventing ecumenism for the 21st century - Can we move from conference table to dinner table?

By John Bluck

*I want to talk about reinventing ecumenism because I'm concerned about the future of the movement that defined so much of our lives as Christians through the 20th century.*

Many of us lived and breathed ecumenism and saw it as the only way ahead for the church. We became post denominational Christians because we thought our denominations had seen the writing on their walls. But not everyone wanted to read what was written. For generations after mine in Aotearoa New Zealand it's as though the ecumenical movement never happened.

Maybe ecumenism continues on, only less obviously and visibly? Churches work together at local, individual, informal levels; Protestant parents don't have heart attacks any more at the prospect of their children marrying Roman Catholics, or Bahais. Muslims pose more of a challenge but most parents are pleased that their children get married at all.

And the obvious wisdom of inter faith dialogue and mutual respect is not the scandal it was 50 years ago. Whether religions can find a way of getting on with each other is no longer just a theological challenge. It's an issue for the survival of the planet.

And the broader meaning of ecumenism beyond any church walls – the search for shalom among all God's people, across the whole inhabited earth – that sort of ecumenism has never been more fashionable, more welcome, more urgent.

We could identify many things that stopped the ecumenical movement. Lack of nerve. Lack of courage, commitment, clarity. Shortcuts in consultation and preparation. Our monocultural orthodoxy that wasn't resilient and robust enough to prepare us for the turmoil of the 1990s and the new millennium.

Recently I've wondered whether the paralysis hasn't got to do with a failure to find the right trigger or tipping point. The volatility of ecumenical energy and the inspirational breadth of the ecumenical vision hasn't gone away. It's rather that we so often fail to find the catalyst to catch the vision.

What made the modern ecumenical movement so powerful was the immediacy and urgency of the issues it focused on. Time and again throughout the 20th century it was the ecumenical movement that had its finger on the issues of life or death, war or peace.

If it's true that the ecumenical movement is an authentic expression of God's global generosity and shalom, and waiting to be seen and engaged again in the life of our churches and communities, what might the new trigger points be for our time and place?

It won't be a corporate style restructuring of our existing ecclesial shapes and styles,

merging and rationalizing what we've got to make it more cost efficient and market shareable.

It could be the new fascination with ecology and ecotheology.

Alternatively, there must be a new trigger point for ecumenism buried somewhere in the faith-science debate. Today the trigger will more likely be astronomers and astro physicists as they get more mystical and theologian-scientists like Teilhard de Chardin move from the eccentric fringe to the mainstream.

The interface of world religions is another hot centre of a new ecumenism as Christian-Muslim and Muslim-Jewish dialogue becomes a life and death survival skill in the Middle East and Asia.

My money is on the art of hospitality. You don't have to look far to see how essential it is to the Gospel and the very nature of God.

The essence of ecumenism is the capacity to offer and receive hospitality – to be generous and gracious in the way you care for your neighbour, especially if that neighbour is unlike you, in order that we may better reflect and reveal the Christ in us.

Consider the number of New Testament parables that are about eating and drinking, including those about people who usually don't get a seat at the table.

Many scholars argue that the most revolutionary thing Jesus did was his practice of open table fellowship. It was his brand of hospitality that caused the greatest outrage of all.

Theologically, I don't think there is much of an argument about the fundamental importance of hospitality. Jesus taught us to pray for daily bread in a prayer that make it clear you don't go asking for food or forgiveness or love or anything else unless you're prepared to give back what you have received and share it around. There are few if any other activities closer to the heart of God.

But is hospitality a trigger point? Does it ignite energy and excitement, new life and hope? I argue that it does, with great timeliness for our day and age.

Hospitality is an action not an idea. You know it by doing it, physically, by hand. There is no such thing as an air guitar equivalent of cooking. Food and drink is made out of animal, vegetable and mineral material. To prepare food and serve it, to eat it and share it, that is something we all can do, and need to do, and love doing, in order to be human.

On a good day such hospitality is central to the life of every Christian community. Eucharist in church, a cup of tea and good food afterwards.

The tragedy and the scandal is that the sacramental meal that symbolizes all that unites us still divides us ecumenically. That's the contradiction that paralyses all ecumenical hospitality – the meal that Catholics and Protestants still can't share.

It could well be that the hardest lock to break to get the ecumenical movement moving is in fact access to eucharist which depends on an open table as much as it does on bread and wine.

It may well take a campaign of ecclesial disobedience from the ground up to crack that obstacle, in the same way that local congregations have called and encouraged gay people into leadership roles, despite the cautions of their hierarchy.

But my deeper confidence in hospitality as an ecumenical trigger point is its cross cultural relevance and power.

There has been an attempt to globalize and corporatise the food industry, to make food a fast commodity, governed by profit and appearance rather than nutritional value and the authenticity of its origins. But for all the success of McDonalds and KFC, there is a huge counter movement to make food healthier, safer, and shared more justly and socially. Christians have been part of this resistance movement in a modest way with pot luck dinners and food banks, sales tables and liturgically framed meals.

We need to be bolder and more confident in the way we serve and share food and drink. It may be the most effective way we tune into the wavelength of our so called secular communities, where people increasingly don't gather to eat, don't know how to cook or entertain around a dinner table.

We still know how to eat with people like us, in clubs and family and like minded groups but we've lost the art of inviting strangers to join us and making them feel

welcome.

To share food with people unlike you, as eucharist requires, even with the unworthy, the unreliable, even the traitors like Judas, requires a very robust faith. It can be uncomfortable, messy, awkward, even dangerous. If you don't believe that Jesus is really present when you break bread in his name you are taking a big risk by opening up your table.

But when you do, exciting things happen. Lonely people make some friends. Withdrawn people break their isolation. Troubled and grieving people find support. People on the edge are drawn into the centre. Broken people find healing.

The power of hospitality to cross lines of generation and culture is what makes it so potent for rebuilding an ecumenical movement. We failed last time round by never managing to break the eurocentricity of the movement. I believe that the Achilles heel of our efforts to restructure the national council of churches into a broader conference was a misreading of the bicultural and multicultural issues at the time. The history of a colonial church wrapped us still too tightly.

If we had invested more time in eating together and sitting on marae as often we did in church halls and conference centres, if we had remembered that our settler forebears depended heavily on the hospitality of Maori to build their

first houses and churches, then ecumenism might have moved very differently in Aotearoa in the 1980s and 1990s.

My plea is really a simple one. To look again at the ordinary business of feeding and entertaining each other around the table as a way of kickstarting the movement that has stalled on us. Assembling our guests lists from unlike people, even including our enemies, ignoring the conventions of having to impress the diners with expensive or elaborate fare, daring to ask all sorts of people, even those suspicious of us, to contribute, and always beginning with a prayer, even a silent prayer, that the Christ who promised to be present when we break bread in his name, will be present again.

If we do that, it doesn't matter too much what we eat and who we eat with. Because as we eat we will be reconnected with the gift of life itself. God's free gift, Given unconditionally. Waiting to be enjoyed by all God's people, across the whole inhabited earth. An ecumenical blessing, waiting to be rediscovered again.

*John Bluck recently retired as Anglican bishop of Waiapu. He was the editor of the New Zealand Methodist (later called New Citizen) from 1972 -77 and is the author of the forthcoming book Hidden Country – Having faith in Aotearoa NZ. It is published by Epworth Books, Wellington.*

### 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.

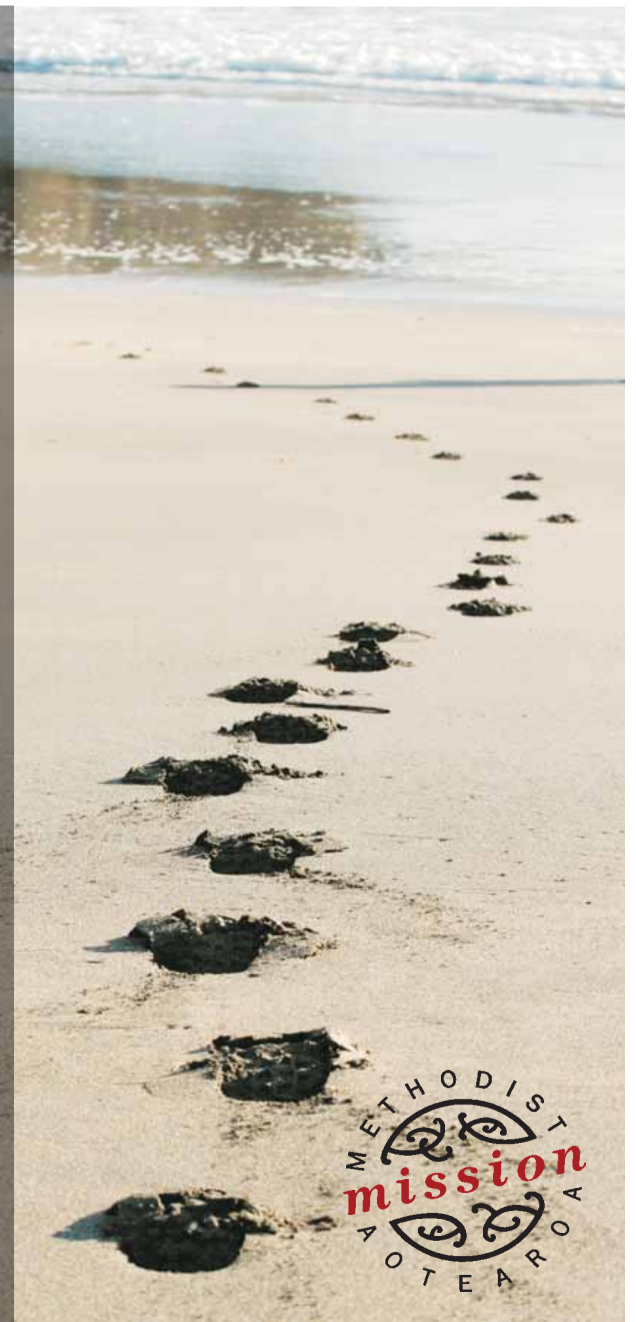
*To ensure your legacy lasts longer than footprints in the sand, contact:*

Ruth Bilverstone

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

Phone: 03 307 1116

Email: bilverst@xtra.co.nz





Teams built shelters during the mock disaster. From left: Nathan, Hawiti, Catherine, Siu and Vaiuli (seated), Danyelle, Angela (seated), Johnny and Fiona.

## Brush with disaster during CSI youth camp

By Siu Williams-Lemi, Central South Island youth ministries coordinator.

It was a winter night like any other in Christchurch – cold, crisp and wet! More than 30 young enthusiastic teens travelled from far and wide (as far as Upper Riccarton and as wide as Kaiapoi) to Woodend Christian Camp for a Queens Birthday Camp themed Community-Survival-Hope.

On first night they gathered, conversed, and got to know each other again or for the first time through games of all sorts. What a night, just relaxing with friends in and out of the howling winds that we are so familiar with at this time of year.

Morning bell rings. The howling has stopped. The rain has ceased and given way to the beautiful warmth and serenity of the sun. We come out for breakfast and are welcomed by a selection of varying breakfast options.

WOO OOO, WOO OOO. Fire alarms sounded, panic rose in the air people running around like 'headless chickens', Luckily we had a team of highly trained leaders on staff who calmly led the hoards of screaming teenagers out to the safety point.

Here is where the real camp started. A (mock) disaster had hit Woodend Christian Camp. All technology was wiped away, all cabins destroyed, and we were left with only the clothes on our backs.

We dug sanitary holes, and were rescued by

Katrina Hill of CWS who came with food supplies, gas stoves, tarps, a single can opener, 20 litres of water and a box of matches – not enough for each group to cope on their own, necessitating co-operation and community building. Teams set up shelters and filled our pukus with good wholesome kai made with our own hands.

Luckily for the campers, on arrival back at the campsite it had been miraculously restored to its original state and all items returned to their rightful places!

The rest of the camp went without a hitch. We had talents coming out of our ears, including archery experts, flying Kiwis, climbing Cantabrians, world renowned 'disaster' makeup artists, bead making engineers, and a debut band all consisting of CSIS Youth (Central South Island Synod Youth).

The whole camp never would have come to fruition without the excellent camp committee made up of members from Upper Riccarton, Linwood Union, Durham Street and Beckenham parishes. We also had the privilege of being led by two outstanding and creative ministers, Rev Alan Webster and Rev Darryn Hickling, who put together thought provoking and spiritually charged studies to help to shape the minds and souls of our campers.

Watch this space for more of our CSIS Youth antics, 'cos there are many more to come!



Murray and Mathew dig their group's sanitary hole in their own style. Also pictured from left Grace, Marie and Miriam.

## Ministry team combines experience with youthful energy

By Cory Miller  
*The Central South Island Methodist Synod has gone creative in its efforts to find a solution to a gap in youth ministry left since the previous youth worker moved away.*

A new youth ministry team has been created, with a vision of re-energising youth and drawing them closer to Christ. Rev Jill Van de Geer, Rev Alan Webster and Siu Williams-Lemi have together formed this unique partnership to meet the needs of the youth of the district.

Instead of a single person carrying the weight of all the youth, the ministry is to be shared between the three of them.

Jill is the team co-ordinator. She says "It can be a stressful job, working on your own. That is why we have set up the team in this way, so that there are three people to share the load."

"Youth ministry is a priority within the churches in the Central South Island, and the Synod is to be congratulated for their creativity in utilising its people resources to meet this need."

The original plan was to replace the former youth worker with another single, full-time youth ministry coordinator. This was unsuccessful but the Synod was not prepared to let the matter drop. Rather, it looked at how it could achieve what was wanted when it couldn't be done in the way it was originally conceived.

"Instead of going for a qualified experienced person, we decided to look for a person who had all of the qualities needed for the task and then equip them," Jill says.

The idea was to then develop a supportive team to mentor, educate and enable the chosen candidate.

Alan is the team's resource facilitator. He says Siu stood out as having these qualities.

She had long been recognised for her contribution and presence amongst the youth of the parish, he says.

"Siu was right here. She is gifted and she is able and she contributes enormously to the life of the church."

After a series of informal discussions Siu applied for the job, was formally

interviewed and appointed to the regional youth ministry coordinator position for the Central South Island as from the 1st June.

She is responsible to encourage networking amongst youth from as far south as Timaru and as far north as Rangiora, and to organise regular youth events.

"I see my job as equipping youth, helping them, and enabling them to become whole people, fulfilled in Christ," says Siu.

It is no small task, with more than 100 youth in the synod and more than 10 active youth churches.

However she is not alone, as she is supported by Jill, Alan and the wider church community.

Siu, Alan and Jill feel that the team is bigger than the individuals in it. They and the wider Christian community want to enable Siu in her task of resourcing youth leadership within the Central South Island.

Through formal tertiary education and hands-on experience, the Synod is



Central South Island Synod's new youth worker Siu Williams-Lemi (playing guitar) is supported in her work by two presbyters.

committed to enabling Siu to become fully equipped to carry out her role.

Already Synod has been impressed with the enthusiasm and vitality Siu has shown.

The skill that has most impressed them has been the high energy she brings to all her tasks, particularly in emails sent out to the youth.

They have been hitting with energy.

It is this energy this new youth ministry team hopes will also encourage other youth leaders to be inspired to begin their own developmental journey.

## Youth and the Church: inclusion or exclusion?

By Abhi Solomon, Auckland Synod youth work enabler

*As a youth work enabler for the Auckland Methodist Synod I am frequently invited to speak to congregations and the youth groups about the work I'm doing. While attending various youth groups I have had an opportunity to interview some of the young people (and young-adults) in the Auckland Synod area.*

When I do, the questions I ask them are: How do you perceive church? How do you participate in your church service? What can you tell me about your church life?

In their responses the vast majority says things like: 'We feel excluded from the life of the church'. 'We are not provided with much opportunity in the Sunday morning services'. 'We feel detached'. Many went so far as to say that their church services are aimed at serving more elderly people of their congregation therefore they can't relate to the current style of service. It is clear that most of our young people are unable to relate to the current life of the church.

In some ways it wasn't alarming for me to hear the responses that I got from the young people. Being in youth ministry over the past few years has enabled me to observe a pattern that has been established. I call it a pattern of 'inclusion and exclusion'.

The Church in general has already tried to provide a solution to the above problems by establishing youth groups and youth services on a regular basis, i.e., by being inclusive toward the young people. However this particular inclusion often leads to the establishment of another exclusive community of young people where the youth and the youth leaders are often left to do their own thing in their own little bubble.

Furthermore, this exclusive

community of young people ends up being isolated, lacking emotional, spiritual, and pastoral support. This results in further detachment from Church life and ultimately, a fall out from the faith community.

This inclusion results in exclusion, and this moves our faith community from being 'an intergenerational church' to 'a generational church'. The 'generational church' is self perpetuating. Once the pattern is established these exclusive groups continue to reflect this separatist



Abhi Solomon

ideology, fostering the separation that already exists.

I believe that this is one of the central challenges of our Church: How do we move away from 'a generational church' to 'an intergenerational church'?

The problem is not solved by establishing youth groups or running youth services (although I see them as an important tool). Rather it's about relationship, trust and education.

Firstly, we should learn to develop relationships with the young people in our congregation by making them feel welcomed and valued, and then providing them with pastoral care and support. A good relationship and friendship can provide a condition for 'intentional mentoring' of the youth leaders by the presbyter on a semi-

formal basis. Furthermore we must learn to listen to what our young people are saying, and to acknowledge the talent and skills they have got to offer without them needing to prove anything. It is critical to provide a framework within which they are able to express these skills and to be nurtured in the broadest sense of that word.

Secondly, we should trust our young people more, involving them in the life of the church (the Sunday morning services as well as Synod). Providing them with opportunities and giving them some real responsibility within the church (with appropriate support and training) is also essential. At very least this may involve them being part of the welcome team, doing readings, playing music, singing, performing skits and organising the morning teas.

Finally young people need education with motivation. Youth leaders need to be motivated and equipped well in order to provide an appropriate education including both the fundamentals of the Christian faith including Methodist Church theology and its ethos, and the fundamentals of church life and tradition in general. For example many of our young people don't know about the church calendar, liturgy, the reasons vestments are worn, or the core values of Methodism.

I understand that the ekklesia is the body of Christ, and within this body every part is equally important and has a significant role to play. Moreover the word ekklesia is impregnated with the sense of radical equality, inclusivity, and decision making power for all members of the Christian community.

It is on this basis I invite us all to reflect, to continue this dialogue, and to take meaningful actions in order to establish a community where all are accepted, valued, and the different generations are able to learn from each other.

## 'The harvest is on' at youth outreach camp

*The weekend of July 2nd-6th 2010 saw more than 200 Tongan youth from throughout New Zealand gather at Christian Youth Camp, Ngaruawahia for the annual Vahefonua Tonga Youth Outreach Camp. The theme for the Camp was 'The Harvest Is On!'*

In Luke 10:2, Jesus told the people, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

A central purpose of the Vahefonua's Youth Vision is to win souls for Christ. Daily series of Bible Studies were held to prepare the youth for the altar call on Monday night. The themes were: Remember your Creator during your youth; What hinders you?; What God offers; and Turning a new leaf.

The focus on Saturday was 'Purpose Driven Life'. Guest speaker Ronji Tanielu encouraged the youth that all have gifts that God has blessed us with and we need to submit those gifts to God so He can use us to do his will. Mele Suipi Latu held workshops reiterating that God has a purpose for everyone and we need to be willing to let God take control of our lives.

The youth were honoured by the presence of general secretary of the Methodist Church of NZ, Rev David Bush, who took the Sunday service. He also spoke on a Purpose-Driven Life from his experiences which helped in paving a "further mile" for the young people to take in their journey during the Camp. David Bush shared with the youth the ins and outs of the MCNZ and the particular importance of the Local Church.

On Monday the focus was on men's and women's ministries. Pastor Geoff Wiklund and Tavale Mataia from Promise Keepers took the boys focusing on the importance of godly men, sexual purity in being godly, and the importance of young men in the church. Dr Glennis Mafi and Pastor Rachel Dunwell took the girls sharing about being godly women, sexual purity and modesty, and the importance of young Christian girls to stand out.

On Monday night the youth were challenged to accept Christ into their lives. An altar call was then held and 93 youth "were called and moved" to take the step of

accepting Jesus Christ into their lives with a number of them recommitting their Faith in Jesus.

The camp rounded up on Tuesday focusing on "Turning a New Leaf" with Myan Subrayan coming in to encourage the youth with their walk with Christ sharing from his experiences of growing up in South Africa, his faith and hope in God's care, and moving his family to NZ though they had nothing. He shared the importance of young Christians to stand out noting that "only dead fish go with the flow" stressing the importance for the youth of today to be acutely aware of their surroundings and friends as being with the wrong crowd can lead into trouble. He led a spontaneous altar call that brought 12 more people forward.

There was also humour and fun provided as the young people thoroughly enjoyed the 'Bring-It On' Showcase on Saturday night and the Choir Singing on Sunday night. Talents were displayed and there was plenty of laughter. The Worship Team led the singing and there was spontaneous joyful outbreak of dancing and singing in body and spirit from young and old. Lasting youthful relationships were established: with each other and with their God.

The Organising Committee acknowledges with gratitude all the efforts and prayers put in by all to make this occasion a success. The 2010 Youth Outreach Camp revealed to the youth that our God is a living God; that our G-O-D is B-I-G! Glory be to God!



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# A call to faith

Greg Hughson reflects on Luke and Hebrews

*During August the lectionary continues to lead us through Luke's story of Jesus. Readings from Hebrews provide a counterpoint to the gospel, reminding us that many people of faith have gone before us. Hebrews informs us that it is by faith that we are able to perceive that "the Universe was fashioned by the Word of God who enabled the visible to come forth from the invisible," (Hebrews 11:3).*

The author of Hebrews could not have put a date on when this creative process began. We now know that it was 13.7 billion or so years ago when the first visible matter emerged from nothingness, in the 'big bang' that gave rise to the Universe we indwell.

What is it which distinguishes Christian faith from other expressions of faith? Christian faith is by definition, faith placed in Jesus Christ.

In Hebrews vs 1-2 we read "And what of ourselves? With all these witnesses to faith around us like a cloud, we must throw off every encumbrance, every sin to which we cling, and run with resolution the race for which we are entered, our eyes fixed on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish."

Luke helps us to fix our eyes on Jesus. Here is someone who chooses to heal on the Sabbath (Luke 13:10-17), a man who teaches his followers to throw parties for the crippled, the lame and the blind (Luke 14:7-14), a wise man who reminds his followers to be on guard against every kind of greed (12:15) and to sell their possessions and give to charity.

In Luke's Gospel we are challenged to attend to Jesus when he reminds his followers that the Son of Man will come when least

expected, so be ready, be alert! This is the Jesus we are called to follow, the one in whom we are invited to trust.

The book of Hebrews reminds us that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and many of our other ancestors died in faith, without being in full possession of all they had been offered. It will be the same for us. We will never fully "arrive". The main thing is to be on a journey of faith, to run the race towards becoming more like the one who calls us to follow him, to love one another and care for the poor and oppressed of our day.

When we fix our eyes on Jesus we choose to allow his influence to pervade every aspect of our being and doing. We need to be continuously open to new insights into what following Jesus today means. The biblical themes of justice, peace, healing, salvation,

liberation and renewal are all worked out in our lives when we follow the Christian way.

Ideally our faith will move us in the direction of becoming more able to express the inclusive love of God to all people and to the whole of creation.

Faith development is a process which can be stunted if not nurtured through worship, prayer and continual reassessment of what we believe and of where we need to be. The implications of trusting God through faith in Jesus Christ are profound for each and every one of us.

To fix our eyes upon Jesus will have life changing consequences, liberating us from preoccupation with our own survival and needs, setting us free to serve others in his name.

## A RESTLESS HEART LIBRARY OF FAITH

By Jim Stuart



*Albert Einstein, when once asked about God, is reported as answering, 'When I get to heaven, I have a lot of questions I am going to ask God.' Part of me*

*can appreciate Einstein's ironic sense of humour.*

As Christians, we face a multitude of contradictions in life. For example, if God is our loving and gracious Creator, why do sin and evil exist? If we are created in the image of God, why do some of us behave so badly, so selfishly? If Jesus was the living expression of God's love, why did he suffer such a horrible death?

The questions are endless and they seem to become more pressing as the

human race enters the global age when the possibilities of human annihilation are more dangerous than ever before but at the same time, the possibilities of a new and better world could so easily be realised.

One Christian who wrestled with these types of questions was a young man born in Algeria in the fourth century. The son of a minor landowner, Augustine became a great Catholic bishop and saint who shaped the course of history. His influence continues to shape our ideas about faith, meaning, politics, and psychology. There are some books which have an enduring influence long after the author has died and Augustine's Confessions is one of them.

I was first introduced to Augustine's book during my university years by one of my favourite professors, Dr John Noss. Noss described Augustine

as one of those 'bridge-personalities' who built a bridge between what we call the old world and the new world of modernity. Augustine's relevance reaches out to people of every age who struggle to understand the world and their place in it.

"Seek for yourself," writes Augustine in his Confessions, "search for your true self. He who seeks shall find – but, marvel and joy, he will not find himself, he will find God, or, if he find himself, he will find himself in God!"

Augustine's Confessions are a deeply revealing and honest revelation of one man's sincere search and the profound insights he gained along the way. In a sense, Augustine's search is everyone's search born into the uncertainties and contradictions of this world. He speaks to our secular, post-modern world just as he did to the

despair of the dying Roman imperialism. As one modern interpreter of Augustine has observed, "if ever there was a great heart to speak, it was his, and if ever there are small and frightened hearts who need his words, they are ours."

Across the centuries Augustine speaks to all of us about the importance of finding our true selves, choosing between freedom and slavery in our lives, recognising the vanities of life and discovering in this search for truth, that it is not in the end about us, but about God, who is the centre of all life and love. I'll leave the last word to Augustine as he tried to find his way through this world. He wrote, "Our heart is restless, until it finds its rests in you [God]."

## MISSION OF UNITY IN MANAWATU

By Rev Rilma Sands,  
Manawatu JRC rep  
on Standing Committee

*For the past few years I have been privileged to be chair of the Manawatu Joint Regional Council. As a Presbyterian minister in a Presbyterian Parish I did not get much of a chance to enter into things ecumenical but since joining the JRC the horizons have widened for me personally.*

During the 1980s and 1990s I 'grew up' in my faith and spirituality in a Union Parish in Auckland (Avondale Union) and naively learned through that time about the unity of the people of God at the grassroots. I then heard the call of God to the ministry of word and sacrament and realised I had then to choose between our parent churches which stream I would enter.

God was very much in that decision as well and here I am. But a lot of what I learnt during those years in Avondale I have retained. There I learned and came to firmly believe in the unity of God's people.

I believe in order to achieve this we do have to respect each other's backgrounds

and traditions for in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, Methodist or Presbyterian etc. We are to be one in order that others may believe.

In the Manawatu region we have various cooperating ventures which show this unity of mission: Levin; Foxton Shannon; Rongotea, Woodville; Pahiatua; and Milson.

I have recently participated in the induction of a new minister/presbyter, Rev Anne Bennett at Rongotea under the oversight of the Presbyterian Church. Anne is an Anglican priest and will be ministering in a Methodist/Presbyterian parish where there is a spirit of unity that gladdens the heart and encourages our mission in the small places of our land.

There is mission in these small places for small groups of people who need the Gospel of Jesus Christ to be spoken and modelled. It is from these small beginnings that great movements are born.

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## Gaza refugee expert to visit CWS

*CWS expects to bring one of the world's experts on Gaza refugee conditions to New Zealand in mid August.*

Constantine Dabbagh directs the provision of health care, education and community services for the predominantly Muslim population of Gaza.

The services focus on mothers and babies, vocational education and the provision of psychosocial healing services to an increasingly traumatised population.

A Palestinian Christian, Constantine is executive director of the Middle East Council of Churches Department of Service for Palestinian refugees in Gaza.

His personal and professional dedication to a dialogue of peace, justice, security, mutual understanding and reconciliation has often involved him in critical negotiations between political factions in Palestine, the Palestine Authority and the

international community.

During the Israeli attacks on Gaza in January 2009 the combined major health clinic and central offices of the Middle East Council of Churches was destroyed by an Israeli rocket and remains in ruins.

He has witnessed personally the effects of the Israeli blockade of Gaza which has meant no building materials are allowed to enter, and rubble is the only material available for reconstruction.

An offer of a volunteer Australian work team to rebuild the clinic was rejected by Israel and the necessary visas required for the project denied.

Constantine's Australasian visit will include talks from him on efforts of moderate Christian and Muslim leaders to achieve a peaceful resolution of the conflict and to convince the Israeli Government to end the current blockade of Gaza.

## OUTREACH

# Haiti avoids worst case scenarios after quake

*Six months after the devastating January 12 earthquake hit Haiti the good news amidst the rubble is that possible worst case scenarios have been avoided.*

Christian World Service global partner ACT Alliance is deeply involved in the emergency aid and ongoing development work in Haiti. It has been the vehicle for New Zealand contributions to CWS for Haiti.

In their six month report the ACT Alliance team says the real mark of success so far is in what has not happened.

There has been no massive outbreak of disease despite cramped and often unhygienic conditions. There has been no nutrition crisis and most of the 1.5 million displaced people have some form of shelter.

The logistics of the relief effort are huge. Since the earthquake hit ACT Alliance has raised over US\$120 million for Haiti and working either directly or through more than 20 local and national partners has provided extensive help to people.

"We have assisted more than 341,000 people since the earthquake hit Haiti. People have been provided with emergency shelters, food, water and sanitation amongst other forms of help," says ACT Alliance co-ordinator in Haiti Genevieve Cyvcoot.

However she notes there are still huge amounts to be done.

"Hundreds of thousands of people are still in vulnerable situations especially those in inadequate shelter for the hurricane season."

The new challenge is to maintain the present levels of aid and support while moving ahead into the reconstruction of Haiti. Increasingly the Haitian Government will have to take charge.

"We urge the Government of Haiti to take the lead in the recovery and reconstruction of the country and to make political decisions for the benefit of the Haitian people. We also urge the inclusion of the Haitian civil society and



*Emergency workers from ACT Alliance unroll piping for safe water supplies soon after the quake. Systems such as these helped avoid outbreaks of disease.*

Haitian people in the rebuilding of our country. A dialogue between the Government and the civil society is much needed," said ACT Alliance country manager Prosperity Raymond.

ACT Alliance reminds the global community that promises made in the heat of the quake aftermath now needed to be honoured.

So far just over 20 percent of the US\$12 billion promised by international donors has been actually delivered to the Haitian Government, well short of the amount needed to pay for the cleanup and redevelopment process.

## Helen Clark to speak on Millennium Development Goals

*Head of the United Nations Development Programme Helen Clark will give the first annual Christchurch Cathedral lecture on August 13 at 6.15pm.*

The former prime minister will speak on the 'Millennium Development Goals: Ten years down, five to go.'

The Millennium Development Goals are the global benchmarks set for reducing poverty and disease by specific amounts and times. The Goals are credited amongst aid and development agencies with moving poverty reduction into a new era of tangible achievements and measurements.

Dean of Christchurch Cathedral Peter Beck says he is delighted to get a figure of international stature such as Helen Clark to give the first of what will

become an annual lecture.

"I met Helen in Auckland earlier this year and just asked her if she was willing to do the first lecture if she was passing through Christchurch.

"Obviously she said yes, and given that she is ranked near the top of the United Nations' key figures it is a big achievement for Christchurch to have her here," Peter says.

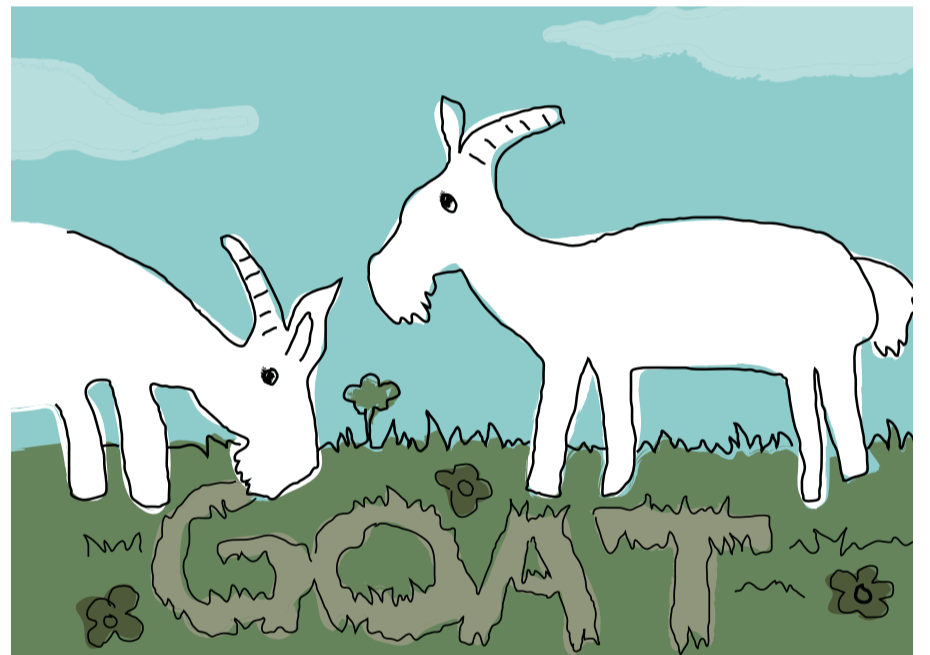
The Cathedral will host the event in the same spirit that it had recently provided the venue for meaningful dialogue on issues such as alcohol use and abuse and water use.

"We are doing this because we think it is the right thing to do to engage in significant social justice issues," he said.

The lecture is co-sponsored by Christian World Service and The Press newspaper.



*Helen Clark*



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## Health insurance for Methodist employees

*As part of its new stipend package for the 2010-2011, financial year the Methodist Church of NZ has offered its employees a medical insurance scheme.*

Those eligible for the scheme include all stationed presbyters and deacons as well as employees of boards that have opted into the scheme.

The scheme came into effect on July 1st. While the MCNZ pays the insurance premiums for its employees those who receive the insurance also had a one time offer to include their family members in the scheme at their own expense.

Insurance broker Craig Gudsell will administer the scheme for the Church. Craig says the insurance programme will benefit both employees and the Church.

"There is a significant correlation between early intervention in health problems and the well-being of staff. This benefits employers because their workers have less down time and are more efficient

on the job.

"Health problems do not only affect the person who suffers from them but also their partners and children. If other members of their families are ill, it can cost the employee time away from work," Craig says.

The plan covers full hospital and surgical procedures. Major diagnostic procedures are covered in the base level of cover, even if they are not linked to surgery. In addition to the base cover employees were able to opt to pay extra for additional cover the suit their personal needs.

Craig says the insurance covered all qualifying pre-existing health conditions.

"Experience shows that a significant number of people with existing ailments and health issues will get them addressed now that the scheme has begun."

The insurance is provided by Accuro, a not-for-profit insurance provider.

For enquiries call the administrator Chris White on 0800 843 276.

## Honouring our Loved Ones

*Death and bereavement are universal experiences. Yet, when someone dies, even if expected, we may find ourselves unprepared. This is especially true if we are responsible for funeral preparation.*

We may depend on what other people tell us or what we think, rightly or wrongly, is traditional. Or we may be willing to leave it to the officiating minister or celebrant who may also have limited ideas.

Brian Malcouronne's book is described on the frontispiece as "notes and resources for funeral celebrants, family and friends." It is a helpful guide to all those who may be involved with funerals. First published in 2000, by popular demand it has been reissued as a facsimile edition.

Drawing on his own pastoral experience and wide reading, Brian considers the role of the funeral as both a tribute to the dead and as ministry to the living.

He suggests creative ways of sharing memories and



dealing with the positive and negative aspects of grief. Gently he leads the reader through the various aspects of a funeral service. He raises practical issues to be considered where the celebrant did not know the person who has died or may have built no relationship with a bereaved family prior to involvement with the funeral preparations.

Professional issues that may arise for a celebrant who is not a minister of religion are touched on, including follow-up and fees.

When we may be wondering about what words to use, Brian makes helpful suggestions regarding those situations where death has occurred suddenly and unexpectedly or after long suffering.

Funeral celebrants, and those bereaved, will find particularly helpful the compilation of readings from various sources. Readings from scripture are suggested but also extracts from other sources.

While there is comfort to be found in scripture, it must

By Brian Malcouronne  
2010, Grasmere Productions (facsimile edition), 120 pages.  
Reviewed by John Meredith

be admitted that words of comfort and inspiration are not bound to scripture. If neither the deceased nor the bereaved family are religious in a traditional sense, alternatives are offered. These are nonetheless spiritual in that they recognise that love and hope and the significance of life are not limited solely by one's belief system. That the meaning of life and death cannot be defined solely by religion is also recognised by the forms of committal in the book.

Because this is a facsimile edition some minor grammatical and proof reading errors have been perpetuated. What is of greater moment is that the original text is not written using inclusive language. The author states his intention to alternate gender terms but 10 years on this sounds and feels awkward. Rather than a facsimile maybe the time has come for a new edition.

Nevertheless, this is a very useful book that will aid careful thought about how the passing of a human life may be marked in a significant, meaningful and personalised way. The author's personal integrity and concern that funerals should be realistic and uplifting shines through its pages.

## Making Connections Down Under – Reflections of a United Methodist in Aotearoa NZ

*Jim Stuart is a New Yorker whose practice of Wesleyan itinerancy has taken him across his homeland and to the universities of Tübingen and Zurich before connecting 'down under', first as lecturer in Systematic Theology at Trinity College, Auckland and later as minister of St Andrew's on the Terrace, Wellington and as chaplain at the University of Canterbury.*

This book is a useful collection of lectures and other papers from his years among us. First is a series on 'Breaking the Cycle of Poverty' which includes insightful reflections on biblical material and the early Wesleyan example.

Also demonstrating the Methodist historian's expertise familiar to readers of Touchstone is the next piece 'Weaving the Cloak: the Pakeha Contribution to Methodism in Aotearoa New Zealand', a valuable and ultimately prophetic supplement to the official histories, and also a Conference address on Methodist ecology, 'Have we fallen asleep?'

The book ends with a couple of overtly theological papers. 'The Liberal Theological Tradition' is found extraordinarily diverse in "its elasticity of thought and openness to new ways of thinking."

A liberal Christian theology is characterized as evangelical in spirit, radical in praxis, critical in method, personal in emphasis, ecumenical in scope and inclusive in

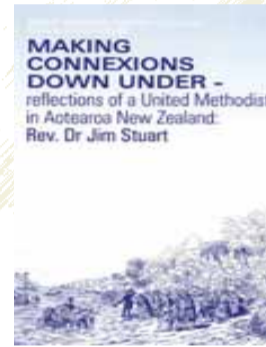
practice, and finding freedom in God's all-embracing love, like Wesley it "offers love and healing to a broken and divided world."

Finally in a historical sketch of 'The Evolution of God in Christianity – a Theological Typology' Stuart focuses on Gutierrez's wounded God in reference to the human and planetary condition; in Sallie McFague's metaphor, "the world is God's body".

For some readers the most accessible part of the book may be the personal memoir, 'a theological odyssey'. This includes some of the theological insights he gained from teachers at several institutions in America and Europe.

In Tübingen he learned from Hans Kung that the reason to be a Christian is "in order to be truly human" and from Ernst Kasemann that faith is a genuine wrestling with the biblical text until "the text interprets us".

In Zurich for doctoral studies on Wesley, Gerhard Ebeling's seminar introduced him to the work of Friedrich Schleiermacher, who showed that faith gives voice to "the deepest human questions: what is evil, how does culture



By Jim Stuart  
2009, Wesley Historical Society NZ, 124 pages  
Reviewer: Ren Kempthorne

shape us, what is our purpose in life and how does the imagination of faith help us live in an incredibly diverse and ever-changing world?"

These are the kind of questions that seem to have informed Stuart's life ever since.

Already as a young minister in Philadelphia he had been drawn into the civil rights struggle of the 1960s, becoming one of three white faces at a huge memorial gathering on the morrow of Martin Luther King's assassination.

Later, as ethics teacher in a small Free Methodist-affiliated college in Illinois, he was controversially involved for several years in a community development project in a nearby

town where poor black families were being subjected to intolerable living conditions by a developer and county officials. Thus he has habitually 'made connexions' with his world's challenges.

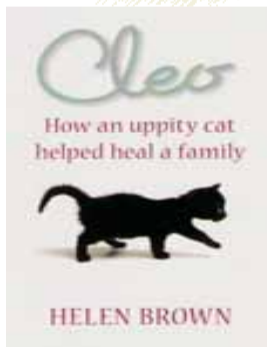
This invaluable and widely-ranging collection by a profoundly practical theologian evokes the hope that this Odysseus (his analogy!) may still longer tarry distracted by the delights of these islands from a return to his Ithaca (for there is after all an Ithaca in his home state).

## Cleo – How an Uppity Cat Helped Heal a Family

*If you are a bona fide cat lover, don't bother reading the rest of this review! Just go get the book, you will love it. If you are not so sure, read on, and then go get the book as you will love it too.*

Cleo is an uppity cat who enters the lives of Helen and her family under tragic circumstances. Sam, Helen's animal-loving oldest son was promised a cat just days before being killed in a car accident. As the family tries to deal with their grief, Cleo arrives on their doorstep and Helen's immediate response is to refuse to keep her. But when her younger son, Richard - who saw the accident - smiles for the first time since Sam's death, she relents and Cleo stays.

What follows is a journey through the next decades of



the family's life as they struggle to come to terms with Sam's death and the other events of life as time moves on. It's a journey marked by pain, despair, self discovery, growth and eventually healing.

By looking at her family history through the way Cleo fits in, Brown has been able to tell a very personal story with a frank perspective and the right balance of personal reflection and story telling. This leaves us with an endearing tale well told.

Events are punctuated with the various things that happen when you have a cat:

everything from plants knocked over to the unconditional love that animals bring. The proficiency of the writing gives the most wonderful visual images of Cleo's antics, and the ensuing human reaction.

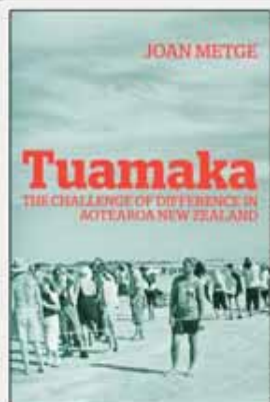
Helen Brown  
2009, Arena, 286 pages  
Reviewer: Nan Russell

Helen Brown is an accomplished writer, and her skill means this is a polished, moving and at times humorous book. Thankfully it doesn't fall into the trap of sentimentality like some other books featuring animals as their main protagonists. Brown is always real and never 'fluffy'.

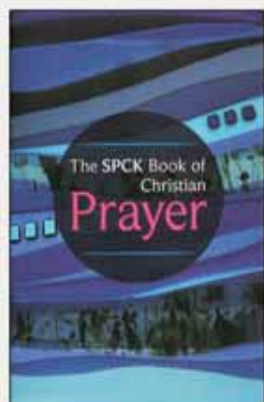
So you will laugh, you will cry. You will chuckle; and you will love, like and dislike the cat as the book unfolds. You will also find you can't bear to put it down as you might miss the next adventure of the cat Cleo and her human family.

This is a book well worth reading, don't dismiss it because you are not a cat or animal person, or you fear it may not be well written or too light and fluffy. It is a well written book that is a joy to read.

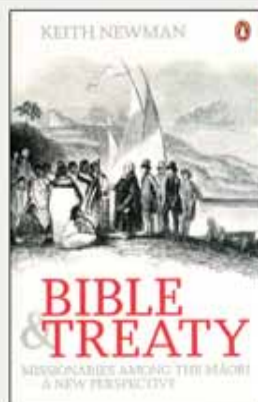
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ON SCREEN

# TOY STORY 3

A film review by Rev Dr Steve Taylor

In 1995, a bunch of toys started a cinematic innovation. The toys (*Toy Story*) were to be followed by fish (*Finding Nemo*), rats (*Ratatouille*) and robots (*WALL-E*), all creations of Pixar Animation Studios. The credits began to roll, with 11 films in the next 15 years garnering 24 Academy awards and contributing to the sale of Pixar to Disney in 2006 for \$7.4 billion. This creative energy was based neither on Hollywood star power nor on clever computer technologies.

Rather, according to Pixar co-founder, Ed Catmull, it was the result of a shared commitment to play. Catmull wrote in the Harvard Business Review of a dream, that of making the first ever computer-animated film, only to realize that the most exciting achievement was the creation of a unique collective environment, a team of individuals committed to collective play.

Toy Story 3 is Pixar's latest offering, and the ethos of creative play continues. When interpreting film, the first scene is often pivotal. Toy Story 3 begins, and ends, with toys at play – historic toys, like Mr and Mrs Potatohead and action toys like Buzz Lightyear – collectively engaged in the sheer joy of imaginative play.

Toy Story 3 marks the third, and final installment. Times are changing, for the toys' owner, Andy is growing up. Questions of identity begin to surface.

What is the place of play in a world grown-up? The tension in the Toy Story 3 plot continues to tighten. The toys find themselves delivered to a local child-care centre, only to meet Lotso the bear, who in the face of change, has chosen to respond with bullying and manipulation. How should we respond as people around us change? Should we play both equally and fairly, or in power-wielding hierarchies?

A theme of collective play is worth pondering theologically. The German 16th century mystic Angelus Silesius wrote that, "God plays with creation. It has imagined the creature for its pleasure." This finds expression in a number of Biblical images of God, as musician and composer, as designer and garment maker, as architect and builder, as crafter and artisan. God plays, not manipulatively nor hierarchically, but in imaginative and joyful partnerships. And so we, as humans, made in the image of God, are similarly invited to play, imaginatively, joyously, collectively.

Using this lens, Toy Story 3 offers a fascinating theology, that of creatures made for play. In the midst of contemporary consumerism, we find toys built not for the purpose of

entertainment but for the purpose of imaginative play. It is a subtle, yet profound difference.

Further play occurs throughout the plot. In a delightful twist, Barbie meets Ken. Stereotypes are introduced, only to be playfully subverted. Collective friends become more important than fantasy.

And all the time one is watching computer-generated toys at play. Such is the genius of the Pixar creative innovation. The usual run of Hollywood A-listers, including Tom Hanks (Woody) and Tim Allen (Buzz Lightyear), serve as simple voice-overs. The real stars – the writers and animation artists – are invisible. Is this yet another message about the ethics of collective play?

Such is the playful skill of Pixar, a creative collective drawn together with permission to play. In turn, they create a team of toys at play. In so doing, they offer to children and adults a way of being human, as made to play.

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 emergentkiwi.org.nz.



## BIRDS FOUND IN SCRIPTURE

As spring approaches we see signs of migratory birds as they return, seek mates and build nests. We Kiwis are proud of our unique bird-life heritage but we cannot be complacent.

Captain Cook noted in the 1770s that the bird song was deafening. Since human settlement about 33 percent have become extinct, 16 of these since 1840. Currently 153 species, out of around 200, are listed as endangered.

The Scriptures name 35 birds but only 10 of these are listed as 'clean' – able to be used as food and for sacrifices by the Hebrew people.

### Bible Challenge

Desolate place where the ___ lives	B _____	(Zep 2:14, AV)
Meat in the Wilderness	I _____	(Ex 16:12-13)
Two were sold for a penny	R _____	(Mtt 10:29)
Second bird to fly from the Ark	D _____	(Gn 8:8)
A hen gathers her	S _____	(Mtt 23:37, GNB)
Created on the 5 <sup>th</sup> day: winged...	F _____	(Gn 1:21, AV)
Four 'unclean' birds: 1) a nocturnal bird	O _____	(Lev 11:13-19)
2) a sea bird	U _____	
3) a diving bird	N _____	
4) type of falcon	D _____	
A large flightless bird	I _____	(Deut 14:15)
Jesus likened himself to a mother	N _____	(Mtt 23:37)
A migratory bird, nest in fir trees	S _____	(Ps 104:17)
A bird that distressed Peter	C _____	(Lk 22:34)
Elijah was fed by	R _____	(1Kg 17:4)
She hatches others eggs	I _____	(Jer 17:11)
Purification offering: two young	P _____	(Lk 2:24)
Forbidden, a carrion eating hawk	T _____	(Lev 11:14)
A scavenger known to Job	U _____	(Jb 28:7, AV)
A bird that was heard in spring	R _____	(Sg 2:12)
Inspiring high-flying bird	E _____	(Is 40:31)

Answers: bittern, quail, sparrow, owl, seagull, cormorant, buzzard, ostrich, hen, stork, cock, ravens, partridge, pigeon, kite, vulture, turtle dove, eagle © RMS

## Dave Dobbyn to perform in churches NZ-wide



Dave Dobbyn is set to headline an acoustic tour of church venues with support from members of Christchurch band Dukes.

Now in its second year, the tour has expanded to 12 shows in 11 cities - with New Plymouth and Nelson joining Auckland, Hamilton, Tauranga, Napier, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch (with two shows in different venues), Dunedin and Invercargill on the tour through churches, chapels and cathedrals.

The first show is at Chapel of Christ The King at St Paul's Collegiate in Hamilton on September 9.

Last year Dave celebrated three decades in music. He is known for a string of hits including Loyal, Slice of Heaven and Welcome Home.

His enduring popularity sees perennial polls of New Zealand's Top 100 songs returning Loyal to number one year on year, and he holds the most Silver Scroll Awards for song writing. In 2001, Dave received a lifetime achievement award from the NZ recording industry.

He says he is very much looking forward to the tour. "I'm excited by the ambiances of churches. There are layers of resonance that are ideal for singing.

"I've always been transported by the sonics of such rooms. In performance it allows you to expand the dynamic range without over-playing. I love that challenge. There's also an intimacy about it. In these rooms I'll be playing acoustic guitars and a piano," Dave says.

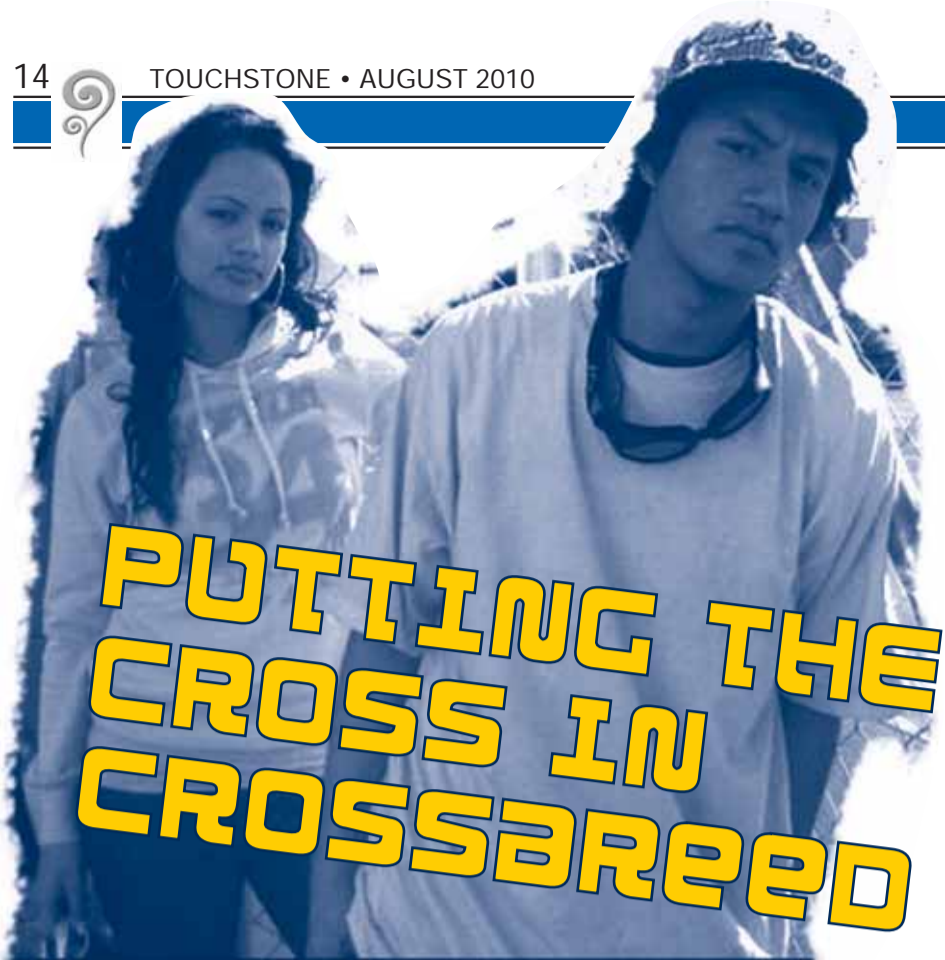
Long-time friend Ross Burge will play percussion and drums and will be joined by LA Mitchell and brothers Jo and Matt Barus from the Dukes.

## The REV...

by Dale Sweeney



By Mataiva Robertson



## PUTTING THE CROSS IN CROSSBREED

Nineteen year old Siauala Nili of St Pauls Methodist Samoan Congregation Otara forms one half of the up-and-coming hip hop/R'n'B duo known as CROSSBREED.

Siauala (aka GiantKilla) and Maurica Howard (aka Ryze) who is of Maori decent, use the influences of their different cultural backgrounds and upbringing as well as their surrounding environment to create a unique

hip hop sound that carries a positive message for the youth of today.

Siauala was born and raised in the St Pauls Otara Methodist church and points to regular choir practices at church when growing up as a major contributor to forming a solid musical foundation on which he has gone on to build what seems set to be the beginnings of a successful music career.

It was during a community performing arts concert in 2004 (organised by older brother Saipele) that Siauala, Maurica and three others were identified and brought together to form a group. For various reasons the other three were unable to commit to the group leaving Siauala and Maurica to carry the CROSSBREED name into the future.

They have not looked back since, and have gone from strength to strength. One of Siauala's biggest highlights to date was in 2007 when they travelled (along with over 30 support staff (e.g. DJ's, sound technicians, make-up, costume etc) to Los Angeles to do a showcase for Universal Motown Records. Although a deal did not eventuate, Siauala said it was invaluable experience for them and gave them the opportunity to do some awesome

networking.

Since then their music has received radio air time and also featured in national hip hop magazine "Back 2 Basics" receiving great reviews from the likes of the renowned DJ Sir-vere. They have been steadily working on their debut album "Flow Motion" which is set to be released later this year. On top of all that they've also been involved in the making of a NZ feature film musical which is also set to be released on the big screen in Auckland later this year.

Despite being so busy with his musical career, Siauala remains very active in his church where he is currently co-leader of the tupulagatalavou (youth) group. His faith remains a key driver in his goal to influence others through music – to be a role model for the youth, to make an impact on young people around New Zealand, around the world. Through his music and the opportunities it brings he hopes to make an even bigger impact for God.

Siauala summed it nicely when he told me that as Christians "we are in the world, but we are not of it." We wish Siauala all the best. May God continue to bless you and use you for His glory.

# Kidz Korna!

Welcome to the August Kidz Korna

## HAIKU and HOLIDAYS

What is a haiku and what do they have to do with school holidays? For the Wesley Kidz of Tauranga, the two meant a fun holiday activity joining the Wesley Walking Group and exploring the Haiku Pathway at Katikati.



The haiku does not rhyme. Instead, the haiku sets a mood or portrays a feeling or scenery. We tried composing our own haiku and we hope readers of Touchstone will be able to enjoy them too!



one lonely old tree surrounded by bright blue sky but now it is dead

plop of stone on rocks splashes landing on my face litter spoils the stream

I did see a simple daisy doubled by reflection

black and brown flax flowers seeding feeding tui

blowing cobwebs wind from the south a spider's nightmare

blue grey hills above blue grey herons wade below merging colours

runaway cousins teasing dogs with grass blade call hiding in flax bush

how the rock skims it bounces across the water then it sinks

This pathway along the Uretara stream was a Millennium Project and boasts the largest collection of haiku stones Japan.

What is a haiku? The haiku originated in Japan and is a verse (poem) written in three lines.

Traditionally, the entire haiku is composed in 17 syllables. The first line contains five syllables, the second line has seven syllables, and the third and final line has five syllables. 5-7-5. However, the haiku on the pathway, and some of ours, had different numbers of syllables.



## PICTURE KIDZ AT CONFERENCE

Calling all children, teachers and children's ministry leaders! Make a collage, picture, photo display that shows us who you are and what you enjoy about church. (Size no larger than A3.)

These presentations will be displayed at Conference at Palmerston North in November. Later they will be used in Touchstone in Kidz Korna.

Send your entries to Conference with your church's representative or post to:

Doreen Lennox  
Unit 4 St John's Close  
22 Wellington Street  
Hamilton 3216

All entries posted must arrive before October 31st 2010.

## CAN YOU SOLVE THIS?

Use the clues to find the mystery word:  
My first is in God and also in grace  
My second is in mouth but not in face  
My third's not in tower but always in spire  
My fourth is in taper but not in fire  
My fifth is in evening but never in night  
My sixth's not in torch but always in light  
My whole is what St Matthew wrote.

## Linwood Cemetery seeks Methodist friends

*Linwood Cemetery, in the eastern suburbs of Christchurch, was opened in 1884 to a response from the City's growing population to move burials to the outskirts of town.*

Sadly what makes this once-majestic cemetery so notable now, is the neglect and damage, due not only to vandalism and lack of interest as the generations pass, but also environmental factors.

Ten years ago, a small working group started to tidy and garden the cemetery, hold regular working bees, and make significant improvements. Today that working party is The Friends of Linwood Cemetery Charitable Trust and it is putting information about those buried in the cemetery onto their website for global access.

This huge cemetery of just under 10 hectares contains around 20,000 people all of whom could be considered to have shaped Christchurch – and even New Zealand. It is divided

into areas reflecting the religious denominations of the day. What is remarkable is the size of the Wesleyan area. There are around 5,000 Methodists buried therein.

One of the aims of the Trust is that more people reconnect with the graves of their ancestors buried in Linwood Cemetery. Regularly visiting to ensure ancestors' graves are tidy is a great help when possible, as this is not part of the City Council's remit. Neither is it the City Council's responsibility to notify relatives of the state of a grave unless it constitutes a new threat to public safety.

The Trust would like anyone with family from Christchurch, wherever they now live, to see if their ancestors are buried in Linwood Cemetery. You can do this easily searching the City Council's Cemetery database ([www.librarydata.christchurch.org.nz/Cemeteries](http://www.librarydata.christchurch.org.nz/Cemeteries)). If you have an ancestor in Linwood Cemetery, The Friends would also like to

know.

A page about your ancestor can be added to The Friend's website and they can photograph the plot so you can see the condition. If necessary they can advise on restoration.

The Friends of Linwood Cemetery are delighted when they receive family biographies and reminiscences to add to a page. You don't have to live in Christchurch to connect with your ancestors.

Due to Privacy laws, the City Council can't give The Friends information needed to contact people to let them know if one of their ancestor's graves needs restoration. The Friends rely on people searching their family history to contact them independently. It is the responsibility of the family but it is our neighbourhood.

Please visit our website [www.linwoodcemetery.org.nz](http://www.linwoodcemetery.org.nz) for more information or e-mail:

[info@linwoodcemetery.org.nz](mailto:info@linwoodcemetery.org.nz), or call 03 381 4171.



Some of those who have helped rejuvenate Mangere East Methodist Church are (from left) Vatsi Uasi, Manukau District superintendent Rev Prince Devanandan, Lolita Malafu with her daughter Lolita jnr, Matilda Parker and Rev Kalo Kaise.

## New lease on life for Mangere Church

By Cory Miller

*Hidden away in an eastern corner of Mangere sits an old church, where a dwindling congregation has fought against all odds to survive.*

One year ago this small congregation seemed to be facing its inevitable demise, but since then, it has more than doubled in number.

Rev Kalo Kaise is the presbyter for the English-speaking congregation at the Mangere East Methodist Church.

"I believe revival is not about numbers but about the soul in this place," Kalo says. "It is a small but great congregation. Even if there are only three of us we will continue on, to share in faith. We will keep going."

Last year, the attitude at Mangere East was not so positive as the English-speaking congregation faced a difficult choice – whether to stay or go.

With only seven remaining members, four voted to leave, and the difficult decision was made to cease worshiping as a congregation.

Vatsi Uasi, was one of those who voted to leave Mangere East.

"I saw good reasons to leave," she says. "Due to the low numbers one person was being forced to carry multiple roles. The membership was declining and the spirit of the congregation was in

decline."

The last intended month of worship for the congregation came and went in April but surprisingly the congregation remained.

Not only that but miraculously it grew, as more members came and joined the worshippers.

Lay preacher, Matilda Parker says "I don't know why we didn't leave. Perhaps it was God's calling."

Matilda says staying with the church has been difficult at times. "I wanted to run away but I couldn't," she says. "I have a purpose here as a lay preacher."

Vatsi too says despite her decision to leave when the time came she found herself staying put.

"We kept on going as we did not have the heart to close," she says.

Lolita Malafu, one of the new members says she chose Mangere East Methodist church, as it was close to her home. She says its small size was not a deterrent, in fact she was drawn to its small size as she felt it would enable her dreams of becoming a part of the leadership of the church.

"Praise God," she says. "The decision was a human decision to close but for some unknown reason we are still here and growing. I can see it growing, and in five years we'll still going," she says.



The Wesleyan section of Linwood Cemetery.



Frank Paine today and circa 1940.

*As I near my 86th birthday, I have been remembering some of the people and events that have been part of my life. Within the space permitted by this article, I want to share some of them with you.*

I was born in 1924 to the household at 51 Empire Road, Epsom, Auckland, where lived my grandparents, Frank and Bertha Paine, and my parents, Charles and Dorothy Paine. My father had returned from the War where he had been wounded in the head on the Somme and he was employed as a carpenter. His twin brother Francis was killed in the landing at Gallipoli, and I

was given his name.

One day when I was seven, Dad was late home. I was playing on our front lawn watching for him to arrive. A car pulled up and Mr and Mrs Gibson, Dad's boss and his wife, got out. They had witnessed Dad's accident and were very distressed. Dad had been run over and was seriously injured and in hospital.

I remember taking our Christmas gifts to show Dad in hospital. So from 1931, Dad's accident made such a difference to our lives during the Depression. With him out of work my mother courageously held things together. We became very aware of the

## Methodist memories

METHODIST ARCHIVES

By Frank Paine

kindness of people who offered help and left bags of groceries etc. I am not sure how we survived – there must have been a pension or some relief work. I remember, too, being able to buy 7/6 worth of basic food from the Self Help shop with an official form.

My association with the Methodist Church began when my name was placed on the Cradle Roll in the Primary Department at Epsom Church Sunday School. Memories of the Sunday school anniversaries, when we aspired to sit at the top row of the platform which reached the height of the organ pipes.

One year Euan Lawry and I recited the books of the Old Testament. Mr and Mrs Moodie and family ran the Sunday school library and we enjoyed the books they provided. I remember those written by Percy Westerman and

the comic annuals Tiger Tim and Rainbow.

When I was about 13 I attended the Seddon Memorial Technical College and enrolled in the Typography Course, which led to me becoming a compositor. I was accepted as an apprentice compositor with Wilson and Horton Commercial Printing, before starting the apprenticeship, I had to spend a year as an office boy in the editorial department of the Auckland Herald.

On 17 February 1941 I commenced my five year apprenticeship in the composing room. The next year, in October 1942, I was called up and sent to Harewood in Christchurch to join the Air Force. By early December 1943, I was in Swanson, Auckland, ready to sail to the New Hebrides (now Vanuatu) and then Bougainville.

We sailed on a South American orange boat, where I survived on Coco Cola as I

suffered for four days from seasickness. At Espiritu Santos we celebrated Christmas and I joined an American male voice choir. Fortunately the journey to Bougainville was in a troop ship on calmer waters.

One day our camp there was shelled and I was unwillingly first down the foxhole. It was an ordeal for me as I suffer dreadfully from claustrophobia! The next morning we explored an American camp down the road which received a direct hit. I picked up a small piece of paper; it was from the Bible which described vividly the state of the camp (Revelation 8:7).

After the war I resumed my apprenticeship, became Sunday school superintendent at Epsom Methodist Church, and attended those wonderful winter and summer schools and youth conferences.

(Continues next issue).

