

# TOUCHSTONE

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

## Methodists move to two-year presidency



Above: Vice president Sue Spindler serves holy communion to Rev Metuisela Tafuna during the ordination service.

**A**s they prepared for Conference 2010, the then incoming presidential team of Rev Desmond Cooper and Sue Spindler sought ways to make business sessions shorter, more interactive, and good humoured.

By Paul Titus

Conference organisers asked boards, synods and committees to consider whether they could reduce the time they took to make their reports. Delegates were encouraged to think of the business sessions as 'theology at work'.

During the work sessions, which were held at the Palmerston North Convention Centre, they sat at tables rather than in rows. And a prize was awarded for the best and the worst jokes of each day.

These innovations seem to have worked. The mood of Conference was positive and progress was made on issues the Church has wrestled with for years.

With less time required for reporting, evenings were given over to guest speakers rather than business. Each of the speakers, Maori Party co-leader Pita Sharples, Muslim imam Mohammad Amir, and journalist Rosemary McLeod brought a unique perspective. Nevertheless, they all shared the message that people of different faiths, and no particular faith, share

concerns for morality, truth and justice.

While Conference did focus primarily on internal matters – how the Church is organised and run – with the launch of the Public Questions Network attention was given to the social issues of welfare reform, the environment, and overseas aid.

In his morning devotions, Rev Jim Stuart also encouraged Church members to follow the Methodist tradition and respond creatively to the challenges society faces and in particular support people facing poverty or injustice.

### Two-year presidency

The most notable decision Conference made was to extend the presidential team's term of office from one year to two.

The Council of Conference brought the motion for a two year presidency to Conference. In 2009 Conference had considered a proposal of a two-year term and rejected it. In doing so it asked the Council of Conference to do more work on the model, and present it again this year.

The new proposal called for a single president (with no vice president) who would serve for a year as president elect, two years as president, and a year as past president. The position would be open to lay and ordained people, and he or she

would receive a full stipend and housing.

General secretary Rev David Bush presented the proposal to Conference. He explained that the two-year term would give the Methodist Church more consistent leadership and the president more time to come to terms with the role.

Methodist presidents serving a one year term are at a disadvantage when it comes to dealing with leaders of the other mainline denominations in Aotearoa, who have longer terms. Changing to a two year term would also create significant savings as the cost of having a president and vice president have been steadily increasing in recent years.

While there was support for the proposal, there was concern it would undo the tradition the Methodist Church of NZ has established that the presidential team should be a lay-ordained partnership.

Some opponents of a two-year presidency argued that it would be very difficult for most lay people to take time away from their jobs or businesses to serve the Church. (See Eric Laurenson's letter to the editor in this publication).

Another point of view came from



The co-hosted gathering of the Evangelical and Liberal Networks drew a large number of people including Neville Price (left) and Rev David Poultney.

Tongan synod's superintendent Rev Setaita Kinahoi Veikune. She said that, if there were to be a sole president, it would be very important for the members of her synod that the person be ordained.

After initial discussions, Conference was undecided on the issue. It again asked the Council of Conference to reconsider the proposal. In light of what they had heard, the Council returned with a proposal for a lay-ordained presidential team with a two-year term of office.

Conference accepted this model. The presidential team selected in 2011 will begin their two-year term in 2012.

"This will potentially make a significant difference to the church," David Bush says. "It will give the president and vice president the ability to build a theme and address particular issues. It will enable them to make contact with more people in the Church."

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# Churches, Workplace Support leap to aid Pike River families

By Maree Sherry

*In the wake of the Pike River Coal mine disaster the Greymouth Uniting Church and other ecumenical groups moved quickly to support the employees and the families of the 29 men trapped underground.*

The Interchurch Trade and Industry Mission (which trades as Workplace Support) provided around the clock support for Pike River employees and their families, alongside various church organisations.

Lyn Heine works part-time for Workplace Support and is a member of the Greymouth Uniting Church. She says Workplace Support staff were called in early to provide support following the explosion in the mine on November 19 that trapped the miners and contractors.

Workplace Support staff were at the mine site around the clock, attended to Pike River employees in Greymouth, and maintained contact with other workplaces connected to the mine in some way within the small community.

Workplace Support chief executive Brent Andrews, of Christchurch, says part of the organisation's job is to provide early intervention support within the workplace for client companies, including Pike River. "We're a mission within the workplace.

The people that work for us come from ecumenical backgrounds around different denominations. Our team is employed to serve as chaplains to the mission," he says.

While Workplace Support employs a number of part-time chaplains on the West Coast, it sent others to Greymouth to provide additional help.

"Our team on the West Coast is providing assistance for the staff of Pike River. We're running a 24/7 operation up at the mine and we've got various staff doing rostered shifts up there so there is always someone at the mine assisting and talking to the people up there. The rest are in the community, touching base as and when required," Brent said when interviewed shortly after the explosion.

"It's a fantastic service that our chaplains do. The crisis at the moment is no different to a normal early intervention scenario, although what happens down the track might change things. Our people are offering marvellous support and dedication. They are working all hours to accommodate the needs of the people in the workplace, which is fantastic – it's a gift of service."

Members of the Greymouth Uniting Church worked with the community to provide support where it was needed.

"There's a drop-in centre for

community people, as opposed to family who are allowed into the Red Cross Centre," Lyn Heine says.

"It's at the Salvation Army Hall, and it's being run by people from all the churches. The Anglican and Catholic Churches are open for people to go in and light candles through the day. We're having nightly prayer vigils at the Holy Trinity Anglican. They are being run by all the church leaders and are open to everybody."

Food contributions have been pouring into the Red Cross Centre, while goods, services and accommodation had been provided for out-of-town family members.

Lyn has been dealing with the miners' family members herself and says they're getting plenty of support.

"I think the families are coping remarkably well. There are grumblings but to a large extent they have pulled together. As a West Coast community we're not unfamiliar with the risks of a tragedy happening," she says.

"(Mining) is the sort of environment and workplace that we live with here. It's not a forgiving environment like that a lot of people live and work in. In my own living memory as a child there was the Strongman Mine disaster and then Cave Creek. We know it as a reality.

"It certainly helps to know that we're

part of a wider community that supports and cares for us, and that the God in all of us is alongside."

Greymouth Uniting Church retired minister Rev Graeme Pratley says the parish offered support on a number of levels, including prayers.

"Parishioners have been co-opted to be part of food preparation teams in town. They're doing that to support the families. People from overseas are being accommodated in town," says Graeme.

Graeme says there is a lot of anxiety within the community, and the effect is cumulative even on people who weren't directly affected.

"People are very thankful. They're supporting each other and the community has pulled together. It's like a big family."

Methodist Church president Rev Desmond Cooper and vice president Sue Spindler sent a message that their love and prayers surrounded the miners, their families, and the West Coast communities affected by the accident.

"We are very conscious of the pastoral needs of these communities at this very difficult time. We are upholding those within our church, who are extending pastoral care to those affected," they said.

# Methodist submission on 'seabed and foreshore' repeal

*The Methodist Church has sent a submission on the Coastal Marine Takutai Moana Bill. This is the proposed legislation the coalition government has prepared to replace the Foreshore and Sea Bed Act of 2004.*

Methodist Public Questions Network coordinator Betsan Martin drafted the submission, and Methodist Church of NZ president Rev Desmond Cooper signed it.

Betsan says Maori have put their stake in the sand on the issue. While there has not been time for the Church to come to an agreed position about what should replace the Foreshore and Seabed Act, there is universal agreement that the 2004 Act should be repealed.

"We prepared our submission at short notice. The Church had not reached a fully agreed position on the issue but we believed our submission could raise some points of principle regarding social justice and spirituality in line with the Methodist mission statement.

"At Methodist Conference Maori Party co-leader Dr Pita Sharples spoke about the proposed legislation. He said there are many views amongst tangata whenua and there is not a consensus to support the proposed bill."

A discussion paper was distributed to the Public Questions Network and to Conference members to remind us of the main issues around the 2004 Act, and the options facing us now.

Betsan says a compelling ethical question is how our grandchildren and mokopuna will be affected by our actions and government decision on this issue. How will we be judged by coming generations?

"The repeal of the 2004 act would remove what Maori see as a confiscation and the injustice of iwi not having the opportunity to have customary titles clarified in court.

"The question now is 'what next?' Will the law that replaces the Act continue assimilationist history? Are we prepared to reshape history for a future that enacts the Treaty covenant and brings power sharing to public life?" Betsan asks.

She says Public Question Network's submission was discussed with Te Taha Maori and the main point of consensus was that the 2004 Foreshore Act should be repealed.

"Discussions with groups in the Methodist Public Questions Network and others working on submissions, including Christian World Service, led us to a focus on removing the condition that iwi and hapu must prove continuous occupation since 1840 to gain customary title. This condition imposes an impossible threshold."

The Methodist submission included support for a Treaty of Waitangi framework and highlighted care for the integrity of creation.

Betsan says a robust Treaty framework would make provision for tino rangatiratanga that lays out customary responsibilities, opportunities and intergenerational safeguards. This means customary titles and rights are ensured on their own terms and not made to fit within western legal precepts.

"Theologies of care and ethics of respect and shared responsibility were highlighted in our submission. We can look forward to hearing more of tumuaki Rev Diana Tana's work on ecotheology of the oceans. This was mentioned in the submission along with the imperative of any new legislation to ensure the long term sustainability of the coastal marine ecosystem."

Desmond says that while the issue is complex, repeal of the 2004 Act is an important starting point. New legislation should allow iwi and hapu the right to go to the High Court and negotiate with the Crown to have customary title investigated and affirmed.

He agrees that it is important that Maori ownership of the seabed and foreshore not be reduced to Western paradigms of ownership. There is a fundamental injustice that Pakeha private land owners can do what they want with their section of the foreshore but Maori cannot do what they want with theirs.

# Church leaders push PM on growing inequality

By Betsan Martin, Methodist Public Questions

*On November 23rd representatives and advisers from seven denominations along with the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) met with Prime Minister John Key and Minister of Finance Bill English at the Beehive as part of an on-going series of consultations.*

The church leaders made concise presentations on several topics. These were welfare reform, alcohol reform, criminal justice, and overseas aid. Papers on child poverty and housing were also prepared and referred to.

President Rev Desmond Cooper and I represented Te Haahi Weteriana.

There have been preparations over several months to clarify priority topics and prepare background papers. A common theme among all the presentations was inequality.

The church leaders have growing concerns that New Zealand is now ranked as the fourth most unequal society in the OECD. As an indicator for social dysfunction, inequality is a lens for analysis across a range of issues.

The prime minister and deputy prime minister engaged in discussion on the topics in an informal style.

Assemblies of God representative Ken Harrison stressed the unanimity of the church leaders on support

for the 5+ approach to alcohol reform. This means raising barriers to excessive alcohol consumption by increasing price and drinking age, stronger prohibitions on drink driving, and limits to marketing. The church leaders made a case for a much stronger stand than the government is taking.

The freshly published document prepared by the Alternative Welfare Working Group was presented to the prime minister with a request for him and his government to read it and to proceed with any further policy in ways that are respectful of beneficiaries.

When speaking to a paper on overseas aid a main concern was that partners in developing countries are being adversely affected by uncertainties over whether programmes are to continue. This is because of delays in decisions on the new Sustainable Economic Development fund.

The Pike River Coalmine disaster was the major concern of the day, and this was a focus for the prayer at the beginning of the meeting.

Plans are in place for the next church leaders meeting in February. Further briefing papers will provide for in-depth engagement on issues such as inequality and housing. 2011 is election year so this will be a strategic moment for government and other party dialogues with Church Leaders.

## Position Vacant

St Stephen's Uniting Church, Wodonga

Expressions of interest are invited for a full-time Minister of the Word placement at St Stephen's to commence as soon as possible.

St Stephen's is an active congregation involved in the local community. A significant priority in ministry is a demonstrated ability to foster relationships with and between the congregation and the Wodonga Uniting Care Agency, which are closely linked.

Inquiries can be made to the Secretary of the Placements Committee of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania at [peter.blackwood@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:peter.blackwood@victas.uca.org.au)

Applications close Friday January 7th, 2011.





# Spirit in fine voice at Conference 2010

*While Conference has its sometimes gruelling business side, it also has its uplifting celebratory and social side.*

Following the opening powhiri where the Church acknowledges those who passed away, the new presidential team is inducted and new presbyters are brought into the Connexion.

The presidential team of Rev Desmond Cooper and Sue Spindler were pleased with the way this aspect of the yearly event played out.

Desmond says highlights for him were the presence of his family at the induction service and their gift of a pounamu to mark the occasion. "Another highlight was the anthem sung by the combined Wellington Methodist Choir and the hymn 'Loving God of Aotearoa', which was specially written for the occasion by Philip Garside."

He and Sue chose the theme 'Tell out my Soul' for Conference, and they were delighted with Louise McConkey's moving solo performance of the Magnificat, which reflects that theme.

Sue says one of her special interests is music so the weekend induction and ordination services were a joy for her.

"The introit 'Take this moment' and the song 'Shout to the Lord' are among of my favourites, and it was very special for me to have the

youth band from Palmerston North play during the services," Sue says.

"The induction service as a whole was very emotional for us both, being such a very significant event, but also having our families there supporting us was really significant.

"The youth night was a highlight for me, I really enjoyed the fun and the energy and the opportunity for us all to let our hair down."

Four new presbyters – JooHong Kim, Hiueni Nuku, Ikilifi Pope, and Meuisela Tafuna – were inducted and six presbyters were reinstated or brought into full Connexion from other Churches. Five presbyters Revs Michael Dymond, Stuart Grant, Brian Peterson, Tony Stroobant, and Gillian Watkin as well as Deacon Richard Matthews were honoured at a retirement service.

Desmond and Sue both acknowledged insights Rev Jim Stuart offered during his morning devotions and those the guest speakers provided in their talks.

They also noted the brilliant hospitality the people, congregations and officials of Palmerston North provided for what was the Methodist Church's largest Conference in years.

Last but not least Desmond noted the coffee and barista on site worked their own magic.



The celebratory services at Conference featured lots of music including performances by young people from Palmerston North.



Maori Party leader Dr Pita Sharples (third from left) is welcomed to Conference by Sue Spindler, Rev Desmond Cooper, and Rev Rex Nathan.



In his address during the induction service President Desmond Cooper spoke on the importance of feminism, the Church's bi-cultural journey, and concern for the poor.



Eric Laurenson unveiled a plaque commemorating the 1988 and 2010 Conferences held in Palmerston North.

## Conference leaves its mark in Palmerston North

*The last time Methodist Conference was held in Palmerston North was in 1988, and the city still has a tangible reminder of the event.*

During that Conference then president Eric Laurenson planted a kowhai tree in the Square in the centre of the city to mark the occasion.

That event was remembered and celebrated this Conference with the unveiling of a memorial plaque at the foot of the kowhai.

At a short ceremony following the Sunday ordination service, Eric unveiled the plaque and current Methodist president Rev Desmond Cooper blessed it.

The plaque reads 'This tree and plaque commemorate the gathering of the Methodist Conference in 1988 and 2010'.

Convenor of the local Conference arrangements

committee Jenny Olsson says in 1988 the tree was planted following a procession around Square with all parishes displaying their banners. This year a procession went from the Conference venue to the Square carrying the 1988 Conference banner, this year's Conference banner, and a new banner depicting the Lower North Island synod.

After the plaque was unveiled Palmerston North city councillor Vaughan Dennison addressed the Conference members. He welcomed them to Palmerston North and requested that it would not be another 22 years before Conference came back to Palmerston North.

To conclude the event vice president Sue Spindler asked that those assembled sing the Doxology.

## Focused Conference makes progress

*From Page 1*

"It will bring some cost savings, and every two years Conference will not require an induction service so Conference could be a day shorter or use that time to do something different."

An underlying theme in many of the Conference's major decisions and discussions was the role of laypeople in the Church. This is especially true for the English-speaking synods where there are at times shortages of ordained people to carry out some roles.

There was, for example, a lively discussion about the Faith and Order Committee's view that because district superintendents have a role of oversight, they should be in full Connexion. While it is acceptable, the Committee said, for lay and ordained people to jointly carry out the role of district superintendent, it would not be appropriate for lay people to be stand-alone superintendents,

except in exceptional circumstances.

This view was hotly contested by some and when no consensus was reached on the issue, the Faith and Order Committee was asked to examine it further and report on it once again.

Another theme that came through strongly in Conference 2010 was a focus on children and young people. Taha Maori reported they have growing numbers of young people and their national rangatahi hui in Taranaki was a big success.

Mission Resourcing gave a lively presentation on the new children's ministry initiative Kids Loving Church, and there was an impressive display of 36 posters by children's groups from around the Connexion.

Finally, one of the most important decisions Conference makes is to select the next presidential team. They are president Rev John Roberts and vice president Olive Tanielu.



## Cornish choir sings in solidarity

To the editor,

Thank you for your November edition coverage of my CD associated with the Durham Street Methodist Church's financial needs.

I would like to report that on Sunday 3 October in Bude, Cornwall, UK, members of the Trelawny Male Choir presented a concert in aid of the restoration fund for our church. They raised the sum of £2,000 (approximately NZ\$4,200) by their efforts.

Jean and Graham Harry, members of the Durham Street Church Choir, were visiting Cornwall at the time and were able to speak at the concert. They conveyed the gratitude of our local congregation for the magnificent gesture of the Trelawny Choir members.

In October 2007 the Trelawny Choir, then touring New Zealand, presented a concert in the Durham Street Methodist Church. That concert raised the sum of \$3,300 for Durham Street's organ restoration fund.

It seems that they enjoyed their time here, and the hospitality, so much that they felt compelled to respond in some tangible way to the news of the Christchurch earthquake having seen the television coverage of the event on UK television.

Please note there was a mistake in the November article. The correct phone number for Durham Street Church offices is 03 366 6745.

Wallace Woodley, Christchurch

## Earthquake chance to green church

In light of Conference's decision that the Public Questions co-ordinator and co-ordinating group should prepare resources that would enable parishes and missions to implement sustainability audits and practices, I urge those rebuilding and redeveloping properties

following the Canterbury earthquake to think "green".

This is an opportunity to begin bringing the church into the 21st century with its building stock and the way we do church, and to bear witness to a God who care's deeply for all of creation.

Mark Gibson, Christchurch South

## Rhetoric vs reality in church partnerships

To the editor,

Peter MacKenzie claims (October Touchstone) that partner churches of Cooperative Ventures (CVs) "have no desire to unite" but they are committed to "partnerships...at a local level." To what end?

Is the agenda really the development of local church partnerships (CVs) or tighter partner church control over their de facto offspring?

If development of local partnerships is the priority, why has the Christchurch Presbytery approved Hornby Presbyterian Church establishing a satellite congregation in Rolleston in direct competition with a joint Methodist-Presbyterian-Anglican Community Church which is meant to be the primary partnership and priority for all three partner churches?

If local partnerships are meant to be a priority, why did the Christchurch Anglican Diocese attempt to

dismantle five Presbyterian-Anglican-Cooperating parishes in South Canterbury and why are mega presbyteries and super synods rolling over United District Councils (or their equivalents) in Northland, Wairarapa and the West Coast?

The rhetoric of partnership is fine. The reality is disturbing. The rhetoric of the new UCANZ proposed oversight for CVs is partnership; the reality will be tighter control over CVs by partner churches.

If partner churches are genuine about partnership they will promote further full CVs instead of trying to neuter those already in existence.

Of course the situation today is different to the 1970s but does that make the call of Jesus to unity and oneness any less relevant than when Jesus first said it?

Brian Turner, Christchurch

## Drawbacks of two year presidency

To the editor,

I write with due respect for the wisdom and authority of Conference in its decision to introduce a two-year presidency. I would want to ask, however, if Conference realised all the consequences of what it has decided.

I believe that it has considerably reduced the likelihood of suitable lay people being available for nomination as president. As one who has been privileged to hold the office as a lay person, I could be accused of wanting a return to the good old days. I may indeed have to face the realisation that it is a whole new world. Nevertheless, I would be interested to hear what others feel about this important matter.

I have to say that I would have been unable to take the position had it been a two year appointment. As it was, one year out of active involvement meant that my professional life suffered considerably, and my business took some time to restore to good health.

I acknowledge that the church now recognises this aspect of lay presidency and is prepared to look at some

sort of stipend during the presidential year. The actual recompense for lost business opportunities or career advancement is probably not something the church could seriously consider, however.

It is hard to envisage employers who would be willing to grant an effective two year leave of absence or accept the severely reduced availability of their staff member for two years. This means that nominees for a lay president position are more likely to be found in the ranks of the retired or those with some independent means of support.

This all raises the question of what is going on in the mind of the church. The debate over the roles of president and vice president appears to indicate that the church is really much happier with ordained presidents and wishes to retain the role of vice president as a concession to those who take seriously our statement 'every member a minister'.

Eric Laursen, Auckland

## Durham Street's demise chance to create new kind of church

To the editor,

I read with interest in the November issue of Touchstone the tough questions facing the Durham Street Methodist Church. This was particularly pertinent as I prepared material for worship on Sunday November 14.

The readings I had selected were Isaiah 65:17-25 and Luke 21:5-19. In these readings from Isaiah, the prophet says: "the former things shall not be remembered...but be glad and rejoice forever in what I am creating". In Luke, Jesus speaks of a coming social change which will be life-shattering and change everything (as if a major earthquake has struck) - i.e. moving from a temple-centred to a human-centred faith.

Another piece in November's Touchstone which caught my eye was the front page piece about American evangelical Christian writer and political activist Rev Jim Wallis.

In his book *Seven Ways to Change the World*, Wallis says the time is right for a "spiritual revival" to engage people and to address social issues like poverty and climate change. He cites the Wesleys, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and many others who are "a testimony to the power of conversion, the persistence of faith, and the achievement of social justice".

However, when many people today think of religion, they think of Muslim terrorists, right-wing Christians in the US, or Israelis and Palestinians constantly fighting.

They do not readily think of Christians being concerned with social justice or the environment.

Among the challenges today is firstly how do we engage people in social movements on issues like poverty and climate change, and secondly to maintain that energy. How do we engage young people, in particular, who often have short attention spans, spend their time listening to loud music, or would rather watch TV?

The reality is that very few young people are being engaged by the way we do "church" today. Jesus, Martin Luther and John Wesley all realised that the foundations and structures of their churches were not working for their people, so they created new ones.

The hard choice facing the Durham Street Methodist Church is whether to restore or to rebuild. As an avid historian, I am one who appreciates the value of heritage buildings. I am also not immune to this reality - my own home is facing the likelihood of being demolished and rebuilt.

However, we need to ask the question: will spending millions of dollars restoring an historic church meet the needs of God's people and the wider creation today and in the future?

I suggest this is both an opportunity and a challenge for Methodists, Presbyterians, Uniting churches and other Christians in Christchurch to create new structures and foundations to meet those needs.

David Hill, New Brighton



## FROM THE BACKYARD

### Sustainable Meaning

Gillian Watkin

*A quote on radio got me thinking: 'People want sustainable food'. For one thing it is complete oxymoron. Food, by definition, is consumed and therefore unsustainable. What was meant, no doubt, was sustainable food production.*

We hear this word 'sustainable' a lot these days. It can become like background music, our minds mist over. It is sad when such a sound idea becomes truncated almost to the point of irrelevance.

It's like the label 'organic'. The ideas around eating organic food have almost turned to judgments. If you only eat organic you are good, if you don't you are careless. Such overworked simplicity.

'Organic' is a label for food grown and processed in a specific way. We get asked if our vegetables are organic and we like to say they are naturally grown with as little interference as possible.

There is homemade compost, and seaweed tea for soil conditioning. We collect the seaweed after a storm and soak it in a big barrel, watered in at a three to one strength.

The birds take care of the slugs and snails. It is a quiet and simple way of gardening. Crop rotation, not growing the same plant in the same place all the time, is an ancient but effective step to plant health.

Sustainability - the word comes from the Latin tenere (to hold) and sus (up). Basically it means to support, to endure. The First Testament of the Bible is full of the message of endurance, of peoples encouraged and cajoled to develop lifestyles that sustained the resources of the known world for the good of all God's

creation.

John Dominic Crossan's new book *The Greatest Prayer* draws in all the great themes and shows how the Lord's Prayer contains the essence of these. He writes of God, the divine householder, and the movement of people in partnership creating a just world.

He weaves the life and teachings of First Testament people into the fabric of the text of the prayer we pray so regularly and reminds us of its power.

He makes the point that throughout histories communities have expected and worked towards what they considered the end times. What is it we pray when we say 'thy kingdom come'?

It seems to me as if the cry to pay attention to climate change is a call of end times and therefore the word sustainability becomes the call of justice.

Just as access to healthy vegetables will not alone create a healthy lifestyle, talk of sustainability without developing understanding and a willingness to do some things differently will not bring about a just world.

I write about paying attention. My Buddhist friends talk of mindful living, and I know the Gospels are littered with references and calls to us to pay attention. Be aware. Stay alert. Be watchful.

These calls are to participate in a community where good endures and the needs of future generations are paramount. Building an enduring life, 'thy kingdom come', is a daily task, 'give us this day our daily bread'.

May your summer be one of mindful reflection and relaxation, and those small daily steps that restore the soul and condition the growing places of life.





Desmond Cooper and Sue Spindler

## PLEASE SAVOUR ADVENT'S UNFOLDING JOY

*'Tell out my soul' was the theme for this year's Conference and is also a major theme for advent. We prepared for conference with much expectation and hope, and our hopes were more than fulfilled.*

We experienced a huge level of goodwill as people entered into the spirit of what we had hoped to achieve – a Conference of celebration and inspiration, prayer and laughter, as we heard and saw the work of the church over the last year, and made decisions about our ongoing life and leadership.

So we now enter Advent with much hope and expectation as we await its fulfilment in Christmas, the birth of God amongst us. Too often the wonder of Advent is lost in the rush for Christmas but Advent is important in itself as a time of preparation and can't be hurried, just

as the natural waiting and anticipation of pregnancy can't be hurried.

Advent is the beginning of the Christian calendar just as spring is the beginning of a new year. We start afresh with renewed hope both in nature and in Christ. Just as spring anticipates the joy of summer so advent anticipates the joy of Christmas. This is our Southern Hemisphere uniqueness. As we read the Advent scripture in Luke 1 we too get caught up in the anticipation.

Firstly we read about Zachariah and Elizabeth, an old couple unexpectedly blessed with a baby promised by God, as heralded by the angel. The angel tells Zachariah that many will delight in the birth of his son, and he will get the people ready for God. Not surprisingly Zachariah initially doesn't believe the angel, and is told "because you won't believe me, you'll

be unable to say a word until the day of your son's birth. Every word I've spoken to you will come true on time – God's time."

Next we read about the angel Gabriel surprising Mary with the startling news that she will bear a child who will be the son of God, and Mary's acceptance of this momentous role that she is being called to fulfil. "I'm the Lord's maid, ready to serve. Let it be with me just as you say," she replied.

Mary then visits her cousin Elizabeth, whose baby leapt in her womb. This is a very significant and joyful time in any pregnancy, when the baby's active presence is very powerfully felt, and the reality of the life within the womb magnifies the joyful hope and anticipation of the birth.

Mary and Elizabeth rejoice together

and Mary 'tells out her soul', celebrating the promise of God's mercy, compassion and justice. When God's time comes for Zachariah he is finally able to speak again and praise God and tell the people how God is going to fulfil their hopes.

Just as a birth is awaited, so too many a child awaits Christmas with mounting anticipation and not a little apprehension. They of course will be focused on the gift-giver Santa while we await the gift of God-with-us-Emmanuel, the gift for all of life.

When a child opens their presents before Christmas Day they spoil the great excitement of that day. There is no build-up of awe and wonder. So too if our focus is solely on Christmas Day we miss the building joy of Advent.

Let us then read and re-read each Advent passage and savour this unfolding Advent joy.

## Christmas is a call to action

By Tony Franklin

*The Christmas season is a time for the melding of Christian celebrations and summer festivities.*

As quick as the stores take down their Halloween decorations and supplies, the advent of the commercial Christmas season begins. Christmas cakes and other goodies appear in supermarkets and decorations get hung up in shopping malls. Christmas parades quickly follow, as does the usual round of 'silly season' events as businesses and organisations compete in our diaries for their Christmas socials.

An Auckland institution, the department store Smith & Caughy's, has in recent years created sophisticated Christmas window displays, far grander than simply frosting the edges of the window and stringing garlands. As I walked past to admire this year's efforts, I find that the windows are portraying scenes from the fairy tale Cinderella.

Certainly it is a great fairy tale, but its relevance to Christmas baffles me. Yes, the Cinderella story is the nub of many an English panto at this time of year (I too have once played the part of an ugly sister in such a production at St Matthew-in-the-City some years back). Yet it hardly creates an atmosphere of Christmas in the store window.

If the window display hadn't appeared before the Royal engagement of Prince William and Kate, one might have thought it was more appropriately celebrating the happy betrothal of a so-called 'commoner' to the handsome prince who will one day be king. The Cinderella window display could just as easily be used any time of the year and not look out of place.

Ultimately though, is it really our concern what stores put in their windows? Is the real question for us as a people of faith: how do we witness to our faith, in particular the faith that

is framed around the stories of Christmas?

A liturgical call to worship for Advent might remind us of why we gather to celebrate Christ's Advent in the past, present and the future:

*God comes to us in echoes of the past, in memory and tradition, in stories told and re-told.*

*We come to God, in search of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.*

In this season let us be more than tour guides, masters of ceremony, and participants that decorate our worship. Let us be people watching for each Advent, each in-breaking of God's peace on earth. Let us be continually affirming the Angelic anthem:

"Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours" (Luke 2:14)

The 'peace' that was spoken of was in direct contrast to Imperial Rome's Pax Romana established by Caesar Augustus, peace to be gained through war and victory. Rather the 'peace' proclaimed here is that of justice: peace through God's sense of distributive justice.

This is no longer 'imminent', not even 'near' as John the Baptist proclaimed. It is more shocking than that. It is 'here'. It has started, and it is among us!

I am reminded of Desmond Tutu's re-interpretation of Augustine of Hippo "God, without us, will not; as we, without God, cannot." We are called to be agents, participants of God's change that Christ ushers in.

And so an Advent Benediction might also be a call to action, responding to the song of the angels:

*Go forth, Advent-people of God to sing love's song, and live love's way;*

*to play your part, in the great symphony of many voices.*

## Open letter on the theology of Methodist Conference

By Silvia Purdie

*It was a pleasure to meet so many folk at Conference and hear about the excellent work the church is doing. I would like to thank the Methodist Church for welcoming me back into its fold after my absence of 15 years.*

I come now with a fresh perspective on the Methodist Church, and I would like to share my concerns regarding the theology that was expressed at Conference. My intention is to stimulate discussion about how we imagine and relate to God.

What I hear as I listen to the words and liturgies of the Methodist Church is an emphasis on the conviction that God is love. Love is THE defining characteristic of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

The Gospel means acceptance of the unconditional love of God for all people and all of creation. Discipleship and service means responding to the call to express this love through building community, serving those in need, and working for justice and the environment.

This single word, 'love', was repeated many times during the worship of Conference. There were some other words used also in relation to God, such as 'life' and 'grace'. However, many of the words that the Christian church throughout the ages has also used alongside love were absent.

I would like to make a case for the importance of three of these missing words, and to share my concerns as to the implications of deleting them.

a) **Lord.** The earliest Christian claim was 'Jesus is

Lord'. This has resounded through the ages as the decision to give Jesus Christ highest honour and authority in our lives. When we reject the language of lordship or kingship are we also rejecting the idea that we are fundamentally accountable to Christ and belong to him? The affirmation that Christ is Lord is a radical pledge of allegiance.

b) **Glory.** Central to my faith is the conviction that God must always be more than anything we can imagine. I have experienced God continually stretching my ideas, as God actively reveals Godself through the Spirit. This has led me to an appreciation of words such as 'glory', 'honour', 'awe', 'majesty', words which push at the limits of human language and experience.

This has opened me to worship which hurls my own soul far out into spiritual space. This is in which I am brought more alive in loving and knowing a God who is far beyond me. My concern with our over-reliance on the language of love is that it feels so safe. 'Love' is a warm-fuzzy experience, a warm bath in which we have become too comfortable.

c) **Salvation.** I was surprised to hear no reference to Jesus as 'saviour', or indeed to any need for people to be saved. Surely the realities of people's lives are obvious: lost, confused, depressed, violent, alienated. The church has called this 'sin'; Charles Wesley described it as imprisonment.

If God's only action is to love, then God is helpless to release people into freedom

and hope. All God can do, then, is love unconditionally those who are in prison, and to send God's people in to care for them (social service, chaplaincy) and to work for their release through striving for justice.

The central drama of the Christian story is that God stepped into our mess and took it into God's own self on the cross, so releasing us from the power of death through relationship with Jesus Christ. This was an act of power! Yes, it was motivated by love, and enabled love, but it was more than love. To speak only of love without saving power is to emaciate the Gospel.

That God loves us unconditionally and calls us to love others is true. My argument, however, is that it is not enough truth.

It is not enough truth for people who are not yet part of our church to be bothered joining us. It is not enough truth to hold our young people who are pulled in so many other, more compelling, directions.

It concerns me that a church that prides itself on respect for diversity seems to have chosen a single theological insight to dominate all others. Any word often repeated can become effectively meaningless, with only an assumed consensus as to what we are actually talking about.

If you are interested in these questions enough to respond in writing, please send a copy to the Faith and Order Committee. They have the task of reviewing our liturgies for Holy Communion, which more than anything else give explicit shape to our theology. [fpurdies@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:fpurdies@slingshot.co.nz)



# Let's move beyond the natural/supernatural divide

By Bruce Tasker

*Thanks Kathleen Loncar for your response to my piece in the October edition of Touchstone. I invite you to reconsider 'the Storm' story retold in Matthew and Luke, as they based theirs on Mark's, the first of the Synoptic Gospels.*

The prevailing wind is from the Mediterranean and is broken up by the hills behind Capernaum, frequently causing squalls on the lake. Associate professor of Classical Studies at the University of Minnesota Philip Sellow and Robert Miller, editor of the Complete Gospels, think the Aramaic and Hebrew should be translated as 'squall' even if the Greek is compromised.

By the way, unless you count Jesus as an experienced fisherman, it's possible that fewer than half of the disciples were fishermen. Given two or even three boats, it is likely that Jesus ordered the fishermen among the disciples to take on board inexperienced passengers, the aged and infirm, and return them to Capernaum.

This raises a number of problems for the clergy. Do they deliver reflections according to the themes that their congregations want to hear or do they give an authentic and relevant reflection? What if they want their congregation to hear the authentic and relevant voice of Jesus coming through scripture, put in the 21st century?

In the world of Jesus, there were three main worldviews. There was the Jewish three-tiered worldview. Israel was occupied and surrounded by two tiered worldviews that of the Greco-Romans, and the people of Asia Minor – Zoroastrian, Arab, Egyptian and North African. The third worldview was of a singularity, monistic, the one-tiered view. The two-tiered worldview of dualism was very

popular then and still is today given the pressure from the pews for our ministers to include supernaturalism. But it's not what Jesus taught.

When Jesus was asked to show his followers his Parent he said simply, "You have seen me, then you have seen what Parents me. We are One." This is a single-tiered worldview.

He said, we need to develop a vital, loving relationship with our Parent first, and then love others. I hear his authentic and relevant voice in these statements. I also hear a declaration to those with ears to hear, of a worldview that is singular, monistic and of one tier. One that certainly rejects dualism.

Plato defined the cultural themes of dualism. Put simply, the distinction between natural and supernatural, i.e., the intervening superpowers and the defiance of natural law, which Jesus did not teach.

Note his utter rejection of the defiance of natural law in The Temptations. Note the vital empathic relationship with that which parents us. This Jesus did teach. Even at 12 years of age, Jesus had a remarkable grasp of this relationship, of its power and empowerment.

I recall lying on the warm sand of a North Shore beach when I saw adults and children fishing from rocks at the far end of the beach. The tide was coming in.

Eventually, I could not see, from where I lay, the rocks that the fishermen were standing on. The illusion was that they were standing on water. They walked back to the cliffs.

If I was to believe my eyes, the returning fishermen were walking on water. I was seeing what the disciples saw in poorly lit circumstances at three o'clock in the morning: Jesus walking on water.

# Muslim and Christian leaders say religion must inspire compassion, not conflict

John Roberts

*Mission and Ecumenical Secretary On Sunday 31 October 58 people, including three priests were killed during an attack on Our Lady of Najat Church in Baghdad, Iraq. They died after gunmen seized hostages in the church and government security services stormed it to end the siege.*

The following day, 64 Muslim and Christian leaders, scholars and activists from around the world gathered at the Ecumenical Centre in Geneva for a four day consultation called to foster more compassionate and just societies on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

Their first task was to issue a statement concerning the attack on Our Lady of Najat Church and those worshipping there. Participants in the Consultation were shocked by the attack carried out by unidentified armed bandits.

They condemned "all acts of violence that target places of worship and other sacred places, defile them, or threaten the safety and security of worshippers."

The attack, they said, "contradicts all religious teachings and Middle Eastern culture that has enabled people to coexist peacefully for many centuries." They condemned "any criminal act that goes against the right to live in dignity and freedom of worship and religion."

Christians and Muslims jointly planned, funded and attended the interfaith Consultation. Convening organisations were the World Council of Churches, the Royal Aal al Bayt Institute, the World Islamic Call Society, and the Consortium of a Common Word.

Motivated by a commitment to dialogue, the Consultation sought to move beyond the discourse of minority and majority towards shared citizenship. Participants stressed the role of religion in reconciliation and the importance of education in eliminating mistrust among religious communities.

One of the participants was associate professor in the Department: Philosophy and Religious Studies at the University of Waikato Rev Dr Douglas Pratt. Douglas has a special interest in Christian-Muslim relations.

He says, "All at the consultation were acutely aware that there is strong mutual antipathy in the wider Muslim and Christian worlds. Fundamentalism, prejudice, and extremism abound on both sides. But there is clear evidence of a desire for positive relations from both Christians and Muslims."

Douglas believes consultations such as this are an invaluable witness to the love of God held by both faiths.

A keynote speaker at the consultation was Prince Ghazi bin Muhammad bin Talal of Jordan, coordinator of the Christian-Muslim dialogue the 'Common Word', which was endorsed by the Methodist Church of NZ Conference in 2008.

Ghazi said, "Our theology is not the same but we are in the same boat." Causing harm to religious minorities is evil and absolutely forbidden in both Christianity and Islam; it is a rejection of God's love and a crime against God.

He urged leaders of both faiths to "defend the other against followers of our own religion when the other is weak and oppressed."

See Page 13



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## Parish Vacancies

Methodist Church of NZ



### DUNEDIN

Dunedin Methodist Parish is seeking an ordained minister (1/2 time) to become part of the ministry leadership team in this energetic and forward looking parish.

The parish is looking for someone who is passionate in preaching and providing pastoral care in a team ministry.

The successful applicant would work under Methodist oversight alongside the recently appointed full time parish superintendent.

### INVERCARGILL

The Invercargill Methodist Parish is seeking an ordained minister to become part of the ministry leadership team in this well-established and lively parish.

The parish is looking for a minister who can share in the work of our church in the community.

The successful applicant would work under Methodist oversight.

Profiles of the parishes are available on request.

APPLICATIONS CLOSE 30 JANUARY 2011

Inquiries should be directed to:  
Rev Nigel Hanscamp, Director Mission Resourcing  
Methodist Church of New Zealand  
[em.nigelh@methodist.org.nz](mailto:em.nigelh@methodist.org.nz) • ph 09 525 4179 or 021 570 385



## Country musicians croon for Agape Fellowship



Ian and Gloria Franklin perform at the fundraiser for Agape Fellowship.

On the Saturday night of Conference, while most delegates departed to restaurants or imbibed the lively energy of the youth event, a concert of another sort was taking place at across Palmerston North at Wesley Broadway Methodist Church.

A troupe of country western musicians were twanging their guitars and fiddles and tugging on heart strings, all for a good cause. The concert was a fundraising event for the Agape Fellowship.

The Agape Fellowship was formed in Palmerston North 22 years ago by Methodist deacon Lorna Goodwin. Lorna learned that many people with mental illnesses were isolated in the community. She formed Agape Fellowship to provide a safe, accepting space for social contact.

Since then Agape has grown incredibly. It now offers support to a wide range of people with a variety of needs and disabilities. Several years ago Lorna, retired after many years of service to the special needs community.

Registered clinical psychologist Craig McDonald took over as coordinator assisted by Juliette

Jobson and Stephen Russell.

Craig says all members of Agape are encouraged to have goals and plan for a future.

"Agape staff try to help them achieve these dreams no matter how impossible they may seem. For six days a week Agape runs programmes and activities determined by the needs and interests of members."

These include a walking group, a book group, a singing group, a swim group, and a music appreciation group. Friday evenings are video nights and Saturday evenings are social nights.

To break the monotony of regular activities Agape members have a great time going on out of town trips, such as a visit to Wellington Zoo, Weta Workshops and to Lake Ferry.

Some Agape members have realised that their future employment is dependent on having a qualification. This is especially important if you have a disability. Several have now enrolled in a variety of correspondence courses through the Open Polytechnic, and they are

supported by staff during their study.

Agape Fellowship staff also accompany people to court and provide other advocacy and support services.

But back to the fundraising hootenanny. It was the brainchild of two country musicians, Ian and Gloria Franklin.

Ian took the reins to drive the event because he wanted to repay the Agape Fellowship for the support they have provided Gloria. Several years ago Gloria was diagnosed with the condition hydrocephalus, an accumulation of fluid within the cranium. She has had to give up her work, cannot drive, and tires easily.

To get out of the house and develop social contacts Gloria now attends several Agape activities, including the music appreciation group. When Ian accompanied her to a talk on country music, he learned the Fellowship needs funds to maintain its free services.

From there sprung the idea of the country music festival. Ian and Gloria are prominent in the scene and invited musicians from around the lower North Island to perform.

They came from Taranaki, Lower Hutt, Waikanae and Marton. Ian and Gloria performed a duet, and Ian sang a song he composed entitled 'Agape Rules'.

For further information contact Craig McDonald at 06 359 0729 or [agape@inspire.net.nz](mailto:agape@inspire.net.nz).

## Meet the Church's youngest lay preacher

It is appropriate that the Methodist Lay Preachers Network held its Sunday worship service at Wesley Broadway Church during Conference.

Wesley Broadway is at the heart of the Manawatu Methodist Parish, and the parish depends very much

on its network of lay preachers to conduct worship and other activities.

Presbyter Rev Philomeno Kinera is the only ordained person in the parish. Philomeno says the parish has six churches so the role of its 10 active lay preachers is vital.

Among the crew of lay worship leaders is youngest member of the Methodist Lay Preachers Network, Jessica Rabone.

At just 23, Jessica is a bundle of energy and combines her duties as a lay preacher with a full time graduate diploma course at Massey University and several part-time jobs.

When she spoke with Touchstone during Methodist Conference she had just completed her final exam as well as a busy schedule of performing with the youth band during the weekend induction and ordination services.

Jessica says that putting the youth band together for Conference was in itself something of an adventure because it drew on the musical

talents of the Tongan and English-speaking congregations at Wesley Broadway, who usually do their own thing.

While she places a special emphasis on youth services, such as the quarterly café worship service, Jessica leads all age services. She is on the rotation at the Aokautere Community Church and serves at other congregations as well.

One of Jessica's paid jobs is a part of a team that organises activities and education for children and young people throughout the synod.

"More young people are getting involved in Church. That is encouraging but there are still lots of other things out there competing for the attention of young people," Jessica says.

Jessica comes from a Methodist background. Her grandmother is a staunch Methodist and her great great grandfather Rev William Rowse was an early missionary. She says she has always been involved in church and spent some time attending a Baptist congregation.

With her background in zoology, ecology and animal behaviour, Jessica is interested in creation and ecotheology.

She says she is particularly grateful to Ian and Jeannette Boddy and Cornelia Grant for their support of her spiritual journey.



Jessica Rabone

### POETS CORNER

## Merry Christmas

By Joyce McHale

*This time of year we celebrate  
The annual Christmas binge.  
With road deaths, wives and children bashed  
To honour Christ the King.*

*The world moves on another year  
But not for Uncle Hugh.  
He's lying crushed beneath a truck  
With Hemi, Jake and Sue.*

*It's hard to celebrate, each year,  
A day that brings such pain,  
To those for whom each Christmas day  
Means same old same again.*

*Make Christmas Day just 'party time',  
A time for gifts and play.  
No Peace on Earth to all mankind,  
At least not on this day.*

*It is time to choose a different day,  
Away with Christmas dread,  
A quiet day, a time to think  
Of things that Jesus said.*

*To love all people as ourselves  
Goodwill to ev'ryone  
Not empty doctrines masking hate  
And enmity to none.*

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

Phone: 03 307 1116

Email: [bilverst@xtra.co.nz](mailto:bilverst@xtra.co.nz)







# A loving mother sets the scene for 65th Christmas Appeal....

*A mother lovingly bathes her baby amongst the ruins of Port Au Prince, Haiti. This powerful image has set the theme for the milestone 65th Christmas Appeal from Christian World Service and has helped connect thousands of New Zealanders to a family facing an uncertain future.*

The picture was taken by ace photographer, Paul Jeffrey who

got to Port Au Prince just days after January's devastating quake. He was sent to the disaster zone to put a visual spotlight on relief work carried out by CWS global partner ACT (Action by Churches Together) Alliance and the people they were helping.

The powerful redemptive image of mother and baby touched hearts throughout New Zealand. When it featured on the

STUFF news website for many weeks it swayed more than 300 new donors to support relief efforts.

It also featured in the Friends' Forums that toured the main centres this year and rapidly stood out as an iconic image for what CWS supports and stands for.

CWS national director, Pauline McKay said it was the combination of love, strength, hope and resilience that made the picture a centrepiece for the Christmas Appeal. "people who have no intention of being victims but just need help to get back on their feet," said Pauline.

This picture of hope in the midst of the Haitian catastrophe encapsulates the 65 years of commitment and service from CWS and its supporters.

"We decided that the message it gave us was summed up in the invitation to "share the care", said Pauline.

The Haitian disaster also coincided with the launch of the CWS global partner, ACT Alliance, the third largest aid and

development organisation in the world.

ACT Alliance is the service arm of the World Council of Churches and CWS a founding member.

CWS media officer, Greg Jackson was seconded to Haiti to support ACT Alliance general secretary, John Nduna, on his fact finding trip there.

In addition to the ACT Alliance groups working in Haiti before the earthquake, CWS also funds long term partner the Institute Kulturel Karl Leveque who have played an important role in community organising.

The amazing resilience of Haitians dealing with the consequences of their own disaster on top of a long history of struggle and deprivation is a narrative that has dominated the work of CWS throughout the year.

It became a subject close to the hearts and minds of Cantabrians after our own quake which although larger caused no fatalities.

This unexpected earthquake connection has helped raise awareness of what it takes to

recover after disaster as well as strengthening the ties between people.

CWS, based in Christchurch, received many calls and messages of concern from partners working under difficult conditions including those in Haiti and Gaza, both of whom feature in the 65th Christmas Appeal. It was a strong reminder that the work of CWS and the partnership approach that is used has forged deep emotional bonds around the world.

For the 65th Christmas Appeal planning staff went right back to the original appeal for war torn Greece both for inspiration and renewal. The invitation to "share the care" was there at the launch of the first appeal and has remained essential to all that CWS has been able to do.

While the look may be more crisp and contemporary, supporters who delve into the Christmas Appeal kit will find the key message of active, informed love has been strengthened.

## Changing times, Changing Appeal

*This year CWS has moved more firmly into the virtual realm with the decision to make a separate one stop page for the Christmas. The virtual Christmas Appeal can be found at and is well worth a look*

*for readers with Internet access.*

The growing numbers of supporters who have gone virtual shows up in the increasing number of on line donations CWS is receiving. New this year is the opportunity to give by direct debit. Donations can be made to the Christian World Service account number which is 06 0817 0318646 00.

These new donation gathering systems would have seemed like something out of the Flash Gordon films when the first Christmas Appeal for war torn Greece was run in 1945.

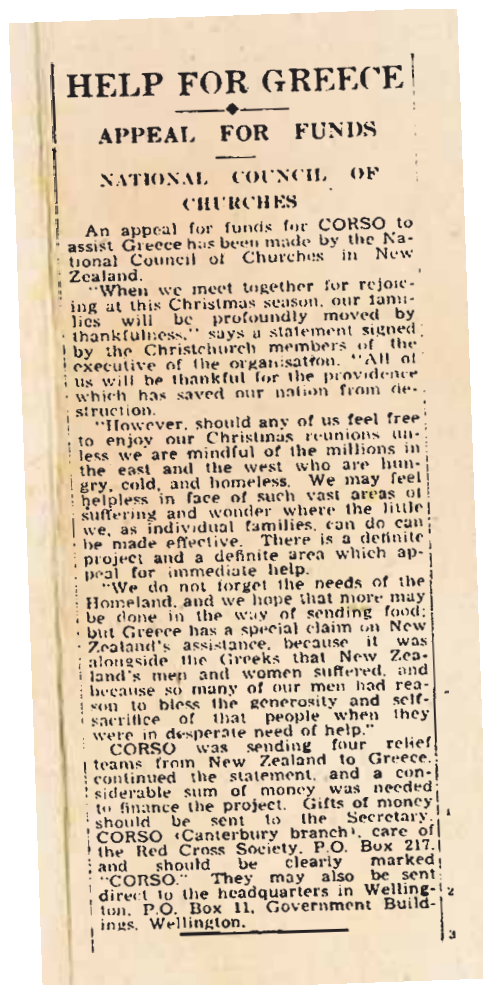
Browsing through the extensive CWS files this year has also turned up a few historic gems. One staff favourite was classically Kiwi. Donations to the Christmas Appeal included a cut of the total made from sheep sales.

Another one-off donation system that took everyone's fancy was the year that a North Island church office was the lucky recipient of a 1000 pounds wrapped up in bundles of small notes.

Donations have also come via wedding "fees", Christmas tree sales, dance profits and what were then one penny at a time lunch and dinner donations over a year.

While donation delivery and funding has changed over the years the underlying impulse to do good to the wider world has remained constant.

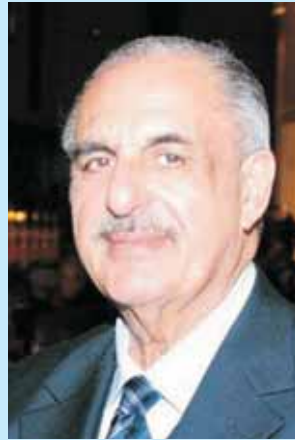
This year will prove no exception.







## Palestinian ties amongst oldest for CWS...



*Constantine Dabbagh executive secretary of the Department of Service for Palestinian Refugees run by the Middle Eastern Council of Churches and supported by CWS.*

*The 65th CWS Christmas Appeal features one story for each week of Advent. With over 30 partner groups to choose from, it is always a challenge to balance the different regions and aspects of the work undertaken by CWS on behalf of the churches. This year's appeal features work in Haiti, Uganda, Tonga and Gaza looking at improving health in communities.*

The Palestinian connection is amongst the oldest for CWS. This tie goes back as far as the fourth year of the Christmas Appeal in 1949 when donations helped refugees in Greece, Palestine and Germany.

In October CWS helped organise an exhibition of paintings from Christian and Muslim children and adult artists who live in Gaza. The exhibition opened in the ChristChurch Cathedral and gave a powerful insight into life in Gaza through artistic eyes. Interest was so strong that the show has now gone onto venues in other New Zealand cities.

For about 37 years the formal links with Gaza and the Palestinian refugee community has been through the Department of Service for Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), associated with the Middle East Council of Churches. The DSPR executive secretary, Constantine Dabbagh, visited New Zealand for a whirlwind tour in August. During his visit here the dynamic spokesman spoke at venues throughout the country, met with church leaders, politicians and former Prime Minister, now UN Development Programme head, Helen Clark.

He made the visit in part to express gratitude for the CWS sponsorship in Gaza of three maternal clinics which have helped over 19,000 women with advice on pregnancy health and hygiene, and other training courses which provide hope as well as professional skills. The antenatal clinics are hugely important in Gaza where 48 per cent of the population is under 16 years of age.

Constantine reported that there is now only a tiny Palestinian Christian population still resident in Gaza as many have fled the grim living conditions. Working closely with DSPR colleagues in Gaza, he is able to promote the situation facing its desperate 1.5 million residents who struggle to survive behind an unforgiving blockade. He emphasised that the provision of support and skills training through DSPR showed the Palestinian people that the world had not totally forgotten them.

Constantine also gave a grim warning about the future of Palestinian/Israeli relations if things did not change. Expropriations of land without compensation were continuing against a backdrop of international silence despite

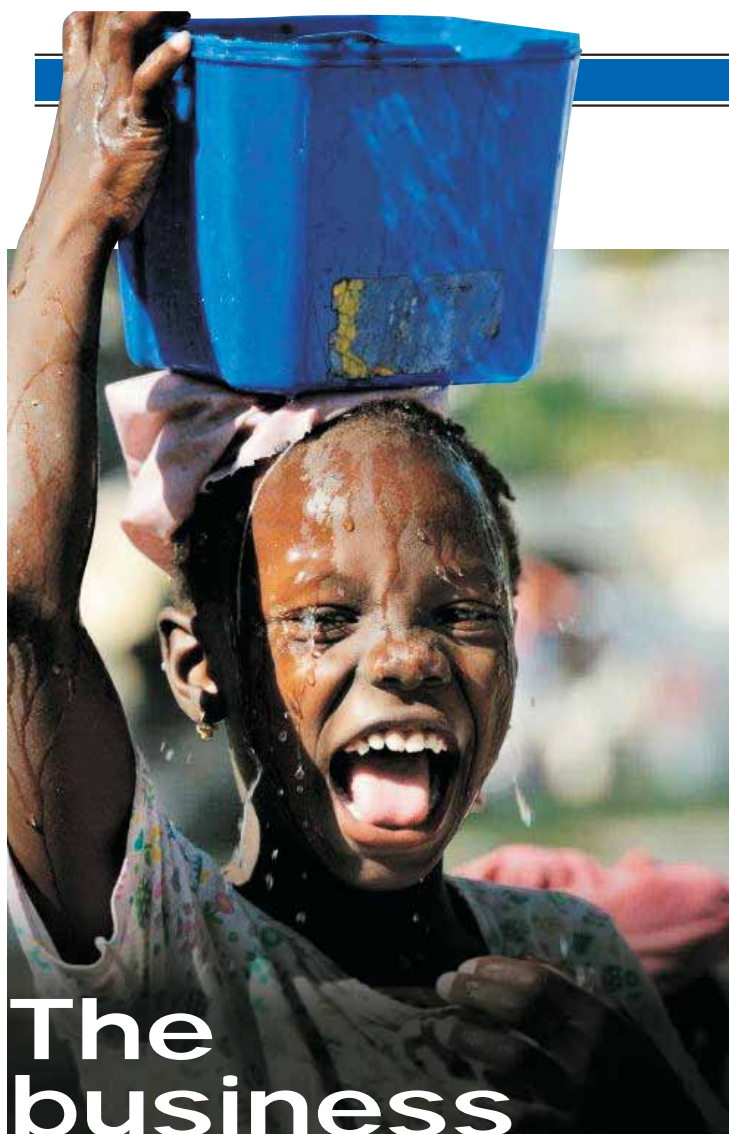
its breach of international law.

"Palestinians are at the point where we have no more land to give, our plight needs to be recognised along with the fact we have no more concessions to make," said Constantine.

A constant advocate for a just peace, Constantine highlighted the important Kairos statement made a year ago by the Palestinian Christian community which he saw as an important step towards unity. He was adamant that without international support and easing of conditions in Gaza the sad reality was that it would continue to be a breeding ground for radicalism.

"A catastrophe is coming in the Middle East that we could prevent just by adopting the UN resolutions that already exist," he said.

Like many of CWS's partners, DSPR is meeting the immediate needs of local people while trying to address the issues that keep them poor and in the case of Palestine foster violence. Donations to this year's Christmas Appeal donations will help to build healthier communities and pockets of hope in even the most difficult places.



## The business of building hope.....

*"We build hope" is how one CWS staffer summed up the work of the organisation. It is one perspective that partly sums up what CWS has done since the very first Christmas Appeal.*

As part of the 65th Christmas Appeal research this year staff have tried several times to try and come up with a ballpark figure of how many lives CWS have improved since starting out.

It proved an impossible task but the consensus conclusion was that the figure must be into the multiple of millions.

The very first appeals came from the wish of New Zealanders to help rebuild hope and life in the ruins of post war Europe.

The first appeal was promoted under the banner of Archbishop West Watson and what was then the National Council of Churches.

Evidence of the profound emotional ties to Britain can be seen in the statement that went with the first Appeal publicity in The Press newspaper.

"We do not forget the needs of the homeland, and we hope that more may be done in the way of sending food; but Greece has a special claim on New Zealand's assistance because it was alongside the Greeks that New Zealand's men and women suffered, and because so many of our men had reason to bless the generosity and self-sacrifice of that people when they were in desperate need of help," the statement said.

During the CWS road shows of the main centres this year some of the other pioneering phases of the Christmas Appeal have been remembered with the first appeal to catch the public imagination the famous shoe appeal of 1947.

The appeal for pairs of shoes for deaconesses in Europe got an overwhelming response. Instead of the 10,000 pair set as the optimistic target 35,000 pairs of shoes came in, all of which had to be packed and despatched.

The shoe appeal was also a step on the way toward realising that cash was a better commodity to send than objects.

The cost of freighting the invasion of shoes to Europe turned out to be close to 1000 pounds.

Despite this the trend toward sending items took some time to fade out.

Even in 1949 the spirit of forgiveness was evident in the records that show a final 1500 pounds of child feeding material had been sent to Germany along with 90 cases of stationery for students.

Gradually the appeals moved away from objects in line with the polite but firm request from the World Council of Churches to start sending money, not goods.

This shift was part of significant feature of the history of CWS which has meant that over the years major expertise has been built up around what aid and development works, and what does not.

This progress into professionalism has been one of the most valuable assets that CWS built up as part of the process of building the "business of hope."



## Tu'a-melie – the pleasure hope brings

*Hope, like a phoenix, is born and reborn out of the ashes of death. Amidst life's worst moments, hope allows us to envision new life.*

In deep darkness, hope enables us to feel the life-sustaining warmth of the light of God. Hope opens our eyes to see streams of water flowing in the driest of deserts.

Tongans speak of hope as tu'a-melie. Literally, it means 'sweet hope' or 'the pleasure that hope brings.' Tu'a-melie brings to one's life the pleasure of knowing that there is always a calm moment after every rough wave. Tu'a-melie makes life 'sweet.' Without it, life is full of bitterness, misery and despair.

Tu'a-melie is not wishful

thinking. It is rooted in memory. It is about imagining what has been proven to be true by experience. Memory draws the line between tu'a-melie and fantasy.

The latter is an illusion, whereas tu'a-melie is founded on concrete experiences of life. The lectionary readings for the month were composed out of such experiences.

Texts from Isaiah emerged out of the shadow of ancient empires. They are stories of and from people who had gone through personal, religious, economic, social and political crises, yet managed to survive because they had tu'a-melie, they clung on to their hope.

Advent is a season of hope. The

Isaiah readings bring to the fore the idea that another world is not only possible but it is surely coming. In a situation of disorientation and political oppression, the prophet announces God's promises of redemption and restoration. He urges the people of God to do away with fear, and to celebrate with hope the everlasting reign of God.

Christmas represents the realisation of that hope. Readings for Christmas remind us of that. It is a season not only to celebrate the fulfilment of God's promises. It is also about a God who enters 'our' world, lives with us in 'our' world, restores 'our' world, and gives the world a new and abundant life

through Christ.

No wonder that Isaiah invites us to walk with him in the light of God; the light that shines in darkness (Jn 1:5).

There are two islands that bear the name 'Christmas.' One is in Oceania, the other in the Indian Ocean. Both islands are isolated but they provide refuge for travellers who dare to cross both seas. Christmas is an 'island of hope' in a vast ocean of uncertainty.

Let us journey together in Advent and prepare our hearts and minds for Christmas with tu'a-melie, with the pleasure of hope.

## HEART OF THE MATTER

## LIBRARY OF FAITH

By Jim Stuart



*When friends ask me what to see when visiting Berlin, I often recommend the Potsdamer Dom, the church where Friedrich Schleiermacher preached. According to one biographer, CW Christian, Friedrich Schleiermacher is the father of modern theology and by almost any standard "must be judged among the most significant figures in the history of Christian thought".*

Schleiermacher set a new direction for theology making it more accessible to the people of his time and the emerging modern society.

While he is primarily recognised as a theologian, his real love was preaching and for over a quarter of a century, thousands regularly attended services at the Potsdamer Dom to be challenged and renewed by his

proclamation of the Christian faith. Schleiermacher often said that "conversation, preaching and lecturing were his most precious arts...in that order of preference." Everything else was second best.

One of his best and most widely read books was not a lecture on Christian theology but what he called a dialogue on the meaning of Christmas entitled simply, *Die Weihnachtsfeier: Ein Gespräch* or Christmas Eve: A Dialogue.

While the dialogue is structured like a drama the real purpose of the book is to engage the reader in a conversation about the meaning of Christmas. It is offered to the reader as a gift and, in return, invites the reader to bring, as it were, his/her own gifts to the story. Thus the dialogue is not just among the characters but with the reader too. Schleiermacher wanted ordinary people to enter into an experience of the Christian faith.

Created after what Schleiermacher

described as a sudden inspiration, the book was conceived, written and published during a period of no less than three weeks just before Christmas, 1805. Meant specifically for close friends, the impetus behind the dialogue was a period of despair and suffering in Schleiermacher's life. Of this period, he wrote to a friend that he had shuddered at his life "as before an open wound that cannot be healed" and then added, nevertheless, "peace dwelled in his heart".

Schleiermacher was 37 years old when he wrote the Dialogue and at the height of his career. In it he weaves his fundamental belief that the coming of the Christ child is the beginning of a new world and can lead to the transformation of humanity.

This belief is embodied in the character of Sophia, an energetic and precocious young girl of 10 or 11 years. Her total immersion in the festivities is a prism into the joy of Christmas. Through Sophia and some of the other

characters, such as Leonhardt, a jovial and perceptive lawyer but not much of a church-goer, Schleiermacher suggests that theology is primarily a way of understanding life. But it can never be a substitute for living life.

Above all, Christmas is about the gift of love in the Christ child. Love is first and foremost a relationship, a state of being. Christmas, in the dialogue between the characters of the play, is the celebration of the joy that comes into our lives when we are embraced by the love of God.

The love of the people gathered on Christmas Eve, Schleiermacher proclaims, "is the heart of the matter". Their intimate family community and sharing of the joy of Christmas becomes a paradigm of hope for the entire human family. As one interpreter has observed, "Schleiermacher's little drama shows what is celebrated at Christmas goes far beyond the manger scene itself. Its scope is the whole history and destiny of humankind."

## WHEN GOD CALLS...

By David Dittmer of UCANZ Standing Committee

*Are you there? Have you rung God recently? Do you know God's phone number? Is it a local, national or international number?*

You do not have to phone God, just talk either out loud or within yourself, he is there 24/7 and his line is always open.

There are many times when we are unsure of the path that we should take. Ask for guidance and await the reply. You may be surprised and even confused.

This is not the answer I had expected you may say, nor is it what I really wanted. Your answer may come from an unexpected source. Be receptive, if in doubt have another talk with God and be patient, keep the conversation flowing, open your mind to new ventures, when the same reply comes from two or more other

sources, the answer will become clear.

If still in doubt, then I would suggest you read Psalm 139 (God's complete knowledge and care). It has been of terrific help to me. There have been times when I have been unsure of the direction that was being shown to me but over the past 40 years I have trusted God's wishes and continue to talk with him. There is no charge to phone God, you do not need anything except time to talk with him.

On the other hand, do you listen for God ringing you? Or have you taken the receiver off? Or even switched off your answer phone?

There are so many opportunities out there, and, with Christmas just around the corner, who knows what you may be able

to do to make this time something special for someone.

When did you last greet a stranger with a smile and a message of welcome? Who needs a friend this year? Maybe this is where you are being directed.

Who, me? You may say: 'I am not the person, there are others better suited for this than me.' Are you sure? Has God asked you to step out of your comfort zone?

Maybe so. It will not hurt you and you may find that by doing so you will have new exciting experiences. It is so easy to leave things to others and not get involved. To write this article took me out of my comfort zone but I was approached, and I took up the challenge.

For the past 10 years the members of our parish have gone that extra mile and provided a

special Christmas Dinner for those who are alone on Christmas Day. What started with some 40 or so attendees has now grown to accommodate for over 120 last year.

Those who share this meal with us include people from many countries who live in the Central Otago area but have no family here. I know that many other parishes do likewise, and I am sure that this has been in response to a call from God to go out and share what we have to offer with all. The church has moved into the 21st century and we its people must listen for God's call and act upon it.

Go forth in the knowledge that God is with you forever. Never underestimate the power of prayer. Trust in God and experience a new life. Blessings to you all.



## Church Women United pray, work for sisters worldwide

By Hilaire Campbell

*Kiwi hymns were in the air when women from 18 countries gathered in Bogor, Indonesia this October for the 14th quadrennial Assembly of Asian Church Women's Conference (ACWC).*

That's because the delegation from Church Women United in Aotearoa NZ (CWU) had the responsibility to arrange the liturgy for the Assembly.

The theme of this year's ACWC Assembly was 'Asian Women Moving Forward: Non Violent World, New Earth, Life in its Fullness'.

CWU officer Pauline Yates serves as ACWC vice president and treasurer. Pauline says there is power in numbers and the Assembly is an opportunity to celebrate and strengthen the position of women everywhere.

"Individuals have little power but an organization can combine forces and disseminate information quickly."

She says it's very important to meet together with women who are in contact with people at the grassroots. They include women who live in polygamous relationships, face violence in their lives, or are forbidden to practise their faith.

"Some women cannot read in Church, and we met women clergy whose churches had been vandalised. One of our members preached outside one of them in Jakarta.

"On the other hand, the Mongolian women, subjected so long to Russian domination, are now enjoying the new freedom of Christian worship.

"They are so able, all of these women. I can't speak highly enough of them.

"New Zealand is a fortunate country and a free country. As churchwomen we really should support those who do not have the same opportunities."

CWU is based in Christchurch, with branches in the main centres. Formed in the 1950s amid the movement toward church union and post war yearnings for a better world, CWU aims to develop friendship between women as an opportunity for ecumenism. It is fully ecumenical, with a committee representing all mainstream denominations.

"We cherish this," says Pauline. "We have Roman Catholics, members of the Salvation Army, people you might not otherwise meet. Church women's groups like the YWCA and Girls Brigade are also represented."

"Numbers don't count because we get two National Committee members from each denomination," says Pauline.

"It's a system we've fought hard to keep over the years because it protects the greater number and it includes the greater number. That way we're not confined to one way of thinking. The other thing is that we're very small, so we try to do a few things well."



More than 200 women from 18 countries took part in the Assembly of the Asian Church Women's Conference.

Pauline says CWU is an umbrella organization, best described as a facilitator. Through its officers, it made a contribution to the smooth running of the Assembly. In NZ it arranges everything from morning teas and talkers to large scale ecumenical events such as the world week of prayer for Christian unity.

CWU also coordinates the work of the Fellowship of the Least Coin in New Zealand. The Fellowship of the Least Coin is a worldwide ecumenical movement of prayer for peace and reconciliation. Women in the movement spend time in prayer, and uphold in prayer others who are victims of jealousy, violence and injustice. Every time one prays, she sets aside a 'least coin' of her currency as a tangible token of her prayer.

CWU arranges the ingathering of coins which women put aside as they pray for peace and reconciliation.

"We receive no funding from the church," says Pauline. "It's all voluntary, so CWU depends on

donations. New Zealand's contributions to overseas projects and scholarships are small but they are still appreciated.

"In a disaster, government agencies can do more; the grant we send to an affected country is really a love gift with prayer and support. But this is part of CWU's great purpose – to acknowledge fully each Christian denomination, to boost practical aid and prayer-based goodwill to all women."

Pauline says CWU has always valued the inclusion of young women. This year the Assembly had its first Youth Forum. The New Zealand representative was Methodist Taiuiwi youth facilitator Te Rito Peyroux. Te Rito's attendance was made possible by the CWU's national committee.



Pauline Yates

## Young women of Asia and the Pacific share their stories

system, which prevent them from "enjoying the fullness of life and basic human rights."

During informal social sessions, Te Rito heard other issues about social issues that are common in various parts of the world.

"Identity and loyalty to the church and to denominations are a common issue faced by many. Generation Y has different priorities to earlier generations. If young people don't get what they want out of a church they will move on to the next," she says.

While these issues are relevant to New Zealand, Te Rito believes she offered the group some positive insights due to the relative success of what she sees in the New Zealand Methodist Church.

"Women's gifts are used in our Church and this could be a model to offer to the group," she says.

Some New Zealand churches have been ordaining women for the past 50 years and women lead active roles in the church. By contrast in some places women still fight to read the bible and take part in church services.

"From the Methodist perspective there is a lot to celebrate, through this doesn't mean we should stop. There is still a way to go."

Te Rito says she learnt some lessons of her own by being in Indonesia. Her preconceived notions of a predominantly Muslim culture were challenged.

"I learnt to dismiss racial prejudice that we so often see presented through various media in New

Zealand," she says.

"I met a whole range of Muslim women who were strongly Muslim and staunch activists for women's rights. I didn't think they would mix but they really did.

"I am still in awe of the exposure and opportunity to experience and engage with people I would never otherwise have known. I am thankful for that and for the many friendships that I made, the connections amidst tears, laughter, music, dance, food, conversation and prayer.

"Thanks be to God...Terima Kasih!"

By Cory Miller

*New Zealand's representative to the first ever young women's forum at the Asian Church Women's Conference (ACWC) general assembly says it was quite special to be part of a gathering that brought together so many women of different cultures.*

Methodist Church of NZ Taiuiwi youth facilitator Te Rito Peyroux attended the 14th Quadrennial ACWC general assembly in Bogor, Indonesia October 14–21.

The forum encouraged young women to engage with one another and share their perspectives and stories. More than 200 participants, from 18 countries in the Asia-Pacific region took part.

Te Rito says the experience fit quite well with her efforts to engage and encourage young people in the Methodist Church.

Despite the obligatory business, the general assembly provided an open forum where the young people could discuss social issues.

According to the ACWC, poverty, illiteracy, HIV AIDS, aggressive consumption of natural resources, pollution, and climate change burden Asian countries.

Many women also face family violence, human trafficking and the dowry



Te Rito Peyroux

## Asian churches promote climate justice

*Environmental degradation around the world is creating a new category of people known as climate refugees.*

There are reportedly some 25 million climate refugees in the world today, mostly in Asia and Africa. Some experts predict their number will grow to as much as 200 million by 2050.

In October the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the National Council of Churches in India held a consultation to examine the issue.

Methodist Church of NZ presbyter Rev Prince Devanandan is a member of the CCA general committee and he attended the consultation.

Prince says climate refugees are people who have to leave their habitats, immediately or in the near future, because of droughts, water scarcity, desertification, sea level rise or extreme weather events such as hurricanes, cyclones, mass flooding and tornadoes.

The Bhola islanders in Bangladesh are considered to be among some of the world's first climate refugees. Bhola Island became permanently flooded leaving some 500,000 people homeless. They moved from flooded areas into slums in the country's capital city of Dhaka, where today they lead a life of poverty.

There is growing evidence to show that climate change displaces people and communities.

The fear is that warming of the earth due to higher levels of greenhouse gases carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide will lead to rapid deterioration of land, water air and

biodiversity. The most vulnerable groups to climate change are poor, elderly, children, women and indigenous people.

The consultation observed that underlying climate change is a worldview that seeks to dominate nature and transform all natural and cultural resources into commodities.

Prince says the consultation arrived at a number of action points. It urges churches, individual Christians and social movements to:

- Understand climate change as climate injustice and the colonization of the commons,
- Create awareness in children and young people by incorporating climate concerns into the Sunday school curriculum,
- Establish eco-justice commissions with full time coordinators in all churches and ecumenical organizations,
- Initiate carbon auditing of all churches and Christian organizations, and make alternative energy policies and practices,
- Engage in inter-faith initiatives in solidarity with climate justice movements,
- Create awareness on the impact of tourism on nature and subaltern communities, and encourage just tourism,
- Lobby law makers to change policies to reduce the causes of climate change and open their borders to climate refugees,
- Create a new culture of ecological living.



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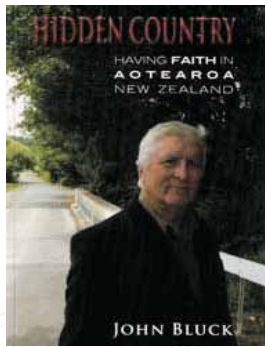


## Hidden Country: Having Faith in Aotearoa

*The author's name may be familiar to some Touchstone readers. In the 1970s this Anglican priest edited the New Zealand Methodist newspaper (changed to New Citizen under his editorship).*

He moved from that position to the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Geneva to become editor of its magazine, One World, and then director of WCC communications. After nine years in Switzerland he was appointed professor in Practical Theology and Communications at Knox Theological College in Dunedin. The Anglican Church reclaimed him as Dean of Christchurch Cathedral, and he ended his ecclesiastical career as bishop in his home diocese of Waiapu.

Of the many publications John has produced, Hidden Country is the most personal. It is an account of his life lived through 60 years of extraordinary social and political



change in NZ and around the world: feminism, bicultural development, homosexual law reform, nuclear disarmament, globalisation, the end of the Cold War and apartheid, secularisation, the information technology revolution, and growing ecological awareness.

The first section of the book tells of places, personalities and events that shaped the author. A childhood spent in Nuhaka, a small, mostly Maori community north of Gisborne, lay the foundations for a search for spiritual turangawaewae for the people of Aotearoa.

The young theological graduate studied in the USA at the time of the Vietnam War and returned to New Zealand for ordination and his first parish appointment. He felt the call to be a 'worker priest' and joined the Wellington Polytechnic as a part time tutor in the School of Journalism, and part time chaplain. A deep ecumenical commitment never usurped his love for the Anglican

tradition.

The life experiences of this far-from-typical Anglican priest are related with the skill and insights of a distinguished journalist and a thoughtful Christian theologian. In the second part of the book John reflects on the underlying landscape of religious belief in this aggressively secular land.

The search for a sense of national identity, a faith and a spirituality, sacred places to stand, and a credible Christian voice finds rich resources in the treasures of tangata whenua.

This wise, compassionate and congenial guide invites others to join his pilgrimage, following the secret pathways winding through the hidden country of faith. There is clarity and hope in his vision, yet variety and complexity too.

This book will be a constant companion for me on my faith journey in Aotearoa. I commend it to all who are seeking a way into the hidden country.

Review copy supplied by Epworth Books.

By John Bluck

2010, Bathgate Press, 143 pages

Reviewer: Diana Roberts

## Such is Life! A Close Encounter with Ecclesiastes

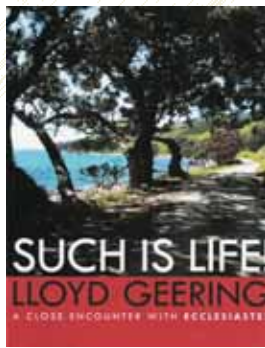
*Lloyd Geering is undoubtedly New Zealand's most prominent theologian. He evokes strong feelings both for and against. For some of us he is a brave thinker who causes us to re-think what Christianity can be today; for some of us he is outside the heritage of the Christian tradition.*

To do justice to this book means that we must bracket our particular response to him and put it to one side. Instead we must listen to the Proclaimer, the anonymous Jewish sage who wrote the Book of Ecclesiastes some 23 centuries ago.

Geering begins by reminding us that the Bible is not a book in the conventional sense. It is a veritable library put together over a period of centuries. Therefore, it is unsurprising that it has several different traditions.

The Hebrew Bible contains four. The priestly tradition can be seen in the Torah or Law, the first five books of the First Testament. The Kingdom tradition is the narratives around the Davidic dynasty. In the Prophetic tradition, the prophets speak about the current condition of the nation and the near future.

Each of these three traditions speaks from a place of some power, be it the Temple or the court. The fourth



sense of the supernatural and with less and less connection to the institutions and narratives of religion that wisdom has come into its own.

It is a tradition emerging from the people, a body of folk wisdom expressed in insights and sayings about how to live well. It shows little interest in the ritual or beliefs of religion. Geering insists that we would now call it a secular tradition, and he believes it speaks to our present age.

He describes it as "the Cinderella of the ancient Israelite culture." He writes that as Judaism developed, the Wisdom tradition became more marginal and neglected. It is in our modern secular world with a declining

sense of the supernatural and with less and less connection to the institutions and narratives of religion that wisdom has come into its own.

The main part of this book is a series of imaginative dialogues with the Proclaimer. It emerges that the role of the sage, the wisdom teacher, is to cause us to think for ourselves.

There is no great truth narrative, no big story. It is our task as human beings to make meaning and plot a course through life to live well, with integrity and in harmony. Consider this succinct summary of the role of the sage: "The words of the wise are like goads. They are like nails

driven firmly home by members of a fraternity and now delivered by a caring guide."

While his dialogues are compelling, I am critical of Geering's underlying premise about the nature of contemporary religious thought. He says we are in the second axial age, and are in the process of abandoning any idea of God. Rather, what we bring from religion might be a useful tool in living well here and now.

It may well be true that in New Zealand and much of the West there has been a movement away from religion and a loss of connection with its narratives and institutions. Yet there is a phenomenal growth of conservative forms of Christianity in places as diverse as Nigeria and Korea. Even in the West the picture is far from uniform, we need only look at religion in the United States to see that.

We may be at an axial moment in the history of human thought and that some move more quickly and easily into the emerging paradigm. Yet we cannot know this until we can look back and see the road upon which we have travelled.

That being said this book is a fresh and compelling read and I personally value the wisdom tradition as a way of teaching truths and causing us to reflect upon our lives. This is a fine book, if you choose to read it bring your questions to it, read it critically, gratefully and wisely.

By Lloyd Geering

2010, Steele Roberts, 214 pages

Reviewer: David Poultney

## Navigation: A Memoir

*Acclaimed internationally, Joy Cowley is one of New Zealand's most loved and prolific writers. Her output includes stories for children and adults, picture books, and books of prayer-poems with photographs by husband Terry Coles.*

When first asked for an autobiography, Joy declined. Eventually she agreed to a memoir which, she says, "seemed possible because it was in a wider place, focusing on the gifts of life that make a person".

In this memoir Joy has assembled a collection of themes that yield glimpses of someone who is observant, reflective, imaginative, modest, compassionate, one who loves people and nature in all moods.

Joy is aware that children read at their own speed and she is sceptical of standardised tests. In commenting on her schooldays, Joy remarks on how children's self-esteem may be strengthened or undermined by teachers.

She will always be grateful for a teacher who spoke to children as people whose opinions mattered, who painted



word pictures, read stories and created a love of learning. These are all things Joy herself has tried to do with children.

While still at school Joy's flair for writing saw her editing a weekly children's page for a local newspaper. As she was leaving school a teacher said, 'Promise me you will never give up writing'.

The next few years were filled with work in a pharmacy, marriage, motherhood and farm life, but Joy remembered her promise. Her great desire was to have a story published in the New Zealand Listener. Initial rejection was followed by encouragement from editor,

Monte Holcroft, who asked simply, How much rewriting do you do? She joined a writers' group and benefited from shared critique.

Joy has always enjoyed story-telling and comments that fiction is experience dismantled and reassembled. This creates reader response. The worst fault of a story-teller is to be boring. She likens writing to night fishing. Sometimes nothing happens. At other times the bait is taken and the

story runs with great energy.

Joy allows readers glimpses of her home and family life and relationships. She tells of her determination that school children should have access to quality reading books and the realisation of her dream for an annual children's book festival.

Spirituality and religion have been of great influence in her life. At one stage she ceased going to church because she found herself in a place wider than the conventions she had grown up with. Eventually embracing Catholicism, she says, "I came home to the wisdom and mystery of a love too great to bear a name".

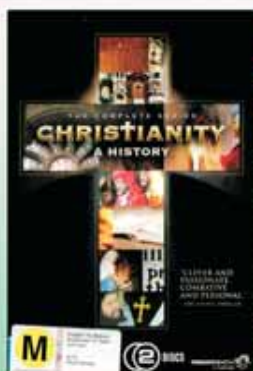
Throughout the book Joy is not afraid to laugh at herself so that an endearing honesty pervades every chapter of this most readable memoir which is enhanced by a comprehensive index. Joy's life has been one of constant discovery.

This is the reference to 'navigation' of the title, which for her is ongoing although the pace has changed. "I spend more time now...listening to the voice of the wind... It is all exactly as it should be," she concludes.

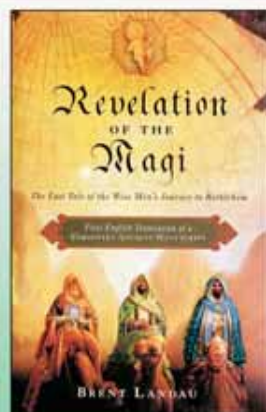
Joy Cowley

2010, Penguin, 288 pages

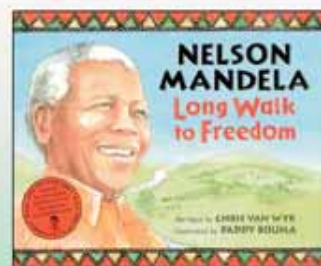
Reviewers: Jillian and John Meredith



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## ON SCREEN

A film review by Steve Taylor

# Harry Potter

AND THE DEATHLY HALLOWS™ PART I

*It is a marketer's dream. Buy the film rights to a seven part blockbuster book series. Divide the final book in two. Release them six months apart, the first just before the Christmas holidays.*

Despite the hype, there is much to admire. The first part of Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows offers moments that make you jump, smile and laugh out loud (What else might be in Hermione's handbag?).

There are puzzles to solve. There is sexual tension as teenage relationships mature. There are strange characters, some cute, some full of serpentine slither.

The animation that tells the tale of the deathly hallows is beautiful, yet haunting and disturbing. And this sums up much of the movie: special effects mixed with dark graphics, including scenes of torture and pre-meditated violence.

It remains a movie for groupies. Without some knowledge of the series, a first time viewer might wonder if they have stumbled into an imaginative re-enactment of World War II Britain, complete with dive bombing black figures and war news on the wireless.

For those new to the world of Potter, the hero, Harry, (the one with glasses) has lost his mentor and teacher, Dumbledore. Without this protection, the evil Lord Voldemort is able to entrench his power, turning the Ministry of Magic literally into a witch hunt.

All that Harry and his friends, Hermione and Ron, can do is tramp around in the wilds, dodging Ministry of Magic thugs, while looking for hidden treasures (horcruxes). The middle section of the movie meanders, the escalating tension between three hormonal teenagers adding little sizzle to the plodding pace.

A recent panel, gathering to discuss the topic of youth, arts and spirituality was asked if the world of Harry Potter was a religion. After a lively discussion, the answer was yes. Not because it has wizards, although it does. Nor because it has evil, although it does.

Yes because the world of Potter is an invitation to an exercise in imagination. Physically, with cars that fly and wands that work. Imaginatively, to conceive of life and identity in new ways.

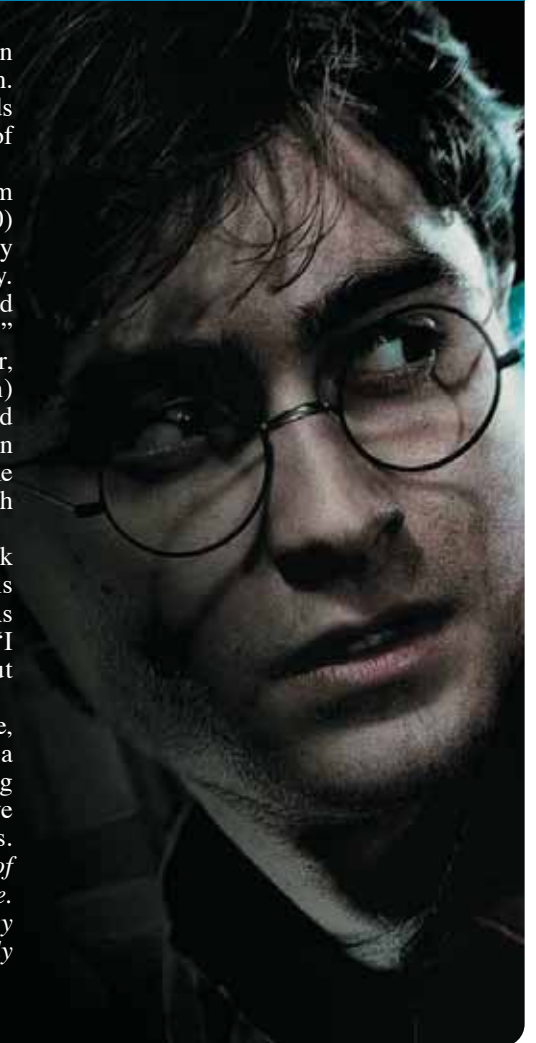
For theologian of culture, Tom Beaudoin (Consuming Faith, 2003, 50) this type of imaginative work is precisely what can be achieved by Christianity. "To reorient persons spiritually...one had to reshape them imaginatively."

In the imaginative world of Potter, Hermione Granger (Emma Watson) might be a swot but her hard work and persistence carry many a day. Ron Weasley (Rupert Grint) might lack some social skills but his loyalty is a gift worth celebrating.

Harry (Daniel Radcliffe) might look slightly geeky but time and again his courage and care will save the day. As he farewells a dead friend, he says "I want to bury him properly, without magic."

Harry Potter's world rewards courage, persistence and loyalty. Surely this is a world worth encouraging for any growing and gangly teenager, learning to conceive of life and identity in maturing ways.

Rev Dr Steve Taylor is director of Missiology, Uniting College, Adelaide. He writes widely in areas of theology and popular culture, including regularly at [www.emergentkiwi.org.nz](http://www.emergentkiwi.org.nz).



## GENEALOGY OF JESUS

Usually ignored in the telling of the stories of Jesus' birth are the two genealogy lists. They run in opposite directions, and both include the patriarchs of Genesis but only Luke's extends to Adam.

Interestingly, the names differ considerably, starting with the grandfather of Jesus. Some consider Matthew's list to be Joseph's line, and Luke's list as Mary's lineage. If this is so, it can be concluded that both lines meet with King David, like our Queen and her husband can trace shared ancestry from Queen Victoria. The lists also link with Zerubbable, the prominent leader during and after the Exile.

For Matthew the number of generations is significant. He deliberately itemizes 14 generations between the three most important events in Jewish history. Another feature of Matthew is the inclusion of four strong women all of whom displayed behaviour untypical of Jewish matrons.

### Bible Challenge

The grandfather of Jesus	---	L	---	Lk 3:23
The most famous Hebrew king	---	I	---	1Chr 18:14
Husband of Rahab & father of Boaz	---	S	---	Mtt 1:5
Had twins by Jacob's son, Judah	---	T	---	Gn 38:24
Mother of King Solomon	---	E	---	2Sm 12:24
Our most ancient forebear	---	D	---	Lk 3:38
Angel who visited Mary	---	G	---	Lk 1:26
Father of King David	---	E	---	1Sm 16:1
King with same name as Joseph's 1st son	---	N	---	2Kg 20:21
A king who brought water to the city	---	E	---	2Kg 20:20
A prostitute who aided Joshua's men	---	A	---	Jos 2:1
Successor to most famous king	---	L	---	1Kg 2:12
2 <sup>nd</sup> husband of Ruth the Moabitess	---	O	---	Ru 4:13
A word that once meant 'young woman'	---	G	---	Lk 1:26
The most famous 'young woman' ever	---	Y	---	Lk 1:38
Younger son of Isaac	---	O	---	Gn 25:26
Abraham, ___ of the Jewish nation	---	F	---	Gn 17:5
4 <sup>th</sup> son of Jacob and Leah	---	J	---	Gn 2:35
The first born of Tamar's twins	---	E	---	Gn 38:29
His name means 'laughter'	---	S	---	Gn 21:5-6
Grandmother of Jesse	---	U	---	Ru 4:13-21
Husband of Mary	---	S	---	Mtt 1:20

Answers: Heli, David, Solomon, Tamar, Bathsheba, Adam, Gabriel, Jesse, Manasseh, Hezekiah, Rahab, Solomon, Boaz, Virgin, Mary, Jacob, Judah, Perez, Isaac, Ruth, Joseph.

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## Christians and Muslims

From Page 6

The Church of Sweden's archbishop of Uppsala Rt Rev Dr Anders Wejryd was another keynote speaker. He recalled the enormous change over the last century from Western triumphalism to the interreligious initiatives of today. He said elements of religious communities have been politicised and others have suffered by association, while a backlash against religion threatens to marginalise them all.

The consultation ended with a call for the formation of a joint working group to mobilise whenever a crisis threatens to arise in which Christians and Muslims find themselves in conflict.

Participants recognised that religion is invoked as a cause of conflict, even when other factors such as unfair resource allocation, oppression, military occupation, and injustice are the real roots of conflict. The role of religions in situations of conflict, they said, must be one of compassionate justice.

The organisers of the consultation were asked to establish a joint project to promote the sharing of experiences and best practices of living together constructively in plural societies, building a culture of dialogue and interreligious cooperation, and working together on social and environmental issues.

Douglas Pratt says the achievements of the Consultation were quite impressive. It was a privilege to be a part of the consultation because there were few voices from the Southern Hemisphere.

"Witnessing a wide spectrum of Muslim and Christian leaders address real issues and share self-critiques, in a context of goodwill and good humour, is a cause of celebration and encouragement."





# One Heart, One Soul

During Labour weekend, 23-26 October, Sinoti Samoa held its first ever tupulaga (youth) camp. More than 400 young people from across the Methodist Church of NZ's Samoan Synod gathered at the El Rancho Christian Campsite in Waikanae.

The theme for the camp was 'One Heart, One Soul'.

The weekend of fellowship began on Friday afternoon with a marching parade during which each district paraded their banners. Sinoti Samoa superintendent Rev Tovia Aumua then led the opening service. It was a moving service and also a time to recognise and acknowledge the many people who paved the way in years gone by for such a youth event.

A number of workshops were held during the course of the camp. Their themes included godly stewardship, religion and culture, education and careers, and health education (specifically nutrition and smoking).

On the Saturday, everyone enjoyed outdoor sports including volleyball, touch rugby and netball. Gloria Ieli (Papatotoe) and Henry Etimani (New Plymouth) picked up awards for the best sportswoman and best sportsman, and Sienitione Faafuata picked up the most promising sportsperson



Sinoti Samoa's first national youth camp mixed fun and games with worship and plenty of food for thought.

award.

Saturday evening was cultural performance night. Every Sinoti Samoa district – Auckland, Manukau, Hawkes Bay, Wellington, Gisborne and Taranaki – contributed an item. Those in attendance, including some local Waikanae residents, were treated to some dazzling displays of Samoan cultural dance.

The La'asaga Youth Group from New Plymouth performed a moving drama about Tupua Tamasese Lealofi III, the man who led Samoa's peaceful pro-independent

movement, known as the Mau movement. Tupua was shot by New Zealand police during a peaceful procession in Apia, Samoa in 1929.

The Mission Choir from Wellington, Siauala Nili (aka Giant Killa), and Lahleina Feaunati also shared their musical talents.

On the Sunday evening a Christian Youth Rally was held. On hand were then president Alan Upson and vice-president Lana Lazarus as well as Tauivi youth facilitator Te Rito Peyroux. Fati Tagoai led a spiritual session of praise and worship, and this was followed

by a series of encouraging spiritual items contributed by each youth group.

Constable Glen Potoi and president of NZ Methodist Women's Fellowship Mataiva Robertson ably filled the two guest speaker slots during this evening, providing inspiration and encouragement to all.

The rally ended with devotions led by New Plymouth's La'asaga, culminating with a call to commitment that was made by director of Tauivi Ministries Rev Aso Samoa Saleupolu. He invited anyone wanting to commit or recommit to God, to come forward. The angels in heaven were rejoicing on that night as more than 100 young people responded to his invitation and committed their lives to the Lord. It was an amazing sight to see so many young people in tears, rejoicing in the presence of the Lord. This was undoubtedly the highlight of the whole weekend.

Many thanks go out to the camp organising committee – Filo Tu, Edna Te'o, Rev Aso Samoa Saleupolu, Rev Falaniko Mann-Taito, Afa Aumua and Mataiva Robertson – who did an excellent job in organising the camp.

May the seeds that were sown in many young hearts during this weekend continue to grow in Him. To God be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

## Kidz Korna!

Welcome to Kidz Korna for December 2010, just around the corner from Christmas!

### POSTERS TO THE MAX

This is the time of year for celebration. Not only are we celebrating Advent, when we are preparing for Christmas, and remembering the birth of Jesus, but this year we are celebrating you, the children in our church.

Remember that earlier this year I asked you to make a poster telling about what you did in church?

It was so exciting to receive 36 posters from all around the country. You are all doing amazing and exciting things and it was great hearing about them. The posters were all displayed at the Church Conference in Palmerston North and at the end of Conference people from other churches took a poster to share with the children in their church. The idea is that they will contact the children whose poster they took and write and tell them about themselves.

This is the last Kidz Korna for this year. I hope that in the New Year some of you will write and tell me how you celebrated

Christmas. Send a photo as well and we can share what you did with children around the country, just as you shared with the posters.

My address:

Doreen Lennox, Unit 4 St John's Close, 22 Wellington St.  
Hamilton 3216. email – dlennox@xtra.co.nz



### Recycling Creation

The kids at New Plymouth Methodist Centre spent several Sundays exploring the creation story from the book of Genesis.

They also thought about how they might look after all that God has created by reusing, recycling and getting rid of our rubbish carefully. Lots of paint, glue, coloured paper, cellophane, wool and fabric were used to make our big, colourful mural.

It now hangs in the Kid's Corner in our church for everyone to enjoy.



Zac, Jekope, Loma, Bale, Inoke, Waisea, Elina and Lusi.

### Christmas Symbols Match Up!

Can you match up these symbols with their meanings?



They remind us that we are to be the light of the world



It is evergreen and symbolises God's everlasting love



They are used to call us to worship



The circle reminds us of God's unending love



They remind us of the perfect gift of Jesus Christ



## CREATIVE WORKSHOPS COMING TO KING COUNTRY



Accomplished musician Roy Tankersley will be one of the presenters at a March workshop on creative outreach and ministry.

Gibson return to present more material on music.

The March workshop will feature Roy and Very Rev Pamela Tankersley, and Rev Malcolm Gordon.

Roy is a gifted keyboard player and teacher. He is director of music

*The success of a music workshop they organised last year has led three friends to set up an official group to hold them on a regular basis.*

In June, 2009 Gaynor McCartney, from Piopio Co-Operating Parish, and Pat Gibb and Terry Tutty from Te Kuiti Presbyterian Church organised the 'These Hills Workshops'. Hymnwriter Colin Gibson and Rev Val Riches led the workshops, which took place in Te Kuiti and Bell Block.

Now, with the addition of Rev Carol Hancock representing the Te Kuiti Anglicans, they have set up a group called Ecumenical Workshops King Country and Taranaki to provide regular workshops in their sparsely populated part of the country.

They intend to hold three workshops in 2011. The first, in March, will focus on creative outreach and ministry. The second, in June, will focus on parish websites. The third, in October or November, will see Colin

at the Presbyterian Parish of St Marks and St Andrews in Palmerston North and directs the Manawatu Youth Choir and the Schola Sacra Choir in Wanganui. His workshop will focus on how to learn new songs from the keyboard.

Pamela will hold a workshop on community-facing ministry. She is a former moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ. She was appointed PCANZ global mission coordinator earlier this year.

Malcolm's topic is creative worship. A former youth actor, Malcolm is the minister at St Paul's Presbyterian Church in Katikati. He combines this with writing and performing Christian songs that are suited to youth and the wider church. He says his guiding principle is to create music that is true to the Christian Faith, theologically authentic, and culturally credible.

For more information contact Gaynor.

## NOW AND THEN

### Holiday Art Cool Fun and Good Outreach Tool



Art teacher Lynn Ramage and 8-year-old Rachel Greenwood show off their stained glass windows made with baking paper.

*"It'll be really boring", 10-year-old Aaron Purdie said on his way to the art workshop at the Himatangi Beach Union Church during the October school holidays.*

He quickly changed his mind when he arrived and found heaps of other kids to play with and lots of art projects to tackle. "It was cool fun!" he declared afterwards.

Some 16 children aged seven to 13 as well as some younger siblings took part in the school holiday programme run by the Foxton-Shannon Co-operating Parish.

Emily Hicks (7) especially enjoyed making a stained glass window effect out of waxed paper. "I used the special leaves and flowers I collected from the beach. I used my imagination to make it a special part with flower gardens, a big tree, and a pond with a boat on it. I sprinkled little white flowers to make it snow and rain at the same time."

Jessica Ramage (13) came from Palmerston North. "It was great to meet new people and learn new things in an

environment that was friendly and open. I enjoyed it all.

"It's a funny feeling to sit down in front of a blank canvas. It feels like stepping into a void of uncertainty. But when you make that first stroke on the canvas you know you are going to make something unique. I decided to jazz up an old idea of a string doll ninja. I am proud of him. I'm going to put him on my wall."

Parish minister Rev Silvia Purdie was delighted with the day. "Our church is committed to serving our local communities, and we love getting kids together to have fun, build friendships, skills and self-confidence.

"These days we have to be creative to attract children and families. When we ran a school holiday programme last year hardly any kids came. But the response to this art workshop was excellent."

Sylvia says publicity for programmes like this has to look fresh and exciting, and organisers have to build on the links with families they already have.

"This workshop has put us in touch with three new families. This will create an opportunity for me to visit, and invite them to all-age worship and social events.

"Let's face it - families aren't going to seek out the church, those days are gone. We have to promote ourselves, offer invitations that people might welcome."

## Jesus is Cool for NZ Youth Heading to Tonga

*Twenty-five New Zealand Methodist youth are heading off to attend the 26th Pacific Christian Youth Convention from December 9-14 in Tonga.*

Typically held bi-annually, the theme for this year's convention is Jesus is Cool.

This vision of the convention is to "invite participants to share their stories of Jesus from their island shores and to explore their faith and experience together".

The 25 young people from New Zealand were invited to share their stories at the convention to be held at Tupou College, Toloa. The Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga has organised this year's convention.

Lana Lazarus is co-ordinating the New Zealand youth contingent. Lana says she first received the invite whilst still in office as the Methodist Vice President earlier this year.

She was asked to bring Maori youth. But Lana told the Free Wesleyan Church her partnership in the life of the church meant she looked at the church as a whole, not in parts.

So she sent invites to the various Methodist synods in New Zealand, which resulted in a diverse range of youth who will head to Tonga.

Lana says the youth who go will "gain an ecumenical experience of another culture".

"The youth can gain insight into church in a different context," she says.

In turn Lana says the youth can offer to the convention an example of "how a wide range of people can do church".

"We will offer the convention a bicultural church," she says.

## Oruaiti Chapel cherished reminder of settlers' faith

### METHODIST ARCHIVES

By Jill Weeks

*In 1859, a group of people left Lincolnshire in England to sail to New Zealand. They were ardent Christians who wanted to pursue a life of study, worship and prayer and they settled in Oruaiti, near Mangonui in Northland.*

After building rough dwellings for themselves, they turned their attention to a chapel for Bible study and worship.

Mr J Ball donated the pit-sawn timber and the settlers constructed a small octagonal chapel. Rushes were used to thatch the roof and in less than two years after their arrival in New Zealand the settlers opened their house of worship in 1861.

This was a private chapel and not attached to any Mission Station. The services were conducted by Mr. Ball and other members of the congregation in turn. There was no 'collection' but freewill offerings were put in a stout wooden box at the door.

Occasionally a missionary from either the Wesleyan or the Church of England Mission would visit the district and hold sacramental services. An old pewter 'Common Cup' Mr Ball



Early settlers built the Oruaiti Chapel as their place of worship. It is now part of the Heritage Park in Whangarei.

brought out from England was used. He seems to have been well equipped as he also had a tuning fork with which he set the pitch for the singing.

By 1870, a fine library was opened in the chapel and the books found a place on shelves in the pulpit under the Bible desk. They must have formed a great resource for some of the studies of these early pioneers. Many were given to the chapel by Sir Maurice O'Rorke, speaker of the

Auckland Provincial Council and of the House of Representatives.

A brief sketch published by the Wesley Historical Society names some of the early members of this chapel: Wiles, Thompson, Bradley, Mawer, Bruce, Jerome, Sturge, Hewson, Anderson, Foster, Thomas, Kitchen, Garton, Wilkison, Frear and Usher.

There were regular meetings during the week for Bible Study, prayer and sermon reading. Until the Ball family moved to

Auckland, the annual activities ended with a tea meeting.

In 1886, a meeting was called to consider modernising the building. Instead of the customary re-thatching with rushes, the congregation decided to shingle the roof. The shingles remained weather-proof until 1919 when the roof was re-shingled in kauri.

In 1892 the Ball property, and with it the chapel, was bought by the Foster family. They kept it until May 1936 when it was ceded to the Methodist Connexion as a gift. Before this happened there were many changes as the settlement expanded and younger families moved out from the centre. A group of 'Exclusive Brethren' came into the area and some of the families were won over to them.

There was a lack of support for the chapel. It was closed and its precious contents were loaned to various groups, the harmonium to a Maori Mission, the seats to a local hall and the pulpit bible to the Fairburn Church.

Twenty years later, the chapel was re-opened for worship by the faithful few who had worked so hard through the years to restore

Methodist worship in the valley. The chapel was decorated for the occasion and all the loaned articles were returned.

This service was continued on Christmas Day each year and all the branches of the Foster family were joined by many other families from far and near. The last of these special gatherings was in 1935.

In 1946 the chapel was again moved to a Methodist property at 149 Kamo Road in Whangarei in the hope that it would be cared for and used. For a time there was a Sunday School there and several weddings were also celebrated in it.

In 1975, the Chapel was given to the Northland Regional Museum as its site was needed for the proposed 'Golden Church'. It was moved by Keith Hay Homes Ltd. free of charge to its new site in Heritage Park where it was returned to its original name once more. It is now a delightful and popular venue for weddings.



# Konifelenisi Siasi Metotisi Nu'u Sila 2010

*Ko e Konifelenisi fakata'u 'a e Siasi na'e fai ki Palmerston North mei he 'aho 5 ki he 'aho 10 Novema 2010.*

Ko e ongo me'a lalahi na'e tokanga ki ai 'a e Konifelenisi ko e:

**1. Ta'u ngaue 'a e Palesitini mo e Tokini Palesitini, ke hiki mei he ta'u 1 ki he ta'u 'e 2**

Ne tali 'e Konifelenisi ke kamata mei he Konifelenisi ta'u 2012 mo e ta'u 2014, ko e Palesitini mo e Tokini Palesitini 'e Fakanofa ai, tena ngaue ta'u 'e 2 pea ke fai hano *review* 'o e motolo ko eni ke 'omi ki he Konifelenisi ta'u 2016.

**2. Ko e Motolo pe fa'unga ke vahevahe fakafeitu'u (regional) 'a e ngaahi Sinoti kotoa 'a e Taiiwi.**

Na'e tu'utu'uni ke toe fakafoki ki he Komiti *Governance* ke nau toe fakalelei'i 'a e motolo pea ke 'ave ki he fakataha Komiti *Taiiwi & Strategy* mo e *Hui Poari* 'i Ma'asi 2011 pea ke ngaue kiai 'a e ngaahi sinoti - pea ke toki lipooti ki he Konifelenisi 2011. Na'e toe tali foki ke vakai'i 'a e kau memipa 'o e Komiti *Governance* na'a 'oku taau ke liliu.

Ko e konga maheni 'o e Konifelenisi ko e fakanofa fakata'u 'o e Palesitini fo'ou, 'a ia ko Faifekau Desmond Cooper pea mo e Tokini Palesitini fo'ou Sue Spindler pea na'a na fokotu'u mai 'a e kaveinga ngaue ki he ta'u ni: **'Fakahaa atu hoku laumalie' pe ko e 'Tell out my Soul'**. Na'e toe lava lelei mo e fili 'o Faifekau John H Roberts ko e Palesitini Fili pea mo Olive Tanielu ki he Tokini Palesitini Fili ke fakanofa kinua 'i he Konifelenisi 2011. Pehee foki mo e malanga Hilifaki nima mo e Sakalameniti 'o e kau faifekau fo'ou 'e toko 3 Tonga ko Hiueni Nuku, 'Ikilifi Pope mo Metuisela Tafuna pea mo Joohong Kim ko e toko taha Kolea, hili 'enau lava'i lelei enau Faifekau 'Ahi'ahi he ta'u 'e 2. Na'e laka hake he toko 600 tupu ne nau tefua he malangaa pea na'e kau mai ki ai 'a e Hiva Fakatahataha 'a e Kainga Lotu Tonga 'o Tawa, Petone Vahefonua Tonga, Avaloni pea mo Upper Hutt. Na'e 'i ai foki mo e kau faifekau 'e toko 4 mei he ngaahi Siasi kehe ne lava honau fakahu mai (*received into Full Connexion*) kenau ngaue 'i he Siasi pea mo e ongo faifekau 'e 2 na'e toe tali kena foki mai ki he Siasi hili ia 'ena mama'o he ngaahi ta'u.

**Ko e ngaahi Fehikitaki mo e ngaahi fatangia kehe na'e tali:**

**Fehikitaki 'a e Kau Faifekau 'a e Vahefonua 'o pehe ni:**

**Setaita Veikune** (Faifekau Sea Vahefonua Tonga O Aotearoa/Faifekau Pule A o k a l a n i / M a n u k i a , - *Ponsonby/Dominion/Ellerslie/Panmure/Glen Innes/Petone* Vahefonua), **Vaikoloa Kilikiti** (Tokaima'ananga & Huli Ma'oni'oni), **Kilifi Heimuli** (Papatoetoe Saione), **Kepu Moe**

(*Christchurch* Kosipeli), **Lay Pastor Matangi Fonua** (*Gisborne* Tonga), **Moses Manukia** (*Northcote/New Lynn*), **Viliami Finau** (*Henderson*), **Molia Tu'itupou** (*Onehunga/Epsom*), **Holakitu'akolo Paea** (*Pukekohe/Waiuku/Otahuhu/Papatoetoe*) **Goll Fan Manukia** (*Lotofale'ia*), **Lay Pastor Moi Kaufononga** (Tokoni Lotofale'ia), **Simote Taunga** (*Manurewa*), **Langi'ila Uasi** (*Lotu Hufia*). **Foeata Tu'ipulotu** (Tikoni 'Ahi'ahi).

**Fehikitaki 'a e kau Faifekau Tonga ma'u potungau 'i he ngaahi Potungau Papalangi:**

**Sylvia 'Akau'ola Tongotongo** (*Kolisi Wesley*), **Siosifa Pole** (*Dunedin*), **'Epli Tungapeau** (*Whangarei*), **Motekiai Fakatou** (*Tauranga*), **Saikolone Taufa** (*Christchurch* Noate), **Tevita Taufalele** (*Hutt City Uniting*), **Tavake Manu** (*Sotia Christchurch*), **'Alipate 'Uhila** (*Waitakere*), **'Ikilifi Pope** (*Onehunga Co-operating*), **Kalo Kaisa** (*Mangere/Otahuhu*), **Vaitu'ulala Ngahe** (*Manurewa*), **Metuisela Tafuna** (*Matamata Union*), **Hiueni Nuku** (*Tawa Union*), **Inoke Siulangapo** (*Barnados Christchurch*), **Nasili Vaka'uta** (Faiako Kolisi *Trinity*). Na'e 'ikai ma'u ha potungau 'a **Hausia Taufu'i.**

**Kau Faifekau Akoako ki he ta'u 2011:**

**Nehilofi 'Aholelei** (hono ta'u 2 eni), **Tevita Finau** (hono ta'u 2 eni), mo e kau ta'u 'uluaki: **Kuli Fisi'iahi, Sione Lea'aetoa, mo Manoa Havea.**

**Kau Fakamafai ke fakahoko 'a e Ongu Sakalameniti Toputapu:**

**Kalo Kaisa, Simote Taunga, Goll Fan Manukia, Moi Kaufononga, 'Uha'one Metuisela, Mafua Lolohea, Saia Fia, Matangi Fonua, Moala Katoa, Taniela Vao, Siela Nau, Sione Na'a Sina, Piutau Moli, Palanite Taungapeau, Frances Oakes, Sekope Moli, Sione Molitika mo Foeata Tu'ipulotu.**

Na'e toe fakaha mei he Poate Pule *Touchstone* 'a e kole 'a e Vahefonua Tonga ke hiki hake 'a e Pukolea mei he peesi 'e 1 ki he peesi 'e 4 - pea kuo nau tali eni mo e fakakaukau ke 'oange ai 'a e faingamalie ki he kau Ha'amoia, kau Fisi mo e Te Taha Maori kenau kau mai ki ai.

Ko e toe me'a fakafiefia foki (ouau faka'osi) ko e loto 'a e Konifelenisi ke talitali (*host*) 'e he Vahefonua Tonga 'a e Konifelenisi 'o e ta'u 2011 ('aho 5-9 Novema) ki Aokalani pea fai ai pe hono foaki 'a e Fuka 'o e Konifelenisi mei he Faifekau Sea Vahefonua *Lower North Island*, Tony Bell, 'o tali ia 'e he Faifekau Sea 'o e Vahefonua Tonga, Setaita K Veikune, mo e hiva fakafeta'i 'aki 'o e Himi 114 'e he Vahefonua.



Ko e kau Faifekau (toko 4) na'e Hillifakinima he Konifelenisi 2010. kei ma'u kakato honau ngaahi teunga faka-faifekau (alb & stole): Metuisela Tafuna Joohong Kim, Hiueni Nuku mo 'Ikilifi Pope. 'Oku ha atu mo e kau Faifekau Simote Taunga, Goll Fan Manukia, Saikolone Taufa mo Vaitu'ulala Ngahe.



Ko e fanau Tonga lolotonga 'enau sikiti he efiifi faka'ali'ali mo fakafiefia 'a e To'utupu 'a e Siasi he Konifelenisi 2010.



Ko e Fuka 'o e Konifelenisi 'oku to'o 'e he Sekelitali Vahefonua, Edwin Talakai, teuteu ki he hiva Fakafeta'i Himi 114 hili hono tali 'a e Fuka 'e he Faifekau Sea Vahefonua Tonga.

## Fakalotofale'ia Ko e Talanoa Fungani 'o e Kilisimasi (Matiu 1:18)

Ko 'etau lau lea pe ki he fo'i lea ko e 'FUNGANI' pea mahino 'oku tu'u mo'unga 'a hono fotunga; pea nofo'i kiai 'a e tokanga 'a e to'u tangata kotoa koe'uhi 'oku mahulu hake pea hilio 'i he ngaahi me'a kotoa pe.

'Oku 'i ai 'a e ngaahi talanoa 'oku manako 'a e kau fai ongoongo ke pulusi he peesi 'uluaki 'o e niusipepa, ke tohoaki 'aki 'a e tokanga 'a e kakai ke nau fakata'u 'a e nusipepa 'o e 'aho ko ia. Ko e 'aho leva 'oku fehohoi, 'oku kehe ia. Kae fakatokanga'i, ko e ngaahi me'a fakataimi kotoa pe ia pea mole ngofua atu he manatu. Ka ko e **Talanoa Fungani 'o e Kilisimasi** 'oku tu'uloa ia pea laui senituli hono talanoa'i 'e he to'u tangata mo e to'u tangata 'o a'u mai kiate kitaua he 'aho ni. Ka lau ki he fungani 'o e kakala hingoa, 'ko **Ela**

**'Elioni** eni ko e **'Otua Taupotu**. Ko Ia eni 'oku fou mai ai 'a e Talanoa Fungani 'o e Kilisimasi. Pea na'e 'i ai 'a e ngaahi pou tuliki na'e fakava'e ai 'a e Talanoa Fungani ni.

1. Ko e ngaahi me'a kotoa na'e fakaha mo palofisai 'e he kau Palofita, na'e hoko kotoa. Kau ai 'a e tu'itu'ia 'a e Taupo'ou ko Mele ki he Laumalie Ma'oni'oni. Koia kuo hoko ai 'a e ki'i tamasi'i ni ko e **'Fanutama-a-Tangata**. Tamai ki he Laumalie Ma'oni'oni kae fa'e ki mamani. Ko e fungani ia 'o e talanoa 'o e mahina mo e fa'ahita'u ko eni.
2. Na'e fakaha mai mo Hono Huafa ke ui'aki: ko **SISU**, he ko ia pe te Ne malava ke fakamo'ui 'a e kakai kotoa pe mei he'enua ngaahi angahala.
3. 'E 'alo'i 'a e tamasi'i, pea 'e fakahingoa ia ko

**IMANUELA**, ko hono 'uhinga: "'Oku 'iate kitautolu 'ae 'Otua.'" - ko 'ene fungani ia.

4. Toki fakakakato mai 'ehe Palofita ko 'Aisea Hono ngaahi huafa; ko **Fakafo-ene-Fale'i**; ko e **Helo 'Otua**, ko e **Tamai Ta'engata**; ko e **'Eiki 'o e Melino**. Ko e **'sisi fungani ia 'o e kakala hingoa'** pea taane'ine'i ke hoko 'a e **Talanoa 'o e Kilisimasi**; ko e Talanoa Fungani ia 'o e 'aho mo hotau kuonga. Tauange ke hoko mai 'a e ivi 'o Hono ngaahi huafa; mo e Kelesi Faifio 'a e 'Otua 'o kapui 'etau mo'ui ke tau hoko atu hono fai 'a e **'Talanoa Fungani 'o e Kilisimasi.** 'Emeni.

Fakatauange ke mou ma'u ha 'aho Kilisimasi Fiefia mo ha Ta'u Fo'ou 2011 fonu Kelesi pea mo Monu'ia.

'Ofa lahi atu,  
**Faifekau Kilifi Heimuli.**