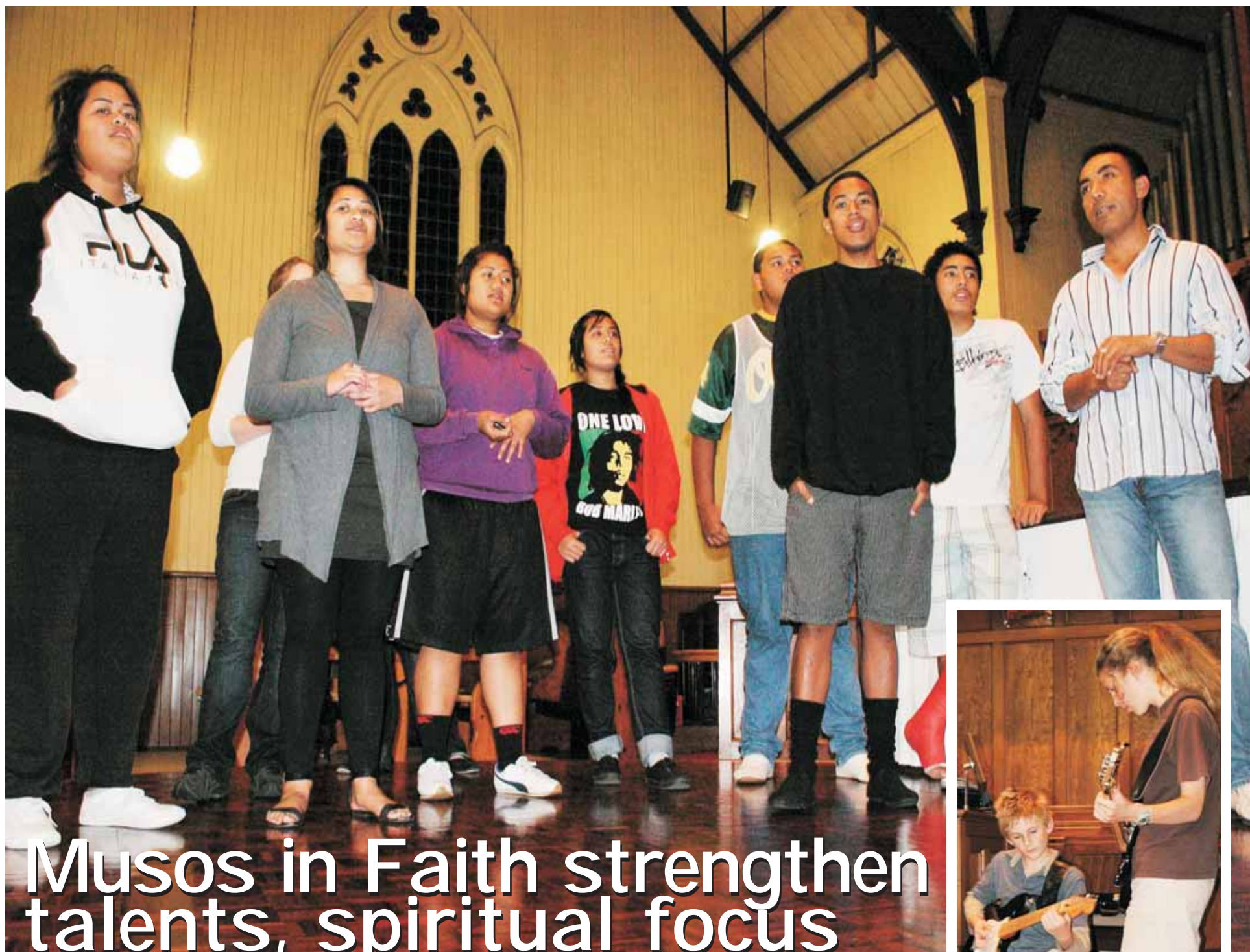


TOUCHSTONE

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



Musos in Faith strengthen talents, spiritual focus

By Cory Miller

A group of musicians is bringing a new face to traditional church music.

Musos in Faith is a 20-person band of mixed ages and ethnicities, brought together through a common love for music.

One Sunday each month they have the privilege of sharing their love for music through worship at the Mt Albert Methodist Church.

"We are blessed with the musical church of Mt Albert," says Musos in Faith director Poulima Salima.

"As a group we bring our own elements to the worship, in a way that is adaptable to the young people."

Musos in Faith is not just a music group, says Poulima. "We are both a band and a choir. We can't pigeon hole what we are. You could say our group is a space

for Christ."

The musicians enjoy the freedom of being able to perform in different styles. As a result they have a large repertoire of music, from traditional church songs, to gospel songs to remixes and contemporary hill-songs.

In April Musos in Faith director Poulima Salima took part in an Asia Ecumenical Course and the General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

For a full report on his creative endeavours there and the CCA Assembly, see pages 8 & 9.

Since the group first banded together in March of 2009, Musos has grown both in number and in skill. Every Friday they gather to share in fellowship over a meal, before

continuing on with a solid session of singing and dancing.

"We are growing each week," says Poulima. "Everyone has grown into their talents. The great thing is that originally it was us leaders who were guiding the

band. But the younger folk have now begun to take charge."

He says Musos is providing the youth of the church an opportunity to "grow into their own."

Drummer Kerry Smith first became involved because it was a way to give something to the youth. He says it has been an "enlightening experience" to be able to see the youth develop into their talents.

"Now we are trying to get them to bring in their own inspiration."

Being a part of Musos has helped to keep a lot of youth within the church, says Kerry.

"Being a part of a music group gives them something to put energy into. What we play is not just a song but also a performance," he says.

Poulima says they encourage the youth to act on their talents and to share them with the group.

He says it does not have to just be musical talent. "We have people talented in choreography who are able to bring



The 20-person band Musos in Faith enjoys a wide range of musical styles and performs monthly at Mt Albert Methodist Church.

their skills to add to our music."

Poulima has high hopes for the group. Already they have ventured out into the community performing for youth services at various venues.

One day, he says he would like Musos to be able to take their music out into the wider community, into hospitals and into rest homes.

"The Glory is to God through music," he says.

Broadcast yourself through Public Questions Network

The Methodist Public Questions Network is getting into gear and you are invited to help give it directions.

The Public Questions Network aims to help Methodists understand and speak out on the issues of the day.

Public questions help us understand and grow the 'public good', our collective positive experience of our communities. Asking questions is an important first step for contributing to positive change.

The Network is not a committee. Rather it encourages a wide range of people connected to Methodism to explore what are critical public questions for them and how they can express them.

The coordinating group of Public Questions is keen to hear what you believe key public questions are. Your input will help it shape how the network operates.

Public Questions coordinator Mataiva Robertson says during June Methodists are encouraged to ask the following three questions in different church forums (parish council, youth group, Sunday School, individually, prayer groups etc). Briefly record your

answers and send them in by the end of the month.

1. Within your local community what are two or three ways you want to see positive change?

2. What two or three aspects of our nation's life do you desire change so all peoples lives are improved?

3. For our global community what two or three areas would you focus on to make this a better world.

If you or people in your group have an interest in one or some of the areas named we would love to know this and how to contact you. You may have a general interest or some valuable skills or knowledge to help move towards a positive future. Please write these peoples names and contact details (including email address) on your responses.

Add names and contact details of people who want to get involved in the Public Questions Network.

Email your responses by June 30th to mdrobertson08@gmail.com or josh_iva@xtra.co.nz. Or write c/o Mataiva Robertson
20 Calvert Road
New Plymouth 4310

PAC giving to build connections

The Prince Albert College Trust is currently accepting applications for the grants it makes each year to the Methodist Church and community groups.

This year the PAC Distribution group has given its funding programme the theme 'Being Connected' and will allocate money to strengthen connections within the Church and with the whole of Creation.

Methodist rohe, districts, cultural synods, missions, parishes, and other groups within the life of the Church are all invited to submit stories and applications for this year's distribution. They are invited to share this information with community groups who are also eligible for funding.

The PAC Distribution group says the idea of being connected is at the very heart of Methodism. We use the word 'Connexion' with Wesley's unique spelling as a synonym for Church. We are all connected one to another in Christ. We are not individual

isolated congregations but integral and important parts of the Methodist family.

In a similar way, we proclaim our connectedness to the whole of creation. We are nurtured by it, and are stewards of it.

To further connectedness, the Distribution group will provide funds in three categories. Seventy percent of the distribution will be in the form of endowments to fund important aspects of Methodist ministry. Twenty percent is for grants to the Methodist Church and Co-operative and Uniting Ventures with Methodist components. Ten percent of the funding is for groups outside the Church.

For a copy of the 2010 theme and more information visit www.methodist.org.nz, email info@methodist.org.nz or call 03 366 6049.

Applications must be submitted to the General Secretary, Methodist Church of New Zealand, PO. Box 931, Christchurch 8140, by 30 June 2010.

LECTIONARY READY TO FLY

The 2010-2011 Lectionary will be distributed in July. If you would like to order a copy, please contact Amy Scott at the Connexional Office on 03 364 9427 or email amys@methodist.org.nz by June 11th.

Globetrotting deacon says Diakonia in good heart

Deacon Shirley-Joy Barrow says it is great to be back in New Zealand after an extended trip overseas that included attending the World Diakonia Federation (WDF) executive meeting in Finland. She says being a part of the WDF executive is an amazing experience.

"To work with such gifted and faithful people for four years offers learning, sharing and relationships that I am sure will benefit the Diaconate both locally and nationally. For six days, I joined with 16 people from Finland, Africa, Brazil, Norway, Switzerland, Germany, Britain, Scotland, United States, and the Philippines – each with their own culture and language.

"This meant slowing our discussions down and allowing each person to comment and take time to translate English into their own language. We were able to laugh when the words we used caused confusion and we teased out meanings and misunderstandings. Although we worked mainly in English, the pace at which we worked allowed each person to follow the direction of the discussion and to deepened relationships."

Shirley-Joy says Diakonieschwester Doris Horn is the new president of the WDF. Doris was past president of the Africa-Europe Diakonia region. She has been a member of the executive committee of the Diakonia since 1996.

"Doris' wish for the next four years is to continue those things that have been started and intensify them. This means increasing and deepening the links between member organisations through exchange programs,

workshops, visits, and local and regional gatherings. She wants to promote dialogue among members of the WDF in the Southern Hemisphere, and look for new ways for individual members and friends to support and enrich Diakonia and promote dialogue with churches, institutions and church organisations."

"Doris told us that Diakonia begins in our hearts, will be developed in our heads, and carried through our hands and feet and mouth. She said Diakonia means, that I will serve and carry out God's purpose wherever and however He leads me."

Shirley-Joy works with the Asia Pacific president Emma Cantor. Together they have mapped out work in Asia Pacific over the next three years.

"Emma will work on the areas where there is so much new growth in Diaconal ministry in India, Philippines, Korea, Indonesia and in some parts of China. I will focus on the countries including Japan, the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand. We both intend to involve our two alternates, Ristua Sirait from Indonesia and Sandy Boyce from Australia, in our work.

"2011 will bring more adventures as I will attend the Diakonia of the Americas and Caribbean Regional Conference in Oklahoma in July, followed by Diakonia Region of Africa and Europe Conference and the World Executive meeting which will be held in Moshi, Tanzania. The next Diakonia World Assembly will be in Germany in 2013."

If you wish to know more, contact Shirley-Joy at belbarow@clear.net.nz.

MWF leaders rally the SI troops

Methodist Women's Fellowship (MWF) national president Vaotane Saleupolu and treasurer Leu Pupulu received some top of the south hospitality in April.

They arrived in Blenheim by train after visiting the Canterbury MWF district. In Marlborough they were hosted by the Wesley MWF and spoke to their members the next day.

From there they travelled to Murchison for the annual MWF rally that was attended by Nelson, Marlborough and West Coast members.

At the conclusion of the rally Vaotane and Leu were brought to Nelson and hosted by the

Stoke MWF.

Stoke MWF spokesperson Alison Kane says the rally was very successful and was a good opportunity for the president and treasurer to meet the membership and encourage them in their local church and community activities.

MWF is engaged in a nationwide fundraising project called Supporting Youth in New Zealand which has an overseas component, Young People in Nicaragua. It is a joint project with the Association of Presbyterian Women.



MWF officers drop in on SI districts: back row (from left) Vaotane Saleupolu and Alison Kane; front row Betty Batchelor, Charlotte Williams, Valerie Knight and Leu Pupulu.

Oomph Required

St Paul's Co-operating Parish, Whangarei, is looking for a full-time person for ministry in the parish and community.

Step out in faith
with us to make a difference in our wider community.

Contact Rev. Peter Dunn, dunnznorth@xtra.co.nz
Applications close 30 June 2010.

Anniversary chance to celebrate cultural, religious teamwork



Hone Wetere Church, Taumutu has a long history of cooperation between people of different cultures and faiths.

Hone Wetere Church sits on the shore of Lake Ellesmere. It is not a large building but it embodies the best traditions of cooperation between Maori and Pakeha and between different Christian denominations.

The church is close to Ngati Moki marae in the rural community of Taumutu. The community's Christian roots go back to the early Maori Wesleyan evangelist Tawao, who brought the gospel to the area before European missionaries arrived.

On May 1st and 2nd local people and Methodist Church leaders gathered to mark the 125th anniversary of Hone Wetere Church. (Hone Wetere is the Maori pronunciation of John Wesley). On hand were Methodist president and vice president Rev Alan Upton and Lana Lazarus as well as Taha Maori tumuaki Rev Diana Tana.

The weekend included a welcoming powhiri, a bus trip to local sites of historical interest, a bicultural workshop, and an evening gathering where people told stories of their connections to Taumutu. On Sunday there was a church service and, of course, on both days there were many cups of tea, lots of food, and plenty of hospitality.

The event itself was organised by a committee made up of people from the Ngati Moki marae and from the Ellesmere Cooperating Parish. Key individuals on the committee included convenor Garth Cant, kaumatua Denise Streat and Rosaline Brown, and Rev Paul Eden.

Rosaline is a member of the Ellesmere Historical Society and she prepared a history of the church for the occasion.

She says an important figure in developing the church was Ngai Tahu leader and MP HK Taiaroa. He and his family moved to Taumutu in the late 1870s. He was one of the group that selected the site for church and raised the £400 required to build it from local Maori and Pakeha.

"The Maori communities at Kaiapoi and Little River were supportive as were the Pakeha communities at Sedgemere and

Lakeside. Architect TS Lambert designed the church, and the German carpenter Herman Kamura was the builder. The church was completed in 1885 and the opening service was held on Easter Tuesday.

"Over the years there were close relations between the Anglicans at Sedgemere and the Methodists at Taumutu. Others joined in to lead worship over the decades, in particular, Presbyterians and the Salvation Army," Rosaline says.

Hone Wetere Church is now owned and maintained by Ngati Moki marae in cooperation with Ellesmere Cooperating Parish.

The church is occasionally used for weddings, and services are held at Christmas and on the last Sunday of January. These are occasions when people who have left Taumutu to live in other parts of Canterbury and further afield return.

A trust made up of representatives of the marae looks after the church building. Recently they re-oiled the building and gave it a new Coloursteel roof approved by the Historic Places Trust.

Lana and Alan preached a sermon together during the Sunday worship service. They say their experience is that community spirit at Taumutu is very strong, as is the sense of sharing between Maori and Pakeha.

"The iwi of Taumutu have real mission of hospitality. I felt it is a very welcoming community and a very peaceful place," Alan says.

Ellesmere Co-operating Parish minister Rev Paul Eden says preparing for the 125 anniversary heightened the partnership between the parish and the marae.

"The journey of preparation for the celebrations was one of personal growth for me as I learned more about how Maori and Pakeha have different cultural starting points, but with perseverance and mutual kindness can achieve greater understanding," Paul says.

"The outcome was a great time of celebrating the history of the church, enjoying the richness of two people working together with the blessing of God, and a very real hope for the future."

Budget has negatives and positives – NZCCSS

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) is concerned with the increasing disparity between the worst-off and the best-off within New Zealand society.

NZCCSS president Shaun Robinson says New Zealand has always prided itself on being an egalitarian nation but for the last 20 years the differences between poor and rich New Zealanders has grown and grown.

"We know from international comparisons that in developed countries more equal societies almost always have happier and healthier citizens with fewer prisons and better support services. This is what we should be striving for."

"The major changes in taxation, particularly the increase in GST, will still fall heaviest on those least able to bear it. While we acknowledge that the reduction

in tax rates for middle and lower income earners was slightly more than expected this will not make a significant impact on the disparities that have become a feature of our society," Shaun says.

"This restructuring of our taxation system has been a wasted opportunity to redress the balance and begin to return New Zealand to its traditional values of equality and a fair go for all."

NZCCSS executive officer Trevor McGlinchey is more positive about the Community Response Model outlined in the budget as a way to boost social service agencies. He says it is a dramatic shift toward working with communities to help people address their own issues.

"Moving from a 'Wellington knows best' model to one that empowers communities to work together to find solutions that work for them is exciting

and challenging.

"While we will be keeping a close eye on the roll out of this way of working, it is in line with recommendations made by the Community and Voluntary Sector Advisory Group formed by Minister Bennett in the run up to the Budget.

"NZCCSS was represented on this Advisory Group and is pleased the Community Response Model reflects many of the Group's recommendations."

Trevor says some new Budget programmes, such as Whanau Ora and the Whare Oranga Ake initiative to successfully reintegrate prisoners into their communities, are excellent.

NZCCSS has concerns over potential cuts to some of the funds its members use to support families and communities to be more resilient.



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Spong's faith

To the editor,

I am concerned at aspects of the review of John Spong's book, *Eternal Life: A New Vision* in the April edition of *Touchstone*. Of course, people disagree with Spong's biblical and theological positions, and Alan K Webster clearly does that.

My concern, however, is at the suggestions that Spong might have lost his faith but "does not have the intellectual courage to admit it". Having known Bishop Spong for some years, I can assure *Touchstone* readers that he definitely has not lost his faith. In fact, his intellectual courage is precisely in seeking to explore the biblical

foundations of his faith in the light of good contemporary scholarship.

What is important is that many have been able to remain people of faith and stay part of the Christian community because of Spong's writing.

I hope people of differing theological perspectives can talk about those differences without assuming that someone whose theology is different from mine, and with whom I disagree, thereby shows they have "lost their faith". Our church needs to respect everyone's faith, even when we dislike or disagree with their beliefs.

John Salmon, Auckland

Spong putdown inappropriate

To the editor,

I haven't read John Spong's book, 'Eternal Life: A New Vision' but I did read the review by Alan Webster in the April edition of *Touchstone*. Like Alan I'm evangelical and I'm also progressive so I've read some of Spong's writing.

I corresponded with Spong after he wrote he had written his last book. I told him that it was evident in some chapters that he still had a few books left in him and encouraged him to write them. He is an extremely well read man who reads his Bible very carefully, is very humble and prayerful, perhaps a side to the man that isn't well known.

I remember Alan Webster too as the Baptist-trained pastor at Epsom Baptist Church and Green Bay Community Church. I enjoyed meals at Alan's and enjoyed his family's company on several occasions. Alan is a loving, fun man, with a great capacity for caring.

I appreciated his review as a response to Spong's book, until near the end when I said to myself, 'Oops, a bit much ego showing here, Alan'. Alan wrote, "Spong offers nothing of value...nothing of hope." And later, "Spong's god is too small and too human... a reflection of his own vision and lack of it."

So I thought I'd let Spong answer for himself realising he has said that fundamentalists don't really know their own Bible. They put worshipping

the Bible literally ahead of worshipping in truth and understanding.

Spong refers to the crucifixion in Mark as, "not historical memory at all, but are rather liturgical interpretations. The narrative reveals that they were drawn not from the memory of eye witnesses but from the scriptures of the Jewish people, primarily from Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53."

Spong's Jewish friends back him up on this point. Spong says it may come as "a shattering insight to those who have literalised" the Easter story.

The point Spong has made is that it's about insight. We have Spong's insight and Alan's insight. Thank you to both.

But it is really inappropriate to put down another's insight when Jesus himself said how frustrating it was for him that even at the end of his ministry his disciples still didn't understand his teaching. Even then he could still show them compassion and respect.

Regarding the 'too small and too human comment', Alan, don't forget the incarnation is about the fully human Jesus inclusive of transcendence and immanence. This seems to me to be where Spong comes from: a glorious experience and expression that isn't for squabbling over.

Bruce Tasker, Mt Albert

Spong in this reader's trolley

To the editor,

I write in response to Alan Webster's review of Bishop John Spong's latest book in the April edition of *Touchstone*:

In the first instance I was rather disturbed until I realized that this review by Alan was indeed severe but no more or less than one would expect from the head of the Evangelical Network.

Needless to say, I don't agree with Alan's comments. With his writings John Spong has helped many believers and non believers around the world, including myself, move towards a much more liberal and realistic understanding of the Bible. He couples this with an attitude of unconditional tolerance along with compassion towards our fellow human beings.

If any one is concerned about their own disquiet by these recent words of criticism of Spong, then I suggest that they should pause for a moment and consider, for example, what Professor Lloyd Geering has had to contend with over several decades. This could likewise be said of several other 20th century biblical scholars and in particular those members of the Jesus Seminar.

In my view Christianity, since its foundation,

has been like a 'supermarket' of options. Just think of the denominations that have evolved over the last millennium and since the 15th century --- most offering the answer to Salvation by way of their own particular brand.

When all is said and done, I have personally come to a compromise over the years. I have tried to listen with interest and respect to the many options on offer but I have come to my own conclusions and, hopefully, some measure of peace of mind.

One can't go far wrong trying to adhere to the Golden Rule while accepting that God is around us in a multiplicity of ways both in natural beauty and in human friendships providing example and guidance as appropriate.

Jesus, reputedly the Son of God, did set us an example and marked out a path to follow during his short ministry on earth.

Unfortunately it seems, some have made the mistake of trying to analyze and define who or what God is. That, to my mind, is to demean the whole reality of life and the faith in a God that so many true believers maintain as the great Mystery of our world and universe.

G Frank Lowry, New Plymouth



Jeff says the 'S' word in church.



FROM THE BACKYARD

A lot of twittering

Gillian Watkin

No sooner had I finished writing about water in the last issue of Touchstone than the whole world seemed to be talking water. In my local research I had found any number of paths to think along: coastal property threatened by sea, murky rivers, and restoration of wetlands to name three.

There were lead articles in the *Listener* on the local front and *National Geographic* internationally. With modern media practice in the interconnected world we inhabit ideas have observable seasons.

This is a superficial connection. A matter of concern, usually called an 'issue', comes along and suddenly it's everywhere and then just as quickly we move on the next thing. The questions around water are anything but superficial. They and natural observable seasons, particularly of weather, are important in our lives.

In our part of the world a fine spell of beautiful autumn weather perfect for the grape harvest has finally been punctuated by rain. Comedian Billy Connolly once said "There is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing." How often we curse the rain automatically ignoring its benefits.

As the sun came out there was a clear reminder of that real connectedness of all things.

The backyard was packed; birds everywhere, queuing up for places, trees were as busy as airports. All the birds were in a twitter – of the bird kind, not short text conversation. Long and energised discussions could

be heard in every tree.

The ground is always kept for eating and bathing. We feed the birds a cupful of seed once a day, broadcast onto the lawn. We have a bird bath, an old concrete block on its side with a large plastic plant saucer on top. It is extremely functional and always in use. Watching a bird in a bird bath is a lesson in innocence and joy.

We have a good bird population in our garden. We have spotted 15 different species, and in spring the hedges will be full of little cheeps and warbles as the blackbirds and thrushes go about their business of bringing up their young. When the park nearby is busy the doves appear for respite care. After recent rains there was a celebration of refreshment.

Jesus counters the fear and doubts of his followers by reminding them of the care of God for the great and the small. He showed them how to find lessons in life from the lilies of the field, the sky and the sparrows. He showed them that the divine creativity of God was all around.

The wisest of mystics knew of the great canvas set before humanity, available to all who slow down and watch. They remind us to look lightly on that great web of ideas ('worldly business' Julian of Norwich called it) that now comes to us in sound bites and changes as soon as the next big event takes place.

Whatever our ancestry we are all descended from people who could read the natural world like a book. May be it is time to rekindle that art.

In the flow of God's tide

Rev Alan Upson

Thanks for the messages of condolence. My step-father, Jack Roberts, lived a good 93 years in the Papatara valley. He was a lay preacher in the Bombay/Tuakau/Ararimu Circuit, and Methodist from start to finish. My head says that latterly his quality of life was dwindling. My heart and those of family and friends at his funeral knew him as a gentle, good man who lived his faith in a loving way.



Rev Alalafaga Palelei was born in Samoa in 1943. Alalafaga trained in New Zealand and was ordained in 1999. Last year his ministry at Manurewa was extended to include the Papanui Samoan congregation. Alalafaga died 'in office' – not at his desk but while still in active ministry. He was a much loved and respected man, especially to Kueni and family.

The 125th Anniversary of the Hone

Wetere church (May 1st and 2nd), near the entrance of Lake Ellesmere is already sliding into the past. The associated marae and Ngati Moki people at Taumutu were always known for their hospitality. The eels of Ellesmere, fed Maori travelling along the coast long before the whalers and first settlers of European history. Smoked, the eel delicacy delighted the palate of those seated for dinner at the marae on Sunday.

One kuia told Vice-President Lana and I that where we sat was once under water, a part of an extensive wetlands at the lake edge. The repainted settler church was packed, the overflow congregation enjoying the warm sun and loud speaker at the open end of the tent by the church. Overall, it was a memorable and hospitable celebration.

The 120th birthday dinner of Dunedin

Methodist Mission and Parish was equally enjoyable. Following a morning of hospitality and significant talks at Otakou Marae, the evening celebration took place in the Mornington church. People feasted at tables entertained by the lively Tongan Youth Group and the choir supporting Rev Stuart Grant's song, "Where is my wandering boy?" which harked back to early colonial days and teenage problem drinking.

Mission director Laura Black had three of the Mission staff, Virginia Bridgman, Charles Pearce and Pam Tomkins, lead a fun quiz that also got home the message, 'Enough support and challenge for you to risk a better future'. Mayor Peter Chin spoke of being brought up in a Chinese laundry and later fish and chip shop next to the Octagon Methodists.

The Mission is alive and well, with a building programme for both Mission and South Dunedin congregation that replaces the topsy like complex and earthquake-vulnerable church.

With Wesley Day now past, Jesus Day starts fresh every morning for you and I, just as it did for John Wesley. Lose sight of that and we become a preservation society struggling to keep alive the relics of a church institution. That's hard labour!

Shirley Murray wrote, 'God is alive and the universe must celebrate!' (AA15). Our efforts are multiplied many times over by God's Spirit when we join that celebration as Wesley did. So join the flow and don't swim against God's tide. But beware. The Spirit may take you away out into the sunshine of open fields, or to be a candle in dark, dank prisons, or a glimmer of hope in the homes of church and un-churched – the kind of places where Wesley's ministry flourished.

The spirit of Pentecost that we celebrated concurrently with Wesley Day will always be where we will find the church of the future. May Christ's peace and the Spirit's leading be with each of you.

UCANZ should push for more CVs

To the editor,

The responses you report to my piece 'CVs Be Warned' in the May Touchstone are fascinating.

I welcome David Bush's affirmation that the Waimakariri Shared Ministry (WSM) and North Avon Crossway Parish are Cooperative Ventures (CVs).

More concerning is David's claim that some Joint Regional Committees (JRCs) "meddle in the affairs of partner churches". This suggests that JRCs and indeed the secretariat of Uniting Congregations in Aotearoa-New Zealand (UCANZ) exist primarily to facilitate the interests of the Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian etc partner churches.

I see it quite differently. UCANZ and JRCs primarily exist to serve and promote CVs.

Also worrying is the suggestion that there's nothing to worry about; that what is occurring are new forms of church cooperation in mission; "a diversity of solutions based on local contexts" and "looking for ways to work with other churches that are more flexible."

All this is very true but it's not occurring because of national church encouragement but because local churches and communities are determined it will occur. For national church leaders to suggest that this is being driven by partner churches is totally misleading.

Let UCANZ be new denomination

To the editor,

As a minister who has served in two Uniting Parishes, I have experienced the frustrations of having to relate to different partner churches, and, despite what is said, the partner churches are drifting further apart.

I thought "Yes!" to what Geraldine Coates wrote in the May Touchstone. She challenged the partner churches to put their property where their mouths are and she wrote that the property of Union Parishes should be vested in UCANZ.

Of course that would create a new denomination, and I suppose many in the hierarchy of UCANZ say they don't want that because they still have their prime allegiance to the partner churches.

Like lots of old guys, I still get asked to take services when things get desperate in one of the local parishes, and so I have recently been giving thought to that lectionary passage in John, where John has Jesus saying that he prays that all his followers will be one.

Disunity is one of the prime reasons churches struggle to survive. One reason is that a church has to be able to do more than just run services and keep the building up to scratch.

To make an impact on the local community it needs enough resources to run events and provide what is needed, and do so to a high standard. Too many of our parishes are trapped in a state of inexorable decline where they have enough personal and financial resources to keep the show on the road but not enough to truly engage with their community.

Just as CVs are being formed more by local and regional initiatives, so CVs and JRCs now need to organise a more solid national defence against the meddling of national partner churches that I detailed in CVs Be Warned.

For this to occur, UCANZ must take a stronger position with partner churches in the development of CVs.

What's required are more CVs not less. I look to the day when the number of CVs is so great that separate partner churches will be an anachronism!

In this respect, I see the future of Methodism lying more as a movement or distinctive emphasis within a wider ecumenism, than as a stand-alone denomination. Already, approximately 50 percent of Methodist parishes are CVs.

Jesus is reported as saying, "that unless a seed falls in the ground and dies it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." (John 12:24).

The dying to denominationalism and rising to a greater reality is not an outdated concept of the 1970s but the contemporary movement of God's Spirit today.

Roll on this resurrection.

Roll on this grass roots movement,

Roll on the greater unity of the church!

Brian Turner, Waimakariri

Tabaka reunion

To the editor,

A small committee in Hamilton is planning a reunion of those who worked on the construction of the Tabaka Rural (formerly Youth) Training Centre in the Solomon Islands in 1991-92.

We do not have a complete

list of those involved or of current addresses and would appreciate hearing from any who have not yet been informed of the reunion.

I may be contacted at 216c Hukanui Road, Hamilton. Ph 07 853 7595 or email trevor.barbara@xtra.co.nz

Trevor Bennett, Hamilton

Waihopi Christians misguided

To the editor,

I write in response to Jim Consedine's article in the May Touchstone.

The trio involved in the vandalism at Waihopi that has cost us taxpayers did not have a 'claim of right' as the judge pointed out.

As a practising Christian, I too have sincere beliefs but if everybody in this country were to act outside the law because of their beliefs, we would have anarchy and terrorism.

In my view, this case was

unjustifiably hyped by misguided Christians. The Bible, particularly the Old Testament, and history show us that peace comes at a price. We have freedom of expression here only because men and women, in our case particularly Americans, have given their lives against tyrants and terrorists.

Make no mistake, if the latter are ever to get their hands on nuclear weapons, we shall have to pray for the Lord's imminent return.

E Bate, Helensville

Spy base verdict queried

To the editor,

I believe Jim Consedine's glowing report of the 'spy base' trial in the May edition of Touchstone warrants some comment.

It is important to note that the judge allowed a very narrow line for the defendants to make their case; namely, that although they had no legal rights for their actions, they sincerely believed that they did. Since when has any illegal or criminal act been sanctioned (in this case, almost sanctified in the article) because of the sincerity of the perpetrators? I'm reminded of the old proverb – 'The road to hell is paved with good intentions'.

Although the jury's verdict was a quite remarkable result, to many people it would be astounding, and could by extension, be quite dangerous. Just where, and by whom, are the lines to be drawn sanctioning damaging actions by those with sincerely held beliefs? The overseas suicide bombers demonstrate their sincerity (or fanaticism according to one's point of view) by blowing themselves up, along with their perceived enemies or targets, and cannot be taken to court. They too, as with

the trial trio, have plenty of religious supporters.

The defendants drew an imaginative, awfully long bow to make the political connections and claims that they did. Obviously they were sufficiently effective to persuade the jury of their sincerity. They hardly demonstrated their peacefulness with the damage they caused. Their fellow citizens, most of whom probably do not support them, will pay for repairing it (and that is ignoring court costs).

They certainly do not appear to have the means to make restitution, and I doubt that their protest will make one iota of difference to government policy; particularly in light of Helen Clark's Labour government's refusal to change anything. In earlier years Helen was not known for her pro-American policies but she did commit NZ forces to Afghanistan. The jury's decision could also be construed as a judgment on government policy, which was hardly its role.

It will be interesting to see whether an appeal against the verdict is lodged, and if so, the outcome.

David M. Musker, Waitara

Norman Wilkins, Petone

Price of unity

To the editor,
I found Rodney Macann's observations about church unity in the May issue of Touchstone both encouraging and depressing.

Encouraging because the sense of unity and cooperation he talks of should only be a good thing. Depressing because there is a price to pay for that unity and I'm not sure that the churches are facing up to the reality of the situation.

If our so-called unity is bought at the price of a retreat into conservative theology as Rodney suggests, then we are in a sorry state indeed. It may well be that the mainstream visible churches are happily interacting within a conservative framework but to describe liberal Christianity as "small aging communities with few spiritual children" could not be further from the mark.

There is a whole world of liberal or progressive Christianity out there amongst all the mainstream denominations which is vital and relevant. It may not be highly visible within

traditional church structures but in the eyes of its members it holds the secret of Christianity's continued place in a constantly changing world.

Within the Methodist Connexion we have The Liberal Society, an informal grouping of people linked by an email network. With more than 100 participants it could hardly be described as a group that has "lost its way".

On the contrary, members have said how this sharing environment has enabled them to stay with integrity in a church that at times seems to have indeed lost its way.

The recent Common Dreams conference in Melbourne, which I believe was a sell-out event, is a clear indication that liberal/progressive Christianity needs to be taken very seriously indeed.

It's difficult to see how Rodney can reconcile his approving comments about "the important area of exploring theological frameworks for unity" and his dismissive consignment of liberal Christianity to irrelevance.

Eric Laurenson, Auckland

Christian is as Christian teaches

To the editor,

I was interested in the article in the May "Touchstone" about Christian Education.

I have been a Christian all my life and became a qualified primary school teacher in September 1954, because I believed this was what God wanted me to do.

I arrived in New Zealand at the end of 1960 and taught five to seven year old children in many state primary schools, including Kawhia, Homai and Papakura before I married in 1970.

After that I stayed home and brought up my children though occasionally I did some relieving, in the Henderson-Te Atatu area.

For the last eight years before I retired in 1996, I taught at Mangere Primary School, one of my most enjoyable teaching times.

I feel that I always created a Christian atmosphere in my classroom and helped the children to understand Christianity and especially to learn about Jesus.

At Christmas and Easter I did extra things including a nativity play to make sure the children knew what was being celebrated.

There must be many Christian teachers in New Zealand state schools as well as the integrated schools. No one needs permission from the Ministry of Education to be a Christian. They can easily maintain and even exceed the standards set.

Everyone teaches the curriculum from their own perspective whatever they believe.

Elsie Jones, Mount Maunganui

Inequality root of all evil

The social problems that bedevil our lives and regularly hit the headlines can now be seen in a new light thanks to two British researchers, Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett.

Their book 'The Spirit Level - Why Equality is Better for Everyone' provides hard evidence to show that almost everything – from life expectancy, addiction, mental illness, obesity, violence to illiteracy – is affected not by how wealthy a society is, but how equal it is.

Societies with a bigger gap between rich and poor are bad for everyone, including the well-off. The authors don't say we're all equal or preach any particular political solution. Rather they seek to get us all talking about

what we can do with these new insights.

Why do the Brits mistrust people more than the Japanese? Why do the Americans have higher rates of teenage pregnancies than the French? Why does NZ have such high rates of violence against small children? The answer in each case: inequality.

This book gives grounds for a better approach to human organisation and is important reading for all of us. Christians will quickly be attracted to the theory and implications. The Spirit Level really is timely and a basis for a monumental social and political evolution. The authors' website is www.equalitytrust.org.uk.

Roger Hey, Tauranga

Ted Grounds remembered with thanks

To the editor,

Pilgrim Productions has noted the recent passing of the Rev Ted Grounds and thought your readers might be interested to know about the single but critical, contribution he made to this society.

In 1977 I secured permission from Aldersgate Productions in London to mount in New Zealand an amateur production of the musical on the life of John Wesley, 'Ride! Ride!'. Obtaining the performing rights had been a challenge but once secured I sought out the current chairman of the Auckland Methodist synod for assistance in mounting a worthy production. That chairman was the Rev Ted Grounds.

Ted Grounds responded to the approach by nominating two ministers from the synod to help with the venture. The nominees were the Rev Stanley Goudge, who later became the chairman of Pilgrim Productions for its first 10 years and the Rev Bill Chessum, musician extraordinaire, who became musical director

for Ride! Ride! and for the society for a subsequent 25 years.

Pilgrim Productions is still going strong and is now in its 32nd year. When competing last year against 17 other Auckland theatre groups, we received seven theatre excellence awards (including best production for 2009) for our most recent production of '84 Charing Cross Road'.

Without the interest and astute selection of personnel by Ted Grounds we may never even have begun this theatre company. We remember him therefore with grateful thanks.

Marion Hines, Chairperson, Pilgrim Productions, Auckland.

Editor's note: Rev Ted Grounds passed away on April 19th, two days after his 90th birthday. As its oldest ordained member, Ted was the 'father' of the Methodist Church of NZ. This honour now passes to Rev Trevor Shepherd, who was profiled in last month's Touchstone.

Covenant opens new conversations

To the editor,

Laurie Barber's letter (Touchstone, May) is to be welcomed. Both the Anglican and Methodist Churches are assembling teams to take the conversation beyond the signing of the Covenant.

The Covenant represents a milestone for Anglicans and Methodists and provides a relationship within which the issues Laurie mentions can be

discussed candidly.

In the meantime collaboration in worship and witness at local and regional levels proceeds and is encouraged. It seems that none of the few outstanding theological questions can be resolved easily.

*Terry Wall, Convenor Methodist Faith and Order Committee
John Roberts, Secretary Methodist Mission and Ecumenical*

MMN ponders inner city ministry

To the editor,

Methodist Mission Northern's lease of the Aotea Chapel site at 370 Queen St, in Auckland's CBD, expires at the end of July. While this is a time of uncertainty for the chapel's congregation, it is also an ideal opportunity to consider what a ministry to the inner city might look like in the future – especially with the changing nature of Auckland as a super city.

The MMN's board wants to be certain that it makes the right decision, not just for now, but for the future. Its final decision will take into account the wishes of the congregation, the future goals and financial costs. MMN and the Auckland Synod superintendent are working with the congregation and exploring different proposals. The mission has made several

possible locations available as short-term worship sites while all parties consider the long-term mission and congregation opportunities.

The congregation's work group and MMN's property managers have already visited several prospective locations. The congregation decided that the only suitable site was a property at 191 Queen St, currently used by Qantas and previously the location of the Stock Exchange. While this was the congregation's preferred site, the MMN board could not support it as a viable option.

The board and the congregation ask for the prayerful support of the Connexion as more decisions are made.

John Murray, MMN Superintendent.

Aotea Chapel's future deeply concerning

To the editor,

Many of your readers will know that in 2008 Methodist Mission Northern (MMN) sold four buildings in Queens Street, Auckland including Aotea Chapel.

Before the sale Chapel members were promised that the Chapel or a place for its congregation would be allowed for within the new complex. However, like so many promises, this was not kept by the new owner. (This was before the downturn in the economy.)

The buildings were sold, the Chapel community was told to vacate by July 2010.

For the past two years, our congregation has continued to worship and be a base for a wide variety of people, including foreign students, street people, and tourists as well as a very diverse congregation. Large youth groups of 75 to 100 people have met monthly in the Chapel in the last year on a Sunday evening.

Under the able leadership of Rev Tony Franklin, our congregational work group has met regularly and looked at many properties, one of these on Queen Street being a possibility.

On Sunday May 2nd, MMN superintendent Rev John Murray read a two page statement during morning worship about the future of the ministry of Aotea Chapel and MMN.

With the statement, the Board rejected our proposal as not being viable without explaining why. Understandably, many people were upset, as we are now faced with being homeless as of this July.

Following the service, our new synod superintendent Rev Norman Brookes looked after the somewhat shattered congregation. We are very grateful to him for really listening to us, for hearing our on-going concerns, and understanding our present situation.

After May 2nd people phoned me with further questions. These include:

What protection does the church give to a congregation when its building

is sold?

Has the MMN Board the right to sell the church from under us and retain the money?

Was this done with the full knowledge of a) synod and b) Conference in 2007 or they told, as we were after the event?

Concerning our future the congregation strongly feels there should be a Methodist presence on Queen Street in a central place.

The MMN superintendent talked about word and deed but the congregation feels that the importance of the word is being overlooked. However, we have not given up hope that we may yet find a suitable venue to carry out a ministry in Queen Street.

Many have expressed huge concern regarding Rev Tony Franklin's future. He has been placed in a terrible situation. We could even lose this gifted man completely.

If we are not allowed to keep Tony, will there be another presbyter for us?

In the mists of all this schemozzle what matters most to everyone is the lack of sensitivity on the part of the Board.

Many members of the Aotea Chapel have supported MMN in the past, some for decades. Newcomers too have been generous with money, time, talents and other gifts, including those who have worked long hours voluntarily with the Mission property. Two of the congregation were 'friends at court'.

While these people have never looked for rewards, it would be good if the Board could show some basic courtesy towards them and others who have help keep MMN afloat in the past.

Although the congregation has been deeply hurt by these events, it wants the best possible outcome for itself, the Board, and our mission on Queen Street.

What will happen if the Christian base to MMN is removed? We all know the story about the house built on sand and the house built on rock.

Edna Garner, Auckland

Trust to keep rethinking crime and punishment

The founders of Rethinking Crime and Punishment project say they have decided to extend its life beyond its original three years because of the government's decision to introduce the 'three strikes' legislation along with other harsh measures, such as double bunking, and increased lockdowns of prisoners.



Kim Workman

The aim of Rethinking Crime and Punishment is to raise the level of public debate about the use of prison and alternative forms of punishment in New Zealand.

Director Kim Workman says 'Rethinking' has established a reputation as a thoughtful and credible participant on criminal justice issues and now wants to make a greater impact in the public arena.

A successful long term criminal justice strategy must introduce policies and programmes that are based on sound evidence, represent value for money, and actually work, Kim says. Providing the community with information about those choices is a priority.

"The feedback we've had from the judiciary, from sympathetic

parliamentarians, from public policy advisers, and service providers was that we in no account should close shop.

"We recently formed an independent charitable trust to more actively address crime and justice. It is named the Robson Hanan Trust after John Robson, and Ralph Hanan, the two great justice reformers who between 1960 and 1970, who introduced major reform to the criminal justice system."

Kim says the Robson Hanan Trust will seek long term changes to make the criminal justice system more effective. It wants to see a system that doesn't rely only on punishment and community control but provides support for both offenders and victims, reparation, reconciliation, transformation; and effective reintegration into the community.

The focus of the trust will be on public education and research.

Russell Marshall will chair the Trust's board of directors. Sir Paul Reeves, Sir Eddie Durie, former bishop of Waiapu Peter Bluck, Major Campbell Roberts, Sam Chapman, Celia Lashlie, Charles

Waldegrave and Sharron Cole are amongst the 19 directors.

"The Robson Hanan Trust is keen to support initiatives that will reduce reoffending and social harm such as the Drivers of Crime strategy, Whanau Ora, and ongoing work on the issues of child abuse and family violence."

There is growing concern at the development of a criminal justice system where

- Offenders with serious mental illness, drug and alcohol dependency, or who have been the victims of sexual abuse are sentenced to prison without any effort to deal with the underlying cause;

- The social, economic and political interventions necessary to prevent crime are being ignored, in favour of 'quick fix' imprisonment;

- Sentencing is not proportional to the crime, and whanau and community are excluded from participation in transformational or reintegrative initiatives;

- Criminal justice and sentencing are designed to avoid any risk, and directed toward the maximum use of custody, and maximum deprivation of liberty;

- Criminal justice policy favours the crimes of the powerful, against those offenders who are the least powerful within the community.

"We require a cohesive long term criminal justice strategy, in which the needs and rights of all participants are carefully guarded, and community peace is the ultimate goal," Kim says.

Over the next six months, the Trust will reshape its website so that it becomes a criminal justice information clearinghouse.

"The idea is that if you want to consider carefully all the evidence about, say, youth imprisonment, the site will provide a range of research papers and information, to help people understand what the issues are.

"We will employ a research officer so we can engage more actively with the media, and prepare independent policy and research papers to inform the public and be available to a wide range of stakeholders."

We will also focus on Maori and the criminal justice system. We need to do far more research and develop a holistic approach to address the extent to which Maori are involved in crime as perpetrators and as victims, Kim says.

For more information visit www.rethinking.org.nz or email director@rethinking.org.nz.

Churches urged to target prisoner rehabilitation

By Cory Miller

Prison Fellowship New Zealand (PFNZ) is expanding its services through the launch of its new Target Communities initiative, which will work together with churches to support prisoners and reduce their risk of re-offending.

National director of PFNZ Robin Gunston says his service wants to see 800 communities supporting some 1000 prisoners per year by 2020.

"We aim to start making a dent in the number of people going back through the revolving door," he says.

Robin estimates only 300 to 400 churches are involved in some aspects of prison work across the country.

"So what about the other 8600 churches? Do they not care, or do they not know of the need?"

"We are looking at some 10,600

prisoners being behind bars by 2010 according to Government projections, with a possible 12,500 by 2020 unless we find ways of getting these numbers down."

Robin says through this new initiative PFNZ wants to provide places where prisoners feel welcome, where they are not judged for their failings and are given the opportunity to start afresh.

"A Target Community is a prepared community with the heart to minister to both those in prison and to those being released from prison."

He says every released person will gain a much needed circle of support from within the community.

Robin says it is important for these prisoners to have a lot of people around them who are willing to hold them accountable for their actions.

See Page 16

Peace Centre goes from strength to strength

By Marie Sherry

The new National Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Otago is receiving international attention after less than two years of operation.

Work on developing the centre began several years ago, with its official launch taking place in October 2007.

Director Professor Kevin Clements says the centre is progressing extremely well and receiving a lot of interest from students throughout New Zealand and the world.

"We're constantly fielding inquiries from people all over the world," he says.

"People are interested in studying in New Zealand. They are interested in New Zealand and why it ranks as a peaceful country. I think there's a natural interest in trying to understand if we're really as peaceful as we say we are."

The centre is the first in New Zealand to combine global cross-disciplinary expertise on the issues of development, peace building and conflict transformation. It offers postgraduate

programs at the masters and PhD levels, and conducts high-level research on the causes of violent conflict and conditions for sustainable peace. It provides training, evaluation expertise, and expert advice to government and non-governmental organisations engaged in peace building and humanitarian intervention. It is a theory, research and practice centre, located within the Division of Humanities.

Dr Heather Devere is due to take up a position as director of practice in July, while 28 research associates have been appointed to the Centre. These are scholars from all around the world who have agreed to help develop the centre.

Two post-doctoral fellows arrived at the Centre late in 2009: Dr Karen Brouneus' research is focused on reconciliation and transitional justice processes after civil war, and the psychological aspects of these processes.

See Page 16



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Prince Devanandan with former Trinity Methodist Church Pakuranga parishioner Christopher Chan in front of the Petronas Towers skyscrapers in Kuala Lumpur.



Diana Tana (left) and women from different parts of Asia gave the report by the Women's Group.



Kiwi delegates to CCA (from left) Rev Diana Tana, Alison O Grady, Rev Ron O'Grady, Rev Pamela Tankersley, and Rev Prince Devanandan.

Christian Conference of Asia strives for unity, justice

Conflict between states in Korea and Kashmir, human rights abuses, and the ravages of globalisation are among the issues Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) will give priority as it seeks to build communities of peace.

In April the CCA held its 13th General Assembly in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. CCA holds Assembly every five years to celebrate the unity of the Church in Asia and set its general direction.

Representatives of several New Zealand churches took part in the Assembly and the pre-Assembly forums that present issues for the full Assembly to consider. Several NZers were appointed to the committees that will carry on the work of the CCA between Assemblies.

Rev Diana Tana and Rev Prince Devanandan represented the Methodist Church of NZ at the Assembly. Prince also took part in the pre assembly session on people's forum.

In their report on the Assembly Diana and Prince say it was an honour and pleasure to be part of the life of CCA. They believe the Methodist Church has an important role in helping CCA achieve more gender equality and better decision making.

They report that the worship, Bible studies, lectures and discussions at Assembly "informed us and highlighted at times the ignorance and lack of interest many people in Aotearoa New Zealand's mainline churches have regarding the numerous burning issues in Asia."

Prince says among the issues the people's forum discussed was the impact tourism has on the

people, economies and ecologies of the region. While, tourism is touted as an economic boon that creates jobs, the CCA says the net effect is negative. Asians, particularly women, are exploited as cheap labour, and hotels and resorts are often built on land taken unfairly from local people.

The people's forum also examined critical issues in several countries. These included Indian churches' peace initiatives in Kashmir, human rights violations in the Philippines, and initiatives to reunify South and North Korea.

"We heard personal testimony from several people including Pastor Berlin Guerrero of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines who was abducted, tortured and detained by government-sponsored militant groups.

"The discussions on Korea and Kashmir were very important because both conflicts involve states with nuclear weapons. Korea is of interest to the ecumenical movement because in three years the World Council of Churches will hold its own general assembly in Pusan, South Korea," Prince says.

Delegates to the people's forum also discussed the tendency for the ecumenical movement to become an empire in its own right rather than the voice of the people at the grassroots.

"There is a concern that the CCA has become technobureaucratic. The people's forum called upon the CCA to find ways and means to work with the oppressed, the excluded, and the people victimised by globalisation," Prince says.

HIV Aids, domestic violence, climate justice, and the trafficking

of women and children are other concerns that the pre-conference forums brought to the general assembly.

Diana says the forum on women addressed the issues facing women both in society and in the Church.

Among the proposals the forum brought to Assembly was that the CCA and its member churches should develop and implement sexual harassment policies and initiatives to give women better representation.

Diana says another important report came from the forum for indigenous people and minorities. Most of the world's indigenous people live in Asia. They are exposed to many forces including displacement, militarization, colonization, injustice, humiliation, and loss of land.

"The forum challenged the CCA and its members to stand in solidarity with indigenous people and minorities, initiate programmes to address their issues, and network with faith based organizations on these issues," Diana says.

Prince and Diana say one of the issues CCA Assembly addressed is the decline of ecumenism in Asia. Aotearoa-New Zealand was identified as a notable case in this regard.

In his report the out-going CCA general secretary Dr Prawate Khid-Arn stated that when Churches become lukewarm towards ecumenism it is often based on ignorance or to avoid the path of the cross. He encouraged church people to overcome the false dichotomy between ecumenism and evangelism and work with people from the evangelical churches.

CCA at a glance

The CCA was established in 1957. Today it represents more than 55 million people who belong to more than 100 national churches and 19 national councils. Member church bodies come from 23 different countries in the region (all except China and Vietnam).

The role of the CCA is to promote cooperation among the churches and national Christian bodies in Asia within the framework of a wider ecumenical movement.

The ecumenical movement strives to unite the different branches of the Christian Church but does not insist on making all Christians the same. It recognizes and celebrates the differences that exists between Christians and calls for mutual understanding and co-operation in worship and service.

The CCA is committed to the equal participation of women, men, youth, clergy and laity in church and society.

CCA seeks to build communities of peace through Christian unity, service and witness.

The vision for the next five years is that the Church in Asia should participate in God's mission by building of communities of peace based on justice, healing and reconciliation.

At its 2010 Assembly, the CCA welcomed five new member churches: the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church in Iran, the Oikoumene Christian Church in Indonesia, the Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney, Australia, and the National Christian Council of Bhutan

Key people at CCA Assembly

Among the task of CCA Assembly is to select its leaders.

The year's Assembly achieved a milestone by selecting its first woman general secretary. Rev Dr Henrietta Lebang of Indonesia will lead CCA for the next five years.

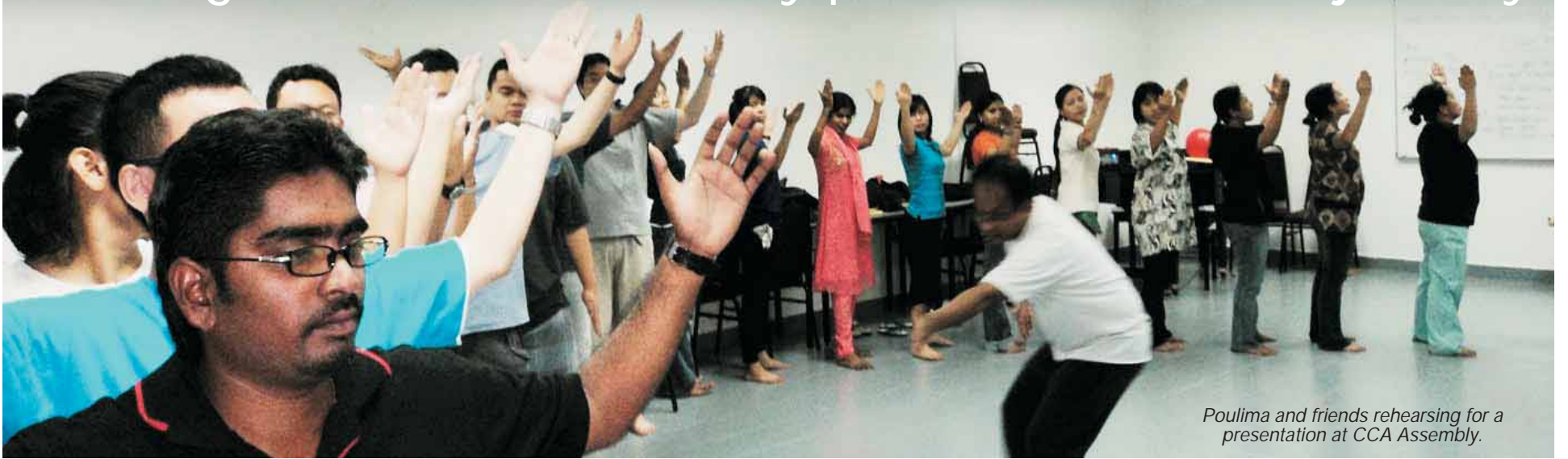
Henrietta has served in many senior positions both in Asia and internationally. She is a member of the committee co-ordinating relations between the World Council of Churches and the Vatican.

Three Kiwis will take prominent roles in CCA over the next five years. Rev Diana Tana will be the moderator of the CCA's programme cluster on

Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice and Youth Empowerment; Rev Prince Devanandan will serve on the CCA's General Committee; and former moderator of the Presbyterian Church of NZ, Very Rev Pamela Tankersley will be a member of the programme cluster on Faith, Mission and Unity.

Two of the keynote addresses at CCA were of particular note, New Zealand delegates say. Anglican archbishop of Perth Rev Roger Herft gave the opening address, and the DT Niles Memorial lecture was given by DT's son Dr Preman Niles.

Sharing talents and creativity part of ecumenical journey



Poulima and friends rehearsing for a presentation at CCA Assembly.

An exciting and life-changing experience is how New Zealand representative Poulima Salima describes his experience in a two week intensive Asia Ecumenical Course that included taking part in the 13th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia.

Poulima has a Samoan background and attends Mt Albert Methodist Church. He says the theme of the ecumenical course and assembly focused on reconciliation and healing.

The theme resonated through the music, lyrics, performances, prayers and testimonies of faith. It reflected the complex and conflicting Asian realities such as bad governance, human trafficking, human rights violations, and religious extremism.

"I was overwhelmed by the diversity of participants in the ecumenical course. They came from: Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, India, Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia, Pakistan, Taiwan, Aotearoa-New Zealand, Philippines and Malaysia.

"Everyone was very energetic, courageous and fun to be with. I was amazed with the creativity, passion and enthusiasm. It was strong, encouraging and infectious. We had fun learning, speaking and singing in various languages."

Poulima says his group gave the opening worship for General Assembly. They had to come up with their own cultural dance

"The choreography and dance gestures represented the identity of each culture. The power and spirit of the lyrics sung in their respective languages was soul-stirring. We had all the Asian instruments and percussion you could possibly think of and we wore our cultural costumes.

"Some of the church leaders commented that it was the best opening worship service since they joined the General Assembly."

Poulima says the young people wanted to remind all conference participants about unity, justice and healing. This was delivered through song, dance and drama.

"We had all the styles of songs you could possibly think of from ancient Asian folk type tunes, to hymns, and contemporary music. The orchestration fused cultural instruments and the choir to make the music catchy and interesting. We also performed a 25 minute drama."

During the ecumenical course there was bible studies and personal reflections. Participants shared their faith journey, background and goals. Most participants were theological students, or teachers and lecturers of theology and young church pastors and ministers.

"I admired their passion and zeal for God's mission. Their life of dedication, commitment and service to God's work in their churches, communities and villages was a blessing."

He says speakers at the ecumenical course discussed the cultures and churches in Malaysia. Religion plays a big role in society and it can be a source of tension and conflict. Other guest speakers talked about efforts to provide programs and training for young people to channel their energies so that churches in Asia become a prophetic voice in denouncing human rights violations.

"I was inspired by the testimonies from pastors and church

ministers who shared their faith, hardship and the darkest moments of their lives, of being beaten and tortured because of their faith in Christ and mission. Hearing them testify about God's goodness and faithfulness during times of suffering and hardship was inspiring for all participants to carry their cross as well.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the Asian Ecumenical Course and the Christian Conference of Asia General Assembly. It was definitely the beginning of my ecumenical journey. My prayer for the Methodist Church of Aotearoa-New Zealand is unity and that its people celebrate and share our diversity to advance God's kingdom."



Poulima Salima

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Salvation through joining Christ's life

News reached Paul of problems in congregations he had helped establish in Galatia. He addresses those issues in his letter.

Some claimed that Paul was, at best, a second-hand apostle. He had neither shared in the Galilean ministry nor followed Jesus on his last journey to trial and crucifixion.

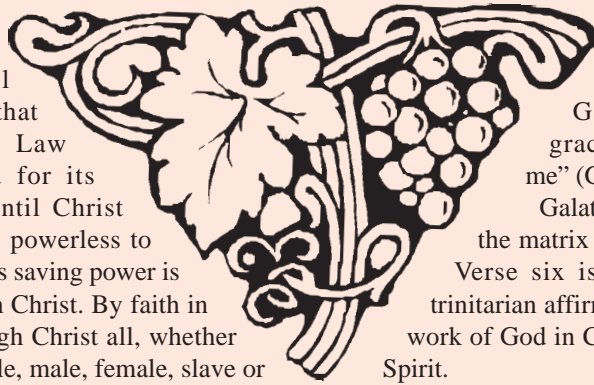
Paul replies that following his encounter with the risen Christ on the Damascus road God called to him to take the Gospel to non-Jews. His apostolic authority came from obeying that call (GAL 1:11-24; Acts 9).

Galatia had its share of four million or so Jews settled across the Roman Empire. Some of them argued that because Paul's Christian movement grew out of their Jewish faith the Law should be observed. Non-Jews baptised into fellowship with Christ and his people should be circumcised.

But Paul counters that while the Law was good for its purpose until Christ came, it is powerless to save. God's saving power is revealed in Christ. By faith in God through Christ all, whether Jew, Gentile, male, female, slave or free may enjoy a life of liberty as God's children (GAL 3:21-29).

God's children know salvation through participating in the life of Christ in the congregation. Christ is central, not the law.

Paul testifies that he himself has died to the law that he may live to God. "I have been crucified with Christ... Christ lives in me (as) I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave



himself for me. I will not reject God's graciousness to me" (GAL 2: 19-1).

Galatians 4: 4-7 is the matrix of this letter. Verse six is a dynamic trinitarian affirmation of the work of God in Christ and his Spirit.

In the earlier sentences of this section Paul affirms Christ as at the centre of history by Divine intervention. "In the fullness of time God's Son was born of a Jewish woman under the law to free those imprisoned by the way the law was being applied. However by God's personal, adopting grace believers may know a close, loving relationship with God as (his) children."

Although freed from the Law, God's

children need to stand firm in their faith that works through loving in the Spirit of Christ.

The fruit of his unifying Spirit is "Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. There is no law against such a lifestyle".

By contrast, those who live without the Spirit of Christ live according to the flesh. Their trust in their human nature easily surrenders to a self-centredness and immorality of the worst kind.

Such "works of the flesh" are evil and divisive, and destructive of family, fellowship and community life (GAL 5).

Although we celebrated Pentecost last month there is never a time for the Spirit of Christ to be absent from our congregation.

Meeting the Crucified Christ through Asian eyes

LIBRARY OF FAITH

By Jim Stuart



While teaching at a small university in the United States in the early 1970s, I received a letter from an old Japanese friend. At the time he was teaching at the

Osaka Christian College in Japan. In his letter he encouraged me to read a new, exciting and groundbreaking book on Christian theology from an Asian context.

The book was 'Water Buffalo Theology' written by the Japanese theologian and at the time missionary to Thailand, Kosuke Koyama. Koyama later taught at Knox Theological College.

I knew very little about Christianity in Asia and, intrigued by the quirky title, I quickly acquired a copy. Once I started reading it, I couldn't put it down. Not only was it an important introduction to an

Asian theology, it was a fascinating and imaginative re-formulation of the Christian faith. Through lively metaphors, powerful symbols and lyrical descriptions, Koyama opened up for me the world of Asian cultures and challenged me to re-examine my own Euro-centric interpretation of Christianity.

As modern society becomes increasingly international and less insular, Christians need to be aware of their own cultural contexts and how they shape their understanding of the Christian faith. As Koyama points out in his book, his theology had to begin with the needs of the Thai farmers where he was working and not with the great thoughts developed in the Summa Theologia of Thomas Aquinas or the Church Dogmatics of Karl Barth.

As important as these works are to the European cultural context, Koyama learned that God called him to work among Thai farmers and to earth his theology"

in the soil of Thailand. Thus began for Koyama 'an extraordinary journey in Asian contextual theology.

In the book, Koyama reminds all Christians to take their history seriously while acknowledging that "those who can afford to eat much experience history more superficially than those who are not so affluent." He learned, he says, while working alongside the poor farmers of Thailand that "a bank account and an abundant diet" sometimes insulates us from coming to feel and experience the primary truths of our faith and our particular history.

The fundamental premise of his book is that "Jesus indigenised", that is, contextualised the message of God "through his life and suffering". In doing this Jesus opened up a new possibility for the human community: "a crucified mind theology that is joyous, resourceful, accommodational and prophetic".

Koyama advocates a particular orbit

theology (or POT) instead of a one-size-fits-all theology that disempowers Christians who don't fit the dominant theological paradigm of the day.

Finally he confesses that this crucified mind approach to Christian theology did not come to him in the seminaries and theological halls. Rather he had to discover it by himself. He concludes, "it is more rewarding to know a Buddhist than Buddhism, a Marxist than Marxism, a revolutionary than revolution, a missionary than missiology, a wife than a marriage and family course, Jesus than Christology".

Koyama offers other Christians an opportunity to meet an Asian Christian and through the encounter, learn how they might know and live the mind of Christ in their particular cultural contexts. This, he says, is an enormous challenge – but, he warns if Christians fail in this, they ghettoise Christianity and become "theological Frankensteins".

HOW TO WIN OUR THREE-LEGGED RELAY RACE

By Rev Peter MacKenzie, UCANZ executive officer.

Paul wrote to the church in Corinth and used the image of a race (1 Cor 9:24). Reading that passage set my mind to thinking about the race that CVs are in. Take a moment before reading further to consider what sort of race your parish is in. A sprint? A marathon? A steeplechase?

As an aside, the steeplechase began as a cross-country event where contestants began out in the country and were to run to an identified church steeple. It provided an element of choice in how to get there (jump the fence or go through the gate) and an end goal in sight most of the time.

Two concepts of races struck me

as I thought about CVs and our understanding of parish oversight. The first was that we have been running our churches as if they were a relay race – a baton passed from one partner to the next as we progressed through time. The baton of oversight was given over (sometimes dropped in the process), and then the partner rested. Of course, this means that the parishes have had to adapt to a new style of oversight and there is a discontinuity of approaches and mission strategies.

The second idea was that of a three-legged race. Here the partners have to work together and coordinate themselves in what they are doing. While the partners move in step with

each other, it has to be acknowledged that one partner needs to take responsibility to call the shots – to say "left, right" for all to hear.

No analogy is perfect, but I would hope that our churches can develop ways in which they can coordinate their approach to CVs and provide a clear path for them to run the race. But it is equally important for CVs to provide support and encouragement to the partner churches that form the parish.

It seems quite wrong for a parish to say 'we are neither this nor that' in terms of denomination, when in fact they should be saying 'we are both this and that – and so much more'. One of the central tasks of a

CV is to nurture the partnership relationship that has been entered into in the covenant agreement.

Perhaps the steeplechase image could also be expanded. We (as parishes) can see the steeple of God's pure church in the distance and strive to race toward it – but there is no direct path and plenty of options. There are fences to straddle, waters to cross, steps to climb and blind alleys to frustrate us.

What a privilege it is to run the race with partners who will share the load, to gain encouragement from others who have taken similar journeys, and to know that when the race is done God calls us into the peaceful love of the Kingdom.

Traditional foods boost health in Tonga



The Tongan Community Development Trust teaches composting as part of its efforts to promote healthy lifestyles.

An elder on one of the Tongan outer islands gives credit for her 104 years age to a regular diet of fresh seaweed, says Tongan Community Development Trust spokeswoman, Oketi Faletau.

Oketi was in Christchurch in May to visit Christian World Service headquarters to meet and thank CWS for its financial support of the Trust.

While the prospect of eating fresh seaweed makes our own eat-your-vegetables pleas to youngsters look a whole lot better it is worth noting that the belief in the health benefits of seaweed is part of a revival of traditional Tongan diet Oketi and the Trust are involved in promoting.

The Trust teaches a mix of old and new techniques for diet, agriculture and hygiene through workshops for community leaders held throughout Tonga.

Reviving traditional Tongan dietary habits is proving useful in helping turn back the tide of an epidemic of heart disease and diabetes that has come with the increased reliance on imported foods.

"It is much healthier for us to

have our own traditional foods," Oketi says. "The smartest children in school are those who eat the traditional diets, while those who stay with the diet live longer like the elder who is 104 years old."

She had lived all her life on a diet that consisted mainly of fish, seaweed, salads and the chicken and pork she does eat is raised locally.

The families that reverted to the traditional diet and self reliance also found that it freed up money that could be put to better use than buying imported and unhealthy food.

Much of the work CWS helps fund the Trust to do is similar to that of Christchurch's "Supergrans" programme where grandmas teach younger generations basic skills like growing vegetables, preparing and cooking them and the basics of good home management.

The Tongan Community Development Trust has a similar emphasis on transferring skills between generations but also adds a modern dash to its teaching mix.

For example, it provides classes on compost. Composting is not a traditional Tongan farming

technique but it is proving useful in a variety of ways.

It improves plant yields and soil fertility, takes organic "rubbish" out of the waste stream and puts it to good use and finally helps improve food quality.

Oketi says that for families who took up the full set of suggestions for diet and growing healthy organic food there were also other direct benefits.

"It frees up money for them to buy other assets and in some cases move from a home they have to rebuild every year into a "palangi" house with wooden walls and tin roofing that is much more low maintenance," she says.

Oketi says that when they took the classes and skills workshops back to the outer Tongan islands they could see how groups that started with them some years ago were making significant progress toward self determination and reliance.

"You know that it is working because when we take something new out to them they always end by saying please come back to us," she says.

Funding changes for CWS take shape

By Pauline McKay, Christian World Service national director.

Christian World Service faces major changes to the way it gets Government funding.

The Government's recent news that it was stopping the KOHA and HAF funding schemes at the end of the financial year will mean a huge change to our present and future plans.

I have already alerted CWS supporters that potentially this will have a major impact on our viability and operations, and in turn the work of our partners. We made a commitment to keep you as informed as we can on where these changes are heading.

This time of major uncertainty has shown us is that our supporters are many, that they are very committed, and that their expressions of concern and support have been very heartening. Thank you, to all of you who have rung, written, emailed and offered your support.

In the previous edition of Touchstones we indicated that we were trying to adapt to these major changes with very little specific information to work with.

An unofficial briefing paper has told us that there will be two new funds. The Sustainable Development Fund would put much greater emphasis on the Pacific and sustainable economic development programmes.

The Humanitarian Response Fund will focus more on immediate assistance and "effective locally-led recovery" in the event of a disaster.

We responded to this paper with a report outlining our key concerns, which at that stage were many.

I can now report to you that although there is still much to be discovered we have some indication of the likely future shape for Government funding for the schemes.

While we can still barely see the trees for the forest we have at least sighted

the forest!

It is our understanding at this stage that by the time you read this article the broad brush aspects of the new funding schemes should have gone to Cabinet for approval by May 26.

If this approval is given it looks likely that funding for some CWS projects will continue, projects near completion will get interim funding, and some transition mechanisms will be set up.

While there is still no absolute certainty about funding for CWS and other NGOs it does look as if funding will be available.

Our other major area of concern is with the proposed new emphasis on funding ratios which when first announced looked very difficult to attain.

The new ratios are 50 percent to the Pacific, 30 percent to South East Asia and 20 percent to the rest of the world. The date for achieving these new ratios is 2013.

We understand that these remain as goals but that they will be rather more gently phased in than looked the case at first.

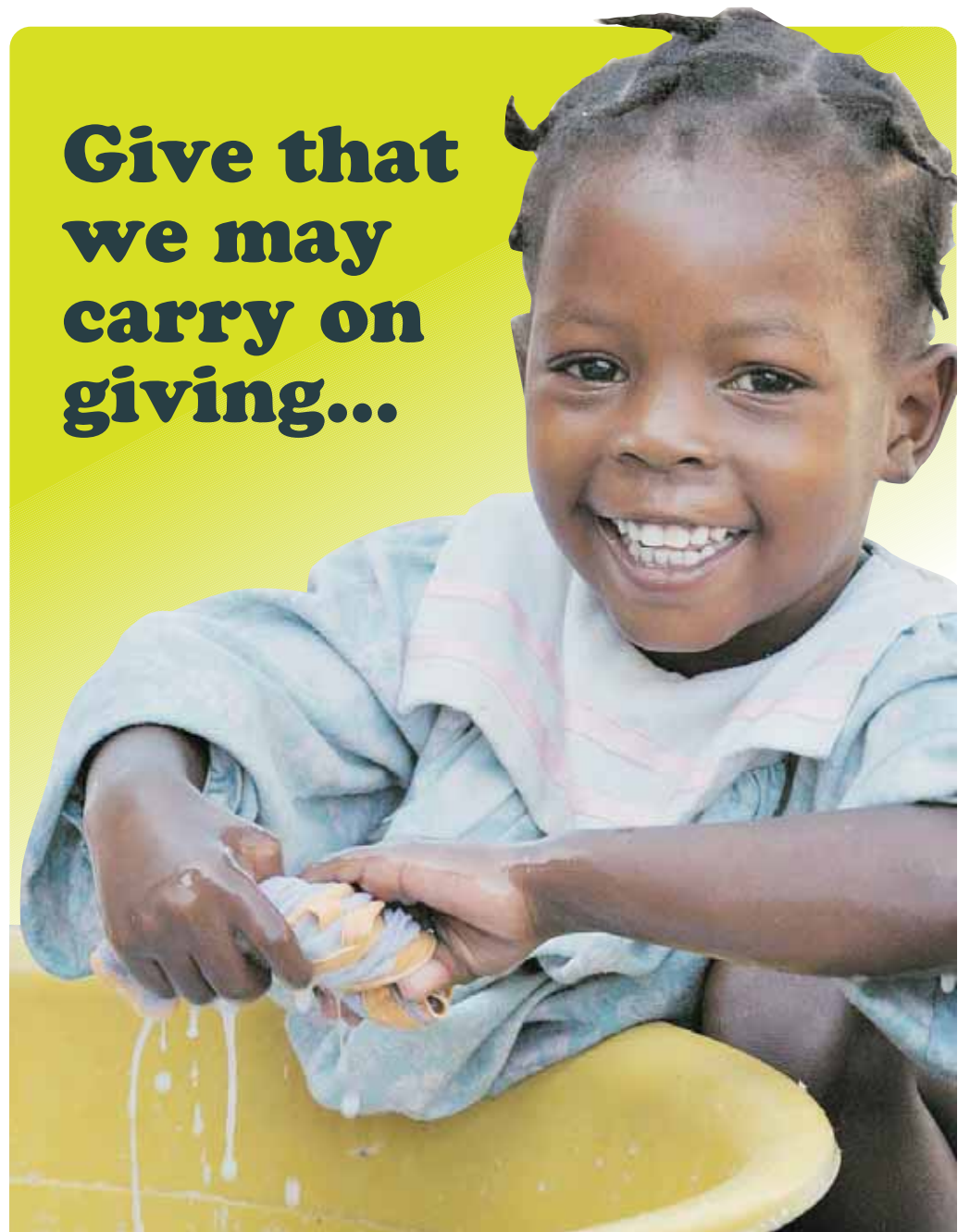
Finally the accreditation process for the new scheme has also taken on some firmer outlines. It looks as if an interim phase for the first year that recognises existing accreditation will allow us to apply for funding.

If this is the case it provides at least a partial answer to one of our most pressing concerns.

None of these outlined changes are of our asking and many areas of clarification remain before I can confidently predict CWS is out of danger.

Many questions remain about the long term impact on the quality of New Zealand's overseas development assistance. Once again we thank you for your heartening support.

Give that we may carry on giving...



You can, and do, make a difference.

Find out more: www.cws.org.nz
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Jesus Beyond Christianity – The Classic Texts

Edited by Gregory Barker and Stephen Gregg
2010, Oxford University Press, 300 pages
Reviewer: John H Roberts

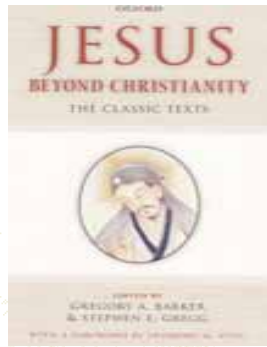
The editors of this book see two stories of Jesus in religion. The first is the story of Jesus in the Christian tradition. The second is the significance of Jesus as seen by other religious traditions. It is the latter that this book sets out to explore.

Perceptions of Jesus from Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism are included. Each of the different perspectives is approached in the same way.

First the key issues of the religion's perception of Jesus are identified. This is followed by a series of texts presented in chronological sequence. The texts are rounded off with a closing reflection by a leading scholar of that religion, followed by some questions for discussion as well as suggestions for further reading.

The texts from Judaism cover the period from Rabbi Nachmanides (13th century) to David Flusser (professor of Judaism at Hebrew University in the 1960s).

Jewish perceptions of Jesus travel along two paths. There is the 'disturbed deceiver' path that views Jesus negatively and the 'righteous teacher-prophet' path which views Jesus more positively, building on Jesus' Jewishness. Professor Dan Cohn-Sherbok provides the closing reflection and suggests that rather than reject Jesus as a blasphemous heretic, Jewry



should now see in Jesus' life a reflection of the prophetic ideals of Judaism.

The texts from Islam stretch from the writing of the Qur'an (6th century) with its ninety three references to Jesus, to the Common Word document of Muslim scholars (2007). For Muslims Jesus is a prophet and an end time figure. Sufis also revere him as a spiritual teacher.

Muslim academic Amjad Hussain, who has written the reflection on the texts in this book, says there is both a merging and a diverging between Christianity and Islam over how the person of Jesus is to be understood. The diverging comes from different understandings

of Jesus' spirituality, his divinity and crucifixion. The merging is based on a mutual love and reverence for the figure of Jesus, belief in his miracles and a looking forward to his return.

The Hindu texts cover the period from Ram Mohim Roy (a social and religious reformer of the 19th century to Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan (professor of Eastern religions at Oxford University in the 1930s and 1940s). The responses to Jesus in these texts range from the generally positive to the distinctly critical.

Consideration of Jesus by Hindus began in earnest as a result of British colonial rule in India and the associated missionary efforts. Some Hindus came to value Jesus as an

Asiatic rather than a Western figure. Alongside this Asiatic Christ is a universal Jesus who transcends Christianity. Hindus have often separated Jesus from Christians and the Church, claiming that his ethical teaching has often not been observed by his followers. Professor Gavin Flood has written the closing reflection here. He argues that Hindus need to engage with an Indian Christ who is already part of their cultural heritage, as Christianity has been present in India since the 1st century CE.

By the time of Jesus, Buddhist traditions were spreading to lands where there would be no contact with Christianity for a very long time. So the texts in the Buddhist section cover the period from Fabian Fucan (a Japanese convert to Christianity in 16th century who later reverted to Buddhism) to Tenzin Gyatso (the present Dalai Lama). Despite barriers there has been a lively discussion about Jesus by Buddhists in many places reflecting a diversity of views. Professor Donald Lopez suggests each of the texts falls into one of three categories of response to the person of Jesus: hostility, disinterest, or incorporation. Each reflects the degree of threat posed by Christian missions at that time.

This is an academic book which is both a demanding and rewarding read. The questions encourage discussion about the issues raised by the texts and reflections. For Christians engaging in interfaith dialogue this will be a very helpful resource. I highly commend the book.

Coming Back to Earth – From gods to God to Gaia

By Lloyd Geering,
2009, Polebridge Press, 221 pages
Reviewer: Jan Leman Christiansen

George Bernard Shaw famously remarked that 'Those who can do, those who can't, teach'. I suspect he might have lumped reviewers in that second category.

Coming Back to Earth is a compilation of lectures with a common theme, delivered to different audiences. In structure, it is rather repetitive, and the sustained development of arguments is constrained.

Geering argues for the secularisation of Christianity, meaning that beliefs and practices need to be grounded in the present world, not that of the supernatural and 'other'. As such, secularism is not opposed to religion but has a different focus, i.e., on this world. 'Religion' is the conscientious search for what really matters.

The first section, 'Is Christianity Going Anywhere?', examines the history of the Christian church and the rise of modernism. A chapter is devoted to seeking the historical Jesus, and another to evaluating his teachings.

For Geering, Jesus is a sage in the tradition of the Wisdom writers. His primary focus was on right living, on the promotion of healthy relationships and ethical conduct. For Jesus, the Kingdom of God meant living morally. Geering argues that the teachings of Jesus, not the death, should be the paramount

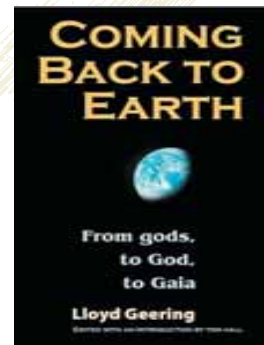
focus, a view with which I concur.

And what of God? For Geering, God is a symbol of our deepest and best values and aspirations, and anything in which we place faith by definition becomes God.

In the middle section, 'The Greening of Christianity', Geering postulates that we have a fundamental responsibility for the health of the planet, which is not ours to dominate and exploit. He articulates an eco-theology to supplant all existing theologies.

The physical world, being the only 'real' world dominates, and we have an obligation to ensure its continued existence. In a sense, this is what immortality means. We fail to nurture the earth at our peril.

The final section, 'In Praise of the Secular', is the development of eco-theology as a secular religion. Just as we have moved from ancient polytheism with its panoply of all-controlling gods, to the concept of monotheism, that is, one God in charge, now it is time for a recognition of Gaia (or Mother Nature?) as expressive of the dynamic organism we call earth.



Our goal should be to save this planet of which we are an integral part, which nurtures and sustains us. For me, this section is the least satisfactory and I was left with a comical image of 'church' being the Green Party at prayer.

Does Geering persuade and convince? Not this reader. The writing is vintage Geering: lucid, intelligent, accessible, and rational. And therein lies the problem.

The rational dimension of the human personality is emphasised at the expense of our other parts – emotions, senses, relationships, and spirits. This book is rooted in the material world

where the only transcendence is a green conscience. Yes, to be critically aware of the fragility of the planet is vital but should that be all we aspire to? I do not find Geering's conclusions uplifting.

In 221 pages Geering demolishes orthodox Christianity, kills off a transcendent God, abolishes Christian worship and replaces it all with a wan green gathering where Mother Nature is top dog/God. Geering may be right, but I prefer the old dispensation.

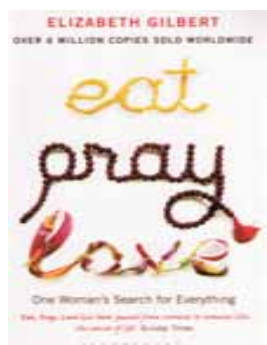
Eat, Pray, Love - One woman's search for everything.

By Elizabeth Gilbert
2007, Bloomsbury, 349 pages
Reviewer: Diana Roberts.

I wasn't totally thrilled about being asked to review this book, even though it's what Julia Roberts is giving to all her girl friends. Interest in this 'flavour-of-the-month' autobiography - "over 6 million copies sold worldwide" - has been revived with the publication earlier this year of the sequel, *Committed: A sceptic makes peace with marriage*.

My reservations were overcome to a degree by the author's intelligence and charm. I like her in spite of myself, although I don't so readily engage with her material.

Following her divorce and a rebound affair, 35-year-old Liz decided to take a year out to "find balance". The first four months were spent in Italy, nourishing herself with a new language, new friendships, and wonderful Italian



food.

Physically, mentally and emotionally restored, she moved on to her next four months: a focus on her spiritual life through a programme of yogic meditation and prayer at the ashram of her guru in India.

Her cultural background is Christian but she rejects what she understands as Christian insistence on Christ as the only path to God. I am concerned that this rather superficial and dismissive analysis of Christian theology could limit her exploration of other faith traditions.

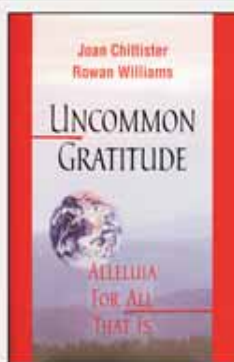
However, she entered fully into the discipline of the ashram and she reflects on her search for divinity in that community. Liz comments that she sees among her friends a longing for something to believe in. She offers her spiritual

exploration as an affirmation of the 'cherry-picking' of religious practice.

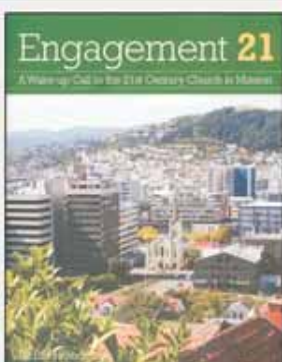
The last third of her year was spent in Bali, where she became involved in the lives of two traditional healers. There Liz met and fell in love with Brazilian Felipe and developed a relationship which became central to her life, and endures beyond this book as the subject of the sequel.

I can understand the book's celebrity appeal. The author is a member of a privileged group with the means and freedom to find refreshment and spiritual expression in exotic places, and above all to find fulfilment in love (the romantic variety).

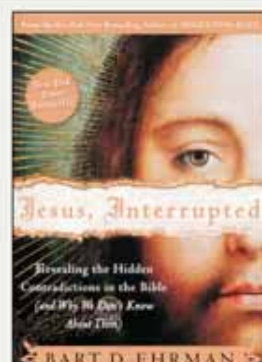
I feel uneasy. Yes, it's good and necessary to know and accept yourself, it's good to love. But compassion for those who are unappealing, and a sense of social justice are thin on the ground here. For me, on the whole, Eat, Pray, Love is just a bit too 'fashionable'. I won't be giving it to all my girl friends.



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ON SCREEN

A film review by Rev Dr Steve Taylor

THE GIRL WITH THE DRAGON TATTOO

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo is a movie that remains inked on the viewer's memory long after the final credits roll.

The themes are big, a graphic portrayal of humans forced to wrestle with the impact of abuse. Can two wrongs make a right in a world that is broken and bent? How do humans face past pain? Can we choose who we want to be, or are we unavoidably damaged by acts of human violence and depravity?

These themes are cleverly developed by an absorbing plot.

Journalist Mikael Blomkvist (Michael Nyqvist) is invited to solve the 40 year old mystery that is the disappearance of Harriet Vanger (Ewa Froling). Blomkvist works surrounded by the suspicions of the Vanger family. Insular, yet wealthy, they entwine links to big business with the suspicions of a Nazi past. His investigative skills are watched by the mysterious Lisbeth Salander (Noomi Rapace), who compulsively cyber-stalks Blomkvist in order to monitor (pun

intended) his progress.

The movie is an adaptation of the first book in Swedish journalist Stieg Larsson's 'Millennium' series. The books have become worldwide bestsellers. They work by using clever pairings: investigative journalist Mikael Blomkvist with the tattooed cybersleuth Lisbeth Salander, her abusive state guardian Bjurman (Peter Andersson) with the shadowy businessman Martin Vanger (Peter Haber), Lisbeth Salander as a child with an adolescent Harriet Vanger.

The plot twists and turns, the pairings ensuring an unfolding set of mysteries that never baffle nor patronise, but rather absorb and intrigue the viewer. It is clever, gritty and engrossing. The cinematic excellence – in theme, plot and 21st century aesthetic – make this movie good. All of which serves to make the film compellingly hard to watch.

The movie's big themes – of wrestling with the past – are in fact

deeply theological. They invite dialogue with events like the processes of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.

In his book, *The End of Memory* contemporary Christian theologian Miroslav Volf explores the place of grace given that humans are made with memory. Miroslav's own narration of his memory of persecution in Yugoslavia, offers an alternative to the themes that unfold in *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*.

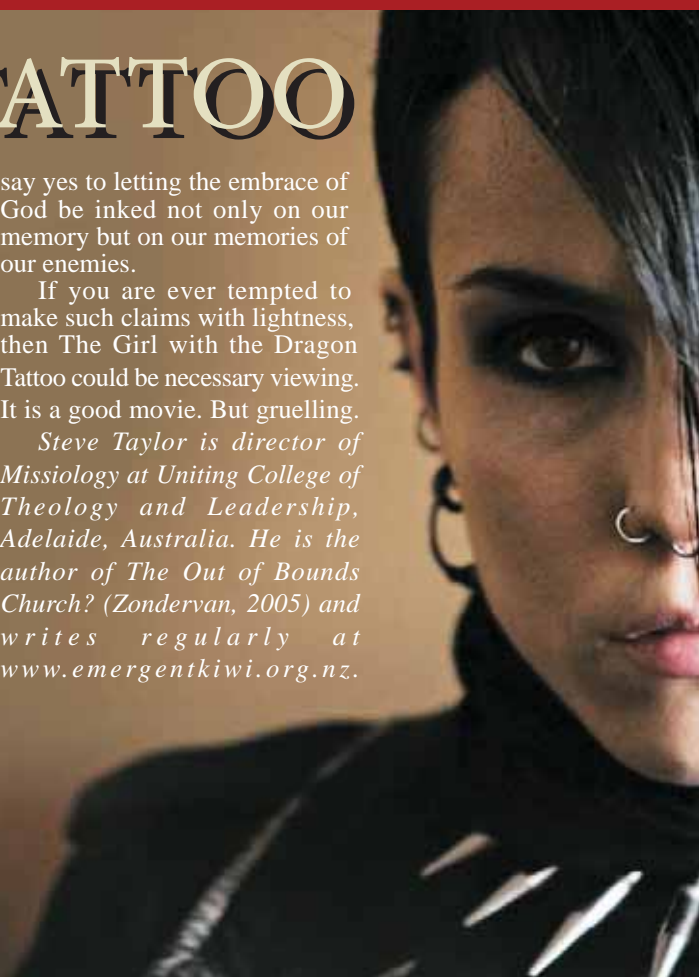
Memory, for Volf, must start by remembering truthfully. This includes the need to consider the points of view of all who remember. Once such investigation is concluded, we then have a choice.

We can continue to perpetuate cycles of revenge. Or we can seek new ways of being human, through forgiveness and reconciliation. For Volf, Christian grace is never simply individual. Instead, the gracious acts of Jesus invite us to

say yes to letting the embrace of God be inked not only on our memory but on our memories of our enemies.

If you are ever tempted to make such claims with lightness, then *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* could be necessary viewing. It is a good movie. But gruelling.

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



BIBLE TREE STORIES

June is a good month for thinking about the environment particularly in relation to tree planting. Arbour means shady trees. Arbour Day was first celebrated in Nebraska, USA, in 1872. New Zealand's first Arbour Day planting was in Greytown in the Wairarapa on 3 July 1890. The first official celebration took place in Wellington in August 1892, with the planting of pohutukawa and Norfolk pines along Thorndon Esplanade. Since 1977 New Zealand has celebrated Arbour Day on June 5, which is also World Environment Day.

There are more than 100 plants mentioned in the Bible including fruits, grains, vegetables, nuts, flowers, weeds, bushes and trees. Different versions supply different names for a few plants. Over 30 different trees can be identified. Can you supply a Bible tree for the following letters:

A _____ B _____ C _____ D _____ E _____ F _____ G _____
H _____ M _____ O _____ P _____ S _____ W _____

Bible Challenge

Moses saw a burning _____ B _____
the boat-builders of Tyre made planks from _____ trees _____ I _____
ivory and _____ was imported to Tyre from India _____ B _____
Aaron's staff came from an _____ tree _____ L _____
Noah made his ark of _____ wood _____ E _____

Jesus told a parable about a _____ seed _____ T _____
Elijah rested under a _____ tree _____ R _____
Tradition says Eve ate from an _____ tree _____ E _____
Solomon's temple was built with _____ and... _____ E _____

_____ timber from Lebanon _____ S _____
Jericho had many _____ palms _____ T _____
Absalom got his hair caught in an _____ tree _____ O _____
Zacchaeus climbed a _____ tree _____ R _____
Jesus cursed a barren _____ tree _____ I _____
Jesus prayed on the Mount of _____ _____ E _____
Branch used at Passover & Crucifixion _____ S _____

RSV
Ex 3:2
Ezk 27:5
Ezk 27:15
Nm 17:8
Gn 6:14

Mtt 13:31
1Kg 19:4
Gn 3:6
1Kg 5:8

1Kg 5:8
2Chr 28:15
2Sm 18:9
Lk 19:4
Mtt 21:19
Lk 22:39
Jn 19:29 & Ex 12:22

BIBLE TREE STORIES: bush, fir, ebony, almond, gopher, mustard, broom, apple, cedar, cypress, date, oak, sycamore, fig, olive, myrtle, hysop. BIBLE TREES: Acacia, almond, apple, ash, balsam, birch, cedar, chestnut, cypress, date, ebony, fig, gopher, hazel, hysop, juniper, myrtle, olive, palm, pine, poplar, pomegranate, sycamore, walnut, willow. © RMS

Seminar to explore Fresh Expressions of ministry

How do churches create contemporary ways to share the Gospel in our fast-changing, interconnected world? Methodists and Anglicans in the UK are doing so through Fresh Expressions.

In July an Anglican leader of the Fresh Expressions initiative, Bishop Graham Cray, will present a seminar in Christchurch.

Graham has said that the old ways of being church are not reaching a greater and greater percentage of the population.

"The ways that we have used to reach out to people are less and less effective. At least 40 percent of the adults in Britain and a much higher proportion of children and young people have never had any contact with a church in their life.

"We have to meet a culture that has practically no working knowledge of the Christian faith and what God has done in Jesus Christ. These people are not going to come to us."

Fresh Expressions seeks to do this. It is a form of church established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church. It is based on principles of listening, service, incarnational mission and making disciples.

The day-long ecumenical seminar is called Fresh Expressions: Theology & Practice. It takes place on Saturday July 10th at St Christopher's Church in Avonhead. This seminar is open to all. It costs \$30 and will run from 9.30am to 4.30pm. Participants will need to bring their own lunch.

For more information contact John Day on 03 363 0915 or mission@anglicanlife.org.nz.



BLIND EYE TO ALCOHOL

By Mataiva Robertson



For years alcohol abuse has plagued mankind. In recent weeks we have heard of the sad news of a teenage boy from Kings College, James Webster, who died from alcohol poisoning after a night of heavy drinking with friends.

We cannot hide the fact that this is a growing problem in New Zealand – one that's going from bad to worse. There have been so many ads on TV about drinking and its dangers that you start to wonder whether people have become immune to the impact they have or at least are supposed to have. Is that why our youth continue to drink themselves into the ground?

Some people put it down to family history: these kids were raised in bad homes,

lower socio-economic environment, surrounded by alcohol, abuse etc. But in a lot of cases these young people come from secure, wealthy, stable homes – Kings College? And some are from Christian families. Many of these young people drinking out of control on a Saturday night are sitting in church on a Sunday morning.

Everything is hunky-dory within our churches... 'Yeah Right'. The truth of the matter is, young people are young people and we all go through 'testing' stages in life. I know of many parents who are in denial. "No, my kids are not like that". But if only they knew what really went on... trust me, been there too!

There are just so many things in this society that make

it attractive to drink and the current drinking age also makes alcohol a lot more accessible to young people earlier, and of course nowadays you can find alcohol pretty much next to the milk at your local grocery store.

Alcohol advertising on TV, magazines and billboards reminds me of the way things were many years ago when tobacco companies were free to place their brand name on anything, anywhere. There were things like the Winfield Cup (now known as the NRL Telstra Premiership) and we can't forget the Benson & Hedges Fashion Awards just to name a couple. Well now that it's no longer fashionable (its actually illegal) for tobacco company sponsorship of such high profile events. Is it any

coincidence that smoking has also become pretty unfashionable?

Drinking however still plays a huge part in sponsorship of NZ sport, and then of course the athletes are generally expected if not required to make use of or at least endorse the sponsor's product. A drinking culture is very much part of NZ sports, especially certain team sports that we all love and enjoy in this country.

With all this surrounding us, how do young people stand a chance? Let's all pray that the recent tragic death of young James Webster helps us all open our eyes to the alcohol problem at hand so that we can start helping ourselves and each other.

Kidā Korua

FAKAME



Taiana Siufanga sharing the Bible verse she has learned with her class.

The parish of St John's Methodist church is made up of people from many different cultures. There are times when we celebrate together such as Christmas, Easter and Pentecost, but there are some celebrations that are special for just one group. Fakame (White Sunday) is one of these. It is a very special time for our Tongan people.

Allilia Molitika tell us about it:

Fakame is celebrated on the first Sunday in May. All the children dress up in their

beautiful white clothes, topping them off with their traditional ta'ovala. On this day children are given the chance to express their love for God by reading hymns and bible verses that they have learned by heart.

Different classes of children dramatise stories from the bible. This year one class did the story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet and an older group acted the story

from Matthew when Jesus calmed the storm. This helps them to understand and learn more about the Bible.

This year some of the children wore black instead of white because one of our beloved mothers passed away. She had been a great influence on the children and they did this to show their respect.

We couldn't have done all these things without the support and love of our Sunday school teacher. We all love you Fe'iloaki Takataka!



Ala and Lela Tupou, with Velonika Vakolahi wearing the traditional ta'ovala.



Messy Church takes the notion of all ages worship seriously.

Young and old get messy in church

Imagine a worship service that encompasses people of all ages in a relaxed setting where fun and learning mix. Things could get a bit chaotic and even messy at times.

If the idea appeals, then check out the world of Messy Church. Advocates of Messy Church say it is more than creative, colourful worship for kids or a stepping stone for people to move into a 'real' church. Rather it is a new form of church that comes from and serves our changing culture.

Messy Church has its origins in the UK where a congregation near Portsmouth was frustrated at its inability to reach out to children. They experimented and came up with a creative, activity-based approach that included adults and young people and took children seriously.

Today a growing movement, Messy Church has been endorsed by the joint Methodist-Anglican 'Fresh Expressions' initiative that seeks to plant new congregations of people who do not attend traditional church.

Now Messy Church has been transplanted to Godzone. Rev Debbie Smith is national Messy Church coordinator. Debbie is assistant priest at St John the Evangelist Church in Christchurch, and in September she will lead a two-day ecumenical conference on Messy Church.

She says she dislikes the term 'all-age' but can't think of a better one because church should always be for everyone.

"In all-age worship it is tempting to water down the celebration and activities to fun and entertainment. It can be hard to break away from the view that an event with children present is primarily a children's event.

"Our team at St Johns always considers the needs, learning style, temperament and

spirituality of everyone, including the youngest. All-age worship can be a one-way flow because we adults tend to believe we have the answers and children need to learn from us," she says.

"Messy Church turns that on its head by acknowledging children's spirituality. It is an enriching experience to learn from children and allow opportunities for them to minister. In a relaxed atmosphere what we seek to 'be' and 'do' springs from a desire to encourage appropriate faith development across the generations, where all can encounter God."

Debbie says as national Messy Church co-ordinator, she is committed to exploring and pushing the boundaries of what it means to be church.

"It is my heart to encourage and support others in daring to be radical, to minister on the edge, as Jesus did, to ask difficult questions and to face challenging issues of developing church in the 21st century.

Messy Church isn't claiming to have it all sorted. We have much to discover and we don't want to limit God. You won't find it a 'how to' programme. It has enormous potential for growth individually and corporately. If we are committed to communicating the Gospel in ways that connect in the 21st century, we have to grasp this challenge, move out of our comfort zone and expectations and be prepared for God to surprise us."

The national Messy Church conference 'Sowing Seeds for Growth' takes place Saturday and Sunday, September 18th & 19th at St John's Church, Woolston, Christchurch. For details contact Debbie Smith dlsinz@xtra.co.nz or 03 981 6144; or Chris Church, Theology House at admin@theologyhouse.ac.nz or 03 355 9145.

QUESTION TIME

Read Acts 2:1-21 to find the answers to these questions:

- 1) What did the people see and hear when they were gathered together?
- 2) How many different places were the people from?
- 3) Why did some of the crowd make fun of some people?
- 4) Which disciple spoke to the crowd?
- 5) Which prophet did the disciple quote when he spoke?

Solution to last month's Word Search:
The remaining letters said 'Let the children come to me.'

Mission's 120th birthday no occasion to rest on laurels

The 3rd of May marked 120 years since the Methodist Mission first started in Dunedin, although Methodists have been providing support to the people of Otago since 1822.

Mission director Laura Black says the last 120 years have been filled with hard work, much change, and many successes. The next decades will be even more so.

"The Mission today is in good heart. Our work, like that of our sister agencies, does much to prevent hardship and to heal the damage that too many in our neighbourhoods wrestle with.

"However, it is the nature of who we are and the times we live in that there is still much work to do. Unemployment is high, and the recession stubbornly refuses to shift. There are more than 95,000 young people not in education, employment or training. Budget cuts abound, and real people are caught in the gin traps of poverty, injustice, and the loss of hope."

To mark its anniversary the Mission delivered a brochure to all Dunedin homes inviting people to spend time being community.

Laura says if Dunedin is to flourish its citizens need to understand how together they are all a community, and how much they rely upon and benefit from each other. Ideas presented in the brochure – from voting in this year's local government elections to hiring some young people for odd jobs around your house – all support stronger community relationships.

"While many people think all helping agencies are the same, particularly the faith-based ones. But actually, they have very different histories, different



Chairman of the Dunedin Mission board, Colin Gibson holds aloft a special gift of albatross feathers given to the Mission by the local Otakou Runuka of Kai Tahu.

services, and different approaches." Laura says.

"The Methodist Mission is proud of its commitment to personal and social change. We work with the strengths and opportunities people have. We focus on doing what is right, not what is easy, and we emphasize practical change."

To mark its anniversary the Mission held a dinner at the Mornington Methodist Church. Dunedin mayor Peter Chin, Methodist Church president Rev Alan Upson, and vice president Lana Lazarus all spoke. The Methodist Tongan and Mornington Choirs sang and danced.

Laura thanked the parish supporters and friends of the Mission, who are frequent collaborators and generous contributors to its work.

She recommitted the Mission to "continuing to do all of the good that we can, by all of the means that we can, in all of the ways we can, in all of the places we can, at all the times we can, for all of the people we can."

Waikato Methodists make connexions during Kawhia visit

By Mary West

Hamilton Methodist parish often has inspirational meetings. Last month the parish decided to take this tradition on to the road and visit Kawhia to see the recently renovated Methodist church.

In November a special service was held to mark the reopening of the restored church. Knowing the affection Waikato Methodists have for Kawhia Church, District Superintendent Susan Thompson asked Hamilton parish to consider opening their trip up to the whole district.

Rev David Poultney suggested that if sufficient people were interested that a bus could be hired. A message was sent synod-wide and the response was such that the bus was full to overflowing and cars were used to transport other interested people.

Saturday May 8th was dry but overcast as we set off. Each person took a picnic lunch. We were met at the Church by Nick Tuwhangi, who told us he had been the project manager for the restoration.

Nick and his wife Linda had arranged that the community hall was open for the opportunity for a hot drink. There was time for folk to wander along the beach front either to explore or reminisce.

At the church David led the group of 45 in a short service. It was a great joy to the members of Kawhia church that the restored organ was played for the first time as we lustily sang two hymns. Eric Russell from Te Aroha was the organist. In addition to playing an unknown instrument, he needed to pedal to get power.

Nick gave a vivid description of all the work that went into the restoration and the great support

that he received from Kawhia folk. Nick explained the meaning behind the tukutuku panels and the two miniature canoes on the walls. We were especially interested in the carving on the front of the pulpit which had been done by the father of the late Evelyn (Tuss) Kingi.

David invited stories from those of us who were gathered.

Elsie Jones from Mt Maunganui told of her arrival in Kawhia in the late 1950's. Elsie had just arrived as a teacher from England and had thought she would be posted near Auckland. Kawhia was something different.

Elsie shared how on her first day at the school she was as scared of the children as they were of her.

Elsie always worshipped at the church and the first Sunday she attended she played the same organ with one finger only to get the basic tune of the hymns! Elsie made her stories come alive.

We heard from a member from Thames who had had the trucking business for many years and

today the husband of one of Maori women present today had been a driver for him.

A photograph was taken of everyone and you can see it was a great gathering. After we had boarded the bus we were taken to see the local Pa, unfortunately we were not able to go inside.

Homeward bound we were all very thankful that we were not the driver on that very twisty road.

This was a memorable day. There was great Synod wide fellowship with old and new acquaintances but most important of all the opportunity to learn more of our Methodist history in the Waikato.



Waikato Methodists enjoyed fellowship on the road during their trip to Kawhia.

When Irish Home Rule raised passions

PRESBYTERIAN ARCHIVES

By Yvonne Wilkie

I recently came across an obscure comment in the 1921 Publications Committee Report to the General Assembly that raised my curiosity. "The Committee is of the opinion that the Editor's action in admitting Miss Jessie MacKay's letters to the Outlook and his commenting thereon in the editorial columns was a serious error of judgment." What had Jessie Mackay written that caused editor Alfred Grinling to receive such a rebuke?

Jessie Mackay (1864-1938) has been acknowledged as one of New Zealand's significant early poets. An enthusiastic member of the Cashmere Hills Congregation her obituary referred to her as someone who did not wear their religion lightly. "Her love for her Lord was the source of her wide humanitarian feeling...every motive of her action found its source there." She was described as a "very practical apostle of political and social reforms and... a pioneer feminist".

Jessie Mackay's commitment to working for the poor, improving society through prohibition, and universal suffrage and her desire to see Irish and Scottish home rule as well as her love of the New Zealand landscape underlies much of her writing. A regular contributor to the Outlook and the Harvest Field she wrote

poems and short stories as well as commenting on current issues of the day. It was her letter to the editor of the Outlook in February 1921 and his subsequent response that caused a wave of dismay throughout the Church.

Titled the 'Church and the Irish Question' the letter challenges the leaders of the Presbyterian Church of NZ to confront the Irish issue, and stand up to defend Irish self-determination. The Presbyterian Church, Mackay wrote, needed to move into the 20th century and to respond to the situation with new eyes or "be forever shamed". She believed the Church should deplore the aggressive Irish Protestant stance towards Catholic Irish and join the Roman Catholic Church and the NZ Labour Party in putting forward a statement to the then upcoming Imperial Conference.

The response that followed reflected the complex nature and deep prejudices held surrounding the debate. Some reveal the sectarian distaste towards Catholicism,



Alfred Grinling, editor of Presbyterian Outlook 1902-1928.

suggesting Mackay's letter should be in the Catholic Tablet rather than the Outlook. Others questioned what right the editor had in interfering with the affairs of Ireland. Another questioned Mackay's loyalty as a Scot suggesting that she "lack[ed] the keen intuition and wisdom of a true Scot".

It is difficult to ascertain whether Alfred Grinling, received more letters opposing the Home Rule stance than letters supporting it but he did attempt to bring the varying opinions together in two editorials, at the same time hinting at his personal support for Irish Home Rule. In so doing readers believed he was passing judgment on the British Parliament which they considered bordered on treason.

The Publications Committee received a number of protests especially from the Presbyteries of Oamaru and Timaru. They met on four different occasions to discuss the apparent widespread "unrest that exists throughout the Church". Grinling was invited to present a statement but sadly the

minutes do not give any indication of his defense.

The last recorded minutes on the subject indicated a special meeting to discuss the editorship was called, however there is no evidence the meeting took place and no further mention appears. Whether it was decided that the reprimand to be recorded in the General Assembly Report was sufficient warning to the editor to be more circumspect in the future or whether it was a 'storm in a teacup' we will never know.

However Grinling was acknowledged as widely read, a concise thinker, with the ability to state facts in clear and forceful language. He noted that he worked towards balancing his own convictions and the beliefs of the church to meet the wishes of his opponents.

Grinling, like his predecessor Rutherford Waddell, aimed to make the Outlook a religious weekly. That neither achieved this ambition was due more to the Church's failure to recognise the possibilities open to them, than their lack of ability to do so. As the Very Rev George Jupp commented, "those who are in advance of their fellows always face that."

Grinling continued on as Editor of the Outlook until the end of 1928 when due to ill health he resigned after 27 years.

Ko e Katoanga Fakamee 2010 Siasi Lotofale'ia, Mangere

Ko e toki me'a fakafiefia mo'oni ki he Faifekau mo e Siasi Lotofale'ia 'a e me'a mai 'a e Ta'ahine Pilinisesi Pule 'o Tonga, Pilinisesi Salote Pilolevu Tuita ki he katoanga Fakamee 'a e Siasi Lotofale'ia 'i he 'uluaki Sapate mahina ko Me 2010, 'o hange ko ia 'oku tau anga maheni ki ai 'i he ta'u kotoa.

Ko e malanga 'o e katoanga na'e fakahoko pe ia 'e he Faifekau 'o e Siasi Lotofale'ia, Faifekau Goll Fan Manukia pea na'e me'a ai foki mo Nopele Tuita (neongo 'oku 'ikai 'i he 'imisi taa), 'Eiki Lupepau'u, 'Eiki Moheofo, pea pehee foki ki he memipa kakato 'o e Lautohi Faka-Sapate 'a e Vahefaonua Tonga O Aotearoa, Ta'ahine ko 'EIKI 'ANASEINI TUPOU VEIHOA IKALETI OLO-'I-

FANGATAPU PHAEDRA TUITA FUSITU'A.

Ko ia foki na'a ne me'a sipela himi 'uluaki 'o e Malanga Fakame he pongipongi, pea ne toe me'a kamata foki 'i he lesoni 'o 'enau kalasii he Katoanga Fakame 'o e efiapi Sapate. Na'a ne toe maa'imoa hiva foki 'i he taha 'o e ngaahi veesi mei he Tohi Himi 'a e SUTT, pea na'e hoko eni ko e huelo hailaiti 'o e katoanga Fakame.

Na'e fakafofo ki he kau mamata 'a e maa'imoa hiva himi na'e ne fakahokoo he na'e fakamaafana mo'oni mo fakalaumaalie, pea a'u ai pe ki he tutulu 'a e Ta'ahine Pilinisesi, pea lo'imata'ia mo e kakai 'o e Siasi na'a nau tefua he katoanga Fakame. Ko e konga mahu'inga foki 'o e ngaahi katoanga Fakamee ko hono Lotu' mo

hono Tapuaki 'i 'o e longa'i fanau iiki 'oku te'eki kenau lava 'o kau ki he ngaahi lesoni faka-kalasi pea na'e lava lelei mo e ouau ko eni hono fakahoko 'e he Faifekau Goll Fan Manukia.

'Oku hounga'ia mo'oni pea fakatupu fakalotolahi ki he Faifekau, pehe kia Talihau mo e kau taki 'o e Siasi Lotofale'ia 'a e poupoua mai 'a e Fale 'Alo ki he ngaahi ngaue 'a e Siasi mo e Lotu Lelei 'a e 'Eiki. Fakataunge pe na'e ma'u 'e he ngaahi Siasi kotoa 'o e Vahefonua Tonga O Aotearoa ha ngaahi katoanga Fakamee 2010 na'e tolotolahi ai 'a e Laumalie Ma'oni'oni mo Kelesi'ia foki pea mo fiefia ai 'a e 'etau faanau 'o hange ko ia na'e 'inasi ai 'a Lotofale'ia.

'Ofa Atu 'i he 'Eiki.



Ko 'Eiki 'Anaseini Tupou Vaihola lolotonga 'ene me'a sipela Himi 'uluaki 'o e Malanga Fakame:



Na'e kamata pe 'a e Fakame 'i he lotu hengihengi Sapate. Ko e fanau Kindergarten lolotonga 'a 'enau lau 'a e himi tuku 'o e lotu hengihengi: ko 'Olivia Pepa, Melelola Latu, Penisimani Terepo, Sinipata Tapaevalu mo Tevita Manu.



Ko e imisi taa 'o e Pilinisesi Pule 'o Tonga, Pilinisesi Salote Pilolevu Tuita mo e ni'hi 'o e Siasi Lotofale'ia mo 'enau longa'i fanau na'a nau tefua he katoanga Fakamee 2010. 'Oku ha foki 'i he imisi taa 'a 'Eiki Lupepau'u, 'Eiki Moheofo, 'Eiki 'Anaseini Tupou Veihoa, 'Ala-ki-Hihifo Luani, Faifekau Goll Fan Manukia, Faifekau Ma'afu Hosea, Lay Pastor Moi Kaufononga pea mo e Setuata Lotofale'ia, Timote Ta'ufu'ou (kau me'a sea). 'Oku ha mei mui 'a e Pule Lautohi Faka-Sapate, Taukiha'amea Latailakepa.



Ko e konga 'o e faanau hili 'a e fai fatongia he Malanga Fakame pongipongi.

FAKALOTOFALÉ'IA

Ko e ivi liliu mo'ui 'o Sisu

'Oku mahino 'a e ivi 'o e 'Eiki 'i he ngaahi ngaue na'a Ne fai. Ko e ivi 'o e tangataa 'oku fai atu pe pea ongosia; pea hoko 'o li'aki 'a e fatongia koe'uhi kuo 'osi 'a e ivi.

Ka ko e ivi 'o e Laumalie, 'e ope atu ai 'a 'etau fai fatongia poto 'i he lakanga kuo ui kitautolu ki ai 'i he ngaue 'a e 'Eiki. 'I he Tohi 1 Kolinito, vahe 1, veesi 24: 'oku mahino ai, "Ko Kalaisi ko Ia ko e ivi 'o e 'Otua mo e poto 'o e 'Otua."

Vakai ange 'oku tu'u mahanga heni 'a e ivi mo e poto; pea 'e tu'utai mo kaukau 'a hono ngaahi me'a kotoa. Na'e e'a eni 'i he fakamo'ui mahaki na'e fai 'e Sisu (Matiu 9:6-8) - ko e ivi ke fakamolemole 'i angahala 'a e tangata mamatea; talafili ai kau sikalaiepe; mea 'i ia 'e Sisu, 'o Ne folofola mai, "Ko e fe 'oku faingofua; 'a e pehee kuo fakamolemole ho'o ngaahi angahala; pe ko e pehee, tu'u 'o 'eve'eva."

Ko e liliu mo'ui ia na'e fai 'e Sisu; tu'u 'a e mamatea 'o 'eve'eva. Pea 'oku toko lahi mo e kakai mahaki kehe na'e fakamo'ui 'e Sisu; pea ofo 'a e fu'u kakai. (Ngaue 8:10). Kainga; 'oku 'i ai 'a e faingamalie ke hanga 'e he Laumalie 'o fakafo'ou 'etau mo'ui; ke tau hoko 'o taau mo e fanau 'a maama. Ke 'iate kitautolu 'a e 'Eiki. 'Ofa lahi atu. *Faifekau Kilifi Heimuli.*

Prison Fellowship

From page 7

"Ex-prisoners think, 'I am invincible,'" but I tell them, "Guys, you need to be realistic, you have been in prison for a long time and are going to step back into a radically changed world.

"You cannot go back to those people who have got you in trouble in the first place."

Former prison chaplain Father Jim Considine says ex-prisoners are generally not welcomed with open arms.

"Some ex-prisoners are demonised... they are earmarked for life and usually treated abysmally.

"Genuine Christian concern can make a real difference. If Christians accept that each person reflects an image of God and is a child of God, no matter how flawed, then they can bring a different perspective than that of popular current culture to re-integration efforts. "Overcoming community

prejudice and discrimination is a major effort in a society which is obsessed with crime and its effects."

Robin says its Target communities initiative is a "backyard mission" that all churches and communities need to embrace.

He says PFNZ wants the church to lead the way with this new initiative. As a faith-based organisation, it makes sense that support originates within the church.

Today 86 per cent of all prison volunteers come from churches. However the material can easily be adopted and made relevant to any community group.

"Churches are the ones who have understanding" says Robin. "But we are happy for anyone wanting to be involved to do some work on this.

"New Zealand is only seven to eight per cent Christian. For this scheme to work it needs to be wider."

Peace Centre

From page 7

Dr Isak Svenson's area of expertise ranges from religion in conflict resolution and unarmed insurrections, to international mediation.

"Last year I got through approval for a post-graduate diploma and masters in peace and conflict studies," Kevin says. "We're the first university in New Zealand to do that."

The centre has a foundation post-graduate class of 10 students, who come from a wide range of backgrounds.

"They are committed and engaged and come into the centre with a lot of experience, which is great."

There are also three Masters thesis students and three PhD students currently studying at the centre.

"We're looking at building these numbers up. We can go up to about 20 in our masters programme and I don't think we will have any trouble getting there. Our students are loving the course and it's growing nicely," Kevin says. Students and staff are

developing strong contacts in Pacific nations.

"We're really trying to make sense of our bi-cultural traditions and heritage here and what that can teach us about peace building. Students can go into a research stream or practice stream and are working in a range of programmes around the country. Our students are going to be exposed to a range of very different kinds of activities that are generating peace at different levels."

The Aotearoa New Zealand Peace and Conflict Studies Centre Trust has contributed scholarship support for three master's students and two PhDs. The trust has also given money to support one Maori student who has completed an undergraduate degree with strong academic records and wishes to specialise in peace and conflict studies.

The centre plans to offer a summer school in Auckland, and possibly Wellington, which will be at 300 level and open to any interested students.