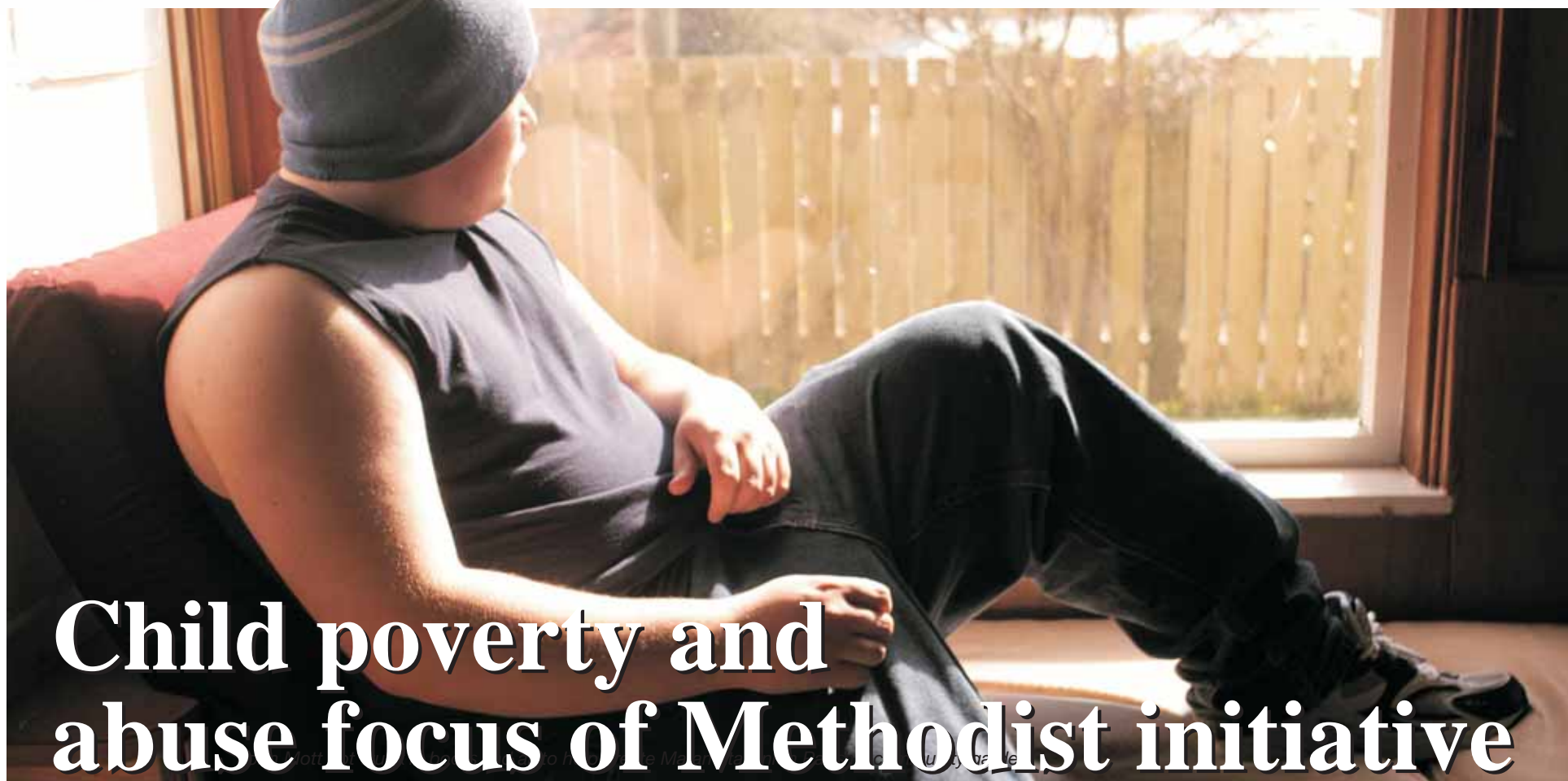


TOUCHSTONE

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



Child poverty and abuse focus of Methodist initiative

The Methodist Church is encouraging its members to help improve the lives of children and young people in their communities.

Too many New Zealand children live lives scarred by poverty, neglect and violence.

Some frightening statistics tell the story. About 230,000 Kiwi kids grow up in poverty - that's 22 percent of the nation's youngest citizens.

NZ social agencies deal with 21,000 confirmed cases of abuse and neglect every year. No doubt many, many more go unreported.

A 2009 study of children's well-being in the 30 developed countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) ranked New Zealand 21st out of 30 for the material well-being of its children and a dreadful 29th out of 30 for children's health and safety. Only Turkey had a worse record for the health of its children.

Behind the numbers is the personal trauma children face growing up hungry, anxious and afraid. For many, this experience leads to difficult adult lives marked by poor schooling, low-wage employment, or crime and imprisonment.

To address this situation the Methodist Church of

New Zealand is calling on its members to take children to heart and make their well-being a focus of their congregational life. To do so the Church is launching the 'Let the Children Live' initiative at its 2012 Conference.

Let the Children Live is to be a defining priority for Te Haahi Weteriana over the next 10 years. It aims to promote the health and well-being of children and youth in the Church and our communities.

Ex-Methodist president Rev Desmond Cooper helped initiate Let the Children Live and is a member of the Council of Conference committee that is implementing it. Desmond says the roots of our poor treatment of children are in New Zealand's high degree of economic inequality.

"As New Zealanders we have many delusions about ourselves. We are 30 years behind most European countries when it comes to cleaning up our environment, and the statistics show we are far from

being a good place to raise children," Desmond says.

"Children are among our most vulnerable people and successive governments have shown their unwillingness or inability to invest in the social infrastructure that will support vulnerable people.

This initiative has the power to re-invigorate our church and give us a fresh sense of meaning and purpose.

Rev Desmond Cooper

"The neglect of our social infrastructure has led to the appalling statistics on the state of our children. It is the old story: society kicks the man, the man kicks the woman, and the woman kicks the child."

Desmond says Let the Children

Live is a way the Church can use its call to mission to address these issues.

"Why does the Church exist? Where should we apply our resources and energy? We exist for the well-being of people, particularly people outside the Church.

"Our Methodist heritage lies firmly in addressing social concerns. Through our parishes and missions, we have always

provided help for people at the bottom of the cliff and lobbied government at the top of the cliff.

"The Methodist Church is not growing today but I think this initiative has the power to re-invigorate us and give us a fresh sense of meaning and purpose. A Church that is seen to be doing good is an attractive Church. In this sense Let the Children Live is a gift from God for us as well as the people we can help."

Let the Children Live will target three problems, poverty, child abuse and teen suicides.

Council of Conference wants to see congregations take up one or more of these causes in their communities. It would like to see the Connexion make money available so that synods could support their congregations in their efforts with resources and ideas.

Wesley Community Action director David Hanna says the Methodist Church of NZ has a long tradition of supporting children and young people.

He would like to see Let the Children Live open up conversations between parishes and their local Methodist Missions as well as other groups in the community who work with children.

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XERO SUM GAME

New accounting standards loom for parishes

Over the next five years the way that financial accounting is done in the not-for-profit sector will change.

Those people who do day-to-day parish accounting work will have to produce annual accounts to meet new national accounting standards developed by the External Reporting Board (XRB). The law will also require that accounts are audited, reviewed or examined by an external organisation but this will depend upon operating expense and size of the parish concerned.

The Connexional Office will help local parishes and other small Methodist entities comply with these new requirements.

Connexional financial services manager Peter van Hout says the Connexional Office has trialled the online accounting system Xero. It has proved to be simple to use and capable of producing the outcomes the Church needs.

"Xero uses non accounting terminology. It is an online system, so the only things you need are a computer, a broadband connection (dialup won't work), a login ID and password, and a printer," Peter says.

"You can do the accounting work from any computer, so long as you have the login and password."

"We are able to offer Xero to the wider Church and have negotiated discounts off the retail price. The Board of Administration will offer an incentive to help parishes and other Church bodies move onto Xero."

Until 30 June 2013 the cost of Xero will be discounted in three ways:

1) Parishes and other groups will not be charged the first three months of the Xero monthly discounted charge of \$40 per month (plus GST if any applies). After that, the monthly fee will apply. The Board of Administration will make a direct debit from the Parish bank account on the 18th day each month to pay Xero.

2) Parishes will not be charged the onetime

setup cost of \$50 to activate the Xero account.

3) Also free will be the first two hours of Connexional office time needed to enter the opening balance sheet, comparatives, and profit and loss accounts to start in Xero. Any additional time required to validate balance sheet items will be charged at the rate of \$70 per hour.

Peter says the new accounting standards framework has been approved by the Government and the XRB.

"We are now waiting for the legislation that will define the new reporting framework. We know that the changes will have a big impact upon what many parishes do and how they report to the Connexional Office and the Charities Commission.

"Over the next 12 months the Connexional Office will present road shows, online forums, and mail outs to keep parishes informed of progress and what it will mean for them."

The Connexion will give parishes options for how they do their accounts to meet the legal requirements and the needs of their congregations.

One option is training for parish treasurers so they can produce accounts to the necessary standards. Another option is that the Connexional Office can do the accounting work. Or parishes may want to work together so that one person does the accounting for many parishes.

The Connexional Office can also offer parishes different levels of access to Xero.

Level 1 is full online access to Xero whereby the parish has full management and access to all accounting functions.

Level 2 is when the Connexional Office provides accounting services, including full management of the bank account, accounts payable and reporting back to the parish.

The Connexional Office can produce end of year financial accounts and reports for a flat fee.

If you have any further questions, feel free to contact Peter van Hout in the Connexional Office.



Minister for Environment Amy Adams led the NZ delegation to the disappointing Rio+20 UN summit.

Rio+20 detours from path to sustainable global economy

By Rev Dr Betsan Martin, Public Questions co-ordinator

The United Nations Conference on sustainable development Rio+20 shows that governments are unable to address the acute ecological crisis of the planet and thus we do not have a road map for a transition to an economy of stewardship.

There were no negotiators for the planet, nor for future generations at Rio+20. Could we really expect such commitments in their absence?

Rio+20 gave government leaders an opportunity to sketch a road map toward a green economy. This means stopping extreme poverty and creating positive policies such as renewable energy. It also means setting up forms of accountability nationally and internationally to report on achieving these changes.

The final Rio+20 document, however, resembles a liturgy empty of meaning. While it abounds with statements of support for sustainable development, there are few commitments, possibly because negotiations were marked by confrontation and division between developed and developing countries.

New Zealand NGOs asked our government to push for commitments to measure sustainability (as opposed to GDP). We also proposed that the Rio conference would adopt a framework of responsibility.

The world's current environmental and economic crises dramatically highlight the climate of irresponsibility that threatens nature and our future generations. Political and economic leaders are only accountable to their constituencies, electors or shareholders, and are bound by laws and trade agreements.

Humanity is in a global community with a shared destiny. Living together as a community requires a common ethical basis. A fundamental value human beings share is our sense of responsibility (that can begin with parenthood) and a sense of community.

The survival of Small Island States and low lying countries like Bangladesh depends on the big economies reversing their climate impact. How can such change be assured? Can there be recourse to justice for climate crimes?

As we overuse scarce resources and exacerbate inequality we create the prelude to conflict. To avoid it we need governance with a mandate for the planet and for future generations.

States are limited by their state mandates. Do we leave it to

multinational corporates with no social and environmental conditions?

International NGOs can serve as models for negotiating across borders for common interests. Groups such as Christian World Service, Oxfam, the Oceans Coalition, and the Antarctic Oceans Alliance can do this but they were not the negotiators at Rio.

At Rio+20 the New Zealand government championed proposals for oceans, water, forests, transport, and food security. Minister for Environment Amy Adams said we did this because of our status and our development interests in the Pacific.

Among the provisions related to oceans was implementation of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This is the international framework to manage oceans beyond national boundaries and stop unregulated fishing. New Zealand's interests are long on management for commercial development and short on safeguarding oceans and fisheries.

Sustainable development and reducing poverty through development are themes in New Zealand aid policy, yet we have no commitments to either principle at home.

The pending Local Government Amendment Bill would remove the clauses on sustainable development and the four well-beings (social, cultural, environmental, and economic) from the Local Government Act.

The proposed sale of state assets threatens confiscation of Maori interests in water. Bringing agriculture into the Emissions Trading Scheme has been deferred.

What comes after Rio?

It is time for all of us, in public and private spheres, to account for actions to the global community. New Zealand NGOs want to see measures for sustainability so that social equity and our use of natural resources are measured in our accounts.

We can set up trade based on sustainable production and consumption. We can save energy and encourage dignified work. Like other countries, we can encourage positive behavior through taxation and create policies that enhance wellbeing. Subsidies to industries that exploit and pollute must stop.

We are pushing for a debate on Rio+20 in Parliament, and we want to see whether we can elicit a turn towards sustainable development from government.



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Economic justice priority at British Methodist Conference

By President Rev John Roberts
The Methodist Church in Britain recognises that it belongs to a wider Methodist family and that its overseas partners make a significant contribution to Conference. I was one of 20 partner church representatives at the 2012 Pre-Conference Consultation and Conference held in Plymouth 30 June to 5 July.

One of the things I first noted at the British Methodist Conference was the differences between the British and New Zealand Churches. Firstly in liturgical dress, the British Conference leaders wear black cassocks or gowns with white Geneva bands, while we tend to wear white albs and red stoles. The British Conference officials wear their attire throughout the life of Conference.

Then there are the differences in decision making. The British Church uses the Westminster decision making process with points of order and voting, while we use consensus. The British church receives ordinands into full connexion on the Saturday, before the ordination service on Sunday. We receive into full connexion following ordination, in the context of the ordination service on Sunday.

The induction of President and Vice-President in the British Church is light on liturgy, in contrast to ours which has a full liturgy.

There were eight ordination services in different locations. I participated in the ordination service at Liskeard. This included reading the epistle and

participating in the laying on of hands. This service had a good feel about it. Another ordination service was held at Gwennap Pit in Cornwall, one of John Wesley's outdoor preaching places.

The item of Conference business that attracted the most attention dealt with ministry formation, training, and theological education, research and development. The church currently has six major educational institutions areas with a number of other smaller facilities. These are now unsustainable with diminishing resources to keep them going. Conference decided to reduce them to two institutions: Cliff College in Derbyshire and the Queens Foundation in Birmingham. Considerable anxiety was expressed by those responsible for institutions facing closure.

Two social issues stood out for me at the British Conference. The first was the formation of a Methodist Tax Justice Network (MTJN). The second was a Living Wage initiative.

Tax justice is seen to be a key issue in the restructuring of the global economy in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis. The vision is of a global economy in which tax systems in all countries are set by democratically elected governments, all taxes are paid by individuals and local and international companies, transparency and reporting is paramount, and tax havens cease to exist. The aim of the MTJN is to have this vision as a fundamental mission objective for the Methodist church



The Methodist Church of Britain Conference 2012 took steps to promote tax justice and fair wages.

nationally and internationally.

The Living Wage initiative is a response to poverty. The Methodist Church in Britain has committed itself to paying the living wage. Currently a minimum hourly rate of £7.60 (£8.30 in London) has been calculated as the rate to enable a person working 40 hours a week to live free from poverty.

Treating staff well and with dignity is seen to make good business sense as well as being morally just. The Central Finance Board (CFB) of the Methodist Church made an agreement with its cleaning contractor to ensure that the living wage was paid to all cleaning staff used to fulfil

the CFB contract.

The church is promoting the living wage through its investments. In 2011 the CFB joined a coalition of responsible investors pushing for change at the UK's biggest companies. It sent letters to 100 companies urging them to become living wage employers. It raised the issue at meetings with several companies, most notably Tesco and HSBC.

The British Methodist Church is alive and well and making creative responses to significant issues on several fronts. There is much the New Zealand Methodist Church can learn from its British counterpart.

Asian theologians explore Christian hospitality

Christian hospitality in the contemporary world was theme of the Seventh Congress of Asian Theologians, held in Seoul, South Korea last month.

Two members of the Methodist Church of NZ - Rev Prince Devanandan and Rev Lynne Frith - took part in the ecumenical event, which is sponsored by the Christian Conference of Asia.

Lynne says it was a real privilege to be part of the gathering of 70 theologians from throughout Asia and the Pacific who were invited to participate in the event.

The Congress included four plenary sessions, panel discussions, and group discussions. Points raised in the discussions were fed back to the full Congress and ultimately into a statement that will be submitted to the World Council of Churches.

The topics of the four plenary sessions were 1) embodying God's hospitality today, 2) Christian unity, 3) hospitality and relations with people of other faiths, and 4) ecological justice.

Lynne says the discussions focused on the real pressing issues facing churches, communities and nation states today, and she was impressed with the progressive, creative

ideas the theologians offered about them.

She says Asian churches still struggle with the aftermath of colonialism and they constantly face interfaith issues because Asian Christians live in villages, towns and cities with people of other faiths.

"Those who spoke about interfaith issues had a strong desire to talk about the world religions as different ways of life. They don't see religion as what we do on Sunday but how we live our lives. Therefore people of other faiths have other ways of seeing the world.

"The point was made over and over again how important it is that we do not approach people of other faiths with a conversion mentality. We were reminded that religious conflict occurs when Christians or members of other religions assume their own superiority.

"A Muslim speaker told us that only a very small minority of Muslims hold extremist views but anti-Islamic views are promoted in Western societies for political purposes."

Lynne says theologians from India, Korea and other nations with a colonial past expressed how the process of decolonisation

still continues. A delegate from Fiji reminded the Congress that the nations of the Pacific are increasingly connected to those of Asia and it is important that Asian Christians be mindful their governments' policies do not create new forms of colonialism.

One contribution Lynne made to the Congress was to offer insights on the experience of her Methodist parish in Auckland, a growing multicultural city with a large number of migrants.

"I discussed how the Pitt Street congregation endeavours to be responsive to an ethnically diverse membership. I also made the point that we are committed to being welcoming and inclusive to gay, lesbian and transgender people. Hospitality should include not only the stranger from another town or country but the strangers already among us, those who we might treat as outsiders.

"I was pleasantly surprised that these ideas were accepted without debate. One section of the final statement says that Asian churches should acknowledge the existence of diverse sexual orientations among their people and be open to include them in their fellowship."

Embracing and Embodying God's Hospitality Today

The opening portion of the message from the 7th Congress of Asian Theologians states:

We affirm our belief that God is the ultimate host of the whole creation, and we are the recipients and agents of God's hospitality through Jesus Christ, churches, religions and creation.

We also affirm that our hospitality is simply an overflowing of God's abundant hospitality and our joyful and thankful response to it. We speak of hospitality in a theological and moral sense, which does not assume any return or profit, and not in a commercialized and commodified sense.

We repent that we Christians in the past-and at times even at the present-have harboured an attitude of superiority to others and have often been lacking in giving due recognition to them, even in providing hospitality, unilaterally playing the role of host.

This is particularly a painful memory in Asia where most of the churches were brought by the Western missions which often coincided with colonial projects.

We hope that we first learn to recognize and embrace God's hospitality through Jesus Christ, churches, religions and creation; and second, commit ourselves to embody God's hospitality in churches, between churches, among religions and in the midst of creation.

We are aware that this may entail a prophetic role to challenge an unjust host, in seeking to provide just and true hospitality, especially to the marginalized.



Rev Lynne Frith (right) with some of the other delegates who discussed interfaith issues, Christians unity and ecological justice at the Seventh Congress of Asian Theologians.

Believe in order to understand

To the editor,
Deirdre De Zoete writes, "Beliefs should remain as theories. It's okay to say we don't know." Does she intend this principle to apply to this belief of hers?

If not, she is being inconsistent. If so, her statement is itself is but an uncertain theory. Either way, we are left at sea, "tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching," (Eph 4:14).

Epistemologically, not to mention soteriologically, we need certainty. Millennia of philosophical theories have taken us no further than Plato. Wisdom tells us that speculation must

give way to revelation, in which we simply listen to and are instructed by the authoritative voice of God as he speaks through the Scriptures, and through his Son to which the Scriptures point.

It is not until we do this that we shall have even the beginning of the certainty we seek and crave. Augustine said, 'credo ut intelligam' - I believe in order to understand.

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble - even epistemological grace. This is why Jesus said, "unless you become like little children, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven".

David Balchin, Waihi

Mighty River opportunity for MCNZ

To the editor,

The forthcoming public share offering by the government of 49 percent of Mighty River Power Ltd on the NZ Stock Exchange gives those to whom we entrust the investments of the Methodist Church of New Zealand the opportunity to add to our current portfolio, and thereby assist in safeguarding the Kiwi ownership of this valuable asset for future generations.

Such a purchase would also reinforce our commitment to ensure "a fair sharing of the

community's resources" as stated in our published Ethical Standards.

Perhaps Te Taha Maori could also consider using this opportunity to promote the purchase of these shares to iwi within their sphere of influence, thus providing the tangata whenua with a tangible as well as symbolic stake and influence in the future of this asset. This could reinforce the standing and place of Te Taha Maori within both the spiritual and social arenas of Aotearoa.

Nigel Young, Christchurch

Opinions sought on Bible in Schools

To the editor,

A debate over Bible in Schools is raging in Auckland. As one of the participants, I would appreciate comment from churches and individuals on the subject.

Bible in Schools is a programme run by the Churches Education Commission, in state primary schools. The NZ Association of Rationalists and Humanists (of which I'm a member) objects, saying it's unfair for children to receive teaching by one religion, while not learning about other religions and non-religious beliefs.

As a Methodist myself, I'm aware many Christians would also see the system as unfair, so I'm trying to get an impression of how much support there is for various options on religious education.

The options that have arisen so far are:

(a) Bible in Schools is fine as it is.
(b) It should be replaced by a comparative religion programme, included in the state school curriculum.

(c) It should be replaced by a programme of comparative religion plus non-religious belief systems.

(d) Bible in Schools should be stopped and there's no need for any replacement programme, because religions and values are already covered in the school curriculum.

(e) Other suggestions.

Please send your comments to me at davidhines@orcon.net.nz. You may wish to include the names of individuals or a tally of opinions from a church group collecting the comments.

David Hines, Auckland

Doubts about Bible in Schools

To the editor,

I have spent many years teaching young children. As a liberal Christian I have grave concerns about the manipulation and indoctrination of impressionable young children exposed to Bible in Schools.

Children's emotional well-being and self-confidence is paramount to good learning. Evangelistic teaching often goes against this when they are exposed to terms like sin, heaven and hell.

If families are interested in their children learning about God they can chose to be proactive in this area themselves. Many schools chose not to participate in Bible in Schools and these young children are still grounded in ethics and values which are part of the primary curriculum.

Christianity should not have a monopoly on values, and I think it causes problems and misunderstandings when people think this is the case.

Anne Blythe, Pt Chevalier, Auckland

The God Particle and Church

To the editor,

In 1900 Lord Kelvin was bold enough to say "There is nothing new to be discovered in physics now. All that remains is more and more precise measurement." Perhaps with the discovery of the Higgs Boson particle, we might be tempted to say something similar about religion.

I'm afraid that I see little in the religious world to make me think otherwise. We seem to be on some sort of mental plateau in the Church with a dogged stating and re-stating of medieval concepts about the nature of God and our relationship to that God.

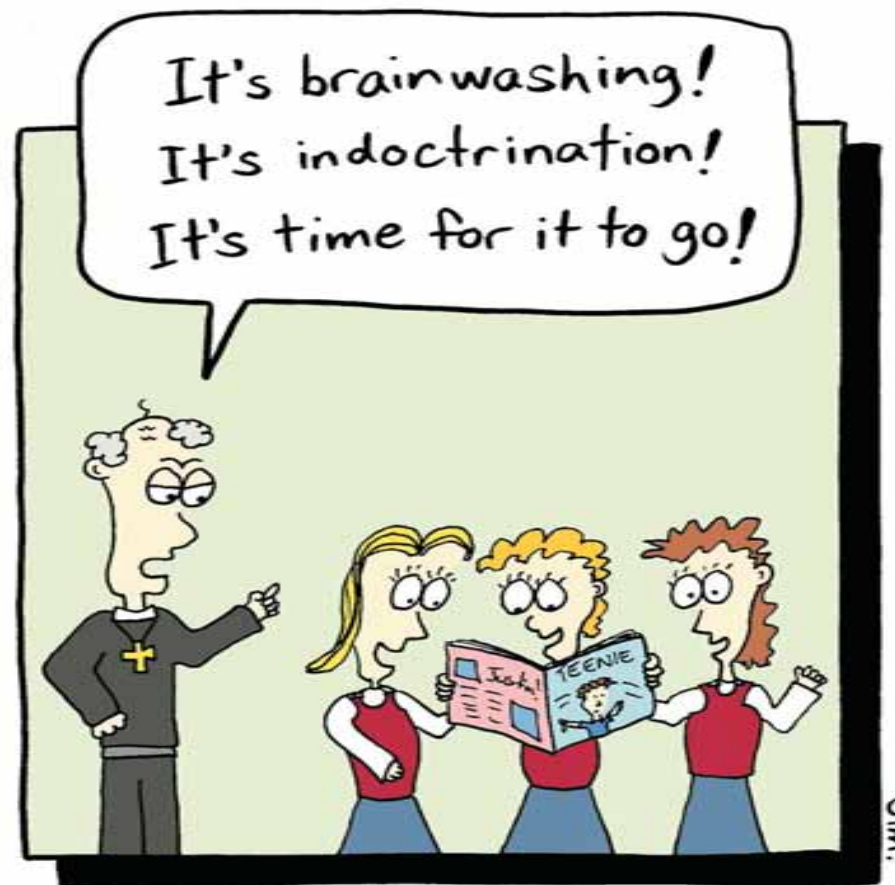
Like Lord Kelvin, it seems we now feel that the only thing we have to do is to fine-tune our faith. The discovery of the so-called 'God Particle',

however, must compel us to realise that we have much work to do if we are even remotely able to meet the challenge of modern particle physics.

This is not to say that we all have to become scientists but, if our faith is based on the mysteries of our physical existence, it appears our refuge has just been significantly reduced.

I wonder if an emphasis on relationships with the other world religions holds the promise of a perspective that doesn't see us in some sort of contest with other faiths. Rather we can emphasise countless people's experience of a dimension that makes sense of an otherwise meaningless physical world.

Eric Laurenson, Auckland



Reverend Olsen was not a fan of the 'Bieber in Schools' programme.

FROM THE BACKYARD

Our garden in winter

Gillian Watkin

It is winter. There is not so much time to do outdoors.

Our garden is well prepared to weather the storms and winds. The hedges are trimmed, there are many bare spaces of soil, the veggie garden is empty but for a few carrots and cabbages just planted. We cover the hibiscus each night to protect it from frost. Daffodil bulbs are just starting to appear from the ground.

We have had the arborists in to treat our elderly fruit trees with respect, before the birds started nesting. The grapefruit and the apricot could well be 50 years old. The grapefruit was thick and dense and growing bigger and bigger, the apricot had been wind damaged and looked a little sparse and fragile. With expert attention they can carry on fruiting for more years. Our small two year old trees were pruned, now they look like proper Hawkes Bay trees.

Winter is traditionally the time for seed catalogues. We used to get whatever we fancied, but gradually came to understand the best crops for us to grow. There are so many roadside stalls and farm gate sales which sell equally fresh produce cheaply.

Garlic is one plant we decided to give space and time too. Garlic is never cheap but it keeps well. The first year we wanted to plant it in late May and we were told stock would only be available in late June as the garden centre was adamant that it had to be planted in the week of the shortest day. The trouble is that plants and weather do not run to calendar

time. Once upon a time one could buy a bulb from the grocery shop and use that. Now many store bought products are treated to prevent sprouting. The imported product has also gone through rigorous biosecurity processes and has its roots cut off so it will not grow. That is the way to tell imported garlic from home-grown NZ in the shops.

So this year - in our perfect winter, singing our winter songs 'In the bleak midwinter, frosty wind made moan, Earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone' - we went on the great garlic search.

Shop one, sold out; shop two, our favourite garden centre, had tiny organic corms at exorbitant prices. Shop three, like goldilocks porridge, was just perfect.

To plant garlic you need enough space for it to grow undisturbed for at least 100 days. Take a bulb, separate all the cloves and plant each near the top of a well composted soil.

Garlic is an ancient vegetable, traced back more than 6000 years, mentioned in the Bible as one of the good things left behind by those in exile. It is a flavour, a medicine, a natural antiseptic. It is the stuff of legends and myths and really great food. To have it growing is a privilege.

Now we wait. "Everything that slows us down and forces patience, everything that sets us back into the slow circles of nature is a help. Gardening is an instrument of grace." writes author May Sarton. Amen to that.



Church leaders open dialogue with Prime Minister

A reflection by
President Rev John Roberts

Following a June meeting of national church leaders with Prime Minister John Key, and his deputy Bill English, a way for ongoing dialogue between the churches and the nation's leaders has been created.

The church leaders who met with the heads of state were from those churches that are members of the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services: Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Presbyterian and Salvation Army. The church leaders also had advisers from their social service agencies present at the meeting. David Hanna was the Methodist adviser.

At previous meetings of church leaders with the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister, the focus had been on

papers prepared by church leaders and their advisors on particular issues. It was felt that this approach was no longer working, so the church leaders suggested a different approach, that of building a relationship for ongoing dialogue.

At the beginning of the meeting Prime Minister John Key outlined his current concerns. At the top of his list was the global financial crisis that has been going on for some time. Other issues were: consolidating the bureaucracy of government ministries and departments, welfare reform, youth justice, schools, and alcohol and drugs.

The church leaders pointed out that the churches have a large percentage of the population amongst their members and their churches are diverse

communities. Churches have an understanding of what is happening at grass root levels.

Churches also have social service programmes that are functioning well. They draw on expert analysis from the basis of enduring values and principles. They offer a positive transformative presence in communities and have a genuine concern for the plight of the poor.

The Prime Minister and his Deputy were open to an ongoing dialogue with church leaders. They suggested that the advisors to church leaders could meet with Ministry and Departmental CEOs in the Social Sector Forum of government agencies.

In a debrief following the meeting church leaders saw a willingness and an

opportunity for greater engagement around some specific social issues. As one said, we should "Find something we can engage with and get some early runs on the board." Crime and punishment, housing, and social service funding were mentioned as possible starters.

The church leaders' advisers were to meet before the end of July, and the church leaders will meet again by the end of August. These meetings are to further the opening of dialogue between the churches and government on social issues. One of the Prime Minister's advisers offered to assist further with working through what the potential mechanism for church leader engagement could look like.

The possibility of engaging with other political leaders is also to be explored.

Where do we place our faith?

To the editor,

In her letter to the editor in the July Touchstone, Deidre De Zoete writes "Thinking people cannot believe blindly with faith and trust". What does she mean by "blindly"?

In our relationship with God that is exactly what we as professing Christians can only do. We ourselves are not God and we cannot have complete knowledge of God. Our intelligent understanding of God and His ways and His abilities to do or to achieve is virtually nothing.

We must remember one very important warning in Scripture, which says "all liars have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone," (Rev 21:8). God never condemned anyone for questioning Him. But, as with the disciples and so with us, He expects us to make the effort to use the intelligence He has created in us to understand why His demands are so severe but not impossible for us.

I get the feeling from Deidre's comments that we should believe scientists, maybe even evolutionists, above the Bible. But they talk fairy tale talk of 'millions and millions of years ago', when no one but God existed, and certainly no one of our creation period from Adam to the present age.

If the creation story is wrong, then God

lied to Moses. If any other part of Scripture is wrong then God and Christ lied, and He must cast himself into the lake of fire.

Scientists know nothing other than what they observe and can only theorize on what happened to the observed thing in the past. They cannot allow for God to make changes.

God has given everyone born on earth the right to accept Him and His Christ and to follow His will and plan. This is the covenant of free choice. He cannot force us to accept Him because as soon as He does that, He has broken his covenant with mankind.

That covenant also applies to the angels as well as Satan and his demons. God has to allow Satan to carry on his work until his allotted time expires. Whereas we have only until we die, Satan has been given approximately 8000 years.

The rest of Deidre's letter would take much longer to reply to but to say "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, it is evidence of things we cannot see," Heb 11:1. Faith is not required for things we can see. Faith shows God how much we love and trust him.

(This is an abridged version of a longer letter).

AK Nielsen, Lower Hutt

Petition seeks end to street prostitution

To the editor,

Years ago I heard a preacher ask 'What gives you holy discontent?' He then asked 'What are you going to do about it?' Freedom from Sexual Exploitation is my answer to those questions.

When sexual intimacy becomes a commercial service, the moral fabric of our society is deeply damaged. We believe the Prostitution Reform Act (PRA) passed in 2003 has not only encouraged more men to buy sex but has transformed prostitution into an acceptable, even attractive job for young, poor women and men in New Zealand.

I agree with missionary Mark Crawford who says that "If no prostituted person is beyond the reach of God's grace, then no church or Christian can be exempt from concern and engagement on these issues at some level."

Mark asks question "Who wants them more? Do we, God's people, want these women and girls [and men] free more than the forces keeping them there?" I believe we should all, as Christians, be asking the question to ourselves and our churches.

The aims and objectives of Freedom from Sexual Exploitation are to challenge the failure of the PRA and to suggest a better way forward. We have launched a national petition asking the government to consider a national plan of action that would combat street prostitution by passing a law that makes the purchase of sexual services illegal.

Our motivation is to stand up against the purchasers who drive the demand and to call for laws that protect the women and children of our country.

The biggest ally Satan has in the church today is that of apathy. We ask you to please make a stand with us and be a voice for those that are being seduced by the great seducer.

You can help by downloading the petition found from our website www.ffse.org.nz. We ask that you help us by raising awareness and collecting signatures on the petition for us to forward to Parliament on 20 November 2012.

Beth Subritzky,
Freedom from Sexual Exploitation,
Beachlands

LIFE WITH DISABILITY

By Bev Sutherland

There are as many attitudes about disability as there are people with disabilities so I am speaking only for myself, not anybody else.

At birth it was obvious that I had dislocated hips, double scoliosis of the spine, and a malformed jaw. I was diagnosed as grossly mentally retarded. Twenty-two years later it was discovered that I have a sensory neuropathy meaning I lack sense of touch, taste or smell.

A myth to discard is the one that if you're born with a disability you automatically know how to cope with it, and have no need to grieve for the life possibilities that were never yours. Not true.

Sometimes the Bible gets in the way. We are familiar with the verses stating categorically that physical infirmity is the consequence of sin (sometimes going back generations), or evil spirits.

In John 9.1 Jesus is asked whether the man's blindness is his fault or the fault of his parents. Jesus replies "Neither this man nor his parents sinned, he was born blind so God's works might be revealed in him."

The Jesus Seminar teaches us that not all sayings attributed to Jesus were necessarily his words, but words the writers thought fitted with how they understood his teachings.

Not experiencing taste or texture is difficult to imagine. Tutorials with students brought a wide variety of questions. Some were basic, like how I determine water temperature, and how do I manage eating. I answer that I choose food by what I can safely manage; I'm aware of the risk of choking.

Some questions make me fear for society when the students are released into an unsuspecting public; questions like 'Do you think your life would have been different if you didn't have



Bev Sutherland

disabilities?' And one very vocal student, hearing that I was able to drive in spite of not feeling my hands or my feet, raised his hand yet again, and asked me where I drive. After pausing a second or two, I replied that I try to avoid the footpath!

I found a book years ago about chronic illness, and responses to it that had a profound impact on me. It made the point that traditionally in our culture, in order for society to function, individuals are required to not be too open about their emotions. This goes for family as well.

I was aware at an early age that some family members saw my disabilities as being their cross to bear. It also applies to the wider circle of friends, and to the medical profession. In my experience, medical professionals are somewhat uncomfortable when patients respond emotionally.

Bureaucracies don't necessarily help, and it's fair to say it's true of some parts of the Church. In my days in the charismatic movement people kept wanting to pray for me. Finally I began saying if you want to pray for me,

great, I'll take all the help I can get, but pray that I'll be given the resources to cope with whatever I have to deal with.

This attitude of needing to fix things is quite common, and I suspect partly comes from our very human discomfort with difference and with powerlessness.

Unfortunately, this lesson of trying not to burden others with my problems means I have to learn to give myself permission to be more open sometimes, when it feels safe. That's a hard one for me.

Practical stuff is easy: keep walk-ways uncluttered. If you know someone uses a wheelchair or motorized scooter, ensure there's space before the person arrives. The don'ts; if I offer to do something, please don't decide for me that I shouldn't do it. Feel free to offer help, but please don't try to organise me. I can be very uncooperative when I feel I'm being managed!

Baron von Hugel, a modernist Christian theologian writing in the early 1900s wrote "Christianity allowed the soul, encouraged the soul to sob itself out." I can identify with that. I, and I am sure many others with disabilities, need to feel we have permission at times to share that pain is constant, that exhaustion is constant, that the feeling of being "other" is hard, that new friendships will probably develop into a disability awareness exercise, and that we DO care that life's not going to magically get better.

We need people who will remain with us in our pain. That is a lot to ask of anyone but one of the greatest gifts.

HONEST TO GOD

By Ian Harris

Spirituality versus religion

It is common in New Zealand today to hear people say 'no' to religion and 'yes' to spirituality.

It is as if spirituality is pure and free while religion - and especially, horror of horrors, 'organised religion' - has been tarnished beyond redemption.

I have mixed feelings about that. For many people, spirituality is a positive term reminding them that there is more to human experience than can be objectively observed, measured, or explained in physical ways. When two people listen to the music of Bach, for example, one may feel deeply moved and the other be bored. Similarly, natural beauty may inspire awe, or indifference.

Those who are moved by such experiences may describe them as spiritual, or they may not. They would certainly say they were enriched by them, and perhaps have a sense of being in the presence of something bigger than themselves. In religious settings, ritual, music and stirring words can produce a similar response.

All these experiences, however, occur within the ordinary bounds of human existence. They do not require a supernatural reality to explain them. They are part of the texture of life in this world, and should be valued as such.

This is the positive meaning of spirituality. More suspect is the way the word is used to suggest that we are surrounded by, or infused with, a misty-cum-mystical quality providing a sort of medium for the inner life.

That may seem satisfying to some people but it can end up being merely self-indulgent. It also runs the risk of suggesting that whatever any one person feels about the non-material aspects of life is as valid as what anyone else thinks, because 'spirituality' makes it so.

Not so. Spirituality can easily tip over into superstition, and New Age cults, fascination with the occult, crystals, tarot cards, horoscopes, the revival of witchery are all evidence that superstition is alive and well today. Investing them with 'spirituality' does not make them any more valid.

But is the religion that the New Ageists have spurned any better? That depends on what people understand by the word.

Assumptions that religions are repositories of superstition, or oppressive power structures,

or the opiate of the people - or even that they are all centred on a God of some description - are lazy generalities. Some of that is true some of the time but it is sometimes also demonstrably false. It depends partly on where you look, and partly on what you want to see.



Ian Harris

Good religion, for example, frees us from superstition. It has been a force for liberation in many people's lives and societies. Classical Buddhism has no overarching deity.

The word 'religion' is often used to refer to a specific set of beliefs and practices, but there is a more pragmatic way of looking at it, summed up in Italian scholar Carlo Della Casa's definition of religion as "a total mode for the interpreting and living of life".

As such, it serves a number of useful purposes. For starters, it expresses what people believe to be of ultimate worth and validity to them. It helps them to create meaning for their life and times, and provides direction and purpose both for individuals and for the society in which their religion is practised.

Religion puts people in touch with their cultural past. It promotes a unifying vision of the world and expresses that vision through myth and music, poetry and art. It draws people together in communities of faith.

It gives them a shared vocabulary and set of symbols which enable them to celebrate their life and make connections with wider society and with all of nature. Through the lively interaction of all of these, it shapes people's attitudes and behaviour.

Religion is a human creation, and at its best a worthy one. But being human, it must adapt as the ultimate questions of life and meaning press on people in new ways as the world around them changes.

Seeing destiny in terms of going to heaven and avoiding hell, for example, was central to people in medieval times but is a quaint irrelevance today, including for many in the churches. The future of humanity on a planet whose resources are coming under increasing pressure, not least from the human population explosion, is a far more pressing concern.

Irrelevant religion will wither and die, and so it should. But there is still a place for pragmatic religion, even and especially in our secular world. And yes, it will need to be organised.

Asset sales and ownership issues muddy the waters

*By Dr Arapera Bella Ngaha
Maori have always maintained that their relationship with the land and waters of Aotearoa is one of responsibility and care. Each tribal region has land and waterways that have nurtured and sustained their people since their beginnings, and they maintain that they have the responsibility to care for and maintain these resources for the benefit of all who live in their region.*

This care of land and waterways is an expression of chieftainship guaranteed to Maori in Article Two in the Treaty of Waitangi, and customary law interests have ensured the ability to carry out that care.

Management of our waterways is primarily the domain of Regional Councils although there are a number of examples where co-management practices with the Crown via Regional Councils and Maori working together have been implemented and benefit all New Zealanders (see Co-management of the Conservation Estate, the Waikato River and the Volcanic Cones of Auckland). Such examples show how Maori customary law interests have been recognised, legislated and successfully incorporated into managing these resources.

The Crown's proposed partial sale of 49 percent of the state-owned power company assets assumes the Crown's right to divest shares in public assets without consideration of customary law interests that Maori, the Crown's treaty partner, have maintained. Maori are

challenging that assumption.

So what is it that Maori want? The NZ Maori Council has taken a claim to the Waitangi Tribunal seeking to delay the proposed asset sales until Maori interests in the matter of customary law rights relating to those assets have been investigated and addressed. If sales to private organisations go ahead Maori interests can be ignored because private organisations are not required to observe treaty obligations.

When the State Owned Enterprises Act 1984 was enacted, Maori challenged the Crown's right to sell off public assets which might be subject to treaty claims, without regard to their treaty obligations. Sections 9 and 27a were inserted into the Act to ensure that the Crown was duty bound to observe their treaty obligations and that private enterprise, who might buy those assets, were also appraised of that duty.

Late in 2011 the National Party signalled that the legislation regarding partial asset sales would drop the treaty clauses, as they did not apply to private enterprise. In January 2012 the Maori Party called for Section 9 to be retained in this new legislation, to ensure the Crown's treaty obligations remained.

The Foreshore and Seabed Act 2004 effectively quashed the right of Maori to test their claim of 'ownership/customary guardianship' of the seabed and foreshore that they have been responsible for, in the courts of law. Having their civil rights denied - i.e., to test their claim in the courts of this land - created the backlash that was the

Foreshore and Seabed debacle, divided the nation and was the catalyst for the creation of the Maori Party. No-one wants a repeat of that situation.

The Prime Minister's statement 'that nobody owns the water' serves only to muddy the waters. He uses the concept of 'ownership' of water as understood in western terms, as the total control over an item or commodity. But, ownership in that sense is not how Maori see their role regarding the waters of this land, and that is not what this case is about. The Prime Minister's remarks about the Crown not needing to abide by the Waitangi Tribunal's recommendations before the process had begun were insulting to all New Zealanders who have put their energies and their good faith behind our legal processes.

This case is about treaty rights. Not all water related issues will have Maori customary interests but, where they are present, Maori are saying "let's have the conversation about how these interests might be addressed before any proposed sales commence."

In the multi-ethnic society that is Aotearoa/New Zealand, Maori are seeking resolutions that are fair and just. In 1840 we agreed to share our land through a treaty of friendship and co-operation. We are the first nations, indigenous peoples in this land. We have no other. If as a church we take our bicultural journey, our bicultural relationship seriously, then we need to get behind and support Maori's quest for rights-based justice.

Pakeha church in uncertain waters

*By Rev Ian Hanley,
Whangaparaoa Parish*

In the July edition of Touchstone, there is a delightful cartoon of a Bishop standing by a sign that says 'Gay Marriage', as a passenger liner sails off in to the distance leaving the 'Church' behind.

The problem with that picture, if we change the metaphor slightly, is the Pakeha presbyters available for stationing as part of the Tauwi process this year would have the ship full of parishioners sailing in to port with no presbyters on the shore to greet them! At least not enough to meet their needs.

I have been an Anglican priest for 32 years and a presbyter coming up to his first birthday.

It is very important to be concerned with social issues and to debate them appropriately but equal concern must be given to the shape and future of the Methodist Church in coming years.

Add 15 years to your age right

now. Some of us will be here, some won't. What do you think the Methodist Church should look like in the years to come? Are we doing some honest planning about it, or are we just letting the future as it rolls out be our solution?

Clearly we are going to be a multi-cultural Church with the excitement and challenges this will bring. Some congregations are already there, many more will follow. English may well not be the first language of the presbyter, if the congregation can actually find one and perhaps a young one (under 50 years of age) at that.

Local Shared Ministry is and will be playing an important role. It may very well become the norm for Churches with less than 100 people in the congregation. That may free the Pakeha side from 'museum keeping' to more active 'great commission' action.

Generally, the Pakeha part of Tauwi is older and most commonly retired. That is an important and

worthwhile ministry but when people come to a Methodist Church or indeed any other denomination, they ask subconsciously at least, 'Is there anyone of my age and interests here?' If not, where do they go? Probably to the local Baptist or Pentecostal Church and dare I say it, even to the Anglicans.

Paraphrasing Ken Booth and Jenny Dawson in 'Practising the World's Future', I trust Conference might give thought to and actual solutions to these questions.

"The [Church] always needs to... say: 'What is God's mission for you here? How are you responding to that call of Mission? And - crucially for the future... What are you doing to ensure that this [Methodist Church] is vital and growing? Who will be doing Christ's work of ministry here in [15] years' time?'"

Ministry is a Lay and Ordained partnership but one is popping its clogs and the other is a scarce resource. I'm just saying!



Archbishop Winston Halapua addresses the Anglican Church's General Synod.

Pacific Anglicans reject worldwide Anglican Covenant

Methodist Church of New Zealand president Rev John Roberts as a guest at the Anglican Church General Synod in Nadi, Fiji last month.

John says ahead of the gathering there was some debate amongst New Zealand Anglicans as to whether it should be held in Fiji. Because the invitation to hold it there came from the Diocese of Polynesia, it was decided to accept.

The General Synod expressed its appreciation to the Fiji Government for setting a timeline on holding a general election in 2014.

In a joint opening statement, the three archbishops, David Moxon (Tikanga Pakeha), Brown Turei (Tikanga Maori) and Winston Halapua (Tikanga Pasifika) noted that we live in a time of great change that presents an opportunity for the church to be courageous and creative.

"We live in a time of such violence and poverty that God calls us to focus on those who are struggling and suffering. Wherever poverty and injustice rob people of a good life, we are called like the Good Samaritan to be a life giving neighbour," they said.

John was asked to briefly address the General Synod. He conveyed the greetings of the Methodist Church and said Methodists are looking to a growing relationship with the Anglican Church. His presence at the General Synod was a sign of the seriousness with which Methodists take the Anglican-Methodist Covenant signed in 2009.

In a later address David Moxon referred to the Covenant, stating, "The task ahead is to develop a 'road map' for mutual recognition of the ministry of ordination and honouring of respective models of episcopacy for the Aotearoa New Zealand context, and flax root developments that both

celebrate the existing joint activity and encourage further ministry."

During the General Synod, the Fiji Sun newspaper reported the Anglicans were debating two hot topics, the ordination of gay and lesbian priests and the blessing of same gender relationships.

The Church has set up a commission, to look into these matters. Archbishop Winston Halapua said the commission was established to assist the whole church debate with prayer, research and respectful discussions. The Commission will carry out its work over the next two years and will table its report at the 2014 General Synod.

A motion presented to the General Synod asked that the church hold conversations about the nature of marriage and the issue of gay and lesbian relationships.

As a result of the controversy over the consecration of an openly gay bishop, Gene Robinson, and the blessing of same-sex unions, Anglican leaders from around the world met in Lambeth Palace in 2003 in an attempt to avoid a schism on the issue. The result was the proposed worldwide Anglican Covenant, which is seen as a way to ensure future contentious actions are not taken without consultation with the whole Anglican Communion.

The General Synod stated that it was unable to adopt the proposed covenant due to concerns about Section 4, that refers to churches taking actions or decisions that may be deemed controversial and incompatible with the Covenant, and the consequences flowing from this.

The General Synod went on to affirm the commitment of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia to the life of the Anglican Communion.

MCNZ President issues statement on Methodist Church in Fiji

In July the President of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Rev John Roberts, made a solidarity visit to the Methodist Church in Fiji. He visited the Methodist Church's theological college and lay training centre, and he received a detailed briefing from Church leaders.

In response to the situation the Church faces under the Fijian military government, he issued the following statement:

"The Methodist Church in Fiji has faced extreme hardship since the military coup of December 2006. It continues to be oppressed. Soon after the coup the Methodist Church in Fiji sought dialogue with the military regime, with a view to achieving forgiveness and reconciliation. However this was declined by the regime and repression of the Church followed.

"There have been 20 pre-court trial conferences involving charges laid against Methodist Church leaders. These have been costly for the church and its officials in more ways than one.

"Prior to the lifting of the military regimes Public Emergency Regulations (PER) in 2012, no Methodist Church meetings were allowed throughout Fiji and national leaders of the church were banned from overseas travel, so they could not attend

church gatherings in other parts of the world.

In recent times the police have taken over responsibility for security matters in Fiji through the Public Order Amendment Decree 2012 (POAD). This has resulted in some relaxation of restrictions, and the Church has applied for a permit to meet. But when the Church's Standing Committee met recently it was told that representatives of the regime were to be present, it was only to meet in the Centenary Church in Suva, the hours of meeting were to be 8:00am to 6:00pm; the agenda was not to include discussion of any political matters, and minutes of the meeting were to be supplied to the police.

"This year, the Methodist Church in Fiji has been granted permission to hold a version of its annual Conference. If the permit is not withdrawn it will be the Church's first Conference in four years.

"However strict conditions have been laid down in the permit that has been issued. The meeting is to be held for three days only (normally Conference lasts two weeks) the meeting time is from 8:00am to 8:00pm, the meeting is to be confined to the Centenary Church premises in Suva, church

matters only are to be discussed i.e. no political issues are to be discussed, no request can be made to extend the timeframe during the meeting, and the traditional choral festival will not be held alongside the Conference.

"The Methodist Church is the only Church in Fiji to be treated in this way. It has been singled out for oppressive measures because it has held out against the illegality of the military regime. The repressive measures taken against the Methodist Church have been painful for faithful church members throughout Fiji.

"The military regime's treatment of the Methodist Church in Fiji clearly contravenes the right to freedom of religious expression enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 (and which Fiji has ratified). It is also a denial of justice. The God of the Bible is a God of justice. Injustice, such as prevails in Fiji, must be addressed.

"The President of the Methodist Church of New Zealand calls on the military regime in Fiji to enter into genuine dialogue, not only with the Methodist Church, but all churches in Fiji, with a view to replacing injustice with justice and facilitating the process of transition to democratic rule in the country through free and fair elections to be held in 2014."

Leave a Lasting Legacy

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

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Methodist Trust Association

Results to 30 June 2012

	6 Mths to 30.06.12	12 Mths to 30.06.12
Income Fund A	5.87%	6.11%
Income Fund B	5.48%	5.78%
Growth and Income Fund	4.00%	4.21%

Income Distributions for the quarter totalled \$2,767,075

Contact email: info@methodist.org.nz

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Time to close the book on Bible in Schools?

By David Hill
Generations of New Zealand school children have been introduced to Christian values through the Christian Education Commission's Bible in Schools programme, now known as Christian Religious Education (CRE). Some believe it is time for change, however.

After more than a century, is Bible in Schools out of date in New Zealand's increasingly multi-cultural and secular society?

Secular Education Network religious liaison and Methodist lay preacher David Hines thinks so. He says CRE is "an exclusively Christian programme that is unfair to kids whose parents follow other religions and to kids whose parents are not religious at all".

David says opponents of CRE have a range of views from replacing it with a comparative religion programme to ending it altogether.

The Christian Education Commission runs CRE and its website says CRE dates back to 1897, when Nelson minister Rev J McKenzie persuaded the Education Board to allow him to organise religious instruction in Nelson with ministers from other denominations.

A loophole in the law allowed religious teaching for half an hour one day per week when the school was officially 'closed'. By 1910 about 10 percent of primary schools followed the Nelson system and by 1965 around 50 percent of New Zealand schools were using Bible in Schools.

Commission chief executive Simon Greening says the curriculum approved by school boards is of a high quality and fits within the New Zealand Curriculum Framework.

"We educate children about Bible-based values in a Christian context. We are not there to convert children to Christianity or to evangelise in any way or form," Simon says.

"Our programmes are not

discriminatory in nature. Schools have the option of providing education about other religions should they choose. The Education Act does not state that religious instruction should only be provided in relation to Christianity.

"Religion should be taught, within the state school system, as part of a well-rounded education. In particular Christianity should be taught because it is a core belief system which forms part of our heritage and history as a country."

Simon says the Education Act did not simply give the commission the right to teach CRE to schools, but rather "it gives school boards the discretion as to whether they will allow the programme in their school".

The Methodist Church of New Zealand is one of a number of denominational members of the Christian Education Commission.

Methodist Tauwi Pakeha ministry director Rev Nigel Hanscamp says CRE is an important part of the Methodist church's mission resourcing.

"We are fully supportive of it. It provides an opportunity for Christian values to be put in schools. They have very clear boundaries of what is acceptable and these are not to be crossed. So they are not a fanatical organisation."

Nigel says the Methodist Church is now represented by Esme Cole on the Commission's board and Methodist Mission Resourcing supports two new initiatives - chaplaincy in primary schools and one-on-one mentoring.

He would like to see more Methodists involved in the programme as volunteer teachers. The commission provides good training and excellent support to participants, he adds.

Auckland Anglican Bishop Rt Rev Ross Bay has come out in support of CRE. He says "Christianity has a great deal to offer" and he is convinced students



Is Bible in Schools the best way to teach religion to children in multicultural New Zealand?

benefit from understanding the part Christian faith has played in the development of our heritage.

"The New Zealand Curriculum places a high bar on the expectation that students will develop a sense of values through their learning experience. There is a specific expectation that students will come to understand the values on which our cultural traditions and institutions are based, and understand the values of other groups and cultures," Ross says.

However, opponents say children also need to understand the values of other groups and cultures so it is time for change.

Interfaith educator and former Council of Christians and Jews co-president Jean Holm says the designers of CRE "claim they are broadminded and that they are not brainwashing children, but the fact they assume Christian beliefs about God and Jesus are true, shows they

are brainwashing".

Jean helped set up religious studies syllabuses in Britain during the 1970s and 1980s, and favours this kind of approach for New Zealand.

"Religious Studies is a statutory subject in the UK. Syllabuses are created by committees of representatives of different faiths. They cover material for primary and secondary schools. Different regions of the country are able to use this material, but can also add or subtract material, to suit local needs."

She says religious studies helps children learn about the practices and beliefs of major groups in their communities but it is not education into a religion and it does not criticise other religions.

David Hines says he has spoken to several Auckland school principals about their experience of CRE. One school pulled out after 50 students were withdrawn from the classes,

while another pulled out after 40 Muslim students were withdrawn.

"The principals said it makes it very difficult when they have to organise other activities and supervision for such a large number of students," David says.

Another Auckland school stopped offering the CRE programme as some of the volunteer teachers were providing inappropriate answers to student questions, David adds.

Touchstone attempted to contact the schools concerned but they chose not to comment.

Simon Greening says the Christian Education Commission has a clear code of expectations which all CRE teachers are expected to abide by. He did not explain how this was monitored or enforced.

How schools view Bible in Schools

Schools in Auckland and Canterbury were contacted in the course of researching this article. Most were either unwilling to comment or said they did not offer Christian Religious Education (CRE) or Bible in Schools or any other religious programme but did not give a reason.

The following schools which were willing to comment:

Addington Primary School (Christchurch) - after consultation with their school community the school chose to stop offering CRE and now offers Christian Club one day a week during the lunch hour. It is totally voluntary.

Ashgrove Primary School (Rangiora) - principal Christine Chadwick says the staff found CRE

took up too much time out of the school curriculum. After conducting a survey of parents several years ago, they decided to opt out.

Ashley Primary School (North Canterbury) - principal Craig Mullan says his school uses CRE. "It works very, very well with our kids teaching them old fashioned values. It is pretty much tied in with our own values of honesty and respect. If we can help develop those things I think it is really important," Craig says.

"We have canvassed our parents and we have never had any negative responses. We have had a couple of kids opt out - that is the parent's prerogative. Parents are entitled to come in and have a look at the programme."

How other faiths view Bibles in Schools

Several representatives of other faiths in Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch were contacted by Touchstone for their thoughts on Christian Religious Education (CRE) or Bibles in Schools. These are the ones who were willing to comment:

Wellington Mosque leader Sheikh Mohammad Amir says he would like to see New Zealand children learn about different religions.

"Education should be based on the needs of the society. We need to face the reality. It is very important that our children have an understanding of the people around them with whom they are going to live for the rest of their

lives," Mohammad says.

He says teaching about different religions in schools "will only bring good things. Children will be more tolerant if these things are nurtured from an early stage."

Wellington Liberal Jewish Congregation spiritual director Joellen Puckor has concerns about teaching the Bible in the classroom.

"The children should know the Bible. It is important but we need to be really careful how we teach it. Children from a non-Christian faith may find it really difficult.

They are learning a certain way of reading it and if we teach them stuff at that age it is what

they believe," Joellen says.

"The lack of Bible knowledge is sad but the public school is not the place unless it is taught in a really careful way."

Joellen believes a religious studies programme which looks at different faiths would be more appropriate than CRE.

A spokesperson from Swaminarayan Hindu Temple in Auckland says Hindu children participate in CRE and with the full support of their families.

"It would be better if they incorporated other religions. But I don't have any problem with other religions because they are all talking God and they are teaching the same values."

'I AM THE BREAD OF LIFE'

REV GREG HUGHSON
REFLECTS ON JOHN 6

The lectionary readings for August take us on a journey through the sixth chapter of John's gospel.

Throughout John 6, Jesus is in provocative dialogue with three groups - the Jews, the crowd, and his disciples. All three groups are very keen to discern who Jesus really is and what he has to offer. He does not make it easy for them, or for us.

Many of his metaphorical sayings are puzzling. A major theme in this chapter has to do with how Jesus' presence and influence can be thought of as 'feeding' or nurturing humankind. Before they will believe in Jesus, the crowd want proof that he will meet their everyday food needs. They want a sign similar to the manna from heaven arranged by Moses centuries earlier.

Jesus takes the discussion to a deeper level. He declares, "Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the

bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven."

"Sir," they said, "always give us this bread", to which Jesus replies, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty".

John's gospel proclaims that Jesus is God's ultimate gift to humanity, and that Jesus will meet all the needs of those who choose to abide in him. Jesus challenges the crowd not to work for food that spoils but for food that endures to eternal life, spiritual nurture which the Son of man will provide.

John's gospel presents Jesus as the one upon whom God the Father has placed his seal of approval, the unique one who can authentically be designated as "the bread of life". Jesus declares that it is "my Father's will that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have

eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day". (6:40)

For the Johannine community, around the turn of the first century, Jesus was indeed experienced as the "living bread that came down from heaven". Whoever 'eats' and psychologically internalises this bread, will live forever! This bread is the flesh of Jesus, the body which he will give up for the life of the world.

On hearing these mysterious ideas, many of Jesus' disciples struggled to understand what Jesus was trying to convey. It was and still is "hard teaching" (6:60) It is not surprising that from this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him (6:66).

Each disciple was challenged by Jesus as to whether or not they wanted to remain with him. Now, 1900 or so years after it was written, as we hear John Chapter 6 read in Church during August 2012, we too will be confronted with the choice of

whether to stay with Jesus, or to remove ourselves from his influence.

Simon Peter in all sincerity declared "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God." Simon Peter's response can inspire our response and our faithfulness today.

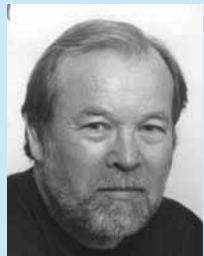
In continuity with Christians down through the ages we also can be fed and nurtured by Jesus, by responding to his challenging words and by reflection on his actions. Such nurture flow to us when we are open to the radical influence of the risen Christ, ever present in our midst.

Such nurture enables us to continue to work for peace and justice, in Jesus' name. Such nurture inspires us to feed the poor, and to work to confront injustice at all levels. Such nurture and inspiration is received whenever we sincerely receive the bread of life during Holy Communion.



This land is our land

CONNECTIONS



This year marks the hundredth birthday of the legendary folk singer Woody Guthrie. Coming from the USA and born in New York City, I grew up humming along to his songs, many of which I can still remember almost word for word. I've sung them at protest rallies and listened to them in concert halls sung by Pete Seeger and Joan Baez.

Guthrie sang about hard times, about men and women struggling to survive the indignities of inequality, exploitation and unrelenting poverty. One of Guthrie's most enduring songs affirms "this land is made for you and me" - a song he wrote as a critical response to Irving Berlin's 'God Bless America'.

He spoke for working class North Americans, and in a way embodied the

role of the biblical prophets in speaking to the nation. Looking back on the economic tectonic shifts which have taken place in recent years, I find myself asking - Is this world really made for you and me? It's a question the church ignores at its own peril.

Earlier this year the Listener featured an article entitled 'Pay Dirt' (February 18 2012) investigating the disparities between the incomes of corporate executives and ordinary New Zealanders. Last year recently departed Telecom CEO, Paul Reynolds, earned \$5.2 million or more than 100 times the average annual full-time worker's salary of \$51,000.

Expressed in another way, according to the Listener, "In just one week, Reynolds, pulled in nearly twice what the average worker earns in a year." Such money has to come from somewhere. I agree with British political writer George Monbiot that this kind of economic inequity is "a form of institutionalised theft, arranged by a kleptocratic class for

the benefit of its members".

While church congregations gather for worship and a cup of tea, the gap between the rich and poor continues to grow at an alarming rate. One of the biggest issues of our time is this growing inequity within societies like New Zealand. The huge transfer of wealth to the already rich has been taking place before our eyes. Simultaneously the land and water are showing increasing signs of stress and over exploitation.

This beautiful land of Aotearoa that we call home is in great danger of no longer being 'a land made for you and me'. Rather it is quietly being taken over again - this time by the winner-take-all super rich. They are buying up open spaces, building flash houses and private golf courses, exploiting vast acres of land for profit, and mining its water and other resources.

All this is encouraged by the cynical expedient actions of politicians who serve the interests of their capitalist masters,

By Jim Stuart

bailing them out when things get tough. It has been good to hear some Methodist voices telling stories of what is really happening in Porirua and Auckland but the volume needs to increase. People of goodwill need to stand up to the rich and powerful to say enough is enough. Instead of demonising those on benefits, it's time to challenge those on corporate welfare.

As the author of the first epistle to Timothy reminds us, "Those who want to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil," (1 Timothy 6:8-9). It isn't too late for the churches to speak up and to speak out. We need to change the debate from economic growth for the few to the economic well-being of all so that every person young and old is valued, loved and provided for. Then this land can be everyone's land.

Building and insurance issues vex many CVs

Rev Peter MacKenzie,
UCANZ executive officer

The Standing Committee of UCANZ met for two days in Wellington, 12-13 July. Part of the discussion addressed the difficulties that local churches are facing with their buildings and insurance.

We heard about the astronomical rise in charges that local churches are facing, struggles to make ends meet, and the challenges of older buildings. The issues are complex, and while we are not directly involved with these property issues, Standing Committee wishes to assure all of Partner Churches that our thoughts and prayers are with them at this time.

Standing Committee is also aware of the extraordinary effort that is being put into sorting out some of these problems by the people in the national and regional offices of the Partner Churches. While it is sometimes frustrating that the answers are not clear for local parishes, it is even more frustrating for those in the

national offices of our Churches as they seek to find a way through a complex world of finances, risk management and liability concerns.

We would commend those working at the higher level on these insurance and building issues and assure them of our love and support.

For local churches there continues to be much uncertainty. As buildings are evaluated by engineers many are being assessed as below standard and the liability risk requires that they no longer be used.

This is a difficult decision, forced upon local churches at a time when there are many other pressures. While it is easy to say the church is the people, there is no doubt that our buildings are the receptacles of our corporate memory.

We must remember is that our forebears built these churches as a witness of the Kingdom here on earth, and we must find a way to continue



their legacy and their witness to the world.

Insurance bills are rising and our Uniting Congregations are faced with differing approaches among our partners. Standing Committee would remind all of our Cooperative Ventures that we are partnerships - and decisions that affect property and the liabilities associated with property should be discussed with all of the partners of the local church.

These are not decisions that can simply be dealt with by the holder of the title. If there are questions about

this, please contact the UCANZ office.

Standing Committee also continued to work on how churches will implement the changes to our Procedures when (or perhaps that should be "if") they are approved by the Partner Churches later in the year. We are very aware that there is an expectation that partner churches will step up to the responsibility of governance of their churches, either as Coordinating or Participating Partners.

Local churches have a responsibility to work with the new Procedures and to affirm the partnership of the Cooperative Venture. Perhaps the way we deal with buildings and insurance will be a test of how this new view of the partnership will work.

Blessings to you all through these difficult times.

The good, the bad and the banana



Pedro Chamaidan and Graciella Apolo belong to Ecuador's El Guabo Association of Small Banana Farmers, which provides bananas to NZ.

By Simon Coley - All Good Bananas

At All Good, we believe we should treat the people who grow our food as if they were part of our own community. Just a few weeks ago we travelled to Ecuador to visit the families who grow the Fairtrade bananas we import to New Zealand.

All Good started three years ago to support farmers in Samoa and Ecuador and help bring their bananas to New Zealand. Although bananas are the perfect health snack, the banana trade hasn't always been good for those who grow them. This is especially so for small-scale banana farmers in developing nations.

But Fairtrade offers a better way.

One of the small farms we visited belongs to Pedro Chamaidan and Graciella Apolo. Walk through banana plants to the shed where Pedro and Graciella pack their bananas though, and you'd be forgiven

for mistaking their farm for some kind of banana sanctuary.

Pedro and Graciella are naturally cheerful even if running a family banana 'finca' is a serious business. Before they became Fairtrade farmers they sold to banana exporters represented by intermediaries who would regularly force them to sell their fruit for less than the cost of production. For Pedro and Graciella this was heart breaking. But they fought back.

They are now part of an unusual revolution, a cooperative of banana-farming families who benefit from the collective scale of its members' production - the El Guabo Association of Small Banana Farmers.

The El Guabo Association began in 1997 when a group of 14 small banana growers decided to stand up against the corporations, exporters and local intermediaries, and deal directly with international markets. They chose to do this through the Fairtrade system.

This band of farmers

organised themselves to export their own bananas. By cutting out the middleman they took the power into their own hands. Since then they've been exporting containers full of bananas every week, and since 2010 they've been sending them to New Zealand.

Today, the El Guabo Association includes over 430 banana farmers. Everyone who works in the El Guabo Association's Fairtrade farms is protected from the use of agri-chemicals, they get a fair wage, healthcare, schooling for their children and job security.

Without relying on charity they've taken their future in their own hands, challenged the power of much larger and less benevolent organisations, and worked hard to carve out a sustainable business for themselves.

Not only do they deserve our respect and support - they've earned it. For more see allgoodbananas.co.nz.



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Purchasing fair trade products is a practical thing everyone can do to reduce poverty and improve the lives of small-scale producers

Each individual decision to purchase fair trade makes a difference. The growing demand for fair trade products enables fair trade organizations and those who adopt fair trade practices to extend the reach of their work.

Fairtrade certified products available in NZ include All Good bananas, Whittaker's 250gm Creamy Milk chocolate, various Cadbury Dairy Milk chocolate products, tea, coffee and chocolate from Scarborough Fair, Nice Blocks, loose leaf teas from KTea and hot drinks from Wild Bean Café and Esquires coffee shops.

A large number of Kiwi coffee roasters and retailers are either Fairtrade certified or else purchase their coffee from Trade Aid. They include Addington Coffee Co-op,

Caffe L'Affare, Cerebos Greggs, Havana Coffee, Hummingbird, Kawatiri Coffee, Peoples Coffee, Switch Espresso, and Vivace Espresso.

Many churches support the movement by purchasing fair trade coffee and tea for their weekly cuppa. CWS and Trade Aid have a joint initiative for fair trade faith groups, and those who join can purchase direct from the Trade Aid warehouse.

Visit the Trade Aid website to see how you can get involved - www.tradeaid.org.nz.

Fairtrade works with Christian World Service to hold Fair Trade Fortnight each year to spread the word and reduce poverty.

Fairtrade also has suggestions how individuals, schools, workplaces and churches can support fair trade. Many New Zealand churches have joined the list to become Fair Trade Communities. Visit their website to learn more - www.fairtrade.org.nz.

**If you've ever thought about
the people who pick bananas,
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Ethiopian grower says life's better with fair trade



Through fair trade Ahimed not only gets more money for his coffee, he has received training on how to be a better farmer.

Ethiopian coffee farmer Ahimed is 60 years old but he's broad-shouldered and still has enough strength to put in a very productive day's work on his coffee farm.

Between his two huts, a 6.0m stand a drying table that is thickly covered with freshly-picked ripe coffee cherries drying in the sunshine.

Ahimed says before he joined the Chafe Jenata co-operative, he used to dry his coffee on the ground and he was earning a small amount for what he produced.

Joining Chafe Jenata, and selling his coffee to fair trade buyers through the Oromia Coffee Farmers Co-operative Union, has brought him two key benefits: higher prices, and training in better production methods.

"Higher prices for my coffee

inspired me to do all this work, and I was also able to afford to build better terracing. I've been taught through the co-operative how to dry my coffee to a higher quality and how to pick only the ripest beans.

"I also put in my coffee nursery after receiving training. I give away the extra seedlings I don't need myself to other hard-working farmers in the co-operative'.

Today Ahimed receives 10 times the amount per kilogram for high-quality Harrar coffee, which is some of the world's best. For the first time in his life, he earns enough money that he can save. He plans to use these savings to support his children through higher education.

The Oromia collective is among Trade Aid's coffee suppliers.

Fair trade - every purchase counts to make the world a better place

NEW ZEALAND CONSUMERS HAVE A CHOICE.

We can spend as little as possible and ignore the consequences of what cut-rate prices mean for those who produce the food we eat. Or we can pay a bit more and show our support for a fairer system of world trade.

Increasingly we choose the latter.

Fairtrade ANZ spokesperson Angus Coull says Kiwis love Fairtrade products and the ideas behind them.

"Each year retail sales of Fairtrade certified products continue to grow. Estimated sales for 2011 were 24 percent higher than 2010. New Zealand consumers spent \$45.4 million in 2011 on Fairtrade foods such as coffee, bananas, chocolate and tea.

"Awareness of fair trade also continues to rise each year. A survey by Colmar Brunton showed 66 percent of New Zealanders recognise the Fairtrade label, up eight percent on 2011."

Christian World Service fair trade spokesperson Gillian Southey says fair trade is a way to overcome some of the inequalities in the world economic system

whereby large multinational corporations force down prices for food items produced in developed countries, or else push small scale producers out of business and replace them with plantation-style production.

Gillian says there are two approaches to fair trade in New Zealand. Fairtrade ANZ is the Australia-New Zealand wing of Fairtrade International, which coordinates the Fairtrade labelling programme around the world.

"Fairtrade International sets standards that producers must meet to use the Fairtrade label. It organises support for those producers, audits their businesses to ensure they continue to comply, and promotes trade justice," Gillian says.

"Trade Aid is a uniquely New Zealand organisation that takes a somewhat different approach. Trade Aid works closely with producers in developing countries. It focuses on establishing long-term relationships with them to develop their businesses and tell their stories.

"In many cases Trade Aid sources its products from Fairtrade certified producers. Christian World Service works with both organisations because they both

promote a fairer economic system."

Fairtrade-certified farmers are audited by inspectors, who check their products against agreed environmental, labour and development standards. In New Zealand Fairtrade ANZ also certifies the products on sale here ensuring transparency throughout the supply chain.

Angus says Fairtrade 1.2 million farmers in 63 developing countries benefit from Fairtrade.

"You can tell a product is Fairtrade certified by the distinctive green and blue

label. Fairtrade ANZ is now working with farmers in the Pacific region to enter into and benefit from the Fairtrade system.

"Coffee and cocoa farmers in Papua New Guinea and sugar farmers in Fiji are now becoming Fairtrade certified and we continue to support these groups and applicant groups. Already people in the Pacific region are starting to see a difference from sales of Fairtrade coffee, cocoa and sugar," he says.

In the 1970s Trade Aid pioneered fair trade in New Zealand and today it sells

fair trade products through its own network of retail outlets and wholesale to other retailers.

Trade Aid food manager Justin Purser says there are a number of ways the organisation supports its supplier beyond the purchase of their goods.

Because Trade Aid is not-for-profit, if it has any annual surplus beyond what it needs to grow its business, it shares those profits with its suppliers.

"The second way we support our supplier/partners is through pre-financing. Many of our suppliers are cooperatives and it can be very difficult for a cooperative to manage the cost of purchasing from their members without borrowing from banks at high interest rates. We can provide them money in advance at no interest," Justin says.

"Another way we give extra value to the coffee growers who supply us is to provide capital loans. This enables them to replace old, unproductive trees and make their farms more efficient.

"We have also developed a healthy relationship with the New Zealand government, which has led them to channel capacity-building funds to some of our suppliers so they can improve their businesses."



Oliva Kishero is the treasurer of fair trade producer Gumutindo Coffee Cooperative in Uganda, which has a policy of empowering women farmers.

Trade Aid - putting the human story back in trade

Back in the day, trading meant purchasing from the person who made the product or who knew the person who made it.

Today, however, with longer and increasingly global supply chains, trade has turned into a transaction that is purely about the product, and it is divorced from any human interaction.

But with evidence that people are once again looking to put people back into their trading transactions, Trade Aid is providing opportunities to do just that.

Digital storytelling is the vehicle that Trade Aid has introduced into its 29 shops around New Zealand, enabling the customer to enter the world of the people who make their products. Customers can select any product in-store and, as a twist on modern consumerism, learn about why the product is being sold, instead of a marketing message about why they should buy the product.

A simple scan of any product barcode in a Trade Aid shop, via an in-store kiosk reveals the name of the group that made the product, the benefits they receive from participation in the trade, and images of the producers and the environments they work in.

Rich and vibrant video and audio transport customers into worlds at once similar and different to their own.

Trade Aid's unique trading model is characterised by close relationships with its trading partners. This means information can be made available about every product in its extensive product range of more than 4000 products.

The kiosk platform, which includes a touch screen in each store, now means Trade Aid can share this information with those who buy their products. Trade Aid's key messages such as 'made by people', 'made fair', and 'made to feel good' take on new meaning as customers are brought closer to the producers and to the reasons they are engaging in the trade.

With the initial roll out of the kiosks into Trade Aid shops earlier this year, Trade Aid's plans to increase the connection and interaction between producers and consumers has just begun. Already however, in the first phase of the technology, customers can leave messages for producers of their products, ask Trade Aid questions, or just add some impulsive learning to their shopping experience.

For Trade Aid shop locations check out www.tradeaid.org.nz.



Coffee farmer, Sidama Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union, Ethiopia.

Made to feel good

Buying our products changes the world for good.

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 trade aid

Trust us, CWS tells Government...



Christian World Service staff members Nick Clarke (left) and Greg Jackson in front of Christchurch Civil Defence headquarters, March 2011. Nick and Greg were on secondment to manage non-government organisations providing earthquake relief. Photo: Gerard Smythe.

The simple message Christian World Service had for two cabinet ministers and Civil Defence head, John Hamilton, at a recent feedback meeting was: 'trust us'.

The meeting of selected Christchurch volunteer groups was held to find out what worked during the post February earthquake relief effort, what did not work, and what could work better.

The Government ministers attending were Civil Defence Minister Chris Tremain and Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector Jo Goodhew.

CWS took part as one of the lead players in the management of the post-quake relief efforts by the Non-Governmental Organisations Disaster Relief Forum (NDRF), a sub group of the Council for International Development (CID).

CID is chaired by CWS national director Pauline McKay.

NDRF provided an umbrella group for the various New Zealand and international groups working in Christchurch after the February 2011 earthquake.

The NDRF project deliberately stayed out of the media and this allowed the groups to work collaboratively on disaster relief in an integrated way. Their work drew favourable attention from around the world.

The CWS/NDRF response to the question of what worked and what did not was basically a call for higher trust and understanding between international NGOs like CWS and Civil Defence.

Former CWS staffer, Nick Clarke who headed project management for NDRF in Christchurch says there are many lessons to be learnt but more ready trust and recognition of what NDRF had to offer would have achieved much more for the disaster relief effort.

"Given the wide ranging skills and resource base of NDRF and its global affiliates they could have added a lot more to the response than they did. At that level it would have been good to ensure reach beyond just the psychosocial level expertise to actually taking part in the wider meetings and discussions at Civil Defence headquarters, at national Controller's meetings and other forums," Nick says.

Community and church groups did a "huge amount" during the disaster response, and Nick feels the ties CWS / NDRF have with them enabled them to hear direct messages from the community that could have been reported and acted upon.

His views were backed by CWS national director, Pauline McKay.

"We expect that if there is another major disaster the authorities will

understand that we can offer effective help and that our skills and standards are both international and rigorously assessed.

"There were some instances when the NDRF disaster experience pool could have provided some very relevant and informed answers to questions that regrettably we were not asked," Pauline says.

For example CWS and other agencies in the relief efforts were users of the HAP Standard in Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Management. The HAP Standard offers a simple, relevant and tested good-practice framework that is widely used by humanitarian agencies to prepare for and respond to emergencies. It is a tool that allows agencies to measure, validate and improve the quality and accountability of their programmes.

After the meeting there was a perception that Civil Defence and Government now have a better understanding of what groups like CWS and NDRF could offer in crisis situations.

"This is an issue with many levels and layers to it but the best summary really is what we asked the Ministers and Civil Defence to do which is simply to trust us," said Pauline McKay.

Post tsunami building project nears completion

CWS supporters who helped fund the new inland community hall for the tsunami hit village of Saleapaga in Samoa will be pleased with the results.

The new hall for Saleapaga provides a community hub for the village which moved inland after the disastrous 2009 tsunami. The people of Saleapaga were among the worst affected in the disaster, losing 31 members of their community.

The aim of the rebuild project was to reduce future vulnerability and build a multipurpose hall where many of the cultural, social and spiritual activities that sustain village life can continue. The hall is to house the church, associated groups, the village council, and preschool.

This was a multi partner project carried out in partnership with the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa. Work started in December 2009. CWS supporters contributed \$51,800 toward the project.

As Christchurch residents will realise nowadays the post disaster recovery path can take many unexpected twists and turns.

The community hall project also reflected this as the project began slower than planned because many in the community were busy building their own new homes. There were also restraints because of a reliance on imported



materials.

As the project took shape the congregation also decided that they needed a larger building than originally planned, so they took out some additional loans to complete the work.

Now complete, the hall is located 300 metres inland at an altitude of 150 metres to reduce vulnerability.

As well as the main hall, the ground level houses a kitchen and bathrooms. The lower level has a preschool, and the mezzanine is used for offices and storage.

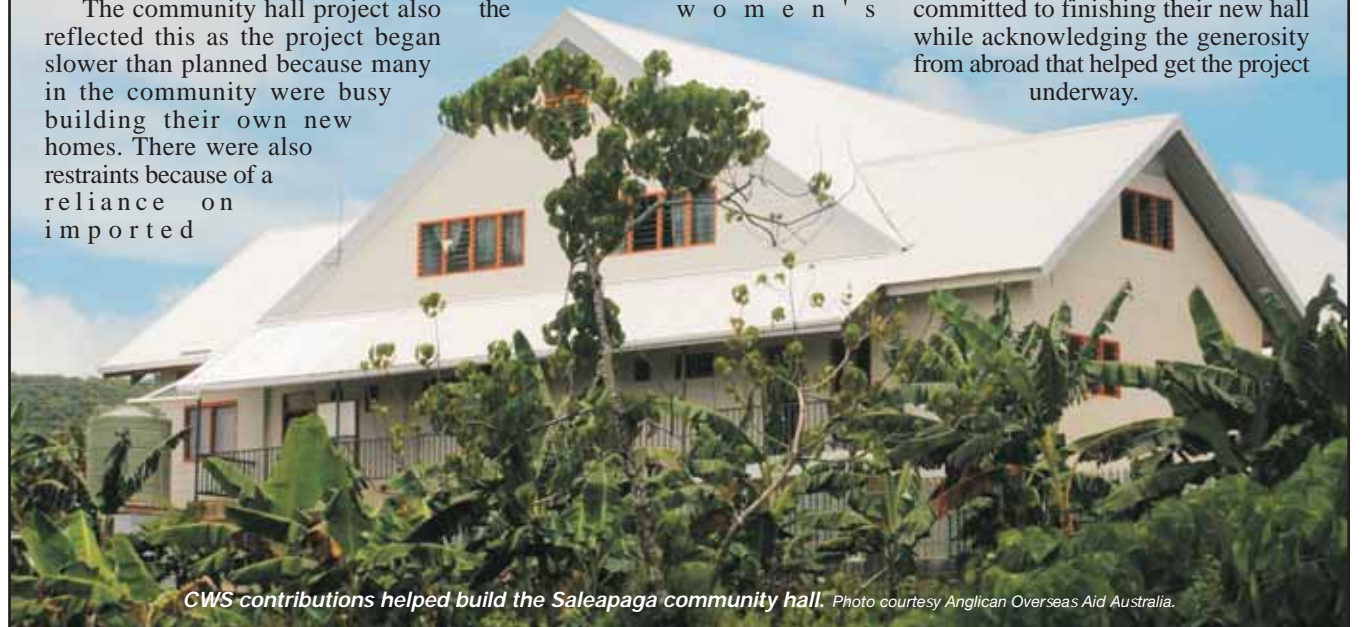
The hall is functioning as intended as a viable hub. It is used for church services and weddings, as meeting place for the village council of chiefs, the women's

fellowship, youth group and choir. The hall is available for use to the whole Saleapaga community.

There are very few members of the local community of 500 who are not church members, and an estimated 90 percent of the community belong to the church.

The community has committed itself to the hall project and has finished most of the construction with some fitout yet to be completed. For instance the bathrooms are incomplete but are plumbed in and in use, the kitchen has yet to be fitted out, while the ground floor and mezzanine level offices are in use but also require completion.

The people of Saleapaga are committed to finishing their new hall while acknowledging the generosity from abroad that helped get the project underway.



CWS contributions helped build the Saleapaga community hall. Photo courtesy Anglican Overseas Aid Australia.

CHICKENS

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The Church's Healing Ministry: Practical and Pastoral Reflections

By David Atkinson
2011, Canterbury Press, 99 pages
Reviewer: John Meredith

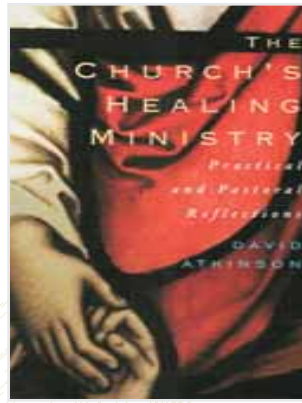
Healing ministry may conjure up pictures of people with sickness or disabilities being prayed over, possibly with anointing or laying on of hands. Healing does sometimes occur in this context.

When there is no other explanation we may say it is a miracle. Atkinson sees this as leaving the impression that healing occurs in response to the right prayers or ritual. For him this raises questions about God's nature.

There are those who claim that healing by prayer and laying on of hands is the method employed by Jesus and that he commissioned his followers to heal the sick in this way. Others see healing as a medical preserve.

Atkinson adopts a different view of healing. He sees health not just as the state of being healthy but as the struggle to be human regardless of sickness and the possibility of death.

Health is wholeness of life expressed in the biblical word "shalom" and is not limited by physical malady. Healing always brings hope, and health is a divine gift.



In Atkinson's view, the wholeness God intends for human life finds expression in the ministry of prayer and pastoral care for people. This takes place not just in times of illness, grief and stress but in all circumstances throughout life's journey.

He goes on to recognise that pastoral care cannot avoid the question of innocent suffering and pointless pain. In the biblical story of Job we find that Job, who is suffering deep distress of body, mind and spirit, rejects all easy explanations. Although Job finds no definitive answer he comes to accept that he remains always in God's care.

It is a pastoral role to reflect this, standing beside people in their struggle with pain and representing the compassion of God.

Atkinson considers the role of counselling in healing. He argues that for people who have been physically or sexually abused, counselling using the best insights of the human sciences and offered by properly qualified and supervised

practitioners may bring healing.

People may be helped to face truth and find freedom from negative thinking and mistaken ideas that have kept them trapped. Counselling may also help people to forgive. Even when we hold perpetrators to account, forgiveness can contribute to health by assisting victims move away from resentment and desire for revenge.

Healing, though, is not just an individual matter. It has communal aspects. This involves commitment to social justice and a supportive presence for vulnerable people. Actively seeking justice is the expression of love for our neighbours.

Atkinson sees the Christian ministry of healing as embracing the management of disease, medical and nursing care, physical and emotional therapy, the search for a more just social order, and care of the environment.

The author presents a comprehensive overview of the biblical concept of wholeness and wellbeing and argues persuasively for the church's ministry in promoting this in the world today. He does this well but anyone looking for fresh insights is unlikely to find them here.

Review copy courtesy of Epworth Books.

The Caring Congregation: How to become one and why it matters

By Karen Lampe
2011, Abingdon Press, 114 pages
Reviewer: Morven Sidal

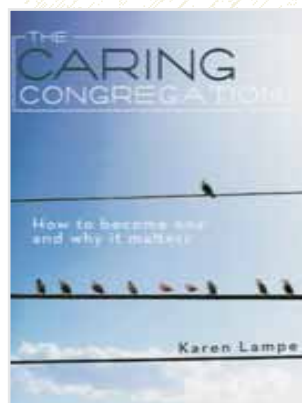
This book is a four session study, modelled on the Congregational Care Department of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas.

It is written to help churches form an effective team by addressing four key areas of congregational care: prayer ministry, support ministry, hospital visitation, and grief and death ministry. Some helpful appendices cover anointing, volunteer covenants, and counselling guides for situations of anger, anxiety, cancer or chronic illness, depression, grief and divorce.

The title clearly reflects the content - it is a 'how to' book for clergy and lay people who are ministering to people at the most vulnerable times in their lives, and who are training volunteers to assist in such ministry.

Lampe's writing and presentation style make good use of bullet points and lists, and she begins each of the four chapters with case studies that put human faces onto the pages.

She writes from her experiences leading a congregational



care (CC) department in a church of 18,000 members. Her church's CC department alone is staffed by seven full-time pastors, an executive director, two seminary interns and a retired pastor, plus a full-time funeral and wedding director, four full-time administrative assistants, a baptism administrator, a full-time family counsellor and a host of unpaid congregational care ministers!

Therefore, her organizational structure is not very helpful to the average-sized NZ church. Nevertheless, her basic principle of redemption as the key to caregiving is applicable over large or small congregations. She defines redemption as the ability "to

restore a person to being the whole person God intends you to be".

I am a lay minister and fall in the middle of her clergy/volunteer roles. I found the book helpful. As I read I remembered a minister friend telling me years ago of his

anguish and frustration when, in the first few weeks of his first appointment out of theological college, he sat by the bedside of a couple in his church who had just experienced the stillbirth of their first child.

"Nothing that I learned in theological college," he said, "prepared me for this experience." Obviously a 114 page book is not going to come near such preparation but Lampe does offer steps to take on the journey.

She says, "I am convinced there is no greater service that you can give a family than to lead them through this valley. In fact, I believe that death trumps every other element of pastoral ministry. It is the greatest fear that most people face. But it is the gift of Jesus' life that he conquered the grave: 'Death, where is your sting?'"

Lampe says moments of redemption can happen in many ways in the death experiences within families if there is good leadership.

I appreciate having this book on my shelf to remind me of principles, practical tasks and potential opportunities when I may be called on to walk with members of my congregation through times of crisis, sickness and grief.

If Darwin Prayed: Prayers for Evolutionary Mystics

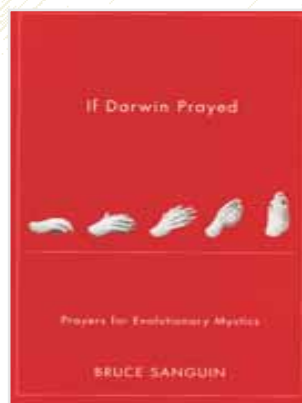
By Bruce Sanguin
2010, Bruce Sanguine, 217 pages
Reviewer: Mark Gibson

Ministering in the context of the unfolding Canterbury earthquake experience, both in a parish and a creative new mission venture, and having this book land in my lap was exquisite timing.

Since this providential moment I have shared a prayer from the book each week with the New Brighton Union congregation. Not surprisingly they have appreciated each offering because the theology resonates with their lived experience.

If the earthquakes have taught us anything it is that we need to evolve, not just in our building techniques but in every way, including spirituality and theology. Our old ways of understanding faith and life and what it means to be church no longer ring true. The author of these prayers is someone who knows deeply how important it is to evolve and grow to a new stage.

In the prologue to this book, Sanguin shares that it is not easy to find prayers for worship or spiritual practice that are in tune with the great evolutionary story of the universe. I agree with his observation that evolutionary cosmology has not yet found its way into our liturgies.



More often than not there is a large disconnect between the science we say we affirm and the expression of our faith. Putting together this collection of prayers is Bruce's response to this chasm.

There is a challenge too in taking this step, when he expresses his concern with "liberal and so-called progressive Christians". He says, "We who accept - and even celebrate - the scientific method and its findings, have been slow to incorporate the evolutionary nature of reality into our theology and liturgy."

Sanguin's congregation, Canadian Memorial United Church in Vancouver, where he has been an ordained minister for 16 years, encouraged him to share his prayers with a wider audience. I for one am thankful that they did because there are many gems in the collection and they have invigorated worship in a small congregation emerging from a life-changing experience on the opposite side of the Pacific.

In the book he prays the Christian seasons. Each season of prayers begins with a wonderful introduction. Now journeying through the Ordinary Season (that he calls The

Season of Emergence) we are introduced to his definition of church - "a domain or habitat for creative emergence".

In New Brighton this understanding makes total sense. Reflecting on the words of Isaiah he says, as church "we are together in such a way that we are always seeking the 'new thing' God is doing in our midst". It is a refreshing and exciting understanding that challenges the church to greater openness and receptivity to the movement of the Spirit.

As a congregation in a disaster zone we have received a lot of beautiful knitted items from other parishes near and far away. It is probably for this reason that our favourite prayer from this book so far has been Knit One, Purl Two. It is a beautifully knitted and woven prayer that speaks to the heart of our experience.

In the prayer God is named "Cosmic Knitter". It begins, "We have managed to roll together the tangled strands of our lives and get ourselves here" and ends with the delightful and playful... "We place these woolly bits of our living in the knitting bag of this sacred liturgy, listen for the eternal click and clack of needles, and eagerly await the finishing touches of Spirit".

To this we say Amen and embrace what is yet to come!
Review copy courtesy of Epworth Books.

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ON SCREEN

A film review by S and S Taylor



Snow White is a German fairytale, made famous by the Brothers Grimm in 1812. From this classic story we get the magic mirror, poisoned apple and seven dwarfs.

The tale has long been a fascination for movie makers. Snow White first appeared, silent, in 1916. Disney grabbed her in 1937, while in 1961 the story was parodied as "Snow White and the Three Stooges." In other words, when the tale is well known, give it a twist. Exactly 200 years later, enter 'Snow White and the Huntsman', a dark recasting of the classic tale.

Some things remain, including the mirror, the apple and the dwarfs. And like the traditional tale, the movie focuses on the importance of inner beauty, contrasted by an Evil Queen preoccupied with her appearance.

But in 2012, the Huntsman (Chris Hemsworth) becomes both saviour and fellow fighter, the dwarves are more suspicious, and Snow White saves not only herself but her entire Kingdom.

While the cast is well known, the acting is uneven. Kristen Stewart (Snow White) struggles to break free from being Bella Swan of the 'Twilight' saga. Chris Hemsworth as the Huntsman, struggles to be more than the mysterious strong man. Charlize Theron (featured in "Prometheus," reviewed in Touchstone last month) is superbly wicked, an Evil Queen of chilling complexity.

Despite being old-fashioned, Snow White is intriguing in the way it places as its heart two strong female characters, Snow and the Evil Queen. But this is a twisted tale and so the question is worth exploring. What might it take to be a 21st century woman?

For the Evil Queen, it is to seek youth and beauty. She lives and dies defined by her mother's words: "Your beauty is all that can save you".

For Snow White, her mother's words are also defining, an inner beauty expressed in honourable actions. (Although a climax in which she leads an armed uprising becomes an intriguing 21st century take on moral purity). Surprisingly for Hollywood, Snow White in 2012 requires no Hollywood love

interest, no handsome hero to complete her day.

And to be a man? It means confronting pain and facing grief. For Snow's father, impulsive decisions result in far reaching negative consequences. For Snow's childhood friend, boyhood loss generates a lifelong quest. For the Huntsman, adult grief requires facing the pain, taking risks and making right choices.

Being a modern tale, Snow White and the Huntsman comes complete with environmental themes. The Evil Queen poisons not only an apple but people and planet. The good fairies emerge from friendly birds, to conjure up a very English creation, complete with cute squirrels and

the famed white stag.

The M rating is deserved, a mirror of human wickedness. All fairytales contain a moral. In 1812 it was that beauty comes from the inside but it needs a rescuing Prince to restore Snow White to her rightful place, man at side.

In 2012 beauty remains but it needs an iron fist, a deadly battle between sword and bow, leaving Snow a woman alone. Such is the feminism of the 21st century.

One S Taylor is principal of Uniting College for Leadership and Theology in Adelaide, Australia. The other S Taylor is a hard-working and high achieving teenager at Westminster School, also in Adelaide.



THREE 'SEVENS' IN THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

In August the Gospel readings move from Mark to John and pick up on some of our Easter readings. The Gospels are all carefully structured with a particular audience in mind.

Each evangelist arranges his stories to convey a particular emphasis. The three synoptic Gospels draw, in part, from a common source. John is quite different. He records no parables and fewer miracles than the others. He describes only seven, which he calls 'signs'. John relates seven unique dialogues and seven unique 'I am' teaching statements. All are mentioned in this puzzle.

Bible Challenge

Jesus said, 'I am the way the ___ and...'	T _____	John, RSV	14:6
'I am the ___ of the world'	_____ H _____		8:1
'I am the ___ of life'	_____ E _____		6:35
'I am the good ___'	_____ S _____		10:11
'I am the ___ and the life'	_____ E _____		11:25
'I am the true ___'	_____ V _____		15:1
Jesus walked on the _____	_____ E _____		6:19
He healed a man who was ___ from birth	_____ N _____		9:1-7
Jesus fed five ___ with a boy's lunch	_____ S _____		6:2-11
Jesus said, 'I am the ___ of the sheep.'	_____ O _____		10:7
Jesus healed an ___ son	_____ F _____		4:46-54
Gospels are about the life and teaching of	_____ J _____		21:25
He came to Jesus when it was dark	_____ O _____		3:1-2
She recognised Jesus as the Christ	_____ H _____		11:24-27
Jesus turned water into _____	_____ N _____		2:9
Jesus talked with a Woman from _____	_____ S _____		4:7
Mary ___ mistook Jesus for a gardener	_____ G _____		20:1&15
This disciple had to see for himself	_____ O _____		20:24
Jesus ___ Lazarus from death	_____ S _____		11:44
This man asked, 'What is truth?'	_____ P _____		18:38
Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs'	_____ E _____		21:15
Jesus healed a ___ man at Bethzatha	_____ L _____		5:2-9

Answers: truth, light, bread, shepherd, resurrection, vine, sea, blind, thousand, door, official's, Jesus, Nicodemus, Martha, wine, Samaritan, Magdalene, Thomas, raised, Pilate, Peter, paralysed

© RMS



Let the children live

From Page 1

"Working with children and young people in vulnerable situations is a central task of our Missions. It is what we do day-in and day-out. Sinoti Samoa and Vahefonua Tonga are also addressing the issue and have programmes to build up the well-being and safety of their children and families," David says.

"If we can open dialogues and build relationships with local churches, we can help them decide on practical things they can do. Sometimes this can be to provide a support network for those who are already working with children and young people in their community," David Hanna says.

President elect Rev Rex Nathan says Let the Children Live will be launched at Conference in Wellington on the Sunday morning with a procession from the Town Hall to Wesley Wellington Church on Taranaki Street. There a service will be held that will feature the Wesley Wellington's choir, students from Wesley College and a talk by a representative of the NZ Children's Commission.



By Josh Robertson

A DIFFICULT SUBJECT

Youth suicide - there is no easy way to bring this topic up. New Zealand has one of the very highest rates of youth suicide in the developed world. It is something that knows no boundaries - it has no regard for gender, race, religion or wealth.

If you don't have a connection to anyone who has suffered from such a tragedy then consider yourself very lucky. I say this because it continues to be an all too common event within our communities and families.

Neither is the Church immune from this issue. I am aware of at least two youth suicides that have occurred within our Methodist Church of NZ this year.

So what's going on? I watched a documentary on TV recently that focussed on a couple of families who had recently lost young people through suicide. The parents, the brothers and sisters were obviously absolutely shattered.

Even though some time had lapsed since the death, they were left asking questions that could never be answered. Why had this taken place? Why didn't we see the signs? Why didn't he/she come to us for help?

Seeing the pain that they were experiencing was so sad. It's a problem that is difficult to tackle, it's a subject that remains taboo in many cultures. However not talking about it hasn't made the problem go away.

I don't proclaim to have the answers but I do think that talking about it will at least raise awareness and make us all a bit more alert and wary of not falling into the mentality that 'it won't happen in my family' or 'it won't happen in our church'.

We all need to be aware of those around us, especially our young people who face so many different pressures in this day and age.

There are relationship issues, bullying, feelings of isolation and loneliness, physical violence, and sexual abuse. The list goes on.

The ever growing spread of social media technology and texting is often used as a tool by others in ways that can cause mental harm to young people. Even today's popular music can contribute to placing a young person in a dark space'.

There are so many things that can push a young person over the edge. We need to look out for each other - especially our young brothers and sisters. We are not all trained counsellors but we all have the capacity to do good.

In the words of John Wesley, "Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can."

You never know how an act of goodness can impact on a young person who may be suffering and struggling with suicidal thoughts. Young people out there - if you are currently struggling with such problems, please believe me when I say, there is hope.

Help is available to you. There are people who care about you and what you're going through. If you feel like you or someone you know is at risk, try speaking to your minister, or you could call Youthline 0800 376 633, Lifeline 0800 543 354, Depression Helpline 0800 111 757, or What's Up 0800 942 8787 (noon-midnight).

Kidz Korna!

Welcome to Kidz Korna for August

PEACE CRANES

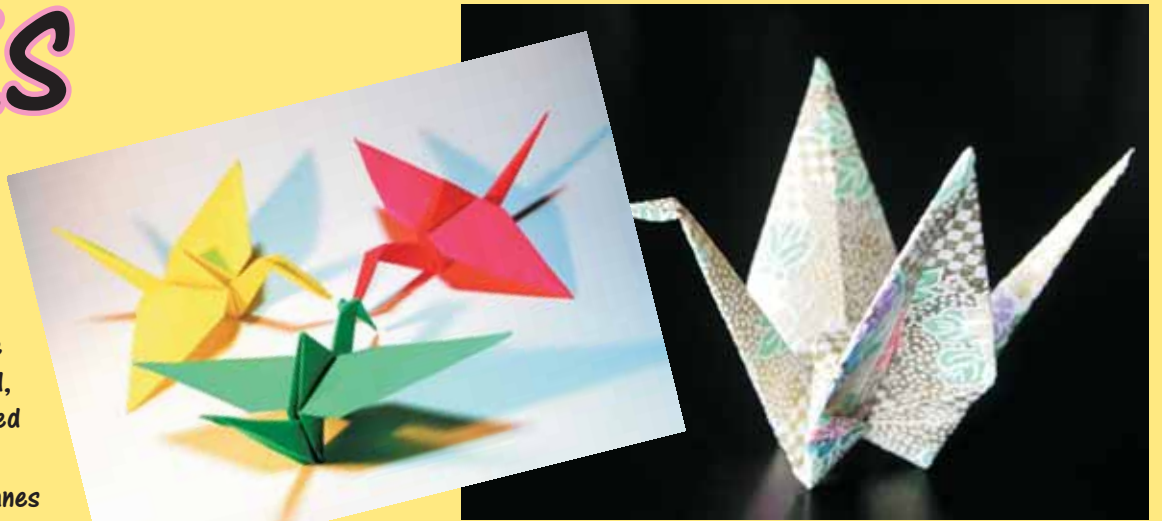
Firstly, I hope everyone had a great time during the school holidays. I visited my grandchildren and we had lots of fun together.

Next, a big thank-you to the children at Te Awamutu Methodist church for sharing what they have been doing at church.

August 5th is Peace Sunday. One name given to Jesus was Prince of Peace. On this day one person we remember is Sadako Sasaki, a young Japanese girl who died of leukemia as the result of an atomic bomb being dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.

That bomb ended a war but many people died as a result. Sadako heard a story that if she could fold 1000 paper cranes, she would live. She folded more than 600 before she died, and then her friends folded the rest.

Children still fold paper cranes as they remember her. If you want to learn more about Sadako you can read the book by Eleanor Coerr - 'Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes'.



Children still fold peace cranes to remember Japanese girl Sadako Sasaki, who died after the bombing of Hiroshima.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH AT TE AWAMUTU

On Sundays at Te Awamutu Church, we have Children's Church after the children's talk and song. We go out to the lounge with two people who help us with the activity.

One week we made a banner which hangs in our foyer. It says "Peace be with you". It's what Jesus kept saying to the disciples.

Another time we made woolly sheep in a sheepfold. That's because Jesus said he was the good shepherd and his followers were sheep. In those days the sheep followed the

shepherd. They don't do that now. I think the sheep have got smarter.

Sometimes we do worksheets about the story and the little kids play with toys. They are noisy. If we finish our activity we take it into church at the end of the service.

Sometimes we show them to everybody before we say the Grace. In the holidays we stay in church with our family. We can do colouring and puzzles and the little kids play with toys in the crying room.

Cheers, Maureen Calman



Banners made by Children's Church at Te Awamutu.

PUZZLE: ODD ONE OUT

In each row one name is the odd one out. Can you say which one and why?

1. Matthew, Paul, Luke, Mark
2. Saul, David, Ahab, Jonathan
3. Benjamin, James, Joseph, Reuben
4. Romans, Ephesians, Luke, Corinthians
5. Lazarus, Peter, John, Thomas

Answers in next month's Touchstone.

Papatoetoe Methodists had a dream



Papatoetoe Methodist Church circa 1960s. The congregation is celebrating the centenary of their church buildings.

A little more than 100 years ago, a small group of Methodists living in Papatoetoe who were used to gathering at house meetings, had a dream of building their own church.

At that time, Papatoetoe was a farming area and the families were dispersed. They met through the grace of Farnsworth family, whose home was made available for worship and fellowship. In 1912 they decided that the time had come to build their church so action was taken.

A section was purchased on a site near the Farnsworth home at a cost of £400. At the time there were 19 church members, so the next step was a huge proposition.

You can't keep a good Methodist down, however, and the foundations were laid. On the 14th December 1912 the dream began to come to fruition.

Very early in the morning it was all hands on deck. With many willing workers and the ladies there to keep them fed, the first Methodist Church in Papatoetoe was begun. By 11.00pm

that night, with acetylene lighting installed, it was done. Three services were held the next day and 95 people from many parts of Auckland attended.

Fifty years later, the congregation dreamed again, and a new church was built incorporating parts of the original one.

This year Papatoetoe is celebrating its centenary. The congregation hopes many past members will be able to participate with them as they give thanks to those wonderful pioneers who bequeathed such a treasure and to God for the immense blessings he has showered on them all these years.

The celebrations will be held with an open day on Friday 19th October, a celebration dinner on Saturday 20th October and Church Service Sunday 21st October 2012.

For further details please contact 100th Anniversary Celebrations Co-Ordinator Christine Knock MNZM at cbknock@xtra.co.nz

Sister Edith James' life of service included groundbreaking missionary work

By Marcia Baker

In this fast changing, highly technical world it is good sometimes to stop, be still and remember the pioneers of our Methodist Church who have prepared the way for us to travel.

Edith James is one of those great pioneers. Edith's mother died when she was quite young and she became a very important person to her younger siblings, helping to maintain the loving caring home, all the time equipping herself for a life of giving.

Her spare moments were filled with hobbies - handcrafts, sewing, gardening, reading (she decided detective stories were the best relaxation!), leading the activities of young people in many varied ways, and choosing special friends.

Vocational training included child and maternal welfare and Edith gained general, midwife and Plunkett nursing certificates. Then - listening to friends nursing overseas, reading advertisements in 'The Open Door' and 'Methodist Times', Edith believed she was tuning into God's will and her call became clearer.

After a year training in Australia learning more of mission and something of different customs and languages Sister Edith James became the first Methodist Missionary nurse from New Zealand to work in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea.

At Tari she undertook many

roles - teacher, nurse, village visitor, first aid instructor, and leading girls' clubs, Church and Sunday school. Edith was almost all things to all people, and she was noted for her ingenuity and ability to cope.

She became supervisor and administrator of the Hansenide Leprosy Hospital and loved those who had been society's outcasts.

In Edith's own words, "We are often physically weary, mentally dulled, terribly disappointed, and shockingly impatient. God seems far away, but He isn't. There is joy - patients cured, lives transformed, prayers by patients for unknown friends in NZ. And there is always oceans to laugh about."

After 10 years in the missionary field she sustained a back injury and returned home. There was great sadness amongst patients and fellow workers and sadly she was never able to return.

One day in Hamilton, she read a notice in a paddock: 'Methodist Eventide Home is to be built here', and for its first four years the matron of Tamahere Home was Sister

Edith James.

Later she went to Dunedin as a supervisor of Presbyterian Support Services.

For the last 27 years or so Edith's home has been Tainui Village, New Plymouth where she was a much loved, vibrant resident who gave of her very self whenever she saw a need. Her gentle smile, strong faith and amazing sense of humour will

always be remembered by all with whom she came in contact (and it is said that the plum duffs she made excelled all others).

Edith passed away April 12, 2012, just one month after her 90th birthday. Our sympathy is extended to all her family and 'partners in Mission' and all those who loved her too. No longer do we as a Church send missionaries overseas. We leave the leaders in their own countries to continue developing the faith suited to their special needs.

At this time we salute Edith as a trail blazer as we seek to follow in her footsteps, to keep our lives open for signs along the way, growing closer to God and filling our hours in service for others.... and never forgetting to surround our ways



Sister Edith James.

Australia Jane Dellow, matriarch of notable Methodist family

METHODIST ARCHIVES

By Helen Laurensn, Wesley Historical Society

On 29 February 1912, Australia Jane Dellow became the first woman to take her seat in the Methodist Conference in New Zealand. She was one of the two lay representatives for the Auckland East Circuit.

Accompanied by the Rev George Bond, she entered Pitt Street Church, where the annual gathering was held, and walked up the aisle to a pew near the front. According to the New Zealand Herald, "the large audience present even at that early hour rose and cheered her cordially on the landmark occasion".

Australia Jane Dellow (née Buddle) was a respected figure within the Connexion. She was born on 31 October 1848 at the Wesleyan Native Institution in Grafton, where her father was the first principal. She was the fourth daughter among the 10 children of Rev Thomas and Sarah Buddle (née) Dixon. Their unusual choice of name for her, 'Australia' meaning 'southern', possibly reflected New Zealand's strong Wesleyan links across the Tasman.

As a 17-year-old, Australia might well have attended the 1865 foundation-stone-laying of Pitt Street Church, when her father took part as Chairman of the Northern District of New Zealand.

In 1883 she married Rev John Dellow, who was born at Bromley-by-Bow, Middlesex in 1851, and came to New Zealand with his parents when he was eight years old.

The Dellow family attended services at Weedons in Canterbury's Springston Circuit, and there young John became a Sunday-school teacher, class leader and local preacher. He spent 12 months at Three Kings College in 1878 before entering the ministry. It is likely that he and Australia would have met during that year, as Thomas Buddle had been appointed as College Principal in 1876.

For John and Australia there followed faithful, hard-working ministries in the Whangarei, Hamilton, Greytown, Temuka, Rangiora and Woodend Circuits. In all of which John's musical gifts were appreciated but he died prematurely at Woodend on 21 November 1897 aged 47.

Newly widowed Australia Jane and her five children, Vera, Roy, twins Percy and Nina, and Kenneth, moved to Auckland, where they first attended St John's Methodist Church in Ponsonby, before moving their membership in 1902 to the recently opened Mt Eden Methodist Church.

They were gifted and extremely influential members of



The Dellow Family c.1917-18. Back row, from left: Eva with husband Kenneth, Nina, Percy. Front row from left: Millie, wife of Roy, Australia Jane, Roy. The babies are Jack and Alan.

the Mt Eden congregation. Australia was known for her interest in missions and commitment to work amongst young people. She regularly attended the Mt Eden Methodist Church Leaders' Meeting and in 1914, was presented with a Diploma of Honour from the London Sunday School Union, for 50 years of continuous service as a teacher. She was subsequently awarded an Honorary Life Membership of the Auckland Methodist Women's Missionary Auxiliary.

The family contributed their

talents to the Methodist Church and to the wider community. Both Roy and Kenneth conducted the Mt Eden church choir.

Long-serving choirmaster at Mt Eden from 1924 until 1960, Percy was also a Trustee of the Church from 1921 and Sunday school superintendent from 1935 until 1953. In 1959 he was presented with his 50 year certificate as a local preacher.

Kenneth graduated MA from the Auckland University College in 1913, and then taught at Auckland Grammar School. He was wounded while serving

overseas in World War I. He became principal of Takapuna Grammar from 1935-1953. His son, Ron, was a leader in Auckland's music scene and one of New Zealand's first professionally-trained Church musicians. His daughter Vivienne was awarded an MNZM for her services to botany. and Nina brought their gifts of teaching and music to the Sunday school.

Aged 26, on 10 March 1911, Vera was killed, falling from a train as it approached the Ohakune station. The shock of her death brought the congregation such sadness that the Church Anniversary services were postponed for several months. When Australia entered Pitt Street Methodist Church as the first woman lay representative to Conference, only one year had elapsed since Vera's death.

Despite the tragedies in her life, Australia remained a strong, resilient woman and a staunch Methodist. Cared for by unmarried daughter Nina, she died on 17 October 1934. On her gravestone at Waikaraka Cemetery, the words 'The Lord God giveth them light', fittingly reflect the Dellow and Buddle families' lifelong commitment to missions, education and music.

Gala re-release of first Fijian New Testament

By Andrew Thornley

13 June 2012 was a memorable day for Fiji's Methodists. Their focus was on the small island of Viwa, off the east coast of the main island of Viti Levu, where celebrations were held to mark the bicentennial of the birth of Rev John Hunt.

John came from England and was a Wesleyan missionary on Viwa from 1842 to 1848. In that relatively brief span of years, and before his death at the age of 36, he established Christianity as a vital part of the religious life of Fijians.

One of the most significant achievements of this very able missionary was the first translation of the New Testament from Greek into Fijian. John's style of translation was culturally contextual and idiomatic; subsequent revisions have not improved on his efforts and may indeed have detracted from them.

The final analysis of differences between the original New Testament and its successors has yet to be done, however. Nevertheless, the republication of Hunt's translation provided added cause for bicentennial celebrations.

The people of Viwa hosted the occasion in true Fijian style with singing, fine food and a grand traditional welcome to the chief guests. Most significant among them was Ratu Epenisa Cakobau, a direct descendant of the high chief who permitted Hunt's preaching on Viwa and who came

to greatly respect the missionary's integrity and his intellect.

Also present were other representatives of the great chiefdoms of Fiji and the senior churchmen and women of the Methodist Church. The celebrated choir of the Centenary Church in Suva was also in attendance, singing beautiful hymns and anthems.

The more than 300 people who attended were transported to Viwa by boat, and their joyful feelings at this unique event not dampened by the heavy rain that fell throughout the day. Rain to the Fijians is blessing in abundance and many commented that their experience simply mirrored what the early Fiji missionaries on the "wet" side of the island - both European and Indigenous - encountered during their daily endeavours.

The republication of the New Testament was marked by both a celebratory cake and the unveiling of a plaque. The plaque honours the work of John Hunt and his wife Hannah and the valuable contribution made by the first generation of Fijian converts, most notably Noa Koroinavugona from Viwa, who was described by Hunt as a master of the Fijian language and a theologian.

Noa was Hunt's right-hand man as a language informant and many of the rich and beautiful words in the first Fijian New Testament undoubtedly come from his



Bicentennial celebrations for John Hunt on Viwa with the celebratory cake in the foreground.

theological reflections.

Since the launch date of 13 June, the New Testament has been warmly embraced by the Fijian people and copies are selling steadily, not only to Methodists but to people of all Christian denominations. The combination of a simple flow of language - as though spoken from one person to the next - together with expressive words that, as one observer puts it "breathe with a Fijian heart", has had the effect of restoring to Fiji's

Christians the root or foundation of their scriptures, in the same way that the King James Bible marks an important milestone in the history of English translations.

The republication comes with commentaries on the language by well-regarded Fijian ministers and laypeople. Copies of the Hunt New Testament are available from the Epworth Bookshop in Wellington.

Service simply given leads to royal honour

By Cory Miller

She's a mother, a grandmother, a great-grandmother and now the proud recipient of a Queen's honour. Janet Jensen became a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit at this year's Queen's Birthday and Diamond Jubilee Honours in recognition of her long-standing presence in the community.



Janet Jensen

could help people in need."

Today Janet continues to be an active member and leader of the Morrinsville Methodist Church, of which she has been involved with for the past 56 years.

Over the years she has held numerous roles both within the church and the wider community. She has held roles as president, treasurer and secretary for many years within a variety of organisations including, her parish, the Women's Fellowship, Rural Women New Zealand, Scotlands Te Kiteroa Charitable Trust and the Morrinsville Community House.

She has obviously been recognised for her invaluable contribution but Janet says she could not have achieved so much without having her husband at her side.

"I could not have done so much in the community without Clarrie's support

and encouragement. We are a team and have always worked together. We were on a dairy farm for 46 years, and did not employ farm help until the last five years," she says.

"The Methodist church has always been a vital part of our lives, as bible class leaders and Sunday school teachers, Church Trustee and Women's Fellowship. I have enjoyed the years of service simply given."

As well as their community work, in their own lives Janet and Clarrie have been busy raising six children, who in turn have given them seven granddaughters, six grandsons, one great-granddaughter and four great-grandsons.

"We supported the family through school, Brownies, Guides, PTA, hockey, netball, rugby and athletics."

Outside of her obviously busy family and community life, Janet is also a sport fan. "I am an armchair sports critic, following anything with a ball - tennis, rugby, league, golf. You name it and I probably know something about it. I do get up in the night to watch, and I do enjoy watching Wimbledon," she says.

Jim's 50 years of giving

By Cory Miller

Jim Watson is a man of few words, softly spoken, modest and rather reluctant to speak of himself. He is a community man and has been for more than half a century.

It is this modest, but giving nature that has made this 85-year-old gentleman such an inspiration to those that know him.

Jim has been a member of the Papatoetoe Wesley Methodist Church since 1938, and he was awarded a 2012 Kiwi Bank Local Hero Award earlier this year for his contributions to his community.

This father of six has served as a lay preacher at the church for 50 years and in his own words has "done almost every role there is within the church". He has taken bible classes, organised working bees and managed the renting of the church facilities.

Jim's work is not limited to the church. He has also spent 40 years serving the Boys Brigade, and has taken on a leadership roles at both the local and regional levels. Jim has also built homes for people through Habitat for Humanity and has opened his own home to those who need accommodation.

He is on the local neighbourhood support group, delivers meals on wheels, helps with the Food Bank and once a month takes cancer patients from their homes for treatment at



Auckland deputy mayor Penny Hulse awards Jim Watson his Local Hero Award.

Middlemore hospital - while there he helps to push patients in chairs or hospital beds to services in the chapel.

When Jim was asked what drives him to contribute to the community, he says matter-of-factly it is what he has made his life about.

Even as we talk he, tells me that he did some hospice driving earlier in the day and in the next hour he will head off to another meeting at the church.

Jim chuckles a little as he explains what he does to relax. "I am out tramping every fourth Friday." He is also known to do six day tramps around the Rotorua and Papamoa region and quite recently Jim was on a camping holiday in America. He says it was a beautiful thing to have done visiting the East Coast and its national parks.

A member of the Papatoetoe church spoke highly of Jim, on behalf of the church, saying in the decade she has known him he has always been so active, time has certainly not slowed him down.

"He always says I must stop now - but come the next time he is there. He is a very humble man and doesn't like the fuss, but if someone inspires you it must be acknowledged.

"He always has time to give, not just to the church but to the wider community. He shows you how you can never be too old to be of service. He is just always at church doing something; if he is not at home you can find him at the church fixing things, helping out, mending chairs and doing the plumbing."



Sinoti Samoa Educational Expo - Lower North Island

What started off as a simple idea about three years ago became a reality again on Friday 13th July 2012 - the second of Sinoti Samoa Educational Expo's was held at the Wesley Wellington Methodist Church on Taranaki Street. The theme of the expo was: "Making informed decisions today, for a better tomorrow." With over 300 people in attendance and over 20 different education providers/career pathways on display, this expo event was deemed a definite success.

Youth members from across the Sinoti Samoa Taranaki, Gisborne, Hawkes Bay and Wellington districts were out in force at the Wellington CBD. It was ablaze and resembled the stock exchange, only this one was selling tickets bound for knowledge...for free.

While young people are always the main targets for these types of expos, older and younger people alike were also encouraged to attend and take advantage of all the valuable information.

It was a change to the normal programme to the Sinoti Samoa Annual General Meeting, but the day was opened by the Superintendent of Sinoti Samoa - Rev Tovia Aumua - together with an opening prayer by the District Superintendent of Wellington - Rev Falaniko Mann-Taito, and inspiration and formal opening from the Vice President

of the Methodist Church of New Zealand - Olive Tanielu. The display/stalls area was then opened, with three different workshops also being run throughout the day by Careers NZ (2), and Leprosy Mission New Zealand.

Some of the stall holders present included Victoria University, New Zealand Institute of Sport, Futureintech, School of Audio Engineering, New Zealand Defence Force, Hairdressing Industry Training Organisation, Ministry of Primary Industries, Massey University, NZ Fire Services, Otago University, YouthLine Wellington and New Zealand Women's Methodist Fellowship just to name a few.

To encourage everyone to visit every stall and attend each workshop, attendees were required to carry with them an "expo passport" that was stamped by each stall holder and workshop presenter. A fully stamped passport was then eligible for entry into a prize draw which was drawn at the end of the day. Bonita Tuala of Petone Youth won the first prize (a Panasonic Stereo) with consolation prizes also won by other youths in attendance.

In true Samoan style, food was also provided at this expo, with the Wellington Itumalo generously catering morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea.

One of the highlights of this expo was that it was

organised entirely by Sinoti Samoa youth - and at the forefront were the very youthful organising committee a.k.a. the LNISSEE (Lower North Island Sinoti Samoa Educational Expo) Project Committee made up of Filo Tu, Edna Te'o, Isa-Uana Toelupe, Malavai P. Misikei and Su'ega Tanielu, and acknowledging also the support of the MASSEE Project Committee who also assisted with the event.

A HUGE thank you to The Methodist Church of NZ PAC distribution group, Sinoti Samoa, Careers NZ, Dick Smith, Rebel Sports and the Wellington Itumalo for their financial support and encouragement of Sinoti Samoa Youth Ministry and of course thank you to all who came along to listen, learn and support from Taranaki, Gisborne, Hawkes Bay and Wellington.

Of course the real success of such an event lays in the future successes of our people - in the words of John Wesley: "Do all the good you can. By all the means you can. In all the ways you can. In all the places you can. At all the times you can. To all the people you can. As long as ever you can". We pray that hard work, faith and God's grace will continue to help water the seeds that were planted during this educational expo extravaganza!



Siniva Isaia at the Pacific Business Trust stall.



Leigh Tufuga engages the University of Otago stall holders.

FA'AFETAI I LE ATUA UA I'U MA LE MANUIA

By Filo Tu

Upu a le pese: "Ua mae'a, ua mae'a, Aleluia ia Iesu". O le lagona lena e pei ona alualu pea i luma le taumafaiga a ni isi o tupulaga talavou. O le fiafiaga o le loto ina ua mae'a fo'i le tausinioga a se tasi o tamafanau a le tatou Sinoti Samoa, le tama'ita'i ia To'aga Christina Alefosio. I le masina o Me sa fa'au'uina ai lea alotama'ita'i ma lona Bachelor of Arts i le Development Studies, Pacific Studies, ma le Samoan Studies mai le Iunivesite a Vitoria i Ueligitone. Ae peita'i, o lo'o finafinau pea le tama'ita'i ia To'aga e fa'aauau lana soifua a'otauina i le Iunivesite a Aukilani, o lo'o taumafai ai mo lana Bachelor of Arts (Honours) i le Development Studies. O le tofa a'e a lea auaua, o le tauivi ina ia 'ausia le tikeri, ona taga'i lea i le isi la'asaga o le Masters, ma finafinau pea i ni isi la'asaga o i luma.

Fai mai: "I studied in the Development field as it was one of my passions in life to make this world a better place. Development Studies within the Pacific was the focus of my interest in particularly how tourism has changed ideas about the land in Samoa and its effects on our culture and value of land. This is the research topic for the thesis that I am working on this year which I intend to carry through to my Masters research".

E le mafai ona fa'atinoina nei tulaga uma, e aunoa ma le lagolago a le Ekalesia, e pei ona galue punoua'i i le Matagaluega a Uesele i Ueligitone. O le fa'afetai a To'aga e fa'apea: "Throughout my studies I was blessed with scholarships from The

Methodist Church of New Zealand. The New Zealand Methodist Women's Fellowship Annual Friendship Scholarship and Smethurst Trust Fund supported me financially with my studies, encouraging me to strive for the best without the stress of financial matters. I would like to thank the church for providing scholarship funds for South Pacific Island girls to continue with their education and gain higher qualifications. It has been a blessing!

Graduating was such a humbling feeling. All the hard work and sacrifice was finally paid off. I am so thankful to God for this opportunity; E leai se mea e faigata I Le Atua.

"From this experience I have learnt that there is no limit to learning and every challenge has its own sacrifice. But it is the decisions made by the individual that reflects on their success. I am thankful for my family, for understanding when I could not fulfil my duties at home, my church family for upholding my spiritual wellbeing but most importantly my parents (Malie Matai'a Alefosio & Matai'a Lome Alefosio) for believing in me.

To the Tupulaga (Youth) that are thinking of studying or are currently studying, keep at it! You can do it! E leai se mea e faigata I Le Atua. Keep that connection with your spiritual side, the tasks ahead of you is never as great as the power behind you.

I would like to acknowledge Rev Fatuatia Tufuga and Suresa Tufuga, Rev Falaniko Mann-Taito and Marlene Mann-Taito for their love and support while I was

studying at Victoria University. Thank you for your prayers, your wise words and for feeding me spiritually. To Seaga Toelupe, as my mentor you played a significant role in my education, thank you for keeping me in line. To my youth group and church family at Wesley Methodist in Wellington thank you all for your prayers and for keeping me motivated. To my uncles and aunties, Uncle Le'aula Peniamina and Aunty Niu Vai from Ponsonby; Uncle Le'aula Sililo and Aunty Sia Pio from Hastings; Uncle Matai'a Sione and Aunty Olive Amani Tanielu from Hastings; Uncle Aufa'i Amalamo and Aunty Eseta Tanielu, Aunty Mase Tinei and Uncle Mika and to all my family, this achievement

is dedicated to you all.

If I did not have a solid family who supported my studies and kept me in their prayers I wouldn't have achieved this milestone. I am so humbled.

Ia fa'amanuia pea Le Atua ia te outou uma".

Fa'apea upu a Sione Uesile: "O le mea sili ua ia te i tatou le Atua". E vi'ia pea lona alofa ma lona agalelei i Tupulaga faia'e o le tatou Sinoti Samoa. Tau ia ina ia aveave nei alo fa'asino i le tatou galuega, e lu'itauina ai i tatou uma, e finau pea. Ae a mae'a se galuega, e ao ai ia i tatou ona fa'afetaia le Atua ua i'u ma le manuia a tatou fuafuaga uma.



Christina Alefosio and her family.

K O E F A K A L O T O F A L E ' I A

Fakatulou atu kia Hou'eiki, 'oku toka ki ai 'a e talamalu fakatoukatea hotau fonuaa, kae'uma'a 'a ha'a Tauhi Fonua. Fakatapu ki he Faifekau Sea 'o e Vahefonuaa, kae'uma'a 'a e ongo Sekelitali 'a e Vahefonua Tonga O Aotearoa, kau Faifekau, Setuata Lahi mo e kau Setuata, 'a e ngaahi famili kotoa pe 'o e Vahefonua, kae 'ataa mu'a ki te fakahoko atu 'etau Fakalotofale'ia 'o e mahina fo'ou ni.

Ko e kalofiamā kuo malama mai, ke hoko ko e tuuhulu 'etau fononga he halafononga 'o e mahina fo'ou ni 'oku pehe hono fakaleaa. **“Ko Sisu 'a e Fakamo'ui ki he Toko Taha Fakafotofale'ia”**. Ko hono potu folofolaa ko e - **I Kolinito.5:17: Ko ia foki, kapau 'oku 'ia Kalaisi ha taha, ko e maatu'aki fakatupu fo'ou ia: kuo mole 'a e ngaahi me'a 'o ono'ahoo, uee kuo nau hoko 'o fo'ou.**

Ko e ngaahi 'aho ni 'oku tau mamata he televisonee, pea tau fanongo he ngaluopee, 'a e ngaahi tu'uaki kehekehe, ke fakahaa'i 'a e ngaahi fekumi fakapoto ki he ngaahi founa kehekehe, ke tokoni'i 'aki hotau sino ke fakafotofale'ia. Taimi 'e ni'ihiki ko e ngaahi efuefu mo e kilimi ki he fofonga 'o e hou'eiki fafine, ko hono ngaue'aki 'a e ngaahi me'a ko iaa, pea 'oku liliu ai 'a e toko taha ko iaa, ki ha fotunga fo'ou. 'Oku tu'uaki mai 'a e ngaahi naunau fakamalohi sino kehekehe ke ngaue 'aki, pea ko e ngaue'aki 'a e ngaahi me'a ko ia, kuo liliu ai 'a e toko taha ko iaa ki ha natula fo'ou. Kuo tu'uaki mai mo e ngaahi fekumi ki he me'atokoni mo e faito'o ke ngaue'aki 'e kinautolu 'oku sisinoo ken au holo 'o sino iiki, pea holoki ai mo ha ngaahi fotunga 'oku ha ngali motu'a ke haa ngali "talavau" ange. Ko

'enua ngaue'aki 'a e ngaahi me'a ko iaa, pea 'oku nau toe foki ki he fotunga na'a nau 'i ai 'i mu'aa, 'o nau ma'u ha fotunga 'oku fo'ou hono angaa.

Ko hotau Kaveinga 'o e mahina fo'ou ni, ko e faka'amu mo e tu'uaki tatau 'oku 'omi 'e he kau taki hotau Siasii, ka 'oku 'ikai 'uhinga ia ki hotau sino mateliee, ka 'oku 'uhinga ia ki hotau tangata 'i lotoo, ko e faka'amu ia ki he toko taha fakafotofale'ia kotoa pe he Vahefonua Tonga 'O Aotearoa he mahina fo'ou ni - **Ke tau ma'u 'a e FAKAMO'UI**. Pea ko e fakamo'ui ia 'o e laumaliee, 'oku 'ikai ma'u ia mei ha ngaahi faito'o mo ha ngaahi fekumi fakalalakala faka'atamai, ka ko e Fakamo'ui ia 'o e Laumaliee, ko e toko taha pe ia 'oku ma'u aii ko Sisu pe.

Pea 'oku talamai 'e Paula - **“Ko ia foki, kapau 'oku 'ia Kalaisi ha taha, ko e maatu'aki fakatupu fo'ou ia, kuo mole 'a e ngaahi me'a 'o ono'ahoo, uee kuo nau hoko 'o fo'ou”**. Ko e feinga mahu'inga taha ia te tau fai he mahina fo'ou ni, ko e feinga ke ma'u 'a Sisu, 'e kinautolu 'oku te'eki ke nau ma'u 'a Sisu. **‘Oku ua pee 'a e HALA te tau fili ke fou ai, 'oku 'ikai toe tolu, 'oku ua matematee pe. Ko e hala fou 'ia Sisu - pea te tau ma'u 'a e MO'UI, mo e hala 'oku 'ikai fou 'ia Sisu, kae ma'u 'a e MATE.**

Ko e fa'ahinga MO'UI 'oku 'uhinga ki ai 'a Paula he veesi folofola 'o e mahina fo'ou ni, KO E FAKATUPU FO'OU. Ko ia foki, kapau 'oku 'ia Kalaisi ha taha, ko e maatu'aki fakatupu fo'ou ia, kuo mole 'a

e ngaahi me'a 'o ono'ahoo, uee kuo nau hoko 'o fo'ou. Ko e Fakatupu Fo'ou 'oku 'uhinga ki ai 'a Paula, 'oku 'ikai ko e LIUANGA. Ko e Liuanga, 'oku hoko ia



Vaikoloa Kilikiti

'i he ngaahi feinga ke fakafotofale'ia 'a e to'onga mo'ui 'i he ngaahi faito'o mo e ngaahi fakatoto'lo ki he fakalakala 'o e mo'ui fakasino. Mo'oni kuo holo 'a Mele pe ko Sione ia 'i he feinga mo e fakamalohisino na'a na fai, pea kuo toe ha fo'ou hono fofonga koe'uhi ko e faito'o na'e 'ai ki ai, ka 'oku kei Mele pe 'a Mele pea Sione pe 'a Sione - pea ko e fakafotofale'ia na'e fai ki hona "nge'esi fefine pe nge'esi tangata" pe (hufanga he Fakatupu). Ko e fakatupu fo'ou ia 'ia Sisu, 'oku mole 'a hoto motu'a'i tangataa, pe ko hoto ono'ahoo, ka 'oku te ma'u ha tangata pe fefine fo'ou, 'oku mo'ui fo'ou.

'E 'ikai lau kuo te fakatupu fo'ou, kae 'osi angee ko e to'onga mo'ui ko ee na'a te mo'ui 'aki he laui ta'u kuo hili, 'oku kei tatau pe. Na'e lave 'a Paula ki Kolose ki he natula 'o e ngaue 'a e fakatupu fo'ou he mo'ui 'a e tangata. **Kolose 2: 6-7 - “Ko ia, ko e me'a 'i ho'omou ma'u 'a Kalaisi Sisu ko e 'Eiki, pea mo fou 'iate ia pe; ko e kakai kuo aka 'iate ia, pea 'oku langa hake 'iate ia, pea 'oku faka'a'au ke kaukaua 'i he lotu, 'i hono anga ne akonekina ai kimoutolu 'o mou tupulekina ai, pea oo mo ia 'a e fa'a fakafeta'i”**.

Ko e liliu ia ki he mo'ui fo'ou he taimi 'oku te ma'u ai 'a Kalaisii, 'oku 'ikai te

te toe fou he hala motu'a na'a te fa'a maheni 'alu ai, ka kuo te fou pe 'ia Kalaisi pe taha ko e hala ia 'o e 'Otua. Pea ko 'ete tuii, kuo aka 'ia Sisu pea 'oku ta'aki ngata'a 'e he filii. Pea 'oku te langa mo'ui 'ia Sisu ko e Maka Taufatunga motu'aa, pea 'e 'ikai uesia kita 'e ha malohi 'e taha. Ko e kakai pehee 'oku nau faka'a'au ke kaukaua he lotuu, kuo nau tu'u ko e pou ke falala ki ai hotau ngaahi potu Siasii, 'oku hoko 'enua ngauee ko e falala'anga mo e 'amanaki 'anga.

Ko e fakataataa 'o e Fakatupu fo'ou 'ia Kalaisii: Ko e fo'i 'unufe, na'e totolo holo pee he fu'u 'akau 'o kai mo mo'ui hono lauu, pea a'u ki ha taimi, kuo liukaamoko 'o pipiki hono kongā 'e taha he vaka 'o e fu'u 'akauu, kae taupe hono fofonga ki lalo ki he kelekelee. Pea 'alu pee 'a e taimii kuo ha mai mei he fo'i 'unufee ha fotunga kehe, pea fakalau mai 'a e 'aho 'oku fakautuutu ai pee 'a e liliu hono fotungaa mo hono lanuu, pea a'u pe ki ha taimi kuo haa mai hono fotungaa ko e fo'i pepe, kae kei tautau pe he va'akau na'e pipiki aii, pea a'u pe 'o moulu hifo hono nge'esi na'e kofu 'aki ia 'i tu'aa 'o too ki he kelekele, kae mafola hono kapakauu 'o puna ko e fo'i pepe.

Ko e fakatupu fo'ou ia, ko e sino mo e mo'ui fo'ou, tangata fo'ou, pea faka'a'au ai pe ke kaukaua 'ene mo'ui fakalotu, 'o tupu mei he kelesi ki he kelesi. Ko ia foki, kapau 'oku 'ia Kalaisi ha taha, ko e maatu'aki fakatupu fo'ou ia, kuo mole 'a e ngaahi me'a 'o ono'ahoo, uee kuo nau hoko 'o fo'ou. **“Ko Sisu 'a e Fakamo'ui ki he toko taha fakafotofale'ia kotoa.”** 'I he huafa 'o e Tamai mo e 'Alo mo e Laumalie Ma'oni'oni. **‘Ofa Lahi Atu.**

Faifekau Vaikoloa Kilikiti

ONGO AKO MO E FAKA'ALI'ALI (ROADSHOW) MO'UNGA HEAMONI & LOTOFALE'IA

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Na'a ne lave foki ki he tupu vave mo tokolahi 'a e kainga Tonga 'i he fonua ni. 'I he tohi kakai fakamuimitaha (NZ Census, 2006), ko e toko 52,923 Tonga 'i Nu'usila ni. Ko e tokolahi tahaa, 'oku nofo 'i 'Okalani ni, fakafuofua ki he toko 41, 000, pea ko e toko 19,160 'o e kakai ko ia, 'oku nau nofo 'i he vahenga Saute 'Okalani (South Auckland). Ko e fekau mahu'inga, 'o kapau te tau lava 'o tokoni'i e fe'amokaki mo e palopalema 'oku tau fehanga'angai mo ia 'i 'Okalani ni, 'e malava ke fakalalakala 'o e tu'unga mo e fa'ahinga 'ataakai 'oku tau nofo ai. Na'e faka'ohovale foki 'a e ha mei he tohi kakai ko 'eni, 'a e faka'au ke tokolahi 'a hotau kainga Tonga, 'oku 'ikai ke nau kau kinautolu ki ha Siasi pe fa'ahinga lotu (religion). Ko e ngaahi faliunga 'eni 'o taimi, 'oku faka'amu ai 'a e Vahefonua ke faka'aonga'i e faingamalie, pea ke fai ha tokoni telia 'a e fasitanunu 'a e to'onga mo'ui 'oku tau fe'ao mo ia 'i he tu'unga fakaako mo e ngaahi palopalema pehe ni. Na'e mahino foki mei he fakatoto'lo mo e savea faka'ekonomika, kapau te tau ngaue'aki 'a e ngaahi faingamalie 'i he fonua ni, 'e haofaki ai 'e he Pule'anga ha pa'anga 'e 4-5 pilliona, 'a ia 'oku tau 'ilo kotoa pe, 'e ma'u mei ai

ha lelei mo ha faingamalie ma'a hotau ngaahi famili.

Na'e hoko atu foki ki hano fakamatala 'e Sione Tesimale (Clinical Practitioner/Educator) mei he Problem Gambling Foundation of NZ ki he ngaahi tu'unga mo e fika kuo a'u ki ai 'a e Taonakita, Peti Pa'anga (Gambling), Ta/Houtamaki 'i he famili (Family Violence) pea pehe ki he palopalema te tau fe'ao atu mo ia, kapau he 'ikai tokanga 'a e Siasi ki he ngaahi me'a 'oku 'auhia mo mole ngoufa ai hotau kakai. Na'e lava foki 'a hono fakai'iki 'i he ha'ofanga SIAOLA, 'a ia na'a nau ngaue fakataha ki ai mo Faifekau 'Ikilifi Pope pea mo Mosese 'Alatini (Policy Analyst, Auckland District Health Board).

Na'e tokoni foki 'a Faiako Kilisitina Manuepangai 'Otonuku mei he Komiti Ako 'a Lotofale'ia, ki he ha'ofanga fekau'aki mo e mahu'inga 'o e Sivi Ma'olunga 'i he ngaahi kolisi (NCEA). 'O hange pe ko ia na'e fakahoko 'i Northcote, 'o tatakai mai 'e Mele 'Alatini (Advisor, PTE and Community Education Investmetn, Tertiary Education Commision)

Koe ha'ofanga ki he Laukonga (Literacy), na'e tatakai ia 'e 'Anahina Sikalu, Faiako 'i he Te Wanaga 'o Aotearoa, pea

tokoni ki ai 'a Nunia Mone Ngauamo (Pacific Project Manager, Ministry of Education)

Na'e lava mai foki mo e ngaahi kautaha (service providers) mo e ngaahi 'apiako (Institution) 'o faka'ali'ali 'enua ngaue mo e polokalama ako 'oku fakataumu'a ma'a e kainga Pasifiki. Ko e South Seas Healthcare, 'A-kihe-uho, Digel Money Transfer, University of Auckland, Manukau Institute of Technology pea pehe ki he Best Pacific Institution for Education.

Na'e teuteu'i foki 'e he kainga lotu Lotofale'ia (Mele Finau Terepo, Kaneisi Vaomotou mo Uona) 'a e BBQ, hamburger mo e me'atokoni 'o fakatau ke ma'u me'atokoni mei ai 'a kinautolu na'a nau kau mai ki he ako ko 'eni.

Na'e mahino 'aupito meiate kinautolu na'a nau kau mai ki he ongo Ako mo e Faka'ali'ali (Roadshow) ko 'eni, 'o tatau pe 'i Northcote mo Lotofale'ia, 'a 'enua fiefia he faingamalie ko'eni, mo 'enua faka'amu na'e toe lahi ange ha taimi ke talanoa'i ai e ngaahi kaveinga ha'ofanga, pea mo uki mai 'a e siasi mo hotau kainga Tonga ke nau omi ki he fa'ahinga polokalama mahu'iga pehe ni.

Ko e fakafiefa lahi ko e lava 'e he tamai 'o talaloto 'o fakahaa 'a e feinga hono 'ofefine

ke to'o 'ene mo'ui tu'o ua kae ikai lava ke fakahoko. Na'a ne lea 'o 'omi e fekau mahu'inga ki he ngaahi tamai mo e famili - ke 'oange e time mo e space ki he fanau ke nau lava ke nau lea ai ki he matu'a. Ke fakalotolahi'i mo talaange 'oku nau 'ofa 'ia kinautolu. Ko e 'ofefine ko eni na'a ne fu'u ilifia he tangata'eiki koe'uhi 'e fakama ki he famili mo e ngaahi maheni 'a e me'a kuo tofanga ai 'ene mo'ui: ko 'ene solution ke to'o 'ene mo'ui. Pea feinga ke puna he bridge pe ke tu'i'i ha me'alele ka na'e ma'u ia 'e he kau polisi 'o fakafoki ki 'api pea ko 'ene 'i 'api pe na'a ne toe feinga ke to'o 'ene mo'ui he garage. Ko e tamai eni hotau Siasi pea fakafeta'i ki he 'Eiki na'e 'ikai hoko 'eni pea kuo fai e femahino'aki 'a e tamai mo e famili mo e 'ofefine ko 'eni. Na'a ne fakamalohi 'a e ngaue 'oku fai 'ehe Misiona mo e Vahefonua. Ko e fekau mahu'inga (powerful message) 'eni ko e lava ke vahevahe tau'ataina mai kae 'ikai ke tukuloto'i. Fakatauange ke hoko mai 'a e nonga 'a e 'Eiki ko Sisu ki he famili ko eni.

Talamonu atu ki he ngaahi ngaue kotoa 'a e Misiona Tonga ki he ta'u ngaue kuo tau kamata ni.

Tu'a 'Ofa Lotu Atu

ONGO AKO MO E FAKA'ALI'ALI (ROADSHOW) MO'UNGA HEAMONI & LOTOFALE'IA

Ne 'aukau mai 'a e fu'u kakai Tonga mei he tapa kehekehe mo e ngaahi Siasi kotoa ki he ongo Ako mo e Faka'ali'ali (Roadshow) 'i 'Aokalani ko e kongā 'o e Polokalama Ngaue 'a e Misiona 'a e Vahefonua Tonga 'oku fakataumu'a ke langa hake 'a e tu'unga mo'ui 'a e Tongaa 'i Aotearoa. Na'e pehe ni 'a e ongo Polokalama:

Ako & Faka'ali'ali (Roadshow) Mo'unga Heamoni (Northcote) mo Lotofale'ia (Mangere)

Ko e taha 'eni 'a e visone 'a e Komiti Misiona 'a e Vahefonua Tonga ke ngaue fakataha (Partnership) mo e ngaahi Komiti Ako mo e Mo'ui Lelei 'a e ngaahi Siasi Fakakolo, ke fakalele ha ngaahi polokalama ki hono tokoni 'i 'a e ako mo e mo'ui lelei 'a e siasi. Na'e tokoni 'i fakapa'anga (sponsorship) 'a e polokalma ko 'eni, 'e he Vahefonua pea pehe ki he Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs mo e 'Apiako Pasifiki (Best Pacific Institution for Education). Na'e tataki mai ai 'a e tamaio'eiki mei he kaingalotu Metotisi 'o Dominion, ko e 'Ofisa Fale'i Ma'olunga ko Li 'Ilohahia. Na'e poupu ki ai 'a e kau ngaue Tonga 'i he 'apiako ni. Na'e kau foki 'enau tokoni 'i hono paaki 'o e pepa (flyers) ke tu'uaki 'aki 'a e Roadshow, pea fakahoko mo e ngaahi polokalama letio 'o fakamamafa'i ai 'a e mahu'inga 'o e polokalama faka'ali'ali (Roadshow) ko 'eni.

Ko e polokalama na'e fokotu'utu'ua 'e he Komiti Misiona, pea tokoni ki ai 'a e kau Faiako mo e Komiti Ako 'a e ongo siasi ko 'eni, 'o muimui 'a e ngaahi ha'ofanga (workshops) ki he ngaahi kaveinga ngaue lalahi ko 'eni 'e 4 mo kinautolu na'a nau tataki 'a e ngaahi polokalama mo e ngaahi ha'ofanga:

1. **Sivi mo e Tohi Fakamo'oni Ako NCEA – Mele 'Alatini/Samuella Uasi/Kilisitina 'Otonuku Fakamatala ki he sivi ma'olunga pe tohi fakamo'oni ako 'i he kolisi (secondary school) – 'a e ngaahi lesone ke fili mei ai, mo e ta'u ke fakakakato ai 'a e ngaahi tu'unga (level) takitaha. 'Oku meime kamata 'eni 'i he ta'u/year 11, 12 & 13. 'Oku 'i ai foki mo e fa'ahinga mo e founa kehekehe pe hono sivi 'i mo tanaki 'a e maaka ke fakakakato 'aki 'a e ngaahi tu'unga (level) takitaha (NCEA Level 1, 2, pe 3).**
2. **Mahu'inga 'o e Laukonga (Literacy) – 'Anahina Sikalu/Nunia Mone Ngauamo 'Oku matu'aki mahu'inga 'aupito 'a e founa lautohi, ngaahi lea 'oku ngaue'aki,**

anga hono pu'aki pea mo e anga 'ene tu'u 'i he setesi. Na'e tokoni 'a e polokalama ko 'eni, ke tupulaki 'a e 'ilo faka'atamai ki he laukonga mo mahino 'a e ngaahi fakakaukau mo e lea 'oku ngaue'aki 'i he TV, komipiuta mo e ngaahi fetu'utaki faka-tekinolosia. Ko e ngaahi founa lelei ke tokoni ai 'a e matu'a ki he ako 'a 'enau fanau.

3. **SIAOLA (Social issues) – Sione Tesimale/Mosese 'Alatini/Faifekau 'Ikilifi Pope**

Fofola e fala ke fai ha talatalanoa fekau'aki mo e ngaahi me'a 'oku ne uesia kovi 'etau mo'ui 'i he fonua ni. Hange ko e ngaahi me'a f a k a s o s i a l e , fakapa'anga/faka'ekonomika, fakapolitikale, nofo 'a e famili mo e kainga mo e fa'ahinga 'aatakai 'oku tutupu ai 'etau fanau.

4. **Youth Guarantee (Best Pacific Institution for Education) – Li 'Ilohahia/Taina Tupou**

Polokalama ako ta'e totongi, 'a ia 'oku fakapa'anga 'e he Pule'anga ke tokoni 'i 'a e fanau ako, kuo nau nofo mei he ngaahi kolisi, ka 'oku te'eki fakakakato 'a e ngaahi sivi pe ma'u 'enau tohi fakamo'oni ako ma'olunga (NCEA). 'Oku tokoni 'a e polokalama ko 'eni, ke fakamahino 'a e ngaahi lesone mo e ako 'e tokoni 'i 'etau fanau ke fakakakato 'a e NCEA Level 1, 2, pe 3, ke ma'u ha 'ilo mo ha taukei fe'unga ke kumi 'aki ha'a nau ngaue, pe ke hoko atu 'aki 'enau ako.

Na'e lava mai foki mo Halaifonua Finau mei Wellington, ko e "Inspirational Youth" ki he Faka'ali'ali 'i Northcote. Na'e mahino 'a 'ene taukei mo fengau'aki lelei mo e To'utupu, he na'e tokolahi 'a e fanau 'oku nau 'ilo' 'i 'a Halaifonua mei he polokalama TV (Small Blacks). Ko ia, na'e toe fakaafe'i ai 'e he Komiti Ako 'o Lotofale'ia ke ne hoko ko e MC ki he Faka'ali'ali/Roadshow 'a Mangere.

M o ' u n g a Heamoni/'Apiako Northcote Intermediate – Tokonaki 7 Siulai.

Na'e faka'ofa'ofa 'a e polokalama 'a e kainga lotu Mo'unga Heamoni, 'i hono tataki 'e Faifekau 'Ahi'ahi Tevita Finau mo hono hoa, Valeti Finau, pea pehe ki he 'enau Komiti Ako/Laulotaha Mentoring. Na'e kau mai foki ki ai mo e kainga Tonga mei he ngaahi fungavaka kehe 'o hange ko e Siasi Katolika mo e Siasi Penitekosi.

Na'e fakafiefia foki ko e kau

mai 'a e Komiti Laulotaha, 'o hange ko e Tokoni Puleako 'o e Kolisi Tangaroa, Samuela Uasi, mo e kau Faiako - 'Anau Tu'i'onetoa, Siosi'ana Taukolo, Fakafofonga 'o e matu'a Milileita Muna, Mele Pesini pea pehe kia Kamipeli Tu'itahi, Halani Fine, Tina Tu'itupou, Setuata Selu Tuiaki mo e matu'a 'o e siasi. Na'e teuteu'i foki 'e he kulupu 'a e Kakai Fefine 'a Mo'unga Heamoni ('Ema Tuiaki, 'Ema Sita'u, Lisita Fonua) 'a e me'atokoni mo'ui lelei - BBQ mo e supo ifo atu, 'o fakataha ke ma'u me'atokoni mei ai 'a e kau ako mo e kau ngaue 'o e 'aho.

Lotofale'ia, Mangere – Tokonaki 14 Siulai,

Na'e lava lelei foki mo e polokalama Ako mo e Faka'ali'ali Roadshow 'a Mangere 'i hono tataki 'e he Sea 'o e Misiona, Lay Pastor Moi Kaufononga, Faifekau Goll Fan Manukia, Komiti Ako 'a Lotofale'ia, pehe ki he Setuata, Sila Terepo mo e kainga lotu 'o Lotofale'ia. Na'e lava mai foki mo e ni'ihini mei he ngahi fungavaka kehe, 'o hange ko Faifekau Teisi mo hono hoa mei he Siasi Tonga Tau'atana, pehe kia Pastor Pelikani 'Esau mo e To'utupu 'a e Siasi 'Ahofitu.

Ko e Faka'afe Fakalangilangi 'o e 'aho koe Fakafofonga Falealea 'o Mangere – MP Su'a William Sio. Na'a ne poupu lelei ki he polokalama ko 'eni, mo e manatu melie ki he fuofua Education Expo na'e fakahoko 'i he 2007 'i he kelekele 'o Lotofale'ia. Na'a ne pehe, ko Mangere 'a e matapa mo e hu'anga ki he fonua ni pea 'oku taau mo kitautolu ke ngaue 'aonga 'aki 'a e faingamalie ko 'eni. Na'a ne fakalotolahi ki he mahu'inga 'o e ako mo e tokanga 'i 'etau fanau ke nau hoko ko ha tangata 'i mo e fefine 'i fonua lavame'a mo 'aonga 'i he fonua ni.

Na'e fakahoko foki 'e Kalolo Fihaki (Senior Advisor, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs) ha fakamatala ki he puiipuitu'a 'o e 'uhinga mo e taumu'a na'e fa'u ai 'e he Vahefonua 'a e fa'ahinga polokalama ko 'eni. Na'e makatu'unga ia 'i he faka'amu 'a e siasi, ke tau fengau'aki mo e Pule'anga ke hakeaki 'i 'a e tu'unga mo'ui lelei mo e socio-economic (fakatu'umalie) hotau ngaahi famili. 'Oku 'ikai ke tau fie ongo ki he ngaahi nunu'a kovi 'o e masiva mo e fusimo'omo, 'a e ta'e ma'ungaue, taonakita, kee pe taa mo e houtamaki 'i he famili, too lalo 'a e tu'unga fakaako mo e ngaahi palopalema ki he to'utupu, fa'ele tu'utamaki (hufanga he fakatapu) pea pehe ki he inu kavamalohi mo e ngaue'aki 'o e faito'o konatapu.

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Ko e ngaahi imisi taa 'o e ni'ihini 'o e fu'u tokolahi ne nau ma'u faingamalie kenau kau mai ki he ongo Ako mo e Faka'ali'ali (Roadshow) 'a e Misiona 'a e Vahefonua Tonga. Ko e toki me'a fakafiefia ki he kau Taki 'o e ngaahi polokalama mo e ngaahi ha'ofanga ko e kau mai 'a 'etau longa'i fanau 'o a'u ki he ngaahi tamai mo e ngaahi fa'e kae 'uma'a 'a e fanau ako mo e to'utupu. Kau mai foki mo e kau Faifekau, kau taki lotu, kau faiako mo e kau taki 'i hotau ngaahi Komunitii Tonga.