

TOUCHSTONE

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



Manurewa mural is creative community outreach

By Paul Titus
Manurewa Methodist Church invited the community to help create its new public art work - a mural depicting the ties between New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

The mural evokes the journey of Pasifika people to Aotearoa. It is the latest work of Auckland artist Doug Ford, who has painted a number of murals around Manurewa.

The church mural has a point of difference, however. Rather than paint the entire mural himself, Doug outlined it and then invited members of the parish and the community to fill it in.

"I basically made a giant sketch, and then it was up to the people to choose what colours they wanted to paint the birds, flora and other images from the Islands.

"About 80 people helped paint the mural. I mixed all the paint - which

included lots of blue given all the ocean and the sky that has to be in a mural of the Islands.

"That part of the project took a whole day, and then I spent about a week filling in over the lines, blending the colours and adding shading."

Doug says the Island nations depicted in the mural all have some governmental ties to NZ. They include Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Rapa Nui/Easter Island.

Other murals he has painted in Manurewa public spaces depict the settlement of the area by Maori and Pakeha as well as natural landmarks such as the Manukau Heads.

The mural covering the large church car park wall was painted in November, and in May Doug painted a second, smaller section of wall around the corner from it. The small mural depicts the graveyard at Wiri (formally known as Woodside) because Manurewa's first Methodist church building was moved from its original home in Wiri in 1909.

Parishioners young and old, members of the community, police constables and MPs all pitched in to paint Manurewa Methodist Church's car park mural.

Manurewa Methodist presbyter Rev Vaitu'ulala Ngahe says he put ads in the local paper to invite people to join the parish in painting the mural.

Along with church members, some individuals from the community groups who use the church pitched in, and other people simply walked in off the street when the painting was underway to take part.

"I contacted the deputy police commander to let him know what we were doing, and he sent three constables to help paint the mural. The constables also ran a barbecue so we could provide sausages to the painters. Our two local MPs - Louisa Wall and Cam Calder - also turned up on the day to help," Vai says.

"Manurewa Methodist Church is called the Corner of Hope, so we have named the mural the 'Journey of the Corner of Hope'. Three Methodist congregations - Samoan, Tongan and Palagi - worship at

the church. It is great to have a reminder that the Pacific people are part of the journey here."

Vai says the parish is very thankful for grants from the Auckland City Council and their neighbour, the Manurewa Cosmopolitan Club, which helped pay for the paint, brushes and Doug's time.

Parishioners Robin and Margaret Ziegler helped organise the murals. They say the Manurewa church is home to people from 11 different ethnic groups, and it is befitting to have a mural that reflects the many Island groups associated with the church.

"The whole idea of the mural was to create more connections with the community. Vai emphasises that the Church must be part of the community, and since he has been with us we have a lot more involvement in the community," Robin says.

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Ecumenical gathering explores justice and peace in Asia

Waiuku presbyter Rev Dale Peach says Asian Christians have much to teach Christians around the world about how to express Christianity in a multi-faith world and how to expand their concerns beyond themselves to the whole of creation.

In May, Dale was in Indonesia as a MCNZ representative on a two-week Christian Conference of Asia ecumenical course. The course was held at Jakarta Theological Seminary, and the 24 participants were from 12 Asian countries and represented 13 different denominational traditions.

The theme of the course was 'Called to be Life-Givers to the World' and it reflected the theme of the forthcoming World Council of Churches (WCC) assembly: 'God of Life, lead us to justice and peace'.

The first keynote speaker was Rev Dr SAE Nababan, a towering figure in world and Asian ecumenism.

Dale says Dr Nababan told participants that to be 'life givers' we need to work with God to address the issues of injustice because injustice creates poverty. We best do this when we work together, which is the essence of the ecumenical movement.

By exploring Bible verses course participants were reminded of God's call to address injustice with dedication and action. They also considered environmental issues that stop people living fully.

"Rev Evangeline Pua discussed the injustice of climate change. The people who are most responsible for climate change are the least affected by it. And the people who are the least responsible are the people who are affected the most.

"Rev Pua encouraged participants to make small changes and to start with 'Repent, Rethink, Refuse' before 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle'."

The course visited Evangeline's church where they heard about the congregation's ecological programmes, including a creative paper recycling project.

Those attending the course also visited the Jakarta dump and heard about plans to recycle rubbish and harvest methane gas to generate power. Unfortunately this will only deal with about one third of the 6,000 tonnes of rubbish that comes to the dump every



Conference goers witnessed Indonesia's poverty when they visited the Jakarta dump, which is home to thousands of people who make their living picking through rubbish.

day. Another problem the dump faces is how to address the welfare of the 7,000 people who live there and make their living picking through the rubbish.

Another topic of the course was the need to work with all people to overcome injustice. This brought up the matter of inter-faith relations.

Dale says Dr Martin Sinaga introduced the terminology of 'neighborology', the need to understand and become engaged with all neighbours, no matter who they are, and to take their cries to God in prayer. Martin said that interfaith relations cannot start from the stand-point of faith. People first have to be able to see each other as neighbours. Ecumenism must include people of other faiths because God's grace is for everyone and accepting people as they are is putting into practice the love that comes from Christ.

During the course Christian-Muslim tensions were often discussed. A course participant, who lives near Jakarta, has been stopped by local Muslims from worshipping in his church. The participant from Bangladesh described how he and his family had to flee to India because of tensions. The women from Pakistan said converts to Christianity can lose their jobs and even their homes.

"In most of Asia Christians are outnumbered by Muslims. The missional understanding of Western Christians is that we are called to make everyone disciples of Jesus. In Asia acting on this could be dangerous," Dale says.

"Therefore Asian Christians have had to find a deeper way to understand this call to make disciples. Asian Christians cannot ignore interfaith relationships.

"However even in New Zealand, the number of people from different religions is growing and it is important that Christians build relationships with them.

"One article we read by S. Wesley Ariarajah says that faithfulness to Christ's message is about the need to love everyone, no matter who they are. God created the world and all people, and cares about everything created. Being faithful to God means caring about the future of all that God created, caring about people who are struggling and suffering, irrespective of where or how they live, and caring about the health of the planet. This is my main learning from the course."

Dale thanks the Methodist Church for the opportunity to gain an insight into Asian Christian realities.



Leading the covenant service in Napier were (from left) Rev Tony Franklin, Jan Tasker, Rev Rex Nathan, Rt Rev David Rice, and Rt Rev John Bluck.

Five years on Anglicans and Methodists celebrate their covenant

When the New Zealand Anglican and Methodist Churches signed their covenant in 2008, one of the objectives they agreed upon was to celebrate together the common heritage the Anglican and the Methodist traditions share through John and Charles Wesley.

In Auckland, an annual celebration has become a regular part of the calendar for the Methodist Synod and the Anglican Diocese. The service has alternated between Pitt Street Methodist Church and Holy Trinity Cathedral.

On May 19th, this year a service was held at Pitt St Methodist. The preacher was assistant bishop of Auckland Rt Rev Jim White, and the service was jointly led by Methodist Regional Synod superintendent Rev Norman Brookes, Cathedral Dean Very Rev Jo Kelly-Moore, Auckland Central Methodist Parish superintendent Rev Dr Lynne Frith and Methodist vice president Jan Tasker.

The Pitt Street Choir with the help of the choir of St Peter's Anglican Parish in Takapuna added to the congregational singing.

To mark the first five years of the Covenant, a celebration service was also held on June 9th at the Waiapu Cathedral of St John in Napier. Acting Dean Rt Rev John Bluck, who preached at the service marking the formal signing of the Covenant in 2009, hosted the event, and the co-convenors of the Anglican-Methodist Dialogue, Rev Tony Franklin-Ross (Trinity Napier) and Right Rev David Rice (Bishop of Waiapu) led the service.

MCNZ President Rev Rex Nathan and Vice President Jan Tasker attended the service, and Rex preached the sermon. The Waiapu Cathedral Choir led evensong responses, while the Napier Methodist Tongan Fellowship contributed to the evening's choral music.

At both the Auckland and Napier services a litany based on the Covenant was read and affirmed by those attending.

At the Napier celebration, Tony and David reflected on the journey of conversation the Dialogue team are currently taking to address one of the key objectives of the current Dialogue: the interchangeability of ordained presbyteral/priestly ministry between the Anglican and Methodist churches in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

"Our key goal 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. To this end, conversations are leading toward a substantive proposal in the near future", Tony says.

"Hospitality at a national level is being seen at the reciprocal attendance of bishops at Conference, and of the president at General Synod but our second key objective is to foster flax-root connections at parish and Synod/Diocese levels to foster opportunities for fellowship, ministry and mission between the two churches."

TRINITY METHODIST CHURCH HOWICK/PAKURANGA

We will be celebrating 50 years of worship and service in our present building on the weekend of 12-13 October 2013. If you have links with our church, either past or present, we warmly invite you to join us.



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Half century of Methodist Social Service in Palmy

Van drivers, skilled and devoted counsellors, men and women who work cleaning shoes and washing clothes, and educators who provide guidance and training to children and adults - these are some of the ways volunteers and employed staff help people through Methodist Social Services in Palmerston North.

This year Methodist Social Services is marking 50 years social work and counselling.

The organisation dates back to August 11th, 1963 when the late George Baber was commissioned to establish an additional form of ministry at Palmerston North's Trinity Church.

Later the Trinity and St Pauls congregations joined together to form a single parish, and it incorporated the Social Service Centre.

Today the parish's place of worship, administration buildings, teaching centre and counselling services, and a workshop for preparing clothes and other goods before sale are all on one site.

During the Social Services' 50 years of life, it has had 10 directors who have led the team. Each of them has brought different gifts and initiated services to meet current needs.

Today these include anger management for children, assistance for blended families, a food bank, budgeting advice, grief counselling, and advocacy.

Recently former Methodist Social Services director Roy Bowden discussed the introduction of one of these services when he paid tribute to Bertha Zurcher on the occasion of her 100th birthday.

"As a family support worker Bertha pioneered a 'line in' service which took her into the kitchen and living rooms of people struggling with real disadvantage. Bertha observed without interfering, loved without judgement and encouraged



Some of those who make Methodist Social Services tick are (from left) Rev Loyal Gibson, Lyal Brenton, Nici Scott-Savage and Reece Mehlhopt.

by casting doubt aside. She brought family situations to me as one of her supervisors, and opened herself to intense assessments of her practices and beliefs."

A 50th anniversary event will be held at Wesley Broadway on Sunday August 11th. It will begin 10am with a worship service- followed by lunch. In the afternoon there will be time to share memories.

Methodist Social Services extends an open invitation to all and asks those who wish to attend to RSVP 06 358 2860 or PO Box 1887, Palmerston North 4440.

Pacific churches call for global response to climate change

By Paul Titus

Pacific Methodists have urged the world-wide Methodist family to take whatever steps they can to mitigate the causes of climate change and encourage the people of their nations to do the same.

This was one of the key resolutions of the 2013 Methodist Consultative Council of the Pacific (MCCP), which met in East New Britain, Papua New Guinea May 13th to 18th.

The MCCP takes place every two years and brings together leaders from the Methodist and Uniting Churches of Australia, Fiji, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, and Tonga. The representatives brief one another on the issues facing their churches and each MCCP gathering also has a theme. This year the theme was climate change and the effect it is having on Pacific nations.

The Methodist Church of NZ had three representatives at the MCCP: President Rev Rex Nathan, Mission and Ecumenical secretary Rev Prince Devanandan, and acting general secretary Rev Dr Susan Thompson.

Stories that delegates shared made it clear that people in the Pacific are already being harmed by climate change. An entire village in Fiji - Narikoso village on Ono Island - has been moved because of the effects of rising sea levels. Other people from island atolls and other low-lying coastal communities have been affected or are vulnerable.

It is a problem that is growing and many people will be forced to leave their homes and relocate within their own countries or to larger countries such as Australia and NZ.

Delegates from PNG and Fiji told the gathering that even where relocation is not necessary, climate change is altering weather patterns, causing droughts and floods, and hindering the ability to grow traditional crops.

Prince says United Church in PNG moderator Rev Bernard Siai gave the opening address at the conference's first service. He talked about rising sea levels and the shorelines encroaching inland.

"Bernard said the weather was more predicable in the past. Today there are more natural disasters such as floods, cyclones, and typhoons as a consequence of global warming. He urged the MCCP to rise up and say something to the world.

"He said the reason God called us to this meeting is to speak as leaders of the church. The churches have been silent about the climate change. In PNG

only the Roman Catholic Church is speaking out. Women are beginning to gather to raise their voices in demonstrations calling the government to respond," Prince says.

Among the steps the Uniting Church in PNG is taking to address climate change is to provide circuits with information and Bible studies on the topic. The Church is also educating its leaders on climate change so they are equipped to advocate.

Some communities are replanting mangroves to protect shorelines, and some churches are urging the government to change the law to stop fishing with dynamite.

Susan says the MCCP was held at Rarongo Theological College, an institution where a number of Kiwis have served in the past.

She was interested to note that she was the only woman delegate at the gathering.

"Midway through the conference I asked if I could meet with the women at the Theological College, most of whom are wives of students. We had a fascinating talk about the issues facing women in the church and society in PNG.

"A major issue is the increasing violence against women, including women killed after being accused of using witchcraft. While we were in PNG, there were nationwide protests against the violence against women."

Susan says in his presentation on issues facing the Methodist

Church of NZ, Rex discussed the Marriage Amendment Bill and the MCNZ's decision to leave it up to individual ministers and parishes whether or not they will conduct or host same-sex marriages.

"I thought Rex was pretty brave to discuss the topic because I am sure most of the other Church leaders at MCCP would not support the law that the NZ Government passed or the stance the Methodist Church has taken," she says.

Prince says a theme that came through in some of the Pacific churches' reports was sexual abuse in the church and how to respond to it. People wondered whether incidents should be reported to police or dealt with in the church. The churches decided to ask for assistance from the Methodist Church NZ and Uniting Church of Australia on how to handle issues of abuse.



A New Britain style welcome.



The Church leaders who attended MCCP are calling for the world to limit the effects of climate change



Mission and Ecumenical secretary Rev Prince Devanandan visited projects in Bougainville that the MCNZ supports.

Bougainville training programmes make progress

A trip to Bougainville reveals that a Uniting Church lay leadership training programme supported by the Methodist Church of NZ has had its first graduation ceremony and hopes are high for a new project to provide vocational training for women.

In addition to joining discussions with other Pacific church leaders at Methodist Consultative Council of the Pacific, MCNZ Mission and Ecumenical secretary Rev Prince Devanandan visited Bougainville in May.

Prince says Bougainville is preparing to celebrate the centenary of the arrival of the Gospel in 1916. Tentative dates of the celebration are 12 to 25 of September 2016.

The Uniting Church hopes New Zealand missionaries who served in Bougainville or their children will attend the centenary celebration.

During his visit Prince was informed about the success of Kekesu Ministry Training Unit for lay pastors on the island of Bougainville. The programme celebrated its first graduation in April and Prince made a commitment to provide books for its library.

Other projects the Uniting Church of PNG is working on in Bougainville is to expand the secondary school at the town of Tonu so it can offer grades 11 and 12 and to establish a vocational training centre for women at Kekesu.

The vocational training centre would be built near the lay ministry training unit at Kekesu to provide skills to the students' wives and other

women who leave school without a proper qualification. The project will include programmes on dress making, weaving and crafts so women can earn money to support their families. When power comes to the region it could also provide training on computers.

The Uniting Church asked MCNZ Mission & Ecumenical to fund sewing machines and help with initial setup of the training centre. Prince asked for a budget and the cost of manual sewing machines.

"There is a need for vocational training for young women in Bougainville. A micro finance credit system is in place for women to borrow money to start small businesses projects but no training is available for them."

During his stay in PNG Prince also met the principal of Rarongo Theological College Rev Garo Kilagi. Over the years Mission & Ecumenical has donated more than 600 books to the College's library. Prince reviewed the status of the books and discussed further donations.

Discussions were also held on the lack of progress establishing an Internet connection to Rarongo College. The only means of communication with the outside world the School now has is through cell phones.

Prince was also able to hold one-on-one meetings with Uniting Church moderator Rev Bernard Siai and general secretary Rev Oika Gabutu.



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Slow progress at best.

To the editor,

It is encouraging to read that the Archbishop of Canterbury is to address the British Methodist Conference in July.

This teaches us two things, first that love is patient and, secondly, that as a coping mechanism we need a sense of humour.

I quote: "The current state of the ecumenical movement in Britain creates much bewilderment and pessimism. Are the Methodist-Anglican

'conversations' still going on? What on earth remains to be discussed?"

These are the words of Eugene Carson Blake written 47 years ago.

This visit of the Archbishop to the Conference suggests the Church is locked into Greek rather than Biblical history, cyclical rather than lineal - going round in circles rather than progressing.

Laurie Michie, North Shore

Doubts about credible theology

To the editor,

In the Dominion Post (23/5/13) an Anglican minister claims that casting out demons is a load of rubbish. Really?

This is contrary to the claims in the Bible that Jesus himself cast out demons and said that those who believe in Him and are faithful to Him will do the same and even greater things.

Also, in the April 2013 edition of Touchstone scientist Brian Butterfield claims to be seeking a credible Christian theology. But he denies a complete and perfect creation or that it fell from this idyllic state.

He says both teachings are far removed from reality and creation never was perfect. He says new stars are being formed even though no one on earth has ever witnessed this happening, though we have seen many supernovas.

God we are told was completely happy with what He had created. Is that surprising?

Who in creation are we to say it didn't

happen as recorded? It looks as if this scientist's credible theology has to be an evolutionary one. They don't want a God that they have to answer to.

Is this gentleman denying God? Or if he can accept the fact of a God does this mean that in spite of creating everything God cannot alter, adjust or cancel out what he has created? I refer to the creation of the world in six days, Noah's flood, and the raising of the continents and mountains during the flood to disperse the water.

Imagine if God, instead of flooding the world just gave everyone a heart attack, thus saving the lives of innocent animals and birds. In that case God would not have got his message through about his hatred of all evil.

A Christian wanting a credible theology to justify his desire to debunk some of the so-called myths of the Bible - which ones next?

AK Nielsen, Lower Hutt

The right place for children

By Diana Roberts

Children do well in countries that place their well-being at the centre of society.

That's pretty much what I heard the Commissioner for Children say on the radio last month, and I'm fairly sure that among his other comments were that children's well-being is not a central focus for our country. Instead, in New Zealand children are generally seen as an expensive inconvenience.

We need to be reminded that the New Zealand government ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1993. This means that for the last 20 years, our government has agreed to accept for our country this set of standards concerning children. We have legal and moral responsibilities to uphold the articles of this document, which defines universal principles for the status and treatment of children.

The well-being of all the world's children is at the centre of the UNCRC. In it we find what we would expect: articles to ensure the survival and development of children by providing healthcare, people to care for them, education, information, protection and the rights to have a voice and participate in activities.

Perhaps not so well recognised by most of us, though equally important, is the statement that the best interests of the child should be a

primary consideration in all matters affecting the child. Too often economic interests have taken priority. Too often self-interest dictates the way we exercise political power.

How many of us have given thought to wider aspects of well-being for children? Article 31 of UNCRC declares: "Parties [to the Convention] recognise the right of a child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts."

Article 13 states that all children have the right to an opinion and for that opinion to be heard in all contexts. How faithfully do we as Church honour that right? Until we take this provision seriously children will continue to suffer.

'Let the Children Live' is our cry. What must we do to nurture children into a life of wholeness and richness? We must put their well-being at the centre, as Jesus did: "Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them: 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me'." (Mark 9:36-37)

Information on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is available from the Human Rights Commission, www.hrc.co.nz.

**Got a bee in your bonnet?
Something in Touchstone get under
your skin?**

**Have an opinion about the issues
of the day?**

**Put your fingers on your keyboard
and write a letter to the editor.**



FROM THE BACKYARD

Signs and weather

Gillian Watkin

The gasman arrived on Wednesday; he usually comes on Thursday.

"We wanted to make sure everyone was stocked up before the cold snap," he said. It was a gesture well received, although at that point we really hadn't had much cold weather at all. Wearing summer clothes some days in June was a bit unusual.

How can we tell the weather? The forecasts in the paper, on TV news and websites are our usual sources these days, although a glance outside to the horizon is helpful. Living on the Heretaunga Plains, we value and marvel at this wonderful horizon. It is so broad you can see the curve of the earth.

We have a high window in our bedroom which is never curtained. Recently we woke up to sunlight and the room bathed with pink light. 'Red sky in the morning shepherd's warning, red sky at night shepherd's delight' - ancient words often relegated to the category of children's rhymes.

But Matthew 16:2 tells us "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red'. And in the morning, 'It will be stormy for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky but you cannot interpret the signs of the times."

It seems to me that 2000 years on the reverse is true. The interpretation of the signs of the times is everywhere. You can have 367 million hits on Google in 36 seconds, which gives some idea of scope.

But theology, media commentary,

news, talk back conversation (both considered and random), health tips, books, and academic research provide continual interpretation. This torrent of words and images is often accepted without debate or even the mildest discussion.

Today we are individuals well able to discern the signs of the times but put us out in the natural world and we are lost.

A very important book, 'Last Child in the Woods' by Richard Louv, raises the question of how we save our children from what he termed, 'nature deficit disorder'. It's a book that reminds us that current generations of children are often separated from the land, and from God's creation.

He quotes Rachel Carson, who wrote "Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts". Rachel Carson was a writer and a scientist, one of the eco-heroes of the past 100 years.

Her first books were designed to teach people the wonders of the natural world. In 1962 she changed tack, and, distressed by what she was seeing, wrote 'Silent Spring'. It was a warning to the world about the long term effects of using pesticides.

With our understanding of sprays, chemicals and artificial preservatives in food, it is hard to imagine a time when that was not a concern. The chemical industries tried to discredit her but could not.

Will our children and grandchildren have faith? Will they touch the earth lightly and interpret the skies? How will we teach them?

Full agenda includes talks with church, political leaders President Rex Nathan

The presidential team has had a busy month with President Rex in particular building up air points with trips to Australia, Papua New Guinea, Tauranga, Napier and Tonga.

The trip to Australia was to attend a gathering of church moderators and presidents on May 22nd to 26th. Along with Rex those on hand were the president of the Uniting Church of Australia Rev Andrew Dutney, moderators from all the Australian states (except the Western Australia moderator, who was not able to attend), and the moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ Rt Rev Ray Coster.

Rex says it was a very positive time of sharing and comparing. It is interesting



that some of the issues facing churches in Aotearoa are similar in Australia.

"We each shared issues that affect us in our leadership roles, as well issues in the life of our Churches generally," Rex says.

Among the common themes the leaders explored were how to better prepare incoming moderators and presidents for their leadership roles, self-care and health, evangelism, same sex marriages, and the Australian Royal Commission on sexual abuse of children.

Rex says the meeting ended on this note: "Our calling is to be witnesses; the Holy Spirit is our guiding light; God summons people with calls of love; be followers of Jesus".

Next year New Zealand will host this

gathering so the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches are exploring sites that would be a suitable venue.

Closer to home Rex also joined other Aotearoa church leaders to meet with Prime Minister John Key and Deputy Prime Minister Bill English in the Cabinet Room of Parliament before the 2013 budget.

Along with Rex, those who met with the political leaders were Roman Catholic Bishop Peter Cullinane, Salvation Army commissioner Donald Bell, Presbyterian moderator Rt Rev Ray Coster, and national leader of the Baptist Church Pastor Craig Vernal.

A number of advisors supported the church leaders, including Wesley Wellington Mission director David Hanna.

Rex says a meeting earlier in the year agreed that the discussion with the PM and his deputy would focus on two topics: housing and child poverty. The political leaders were very keen to establish a

dialogue that will encompass church leaders, their advisors and government officials to determine the scope of these issues and solutions to resolve them.

During the meeting Bill English outlined the Government's direction in terms of housing. The matter surrounding child poverty is that the Government needs assistance from community groups to identify the issues involving communities.

Jan and Rex were together in Napier on the weekend of June 8-10. They held a pastoral visit with the people of Napier, took part in the Trinity Napier morning service, and at 5pm Sunday the 9th they joined with the Anglicans at their Cathedral for a fifth anniversary service for the Anglican-Methodist covenant.

Jan says it was good to be part of the service and celebrate the outstanding ecumenical connections in central city Napier that include Methodists, Anglicans, Presbyterians and Catholics.

Child poverty, Elijah and speaking truth to power

By Rev Mary Caygill

Last month a newspaper article ran in the NZ Herald went largely unnoticed. Entitled 'How super rich kiwis dodge tax', it detailed how many of NZ's richest people avoid paying the top personal tax rate.

Inland Revenue says 107 out of 161 'high-wealth individuals' who own more than \$50 million worth of assets declared personal incomes less than \$70,000. The multimillionaires use tax planning devices - such as companies, trusts and overseas bank accounts - to avoid paying tax.

It was hardly surprising to see another article in the same week about a report from Amnesty International backed up by UNICEF stating that child poverty is a stain on NZ's human rights record.

How might we read these reports in relation to the recent Lectionary readings from the book of Kings on the confrontation between King Ahab and Elijah the prophet?

King Ahab is described as 'more evil than all his predecessors', and he is married to the equally notorious, Jezebel. At that time the Israelites were surrounded by enemies and faced drought, famine, disease, poverty, and violence.

King Ahab gave into the temptation when Jezebel suggested that he set up places where her god, Baal, would be worshipped. Baal was the god Jezebel brought with her from Phoenicia.

God sends the prophet Elijah to remind Ahab and Jezebel who was in charge. Elijah tells them that the Most High God of Israel is the only one to be worshipped. He says there will be no rain for a long time, 'except by my word'.

Then God tells Elijah to get out of town - quick.

Next in the story we meet a widow and her child, strangers to Elijah. He is thirsty and hungry, and a fugitive from the anger of King Ahab.

The widow is thirsty and hungry but not only for food and water. She desires a voice that can be heard and a full life for her and her son.

We do not know the names of the woman or her child, something common in biblical narratives and another sign of injustice. Women were usually referred to as the wife of male adults, the only ones with power in social and religious life.

The stranger woman and her child feed Elijah. She offers an act of generous

compassion, trusting in Elijah's words not to be afraid. He tells the widow to make a little cake and bring it to him, and then go and make some more dinner for herself and her son.

Elijah says where there is scarcity, God will provide. There will be enough meal and oil for her and her son. Indeed, this is the case - the miracle of generous provision overflows.

Elijah as prophet speaks the truth that there is enough for all, not just a privileged few. The myth of scarcity is not the truth.

While Elijah lingers in this community another crisis looms. The widow's son dies. Elijah pleads with God, and lays himself over the boy's body as like an outer covering. The boy lives, and hope and life return to the widow and child.

Truth again has spoken to power. Elijah deals with death by raising the son to life. Elijah the prophet - on behalf of God - bears the power for life.

This story destabilizes. It shatters the poverty-ridden world of the widow. It breaks her assumptions and her habits.

This story has the power to break our conventional assumptions, for it announces that the world is not the way we thought. It asserts an alternative reality against Ahab's violent, acquisitive world.

By an act of imagination it is a story of feeding and healing that serves as a vehicle for a different world.

Former finance minister Ruth Richardson prefaced her 1991 budget as launching a battle for the hearts and minds of New Zealanders. This battle continues. We should be ashamed of the fate of our country's children and the obstacles that sap them of their life-giving future.

It is no less than the battle of old between the prophet Elijah and the corrupt King Ahab. It is a collision of two opposing forms of consciousness - that of the royal consciousness of Ahab and that of the prophetic consciousness of Elijah.

Ahab's deception was that the world is fixed and must stay the way it is. In NZ we are told that the global economic crisis has created poverty for 25 percent of our children.

May we continue to speak up for a full life for the children of this land. The world need not be how it is. We belong to a way where we are bound in covenant to be our brothers' and sisters' keepers from generation to generation.

I can see God in Ashley Tonga

By Rev Ikilifi Pope

A Methodist minister went to a youth fono (workshop) and was invited to close the gathering. In the programme leaflet there was a phrase advocating this value: 'Otua mo Tonga ko hoku tofi'a, which literally means God is my inheritance.

The minister was attracted to the phrase and opened his closing short message with this question, "Have you seen God? Put up your hand if you have seen God." Every young person in the room was reluctant to put up a hand.

Then, the minister added, "I have seen God this morning. I have seen God when I watched New Zealand X Factor on YouTube."

The performer that he watched was an attractive 18 year-old girl named Ashley Tonga. The gathering burst into laughter because most of them watched the live show and knew what the minister was talking about.

Briefly, what had happened was that as Ashley Tonga queued to perform live on stage, one of the X Factor organisers asked what she wanted to be known as by the audience. Without a pause Ashley replied, 'A man in heels'.

The minister says he looked at his television closer to see Ashley Tonga better. When she sang she went as high as the opera singer Dame Kiri Te Kanawa; and when she sang low notes her voice went as deep and low as an 80 year-old man from Tonga. It is peculiar for an 18 year old girl to do this but Ashley did it well.

The minister was finally aware of Ashley's sexuality. She is not a real she but she is a he or a he who wants to be a she. Ashley is a fakaleiti or fa'a fafine which literally means a male that is female in heart, mind and soul. The minister came to fully understand the phrase 'man in heels' that Ashley mentioned at the beginning.

The minister continued to articulate his message: "Firstly, I did not confirm Ashley's

real sexuality until he performed on stage. It was confusing at first because I thought Ashley was a girl. However, I won't judge Ashley but I admire his honesty."

He admired Ashley's honesty to his own self and being. He respected his true nature and sexuality. The minister convincingly assured the young people that honesty is one of God's characteristics.

Again he said that when we are honest to our own being, honest with others and the community we're embodying God's honesty and justice to the world and all mankind. In that sense he saw the true nature of God in this young person.

In my view, the message that the minister conveyed was that no one can see the face of the invisible God the way Jesus' community experienced in his time. However, we can all portray the image of God in our own lives and actions. And that means in our actions (good works) and in the way we are honest to ourselves, our families, and others.

Furthermore, the minister insisted to the young people that God is with us and in us. Therefore, our practice of loving others and pursuing justice, inclusiveness, respect, integrity and other values that Christ advocated show that God is with us and in us.

Moreover, the community can see God in young people. The minister tried to inspire the parents who were there that their role is to be sensitive to the plight of young people so they may be confident, be honest to themselves and pursue their legacy and destiny.

I am really confident in believing that is what the minister meant in his short devotion, because I am that minister.

Ikilifi is presbyter at Papatoetoe Tongan Parish. He urges people to look up Rachel Glucina's article on Ashley Tonga in the on-line edition of the NZ Herald or check out Ashley's X Factor audition on YouTube.

Send your stories to Touchstone

The Methodist Church has asked parishes to work against child poverty, abuse and youth suicide.

We are eager to print articles about what churches are doing in their communities for this initiative.

Write something and send it to us or simply drop us a line to tell us what you are up to. Email: touchstone@paradise.net.nz or phone 03 381 6912.



Mission goes back to the future with community garden

By Hilaire Campbell

If you're driving through Porirua, you can't miss the Cannons Creek Food Bank and Community Pantry gardens.

Chock full of sweet potatoes, pumpkins and silver beet, they're right next to shops advertising junk food. "Our healthy food needs no advertising," says Community Pantry coordinator Tim Borrer. "Our gardens are our billboard."

For hundreds of people who run out of food but are reluctant to ask for help, this is the place to go. There's no queuing or means testing, and no loss of dignity. The vegetables are fresh and high quality.

The new style food bank is a Wesley Community Action (WCA) initiative. For years WCA had been concerned that it pushes the people it helps toward dependency. Until recently, however, it did not have the means to develop alternatives.

Partly driven by the recession, a comprehensive pilot study in 2011 trialled a range of projects, including a demonstration garden.

Tim says placing the food bank under the umbrella of the Community Pantry and its gardens was a good move because people are proud that they give something back when they help in the gardens.

WCA is now collaborating with the residents of Porirua East to develop the food bank into something approaching the Stop Community Food Center in Toronto.

The Toronto food centre promotes self-reliance by teaching people to garden, cook, and eat healthily. As they do this they share skills, build confidence, make friends and develop community links.

Tim hopes the Community Pantry project will lead to a reduction in obesity and chronic disease. "With food security anything is possible," he says.

The Community Pantry's food bank gardens are collectively owned and run by members of the Porirua community. There is a comprehensive collection of tools, and many local people have donated plants and given freely of their advice.



Wesley Community Action teaches gardening skills and self-reliance at its Community Pantry gardens in Porirua

Last year the Community Pantry trialled a composting workshop but it was a step too far, says Tim. "Most would-be gardeners only wanted to know the basics like how to recognise a weed, and how to sow a seed.

"Rather than a traditional community our aim is to get communities gardening," Tim says. "The feedback we are getting from people and the success of the pilot trial show we are on the right track. We used the pilot to apply for funding for the next three years, and we are very grateful for the generous grants we have received."

"My dream is to see neighbourhood gardeners sharing skills and eventually become self-supporting. There have been no home gardens here for a generation, so skills have been lost. We are helping people re-establish gardens. They don't produce much at the moment but we'll get there."

The Community Pantry now has more than 100 square metres of fruit and vegetable gardens, and staff and volunteers support 50 home gardeners. "Lawns are a thing of the past," says Tim.

The Community Pantry plays host to all sorts of people. Schools and community groups come for guided tours and garden demonstrations. The Porirua Menz group meets and works there. Even local gangs have got involved, and community workers come as part of a court order.

This has been very successful, Tim says, as it helped some of them rehabilitate. Two of these men now work as volunteers.

Having come this far, Tim says the Community Pantry's future looks secure.

"Our cooking workshops and trial gardens have been a great success. We cater for people of all ages and backgrounds. With our high population of young families we want to provide parenting courses that include nutrition and breast feeding.

"We want to bottle fruit and make jam, and have a sunflower garden for kids. We're also keen on the idea of a food co-op."

HONEST TO GOD

By Ian Harris

Advancing in faith

There is a lot of talk these days about 'faith journeys'.

The phrase can be a cliché though its value lies in suggesting that faith is not meant to get stuck in a rut but should keep moving on.

That is a huge advance on the common assumption that a person's faith depends on whether he or she accepts a certain set of beliefs. Belief is not the same as faith, and it is our faith - in which our



Ian Harris

understanding of Jesus blossoms into trust and commitment and gives life meaning, purpose and hope - that counts.

In some ways the faith journey parallels the physical, mental and emotional development that proceeds along a built-in biological path from babyhood to old age. The big difference is that while for most people the biological journey unrolls quite predictably, religious development can peter out at any point.

In the 1970s an American researcher into the psychology of religion, James Fowler, identified six stages of faith. These correspond roughly to the stages of cognitive development familiar to any teacher except that in religion it is possible to carry the fossilised outlook of a seven year-old or 12 year-old right through life, and never realise there can be more to faith than that.

Each stage of faith is right for its own developmental period and, Fowler insists, each needs to be travelled before the next can begin. When people find that the stage they are in is no longer adequate, they either give the whole thing away or they move on, usually with some discomfort.

The first stage is early childhood, until the age of about seven. The best preparation parents can give their children for a life of faith, as for life in general, is to enfold them with love and be utterly dependable, and so nurture a basic sense of trust.

From the age of two, children like hearing stories, which they eagerly embroider with their own fantasies. They cannot always distinguish fact from fantasy, and their ideas of God reflect this magical framework. Adult concepts of religion as fairy tales originate here.

For children aged from seven to about 11, the world seems ordered and dependable, the rules are clear, and fairness ('an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth') is a dominant

concern. Fantasy recedes and religious stories are interpreted literally.

Fowler's third stage of faith is closely related to this and some would place it within the previous category. Here children find security, certainty and meaning by conforming to what authority figures tell them. Beliefs and values are firmly held but are unexamined, and religious symbols tend to take on the character of the sacred itself.

Fowler says most churchgoers never move beyond this level of religious understanding. Nor, perhaps, do most non-churchgoers. This means that in terms of faith, the bulk of the adult population could well be suffering from arrested development.

In the teen years the person's world expands. They develop an ability to think abstractly, and find themselves questioning their previous assumptions and understandings. By the late teens they begin to take responsibility for their own lifestyle, beliefs and attitudes, and by 20 they are capable of setting idealistic lifetime goals.

That is a giant step towards maturity, yet it can happen without extending to matters of religion. The parallel stage of faith, Fowler's fourth, may not even come till midlife when, having established themselves in their homes and careers, people often feel a certain sterility setting in. 'Is that it, then?' they ask. 'Is that all there is to life?' Such questions are unsettling, but they are worth persevering with.

The fifth stage, if it happens, deepens the search for meaning. It may be triggered when a person has to come to terms with failure, disappointment and suffering.

Fowler says people do not enter this phase until much later. It happens when we open ourselves to new ways of looking at matters of faith, and come to value exploration above dogmatic assertion. Such people have integrated their experience of life sufficiently to live fully within their faith tradition but they can also evaluate it critically and respect the ways other people find their point of equilibrium.

Fowler has a sixth stage, rarely experienced, to which people such as Gandhi, Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa belong. They love life but hold to it loosely, fulfilling their lives in the service of others. In Christian shorthand, for them the kingdom of God is not a dream but daily experience.

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Tauranga Church puts money where its heart is to support children

Inspired by the Methodist 'Let the Children Live' initiative, Wesley Methodist Church, Tauranga has made significant donations to a number of community groups working with kids.

The Parish was challenged by Jim Stuart's column in the December 2012 edition of Touchstone entitled 'Poverty is not an accident'. As a result they decided unanimously to spend a large bequest they have received to support social service organisations working with children.

A Bequest Monies Committee of four was formed, and its members agreed to investigate agencies focused on children within the Parish area.

Bequest Committee chairperson Jocelyn Buchanan says the Committee approached five agencies seeking formal funding proposals.

"We advised them that we were interested in assisting children under age 12 and we would like the donation to be recognised as coming from the Tauranga Methodist Parish. We also suggested the funding could continue over several years," Jocelyn says.

"The social agencies were delighted to find a new source of funds and were quick to return their written proposals. The committee met with one of the agencies to gain a greater understanding of how they operate."

The result was that by the end of June (and three months after it was formed) the Committee sent formal letters with cheques attached to each of the five agencies.

Two received a lump sum of \$1000 each, and one received a one-off donation of \$3500 to finance a programme that will

run in different venues over one school term.

"We also decided to support two agencies on an on-going basis. One of them is the Ministry of Social Development's 'Strengthening Families' programme. We contributed to their Vulnerable Children's Action Group with a donation of \$5000.

"We also donated \$10,000 to the charitable trust Te Whanau Kotahi to purchase therapy equipment. They told us they never seem to have enough money in their budget to refresh their equipment. This equipment will be labelled as being donated by the Tauranga Methodist Parish plus we will be acknowledged on their website and in their newsletter."

Jocelyn says the Committee and the Parish were satisfied that they had met their goals.

"It certainly was a privilege and pleasure to spend someone else's money in this way. We will meet with the groups again next April to review how the funds have been spent and ask for further requests from Strengthening Families and Te Whanau Kotahi. We expect our support to be on-going for five years."

The initiative raised awareness of the Let the Children Live in Tauranga and resulted in the local Methodist Women's Fellowship directing money to community groups working with children. Child-focused organisations that have benefitted from a total MWF donation of \$2500 this year are Bay of Plenty Plunket 'Bear Hug' Appeal, Riding for the Disabled, Kidney Kids of NZ, and the Haemophilia Foundation.



Students at Cannons Creek School can face winter more easily this year, thanks to slippers made by industrious knitters at Johnsonville Uniting Church.



Beverly Donovan (left), Barbara Chapman (sitting), and Rev Anna Gilkison led the blessing of the slippers.

Learning is easier with toasty toes

By Hilaire Campbell

For some students it is a long walk to Cannons Creek School in Porirua, and when they arrive it is hard to concentrate with cold, wet feet.

Now 180 pairs of brightly-coloured, hand-knitted slippers are keeping their toes warm this winter, thanks to an initiative by Johnsonville Uniting Church.

When Methodist Conference launched its national 'Let the Children Live' initiative last year to help vulnerable children they probably didn't have slippers in mind but the members of the Johnsonville church who took part in the knitting bee are delighted with its success.

"The looks on the children's faces when they saw the slippers were worth every stitch," says one member.

The impetus for the project came from parishioner Lois Robertson. Lois attended the Methodist Lower North Island Synod's School of Theology session on child wellbeing organised by Johnsonville Uniting minister Rev Anna Gilkison. Lois inspired Beverly Donovan, who is the convenor of the church's Mission and Community Services Committee, to ask local schools what children needed.

Beverly got the idea for the slippers from a teacher at Cannons Creek School. With the congregation's approval, she obtained a pattern and some sample slippers. From there the whole thing just snowballed.

"Wool began arriving, and we were inundated with offers of help. Our homes turned into knitting factories," Beverly says.

The church has a strong mission role in the community but with an aging congregation, it has to pick its projects carefully.

"This project was tailor made for us," Beverly says. "It's something we can all do and it's for a good cause."

Cannons Creek is a Decile 1A school, with mainly Pacific Island children. It is in one of the poorest areas in the country. There are no school fees or big fund raisers, so the school depends a lot on the community for help with food and other basics.

Principal Ruth O'Neill says it's a

constant struggle to balance the needs of the children against their learning. The majority of parents try hard to help their children, but many are shy of the school, and they have no mod cons.

"They have no computer, and no phone. Some have a car, but the cost of petrol is prohibitive. Ten dollars is an awful lot of money around here," says Ruth.

"Many children live their whole lives in Cannons Creek. Their wealth of experience and knowledge of the world is limited, so we try to give them as many experiences as possible to help with learning."

Recently a local group paid for the children to go on a bus trip to the opera, and the Rotary Club donated hundreds of books. "The children might not know what a lighthouse looks like, but they can see a picture and read about it," Ruth says.

"Despite the hardships, Cannons Creek School is a happy place. The children love being here, and the teachers have their best interests at heart."

At a special blessing of the slippers at Johnsonville Uniting Church, Anna paid tribute to the efforts of those who made them, as well as to the children and teachers at Cannons Creek.

At the end of May church members formally presented really full boxes of slippers to the children at a school assembly. The gift included 196 pairs of slippers and 14 pairs of socks.

"Everyone was very excited as they tried them on," says Ruth. "They look great and the kids love them. We are totally grateful to all involved."

A thank you letter from one little boy says it all: "My slippers are bright and they keep me warm. On top they have red cherries."

Anna says all children are special, and she values any opportunity the church has to help them. "But we need to do more. We need to have our hearts and minds changed so that we really learn to love children in this country."

"This is a spiritual task and we have to believe that God is capable of accomplishing it."

'Let the Children Live' Wesley College style

Every month the Auckland and Manukau Synods' Workgroup holds a youth service, and on June 9th it was Wesley College's turn to host the event.

The theme of the service was 'Let the Children Live' in line with the Wesley College's commitment to the 10-year project Methodist Conference launched last year.

More than 500 people attended the service. It included items from different youth groups and both young people and the young at heart very much enjoyed the lively service.

Auckland parishes and churches present at the service were Glen Eden, Henderson, St Austells' Co-Operating, New Lynn and Avondale Union, Takapuna, Pakuranga Parish and the Fijian Circuit from East Auckland. From Manukau participants attended from Mangere/Otahuhu Parish, Wesley Papatoetoe Parish, Saione Tongan Parish, Manurewa, Papakura, Pukekohe, Waiuku Combined Churches, and Wesley College.

The praise and worship band was from the Pacific Islanders' Presbyterian Church.

Some 70 adults were on hand to support the young people. Along with many parents they included Mission and Ecumenical secretary Rev Prince Devanandan, 14 ministers, the Auckland area superintendents Christine Peak and Andrea Williamson, and the Youth Workgroup.

Those who attended the service were challenged by a message from the Wesley College head girl 'Ilaise Sekona, based on Luke 2:41-52.

'Ilaise said Let the Children Live initiative presents a challenge to the Methodist Church for the next decade.

"It calls adults, youth leaders, ministers, managers, to help us as young people and children to live life. It is an opportunity for us and all children to discover our full potential, to identify our gifts; and to use them so that like Christ we may grow in wisdom and in stature," 'Ilaise said.

"It is also a challenge to all of us as

young people to stand tall and to be proud of who we are. We are God's image in the world, regardless of culture or any other label. We need to take responsibility for making our choices in life and to choose a culture of life rather than death.

"This morning in chapel we were challenged with the theme 'From Collision to Collusion!' and guess what, too often we focus on the collision rather than the collusion. There is increasing tension between the generations. Sometimes as young people we say 'adults don't listen; adults don't understand us; they think they know best; the church hasn't got it right; we're not given a chance; we have no voice; they crush our programmes.'

"On the other hand, the adults say 'young people don't listen; young people are trouble makers; young people have no patience; young want things and they want them yesterday; young people have low self-esteem and lack confidence'.

"So we are saying the same things and we are in collision. To 'Let the Children Live', we all need each other, old and young together. Instead of colliding because of our attitude and differences, we need to shift gear into collusion mode, work together and trust one another to make the most of our life together.

"The Bible guides us with our living. It tells children to obey and honour your parents and promises us a prosperous and long life. Parents, do not exasperate your children but bring them up with advice and instruction according to the ways of the Lord."

'Ilaise said Let the Children Live is not a challenge only for adults, it is as much a challenge for young people.

"It is for all of us. It is said we are what we eat. What is it we choose to eat? If we are what we learn, what is it we are learning? If we are God's image, what image of God are we showing?"

"Let the children live and so grow in stature and in wisdom. Amen."

Appreciating our diversity

GARTH AND ELIZABETH
CANT REFLECT ON TABITHA

Christchurch's Wainoni Methodist is a warm hearted congregation. They worship in a church that has survived two quakes but they are surrounded by homes that are damaged and red zoned. They do a great job of caring for their neighbours and caring for each other. And they are a congregation with very diverse theologies.

The Sunday we went there to lead worship at Wainoni and had the story of Peter and Tabitha and the congregation at Joppa. The reading focused on another congregation facing tough times, not from quakes but from persecution.

A member of the Joppa congregation is a disciple named Tabitha. She is the sort of woman who sits in the midst of our congregations, steadily and unobtrusively looking out and getting alongside people in need, doing practical caring things to

help them. But Tabitha falls ill and dies.

You can imagine the sadness and grief, and the loving way in which they take her body to an upper room to be with her and prepare her for burial. The news reaches Peter in Lydda, not far away. He comes to Joppa, shares the congregation's sadness and knows what must be done.

Peter prays that Jesus will be there, in that place and at that time: 'Tabitha, get up'.

We can imagine the outcome, Tabitha was back in action, not asking for any fuss but looking for people in need, caring, and encouraging in practical ways.

Luke doesn't say these things but we can be sure that they happened - Tabitha was that sort of person. What Luke does say is that the news spread all over Joppa, and many believed in Jesus as a result.

Our generations - those of us who were

born last century - are not quite sure how to handle the Peter and Tabitha story. Some of us are trained in the sort of science that makes us sceptical, even unbelieving, about the supernatural. We work hard, dig deeply, and explore evidence that enables us to find other answers.

Two people we know well have done just that: Presbyterian minister Lloyd Geering and Anglican bishop John Spong. I admire and respect them - they have taken the act of faith that says there is no supernatural, they have grappled with all the evidence, and they have still emerged as sincere and enthusiastic followers of Jesus.

There are other people, from the same generations, who have a deep respect for science but are not overawed by it. They see that there is a place for science and religion - side by side, each enriching the

other. They begin with an act of faith which says there is a supernatural.

They are just as honest, and they too are positive, thoughtful, followers of Jesus.

We thank God for Tabitha, for the congregation at Joppa, for the bonding between them and Peter, and for the way their story has passed down the ages to us.

This is one of those readings, where we can each enjoy our own beliefs, and not feel under pressure to follow anyone else's lead.

One of the reasons we enjoy going to Wainoni is the richness of life experience, and the diversity of Christian faith. We can say to them: Christ is in your midst, you love and care for each other, and you reach out to your red zoned community. Tabitha would be proud of you, Wainoni.

On illuminating the darkness

CONNECTIONS

By Jim Stuart

As I write this, the sun is shining again in Christchurch and it is Sunday! It is not a coincidence, it is a gift. After days and nights of heavy rain, sleet and snow, freezing nights, and gloomy days, the light has returned.

It reminds me of a visit to Iceland. At the time I was an officer in the US Navy and returning from a short period of duty in Rota, Spain. The plane I was on stopped in Iceland to refuel just before a fierce winter storm hit. Strong arctic winds, accompanied by heavy snow and freezing temperatures kept us "hunkered down" in the capital, Reykjavik.

Like June in Aotearoa New Zealand, December in Reykjavik was the middle of winter and near the shortest day in the northern hemisphere. I had never experienced such "darkness" before - it was unearthly. Snow and ice were everywhere.

What little light there was didn't come from above but was reflected from the snow underfoot. For me, it was an extraordinary experience that I shall never forget. In those days with so little light, I gained a new sense of the power of darkness.

Darkness is the time when we sleep, we dream, when we struggle and when we face the unknown. In the darkness boundaries disappear and new possibilities are born. In the dark, you have to trust your heart and your senses.

From a biblical perspective, it was out of darkness that God created life and light. Darkness is where we learn to walk by faith, a slow journey to the heart of the unknown - the space where we have to trust the path that unfolds before us.

Darkness is the doorway to imagination and the pathway to empathy. When we step out in faith from security and certainty,

we open ourselves to the freedom of discovery. Darkness invites us to travel out of our known selves into our unknown selves.

Last night as I lay in the darkness and experienced the warmth of my bed, I was overcome by an immense feeling of sadness for all those who were struggling to keep warm in cold, damp and earthquake damaged homes. In that moment of empathy, I was reminded of what it means to be human - and in some way sensed that deep connection with others.

The Jewish Talmud tells us that "the highest form of wisdom is kindness". From the comfortable and familiar, kindness is how we reach out to others in the darkness - and open ourselves to what only others can teach us. It is a gift that comes from the darkness.

The darkness of the last three years in Christchurch has forced many churches

out of the comfort of their familiar buildings and ways of being church. The earthquakes have been a tremendous challenge and an opportunity to reach out with compassion to those who are struggling and hurting. In the words of Rebecca Solnit in her illuminating book *The Faraway Nearby*: "In darkness we find ourselves and each other, if we reach out, if we keep going, if we listen, if we go deeper."

Before the light of the resurrection could break forth in the lives and hearts of Jesus' disciples, Jesus had to embrace the darkness of the crucifixion. Mark's gospel reports that the three women were not prepared for what they found when they went into the tomb to anoint the body of Jesus. As they entered the darkness of the tomb, they encountered "a young man dressed in white" whose words changed their lives. "Don't be afraid. He is not here. He is risen! He goes before you."

Lessons from sharing our journey of faith

By Peter MacKenzie, UCANZ Executive Officer

Jesus told a parable about a Pharisee and a tax collector (Luke 18:9-14) which shares an interesting psychological component. In the parable we hear the Pharisee comment "thank God I'm not like that tax collector."

Making comparisons seems to be a natural part of our human condition. It is clear that doing so can be a help to providing motivation and focus. Sibling rivalry is a classic comparative state that has driven many siblings to do better in life.

But social comparison can go astray when we get too caught up in the emotion. When we compare ourselves to others and find that they are in a better position it can lead to envy. If we find that they are in a lesser position it can lead to self-righteousness or sanctimony.

As churches a certain part of our identity is based on comparison to other churches. Folk in Uniting congregations are well accustomed

to the notional ideas of what it is to be Methodist, Presbyterian or Anglican. We tend to understand another denomination through how they are different from or similar to our own. Many people have commented how experiencing a denominational meeting or worship service has helped them to understand their own a bit better.

This is also true at congregational level when we compare the local church's worship or governance with the other churches down the road. Sharing worship with the local Catholic Church or Pentecostal fellowship often highlights what we like about our own style of worship.

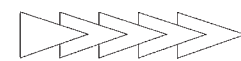
The relational comparison also highlights the similarities we share with the people that are part of our church. Sharing an ecumenical service can often strengthen people's congregational identity by highlighting a commonality of experience.

Yet we are reminded of the dangers of envy and sanctimony. Making comparisons with other churches can be helpful in some aspects but it can also lead into a self-destructive path of regret and sorrow. Seeing a successful youth group at a neighbouring church should be an opportunity of praise to God - but too often it results in a desire to have something similar and either a guilt that it is not happening or a forlorn attempt at bringing it about.

So too at times we see the troubles faced by another congregation and give thanks that it's not us instead of praying for a resolution.

As individuals and as churches we have a lot to learn from each other. Experiencing another way of doing things affirms who we are, challenges us to do better, and encourages empathy for others. But it may also call us to remove sanctimony or envy

Working
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from our lives.

Jesus was neither condemning the Pharisee nor approving the tax collector in his parable. He was simply calling on people to accept who they are without making those with whom they make comparisons to be rivals. That seems to be a task for the churches as well - to accept who we are and to acknowledge the shared journey of faith we have with so many others in the universal church of God.

Canterbury synod takes careful steps toward rebuild strategy

By Paul Titus

The Central South Island Methodist Synod continues to refine its strategy to rebuild ministry and mission in the wake of the earthquakes and will prioritise its efforts in the worse affected parts of the city and rapidly expanding suburbs.

The Synod held a 'strategy day' on June 8th to discuss its evolving plans to rebuild churches and congregations and respond to the changing demographics of Christchurch and surrounding towns.

In earlier versions of the strategy, the Synod charted out a path where parishes across Canterbury will be grouped into clusters (or circuits) that will share resources and expertise. This arrangement would overcome the currently unsustainable cost of stipends because presbyters would work as a team to meet the needs of the congregations in the cluster. Each cluster would have a well-resourced lay leadership team who would work with the stipendiary ministers.

While some churches have reservations about the actual clusters that have been proposed, all endorse the general concept of greater cooperation between churches. The revised strategy document outlined different types of groupings which recognize the specific situation of each congregation and what is happening in the wider

community.

It proposed that some groupings work as a more formal 'circuit' while others allow relationships time to develop and start by exploring opportunities for shared ministry and outreach into the community.

Those who attended the June 8th strategy session met in geographical groupings to discuss and respond to the strategy document. Among the points agreed upon were that while all parts of the Synod are important, the priority focus should be in three areas: Christchurch's eastern suburbs; the newly developing residential areas across Canterbury, and inner city Christchurch.

With regards to new suburbs, it is estimated that the southwest and north of the city will experience significant growth with more than 5400 new sections going into one suburb alone (Halswell) and Lincoln expected to triple in size.

Substantial growth is also predicted in Rangiora and a number of other towns in the Waimakariri area. New developments are also emerging in the Marshlands area. Current churches within the Synod are well



Jill Hawkey

located to respond to these changes and challenges.

Ministry in the inner city faces a number of unique issues including the likely influx of new workers, including many migrants from overseas.

The June 8th gathering also endorsed the synod strategy's proposal that lay ministry teams be developed in regional groupings across Canterbury. Providing funds are available the Synod would like to appoint a lay ministry development officer to build up the skills of lay leaders.

The synod strategy document also lays the criteria that will be used to decide which church buildings will be rebuilt with the insurance money the Methodist Church has received. The Synod says it has a responsibility for wise financial stewardship and must ensure buildings effectively support mission in the local community.

The strategy states for a church to be rebuilt, the congregation should have consistent growth or at least 50 adults and children attending Sunday worship most weeks. It should also have strong lay leadership, a vision for continuing

engagement with the local community, and a five-year plan that demonstrates its financial viability.

Congregations will work with the Synod to identify what funds are available through insurance or the Church Building and Loan Fund as they move to strengthen or rebuild their buildings.

The Synod will also create a 'strategic development fund' made up of insurance funds over and above what is allocated to individual parishes. Congregations will be able to apply for money from this fund for priority projects such as strengthening buildings or developing new buildings that meet the mission priorities of the Synod.

The June 8th gathering approved the rebuild criteria with some provisions. For example, some felt setting a precise number of 50 people is too arbitrary and should be a guide rather than a rule. Others wondered if the Synod would benefit from investment in an inspirational building.

Leasing premises or buying into collaborative community projects were also raised as possibilities.

Congregations are now having their final review of the Synod Strategic Plan, and the July Synod meeting will consider its final approval.

Scoop for journalism in the public interest

By Cory Miller

It is becoming increasingly apparent that a big gap exists between the journalistic ethics taught in academia and that found in the working world.

While journalism schools teach their students to achieve a high ethical and moral standard, the reality once entering the working world can be starkly different.

Often it's the story that sells that makes the cut in a publication, not the story that should be told. Once financial pressures interfere, it can take precedence over in-depth informative journalism and the standards fall below what journalists are taught to achieve whilst still learning the ropes.

Now a passionate group of media people is trying to take the matter into its own hands. They have created a foundation that will fund and support what they call a new type of journalism.

The groups working name is the Scoop Foundation for Public Interest Journalism. It was officially launched in April, at the Auckland University of Technology's Pacific Media Centre, with a vision to support journalism in the public interest.

Scoop Independent News editor and general manager Alastair Thompson said, at the launch, that the foundation would provide the building blocks for a new kind of journalism.

"It is clear that we now need to build a new journalism," he said. "The one that we have been struggling for some time and a key component of it - print - is now on life support."

Alastair said journalism, as we know it, is in dire straits.

"I would not at all be surprised to see Fairfax take over APN sometime in the next few months. If this happens, the engine of competition in the news space will be effectively nobbled.



Scoop director Allastair Thompson (right) with director of the Pacific Media Centre at Auckland University of Technology David Robie

Further layoffs will follow and the limited experience pool which remains in our newsrooms will be even further eroded."

A spokesperson for The Scoop Foundation, Alison McCulloch, says it is this hollowing out of newsrooms and the lack of in-depth investigative journalism in New Zealand that drove her and the seven other members in the foundation's steering committee to come together and find a solution.

"We created the foundation due to the cutbacks happening in the newsrooms," she says. "The mainly business model is creating a real hollowing out of the newsrooms. The ability to spend time on long investigative journalism projects is the first thing to go out the window."

She says The Scoop Foundation will enable journalists to research and report on stories of substance, which will in turn create a type of public journalism that fosters higher levels of knowledge and skill among practicing journalists. "It is the foundation's vision to keep the public well-informed and act in a watch dog role to provide in-depth coverage of what is going on."

Scoop Independent News, which is published at scoop.co.nz will provide both the infrastructure and the support in its early days. However, Alison says, this will not interfere with the foundation's individual identity. The Scoop Foundation will in fact be a separate identity that will be governed by a trust with all its editorial decisions separated from its fund-raising activities by an independent editorial board.

Alison says the foundation is not looking to compete with the established media or act as a publishing body instead it will act as a not-for profit enterprise to support investigative journalists. For this reason the foundation is currently applying for charitable status through the formal legal process. Once it is established, it will set up a framework for foundation grants, fellowships and internships in public journalism within New Zealand.

As Alastair said at the launch in April a need to support public interest journalism has been identified. "Now we are going to go ahead and build it."

Maisie farewelled at all but 100

By David Hill

Rangiora woman Maisie Thwaites lived a quiet life to the very end.

Emily May (Maisie) Thwaites was born in Southbrook, outside Rangiora, on June 11, 1913, and was due to celebrate her 100th birthday at the Rangiora Methodist Church last month.

She didn't reach the milestone, however. After reading about herself in the local newspaper and receiving congratulatory letters from the Queen and Prime Minister, Maisie passed away just three days before her 100th birthday.

Maisie was the daughter of Charles and Emily Thwaites and spent her early years in Southbrook.

Charles Thwaites was a bootmaker, and he and Emily had four children. Maisie was their only daughter.

When Maisie was 10-years-old the family moved to Rangiora, and she later attended Rangiora High School. Charles Thwaites lost his job during the Depression years and so he went out on his own, opening a shoe shop.

"The shop has changed hands several times and changed names but it is still going," Maisie recalled a week before her death.

After leaving school, she worked as a dressmaker, before being 'manpowered' during World War II.

"I was given a choice of either working in the woolen mill, which would have meant traveling into Kaiapoi each day, or working in the Rangiora Hospital, which was closer to home."

She chose the Rangiora Hospital and continued to work there until she retired.

In 1953, Maisie moved to a



Maisie Thwaites lived a lifetime devoted to her local Methodist church.

house in Queen Street, Rangiora, with her parents. However, her father was unwell and died three months later. It was her home for 60 years.

While in Southbrook, the family worshipped at the Southbrook Methodist Church, which has since closed. After moving into Rangiora, the family attended Rangiora Methodist Church, and Maisie was an active member for the rest of her life. She served in the choir, Women's Fellowship and as a Sunday school teacher.

"It has always been a very important part of my life," she said.

Maisie lived in her own home and cooked vegetables from her garden right up until the day she died.

While she had no children of her own, she had lots of nephews and nieces who visited her as often as they could.

Maisie said she had noticed a lot of changes in Rangiora over the last century and especially since the Canterbury earthquakes.

"But I don't remember much. Some of the buildings have come down, so it certainly looks different now."

Some left behind as quake recovery gains momentum



The Anglican Church's 'Cardboard Cathedral' is a sign of progress in Christchurch but many people are still waiting for major decisions to be made about their homes.

By David Hill

While there are now signs of recovery in Canterbury, many residents are enduring a third winter of uncertainty, nearly three years on from the first major earthquake on September 4th, 2010.

The majority of the 7,800 red zone homeowners have left and moved on with their lives, even when the buyout offers have been unsatisfactory.

However, around 28,000 residential properties were designated technical category three (TC3). Out of that total, some 10,000 homes either have significant damage to the foundations or require a total rebuild.

TC3 home owners are enduring delays as insurance companies, the Earthquake Commission (EQC) and the Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) debate the requirements to remediate foundations and land and argue about who will pay for what.

Wider Earthquake Communities Action Network (WeCan) spokesperson Rev Mike Coleman has moved on from his own Avonside red zone home. He says the majority of red zone residents have been forced to

move on but several cases are unresolved with court cases pending.

Among the looming court cases is a class action from uninsured and under-insured red zone homeowners against Earthquake Recovery Minister Gerry Brownlee to challenge the legality of the red zone.

Kaiapoi red zone homeowners Brent and Shirley Cairns have had their land assessed as the equivalent of TC2, Mike says. The Cairns family has declined the government's buyout offer and they are determined to stay.

In an interview with Touchstone last year Mike predicted TC3 homeowners would end up in a worst situation than red zone homeowners. Since then he has not seen anything to change his mind. He believes many TC3 properties should be red zone.

"I have been talking to thousands of people who are in massive battles with their insurance companies. The main issues are around the cost of new foundations. Insurance companies are not happy with any of the current proposals. They want cheaper options that will do the job."

One insurance company representative has said TC3 foundations could cost in excess



While life moves on for many Cantabrians, those on TC3 land are in limbo.

of \$100,000, compared to a standard foundation of \$15,000 to \$20,000.

WeCan has made an official information request to EQC and a copy of this is on the website www.wecan-nz.com.

Housing shortages and rising rents are another difficulty facing families who need rental accommodation. There is a particular shortage of short term accommodation, which people need while their homes are repaired.

Tenancy Protection Association outreach worker Laura Gartner hosted North Canterbury clinics in Kaiapoi and Rangiora, until funding ran out recently. The service continues to be available in Christchurch.

Laura says most enquiries relate to a lack of supply and rising costs. Both tenants and landlords want to know their rights.

"A lot of people have to move out of rental houses while they are repaired. There are questions around how much notice they have to give and whether people still have to pay rent.

"You would think it would be an easy answer but it is actually quite complicated. A landlord has a right to do repairs, and a tenant has a right to occupy."

Laura says there is no set notice period for repairs, so both parties need to negotiate.

NEW BRIGHTON COPES WITH DELAYS

New Brighton Union Church minister Rev Mark Gibson runs an earthquake support group and hears similar stories of frustration from TC3 and TC2 homeowners.

"A regular thing that I hear is that people's hopes go up and then there is another delay. Every time they think they are making a step forward and their insurance company or EQC has made a decision, they end up feeling like they've gone two steps back because they are told something different," Mark says.

Finding affordable rental accommodation is an ongoing issue and Mark says the parish has lost families who have been unable to find somewhere to live.

Barbara Joyce has had a connection with the New Brighton Union Church for 40 years and lives in a TC3 home in Bexley. Barbara is now awaiting a total replacement.

She has been without functioning toilet in her home since February 2011 and when buses and trucks drive past the house shakes. Her insurance company indicated work would

commence between January and March this year but she is still waiting.

"I am on the emergency list because of my age and because I am living on my own but that doesn't seem to make any difference.

"I hope something will happen soon. It gets my health down a lot but I always think there are people worse off than me."

Barbara keeps herself busy through her artwork, taking in sewing, and getting out of the house as often as she can. She attends regular worship with a nearby Maori congregation, as well as the coffee and muffins morning and earthquake support group at New Brighton Union Church.

KAIAPOI SHOWS RESILIENCE

Kaiapoi Co-operating Parish minister Rev Peter Jackson says the parish is recovering from the earthquakes.

"Many of our people are pre-occupied with insurance claims but on the whole I think they are coping reasonably well.

"There are ongoing issues. Some people are weary and elderly people do not want to go out at night. Psychological issues will be very far reaching and I'm not sure therapy is necessarily the answer. It is just going to take time.

"The awareness for many is that even though they can rebuild, they may not live to see it."

Peter says the parish has lost a few families as people have moved away but it has also gained families as people have moved out from Christchurch.

Repair work to the Kaiapoi church and hall is progressing but uncertainty remains over the future of the 100 year-old church house, which is registered with the New Zealand Historic Places Trust, and has been out of action for 12 months.

"The building has served us well, but we have moved beyond what our buildings can provide for mission."

Waimakariri Earthquake Support Service team leader Jude Archer has been working with residents throughout Waimakariri and eastern Christchurch.

While there are signs of recovery, in recent months Jude has been kept busy with enquiries from red zone residents who need more time for their new houses to be built and from TC3 property owners facing uncertainty.

Jude says red zone residents who chose the option where the government buys the land and their insurance company pays out on the house can face a squeeze. They are not covered for temporary accommodation assistance if they are forced to leave their home before the new one is built because they have settled with their insurance company.

Jude says she has observed how much harder it is for city people to receive assistance.

"It has been interesting to see the contrast in working with people in Kaiapoi and in the city. In a smaller community people know where to go for help. Working with people in east Christchurch you become aware of how much more difficult it is for people to get information. The Waimakariri District Council has been active in getting information out to people."

Reporter lives the earthquake story

Touchstone contributor David Hill is living through his third winter of uncertainty in his 'munted' home in Parklands, northeast Christchurch, with his partner Karen, 11-year-old daughter Sasha and three-year-old son Tristan.

Hey says it has certainly been an eventful few years since the earthquakes.

"Through my day job, as a journalist for the former Hurunui News (now The News) and Courier Country, I have had the privilege of telling people's stories as they have lived through the earthquakes and the recovery or renewal.

"I have shared stories of those who have offered assistance and worked with people surviving and recovering. I have also shared some of these stories with Touchstone's readers.

"Through all that, I have lived and breathed the earthquake experience myself, through our lives in the Parklands and New Brighton communities and through our home, which was damaged beyond repair in the September 4th, 2010 earthquake."

David says his family's house took a pounding in that first major quake, when it literally split in two and there is extensive cracking throughout. The front garden even parted company with the front of the house.

"The front end of the house has sunk 45mm, while the end room has sunk 205mm - meaning you literally walk up and down the hallway. When buses go past the house shakes.

"We have much to be thankful for, however. The house is still standing and we can still live in it. We have running water, a functioning toilet, a log burner and a heat pump which we can still use. Although keeping the house warm during a snowstorm has proved a challenge during the last two winters.

"While we know we are looking at full replacement, our property has been categorized TC3 and so we continue to face an uncertain future.

"We continue to receive conflicting information from our insurance company and the Earthquake Commission (EQC), about who is responsible for paying for new foundations and land remediation."



David Hill's children Tristan (left) and Sasha keeping warm with prayer shawls the Uniting Church of South Australia sent to New Brighton Union Church after the earthquakes.

The latest information David and his family have received indicates work will begin by the end of 2014. However, he has been through this long enough to know that means any time in the next decade.

Port Hills Uniting Parish rises from the rubble

While the large Red Zone along the Avon River is more often in the public eye, another part of Christchurch was severely affected by the earthquakes - the Port Hills.

The hillside suburbs as well as Lyttelton and Sumner were very close to the epicentres of the most damaging aftershocks, and life for both residents and churches was disrupted.

One of the consequences of this disruption has seen the expansion and renaming of the Sumner Redcliff Lyttelton Union Parish.

The parish has welcomed members of the now closed Mt Pleasant Presbyterian Church, and from July 1st the expanded parish takes on a new name - Port Hills Uniting Parish.

Rev Neil Keesing was the minister at Mt Pleasant Presbyterian Church when the big aftershocks hit in 2011 and he is now the minister at Port Hills Uniting.

"The earthquakes had a major impact on the Mt Pleasant community. About 30 percent of the homes will be demolished. The Presbyterian congregation lost a lot of people. Former members of the congregation are now spread from Winton to Auckland," Neil says.

The Mt Pleasant church and



Rev Neil Keesing (with microphone) led the first combined parish council meeting of the Port Hills Uniting Parish on June 23rd.

manse were among the suburb's damaged buildings, and soon after the quakes Neil and wife Christine moved into the vacant parsonage of the Sumner congregation.

Their move led to an informal relationship between the two parishes, one that became more formal when Neil was appointed to Sumner Redcliff's Lyttelton Parish. Later the decision was made to dissolve the Mt Pleasant

Presbyterian Church because repairing the damaged buildings was beyond the capacity of the diminished congregation.

Neil says the Mt Pleasant Church drew its members from a wider area that included Heathcote Valley and Ferrymead. Now most of those who remain on its rolls have joined Port Hills Uniting.

The Uniting Parish's church buildings fared better in the quakes.

The former Methodist chapel is the only church building still standing in Lyttelton after the Presbyterian, Anglican and Catholic churches were all lost. The Uniting Congregation now hosts joint worship services with members of Lyttelton's Anglican Church at the chapel.

The Uniting Parish's church in Redcliff is currently undergoing repairs and the congregation is

meeting at its Sumner church.

"The church in Sumner has been repaired and it is a real community asset," Neil says.

"The council-owned community centre was destroyed so a large number of groups are now using the church hall for their activities. The church at Redcliff is also well-used by the community, and after the earthquakes it became home to the local kindergarten.

"Once the repair work at Redcliff is finished, it will become the main worship centre for the parish because it is central to both Sumner and Mt Pleasant.

"We are not certain what the future of the Sumner property is but we will maintain it as long as it continues to be an important community facility."

Port Hills Uniting is an aging parish but its members are active in the community. The congregations do local outreach in conjunction with the Sumner Bays Union Trust through 'Coffee and Conversation' in Redcliff and 'Tea and Talk' in Sumner. They also contribute to the Linwood Union Church's Foodbank and to the breakfast programme at Linwood College.



Vice president Jan Tasker blesses the rata tree from Greymouth Uniting Church.



Peter Majendie describes his mini chapel, aka the God Box. Seated are Rev Mark Gibson (left) and Methodist vice president Jan Tasker.

Cardboard 'God box' fills gap for New Brighton congregation

By Paul Titus

While the Christchurch earthquakes were certainly destructive, they have also prompted a flourishing of creative spirit as people have moved to fill the empty spaces in the urban landscape.

The best known of these is Gap Filler, a group that constructs temporary creative projects aimed at making the city more interesting and dynamic.

Christian artist Peter Majendie is working in the same vein. Peter and his Side Door Arts Trust is building mini chapels - sometimes referred to as God boxes - to create small personal places where people can take time to pray or meditate.

Last month about 100 people gathered in the hall of New Brighton Union Church to bless Peter's latest God box. It will soon have a home on the vacant land where the New Brighton Union

Church stood before it was demolished in September 2011.

"The little chapels are 1.2m x 1.2m, which is enough room for one person," Peter says. "They are 1.8m high so you can stand up in it. They are made of cardboard, which plays on the idea of the Anglican cardboard cathedral.

"They have a tin roof and the cardboard is double layered, painted and weatherproofed. They are sturdy but they won't last forever. The idea is that they will be temporary reflective spaces.

"I designed them partly as a response to the prevailing rationale of the rebuild, which is based on a business model. The business model is supposed to make everything okay but the recovery is also about people. I wanted to make small spaces where people can take time to slow down, think and reflect."

Peter says the Christchurch City Council has ordered 10 God

boxes for the central city. He would like one of them to sit on the former site of the Durham Street Methodist Church.

New Brighton Union minister Rev Mark Gibson says the congregation approached Peter about building a God box.

"I call it a prayer pod. We like the fact that it is an ecclesial version of Gap Filler's transitional projects and will create a quiet, contemplative space for local people," Mark says.

"Peter also has some ties to our church because his mother Jessie was a member of the congregation. Jessie died a year ago."

On hand to bless the God box was Methodist vice president Jan Tasker and Christchurch City Councillor Glenn Livingstone. Days of stormy, wet weather prior to the opening meant it could not be installed outside so the dedication took place in the church

hall.

Two other blessings and dedications took place at New Brighton Union on the day. One was for the all but completed office block for the congregation, the first new building on a Methodist property since the quakes, and the other was a southern rata tree.

Mark explains: "After the earthquakes a lot of community groups began to use our church hall, and there was no suitable place there for an administrative office or pastoral meetings. We moved a Portacom office onto the site, and our administrator Jenny Lineham and I shared it but it was too cold in the winter and hot in the summer, and a bit too cosy for two.

"Now we have built a small, two room office building that can be relocated once it is no longer needed. It is insulated and double glazed and has two heat pumps so it is energy efficient. It too is a

transitional building that will last until the future of the parish is known."

Talks are underway among the Methodist, Uniting and some Presbyterian churches in the eastern side of the Christchurch to determine the future of ministry in the area.

The southern rata tree that was dedicated on that day was a gift to the New Brighton congregation from Greymouth Uniting Parish.

Mark says the two parishes from opposite sides of the South Island have become close through their shared experience of tragedy, the Pike River mine disaster in the case of the Greymouth parish, and the earthquakes in the case of New Brighton.

In her talk before conducting the blessings Vice President Jan cited Galatians 6:9 "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

Refugee crisis deepens in Syria

When violent clashes suddenly erupted in his Aleppo neighbourhood, Faruk (33), his pregnant wife, Mona, and their three children left their home in Syria and the only life they had ever known to make the exhausting, 160-mile trek to Lebanon's Bekaa Valley.

Arriving safe but penniless and alone in a foreign land, the former construction worker fashioned a small shelter out of scavenged scrap metal for his family. The long, difficult journey made Mona seriously ill. Faruk took her to several hospitals in search of help, only to be turned away from each one because he couldn't pay for her care.

With his wife's life at stake, he pleaded with strangers for any help they could give and eventually scraped together enough money to cover the hospital fees. Mona gave birth to a little girl but the long journey and harsh living conditions in their makeshift home took their toll on the young mother's weakened body and she passed away four days later.

Devastated, Faruk, who left Syria out of fear for the safety of his family, was now a widower. He was also filled with a new concern: how to care for a new-born and three other children with no means to

support them.

More than 1.6 million people, including Syrians as well as Palestinian and Iraqi refugees, have fled the bitter conflict that is destroying Syria. UN High Commissioner for Refugees Antonio Guterres says that the conflict in Syria is "more brutal and destructive than the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and has turned into the worst humanitarian disaster since the end of the Cold War".

CWS partner the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) is struggling to cope with the influx.

"The camps are overflowing with the new Syrian and Palestinian refugees, and Lebanon is unable to cope with more than a million Syrian refugees," says Sylvia Hadaad of DSPR in Lebanon.

In Jordan, refugee numbers are now nearly one tenth of the population. Their growing numbers are causing growing resentment in host communities where locals face higher rents and food costs. The Jordanian health ministry says that it is spending half of its budget on Syrian refugees and will need more to continue operations. Jordanians also complain because refugees are working illegally or at reduced wages in low paid jobs.



More than 1.6 million people have fled to neighbouring countries to escape the civil war in Syria.

DSPR reports that rising tensions between Jordanians and Syrians have trickled down to the schoolyard. The influx of about 30,000 Syrian students has forced many of Jordan's schools to switch to abbreviated "two-shift" systems, rotating students in half-day sessions to ease stress on overcrowded and understaffed classrooms.

The pressures on DSPR and other members of the ACT Alliance are also huge as they struggle to help supply the basics of food, shelter, healthcare and education. The overwhelming need is straining the resources of the host countries and Christian aid agencies trying to respond through ACT Alliance.

Christian World Service is asking for more support for the Syria Appeal to assist the work of DSPR in Jordan and Lebanon.

"CWS partners are helping those in need now but the urgent task is for the international community to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. Dispatching more weapons will not

end the fighting. Weapons can be captured and more people killed," says CWS national director Pauline McKay.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports that human displacement around the world reached an 18 year old high in 2012. Their recent report found that more than 42.5 million people are either refugees or displaced within their own countries. Another person becomes a refugee or displaced person every 4.1 seconds.

The report says 55 percent of refugees come from five countries: Afghanistan, Somalia, Iraq, Syria and Sudan. The full report can be read at: www.unhcr.org/51c071816.html.

CWS is a member of the ACT Alliance, a global coalition of more than 130 churches and church-related organisations working together in humanitarian assistance, advocacy and development. www.actalliance.org.

Donations to the Syria Appeal can be made on line at: www.cws.org.nz/donate, sent to PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8140, or by calling 0800 74 73 72.

CWS SYRIAN REFUGEE APPEAL



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Syria's refugees need help now. Our partners know what they need and need you to help them provide this help. Help that feeds, shelters, educates and gives the precious gift of hope. Help us give that gift today.

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UN says leave no one behind

Although there are still more than two years to go to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, the United Nations has begun work on what comes next.

On 30 May, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon received the report from a high level panel of eminent persons set up to draft its successor. Climate change is identified as the key factor that will affect plans to map a better future.

Christian World Service director Pauline McKay says the report is a good start and something we can build on.

"Stronger recommendations on women and environmental protection are good but there needs to be more work on addressing economic inequality within countries to really tackle poverty. Disappointingly the New Zealand Government as yet has no position on the points raised in the report, and there is no mention of the Pacific," Pauline says.

In June Pauline attended a meeting of university people, government representatives and non-governmental organisations to discuss the report. The report is stronger in its ambition to tackle poverty and builds on the Millennium Development Goals and last year's UN Conference on Sustainable Development.

The report identifies five transformative shifts that should be part of a new global agenda: leave no one behind (ending extreme poverty), put sustainable development at the core, transform economies for job and inclusive growth, build peace and effective, accountable institutions, and forge a new global partnership.

Creating new jobs will be a major challenge as the global population continues to climb. According to the report the global labour force will grow by 40 million people a year. This means that 470 million new jobs have to be created from 2016 to 2030 to keep up with demand.

The Millennium Development Goals were agreed at the 2000 UN General Assembly and included goals to halve extreme poverty and the number of people without access to safe water.

These goals and the goal to improve the lives of those living in slums have already been met. Child death rates have fallen by 30 percent, saving about three million children each year. Access to safe sanitation and better gender equality are two Millennium goals that are unlikely to be met.

Youthful enthusiasm boosts Canterbury outreach

By David Hill

Five Canterbury churches have received a boost to their outreach thanks to young community development worker Cassie Welch.

Churches in Christchurch and Rangiora are participating in a pilot scheme, sponsored by the Christchurch Methodist Mission, Presbyterian Support and the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, to help improve their community outreach.

Cassie has been appointed on a 12-month contract to work with Rangiora's Trinity Methodist Parish, New Brighton Union Church, Halswell Union Church and Presbyterian parishes St Georges Iona in Aranui and St Martins.

"Churches can provide a really vital link between services and people out in the community. So my role is to encourage that and facilitate any new opportunities," Carrie says.

"The churches have already been doing amazing things post-earthquake, so this is an opportunity to build on that and put in some extra resources."

Cassie has been in the role since the beginning of May and has been learning about each parish's outreach efforts and

their local communities.

The Rangiora parish already runs a Mainly Music programme for pre-schoolers and is the local contact for a Christchurch-based Curtain Bank. Cassie says the parish wants to run more community events and is talking with the Rangiora Borough School about creating a community garden in the spring.

"There is so much going on in Rangiora already, so it is a matter of working out what is the capacity of this parish. It is important to do a few projects well. If they do too many things they will be overwhelmed, so it is about finding a balance."

One way to do this is to find other groups in the community to partner with, Cassie says.

"That has been a strong theme with all of the parishes because everybody is tired and we have smaller numbers of people in the churches these days."

Several community groups use the New Brighton hall, and the congregation runs a Loopy Tunes programme for pre-schoolers, a community barbecue, 'Coffee and Muffins' on Friday mornings, an

earthquake support group, and 'Seaside Seniors' with Presbyterian Support.

Cassie says New Brighton has asked her to do an assessment of the parish's existing outreach, so they can discuss how the activities can be developed and better promoted.

Halswell has a different approach, so Cassie has been asked to run some workshops with the parish to explore creative ways to engage with the community. One proposal is for the Halswell Community Project to run a monthly market on the church site.

Cassie says she has only recently been introduced to the two Presbyterian parishes and they pose different challenges as neither is operating from a permanent site due to the earthquakes.

"Everyone has a different style and the communities are very different. That means I have to adapt to each parish situation, so that is very exciting."

Last summer Cassie was employed by the Anglican and Methodist churches to co-ordinate community fun days in Christchurch and Waimakariri. The fun days were funded by the Christchurch



Cassie Welch is helping Christchurch churches establish better links with their communities

Earthquake Trust.

The Rangiora parish is planning more community fun days on Sunday September 8th in Rangiora and October 13 in Woodend. New Brighton plans to run a fun day on Saturday October 19 as an anniversary celebration.

Kidz Korna!

Welcome to July's edition of Kidz Korna

The children and youth at Wesley, Tauranga have been doing some interesting things and they share some stories with us this month.

Winter is certainly with us. The trees outside my window are waving frantically and the odd branch has started to break off. It is really cold.

Sunday, June 23rd was Refugee Sunday, when we think of the people who have had to leave their homes. Many refugees have no proper shelter, food or clothing. We need to remember these people all the time and pray for them. There are practical things we can do as well.

One of the families in the church I attend has 'adopted' a family who have just arrived from Afghanistan and they and their friends have provided many of the basic things that the family need. But children also need things like toys and at the moment I am organising a toy drive.

What can you do to help? Think about it.

President Rex visits Tauranga

On Wesley Day, the congregations of the Tauranga Methodist Parish had a special visitor - our president, Rev Rex Nathan.

President Rex talked to the children and young people about his visit to Papua New Guinea, when he and other church leaders from the Pacific discussed some of the issues about climate change. He encouraged everyone to learn more about climate change.

As a start the Wesley Kidz made a mural to suggest ways we can take care of our precious environment. They were helped by Peter Hardyment and Margaret Savage from the congregation.

People wrote down their ideas of how to look after the world on paper kiwis, which

were then stuck on the mural. Some of the messages were: Turn the lights off when you leave a room; Can you walk rather than drive?; Keep our lake and rivers clean; and Reuse, recycle.

At the end of June, the Youth Group explored the idea of 'sustainability' and had an all-age holiday activity to put some of these lessons into practice.

While President Rex was in Tauranga, he also came up to St Stephens where there was a youth event - Scavenger Snap and Seek. Three teams almost beat the rain round the two km course. Then they enjoyed looking at the photos taken to answer clues, played some games and finished with takeaways and a God-Spot.



For your Bookshelf

The Colour of Home



Mary Hoffman with illustrations by Karen Littlewood
2003, Francis Lincoln Ltd

Hassan is a young refugee boy from Somalia who finds his new home strange and cold. School is inside a classroom, not in the open air and sun like he is used to.

No-one can understand him and he feels alone. Things change when his teacher asks the children to draw a picture. He paints a colourful picture of his home in Somalia and this becomes the turning point in his new life.

The story is sympathetically told and beautifully illustrated. At a time when we are thinking about refugees, especially those in Syria, this picture book would be ideal to share with children of all ages.



Tauranga kids made a mural about how we can look after our environment.



Methodist President Rev Rex Nathan (back row, fourth from right) spent time with Tauranga kids on Wesley Day

What are the kids in your church up to?

Kidz Korna wants to hear from you so we can share your stories. Send stories and photos of your activities to Doreen Lennox at dlennox@extra.co.nz or to touchstone@paradise.net.nz

ON SCREEN

THE RELUCTANT FUNDAMENTALIST

A film review by Steve Taylor



I want to question what the outside is and who defines it' - director Mira Nair

Fundamentalist is a toxic word. First used in 1910, in a book edited by American evangelist Reuben Torrey, it became common as a shorthand label applied to conservative expressions of Christian faith.

More recently, the word has jumped from Christianity to any religion or group perceived to be shaped by blind allegiance to fundamental principles or beliefs. In liberal Western culture, it has become pejorative, a way to define outsiders who

disagree with us.

Or as Pakistani born, American educated, Changez realises, a means to evaluate people using binary columns, black and white, in and out, as evident in the economic markets of global capitalism as in the religious rhetoric of a travelling preacher.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist flips our notions of fundamentalism. Changez is a leading Wall Street analyst. His stellar rise through corporate America is abruptly re-shaped by the events of 9/11. Tiring of the xenophobia, suspicion and the

fundamentalising tendencies of racial profiling, hurt by a relationship gone sour, Changez retreats to his native land, to home and family.

He finds work teaching in a Pakistani University. It is at this point that the plotline of The Reluctant Fundamentalist becomes murky. Is Changez becoming radicalised? If so, has the agency been capitalist economics? Or is it religious rhetoric?

An American journalist Liev Schreiber approaches Changez, seeking to uncover information about a kidnapped university professor. Watched by their respective tribes of agents and activists, over a course of the afternoon, they share their stories. Listening, they realise that what is black and white is actually made grey by the complexity of human nature.

Technically this is a fine movie. The plot is cleverly arranged. The acting is sincere. Unknown Riz Ahmed plays a believable Changez. Kate Hudson, better known for lighter roles including Almost Famous and Bride Wars, embraces the complexity of grieving American artist, Erica.

Director Mira Nair describes The Reluctant Fundamentalist as an exercise

in personal healing and reconnection. We see the complexity of Islamic culture, the beauty of a mosque in Turkey, the richness of Urdu poetry, and the spiritual search in the original soundtrack, which includes music by Amy Ryan, Atif Aslam and Zahra Khan.

While technically proficient, conceptually intriguing and culturally revealing, the movie meanders. It uncovers what we all know, that mutual distrust exists between fundamentalisms today. And it provides an ending that is pious, yet scarcely plausible.

A less than believable cell phone exchange results in inevitable tragedy. The pious prayer will be dismissed as naive, both by fundamentalists of religion and of secular, agnostic West.

The Reluctant Fundamentalist is based on the 2007 Booker nominated novel of the same name. The book has been given to all undergraduates in Tulane and St Andrews Universities, in an attempt to encourage diversity. While a noble aim, the questions linger: Is questioning who is really the outsider enough to stop global bloodshed? Or might coexistence require yet more radical approaches to pluralism?

Rev Dr Steve Taylor is Principal, Uniting College, Adelaide. He writes widely in areas of theology and popular culture, including regularly at www.emergentkiwi.org.nz.

The Minor Prophets

During July the Lectionary readings for the Hebrew Scriptures dip into a section known as the Minor Prophets. These are difficult books to read as most of them (with the exception of Jonah and Hosea) don't tell a story as such, and much of the teaching they expound does not fit with our view of the world.

Nevertheless, as ancient documents that helped shape the Jewish religion inherited by Jesus, they are of historical interest to us and contain some pearls of wisdom that relate to any era in history.

Bible Challenge

In Hosea chp 1 his wife ___ 3 children	___ C ___	Hos 1:3, 6, 8
The name of Hosea's wife	___ O ___	Hos 1:3
God's message: 'I desire ___ of God not sacrifice'	___ N ___	Hos 6:6
God: 'I am like an evergreen ___ from me comes your fruit'	___ C ___	Hos 14:8
How many 'Minor Prophets' are there?	___ E ___	see contents
Joel urged all the people to 'give ___' to his words	___ R ___	Jol 1:2
He condemned the drinkers of sweet	___ N ___	Jol 1:5
God's message; 'I will pour out my ___ on all...	___ I ___	Jol 2:28
...young men shall see ___'	___ N ___	Jol 2:28
'Your sons and your ___ will prophesy'	___ G ___	Jol 2:28
This prophet was a shepherd from Tekoa	___ M ___	Ams 1:1
Greek name for the 'Matariki' star cluster	___ I ___	Ams 5:8
Amos called his listeners 'you cows of ___'	___ N ___	Ams 4:1
Amos lived in the time of King ___ of Israel	___ O ___	Ams 1:1
Made famous by Susanna Wesley 'a ___ plucked...'	___ R ___	Ams 4:11
Jonah tried to flee from the ___ of the Lord	___ P ___	Jna 1:2
He booked a passage to Spain, then called	___ R ___	Jna 1:2
The sea grew ___ (very rough)	___ O ___	Jna 1:11
In the belly of the fish Jonah	___ P ___	Jna 2:1
In chp 3 Jonah went to	___ H ___	Jna 3:3
The city was 3 days ___ in breadth	___ E ___	Jna 3:3
Mica's best known verse urges us to 'do	___ T ___	Mca 6:8
and to love ___ and walk humbly with God.'	___ S ___	

Answers: conceived, Gomer, knowledge, cypress, twelve, ear, wine, spirit, visions, daughters, Amos, Pleiades, Bashan, Jeroboam, brand, presence, Tarshish, tempestuous, prayed, Nineveh, journey, justice, kindness. © RMS

Tales of hope in the face of cancer

The Albury/Pleasant Point Presbyterian Parish has had two successful publishing endeavours, and now they are at it again.

In 2009 the parish published an anthology of spiritual writing called Fuel for the Soul. It was so successful that they followed up with a 'love' anthology in 2011 called I Saw Love Today.

In response to requests from readers for a third collection, together with a perceived gap in the market for a book of hope for those people touched by cancer, the Parish's publication team are calling for new submissions of writing with messages of hope and encouragement.

They encourage those who have had experiences with cancer (themselves or through friends or family members) to put pen to paper and tell their story in a positive and encouraging light.

The Parish will be working alongside the South Canterbury Cancer Society on this project.

The publication team asks for submissions of poetry or prose with a 'hope' theme. They will select a 1st (\$250 cash prize), 2nd (\$100 cash prize) and 3rd (\$50 cash prize) and select 50 (or more) pieces of writing for the new anthology.

Pleasant Point writer and leader of the anthology team, Karalyn Reid encourages people to have a go - they don't need to be published writers. She expects this book, like the earlier ones will truly touch readers.

The new publication will be launched in early 2014. Entry forms and more information are available by contacting Anne Dowall (03) 614 7324, anne.alf@clear.net.nz, or emailing Karalyn Reid karalynjoyce@xtra.co.nz. The Parish's facebook page is: Pleasant Point Presbyterian Parish, NZ.

Limited numbers of Fuel for the Soul and I Saw Love Today are still available by sending a cheque for \$20 (two-for-one special price), plus \$2 postal details to Yvonne Gray, 16 Runa Terrace, Pleasant Point 7903.



Leonardo and the Last Supper

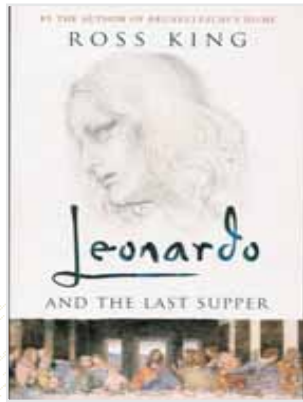
The focal view for our church is a much-loved stained glass window based on The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci.

I do wonder how it avoids being kitsch, given it is a reduced size version of one of the most famous artworks in the world. It succeeds, possibly, because the subject is appropriate for its situation and also because it is not drastically miniaturised.

Since reading this book I look at our window with heightened appreciation of not only the overall composition but also the characterisation and gestures of the 12 apostles.

I've checked the table for Leonardo's interesting innovation of a dish of eels garnished with slices of orange. In our stained glass window the tapestries on the wall display koru motifs and the scenery behind Christ's head is New Zealand countryside rather than Leonardo's Italian landscape.

Ross King recounts how, surprisingly, Leonardo was employed to paint The Last Supper on a wall of the refectory of the Dominican monastery, Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan despite having no experience of the usual fresco technique of applying pigment directly into wet plaster.



Instead he chose to experiment and develop his own, unprecedented methods of painting in oils on dry plaster. This allowed much freer drafting and development of the design and the richer and more subtle colours of oil paint, but also resulted in deterioration from the time it was made.

A recurrent theme in this narrative is Leonardo's tendency to not progress or even not finish commissioned work. Sources describe him as sometimes working rapidly all day, up on the scaffolding without break; sometimes motionless, contemplating the work for hours; but sometimes absent, engrossed in other projects. He gave priority to his own many and varied interests in science and mathematics.

King recounts how Leonardo was absorbed in the study of motion and weights while his patron, the Duke of Milan, was fleeing from his enemies. Like its subject, the book also takes many detours, which could be as infuriating to the reader as Leonardo must have been to his employer.

Central to the book are interesting accounts of the composition of the painting from studies made for the various

disciples. There are helpful comparisons to paintings of The Last Supper by other artists and discussion of whether details are taken from the Synoptic gospels or John.

Leonardo's records show that he possessed a copy of the Bible in an Italian translation, acquired around the time of starting work on The Last Supper. His choice of subject is the dramatic moment revealing Judas as the traitor.

At the same time there is a clear reminder of the institution of the Eucharist in the welcoming gesture of Christ's hands. The Renaissance interest in perspective is there, giving focus to the central figure of Christ, but not applied rigidly.

Leonardo stands at the beginning of the modern era. King gives instances of his secular, scientific interests and cheerful, Chaucerian anti-clerical views, but considers him to have shared the Christian beliefs of his time. Where measurement did not offer sufficient explanation, he found miracle and mystery acceptable. King debates but reasonably concludes that taken in its context, situated in the monastery, the painting has to be seen as a religious work.

He summarises Leonardo's beliefs: 'God was best approached and understood through a study and appreciation of his works.'

Review copy courtesy of Epworth Books.

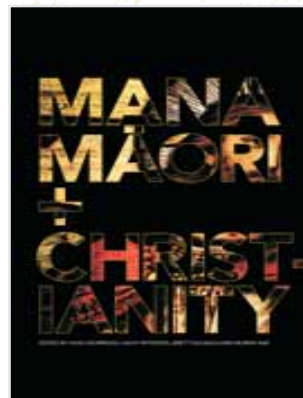
Mana Maori and Christianity

This edited volume came out of a 2009 symposium in Dunedin where a range of papers were presented "telling variously of missionary endeavours, of the work among Maori of particular churches, of particular individuals, and of Maori reception and adaptation of Christian faith".

Of the 13 chapters, four are contributions from the Presbyterian Church and one chapter each is from the Salvation Army, the Mormon Church, the Pentecostal faith, the Assemblies of God, Destiny Church and the Catholic Missions.

The omission of Anglican or Methodist contributions I feel detracts from this work. A book addressing Maori and Christianity I believe ought to at least include contributions from the missionary churches and the Church Missionary Society (CMS), who provided the very first Christian contact with Maori.

However, a redeeming feature of this book is that the concluding three chapters provide reflections on Maori views of Christianity through the stories of the prophetic leadership



of Rua Kenana, Tahupotiki Ratana and through Christian symbolism noted in Maori church buildings.

There is a clear thread of assimilation noted throughout the writings. This is not unexpected because the colonisation of Aotearoa was all about coercing and shaping Maori into Pakeha norms of being. The missionaries' role was the salvation of the native soul so seeking or understanding indigenous modes of Christian expression was not their primary task. These churches were essentially became 'settler' churches and aimed to service the needs of the settlers, not necessarily Maori.

Robert Joseph's chapter on the Mormon Church suggests that it was more closely aligned to Maori modes of Christian expression but the process for Maori engagement was still based on the dominant frameworks of non-Maori.

The discussion of Destiny Church suggests it can be considered as a "Maori church" but the Pentecostal tendencies

*Edited by H Morrison, L Paterson, B Knowles, and M Rae
2012, Huia Publishers, 327 pages
Reviewer: Arapera (Bella) Ngaha*

from which Destiny derives much of its dogma carries distinct elements of patriarchy that are at odds with tikanga Maori and therefore deny indigenous expressions of being church and Christian.

Hugh Morrison acknowledges the time it took for the Presbyterians to move to ordination of Maori and Maori autonomy. He argues that "racism and the maintenance of prejudice were partly a legacy" inherited through the conservative, Eurocentric nature of the early Christian literature used to teach Maori children.

For the most part it is acknowledged that for Maori to advance in any of the churches, they were required to leave their tikanga Maori (customary practices and beliefs) at the door and embrace the particular 'brand' of Christian teaching and worship each church offered. Venturing onto the pathway of biculturalism and/or Maori autonomy has not come easy for any of the churches and all are struggling to find their way.

Although a disappointing read for me, I found the chapters on Destiny and Pentecostal Church in particular very helpful to understanding the pull that they have on the Maori community today.

Nature as Spiritual Practice A Field Guide to Nature as Spiritual Practice

Often I read and enjoy American books but struggle to relate them to our context.

This book is different. In fact, it would be easy to argue that in many ways it has been written for our context even though it largely arose out of a rural Minnesota writing sabbatical.

It is in the natural world where most New Zealanders have their deepest spiritual experiences.

In New Brighton if you ask people where they have the strongest sense of the sacred most will tell you 'on the beach'. This is where they seek renewal or solace.

It doesn't surprise me then that the community-oriented services I've been involved with on the beach or by the river have been supported by more than a few people who do not attend the traditional Sunday service.

In his twin books, Steven Chase, provides those who are engaged in corporate ministry with a powerful tool for working with this Kiwi cultural reality rather than against it. But they could be used just as productively as the basis for personal spiritual practice.

A core conviction of the writer is that God/Christ/Spirit is



at the heart of creation, and so through nature we can draw closer to the divine and to each other. Nature has both an everyday and sacramental reality. Creation is God's first scripture and "relearning our shared language with creation is a slow but essential prayer".

The main book has four primary goals. 1) Making connection with nature. 2) Recognising the Creator in the Created. 3) Participating with nature as spiritual practice. 4) Reawakening attention, wonder and moral response.

In 14 well-thought out chapters, theology and scripture are woven together beautifully and grounded in detailed suggestions for spiritual practice. Each spiritual practice is

explored at more depth in the Field Guide. Some of my favourite practices have titles like 'Finding a place not sacred?', 'Touched by a tree', 'The liturgy of creation', 'The sacrament of silence', and 'The sounds of earth crying'.

A short section that I found personally exciting and thought-provoking is called 'Post-modern, indigenous Christians'. In it Chase suggests that "the natural world is the stage where the reign of God is enacted, the place where faith in God with

all its dimensions is lived out".

He says Jesus' reading of the book of nature and engagement with the natural world "allowed him to become the things that he saw". For those of us who seek to follow Jesus it means learning to do the same. Through spiritual practice we can enter into this transformative process.

Journeying with this book has changed the way I see my ministries with parish and the eco-faith River of Life project. When I started reading I thought it could be useful to my eco-ministry, but by the time I had finished I was wondering if it had more to offer parish ministry.

More than anything I began to sense that it had rolled back a screen door to reveal that there is really one room not two, and so a deep integration needs to take place.

The Field Guide finishes with the suggested outline for a nature-as-spiritual-practice retreat day.

It is a resource I have every intention of developing and running with. I believe the potential here is enormous, not just for enriching the spirituality of active church members, but more importantly the nebulae of spiritually receptive people beyond organised religion.

Review copy courtesy of Epworth Books.

*Stephen Chase
2012, Wm B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 268 pages and 148 pages
Reviewer: Mark Gibson*

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Richmond Methodists cheer 170 years of worship

Few Methodist churches in New Zealand can claim a worshipping tradition that stretches back nearly to the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi. Richmond Methodist Church is one that can, and last month the congregation commemorated 170 years of Methodism.

Methodist worship in the Tasman Bay region began in 1843 with house groups. The following year Richmond Methodist built the town's first church. Since then there have been three more churches on the site. A larger wooden chapel was built in 1866. It was replaced with a roughcast church in 1913, which was in turn replaced by the current complex in 1992.

Over the weekend of June 22nd to 23rd the Richmond Congregation celebrated this history with special events and guest speakers. The celebration was timed to coincide with what would have been the 100th anniversary of the 1913 church's opening service on June 22nd, 1913.

Richmond minister Rev Paul Tregurtha says the Saturday was taken up with reminiscences of parish life and these continued on Sunday following the morning worship service.

"Tasman District mayor Richard Kempthorne and Nelson-Marlborough-West Coast District superintendent Rev Jill van de Geer spoke after the official welcome. We welcomed greetings from Methodist president Rev Rex Nathan and vice president Jan Tasker as well as former ministers and their families.

"Two former ministers Rev Beverley Pullar and Rev Jessie Kerr shared their memories as did parishioner Rick Williams.

"We viewed old video clips



Stepping up to celebrate Richmond Methodists' achievements are (from left) Rev Jessie Kerr, Rev Jill van de Geer, Mayor Richard Kempthorne, Rev Paul Tregurtha, and Rev Beverley Pullar. Photo by Sinead Ogilvie, courtesy of the Waimea Weekly.

including some taken during the 150th celebration in 1993. A local vocal group 'Men in Accord' sang a bracket of songs in beautiful harmony before our oldest member Ray Hawken cut the commemorative cake. We then shared afternoon tea to finish a wonderful afternoon of great memories and warm fellowship," Paul says.

In her talk Beverley recalled life in the Waimea Parish, which encompasses Richmond, when she was stationed there in 1985. It was a kind of homecoming for her because she grew up in nearby Stoke and remembers Methodist Easter camps at Dovedale and winter schools a camp in Marsden Valley.

Among the highlights of life in the Richmond parsonage were its large vegetable garden and the pot-belly stove in the dining-room.

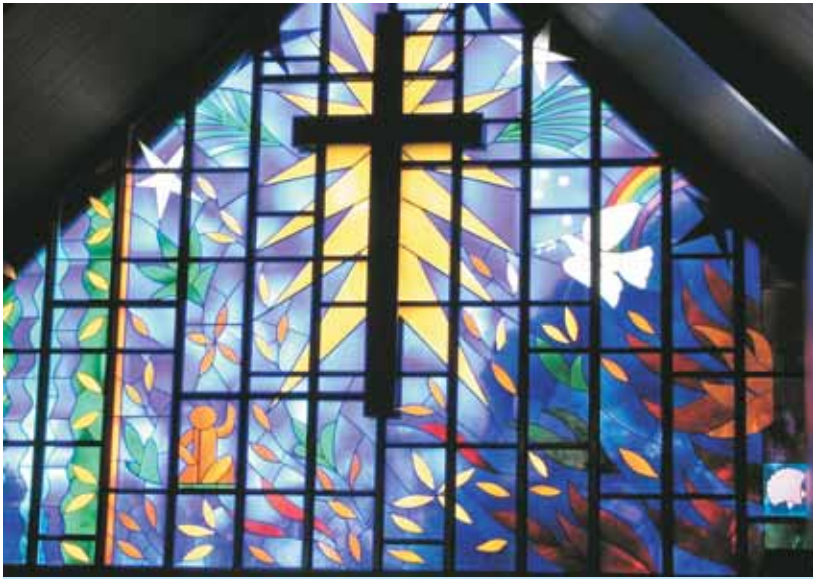
"It was a busy life with services at Richmond, Brightwater and Wakefield and an evening Bible study group at Richmond. I have warm memories of Rex Brumby, who was minister's steward at Richmond. Rex would

greet me in the vestry and offer a prayer for myself and the congregation. It was such a calming beginning to the service."

Beverly says today the Richmond Methodist Church is used by a wide range of community groups and the congregation runs a number of activities. They include the Crafts Caring and Sharing Group, which has been meeting for many years and draws women from the community and congregation together to enjoy fellowship over knitting, crochet, and hardanger embroidery.

The Sunday morning service was attended by about 90 people. Jill van de Geer preached and challenged the congregation to 'sing new songs' to bring a relevant message to today's secular society.

During the service former parishioner Grant Marshall shared his memories of Richmond Methodist, and afterwards a plaque commemorating 170 years of Methodism in Richmond was unveiled by Ivy and Jim Short, long standing and very active members of the congregation.



Trinity Methodist Church's 'Shalom Window'.

Trinity Pakuranga ready for a jubilee

Trinity Methodist Church Howick/Pakuranga is set to mark a major milestone. In October it will hold a jubilee celebration - exactly 50 years to the day from when it was officially opened.

Methodist services began in Howick on Sunday 5 June 1852. On that day Rev R Ward preached in Auckland and then rode 15 miles to Howick, where he preached to a good number and formed a society of eight members.

Under the guidance of James Qualtrough a small wooden church was built in 1853. It was situated on a site in Picton Street where the police station was until a few years ago.

With the passing of the original families, Methodist services lapsed for a number of years. They began again in a Keith Hay building on Moore Street on 24 April 1954.

Rev Edgar Hornblow was appointed as the first fulltime preacher in 1962 but the pivotal year for the congregation was 1963. In that year The Keith Hay hall was shifted from Howick to a five-acre site near the junction of Pakuranga Road and the Bucklands Beach turnoff. Ralph Witten had to foresight to purchase the block.

On 30 March 1963, a new parsonage was dedicated by Auckland District chairman Rev

Clarence Leadley. On the same day the foundation stone of Trinity Methodist Church was laid by Auckland East Circuit superintendent Rev Athol Penn.

Every Sunday from March to October 1963, it was exciting to see the progress of the new church being built.

The official opening and dedication was held on Saturday 12 October 1963. President of Conference Rev Robert Thornley led the opening ceremony. Special anthems were sung by the choir and Jill van de Geer was the guest organist. A week of celebration followed the opening.

The Parish is now preparing to celebrate five decades since the official opening. There will be a formal dinner on Saturday 12 October 2013 at 6pm, at the Howick Club.

On Sunday 13 October, hymn singing will commence at 9.30am and the service will follow at 10.00am. Guest preacher will be Rev Michael Greer and the children's talk will be given by Rev Graham Whaley. Lunch will follow in the church hall.

If you want to attend, please contact: 50th Jubilee Celebrations Co-ordinator, PO Box 82-056 Highland Park, Auckland 2143 or email: emjabee@xtra.co.nz.

Correspondent's swansong underscores value of archives

PRESBYTERIAN ARCHIVES

By Yvonne Wilkie

Yvonne Wilkie is Touchstone's longest serving writer and has written 'From the Archives' columns since the paper began in 2001. Later this year she retires and this is her final contribution.

To write a final piece for Touchstone as the Presbyterian archivist is tinged with sadness but also satisfaction. It is a chance to reflect back on beginnings, progress and outcomes.

Beginnings: Sitting in the Presbyterian Archives Office on that first working Monday in January 1994, I wondered where to start. On the back shelf were several boxes of records to be processed from the Knapdale/Waikaka Parish but otherwise everything was in order.

An old electric typewriter sat to the left of the desk and a three-drawer filing cabinet to the right. An instruction manual prepared by my predecessor strategically placed at the centre of the desk gave me little reassurance.

With a sense of intrusion I entered the hallowed storage spaces that I had been prohibited from as a researcher. A room fondly labelled the 'Synod Room' - owing to the fact the the Synod of Otago and Southland gave a grant to create a storage area - and the photo and audio safes, with their heavy metal fireproof doors, gave a sense of mystery of times past but little sense of what next.

I took tentative strides during the first week with each new task. Processing a collection of records was where I felt most nervous. Now, when I look back, it seems ironic that these first efforts were with a



Head archivist and unflappable Touchstone correspondent Yvonne Wilkie is retiring from Presbyterian Archives.

parish where I began my primary schooling.

Although many years had passed the familiarity of the names and locations helped me to gain a sense of assurance that this position would prove to be both fun and challenging. And that it has been!

Progress and Outcomes: We seldom achieve progress without huge effort and a team of loyal supporters. Those of us who work in Church institutions will acknowledge that the wheel can turn slowly. Protracted debates, changing personnel, and a small resource base can be frustrating and exhausting. A wise minister said to me early on, "Time can be your friend, Yvonne, by taking small steps".

This proved to be so when, after 11 years of stiff negotiations, Presbyterian Archives' new facility opened in 2009. From an overcrowded and restricted basement with difficult access, our new ground floor location

gave us visibility, a professional front, and wheel chair access.

During those 11 years the work of the Archives did not slow down. Staff grew to four; collections multiplied five times; photographic images doubled in number; and hundreds of researchers from New Zealand and around the world found treasures in our holdings.

Promoting an archive's collection is of essence to draw researchers. Over the past 20 years the means to achieve this have shifted but one channel, the church newspaper, has remained a constant. While researchers are on the lookout for material, our Church members can be unaware of what Church records are, why they are retained, and what purpose other than their own parish histories they serve.

Touchstone in particular has opened its pages and allowed both Methodist and Presbyterian Archives to keep readers informed.

I first contributed to Crosslink, the joint Presbyterian-Methodist paper, under the title '100 years ago' where occasional quotes were extracted from the collections and past Outlooks in an effort to tantalise readers and offer a taste of little known or forgotten gems from of the past.

By 2000 a regular monthly column of 400-600 words appeared. A monthly contribution allowed us to tell the story of the Church's faith journey and raise the awareness to the need to protect parish records for posterity.

Changes loomed, however. In 2001 the two denominations parted company to produce individual papers. The Presbyterian paper Spanz had a narrow editorial policy that did not include a regular column from the Archives despite supportive feedback from readers. This meant a lost opportunity to reach a wider Presbyterian audience.

The Touchstone editorial panel on the other hand enthusiastically sought a Presbyterian contribution. With a broader circulation Touchstone reached Uniting Congregations and Cooperating Ventures that included many Presbyterians.

I believe I made the right decision to continue this link, although my superiors initially frowned upon it. Articles covering the 1930s work camps, ANZAC, Dutch Settlers, and the various mission activities, for example, drew in many researchers, visitors and additional acquisitions.

I have appreciated being able to contribute the Presbyterian story and I thank Paul Titus and others for their continuing support.

Presbyterian Archives has now reached a crossroads with the expansion of the Internet and researchers' desire for 24 hour access to digitized records. This is a new venture that demands an expertise this archivist holds only a limited knowledge of.

These challenges I will leave to younger brains. I look forward, however, to becoming an active researcher in this new digital environment when I finally retire within the next six months.



Rev Dr I.S. Tuwera

Ni ra tarogi na gone-turaga Vunivalu mai Bau ko Ratu Seru Cakobau ena gauna oya se yaca cava me vakatokai kina na veiliutaki vou ka vakarewa na kena kuila mai Nasova, Levuka ena 1874, a mani kaya kina na Vunivalu me vakatokai me "MATANITU". Sa tu oti e Viti na duru lelevu e rua oya na Vanua kei na Lotu. Sa qai yaco mai ogo me kena ikatolu na Matanitu. Na 'matanitu' sa ivakalekaleka ni "mata-ni-turaga" se 'matana-na-turaga' se matana na Tui. Sa mai vakarewa na kuila e Nasova ka sa tukuna me kilai raraba ni sa vakaraitaki kina na 'matana na Tui' Peritania ka sa soli ogo ko Viti me vakarurugi ena ruku ni nona lewa kei na veiliutaki.

Ni tukuni na "Matanitu ni Kalou" sa tukuni tikoga kina na 'matana na Kalou' se nona veiliutaki na Kalou. Ia sa raici vinaka na matana na Kalou ogo ena bula kei na cakacaka ni luvena ko Jisu Karisito. Na nona vunau taucoko kei na veika kecega ka mai vakayacora e vuravura na gone - Turaga ko Jisu sa kena usutu se kena isoqoni na 'Matanitu ni Kalou.' Sa i Jisu na "mata-ni - Turaga se Tui" sa ikoya na Kalou na Dauveibuli, ka bulia

V A Q A V A K A Y A L O

Rev Dr I.S. Tuwera

NA MATANITU NI KALOU

na lomalagi kei na vuravura.

Sa vuqa na 'matanitu' sa tu edaidai e vuravura. Era vakaliuliuli kecega. Tu o ira na kena vakaillesilesi, vakamuri edua na ituvatuva ni cakacaka. Na ituvatuva ni cakacaka me vakamuri ka sema tu ki na 'yavu ni vakavulewa '(constitution), kena lawa, veivakatorocaketaki, ka vuqa tale.

Na Matanitu ni Kalou sa isoqoni ni Cakacaka kece sara, Vunau, Vosa Vakatautauvata, Mate, Tucake Tale ni Mesaia se Karisito, sa Jisu ka dau cavuti me kai Nasareci. Ni lesu cake tale vei Tamana ni mai vakayacora vinaka n aka ka talai mai kina kim vuravura, sa talai mai na Yalo Tabu me mai vakuria tiko na kena liutaki ka cakacakataki na Matnitu ogo e vuravura. Ka sa itavi dina ga ni lotu ka kilai ni "Lotu ka Vakarisito" me bula ka cakacakataka na Matanitu ni Kalou e vuravura. Ka sa koto na idusidusi oqori ena qaqa ni masu ka vakatavulica na Turaga vei iratou na nona tisaipeli - "Me vakayacori na nomuni Matanitu e vuravura, me vaka sa vakayacori tiko mai lomalagi."

Sa sega ni tautauvata na 'lotu' kei na Matanitu ni Kalou. Sa itavi ga ni lotu kei keda na vakaillesilesi kina - talatala, vakatawa, dauvunau, daucaka lotu masumasu, se itavi cava ga ni veiqaravi ena loma ni lotu meda raica ni qaravi, bulataki...vakatetei

na Matanitu ni Kalou e vuravura. Sa duri oti tu na Matanitu ni Kalou ogo. Sa mai vakaduria na Turaga. Na kena irairai, kena Yavu ni Vakavulewa, kena inaki sa koto ena bula kei na cakacaka i Jisu Karisito na Turaga. Sega ni da qai vakaduria, ka ni sa duri oti tu. Sa itavi ga ni lotu me raica me vakamuri vinaka ka cakacakataki.

Ena sega ni bokoci rawa na Matanitu ni Kalou. Era na yali taucoko na veimataniitu e vuravura kei ira na kena iliuliu. Na Matanitu ogo ena sega ni bokoci rawa. Eda sa sureti tale tiko meda vakavoutaka na noda vakaitavitaki keda ena Nona Matanitu na Kalou ka mai vakaduria na Turaga. Na kena Yavu ni Vakavulewa sa sega ni volai ena pepa kei na peni. Ia sa volai ka dregati ena Nona dra na Karisito. Sa yaco kina na Nona soli Koya na Turaga me Yavu levu ni Veiyalayalati Vou ka tekivutaka na Kalou.

Ni da raica yani vakatotolo na iVola Tabu Makawa, eda raica ni ra a sega ni vaka Tui na Isireli ena loma ni dua na gauna balavu. Nodra Tui ga na Kalou ko Jiova. Ni ra yaco ki Kenani na vanua yalataki, era sa qai vinakata me ra vakamurimuri ira na veimataniitu ka vakavoli voliti ira (1 Samuela 8). Tukutuku ko Samuela vua na Kalou (1 Samuela 8) ni ra sa vinakata na Isireli me dua na nodra Tui me

vakataki ira na veimataniitu tani. Kaya na Kalou vei Samuela me ra vakamuri mada na tamata me vaka n aka era vinakata. Sa vakamalumalumutaki koya na Kalou levu ko Jiova. Na gauna ni Nona veiliutaki na Kalou ni bera ni mai lumuti ko Saula na imatai ni Tui Isireli sa kilai ni: Gauna ni Sautu. Levu na veivakacokotaki...Bulabula vinaka na ka era tea ki na qele ..Gauna ni Veiyalayalati... Oti na ivalu...Bula veicurumak vinakai... Oti na rarawa kei na tagi: Gauna ni vakacegu. Ni yaco mai na gauna nodra na Tui, sa levu na gauna dredre ka sotavi. Gauna vinaka duadua ka ra dau diva tu na Isireli me lesu tale mai na gauna nei Tevita. Era waraka ka diva tu me lesu mai edua na 'Tevita vou' me mai liutaki ira tale. Sa tu oti tu na vakanuinui ni na yaco mai na siga me vakayacori kina na veika oqori, ni bera ni sucu na Turaga. Ena kauta mai na gauna vinaka oqori na "Mesaia."

Ni da raica yani vakatotolo na iVola Tabu Vou kei na iVakavuvuli i Jisu, eda raica ni ra sega ni kilai koya rawa na tamata, ka wili kina o iratou na wekana voleka. Era kaya ni sa lialia se curumi koya na yalo velavela (Marika 3: 21). Doladola na Vunau mai na Ulunivanua - "Sa kalougata ko ira era yalo malumalumu ni sa nodra na Matanitu vakalomalagi" (Maciu

5: 3). "A sa kaya ko Jisu, laivi ira na gone lalai, ka kakua ni tarovi ira, ni ra sa lako mai vei au, ni sa vakataki ira na lewe ni Matanitu vakalomalagi" Maciu 19: 14).

Ogo eso na sala kina Matanitu ni Kalou meda gole yani kina ni da mai tekivutaka tale na ikarua ni veimama ni yabaki ogo 2013. Na veisala e vica ogo e kunei vinaka vei ira na gone lalai. "Saumaki " me vaka na gone (Maciu 18: 1-4). Sega ni "vagonegonea" ia meda veisautaki keda ki na nona bula edua na gone. Kena isoqoni tiko na 'yalo malumalumu.' Yalo ni qoroya ka rekitaka na veika vou e raica se sotava (sense of wonder). Cabe se dromu ni siga, qoroya na totoka ni senikau, manumanu, ka vuqa tale. Yalo ni vakararavi ni gone. Vakararavi vinaka ka sega ni baleta ga na vakasavu liga se vucesa. Yalo dau veivosoti vakatotolo. Sega ni tu vakadede vei keda edua na vakasama ca me baleta edua tale.

"Vuli" mo kila vinaka cake edua na ka ko sega ni kila vinaka. Kakua ni nanuma ni ko sa kila vinaka n aka kecega. Vuli mo guilecava eso na ka makawa sa dodonu me kau tani... Vuli mo Dauloloma... 2 Korinica 5: 1 - "Ni keitou sa kila kevaka sa rusa na neitou vale vakavuravura o koya sa vakacevaceva, sa dua na neitou mai vua na Kalou, a vale sa sega ni caka ena liga, sa sega ni rusa rawa, mai lomalagi."

Curumi Nai Tikotiko Vou Ni Lotu ni Tabacakacaka O Viti e Okaladi

E dua na gauna lagilagi kina Wasewase Ko Viti kei Rotuma e Niu Siladi ena nodratou sa laki tawana na Tabacakacaka o Viti e Okaladi nai tikotiko ni Lotu e Meadowlands Methodist Community Church e Whitford Road, Okaladi. Ena nodratou cakacaka vata na Tabacakacaka kei na Komiti ni Manukau Synod Property ka yaco kina na veisolisoli ni tikotiko ni Lotu mai vei iratou na lewe ni Howick Pakuranga Parish.

Era vulagi dokai ena soqo bibi ogo na Peresitedi ni Lotu Wesele e Niusiladi, Rev. Rex Nathan kei na nonai vukevuke o Ms Jan Tasker ka vaka kina Na Qase Levu mai Viti o Talatala Tuikilakila Waqairatu kei na nona lewe ni vale o Radini Talatala Iowana. Ena qai kuri tale tiko yani nai talanoa ni kena curumi na vale ni lotu ena pepa e tarava.



Ko ira na Vulagi Dokai kina soqo bibi ogo.



Ko ira na lewe ni Soqosoqo ni Turaga.



Ko ira na lewe ni vavakoso ni Tabacakacaka o Viti e Okaladi.



Matasere ni Tabacakacaka o Viti e Okaladi.



Patipatia le Agalelei o le Atua i le Maugaaisa

Ae matou te le'i taina ao maugaloa ma tatala le ta'afi tualua na ifo ai le Aso o le Aiga Sa Saumani, e muamua lava ona fa'aetefimalie ma seumalu lupe o le Foaga ne'i sala le Gagana i lau Fa'afifoaga, e talii fo'i ae popo'e pei o le Fetalaiga i le Vaimauga, ona manatua ai lea o le Fetalaiga ia Mata'utia ma lana maimoaga, Tulou tulou tulona lava. Ae talu ai o le utiuti o le avanoa, e manatu ai le Matagaluega o lea fagatonu ia le

malama ma ta'u sa'o le solo a le Tamaloa aua le 15 Tausaga o le tatou Galuega i New Plymouth nei.

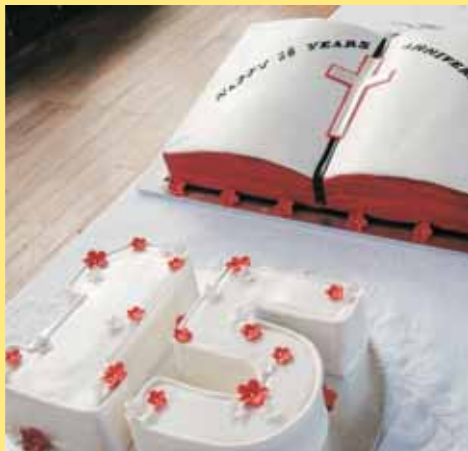
I le tausaga e 1998 na fa'atu aloa'ia ai lenei Matagaluega, i lalo o le ta'itai'ina a le Susuga ia Fatuatia ma le Faletua ia Suresa Tufuga, ma sa auai le tatou Sinoti i lea fa'amoemoe pei ona tauata'i mai, o le Susuga ia Aso Samoa Saleupolu, sa se'e'i i le Tofi Sea o le Sinoti i lona Vaitau, e to'a 5 nisi o tua'a sa asaina le gasu o le Galuega i lona fuafuaina ma tauata'iina, ua fai i lagi le Folauga. Sa amataina i le 2 Sauniga i le masina, peita'i ona ua fa'aosofia pea le Agaga Tapuai, ona faia ai lea o Tapuaiga i aso sa ta'itai, pei ona fa'auau mai ai nei.

I le 2002 na tofia mai ai le Susuga ia Limu ma le Faletua ia Ela mo le ta'itai'ina o le Galuega, e tele galuega sa fuafuaina i lona vaitau o le galuega, o le talosagaina o mea totino mo le galuega Samoa, e pei o le Malumalu ma le Maota o le Galuega, e ui lava ina faigata, ae sa fa'amoemoe pea i le Fesoasoani mai o le Mana o le Atua.

I le 2005, na fa'ato'a tafa ai se Tofa i le Palisi, ma tu'uina mai ai loa mea totino mo le tatou Galuega Samoa, i lalo o le fa'amalumaluga a le Sinoti Samoa, o le tausaga fo'i lea na Susu mai ai le Afioga i le Sea, Aso Samoa Saleupolu, o sui o le Palisi (Parish Steward) le Susuga ia Limu ma le fofoga o le Matagaluega Peleti Misikei, mo le sainia o lenei feagaiga, ae maise o le Sauniga mo le fa'apaiaina o lenei lava Feagaiga.

2006, sa toe fausia ai le Hall, mo le fa'ateleina mo Galuega, ma o le Susuga ia Iakopo Fa'afuata sa fa'apaiaina lenei Galuega ina ua maea, a'o se'e'i fo'i o ia i le Tofi Sea o le tatou Galuega.

O nisi mea sa tutupu, 2007 sa fa'amanatu ai le 100



Keke matagofie o le aso-fa'a'ailoga o le Matagaluega.



Rev Fatuatia Tufuga ma le faletua ia Suresa, Rev Limu Isaia ma le faletua ia Ela ma nisi o le Matagaluega.

tausaga o le Malumalu, sa matua fa'atumulia lea aso i aiga mai so'o se itu o le Kelope, o e sa galulue i le Malumalu, o latou Tua'a ua fai i lagi le Folauga, fa'atasi ma le to'atele o le Auaigaluega o e sa galulue ua malolo manumalo, ma e o lo'o galulue pea, i le Koneferenisi ma nisi ua si'itia atu i nisi Ekalesia.

Ona o le utiuti o le avanoa, ua le mafai ai ona tolalau mea sa tutupu i le tatou Matagaluega, ae o le mea moni lava, e fa'afetai ai i le Atua, ona o le fa'aogaina o le tatou Matagaluega nei i so'o se vaega, ua le gata i le Malo ae fa'apea fo'i i le Pasefika, O le malaga asiasi mai a le Ao o le Malo o Samoa, le Tama aiga ma le Au malaga, o le malaga mai o le Palemene o NZ, (Laburu) o le fa'amaopoopoina o fesoasoani mo lo tatou Atunu'u i le feagai ma mafatiaga, i le Sunami ma Eveni, e maitauina lava pei o le tatou Matagaluega, o le Centre lea o Samoa ma le Pasefika i lenei Pitonu'u.

O le aso 1 IUNI sa fa'amanatu ai le Anniversary, 15 tausaga, o le molimau ua le gafatia e le Malumalu le to'atele o aiga ma uo, ae maise le Paia i le Auaigaluega,

e le'i fa'apitoa manu ia tasi, sa vala'aulia uma lava le nofo a Fa'afeagaiga i so'o se fata faitaulaga i le Nu'u nei, o le Pasefika, Kau matua, Papalagi, ua matua matagofie ai lava lea aso, Ua le gata i le Sauniga, ao le taumafataga felanulanua'i, sa fa'afiafia le Au siva mai Ausetalia ma Aukilani, ae tauluga e le Mauga Aisa.

E fa'afetai ai fo'i i le Atua ona o lona tamaoiga, aua na alo fo'i le Matagaluega ma le Mafutaga a Tina, i fa'aaloaloga masani ona ta'ape ai lea ma le fiafia.

E avea ai lenei avagoa e momoli atu ai le faafetai tele lava i Lau Afioga ile Sea Rev Tovia Aumua, Susuga i Faafeagaiga O Faletua ma Alii ona o outou talosaga ma faamanuiaga. Ua fa'ataunu'uina ma le manuia. Faapea fo'i le tapuaiga mau ile Afioga ile Faatonu Aso Samoa Saleupolu ma le Faletua. Faafetai tatalo, Ia faamanuia le Atua i tofi ma tiute ua valaauina ai.

Faafetai Faafetai Lava
Rev. Limu Isaia

Tala a Tamaiti O LE LALELEI MONI - THE REAL BEAUTY

Na iai se kamupani lauiloa ia latou mea manogi ma mea faamomosi ai foliga o tamaitai ma alii, na faia se latou iloiloa poo faapefea mai le latou kamupani ia latou oloa. Ona latou fesili atu lea i tagata o se tasi aai tele lava, ina ia lafoina mai ni ata faapea foi ma se faamatalaga e uiga i se tamaitai aupito i sili ona lalelei ua latou iloa. I le lua vaiaso talu ona alu i tua lenei faasilasilaga, ae maua e le kamupani lenei, le anoano o tusi o loo iai ata i totonu o tamaitai lalelei. Fai mai na iai i nei anoano o tusi, se tusi na mata'ina e le Pule o le kamupani ona o le faamatalaga o loo iai. O le nei tusi na tusia e se tasi o alii talavou ua nofo toatasi ona ua tete'a ona matua, ua alu lava le tagata ia, ae sa nonofo i le nuu tuaoi ma le taulaga tele.

I le tusi a lenei alii na ia faapea ai: *O loo iai se tamaitai lalelei o loo nofo i le auala ma te tuaoi.*

Oute asiasi ia te ia i aso uma lava. E alofa tele lenei tamaitai ia te a'u, ma ia faia a'u o se tamaititi pito sili ona taua i le lalolagi. Na te fafaga ia te a'u. E faalogo mai foi o ia i o'u faafitauli. E malamalama tele o ia, ia te a'u - a oo ina ou tuua lona fale, e tu i le faitoto'a ma valaau mai.... e ese lo'u mimita ia te oe. Na ia faaiuina lana tusi i le faapea atu: O le ata lenei e faailoa atu ai ia te outou o ia o le tamaitai pito i sili lava ona lalelei. Oute faamoemoe ia maua so'u toalua e lalelei e pei o ia.

I le manaia tele o le tusi i le faitau a le Pule o le kamupani, na ia toe tago atu ai i le teutusi ma aumai i fafo le ata o le tamaitai lalelei e pei ona faamatalaina e le alii talavou. Na tilotilo atu le Pule o le kamupani, e le talitonu i le tala a le alii talavou, ona o loo ia vaai i le nei ata, se olomatua o loo ata mai ae leai ni ona nifo i luma. O se olomatua ua matua

matua lava o loo ia tilotilo atu nei iai i le ata.

Ae maise foi o loo ti'eti'e i le wheelchair. O loo faapatu lona laulu ua sina uma, ma ona foliga ua maanuminumi.

Sa umi ona tu le Pule ma tilotilo i le ata ma lulu lona ulu, aua e le o le ituaiga tamaitai lenei o loo ia faamoemoe e vaai i le ata o loo faamatalaina e le alii talavou. **O le tatou tala lenei tamaiti.**

O le mea lea o loo tupu - Ese a le lalelei lea o loo i le mafaufau o le Pule, ese foi le lalelei lea o loo faamatalaina e le alii talavou. *(O ai se tasi na te ta'u maia?)*

O loo vaai le Pule i se tamaitai momosi ona foliga ma aulelei ona o mea manogi ma faamomosi foliga o loo latou faatauina. **O lona uiga o loo vaai i le tino ma foliga o le tamaitai, ao le alii talavou o loo ia faamatalaina se tamaitai aulelei ma momosi foliga o lona loto.**

O le mea lea na tupu i le aso Sa o Pama. Tele mea lelei na faia e Iesu e pei o le faamaloloina o ma'i, faapupula tauaso, faasavavali pipili, faatutu e na oti ma tete'e i uiga faaletonu ma amio le tonu a le au faresaio, ae lei iloa lava e ona soo le Iesu moni.

Na vaai lava latou nao mea o loo tutupu i fafo - ona latou fiafia lea, faapea ua iai le tagata e faasaolotoina i latou mai le sau o Roma, ae le o le ituaiga tagata lenei e iai Iesu.

E le o le faasaolotoina foi lea na sau ai Iesu o loo tulimata'i e le au soo.

E le o le tino ma le taua faa le tagata - ao le faasaolotoina o i latou ma tatou uma mai le oti ona o le agasala. O iina tatou te iloa ai le lalelei ma le momosi o le Iesu moni. Aua o ia o le Alo o le Atua.

By Rev Suiva'aia Te'o

National Methodist Youth Fun Day - Manukau Itumalo UNITED WE STAND, DIVIDED WE FALL Saturday 25th May 2013

The Methodist Church of NZ declared 2013 as a year of celebrating youth all around the country. It was the one special day where nothing but 'fun' was in our vocabulary.

Although it was unfortunate that the weatherman declared the weekend was to be overcast with heavy rain, in no way did the rain stop us from enjoying ourselves. Praise Him!

Manukau Tupulaga is a body of six youth groups. Our theme for the day was Unity - United we stand, Divided we fall. Our committee made up with all the youth leaders, had weeks of planning for a full-on day which was held at Mount Fort Park in Manurewa. We split each youth group into six NRL teams to compete against one another, from sprint relays and sack races to Weet-Bix eating competitions and much, much more.

Team bonding was one of the necessities we wanted to accomplish out of this event, so each group had to come up with a five minute chant/item to showcase themselves to their peers.

Overall it was an enjoyable day, full of laughter for everyone especially when you put two and two together, full speed and slippery

grounds. At times the score keeper was losing track of who completed what set from all the laughter, and in the end there wasn't a team that did not win a prize from the committee.

A huge thank you to our Aulavou Convener Rev Utumau'u Pupul, for making our Youth Fun Day possible and not to mention our parents and church family who also put on

a lovely BBQ for us which kept us all ready and fueled for more action. Apart from ending our Fun Day earlier than expected due to heavy downpour of rain, it was still an enjoyable day for all.

To see more photos of Youth Fun Day 2013 all over NZ, visit Facebook, Twitter or Instagram #YFD #YOUTHFUNDAY #MCNZ.



Ngaahi 'Ata Mei He Fakamē



Ngaahi 'Ata Mei He Uike Fāmili



KO E FALALOTOFALÉ'IA

Kaveinga: 'Oku tolonga pea ta'engata 'a e Mo'oni 'a e Tohitapu: Matiu 24:35:
'E mole 'a e langí mo māmani, ka ko 'eku ngāhi leá 'e 'ikai 'aupito 'e mole.

Ko e hā 'a e Tohitapu? 'Oku hā 'i he tikisinala faka-Tonga 'a *Churchward*, ko e Tohi Tapú (*fo'i lea 'e ua*) ko e *Bible*, pea 'oku faka'uhinga ia ki ha *fuakava*, pē ko ha *kovinānīte, tukupā*, pē *tukumo'ui*, kuo hiki ki ha tohi. 'Oku fā'ūtaha 'i leva 'a e ngaahi 'uuni nāunau ko ení kotoá 'i he fo'i lea ko e **Tokāteline**, 'a ia 'oku hiki ki he **Tohi Tapu' (Holy Bible)** 'i he *Fuakava Motu'á* mo e *Fuakava Fo'ou*, 'o fakatatau ki he kuonga na'e fakalotoa 'e he Toko Taha 'oku 'o'ona 'a e **Tokateliné**, ha ni'ihiki ke fai hono hiki tohí. Pea kiate koe mo au, mo e kakai kotoa 'oku lotu ki he Tolu-Taha'i-'Otuá, 'oku *Tapu(hā)* 'a e Tohi ko ení, he 'oku Tāpuhā mo Mā'oni'oni 'a Toko Taha na'a ne fai 'a e ngaahi *fuakavá, kovinānīte, tukupá mo e tukumo'ui*, 'a ē 'oku hiki 'i he Tohitapú. 'Oku mahino mei ai

leva, ko e Toko Taha 'oku 'a'ana 'a e *fuakavá, kovinānīte, tukupá mo e tukumo'ui*, ko e Tolu-Taha'i-'Otuá, ('Otuá ko e Tamai. 'Otuá ko e 'Alo, mo e 'Otuá ko e Laumālie Mā'oni'oni), ko e 'Otuá Mafimafi, Ko Sihova Sāpaoti, ko e 'Otuá Ta'engata. Pea ko 'Ene fiema'u fika 'uluaki mei he fa'ahinga 'o e tangatá, meiate koe mo aú, ko 'Ene fānau: **Kemou mā'oni'oni he 'oku Ou mā'oni'oni!**

Ko e tau'mua fisifisimu'a ia hono faka'atā ke hiki tohi 'a e Tohitapú, ke fakahā mai 'a e 'Otuá, 'a Ia mo hono ngaahi natulá kotoa, ke 'ilo 'e he fa'ahinga 'o e tangata. Ko hono ngaahi natulá eni: Ko e 'Otuá 'oku Tokaima'ananga (Poto), 'oku Aoniua (Pule) ki he me'a kotoa, 'oku ne Malava (Mafimafi) 'a e me'a kotoa, 'oku ne 'Afio he potu kotoa pē, 'oku mo'ui Ta'engata pea 'ikai 'iloa

hano Kamata'anga, ko hono uhó ko e 'Ofa, pea ha'i kotoa 'aki 'a e Mā'oni'oni.

Ko e Kaveinga ki he ta'u Faka-Konifelenisi kuo tau kamata ni: **Ke 'Ilo pea Tui mo Mo'ui'aki 'a e Tohitapu.** 'Oku na kaungā kau mo e Kaveinga 'o e māhina ní, hono uki kitautolu ketau tokonga ki he Tohitapú, 'o 'ikai ko hono laú pē, kā ke e'a mai 'oku mo'ui 'i he toko taha lotu kotoa 'a e **Tokāteline** kuo faka'atā mai 'e he Tolu-Taha'i-'Otuá ke hiki ki he Tohitapú. Fakatokanga 'i ange, ko e *fuakavá, kovinānīte, tukupá mo e tukumo'ui (Tokāteline)*, 'a ē 'oku hiki 'i he Tohitapú, ko e ngaahi me'a 'ata'atā pē ia 'a e 'Otuá, 'oku ne 'Ofa mai 'aki, ta'e fiema'u ha totongi, ma'a kitaua, kuo ne ngoahi 'i Hono 'Imisí, ko e faka'ilonga 'o 'ene fānau. Ko e me'a pē ke ta fai ke ta 'inasi ai he

"mā'oni'oni", ke ta fakapapau 'i 'oku mo'ui 'a **Tokāteline** 'iate kitaua 'i he tui. Ko 'etau veesi huluhulu, ko e folofola tonu ia 'a Sīsū, ke fakamahino ko Iá, ko e "Otuá ko e 'Alo" pea 'i he 'ene pehē, ka 'i ai ha'ane lea 'e fai, ko lea ko iá 'e tu'u ko e **"mo'oni"** 'o ta'engata, he Ko e 'Otuá Ta'engata Ia. Pea ko e Tohitapú Katoa, mei Senesi ki Fakahā, ko e ngaahi lea kotoa 'a e 'Otuá.

Ko ia 'oku tokanga 'a e Kaveinga 'o e māhina ni, ke fakamahino mai: ka tau ka mo'ui 'i he Mo'oni 'o e Tohitapú, ko 'etau ma'u ia 'a e mo'ui 'e 'ikai 'aupito 'e mole pē 'e 'osi 'o hangē ko e langí mo māmani. Ko e Mo'ui Ta'engata ia mo e 'Otuá. **'Ofa Atu pea fakatauange: Kemou Mā'oni'oni he 'oku Ou Mā'oni'oni.**

OKOOKO 'A SIOPAU FAKAMĒ MO E UIKE FĀMILI 2013

Kuo tau paasi mai mei he māhina kō Mē mo hono ongo katoanga tu'uma'u fakata'u ko e Fakamē 'a e longā'i fānau Lautohi Faka-Sapaté, pea mo e Uike Fāмили 'a e ngaahi Fāмили Faka-Kalasi 'Aho. Fakangalongata'a koe'uhi ko e hope atu 'a e hona ongo Faka-Laumālie makehe atu 'i he ta'u ní, Pea ne lava atu 'a Siopau 'o vakavakai'i mo ki'i sivi'i 'a e ngaahi Siasí, pea ko e fē 'a e Siasi ne matamataleli tahá mo talavou. Ko e ta'u ni, ne fu'u mavahe atu 'a Moia Mei He 'Eiki ia 'i he matamataleli mo e toe talavou.

Pea mahalo ko e me'a ia ne tokamea'i pē 'e he Faifekau Sea 'o e Vahefonuá, pea ne me'a ia ki ai 'o fai 'a e fakamaau faka'osi 'o 'enua Kātoanga Uike Fāмили, mo e Faifekau Mālōlō, 'Aisea Lau. Pea toe 'i ai foki mo e ngaahi pola, kae pangō, ne toki fai 'a e havē kuo 'osi mavahe mai 'a Siopau ia ke hoko atu 'a e sivisivi mo fakalele 'a e ki'i polokalama ako teolosia. Ko e ngaahi 'ata ena mei he 'enua ongo katoangá na'a mou pehē 'e moutolu ko si'ate talaihangamai. Mou me'a pē ki ai ki he longā'I fānau mo e kau fine'eiki mei Tokelau Mama'o.

Ngaahi 'Ata Mei He Fakamē

