

TOUCHSTONE

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



Church people can join other volunteers to help refugees start a new life in New Zealand.

Volunteers help refugees make NZ home

By Sophie Parish

Lending a helping hand to a refugee make a new life in New Zealand can be a rewarding extension of the Methodist tradition of mission.

Each year 750 refugees arrive in New Zealand and over the next two years an additional 600 Syrian refugees will be welcomed here. Most arrive without the basics of life but the chance for a peaceful life away from war and persecution is an answered prayer.

Volunteers play a big part in helping refugees find their feet and settle into life in Aotearoa, and churches may want to consider how they could contribute to this effort.

The Red Cross is the primary provider for refugee resettlement in New Zealand. When refugees

arrive into New Zealand, they are placed at the Red Cross resettlement programme in Auckland.

There they go through six weeks of orientation to help them integrate into Kiwi life, culture and language. Qualified Red Cross social workers, case workers and trained volunteers help with this initial transition.

After the six week orientation, refugee families are then placed in communities in Auckland, Manawatu, Nelson, Waikato and Wellington.

Red Cross national programme development manager says Rachel O'Connor says one of the most rewarding parts of working with refugees is that you get to see people at the start of their new life.

"I remember dropping off one family to their first home and pulling onto the drive way. The father got out of the car and pointed to the house and asked who lived there? The thanks you

receive is very special."

This year Rachel says the greatest need is for refugee support volunteers, who help refugees during their transition to living in their new home and community.

Refugee resettlement volunteers attend a training course through the Red Cross in their region, and are often paired with another volunteer to help families during the first three to six months in New Zealand.

Some of the tasks volunteers do include helping families enrol their children into schools, going grocery shopping with them, showing them the local libraries and playgrounds, and just being a friendly face in their new country.

Manurewa Methodist parishioner Robin Ziegler had the opportunity to assist a Syrian refugee family resettle here in 1990s.

The Red Cross approached

the church at that time and asked if we could help the family find accommodation.

"Our whole church came together to find furniture, bedding and home supplies to help the refugees they volunteered to support. It helped them but it was also a way to pull the church people together," Robin says.

Parish steward Margaret Ziegler visited the family and taught the parents and five children English.

"The congregation followed the family through the years as they moved around the Manurewa community. Eight years ago the family had saved enough to buy the Manurewa parsonage. They said they wanted to live in a place dedicated to God," Robin says.

When asked about the current crisis affecting Syrians fleeing to Europe for survival, Rachel says the humanitarian disaster has displaced more people than

after WWII.

"We would like to see the New Zealand quota for refugee assistance increased. We have a successful resettlement program and we think that as a country we have the capacity to do more."

In the next six months the New Zealand government will make a decision about the current refugee response and whether they will increase the refugee quota.

You can support increasing the New Zealand refugee quota by contacting your local MPs or you can help to raise awareness about New Zealand's role in helping address the global refugee crisis.

To become a resettlement volunteer contact your local Red Cross branch by visiting www.redcross.org.nz or phoning 0800 7332 7677.

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Christian World Service - Small change makes big change

By Gillian Southey
The highlight of Christian World Service's 70th anniversary celebrations last month was a lecture by Rod Oram in Christchurch's Transitional Cathedral and St Matthew's in the City, Auckland.

Both gatherings were attended by long-term supporters of CWS and others interested in Rod Oram's reflections on the challenges the global community faces.

As the audience mingled before the proceedings, there were many comments as people recognised old CWS Christmas Appeal posters. The events culminated in a collection to assist Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon.

CWS national director Pauline McKay welcomed people to the event and highlighted the organisation's early history, its transition from relief work to community development, and the way its work addresses unjust structures and poverty.

Pauline cited the Sustainable Development Goals agreed at this year's United Nations General Summit as an important benchmark. She said CWS's work is more important than ever given the complex problems of inequality, conflict and insecurity.

Sparks in the Stubble

In his talks Rod aimed to ignite action for social change. He took inspiration from US Episcopal Church bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori as he encouraged Christians to be "sparks in the stubble" and clear away the old growth and regenerate the world.

He argued for a radical revision of the

way the economy works to address the widespread damage human activity is doing to the planet.

The loss of biodiversity, climate change, increasingly rapacious habits of banks, record numbers of refugees, practices such as Volkswagen's deliberate falsification of emissions and other crises are all leading to the world's sixth extinction, he said.

The way forward is to focus on restoring relationships with each other and between us and the planet. It is imperative that we work with nature, not against it.

Drawing on economist Kate Raworth's radical revisioning of economics, Rod spoke of the need to build a safe and just space for humanity under the environmental ceiling. The solution to issues that are increasingly global is to focus on the local.

Change will come from strong communities where individuals are valued, helped and encouraged.

Quoting scientist Gus Speth, he argued for a spiritual and cultural transformation to deal with what he called the environmental problems of selfishness, greed and apathy. Rod touched on Pope Francis's latest Encyclical *Laudato Si* and its unequivocal argument for a reorienting of human life.

The need for radical transformation in the way we live together within the ecosystem is urgent.

Churches too need to learn to work together more effectively. Inspiration and strength will be found as we learn from one another. In many ways this is the work



CWS director Pauline McKay addresses the audience at the Transitional Cathedral in Christchurch. Seated (from left) are David Tombs and Rod Oram.

that CWS has been doing for the last 70 years and that will be needed for a long time to come.

The future agenda needs to be inspiring and it needs to be faithful in all senses of the word. The care of creation unites people across all faiths.

Rod argued for small, incremental steps to rebalance the ecosystem to support more life. His faith in the ability of people to make big change from small change was matched by the sense of urgency for action.

First Appeal

The first CWS Christmas Appeal was launched by Archbishop West Watson in a letter to the Christchurch Press on 15 December 1945. The letter appealed for

funds to help war torn Greece in the name of the National Council of Churches..

Money raised helped four relief teams organised by CORSO.

The anniversary celebrations included videoed messages of congratulations and thanks from CWS partners around the world.

The video culminated in a message of congratulations from Helen Clark, now head of the United Nations Development Programme. Helen strongly affirmed CWS's pioneering work and encouraged us to work together to address the drivers of poverty.

"Hasn't CWS proven to be on the right side of history?" she asked.

Ecumenical dialogue bears fruit

The New Zealand Anglican, Catholic and Methodist Churches have agreed to form an ecumenical trust to pursue closer ties and share understandings.

The National Dialogue for Christian Unity (NDCU) will hold its inaugural annual forum in Wellington on 25 February 2016, followed by a service of celebration at the Sacred Heart Cathedral at 5:00 pm.

The aim of the group is to explore the significance of Jesus' prayer for unity and truth by:

- 1) Moving beyond what we can do within our own denominations and theological traditions and journey into uncharted territory with the company of others on the same journey guided by the Holy Spirit;
- 2) Deepening our relationship

with each other to express more visibly the unity willed by Christ for his church; and

3) Working together towards our common mission of worship, witness, and service in the world.

Anglican archbishop Most Rev Philip Randerson says forming the NDCU gives hope that dialogue will lead to formal ecumenical collaboration among the churches and other groups in society that want to see progress on issues that are a concern of all New Zealanders.

"This includes child poverty, access to affordable good quality housing, and responding with generosity to the refugee crisis. Establishing the trust reflects the responsibility we have to find a way forward and open dialogue not only with other churches but

other faiths," Philip says.

Former Methodist president Rev John Roberts served as a facilitator during the eight years of dialogue that has led to the formation of the NDCU.

John says the Methodist Church initiated the dialogue after the demise of the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand in 2005.

In 2007, Methodist Conference agreed that then president Rev Brian Turner would convene a meeting of the leaders of the traditionally ecumenically minded churches to discuss a way forward. This led to a meeting in 2008 of leaders of the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Christian Churches NZ, Methodist, Presbyterian, Quakers, and Salvation Army.

Later leaders of the Apostolic Church, Congregational Union and the Wesleyan Methodist Church joined the dialogue.

"This and the decision to give observer status to the executive officer of the evangelical New Zealand Christian Network was to profoundly affect the outcome of a proposal to form a wider ecumenical grouping," John says.

"Initially the discussions focussed on a theological basis for ecumenism. Some objected to the term 'ecumenism' so it was agreed to use the term 'Christian unity'. A statement - Towards a Theology of Christian Unity - was approved by consensus in September 2010."

John says there was disagreement over the accountability of the dialogue group. Some wanted to make the dialogue accountable to the

National Church Leaders, a much more diverse group with a number of smaller and more conservative churches.

It was decided that representatives of the churches in the dialogue should be responsible to their own national church structures, and that the NDCU as a whole was accountable to the structures and courts of the participating churches.

September 2011 the group decided to move beyond dialogue and form a Churches Forum for Christian Unity (CFCU). Their agreement stated that the CFCU would be a gathering of churches that confess Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the scriptures and commit themselves through the Holy Spirit to fulfil Jesus' prayer "that they may all be one so that the world will believe" (John 17:21).

The participating churches then considered the CFCU's terms of reference and whether they would seek membership.

Responses from the Baptist, Christian Churches NZ, Presbyterian, Salvation Army, and Wesleyan Methodist churches were negative.

"It became clear that the NZ Christian Network was a sufficient ecumenical vehicle for them, in a way that it was not for the Anglican, Catholic and Methodist Churches," John says.

"While they dropped out of the conversation the Anglican, Catholic and Methodist Churches approved the proposal and agreed to consult further about its future.

"We three churches agreed to continue to meet under the banner



John Roberts



Philip Randerson

of the NDCU and to take custody of the proposal for a CFCU. Representatives of the Salvation Army and Uniting Congregations in Aotearoa New Zealand have also participated in the ongoing dialogue."

The initial focus of the continuing dialogue was to look at the progress made in the bilateral conversations of the three churches.

The NDCU agreed to look into how the participating churches celebrate the Eucharist and to explore the World Council of Churches' statements on mission, evangelism and a common vision. The members of the dialogue are also learning from one another how they handle sexual abuse.



Methodist Trust Association

Results to 30 September 2015

	6 Mths to 31/3/15	12 Mths to 30/9/15
Income Fund	5.39%	5.41%
Growth and Income Fund	4.10%	4.25%

Income Distributions for the quarter totalled \$3,254,797

Contact email: info@methodist.org.nz

Established for the secure investment of the Church's funds.

Uniting Congregations Forum - Big ideas for small churches

By Hilaire Campbell
Member of Uniting Congregations Aotearoa NZ (UCANZ) who attended the biennial Forum in Lower Hutt last month were treated to a potpourri of ideas on how to be more effective and enthused.

The Forum was held at St Marks Wesley Church in Lower Hutt October 15-18. About 85 people attended the event, which included two days of workshops aimed at boosting smaller congregations with plenty of encouragement and suggestions.

Tawa Union Church minister Rev Clare Lind says the speakers and workshop leaders entertained and inspired everyone. "The Forum was well structured and with no decision making there was lots of time to reconnect."

Presbyterian Church moderator Rt Rev Andrew Norton was one of three guest speakers at the Forum. Andrew told his audience the young ethnic congregations in our churches are sources of hope but we should not beat up on congregations in decline.

"That's life. If the grain of wheat doesn't fall to the ground and die it won't bear fruit."

Andrew emphasised the important role churches have to play in our society.

"New Zealanders are so blessed but the Kiwi dream is flawed. Every year 35 people die year as a result of family violence...a child is killed every five weeks. The government must provide just laws but it can't care. Only you and I can."

He recommended congregations use the Presbyterian workshop booklet Justice and Action, and he exhorted churches to work more closely together.

"The Church's biggest crisis is lack of imagination. Can you

imagine a day when there is no ordained minister, hymn book or organ? That day will surely come."

In his talk Anglican Bishop of Wellington Justin Duckworth asked why. Why isn't Jesus in our conversations? Why is our passion dying?

Victim mentality stops growth, he says. "We have lost confidence in the gospel. We can't wait for a guru; we have to be the change."

Justin is optimistic about church renewal. "There is 2000 years' proof of that." Leadership is vital, and this includes team ministry.

UCANZ executive officer Peter MacKenzie likened church renewal to a restaurant makeover. "If you follow Jamie Oliver, you will know that you have to source local produce so don't go to sermon central."

"Find your passion. For a restaurateur it might be truffles, for you it may be pastoral care or a mission project. Don't be afraid to ask for help. The red tape gets stickier every day, and you can't keep ignoring those IRD envelopes."

"Spring clean. Change your decor. It helps rekindle passion. Above all, don't try to 'youngify'. You won't attract 18 year olds so put your energy into current customers."

Methodist president Rev Tovia Aumua spoke about the importance of the multicultural church in today's New Zealand because it reflects God's vision. He quoted Revelation 7:9 as his guiding principle: "I looked, and behold, a great multitude...of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues".

Tovia says it is important to encourage members of all cultural groups to be leaders. "Train them, ensure fair selection processes,

and then support them to give their best."

"But be warned there will be obstacles. Coming together brings diverse expectations and that requires extra love. "But how can we do God's work if we can't work together?"

Presbyterian minister Mary Petersen supports ministry in small churches in the Waikato and Canterbury. Her workshop on community connections, explored how churches can minister deeply into their community.

Mary asks how the wider Church supports locally-led ministry and she provided data on 40 small churches which led to some alarming conclusions.

"Churches without a resident minister feel ignored and despised despite good local leadership. Many feel they don't count...but small churches can be strong, vibrant and deeply connected to the heart of community. They deserve support and practical help from Presbytery and Synod."

Nutrition consultant Delwyn MacKenzie's workshop on Healthy Congregations offered another take on spirituality. "Spiritual health depends on physical health," Delwyn says.

The body is a temple but we are not treating it as such. Churches have a great opportunity to promote good health.

UCANZ co-chairperson Lyn Heine says the Forum was a catalyst for conversations about and among the Partner Churches. "There is no other place where you get together across denominations...it was lots of fun."

Thanks must go to members of the St Marks Wesley Samoan and Tongan congregations for their moving performances on the cultural evening. One of their songs, Ulufale (Our house) had special meaning for the Forum.



Forum gave Uniting Congregations members a chance to explore ways to spark up church life.



Methodist president Rev Tovia Aumua (left) was one of the speakers at Forum.



St Marks Union Church in Lower Hutt hosted Forum 2015.

Push to raise age of leaving state care

Methodist Lifewise is leading a nationwide alliance of agencies who are calling on the government to raise the age of leaving age for state care from 17 to 21.

In New Zealand, young people leave state care on their 17th birthday, an age when they can't even sign a tenancy agreement.

Lifewise general manager Moira Lawler says the consequences of this are visible every day. "Young people who end up homeless, living on the streets because they have nowhere to go.

"We are pleased to hear that the Minister can see the need for the age to be raised, and we hope that she will consider international research that shows overwhelmingly positive results for young people leaving care at 21."

Research from Monash University in Australia shows that for each 17 year old who leaves state care, it can cost the state more than \$700,000 due to homelessness, justice and correction costs, and long-term welfare dependence.

Most Kiwi families support their children well past 17, and most young people now leave home at 23. Even then, those who leave the nest can come back for support if times get tough.

That isn't the case for young people raised in the state care system. They don't have the option to come home if something goes wrong. They are left isolated, without

the skills or support needed to navigate the adult world.

Lifewise, Youthline, Child Poverty Action Group, Action Station and agencies from all around the country have teamed up for the campaign We Don't Stop Caring. They are asking the public to sign a petition to increase the age of leaving state care from 17 to 21.

Nearly 6000 people have already signed the petition, and the group is hoping to get at least 10,000 signatures before presenting the results to the Select Committee.

"Young people are in state care through no fault of their own. Somehow we have got to a point where people are quick to judge young people in foster care but they are the innocent victims of sometimes horrific abuse and neglect.

"Our government is responsible for young people in state care, and we as members of the community have a role to play in making sure that they have the support they need to thrive," says Moira.

Tupua Urlich, now 19, left state care at 15. "For me, leaving state care was a horrible and heart-breaking experience. You have so much expectation that grows throughout your childhood of returning to a loving environment with your family. Sadly that was not the case for me."

Moving into life as an independent adult is harder when a young person has had a disrupted life in-and-out of the state care system. Raising the age of leaving foster



An online petition urges the government to increase the age of leaving state care from 17 to 21

care would give young people more chance to learn the skills they need to be independent.

Moira says raising the age of foster care from 17 to 21 is in everyone's best interest. With better support, more young people will be able to make the transition to adulthood successfully, resulting in long-term economic, social and health benefits for us all.

To sign the petition, visit the website actionstation.org.nz.

Bible in Schools part of NZ heritage

To the editor,

The July edition of Touchstone carried two articles on Bible in Schools. To summarise, it appears from them that the Secular Education Network (SEN) is not happy with our existing Bible in Schools programme.

For goodness sake, we are a Christian nation founded on Christian principles and faith. I see no problem in teaching about this in our schools as we have done for the past 150 years.

Our Christian principles are being eroded and it is the old story that we are often too busy to care when extremists threaten our way of life.

If a young person is really keen to learn

about all of the faiths on our planet, I suggest a good start would be a Google search or one of the many excellent books readily available.

I wonder how many SEN principles would work in Indonesia, a Muslim country, or in India, which is predominantly Hindu. I am sure they would readily move aside for the teaching of Christianity as well.

I guess SEN's next mission will be to remove the opening prayer of Parliament or maybe to replace all the Gideon Bibles in motels with readings from all the faiths and so on.

Ron Panckhurst, West Melton

Science and the truth of Scripture

To the editor,

While I totally respect the position taken by Geoffrey Stubbs on the relationship between evolution and Scripture as outlined in the October Touchstone, I think it is important to recognise the position that the truth of Scripture is not necessarily to be found in scientific or historical terms.

The truth of Scripture lies in revelations about the relationship that exists between God and God's creation, especially from a human perspective.

From my perspective, the scientific awareness of the fact of evolution has been clouded by the use of the word 'theory' in relation to the fact. The theory is an attempt at explaining the fact.

Because the process is so slow and conditional upon so many factors, all of evolution is in reality microevolution. Perhaps there is a problem when we use our micro knowledge to confront a macro problem because, in doing so, we believe we see impossibility.

What we are actually confronting is the boundaries of our own knowledge.

Likewise, in ancient myths of various cultures we must expect to discover stories of

great floods, storms, fires, earthquakes and other perfectly natural phenomena. To humanity without knowledge of the scientific truth behind such events, it would be natural to believe a 'supernatural order' was in action.

Then there is the story of the discovery of chariot wheels in the Gulf of Aqaba in the Red Sea. I watched a documentary by a Christian researcher who made the discovery in the 1990s. Much of his presentation was conjectural and the only explanations he gave were scientifically totally implausible.

The phenomenon of erosion is a constantly occurring process related to the recently discovered fact of tectonic plate movement so that while mountain ranges are being constantly raised by this movement, so erosion returns them, eventually to the sea as sand and then again to rock as the process continues.

I find my evolving God in all of the amazing scientific discoveries we are making, just as I find God in my relationships with the living.

I think it is important to allow the truths of Scripture to maintain their own relevance and not to be confused with the truths of science and history.

Brian Kendrick, Nelson

Biblical truths that matter

To the editor,

In response to Geoffrey Stubbs' letter in your last issue, I doubt very much whether "the truth of the Scriptures" is dependent on the historical verification of a Great Flood, the exact location of the wheels of Pharaoh's chariot, the age of the earth, or where the top of seven Mt Everests went to after all that erosion.

I also doubt very much whether such truth is at all relevant to the ways in which we live our lives in this day and age.

Today 5.5 percent own 80 percent of the world's wealth, millions of people have been killed, injured or displaced as a result of war and civil unrest, and our continued use of fossil fuels and consequent pollution of the air and water we depend on for life is destroying the

earth by climate change.

We see social dysfunction, domestic violence, and the increasing prevalence of suicide. For many, poverty is the result of living in a world in which meaning has been lost as the few have acquired an obscene amount of wealth.

The truth of the Scripture, it seems to me, is contained and revealed in the meta-narrative of the all-encompassing, all-embracing love and grace of God extended to all without merit or favour. This message is to be found in the stories, poems, parables and prophecies in the Bible.

By comparison, concerns about the Great Flood, the location of the wheels of Pharaoh's chariot, etc., seem quite insignificant and unimportant in the overall scheme of things.

Valerie Marshall, Christchurch

Hard words for John Key

To the editor,

It is high time to initiate a vote of 'no confidence' in Prime Minister John Key in light of his apathy and neglect of those in greatest need in New Zealand.

To date we have seen 1) His initiative to spend \$25 million to change the NZ flag while ignoring the needs of 260,000 Kiwi children in poverty.

2) His endorsement of the costly plan to bring pandas into NZ, again while belittling the needs of desperate families and children.

3) His wilful obscuring of the consequences

of the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA).

4) The lack of support he and his party give to charitable institutions in NZ.

Such arrogant, irresponsible immorality does not truly represent the attitudes of decent NZers.

John Key's attitudes, personal wealth, and attention-seeking self-centeredness have dominated for long enough. As New Zealand citizens we need to put a stop the trends John Key follows.

HJ Hoskin, Whanganui



Rev Smith was perennially perplexed by the quadrennial surge in attendance at his early Sunday morning prayer group.

The Ageing Experience By Jan Fogg

The strength of eagle's wings

One of the beautiful things about some couples who have grown together over many years is the way they depend and lean on one another.

They can be amazing to watch as they share love with grandchildren and children. Together, they give life to each other.

They are still vulnerable though. When something major goes wrong for one, ironically the other can be flooded with a sense of helplessness.

It is ironic because after long years of life and struggles together we might think we could cope with most things but that very experience of togetherness can mean being alone is more frightening.

When a man says 'My wife runs the home and without her here I'm helpless,' what he might really mean is that without her life has lost its meaning; even with supportive whanau it can be an emotional road.

I think of the verses from the end of Isaiah 40: "Those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."

These are great words to take into our hearts, yet the human reality of helplessness is a sense of being lost, adrift in a sea of fear about the future.

It can seem that the suffering caused by a partner's ill-health is greater than suffering our own ill-health. The person in hospital is, hopefully, well-supported by friends and church family but it is not unusual to have only one of a couple deeply involved in the church family. If she

is the one in hospital, the one at home may suffer.

Sudden change and uncertainty can send us deep into our inner self to reflect on life. What has it meant? What have we learnt that can serve us now?

Where does the strength of the eagle come from at a time like this? Will someone be 'the Christ with skin on' and support the one alone at home?

Before this point arrives people can ensure that their mate of many years is competent to take up some of the tasks that the other has always done. Can we all cook nutritious meals? Pay the accounts? Keep the car running? Quickly find important telephone numbers and addresses? Keep in touch with friends? Remember the family's birthdays?

A mother eagle prepares her young ones for flying by 'unpreparing' their comfortable nest. She makes sure it isn't such a good place to be - sticks poke up, her beak is often empty, and she hovers above the nest creating a draft but also showing what wings can do.

Eaglets will never learn to be independent and fly as long as the nest provides everything. They have to change emotionally. This is a great image for couples who love one another enough to train their partner in the tasks they don't usually do.

So couples have to gain the security of independence whilst keeping the real connection even stronger. Letting go and holding on at the same time - what wisdom and courage is needed for older age!

CONVERSATION WITH THE CONNEXION

Mourning, celebrating, looking ahead

It is now approaching the end of the first half of our presidential term for the years 2015-2016. On reflecting over the past 11 months of our journey, we have experienced mixed emotions.

We have participated in some joyful events and celebrations and also experienced some sad times. We have already shared some of those in past issues of the Touchstone.

This month, we had the sad news of the unexpected passing of former Methodist vice president Lana Lazarus.

We were shocked and left feeling what a great loss it will be to her whanau, her community, Te Taha Maori and the Methodist Church as a whole.

Lana was so dedicated and efficient in all the things she did. She was always willing to stay with the issues and remained true to her understandings of the Bi-cultural partnership of the Church.

She was willing to share her personal insights with the wider church insights. And she had a wealth of knowledge of the Church, not only in New Zealand but also overseas.

We pay tribute to Lana as mentor and

friend. A good leader inspires others to be like them and to exercise their own gifts. Lana did that for many people. This is what Connexional leadership is about.

Lana was laid to rest in her beloved Taheke, Northland, in the Pukewhiki urupa, on Sunday, October 4th. President Tovia and Vice President Arapera, Tumuaki Diana Tana, past president Alan Upson and Waikato Waiariki Synod superintendent Susan Thompson presided over her funeral service and burial.

Later in October President Tovia was one of four representatives from the Methodist Church of New Zealand to attend the third meeting with leaders of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of NZ. The initial meeting was held in 2008, and the second 2009.

The long break between the second and third meetings was because of the earthquakes that struck Christchurch in 2010 and 2011 and the involvement of leaders in their aftermath.

The initial purpose of this forum was to explore ways to reconcile the two churches, which split after a number of people left the Methodist Church of NZ in the late 1990s

because of disagreements over issues and events at the time.

The latest meeting between the Methodists and Wesleyans took up where the first two meetings left off, exploring new ways to reconcile the two churches. This effort at reconciliation reflects the theme of the Presidential Team's second year, 'A time to Re-Sow, A time to Re-Grow'.

On Sunday 20th October, Bella and Tovia participated in the 100th year anniversary celebrations of the Te Awamutu Methodist church building.

It was an enjoyable celebration, and it was great to meet the past members and presbyters, who attended the celebration and shared their memories of the building and the parish.

In her foreword in the celebration booklet, Rev Jo Durrant wrote:

Wesleyan Methodism came to Te Awamutu 140 years ago, and this year marks the 100th anniversary of the building at 261 Bank Street.

The congregations from Pirongia and Otorohanga have now joined with Te Awamutu to form one congregation.



President
Rev Tovia Aumua



Vice-President
Dr Arapera Ngaha

If the building could speak, what wonderful stories it would tell. From earnest young preachers to the antics of small children, to the melodious tones from the choir and congregation.

We look back and give thanks for those who dared to dream dreams and share visions.

We give thanks for those who went through endless fundraising to make the dream come true.

We give thanks for those who spent many hours doing the labour to create the building and for those who gave of time and talents in the inner refurbishing of the church.

No church is complete without a worshipping, loving, caring and welcoming congregation whose life is both within the church and community.

Israel's right to be Jewish homeland

By Gary Clover

I'm dismayed that ex-President Brian Turner (October Touchstone) repeated the Palestinian Liberation Organisation's slander that Israel is an "apartheid state".

Despite its many and transparent flaws, Israel is the one remaining multi-religious, multi-cultural, and multi-national, democratic haven for oppressed minorities and their different faiths in the Middle East. It is the one place where Jews, Arab Christians, Druze, Baha'i, and other Middle Eastern minorities are not oppressed as dhimmis, and all have access to redress under the rule of law.

Playing fast and loose with the term apartheid, and using it out of context to de-legitimize and demonize Israel and bully Israel's defenders into silence has no place in our Church's life. We can do better than that.

Why doesn't Brian know that denigrating Israel is a worldwide leftist ploy that began as a 1964 KGB initiation of Soviet leader Yuri Andropov to give Yasser Arafat and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) a respectable, secular, Marxist, ideological under-pinning as anti-colonialist freedom fighters within the Soviet-led Second World bloc of post-colonial nations?

Brian needs to address his own liberation theology blinkers. How can he promote the lie that Israel persecutes and drives Palestinian Muslims and Christians from their ancestral homeland when Israel is the one Middle Eastern nation where the Christian population is actually growing?

In a recent poll Jerusalem Palestinians, by a majority of 56 percent, preferred Israeli to PLO rule. Under the PLO, Bethlehem's Christian population decreased from 75 percent in 1993 to around 20 percent today.

How does Brian answer the Arab mother from Nazareth and 2015 Israeli Master Chef Sarah Zoabi, who in her winner's speech on nation-wide TV declared: "I am an Arab, Muslim, Israeli, proud Zionist"? In her victory speech Sarah said: "I believe in the right of the Jewish people to have their own country,

which is the State of Israel, the Holy Land. I want to say to all the Arabs of Israel to wake up. Comparing us to other countries, to Arab countries, we live in paradise. [There is no] place better than Israel."

What does Brian say to the Greek Orthodox priest who broke ranks with his dhimmi-cowed colleagues to call on Arab Christians to take up their full role and responsibilities within Israel because it is the only Middle Eastern safe haven Christians have?

The Bethlehem wall and the checkpoints surrounding Jerusalem are inhumane monstrosities. But they beat being bombed in buses or restaurants or being sniper shot from nearby hills.

Checkpoints are a necessary feature of life for everyone throughout today's Israel, not just for Palestinians, because of unrelenting Muslim Arab terrorism.

Even as I write, in northern Judea, Fatah drive-by shooters have shot dead a mother and father before their children's eyes. In Old Jerusalem another Jewish couple were stabbed to death by a Palestinian youth. And in Judea and Samaria there were three other cases of drive-by shootings - all endorsed by the Fatah Party of Palestinian Authority president Mahmud Abbas.

This official racial hatred and demonising of the Jewish people, carried on day and night in the Palestinian territories, is the real apartheid. It has to stop before any meaningful peace talks can progress.

The PLO is not a partner for peace. Three times in the last 20 years its leaders rejected Israeli offers of 95 percent of their territorial demands and land swaps to cover the other 5 percent

Brian, I base Israel's right to be the Jewish homeland on the loyalty given her by unlikely people like Sarah Zoabi, the evidence - archaeological, historical, and scriptural - of her 4000 year-long continuous connection to the Holy Land, and the declarations made by the post-World War I imperial powers, the League of Nations, and international treaties.

Gary Clover, Nelson

Does Christianity have a future? A response

By Geoffrey Stubbs

John Peat raised an extremely valid point in the October Touchstone when he asked whether Christianity has a future. Although I am mostly a theological conservative, I feel I have a great deal in common with his thinking.

John wrote, "We must put into modern idioms the wonder, spiritual power and desire to serve that Jesus evoked in His original followers. If not Christianity will disappear."

I couldn't agree with him more.

I would say that in my own personal experience, the major thing which blocks us from reaching out to others is fear. I have had to pray regarding different spiritual issues over the years, and those prayers helped a lot.

Last year, in the August 2014 Touchstone, Rex Nathan wrote, "Holy Spirit, revive our church." I feel Rex made an important point, that only with God's help can we make the changes needed in our own lives to find this "new language, new evangelism, new warming of the heart".

Rex wrote that we need to follow the major teachings of John Wesley, and the 10 Commandments (I would prefer the commandments of Jesus in Matthew 22:37-40). As the Scripture says, "Obedience brings down the Spirit of God."

The middle verse of the whole Bible, Psalm 118:8, says, "It is better to trust in

the Lord than to put confidence in man (in ourselves, in our own resources)." I am quite sure that if we try to leave God out of it, we are doomed to failure.

John Peat divides Christians into three categories: 1) Hebrew Christians or Old Testament Christians. There is a danger that the members of many of our denominations in NZ fall into this category.

2) 1st Century Christians, who interpret the New Testament literally. I pretty much fall into this category. I believe it is absolutely essential for us as Christians, to study the Bible.

3) 21st Century Christians. John points out that the 21st century worldview is ruled by science and technology. That is fine up to a point. I myself almost graduated from the Otago Medical School years ago.

But for me, it is patently obvious that there is a God. How can we be Christians if we do not believe in God? How can science explain the Holy Spirit? How can science explain the resurrection of Christ?

At the end of his article, John wrote, "We must put into modern idioms the wonder, spiritual power and desire to serve that Jesus evoked in His original followers."

I suggest that what gave the disciples their power and fervour included their experience of the miracles (signs) which followed them

as they were faithful to Jesus and preached (Mark 16:20).

The disciples also had a great interest in God's Word (2 Peter 1:16-19). Peter was looking for a little comfort just prior to his impending martyrdom. He returns to the importance of the Scriptures: "And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place".

Finally the disciples knew Jesus' beautiful love for them individually. Jesus pointed out the most important thing in our lives when He told Martha that Mary had chosen the "good part", of sitting at his feet and listening to his teaching (Luke 10:38-42).

I sincerely believe that we as a church need to return to daily Bible reading and study. "For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels," (Mark 8:36-38).

It is very possible that the decline in Bible reading today is because many of us are intimidated by modern science and the news media.

As John wrote, "Christianity only has a future if we can find a new language, a new evangelism, a new warming of the heart." I couldn't agree more.

Thank you, John. As we do our part, however halting our steps, the Lord will do His, I am sure of it, (John 14:21).

HONEST TO GOD

By Ian Harris

For secular Christians

What on earth is a secular Christian? Surely if you're secular you can't be Christian, and if you're Christian you can't be secular!



That was the puzzled reaction to a comment that I thought of myself as a "secular Christian". An explanation seems timely.

First, though, I must acknowledge the attempts of others to answer the question for me. Three priests, two Catholic and an Anglican, have written that it is dishonest to claim to be both. The first insists: "There is no such thing or person, because 'secular Christian' is a contradiction, like 'a square circle'... For you and others to come along now and try to appropriate for yourselves the term Christian is quite unjust and dishonest."

Another says: "If you are an atheist, be an atheist and don't obfuscate this with pseudo-theological language."

And the third: "[You are] merely spreading confusion, concealing the Gospel truths by many empty words, which is properly the domain and objective of Satan, the arch-deceiver, whom Christ called 'a liar, and the father thereof'."

Oh dear. Here was I thinking there is virtue in trying to be honest in matters of religion, and good sense in exploring ways to hold the Judaeo-Christian heritage and our contemporary secular culture together in positive tension. At least that offers the hope that currents of

energy will begin to flow between them, to the enrichment of both.

Naturally, this means rethinking a great deal of what has been handed down to us from pre-secular eras. That includes the quaint idea of reducing Christianity to a package of beliefs which, if you assent, makes you a Christian, and if you don't, rules you out.

As usually expressed, those beliefs are really the time-bound and culture-bound answers to the ultimate questions of life. In every other field of knowledge people of the third millennium have gone way beyond the science, medicine, law, education, technology and worldview of past ages.

They build on the new knowledge that has been won. But there is something about religion with its claims to final truth and ultimate authority that makes many of its adherents reluctant to follow.

It is necessary at the outset to distinguish between the core tradition of Christian faith and the many lesser traditions that have accumulated around it. One way to express the core tradition is that through his life, ministry, death and resurrection Jesus expressed with a startling clarity and freshness the possibilities for Godness that lie within each of us.

To preserve that core and pass it on the church developed a host of forms and practices - creeds, rituals, systems of ministry and government, hymns, robes, architecture - that helped people of former times to understand and embrace the core tradition.

Effective as these lesser traditions were in their day, many of them now cling to the core like barnacles.

Sometimes they obscure it. They are quite irrelevant to the way secular people understand the world and live their lives.

This applies even to the once pivotal notion of theism - that is, in the words of one of my priestly critics, "a God who is independent of this world and universe, who has planned it and keeps it in existence, and has involved himself in its history".

That is a time-honoured concept of God but it is not the only one. It was challenged early in the life of the church by the conviction that Jesus showed in a unique way what God is like, to the point where Christians were spurred to refine the notion of God by catching Christ up into it.

But these creative exercises are best seen as interpretations of experience, not dogmas fixed for all eternity.

In a secular world, people have to be free to explore the core tradition and to attempt new interpretations.

Why should it be considered atheistic, dishonest or demonic to try to make sense of faith in the light of the new knowledge and insights of the past 400 years, and vice versa?

Secular men and women look for meaning, purpose and fulfilment within this world of space and time, because they are not convinced there is another world beyond it. That makes them secular.

Many would say Jesus is decisive in their lives (which is another way of saying "Jesus is Lord"). This makes them Christian.

It seems odd that instead of building on that, some priests are more intent on chasing us out of the church.

A Visit to Lincoln Cathedral

By Desmond Cooper

*When the silence takes hold
All is suspended
Night and day; need and want
Dread and desire; life and death.*

*As the horizontal gives
Way to the vertical
So the spirit is released
Suspended; all is suspended*

*Embraced by a
Divine ecstasy; a sense
That all else is trivia takes hold.
Compassion, laced by grace*

*Embraces all with it's
Indelible touch a
Perfectly proportioned eternity
A silent, reverent joy reigns*

*All is contained, all of
Heaven and earth in this
confined clarity.
Even a little imp
Moulded high in the corner.*

We can do better than foster care

By Moira Lawler,
Lifewise general manager

The main finding of the current Child Youth and Family review is completely sound: New Zealand's most vulnerable young people are being let down by a system that traumatises them.

But the conversations we are hearing from the review are all about blaming families. That won't get us anywhere. We have a broken system.

There's no question that some people are not capable of being loving parents but most parents can provide a stable and safe home if they are given the right support.

Taking children away from their families is treating the symptom, not the cause. It is entirely possible to do a better job.

The focus on the review should not be on how we can keep children safe from their families, it should be how we can make families safer.

Our system has everything backwards. We give young parents everything they need to know about how to give birth but there is no manual for what to do with babies and children once they go home.

New Zealanders are becoming increasingly isolated from each other, and lack of support means



that some parents simply can't cope.

Many parents who have children removed from them have themselves been in care. They don't have role models for how to set up a loving home.

When children are removed from their home, not only are they removed from their parents, they are often separated from their siblings, further traumatising them.

These children have to go wherever a placement can be found, leaving behind everything

familiar to them, including their school, friends and the communities where they have been raised.

The research shows that removing children from their families can damage them. It creates disruption, confusion, and feelings of abandonment.

The transient nature of foster care can also harm children. When interviewed, adults who have been in foster care remember moving between placements as a series of significant losses that left

emotional scars. This prevented them from trusting people and building and maintaining relationships.

Despite abuse and neglect, children naturally feel a sense of belonging to their birth families. We are all naturally wired to love the people who raise us, even if they may not be the best person for the job. And most parents want their children to come home.

In fact, research shows that children who remain with their parents fare better than children removed from care. The more contact children in care have with their biological parents, the better they do later in life.

That could be because children in state care are often badly treated. They are handed from home to home, and multiple social workers manage their case over the years. Or it could be because children simply do better when they are with their family, no matter how dysfunctional.

It's clear that state care needs to change - we can definitely do better.

Lifewise has piloted an approach that turns the foster care paradigm on its head. We were working with a family that had all five children removed from them. CYF concluded that the children should never return to their parents

but our team believed that the parents could provide a loving home. They just needed to learn how.

We asked CYF if we could test out a different way of doing things. Rather than removing children from the home, we removed the parents.

We set the children up in a new home where the family wanted to put down their roots.

Our foster carer moved into the new home full-time, and the parents were slowly brought back into family life, learning the ins-and-outs of establishing routines, setting boundaries, and having fun with parenting.

It was a long process, but today the parents have full custody of their children, and all reports show that the children are happy and well cared for.

We need to stop focussing our efforts on what happens to children once they've been removed from their parents, and shift towards giving parents the support they need so that children don't have to be removed in the first place.

The young people who talked to the Children's Commission for their recent report were unequivocal: They want to stay with their parents. It's time we listen to them.

PUBLIC ISSUES NETWORK

Government rethinking policies on children. What does it mean?

By Betsan Martin

An array of important information on children has emerged in recent weeks.

The Children's Commission State of Care 2015 report and the Rebstock review of children in state care are part of a wider picture of state sector reform and a new approach called 'Social Investment'.

Taking a Christian justice lens to welfare and investment means looking at how families are supported, how communities help children achieve, and how we support cultural and spiritual values.

Justice includes social services that are trustworthy and accountable for the quality of services they provide and the money they spend.

It means looking at the whole picture: school, health, crime, abuse, and housing. It also means recognising the principles that shape policies.

Child Youth and Family deals with a plethora of programmes, policies, ministries, legislation, and statistics. The numbers are difficult to deal with. Here are a few: There are 250,000 children in poverty, the police made 58,000 referrals to CYF in 2014, and 68 percent of young people in CYF residences are Maori.

Finance minister Bill English explains Social Investment as taking account of all the contributors to a good life for children -

education, health, and housing. Instead of simply focusing on bringing down the number of people on unemployment benefits it would look at a longer term programs for beneficiaries.

For example, teen parents are projected to be on benefits for 17 or so years. Social Investment would ensure they are in school or training, and supervised to strengthen their prospects for employment and independence. This would reduce costs to taxpayers.

Bill English's paper on social investment sets out a long term approach to welfare and the need for children to reach their potential but it emphasises the cost of welfare. The paper states that the Ministry of Social Development aims to reduce the \$78 billion welfare liability.

His proposals suggest working with data collection programmes to identify children at risk. IT software known as 'big data' will use information from education, health, welfare and corrections to identify behaviour patterns likely to lead to welfare.

It would provide information on those likely to pose the 'risk' of being on benefits or needing intense social work. It would identify when children risk being exposed to abuse or neglect.

This raises concerns about privacy, stigmatisation, state surveillance and profiling children and families, in particular Maori

whanau.

It raises the question as to whether there are business opportunities for those who develop big data software.

And we might ask what happens when the judgement of social workers clashes with the data sets.

Another problem is that children can be put at risk if their parents do not comply with the obligations tied to their benefits. Radio NZ found that nearly 2000 children are in families that have lost half of their benefit income.

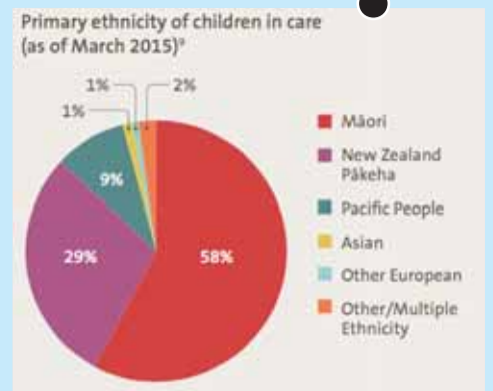
This can happen if the parent misses an appointment or a training course because they have no transport.

The Rebstock report says that children and young people under the care of the Child Youth and Family have dramatically worse outcomes as young adults than the rest of the population.

Complex issues arise when a child passes into state care. This includes dependency, deprivation and psychological damage that pass from one generation to another. For Maori children it is part of the legacy of colonial alienation.

The question we face is how we can build communities, heal and create the multiplier effects of love for children taken from their families?

The Rebstock report and the State of



Care 2015 report say that social welfare systems do not place children and their needs at the centre of their work.

Most of the focus of government policy is on services and what is missing from the Social Investment paper is a long term vision for investment in wellbeing by eliminating poverty and providing adequate childcare, parenting, and housing.

Countries with better outcomes for children than ours spend more on early childhood education. Denmark spends \$50,000 per child, the Netherlands \$24,000 and New Zealand \$14,000.

Trip to Hamilton Zoo 'best day ever'

By Julie Thomas

Tuesday September 29th dawned fine and clear and continued to be a hot, sunny day under a cloudless blue sky.

It was most definitely an answer to a prayer as this was the day the parishioners of the Anglican Methodist Co-operating Parish of St Pauls in Putaruru took a large number of very excited people to Hamilton Zoo.

St Pauls has more than children on the roll for regular Sunday 'Fun, Faith and Food' ministry, and every six weeks or so the number of children and adults swells to 75 for a Saturday afternoon of Messy Church.

It is a flourishing ministry and a vital one. These children often lead difficult lives and the care and attention, smiles and hugs, and wholesome food they at St Pauls is very important to them.

The trip to the zoo was part of this ministry and those who joined the trip assembled outside the church, many for more than an hour. There were 55 people in a bus and 25 joined in a collection of vans and cars.

As the bus made its way to Hamilton there was lots of enthusiasm at seeing Lake Karapiro, horses in paddocks and all the houses in Hamilton. It brought home to the trip leaders the fact that some of the children had never been out of Putaruru before.

The 'Let the Children Live' fund paid for the bus and it was a huge part of the day for the children who rode on it.

After morning tea, family groups of delighted children with parents, grandparents or caregivers made their way to the animals.

Some, like the playful lemurs, put on a real show, and some, like the chimpanzees, snoozed in the sun and eyed us while we eyed them.

The giraffes were a huge hit and the children laughed uproariously at the young giraffes whacking each other with their long necks. The tiger inspired awe and fear and the monkeys



The giraffes were a big hit with the kids from Putaruru.

raced around their enclosure and swung by their tails as they ate fruit.

Local ladies from the parish had supplied baking for morning tea and the fact that it was homemade really impressed some of the children.

Lunch was a picnic of bacon and egg and sausage and egg pies, more baking, fruit and muesli bars. The other groups watched us sing grace and marvelled at our well-behaved children. Tables groaned with food and hungry tummies were soon filled.

The trip home was more subdued as some little ones slept on the shoulders of caregivers. The day was declared 'the best day ever!' by several as they disembarked back at the church.

The shining eyes, smiling faces, happy laughter and little hands slipped into ours with such trust and happiness will stay with those lucky enough to accompany these children for a very long time.

Flat Bush church land for houses

By Cory Miller

Church land that has lain dormant for more than half a century in Auckland's Flat Bush is to be sold to a developer and transformed into a cluster of much-needed new homes.

The land at 169 Chapel Road is where the former Flat Bush Methodist Church was built back in 1882. It remained on the site till its doors were forced to close in the 1960s when the decision was made to move the congregation elsewhere.

At its rear sits a cemetery plot where some of the city's first settlers are buried. The earliest grave belongs to Horace David Whitten who died from blood poisoning at age six, on July 12, 1886.

In the 1970s the church building was moved off site and sold to a private owner who transformed it into a home on Gillies Ave in Epsom.

For the last half century the 3,200 sqm plot of land has gone largely unused barring the occasional animal grazer.

For years the Howick-Pakuranga Parish paid the cost of its general upkeep, maintaining the land, trimming trees and cutting grass.

Methodist Church Connexional property chief executive Greg Wright says because the whole plot was designated as a cemetery it was not possible to just sell off the land.

"The land had lain fallow with just a couple of horses and sheep grazing on it."

Greg says eventually the parish decided it was a valuable asset that could be put to better use.

To make it available for residential development the church had to prove there were no bodies outside of the cemetery area.



The Methodist Church will maintain the Flat Bush Cemetery.

It has taken about eight years, but Greg says plans are finally on track to put the block of land up for sale.

Church records indicate the land was bought for £20 in 1882 but today will likely go for well over \$1 million.

Howick-Pakuranga Methodist Parish elder Brian Jones has looked after the empty land for several years is pleased that things were finally coming together.

"It took an act of parliament to separate the two pieces of land," he says.

The roughly quarter acre of land the cemetery sits on will still be owned and maintained by the church.

Greg planned to have the land ready for sale at the end of October. Once sold, it will be divided into housing plots for up to 18 new homes.

While Greg can't say how much each new home was likely to cost, he said the density of the area suggested these would be in the affordable bracket.

"It's a parcel of land that will be able to provide houses in an area that is so desperately in need of it."

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Conference to ordain strong cohort of Trinity College graduates

Methodist Conference will see the ordination of nine new ministers - one deacon and eight presbyters.

The service these people carry out ranges from Lifewalk chaplaincy at a primary school in Auckland, to ministry on marae, worship centres and parishes from Northland to Christchurch.

All the ordinands have met the requirements of the Methodist

Church and been assessed as ready for ministry in Te Hahi Weteriana. This means they have completed their academic study and ministry formation programmes through Trinity College, and probation ministry in their communities, parishes or rohe.

Trinity College Council chairperson David McGeorge says the ordination service is always one of the highlights of

Conference.

"Trinity College Council celebrates with the ordinands and rest of the Methodist Church and acknowledges their commitment to service.

We look forward to accompanying the ordinands on their faith journey as we support each other in our ministries."

MOIMOI 'AHAU KAUFONONGA

I was born in Tonga in 1949 and in 1972 I left high school for my first job at the Tonga Electric Power Board.

In 1975 I married my wife Lisia, and we had four children. We moved to New Zealand in 1979.

I became a lay preacher in 1981 and moved to Mangere in 1983.

I joined the Mangere Methodist Tongan Congregation (Lotofale'ia) which built its church chapel in 1987. It was opened by King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV in 1988.

I have been the steward for the Lotofale'ia congregation for 15 years, and I have served as a lay preacher there and at Papatoetoe Tongan Parish.

I have also served as the administrator of the 'Akoteu Lotofale'ia child care centre for 14 years and I manage Vahefonua Tonga O Aotearoa's housing project Matanikolo Village in Mangere.

My aim is to continue to serve my Lord and the communities within the Methodist Church of New Zealand as a minister.



FALANISESI FUSITU'A HAFOKA

I am blessed through my marriage with my husband Lopeti Hafoka and our six children and nine grandchildren. We migrated to New Zealand in 2003.

I graduated with a Bachelor of Education from the University of Auckland in 2008 and earned a diploma of Practical Theology from Trinity Theological College in 2013.

I also received a lay diploma of Theology and Preaching from the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga in 2002 and a diploma in Education from Tonga Institute of Education in 1992.

I am currently a deacon probationer based at Glen Innes Tongan Methodist church. I am a Lifewalk chaplain for primary schools through the Christian Education Commission and I worked as primary school teacher for many years.

Deacon Louis Williams said "Part of being a deacon is to ensure that the conscience of the church remains awake to the suffering and needs of the poor and society's unloved." I am here to develop the gift and grace of God, and to open my heart to those who struggle and are rejected.



FINAU HALALEVA

I am in my first appointment at Henderson Tongan Fellowship within the Auckland/Manukau Tongan Parish.

I came a long way with many ups and downs to be here. I echo the disciple's words on the Sea of Galilee: "It is the Lord." Without the Lord, Jesus Christ, I would not have made it to this stage.

Today, I open a new chapter of my life and I am ever so grateful to those who have contributed to my journey. It started at Sia'atoutai Theological College and now into Trinity Theological College.

I wish that God will continue to bind and guide us in the field of ministry.

Last but not the least, I would like to give thanks to my family - my wife Fekita, my daughter Melissa, my son Zunien, and my youngest daughter Elizabeth. They have walked with me all the way. Malo 'aupito and may God bless us.



MELEMA'U MOLITIKA

As the saying goes, 'It is not about the destination, it is about the journey'. My journey began at Koulo, Ha'apai, Tonga and it has taken me to Aotearoa New Zealand.

Here in New Zealand it has taken me from Kirikiriroa (Hamilton) to Otautahi (Christchurch).

It has been an experience of searching, exploring, discovering, and learning to continue searching, exploring, discovering and learning!

Last year I moved from being a Trinity College student to a probationer at Beckenham Methodist Church, Christchurch.

When my probationary journey ends and I am ordained will I have arrived? According to an old wise man from Koulo the journey continues.

I use the words from Micah as my GPS: "To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."



HOSEA SOVEA TUPOU

I was born and raised in the tiny village called Ha'avakatoalo on the western end of Tongatapu, the main island of the Kingdom of Tonga.

I moved to New Zealand in 1986 for further education after high school in Tonga. I have lived in Otara - the heart of South Auckland - since moving here.

I was a member of Tokaima'ananga - Otara Tongan Methodist Parish for many years before transferring to Wesley Papatoetoe Methodist.

I graduated with a Bachelor of Theology from Auckland University. In 2012 I candidated and was accepted for general ministry as a presbyter. My first appointment was as a probationer at Avondale Union Parish in 2013 and in 2014 I transferred to Waitakere Parish.

I wish to acknowledge with thanks the guidance, help and support from all those people whose paths I have crossed. I also wish to thank my parents, sisters, brothers and my wife and children. May God bless us all.



IEREMIA AMANI AMITUANA'I

I was born in Samoa in 1968 and was brought up in a Christian family. I learned Christian values enriched with Samoan culture and traditions.

I was educated in Samoa and had the good fortune to further my high school and tertiary education in New Zealand, where I became a teacher.

While pursuing a teaching career, I felt the call of the Holy Spirit to serve as a lay preacher. God has also blessed me with the gift of music which I have utilised to serve Him through the Samoan Methodist Parish in Hastings.

After 20 years of teaching, five years of lay preaching and many years as a musician, I felt the call to offer myself for ordained ministry. The journey was not easy but through it I learned to cherish and celebrate the successes and achievements.

I thank God because it was through the low periods of life that I came to understand more about myself, life, and His grace and mercy. My experiences in my family, church, education and teaching have helped to form a solid foundation from which to pursue ordained ministry with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

I am currently stationed at Bainbridge Methodist Parish, Rotorua. I recently married Matila Lautasi. My son Latu and I are blessed to have Matila and her daughters, Danielle and Felicia in our lives.



KEITA HOTERE

Tena koutou katoa. I am of Ngapuhi and Te Aupouri descent and currently live in Whangarei.

As a kaikarakia I trained for ministry as a private student and graduated from Trinity College in 2007 with a diploma in Practical Theology. In 2012 I was stationed by Conference to the Taitokerau Rohe - Northland region as a minita-a-iwi.

The skills, experiences and knowledge gained through growing up and working in Te Taha Maori has equipped me well for my present ministry on marae, churches and worship centres in Northland.

Throughout my teaching career I have been involved in Te Reo Maori language revitalisation programmes, community research and educational initiatives that have shaped the aspirations of my people socially, economically, politically and spiritually.

As a minita-i-tohia my ministry will continue in that vein and offer a service that contributes to the many gifts of all ministries that make up the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

"There are different kinds of gifts but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service but the same Lord," (Corinthians 12:4-11).



ALIVERETI ULUDOLE

I am a fitter and turner by trade and I am originally from Fiji. I became a lay preacher in 1998 and, after three years of study at Davuilevu Theological School in Suva, I became a lay pastor in 2004.

In 2011 I started my training at Trinity College and I completed my studies in 2013. Now I am stationed at the Fiji Methodist Circuit in Meadowlands, Auckland as a probationer.

This ordination means a lot to me. It opens an important chapter of my life and my calling. I look forward to doing pastoral work with the Methodist church of New Zealand and its missions. And I look forward to being a helping hand on the Wasewase ko Viti kei Rotuma canoe.



JOELI DUCIVAKI

I was born in Bagasau, a business and residential district in central Suva. As a teenager I accepted Jesus Christ to be my saviour while attending a camp with the Campus Crusade for Christ with my elder sister.

I earned entry to university but decided to join Telecom Fiji as a technical cadet. I achieved a diploma in telecommunication engineering in 1986, which paved the way for 23 years career as telecom engineer and administrator.

In 2006 I joined Downer Engineering in NZ and migrated with my family. I attended Mt Roskill Fiji Methodist Church and became the assistant steward.

I enrolled at Trinity in 2009 and at the same time took a position at Air NZ. I acknowledge the guidance and support of the Trinity College staff and past principal Rev Dr David Bell who helped me shape a new worldview of God, life and myself.

I am married to Talatoka Tikoirotuma and have five lovely daughters. They are all very supportive to my calling.

In 2013 I was stationed at Mt Albert Parish and last year I was stationed to Pukekohe Wesley Fiji Parish.

A big vinaka vakalevu to the Methodist Church of NZ for affirming my calling.



College Snippets

ENROLMENTS FOR 2016

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MS510 TE AO TAWHITO. 23 - 27 NOVEMBER.

This paper investigates a distinctive Maori world view and highlights the significance of Maori mythology and oral tradition in the development of Mātauranga Maori. This course also examines the impacts of European contact on Maori society and the manifestation of Maori prophetic movements of the 19th-century.

GRADUATION - 13TH DECEMBER

3pm, Wesley Hall, Trinity-St John's College, 202 St John's Road, Remuera. The preacher will be Rev Donald Phillipps. Everyone is welcome. Following the graduation there will be a shared meal.

Heaven on Earth

DAVID HILL
REFLECTS ON MARK

*They say in heaven, love comes first.
We'll make heaven a place on earth.
Belinda Carlisle - Heaven is a
Place on Earth.*

Living in east Christchurch over the last five years has given new meaning to those prophetic words "heaven is a place on earth".

Rebecca Solnitt's book title *A Paradise Built in Hell* suggests that paradise can be built in hell. We can find meaning in a tragedy by turning it into an opportunity to create a paradise where everyone has what they need - love, support, food, water, warmth, shelter.

Passages from Mark in the November Lectionary provide insights into this challenge.

In Mark 12:28-34, Jesus is asked 'Which commandment is the first of all?' In response he gives not one but two commandments.

Firstly, 'There is one God and you shall

love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength'. Secondly, 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself'.

In Mark 12:38-44, Jesus speaks of scribes who "devour widows' houses" and the widow who "has put in everything she had".

Jesus also foretells the destruction of the Temple (Mark 13:1-8).

By referring to the first two commandments, Jesus is saying the two are inseparable - loving your neighbour is rooted in loving God. After all, we are made in God's image and God dwells in each one of us.

In his sermon *A Catholic Spirit*, John Wesley calls on us to love and encourage people in their love of God and Jesus to create a "unity of the spirit". It matters not your opinions, your lifestyle or methods of worship, so long as you love God and stand for social justice, you can walk with me.

Jesus accuses the scribes of being vain, hypocritical and lacking in hospitality.

Some scholars suggest "devouring widows' households" means "abusing hospitality", others say it means "charging excessive fees".

Either way, it is a charge of hypocrisy as the care of widows and the fatherless was something the Bible calls for - oppression is condemned. In contrast, the widow gives all she had - her next meal.

It reminds us of Wesley's saying: "earn all you can through honest means, save all you can, give all you can".

Reading the third passage in isolation could leave one thinking of end times or the afterlife but it is clearly not.

As Jim Stuart writes in *The John Wesley Code*, "Wesley learned over and over again that letting go of the old allows the new to take its place. Isn't that what Christian faith is all about, new life and resurrection?"

Should it take a major earthquake to

bring a seismic shift in our thinking? We don't have to keep doing what has always been done or accept what has always been believed.

As Jim challenged Methodist Conference in November 2010 following the first Canterbury earthquake, "There is a unique opportunity to create new forms of ministry if the church can recover its apostolic priorities and not accommodate itself to maintenance and survival."

In the days and weeks following the February 2011 earthquake, for many in east Christchurch, New Zealand was closed but Christian groups in Darfield and Rangiora ignored the authorities and brought in supplies by helicopter and driving on broken roads.

The message of salvation is not about the afterlife, it is liberation from that which prevents us from being fully human in this life.



On having a brain scan

CONNECTIONS

By Jim Stuart



The other day as part of my treatment for Parkinson's disease and in the interests of medical science I had my brain scanned at Christchurch's

Brain Research Institute.

The Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) involved lying absolutely still for one hour on my back inside a cylinder and enduring the unrelenting hammering sound of the scanner as it literally worked over my brain.

It was not an easy procedure and I was physically and mentally exhausted when it was over. The experience caused me to reflect on my brain and how important its functioning is to good physical and mental health.

After the scan I was given a CD containing images of my brain. It was quite moving to see the pictures of my

brain on the computer screen and think about how much my brain made me who I am.

For most of my life I took my brain for granted. My life is written somewhere in there: my hopes and dreams, the things I can and can't do. In a way, I am my brain.

Through our brains we recognise and remember the experiences that have shaped our lives over the years.

We treasure the memories of family, the challenges of growing up, the moment(s) when we fell in love, the jobs we have done.

We remember the love and support we received from others when we were struggling, the guidance and wise advice we were given when we were confused, the compassion and understanding that others offered us in those difficult moments of loss and pain.

At the same time our brains enable us to make sense of the world, to feel compassion for others, and figure out how best to respond to events around us.

In a sense we might say our brains define us: how we think, how we move (in my case increasingly slowly), what we do, and what we become. A Buddhist sage Nagasina once observed, "I can never catch myself at any time without a perception."

One of the reasons I was drawn to a lifetime's study of John Wesley was the simplicity and clarity of his faith. His life of faith began with one basic fundamental perception: God is love. Out of that fundamental experience, it was as if his brain exploded with faith.

In his essay *The Character of a Methodist*, Wesley argued that the distinguishing mark of a Methodist "is not opinions!". Rather, Methodists are distinguished by their experience of love - love for God and love for others.

This experience of the love of God and others was first written in his brain, before it became embedded in his heart.

On February 9, 1709, young John aged six years was asleep in his bed when the

parsonage in which the family lived caught fire. His parents, Samuel and Susanna, rescued all the children except John.

On waking John found himself trapped in his bedroom as the fire waged throughout the house. He stood at the window and cried for help.

"Quick as thought," wrote Wesley, "one man placed himself against the wall, and the other stood on his shoulder and just a moment before the roof fell in with a fearful crash," rescued Wesley from the fire.

Wesley spoke often of himself as "a brand plucked from the burning". The phrase was written on his heart and brain - and his tombstone as well!

The experience of the MRI has made me think. The brain has its own mystery and deserves our attention. In the language of faith we talk often of the heart but we must not forget the brain for it has much to teach us.

Reaching out and following up

By Peter MacKenzie
UCANZ executive officer

I've just finished our UCANZ Forum and Big Ideas for Smaller Churches conference in Lower Hutt, and I am exhausted.

But it is a satisfied exhaustion. It feels a bit like the weekend before when I spent all day Saturday getting the spring garden sorted. I imagine it is a bit the same for rugby players but in their case, it is the winners that have the satisfied exhaustion and the losers who have a frustrated exhaustion.

Our four days together was a wonderful time of resourcing, fellowship and networking. There were great speakers, workshops and conversations, and we will provide more details on the event at a later time.

But it got me to wondering why there weren't more people there. I received a few emails from people

who wanted to be there but had other commitments on the day. I can totally understand that.

I also had comments from a number of churches saying that they couldn't afford the time or the cost of sending people. I am not so sure that I can understand this.

As churches become smaller it is even more important that they develop strong networks of support. Retrenching both expenditure and networks is not a positive step. A smaller church needs that outside connection to support and provoke new ideas of being church.

A number of ministers have commented that when times are busier there is an even greater need to take time out in prayer. Research has shown that an antidote to ministry burnout is collegial support but ironically most ministers heading for

burn-out opt out of attendance at church meetings and gatherings.

Smaller churches that find they have no money or energy to connect with the wider church often find themselves more isolated and struggling hard to build enthusiasm and generate new ideas.

While saving time and money by not having people go to regional or national events seems a good idea, it is generally false economy. The value of networking, inspiration and growth is nearly always higher than the costs of attending.

There also needs to be an affirmation in the local church. Too often churches might go to the expense of sending someone off to a meeting or conference but then fail to use their experience to generate ideas.

People are sent off to national or regional events and are then given a

little time to report back, and even less time to work through the innovative ideas with others in the local church - especially the leadership.

So two pleas: Firstly, always rate the value of sending members of your church to resourcing events or national meetings far higher than just the cost of travel, accommodation and registration.

Secondly, if you are spending the money, get even more value from the investment by sharing any inspiration as soon as possible and allowing those who attended to 'infect' others with their enthusiasm.

I am going out to water my garden. If I get too busy to do that, all my good work gets undone. As a church keep learning and networking. It is deeply satisfying.



The old roof of Opawa Methodist Church will sit on a new building.

Opawa Methodist's ambitious rebuild

By David Hill

Opawa's Methodist congregation is seeking to stay true to its original building.

The southeast Christchurch congregation's presbyter Rev Andrew Doubleday says foundations have been laid for a new church building which is set to reflect the church's original layout.

"There was a group people who had a vision for a Methodist church in Opawa more than 100 years ago and they stepped out faith and made it all possible. Other generations have added to it, so now it is our turn to make a contribution."

Andrew says the 1908 building was severely damaged in the earthquakes. The foyer, toilets, offices, meeting rooms and hall were demolished in 2011. The church was left standing for some time before the roof was lifted off to another part of the site to be refurbished.

The new foundations include suspended timber and steel screw piles. They lift the new floor 1.5m above the ground.

"The building is being turned around 180 degrees. It will have modern windows and will be properly insulated and fire rated."

The interior of the church will look similar to the original built. The exterior will be laid out in concrete panels, instead of bricks.

"There wouldn't be much else like it in Christchurch. It is a smaller version of Knox Church and will have a really nice feel to it," Andrew says.

The rebuild is expected to cost \$3.4 million, which is funded by insurance money, a grant from the Central South Island Synod's strategic fund, and fundraising.

It will also require a \$300,000 mortgage but Andrew doesn't see this as a bad thing, as the 110 member congregation is likely to start growing once it has more certainty. The congregation has other income streams, including an op shop.

"We have been meeting in the Opawa School hall for the last three years. We set up on Saturday evening and take it down on Sunday afternoon. It has been great to have this venue but it's not the same.

"The evidence is that when you build a church it will grow. We have lost numbers since the earthquakes but for the last four years we have had no visibility.

"A lot of planning has gone into it and there will be a few nervous moments, especially when we put the roof back on the church. But it will be very exciting to see it go back on."

A video of the roof being taken off the church has been uploaded on YouTube.



Thanks to the work of volunteers and financial support from the Church, Red Hill Camp now has a new roof.

New lease on life for Red Hill Camp

The Northland Church community and Te Haahi Weteriana are rallying to renovate and reopen a youth camp that was out of use and ready to be sold.

Red Hill Camp is at Te Korpuru, on the coast between Dargaville and Kaipara Harbour. It sits on 10 acres that was gifted to the church in 1956 as a camp for youth development.

Northland Methodist Synod co-superintendent Rowan Smiley says Red Hill Camp ran successfully for decades but in recent years, Church use declined and the facility was more often hired out to the general public for 21st birthday parties, weddings, and other social events.

"The complex was not being used enough on a regular basis to ensure maintenance and upkeep were being attended to, and some of the buildings had deteriorated," Rowan says.

A decision was made to sell the camp but after a rethink the Synod held a public meeting and consulted with the Methodist Church and with other Northland Church groups. The feedback was strongly in favour of keeping Red Hill Camp in Church hands.

"I was astounded and humbled by the degree of support for its continuance, and its importance for the Northland community. Scoping committees found there was an overwhelming desire from the churches and the community to refurbish the camp and keep it going," Rowan says.

"An initial assessment found that to restore power and obtain a new warrant of fitness would require about \$30,000. At least half of this was needed to renew the roof over one of the halls and the girls' dormitory."

Rowan says when efforts began to re-establish Red Hill Camp Christian Campsites NZ CEO Jenni Davies offered assistance, which has been invaluable.

Since then generous donations of money, expertise, supplies and manpower – large and small – have come from the Connexion and beyond.

The Methodist Church of NZ provided a grant \$12,000 from the development fund and Te Taha

Maori gifted \$5,000 to the project. And there have been other financial gifts from residents and parishes in the North.

A Redhill Camp Committee has been formed. Rev Kuli Fisi'iahi is its chairperson and it held its first AGM in July.

In addition to support from Christian Campsites NZ and Youth with a Mission (YWAM), offers of help to rejuvenate the camp has come from other church groups throughout Northland and beyond.

Neighbours and local businesses have also provided support to get Red Hill up and running again.

"Engineer Max Coleman has been a great help and has offered ongoing consultation free of charge. We have had so many offers of professional labour to do the necessary work, including a builder who lives next door," Rowan says.

"We received a donation of 120 second hand vinyl covered mattresses from Dilworth School. Some of them need small repairs but they are still useful.

"We have had a working bee to tidy the grounds, and the neighbours brought a ride on mower and a tractor to tidy up the grounds. Work parties have repaired rafters and re-roofed the hall."

Rowan says the committee is very grateful to the financial donations and to the work of volunteers, which has saved the camp thousands of dollars in labour costs.

"There are a number of small maintenance jobs that are still required to renew our warrant of fitness. The inspection for the warrant of fitness will be in November.

"We continue to seek financial and labour support. Once we have achieved our warrant of fitness, the steering committee has recommended that the committee look at upgrading the wastewater plant, repaint the buildings, and ultimately consider raising \$150,000 to put a caretaker's residence on the property.

Red Hill Camp's working bee co-ordinator is Bill Sheppard 09 431 7196. For further information contact Christine Herald 09 439 1598.

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For more information contact the chairperson of Methodist Mission Aotearoa, Michael Greer
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Seismic issues shake up NI congregations

By David Hill

The Canterbury earthquakes have forced churches to rethink how safe buildings are and what is a morally acceptable risk.

After the earthquakes, Methodist Conference passed a motion calling on all church buildings to be brought up to 67 percent of code.

Methodist Trust Association executive director Greg Wright says 67 percent of code can mean different things in different regions, depending on the level of earthquake risk.

Engineering reports have been completed on all Methodist Church-owned buildings throughout New Zealand and about eight buildings outside of Canterbury were immediately closed when they were found to be under 20 percent of code.

Greg says around two-thirds of buildings were below 67 percent and close to half were below 34 percent. The minimum legislative requirement is 34 percent for pre-existing buildings.

"The difference between bringing a building up to 34 percent and 67 percent is not necessarily double the cost, because some costs will remain the same but the cost can be significant."

Greg is aware of at least 10 churches that have completed strengthening to 67 percent and another four to five are going through the process.

An updated report was due to go Conference this year, however this has been delayed as proposed new legislation is yet to be presented to Parliament, which is likely to make changes to the building code.

"We're not rushing to enforce anything yet, but if anybody does do any work we are recommending that the strengthening needs to be to 67 percent," Greg says.

Bringing a building up to code includes other improvements including disabled access but the new legislation may not require other aspects of the code to met when strengthening work is completed, Greg says.

Auckland

Auckland Central Methodist minister Rev Dr Lynne Frith says parishes in her region are "anxiously awaiting the government's legislation" as the costs of earthquake strengthening begin to bite.

She wonders whether it is realistic for the Methodist Church to expect all church buildings to meet 67 percent of code, especially in low earthquake risk regions, and she would like more dialogue.

"We do have a concern for public safety but earthquakes are of a very low level risk in this area. A lot



Napier Methodist Parish will strengthen its historic wooden church but has had to demolish an adjacent complex.



The 1886 Ashhurst Methodist Church has been sold and will be transported to Tauranga.

of parishes are affected and the difficulty they face is there is no insurance payout money and many don't have any capital to draw on. We have no idea how much it will cost."

Some strengthening bills are likely to be in the millions of dollars and several buildings are registered heritage buildings which can add complications.

Lower North Island

Lower North Island synod property secretary Lindsay Taylor says 100 buildings from New Plymouth, across to Gisborne and down to Wellington were assessed and six were closed immediately, including two in Wellington.

"A lot of parishes have money invested in the Church Building and Loan Fund from the sale of previous churches, and they are able to use that," Lindsay says.

Some congregations are choosing to sell their buildings

because of low numbers, other because of the cost of strengthening.

Manawatu Methodist Parish superintendent Rev Bob Franklyn says rural congregations in Ashhurst, Bunnythorpe and Pohangina have faced some tough decisions.

Ashhurst has sold its 1886 church building. Parishioners watched last month as the roof was cut off and the building and roof were loaded on to separate trucks to be transported to Tauranga.

Bunnythorpe's church is just below 33 percent of code and will be put up for sale. Pohangina has an old wooden church that is used for two hours a month but will be kept because "it is iconic in a very small rural community and the opportunity for missional growth is strong".

Bob suggests the requirement around reaching 67 percent could be relaxed for wooden church buildings.

In contrast, Wesley Broadway in Palmerston North has had a positive experience in visioning for the future.

The parish has a concept plan for a \$2.8 million development in two stages to develop a social cafe and a multi-purpose hall and community centre.

"We have a vision of a social cafe serving a simple meal three times a week where people pay what they can afford."

The cafe would be able to provide training and social engagement which fits in well with the parish's Agape programme. Leftover food could also be frozen and given away, Bob says.

Bob says congregations should look at selling buildings that are "a millstone".

"We need to get away from this idea that we need these buildings so we can have worship. There are other options like renting space and I have seen churches in pubs, cafes, garden centres and in the open air."

Napier Methodist minister Rev Tony Franklin-Ross says his congregation's 1920s two-storey Sunday school hall is set to be demolished. This means the congregation will lose a hall, kitchen and office space.

Tony says the 1870s wooden worship centre, one of the few surviving pre-1931 buildings in downtown Napier, barely passed the 34 percent minimum.

"In the medium term we will probably look to bring it to 67 percent but it's a wooden building and it came through the 1931 earthquake, so it's not a concern at this stage."

The parish has a four stage re-development plan beginning with bringing its commercial building up to code and constructing modern facility with a kitchen and meeting rooms, before upgrading the worship centre.

Ashburton Methodist set to restore historic church

By Paul Titus

After years of discussions and some tough decisions, the Ashburton Methodist Parish is moving forward with plans to rebuild its historic Baring Square church building.

Though the final design of redevelopment has not yet been decided, discussions are underway with engineering firm Structex to appoint a team of consultants that will guide the project forward.

The graceful brick church in the heart of Ashburton was put off limits after the Canterbury earthquakes five years ago because it had a vulnerable archway and was only 28 percent of the seismic code.

Since then the congregation has worshipped in the adjacent lounge, office and hall complex.

An engineering report done soon after the quakes projected that it would cost \$1 to \$1.25 million to bring the church up to full code.

With limited resources and opinion split between those who wanted to rebuild the old church and those who wanted to replace it with a new worship centre, the Parish was at an impasse for several years.

Steward Brian Reesby says the Parish eventually received an insurance payout of \$800,000 but the financial shortfall and divided opinion about the way forward prevented further action.

"We had support from the Connexion through Greg Wright, Jill Hawkey and Rev Andrew Donaldson. Greg explained the way



The parish is steadily moving toward restoring its Baring Square Church.

forward and Jill and Andrew facilitated discussions within the Parish and consultations with the community."

Brian says in the past two years several positive things have fallen into place that tipped the balance of opinion toward rebuilding the church.

"The Central South Island Synod ring fenced \$400,000 from its Earthquake Fund for our work, and an engineering review suggested possible savings of \$100,000 on the initial estimate for the repairs.

"At that point we felt the finances necessary to do the rebuild were available but we were concerned that we did not have enough revenue to sustain the full-time ministry of our presbyter Rev Tevtia Taufalele.

"Since then our numbers have grown and we received a special grant from the President's Earthquake Fund for ministry support. This made us more confident to recommend repairs to the church," Brian says.

Ashburton Parish property convenor Ken Leadley says the Parish is adamant that the redevelopment will safeguard the church's remarkable exterior, its organ, and acclaimed acoustics but the final design of the interior is yet to be determined.

"We want to create a space that is more suitable for contemporary worship and the other facets of church life," Ken says.

"At this time we do not know how much money we will have to work with, so the redevelopment may have to be staged with reinforcing and structural work done first and developments to meet 21st century applications second."

The situation will become clearer when the future of the other property in the Parish – Tinwald Methodist Church – is decided. The Tinwald congregation no longer has the numbers to be viable, and in September the final service in the church was held.

The Tinwald property is home to a long-running Op Shop, which may find a new home in the refurbished Baring Square church complex. This and other issues regarding the Tinwald site are yet to be resolved but should the property be sold the funds would be available to redevelop Baring Square.

Until that time, the Parish will proceed as it has in the last five years, cautiously listening and considering its options.

Dealing with the legacy of Typhoon Haiyan

Two years on from super Typhoon Haiyan families in the Philippines are working hard to rebuild their lives.

Christian World Service partners the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP) and Developers Foundation work in the coastal regions of Aklan province. They have submitted final reports on the recovery stage, after the initial emergency response.

Both groups have worked hard to make sure families are back on their feet but the magnitude of the disaster and political issues in areas like Tacloban City mean that the work will continue.

NCCP extended their programme when it became clear that many families would need support for some time. They have focused on the most vulnerable communities that missed out because of their isolation or local politics.

Developers Foundation takes a similar approach. In the initial stages, outside help was available but now it is critical for local communities (or barangays) to get support to rebuild local economies and build back stronger in



Children at a workshop on community development in coastal Philippines.

preparation for the next typhoon.

Developers Foundation has run a series of workshops in two barangays bringing together representatives from 736 households to work on medium term development plans.

They have collected data and met with local government on behalf of the 3,203 residents. They have trained local people to collect data about the community, identify problems and develop a vision for the medium term.

By using a participatory approach, they were able to address issues of gender,

environmental protection, poverty, disaster risk reduction, governance and education in the integrated local government plans.

Developers Foundation has also repaired and improved nine local schools and help fishermen and farmers start again after the typhoon.

Methodist Women's Fellowship and Presbyterian Women of Aotearoa are fundraising for the next stage through this year's Special Project. Resources in support of the Special Project are available from Emma at 0800 74 73 72 or your local group.



A volunteer from the Czech Republic escorts a refugee from the Serbian village of Berkasovo towards the border with Croatia.

Syrian refugee crisis

Agencies like ACT Alliance are doing their best to assist growing numbers of refugees. As part of its 70th anniversary celebrations, CWS is appealing for gifts to help Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon.

Media attention has focused on refugees arriving in Europe but many more are struggling much harder at home in the Middle East.

The Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees has extended its emergency food, healthcare, life skills training and education programmes to refugees who have used up their savings and resources as the conflict continues at home. Photo: ACT Alliance/P Jeffrey.



Dr Saba Ghawi attends to a resident in the sprawling Madaba refugee camp, Jordan.

This Christmas buy gifts that multiply good

The challenge of choosing gifts for relatives and friends can be a stressful task. The Gifted programme makes things a whole lot easier for people who want to give something simple and meaningful.

CWS sends a card or an e-card which can then be passed on as a gift by itself or with a box of chocolates or some other treat. The money donated in this way will be directed to a CWS partner organisation.

For example, if you purchase a chicken card, it will provide a family with chicks, feed, a coop, training and support.

New gifts added this year are fishing gear to replace equipment lost in some of the Philippines super typhoons and equipment for school children in Haiti.

At Christmas, baby and mother healthcare is particularly appropriate. Funds support primary healthcare clinics in Madaba and Jerash refugee camps run by CWS partner the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) in Jordan.

In a country where all services are severely stretched by the arrival of 628,000 refugees, DSPR provides some of the only healthcare to pregnant women and new babies. Last year, each DSPR clinic

provided healthcare for more than 9000 patients including 2000 Syrian refugees. With poverty comes anaemia and many of the children need supplementary food as well as iron supplements.

Mothers attending Well Baby clinics receive education on caring for themselves and their child as well as medical attention. Children are vaccinated and mothers can receive advice on birth control.

DSPR Jordan also runs Medical Days in three camps. These focus on mothers and children as well as general medicine.

A gift of Baby and Mother Health costs \$40 and will help a baby get a better start in an area where living conditions are very poor.

CWS international programmes coordinator Trish Murray says when she visited the clinics, the waiting rooms were crammed full of mothers and children.

"While they waited for their appointment, DSPR staff gave them food supplements and information. It was the only medical care available in the area and the women were deeply appreciative."

Catalogues are available from Emma at cws@cws.org.nz or gifts can be ordered on line at www.gift.org.nz.

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Young People

By Filo Tu

Boyz hit all the right notes

There is something about music that sets the mind free and something about pure harmonies that makes the body shiver.

Whatever that something might be, it has been 24 years in the making and continues to strive for even bigger and better things.

The American R&B vocal group Boyz II Men are known for their emotional ballads and a cappella harmonies.

They hit the Auckland and Wellington stages late last month for epic performance as part of their tour of Australia and New Zealand.

Formerly a quartet and now a trio, Boyz II Men are Nathan Morris, Wanya Morris and Shawn Stockman.

They performed their original pieces that earned them fame during the 1990s as well as new

collaborations from their latest album, *Collide*.

The atmosphere in Auckland was astounding! It was a sold-out event, and it was a fitting scene at Aotea Centre. The Diwali Festival filled the Aotea Square and the city had definitely come alive.

It wasn't until a 9:00pm arrival that the seats were filled and the crowd waited silently as anticipation hung in the air. Without further ado, the PowerPoint presentation went live, and the crowd went wild.

When the American twang hit us from centre stage, it was met by thunderous applause, cheering and shouting.

It was evident why Boyz II Men's single *End of the Road* (released in 1992) stayed at number one on the Billboard Hot 100 for 13 weeks.

It seemed that the crowd was

going to drown out the singers as they sung along.

It was one of the biggest karaoke sessions I have been to - but it was their delight to allow the crowd to simply be thrown back to memory lane or rather be mesmerized in their appreciation of such musicality.

It would not have been a complete performance without other hits like *I'll Make Love to You* which saw no female seated (or male for that matter).

The performance of *On Bended Knee* brought out some raw emotion and there were some new flavours that the trio mixed in from their latest album.

I was very disappointed that things didn't work out for us, having been requested by Boyz II Men to replace Mariah Carey in singing *One Sweet Day*.

I had to decline as my vocals were tainted with hay fever



Out on the town after the conference.

symptoms. However, I still believe that if I was 100% things would have gone from 0 to 100 like that... *clicks fingers*.

The performance was a great opportunity for a number of Methodist young people to attend.

It wasn't dominated by any one synod but appreciated by all. This would be the part where

we claim Boyz II Men to be Methodist back in Philadelphia, but I'd rather not let the Waters Run Dry.

If you ever have the chance, I would encourage readers to seek out the Boyz II Men crew at the Mirage Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

Kidz Korna!

WELCOME TO KIDZ KORNA NOVEMBER 2015!

Welcome to this month's Kidz Korna.

I was reminded how close we are to celebrating Advent and Christmas when I saw cards, calendars, decorations and ideas for gifts in the local shops.

Did you know that Advent means 'coming'? It is the time of year that we remember the coming of Jesus.

I hope that in the midst of all the Christmas decorations - the trees, bells, holly and other things - that we all remember that the most important thing is the coming of Jesus Christ.

This month the children from St John's in Hamilton East share with us something they have been doing.

Kidz at the fair



Oisin (wearing the orange vest) helped at the games stall.



Hamilton East kidz checking out the toys at the fair.

Two years ago our church was pulled down because it was an earthquake risk. The grownups in the church have been busy raising money to rebuild it, and when we heard that there was to be a fair we thought we could help.

The fair had a special Children's Corner with

games and activities. Some of us donated toys for a toy stall. Oisin helped on one of the stalls and the rest of us spent our money on the games and some of us bought toys.

We had a wonderful day and the games and toys raised more than \$400.

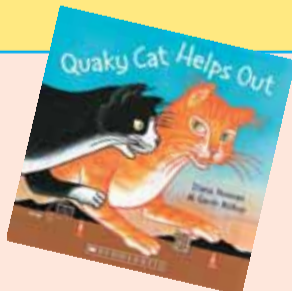


For your Bookshelf

Quaky Cat Helps Out

By Diana Noonan with Illustrations by Gavin Bishop
Scholastic NZ

You may remember the story of Tiger in the book *Quaky Cat* and how he was separated from his family after the Christchurch earthquake. Five years later he found that there were still people in Christchurch who were homeless, or who had to move or were still too afraid to go out. What could he do? He organised a party. To find out how this helped everyone you must read the book. It is beautifully illustrated by Gavin Bishop. All royalties from the sale of this book go to help Orphans Aid International and it is available from Epworth books.



Quiz

- Quiz: Find the missing words
- The word Advent means _____.
 - The 1st Sunday in Advent begins a new church _____.
 - There are _____ weeks in Advent.
 - Advent is to _____ as Lent is to Easter.
 - The Advent wreath _____ remind us that Jesus is the _____ of the world.

Answers to last month's Quiz.

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Tarsus | 4. In prison |
| 2. Saul | 5. Mark |
| 3. Damascus | 6. Yes |

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@xtra.co.nz or to touchstone@paradise.net.nz

Writing with an edge for church people

Sex, sin and violence - the Bible is full of stuff we still can't really discuss, says Rosalie Sugrue.



Rosalie Sugrue.

Through her work as an author and lay preacher Rosalie has tried to make it easier for people to discuss traditionally taboo subjects, and her experience with a gay minister was a trigger for her latest novel *Greens and Greys*.

Greens and Greys follows a young girl growing up in a small NZ town in the 1950s and 1960s. Molly can't tell her parents she has been raped and her gay brother's life is a living hell. Who can they turn to? Certainly not the church.

"This book raises heaps of issues including suicide," says Rosalie. "It's ideal for church dialogue and discussion groups."

Rosalie's writing is geared for the church. "It's what I know," she says, though her earlier novel *The League of Lilith* and her other non-devotional books should appeal to everybody.

"Writing is a two way thing. It has to be read to have any worth."

Deeply against discrimination in any form, trying to move people

on in their theological thinking is uppermost in Rosalie's mind. She changed the focus of some of her stories when she heard about suicide and faith issues among Pasifika youth.

"Missionary Christian beliefs are conservative and judgmental. Young people can't talk openly to elders who hold these beliefs."

"They struggle with personal issues while trying to stay loyal to family, church and culture."

Rosalie's output has been prodigious. Her 30 plus publications so far include novels and eBooks, kids pocket puzzle books, and the Bible Challenge puzzles for Touchstone.

Fundraising has been part of her focus. NZ Methodist Women's Fellowship (MWF) continues to benefit from her Christmas and Easter Traditions, Abundant Bible Puzzles and other booklets, as well as many programme leaflets.

Books and eBooks published after 2011 include *League of Lilith*, *Sophia and Daughters*, *Ten Plays* (10 easy dramas for church productions), and *Theme Scheme* (a collection of games and activities

for anyone leading programmes for youth to elderly).

Her puzzles have been published in Canada, and her poems and prayers are in anthologies in the UK and USA. Articles, prayers, puzzles and poems she has penned have enlivened many NZ church magazines.

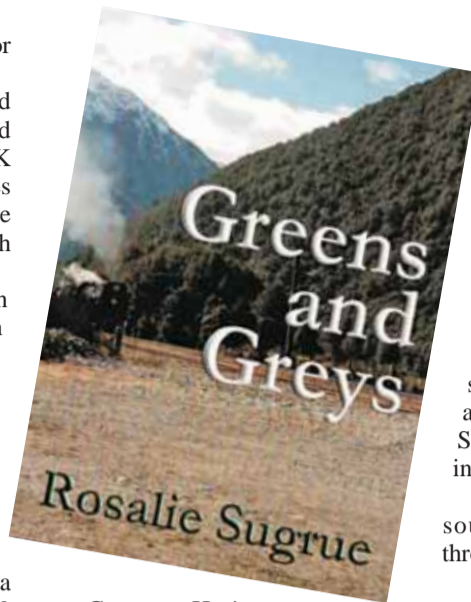
The League of Lilith, written with son Troy, is a "new take on patriarchal society". Full of Wiccan witches and dark desires, it has been described as a thriller with soul. It is a bit raunchy, Rosalie says, partly because its central character, a lecturer on Bible women, uses a sex doll to get her message across.

Sophia and Daughters, is a devotional study that salutes 29 biblical women including Jezebel and the Witch of Endor. "They get bad press but if you dig deeper you'll find wisdom," she says.

Rosalie writes first to entertain but also to make people think.

Does she get any flack? "No," she says sadly. "The publicity would be good for sales."

Despite excellent reviews, her hard back *Greens and Greys* hasn't sold well, so the extended version, *Green Ho!* will appear as an eBook only, for this year's Conference.



help their kids and I can".

On issues of faith and life she believes women are generally better educated thanks to Methodist Women's Fellowships. MWF is well funded and its members travel and are exposed to excellent educators.

She says Men's Fellowships tend to be social groups that lack national and international structures. Rosalie is writing *Seth and Successors*, the sequel to *Sophia and Daughters*, with men in mind.

All Rosalie's work is based on sound scholarship revitalized through dialogue and other devices.

She hopes her books will encourage intergenerational discussion on sensitive issues. "They would make great Christmas presents particularly between mothers and daughters or between preachers and their relations."

She would like Touchstone readers to be more aware of her work: fundraising puzzle books for MWF, Touchstone, and Kids Loving Church have raised thousands of dollars over the years.

Rosalie's books can be bought on line at Philip Garside Publishing or through Epworth Books.

Brave Biblical Women

The Book of Ruth features in this month's Lectionary. Ruth is a heroine celebrated for her devotion and bravery but there are many unsung Biblical women, who did brave things.

Some are even vilified because only part of their story is told. Like Ruth at times, some did things we may not approve of but all listed here were women who showed courage as they struggled to survive in difficult circumstances.

Bible Challenge	Accompanied mother-in-law to an alien land	R _ _ _ _	<i>Rth 1:16</i>
	A midwife who disobeyed Pharaoh	_ U _ _ _	<i>Ex 1:15-20</i>
	A woman friend who confronted Jesus	_ _ _ T _ _	<i>Jn 11:21</i>
	A midwife who lied to Pharaoh	_ _ _ _ H _	<i>Ex 1:15-20</i>
	Petitioned Moses over land rights for women	_ _ _ A _ _ _	<i>Nmb 27:1-4</i>
	A widow willing to travel alone to her homeland	_ _ _ N _ _ _	<i>Rth 1:7-8</i>
	A woman at the crucifixion, Mary	_ _ _ _ D _ _ _	<i>Mtt 27:56</i>
	Married an unknown fugitive (Moses)	_ _ _ _ O _ _ _	<i>Ex 2:21</i>
	A _ who died for her father's honour	_ _ _ _ T _ _	<i>Jdg 11:35-36</i>
	A queen who saved the Jewish people	_ _ _ _ H _ _	<i>Est 8:5-6</i>
Dared disobedience to seek knowledge	_ _ _ E _ _ _	<i>Gen 3:5-6</i>	
Bargained with spies to save her family	_ _ _ R _ _ _	<i>Jsh 6:23</i>	
Stopped trouble caused by husband's rudeness	_ _ B _ _ _ _	<i>1 Sm 25:14</i>	
Devoted to good works and acts of charity	_ _ _ R _ _ _	<i>Ac 9:36</i>	
Helped provide for Jesus and his disciples	_ _ _ A _ _ _	<i>Lk 8:3</i>	
Refused to entertain a drunk king (her husband)	_ _ _ V _ _ _	<i>Est 1:11-12</i>	
Killed the commander of the enemy	_ _ _ E _ _ _	<i>Jdg 4:21</i>	
Fed an ill king, commonly called the ' _ of Endor'	_ _ _ W _ _ _	<i>1 Sm 28:6-24</i>	
A woman who watched the crucifixion	_ _ _ O _ _ _	<i>Mk 16:40</i>	
The mother of Jesus	_ _ _ M _ _ _	<i>Mtt 27:56</i>	
Agreed to marry an unknown cousin	_ _ _ E _ _ _	<i>24:58-59</i>	
She went to the tomb with spices	_ _ _ N _ _ _	<i>Lk 24:10</i>	

Answers: Ruth; Pua; Marthe; Shiphrah; Miriam; Naomi; Magdalene; Zipporah; Daughters; Esther; Eve; Rahab; Abigail; Dorcas; Susanna; Vashai; Jeeli; Witch; Salome; Mary; Rebekah; Joana © RMS



Scrubbers stars were (left to right) Lynn Webster, Bibiana Ogando, Lindsey Brown, Jenny Soden, and Joanne Yan.

On stage for a living wage

Pilgrim Productions has donated all the profit from its latest play to the Living Wage Aotearoa New Zealand campaign.

The amateur theatre company is based at Pitt Street Methodist Church in Auckland and has been in operation for nearly 40 years.

The play *Scrubbers* by Cenarth Fox is a warm and gritty comedy about five cleaning ladies who work at night in a large office complex.

Each woman has a sad story to tell but one woman hopes for a better life away from scrubbing floors. Her dreams affect the others to the extent that their lives are changed dramatically and forever.

Chair of Pilgrim Productions Marion Hines says good theatre holds up a mirror to life. It can lead audiences to reflect on their own lives and life in general.

"We aim for theatre that helps people feel better about themselves, more connected with their community and more hopeful and thoughtful about life. Every year we search for plays that promote these values, and this year, we found *Scrubbers*."

"We hoped audiences would be inspired by the inspiring story of low paid workers who dream of a better life."

The play ran from 12-22 August. Marion says there were good audience numbers for the whole season and the play received a warm response every night.

"We were delighted when final accounts revealed a gift to the Living Wage campaign of \$850."



Idolatry of Blood - Religion for a Post-Modern World

This book shares important truths but in the process managed to irritate me. Let me explain.

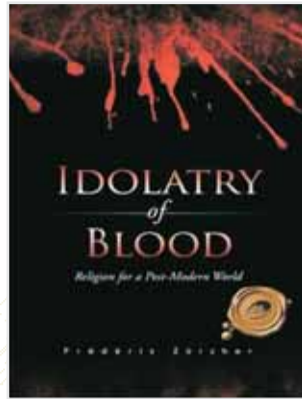
The author's thesis concerns the nature of salvation. Much Protestant theology states that sin separates God and humanity.

God demands payment before restitution but because we humans cannot pay this, Jesus paid instead, taking our punishment on the cross. This is salvation - but not for Frederic.

He sees the idea that God the Father punished God the Son for what we have done as barbaric and illogical. He rails against world religions that believe in a God whose focus is on dealing with bad behaviour to satisfy divine justice.

Rather, he believes God's focus is on transforming the mindset that causes such bad behaviour. This usual mindset is 'love self first' and is the source of most of the world's problems.

Frederic rightly contends that God always forgives and does not need a blood sacrifice. Forgiveness is akin to a



doctor's diagnosis, and thus merely the first step towards salvation (the cure) which is not forgiveness but a heart transformation as we realign our minds to love others before ourselves. This is what Jesus came to demonstrate.

Much of this I agree with but I was needlessly irritated by:

[1] A literalist approach to the Bible, e.g., Jesus will literally return, or Adam and Eve really lived, and were created perfect. Acknowledging that many would agree, it has little bearing on the argument and simply alienates some readers.

[2] The peculiar translations and exegesis, especially of the Beatitudes. These were not needed.

[3] A lack of proof-reading and editing. There are some strange grammatical phrases and at least two mistakes (John's Epistle should be Gospel (p263), and 1 Peter should be 1 John (p317)). The book is too long, and was at times repetitive and a hard grind.

By Frederic Zurcher
2015, Trafford, 368 pages
Reviewer: Peter Taylor

[4] A stress on faith being logical throughout the book. I was begging for an explanation of this much earlier and it ultimately was poorly given.

Frederic's presumes that the Church has gone astray with inexplicable tenets of faith (e.g., God demanding blood or the Trinity) but now he, Frederic, has the perfectly logical truth. He forgets that something can be inexplicable yet logical (like my wife's love for me).

The final two chapters about the Trinity were confusing. Elohim is not the same as Yahweh (both are Hebrew names for God, like God and Lord in English). Yahweh (who for the author is Father) is a 'sliver of God', became the Son of God in Jesus, and so the Father and the Son are the same!

This verges on the illogical for no father is identical to his son. If this idea is true, surely God would have found a less confusing metaphor.

All in all, despite the irritations I am glad I read the book because of the main thesis. However, I would recommend a rewritten version half its size, with someone proof-reading and editing so that it can be heard more effectively.

Stuff I Forget to Tell My Daughter

Michele A'Court has a public image as comedian and writer. More than this she is a person of penetrating insight, clear values, feminist vision and an indestructible cheerfulness. She is also mother to Holly who is the daughter in this title.

Michele speaks and writes a lot about life and relationships. When Holly left home she asked herself if there were things she had forgotten to tell Holly as she set out on life on her own. This book was the result.

It covers a wide range of 'stuff' Michele would want to pass on to Holly, from domestic trivia to issues of life choice.

Written with genuine compassion, gentle humour and the wisdom of experience, it offers no hard-and-fast answers but raises questions that could be explored in conversation.

Overlying all is Michele's commitment to feminism. The book presents a 'herstory' of feminist evolution, beginning with women insisting on their human rights to social and political equality, moving on through the claim for freedom from domestic, occupational and sexual



stereotyping, to recognising and respecting women's right to make their own life choices.

This is no tedious repetition of facts but is told with conviction and humour.

Many of the goals feminists have set out to achieve are now recognised in law and women can be Prime Ministers and High Court judges. So, surely we are now in a post-feminist era where sexism no longer exists?

To take this view, Michele suggests, is akin to asking, 'Now that slavery has been abolished is there any need to be

black?' Being black is part of who you are just as being female is an essential part of being a woman.

As a person, a woman's identity cannot be defined by social expectations, a particular role, her appearance, or how she speaks and acts.

Feminism is opposed to all forms of female stereotyping and insists on a woman's right to equality, choice, independence and dignity. This is not at all the same as a

woman being successful in a man's world a la Margaret Thatcher.

Sexism continues to exist as revealed in language that assumes male pronouns are always correct, that it is acceptable to call women 'girls', that titles indicate the sex of the holder, that honorifics indicate a woman's conjugal status, that expects a wife to adopt her husband's name, or that assigns 'ladies' the role of tea makers and wives the role of cooks, cleaners and child-minders.

In regard to sex, Michele argues persuasively that it should be mutually desired, safe, satisfying, respectful and kind. Women are not objects to be used when and as men desire.

There is much in this book about being self-aware and self-confident and making mature and responsible decisions. The 'stuff' Michele wants to pass on to her daughter is not so much a list of things as a philosophy of life. This includes values that motivate and show respect for the unique identity of every woman.

The book is fun to read and touches on issues upon which it is worthwhile for all - women and men, daughters and sons - to reflect.

By Michele A'Court
2015, HarperCollins, 317 pages
Reviewer: John Meredith

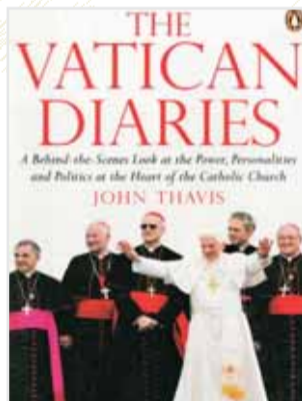
The Vatican Diaries - A Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Power, Personalities and Politics at the Heart of the Catholic Church

John Thavis was chief of the Rome bureau of Catholic News Service. As a journalist he discovered it was always possible to find someone willing to talk and that one of the best ways of finding out what goes on in the Vatican is through informal encounters and back-door conversations.

Vatican culture is swamped in organisational complexity and lack of coordination between a patchwork of departments.

The book tells of an excavation for a new car park that uncovered an ancient cemetery under the Vatican. With lack of clear policy or instructions archaeologists and administrators were soon in conflict over how to proceed. There is no guarantee that even the Pope is always fully aware or informed about what is going on.

Thavis covered the papal election of Benedict XVI in 2005. His sense of humour prompts him to comment that despite the availability of 21st century technology, the election of a pope is announced to the world by smoke signals from a Vatican chimney - black for an inconclusive



ballot, white for a clear majority.

Yet the signal may easily be misread. The tolling of the great bell of St Peter's removes all doubt but because of a breakdown in communication, Pope Benedict was ready to appear on the balcony before the bell tolled.

It is difficult for Vatican journalists to report on the Pope's activities because arrangements are often poorly coordinated. Sometimes the Pope himself has been inadequately briefed for press conferences and the Vatican publicity machine is then left to clarify - and even on occasions modify - papal statements.

Neither are the Pope's own wishes or intentions always communicated clearly within the Vatican. This has led to conflict and disagreement among the hierarchy over matters such as the use of the Latin Mass, ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue.

Thavis touches on Vatican arguments over priestly celibacy, condom use and HIV/AIDS prevention, homosexuality as a risk factor in child abuse and the banning

of ordination for gay men.

He says these issues are often mired in a welter of contradictory statements and expose deep fault lines in the Catholic Church.

In the face of an avalanche of sexual abuse charges the Vatican has appeared to lack a sense of urgency to address the issue. While Pope Benedict spoke firmly, the effect of this was countered by Cardinals who expressed the view that publicity given to sex abuse is an attack on the church.

A distinction is drawn between John Paul II's image as a pope of the people and Benedict's reserved nature. Thavis remarks that towards the end of his papacy Benedict seemed to have become little more than a passive observer of passing events.

An objective and competent writer, Thavis concentrates on recording what he has seen and heard, drawing reasoned conclusions but refraining from judgement.

Although Thavis has not been in a position to comment on changes wrought by Pope Francis, this book provides some fascinating glimpses into a large and complex organisation which remains the largest Christian church in the world today.

By John Thavis
2013, Penguin, 321 pages
Reviewer: John Meredith

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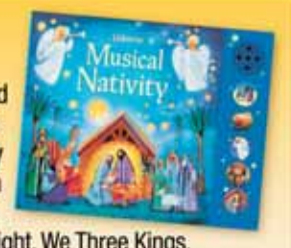
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By Donald Phillipps

GEORGE WARREN 'RICKETY' RUSSELL - 1854 - 1937

RADICAL LIBERAL WITH A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE

In 1919 a book was published in London entitled *The New Heaven*. It was written by a minister, as you might expect.

The *Times* of London described it as a "glowing picture of the future life". It was indeed written by a minister but he was the Minister of Internal Affairs and Public Health in the William Massey government in New Zealand.

The author was one of the few Liberal Party members of that coalition government. More than 40 years earlier he had been a Wesleyan minister. His story makes fascinating reading, though his moment of glory was also his tragedy.

He was George Warren Russell, born in London in 1854, the son of Miriam and Gregory Russell, a bricklayer and builder. The family emigrated to Tasmania, where George was educated at Launceston Grammar School. They moved to New Zealand in 1865.

As a lad George worked for the *Southland News* in Invercargill and later served his apprenticeship as a compositor with the *Evening Post* in Wellington.

He then entered Wesleyan Methodist ministry. He was stationed as a probationer at Gisborne, New Plymouth and Hokitika in the early 1870s. Disagreements with the church over its itinerant system led to his resignation without ordination.

In partnership with his brother George Russell established the *Manawatu Herald*. In 1879 he returned to Hokitika to marry Charlotte Park. He managed the *Manawatu*

Times in Palmerston North and then bought two Waikato newspapers.

In some ways Russell remained a preacher all his life. His 1887 booklet, *Catechism on the Duties of Life*, was later approved for use in state schools as a non-sectarian guide to ethics, morality and civic duty.

He moved to Christchurch in 1889, and became senior partner in a printing firm. In 1898 he took over the newly founded *Spectator*, an illustrated weekly embracing sport, society, literature and politics. Under his outspoken editorship the *Spectator* prospered.

But Russell aspired to a career in politics, and was a Liberal member for Riccarton in 1893. He established a reputation for incisive speaking and independent views - advocating women's rights, a state bank, and a universal pension. At first nicknamed 'Riccarteron Russell' to distinguish him from Captain William Russell of the Hawkes Bay, he was later known as 'Rickety Russell', due to his tenuous hold on the Riccarton seat.

He gathered around him a small group known as the Progressive Liberal Association. In 1896 he tried to form them into a Radical Party to hold the balance of power in the next parliament but lost his seat to William



George Russell

Rolleston in that year's election. He regained the seat in 1899 by just one vote but lost it in 1902.

During the ensuing break he became involved with education in Canterbury.

Russell returned to politics in 1908, winning the Avon seat on the licensing issue. Although a Wesleyan, he opposed prohibition. He retained the seat quite comfortably in 1911, and was considered as a possible Liberal leader when he was chosen for the 1915 Cabinet.

During World War I Russell carried the largest load of administrative responsibilities in the Cabinet. Besides Internal Affairs, he was also minister of Public Health, and of Hospitals and Charitable Aid, among other things. Among his most important wartime work was the organisation of the hospitals at Hanmer and Rotorua for sick and convalescent soldiers.

The great challenge of his ministerial career came late in 1918 with the influenza epidemic. He had to decide whether or not to quarantine the passenger liner *Niagara* when it arrived at Auckland in October 1918. On the advice of his officials he allowed it to dock without quarantine, a decision that was medically correct but politically

disastrous.

When his senior departmental officials went down with influenza, he took charge himself. He set up temporary hospitals and sent army medical units to the worst-affected areas. He set out a comprehensive system of relief that did much to steady public morale.

He persuaded Cabinet to approve a generous pension for epidemic widows, and called for a national conference on town planning, which took place in May 1919.

The epidemic left Russell run down and exhausted. He suffered a backlash of public bitterness over the influenza epidemic, and lost his seat to the Labour candidate. He stood for an Auckland seat, and in 1922 contested Avon again, but was unsuccessful.

After the death of his wife, Charlotte in 1924, Russell retired from public life. In 1927 he married Hilda May Tidey in Wellington, and was still sending letters and articles to the newspapers right up to his death at the age of 83, at Eastbourne, Wellington, in June 1937.

His waspish tongue in opposition won him few friends or allies but he deserves to be remembered as one of New Zealand's most effective wartime cabinet ministers. It's difficult to see his like in Wellington these days. What's happening to our social conscience?

On the road to digital archivesAnne Jackman, Director
Presbyterian Research Centre

PRESBYTERIAN ARCHIVES

I am just back from a conference that focused on digital access to archive collections, and it is worth sharing some ideas and thoughts about what this can mean for the researcher or anyone with an interest in history.

The annual National Digital Forum conference has been running for more than 10 years. It started as a forum for institutions in the GLAM sector (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums). While we all have our own professional associations and gatherings, this event is the one time we can all mix with and learn from those with a broader heritage focus.

When I started in libraries back in the 1980s there was only one way to do your research and that was by doing the hard yards - trawling through books, newspapers, documents, and travelling to where they were housed.

Researchers still do this work, and many feel there is no substitute for examining the original documents. Now, however there is a wealth of opportunity.

You can read and search New

Zealand's historical newspapers on websites such as *Papers Past*, view and download high resolution images from the Alexander Turnbull Library, or extract datasets from various organisations and manipulate them to inform your own research.

The best place to start for local material is Digital New Zealand (digitalnz.org), which acts as a portal to digital content from about 200 partners around the country. They range from such big players as Alexander Turnbull Library to smaller ones such as Nelson Provincial Museum.

Presbyterian Archives is working towards joining this group to make our resources visible, usable, and available to anyone.

The expectation now is for all collections to be online so any institution that doesn't at least have a webpage (and hopefully one that provides access to digital content) becomes invisible and in danger of being overlooked.

Remember too that what is out in the digital world is usually only the tip of the iceberg. Doing research digitally from home will



NZ Army chaplain Rev David Herron conducting a military funeral at Gommecourt, France, July 1918.

give you an overview at best.

There will always be more hiding down through the layers, and often it is only by working with the experts who care for these collections, that their possibilities are uncovered.

If all goes according to plan, the indexes to the Presbyterian Archives will be online and searchable by this time next year. This means our images will be visible to the world.

It will be an exciting time and as a researcher myself, one I look forward to.

For now, however, we do have some image galleries online. The photograph accompanying this article is from our digital Photo Gallery New Zealand at War: 1914-1918.

it shows NZ Army chaplain Rev David Herron conducting a military funeral at a newly dug grave at Gommecourt, France, 26

July 1918, with the burial party of soldiers looking on. This is described in his diary which is also held by the Presbyterian archive.

Archive staff are always happy to advise on what is digital and what is not. Email pcanzarchives@knoxcollege.ac.nz or call 03 473 0777 or check out the Presbyterian Archives website.



O LE SUA-ALOFI MAGALO O LE VAIFOFO I LE VANONOFO Galuega 10:33

O le tala oto'oto a le Tusi Paia o lo'o penitala manino ina ai le va-nononofo o le malo o Roma ma le sosaiete o tagata ua filifili toto'a e mulimuli ia Iesu, e le o se va-nononofo e to'afiamalie.

O se vaitau pogisa, e le mautonu e tumu i le fememea'i mo lea sosaiete fou na totogo a'e i le tafu'e o le satauro o le atali'i o le kamuta.

O le vala'auina e faafesaga'i ma le fili, e le o se mea faigofie, ae atili ai ona faigata pe afai e matua feteena'i lava faamoemoega ma talitonuga. O le valaauina o Peteru e alu e ave le feau ia Konelio le ta'itai au o le malo o Roma, o se valaau ua matua faailoga fesili i le mafaufau ma le talitonuga o Peteru. Aua foi o le vaitau lea o le matamata ita o le malo o Roma i tagata kerisiano.

Atonu e feololo mai le sailiga e Malo Aufa'atasi o Hitila, po o le finauga a Amerika e saili o Osama ma Saddam, nai lo le sailiga e Roma o tagata kerisiano. E saili lava e Roma tagata o lea sosaiete i le fa'asala i se

taimi umi i le falepuipui seia o'o lava i satauro e oti ai.

Peta'i, o le sailiga na ifo mai lagi, o lea lava na fa'ia ai le 'ava i tumutumu mauga o korokota aua o le laau na tu ae gase o loo tautau ai Le Atua, o le satauro lea a le malo o Roma.

Le 'ava na tafe ifo lona sua-alofi e alii taeao ai le feiloaiga a le tulafae o le malo o le Atua o Peteru lea, ma le tulafale o le malo o Roma o Konelio. Le 'ava na fa'ia mai i tumutumu mauga o korokota ma toto lona ata i le tu'ugamau na foa i le papa.

Ua a nei? Ua tupu a'e ai le moemoe ola o Suasamiavaava lea ua fai nei ma taeao fou o le manumalo.

O le mavaega a le Tuifiti Suasamiavaava i lona tuafafine o Sina ma ona uso, "afai oute oti tanu a'u i le valusaga, o mea e tutupu mai ai saili ai lo tatou aiga i Samoa" Ioe le paia o le au-faitau, o le faamanatu a le tomanatuga, o pine matamata tetele ia ma lagisoifua ia o le sailiga a Le Atua i le lalolagi

ina ia faatoilalo feteena'iga o le Lotu ma malo faalelalolagi nei, o loto ma faamoemoega ae maise o talitonuga.

O le sailiga na ifo mai le lagi, na masae ai le manava o le eleele ina ua tanumia ai lo tatou Alii o Iesu Keriso, ua maea ona fa'ataunuina ma ua a'e malo ua toe a'e i lagi.

O le aso ma le taeao nai Kaesareia, o le aso na taumate ai e Peteru, a nei meaane ua seu lauga faleupolu o Kaesareia, peitai o le vagana tatala ma le fetalaiga tu'u i luma na ifo i atimalie e pei o tuamafa filimalae, aua ua malele le alofa ma le finagalo faaola o Le Atua Puleaao, ina ua fesilfafa'i i le sua-alofi, o le 'ava na matimati mai vasa, o le 'ava na tofa i maota ae moena'i i laoa. O le 'ava na fa'apolopolo ma fa'amili i le lagi.

Lele la ua tulolo ai nei laau o le vao ina ua malama i ulu galu le fetu o Tapuitema. O le aso sa taumate i le ete, sa taumate faamea taitai.

Peita'i lele ua i fale o matega, aua ua

logo i le vateatea e pei o le fetalaiga i le alofisa o le Tui Manu'a. Ina ua fa'alava le toto'o o le failauga o le Malo Roma, ina ua logotino matagi lelei ma lelemalie le fa'alelega-fulu a le tulafale a le Atua si toeaina o Peteru.

Faimai Konelio le taitai au o le malo Roma ia Peteru le suli o le malo o le lagi i le latou feiloaiga i lona taeao, "... O lea na ou aauloaina atu ai nisi; ua lelei lava ina ua e maliu mai; o lenei o loo i nei i matou uma lava i luma o Le Atua, e faalogologo atu i mea uma lava ua poloa'i mai ai Le Alii ia te oe..."

Matua manaia le faamanuiaina o le ava a Konelio i lea taeao. Ua moni ai le upu e fai i Vailoa "ua muamua le aso e pei o le fetalaiga ia Tualemoso". Ae leitioa fo'i fai mai toeaina afai e mai vai, magalo ava taute se ipu aua aiga, se 'ava mo faleupolu se toe sualii i le laulau mo le tautalaga...soifua.

Soifua, Paulo Ieli

Va'aiga i le Lotu a Tamaiti i lotoifale o le Sinoti



NA KALOU NI LEWE VUQA EDA CUVA KINA KA QARAVA

By Rev Dr IS Tuwere

Sa toso totolo sara na gauna ka sa levu talega na veisau eda raica ka sotava ena veisiga. Sa ka bibi kina meda kila vinaka na itukutuku se ivakamacala me baleta na Kalou eda goleva, cuva kina ka qarava.

Sa ka bibi oqo ka ni sa levu sara na ivakamacala me baleta na Kalou ena veimatalotu kei na kena vakabauta sa tu e vuravura edaidai. Levu na ivola e volai ka levu talega ko ira ka ra vakadewataka na ivola oqori, kei na kedra ivakamacala.

A volai taumada na iVola Tabu ena vosa vaka-Iperiu. Oqo na vosa ka levu kina na vosa vakaiyaloyalo. Sa qai tarava yani ena kena vakadewataki ki na vosa va-Kirisi me sotava na nodra gadreva na lewe ni vanua ka ra sa lotu ena gauna koya, me tu e ligadra na iVola Tabu. Na vosa oqo na vosa va-Kirisi e vosa ka levu kina na ka vaka-vakasama (abstract thinking).

Oti, sa qai vakadewataki ki na veivosa duidui ni veivanua e vuravura, ka wili kina na noda vosa vaka-Viti ka qarava na cakacaka levu oqo ko Joni Oniti kei Noa edua na turaga ni Viwa ena yabaki 1847.

Na Kalou ena vosa vaka-Iperiu e cavuti me Elohim. E vakadewataki me "Kalou-Lewe-Vuqa" (plural) se 'Kalou Levu'. Sega ni kena ibalebale ni levu na Kalou. Sega! E Kalou levu ga...se vuqa...ka ni sega na vosa vaka-tamata me vakamacalataka rawa na na Kalou, na kena irairai se kena ibulibuli, kei na nona cakacaka.

Qaqa ni masu nei Solomoni na Tui ena dola ni valenilotu ka tara, ka vakarautaka vei koya na kena iyaya ko Tevita na tamana ni bera ni mate: "Ia ena tiko vakaidina li na Kalou e vuravura? Raica ko lomalagi kei lomalagi e cake sara sa sega ni rauti kemuni, ka sa sega dina sara ni rauti kemuni na vale oqo kau sa qai tara" (1 Tui 8: 27).

E vuqa na ka e baleti Koya. Vuqa na sala e muria me cakava se vakayacora

kina na nona inaki me baleti vuravura. Sega ni dua ga...Lewe vuqa era qaravi koya, o ira na 'agilos'....na Jerupimi kei na Serafimi. Na veivosa e tini tiko ena "im" ena vosa vaka-Iperiu e kena ibalebale na 'vuqa' se plural. Na "wai" se (mayim) ena vosa vaka-Iperiu e vuqa...Mai na 'tuturu' ni mata ni wai yadudua ki na uciwai, wasawasa; waidrodro ka batabata vinaka... ki na dobui ena gauna ni draki ca.

Oqo na wai ka cavuti ni yavavala koto kina na Yalo Tabu se Yalo ni Kalou mai na iVakatekivu. "A sa yavavala na Yalo ni Kalou ena dela ni wai" Vakatekivu 1: 2).

Tiko-tawana na Kalou na ibulibuli kecega ni wai - lelevu se lailai, mai liu me yacova na iotioti...na itinitini ni gauna. Meda laiva na "Kalou me Kalou"... Me 'vuqa' me vaka e dusia koto na iVola Tabu. Na tamata me 'tamata'...me goleva na tamata na Kalou oqo, cuva kina ka qaravi Koya vinaka ka sala vata kei koya ena veigauna.

Na Kalou oqo e cavuti ena iVola Tabu ni "sema vinaka" vei iratou na Qase lewe Tolu - Eparama, Aisake kei Jekope. Ni ratou raici yadudua na qase veitamani lewe tolu oqo, e raici rawa ni o Eparama e cere sara.

Kilai ni 'Tama ni Vakabauta'. E yalataka vua na Kalou ni na vakayacori koya me matanitu levu; ena vakarogorogoi na yacana; era na kalougata na lewei vuravura kecega ena vukuna. O Jekope e kilai ni soli vua edua na yaca vou - "Isireli" ka vakayacani kina ko ira na yavusa 'Isireli'.

Basika talega mai vei Jekope na mataqali e 12 ni yavusa o Isireli. Eda raica ni vaka talega edua na delana cere vinaka na bula nei Jekope. O Aisake e sega sara



Ilaitia Tuwere

ni tautauvata kei rau na lewe rua oqori. Edua ka raici ni voleka sara ki na vakayagataki qele kei na susu manumanu, ka levu na ikeli wai e kelua.

Tolu na ka e maroroya vinaka ena nona bula - Cabocabo ni Soro, Vale laca, kei na ikeli wai. Sega ni guilecava vakadua ko Aisake na nodrau lako kei tamana ko Eparama ka laki kaya

na Kalou vei Eparama me vakacabori Aisake na luvena vua ena icabocabo ni soro oya mai Moraia (Vakatekivu 22: 1-13).

Sega ni 'moqe' o Aisake ni sa tauri koya ko tamana me vakacabori vua na Kalou. Na icabocabo ni soro oqo e sega vakadua ni guilecava ko Aisake ena nona bula taucoko.

Sa vanua ni nona masu kei na vakararavi vua na Kalou. Na yalo vinaka kei na yalo dina nei Eparama e sega vakadua ni guilecava. E drodrovi koya na yalo dina oqori ka tauri koya voli ena nona bula taucoko.

E tautauri kina ni mai sotava e vuqa na ka dredre ena loma ni nona vuvale. Eda rogoca na veika dredre ka yacova ko koya ni sa qase mai ena loma ni nona vale sara ga.

Oqori me baleti rau na luvena drua lewe rua - ko Iso kei Jekope. Kena italanoa eda sa dau rogoca wasoma ni vunautaki. Nona vosa vakalougatataki Jekope oti...vakalailai sa lesu mai ko Iso mai veikau. Sa solia oti ko koya na vosa namaki ni veivakalougatataki vei Jekope ka dodonu me soli vei Iso.

Ni toso na gauna ka sa levu sara na veika eda sotava ena veisiga ni noda bula, meda maroroya vinaka na icabocabo ni soro - me vanua ni noda masu kei na noda vakacabori keda kei na noda vuvale vua

na Kalou ena veisiga ni noda bula.

Me tiko na vanua kei na gauna meda gole kina vua na Kalou ena veisiga ni bera ni da gole yani meda laki qarava na noda cakacaka se veitosoyaki.

Na ikarua ni ka ka maroroya vinaka ko Aisake sa ikoya na 'vale laca'. Sa dusia tiko na vale laca na bibi ni noda 'tu vakarau' meda veisau. Meda kakua ni dabeca vakadede edua na vanua ka sa sega ni kune tiko kina na bula vinaka - gunu yaqona vakasivia, yali vakawasoma beka mai vale.

Meda tu vakarau meda goleva na 'bula'. Na ikatolu ni ka ka maroroya vinaka ko Aisake sa ikoya na 'ikeliwai'.

Oqo sa dusia na veika eda sotava se qarava ena veisiga. Me vaka na 'wai' sa yavu levu ni noda bula ena veisiga na wai. Kevaka e sega na wai eda na leqa.

Me maroroi vinaka na bula vakavuvale, nodra susugi na gone, nodra vuli, nodra tuberi ena veika mera tautauri kina ni sa toso na gauna ka da takali yani.

Sa curuma taucoko sara na katuba ni bula eda bula kina na tamata na Kalou ena bula ni luvena ko Jisu Karisito. Sega walega ni curuma, ia sa yaco me tamata na Kalou meda rawata na bula. Nona vosa: Au sa lako mai me rawa vei ira na bula, ia me rawa vakalevu sara" (Joni 10: 10).

Meda bulataka na nona vosa oqo na Kalou ena noda cakacaka ena veisiga. Meda tovolea tikoga meda yaco me 'qele vinaka' me tei kina na sore ni kau ni nona veiliutaki na Kalou ni lewe vuqa ena noda bula lekaleka eke e vuravura.

Nona vosa: "O koya sa kaburaki ena vanua vinaka, sa ikoya oqo sa rogoca na vosa, sa kila na kena ibalebale; a sa vua, ka vua idrau eso, sa ono sagavulu eso, sa tolu sagavulu eso" (Maciu 13: 23). Meda yaco me nona iteitei na Kalou, ka qaravi koya tiko ena yalo marau.

Leo o le Sinoti

THE VOICE OF SINOTI SAMOA

LOIMATA O LE OLIOLI

O le taimi o le seleslega o le taimi lea e fofo'e ese atu ai tiga ma faigata a o puno ma galue e tulimata'i le aso o le seleslega.

O le aso na e suia ai le vaivai i le malos, o le aso e fa'amati'eti'e ai talu mai le feagai ma tauiviga o le soifua su'emalo.

E le gata i lea, o le aso e toe tu ma tepa ai i tua i le alofa ma le agalelei fa'amalamalo o le Atua a o tauivi ma punou ai e galue, ua moni ai le fai Salamo 'o le aso e olioli ma fiafia ai'.

O lagona ia na molimauina i le afiafi o le Aso Lua aso 29 o Setema 2015 i le ASB Convention Centre i Aukilani. Sa fa'atumulia lea vaega o Aukilani i le fa'au'uga a le Iunivesite a Aukilani na fa'au'uga ai se tasi o alo o le Sinoti Samoa le tama'ita'i failauga o le Talalelei ia Koke Leleisi'ua mai le Matagaluga a Papatoetoe.

O le fa'ailoga o le Master in

Education o le susuga ia Koke sa fa'au'uga ai, sa fa'au'uga i lona Master with Second Divison Honours.

Sa va'aia loimata o le olioli e le gata ia Koke a o se ona tina matua ia Lulu Leleisi'ua fa'apea nisi o le Matagaluga sa mafai ona auai i le sauniga o le fa'au'uga.

Se mea ina lelei o le tali mana'o o le fanau, se mea ina matagofie o se fanau sailimalo. E fa'olatotoga le taunu'uga lelei o a latou galuega i le tapuaiga a matua ma aiga ae maise o Matagaluga ma aulotu.

O le afiafi o lea lava aso na vala'au fa'aaloalo ai le tama'ita'i fa'au'uga ma lona tuua i le Matagaluga ae maise o le faifeau ma lona faletua tainane le susuga i le Tausi Itumalo susuga ia Faiva ma Luafalelele ina ia mafuta fa'atasi i se faiga'aiga e momoli ai le fa'afetai i le Atua ona o lona

agalelei. Sa faia leni mafutaga i Three Kings i se Faleaiga.

Matagofie lena afiafi i le mafutaga fiafia e momoli ai lapalapa o malo, o upu na ogatotonugalemu iai le saunoaga a le failotu i le afiafi 'amuia se penitala e maai lona mata' o lagona ia na fa'aleo ai le agaga fa'afetai ona o le agaga finau, agaga loto nu'u, o le agaga i le tapuaiga a matua sa afua ai ona finau ma tauivi fa'amaai atili le mata o le penitala.

Ina ua mae'a le taligasua, ona alo fo'i lea o le tina ia Lulu ma le aiga ali'i i fa'aaloalo aua le aufaigaluega ma le au valaaulia sa potopoto i le afiafi. O le fofoga o le Matagaluga ia Vaimauga sa fai ma sui o le au valaaulia talifaitau i le maau ma le agalelei.

Ua tu'uva'a atu nei le tama'ita'i ia Koke i Ausetalia mo le fa'au'uga o a'oa'oga i le sailiga



o lona PhD in Education.

Talosia ia i le agalelei o le Atua le fa'aamoemoe o le afafine, ia iai lona agalelei i le fa'atamasoaliiga a lea alo o le Sinoti Samoa.

Tu'itu'imaloie ma pati taoto le tina ia Lulu i lona faiva tapua'i, ae

nofo tatalo le aufailotu ma le Sinoti e le gata mo Koke ae fa'apena mo so'o alo o le Sinoti Samoa o lo'o finau ma tausaili e fa'alautele le silafia ma le iloa, e tua iai aiga, sili ai mo le Sinoti ma le Ekalesia.

Paulo Ieli

FakaSepitema 'a Hou'eiki Fafine, Sapate 27 Sepitema 2015

Na'e kamata'aki 'a e Praise & Worship pea tatakia ia 'e he kakai fefine.

Na'e hange ha 'umata 'a e fakalanulanu mai 'a e si'i kau fefine 'enau fakahokohoko 'ofa mo fakamafana 'a e 'aho mahu'inga ni.

Ko e malanga na'e fakahoko 'e he Faifekau Viliami Finau pea tokoni ki he oua 'e he si'i ngaahi vaasi koula faka'ofa 'a e siasi. Fakafeta'i 'oku mo'ui lelei pe 'a e si'i kau toulekeleka 'o hange ko Litea Fiefia mo Vea Maupo Havea. Na'e fakahoko mo e hiva 'a e kakai fefine pea ko e faihiva ko 'Ana Manaolana Paongo, Pulehiva Paelata Pauta.

Na'e fakamafana 'a e ngaahi taliui koua mo'ui 'a e si'i ngaahi fa'e 'o a'u ki he kau finemui. 'Oku fe'unga 'a e tokolahi 'a e kau fefine 'a Wesley, Wellington mo e toko 40.



DISCIPLESHIP 101 (DIS101)

By Mj Taliauli

“Go then and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.”

These are words from the Lord's mouth but do we pay attention to the command that immediately followed? “Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always to the end of the age,” Matthew 28:19-20.

Since the annual youth outreach in July hosted by Vahengangaue Auckland Manukau's Youth (VAM Youth), we held a 'tanumaki' series.

'Tanumaki' means to dig up or prepare the soil so that a plant or tree can become fruitful.

The idea for the tanumaki series was for those whom responded to the altar calls at the outreach, came to Christ for the first time and accepted him into their lives would understand the decision they made and learn about where to from there.

This year was different than previous years, however. Moved by the Holy Spirit, the youth pastor planned a tanumaki series to last for 12 weeks (rather than the usual six weeks) and for the first time young leaders ran one or two sessions each.

So for 12 consecutive weeks, young people from all over Auckland gathered on Tuesday nights at Epsom Methodist Church for two hours and learnt about Christ and the Biblical foundations to building strong disciples.

In Week 1, Rev Saane Langi and her husband Penisimani Langi set the standards and taught on sin and salvation. The young women were separated from the young men, putting into practice raising a strong women's and men's ministry.

Week 2 was led by Neomai Tu'uhoko-Pole and Henry Hogleund, who taught the importance of obedience and lordship. The youth returned home with a strong statement: “If Jesus is not Lord of your all, He is then not Lord at all”.

In Week 3 Henry Hogleund continued with the young men and Lupe Pikula taught the young women on repentance and baptism. The youth were taught, forgiveness and repentance go hand in hand. We simply cannot go to God for forgiveness with the mindset that we don't need to repent.

For Week 4 Latu Fonua and Faka'osi Hausia taught the youth who the Holy Spirit was and his spiritual gifts.

Week 5 saw Latu Fonua and

Penisimani Langi share about spiritual hunger and the vitality of God's Word.

During Week 6 Sifa Pole and Meleseini Taliauli taught about Jesus's view of discipleship and leadership.

In Week 7, the same two taught about spiritual family and church life.

Week 8 was about prayer and worship and that was led by VAM Youth's choir conductor Finau Pole and praise and worship leader Nau Finau.

Finau Pole continued in Week 9 with Mele Tuai. They spoke on faith and hope.

Our prayer ministry leader Lesieli Samiu together with convenor Osaiasi Kupu taught about Biblical Prosperity and Generosity in Week 10.

One of the girls shared something Lesieli quoted “If you get blessed financially, don't increase your standard of living, instead, increase your standard of giving.”

Week 11 was led by Lupe Pikula and Penisimani Langi on evangelism and world missions.

And in our final session (Week 12) our young men and women were together and heard from Siva Sika on resurrection and judgment.

Throughout the series, youth pastors Rev Lute Tu'uhoko and Rev Saane Langi supervised us. It was an encouragement to the youth to know that they are not alone. During some nights, young people would make appointments with Rev Saane seeking prayer and wise counsel.

The numbers of young people attending varied from week to week due to work, school, church and family commitments but we know ministry isn't measured by numbers.

The offer was there, to equipping them with what they needed to know about them being a new creation and part of God's family. The young people came out knowing God is and will always be with them but also they were encouraged to seek a mentor to journey with them and help them in their Christian walk.

To the young men, Men's Night every Monday night at Epsom is always open for fellowship and Bible study. To everyone else, Prayer on Saturday Mornings at Epsom Chapel is open to all.

Thank you to Rev Lute Tu'uhoko, Rev Finau Halaleva, Rev Saane Langi, Penisimani Langi, and to the parents for the huge support! Also thank you to Epsom Church for allowing us to run our Discipleship series on your property. God bless you all. Victory is ours!

TISAIPALE 101 (TIS101)

By Mj Taliauli

“Ko ia ke mou o, 'o ngaohi 'a e ngaahi kakai kotoa pe ko 'eku kau ako, 'i he papitaiso kinautolu 'i he huafa 'o e Tamai, mo e 'Alo, mo e Laumalie Ma'oni'oni.”

Ko e Lea ia na'e folofola mai 'aki 'ehe 'Eiki, ka koe fehu'i, 'oku tau tokanga nai ki he tu'utu'uni ne muimui mai 'i he folofola koia? Ke “ako'i kinautolu ke tauhi 'a e ngaahi me'a kotoa pe kuo u tu'utu'uni atu. Pea ko 'eni, 'oku ou 'iate kimoutolu 'e au 'i he ngaahi 'aho kotoa pe, 'o a'u ki he ngata'anga 'o mamani.” Matiu 28:19-20

Talu 'a e kemi fakata'u 'a e Potungae to'utupu 'a e Vahengangaue 'Okalani Manukau, ne hoko atu ai mo e polokalama tanumaki ('a ia 'oku fa'a anga maheni kiai). 'Oku mou 'osi mea'i pe 'a e 'uhinga 'a e fo'i lea ko e 'tanumaki'; ke teu'i ha kelekele ke tupu lelei mo fua lelei ha 'akau pe ko ha me'a 'e to ki he kelekele.

Ko e polokalama ni, ko e taumu'a ke tokoni'i 'akinautolu ne nau ului 'i he kemi mo kinautolu ne nau fakaafe'i 'a Kalaisi ki he 'enau mo'ui, pea ke nau mahino'i 'a e tu'utu'uni kuo nau fai mo teu'i kinautolu ki he me'a 'oku hanga mai.

Ko e ta'u ni na'e ki'i kehe fakatatau ki he founge ne ngaue 'aki he ngaahi ta'u kuo hili. Ne anga 'ehe Laumalie Ma'oni'oni 'o fai tu'utu'uni ai 'a e Faifekau 'o e Potungae ke fakalele 'a e polokalama tanumaki 'i ha uike 'e 12 ('o 'ikai ko e uike 'e 6 ne anga maheni kiai).

Ne toe vahevahe foki mo e uike 'e 12 ke fakalele 'ehe kau talavou mo e kau finemui 'oku tau pehee ko e kau taki lelei eni ki he kaha'u kenau taki taha fakalele ha efiafi tanumaki 'e taha pe ua nai pea kuo te'eki ke pehe ia ki mu'a. Koia ai, 'i he uike 'e 12 malo, ne fakatahataha mai ai 'a e to'utupu mei he ngaahi tapa kehekehe 'o 'Okalani, efiafi Tusite kotoa pe ki he 'apisiasi Epsom ke ako kia Kalaisi mo e ngaahi tefito'i mo'oni fakafolofola ke langa hake ai 'a e Tisaipale kaukaue.

'I he tanumaki 'uluaki, ne kamata'i ia 'ehe Faifekau Saane Langi mo hono hoa Penisimani Langi talanoa ai ki he angahala mo e fakamo'ui.

Ne fakamavahevahe'i e kau finemui mei he kau talavou - ko e taha pe 'o e ngaahi founge ke fakamo'ui ai 'a e potungae 'a fafine mo e potungae 'a tangata 'i he to'utupu. Uike hono 2 ne tatakia 'e Neomai Pole mo Heneli Hoglund 'aki 'a e ongo kaveinga ko e Talangofua mo e Tauhi ki hoto 'Eiki.

Ne foki 'a e fanau mo e fakakaukau “ka 'ikai Pule 'a Sisu 'i he 'eku me'a kotoa, ta 'oku 'ikai koia ia 'oku Pule ia 'i he 'eku mo'ui”. Ne hoko atu 'ehe ako'i 'e Heneli 'a e kau talavou pea ko Lupe Pikula na'e ne tatakia 'a e kau finemui ki he mahu'inga 'o e Fakatomala mo e Papitaiso Vai.

Pea 'oku 'ikai ke lava 'o fakamavahevahe 'a e fakamolemole mo e fakatomala, 'oku na o fakataha pe. 'I he uike hono 4, ko Latu Fonua mo e Faka'osi Hausia ne na tatakia 'a e tanumaki koia 'i he kaveinga ko e Laumalie Ma'oni'oni mo e ngaahi me'a'ofa 'a e Laumalie Ma'oni'oni. Tanumaki hono 5 ne toe tatakia pe 'e Latu Fonua mo e Penisimani 'o na ako'i ai 'a e fanau ki he mahu'inga 'o e folofola mo e fiekaia fakalaumalie.

'I he vaeua'anga 'o e polokalama tanumaki, ko Sifa Pole mo Meleseini Taliauli ne na tatakia 'a e tanumaki

hono 6 ki he mo'ui faka-tisaipale moe tokotaha taki lelei.

Pea na toe tatakia pe 'a e tanumaki 'i he uike hono 7 'o na ako'i ai 'a e fanau ki he Famili fakalaumalie, mo'ui fakalotu mo e nofo 'a e Siasi.

Tanumaki hono 8 ki he Lotu hufia mo e mo'ui Lotu ne fakahoko ia 'ehe taki faihiva 'o e to'utupu Finau Pole mo e taki Praise and Worship Nau Finau.

'I he uike hono 9 ne tatakia ia 'e Finau Pole mo Mele Tuai 'o na vahevahe ai ki he Tui mo e 'Amanaki.

Ko e taki 'o e komiti Lotu hufia Lesieli Samiu mo e konivina 'Osaiasi Kupu na'a na tatakia 'a e tanumaki hono 10 ki he tu'umalie fakatohitapu mo e mo'ui foaki. Ne vahevahe 'a e taha 'oe kau finemui ne nau ma'u tanumaki 'e 'ikai ngalo 'iai 'a e lea ne akonaki ne lea 'aki 'e Lesieli, “Ka tapuaki'i fakapa'anga koe 'ehe 'Eiki 'o hiki hake ho'o tu'unga fakapa'anga, 'oua vave keke tuli ki he mo'ui tu'umalie, kaihehe keke vave ki he mo'ui foaki”.

Uike hono 11 ne tatakia ia 'e Lupe Pikula mo Penisimani Langi pea koe kaveinga ko e mo'ui faka'evangelio moe ngaue fakamisinale. Pea ko e tanumaki faka'osi lea, ne fakataha'i 'a e kau talavou mo e kau finemui 'o tatakia ia 'e Siva Sika pea na'a ne ako'i ai 'a e to'utupu ki he Toetu'u mo e 'aho Fakamaau.

Lolotonga e ngaahi polokalama tanumaki, ne 'iai pe 'a e ongo Faifekau Lute Tu'uhoko mo Saane Langi 'o na tokanga'i 'a e fanau moe ako ne fakahoko. Ne kau eni ko ha fakalotolahi ki he to'utupu ke nau manatu'i 'oku 'ikai kenau fononga toko taha pe. Ne 'iai e ngaahi efiafi ne faka'ataa ai 'ehe Faifekau 'Ilaisaane Langi ke talanoa tahataha e ni'ih'i 'o e to'utupu mo ia ke kole lotu mo kole tokoni.

Ko e tokolahi 'o e to'utupu ne nau ma'u tanumaki ne feluiliuaki, ne tokolahi e ngaahi efiafi e ni'ih'i pea tokolahi fe'unga pe 'a e ngaahi efiafi e ni'ih'i tu'unga pe 'i he ngaahi mo'ua. Ka 'oku mau 'ilo pau 'oku fua ha Potungae ia 'aki 'a e tokolahi.

Ne 'oatu pe 'a e tokoni ke teu'i kinautolu mo e ngaahi 'ilo ki he 'enau mo'ui fo'ou 'ia Kalaisi pea mo hono famili. Ne 'osi e tanumaki, ne ako 'a e to'utupu ko e 'Otua 'oku ne 'iate kinautolu ma'u pe. Ne 'iai foki mo e fakalotolahi ke nau taki taha lotu mo kumi ha taha kene mentor kinautolu (tangata pe fefine fakahinohino) ke tokoni'i ia 'i he 'ene fononga 'oku ne fai ko e Kalisitiane.

Ki he kau talavou, 'oku kei hoko atu pe 'a e Men's night he efiafi Monite kotoa pe 'i Epsom pea 'oku kei fakaafe'i atu pe ha taha 'oku fie kau mai ki he feohi'anga ko 'eni mo e ako tohitapu 'oku fai ai. Ki he toenga, ko 'etau polokalama lotu hufia 'oku tu'ula hoko peia he hengihengi Tokonaki kotoa pe ki he Chapel 'i Epsom pea 'oku 'ataa eni ki he taha kotoa pe.

'Oatu heni ha fakamalo lahi kia Faifekau Lute Tu'uhoko, Faifekau Finau Halaleva, Faifekau Saane Langi, Penisimani Langi pea mo e si'i ngaahi matu'a 'i ho'omou poupu'i 'a e ngaue 'oku fai 'i he Potungae ni. Fakamalo lahi atu ki he Siasi Epsom 'i ho'omou fa'a faka'ataa ho'omou 'apisiasi ke fai atu kiai 'a e ako faka-tisaipale ka ko e polokalama tanumaki 'a e Potungae. Ke fai tapuekina mai 'e Sihova kimoutolu, kuo tau ma'u 'a e Ikuna!

TALI UI SEPITEMA 2015 SIASI VAINA MO'ONIA

'Oku fakafeta'i 'a e si'i ngaahi fofonga'i fa'e kau tau ma'ae kolosi 'o e Siasi Vaine Mo'onia he lava lelei 'enau tali ui Sepitema ki he 2015.

Ko e fuofua tali ui Sepitema 'eni 'a e ngaahi fa'e 'o e fu'u Vaine mo 'enau faifekau fo'ou Faifekau Siutaisa Tukutau pea na'e taliui ai 'ae kau fefine 'e toko 107 pea poaki ai 'a e toko 17.

Ko e tali ui na'e tatakai pe he sea 'o e katoanga Faifekau Siutaisa Tukutau pea hoko atu ki he Hou'eiki 'oe siasi 'Elenoa Ngataialupe Tupouniua moe hoa Faifekau malolo Lolofi Heimuli. Ko e fakakoloa 'o

e taliui koe lava mai 'a e ongo fa'e ta'u motu'a taha he Siasi 'Amelia Fonua (Ta'u 92) pea mo Toakase Tau (Ta'u 91) 'o na kau he tali ui.

'Oku fiefia 'a e ngaahi fa'e 'o Vaine Mo'onia ke nau tali 'aki honau ui he Kuata Sepitema ni 'a e Tohi Palovepi 31:29,30 "Oku toko lahi 'a e ngaahi 'Ofefine kuo faifita; ka ko koe 'oku ke hulu 'iate kinautolu kotoa... Ko e matamata lelei koe me'a 'e 'ikai ala falala ki ai pea koe hoihoifua koe me'a hamolofia: Ko e fefine 'oku 'apasia kia Sihova, ko 'eni ia 'e fakamalo'ia."



Ngaahi Fa'e Siasi Vaine Mo'onia.



Faifekau Siutaisa Tukutau moe ngaahi Fa'e Siasi Vaine Mo'onia.



Hili 'a e tali ui koe Finau Vakalahi, Ikaafeafe Vae, Faifekau Siutaisa Tukutau, Amelia Fonua, Kaloni Paea, Houeiki Siasi Elenoa Ngataialupe Tupouniua, Toa Pani pea mo Analose Lavulavu.

Ongoongo mei he Kaingalotu Wesley, Wellington

Na'e lava lelei 'a e fuofua fetaulaki (face-to-face) 'a e Kaingalotu Tonga 'o Wesley, Wellington Methodist Parish pea mo e Faifekau Simote Taunga pehe ki hono hoa 'Akesa Taunga 'i he Sapate 20 'o Sepitema 2015. Ko hono tatakai 'a e polokalama mahu'inga ni na'e fakahoko ia 'e he Faifekau Sea Tevita Finau pehe ki he Sekelitali 'o e Vahefonua 'Etuini Talakai. Na'e me'a foki 'i he polokalama ni 'a e hoa 'o e faifekau sea Valeti Finau pea pehe foki kia Faifekau 'Alipate 'Uhila.

Na'e me'a mai 'a e Faifekau Sea mo e Faifekau Simote Taunga, kuo maau e Faifekau 'o e potungoue Viliami Finau, Setuata Lahi Saia Finau Vea mo e Kaingalotu ke talitali e kau folau.

Pehe foki ki he Vaikeli 'a Sekope na'a nau taa e ngaahi fasi ke talitali'aki 'a e kau

folau.

Ne teuteu 'e he Setuata mo e kaingalotu 'a e me'atokoni ke ma'u malohi mei ai 'a e kau folau fakataha mo e kainga pea toki fakahoko 'a e fakataha. Ko e ola 'o e fakataha ko e lotolelei katoa 'a e Kaingalotu 'a Wesley ki he tu'utu'uni kuo fai mai 'e he Komiti Fehikitaki 'a e Konifelenisi ke hoko 'a Faifekau Simote Taunga ko e faifekau 'o Wesley, Wellington pea ke kamata 'i Fepueli 2016.

Ko e tatakai lelei na'e fakahoko 'e he Faifekau Sea pea vave mo pau. 'Oku hiki 'a e faifekau 'o e potungoue Viliami Finau ki Auckland-Manukau 'i he ta'u kaha'u.

Ko e Kaingalotu ni foki 'oku nau lava 'o fakavahenga taimi kakato (full-time stipend 'a e faifekau) pea pehe ki he 'api nofo'anga.



H-M ('Otu mu'a): Loto'aniu, 'Akesa Taunga, Valeti Finau, Tu'ipulotu Finau, Rev Viliami Finau, & Rev 'Alipate 'Uhila. ('Otu mul): 'Apitanga Palu, Rev Tevita Finau, Rev Simote Taunga, Sateki 'Ahio, 'Etuini Talakai, & Solomone Ngauamo.

Tapuaki Sports Camp #2

By Sela Tu'uhoko Pole

On the weekend of the 2nd of October, youth members from various Tongan Methodist churches in Auckland gathered at Willow Park Christian campsite for a weekend of events that tested sportsmanship, group endurance and physical strength.

The weekend began on Friday evening with registration, an opening prayer, and a discussion of rules and regulations. The competition commenced at 8:40 p.m. with basketball. Lawn balls and table tennis ran alongside each other after supper.

A boost session at 10pm was then led by Rev Saane Langi on the race we are inevitably running in our individual spiritual journeys.

"Do you not know that everyone who participates in a race runs but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win," 1 Corinthians 9:24. We were encouraged to run our race without distraction, in all determination and with the goal of winning the prize in heaven.

We continued our games after the boost until 12:30am. Although we were tired from the night's games, there was enough hype to get us anticipating the next couple of days.

Dawn saw Willow Park staff set up for the day's games with a few sleepy-eyed young ones making their

way to breakfast after a few hours of rest.

The first draw began at 7:00 a.m. on Saturday. Breakfast and lunch ran for an hour and a half so the teams could squeeze in their meals when it was convenient (although dinner was at a set time).

The day started with light showers but it eventually cleared up and we had beautiful clear skies.

Team Blessed walked away as the top team. They came first overall and won six sports - netball, female volleyball, female touch rugby, table tennis, mini golf and dodgeball.

Ellerslie Youth won five games - soccer, indoor bowls, male touch rugby, tag rugby and petanque.

Northcote youth won the male volleyball division and the female multisport (which included sprints, swimming, kayaking, and a two km run).

Panmure youth won basketball, New Lynn youth took out male multisport, and Henderson won the mystery event.

An award recognised alongside first place is that for sportsmanship. This award acknowledges the youth that made the effort to not only reflect sportsmanship in behaviour but also in practice (through their interaction with the referees and with others). This award went to the Northcote

youth.

Our boost session for Saturday was led by Afi Leota, pastor for Break Through Manukau. His message highlighted the importance of finding Jesus. Afi's testimony provided realistic examples of how he fought his battles in life, his challenges with losing loved ones and how he was able to heal.

Sunday morning started a little later at around 8:00 a.m. This time was reserved for packing, clean-up and most importantly our last boost session with Nick Tutasi.

Nick's message encouraged the young people attending the camp "to get off the playground and get into the race", Jesus had begun the race and so now we must take this opportunity and jump into our lanes and continue the race.

Praise God for the opportunity of an alter call. We saw up to 40 young people recommit as well as give their lives to Christ.

We would like to acknowledge Willow Park Christian campsite for always accommodating us and giving us a place to play sports and rejuvenate spiritually.

Thank you to all the youth that attended and to the churches that helped fund the weekend. We appreciate all your support.



One competition covered kayaking and teamwork.



The Northcote team awaiting their turn at the multisports challenge.



The Northcote team ready for the Tapuaki Sports Camp.