

Touchstone

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Nau mai rā, Talofa lava, Mālō e lelei, Bula Vinaka and Welcome!

Inside

Rotuman Language Revival**CWS Christmas Appeal****Celebrating our people**

Since the announcement of her appointment to the role of General Secretary Designate MCNZ, in September 2019, Tara Tautari has been shadowing Rev David Bush at meetings throughout the country, absorbing the institutional knowledge that he has amassed over a 42-year-long career in the Church.

In January, Tara took over his seat at the Connexional Office, immersing herself in the day to day governance of MCNZ. At the end of January David officially embarks on his long awaited retirement. We invite Tara to share her first impressions and vision for her new role, sharing her voice and views.

Q) How are you finding life in the South Island and Christchurch specifically?

I have settled into my new home really well. People have been incredibly warm and welcoming. It is a joy to have the opportunity to settle in the South Island for the first time in my life. I am looking forward to exploring the cities and townships, enjoying and discovering people and places in the South Island.

I have moved from living on a farm by the beach in Northland to living in a city. I have done that before so this is no different. It's nice that I am never far away from nature. Last night I turned on my GPS for the Port Hills and I drove via Cashmere to Lyttelton. I saw the sign for Akaroa and I recalled the memory when I was very young of thinking how romantic it was that there was a French settlement in the South Island. When I realised the distance to go (58 minutes) I turned around and drove back to Lyttelton. We drove past Rapaki. As a rangatahi I attended karakia at the Rapaki Church. It is a place of special significance to me.

Change at the top



Tara Tautari.

My son Manaia is about to start at Papanui High School in Year 12 and my daughter Puspa will soon join us. She is planning on studying International Relations at UC.

Q) How are you coping with adapting to your new work role?

The Church is well served by the policy of having a one year transitioning period. With most jobs you are lucky to get even a few weeks shadowing the person leaving. It has been good to get a feel for, and familiarization with, the architecture of the church. Because of the time I have spent attending Synod, Board and committee meetings alongside David over the past year, I have found the transition relatively easy.

Being here in the Connexional Office on a day to day basis is different. Nothing prepares you for what comes across your

desk daily. I can start my day with three or four priorities but then things change. This role encompasses such a broad sweep of tasks role and responsibilities there are always shifting priorities. This can sometimes require a bit of a juggling act.

Q) Have you encountered any challenges so far?

When I was first appointed to the position, many people around the country reached out to me to share their concerns and vision for the Church. I myself also met with many different members to korero about how we viewed the Church, especially as we look ahead to the future. Managing expectation of members in this context is a challenge, especially as we navigate our way through a Covid-19 environment that is always changing. At the same time this is an exciting challenge to have because it takes us out of our comfort zone and dares us to imagine a different way of being Church together.

Q) What is your vision for MCNZ?

My vision for MCNZ is one of a strong, vibrant Church that knows its whakapapa and history and that has a clear understanding of

what it means to be Methodist in Aotearoa, right here, right now. My vision is a Church that truly seeks to serve God in the world, by serving God's people. All God's people. Not only the ones we like, or the ones who look like us, or the ones who we feel comfortable with.

I believe that the Church needs to speak to people in their own lived experience. Too often in the hurly burly of daily life there is great competition of sound, and voices wanting our attention. In this space, what is the Church saying to ensure faith is important? How do we tell our story in ways that can resonate with others, because our message of good news speaks directly to them?

Q) Covid-19 has presented us with many new opportunities to deliver church and ministry - how can we maintain that can-do attitude and

positive spirit as new challenges arise?

What last year taught us and what I observed was that we are resilient and resourceful. More so than we ever knew. How do we carry that resilience and resourcefulness with us as we navigate ourselves in a new and ever changing environment? It wasn't so much the tools but what it tapped into was the strong vein of resilience and resourcefulness; the way people were determined to reach out and make contact with each other. I never heard anyone say "I was part of a church community and I never heard from anyone". We reached out. Whatever happens, contact and shared community of faith continues.

Q) Have you joined a local parish?

I have been intentional about not joining a parish. Every Sunday I have free I visit a different church. Afterwards I participate in refreshments and I korero. I have been to several services already and this gives me an opportunity to find out how things are going. For church and congregations. I hear about issues, concerns and challenges, new developments, things that people are excited about. It gives me a sense of the vibrancy of the worshipping community. I have been welcomed everywhere, as a stranger walking into the doors of the church for the first time. That is wonderful. I was a stranger and welcome. Hospitality was extended to me. It was what I expected but it was so lovely to be on the receiving end. I look forward to that everywhere I go now.

Q) As Rev David Bush nears retirement, are there any pressing question or issues that you want to address?

David is a repository of knowledge. He has spent his whole life in ministry I am really fortunate to be able to tap into that. Recently David, Jill van de Geer and I sat together to discuss an issue. I wonder how many people have had three General Secretaries in one meeting? I am learning from not just one, but two former General Secretaries. I feel I have been blessed as most organisations are not well prepared in passing on institutional knowledge.

I am aware that I stand on the shoulders of those who go before me. The Church is strong in that. It is part of a legacy.



A Lasting Legacy

At the end of January 2021, Rev David Bush retired from his role as General Secretary. Nan Russell, Chair of the Board of Administration, prepared a review of Rev David Bush's career for Conference 2020. Nan's summary of his 42 years of ministry follows.

When you look back on David Bush's career in ministry, you see a rich tapestry of jobs and are inclined to wonder if there are any positions within the Methodist Church that he has not held. And when you add the roles on the International scene, you get a picture of a life answering the call to serve where ever that call has come from. No doubt when David was a probationer in 1979, the idea of such a broad and diverse ministry was not in the front of his mind. It was certainly very different from the small rural church at Rapaura, near Blenheim, which was the first worshipping community he was part of.

Participation in Wesley Church in Blenheim and then at Upper Riccarton in Christchurch, while gaining a science degree at Canterbury University, broadened his experience and the opportunities to exercise leadership.

Ordained in 1980, at his first appointment in Northcote, David and Lynda began what would become a journey of 42 years of service to the Methodist Church. In this appointment David started giving hints as to the style his ministry would have - a youthful and open-minded attitude and a willingness to take risks.

In 1984, David was appointed to Whangaparaoa, where he and Lynda built their own home. David describes this as a rewarding and challenging project.

By the time David moved to Rangiora in 1992, he and Lynda had expanded their family and were now a tribe of five.

David's clear understanding of servant ministry imbues all he does.

These early years of ministry saw David deeply involved in children's

ministry and Boys Brigade, including after school clubs and holiday programmes.

It was while he was stationed in Rangiora that David was appointed to the role of President. This was a difficult time in the Church, as it responded to Conference decisions that sexuality was not a barrier to ministry. David found these times testing and stretching, which he hoped were opportunities for growth within the Church.

These challenging times forged David's leadership - which was still open-minded and predicated by a willingness to take risks. A quiet and humble leader, David navigated these times with grace. He proved he was a courageous leader, able to make the difficult decisions with the hallmark of compassion and humble leadership that was a through-line in his ministry. It could be said it was good training for his future call to the role of General Secretary.

After he completed his term as President and as presbyter in Rangiora, David moved to Richmond / Shirley where he was both the presbyter and the Synod Superintendent. This was a time of significant change and David was a calming voice that helped the congregation and Synod come to terms with the changing face of the Methodist Church.

In each of his roles, David sought to remove some of the bureaucracy to enable and empower people at the local level of the church.

In 2009 David was inducted into the role of

General Secretary, arguably one of the most demanding roles within the Connexion. Part of the preparation for the role was to engage in study at Canterbury University. This prompted David to read more widely, challenging himself with new ideas.

Much of David's career in ministry involved roles in the international church. He has been the MCNZ representative on the Methodist Consultative Council of the Pacific. He has been on the World Methodist Council Steering Committee for two terms, commencing in 2011.

Offering leadership on the international level has been rewarding on many levels for David; he has colleagues and friends literally around the world through these roles.

As General Secretary, David has participated in numerous international forums including the Uniting Church of Australia General Assembly, The Methodist Consultative Council of the Pacific and the Conference of the Methodist Church in Britain.

He is well respected Internationally for the work he has done and continues to do for the WMC.

David's contribution to the Methodist Church of New Zealand is significant and profound. His wise council, comprehensive understanding of the wider church and his humble leadership has been a gift to the church.

To all of these roles, David has brought a concern for wise decision-making and careful process, believing that it is in love and respect for one another that grace and joy is found.

A Pleasure and a Privilege

Wendy Keir has worked as David Bush's personal assistant for the past 10 years. Following the 2011 earthquake, the Connexional Office building was unable to be occupied. The team relocated to a temporary site - a residential property in Ilam that was hastily converted to accommodate the Connexional staff. Wendy says "she shared very cramped quarters with David for six years." At his farewell dinner at Conference Wendy briefly addressed the crowd.

"Working for David has been an absolute pleasure and a privilege. It has been an honour to witness David work with the dedication, commitment and care that he applies to all those he works with and everything he does, even if sometimes it has been at his personal expense.

David has always had an open door. He is approachable, kind, endlessly patient and accommodating to the needs of others. He has been a friend, mentor, a wise and always level-headed influence in the lives of those around him. It absolutely goes without saying that he will be missed."

A Massive Contribution

Rev Jill van de Geer

David Bush contributed greatly to the work of the Methodist Church at Connexional level all of his ministry. I first worked with him when he was a young minister at Whangaparaoa and we served on Trinity College Council together. He went on to serve on many more of the major Boards and Committees and served as Canterbury Synod Superintendent until his appointment as General Secretary in 2008.

David brought to the task intelligence, logical thinking, an excellent understanding of finance, Church Law and Methodist history. David read widely and willingly shared new insights with colleagues and was always willing to acknowledge changes in his thinking. Underpinning all of his ministry, was his strong faith and commitment to people. Pastoral care was always part of everything he undertook. Retirement may bring a change of pace but David's commitment to the work of the Church will continue for as long as he is physically able.

From the Editor

Greetings and welcome to the February edition of Touchstone, the first for 2021. The New Year brings with it many changes and here in Christchurch at the Connexional Office we welcome Rev Tara Tautari as the new General Secretary as we farewell Rev David Bush following his 12 year tenure guiding MCNZ.

I have only worked alongside David for the past two and a half years, but he has always impressed me with his calm, positive and considered approach to every issue, regardless of how big or small. He is intelligent, wise, empathetic, experienced and he embodies the many positive values of Methodism in Aotearoa.

Just a few days before his departure I heard someone



Ady Shannon

In this issue we pay tribute to David and invite Tara to give voice to her first impressions and vision as she takes over her new ministry.

There are changes to the content of *Touchstone* as we farewell some of our regular contributors and welcome new ones. Rev Jan Fogg has decided to discontinue her Ageing Experience column and Rev Dr Betsan Martin is no longer engaged as Public Issues Coordinator. I thank

ask him, "Are you beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel?" His response made me laugh. "That could be a train I think." He will be missed, however I have no doubt that Tara is an excellent replacement and we all look forward to the vision and influence she will bring to the role, the office and the Church.

them both for their regular contributions that have inspired, informed and entertained our readers.

In a new feature called Our People, we celebrate the achievements of members of the Connexion. This month we introduce Russell Lowe who has made a significant contribution to the kiwifruit industry in NZ.

Rev Dr Lynne Frith will be sharing the Reflections contribution column with Rev Dr Susan Thompson and Rev Dr Mary Caygill in the gap left by Rev Andrew Doubleday. And Rev Ian Faulkner will be writing future articles on behalf of the Wesleyan Historical Society (in conjunction with Lynne Macdonald) now that he has replaced Dr Helen Laurenson as WHS President.

I thank all my contributors past, present and new for the variety, knowledge, wisdom and voice they bring to *Touchstone*.

Warm regards, Ady Shannon



Celebrating Success

We acknowledge the recent successes of people with a connection to MCNZ:



Prof Stephen Chambers

Stephen, parish steward for the Christchurch South Methodist Parish, was awarded a Companion of NZ Order of Merit, in the New Year's Honours list, for services to infectious disease research.



Aaron Hendry

Aaron is the Youth Housing team leader for Lifewise, Auckland. He is a Kiwibank Local Hero Medallist for Auckland Tāmaki Makaurau and nominee for the New Zealander of the Year award.



Jeffrey Sanders

Jeffrey, a former Methodist minister and former Director of Wesley Community Action, was awarded a Companion of the Queen's Service for services to social service governance.



Marion Wood and Jim Kebell

Marion has been a long-time supporter of Wesley Community Action, Wellington. Along with co-founder of Commonsense Organics, Jim Kebell, Marion was made a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to sustainable business and the community.



Standing left to right Rev. Andrew Donaldson, David Moore, Elizabeth Hamilton, Laurie Michie, Dianne Claughton and Jill Hawkey. Front: Justine Pilgrim, Jack Murray. Betty Knight.

Order of St Stephen celebrates 70 years

Members of the Order of St Stephen were delighted to have Jack Murray sharing their celebration meeting in Christchurch. Jack, 90, the first young man to offer himself for the Order in 1951, was the first candidate from the Canterbury District and the first of 60 members to serve overseas.

A builder by trade, Jack was the pioneer of 22 tradespeople who served in either the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands or Western Samoa. Ultimately this led to 11 Solomon Islanders and one Tongan becoming members of the Order. It is also noteworthy that five tradesmen members of the Order worked on Methodist properties in Aotearoa New Zealand. The organiser of the celebration, Dianne Claughton (Lloyd) was one of 22 teachers to serve in those mission regions. Dianne Rushton from Morrinsville worked in Fiji.

Justine Pilgrim was one of seven nurses who served overseas under the Order, including Margaret Lavelle from England. These nurses were supported by pharmacist Bernice Birch, Anne Shaw a bacteriologist, and secretarial assistants Heather Gibson (Salmon) and Margaret Wharfe. In 1967 Judith Layton was nursing in Arnhem Land and Patricia Wall was acting as Assistant Matron in Astley House in Auckland. Over three decades three Australians, Elizabeth James, David Neate and

Sharon Hinton worked under the Order in New Zealand.

A common feature of those who served overseas was that they often exceeded the one year without remuneration stipulated by the Order. Elizabeth Hamilton (Peach) cared for the elderly in the Methodist Church in Austria. This eventually led to two Austrian men coming to New Zealand to serve. Reinhold Mueller and Wilfred Mayo worked in the Christchurch Methodist Mission in 1984 and 1989 respectively. Jill Hawkey also worked there in the 1980s and is presently its Executive Director.

Betty Knight (Nelson) worked widely in the Christchurch region out of Riccarton in 1957 in Christian education, recreation and youth work. Rev Andrew Donaldson, David Moore and Laurie Michie represented more than 20 other members of the Order engaged in similar work. This included children's homes, hostels and pastoral work. Those who worked in the Church bookroom and offices for the Order should not be overlooked. Like many whose specific fields of service have been mentioned, their service was far from being confined only to those areas.

Who would have thought that the dream of two men travelling on a steam train during World War II would result in an internationally blessed Order of 139 members? Those present at the celebration felt they were greatly graced by their shared experience.

Build on a Strong Foundation

Gillian Southey

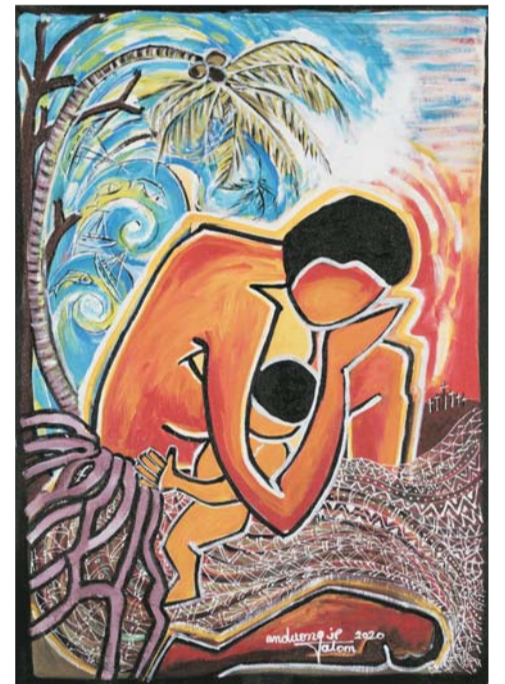
A series of devastating tropical cyclones form the backdrop to this year's World Day of Prayer services on Friday, 5 March, hosted by local organising committees throughout the country. All are welcome.

In the resources for this global event, Vanuatu women share their faith in God's love and address some of the many challenges they face.

Vanuatu is vulnerable to frequent disasters like last year's Cyclone Harold, climate change and now the significant loss of income due to the collapse of tourism with Covid-19. The women face the struggles of providing healthy food for their families, educating their children and, in a growing number of cases, finding employment.

The service and Bible study centre on the story Jesus told about building houses. In a land rocked by earthquake and cyclone, covered in volcanic ash or threatened by rising seas, the decision about where to build can be critical. "Building on a Strong Foundation" offers time for reflection and prayer.

Artist Juliette Pita from Erromango island captures the prayer of the ni-Vanuatu in her painting 'Cyclone Pam II: 13 March 2015'. The image of a mother praying over her child, protected from the large waves by a palm tree held firm by its strong roots, is based



World Day of Prayer 2021 artwork by Juliette Pita, from Vanuatu.

on her personal experience. During the cyclone, Juliette took refuge in a container with her neighbours. When they opened the door the following morning everything had been destroyed except for her studio, a traditional hut made from palm trees. Juliette says God answered their prayers and nature protected them from harm.

Offerings from the services will go to Christian World Service for a new food security programme of the Vanuatu Christian Council, the Bible Society of Vanuatu and the Interchurch Council for Hospital Chaplaincy as well as costs.

For more information contact your local World Day of Prayer organising group or Zella at wdpnz@extra.co.nz

The World Day of Prayer is a global movement of Christian women who come together in prayer and for action in more than 170 countries. Begun in the USA and Canada in the 19th century, it became a global movement in 1927.



Report from President, Rev Andrew Doubleday and Vice President, 'Etuini (Edwin) Talakai.

Looking Back and Forward



Rev Andrew Doubleday.

'Etuini (Edwin) Talakai.

David Bush to Retire

Rev David Bush has completed 12 years as General Secretary though he is still hard at work in the Connexional Office supporting the transition of the role to Rev Tara Tautari, his replacement.

From the moment of his candidature to ministry back in the 1970s, David has been earmarked for leadership within the church. He was President at the relatively tender age of 45, leading the church through one of the most difficult periods in its history.

David has brought that same steady evenness of temperament to the task of General Secretary - encouraging those around him to believe the church is in safe hands.

My experience of David is that he is first and foremost a pastor, and it's his care for people that will be his enduring legacy. Ever the diplomat, David has demonstrated the capacity to gently negotiate people through difficult situations. Ego never seems to get in the way - the people and doing what is required and making sure it's the right thing is always seen to be front and centre with him. While David is clear about the strictures of the Law Book, yet I've experienced in him a Christlike desire to see the best in others where he will seek the way of grace, having at some deep level imbibed the words of the Apostle Paul that "mercy triumphs over judgement."

We wish David and Lynda well as he moves into a much deserved 'retirement.' While he may quietly remove himself from the scene for a while, I'm confident that ultimately the church hasn't seen or heard the last of him. God's richest blessing on you both.

Emerging hopes for coming 2 years Online lectionary based homilies

At heart I'm a preacher - it's what I do and it has become part of who I am. It is key to my role as a pastor. Therefore I'm committed to posting a lectionary gospel based homily on my YouTube channel each week. It will be linked to both the church's website and Facebook page. The aim is three fold.

1. To provide a resource that parishes can use in any way they wish. a) There may be small parishes that struggle to get a preacher for Sunday - use the video. b) There may be preachers that are 'running on the fumes' and want to see what someone else is saying - it could be they discover what they don't want to say. c) It also may be useful for discussion / study groups - at the least something to push against.

2. It keeps me in the discipline of my primary sense of call.
3. It helps me feel like I might be making a useful contribution.

But wait, there's more ... I'm inviting ALL preachers who feel so inclined to do the same thing. I won't be to everyone's taste. There are more scholarly, more considered, more dynamic and more inspirational preachers out there than me. Let your voice be heard. Contact Trudy, our Facebook person, at trudyd@methodist.org.nz or Heather, our website person, at heatherf@methodist.org.nz. This is a standing invitation. It could then provide a range of voices for our people to choose from and be encouraged and enriched by.

Online leadership engagement

I'm also wanting to experiment with posting interviews with other leaders across the church, through the use of Zoom. Generally they'll be one-on-one interviews. Sometimes it will be sharing what's going on in the church - perhaps challenges we face, or joys to be celebrated. If you have something life-giving that the church could benefit from hearing about - give me a call.

Visitability (yes, you read that right)

Vice-President 'Etuini and I have 21 months of our leadership term to run. If you'd like either or both of us to visit, give us a call. It's our desire to encourage and hopefully inspire. We believe in the church and its future. Let's talk about what you think you need and we'll make a plan.

Andrew Doubleday
president@methodist.org.nz

'Etuini Talakai
vicepresident@methodist.org.nz

Outgoing Report from President, Setaita Taumoepeau K Veikune and Vice President, Nicola Teague Grundy

Ex-Presidential Team Address Conference



Setaita Taumoepeau Veikune and Nicola Teague Grundy deliver their farewell speech at Conference 2020.

At Conference 2020, the ex-Presidential team, Rev Setaita Taumoepeau Veikune and Nicola Teague Grundy, jointly addressed delegates. This is an abridged version of their final speech.

Presidency a Call of God

With our warts and all, God saw fit that we lead and mother Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa from Conference 2018 until November 2020. For that we thank God and the church. We believe Presidency is a call of God, a call that we heard and accepted with grateful humility and a desire to work well together as the first two women in this leadership position.

Our theme "Weaving Us Together To Proclaim Life" started with the two of us. We come from different places, cultures, backgrounds, theological perspectives and ways of doing things. We have thoroughly enjoyed our term of Presidency. With God's help and guidance, we have given it our all and done our best. No one can please all the people all the time and this is the case for us.

We have faced challenges that have stretched and taught us along the way. We have had to make some of the hardest decisions we have ever had to make. All the while we have experienced God's presence, guidance and love. We have celebrated victories and God moments beyond our expectations and the norms (whatever norms mean now).

We are two bold, forthright and adventurous women that God - through the Church - decided to put together for a season that has seen the horrendous shooting in Christchurch, our young people protesting for climate action, black lives matter protests and Covid-19. We have also had difficult disciplinary matters seeing the church doing the right thing as we continue to respond to issues of historical abuse. We have spent a lot of time working with Te Taha Māori, and there has been a lot of comment about our bicultural partnership. We shall happily abide by the Te Taha Māori preference that "what happens in Te Taha Māori stays in Te Taha Māori."

Blogging Bigger than Anticipated

We decided to touch base with the breadth of the church via a weekly blog. In our excitement and keenness we thought it would be easy - it had its challenges. However, it was one of the most enjoyable aspects of our work because it allowed us to:

- engage with people around the Connexion
- hear a variety of voices
- connect with the breadth of the church on a weekly basis
- stay grounded.

Neither of us are photographers, however, we have both been given the gift of speech and our first blog topic was on excluded voices. We sent out 93 blogs during our term of office. We thank all the 83 people - young and not so young, presbyters, deacons, lay people, Māori, Pakeha, Tongan, Samoan, Fijian, South African, Zimbabwean, Sri Lankan and

Korean - who have contributed by writing a reflection.

We have seen or had reports of our blogs being used in house groups/study groups, as reflections at other church meetings, on church noticeboards, and distributed with weekly bulletins. The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church told us he has shared them with his churches.

We thank all the parishes and individuals who have ensured the blogs have been circulated far and wide. The blog experience has highlighted the vision and aspiration contained in our theme.

Beyond the Blogs

We have attended many meetings both here and overseas, visited parishes, attended funerals and made pastoral calls and visits. Most of our travel was during 2019. Zoom has become our friend and lifeline this year.

As we said in our final blog reflection, our theme is not about eliminating differences. It is about love. Love is the only thing that can ever overcome division. Over and over Jesus tells us that.

"Love God. Love your neighbour. Love yourself. Love your enemy."

Only in and through love can we be Woven Together in the midst of our differences and hence Proclaim Life and that is what we leave with the current presidential team and the church as we continue to prayerfully work with the Connexion as we journey forward in our respective ministries.

We thank God for our calling and for having guided and empowered us, and we thank the many people who have helped in many different ways.

Special Thanks

There are some people we particularly want to thank.

David: for your patience and understanding. It is true to your nature but we acknowledge with deep appreciation how you have dealt with our excitement, vision and aspirations and yes our tantrums with peace and grace. We thank you for your guidance and support through a very demanding and unsettling period of the church's life. You have eased our load. We wish you well in your retirement and God's blessings.

David's personal assistant Wendy Keir, was also our PA. Wendy and other staff members have always remained calm, loving and forever encouraging.

Our chaplains, Te Aroha Rountree and Rev Jill van der Geer, have travelled this journey with us as part of a team of four diehard women. There have been late nights, robust discussions, times of prayer and reflection. We have always felt their love, pastoral care and wisdom guiding us.

We thank our families and husbands Maika and Peter. They have been our cooks, cleaners, laundry assistants, harshest critics, gentlemen in waiting - and always in love. We have been grateful for the love and encouragement from our children and grandchildren even though we feel we have neglected them over the last two years.

Andrew and Edwin: we will pray for you both every day. We will encourage you and support you and challenge you when we believe it is appropriate. We have your backs. We wish you well and hope that you will have the laughter and joy that we have been blessed with.

God bless you, and God bless Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa.

Ofa atu, nga mihi nui.



HONEST TO GOD

The Cycle of the Christian Year

Fairs and festivals, jubilees and carnivals - in the rhythm of the year there is much to celebrate about being alive. Where entrepreneurs sniff there's a dollar to be made, the feast days loom ever larger, from Valentine's Day to rugby sevens, race days to Halloween, and wine festivals to Christmas.

Of those events, three have grown out of New Zealand's Christian heritage, though for many the link with their religious origins has long been lost. That doesn't stop people from making the most of the fun and expansiveness the festivals can offer, and nor it should.

Enjoying good times, however, can never be "a total mode of the interpreting and living of life" (which is Italian scholar Carlo Della Casa's definition of religion). There is more to life than that. A total mode for the interpreting and living of life must also make room for disappointment and drudgery, poor health and pain, tragedy and grieving, reflection and responsibility, guilt and renewal.

That rounded approach to life is built into the cycle of the Christian year and

all the world's major religions have their parallels. For Christians this month it will be highlighted with Shrove Tuesday on 16 February, followed by Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. Each of these is worth more than a passing glance.

Shrove Tuesday is traditionally the day for pancake races and hijinks preceding the seven weeks of restraint and self-denial leading to Easter. It gets its name because in former times people would confess their failings to a priest on that day and be told what penance they should do: that is, he would "shrive" them. The penitent were said to have been given their shrift - a word still used in the phrase "short shrift" which was originally the abbreviated confession and absolution a prisoner would receive on his way to execution.

So Shrove Tuesday was a time for people to be honest about their shortcomings and to set things to rights. To reinforce their resolve, they were expected to refrain from eating flesh and the products of flesh - eggs, milk, butter and fat - in the weeks until Easter.

Ahead of this self-restraint came the day of indulgence. Lacking refrigerators, housewives would use up all their surplus butter and eggs to make

pancakes for everyone to gorge on during the day's festivities.

In England, Shrove Tuesday became the time for pancake races, a custom going back to 1445 when a housewife busy making pancakes suddenly heard the church bell calling people to confession. So off she dashed to church, still clutching her frying-pan with a pancake sizzling in it.

Ash Wednesday introduces a more sombre mood. In biblical times, wearing sackcloth and putting ashes on one's head was a dramatic way of showing repentance. The early church took up the symbolism in its Day of Ashes, when the priest would burn the palm fronds used the previous Easter to celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem five days before his crucifixion. Mixing the ashes with oil and incense, he would then mark people's foreheads with a cross, signifying that this was Christ's man or woman. The ashes also pointed to their mortality as the priest intoned: "Remember, man is dust, and to dust you shall return."

From time to time people overdo the guilt and self-abasement. But the symbolism of Ash Wednesday, reminding us that life has its downside

but no one needs to be stuck there, can still contribute to a sense of the roundedness of life.

Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, a word that betrays the preoccupation of

the English with the weather. In the northern hemisphere it signals the arrival of spring, when the days start to lengthen (hence "Lent") after winter. In the Christian year it is the period of 40 weekdays of preparation and reflection before Easter Sunday.

The number 40 sets off lots of echoes in the Judaeo-Christian story. The rain that caused Noah's flood went on and on for 40 days and nights, even worse than recent deluges here; Moses fasted 40 days on Mt Sinai before he received the Ten Commandments; the Hebrews who fled from Egypt were 40 years in the wilderness before they reached the promised land; Jesus spent 40 days in the desert before beginning his ministry.

It is important to highlight opportunities for entertainment and fun, and natural to try not to think about the shadow side of life or the benefits of self-discipline unless we have to. Good religion makes room for them all.



Ian Harris

Ian Harris

A R O U N D T H E C O N N E X I O N

Braided – Te Awa Whiria

Susanne Spindler

A day-long Christchurch hui, titled Braided: Te Awa Whiria - Conversations about Spiritual Wellbeing, started with presenter Deirdre Carroll (Ngāi Tahu from Ngāi Tūāhiriri Marae) posing a query to the audience; "We know where to go to get a sticking plaster, but do we know where to go to replenish the unseen spiritual element within us?"

Spiritual diversity and tolerance have a mixed history in Aotearoa New Zealand. During the Waitangi signing of Te Tiriti in 1840, debate on respect for Māori customs and authority became mixed with a dispute among the missionary churches. The French Roman Catholic Bishop, Pompallier, was concerned that the predominance of the Anglican faith amongst the British representatives and missionaries would discourage Māori from adopting Catholicism.

At Pompallier's request Governor Hobson agreed to give the assembled chiefs a guarantee by declaring that "the several faiths of England, of the Wesleyans, of Rome, and also the Māori custom, shall be alike protected by him". Although never actually added to the text of Te Tiriti, this is sometimes referred to as an (unofficial) "fourth article".

Despite these early guarantees of religious freedom, the Tohunga Suppression Act came into effect by 1907, as a part of a wider push for assimilation. Tohunga are traditional healers, spiritual leaders and holders of knowledge of rites,



rongoā, medicinal plants and other important traditional knowledge. Although prosecution was not frequently deployed, the Act had a chilling effect on the passing on of traditional knowledge. It was not repealed until 1962.

Braided represented a deliberate effort in Ōtautahi Christchurch in 2020 to inoculate against the threat of hate and prejudice against different groups, to explore possible pathways to spiritual wellbeing, and to 'make meaning together'. It arose out of a 2018 Women's Spirituality Gathering in Christchurch, which itself was the 30th anniversary of the third National Ecumenical Feminist Women's Conference. Held in Christchurch in 1988, this Conference aimed to share how women's spirituality could empower to transform our lives and our world. The circle grew wider, and the need for *Braided* was spurred on with even greater urgency to have honest and inclusive conversations after the

terrible 2019 mosque shootings.

Postponed twice due to the Covid lockdown and the delayed election, *Braided* was held in Aldersgate in November 2020, bringing together 80 or so participants from a wide variety of backgrounds - representing Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, traditional Māori healing and spirituality, Interfaith ministry, Atheism, Progressive Spirituality, and more.

A panel shared their powerful stories about what spirituality means for them, and its significance:

- John Allen (Interfaith Minister)
- Aparahama Kipa (Tōhunga, Rongoā For You)
- Helene Hakaraia (Traditional Māori healer, Te Kahu Aroha Ki Waitaha)
- Sande Ramage (Spirited NZ and Spirited Crone blog)

- Dr Richard Egan (Dunedin School of Medicine, University of Otago)
- Farid Ahmed (Al-Noor Masjid)

It was also a day of creativity, ukuleles, stories, food, prayer, drawing, sewing and healing. People explored their own stories, common elements and differences, and emerging themes were identified in 'making meaning together'. Small groups then discussed possible pathways forward for building spiritual wellbeing in our city. Feedback was summarized into several key themes that attracted people's interest and energy for follow up, including: creating a network of people out of this day; need for inclusive rituals, including learning to lament pain and suffering; developing ways of ethical spiritual care; and normalising spirituality in the health system.

Over the day an art installation was collectively constructed, created out of recycled materials and items people brought to contribute. The installation was called "A Place of Being", a place where all could feel safe and at home regardless of their faith or background

Braided created an opportunity for people to encounter others with very different world-views, in a spirit of warm acceptance, curiosity and mutual respect. Perhaps the most important outcomes of the day were that people overwhelmingly reported they felt their voice and their own spiritual story was heard, and many participants were keen to remain connected and be part of an ongoing network to promote spiritual wellbeing.

The hui was made possible by a grant from the Ethnic Communities Development Fund.



Lifewise challenges beyond Covid-19

Jo Denvir, Chief Executive, Lifewise

The year 2020 was a tough year for all charities and non-profit organisations. Lockdown challenges notwithstanding, Lifewise has walked alongside some of our most vulnerable people through one of the most transformational periods in history, when life and work has been turned upside down.

For the most part, Lifewise staff have been able to look after people as best as we can, supporting those who experience homelessness into accommodation, providing children and families hurt by the lockdown with the love and attention they deserve, and keeping the hearth in our Merge Cafe warm and our hearts open.

In the middle of this we have been in negotiations with E tū members and unfortunately this has recently become contentious, including strike action by union members and pickets. Sticking points in the negotiations include claims for additional sick and bereavement leave and more fixed guaranteed hours.

Lifewise's homeware model for older persons and people with disabilities is client-driven. It is based on the changing needs of supply and demand for our services. We contract and are funded for workers based on client numbers and therefore require flexibility in working arrangements - it is not a 9:00 am to 5:00 pm business. However, we pay our employees above the living wage and offer fair and reasonable working conditions.

Meanwhile, separately from our negotiations, the unions are calling on the government to double the minimum sick leave entitlement. Unfortunately, the funding model operated by government for these services restricts funding additional leave and places Lifewise in a difficult position. Until we are funded for these additional entitlements, we will not be in a position to pay them.

Lifewise will continue to work with the union in good faith and seeks a constructive outcome to the bargaining. We believe that we have made a fair and reasonable offer to resolve the bargaining, even though we have been unable to meet all the demands of healthcare workers due to financial and contractual constraints.

Through all of this, let's not forget who we are here for: older people and people living with disabilities, many of whom require daily care and assistance from healthcare workers. We have resourced additional workers during the strikes to provide continued care for our clients to ensure their health and safety.

We took the difficult step of issuing lockout notices reluctantly. The bargaining has now been ongoing for over a year and it was necessary to take action to encourage union members to accept the offer we have made and bring some reality to the situation in the interests of the organisation, employees and our clients.

We hope that by the time you read this, a resolution has been reached and we can carry on looking after our clients and each other with love in our hearts.



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Photo shows Philomeno Kinera, Nolene Odgers, Pimmy Takahashi, Matthew Gardner, Robert Hunt and Raziuddin Syed.

An Imam, a Philosopher and a Priest

At Aldersgate, Christchurch, the second Sunday of Advent Peace service included speakers from the Muslim and Buddhist community. Rev Philomeno Kinera reports on an initiative that is part of Aldersgate's inclusive interfaith outreach, an important part of their ministry.

Our communities are being challenged to move beyond boundaries, within which some of us have become very comfortable. If we are to follow Jesus, we too must open ourselves to new ways of being in the world. And we have to face and work through our own cultural and religious prejudices.

Imam Ibrahim Abdelhalim is a former Imam of the Christchurch Linwood Mosque, former Ambassador for Peace and the first Muslim chaplain. He also received the 2019 Spirit of Anne Frank Interfaith Unity Award in

recognition of his spiritual leadership in the aftermath of the March 15 attacks and the Unit of Religions 2019 award by the United Nations. In his presentation, he pointed out that often what leads to Islamophobia is ignorance. He appealed to all to pursue peace and cultivate a better understanding of other religions.

Our second speaker, Robert Hunt - accompanied by Pimmy Takhdada - from the NZ Buddhist Council, gave an insight into the attainment of inner peace and more universally understandable aspects of the teaching and practice of Buddhism. The overall intent was to convey how important it is in Buddha's teaching to cultivate qualities of the heart in a peaceful way - kindness and compassion are to be in balance with mindfulness, insight and peace.

Both speakers focused on how we might get beyond assumptions about each other and build peace together.

Kaitaia Service Popular



On Sunday 13 December, 80 people from Kaitaia and surrounding districts gathered at the Kaitaia Union Parish (Hope Christian Centre) for the annual candlelight Christmas service.

Service leader, Rev Augusten Subhan, was assisted by Father Larry Rustia (Catholic Church), Pastor Paul Garrett (Church

Unlimited), Pastor Owen Wagner (Pukenui Church), and Pastor Peter White (Fairburn's Community Church).

The congregation joined the Oruru Community Church band in singing carols and Christian songs. Margaret Smiley played the organ and Karen Williams played the piano and sang a solo, *O Holy Night*.

The service concluded with the hymn *Silent Night*, and then supper.



Transforming the Kiwifruit Industry

Russell Lowe is a member of the Te Puke/Mount Maunganui parish. An esteemed scientist and NZ kiwifruit breeder, last year saw him receive many awards for his distinguished career.

In June, the Royal NZ Institute of Horticulture (RNZIH) presented Russell with the 2020 Plant Raisers' Award in recognition of his work in breeding Zespri™ SunGold™ kiwifruit.

In September, he was awarded the 2020 Kiwifruit Innovation Award for his contribution to breeding the first commercialized red kiwifruit cultivar. And in December, at the Science NZ Awards for Plant and Food Research Scientists, he was recognized with a lifetime achievement award. Russell, now retired, has spent a 50-year career involved in work that has transformed the kiwifruit industry.

As a student doing a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Canterbury, Russell Lowe worked at an orchard in the Horotane Valley to support his studies. That work gave him a

great appreciation of horticulture. In 1969, he took on a position as a technician on a research orchard in Nelson.

Three years later he was offered a new role as "officer in charge of the orchard" for a 60-acre block of land in Te Puke. The small rural town in the Bay of Plenty has a marketing tagline that says, Goodness Grows Here and is widely regarded as the kiwifruit capital of NZ. It was different in the early 1970s. "The 60-acre block of land was a blank canvas with an orchard house and a pile of posts. At the time kiwi was not a major crop. Citrus and sub tropicals - avocados, feijoas, figs and stone fruit - were all being looked at," Russell says. He started setting up the orchard and putting in kiwifruit blocks. Some of the blocks originally planted are still in production.

In 1987 Russell, his wife Veronica and three children, moved off the orchard to a property in town. "Being on the orchard there is always something to do. I needed a break." Russell still lives on the property, surrounded by an impressive garden planted with apples, figs and roses. "One fifth of an acre is enough for me to look after," he says.



Russell Lowe has made an outstanding contribution to horticulture in New Zealand.

At the age of 65, Russell stepped down to a half-time role at the Crown Research Institute: Plant and Food Research, and 12 years on, officially retired in 2020, just a year after the red kiwifruit cultivar was commercialised. He first started working on developing a red kiwi in 1993. Russell says, "It is difficult to let go. We do crosses with breeds every year but you don't see fruit for two or three years, so I am always interested in what is coming up next."

Russell's wife Veronica died in 2012. An avid gardener with a special interest in roses, she was a National Rose Society judge and a keen grower of roses. Both Veronica and Russell have had

a long involvement with their local Methodist Church. Russell is currently on the property committee and plays the organ for services each month. He admits he is still keeping busy with Plant and Food and is an Honorary Fellow. During Covid lockdown work continued via Zoom meetings.

In presenting the RNZIH award to Russell last year, Zespri Chairman and awards judge Bruce Cameron said Russell "epitomized innovation within the industry, not just with his work on developing the red cultivar but also for his contribution to selecting gold varieties of kiwifruit that have

proven exceptionally popular with consumers all around the world."

Last year, NZ orchards produced a record number of 74 million trays of kiwifruit. Given that the fruit is now available in green, gold and red, the appeal is likely to continue to grow, especially in the Asian market where red is perceived to be a lucky colour and the sweet flesh is popular.

Perhaps surprisingly, given his life-long association with kiwifruit, Russell admits he still "certainly does" eat the fruit. "I help out with assessment and taste tests to meet protocols. I am careful that I don't eat too many in a day."

C A R I N G F O R O U R P E O P L E

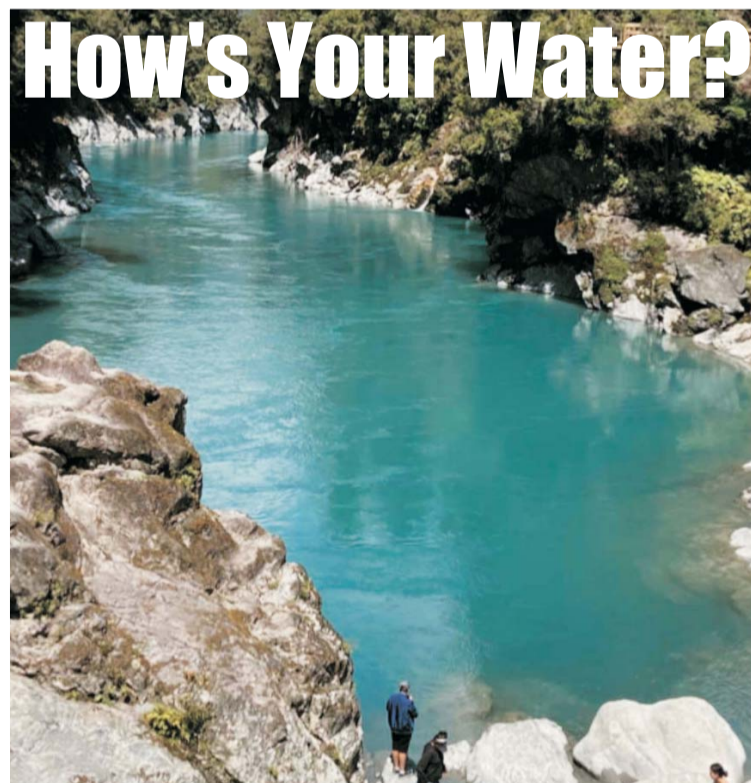
Trudy Downes

This Christmas I delighted in taking time to tour regions of New Zealand and always parking near water. It was beautiful and a prod against complacency.

Many spots we visited were wonderful as always (Gisborne beach, Tokomaru Bay and Hokitika Gorge to name a few), and yet other waters were overrun with water weed or had toxic algae warnings posted beside them.

I couldn't see the Dancing Sands at Waikoropupū Springs (Takaka, South Island) due to the overgrowth of water weed. When once I wanted to jump into the pure clean water, now I don't even want to dip my toes. Yet it is still known for its clarity and freshness. (Jumping into or dipping your toes in Waikoropupū are prohibited activities which I did not do).

The Pakuratahi River at Kaitoke Regional Park (also known as Rivendell from the *Lord of the Rings* movies) has algae warnings and when we got up in the morning another camper's



Hokitika Gorge, January 2021. Gorgeous!

rubbish was left at our front door. Not even the cat wanted to go outside!

It has been 20 years between visits to these places, but I have been wondering... have we been resting on our past glories thinking that because something is wonderful that it will stay that way without effort? Memories

are better than reality? That last year's victories are the way forward for this year and beyond?

It is this thought of resting on past glories that has me most concerned. We have been so busy coping with last year that our victory celebrations are part of our coping mechanisms to

keep us going. But in celebrating our recent victories are we going to use them as an excuse to stop striving for further improvements? Do we feel that because we have done so well, we don't need to strive further?

2020 gave us new experiences: Zoom meetings, mask wearing and lockdown to name a few, but the previous year also had some big lessons for us. Measles outbreaks, shootings, a gas explosion and a volcanic eruption, all of whose lessons continued into 2020. Has 2019 been dwarfed by 2020?

At the end of 2020 WorkSafe concluded their prosecution of the gasfitter and his company that were involved in the 2019 gas explosion. WorkSafe also started their prosecutions of companies and individuals in relation to the fatalities and injuries from the 2019 volcanic eruption at Whakaari.

All these prosecutions relate to having processes in place that are relevant to the risks of the activities, and then carrying out those processes to keep people safe.

Say what you'll do, do what you say.

I don't think the Church is yet in a position of being able to say

what it will do to keep people safe at all its activities. Perhaps we have been resting on past glories of wellness and victories of surviving the first round of Covid-19. We have reduced the severity of some incidents by saying, "Nobody was hurt, they're OK now," or perhaps by not even talking about the incidents.

This year I plan on confronting complacencies and I am looking forward to bringing together all those things that we should be doing. The focus will be on Covid-19 and beyond, incorporating all of the old lessons and getting ready for new lessons.

I don't consider this to be a New Year's resolution. I consider this to be like jumping waves at the beach. You look at each wave with anticipation, sometimes standing on tip toe works, sometimes you turn your back and jump, and other times you get a face full of salt water. All options are learning experiences and mostly great fun!

We can't celebrate the clarity of Waikoropupū Springs if our other waters become unusable.

Ko au te awa, ko te awa ko au. I am the river, the river is me.



Congregation Collaborating with Community

Rev Stephanie Wells

In December, the windows of Kaiapoi Cooperating's Wesley Centre are converted into a community-facing Advent Calendar. The bottom panels of the 24 windows facing the street are first covered in numbers 1-24 and then each day they change to pictures that tell the story of Christmas.

Finally, on Christmas Day the whole central set of windows are used to announce Jesus' birth. This last year we had a baby Jesus. Other years we have had stained-glass or shadow-style nativity scenes.

What makes this annual display special is the community that produces and enjoys it. In October and November, and sometimes into December, church members of all ages make artistic additions to our stock of Advent pictures. They then help "open" the calendar windows and put together the big Christmas Day window. Outside, people walk by and comment, some on social media, about how much they enjoy seeing the calendar evolve. Older people have been known to drive by, just to see the pictures. This year, for a little boy living



The 2020 Christmas Day window display of the Kaiapoi Cooperating's Advent Calendar.

opposite, finding out what new picture was displayed became the highlight of his day.

The Advent Calendar is just one example of the way this congregation is collaborating with each other and the wider community. Initially this activity was a Youth Group initiative but with a small number of young people it was a struggle to make 24+ panels. So parents and senior members of the congregation added their talents. By involving the parents, they became more involved in other Youth Group activities until it had to be renamed Whānau Group. By

including artwork of our older members the entire congregation started claiming the Advent Calendar as theirs rather than a "youth" thing.

Such moves to include and to value everyone, have led to some of the young families joining us, to some of the youth taking part in worship services and to some volunteering to help. Our mainly older congregation has been able to practise hospitality and acceptance as young ones have built tall towers in church services and learnt to accompany songs. We practise openness as strange new ways of worshipping are developed



to accommodate different ages. And the amazing thing is, by stretching to be open to younger people, we have also pulled in their grandparents and others.

"Intergenerational" is the trendy word for what is happening here, where all ages are together. But, really, it is just learning to truly be a family of God. Like our own families, there are all ages. Some of the family we see a lot - some not. Sometimes we argue, sometimes we don't like each other, some of us are just plain weird - but through it all - we are family.

Our Advent Calendar is a public sign of the intergenerational movement happening within us. All ages produce the art and all ages can appreciate it, at whatever level. In a world which so often separates ages, this a powerful countercultural witness.

Adapting to Community and Isolation

Rev Dr Lynne Frith

During 2020, as a consequence of the coronavirus pandemic, social isolation was the order of the day - and still is in many parts of the world as governments implement various kinds of lockdown.

Some friends and colleagues who identify themselves as introverts, found the social isolation enforced by lockdown was a gift. They could unashamedly and comfortably communicate by phone, email, social media, and relish the freedom from pressure to be sociable.

Spare a thought for the extroverts, those people who have their energy and flagging spirits renewed by being with people. Those who can tolerate only so much silence and aloneness. The ones who thrive in group settings. For them lockdown can be a serious challenge to mental and spiritual wellbeing and sense of self, accentuated if they live alone. As one such person, I found our relatively brief duration of lockdown de-energising and dispiriting. The weekly trip to the supermarket to pick up click and collect groceries, with the minimal human contact it provided, became essential to my wellbeing.

Technophobes like me were forced to learn some rudimentary skills in order to get our work done, and remain connected with people. I am in awe of the skills of those who used social media and other platforms to bring "church" into people's homes. This both raised the bar for what it was possible to do for a Sunday Service of Worship, for example, and sometimes evoked a sense of inadequacy among those not technologically gifted or resourced. There were more opportunities for online education and professional development than it was possible to utilize.

As the end of 2020 approached, there were volumes of comment and reflection on the ways in which people had adapted to working from home, and the use of digital media to connect. Predictions are that this is the way

of the future. Churches have been quick to come out on the side of conducting meetings and events on a digital platform whenever possible, mainly citing cost cutting and timesaving benefits. A few brave commentators in the public sphere have cautioned against an uncritical wholesale abandonment of in-person meetings and conferences, and the subsequent diminution of human community and creativity.

What about the all-important conversations and connections that occur in meal breaks, departure lounges, and the before and after meeting catchups, they ask. Not to mention the difficulty of sensing the mood of the whole group when only one person is on screen at a time.

What about the people who are already socially isolated from their peers by geographical location, for whom technology may be a godsend, but no complete substitute for interpersonal engagement? Or those whose living arrangements do not provide sufficient space or freedom from interruption necessary to participate fully in a Zoom meeting? Or those who live alone and depend on community contact for their interpersonal connection?

As we as a church imagine and plan for a post-pandemic society, even while continuing to be prepared for the possibility of further lockdowns, there is no doubt that technology will be a vital component in sustaining our common life. However, let us not forget that the church is made up of real time living breathing human beings, with different personalities, spiritual, emotional and social needs. The pandemic has brought home to us that our lives depend on how we both gather in community and how we sustain ourselves in isolation.

Whatever the post-pandemic normal turns out to be, my plea is for creative and imaginative use of our resources to enable styles of common life that are inclusive, welcoming, and accessible to all, regardless of age or ability.

Who Would Be a Preacher?

Rev Peter Taylor

Looking at lectionary readings, trying to find an overarching theme in February should have been tricky, but somehow was not.

Take 7 Feb: it has its usual four lectionary readings, four more to mark Waitangi Day and another five for a Covenant Service to begin a new Methodist year.

February is further complicated by the arrival of Lent on 17 Feb with its usual switch of liturgical gears. We even have the confusion of Mark's account of the Transfiguration occurring on 14 and 28 February!

We are introduced this month to a God who was behind all of creation, including the whole of humanity, yet chose particular people like Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Elijah and Elisha, and with them the nation of Israel, not because Israel was special (in fact Israel was said to be the smallest nation - see Deuteronomy 7.7-11 [the alternative First Testament reading for the Covenant]) - but as the first fruits of a global human relationship with God. This relationship with Israel is sealed with a covenant - note the covenants in Noah's story on 21 Feb and the dealings with Abraham and Sarah on 28 Feb, as well as the obvious Covenant on 7 Feb. In these covenants God declares what will be done for the people and what response the people are meant to make. This God is not satisfied in being a mere acquaintance but seeks to become a best friend, transforming individuals and their society.

There are two ways God wants to be a best friend: the first involves alerting us to times when the covenant is breached by a reluctant or wilful humanity and with it God's genuine desire for a new start, something called for by prophets, Jesus and early Christians. The second is demonstrated by the life of Jesus whose entry onto the earthly scene we celebrated with the incarnation at Christmas. This life, which those of faith are called to follow, leads to this desired transformation.

In our preaching we can apply this talk of relationships to church life, the life of a wider society and creation. We can examine where humanity lets God down, the possibility of a renewed relationship to God and a sense of hopeful excitement as we allow God's Kingdom to change every aspect of life.

Of course it is not hard to see some parallel in this relationship with that commemorated on Waitangi Day between the signing partners - a relationship sadly marked more by breaches. The Treaty has at its heart a desire for a transformed society and it would be worth exploring and contrasting these two covenants not just on Waitangi Day but possibly as a Lenten theme.

There is a further parallel for parishes with a new presbyter and again that new relationship can be celebrated throughout the first few weeks and not just at the induction, then forgotten about.

Here is rich fare for a preacher.

So who would be a preacher? I for one!



A Tribute to Rev David Bush

I pay tribute to Rev David Bush for his service and contribution to many parts of the Church during his tenure as General Secretary for the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa.



Ruby Manukia-Schaumkel,
Legal Advisor MCNZ.

trustee company of the Methodist Church of New Zealand Supernumerary Fund.

David's experience and extensive knowledge of the Church's processes, practices and functions has been invaluable.

We have worked on a range of matters, including some challenging situations. Those collaborations have taught us patience and resilience and we have worked well together for the common good.

David is a man of respect and dignity. He is kind, patient and understanding.

He lived to:

*"Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,*

I have known David well over the years from our involvement on the Law Revision Committee, the Board of Administration and Superannuation Trustee Limited, the Presidential Committee of Advice and Conference. It has been an honour working with him in my capacity as Legal Advisor, Convenor of Law Revision, member of the Board of Administration and Director of the



David Bush and Ruby Manukia-Schaumkel at the new Connexional site, Christchurch.

*At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can."*

John Wesley

I wish David well in retirement, knowing that Lynda and the children and grandchildren will enjoy seeing more of him.

I bid you well with this final quote by John Wesley:

"What one generation tolerates, the next generation will embrace."

Farewell my friend, enjoy your retirement!

Nga mihi nui

METHODIST ALLIANCE

Using our 2020 vision to create a better 2021

Carol Barron, National Coordinator Methodist Alliance

Looking back on the year that was, with our 2020 vision, we need to take the time to reflect and consider what is really important to us as individuals, as parishes, as Missions and as a Connexional Church.

What we learnt in 2020 about privilege and inequity, grief and anger, kindness and humanity, compassion and respect, hope and collaboration, and about what was really important to us, should shape how we respond.

One of our strengths is our Connexionalism and our ability to pool our resources to respond to meet the emerging needs in our communities. We, as Methodists, have a strong tradition of social justice and 2021 presents us with an ideal opportunity to consider how we should respond. Our 2020 vision will help us to do this.

I agree with the commentators who say we are facing a K-shaped recovery from the recession brought on by Covid-19. The K-shaped recovery means that different parts of the economy recover at starkly different rates or at different times. The recovery is not uniform across all sectors, industries or people. Households from the higher socio-economic groups may have had their income protected and even seen a rise in the value of their assets, while the working poor have got poorer with job losses and rising

rents. Those receiving benefits have also suffered the indignity of seeing the creation of a two-tiered benefit system and finding themselves on the lower tier.

I suggest we go into 2021 with a blank slate and instead of doing things the way we have always done them, how about we use our 2020 vision to evaluate what we are doing? I know some churches where people are burnt out and we need to ask ourselves if we are sacrificing our families and opportunities to develop relationships in our communities because of the activities we have set in stone in our church calendar. If we are courageous enough to focus on doing a few things well, what would those few things be? If we were starting a new church, what would it be doing?

At Conference 2020 President Andrew Doubleday challenged us "to look into our own hands" and recognise the skills and resources Te Haahi Weteriana has and to use these to create a better world. Our Wesleyan tradition marries "Word" and "Deed" and our wider gospel imperative to be the "Good News to the Poor."

Who are the poor today?

In September 2020 there were 21,415 households on the social housing register. This has increased 53 percent since last year when there were 13,996 households on the register. These numbers represent only the people who have been accepted by MSD for public housing and do not include everyone who is experiencing

homelessness like young people who are couch-surfing with friends because it is not safe for them to be at home.

Our Methodist Missions are providing a wide range of responses to the housing crisis and many also work in collaboration with other organisations to meet this seemingly ever-increasing need. But perhaps with our 2020 vision, we need to coordinate on a national scale, using our Connexional power and resources. As members of Te Haahi Weteriana and representatives of Jesus, what can we do on a national scale to address this most pressing need in society?

The housing crisis may seem too big for us to make any significant change but even small incremental changes can lead to substantive changes. And it is a significant change in the life of one person or one family that is housed that has experienced homelessness for months or years.

We are closely connected with our communities at the flax root level. We know what they need. We have rich resources that we can use to meet these needs.

I challenge you to use your 2020 vision and consider how we can make a tangible difference in the lives of people in 2021? How can you, your Parish, your Synod, the Connexional Committee you serve on, your Mission, bring the Good News to the Poor? What would a better future for your community look like? What is our role in making this come to reality?

As a Connexional church we have great advantages and we need to ensure that we use these to enable us to do all the good we can.



Here is the Te Reo version of the above...does not look as pretty.

**Tāu e mahi ai, mahia i runga i te tika
Mahia i runga i te kaha ōu
Mahia i runga i te āhei ōu
I ngā wāhi me ngā wā katoa e taea ana
Tae atu ki ngā tāngata katoa
I te roa ōu i tēnei ao**
- JOHN WESLEY



**METHODIST
ALLIANCE**
NGA PURAPURA WETERIANA

If your parish is engaged in community or social service work, you should join the Methodist Alliance.

The Alliance supports the work of its members by leveraging collective skills and experience, providing resources and information, and raising the profile of the work you do.

If you would like to join the Alliance please contact the National Coordinator Carol Barron:

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Preface: Keita Hotere

Healing comes from a rediscovery of our own collective ecological awareness. This is the message Enabling Ministry Team member Iriana Rountree shares in her reflective contribution. She joins a growing number who promote the importance of returning to Māori traditional cultural practices to help restore health and balance in life.

Iriana re-engages us with Rongoā medicinal practices and resources - life-giving they bring healing and sustain our wellbeing. She shares a karakia gifted to her from Rongoā Māori practitioner Tohe Ashby. Her reflection emphasizes our resilience to the psychological damage caused by Covid-19 and reminds us that nature and her bounty are a treasure not to be overindulged or exploited. In an age of self-help gurus, disruptive trade markets, government restrictions, Rongoā presents an alternative to the dominant narrative that has prevailed.

In his time Jesus's healing ministry presented alternative living, disruptive living, a rediscovered living. It went to the heart of Jewish life, striking a chord at the deep social unrest, social exclusion, and the grave impact left from disconnection with God's creation and the redemptive power of change.

Restoring Health and Wellbeing



He Kai Rongoā

Reflection: Iriana Rountree

*Karakia Timatanga
Ti ara ra te tipua
Ti ara ra te tawhito
Ti ara ra te kahui o nga Atua
Ti ara ra tawhiwhi atu ki a Tane
Tane te whakapiripiri
Tane te wananga
Tane te waiora
Tane nui a rangi
Taonga ki te whei ao
Taonga ki te ao marama
Haumie hui e taiki e*

The karakia refers to the start of life from a seed, embraced by all the Gods, mothered within Tane's ahua, given life from the veil of the spiritual being to our present time. With endless life forms of Rongoā from food, water to technology and advanced communication styles in all languages. This occurs for us as Māori

in all aspects that make us whole. We value our whenua for both life and death. She provides us with food and water for survival and to nurture our land. We are being more vigilant towards our medical resources and returning to our Rongoā practices instead of Westernised medicine. This leaves choices to also enable both practices, new and old.

We have all been affected by Covid 19 in one way or another. The ongoing development of Covid-19 has brought about a global acknowledgment of our humanity and just how fragile life is. Still, there are some who will yield power to suit their own needs driving exploitation of international trade worldwide.

"Judah has gone into exile with suffering and servitude." Along with Covid, I have experienced major health adjustments to suit the journey of Rongoā, Te Ao Māori, and Haahi. In the karakia, I feel that it reflects our foundation of cultural beliefs

as Māori, to our land and each other. Humans try to balance their current living needs both here - te ao marama and in the veil - te whei ao. e.g., housing, food, water, and the spiritual connection with our whenua.

We have been in exile with our health options and practicing of Rongoā Māori. For many, the social adjustments in our lives have leaned towards the edge. People find themselves struggling with lifestyle changes, loss of jobs, loss of income, overcrowded housing, lack of housing. These lifestyle changes have pushed our people to extreme measures, in exile. There has been an increase in people finding coping mechanisms to deal with their mental health issues and self-worth. The Covid restrictions placed upon us, the physical distancing and social isolation has provided less protection for many. The increase in alternative communications allows greater technological connectivity through the internet; Zoom, online shopping delivered to your doorstep, Facebook, Messenger, and more fulfilling the social need to be part of a family.

On the upside, exile has also offered the opportunity of our own Haahi greater participation for young and old to attend online Karakia, Hui and catch up to say "Kia ora!" We have a chance to reflect on what our lives mean - socially, economically, politically. I have found that these three factors have been a barometer to measure the impact upon our spiritual wellbeing. We still give ourselves hope, a glimmer of light at the end for the new beginning, because with death comes life.

N Z M E T H O D I S T W O M E N F E L L O W S H I P



Siniva Vaitohi,
President
NZMWF



NZ Methodist Women Fellowship Proclaim Life & Hope with what's in your hand



As we open the curtain on our Methodist Women's Fellowship work for 2021, I pray for grace for the journey. For many 2020 was a long and trying year, yet two words I wish to offer us for this new year are Life and Hope.

What are our hopes for our lives and for other women's fellowships in a year of a pandemic world? How can we work together to realise 'life and hope' and proclaim it across cultures, regions, races, and religions or faith groups in a time of disturbance and uncertainty? As we seek answers, we are encouraged by the Living Words of God whose grace is sufficient for us all for his strength is made perfect in our weaknesses (2 Corinthians 12:9) and the Lord is our source of life and hope! "Do not grieve for the joy of the Lord is your strength," Nehemiah 8:10.

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Isaiah 41:10; The Lord is my strength and my song; he has given me victory" Exodus 15:2.

It is important that we become beacons of life and hope when all else seems hopeless or lifeless. The Methodist Church of New Zealand's Presidential theme "What's in your hand?" prompts us to think in this time of restrictions and isolations about how we can proclaim life and hope, with what is in our hands! Covid-19 has brought changes to many facets of our lives. This includes changes in what we used to see as the norms for many of our traditions and cultural practices whether it be private or public life, micro or macro, social, religious, economic, educational, environmental, political, and more - changes that affect the smallest family unit of our society up to the largest global organisations. The impact of these changes introduced by

Covid-19 to the global community have both negative and positive effects. One of the obvious swift changes includes the adaptation of people, both young and old, to the increased use of technology and social media.

This prompts us as leaders to think about how we can make use of the available and accessible means of communication - something that is in our hands - to proclaim life and hope. I understand that there are some people who do not have access to using technological devices; maybe that's an area where those of us in the MWF can reach out and teach others, how to access and use technology.

As a national organisation, we can make use of the opportunity that technology has provided us to connect ourselves regularly in a way that saves us time and money. It is my prayer and hope that we are taking time to retreat and refresh as MWF women even as we work towards 'life and hope with what's in your hand' in our collective Districts and Fellowships spaces.

I invite our members and anyone who is interested in women's fellowship ministry to the following updates from our National Executive:

- MWF and PWANZ partnership Special Projects 2020-2021 The St John's Ambulance and The Palestinian Women and Children
- NZMWF Convention (Thursday 14 - Sunday 17 October 2021).
- Tree of Life (download from the World Federation WFMUCW website)
- Thursday in Black campaigns

I leave you with the following words from Paul the Apostle's Epistle to the Romans "For I am certain that nothing can separate us from his love: neither death nor life, neither angels nor other heavenly rulers or powers, neither the present nor the future, neither the world above nor the world below - there is nothing in all creation that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God which is ours through Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8: 38).



The Assault on the Capitol of the United States

On 11 January 2021, five days after the unprecedented attack on the US Capitol, Rev Dr Kimberly Reisman, Executive Director of World Methodist Evangelism, responded to the situation in her regular prayer correspondence with the World Methodist family. We reproduce her report with her permission.

Each Thursday morning, at 8:00am (Eastern Time), I lead the Wesleyan Methodist family across the globe in a time of prayer on Facebook Live. We focus on the needs of our world and on the continuing Covid crisis. The events at the US Capitol on Wednesday, January 6, made our Thursday morning prayer time the next day particularly difficult, yet deeply meaningful as people all over the world joined in prayers for the United States.

Like many others I was horrified by what I saw unfold. It was frightening. It was ugly. Like many others around the world, it was something I never dreamed I would see happen in the United States - especially given that it was incited and encouraged by a sitting president. The stark contrast between the response of the police and military to this event, and the response of the police and military to the protests for racial justice in June continues to weigh heavily on me. My concern for the heart

and soul of my country continues to grow with each photo and video I see and each social media post I read, because they offer dramatic evidence of how radicalized American politics has become, and how opposed to the democratic values of our republic many people actually are.

Christian faith was born in the midst of political turmoil. Jesus' birth, ministry, death, and resurrection, all took place in the midst of political struggle. Christians all over the world and throughout the centuries have lived out their faith in the midst of civil unrest, oppression, and persecution. We should never be surprised that as followers of Jesus, we are called to live out our faith in the midst of political turmoil.

And yet, living out our faith in the midst of political turmoil is not the same as what we saw last week where people proclaiming to be Christians aligned themselves with political ideology, lifted the banner of violence and hate, and attempted to hide their overarching commitment to nationalism behind the name of Jesus.



Kimberly Reisman, Executive Director of World Methodist Evangelism.

The fact that the assault on the US Capitol occurred on January 6 - the Christian Holy Day of Epiphany - is telling. Epiphany marks the arrival of the wise men to worship the Christ child. It is a day of revelation. For the magi, it revealed both the power of God and the power of empire. In the Christ child, they recognized that God was doing something

miraculous and world-changing and they fell down and worshipped. In Herod, they recognized that the jealous desire for power is dangerous and deadly, so they went home by another way.

As we seek to follow Jesus, especially at this particular moment, what will we allow the events of Epiphany 2021 (and all that led up to it) reveal to us about the power of God and the power of empire? Are we willing to see the sin and the danger of mistaking the one for the other? Will we fall down and worship when it would be better to return home by another way?

In our social media fuelled world of outrage, vitriol, and divisive sound bites,

it is imperative that we Christians remember that Jesus came not to provide an echo of culture (any culture), but an alternative to it. His mission was not division but reconciliation. Reconciling humans to each other and the entire world to God. If we are not part of that process of reconciliation, if our words and our actions tear down rather than build up, if we raise the placards of our political ideologies rather than shouldering the cross of Christ, then our faith will have become a dark shadow of itself and we will have mistakenly put our hope in a nation rather than in God, whose promise is that his kingdom will come to all the nations of the earth.

The days ahead will not be easy. Our divisions are deep and the chasm that separates many of us is wide. So, I am following the guidance of the prophet Joel:

The Lord says, "Turn to me now, while there is time!

Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning.

Don't tear your clothing in your grief; instead tear your hearts."

Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful.

He is not easily angered.

He is filled with kindness and is eager not to punish you.

Joel 2:12-13

Tuvaluan Delegation visit Connexional Office



On Wednesday 9 December 2020 a delegation from the Ekalesia Kelsiano Tuvalu (The Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu) visited the Connexional Office to discuss areas of mutual collaboration and ecumenical solidarity.

Photo shows (left to right) Paani Laupepa, Rev David Bush, Rev Teatu Fusi (President), Rev Tara Tautari, President MCNZ Rev Andrew Doubleday and Elder Iapesa Vave.



Boost for Rotuman Language

Rotuma, a Fijian dependency consisting of Rotuma Island and nearby islets, is home to a large and unique indigenous ethnic group which constitutes a recognisable minority within the population of Fiji, known as Rotumans. Like many indigenous languages, Rotuman is considered an endangered language.

In December 2020, Ingrid Leary, newly elected Labour candidate for Taieri (Dunedin), delivered her parliamentary oath of allegiance in Rotuman, in honour of the ancestry of two of her three children. Their father, Leary's ex-partner, Frank Atu is Rotuman. Over the years the couple have been active and supportive members of Rotuman communities, both in New Zealand and Fiji.



Healani Esau, Samara Emberson, TeAriki Peyroux-Semu, Jiurie Samisoni and Jatiana Esau form a special greeting party in the foyer after the service, "Noa'ia 'e Mauri!" (Hello, or, 'thank you for living' in the Rotuman language)

Ms Leary's gesture in Parliament was symbolic and warmly welcomed by many in the wider Rotuman community, including the Kingsland Methodist Church who gather every Sunday morning for a special bi-lingual service that includes

hymns and readings in Rotuman. The Kingsland Methodist Church is making a significant contribution to a group of Auckland church groups committed to sharing the Rotuman language and culture. TeRito Peyroux is

one of four lay preachers who share leading the Sunday service. TeRito says, "One of the earliest LMS Methodist Missionaries to Rotuma was a linguist by the name of Clerk Maxwell Churchward. His way of capturing (and thus preserving) with much detail the intricacies and unique features of the Rotuman language in written form, is a legacy that even us, as a central Auckland, multicultural, bi-lingual, 21st century congregation in the diaspora, are very proud and fortunate to use, engage in and celebrate every week."

Beyond the weekly services, the Rotuman community in New Zealand, Fiji and further afield are maintaining regular connections online.

Last year the Ministry for Pacific Peoples introduced the first NZ Rotuman Language Week, producing resources and promoting special events designed to encourage people to celebrate the language.

Kidz Korna

Welcome to February Kidz Korna!

Welcome to the first Kidz Korna for 2021. I hope everyone had a happy Christmas with their families and friends. We are so lucky that we could meet together and must pray for all people in the world who cannot meet with family and friends because of the Corona virus.

Thank you to everyone who sent stories for this month. For those who shared their Let the Children Live activities, we haven't forgotten you. We will run a special feature in a coming edition of Touchstone.



The children from St Andrew's Community Church in Mercury Bay joined together with those from St Patrick's and St Peter's churches and local schools for the annual "Walk Through Christmas." At St Andrew's they saw a nativity play and at St Patrick's they had a pop quiz about Christmas. At St Peter's they sang a Christian version of the *Twelve Days of Christmas*. Afterwards they returned to St Andrew's for drinks and cookies.



Chapel Street, Christchurch North celebrated with a nativity play, *Counting on Christmas*. Mary counted the days until the birth of her baby. The miles to Bethlehem were counted, the footsteps of the donkey and the number of twinkling stars. The angel narrators reminded everyone that in the countdown to Christmas through the birth, life, death and resurrection, we can count on God.



For your bookshelf

The Screwtape Letters

Letters from a Senior Devil to a Junior Devil

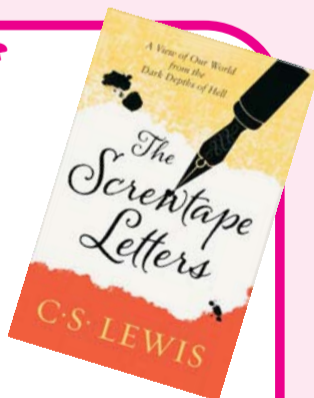
Author: C.S. Lewis

Publisher: William Collins

Luther said, "The best way to drive out the devil ... is to jeer and flout him for he cannot bear scorn."

This is a fascinating book, not only because of the unusual content but because of the comic element, the seriousness and originality. Through the letters of Screwtape to Wormwood his nephew, C.S. Lewis shows his darkest and yet playful work.

This is a novel suitable for older children but I enjoyed it as it brings something new to Christian literature. Lewis shows the common fears Christians have and how Satan tries to drive us away from God.



Puzzle Time!

As it is the beginning of the year, I thought it would be a good idea to include a puzzle about the beginning of the world. Can you find all the words in the puzzle?

ANIMALS BIRDS DAY EARTH FISH LIGHT MOON NIGHT PEOPLE PLANTS SEA SKY STARS SUN

D	M	O	O	N	N	I	G	H	T
M	A	J	J	S	W	P	K	B	P
I	A	Y	L	T	T	I	W	P	L
L	B	N	A	I	C	A	X	N	A
F	I	B	I	P	G	N	R	N	N
F	R	C	T	M	E	H	L	S	T
I	D	S	V	W	A	O	T	B	S
S	S	K	S	N	L	L	P	Y	A
H	D	Y	A	E	A	B	S	L	A
G	S	U	N	E	A	R	T	H	E

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 dlennox02@gmail.com



Parish resources for young people



Michael Lemanu
Tauwiwi Children, Youth and Family
Ministries National Coordinator

Happy New Year to all of our Touchstone readers. I trust that you have had an enjoyable holiday season, filled with joy, hope, peace, love and fun. Though this time of year is a typically quiet one across the church, there continues to be a lot of things throughout the Connexion that start the year off with a bang.

Many Tongan parishes across the church take the time to celebrate Education Sunday (Sapate Ako) in the month of January. This service honours the academic achievements of young (and old) members of the parish, with secondary and tertiary graduates inspiring young children to focus and strive for the academic heights that their fellow parishioners have attained through faith, dedication and hard work. This is a fantastic way to highlight the achievements of young people of the parish and focus on good news - sometimes much needed at the start of a long year ahead.

Other churches take time, normally

during the first week of the year, to gather and share reflections about the year that was, and their hopes for the year ahead. Young people are allocated a day during this to give testimonies and share with the church their hopes, with the prayerful support of the parish willing on the success of these ambitions.

Another highlight for churches is the blessing of the backpacks. This

service takes the time to bless all students (and teachers) set to return to school, and often involves either the donation of stationery from the congregation or a custom made bag-tag that is attached to each person's bag and given with a prayer or blessing for the year ahead. This service is a great practical way to give children something symbolic and visual to carry with them for the school year, with some children still having tags from many years previous.

This year, Mission Resourcing has an online resource for churches who may want to participate, along with some ideas for prayers/blessings and a downloadable template for a bag tag that

can be used. This is normally done the Sunday before students and teachers return to school, but could be done any time throughout February or even at the start of each term if new families join or families on holiday miss out. The website will also contain more information about some of the abovementioned services that parishes might want to take and adapt to the children of their parish and context.

With 2020 causing major disruption for students, we invite parishes to take some of these ideas and intentionally highlight the support a parish gives to all students and teachers for the year ahead. Whether blessing/praying for one student, one teacher or many young people and education practitioners, this is a small but meaningful way a parish can commit to Letting the Children Live.

Let the Children Live Funding initiatives continue throughout the year, offering funding of up to \$600 towards a project that supports the Connexional vision 'Let the Children Live.' Visit the website for further information: www.missionresourcing.org.nz/let-the-children-live

A bi-monthly column exploring questions concerning faith issues.



Ask Aunty

Aunty welcomes your queries. No concern is too small, whether it is an opinion, advice or information that you are seeking.

Please email the editor with your questions. We respect your privacy. You are welcome to choose a pen name for anonymity.

CONCERNING FAITH

Dear Aunty,

Why do some people say God is a black woman? Rocky

Dear Rocky,

God is bigger than human comprehension and cannot be adequately described in human terms but this doesn't stop us from trying. From the earliest stirrings of abstract thought, humans have sensed a power greater than themselves. All cultures have tried to explain this and most have done so by naming gods and attempting to describe them. Regardless of being depicted in human form or with a fanciful appearance, they are perceived as having some human-like characteristics.

It was logical for people who lived in male-dominated societies to think of a divine power in terms of a super-powerful human king. Jesus promoted the revolutionary concept that a divine King can love all his subjects as a

human father loves his own children. We respond warmly to this because it is something we understand but it's only one aspect of the Divine. If we want to visualise an amazing God we can hold any image that works for us. God cares for everyone so can be described as a marginalised person.

The concept of God as a black woman was popularised by a novel called *The Shack* written by William P. Young, and published in 2007. The story depicts God as an insightful and motherly black woman. Theologians have long recognised feminine imagery for God in the Bible. Over the past 20 years various movies and songs have suggested God is female, black, or both. Use your own best thoughts when thinking of God and expect these ideas to grow and change.

Nurture your best ideas, Aunty

Dear Aunty,

Why do Nativity scenes have shepherds and wise men together in the stable with the baby Jesus when the churches celebrate the visit of the wise men on 6 January? Carol

Dear Carol,

Nativity scenes were devised to tell the story of Jesus' birth to people who couldn't read. St Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first nativity scene in 1223 after visiting Jesus' traditional birthplace in the Holy Land. St Francis used a manger with hay and a carved doll, putting it outside his church with a real ox and donkey. From this developed the custom of representing the birth story with charming models at Christmas time. Widely embraced throughout Europe the custom

extended beyond churches to public spaces, shops and homes.

Nativity scenes are decorative and symbolic. There is no attempt to be factual. The Bible doesn't mention an ass, ox or donkey, only shepherds minding sheep in a field. The point of shepherds and kings together worshipping a baby in a stable is a creative representation of the amazing truth that God cares for all people regardless of status. Other visual messages can include the importance of babies and animals.

The Bible says the wise men visited the child in a house. Tradition dates this as 6 January. Bible messages are not bound by facts.

Enjoy good stories, Aunty



A Challenging Year Ahead

The lack of access to sufficient good food for families around the world remains one of the priorities for Christian World Service in the year ahead.

"Thank you for supporting the Christmas Appeal. Your donations will help our partners facing another tough year. The Covid economy continues to undermine livelihoods and health, so their efforts to strengthen food security are lifesaving," says Pauline McKay, National Director.

Last year's Christmas Appeal focused on improving and expanding gardens to help people through these tough times. Hunger is increasing, as the Covid economy continues to take away jobs and other supports. Already indications are that Covid is increasing inequalities with more people losing their jobs and falling into poverty.

"Funding for humanitarian response has fallen, making it much harder for refugees, displaced people and those with few resources. We ask you to remember these families in your prayer and where you can with generous support," she adds.

In Fiji for example contractions in the tourism sector are contributing to unemployment that is approaching 50 percent, making the Pacific Conference of Churches' Food Bank story featured in the Appeal a model to be replicated.

In January the Women's Centre in Sri Lanka ran the first workshops with factory workers to identify key priorities for their work together. In factories that make brands like Nike and CK, they found that workers were being denied the leave to which they are entitled with threats of termination if they did not turn up for work. Workers say the factories have enough orders but are refusing to pay overtime and other allowances which they



Work will begin on Turyakira's (front) new rainwater tank this month. A tank will help protect her family of HIV and AIDS orphans in southern Uganda against Covid-19. Credit: CCS.

need for basic living costs. Addressing these and issues of gender violence in the factories are priorities for the year on top of continued Covid protection and the distribution of cash vouchers to workers who have not been paid adequately.

The Centre for Community Solidarity is pressing on with the urgent need for safe water in southern Uganda. Director Charles Rwabambari said they suspended the distribution of building materials during the heavily contested elections so as not to be seen as trying to influence results. With the elections over, the building of 75 new rainwater tanks for the families of HIV and AIDS orphans can proceed before March rains. Clean water will help protect more people from Covid-19 and other illnesses.

With the phasing out of cheques, CWS staff will help people who want to make a donation by bank transfer or credit card. Please call 800 74 73 72.

Remembering Barbara Stephens

At its first meeting of the year, Christian World Service took time to remember Rev Barbara Stephens, National Coordinator from 1986-1994.

Barbara led the organisation through a period of significant change, drawing on her learning and experience of working as the Education Secretary for the Christian Conference of Asia. In Asia she encountered emerging theologies that explored faith from places of suffering. Moved by the reality of families living on rubbish dumps or marginal land, displaced and indigenous peoples, and the plight of women ignored and exploited, she worked with local Christians and peoples of other faiths who took up their need for justice.

Returning to Aotearoa with a sharpened structural analysis and a more political theology, she helped the organisation think differently about what she often called the 'aid business'. She was highly critical of a charity model that involved doing good for those less fortunate. Instead she worked from an understanding of poverty as a result of unfair structures that depended on the exploitation of the poorest people for cheap labour and the land and sea for their resources. Aid was about redistribution from an unjust system and about letting the people decide their own future. At the same time New Zealand nongovernmental organisations negotiated a new funding scheme with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that enabled CWS to develop local partnerships rather than fund the appeals of the World Council of Churches.

In response to challenges from new leadership in the South or Developing



Former Director of CWS, Barbara Stephens.

World, there was a greater emphasis on participation and self-determination, especially the place of women. The WCC held major consultations on aid and to one of these meetings Barbara took maps of the world, showing the southern hemisphere on top. When participants were confronted with these maps, they could immediately see what was at stake.

Barbara introduced consensus decision-making and emphasised learning within CWS. More importantly, she worked hard to help New Zealanders understand what was happening in the world and encouraged people to see the links between poverty and exploitation here and overseas as primary to faith. Her strong commitment to justice was matched by her faithfulness to the church, especially to the Church of Christ into which she was ordained, the Methodist Church and the ecumenical movement. Under her guidance, CWS first developed its theological rationale, Partnership and Letting Go as a basis for its work.

She was one of the first three women deaconesses ordained as a Church of Christ (now Christian Church) minister and more recently served as a presbyter in the Methodist Church.

There will be a memorial service for Barbara who died on 18 December.

"For I was hungry and you gave me food"

Thanks for supporting the Christmas Appeal. Your gift will sustain lives in a difficult year ahead.



Christian World Service
ACTION AGAINST POVERTY

www.cws.org.nz





C I N E M A

Amid Covid, Brexit and American politics, those searching for lightweight escapism might consider *From the Vine*. Directed by Sean Cisterna, acclaimed for his work on Canadian cancer drama *Kiss and Cry* (2017), this 2019 vintage is advertised as a dramatic comedy. In reality, to watch in 2021 a film in which vines talk, statues move, and with a plot based on air travel across international borders feels more like fantasy.

As a child, Marco Gentile (played by Joe Pantoliano) migrates from Italy to the United States. First, a successful lawyer, next a business executive, Marco finds himself trapped between promises and power. An early scene of Marco's head in the oven, smoke billowing from burning food, is an apt metaphor for a business career crushed by board room politics.

Retreating in shame, Marco returns to Acerenza, the place of his birth. It is a town in southern Italy, with terraced hills,



steeped in history. Marco must confront his absence from his grandfather's death. Childhood memories are quickly shattered by the reality of land taxes unpaid, the family house derelict and the vineyard unkept.

Cue a religious experience. Dragged to church the morning after his welcome home party, a hungover Marco is offered "fruit of the vine," a reference to Luke 22:18, and the comfort of the communion cup. Following the gift of bread and wine comes confession. The priest, fluent in English and Italian, bluntly informs Marco that God does not need lawyers. Instead, Marco must share in the first fruits of God's coming Kingdom by serving others.

While faith is present, so also is Marco's

saviour complex. What can't a white man with no previous experience do in, and for, another culture? Local caretaker, Marcello (played by Tony Nardi), wisely warns Marco that the villagers of Acerenza do not need hopes falsely raised. In the real world, an unkept vineyard demands patience and love.

These qualities of character are tested when Marco's wife and daughter arrive to take him home. Joe Pantoliano gained an Emmy for his portrayal of Ralph Cifaretto in *The Sopranos*. Indeed, the lack of communication by Marco with his wife Laura (played by Paula Brancati) and daughter, Marina (played by Wendy Crewson), border on the criminal.

The Gentile family vineyard grows

Review by Rev Dr Steve Taylor

aglianico, a full-bodied red wine native to the south of Italy. Described by award-winning wine communicator, Madeline Puckette, as "rigid" at first approach, it provides an apt metaphor for Marco, his family and the surrounding village.

As a wine, aglianico needs time. Over the years, tannins soften and the wine begins to offer floral notes and flavours of sweetened fruit, spiced with savoury smoke. Hence Marco's hurried drive to re-certify his first fruits of aglianico create an unexpected plot twist.

From the Vine is better approached not as a high intensity, flavour-filled aglianico but as a recently planted off-dry rosé. It is a film better paired with salad leaves than rich meat (or for vegetarians, roasted mushrooms). This summer it offers an easy-to-quaff and somewhat pleasant, yet quickly forgotten, way to spend an evening.

Rev Dr Steve Taylor is author of *First Expressions* (2019) and writes widely in areas of theology and popular culture, including regularly at www.emergentkiwi.org.nz.

O N P A P E R

Said I Wasn't Gonna Tell Nobody

The Making of a Black Theologian.

Author: James H Cone

Publisher: Orbis Books, 2018

Reviewer: John Thornley

In this memoir by James Cone (1938 - 2018), seven chapters follow a traditional spiritual, with its chorus words: "I wasn't gonna tell nobody / but I couldn't keep it to myself / what the Lord has done for me."

The title is ironical, as each chapter explores his faith-bound life experience, where the writer will "tell everything." The opening chapter is about Cone's childhood years, in Bearden, Arkansas, described in his words as "a lynching state." Blessed by strong parents and family, and members of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME), he found the courage and freedom to break the fear of speaking out against white racism, and "remove the mask" to reveal the real self. He never lost the feelings of empowerment he experienced in the black church.

Chapter six describes the writing of what he felt to be his most important book, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree*, in 2013. In the Introduction to this book he sums up his life's calling: "The violent crosses of the Ku Klux Klan were a familiar reality and white racists preached a dehumanising segregated gospel in the name of Jesus' cross every Sunday. And yet, in rural black churches I heard a different message, as preachers proclaimed the message of a suffering Jesus and the salvation accomplished in the death on the cross."

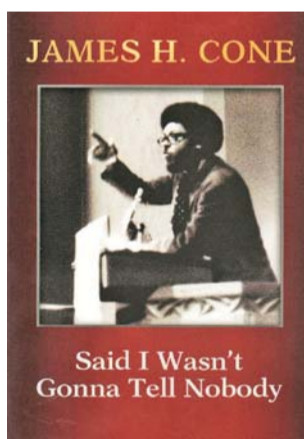
For most of his working life, Cone served in research, writing and

teaching for 48 years (1970 - 2018) at Union Theological Seminary, New York. For much of the time he was alone as an African-American scholar, challenging the white and western theological teachings. One chapter emphasises the central importance of a systematic theology for all preachers. His words apply beyond just black churches when he says:

"Without disciplined interpretations, preachers would proclaim the same prepackaged message that previous generations handed down to them. Reflecting on theology keeps preachers up to date, enabling them to take an ancient text and make it read like the front page of the *New York Times*."

Cone was often challenged on his focus on a 'Black' Theology, with some critics arguing there was no such phenomenon. His rebuttals appear in several chapters of the memoir. He says, "Being black in America has very little to do with skin colour. To be black means that your heart, your soul, your mind and your body are where the dispossessed are. To become black is like what Jesus told Nicodemus, that he must be 'born again', that is, 'born of water and Spirit' (John 3), the Black Spirit of liberation."

One review I read recommended this text especially to Māori and Pacifica students in theological training. This misses the point. Cone's ten books challenge the shift in consciousness in our post-colonised global family and how this impacts on our theologies. Cone's books speak to all peoples, ethnicities and cultures.



Fridays with Jim

Conversations about our country with Jim Bolger.

Author: David Cohen

Publisher: Auckland: Massey University Press, 2020. 287 pages

Reviewer: John Meredith

The self-educated son of Irish immigrants, James Brendan Bolger prefers to be known as Jim. Originally a farmer, his involvement with Federated Farmers was the springboard to a political career as member for the new seat of King Country in 1972. He was Prime Minister of New Zealand 1990-1997 and then New Zealand Ambassador to the United States 1998-2002. More recently he has chaired boards and been Chancellor of Waikato University. Now living in Waikanae, on a number of Fridays he spoke with David Cohen over morning tea and reflected on his life and times, our nation and our world. Apart from David Cohen's introductions to the nine chapters, Jim speaks directly to the reader in a relaxed and informative style.

Jim's parents came to New Zealand from County Wexford in Ireland. In 1798 Wexford was the scene of a violent uprising against English rule. In 1998 Jim was invited to speak at a commemoration in Wexford and his moving speech is printed in full. Drawing on the Māori concept of *tūrangawaewae*, Jim stressed his historic family connections to Wexford and his identity with its struggles. This gave him a real feeling for the unjust confiscation of Māori land by British colonists and contributed to his strong support for settlements under the Treaty of Waitangi.

Jim pays tribute to the influence of Christian faith in his life. His concept of social justice through a just economic order and a humane welfare system flows from his

belief in the inalienable worth and dignity of every person. He sees this at the core of Christian teaching.

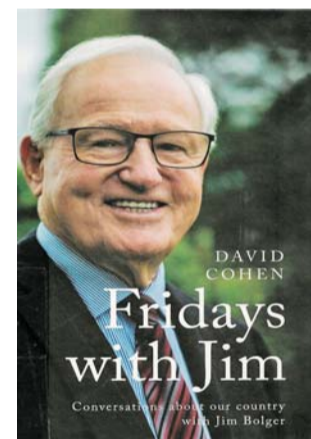
While broadly embracing a market economy, Jim accepts that an unrestrained market may lead to a widening gap between rich and poor. He sees inequality as one of the biggest issues facing the world today. Hope, opportunity, food and clean water

for all must be high on the agenda of all politicians, nationally and internationally. This involves important scientific, environmental and ethical questions that must be addressed including the implications of global warming, climate change and rising sea levels. These matters must be addressed urgently and we must go beyond talk to action. Speaking as a

politician Jim says, "When you believe something you must lead."

Jim is in favour of a freer immigration policy which he believes would contribute to a better sharing of the world's resources. We are all citizens of one global home. He is also passionately committed to building peaceful relationships between nations and a world free from nuclear weapons.

Jim speaks with appreciation of his marriage to Joan who has been beside him all along the way. His refusal to accept a knighthood shows us a man of integrity who believes that such honours are a relic of the past. The book is well-illustrated with photographs and cartoons, and includes extracts from some of Jim's speeches. Jim emerges as a figure not bound by party politics but a person of genuine compassion, humility and far-reaching vision for whom faith has always been a component of service.





A Gem in a Plain Brown Cover

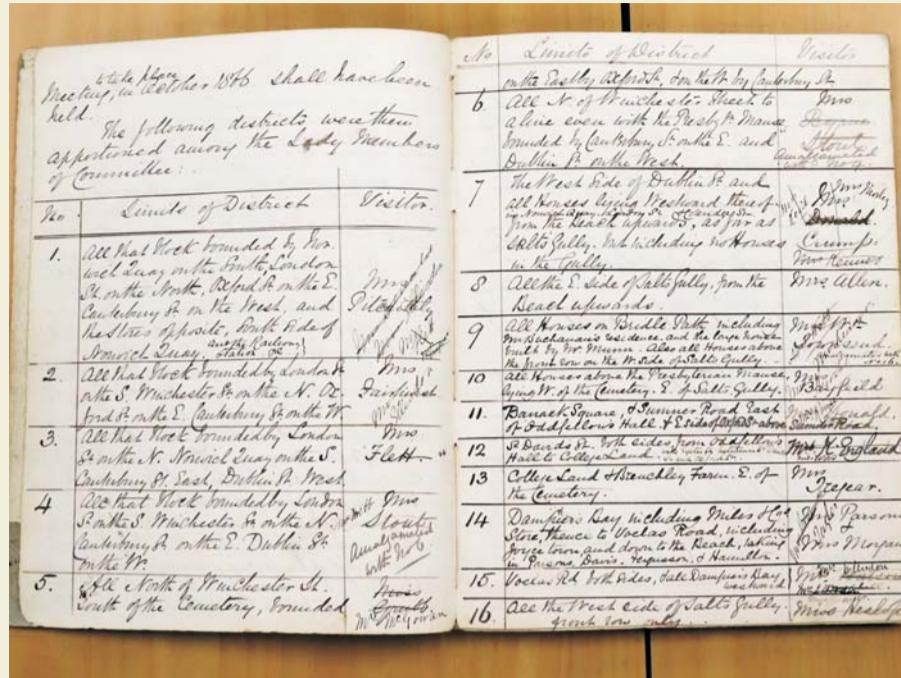
Kathleen Stringer, Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives Volunteer.

Tucked away among the archives of the Lyttelton Methodist Church is an item that doesn't quite belong. It is, however, one of the many treasures held in the Methodist Archives.

At first glance the slightly battered A5 exercise book doesn't look much but inside it's a gem. It is the first minute book of the Lyttelton Benevolent Aid Society, also known as the Lyttelton Relief Committee. The Committee was established in 1866 (the book concludes in 1868).

While senior roles were held by men - the first president was Rev Gow (Presbyterian) with Rev Knowles (Anglican) secretary - much of the work was undertaken by women. This entailed visiting families and individuals and relieving "cases of pressing temporal need, without encouraging idleness or vice" and scrutinising those who received relief. "Lady Visitors" were used as it was felt that women were less likely to be hoodwinked by unscrupulous "posers," and as women were the main beneficiaries, they would be more at ease explaining their plight to a fellow female.

In 1885, the Hospital and Charitable Institutions Act required local bodies



Minutes from the Lyttelton Benevolent Aid Society recorded 1866 - 1868.

to form boards to manage funds raised by levies demanded from local councils. This care was transferred to the government under Mickey Savage's Social Security Act - which made health and other care free from scrutiny. Before that, support of people who fell victim to illness, desertion, unemployment or other mishap was at the discretion of the community the

person lived in. It is the discussion of cases that makes the little book so valuable.

Readers of the book might be surprised, even concerned, at the apparent lack of care shown by the Management Committee. Any question of immorality, idleness or "unworthiness" saw the meagre benefits withdrawn. Many funds were paid directly to those who

were owed money - such as landlords, grocers or undertakers. Some benefits were in kind - groceries, coal and clothing - rarely were the unfortunates given money.

As the funds were donations from locals, the committee did its best to reduce expenses. Any hint of support from others (such as Christmas money from a son) saw the benefits reduced or stopped. Those with family elsewhere were sent off to be supported by their kinsfolk, regardless of whether they were wanted or not. Children were either placed in orphanages or sent away to work, freeing the mother to earn her own living. Along with widows and unemployed husbands, the book also mentions a number of absent husbands - all digging for gold on the West Coast. The committee also had a unique means of reducing their outgoings: they purchased a mangle which they gave to needy women, so they could wash clothes and thereby earn money.

Although it is likely that other minute books exist somewhere, they have yet to be uncovered. Archival plans to index the book so researchers can check for their ancestors. While those on the committee may be mentioned, often the recipients of aid are absent from most historic records, due to their poverty or because they were itinerant.

Unsung Methodists

Rev Donald Phillipps

A Bargain with God

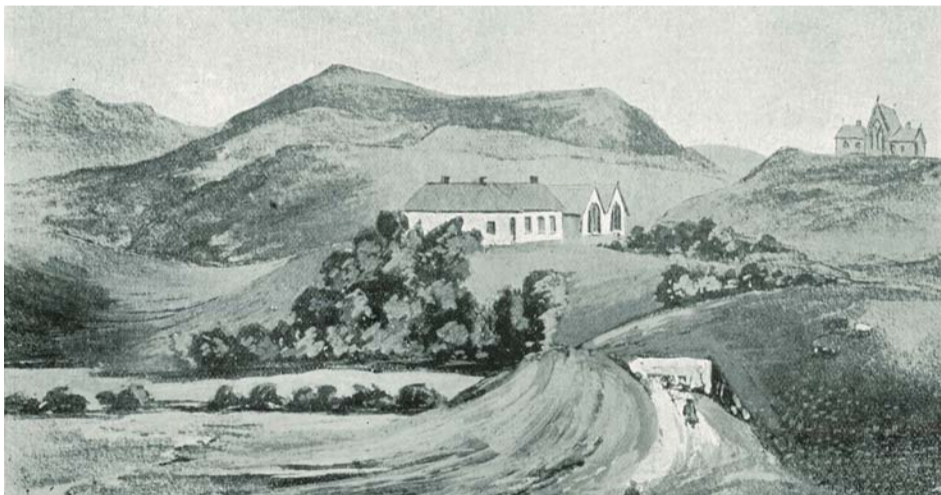
Thomas Skinner, Catechist 1821 - 1866

It was difficult enough getting safely from England to New Zealand in sailing ship days. When new ministers came to this country they had to go to their appointments around the country on even smaller coastal vessels and often had to negotiate the treacherous harbours of the North Island coast.

Thomas Buddle and his wife were posted to Waipa, accessible via the Aotea Harbour, and as with Hokianga, Kaipara, and Kawhia, gaining entry to the calm waters across the bar was hazardous in the extreme. On this occasion at the very beginning of 1840, luck was against them and their ship, *Hannah*, was wrecked. No lives were lost, but it was a life-changing experience for one of the crew of that boat.

This story, largely based on an article by Verna Mossong and Veda McKay, was published in the Wesley Historical Society Proceedings in 1998. Thomas Skinner was Sussex-born exactly 200 years ago. He had come to this country as a teenager and had been employed on ships for some time. He is said to have been at the helm of the *Hannah* on 24 November 1840 when it foundered on the rocks at the mouth of Kawhia Harbour. Aged 19 and frightened, family tradition says he vowed there and then to serve the Lord if he and the passengers were saved. That memory is at the heart of this article.

Thomas had a good understanding of the



Mission House at Ngamotu, and Grey Institute, 1864.

Māori language and was living in the home of William Woon at the South Taranaki Mission at Waimate by early June 1846. By 1848 he took William Hough's place as catechist at Patea. In July 1848 it was decided that he was to open up a mission at Taupo. Skinner walked to Motuapuhi, on Lake Rotoaira - the exact location now difficult to identify. All his clothes, supplies, furniture, doors and windows for a cottage he had to build, had to be carried from the coast at Mokau. His journal, in very close writing, has careful details of temperatures and weather, and his daily activities - which were not entirely approved of by the Church Missionary Society. They regarded this area as their own. Skinner explained that the Wesleyans had waited and had finally sent him to Taupo because no CMS missionary was there. He reported that he had preached from Umurua to Pukawa and that, "the Spirit had assisted: ... I

spoke with freedom and I trusted not in vain." An afternoon school was divided into five classes and he led divine service in the evening. He believed, "that some few retain what they have been taught," though Bible learning and engagement with a new morality were a personal challenge to him.

There was an influenza epidemic and the mission station was converted into a hospital, "my time fully taken up ... preparing and administering medicine and food." Unexpectedly, in 1850, he was appointed to Ngamotu, Taranaki, and the people at Rotoaira were distressed. In the event no replacement was made by the Wesleyan Mission. Much of his new work revolved around the Grey Institute, one of whose assistant teachers was Hannah Taylor of London. They were married in May 1851. Still as catechist, Thomas was an essential part of the Institute, being in charge of the school,

the farm and the "Industrial Department," with control of all the outdoor workers. In 1856 the family transferred to Beechdale at Aotea where within a couple of years there was a "commodious" schoolhouse with 24 scholars. They had three acres of potatoes, four acres of corn, a bull, ox and sheep with lambs.

Thomas Skinner was now in ill health. There was a move to Onehunga, and then in late 1863 to Te Poinga, at Waima, Hokianga. Thomas died on 30 October 1866 and was buried near the Mission house. Hannah, with eight children, stayed on at Te Poinga and later married Joseph Hare of Kaeo to which place she moved with her children - now ranging from a 16 year old to the youngest about 18 months. The house needed to be large for Hare already had 11 children. The story does not stop there for Hannah and Joseph Hare became parents of five more children. Hannah (Taylor/Skinner) Hare died at Kaeo on 22 January 1898. Of the many, many descendants the best known was 'Jerry' Skinner, Minister of Rehabilitation and Lands and other portfolios in the post-war Labour Government.

This is a story of sacrificial service starting with a promise made to God (as it seems) that if saved from a shipwreck he would give his life in Christian service. It's a bit like a bargain with God and sits less than comfortably with the belief that God's love is unconditional. It is a remarkable story for that very reason and it's not for us to judge but to give thanks for the life and ministry of Thomas Skinner, catechist.

Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives

William Morley The History of Methodism in New Zealand.



O LE FAAMOEMOE UA TAUNUU, E OLIOLI AI LE LOTO

Hopes fulfilled make a happy heart



Donmorgan and Eneti Faafou Meleisea.

O lagona faafetai a'e lea I le Atua ina ua momoli mai le soifua o le paia o le tatou Sinoti Samoa, mai le Aufaigaluega ma faletua, seia oo lava I se tasi ua aupito ititi o le fanau, ua tatou aulia mai ai le lua o masina o lenei tausaga fou.

Tatou te vivii faia'e o tatou loto I le Atua soifua, o le na tu I matagiolo e malutia ma puipui le faiga malaga a le Sinoti Samoa I le amataga o le nei tausaga. Lea ua tatou iai I le 2 o masina I le manuia, leai se mea o faapopoleina ai I tatou. Faatalofa atu ai lea I le paia o le Aufaigaluega ma faletua, paia o tuua sinasina seia oo lava I fanau lalovaoa a le Sinoti. Malo le soifua maua ma le lagi matafi. Tatou talosia lenei tausaga ua amataina ina ia sao ma uli le folauga ua faia nei, aao taitaiina e le Atua, faatonu folau lona Agaga mo I tatou.

Ao sina vaai I le tau faaiiuga o lena tausaga, seia oo mai I le masina amata o le 2021 ma ni faamoemoega na lomalomaa o matagaluega ma nai o tatou aiga, lea ua faaiuina I le manuia, pei ona saafi le Poto: O le faamoemoe ua taunuu o le la'au o le soifua lea, ao la le fai pese: O le aso lenei ua faia e le Alii, tatou te olioli ma fiafia iai.

Aso Toonai 28 Novema 2020 na faatumulia ai le malumalu I Henderson I le faapaiaina o fanau ia Ulatifa Jnr Lauaki ma Amy Amio Nafoi, o I la'ua o alo o le fetalaiga ia Motuopuaa ma Tofilau Lauaki, faapea foi Farani ma Neta Loto Nafoi.

O le Aso Toonai 5 Tesema 2020 na faapaiaina ai le Maota Fou o le Galuega a le Matagaluega I Ponsonby, I le mea o loo susu ai le susuga ia Paulo ma le faletua ia Faapaiaga Ieli. Na faatumulia foi I le aufaigaluega ma faletua o itumalo I Aukilani ma Manukau e molimauina lea

faamoemoe taua. Na amata I le Sauniga Lotu faafetai, ma le ootiina o le lipine, ona faaiuina ai lea I le taumafataga I lo latou hall ma a latou faaaloaloga.

O le amataga o Ianuari na aao mafola ma fai taulaga ai nisi o tatou Matagaluega pei o Ponsonby, Magele Tutotonu, Magele Sasa'e, ma Oratia e ala I taumafa, lavalava ma le tele o meaalofa na avatu mo Fiti ona o matagi ma afa na faaleagaina ai le tele o nuu o le atunuu lea. Faafetai tele le ma'au ma le agalelei ona o Iesu.

O le Aso Toonai 9 Ianuari 2021 na faatumulia ai le malumalu o St Pauls Otara I le faaiipoipoga a nisi o alo ma fanau tupulaga a Papatoetoe ma Otara. O le alii faaiipoipo o Donmorgan Meleisea o le alo o le fetalaiga ia Manufelavei Puna ma le tausi ia Fu'a Meleisea, ma le tamaitai faaiipoipo o Eneti Faafou Tauofaga o le alo o le fetalaiga ia Mataafa Su'a ma le tausi ia Foifua Tauofaga.

O le Aso Toonai 16 Ianuari na faapena ona molimauina ai foi le tuufaatasia o le alii ia Sootaga Misikei o le alo o le susuga I le Taitai o Mulipola ma le faletua ia Jeannie o New Plymouth, ma lana manamea o Silotomua Leaupepe. Na faia lea faaiipoipoga I Ellerslie Event Centre. Ma o se aso foi matagofie tele. Na auai mai le tama malolo ia Limu ma le faletua ia Ela, faapea le matagaluega atoa mai New Plymouth. O le tamaitai faaiipoipo o le grandniece o le susuga I le Tamaitai Faifeau ia Alofaifo Selesese Asiata, na faapena foi ona iai si o latou aiga uma mai Stokes Valley. Viia le Alii ona o lona alofa ua mafai ona faataunuina ai faamoemoega na lomalomaa o nai fanau a le Sinoti.

Ao nai ata nei mai nei faamoemoega ua maea na mafai ona maua mai:



Newly wedded couple Sootaga and Silotomua Misikei with their parents.



The couple with their New Plymouth Samoan Parish.



Sootaga and Silotomua Misikei.



The couple with their aunty Rev Alofaifo Asiata.



NA NODA TACAKE KINA ULUNIVANUA KO JIOVA: NA NODAI VUKEVUKE

Psalms 121:1-2

I will lift up my eyes to the hills-From where comes my help? My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

The Lalakai contribution for the month begins with this declaration that 'Our help comes from the Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, the Creator of heaven and earth.'

Na yabaki 2021, eda sa sureti ena dua na qaani sere nona na daunivucu, na Daunisame 121: 1-8. Oqo e dua na domo ni Same sa voqa ena vula ko Janueri me tekivuna na noda cabe ulunivanua ni veiqaravi ena loma ni yabaki vou eda sa vavaca yani oqo.

“AU NA TA CAKE KI NA ULU-NI-VANUA, SA TAKA MAIKINA NA NOQUI VUKEVUKE. SA LAKO MAI VEI JIOVA NA NOQUI VUKEVUKE, O KOYA KA BULIA NA LOMAGI KEI VURAVURA. ENA SEGA NI LAIVI IKO ME YAVALA NA YAVAMU: O KOYA SA MAROROI IKO ENA SEGA NI SOSOVU. RAICA, O KOYA SA MAROROI IRA NA ISIRELI, ENA SEGA NI SOSOVU SE MOCE. KO JIOVA SA MAROROI IKO: ENA MAROROI IKO: ENA MAROROI IKO KO JIOVA ENA LIGAMU I MATAU. ENA SEGA NI YAVITI IKO NA MATA-NI-SIGA ENA SIGA, SE NA VULA ENA BOGI. ENA MAROROI IKO KO JIOVA MAI NA CA KECEGA: IA ENA MAROROYAKO NA YALOMU. ENA MAROROYAKO JIOVA NA NOMU VEICURUYAKI MAI NA GAUNA OQO, KA SEGA NI MUDU”

Ni da vociga vakavudi na domo ni Same ni cabecabe oqo e vica na yavu lelevu e veivakaraitaki veiira na nona yavusa Isireli, ka nuitaki nida rawa ni tomika cake e vica na kena yavu kei na kena uma vakasama me tawana na noda noke ni veiqaravi enai lalakai ni vula oqo.

1. Laveti cake ni vakabauta kei kena vakacaberi vakamatau ni nodra nuitaki Jiova na nodra vukevuke. E sereka toka na qaana ni sere oqo na tiko e dua na nodra nuinui ka nodra vukevuke e na veiveigauna dredre era veitosoyaki tiko

kina. Ena loma ni veidredre e curumi e uasivi na nuitaka na Kalou ko koya na nodra ulunivanua tudei ka sega ni yavalati vakarawarawa.

2. E momona na qaana sere oqo ni sereka vua na Kalou na nona leqa ni vuvale se leqa ni nona yavusa. E vakarogotaka vua na Kalou na veileqa e curuma tiko na bula. Na noda leqa ni 2020 me tautauaki ena ulunivanua nei Jiova. Na Noda cabe cake kina ulunivanua ni 2021 e dodonu vakagolei vua na Kalou nai daunveibuli ka dau vakavou ni noda veimataka ena nona loloma savu ni yalona na Kalou dauniveibuli oqo.

3. Era curuma tiko e dua na gauna ni veivakatovolei ka ra sa tekivu mera vakataroga na nodra vukevuke ka dei na nona tacake na Daunisame vua na Kalou ko Jiova. Ena loma ni yabaki sa oti e yavalati na noda bula vakavuvale, lotu kei na noda matanitu kei na vuravura taucoko. E veiyalati keda na mateca dauveitautauvi na covid 19. E cavuta na daunisame ni tiko na veimaroroi ni Kalou ena ruku ni tabani Kalou oqo.

4. Ena Same 120 sa toqai toka kina na nona sa sega ni rogoci vinaka na domo vakatama ka veiliutaki tiko ena loma ni yavusa. Sa basika na duiyaloyalo ena loma ni vuvale levu oqo. Sa sega ni vakabibitaki na goleva na nodra vukevuke, na rogoi vakasala e momona kei na vunau. E vaka me sa sega ni tudei rawa na loma ni vuvale, sa yavalati vakawasoma.

5. E cavuti ko Meseti e dua na kawa nei Noa kei na vale ni Kitari, na vuvale ka kawa mai vei Isimeli. Sa sega ni veiriti rawa ni o rau na veiwekani e nodra bole tu ga na vakacibivalu kei na veivalualuti, ia sa tagicaka tiko vua na nonai vukevuke ko Jiova ko Tevita na nodra tiko sautu ka tiko vinaka na veiwekani ni vuvale oqori. Na Kalou na nonai vukevuke na Daunisame enonai yau na tiko sautu ni bula kei na tiko veimaliwi vinaka. Na lotu kei na kena veivakabauti Jiova e maroroia na duidui vakatamata kei na duiyaloyalo ka dauvakavou ena veimataka na nona Yalo Loloma me vurevure ni bula vou

ena veimataka.

6. Oqo na domo ni tagi ni kere vukevuke ena Same 120 ka basika mai na Same 121 me vueta cake na nona vakabauti Jiova ni na vukevuke ena lakolako ni cabe ulunivanua oqo.

7. Ena loma ni yabaki oqo, sa mai veitautauaki na Same 121 me ra vakacaberi kina na ulunivanua I Jiova na noda duidui ni loma ni veivuvale, na veileqa e da curuma tiko, na noda dredre ni tiko ena dua na vanua vou, na kena sasaga taki tiko na tiko sautu ena vanua ni veiqaravi, na duidui ni rai ni veiliutaki, na lawa ni vanua e butuka sobu na dina kei na kena vakalolovirataki na bula ni veiwekani vinaka. E tukuna na toso ni gauna e Aotearoa ni biu vakawiliwili na leqa me baleti ira na tabagone, e lasika tu ki lagi na vanua oqo ena [youth suicides] Oqo e dua na ulunivanua me tagicaki vua na nodai vukevuke. Na nodra ulunivanua ni vakatulewa vakamatau na luveda kei na makare ni digidigi ena loma ni gauna eda sa vavaca yani oqo.

8. Me da tautauri ena domo ni Same me da tacake kina ulunivanua nei Jiova na nodai vukevuke dina ena veitabagauna dredre eda curuma vakavuvale, vakalotu, vakayavusa na Viti ena vanua vou ni veiqaravi e Aotearoa Me ra nanumi na luveda ena bula veicurumaki kei ira tale eso, me kakua ni bulia cake tale eso na yavu vuvou ena vakadromuci ira ena veiveigauna tawakilai eso.

9. Ni sa bera ni vakacagau na loma ni yabaki, sai tautau ni lalakai oqo me da kauta mai vua na Kalou ko Jiova na nodai vukevuke ka noda ulunivanua talega. E tukuna tiko na veitikina oqori, ena sega ni oti na cabe ulunivanua, e na so na veimataka ena kabukabu, na veilunivanua e na kauta mai na oca ni kena cabeti kei na kena veibolebole eso, ia tiko ena loma veidredre oqori na liga matau ni Kalou, okoya e a veibuli taumada, e bulia na lewa, na kena kaukauwa ni gauna, na vuravura kei na lomalagi. Na veilunivanua eda cabeti tiko era ka buli tubu koso ga ia na Kalou na nodai vukevuke e ka dina ka eka e taucoko vakaoti.

10. Na ulunivanua ka taka mai kina na vukevuke ni daunisame e dauveimaroroi veiira na yavusa Isireli ka cavuti tiko ena veitikina ni same oqo “ena maroroia iko ka sega ni sosovu, se moce,” ka dau veivakarurugi na ligana I matau. Ena ruku ni tabana oqo ena sega ni yaviti iko na veikaukauwa e tiko ena ruku ni matasiga kei na kaukauwa e tiko ena veirarama ena bogi. Oqo na vosa ni vakabauta dina ni maroroia tiko mai ena loma vuvale na Domo ni Vakabauta veiira na tukadra. “Me nanumi na Kalou nei Tamadra ko Eparama ni a kacivi me biuta na nona vuvale kei na kena lotu cuva ka qarava na na veikalou ni rarama eso. Na veirarama kei na ulunivanua ni cuva eraka buli walega ka ra sega ni Kalou dina.

11. 2021 kei na kena so-Kalou me vakagolei vakadua vei Jiova na nodra Kalou dina, ena veimaroroi mai na ka ka na maroroia na yalodra. E cavuti vinaka toka ni na maroroia ira kei na nodra veitosoyaki kei na veicuruyaki mai na gauna dredre era tiko kina kei na veimataka tawa kilai e tu e matadra.

12. Nai lalakai ni vula oqo Janueri, ni vulavou e vakadeitaki ni Kalou ni nodra yavusa e dau veimaroroi ka dau yadrayadravaki mai vei ira na meca kai vakatawa ni koro vinaka duadua baleta ni sega ni moce se sosovu ia ena ruku ni tabana e dauveimaroroia voli kina.

13. Na veileti ni vuvale kei na kena veimataka e tawa kilai ia e vakaravita vinaka na nona bula kei na nona vakabauta na Kalou.

14. Ena loma ni Wasewase e Aotearoa e rawa ni vakaibalebale na veivula e matada nida kakavaki kina ulunivanua nei Jiova, o koya sa dau lakovi ira na nona tamata era yalodina ka nuitaki na nonai vakaro kei na nonai vakasala.

Ena loma ni lekutu kei Waikato/Waiariki kei iratou mai Te Tairawhiti keimami sa vakanuinui vinaka tiko ni da cabeta vinaka na ulunivanua ni 2021 e nona veiliutaki, veiceguvi kei na veimaroroi ni Kalou ko Jiova.



New Year Service. Na lewe ni lotu mai Picton kei Blenheim.



Bowen Falls, Milford Sound.



Mirror Lakes.



Milford Sound mountains (Family Gallery) during our South Island Tour 4 -10 January 2021.



Isireli Vula and Paulini Banuve at Milford Sound. (Family Gallery).



New Year Service, Tauranga.

Ko e Tokangaekina e Ako ko e Tokangaekina ia 'etau Fanau

Hangē ko ia na'a ku lave ki ai he 'Fakalotofale'ia', ko e taha he ngaahi kaveinga fisifisimu'a 'oku tokanga ki ai 'a e Vahefonuá ko e akó Pea 'oku lahi foki 'a e ngaahi 'ū 'uhinga ki ai 'o hangē ko 'eni: [1] Ko e taha 'o e ngaahi 'uhinga na'a tau folau mai ai mei Tongá ke ako'i 'etau fanau pea lava foki ke ma'u ha nau kaha'u lelei 'i he fonua ni. [2] Ke fakatolonga 'a e mahu'inga'ia he akó he ko e me'a ia na'e mamahi'i 'e he Siasí 'i Tonga. [3] Ko e matapā ia ke ma'u ai hanau faingamālie 'o hangē ko e ngāue pea mo ha mo'ui 'oku toe lelei angé. 'I he ngaahi 'uhinga ko íá 'oku tau fakamanatua ai 'a e mahu'inga 'o e akó 'i he ta'u kotoa pē pea 'ai foki mo hono Sapate fakamamafa.

'I he fakakaukau 'o e Sapate Fakamamafaá 'oku ngāue'aki ai 'a e Sapate Akó pe ko e Sapate kuo fakamavahe'i ke fakamamafa'i ai e mahu'inga 'o e akó. Tukumu'a ke fakahaa'i atu 'e he ngaahi 'ata ko 'ení ha konga si'i 'o e ngaahi polokalama Sapate Ako mei he ngaahi potu siasif .



Ko e fakanofu [induction] 'o 'Alipate 'Uhila ki he fatongia 'o e Vahefonuua Tonga ko hono tokanga'i 'o e Potungau'e 'Evangelio, Lautohi Faka-Sapate pea mo e Talvou & Finemui. Rev 'Alipate 'Uhila inducted to the Vahefonuua role of looking after Sunday School, Youth and Evangelism ministry. Photo by: Mapa Ha'angana media network.



Ko Rev. Siutaisa Tukutau pea mo Rev. Sesipa Mausia 'oku na poupuu kakato ki he Sapate Ako pea mo e ako 'etau fanau.



Ko Tupou Silia Hola-Vaka'uta 'a ia na'a ne fakahoko e malanga Sapate Ako 'a e Siasi Taka-he-monu mei Glen Innes. Silia Vaka'uta led the Education Sunday service at Glen Innes Church.



Ko Dr Edmund and his father, Koli Fehoko from Ponsonby Education Sunday. Edmund is married to Sela Pole-Fehoko and they are expecting their first child soon.



Ko Meliamé Fihaki, hoa e faifekausea fo'ou lolotonga e malanga fakanofu. Meliamé Fihaki, wife of the new Vahefonuua Tonga Superintendent, Kalolo Fihaki during the Induction Service. Photo by: Mapa Ha'angana media network.



Ko e ni'ihí eni ke kau ma'u mata'itohi mei he Sapate 'a Epsom. L to R: Pernie Fifita Finau, 'Aisake Havea, Samuela Folaumoetu'i (medical student), Lupe Havea and her mother, Taisia Havea.



Ko Temisi Taufā, setuata lahi 'a e Vahefonuua 'a ia na'a ne fakahoko 'a e malanga Sapate Ako 'a Onehunga. Temisi Taufā, the head steward of Vahefonuua Tonga led the Education Sunday Service at Onehunga Church.

'Oku kei hokohoko atu pe 'a e tokongaekina Coronavirus Covid-19; Remain Alert

'Oku kei hokohoko atu pe 'a hono fakamamafa'i mei he Pule'angaa ke tau kei matu'aki fakapotopoto mo faka'ehi'ehi 'o makatu'unga eni 'i he toe ma'u ha keisi 'e taha mei he komunitii.

Ko e tu'utu'uni kuo tuku mai mei he pule'anga 'oku anga pehe ni.

1. *Fakamolemole ka ke ngaue'aki 'a hono lekooti e ngaahi feitu'u 'oku ke fononga holo aii 'o hangee ko e ngaue'aki 'a e app 'i he telefoni pe ko hono fakafonu e ngaahi foomu 'i he feitu'u 'oku ke 'alu ki ai;*
2. *Ka 'oku ke ongo'i puke fakamolemole ka ke lava atu 'o sivi pea ke kataki 'o nofo ma'u 'i 'api kae 'oua kuo fakapapau'i 'oku ke hao mei he mahaki;*
3. *'Oku kei fiema'u pe 'a e tokanga mo e faka'ehi'ehi;*
4. *Tui 'a e maasi [mask] kapau 'oku mavahe mei 'api. Pea kapau 'oku heka 'i he pasi, lēlue pe puna vakapuna kuopau ke ke tui e maasi [mask].*
5. *Ko e tale pe mafatua pea fai ia ki ho tui'i nima;*
6. *Fanofano'aki ha koa mo ha vai mamafa 'i he hili ho'o ngaue'aki 'a e toilet pea ko ha feitu'u pe 'oku ke 'alu ki ai.*
7. *Kataki ka ke huhu malu'i flu 'o kapau 'oku ke ta'u 65 'o fai ki 'olunga*
8. *Ko e sivi ki he coronavirus 'oku fiema'u 'aupito ke ke fakakakato 'okapau 'oku ke loto ke fakapapau'i 'oku ke hao mei he mahakii*
9. *Fetu'utaki ki ho'o toketa fakafamili 'i he vave taha kapau 'oku ke ongo'i puke.*



FAKALOTOFALÉ'IA – MONTHLY REFLECTION

Kaveinga/Theme: “Ko e Ako & Siasi”
Church and Education

Veesi/Verse: Himi 570 v. 1 & v. 3

SISU ko koe pe
Ko e **MAAMA** mo'onia
Fa'ahinga **POTO** kehekehe
Ko ho **HUELO** ia
Ke tau **HAKULE** mu'a
'A e **TOHI** kuo fai
Ke hu 'a e **MAAMA** 'a e '**OTUA**
Ki hotau '**ATAMAI**

Ko e taha he ngaahi kaveinga fisifisimu'a 'oku tokanga ki ai 'a e Vahefonuá ko e **akó**. Pea 'oku lahi foki 'a e ngaahi 'UU' uHINGA ki ai 'o hangē ko 'eni: [1] Ko e taha 'o e ngaahi 'uhinga na'a tau folau mai ai mei Tongá ke ako'i 'etau fanau pea lava foki ke ma'u ha nau kaha'u lelei 'i he fonua ni. [2] Ke fakatolonga 'a e mahu'inga'ia he **akó** he ko e me'a ia na'e mamahi'i 'e he Siasí 'i Tonga. [3] Ko e matapā ia ke ma'u ai hanau faingamālie 'o hangē ko e ngāue pea mo ha mo'ui 'oku toe lelei angé. 'I he ngaahi 'uhinga ko iá 'oku tau fakamanatua ai 'a e mahu'inga 'o e **akó** 'i he ta'u kotoa pē pea 'ai foki mo hono Sapate fakamamafa.

Ka kou tokanga 'i he '**Fakalotofale'ia**' ní ki he fakakaukau fakatala'otua pe teolosia 'o e **akó** 'i he 'ene fekau'aki pea mo e 'Otuaá. 'I he fakakaukau ko iá 'oku ou faka'amu ke tau vakai'aki ki he teolosia 'a Dr. Molitoni 'i he

himi 'iloa ko eni 'oku fa'a ngāue lahi'aki 'i he **Sapate Akó**, 'a e himi 570.. 'Oku ne hanga ai 'o fakahā'i ko e **potó** 'oku fekau'aki ia pea mo e Maama. Pea ko e Maama 'oku ngāue'aki ia ki he 'Otua [Sione 1:4-5]. Hange ko ia 'oku ha he veesi 1:

SISU ko koe pē;
Ko e **MAAMA** mo'onia
Fa'ahinga **POTO** kehekehé
Ko ho **HUELO** ia

'A ia ko e poto [wisdom] ko e māfīmāfi pea mo e nāunāu ia 'o e 'Otuaá. Pea ko e Maamaá ko e 'Otuaá ia. 'A ia 'oku faka'otua 'a e ma'u 'o e potópe ko e ako ke potó ko e nāunāu ia 'o e 'Otua. Pea kapau ko e **potó** ko e nāunāu ia 'o e 'Otuaá, pea tā 'oku mahu'inga ke tau tokanga lahi ki ai koe'uhi ke ma'u ia 'e he 'etau fanau. Pea 'i he ma'u 'a e potó 'oku nau fakahā'i ai 'a e lāngilāngi mo e nāunāu'ia 'o e 'Otuaá.

HAKULE mu'a
'A e **TOHI** kuo fai
MAAMA 'a e '**OTUA**
Ki hotau '**ATAMAI**

Ko e fakakaukau faka'osi 'oku ou fie lave ki ai , ko e fekumi [hakule] ke 'ilo koehā fua e ngaahi fatongia 'oku totonu ke tau fakahoko ke poupou'i'aki 'a e ako 'a 'etau fanau. 'I he fakalea 'e tahá, 'oku mau'inga ke tau lau, fekumi, kumi hākili, 'analaiso, toutou faka'uhinga'i



Ko Dr 'Etimani [Edmund] Fehoko lolotonga 'ene malanga he Sapate Ako 'a Vaione Mo'onia, Ponsonby. Na'a ne lautohi faka-Sapate, potungāue talavou pe ai ki mu'a ia pea a'u ai pe ki he lakanga malanga hoko. Ko e fanautama mo'oni eni 'a Vaine Mo'onia pea 'oku tau polepole kotoa ia. Dr Edmund Fehoko led the Education Sunday service at Vaine Mo'onia Church, Ponsonby. Edmund is the latest PhD graduate of Vahefonua Tonga and has a strong association with the Methodist Church. He attended attended Sunday School as a child, was a youth group member and is currently a lay preacher at Vaione Mo'onia Church.

[re-read] 'a e Tohitapu pea fakafehoata tatau ki he 'ātakai [contextualise] 'o e 'aho ni koe'uhi kae lava ai ke tau 'ilo koehā 'a e faka'amu pe ko e finangalo 'o e 'Otua kia

kitautolu fekau'aki mo e ako 'etau fanau. 'I he ngaue'aki 'o e lea **hakulé** pea mo hono ngaahi fakamatalá 'oku lava ai ke mahino kia kitautolu 'a hotau fatongia totonu ki he ako

'etau fanau.

'I he 'eku faka'uhinga ki ai 'e kau ai 'a e ngaahi me'a ko 'eni: [1] Fatu 'etau visone ke mu'omu'a ai e ako 'etau fanau; [2] 'I he 'etau ngaahi polokalama fsksiasi ke fakamu'omu'a pea 'oange mo e taimi lahi ma'ae ako 'etau fānau; [3] Ke ngāue lahi'aki pea faka'aonga'i 'a e ngaahi koloa/nāunau (resources) 'oku tau ma'u ki he ako 'etau fanau; [4] Ke tau poupou'i 'a e ngaahi polokalama kotoa pe 'oku ala ma'u ke tokoni'i'aki 'etau fānau. te tau ngāue'aki 'a e ngaahi faingamālie, nāunāu pea mo e 'ilo 'oku tau ma'u mei hono toutou **hakule** (re read) 'o e Tohitapú'e lava ai ke tau ma'u ha maama 'oku toe lahi angé ke tau fakahoko'aki 'a e ngaahi tokoni pea mo tokoni'i'aki 'a e ako 'etau fanaú

'I he 'eku lave ki he ngaahi koloa mo e nāunāu [resources] 'a e Siasí , 'oku faka'a'au ke toe lahi mo tokolahi ange. Ka ko e toe pe eni ke ngaue'aki ki nautolu. 'Oku kau foki heni 'a Dr. Edmund Fehoko mei he Siasí 'o Vaine Mo'onia mei Ponsonby, 'a ia ko e fakamuimui taha [latest] eni 'i he fānau 'a e Siasí kuo nau lava'i honau faka'ilonga toketā filosefá [PHD].

Lava hono fakanofa faifekausea fo'ou Vahefonua Tonga
Induction of the new Superintendent of Vahefonua Tonga O Aotearoa

Na'e lava lelei hono fakanofa [induction] 'o Kalolo Fihaki ki he lakanga faifekausea. Ko e ouau mamalu ni na'e tataki ia 'e he palesiteni, Andrew Doubleday pea tokoni ki ai 'a Nasili Vaka'uta [puleako kolisi Trinity, Siosifa Pole [talekita Pasifiki]. 'Etuini Talakai [tokoni palesiteni] pea pehē ki he faifekausea lolotonga, Tevita Finau.

Na'e kau foki ai mo 'Alipate 'Uhila, 'a ia 'oku ne tokanga'i 'a e Potungāue Lautohi Faka-Sapate, 'Evangelio pea mo e Talavou & Finemui 'a e Vahefonua. 'Oku 'ikai ko ia pe foki ka na'e kau ki ai mo hono fakatapui e kau ma'u lakanga kehe 'o e Vahefonua 'o hange ko ia na'e ha atu 'i he ngaahi ongoongo ki mu'a.



Ko hono fakanofa eni 'o Kalolo Fihaki ki he lakanga faifekausea. The photo shows the induction of Rev Kalolo Fihaki, Superintendent of Vahefonua Tonga O Aotearoa. From left to right: Andrew Doubleday (President MCNZ), Nasili Vaka'uta (Principal of Trinity College), Siosifa Pole (Director, Mission Resourcing) and Edwin Talakai (Vice-President, MCNZ). [Faita: Mapa Ha'angana Media Network].