

Touchstone

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

Changing Spaces



Aldersgate Centre, Christchurch city.



Crossway Community Church, Richmond Christchurch.

When the Christchurch earthquakes damaged and destroyed Methodist Church properties, many parishes were presented with an unexpected opportunity to rebuild or redevelop their sites. In this article we share the outcomes of four parishes that rebuilt complexes better suited to the congregations and communities they serve.

Each journey was different, and the new buildings provide examples what 'new church' can be and how the interface between community and congregation can be bridged in ways that go well beyond Sunday services.

ALDERSGATE - A PRIME SITE AND A BOLD DESIGN

The original church on Durham Street was home to the Christchurch Central Methodist Parish. The stone heritage building severely damaged by an earthquake on 4 September, collapsed after the 22 February 2011 quake, killing three workers who were removing the organ. In March 2020 an impressive new and vastly different building - complete with a large chapel, commercial office space, an apartment, generous interior meeting rooms and a sheltered courtyard - opened on the site.

Property Steward David Peach was involved in the project from the early stages and says that the congregation drove the redevelopment vision starting with brainstorming ideas that evolved into the mission brief for the replacement complex design. It took almost three years before Synod confirmed a rebuild. That decision came with a proviso that the new complex would be ecumenical, given the relatively small Methodist congregation.

The building committee explored options with Anglican and Quaker groups, but discussions stalled over the course of a year. It was eventually decided that a more viable and achievable co-sharing relationship could be established with Christian World Service and Christchurch Methodist Mission social services and youth housing as anchor tenants, providing the certainty of financial viability. A year was lost in ecumenical negotiations, but that delay was surpassed in the design phase that took almost four years, after the congregation rejected the initial design proposal as "too bland" for the prime, central city site.

David says balancing the budget versus cost was always contentious. Following numerous meetings and discussions with the Synod Property Advisory Committee (SPAC) and Methodist Connexional Property Committee (MCPC) an affordable and acceptable design proposal was eventually tabled. The site required \$450,000 site works before building could begin.

"The build was relatively straightforward. All the contractors performed, and the result was on time and within budget. Because of some final funding uncertainty, most of the technology was deferred. Also, the original pipe organ insurance settlement had to be used in the build, so we haven't been able to replace it although the current digital option is okay," David says.

Three years on, David reports that the outcome is as they intended, although budget constraints limited some of the hoped-for inclusions and this has created compromises in a complex that is used by many groups and organisations. He cites the example of the open-plan reception area that has been burgled on occasions. Compliance codes for access and egress meant the space could not be isolated as hoped. Also, high-end technology on doors has required ongoing maintenance when casual users

have ignored operating instructions. The meeting spaces and stunning auditorium / Chapel have been popular with many groups as the parish affirms its reputation as an inclusive welcoming and safe space for marginalised and diverse communities.

"The "multi-use" aspect causes a few frustrations with some parishioners as the sanctuary area is never "just as we like it" because of rearranging by groups the previous day however the congregation is delighted with the results and numbers on Sunday have maintained growth since we returned with several younger families and children of all ages now attending."

CROSSWAY COMMUNITY CHURCH

Shirley Methodist and North Avon Presbyterian churches had come together to form Crossway Community Church before the earthquakes. That well established union was advantageous to what became a long and protracted rebuild process involving consultation with numerous groups. Over a period of years there were several failed attempts to work in collaboration with other entities that seemingly shared an interest in combining resources.

Ultimately, the venture united three parishes and a community outreach service provider on a high-profile site in the suburb of Richmond. Rev Dr Joohong Kim has been the patient and faith-filled force behind many proposals that demanded considerable time and resources, before being deemed unworkable. If there was any advice he could offer it would be, "Be patient. Navigate what you can see. And trust in each other and in God".

Following the earthquakes, both the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches appointed advisors to work alongside parishes impacted to determine a vision and strategic plan. Consultation started

with congregations and then the wider community. Being displaced from their own church resulted in the Methodist congregation establishing close relationships with two new church communities, St Albans Uniting and the Delta Baptist Community who shared facilities, hospitality, and resources during challenging times.

At planning meetings, congregations were encouraged to dream of possible opportunities and explore a range of possibilities. One included the concept of working with the Christchurch City Council to rebuild a community centre with shared spaces for church and community outreach programmes. After protracted consultations, the CCC would not agree to sell the land to the church. Rev Kim says, "In the end the decision not to proceed was made for us - a City Council election changed the make-up of the Community Board and our proposal was rejected".

The easiest option would have been to rebuild on their original site but as it was not particularly visible in the community, they began to investigate other options. "Had we rebuilt on our former church site the process would have taken less time but would not necessarily have been the best decision," Rev Kim says.

At the time the Delta Baptist Community were considering repairs to their buildings following the earthquakes. "When the opportunity arose to work together and use our collective earthquake insurance money to build a combined facility and share spaces with the Delta Community Support Trust and the Baptist Church so we were not duplicating resources, we realised we could achieve something bigger and better for the community than we could alone. Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists building and working together? I think we were breaking new ground there," Rev Kim says, laughing.

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Changing Spaces

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It took years of planning and poring over the details as the collaboration involved designing a shared building and establishing a Relationship Agreement that required approval from the parent churches. Once approval was granted, the original buildings were demolished, and the new complex was built in stages. The Delta Trust building opened in 2019 and a year later Crossway was ready for its long-displaced tenants.

Rev Kim concedes that maintaining energy and enthusiasm for the project was sometimes difficult given the many setbacks and the state of the region and community impacted by the ongoing devastation of the quakes, insurance battles and dealing with so much loss.

The light, bright, warm and comfortable building is working particularly well for Crossway Church. Indoor and outdoor spaces provide excellent amenity for diverse users including children, youth, community groups and disabled adults. A secure courtyard provides a play area for children, and flowers and vegetables are flourishing in garden beds. State-of-the-art technology and audio visual equipment has been particularly useful during lockdowns.

The pandemic and increasing food costs have resulted in a huge demand for their foodbank. A lack of storage space to meet that need efficiently has meant Delta has overflowed into Crossway areas.

"We did anticipate the building being shared but sharing does not allow permanent set-up of spaces that have multi uses. That is something we have had to adjust to at times. Delta Trust and Crossway manage to work together without tension, so that's good. The Delta Baptist Church has now closed, and the Trust continues under the umbrella of the Regional Baptist Association. Some Crossway members are involved in the Trust and we have a seat on the Trust Board".

ST ALBANS UNITING PARISH

In 1996 the St Albans Uniting Parish was created as a Co-operative Venture (Union Parish) bringing together Presbyterian and Methodist congregations operating over three properties. The intention was that the two congregations would combine on one site, ideally suited to community-facing mission, and resourced with funds from the disposal of redundant properties. Bill Delaney, a member of the Methodist congregation since 1974, was a lay representative on the committee that progressed the initial moves to worship on the Aldred Centre site and drove decisions around the optimum use - and sale - of the combined parish properties.

"We always recognised that we would move to one site but getting to that point was a lengthy and painful process as both partner churches struggled with reaching consensus on implementing an effective strategic plan," says Bill, parish treasurer and redevelopment project manager.

Following many years of deliberation, debate and prayer, the parish shifted

worship to the well-appointed Aldred Centre site in 2010 and was preparing for the sale of both the Merivale Methodist and the St Albans Presbyterian properties. When the earthquakes occurred the Merivale heritage-listed church had been sold and the St Albans property was "under offer". The heavily damaged property was eventually sold in a modified offer.

The earthquake damaged Aldred Centre Hall was unavailable to its congregation as it was marginally below the New Building Standards (NBS) percentage compliance standards.

The options were:

- 1) Repair the hall to bring it up to standard. The cost to do this was significant and the congregation would be left with an aged church and hall.
- 2) Redesign and build a new complex.

The parish eventually chose the latter, a decision based on the age of the congregation; the advantages of a new building versus a modified old building; and the parish's financial assets. Bill Delaney, Bill Percy, and Rev Hugh Perry, were charged with bringing this about.

The design brief included a multi-purpose complex suited to worship and community gatherings, with all spaces easily accessible to everyone using the building, and ample parking. Lounge, church, and a generous and welcoming foyer should be interconnected and able to be divided as necessary, with easy access to kitchen facilities. An existing Men's Shed required additional space and the parish wanted adequate office space for staff.

Initial concept plans - a concrete slab with tilt-slab construction panels - came within the \$800,000 budget allocated to the project. However, subsequent post-quake zoning requirements from the Christchurch City Council necessitated a complete review of the design and construction, and major siteworks before any building could begin. The new plans blew the initial estimate to a projected cost of \$1.9 million.

Despite the protracted process in getting their new complex completed, Bill says the outcome is ideal for the parish and the numerous community groups that share the facilities. "Given the constraints we were under, we are delighted with the end result. The only minor irritation is the fact we are now high enough off the ground to warrant steps/a ramp, whereas the original concept was for a street level entrance to the facility."

CHRISTCHURCH NORTH METHODIST PARISH

The original church occupied by the Christchurch North Methodist Parish on the Chapel Street site was a traditional double-brick building constructed circa 1900, flanked by a hall constructed in the 1960s. The February earthquakes damaged both buildings and although the church was obviously no longer fit for occupation, the hall appeared usable. Subsequent engineering reports identified the hall structure was



St Albans Uniting Parish, St Albans Christchurch.



Chapel Street Centre, Papanui Christchurch.

compromised. For the next four years the congregation shared local parish St Joseph's hall as extensive consultations were undertaken with the congregation, home groups, other churches and parishes, and neighbouring commercial enterprises. Although the congregation was open to possible options, there didn't seem to be an appetite for establishing a cooperating venture says Richard Chalklen, Christchurch North Methodist Parish property secretary and project manager.

The parish and parsonage was located on a high-profile corner site opposite the Christchurch Methodist Mission, the properties separated by a busy road. Discussions eventually ruled out moving the parish to combine the organisations on a single site, however the congregation was unanimous in their desire for a building that complied 100 percent with the building code.

The hall and church, although repairable had already undergone many renovations over the years, rendering both buildings devoid of any classical architectural merit. The decision was made to use the \$4 million insurance settlement to build a new complex on the site. As one of the first parishes to commit to a rebuild, Richard says many others were watching the process.

The design brief was determined by the congregation. Deciding factors for the design were influenced by a novel road tour where the congregation was bussed around the region and invited to consider building design features that could benefit their project. Key features included a single level, wooden detailing, easily accessible for the elderly and with adaptable areas suitable for worship and community use.

Richard Dalman, a principal at Dalman Architecture, turned out to be an ideal choice to fulfil the design brief. Having lived in the area, he biked past regularly and had an understanding and sense of

the community and the site. The award-winning complex - Chapel Street Centre won an NZIA New Zealand Architecture National and Local Award for Public Architecture 2017 - barely differed from the original concept plans he presented to the parish council. The fact that the project came in on time and only .05 percent beyond the quoted price was down to the meticulous planning and project management of every detail in a complex that serves the needs of its congregation and the wider community incredibly well.

The design emphasises the centre's predominant function as a place of worship and the corner tower window references the spire that was an iconic feature of the original church. An open and inviting entrance, extensive glazing and many separate interior and exterior spaces are ideally suited to the community-orientated mission the parish has always favoured. Currently more than 35 groups use the facilities on a regular basis. The complex includes a double-height worship centre that seats 180, a sports hall, numerous interconnected and adaptable meeting rooms, a kitchen and a spacious foyer that doubles as a central gathering area. The use of an electronic booking system is highly effective in managing the logistics of hiring out the venue.

Richard admits that an initial oversight of GST inclusions could have been financially damaging, but the potential budget blowout was averted by cutting back on air conditioning and sound proofing. The deferred mezzanine area has since been added.

The first service was held on Christmas Day 2015 and the building was consecrated in January the following year. Richard says there is nothing the property council or the congregation would change if given the opportunity.



Awaken Maranga Mai 2023 and a Call to be Inclusive

Durham Street Methodist Church, also known as Aldersgate Centre, is an inclusive church located in central Christchurch. In March the church partnered with Diverse Church (Home - Diverse Church NZ) to host Awaken Conference, a special event for LGBTQIA+ Christians and allies as part of Christchurch Pride Week. Parish Superintendent Rev Philomeno Kinera, reports on the event and how being inclusive can bring about meaningful and positive change for a marginalised community.



In 2016 Diverse Church welcomed 120 LGBTQIA+ Christians and allies to All Saints in Ponsonby for the inaugural Awaken Conference. This was an incredible time of learning, as like-minded people focussed on empowering and equipping rainbow Christians in their faith. Since then, Diverse Church has hosted two additional Awaken Conferences, in Auckland in 2019 and Wellington in 2021.

Awaken this year was designed for the LGBTQIA+ (rainbow) community who identify as people of faith, along with youth workers, whanau, and church leaders wanting to engage with and learn about supporting and affirming this community.

Keynote speakers included Karl Hand, from Crave Church, Sydney, Steff Fenton, a queer gender pastor in Australia, and Dr Peter Lineham, renowned historian, professor emeritus, and religious commentator from New Zealand.

Attendees participated in a range of workshops including one jointly arranged with the Human Rights Commission (HRC) where attendees discussed the new law banning conversion practices.

Conversation centred on what it means for us, and what people from the rainbow community are saying they need to feel safe in their faith communities.

Caring for LGBTQIA+ youth can be challenging, especially when our churches are so conflicted. We began with a session specifically for youth leaders and workers, designed to help them be more effective with LGBTQIA+ youth - equipping them to understand how to create safe spaces, the importance of those spaces, how to have healthy conversations, and where to find support when required.

My Journey as an Ally

As a speaker for a workshop titled On being an ally or a good bystander for the LGBTQIA+ community, I shared my journey as a migrant with a deep faith tradition, based on the book of Micah chapter 6 verse 8.

And what does the LORD require of me here on earth "To be just, and to love [and to diligently practice] kindness (compassion), and to walk humbly with your God setting aside any overblown sense of importance or self-righteousness.

Being a minister gives me a platform to be an ally for the LGBTQIA+ community as I interact with people from various backgrounds, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. I have heard stories and seen instances of my LGBTQIA+ friends being held back in their professional growth and personal wellbeing at work, at family and community gatherings, and church. The stories can be heart-warming, moving and shocking. The commonality that binds us together is wanting to fit in and be accepted.

There comes a time we need to move beyond listening and become real allies, not just a good bystander, but an active participant. Before this can happen, we must confront and challenge our assumptions, prejudices, and unconscious bias.

Acknowledging my humanness opened a pathway to attending many meetings and support networking with Qtopia, and Rainbow Alliance. I was proud to be invited to attend the launch of the Indian Pride Origin at Parliament House - the only minister present. Part of being an ally to our LGBTQIA+ friends and loved ones means developing a true understanding of how the world views and treats them. To learn, we must be willing and open to truly listen.

The Aldersgate Approach

At Aldersgate, we work as a team encouraging and supporting one another to be inclusive. We have created an inclusive environment where LGBTQIA+ can be themselves, and that includes them feeling comfortable enough to be out. Taking risks, opening doors, and making connections with the existing LGBTQIA+ community and service providers gave us the confidence to launch our first PRIDE service in two years. It has grown from strength to strength.

Being an ally in and outside of work for many years has been a journey of learning and growth. It has taught me so much about others and myself. I have been amazed at the impact allyship can have on a personal and collective level.

New Testament scholar Marcus Borg, wrote, "In the last half-century, more Christians have left the church because of the Bible than for any other single reason." Many Christians have disengaged from trying to relate to texts that appear locked in a mindset that is trapped in a bygone age. I don't take the Bible literally.

As religious scholar Dominic Crossan teaches, "My point, once again is not that those ancient people told literal stories and we are now smart enough to take them symbolically, but that they told them symbolically and we are now dumb enough to take them literally". Christian fundamentalism is as perverse and dangerous as Jewish and Islamic fundamentalism.

Scripture should always be interpreted in the light of the Gospel and the Gospel is summed up in the LOVE of our neighbours. The over-arching narrative of the bible teaches us that God is LOVE and nothing in all of creation can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. We are not sent into the world to judge or to condemn. It is especially important now to speak up for inequality as one voice. For this to happen, we must first empower ourselves to be brave in our interactions, conversations, and actions. Understanding our privileges can help us to empathise with marginalised or oppressed groups.

Allyship has taught me, time and time again, to listen to the perspectives of others and let them guide my choices and actions in promoting all aspects of diversity. While allyship can be incredibly impactful on a personal level, its power also lies in the way it drives change in the workplace and broader society.

I am still learning on my allyship journey, but there are things I know for sure: being an ally is humbling, eye-opening and incredibly rewarding. I am a better person, and a better leader, for the relationships I have been lucky to build as an ally. Above all, allyship is incredibly powerful because it enables us all, through empathy and our willingness to listen and act, to drive real change.

St John's Community Church Celebrates Opening of New Extension



In July 2022, Touchstone featured an article on the redevelopment of the community church on Great Barrier Island. On Sunday 19 March 2023, the community gathered to celebrate the completion of the long-awaited and highly-anticipated extension project.

Rev Martin Baker, parish Presbyterian representative led the Sunday service, with support from Auckland friends sharing prayers and Maugapaia Ropeti-

lupeli, accompanying as a pianist. After greetings and fellowship, Patrick O'Shea gave a special karakia in Māori and English before inviting people involved in the project to reflect and comment on the convoluted, three-year journey.

Speakers included representatives from a variety of funding organisations and partner churches. They were thanked for their generous financial support and involvement that contributed to the creation of a welcome multi-use meeting place for church members and the wider Island community. Local tradespeople

and members of the community were also thanked for their practical and financial support. Project leader Teresa Manion-Wood said, "All these folk deserve a "gold star" because all have made this venture possible."

Five ecumenical church representatives blessed the new facility in prayer as they followed Rev Dianne Miller-Keeley, Anglican guest, sprinkling Holy water with fern fronds around the new extensions.

Guests then shared a barbeque lunch on the veranda, enjoying the view across the community garden and beyond to the surrounding green hills of Medlands Valley.

St John's Community Church Building Project Subcommittee team (Ben Sanderson, Kate Langford, Pat Sanderson, Doreen

Scott, and Teresa Manion-Wood) extend a special thanks to:

Ray Simpkin, Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian, & Catholic Churches, St John's

Community Church, local Community Board, St John's Op Shop, Awana Rural Women, and the local community for their fundraising support.



Methodist Trust Association

Income Distribution Rates to 31 March 2023

	March Quarter	12 Month Average
Income Fund	4.00%	2.85%
Growth and Income Fund	2.10%	2.07%

Income distributions for the quarter totalled \$2,419,283

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Vice President's Report, TeRito Peyroux-Semu.

Navigating Troubled Times

My freshly turned four-year-old son's current favourite toys are a pair of wooden [display] wheels he was gifted for his birthday. One is a Weather Wheel, where on it, he can move the dial to one of six different weather options (Sunny, Overcast, Windy, Frosty, Stormy and Raining) each illustrated in different sectors of the wheel.

The second is an Emotions Wheel, which is like the first one, but for each sector of this wheel, eight simple symbols for different emotions, ranging from *Frustrated* and *Worried* to *Excited* and *Loved* are included.

My son updates the weather wheel dial whenever he notices that the weather outside has changed; in Auckland, like many other parts of the country, this happens quite frequently. Whenever he wants to make his emotions explicitly known, everyone at our house is shown which sector of the Emotions Wheel he best identifies with at the time.

Google research revealed that although each wheel [or disc] was made and sold by the same company, they weren't sold in the pair in which they had been

gifted. But together, they make a profound pair. In my son's words, "This one (the Weather Wheel) is for the weather outside, and this one (the Emotions Wheel) is for the weather inside" as he points to his chest.

For various reasons, our current social climate seems to have been a lot more blustery and turbulent than usual, lately. In addition to tending to the aftermath of the weather extremes from earlier on this year, amongst my extended family and the wider communities that we are a part of, serious causes for concern and worry have also been raised as a consequence of anti-transgender and anti-co-governance rallies and attitudes, as well as the various counterprotest rallies and demonstrations to these.

Within our hāhi, hearing the serious historic and recently reported cases of abuse at Wesley College, and the concerns that led to the appointment of a statutory manager by the Education Review Office while a special review of the school continues, would have been a difficult experience for past and present students and their families, staff, the members of both boards and many of us who are connected to the school.

Furthermore, even as we continue to

review the work of many of our Connexional boards and committees, the criticisms, frustrations, scrutiny, and shared opinions about the work of different parts of our own Connexion, can be demanding.

This month, six months after our Bicentenary Conference, as we continue to navigate through what may seem to be very intense squall lines amidst different parts of our own

Connexional family, it is important to remember that much of the preparation for what we are currently moving through had already been forecast and reflected in the discussions and decisions that were made at Conference. Staying the course, while ensuring that we are connected to as many resources and tools that can assist us as we reflectively and discerningly continue to pave better ways forward, is vital. We can also take comfort in knowing that within our own hāhi, both historically and currently we are made up of many dedicated, knowledgeable,



courageous, and creative advocates and activists for social justice, social change, transformation, peace and healing. President Peter and I have had the privilege of meeting and working alongside many of these people already and we look forward to meeting and working alongside others in the future.

Towards the end of May we observe Wesley Day as well as the southern

hemisphere's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The theme for the latter is "Do good, seek justice" and I'm reminded again of my son's favourite pair of wheels.

Despite the times when the dial for our *social weather wheel* seems to be stuck on *Stormy*, my prayer, especially this month, is that the area in each of us, that my son refers to when he uses his Emotions Wheel, is empowered to feel the same strange and transforming warmth as John Wesley.

MISSION RESOURCING

Joint Resourcing

Rev Siosifa Pole, co-Director Mission Resourcing

The mandate of Mission Resourcing is to resource synods, parishes, and leaders for contemporary missions and ministry. Over the years, Mission Resourcing through its responsibility to administer the Ministries Development Grant has engaged with synods and parishes by offering them financial help to assist their mission in their local communities. Synods and parishes know well their contexts and possible mission opportunities and Mission Resourcing is happy to consult with these synods and parishes to enable them to fulfil their vision of establishing new mission opportunities.

There are many examples of the positive impact of the Ministries Development Grant on the mission of synods in their local context. I have asked Rev Barry Jones to share his story which reflects the joint effort of Mission Resourcing and Auckland Synod in supporting the outreach at Hobsonville Point.

How To Be Church in a New Housing Area?

Rev Barry Jones

That's the question the Auckland Synod asked at a strategic planning day held in 2016. Hobsonville Point is a new town being developed on the old Air Force base. When completed Hobsonville Point will have a population of over 15,500; bigger than many existing provincial towns in New Zealand.

I volunteered to be the facilitator of a small support team of lay people from the Takapuna congregation and the Te Atatu Union Parish, to pioneer a new expression of church in Hobsonville Point. Rev Andrew Gamman from the Whangaparaoa Parish suggested a model for establishing a church in the area and gave valuable 'hands-on' support for the initial phase of the project.

The name given to the Hobsonville Point project was "Discoverers," because it infers a commitment to explore and be adventurous in being church.

There were several challenges that Discoverers faced when they began meeting in February 2021.

- The developers of the Hobsonville Point town made no provision of land for church use. Rather than being a disappointment, it has been a creative challenge to meet in the Baffin lounge which is part of a large community facility. This has encouraged Discoverers to emphasise informality in its monthly gatherings. There are no pews in the lounge, only comfortable sofas and chairs!
- The Auckland Synod recognised that there was little point in trying to replicate in Hobsonville Point, traditional church practices that have limited appeal today. Rather something new needed to be pioneered. After its initial first gatherings, one of the participants suggested that Discoverers should promote itself as an informal church because that is the significant emphasis in its monthly gatherings.

Discoverers gatherings focus on themes that enhance personal wellbeing and the health of the community, encouraging interaction and sharing among the participants as they engage with Biblical insights. Discoverers is committed to the



Children and their parents make decorations at the pre-Christmas workshop.

development of spirituality that is life-centred, inclusive and world-affirming.

- Generally, the church has little appeal to people. This is no exception in Hobsonville Point. Before the Discoverers project commenced there was a letterbox drop to 800 homes in the area. That mailout generated no response from the community. However, Discoverers is committed to staying the distance. It recognises that it will take time to establish its credibility among the residents. Gavin Gunston, the Manager of the Hobsonville Community Trust, which oversees all the City Council's community facilities in Hobsonville Point, has encouraged Discoverers to keep on keeping on. He said, "Members of the community will be watching to see if Discoverers has the stamina to last the distance."

As a means of engaging with the community, Discoverers hosted a children's Christmas decorations workshop on the Sunday afternoon before Christmas 2022. The decorations were carefully chosen to illustrate the Christian significance of Christmas. A

short video was shown depicting the birth of Jesus using Lego block characters. Over 60 people attended, and Discoverers received positive feedback from participants.

Arising from its reflections on the teaching of Jesus about offering 'unconditional hospitality - no strings attached,' (Luke 12:12-14), Discoverers made a successful application to the Auckland Synod's "Dream Fund," for a grant to host community forums that would address issues facing three specific groups in the community; 1) migrants who are new to New Zealand and settling into a new community, 2) single women, some of whom are experiencing social loneliness, and 3) elderly residents who are vulnerable.

Since the beginning of the Hobsonville Point project, Discoverers has been generously supported by grants from the Auckland Synod and Mission Resourcing's Ministry Development Fund. Without that financial support, the project would not have been able to start, and subsequently restart after the long Covid-19 restrictions on social gatherings were lifted.



LETTERS

Many Thanks

I write to acknowledge and thank the following people who participated in the official opening service of the Baring Square Centre on Saturday 18 February, 2023.

To Piper Iain Isles, who gave the proceedings a stunning start, followed ably by singer Leanne Gichard.

To Reverend Kathryn Walters, District Superintendent, who opened the service and became M.C.

To Mayor Neil Brown, who acknowledged the Ashburton District Council's association with the Methodist Church and neighbourly support.

To our Tongan family who provided cultural entertainment and showcased our combined church family association. Well done boys!

To Rev. Norman West, who spoke of past memories and ministers and shared amusing incidents and advice for the future.

To Rev. Peter Taylor, President of the Methodist Church of New Zealand and our parish minister in 2010, who looked back to the earthquake event, acknowledged the work involved in the restoration and

unveiled our opening plaque.

David Leadley who provided the power point presentation along with the order of service, photos of construction work and acknowledgments. Thank you David, you kept us on time.

To the pianists, Ann Allot, Ruth Clucas and Stuart Grant. Leading the congregation of 200 strong singers, was wonderful (a joy) to hear... acoustically superb. We look forward to having the organ restored to its former glory later in the year.

To the Silver Band Committee for providing afternoon tea.

We acknowledge the huge task undertaken by Rangzen, Rushton Architects and McIntosh Construction.

Finally, we thank all the local people who joined us for our celebration. The venue is available for meetings, productions, cultural, choir, lecture, educational, and musical events. Our wish is for it to be used by the community.

Yours sincerely, Judith Crozier

On behalf of the Ashburton Methodist Parish Restoration Committee (Ruth Bilverstone, Brian Leadley, Brian and Rothery Reesby, and Alister Smyth.

Nobody should walk alone

In the April issue of *Touchstone*, Michael Lemanu shared his memories of stress as a young youth leader doing a full-time study, having two part-time jobs and family responsibilities. Thank you, Michael. But let us not get bogged down in detail. You raised an intergenerational problem in the church that needs to change.

The business of finding someone to do a task in the local church and then leaving them to it without support can be a form of betrayal. Appointing someone is not necessarily a problem solved. It can be simply passing the parcel.

Those appointed to tasks in the church

are entitled to the intentional provision of continuing pastoral care. Personal support and an awareness of the challenges of the task undertaken are required. I look back with gratitude to times when a school teacher and an artist offered their services.

No leader and no church member is exempt from giving or receiving pastoral care. Singing "Brother, sister, let me serve you" without caring may be sound religion but more is asked of us. The mind of Christ and living life in his Spirit.

Laurie Michie, North Shore

MCNZ Facebook Page Content

I am very proud that our church has a long history of women playing roles at all levels from President of Conference to minister and also playing a vital role in keeping our church going and serving our communities. My church in Papatoetoe acknowledged International Women's day thus in our bulletin: "Let us recognise and celebrate all women of our own Wesley family, both those who are here with us now and those who are no longer with us in this world - for their contributions to families, communities and achievements in life." Fitting and appropriate.

I am also proud that the Methodist Church of New Zealand has supported the rights of same sex attracted people, has accepted gay and lesbian ministers and also the right of same sex attracted people to marry.

However, I was shocked and disappointed that the church's Facebook page chose to honour Georgina Beyer on International Women's Day, completely ignoring the achievements of the women in our church. This felt incredibly regressive and misogynistic to me. Regardless of what Georgina had achieved, pride month would have been a more appropriate month than International Women's Day. Acknowledgement of the death did not have to come under an International Women's Day banner.

This seems to be a political position stating that trans women are indeed women. This is contested by many people because of problems with women losing places in women's sports and facing stronger, more aggressive males in contact sports, problems with heterosexual men who are attracted to women and have not had any transgender surgery being placed in women's prisons affecting the dignity and safety of women. This is happening all over the world and in New Zealand. Lesbian women are being told they are transphobic if they do not accept trans women as dating partners.

This has not been decided. We cannot assume the fight for women's rights are over when women are subject to violence, when prostitution and pornography are rife throughout the world and prostitution is legal in our country and still dangerous and harmful to the women in it. Surrogacy is another issue where women's bodies are commodified. Just because these issues mainly affect poor and marginalised women is no reason to assume they don't matter and women's places can be given to men.

I would suggest our church Facebook be more carefully moderated as it is part of the online face of the church

Yours sincerely, Dawn Trenberth

Member of Wesley Methodist Church Papatoetoe.

HONEST TO GOD

Ian Harris

Creation Today

How did the world begin? What has that to do with the threat to life and wellbeing posed by today's climate crisis? How is religion relevant to this?



Ian Harris.

not a crowning glory of the earth, but the instrument of its degradation."

The only way we can set things to rights is to turn away from destructive technologies, lifestyles and values. Turn away: the biblical word for that is "repent".

For that, I suggest we strip ourselves of any notion that we're the pinnacle of creation and embrace the new story of how we came to be here in the first place, which I see as the great gift of science to the world and the church.

That transforming story, which takes not six days but 13.7 billion years to unfold, exalts the earth and gives us a new perspective on our place within the wondrous miracle of life. It tells us that along with the universe, the planet and all life forms on earth, we humans are products of stardust and time. From the Big Bang that set the process off, earth has been continually evolving, geologically, physically, and biologically, and human life is just part of that process - not above it or below it, but an intrinsic part of it.

We're not creatures poised halfway between demons and angels and with the potential to go either way: we're earthlings. Our life here is almost certainly all the life we shall ever know. It's here that we must find meaning and purpose, here we must work out our salvation and find our wholeness as creatures of the universe. It's here we must make sense of God, and work towards a spirituality that accords with all this.

And it's here that we must rid ourselves of any lingering notion that the human species is free to lord it imperiously over nature. We have to replace that with an awareness that we're but one strand in the grand reality of nature, and every strand is to be nurtured and valued.

That said, the human species has developed one unique attribute: we constitute the consciousness of the planet. We possess a vibrant awareness of the earth, and increasingly of each other, in a way no other life form shares.

Consciousness alone is not enough, however. It needs a mate, conscience, to enable us to respond properly to the great salvation/destruction question of our time, namely: How should we humans live upon the earth so that our presence enhances not just ourselves, not just human life, but the planet itself?

More on that another day.

To the first question, every culture and religion has its own answer. The traditional one for Christianity is summed up in the hymn All Things Bright and Beautiful: the divine creator did it all - every detail, from sunset and the morning to a flower's glowing colours and a bird's tiny wings.

The idea of a God with a grand purpose for creation made supreme sense for centuries, and for many it still does. But today there's another explanation of our origins that's much more promising for thinking theologically about the world as we know it now.

If the churches are to engage seriously with that world, they need to find a perspective on "creation" which grows out of the Judaeo-Christian heritage, yet also takes account of the huge explosion of knowledge that has occurred over the past 400 years.

That's because those years have radically changed our understanding of everything under the sun.

Wherever we turn, we experience the world very differently from the way our grandparents did. Few of us would want to turn our backs on this new knowledge and what it offers. Yet cumulatively, it's those very changes, along with a rapidly expanding population, that imperil our future. Humanity, long exalted as "a little lower than the angels", does seem to be slowly, blindly, defiantly destroying the earth's ability to sustain us.

The industry as we've come to know it carries massive risk for the future of the human species, and it isn't letting up. For example, a Guardian investigation revealed last year that the world's biggest fossil fuel corporations have 195 projects on their books, most of them already underway. Each would detonate carbon bombs of at least a billion tonnes of carbon dioxide.

"Unchecked greed," says the Guardian, "is driving us ever closer to the abyss." American monk and eco-theologian Thomas Berry dismally sums up: "Our ultimate failure as human beings is to become



Not Your Usual Meeting



Long Bay Beach, from the Vaughan Park Retreat Centre.
Credit Miles Hadley.

Rev Tara Tautari, General Secretary MCNZ

In my work, there are many meetings to be attended. The buzz of notifications across my computer screen is a constant, alerting me to the next virtual or in-person experience. On any given day, a surfeit of engagement springs forth demanding all of one's attention and time, and my ability to digest and parse large amounts of information is continually put to the test. Sometimes it can feel like information overload.

So it is always with real pleasure and a sense of great privilege that I am able to enter into the space of the wānanga, which in many ways is the antithesis of modern meeting culture. Wānanga in this context is a Māori term that refers to a particular style of meeting and learning environment, a model and process for the acquisition and transfer of knowledge, a meeting of hearts and minds that are willing to explore and discern together.

And so it was that a couple of weeks ago, a gathering of ten people came together for a

wānanga on the Church's decade theme on climate justice "Rekindle the Vā of Papatūānuku." There was great diversity in our group. We had Taha Māori and Tauīwi members, ordained and lay people, young and old, we were gender diverse, some of us came from academia, one of us had a lived experience of disability, we had specialists in the area of climate change and climate justice. We had Connexional leadership present, and each person came with a kete full of knowledge and experience, ready to share.

We gathered at Vaughan Park Retreat Centre, at the south end of Long Bay Beach, North Shore, Auckland. I make mention of the environment deliberately, as respect and reverence for the natural world/ te ao tūroa, is an important tikanga of wānangā. This involves acknowledging the spiritual significance of the environment and recognising that we are not separate from the natural world, but rather a part of it. From our opening karakia on the beach to the closing karakia gathered outside in a sacred circle, our entire wānanga experience was accompanied by the presence of the sea and the sound of the surf.

Another tikanga of wānanga is the emphasis on the transmission of knowledge through oral tradition. This involves the sharing of stories and other forms of traditional knowledge from one generation to the next, ensuring that knowledge is passed down in a way that strengthens shared values. Our storytelling began in the evening of the first day and I share some small snippets that came in response to the question "What is your first memory connecting to nature?"

"My earliest memory is of touching grass. When I was small, it was common for me to go barefoot. The older I got, the more things I put on between myself and the earth."

"I have memories from way back of climbing in trees and making huts and underneath those trees there was a creek, you probably call it a ditch. And there were eels in that ditch and I can remember catching them, so that is the memory I am going to share. I decided to share it because catching those tuna and being aware of those tuna is probably one of my earliest memories of any biodiversity, which wasn't part of a colonist plan. Those tuna and their ancestors were here before the colonists were."

"My earliest memory connecting to the land, was in 2018, when my dad called the family to go back home to Tonga. I remember that the first day I got there we all went to where my grandfather was buried. Every family has a cemetery and my dad's family cemetery is right beside the beach. Once we landed we all just walked to the beach to see grandpa and I felt home as we walked towards the cemetery. I walked passed the cemetery and went right to the sand and standing on the sand looking out to the ocean that was the first time I really connected to the land."

The wānanga was not your usual meeting. In many ways for all of us present, it was an opportunity to slow down and go deep, exploring our understanding of the vā, and what it means to connect with Papatūānuku as well as understanding intersectionality and climate justice. The fruits of this wānanga will be seen at Conference this year, when we launch a resource for churches to engage with the theme "Rekindle the Vā of Papatūānuku."

Glossary

Wānanga - term used in Māori culture to refer to a type of higher education institution or learning environment, as well as a process of acquiring and transmitting knowledge.

Vā - term used in many Pacific cultures to denote the space between, relationship

Papāūānuku - Earth mother

Kete - basket, kit

Te Hahi Weteriana o Aotearoa Year 1 on Zero Waste

Siniva Isaia, Climate Justice Working Group

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, Engari he toa takitini.

My strength is not as an individual but as a collective.

What is the Spirit saying to us as we journey through this ongoing and intensifying challenge of climate? How can we adapt and change in the face of all this rapid change to our landscape and environment? As we reflect and engage in conversation with one another, how can we support one another and learn together?

Ngahuru Autumn, is the season for harvest, a time of turning leaves, cooling temperatures and darkening nights. As we witness nature's changes, we as Kaitiaki of the whenua must make decisions around our response to rapid environmental changes.

The Climate Justice Working Group continues to seek knowledge and advice to support Te Hahi as we start our 10-year journey of 2023 - 2033 of Climate Justice. What are you, your household, your congregation your Synod doing to claim justice for our environment?

Ecclesiastes 3, shares with us, "There is a time for everything. Time to observe, time to listen and time for action. Now is the time to act, step up, and continue our role as stewards of our whenua, our land, and our environment.

This is a year for laying foundations; facilitating conversation and fostering enthusiasm and commitment to engage and act. Many of our parishes, rohe and Synods are already well informed and taking action. We encourage all individuals, aiga, rohe, committees, and congregations to:

Reduce (most preferred option), Reuse & Recycle.



Let's take a leap into an unknown space as we adapt, and embrace new learnings, awareness and conversations around the seasons:

Autumn - Ngahuru, Spring - Koanga, Summer - Raumati, Winter - Makariri.

The seasons offer the ripe potential for theological reflection, study resources, worship and first action steps. Seasonal happenings and changes in the natural world can deepen our understanding of Zero Waste. Creation and nature don't 'do' waste! It is an alien concept when we think ecologically. We encourage Te Hahi to connect with nature and to learn from it.

Some 2023 Environment Days for you to consider and engage in:

- June 5** World Environment Day
- June 16** World Refill Day (to avoid plastic pollution)
- July** Plastic-Free July
- September** Second-Hand September (buy second-hand)
- Sept 19** World Clean-Up
- Sept 29** Day of Awareness of Food Loss & Waste
- Nov 24** Buy Nothing' Day

We welcome your ideas, stories, and feedback. Please email marionhines@xtra.co.nz



Top Tips for Hosting Online Meetings and Events



Peter Lane

Covid-inspired advances in the adoption of remote presence technology and videoconferencing have the potential to create benefits, but like all technologies, there is also the potential to create significant disadvantages, often due to people trying to do more with the system than it was intended to achieve.

In the context of remote meetings by video conference, this often takes the form of assuming that people develop a relationship with each other just as well over video as they do in "real life". Typically, the relationships people form using video-only forums take longer to form, are not as deep and break down more easily than the relationships between groups

that meet in person. This is important to understand, as particularly in governance contexts, the relationship between meeting members directly contributes to the meeting's effectiveness. Video calls let people fill in a speaker's intent and motivation more than text-only or voice-only communication, but this is kick-started by having pre-existing

face-to-face relationships.

All the tips and hacks we have learned to make running meetings easier in a lifetime of face-to-face meetings, now need to be re-learned (or discarded) to suit the digital meeting medium we tend to use. This article presents tips for running meetings and events online to mitigate this issue. "Meetings and Events" is a large scope, and not all events will need the same level of attention. Each meeting will have its own requirements for formality, record-keeping, interaction and relationship; and these requirements will translate into different ways to manage the specific meeting.

Planning and Preparation

Because video communication leaves out a lot of the subliminal content we unconsciously take for granted for in-person meetings, good planning and pre-meeting communications are arguably even more important.

- Set up the meeting and invitation as far in advance as possible, and configure it so that participants can join the meeting (at least to the waiting room) before the meeting and encourage them to check they can access the meeting with all the audio, video, sharing etc working as they expect. For a presentation or seminar, you may even consider doing a "dry-run" with the presenters.
- Produce a "running sheet" for the event. This is like an agenda but is typically more detailed and focused on the production requirements, not the content. It could indicate things like timings, backgrounds, and resources needed when things like notices need to be put in the chat, when videos need to be played etc.

Minutes

It is really, really hard to both run a meeting and take good notes and contrary to a lot of opinions expressed to me, this doesn't get easier in an online context. In fact, if the host has to manage the technology as well, they are then to do three things at the same time instead of two.

- Appoint someone whose job is to take notes. If you need to do more than fire up the meeting and share a screen once or twice, appoint someone else to manage the technology. If it's even mildly complex, consider producing a running sheet for them.

- Consider using a software notetaker. With the surge in AI that's happening in the tech space just now, there are some significant advances. I've been playing with a Zoom plug-in called Fathom AI notetaker and the results are impressive. At a recent meeting, I was impressed by the two-sentence summaries it generated on the fly for each section of the meeting.

Screen sharing

- If you are sharing a document or a PowerPoint slide, consider logging into the meeting from a separate computer (no camera or microphone needed) and sharing the document from there. Then you can Pin the screen or remove it as required. You can also pin the document side by side with the speaker, giving a much better view of the speaker than Zoom's default thumbnail view.

Running the Meeting or Event

- When hosting a video call with a large group, try to ask specific questions to specific people, and use their names when doing so. This establishes who will be answering the question and avoids the ever-awkward "No, you go ahead. No, you!" situation.
- If you (or your technical delegate) need to share information in the Chat during the meeting, set all the information up

beforehand in a document, then cut and paste it at the relevant time. This avoids getting it wrong at the crucial moment or forgetting. Don't forget to put the name and location of the file in the running sheet!

Consider these golden rules for better video meetings (adapted from a Trello™ blog post):

- Use video for strengthening existing relationships.
- Have equipment that works - test it before your meeting.
- Look professional and aim for a professional-looking, smooth flowing delivery.
- Ensure everyone feels included.
- Set up team rules to make video meetings more manageable. Rules should match the requirements and purpose of the meeting. Eg, if you are running a brainstorming meeting, preventing people from speaking till called on may be counterproductive.

Peter Lane is Principal Consultant at System Design & Communication Services and has over 30 years of experience with Technology systems. We invite your questions, suggestions and ideas for articles. These can be submitted either through the editor or by email to dct@dct.org.nz. We also operate a website focused on building a community of people interested in improving how we can use technology in churches, located at www.dct.org.nz.

ELECTION ISSUES

Income Security & Wealth Distribution

Carol Barron, National Coordinator

In Aotearoa New Zealand, between the 1950s and the 1980s, wealth and income used to be shared more evenly, however this changed dramatically over the following two decades when we had the biggest increase in income inequality in the world.

This is only half the story though, as income is much easier to measure than wealth. Wealth is much more unequally distributed than income and is often accumulated through untaxed inheritances or capital gains on property. The richest 10 percent of income earners have 27 percent of all after-tax income, while the wealthiest 10 percent of the population have 59 percent of all wealth. These are not necessarily the same people, as a pensioner living in their Auckland house worth \$3 million may rely on New Zealand Superannuation as their only income.

Inequality connects wealth and poverty as they are at the opposite ends of the same spectrum, so they need to be looked at together.

A spectrum of wealth and poverty could look like this:

1. Complete reliance on the kindness of

strangers for sustenance - deep poverty.

2. Your income is above average, but you are overcome with envy and a feeling of inadequacy towards those who earn more than you - deep psychological poverty.
3. You have a large income and net worth that was acquired in a way that brings active disdain from people who would otherwise want to like you - socially bankrupt.
4. Your lifestyle expectations consistently grow faster than your income and assets - adaptive poverty.
5. You have so much money you can do nothing, and doing nothing leads to boredom at best and self-destruction at worst - ironic poverty.
6. You have a large income and net worth which you are satisfied with, but your career and assets are fragile, leveraged, and will disappear when the world shifts only a little, leaving you yearning for the money you used to have and became accustomed to - pent-up poverty.
7. You have a job you love, surrounded by people you enjoy working with but one that does not pay well and leaves you vulnerable and stressed about your finances - financial poverty, life wealth.

8. You have a large income and net worth that was made in a job you hate that requires such long hours that it derails your social and family life - financial wealth, life poverty.

9. You can go to bed and wake up when you want to. You have time to exercise, eat well, learn, think slowly, and clear your calendar when you want it to be clear - health wealth.

10. You could stop working tomorrow, and your lifestyle could remain the same for the indefinite future. You can, and want to use your wealth to help others because you care about them, not because it will make you look good or make them beholden to you, but because of the social cohesion it creates - financial and social wealth.

How our economy is structured determines how wealth is distributed and shared. Do we want a society that values individuals ahead of communities and discourages the government from collecting more tax from the wealthy, as it is viewed as punishing "successful people?" Society is stronger and everyone better off when the government shows compassion towards those who are struggling due to a range of drivers like ill health, discrimination, difficult upbringing, and bad luck. In these communities, governments ask for a greater tax contribution from wealthy people, and invest more in social support,

infrastructure (including for housing), education and health services for the benefit of all people.

Societies which are more equal have higher functionality and productivity, more cohesion, and are healthier than their unequal counterparts. Many recent polls in Aotearoa show that most people are concerned with our widening inequality and the associated negative effects. The majority of New Zealanders support a more even distribution of wealth than we currently have. So why isn't this happening?

As a society we need to look at the drivers of inequality like racism, discrimination, colonisation, and disability. We need to have the courage to sit in that most uncomfortable space, to hear these stories, to accept the reality of hurt, injustice, and anger, and to advocate for change in society. As Moira Lawler would say, "It doesn't have to be this way."

The Methodist Alliance's working group campaigning to increase benefit and abatement rates has drafted a resource to look at the issues of income security, wealth distribution and debt to government. It contains questions to consider, stories to reflect on, and questions for parliamentary candidates. We hope this will be a well-used resource to help us make Aotearoa a more just and inclusive society where everyone can flourish.



Rev Andrew Doubleday, UCANZ

As I write, the Australian government has reset the way New Zealanders may access citizenship in their country, returning to close to what it was in the 1990s. I was interested to hear Christopher Luxon, leader of our parliamentary opposition, express concern that we could see a 'brain drain' to Australia. This is a possibility. I'm not sure that putting up punitive disincentives to prevent it is the best option. Already 700,000 Kiwis live across the 'ditch'. We need to lift our game, so that current and future New Zealand citizens can see the positive advantages of living here. Rather than forcing people to stay, surely we would WANT them to?

There's a parallel here for the church. So often we default to erecting a fence, to keep the people we want / have in - warning them of the dangers on the other

Being Drawn to Stay



Uniting Congregations
OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

side of the fence. And we're hoping others will peer through the wires, like the look of our gated community and want to join us. The other option is the model of the well, or fire, around which we can gather - that draws people to it. No fences. What is it most genuinely authentically about us that people will find a place of connection with? And want to join in.

The last few months have allowed me the joy of preaching in several CVs. They are unlike any 'pure' denominational church. I understand why some 'ministers' prefer them.

I've discovered a vitality that the churches themselves seem unaware of. They are all churches I would have happily served

in as their presbyter. Assuming they could afford me. And not all could. I may be romanticising my experience, yet I detected an openness to different ways of doing that I suspect are inherent in being part of a CV. There's a genuine sense of community that transcends traditional/denominational ways of doing things. Each denomination has its own particular culture - often unrecognised as being peculiar to those immersed in it. Much as a fish fails to recognise the water it swims in.

While CVs can complain loudly about the strictures of having to answer to a variety of church courts, perhaps how we see could be reframed. I've commented before, that in my previous role, MCNZ issued Covid guardrails without any

reference to partner denominations. They did the same. Three different sets of guidelines. Although UCANZ suggested going with the Methodist requirements because they were the strictest, parishes were able to choose for themselves. And they did. Much to my annoyance at the time - Lynne and I walked away from our 'local', when on getting to the door we were informed that they'd taken a vote and decided to be Presbyterian on this matter. They got to choose. Visiting CVs has pointed to this underlying freedom which I suspect they don't recognise themselves - again, like fish not recognising the water.

As we move into an uncertain future, there needs to be an openness among us to different ways of doing and being church. Societal needs, and basic human needs for forgiveness, validation, meaning and purpose, connection, and security remain unchanged. CVs can potentially be well-positioned to meet these needs. They tend to be 'community' churches - of the community, in the community - and can be experienced as places that draw people to them. It is that sense of belonging that will ultimately hold us in - not fences or gates.

NZLPA; Relevant and Enlightening

Lute Taufalele-Vute, NZLPA

There is something nostalgic about going back to a place you once called home. I felt this way as I flew into Dunedin for the New Zealand Lay Preacher's Association (NZLPA) Strategic Planning weekend, 10 - 12 February. Humbled by the invitation I received at MCNZ Conference 2022, from the current President Namulau'ulu Taotua Leaoa Josh Robertson, I wasn't sure what the weekend would offer. I did think there would be a lot of talking.



Lute Taufalele-Vute.

Greeted with a blue sky and crispness in the air on Saturday morning, we drove past my old high school, Kaikorai Valley College and onto St Margaret's Church in Green Island. Rachael Masterton's Opening Devotion invited us to think about what we factor in when we are planning to go away on holiday. Is the proximity of family and friends a factor? Does the cost involved factor in the decision of where to go? Whatever the reasons, we can find ourselves in places where we otherwise might not have planned to be, but perhaps were 'meant' to be.

After a brief welcome by Josh, and introductions, we moved on to the agenda.

The group was split in two to discuss questions about the Constitution, and

whether there needed to be changes made.

A question that intrigued me was, 'Was the NZLPA still relevant as an organisation?' I think this is a very important question to ask if only for accountability.

That evening the committee hosted a dinner for local lay preachers, that combined amazing food and collegiality.

There were no competing stories between denominations, no tally chart of how many services one had taken the previous year. Just new friends getting to know each other over a meal, with the commonality of preaching the 'Good News'. Sunday morning was spent wrapping up unfinished business at Caversham Presbyterian

Church Hall, then lunch together before departing for the airport.

My experience at the NZLPA gathering was an enlightening one. The Executive Committee is a committed group, aware of its capabilities in terms of 'staying relevant' for its more tech-savvy members and actively encouraging parishes and synods to host gatherings.

I urge all current and prospective lay preachers to check out the NZLPA website, join the association and seriously consider serving a term on the Executive Committee, as there are upcoming vacancies. Being a member of the NZLPA is an opportunity to be a part of a team of people who are passionate about encouraging and recognising the work of lay preachers throughout New Zealand.

Light Invades the Darkness

Annabella Third

2023 is the year of adventure and change for me. I am no longer living at home and at 18, I am officially an adult. In the middle of February, I moved to Dunedin to attend Otago University. This has been a time of much fun and new experiences, however, the adjustment from living with my family in a large home on a farm just outside Auckland to living in a shoebox-sized dorm room has not been so easy. The constant noise that comes with living next to a hospital and helipad is far from the quiet bliss of home. The view of paddocks and grass has been traded for that of other buildings.

However, I've grown to love my little space. The morning sun floods my room when I open my curtains. This is a constant reminder that although this isn't my normal home, God is good, and he sees me. The light invades the darkness. When I'm missing home the light comes through. When I sit at my desk studying for hours and I start to get tired, the sun beaming through reminds me of the goodness of God.

He is the light in our lives. No matter where we are in life physically and spiritually, God can flood our space with light and life.

It reminds me of the common blessing from Numbers chapter 6. The LORD blesses you and keeps you; The LORD makes His face shine upon you. And be gracious to you; The LORD lifts up His countenance upon you and gives you peace."

I love this verse. It was the blessing we said often at church and is in one of my favourite worship songs. I envisage God looking down at me smiling and I feel the warmth and love from his glory. I am reminded of the grace, love, and peace that God gives us. This ties in well with the Easter message we have all just been hearing. When Jesus was crucified on the cross, it says the world went dark. Darkness is a place of sadness and mourning. Except as we know the story did not end there. After three days Jesus rose from the dead conquering the grave. I imagine the world was not so dark then but full of his wondrous light.

After Easter, as we remember his sacrifice, we can rejoice together as Christians in the glory of God, for Christ is risen. In John 1:4 it says, "In him was life and the life was the light of men." The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it. Whenever you feel you may be in darkness, look for the light. I'm sure it will find you.



Vigilance Required to Avoid Being Scammed

Ruby Manukia Schaumkel

Scammers and robbers are becoming more sophisticated, so we need to be extra vigilant. Scammers are trying everything they can to hack into computers to obtain people's codes and passwords. It is necessary to take precautions and to set up extra security to be verified by you.

For example, some members of the public are receiving scam letters from the Taxation Review Authority on Ministry letterhead claiming that other parties' assets are stored in their trusts. These letters are fake and should be ignored. You may receive notification from your bank asking for your personal code and password. These messages should be ignored. Some customers have received fake bank email messages asking them to upgrade their bank account to receive funds from a fake buyer on social media. Examples include:

- Payment on hold until verification process is completed.
- You have a pending payment of \$500.00 NZD.
- Notification additional payment received >>> Urgent step needed.

If you have someone contact you about



buying an item on social media and then receive an email message, Do Not click on any of the links.

Remember:

- The bank will never send you an email or text message with a link requesting you to click to log in.
- Scammers hide fake websites behind genuine-looking links.
- Always log in to Internet Banking through the bank's website or the bank's app, not from links in text messages or emails.
- A text from your bank is not a sign that their systems have been breached in any way - it simply means a scammer is impersonating their brand.
- Visit your bank's recognising scams page and watch their video to learn the common signs of a scam to look out for.

Thieves and robbers are becoming more sophisticated, often impersonating police officers, council workers or salespeople. Never let anyone into your house without proof of proper identification or authority. If you are unsure do not open the door.

Recently in Auckland, three guys wearing police uniforms entered a house occupied by international students, after presenting a fake search warrant. One of the thieves stayed with the students, pretending to question

them about a tip-off concerning illegal firearms in the home, while the other two fake officers went through the home pocketing personal items including cash and car keys. Genuine police officers arrived around 30 minutes after the thieves left. The students were not able to return home for two days while police searched the property and looked for fingerprints. Police recommend anyone dealing with a representative or agency to question their identification if they are unsure. If something does not feel right, contact the police as soon as possible.

Scams - there are many ways people try to scam you. The scams might be online, through email, the internet and social media or the scammers may come to your door or contact you by mail, phone or text.

Common scams include:

Phishing - an email or text that tries to trick you into providing your personal details.

Computer virus scams - where you get a phone call saying your computer has been infected with a virus, which the caller can fix, if you give them your credit card details and remote access to your computer.

Investment scams - you are offered the chance of high returns for very little risk.

Inheritance or lottery and competition scams - where you're told you've inherited or won money, but you need to pay a fee or taxes before you can get your winnings.

Online dating scams - where a person

you have only met online and have become romantically attached to starts asking for money or wants your personal details.

Door-to-door scams - someone knocks on your door and offers to do a job for you for an upfront fee, and then does it badly or not at all.

Phone scams - someone calls pretending to be from a government department or a well-known company and asks for your personal information.

Identity theft - people try to find out your personal details and passwords so they can use your details to steal money or set up fake identities.

What to do if you've been scammed

If you think - or know - you have been scammed, report it to your bank and to NetSafe's website. Call Freephone: 0508 638 723 (NZ only).

NetSafe will get back to you with advice and may also pass your report to another agency, such as the police or Consumer Protection. You can report a cyber security issue through CERT NZ. To protect yourself from scams, put security measures in place. On your phone and computer: use different, hard to guess passwords, such as a mix of numbers, letters, upper and lower case. Put a PIN on your phone and do not reply to unsolicited emails or texts or click on links in them. Use security software on your computer and keep it up to date. Otherwise, report to complaint@spam.govt.nz

We must be more vigilant now than ever before for scams.

A day in the life of a Youth Worker

Carol Barron, National Coordinator

Our Methodist Alliance members offer services from the cradle to the grave to whānau around Aotearoa New Zealand. Our members employ about 650 full time equivalent staff and have over 720 volunteers working to support over 4,000 whānau every year.

Methodist Mission Southern (MMS) has been operating their youth transition housing model since early 2018 and has houses supporting young people in Dunedin (YTH Ōtepoti) and Invercargill (YTH Waihōpai).

The YTH model supports 16-19-year-olds who would otherwise be homeless to successfully transition to independent living. Support includes developing essential life skills, creating education and employment pathways, and enhancing their physical, mental and social resilience.

This service addresses the specific challenges faced by young people who are homeless - a group that frequently slips between the cracks in housing statistics. MMS works closely with a number of local service providers to best meet the needs of these young people to achieve the best possible outcomes.



Loretta Holland.

Loretta Holland has been working as Supervisor YTH Ōtepoti for eight months and she describes what a day in her life looks like.

Q) What do you enjoy most about your work?

I enjoy knowing that I am making a difference in our residents' lives. I find it so inspiring to watch our rangatahi, many who have come from difficult challenges, start to thrive and find their place in the world. It is a privilege being able to be part of this.

Q) What does a typical day look like for you?

I'm a single mum to an amazing 12-year-old boy, so we hang out a lot. I'm also on placement at Mirror HQ youth addiction services during the day and do one to two afternoon shifts at the Ōtepoti youth transition house during the week. My days are very busy but also very fulfilling.

Q) What is on your to-do list?

I'm currently studying a Te Taketake Diploma in Applied Addictions Counselling at the Moana House Training Institute programme, which is offered in partnership with Otago Polytechnic. My goal is to be a Youth Alcohol and Drug Clinician. My goal is to help people stuck in the cycle of addiction pull themselves out of this cycle.

Q) What excites you most about your

mahi?

I love that feeling that comes with knowing I have been able to make someone's day a little bit better through empathy, kindness, understanding and connection.

Q) What have you learned since you started?

So many things! I've learned how much need there is for our services. I've learned how stunningly brave and resilient our residents are. I've also learned to lean on my co-workers and draw from their vast wealth of knowledge and experience.

Q) If you could change two things about the world, what would you change & why?

The level of divisiveness and hatred our country is experiencing around topics such as cultural and LGBTQI+ awareness to name a few.

The stigma around mental health and addiction and the lack of resources available in these areas.

These changes would make the world a better place for everyone to live in and for my son to grow up in.

Q) If you could give one piece of advice, what would it be?

"Be who you are, and say how you feel, because those who mind don't matter, and those who matter don't mind".

I love this quote from Dr Seuss' *Cat in the*

Hat so much I had it tattooed on my arm

Q) What is worth smiling about right now?

Watching my son navigate the world with so much kindness, caring, fierceness and bravery. I am looking forward to smashing my goals and having a career where I can truly make a difference...having a path with a heart.

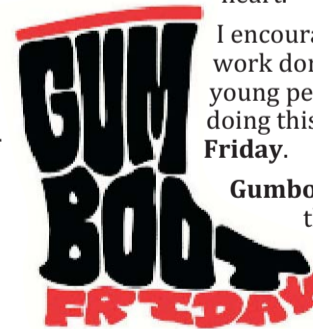
I encourage you to support the work done by our Missions for young people and a novel way of doing this is through **Gumboot Friday**.

Gumboot Friday is an initiative that helps connect young people with counsellors and therapists and provide funding for this so young people get the

help they need when they need it. You can find out more here - www.gumbootfriday.org.nz

Having depression is like walking through mud every day, so you can show your support for by putting on your gumboots, giving a gold coin (or more), and taking a walk in their shoes for just one day. You could have a church service, or a day at work for **Gumboot Friday**. You can donate directly to your local Methodist Mission, or to the **Gumboot Friday** website.

Your support will help young people and also acknowledge the great mahi Methodist Mission staff do every day.





Prayer for Travellers Mō te Tira Haere

Reflection: Keita Hotere



E te whānau, kia ārahina rā tātou i runga i te ara o te rangimārie, o te ora, o te pai. Mā te te Atua kaha rawa, te Atua o ngā atawhai tātou e arahina. E te Atua e īnoi ana mātou ki ā koe, kia tiakina mātou i tēnei tō mātou haere.

Haere mai e te Ariki, hei hoa haere mō mātou i tō mātou haerere. Whakatapua tēnei waka me ngā iwi katoa o runga. Tonoa iho ngā tohu pai hei arataki i a mātou mai o mātou wā kāinga, tae atu ki ngā wāhi kei mua, he mea

tauhou, he mea waia rānei, ko koe te kaihautu matua e Pā. Nā reira e te Atua māu anō hoki mātou e whakahoki ora mai ki ō mātou kāinga, whānau hoki. Mā Te Atua, Tama, Wairua Tapu tēnei haerenga e whakahaumarumarū ai. āmine.

This travel prayer asks God to look after those undertaking a journey. We ask God's continued guidance and grace to guide us to our destinations and to be returned safely to loved ones.

ministry involved lots of travel by foot over all sorts of terrain, from the temple and marketplaces to the desert. the lakes, rivers and seas. Jesus travelled extensively throughout Jerusalem and the Holy Lands with his disciples who carried on his teachings and took those same lessons out into unknown territories.

for the movement of people, and the delivery of goods and services to the

whole country. In recent times we have been faced with the devastating effects of Cyclone Gabrielle, the rising cost of all products, and the uncertainty of road works. All factors influence whether we decide to travel by car, or plane or opt for the comfortable option of a Zoom meeting from home. Our thoughts are with those in the Tairāwhiti, Tai Hauāuru, Heretaunga, Wairoa and the Taitokerau regions in recent times, as they navigated reconnecting with the wider country. For some, no

power, no access to supports, and even the inability to move out of the precarious position that flood waters left them in was totally disempowering. Travel was impossible, for many; they just had to wait.

In early April, Hui Pōari gathered at Parirau marae, Matakōhe district on State Highway 12 north of Auckland situated in Te Uri o Hau of Ngāti Whatua territory. The gathering of Te Taha Māori members offered an opportunity to reconnect with one another. Most members travelling from Ōtautahi, Pōneke, Taranaki, Waikato, and Tāmaki Makaurau experienced re-routing and long delays getting out of Auckland City to head north for the meeting. Everyone experienced the pot-holed northern roads affected by the flooding damage. It was healing to connect in person and share the many stories of the journey to Parirau, as well as the stories of whānau in isolated communities who have been unable to use their roads. Reflecting on our journeys, both real and metaphorical, brought together the different experiences and voices of Te Taha Māori. The healing power of whakawhanaungatanga, being in connection with one another and the deepening of relationships, can never be underestimated.

With Emmaus eyes let us reflect on travelling on our roads with a deep appreciation for what we have lost and a deeper appreciation for what we still have. May we be more mindful of our driving behaviours and the need for greater patience and compassion for others also travelling on our roads. And as we journey in our various fields of endeavour, may we keep uppermost in our minds that we take Christ as our travel guide and companion in all that we do and say.

Ō TĀTOU TĀNGATA • OUR PEOPLE

An Audience with the Queen

We all have cherished memories of significant moments in our childhood; for Anne Peri, a curtsy in front of the new monarch Queen Elizabeth II during her visit to New Zealand in the summer of 1953/1954 was a treasured moment. As a

four-year-old, Anne was chosen to present a bouquet of flowers to the Queen at the welcome ceremony for the newly-wed royal couple at Waitangi Treaty grounds on 28 December 1953.

Anne lived with her parents and five sisters in Waimā, a small rural community in the south Hokianga area of Northland,

approximately 60 kilometres from Waitangi. At the time of the royal visit, Anne's uncle Hone Heke Rankin, a tribal leader, medical worker and farmer affiliated with the iwi of Ngapuhi, was Cultural Advisor, in New Zealand and involved in planning the Waitangi event. Anne says, "Hone Heke wanted to gift the royal couple with a sacred Mere,

to add mana to the occasion. He suggested that a young (puhi) girl be chosen for this honour. The powers that be added that this young girl must have long hair.

Hone Heke came to see my dad. I was the only one with long hair, so I was chosen". It was also decided that flowers would be presented to the Queen, instead of the proposed Mere.

Anne was whisked off to Paihia where she joined her two grandfathers and her father at a tent city that had sprung up on a grassed domain along the Te Ti Bay shoreline, the site where the Waitangi Holiday Park is today. Anne spent a week in



Four-year-old Anne presents flowers to Queen Elizabeth in 1953.

training under the guidance of three older cousins who were tasked with teaching her royal protocols and drilling her in the art of how to curtsy (one step forwards and one step backwards), and how to respond to scripted questions (How old are you? And where do you live?)

She was well-versed in the expectations of her brief performance and duly presented the Queen with a bouquet of flowers. Anne says that was the moment that she had to ad-lib. "No one told me what to do after I had given her the flowers. That part was straightforward but afterwards, I decided to gap it. I looked around, saw Dad and ran back to him."

Later the same day, Hone Heke Rankin handed the sacred Mere to Prime Minister Sidney Holland for presentation to the Queen. Both men wore Korowai.



Anne Peri at Conference in 2022.

NZ History estimates that three in every four New Zealanders witnessed the royal tour, as Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip visited 46 towns and cities and attended 110 separate functions. Many members of the Connexion will recall the moment they saw the royals but few will have as close a connection as Anne Peri.



**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:

03 375 0512 • 027 561 9164

Carol@MethodistAlliance.org.nz

PO Box 5416, Papanui, Christchurch 8542

methodist.org.nz/methodist_alliance



Augustine 354 – 430 AD



Rev Abhishek Solomon

Augustine was born in Thagaste (present-day Algeria) in Roman North Africa in 354 to an unbeliever father, Patricius, and a Christian mother, Monnica. His mother did her best to inculcate the Christian faith into her son, but the early life of Augustine was a moral shipwreck. To add to his mother's pain, Augustine joined the Gnostic sect. In desperation over his wayward behaviour, Monnica turned to a Catholic bishop, pleading with him to reason with Augustine. The bishop refused. "Only prayer, not arguments, will bring your son to Christ."

In retrospect, the words seem

prescient, if not prophetic. Soon after Augustine came across a preacher called Ambrose, bishop of Milan, whose eloquent preaching captivated him, prompting a spiritual crisis in Augustine's life and setting him on a path of Christianity. Ambrose baptised him, and not long after that, he was ordained assistant bishop of Hippo to Valerius. When Valerius died five years later, Augustine became the bishop of Hippo, a position he filled until he died in 430.

Scholars in the humanities have recently turned to Augustine to query the nature of ethics, truth and politics. While his importance for medieval political theory would be difficult to overstate, creative thinkers such as Reinhold Niebuhr, Alasdair MacIntyre, Eric Gregory, and John Milbank returned to Augustine in the 20th century with great profit. John Milbank turns to Augustine to overcome postmodernist tendencies. Milbank garners Augustine as an anti-capitalist in which radical Christian

theology can potentially outstrip secular market-centred politics. On the other hand, Eric Gregory draws on Augustine to revitalize liberalism by reinstating civic values predicated on love.

Augustine matters to Christians and non-Christians alike, primarily because of what he criticised about Rome in his masterpiece *The City of God* and because Rome has so many things in common with the modern West. The Romans (Cicero and Plutarch) believed in the power of humans to master themselves, to be able to control nature and devise their own happiness and perfection. Wealth was associated with inner virtue for them and showing it off was deemed honourable. Augustine detested this attitude. He proposed that all humans are fundamentally broken, and our imperfect nature gives rise to the merciless way we treat others and the world around us. He believed we fall short of our love and care for others because our ego and pride constantly undermine us. Augustine concluded his polemic against Rome by rejecting those who "have wished, with amazing folly, to be happy here on earth and to achieve bliss by their own efforts." (*City of God*). True happiness and perfection are impossible because of the sinful condition we find ourselves in. Today we do not like being told that our lives are awry through no fault of our own. It does not sound very optimistic, but Augustine had Roman pride in mind when he penned those sentiments. Augustine invites us to consider the imperfect nature



of everything we do and are.

Secondly, the Romans organised society with robust meritocratic features. The greatness of the Roman Empire was a sign of the collective merits of the Romans. They believed they deserved to rule large parts of the earth. The empire was simply the reward for their virtue. Perhaps, it is not too difficult to discern an echo of this view today for those who see their great prosperity and power as just rewards for merit. For Augustine, these were arrogant and boastful claims. Wealth is not a blessing from God, nor is poverty condemnation. There is no justice in Rome, responded Augustine. True justice only exists "in that republic whose founder and governor is Christ" (*City of God*). In other words, it only exists in our communion and commitment to the love of God. For Augustine, the

construction of a community based on the teachings of Christ is distinctly different from that of Roman civic life.

Augustine's thinking is highly generous towards failure, loss, and hardship, a reason why social theorists turn to his philosophy. Whatever the world might claim, earthly failure is no indication of being an inherently bad person. Similarly, our earthly triumphs cannot mean anything too profound, either.

We do not need to be Christians to appreciate Augustine. To paraphrase John Milbank, Augustine's philosophy is Christianity's universal gift to society and human psychology. He is a permanent reminder of the dangers of believing that life can be perfect or that poverty and wealth are reliable measures of human character.

TŪHONONGA - Ā - TĀNGATA • AROUND THE CONNEXION

UK Guests Share Learnings with Kiwi Connexions



Sheila Norris, Kerry Scarlett and Peter Taylor at the Connexional Office.

In late February two Methodist leaders from the United Kingdom visited New Zealand. Deacon Kerry Scarlett, Vice President Designate for the Methodist Church in Britain and Sheila Norris, Partnership Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific for the British Methodist Church, spent time with MCNZ

President Peter Taylor during their brief stay in the South Island.

Kerry, an ordained Methodist Deacon, currently working as Learning and Development officer within the Methodist Learning Network will take on her new role at the 2023 Annual Conference in June. Kerry met Sheila in Samoa and they travelled together for their NZ visit. The UK President and Vice President of Conference undertake a visit to global

church partners in their designated year. "This provides an opportunity for the Presidency to learn from our global partners, and allows an opportunity for renewing relationships," Kerry says.

Kerry said despite being here just five days, her visit had a significant impact. "We heard how church communities have supported one another following the trauma of the earthquakes and other recent severe weather events. Stories about the impact of Covid resonated deeply with our own experiences in Britain. What will stay with me most of all are the stories of what happens when people are noticed, valued, and treasured. We saw how intentional relationship building is building church communities in ways that may look different to that which we are used to but show by the fruit they bear that they are good news."

Sheila visited Singapore, the Solomon Islands and Fiji before joining Kerry in Samoa. In Christchurch Rev Peter Taylor, Sheila and Kerry attended a meeting in the Connexional Office to discuss options for selling/redeveloping church land in Timaru. "Although the underlying

problem of what to do when congregations are no longer viable is the same for us, the need for earthquake proofing and the possibility of using land for social housing are aspects that would not usually arise in the United Kingdom," Sheila says.

The Christchurch stopover included a visit to the Aldersgate Centre and a meeting with staff from Christian World Service where Sheila was delighted to reconnect with the team she met on her visit to NZ last year. A visit to Crossway Community Church was inspiring. "We were particularly impressed by Rev Joohong Kim's approach to keeping children fully involved in worship, the use of church property by the community, and by the way the church shares the location with the Delta Community Centre, working with the vulnerable in society," Sheila says.

In Wellington, they visited Ngaio Union Church to learn about the community engagement work being done there and also met with leaders of the multicultural congregations in Wesley Parish.



A Pilgrimage in the Footsteps of St Paul in Greece and Türkiye 2023



St Paul.

In March Rev Christina Morunga participated in the Pilgrimage "Greece and Türkiye in the Footsteps of St Paul and other early Christian Leaders" led by Rev John and Dr Jenny Hornblow. Here she reports on the experience.

Pilgrimage is more than being a tourist. We walked to places of past significance, learning the context in which St Paul lived and worked, walked and sailed, was imprisoned, spoke to Jewish and City elders and leaders, made and visited friends. These we encounter in his letters to the Churches he established in the City States now united as Greece and Türkiye.

It was fascinating to gain a better understanding of the distances Paul travelled, his scholarship, and his knowledge of the different cultures, world views, and faith beliefs he encountered on his Missionary Journeys. Wise in dealing with people from all walks of life, he used imagery, events and history to tell the good news of Jesus, in ways meaningful to his audiences, without devaluing their beliefs. Rather, he built on their understandings, lifestyles and world views to present the truth of the new way in Christ.

A Rich Journey

We visited many archaeological sites, including the Acropolis and the Areopagus, both in Athens.

We reflected on Paul's defence of Christ where things could have gone terribly wrong if he had not been culturally aware of Greek philosophy and theology. Having the text explained in the context of his time, while standing on the site of the encounter made his words come alive in new and rich ways. We had many similar experiences as we journeyed.

We visited places of great significance to the growth and spread of Christianity to the Western world. We saw seven of the Byzantine Monasteries of Meteora perched precariously atop sheer soaring rocks. The Monks had left their wealth on the plains for an ascetic life closer to God. How they reached the summits was incredible; even more amazing was how they got building materials up and secured to the rocks, and food and water for the community. With the World Wars women were gifted St Stephen's Convent, and allowed to join and help with the work of daily living. We were able to visit, an access road having been engineered!

We entered a Greek Orthodox Church as the evening service began. I enjoyed the pageantry and rich robes, the grace of the Priest and his associates chanting and swinging the incense around the congregation. I also enjoyed the rich stories depicted in iconography on the walls and dome of the Church, typical of many churches and mosques we

visited. Visiting an iconography workshop and having the process demonstrated and explained by the family was an inspiration. The father, an Orthodox Priest, had studied traditional Byzantine iconography and produced icons of Jesus and all the Saints and prophets, each distinctive in size, shape and character. Iconography in churches and mosques depicts scenes from the lives of particular Saints and of the Apostles with Christ.

This was poignant at Philippi where Paul baptised Lydia, the woman of Thyatira who dealt in purple linen, as there was an exquisite depiction of Scripture in the Baptistery. It was awe-inspiring to be by the river that Lydia was immersed in for baptism and there renew our baptismal vows.

Into Türkiye

We crossed the border into Türkiye and visited Istanbul, its history explained during visits to beautiful buildings adapted from ancient temples into churches, synagogues and mosques, sometimes with areas still obvious of each use, such as the great basilica built by Constantine the Great, now the Hagia Sophia Mosque.

We travelled down the Dardanelles Peninsula to the Gallipoli Reserve, visiting Anzac Cove, Lone Pine and Chunuk Bair. I shared holding the New Zealand flag during a moving memorial service at Anzac Cove, a keen wind blowing across the Dardanelles Strait. It was emotionally stirring and challenging to be in the steep rocky land where so many soldiers on both sides of the battles lost their lives. It's remarkable how the Turks honour and care for the graves and memorials of those who fought against them.

My knowledge of ancient Greek mythology was enhanced by the stories our tour guides told, and by the stone and marble sculptures in the many archaeological sites and museums we visited. The scale of the excavations is incredible; archaeologists are continually uncovering more buildings with friezes and paintings and mosaics along with coins and articles used in daily life, thus learning more of life in earlier times.

The Pamukkale World Heritage area is an incredible site, with geothermal pools and white limestone terraces on a grander scale than the pink and white terraces of Tarawera. At Hierapolis we had a memorable service at the Tomb of Phillip, recently authenticated, a poignant experience to be able to venerate one of the disciples of Jesus at his tomb, nearly 2,000 years after his burial.

And then to Greece

The pilgrimage took us through Athens, Corinth, Delphi, Thessalonica and Philippi in Greece. We went to the sites of the Seven Churches John wrote to in Asia Minor, Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamon, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea, pondering the words about Revelation to each.

We explored the excavations to find significant early Christian sites along with the temples, theatres, gymnasiums, bathhouses, latrines and dwellings, some simple and others beautifully appointed and decorated with mosaics and paintings.

We farewelled Paul at the ancient port of Miletus, where he had called the Church leaders of Ephesus to meet him on his return from his third missionary journey for his poignant farewell to them, recorded in Acts 20:17. We ended the day with a reflective communion service.

Visiting cities and ancient archaeological sites linked with Paul has given me clearer insight into 'a man on a mission'. Paul valued his friends, yet sometimes chose to walk over difficult terrain to have time to think. Paul imitated Jesus in taking time for reflection. He urgently requested his scrolls and parchments to be delivered to him to verify his facts whenever he met with converts to Christianity, the Jews, Greeks, Romans, and people of other nationalities with their questions and concerns; some eager for the good news, but more who felt threatened by what he was teaching. While I find it challenging to continue

reading Scripture and cope with the many commentaries written through the 2000 years since Jesus died and rose again, this Pilgrimage builds on what I know, stretching my understanding and bringing me into a closer relationship with the writer of so many letters in the New Testament. Through Paul, I am encountering the Triune God more deeply and intimately.

Our last day of Pilgrimage was a ferry trip to Patmos where we visited the Cave of the Apocalypse and the Monastery of Saint-John the Theologian, where the aged John sheltered and dictated letters to the Churches and was astounded by an incredible vision and revelation of Christ from which the Book of Revelation was written. It was incredible to be in the austere rock cave where part of the New Testament was written, a holy place.

The pilgrimage closed with a service exploring the story of the Lord's Banquet. Afterwards each pilgrim shared one meaningful experience from the Pilgrimage, reviving special memories of our time together. The journey was enhanced by the participation of Archbishop David Moxon - our Shepherd, with his scholarship, ecumenism and inclusiveness - and congenial companions from all over the world who shared their knowledge and experiences.

I appreciate the support of the Methodist Church Professional Development Fund, enabling me to participate in a sacred Pilgrimage with wonderful pilgrims. I am greatly blessed.



Meeting Our Requirements

Thursday 11 May 5pm - 6pm

Register Now!

Learn about our key requirements from Wendy Anderson and how Trudy Downes verifies our requirements are being met.

For more information, visit:

www.methodist.org.nz/tangata/connectional-resources/webinars/

or email:

trudyd@methodist.org.nz

Northland Fijian Children Conduct Palm Sunday Service

Litiana Tukuca

The Northland Fijian Community comprises Fijian families from Ruakaka, Whangarei, Dargaville, Kerikeri, Paihia, Kaikohe and Kaitaia. Although we belong to different denominations, every 2nd Sunday of the month we come together for a combined church service. The service usually starts at 3 pm, giving us time to attend our own denomination services in the morning.

We are thankful to the St John Golden Church, Whangarei for accommodating us. The church service is led by different confederacies, namely Kubuna, Burebasaga and Tovata, representing provinces we come from in Fiji.

We celebrate Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day. In 2018, our Community President, Paula Tabakinabou decided we should celebrate Children's Sunday on Palm Sunday, following the Methodist Church of Fiji calendar. In 2020 we missed this annual event due to the lockdown.

This year the Palm Sunday Service involved 20 children aged from 5 to 17, including some young adults aged 18 to 23 who continue to be part of the celebration. Since 2018, Aliti Masitabua and I meet with the children involved on two Saturdays before Palm Sunday, helping them prepare physically, mentally, and spiritually for the service that is conducted entirely by the children, in Fijian. After the service, they are treated to a special meal and cake by the adults of the community.



Children from the Northland Fijian Community conducted the entire service in Fijian.



TAITAMARIKI • KIDZ KORNA

Welcome to this month's **Kidz Korna!**

How many of you have a garden and grow vegetables and maybe flowers? The children at Church Corner Methodist Centre at Riccarton, Christchurch started a small vegetable garden a few years ago and recently displayed some of the produce from it at the Harvest Thanksgiving service.

This year the children also grew sunflowers in the church gardens and made a body/person starting with a sunflower for the head and adding vegetables to make the face.

The children in the photo - Kana with his arm around the sunflower body (back row) David (front left) and Elijah (front right) - helped create this Harvest Thanksgiving 'person'. Along with other children in the parish, Kana, Elijah and David care for the garden.

We should all think about having a small vegetable garden, especially now that vegetables cost so much in the supermarkets. There is nothing more satisfying than picking your own fresh vegetables and they taste much better.



For your bookshelf

The Little Veggie Patch Co.

An A-Z Guide for growing food in small spaces

Authors: Fabian Capomolla and Mat Pember
 Publisher: Pan Macmillan Australia

I found this book online and was immediately impressed. The authors believe that anyone can grow their own food anywhere. You just need a small space. If you use your search engine you can find all the information you need including several pictures of small gardens in boxes and different plants that you can grow.



Bible food Word Search

All the words in this puzzle can be found in your Bible.

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

- APRICOT GRAPE BEANS LETTUCE CUCUMBER MINT DATES OATS FIG OLIVES GARLIC PEAS

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



Vanuatu Needs Extra Support

Andrew and Anna were at home with their children when Cyclone Judy struck Vanuatu on 1 March. As soon as the first piece of roofing iron went flying, they fled to a small cave nearby. When a second category 4 cyclone swept through two days later, they had already accepted a ride from the Vanuatu Mobile Force to an Evacuation Centre run by the Vanuatu Christian Council (VCC).



Andrew and Anna lost their home in Cyclone Judy. Andrew sits outside the makeshift shelter where he is staying until he has rebuilt his home. His family are living in the VCC Evacuation Centre.

Almost a month later the family was still at the Evacuation Centre. Thanks to new iron supplied by VCC, Andrew has begun to rebuild their home destroyed in the twin cyclones.

"We should have returned to our homes [by now] but it's a real mess. We don't have anywhere safe to shelter. I didn't think that our homes would fall down. When I came back after the cyclones, I saw that everything had been destroyed," said Anna.

The twin cyclones affected more than 271,000 people.

Disaster preparedness is one of the priorities of the VCC. It has trained local people to make disaster plans for their communities to deal with intense disasters linked to climate change.

The National Disaster Management Office run by the government has allocated 18 communities in the areas of North Efate, Pele and Nguna for help from VCC. Christian World Service is appealing for donations so families like Andrew's and Anna's can start again.

"Ni-Vanuatu need practical help and our prayers as they recover from this double disaster. Families have lost their homes and livelihoods, sometimes for the second time in three years. If you can, please support our appeal so they can replant their gardens and look after each other," says Murray Overton, National Director.



Anna was cooking soup for dinner when Cyclone Judy struck Mataso Island. Her family took shelter in this small cave. Their home was destroyed and the family's possessions were scattered. Photo credit: Act for Peace/ Sarah Doyle

Donations will help communities repair and upgrade latrines and share hygiene information. Local committees will distribute new seeds and tools to re-establish gardens, community seed banks and nurseries. Work will also be done to raise awareness on child protection and the prevention of gender-based violence especially after a disaster when people are more vulnerable. The Appeal will fund psychosocial support for people struggling to deal with their losses, and help communities prepare for the next disaster.

Donations to the Vanuatu Cyclone Appeal can be made online at cws.org.nz or call 0800 74 73 72.

Stand with Refugees



After Shehzad's wife was murdered by the Taliban last year in Afghanistan, he fled to Pakistan with his two children. He was grateful for a grant of \$103 for three months to pay for food and other necessities. Photo credit: Community World Service Asia.

Christian World Service is inviting people to sign up for this year's Operation Refugee. In a new twist, participants will have 12 hours to do one of three challenges: Food for Life, a Winter Walk or a Shelter Challenge. Participants choose their challenge, and then encourage friends and family to sponsor them or donate to refugees.

"This year's Operation Refugee is an opportunity for people living in Aotearoa to come together and stand with people who have fled their homes and countries in fear for their lives. By focusing together, we want to create more support for refugees who are finding it much harder to survive in the current environment," says Murray Overton, National Director.

Participants are encouraged to do their 12-hour challenge on June 20, World Refugee Day, though it can be completed at another time that suits.

CWS aims to raise \$73,000 to provide food, education, and medical care to people from Afghanistan, Palestine, Syria and Ukraine.

By the middle of last year, the United Nations Refugee Agency calculated that 103 million people have been forcibly displaced around the globe. Over 70 percent of the refugees live in neighbouring countries. New Zealand Immigration reported that 989 people were resettled in the year ending 28 February 2023.

Refugees are people who have fled war, conflict and persecution and crossed an international border in search of safety. Displaced people have stayed within their home country.

"Refugee Sunday is an important time to pray for refugees and think further about how we as individuals and faith communities can share a warm welcome to the stranger as Jesus taught. It is work that our partners in the Middle East, Pakistan, Poland and Nicaragua do every day," Murray adds.

Worship resources for Refugee Sunday - 25 June in the Methodist and Presbyterian calendar and 2 July for Anglicans - will be available later this month.

Sign up or find more information on: operationrefugee.nz or call 0800 74 73 72.

Vanuatu Cyclone Appeal

Help families with seeds, garden tools and psychosocial support

Repair latrines

Re-establish community nurseries and seed banks

Donate Today



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C I N E M A

***Red, White and Brass* is wonderfully good fun. As the movie theatre lights dimmed, one of the cast, Suzy Cato, stood to thank her friends and family for their support. As the movie theatre lights brightened, Cato's friends and family cheered. These moments of love and laughter speak to the joy generated by this Aotearoa-made movie and the way it celebrates the culture, warmth and creativity of Tongan communities through Aotearoa.**

Red, White and Brass returns us to 2011. It is the Rugby World Cup and Aotearoa has promised a stadium of four million. Aotearoa is diverse, and our national stadium includes perhaps the world's most passionate fans, supporters of 'Ikale Tahi, the sea eagles of Tonga.

'Ikale Tahi Tonga is playing France in Wellington. Mad on rugby, Maka (John-Paul Foliaki) and Veni (Dimitrius Schuster-Koloamatangi) promise tickets for the Tongan Methodist youth group. But it's impossible to fit four million fans into Wellington's Cake Tin. Determined, Maka and Veni suggest forming a traditional Tongan marching band. They will march, then watch. Based on real life, *Red, White and Brass* captures their



journey, from rehearsing with plastic milk bottles to the roar of the Cake Tin.

Red, White and Brass is directed by Damon Fepulea'i, whose credits include Dawn Raids, Jono and Ben and documentaries exploring Pacific Islanders' experiences in New Zealand. *Red, White and Brass* locates Fepulea'i as a unique talent with plenty more to offer cinema in Aotearoa. The cinematography by Andrew McGeorge is equally impressive, a standout being the church

gorgeously lit against a darkened night sky.

The film spotlights the rich complexity of Tongan culture. Amid the humour is plenty of compassionate reflection on language and migration in identity. The movie explores the shame of language loss and affirms the gifts of migrants, including those recently arriving from Tonga.

A feature is the agency of Tongan women.

Review by Rev Dr Steve Taylor

Early in the movie, Maka's mother confronts a group of young Tongan men, sellers of fraudulent tickets, seeking back the youth group's money. Later in the film, she speaks wisdom to Maka's father. "We need to listen to people, and that listening includes our children." This is rich pastoral wisdom, an understanding of ordained ministry that respects the elderly and encourages the young.

Maka's mother thus provides a contemporary illustration of the birth of the Christian church. At Pentecost, Peter preaches from the Old Testament book of Joel. The young will see visions; the old will dream dreams (Acts 2:17). Theologian Mark Lau Branson has suggested that at Pentecost, those staying in Jerusalem (Acts 2:6) were likely to be older. Older people have time to make pilgrimages and worship at the temple.

Hence elderly dreams is not poetic license. It is reality. At Pentecost, the Spirit birthed a church in which the elders listen to youthful visions.

Red, White and Brass celebrates partnerships across generations as church elders respond to Maka's vision of a Tongan cultural identity that fuses innovation and tradition. It's no wonder the cinema cheered as the movie ended.

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

O N P A P E R

Christ-Figures *There On Our Screens*

Author: Peter Malone MSG
Publisher: Coventry Press, 2022.
117 pp
Reviewer: Gary Clover

Rev Dr Steve Taylor's film reviews in *Touchstone* are familiar. Australian Catholic priest, spiritual director and film buff Father Peter Malone, similarly follows Ignatius's principle of "Finding God in all places" to provide a fascinating, clear set of criteria to enable Christians, lay and ordained, of all denominations, and of other faiths, or none, to learn about Christology through the lens of popular film. In the late 1980s, well before the subject became fashionable, Malone saw "a fertile ground for looking at Christic, salvific and messianic resonances" in mainstream movies.

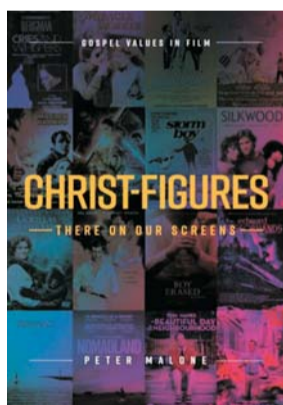
A theological scholar of high repute, holding degrees in Philosophy, Theology, and Literature, a Masters in Australian History, and qualifications in communication, in 2021 he received "an international award for the quality of his film criticism". He has published two earlier books on films: *Movie Christs and Anti-Christs* (1986), and *Dear Movies*. A former president of Catholic organisations, for cinema and audio-visuals, and communication, he has lectured at seminars and workshops worldwide, including in New Zealand.

The 30 movies chosen display a wide range of characters, issues and genres:

science-fiction, romance, biography, documentary and war. Malone starts with Jesus as portrayed in Scorsese's *The Last Temptation of Christ*. Then, from Father Barry in *On the Waterfront* (1954) to Fern in *Nomadland* (2020). Epic sci-fi heroes, Obi-wan Kenobi and Edward Scissorhands, to real-life Irena Sendler a Polish Catholic Warsaw Ghetto hero who saved 2,500 Jewish children (played by Anna Paquin). *To Kill A Mockingbird's* Atticus Finch, Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King Jr, William Wilberforce, *Dead Man Walking's* Sister Helen Prejean, the Erin Brockovich-like Karen Silkwood, and Ingmar Bergman's Agnes (*Cries and Whispers*, 1971). Young people's heroes like Fingerbone (*Storm Boy*) and Katniss Everdeen (*The Hunger Games*); also the Seventh

Day Adventist pacifist, US Medal of Honour recipient Desmond Doss, in *Hacksaw Ridge*. Surprising inclusions are, though she's Jewish the Ruth Bader Ginsburg documentary; the bitter, vindictive Dian Fossey in *Gorillas In The Mist*; and the saccharin portrayed but in real-life driven Maria von Trapp.

Each "Christ-Figure", discussed in pithy, bite-sized, easy-read, three to four-page chapters, challenges our responses and spiritual journeys to prompt us to be the "Christ-Figure you are." Highly recommended. This will change your perspective on why Christians should go to the cinema.

A Women's Lectionary for the Whole Church
A Multi-Gospel Single-Year Lectionary

Author: Wilda C. Gafney.
Publisher: Church Publishing
Incorporated: New York 2021. 336pp
Reviewer: Lyn Heine

'For those who have searched for themselves in the scriptures and did not find themselves in the masculine pronouns.'

Wilda Gafney is a Black American theologian, pastor and Hebrew biblical scholar. She has written this book with lectionary readings for a full year and provided both brief text and translation commentary and preaching notes for each. In the commentary notes she explains why she has chosen particular translations of the Hebrew words and gives examples of where else they are found in our scriptures. She has very deliberately used a feminine expression of God in the lectionary psalms and uses a wide variety of titles for God throughout all the readings.

The author started this lectionary book and project by asking the question: "What would it look like to tell the Good News through the stories of women who are often on the margins of scripture and often set up to represent bad news? How would a lectionary centring women's stories, chosen with womanist and feminist commitments in mind, frame the presentation of the scriptures for proclamation and teaching?" In

answering these questions she has produced something that invites all men, women, non-binary readers and hearers to engage with the scriptures in new ways and find themselves within.

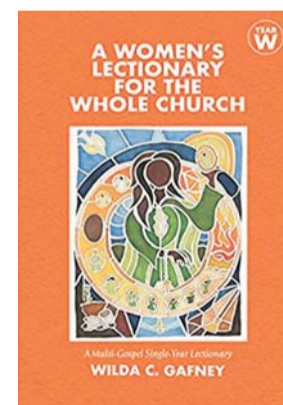
I have been using this for much of this lectionary year and have found it to be enlightening, challenging, disturbing, confronting and comforting. It has

certainly drawn me into stories and perspectives that I was previously unaware of; has made me rethink assumptions and narratives that I thought I knew well; and has given me things to consider and conversation starters with others.

How often are we aware of the number of women who stand up to power at risk to themselves - the midwives to the Hebrews;

Pharaoh's daughter; Esther; Abigail; Judith? And usually, but not always, non-violently. The preaching notes offer introductory material to themes that we often otherwise avoid - such as slavery, use and abuse of power, marginalisation of all kinds and violence. I would recommend this book to anyone wanting to delve further into preaching and knowledge places that are not commonly on offer. And to those who are prepared to be uncommonly moved.

The reviewer, Lyn Heine, is Local Ordained Ministry Probationer at Greymouth Uniting Church.





John Laughton and the Māori Church

Rachel Hurd, Archivist Presbyterian Research Centre

We recently received a collection of material from Te Aka Puaho, the Māori branch of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. This material is full of taonga, including minute books relating to the Presbyterian Māori Missions and material relating to the Māori Section of the National Council of Churches. A large part of the material comprises a personal collection relating to the Rev. John Laughton who played a prominent and vital role in the leadership of the Māori Missions and in the development of Te Hīnota Māori, the Presbyterian Māori Synod.

John Laughton was born on windswept Orkney, off the far north of Scotland in 1891. He emigrated to New Zealand at the age of 12 with his family and settled at Mosgiel, near Dunedin. He studied at Otago University and then in 1914 became a Presbyterian home missionary. Working at Piopio in the King Country he came into contact with Māori and learnt te reo. In 1915 he married Margaret Leask, but sadly she died two years later.



Rev John Laughton was a driving force behind the Presbyterian Māori Missions and the development of Te Hīnota Māori, the Māori Synod. The photograph, taken circa 1935, shows a Māori Missions concert party. John Laughton (far left back) Sister Nessie Morgan (centre front) and next to her (right) is Laughton's wife, Horiana Laughton (nee Te Kauru). Credit: Presbyterian Research Centre (Archives).

In 1918 John Laughton was invited to join the Presbyterian Māori Missions and he began work among Tūhoe at Maungapōhatu in Te Urewera. This was the settlement of the Māori prophet, Rua Kēnana, who two years previously had been imprisoned following a police raid on Maungapōhatu in which two people, (one of them Rua's son) had been shot and killed. *

Rua had been released from prison not long before Laughton arrived and initially there were tensions between the two men. Later they went on to develop a lasting friendship which endured for 20 years. When Rua died

in 1937, Laughton conducted his funeral service.

Both men were deeply concerned that the children of Maungapōhatu should receive an education and Laughton worked to establish a school there. In 1918 he also worked to establish a school at Ruatāhuna (with Sister Annie Henry and Abigail Monfries) and later additional schools at Matahī, Tanatana, Te Teko and Te Onēpu.

In 1921 he married Horiana Te Kauru from Nūhaka, who was a teacher at the Matahī School, and they had five children together. The family later

moved to Taupō and then to Ōhope and in the 1930s Laughton became Superintendent of the Māori Missions.

Laughton's vision was of a Māori Church that went beyond a "Mission to Māori", to one which reflected Te Ao Māori and strove to develop Māori leadership. Speaking to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1955 he said that there could be no question that the new systems in which Māori took full part in leadership were "a far more effective agency for the proclamation of the Gospel and the extension of Christ's Kingdom".

He was a driving force behind the development of Te Hīnota Māori (the Māori Synod) and the building of the wharenuī, Te Maungarongo, at Ōhope. He also treasured the language. He was fluent in te reo and helped to produce the Māori Service Book. He edited Te Waka Karaitiana, the magazine of the Māori Church, and supervised the printing of the Revised Māori Bible in 1950. The collection includes sermons and a Christmas message written in te reo, as well as the script for what appears to be a radio broadcast.

He died in 1965 and is buried at Whakatāne where a stone from the sacred maunga at Maungapōhatu is placed upon his grave.

*In 2019 the Crown granted Rua Kēnana a statutory pardon and made a formal apology to his descendants.

Unsung Methodists

Rev Donald Phillipps

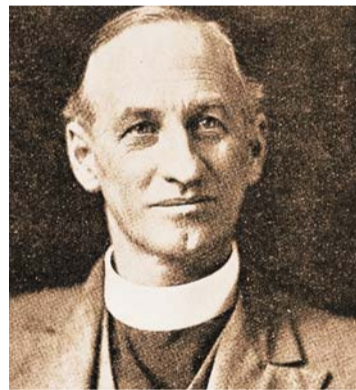
Your Worship

Do we still address our mayors as "Your Worship"? If so, why? One source tells me that we do so because 'citizens give or attribute special worth or esteem (worship) to their first-citizen or mayor.' I remember, as a boy, hearing my minister address the Mayor of Wellington as 'Mr Mayor', and thinking that was a bit too familiar. But, then, my minister was a man of principle and would have thought of 'worship' in a very different way. I now, of course, am of his mind. Is the title still justified - or relevant?

This month's subject came to my attention while reading the leading article in the New Zealand Methodist Times for May 1923. It was all about the recent civic elections around New Zealand, and how successful Methodist mayoral candidates had been. James Henry Gunson, CMG, MBE, a regular Epsom Methodist, often elected unopposed, was Mayor of Auckland for his fifth term. Christchurch elected J.A. Flesher as its Mayor. He was the first Connexional Legal Advisor, and largely compiled our first Law Book in 1916. Mr J. Gamble was the Mayor of New Brighton; Mr W.A. Rouse was the Mayor of Rangiora; James Fow was the Mayor

of Hamilton, a role he filled for a total of 18 years between 1916 and 1938; W.A. Strand was the Mayor of Petone. None of these was a minister of course - to stand for election would have necessitated their resigning from the ministry. But in Kaiapoi, nevertheless, Bramwell Scott, the local Methodist minister stood successfully for a seat on the local Borough Council. The Church newspaper proudly expected these good church-going Methodists to make a significant contribution to their communities.

In those days party politics (in the sense of national political parties) did not feature in local politics. It was not until the rise of Labour in the late 1920s as a force to be reckoned with that the atmosphere of local body elections changed. One senses that this ambivalence is still present in the minds of electors in country areas and the larger cities - 'Do we need parties!' For one Methodist minister that was an important issue, and he was a successful mayoral candidate in the 1930s for that very reason. His name was Edwin Thomas Cox - born into a farming family in Marton in 1881.



Edwin Cox.

Edwin Thomas Cox 1881 - 1967

He was 'converted' in 1898 and began local preaching in Ōpunake. Educated at both Auckland and Victoria Universities he was awarded an M.A. with First Class Honours in 1915. He had been a Home Missionary in North Auckland; trained at the Theological Institution 1905-1908; served his probation in

Auckland and Christchurch; and was stationed at Westport, Auckland (six years at the Central Mission), Gisborne, Whanganui, and finally at Mornington, Dunedin from 1932. The Depression years were taking their toll, and here was a man in his prime, with a good mind, and with significant experience of inner-city life.

He stood as an Independent in 1933, financing his own campaign, but was on the Labour Party ticket in 1935. In the same year, he unsuccessfully contested the Balclutha seat in the General Election. Cox's programme in 1935 was described by one critic as 'municipal sovietism' - assisting the unemployed, improving working conditions for council employees, relief work in the form of construction projects, and adequate housing. He could not implement all his projects however and failed in his bid for

a third term in 1938 (something that had never happened in Dunedin). The ODT and the Citizens Association claimed he lacked judgment and dignity - maybe he didn't insist on being called "Your Worship" - and his party affiliation was not to his advantage on this occasion.

Officially Cox was 'without pastoral charge' as the 1935 Conference Minutes noted. The occasional newspaper references to his ministerial position suggest that his political activities were not generally acceptable to his congregation. He enjoyed the unusual distinction of being the Mayor when the 1935 Conference was held in Dunedin. He welcomed them, officially, and the then President publicly complimented him on his municipal activities. Because he was not paid a stipend he worked as a land agent from 1935-1939, and formally and voluntarily resigned from the ministry in June 1938. He and his wife, Winifred Mary Hudson, moved to Adelaide, where he died in 1967.

Leslie Neale, the minister at the Dunedin Central Mission at that time, and Cox's contemporary described him as bringing a 'thoughtful and trained mind' to his office. He might well have been ambitious, but it was for others rather than himself. In 2023 there is the same need for the Gospel to be worked out in the world of local government as there was 100 years ago.



SINOTI SAMOA METHODIST CHURCH OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

I le fa'ai'ui'uga o le tausaga ua mavae 2022 i galuega fai a Aulotu, Matagaluega, Sinoti ae fa'apea le Ekalesia aoao i ona Komiti eseese, na fa'apena fo'i ona usuia ai le fonotaga fa'ai'u a le Aulotu Samoa i Tokoroa, atoa ai fo'i ma le va'ai atu e le gata i fuafuaga fai o le fa'ai'uga o le tausaga, ae fa'apena fo'i le va'ai mamao atu mo tualumaga mo le Tausaga Fou o muamua, ae fa'apea fo'i ma le lumana'i.

I le fonotaga fa'ai'u lava la a Tokoroa, na alofaiva ai mo le filifiliaina o se Ta'ita'i Fou a le Aulotu, e sui tulaga i le afioga ia Ma'ilata Maua'i, o le sa tauaveina mai leni tofiga taua mo le tele o tausaga ua mavae. Ma, i le i'uga la o le filifiliga a le Aulotu mo se Ta'ita'i e sui-tulaga i le afioga ia Ma'ilata e pei ona mua'i ta'ua, na tasi moemoe ai le finagalo o le Aulotu mo le fetalaiga ia Pouniu Levao e avea ma Ta'ita'i, fa'atasi ai ma le faletua ia Vanessa e avea ma faufautua i le galuega mo le ta'ita'ina o le Aulotu i leni fo'i vaega o le Ekalesia ma le Sinoti.

E tusa ai ma tulaga ma aiaiga a le Ekalesia Metotisi i Niu Sila nei o loo fa'apea fo'i ona fa'atino ma mulimulita'i ai galuega a le Sinoti Samoa, o le ala lea, i le ulua'i Lotu aofa'i a le Itumalo o Manukau na faia lea i le Aso Sa 26 Fepuari 2023 i le malumalu i St. Paul i Otara, na fa'apa'iaina ai le Tofi Ta'ita'i o le susuga ia Pouniu ma le faletua ia Vanessa Levao, aua le ta'ita'ina o le Aulotu Samoa i totonu lava o le 'a'ai i Tokoroa, i le vaega o Hamilton, ma le Itumalo fa'ale-sinoti i Waikato Waiariki.

O se sauniga na va'aia ma molimauina le lē-ofi o le malumalu, ona ua le gata i le auai uma o Matagaluega ma Aulotu a le Itumalo i Manukau, ae fa'apea fo'i le to'atele o sui o le Mafutaga a Tagata Pasefika i totonu o Tokoroa e aofia ai



To'elau, o Niue, o Rarotonga ae maise ai fo'i o le to'atele o sui o tagata Samoa, atoa ai ma tauaiga o le susuga i le Ta'ita'i ia Pouniu ma le faletua ia Vanessa na mafuta mai mo le molimauina o leni fa'amoemoe taua e pei ona mafuta ma tapua'i ai i lea lava aso.

O se tasi o vaega taua na ta'ua ai fo'i i lea lava fo'i mafutaga, na fa'a'iloa mai ai e le Mafutaga a tagata Pasefika; o Pouniu, o loo ia tau'aveina fo'i le tofi Peresitene o le Mafutaga ma le fa'alapotopotoga a Tagata Pasefika i lea lava itu o le atunuu.

Ua le gata fo'i i ia tulaga e pei ona fa'aalia, ae mo le toe fa'amanatu mo nisi e le'o silafiaina, o le faletua ia Vanessa, o le alo fa'asino i le tamā ia Letoa Alesana Letoa ma le Tausi ia Amerika. O le fetalaiga ia Letoa, o se tasi o Toa manumanu o le Sinoti mai lava i le fa'atuina o ulua'i Aulotu Samoa i lea vaega ma lea Itumalo o le Atunuu, o ia o se tasi na finau malosi mo

le galuega Samoa, ma na i'u ai lava fo'i na fa'atuina ai ma le Aulotu i Tokoroa e pei ona o'o mai lava i nei ona aso. Ona manatua ai lea o nisi o muagagana a le Atunuu - E soso'o lava le Fau ma le Fau. Ua tofafa mai i Atutia Letoa ma Amerika, a'o lea ua tula'i mai Pounia ma Vanessa e fa'aaau lo la'ua Vala'auina. O le susuga fo'i ia Pounia ma Vanessa, na o la tausi ma le fa'amaoni, ma o la'ua lagolago malosi i le galuega fita i le taimi o le talutalu-fou o le galuega Samoa a Letoa ma Amerika i Tokoroa.



Manuteleina lo oulua Vala'auina; ma ia saga fa'amanuia le Atua i lo oulua tula'i mai, aua le ta'ita'ina o la tatou Aulotu i totonu o Tokoroa.

TE RŌPU WĀHINE O TE HĀHI WETERIANA • NZ METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

In-Person Gathering In Brazil Outstanding

This year Janice Auva'a visited Brazil as part of her Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship journey. She reports on the first in-person gathering of her four-year programme.

Last year we were unable to meet at the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW) World Assembly. Like everyone else battling the Covid wave, we had online trainings and meetings. This year the WFMUCW World Executive invited all Helen Kim Memorial Scholars from around the world to join their second executive meeting held in Foz du Iguacu, Brazil.

Brazil is a place of wonderment and beauty, renowned for colourful carnivals, the exotic Amazon River and forest, and the statue of Christ the Redeemer, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. That environment amplified our trainings and meetings with so much meaning and depth.

Our time was filled with Bible Studies, Sustainable Development Goal workshops, praise and worship, sightseeing and learning about WFMUCW

and its structure.

Bible studies were led by Lilian Faleiro, a member of a Methodist Church in Rio, Brazil. The study had a focus on John 15 verse 16 about bearing fruit that will last, which aligns with the WFMUCW theme. During Sustainable Development Goal workshops, led by Luiza Pereira, we shared information about the importance of the goals and what our countries are currently doing to help achieve these goals.

Praise and worship every morning were led by different sisters from around the world. It was a beautiful time of learning new music and sharing in each other's languages. One afternoon we visited the Iguazu Waterfalls. It was quite a hike, but the views were worth the walk. We learnt about the structure of the WFMUCW and the various world executive roles and responsibilities. We were also able to share information about



Janice Auva'a (bottom right) joined Helen Kim Memorial Scholars from all over the world in Brazil for the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (WFMUCW) World Assembly.

the different projects and workshops we deliver and support within our own fellowships.

It is a blessing to be in a space where we can learn from sisters from around the world; where we can work together and

unify our goals as we share our various views and experiences. I will be forever grateful and thankful for this opportunity to meet the Helen Kim Memorial scholarship winners, to share viewpoints and cultures and to build bonds that will last a lifetime.



NA RAI LESU (EVALUATION)

Qalo Seniceva

(JEREMAIA 6:16 , SA KAYA VAKAOQO KO JIOVA , “DOU TU ENA SALA KA VAKARARAI,KA TAROGA NAI LAKOLAKO MAKAWA,SE SA I VEI NA SALA VINAKA,IA DOU LAKO GA KINA,DOU NA QAI KUNEA KINA NA VAKACEGU NI YALOMUDOU.”

Dou sa bula vinaka tale mai Liuliu ni nodatou vei Tabacakacaka e 6 ena Loma ni wasewase o Viti kei Rotuma e Niusiladi.Sa mai lamata tale oqo vei kedatou nai ka lima ni vula ka sa toso totolo sara tiko na soko.E mudremudre toka na cagi ni veisau ka totolo sara tiko na kui eda sa muria.E vuqa vei keda, e da nalu sara ena kena viko ka sa tekivu me da sa silima na kena biau.E da sa vakasaqara talega e so na noda I vakaukauwa me rawa ni da tatakube kina me kua na ciri,se lutudromu.

E nai ulutaga digitaki ena noda I Lalakai ena vula oqo ko Me e vakatokai tiko me vula I Doi.Na vula ka sa cabeta yani kina na yabaki me sa laki veimama kina.Sa dau matua kina ka keli talega kina na “uvi” leleka.Ena so na vanua sa dau kamikamica vinaka sara tu ga kina na “Kawai”.Na Doi sai koya e dua na mataqali kau.E na so na vanua na “selavo” ka dau vulavula vinaka na sena.Na vula talega oqo, sa dau tekivu me tawa kina na qa ni kumala ni sa tekivu me dabe na lewena.Sa dreu na tarawau.Mai waitui sa dau basika vunavuna mai kina Salala ka dau rawarawa sara na kena qolivi.

Oqo e dua na gauna ka mai vakatakilai koya kina na Draki ena kena dau liwa na kena cagi tataba ka tau na kena uca me dusia ni sa oti na vula I cagilaba.Sa dau dolava na wasawasa kei na kena kina I ukuuku me vakadeitaka vei ira na dausoko ni oqo sa kena gauna vinaka me sa sorosila kina na laca ka sili sevusevu kina na uduudu ni waqa vakaviti.

Na veika e yaco ena vula oqo e matana taka tiko vakavinaka na veika eda sa qaravi oti, ka me da yacova e dua na gauna ni tatamusuki.Nai rairai ni vakavakarau ena kena tei na uvi,Na nodra qarauni vakavinaka na kau vuata kei na kena yadravi vakamatau nai qoliqoli me qai rawa ni da namaka na tatamusuki me yaco na kena gauna me da taleitaka na veika eda tamusuka.

E na I taba ka ratou digitaki toka ena noda I lalakai ena vula oqo e tauri mai ena 2019-2020.E dusia nai yaloyalo ni noda vakavakarau.Na nodra vakarautaki vakamatau na Luveda e dusia nai yaloyalo ni 'Rai Lesu'.Ni vakarautaki vakamaqosa na uvi kei na kakana vuanikau ,yadravi vakavinaka nai qoliqoli,ena liwa ka mudremudre vinaka na kena cagi, me dusia ni dua na ka e teivaki,e na waraki



Wesley College Fijian Students 2019 Fiji Day Celebration.

me na tamusuki.

O ira na luveda era I vakadinadina ni solesolevaki ni noda toso.Na 'niu' ni lutu e lutu ga I vuna.Sa via dusia na lagilagi ni noda rai lesu.Na veiqaravi kei nai vakavuvuli eda solia vei ira na luveda,sai koya sara ga koya na veika eda na marautaka na tamusuka ena kena vula.

Sa bibi kina veikedana na noda taleva lesu na veika vinaka e da sa qarava oti mai ena loma ni noda I Wasewase,Tabacakacaka kei na vei Valenilotu.Me da tu mada ,meda vakararai,meda vakatataro,Meda qai tekiduru vata ka gole vua na Kalou me dolava vei keda na sala vinaka me rawa ni da na muri kina.Sai koya saka oqo kemuni nai tokani na vakacegu dina.Na nona vakacegu na Tamada sa cecere sara ena dui Yaloda vakayadua ga.

Na noda vakamareqeta vakamatau na veika e da kilai tani kina.Na noda I tovo kei na kena I ukuuku.Na noda sere kei na noda meke.Ena vanua e da sa mai bula kina oqo ka yavalati ,me cakacakataki kina na noda vakabauti Kalou. Sa dua na sala vinaka ni kena caramaki na mataniwai ni Yaloda.

Na kena susugi ka yadravi nai lakolako makawa ena dusia ni sa cava na gauna ni cagilaba ka cadra na vunilagi ni noda veisotaraki ni da sa vakaligaliga kece yani ena noda I tei,me da marautaka na noda I sevu vua na Tamada.Ni da vakamatautaka na rai lesu,e da sa valuta tale tikoga kina na dravudravua kei na lecaika.E vuna ga oqo ni da sa yadrava me da vakabulabulataka na sala vinaka.E da sa vakabulabulataka me da veisureti ka dolavi keda ki na vakacegu ni lomadaka ia na veivakacegui.

E ke,sa mai tamusuki kina na I tei ni gugumatua kei na soli bula ena kena sa mai ciqomi nai sevu ni veiqaravi.Na kena sa volai na veika baleti keda ena noda



Sunday School Tabacakacaka Viti Okaladi.



The first Translated Sunday School Module presented to Rev Siosifa Pole.

vosa.E da bole tale eke.O cei me na vulica?,se o cei me na veivakatavulici?.

E da gole lesu tale ki na noda I tekitevu me da na sarava ga kina na veisala kecega e da vakatura.E da sa vakauqeti na noda, me da kauta vata mai na noda I sigana ka mai marautaka vata kei ira na luveda ena

sala e da sa digitaka me vinaka, ka kune kina na noda vakacegu, kei na vakacegu ni Yaloqa sa vakavuna veikedana Kalou na Tamad,kei na Kalou na Luvena kei na Kalou na YaloTabu.

Vinaka Vakalevu



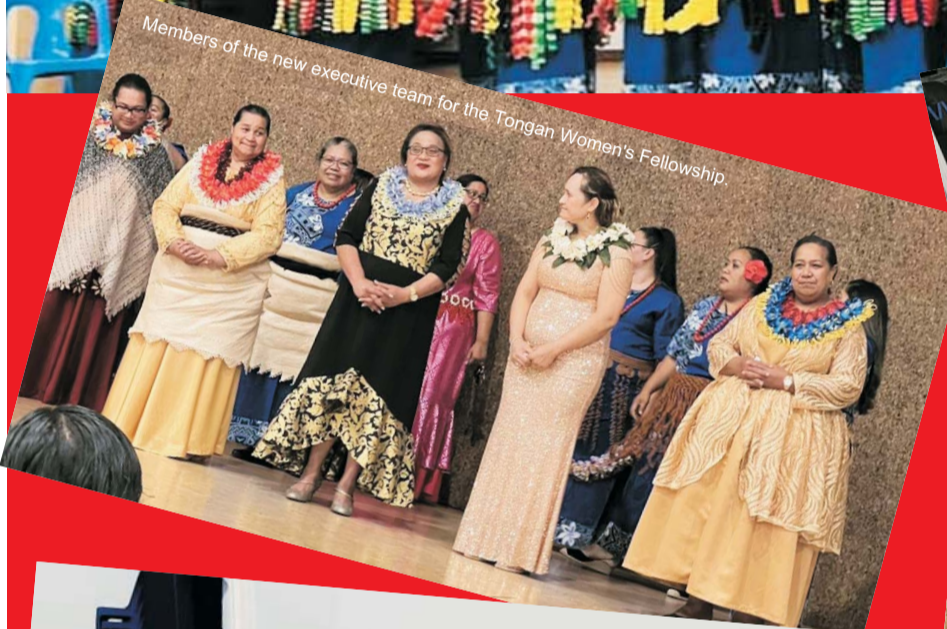
New Zealand Methodist Tongan Women's Fellowship Fiefia Night

In Auckland last month, many Tongan women gathered for an evening of celebration and fellowship at the New Zealand Methodist Tongan Women's Fellowship Fiefia Night.

The contingent from the Ellerslie Tongan Methodist Church.



Members of the new executive team for the Tongan Women's Fellowship.



The contingent from the Manurewa Tongan Methodist Church.

New Zealand Methodist Women's Fellowship President Mrs. Tuituiavao Salevao (far right) and representatives from the Samoan Fellowship.



Mrs. Sitila Kilikiti, President of the Auckland Methodist Fellowship, speaking at last month's Fiefia Night.



The contingent from the Onehunga Tongan Methodist Church at the New Zealand Methodist Tongan Women's Fellowship Fiefia Night.

The contingent from the Dominion-Kingsland Tongan Methodist Church.



President-Elect of the New Zealand Methodist Women's Fellowship, Mrs. Tiulipe Pope (forefront) with members of the Tongan fellowship executive team, at their Fiefia Night.





Ikuna Toketā Filōsefa e kupu 'e toko-nima 'a e Vahefonua Tonga

Fai 'e Felonites Manukia

'I he fakataha 'o e māhina kuo'osi, na'e loto 'a e Vahefonua Kakato ke fai ha fakamālō mo e talamonī ki he ngaahi kupu 'e toko 5 'a e Vahefonua Tonga 'o Aotearoa ne nau ikuna he mala'e 'o e ako 'o fakanofu honau faka'ilonga Toketā Filōsefa he faha'ita'u ako ne toki maliu atu.

Ko e kau Toketā Filōsefa (Doctor of Philosophy, PHD) fo'ou ko'eni ko Dr Soana Muimuiheata, Dr Ruby Manukia Schaumkel, Dr Malakai 'Ofanoa Jr, Dr Suliana Mone 'Alouaivaha mo Dr Jeanne Pau'uvale Teisina.

'Ikai ngata ai ka na'e fakanofu Toketā Filōsefa mo Dr Siuta Laulaupea'alu, ko e mēmipa 'o e Siasi Uēsiliāna Tau'atāina 'o Tonga 'i Te Rapa, Waikato, ka 'oku ne ngāue menitoa (mentor) 'i he polokalama Laulotaha Mentoring 'a e Siaola he Siasi Metotisi 'o St John's, Hamilton.

Ko e ngaahi ikuna kafakafa ko'eni na'e loto 'a e sinoti ke fai 'a hono fakamālō'ia he foaki taleniti mo e maama 'a e 'Otua 'o lave monū ai e kau toketā ni mo honau ngaahi fāmili, ka ko e ngaahi kupu 'o e Vahefonua.

'I he'ene me'a he fakataha 'a e Vahefonua Kakato, na'e pehē 'e he Faifekau Sea 'o e Vahefonua Tonga 'o Aotearoa, Rev Kalolo Fihaki, 'oku totonu pe ke fai 'a hono fakamālō'ia mo e fakafeta'i he kau mai 'a e 'Otua 'i he kau 'akatēmika ni 'o nau ikuna. "Oku mahu'inga ki he Vahefonua 'a e ikuna 'a e kau ako ni he ko e tāpuaki ia ma'a e Siasi, pea 'oku 'ikai ko ha me'a si'i 'a 'enau feinga he mala'e 'o e ako pea lava lelei," ko Faifekau Kalolo Fihaki ia.

"Tau fai pe ha fakamālō kiate kinautolu kotoa mo e talamonū."

Ko Soana ko e sekelitali lahi ia 'a e Vāhenga Ngāue Lotofale'ia, Mangere. Ko Ruby ko e 'ofefine ia 'o e setuata mālōlō 'a Pulela'ā, New Lynn, ko Tāvō Manukia mo hono hoa ko Meleseini. Ko Malakai ko e foha lahi ia 'o Dr Malakai 'Ofanoa, setuata 'o Vai-o e-Mo'ui, Henderson. Ko Jeanne ko e mēmipa ia 'o e Siasi Tokaima'ananga,



Dr Suliana Mone 'Alouaivaha (right), one of 5 from within Vahefonua Tonga 'o Aotearoa to graduate with a PHD, with Rev Tevita Finau. Credit: Valeti Finau.

Otara. Pea ko Suliana ko e 'ofefine ia 'o Dr Fisi'ihoi Mone (kuo ne pekia) pea mo hono hoa ko Nūnia mei he Siasi 'o Moia-Mei-He-'Eiki, Ellerslie.

Ko Nūnia Mone foki ko e Faifekau Ako 'a e siasi pea 'oku lolotonga ako ngāue 'i Siasi Vaine Mo'onā, Ponsonby.

Ko e mala'e 'o Soana ko e toketā he dietetics & nutrition (ma'u me'atokoni mo'ui lelei ki he sino) pea ko Ruby (Auckland University of Technology, AUT) mo Suliana (Waikato University) 'oku na toketā 'i he lao (law). Ko e mala'e 'o Jeanne ko e toketā he ngaahi akoteu mo 'ene 'aonga pea mo 'ene felāve'i mo e kakai Pasifiki 'i he fonua ni.

Ko Malakai Jr 'na'a ne muimui pe he mala'e ako 'o 'ene tangata'eiki - toketā mei he 'Univesiti 'o 'Aokalani (University of Auckland) he health promotion pe ko hono talaki mo poupu'i e mo'ui lelei he kominiuti.

Ko e mala'e foki 'o Siuta (Waikato University) he cyber security pe ko e malu'i e komipiuta mei he fakaēhaua mo e kākā faka-tekinologia

he ngaluope.

'I he'ene fakamatala ki he Pukolea na'e 'ikai ha'a ne teitei 'amanaki 'e a'u 'ene ako ki ha tu'unga ko e toketā filōsefa ia 'i ha fa'ahinga mala'e.

"Neu ha'u mei Tonga 'ikai ha taukei ako 'e taha, ne u toki ha'u ki Hamilton 'o 'ai e ki'i koosi ta'etotongi he komipiuta 'i he lēvolo 3, 'a ia ko e ma'ulalotaha ia, 'a e lēvolo ko ia," ko e fakamatala ia 'a e Toketā Siuta Laulaupea'alu.

"Pea u hoko ai pe ki he 'Univesiti o Waikato 'o feinga he mata'itohi bachelor."

'I he lava ia na'a ne fakatokanga'i 'a e mahu'inga 'a e cyber security pe ko e malu'i 'a 'etau ngaahi komipiuta mei he 'ohofi kinautolu 'e he kau fakaēhaua kākā he ngaluope pe vahaope.

"Ko e 'uhinga ia 'eku fili ki he mala'e ni," ko e fakamatala ia 'a Siuta.

Ko e ta'u onongofulu-tupu 'eni o Siuta pea ko e fakalotolahi eni kia kinautolu 'oku 'ikai fakangatangata ta'u motu'a e ako ia.



Dr Soana Muimuiheata graduates with a PHD degree. Credit: Soana Muimuiheata.



Dr Ruby Manukia Schaumkel, legal advisor to MCNZ celebrates her graduation with a PHD. Credit: Ruby Schaumkel.