



## MCNZ President's Kauwhau Receives Global Attention & Applause at Waitangi Day

As Waitangi Day 2025 was overshadowed by anger at the introduction of the controversial Treaty Principles Bill, MCNZ President Te Aroha Rountree attracted rousing applause and widespread media attention. On Waitangi Day, criticism surrounding the contentious and divisive plan to redefine New Zealand's foundational document, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, ranged from subtle comments directed at politicians supporting the Bill to blatant acts of defiance.

However, the kauwhau (sermon) delivered at the dawn service and at the ecumenical service by Te Aroha Rountree, referencing the 'growing need for truth telling, justice and the need for reconciliation' and likening the relationship between Māori and the Crown as a marriage gone sour, drew resounding applause from the assembled crowd, and widespread media attention in Aotearoa and beyond.

"But to renegotiate the terms of a marriage, usually requires both spouses to be at the tepu. But it seems our spouse, the Crown, has filed for divorce while we were blissfully unaware," Te Aroha said.

"The potential for Māori success in the face of racist legislation masquerading as equality for all, is impossible."

Te Aroha went on to affirm, "These injustices are not abstract; they are real and present in the lives of Māori whānau and communities." She cited housing shortages and the rising cost of living as examples of issues that disproportionately affect and impact Māori.

Te Aroha said, "We pray for the Justice Committee to love mercy."

To hear extracts from the powerful kauwhau and compelling call for justice, mercy, and for the Crown to honour our Constitutional foundations, [Click Here](#)

The full sermon can be found in this edition of Touchstone, reproduced with the permission of Te Aroha Rountree.





### President's Report Pepuere 2025

*Te Aroha Rountree*

Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa the Methodist Church of Aotearoa New Zealand stands at a significant crossroads in our journey of justice, reconciliation and faithful witness in this country.

In light of recent kōrero about governance, rights and obligations, Te Hāhi Weteriana is called to state our position on important legislation including the Treaty Principles Bill and the Regulatory Standards Bill. Both bills, hold profound implications for the future of Aotearoa New Zealand's political and social landscape, and the Methodist Church must navigate our stance on these issues carefully. For the Church, which has long been committed to the principles of justice and honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi, opposing both bills is a necessary act of faithfulness to our bicultural partnership, and to our theological commitment to justice and peace.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi, signed in 1840, serves as the foundational document between the Crown and Māori, establishing a relationship based on mutual respect, partnership and protection of Māori rights, language, culture and land. Over time, Te Tiriti has become a living document, evolving through legal and political interpretations to reflect the ongoing journey towards reconciliation in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Treaty Principles Bill proposes to establish a set of principles which would be used to guide government decision-making. While the intent behind the bill may appear to be one of clarifying and reinforcing the Crown's obligations, there are significant concerns among Māori and the wider public about how the bill will also undermine the spirit of Te Tiriti partnership. Te Hāhi Weteriana, given our historical commitment to justice and to living out our covenantal relationship with Māori, has a particular responsibility to stand against any legislation that may erode or weaken te tino rangatiratanga o ngā iwi me ngā hapū. The core issue with the Bill lies in its potential to entrench the Crown's interpretation of Te Tiriti at the expense of Māori rights guaranteed in Te Tiriti.

By focusing on abstract principles rather than a clear commitment to active, good-faith partnership, the bill will place limitations on Māori aspirations for land, resources and cultural revitalisation. For the Methodist Church, the Bill represents a profound contradiction of our mission to work for social justice and equity. The Treaty Principles Bill, as it stands, perpetuates the imbalance of power between the Crown and Māori, undermining the intent of partnership and mutual respect in Te Tiriti. By opposing the bill, the Church has aligned ourselves with the ongoing efforts of Māori and Tauīwi organisations and groups to protect Māori rights and uphold Te Tiriti.

The Regulatory Standards Bill is another piece of legislation that warrants careful consideration by the Methodist Church of New Zealand. The underlying principles established in the proposed bill are broad, ambiguous and subjective. The proposed bill deliberately excludes Te Tiriti o Waitangi and makes no reference to the rights of Māori to exercise tino rangatiratanga guaranteed in Te Tiriti.

The principles laid out in the bill prioritise the protection of individual, private property rights while dismissing any collective property rights and interests such as those of iwi and hapū. The bill lacks evidence-based regulatory decision-making processes that align with international guidelines and principles. As a result it fails to prioritise environmental interests and excludes any acknowledgement of tikanga Māori in regulatory processes, such as Kaitiakitanga that often informs environmental sustainability methodology and practice.

While regulatory frameworks are necessary for ensuring accountability and transparency, the concerns regarding the Regulatory Standards Bill centre on its potential to impose centralised control over iwi and hapū collective property rights and could potentially impact negatively on environmental protections that are not taken into consideration in any detail. The Bill has vested a significant amount of authority in the Minister for Regulation, essentially centralising power with the Minister/Ministry with little accountability for public/Te Tiriti interests.

For the Methodist Church, this bill represents another opportunity to stand in solidarity with Māori in their ongoing efforts to retain tino rangatiratanga over their cultural, social, and economic practices. By opposing the Regulatory Standards Bill, the Methodist Church sends a strong message that the voice of Māori communities should not be diluted by over-reaching government intervention and that Māori have the right to determine their own paths forward. We take a stand now against injustice, support Māori land rights, advocate for social justice in times of poverty and inequality, and challenge discriminatory policies. It is crucial for Te Hāhi Weteriana to continue to stand in opposition to such legislation as a faithful witness to the values of justice, equity and respect for all people.



## AROUND THE CONNEXION



*Guests at the Induction service included MCNZ General Secretary Rev Tara Tautari, MCNZ President Te Aroha Rountree and Tumuaki Rev Dr Arapera Ngaha along with other church leaders.*

### Te Taha Māori: Te Rohe O Taitokerau: News and Events

*Rev. Hoana Flay*

The first Te Taha Māori hui Poari for 2025, hosted by Taitokerau Rohe at Te Puna o Te Matauranga marae, Raumanga in Whangarei was held on Friday 31 January and Saturday 1 February. The following day, Sunday 2 February, the induction for Rev Hoana Flay was held at the same venue. Rev Hoana reflects on the special gathering.

Many came to support the kaupapa of the day, including MCNZ President Te Aroha Rountree who officiated my induction.

General Secretary Tara Tautari delivered an

inspiring reflection from the reading :Jeremiah 1: 4-10, "And the Lord touched my lips and put his words into my mouth".

It was a privilege to have Rev. Dr Arapera Ngaha, Tumuaki o Te Taha Māori, the newly appointed Kai Hapi o Ki Muri Rev. Nicola Teague Grundy, Northland District Superintendent Saikalone Taufa, the Haahi Ratana from Kaipara, and others too many to name. There was a deep wairua connection throughout the Karakia. Kai Hapa Tapu o Te Ariki was also a significant inclusion.

The service also included the induction for the new Tai Tokerau Kai Takaweanga (LP), Ngahuia Lord, and recognition of our Kai Karakia and Minita-a-Iwi. There was also a launch of the book I have written about my late mother, the Rev. Hana Hauraki.

It was a day of new and old memories filled with laughter, lots of head nodding, and testimonies from those who spoke in acknowledgement of this celebration. I am happy for Te Taha Maori that we can bring our people together in the most respectful manner to share in the beauty and scared elements of Wairua Tapu. I'm sure others will have reflections to share.





## CMM Celebrates New Housing Complex Opening

The Housing Minister Chris Bishop honoured a promise made to Jill Hawkey, CMM Executive Director, some years ago when he visited Ōtautahi to open a new housing complex at Wesley Village.

The 14 new units designed for older people - a mix of social housing and affordable rental homes - feature solar panels to help reduce household running costs and have been designed to be accessible for people with functional limitations.

*Resident Rodger Whitley (left) joins local MP Hamish Campbell and the Housing Minister Chris Bishop (right), as he cuts the ribbon to the new unit he will move into.*

"We've ensured that it is easier and safer to move around by including wider accessways and thresholds, and level transition zones.

And we've installed grab rails and non-slip flooring in the bathrooms to reduce the risk of falls," says Hawkey. "Generous funding support from the previous Government's Affordable Housing Fund and Rātā Foundation has made this extension possible."

Amidst a decline in home ownership and a rapidly aging population, and at a time when most new retirement villages have a business model that is too expensive for those without a home to sell, accommodation options for older people without assets are few.

"This trend is deeply worrying and means that affordable, accessible and secure units like those at Wesley Village are in great demand," she says.

Ruawhiti Pokaia, a close friend of the late kaumatua and Ngai Tahu leader Dr Terry Ryan, performed karakia and welcomed the minister, local MP Hamish Campbell, residents, neighbours and other guests, acknowledging recipients of the new units 'who will soon be blessed by moving into the new whare'.

CMM has been engaged in providing safe, affordable and accessible housing for older people for more than 40 years and is increasingly concerned by the dire shortage of housing suitable for those aged 65+ who are overrepresented on the housing register.

In acknowledging the government's support for community housing, Hawkey expressed an ongoing need for providers to partner with government agencies to meet the growing need for social housing. Currently 40,000 people are on the housing register.

Hon Chris Bishop said, "The government is up for the challenge, but the government does not have all the answers. Communities have the answers."

In his former role as National party spokesperson for housing, Chris Bishop had assured Jill Hawkey that if he was Housing Minister, he would come to open the new complex. Now that he has fulfilled that promise, he closed his address by affirming, "This is just the start."



### Two new social housing projects at Wesley Rātā Village

*Ruth Nicol WCA*

The transformation of Wesleyhaven - Wesley Community Action's former aged-care facility in Naenae, Wellington - Into a vibrant, intergenerational community is taking another exciting step forward.

Two new building projects at what is now known as Wesley Rātā Village will see the former hospital and the Strand rest home converted into 31 small apartments. The new apartments will take the total number of affordable rental homes at the village to 86. They include 30 independent-living villas that had been on the site for many years, as well as 25 new social houses that were completed in 2021.



Work on the \$4.8m project to convert the hospital wing into 15 small apartments started in August last year and the apartment complex, which will be called Kowhai Court, is expected to be finished by July this year. The apartments will be made available to people on the social housing waiting list, with a particular focus on older people.

Work on the \$7.8m project to convert the 50-bed Strand rest home into 16 apartments – to be called Pohutakawa Apartments – is scheduled to start in April. These apartments will be rented at a discounted rate to people

who do not qualify for social housing but who cannot afford market rents.

Both building projects are being partly funded with grants from Grafton Downs, a charitable company within the Methodist Church.

Wesley Community Action provided aged residential care on the beautiful, 60-hectare site for more than 60 years before making the difficult decision to stop providing the service in 2017. However, as difficult as that decision was it also marked the start of a new chapter that has seen Wesleyhaven reborn as Wesley Rātā Village.

This rebirth followed conversations with the local community about how to develop the site into a community asset while respecting its historical association with older people. Working together they came up with [a vision](#) to create a place that weaves community and enhances wellbeing.

Almost eight years later that vision is well on the way to being achieved. As well as providing warm, dry, affordable rental homes for around 70 mostly older people (that number will increase to more than 100 once the apartments are built) the village has also become a hub for a range of community activities, all of which help create a sense of connection and belonging for residents. They include programmes for older people as well as activities for parents, babies and children, along with art classes and a monthly Koha Café. There's also a community food garden and a recently established community composting scheme.

Wesley Community Action director David Hanna says it's very satisfying to see the transformation taking place at the village.

"In 2017 we took a leap of faith and decided to shift our focus from institutional care to helping create a village of people wanting to live in their own place surrounded by opportunities to engage, contribute, and retreat. It's very exciting to see that now happening.



## Kete Aroha o Waipounamu 2025 not to be missed!

*Rev Dale Peach*

Since the end of last year's very successful South Island Synod School of theology held at Aldersgate, Ōtautahi, a group have been working towards this year's event. Registrations are now invited for the South Island Synod School of Theology, Kete Aroha o Waipounamu 2025.



When the three geographical synods in Te Waipounamu decided to combine, one of the areas they explored was the taonga that each synod would bring to the new combined South Island Methodist Synod, Te Hinota Weteriana o te Waipounamu. They found it easy to identify a significant

taonga from the Otago Southland Synod to be carried forward – the tradition of holding schools of theology. The events were considered unmissable by those in the know. And so, the first South Island Synod School of Theology, Kete Aroha o Waipounamu, was held immediately following the inaugural Synod meeting at the beginning of last year.

The South Island Synod School of Theology, Kete Aroha o Waipounamu 2025, is being held from 2pm Sunday 16 March to lunchtime Tuesday 18 March, 2025, at the Aldersgate Centre, central Christchurch. The varied, stimulating and educational programme includes sessions on the Sunday and Monday evenings.



The 'star' of the Waitangi Day Dawn Service, President Te Aroha Rountree is one of the keynote speakers. Her two sessions will kōrerorero two significant areas in the life of Te Hāhi:

1. The bicultural journey - discussing 'Honouring the Treaty Forever' and
2. Climate justice – 'Rekindle the vā of Papatūānuku' - exploring the topic of 'Nature, People and God'.

Te Aroha's Presidential duties mean she is currently on leave from her Trinity Methodist Theological College lecturer position. Those who attend Kete Aroha o Waipounamu will benefit from her extensive knowledge and insights usually shared with the Trinity College students.



The other main keynote speaker will be Dr Emily Colgan, another Trinity Methodist Theological College lecturer. With extensive scholarship in Biblical studies and theology, focusing on the relationship between the Bible and social issues we face today, Emily's first session will raise awareness of the 'lens' we and others bring to Biblical texts. Her second session will be an extended practical workshop to help us explore ours and others' perspectives that need to be acknowledged whenever we consider biblical texts.

As well as these very capable and highly regarded keynote speakers, the programme will also include up to four workshop sessions giving people the possibility of exploring topics like:

- Origins of Christianity in the West Coast from a Māori perspective
- Climate Justice – sharing findings from last year's World Methodist Conference
- Working with Pacific People as part of your congregation
- Congregational-based Ministry with children - the learnings that come with experience
- A fresh look at the New Zealand liturgical calendar
- Theology through a disability lens

Schools of theology, like Kete Aroha o Waipounamu, are wonderful opportunities to keep our minds theologically stimulated and exposed to modern scholarship. These events also offer practical and helpful expressions of ministry.

Kete Aroha o Waipounamu is open to anyone who would like to attend. Publicity, with full programme details, will be available by Friday 14 February, and will be widely distributed. Anyone who would like the information sent to them directly can [email](#).



### Wellington Parish Welcome New Ministers

*Iliesa Tora*

The Wellington Methodist Parish welcomed two of their new ministers over two days of traditional and spiritual confirmations in the last week of January at the Wellington Methodist Church in Taranaki. As new parish superintendent, Rev Joeli Ducivaki and the Minister in charge of the Samoan congregation, Rev Suiva'aia Te'o were confirmed in their new roles.

Rev Ducivaki and his family were traditionally welcomed on Thursday, 30 January by the Fijian congregation, after they were presented to the congregation by the members of the Pitt Street Parish Fijian congregation. The following day, both Ministers were officially inducted and blessed in their new positions.

The induction service was presided over by the Superintendent of the Lower North Island Synod, Revi Petaia, the Sinoti Samoa Superintendent Rev Paulo Ieli, Vahefonua Tonga o Aotearoa Synod Superintendent Rev Kalolo Fihaki and the Wasewase ko Viti ke Rotuma Synod Superintendent Rev Alipate Livani.

Members of the Wellington Parish witnessed the induction ceremony, which also included the gifting of ministry gifts to the two new Ministers.

In his induction sermon, the Rev Ieli shared the message of the people of God also needing to rest and be refreshed so that they can continue to do the work they are called by God to do. Following the induction service, guests and parish members witnessed traditional ceremonies performed by the Fijian and Samoan congregations.

That included the traditional Fiji ceremony of sevusevu and ivakasobu, where a whale's tooth was presented to the two Ministers along with kava, welcoming them in the traditional manner to the parish and also re-affirming the parish members commitment to helping the two newly inducted ministers in serving the ministry.

A Samoan ceremony of gifting was then presented where Rev Te'o and her family presented gifts to all the ministers and church leaders present at the event. After, a sumptuous meal was enjoyed by all.

In thanking the parish, Rev Ducivaki, who spoke on behalf of the two ministers, said they were touched by the love and unity shown by parish members in welcoming and receiving them at the parish.

He said they will work together with the pastoral team and the parish members to ensure that the call of God is carried out within the parish and the greater Wellington communities. Rev Ducivaki is the first Fijian Minister to be appointed Superintendent of the Wellington Methodist Parish.



Ngā mihi nui

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I welcome feedback on content included in Touchstone.





*Rev Keita Hotere used Deepart AI to modify this image of Tumuaki Rev Arapera and Rev Sandra participating in celebrations at Ratana Pā.*

*Credit: Rev Keita Hotere.*

### He Inoi Mō Te Iwi Morehu

*Rev Keita Hotere*

“Aue Ihoa tiakina tō iwi Morehu ...  
E te whetu o te ata tiro mai ki tō iwi e noho nei  
Huakina mai e koe he ngākau, te manawa huarahi  
Aue Ihoa, aue aue manaakitia mātou  
Hei whakaū te waka nei te rangimārie.”

I begin with the words of the waiata ‘*Te Iwi Morehu*’ composed by Myra Te Rehita Maraku. This composition speaks to ‘the people, the followers’ of Tahupōtiki Wiremu Ratana reminding them of certain touchstones of their faith. It is these spiritual and cultural traditions, that form part of the deeply rooted legacy of the Ratana faith. The words call for God’s protection, a spiritual devotion and unity of the people, grounded in peace.

This year marked 152 years of gathering to celebrate the birthday of Tahupōtiki Wiremu Ratana. Representatives from Te Taha Māori, and the Connexion journeyed to Ratana Pā. We are called to these sacred places. President Te Aroha, Lower North Island Synod and Methodist Mission Northern representatives shared the experience of being amongst Te Iwi Morehu at their home, Ratana Pā. The anniversary offers an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the life of Tahupōtiki Wiremu Ratana, the founder of the Ratana faith and the movements of his people Te Iwi Morehu.

This annual event draws us to this sacred place every year to renew ties and for the common witness and service of all churches living in Aotearoa today. It particularly speaks to our Methodist church heritage and reminds us of the commitment of Father Seamer and those Deaconesses who supported the people of Ratana Pā, Tahupōtiki Wiremu Ratana and his church in their beginnings.

The distinctive call of Te Iwi Morehu is an invitation for the faithful to gather and to renew commitments to their faith, but they also extend that invitation to all denominations, to Kiingitanga, and to the political leaders of the country. When the political leaders talk to their plans for the year ahead, representation from Maoridom across the motu are present.

It is rewarding to rekindle the cherished tradition of a Methodist presence at Ratana Pā. Tumuaki Arapera Ngaha shared, “In the procession to the temepara tapu our Weteiana clergy were invited to participate honouring of connections and relationships”.

Lower North Island synod representative Rev Sandra Williams shared the highlight for her, “was the way the celebrations included the whole whānau. At the centre of the festivities was a sports field with games for the children and youth and each evening the stage rocked with entertainment for the young and young at heart. There were speakers addressing issues relevant to young people, health checks for the adults and food trucks to ensure all were taken care of with food and drink.”

I resonate with the voice of Rev Sandra when she spoke of “the privilege of being immersed in a culture that is not of our own and experiencing the beauty of welcome and inclusion”. We thank Te Iwi Morehu for their welcoming of us into their sacred space and offer our blessings for their continued wellbeing as they continue their faith journey as a people with God.





### Genuine Person Centred Care

*Rev Dr Susan Thompson*

There's a poster on some of our noticeboards at Tamahere which says, "Residents don't live in our workplace, we work in their home". I really like that message for the way it puts the emphasis of our work in aged care very firmly on our residents and their needs, desires and values.

Making a care home feel like home depends on a number of things including the frequency of the tea trolley, the building's design and decor, whether you can hear people talking and laughing, the presence of music, flowers and dogs and most importantly, the way staff treat residents.

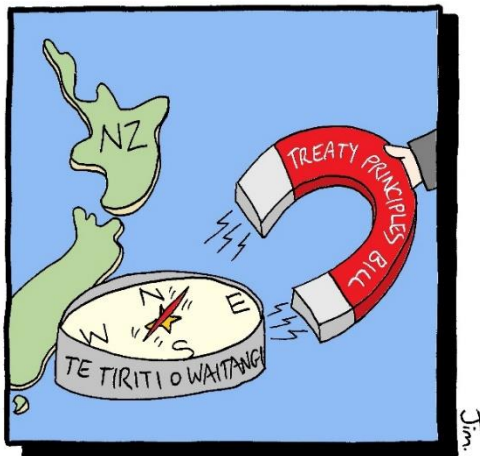
In thinking about their engagement with residents, I suggest to staff that a good place to start is by recognising that it's not easy to come into a care home. It's really hard giving up your independence even if you have got to the stage where you need extra care and support.

That means residents don't find it easy to ring a bell even when they need assistance, to accept help with their personal cares, to follow a timetable set by someone else, to have people checking on them regularly and to feel like they can't leave the building without someone asking where they're going.

I think it's important for staff to be aware of how residents might be feeling and to do everything they can to help them retain their sense of independence and freedom. So we talk about simple things like knocking on people's doors before entering their rooms, asking residents to do things rather than telling them, letting people make their own decisions as much as possible and being prepared to trust them.

Some of these things are harder to do than others especially when residents are physically frail and do need help or when they're on the dementia journey and staff worry that they will be unsafe without their assistance. However, giving people the ability to do things for themselves makes such a difference to their well-being and self-esteem and helps them feel as if they're still in control of their lives.

In the health sector people talk a lot about "patient-centred care" which for me means putting residents first and always treating them with respect and dignity. In thinking about the way those of us working in aged care engage with residents, a useful question to keep in mind might be "how would I like to be treated in my home?"



### Jim's Cartoon

*Brendan Boughen*

Our regular cartoon that finds the funny side of faith.



## **Spreading the Good News**

*Lesieli Pope, President NZMWF*

Fakafeta'I `etau ma'u `a e ta'ufo'ou ko `eni. Happy New Year to all NZMWF District leaders and members across the motu. Although 2024 brought challenges, we now look ahead with hope for a productive and successful year, thankful for the strength and life we've received to continue spreading the Good News.

This year will be a busy one as we begin preparations for the World Assembly in August 2026. Our World Federation representative, Simulata Pope, will maintain close communication with the Local Arrangement Committee (LAC) and District leaders, as well as South Pacific officials, through Zoom meetings and email updates. The LAC will meet in the next few weeks to get things underway.

We also have some district visitations outside of Auckland scheduled for the first quarter of this year. On Monday 24 March, the North Canterbury District will meet with us in Christchurch, and on 12 April, the Upper North District will gather with us in Dargaville.

2025 will be our final year in this role, as we will be handing it over to the Waikato District, specifically Judith Herbert and her new executive team. In preparation for this transition, I am taking every opportunity to encourage current executive members to lead with confidence, helping to train them for future leadership roles. Finally, I want to remind us all of our theme: "GROW IN CHRIST AND BE A LIFE GIVER." This is our call to walk together in God's grace and share life with others through our actions, letting His light shine in all we do.



## **Fresh links with the United Church of the Solomon Islands**

*Ian Faulkner*

The Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Board is funding the educational and living expenses of the three children of Brian and Dima Bird, who are currently enrolled at the Pacific Theological College (PTC). Brian Bird is enrolled in a Master of Theology programme and completed the first year with distinction in 2024. He has been designated by the United Church of the Solomon Islands to lead the Seghe Theological Seminary (STS) in the Solomon Islands following his graduation.

His wife Dima is enrolled in a Certificate in Communities Ministry programme, and on her return to the Solomon Islands will be involved in the Women's Development Programme at STS. Brian's course is sponsored by The Council for World Mission, and Dima's by the Methodist Church of Britain. Their three children Requela Ravutu, Reirn Sibio and Braema Tavasere are supported by the Mission and Ecumenical Board. In 2025 Raquela will be continuing her studies working towards a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Education and Sociology at the University of the South Pacific and is expecting to graduate at the end of the year.

Reirn has completed Year 13 and has been accepted to pursue a Diploma in Information Technology at the Fiji National University in 2025. He is considering the option of enrolling in a Diploma of Pasifika Leadership and Resilience at PTC, which would allow him to graduate in 2025.

Braema will move into a Year 7 programme at Veituto Primary School this year. The support of the Mission and Ecumenical Board has meant that the family has been able to be together in Fiji. Brian says, "This has addressed our concerns about neglecting our children and has supported us in ensuring they thrive while we focus on advancing God's mission in the Solomon Islands and the surrounding region." Donations received from a number of New Zealand Methodist parishes and individuals during 2023 and 2024 have seeded the opportunity of the Mission and Ecumenical Board to join with the Council for World Mission and the Methodist Church of Britain to build the capacity of the United Church of the Solomon Islands to address contemporary challenge



## Wesley Historical Society Prepare 2024 Journal

Rev Ian Faulkner

The Wesley Historical Society Journal adds to our understanding of several significant moments in the life of Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa. WHS President Rev Ian Faulkner provides an overview of the contents of the 2024 Journal.

The 2024 Journal, published as a Proceedings of the Society, number 113, includes reflections on:

i. The Methodist Church Bicultural Journey (marking 40 years since the Conference decision to embark on this journey), submitted by Norman Brookes;

ii. The impact of Harold Williams, a gifted linguist, and foreign editor of *The Times* during a tumultuous period in history. Williams is listed in *The Guinness Book of Records* as the world's great linguist, speaking 58 languages. He was the only man to attend the League of Nations and talk to every delegate in their own language, submitted by Garth Cant;

iii. The personal experience of a Methodist Military Chaplain in Vietnam, submitted by Mervyn Dine;

iv. The Nelson Action Committee on International Affairs, submitted by Oliver Sutherland; and

v. The PhD thesis submitted by the current Gilmore-Smith Scholar Josh Reid, based on the Taranaki Flax Workers' Union, championed by those in the Maori peace movements and several prominent Methodist leaders within the Christian Pacifist tradition.

In addition to the articles listed above, Terry Wall's eulogy for Rev William (Bill) Livingstone Wallace (noted hymn writer) spoken at The Transitional Cathedral, Christchurch, is included as an obituary, along with two book reviews.

The first is Donald Phillip's review of Trish Rossiter's 2023 *Finding Thomas*, the story of Thomas Skinner, remarkable catechist and teacher. The second is Gary Clover's review of Ned Fletcher's 2022 *The English Text of the Treaty of Waitangi*. The current discussion surrounding the Treaty Principles Bill makes these comments very relevant.

This edition of the Journal is the second recent Wesley Historical Society publication. It accompanies *Weteriana Methodism: Bicentennial Reflections from Aotearoa New Zealand*, edited by Emeritus Professor Dr Peter Lineham, which was launched at Conference 2024.

*Weteriana Methodism* examines with fresh eyes aspects of Methodism's journey in Aotearoa prior to and following the establishment of the Wesleyan Mission Station at Kaeo in 1822. In the words of Dr Lineham, "This book challenges traditional narratives, and shows the complexity of Māori society and its engagement with the Mission. It shows the broad context of the Wesleyan mission's English supporters and its Māori defenders and proponents."

Copies of both the Journal and *Weteriana Methodism: Bicentennial Reflections from Aotearoa New Zealand* are available from [Rev Ian Faulkner](#).





*Dawn rises at Waitangi Treaty grounds 2024.*

*Credit: Keita Hotere*

### Our Bicultural Journey Based on Partnership

*Rev Donald Phillipps*

We simply must take Te Tiriti o Waitangi seriously. The Treaty - its words, their meaning and their intention – have come under closer scrutiny in 2025 than for some time. Already we are aware that it is, for many, a divisive issue. This is the time of the year when, more than any other, we have an opportunity to reconsider who we are as 'people of Aotearoa New Zealand.

In our own brief enough history as the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Te Tiriti is something we have slowly learned to understand and respect. It was only in the late 1940s that some semblance of equality began to be established within the Church in respect to Māori ministry. This was finally reinforced by the appointment of Rua Rakena as Tumuaki of the Māori Division (Taha Māori) in the early 1970s. But there was no reference to the Treaty in the Church's law book until the 1990s - the result of the Connexion's Bicultural Journey throughout the 1980s.

What happened in the 1980s, however, was of a different order. The Methodist Church of New Zealand finally recognised it could not maintain its stance as the sole decision-maker regarding the principles that under-pinned its laws and regulations. It saw itself as part of the wider world of Protestant Christianity, that its theology owed its origins to the European Reformation, and through the centuries its story went back to the establishment of Christendom.

But in addition, in the 1980's, we believed it was time to acknowledge and assert that we belong to a particular part of the world where two cultures live alongside each other. We began to question our understanding of bi-culturalism, and in the language of that time we chose to declare that within our own community of faith we are committed to a power-sharing partnership with the *tangata whenua*.

We used that phrase from the late 1980s. We did not make it part of a specific law or regulations. We placed the words at the beginning of the Statement of Mission that precedes the detailed guide to the ordering of our work. And now there is a challenge from outside the Church to the Treaty that we have accepted as part of our reason for being.

Underlying what is said in this article is the conviction that partnership is not a matter of mere numbers – with the exception, possibly of  $1 + 1 = 2$ . Democracy is so often expressed in bare majorities. We are living in a country where the Government survives by a bare majority and is itself a disparate coalition of parties and policies, rather than a partnership.

Partnership, as expressed in our Statement of Mission, looks back to the moment when a sovereign people, the *tangata whenua*, chose to ally itself with the representatives of a country from the other side of the world, whose symbolic leader was a queen. The people of this land did not see the signing of the Treaty as a loss of *mana* for themselves. We cannot in 2025 think of *Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa* as an unequal partnership, and we cannot accept that either its principles or its spirit are to be decided by the ballot-box.