



The wrong tool for a fragile nation...

Prime Minister's Slip at Waitangi: Jews or Gentiles, slave or free

Rev Dr Jione Havea

At the Dawn Service on Waitangi Day 2024, Hon. Christopher Luxon announced he would read a passage "that speaks to 'unity': 1 Corinthians 12:12–27 (see RNZ news clip, 58:12)". Without explaining what 'unity' meant (to him), or commenting on what the passage could mean (for the nation), Luxon read the passage from the NIV translation. But he slipped past (skipped over) verse 13: "For we were

all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body - whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink."

In this article, I will reflect on 'unity' and whether it is the appropriate tag for this passage (1 Cor. 12:12–27) and on what the PM's slip says (about him) and does (with regards to the public use of biblical texts).

Unity?

'Unity' is a beautiful term but it has loaded baggage. In Christian circles, 'unity' is one of the terms or concepts often used to romanticize the Christian fellowship as well as to discourage doubts, questions and protests. In church gatherings, one will not be surprised to hear admonitions along these lines:

Don't question our sacred texts, our teachings or our ways because to question or to doubt those will disturb our unity;
we are one in Christ;
be united, keep the peace.

Peace is one of the manifestations of unity but neither unity nor peace is innocent: someone benefits from preaching unity and demanding the upholding of peace. Maintaining unity does not redress the power imbalance that fractures communities (causing disunity). Protecting peace tends to serve the interests of people with power.

If the honorable PM had read on to the end of the chapter (1 Cor. 12:28–31), which reminds us that people do not have the same gift or call but we need to work together – like the many parts of the body needing to respect each other as they work together, he might have realised that this passage speaks more to 'collaboration' over 'unity'.

If the PM had used 'collaboration' as a frame for how the gathered people heard his reading of 1 Cor. 12:12–27, he would have affirmed diversity and difference, and encouraged communing through action over 'unity' in words and spirit. Put sharply, the frame that the PM announced – unity, and the reason why he read (or was told to read) this passage, was based on a misreading of the text.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi is evidence of the illusion of unity. We have two versions of this foundational document, in two different languages and worldviews, that seek to make two peoples - each of which was and is inherently diverse - share power and work together. Since 1840, these two peoples, along with many more people who arrived after 1840, are still trying to figure out how to co-exist and to distribute power and resources justly. Among and between Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti, there was no unity before or after 1840.

Notwithstanding, Te Tiriti o Waitangi upholds the vision that different people could collaborate – the critical message of 1 Cor. 12:12–31, in my personal reading.



Bible in public places

What then of PM Luxon's 'unity'? What was he trying to do or cover up? These questions bring me to the matter of using the Bible in public places. Of course, anyone could read the Bible in public places. But to read without reflecting on a passage, in my opinion, is like using the Bible as a club – to hit people, and to discourage them from doubting, questioning and protesting.

Not long after the Dawn Service, more hīkoi arrived at the Treaty Grounds to raise questions, to voice doubt and to protest, in the spirit of Te Tiriti. Before and after the Dawn Service, what matters is not so much what Te Tiriti says but what it does; what Te Tiriti does is to cry for collaboration.

Since 1840, Te Tiriti has done and continues to do a lot:

the many people who arrived and settled Aotearoa New Zealand before and since 1840 – whether at the behest of the British crown and its churches or according to their own drives, whether invited by Tangata Whenua or by more recent treaties – reap the benefits of Te Tiriti; the generations of people who learned and cultured in Te Reo and Te Ao Māori – reap the benefits of Te Tiriti;

the new generations of migrant communities, from Pasifika and beyond, who learn and appreciate their native languages and ways of being in Aotearoa New Zealand – reap the benefits of Te Tiriti;

the native animals and flowing rivers that have legal rights – reap the benefits of Te Tiriti; both residents of and visitors to Aotearoa New Zealand – reap the benefits of Te Tiriti; and the list goes on of human- and other- kinds who reap the benefits of Te Tiriti.

For me, a manuhiri to Aotearoa, Te Tiriti is not interested in 'unity' but in real justice – on the ground, in the lives of real people, among Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti (among whom are Tangata Pasifika or Tangata Moana). Intentionally or unintentionally, the PM's undefined 'unity' covers over (masks) Te Tiriti's search for real justice.

Slip?

The PM may have slipped past 1 Cor. 12:13 because the verse addressed people who "were all baptized by one Spirit" (NIV). It makes sense not to use the category of being baptized in a public event, out of respect to those who have not been baptized. However, this was at a Christian worship event and the intention was to remember the first signing of Te Tiriti at Waitangi – for which Christians and non-Christians played significant roles.

By slipping past 1 Cor. 12:13 ("For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink") the PM neglected two important differentiations.

Firstly, taking 'Jews' as reference to the 'in group' (or baptized) while 'Gentiles' refers to 'outsiders' (or unbaptized), verse 13 is an opportunity to affirm that there were Jews/insiders and Gentiles/outsiders both at Corinth as well as at Waitangi. This differentiation is affirmed in Te Tiriti 1840 – even though the British acted as the in-group/Jews and they looked down upon the Māori as the outsiders/Gentiles – but missed by the PM in 2024.

Secondly, a more important differentiation in verse 13 is between slave or free among both groups, the Jews and the Gentiles. There are other ways of reading this verse but my concern here is the implication of the PM's slip: as a consequence, he missed the opportunity to raise the consciousness of the nation to free-people among Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti, as well as slave-people among Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti. There is diversity within each group.

So what?

1 Cor. 12:13 affirms diversity, not 'unity', and lays upon readers/hearers of 1 Cor. 12:12–31 the responsibility, for instance, to do something about Tangata Whenua who are free and have no respect for Te Tiriti. The same applies to Tangata Tiriti!



TE KETE AROHA O WAIPOUNAMU 2024



Theology on the Edge

On 27 January, Rev Dale Peach was inducted as Superintendent of the newly established South Island Synod and the next day, a keen audience gathered to discuss theology with a diverse team of presenters at the inaugural School of Theology. *Rev Janet Marsh* reports on behalf of co-organisers *Rev Dale Peach, Garth Nowland-Foreman, Rev Dr Mary Caygill, Rev David Poultney, Lyn Heine and Lucy D'Aeth.*

Methodism was born out of preaching, singing and teaching. This dynamic approach fuelled a revolution of social change that altered the course of British history. We, in the Pacific, inherited those hefty spiritual genes. In recent years, however, the educational imperative has fallen to the side, especially in the South Island of Aotearoa, where small, often struggling congregations are scattered over an expansive area. Resourcing these faith communities seemed an impossible task. The road was running out. In March 2023, as we explored the tentative amalgamation of all the South Island synods into one, the question was posed: Why don't we hold a School of Theology?

In late January a group of more than 50 people, predominantly Methodist, but Catholics and non-denominational people - lay and clergy, active in ministry and retired, female and male, gay and straight, Asian, Pasifika, and European - gathered at Aldersgate, Christchurch to hear from four Keynote speakers chosen because they were experts in their respective fields. They had something to say and we were ready to hear it.

Peter Lineham painted an honest picture of institutional church life in Aotearoa today. It was sobering. We are living in 'The End of the Age of Progress' so what does that mean as we see institutional religion in decline all around us? How do we identify ourselves as people of hope, from supportive faith communities, when we are perceived as being divisive and judgemental? How do we recover our mission focus? There is a lot of work to be done but the task is not insurmountable.

Rev Tara Tautari spoke on 'Rekindling the Vā of Papatūānuku' which was a specific challenge to us in the Pacific re our relationship with the planet and climate justice for the earth. Simple questions such as 'What is your relationship to the earth?' and 'What is the rain saying to you?' led to enlivening discussions. (Vā is Samoan for the sacred relationship which exists between people and the environment and Papatūānuku is te reo for the earth.)

Kathleen Rushton RSM offered two presentations on 'Participating with Jesus in Completing the Works of God in an Unfinished, Evolving Universe'. The basis for her intense and thought-provoking biblical exegesis was John's prologue: Jesus came and 'pitched a tent in us.' How do we as human beings, created in the image of God, participate in doing and being God's work in the world?

David Tombs spoke on Jesus' experience of sexual abuse. This was a perspective which many of us had never considered before. David spoke on the pastoral care needed for those who have suffered abuse at the hands of the church and its leadership and the shame experienced by the victims of such treatment. These sessions were confronting and several expressed their sense of being 'freaked out' by the disclosure exposed in this passage of scripture.

Additional presenters hosted workshops on 'Mental Health: Pastoral & Theological Perspectives', 'The Second Testament through a Jewish Lens', 'Being Church Differently' and 'Liturgy on the Edge'. Participants also learned from each other; time was allocated for people to talk to each other and the space was safe for participants to voice differing opinions and critiques.

The feedback at the end of the event was overwhelmingly positive: inspiring, informative, challenging, and relevant were words that were frequently heard. And there was enough constructive criticism to keep us on our toes for future events.



Embracing Change

Rev Peter Taylor

In January we were blessed as a family by the visit of our son, Aidan, and his young family from the United Kingdom for the month. Aidan had not been back to New Zealand for 10 years and noticed some changes in that time.

In fact, we had all changed in that time. Aidan had married, bought a house, got a job as an op-shop manager and become a father. Our other child, Eliza, had moved to Invercargill and completed one year retraining as a nurse.

Sharon has changed from teaching Year 6 to Year 8. And I had retired, then been appointed as President. All these changes came with their issues, many of them pleasurable, some not.

Our family experiences made me think about how we manage (or don't manage) change within the church. In many parishes key lay people give up long-held positions, leading to crises as churches try to fill the gaps. Then ageing buildings or climate-related problems create budget holes. But some changes have benefits.

The union of three synods in the South Island, celebrated at the same time as Rev Dale Peach's induction as their first Synod Superintendent, for me is a good call. For too long Taiwi meetings have been dominated by geographic synods (English-speaking) to the detriment of the cultural synods. Maybe there should be more amalgamations, signalling an appropriate rebalance of power within Taiwi, away from the long-standing domination by pakeha, assuming an authority they once had but no longer have. This change will be painful but necessary.

Last year at Conference we appointed a transition team to oversee the change from Mission Resourcing to Ko Te Hāpai ō ki Muri. This is happening, not because Mission Resourcing was a failure but because times change and as Te Hāhi we need to be flexible in our response. Over the coming months the team will clarify what Te Hāpai means and ensure that Kai Hāpai is appointed to do the work Conference has agreed.

These changes, along with those mentioned previously, such as changes to the Disciplinary Code in Section 8 of the Law Book, to ensure a less confrontational approach to disputes, and changes in our response to climate justice, will mean a church prepared to be more nimble, flexible and proactive rather than slow-moving, tradition-bound and reactive.

In traditional theology it was a fundamental truth that God was unchanging ("Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever" – Hebrews 13.8); if God can change how can God be perfect? This idea is one many wrestle with, leading to belief that change is somehow bad for God, and therefore also for the Church and for us. But the opposite is true, at least for us. We and the Church are sinful - whatever we mean by that - and so we should be open to improvement and therefore change. This does not mean that every change is good but neither is a slavish hanging on to tradition or old decisions.

With so many important changes coming up I am glad our Church is prepared to change. Are you?



Kathryn Walters Retires: Farewell and Thank you

Ady Shannon

Recently whanau, friends and colleagues from MCNZ and other churches, social service agencies and faith-based organisations gathered to celebrate Rev Kathryn Walters' imminent retirement, and her enormous contribution to church and community. Kathryn has worked tirelessly and with a great sense of wisdom, compassion and humour during a 34-year career in ministry, including the past 25 years as an ordained minister.

Growing up in a Methodist farming family in the Waikato, Kathryn traces her call to ministry back to her confirmation in 1974 by Rev Ted Baker, a charismatic evangelical. That experience led to her first communion. Some years later a spiritual awakening at a crusade prompted her to think, "Crikey, I better find a church." That turned out to be an Elim Church where Pastor Larry Davis provided advice that has informed her life and ministry ever since. "Larry always said, 'If you do it in faith, and you do it with discernment and in wholeheartedness, even if you are wrong, you are right.' Ministry takes risk and God honours that risk."

In 1988 she headed to Hong Kong for a year with Asian Outreach International. In 1993 she completed a Bachelor's degree in ministry with the intention of returning to Hong Kong as a missionary. Instead she was called to go into ordained ministry and in 1998 she completed a Bachelor of Theology at Trinity College. She describes her first ministry appointment at Kamo Co-operating Parish, as 'amazing'. Ordination followed in 2000. Her leadership skills were recognised early on in her ministry and that same year Kathryn became Superintendent of the Northland Synod.

Her sense of humour has been an integral part of her life and work. "I love to laugh. Everyone has a sense of humour. It is a great leveller; it dampens the intensity. Otherwise things can become a bit dry. You find it and use it. It makes you real, but knowing when to use it is important. I have got it wrong from time to time. Humour with the whanau is not always the humour you use in pastoral care," she says laughing.

From 2004 to 2008 Kathryn was presbyter at Christchurch Central Parish (Durham Street) and later spent five years at Halswell Union Parish. Working in predominantly co-operative ventures honed her leadership skills. "Methodists by nature are ecumenical. In any parish you have to work with differences theologically and in the way we do our business, and that serves you well for leadership."

Since 2015 Kathryn served as Superintendent of the Central South Island Synod and from 2018 concurrently as Superintendent of the Nelson Marlborough West Coast Synod. She worked closely with both Synods as they discussed and then prepared for amalgamation and she oversaw the process of amalgamating all three South Island Synods into the new combined Synod for the South Island. These were very demanding years, as Canterbury was still involved with church property rebuilds and post-earthquake parish uncertainties. Over the past four years dealing with an unprecedented pandemic situation added to her considerable workload.

Her ability to seek solutions that take people along with her, pastoral caring skills, clarity of thinking and her commitment to always act with a deep concern for the people involved contributed to her outstanding effectiveness as a minister, Synod Superintendent and in the numerous additional roles she undertook.

At her retirement event at the Chapel Street Centre, Christchurch on 26 January, Kathryn paid tribute to her wife Viv, thanking her for her constant support, love and care. "I am only the best I can be because I am supported by the best." Her farewell marked 20 years since the couple relocated from Whangarei to Christchurch. Kathryn acknowledged that difficult decisions come at a cost but she has always felt supported by the communities she has served.



Unity and yet to be explored possibilities.

Rev Dr Keith Rowe

Last week I took part in a discussion on the situation in Palestine/Israel. We explored the historical background and the horrors of what is currently unfolding in Gaza. At the end of our discussion, we felt exhausted having entered into a story that has unfolded like a Greek tragedy, a journey into a dark hole with no doorway or windows from

which the participants, both aggressors and victims, can escape.

There seems to be no agreed focus of unity around which Zionist settlers and indigenous Arabs can come together. We ended our discussion in a somewhat gloomy mood. One participant feared we might be on the edge of World War III. Perhaps the far-right Zionist government will reach its long-held goal of getting rid of the Palestinian presence. As a Zionist cabinet minister recently said, "The Palestinians have three options: submit to us, migrate to another place, stay and face death". We concluded with some searching questions ringing in our ears: Can we as a human race escape from the cycles of violence in which we imprison ourselves? Can we learn to live creatively with diversity? Or are we doomed to live in never ending conflict with those who live and believe differently?

As I drove home I reflected how fortunate we are to have the Treaty of Waitangi, the founding document of our nation, but more than that, also a focus of unity for our life together, a pointer toward possibilities yet to be fulfilled, a document that since 1840 has come to be the bearer of creative and needed possibilities not imagined by those who signed it. Over recent decades parliaments and the courts have concluded that the enduring and ever relevant basis of the Treaty is that Māori and Pakeha, indigenous owners of this land and settlers from other places, are committed to and have the capacity to live in a respectful and caring partnership. But it requires disciplined effort.

The Treaty was written and signed in 1840 to address a particular set of aspirations and circumstances. But it means more than its writers and signers could imagine. Like Magna Carta in Britain, the Declaration of Independence in USA, and other founding documents in other places it continues to be a guide and a focus of unity for all who by birth or by choice call Aotearoa New Zealand home. It represents possibilities that may help guide us through the difficult decades that lie before us. But Treaty-based possibilities must be chosen afresh in every generation and by every group who come to our shores.

The Treaty presents us with an ongoing question: 'Can we build a society where two races, two distinctive cultures, can share together in building a community where each group's wisdom, history and ways of meeting human need are respected and expressed? The Treaty response is that it may be possible and we'll give it a go even when it's taking us into uncharted territory. The brief but bold description in Te Tiriti, of a society where settler and Māori leadership and values are both respected and enabled to flourish, represents a possibility yet to be fully enacted. Considerable progress towards this elusive goal has taken place in recent decades and it is tragic that the present coalition government wants to turn back the clock and dampen down Māori Treaty -based aspirations. It is a socially destructive path being built by politicians some of whom are clearly historically ignorant, greedy for power, racist, uncaring and culturally tone deaf.

The church was present at the signing of the Treaty - we are in a sense among the guarantors of the Treaty and its possibilities. Local Māori leaders say it is time for Pakeha and later settlers to speak up in support of continuing Treaty-based possibilities. As we move into a particularly difficult period of human living shaped by the challenges of climate change, environmental destruction, a growing gap between rich and poor, the possibilities and perils of artificial intelligence, the accumulated wisdom of both Settler and Māori New Zealanders will be needed. Western capitalist greed and disrespect for each other and for the environment will be a poor guide into the future we face. The treaty provides an appropriate focus of unity and possibility as we travel into tomorrow's uncertainties. Unlike the people in contemporary Palestine/Israel we do not live in a darkened room without doors or windows; we are held together by a Treaty and its' still to be explored possibilities. It's an experiment in nation building that is still in progress.



Waitangi 2024 – a personal reflection

Lay Preacher Lucy D'Aeth attended Waitangi Celebrations with fellow students from Trinity Theological College. She reflects on an experience that has contributed enormously to her understanding of the role of Methodism in the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and our role in ensuring the agreement is honoured.

Just before Christmas, I ended a decades long career in Public Health to take up a lay minister role at Christchurch West Methodist Parish. To start this new life I headed to Tāmaki Makaurau for Trinity College's Mana Tiriti course, which includes four days in the beautiful Tai Tokerau visiting the places where Methodism first took root in Aotearoa.

It was a rich and joyful time, meeting new people, visiting new places, sharing new ideas and experiencing new hope. There are plenty of memories to treasure – singing from the Wesleyan hymnbook in the historic chapel at Mangungu, seeing the sun rise over the sea after the Dawn Service at Waitangi, joining the Covenant Service at Kaeo church – and it was a time of learning and laughter. As the only Palagi and only South Islander on the course, I returned home with a much stronger sense of Connexion and of the rich diversity of our traditions and many wonderful new friends.

Learning Methodist history in the places it happened is profoundly humbling. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is in our Methodist DNA and our bicultural journey has never been more vital in a country currently described as 'fragile'. When a signing ceremony was hosted at the Methodist Mission at Mangungu in the Hokianga, 64 chiefs added their signatures to the Tiriti; the largest number of Rangatira to sign at one event. The involvement of John Hobbs, the Wesleyan missionary, as interpreter was influential. I left Mangungu with a deep sense of Methodism's responsibility to honour the faith those Rangatira placed in our missionary forebears. One way to honour this history is to make sure we keep sharing the facts so that volatile political rhetoric is not able to do more damage. He Whakaputanga – the 1835 Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand – is a fact that too few people bear in mind when the relevance of Te Tiriti is raised. In He Whakaputanga, Māori declared a sovereign nation state, enabling them to trade and make treaties with other states. He Whakaputanga is central to understanding why any claims that those signing Te Tiriti O Waitangi were signing away sovereignty must be dismissed.

I also have renewed respect for the brave souls who made the long journey from England. A plaque at Kaeo Church lists the names of the men who came as Wesleyan Methodist Pioneer Missionaries. This increased my curiosity about the women whose names are not listed, wives and daughters who inevitably worked just as hard. I migrated from Kent in the 1990s. I now want to know much more about Jane Hobbs, also from Kent, who shared the Mission House at Mangungu with her husband John, when Te Tiriti was signed.

Witnessing part of a pōwhiri on the Treaty Grounds, I was reminded of the rich gifts Tikanga Māori offers for brokering encounters between different, sometimes hostile, parties. For all the political rhetoric, the Treaty Grounds feel beautiful and peaceful. There is powerful emotion but there is no sense of violence or threat. This potential to meet, debate and challenge, without falling into fear and violence is something this country should guard with great reverence. It is a rare thing in a divided and aggressive world.

After the Dawn Service, drinking coffee on the beach, we agreed that we had been privileged to share in a unique experience – to walk in the footsteps of our Methodist forebears, Māori and Tauīwi, and feel their hopes and fears for the future of this beautiful nation. Te Tiriti is the covenant which holds us together and gives us the guidance and inspiration to shape the future together.



Looking Back on Four Decades

Rev Setaita Taumoepeau K Veikune

A review of the Mission Resourcing Board, directed by Conference 2022, called for changes to ensure the Church is relevant in today's context. This article highlights the role and history of Mission Resourcing, and major changes throughout the years.

Mission Resourcing this year, in transition, rounds up more than 39 years of its general prescribed role of resourcing parishes, synods and leaders for contemporary mission and ministry. Over the years this has included stationing, ministry candidacy, distribution of various grants for ministry, production of multi-lingual contextual resources for parishes throughout the Connexion, the recently introduced Year of Discernment Programme, resources produced by the Tauwi Children, Young People and Family Ministries, TCYFM and more.

Early in the 1970s MCNZ embarked on a serious review of its national structures. One of the significant outcomes of the review was the formation of five Divisions in 1973: the Administration Division, the Education Division, the Overseas Division, the Māori Division and the Development Division. The latter two replaced what was the Home and Māori Mission Department. The late Rev Rua Rakena was appointed Tumuaki of the Māori Division, and Rev Barry Jones was appointed Superintendent of the Development Division.

Rev Barry recalls that the Development Division was given a wide brief which included:

- evangelism - handled by a Making Disciples task group in Palmerston North
- funding of hospital chaplaincies – Methodist and ecumenical
- the development of advisory committees for Samoan, Tongan and Fijian-Rotuman ministries
- grant-in-aid for parishes needing financial assistance
- supporting the development of innovative forms of ministry e.g. The Porirua Social Justice Unit
- Providing consultative services to synods and parishes relating to strategic planning
- Oversight of the formation of co-operative ventures in collaboration with Anglican, Associated Churches of Christ, Congregational and Presbyterian partners.

In 1985 Rev Norman Brookes succeeded Rev Barry Jones as Superintendent of the Development Division. Norman recalls that in addition to the responsibilities carried out by the Division, they were largely responsible for the Methodist Stationing process. As head of the Division, Rev Norman also became minute secretary of a newly initiated Bicultural Committee. The purpose of the group was to encourage power sharing between the Māori and Tauwi (non-Māori) sections of the church.

Another significant area which Norman recalls having addressed at the time, was the need to build good working relationships with each of the Pacific Island Advisory Committees. This took a lot of time and conversations with the Pacific Church leaders here, as well as in Samoa, Tonga and Fiji. It all led to the Advisory Committees, over the years, morphing into National Synods with the same powers and responsibilities as the traditional District Synods.

The National Synods then gave oversight to their respective congregations and parishes within the Methodist Church: Sinoti Samoa, Vahefonua Tonga O Aotearoa, and Wasewase ko Viti kei Rotuma. Just as the District Synods were responsible to Conference, these new Synods, being part of the Connexion, came under the discipline of Conference.

Norman recalls that 10 years after his induction, towards the end of his term as Superintendent of the Development Division, there was a great deal of discussion and consideration within the church about creating a new body, by merging some of the roles of



the Development Division and the Committee on Ministry, including the Trinity Theological College Board. This ultimately failed.

However, the Development Division was modified and renamed Mission Resourcing, a title likely to be better understood within the church context than the term Development Division.

A New Unit and New Director

In 1995, Rev John Murray was appointed as the first director of the new unit and he led the development of Mission Resourcing through to 2004.

Given the extensive mandate of Mission Resourcing and the strong growth of the Samoan and Tongan sections of Te Hāhi, the move to appoint a second director of Mission Resourcing was timely and warmly welcomed. The newly created position was to be filled by one who would oversee the Pasifika side of the work. In 2005 Rev Nigel Hanscamp was appointed Director of Mission Resourcing, English Language Ministry and the late Rev Aso Samoa Saleupolu was appointed Director of Mission Resourcing, Pasifika Ministries.

Rev Dr Trevor Hoggard succeeded Rev Nigel Hanscamp as Director of English Language Ministry in 2013. Under the co-directorship of Trevor and Aso was the pivotal additional Taiuiwi Children, Young People and Family Ministries, TCYFM in line with the Conference 10-year theme, Let the Children Live.

Michael Lemanu was commissioned at Conference 2014 as National Coordinator for TYCFM through to 2023. Directors for Pasifika and English Language Ministries, Setaita T. K. Veikune and Rev Siosifa Pole, joined Mission Resourcing in later years.

Despite changes over the years and additional responsibilities for Mission Resourcing since 1995, the standard brief given to the Development Division in 1973 has been continued and basically remained the same.

It is timely that changes are made to enable MCNZ to be relevant and effective. Findings from the review carried out in 2023 included the need to identify and meet the demands of the Church today, with many respondents calling for a clear bicultural approach to resource the whole Connexion.

Ways forward are proposed with Ko Te Hāpai ó ki muri – A Bicultural Partnership approach. After discussions in Conference 2023, I believe it is timely and warmly welcomed that changes are made so that Te Haahi may continue to be a life giver in God's name.

As Mission Resourcing transitions into another new beginning in 2024, we welcome the valued assistance of Rev Dr Mary Caygill this year.

'Ofa atu mo e lotu



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Te Ao Māori Convene for Tiriti Justice

Rev Keita Hotere

In recent months, large numbers of Te Ao Māori have convened to call for Tiriti justice, starting with the Hui-a-Motu in the Waikato, followed by the Ratana celebrations in Whanganui, and then Waitangi commemorations in the Tai Tokerau. Conversations about the erosion of tangata whenua rights in this country ignite discussions and debate of a constitutional nature, with significant consequences for our social and cultural cohesion as a growing nation moving forward.

The opening verse of the hymn composed by Tuini Ngawai for C company (Ngāti Porou) of the 28th Māori Battalion before they departed for World War II was sung at the recent Hui-a-Motu. The lyrics speak to us of a benevolent God, from whom we seek compassion and protection. I was fortunate to learn the hymn at college, where our teacher instilled in us a sense of pride for the sacrifices made by the 28th Māori Battalion. The men of my grandfather's generation adhered to the triad, fighting for God, King and country, ake ake ake Kia kaha e. It was a different time and their call to duty was strong.

Arohaina mai	Show compassion
E te Kingi nui	O great King
Manaakitia rā	bestow blessings
O tamariki e	on your children
Horahia mai rā	Spread your blessings
Te marie nui ki te	of peace and comfort to the
Hoko-whitu-a Tū toa.	brave band of Tū.

We hear the cries for Tiriti justice from different spheres of influence. Tiriti activists present us with a challenging God, one who confronts, protests and disrupts to bring about change. During the Waitangi Day dawn service, Dr Alistair Reese delivered a sermon on the covenantal relationship of Te Tiriti o Waitangi, one guided by an ethic of love that seeks the best outcome for all parties involved in the relationship. Dr Alistair echoed the sentiments expressed by Rev Whakahuihui Vercoe at the 150th commemorations of the signing of the Tiriti o Waitangi in 1990, declaring to the masses.

“May God grant us the courage to be honest with one another, to be sincere with one another, and above all to love one another in the strength of God.”

In this time of Te Ao Hou, Toitū Te Tiriti advocate Eru Kapa-Kingi challenges us to consider our core values of aroha and how aroha might be expressed through protest action. We express aroha ki te tangata demonstrating ongoing appreciation, acknowledgement, respect and dignity towards one another. We also express aroha through confronting actions that address the hard issues, particularly when it comes to those who may cause us harm. Aroha ki te kaupapa, our aroha and commitment towards upholding Te Tiriti o Waitangi as a living, breathing document continues to shape our God understandings in Aotearoa today. Aroha through protest is not new to this generation alone. As Tiriti activists ourselves we bear the responsibility of efficacy and ongoing Tiriti education. Eru reminds us, echoing Dame Whina Cooper's call to safeguard and protect what our children “hear, see, and feel,” as a nation is born from these seeds.



Our Future Together

In January the UCANZ Standing Committee met for two days in Auckland to consider the future of UCANZ. In this article **Rev Andrew Doubleday, Ministry Facilitator, UCANZ**, extends an invitation to national and regional leaders of the partner churches to come together next year to participate in a national forum where the theme **Our Future Together** will shape discussions.

At our recent meeting we first asked whether we believed we had a future. We recognised that we are slowly dying by attrition – with an either apparent or declared reluctance of the partners to enter into any new Cooperating Ventures (CVs). We also recognised that there are those in the partner churches who would favour dissolution of the CVs and distribution of the resources among the partners. While it would not ultimately be our decision, the possibility of winding up needed to be considered. One cannot give a full-throated ‘Yes’ without being willing to seriously consider saying ‘No’.

It became clear that we are committed to the ecumenical project – believing that if the partner churches are to survive in the long run, it will likely be as a body unified in some way rather than separately. We want more than survival. We want to thrive. And believe we can. The days of special pleading need to be behind us. While acknowledging and honouring our taonga, we need to make a place for them where we can focus on the call and mission we share in common, rather than each clinging to our taonga as shibboleths that we regard as so distinctly central that they ultimately deprive us of a possible future together.

We acknowledge that demographically CVs represent the oldest age cohort – this was clearly borne out by the findings of the National Church Life Survey. We also recognised the level of energy and giftedness present in many CVs - many without paid clergy – yet life-giving, relevant and connected into their local communities.

There needs to be a wider conversation about the future – our future together. The ecumenical project needs to be re-birthing. We believe that UCANZ can be a resource to the wider church – beyond the confines of our current partner churches.

With this in mind we are in the early stages of planning our Biennial Forum – setting it down for 30 May to 1 June 2025 in Auckland – based at the Onehunga Co-operating Parish. We need to know ASAP if these dates conflict with significant partner scheduling.

National and regional leaders of the partner churches need to be in the same room together – by which we mean Bishops, Presidents, Moderators, Assembly and General Secretaries, Synod Superintendents, Executive Officers. This is important. To all of us.

Even as I write, I realise what an ambitious project this is – yet if we are to succeed, the dream needs to be big and compelling. Feedback is appreciated – please send to office@ucanz.org.nz



Jim's Cartoons

Brendan Boughen

Our regular cartoon that seeks to find the funny side of faith



Methodist partnership achieves a social housing dream

Methodist Alliance

Twelve Hawkes Bay families experiencing housing difficulties will soon be moving into warm, safe, dry homes thanks to a partnership between two Methodist organisations, Wesley Community Action and the Methodist Church of NZ Hastings Samoan Parish.

The 12 new three and four bedroomed houses at Punavaiola – Spring of Living Water in Flaxmere are now finished and will be officially opened in March. They are being made available to people on the social housing waiting list with a particular focus on Pasifika aiga.

Work on the \$7m social housing project, which is based on church-owned land in Caenarvon Avenue, began in September 2022. It is supported by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development.

Minister of Hastings Samoan Parish, Rev Iakopo Faafuata, says they originally bought the land with the intention of building a youth centre. However, the growing housing crisis in Hawkes Bay made the parish rethink that idea and instead they decided to use the land to provide social housing.

They called on the expertise of Wesley Community Action, which is a registered Community Housing Provider (CHP), to help them carry out their plan. Wesley has already undertaken a similar project at Wesley Rātā Village in Naenae, Wellington (previously Wesleyhaven), where the organisation recently built 25 community houses, with another 31 apartments now planned.

“Providing social housing is a core part of our work now,” says the director David Hanna. “We know that poor and inadequate housing is a major source of social and financial stress and that building houses is a really important way of addressing this.”

He says that as a CHP, Wesley can access the funds needed to support the contribution of the local parish. Just as importantly, Wesley can also work with the parish to help build connections and a sense of belonging for the 50 or so people who will live at Punavaiola. “For us social housing developments like Punavaiola are about more than just putting a roof over people’s heads – they’re also about creating a community.”

As with the housing development at Wesley Rātā Village, the houses at Punavaiola were supplied by Wellington modular home provider EasyBuild. They were sent by container to Hawkes Bay and assembled onsite.

David says that Cyclone Gabrielle, which devastated much of Hawkes Bay last February, created unexpected challenges for the building project, slightly delaying its completion. It also highlighted the need for more social housing in the area.

For Iakopo, the completion of Punavaiola is a dream come true. “We’re so happy that this land will now be used as a ‘spring of living water’ of God’s love to people who need help because of the growing housing crisis and the increasing cost of living.”



Outstanding Youth Leader Moves into Ministry

‘Amelia Takataka

In the vibrant tapestry of service and ministry, transitions mark profound moments where dedication and divine purpose intertwine. We rejoice in the extraordinary voyage of Rev Michael Lemanu, formerly Taiwi Children Youth and Family Ministries National Coordinator (TCYFM), as he embarks on a new chapter in ministry in Taranaki, alongside his wife Eseta and their three beloved children Amorangi,

Rāniera and Tohunga in Taranaki.

On Thursday 8 February, leaders from TYTANZ (Taiwi Youth Together Aotearoa New Zealand), representing Auckland Manukau Youth (AMY), Waikato Waiariki Unite (WWU), and Sinoti Samoa Tupulaga (SST), gathered to support and witness Rev Michael Lemanu's induction as the Taranaki Regional Enabler. Surrounded by his village and family members, Michael embraced this fresh chapter of service and devotion, guided by divine providence.

During the induction ceremony at Wesley Methodist in Hāwera, Rev Siosifa Pole delivered an empowering message centred on "Mission for Change," drawing inspiration from Jeremiah 1:8. These words encapsulate Michael's unwavering commitment to fearlessly embrace challenges, guided by faith and empowered by divine grace.

Michael's transition from TCYFM National Coordinator to Minister exemplifies his deep sense of purpose and service. His journey embodies the transformative power of trusting in God and leading by faith. He possesses a unique gift and talent to inspire, encourage, and work alongside people (young and old) to deepen their understanding of God. He is admired and respected by numerous youth and youth leaders across Aotearoa.

In the words of a close sister in Christ, ‘Alilia Molitika (former WWU convenor), "Michael's journey has been marked by dedication, compassion and an unwavering commitment to youth and families across Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa. His tireless efforts to create inclusive spaces and foster meaningful connections have left an indelible mark on all who have had the privilege of knowing him. I have known Michael since he was appointed the TCYFM National Coordinator. Working with Michael in youth ministry has been a blessing over the years."

The induction ceremony was a radiant and auspicious milestone, with sunlight streaming through stained glass windows, casting a warm glow over the gathered community. As Michael was inducted into his new role, his eyes reflected purpose, humility and passion, echoing the sentiment of hope and unity palpable in the air.

As the ceremony concluded, the echoes of joyful laughter, heartfelt greetings from across te Haahi, and talanoa resonated among the many attendees who came to support Michael, including community leaders like the Mayor of Taranaki. These interactions carried with them the promise of a brighter future for the region. It was a day of celebration, marking new beginnings and embodying an unwavering belief in the transformative power of the "Mission for Change."

In celebrating Michael's transition, we honour his remarkable journey in youth ministry, and the countless lives he has touched through his ministry in our Haahi and community. To our brother in faith Rev. Michael, may you be guided by the belief that with God, all things are possible. Wishing you all the best in your mission for change. Go well Lemanu aiga, blessings and aroha from your TYTANZ whānau! He waka eke noa.

Ma te Atua koutou katoa e maanaki.



Only silence will describe such inhumanity.

Rev Dr Keith Rowe



Every day it seems, the evening News is a rerun of yesterday:

the endless deaths of young and old, men and women, all who stand in the way of another's search for power.

In Ukraine families huddle in ruins that were once homes

where laughter and dreams flourished and family love prevailed. Now the men are enlisted in a cruel war that seems to have no end. They see things that none can repeat in words: mangled bodies, children killed before their first steps, communities destroyed. In the midst of their fear they dream of their families and pray that somehow, someone will bring an end to this insanity.

In Gaza youthful conscripts follow without question orders to kill without mercy until the last shred of support for an event that mirrored what Palestinians have endured for a century is destroyed. Their land was stolen, a village here, a garden there, a concrete wall and lethal weapons beyond imagining, control the movement of a proud people. The people of Gaza see things that cannot be repeated in human words. Death is everywhere, its smell hangs on the air, it finds a home in every heart.

And who will tell these blood-stained stories of inhumanity and misplaced power when tomorrow comes, the guns are silenced and politicians feign repentance? The stories will be embedded in the lives of children scarred by these inhuman events. Mothers and wives will relive the long days of worry and fear, hunger and despair. Those who obeyed commands to kill will be scarred forever, haunted by their own deeds. But those who saw the most, who though in life remain in death's embrace, will remain silent lest their very words betray the enormity of those dark times.

We recall our forebears, survivors of Paschendale and Gallipoli, Crete and Greece, those whose lives were damaged by what they saw and what they did. They too remained silent lest their very words justify all that was done in those dark times. They found no words adequate to describe what they saw, felt, feared and did. Only their glazed eyes touched by tears remained as signs of inhumanity laid bare. When you have faced the evil depths of inhumanity only silence can describe it all. In their silence do they somehow share in the silence of a weeping God?



Supporting Families in Gaza

Christian World Service

Despite limited resources and extremely challenging circumstances, Christian World Service partner, the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR), is providing invaluable assistance and healthcare to thousands of displaced Palestinians in Rafah.

In a courtyard in southern Gaza, a group of young children are listening to a woman. As she talks, the children start to relax and then join in the familiar action songs. Some watch in silence. Inside, mothers are crowded into an empty classroom. They listen to another woman trained in mental health. In the group they find support and new ways to help their frightened children. Everyone is on edge and desperate for the war to end.

Psychosocial sessions are run by DSPR, working from its only remaining centre in Rafah. By mid- February, DSPR staff had reached more than 4,546 people with psychological support. Its mental health team of 13 is organising entertainment and activities for children. The sessions include music, movement and relaxation exercises to help them cope. The mothers practise breathing, play games and learn stress management skills.

The medical team has seen more than 8,654 children and adults at its Primary Health Clinic. DSPR has also distributed hygiene supplies, run health awareness workshops focusing on water-borne and communicable diseases. It has made 620 emergency cash transfers to eligible families for their most urgent needs.

"The destruction of our premises, the limitations of our resources, the poor connections and the fragmentation have never prevented DSPR-Gaza from keeping a light in the middle of darkness and trying to help people live with dignity. What has been done so far and what we are doing now could not be achieved without the generous support of our partners. 'For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in.' Matthew 25: 35," says DSPR. If you can, please support the Gaza Palestine Appeal or call 0800 74 73 72.



Cbm Intervention Supports Dreams and Surgery

Murray Sheard, CEO cbm New Zealand

Children often dream of doing special things when they grow up. A 7-year-old boy from the Philippines wanted to play basketball but his dreams were slipping away because he was going blind from cataracts.

Kyle's condition was caused by a simple and unexpected incident. One day, when he was out playing, he ran through some trees and small twigs scratched his eyes, causing damage. His parents were deeply concerned and took him to the doctor where he was diagnosed with 'traumatic cataracts', a clouding of the eye's natural lens after an injury. Early intervention was necessary to ensure the surgery to restore Kyle's sight was effective. In the early years of brain development, a child can permanently lose the ability to see perfectly, even if sight is restored, when intervention is delayed.

Kyle's parents' prayers were answered when Kyle received sight-saving cataract surgery at a cbm-funded hospital. When the bandages came off Kyle's eyes, his vision was restored. He is now looking forward to continuing his schooling, playing with his friends and, most importantly, playing basketball again.

To transform the lives of more children like Kyle, please prayerfully consider sending a gift today. Your generosity will help bring the miracle of sight-saving cataract surgery to adults and children living in poverty. To Donate, Call Freephone: 0800 77 22 64



Mahi Tahī – a Gift Towards Partnership

Rachel Hurd, Archivist, Presbyterian Research Centre (Archives)

A series of five books, *He Taonga hei Whakatu Honohono: A Gift Towards Partnership*, known informally as “Mahi Tahī” (Working Together) produced in 1992 by Te Hinota Māori and Diane Gilliam-Knight from the Presbyterian Church’s Department of Communication, are among the most popular Presbyterian archive resources.

“O God, our God, we renew the covenant to be keepers of one another, to honour the Treaty, its obligations and promises, that justice and peace may cover our land and that our life together grow in new forms of partnership.”

These words were spoken at the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand in 1990. That year marked the 150th anniversary of the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. The preceding years had brought a growing awareness of Māori voices, from the Māori land marches and occupation of Takaparawhā Bastion Point in the 1970s, to the beginnings of the kohanga reo movement and language revitalization, and the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal in 1987.

The 1990 celebrations brought an increased public awareness of the bicultural nature of New Zealand society. This was also becoming true of the churches. By 1983 the Methodist Church had already established a bicultural committee to give both Māori and Pākehā a voice in the running of the church.

In 1988, Te Hinota Māori, the Presbyterian Māori Synod had stated in its report to the General Assembly,

“If this is to be a shared venture or journey within the Church, then it requires that you who are not Māori should now set out to learn something of the Māori people who are the tangata whenua, and who are also a part of this Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.”

The result, four years later, was the production of a series of five books, *He Taonga hei Whakatu Honohono: A Gift Towards Partnership*, which have become known informally as “Mahi Tahī” (Working Together). A set was given to every Presbyterian parish in New Zealand.

The five books in the series are; *Te Hinota Māori*; *Te Maungarongo: the ancestral house of the Māori Synod*; *Te Kakano: the church marae of the Wellington Māori Pastorate*; *Kawa Marae: a detailed guide to marae visits*; and *Mahi Tahī: practical resources for bicultural partnership*.

The books outline the history of Te Tiriti and of the Māori Presbyterian Church, and through a series of short essays explore aspects of Māori spirituality and Te Ao Māori. They also provide an in-depth guide to the two church maraes, Te Maungarongo at Ōhope, and Te Kakano in Lower Hutt, along with a guide to marae protocol. The final book also provides a selection of karakia and waiata, along with a Te Reo pronunciation guide and a glossary of frequently used words in Te Reo Māori.

These five books remain among our most popular archives resources and they have now been digitized to make them more easily available. They can be found on our Recollect website: [Other PCANZ Publications | Presbyterian Research Centre \(recollect.co.nz\)](https://recollect.co.nz).

The series of five books, *He Taonga hei Whakatu Honohono: A Gift Towards Partnership*, known informally as “Mahi Tahī”



Dream and Reality in 2024

Rev Donald Phillipps

'And Did Those Feet In Ancient Times' Jerusalem, a poem William Blake

Eighty years ago, the Rev Bill Blight published a brief, 14-page booklet entitled *What is British Israel: the chief points of British Israel teaching examined ...* It was a critique of a movement and a way of thinking that had been present in the English-speaking world for more than a century. It particularly attracted members of the Established Church but it was to be found among Christians of all varieties who owed their forms of

religion to their 'homeland.'

It was originally based on the simplistic belief that the people of England had their origins in the so-called 'lost tribes of Israel.' A romantic notion, unsupported by hard evidence, and as the decades have passed nothing has emerged to endorse this special genetic link with Israel. But it found its way to Aotearoa and I recall my parents referring to people they knew as being committed supporters of the movement.

I include the first line of William Blake's poem *Jerusalem* in the title simply because the mythical connection lives on. One king of England even referred to it as the National Anthem. Blake's words were, of course, an appeal to the past – but it was a past without smoke-belching factories – when people lived in a 'green and pleasant land.' That sort of idealism can live on despite the logic of scientific progress and in a changing world, where the balance of power teeters from one extreme to another. If English-born Methodists continued to speak of their distant place of birth as 'home' there was little likelihood of change. However, Bill Blight knew he was living in a new world where such romantic idealism had no place. He had seen the disaster of war at first hand and did not imagine that the end of the conflict would lead to a return to a lost way of living.

It could be said that a factor in the decision to create a homeland for the dispersed Jewish people was, partly, a reflection of that idealism. Jerusalem was the heart of the Holy Land, and nothing should prevent that from being made a fact in the settlements that must take place at the conclusion of WW II. The British parliamentary leader Arthur Balfour had made a declaration to that effect in 1917.

And so it happened, in 1947, and the history of that part of the world since that time has been continuously riven by the almost irreconcilable problems of the relocation and dislocation of displaced peoples. Palestine, as that whole area was called at the time, then became Palestine and Israel, and the boundaries of these two nations - with a shared history going back at least 3000 years - have never been equitably settled.

What we are currently witnessing is the appalling outcome of both international indecision and of age-old rivalries and distrust. And, as is mostly the case in such situations, it is ordinary people who suffer. A strip of land is being fought over, 365 sq. kms in area - significantly less than the area of greater Wellington, for example.

How many have died so far? The reports vary, but the truth is chilling. Of one thing we may be sure – helpless citizens are being killed in their thousands. And that will go on, even if a truce is temporarily arranged. We want peace for Gaza especially, and peace in that whole area of necessity. That peace will not come simply because of our special feeling for the Holy Land or Jerusalem, but because justice and compassion demand it.

Is there a place for such a philosophy as British Israelitism nowadays? Certainly not at this moment. A cease-fire is only a step on the way. Peace will come when the exercise of power is replaced by an awareness of our common humanity.