

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

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Rev Bill Wallace Honoured



Youth Camp a Success



Papakura Celebrates Three Milestones



The Future Of Touchstone Lies With Our Readers

This June edition of *Touchstone* is the last one produced and posted to parishes free-of-charge. Increasing printing and postage costs, diminishing returns on investments and a commitment by MCNZ to embrace initiatives that meet our 10-year plan to reduce, reuse and recycle as we aim for zero waste, contributed to a decision made at Conference 2022 to see *Touchstone* move to a subscription-based model.

At the time of writing, a little over half of the contacts on our distribution database have responded to a call to commit to paying for papers. As a result, we have not quite reached a point where it is viable to print a paper each month. Depending on the outcome of our final call-to-action, from July, *Touchstone* may be available online only. However, if enough parishes commit to supporting the paper financially, the Methodist Church of NZ will continue to publish a paper that explores faith issues for today and shares news and views with the wider *Connexion*.

Therein lies a challenge. Many readers have expressed disappointment that *Touchstone* may be available online only. If the 45 percent of parishes that have not yet responded commit to even a small subscription of up to 10 copies per month, we can assure our many older readers - who prefer a paper copy - of a continued print run.

Last Denomination Publishing?

Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa is one of the last denominations in the motu to still be publishing a free newspaper. When I started as editor in August 2018, we were printing and dispatching 10,000 papers each month, in packages of 1 to 300, to individuals, parishes and organisations. That has changed significantly over recent years as we have asked parishes to reconsider the number of copies required to mitigate costs, waste and the inevitable dumping of unread and unclaimed papers each month.

The move to online-only news streams has been playing out for many religious publications over recent years. The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia published its last print version of *Taonga* in 2018; the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa NZ ceased publication of its quarterly *SPANZ* magazine in November 2019; and the Salvation Army is currently transitioning their subscription-based *War Cry* magazine into a new publication called *SALT* and looking at options for morphing into online platforms. Vivienne Hill, editor of *SALT*, (formerly *War Cry*), wrote in a recent editorial, "The world is in a season of great change and that can be disorientating, but it can also be a time of opportunity".

Vivienne Hill identified the same issues affecting many religious publications, including *Touchstone*, as we morph into the online-only space. "It is always a tricky negotiation. Feedback is limited, budget constraints impact and there are so many platforms to consider."

Sophia Sinclair is the NZ-based President of the Australian Religious Press Association (ARPA), an ecumenical Christian communication network for Australian and New Zealand publications, their editorial staff and contributors. Since it established a NZ chapter in 1990, ARPA has had an active membership and run workshops, an annual conference, and a well-supported awards event to celebrate excellence in the industry. The proposed ARPA AGM in December 2022 did not achieve a quorum. When the deferred meeting scheduled for 17 June this year is held, discussion about the future and viability of ARPA will be a key agenda item.

In her message to members, Sophia wrote, "The last three years have had a profound effect on many member publications. A growing number of publications are being phased out by denominations, with communications changing to digital-only models. With

dwindling membership, a lack of involvement from existing members and rising costs, we have some important decisions ahead of us as an association."

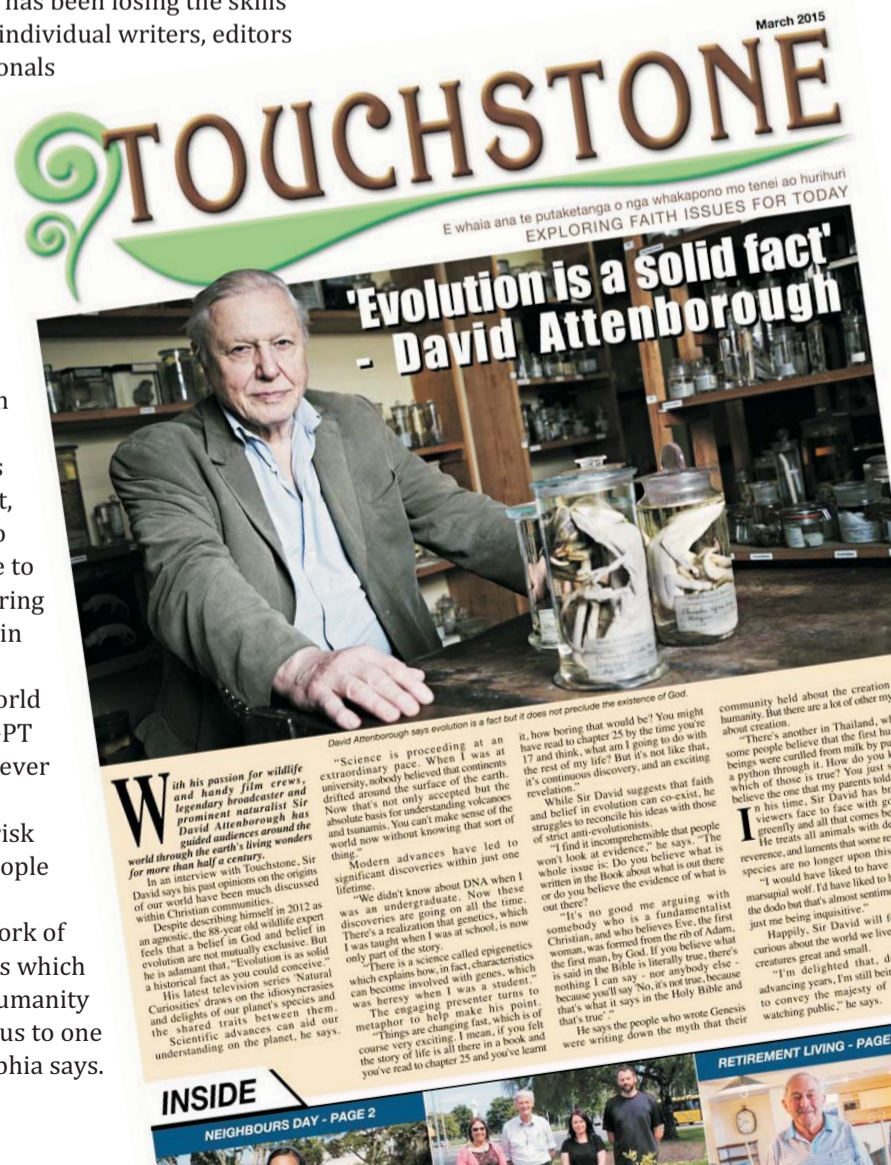
In four years from 2019 to 2023, Australian membership has fallen from 57 Member Publications and 14 Associates to 18 Member Publications and 3 Associates. Sophia says this decline matches the trend across Australasia. "More religious communities are opting to invest in digital and online communications, rather than printed ones. One positive in the move to digital has been increased flexibility, cost effectiveness, and the timeliness of delivery.

"A downside has been losing the skills and input of individual writers, editors and professionals who have significant experience telling stories and gathering news. Ultimately, it's readers and people in religious communities who miss out, as there is no one available to facilitate sharing their stories in meaningful ways. In a world where ChatGPT provides a clever but soulless answer, we risk losing the people who do the important work of telling stories which reflect our humanity and connect us to one another," Sophia says.

Looking Back

When the Presbyterian Church opted out of *Crosslink* (March 1987 – April 2001), a monthly publication jointly funded by the Presbyterian Church of NZ and the Methodist Church of NZ, *Crosslink* editor Michael O'Dwyer took on the role as editor of the new and MCNZ-dedicated *Touchstone* publication. Its mandate was 'to provide a monthly glimpse of the ecumenical life of NZ ... a vibrant view of our faith'. Initial issues were offered free-of-charge, as per a brief article in the May 2001 edition written by Rev David Bush, a member of the Communications Committee.

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The Future Of *Touchstone* Lies With Our Readers

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The next few years were spent boosting parish subscriptions, at a cost of 35 cents per copy. This funding, along with advertising revenue, supported an A3-tabloid publication that fluctuated between 12 and 20 pages depending on the number and value of advertisements. From 2003, a series of Connexional grants, endowments and Trust payments negated the need to charge and manage a subscription fee – a task that involved almost as much cost in Connexional Office administration time as the revenue it generated.

Rev David Bush says, “There was a time when parishes were charged for copies. There was also a grant each year from the Connexional budget. However when we looked in detail, we saw that a significant proportion of the ‘subscription’ was eaten up by the costs of sending invoices and the extra work that maintaining a subscription database required”.

In 2009 an application to PAC resulted in a \$750,000 endowment. In a May 2011 editorial, editor Paul Titus wrote, “Thanks to a PAC endowment, our finances are more secure than they have been for years”. Since that time, interest received

from this endowment, in conjunction with advertising revenue, parish donations, and occasional TTM and Trust grants have largely supported *Touchstone*.

Mark Gibson was closely involved with *Touchstone* from 2009-2012 when he was chair of the Methodist Publishing Board, taking over from the late Jim Stuart. Mark says, “I laid the role down because of the parish demands in the east post-quake, but yes it was a big deal in 2011 when we were the chosen recipient that year of the PAC endowment. This supposedly took financial pressure off *Touchstone*. The possibility of charging and moving to a ‘user pays’ model of financing was always ‘in the air’ but the Board at the time didn’t want to go down that track if possible. From the edge of the church where I’ve tended to be since resigning as chair, my impression has been that another model is needed to keep *Touchstone* alive and kicking but a good alternative has not emerged.”

Last July when the MPB invited readers to comment on options for *Touchstone* going forward, Ian Harris, regular contributor of the Honest to God column, wrote to the Board. “It is sad to read that the Publishing Board is having to respond to the financial pressures of producing

Touchstone on a sustainable basis. This, of course, is not a new problem. I remember similar discussions concerning the future of *The New Zealand Methodist* when I was editing it between 1968 and 1972. Then, as now, the response will boil down to how the church sees the role of the paper in its life and mission, and the priority (or lack of priority) it gives that role.”

Dwindling Reserves

Several factors have impacted on reserves, most notably increasing publication and postage costs and diminished returns on investment funds. The introduction of a subscription model was identified by the Publishing Board in 2022 as the only means of ensuring financial stewardship over the dwindling reserves. In addition to the standard version of the monthly publication available online since 2009, a new more contemporary digital format was introduced in October 2021, to encourage readers to access content online.

Analysis of hits indicates the online forum has not attracted a huge response, and direct feedback from readers and parish representatives supports the concept that many older members of the Connexion prefer to read *Touchstone* via a printed

version of the paper.

Rev David Bush is hopeful of a printed and online option for the publication. “I support the idea of encouraging readers to read *Touchstone* online but I hope there is a way for hard copies to also be made available,” David says. Those sentiments have been shared by many readers.

Rev Dr Terry Wall and his wife Lynne have been closely associated with *Touchstone* over recent years, proofing copy and providing invaluable advice and MCNZ background knowledge. They said, “We both feel that so much would be lost if the print version of *Touchstone* were to be discontinued. Members of parishes are not well-connected with the wider church and *Touchstone* provides a key avenue for an ongoing conversation among our membership.”

The Last Word

Whether or not *Touchstone* continues to be printed is entirely down to the response of its readers and their willingness to pay for production costs. Regardless of whether the print run continues, *Touchstone* will continue to be available online.

Parishes that wish to receive papers, who have not yet responded, should contact reception@methodist.org.nz immediately.

Papakura Celebrations

The Papakura Crossroads Methodist Church congregation and Commercial Property Committee recently celebrated three significant anniversaries. Bill Peddie reports on a weekend in April when an estimated 230 folk gathered to remember and celebrate local church history.

Like many of the District Methodist parishes, our local church and the supporting properties have undergone significant changes through the years. The first Methodist church in Papakura was established as a shed-like building in 1855 and was requisitioned for a redoubt by British troops during the land wars. When it was handed back to the church it was in such a poor state it required rebuilding. Successive churches were constructed, and 100 years ago early local Methodist leaders put up their first commercial building - the Premier Building - at the corner of what became the Great South Road and Broadway.

Our celebration weekend focused on three milestones. The first was the 100 years celebration for the Premier Building and what became the Church Commercial Property Trust. The second was this year’s 50-year



Over the course of the weekend more than 230 people participated in the celebrations.

celebration for the building of the main part of the present Crossroads Church complex. The third marker to celebrate was a substantial upgrade 30 years ago, modernising the complex into its present configuration.

A highlight of the celebrations was the production of two significant histories published for our weekend. The first, launched by the Commercial Property Committee at their Saturday lunch, was 100 Not Out, a well-presented illustrated history of the Premier Building organised by the current Trust chair, John Shaw, and collated by a local historian, Toni Reid. The second, assembled into a fascinating package by Robin Buchan, was the story behind the influences and highlights of our local church history, entitled Crossroads Forward to Fifty.

Many of those attending enjoyed meeting up with past acquaintances, and renewing friendships with past

leaders and those who shared common experiences. The church service was led by Rev Faiva Aleatua (the current Samoan presbyter) and Rev Suresh Chandra who is presbyter for the other part of the congregation.

Myra Smith, one of our earlier gifted music leaders, was our guest organist. Past presbyters Norman Brookes, Murray McMeikan, Faleatua Faleatua and Peter Williamson shared some brief memories. The architect of the original complex, Brad Shaw, was also in attendance.

We appreciated the presence of Methodist Vice President Te Rito Peyroux-Semu who delivered the main address. The Bible readings were presented by Raewyn Parris, daughter of the Rev Graham Bell, presbyter when the 1972 church building was commissioned, Judy Bennett, daughter of the Rev Clement, who as President dedicated the 1972 church building,

and Patisepa Tala’imanu representing the current Samoan congregation as well as her late father, Rev Aso Saleupolu.

The congregation responded well to the coordinated action song item from a large Samoan youth group. The music had further connections with the congregation in that hymns sung were composed by Norman Brookes and Jan Chamberlin. Another item was presented by the South Auckland Choral who have rehearsed and performed regularly in our church since the early 1970s.

Our final hymn “Tell Out my Soul” was sung to the backdrop of a video clip made at our church in 2003 as part of the TV series Praise Be. Seeing ourselves as we were 20 years ago was a somewhat sobering experience.



Methodist Taonga Honoured



Rev Bill Wallace with Rev Philo Kinera and his wife (seated) Barbara Aspell-Wallace.

To celebrate his 90th birthday, prolific Methodist hymn-writer Rev William L. Wallace (Bill) shared highlights of his life's work in theology, composition and hymn-writing at two events held in Christchurch in April.

On Saturday 15 April, an event at the Christchurch Transitional Cathedral showcased some of Bill's new hymns which are due to be published soon on the Progressive Christianity website.

Bill's hymns have appeared in 13 different denominational hymn books and 17 other hymn collections. Additional worship material has been included in 15 different anthologies.

At the event, Bill introduced the genesis and development of 11 new hymns to the gathering of friends, family and colleagues, who joined in singing excerpts from a selection of the hymns supported by pianist Sue Lennon and organist Denis Guyan.

Christchurch soprano, Courtney Hickmott, sang verses from three of the hymns while Bill's daughter, Dr Alison Isadora, played violin solos of two of the most popular original tunes used in Bill's hymns.

After the event, Rev Brian Turner, former President of the Methodist Church, reflected on how Bill's work had changed over the years recalling how, as Director of Christian World Service, Brian had encouraged Bill to attend his first conference to Asia, a region which has continued to influence Bill's writing. "There were some great hymns today, and I think in comparison to some of his earlier ones these are much more mystical," Turner said.

Rev Jill van de Geer, former General

Secretary, Vice President and President of the Methodist Church, agrees Bill has started to write some of his deeper works in recent times. "Bill's earlier work was more focused on justice and spoke more of everyday things," she said.

Jill suspects those more grounded words had made it hard for some people to decipher the spiritual content that was there in some of his earlier hymns. "I think as he's got older Bill's hymns have become much deeper, more spiritual, and more reflective. There's a deeper sense of mystery in his theology."

On Sunday 16 April, Durham Street Methodist Church welcomed Bill for a service created around his hymns that picked up on key themes in his work including fire, passion, cosmos, justice and silence, all emphasising the need to de-centre the human ego from both worship and understandings of God.

Carol Barron, National Coordinator of the Methodist Alliance, who attended both events appreciated Bill's ongoing emphasis on social justice, and the interconnection of science and spirituality in his writing. "I enjoyed 'From the Mystery All Things Came' because it's telling the creation story from a scientific view:

"Gravity gave birth its stars, Giving planets each their space. When the face of earth had cooled, Life evolved at its own pace ..."

After Sunday's service, Minister of Durham Street Methodist Church, Rev Philomeno Kinera blessed a plaque celebrating the sculpture created and donated by Bill which sits at the centre of the Aldersgate Centre garden. The accompanying plaque acknowledges the gift of the sculpture from Rev William L. Wallace and his wife Barbara Aspell-Wallace.

A New Garden of Friends in the Garden City



The late June and Norm Allen (circa 2009) Garden Sign



Beckenham-Sydenham Parish, Christchurch, held a special service on 5 March to dedicate a special new memorial garden at their church. The Garden of Friends recognises and honours long-serving members June and Norm Allen, along with other loyal and dedicated former members of the church family. Kelvin Aird and Ros Jackson report on the project that has been a welcome addition to the Beckenham community.

June and Norm lived and raised their family in the Beckenham Loop, near the Methodist Church. The Church became central to them both and they served on several committees.

Norm died in November 2021, and June died less than a year later. Their four sons wanted to acknowledge their legacy and the love and support the family and friends received from the Beckenham Methodist Church Community. After meeting with the Parish Council, the brothers decided to establish a garden area in the church carpark. In transforming an overgrown garden of large trees which blocked the view of the church from the street, they wanted to create

a welcoming space to sit, rest and reflect.

The concept plans, designed to complement an existing community garden on a side street, gained the support of the local Neighbourhood Association and a neighbouring café, The Birdwood. Parish steward, Sam Beaumont, provided a digger to excavate the seating area and over a seven-month period the brothers met each Friday to develop their concept plans into the seasonal memorial garden they envisioned.

They named the space *The Garden of Friends* to acknowledge all the people that were part of the church community during their parents' association. During the dedication service those gathered remembered the many church activities that were special to June and Norm - and others in the parish - including picnics, parties, spring fairs, dances, flower arranging group, boys' and girls' brigades, prayer group, coffee club and women's fellowship, working on church gardens and properties, serving in the vestry, serving as a door steward, and serving on Parish Council, Synod and Conference.

This project, special for the Allen brothers and the congregation, has touched the hearts of those from the community who provided support and now rest and reflect on the newly constructed seating the garden provides.

Esteemed Historian Visits Archives

Peter Lineham, renowned religious historian and retired Massey University professor, recently visited Kei Muri Māpara to trawl through records as part of his research into a publication based on the early Māori Mission which he has been commissioned to edit by the Wesley Historical Society.

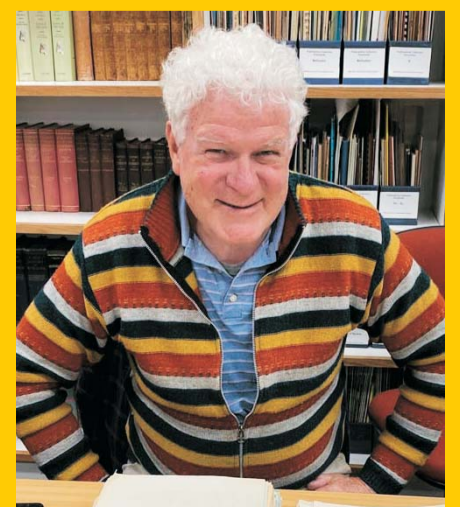
The purpose of the publication is to explore various aspects of the Māori

mission from its beginnings in the 1820s. Peter and other authors, including Roshan Allpress, Glen O'Brien, Rowan Tautari, Susan Thompson and Geoff Troughton - all presenters at the WHS 2019 Bicentenary Conference, Methodism in Aotearoa, Origins & Impact - will document the contributions of the Pākehā and Māori missionaries and catechists.

Peter's chapter aims to shed light on the role of the Māori home missionaries whose work has been largely unrecognised in historical records. He will tell the story of the Māori home

missionaries and deaconesses who were active in remote and difficult to access coastal regions from Taranaki to Northland, including Kaeo, Hokianga and the Bay of Islands. Peter says he is particularly interested in the period before urbanisation - the 1920s and 1930s - when Methodist Māori leaders and deaconesses were supporting communities and leading services in remote areas where European preachers had stopped preaching.

The aim is for this book to be published this year.



Peter Lineham recently spent a day in the archives focussed on papers relating to the early Māori catechists.



President's Report, by Rev Peter Taylor.

"You've Not Changed a Bit"

Rev Peter Taylor President MCNZ

"You've not changed a bit," they said. They were church folk from Cockermouth, UK where I'd been presbyter before emigrating in 2006. I was there on holiday visiting my son's family and meeting our first grandchild. I met many of the church folk from those days and stayed with two of them. It was good to see them all.

"You've not changed a bit," some said. Sweet of them, but in 17 years I am older and greyer, if not wiser. I recognised them, though it took a few seconds to remember names and greet them personally. There were many I did not recognise (those new to the area) and many I did not see (who had either died or moved away). Nothing

unusual there. I enjoyed exploring the town with its familiar streets, and some unfamiliar shops; some things remained constant, others changed quite radically. Of the whole parish - seven churches in 2006 - two church buildings have been extensively remodelled, and two others have closed (their sale presumably helped the remodelling).

Nice story - but what is the point?

Well, it reminded me of the tension between wanting to hold on to the past and recognising a different future beckons. It was a strange feeling of familiarity and unfamiliarity. The old was comforting and a gentle reminder of my ministry there, the new was somewhat unsettling. Even the familiar was different, both people and places.

Too easily as churches we want to hold on to a familiar past, even though time brings changes. Too easily, like Mary Magdalene when she first met the risen



Peter Taylor.

Christ on the first Easter Sunday, we want to hold on. Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me... but go..." (John 20:17). She wanted to cling on to a familiar Jesus but he had changed and she needed to realise this. What does Jesus say to us in our turn, where are we meant to "go"?

Does Jesus say to us, "Do not hold on to the past, however wonderful or comforting it might be, simply because it is the past and it has gone"? Does he mean our memories, experiences and life-long wisdom are useless? No, they have great value but he calls us to move on, to step into the future, not hide from it and wish it would go away.

As a presbyter I too have changed. My understanding of God, attitudes and ways of working have all slowly altered. My face might not have changed much but my inner life has slowly transformed. I hope and pray that the transformation is towards the likeness of Christ, to which we are all called but I will leave others to be the judge of this.

"You've not changed a bit," they said. My reply should have been, "But I know I have and I believe for the better." Over the years I hope each parish and each person in our church can say the same.

MISSION RESOURCING

Stationing Process

Setaita T. Taumoepeau K. Veikune, Director Mission Resourcing

Stationing Committee, in 2022, faced the very rare scenario of having more presbyters available for Stationing than parishes. Mission Resourcing continued to facilitate conversations working with parishes who did not go on stationing due to financial constraints. Continuous Stationing process required funding assistance for new initiatives and ministry partnerships between synods and parishes. This allowed appointments for most of the presbyters on Stationing.

Although the tides have quickly turned this year, strategies are in place to ensure that parishes ranked as 'Critical for Mission' and 'Strategic for Future' are prioritized and offered assistance for appointments.

The Mission Resourcing team continues our Road Show this year, to discuss with synods how best to work together in resourcing parishes and congregations for mission and ministry. The Stationing process is one of the key issues we wish to discuss and clarify with presbyters, parishes and congregations. It takes time to reach all synods and given our experience of the need to assist the church with Stationing matters, we wish to share the timeline and main points in the process, as stipulated on the Tauwi Stationing Manual.

Details can be found on the Tauwi Stationing Manual (Stationing Process & Timeframe 2023) on the Methodist Church / Mission Resourcing website.

www.methodist.org.nz/assets/DownloadsFiles/Tauwi-Stationing-Manual-2023.pdf

We welcome questions and enquiries, while we are currently working on completing preparations for the Tauwi Stationing Meeting in September.

Malo 'aupito

Step 1) By March 20: Advise Synod Superintendents and General Secretary of Movements

All parishes and presbyters seeking a change of appointment must inform their Synod Superintendent and the General Secretary by 20 March.

The Synod Superintendent will inform Mission Resourcing as soon as possible.

Step 2) By May 29: Stationing Profiles

All parishes and presbyters seeking a change of appointment must complete a Stationing Profile form.

The completed form must be in the hands of the Synod Superintendent no later than 22 May and forwarded on to Mission Resourcing by 29 May.

As soon as possible after the due date the Mission Resourcing Administrator will post the profiles to parishes and presbyters.

Step 3) Possible Matches

Please read and study all the profiles carefully and, then in consultation with your Synod Superintendent, identify up to four parishes / presbyters that you feel are a good match (a maximum of four).

Step 4) September 18 - 20: Tauwi Stationing Meeting

The purpose of the Tauwi Stationing Meeting is to match the parishes and presbyters on the Stationing Sheet for a face-to-face meeting (Provisional Matching),

which considers all the information received including the possible matches, stationing profiles, Synod Strategies, lifting, etc.

Step 5) October 24: Face-to-Face Meetings

The meeting is conducted on the basis that this is the best possible match for the presbyter and parish. The parish and their Synod Superintendent should work in consultation with the presbyter and their Synod Superintendent to organize a mutually agreed date, time and venue for the meeting. All face-to-face meetings must be completed no later than 24 October.

Step 6) The Stationing Sheet will be approved by the Conference at

its Annual Conference 8 - 11 November 2023.

Step 7) November - December: Arrangements for Moving if required.

Immediately following Conference, Connexional Office staff will make contact with presbyters who are moving to make the necessary arrangements.

Step 8) January - Ministry Covenant

A Covenant needs to be drawn up for part-time, supply and self-supporting ministries. This document helps ensure that both parties (presbyter and parish) know what is expected of each other in their new appointment.



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Richmond Retirees Grateful for New Housing



Residents Peter and Bruce are very happy with their new homes purchased with the proceeds of the Richmond Church.

The sale of property in Richmond, Nelson has enabled the Nelson Tasman Methodist Parish to purchase four rental houses with the proceeds. Tenants are grateful to be able to access modern, safe housing at an affordable rate.

In December 2021 the Richmond congregation voted unanimously to sell their well-positioned church and Wesley gardens and unite with the Stoke congregation. A land story was prepared and MCPC approved the sale of the property.

A committee including representatives from the Richmond and Stoke congregations was appointed to advise and manage the removal of chattels and

the sale. A sales agent was appointed, and the committee accepted a tender from the Tasman District Council with settlement due last August.

A deconsecrating service in the Richmond church on 30 July was led by the Rev Kathryn Walters, Synod Superintendent. The Richmond congregation's recommendation to purchase rental accommodation suitable for those who struggle to find affordable accommodation was agreed to by MCPC and four modern stand-alone houses were purchased with proceeds from the sale. The homes are all tenanted by people, in or near retirement age, who have not achieved home ownership.

The parish now owns six rental houses including the previous St. John's and Richmond parsonages as well as five flats on the Stoke site built in 1976.

LETTER

Missed Opportunity for Inclusive Church

I want to congratulate you on printing the letter in the April issue on inclusive church.

I myself have been vaxxed, and like the writer I was greatly saddened by the Methodist stance in 2021 and felt it was a missed opportunity to show the breadth and depth of Christianity.

Since then I have seen a great deal of research on the vaccine and have come to the conclusion that we have been misled,

government and people both, by a dominant and influential group with money and power at the heart of it.

Happily I read that a country like Switzerland has abandoned the mRNA vaccine, while England now offers it only to those over 75 years old, and to younger people only if they are immunity compromised. In my opinion it is time that our own health department followed suit.

Best wishes, Peter Wood, Lower Hutt.

Touchstone welcomes letters from all readers. Letters should be a maximum of 500 words and include the full name and postal address of the writer. Contributions can be emailed to adys@methodist.org.nz or posted to: The Editor Touchstone, PO Box 931, Christchurch 8140.

HONEST TO GOD *Ian Harris* Enhancing Creation

Imagine human life without the planet on which it is set. It isn't easy: we are so dependent on its air, water and soil. Yet since the Industrial Revolution humans have been exploiting, polluting, even trashing our environment at an ever-increasing rate. The earth has been enhancing us; we have not been enhancing the earth.



Ian Harris.

Enhancement? Isn't our proper role stewardship? In recent years there's been plenty of encouragement for that. The strength of stewardship is accepting that we have a duty to care for creation. Its weakness is that it falls short of insisting on what follows from our new earth story: that in our evolving world we should be seeing ourselves as an integral part of nature, not beings above and beyond it, as "stewardship" can imply.

When we make that shift, we begin to see our relationship with the earth in a radically new light. So it's encouraging that in recent decades many churches have been quietly greening themselves. You see it in new hymns, prayers, sermons, liturgies and church-sponsored conferences and seminars.

For theology, a major new factor is the huge shift in our consciousness of power. Once God, conceived theistically, was assumed to have all the power. Only God was almighty.

Not quite any more. Humans now have knowledge unimaginable to previous generations, and the power to move mountains, change the course of rivers, send landing-craft to Mars, manipulate genes, develop new strains of plants and livestock, destroy forests, destroy species, destroy people en masse with nuclear weapons, poison gas and deadly viruses.

Where we fall short is in the wisdom to marshal all that knowledge and power for the betterment of our species, and of the planet that we share with all life. For along with our knowledge and power goes an awesome responsibility new to our times, and the scorecard so far is very mixed. Some highly informed folk assess that the human species in relation to the planet is close to tipping-point.

An American physicist, David Robinson, reflects that concern in *The Poised Century*. Which way we

tilt will depend almost entirely on how we humans use our power: to preserve and sustain or to destroy? As Robinson says, "Given consciousness, we have the capacity for conscious evolution, the ability to look at our own actions, see their effect on ourselves and the world, and then act in new ways that will change our

course from extinction to sustainability."

Extinction? Climate trends show the world is on track for a 3°C warming by the year 2100, well past the 2°C trigger that threatens drastic effects on the weather, oceans, fish stocks, species survival, human well-being. The fear is that nothing we can do will then prevent a further rise towards a 6°C warming. "And," some predict, "6°C gives you mass extinction," which means that 50 per cent or more of existing species will vanish.

That's happened five times in the past 500 million years, when warming radically affected the world's oceans. It led to vast emissions of hydrogen sulphide gas, destroying the ozone layer and poisoning land species.

Today it's burning fossil fuels that's tipping the balance against our children's future. Their emissions form a greenhouse blanket around the earth that distorts the balance between solar energy coming in and earth-generated energy escaping from the atmosphere.

We're already seeing the consequences in hotter, longer and more frequent heat waves and droughts, fiercer bushfires, harsher winters, wilder storms and flooding, and melting permafrost and glaciers.

Close to home, the Antarctic is carving ice at an alarming rate. The polar glaciers are disappearing six times faster than in 1990, and sea levels are set to rise, some say at least three metres, by the year 2100. As one observer put it, "To understand our origins, scientists look to the stars. To understand our demise, the glacier is ground zero."

Expect the new extremes of drought and flooding to slash food crops more often. Expect more people to suffer malnutrition and starvation. Expect a time when millions more will lack ready access to water.

In the face of all that, we need action, we need hope - and we need a spirituality that embraces the earth. With the pressures of consumerism all around us, Robinson asks, "Is there a better way to be better off?" and answers, "Yes" - as long as we develop "a new economics that values who we are over what we have. That values being over accumulation [of goods]."

Next month: A new spirituality.



Happy Hōtoke/Winter: a Season for Slowing Down and Contemplating Change

Aurora Smith, Climate Justice Committee member.

At this time of year, Papatūānuku has withdrawn much of her energy within. We have enjoyed the flourish of Koanga/Spring, the bounty of Raumati/Summer, and the yields of Ngahuru/Autumn. As we settle into Hōtoke/Winter, the main activity is now occurring quietly below the ground.

People plant trees. Roots develop and take hold. As children of the Earth, we turn more inward too. Te Rā/the Sun has moved north. The heat of the day is replaced by the coolness of the snow and frosts. The more extroverted activity has moved to warmer regions. There is a slowing of pace.

Papatūānuku has become clothed in deeper colours. Grasses are greener. The bright, direct light of summer has changed frequency too. The world has become quieter.

As we observe what is occurring around us, we strengthen our vaa (the space of sacred relationship) to Papatūānuku. In the early morning, we can stretch up and inhale deeply, feeling the fullness of the morning air. Air, purified by the plants produced upon Papatūānuku. We might consider the sacredness of the breath, connecting us to Papatūānuku and to life. How will you connect? A walk?

Experiencing the sights, the sounds, the feeling of Hōtoke/Winter. Gardening? By finding a warm spot to sit? Introduce a new habit to reaffirm your aroha to Papatūānuku? Whatever way we choose to reclaim and rekindle that space of sacred relationship, we are connected and are part of this wondrous planet.

Stop Mowing; Start Growing

This is a perfect time to set aside lawn space for sustainably growing your kai. It is so easy. Choose the area, mow it, cover it with cardboard, then lay pea straw on top. That is it! Done. This will stop grass growth and start building the soil with the bulk and nutrient materials you have laid on top. Alternatively, you can cut the grass and just lay a tarp on top. You can be sure the microbes underneath will be doing their job to help grow a healthy soil structure. Just wait two to three months and your garden will be ready to plant. You might contact factories in industrial areas or supermarket personnel, who are typically happy to provide cardboard, cutting down on their waste, as your contribution to zero waste increases.

Most cardboard and paper waste at home can go into the compost, except coloured paper. This refuse provides the carbon, building bulk in the soil, and with equal amounts of plant material added to contribute nitrogen. We will share information on compost in the months to come.

Start with Small Steps

In contemplating the job of caring for this



Winter in Aotearoa. Image Danny Postma, Unsplash.

planet and inhabitants, the responsibility seems immense. Where to start? How to start? There is room for guilt regarding mistakes made in our carelessness towards Papatūānuku. Yet, in Winter/Hōtoke, plants take root, and there is time for inner growth to begin. A theologian once said that guilt can incapacitate us, but a healthy shame can flip us into new ways of being and doing. We can look at present practices that don't work and search for new and better ways. Not with a burden of guilt, but by walking forward with faith.

Two years ago, I would look at all the beautiful, cheap, synthetic, recycled plastic clothes and yearn to buy them, knowing that so much toxic waste would end up in waterways, oceans and inside sea creatures. Now, I am working to build

up more natural clothing that will last way beyond fashion cycles. It is a journey and there is much that needs to change. Many now consider recycling through op shops to help the planet, as mountains of waste clothes build in deserted areas of the world. Consider searching online for sustainable clothing and shoes.

One fun recent discovery was www.twiice.co.nz with their edible takeaway coffee cups. Really! Each time we go into a cafe, we could ask if they have the twice takeaway cup option, or if they would like to stock twice coffee cups.

Please Calendar and be inspired:

- World Environment Day 5th June
- World Refill Day 16th June

ELECTION ISSUES

No Frills Budget Elections 2023

Carol Barron, National Coordinator
Methodist Alliance

The irony of the appropriately labelled "No Frills Budget" was not lost on me. People whose income comes from welfare know exactly what a no-frills budget means. It means that you don't really have enough income to meet the living costs for your whānau; that you have to decide between whether to spend your very limited income on the rent, or power, or food; that you have to go without things that you need. You may not be able to afford to go to the doctor, or the dentist, or to have a heater on during winter, or buy new shoes or clothes for your tamariki when they need them.

Since the Welfare Expert Advisory Group released their report in 2019, everyone has known that our welfare system was no longer fit for purpose and needs fundamental change. Since then, the impact of Covid-19 and increased costs of living has resulted in a widening gap between what benefit recipients receive and what they need to live with dignity. ActionStation's Fairer Futures research in 2022 showed that 12 of the 13 households modelled would not be able to meet their total living costs.

The Lifting the Weight Report shed light on the impacts of debt owed to government. The average debt owed by the almost one in ten people in Aotearoa was \$3,550 and makes life on a benefit even harder.

Good things from the no frills budget 2023 include:

- 20 hours free early childcare assistance which has expanded to two-year-olds, previously this was available only to three to five-year-olds.
- Abolition of the \$5 prescription charge. This will remove the barrier that in 2020/21 prevented 135,000 New Zealanders who were not able to afford the \$5 prescription charge from picking up their prescription, many of whom became sicker and required hospital care.
- Free public transport for tamariki/children under 13 years and keeping half-price fares for under 25-year-olds.
- Expansion of free school lunches.
- A further 3,000 houses through Kāinga Ora and community housing providers. However this will not meet the need of the 24,080 households on the housing register.
- Additional funding for health services and services for people with disabilities.
- The trustee tax rate will increase to match the top tax rate of 39%, up from 33%.

- Funds for a national resilience plan for infrastructure following cyclone Gabrielle.

And there are many other good things in the no frills budget.

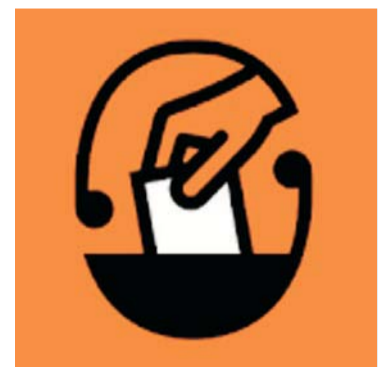
I remember the Mother of all Budgets delivered in 1991 by Ruth Richardson, which significantly cut spending on welfare support and introduced user-pays to many government services including health and education. This was the last time Aotearoa had universal family benefits.

The Wellbeing Budget of 2019 signalled a new approach with a focus on the wellbeing of New Zealanders and trying to break the cycle of child poverty.

I wonder if there needs to be yet another change in thinking with a focus shifting the budget culture from scarcity to abundance.

Abundant life is the promise of the Gospels and we know that a harmonious society is built on equity, justice and fairness. These values are crucial to create and preserve social stability and to nurture a dynamic, creative, healthy society.

The majority of New Zealanders believe in compassion, justice and a life lived with dignity where everyone can flourish. A life that is free from poverty, where everyone's needs are met and their contributions to our communities are valued.



It is time to fix our tax system. It is time to fix our social support system. It is time to restore dignity to those living in

poverty and trapped there by a system that does not provide them with enough to live on. A recent Newshub Reid-Research poll indicated that 53.1% supported some form of wealth tax, with 34.7% opposed, to make the tax system fairer.

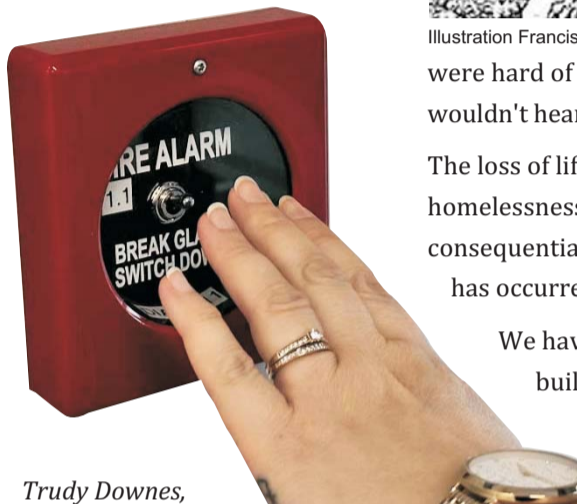
The Government now has a wealth of information advising them and encouraging them to make changes for the better, and support from the majority of people in Aotearoa. So let's encourage them to make it happen.

The Methodist Alliance will soon be distributing a resource to all parishes that looks at the issues of income security, wealth distribution and debt to government. This is the mahi of the Methodist Alliance's working group campaigning to increase benefit levels and abatement rates. It contains questions to consider, stories to reflect on and questions for parliamentary candidates. We encourage you to use this resource to consider what you can do to encourage our decision makers to make Aotearoa a more just and inclusive society where everyone can flourish.

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The Alarm That Cried Wolf



Trudy Downes,
MCNZ Caretaker

Do you remember the fire drills you used to do at school? As a kid, I thought they were a waste of time but hey, they got us out of the classroom for a while!

I have a different opinion about fire drills now and fire alarms, particularly after the Loafers Lodge incident reports from Wellington. Experience has also upgraded my views on earthquake drills, intruder drills, CPR and first aid training.

One of the things I still have to get used to as a health and safety officer is that if I do my job well, nothing happens. How weird it is to take pride in nothing happening, unlike the alarm that kept going off with nothing happening until it did.

Mixed media reports state that the Loafers Lodge building was up to code, passed compliance inspections and had regular fire drills. However, the building was aged, lacked modern fire safety equipment, had exit doors shut off due to break-ins, and people ignored the alarm that cried wolf too many times. Possibly the evacuation plan (if there was one) was not fit for purpose as some families claimed their loved ones



Illustration Francis Barlow, 1687

were hard of hearing and wouldn't hear the alarm anyway. The loss of life, the forced homelessness and the consequential deprivation that has occurred is heartbreaking.

We have to think, are our buildings up to standard? Not just ticking the box but truly up

to standard with all compliance checks up to date and truly fit-for-purpose. Do they work as they are supposed to?

Have we thought about the location of our buildings in tsunami zones or flood paths? Are our residential dwellings up to healthy home standards? Have we practised our evacuation plans and do they work? Will our people be safe when events turn to custard? Can we use our buildings to help respond to events? Are they fit for that purpose?

I recently met someone who has been a Civil Defence volunteer for over twenty years. During the first ten years, they never had to deploy to any emergency. Since the Christchurch quakes, they have deployed at least once a year, every year. Their personal forecasting says the number of events per year will continue. Are our buildings still fit for purpose?

I am not trying to be the doom and gloom fairy but, unlike flooding, there are more actions we can take to make the mess less when it comes to fire. The outcomes from Loafers Lodge were avoidable and that's what upsets me the most. They may be able to tick the official compliance

boxes but official compliance is the lowest 'pass' standard there is and we can do better.

This year I will be checking the approved evacuation status for all relevant buildings within the Church - has every building got an evacuation scheme approved by Fire and Emergency NZ, and are the trials up to date? All of our churches and camps need one and most are unlikely to have one. Some churches even have approved evacuation schemes from the last century; those need replacing. Some evacuation schemes have had no recorded evacuation drills for over ten years; those need replacing too.

The outcome from Loafers Lodge was avoidable.

Let us learn the lesson because it was too expensive to ignore.

Whakatāharaharatia ngā aituā. Make the mess less.

CRISIS SUPPORT

If you or your parish want to get involved in looking after others during disaster events, then contact your local Civil Defence team. Every local council supports a Civil Defence response team of some sort. They will be able to advise if your building can be used as a response centre, and they could probably advise on how your people can be organised as a response team as well.

www.civildefence.govt.nz/
www.methodist.org.nz/tangata/wellness-and-safety/emergency-response-plans/

Auckland Lay Preachers recover the Jewish Jesus

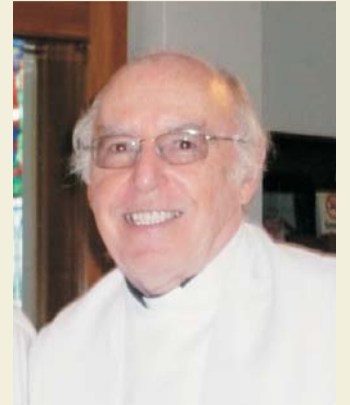
The Auckland ecumenical network of lay preachers is committed to keeping up to date with developments in theology and holds regular workshops for its members. Rev Dr Terry Wall & Linda Hall report on its most recent meeting for continuing education held at St. Paul's Methodist Church, Remuera.

We are open to engage with current trends in biblical interpretation. We are wanting to grow spiritually, to be intellectually stretched and to stay fresh for our ministries.

At our March meeting, 24 participants were reminded how central culture is in shaping our world view and providing us with perspectives on what it means to be human. So often we fail to take the cultural dimension into account when reading scripture.

In his presentation on the Jewishness of Jesus, Rev Dr Terry Wall suggested that if we want to understand Jesus, we had to take the Jewish context of Jesus seriously. The faith Jesus was shaped in, the vision he embraced and the path he walked were Jewish. Reading the New Testament through a Jewish lens will help us to encounter the Torah observant Jesus.

Early in its life the church, to emphasise its distinctiveness, developed its identity over and against the synagogue. New Testament writers wrote in a context of conflict over identity and portrayed Jesus as different from his heritage. Later, Jews were blamed for the death of Jesus (rather than the



Rev Dr Terry Wall.

Romans) and Christianity was seen to supersede Judaism.

These theological developments gave rise to what is called the teaching of contempt. Christian antisemitism has been prevalent throughout European history and provided the seed bed for the Holocaust. Today the church is seeking new models of its relationship to Judaism. We are seeking to read the Bible and discover our indebtedness to Jesus' Jewish tradition.

Lively groups reflected on quotations from writers in the field. Questions were raised about the negative portrayal of the Pharisees. The subject matter was not familiar to all in attendance, but we had a sense that by treating Jesus' cultural context with care, new approaches to interpretation were being opened up. In our sermon preparation we will be aware of continuities with the Jewish tradition and will hesitate before contrasting law and grace.

The next meeting will be held on Saturday 26 August 9.30am - 12.30pm at St Paul's Methodist Remuera, Auckland. TeRito Peyroux-Semu, Vice President, MCNZ Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa will engage lay preachers in self-reflection.

For further information or to register, please contact: lindajeanhall00@gmail.com.



UCANZ Forum 2023: A Time for Looking Back and Forward



Rev. Heather Kennedy - outgoing member of UCANZ Standing Committee

I recently returned home from attending my fourth UCANZ Forum. I have appreciated the opportunity to serve six and a half years on the standing committee as an elected member and as one of the few representatives from the South Island.

There were fewer attendees at Forum this year than previous years, possibly due to the increased cost of airfares, accommodation and meals, which we are all impacted by these days. We all enjoyed worshipping together and the fellowship, catching up with friends over good food and a diverse menu of speakers discussing a wide range of topics, of special interest and benefit to those in Co-operating Ventures.

The story behind the establishment of



Crossway Community Church in Richmond, Christchurch and the building of their fit-for-purpose premises was very informative and an example to others. The former Methodist and Presbyterian parishes, a Baptist group and Delta Community Support Trust all worked together to provide the building that supports all their activities.

Our key speaker, Dr Peter Lineham, religious historian previously of Massey University, spoke on the history and formation of the Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand. He talked about the initial discussions dating back to pre-1900s, the enthusiasm - and lack of - for the idea of combining denominations into one body and the struggles over the years to get enough buy-in for the concept. His research into the eventual formation of UCANZ brought us all up to speed on the progress that was made, particularly in the 1970s. He reflected on where we are at now, the unique character of Co-

operating Venture parishes and their involvement across the denominations and their communities.

His final address on the Sunday morning looked at where we are going, in light of the dissolution of some Co-operating Ventures, the departure of member denominations and a reflection on what the future might look like. He referenced a quote on 'Hope for a Fallen World' in referring to the ability of a broken church to reach out to the brokenness of the world as being a virtue.

Other speakers provided interesting topics with question and answer sessions. They spoke on: Healthy Families, Healthy Communities - Rev Hana Popea-Dell (PCANZ White Ribbon Ambassador), Alpha, Natural Church Development - Neil Adams (NCD), and The Frontiers of Mission in Digital Neighbourhoods - Rev Mark Chamberlain (Christchurch Anglican Diocese). There was a lot to take in and great enthusiasm for the information that was provided, as 'take-homes' for the congregations represented.

Having the Forum in Christchurch in April was a good decision as the weather was good and as a city hub, flights in and out worked well. Some attendees made the Forum an excuse for an extended weekend away. The hospitality of the Crossway Community and the catering was appreciated by all.

Savouring a Sacred Treasure

Rev Dr Mary Caygill

Last week while searching for a book in my library, housed in the parsonage garage where I am currently located, I lost myself in the searching.

It happens quite regularly as I enter the garage space with a singularity of focus to lay my hands on a particular book that I want to use mostly as I prepare a Sunday reflection or possibly to confer with alongside something else I am reading, listening to, or a thought that has come to mind in that moment. Just as an aside, there is no more wondrous sight for me as an ardent booklover than coming home and driving my car to the set space on the drive, placing my

finger on the garage door control, then pausing in the moment as the door quietly ascends to be confronted with the sight of the all-encompassing bookshelves lining each of the garage walls. There, so neatly packed into the respective shelf space provided, stand so many of my friends and companions who have accompanied me through endless explorations and seasons of life and faith, transporting me to time and place and more beyond simple imagining.

I eventually found the one book I was initially looking for but not before losing myself in the row of books sitting just below that being searched for. My arms were full as I traversed the short distance back to my study desk and thus lost myself again in time remembering, reacquainting, the treasures within, and how over time the wisdom imbedded had found its way to enlarge my mind, heart and soul.

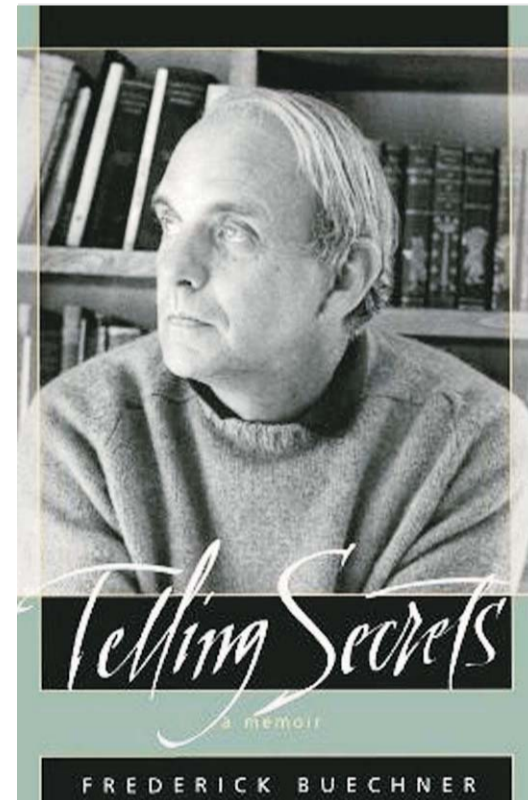
The fruit of my search and sacred remembering was one of the written works I most treasure from the pen of the late Frederick Buechner, ordained American Presbyterian, who died late last year at the age of 96 years. His calling never found expression in any parish appointment but rather was realized through the vocation of writing.

The fruits over his lifetime included a prodigious quantity of novels, memoirs and essays that explored the human condition from a uniquely inspirational, theological, humorous and real lived experience. I made my first acquaintance with his writing very early in my ministry and devoured anything and everything that flowed from him.

Some thirty-plus of his books line a section of my shelves as constituting my most sacred treasures. On this day, this sacred diversion of my focused attention caused me to re-read and ponder afresh the following extract from Buechner's memoir *Telling Secrets*, an extract I have noted on many occasions in reflecting on my own life and faith journey.



Rev. Smythe was determined about getting ahead of the generative AI revolution.



What we hunger for perhaps more than anything else is to be known in our full humanness, and yet that is often what we also fear more than anything else. It is important to tell at least from time to time the secret of who we truly and really are... because otherwise we run the risk of losing track of who we truly and fully are and little by little come to accept instead the highly edited version which we put forth in hope that the world will find it more acceptable than the real thing. It is important to tell our secrets too because it makes it easier... for other people to tell us a secret or two of their own."

Frederick Buechner novelist/minister (from his memoir *Telling Secrets*)



Disclosure to Avoid Putting the Church into Disrepute

Dr Ruby Manukia Schaumkel

There may be situations when disclosure is necessary to avoid putting the Church into disrepute. In every situation an individual, congregation, parish or affiliation of the Church should ask itself if disclosure or non-disclosure helps to avoid putting the Church into disrepute. A good place to start is by looking at Principle 11 of the Privacy Act 2020.

An organisation may generally only disclose personal information for the purpose for which it was originally collected or obtained. Sometimes other reasons for disclosure are allowed, such as disclosure for a directly related purpose or if the person in question gives their permission for the disclosure.

For instance, an organisation may disclose personal information when:

- the information was gathered for this purpose

- the person concerned authorises the disclosure
- the information is to be used in a way that does not identify the person concerned
- disclosure is necessary to avoid endangering someone's health or safety
- disclosure is necessary to uphold or enforce the law.



In any given event or situation, due diligence and prudence should be exercised to help protect individuals disclosing the information and avoid putting the Church into disrepute. If in doubt, seek guidance and assistance. Expertise is available from the Connexional Office.

The retention of information due to the Privacy Act is different from when you need to make a disclosure to protect the Church or avoid putting the Church into disrepute. For example, by exercising sound judgment on reasonable grounds to make a disclosure to avoid a conflict of interest or raise awareness of a potential conflict

is good practice to avoid putting the Church and any other person into disrepute.

Under employment law when an employee's conduct might reasonably be viewed by the employer as having a negative impact on the reputation of the employer's business, the employer may consider dismissal for serious

misconduct. The employer does not need to prove that there is actual damage to the business - only the potential for damage. For example, if the employer is mentioned when the conduct is referred to in the media.

If the employer decides that there may be damage to the reputation of the workplace, they must still follow a fair process with the employee in relation to taking disciplinary action. The question for the employer is whether a decision to dismiss (or take other action) is one which a fair and reasonable employer could have taken in the circumstances.

If an organisation is sensitive to public opinion and business interests may be hurt because of employee misconduct,

it is important to make sure that employees know that certain standards must be met. Public servants and more senior staff are often held to a higher standard of conduct.

Employers may consider putting a clause in their employment agreements to make it clear to all employees that the employer may dismiss an employee if their conduct outside work brings the employer into disrepute or for other specified reasons.

No one is above the law so when in doubt it is better to seek advice rather than wait for something to happen. We can avoid this by seeking consultation and disclosure to avoid sticky situations ahead of time before the Church or organisation is put into disrepute.

Early identification and acknowledging what may constitute serious misconduct is important. Equally important is knowing how to avoid misconduct before it occurs. Thus, the best practice if in doubt is prevention. Don't get involved if you are unsure whether an activity poses a conflict or puts another into disrepute. Take action to reduce the risk or harm and if in doubt, disclose information about the situation and follow work ethical standards.

NGĀ PURAPURA WETERIANA • METHODIST ALLIANCE

Addressing the Need for Aged Care

Michael Herman, Christchurch Methodist Mission Communications Manager

Strong headwinds are battering the New Zealand aged residential care (ARC) sector, resulting in a shortage of rest home beds because of underfunding and staffing shortages.

The challenges in the aged care sector also result in significant pressures on the public health system as highlighted by reports of elderly patients languishing in hospitals, awaiting transfers to other facilities that have no immediate capacity to accept them.

The Aged Care Association has attributed nurse shortages and funding shortfalls to the lack of capacity at ARC facilities and the closure of about 1,200 care home beds since the middle of 2022.

With people over 65 years-of-age approaching a fifth of our population within 10 years, arresting and reversing this trajectory is seen as crucial.

The Aged Care Commissioner, Carolyn Cooper, emphasised the extent of the problem recently, calling for a review to address gaps and blockages across "the whole system." The Commissioner points out that older people are the biggest users of the health system and that a plan is necessary "to ensure that older people receive the health services they need."

CMM's Executive Director, Jill Hawkey, notes that parts of the aged care sector have for many years helped reduce the cost to the Government of providing support by delivering services at a fraction of the cost compared to public hospitals.

"The Ansell Strategic report into aged residential care in New Zealand showed that it cost the government \$1,345 a day to fund a hospital bed. Meanwhile, a rest



The underfunding of aged-care homes and hospitals has created a very challenging operating environment for WesleyCare (pictured) and the other remaining religious providers in Christchurch.

home bed was just 10.7% of this amount and a hospital bed slightly higher at 17%," says Jill. "Although aged-care homes and hospitals like WesleyCare in Christchurch have had to be experts at providing quality care on a shoestring, the pandemic has exposed flaws in this funding approach."

Underfunding prevents the ARC sector from offering competitive salaries to nurses, with many leaving to work for higher pay at public hospitals, forcing providers to close rooms. This is resulting in some vulnerable older people being cared for at home by relatives who themselves may be elderly and struggling.

"This is unconscionable in a country which prides itself on being caring and kind," says Jill. "We know that there's a growing number of people with few or no financial assets that are reaching the point of needing care. We also know that a third of retirees are renting currently and that this is expected to double by 2048.

"Financial insufficiency means that this group will be unable to access private retirement villages that operate as

licence-to-occupy or to afford the premium room charges of private rest homes and hospitals. However, CMM and others in the sector have shown that it is possible to provide quality care for this group. The model is simple: affordable retirement housing in conjunction with an affordable premium room charge. But this is possible only if the government increases funding levels."

The challenge posed by nursing shortages and the high cost of delivering quality care aside, Jill points out that there are few options for people who cannot afford the premium room charges that ARC facilities are entitled to pass on to residents in certain circumstances and which help providers to break even.

"The risk is that these people will spend more time in public hospitals while a bed is sought, placing them under increased pressure. This not only costs the government more but is a source of great stress for elderly people and their loved ones at a time of heightened vulnerability," Jill says.

An increasing number of stand-alone charitable aged care providers are closing,



CMM Executive Director Jill Hawkey briefs Hon. Andrew Little about the need to increase funding for aged care providers during a visit to WesleyCare.

with the three remaining religious providers in Christchurch all experiencing the same financial difficulties. A survey by Aged Care Matters last year underlined this threat, with 35% of respondent facilities saying that they were "very likely, or likely" to wind up over the next 12 months, and that it was "clear the sector is at breaking point."

Jill points out that it is possible to avoid this outcome and the resulting hundreds of millions of dollars it would cost the Government to fill the gap. Analysis undertaken last year by CMM shows that the care provided in ARC facilities collectively saves the state \$11,836 billion a year, providing a compelling argument for a funding increase to ensure sustainability for the sector and New Zealand's ageing population.

The inaugural Aged Care Commissioner, Carolyn Cooper, will be the keynote speaker at CMM's Public Celebration in November. Touchstone readers are invited to register to attend the event in person, or the livestream broadcast, at www.mmsi.org.nz/Public-Celebration-2023.



Liturgical Resources for Contemporary Aotearoa

Reflection: Keita Hotere

Liturgy - Kupu Rītani

In recent weeks the authorised liturgy for the coronation rite of his majesty King Charles III of England and a Māori translation of the serenity prayer crossed my desk. I appreciated the translation and the adjoining commentary of the coronation liturgy. Readers might choose to read, analyse, and draw from the messages meaning for themselves. The liturgies provided universal messages of peace, wisdom and love. Both liturgical resources seek to bring a continuity of reassurance and hope in times of uncertainty.

As someone always looking to find relevance in the written word for the places, and people where I am, the symbolism within the coronation liturgy still reflected colonial instruments of oppression. In the imposition of a print culture on to an oral culture Māori have experienced the power of the written word. Too often, the impact of that change has served to include, exclude or redefine spaces of influence for Māori. This brought me to reflect upon the various liturgical resources within the catalogues of our 200-year church history. I then ask, are we liturgically resourced appropriately for contemporary Aotearoa and how can we do this into the future?

In recent years I have been part of the team tasked with Conference liturgical resources and much of this requires te reo translation and often a retracing of material to the original texts. This is not an easy ask. In our context perhaps an Aotearoa Moana understanding, and

expression of liturgy is more appropriate. Liturgies that reflect this model shape the role and nature of ministry for all people in the contemporary Aotearoa church. Embracing an Aotearoa Moana approach to liturgy allows for inclusion of metaphor, language devices and Māori thought patterns to emerge.

It is with gratitude that we acknowledge the many translators, theologians, hymnwriters, and liturgists who have composed liturgies of the past and present. The great composers of our thriving poi, waiata and haka traditions who were attuned to the land and people, their contributions were examples of our Māori gospels. The waiata 'Haere Mai' from composer Harihari of Ngāti Ruanui draws upon Māori imagery to tell of the gospel story and its life-affirming witness. (See Touchstone September and October 2021).

Following in this tradition we have the published books 'Whakawhetai' a gratitude journal from Hira Nathan and 'Aroha' from Hinemoa Elder who draw upon our rich Māori oral culture and through whakatauki share with reflection and simplicity. The upcoming August gathering of liturgists provides the fertile ground to explore and dig deeper into the Aotearoa Moana pool of wisdom today. Creator God makes all things anew, and as with seasonal changes we are transformed to what the gospel calls us to be in the world. The Spirit prompts us through challenging climate times to listen attentively to Papatūānuku and urges us forward to be responsive to the change in our communities.



Winter bush berries. Credit Keita Hotere.

E te Ariki o te Rangi me te Whenua. Nōu te Ihi, nōu te Mana. Nōu anō te Māramatanga. I tēnei ao hurihuri kia tata mai koe ki a mātou nei inoi. Ki te rongō ki te Reo o te Whenua me ōna pai. Me huri anō ō mātou whakaaro me ō mātou mahi. Kia whai hua ai te ao hou.

Creator God of the skies above and the land beneath my feet. Bringer of inspiration, influence and greater understanding. In a changing world draw near to us in prayer. As we listen and respond for the flourishing of a new world.

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

Le ala i le pule o le Tautua *The Pathway to Leadership is Service*

Tui Salevao, President, NZMWF

If you ask any Samoan if they have ever come across this proverb, you would expect an affirmation that they have heard it. If you then ask what this saying means to them, they would explain in their own words that to get somewhere in life you need to prove your service to your elders, village, church or family.



Help families live better lives

Every child has a right to a good start in life. Everybody has dignity and worth in the sight of God.

Every day Methodist missions and parishes work with individuals, families, children, and older people who need support.

Your donation or bequest can help make a lasting difference to people in need throughout New Zealand.

You can make a donation to your local parish, one of the Missions, or the Methodist Alliance. Please contact Carol Barron for more information on:

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methodist.org.nz/methodist_alliance



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NGA PURAPURA WETERIANA

This proverb is dear to me and has always been my mantra in whatever I do within my family, church or work. This is the key to my journey in life. My life revolves around service.

I started work at the age of 17 and when I applied for a cadetship with the Department of Social Welfare, I wrote, "I want to help people and see them progress in life."

This is still important to me 34 years later; helping those in need and being of service in any way I can in my capacity as an employee, parish member, daughter, mother, sister or aunty. I have learned over the years just how important serving others is, regardless of what position I may hold.

I firmly believe in sharing my knowledge and helping others to see and realise their potential. At the forefront of whatever they do in life, God is at the centre of all things guiding them in their journey. Serving is about doing it with the right intentions, and not doing it for the sake of doing it as this clouds the reason behind what you do.

As NZ-born-Samoans, our cultural values and beliefs were embedded in me and my siblings at an early age by our parents. Service (tautua) was drummed into us and we were expected to serve our elders and respect them in every way as they

held that status.

This tautua is still embedded in our children but as we live in a westernised country, it's about modernising the service. I have given my life to serve wholeheartedly in everything I do. This is my way of paying forward my skills and attributes.

As I count down the months before I end my term as President for NZ Methodist Women's Fellowship, I pray that I have given justice to the role in serving our members. It has been a fantastic two years and as it comes to an end, I believe that as one door closes another door will open.

"Proverbs form an important part of Samoan traditions and culture where oratory, poetry, metaphors, and subtlety in language art forms are held in high esteem as a form of communication in a ceremony and ritual of fa'aSamoa". (Excerpt from Wikipedia)

This is powerful when it comes to explaining Samoan proverbs and the importance of why chiefs and orators use proverbs when addressing an audience to captivate their interest in the story/journey they are about to explain. So, for those of us that use these proverbs, we also want to captivate those we are serving and enlighten them on our journey.



Pelagius

Rev Abhishek Solomon

Pelagius was likely born in the British Isles sometime between AD 360-370. He belonged to the Celtic tradition and is known to have practised an ascetic life. His Celtic theology sharply contrasted with the predominantly North African Christianity of Augustine and the Christianity of Jerusalem led by Jerome. Pelagius is important because of his theological insights and because he touched on a problem that remains perennial, namely, the problem of free will. In this respect, he was a precursor to a secular liberal West emphasising individual autonomy and free choice. He anticipated the Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Immanuel Kant.

Pelagius advocated three things that got him into trouble with the established church. Firstly, his emphasis was on action over belief. In a letter to Demetrias, a new convert to Christianity, he wrote, "You realise that the doctrines are the inventions of human minds, as it tries to comprehend the mysteries of God. You will realise that the Scripture itself is the

work of human minds, recording the examples and teachings of Jesus. Thus, it is not what you believe that matters. It is how you respond with your heart and your actions. It is not believing in Christ that matters, it is becoming like him."

He goes on to make a case for a relative morality, claiming that the same actions of someone of wealth and influence are worse than those same actions done by someone in poverty. He pointed out that if someone is rich and refuses to give food to the hungry, it may cause more damage than the cruellest criminal. One can imagine that this would have been controversial in a world where bishops and priests sat upon mounds of wealth and power. He was quick to express his annoyance: "Do you consider him a Christian who oppresses the wretched, who burdens the poor, who covets others' property, who makes several poor so that he may make himself rich, who rejoices in unjust gains, who feeds on others' tears ... who, when ordered to distribute his own possessions, seizes others' instead? And a man of this kind has the audacity to go to church and thoughtlessly and inappropriately stretches out his impious hands ..."

The second thing that got him into trouble was that he was not opposed to teaching



Adam or the original sin plagued humanity. Pelagius countered that through free will, we could choose not to sin if assisted by grace. For him, God's creation was good and he had made humankind in his image. In his writing *De Natura*, Pelagius maintained that a child is born free from sin and that human nature is God's gift, consisting "primarily of the feeling, choosing, and doing the good". To Pelagius, human beings are not irreducibly bound to the sin of Adam. We can choose good over evil.

Pelagius was seen as a threat to the expansion of a global church. He had to be ousted and

women. He was mocked by Jerome for the idea that women could be taught to read and interpret the Bible, which was a guarded knowledge at the time. In contrast, Pelagius taught the goodness of seeing God in all creation, including nature. For Pelagius, if we look at the world through God's eyes, nothing is ugly, and this would apply to Jesus' teaching to love your neighbours. Except the neighbour includes the whole of creation.

And lastly, what got him into trouble the most also made him discover his most important and controversial idea. It concerned Augustine's contention that a Christian could be saved only through God's grace. Without grace, the sin of

Augustine had the political power to outmanoeuvre his opponent. After repeated hearings in AD 418, Pope Zosimus issued a letter condemning Pelagius's theology as heretical. But despite the official decree, Pelagius's ideas have prevailed in the secular liberal humanist culture of the West where we believe in free will and freedom of choice. In the writings of Pelagius we discover a theological defence of human freedom, including the freedom to disagree without the interference of state or church. To some extent, our modern freedom was born out of this defence. If humans were free enough to save themselves, they must be given social and political freedom to actualise it fully.

TŪHONONGA - Ā - TĀNGATA • AROUND THE CONNEXION

Waikato Wairiki Synod Refresh



People from across the Waikato Wairiki Methodist Synod, including the Waikato Rohe, gathered for their annual Refresh Retreat at Epworth Camp.

At the end of April approximately 30 people from across the Waikato Wairiki Methodist Synod, including the Waikato Rohe, gathered for their annual Refresh Retreat at Epworth Camp. Rev Alisa Lasi reports on an event that was blessed with good weather, a wonderful venue, superb staff, good food and an inspiring programme.

The three-day programme began on Friday 28 April with a Whakatau and Minita a Iwi, Te Papara Kopa-Katene opened in

prayer and with a blessing. Revs Tau Lasi and Bob Franklin (Super team and organising committee) also spoke, then all present introduced themselves. Speeches were supplemented with waiata (songs) sung by all from the synod Te Reo resource booklet 2019.

Attendees were able to choose to participate in any two of three

excellent workshops:

- "It's Ok that you're not Ok" Navigating Grief Rev Dr Susan Thompson
- Changing World Changing Church Rev Bob Franklin
- Our Green Journey /Eco Church Sione Molitika, Amanda Williams and Alilia

Molitika, Hamilton East and Anna Casey-Cox, Chartwell.

The evening finished with games and a Sing Along. Saturday we gathered for devotions "Who is our neighbour?" led by Rev Bob Franklin then Shirley Rivers from Methodist Mission Northern (Te Taha Maori) shared an interactive presentation on 40 years of the Bicultural Journey. Rev Norman Brookes, retired presbyter, in "Evolution or revolution- the Bicultural journey from a Pakeha Perspective" shared the history/s leading up to the conference decision in 1983 and after.

We reflected on the journey. What has been achieved in the past 40 years and where to from here? Many interesting thoughts were shared in different conversations.

We can all support and encourage each other as parishes on this journey and grow the relationship with Te Rohe Waikato. We were reminded by Te Rohe that it is a two-way conversation. This hui was a time to reflect before moving forward.

I extend our thanks to all who

attended and acknowledge our workshop facilitators and our special guests. It was wonderful to have Te Papara for one day and the Te Taha Maori Liaison person, Waikato Rohe, Faye Blossom and her team present throughout the hui. Faafetai lava

to Rev Bob Franklin, for all his hard work in bringing this year's Refresh together. I know we were all blessed in some way.

Ma te Atua tatou katoa e tiaki. May God continue to watch over us all.



Combined Hurunui Parishes, North Canterbury

Incorporating the Kowai Parish (centres at Amberley and Cheviot) and the Waikari Parish based at Hawarden

The Combined Parishes seek a Full-time Minister (based in Amberley), for an initial period of 5 years.

The centres of Amberley, Cheviot and Hawarden support a rural hinterland.

We are seeking a minister who is:

- a preacher who stimulates both thought and action
- a person for whom connection with people is essential
- a spiritual leader who empowers members in their ministries
- a person who will be active in building networks in the wider community

Are you the person to help us focus on God's vision for our widespread and to work with us in ministry and service within the communities?

**Expressions of Interest to the Rev. Chris Elliot
mcelliot22@gmail.com 027 451 5296**



IRCA Dubuque 2023

Last month Rev Christina Morunga reported on a pilgrimage to Turkiye and Greece. As part of her travels, she attended an International Rural Churches Conference (IRCA) in the United States that inspired and enriched her ministry.

This year's International Rural Churches Conference (IRCA) in Dubuque, Iowa in April was the smallest IRCA Conference to date, due to the difficulty many people experienced in obtaining a visa for the USA. However, the Conference was combined with the Rural and Small-Town Ministry Conference of USA so we had the opportunity of sharing with people from the Midwest and further afield as well as reconnecting with many friends attending the IRCA.

Hebrew Scholar Rev Dr Ann Fritschel led an amazing Bible Study of Isaiah 35. She looked at 'Shalom' being total wholeness and wellbeing, in touch with all the blessings God wants for creation; 'Righteousness' being a state of wholeness in the world as it is now, for the Hebrews there was no life after death. The theme of the Conference "Flourishing" is more than a

personal achievement but that of all creation living in harmony that all might flourish. To make this happen we need to be good stewards of the land and sea, and serve, protect and guard God's good creation.

The Bible is grounded in the triune God and God's intention is for all to flourish wholistically. Ann used the analogy of Death Valley springing to life in the right conditions, and how after the pandemic we need to grieve and then sing a new song, knowing we have a future in God. This leads to us becoming a part of the new creation, joining in communal life and work with a mission to help one another. Isaiah speaks of 'Vengeance', as God ordering the chaos we have created in God's perfect world and of Redemption in the language of kinship and identity to restoring God's life-giving life in creation.

I was intrigued by Dr Gil Waldkoenig's presentations on Soundscape Ecology and Theology. The spirituality of listening in God's creation, telling and singing the story of the Gospel. He shared the history of the Moravian Christian community that originated in the Czech Republic in the 14th and 15th centuries and fled to the New World of USA in 1722.

They lived their lives with continual, gentle, singing of scripture and Biblical stories and insights. It was in one of these communities that John Wesley "was strangely warmed". The Moravians believed in the power of sound to shape community and to demonstrate connectedness with the Holy Spirit, whether they were in buildings or outdoors. They lived with the communion of saints, past, present and future as they sang from the collective memory, the sacredness of the ordinary.

We visited the "Four Mounds" estate which was gifted to the city of Dubuque, Iowa. The Council did not have funds for renovating the buildings so a trust was formed as a 'not for profit' training school with the students and adults paid as employees. They were taught the tasks involved in renovating buildings, starting with the 17 on the property. They then embarked on renovating homes in conjunction with the council, to be sold to first home buyers at a low price. They also renovated homes to allow people who have developed disabilities to be able to stay in their own homes. Along with the employment skills, the employees are given life skills, budgeting advice, counselling



International delegates from USA, NZ, Canada, Kenya and India about to go on the trolley bus. Rev Christina Morunga is second from the left.

and support in employment options.

We visited "the Convivium Urban Farmstead" which has a three-pronged outreach. Food is grown, preserved and prepared in a renovated property with an old greenhouse upgraded to start a gardening project. This has extended to the yards of several homes and businesses in town. Crops grown support the community, a restaurant and a social meals programme. Students are taught to use the vegetables they grow, preserve excess and to run the restaurant that has become a popular eatery and successful business.

Dr Heather Major presented findings from her PhD thesis on the viability of rural churches in the Borders of Scotland, that correlate with the experience of

many rural churches in the Western world. She questions why things are done the way they are and what possibilities there may be for becoming church in ways that may encourage greater interaction and mission.

We had African input from members from Kenya and Zambia. Keynote speaker, Dr Beth Elness-Hanson, has a Marie Curie fellowship to research ways to assist Maasai to maintain their nomadic lifestyle and find a sustainable way forward to prevent annihilation of their lands. Via Zoom we participated in a presentation on "Farming God's Way" enabling Africans to utilise their land to produce food and improve their wellbeing.

Ō TĀTOU TĀNGATA • OUR PEOPLE

65 years as a Lay Preacher

This year Brenda Skinner celebrates 65 years' service as a lay preacher. Doreen Sunman shares the background to a lifetime of dedicated service.



Ken and Brenda Skinner.

Brenda was born in the small settlement of Tyldrum in northern New South Wales, the oldest of five children. Once a month, the family worshipped at a nearby church which was shared by all denominations.

On the other Sundays a service was held in her Welsh grandparents' home, her grandfather both preaching and playing the small organ. When she was older the family worshipped at Murwillumbah Methodist Church. During her time at Armadale Teachers' College, Brenda joined a preaching team led by the Methodist minister. She began her teaching career at a primary school in Batlow and then Glen Innes, NSW.

When Brenda heard a minister from Northern Australia talking about his work and then called for more missionaries, she felt very strongly that God was calling her. While training at George Brown Methodist College in Sydney, she completed the lay preachers' course. She offered herself for work in the Pacific Islands as a teacher and was sent to Vunarima, on the island of New Britain in Papua New Guinea. Two ministers at George Brown College tried to teach her the Tolai language but, when she arrived in PNG and was met by a very large man,

the only words she could recall were those for "little boy"!

There are 800 languages in PNG but at Vunarima the Methodist Church used Tolai for its worship and work and it was in that language, in 1958, Brenda passed her written and oral examinations to become an accredited lay preacher. She visited villages, often with a nurse, planning her service on the way. Typically, the worship space had a clay floor and rush mats over the windows. Various

animals roamed freely. The nurse would do health checks on the babies at the back of the room while Brenda preached at the front. The singing, unaccompanied, was of hymns translated by a colleague of Brenda's. Brenda, with a team of indigenous senior ministers, revised the Old Testament of the Tolai Bible. Miraculously, their work survived a tsunami, following an earthquake.

The teachers' college was moved from New Ireland to Gaulim on New Britain. New Zealander Ken Skinner, an Order of St Stephen volunteer, was in charge of the build. Brenda set up a demonstration school for the college. Ken and Brenda were married in Rabaul in 1967.

By 1970 the mission station was being handed over to local people. Brenda and Ken came to live in New Zealand. They attended Mt Albert Methodist Church where they were both active in Sunday School and youth work. In the late 1970s they moved to Glen Eden Methodist, where they continue to be involved with the young people and Brenda, often with Ken's help, continues to serve as a lay preacher.



Leases and Tenancies

Thursday 08 June 5pm - 6pm

Register Now!

Wendy Anderson and Trudy Downes discuss the responsibilities of leases and tenancies. Two sides of the same coin.

For more information, visit:

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

or email:

trudyd@methodist.org.nz



Liturgy - the work of the people: old and young

Michael Lemanu, *Tauīwi Children, Youth and Family Ministries National Coordinator*

This past Easter, I was privileged once again to head to the annual Epworth Easter Camp, hosted by the awesome Waikato-Waiariki Unite (WWU) and Youth Activities Committee (YAK). It was the usual outstanding weekend of high energy, fellowship, food and good vibes. The theme chosen was 'Hope Remains' and this was interpreted and expressed via many different activities during the weekend.

On the final night, during what is known as the "Celebration Service", we asked camp groups, in their allocated group time, to consider the events of Easter weekend and the theme and to compose a prayer of hope. This prayer was then presented by each group to the wider camp as a liturgical presentation in the service.

The prayers created were powerful and inspirational, speaking to the context and lives

of the young people - many who were not from a church - in such a way that isn't always reflected in our typical 'Sunday' worship setting. After the service, many of the campers remarked to me how difficult they found the task of writing their own prayers. In churches where they are so used to hearing or reciting the prayers of others, it was a foreign experience for them to pray something publicly that was specifically from their own mind and spirit, and was unapologetically their own words.

I've reflected on this experience greatly since and have wondered how we might be able to look at our liturgical worship and encourage young people (and any other people for that matter) to see their own creativity and voices more visible and evident in this setting.

Now, I'm not suggesting we get rid of traditional forms of liturgical worship that are still deeply meaningful to many in our churches today. I regularly advocate for an intergenerational approach to church that attempts to make space for both the old and the new workings of God to co-exist harmoniously. There is space for both, if we are willing.



Participants enjoy good times and great vibes at Easter Camp.

So how can we, as church communities become more willing? Some thoughts.

Teach young people the 'why' behind the 'what'

Education and understanding are crucially important. Take the time to explain why certain things in liturgical worship are done a certain way. What is the significance of our sacraments? Language? Symbols? Hymnody and so forth? To explain the value and worth of something goes a long way towards understanding. For young

people, that might not necessarily mean that a hymn they didn't like will suddenly become a fave, but perhaps it can open up ways in which they are able to find and express meaning for themselves in ways not previously considered.

Provide opportunities to contribute towards liturgical materials

In my home church, one of the regular practices in worship is to have children compose prayers for the intercessory prayers of the service. It is often in these prayers where children will bring to light a group or area

that needed prayer, or articulate God's love in a newfound and meaningful way. Crucially, the prayers are always unedited and raw - often with the odd grammatical error and all. The point is to make children feel like they are able to meaningfully contribute to worship. Finding ways for this to happen is crucial.

Don't be dismissive...

Encourage young people to express their relationship with God without any desire to conform them to a particular way of doing. This is a big one. Churches cry out for youth participation, but only if it fits within criteria or expectations of what they envision. This needs to be challenged in my view. Elements of creativity and language that make no sense to one generation, can indeed be just as meaningful and authentic to another. This is the other side of the earlier point of education and understanding of tradition. Church leaders must be also willing to do the same of young people. Attempt to understand how social media, technology and contemporary worship might meaningfully connect young people with God in today's context.

TAITAMARIKI • KIDZ KORNA

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

On the Sunday after Easter, St Mark's Somerfield Methodist Church, Christchurch held a children's service focussing on doubting Thomas and Jesus' resurrection.

The apostle Thomas said he could not believe that Jesus had come back from the dead until he had seen and touched his wounds.

Linda Cowan, a lay preacher, led the service and the children participated in activities based on the story of Thomas and the hope we receive from the resurrection. They included planting bulbs as a symbol of new life, making a cross of flowers, doing pavement art on the theme, "He is risen", presenting a short play and learning a new hymn.

St Mark's Somerfield, received a grant from Let the Children Live to hold a series of services led by Linda. The number of children attending the services has grown over the past year.



Children from St Mark's doing pavement art with chalk.

For your bookshelf

The Beginner's Bible Activity Book

Compiled and Published by Zondervan Publishing

This is a great interactive activity book to keep young children busy during the winter months. It is full of mazes, word and connect-the-dots puzzles, matching games and much more.

As well as providing fun it also teaches and helps bring familiar stories and characters to life.



Bible Quiz

Can you answer these questions?

- 1) Which apostle wanted to see the nail prints in Jesus' hands?
- 2) Which apostle denied knowing Jesus three times?
- 3) How many pieces of silver did Judas receive for betraying Jesus?
- 4) How many people were crucified with Jesus?
- 5) Who found the tomb empty on Easter Sunday morning?
- 6) Who did Jesus ask to look after his mother?

Answers
1. Thomas 2. Peter 3. 30 4. 2 other thieves
5. Mary Magdalene 6. John

What are the kids in your church up to?

Kidz Korna wants to hear from you so we can share your stories. Send stories and photos of your activities to Doreen Lennox at dlennox02@gmail.com



Life-giving Support for Ukrainian Refugees

In April, International Programmes Coordinator for Christian World Service, Rob Wayne, visited Poland to meet with local partner the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). He was able to monitor the use of New Zealand government funding and meet with recent refugees.

The relative safety of Poland contrasted sharply with the war that is waging in neighbouring Ukraine. LWF is providing practical support to the refugees and helping them deal with some of the psychological challenges they are facing.

CWS is grateful to the many people who have given more than \$209,000 in response to its appeal for Ukraine, launched 16 months ago. CWS also received \$135,754 from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade to assist refugees. CWS made an initial grant of \$50,000 to the ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) Ukraine Appeal but most funds have been directed to LWF Poland. In the first stage, LWF assisted over 2,600 people with three monthly cash transfers to eligible families, to provide safe spaces and psychosocial support for women and children and help people with disabilities.

"The programme was well organised to meet the needs of the people and has adapted as the needs changed," reports Rob.

Poland has provided shelter for more Ukrainian refugees than any other country since the current round of fighting started in February 2022. More than 1.6 million people have registered with the United Nations Refugee agency (UNHCR) in Poland and by mid-May 8.2 million were spread across Europe. Most are mothers and children or older people.

In Warsaw, Rob met with LWF's local Polish partner assisting people living with disabilities. As well as providing physiotherapy, occupational therapy and guidance on parenthood and sexuality, the partner was introducing some Ukrainians to extreme sports, like parachute-jumping and deep-diving to encourage them to overcome obstacles. Funding from CWS provided ten people with wheelchairs.

LWF runs programmes for refugees in six

centres: Gdansk, Wroclaw, Ostróda, Zgierz, Bytom Miechowice and Bielsko-Biata, 75 percent of staff are Ukrainians.

Yulia who runs the centre in Wroclaw told Rob, "We like to show refugees that life has not ended. When you feel happier you can help other people." Women like Maria (see story) have found this very true.

Mothers say the child spaces are invaluable. They can safely leave their young children for up to three hours while they attend job interviews or other appointments. The children enjoy the chance to play and make things. In recent months LWF has moved to working with teenagers and is setting up local clubs and sports programmes for community-based support.

In Poland the demand for psychological services has increased, especially from single mothers. The incidence of depression grows as people struggle to cope with family and friends back home and the needs of their children.

"People left the war and their problems behind in Ukraine. They were running on adrenalin at the beginning and did not want to talk about the war. It was only after half a year or more that they became aware of what has happened to them," says Tetyana, a Ukrainian psychologist working with LWF. She estimates 17 percent of the refugees will need trauma and PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) counselling support.

Refugees can access the healthcare system and other social services in Poland. Some receive pension payments from Ukraine but not enough to meet their daily needs in Poland. Ukrainian mothers with older children have found work and some are beginning to think about staying. Young mothers and older people find it harder to manage the rising costs. Children can attend Polish schools but because this education will not count if they return to Ukraine, many prefer to study online through the courses broadcasted by the Ukrainian government.

CWS encourages people to pray for all those people displaced by war.

Operation Refugee on June 20 and Refugee Sunday on June 25 are two opportunities for people to show their support for refugees. More information is available at www.cws.org.nz.



After fleeing her home in Ukraine, Maria pictured here with Yulia, has found friendship and support at the LWF Centre in Wroclaw. Photo credit: Rob Wayne.

One Refugee Story

When the daily bombing became too much for Maria last year, she left her town near Zaporizhzhia to join her son in Poland. The large city in the southeast is home to Europe's largest nuclear power plant and under Russian occupation.

Maria welcomed the opportunity to talk about the community and support she receives in Wroclaw at the LWF Centre. She found a part-time job teaching Ukrainian literature and languages, working with a local NGO.

She spoke to Rob after attending a Polish language class. If she can improve her Polish, there is a possibility of a job at a local school. Although Polish and Ukrainian use different writing scripts, 70 percent of their words are the same.

Maria says older refugees find it harder to get a job because employers 'only want young and beautiful staff'. She needs work as her Ukrainian pension is not enough to meet her expenses in Poland or assist people back home. With some of her pay, she has bought Ukrainian schoolbooks for her teaching and sent easter gifts to soldiers.

When she talks about her literature and singing group, her eyes light up. In this group she has made many new friends. Rob was impressed by the way the women celebrated one member's birthday. The women organised a party where everyone shared stories and poems. The women contributed enough to pay for one ticket so the newly turned 70-year-old could enjoy a local ballet.

LWF runs a number of community groups for older women involving activities such as knitting and embroidery. Maria says the group has helped her a lot and she wants to keep the programme going.



FOOD FOR LIFE



SHELTER CHALLENGE



WINTER WALK

20 JUNE
World Refugee Day

**A Christian World Service
campaign**

STAND WITH REFUGEES



[http:// Operationrefugee.nz](http://Operationrefugee.nz)



CINEMA

***Boy from Heaven* probes the place of religion and power in the modern world. Director Tarik Saleh, Swedish-born with Egyptian grandparents, gifts viewers with a political and religious thriller. The boy is Adam, superbly played by Palestinian actor Tawfeek Barhom. A teenage diet of Egyptian films helped him capture the accents of an Egyptian fisherman's son who wins a scholarship to Cairo's Al-Azhar University.**

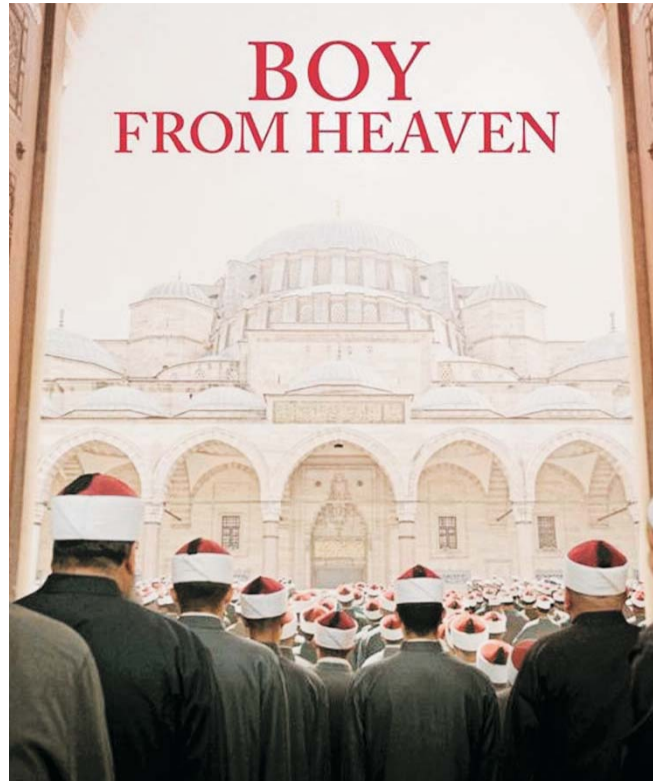
For the boy the scholarship is heaven. Education offers boys from rural Egypt a path out of poverty. Education at Al-Azhar occurs in an internationally recognised centre of Islamic learning. Early scenes include Adam caressing the books shelved in one of Egypt's finest libraries. Housed in three-tiered bunks, Adam and his fellow students learn Islamic calligraphy. Together they sit on stone floors to hear world-recognised faculty lectures on Islamic purity codes and Islamic history and compete against each other in adhan (daily prayer) competitions.

Yet places of heavenly purity house human power. The death of the Grand Imam requires an election from among the faculty. Each lecturer offers differing visions of Islam's place in the modern world. Jihadists argue that human force is needed to hasten heavenly purity.

Centrists argue for co-existence between mosque and state to avoid civil war.

Outside Al-Azhar, state security works to manipulate elections in this ancient place of learning. The boy trained to fish, not to spy, finds himself flopping like a manipulated prawn in nets of religious and political intrigue. Dawn devotions become forums for recruitment. Lofty minarets provide tombs for fear, not havens of prayer. The superbly crafted plot was a deserved winner of Best Screen Play at the Cannes Film Festival 2022.

Interviewed at Cannes, director Tarik Saleh spoke of the influence of Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose*, a historical murder mystery set in an Italian monastery. Tarik Saleh could have spoken of other historical influences, including Augustine's *City of God*.



Augustine contemplated divine power in response to the fall of Rome. He worked with a vision of two cities. Worldly power exists in the city of Rome, divine power in the New Jerusalem. Since Christ has acted to redeem earthly cities, we live in times slowly giving way to the eternal city. The different approaches at work inside Al-Azhar are contemporary

Review by Rev Dr Steve Taylor

wrestling with Augustine's historical separation between two cities.

Inside Al-Azhar, the most intriguing approach comes from Sheik Negm, played by Markram Khoury. Blind yet intellectually brilliant, the Sheik offers himself as a scapegoat. Slowly Egyptian security realises that in their hurry to arrest the blind Sheik, they have become entangled in a long game. The Sheik's act of sacrifice will require a public trial that risks exposing political interference. Negm provides an approach to human power reminiscent of the Apostle Paul's use of Christ as a fool, acting in ways that seem absurd so that those they serve might become wise in Christ (1 Corinthians 4:10). This results in an enthralling

final plot twist as boy and lecturer, both imprisoned, apply religious history to the saving of life in the modern world.

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

ON PAPER

We, The Oppressors:

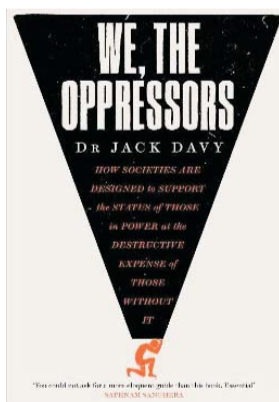
How societies are designed to support the status of those in power at the destructive expense of those without it.

Author: Dr Jack Davy.

Publisher: Quercus, London 2022. 333pp.

Reviewer: Lyn Heine

Dr Jack Davy has written this book out of his extensive study of trying to understand oppression - the processes by which one set of people dominates and controls others for their own benefit. His expertise is in the European colonisation of the Americas which, as he describes, "took the form of a rolling genocide enacted by many tens of thousands of people, very few of whom thought of themselves as bad people, pursued over generations and stretching far beyond famous military encounters like the Battle of the Greasy Grass (known to its losers as the Little Big Horn)."



It is a book that can throw you into despair. Its descriptions and details of institutions and agencies and actions far beyond any one individual's control or influence are more than enough to make you weep and wonder how on earth anything can be done to challenge or change things for the future. He writes and speaks of the damaging legacies given to whole continents, countries and peoples that we see around us today. He tells of ecological oppression, economic oppression and educational oppression. He challenges our assumptions that 'we' are not oppressors or engaged in oppressive actions and systems. He challenges us to be self-aware and to not look away so that we can learn how we might take steps to reduce the harmful impact that oppression has on others.

Although this book concentrates on

northern hemisphere actions and encounters, it throws light on our Aotearoa New Zealand context. It counters the arguments that what was done by our forebears leaves us free of any responsibility for the consequences; the thinking that says others' pain and hurt is not our responsibility; and our 'head-in-the-sand' unwillingness to understand and engage with the effects of the past and the systems with inherent oppression that arose from these.

The note of hope with which this book concludes is that we do have it within us to be aware and understand how our world has been shaped and learn to question the justice of the objective oppression of systems, cultures and societies

imposed upon us by decree. It seems to me that Te Taha Maori could educate us mightily on this in our national context.

Dr Jack Davy's closing sentence is: "Don't look away. Don't say it is none of your business or not your problem. It is, and it always has been. Don't look away."

I think this is a book of its time. It makes reference to pandemic management practices, it fills out fragmented stories of colonising practices through history and geography, and, while challenging, still manages to encourage a sense of hope if like Dr Suess' concluding words in *The Lorax* " 'But now,' says the Once-ler, 'Now that you're here, the word of the Lorax seems perfectly clear, unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, nothing is going to get better. It's not.' " Let us care.

Matariki Around the World: a Cluster of Stars, a Cluster of Stories

Authors: Rangi Mātāmua and Miriama Kamo, with illustrations by Isobel Joy Te Aho-White.

Publisher: Scholastic New Zealand, Auckland, 2022. 80 pages. \$28.

Reviewer: Garth Cant.

Matariki has become part of our nation and our churches in exciting new ways.

As we prepare to celebrate Matariki, this year on July 14, there are many good resources. One of the most flexible, exciting and practical has been crafted by Rangi Mātāmua, Miriama Kamo and Isobel Joy Te Aho-White. They are a great combination. Rangi is Tuhoe: descended from tohunga kōkōrangi

(Māori astronomers), a professor of Mātauranga Māori who has promoted Matariki as a day of national celebration. Miriama is Ngāi Tahu from Rāpaki, a seedbed of South Island Methodism and an empathetic communicator, often on our television screens.

Isobel Joy is a creative illustrator whose ancestry combines Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa, Scandinavia and the Pacific, and whose books delight a generation of pre-schoolers, children and parents. Together they have crafted a magnificent volume.

The title is an overview of the book. The cluster of stars is central and has given birth to a multiplicity of stories around the world. This book will engage the full spectrum of people in our congregations, from children to

teenagers, to busy Mums and Dads, to golden oldies. Matariki is grounded in Aotearoa. Ranginui and Papatūānuku are the parents and they have a family rich in compassion, turbulence and mischief. The first half of the book tells our stories. As we read and look at the visuals, our understanding of the seasons, the movement of the stars and the matauranga quietly grows.

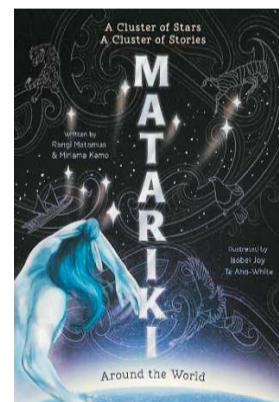
But we share the cluster of stars with other peoples. The second half of the book tells their stories: stories from the Pacific, the Americas, from Australia, Asia and Europe.

There are rich stories and intriguing connections that may

resonate with some in your congregation. Two examples: in Scandinavia, Freya travels across the sky in her chariot. The cluster of stars were likened by the Viking navigator to chicks surrounding Freya, the mother hen. The Viking navigators read the stars to find places as far afield as Iceland, Greenland, North Africa, the Mediterranean Sea and the Middle East.

Makali'i is the name for the cluster in Hawai'i. The stars are the marker for four months of celebration: feasts, games and competitions. One of the local competitions has become a world-wide contest: surfing is now a global sport.

This is a great resource widely available in public libraries. And it is great value for personal purchase.





A busy time at Kei Muri Māpara!

In the six months since Katherine Doig and Jennie Hood took over the role following the retirement of long-term Methodist archivist, Jo Smith, they have been working to introduce archival best practice to the physical management of Kei Muri Māpara's 1.5km of original records. Katherine shares what they have been doing.

We have reorganised the layout of the repository, introducing clear signage, and have reshelfed the collections in a logical order - taking into account the special storage requirements of different media (e.g. moving fragile objects and glass plate negatives from mobile to static shelving).

Scannable container labels have been added to the 11,000 boxes of archives in the collection, and scannable shelf labels to the repository's 2072 shelves, creating an electronic location database to facilitate the speedy retrieval of items and ensure the safe tracking of archives in use by researchers.

Another important project, now completed, has been to identify and reshelve all the uncatalogued material



Katherine Doig adds scannable labels to records in the 1.5 kilometres of shelving housing archives at Kei Muri Māpara.

in the repository. We now have a basic box list of the material so we can prioritise the cataloguing backlog, and find the material in the interim, prior to its deeper description.

On the preservation front, we have conducted extensive shelf surveys to identify any immediate preservation concerns (e.g. mould, vinegar syndrome, naked volumes, over-stuffed boxes, open or damaged containers), and to calculate the remaining storage space left in the repository. This work will



inform decisions over the amount and nature of the material we can accept into the collection in the future.

We have also introduced new archival handling guidelines for researchers and Kei Muri Māpara's volunteer team, and have ensured that appropriate preservation techniques are employed when processing new accessions of material. We have also commenced close monitoring of the building's state of the art climate control system and engaged local company Christchurch

Pest Control to implement a pest control regime which includes traps in the repository and regular fumigation - to ensure that no nasty creatures can eat the precious taonga in the collections!

Thanks to the generosity of the Canterbury Museum who needed to dispose of surplus equipment prior to their recent move, we have acquired new disaster salvage equipment for the archives. We are now better prepared to act swiftly to ensure the safety of the physical holdings should an emergency strike. The Teece Museum, part of the University of Canterbury, has also kindly donated a light table which will be invaluable when we commence digitisation of Kei Muri Māpara's quite incredible glass plate negative collection. We look forward to sharing news of this in a future edition.

In addition to supporting the wider Connexion with their requests for archived information, we are available to support the general public with their historical research enquiries, online or in person (by prior appointment only). Contact details and comprehensive information about holdings and services can be found on the Methodist Archives website: www.methodist.org.nz/whakapapa/archives/

Unsung Methodists

Rev Donald Phillipps

God Save

The coronation celebrations certainly captured the attention of the media in Aotearoa. The fact that newspaper and television reports are quick to inform us of the shortcomings of various members of the royal family made the extent of their coverage somewhat artificial in this writer's judgment.

However, there is no doubt that for millions in the UK and around the world there is still a mystique about royalty that captures heart and mind.

The occasion brought back memories - I was in the crowd in Parliament Square in London 70 years ago, sitting in the Commonwealth Stand. And it drizzled then, too! In 2023 we became, if we chose, part of the audience in Westminster Abbey. I wonder how many stayed tuned in for the whole service on this side of the world. And how many responded to the suggestion that we join in when the crowning moment came and said those words: "God save the King!"

An ancient phrase, coming straight out of the Hebrew scriptures, as far as the Coronation Service is concerned. That word 'save' has such a variety of meanings. Probably the most apt is the idea that the monarch should enjoy a long life, kept safe by God. Not just for months or a few years but forever. "May the King live forever!" We would not really wish that on anyone nowadays, surely. And

yet the idea of lengthened life is still at the heart of medical science. Recently we heard news of research that is based on the idea that the ageing process can be refined/improved to the point where we live to be 130. Is that what being 'saved' is going to mean?

This month's offering is about a quite different understanding of that word; one that is even more relevant to our present situation. The cost of living is likely going to be a major factor in the way we make our democratic choice of a candidate at the coming elections. Too many people are living beyond their means - and they can hardly be blamed for their predicament. Some have decided to adopt the risky expedient of drawing on their savings. Money put aside for retirement or for buying a house sometime in the future is being used simply to live from week-to-week. This predicament draws attention to the role that banks in general play in our lives and the life of our country. Savings banks were established in Auckland and Wellington in the 1840s, and Methodist ministers contributed to their operation from the beginning.

An early Auckland Methodist played a significant role in the establishment of the country's banking system. That man was Thomas Russell "arguably the outstanding commercial figure in 19th century New Zealand" as his entry in the



Thomas Russell

New Zealand Dictionary of Biography states. First employed in a legal office, Russell was from his earliest years involved in Auckland Methodism. Walter Lawry, himself a man of considerable business acumen, took him under his wing when Russell was in his mid-teens. Much of the Wesleyan Mission's legal work was

put his way and he managed the Wesleyan funds with such prudence that he "soon amassed a considerable sum of money." Lawry encouraged Auckland Wesleyan leaders to give their business to him and these links were further strengthened when Russell married Lawry's niece, Emeline Vercoe.

Russell's legal practice had much more to do with conveyancing than consultation - he was businessman first and lawyer second. It was largely on his initiative that the New Zealand Insurance Company was formed and it is said that more than anyone else he was responsible for the founding of the Bank of New Zealand. At first there was no suggestion that he was anything other than a man of "good practice in good circumstances." Long before he was 40, he was regarded as the leader of the Auckland business community. Increasingly he became involved in politics and was a cabinet minister by 1863 but at the same time his relationship with Governor Grey started to break

down. When the site of the capital moved to Wellington, Russell dropped out of formal politics.

As Russell dropped out of politics, he increasingly became involved in an issue that has dominated relationships in Aotearoa for two centuries - land. Typical of so many of his cast of mind, Russell thought of land as a commodity. It was something to be obtained and developed and sold - something that would prove profitable for the investor. Russell the capitalist had the ability to organize what we now call infrastructure. But the other side was more concerned with personal advantage. He engaged in land development schemes on a grand scale and was not always successful. It is hard to imagine that his involvement was in line with the thinking of the average Methodist of his time.

His involvement with Methodist affairs dwindled as he became totally involved in business and political affairs. He and his family migrated to England in 1874 but he continued his involvement in land development (speculation), among other things, in this country. As the 1880s depression deepened, his personal circumstances changed and his reputation was called into question. Such an attitude had been long in the making, and it had taken a long time to forget. He died in relatively comfortable circumstances in Surrey in 1904 and this former Methodist lay preacher no longer warranted an obituary in the church newspaper.

Thomas Russell 1830 - 1904



E LE MAVAE LE AGAGA FIAFIA ONA O LE ALOFA MA LE FA'AMAONI O LE ATUA

Fa'atalofa atu i matua o le Sinoti, Susuga i Tausi Itu malo, le paia o le aufaigaluega, susuga i ta'ita'i, fa'apea le mamalu o le tatou Sinoti. E maualuga pea le viiga ma le agaga fa'afetai i le Atua ona o lana tausiga ma lana ta'ita'iga alofa lea ua tatou aulia mai ai lenei vaitau o le tausaga.

E le fesiligia le louloua o le tau mai le tele o masina ua mavae, ae fa'afetai i le alofa o le Atua, ua leai se tasi o le tatou Sinoti o afaina ai le soifua. E ui lava ina afea nisi o tatou aulotu ma aiga i le malaga a le maliu ma le oti, ae fa'afetai ua amia le to'atasi ae o lo'o manuia pea le

to'atele. Mo lo outou silafia, o lena ua toe fa'aauu atu nisi o ata o le fa'auuga o le fetalaiga ia Pouniu Levao ma le faletua ia Vanessa e ave ma Ta'ita'i o le tatou Ekalesia i Tokoroa. Talu ai ona o le tele o ata na fa'ao'o mai ona o le agaga fiafia ma le agaga fa'agae'etia o le tatou Sinoti, ona o Alo ma Fanau sa tautua mai i le tele o tausaga, ae o lea ua fa'apaleina nei i laua e ave ma Ta'ita'i o le galuega i Tokoroa, ua manatu ai le ofisa, e lelei ona outou silasila i nei ata, aua o se fa'ailoga lea o le AGAGA FIAFIA o tagata o le tatou Sinoti ona o lea ua fa'aalia ALOFA ma le FA'AMAONI o le Atua i le tatou Sinoti Samoa.

Ae ua ave fo'i o se avanoa e momoli atu ai le agaga fa'afetai tele i le Tausi Itu Malo ia Tovia Aumua ma le

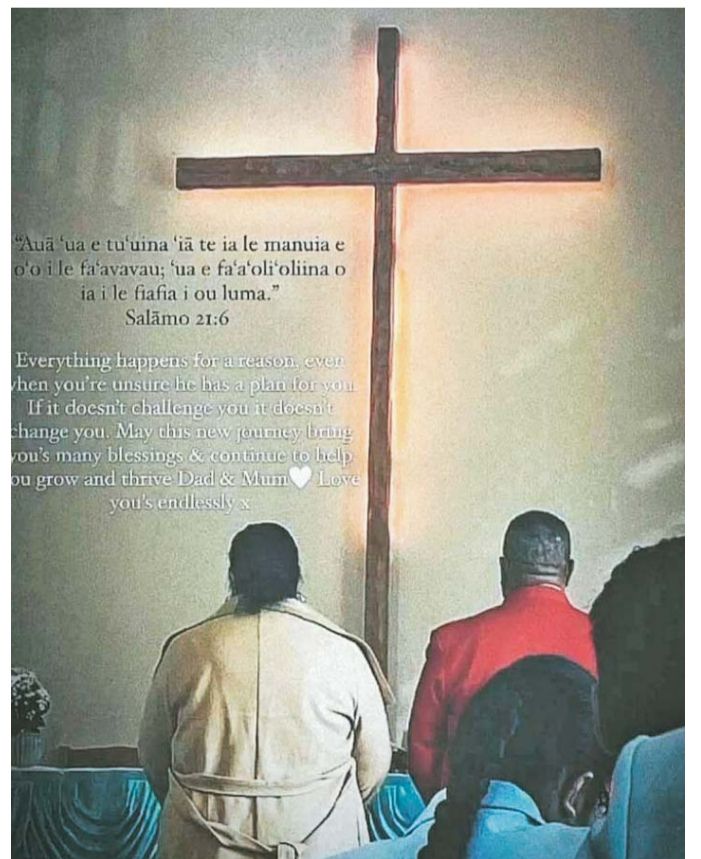
paia o le Itu Malo Malosi i Manukau ona o tapenaga uma sa feagai ai aua le fa'au'u ina o alo ma fanau o le tatou Sinoti, ua tula'i mai e ave ma Ta'ita'i mo le lumana'i.

Fai mai upu o le Salamo e 115:1

"Aua ne'i ia te i matou, le Ali'i e, aua nei ia te i matou, ia tu'uina atu le viiga i lou suafa, ona o lou alofa ma lou fa'amaoni"

MAY GOD'S BLESSING BE UPON YOU POUNIU LEVAO AND VANESSA.

Saunia e Fatuatia Tufuga



"Aua'ua e tu'uina 'ia te ia le manuia e o'o i le fa'avavau; 'ua e fa'a'oli'oliina o ia i le fiafia i ou luma."
Salamo 21:6
Everything happens for a reason, even when you're unsure he has a plan for you. If it doesn't challenge you it doesn't change you. May this new journey bring you's many blessings & continue to help you grow and thrive Dad & Mum Love you's endlessly x





Nai Lalakai

NAI LALAKAI MAI NA WASEWASE KO VITI KEI ROTUMA E NIUSILADI

Na Veivakabulai ni Gone Turaga ko Jisu Karisito keina Veivakaugeti ni Yalotabu ena rawa kina na veisau.

The Salvation of Jesus Christ with the Grace of the Holy Spirit to make Changes.



Traditional welcome to the Wasewase Synod Superintendent on his first visit to Pitt St Church.

E sotava na gone Turaga ko Jisu Karisito, edua na veisau mai na ulunivanua, mai na veivakabulai keina vunautaka na Matanitu Vakalomagi. Sa tekivu na nona vakavakarau me gole yani ki Jerusalemi. Me vakarau curuma, nai lesilesi kina nona veitalai.

Au vakabauta oqo na veisau e vinakata na Kalou, meda lako curuma ia ena yacai Jisu Karisito, ena nona veivuke keina veituberi na Yalotabu. E vinakata na Kalou meda tubu cake vakayalo, oqori na cakacaka ni veivakalotutaki, ni veituberi ena wili volatabu, masumasu keina veitokani vakalotu.

Eda sarava kina edua na lakolako vou, erau tiko na gone Turaga ko Jisu Karisito keina Yalotabu dau cakacaka. E sega baleta ni sa papitaiso, ia ena noda tubu vakayalo ena nona wilika na Vosa ni Kalou ka tugana e lomada me tei ka ka'dre. Oqo sa ka bibi ena bula Lotu Vakarisito ena noda via kila nai tukutuku meda cega ka wilika tiko tukutuku vou ka bula. (II Koronica 5:17). "Ia, kevaka sa tu vata kei Karisito edua na tamata sa qai buli vou, sa lako tani na veika makawa, sa yaco me ka vou na kecega"

Na bula Vakayalo e solia na vei keda na kaukauwa ni veibuli ni Kalou keina noda bula. Ni rau sota vakayalo vaka-Kalou e lomada, e tubu ni duabau Vakalou. Eda sa tekivu meda bulataka na lagilagi keina serau savasava keina dina ni Kalou bula. Baleta na veisau edau kauta na yalomatua keina railesu titobu.

Na sucu mai nei Karisito, ena sa tadu mai vakatamata ki vuravura na Kalou bula,



Mother's Day Service drama by the Fijian Women of Pitt St Church, Central Auckland.

sa mai vakayacora na nona cakacaka keina veivunau eso. Na veitalanoa mai na ulunivanua sa caka kina na veitataunaki, ki nai golegole ki Jerusalemi me laki vakayacora na loma ni veitalai ni Kalou. E sega ni tu vakasuka se kaya ena sega ni rawata. Ia sa gole ga yani, ena vakarorogo keina nona veivakarautaki na Yalo ni Kalou.

Na veisau e mai vakaraitaka tiko na gone Turaga, eda sarava kina na lagilagi ni Kalou, ena noda bula yadudua. Baleta ni da sa doudou, meda boletaka nida veisau ena vuku ni yaca nei Jisu Karisito. Sa yali yani na rere kena veilecayaki, baleta ni veiliutaki keda edua nai vakarau meda tu doudou ka valataka na dina keina dodonu, bucina na galala, me vakakotora edua na noda nuinui dei ka dina ena vei Siga ni mataka.

Na veiwekani, sa gauna ni veisau, vata kei Kasirito. Na cava tale eda sa waraka tiko. Na nomuni tavi mo vakadinadinataka na nona veivakabulai baleta nai valavala ca. Roma 10:9 - Na nomu vakatusa ena gusumu ka vakadinata ena vu ni lomanu taucoko ni



Digital Literacy Project. Providing laptops and training to Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders for preparation and delivery to the congregation, in-person or online.

sa luve ni Kalou ko Jisu Karisito, ka mate ka tucake tale. Oqori sa noda vakaidinadina ka meda vakatusa, na noda caka cala.

Au sa na sureti keda meda raica lesu, ena vakatutusa, ka vakadinata ni da sa tamata valavalaca. Oqori, ena qai vakavurea na vakabauta keina dina, na Yalo doudou, ni sa bulia e lomada, ko Jisu Karisito, me vakakila kina na galala keina veisau e rawa ni vakayacora ko koya. Eda sota vata keina nona veisureti, veisusu keina tara cake na loma ni Kalou vei keda. Oqo sa'ka na veitikina e cavuti koto Paula ena

Wase 4 ni Roma.
Sa lauvako oti na Turaga, baleta keda. Sa vo ga o keda, meda soli keda taucoka, yaloda, yagoda keina lomada vei Karisito. Baleta ena va na mataqali bula eda kilai kina - o iko vei ira na lewe levu, o iko vei ira na wekamu, o iko vei watimu, o iko vei iko ga. E duidui kena na kedai yaloyalo eda vakaraitaka, ia e mata ni Kalou e duabaga. E sega ni dua na ka e vunitaki. "Sa gauna ni Veisau ena Ligai Jisu"
"Me ceguva ka vakalougata na veivoso keina tikina eda sa rogoa ni kua"

Fakamatala: Uike Famili 2023 - Kaveinga: Fāмили ke Fe'ofa'ofani
Koe ngaahi 'ata eni mei he ngaue 'o e 'Api Siasi 'o Moia Mei He 'Eiki Ellerslie

Fai 'e Henry Hoglund

Sapate Fakamē - Moia-Mei-He-'Eiki, 2023 (White Sunday)



1



2



3



4

Photo 1

Ko e Tangata'eiki Faifekau, Rev. Viliami Finau, Setuata Lahi, Tikitoni Lolo, Pule Lautohi Faka-Sapate, Solomone Mahe, Hoa e Faifekau Malolo, Kalolaine Fotofili, mo e Lautohi Fakasapate.

Rev Viliami Finau (Presbyter), Tikitoni Lolo (Head Steward), Solomone Mahe (Sunday School Ministry Leader) Kalolaine Fotofili (Wife of Retired and Late Minister, Rev Sione Fotofili) and the Sunday School Teachers and Children.

Photo 2

Sapate Fa'e - Moia Mei He 'Eiki 2023

Ko e Tangata'eiki Faifekau, Rev. Viliami Finau, Setuata Malōlō, 'Uha'one Metuisela, Setuata Lahi, Tikitoni Lolo, pehe ki he Kau Fine'eiki mo e Kakai Fefine mei he 'api ko Moia-Mei-He-'Eiki, Ellerslie.

Rev Viliami Finau (Presbyter), Retired Head Steward of Vahefonua Tonga o Aotearoa, 'Uha'one Metuisela, Head Steward, Tikitoni Lolo, the Elderly Mothers and Women's Ministry of Moia-Mei-He-'Eiki Church, Ellerslie, Auckland.

Photo 3

Ko e 'ata eni 'o e ngaahi fofonga'i fa'ē:

'I mu'a: Milika Metuisela, Melape Fisi'ihoi, 'Elenoa Havea, Kalolaine Fotofili, Sinia Malua.

'Olunga: Salome Lever Change Vuna, Luhama Fale, Saloni 'Otukolo, Sisilia Mahe.

A quick snapshot of a few of the Mothers:

Front: Milika Metuisela, Melape Fisi'ihoi, 'Elenoa Havea, Kalolaine Fotofili, Sinia Malua.

Top: Salome Lever Change Vuna, Luhama Fale, Saloni 'Otukolo, Sisilia Mahe.

Photo 4

Ko e Kalasi 3 eni, pea ko 'enau lesoni ko e talanoa ko ia kia Kuini 'Eseta. Our Class 3 children performing their play - "The Story of Queen Esther".



Ta'u 50 e kamata e lotu Tonga 'i he falelotu Wesley, Uelingatongi.

Talateu 'e Felonitesi Manukia

'E hoko he mahina ni e ta'u 50 e kamata e lotu Tonga 'i he falelotu Wesley 'i lotu Uelingatongi, pea 'oku 'amanaki ke fakahoko ha re-union 'a kinautolu na'a nau kau ki he kamata.

Na'e kamata e lotu Tonga 'i Siune, 1973, pea kuo 'i ai foki e tokolahi 'o kinautolu kuo nau pekia.

Ko e konga eni 'o e manatu melie 'a Faifekau Tevita



Tongan Father's Day last month at Wesley Parish.
Credit: Nunia Mone Nguamu.

Finau ki he kamata 'a e lotu 'i Wesley, Uelingatongi, 'i he tohi ko e Raupo Chapel to Multi-racial Community 'a e peulisi Wesley. Ko e konga 'uluaki eni 'oku tuku atu.

'E toki faka-kakato atu e konga hono ua he Pukolea 'o Siulai, he 'oku mahu'inga ke ma'u kakato 'a e hisitolia 'o e siasi. 'Oku faka-Pilitānia ka 'e toki liliu kakato atu fakataha mo e konga ua 'o e tohi 'a e faifekau.

This month marks the 50th anniversary of the Tongan Methodist congregation in Wellington holding services at Wesley Parish, Taranaki St, Wellington.

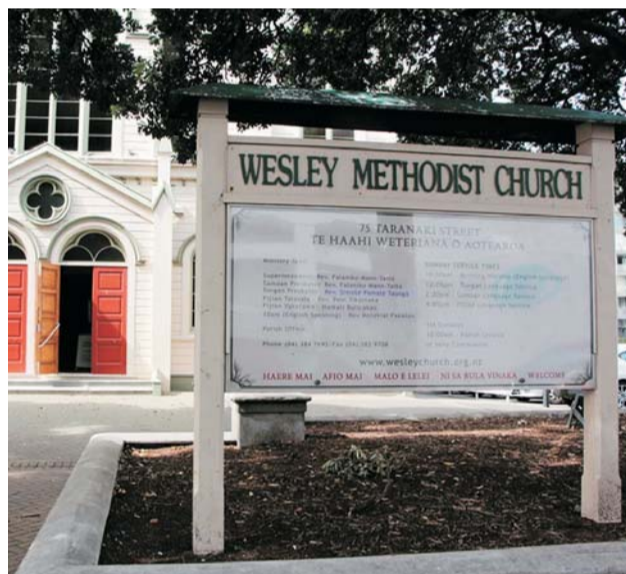
The Tongan language services started in June, 1973, by a group of families who had moved to the Wellington region.

This is Part 1 of a two-part series in English marking the milestone. Written by Rev Tevita Finau in 2005 for Wesley Parish's book Raupo Chapel to Multi-racial Community, courtesy of Wellington Methodist Parish minister and Lower North Island synod superintendent Rev Nicola Grundy.

A Tongan translation will also be available in the July issue of *Touchstone*.



Wesley Parish's Tongan brass band Taulanga Ū. Credit: Halaifonua Finau.



Wesley Parish Church building. Credit: Wesley Parish.



RAUPO CHAPEL TO MULTI-RACIAL COMMUNITY 1839 TO 2005 - Tongan Congregation - The Early Days

Greetings, Male e lelei, Ni sa hula vinaka, Talofa lava and Kia ora in Christ to all.

Most Tongan individuals and families either visited or started to reside in Wellington in the second half of the 20th century, much later than the Samoans. Early in 1973 a number of Tongans who attended and worshipped at the Sunday English language service in Wesley Church, Taranaki Street, were always invited by Paula and Lolohea Makisi for meals in their home (149 Owen Street, Newtown).

While waiting for Lolohea's cooking, it was realized that they could use the time to sing, pray and have fellowship in the Tongan language. This became the routine almost every Sunday. One day I was asked by Paula and Lolohea Makisi if we could worship in Wesley

because there were now too many of us for their lounge, the kitchen and hallways.

I met with the Rev Jack Penman early in June 1973 and asked to use the Chapel for a Tongan language service. He gave me a big smile, with open hands, and said "You were Methodists in Tonga and you are Methodists here. The place is open for you." Since then the parish premises have always been open for us. After our very first Tongan language service in the chapel when I preached, it was decided that the chapel was too small. Our request to use the church was met favourably and we moved to worship in the church at 12.00 noon every Sunday, followed by a cup of tea and further fellowship in the lounge, next to the Drama Christi Studio. Fo'ou To'a was the first Tongan lay preacher to preach in the Tongan language from the Wesley Church pulpit.

Most of the Tongan worshippers were here on temporary visitors' permits — students and others. Paula Makisi was looked upon as the elder and leader of the church while Kelepi Mailau, now living in Trentham, was elected as a pastoral or fellowship steward. Paula Makisi later was elected as the pastoral steward followed by Samiuela Taufa prior to his training and ordination.

The Rev Samiuela Taufa is part of the ministry team with particular responsibility for the Tongan congregation. He also plays a major role in combined services with other Tongan congregations in the district as the only ordained Methodist Tongan presbyter in the Wellington District Synod region. In 1979 Rev Taufa was authorised to administer the Sacraments. In 1996 he was ordained as a local presbyter.

Many of the founding worshippers were from a group of Tongans from the village of Nukunuku. Others were

sponsored by Barry and Tala Cleverley, who were Wesley parishioners. Almost all of us attended both the English and Tongan languages services. To reduce the waiting time between services it was decided that we could start at 11.30am, but still maintain 12.00 noon as the official starting time. The Tongans who were here temporarily were often invited by Wesley palangi families for meals and outings on Sundays.

Later we decided not to have a Tongan service on the first Sunday of the month, to encourage members to attend, participate and receive holy communion in the combined service with other Wesley congregations. Other Tongan fellowships or congregations and other ethnic groups throughout New Zealand have also adopted this practice of having a Combined Service on the first Sunday of the month and no other service later in the day.

Tevita Finau, February 2005.