



A World Free from the Need to Rescue Exploited Children

Rev Siosifa Pole, Co-director Mission Resourcing

Sunday 19 November is World Day for Prevention of Abuse and Violence Against Children. The worldwide phenomenon of violence and abuse against children and young people can include sexual abuse, child trafficking, child marriage, forced labour and sex tourism. In this article Brian Saipe, Child Rescue New Zealand CEO, discusses the work of a charitable organisation making connections with

interdenominational NZ churches and mission organisations to share their vision to end the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children in our lifetime.

The Genesis of Child Rescue New Zealand

In 2001 Tony Kirwan, an expat New Zealander living in Thailand, heard a conversation about a man who had been invited to purchase a child for sex. The conversation had a profound effect on Kirwan, the son of a pastor and committed Christian. He founded Destiny Rescue International, (DRI) an organisation dedicated to rescuing children and to keeping them free from trafficking, sexual exploitation and human slavery.

In 2013 Child Rescue was created to support Destiny Rescue International's work. Originally named Destiny Rescue New Zealand, its Trustees changed the name to Child Rescue to avoid any confusion with Destiny Church. "There has never been any relationship between the two," Brian explains.

Funded entirely by donations, Child Rescue supports the work of DR frontline staff - rescue agents, border agents and social workers. Since 2011, rescue, reintegration and community care initiatives have helped free more than 13,000 people - in twelve countries across three continents - through DRI's work with government agencies and non-government partners in rescue nations.

In the United States, Australia and New Zealand, staff raise awareness and funds to fuel the international rescue work of DRI. "Together, our speakers, staff, volunteers, church and business partners, and supporters fight tirelessly to raise funds and awareness to bring the world one step closer to our vision to extend freedom and hope, and end the exploitation of children within our lifetime," Brian says.

"God is at the centre of everything we do. We follow the Good Samaritan story principle and make no distinction based on culture, ethnicity or religion." The aim is to work with children up to 18, however support teams can also be involved in rescues for women and children, including girls in the sex industry older than 18.

As well as supporting rescue work in regions known for trafficking and exploiting children, DRI supports personnel and partner organisations it refers to as 'undisclosed' nations - primarily for security reasons. "Some governments are hostile to Christian organisations. Where there are dangers from people being watched, our teams are more effective working under the radar," Brian says.

"Circumstances vary in all cases. There is no one-size-fits-all model for the people we work alongside. In many countries we have a community care model. Every survivor has an individual assessment done by personnel trained in trauma-informed resilience training."

physical, mental and rehabilitative. Case workers involved in the journey may work alongside survivors for years as they provide assistance in finding alternative work and income streams, on the job training and scholarships to study if practical.

Brian says providing formal education is not always a viable option. "Since many of our people come from broken backgrounds, education is not easy. Survivors have a limited range of things that will give them an income." This also contributes to the lure of the sex industry for young women with no education.

The issue of culpability is complex Brian explains, especially in cases where extended family members may be complicit in the selling or trafficking of young people. Knowingly or unknowingly they may offer their children to devious employers and the children are subsequently forced into unscrupulous situations.

Along with poverty and desperation, 'filial piety' is a major contributing factor to the issue of child trafficking. In many cultures familial respect and honour is a deeply embedded value and young people will do anything to provide for their siblings or parents.

The explosion of global online platforms and dark web sites that have enabled paedophilia to flourish, exacerbate the problem and, in some respects, make it harder to detect.

Despite the global scale of the issue and the challenge of keeping ahead of sophisticated criminal online networks, many lives have been saved by the work undertaken by Destiny Rescue International. New legislation and international efforts to bring cases against perpetrators are gaining traction. Collaborations dedicated to exposing and ending online forums, prosecutions and coordinated raids by enforcement and care agencies have had a major impact. "In the Philippines, 159 people were rescued before phony advertised positions resulted in people being sold into domestic servitude."

In Thailand it has been recently estimated that one in five children are at risk of exploitation.

Brian says, "We fight a global issue on a scale that is several hundred thousand times greater than anything that happens in New Zealand. We are a donor-supported organisation providing a way for ordinary Kiwis - including those who have seen shocking exploitation overseas - to do something about it. These kids often have NOTHING. No school, no job, no parental protection - if they have parents - little legal protection and frequently no food."

Brian invites readers to pray for:

- Opportunities for Child Rescue to connect with an audience with open hearts and ears
- God's guidance and help in raising up an army to fight against child exploitation
- Child Rescue and Destiny Rescue teams: their safety, spiritual protection and their work, especially in bringing the gospel to the victims
- Abundant financial provision for Child Rescue and Destiny Rescue
- Many more salvations among those cared for by Destiny Rescue staff
- Partnerships with NZ churches, youth groups and schools, and with Christian churches in project nations where rescued girls can be embraced
- Partnerships with like-minded organisations, local businesses, educators and employers
- Strengthened relationships with local law enforcement, governments, families and village leaders in project nations
- Our rescued girls – that they will not return to the sex trade and that our team can help them find a new job that inspires passion and encourages their God-given talents to flourish and for them to find genuine relationships with Christian friends
- An end to people trafficking and human slavery in all forms
- The protection of children who are vulnerable to abuse and for those who are being abused.



Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa Response to Climate Change Lament, Repent, Assent

Rev. Peter Taylor

The earth's climate is changing – there can be no doubt about it. We may debate about how much is due to human activity but we only have to watch the news about massive raging fires and extreme temperatures, huge downpours of rain followed by heavy flooding, frequent violent hurricanes and severe drought, all happening with either greater

frequency or higher intensity, or both.

As Methodist Christians our understanding of what is going on and our responses will be different from secular humanists.

We believe that it is God who created the universe. We believe we human beings have been made in God's image. The Bible tells us that we have been given a responsibility to be stewards of this creation, which sadly has often led to humanity assuming the right to exploit and abuse it. However Māori remind us that we too are part of creation, not separate from it.

I think our responses should be threefold:

[1] Lament

We have a responsibility to share with the creator what is happening to our planet, crying with many tears over the excessive mess the world is in. Spelling it out with God in prayer is not only an acceptable response but powerful, as our fellow Jews have long known (see for instance Job 3, Psalm 69 or Ecclesiastes 4).

[2] Repent

While lament recognises the problem, repent accepts our responsibility in creating the problem. Admittedly it is the western world, industrialised two hundred years ago, that has been mostly to blame, and I admit I have inherited the benefits of that world. To repent here is not just a personal response but an acknowledgment that humanity, as a whole, is to blame (even if some parts are personally blameless). This is something we can – and must - share with God.

[3] Assent

Assent is to agree to change our mindset, our actions and our attitudes, so that we can begin to repair the damage we have agreed is humanity's fault. This is a prayerful response and as a church we have embarked on a ten-year emphasis on climate justice. It is up to us to work out what this means for each of us.

In this Season of Creation we would do well to Lament, Repent and Assent as Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa, locally, regionally and nationally.



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Māori Audio Bible Launch

On 11 September, a historic partnership was unveiled, marking a momentous milestone in the ongoing revitalisation of te reo Māori and the reach of Te Paipera Tapu (the Māori Bible). Bible Society New Zealand and Te Wānanga Ihorangi have joined forces to create the Māori Audio Bible, a visionary project aimed at recording the complete Māori Bible in audio format.

This partnership was inspired by a shared passion for te reo Māori, uniting Rev Te Karere Scarborough, Tumuaki (Co-Principal) of Te Wānanga Ihorangi, and Steve McRobie, the Relationships Director at Bible Society New Zealand. Beyond collaboration, this partnership embodies unity in Christ and a shared mission to make the Bible available and accessible to all in their heart language. It presents a unique opportunity to increase the accessibility of the Māori Scriptures and encourage interaction with the Word, driving the ongoing revitalisation of te reo Māori and the reach of Te Paipera Tapu.

Given the magnitude of the project, which encompasses all 66 books of the Māori Bible, an incremental approach has been adopted. Rev Te Karere Scarborough envisions a project duration of up to three years, with the anticipated outcome a fully recorded Māori Audio Bible accessible through all major platforms.



Everill Orr Celebrates Opening of New Frampton Building

The Everill Orr Village has been a prominent landmark in the Auckland suburb of Mount Albert for many decades, providing care and accommodation to the elderly. Over recent years the site has been undergoing a staged redevelopment to provide a modern, fit-for-purpose aged-care facility. Recently members of MCNZ joined key personnel involved in the redevelopment to celebrate the completion of the third stage of the five-stage development.

The Frampton Building opened for Care residents at the beginning of August, and the first Independent Living resident moved in at the end of September 2023.

The extensive four level care facility offers 68 Care Units across three levels for assisted living. Amenities include a library, public and private dining areas that can be hired for family functions or special celebrations, activity rooms, a beauty salon, onsite laundry service and a theatre. Landscaping has been designed to enhance the development and enrich the environment. On the top level of the building, eight apartments designed for Independent Living include private balconies offering views across the Waitemata upper harbour and Waitakere Ranges.



Whangaparaoa Parish Book Heaven

Betsy Galloway

Book Heaven Second-hand Bookshop began almost by accident and is now surpassing all expectations, generating excellent income and providing a valuable community service.

In September 2020, shop tenant, Ian Harrison, decided to leave and establish his business elsewhere. He had been running Harrison's Book Heaven but didn't want to move all the books and bookcases out, so he "donated" the shop to us.

We had been told that we might earn about \$36,000.00 per year. This would cover the rent, on which our church relied, and a little extra after expenses. A small group of us met, considered the enormity of the job ahead, and we hesitantly began, totally reorganizing the shelving and floor space in an overhaul of the shop.

Two of our over 80-year-olds spent weeks sorting every book of fiction by the author. Others agreed to do three- or four-hour shifts staffing the shop. It has been important to us to uphold our values. We wanted to reach out to the local community and to be welcoming to all. We help sell the Lions Club calendars and we collect food-donations for our local food bank.

At last count, in January 2023, we stocked over 10,000 books.

To our surprise, in the first nine months, (including Covid-19 breaks) we grossed \$38,000.00. In our second year, again with the Covid restrictions, we grossed \$54,000.00. In the past fiscal year, even with the cyclone flooding, we grossed over \$78,000.00 - well beyond our wildest dreams.

We are aware that other local charities also sell second-hand books. Our customers come to us because they receive quality service and care. When they "return" books, they get an automatic discount on their new purchases. Our volunteers love what they do. It shows.



Wellington Methodist Trust Inspired by The Voyage

Members of the Wellington Methodist Charitable and Educational Endowments Trust were delighted to meet with the incredible young leaders of The Voyage, and their equally amazing youth workers from Wesley Community Action - Fred Ama and Alisa Tatupu.

After a morning of business discussions, over a shared lunch, The Voyage team talked about Ko Au, a co-designed and youth-led wananga that supports the mental wellbeing and provides community connection for young people across Porirua. The trustees were impressed by the impact this programme is having on The Voyage team, as leaders, as well as the young people who take part in it.

For the last two years the Trust has partnered with WCA to support its youth workers. Their commitment to their Porirua community, and their aroha for the young people in their care is inspirational. The trustees resumed afternoon business discussions with renewed heart!



Green Grants Support Solar

Green Grant Pūtea Tiaki Taiao was launched at Conference 2022 as the Methodist Church of New Zealand's grass roots response to global warming. The first funding round saw more than \$155,000 distributed across five applications for four entities.

All the projects involved the installation of solar panels and in two cases the solar panels were supplemented by additional heating sources and efficiencies, including heat pumps, insulation and double glazing.

Feedback has been extremely positive from the four parishes and Wesley Community Action who used funds to achieve improvements to church buildings, a parsonage and the Canons Creek Community Centre.

Laura Black, Lindisfarne Worship and Community Centre secretary, was responsible for a successful application to install solar panels at the Invercargill complex. "Installation of the solar panels is complete and fully operational. The application process all worked well and it was straightforward. We were very happy with the time it took to find out our application was successful and receive the grant. Excellent."

Parishes and MCNZ entities are encouraged to consider projects that address climate change such as solar panels, greywater recycling, insulation, use of renewable energy or new builds incorporating green building initiatives.



Making Hymns More Accessible.

John Thornley hosts a weekly half-hour radio programme from Wesley Broadway, Palmerston North, in partnership with local radio station Manawatu People's Radio. This article looks at two recording projects he has recently produced: 'Fifteen Singable Hymns' and the 'Six Hymns' series.

John says he is at home on the radio. "It's a private conversational sharing time with those at home or others confined in prison or hospital. It doesn't have the gloss of a television screen where looks and dress are a poor substitute for the Word of the Spirit and the words of ordinary people."

The seed that began this project was a local minister who expressed a wish to use more New Zealand hymns in worship but was overwhelmed by the choice available. "Where do I start when Alleluia Aotearoa (AA) has 162 hymns?" he said. John produced Fifteen Singable Hymns from Alleluia Aotearoa and continued through the four hymn collections published by the New Zealand Hymnbook Trust (NZHBT). John was NZHBT Manager from 2003 to 2015.

The current series of programmes started in August and continues until December. "This project is more ambitious than just listing titles," John says. In conjunction with Roy Tankersley, Presbyterian music leader, John selects six songs from each book and introduces each hymn. Currently there are two programmes available in podcasts (the technical term for a radio programme) titled Six Hymns in Alleluia Aotearoa and Six Hymns in Faith Forever Singing (FFS).

The main aim of this project is to encourage greater use of New Zealand hymns in New Zealand church and community.



Building Bridges

Rev Siosifa Pole, Co-director Mission Resourcing

Mission Resourcing administers the Ministries Development Grant fund for the purpose of growing the mission of our church.

The fund enables synods and parishes to connect with their communities and to share with them the good news of the transforming love of Christ. One of those parishes is Levin Uniting Parish which initiated a mission that is seen as building bridges to bring good news to the most vulnerable members of their community. It is inspiring and encouraging to observe the positive impact that this community of faith brought to their community.

Through fervent prayer and visioning, they came up with a strategic plan focused on mission. It was not easy at first, but once they started everything fell into place. Their presbyter, Rev Sandra Williams, shared their journey of exploration and discovery with a passion to be the light of Christ. She writes, "We began to work away quietly in the background building bridges between the various groups within our parish, sharing our vision, improving parish communication, and working to bring people together. Yes, some fell by the wayside but many more got on board and supported our potentially crazy plans."

When they researched and identified the social issues facing many people in their community, they found that most of the elderly people in the community were facing loneliness and isolation. Sandra states, "The most glaring need before us were the issues of isolation and loneliness. Being a small parish with a predominantly elderly congregation, we knew our main target mission group was to be the older members of our society. We formed a plan and then sought funding to put that into action. Thanks to the support of Methodist and Presbytery Central's Mission Resourcing groups, we could commit to a three-year seeding programme."

The size of their parish didn't hinder their vision. They prayed about it, actioned it and the result was positive because people's lives were transformed. Sandra concludes, "We are in awe of what God is doing in our place and very grateful to Methodist Mission Resourcing for the support that has enabled it to happen."



CWS welcomes new National Director

At the end of August Christian World Service welcomed Rev Dr Tim Pratt as its new National Director.

Tim brings many years of governance and management experience to the organisation both in and beyond the church. Most recently, he has served as the Maclaurin Chaplain at the University of Auckland. He says he specialises, "in leading a refresh of service-oriented organisations that has focused on developing their strategies, structures, and finances, so they continue to respond effectively and efficiently amid an everchanging world."

He has worked at several faith-based organisations, both locally and internationally. Originally trained as a pastor at Baptist (Carey) College, he has worked in leadership roles with Boys' Brigade New Zealand (Iconz/BBNZ), The Global Fellowship of

Christian Youth, and The Interchurch Council of Hospital Chaplaincy. He holds a Master of Business Administration with distinction and a Doctor of Philosophy in management.

Tim says he was attracted to the core values of CWS, "centred on actively living our faith through care, support and partnership with both people and planet".



On Preaching

Rev Andrew Doubleday

One of the criticisms of preachers from a number of people I've heard lately is, 'They always/only preach that God loves us'. This is not because these people don't believe in the importance of God's love – for them it seems rather to be a reflection on what they consider the shallowness of the preacher's theology.

I want to plead 'guilty as charged'. It may be that my theology is shallow. It is also my conviction that we leak. A lot. Many of us need to hear that message

repeatedly. Maybe this is not true of the theologically sophisticated or the spiritually mature. For most of us my experience is that it is generally true.

What are the options? The alternatives?

I've usually encountered two.

1. 'Try-harderism', where we're encouraged to do more, to be better, to take the call to share the gospel more seriously. This, usually from the theologically conservative end of the spectrum, can be weariness to the bones.
2. 'Areopagisation', (see Acts 17:21) where we're lectured on the latest progressive theological ideas – intent on improving our lives by making us more theologically literate. This, usually from the theologically liberal end of the spectrum, can be mildly interesting, often tedious, rarely transformative.

In my view, the primary purpose of preaching is pastoral – it is the significant opportunity we have every week to do some serious pastoral work with all our people gathered in the same space. This, in turn, offers the opportunity of being transformational – giving the people the confidence to step out into the fullness of life they are being offered in the following weeks.

Rev Wes Chambers shared with us at a Methodism class at Trinity College around 35 years ago. His position was that a preacher needed to earn the right to be prophetic and to speak on difficult issues. We need to have 'money in the bank' that we can draw on, deposited through our caring and loving of our people. Without it our time in front of the congregation is likely to be short.

My expectation is that when we are loved, and know that we are profoundly and completely loved by the One in whom we live, and move, and have our being, then anything might be possible.



Celebrating the Unconditional Love of Pets

Rev Dr Susan Thompson

This month at Tamahere we've been celebrating the Season of Creation. So far we've enjoyed a special service to welcome spring, an outdoor communion service and a Creation Walk to the local Tamahere Cultural Reserve. The latter gave us a chance to clean up our neighbourhood by picking up rubbish on the way.

However, the outstanding highlight of the Season will be our annual blessing of the animals on St Francis Day. I'm hoping the chapel will be full of humans and the creatures who share their lives bringing

so much comfort and joy, friendship and love. Last year's blessing service was an exuberant celebration and we're looking forward to doing it again.

One of the hardest things about going into aged residential care is having to give up a beloved pet. Some retirement villages like Tamahere allow residents to bring their pets with them. Having a cat, dog or other companion animal with them helps people to settle in and feel as if they're at home. It also adds life to the village.

However, keeping pets isn't always possible at other levels of care. Some of our rest home residents come to us having had to rehome pets they've had for many years and this can be just as hard as leaving their homes. If they've been living by themselves, their cat or dog may be their closest companion and they grieve their loss.

Over the last few weeks I've been taking our dog Felix into work. He's a small ten-year old poodle who is friendly and gentle and he's been a big hit with residents and staff. We go around the different units and he's excited to meet everyone. It's a joy to see dementia residents lighting up when they see him and reaching out for a cuddle.

When residents are feeling sad, agitated, lost or confused, the touch of an animal can restore joy, bring a sense of calm and evoke happy memories. One of the great things about pets is that they don't care whether people are old, forgetful or wobbly on their feet. As long as they're shown love, they accept people as they are and the love they offer is unconditional. Felix gives and receives so much love when he goes to Tamahere that he comes home thoroughly exhausted which as every dog owner knows is always a good thing!

The benefits of having dogs and cats visiting or living in a rest home extend beyond residents to staff. It's been shown that animals in the workplace have a positive impact on staff morale. They create opportunities for conversation and connection, cheer people up and help to make the work environment a friendlier place to be.

Felix is fast becoming a vital part of the Tamahere family. Hopefully he'll be joined by other people's pets on St Francis Day when we give thanks to God for all the animals who share our world and bring us so many gifts.



Reconciliation requires acknowledging and respecting each other's world views

Rev Keita Hotere

On 1 September the historical signing of Te Ruruku Pūtakerongo Taranaki Maunga Collective redress deed between Crown and ngā iwi o Taranaki was held at Owae marae, Waitara. The Minister for Treaty of Waitangi Negotiations, Hon. Andrew Little reflected upon the deep divisions and mamae caused to ngā iwi of Taranaki by the 1865 act which included the confiscation of 1.2 million hectares of land.

"Reconciliation is a process of coming together of healing rifts which are created when one party harms another. Reconciliation requires more than anything acknowledging and respecting each other's world views. This can be a challenging task."

Minister of Conservation, Hon. Willow-Jean Prime also addressed the packed Manukorihi tupuna whare followed by mainly the rangatahi voices representing each of the eight iwi of Taranaki; Ngaa rauru Kitihi, Ngāruahine, Ngāti Mutunga, Ngāti Ruanui, Ngāti Tama, Taranaki Iwi and Te Ati Awa. This collective redress package sets forth developing a deeper understanding of respecting and caring for the taiao environment and people.

Maunga are gathering sites of great significance for our people to commune with the living, and the dead. For Maunga Taranaki "The mountain has long been an honoured ancestor, a source of physical, cultural, and spiritual sustenance, and a final resting place".

A new legislative framework He Kawa Tupua is established to guide the enactment of Te Mana o Ngā Maunga which recognises, promotes, and protects the health and wellbeing of Te Kāhui Tupua and its status. i.e. Taranaki and the other Tūpuna Maunga. This legislation provides for the concept of legal personality for Te Kāhui Tupua and as an identity is deserved of respect, care and protection now and into the future.

Legal personalities have been delivered in respect of other tribal Crown settlements Ngāi Tūhoe (Te Urewera) and the Whanganui River (Te Awa Tupua). In the quest to protect these sacred sites of significance to Taranaki a collective iwi governance entity, Te Tōpuni Kōkōrangi will act on its behalf.

Te Kāhui Tupua is the common home witness to historical events of importance to Iwi, hapu, whānau of Taranaki. Te Pūeatanga ki Te Ao the historical account and the Crown acknowledgements and apology for breaches of te Tiriti o Waitangi also included in this redress model.

Te Kāhui Tupua is the common home embryo to various rongoa plant species, habitats, and animals. Te Kāhui Tupua is the common home to spiritual elements and our deceased.

The legislation Te Mana o Te Kāhui recognises and provides for the mana and relationship of Ngā Iwi o Taranaki with Te Kāhui Tupua. It is an undisputed truth that the wellbeing of iwi lies in the wellbeing of the whenua.

The recent release of the novel The Bone Tree written by Airana Ngarewa tells a story set at the base of Maunga Taranaki and what the sibling relationship face to ensure their survival. For me the storyline brings home the message we cannot exist without one another. It is a costly message we would be advised to act upon now - the call to care for God's creation is an even deeper call for the care of people.

For the wrongs done of the past
For the acknowledgments of today
For the Bone Tree
For the Bone People
For all that is Te Kāhui Tupua
Kāhui Maunga
We give thanks



The Blessed Journey

Tuituivao (Tui) Salevao, NZMWF President 2021-2023
The journey is never ending. There is always going to be growth, improvement, adversity; you just are to take it all in and do what is right, continue to grow, continue to live in the moment.

How quickly time flies: just when I was getting comfortable at the helm as President for the New Zealand Methodist Women's Fellowship (NZMWF), my term ends.

This is the case for my team and me at this year's convention to be held 12 to 15 October 2023 at The Sudima Hotel, Mangere, Auckland. Our attendance would not have been possible without the support of the PAC committee who accepted our application for a grant to subsidise the registration for our members to attend this year's convention. We are grateful for that generosity and we pray that they continue the great work in assisting groups like us, supporting our mission and vision to help those that need help.

The journey has been incredible and it has been great for my team to see the depth of this great organisation. We pray it will continue to grow as we accept change and take our members towards a new world involving technology, accepting the risk and change of worshipping in a more charismatic way that involves all members of our Connexion. We have many young vibrant women hungry to outreach into the community and abroad. If we give them the chance, they will move us to a new level of learnings and ensure we continue to serve the mission and vision NZMWF set out to do when they were formed.

My team and I wish the incoming President Lesieli Tiulipe Pope and her incoming National Executive all the best in their up incoming two-year term as they continue to lift the profile of the NZMWF within our Connexion and through the South Pacific and the World Federation forum.

Sharing our stories over the last two years through Touchstone has been so much fun. We hope this forum continues to serve our people so that we continue to enjoy reading about what is happening throughout our Connexion.

Signing out for a final time as your National President for NZMWF,
Your humble servant on behalf of my team,
Tuituivao (Tui) Salevao



God in a Basket.

Methodist missionaries on Choiseul from 1904 encountered many customs that bemused and annoyed them. Among these were the various practices of witchcraft and sorcery.

Sorcery and witchcraft generally focus on death and illness, thus providing the people with explanations for a wide range of calamities including falling from a tree, being attacked by a wild creature, storms, and destruction of crops. They also included failures, such as the failure of a woman to conceive, or failure in a business venture or failure of a public ceremony or performance.

Choiseul people were often unhappy when in the company of someone not from their kin group because of the fear of sorcery. The danger was that there might be fragments of food or other objects touched by the Choiseul people that would be collected and used by their enemies for some sort of magic. This included hair or nail clippings. This imagined or real danger was usually associated with a past event, and caused confusion for the missionaries because they could not understand the reasons for the fear.

One encounter with the powers of sorcery and magic was with Dalekana who was from Seqa on Choiseul. He carried his god with him in a basket. Dalekana attempted to take one of the girls who lived at the Methodist mission as his third wife. A physical encounter with a determined missionary sister, Sister Jessie Grant, ensued. After a fight between him and Sister Jessie where they both attempted to hold on to the girl, he declared that (during the fight) "twice I took my god out of the basket and sacrificed to him and prayed, and twice he has deceived me and led me astray. He has mocked me and lied to me". After Sister Jessie shared the Gospel message with him, he said, "I give in. I am a sinful man, but I will now give up all idea of this wrong . . . ". Mission head, Rev John Goldie described Dalekana as a changed man; no longer the "scowling dreadful savage . . . but laughing and happy". He became a "success story" for the mission.

In the 1950s, Sister Jessie had another supernatural encounter on Choiseul. She objected to a traditional remedy being worn by her patients. This was a piece of string, known locally as papaqala, worn to ward off evil spirits. Sister Jessie demanded patients remove the string before she gave them medicine. A local member of the nearby Roman Catholic mission objected and said the Catholic priest thought it was fine for a Roman Catholic to wear it if they prayed to God when they tied it on. The inimitable Sister Jessie responded that she would not treat anyone who continued to wear the papaqalas.

There is still a strong belief in sorcery, magic, and customary rituals on Choiseul even though the practice is a state and customary offence. This is despite over 100 years of missionary endeavour on Choiseul, and a continuing missionary presence. Sorcery is a serious concern in society. It has been suggested that the state, church, and community leaders must take responsibility for dealing with any sorcery offence. The Solomon Islands Law Reform Commission (SILRC) Taro Consultation in Choiseul Province declared that "Law should recognise customary law that deals with sorcery. The chiefs should deal with sorcery disputes". The declaration also included the information that use of witchcraft like black magic for house breaking is still common.

In Melanesia, witchcraft and sorcery are still potent means of dealing with the unknown. In Papua New Guinea recently the tragic case of a woman accused of being a witch and being tortured to death was in the news. These customs are entrenched in Melanesian society and many years of Missionary endeavours have not managed to remove them.



Keeping Up With The Latest

Rev Donald Phillipps

Joseph Horner Fletcher 1823-1890

The emergence of school curricula, the current version of the old '3 Rs', as an election topic is a reminder of the important place that education has had in the history of the Methodist Church.

Think of the role of Sunday Schools in the second half of the 18th century. A century ago, in 1923, one of the foremost ministers in the Connexion, C.H. Laws, travelled for some months in the United Kingdom to "keep abreast of modern scientific and social thought". He was also, at that time, the Principal of the Theological Institution, and another of his tasks while travelling was to encourage likely young men to come to this country.

He was especially impressed by a newly formed group of about 250 younger English ministers - calling themselves the 'Fellowship of the Kingdom' – who gathered annually to glean and share knowledge, and who sought to influence attitudes within the church. Their freshness and virility, their unconventionality and their spirit of optimism in respect to current religious and social questions caught Laws' imagination. He was excited by what he saw and heard, and though in his sixties clearly hoped that such an example would be followed in Aotearoa. He wanted his Methodist Church to be in the vanguard when it came to the development of new ideas for a new future. That was the preacher's primary role, after all.

Joseph Horner Fletcher was born in the West Indies two hundred years ago. He was the eldest son of Rev Joseph Fletcher, Wesleyan missionary, and his wife Mary, also from a missionary family. Methodist ministers were liberally scattered among his relatives. He attended a Methodist school in Kingswood, England, and then his uncle's school in Bath. He entered business but became a local preacher and was accepted for the Wesleyan ministry in 1845.

After training at Richmond College, Fletcher married Kate Green in December 1848 and was sent to Auckland, where he became, at 25, the founding principal of Wesley College. He was a key player in the first moves towards the creation of New Zealand as a separate District. In 1856 poor health obliged him to take up circuit work in Auckland and then New Plymouth. He moved to Queensland and in 1861 was on circuit in Brisbane. In 1863 he became the first chairman of the Queensland Wesleyan District.

In 1865 Fletcher succeeded John Manton as president of Newington College, the Methodist teaching institution in Sydney. By contrast with the more conservative nature of Wesleyan schools in England, and as evidence of his independence of mind, Fletcher believed that the main business of the school was secular education in a Christian atmosphere. Education could help to overcome sectarianism rather than perpetuate it.

He invited distinguished academics to examine Newington students and strongly supported the State government's education policies. He opposed the formation of a Methodist university college until strong secondary schooling was established. He believed that boys should be taught to appreciate orderly conduct rather than to fear punishment and that corporal punishment was degrading and to be used only in extreme circumstances.

Education, in its most basic sense – reading, writing and mathematics – is currently election fodder. This contribution is not concerned with those basics of universal education. But it makes the claim that Methodists, and all Christian churches, must engage in education – in the sense referred to above as "scientific and social thought." Is that what happens of a Sunday morning week by week? How far is the sermon these days directed towards engaging with the world.