



Accompanying Survivors of Sexual Harm

In October 2022 a three-day pilot workshop, *Accompanying Survivors of Sexual Harm: A Toolkit for Churches* led by Dr Emily Colgan was held at Trinity College, Auckland. Rev Dr Mary Caygill reports on the training that will eventually involve all future probationers and current presbyters.

The workshop was attended by an invited group of current lay and ordained leaders within the life of Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa, MCNZ. The letter of invitation prepared by the General Secretary Rev Tara Tautari outlined this pilot workshop was part of an ongoing critical commitment to intentionally train lay and clergy leadership in their support of victims and survivors, as well as in their efforts to ensure that church communities are no longer spaces where sexual harm can flourish.

The outcomes of the pilot and subsequent workshops taking place throughout 2023 include educating ordained and lay leaders about:

- Understanding the nature of sexual harm and its prevalence in New Zealand society,
- Being alert to and responding in a pastorally sensitive manner to people within their community who have experienced/are experiencing sexual harm,
- Identifying and articulating some of the scriptural and theological foundations that work to justify/legitimise/enable sexual harm while silencing the voices of victims/survivors,
- Identifying and articulating some of the scriptural and theological foundations that work to challenge and resist sexual harm,
- Exploring how their church might work to create a safe space for victims/survivors of sexual harm.

Each participant in the workshop is given the invaluable resource, *Accompanying Survivors of Sexual Harm A Toolkit for Churches*, edited by Dr's Emily Colgan and Caroline Blyth and released in 2022. The content and scope of the material contained within is the basis of the ongoing training workshops. As Emily Colgan acknowledges in the toolkit introduction, the resource is the "fruit of collaborative efforts from seven academics, all of whom work broadly at the intersection of sexual harm and Christian faith traditions in Aotearoa New Zealand".

Bringing the material into this form, ready for use by workshop facilitators and participants has required careful and extensive work by respective contributors and editors. It was invaluable at the October 2022 pilot workshop to have Emily Colgan providing the lead and her Trinity College Faculty colleague Te Aroha Rountree available throughout as pastoral support person for the 10 participants.

Pilot Workshop Rolled Out to Wider Audience

It was from this pilot workshop then that the MCNZ made the commitment to roll out three subsequent workshops in 2023 thus beginning the commitment that all future probationers and current presbyters will undertake training in this area. A team of three facilitators was appointed, Shirley Rivers currently Head of Mission Methodist Mission Northern with a background of social and community work and as tertiary lecturer in social work training,



leadership within Te Taha Māori, Darryn Hickling, Presbyter at Rangiora Methodist Parish, Trained and Practicing Counsellor, and myself, Presbyter, pastoral and practical theologian with a background in theological education and parish ministry.

The decision was made to opt for an ideal group size of 8-10 participants to maximise group cohesion, personal safety, participation, and depth of engagement with the resource material. The first three day workshop was held in Christchurch, based at the Connexional Office with the Christchurch North Methodist Parish facilities available as needed. We began with six participants, all presbyters including two engaging in their probationary studies within their first stationed appointments. Due to varying circumstances two of the participants were unable to complete the three days. On reflection the smallness of group size had certainly advantaged ease of relating and allowed for the richness of unique and diverse perspectives to be explored alongside the resource material.

The second workshop at the end of June was held at the St Francis Retreat Centre, Auckland with eleven participants (Presbyters), indicating their attendance, but over the three days just six attending. Within this group there was a wealth of wisdom and experience acquired through significant ministry leadership at both Connexional and local church levels. This meant that much of the introductory material looking at awareness of social context, understandings of terminology, statistics around sexual harm, were well understood.

Accordingly, we were able to go deeper and more critically move to an engagement with the biblical and theological studies. We grappled together with the theological complexities around forgiveness, shame, whakamā, muru, the significant difference in understandings between the English and Māori words/concepts used in the familiar Lord's Prayer in reference to forgiveness.

Equally so, talking at depth in relation to how as presbyters we exercise and embody power, and how difficult but of critical importance to push towards the deconstruction of power and privilege so often conflated in a presbyter's understanding of ordination.

What does forgiveness mean? How do we move towards constructing a framework of restorative justice for those who have been harmed, abused within the assumed safety and sanctuary of church.

With the two workshops already run for this year and the third to take place mid-September at Vaughan Park Retreat Centre, Auckland, we have made an important beginning in gathering our leaders in ministry together for this critically important engagement. However, there is much more to be done.

We need our ministry leadership to consider it a high priority to commit to not only three days of study and engagement together, but to work at revising and reforming our theological and liturgical foundations to address the deep-seated violence and embodied damage done whenever acts of sexual harm occur within the body of church.

***Touchstone* Contact Details**

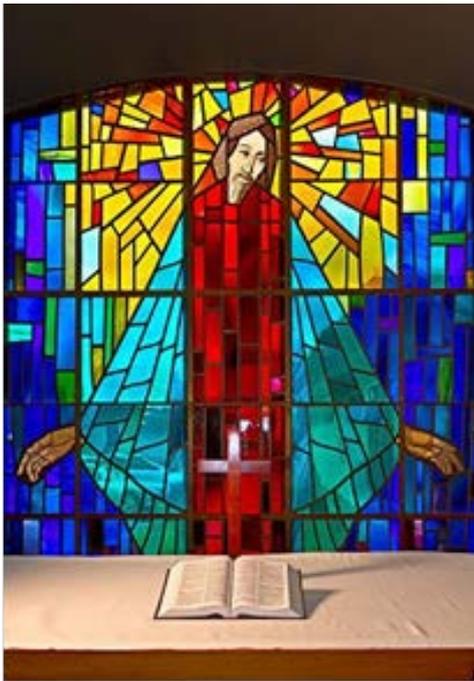


I welcome feedback on content included in this printable, reduced version of *Touchstone*.

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The stained glass window in the chapel at the Hawkes Bay Fallen Soldier Hospital. Called Christ the Healer, was designed in 1964 by Geoffrey F Fuller of Havelock North.

Hospital Chaplaincy

The Interchurch Council for Hospital Chaplaincy (ICHC) was established in 1996 having evolved from a service that began in 1868 with the employment of the first hospital chaplain in Dunedin. The organisation is governed by representatives of a collective of denominations and independent representation including The Methodist Church of New Zealand. Statistics recorded by the ICHC over the past six months indicate almost 36,000 patients in hospitals throughout Aotearoa were seen by a chaplain, almost 4,000 staff were supported by a chaplain and more than 18,000 spiritual rituals were carried out. Hospital chaplaincy is a valuable ministry, clearly appreciated.

Most of the funding for hospital chaplaincy comes from Te Whatu Ora, Health New Zealand, topped up by a variety of funding streams from hospitals, churches and private donors. David Hough, National Operations Manager for the ICHC, says, "Our contract with Te Whatu Ora provides for 30 full-time equivalent positions throughout NZ. Some funding is tagged to provide chaplains working in mental health. Additional funding comes from local hospitals. A third of our income is the result of donations from church denominations, local hospitals and individual donors. We welcome contributions from willing partners".

Currently there are chaplains in 40 hospitals throughout Aotearoa New Zealand with larger hospitals covered by teams of chaplains working fulltime and part-time hours. "We have 90 chaplains covering 57 FTE, 62 are ecumenical chaplains and 28 Catholic chaplains (12.8 FTE). Some smaller hospitals are staffed part-time or covered by volunteer chaplaincy. There are a few smaller public hospitals and remote locations without chaplaincy at present," David says. In most hospitals, volunteers supplement the work of the paid chaplains.

Hospital chaplains work alongside health professionals to offer holistic spiritual care by journeying with, listening to, and advocating for patients and/or their whanau or hospital staff.

David says, "Many of our chaplains are ordained ministers; however, some come from nursing, social work, counselling and education backgrounds. Chaplains need to be in good standing with their church denomination or at least have the support of their church. For safety purposes chaplains also need to be Police Vetted and vaccinated against Covid-19. Theological training is desirable and we encourage chaplains to complete Clinical Pastoral Education".

Skills required need to cover a service to all people regardless of their religious denomination, faith, belief system, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation. "Chaplains engage people at all stages of the life journey where people connect with hospital care and encounter the joys and trauma that may result. Chaplains require a mature practical theological, strong pastoral skills and solid personal and professional boundaries. Awareness of different religions, faiths and beliefs, an understanding of human development and life stages are also important. They will benefit from basic counselling and coaching skills; however, being an attuned active listener is key! Having strong liturgical skills is important in most hospital chaplaincy positions. Chaplains need to quickly make connections with people and assess what support they may require. An awareness of how a hospital functions and flows is beneficial".



A Chaplain Reports

Rev Ruth Sandiford Phelan has spent three years in her role as Chaplain at Hawkes Bay Hospital. It is a role she has had more than 25 years preparing for as she draws daily on skills acquired since she ordained for ministry in the Uniting Church of Australia in 1995.

In addition to several stints in parish ministry, Ruth has spent time as a dedicated palliative care chaplain at Gisborne Hospital and as a chaplain to students at Tairāwhiti Polytechnic. Each role has contributed to her ability to respond appropriately to the huge variety of situations that unfold at Hawkes Bay hospital. "Palliative care chaplaincy was good groundwork as there is palliative care at hospital. An enduring memory from my time at polytechnic was the sudden death of a student who drowned when she was returning from Auckland to Gisborne. It was a powerful time. I was amazed by how many students turned out for the memorial service and then to another one when her parents arrived. These experiences influence me today."

Ruth shares a seven-days a week 24-hour hospital chaplaincy roster with four other chaplains. The hospital provides care services to all ages from pediatrics to geriatrics. Ruth works one weekend each month and that includes leading a Sunday service in a small chapel closely connected to their office. On-call chaplains are involved in one-off specialised events like the blessing of a room where someone has died. Not all callouts are for conventional pastoral care.

One night Ruth was called in to offer support to a woman who had seen a ghost. "I listened to her story, offered comfort and did a blessing of cleansing in the room," Ruth says

Each day starts with the chaplains praying together before they join clinicians for a multidisciplinary meeting to share information before allocating wards or patients to the chaplains on duty.

"Working in collaboration with physiotherapists, specialist nurses, Māori health professionals, occupational therapists, dieticians, pharmacists and others involved in patient care gives us an understanding and insight into what is going on.

"It is not unusual on a single day to meet a person who is dying, someone who has been told they have a terminal illness, or news of a condition that will have a huge life impact. We might meet families who have lost a person or sit with someone who has dementia. A single day can involve intensive pastoral care."

Beyond the diversity and intensity of the workload, the people that the chaplains minister to differs markedly from parish ministry. Ruth says, "In a parish most people are Christian – a hospital is a microcosm of people on the street; Buddhist, atheist, agnostic, elderly who have not been to church for years and devout Christians. It is a huge cross-section of society. It can be exhausting, and it is important to learn to let go at the end of each day," Ruth says.

Daily prayer sessions provide the ideal space for chaplains to share the issues that are affecting them. All the chaplains meet regularly with professional external providers for supervision, and pastoral care from their own parish networks is also important in managing the personal impact of their work.

"Our main ministry is to be a presence that sparks a person's connection with God. To help people find what is meaningful in their lives, what gives them hope. What matters? Parish ministry is totally different. That is taking a group of believers on a journey and then there is all the administration, meetings, dealing with buildings. It is quite different although at the nub of both is pastoral care and support," Ruth says.



The joint synod service included contributions from several parishes across the region.

Joint Synod Service a Huge Success

On Sunday 6 August Auckland synod's Central Parishes Region came together for a joint service hosted by the Mt Albert Parish. Rev Dr Trevor Hoggard, Auckland Synod Central Parishes Convenor, reports.

This event was planned by the parish synod representatives in response to a recently adopted strategy document called Parish Partnerships. The aim of the strategy is to encourage parishes to share in ministry and mission as a response to falling numbers and dwindling financial and human resources.

Attempts to revive the old-style co-operation which was the essence of the circuit system have failed to gain traction over the years. We recognize and acknowledge that some form of greater co-operation is needed to meet future challenges. Parish Partnerships seeks to facilitate the sharing of resources whilst avoiding the inflexibility of the circuit model.

Parishes are encouraged to share ministry and mission initiatives with any parish within the synod for whatever purpose (youth work; property concerns; lay and ordained preachers etc.) for as long as such partnerships remain fruitful. When the partnership has run its course, new partners can be found for new initiatives.

This model of co-operation does not require the significant hurdle of complete and permanent amalgamation of parishes based solely upon geography but allows for flexibility to work with others who are embarking upon a similar programme or who have similar needs.

The service received contributions from several parishes across the region and a positive and energizing spirit pervaded the entire inspiring and uplifting event. Whilst things can appear to be increasingly challenging at the local parish level for many parishes, events such as these suggest that strategic input from synods may help stimulate fresh thinking, new hope and greater confidence. In that hope, we have announced a second joint service to be held at Epsom church on 10 December which will take a Christmas theme. The synod is grateful to all those parishes for their support.



Mt Albert Methodist Church Choir

Mt Albert Choir Perform

The Mt Albert Methodist Church choir recently participated in the Festival of Music and Brass at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Parnell, organized as a special evensong by the Auckland branch of the Royal School of Church Music (RSCM). Mary McNair reports.

The RSCM was established in UK to promote Christian worship in all churches, and to provide music and worship resources for musicians and congregations.

The evening service involved a chorus of 60 musicians from affiliated RSCM choirs with two conductors, Neil Schroff and Mark Rosser. The Auckland City Brass Band enhanced the Cathedral's assistant organist for the hymns sung by the congregation and the choir.

The following week, the choir sang at the Auckland Central Synod joint service. In addition to singing at weekly church services – they take a break in January – the choir gives regular concerts, sings at the local ANZAC service and provides an all-comers bi-annual sing-along Messiah that is popular with the wider community.



Celebrating Connexion and Diversity

TeRito Peyroux-Semu



Vice President TeRito Peyroux-Semu and Mrs Luseane Fisi'iahi, with the late Rev Dr 'Alifeleti Mone, at the 99th Annual Conference of the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, Nuku'alofa, July 2023.

One of the privileges and absolute pleasures of being Vice-President of our hāhi, is having the opportunity to experience the best of the plethora of diversity that is our church.

For sure, there are many strong commonalities between all of us, and there are many similarities shared in the issues, experiences, or circumstances of some groups or clusters throughout the Connexion; but no two parishes, rohe, synods, or parts of our church are completely identical. Each has a makeup, a background and a journey that is uniquely their own.

Being able to meet, worship, pray, celebrate, and engage with people from various and diverse parts of our church has been inspiring, and is certainly a highlight that I will cherish and appreciate long after my term in this role is finished.

Whether it's internationally, nationally, ecumenically, at a regional, or a more localised congregational level, there are theological, social, generational, geographic, ethnic, linguistic, economic, and historic facets which shape the cultures in different parts of our church, and who we are as a whole church.

Being immersed in unfamiliar situations and engaging with people from parts of the church that are structured and operate differently, isn't always easy. It means stepping out of one's own comfort zone, away from what is familiar, and sometimes risking offending someone along the way. However, those are never good enough reasons to refrain from engaging with the unfamiliar parts of our own living and growing church.

We are blessed to have many of the most gracious, insightful, and culturally-competent people in our midst, who are the best conduits - the "modern-day navigators"- that help guide us through unfamiliar situations, and help develop our own capacities for cultural competence.

By cultural competence, I mean the ability to effectively interact and communicate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds. This encompasses the knowledge, understanding and skills necessary to navigate the customs, beliefs, values, and practices of different cultures.

Being culturally competent also involves recognising and challenging our own biases and assumptions, as well as developing a genuine curiosity and openness towards learning about others.

In doing this, we foster positive relationships, enhance collaboration, and create environments that value and respect diversity, allowing people to see themselves, feel valued, and have opportunities to further develop and grow in various parts or levels of our church.

Basic examples of cultural competency can be through connecting with people, by intently listening to learn how to properly pronounce their name, understand where they may have come from, or how it might be appropriate to ensure that they feel welcome.

At best, cultural competency upholds spaces where people feel safe to consider or explore new ideas and ways of collectively being and thriving, whilst also feeling safe to evaluate or even challenge the relevance of the way we currently do things.



Wasewase Ko Viti Kei Rotuma, Celebrates 10 Years!

As one of the speakers at the inception ceremony of Wasewase ko Viti kei Rotuma I Niu Siladi, in 2013, Rev Setaita Taumoepeau K. Veikune, Co-Director Mission Resourcing, was invited to preach 10 years later, in a Service of Worship and Thanksgiving at St Johns Methodist Church, Hamilton East on Saturday 15 July 2023. Co-director of Mission Resourcing Rev Siosifa Pole blessed the occasion with prayer.

Wasewase ko Viti Rotuma celebrated its 10th Anniversary, on Saturday 15 July 2023 at St. Johns Methodist Church, Hamilton East.

In the late 1980s, the Fiji Advisory Committee (FAC), was initiated to oversee the journey of only a few Fijian Methodist families. More than 20 years later, the FAC became Wasewase ko Viti kei Rotuma I Niu

Siladi. I acknowledge the leadership of the late Past Vice President Susau E. J. Strickland QSM, who was the Convener of FAC for many years.

Susau, a few years later, started a Prayer Group for the Rotuman Methodist families in Auckland, which grew into the Kingsland Rotuman Methodist Congregation. In sharing this story it is important to highlight history repeating itself. The FAC and Rotuman Methodist Congregation, has sprouted a shoot from the house of the late VP Susau Strickland. In 2023 her granddaughter TeRito Peyroux-Semu, became the second Vice President of the church, from the Rotuman and Fijian whanau of Te Hāhi Weteriana.

The FAC would not have been able to plant the seeds from which we bear fruit today, without the loving commitment, support and sacrifices of outstanding leaders. We pay tribute to Rev Kuruwera, Rev Mosese Naivolasisiga, Rev Mike Yasa, the late Rev Jone Lagi, and the late Rev Dr Sevati Ilaitia Tuwere. We salute them all and their families as we celebrate the fruit of their labour. In 2010 the Rev Peni Tikoinaka and his family arrived in New Zealand and joined the leadership of FAC. Rev Peni took upon him the call into ministry in Aotearoa, travelled the motu to take services and offer pastoral care, and looked after congregations in Whanganui, Wellington, and Christchurch.

At the inception of Wasewase ko Viti kei Rotuma I Niu Siladi in 2013 at Wesley Taranaki, Wellington, Rev Peni Tikoinaka was inducted as its first Superintendent. Rev Peni has since, faithfully led the National Synod with passion, and ensured that Wasewase nurtured young men and women to become Presbyters and lay leaders of the Fijian and Rotuman communities and within Te Hahi.

In 2022, Rev Peni and Wasewase celebrated the Induction of Rev Alipate Livani as the first NZ trained Superintendent of Wasewase ko Viti kei Rotuma. Under the jurisdiction of Wasewase at its inception, there were four parishes nationwide, with seven congregations. Synod Superintendent Peni had the assistance of two Presbyters, Rev Dr Tuwere and the Rev Rupeni Balawa, both since deceased.

At its 10th Anniversary, Wasewase celebrated growth into six parishes, with 19 congregations. There are now six Presbyters, five of whom were trained in NZ. With one final year Ministry student, Wasewase is hopeful of working with seven Presbyters in 2024.

God bless Wasewase ko Viti kei Rotuma with many more decades to come.



Scrap metal yard in low-income residential Woolston where there has also been a recent toxic fire.

No Such Thing As 'Away'

Rev Mark Gibson

When it comes to our waste there is no such thing as 'away'. It is an illusion. It might be out of sight, out of mind but it still exists somewhere else.

What we send to landfill is still within the community of life, system and processes we are part of. We may have moved something toxic from our patch, but all we have done is dump it on someone else's patch. In the real world, the ecological world, we cannot externalise waste.

When it comes to waste, we need to reorient ourselves to Jesus' wisdom teaching. His 'Golden Rule' seems utterly relevant as we focus as a hāhi on Para Kore (Zero Waste) to begin our decade on Climate Justice. "In everything do to others as you would have them do to you," (Matt. 7:12) he urges us.

So, let's not do with our waste to others what we wouldn't want them to do to us. In the 21st century we need to extend our understanding of 'others' to include not only 'other' human communities, but 'other' creatures, indeed all the community of life that we are part of.

Of course, the two great commandments of Jesus as his summary of the law further sharpens this approach to waste. As we ponder love of God, and love of neighbour as self, many questions emerge in relation to waste. How can we love God if we don't love our neighbour? How do we love our neighbour if we dump toxic waste in their neighbourhood? If the seabirds on our coastline are our neighbours, why do we burden them with our waste?

Just a few minutes of research on the internet shows how the global waste crisis is rooted in colonialism and is deeply racist. In this motu too much of our waste has become the burden of poorer and Indigenous communities. What the leafy, affluent suburbs don't want in their own neighbourhoods they send to low-income communities.

In Ōtautahi this injustice has been recently exposed. For decades, the low-income suburb of Bromley has been the site of the much of the city's waste management facilities. The reality of living in an already poisoned environment compounded enormously for long-suffering residents when a large fire in the waste-water treatment plant in 2021 made life intolerable for those living near the site. The plant repeatedly breached resource consent conditions.

Aotearoa New Zealand also exports toxic waste to other parts of the world. Last year Lydia Chai, a lawyer, and others, in presenting a petition to Parliament, asking for a ban on our waste plastic exports to developing countries, slated the practice as 'waste colonialism'. South-East Asia in particular, has been the recipient of vast amounts of our waste plastic.

What we do with our waste is a life and death matter. It is a justice matter.

It calls into question our commitment to the wellbeing of others and our planet. We cannot externalise our waste; we can only reduce it.

This springtime as you have your spring clean think carefully about how you dispose of things. Seek first, to repurpose. Don't just make your rubbish someone else's problem.

Take greater responsibility for it. Shun plastic! Then think also about the kinds of things you buy, whether you really need them, and the importance of downsizing. Lobby to end waste colonialism.



Waiving Benefit Debt An Election Issue



Rhonda Swenson

Rhonda Swenson – artist, advocate, policy influencer and member of Ngaio Union Church – recently fronted a special service to raise the profile of an issue often overlooked, the level of ordinary people’s debt to the Ministry of Social Development, and its contribution to wealth inequality in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Rhonda worked with Ngaio Union Church’s Minister Sue Brown to create the service built around the real stories of people who are in debt to MSD and whose benefits are reduced to often unsustainable levels to repay that ‘debt’.

Rhonda has lived experience of this situation and has also been involved in preparing the Fairer Futures network’s report ‘Lifting the Weight – a Fairer Future Report on Experiences of Debt Owed to the Ministry of Social Development’

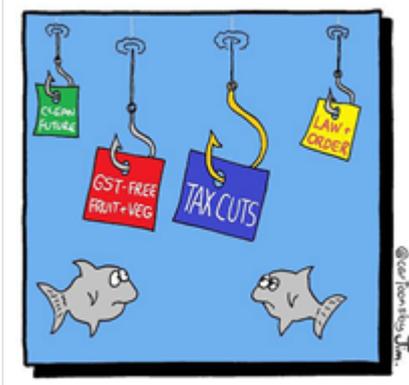
An interview with Rhonda set the scene, followed by four stories (read by members of the congregation) drawn from the report, of people’s experience of being in debt to MSD – a very different reality for most people in the pews.

Liturgy was drawn from the mahi of retired Australian Uniting Church minister and activist, Dorothy McRae-McMahon, which values the human person and the sanctity of life. A poem called ‘Face to Face’ from Tranquil Moments by New Zealand poet Brian Hardie, and karakia from the Methodist Alliance discussion document provided inspiration for the congregation to engage in deep thinking around an issue that ‘hides in plain sight’.

A short reflection wove these contemporary stories together with the concept of Jubilee from Leviticus as embodied by Luke’s Jesus. The service concluded with a challenge for the congregation to sit with the stories in the coming week, to reflect on the fact that at least 461,000 people in New Zealand (unbelievably, that’s almost 1 in 10 of the population) owe debt to the Ministry of Social Development; to hold that statistic in one hand and in the other hold the story of Jubilee; then to open their hearts; and ask – how will I respond ...

Jim's Cartoons

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



Cartoons by Jim



“Be Patient with Me”

Rev So’otaga Misikei

September has always been a month where time goes so quickly. Whatever our current occupation may be, September seems to be always the month where everything needs to get done.

For students it is a time of panic when assignments need to be completed in order to have enough time for the major end of year projects. Our children begin to scramble together their notes for NCEA examinations. In our workplaces the pressures begin to build in finishing orders for the end of the year. Even the church becomes a place of demand with the need to get things in order before members begin to leave for Christmas vacations. September is the beginning to the end of year mess.

It is a stressful time; burdening, demanding and heavy in all aspects of our lives. In the parable of the unforgiving debtor in Matthew 18, we have this servant who makes this remarkable request in verse 29 which states: His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with Me’.

While this may seem relatable it is a reminder for us all to prioritize self-awareness. Perhaps it requires a simple trip to the mirror, asking, How am I feeling today? Prioritizing self-awareness is not a selfish act, it is a necessary one. Throughout September there is no shame in throwing positive affirmations at ourselves while we are staring into the mirror either.

Regardless of our personal situations, this request for patience seems to be an unspoken thought throughout September. Though silent this request for patience can often be heard by those of us who are observant within our faith communities and workplaces through the body language of those around us and even in hearing the sighs of frustrations.

Therefore ‘Be patient with me’ becomes a prayer in which we might add ‘Be patient with me and teach me also to be patient with others’. Though this seems quite a simple addition, it also becomes quite complex. It asks of us to not only consider and be aware of our own thoughts, emotions and wellbeing, but also to consider the same factors for others. Treating others the way in which we would expect to be treated offers a space for us to consider not only our own personal needs but also the needs of others.

This month let us not only focus on what needs to be done. We need to learn to be content with what has been done. Let us not grow weary in anxious thoughts of the future months, but rather find joy in what we have in our hands at the present. Through the stress of it all let us work together in eliminating the concepts of shame around asking for help. Let us share a cup of peace with each other that may be blessed and anointed with a simple salute of ‘Be patient with me and I will be patient with you.’



Russell Eric James

Farewell and Thank You

Rev Andrew Doubleday UCANZ

Russell Eric James:

2 December 1933 – 2 August 2023

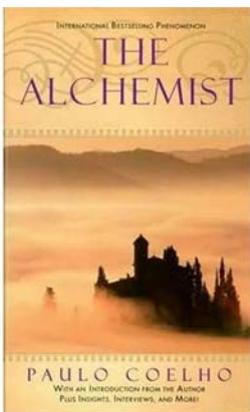
No one of us makes it on our own. All our lives are derivative in some way. We stand, or sit, on the shoulders of those who have preceded us – they give us a better view on what might be ahead and of what is possible. We all owe a debt to those who have gone before.

Russell James preceded me as Presbyter at Opawa. He and Ivy had led the Parish for 20 years. The 'Cathedral of Charismatic Methodism', by any measure their ministry was wildly successful - the lives that were touched and transformed; those sent out into mission and ministry; the way in which the church followed John Wesley's dictum "Go not to those who need you, but to those who need you most".

Russell was forced into 'retirement' by a debilitating stroke. In the years that followed both Russell and Ivy continued to support ministry at Opawa, and beyond. And when Ivy died 11 years ago, Russell just kept on. A mentor and support to many, Russell was first and foremost a pastor - right to his last breath – one who loved Jesus, his ever-growing family, and the people God put around him.

While it is not usual for a presbyter to stay in a parish in retirement, I am grateful that Russell and Ivy did. They lent stability to a rocky venture – my appointment was a difficult one, and although we 'bled' people over those ensuing years, ultimately fracturing in a church split, Russell remained loyal, supportive and committed. In his 90th year, cheerful and positive to the end, Russell died quietly in his sleep on 2 August.

While none of us know who we might have been if we'd chosen an alternate path, I'm grateful for the way that Russell's life enriched mine. It's only now, as I look back, that I see this with a greater clarity. Thanks Russ.



The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho

The Benefits of Saying Yes and of Saying No

Rev Dr Mary Caygill

The famous Brazilian writer Paulo Coelho, known in particular for the writing of his 1988 novel *The Alchemist*, is quoted as saying ... "There are times when in saying "yes" to others, he is actually saying "no" to himself. That is why he never says "yes" with his lips if, in his heart, he is saying "no"."

Of late, I have been reflecting at some depth on my propensity to say 'yes,' to commit to activities and tasks which require of me an expenditure of energy which I don't necessarily have, or my 'yes' inevitably finds me sliding back towards former pathways and seasons of being that I am consciously seeking to let go of.

A wise friend and mentor encouraged me this week to become as a conscious witness to my replies of yes and no. It is not long before such witnessing leads me to become all too



conscious of my propensity to say, 'yes' with almost too much ease and experience considerable difficulty in the saying of 'no'.

As a further critical step of reflection my wise friend suggested I observe if the yes's and the no's are originating from the mind, or the heart.

Yesterday, I was invited to do three things. These three events would not have been of my choosing and I wasn't looking forward to any of them. I consciously shifted the yes from my mind to my heart concerning all three. Surprisingly, but maybe not, unexpected gifts emerged from each of these yes's.

I have been invited tomorrow to do three things. I have had to say no to two of these events because of prior commitments and appointments. I am fascinated by my conscious awareness of how pleased I was to have an excuse to be able to say "no".

It is not surprising, unexpected gifts will emerge from having said no and I will likely also miss unexpected gifts from not being able to say yes.

So, as I continue to polish the lenses on my yes's and no's, admittedly like Mary's gospel yes to the Angel Gabriel, when I make and take time to ponder my responses, I'm better able to trust that God's unexpected gifts can and will emerge from both a yes and a no.

A "heart-fed-no" holds ongoing deepening to my ordinary day-to-day role as sacred. And a "heart-fed- yes" is trusting God's invitation of inviting me to what (unbeknownst to me) is already within my capacity.

HE WHAKAROARO



Order of Service cover

Amohia ake te ora o te Iwi ka puta ki te wheiao

Rev Dr Arapera Ngaha

"The wellbeing of the people is paramount".

We have just attended Koroneihana celebrations, the 17th of Kingi Tūheitia's reign and in his message to the people, he was very clear about the focus for us all – Amohia ake te ora o te iwi.

This is the whakatauki that led the charge by Kingi Tūheitia and Waikato-Tainui to uplift and support te iwi Māori in the Covid 19 lockdowns and ensuing challenges around vaccination and caring for each other.

Marae and Iwi groups around the country mobilised, providing and delivering 'care packages' to whānau, who in their isolation, were not faring well. These packages included foodstuffs, household needs and even Rongoa Māori. As a recipient of one of these packages, I can vouch for the relief that the Rongoa Māori gave me.

Earlier this year, parts of the country were devastated by flooding and the effects of te huripari Kapireira – cyclone Gabriel. The havoc wrought by Gabriel was evident particularly on Te Whānau a Apanui, Ngāti Porou and down into Kahungunu.



Last month, Kingi Tūheitia visited the area around Kahungunu and Tai Rawhiti and saw firsthand the havoc wreaked upon the land and consequently the people. He was well received, and the people noted how pleased they were to see him, as they were still waiting for the government to front up.

The way that Māoridom mobilised during these difficult times, he urged, were the example to follow. In all these matters, Māori mobilised quickly, moving to the areas most in need.

Marae opened to all who needed shelter, food was provided to support those made homeless, not only Māori, but everyone who needed support. Co-ordination of services, sharing of resources is something that Māori know how to do and do well. "We all know mana motuhake works. We know that by Māori for everyone works" we all need to work together.

Let Māori and the way we work together be the change that's needed in our society.

He asked that in this year of elections that the Māori politicians, across the house, work together for the betterment of the people. He likened the work in parliament – the Beehive – to a real beehive, where you have worker bees, those who lay the eggs, those who support the queen etc. all work together to create the honey and pollinate the flowers to encourage new growth. They don't work in silos, one here, another there and so on. Māori politicians, change is needed!

Kingi Tūheitia Potatau Te Wherowhero te Tuawhiti in his message pointed out areas of our society where Māori continue to be those most affected detrimentally. His words resonated "Change is needed", let Māori lead the way so that we may truly say "by Māori, for everyone" for what benefits Māori benefits everyone.

Amohia ake te ora o te iwi is the rationale and the impetus for the change that is needed. Pai Mārire!

He inoi mō te Rangimarie – A prayer for peace

E te Atua, ko koe te take o te rangimarie, e paingia ana e koe te āta noho, mā te mōhio ki a koe ka ora tonu ai mātou, he tino mahi rangatira te mahi ki a koe. Tiakina ō pononga i ngā wā e whakaekea mai ai mātou e ō mātou hoa whawhai, kia kore ai rātou, te hunga e okioki atu nei ki a koe e wehi ki te kaha o ō mātou hoariri, e kaha ana hoki tō mātou Ariki a Hehu Karaiti. Āmine.

NZMWF



NZMWF National Executive

Navigating Unity and Bearing Fruit: A Samoan Perspective on Our Journey

Leuluaiali'i Pauline Ah Young,
NZMWF Diaconate Link

Talofa lava and warm greetings. I have had the privilege of serving on the NZMWF Executive alongside a fantastic team of strong Samoan Christian women who have embarked on a transformative two-year journey.

We have come together from all walks of life, united by our common faith and desire to serve others, and guided by our vision to Revive and Unite, inspired by 2 Corinthians 13:11, and fortified by our mission: "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." I encourage all New Zealand Methodist Women, to "Go and bear fruit, fruit that will last."



Revive and Unite: A Call to Transformation:

"Finally, brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, and live in peace. Moreover, the God of love and peace will be with you." - 2 Corinthians 13:11

This verse exhorts us to strive for restoration and unity, challenging us to examine the fractures within ourselves and our community. Through dialogue, collective action, and shared purpose, we have embarked on a journey of healing and unity.

The vision also resonates deeply with our Samoan unity and communal strength values. Our Samoan heritage emphasises the power of Va Fealoa'i - the interconnectedness of relationships. As we worked together, our Samoan heritage became a thread woven into the fabric of our service, drawing us closer to the God of love and peace.

The Power of Collective Progress:

"Two are better than one because they have a good return for their labour." – Ecclesiastes 4:9

Our mission is encapsulated in the proverb, "If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together." In an individualistic society, this perspective is revolutionary. Our diverse roles, talents, and backgrounds have become a tapestry of strength. We have seen that the path to enduring impact is marked by cooperative endeavours, underscoring the significance of collective progress in the journey toward a shared goal.

Unity brings strength and prosperity. Our journey exemplified the wisdom of this verse, embodying the essence of Va Tapuia - the sacred connections that bind us. Just as our Samoan community thrives on cooperation, our Executive Team thrives on collaboration, each role harmonizing with the others to create a symphony of service.

Bearing Fruit of Lasting Impact:

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit – fruit that will last." – John 15:16

These words remind us of the purpose behind our service. We have been chosen and appointed to bear fruit that stands the test of time and speaks to our dedication, love, and unity. This requires a deep commitment to nurturing the wellbeing of those around us, and an understanding that the impact of our actions reverberates through generations.

Jesus Christ's call to bear lasting fruit echoes through the heart of our Samoan culture. Loto Fa'amaoni; a sense of gratitude. Our efforts resonate with this call.

Encouragement for Continued Transformation:

I extend a call to action to the NZMWF. Our journey exemplifies the transformative potential of unity and purpose-driven service. As we look ahead, let us continue to Revive and Unite within our communities. The path to lasting impact requires collective strength, just as the Samoan concept of "Va Tapuia" emphasises unity for growth and transformation.

Let us embrace unity as a catalyst for change, understanding that in accordance lies the power to navigate challenges, cultivate transformation, and create a legacy of love and service that will flourish for generations. May the Spirit of God guide us in this ongoing journey of transformation and unity.



In January Shehnaz's land was mostly covered in water. When one of her children fell into the water, she would run one and a half hours to get treatment for their injury or infection. Credit CWSA.

Donations help Flood-affected Families in Pakistan

Christian World Service is grateful for donations of over \$115,600 to the Pakistan Flood Appeal, launched one year ago. Funds were distributed to our partner Community World Service Asia (CWSA) for work in Sindh province.

Shehnaz said the support was life-surviving. Before the floods, her husband worked as a daily wage labourer and selling wheat in a neighbouring town. With the food they grew, they could support their three young children until the floods forced them to seek higher ground.

Once the waters dropped, the couple constructed a small shelter out of bricks beside the ruins of their home. In January when CWSA met with Shehnaz, the land was underwater making it impossible to replant. Sometimes Shehnaz travelled to the city to buy household items like soap to sell, earning a little cash while the family waited for the water to drain.

According to Shehnaz, the children often injured themselves when they fell into the ponds or picked up infections from the polluted water. She would have to run to a neighbouring village, an hour and a half away to get medical treatment. The Mobile Health Clinic and cash assistance from CWSA made a significant difference.

In Matiari, donations helped support Mobile Health Units. Medical staff saw 49,386 individuals, of whom 20,932 were children. CWSA also provided cash assistance to 990 households of whom 379 were headed by women.

In the Mirpurkhas district, CWSA assisted 800 of the most vulnerable families in 12 villages with hygiene and dignity kits as well as two mosquito nets and a tarpaulin. The kits contained toothbrushes, toothpaste, a comb, sanitary pads, mosquito repellent, a nail cutter, a plastic mug and bucket, underwear and towels for family members.

CWS is grateful for the generous response to this appeal.

ARCHIVES



Kei Muri Māpara signs a deal for Recollect

Soon thousands of MCNZ archives will be available online for the first time.

Katherine Doig, Archivist MCNZ

In the July 26, 1930 edition of *The New Zealand Methodist Times*, the then Connexional Secretary, Rev. Rugby Pratt, who amongst his many duties was also responsible for the custody of early church records, reported that:

'A card index has been compiled which is the forerunner of what the Custodian of Records hopes some day will be a properly arranged and classified catalogue of all the valuable documents dealing with our history.'

Almost 100 years later this dream is set to be realised, as the Board of Administration approved the purchase of a Recollect software subscription for Kei Muri Māpara in May this year, with



the implementation phase of the project supported by a generous grant from the PAC Trust in late July. In August, myself and fellow Methodist Archivist Jennie Hood concluded a deal with New Zealand Micrographics (NZMS) who will provide the new system, which will act as both an online catalogue and also as a curated digital exhibition space for MCNZ's precious archival taonga.

Kei Muri Māpara holds unique and historically important collections, amounting to about 1.5km of original records. Currently our collection holdings are listed on MS Excel spreadsheets and MS Word documents (about 155 separate lists and counting!) which are at high risk of data loss or corruption. Our digitised holdings, if online, are buried on the MCNZ website, and can be difficult to find and use effectively. Until now we have had no platform to effectively manage born-digital records considered to be of long-term value. Acquiring Recollect is a key step on our digital transformation journey, and we are excited to be working towards a November 2023 launch date for our new Recollect website.

Recollect is a specialist online collection management software and community engagement solution which was developed in New Zealand by NZMS for the Cultural Heritage and Archival sectors locally. Its usership has grown rapidly, and currently over 100 organisations across Aotearoa, Australia, and now North America are using the software – including similar organisations to ours, such as the John Kinder Theological Library in Auckland, and the Presbyterian Research Centre in Dunedin.

Our new Recollect site will allow researchers in Aotearoa and abroad to access our digitised holdings (such as Methodist newspapers and magazines, photographs, and Minutes of Conference), our indexes, and our catalogue in a user-friendly and attractive online environment. We already have significant additional digitisation projects underway, or in the planning phase, including digitising our unrestricted baptism registers (those over 100 years-old), and our glass plate negatives recording missionary activity across the Pacific.

Having a modern and robust online platform such as Recollect to help preserve and display our documentary heritage is imperative, and will help us, as archivists, to ensure that the rich and diverse multicultural fabric of the Church – past, present, and future – continues to be reflected and recorded for current and future generations.

In addition to supporting the wider Connexion with their requests for archived information, we archivists are also available to support the general public with their historical research enquiries, online or in person. Contact details, and comprehensive information about holdings and services can be found on the Methodist Archives website:

www.methodist.org.nz/whakapapa/archives/