

e-messenger



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**The Methodist Church of New Zealand
Te Hahi Weteriana O Aotearoa**



“Our Church's Mission in Aotearoa New Zealand is to reflect and proclaim the transforming love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and declared in the Scriptures. We are empowered by the Holy Spirit to serve God in the world. The Treaty of Waitangi is the covenant establishing our nation on the basis of a power-sharing relationship, and will guide how we undertake mission”.

Web Site Address: www.methodist.org.nz

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

“And where are you going for Easter?” asked the hairdresser, and then sort of blanched when she remembered my job. “I suppose it’s a busy time for you” she added.

I said something like “no more or less than it is for anyone else who has to work when it seems as if all the world is holidaying.”

There followed some conversation about how little space most people have in their lives either because their full time employment demands more and more, or because they have to work at part time jobs seven days a week in order to make ends meet.

A sabbath, let alone a holy day, is a rarity.

I don’t subscribe to the view that Christian holy days need more protection than any other public or religious holiday. But I do believe that all human beings benefit from a cycle of work and rest, and that days of rest do need to be protected.

So what do a vacant cross and an empty tomb, and stories of resurrection appearances offer to us? For many Christians they are unquestionable signs of the continuing presence of Christ in human experience. For others they are equally powerful symbols that things as we experience them are not all there is to the story, that even death and desolation might be transformed, that emptiness is not to be feared.

There is much in our world, maybe even in your life and mine, that needs transformation. As we reflect on the gospel tradition of Christ among us, let this Easter be a reminder to us that life and love may yet startle us into new awareness and experience.

Lynne

A MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

Easter has come at last and Jackie and I have been attending prayers and breakfast each morning this week at Trinity, Pakuranga. It is good to stop and reflect on why we go to Church. Looking around the circle each morning I realise that I am sitting with years of collective commitment to the Methodist Church and to Jesus Christ's great Commission. It seems to me that this is where the story of Jesus life, death and resurrection are and not inside some Hollywood directors head. The Passion is centred inside each of us and shows itself in the works of individuals and collectively in the life of our congregations.

It was good to see and hear the South Island and then the Central North Island regional schools of theology talk openly about their understanding of financial resources over the last month. Council of Conference also discussed the Connexional Budget at its March meeting in an open and honest way. This is the only way to treat these matters if we are not to make bad strategic decisions. To fudge over the financial viability questions of any major undertaking is to ignore the call Wesley made for careful financial stewardship over all that we do. I implore you to at least listen to your Treasurers as they raise the questions of "...but, where will the money come from?" If we ignore these questions we will compound any financial weaknesses that we have inbuilt in our structures. This in turn means that any future ministry opportunity that comes along will risk being under resourced.

For most of us, Easter weekend is an opportunity to take time out and reflect with family and friends. Amongst the celebration of Easter there is time for Rest and Recreation. Remember that there are those around us who do not get time out either from having to work over the long "holiday weekend" or from those who are still recovering from the floods earlier this year. Spare an extra thought and an extra prayer for those who are less fortunate than you over this period. Also include our young people in your prayers as they go away to Easter Camp and join in their joy as they come back with new "Passion" and fresh "Zeal" from what they experience. I would ask that you ask them to share their experiences with the whole congregation when they get back. Take time out one on one if you can to listen and answer any questions they may have as well as share your memories of the camps you attended.

David

FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S DESK

Conference 2003 passed a resolution which affects all Presbyters in Parishes and the congregations. As a result of the 2003 court case regarding property ownership it became apparent that the Church needed to take responsibility to ensure that when a person joined the Church i.e. is received into membership, they were clear about the Church into which they were being received, their rights and responsibilities as a member. The Conference adopted the following change to the Law to assist this happen:

“Each person received into membership shall be provided with a suitable document, to be signed by that person, recording that person’s reception into membership of the Church and recording their new status as a member of the Church. Each new member shall also sign the Parish Electoral roll”

Presbyters and Parish Stewards are asked to ensure this happens. A suitable form of wording can be provided by the Connexional Office.

It has been brought to my attention that the Wesley Historical Society resolutions are missing from the Buff pages. Please add the following to your Year Book page K-6:

DECISIONS:

1. The report is received
2. That the Oceania Conference with the theme *Weaving the Unfinished Mats: Wesley’s Legacy: Conflict, Confusion and Challenge in the South Pacific*, proposed by the Society for January 2005 is endorsed by the Conference.
3. That Rev Dr Susan Thompson’s PhD thesis on the history of Methodist Theological Education in New Zealand be published with the support and encouragement of the Conference.
4. That the sourcing of funding for both proposals in Decisions 2 and 3 shall be the responsibility of the Wesley Historical Society.

I received the following message from Wendie Rosewell after Conference and would like to share it with the Connexion. Wendie writes:

Please convey my thanks to the Connexion for the retirement greetings and gift, brought back to Opotiki and personally delivered.

I am very touched by the choice of the emblem, pikorua – it is one that has always particularly ‘spoken’ to me. When I read the symbolic meaning “Friendship and growth, interwoven lives ...: it seemed even more apt.

The koromiko shrub, is welcome too and will be lovingly nurtured on the 1.8 hectares on which I have the blessing to live.

My deeper thanks go to the Church at large, and to many colleagues and friends for a lifetime of Christian community and share ministry - interwoven lives and growth, indeed.

Warmest regard.s

Jill

A MESSAGE FROM COUNCIL OF CONFERENCE

Council of Conference met over the weekend of 26-28 March 2004. We would like to share the following matters with the Connexion which were part of this meeting:

1. Tumuaki Diana Tana led a *theology session* on Issues in Aotearoa Today. The basis of this session came out of the speech by the leader of the National Party, Don Brash, to the Orewa Rotary Club on 27th January 2004. Council of Conference members were encouraged to share as much factual information with their Parishes / Rohe as possible when dealing with sensitive political issues.
2. Council of Conference received the report from the *Connexional Budget Task Group* and the Council agreed to the recommendations as outlined in the report.

Concern was raised that in a number of Parishes, copies of 'Touchstone' are being left unread. Council of Conference strongly encourages all people within the Connexion to distribute this resource widely.

3. Council of Conference are continuing with work relating to the *Format of Conference* so that when we gather for Conference our work together will proceed without any problems.
4. The focus for the Council meeting were the two questions:

- *What is the Spirit saying to the Church?*

Council of Conference would like to share that Don Brash's speech has strengthened their resolve to continue to follow their commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi. The Council would also like to encourage Tauwiwi Strategy and Stationing to continue to grapple with the issues and they rejoice in this happening NOW!

- *What more can be done to promote the work of God?*

Council of Conference encourages all to be 'passionate' about being Methodist and being Connexional. It is important to continue building relationships within our Methodist Church of New Zealand–Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa and to help Parishes / Rohe to know and understand the work of the Council.

CONNEXIONAL BITS 'N PIECES

District Superintendent - Northland

Val Nicholls has taken up the position of Northland District Superintendent as from 1 March 2004. Val's contact details are 57 Laurence Street, Manly, Whangaparoa. Ph [H] 09 424 5758, [O] 09 426 5615, Mob 025 518 786, Em [H] valnicolls@xtra.co.nz, [O] office@whangamethparish.org.nz

Wedding Bells

Sarah Shadbolt, Fund Administrator from the Administration Division was married in Christchurch in March. Sarah will now be known by her married name of Andrews. The Administration Division is sure that you will join them in wishing Sarah and Leigh a very happy and fulfilling future.

Prince Albert College (PAC) Funds

Applications for the PAC Fund are now being received and it would be appreciated if the "Stories" could be received by early May.

Touchstones for Mission

The PAC Distribution Group and the distribution would be expected to be in tune with our Church's current understandings and priorities of Mission:

- Biblical Teaching relating to the Christian use of money;
- Wesley's Sermons on wealth and the use of money;
- Commitment to the bi-cultural church and society

Law Book - Amendments

Just a reminder, if you haven't received the 2004 Amendments for your Law Book please contact Viki on (03) 366 6049 or email vikif@methodist.org.nz for your copy.

Conference 2004

The Conference Arrangements Committee has put together a comprehensive list of hotels/motels that are in the vicinity of Conference venues in Auckland. This list, including a map of the area will be posted out during the week ending 16 April. If you haven't received a copy by Wednesday 21 April and would like one please contact Viki on vikif@methodist.org.nz or phone (03) 366 6049.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE CONNEXION

CELEBRATIONS



PAPANUI METHODIST CHURCH

Celebrating 150 Years of Service

1854 – 2004

April 30 – May 2

Friday night	-	Conversazione
Saturday Afternoon	-	Walk, Talk & Entertainment
Saturday Night	-	Dinner
Sunday Morning	-	Morning Worship
		President of Conference

Contacts for further details:

Doreen Hudson (03) 352 6352

Stan West (03) 352 1179

Email: chchnorthmeth@xtra.co.nz

ROSEMOUNT METHODIST CHURCH, MURCHISON

Celebrating it's 90th Anniversary

Sunday 23rd May 2004

Rosemount Methodist Church will be celebrating its' 90th Anniversary with a Celebration Service followed by lunch and time for reminiscing.

All former members and ministers will be most welcome.

For further details and registrations please contact:

Mrs Margaret Rouse, Canton Road, Murchison, 7191 (ph 03 523 9067)

DARGAVILLE METHODIST CIRCUIT

Celebrating 125 years

Queens Birthday Weekend 2004

Celebrations are being planned for Queen's Birthday weekend, June 2004. We would like to hear from Ministers, Deaconesses, Lay preachers, Choir persons, Organists and any other past congregation members interested in attending.

Contact:

Caroline Cornor, 19 Montgomery Avenue, Dargaville

Email: cornor@clear.net.nz (subject line 125 yr Celebrations)

Te Puke Methodist Church

Church Anniversary Thanksgiving

On Sunday May the 2nd it will be **FORTY YEARS** since the present church building on the corner of Oroua Street & State Highway Two was opened. We plan to have a special Service and Communion at 10.30am on that Sunday, followed by lunch and time to share stories.

If you have had connections in any way with the Te Puke Church and would like to join us you are would be most welcome.

If you would like more information don't hesitate to contact us...

- Office 07 573 7676 - tpmtmethos@actrix.co.nz
- Presbyter - Gloria Zanders 07 573 5545 - gjz@xtra.co.nz

Accommodation in Rotorua Available

A modest three bedroom house in Rotorua is available free of charge for persons seeking a short break. (A donation to cover cost of power would however be appropriate). Normal home facilities are available except a television. Interested persons should contact (Rev) Brian Eagle Phone 07348 0135 (evening), or 07348 1527 (Church Office - mornings); e-mail: bjeagle@free.net.nz.

Data Projector – a message from Te Puke/Mt Maunganui parish

We are considering purchasing a data projector for use in the Synod. Any information on good deals and friendly vendors from groups that have recently purchased one would be appreciated. Contact Bonnie Heberton at bonhomie@clear.net.nz

Paihia and Russell in the Bay of Islands – Leading Worship

Would you be interested in leading worship on a Sunday morning in Paihia and Russell in the Bay of Islands? We can offer you 3 nights free accomodation. For fuller details e-mail annpearson@in2net.co.nz or frankleadley@xtra.co.nz.

Please remember in your Prayers the family of Mrs Mabel Tardif, wife of the late Rev Alf Tardif.



Mabel was a resident at the Mossbrae Home, Mosgiel and died on March 20. A private cremation has been held. Messages may be sent to John Tardif, Newmans Road, R.D.1, Middlemarch, Otago.

Thriving Churches:

The Uniting Church of Australia has organised a series of Leadership Conferences in July around the theme Thriving Churches. Thomas Bandy a Canadian Church Consultant is the key speaker.

Tom Bandy's Bio

Ordained in the United Methodist Church in Chicago, Tom served with Presbyterians in Philadelphia, Methodists in New York, and the United Church in Toronto, and led cross-denominational evangelism teams in Michigan. For 7 years Tom served as the Director of Congregational Mission and Evangelism for the United Church of Canada, developing resources, leading national events, and consulting with congregations of all sizes. He now works with William Easum as a church consultant. He lives in Guelph, Ontario, where his wife is pastor of a nearby church.

I have begun reading his most recent book "Kicking Habits: Welcome relief for addicted Churches" I am finding it is challenging and disturbing.

I have contacted the Uniting Church in Brisbane [where it is warmer in July] and they are very happy for New Zealanders to participate. There may be some of our members who will be travelling to Australia at that time and could participate in the Conference.

Districts or Parishes might like to think of assisting one or two key people to attend. The dates are Brisbane Sat 3rd and Monday 5th July, South Australia Friday 9th and Sat 10th July, Melbourne 16th and 17th July. You will find more details on the website: http://www.missionconsultants.ucaqld.com.au/tom_bandy.htm

Quotes from "Kicking habits"

..... I had begun to suspect that "Church Renewal" was not preparing the church for the twenty-first century! "Winning combinations" in strategic planning seemed harder and harder to find. No amount of education or explanation seemed to motivate people to change. Even when a church began a good process, it always seemed to fail. Congregations would spend months writing a new Mission Statement—only to discover five years later that nothing had changed! The denominations planted new churches amid great celebration, only to discover five years later that the new church had peaked with 250 members, the minister was burning out, they were in financial trouble, and the neighbourhood public didn't know (or care) that they were there.

The inability of declining churches to change has deeper, and more troubling, roots. The declining church is an addict. Churches are addicted to habitual, self destructive behaviour patterns which they do not even recognise. No matter how well-meaning, sincere, and spiritually sensitive the church is, members still cannot bring themselves to admit or see the inner addictions that dictate church life and mission. No matter how earnest or energetic they become to plan their future, they always seem to return to the same old ways. And perhaps the hardest lesson of all is this: Addictions are passed on from mother to child! New congregations are, in fact, rarely a beacon of hope for the denomination. They unconsciously perpetuate the same habitual, destructive behaviour patterns of the parent.

Addiction is the great barrier to the church on the brink of the twenty-first century. The church cannot simply be renewed—it must be transformed. No programmatic change will overcome addiction. Only systemic change will overcome addiction. The real beacons of hope for any denomination are not the strategically planned new churches birthed by the institution, but the "maverick," "fringe," "adventurous" established churches that have the courage to travel a radically new path.

Although the new generation of "thriving churches" is very diverse, they are almost always in tension with their parent denominations or sponsoring bodies. Moreover, while their life and mission will vary enormously, it is possible to trace common patterns and purposes. They may not share the same programs, but they do operate within a distinct system of church life. They have overcome the addictions

that beset the whole system of past church life, in order to live with new health in an entirely new system of church life.

Unless declining churches are willing to confront the depths of their systemic addictions, they learn very little from observing thriving church life. For example, in the first flush of enthusiasm, local church leaders simply try to memorize every detail of a specific thriving church and 'reproduce it in their own situation. Often the radical change is initially received with great excitement, and there is a short-term spurt in congregational energy and community participation. The response to every new issue is to recycle "how they did it over there." Yet it is impossible simply to reproduce the experience of one regional context in another local situation. Eventually the questions and issues that arise in one's own situation will demand a depth of creativity and a richness of vision that is unique and distinct. In such a crisis of creativity, when only originality will do, the church unconsciously returns to its old habits, and repeats its addictions. In this case, the learnings from the thriving church are like the seeds Jesus describes, which land on rocky soil and spring up quickly. Yet when the realities of life in their situation bear down upon them, habitual responses take over, and their efforts for church transformation wither (Matt. 13:5-6).

The Church Addiction Test

Get a grip on your hidden institutional addictions! Score your anxiety in response to each of the "Top 20 Shocking Truths Thriving Churches Have Learned." Then turn the page to learn the positive discoveries thriving churches have made, and identify those areas where you will find the greatest difficulties or best opportunities for church transformation.

Top 20 Shocking Truths Thriving Churches Have Learned

No Anxiety	123456789 10	High Anxiety
1. The youth are not the future of your church!		_____
2. Nobody cares about the mere presence of God!		_____
3. "Friendly churches" are the dinosaurs of the twenty-first century!		_____
4. "Good enough" is Just not good enough!		_____
5. Most people don't like organ music!		_____
6. Debt freedom always leads to church decline!		_____
7. Consensus management kills churches!		_____
8. It does not matter what people know following the service!		_____
9. It is not the pastor's job to visit the hospitals!		_____
10. Few lay leaders have any business managing the church!		_____
11. Church membership is unimportant!		_____
12. If you want action, never form a committee!		_____
13. Self-sacrifice is the wrong message!		_____
14. God and the Holy Spirit are not enough for the coffee shop public!		_____
15. Church insiders are the least able to predict the church's future!		_____
16. Sunday school is no longer the cornerstone of Christian education!		_____
17. Finance committees should not talk about money!		_____
18. Nobody has time to hold church offices!		_____
19. Strategic planning is overrated!		_____
20. When it comes to mission, if you can say it all with words, you've missed the point!		_____

David Bush

d.bush@netaccess.co.nz

From the Archives ...

"I'm on the Committee" - Challenging Thoughts for 2004

Oh, give me your pity! I'm on the committee, which means that from morning to night,
We attend and amend and contend and defend, without a conclusion in sight.
We confer and concur, and defer, and demur, and reiterate all of our thoughts,
And revise the agenda with frequent addenda and consider a load of reports.
We impose and propose, we suppose and oppose and the points of procedure are fun,
And though various notions are brought up as motions, there's terribly little gets done!
We resolve and absolve, but we never dissolve since it's out of the question for us,
What a shattering pity to end our committee, where else could we make such a fuss!

Marcia Baker

ECUMENICAL NEWS & VIEWS

PARACHUTE MUSIC

Presents

noise

**Worship and Music Conference
Auckland – 22 – 24 April 2004**

Parachute Music is excited to announce **noise**, the first in a series of annual conferences organised to up-skill and inspire New Zealand singers, musicians, songwriters, worship leaders, technical and support personnel.

Key contributors include four of the world's top session musicians; they call themselves the Superband, and it's their first time in New Zealand. Other contributors include Chris O'Brien, David Evans, Brooke Fraser, Parachute Band and many more.

The aim of the conference is to help develop the huge resource of Christian musical talent in New Zealand through practical training, biblical input, building relationships and inspiring people to reach their potential. **noise** will have two distinct threads; one will be worship based, the other will be non-worship music.

Part of the mission of Parachute Music is to take Christian music in New Zealand to unprecedented levels – **noise** is all about this and more.

To find out more or to register go to www.parachutemusic.com. You can also phone (09) 366 1627.

Anglican Church

OPERATION DAMASCUS

*Mothers Union –
Christian care for families worldwide*
www.themothersunion.org

Jubilee Debt Campaign
www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk

World Debt Day – 16 May 2004

Join with dioceses around the world praying for an end to debt

Operation Damascus is a vision from Joyanna Cleary, Mothers' Union member in New Zealand. It is a commitment to pray until we seen changes happen.

The Mothers' Union will be remembering all the countries around the world that have not had their debt cancelled. Join with the world wide Mothers' Union and pray for justice to be done so that developing countries can be free of their debt payments. Let us pray for leaders around the world, for decision makers who have the power to change the economic systems that often exploit the poor.

The Mothers' Union is committed to campaigning for 100% debt cancellation. If the Millennium Development Goals are going to be achieved it is vital that the debt is cancelled.

The Cavalry Won't Be Coming
— Strategies for local shared ministry
by volunteer teams in small congregations,
Dave Mullan.



The old strategies have failed or are failing and we are losing. But we have no new moves to bring onto the board. We don't even know the rules of the game.

This rather morose statement is from Dave Mullan's 1990 book *Ecclesion, the Small Church with a Vision*. In fact, this book went on to offer many significant new "moves" including the concept of the local ministry team. Many developments have been taking place along the lines suggested at that time.

But the age-old dependence on stipendiary ministry to "do" the ministry of the whole people of God remains. If necessary, small congregations will manage with less of it and many have become highly capable. But when there's a major problem they usually look to the clergy to step in and rescue them — rather like the besieged pioneers of the American West waiting for the Cavalry to come galloping over the horizon to save their community.

The author has liberally drawn on his sources to put together a comprehensive introduction to a style of ministry that will both excite and challenge small congregations. In his book, Mullan seeks to offer a timely, relevant and reproducible model that's consistent with the ethos and practice of most mainstream churches. (*OC Books, Dunedin*)

Far from reducing the role of the trained, stipendiary clergy, this model makes greatly increased demands upon it. A new breed of "ministry enablers" is called for but these will be people who will not have access to the working face of ministry and mission in the local community; that is the work of the local people. This book urges the people to see that they have, within their reach, all the resources that are required for them to carry out their ministry.

The book contains a clear process to determine local needs along with possible responses, details of local calling and appointment of team membs by the parent church as well as a helpful discussion on potential problems to avoid or negotiate. (*Allan Paulin, in TOUCHSTONE 4/04*)

The book is for —

- Congregations who are recognising that the traditional model of stipendiary ministry is no longer appropriate;
- District and regional church authorities who know that something else is necessary but do not know how to go about introducing it locally;
- Denominational bodies who plan strategies for ministry and mission who are aware that changes must be made;
- Theological Colleges who have been saying for years that they are preparing people for "facilitating" ministry but continue to turn out graduates who sometimes do anything but that.

ISBN 0-908815-99-9 2003. 101 pp

Sales: OC Books, 39 Princes St, Dunedin \$19.95 (Also Trade orders)

Bulk orders: Enquire ColCom Press, 20 Tui Gr, Paihia, 0252.

Rural Network News

The latest edition of Rural Network News is now available at:

<http://www.schoolofministry.ac.nz/RuralMinistry/RNN%20files/RNN%203.2004.doc>. Hardcopies can be obtained by contacting the Editor, Robyn McPhail, 9 Jackson Street, Methven 8353, Ph/Fax 03 302 8151 email chirmac@xtra.co.nz