

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

I imagine that I'm not the only person in the church who is feeling 'meetinged out'. In the last couple of weeks there have been meetings of the Pastoral Committee, Budget Task Group, Tauivi Strategy and Stationing, Wasewase ko Viti Kei Rotuma e Niu Siladi, to name a few. This raft of Connexional meetings will have been mirrored in parishes and congregations everywhere as the year gets underway.

Underpinning most meetings and programmes are fundamental concerns about human community. How do we live in harmony with each other? What resources do we need to implement our dreams and goals? Who are the voices we listen to? To whose needs will we respond? There are also always, even if we don't easily recognise them, issues of power and control.

These latter are at the heart of the gospel accounts of the temptation of Jesus, which are part of our Lenten reflection. Jesus is challenged to assert his power over circumstances and the world for his own benefit. He turns away from the seduction and locates himself as one who is concerned with empowering communities and individuals.

Where might the challenges and temptations lie for us? In the Methodist Church, pakeha still have to adequately address the fact that we hold a degree of power and control that is disproportionate to our numerical strength. There are voices as strong in the church as in the community that want to see an end to affirmative action and self-determination for Maori, yet those same voices might claim privilege for other 'minority' groups within the church.

Jeremiah, writing to the exiles in Babylon, reminded them to work for the welfare of the city, for in the welfare of the city they might find their own welfare. (Jer.29:7).

It is a word which applies as much today. If we, individually and collectively, work for the wellbeing of the whole community, within which the Christian community is located, then we will find our own wellbeing.

At this time, I continue to be mindful of all those whose lives and livelihoods have been affected by the recent flooding in the central and lower North Island. Thanks to all who have responded with practical and monetary assistance and with prayer.

Lynne

A MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT

The year has really begun in earnest with congregations around the country starting up their programmes anew. It is good to see fresh ideas and passion in the faces of Methodists as they take on new tasks in the Church. When attending the Tauwi Strategy and Stationing Meeting I saw the eyes of people light up as small groups got together and discussed ideas important to them and then dim later whilst discussing other matters. It does not take long for a new idea to get started if it captures what is important to people. We saw that with the speed that Don Brash's speech entered the hearts of so many in New Zealand. An idea that single-handedly ruined the Labour Party's lead in the polls. New ideas don't have to be smart or even complete to get people thinking and motivated. They just have to be shared from the heart with a promise to follow through. Revolutions can start that way, with a spark of seeming unfairness or implied injustice delivered well. I believe that we need to start a revolution in New Zealand around real injustice. The injustice of not having enough, or the right kind, of food on the table. The injustice of not having a warm water-tight home to live in. The injustice of not having health care available in your time of need. Wouldn't it be good if the news media reported a revolution rising amongst the least in our society and as a result politicians changed policy direction at the same speed as they did after the latest opinion polls? I wish you all a good month fighting injustice in our land.

I will be attending two schools of theology this month and know that there are others going on. I wish you well as you all prepare for these and ask that you look around for the young people in your Synods. Try to encourage as many as you can to attend. These people are our future and they need feeding as much, if not more, than the regular and long standing members of our Church.

I am taking the whole of June off as long service leave this year and will have some time in that month to visit groups that wish to have me talk to and work with them. Of particular interest to me are any groups struggling with money matters who wish to have a fresh view of their position. Please write and share your problem or invite me to visit, see and discuss your issue first hand.

David

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

A group comprising representatives from Te Taha Maori, Taiuiwi, Evangelical Network, Sinoti Samoa, Vahefonua Tonga o Aotearoa, and Wasewase ko Viti kei Rotuma e Niu Siladi met during February to begin work on a memorandum of understanding that will enable there to be no opposition to the ordination of gay and lesbian people.

The group is committed to completion of the memorandum, and expects to report to Hui Poari and Taiuiwi Strategy and Stationing by August.

Lynne Frith
President

David McGeorge
Vice-President

Diana Tana
Tumuaki

John Murray
EO, Taiuiwi Strategy & Stationing

CONNEXIONAL BITS 'N PIECES

LAW BOOK – 2004 Amendments

The Amendments for the Law Book were sent out at the end of last week, by now you should have received your copy. If you haven't please phone Viki (03) 366 6049 or email vikif@methodist.org.nz and a copy will be sent to you.

Information Leaflets

Two more information leaflets have been put on the website www.methodist.org.nz No. 10 Presbyters Criteria for Ordination and No. 12 Deacons Criteria for Ordination.

Lectionary

The Faith and Order Committee regret to advise that there is an error in the Lectionary. The Readings for Transfiguration include 1 Cor 3.12-4.2. It should be 2 Cor 3.12-4.2.

Stipends - New PAYE Tables (Please pass to the Parish Treasurer)

Parish treasurers should have received within the last few days new PAYE Tax Tables from the Inland Revenue Department. The new tax tables are effective for any remuneration paid after 1 April 2004. The new tables incorporate two changes which will be of very limited affect on stipends paid to parish ministers.

The first change is that the maximum remuneration on which the ACC earner levy will apply has been increased to \$92,189. This should not effect the stipend payment for any parish minister.

The second change is the threshold income from which student loans repayment commence. This has been increased to \$16,172 and would result in any minister with student loan repayments having a small reduction in the amount of student loan repayment from the stipend.

As the sample calculations as shown on pages 3 and 4 of the Information Leaflet number 25 dated May 2003 are based on an 'M' tax code they are not affected by either of these changes and therefore continue to be correct for stipend payment for April 2004 onwards.

However, for any minister with a student loan tax code, such as 'M SL' on the standard monthly stipend there will be a reduction of \$1.73 each month on the amount of student loan repayment. Therefore, treasurers must check the tax calculation prior to the payment of the April stipend or wage payments using the new PAYE Tax Tables.

PAPANUI METHODIST CHURCH

Celebrating 150 years of Service

1854 - 2004

April 30th – May 2nd 2004

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

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.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE CONNEXION

FEBRUARY FLOODS

Methodist Social Services, Palmerston North

There have been a number of enquiries about how Methodists might respond to the devastation caused by floods in the Lower North Island.

As the Manawatu is the worst affected area, I have consulted with Michelle Lee, the Director of Methodist Social Services in Palmerston North. Her response is that the immediate need is for cash donations.

My advice at present is that parishes or individuals should make immediate cash donations to any of the public appeals that have been launched. You may also, if you wish, send money donations labelled "flood relief" to Methodist Social Services in Palmerston North, 663 Main Street, P O Box 1887, Palmerston North.

Please also remember in your prayer and reflection all those, including relief workers, whose lives have been affected by the flooding.

As further advice or request for assistance is available, I will advise you through e-messenger.

Manchester House Social Services - Assistance with Flood Relief

Thankyou to all who have, either as individuals or as congregations and parishes, contributed in some way to the appeals for assistance for those affected by the recent floods in the lower North Island.

I have been advised that the Feilding-Oroua Methodist Parish, in conjunction with Knox Presbyterian Church and the Anglican Church in Feilding, operate a social service agency called Manchester House in Feilding. They provide a wide range of services to the people of Feilding and the Manawatu, including counselling services, budgeting, a food bank, elderly support services, and a Southern Manawatu Rural Support Person. The Southern Manawatu Rural Support Person works directly with people in many of the areas affected by the flooding - Foxton/Foxton Beach, Himatangi, Tangimoana, Rongatea, and rural areas around Feilding - and has been very busy supporting individuals and families over the last week or so. All Manchester House services have faced heavy demand from people seeking assistance. Counselling staff have been working closely with the local council, Civil Defence, WINZ, & other agencies to provide support where needed.

If people would like to make a donation to Manchester House they can do so by mail to Manchester House Social Services, PO Box 349, Feilding.

Lynne Frith
President

SUMMER 2004 'MUSIC IN THE AIR'

Bi-annual journal exploring song and spirituality

Contents:

Waiata Maori - Len Willing, member of Te Taha Maori, retired presbyter now living in Hawera, introduces and illustrates the wisdom and power of traditional Maori song and poetry Arvo Pärt - NZ pianist Dan Poynton introduces this Estonian composer Colin Gibson - two contributions, the first paying tribute to the 30 year service of Rev. John Murray as Manager of the Hymnbook Trust, and the second, on hymnody inclusive of gay and lesbian persons John Thornley - 'The Ballad of Johnny Cash'
Chris Nichol, Ecumenical office of the Presbyterian Church, on The Church as Blues The CD Player as Aid to Worship - welcoming the Hymnmaker CDs Hans Kuiper completes his two part series on pioneer NZ composer, Douglas Lilburn, with an introduction to the music Charles Royal reviews Helen Fisher CD

Annual subscription: \$24.00, to John Thornley, 15 Oriana Place, Palmerston North

RACE RELATIONS IN NEW ZEALAND

Let's lower the temperature

In recent weeks CASI has become increasingly concerned about attitudes to race relations reported and expressed in the New Zealand media. Agency members say they are disturbed by the name calling, the use of race issues for political point scoring, and what seem to be attempts to polarise public opinion along racial lines.

When the Seabed and Foreshore issue first appeared, CASI called for a cautious approach based on open dialogue and careful analysis of all the dimensions of the issue. The Agency is also supporting a longer-term Treaty-focused project through an ecumenical initiative representing a wide range of churches.

Reasoned and factual material

In the last month CASI has added a new section to its web site www.casi.org.nz, to reflect some of the concerns, and to help background the current race relations debate.

It includes

- Factual background material.
- Commentary and response from church and allied groups.
- Links to some of the important statements on race relations which have been made recently.
- Statements reflecting the concerns of a number of church people.

This section is updated as new material comes to hand. It's worth a visit any and every day to check new resources and links.

Go to www.casi.org.nz and click on the link in the right-hand column.

From the Archives ...

New Organs in Christchurch.

The body ecclesiastic seems to have little difficulty in producing these, whatever may be the inability of the human subject to grow them, which thing is an instance of the dangers of arguing from analogy. But, to quit logic, our Christchurch buildings are in many cases soon to be fitted with a new 'kist o' whistles' each. (kist = cist, a box used for sacred utensils). Durham Street herself - staid old mother church - is a victim of the epidemic, which must be called an organic disease, I suppose. The back room upstairs is full of pipes - enough to supply all the smoking parsons many times over - and the gallery behind the pulpit is a weird scene of bellows and sound boards and scaffolding. East Belt has a new instrument on order. St Albans is counting Sundays to the arrival of its Carnegie-cum-congregation purchase; Woolston contemplates getting city church status by reason of investing in a sweet thing in pipes. There are rumours of other developments of the kind; and, not to be outdone, one member of a Christchurch congregation has bought a new ear trumpet.

From 'The Outlook' 8th June, 1907
(discovered by Frank Paine).



Breaking the Cycle of Poverty Update

How effectively can we involve our parish community
in our social ministry efforts?

Do we know what community organizations exist in our local community?

Do we know what we want to accomplish through community focused ministry?

In raising these three important questions, this month's Breaking the Cycle of Poverty Update asks how much the Church knows about its neighbours.

It suggests some ways parishes can answer these three questions and in doing so strengthen the social justice dimension of parish life.

This month you'll also find links to other sites that can resource you as you respond to the reality of poverty. These include:

- A Community Toolbox
- A Handbook for Mobilisers
- Information about a Global Ministries Event to explore evangelisation amidst poverty
- Spiritual Strategic Journey

To access this material go to www.methodist.org.nz click Social Services and then WesleyCom or www.methodist.org.nz/index.cfm/Social_Services/WesleyCom_Aotearoa

The WesleyCom Committee thanks you for your commitment to raising issues of poverty in Aotearoa/New Zealand and helping to "Break the Cycle"

TOUCHSTONE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Dear Touchstone Readers

Just a reminder that Touchstone is now free, so remember to order extra copies. Please contact Karen Isaacs, Touchstone Administrator on (03) 381 4315, Fax (03) 381 5315 or email k.isaacs@xtra.co.nz to increase your subscription.

Distribution Tip: When you do order your extra copies don't forget the young people in your youth groups. Order one copy per youth.

CITIZEN'S INITIATED REFERENDUM (CIR) ON PROSTITUTION

Sent on behalf of Gordon Copeland, MP

As you will know, brothel keeping, pimping, procuring and soliciting were legalised by Parliament last year by a single vote and on the abstention of MP Ashraf Chaudhary. Contrary to popular belief prostitution itself has always been legal in New Zealand.

United Future MPs Gordon Copeland and Larry Baldock voted against this bill and have since launched a petition which, if successful, will lead to a CIR on the subject as part of the 2005 general election. If that is to happen however the two MPs need to collect approximately 300,000 signatures during the next few months. They seek the support of Methodist parishes for this initiative. They point out that the petition itself need not be divisive. Its objective is simply to ask New Zealanders whether they would like to have an opportunity to express their views on prostitution reform at the time of the 2005 elections. People are not being asked, at this point in time, to say whether they are for or against.

The necessary forms together with an explanatory note can be obtained over the internet at www.maxim.org.nz.

EXPLORING FAITH TODAY

Topical booklets by Dick Tripp

Dick Tripp has published booklet no. 21 in his series Exploring Faith Today, Life After Death: Christianity's Hope and Challenge. It has turned into a book of 200 pages, but includes one on the same topic by Derek Eaton, bishop of Nelson. They are printed back to back. Lots of sermon fodder. \$18. The titles of all the booklets, with full text and prices, can be read on the website: www.christianity.co.nz

These booklets, most of which sell for \$4, are particularly popular with churches running the Alpha Course as they deal with questions that come up when discussing the gospel. 17,000 have been sold so far. They get used for dialogue evangelism, building the faith of Christians, study groups and sermon material.

Booklets available from Dick Tripp, R. D. 1, Lyttelton. Phone: 03 3299752. Fax: 03 3299525. Email: dick.tripp@christianity.co.nz Promotional leaflet and order form available on request.