

e-messenger



**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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OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Greetings and best wishes for the New Year. I want to thank all those who sent messages, thought of, or prayed for me during my two months of incapacity with a prolapsed disc in the spine. I am now back at work "half-time" and making good progress with regular exercises. I am trusting for a full return to work from the end of February. My special thanks to Vice President Kenneth and others who have helped carry the load and fronted up to events in my place during this time.

The South Pacific Conference organised by the Wesley Historical Society, from 28-31 January, at Crossroads, Papakura, was an excellent place for me to start to pick up some of my duties. The theme "Weaving the Unfinished Mats - Wesley's legacy of conflict, confusion and challenge in the South Pacific" was not only aimed at those of us with a love for recalling our history. Most of the presentations from the visitors from the Churches in South Pacific countries, and Australia, New Zealand and the various groups within Te Hahi Weteriana o Aotearoa, used the past as a backdrop to identifying the issues facing them and the church within the political and social climate in their communities today. Some raised important issues and pointers for the future. I learnt a lot which I know will help me, and I hope our Church, as we plan for the future. Thank you to the Wesley Historical Society Executive based in Auckland, for organising such a timely and strategically important event. I trust many of our people who could not be present, will take the opportunity to read the summaries of the presentations which will be published later in the year.

The Internal Affairs department has called for applications from individuals wishing to become Civil Union celebrants when the Act comes into operation at the end of April. We will then be living and working in an environment where civil unions will be taking place. The president's committee of advice has met and is working on guidelines which I hope will help presbyters, parishes and congregations consider the issues, and make decisions about what they wish to do, until we can look at the issues together, when we meet at Conference in November this year. I hope to be able to issue a statement with the guidelines later this month.

Grace and Peace

Anglicans and Methodists move toward a deeper ecumenical relationship

In May 2002 the General Synod of the Anglican Church passed a resolution seeking to open up a conversation on the unity of the church with the Methodist Church. This followed significant developments in the United Kingdom where a covenant was signed between the Church of England and the Methodist Church in 2003.

The New Zealand Methodist Conference responded warmly to this initiative and a joint working group was formed. A number of meetings were held and the group reported back to the General Synod and the Conference in 2004.

The report outlined the history of relationships between our two churches, what we share in common and the considerable progress made in recent years on our ecumenical journey. It identified areas for further exploration. Both General Synod and Conference endorsed the report and asked for the dialogue to continue.

Part of the report proposed that local parishes jointly celebrate liturgically the common heritage that we share in the ministries of John and Charles Wesley. This suggestion now comes with the endorsement of both of our churches and could take place on the day Anglicans commemorate the Wesleys, 3rd March, or when Methodists celebrate Aldersgate Sunday, the closest to 24th May, or another time mutually convenient to local parishes in 2005.

The joint work group has prepared worship resources which can be downloaded for parishes to use in joint celebrations. I commend this suggestion to local parishes. Our commitment to the visible unity of the church continues to be a priority. I encourage you to pray together that God will show us a way forward into the future.

Ron

A MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT:

Attending the Methodist Youth Conference 2005 was an experience that did my sixty year old heart the world of good.

Being with approximately 200 young people from around the Connexion for four days was different, rewarding and enjoyable.

I was privileged to be able to attend all that happened and to lead two workshops. The depth of thought and feeling that was expressed by the young people was amazing. Especially when we grappled with the recent Tsunami and questioned where God was in that event and what faith means when disaster strikes. It was enlightening to hear the views of the young people on a variety of issues including worship, what it means to be Methodist, and their desire for "the Church" to hear them and to meaningfully assist them in their faith journey and their expression of faith. I hope those who have the ability and responsibility for our young people will take their views, which have been presented to the appropriate sections of the church, seriously. Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa, The Methodist Church of New Zealand is blessed to have such wonderful, articulate and enthusiastic young people among its membership. Please remember them in your prayers.

Kenneth

A Message from the Prime Minister

Rt Hon Helen Clark
Prime Minister of New Zealand

Prime Minister's Message for the Memorial Day on Sunday 16 January 2005

On this Memorial Day, we remember and honour all those who died and all others who have been so terribly affected by the earthquakes and tsunami in Asia and in the Indian Ocean region on 26 December 2004.

Our thoughts are with all the New Zealanders killed, missing, or injured, and with their families; and those who have returned home deeply distressed by what they have witnessed.

Our thoughts are with the countless number of people who have been killed or who are missing, injured, or made homeless by this catastrophe.

Our thoughts are with the communities in New Zealand which originate from the devastated region – and which have seen their home countries so damaged and so many lives lost.

And our thoughts are with those New Zealanders who are serving on our behalf in relief efforts in Asia – the New Zealand police officers working in the morgues, the defence personnel in the hospitals and supporting the relief flights, the foreign affairs staff and other government personnel, and all our non-governmental workers and volunteers in the field.

The support and compassion expressed by New Zealanders for those who have been the victims of this awful tragedy has been overwhelming. New Zealanders have contributed so generously to appeals for funds for the victims and the devastated communities.

The loss of so many lives is deeply distressing. The devastation and appalling human toll from death and injury as a result of these events has been felt right around the world. It is a natural disaster without precedent in recent times and it is, at times, almost too overwhelming to comprehend. We all identify with those who have suffered. May all those no longer with us rest in peace, may the injured be cared for and the distressed comforted, and may the devastated communities be supported to rebuild their lives.

Helen Clark
Prime Minister

CONNEXIONAL OFFICE NEWS

New Year greetings to the Connexion from the staff off the Connexional Office!

Staff

Stacey Cochrane our receptionist is moving to the accounts section from Monday 28 January, 2005 and we have appointed a new secretary receptionist to replace her. Hannah Flinn began work on Monday 21 January. Hannah married in December and has moved from Auckland to Christchurch where her husband is studying at Canterbury University.

Gaye Hamilton joined the Fund Administration staff this month and brings to the office a wide experience in accounts and payroll work. We look forward to working with her and Hannah.

Karen Connor our IT Manager left the Office in December. Karen had worked with the Division for eighteen years and we wish her well in her new endeavours.

Telephones

A reminder to everyone that the Connexional Office has now installed a direct dial telephone system, allowing you to contact individual staff members. The numbers are in the Year Book, blue page 4 and are included below for your information.

Christchurch Office:

P O Box 931, Christchurch 1. (Morley House, 25 Latimer Square) 03 366 6049 Fax: 03 364 9439 [Em]: info@methodist.org.nz

General Secretary

Jill van de Geer – 03 364 9424, Em jillv@methodist.org.nz

Secretary/Administrator – Viki Forscutt, 03 364 9427, Em vikif@methodist.org.nz

Accounts Department:

Financial Services Manager – Leah Scales, 03 364 9434 Em leahs@methodist.org.nz

Assistant Accountant – Sarah Andrews, 03 364 9428 Em saraha@methodist.org.nz

Fund Administrator – Gail Smith, 03 364 9432, Em gails@emthodist.org.nz

Fund Administrator– Gaye Hamilton, 03 364 9436, Em gayeh@methodist.org.nz

Fund Administrator – Stacey Cochrane, to be advised, Em stacey@methodist.org.nz

Administration Department:

Connexional Office Manager – David White 03 364 9426, Em davidw@methodist.org.nz

Property/Administrator – Ruth Le Couteur , 03 364 9429, Em ruthl@methodist.org.nz

Receptionist/Secretary – Hannah Flinn, 03 366 6049, Em hannahf@methodist.org.nz

Travel

The Connexional Office books all travel which is to be paid for by Connexional Expenses ie committees such as Tauwiwi Strategy and Council of Conference. Bookings may be made through Viki Forscutt or Hannah Flinn.

Information Leaflets / Orders of Service

The following are now available

Supernumerary Fund Parish Contributions (IL No. 23)

Travel & Study Grants (IL No. 9)

Lay Preacher Candidates (IL No. 153)

Adult Baptism (\$2.00 per copy, \$10 for a set of 9 services)

Bound copies of 2003 Conference Decisions are for sale at a cost of \$10.

The 2004 copies will be available end of February for a cost of \$50 for a bound copy, \$35 for looseleaf, \$10 Addresses/Decisions. Please note that there is a cost for postage.

WE ARE ON THE MOVE!!!

THE CHURCH BUILDING AND LOAN FUND IS BEING REPLACED BY THE METHODIST CONNEXIONAL PROPERTY FUND.

Following last year's review of the Church Building and Loan Fund, Conference supported some changes which hopefully will result in greater efficiency.

Material for consideration by the committee will need to be received by the Administration Division no later than the Wednesday before the meeting - generally the third Wednesday of the month. If all the material required is not available the business will be held over to the next meeting.

It is important that District Superintendents and the District Property Convenor receive a copy of material prior to it being sent to Methodist Connexional Property Fund (MCPF). This is to ensure that it can be processed appropriately and without delay.

Material can be sent by email to: ruthl@methodist.org.nz

Replies generally will be sent by email

Notes from the Administration Division

Secondhand Dealers and Pawnbrokers Act 2004

Some people may have recently heard through the Media that a new Second Dealers Act comes into force on 1 April 2005. Initial definitions may seem to suggest that opportunity or second-hand clothing shops operated by parishes maybe required to register as second-hand dealers within the Act.

The Act exempts charities and not for profit organisations from its requirements provided:

- the organisation that is selling the articles has not paid for them (ie they are donated goods), and
- the proceeds received from the sale of the articles is used to support the organisation.

Therefore the trading activities of a parish opportunity or second-hand clothing shop will not be caught within the requirements of this Act.

Centralised Payment of Stipends and Wages

Parishes are reminded of the material that was mailed to every parish treasurer detailing the proposal for the payment of parish stipends and wages by the Administration Division. We have received several inquiries since the material was mailed and have decided to offer:

- to make monthly salary and wage payments on the 10th of each month together with stipend payments;
- provide for the inclusion of a regular interim travel allowance payment with Presbyter's monthly stipend payment.

We have also been asked if the funding of the stipend for a Presbyter can be collected from two parishes and we are able to confirm that this will be possible provided the proportion of funding to come from each parish remains the same each month.

Parishes are reminded that should they wish to avail themselves of this service from April 2005 we need to have received their initial response by Monday 28 February 2005. We trust that it has been noted that there will be no direct charge made to parishes who use this services for at least the first two years.

Telecom Voluntary Welfare Organisation Sponsorship

Over the last twelve months a number of parishes have received correspondence from Telecom asking them to complete and sign a form certifying that they are still eligible to qualify for the subsidy of a telephone line at residential rates with no local calling charges.

In April 2004 the Administration Division wrote to Telecom asking them to clarify what they were asking of the parishes. Telecom have recently telephoned saying that these letters have been mailed to the entire over 2,000 recipients of the subsidy as part of an audit process required by Inland Revenue.

The objective of this exercise is to enable Telecom to confirm that the contact details of each organisation are correct and up to date. They are not so concerned about whether the organisation complies with all of the criteria set out within the correspondence as they will be reviewing these over the next twelve to eighteen months. Likewise the request to forward a copy of a Trust Deed or a Constitution is not required.

Telecom has undertaken to rewrite the letter which accompanied the material to better explain what is required. However, they do need to receive a response from each parish with correct contact details in order to continue the provision of the telephone line to a parish office at the line rental concession.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE CONNEXION

Methodist Youth Conference 2005

Nearly 200 young people from all sections of the Methodist Church of New Zealand–Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa gathered together for the Methodist Youth Conference (MYC) from 13-16 January 2005 at the University of Waikato.



MYC 2005 gave young people within our church the opportunity to voice their concerns, explore contextual theology as well as contemporary issues relating to Methodism and society.

On the Sunday morning of MYC 2005 an open plenary session was held. The following resolutions were recorded and we share these with the Connexion:

PREAMBLE

The Methodist Church of New Zealand–Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa is at a critical point. It needs to get real or vanish.

We believe in the Methodist story. We believe in the need for young people to be a part of this story.

It is time for the adult church to listen to their young people and invest seriously in all young people of Aotearoa.

RESOLUTIONS of MYC 2005

1. How will the church encourage an understanding of Methodism among young people?
2. As a Youth Conference we affirm the work and resources of Christian World Service and encourage our church to make use of their material and continue to profile CWS.
3. We ask Conference to acknowledge that there are new ways of expressing faith emerging amongst young people in the Methodist Church of New Zealand–Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa and ask Conference to encourage congregations to be open to these expressions. We affirm those congregations who are already expressing this diversity.
4. We ask the Board of Ministry through the Facilitator, Taiuiwi Youth Ministry to provide a resource that will help congregations and families to better understand different expressions of faith. We request that this resource caters for different ethnic groups and languages.
5. We encourage presbyters to intentionally include and develop young people in leading and participating in worship services e.g. dance, music, readings etc. We further ask the Board of Ministry to include the question of this involvement in the parish reviews and that young people participate in the review process.
6. Congregations are asked to create more opportunities for interactive adult / youth events and encourage young and old to work together to further understand each other.
7. Encourage parishes to provide appropriate facilities and equipment for young people.
8. The MYC 2005 seeks urgent clarity from the Faith and Order Committee on the relationship between culture and religion.
9. Each Synod to appoint a person or people who will support young people and challenge parishes to enact these resolutions.
10. The MYC 2005 challenge young people in the Methodist Church of New Zealand–Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa to be proactive in promoting their youth ministry and be open to solutions that may result from these resolutions.

UK EXCHANGE OPPORTUNITY

A Methodist minister in the UK is exploring the possibility of an exchange with a New Zealand minister for 6 months from early 2006.

Anyone who is interested in looking at this possibility should contact the Rev Steve Sankey. The Church where he is currently ministering has a website, including background about the church and a personal profile.

Christchurch, New Road, Marlborough. SN8 1AH Tel:01672513701 (office)
01672512457 (home) website www.christchurchurc.me.uk email minister@christchurchurc.me.uk

Evangelical Network

The Weekend: Episode 2

Wonderful worship, stirring speakers, fantastic food and fantabulous fellowship.

Evangelical Network Retreat will be held at Chosen Valley Christian Camp, Drury, in Manukau city ***April 29 - May 1 2005.***

Main speaker: Martien Keldermann "Faith in the Workplace".

There will be a ***minister's refresher*** led by David Crawley on Friday afternoon, and a minister's spouse's event at the same time.

Subsidies will again be available for those who are travelling distances.

For more details, contact

Marion Peterson

7 Cambric Place, Highland Park, Manukau City,

marionjp@paradise.net.nz Ph 09 537 1363

Wesley Wellington Parish 75 Taranaki Street

www.wesleychurch.org.nz



125th Year Celebration of the opening of the present church 25-27 March (Easter) 2005

For information contact the Parish Office:

Ph: (04) 384-7695 Fax: (04) 382-9708

Email: gen.wesley@clear.net.nz

Postal address: PO Box 6133, Marion Square, Wellington

Wanganui Methodist Parish events ...

Trinity Church is celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the present buildings on Sat 19th February with a meal and Sunday 20th as part of the 10am Parish Covenant Service.

Wesley Church, Gonville has made the decision to close for Services and will have their Closing Service on Sunday 13th March at 10am. This will be followed by lunch and a time of sharing memories. All people with a connection to Wesley are warmly invited to be part of this Service and we ask if those intending to be there could let us know, to help with catering.

Parish Office - ph 06 345 7394 P.O.Box 4195, Mid Avenue, Wanganui.

email: WG.METH.PARISH@xtra.co.nz

New Brighton Parish is looking for ...

Copies of the "With One Voice" hymn book to purchase or for freight cost only. Offers please to Brian Turner, 24 Collingwood St ChCh 8007 or phone collect 03-3889220

email: bhturner@paradise.net.nz

NEW ZEALAND METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP.

President's Letter: February – March 2005

Malo E Lelei, Talofa Lava, Nisa Bula Vinaka, Taloha Ni, Kia Ora.
Warmest greetings to all MWF Members from your National Executive.

Usually the first letter of the year takes on a positive optimistic note as we look forward into the coming months in anticipation of what they might hold for us. But sadly, 2005 has made a very sad start for many people throughout the world as the effects of the tragic Boxing Day Tsunami in South East Asia are felt. Our hearts go out to those who have lost family members and friends in this tragedy. Few here in NZ would not have been moved by the televised views of the devastation and chaos that has resulted and probably you have all contributed financially to one or other of the organizations involved in sending aid.

Though bewildered by such events we need to remain positive, praising & thankful as we look forward to the days ahead and the goals we hope to achieve. Here are some statements from youngsters that are thought-

provoking. You might like to use them as discussion points at a meeting.

DO YOU AGREE WITH THESE CHILDREN?

On their first day back to school after the Christmas break 7th and 8th grade students at Catskill Bruderhoff (upstate New York) were given time to formulate thoughts on the December 26 tsunami. These children are probably aged around 13 or 14 years.

Kelda wrote: The tsunami was a bucket of cold water thrown on the apathy of the world. It was a call to all people to wake up and change their lives, to love, help and care for every needy human being. Differences are forgotten in the face of all the need.

Dexter wrote: We do not know why God made the tsunami happen. Maybe God was showing us that our guns and bombs are nothing compared to His power. Maybe God wanted this to be a "wake-up" call. think that God is trying to tell us to appreciate each other more...

Karisa wrote: Through this natural disaster God was reminding us that He is much more powerful than humans. This earthquake was a much greater disaster than humankind could ever bring about. God was also saying that we must be ready to die at any time.....

YOUR FELLOWSHIP'S HISTORICAL RECORD

Liaison Officer Margaret reminds you that last year Joan Shaw invited you to send an account of the history of MWF in your District. Joan will compile them into one volume and send them on to our Methodist Church Archives in Christchurch. So, please, if you haven't already done so, send in your contribution as soon as possible.

While on holiday your President attended a service in our Hastings Church and was delighted to learn that Women's Fellowship members had been taking Worship Services there - when there was a need. Great! It was also good to hear Napier members were to visit and share the first meeting of the year with Hastings in early February.

PRESIDENTIAL VISITS: Nelma has been pleased to accept the invitation of Waikato / Thames Valley District to visit and share in their combined meeting on 9 May, 2005. If you would like her to visit your

District it is not too soon to start planning arrangements now. Because the World Seminar in Korea in

July 2006 will be followed 3 months later by NZMWF Convention it will be desirable to try to complete visiting commitments by the end of June 2006. This leaves only 16 months with Christmas holidays to come out of that! You know how time flies!

FINANCE: Yes, it's that time of year again! Treasurers – if your Fellowship has not paid your Affiliation Fees for the current year (which ends in June 2005) please send to your District Treasurer who will then forward it to the National Treasurer as soon as possible.

SMETHURST: Mary West, Convenor of the Smethurst Committee, has sent copies of the new **2005 Application Form and Information Leaflet** to all District Secretaries. Please display these immediately on the church notice board in all Methodist and Uniting Congregations in your District. Applications must be made on these 2005 forms. Applicants need to photocopy a form from the church Master Copy. Please destroy any forms from previous years. Remember the **closing date is 20 March 2005.**

GET WELL WISHES: We have been sorry to hear of the sudden illness of Rev Bill Chessum, husband of Annette Chessum, President of Manakau District. We hope a good recovery will be made.

CONGRATULATIONS and our warmest good wishes to Mrs Florence (Floss) Cooke of Upper Hutt, mother of National Executive Member, Adele Forrester, on the occasion of her 102nd birthday on 13 January, 2005. She happily celebrated it with family and friends.

EASTER will have passed by the time we send our next letter, so in closing I'd like to share with you a brief excerpt from Eddie Askew's book "Encounters". It is based on John 20: 15 where we read "Woman", he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" The devotional reading ends with this:

"Why are you crying?" A simple question but a profound one – many simple questions are. Why should she cry? Why should we cry? Jesus isn't dead, he's alive. The time for tears has gone. He's alive and His love has been released to cover the world. Christians are resurrection people, not Good Friday people. John Dunne understood that. He wrote: "Our last day is our first day; our sunset is our morning; the day of our death is the first day of our eternal life." If only we lived like that. " "

Easter Blessings and love from us all on the National Executive
- Nelma.

Make a cup of tea and sit down and enjoy Rosa's challenge on the back page. No peeking at the answers before you've given it your best!

Easter is a 'Moveable Feast' that is tied to the full moon. It cannot come before March 22 or after April 25. This was decided by the Nicene Council of 325. This year Easter comes early with Easter Sunday falling on March 27. As this year's lectionary is following Matthew we thought you may like to test your memory skills with this puzzle

EASTER FROM MATTHEW'S GOSPEL (RSV)

E_____ When it was ___ he sat at table (26:20)
A_____ ___ for the second time, he went and prayed (26:42)
S_____ then the ___ of the governor took Jesus (27:27)
T_____ as they were eating, Jesus ___ bread (26:26)
E_____ let us see whether ___ will come to save him (27:49)
R_____ Then two ___ were crucified with him (27:28)

F_____ bought the potter's ___ to bury strangers (26:7)
R_____ and his ___ white as snow (28:3)
O___ ___ on the right and one on the left (27:38)
M_____ among whom were Mary ___ (27:56)

M_____ and Mary the ___ of James and Joseph (27:56)
A_____ '___ three days I will rise again' (27:62)
T_____ 'Day after day I sat in the temple ___' (26:55)
T_____ 'Pray that you will not enter into ___' (26:41)
H_____ they mocked him, '___ King of the Jews' (27:28)
E_____ and behold there was a great ___ (28:2)
W_____ toward the dawn of the first day of the ___ (28:1)
S_____ Mary went to the ___ (28:1)

G_____ they came to a place called ___ (27:33)
O___ and laid it in his ___ new tomb (27:60)
S_____ rolled back the ___ (28:2)
P_____ told the chief ___ all that had taken place (28:11)
E_____ Now the ___ disciples went to Galilee (28:16)
L_ '___, I am with you always' (28:20)

? *Rosalie Sugrue*

Easter from Matthews Gospel:

Evening, Again, Soldiers, Took, Elijah, Robbers Field, Raiment, One, Magdalene. Mother, After, Teaching, Temptation, Hail, Earthquake, Week, Sepulchre, Golgotha, Own, Stone, Priests, Eleven, Lo

SMETHURST TRUST FUND 2005 APPLICATION / INFORMATION FORMS

NZMWF DISTRICT DISTRIBUTING SECRETARIES HAVE SENT THESE TO ALL FELLOWSHIPS OR PRESBYTERS WHERE THERE IS A METHODIST COMPONENT IN THE PARISH

If you have not received yours, please contact your District MWF Distributing Secretary. Please may these be displayed on your Church notice board and in your church bulletins.

Closing dates for the application are: 20th March, 20th June 20th October 2005

Mary West Convenor Smethurst Trust Fund
email maryw@west.net.nz

METHODIST MISSION & ECUMENICAL

Dear Presbyters and Parishes,

Attached is the February newsletter and occasional paper off Methodist Mission and Ecumenical

The Mission and Ecumenical newsletter has four short articles on ecumenical responses to the recent Asian tsunami, followed by some information from the secretary's desk. You could cut and paste any of these articles into your parish newsletter, or you could use the short summary below. I would also hope you would post the newsletter on your notice board or place in a Mission and ecumenical file available to church members.

There have been a range of ecumenical responses to the recent Asian tsunami. Action by Churches Together International made an immediate financial response to and has launched a \$41.8 million appeal to its 195 participating churches and agencies, which include the World Council of Churches and our own Christian World Service. It has mobilised relief assistance teams through partner networks. The appeal is to fund ongoing help over the next two years. The moderator and general secretary of the World Council of Churches, sent a pastoral letter to member churches in tsunami hit countries, offering sympathy and encouragement. The Christian Conference of Asia called on churches and church related organisations, other faith based agencies and civil society in the Asian region to mitigate the pain and suffering of the affected peoples. Christian World Service (CWS) has made grants to partner agencies working in areas affected by the tsunami and has been impressed by the ability of their partner groups to meet the needs of their communities in such distressing circumstances. Methodist Mission and ecumenical has contributed \$3,000 to the CWS appeal from its disaster relief fund.

The Mission and Ecumenical occasional paper for February contains an interview with Leonardo Boff, a leading liberation theologian. It explores a "Theology for another possible world". The context was a theological forum at the World social forum in Porto Alegre in January 2005.

John Roberts
Mission and Ecumenical Secretary
Methodist Church of New Zealand
Te Hahi Weteriana o Aotearoa

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical

Newsletter

February 2005

Secretary: John Roberts, 22a Penney Avenue, Mt Roskill, Auckland 1004

Phone 09-626-3771 Fax: 09-626-6137 E-mail mm-e@clear.net.nz

Ecumenical responses to the tsunami

Action by Churches Together – appeal for \$41.8m

On the morning of Sunday 26 December a 9-magnitude undersea earthquake off the west coast of the northern Indonesian island of Sumatra set off massive tidal waves, which slammed into coastal towns and villages across south and south east Asia, killing over 150,000 people and affecting millions throughout the region. Action by Churches Together International members throughout the region has from the outset mobilised relief assistance teams and relief supplies through their local partner networks. This assistance has included food, emergency shelter materials, medicines, and items such as blankets, clothing and cooking utensils and water. Assessment missions are continuously underway and co-ordination is taking place with government and other non-governmental organisations. The relief phase is expected to continue for 3 months, but where possible the rehabilitation activities are planned to help people to become independent from relief distributions as quickly as possible. An immediate appeal for US\$8.2 million was fully funded. Due to the magnitude of the problem longer term assistance will be needed. So ACT has launched an appeal for an additional US\$41.8 million over two years.

ACT International is a global alliance of churches and related agencies working to save lives and support communities during emergencies. It works through 195 churches and related aid agencies including the World Council of Churches and our own Christian World Service. ACT provides assistance irrespective of race, gender, belief, nationality, ethnic origin or political persuasion. ACT has strong local roots within populations affected by emergencies so is able to provide locally based knowledge, analysis and understanding of emergency situations.

World Council of Churches – pastoral letter

From the pastoral message to the World Council of Churches (WCC) member churches in countries affected by the tsunami, from the Moderator and general secretary of the WCC:

“On behalf of the entire fellowship of the WCC we send you sincere condolences and express our sorrow at the loss of more than 125,000 lives in one of the deadliest natural catastrophes that has faced the people of South East Asia and regions surrounding the Indian Ocean. We are also aware that the devastating earthquake followed by the tsunami has left more than five million people homeless who are in dire need of immediate humanitarian aid as well as psychological and spiritual accompaniment.

With our deepest sympathy we pray and think of those who have lost their loved ones. We are greatly encouraged by the exemplary efforts of our member Churches in responding even with meager resources to bandage the wounded and bond with the sorrowful. In prayer, we yearn to God that we may all overcome this cosmic anguish together with all peoples of faith in the region. The WCC together with our partners in ecumenical disaster and emergency management will continue to reach out with the resources available at our disposal to prevent more human suffering and bring about relief to those in this great affliction. We must reach out to one another, and not only weep with those in anguish but also make a new place for those seeking shelter as we struggle to find lasting solutions to future tragedies in this world. One lesson to learn from this tsunami tragedy is the need for the

international community and the religious communities to unite in one spirit and reinvent the capacity for preparedness to face such tragedies together.”

Christian Conference of Asia – call to give generously

The death and destruction across the coastal areas of several south and southeast Asian nations caused by the deadly tsunami has plunged the entire region into shock and grief. The tsunami-hit areas in Asia call for well-coordinated relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts. People belonging to all sections of society must join hands in responding to this challenging situation and contribute generously to lessen the pain and suffering.

The Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) joins the nations and people all over the world in mourning the death of thousands of people. It expresses heartfelt condolences and solidarity to all those who have lost their near and dear ones, hard earned assets and valuable properties. The CCA also asks God's blessings, guidance and protection on all those who have become a victim to this fury of nature. CCA appeals to the churches, church-related organizations, faith-based NGOs and civil society as a whole in the region to come out and mitigate the pain and suffering of the people. It also urges them to relate to the communities in crisis due to this natural disaster and help rebuild their lives. Efforts are needed to ensure that widespread diseases do not occur as an aftermath, and people are provided clothes, shelter, sanitation, medicine, food and clean drinking water. The extent of devastation is so vast that the respective governments' efforts must be supported by all sections of the society.

CCA has also held a workshop on ecumenical ministry in the post-tsunami situation which is expected to produce some common policy and strategy

Christian World Service

The stories coming out of the tsunami-devastated region are heartbreaking. People have lost everything- their families, homes, livelihoods, belongings and their hope for the future. In Aceh a three-year-old boy lost both his parents. Now staying with his uncle, he thinks his parents have left him. In Sri Lanka, a man who managed to save 25 people when the waves washed a packed train off its track struggles with the guilt of not being able to save his family. Throughout the region people are in a state of shock.

Christian World Service (CWS) partners are providing survivors like these with much needed trauma counseling and emotional support as well as food, shelter, medical services, sanitation, and replacement of household goods, clothing and school materials. Working through local groups, CWS has been impressed at their partners' ability to meet the needs in their communities under such distressing circumstances and the way they have organised relief efforts. Many staff lost family and homes, some having being swept up in the waves themselves. Just to reach people in need involved stepping over dead bodies. Yet they quickly mobilised, meeting with affected communities and organising the distribution of emergency supplies. Inland, local people gave food, clothing and household goods to help. Women from the Dalit communities of Tamil Nadu, who live in abject poverty, gave half their rice or what little money they could. The donations meant they would go without food themselves, yet they all wanted to help.

CWS is supporting its own partner groups in India and Sri Lanka and working through the global emergency response network, Action by Churches Together in Indonesia, Thailand and Burma. Aid efforts are directed to the poorest communities and most vulnerable families.

The first phase of relief efforts has concentrated on sustaining life, providing the basic necessities people need for day to day living, clean up operations and preventing further loss of life through disease. CWS expects that the need for food relief will continue for several months. From there, support will be needed for years to come. Over the next two years, projects will focus on ongoing

trauma counselling, reconstruction of homes and community infrastructure and recovery of food production and livelihoods.

The biggest concern now is that the poor and marginalised communities CWS partners work with will be excluded from the rebuilding process and risk permanent displacement from their coastal homes. 'Modernising' agendas threaten to move them into highrise developments inland, cutting them off from their traditional livelihoods and culture. As part of its response, CWS is supporting advocacy on behalf of tsunami victims and the organisation of survivors into village committees to prioritise their own relief and reconstruction needs as part of its relief and rehabilitation programme.

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical has given \$3,000 to the CWS appeal. Contributions to the appeal can be made to Christian World Service, P O Box 22652, Christchurch, or online at www.cws.org.nz

From the Mission and Ecumenical secretary's desk

January 28-31 I attended the Wesley Historical Society's South Pacific Conference in Auckland with the theme "Weaving the Unfinished Mats: Wesley's legacy – conflict, confusion and challenge in the South Pacific". On Sunday morning I preached on the theme: "John Wesley's legacy – weaving a theology of mission into the unfinished mats." Gina Tekulu, United Church Solomon Islands (UCSI) and Robinson Moses, United Church Papua New Guinea (UCPNG), who presented papers at the conference, were hosted by MM&E.

From 15-22 February I will attend a meeting of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (my last before the 9th Assembly in February 2006 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, when a new central Committee will be elected.). This will be followed by a meeting of ecumenical officers 23-25 February at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey.

31 March - 6 April I will attend the 12th General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia as delegate of the Methodist Church of New Zealand. The theme of the assembly is "Building Communities of Peace for All."

A visit to the United Church of Papua New Guinea is proposed for May 2005.

The holiday period provided some quality time for reading including two books on mission which are recommended: *The Common task: A Theology of Christian Mission* by M Thomas Thangaraj (1999) and *:From East and West: Rethinking Christian Mission* by D Preman Niles (2004)

Occasional Paper

No. 22

February 2005

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Theology for another possible world

interview with Leonardo Boff
by Henrike Müller

"Is it possible to live calmly and happily when you know that two-thirds of human beings are suffering, hungry and poor?" asks Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff, one of the founders of liberation theology, believes that the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth are real offences for any theology which struggles to bring about more justice. Boff was one of the guests at the World Forum for Theology and Liberation (21-25 January 2005, Porto Alegre, Brazil). In this interview he speaks of a theology that is committed to social change and about his confidence that change is possible.

Reflections at the World Forum for Theology and Liberation do not concentrate on one single region but look at the whole world. Liberation theology however had its beginnings in the particular situation of Latin America. Is the call to liberation really being heard worldwide?

The protest of Liberation theology against suffering is not limited to a single region. Every kind of repression, every cry of the poor, of the oppressed, of the marginalised anywhere in the world is an appeal to theology. Of course this presupposes that the cries are heard. But is it possible to live in peace and happily when you know that two-thirds of human beings are suffering, hungry and poor? To be human we have to have compassion. This solidarity is really the defining factor of our humanity and is gradually being lost in a culture of material values. It's not only the cry of the poor we must listen to but also the cry of the earth. The earth and human beings are both threatened. We must do something to change the situation – there won't be a Noah's Ark to save only some of us.

Is change possible?

To meet people's fundamental concerns change is needed. The world as it is does not offer the majority of humanity life but rather hell. I believe that change is possible, because I cannot accept a God who could remain indifferent to this world, but only one who cares about the poor and the suffering. God's grace gives us strength to resist, strength to liberate, opens up new ways. Grace can be seen quite clearly in our world. The grace of the living God is at work everywhere that life is protected and defended.

The world has not changed for the better, and the desire for liberation is still there - all over the world. And yet in countries like Germany, liberation theology has taken a back seat. How do you explain that?

Liberation theology only serves a purpose if the issues of justice, of the fate of the poor and the oppressed become real challenges for faith. It presupposes that we have sensitivity to the relevance of the issues of today's world. If theology has no feeling for reality then it may perhaps be of some use for the church, for those interested in academic courses, for ensuring a certain intellectual discourse.

But it has little to do with the living God who acts through history and it will contribute little to changing our world.

Can this kind of sensitivity be reawakened?

To do that you have to look at the way the world is going. For instance whoever sees television images of the world's poverty, of wars, catastrophes and economic crises, will be able to tell that our world has fallen into deep disorder and that we have to protest against that. Liberation theology and any theology committed to social change presupposes this spiritual rebellion.

Do you think that this kind of liberation theology committed to social change could take root long-term even in Europe?

Liberation theology takes quite specific oppression as its starting point. This can also be discovered in ones own context. What's the situation in Germany for immigrants? What security do they have? What's the situation for people who are poor and socially disadvantaged? How are they treated by the population and by social institutions? This is the immediate challenge of any engaged theology.

You have particularly highlighted the protection of creation as a key issue for contextual theology. Doesn't this mean that the options are further reduced for those who were originally at the centre of liberation theology's concerns?

Both are inextricably linked together. With the phrase "Justice, peace and the integrity of creation" the World Council of Churches found a metaphor that brought together the great ideals of the world. The three dimensions cannot be separated. Without justice life together is not possible. Peace means having good and just relations with other people, other cultures, with nature and with God. And integrity of creation is the foundation. If we destroy creation then all other projects are impossible. For me this triple affirmation is like a short summary of the good news of the gospel. And even if it is in the nature of utopia, to never quite be achievable, it nevertheless shows us the way forward like a compass and motivates us to not give up.

In a year's time the World Council of Churches will be holding its 9th Assembly here in Porto Alegre, with the theme "God, in your grace, transform the world". What do you see as the work of the world's largest ecumenical fellowship as it prepares for this?

I think it's important that religion awakens and nourishes people's spirituality. The spiritual dimension expresses the deep experience of the spirit, the experience of being and of God in the world. This spirituality is an innate part of every human being and is not the monopoly of organised religion. For me the task of religion is to open up spaces for human spirituality. If we can achieve that then humanity will be more compassionate, more humane, show more in solidarity.

Henrike Müller is a curate from the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover currently working in the office for Media Relations of the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

The World Forum for Theology and Liberation was organised by Latin American ecumenical agencies and supported by other world-wide ecumenical organisations including the World Council of Churches. 180 theologians from around the world discussed "Theology for another possible world". Thus this forum took up the theme of the World Social Forum, meeting from 26-31 January 2005 in Porto Alegre, whose slogan is "Another world is possible". The theological forum aimed to link liberating and reflective theological thought with the principles of the World Social Forum which seeks ways of greater justice and solidarity in a globalized world.

World Council of Churches Press Feature 27/01/2005

Methodist Mission and Ecumenical 2005 Special Appeal

Training for children's and youth leaders in the United Church of Papua New Guinea

“Children are our most valuable resource. We can develop everything else, but if we don't develop our children we are wasting our time.” Lady Carol Kidu, Community Development Minister, Papua New Guinea Government

Papua New Guinea faces a range of issues that impact on children and youth. These include:

- HIV/AIDS
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- sexual and domestic violence
- marriage breakdown
- law and order

The United Church of Papua New Guinea has 600,000 members with 69% under the age of 30 years. Moderator, Samson Lowa, says the church has to address the issues that affect them and minister to them in relevant ways.



Through this special appeal you can assist the United Church of Papua New Guinea to equip its leaders for more effective work with children and youth. The money you give will be used to bring leaders together for quality training that will lead to more effective work with children and young people.

Please send your donation to:

Rev John Roberts
Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Secretary
22a Penney Avenue
Mt Roskill
Auckland 2004

ECUMENICAL NEWS & VIEWS



TSUNAMI APPEAL

With tens of thousands killed and millions left with nothing following the devastating tsunamis that struck southern Asia on 26 December, CWS partners are pleading for help.

In Sri Lanka, our partners report that many coastal villages and towns were simply washed away. Sarath Fernando says that the groups in MONLAR are using all their networks to get immediate assistance to the poorest communities who are most likely to be overlooked. The National Council of Churches in Sri Lanka is distributing food parcels to those who have taken shelter in temples, mosques, churches and schools. In India as well, the churches have set up emergency feeding programmes, and are distributing clothing and drinking water. They are anticipating a massive need for food-for-work programmes to help reclaim flooded land and re-establish the people's livelihoods.



Donations are urgently needed to help support this work

YES, I want to help VICTIMS OF THE TSUNAMI 6/1/05

Enclosed is my cheque for \$30 \$75 \$150 **Other \$** _____

Mrs/ Mr/ Miss/ Ms _____

Address _____

City _____ email _____

Parish _____

Bankcard/ Mastercard Visa Diners Amex \$ _____

Signature _____ **Expiry Date** ____ / ____

Card Number □□□□ □□□□ □□□□ □□□□

PO Box 22652 Christchurch 8032

Credit Card donations: Tel. 0800 74 73 72.

Website donations: www.cws.org.nz

Tsunami Appeal Thank you

Thank you for your response to the CWS tsunami appeal. The generosity of New Zealanders and New Zealand Churches has been amazing. CWS has already sent tens of thousands of dollars to assist with immediate relief work in India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Now the focus is on rebuilding for the future, including trauma counselling, reconstruction of homes and infrastructure and ensuring that the people who survived the deadly waves will have a full voice in all recovery planning.

To support ongoing tsunami relief, donate now. Christian World Service, PO Box 22652, Christchurch, www.cws.org.nz, or 0800 74 73 72. Appeal leaflets and display materials are also available. Contact cws@cws.org.nz or phone 03 366 9274. Full information on relief efforts can be found at www.cws.org.nz

Watch out for the special emergencies issue of @world in March.

The Faces of Palestine

The 2005 CWS video study series is now available. Following the stories of Palestinians living under occupation, this video and accompanying study material gives a different perspective on the region than that seen through the mainstream media. The video is a story of refugee life and the poverty, fear and violence that are a daily reality for the Palestinian people. It also includes material on the work of CWS partner, the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) of the Middle East Council of Churches. The DSPR is the overseas special project of the APW/MWF for 2004-2005. To borrow a video or DVD contact cws@cws.org.nz or phone 03 366 9274. Please specify the date you would like it for.

WDRC visit

Manohari Doss, the coordinator of the Women's Development Resource Centre, in Tamil Nadu, India will be visiting New Zealand in March. Through the APW/MWF special project, many of you will be familiar with the WDRC's work to empower low caste Dalit women and tribal communities to fight for better housing, labour conditions, and political participation in a community where they have endured centuries of discrimination, violence, exploitation and poverty. This life changing work has been recorded in a NZ made film about the WDRC, *now we are fearless*. Manohari will be attending a launch of the documentary in Wellington on March 9. There will also be events in Christchurch, on March 6 and in Auckland the following weekend. For more information contact cws@cws.org.nz or phone 03 366 9274. The video/DVD will be available from CWS mid March.



Ecustics, an occasional newsletter of the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand

Number 103/1 December 2004

Safe as Churches?

For the church to expend energy questioning the issues of safety for women and children, whether it is in the context of the family or poverty or war is widely accepted, but to raise questions about the safety of women and children *within* the landscape of the church itself is quite another matter.

What does it mean for churchwomen called upon to address violence in the wider world in their work, to be themselves the subjects of physical, emotional and spiritual violation, deprived of the support and safety they need from within their own communities of faith?

It was stories of such violence, which slowly emerged out of the silence among the women who gathered together from around Asia at an Ecumenical Women's Consultation in Quezon City in September. It was a meeting hosted by the National Council of Churches in the Philippines to launch the international campaign on Overcoming Violence Against Women and children, "*On the Wings of A Dove*".

The cultural complexities of the stories and the magnitude of violence against Asian women and children were plainly and alarmingly seen against the backdrop of economic globalisation, domestic violence, and militarism.

But it was their personal stories of faith, struggle, resistance, and healing, which time and time again raised the spectre of violence they had experienced *within* their churches that raised the thorniest questions. As the stories were told, a quiet strength and resolve descended upon the meeting, and in that moment of hope, the flutter of dove's wings could be heard.

Robyn Cave

DOV Coordinator



Ecustics, an occasional newsletter of the Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand

Number 103/3 February 2005

One Song for All?

hymn and song festivals for everyone

Hymn or carol festivals are becoming more popular. The hymns and carols of the New Zealand Hymnbook Trust give local churches a wonderful opportunity to meet together, and experience in a festive atmosphere the ecumenical spirit.

John and Gillian Thornley, Co-Managers of the Trust (email contact: info@hymns.org.nz) can provide advice and assistance on the holding of inter-church and ecumenical song festivals, using the rich resources found in *Alleluia Aotearoa*, *Carol our Christmas*, and *Faith Forever Singing*.

Sharing their own church experience, John and Gillian report three years of annual carol festivals, under the title of 'Celebrate a New Zealand Christmas', held at Wesley Church, Palmerston North. Numbers attending have ranged from 150 to 220. For many attending, there is the delight at the range of carols the Trust can offer, the relevance of the words and theology, and the 'singability' of the tunes.

These events move beyond an inter-denominational base to a truly 'ecumenical' foundation, where everybody feels invited and joins in. The local amateur musicians – solo, choral, and instrumentalist – find fresh material to perform. Invitations go beyond churches to the wider community of music lovers.

Planning a successful festival takes time: at least three months, preferably six. John and Gillian will assist with planning and arrange a generous reduction on prices for resources. There is no need for local folk to handle stock or cash. It's all handled by the Trust.

Finally, why hold such events? There is no more inclusive and non-threatening way to build and energise cooperation among churches, and between church and community, than through the singing of our own contemporary hymns, songs and carols.

These hymns express our faith in terms that speak for and to pilgrim peoples for the twenty-first century, a church not retreating to the past, but looking to the future.

Yes, indeed! One song for all!

Ngairé Lennox
Executive Secretary
Conference of Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand
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2001- 2010 Decade to Overcome Violence - Tekau Tau Hei Parenga Aainga Tuukino: Churches Seeking Reconciliation and Peace

DOVe News from the Conference of Churches (CCANZ)

December 2004

From the DOV Coordinator

Kia ora - Greetings

My family has a pottery nativity scene, a gift from my son's godfather who is an artist with a quirky sense of humour. It has a certain Monty Python feel about it. Unlike many nativity scenes, there is no baby lying in the feeding box, only a mouse, an anxious-looking Joseph and Mary who is cast in the very late stage of pregnancy. As it is in the Advent season, there is no premature appearance of a child, just an all encompassing feeling of waiting in discomfort and bewilderment mixed with anticipation and yearning.

The Decade to Overcome Violence reflects the tension of waiting, and yet not waiting without hope or without thankfulness or active preparation for change. As one who shares in the hope of the Abrahamic covenantal faith, Ahmed Zaoui waited for two years to feel the wind upon his face, to taste the fruit from the olive branch. He still waits to know his future, to be reunited with his family, and to be assured of their safe return home from exile. In the words of Janet Morley 's prayer: God, our hope and our desire, we wait for your coming as a woman longs for the birth, the exile for her home, the lover for the touch of his beloved, and the humble poor for justice.

I look forward to continuing the work of the Decade in 2005 as Asia, the region to which Aotearoa belongs, becomes the WCC international focus.

May the hope and peace of Christmas be with you all.

Robyn Cave

On the Wings of a Dove

The international campaign to *Overcome Violence Against Women and Children* called On the Wings of a Dove for this year is now over, but statistics recently released on NZ women's experience of violence demonstrates how much work there needs to be done in prevention and education. Although the Asian-wide material prepared for the campaign came too late for general use, delegates of the Methodist Conference each received a copy to take back to their communities. Copies were also forwarded to all the Church Leaders, informing them of the intention of the DOV to focus on family violence next year.

Nevertheless, the sound of the wings of the dove were heard in Aotearoa:

Wearing a white ribbon is already a tradition of Unifem on the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. A collaborative effort which involved the Community Trust, political representatives and local community provided an opportunity for reflection and action in response to such violence. Co-organiser Jenny Campbell reported that their "**white ribbon breakfast in Invercargill** went off so well. Women from the Women's Studies Department at Southern Institute of Technology gave very moving stories along with a man who has turned his life around after doing several "men against violence" courses and has changed from the abuse he perpetrated against his wife to become an advocate now... It would be great to hear what other groups did? and any future outcomes? From small seeds... WOW! "

The sixteen-day WCC campaign *On the Wings of a Dove* which was launched by a **Christchurch school** for girls, St Margaret's College was reported not only on the local website, but also on the WCC international website. To see the story, "The sun has risen on the wings of a dove" go to www.wcc-coe.org/dov. Click on the logo of "On the Wings of the Dove" and go to the "News".

Robyn Cave
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CAPITAL CITY FORUM Announces a seminar on

Race Relations 2005

issues and practical responses

Chaired and introduced by Sir Paul Reeves.

Featuring Professor Manuka Henare, Sir Rodney Gallen, Race Relations Conciliator Joris de Bres and Dr Alex Frame, Wellington lawyer, speaking on issues relating to government, to Maori, to human rights and to local communities.

With contributions from those with hands-on experience of race relations in local and church communities.

Programme includes panel discussions and questions from the floor.

Saturday March 5th 2005

9.30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Wellington: Connolly Hall, Hill Street, Thorndon.

Lunch and refreshments provided. Entry by koha.

Details of the programme on our website, www.casi.org.nz, or by email from casi@casi.org.nz

An opportunity to get to grips with a critical topic in this election year.

The sins of the parents...

While the National Party is declaring an open season on beneficiaries (again), CASI is expressing concern about current efforts to further reduce the income of some on the Domestic Purposes Benefit.

The Social Security (Social Assistance) Amendment Bill, a Government bill now before the Social Services Select Committee, tackles a couple of anomalies in social assistance relating to stand-down periods and eligibility for accommodation supplement. However, one clause increases the penalty on a parent supported by the Domestic Purposes Benefit, if they do not name the other parent of the child, by a further \$6 per week. The current reduction is \$22 per week.

CASI considers this a classic example of 'the sins of the parents being visited on the children' which runs counter to the principles of both natural and Biblical justice. Research and Government's own publications show that families who are most likely to be 'food poor' are those with children, and already 22 percent of these households report that 'food runs out because of lack of money'. Further reducing the income of beneficiaries is likely to make their situation worse.

CASI says it would be better to find out why the number of domestic purposes beneficiaries who do not name the liable parent has increased, rather than taking this simplistic and punitive approach.

Busy-work For Schools

Our schools, their teachers, and their pupils have suffered from a sequence of mantras over the last decade and a half - 'self managing schools' with 'community involvement', then 'choice' with competition as the means to tuning

up school responsiveness, and 'accountability' which produced a new parallel bureaucracy to audit their efforts. Now we are to have 'evidence-based practices' promoted throughout the school system.

In 1940 C E Beeby drafted for his minister the words, 'The Government's objective broadly expressed is that every person, whatever his level of academic ability, whether he be rich or poor, whether he live in the town or the country, has a right, as a citizen, to a free education of the kind for which he is best fitted and to the fullest extent of his powers.'

In 2004 the document *Making A Bigger Difference For All Students: Directions For A Schooling Strategy* has a 'strategic goal', 'strategic objectives', a three year consultation phase, and a five year time-line. I read it with increasing despair. It proposes that 'All students in our schools should be positively engaged in learning and challenged and supported to achieve to their full potential The Schooling Strategy will provide a five-year framework, focussed around the best evidence currently available about what will improve outcomes for all students.'

Sixty years after Beeb, can you spot what's new? Beeby was focused on the development of the learner as the whole person. The new thrust is on the bolting on of techniques, in the interests of student 'outcomes'. Education is reduced to instrumental practice, with not to far away the suggestion that schooling, upskilling rather than education, should prepare servants of the economy.

Feedback reported in the document from schools suggested levels of funding, teacher overload, and excessive paper work are pressing concerns. This document proposes instead paper flows and consultation over a further two years - and implies the development of a new mantra five years further out.

Feel free to get a copy www.schoolingstrategy.govt.nz - and to respond. But please recognise that teachers concerned to promote equity are not mere technicians. They are engaged in an activity with limited potential to amend power imbalances in our increasingly unequal society - and yet still very problematic. I once heard quality teaching has been defined as 'the communication of enthusiasm for learning.' Its nurturing requires more than the wiring in of new circuits on to automated mother-boards.

Ken Rae (Methodist member of CASI)

Resources

Treaty study material

Progress continues steadily on the Ecumenical Coalition for Justice study and discussion series. **Theme 5 (Foreshore and Seabed)** and **Theme 1 (Re-looking at early relationships between Maori communities and European families)** are complete. The theme on '**Christian Involvement in the Treaty of Waitangi**' is imminent, and the other three (Christians who have stood up for honouring the Treaty, Christian faith communities and Treaty Today, and The Treaty and Immigration) will be ready in the next two months.

You can download the completed themes, and follow progress on the others, from www.socialjustice.org.nz.

Social Issues Kit

A few copies of this major resource are available from the CASI office for \$10.00. The Research workbook is also available - \$2 per copy. Download free from the CASI website www.casi.org.nz or buy hard copies from the CASI office, 04 381 8295.

Thinking through Immigration

A topic which is bound to become an election issue. Reflections, background information, and four studies. Obtain as above - \$3 per copy p&p.

Dialogues on difficult topics

The Interchurch Bioethics Council has two sets of these available - *Making good decisions in Biotechnology* and *Euthanasia*. They are an effective way of encouraging group discussion and can be used for study during Lent.

Recent additions to CASI's library

John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*. The second edition of this classic text on non-violent resistance, the 'kingdom' of Jesus, Christ and power, and the authority of the State.

Paul Hunt & Margaret Wilson, editors. *Culture, Rights and Cultural Rights.: Perspectives from the South Pacific*. Essays by Pacific writers.

Bronwyn Dalley & Margaret Tennant, editors. *Past Judgement: Social Policy in New Zealand History*. Essays by a range of writers covering, among others, religious contributions to social policy and the role of the voluntary sector.

Guide to Local Government in New Zealand 2004, produced by Decisionmaker Pub