



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”.

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May 2005

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OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT:

Greetings

On April Fools day I flew off to Australia for the Methodist Consultative Council of the Pacific (MCCP) which met in Queensland. "I look upon the world as my parish" is the phrase inscribed on John Wesley's memorial in Westminster Abbey. Director of Australia's Uniting International Mission, Rev Bill Fischer, used this quote in his opening address, to lead into the meeting theme of "Connecting in Mission". The leaders explored their common mission in the context of their shared heritage.

A highlight for me was visiting and preaching at the Albert Street, Uniting Church in the heart of Brisbane City. It is the former Central Methodist Church in Queensland and is the base of the Wesley Mission. I met with 3 of the 7 member ministry team and had the opportunity to meet with other key personnel. I found the seven days together with the presidents and national church leaders of the Methodist and United Churches from Tonga, Samoa, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Australia very valuable in building relationships and learning about the issues as well visiting mission ventures. I had to field questions about our "Memorandum of Understanding" covering the ordination of ministers and our approach to the Civil Union legislation. I came back with a strong desire to see our Church take a turn at hosting this meeting in 2007.

I traveled back to Hamilton to attend the Council of Conference meeting and unexpectedly had the opportunity to attend worship at St John's Church Hamilton East. This is where my parents were members when I was born and the place I spent the first 2 years of my life. I had the opportunity to meet the English speaking, Fijian and Tongan congregations. The following weekend I had the good fortune to be able to attend the 150th anniversary of the Crossroads Methodist Church in Papakura. It was encouraging to be part of the congregation as within 24 hours, they told their history in pageant with stories and hymns from each generation, shared laughs, food and worship, as a vibrant multi ethnic, multi-cultural community that is the Methodist Church, Te Haahi Weteriana, in so many places today.

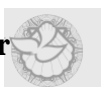
On Sunday 24th I led worship on the day before ANZAC Day at St Lukes Church, Pukerua Bay. This is the church that the Rev Dr Frank and Nola Hanson oversee. We celebrated the accreditation of Noel Dowrick as a Lay Preacher. A number of the lay preachers from the Wellington region were present along and the Vice President-Elect Mary West and her husband Rev Peter West who were visiting.

The last week end of April saw me at Chosen Valley, Drury, South Auckland at a camp with a group of Evangelical Network folk from Christchurch, Whangarei, Auckland, Gisborne, Wellington and Waikato. On the Sunday morning it was good to be able to go and celebrate the first birthday of the Meadowlands Methodist Community Church. This is another vibrant multi ethnic, multi-cultural church. But this one had something extra – Bugs the Bible Bunny. I would like to catch Bugs and bring him back to Upper Hutt – maybe next time.

To all those who have shared themselves, their homes and churches with me as I travel, a big thank you for your hospitality and support. It is much appreciated. I have reached the half-way point in my presidential year well and a lot stronger than when I commenced.

Grace and Peace be with you,

Ron



A MESSAGE FROM THE VICE-PRESIDENT:

If variety is the spice of life then I am certainly being 'spiced' this year with each month providing new and different experiences!

Together with President Ron I attended the Council of Conference meeting at Te Rahui Marae in Hamilton on the 8th and 9th April. It was great to be part of the Council of Conference again and in a new capacity. I have experienced it from the perspective of a member, the co-convenor, and elder and now Vice President. The positive way this meeting's process has evolved over the years is a great tribute to the willingness and openness of the members of both partners. In my opinion it is one of the best meetings our church holds and partnership means exactly that as the agenda items are considered and theological issues grappled with. Please remember to pray for the Council of Conference members, the work they engage in, and the guidance they offer the Connexion.

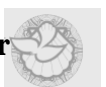
On Sat 16th April, Helen and I together with President Ron attended Papakura's 150th Anniversary Celebrations. The parish presented a journey through the years using drama and relevant hymns and songs from each decade. A wonderful formula for joyfully and entertainingly recalling events from the past. The humorous skits presented during the banquet continued to draw on the acting talents of members and evoke hearty laughter from those present. "Me too!" It was a wonderful celebration, congratulation Papakura!

Sun 28th and Sun 29th I was in Blenheim and shared worship with the English speaking Congregation on Sun morning. This was followed by a conversation about the Connexion and a luncheon. In the afternoon I attended part of the Tongan Fellowship service and had a time of sharing with them.

My final effort for the month was going to Christchurch to attend a meeting of the Methodist Connexional Property Committee, formally known as CB&L. This meeting was a follow on to the CB & L Review that was conducted last year. The meeting worked on the issue of the theology of property and suggested some possible ways of managing and using church property in the future. It was a most worthwhile time of sharing and a further meeting will be held before too long to draw some conclusions to offer to the church for consideration.

So endeth my sharing for the month of April, and being 'spiced' is okay! Blessings to you all. 'Be of good cheer!'

Kenneth



A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY:

Connexional Property matters

The Connexional Office has created a new property/insurance department. This department will be led by Greg Wright, executive officer and he will be assisted by James Hubert our newly appointed property/insurance administrator, Leanne Kime, legal assistant, Gail Smith, fund administrator and Noelene Allen, secretary. All property/insurance enquiries should come in the first instance to James, phone: 03 3649429, email: jamesh@methodist.org.nz

The Charities Act 2005

The Charities Act has been passed into law and this will have implications for the Church. Conference 2004 agreed that the Methodist Church would register as a single entity. The Board of Administration is addressing the issues and will keep the church informed. I have included below a summary about the Act prepared by Frank Claridge for this week's Board of Administration meeting:

After a long period of discussion and development the Charities Act 2005 was passed by Parliament and received Royal Assent in late April. The Act was officially published during the third week in May.

The Act includes virtually all of the changes recommended by the Select Committee as well as a few other "tidying up" changes. It is a big improvement on the original Bill, although in my view, still in need of further amendment in due course.

The Act comes into effect from 1 July 2005, although there are many provisions that will not have practical effect for some time. It is likely to be well into 2006 before the Commission will be able to receive applications for registration. In the meantime, current taxation exemptions continue.

The Commission has been established as an autonomous Crown Entity with two main functions:

- *to provide an educational and support role to the charitable sector;*
- *to register charitable organizations and monitor their activities to ensure that they continue to be charitable in nature.*

The income tax legislation will eventually provide a tax exemption only for registered charities.

It is expected that the legislation, and the Commission will provide benefits to the charitable sector through:

- *improving the credibility of charities, and the extent of public trust in them;*
- *encourage best practice in governance and management in charities;*
- *provide information, statistical data and policy advice on appropriate issues for the government;*
- *promote research into issues that are relevant to the sector.*

Responsibility for the Commission and the administration of the Act is moving from the Ministry of Economic Development to the Department of Internal Affairs. The process for the selection and appointment of the members of the Commission is now well advanced. There were almost 400 indications of interest in these appointments, so the first Commission should be well balanced and well-experienced in the sector.

Work is continuing on the drafting of the associated Regulations. An undertaking has been given that these will be available in draft form for consultation. Now that Cabinet decisions have been made and published on the level of fees to be charged, the main content of the Regulations will be around the registration and return forms to be completed.

The Act now contains provisions that enable an organisation with many parts, such as the Methodist Church of New Zealand to register each of those parts separately, or as a single "group" entity. While this introduces some fresh issues of its own, it is an improvement on the original provision.

There will be a number of initiatives taken, by the Commission, by the government, and by various organizations in the sector to raise public awareness of the Act and of the requirements that we, along with other organizations will need to meet. We will have some compliance costs, but these should not be as great as had been feared.



The Ministry of Economic Development continues to have responsibility for the Review of the Financial Reporting Act 1993. It is clear that it is the intention of the authors of this review to determine many of the reporting provisions and standards that apply to registered charities and to amend the 2005 Act should that be necessary to achieve their objectives. It continues to be my view that it should be the Charities Regulations that determine which charities need to report, and what they need to report. That would leave the amended Financial Reporting Act to set up the mechanism whereby the standard to which they are required to report should be determined. This is likely to be through a set of reporting standards developed by the Accounting Standards Review Board, which does appear to be the appropriate place for the detailed standards to be set.

It was with sadness that in April I reported the early retirement of Ruth Le Couteur after 21 years of loyal and committed service to the Church through work in the Connexional Office. Ruth has resigned because of ill health and this took effect on Friday 15 April, 2005. During her 21 years Ruth served in many capacities – Accountant, Provident Society Executive Officer, Church Building and Loan Fund Executive Officer, Kingswood Trust Secretary, Women’s Fellowship and Smethurst Financial Advisor and others. The NZ Church was also thrilled when Ruth was elected Treasurer for the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Women a position she served in with distinction. Her advice to the Federation is still sought and valued.

Any contributions towards a gift may be sent to the General Secretary, PO Box 931 Christchurch. We are also putting together a book of letters of appreciation which may be sent to the same address.

Wesley College request:

Ian Faulkner, Principal of Wesley College, is trying to put together a class set of the book “The John Wesley Story” published in 1987 by Foundry Press. A copy was distributed to every Parish. If anyone has a copy they would be willing to donate to the school please send to: The Principal, Wesley College, PO Box 58, Pukekohe.

Jill

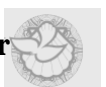
NEWS FROM COUNCIL OF CONFERENCE

The Council of Conference met in Hamilton on Friday 8 and Saturday 9 April, 2005.

The meeting opened with a reflection on the Theology of Ministry led by Mary Caygill and Diana Tana.

Council:

- Noted that the Decade to overcome violence programme was important in the life of Te Haahi.
- Received a report from CCANZ re process of winding up and informing the Church of the appointment of Max Reid to the Presidium until September
- Affirmed Jill van de Geer and Mary Caygill as Te Haahi representatives to the World Methodist Conference in Seoul, 2006
- Encourages Parishes and Rohe to purchase the DVD of the January Youth Conference, watch it and take the resolutions seriously.
- Noted the process for the appointment of Superintendent/Director, Wesley Community Action is underway.
- Affirmed the Board of ministry in the directions it is taking
- Appointed Diana Tana and Terry Wall to the Marsden Cross Trust Board.
- Received the report of the Budget task group and approved their recommendations
- As a group watched the funeral mass for the Pope John Paul II.



THE CHURCH & CIVIL UNIONS

The following discussion is from the Faith and Order Committee. To facilitate open discussion the following questions can be asked:

1. Do we still expect the Churches public representatives who are in a heterosexual relationship to be married?
2. Are the issues concerning Civil Unions identical for both heterosexual and gay/lesbian couples?
3. How could we contract Civil Unions on church premises and maintain some obvious difference between the Christian marriage service and a Civil Union ceremony?
4. Contracting Civil Unions in church would be the fullest way of embracing this legislation, whilst offering a service of blessing might be seen as occupying the middle ground. Can any case be made for the Church having no dealings with Civil Unions?

Civil Unions and The Methodist Church/ Te Hahi Weteriana o Aotearoa

On 14 February 2005 the President, Ron Malpass, put out an interim guide for Methodist presbyters and parishes and co-operative ventures under Methodist oversight concerning Civil Unions. Part of that statement asked Faith and Order Committee to provide parishes, rohe and synods with material to enable further theological reflection to take place between now and Conference. Conference 2005 will either endorse or amend the interim guidelines.

The following statement is the first contribution from the Faith and Order Committee. We anticipate that the committee will have a variety of views as can be found in the church generally, so the next contribution will take a different line. So for now, here is an opening discussion starter.

What's the issue?

What is this new form of legalised relationship called the Civil Union and how will it fit with existing forms of relationship such as marriage and de facto couples? Are the issues identical for heterosexual Unions and gay/lesbian ones? How should the Church respond?

Let us start with the more familiar territory - marriage and find some guiding principles from there.

Principles of Marriage

"God's act of creation is an act of love, and every act of love is a call for a return of love. Love is, therefore, our first and fundamental vocation...Marriage can do no more than offer the opportunity, but it does this better than any other relationship on earth." (Geoffrey Robinson Marriage, Divorce and Nullity, , Chapman Books, London 1985)

Human beings are created as an act of love and have a universal, existential need both to give love and to receive it. Being physical and social beings, this manifests itself in the majority of people seeking that love in an intimate physical, social, emotional and spiritual relationship with another person. Single people have the same need but may find that other networks of loving, though less intimate, relationships satisfy this universal human craving.

The fundamental principles of marriage that are so familiar to us are:

- The relationship is based on mutual attraction and seeks to express, maintain and deepen a bond of love.
- The relationship is faithful.
- Commitment is unreserved in scope and time.



- The relationship aspires to permanence.

Lust without love, violence, coercion and subservience have no part in the ideal of marriage or of any loving relationship, even if our sinful world often falls short of this ideal.

In Christian tradition such principles make marriage the most appropriate environment for the nurturing of children and the Church may continue to say that marriage is the most appropriate form of relationship between a man and a woman to reflect the essence of true love. Certainly, many Christians may want to continue to insist that the Church's public representatives should be married if they are in a sexual, loving relationship.

Civil Unions and de facto couples

So how should the Church respond to de facto couples living together and this new category of those in a Civil Union?

Clearly, such relationships display some if not many of the principles outlined already in relation to marriage. However, they are not marriage; they deliberately set out to be something other than marriage. Christians may want to say that whilst these relationships may bear resemblance to marriage in many ways, both de facto and Civil Union relationships "don't go as far" as marriage.

This could well mean that the Church welcomes such relationships in so far as any relationship based on love is to be treasured and supported, but the Church continues to urge couples to consider the even fuller commitment of marriage.

Obviously, adulterous relationships and serial monogamy (a repeated pattern of faithful but short-lived relationships) are an inappropriate expression of what the Church understands of the nature of true love.

Gay/Lesbian Civil Unions

Is there a good reason why the same principles should not apply? Stating it as neutrally as possible – gay and lesbian people can only find such sexual, physical and emotional satisfaction with members of the same sex. But are the basic needs in all other respects not the same as those operating in heterosexual hearts? If "Love is our first and fundamental vocation" as human beings and love finds its expression in physical, social and spiritual union with another person, then logically the Church might want to encourage faithful, committed, loving, permanent relationships in the gay/lesbian communities also. If this argument is accepted, the Church may well enthusiastically endorse the provision of Civil Unions as providing a legal and social framework for such loving relationships.

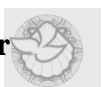
(Some Christians might wish to go further and make the case for allowing gay/lesbian marriage. Other Christians would wish to keep marriage as a uniquely heterosexual expression of love that has its own obviously unique standing in its natural ability to bear new life. However, gay/lesbian marriage is another debate. This debate concerns Civil Unions).

Conducting Civil Unions in Church

Germane to the Civil Union debate in parliament last year was the argument that the Civil Union Bill does not establish gay/lesbian marriage. Marriage continues to be a legal provision open only to heterosexual couples.

A secondary aspect that is easily overlooked, is that the legislation is for *Civil* Union. Parliament has not assumed to legislate for the Church. The various Christian groups retain their freedom to establish their own theological positions.

However, should it be possible for representatives of the Church on church premises to conduct such ceremonies? The idea that representative people such as presbyters can lay aside such a mantle at will and conduct ceremonies as private individuals is hardly consonant with our theology and practice of ordination. The dilemma becomes even more acute if such ceremonies are conducted on church premises.



Could it be argued that to conduct such civil ceremonies on church premises, presided over by a representative person of the Church, changes the ceremony from being “civil” into a “religious” act? Does it not also run the risk of making the “union” appear to be “marriage”?

A useful parallel may be seen in the forthcoming marriage of Prince Charles. The marriage is to be a civil one. This means it must be held on civil (not Church) premises and presided over by a representative of the State (local registrar) and not of the Church. If Church involvement at this point would inevitably make the marriage lose any claim to be a “civil” ceremony, should we not apply the same logic in New Zealand with *Civil Unions*?

However, just as the archbishop of Canterbury will subsequently bless Prince Charles’ marriage at the chapel in Windsor castle to demonstrate the Church’s acceptance of the validity of state-conducted marriage and to show pastoral care and support for those who have been so married, could it not therefore be argued:

- That the Church should not conduct Civil Unions, either by allowing its premises to be so used or allowing its authorised representatives (presbyters/deacons/lay preachers/minita a iwi) to conduct such ceremonies.
- That the Church allow appropriate blessing services on church premises to be conducted by any authorised worship leader.

24 March 2005 on behalf the Faith and Order Committee

CONNEXIONAL BITS ‘N PIECES

LAW BOOK AMENDMENTS

If you haven’t received your copy of the amendments for 2005, please contact Viki on (03) 364 9427 or email vikif@methodist.org.nz and a copy will be sent.

PAC APPLICATIONS

These need to be received by **30 June**.
Please send these to the Connexional Office, P O Box 931, Christchurch.



NZ WOMEN'S METHODIST FELLOWSHIP



The Methodist Church of New Zealand
Te Hahi Weteriana O Aotearoa

SMETHURST TRUST FUND ADMINISTERED BY THE NEW ZEALAND METHODIST WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

APPLICATION FORM: (Revised 2005) Only current application forms accepted.

Fill in this form using black pen and send relevant information with TWO current References to:

Mrs Mary West
Convenor Smethurst Committee
8 Sherwood Drive
HAMILTON
Ph: (07) 850 5711 maryw@west.net.nz

IMPORTANT

This application will be acknowledged only if you enclose a stamped self-addressed envelope.

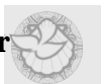
REFERENCES: (each on a single A4 sheet, one side only, black pen/typed).

Current references supporting your application are required from:

- (i) Your Presbyter/Minister or District Superintendent
 - (ii) Another person
- Neither of whom should be related to you.*

NOTES:

Each application must be for ONE PERSON only. Decisions are made in April, July and November. Applications will be returned for resubmission, deferred or declined, if insufficient information is given. Where assistance is required for more than ONE YEAR, applicants will need to reapply each year. If applying for a grant for continuation of a course of study, applicant MUST submit a copy of grades achieved to date for such course.





The Methodist Church of New Zealand
Te Hahi Weteriana O Aotearoa

SMETHURST TRUST FUND
ADMINISTERED BY THE NEW ZEALAND METHODIST
WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Application for:

Miss/Mrs/Ms/Rev/Dr/Deacon _____
(Please circle one) (Christian Names) (Family Name)

Address: _____

Phone number: _____ **Email:** _____

Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Occupation: _____ **No. of dependants:** ____

Marital Status: _____ **Children:** _____

1. Have you applied for assistance previously from Smethurst? Y / N
If 'Yes' - under what name? _____

2. Are you applying for assistance for yourself? Y / N

3. For what reason do you require financial support? Circle appropriate reason:

Course of study / Conference / Seminar / Workshop / Other

If 'Other' please specify clearly: _____

Total cost involved: \$NZ _____

Assistance requested from Smethurst: \$NZ _____

Breakdown of costs: Travel \$NZ _____ Course \$NZ _____ Other \$NZ _____

N.B. Assistance towards travel cost will only be given for the cheapest fares.

4. Are you applying for any other assistance? Y / N

If 'Yes' please specify source(s) and amount: _____

5. Are you eligible for Student Allowance(s)? Y / N

If 'Yes' please give details and amount(s), etc: _____

6. Have you received any other assistance? Y / N

If 'Yes' please specify source(s) and amount: _____



7. Are you in full-time paid employment? Y / N
 Are you in part-time paid employment? Y / N
8. Are you actively involved in a Methodist Parish or Uniting Congregations within the Connexion?
 Please give name of Parish: _____
9. The Methodist Church offers a variety of courses. Have you explored these options? Y / N

Please give details of the course, seminar, etc for which assistance is required:

Name of Course: _____

Place of study/event: _____

Write in your own words why you are making this application. To help the Committee please include information about yourself, family and financial situation, and the way you see your experience relating to the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa. (Use additional A4 page if necessary).

N.B. CLOSING DATES for receipt of applications: **20 March, 20 June, 20 October**

Late applications will not be considered. In the event of your course/study/travel not eventuating please return the grant promptly.

The Committee request a progress report or reflection at the conclusion of the course/event.

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

Names and addresses of those supplying References must accompany this application

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Email: _____
 Relationship to applicant:

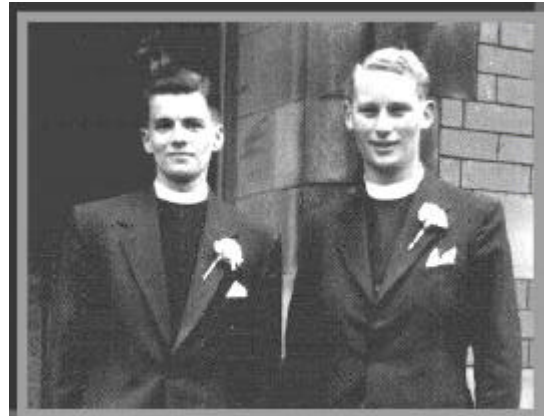
 _____</p> | <p>2. Name: _____
 Address: _____

 Email: _____
 Relationship to applicant:

 _____</p> |
|--|--|

Old Friends...

My name is John Goode. I live in retirement in the UK. In the 1950's I was a student at Richmond Theological College, London as a Methodist Minister that I first met John Ziesler of the New Zealand Methodist Church. During our three years of training, we formed a firm friendship and when, in 1958 Pat and I were married, John was our Best Man and remained my best friend.



For one reason or another we lost contact with each other in the following years even though John was very much involved in the theological training of student Ministers here in the UK and I was involved in the ecumenical movement.

It was in the year 2004 that we re-established contact when we discovered we lived within about 70 miles of each other. Neither of us now belong to the Methodist Church but our memories and experiences remain with us after all these years.

It was through establishing some contact with you that this reunion was made possible. We are the first to accept that this is not a world shattering event - but it has brought great pleasure to us. I am hoping this year to meet Sally, John's wife and former daughter of the Manse so what a very small world we inhabit!

Many thanks to you. I enjoy reading about the Church in NZ which I always hoped to visit one day but which has remained as far away as ever.

Good wishes to you
John

Music Resource for Funerals

Only 10 CDs left of the Waikato Waiariki production *Journey On*. This CD is designed for ministers to give to families as they prepare for a funeral service. The double CD contains the music to 13 traditional hymns and the music with singing of 13 contemporary songs or new words to go with well known music. It is accompanied by a booklet with full set of words.

The aim of the project is to begin to expand the range of music used at funerals and to help families think beyond the very traditional selections.

Available from Bonnie Heberton at bonhomie@clear.net.nz \$36.15 inc postage.

Get your copy now.

World Methodist Conference 20-24 July 2006

Seoul, South Korea

The 19th World Methodist Conference will be held 20-24 July at the Kumnan Methodist Church in Seoul, South Korea. The theme of the conference is *"God in Christ Reconciling"* The Methodist Church of New Zealand is entitled to send 30 delegates.

The conference, held every five years, brings together representatives from around the world who share a Methodist/Wesleyan heritage. Delegates will have the opportunity to meet and hear a range of speakers, engage in dialogue with others from around the world, worship together and explore the joys and challenges facing the church and its mission in today's world.

Expressions of interest in attending this conference are now invited. Delegates will have to meet all costs themselves. This includes air fares, accommodation, registration and meals.

Please register your interest by posting the following details:

Name
Address
Telephone number
Fax number
E-mail address

To:

John Roberts
Methodist Mission and Ecumenical Secretary
22A Penney Avenue
Mt Roskill
Auckland 1004

By 31 May 2005

The names of those interested in attending will be considered by Methodist Mission and Ecumenical and shared with Council of Conference. You will be advised of the outcome of the selection process. The details of those selected will then be forwarded to the World Methodist Council Office in the USA who will issue official invitations and provide information about the conference, registration procedures, accommodation etc.

Newsletter

May 2004

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

Building communities of peace for all

**Christian Conference of Asia General Assembly Chiang Mai, Thailand
31 March to 5 April 2005**

The General Assembly of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) is a once in five years event when representatives of churches in Asia, and their guests, gather for worship, bible study, fellowship, sharing and mutual enrichment, as well as to review programmes and set new directions.

500 people gathered for the twelfth general assembly in Chiang Mai, Thailand, a predominantly Buddhist city and country. They celebrated the ecumenical journey in Asia, around the theme "Building communities of peace for all." A significant feature of the assembly is the D T Niles memorial lectures which focused on the assembly theme. John Roberts attended as delegate of the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

Peace and the churches

CCA general secretary, Ahn Jae Woong, in presenting his report stated that being ecumenical is about "building communities of peace for all"; that justice, reconciliation and non-violence are components of peace. A focus on peace-building requires: respect for life, rejection of violence, resolution of conflict, promotion of a just-peace, protection of human rights, and preservation of common values.

Dr James Haire from the Uniting Church in Australia in his D T Niles Memorial Lecture called for churches to model a fully harmonious and peaceful community and to celebrate peace. "The way we express theology, the way in which we preach, the ways in which we engage in community services, the way we live, need to express peace."

Peace and other faiths

The Thai Prime Minister, Dr Thakshin Shinawatra, (a Buddhist) on his visit to the assembly stated that on reading Karen Armstrong's book, "A History of God" he had been impressed that peace-making and peace-keeping are indispensable elements in the teachings and aspirations of all the major world religions. Commenting on the assembly theme, the prime minister said peace is an important theme and goal for all religions. "If peoples from different religions and cultural backgrounds and traditions can meet together to discuss their differences as well as similarities, the end result will be the emergence of a peaceful and harmonious society."

Two members of other faith traditions addressed the theme in another of the Niles Memorial Lectures. Swami Agnivesh, a social, spiritual, and human activist from India with a Hindu background, spoke of spirituality, stating it "is not just doing meditation or feeling good about oneself, but getting involved in social problems and issues." He saw spirituality and social activism as two sides of the same coin. Dr Ashgar Ali Engineer, an Islamic scholar and social activist, also from India said, "Faith in religious values is the only way to build communities of peace for all. However instead of putting faith in values, religious rituals are given importance and that seems to be one of the causes of increased violence and intolerance in our societies."

DOV Asia focus

The launch of the "Decade to Overcome Violence (DOV) Focus on Asia" under the theme "Building Communities of Peace for All" will highlight and affirm Asian churches' efforts to achieve peace in the



context of religious and ethnic diversity. Leading the launch was Hansulrich Gerber, World Council of Churches (WCC) DOV coordinator, with “living letters” representatives from the USA WCC office and the WCC DOV reference group. The CCA’s DOV Focus on Asia coordinator, Hope Antone, said, “The DOV concern is not going to be an independent programme, but will permeate the life and work of CCA and the churches in Asia.”

Public issues

CCA assemblies also make statements on public issues. The statement adopted by this assembly stated: “We heed the call of Christ to serve the causes of justice and peace. In doing so we affirm the need to stand alongside the poor the deprived and the oppressed in the struggle to claim the right to abundant life. We raise our prophetic concern on certain issues and resolve to address them in every way we can.”

The issues included globalisation and empire building; violence, peoples security and welfare; post-tsunami healing and reconstruction. The statement affirmed the sacredness of life and the conversion of exploitative and repressive structures into tools of healing and reconciliation.

The ecumenical future

In his Niles Memorial Lecture, Dr Sam Kobia, General Secretary of the WCC, said that ecumenical organisations are struggling to survive. In addressing the ecumenical future he stated that, “It is not just ecumenical structures that need to be addressed, but also the content of ecumenism.” He asked, “Do we broaden the fellowship at the expense of commitments required in today’s polarised world?” Kobia saw overcoming violence as a new opportunity for the ecumenical movement. DOV, he said, could be an instrument that opens new possibilities and new ways of being ecumenical.

Kobia acknowledged that Asia needs a wider ecumenism that takes account of other religious traditions. “Building relationships across religious communities is a necessary step on the road to a wider ecumenism.” The ecumenical movement, he said, needs to be part of the ferment for change that will enable churches to encounter and engage with the issues and challenges facing our world today.

Looking ahead

The CCA has four programme areas: General Secretariat; Faith, Mission and Unity; Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service; Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice and Youth Empowerment. Activity in each of these areas was reviewed at the assembly and future directions set with clear mandates and priorities.

CCA is to have a new general secretary. Dr Prawate Khid-Arn will replace Dr Ahn Jae Woong who retires in September 2005. Khid-Arn is a Thai who studied at Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thammasat University in Bangkok and subsequently in the Philippines. He was a teacher at Payap University before joining the staff of CCA as executive secretary for development and service.

The CCA office currently based in Hong Kong is to be relocated to Chiang Mai, Thailand. The Church of Christ in Thailand will provide land for CCA to build on as well as provide other relocation assistance.

Pamela Tankersley (Presbyterian) was appointed to the new CCA General Committee, Donald Tamihere (Anglican) to the Programme Committee for Faith, Mission and Unity, and Judith McKinley (Presbyterian) for Ecumenical Formation, Gender Justice and Youth Empowerment.



SPIRITUAL GROWTH MINISTRIES TRUST

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Applications close 20th August 2005.

Disability Awareness Sunday

Since the first Disability Awareness Sunday service was held in 1994, this special day has been observed by an increasing number of churches in many denominations.

This year the annual Auckland wide celebration on the third Sunday of June will not be held as **every** congregation is encouraged to raise disability awareness on or near that date. Even a few minutes are better than nothing and many churches are glad they make the effort.

Whether you are organising your own service or a combined one in other centres feel free to contact the 'Christian Ministries With Disabled Trust' for a booklet of ideas.

We can send the booklet as a PDF attachment if you contact us by email.

C.M.W.D.T.

Ph/fax 09 636 4763 or

PO Box 13 322,

Onehunga,

Auckland.

E-mail: cmwdt@clear.org.nz

Leila Corban

Community Liaison Officer for CMWDT



WELLINGTON THEOLOGICAL CONSORTIUM

2005 COLLOQUIUM

GOSPEL, CULTURE AND PUBLIC POLICY

- - 9 July 2005 - -

Venue: Central Wellington. *Our hosts and sponsors will be Gordon Copeland M.P., the Hon. Bill English M.P., and the Hon. Marian Hobbs M.P.*

Time:

- 9.15 a.m. Welcome & Introduction
- 9.30 – 10.25 Session 1
The Gospel as public truth in a pluralist world: the contribution of Lesslie Newbigin
Gavin Drew (Bible College of New Zealand)
- 10.30 Morning Tea
- 10.45 – 11.40 Session 2
The early church: Gospel continuity and adaptation in the Gentile context
Paul Trebilco (University of Otago Religious Studies Dept)
- 11.45 – 12.45 Session 3
Wiremu Tamihana, Maori Christianity and Government policy in 19th Century Aotearoa New Zealand: implications for today
Duncan Roper (University of West Sydney & Tamihana Foundation)
- 12.45 - 1.30 *Lunch*
- 1.30 – 2.25 Session 4
What language shall I borrow? The bilingual dilemmas of public theology
Chris Marshall (Victoria University Religious Studies Programme)
- 2.30 – 3.25 Session 5
The Churches as policy advocates in the NZ public arena
Campbell Roberts (Salvation Army Social Policy and Parliamentary Unit)
- 3.30 – 4.00 *Afternoon Tea*
- 4.00 – 5.00 Session 6
Panel and general forum

- - - - Please note: Prior registration is essential. No door registrations. - - - -

Cost: (including lunch and morning and afternoon teas) **\$45** waged / **\$30** unwaged

For more information or to register formally, please contact:

John Kleinsman (04) 496 1714 j.kleinsman@wn.catholic.org.nz

REGISTRATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BEFORE WEDNESDAY 29 JUNE 2005

WELLINGTON THEOLOGICAL CONSORTIUM

The Wellington Theological Consortium consists of a partnership between the Bible College of New Zealand (Wellington), Booth College of Mission (Salvation Army), the Wellington Catholic Education Centre, and the Wellington Institute of Theology (Anglican) for the purposes of advancing the intellectual exploration of Christian faith and mission.



2005 COLLOQUIUM
GOSPEL, CULTURE AND PUBLIC
POLICY

REGISTRATION FORM

NAME: _____
(Please Print)

PREFERRED TITLE: Mrs / Ms / Mr / Rev / Dr

ORGANISATION: _____

CONTACT ADDRESS

PHONE: (WORK) _____

PHONE: (HOME) _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

PLEASE ENCLOSE CHEQUE FOR - \$45 (WAGED) \$25 (UNWAGED)

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO:

The Wellington Theological Consortium

PLEASE POST COMPLETED REGISTRATION FORM + CHEQUE TO:

*The Wellington Theological Consortium
c/- Wellington Catholic Education Centre
PO Box 1937
Wellington*

- - - - Please note: Prior registration is essential. No door registrations. - - - -

REGISTRATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BEFORE WEDNESDAY 29 JUNE 2005

Once you have registered, you will receive a formal invitation



AMENDMENTS to the YEARBOOK

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MISSION RESOURCING:

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St Paul's Union Church and Family Centre

PO Box 11, Pahiatua
Business phone: (06) 376 8680

St James Union Church, Woodville

c/o Jim and Jenny Worboys
Woodlands Road, Woodville.

