



# e-messenger

The Methodist Church of New Zealand ~ Te Hāhi 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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# OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

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## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

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### Greetings

This past month started with August District Synod's meeting. I was pleased to be able to join the people of Otago / Southland in Invercargill as they did their part of the business of the Church as we move toward Conference 2005. On Sunday 7th I preached in the service of the Invercargill parish, in the very fine Lindisfarne Worship and Community Centre. It has to be the best equipped and most functional modern Methodist centre I have visited this year. A full church and a sit-down roast dinner on site to follow, to raise money for a family with specific humanitarian needs, showed this congregation's welcoming and caring Christian community spirit. In the evening I attended the 25<sup>th</sup> annual Invercargill Festival of Praise, when nine church choirs and singing groups from across the denominations, met to share items and congregational hymn singing. A marvellously warm way to spend a cool winter evening. My special thanks to Rev Motekiai Fakatau and his family for their hospitality.

The following weekend I was on the West Coast. Catching up with people I had not seen for 40 years was followed on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> by a lunch meeting with around 30 folk at the St Andrews Uniting Church in Hokitika. I also got to sit next to my Standard One, Bamford Primary School teacher, now a retired Presbyterian minister, Gladys Stiles. In the afternoon I travelled up to Westport. On Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> I preached at the combined 11am service of the Buller Union congregation and the Westport Apostolic congregation, which now shares the Union Church building. The Union congregation is small and aging, while the Apostolic is mainly young families and youth, so it is a mutually supportive arrangement. Whitebait fritters were a delightful inclusion in the shared lunch that followed. On Monday night I met with some of the leaders of the Reefton District Union Parish for tea, a discussion and prayer meeting. This group is in very good heart and they are seen to be "the family church" within their community. This however places extra demands on the leadership. They are currently undertaking the 40 Days of Purpose programme and have an active outreach to young people. The following day, Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> August, I visited the Greymouth District Uniting Parish for the regular meeting of the West Coast Union District Council. Following this I was interviewed by the Greymouth Evening Star and met with the members of the Parish Council over dinner. This was an important visit for me, to see these small but vital congregations continuing their witness successfully using different ministry models. I was also able to reconnect with my roots and I visited the graves of my great grandparents, grandparents, and other relatives as I travelled or stopped at places of significance in my own spiritual journey. My thanks to all those on "the Coast" who shared, fed, talked or prayed with me as I travelled.

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> vice president Kenneth and I spent with the deacons at their convocation at Clark's Beach on the Manukau Harbour. From the powhiri when we arrived until our departure after watching the training of the animals we see in some of our television advertisements, it was a time of learning, laughs, reading, talking and warm fellowship. To the 25 or so folk who shared this time with us thank you for the invitation.

This week from Monday 29<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> I have been chairing the meeting of the Tauivi Strategy and Stationing Committee as we have carried out work of vital importance in the lives of a number of our presbyters, their families and our parishes. For the third time this year, I was part of a gathering within the Church when there has been for me, a significant time of visioning as people have shared and it has been possible to glimpse what the Methodist Church of the future might look like.

Grace and Peace

*Ron*



## A MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT

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Greetings to all readers!

August was a mainly close to home month, but not so much that I spent more time in the parish than has become the norm.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> I had a brief visit to Red Beach on my way to Manly where I took part in the service and ran a session on Pastoral Visiting in the afternoon. Jan Chamberlain had written a new Hymn which was sung for the first time and picked up the theme of the day so that was a surprise.

The following Sunday I took part in the service at Northcote and after lunch officially opened their new parsonage. This parish is really on a roll at present and the new parsonage is indicative of the hopeful future they see before them. Jane Waugh, the Architect, designed a superb house and the building contractor has done a superb job. Well done to all concerned, including the Connexion, and the Auckland Property Committee, but especially the Northcote Parish and their Presbyter Leatuao.

From Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> until Wed 24<sup>th</sup>, with President Ron, I attended the Diakonea Convocation at Clarkes Beach. It was an interesting time meeting up with folk who had been Deaconesses in times past and those who are currently Deacons. There were two excellent sessions run by John Roberts, (Mission and Ecumenical) and Nelma Woodfield (Women's Fellowship). The warmth and good humour of all present made for an enjoyable time of learning and relaxation. Many thanks to the organizers of this years Convocation and for the spot on meals!

Fri 26<sup>th</sup> I was delighted to be able to join with members of the Mission and Ecumenical Committee for their meeting at Penrose. As always John Roberts was on the ball with his information sharing and he and Keith Hopner conducted an excellent meeting. The variety of the work that John engages in on our behalf as a Church is quite amazing. It was encouraging to hear about the way in which the financial resources we share with the church in places like Rarongo is received and used. The job John does looks big size to me and we are fortunate to have such a competent Secretary and Committee working on behalf of the Connexion. Diana Roberts supplied an evening meal of the kind that I could easily become accustomed too.

Mt Albert appeared to survive my visit on Sun 28<sup>th</sup>. How wonderful to have a choir and a pipe organ enhancing worship. Helen and I were warmly welcomed and many thanks to Kate for her kindness in sitting with Helen and looking after her at morning tea.

Tauwiwi Strategy and Stationing Committee meeting held in Wellington Mon 21<sup>st</sup> to Wed 31<sup>st</sup> was my one journey out of the Auckland region for the month. As always an interesting meeting and one that continually grapples with the issue of formulating and actioning a strategy to carry the Connexion into the future and also the issue of staffing for the future. A hard working committee that doesn't hit the parishes' radar screens that often. They deserve a big thank you from all of us.

Kindest regards and God Bless,

*Kenneth*



# NEWS FROM AROUND THE CONNEXION

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## **Announcement from Methodist Mission Northern**

We are pleased to announce that yesterday (August 24<sup>th</sup> 2005) the sale of the Mission's residential care services to New Zealand Life Care Limited (NZLC) was completed.

Early yesterday morning we marked the handover (Te Tuku) of our three residential villages - Wesley Village in Mt Eden, Everil Orr Village in Mt Albert and Franklin Village in Pukekohe - with a ceremony at Everil Orr Village.

The sale of the businesses was the culmination of considerable conversation, planning and negotiation.

The ceremony also marked the beginning of a significant partnership which will see the expertise of both Methodist Mission Northern and NZLC coming together to enhance the quality of life of residents.

In handing over the management of our residential villages to NZLC, we are entrusting them with the care of the residents in the hospitals and rest homes. In the ongoing partnership the Mission will continue to provide chaplaincy services, social work support and additional ancillary services. Volunteers will continue to play an important role in the care and socialisation of residents.

The land and buildings remain in the stewardship of the Mission and will, over time, be further developed.

The new vision is to create facilities which become best practice models of care, recognised not only for their care but also for their innovative approach to the overall well-being of older people and their families.

Earlier in the week, the Mission hosted gatherings at each Village for the residents, employees and volunteers. The dedication of all the employees, both past and present, over many years, was acknowledged and the 'passing of the baton' was marked with the blessing and giving of a taonga (The Three Baskets of Knowledge, Nga kete o te Wananga) to the residents and employees of Wesley, Everil Orr and Franklin Villages.

This marks the conclusion of a significant chapter in the history of Methodist Mission Northern.  
Keith Taylor  
Superintendent

## **Hearing and Reading the Word**

Ivan Whyte is passionate about clear communication. He has years of experience in teaching, listening and lay preaching. Some time ago, at the request of Colin Gibson, Ivan wrote two articles for the Preacher Magazine offering assistance to those who read the Bible in churches. The booklet discusses the how, what and why of Scripture reading in church. These articles have now been put into book form and are being published by the Auckland Central Parish. The books have been trialled by readers in Ivan's congregation at Mt Eden and have been a very helpful resource.

Copies are available by sending \$4 per copy or \$15 for 5 copies to Book Order ` Auckland Central Parish  
P O Box 68-184  
Newton, Auckland.



## SMETHURST REMINDER

The Last closing date for applications for Smethurst grants for 2005 is October 20th.

If your parish has mislaid application forms the Information sheet and application form are available on the Methodist web site in the MWF section.

We eagerly wait to hear from applicants  
Mary West Convenor  
maryw@west.net.nz

### DEVONPORT METHODIST CHURCH 150TH ANNIVERSARY

Labour Weekend Sat-Sun 22-24 Oct 2005

Programme includes Ferry Ride, Historical Tour, Celebration Concert,  
Worship Service with guest preacher President Ron Malpass,  
Dinner at Devonport Yacht Club

Enquiries: devonportmeth@ihug.co.nz  
Ph: (09)445-6801 or (09)445-0360  
Address: 18 Owens Rd, Devonport, Auckland

## NEW ZEALAND LAY PREACHERS' ASSOCIATION TRAINING DAY & ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Bainbridge Methodist Church, Old Taupo Road, Rotorua

**Saturday 24 September 2005**

**Colin Gibson**, the well-known hymn-writer and composer, is also Editor of the NZLPA magazine *Word and Worship*. He is travelling up from Dunedin to run a workshop on music in worship; this is open to any who would like to join us.

Cost for Training Day and lunch is \$10. Please bring a small plate for morning/afternoon tea

### Programme

**9.30 am** Register for Training Day & hot drinks

**9.45 am** Workshop with Colin Gibson

**11.00 am** Morning Tea

**11.20 am** Workshop with Colin Gibson

**12.45 pm** Lunch

**1.30 pm** AGM

**3.00 pm** Afternoon Tea

### RSVP to register for Training Day by Saturday 17 September to:

Mary Rose, Unit 2, 15 Matai Crescent,  
Putaruru

Apologies for AGM to:  
Viv Whimster, 49 Rimu Street, Tauranga

Epworth Books will be providing us with a bookstall with resources for worship and other helpful background reading.



Life in the Day of..  
Peter Majendie



## EVANGELICAL NETWORK AT CONFERENCE 2005

Peter Majendie will be MC-ing a special event brought to you by the **Evangelical Network of the Methodist Church of New Zealand** for Conference 2005. We have booked The Boardroom, a licensed central city coffee bar at 118 Hereford St, and offer an evening's entertainment and reflection over coffee, a meal, art installations and Peter's unique style of humour, a wry depreciative analysis of why people might prefer a different kind of church.

We guarantee a low-key night you'll enjoy to kick off Conference in a pleasant and - we hope- slightly provocative way.

### A bit about Peter Majendie...

#### INSTALLATIONAL AND CONCEPTUAL ARTIST

Peter and Joyce created large-scale multi-media art installations at Christmas and Easter that attract thousands of people from throughout Christchurch. They appeal to people of all ages and stages and are contemplative and interactive.

Their Side Door alternative church is also contemplative and is usually centred round installational art pieces

Peter has also had a recent art exhibition at a local gallery.

#### EMERGING CHURCH

Peter has run Side Door alternative church for 4 years (see Touchstone article April 2005). These services resonate with a significant number of people, of various ages and Christian experience, who appreciate the contemplative, interactive style offered.

#### STAND-UP COMEDY

An award winning stand-up comedian who has performed for several years in the International Comedy Festival and various other festivals throughout New Zealand.

"A Deaf in the Family" is a reflective view of life as an 8 year old through the eyes of a 50 year old. Powered by his hearing aid batteries, Pete's stories of New Zealand life and culture growing up in the 60's are tinged by deafness and no small amount of cynicism.

Peter has been described as a consummate raconteur and a quirky stand-up storyteller, who looks at everyday events with wry humour.

"..An excellent comedian, who had me rolling with laughter. His anecdotes were hilarious." F\*ink - Fringe Encore, Dunedin 2004

"Certainly engaging...." Christchurch Press

#### FAITH AND ART SPEAKER

Peter has spoken at several churches around the country and in Sydney as well as Parachute and other events.



## Remember in your prayers

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**Jack McKinney** passed away on Friday morning, 26<sup>th</sup> August.

Jack served both the local and wider Church spanning a period of over 63 years during his life. Jack's funeral service was held at St Matthew's Church, 96 Washington Avenue, Brooklyn at 12 noon on Wednesday 31st August, 2005.

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**Mark Stubbs**, son of David and Margaret Stubbs, died suddenly in Sydney on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of August after a long illness.

Mark's funeral was held on the 29th August, and there was also a memorial service in Blenheim on the 2nd September.

Messages of sympathy can be sent to Margaret and David at 51A George Street, Blenheim 7301 or email - [dstubbs@xtra.co.nz](mailto:dstubbs@xtra.co.nz)

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**Sister Lucy Money** died on the 9<sup>th</sup> of September early in the morning at Waikato Hospital.

Her funeral will be at the Morrinsville Methodist Church at a date a time to be determined.

Messages can be sent to her sister Edna Money 22 Willow Grove, Morrinsville.



<sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you *hope* and a *future*.<sup>12</sup> Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. <sup>13</sup> You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

~ Jeremiah 29 ~



# New Zealand Methodist Women's Fellowship

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER - September 2005

Malo E Lelei, Taloha Ni, Nisa Bula Vinaka, Talofa Lava, Kia Ora, Munu Munu Leana and warmest wishes to you all – whatever your mother tongue might be – greetings in the name of Jesus our Lord.

What a wonderful privilege and delight it has been for me to visit in both Waikato / Thames Valley and Taranaki District Fellowships in recent weeks. Thank you to those who made all the arrangements, provided hospitality and also transport. Thanks, too, to everyone who attended the meetings and shared with Margaret, Alison and myself. The warmth of your friendship and sharing really touched our hearts as we felt the joy of being part of our Fellowship family.

Visiting our senior members who are no longer able to attend meetings was a very special time – a privilege and a delight – and we loved hearing their stories of earlier MWF times.

Our hearts have gone out to the people of Tonga over these past few weeks while they have been struggling through such hard times. We pray that problems will be solved and family and village life be restored to normal. May there be better times ahead.

Council meets on 30 September – 2 October at Waiwhetu Uniting Church, Lower Hutt. We are grateful to Hutt Valley MWF members who have offered billets and hope the two days (or rather nights!) will be a happy time for all. Please pray for our Council meeting.

Joy and blessings to you each one  
Nelma Woodfield.

*I have had it said to me that people don't know who we are (i.e. the National Executive) or how to contact us, so here we are:*

### **President:**

Nelma Woodfield 4 Kowhai Grove, Waikanae  
[Nelma.woodfield@paradise.net.nz](mailto:Nelma.woodfield@paradise.net.nz)

### **Vice President Missions:**

Lyn Price 15 McEnRoe Grove, Lower Hutt  
[princenw@clear.net.nz](mailto:princenw@clear.net.nz)

### **Uniting Congregations**

### **World Federation M. & U.C.W. Vice President:**

Rosa Sugrue 47 Manawa Avenue, Raumati Beach (04) 298 3343  
[sugrue@paradise.net.nz](mailto:sugrue@paradise.net.nz)

### **Treasurer:**

Marie Smith 18 Sunny Glen, Waikanae (04) 905 7229  
[donmariesmith@paradise.net.nz](mailto:donmariesmith@paradise.net.nz)





**Corresponding:**

Alison Beeston 23 Rata Street, Waikanae (04) 904 9848  
[abeeston@paradise.net.nz](mailto:abeeston@paradise.net.nz)

**Minute Secretary N.C.W.**

Linda Wilkins 3 Goldsborough Avenue, Raumati (04) 904 8486  
[nzmwf@paradise.net.nz](mailto:nzmwf@paradise.net.nz)

**Distributing Secretary:**

Jean Purchase 33 Ira Street, Miramar, Wellington. (04)388-3545  
[jcavep@xtra.co.nz](mailto:jcavep@xtra.co.nz)

**Missions Programmes Link:**

Adele Forrester 3 Duncraig Grove, Silverstream (04)970-9481

**Liaison Link - Presidents Travel:**

Margaret King 3/13 Ranfurly Street, Upper Hutt (04)528-7283  
[uhup@xtra.co.nz](mailto:uhup@xtra.co.nz)

*'Prayer is a two-way conversation and the most important thing is  
listening to God's replies'.  
– Frank C. Laubach.*

**Liaison Officer, Margaret King** thanks those Fellowships that have responded to her request in our last letter and sent in their minutes to her. She loves to hear from you

**Wellington Members of the Tongan Women's District** tell us of their plans to hold a Family Day at Wesley Church, Taranaki Street on Saturday 8 October, 12 noon – 6 pm. They have five groups in the District who will be contributing to the programme, Petone, Upper Hutt, Avalon, Tawa and Wesley. Their aim is to bring families together for a day of fellowship and fun. That's great!

Do let us know of any special plans or activities in your district.

**Congratulations** to Judith Parkes of Blenheim, (South Pacific Area President) who celebrated a special birthday recently. We hope your next decade will be your best yet Judith!

**Our Bible Puzzle** books have been selling like hot cakes.

Have you got your copy yet? They will be available at Council so if you want to save on postage, get your president to pick up your supply. Price: \$5.00 each, \$6.00 if posted.

An idea for the use of the Bible Puzzle books we have been selling for the Helen Kim Memorial Scholarship – A puzzle page blown up to A3 size makes a great group activity for young teenagers e.g. at Bible Class time or in a Home Group.

*How sad we are to read of the effects of **Hurricane Katrina**.*

*Please pray for those in New Orleans and Southern States who are bereaved, injured, homeless and / or hungry. Perhaps you could give to some organisation you know is giving help, such as Red Cross.*



## Invercargill MWF.

For various reasons including advancing age of members and reluctance to go out at night, one of the three groups in this southern town has disbanded and members transferred to one of the two remaining Fellowships. We thank those who have faithfully served in the closing Evening Group and pray God's blessing on you all as you continue to fellowship and work for Him through Women's Fellowship.

**11th World Assembly – 11 to 17 July, 2006**  
**Ramada Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre**  
**Jeju Island, South Korea**

The theme of the Assembly is

**WOMEN MAKING A DIFFERENCE**

It will offer positive ways of bringing about change in our many communities.

There will be **Sales Table areas** where crafts and other items may be sold.

These should promote the work of WFMUCW.

Any donations will be gratefully received.

Thank you, everyone, for the financial support you have given this year to these funds:

<b>Special Project</b>	\$36,493.
<b>Medical &amp; Educational Fund</b>	\$3,140.
<b>Stamp Fund</b>	\$6,217

Great work.



On the street I saw a small girl, cold and shivering in a thin dress with little hope of a decent meal. I became angry and said to God:  
“Why did you permit this?  
Why don't you do something about it?”

For a while God said nothing.  
That night, He replied, quite suddenly:  
I did do something about it. I made you.”

Anon.



Secretary: John Roberts, 22a Penney Avenue, Mt Roskill, Auckland.  
Phone 09-626-3771 Fax: 09-626-6137 E-mail mm-e@clear.net.nz

## **Choiseul Centennial 2005**

*David McDonald of Birkenhead attended the Luru (Choiseul) Region United Church Centennial in May. His parents Alister and Alice McDonald served on Choiseul 1952-63 and David was born there. This is his account of the celebrations.*

On arrival at Taro on Choiseul Island Friday 29<sup>th</sup> April I was taken to a newly built transit house hall for a formal welcome with the Bishop, the Choiseul Premier, other Church Pastors, elders and the local RAMSI police; followed by a wonderful shared meal and speeches. At about 2 pm it was down the coast in the fibreglass canoes, and the views of the coast brought back many memories. The ocean was calm and the two-hour trip passed quickly. We spotted a turtle and a school of tuna as well.

On arrival at Sasamunqa, we had the warrior challenge and welcome before we were taken for refreshments and then to our accommodation. I stayed at 'Martha's' house. On Saturday, after breakfast, was the dedication of the Lucy Money dining hall. Some of the posts were from the old church that was built when Dad was there. After that, it was a time of exploring, looking for the piles of the house we had lived in and getting the lay of the land. On Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> May at ten, the celebration started with the dedication of the Pande Varko built at the base of the Buni tree. The main events were the evening services and Wednesday night was a service of forgiveness and reconciliation for their head hunting past. In the procession, there were representatives from each tribe and island led by warriors followed by someone carrying the cross. When they came to the stage, the warriors laid down their weapons and we all went through the prayers of repentance and forgiveness.

Thursday the 5<sup>th</sup> of May was the big day. I was up at 5.30am to meet the patrol boat carrying the Prime Minister. A large warrior group welcomed his party and then all shared in breakfast together. At 9.00am there was a dedication of the monument, a re-enactment of Goldie's and Rooney's arrival followed by the main celebration service. Some of the programme was dropped and so the service was shortened to only 7 hrs followed by the Nake feast. As Wally Johnson was the last European missionary, he was asked to chop down the Nake. I guess that there must have been about 3000 people there. 7.00pm was the evening service, which went on fairly late with gifts being given out. Earlier in the day I noticed the beach was lined with a few dozen canoes.

The next day Wally and Margaret Johnson and I were given a ride to the Luru training centre on the Kolombangara river by the Principal. It was good to visit the hall Mum dedicated some 20 yrs ago and see the table she had given. On the Sunday we had a closing communion service which was a few hours long and after the number of services during the week, sitting was getting a little uncomfortable. I left on Tuesday the 10<sup>th</sup> May for Honiara and home.

## **Copra project on Vella Lavella Island**

In November 2004 Methodist Mission and Ecumenical released NZ\$25,000 to start a copra purchasing project based at Vonunu on Vella Lavella Island in the Solomon Islands. This followed the receipt of a comprehensive business development plan. A progress report on the project was received in July. A thanksgiving church service to acknowledge receipt of the money was held in the village of Varese during the South Vella Lavella Circuit Executive meeting in December. "Rev Leslie Vedeko acknowledged this as a gift from God sent through the Mission and Ecumenical Committee of the Methodist Church in New Zealand, in answer to



the church's prayer for economic recovery during the ethnic crisis which crippled the country's economy. ... A member of the board who spoke on behalf of the farmers that the gift includes the nation as a whole, since the resumption of the production of copra on Vella Lavella would also have a significant impact on the economy of the country as Vella Lavella is one of the leading producers of copra in the country."

Vincent Ghanny resigned from his position as bursar at Goldie College to become manager of the copra project in January. Purchase of the shed formerly belonging to the government Copra Export Marketing Authority took place in the same month and maintenance carried out to meet local standards. Besides the project manager, an accountant and a commodities inspector were appointed. Office equipment was purchased and the project became operational. A significant threat to the project emerged when the local member of parliament promised funds to set up a rival project with a better return for copra producers. The church based project met this challenge by appointing local agents to act for it in purchasing copra, a move that has worked well, as the politician's promises went unrealized. The first sale of copra from the project took place on 26 May. In the first six months of operation the project made a profit of SBD4,700. The project now has assets of SBD82,000.

The project manager has advised that a better shipping arrangement for the collection of copra from local producers and for on-selling would greatly assist the project. Ideally a boat should be purchased by the project for this purpose. This would require the injection of an additional NZ\$24,000. Discussion is currently taking place as to how this might be achieved.

## **Unemployed youths benefit from project**

The Solomon Islands Christian Association has embarked on a project to assist unemployed youths and street kids to live a better and more meaningful life. The White River Youth Pilot Project as it is called, aims to provide a positive programme for young people in the area who have been left out of the system and are doing nothing. Project Liaison Officer Normal Kwaimani said an initial interview with a few of these unfortunate young people confirmed that they have been neglected and they experience virtually no love from the church and community. Some said they live such a life because they felt their families have rejected them. Others blamed the government for failing to provide employment opportunities.

"So often we talked about love, but practically we don't reflect that real love and that includes Christian values and virtues." Said Kwaimani "We should work together to address this issue and rescue these young people from their problems.

Based on Christian principles, Mr Kwaimani said the project is assisting young people to do voluntary work at the SICA office and so providing practical training in administration work. "It also looks at providing employment opportunities for young people in the community. These unemployed youths have different skills, which can be utilised to make a difference in their lives," he said. Church youth representatives are being given leadership training so they can become advocates to other young people and assist them to build up their self-esteem and gain confidence in dealing with difficult situations in their lives. The training seeks to strengthen the young people's Christian values and virtues to help them live as examples to other young people.

Twelve young people in the project represent seven churches in the White River community and are working as volunteers gaining knowledge of issues relevant to young people in the country. Mr Kwaimani said the project will expand to include other communities in the future. The training will cover a range of topics including family life, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS and human rights. The project is funded through the Pacific Council of Churches and is administered by the SICA Commission.



## Secretary's engagements

The secretary John Roberts presented the Mission and Ecumenical report to the Nelson-Marlborough-West Coast synod in Blenheim on 6 August, and he and the committee convenor, Keith Hopner made the presentation to the Northland synod in Whangarei on 10 August. The secretary led worship and spoke of mission activity in Paihia and Russell on 14 August; attended a Churches Agency on International Issues meeting in Christchurch on 22 August; addressed the Diaconate Convocation at Camp Morley, Clarks Beach on its theme, "All people are God's people" as well as making a mission presentation; attended a meeting of Jews, Christians and Muslims on the theme "People of the Book" on 28 August. In September the secretary will lead worship at Hellensville Co-operating, and Pitt Street Church; attend the final forum of the Conference of Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand; and make a presentation to Ministry training Unit student on "The church and violence."

## MM&E Occasional Paper

No.25 September 2005

# God's October surprise

*By Rabbi Arthur Waskow for 'Tent of Abraham, Hagar and Sarah' an interfaith movement based in Philadelphia, USA - [www.tentofabraham.org](http://www.tentofabraham.org)*

At just the moment of history when religious conflicts have re-emerged bearing lethal dangers for each other and our planet, God has given our spiritual and religious traditions a gift of time. During October 2005, a rare coming together of sacred moments in many different traditions invites us to eat together, walk together, learn together, pray alongside each other, listen to each other, and work together for peace, justice, human rights, and the healing of our wounded earth.

The sacred Muslim lunar month of Ramadan and the sacred Jewish lunar month of Tishrei (which includes the High Holy Days) both begin October 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup>; October 4<sup>th</sup> is the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi; and October 2<sup>nd</sup> is World (Protestant/Orthodox) Communion Sunday. October 2<sup>nd</sup> is also Mahatma Gandhi's birthday. October 4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> is Navarathri (nine nights of spiritual struggle) for Hindus, followed on October 13<sup>th</sup> by Vijayadashami, the tenth day of spiritual victory. For Buddhists, Vassa (rainy season of spiritual reflection) ends on October 18 with the full moon day, Pavarana.

We could do much during these sacred times to heal our nation and the world. We call on all communities of faith and ethics to observe a 'Nationwide Fast for Reflection, Repentance, Reconciliation, and Renewal', from sunrise to sunset on October 13. That day is for Muslims one of the fast days of Ramadan, and for Jews is the fast day of Yom Kippur. Just as Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah welcomed into their tent thirsty travellers from all four directions, we welcome to this fast not only those of the three Abrahamic traditions but all who thirst for a world made whole. We encourage those who join in this fast to dedicate their prayers and their intention to serve the God who calls us to seek peace, feed the poor, heal the earth, and then later to take visible steps in the world to heed God's call.

Besides taking part in the October 13<sup>th</sup> fast, there are a number of ways to share these sacred moments:



- A synagogue, a mosque, a temple could arrange for each congregation to host one meal for members of the others, after nightfall on any of the evenings of Ramadan.
- Congregations could arrange public interfaith walks for peace and reconciliation that go between church, synagogue, and mosque, pausing at each for prayer.
- Jews could invite Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, and Hindus into the Sukkah, a leafy hut that is open to the earth. Traditionally, "sacred guests" are invited in and the rabbis taught that during Sukkot blessings are invoked upon "the seventy nations" of the world. Traditional prayers implore God to "spread the sukkah of shalom" over us. These are perfect rituals for peacemaking among the children of humanity and with the earth.
- Muslims could invite other communities to join in celebrating Iftar (the break-fast) after sunset on a night of Ramadan. For Eid el-Fitr (the feast at the end of Ramadan), Jews and Christians could (as in Morocco) bring food to the celebration of the end of Ramadan's fasting.
- Churches could invite other communities to join in learning about and celebrating the teachings of Francis of Assisi. He was practically unique among the Christian leaders of his day in opposing the crusades, learning in a serious way from Muslim teachers (even to the extent of transforming his own prayer practice), and becoming deeply dedicated to kinship with the earth and all living creatures.
- Synagogues could invite Muslim scholars and spiritual leaders to teach on Rosh Hashanah when Jews are reading the Torah passages on the story of Abraham, Hagar, Ishmael, Sarah, and Isaac. They could explain how Muslims understand that story. Then there could be open discussion of the differences, the similarities, the wisdom held in each of the versions of the story. Synagogues could set aside a time to read and discuss the Torah's story of the joining of Isaac and Ishmael to bury their father Abraham, and then to achieve reconciliation at the 'well of the living one who sees me.
- Congregations could undertake actions to protect human rights by making public the plights of those detained without trials, often without access to counsel or to families, those disappeared, and those being subjected to torture. Over a series of evenings they could look together at the texts in their traditions that have been misused to justify violence against other communities, and shape occasions of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Engaged as we are in war, violence, and repression with strong religious overtones, communities of the faithful, could instead take some action together during the Ramadan/Tishrei month to change public policy in favour of protecting human rights, healing the earth, and achieving peace in the regions where Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah sojourned.

People of all faith traditions are urged to plan with each other how to use 'God's October Surprise' with these sacred dates, to heed the call of the Holy One that we live in peace together. As we walk our path into this journey of sharing sacred seasons, let us make the deep connections that will keep us together long after our sacred calendars dance in other directions.

In the USA this Call was initiated by The Tent of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah. The Call has been endorsed by the National Council of Churches; the Islamic Society of North America; Pax Christi; The Shalom Centre; the Jewish Committee for Isaiah's Vision; ALEPH - Alliance for Jewish Renewal and its rabbinic body, Ohalah; the Disciples Justice Action Network; Northwest Interfaith Movement (Philadelphia).

### **The tent of Abraham, Hagar and Sarah**

We are a new initiative of Muslims, Christians and Jews who are part of an upsurge in multi-religious prophetic concern for peace, justice and the earth.



Out of deep spiritual reflection came a call to action. October will be a wonderful opportunity to put these words into action: a confluence of holy days celebrated by Muslims, Jews, Christians, Hindus and Buddhists.

We have come together because the US government keeps threatening Muslim nations while some groups within the Muslim world keep threatening the US. Jews, Christians and Muslims – the families of Abraham, Hagar, and Sarah – must address this negative dynamic together. Moving beyond religious ‘dialogue’ and coalitions for action’ we embrace public engagement rooted in deep personal sharing. It is a new model for this work.

## SITUATIONS VACANT

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THE INTERCHURCH COUNCIL FOR HOSPITAL  
CHAPLAINCY AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND  
*Te Kaunihera Whakawhanaunga  
o nga Minita Hohipera, Hauora*

### **ECUMENICAL HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN North Shore Hospital of the Waitemata DHB**

Applications are sought from experienced chaplains and other suitably qualified ordained clergy for the **full - time chaplaincy** position on the Chaplaincy Team at the North Shore Hospital. The position is being offered on the basis of a 3 year term subject to the continued availability of funding. An appointee who can take up the position in **January 2006** is sought.

Applicants should have completed a minimum of one CPE Course and must have experience in hospital chaplaincy, parish ministry or other relevant ministry positions.

The ability to provide spiritual health care to people with a range of health needs and from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds, and to participate in a multi-disciplinary health care teams is absolutely essential.

The successful applicant will become a member of a busy chaplaincy team of chaplains and chaplaincy assistants, providing Christian ministry, spiritual, emotional support and pastoral care to patients, families and staff in the Waitemata DHB Hospitals.

An appointee who is not already an accredited healthcare chaplain will be required to work towards obtaining accreditation. Chaplains are now required to become accredited within 5 years of appointment.

**The closing date for the receipt of applications is Monday 10 October 2005.**

An information pack and application form is available from:

The Executive Officer  
Interchurch Council for Hospital Chaplaincy  
PO Box 9049  
WELLINGTON  
NEW ZEALAND

Phone: 04-381 8287  
Fax: 04 801 6001  
Email: [admin@ichc.org.nz](mailto:admin@ichc.org.nz)



# ECUMENICAL NEWS & VIEWS

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## Christian World Service receiving donations for the victims of Hurricane Katrina

Hurricane Katrina has caused unprecedented damage leading to the largest clean-up operation in USA history.

In response to the emergency Christian World Service is receiving donations for relief and restoration work.

The money will be sent to Church World Service, the USA equivalent of CWS which is also a member of Action by Churches Together.

Church World Service has already rushed aid to the devastated area. "We are particularly concerned about the plight of poor people, the elderly, and other vulnerable populations," said the Rev. John L. McCullough, CWS Director. Donations can be sent to CWS at Box 22-652, Christchurch, or by credit card on 0800 74 73 72 or through the [www.cws.org.nz](http://www.cws.org.nz)

For further information contact CWS on 03 366 9274 or Jonathan Fletcher, National Director on 021 238 7710.

**Come along to a one-day seminar** to hear a number of New Zealand and international experts talk about the current criteria for our Crown Financial Institutions and discuss what should be in its place.

Please click on [http://csri.org.nz/documents/CFIconfOct14\\_006.doc](http://csri.org.nz/documents/CFIconfOct14_006.doc) for more information.

*Heather King, Secretariat CSRI*

## AMENDMENTS TO THE YEARBOOK

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### August/September 2005

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**If you have any articles, news or information for next month's e-Messenger,** you can send them in to Hannah Flinn at the Christchurch Connexional Office:

Email: [hannahf@methodist.org.nz](mailto:hannahf@methodist.org.nz)

Postal: PO Box 931, Christchurch

