



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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October 2006

OFFICIAL COMMUNICATIONS

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & VICE PRESIDENT

Do the days and weeks really speed by faster, or is it a matter of some of us slowing down? Spring has arrived and we are into daylight saving, signalling the coming of summer before too long. The end part of the year brings particular pressures for many people, and we are conscious of that.

For many Methodists, it is Conference that dominates at the moment. Some will have been preparing reports or presentations or worship. Others will be getting ready to participate as members or observers. We hope that all who are linked with Te Haahi Weteriana will keep Conference in mind and be supportive of those who will take part.

The last month has seen the death of King Taufa'ahau Tupou IV of Tonga. Both John and Mary participated in events at Atalanga, the Royal residence in Auckland, where the King lay in state before returning to Tonga. We want to express very clearly the support of the Methodist Church of New Zealand for Tongan members who mourn the passing of one monarch and celebrate the recognition of a new one. We are also wish to acknowledge the leadership given through Vahefonua Tonga and the Auckland-Manukau Tongan Parish.

During this time, the Presidency Review Group completed its work and prepared a Report for Conference. Like any such report, this involved a considerable amount of work, and John notes the pressure of that. We acknowledge the contribution of those who made responses to the Group, and thank the members of the Group for their participation in this task on behalf of the Church.

Mary notes: I have just returned from the NZMWF Convention held at St. Andrews's school in Christchurch. For me this was a time where I could most of the time take off my VP role and enjoy the fellowship of my MWF friends. It was a delight to see the 2 cheques presented to the recipients of the 2005-2006 Special project. MWF raised \$37,663.86. The money went to CWS for The Church in Uganda Grassroots Development \$26,364.70. As this is part of the Aid from the NZ Government each dollar raised will be increased at the ratio of 4-1!! The New Zealand portion \$11,299.16 was given to the NZ Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust. This will be used to assist children to go to camps, respite time for them and the families. Thank you to the Fellowships and the support of Congregations.

John notes: I have enjoyed visits to congregations and groups in Tauranga and the Nelson region over recent weeks. In both settings, I was impressed by the energy and commitment of people to the life and leadership of Methodist communities. It was good to be involved in worship, to talk a bit about presidency, and to explore a number of issues facing churches today. This year as President has left me very encouraged by the commitment and creativity shown in many settings around the church.

And back to Conference: Conference in Rotorua in 2006 will be somewhat different. As well as meeting in a hotel conference centre, there will be a different shape to the worship, especially as there is no Induction service. The Conference Service on Sunday morning will include reception into Full Connexion in the Methodist Church of New Zealand. A large group of deacons will be part of this celebration.

A series of interest groups are also part of the Sunday, and we hope that all representatives to Conference have been able to find two groups that will interest you. Please remember to register your preferences, and to register if you plan to attend the Wesley Historical dinner and meeting, and the Lay Preachers meal and gathering.

As Conference approaches please support by prayer those currently in leadership at every level, the nominees for the Presidential team, and the 'Panel' who have the responsibility to make the final selection of the Presidential team. Many have been confused by this unfamiliar process, so we hope this year to ensure fuller explanation of the process and the roles. For all of this, we value your prayers.

Shalom

John & Mary

A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Conference is now only four weeks away. The Agenda will be mailed by the end of this week so that people have plenty of time to read the reports and prepare for the discussions and debates.

Conference weekend is for all members of Methodist and Cooperating Parishes please ensure that congregations are aware of this and encourage people to come to Rotorua and join in the meetings, interest groups and worship services. Feel free to circulate the programme for the weekend which is outlined below.

Conference Weekend

Saturday 5th November

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 9:30am | POWHIRI
<i>St Mary's School, 40 Seddon Street, Rotorua</i>
Welcome and light morning tea for all visitors and Conference Representatives, followed by... |
| | TAUIWI / TE TAHA MAORI MEETINGS
<i>St Mary's School, same as above</i> |
| 12.45pm – 2.00pm | Lunch
<i>Glenholme School, Ranolf Street, Rotorua</i> |
| 2.00pm – 3.30pm | TAUIWI / TE TAHA MAORI MEETINGS <i>continued</i> |
| 3:30pm – 4:00pm | Afternoon Tea |
| 4.00pm – 5.30pm | TAUIWI / TE TAHA MAORI MEETINGS <i>continued</i> |
| 5.30pm - 6.00pm | Pre-Dinner Snack |
| 6.00pm – 7.30pm | RECOGNITION OF SERVICE & CONNEXIONAL THANKS
<i>St Mary's School</i> |
| 8.00pm | CONFERENCE DINNER
<i>Rydges Hotel, 272 Fenton Street, Rotorua</i>
An opportunity to gather with Conference delegates to enjoy a meal together. |

Sunday 6th November

- 9.00am** **CONFERENCE GATHERS**
St Mary's School, 40 Seddon Street, Rotorua
President's Introduction
- 9.15am – 10.30am** **INTEREST GROUPS**
All welcome
- 10.30am** **Morning Tea**
- 11.30am** **CONFERENCE WORSHIP**
St Mary's Catholic Church, 40 Seddon Street, Rotorua
Including reception in to Full Connexion
- 1.00pm** **Lunch**
St Mary's Catholic School, same as above
- 2.00pm – 3.00pm** **INTEREST GROUPS**
All welcome
- 3.30pm** **ORDINATION SERVICE**
St Mary's Catholic Church, 40 Seddon Street, Rotorua
- 5.00pm** **Afternoon Tea**
- 6.30pm** **Evangelical Network Dinner & Art Exhibition**
See below for more details

NEWS FROM

AROUND THE CONNEXION

alt.conference@coffee.com

This year for Conference the Evangelical Network is offering another in the series alt.conference@coffee.com, our informal name for a gathering to which we invite all conference attendees. Last year we heard from and experienced Peter and Joyce Majendie, with a series of installations and a sampling of Peter's skills as raconteur and humorist...and we also enjoyed coffee together!

This year in Rotorua we have a similarly three-pronged effort as an offering to Conference. On Sunday night, from 6:30 to about 8:30pm at Indigo, 1154 Hinemoa St within easy walking distance of the main conference venue, we will

- Share in a light meal and coffee for pre-paid \$20 per person
- Listen to Roger perform
- Look at artworks that come from Methodist artists on the theme "The hope I have within me".

Huh? Well, here are more details –

THE MEAL

You have to eat somewhere on Sunday night! And we are offering a venue close by, at the Indigo Café just down the road at 1154 Hinemoa St with friends and coffee and input that you will appreciate...Send \$20 (cheques made out to the Evangelical Network) to alt.conference, C/- Beckenham Methodist Church P O Box 12 -127 Beckenham Christchurch per person.

THE MAN:

Roger White has worked as a general nurse, a minister in Baptist churches and as a Mental Health Social Worker with remand and sentenced prisoners, and currently in an adult community setting.

Through 32 years as a follower of Jesus he has worshipped in Baptist, Charismatic, Pentecostal, Anglican and alternative Christian communities. He has an avid interest in the pursuit of an open evangelical faith that resonates with contemporary society.

His musical interests since 1996 have been worked out in the setting of Auckland's folk scene. He has appeared as a guest at Titirangi, Devonport and Whangarei Folk Clubs and the 2002 Auckland Folk Festival. His style could best be classified as acoustic folk with a good dose of rhythm. He has produced two CD's of self-penned songs – "Slow Rising Tide" and 'Riding on Silver Rails'.

He is married to Pauline and has two adult sons.

THE ART

The Evangelical Network wants to offer Methodist artists a chance to express their faith in a public context...so we are offering spaces on the wall of the café, wherever it will be, for your art work. The aim is to enlarge mission vision beyond words and into the medium of art life as worship and response to faith. The main aim is simply an exhibition of art: although there will be a nominal People's Prize taken largely from entry fees. You won't get rich at this exhibition, but you are welcome to offer your artwork for sale.

We plan for a maximum of twelve art pieces on show, and the selection committee undertakes only to hang, display and sell your work: getting it to conference and having unsold artwork returned is the responsibility of the artists.

We suggest that you send it along with a representative to look after your interests! The entry fee is \$10 per art work: entrants will need to send a jpeg to beckmeth@xtra.co.nz with dimensions for selection and planning purposes. These jpegs will form part of a catalogue available to all who come to the alt.conference evening. Closing date for entries is October 25th.

The theme for this year's inaugural exhibition is "The Hope I Have Within Me" and we hope to interpret that as liberally as possible! We would like to encourage our artists to interpret the theme in many different media given the limitations of the venue: video offerings would be probably impractical, for example...but surprise us!

Conference Accommodation Available

A one bedroom unit is available from noon Friday 3 November until 10 am Wednesday 8 November. It has four single beds - 2 beds in the bedroom and 2 beds in the lounge. The TOTAL cost of this unit for the five night is \$240, which makes it very economical when split between 2-4 people. The unit is basic and has a full kitchen and bathroom. Occupants will need to bring ALL their own linen and cleaning materials, and will need to clean the unit before they leave. It is understood that this unit is on a side street just a few blocks from the hotel where Conference is being held - i.e. walking distance. Durham Street reps will be staying in another unit in the same complex.

If you are interested please contact Dale Peach, ph 03 338-2608 or dale@otiakedesign.com

Shirley Methodist Church 140th Anniversary Celebrations 15th – 16th October 2006

We are interested in hearing from former members and friends who may be interested in taking part in celebrations over the weekend of October 15th and 16th 2006.

Please send your details to shirleychurch@clear.net.nz or to Shirley Methodist, 6 New Brighton Road, Christchurch 8061.



Pitt Street Methodist Church 1866-2006 *Share with us in celebrating 140 years of worship and witness in Auckland 13-15 October 2006*

Please contact us if you would like an information sheet - Pitt Street Celebration, PO Box 68 184, Newton, Auckland 1145 Phone (09) 373 2869 Web: www.methodistcentral.org.nz Email: info@methodistcentral.org.nz

Methodist Conference Online

You are invited to participate in Methodist Conference by keeping up to date with the daily reports. For the first time this will also include some audio files. Conference reports will be at conference.methodist.org.nz [do not use www.] There is already information for those who will be attending.

Conference is in Rotorua and runs from Saturday 3rd November till Wednesday 8th.

Information for Boards and Committees Reporting to Conference

If you wish to use a PowerPoint or some other presentation as part of your reporting to Conference it is your responsibility to prepare it, and bring it on a CD or a memory card. If your PowerPoint includes sound, please save it as a Pack and Go presentation to ensure the sound file is available.

2-3 months House Swap 2008, U.K.

I am an English Methodist Minister, and have a three month Sabbatical in Feb, March and April 2008. My wife and I (no family) would like to do a house swap during this period with Christians in New Zealand. This would perhaps ideally suit a retired Methodist Minister. (This is not a swap of pastoral duties or church ministries - there will be none here that will need to be covered). We are 80 miles West of London with excellent road and rail links near by, in beautiful Wiltshire, near Swindon. It is an ideal base for exploring surrounding counties, or perhaps catching up with friends and family in Southern England. Ideally we would like to swap to the South Island, near to, or in, Christchurch, but are open to alternative locations in N.Z. *Interested?* Please Contact Steve and Julie Cullis on sc12345@tiscali.co.uk or write to 1 Garraways, Wootton Bassett, Wiltshire, SN4 8LT, United Kingdom. Thanks for your kind attention to this.

alt.conference@coffee.com

*the evangelical network's extra-curricular contribution
to your conference life and health this year will be at*

Indigo, 1154 Hinemoa St

on Sunday 5th November at 6:30pm to 8:30 approx

\$20 pre-paid to David White

C/- P O Box 12-127 Beckenham Christchurch

*will give you a light meal,
a cup of coffee*

*a catalogue of the art exhibition
and a night's entertainment with singer-songwriter*

Roger White

e-mail bookings to beckmeth@xtra.co.nz

Beckenham Methodist Church P O Box 12-127 Chch 8002

Ph (03) 337 3435

Mt Albert Methodist Celebrating 140 years

Mt Albert's celebration of 140 years coincided with the Auckland city's Heritage Festival. Their weekend began with a restaurant meal for 130 people. At the next day's morning service, Rev Elizabeth Hopner referred to two women who excelled at kitchen hospitality - Susannah Wesley and Elizabeth Allen, in whose kitchen, the first Methodist service in Mt Albert was held in 1846. Communion was served by

Elizabeth and three past Presbyters attired in aprons of that period.

On the Saturday of the following weekend, 250 visitors came to see our 14 designed areas depicting the present and past nature of the church and its outreach programmes. The foyer, which had been decorated by Gardenia Taule'ale'ausumai, was where the tour began. Visitors then moved into the church which had been dressed for the occasion by Brice Herbert. People viewed the designs, paintings and displays throughout the rest of the complex before gathering in small groups for refreshments.

At the final service, Mozart's Missa Brevis was rendered by the choir and soloists and the Rev Dr Keith Rowe, whose association with Mt Albert church began in 1959, the day after he had been placed in the Wesley Children's' Home, 42 Asquith Avenue, presided. His address, still on the topic of hospitality, concluded the celebrations brilliantly.

Visitors and present members were welcomed to each event by men and women 'dressed for the occasion'. To all who helped stage these events and to those who came to view them, our sincere thanks.

Kath Horwood, for and on behalf of Liz Hopner

This will be published later this month, and sample copies can be viewed on the Epworth Books display at Conference.

Contents include: Rob Yule writes on the Christian pilgrimage of painter Colin McCahon (6 major works included with text, 4 in full colour), John reviews Dave Dobbyn's latest CD Available Light, Colin Gibson writes on For the crowd another busy day, Ron Gibson writes on The Wizard of Oz, the full text of Bono's breakfast speech at the Washington Hotel earlier this year in the presence of George Bush and Jill Wallis, two poems for Tonga by David Best, Dave Dobbyn says why Colin McCahon is one of his favoured artists, and Shirley Erena Murray is made a Fellow of the Royal School of Church Music - and more!

For further information, contact John at email: john.gill@inspire.net.nz

THE BOYS BRIGADE - ICONZ

The Boys' Brigade has recently announced the formation of its 21st unit of ICONZ, a rebranded programme for BB targeted at boys in the 6 - 12 year age group. There are now over 300 youngsters and 100 leaders involved in this new ministry. This represents a fantastic growth rate for BB, which has experienced declining membership over more than three decades. Leading the changes is the ICONZ Promotions Director, Stu Thompson, a member of St Peters Presbyterian Church in Tauranga where the initiative started in 2003.

The Brigade/ICONZ invites those who have benefited in the past from their membership in Brigade - or the involvement of family members - to support the BB/ICONZ financially as it faces the financial challenges associated with its new fast-growing mission. A Ten Dollar Club has been formed, and more information can be obtained from the National Office at P O Box 302-408 North Harbour, or at <http://www.bb.org.nz/support.html>

Would Parishes please include this information in Parish bulletins or newsletters? Thank you.

Eric Russell
Parish Leader - St Paul's Co-operating Parish
Taumarunui

CLEAN START

"Clean Start" is a campaign seeking a "**Fair Deal for Cleaners**". The majority of office cleaners are low-paid and predominantly immigrants, and for them poverty is a reality. This campaign is seeking to raise awareness of both the role cleaners play in society and their pay and conditions.

Rallies are being held in at Parliament and in Auckland on Tuesday 17 October from 12 noon to express support. That day is International Anti-Poverty Day, so one way of marking the day is to support "Clean Start" by attending a rally or talking with others about the issues.

More information is available on www.sfwu.org.nz – click on 'Clean Start'.
John Salmon

CALLING METHODIST ARTISTS

We are inaugurating a Conference Art Exhibition to be held
as part of the Evangelical Network Tea

alt.conference@coffee.com

We invite all artists to submit a JPEG plus description of their artwork to
beckmeth@xtra.co.nz

for inclusion in the exhibition to be held at 1154 Hinemoa St Rotorua
and in a catalogue to be issued to all diners at the meal

- There's a \$10 entry fee:
- A \$100 prize (!) for the People's Choice, voted on by attendees
 - and you can also offer your artwork for sale

The theme for this year is

“The Hope I Have Within Me”

Artists are encouraged to explore beyond the square, and to remember it's a café setting
(30 metre sculptures might be difficult to exhibit adequately)

Phone (03) 337 3435, Fax (03) 337 3434, e-mail us, or look at the article on page 5 for more details

ANNUAL PEACE LECTURE AT OTAGO UNIVERSITY

The annual peace lecture held on September 25th this year was entitled "The role of interfaith activities in building peace" by Professor Paul Morris of Victoria Univeristy. The lecture was arranged by Otago Tertiary Chaplaincy and the Dunedin Abrahamic Interfaith Group. You can read it, and other previous annual peace lectures (by David Lange and Greg Hughson), as well as other helpful information via www.dunedininterfaith.net.nz

Greg Hughson
Ecumenical Chaplain
Otago Univeristy

In your Prayers

It is with sadness that we report the death of the **Reverend Laurie Currie**.

Laurie died in Auckland Hospital on the evening of 6th September after a short illness.

Over the last year he had worshipped at St. Paul's in the Orakei Methodist Parish.

The funeral will be held at the Baptist Church, Henderson on Monday 11th September at 1 p.m.

Messages may be sent to Mrs Myra Currie, 1 Glynnbrooke St, Te Atatu South, Auckland 0610

~

The President has sent the following message to the President of the free Wesleyan Church of Tonga:

'Alifaleti

Greetings at this time of sadness for you and the people of Tonga. I was sorry to hear the news of the death of King Taufa'ahau this morning. Even though it had been expected for some time, the time of passing is always of time of sadness. I expect it will also be a time of remembering and of some uncertainty. I pass on to you, to the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga, and to the Royal Family the condolences of the Methodist Church of NZ. Be assured that our thoughts and prayers are with at this time. I hope we in Te Haahi Weteriana will be able to find an opportunity to pay our respects to the King before he leaves our country. God's blessings on you all.

John Salmon

President - Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa

~

It is with sadness I share this email from Ron Malpass. As a Church we have been served well by Kevin who has epitomized the best of ecumenism in the chaplaincy field. He has been a key figure at executive level and will be sadly missed.

Jill

Dear Chaplains and LSP members

ICHC Chairman **Father Kevin O'Grady** passed away in Christchurch on Wednesday the 20th of September.

At the time of his sudden death Kevin was about to see the realization of one of his dreams, the first National Hospital Chaplaincy Appeal Week. Kevin has worked hard with Rev Max Reid, Liz Pennell and Terry Luxon of Luxon Advertising Ltd in Christchurch, on the national publicity campaign over the past year.

He and Ron Malpass were to travel together to Dunedin on Saturday the 23rd to take part in the service that was held on Sunday morning at 10am, to launch the national Hospital Chaplaincy Week at the Chapel in Dunedin Hospital. This service which will include the Minister of Health Hon Pete Hodgson will go ahead as planned.

Grace and Peace

Ron Malpass

National Executive Officer

Interchurch Council for Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa New Zealand

It is with sadness that we advise the Connexion of the death of **Ellen Elizabeth Burrough**, known as Beth or Bess to most. Beth was the widow of the late Amos Burrough. She passed away Friday the 22nd in Feilding and her funeral was held Tuesday the 3rd of October.

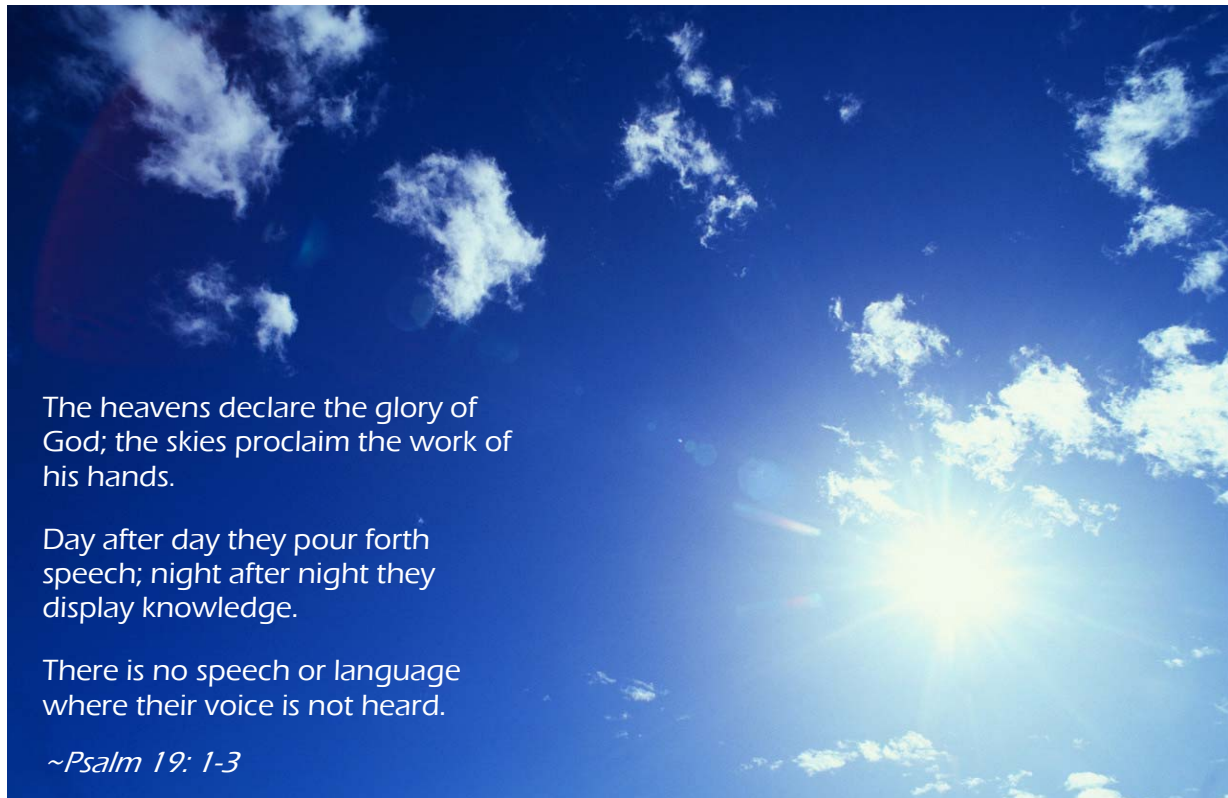
Please keep the family in your prayers.

~

On Tuesday 26th September service was held at Clarence Street Methodist Church for **Elaisa Fonmoa**, lay preacher, and significant person in the life of the Fijian Methodist Community. Elaisa was mentor to many of the leaders in the Fijian community in Fiji and here, both in Christchurch and Wellington. He was an advocate working with others for the establishment of a place for Fijian Methodists within the life of Te Hahi Weterian, and one of the initiators that led to the establishment of Wase Wase Ko Viti Kei Rotuma e Niu Silada.

The large gathering at the funeral serviced was an indication of the respect in which he was held, and a support for his family, many of whom had gathered from overseas.

Contact with his family can be made through the Hornby Riccarton Methodist Parish.



The heavens declare the glory of
God; the skies proclaim the work of
his hands.

Day after day they pour forth
speech; night after night they
display knowledge.

There is no speech or language
where their voice is not heard.

~Psalm 19: 1-3

Methodist Mission & Ecumenical

Newsletter October 2006

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

This issue of the newsletter contains news items from World Council of Churches press service covering recent Central Committee meeting in Geneva, as well as proposals for NZ's ecumenical future

Bring new life into the ecumenical movement

A plea to "bring new life into the ecumenical movement" was issued by Rev. Dr Walter Altmann in his first report as World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee moderator. Altmann is Pastor-president of the Lutheran Church in Brazil. He emphasized the WCC's role as "the privileged instrument of the ecumenical movement" and rejected the possibility of "a minimalist agenda".

Opening the first meeting of the WCC's governing body, elected at its 9th Assembly in Porto Alegre last February, Altmann spoke about the "beautiful, though difficult, ecumenical commitment which has brought us together, in spite of the many differences that exist among us". "The ecumenical movement must not be understood as based on a lowest common denominator" he argued. "Instead, it is driven by a much higher and challenging vision". That vision is "full and visible unity among the churches", its basis is the unity that the Holy Spirit grants "through the gospel and baptism," and it is received in faith. On those terms, "ecumenism is not optional, but compelling". Ecumenical dialogue and cooperation amount not to some kind of strategic planning, but rather to a passion for unity. Those committed to ecumenism envisage full communion as its goal, although they don't lose sight of the divisions among us, which are a sin against God.

The ecumenical movement moves slower than we wish, and our churches probably move slower than they could, Altmann recognized. In a sober assessment of the 'century of ecumenism' he affirmed that in many places the relations among the churches have improved considerably, but observed that the question of whether churches are closer to the stated goal of visible unity remains open.

Since burning and divisive issues, both doctrinal and ethical, create inner tensions in many churches, they experience the temptation "to defend themselves against the forces of fragmentation, entrenching themselves within their own theological or institutional walls". As a result, they may regard their ecumenical commitment as a lower priority, said Altmann.

Key church role in responding to HIV and AIDS

The global fund for tackling HIV and AIDS should be distributed through churches because they have the best access to the populations affected. This appeal was made during the World Council of Churches (WCC) Central Committee meeting in September by the Most Rev. Bernard Ntahoturi, Archbishop of the Episcopal Church of Burundi. Central Committee, meeting 30 August to 6 September in Geneva, issued a statement on the churches' compassionate response to HIV and AIDS, saying the world possesses the means to reverse the global epidemic and that churches have a unique and critical role to play.

The WCC's Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa (EHAIA) enables churches in Africa to gain access to the information, training, networks and funding they need to help deal with HIV and AIDS in their communities. Dr Manoj Kurian, of the WCC programme executive for health and healing, said EHAIA was responding to the burning needs of people. He said through its

five EHAIA offices the WCC was making it possible for church leaders and their congregations to speak honestly about HIV and AIDS, formulate relevant liturgy and theology, and to act practically in response. The programme was nurturing the strength available in Africa and drawing on the tenacity, love and compassion of people living with HIV and AIDS, he said.

Dr Agnes Abuom, a former WCC president, said through EHAIA the WCC was attempting to help restore hope and courage and address issues such as the church's presence and witness in Africa. Critical issues, she said, were capacity building and making the church "HIV competent", so that it: indicates clearly that stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV/AIDS is against the will of God; has a full understanding of the severity of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in Africa; takes into consideration pastoral, cultural and gender issues; and uses its resources and structures to provide care, counselling and support for those affected.

The Rev. Moiserale Prince Dibeela, from Botswana and deeply involved with the theological component of EHAIA, agreed with Archbishop Ntshoturi saying the church existed in every community. The programme therefore was equipping pastors with knowledge about HIV and AIDS and with liturgical and pastoral skills, because life and death were theological issues. "How do we preach about a loving God in the midst of so much suffering?" he asked. He said the programme sought to develop a theology that spoke of life and a language to articulate faith and hope.

The Ecumenical HIV and AIDS Initiative in Africa was set up in 2002 as a joint undertaking of African churches, Northern churches and agencies, and the World Council of Churches.

New voice for youth

Young people will have a stronger voice in the World Council of Churches (WCC), following the establishment by its Central Committee of a new body to promote the participation of youth in the organization's life and work. The new youth body, which was decided at the WCC's 9th Assembly in early 2006, is designed to broaden and strengthen the fellowship in the ecumenical movement by ensuring the sustainable and active involvement of young adults in all levels of the WCC by developing their leadership skills and advocating their broader participation in the council.

Speaking immediately after the decision, the newly-appointed moderator of the youth body, Ms Outi Vasko (Orthodox Church of Finland) expressed her enthusiasm for the decision. "What will be important with this new body is not only to focus on representation, but to enhance the contribution that young people can make in the WCC, in key areas facing the churches and the ecumenical movement," Vasko said.

The WCC's 9th Assembly, which involved more young people than any previous assembly, decided to create the youth body as a means to promote the development of ecumenical leadership and a more direct participation of young people (aged between 18 and 30 years) in the decision-making and programmatic work of the Council. Three primary objectives of the new youth body were agreed in the new proposals:

- consultation and mutual account-ability with the WCC;
- networking with the wider ecumenical movement;
- strengthening ecumenical leadership skills of young ecumenical and church leaders.

The body is also expected to assist churches to enable the involvement of young people in their own decision-making.

A set of proposals for the youth body were worked out in the period following the assembly by youth representatives from the WCC governing bodies and related youth movements. The body, whose name will be decided in the coming months, will consist of 25 young adults from among the governing and advisory bodies of the WCC, and active youth leaders nominated by churches and ecumenical organizations from around the world. Young people from a broader constituency than the WCC's membership are also to be represented.

NZ's ecumenical future – have your say

In 2003 discussion on establishing a new ecumenical body began. A small Strategic Thinking Group (STG) to consider options was formed with representation from Vision Network New Zealand, the Roman Catholic Church, the five co-operating churches (Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Associated Churches of Christ and the Congregational Union), and the Conference of Churches of Aotearoa New Zealand (CCANZ). The group also includes members who give Pacific and Asian perspectives.

The STG began work late in 2004. It has now prepared three models for consideration, and feedback on what might be the best way forward. Proposal one is the status quo, which means leaving things as they are now (with no national structure of any kind) but with an invitation for the churches to share together. Proposal two is a forum. This would require: adherence to a core statement of commitment in order to belong; a council of church representatives and an executive that would meet each six months, and two part time staff. Proposal three is networking involving a minimal structure with no formal membership. Meetings would take place as and when necessary or relationship building and consultation.

The report of the STG emphasises structure, with little attention given to an ecumenical vision that draws on significant biblical and theological insights. Also consultation by the STG has not extended beyond church leaders to regions and the churches grass roots. Perhaps we need more time to develop the vision, and to consult more widely before settling on a structure.

Feedback on the proposals is now being sought from churches and interested parties. The STG will receive the feedback and prepare a summary. It will also analyse the feedback to discern the way forward. Details of the proposals and a response form is available on the website www.stg.churches.net.nz

Methodist Mission & Ecumenical

Occasional Paper No. 33

A log in my eye?

Introduction

I like to look at well designed, well made wooden furniture in the shops. I can't afford to buy it, but I do admire it. I bought some outdoor wooden furniture from one of the local mega stores because it's more affordable. However I didn't think much about where it came from or how the timber that went into it was obtained. Now I'm wondering whether there's been a log in my eye. I've failed to ask where the timber that goes into the making of furniture has come from and how it's been gained. I need to remove the log from my eye and put furniture importers, manufacturers, and retailers on notice, asking if the logs that were milled for the furniture they have imported, made, or are selling, were legally obtained? If so were they sustainably logged? Were the people who originally owned the trees treated justly by the logging company? These are important questions because so much timber used for furniture making around the world comes from logging operations by multinational companies operating in countries of the developing world, where exploitation seems to be the name of the game.

The impact of logging

In 2004 I made a brief visit to a logging camp on the island of New Georgia in the Solomon Islands. My travelling companion informed me that it was an Asian logging company that was working in the area. They had come, identified two or three people they deemed to be leaders of

the land owning community, flown them to Honiara where they were wined and dined in a top hotel, made many promises as to how they and their people would benefit, and then confronted them with a document to sign giving the company the exclusive right to log in their area. In this case the leaders were assured of an income for twenty five years, as that was how long the company said it would be in the area. Now, however, they were leaving after five years. The land had been ravaged in the felling process. Promises had not been honoured. The community had been divided. The local men had been given only menial jobs and were paid at very low rates. The Asian work force took local women and fathered children by them. Now as the company moved on, these women and children were to be left behind. The logging company was able to get away with this because the Solomon Islands is one of the world's least developed countries and has not had adequate laws to protect its natural resources from flagrant exploitation; so it has been vulnerable to big Asian logging companies coming in and devastating its land, natural resources, and communities. News reports say that the rate of logging in the Solomon Islands doubled from 2004 to 2005 and if logging continues at this rate then in eight to ten years the timber resource will be exhausted.

A recent feature in the NZ Herald told of indigenous and 'uncontacted' peoples living in the isolated forests of southern Peru, who are facing an unprecedented threat from illegal loggers moving into remote areas in search of rare mahogany trees to be turned into items of fine furniture sold in the USA. The Natural Resources Defence Council in the USA says "Tens of thousands of tons of Peruvian mahogany are imported into the US for luxury tables, household trimmings, and car dashboards." Those who purchase the furniture have no idea that buying mahogany contributes to the destruction of the rainforest and threatens the people who live there because their environment is being destroyed, and they are being killed by diseases introduced by the loggers as well as in clashes with them.

Last year the London based Environmental Investigation Agency said it had uncovered a timber smuggling operation stretching from Papua to China, describing it as the world's largest logging racket, involving the merbau species, a hardwood mainly used for flooring. The agency said that 300,000 cubic metres of merbau were smuggled out of Papua every month to feed China's timber processing industry, a trade worth US\$1 billion a year. A very recent report by the Australian Conservation Foundation reports that logging companies in Papua New Guinea (PNG) are involved in widespread human rights abuses, political corruption and the brutal suppression of workers. The report "Bulldozing Progress: Human Rights Abuse and Corruption in PNG's Large Scale Logging Industries", reports disturbing interviews with landowners. They gave eyewitness accounts of unreasonable arrests and physical brutality by police 'moonlighting' for logging companies, intimidation and sexual abuse of women, contamination of food and water sources, unfair working conditions and destruction of cultural sites, artefacts and graves.

What can be done?

What can be done about the evils of this world logging trade? Late last year in the Solomon Islands Bishop Charles Koete of the Church of Melanesia (Anglican) and some of his diocesan people visited a newly constructed logging campsite near Bola village on Gela Island. They raised a rugged wooden cross with a public notice halting further activity on the site. The action was taken in accordance with a synod resolution that "logging is not development but destruction." The bishop, who is also the paramount chief of Gela, said the logging causes destruction to God's creation and his diocese condemned logging in all its forms. This action was welcomed by the Mothers Union of the Church who were meeting on Gela at the time. In response to what is happening in southern Peru the National Resources Council is suing the US government and two other agencies for permitting the importing of illegal timber. In PNG an effort is underway to oppose industrial logging and begin eco-forestry.

Early this year Greenpeace was invited by the Catfish clan of the Kuni tribe to set up a camp on the edge of Lake Murray in the Western Province of PNG to run community development workshops for more than thirty clans. Land for eco-forestry was identified, and the owners trained in forestry management and sawmill operation. Local landowners have been able to set up community based small scale eco-enterprises that will strengthen land rights and culture, provide income, protect the environment, and provide a future for their children. The clans involved have expressed a commitment to oppose industrial logging and begin eco-forestry. The Greenpeace volunteers have returned to their home countries determined to raise consumer awareness about choices in purchasing consumer products. Their message is loud and clear. Illegally harvested timber destroys homes and communities, timber harvested sustainably preserves communities and their culture.

Conclusion

Let's take the log out of our eye and ask some hard questions about the operations of the world's multinational logging companies operating in the developing world, and those downstream who benefit from their activity, including log and timber importers, furniture manufacturers and retailers, as well as ourselves as consumers.

ECUMENICAL

NEWS & VIEWS

World Council of Churches

WE ARE CALLED TO WORK IN THIS BROKEN WORLD "FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS"

Interview with WCC President Rev. Dr Bernice Powell Jackson

By Alexander Belopopsky ()*



Rev. Dr Bernice Powell Jackson is an ordained minister of the United Church of Christ in the USA. A member of the World Council of Churches' (WCC) central committee since 1998, she has worked for more than three decades on civil rights, human rights and justice issues. She was elected as one of the WCC presidents at the 9th Assembly in 2006. In this interview, she talks about her life-long commitment to justice, some of her sources of spiritual inspiration, and some of the current challenges she sees for the churches in the ecumenical movement.

How did you first become involved in the ecumenical movement and what was your first contact with the WCC?

My involvement with the ecumenical movement dates back to the early 1970s. First on a local level with the New York City Council of Churches and then with the National Council of Churches (NCC). My late first husband, Rev. Robert Powell, was the Africa Secretary for the NCC and I met many African ecumenical leaders during that time before his death in 1981.

My first contact with the WCC was with the US office of the WCC during the time that Joan Brown Campbell was the programme executive. I then came onto the board of the US Conference of WCC member churches and went to the Harare Assembly in 1998, where I was elected to the central committee.

Please tell us something about your church life and commitment. What have been your sources of spiritual guidance and inspiration?

I was ordained in the United Church of Christ only in 2005, after working for many years on the national staff of the UCC. I have always felt a calling by God to do the justice work of the church, but have also worked in administrative positions and increasingly I found myself called to pastoral functions. In late 2005 I left the national staff and have since been doing consulting work as well as speaking and writing. Right now I am doing pastoral ministry and visioning with a New Orleans UCC congregation which is without a pastor, as it tries to re-build after the hurricane.

One of my sources of spiritual inspiration for many years has been Archbishop Desmond Tutu, whom I have known for 30 years and with whom I worked in the 1980s, setting up a scholarship fund for South African refugee students. The power of his work for justice and reconciliation and healing continues to inspire me.

I also have two spiritual guides whom I never knew: Harriet Tubman, the 19th century American slave who led over 300 slaves to freedom and who did not wait for someone to tell her what to do, she just did it. The second is Howard Thurman, a great 20th century theologian and preacher, who was a strong influence on Dr Martin Luther King, Jr.

How do you see the current situation of the global ecumenical movement?

I believe that the ecumenical movement faces both great challenges and great opportunities. The challenges are how to be more relevant for the average Christian in the pew and to make them feel more a part of a world-wide ecumenical movement. Similarly, the challenges are how to fund the movement and how to develop new partnerships with evangelical churches, our Catholic brothers and sisters and with church agencies.

The opportunities are to provide new models for how we can work on critical issues with our brothers and sisters of other faiths, particularly working on behalf of peace and justice in this broken world. I am especially excited about the International Ecumenical Peace Convocation which is planned by WCC for 2011. We have an opportunity to show the world an alternative vision - a vision of God's holy mountain, a vision of abundance for all, not just the few; a vision of peace and a world of justice. The opportunities also include finding new ways to involve youth and young adults in the work and the decision-making of the ecumenical movement and to help them to see that their faith is relevant in today's world.

What do you see as your role as WCC president?

As for my role, I see it primarily as a spokesperson on behalf of the WCC in North America, particularly on such priorities as the Decade to Overcome Violence. I also see it as helping to communicate the work of the WCC to the people in local churches. Communication is becoming increasingly important in the 21st century.

What do you see as the specific role of the US churches at this time?

As for the role of US churches, I believe we are continuing to be called to speak out for justice and peace, particularly since our nation is the world's superpower. That's why the US Decade to Overcome Violence committee continues to work and to focus on young people and on getting them involved in this work. We are also called to work on globalization and world-wide poverty.

As WCC president, what is your message to the member churches?

My message to the member churches of the WCC is the message of Haman to Esther, we are called to work in this broken world "for such a time as this." The world desperately needs a word of justice and peace, a message of reconciliation, hope and healing, the good news of Jesus Christ. We have so much to learn from each other and so much to share with the world. It is an exciting time to be a part of the WCC!

(*) **Alexander Belopopsky** is the coordinator of the WCC's Public Information Team.

Biographical information and a free high-resolution photo of Rev. Dr Bernice Powell Jackson:
http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/press_corner/powelljackson-bio-e.html

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- provide an understanding of the aging process
- offer a way of integrating theology and pastoral care
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- be of considerable benefit to anyone who is involved in providing pastoral care to older people, or any one who is interested in working this area
- be based at Selwyn Village, Pt Chevalier, and supervised by Roy Alexander
- be under the jurisdiction of Clinical Pastoral Education, Auckland.

For application material for this course as well as other CPE courses, please contact:

John McAlpine - Co-ordinator, CPE – Auckland

71 Tawa Street
One Tree Hill
Auckland 1003

Ph: (09) 634.9103

E-mail: j.mcalpine@slingshot.co.nz

Or: www.cpe-nz.org.nz

Theology and Religious Studies

BY DISTANCE LEARNING

The Department of Theology and Religious Studies offers courses in Christian Theology and Religious Studies by Distance Learning for people throughout New Zealand. It is possible to complete a Bachelor of Theology (BTheol) degree, study for individual papers, or for other university qualifications such as the Certificate and Diploma in Theological Studies. Enrolments for first semester papers close in December 2006, and second semester papers at the beginning of June 2007.

PAPERS ON OFFER IN 2007

SEMESTER 1

VIA AUDIOCONFERENCES

BIBX 112	Interpreting the Old Testament
CHTX 131	Ethics, Religion and Law in a Secular Society
CHTX 201/301	Medieval Christianity

INTERNET-BASED

PASX 212	Research Methods
RELX 102	Hinduism and Buddhism

BLOCK COURSES

BIBX 422	New Testament Theology – Auckland, 22-26 January 2007
CHTX 213/313	Theology of Grace – Nelson, 12-16 February 2007
PASX 207/307	Studying Congregations – Dunedin, 19-23 February 2007

SEMESTER 2

VIA AUDIOCONFERENCES

BIBX 221/321	Gospels
CHTX 111	Doing Theology
CHTX 402	Ranters and Radicals
MINX 406	Leadership in Congregations
PASX 306/404	Special Topic
RELX 211/311	Dead Sea Scrolls

BLOCK COURSES

CHTX 203/303	Reformation in the 16th Century – Dunedin, 25-29 June 2007
PASX 206/PAST380	Frameworks for Youth Ministry – Wellington, 2-6 July 2007
MINX 406	Leaderships in Congregations – Dunedin, 30 July-3 August 2007

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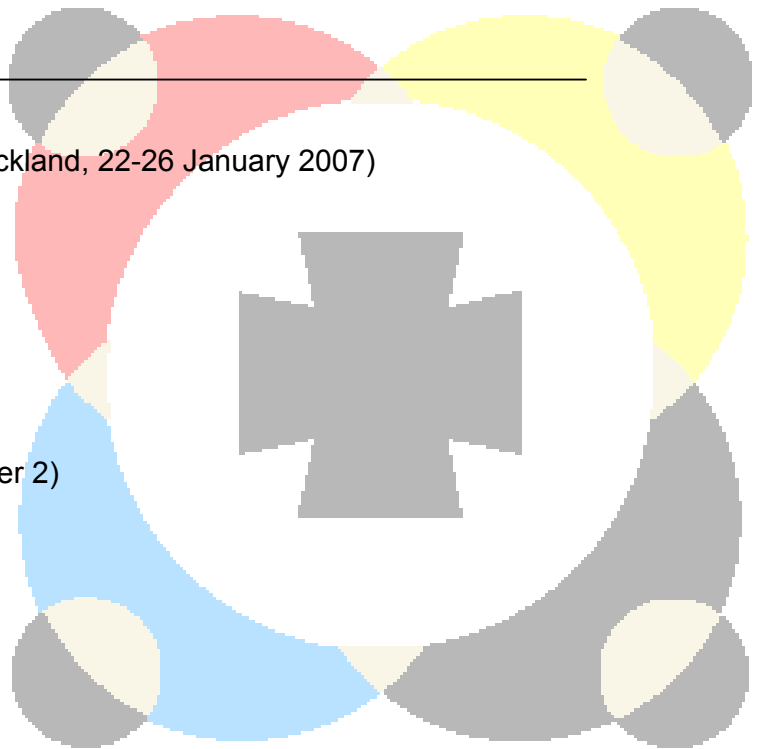
The Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Otago, in conjunction with the School of Ministry, Knox College, offers:

- a Master of Ministry degree (MMin)
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The MMin is a two-year degree. The PGDipMin comprises the first year of the Master's degree. Both programmes are suited to those of you wishing to study while living and working in your place of ministry. Full-time and part-time options are available.

PAPERS ON OFFER IN 2007

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|-------------------|---|
| BIBX 422 | New Testament Theology
(Semester 1 – block course in Auckland, 22-26 January 2007) |
| CHTH/X 402 | Ranters and Radicals
(Semester 2 by audioconference) |
| PASX 404 | Special Topic
(Semester 2 by audioconference) |
| MINX 404 | Clinical Pastoral Education
(Semester 1 and again in Semester 2) |
| MINX 406 | Leadership in Congregations
(Semester 2 by audioconference) |
| MINS 590 | Research Project
(Whole year) |



PREREQUISITE FOR MINS 590 RESEARCH PROJECT

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| PASX 212 | Research Methods
(Semester 1 – fully Internet-based) |
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Or ring 0800 80 80 98 for an enrolment pack

Enrolments close 10 December for Semester 1, 1 June for Semester 2

AUGUST AMENDMENTS

TO THE YEARBOOK

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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:
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Postal: PO Box 931, Christchurch