

# TRINITY METHODIST THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

## Que[e]rying Tradition Transgressing the Boundaries of Theological Education<sup>1</sup>

### Que[e]rying Tradition

Que[e]rying tradition utters a double invitation! First, it is an invitation to query or interrogate the ways in which we have done theological training. Second, it is an invitation to *queer* any theological tradition or discourse that continue to validate any form of discrimination or oppression of those in the margins and underside of religions and society.

I use the term 'queer' in the sense of transgression and resistance. Que[e]rying is about pushing the boundaries to make a point, resisting the norm for a good cause, or challenging the status quo for positive change. Que[e]rying tradition, in that sense, calls for a more transformative theological curriculum that seriously takes into account the diverse and pluralistic contexts of ministry.

Que[e]rying tradition urges faith communities to 'come out,' or depart, from doing theological education in 'missionary positions' (which demands submission and conformity to a particular tradition), and embrace a more 'spiced-up' theological engagement that celebrates difference and plurality. There is a need to free the way we think about tradition—especially about God, scripture and church--in order to release theological education from the grip of fundamentalism and colonial ideas. God-talks (or theologies) and interpretations of sacred texts should be transgressive of boundaries that divide if there is sincerity and seriousness about justice, peace, freedom and equality in society.

### Shifting Paradigms

The landscape of theological education has significantly changed over the years.

- Positivist approach to theological education, epitomised in systematic theology and historical critical scholarship, encountered strong challenges since the 1960s to an extent that it is no longer the norm of theological scholarship in many theological institutions the world over.
- The most notable challenge came from human rights movements that gave rise to new theological development such as feminist theology, black theology, liberation theology and various forms of contextual theologies. These movements offered alternatives that never before thought of. One of the most striking elements of these movements is exposing the fact that there is no such thing as neutral, unbiased, pure and innocent theology or interpretation. All theologies and interpretations are contextual—positioned, perspectival, biased and limited. There is more to theological education than systematic theology, and there is more to biblical studies than historical criticism.
- Similar challenges came about in the last quarter of the last century when theologians and biblical scholars alike employed post-structural, postmodern, and postcolonial ideas. The new millennium likewise brought more options from environmental and queer movements. These movements altered the terrain of theological education.
- These movements, however, had theoretical precursors. Philosophers and thinkers like Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jürgen Habermas and his colleagues from the Frankfurt school; Marx, Nietzsche and Freud (the three masters of suspicion); Jacques Derrida, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault from France; and postcolonial theorists like Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Frantz Fanon (to name a few)—expose the limitations of the Kantian and Cartesian modes of thinking, and point to the contextual and ideological nature of every theological formulation, and thereby shaken the very foundation of traditional theological education.

Despite all this, theological education and ministry training in some church-based (especially fundamentalist and evangelical) seminaries and colleges remain uneven and strange:

- Uneven and strange because the agendas and frameworks for theological training are still predominantly Eurocentric and colonial, and there is an on-going preference for that rather

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<sup>1</sup> A revised version of a paper delivered at Mornington Methodist Church, Dunedin, 23 September 2015.

than ones based on the treasure that we have – our cultures, our belief- and value-systems; our texts; our ways of being and ways of knowing.

- Uneven and strange because English (or some versions of that language) is still the lingua franca of theological training. I strongly believe that one cannot make sense of anything— theological or otherwise—unless it is cashed in the currency of one’s linguistic world and heritage.
- Uneven and strange because there are misconnections between the way we do ministry training and the way we live, and issues we face, in society. We can no longer justify our inaction in regards to issues here and in the region—issues like climate change, colonialism, violence, cultural incompetence, discriminations, economic exclusion, and many more.
- Uneven and strange, because theological scholarship (and education in general) has lost its focus on the beauty of knowledge and critical thinking because it is largely dictated by the demand of the employment market, and we strive therefore to live up to the expectations of the market rather than what is best and fitting to our diverse cultural contexts.
- Uneven and strange because indigenous knowledge, especially from ‘Oceania,’ are excluded from mainstream theological discourses as if Oceania/Aotearoa and its people do not exist. The challenge for us in Aotearoa is not just to decolonise scholarship, but also to ‘de-continentalise.’ Non-European and island views are drowning under the currents of continental perspectives – from Europe, Africa, Latin America and Asia.
- Finally, theological education is uneven and strange because we are epistemologically intoxicated and therefore tend to be overly cautious in what we do to avoid upsetting academia and its traditional norm of theological scholarship.

We, in Aotearoa and in the Methodist Church, deserve better than that. Traditional theological education with its often self-serving agenda must be *que[e]red* in order to establish theological programmes that are appropriate, relevant, transformative, and liberating. We need programmes that can train people to be theologically literate, to think critically beyond their individual horizons, to have a good understanding of their contexts of ministry, and to become agents of transformation, justice and freedom in society.

### **Contexts of Ministry**

Aotearoa is not homogenous in any shape or form, and it has always been like that. We are so diverse in terms of culture, colour, belief, values, interests, worldviews, ideologies and visions. That is very much reflected in our own Methodist household. In such a colourful setting, we need to acknowledge the following:

- First, we can no longer speak of Aotearoa culture in a singular way; our culture is plural. NZ culture is more than just the Pākehā/European; lest we forget, Maori culture deserves our respect. Such an undertaking requires us to depart from our ethnocentric outlook and adopt an inclusive attitude to other cultures as equally valid sites for theological education. Only in so doing that we come close to lessening the dehumanizing and alienating nature of what we do as a Church.
- Second, we can no longer turn a blind eye to our diverse religious and denominational landscapes. We are not in a Christian nation (that’s a fact); we have Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist brothers and sisters who consider their own faiths and scriptures to be as sacred as ours. The challenge for faith-based theological education is not to abandon what we have in favour of others; rather we are urged to seriously reconsider our truth-claims (for we don’t own or control the truth). In doing so, there is hope to avoid violent and oppressive acts committed in the name of religion.
- Third, we have to take account of our diverse situations, needs, and aspirations. If we don’t, theological education and ministry will continue to serve the interests of the rich and powerful minority to the detriment of the poor and powerless majority. We need to learn to listen to the cry of others whom we share this homeland, and thus learn to live with them and care beyond the confinement of our own ethnic, religious, and moral boundaries. Unless we are able to move beyond those socially constructed boundaries, freedom, justice and transformation will remain far from our doorstep.

- Fourth, and finally, let's be mindful of the issues that continue to affect us here in Aotearoa. We still face an economy that exploits people; unemployment and inflation are still high, the housing market is no longer affordable for many; socially, we have high rates of violent crimes, and so forth. Currently we are dealing with the influx of migrants and refugees. In Oceania, the islands continue to face the challenge of social disintegration, political instability, economic hardships, and, above all, climate change. These are the realities at home, and they must inform theological education and ministry training.

### **Trinity College**

Trinity College belongs to the church; it belongs to you; it's your theological institution. We are at the College to serve your theological and ministry needs. You have the right to inform us of your needs, and to question what we do. That is how I work and I have encourage my staff to work likewise. I want the College to work collaboratively with the wider connexion.

That is why we set as a working theme for this year: "Excellence through Collaboration." Collaboration is one of the hallmarks of a professional learning community. Such a community share and critically interrogate their practice in an ongoing, reflective, supportive, inclusive, learning-oriented, growth-promoting way, and function as a collective enterprise. Within such a community, excellence is attainable. That community is us!

Trinity College upholds the Methodist ethos. We seek to offer programmes that are credible, accessible, inclusive and transformative. As a College without border, you can do our courses and be part of the College community wherever you are 24/7. We make sure that what you learn with us counts out there.

Trinity College, in designing its programmes for the coming years, takes account of what I have shared so far, with particular reference to

- the multicultural composition and needs of its learners, and its pedagogical requirements.
- the ministry needs of Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa (Methodist Church of New Zealand) and its bi-cultural responsibilities.
- the standard requirements of the New Zealand Qualification of Authority (NZQA) and the global trends of theological education
- the pluralistic Aotearoa context in which graduates will live and work, and
- the issues that demand immediate attention and action: climate change, imperialism, discrimination, violence, human trafficking, displacement, oppression, and many more.

It is too little a focus to restrict theological training to ministry and pastoral matters only. We need to look beyond ourselves to inform what we do. That shapes the courses we will deliver with the hope that graduates will gain a broad and in-depth understanding of their contexts of ministry.

**Our Students:** The number of students we have this year is 130 excluding those who have participated in preaching courses nationwide. Last year we had 85 students. About 80% of our students are private students, most of whom are planning to enter the candidating process at some point in the near future. Majority of our students are Pasifika, but we have 10 ethnicities in the mix.

I want to make it clear that you don't have to study at Trinity in order to become a candidate for ministry. Likewise, you don't have to be a candidate for ministry to study with us.

**Our Programmes:** For the coming years we will offer five programmes, one of which is reserved only for accepted ministry candidates and in-ministry students (probationers), and that is the Ministry Formation programme. The other programmes are (see Programme Structure document):

Certificate in Lay Preaching (Level 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Compulsory Papers</li> </ul>
Diploma in Methodist Studies (Level 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 Core papers</li> <li>• 1 recommended and 2 electives for endorsement in a specific type of ministry</li> </ul>
NZ Diploma in Christian Studies (Level 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 Core papers plus 1 of 2 options</li> <li>• Option 1 - 3 electives</li> <li>• Option 2 - Research essay + 1 elective</li> <li>• For specialisation in their respective stand</li> </ul>
Advanced Diploma in Religious Studies (Level 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 Core papers</li> <li>• Option 1 - Research project + 1 elective</li> <li>• Option 2 - 3 electives</li> </ul>

Across these programmes (except the Certificate in Lay Preaching) we offer selection of papers from the four areas of studies we currently have, namely, biblical studies, theological studies (formerly Christian Thoughts and History), pastoral studies, and Māori studies. Each area provides 10 papers or so (required & electives). That is a huge cut from the 130 papers we had previously. Required papers offer threshold ones to equip students with basic knowledge and skills in each particular area. Elective papers allow students to choose from contextual papers, issue-specific papers, special topic papers, and/or the research option.

Programme Requirements: Each programme has its own entry requirements. For more details please visit the College's new website: [www.trinitycollege.ac.nz](http://www.trinitycollege.ac.nz). The College will also introduce a new entry test called Trinity College Entrance Test (TCET). This is an on the spot test designed for those who want to study with us but do not have any of the entry requirements. This is to test the knowledge they already have and to check what kind of assistance they might need.

Programme Delivery: Trinity College delivers all its teaching through a blended learning model. All papers are semester based and will have a face to face teaching block. Blocks will usually be held over a working week (Monday to Friday). Some courses will be delivered on a weekly basis in some evenings from 6-8pm. These ones will also be streamed live online to wherever you are provided that you have access to the facility required, such as fast broadband, etc. Enrolment in papers for interest only is also available if needed.

Programme Cost & Financial Assistance: One of concerns we've received is around the area of course costs. Trinity College, though charging fees for its papers, has an interest in delivering affordable programmes. For your information we have bursary funds available to assist those who struggle financially. Ministry candidates are fully funded, but any student can apply for assistance in terms of fees, travel and accommodation. There are also other sources of funding in the church that students can tap into.

### Where to from here?

Here are some of the areas that I think are important going forward:

#### 1. Research and Publication

The College is interested in nurturing a research culture, equip students with research skills, and encourage them to do research. For that purpose, we have a year-long course on research methodology and also weave into courses some research components. Our staff will run four slots of research seminars—each one will share a research paper to students and the wider community, present at a conference, and publish at least one research piece in an academic peer-reviewed journal each year. To do justice to our students and stakeholders, we have to make sure that staff are up-to-date with trends in their respective fields.

#### 2. Education Pathway and Leadership Development

The College seeks to encourage high performing students to pursue higher degrees (Masters & PhDs) either here or overseas. We have decided to ring-fence part of our annual budget to

accumulate enough money for that purpose. Some anti-intellectual elements within the church may oppose to that, but we need to train more leaders, and this is the time to do it. We need church leaders who can think outside the box, rather than merely leading worship and attending meetings.

### **3. Co-operative Links and Theological Partnerships**

Trinity College is too small a college to isolate itself from other theological institutions, especially Methodist ones. I also think that Aotearoa is too small a country to limit partnerships to our borders. The previous principal, Rev Dr David Bell, introduced the College into IAMSCU—i.e. the International Association of Methodist Schools, Colleges, and Universities. We will continue to be a member of that body as they provide a good platform for benchmarking our programmes. In New Zealand, we are part of CTMES, which is the society of private theological providers, but I am particularly interested in reviving the partnership with St John's College (since we have a covenant), in creating formal links with Otago University, Laidlaw College, etc. There was an interest from the Methodist Theological University in Seoul, Korea to establish a relationship with Trinity, and I want to reopen that conversation. Trinity will also become a member of the exchange programme of Methodist theological colleges in Oceania, and the South Pacific Association of Theological Schools (SPATS).

### **4. Environment and Resources**

Last but not least, every learning community needs a good environment to ensure stability long term. That is why we have brought back administration from Torbay to Meadowbank. Our students must be close to the centre of learning, the library. Buddle House, across the road from St John's College, has been renovated and transformed into a Student Centre with rooms to accommodate students coming from outside Auckland, and study spaces where students can gather, work, and help each other. Buddle House is the only space we own; we can do better than that. St John's College continues to provide spaces for our classes, but that won't go forever because it has other plans too. We need our own place where we can use for training, conferences and retreats. We can only do as much with what we have, but nothing is impossible if we put our minds into it. That's a dream but I am hopeful we can do it.

#### **Suggested decisions:**

1. The report is received
2. Conference notes and affirms the programme model adopted by Trinity College Council.
3. Trinity College Council thanks and acknowledges the contribution made by Rev Val Nicholls to College life, students (particularly in the Ministry Formation programme) and as a staff member over the last 6 years.
4. Conference acknowledges the resignations of Max Thomson as Council Chairperson and Isaiah Kainiu as Council member during 2015, and thanks them for their service to Trinity Methodist Theological College.
5. Trinity College Council congratulates: Alipate Livani, Hui Young Han, Joeli Ducivaki, Kimberley Chiwona, Sikeli Cawanikawai, Tisileli Taufa and Veitomoni Siufanga on completing the Diploma in Practical Theology and their impending graduation.
6. Trinity College Council members for 2016: Nasili Vaka'uta (Principal), Richard Biddle, David McGeorge, Ema Wolfgram-Foliaki, Shirley Rivers and Nicola Grundy (Secretary).

## **MISSION RESOURCING**

This year at Mission Resourcing has been a time of comings and goings. Firstly, we planned to say farewell to Nehu as she embarked upon her maternity leave, but baby Taeya decided she wouldn't wait for that and so Nehu was in the office one day and gone the next. We congratulate Nehu on the birth of her daughter Taeya and as I write this report, welcome Nehu for her first day back in the office.

Stepping into Nehu's role, Jaanine Harris has done a magnificent job in absorbing so much information about Methodist procedures and personnel. Jaanine has more than met our hopes and expectations of her and we express our sincere gratitude for the work she has so ably done and wish her well for her future career. Jaanine is also a newly- authorised minister of the AOG church, so some of you may possibly come across Jaanine in the future.

We have also said a sad farewell to Aso Saleupolu this year. Aso had indicated that he wished to retire at the end of January this year, but agreed to stay on as Director Pasifika ministries on a half time basis until a new Director could take over. The Board wishes to express its sincere thanks to Aso for being willing to stay on, despite his failing health. Such service is typical of the faithful and dedicated ministry Aso has exercised not just at Mission Resourcing, but throughout his time with the Methodist Church, Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa. The Board also acknowledges Aso's willingness to attend Conference and be available to account for work undertaken in the final months of his tenure at Mission Resourcing. We know that the whole of Conference will wish to express its thanks and best wishes to Aso as he goes into retirement.

Mission Resourcing has recently welcomed Setaita Kinahoi Veikune as the new Director Pasifika ministries. Setaita was appointed through the four+four process and her appointment was endorsed by the Council of Conference and the President. Setaita was inducted at a well-attended service at Wesley College on Sunday 16 August. Setaita will work on a half time basis at Mission Resourcing for the remainder of this connexional year and half time parish superintendent for the Auckland- Manukau Tongan parish. The Board commends Setaita to the church for prayerful support as she embarks upon this new style of ministry.

Meanwhile, the Director English-speaking ministries will continue to hold things together until Setaita becomes fulltime in February 2016. Mission Resourcing hopes that these various staff changes have not unduly impaired the work we do on behalf of the parishes, synods and committees of the church. Perhaps 2016 will be rather more settled.

### **Refresh Ministries**

As reported to Conference last year, it has not been possible to find funding to continue the Refresh programme. However, resources of this nature are still available by modest subscription from Andrew Gammon at [www.kererupublishing.com](http://www.kererupublishing.com)

Book allowances could be justifiably used to subscribe.

### **Lay Ministry Support**

At Conference last year we launched the Lay Ministry Support initiative. Mission Resourcing made the offer to come to parishes, groups of parishes, or synods to give support and instruction on any topic requested. Mission Resourcing would look for appropriately skilled people to deliver such programmes and pay for them to come to where the people are who have expressed the need. Conference warmly endorsed this initiative last year. Whilst invitations have not matched the enthusiasm shown last year, we have made some visits and responded to some invitations. Please do remember to call upon us if you think we may be able to help in any aspect of mission, administration, or theology.

### **Korean Dialogue**

Conversations with the Korean Methodists of the Seoul South Conference living in New Zealand continue with a growing sense of purpose and anticipation. We have reached the point of discussing practical arrangements for how such a new cultural group would fit into our processes and structures. We could have some concrete recommendations to bring to Conference either next year or the year after.

### **Dialogue with the Reformed Church of Tuvalu**

An inaugural meeting has taken place recently after a gap of several years. If this new approach eventuates in formal dialogue a representative committee will be established similar to the one involved in the Korean dialogue.

### **Chaplaincy forum 2015**

The chaplaincy forum met in Christchurch this year during June. The forum has been established for anyone, lay or ordained, who is engaged in some form of chaplaincy work. We meet for mutual support and education. This year we heard a very interesting account of work as a police chaplain. This meeting is appreciated by those who attend and we recommend the forum to those involved in such ministries. The next forum will be in June 2016 in Auckland.

## **Candidates**

This year we had 9 candidates enter the process; 3 were accepted for English-speaking ministries and 4 for Pasifika ministries. The Board wishes to record its gratitude to members of the Candidates Assessment Panel and the synod candidates' convenors for their hard work.

## **CV Orientation Day**

If you are stationed at this Conference to a Co-operating venture for the first time, or even for the first time in many years, you may wish to attend the CV Orientation Day led by Marilyn Welch and Trevor Hoggard at Mission Resourcing on Wednesday 2 December 10.00- 12.00.

Synod Superintendents who are aware of a change of co-ordinating partner which entail a new Presbyterian or Anglican appointment may wish to offer this opportunity to any newly appointed minister. Please contact the office if you are interested.

## **Police Vetting**

We have been trying to come to terms with recent changes to procedures due to the Vulnerable Children's Act 2014. These changes are complex and they are being phased in gradually, so there is much confusion in the air. We have shared this confusion ourselves to some degree. However, after enquiries we now believe that the new Act with its new regulations and its confusing new categories of "core" and "non-core" workers with children does not actually legally apply to the Church as a voluntary rather than a government funded agency. Such voluntary organisations as the Church are recommended to "follow best practice". Conference has already established that people who work in the name of the church with children, young people or vulnerable adults, should be subject to a police criminal records check every **five** years. The new Act introduces a **three** year term for those core and non-core workers who are covered by the Act. Since the Act is not legally binding upon the Church, it is the view of Mission Resourcing that we can keep with the five year term in order to keep the work load more manageable for parishes and our office. Unless we receive advice to the contrary, this shall be our policy. Please bear with us as we work our way through these unfolding new regulations, new terminology and new forms.

## **Tauiwi Sexuality Work Group**

Conference will be receiving a separate report from this group which was established with PAC funding by Conference last year. Whilst there is no further funding available, Mission Resourcing will continue to host informal meetings of the active core members of this group when the majority of them happen to be in Auckland for other purposes. It is hoped that the deeper trust and respect we have experienced in this smaller group may be made available to the church more generally when addressing this and similarly emotive subjects.

## **TUIWI CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES MINISTRIES**

TYTANZ – *Tauiwi Youth Together Aotearoa New Zealand*

Kids Loving Church – *Kids who love Church AND Churches who love kids*

Just over a year in my new role, it has been a truly unique experience being able to work for and with children and youth across the Connexion. The coming together of Tauiwi children and youth ministry has come with its share of challenges, but with a greater sense of encouraging signs. Essential to our work is the hope that we continue to strive toward being a church which empowers and values every young person as members of the body of Christ.

The first year of TCYFM have been focussed into three key areas:

### **Connect**

The first area of our work, under the heading of *Connect*, has focused on two central questions

*How well connected are our young people to wider parish life?*

*How well connected are our young people locally, regionally and nationally?*

We have worked hard in attempting to better address these areas, in the hope of creating ministries for our young people that are better *connected* to all threads of parish life. The Children Ministry Database has been updated and continues to be crucial to better connecting ministry

leaders in their work and endeavours. A Youth Ministry Database is currently being built, with the same purpose in mind.

Work is being done to update the Children and Youth sections on [missionresourcing.org.nz](http://missionresourcing.org.nz) and [Methodist.org.nz](http://Methodist.org.nz). This again is to promote a better connected culture, by which our young people feel well represented and a part of.

Social media also has a part to play when looking at being better connected as a church, and this has not been fully utilised thus far. We are hoping to explore ways in which we can plug into its benefits for the sake of our young people.

I have also had the huge blessing of being able to work with young people from across all of our cultural synods, attending camps, retreats, workshops, services and many other gatherings. I see the desire for cross-cultural gatherings to happen more amongst our young people, reflecting the societies from which are situated but also promoting a *Kingdom*-like understanding of church, which celebrates but also goes beyond our cultural identity.

Furthermore to this, our ecumenical relationships with other denominations, in relation to children and youth ministries, continue to be of great benefit in our work. I work as part of the National Youth Leaders Network, of which the mainline denominations belong. I am also in regular contact with children's ministry equivalents, through other mainline denominations and workgroups focussed on children ministry. Again, these relationships are crucial to our growth as a church, and support the idea of a better connected church for all young people.

### **Resource**

The second area of TCYFM work has been focussed around resourcing, with emphasis on two main questions:

*How well resourced are our ministries to young people?*

*How engaging and meaningful are those resources?*

These questions have prompted a lot of interesting conversation, and challenged us to explore whether we are as well-resourced for children and youth ministry as we should be. I would suggest that we are not, however we are taking steps in the right direction.

Resourcing across different cultural synods within Tauwiwi presents a wide variety of different needs. Some synods work of a set annual curriculum, some work term by term, some on the fly. What is widely acknowledged is that in the areas where resourcing is needed across the Connexion, we have to be better and more effective in doing so.

### *The Method*

It is my hope to have an online database of resources for children and youth ministry called *The Method* up and running in time for Advent. This will contain resources for such things as Sunday school material, children's messages, youth devotional ideas, PowerPoint song databases and a host of other material. We intend for *The Method* to have a collaboration of resources from across the Connexion first and foremost, as well suitable outside resources. We also hope that these resources will be easily contextualised and moulded so that it connects and engages young people from all over the Connexion accordingly.

### *MYC 16*

Methodist Youth Conference 2016 is currently in its preliminary planning and preparation stage. We hope to provide a *yearly* conference for our youth, which has specific focus on discipleship and leadership development. We believe for this to be a great opportunity to feed into the future of our church in such a way that hasn't been done in the past.

### *Regional Specific Training*

We are also fully committed to providing training opportunities for children and youth ministry workers to gather regionally within the coming year. This will be done in a hope to provide space for training, sharing and networks amongst our ministry leaders, feeding into a better connected culture as well better resourcing and supporting our ministry workers.



### *CANVAS – Worship through Creation*

We are currently looking at creating new space for creatives to harbour their gifts and talents within the life of the church. We hope this would encourage our young musicians, song writers, dancers, actors, poets and so on to feel better valued and nurtured within the Connexion. More information on this ministry will be coming in 2016.

### **Inspire**

The final area of focus for TCYFM has been under the category of *Inspire*. A central question to this area of work has been:

*How well do we hear the voice of our young people in theological and spirituality conversations?*

We believe that too often, the voice of our children and youth is silenced in conversations around theology and spirituality. There is only benefit and gain for all if we choose to be more willing in hearing those voices. In most cases, our young people are strong in a desire to engage with their faith on a deeper level. We would like to encourage our parishes and leaders to become more open and aware to letting these conversations take place.

Furthermore, many of our young Methodists (and possibly adults) are not fully aware of their Methodist heritage and identity. We would like to encourage such conversations around this to happen - for our young people who would actually be more than willing to engage and learn, but also for the sake of strengthening our sense of belonging as proud Methodists also.

### **Overall thoughts and thanks**

Personally, it has been a great blessing in my first year in this role. Having the opportunity to experience ministry to children and youth on many different levels has been overall an encouraging experience. We remain committed to ensuring our children and youth continue to grow in a church which values, empowers and treats them with a Christ-like love.

I wish to acknowledge all members of our Tauwi Youth and Tauwi Children's ministry teams. For the work they do, both seen and unseen, within their own contexts and also for the wider Connexion. Thank you!

Particular thanks to Esme Cole and Filo Tu, who are both riding off into the sunset. You have both been crucial members of our team and we thank you deeply for your work and service over many years.

I'd also like to thank both Trevor and Aso, along with the MRU board for their support in the first year of TCYFM. We have in many cases been learning as we go, and I am grateful for the patience and unwavering support.

Lastly many thanks to all leaders, presbyters, and members who have walked alongside our young people in all areas of church life. For your love, guidance, patience and willingness to hear the voice of our young people be heard and received, we say thank you. We are at the front end of journey for TCYFM, so your continued prayer and support is always much appreciated.

### **Suggested decisions:**

1. That the report be received.
2. Conference expresses its gratitude to the Rev Aso Saleupolu for the sensitive, dedicated and sacrificial ministry he has offered the Church during his years of ministry at Mission Resourcing and elsewhere in the connexion.
3. Conference notes the Mission Resourcing report concerning changes to the police vetting procedures.

## FRESH EXPRESSIONS AOTEAROA NZ METHODIST REPORT

In 2011 the Methodist church became a partner with the Anglicans, Baptists and Wesleyan Methodists in Fresh Expressions Aotearoa NZ (FEANZ) to explore different ways of being church in New Zealand. This follows the successful movement of Fresh Expressions in the United Kingdom that the Methodists in the UK have partnered with a number of denominations including the Church of England since 2004.

In feedback from Tauwi Strategy to the strategic conversations document circulated by the Budget Task Group they have commented on the need to identify 'Church planters and to train people in Church planting'. FEANZ is an excellent vehicle to undertake the training aspects of church planting through the Mission-shaped Ministry course which teaches the participants a wide range of skills in particular being able to listen carefully to the context in which church planting could take place. In the past year the msm course has been run in Auckland, Christchurch and Palmerston North. Palmerston North has also run the Mission-shaped introductory course which is about creating the awareness of the changing world around us and why we need to change our approach to our engagement with the communities where we find ourselves.

So what is Fresh Expressions?

A fresh expression is a form of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of people who are not yet members of any church;

- It will come into being through principles of listening, service, incarnational mission and making disciples.
- It will have the potential to become a mature expression of church shaped by the Gospel and the enduring marks of the church and for its cultural context.

This is not a new form of being church but one that has resonated throughout church history when the Christian church was born out of the Jewish cultural context. Paul in writing to the Corinthian church shared these words:

*When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. 1 Cor. 9:22 NLT.*

With the dawning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have we lost the Wesley roots that formed the Methodist Church? His passion and travels established many churches throughout England; he even used an abandoned foundry building for his London headquarters. Wesley in his own way engaged in fresh expressions of church - be it in the market places, homes, or open air – he went to where the people were. He addressed the needs of the people both physical and spiritual. William Temple said "The Church is the only society that exists for the benefit of those who are not its members." Are we existing for those who already carry the 'card' or are we there for those who are searching to fill the Christ shaped hole in their lives?

Canon Phil Potter, the Archbishop of Canterbury's fresh expressions missionary, visited last year at the invitation of the Baptists and they graciously gave him time to meet with other denominational leaders led by the FEANZ team. Phil also conducted a one day seminar for practitioners and those exploring what it is to be the church in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. His key message was being missional leaders and that leadership needs to provide the vision, encouragement and support for meaningful engagement with our communities.

Work is currently continuing on recording stories for the New Zealand DVD which will be used in teaching in the msm courses and other events. This hoped to be completed by the end of the year. However we still need several stories particularly from the Methodist perspective.

Finally, it is important to say that Fresh Expressions is not a silver bullet to reverse the decline of mainline churches, but it is one arrow in the quiver of many approaches to share the Gospel with a rapidly changing world. However, its main purpose is to stimulate thinking and debate, and more importantly promote the action that is needed in order, in the words of St. Paul, 'to save some'.

T.S. Eliot said, 'Between the idea and the reality, between the motion and the act, falls the shadow'. Let's not allow the shadow fall on 21<sup>st</sup> century church.

**Suggested decision:**

1. That the report be received.

## **DIACONATE TASK GROUP**

The Task Group continues to be available to support new deacons, and to be a sounding board/advisory group to churches and people needing information. We have met with Rev Nasili Vaka'uta and Rev Val Nichols at Trinity College and are assured of their support for future deacon candidates. Recently we were invited to speak about the Diaconate to present and future students, with the whole service themed around the ministry of deacons.



We spoke of the 30 year history of the present Diaconate and gave insights into the work deacons have involved themselves with, as well as giving a brief look at the ministries of deaconesses before 1976 when the Diaconate was reformed to include men. Deacons, after suitable training were also then Ordained at Conference.

In May would-be candidates and deacons met at Wellspring for a one day Retreat with Rev Liz Hopner. This was very helpful as a gathering place as well as in encouraging those in active ministry of the importance of self-care. In April 2016 we are planning to meet for 3 days at Convocation in or near Christchurch. We are glad of the renewed interest in the Diaconate - with deacons working alongside presbyters and lay people and reaching out to their communities in their churches geographical areas.

We were saddened by the death of Deacon Jean McInnes last November – Jean served in many honorary welfare roles and was awarded an MBE for services to the community.

We asked 3 active deacons to share their areas of ministry for this report.

Falinisesi (Sesi) Hafoka (Glen Innes, Vahefonua). Sesi is an on-call primary teacher. She is involved with a weekly gathering for elderly Tongan people and visits and participates in their activities such as weaving, cooking, Bible study, and sharing stories. In her Chaplaincy role she represents the Churches Education Commission (CEC) often spending time with needy children, or helping students make right choices, as well as in helping teachers with pastoral care.

Sesi helps the presbyter in serving Holy Communion, and with funerals, and is a Marriage Celebrant. Sesi says that through a relationship with Jesus, prayer and Bible reading, along with the love of God, healing and transformation comes to many lives.

Ruta Galo (Mangere-Otahuhu Parish). Ruta is a full time primary teacher. She has experienced many challenges, heartaches, fun times and blessings at work. She encourages the congregation to 'go out to Love and Serve'. She is involved with the Fitlife group, and family workshops, along with public questions/debates with the local community. Ruta has established a network of support with people from church, work and family which stabilises her quite busy and often hectic lifestyle. She is active in her local church with children and families e.g. Confirmation classes for youth, along with social activities. At work "Positive Behaviour for Learning Teams" and an "Incredible Years Team" includes the development of 4 key values: Responsibilities, Resilience, Respect and Relationships. She hopes to develop and nurture young church leaders from these.

Two deacons are stationed in smaller churches half time and both are doing well as they give time to their local communities as well as being deacon in their church setting.

Megan Alley is stationed at Kaurihohora (Kamo/Whangarei) and her involvement with the community is with the local hall committee, fundraising, a craft group especially for Mums and babies, Girls Brigade support, teaching lonely and young people to cook healthy meals, providing

transport and leadership for Mainly Music, hospital visiting, as well as church duties and leadership.

The Task group is encouraged by renewed interest in the Diaconate ministry of Te Hahi Weteriana.

We give thanks to God and to all who have supported us over the years.

**Suggested decisions:**

1. That this report be received.
2. That members of the Diaconate Task Group continue as is for 2015/16: Co-Convenors: Edna Evans & Margaret Birtles with Brenda Fawcner, Rachel Tregurtha, Megan Alley, Ruta Galo.

## **METHODIST LAY PREACHER'S NETWORK**

Every Sunday many worship services in Methodist, Union and Co-operating parishes are led by Lay Preachers. Their ministry has grown from a sense of God's call to them; not to be removed from their place of work, but to remain in it, and be able to bring their insights and perspectives to worship. We give thanks to God for them all; we honour the faithful service of those who have died during the year and extend our love and sympathy to their families in their loss.

We celebrate with all those who have recently completed their training and become accredited: Annis Feist, Allen Little, Lavinia Elder, James Gaudin, Joanne Gaudin, Vic Longley, Jan Robinson, Ann Smith, Elva Symons, Derek Kruger, Wendy Russell, Hugh Hill, Robyn Bridge, Valerie Marshall and Julia de Groot.

Trinity College works continually to keep training relevant for ministry as well as compliant with NZQA and it is important for the church to know that those entrusted with the ministry of Lay Preaching have received adequate basic training either through Trinity College or another recognised body. Academic study is only one side of the process of accreditation however, for each Lay Preacher has to be approved as suitable for this ministry by the people who know him or her best, the congregation. Lay Preachers are expected to be "AAU" – which means Accredited, Active and Upskilled – by completing their training, leading a minimum of 3 services a year and continuing with some study, which may be reading, attending training days or other courses. This commitment to continuing education is reflected in the annual return forms which are sent to individual Lay Preachers as well as Parishes. Thank you to all those who have responded; it is on the basis of these returns that the Methodist Network Convenor compiles the list of Lay Preachers for the Yearbook.

Those who have qualified as Lay Preachers in a language other than English often wish to extend their skill base and become more competent leading worship in English. Discussions took place this year between the leaders of Vahefonua, Sinoti and Wasewase, Mission Resourcing and the Lay Preachers Network to suggest some guidelines for this process. These steps are applicable to those from Korean- and Tamil-speaking congregations and any other language group.

The inter-denominational/ecumenical New Zealand Lay Preachers' Association (NZLPA) continues to be the organisation which issues Accreditation and Long Service Certificates and also publishes the quarterly magazine *Word and Worship* which is distributed to all who have paid the annual subscription. The NZLPA and Methodist Network have complementary roles but the two groups are often confused. The NZLPA page on the Methodist Church website may be found at: <http://www.methodist.org.nz/organisations/nzlpa>, and information about the Methodist Network on: [http://www.methodist.org.nz/board\\_of\\_ministry/lay\\_preachers](http://www.methodist.org.nz/board_of_ministry/lay_preachers).

Lay Preachers are encouraged to join forces locally to organise training events to meet the continuing education needs of each area, drawing on local expertise or inviting resource people from further afield. Limited funds are available for the benefit of Lay Preachers so please access them via the Convenors if needed, so that those who offer ministry to our congregations are well equipped to lead worship and be faithful to God's calling.

Viv Whimster (Convenor), Syd Easton, Ngaire Southon (Co-convenors)

**Suggested decisions:**

1. That the report be received.
2. That the Methodist Lay Preachers Network Convenor be: Viv Whimster and Co-convenors Syd Easton and Ngaire Southon.

**THE CHURCHES EDUCATION COMMISSION**

*No report received*

**THE INTERCHURCH TERTIARY CHAPLAINCY COUNCIL (ITCC) &  
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND CHAPLAINCY ASSOCIATION (ANZTCA)**

The Inter-Tertiary Chaplaincy Council (ITCC) continues to coordinate the various ecumenical trusts and councils which sponsor and place Christian chaplains in the various tertiary institutions of New Zealand. In the past it has played a major role in funding these chaplains, but the decline in national church funding has meant that the funding of chaplaincy depends now on local fundraising (which often includes church support) and support from the secular institutions, many of which welcome the presence of chaplains.

During the year our chair made application to the Prince Albert College Trust for funding. We are grateful the contribution received, which has enabled the ITCC to make some funds available to ecumenical chaplaincy trust boards around the country to support volunteer chaplains engage in professional development. It is anticipated that this will mostly be used to enable these volunteer Chaplains to attend the annual Conference of the ANZTCA in November.

The current chair is the Rev Dr Terry Wall, and the secretary, Professor Peter Lineham. The 2014 annual meeting was held at All Saints Church, Ponsonby, Auckland in early December. This AGM was attended by representatives from the chaplaincies of Wellington, Manawatu, Taranaki, Auckland, Canterbury, Southland Institute of Technology, and Otago, and church representatives from the Methodist and Presbyterian and Anglican churches. Apologies were received from the Trust boards of Eastern Institute of Technology, and the two chaplaincies in Hamilton.

There continue to be some very strong chaplaincies in the universities, and they are now often given some funding from the institutions, in the face of the weakening of student associations. The Polytechnic situation is more varied, with some strong chaplaincy work in those institutions where chaplaincy is assimilated into the Student Support structures, while in other places it is weak or does not exist. There is virtually no chaplaincy presence in private training establishments. Work among international students is often particularly strong, with help from International Student Ministries, which is a member of the ITCC. The work that was in progress in establishing ecumenical chaplaincy trusts in Tauranga and Nelson has foundered over this last 12 months due to the difficulty in finding suitable representatives for the local churches to form and sustain such a Trust board.

There is a constant struggle to raise funds, and individual chaplaincies seek support from individuals and congregations. The lack of church funding is a serious issue for most local trusts, as the ITCC itself has no money left to fund more than some basic support for the national tertiary chaplaincy's chairman's role with the wider Christian community.

The Aotearoa-NZ Tertiary Chaplains Association (ANZTCA) is a professional association for tertiary chaplains with around 60 members, most of whom serve part-time in our Universities and Polytechnics. Currently there are two Methodist Presbyters employed full time as University Chaplains, Rev Uesifili Unasa (University of Auckland) and Rev Greg Hughson (University of Otago). The ANZTCA Annual Conference was held last November at Grafton Hall of the University of Auckland where we also joined in celebrations of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Maclaurin Trust Board. Ricky Waters (Co-ordinating Chaplain at Massey University (Albany), Unitec Institute of

Technology, and Manukau institute of Technology - MIT) is the current Chairperson and the Executive includes Peter Woodham (MIT) – Secretary; Bill Mancer – Treasurer; Jill Shaw (Massey, Albany) – Northern Regional Co-ordinator; Paul Stock (Massey, PN) – Central Region Co-ordinator; Glenda Hicks (Lincoln University) – Southern Regional Co-ordinator; Greg Hughson (Otago Uni) – International Rep (IACHE). The ANZTCA 2015 Conference will be held at Ramsay House, Anglican Chaplaincy at Victoria University of Wellington 23-27 November.

Following a generous grant of around \$50,000 six years ago, the All Churches Bureau provided the ANZTCA a further \$5000 at the end of 2014. The ANZTCA are considering using this money to purchase some gospels specially produced for tertiary students in the UK and Australia to distribute to first year students through the country early in 2016

Tertiary Chaplains fulfil a vital role on behalf of our Churches offering pastoral care and spiritual support to thousands of students and staff, of all cultures and faiths, and of no faith. There is a growing ministry to international students from over 100 countries who come to our land to study. We believe that the provision of Chaplaincy services to our tertiary institutions must continue to be supported as a vital and key mission of the whole Church and should be seen as an opportunity for our churches to partner with these institutions in offering pastoral support and Christian hospitality.

The Methodist Church can be proud of its long-standing support of Tertiary Chaplaincy and we ask that this support continue. Often our Chaplains are sought out by students and staff in real need of spiritual support and guidance at crucial turning points in their lives. Our vision is to continue to grow these ministries nationally, in harmony with the Mission Statement of the Methodist Church of NZ and those of other churches.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require further information. Please also contact tertiary chaplains in your area. They need your ongoing support and prayers. Ask them what they need and invite them to come and share with you about their ministries which are offered on your behalf and with your support. See the ANZTCA website for contact information [www.anztca.net.nz](http://www.anztca.net.nz) .

The ITCC thanks the Methodist Church of New Zealand for its support through administering its funds.

**Suggested decisions:**

1. That the report be received.
2. That Conference affirm the importance of ongoing support for tertiary chaplaincy in Aotearoa-NZ.

## **THE INTERCHURCH COUNCIL FOR HOSPITAL CHAPLAINCY**

I am glad to submit this report on the ministry and supporting work done by ICHC in health chaplains, enabled by the generous and continued support of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, through grant aid. Your funding provides a substantial underpinning of stipendiary and volunteer positions, as well as training, accreditation and allowances.



Hospital chaplaincy services in New Zealand meet the legal requirement for spiritual care, appropriate to the needs of patients, staff and whanau. The services offered include liaison with the community, to establish ongoing support for our clients, increasingly through primary, inpatient and hospice situations. Ministry of Health has capped its funding to us for the past 3 years, though there is a continued commitment to the majority element of ICHC's funds.

The main tenet of healthcare chaplaincy is modelled on an ecumenical, bi-cultural service. Increasingly, there is a need to provide culturally appropriate ministry and support to clients of a wide variety of culture and beliefs, or no faith. The Christian nature of our teams is enshrined in the equal treatment of all and an emphasis on linking the patient with resources appropriate to their needs. A medical crisis is, for many, the first exposure to a minister of the Church and often the most significant spiritual experience of their life. The chaplain has the opportunity for potentially

life-changing ministry. This has been proven to have tangible benefits in recovery and avoidance of re-admission.

**Emerging issues and challenges:**

- ICHC funding streams are diminishing. The Ministry of Health funding remains at the 2011/12 level; they have also indicated that the funding is subject to a considerable if not equal contribution from the Churches. This funding will be subject to continued political will to support chaplaincy. ICHC has been particularly successful at increasing donor commitment in the past year and intends to seek new funds by raising awareness, but this is still a small proportion of the total revenue required to provide a professional chaplaincy service. We are committed to providing fund-raising resources to churches and local support groups, to enable better income flow and the aspiration to increase the overall number of chaplains and assistants at bedsides. We will be conducting a review of the allocation of resources and the total cost of the service. The aim is to become more self-sustaining and provide additional chaplaincy positions, especially full-time posts.
- There is an increasing need to view Chaplaincy as providing for the spiritual wellbeing of patients, and that the service provided by the ICHC is underpinned by an informed Christian Theology. Chaplains spend an increasing amount of their time educating staff and raising awareness of the services we provide and the benefits. We seek staff referral as a more active way of bringing ministry to the most needy.

**Looking ahead to 2016** - areas for which we seek funding and missional objectives:

- Increased investment in training and development, through personal appraisals and career planning.
- We continue to work towards a spiritually well population, through Christian ministry.
- With patient stays becoming increasingly shorter, the likelihood of this ministry being a response to crisis events increases. This is coupled with the expectation that some patients will be re-admitted and require ongoing support.
- Education and support to hospital staff about the services and benefits of Chaplaincy.
- Sustainable, continuous development of specialist mental health Chaplaincy services, through investment in those with this unique talent.
- ICHC Board of Trustees will review its governance and seek fresh input from new and existing members, with a renewed mandate from their denominations. An understanding of ICHC and the work it undertakes should be reported back by the denominational representative.
- Local Support Provider committee members who are active, skilled and empowered to train, manage, fund raise and support our Chaplaincy teams.
- Funding is required to maintain paid Chaplaincy positions in order to enable the co-ordination of a suitably trained volunteer chaplaincy workforce. Some, but not all, volunteers would ideally be suitably licensed lay or ordained persons, able to provide the reserved sacrament, anointing of the sick, prayer for healing and the commendation of the dying when the need arises. This would allow the Chaplains to attend to the higher level needs of Critical Care Units and the Accident and Emergency Department.

On behalf of the Chaplains, Volunteer Chaplaincy Assistants and Locums, we wish to thank the Methodist Church not only for its financial support, but also the prayer and pastoral support for our 300 plus paid and voluntary staff, who bring hope to the poor of mind, body and spirit who are admitted to this country's hospitals. I welcome a dialogue with the Methodist Conference on my report.

**Suggested decision:**

1. That the report be received.

**PRISON CHAPLAINCY SERVICE**

*Supplementary Report*

## DEFENCE FORCE CHAPLAINCY

At the time of writing there has been no meeting of the chaplaincy advisory committee (ChaDAC) since the last Conference. However, there are some matters for report. Firstly, the Senior Denominational Chaplain visited the sole commissioned Methodist Chaplain, Rev Tavake Manu, at his army base at Waiouru. The visit opened with a powhiri on the marae on the camp and then proceeded with visits around the station to troops on exercise on the army range, an extended visit to the museum and a brief trip to the ski slopes of Mt Ruapehu. The SDC was beaten in marksmanship by his wife who accompanied him on the visit, but he did regain some honour when he passed the tactical shooting test for infantry soldiers, but targets were rarely in any danger when he took the light machine gun without his glasses on. The SDC wishes to record his thanks to the commanding officer of the Waiouru Army camp for his hospitality.

The highlight of the year took place on 28 August at Wellington Anglican Cathedral for a commemoration service for nine military chaplains who died as a result of active service from World War I to the present. The service was attended by the Governor General, senior military and government and diplomatic representatives and all available serving military chaplains. Poppies of remembrance were laid on behalf of Methodist chaplains by Rev Dr Trevor Hoggard (SDC) and Rev David Bush, General Secretary.

It is anticipated that by the time of Conference the new Principle Chaplain NZDF will have been announced and a meeting of ChaDAC will have taken place.

## TROUNSON TRUST

The Trustees of the James and Martha Trounson Benevolent Fund have carefully considered each request for assistance and worked to closely adhere to the intent the intent of the benefactors.

Thirty-two requests were received during the period 1 July 2014-30 June 2015. This significantly exceeds requests made in any previous 12 month period. There was only one application which the Trust was unable to support. During the past year the Trust supported a high number of requests for emergency assistance along with requests for more general assistance.

Applications were received from the following Synods:-

Auckland and Manukau, Waikato Waiariki, Lower North Island, Central South Island and Otago-Southland, Sinoti Samoa and Wasewase ko Viti Kei Rotuma.

The Trustees wish to acknowledge the care that the applicants have taken as they shared the needs of each person/ family who were experiencing unexpected financial hardship. Applications were received from Synod Superintendents, Parish Presbyters and Lay leaders where there was not a stationed Presbyter.

### Strategic plan

- *The vision of this Benevolent Fund is to continue to be able to give hope and financial assistance to needy members within parishes with a Methodist component.*
- *The Trustees will continue to work within the criteria of this fund as noted in the guidelines 'to help meet the financial need arising from sickness, ill health, misadventure or loss of property'. Should there appear to be leaders who are unaware of this fund this will be advertised through emessenger depending on the availability of funds.*
- *This fund was initiated by the Trounson family; the fund has received 2 grants from the PAC Distribution group. The only income is from the Interest on the Endowment account. Due to the marked increase of applications this year any further grant to the Endowment fund would increase the amount that may be gifted.*
- *Applications may be received at any time. Frequently responses are able to be actioned within 2 days of receiving the information. The Trustees do not handle any money. The cheques are organised in the accounts department of the Connexional office.*



- *By next conference we plan to continue as we have in this 12 month period, giving prompt support to urgent requests, which will depend on the available finances.*
- *We will know if we have met our goals as we continue to receive letters of thanks either from the presbyter or recipient.*

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibility for assisting people who are struggling with situations that often are not of their making.

The membership of this committee remains: Mary West Convener, Gwen Kentish, Rev Metui Tafuna, Colin Telford with Rev. Dr Trevor Hoggard Exec officio.

**Suggested decision:**

1. That this report be received.

## **WESLEY COLLEGE TRUST BOARD**

**Introduction**

2015 opened with the induction of Wesley College's 20<sup>th</sup> Principal – Mr Steven Hargreaves and the College's 18<sup>th</sup> Chaplain (on the current school site) Rev. Aliitasi Salesa.

The board is looking to the future with the proposed relocation of Wesley College and the potential benefits of the development of the Wesley College site and surrounding farm.

The Board is seeking land within the South Auckland – South Auckland area for this purpose.

The appointment of the new Principal has provided an opportunity to refocus on the educational achievement of all our students as outlines within the Wesley College Special Character.

The Wesley College Special character continues to provide the basis for all that we do at Wesley College.

Wesley College is a multi-ethnic school that has a direct affiliation with the Methodist Church of New Zealand - Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa. The Methodist Church of New Zealand - Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa is a Treaty-based Church that expresses its governance in a bicultural, power-sharing partnership between Te Taha Maori and Tauwiwi. This has historical and contemporary relevance that is expressed within the College as:

- Treasuring our Christian and Methodist heritage and learning to express it relevantly. This includes religious observances.
- Openness to the future and to new insights, experiences and people.
- Support for values that respect the integrity of persons and communities.
- Consideration of the needs of others, especially the economically marginalized.
- Use of language and images that are inclusive and which express equality.
- Provision of safe environments in which students can learn to live and work together in harmony.
- Opposition to cultures of violence and to systems of domination and exclusion.
- Processes for dealing with conflict, harassment, abuse and violation.

Wesley College seeks to provide a broad-based education with special attentions to numeracy, literacy and other key competencies. This emphasis on a broad-based education is expressed in the College motto: Fide, Litteris, Labore - Faith, Letters (learning) and Labour (hard work). Wesley College has a special obligation to provide education for students of Maori and Pacific Islands descent and students whose family and personal circumstances require special care. Wesley College caters primarily for students boarding at the Trust Board's hostel with which it has a close association. The Board's hostel provides for residential accommodation with a special character that is an essential component of the special character of the school.

## CHAPLAINCY TEAM MINISTRY

With the appointment of any new Principal to a school, change is inevitable. The impetus on raising academic achievement has resonated both with staff and students here at Wesley, as we have sought to realise our full potential as a school. The impact and practical application of such a focus, has meant that the changes wrought have occasioned corresponding measures. There will always be a domino effect to change and sometimes we can plan for them whilst other times, we cannot anticipate what the outcome will bring. For the most part, the academic focus has been positive and while there will always be opposition to what is new and a yearning for the old, overall the year has begun well for the School.

The new appointments to the roles of Principal, Superintending Chaplain, Directors of Boarding and of Business Services for 2015, has compelled the important need to maintain a level of continuity and stability for our students and School. Pastoral care for both staff and students has been vitally fundamental as we navigate the winds of change. The paradigm shift in focus calls for us to hold even closer, those living principles which are foundational to our way of being and doing - our Special Character. In this way, we continue to witness to and give thanks for, the myriad of ways in which God's presence is forever present and always with us.

### Education Matters

The quality of a school is, rightly or not, often judged on the academic achievement of its' students. To this end we have increased the profile of academic achievement in the school. Regular acknowledgement of student work and attainment at Chapel, publishing credit leader boards, accessing external provision of courses and the establishment of a Learning Support Department are some the initiatives in place to boost our attainment.

The table below records our school leaver attainment data for 2014. This has been sourced from the Education Counts website and internal school data.

### School Leaver Data 2014

	No formal qualification (%)	Level 1 or above (%)	Level 2 or above (%)	Level 3 or above (%)	University Entrance (%)
Maori Wesley College.	18	82	64	40	9
Maori New Zealand	26	74	59	27	15
Pasifika Wesley College.	10	90	74	25	6
Pasifika New Zealand	17	83	72	38	20
Girls Wesley College.	6	94	88	35	6
Girls New Zealand	12	88	80	57	45
Boys Wesley College.	14	86	68	23	8
Boys New Zealand.	14	86	75	43	33
Total Wesley College.	12	88	72	24	7
Total New Zealand	13	87	77	50	39

The proportion of Wesley College school leavers with NCEA Level One compares favourably with school leavers from other schools in New Zealand. Our results at Level Two and Level Three, in particular, do not compare well. Some of this may be explained by the low learning levels of students who enter Wesley College. For example, 60% of Year 9 students in 2015 entered Wesley College with reading levels below or well below the expected curriculum level.

The addition of the Learning Support Department and a core skills subject will accelerate the learning for our junior students next year. The senior curriculum has been revised with more vocational subjects and the introduction of prerequisites.

The Life and Faith course has also been revised and is now offered as a full year course in Years 12 and 13. The course is a University Entrance approved subject.

The school was particularly pleased with the report written after the ERO visit in August. The report reinforces the initiatives in place and gives us encouragement that we are moving in the right direction.

*The report is attached as an appendix*

## **Property and Investment Council**

### ***Financial report***

The Wesley College Trust's commercial properties continue to provide the Trust significant returns. The board anticipates a substantial increase over these properties as the Councils Amity roading project develops around Morrin Road and Te Rakau Drive.

During the 2014 financial year the capital value of the Wesley College Trust's share portfolio reduced significantly. This is reflected within the financial accounts. As the shares are not actively traded this doesn't have a major effect on the boards finances as dividend income has remained relatively stable.

The Wesley College Trust Board agreed during the 2014 financial year that an additional \$200,000 be allocated towards financial assistance of boarding fees. This was to balance the loss of an equivalent level of boarding assistance that was received by Wesley College students via the Governments Mapihi Pounamu financial support scheme. This same level of financial assistance was replicated in 2015.

The Wesley College Trust Board has been examining its own ability to borrow for investment. This has arisen due to the potential cash investment required for the Grafton Downs development. The Wesley College deed which is the Methodist Charitable and Educational Trusts Act 1911 is silent on the matter – thus future borrowing for this purpose may be compromised.

A legal opinion sort by the Wesley College Trust Board recommended:

Either

1. A change to the act

or

2. An application to the high court to sanction a mortgage

The legal opinion sort on behalf of the Methodist Church questioned the need for these steps and recommended an additional amendment to the act supporting the Wesley College Trust Boards ability to borrow for investment purposes.

This recommended amendment to the act is: *“subject to the approval of the Conference, the board shall have the power to borrow, with or without security, and without limitation, and in whatever manner the Board thinks fit”*

## **GRAFTON DOWNS LIMITED**

Grafton Downs limited has achieved rezoning from Future Urban to Mixed Use live zone for the 300 hectares of land owned in Paerata.

Talks continue to with Watercare to shore up the provision and funding of water and waste water infrastructure. Once certainty is achieved for these areas the process of application for development consent will begin.

There is anticipated that the first earthworks would begin around 1 October 2016 with the first sections being created in 2017

**Suggested decisions:**

1. The report is received.
2. Conference approves the amendment to the Methodist Charitable and Educational Trusts Act 1911 stating: "subject to the approval of the Conference, the board shall have the power to borrow, with or without security, and without limitation, and in whatever manner the Board thinks fit"
3. Conference approves the Boards ability to acquire by purchase or otherwise an area of land for the relocation of Wesley College
4. The 2015 membership of the Wesley College Trust Board is: Diana Tana, Colin Telford, Norman Johnston, Gillian Laird, Wesley Mansell, Meleane Nacagilevu, Harvey O'Loughlin, Utumau'u Pupulu, Barry Shuker, Patisepa Tala'imanu, David McGeorge, Andrew Caughey, and Rangi Whakaruru.

**APPENDIX**

**SUMMARY NOTES FROM ERO VISIT 6<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2015**

11<sup>th</sup> August 2015

**Present:** Norman Johnston {BoT Chairperson); Steve Hargreaves (Principal); Chris Bean (DP); Ben Hancock; Christine Pereira; Natalie Fiatala; Jerry Leaupepe; Steve Autagavaia; Steve White; Annie Sio-Tema; JP Eason; Vince Hapi; Lavinia Manoa

Other participants: selection of teachers observed and students selected by school to talk with ERO

MoE personnel: Colleen McGuinness (SAF), Chrissy Denison (Senior Advisor) ERO Team: Brenda Hannay (coordinator), Violet Tu'uga Stevenson

**Purpose of visit:** Part one of a two stage verification visit for concluding the Wesley College ERO review.

**Findings**

**Overview**

The college has made considerable progress since ERO's previous visit in July 2014. This progress reflects:

- the positive impact of work undertaken or continuing to progress as part of ongoing efforts in recent years to improve school performance by the board and staff in conjunction with external advisors
- the revitalised sense of focus and purpose associated with the school's new leadership.

Of particular note are the clear sense of direction setting and the connectedness of planning, actions and interventions to sustain existing valued practices and to address areas of school performance identified as needing further development.

It is also evident that the board of trustees has undertaken considerable work, combining its internal expertise with that of external advisors to review and strengthen governance functions and to meet its accountabilities for ensuring the college is effectively led and managed. It has been highly responsive to ERO's review findings and to supporting work undertaken in the school by the Ministry of Education and other advisory groups. The board has managed the appointment of a new principal well and is preparing strategically for the key role it has to play in the days ahead as planning for a new college progresses.

**Planning for improvement**

School planning documents have continued to develop and provide a sound foundation for

guiding progress and evaluating performance. The strong alignment between SAF planning and review and development priorities for the school's ERO review continues. Strategic and annual planning outline improvement goals and activities that further reinforce this alignment and the ways in which school leaders, teachers and trustees can work together to lift student engagement in learning, progress and achievement.

Key areas of focus for the college are well shared and reinforced by key planning documents, setting clear expectations and indicators for effective teaching practice and student readiness for learning.

ERO noted good evidence of ongoing monitoring against planning documents, further providing indications of their centrality to school development and decision making.

### ***From planning to action***

A good sense of pace and purposeful action is evident within the school. Discussions with the board chairperson, principal, school leaders and teachers show a high level of unity in their understanding of priorities for action. Staff report increased levels of collaborative enterprise to progress school priorities.

ERO particularly notes the good connectedness and pace of change for developments relating to:

- the quality and use of achievement data for monitoring student progress and achievement at whole school, department and class level; for informing decisions about curriculum and learning pathways; and for guiding academic mentoring and increasing student knowledge of and motivation for learning.
- curriculum planning and extending of learning pathways, including work to extend vocational options and cater more explicitly for the diverse range of student interests, talents, and career aspirations.
- identifying and responding to students at risk of not achieving, with the newly introduced learning support department generating an increased sense of connectedness and capacity to improve outcomes for these students across and within departments.
- initiatives to increase teacher knowledge of effective teaching practice through targeted professional development, including within and between school collaboration and practice sharing, and improved teacher performance appraisal systems.
- strengthened links with local iwi and with Māori families and whānau, and work done to improve consultation and communication with Pacific families.
- steps taken to increase connectivity between and effectiveness of school and hostel systems and processes for supporting student wellbeing, preparedness for learning and academic success.
- Developments in these areas also connect to improved communication systems, and increasing sense of teacher empowerment and confidence in school leadership. They are orientating the school towards a more student-centered curriculum design and teaching practices. Observations of classes, although limited in number, provided indications of classroom practices aligned to the school's effective teaching indicators.

### ***Student response***

While ERO interacted with a small sample of students during the visit, conversations were productive in providing early insights into their perspectives of school development.

Students showed an overall positive response to developments in the school. Improvements they identified included:

- better school management
- higher expectations for students' standards of behaviour and self-responsibility
- improvements in the teaching practices of many teachers, together with an improvement in the usefulness of feedback they received about their own learning.

Conversations also indicated that it could be useful to explore how teaching, learning and school culture could be further strengthened through increasing opportunities for students to ask questions, share perspectives and give feedback about their learning to teachers.

## **Summary**

Work towards addressing review and development priorities for the school's ERO has progressed significantly over the past year. Positive developments evident at the time of the last visit have been sustained. New work is clearly connected to key priorities for improving student outcomes and is proceeding at a timely pace. There is good evidence of improved staff morale and confidence in the leadership demonstrated by the board and principal.

Systems for internal monitoring of student progress and achievement are considerably improved. Consequently the college is becoming much better placed to undertake rigorous self review to guide its improvement planning and resourcing decisions.

ERO's next visit to the college is scheduled for the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of October. We look forward to completing the verification visit in accordance with the planning schedule previously shared with the school and attached here for your further reference and consultation.

## **UNITING CONGREGATIONS OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND**

### **2015 Report to the Partner Churches**

Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand (UCANZ) is a meeting place for our five partner churches and the local churches throughout New Zealand who are Cooperative Ventures (CVs). The Standing Committee has representatives from the Anglican Church, Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church, Christian Churches and the Congregational Union, who sit alongside people elected by local churches through the biennial Forum.

Standing Committee met in July 2015 using a video link, hosted by the Anglican Church. This meant that members were able to reduce their travel time and still effectively meet face to face.

One of the pressing matters that Standing Committee is seeking to address is the growing imbalance of payments to national and regional courts. While the Partner Support Fund has unified the national contributions for many churches, the levies for some regional courts have risen dramatically. Standing Committee affirms the need for CVs to contribute to the work of the wider church, but we want to ensure this is equitable. Standing Committee will be inviting discussion with partner churches, regional courts and local churches to seek a way forward.

### **The UCANZ Office**

The office is situated in Cambridge Terrace in Wellington and is staffed by Peter MacKenzie (Executive Officer) and Robyn Daniels (Administrative Assistant). Robyn administers the Partner Support Fund (the payments made for the work of the national churches), Removal Fund (a voluntary scheme to fund ministry movements) and collates statistics and the directory. Peter provides advice to partner churches, regional courts and local churches on any manner of issues that are raised with him. He is regularly leading services on a Sunday morning and has led a variety of workshops throughout the country. There has also been a valuable contribution in having Peter as a point of call for issues that, if not addressed early and properly, can turn into a more significant dispute.

### **Some Statistics**

Within the family of UCANZ there are 116 Cooperating Ventures – of all sorts of combinations. There are around 5000 female and 3500 male members, with around 900 serving on local church councils. There are nearly 5000 adults at worship on a Sunday morning and around 800 children involved in church activities. The returns indicate that there are over 6000 volunteer hours served each week in CVs.

Financial statistics are a bit harder to interpret as the details are often inconsistent. Not every CV has recorded their land and buildings value in the statistics, but the total assets of around 75% of CVs add up to around \$180 million – so we can probably guess at around \$250 million. Each year about \$4.5million is given in church offerings and about \$1.5million is gained in interest.

## **The Future**

It is clear to all our denominations that the church scene in New Zealand is going to face dramatic change in the next ten years. When we look at CV membership 65% are over the age of 65. We will not be able to keep doing what we have always done – because there will be no-one to do it! This is not to say that the CVs have failed – they have proven that churches can work ecumenically and many have done so for half a century. But what has worked in the past won't work today.

UCANZ is committed to witness to the ecumenical dream – that the churches can work together as the one body of Christ. We are committed to the ministry of churches in smaller communities – offering alternative possibilities for ways to be church. We are committed to affirming the work of our five partner churches – and will keep urging them to continue to talk and work with each other.