

Robert Andrew Ferguson

Rob moved from Secondary School teacher into ministry, strongly influenced by presbyters at Caversham Methodist in Dunedin – Len Shapcott, David Besant and Clive Smith, who helped shape his understanding of ministry and church.

Two years at Trinity at St Johns during which time Rob met and married Dawn Gibson. Rob was appointed to Eltham – Kaponga for five years, then a move to Palmerston North for eleven exciting and stimulating years. It was during this time that Rob along with Robyn Brown developed and ran the TELM programme – Training and Education for Lay Ministry. These years gave shape to much of the rest of Rob's ministry, focussing on equipping, empowering and developing gifts.

A one year exchange with the United Church of Canada at Port Coquitlam was an enriching experience for the whole family.

During Rob's time at Beckenham, his work with TELM continued. When the parish appointment reduced to half time Rob was appointed as National Education Resource Person for the Connexion half time. When this concluded after 2 years, he took up a half time position with the STOP Trust as a clinical worker with male survivors of sexual abuse. Later this became full time for a year.

Following training as a Transitional Minister, there were transitional appointments to Malvern and St Albans Uniting, then an appointment under Mutuality of Ministry with St Ninian's Presbyterian Parish in Christchurch. The interest in transitional ministry and spiritual growth and development continued as Rob became a Transitional Ministry trainer, was contracted to provide a spirituality class to the Salisbury House Violent Offenders Programme and was 'Boundaries in Ministry' trainer for Waikato and Christchurch Anglican Dioceses.

Rob has written three books; *Life at Depth – Spirituality*, *Beyond the Shed – Riccarton Men at Work*, and *Roads and Stones – a Resource for Worship*. He collated and wrote *Resources for Funerals*, published by the Methodist Church and has 5 hymns in *Hope is Our Song*, published by NZ Hymn Book Trust. More recently he has initiated two blogs robfergiealoud.com and roboutandabout.wordpress.com.

For the wider church co-organiser of two Methodist Youth Conferences - Blockhouse Bay and New Plymouth, Convenor of the Making Disciples Task Group and District Superintendent in both Hawkes Bay – Manawatu and North Canterbury. On behalf of the Presbyterian Church a member of the HR Committee, Convenor of Complaints Committee, Ministry Development Reviewer, member of ITIM Board.

Ministry for Rob has never been about the status quo, but how to lay hold of new possibilities.

In 'retirement' a transition ministry appointment as a resource person for the United Reformed Church in England and Scotland.

We wish Rob, Dawn well as they change pace and focus in the years to come.

Anne Griffiths

With the support and love of her husband, Rob, her family and the members of the Cambridge Union Church, Anne Griffiths entered the Methodist Ministry journey in 2003.

Her first appointment was at St John's Methodist Church in Hamilton East. A member of her congregation has written:

"Anne showed us what was possible if you have a presbyter with pastoral care as one of their chief focuses and key competencies. Our congregation grew rapidly during the time of Anne's ministry to us because of her exceptional skill in showing care, concern and love to many, many people on

an individual level and word of her wonderful ministry spread widely through the Hamilton community. Her own faith and Christian convictions shone through in all aspects of her life. I believe her strong and firm beliefs were a huge influence on our beliefs and encouragement for us all. Under her leadership and her regard for us all as spirit filled people our faith and spiritual connectedness was able to grow and flourish in turn. Her husband, Rob, was a wonderful support and engaged fully in the life of the parish too, so we were doubly blessed.

Anne's care and devotion to everyone who attended St Johns was absolutely remarkable. On arrival in our parish she learnt everyone's (Palangi, Tongan, Fijian, in fact everyone) names. She visited us in homes, workplaces and if you had anyone in hospital or bereavement she was often there within the hour to comfort and support. She was even there for parishioner's extended families. Just amazing. Her unique gift was in establishing a rapport with individuals which meant we all felt she knew the whole person and who we were. We felt worthwhile and valued. Anne had the gift of accepting every single person as they were and encouraging them to grow from the point they were at. I believe her philosophy was all about empowering people. She would look for ways for people to become involved. So many pastors are there to be in charge: Anne was there to give opportunities for members of her congregation to shine. People who had been disenfranchised began to flourish again as a result of her encouragement. Many people became involved in lead worship training and took responsibility for large chunks of services. Musicians were consulted and involved. Members of our three congregations worked with each other and got to know each other better.

Anne spoke to us from her heart, not from the heart of the Internet so messages were personal and relevant. Amazing reciprocal relationships were formed, not only with Anne, but with each other.

Anne was a wonderful presbyter and the loss of her exceptional skills was a great loss to us and is a great loss to the Methodist Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand."

Following five years of hard work, Anne's next appointment was as chaplain to the Whakatane Hospital, where again she was challenged and used her many skills for the advantage of others. One of her colleagues reflects on her time there:

"Anne Griffiths is an exceptional person. From the first moment we met, I knew she had incredible spiritual presence and insight. Unaware of her qualifications, but based on universal praise for a transformational tour as the Whakatane Hospital chaplain (where she gathered a great following) and my own observation, I asked her to be my Professional Supervisor. This she has done with distinction. She allows a free-flowing monologue from me, punctuated by the most pertinent interjections, in which she always stimulates positive outcomes. I have found her skill in understanding human relationships invaluable in conquering the most taxing leadership conundrums.

I was unaware that Anne has formal counselling training, however this is entirely consistent with her ability to cut through presentations of the most demanding nature and achieve personal growth for both me and my team. I cannot speak highly enough of her skills."

Following a three year term in Whakatane, Anne and Rob settled in Te Awamutu with Anne being appointed as Chaplain (part time) to Tamahere Eventide Home, a position she retains in retirement along with the development of ministry providing Professional Supervision. We give thanks to God for the many skills Anne has shared with us all and we wish her well in her retirement or 'reassignment' as Anne calls it.

Kepu Moa

I was born in Tonga on 19 June 1946, 5th child of Rev Penisimani Suli Moa and Loti Cocker Moa. I was raised in a strong faithful Methodist family, my father was a Minister of the Methodist Church in Tonga [Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga]. My eldest brother was also a Minister in the Methodist Church in Tonga and my youngest brother is currently a Minister in the United Methodist

in Salt Lake City, Utah. I and most of my siblings were born where my father was stationed during his Ministry so there, began my experiences of 'Ministry Life'.

I was educated at the Methodist College in Tonga, Tupou College and further on to Tupou Tertiary Institute where I achieved the Victorian Intermediate and Leaving Certificates and also the NZ University Entrance (UE).

In 1973 I migrated to NZ and was a founding member of the New Lynn Methodist congregation of which from 1987 to 2003, I held a variety of roles from Stewart/ Treasurer and Superintendent. I was employed by the Auckland/Manukau Tongan Methodist Parish as their General Secretary and Parish Treasurer for over 10 years, the Secretary of the Auckland/Manukau Tongan Property Committee and also a member of Tongan Advisory Committee. For 5 years, I was a member of NZ Methodist Church's Faith and Order Committee and a Board of Administration member for 3 years. One of my biggest challenges in my Ministry career was the completion of a 1.9million church complex for New Lynn Methodist congregation which 6 months after the grand opening, the complex was freehold.

In 1989 I was trained for religious ministry at St John Theological College [Trinity] for 4 years. I was ordained in 1993 at the NZ Methodist Conference held in Christchurch which is ironic, that I should end my Ministry journey at the very place I started!

In 2006 to 2010, I was stationed to Gisborne Methodist Multicultural Parish as a Superintendent based at the Wesley Congregation. While I was there I lead the building of a car park, renovated the hall and repainted the church building.

In 2010 I was transferred to the Tongan Methodist Parish, Kosipeli in Christchurch as a superintendent. Unfortunately in 2011 the earthquake destroyed our Church and hall. So at the moment our congregation's main mission is to fund raise for the 'rebuild' however, we believe that with God's strength and guidance, we will conquer these goals.

I would like to acknowledge and express my gratitude to the Methodist Church of New Zealand and the Tonga [Free Wesleyan Church in Tonga] for the support and training given to help fulfill God's work through me. I only hope and pray God's healing and grace continues in new and younger Ministers as there are so many more souls needing God's truth and Jesus our saviour. I speak with John Wesley, that with every breath I have and my every ability left, I will always give all Glory to God for all Glory goes to him until my last breath.

Last, but not least....my utmost appreciation goes to my wife of over 45years Mrs Savelina Maa'imoa Guttenbeil Moa for her life sacrifices and her love and loyal support of me, she has endured and grown and I would not have reached today without her. Thank you to our children for their sacrifices and supporting my ministry of 28 years because there are many family milestones I have missed due to Church commitments but never a complaint.

To conclude, I speak together with Jesus's last words from the cross.... **"It's Finished"**. He had completely fulfilled His ministry. God Bless you all and also my wife and I on our retirement today!

John Murray

John Murray was raised in Otorohanga the son of farming parents. During this time he had little church contact, and his world view was very much influenced by his rural upbringing and the stories his father told of World War 2. On leaving school John moved to Auckland for his first job. He was abruptly confronted with a new life-style and saw first-hand the effects of wealth, poverty, emerging cultural diversity and an urban world view. In this complex and confusing world he found comfort and support in an evangelical group of young Christians. In this group he discovered that he enjoyed the experience of leadership, and began to feel confident in preaching. This lead to his candidature for prebyteral ministry.

Training at Trinity Methodist Theological College (combined with St Johns Anglican Theological

College) was an eventful place for John; it was a time of enthusiastic ecumenical debate, the height of the Charismatic Renewal, the protests over nuclear ship visits, the 'invasion' of Bastion Point. Being students, what better thing to do but join in! In his final year he became the college combined Student Association President and the Methodist Senior Student.

Parish ministry was to take John and his family the length of New Zealand: Waiono (Western Southland), Willoughby (Ashburton), Whakatane (where he took some time out from ministry), and Thames. This brought him into contact with a wealth of lay, diaconal and presbyteral leadership as well as exposure to the Treaty of Waitangi and the Bi-cultural journey, feminist theology and power sharing, homo-sexual law reform and inclusiveness, all of which prepared him well for his appointment, firstly as Convenor of the Committee on Ministry, then to Superintendent of the Development Division (Mission Resourcing Unit), which was followed by a time as the Superintendent of Waikato/Waiariki Synod, and finally to the position of Superintendent of Methodist Mission Northern.

Mission Resourcing was demanding and exhausting, but hugely satisfying. It gave John the opportunity and privilege of working with many inspirational people from across the denominations. It was a time when John became even more convinced of the importance of the local community, local leadership and the importance of leadership that liberates and empowers. During his time in Mission Resourcing he was appointed to the board of Wesley College and served as Trust Board Chair for a number of years, for his services he was made a Companion of Wesley College. He gained widespread trust and support as Director and was greatly appreciated across the whole church.

Methodist Mission Northern, while the most satisfy of Johns positions, was also the most difficult. During his time there would a name change to the service delivery and property sections of the mission's work – something that many felt deeply about as it changed the views of "Methodist" and "Mission". It was also a time of selling the Mission property on Queen St, an act that hurt and angered many. Yet, despite all that, it released new energies for the Mission and its work. Over this period John was thankful that he had a very supportive board, wonderful staff and the appreciative and humbling experiences of the people the mission worked with.

Throughout his ministry he involved himself in other activities, ranging from chair of the Electorate Committee of the East Cape Labour Party, a member of the Whakatane Arts Council, being a member of a number of School Boards of Trustees, to Hockey Association President in Central Bay of Plenty, an active member for a number of years of the Auckland Hockey Umpires Association, and a senior coach within club hockey in Auckland.

John is supported by his wife (Susan) and family (Suella, Jared and their families) who accepted the whims of the Stationing process, the days of absence as John travelled throughout New Zealand, provided endless support and listened patiently as he talked with either enthusiasm or frustration about the work or task he was involved in.

Now, as his time in connexional ministry ends, John will walk away deeply thankful and appreciative for all the opportunities the church gave him and the way he was embraced by the various cultures which make up the rich weave of te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa kete. The church wishes John well in retirement having been enriched beyond measure by the gift of his ministry.

Val Nicholls

Rev. Val Nicholls' association with Whangaparaoa Methodist Parish goes back to 1982 when she and her husband, Bryce settled in Manly to raise their family. They both became fully involved in the life of the Parish. Val had leadership roles in children's ministry, worship, pastoral care and administration. She was Parish Secretary and Parish Steward for several years, and Bryce became Parish Treasurer. Val studied part-time through St John's College and gained a B.Theol, being awarded the top prize in theology. She completed a TELM course in 1993 and encouraged others to do this, also. Then from 1993 to 1999 she underwent training for the ministry in the Home Setting, with Rev Gillian Watkin, and with Rev Graham Brazendale as her mentor and encourager.

Val was inducted as the Presbyter for the Parish in 1999 and was ordained at the 1999 Conference in Auckland. This was at a time when the Parish had been through an upsetting time of controversy and division. Val played an important role in helping to settle things down and move the Parish forward during her ministry, from 1999 to 2010. Her leadership gifts soon became recognised by the wider church and the responsibility of being Superintendent of Northland was added to her Parish duties. She also became one of the trailblazers for Local Shared Ministry, and a member of the Faith and Order Committee. The Parish accepted the fact that Val had skills that needed to be shared more widely.

The Parish remembers, with deep gratitude, the many aspects of Val's ministry over the years : her creative, innovative worship services ; the Holiday Programmes in which she gently persuaded a bunch of very senior citizens to work with her to provide activities for crowds of children ; Easter Dawn services on the beach ; Cafe Church services ; window displays for Advent and Easter ; wayside pulpit signs ; thoughtful and challenging 'Reflections' proclaiming the gospel of Christ in word and action, with inclusive, non-judgmental language.

The Parish gives thanks for Val's genuine compassion, her sensitive, caring way of helping people who are ill or frail or grieving or facing hard times. We give thanks, too, for her skill at leading us to new understandings of our faith, helping people to grow spiritually and giving us encouragement.

Val's car has the number plate "VAL U" and it's true that we, in Whangaparaoa Parish have valued her ministry greatly. We were sad to lose Val as Presbyter at the end of 2010 but we are glad her ministry has continued in the wider church, and she is still a member of this Parish Standing beside her all the way has been her wonderful husband, Bryce sharing the load and supporting Val. Bryce has managed the finances of the Parish with skill and wisdom over many years and he has greatly assisted Red Beach Church in many practical ways. They have both set a fine example of selfless love, in the way they have cared for their extended family.

The Whangaparaoa Methodist Parish gives thanks to God for all the blessings we have received through the faithful ministry of Rev.Val Nicholls and Bryce and we wish them both, a happy and peaceful retirement.

Val joined the teaching staff at Trinity College at the beginning of 2011, teaching the Pastoral Care course, and as tutor in Lay Ministry studies, field worker for student parish placement and Professional Development of probationers. During this time she has tutored and counselled a great number of students, who have become our valued presbyters. She has supported and encouraged the Deacons and the ministry of the Deacon for the wider Church. Val has proved her adaptability, particularly during her term of office within Trinity College, as it entered a new era in ministry training.

Val's ministry during her time in the College was something very close to her heart, as she gave the student's her full attention and commitment – as indeed she has demonstrated throughout her whole ministry. She has been a loyal team member of the College staff, a caring tutor, clear-sighted, unfailingly well organized and prepared. It is very appropriate that, in the last five years of Val's ministry, her knowledge, experience and expertise has been shared in teaching the students at Trinity College. Ministry, in whatever shape or form, can be very demanding and Val, in her inimitable way, has never failed to rise to the challenge! Congratulations Val.

Asofia (Aso) Tauamiti Samoa Saleupolu

Aso Samoa Saleupolu was born and bred in the village of Vailele in Samoa, where his father was one of the high chiefs of the village. Aso was educated in Samoa where he gained a Diploma of Trop. Agriculture from the South Pacific Agricultural College in 1971. He married Vaotane Unasa-Samoa Saleupolu and they had two daughters before deciding to migrate to New Zealand. Upon arrival in New Zealand they attended Papakura Cross-Roads church.

It was while worshipping at this Parish that Aso candidated for ordained Ministry with the Methodist Church of New Zealand. He became the very first Samoan to be accepted by the Methodist

Church of New Zealand for ordained ministry training. Aso and his family were based onsite at the Trinity Theological College campus during the course of his training. He was ordained in 1982 with a Licentiate in Theology (LTh) and was subsequently posted to be presbyter at Petone, Lower Hutt from 1982 to 1986. During this time in the Hutt, he was also appointed Chaplain for the Lower Hutt Hospital from 1983 to 1986. His second appointment was to the Epsom Methodist Church from 1987 to 1989. He was the President of the Auckland and Manukau Samoan Lay Preachers Association from 1988 to 1991, and Chairperson of the then, Development Division Board from 1988 – 1989. Aso was appointed to Bader Drive, Manukau North Parish from 1990 to 1995, and was also Superintendent of the Manukau Synod from 1993 to 1995.

During this time the Sinoti Samoa was inaugurated as the first Cultural Synod of the Methodist Church of New Zealand in 1996, and Aso was inducted as its first Superintendent from 1996 to 2001. He was appointed from 1996 to 2004 as Parish Superintendent for St Pauls Parish, Otara. Aso was elected as President of the Methodist Church of New Zealand, Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa in 2001. He was the very first Samoan to be elected to this position.

Following the completion of his Presidential responsibilities in 2003 he was then stationed as Parish Superintendent of the Panmure Samoan Parish from 2003 to 2005. Following the decision by the Methodist Church to create a new role - Director for Pasifika Ministries, Aso became the first person to fill this role in 2006, which he has held up until the present day

Aso has always been a fit, strong and very active person, however he was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2010. He did not take this diagnosis very well at the time, but gradually came to accept it. Within the first three years of diagnosis, up until mid-2013, Aso felt he was coping extremely well with the symptoms; however, at times we could see that it was becoming increasingly more difficult for him. He said himself that when he wrote things, he felt like he was writing backwards - much water has gone under the bridge in terms of his physical ability to handle himself in public places.

Aso is a very Pastoral Person. Practical Theology has been his area of experience. He has worked as a Minister of Religion within the Methodist Church of New Zealand, in a variety of cultural settings. He has also worked in many pastoral settings within his two extended families, and within the community on a voluntary basis. In doing so he has managed to gain excellent transferable pastoral skills that were useful in a wide range of pastoral roles. Some of the pastoral responsibilities he held included: leading worship services and sometimes, preaching; supervision and counselling; leading workshops on various topics; facilitating meetings; palliative pastoral responsibilities; pastoral visits and organising events.

He was a very patient and good listener. He also has the experience of working within multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary settings, where different professionals need to work together as a team for the holistic well-being for people's needs. He was aware of many of the complexities and challenges that pastors and presbyters face in their ministry settings.

Aso was passionate about pastoral work and was competent, enthusiastic, hardworking, and very eager to learn. He has the ability to relate various theological theories to real life situations. For Aso, every job requires pastoral skills. He strived for the best outcomes for people under his pastoral responsibility, and to make them feel they have the best shepherd. He was all for the personalised approach to ministry, thus appreciating each individual member of the church and providing the right environment for spiritual growth.

Aso considered himself to be a 'goal and results' oriented person with a willingness to keep abreast with new theological developments, particularly in the field of Pastoral Studies. He was committed and worked hard to meet targets. He was a team player, who had the ability to organise, train and run specialised programmes.

Aso had good communication skills. Samoan was his first language and he spoke English well. He could write comprehensive reports and had thought provoking presentation skills, both verbal and written. He had great listening skills, worked amicably and enjoyed collegiality with other team members or related agencies, within a wide range of multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary settings.

Aso had strong leadership and organisational skills, could coordinate the work of others, work to tight deadlines and handled multiple projects and activities concurrently. Throughout his working life, as well as through his academic achievements, Aso had demonstrated his ability to plan, develop, organise and implement short and long term projects.

A very proficient IT skills person, who could use the relevant software and other applications needed to create various documents or deliver effective presentations.

He had good interpersonal skills, as well as respect and an understanding of diverse viewpoints. He had the ability to operate effectively within cross-cultural teams and across organisational boundaries, as well as the ability to work independently.

Aso had two regrets worth mentioning here: One was that he hadn't yet completed his Masters Degree (he has partially completed Masters of Ministry Studies at Melbourne College of Divinity 1990 to 1995) and two he had Parkinson's disease.

He commented that if he had taken the time to continue with his studies, not only would he had achieved a higher academic qualification, but he would have also gained more knowledge that may have led him to explore other avenues of ministry.

Aso said that if he did not have Parkinson's disease, he could see himself continuing in the work for the Church and doing so much more than what he was doing right now. He felt like he had so much to offer or wanted to offer, but was limited by the disabling limitations of this disease.

However, Aso has enjoyed every moment of serving throughout his years in ministry and looks forward to what God has planned ahead for him and Vaotane in their retirement.

Aso and Vaotane have been blessed with four adult children of their own and three adopted, who have given them wonderful grandchildren.

Aso and Vaotane, we stand in ovation and thank you from the bottom of our hearts, for your ministry within Sinoti Samoa of Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa. We sing our heartfelt tribute to you in the words of our well known Samoan song...*Ua faafetai, ua faafetai, ua malie mata e vaai. Ua tasi lava oe, ua tasi lava oe, i lo'u nei faamoemoe...*

Ia alofagia e le Atua faafualoa lou lua soifua, ma ia manuteleina malologa o le a oulua feagai ai.
GO WELL – GO WITH GOD!

Alofa'aga molipo o le Sinoti Samoa