

The Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa

Administration Division



Earthquake Update – from the General Secretary

It has been more than two weeks since I last reported on the effects of the earthquake. In that time, apart from the Memorial Service, the earthquake has thankfully moved from the front page of daily newspapers outside Canterbury, and no longer leads the television news.

Thankfully because water and power are being restored, roads are receiving ‘first aid’ to make them useable and the removal of sand and silt from liquefaction is nearing completion.

At times it feels as if we live in two cities. Driving home from the airport last Thursday there was little obvious damage. On the other hand, cycling with my daughter to visit a friend in Avondale demanded full attention to avoid holes, humps and splits in the road. The West and North of the city are largely undamaged, the East all the way to Sumner has been hit hard.

There are other lines less visible. Job losses have begun. The accountancy firm my daughter works for – located on the other side of the AMI building from the Connexional Office is under threat. Apparently the AMI building is leaning – red stickered.

There will be no access for any of us to Latimer Square, at least in the foreseeable future. With our server and most of our computers we can carry on. The accountancy firm, yet to retrieve anything at all, is under threat. This is not an isolated case, there are dozens, if not hundred of businesses facing the same dilemma.

Then today I was visited by a cycling friend. A sickness beneficiary, he is uninsured. Fortunately his house has only moderate damage, but he has no – or limited means to make repairs. It is almost certain he is one of many in similar circumstances who do not currently qualify for EQC assistance.

A wet day last week saw everyone using their cars to get to work. The 20-25 minute trip to Upper Riccarton took me twice that long. The traffic jams are caused by the unavailability of some key roads, but also the relocation of 1,000’s of workers into different parts of the city now using roads never intended for such high traffic volumes.

The mood of the city is one of getting on with the task. It is settling to have the routine of work and the companionship that brings. There is however no ‘return to normal’. The city, or is it still the whole country, is under a state of emergency. Our city scape has changed, we have changed. It would be too easy to try and bring back what we had. For a time we will live with disorder and uncertainty to allow dreams and eventually plans for the future to emerge.

We continue to be strengthened and warmed by the outpouring of support from around New Zealand and from our Methodist and Ecumenical family overseas. Notes and greetings that have come with donations to the President’s Earthquake Appeal have been another source of encouragement.

The funds received will be used to meet people's needs. Funds will be channelled through local Parishes and the Christchurch Methodist Mission, as well as from the Connexional Office.

Synod has discussed the need for advocacy services in consultation with the Methodist Mission, especially for those dealing with EQC and agencies involved in the recovery effort. It also endorsed investigating the setting up of a team of carpenters and handy-people who could assist the uninsured with minor home repairs.

For those who wish to contribute to the President's Earthquake Appeal donations can be sent to PO Box 931, Christchurch 8140 or deposited into account no.: 02-0800-0766004-03 marked 'Earthquake Appeal'.

Please include your name and some contact details so a tax receipt can be issued.

In previous updates I have asked people to resend emails. Now that it could be some time before we can access the Connexional Office can I ask that if you sent letters or accounts for payment, and you have not had a response, it is highly likely the paperwork is still at Morely House. If so please contact the office and phone (03) 366 6049 or email: info@methodist.org.nz, or re-send by mail to PO Box 931, Christchurch 8140.

Grace and Peace

Rev David Bush
General Secretary
Methodist Church of NZ

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