

Veronica Madeleine Lowe [nee Roughan]

I pay tribute today to Veronica as a friend, and member of the Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa. If Veronica had been around in the time of Christ or in the years following Christ's death I would have numbered her among the women disciples; some named like Martha and the Mary's, Dorcas, Eunice, Lois, Lydia and Priscilla, others never named. Women of strength, intelligence and independence; women all touched by the hand of God, full of faith, determination and courage that helped them overcome adversity.

If it had been Veronica's lot to be around during the middle ages, I would have numbered her among the women mystics who wrote and spoke with insight and challenged the male hierarchy of the church. Women like Julian of Norwich who following a period of illness that all but took her life at the age of thirty, was able to write...

"...for as the body is clad in clothing, and the flesh in the skin, and the bones in the flesh, and the heart in the whole, so are we souls and body clad in the goodness of God and enclosed in it."

Or maybe if she had been around in the 1880's she would have been a staunch follower of Kate Shepherd?

The qualities that marked these women of history are the qualities I valued in Veronica ~ knowledge, commitment, loyalty, determination, tenacity, and passion for a cause ~ qualities she brought into her life with the church, not just locally, but at Synod and national level; and, when it came to the life of the Methodist Women's Fellowship these attributes extended to an international level.

Veronica and I first worked together on the Council of Conference. At the point where I joined she was Taiwi Co-convenor. Little did I know then, that I would end up as the Presbyter here in Te Puke. At that point Veronica had experienced severe ill-health, and future activities were a big question-mark.

I then had the privilege of being part of Veronica's journey as she accept the challenge to explore new ways to live life and participate as fully as she could in the church activities that energised and stimulated her.

The loss of personal freedom created by her physical limitations left her feeling vulnerable and frustrated, so the computer and the telephone became even more vital links, and the support of family and friends was paramount! I also observe in this time an increasing pastoral awareness, a new gift that came out of her own experiences, and I am ever thankful for her personal sharing with and support of me.

Instrumental with the Rev Janet Marsh and Bonne Heberton in the starting of the amazing 'S-Club-7' children's ministry, Veronica was able to continue being part of this programme, along with her commitment to church committees, involvement in worship, and MWF. A passionate supporter of the annual MWF/APW Special Project Appeal, the work of the Methodist Mission and Ecumenical, and Christian World Service; Veronica would be there making sure we had all the information **and** were doing everything about it!

Finally if I needed a metaphor for my words I would choose the Kate Shepherd rose, a healthy floribunda with a profusion of clusters of warm pink flowers ~ complete with a few prickles/thorns.

In Matthew's Gospel we find a parable relating to the use of our gifts ~ hear these words: '*Wonderful!*' the master replied. '*You have been a good and faithful servant. Come and share my happiness!*'

Veronica you have been a faithful servant and good friend - thank you.

Gloria Zanders 19.12.2012.