

TOUCHSTONE

E whaia ana te putaketanga o nga whakapono mo tenei ao hurihuri
EXPLORING FAITH ISSUES FOR TODAY



AFTER QUAKE, CONGREGATIONS LOOK TO REBUILD LIVES, BUILDINGS

T By Paul Titus

The earthquake that ripped Cantabrians from their sleep on September 4th was a turning point in many lives. To varying degrees it damaged buildings and belongings, disrupted daily routines, and shook people's sense of well-being.

Churches – again both property and people – were among those that took the brunt of the violent event. During the edgy days of aftershocks and the following weeks of subsidence, Touchstone contributors gathered the stories of the congregations who were affected.

Methodist Church of NZ general secretary Rev David Bush says a large percentage of the worst damaged public buildings in Christchurch were churches. All denominations – Baptist, Anglican, Catholic, Methodist, and Presbyterian – had seriously damaged buildings.

"It is not surprising since a lot of churches date back to the founding of the city and many were built in stone and brick as statements of the prominent position churches believed they had in the community," David says.

He observes wooden church buildings generally fared better

than masonry. For example, the 132-year old wooden church in the suburb of Richmond was unscathed while the younger 114-year old brick hall next to it was seriously damaged.

Immediately after the quake it was obvious that four Methodist Churches were badly affected. These were the Woodend Methodist Church and in Christchurch the Durham Street, St John's Bryndwyr (home to the Moraia Fijian Congregation), and Richmond Methodist Churches. Later it was evident that damages to the church building and the hall at Christchurch North Methodist and the hall at Beckenham Methodist were more serious than originally thought.

Some landmark former Methodist church buildings also took serious knocks. Notably, the Rugby Street Church formerly in St Albans Parish and now home to a Chinese Methodist congregation, and the Edgeware Road Church, now home to a Coptic Orthodox congregation.

After the quake, congregations made new arrangements to worship, often with the help of others. In some cases these are temporary and the long-term future is uncertain.

By the third week in September detailed engineers'

reports on the damaged buildings had not been done. Therefore it was not known how extensive the damage was or what the costs of restoration or replacement will be.

Methodist Connexional Property Committee executive officer Greg Wright says the Methodist Church will manage all earthquake damaged buildings as a single claim.

"The earthquake was one measurable event, so we will make one claim and pay one excess. Handling the claim in a combined fashion, gives us a number of advantages. We will get maximum flexibility in our insurance, we will be able to prioritise the work that has to be done, and we should be able to contract engineers and builders on a long term basis rather than for one off jobs."

"We have appointed the professional project management company Arrow International to look after the claim and the restoration work. They will prioritise the work that has to be done with input from the insurance company and the synod."

David and Greg say the assessment of damaged properties will vary in complexity. Some will be simple to sort out and others will require

Top: Parishioners Rev Barry Harkness, Rev Jean Bruce and Elaine Hassall point out the damage to the Woodend Methodist Church. Bottom: The Coptic Orthodox Church and hall on Edgeware Road in Christchurch were extensively damaged.

a lot of conversation involving affected parishes, the synod and insurers.

"The complex cases will be those in which the cost of restoring the old building and the cost of replacing it with a new building are nearly the same," David says.

There is a tension between the value and memories embodied in heritage buildings, and the benefits inherent in new buildings made with modern materials and configured for contemporary worship.

Rev Mary Caygill articulates the heritage value of Durham Street Church. "Some people say it is just a building and it should be bowed but that is not a decision to be taken lightly. Buildings hold people's histories. Generations of families have grown up in these churches."

"My ancestors help build Durham Street. It is a monument to the vision and energy of New Zealand's early Methodists. It was the first

major stone church in Christchurch. The service to celebrate its opening was held the day the foundation stone of the Christchurch Anglican Cathedral was laid."

For the rest of this story and more articles on the earthquake see pages 7 - 9.



UK Methodists pledge to shrink carbon footprint

"God saw everything that he had made and indeed it was very good (Genesis 1:31).

Creation is the foundation of Christian doctrine, and is the starting point for any theological reflection on the issue of climate change, says the Methodist Church of the United Kingdom.

Out of this theological reflection a report outlining carbon reduction measures was created and presented to the Methodist Conference in April.

"The risks and impacts of climate change are increasing and this presents the Methodist church with both a theological and practical challenge," the report says.

The carbon reduction measures in the report highlight where the problems in the church are currently and provide feasible solutions to effectively curb carbon emissions.

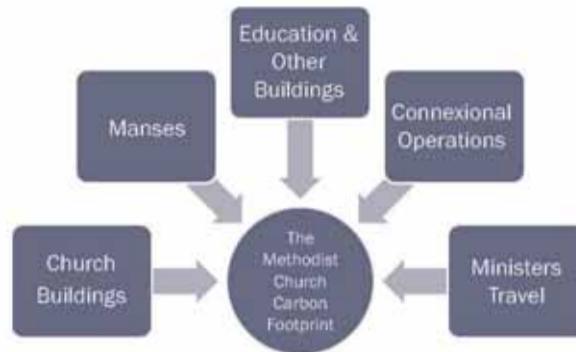
Currently the Methodist Church in the UK has an energy bill of 17 million pounds per annum.

This equals a carbon footprint equivalent to 120,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide, a significant contribution to the marked increases in greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere since the latter part of the 21st century.

The church acknowledges there is an urgent need for radical

cuts in greenhouse gas emissions in order to prevent damage to human populations and the mass extinctions of plant and animal species.

"In this context closing our ears to the voices of those most vulnerable to climate change would be nothing less than giving



up our claim to be disciples of Christ," the report says.

This year's Methodist conference has responded to the challenge of climate change with several practical resolutions in its carbon reduction report.

Local churches in the United Kingdom are being encouraged to sign up to a 'Hope in God's Future' policy, with the guidance of an appointed person who will raise awareness around climate change.

"It is estimated that significant financial and carbon savings can be achieved by churches that choose to sign up to a Connexional carbon reduction service," the report points out.

Parish stewards will be

responsible for the interior decoration and furnishing, and for ensuring energy efficiency of the parsonages.

"For presbyters and deacons it would mean a reduction in energy bills and improved control and comfort of their place of work and living space," the report says.

Parishes will also undertake measures to meet the potential energy efficiency rating of their churches, meeting a minimum energy efficiency rating.

It is also recommended that parishes should provide smart meter devices to help ministers to control their electricity use.

Parishes were also encouraged to fund government sponsored smart driver training for presbyters, deacons and lay employees.

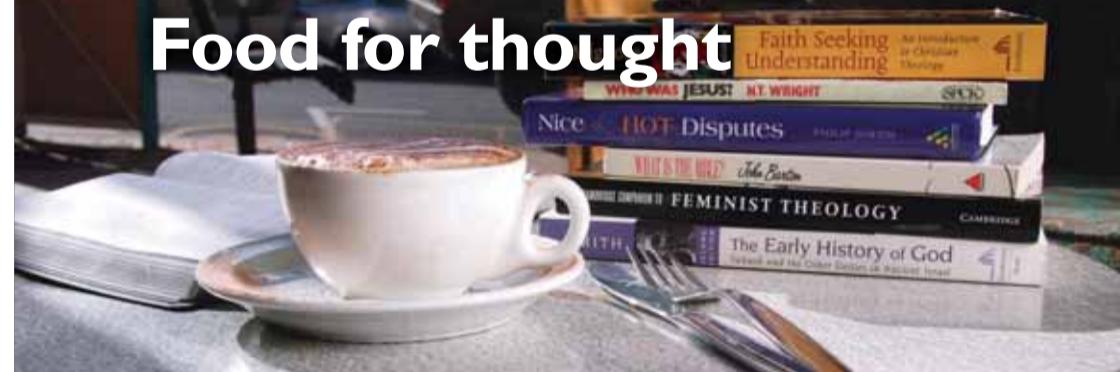
And if deemed appropriate, ask critical questions about travel within the parish for preachers and for congregations.

The Methodist Church in the UK recognises the way ahead will be a considerable journey for its community.

"While we live in an age of individuality and immediacy this is a journey not of individuals but of a community, the people of God and the people of the earth which requires us to build for the future rather than for immediate returns."

Theology from Otago

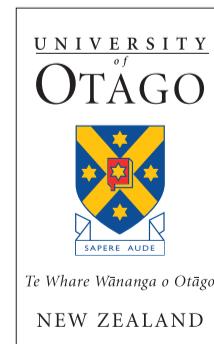
Food for thought



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Study uncovers what makes congregations succeed

Four key areas are the drivers of vitality



Lively, vital churches come in all sizes, locations, and settings says a new study commissioned by the United Methodist Church in the United States.

Despite their differences, they share some common factors that work together to influence congregational vitality. This means what works to make those churches energetic and growing can work for other churches too.

Dynamic churches with high attendance, growth and engagement tend to have inspirational topical preaching, lots of small groups including programs for children and youth, and a mix of both traditional and contemporary worship services.

Other factors include effective lay leaders, rotating lay leadership, and ministers who work at developing and mentoring lay leaders.

An essential finding of the research was that it is the combination of factors that create vitality, rather than any one or two.

"We've taken a data-driven approach to identify what works for thriving congregations large and small, both rural and urban, all over the US," says Bishop Gregory Palmer, chair of the Call to Action committee that engaged a global consulting firm to conduct the study. "While there's no silver bullet, we believe these findings can lead to vitality for many more congregations."

"Lively churches offer more than one style of worship. They work hard to make preaching interesting and relevant. They encourage more lay members to take on leadership roles. They start small groups and keep them going," Gregory says. "If more churches do these things, we believe we will see measurable positive results over time."

The United Methodist Church says data for the study was gathered from various sources in the Church to gain statistically reliable information. This included interviews with

people throughout the Church, group meetings, and surveys targeted at different groups. Data on attendance, growth, and engagement from more than 32,000 United Methodist churches in North America was analyzed.

Key drivers of vitality were consistent regardless of church size, ethnicity, and geographic location. Some factors were influenced by church size and regional area. Large churches that are representative of their community and have ministers who spend more time on preaching, planning and leading worship tends to be vital.

In southern regions of the US, the length of tenure of the clergy as pastors had an impact, while in the northeast, vitality was related to ministers spending more time on personal devotion and worship. In the west, churches that are representative of the community and have a pastor that leads in the community are more vital.

The study identified other factors that did not appear to have a significant impact on vitality, including whether outreach programs are local or global, the number of programs for adults and young adults, the use of experiential activities during worship services, length of sermon, type of music used in traditional services, and whether the pastor graduated from seminary or not.

The Call to Action steering team was created to develop a plan that will lead to reordering the life of The United Methodist Church for greater effectiveness and vitality. Palmer said that the information will be used to develop recommendations about how the denomination should organize, the role of its leaders, and how the church's culture, structure and processes can be aligned in ways that support vitality in congregations.

The full report is available for review at www.umc.org/vitalcongregations.

Conference 2010 to be soul-filled and celebratory

The presidential team organising Methodist Conference 2010 in Palmerston North wants it to be a time of spirituality and celebration as well as decision making.

Incoming president Rev Desmond Cooper and vice president Sue Spindler have given Conference the theme 'Tell out my soul'. This phrase is from the Magnificat, the section of Luke's Gospel that recounts the exchange between the Virgin Mary and her pregnant cousin Elizabeth.

"The Magnificat expresses humility and grace toward God and it has an undercurrent of feminism," say Desmond and Sue. "We expect Rev Jim Stuart to address some of these themes in his daily devotions during Conference."

Sue and Desmond will 'tell out their souls' when they give a joint presidential address in which they will talk about their own faith and convictions.

"We will also challenge the Church to be bold, brave about life, and articulate about what it means to have faith today," they say.



Desmond Cooper.



Sue Spindler.

The presidential team points out that this is the 98th Conference of the Methodist Church of New Zealand. New Zealand's Primitive Methodists and Wesleyans came together in 1913 to form the Methodist Church, and as we near that centenary it is a time to begin celebrating, they say.

Conference is, of course, a time when the Church makes decisions about its life. The presidential team expects two issues held over from last Conference to be major ones this time around as well.

"The last Conference considered the proposal to move toward a two-year presidency," says Desmond. "That proposal was rejected and the Council of Conference was asked to do more work on it.

"Several proposals were put forward – a co-presidency, a presidium and terms of two, three and even five years. The Council of Conference has given the matter serious consideration. In its report to Conference it will present a proposal on the presidency for consideration."

The Governance and Management Task Force report will also return to

Conference this year after having been considered around the Connexion at August Synod meetings.

The presidential team invites the Conference to consider the business sessions as 'Theology at work' rather than business.

"We want to convey a sense that everything is sacred and it is important to bring a sense of that to our decision making. When we make decisions, we would like to have delegates consider who benefits, who suffers and what the Spirit is saying to the Church."

Conference makes about 200 decisions over the course of its three working days. To lighten the mood and refocus people's thoughts, Desmond and Sue have invited three speakers to address Conference. They are co-leader of the Maori Party Pita Sharples, imam of the Wellington mosque Mohammah Amir, and syndicated newspaper columnist Rosemary McLeod.

"We have also revamped the working sessions by having shorter business sessions and reporting times. The intention is that this will allow for more discussion," they say.

Another highlight of Conference will be a youth event on Saturday night after the induction and retirement services. Called 'Connex: Youth Voice @ Conference' it will give young people from around the Connexion the opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences. Presentations are welcome in any format so Sue and Desmond expect to see lively expressions of youthful energy.

Young people on stage at Conference 2010

Young people are signing up to provide Methodist Conference 2010 and inspiring, challenging, fun evening!

Youth from around the Connexion are invited to prepare a short item or presentation for the Saturday night of this year's Methodist Conference in Palmerston North.

The title for the event is 'Connex: Youth Voice @ Conference'.

Vice president elect Sue Spindler says she is excited that an opportunity has been made during Conference week for youth to have their say. "I'm sure it'll be a real highlight!"

Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy the evening at no charge.

Any young people who are keen to participate should contact the national Tauwi youth co-ordinator Te Rito Peyroux by the end of October.

Email:
tauwiyouth@methodist.org.nz.

So ask yourself what might you say to the church. And then get ready to say it.

Connex: Youth Voice @ Conference, Saturday 6th November, 7-9pm, First Floor Conference Room, Convention Centre, 354 Main Street, Palmerston North.



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Concerned about Methodist investments

To the editor,

Rev Mark Gibson's letter to the editor in the August edition of Touchstone about the Methodist Church of NZ's investments in Rio Tinto was raised at the August leaders' meeting of Trinity Methodist Church Howick-Pakuranga.

Whilst our combined knowledge of the detail of Mark's concerns was limited, he won enough support for this letter to be proposed.

Our concern is whether Touchstone has any plans to investigate the position further, to write an editorial on the issue, or to invite further responses from readers.

Trinity Church's presbyter Rev Prince Devanandan will be raising the question of support for this kind of company through the Connexion with particular reference to the Church's policy on ethical investments.

Your response to this letter will be read with interest.

**George Tyler, Leaders' meeting secretary
Trinity Methodist Howick-Pakuranga**

Editor's reply: As stated in another letter to the editor in the August edition of Touchstone, this year the Investment Advisory Board has sought input from Synods and other groups

within the Methodist Connexion on the topic of investment. The Board will use this input to prepare a policy on ethical investment.

The Investment Advisory Board's executive officer Greg Wright is responsible to write that policy, and he intended to present it to Conference 2010 in November.

Greg is also the executive officer of the Methodist Connexional Property Committee. He informs me that virtually all his time has now been diverted to dealing with the aftermath of the Canterbury earthquake and it is unlikely that the policy statement on ethical investment will be ready by November.

Nevertheless, he says, a policy on ethical investment will be presented to the Connexion as soon as possible. While the deadline to submit comment on ethical investment was July 31st, people can still make a submission to Greg on the topic through the Connexional office.

Touchstone welcomes any comments on the topic. We intend to explore the topics of ethical investment as well as ethical consuming in upcoming editions.

Proposed UCANZ guidelines would bolster partnership

To the editor,

I have been the executive officer for Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand (UCANZ) for two and a half years and in that time I have become very much aware of the privilege and challenge of thinking nationally rather than locally.

UCANZ has an administrative function and seeks to serve the mission of God that exists within Cooperative Ventures and partner churches. There is, in a very real way, a balancing act to be done. The guideline paper that will be presented to church meetings in October and November seeks to redress some of the imbalance that currently exists.

I've had the opportunity to look through the old minute books of the Joint National Committee on Church Extension (JNCCE) from the late 1960s through to the 1990s when the Negotiating Churches' Unity Council was formed. I found it sobering reading, especially because I am too young to remember the debate itself.

The hopes and dreams that the partner churches could unite were very real, and they were crushed by the failure to unite. But the Cooperative Ventures throughout New Zealand continue to be a witness to that dream and a visible sign of an ecumenical spirit. Today the churches have no desire to unite but all have affirmed their commitment to the partnerships entered into at a local level. The proposed guideline seeks to affirm that local partnership rather than try to create an artificial connection at regional or national levels.

Two key concepts that arise in the paper are around our understanding of partnership and oversight.

The proposal seeks to strengthen the partnership aspect of churches in Cooperative Ventures. It focuses on the real level of partnership – at the local church – rather than try to create an artificial partnership at regional or national levels. The fact that cooperative ventures are partnerships is central to our very being, and this needs to be affirmed by the national churches and by the local churches.

To be in partnership means working together, sharing resources, supporting each

other and affirming the unique contributions each makes.

Cooperative Ventures are a witness that churches can work together in ministry and mission. A partnership model supports the section of the Act of Commitment (signed in 1967 and affirmed in 1984) that calls on the churches to "do together many of the things, which in the past we have done separately."

One risk of moving away from the partnership model is to declare that the churches cannot work together, something that Cooperative Ventures would want to strongly deny. But partnerships come with both privilege and responsibility. Cooperative Ventures are privileged to benefit from the resources of all their partners but they are also obliged to recognize their partner's ethos, history and support.

The second key concept centres on the understanding of church oversight. If oversight continues to be seen as simply an administrative overlord then we may be on a path to obscurity.

The paper emphasizes that oversight is a partnership activity and something that must be shared. It challenges growing isolationism and congregationalism. And it gives greater permission for partner churches to work through concerns at a local church level, but as partners, not authorities.

This should challenge the partner churches to work together on dealing with the very real issues that exist in local churches. It may also challenge the local churches to face their situation – supported by the resources of their partner churches.

What is clear is that the new church environment is not like that of the 1970s when Church Union was seen to be within reach. Changes in church and society have demanded changes to how organisations function and structure themselves. In presenting the guideline paper the Standing Committee of UCANZ is seeking a way forward that celebrates the partnership of our churches, reflects the needs of parishes, and develops a form of church that functions in our modern society.

**Rev Peter MacKenzie,
UCANZ executive officer**



FROM THE BACKYARD

Told in God's story

Gillian Watkin

When I returned home to the Hawkes Bay from Auckland on the Monday after the earthquake, I looked about. I looked at the house and all through the garden and imagined what it would be like broken and cracked.

This was not a dramatic act, rather an acknowledgement of fragility and the strength of all we hold dear. Does this ground have a memory? In 1887 a large quake moved the river from this location way out in two directions quite a distance away, hence our beautiful loam soil on a riverbed five feet down.

My mother had an expression: 'holding on for dear life' and that is what we all do when our world is shaken. But as Colin Gibson wrote "No feather too light, no hair too fine, no flower too brief in its glory, no drop in the ocean, no dust in the air, but is counted and told in God's story." We do have something to hold on to.

To our friends in Canterbury, know that while you are surrounded by brokenness, silt and fractured ground all around you have a company of people waiting to step up wherever there is need. However, most of us know while we can "hold the Christ-light for you, in the night-time of your fear" there is a lonely difficult road ahead for many.

When crises strike it is the small things that motivate the spirit and the small things which can magnify heartache. There will be no 'closure'. To have you and your home places return to wholeness and wellbeing is the prayer of all. Here in Hawkes Bay it is well known that 'the big one'

shapes you and your place, and your landscape forever.

It is Mental Health Awareness week 4-10 October. The theme for the week is: Flourishing for everybody – Feel good and function well.

Kia whitianga te ra, ka hihi, ka whakamana, te ha, te he, kia whai kikokiko, kia puawai te Mauri. The sun arises with each new day; its rays beckon opportunities to all living things.

The publicity for Mental Health week states that "Flourishing is a measure of mental health that has been developed within the last decade and can be used to determine the level of positive mental health in populations. When someone is flourishing they experience, most of the time, positive emotions, positive interest and engagement with the world around them and meaning and purpose in their lives"

This ideal is a nameplate on the road of life, something to aim at.

It is spring: the season of rebuilding, of new possibilities. The seemingly barren earth suddenly presents us with a plant, some leaves, and some treasure we thought was gone forever.

Kauri and totara are planted by those who know that they will not see the fully grown trees in their life time. We plant a garden knowing but not thinking that someone or something can tear it apart one day. But the story of God's people is always a story of restoration.

Our lives are an act of faith. We so often say we have faith but really we are faith.

THE STRENGTH WE FIND WITHIN

Alan Upson
and
Lana Lazarus



Psalm 46 starts with the words ‘God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.’ Then it goes straight into the serious stuff. ‘So we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken’.

No doubt this would have been an extremely frightening and traumatic experience. Nevertheless, the Psalm reminds us of the quiet deep within, that we hold onto when everything about has been devastated (this can also be called liquefaction). So while the reader is picturing the mountains falling into the sea, in the background the choir is singing quietly, over and over, ‘The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.’

We were reminded of this Psalm on our visit the week after the Canterbury earthquake. We watched members of the

Durham Street congregation (plus others who’d joined the service at the Falkingham Centre), bring broken items to place before the alter, tears flowing.

Perhaps the essence of those defiant words ‘so we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken’ flowed through the worship in silent prayer. Later, at the delayed Father’s Day Fijian service at St Stephen’s because their new church at St John’s was severely damaged, the men led the prayers and sermon.

Did we imagine it or was there a similar confidence despite the aftershocks that echoed verses 4-5? ‘There is a river that brings joy to the city of God. God is in that city, and it will never be destroyed.’ Is that city the quiet centre within each person who joins the Psalms choir ‘the

God of Jacob is our refuge?’ In the foyer after the service we felt a jolt and lingering shake.

The children running around in the hall quietened for at most 15 seconds then went back to their noisy play. Do even the children know the words, ‘in the dawn God will come to our aid’ somewhere deep within their being?

Then the massive storm bringing deep snow to the south and floods to the north, just on the first anniversary of the tsunami in Samoa and Tonga would have some doomsayers rejoicing!

We, the members of the Psalmist’s choir respond quietly from our ground of being, ‘The Lord Almighty is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge.’

Plainly when we had a brief look in

the doors of the Civil Defence emergency welfare centre at Kaiapoi, there was a similar air of order and competence. Something about the way people were committed to helping others took the shock out of the disaster. We all pray ‘save us from the time of trial’ each time we repeat the Lord’s Prayer. The amazing thing is the strength we find from within when we are put to the test.

These things are not sent to try us. They happen. They are part of being on a living planet. They are part of being alive. ‘The Lord Almighty is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.’ May the peace of Christ be with you as the media focuses on other things and you pick up from where you find yourself three weeks after the earth first shook?

Wreckage, who's wreckage?

Bruce Tasker, Mt Albert

I wish to respond to Stewart Patrick’s strong questions in his letter to the editor in the August edition of Touchstone. ‘Why would anyone want to wreck (the Gospel) by incorporating Spong’s beliefs?’ he asks.

I do not want to get into making anyone right or wrong, good or bad, in this debate. I love the followers and faithful too much for that. In the last two paragraphs, of Patrick’s letter readers will see why we have a problem in translation and interpretation of the scriptures. His use of the word ‘wreck’ in this context is over the top and diminishes the value of his view.

My daughter is at Laidlaw College (the old Bible College). Included in its theological teaching is much modern theological scholarship that we in the pews seldom hear. Among them are that Jesus probably never heard himself called Jesus or Christ, as they are Greek terms attached to gentile interpretations. Also, that the Jewish world view was a three tier view whereas Jesus’ world view was a mono-tiered view (“You have seen me, then you have seen my Father. We are one”) and that the pagan/gentile worldview was two tiered.

Can we imagine the anxiety of Jesus, not long before the crucifixion, when he said that his followers hadn’t understood him, yet? They were repeatedly putting his mono-tiered worldview into the two tier pagan/gentile context. Jesus wanted liberation from that view and the salvation of fullness that he offered his followers from his mono-tiered view.

By the time 1 Timothy 3:16 was written the gentiles were in ascendancy in the early church and its Jewish population was becoming a minority. The two-tier spin was being put on everything because that way of thinking was for centuries. Within the first two centuries the early church had lost or replaced much of Jesus’ mono-tiered teaching with the popular two-tiered view.

Like Spong, JD Crossan (Catholic priest and advisor to the Vatican), shows tremendous scholarship in his book, *The Birth of Christianity*. I

don’t always agree with either but that doesn’t mean I shouldn’t read them or that they and other top scholars are trying to destroy the church they love.

It is more about completing and detailing our understanding in the knowledge that the early church got some things so very wrong. There are many sources available, other than the Bible, that tell us the way things were such a short time ago.

My own field was geography, which tells its own story. Northern Lake Galilee is prone to squalls. The translation to squall would be more correct than to a storm as is the case in the story of Jesus calming the storm. Squalls in the area hit suddenly and pass in seconds, seldom longer than 15 seconds.

The inexperienced people on the boat became panicky and may have even stood risking upsetting the boat. Jesus shouted at them to be peaceful and still and not to rock the boat. But the storytellers made the theme more important than the reality. The theme was to show that Jesus had command over nature, that he could command the waves and “even they obey him.” Why?

One of my interests is wine. I searched for the origins of wine making. Viticulture began in the southern reaches of frost in Southern Galilee. That means between Nazareth and Capernaum. The source of water for grape growing was often from springs. These springs exist in the limestone country between Bethsaida and Tyre, which used its source of fresh water to withstand the armies of Alexander the Great for a long time.

Springs near Cana were used to sweeten wine. Not unlike a wine cooler. The drunken comments of the biblical character of keeping the best wine till last suddenly make a lot of sense. So does the “walking on water” story when you know your geography of around Bethsaida where the Jordan flows into Lake Galilee, as do many other favourite Bible stories.

Maybe, for the memory of the authentic Jesus, our evangelism needs to free itself from the “drunken” adherence to the two-tier world of Greek dualism and really hear the words of Jesus, “Peace, be still,” you’re rocking the boat, “I am One with my Parent.” Are you? Why?

Earthquakes and shaky beliefs

By Bill Wallace

Those of us who live in Christchurch have to a greater or lesser extent had our properties and bodies shaken up as a result of the 7.1 earthquake and its hundreds of aftershocks. However it is not just buildings, earth and bodies that have been shaken.

A leaflet that my daughter shared with me pointed out that earthquakes can often seriously shake our belief systems. The result for some people is that they experience a wake-up call and rush back to church. For others the reverse is true. It seems to me that our response depends on what sort of God we believe in, how we see our place within the cosmos, and how we understand the relationship of God to the cosmos.

For those who believe God intervenes in the processes of the cosmos to alter them or stop them, earthquakes and other natural disasters pose an enormous problem. If God is a just God then why do these disasters usually affect the poor much more than the rich?

A clue to the answer is to be found in Mathew 5:45 where Jesus is reported as saying “God makes his sun to shine on bad and good people alike and gives rain to those who do good and to those who do evil.” In other words God does not interfere with the processes of the cosmos.

These evolving processes exist for the benefit of the cosmos as a whole and not primarily for the benefit of human beings. This involves us in a reassessment of the place of human beings within the cosmos. No longer can we believe that the Earth is the centre of the solar system, nor that our solar system is at the centre of the cosmos. The cosmos appears to have no centre and we are not even at the centre of our galaxy. So it really is not much use to urge God to hear our prayer if our prayer asks God to intervene.

How then does a God of love fit into all of this? In the cosmos we find two apparently opposing forces, that of competition and that of cooperation. The major evolutionary developments have occurred through cooperation. If oxygen and hydrogen had not combined there would be no water in the cosmos and consequently no life. If unicellular organisms had not joined together there would be no higher forms of life.

The most developed form of cooperation is human love. To be thoroughly functional it normally needs to be a mutual activity of giving and receiving. However some people manage to love unconditionally that is to say without requiring anything in return.

Such people appear to be in touch with that

THOUGH ROCKS MOVE

By Bill Wallace

Tune: Stuttgart (WOV 200, MHB 242)

1. Though rocks move and wheels fall silent,
Though foundations twist and shake,
We will trust God's seismic loving
Moving with each power-filled quake.

2. If our hearts and minds feel shattered
By the threat of new ideas
We can let God's love and myst'ry
Lead us far beyond our fears.

3. When Christ's pilgrim way embraces
Paths beyond our reason's home
We will trust the seeming chaos
And the love which lets us roam.

4. At the journey's end God's wisdom
Bids us travel ever on
Tracing all the threads that show us
Where the wandering Christ has gone.

Bill Wallace says he wrote this hymn some time ago but it is obviously appropriate at the present moment.

It addresses the fact that buildings are not the only thing that may move on their foundations. As Paul Tillich pointed out 40 years ago, the traditional foundations of the church are shaking.

Bill suggests we need to discover new ways to build the Church as institution and belief system.

Tight Five at the heart of Onehunga youth ministry



The Onehunga Cooperating Parish's Cook Island youth group. Speaking in the language of young people: "What's up? What's up in youth ministry at Onehunga?"

Onehunga Cooperating Parish's response to this question is that it is blessed with a large number of Sunday school children, teenagers and young people. The parish is very determined to achieve a long-term vision to progress youth ministry.

Presbyterian Rev Ikilifi Pope uses the metaphor of the rugby scrum and the 'tight five' to describe youth ministry at Onehunga Cooperating Parish (OCP).

OCP has two churches, Grey Street and St Stephens. The parish caters to five youth groups, whose roots are in the five congregations that call the parish home.

Four are at Grey Street: an English-speaking group, a Samoan group, a Cook Island group, and a Niuean group. The fifth group is at St Stephens.

In the Tight Five each of the five youth groups takes responsibility for its own operations. By doing so, they independently initiate programmes that meet their particular needs.

At the same time, the five groups are interconnected and weave their activities together. The combined youth hold monthly

Another illustration, Ikilifi cites is youth who want to join the police or army. The first step they need to take is to get a full driving licence. With the help of the church young people who want to pursue a career in that area can get started while they are at high school. By the time graduate, they have their driving licence and they can apply to join the police or army straight away.

"Currently, our youth are working on a healthy eating project coordinated by my colleague Rev Fakaofa Kaio and funded by the Auckland District Health Board. The project provides the young people who register vegetable seedlings, so they can plant their own garden in their backyard.

"The expectation is that youth will learn how to provide for themselves and their family. Learning skills inspires them to think positively and be responsible for their life, family, church and community."

Ikilifi says the 'Tight Five' endorses a holistic theological approach caring for the whole being of the youth. As the five groups work together it benefits the young people themselves, their family and the community.

The backbone of this approach is a mentoring system in which youth ministry teams provide support to their peers to handle the pressures they face.

"We would like to see the Church support us in this effort. I am inspired by the idea that John Wesley used in his sermon on the Catholic Spirit.

"If we think alike please offer your hand (2Kings 10:15). In other words, if you believe the work that we do is vital to our church, families and community support us with any resources that may help our youth ministry."

"I have no doubt that youth will be able to practice their faith effectively when they are equipped with these skills."

Poetic response

To the editor,

I wrote this poem after listening to the atheist scientist Richard Dawkins. Although Richard is very eloquent, his world view is one-eyed.

In my view, life is enhanced by the love of God and that cannot be eclipsed by anything else, not even reason, Dawkins primary tool.

Desmond Cooper,
Wellington

Haggard – a poem

*Haggard by reason's relentless and untamed taunts
We stand lonely in a speechless, concrete century, if
Without conviction, without a God for our times.
For all the concrete notions of reason it is just that,
Concrete.*

*Concrete will always appear solid but always cracks
Under time's continuous reformation.
Whereas God – now there's a continuous thread for you,
A thread of tender strength –
Stronger than a spider's web in a Wellington wind.*

*And so beautiful, as to astound us.
In this, our God is beyond reason,
Even beyond beauty, or belief,
And certainly beyond all we set in concrete.*

Otago revamps distance education

From 2011, the Theology distance programme offered by the Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Otago will have a very different look.

Currently, students receive a coursebook of notes and readings, and then take part in two-hour audioconferences at two-week intervals.

"Our students really appreciate the audioconferences, since they put them in touch with their lecturers and fellow students," says Dr Tim Cooper, who co-ordinates the distance programme. "So we don't want to lose the audioconference. Instead we're going to add to them."

The new approach involves a 'blended learning' model that involves online discussion and face-to-face teaching, as well as audioconferences.

Teaching days will take place in Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin and one other regional centre. Tim believes that the best way to learn is by being in the same room as the lecturer and classmates. "It's great to be able to provide that classroom experience to distance students."

The potential of a blended learning model is that each aspect builds on the other to enhance the learning experience.

The new model was trialled in one paper this year. Tim says that experience showed how the teaching day supplies a layer of community and connection for the audioconferences and the online discussion.

He is convinced that the changes will only enhance the student experience, and says he's looking forward to seeing it in place in 2011.

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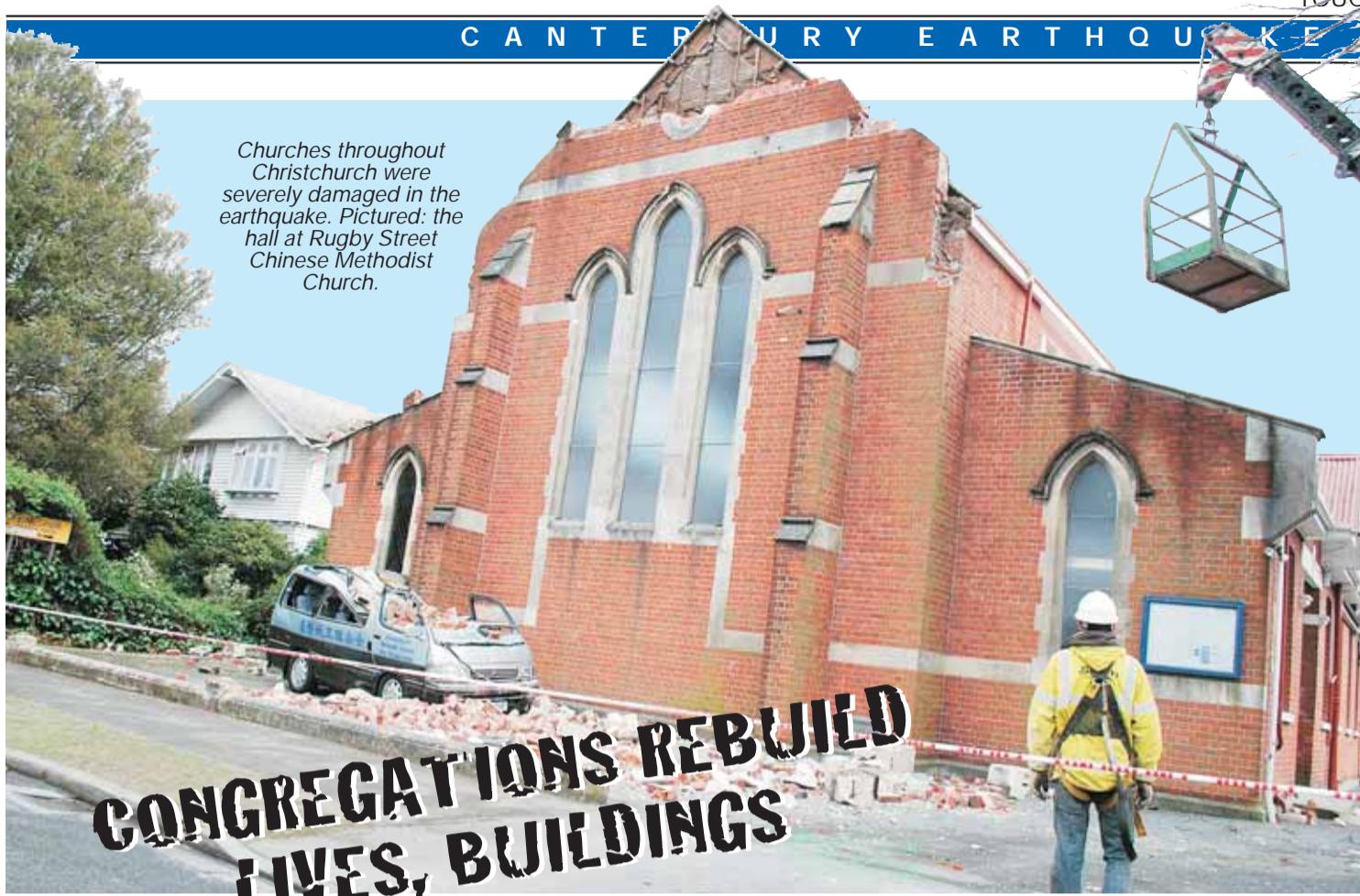
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Churches throughout Christchurch were severely damaged in the earthquake. Pictured: the hall at Rugby Street Chinese Methodist Church.



CONGREGATIONS REBUILD LIVES, BUILDINGS

Durham Street congregation shaken but strong

By Cory Miller

A slightly wonky golden cross, a red Christ candle, and a silver chalice were among the few familiar symbols salvaged from the 150-year-old buildings of Durham Street Methodist Church.

The magnitude 7.1 earthquake that rocked Christchurch made the church unsafe for use but nevertheless the congregation came together in worship a week later.

In the unfamiliar setting of the Falkingham Centre at WesleyCare rest home, the Durham Street congregation gathered for its first Sunday service since the quake.

A large flax mat sat on the floor in front of the congregation, a woven symbol of their connectedness.

Rev Mary Caygill called the congregation to come forth and share their stories on the mat.

"Let us remember Christchurch as it was and our lives before the earthquake," she says. "We place these symbols here in loving memory of the world as it was last week."

Rev Jill Van de Geer is a member of the congregation. She placed pieces of a gift she had been given to mark the end of her term as general secretary of the Methodist Church.

Jill's nine-year-old granddaughter, Aleisha, placed her great-grandmother's broken china on the mat.

But the earthquake didn't just break things, it also seemed to have the ability to repair items. Philip Seddon had an antique clock that hadn't worked for almost a decade.

"In the aftermath of the earthquake I was looking around, checking for damage when we heard the chiming," he says. "It was the clock, it had started working again and since the quake it hasn't stopped!"

Another member of the congregation, Sue Spindler, spoke of a broken dream. The day the earthquake hit was her daughter, Raukura's wedding day.

"A dream was broken of a wedding in an important place [Durham Street Church], for my family. But thanks to everyone, despite part of the dream being shattered the day turned out to be an unforgettable."

Mary said in the past week she had seen the community incarnated through acts of kindness, generosity and love.

"When the earth heaves our first thought goes to the planetary forces that dwarf us," she says. "They may flatten cities but it is love that will rebuild."

"It is this love, central to church, parish and mission that will hold us together through the next weeks as we continue to connect with one another as we rebuild our lives."

Methodist Church president Rev Alan Upson and vice president Lana Lazarus, were also present at the service.

They were a symbolic reminder that this congregation is part of a larger Methodist Connexion.

"We are here as a living reminder that you are not alone. We are with you as much as we can be. We can't stand in your footsteps, but we can walk along side you," said Alan.



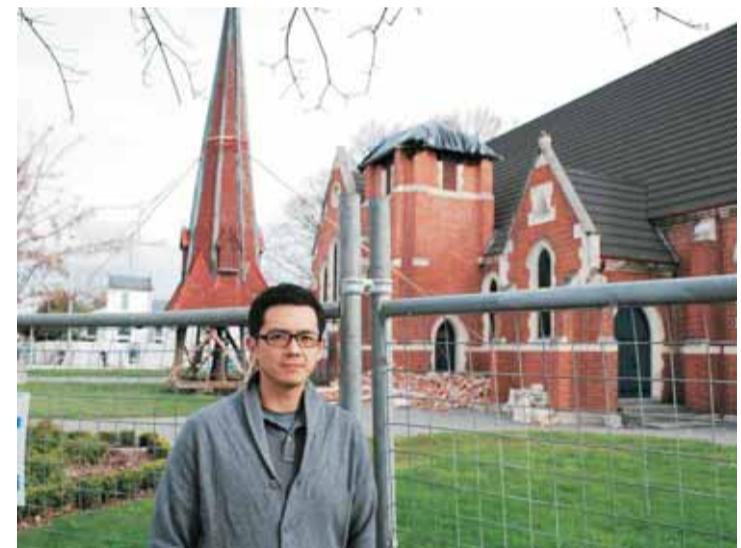
Displaced from their own church, the Durham Street congregation has gathered at borrowed premises for services.

From Page 1

On the other side of the argument, David cites the aftermath of Napier earthquake as an example of the rejuvenation that can take place in the wake of a disaster. "Napier was rebuilt with character but it is not the character that was there before the earthquake of 1931. Napier was rebuilt using the best designs, methods and technologies of the day."

The Methodist Connexion does not have a building fund that would pay to restore churches if this would cost more than replacing them. The parish would bear the additional cost of restoration. Mary says the Durham Street parish council is fully aware of this and is prepared to consider its implications as it decides its future.

David says while capital funds are held by individual parishes, the earthquake does provide the opportunity for the Christchurch parishes to have a discussion about how the Methodist Church rebuilds its presence in the city and how the cost of that rebuilding is shared.



Pastor Simon Goh says his congregation intends to restore its Merivale church.

Chinese Methodists aim to restore Rugby Street church

The Chinese Methodist Congregation that now owns the Rugby Street Methodist Church in Merivale is confident it can restore the heritage building to its former glory. It is not so sure about the adjacent hall, however.

Pastor Simon Goh says the congregation took ownership of the property in March. It was fully insured and now the congregation is waiting for engineers' reports to see what can be rebuilt.

"We do not want to take down the church. It has a lot of history and the whole community wants to see it stay," Simon says. "Initial reports on the hall are that it is not feasible to rebuild it. We are not so concerned about it because it was not a heritage building."

After an engineers' assessment showed that cracks in the bell tower, a crane was brought in to remove the bell and it now sits in front of the church.

Although the Chinese Methodist Church is not affiliated with the New Zealand Conference, it has worship at the Upper Riccarton Methodist Church for some time. It has now returned there.

Simon says the Chinese Methodist Church in NZ is independent though it has links to the Malaysian Methodist Church. There are five Chinese Methodist congregations in this country – in Auckland, Tauranga, Dunedin, Wellington and Christchurch. There are about 150 Chinese Methodists in Christchurch.

"No one in our congregation suffered serious property damage so we were quite blessed. It is good that we have a location to worship at Upper Riccarton. Some churches can't find a place to worship."

"When we moved to our new church some of the congregation stayed at Upper Riccarton. Now we are all back there together, and it gives us a chance to reboot and consider our future."

Trinity Darfield breathes sigh of relief



Organist Hugh Stevenson surveys the damaged organ at Trinity Church, Darfield.
The damaged pipes have already been removed

While the epicentre of the Canterbury earthquake was said to be Darfield, local residents say it was actually to the southeast, closer to Burnham.

Built largely on alluvial gravels rather than sand or former swamp land, most of Darfield escaped the worst effects of the big shake.

Although Trinity Darfield Church suffered a broken window and damage to the organ, members of the congregation counted themselves lucky.

Trinity Church is unique. It was built as a joint use building by the local Methodist, Presbyterian and Anglican Churches.

The Methodists and Presbyterians later formed a cooperating venture. Today Anglican and Cooperating services are held on alternate Sundays and most people who worship there attend both.

Anglican vicar Rev Susan Baldwin led the service at Trinity on Sept 12th. She urged people in the congregation who needed to talk to do so, and others to listen.

She reminded the congregation to consider the needs of others in the community and that earthquake

itself was only the beginning of a long period of rebuilding and healing.

If it could talk, Trinity's organ could tell a story or two about earthquakes. Built in 1914, it was originally housed in Masterton Methodist Church.

Trinity parishioner Betty Green lived in Masterton during the 1940s, and she vividly remembers the 7.2 Wairarapa earthquake that struck near the town in June 1942.

Apparently the organ emerged from its first earthquake largely unscathed because, when the Masterton parish decided to build a new church, the organ went to Trinity Darfield.

The organ arrived in Darfield in 1991 and was restored under the guidance of two organists, Hugh Stevenson and John Dodgson.

Hugh says the extent of damage to the organ is yet to be fully determined. The supports that hold the big pipes were broken so the pipes fell, and the rack supporting the mechanism was cracked.

The proof will come when the pipes are back in place and wind pressure is applied.



Staff have worked in difficult circumstances to keep the Christchurch Methodist Mission moving.

Christchurch Methodist Mission responds in the crunch

The Christchurch Methodist Mission and its staff were resilient in the face of the Canterbury quake.

The Mission and its WesleyCare complex of rest home, hospital and residential accommodation have provided aged care services for more than 60 years. Never before has it had to cope with events like this.

Mission executive director Mary Richardson says all WesleyCare staff have been remarkable.

"The Mission could not have asked for more, especially when you realise some staff suffered major damage themselves and were still ready to be back helping others."

"Early Saturday morning, unrostered staff accompanied by husbands, partners, sons and daughters spontaneously arrived. They joined rostered staff, rolled up their sleeves and got on with cleaning up and helping residents cope."

With no power or elevators on Saturday and still of only limited use throughout the week, meals had to be carried around the buildings. It meant cooking on BBQs and ferrying food trays up four flights of stairs. For five days the complex had to use bottled water and staff had to cope with nights of aftershocks.

"Residents' lives too, were disrupted. Some lost possessions that carry many memories of past years. But they have been resilient and understanding," Mary says.

The Methodist Mission's Community Services staff reconfigured their whole service to respond to this crisis. They have been operating at emergency centres, out of cars, at the mayor's

relief offices and in family homes.

Mary says the imagination of its social workers enabled the Mission to respond to these complex circumstances.

The Christchurch Methodist Mission is one of the South Island's largest social services with almost 200 staff. In addition to aged care, it provides child and family services, emergency support and early childhood education.

Staff kept administration and management going despite the disaster. Mary says the Mission thanks its IT support team for salvaging servers and getting them running elsewhere, the finance team for getting payroll out, and property team for tirelessly inspecting and repairing damage and contacting contractors and assessors.

"The Methodist Mission's Durham Street offices and facilities have been damaged and not functioning at present. Being part of a network of social service agencies has been so important," Mary says.

"The Anglican City Mission has offered space to continue some services. Christchurch North Parish has offered office and meeting space. Presbyterian Support and many others have all provided practical support. Methodist Missions and local parishes through out the country have offered moral and practical support."

"The kind of dedication we've had from our staff and the support we've had from churches and missions around New Zealand, has demonstrated a very practical commitment to not just words but action."

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Fijian fathers' back on their feet

The day after the Canterbury earthquake was Father's Day, and Christchurch's Moraia Fijian Methodist Congregation planned a special Father's Day service.

The quake was not kind to the congregation, however, and the service was called off.

The Fijian congregation moved into their new home at the St John's Church in Bryndwyr on April 1st of this year. The old stone church was damaged in several places by the initial quake.

A tall chimney broke, the roof separated from one of its end walls, and it appears that a crack extends from one side wall of the church, right through the floor and the other side wall.

Rev Peni Tikoinaka says the hall has escaped undamaged and it may be possible for the congregation to meet there eventually.

In the meantime, however, with the nearby church still unsound, it has been able to find a temporary home at St Stephens Church in Russley. The Fijian congregation will worship there in the afternoons and it joins the English-speaking congregation and a Zimbabwean congregation who use the premises.

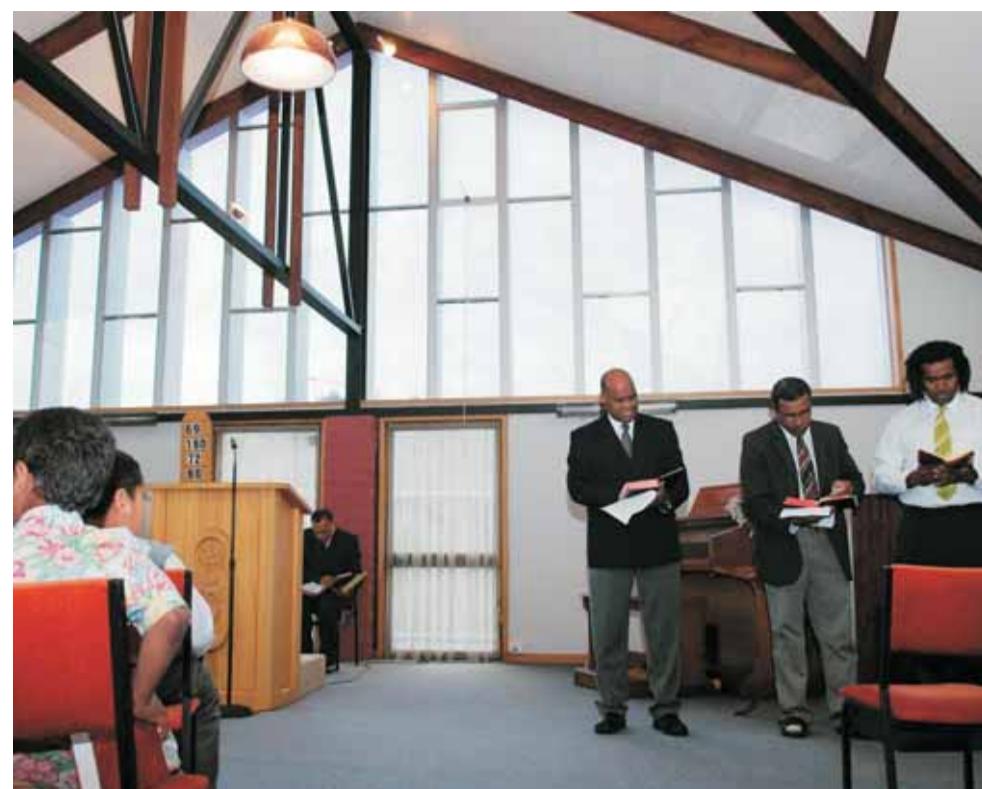
On September 12th the Moraia congregation held its Father's Day Service at St Stephens. Several fathers read bible passages and all the fathers present sang a special hymn together.

They were joined by Methodist Church president Rev Alan Upson and Central South Island Synod assistant superintendent Rev Norman West.

Alan and vice president Lana Lazarus passed on messages of sympathy and solidarity from around the Connexion and around the world. Lana conveyed messages of support from the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference of Asia.

In his message to the congregation Alan said "We have not stood where you stand or experienced what you have experienced but we stand beside you and we are praying for you."

Alan said the Connexion's earthquake appeal has received a very positive response including a large grant from the Robert Gibson Trust to support secondary and tertiary student affected by the disaster.



Meeting in another church in their parish, Fijian Methodists celebrated Father's Day a week late.

Knox congregation reconnects after the quake

By Hilaire Campbell

Earthquakes don't play favourites and some churches in and around Christchurch have been hard hit. Knox Presbyterian Church in the inner city is red stickered as it is unsafe to use.

It lost a roof gable but managed to save its magnificent Celtic cross. It was nursed to the ground like a baby by rival demolition companies. "I can't thank them – Frews, City Salvage and others – enough," says Rev Geoff King. "It was an act that exemplified community spirit."

So was the quake a natural catastrophe or the act of a wrathful God? Geoff says the question raises a whole constellation of questions. What's the nature of your faith? Where does the church fit?

"The idea of a punishing God doesn't work for me, and I think that if your world

view is heading in that direction you have a problem.

"I've no doubt these issues will be discussed among us in the coming weeks. That is the significance of a faith community – to explore meaning."

Geoff says belief is less important right now than a community of belonging.

"Most people haven't experienced anything on this scale, and what they need psychologically is a place of safety and security; a chance to reconnect. It may be just a hug."

"Where I put myself is somewhere between over dramatising and underestimating the effects," says Geoff. "Some are suffering, but there's a spontaneity of caring, and it's coming from everywhere, not just the paid Ministry team."

On 12 September St Andrews at Rangi

Ruru hosted a combined service for Knox, Oxford Terrace Baptist Church, and St Pauls' Trinity Pacific, which is under the Presbyterian umbrella.

"We don't like the reason for it," said a St Andrews woman, "but we are enjoying it. Our small congregation of 30 has swelled to 700."

Ron Keating is a Knox elder who took time from his work as mayor of Waimakariri to be with fellow parishioners. "It's like extended family," he said. "At a time like this I wouldn't be anywhere else."

Geoff describes Knox as an inclusive, liberal congregation, part of a progressive Christian network. There are over 300 people on the church role; 130 attend regularly. They come from a range of socio-economic groups and cultures.

"Some of those in wealthy areas have

had their houses condemned; no one is immune."

Having a church background makes no difference either, said a woman whose son's house was demolished. "I've never felt so frightened."

But Geoff says one old chap is still counting his blessings. His wife is cuddlier than she's been in years.

"We have our own systems of pastoral care but I think the scale of this is a challenge to churches to look outside their own patches," Geoff says. "I'd like to see individual congregations coming together to focus on wider community needs – rebuilding, family dislocation, and downstream of that, psychological help for trauma. The churches have reserves and trust funds; it's what they choose to do with them."

Earthquake wedding day

As September 4 approached Sue Spindler and Mark Gibson were preparing to celebrate the wedding of their daughter Raukura to Phill Beattie. The wedding was to be held at Durham Street Methodist Church, and the couple had been planning the event for more than a year.

Just minutes after the quake struck a distraught bride and a determined bridegroom were on the phone to one another. They knew Durham Street Church would have been hard hit by the quake, and the lack of power and water in many parts of the city meant there was also a big question mark over

Sue says Durh a m S t r e e t Church holds a very

special place in our family's life and history but the couple decided it did not matter where they got married in the grand scheme of things.

A phone call to the caterer was reassuring. The reception venue, Christchurch Netball Centre, had power and water. Another function room was available for the ceremony.

"So the wedding was definitely still on. It felt like we spent much of that morning on the phone, as we tried to get hold of as many people as possible to let them know what was happening," Sue says.

There were further challenges to come. The bouquets were all ready but in a shopping mall that was cordoned off. The orders of service, altar flowers and some special props for the ceremony had all been left in the church after the rehearsal the night before. Nevertheless, everything was safely collected.

Sue says you would never have known any of the above once the wedding got under way. It was a very moving testimony to Raukura and Phill's love and commitment to each other that it was almost the dream wedding that had been planned all along.

"Everyone went the extra mile to make sure it would be a wedding to remember. We sang 'Love Divine' unaccompanied with gusto. The aftershocks kept coming but we kept our fear at bay with laughter and togetherness contributed to our fortitude."

As Mark said in his speech to the couple, "Not even a 7.1 magnitude earthquake can stop this couple. An earthquake can disrupt every human plan, but it cannot destroy love."



Raukura and Phill Beattie

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Partake of bread and wine with joy

The first Sunday in October is designated World Communion Sunday. This is a very meaningful and valuable commemoration because it is of vital importance to all Christians.

Throughout the centuries, all Christians have met together to remember the last meeting of Christ with his chosen disciples before he was taken to his death. Although different parts of the Church celebrate it differently, it is basically the commemoration that binds us all together.

We remember the very first account of it by St Paul. We must bear in mind that Paul's epistles were all written before the Gospels, so although Paul himself was called later and did not take part in the event that the Gospels record, we must realise that he was part of the life of the early Church and would have known how its worship was celebrated.

When Paul describes in I Corinthians 11:23-33, the basic way in which Communion was celebrated we can surely accept it as being the earliest account:

"The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do

this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

It appears that, from what Paul says in the short section of the chapter immediately before this statement, some Christians had got into a habit of having a kind of bring-and-share supper in Church. They were not really sharing, however. They separated out the rich from the poor and failed to truly worship the Lord in what they were doing.

This is clearly why Paul is adamant that they must remember what Jesus had instructed them to do, and it seems that the Church did take what he said seriously. Basically we continue to follow his teachings today.

It is true that different parts of the Church do emphasise different ways of bringing out the meaning of the Communion service. Catholics and Orthodox emphasise the fact that Jesus, when he was crucified the day after the last supper, was representing and fulfilling the sacrifices that had been the basis of worship in the Temple, both for Jews and pagans.

Indeed, these sacrifices persisted after Jesus – in the case of Jews until the Temple was destroyed by the Romans, and in the

case of pagans all the time that their religions continued.

Christians were the first people to stop animal sacrifice altogether. In the early years of the Church, when Christians lived among pagan peoples, it was very often their refusal to take part in the local sacrifices to the gods that called attention to the fact that they were Christians. This caused them to be persecuted during periods when Christianity was declared illegal.

Catholic liturgy expands on the words from Corinthians as quoted above but Paul's words are there in the Canon of the Mass, and the extensions are meaningful to all Christians. For example, 'Upon these things (i.e., upon the bread and wine) be pleased to look with a kindly and serene expression and accept them as you were willing to accept the gifts of your worthy young man and the sacrifice of your patriarch Abraham'.

Over the centuries, when the early Protestants withdrew from the Catholic Church, they were called upon to explain their beliefs and justify what they held to be true. Queen Elizabeth I was challenged to say what she believed about her Eucharist. Her father had, of course, separated from the Roman Church and she came to the throne after her sister had reverted to the

Catholic Church. Elizabeth's response to the question is recorded as:

"Christ's was the word that spake it. He took the bread and break it; And what that word doth make it, That I believe, and take it."

It is difficult to argue with that wording!

It does seem to me that, however closely we feel we must follow the literal meaning of Jesus' statements, he was after all, sitting there with the bread in his hands, so he could not be claiming that it was literally his body. It must represent his body.

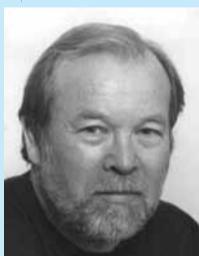
We should accept that we are all united as one Christian people when we share in the communion. Let us quote from Paul again (I Corinthians 10:16-17):

"Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf."

Let us indeed partake of the bread and wine with joy in our hearts, remembering how through the centuries, Jesus has met all his followers in this way, and has promised to go on meeting us until he comes again to call us all to himself.

DISASTER – GATEWAY TO PARADISE? LIBRARY OF FAITH

By Jim Stuart



"What you believe shapes how you act. How you act results in life or death, for yourself or others, as in everyday life, only more so." This observation sets the foundation for

Rebecca Solnit's fascinating book on how people deal with catastrophes and natural disasters such as earthquakes.

Her book is appropriately entitled 'A Paradise Built in Hell: the Extraordinary Communities that Arise in Disaster'. Solnit's premise is that disaster offers us momentary opportunities to demonstrate our best human qualities such as compassion, generosity and the ability to cooperate for the common good.

Originally I hadn't planned to include Solnit's book in my Library of Faith but then

the Darfield quake rattled our house, knocked books everywhere, broke china and gave me a good shake up. It was 'a moment in time' I shall never forget.

Later that morning people left their shaken homes to assess the damage and to see how their neighbours were doing. To my surprise I met neighbours I never knew I had. Surrounded by the damage, we discovered each other as neighbours connected by the consequences of the quake (including the lack of power and water) and the desire to help each other.

"Horrible in itself," Solnit admits, "disaster is sometimes a door back into paradise, the paradise at least in which we are who we hope to be, do the work we desire, and are each our sister's and brother's keeper."

Jesus' teaching seems to parallel Solnit's analysis of courageous human responses to disasters especially in the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke's gospel. Jesus took the

young lawyer's initial question, 'And who is my neighbour?', and turned it upside down. First, he told the lawyer the story of the Good Samaritan. Second, after telling the story, he reframed the lawyer's question by asking, 'Who is a neighbour to one in need?' and finally, before the lawyer could launch into a theoretical debate, Jesus challenged the lawyer to 'go and show mercy'. In other words as Solnit affirms from her study of disasters: what people believe shapes how they act.

Solnit's book demonstrates how disasters open up new possibilities for people. For some people, she argues, disasters become moments of transformation that liberate them from the destructive priorities of everyday life, while opening up a more expansive idea of what it means to be human with a stronger sense of society.

But Solnit also explores the other side of disaster: the way authorities often exploit disasters by trying to impose their agenda

in the name of a quick return to normality. "Panic," she writes, "provides a premise for treating the public as a problem to be shut out or controlled."

This kind of 'elite panic,' she says, is inevitable. She observes, "In a disaster there are two populations: a great majority that tends towards altruism and mutual aid and a minority whose callousness and self-interest often becomes a second disaster."

In the end Solnit encourages all of us to learn what disasters can teach us about the capacity of the human spirit to build paradises out of the damage and debris. "Disaster sometimes knocks down institutions and structures and suspends private life, leaving a broader view of what lies beyond. The task before us is to recognise the possibilities visible through that gateway and endeavour to bring them into the realm of the everyday."

Disasters can become moments of grace.

Is uniformity possible for our diverse CVs?

By Graeme White

One of the papers discussed by Auckland Synod at its August meeting was the UCANZ paper on oversight. It was accepted with little comment. Since that meeting, though, I have been challenged about the direction that the paper suggests. In the Combined Auckland JRC we decided that we should make it the major focus for our October meeting.

The paper proposes a Coordinating Partner that shall take over some of the tasks that have been the responsibility of the Joint Regional Committees. This is largely because in some areas there is not an effective JRC or even a functioning JRC, so something needs to happen. Among the tasks is the responsibility for parish reviews. It is often difficult to get the personnel to carry out these reviews.

We need to ask, however, how effectively the partners conduct parish reviews. I was at a meeting recently where a minister made the comment that they thought that presbytery had

given up doing parish reviews. Just to prove us wrong, the report of a parish review was presented at last month's presbytery meeting but it is the first that I have seen for a long time. Neither have I seen many Methodist visitation reports presented to synod, and those that are, are usually conducted late, often years later than the date they should have been done.

If the partner churches are not reviewing the denominational parishes every five years, or whatever the agreed term is, how can we expect CVs to be reviewed at the approved time, by those same denominational partners? I don't believe we can.

So is it a return to the status quo? In the Auckland JRC we have a well developed programme for doing parish reviews. It works well except when delays are requested by denominational partners because of lack of personnel, or the parish itself because it is experiencing something out of the ordinary. Unfortunately I know that this is the exception rather than the rule.

Many JRCs have been struggling to carry out this task.

Is it possible to have a one-size-fits-all solution? Recently I was involved in a symposium at Trinity Theological College on Cooperative Ventures that was held because a number of students may well enter a CV as their first appointment. Someone asked, 'How important is it to attend JRC meetings?'

My immediate response was 'very important'. Methodist representative on UCANZ Standing Committee Rev Nigel Hanscamp replied by saying "It depends on the context". He is right.

JRCs vary in effectiveness and in makeup. Originally they were made up of church leaders but as organic union has slowly disappeared from the horizon, JRCs have evolved on an ad hoc basis. Now who makes up the JRC differs from one part of the country to another.

Could it be that the paper on parish oversight could be adopted in those parts of the country where there is no

effective JRC, and those who have an effective JRC will carry on as they have? Who decides what is effective? Is the effectiveness of a JRC governed by the commitment of two or three people? Take them out of the equation and we might have a completely different picture.

If both partners and JRCs are unable to do an effective job for the CVs is there a third or possibly fourth way?

For the first time in its history, the CV movement has a full-time executive officer. This means more work can be done from the UCANZ office. Should the executive office be responsible to see that the parish review takes place, along with ministry appointment reviews? The executive officer would then appoint a convenor and advise the partners who would make their appointments to the review team.

This may hopefully bring the uniformity across the country that is lacking at present. Or is there some better way?

Global week of action on hunger

Christian World Service is inviting churches to join a global week of action on the right of all people to adequate, healthy food from 10 - 17 October.

The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance (EAA) of which CWS is a member is part of a growing global movement calling for a change in the way food is grown, sold, distributed and shared.

In response to new figures indicating that one-sixth of the world's population are hungry, the Rev Dr Tolbert Jallah, general secretary of the Fellowship of Councils of Churches in West Africa reflected on the riches he says surround communities in Africa suffering from hunger, stating that, "in the midst of abundant resources, God's people are still dying of hunger."

The Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the UN World Food Programme announced in September that 925 million people are estimated to suffer from chronic hunger this year, a

small decrease from the 1 billion estimated in 2009.

"Nothing much is worse than the anxiety of a parent desperately trying to find food for her hungry son or daughter," says CWS campaign coordinator Gillian Southey. "Yet the global food systems focus on what is best for global food corporations and supermarkets."

There is growing international concern as to how the world will feed itself, but not enough attention paid to the critical needs of vulnerable small-scale farmers who can improve a family's food security, the EAA believes.

This year's week of action focuses on stories and experiences of women. The worship material explores food from a gender perspective and was prepared by the EAA. CWS will be adding some partner and New Zealand specific resources in coming weeks. Resources are available from PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8142 or at www.cws.org.nz.



Post earthquake Port Au Prince. At the present slow pace of clearance, earthquake rubble will remain for decades. Photo by Magnus Aronson ACT/Alliance.

A tale of two earthquakes, Haiti and Canterbury

By Greg Jackson

A message from earthquake ravaged Haiti was one of the most touching communications CWS received after the Canterbury earthquake. The good wishes for staff and the people of Canterbury came from Haitian partner, the Institute Culturel Karl Leveque (ICKL).

This group has been helped by donations from CWS supporters for some years.

It was amongst a tide of calls and messages from partner groups that included recent visitor to Aotearoa New Zealand, Constantine Dabbagh, the director of the churches' Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees in Gaza.

The messages were a welcome reminder that the work carried out by CWS and funded by supporters here has touched hearts and lives since we began in 1945.

Two weeks after the quake hit, the CWS national office is still unsafe because of large quantities of broken glass, and its windows boarded up. Staff and volunteers have continued to work from home and temporary offices kindly provided by Trade Aid.

On a personal level, as media officer, I have found the proximity to two major earthquakes in one year borders on the surreal. In March two months after the devastating earthquake tore apart Haiti, I accompanied John Nduna the head of the world's second largest aid and development

agency ACT Alliance.

Haiti did not have our great good fortune as 250,000 people lost their lives and another 1.5 million made homeless. Their quake struck at 5pm, ours at 4.36am. Theirs was a 7.0, ours 7.1.

The aftershocks in Haiti were not as frequent as ours but they were often ferocious with a 5.9 and 6.1 in the tally. Their aftershocks triggered a mass exodus from the quake torn capital Port-au-Prince. Ours have also produced a quieter migration of the traumatised and frightened including my own partner and sons.

Watching the Canterbury earthquake story unfold has left me amazed yet again at how universal some experiences are. In Haiti and in Canterbury there was a steep upswing in birth figures brought on by the stress following the earthquake. There was also a surge in the number of people attending church.

The day after our quake as I was handed chimney bricks that had been passed from neighbour to neighbour, I remembered how Haitians told me of doing exactly the same thing with their debris.

In Haiti I heard countless tales of kindness and compassion amongst the survivors. Here where my partner stays in a donated home and our sons temporarily attend the Dunedin Steiner School, I have met this same generosity of spirit first hand.

Pakistan treads water as flooding persists



Disease and hunger are constant threats in villages affected by flooding.

Christian World Service staffer Nick Clarke is enjoying the irony of leaving quake ravaged Canterbury for flood damaged Pakistan to find that Internet access is better in Pakistan.

"At least I've got internet access here which may well not be the case where we live for quite some time," Nick says. His own home neighbourhood had been amongst those hard hit by the Canterbury earthquake.

It was a bizarre change of circumstances for the aid and development worker who is used to returning from trips to places in trauma and crisis to places of peace and stability.

His visit to Pakistan had already been arranged by CWS partner, Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan before the Canterbury quake. Nick says he decided to go ahead with the trip because the sort of recovery expertise required in Canterbury was already available here and had proven to be of high

quality.

In his latest email Nick reported that he had quickly been deployed by grateful Pakistan colleagues into assisting with communications with global partners.

"The scale of this Pakistan emergency is just immense. It is the biggest in Pakistan's history, the biggest ever for the United Nations, and it is taking place in a very difficult environment," he says.

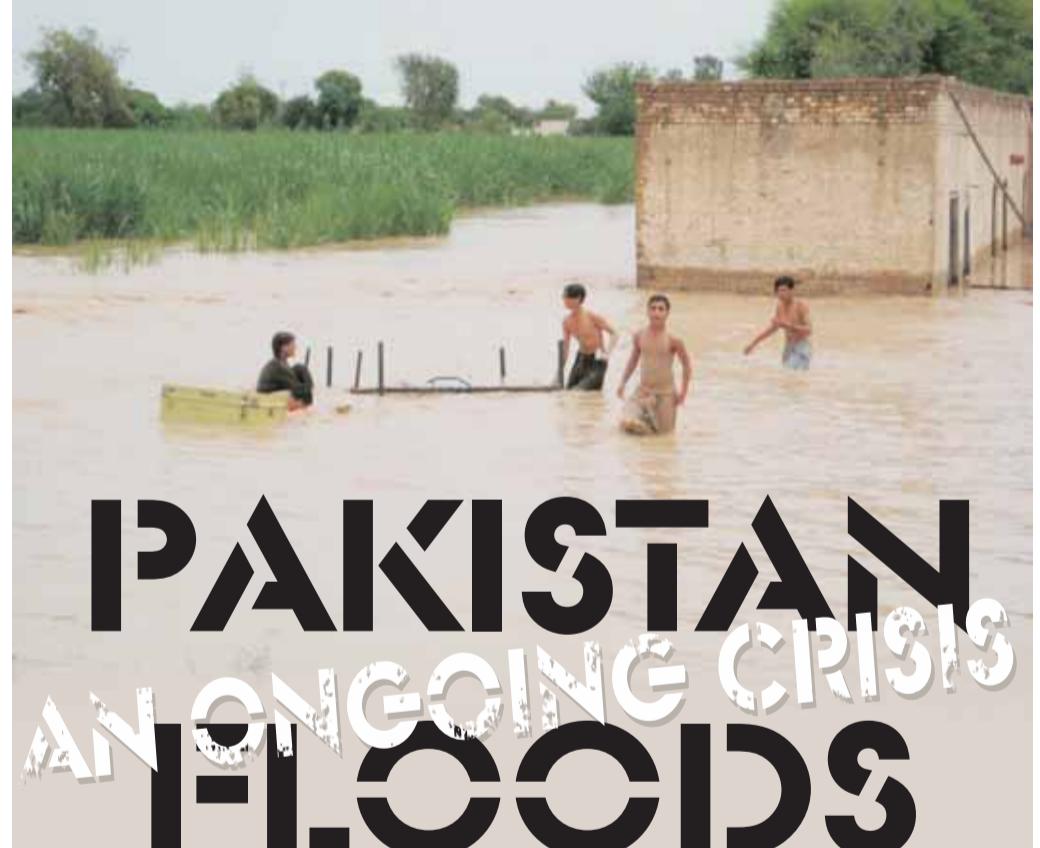
The security situation continued to be tenuous while the actual physical environment was often both hilly and difficult to access.

The scale of the disaster was spelt out in an update from Church World Service P/A which pointed out that even as floodwaters receded in the north, towns and villages in the south were still being submerged. An estimated seven million people would be homeless for some time yet. They needed immediate relief while the fast approaching winter was causing huge concern in the north.

Church World Service medical coordinator, Dr Qamar Zaman says he is deeply worried about the rising disease challenges. "Snow begins as early as October in the north bringing freezing temperatures and increased respiratory infection," he says.

Lack of food and proper nutrition would put many at risk, especially the young and elderly. An estimated 500,000 women are expected to give birth within six months and this group needed both health services and protection from the freezing temperatures. As well as meeting winter needs, aid was also required to equip people to regain economic and emotional independence in the difficult recovery phase.

Nick Clarke is expected to be in Pakistan providing support for at least a month. The CWS Appeal for Pakistan remains open. Donations can be sent to PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8143 or at www.cws.org.nz.



Five years ago it was an earthquake; last year it was conflict on the Afghanistan border; now, millions of Pakistani people have again lost everything in the biggest floods on record.

"Please continue to support CWS appeals for Pakistan floods so that we can provide life-saving assistance. Blessings and thanks for your prayers." Marvin Parvez, Church World Service Pakistan.

You can, and do, make a difference

PLEASE DONATE NOW

PAKISTAN FLOODS APPEAL

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The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better

It takes a brave and prophetic voice to challenge the predominant mantra that market forces and growth is good. It takes an inspired voice to suggest that climate change reduction is also possible if we address income and opportunity inequalities across the world. It is brave to write a book arguing that economies should stop growing when millions of jobs have been recently lost.

But intuitively I think we all know there is something wrong, and this book goes a long way towards explaining what and why.

This is what Wilkinson and Pickett have done in this book. From wide and in-depth research over 30 years, they show that simple growth in people's incomes is not the panacea to resolving evident social ills. They say we in the developed world are rich enough and that economic growth has gone as far as it can to improve quality and quantity of life. Being better off does not improve our perception of happiness.



They examine social wellbeing indicators like life expectancy, imprisonment rates, drug use and educational achievement and rank them against a measure of income equality revealed by the income differences between the top 20 percent and the bottom 20 percent.

In those countries having smaller income inequality there is much less social dis-ease. Conversely, greater inequality causes shorter, unhealthier and unhappier lives across all society's socioeconomic levels.

Using publicly published data from the UN and others, they have created a series of graphs whose patterns look similar, and which document the prevalence of a vast range of social ills. On almost every index of quality of life, or wellness, or deprivation, there is a gradient or line of significance, showing a strong matching between a country's level of income inequality and its social outcomes.

Almost always, Japan and the Scandinavian countries are at the favourable "low" end, and almost always, the

By Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett
2009, Allen Lane, 331 pages
Reviewer: Michael Dymond

UK, the US and New Zealand are at the unfavourable "high" end.

The book's opening pages are depressing, almost making you want to shut it fast. They say "We find ourselves anxiety-ridden, prone to depression, driven to consume and with little or no community life." Taking the statistics broadly, they may be correct, but many readers simply won't feel like that.

Nevertheless at its conclusion there are rays of hope. By addressing the inequality issue seriously, as is now happening legislatively in the UK, we can bring about social wellness within and between countries. In so doing, we can integrate this with the need to work towards a world that can have a sustainable climate.

For me this work has been another revelation that engaged my scientific, logical mind and also touched my compassionate heart. This book has the potential to change our mindsets and thus save the world. When I look at the life of Jesus of Nazareth, I see the battle for equality laid bare even then. Now it is our turn.

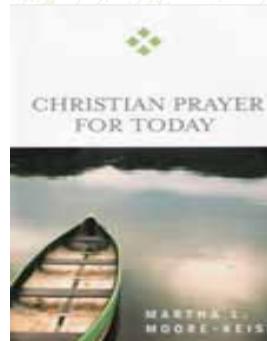
Christian Prayer for Today

Is it appropriate to pray that we will find parking spaces? This is a question the author raises. No definitive answer is advanced as the book is intended to promote thought and provoke discussion.

The author sets out to have a conversation about what it means to pray, about whether anything really happens in prayer, about why or whether God listens and what we ought, or ought not, to say in prayer. Questions for discussion are appended to each chapter.

Christian Prayer for Today is part of a series of resources for the study by non-experts of significant biblical texts, creeds and Christian practices. Prayer is described as participation in God.

The author wants us to understand that, in prayer, we enter into communion with God. If we are serious about attending to the movement of God's Spirit within us, a daily routine may be helpful although prayer need not be restricted



to specific times or places. We may pray wherever we find ourselves in the midst of life, but prayer is not just something we do. It is God who initiates the relationship and calls forth our prayer.

Christian prayer is prayer in the name of Jesus. This means praying in a way that is consistent with Jesus' character and recognising the living presence of Christ as we pray.

But this does not mean that Christians are justified in making exclusive claims for the validity of their prayers or for regarding the prayers of other religions or traditions as lacking spiritual validity.

As the author states: "Christians need not be afraid of learning wisdom from people who have developed patterns of contemplation and prayer apart from faith in Jesus Christ." Humility and willingness to learn from others are expressions of Christian grace and, if we are not gracious, our prayers

By Martha L. Moore-Keish,
2009, Westminster John Knox Press, 91 pages.
Reviewer: John Meredith

cannot really be in Jesus' name no matter how well framed they may be.

Comment is made on the place of lament when all we feel able to do is cry out to God in pain or anger, and on the important role of silence as we listen to God. Prayer does not always have to be expressed in words.

There is a helpful focus on the lack of a sense of God's presence which is not to be confused with lack of faith, as well as what it means to speak of God answering prayer. God's response may well emerge in the very act of praying as is suggested by Jesus' encouragement to "ask, seek and knock." Significantly, there is preference for attending to the whole range of biblical images for God, and not restricting our address of God only or mostly as "Father."

For those looking for a devotional resource this is not the book but it does raise issues that might be helpfully explored in discussion, which after all, is the author's intention.

Review copy supplied by Epworth Books.

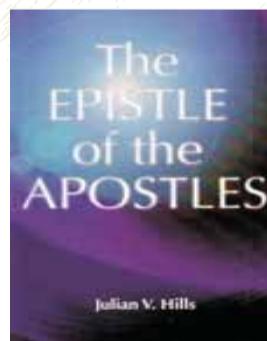
The Epistle of the Apostles

Over the last century, a gradual, quiet revolution has been taking place in biblical studies. A small group of biblical scholars have been exploring what might be called 'the other Bible'; that is, those other Christian writings which existed alongside the Bible.

Most Christians tend to take the contents of the Bible for granted but remain ignorant of these many other writings from the first three centuries which were not included in the Bible. One of these books is the *Epistula Apostolorum* or *The Epistle of the Apostles*.

The significance of *The Epistle of the Apostles* was first discovered by Kirsopp Lake (1872-1946) a professor of early Christian literature and ecclesiastical history at Harvard University. Lake declared the Epistle an immensely valuable work which enriched our knowledge and understanding of second century Christianity.

The well-known German biblical scholar Adolf



Deissmann claimed *The Epistle* was historically the most valuable find providing us with important new insights into early Christianity. The editor of this book, Julian Hills, declares that the book "breathes the spirit of the emerging 'Catholic' (or Great) church vs 'Gnostic' church debate".

One of the major problems of Biblical studies has been the fact that Christianity during the first three centuries was extremely diverse and factional. As Hill points out, *The Epistle* reflects a particular response to one early form of Christianity known as Gnosticism.

One interesting aspect of *The Epistle*, is that, although first composed in Greek, it has been translated into many other languages. This included Coptic, during the fourth and fifth centuries; Latin about the same time, and a dozen Ethiopic manuscripts as late as the 16th to the early 20th century.

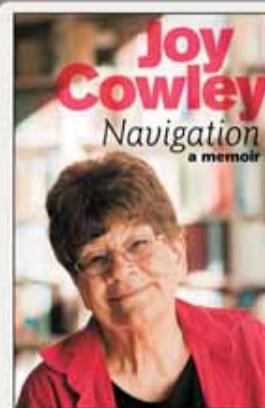
Coptic and Ethiopic texts usually don't belong to the

By Julian Hills
2009, Polebridge Press, 132 pages
Reviewer: Jim Stuart

discipline of church history so it is highly unlikely that texts such as *The Epistle* would receive the attention and study that have been given to other more familiar texts. Thus Hill's observation that the writing has experienced "relative neglect".

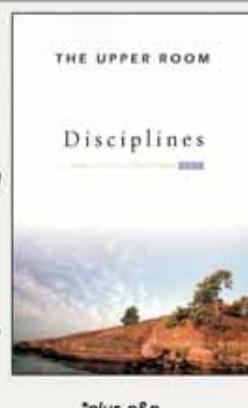
The translation of *The Epistle* attempts to reflect the spirit of the various languages in which it circulated. However, in particular, this translation tries to give the particular flavour of the Coptic and Ethiopic texts while preserving "the echoes of the Greek original".

This is not a book for everyone. Rather it is a specialist text providing valuable information and insights into some aspects of Christianity in the first three centuries. Readers who are interested in Christian Gnosticism and a refutation of it will find this book makes interesting reading. The book is an important contribution especially at a time when it is vital that we understand and appreciate the extraordinary depth and diversity of global Christianity.



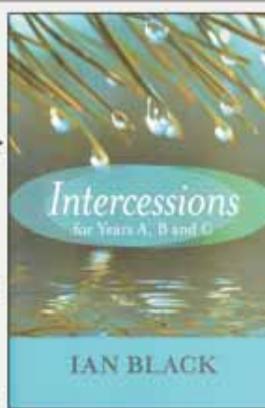
Navigation: A Memoir

A relaxed, beautifully written memoir by Joy Cowley, popular NZ author of *Aotearoa Psalms* and many other books. She writes passionately about the joys of writing, the landscape, the seasons and the natural world around her. \$45.00*



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Kids loving church and vice versa

For children to love church, it is necessary to develop churches that love children.

This is the notion behind a new Methodist Church initiative to make congregations more welcoming, inclusive, and safe for children.

Called 'Kids Loving Church', the initiative aims to provide congregations and Sunday schools throughout the Connexion the ideas and resources they need to enhance children's ministry.

The Mission Resourcing office in Auckland has set up a task group to develop Kids Loving Church. Mission Resourcing director Rev Nigel Hanscamp says the initiative is moving forward along a number of paths.

The task group will prompt churches to adopt practices that maintain the safety of children, help worship leaders better engage

with children, and provide congregations sources of information on various aspects of children's ministry.

"We are adopting the Childsafe programme, which helps churches develop safe practises for keeping children and young people safe in a variety of settings.

A number of New Zealand churches have taken up Childsafe, which is available through the Scripture Union's SafeHere Trust. We are setting up a pilot programme to run in the Manukau region. It will run across all the cultures in the Tauiwi synods – Samoan, Tongan, Fijian and Palangi."

Lay preachers and other worship leaders are being encouraged to examine how they include children and young people during worship. We are also exploring how we can work with Trinity College's Lead Worship! programme and the Ecumenical Institute of Distance Theological Studies (EIDTS),

which have papers on children's ministry.

The task group has appointed Esme Cole to the role of children's ministry initiator. Esme says her task is not so much to develop resources for children's ministry as it is to inform people how to find the information that is already available and to help develop a community of those working in children's ministry.

Esme says churches are already using a number of programmes for children's ministry – the Uniting Church of Australia's Seasons of the Spirit, Dynamite Bay, Scripture Union's Way2go, and Kingsway are some of the programmes Palangi churches are using.

Sinoti Samoa has translated some programmes with New Zealand context into Samoan, and Vahefonua Tonga is using material from Tonga augmented by material from former superintendent Rev Taufa Filiai.

"The task group will be in place for 18 months. Our main goal is to establish a network of support so people can share information.

For example, following the earthquake, churches in Canterbury asked for material to help children cope with trauma. Instead of everyone searching the Internet, we sent out one email with links to a number of resources."

Esme says it is important to remember that children become young adults, and young adults will be the Church's future lay and ordained leaders.

At Conference 2011, the Children's Ministries Implementation Taskgroup will bring a proposal to the church indicating possible future directions for national children's ministries.

Kidz Korna!

Welcome to Kidz Korna. We usually hear of disastrous earthquakes in countries overseas. I'm sure that all of you have been thinking of the people in Christchurch, especially the children, who have been affected by the earthquake in our own country.

It is hard to imagine how frightening it must have been. How are you all getting on with the posters for Conference? By the time you read this Conference will only be four weeks away and if you are sending your work to me I will need it by October 29th at the latest.

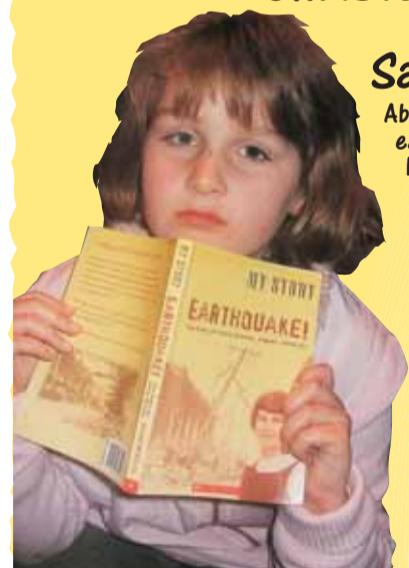
I am really looking forward to finding out what you all love about Church.



Kids from St Marks Church in Christchurch: (from left) Merrill, Ivan, Brent, Rose, Nicole and Rebecca.

EARTHQUAKE!!

Christchurch kids talk about the earthquake...



Sasha attends New Brighton Union Church.

'Earthquake' book. It gave her the idea to write her own earthquake diary. She says she will read it to her one-year-old brother, Tristan, when he's older.

Sasha (aged 9)

About a week before the earthquake Sasha got a book called 'Earthquake'. It is a diary of girl who lived in Napier during the 1931 earthquake. Little did Sasha realise that within a week, she would be experiencing her very own earthquake.

Sasha was shaken up by the earthquake, and her house was badly damaged though it is still safe to live in.

After the quake she kept reading her

Nicole (aged 12)

My sister Rebecca and I both dived under our beds. It was pretty scary with all the aftershocks. We stayed under our beds until it got light.

Our TV fell on the floor but it was okay. Our water cylinder was broken. We used a lot of our survival kit.

We had a battery radio and phone, and we boiled our water. Watching the news and knowing the possibility of a big aftershock has been the hardest thing for me.

Getting back to school was good. Our teacher has a large sink hole in his back yard, and a crack right through his house.

Liam (aged 11)

I was in bed asleep. When I woke up, I realised we were having an earthquake. It felt like the whole house was shaking. I knew it was a big one, and it was scary.

I thought the house was going to fall down. I wanted to get outside, but mum told me to get under the dining room table. Under the table there were more aftershocks. I felt really tired and just wanted to sleep. We began texting people, and used the cellphones as a torch.

It's been good not having to go to school but not sleeping in my own bed has been the hardest.

Merrill (aged 10)

When the earthquake arrived I woke up. I panicked and ran to mum and dad's bedroom. We all ran outside. After it stopped we went back inside and hid under the table in the dark.

We were scared. I thought all of Christchurch might be destroyed. None of us have been through an earthquake like this before.

The chimney on our house was damaged, and a few things inside like a vase. The hardest thing has been feeling like our family is small. We miss all our family in the Philippines.

Rose (aged 7)

I felt scared, and I didn't know what was happening. We got under the table, and after a little bit I began to get my confidence back. But I hated it in the dark with all the aftershocks.

The hardest part was when we had the big aftershock and I lost my confidence. It also feels hard that some of the buildings I see when I go to school won't be there now.

I haven't wanted to go into my bedroom because it is upstairs, and that's where I got the big fright. That day one of my older sisters got married. It felt quite weird being a flower girl on the same day as a 7.1 earthquake.

WHAT TO DO IN AN EARTHQUAKE

IF YOU ARE INSIDE:

- **DROP** to the ground. Take **COVER** by getting under a sturdy table or other piece of furniture. **HOLD ON** until the shaking stops. If there isn't a table nearby, cover your head with your arms and crouch in an inside corner of the building.
- Stay away from windows, outside doors, and anything that could fall, such as lights or furniture.
- Stay in bed if you are there when the earthquake strikes (unless you are under something big that could fall).
- Stay inside until the shaking stops and it is safe to go outside. People get hurt when they try to leave or move to a different place in the building.

IF OUTSIDE:

- Stay there. • Move away from buildings, streetlights, and power lines.

PUZZLE --- ADD IT UP

- The answer to each question is a number. Get them all right and the numbers will add up to 98.
- 1) How many tribes of Israel were there?
 - 2) How many plagues did God send to Egypt?
 - 3) How many brothers (including half brothers) did Joseph have?
 - 4) How many disciples did Jesus call to follow him?
 - 5) How many days did Jesus spend in the wilderness?
 - 6) How many letters written by Paul are in the New Testament?
- Solution to last month's puzzle: CORINTHIANS

Four congregations + three denominations = one community



Eltham-Kaponga Cooperating Parish's two congregations - St Marks and St Johns - have joined the Stratford Local Ecumenical Project.

By Cory Miller

Rural communities are on the decline and as a result many churches are questioning their future.

One small church in Central Taranaki has decided to join a Local Ecumenical Project (LEP) as a way to ensure it will continue to serve its community.

LEPs take shape when congregations cross denominational boundaries to unite small churches. These churches pool their resources together to create a stronger community.

In 2008, two churches in the town of Stratford – St Stevens Methodist and Holy Trinity Anglican – joined together to form an LEP. Recently the Methodist-Presbyterian Cooperating Parish, which has congregations in the towns of Eltham and Kaponga, decided to join the Stratford LEP.

Superintendent of the Central North Island Methodist Synod, Rev Tony Bell, says the combined grouping will make a bigger and more fitting church.

Tony says the ageing and shrinking congregation asked themselves what they

were leaving for the future. How could they ensure a lively church in the years to come? He says they saw only two options.

“One – you either just accept the way things are, and allow the church to slowly die out. Or two – you find a solution to create an active and rejuvenated church that looks to the future.”

Tony says the church was not ready to give up so it looked for a solution.

Its solution lies in sharing the resources and strengths of the different parishes that come together as the new Stratford LEP. However the exact shape of this new project is yet to be decided.

Rev Peter Barleyman, the Anglican rural regional deacon for Taranaki, says “What the congregations can do together is yet unknown. The exact shape and form is still to be decided but we do know there is a lot of potential.”

As part of an LEP, Tony says the congregations will keep their own properties and accounts but will come together for support and ministry.

“No buildings will close but resources will be used more economically,” he says.

“Instead of multiple units dealing with multiple issues we will be able to pool our resources to make single units dealing with single issues.”

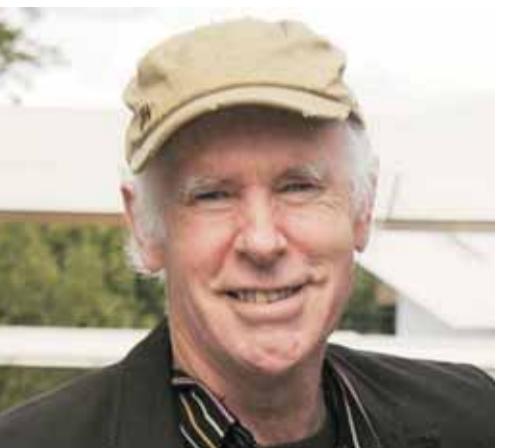
Tony says each congregation will have the freedom to make their own decisions, though ultimately there may be some joining of congregations.

“The new union makes sense, as many of the parishes join together throughout the month for various occasions, yet come Sunday are separated by a great divide.”

Both Tony and Peter say this divide is unnecessary because the differences between the four different congregations and three different denominations are not an issue.

“We can maintain different styles of worship, and rather than focus on differences,” we should focus on how we can support each other in the Kingdom of God.”

Tony says, “We agree to have our differences, to honor and to value them as a gift. What we have in common is more than what separates us.”



Mike Riddell

Mike Riddell discusses Insatiable Moon

From Page 13

Steve: What kept you going?

Mike: To be honest it was a combination of stubbornness and belief in the story. There are a lot of people around the world trying to make films but not many get there because of the constant hurdles. Our core creative team always believed that it would be well received by audiences if we could just get it before them. I personally felt something of a responsibility to tell Arthur's story.

Steve: You once talked about the importance of fiction for your own spiritual journey. What does the *Insatiable Moon* offer to the contemporary Kiwi quest?

Mike: Immersion in stories is the essence of spiritual growth. Stories have the power to engage and lead us forward at very deep levels. The *Insatiable Moon* is a story about people on the margins, and the humanity and insight that exist in their midst.

Broken people often have an innate spirituality that is fresh and raw in comparison to institutional religion. I think the film is an affirmation of the very real spirit that exists everywhere in human life and it champions the divine in unlikely places.

Natural disasters timely reminder to consider how archives stored

PRESBYTERIAN ARCHIVES

By Yvonne Wilkie, director of archives.

About 99 percent of the allocated storage areas in our church buildings for parish archives and records are totally inappropriate.

A church tower where the bells no longer call members to worship and dust and damp filter through wire mesh ‘windows’, or the church basement where water rises periodically to ankle depth, or the unexplained concrete vault in the floor of the old church all fall far short of the standards required to protect our fragile historical documents.

Then there is the attic in the old hall where the temperature fluctuates to the degree that lacquer covered books and loose papers are now so gummed together that to separate them will do damage. And there is the so called security and fire proof safe so crammed with records that the door no longer closes, or the old fridge that leaves spotty traces of mould – evidence that moisture hangs around even years after non-refrigerated use.

These examples are just a few locations that have housed some of our Churches’ archives. I haven’t even mentioned the corners of church halls and cupboards that house vermin, silverfish, borer and other paper-eating undesirables.

And don’t let’s forget the many personal storage facilities provided by generous office-bearers, local businesses, and banks. As time passes and members move on, the



Marriage registers damaged by damp after 40 years storage in a concrete vault.

location of these records is forgotten and parish collections are lost and destroyed. The parish returns of 1931 suggest even further obscure storage locations: “in the vestry stationery press”, “laid to rest in the Manse study”, “old records found in wash-house”, and “in pantry of Managers’ vestry”!

A glance at ‘Lost Archives’ on the Presbyterian Archives web site is a sobering

reminder of how susceptible our records are when poorly housed, to fire, floods, decay, neglect, theft or ‘acts of God’.

The story is repeated time and again, “All records seem to have been lost”, “Incomplete, nothing prior to 1907”, “Destroyed by fire in 1884”, “Early records cannot be found”, “Old records presumed to be burnt”, “No trace of old records”. Although prefaces in a number of recent parish church histories lament this loss, Churches continue to overlook all the necessary precautions required if a parish wishes to retain its records on church premises.

The fire and water damaged records from a recent arson attack on a church hall forced me to question once again the wisdom of parish collections remaining in the parish. In this case the accumulation of 75 years of papers stored in cupboards in an unprotected hall has resulted in not only the hall being gutted and demolished and its contents destroyed but the records seriously damaged. More than likely the hall will be rebuilt but not so the records.

It is impossible to restore burnt and water damaged records to their former ‘glory’. Once charred and soot damaged the paper weakened by fire and water will continue to deteriorate in coming years. With no insurance cover for salvage and conservation of the paper records, the cost on the Archives Research Centre to

undertake this work is high and will probably result in a minimum amount of preservation only being carried out.

Nowhere in New Zealand is exempt from the effects of weather and geological disturbance, as the recent devastating Canterbury earthquake reminds us. Many of our buildings do not meet current building standards so every precaution is necessary to protect our ‘taonga’. The Presbyterian Archives Research Centre, however, has been relocated into a space which now meets international building and archival standards. Although not quite a state-of-the-art archives building, it is secure, vermin free, earthquake proof, with a sprinkler system throughout, and climate control environment for storing records.

We encourage parishes who continue to retain their archives and records to give serious consideration to transferring them. The collections are fully processed and catalogued to enable access to both the parish and researcher. The burden to provide a secure and appropriate storage facility becomes the responsibility of the Archives and is removed from the individual parish.

For further information please make contact with the director of archives, Yvonne Wilkie, ph 03 4730776.

FAKAMANATU TA'U 1 FAKAEVAHA PRINCESS ASHIKA



Kau fakaafe fakalangilangi 'o e malanga fakamanatu 'o e fakevaha he Princess Ashika.
(Mei to'ohema 'otu mu'a) Pilinisi Tungi, 'Eiki Sione Ika Mafana, 'Eiki 'Etani Tuku'aho, Sekelitali Lahi SUTT, Faifekau Tevita Havea, Faifekau Setaita K Veikune, Haikomisiona Tonga 'i NZ, Siaosi 'Aho, Faifekau Tevita Kilifi Heimuli.

Ne hoko foki 'i he 'aho 5 'Aokosi 2010 'a e kakato 'o e ta'u 1 'o e fakaevaha ne hoko 'i he ngoto ko ia 'a e vaka fefolau'aki fakalotofonua Princess Ashika 'i he potu tahi Ha'apai 'i hotau ki'i fonua, Tonga monu'ia. Ko ia ai na'e lava fakahoko hono malanga fakamanatu 'i he falelotu Lofotale'ia, Mangere, hili pe 'a e Fakataha Vahefonua Tonga O Aotearoa 'i he mahina Aokosi kuo toki maliu atu. Pea fakafeta'i ne 'omi 'e he 'Otua 'a e Sekelitali Lahi 'o e Siasi Uesiliana 'o Tonga, Faifekau Toketa Tevita Havea, kene fakahoko 'a e malanga 'o e fakamanatu.

Na'e kole 'i he houa malanga 'o e Vahefonua Tonga O Aotearoa 'a e ongo hiva 'a Onehunga mo Mangere ke na toe hiva 'i he malanga fakamanatu 'o e si'i kau pekia kuo nau fonualoto 'i he

moana vavale 'i he Princess Ashika 'i he 'aho 5 'Aokosi 2009. Na'e molumalu pea faka'e'i 'eiki 'a e houa malanga ni koe me'a tonu ai 'a Pilinisi Tungi, 'Eiki Sione Ika Mafana pea mo 'Eiki 'Etani Tuku'aho. Na'e lava mai foki moe Hai Komisiona Tonga ki Nu'u Sila ni, Siaosi Taimani 'Aho mo hono hoa pea mo e 'Eiki Minisita Nu'u Sila ni ki he Pasifiki, Georgina Te Heuheu. Na'e tokolahia 'a e kau faifekau mei he ngaahi siasi kekekehe pe ne nau lava mai pea ne fakatefua 'i he feohi'anga ni mo e kau fakafofonga mei he ngaahi 'otu motu Pasifiki hono kotoa. Ko Faifekau Toketa Tevita Koloa'ia Havea na'a ne fai 'a e fakakoloa malanga mo e poupou fakalaumalie ki he ngaahi famili na'e huki tonu 'iate kinautolu 'a e fakaevaha ni, pea pehe ki he taha kotoa pe na'e 'i he

feohi'anga fakamanatu ni. Fakamalo atu kia Salote Heleta Lilo, Heamasi Halasili mo Semisi Faka'osikimuli 'i hono fokotu 'utu'u ha ngaahi polokalama fisifisimu'a pehe, ke tau fakatahataha ai 'o fakamahino hotau Tonga 'i he ivi 'o e fe'ofa'aki.

Kuo Tolona e 'ao na'a tau fe'ao mai mo ia,

Ko e manafa 'o e puputu'u kuo malona.

'Io, ko e toafa 'o e lo'imata'ia kuo hange ha pupunga matavai,

Pea ko e loto ta'e toli'a kuo fakalotofale'ia.

Hili 'a e kelesi 'o e feohi'anga ni, pea fai 'a e fe'iloaki 'a ee mo ee, pea matuku leva he kuo ha'u 'a e momoko 'o e po'uli. Mou me'a aa. **Faiongoongo Tanaki Tatafu.**



Koe si'i kau hiva mateaki 'o e malanga fakamanatu. Kuo holo 'ae ta'u ia, ka koe le'o 'oku hange ko e ha'ape 'a Kingi Tevita

Ako Faka-Faifekau Pule Kolisi Wesley

Kuo tali ke kau 'a e Puleako 'o e Kolisi Wesley, Ian Faulkner, he ako faka-faifekau 'i he Kolisi Trinity, ko e 'apiako Faka-Faifekau 'a e Siasi Metotisi Nu'u Sila, hili 'a e lava lelei 'a e ngaue 'a e Komiti Sivisivi 'o e Kau Kanititeiti (Candidates Assessment Team). Kuo tali ai 'a e toko 6, kau ai 'a e Puleako Kolisi Wesley kenau hoko atu 'o kamata 'a 'enau polokalama ako faka-faifekau 'i he Kolisi Trinity 'i he ta'u fakaako 2011, pea ko e toko 1 'oku toloki toki kamata 'i he ta'u fakaako 2012 kae tokanga ke fakakakato 'a e ngaahi fiema'u kehe he ta'u 2011. Kuo tali mo e toko 1 ke hoko atu ke ako Tikoni pea tau fakafeta'i ai pe ki he Tu'i 'o e Langi 'oku kau 'a e toko 3 Tonga he toko 6 tenau kau ki he ako faka-faifekau.

Ko e anga 'o ako 'e fakahoko 'e he toko 8 'e pehe ni:	
(i) Ian Faulkner	- ako faifekau lea faka-papalangi
(ii) Suresh Chandra	- ako faifekau lea faka-papalangi
(iii) Neti Petaia	- ako faifekau lea faka-Ha'amo
(iv) Iremia Amatuana'i	- ako faifekau lea faka-Ha'amo (kae toloki ta'u 1)
(v) Kuli Fisi'iahi	- ako faifekau lea faka-papalangi
(vi) Manoa Havea	- ako faifekau lea faka-papalangi
(vii) Sione Lea'aetoa	- ako faifekau lea faka-Tonga
(viii) Megan Whitehouse	- ako tikoni lea faka-papalangi

'Oku fai atu 'a e talamonu ki he kau ako ko eni hono kotoa pea fakatauange ke fai tokonia 'e Sihova 'a e ngaahi ako kotoa koe'uhu ho ho'omou tali 'io ki he'ene ui.

Fakalotofale'ia

Folofola: Saame 34:18. He ko e loto lavea 'oku ofi ki ai 'a e 'Eiki. Pea 'oku ne fakamo'ui 'a kinautolu 'oku laumalie mafesi.

Fakatapu kia Hou'eiki, kae 'uma'a 'a ha'a tauhi fonua. Fakatapu ki he Faifekau Sea 'o e Vahefonua Tonga O Aotearoa, mo e kau Faifekau kotoa pe, pea pehe ki he kaunga fononga pilikimi kotoa 'i he 'Eiki, kae 'ataa mu'a mo kita ke fakahoko atu 'a e Fakalotofale'ia 'o e Mahina ko 'Okotopa 2010.

Na'e fatu 'e Tevita 'a e Saame 34 ko 'ene manatu ki he taimi na'e tu'u ai 'i he 'ao 'o 'Akisi ko e tu'i Filisitia 'o Kat (1 Samiuela 21: 10-15). Ko e fakakaukai ia 'a Tevita lolotonga 'ene hola takai 'i hono kumi ia 'e Saula ke fakapoongi, he kapau 'e hola holo pe 'i he ngaahi feitu'u lotofonua 'o 'Isileli, tokaange pe ha 'aho kuo ma'u ia 'e Saula 'o fakapoongi. Ko ia na'a ne fakakaukau ai ke hola ki ha feitu'u 'e 'ikai lava 'a Saula 'o 'alu ki ai. Ko e 'uhinga ia 'ene fakakaukau ke hola ki Kat pe ko Filisitia, he 'oku lolotonga manavahee 'a Saula ia ki Filitia. 'Oku fakamatala 'a 1 Samiuela 21: 10-15 ki he anga 'o Tevita 'i he taimi na'e a'u atu ki Kat kia 'Akisi. Na'e puke 'e he kau sotia 'a 'Akisi 'a Tevita 'o 'ave ki he tu'i, 'o nau fakamatala kia 'Akisi: "Ikai ko Tevita 'ena ko e kaimelie 'o e fonua? 'Ikai ko Tevita 'ena na'e fai ki

Kaveinga 'o e Mahina: Ke tau mo'ui 'apasia kia Sihova.

ai 'a e hiva 'a e kau fefine "A e taa 'e Saula 'a e afee, kae mano 'a Tevita". Na'e liliu 'e Tevita hono anga 'o 'ene to'onga ke hangee ha taha 'oku uesia hono 'atamai. 'One kokohi holo he matapaa 'o e matanikolo mo kua hono ngtu. Pea fekau 'e 'Akisi ke 'ave mama'o meiate ia: "Ko ho'omou 'omi 'a e vale na, ke toe kanoni 'aki 'a e kau vale 'o Filisitia." Kaiseke, ne hao ai 'a Tevita pea ne fa'u ai 'a e Saame 34 ke fakavikiviki 'i 'a e kau mai 'a e 'Otua ki he'ene mo'ui. Mou kau mo au ke viki 'a Sihova, pea tau hakeaki 'i hono Huafa fakataha (v 3). Si'i tu'utamaki koe na'e tautapa, pea ongo'i 'e Sihova. Pea ne fakahaofi mei hono faingata'a kotoa. (v 6)

Ko e Saame ko 'eni 'oku fakamahino ai 'e Tevita 'oku hoifua 'a Sihova ke tokoni 'i ha taha 'oku 'apasia kiate ia. 'Oku mou mea'i 'a e lea 'APASIA 'i he'etau lea fakafonua, ko e fotunga ia 'oku tau fotu 'aki ki he Hau, pea mo hou'eiki - 'oku tau fotu mo e fotunga 'apasia 'o fakaha'i mei he'etau to'onga. Ka ko e 'apasia 'oku 'uhinga ki ai 'a Tevita 'i he Saame 34 'oku kehe ia mei he 'apasia kuo u lave ki ai 'oku tau ngaue'aki kia hou'eiki. 'Oku ne fakamahino he Saame ni 'oku 'ikai fiema'u 'a e TO'ONGA 'APASIA IA KIA SIHOVA. Ketau fakaha'i hotau fotunga 'i tu'a 'oku tau 'apasia, kae lolotonga ia 'oku hanga kehe hotau loto, he tetau fakangalingali atu

kitautolu 'i tu'a, ka 'oku 'afio mai 'a Sihova ia ki loto. Mou 'apasia kia Sihova 'a e kau lotu 'a'ana: He 'oku 'ikai ha masiva 'a e kau 'apasia kiate ia. (v 9) Ko e founa 'o e 'apasia 'oku fai mei loto 'oku lave ki ai e veesi 11-14: **Ha'uaa, faanau, 'o fanongo mai: Kau ako kiate kimoutolu 'a e 'apasia kia Sihova. Lama ho 'elelo mei he kovi. Mo ho loungutu mei he lea loi. Afe mei he kovi, 'o fai lelei; Kumi ki he melino, 'o tul i ki ai.**" Pea ne toki pehe he veesi 'o e 'aho ni: "He ko e loto lavea 'oku ofi ki ai 'a e 'Eiki, pea 'oku ne fakamo'ui akinautolu 'oku laumalie mafesi." Ko kinautolu 'oku nau fai mei loto 'enau 'apasia kia Sihova, 'oku ofi mai 'a e 'Eiki 'o fakamo'ui kinautolu. Ko e lea ia 'a Tevita mei he'ene a'usia 'i he 'ao 'o 'Akisi ko e tu'i Kat. Na'e hao 'o 'ikai fakapoongi ia 'e Saula koe'uhu ko e fai mei loto 'ene 'apasia kia Sihova. Pea na'e hao meia 'Akisi koe'uhu pe ko 'ene 'apasia ki he 'Otua na'e fai mei he uho 'o hono loto. Ko e uki ia ma'atautolu 'i he Mahina fo'ou ni. Ko 'etau fotu ki he 'Otua 'oku fai 'aki 'a e loto 'oku lavea mo e laumalie kuo mafesi mo tukulolo kakato kia Sihova. 'I he huafa 'o e Tamai mo e 'Alo mo e Laumalie Ma'oni'oni. 'EMENI.

Faifekau Vaikoloa Kilikiti.