

TOUCHSTONE

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

Lloyd Geering on how we got here, where we're going...

By Paul Titus

Lloyd Geering says he wrote his latest book, *'From the Big Bang to God'* because he wanted to come to terms with current research on the origins of the universe and human beings and with the situation we find ourselves in the contemporary 'globalised' world.

"We have a clearer picture than ever about the role human thought plays in interpreting and understanding the physical world. Traditional religion played an important part in this and it enabled the rise of the secular world.

"The universe has a tendency to create more and more complex entities. Human beings are the most complex entity we know. Now we have reached a point through globalisation that we could create a self-conscious super-society through which the human race could as yet reach unimaginable heights."

Lloyd says it is important to start with the notion that the universe does not have a purpose or meaning other than what we give it.

"The mystery of the universe is that it exists. It has no reason to exist; it just exists.

"The universe does show an extraordinary capacity to produce more complex entities through evolution. But again, evolution does not have a particular direction. It operates through its own natural laws and through chance.

"If we can say there is a purpose, it is survival. Survival is the chief goal motivating all forms of life."

In his book Lloyd takes a big-picture look at the emergence of the physical universe, life on earth, and the human species. He examines the rise of language and the ability it gave humans for abstract thought.

Religion as we know it, he says, came about during an 'axial period' in human history around 500 BC. In several places from Greece to China religious thought changed radically. The replacement of the many gods by the One (monotheism) took place chiefly in the Middle East.

Monotheism spread because it was a simpler explanation of the physical world than polytheism, and it in turn gave rise to empirical science and the secular world. Thus Christianity had a pivotal role in this development.

"The Church is mistakenly afraid of the word 'secular'," Lloyd says, "but it simply means 'of this world'. Christianity was instrumental in the rise of secular thought. This is partly because in Christian

thought God left the heavens to dwell amongst us, initially in Jesus but ultimately in us. This means that life and destiny are now largely in our hands for better or for worse."

During the Enlightenment, scientific thought grew, often pushed forward by

**Jim Stuart reviews
*From the Big Bang
to God*, See Page 16**

men who wanted to understand the natural world so they could confirm the truth of Christianity. This secular, humanist thought then pervaded the globe as the West colonised the rest of the world.

Now, however, Lloyd says, church groups are too often marginalised from society because they have not kept pace with the new ideas they incubated.

"Churches are stuck in the past. Many of them have not embraced the idea of evolution, or the size of the universe and the length of time it has existed.

"Today more real theology takes place outside the Church, if by theology we mean honest thinking about real things such as ethics and ecological issues.

"Religion has to be secular to be relevant. In the past we had a different view of what the universe was. There was a focus on a world beyond this world, a world 'up there'.

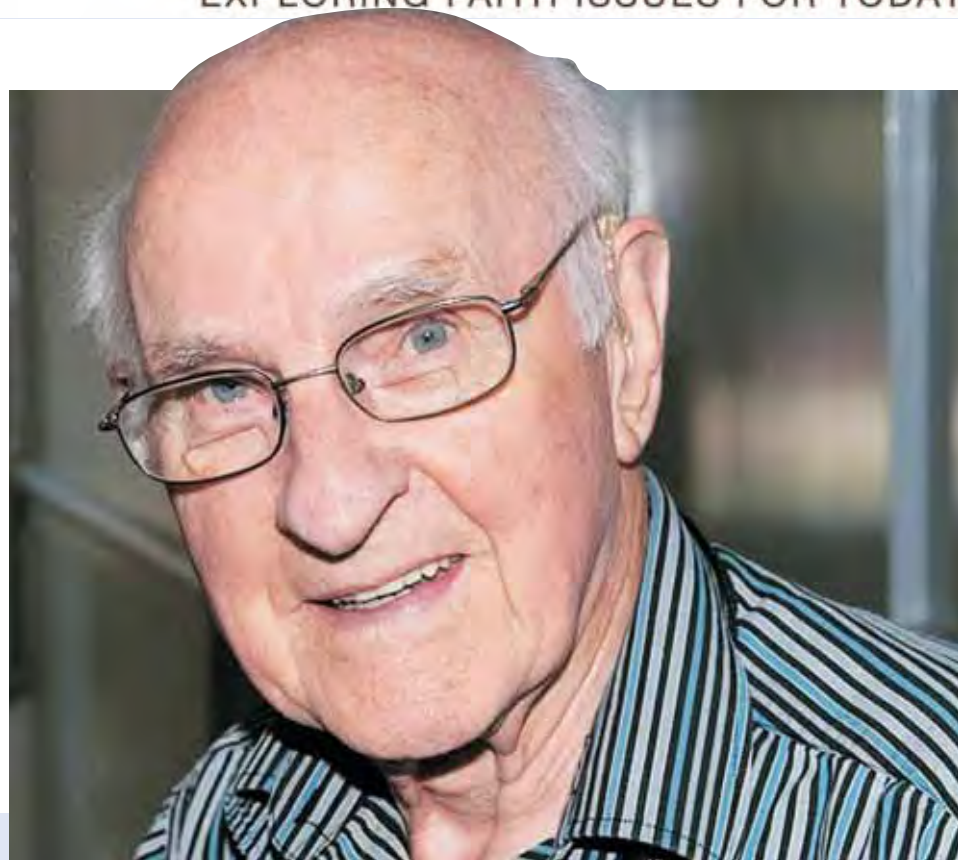
"Reality is actually down here. Some church people do not want to see that this is the only world there is and that Jesus lived life in the here and now."

Lloyd says Christianity still has very important values to offer the world - love, justice, honesty, truth.

"This is an urgent thing because, while our technology has brought us to greater levels of understanding, it also means we have the potential to wage terrible war on one another and the planet.

"Through globalisation we are creating a super-society that has the possibility to act for the common good in much the same way as the billions of cells do in the body. But there is also a real chance that we humans will upset the ecological balance of the world, like a cancer destroying the rest of the body.

"We are at a gateway where we can create a kind of heaven on earth. We must learn to work together on a global scale as one harmonious people. Our reference point can't be heaven beyond earth but the earth that brought us forth and the evolutionary forces that brought forth the earth."



INSIDE

GOSPEL BICENTENARY - PAGE 2



JUST ACTION - PAGE 17



KIDZ BEING KIDZ - PAGE 18



PUBLIC ISSUES NETWORK

What about the Vulnerable Children's Bill

On the face of it, the Vulnerable Children's Bill 2013 is laudable and in line with the Methodist Church's 'Let the Children Live' initiative to reduce child abuse and vulnerability.

In 2012 there were 19,796 child protection notifications in New Zealand. Ten children in this country are killed every year by a member of their family. In 2009 there were 13,315 hospital admissions for children under five that could have been avoided. Of these hospital admissions, 1,286 were the result of assault, neglect or maltreatment.

The introduction to the bill explains that its measures are to protect and improve the wellbeing of vulnerable children.

This is to be achieved through shared responsibility and co-ordinated action across government departments and social services. The bill will impose screening tests on all adults working with children and may prevent those who have previously abused children from having contact with children.

This bill shows leadership and commitment to create accountability in organisations to reduce harm to children. But does it show leadership in preventing harm and removing causes of child abuse?

Prevention is complex. It would require anti-poverty measures, investments in education, health and housing and would, therefore, involve all the Ministries which will be accountable through the Vulnerable Children's legislation.

Numerous studies show that poverty is linked to child abuse. The NZ Children's Commission says income does affect education, health, criminal behaviour, and mental health.

Preventing child abuse requires the wellbeing of families and communities with care for children to be embedded in support systems. The wellbeing of children is linked to strong social neighbourhoods with support for parents as well as children.

Submissions on the Vulnerable Children's bill are due on 30th October.

The bill introduces screening of the children workforce. This means all staff working with children in schools, hospitals, government agencies and government-funded organisations will have mandatory security screening every three years.

People with serious convictions will be permanently restricted from working closely with children, and prevention orders will be placed on adults who pose a serious risk to children.

For some, this represents a restriction on civil liberties, for others, they are welcome interventions. But where will surveillance focus and where does the emphasis of the legislation lie? Will it provide support or focus on punishment and removing children?

There is some concern about possible Human Rights breaches of these measures. Parents who have had a child removed because of abuse or neglect will have to prove they do not pose a risk to 'subsequent children'. This marks a reversal of the current onus of proof.

Critical questions include whether the programme is being adequately resourced. Is money coming from other areas of investment in children? Is it matched with adequate investment to reduce risks to children?

This proposed legislation is part of the government's proposed 10 year Children's Action Plan to reduce child vulnerability. It coincides with the 10 year Let the Children Live, so it is an important opportunity for Methodists to respond to the bill.

More importantly it is an opportunity to review and renew our role in strengthening the fabric of our communities to contribute to the more preventative end of creating the best neighbourhoods for children.



The interpretive centre at Oihi is now under construction.

New Zealand churches prepare for Gospel bicentenary

By Andrew Gamman

Rev Samuel Marsden's Christmas service at Oihi Bay in the Bay of Islands on Christmas Day 1814 was the first recorded occasion that the Gospel was preached in Aotearoa New Zealand. Given the significance of that occasion, plans are well underway to celebrate its bicentenary next year.

Samuel had sailed from Australia on his ship the Active at the invitation of his Maori friend Ruatara. He preached on the beach at Oihi Bay, taking as his text Luke 2:10, "Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy."

Following the service, several hundred Maori gathered around Marsden and broke into a spontaneous haka as a sign of appreciation.

In this first Christian service we have the roots of our bicultural partnership and the laying of the Christian foundations in Aotearoa New Zealand. Oihi Bay became the location for the first European settlement in New Zealand under the protection of the Rangihoua Pa.

Later, in 1907, a large Celtic cross was erected, which still stands on the site. From this location can be seen the terraces where those first Europeans took up their residence. The settlement consisted of the missionary homes, a school and an orchard.

To prepare for the bicentenary, work has already begun on an interpretive centre where arriving visitors can orient themselves. A larger 'gathering place' will also be constructed which will include a small chapel. The interpretive centre was designed by architect Pip Cheshire.

Oihi Bay is 36 km from Kerikeri. The road takes you to the beginning of a 1.1 km walk down to the cross and the beach. A pilgrimage path, with bi-lingual way-stations, is being created along this walk. If you are

visiting the Bay of Islands, be sure to include a visit to the site in your itinerary.

In 2005 the Marsden Cross Trust Board purchased the 20.4 hectare site that goes from the road down to the bay. The Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa pledged to raise \$30,000 toward the cost and this has been accomplished with gifts from individuals and grants from The Prince Albert College Trust, Te Taha Maori and the Wesley Historical Society.

Some may wish to consider making a further contribution to help complete the payment of this land purchase. (Gifts to The Marsden Cross Trust Board, PO Box 37 944, Parnell, Auckland.)

Two special commemoration services are planned at Oihi Bay in 2014: A Christmas Day Church Service and a Civic Service a few days prior.

While most of us will not get to the Bay of Islands for these celebrations we can all plan for our churches to be involved in the commemorations in one way or another.

Liturgical material is being prepared for churches to help with this. The official website gospel2014.org will provide you with background information, photos and design plans.

A related group, The Hope Project, is looking at the possibilities that the bicentenary presents for outreach. A number of projects are currently being explored to involve the wider community. These include museum exhibitions, commemorative postage stamps, television advertising and documentaries.

Rev Andrew Gamman is the Methodist representative on the 2014 Bicentenary Planning Group.



Prison Chaplaincy
Service of Aotearoa
New Zealand

Chaplain WAIKERIA PRISON

Waikeria Prison is south of Te Awamutu on state highway 2.

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- That you are an ordained Pastor or Priest (or have some other similar relevant qualification) and some proof of relevant theological training.
- That you are accredited and recommended by your denomination or church leader as a person qualified, experienced and suitable for a leadership role as a prison chaplain.
- That you have a proven record of pastoral care, (at least five years) and you have some experience and are willing to work in a spiritual/ cultural/ religious and secular context and to minister in a multi faith environment. And you have experience in working as part of a successful ecumenical multi - cultural ministry team.
- That you are competent at using Microsoft Office suite and the internet.
- That you have a good level of general health and are physically fit to work within a secure and rugged prison environment.

Please send your curriculum vitae by email attachment to:

maku@pcsanz.org

or post to:

Reverend Maku Potae
PCSANZ
PO box 9
Wellington 6140

Closing date is
Wednesday
18th October 2013.

Social justice theme for World Council of Churches' Assembly

A group of eight Kiwi Methodists will be on hand for the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) when it meets in Busan, South Korea, at the end of this month.

The Assembly is the highest governing body of the WCC, and it meets every seven years.

WCC general secretary Olav Fykse Tveit says the Assembly is a time of fellowship, celebration, prayer and worship. It is also a time for serious reflection on the needs of the world and the aims and achievements of ecumenical Christian engagement.

This year the theme of the Assembly is 'God of life, lead us to justice and peace'.

It is both a prayer and a statement of faith, calling Christians to engage with God's vision of justice and peace so that all of the world's people can live life in fullness.

The assembly has the mandate to review WCC programmes, issue public statements, determine WCC policies and elect officers and a Central Committee that oversees the Council's work until the next assembly.

Te Taha Maori Tumuaki Rev Diana Tana is the official representative of MCNZ, and Methodist Mission and Ecumenical secretary Rev Prince Devanandan will be the resource person for the NZ Methodist delegation.

Other members of Te Hahi Weteriana attending will be Bella Ngaha, Lana Lazarus, Rev Tony Franklin-Ross, and Soana Muimuiheata from Vahefonua Tonga. Methodist youth leader Filo Tu will be an organiser for the Stewards Programme during the assembly.

Prince says one of the key things the Assembly will do is consider the document from the WCC's Faith and Order Commission entitled 'The Church: Towards a Common Vision'.

This document seeks to answer what common ground Orthodox, Protestant, Anglican, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Roman Catholic churches can find to overcome their divisions and struggle together for justice and peace in the world.

The document lays out the progress churches of the WCC have made as they call one another to visible unity in one faith and Eucharistic fellowship, and also indicates what further work is still to be done.

Prince says the Assembly will also consider the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism's report entitled Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes. It explores what shape mission can take in the post-colonial world.

"There are different issues regarding mission in different continents. In the former colonial

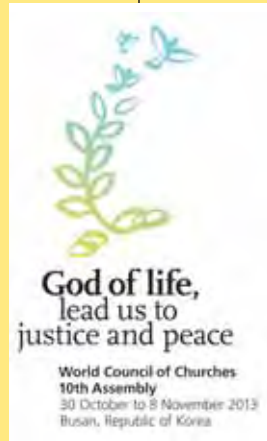
countries, Christianity no longer has a privileged position but we now see the rise of so-called neo-colonialism and the economic colonialism of the West.

"In Asia and Africa Christianity co-exists with Islam. In most of Asia Christians are small minorities. Those countries that once sent missionaries now need to be re-evangelised."

More than 5000 participants will take part in the Assembly. Along with the churches that belong to WCC, other churches and partner organizations are present at Assembly, making it the most diverse Christian gathering of its size in the world.

The Assembly logo is inspired by Isaiah 42.1-4 and the mission of God's chosen servant to bring justice to every land. It depicts life breaking forth from the ground growing upwards, bringing God's justice to all the earth on the wings of three birds.

Prince says the Assembly will not only pray and discuss social justice, it will decide on practical ways churches can work to achieve it.



Indigenous people to brainstorm at WCC Pre-Assembly

Prior to the World Council of Churches there will be three gatherings. One of these is an Indigenous Peoples' forum.

Te Taha Maori minita-a-iwi Dr Bella Ngaha is one of six people facilitating the event, along with others from India, Canada, Guatemala, the Philippines and the USA.

Bella says about 80 people from across the globe are registered to attend the forum. Participants will include Taha Maori Tumuaki Rev Diana Tana and administrative manager Lana Lazarus.

"The theme for the WCC Assembly is 'God of Life, lead us to justice and peace' and the theme for the Indigenous Peoples Pre-

Assembly links into that with the theme 'God of Life, renew the people of the land'.

"Central to this theme is that land, 'Papatuanuku', and indigenous peoples are inextricably linked. When Papatuanuku is defiled, so too are the people; when Papatuanuku is

cared for the people are empowered and justice and peace will prevail."

The pre-assembly event will reflect on the stories and experiences of indigenous peoples in their struggles against exploitative, extractive industries and unfair development policies that have their origins in the Doctrine of Discovery.

Bella says the ideological impact of this doctrine on modern global economic, political and social systems and cultures continues to marginalize indigenous peoples and other vulnerable communities of the world.

"Pre-assembly facilitators hope that the proposed programme will help the participants to discern and develop ways that the voices of indigenous peoples can be heard in the wider WCC Forum.

"Secondly we aim for the group to also develop strategies for gaining wider support in calling world governments to account for the ways in which trade practices, such as mining, result in the continuing destruction of land and ignore the place of indigenous peoples to care for their land."

Bella thanks the church for giving her the privilege to serve in this capacity, and she invites us all to 'watch this space'!

Conference to consider God in a changing world

Methodist young people will take the lead in the morning devotions at Methodist Conference 2013, appropriate for an event that will be held at Wesley College in Pukekohe.

For the theme of this year's Conference Methodist president Rev Rex Nathan and vice president Jan Tasker have to extend last year's theme 'God of the past, present and future' with a particular focus on 'God in a changing world'. Who better than youth to illustrate this topic? they ask.

This Conference is the first to fall in the middle of the new two-year presidential term, and without the need for an induction service for a new president and vice president, it creates an opportunity for different events.

The induction ceremony normally takes place after the powhiri that opens Conference on Saturday morning. In its place the full Conference will join in an opening service that will also honour those leaders of the Church who passed away during the year.

And, whereas the presidential address normally takes place during the induction service, this year Rex and Jan will present it during the Conference dinner on Saturday evening.

The Conference schedule this year also gives more focus on business sessions, which take place on Monday morning, the first day of business, rather than Sunday afternoon. Methodist general secretary Rev David Bush hopes the business sessions provide an opportunity for the Committees to present more detail about their work and get serious feedback during discussions.

Rex and Jan say that along with the theme of God in a changing world, Conference will also focus on the Let the Children Live initiative.

The guest speakers who present talks during the Monday and Tuesday evening sessions will address the needs of young people. They are Auckland University associate professor of Pacific Studies Dr

Damon Salesa and Crosspower Ministries youth worker TJ Faateete.

Rex says among the guests at Conference will be Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga president Rev Dr Ahio, Methodist Church in Fiji president Rev Tuikilakila Waqairatu, and South Seoul Methodist Conference bishop Rev Jun Taek Lim.

"We are especially pleased to welcome Bishop Lim because Jan and I visited the South Seoul Conference earlier this year and discussions are progressing very well that

could see Korean Methodists in New Zealand become part of Te Hahi Weteriana," he says.

Among the issues that are likely to be discussed at Conference are the degree to which church buildings are to be earthquake strengthened.

One issue that was raised at Conference 2012 was the possibility of appointing standalone lay superintendents in Methodist synods. The Taiuiwi section of the Church could not reach a consensus on the topic so it will not be discussed at this year's Conference.



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Constructive cartoons or none at all

To the editor,

Speaking as a liberal minded Christian, I take very strong exception in your paper publishing the cartoon in your September edition.

I do not see this as being helpful to the Christian cause, joking about a core part to our faith, such as communion. This paper has plummeted to new depths to make a mockery of a tradition that Christians have held since our very founder and Lord set in place as a holy time of

remembrance for what he was intending to do and did do.

If you can't come up with constructive cartoons, it would be better not to print any.

Wise editors do not advertise their lack of originality and integrity. This cartoon, or variations of it, have been around since I was a boy. In this case you have shown no integrity.

Wallace Potts, Tauranga

Communion cartoon off-key

To the editor,

I would like to bring your attention to the cartoon in the September edition of Touchstone. Though I like a joke, and am told I have a good sense of humour, I was disturbed to see this cartoon.

After I had read it, I was approached by a parish council member who also did not approve of a cartoon making light of something that was instituted and given to us by Jesus and which is

so precious and powerful.

Historically there have been misunderstandings about the sacrament of communion. Many readers may not understand this historical background. I strongly suggest that if you use a joke that could be misinterpreted by members of the church, you include more background information on the subject.

*Rev Simon Cornwall,
St James Church, Greerton*

Cartoon challenges our assumptions

To the editor,

I think Brendan Boughen's cartoon in the September issue of Touchstone was offensive but for a purpose - it challenges a core religious practice by forcing us to reflect on its meaning.

Confronting people in this way is a common tactic of atheists. They hope that it will shatter people's belief and so is pretty controversial.

Rather than dismiss it, I think an intelligent

Editor's response:

Thanks Simon and Wallace for your letters.

While I found the cartoon somewhat jarring, I did find it amusing. I think the intention of our cartoonist Brendan Boughen [Jim] was to poke fun at how people outside the Church might perceive us.

I think it works as a bit of social commentary given the plethora of zombie movies that seem to assail us in the cinema and on television these

person should embrace the challenge it presents, even if it makes a believer uncomfortable.

Churches will always include people who are there primarily for comfort (often for good reason) and dogma is a key part of the reassurance they need. Even so, challenging dogma keeps religion alive.

Adrian Lennard, Sydney

days and the lack of familiarity many people have with church.

Touchstone, of course, takes Holy Communion seriously. No doubt you will have noted the same issue carried two articles on the subject. One was on a lively discussion in the Methodist Liberal Network on contemporary understandings of Communion. The other was on the new orders of Communion service that the Methodist Church has prepared and is set to trial.

Same-sex marriage litmus test?

To the editor,

I am Tongan and a member of the Methodist Church of Aotearoa NZ so I naturally take an interest in what goes on within the Church's Tongan Synod, Vahefonua Tonga.

After viewing the names of the people nominated for president and vice president of the Methodist Church to be selected at this year's Conference, I have some questions.

I understand that at the Vahefonua's April meeting, the Onehunga Parish put forward Rev Sylvia 'Akau'olo Tongotongo for president and this was accepted. However, the Vahefonua is no longer listed among those who have

nominated her.

For what reason was the support of the Vahefonua withdrawn? And did the Onehunga Parish have any input into this decision?

I believe Rev Sylvia was approached about her personal views on same-sex marriage after the passage of the marriage equality legislation in April. I am concerned that whatever answer they received may have led the Vahefonua to withdraw their support for her nomination.

I have grave concern about the lack of transparency in this process.

Susana Mangisi, North Shore

Nuclear nightmare lingers

To the editor,

I wonder how many of us saw the article in the NZ Herald of July 19th, 2013 depicting a nuclear bomb exploding on Mururoa atoll.

It was horrifying. Apart from the usual mushroom cloud of deadly waste, the shock wave passing through the fragile islands was so great that both the land and sea were turned into a frenzy of foam and smashed coral reefs.

The French military fired off 46 tests above ground, then 147 underground tests. Many islands are now hopelessly shattered and no doubt riddled with radioactivity.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Norman Kirk, New Zealand sent two ships with some 300 men aboard into the area as a protest. Of these, some 180 are already dead. Chromosome damage is now showing up in their children and grandchildren.

We know little of the long term damage to marine life. Inevitably it will be extensive and will affect many forms of life, not only animals and fish but plant life as well.

What a reflection it is on us, as fellow human beings, that we should even contemplate using these dreadful weapons against other humans.

New Zealand's challenge to the French military did not go unnoticed by the rest of the world. Our refusal to allow nuclear submarines to enter our waters has also sent a message.

Some nuclear material has a half-life of 40,000 years. We should not wish that on anyone. Our beautiful planet earth has been gifted to us to use, enjoy and take care of, not to pollute or destroy.

Let us put in place leaders who value the earth, people we can admire and who we can follow with a clear conscience.

Ernest Smith, Helensville



FROM THE BACKYARD

Connected in the web of life

Gillian Watkin

Some of us assume spiritual practices are those parts of life separated from the usual daily routine. We talk, for example, of 'setting aside' or 'withdrawing'.

Nothing could be further from the truth, however. How we live our lives and go about our business is the ultimate in spiritual practice. .

We were born connected - connected to our mothers and fathers, family, community, home place and home land. Sadly, some of those connections come unstuck for people very early in life. We all are called to help them find their way home.

Disconnection and restoration are patterns of life. American writer Sharon Daloz Parkes who has written and specialized in teen faith development writes of times of shipwreck and gladness. Our spiritual awareness calls us to nurture our connections and to understand our networks, the web of life.

At our house we have a kowhai tree in a pot by our door, it is a scruffy plant currently adorned with a crown of gold flowers. Recently I came out to find it glistening with diamonds, a complete spider web that had caught the dew of the morning. The rays of the early morning sun were bringing it alight.

Various visitors during the day admired it, wondered at the brilliance of the little spider and of nature. The next day it was gone. It had obviously done its work and the spider was fed. Life can be so simple and so complex.

We live in a democratic community which we so often take for granted. We are called to pay

attention. Throughout history people have chosen leaders, or had leaders thrust upon them. Some came through birthright, others by conquest of war or invasion.

When Jesus chose his disciples they began to live in a communal, democratic way. Each was invited to participate and they could all say what they liked. Eventually their shared experience would lead to the development of Christianity. The rules of who could do what would come later as people jockeyed for power.

The spider is a simple being and makes a new web each morning but we are carriers of past, present and future and unaware on occasions of our power and potential. We like to hide behind a simple persona.

That's why I admire candidates in local body elections. Each day our paper is full of personal stories and dreams of people willing to participate in the community. For the rest of us it is simple, we join our voice to the community by choosing to vote.

Enrolling and becoming part of the electoral roll is a major step in belonging to a community. Yet it is taken for granted and sometime ignored. Of course, you will not know everybody on those lists that come in the post, any more than the spider knows if something will be caught in the net.

Reading and voting surely is a spiritual act. I spoke to someone recently who didn't like to vote because they might get it wrong. There is no wrong in voting. It is an act of connectedness rather than correctness.



Marriage, Christian bi-centenary among church leaders' talking points

President Rev Rex Nathan

In September President Rex attended the biannual meeting of the National Church Leaders Aotearoa New Zealand (NLCANZ), representing Methodist Church of NZ.

National leaders of New Zealand churches have been meeting together through the NCLANZ for more 20 years. In recent years the group has grown to encompass most churches in the country including Roman Catholic, Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian, Wesleyan Methodist, Evangelical and Pentecostal.

At present the 21 churches that participate are nationally recognised movements embracing theological adherence to a Trinitarian affirmation of God, and adhering to the Apostles' Creed.

National church leaders meet twice a year in Wellington in March and September. Those attending NLCANZ are the appointed or elected leaders of their denomination or

movement.

The purpose of the group is to be an expression of unity in Jesus Christ (John 17:23). NLCANZ is a forum where leaders can discuss theological and social issues and share information about issues and events in the churches.

It aims to close working relationships between churches and promote mutual support among church leaders. It seeks to identify key projects and causes whereby the Churches might serve the people of New Zealand.

Churches with social service agencies do some liaison with the government through the New Zealand Christian Council of Social Service (NZCCSS).

New Zealand does not have a state church, so NCLANZ has on occasions a role in providing a spectrum of National Church leaders for special civic events.

At the most recent meeting held in Wellington in September the NCLANZ agreed to commission a report from a task group on working with government and

opposition political parties.

It was agreed that the churches will work through the existing mechanisms and convey to NZCCSS head Trevor McGlinchey that we would like to see the prophetic and ambassadorial role enhanced.

At the meeting the church leaders accepted an application from Peter Mortlock of City Impact Church to join NCLANZ. City Impact Church has several congregations around New Zealand and claims 6500 members. Many spoke warmly of Peter's ministry.

NCLANZ also set up a working group to consult with church historians on the 2014 bicentenary year of Christianity in New Zealand.

Marsden Cross Trust Board member Bishop Richard Randerson spoke about the work taking place at Oihi Bay by Trust Board and the work of the 2014 Planning Committee.

Services are planned for 22nd and 25th December 2014.

Richard discussed the need to raise

\$300,000 for the purchase of the land at Oihi Bay, and invited all those leaders present to consider ways their denomination may be able to help raise the final \$100,000.

Other speakers at the NCLANZ meeting were Dr Carlton Johnstone who discussed the National Youth Pastors Forum and Glyn Carpenter presented a report on New Zealand Christian Network. Glyn's report touched on marriage and same-sex marriage, a strategy for building a healthy marriage culture, and evangelism in the public square.

The church leaders also received an update on taxation of clergy housing. They agreed to get new legislation worded to include church supplied housing and are waiting for a response from the minister, Todd McLay. If the response is not positive representatives of the NCLANZ will meet again with the minister.

Rex says it was a very good first meeting in the newly formed format, and an excellent sharing of information.

'You should also wash one another's feet'

By Rev Roger Hey

The recent discussion on communion services in the Methodist Church Liberal Network got me thinking about that other enactment of Jesus in the Upper Room: the washing of the disciples' feet.

To my knowledge, unlike sharing bread and wine, this act that Jesus requested of his followers has largely been ignored apart from a few denominations and the domesticated ceremony of the Roman Pope before Easter. My home church has had ceremonies on Maundy Thursday.

At the foot-washing Jesus is quoted as saying: "So if I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also are to wash one another's feet," (John 13:14).

Christians interpret this story as a call to ministry of servanthood but there may have been other reasons in the mind of Jesus in that Upper Room.

It can be read also, for example, as a call to more honest relationships with one another. Revealing our feet to one another leaves little room for makeup, powder or pretence. Here we reveal truth about ourselves.

Is there more truth to be found in our feet than in our eyes, mouths and faces? Does gazing at each other's feet, let alone touching and washing, reveal more than our spoken words?

Nothing disguises our feet. They reveal our humanity, our aging and maybe our infirmities. If we can't stand anyone else looking at our feet, whether healthy or misshapen, young or old - let alone someone touching our feet - this is a faith issue. For Jesus calls us to see, to touch, to wash and comfort.

Jesus challenges our assumptions that we don't share

at this level, and invites us to more truthful relationships with one another, where our fears can be eased by washing in compassion.

Jesus was a genius in understanding how to be human. Beyond cultural expectations of how to be with each other he calls his people to set aside any barriers and reveal how we truly are and to meet.

Today there will be social scientists who would be impressed at this emphasis of Jesus, hundreds of years ahead of his time.

Can you imagine Christians washing each other's feet, without eye contact shared between the washer and the washed? I cannot imagine that. At some point eyes will meet in mutual understanding, in sharing in our common humanity, in gentle communion: bearers of God to each other.

How true the words "they who do not love their brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen." (1 John 4:20).

The Communion orders of the church are to be rewritten to meet present needs of the church...but maybe what we seek through the communion service could be more recognisable in a foot-washing ceremony?

I'm not suggesting that every month we have a foot-washing at church instead of a communion service. But imagine the richness of a communion service after sharing in a foot-washing.

If the church over the centuries had taken Jesus seriously with his request that we wash one another's feet, and not only break bread and drink wine, what kind of church would we have today?

Justice for poor children a long time coming

By Susan St John, Child Poverty Action Group

At the Readers and Writers Festival in Auckland Max Rashbrooke discussed his book 'Inequality: A New Zealand Crisis'. Hopefully his book begins a serious look at why inequality is so extreme today and what can be done about it.

Max stressed how many middle income working families rely on the Working for Families tax credits to make ends meet. In 2013, even with Working for Families, two out of every five children that live in poverty come from 'working' families. But not all low income families receive these tax credits, and it is hard to imagine how some survive when receiving only some of them.

There is an important principle at stake here. Do we as New Zealanders believe that all children matter and that tax-funded social security that is supposed to alleviate child poverty should be available to benefit all poor children? Or do we believe in an exclusionary approach that says if you are sick or are taking care of a young family, your children should be punished for your lack of paid work?

Have we as a nation lost our sense of compassion and empathy for those in complex and difficult family situations?

The Working for Families package has been widely criticised for the speed at which it was passed into law, and then extended, in 2005. There was a lack of transparency around its development: no public consultation, no Green Paper, no White Paper, and no Select Committee process.

It took no account of the 230,000 children who would miss out, despite New Zealand's human

rights commitments to protect all children.

While it is true that all primary caregivers of children in low income households are entitled to the weekly Family Tax Credit payment (\$92 for the first child and \$65 for each additional child with higher rates for older children), when Working for Families came in, much of the increased assistance for families supported by benefits was offset by cuts to their other assistance.

Moreover another significant payment for children made to caregivers was denied families on a benefit. Misleadingly named the 'In Work Tax Credit' (IWTC), it is worth \$60 a week for one to three child families and an extra \$15 per child for the fourth and subsequent children.

Exclusion from the IWTC affects Maori and Pasifika children disproportionately and helps to perpetuate the high levels of child poverty for the worst-off children that have remained even after Working for Families was fully implemented in 2007.

As low income families lose work through redundancies, their children no longer benefit from this very significant payment even when the family does not receive a benefit.

Worse, the caregiver in these families can get bills from the Inland Revenue Department for any overpayment. Sometimes this occurs when families try to support themselves outside of the benefit system, not realising that they are being paid the IWTC that requires them to meet the 30 hours for a couple per week or 20 hours for a sole parent of paid work.

A child's needs do not change just because of a change in the work status of their parents. The extra

\$60+ per week could make a huge difference to their well-being. Since 2006, when the IWTC was introduced, around \$3 billion dollars has been denied to the poorest families.

No wonder we are seeing a huge increase in families seeking assistance from foodbanks and other signs of distress.

Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) has been arguing in the courts since 2008 that the IWTC discriminates against children on the basis of their parents' work status, which is prohibited under the Human Rights Act.

In May 2013, the Court of Appeal upheld that the IWTC is discriminatory and causes material harm to those families denied it. However, disappointingly, they then said this serious harm to 230,000 children could be justified by the gain from the possible incentivising of a tiny number of sole parents to shift off benefits.

Regardless of future legal action CPAG believes one of the first steps needed to address child poverty is to return to the principle that tax-funded assistance for children is given to all low income children on the same basis.

Specifically we ask that the IWTC be joined to the First Child Family Tax credit rate as the most cost-effective way to deliver significant extra assistance. It would then go only to those who most need it. It would cost about \$450-500 million per annum to take this first vital step to a more equal society.

Susan St John is economics spokesperson for Child Poverty Action Group (www.cpag.org.nz). This article originally appeared in the August 2013 edition of Foreign Control Watchdog (www.converge.org.nz/watchdog).

Foster parents are down-to-earth angels

Wesley Community Action (WCA) is looking for people who can make a difference to the lives of vulnerable children and young people.

In partnership with the Child Youth and Family agency WCA runs a foster care programme that supports children who are in desperate need of a safe and caring home.

WCA director David Hanna says many of the children who need foster parents have lived in as many as 30 different homes, have experienced things children shouldn't have, and have significant gaps in their education and little or no involvement in sports teams or clubs.

"The outcomes for this group of young people are not good. They are often on a path to prison, mental health issues or unemployment. Despite the widespread concern about vulnerable children, many parts of our society are reluctant to support them.

"The good news is that there are special people in our communities, I call them 'angels', who open their homes and lives to these young people. These people and their friends make a profound

difference.

"We need help finding and supporting more of these angels. The more people we have scouting for these people, then the more chances we have at making a lasting difference for New Zealand's most vulnerable children."

WCA has a range of resources to help churches locate the 'angels' in their communities. It could be as simple as putting up a poster in the local supermarket.

David says those who do join WCA's foster parenting programme join an amazing team of social workers, youth mentors, and others who share a genuine love and respect for young people.

"Our work is truly strengths-based. We believe in working with young people, their whanau, and each other to bring out the best in all of us. We focus on the strengths and abilities of each young person."

WCA foster parents have access to professional backup around the clock and they receive regular supervision, team meetings, and training. The work is paid (full time or casual) and the costs of providing care are reimbursed.

Foster parents come from all walks of life. They share a desire

and unwavering commitment to provide the young people with the support they need. All are team players, can connect with young people, and it helps that they have a great sense of humour.

Those who are interested in serving as a foster parent must have a current full driver's licence, be free of the responsibilities of caring for dependent children, can commit to providing care for a young person for 12 months, and have a supportive partner or family. They must achieve full police and CYF clearance and be committed to caregiver training.

The young people on the programme are 12 to 17 years old. They share the same interests as any young person, except the disruptions and gaps in their upbringing mean they can act out more when stressed.

David says these young people really want to be normal kids. "Our role is to support and guide them to make healthy choices. We want them to have a chance, which is what any kid deserves."

For more information ring David Hanna on 04 805 0879 or 021 40 3377 or Sarah Packman on 04 805 0880.

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HONEST TO GOD By Ian Harris

Laughing at religion

It is one thing to respect people who hold sincere religious convictions, quite another to insist on shielding religion from the hurly-burly of life swirling around it.

Churches, mosques and temples confident of their faith should welcome the buffeting of challenging ideas, and not recoil from well-directed humour.

A good humorist, of course, will always observe the boundaries of taste and decency. But the test is whether a joke is good or bad, not whether it is religious or not. British satirist Rory Bremner puts a metaphysical slant on it: "I think if there is a God it is very important he has a sense of humour - otherwise you are in for a very miserable afterlife."

Setting aside the question of whether there is 'a God' (to which the best answer is 'no') or whether there is simply 'God' (to which I would say 'yes'), and ignoring the equally fraught question of an afterlife, to ban humour and satire from religion would be to devalue it as a vehicle for enhancing what it means to be human.

Mixing humour with religion has always shocked the pious, who then project their view on to the God they create or affirm. Religious preciousness should not be confused with religious sensitivity, however. And in fact, religion has never been entirely devoid of humour.

Early in the biblical story there is a guffaw from Abraham, who at the age of 100 is startled to be told that his 90-year-old wife is going to have a son. Abraham, we are told, "fell upon his face and laughed." His wife Sarah overheard the promise, and she, too, got the giggles. So when the child was born they called him Isaac, which means laughter.

In the Psalms God is depicted laughing at rulers who oppose him, and at the wicked and the heathen; but that is the laughter of derision.

It is unfortunate that in the imaginations of the devout, Jesus has had all the humour squeezed out of him. But the New Testament includes flashes of crisp observation and humour which would not have been out of place in a Monty Python skit.

For example, there is his warning not to be judgmental about other people's shortcomings. Jesus pictures a self-righteous man

with a wooden plank sticking out of one eye, pompously deploring the failings of his brother who has a speck of dust in his eye. Get rid of the plank, says Jesus, and then you will be able to see clearly to remove the speck in your brother's eye.

Jesus was also down on religious leaders who finely dissected the law of Moses and imposed their finicky findings on others, losing sight of the point behind it all which is "justice and mercy and faith". They are like people straining a gnat out of something they are drinking, he says, yet gulping down a camel. Imagine what the Monty Python crew could have done with that.

As if that wasn't enough, he went on to liken these esteemed exponents of the religious law to "whitewashed tombs, which look fine on the outside but are full of bones and decaying corpses on the inside". It's no wonder that Jesus was not the darling of the religious establishment.

There were echoes of that satirical vein in the Middle Ages when, once a year, cathedrals celebrated the 'Feast of Fools'. A mock king or bishop was elected, the high and mighty were the butt of jest, and church ritual was parodied.

The way Jesus was prepared to give offence over the trappings of religion, while never mocking its essence, gives a good model for humorists to follow. It is as easy as it is cheap to be offensive for the sake of being offensive, which some mistake for cleverness.

Satirists should also think hard about the apparent assumption that Christianity is fair game, but they must be politically (and religiously) correct about Islam, Buddhism and other faiths.

But who wants a humourless Christianity anyway? Monty Python's Life of Brian may offend the over-sensitive but the idea of a man who is mistaken for the messiah - 'He's not the messiah,' says his mother, 'he's a very naughty boy' - should not put Christians in a tizz. It can be enjoyed for what it is, and if it leads to curiosity about the real thing, that is all to the good.

Incidentally, did you hear about the dyslexic, atheistic insomniac who lay awake all night wondering if there really is a dog?



Ian Harris



Keeping the Faith

The first Christian congregations were small, independent groups of believers, who met in private homes, shared fellowship meals, and contributed to communal worship with songs, psalms and prophetic insights. As individuals they were spiritually gifted, and partook of bread and wine in remembrance of Christ.

By the time the Pastoral Epistles were penned, however, a governance structure was beginning to develop that would take Christianity from being a sectarian lay movement within Judaism to a professionally-led institution that would eventually define itself against Judaism.

The Pastoral Epistles purport to be the letters from an elderly Paul to his protégées Timothy and Titus who functioned as bishops, providing oversight of churches in Asia Minor and Crete. While some commentators insist that Paul was the author of these epistles, written during a presumed Roman imprisonment sometime later to that recorded in the book of Acts,

other scholars doubt that these letters were actually penned by the apostle.

To write pseudonymously, utilising the name and reputation of an admired predecessor, seems somewhat strange, if not downright dishonest to us. In the ancient world, however, this was an acceptable acknowledgement of one's indebtedness to the sages who have gone before.

This is just one example of the difference between the Biblical world and our own, and the challenge we face as exegetes.

The author of the Pastoral Epistles is believed to have been a disciple of Paul's, and the 'Timothy' and 'Titus' to whom his letters are addressed are to be understood as 'ideal' church leaders who provide role models for the real recipients of the Pastoral Letters to emulate.

The Pastoral Letters are therefore not private correspondence that somehow got into the public domain, but letters intended to be read as though written personally to

each reader, as if he or she was the Timothy or Titus being addressed.

Thus in Lois and Eunice, Timothy's grandmother and mother, we have representatives of our own grandmothers and mothers - women of faith who introduced us to the faith. They were the first to tell us about Jesus, they taught us how to pray, they sent us off to Sunday school, and they were often the teachers there also. They helped us learn to face the ups and downs of life with courage and tenacity, drawing on the Bible's stories as sources of encouragement and exhortation.

The author of 2 Timothy reminds us of this heritage when he writes, "continue in what you have learned and firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus," (2 Tim. 3:14-15).

Rome was tolerant of religious diversity, providing the religions were

ancient and their followers prepared to worship the Roman emperor. Christianity fell short on both counts, and what's more Christians worshipped a Jew who'd been executed for sedition. Clearly a dangerous, subversive movement to be stamped out!

Even today, incredibly, there are places where becoming a Christian is not just a life-changing but also a life-risking decision. In these places the situation depicted in 2 Timothy is not only ancient history but present reality.

As we contemplate the lectionary's 'second readings' during October, let's remember, and pray for, our fellow believers who "suffer hardship, even to the point of being chained like a criminal" (2 Tim. 2:9).

Their hope, and our hope, is to be able to truthfully declare along with the author of the Pastoral Epistles, "I have kept the faith. From now on is reserved for me the crown of righteousness," (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

JOY KINGSBURY-AITKEN REFLECTS ON THE PASTORAL EPISTLES

Screening people out?

Recently I was talking on the phone to an old friend who I hadn't seen for a long time. Out of the blue he called me from his home in the United States just to find out how I was.

During our conversation he was interrupted by his cellphone at least three times. "Important business," he said and apologised. As you see he is a very busy man.

When we first moved into our neighbourhood in Christchurch, I enjoyed walking my dog Milo. In the morning I often encountered students on their way to the local high school. Initially they were friendly, interested and loved to greet Milo with a pat on his back. But over the years I've noticed a change.

Today students all carry mobile phones, heads down and intensely busy 'staying connected'. They no longer say hello, and Milo misses the attention. Maybe it's

because I am older but I notice these things. Sherry Turkle in her book *Alone Together* argues, "as technology ramps up, our emotional lives ramp down."

At a time when we are more connected than ever before, there is a growing 'disconnection' in our personal lives. I find it harder to go to church today, and I confess church attendance is becoming more and more of a chore for me.

Almost the entire service is projected on to a screen - hymns, prayers, illustrations, the benediction - but somehow it doesn't connect with me. I've had this experience in many different churches.

Maybe I should attribute this feeling of disconnection to my age. Or maybe I am just a digital hermit at heart! I much prefer talking to real people rather than a screen. I enjoy the exchange of ideas and animated conversation.

For reasons I do not understand I prefer

singing from a hymnbook and listening to a fine sermon where faith is a verb that happens between the congregation, the preacher, God and the world. I wonder when the cup of tea after church is livelier than what happens during worship.

My technological skills have never been great, so I have relied on the human capacity to make connections with people. I tell myself this is life now and everything is changing. It will keep on changing I know, but how will the church connect with people?

I listen for the message of grace that John Wesley spoke to the people of his time. He built a community with the people for people; broken, confused and ignored by a rapidly industrialising society.

The early Methodists were happy to meet face to face, sharing their troubles as well as their hopes and dreams, joining together to sing, pray and give thanks.

CONNECTIONS

By Jim Stuart

Their church was not about the technology but about love, acceptance and being connected face to face.

In my lifetime I have been profoundly moved by stories but I find technology is in danger of drowning us in narratives. There are too many issues, too many ideas, too many voices. This information overload seems to be stopping the action that comes after the story.

Instead of working to end violence against children for example, we read the latest report. Rather than building an economy where people and the environment count, we hear more business news or watch state assets being sold.

In its silence, the church is neither good news for the poor nor bad news. It is fast becoming no news. A church actively involved with those who are hurting is something I miss very much.

Preserve the unity of the body of Christ

Rev Alan Judge, UCANZ Standing Committee

From an early age I have been deeply affected by the New Testament's encouragement towards Christian unity. These teachings encourage us to find ways to stay unified as the body of Christ and where there are disagreements and disharmony to endeavour to move forward with respectfulness and Christian compassion.

Yet if you are part of a Christian congregation you know how challenging this can be at times and even more challenging in regional and national Christian bodies.

I am thinking particularly about Jesus' great prayer for Christian unity in John 17. "Father, may they all be one as You are in Me and I am in You; may they be in Us, for by this unity the world will believe that You sent Me" (John 17:21).

In Ephesians 2:14 we read that "Jesus is the embodiment of our peace, sent once and for all to take down the great barrier of



hatred and hostility that has divided us so that we can be one."

I know there are times when there are things we need to stand up for. We have to advocate for perspectives on Christian discipleship with energy and passion.

But even while we are doing this it is important that we hear well the words of scripture that remind us of the importance of preserving the unity of the body of Christ and showing honour and respect to those who express different perspectives.

I invite you to take a minute and remember these significant Christian qualities that shape our lives and encourage greater unity in our churches:

- Gratitude - letting people know we are grateful for their life and ministry;
- Honouring - being respectful and demonstrating deep care to others;
- Compassion - opening your heart to seeing others as Jesus sees them;
- Tolerance - accepting the differences that exist between us;
- Mercy - being kind and merciful in the way you relate to friend and foe;
- Love - let the powerful love of Jesus, shape your attitude towards others;
- Forgiveness - as Jesus has forgiven you, forgive one another.

I encourage you to keep growing in unity with all your Christian brothers and sisters - build up Christ's body by demonstrating the characteristics that lead us towards genuine unity in Christ.

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Overview: theological education today

The President of Conference in 2008 observed that the newly appointed Principal, Rev Dr David Bell, was charged with developing alternative models of lay and ordained education and training.

A redefined Trinity College, fit for contemporary purposes was to be brought to Conference 2009 for ratification after wide consultation. This was done.

David notes that, “This was a quite extraordinary responsibility. With the help of Trinity College Council and the existing staff, we embarked on a new venture.

“Law changes were enacted to embed the bicultural partnership into the heart of College life, and a Strategic Plan was adopted that placed a much greater emphasis on lay education and innovative approaches to multi-site delivery for the new initiatives.

“In parallel to this, the ‘scholar-presbyter’ and ‘ready parish’ programmes were initiated during 2010. These enabled ministers to have new opportunities to participate in training and education for ministry throughout New Zealand. Trinity College improved almost overnight.

“At Conference 2011, these wide-ranging changes were again discussed and completely endorsed and Trinity College achieved its NZQA status as a Category 1 tertiary education provider.

“The new lay programmes have given both impetus and structure. No model is without its critics, of course, but the facts can speak for themselves. These include:

- There has been a growth in student numbers and participation by ministers and laity that is beyond expectation.
- There is a high retention rate,

which is very significant.

- The introduction of multi-site delivery, block courses and e-learning has proven more than successful in terms of educational outcomes for the church and resulted in improved forms of NZQA/TEC reporting.
- There is a strong, resilient and cost-effective set of programmes for lay preachers, private students, and student-deacons and student-presbyters.
- The Ministry Discernment Programme (MDP) and the Probation Programme, delivered by advanced e-learning solutions, are enabling a much improved approach to long-term professional development for presbyters, deacons and those seeking to exercise significant lay ministry.

“2014 is the year of the integration of Alfresco for long-term content management for Trinity College. Although this will not greatly change what students or tutors see and do, it will give the College the capacity to widely distribute e-resourcing for practical theology around the Connexion.

“I am very enthusiastic about this development and regard it is a rare privilege to be able to guide the College to a stage where it is not a dream but a reality to have opened wide the doors of Methodist education and training for all. Trinity College Council are committed to ensuring the on-going development of these goals.

“Generic university qualifications in theology are indeed desirable for intending candidates for ministry but that is really only the beginning. The rich intellectual and cultural resources embedded into our faith community make the College a unique and exciting place to learn.”



SC101 Spirituality and the Christian Mystics

Tutors: David Bell and Andrea Williamson

Venue: Wellspring at Waiake, once per month.

Class size: maximum of 8
Cost: \$200

Selected readings from:
Topic 1: Mystical and spiritual language: the nature of visions, ecstasy, states of perception
Topic 2: Writings on mystical and spiritual experience from women’s perspectives
Topic 3: Celtic Spirituality: historical and contemporary perspectives
Topic 4: Creation Spirituality: historical and contemporary perspectives
Topic 5: The personal spiritual journey

Night School 2014

Tutors: David Bell et al.

Venue: Online once per month, with options to enrol as a parish based study group.

Class size; maximum of 18 online
Cost: by koha

Selected readings from theology, literature and science:
Topic 1: The role of music in the life of the soul
Topic 2: Faith and sex: Augustine’s Confessions
Topic 3: Abelard and Heloise. A case study in theology and the naturalness of lust
Topic 4: Calvin and predestination: how to get theology wrong in one easy lesson, and keep doing it
Topic 5: The human drama: what the Bible doesn’t teach
Topic 6: Beyond five senses: Rupert Sheldrake’s investigations into the paranormal.

Pass rates

Courses	2009 rate	2010 rate	2011 rate	2012 rate
Dip Papers	4	10	11	12
Enrolments	14	63	68	75
DipPTh pass rate	86%	100%	97%	87%
LiMS Papers	0	0	28	24
Enrolments	0	0	179	146
LiMS pass rate			76%	79%

Cost of theological education

Based on the total expenses divided by the number of full-time equivalents (FTE) students in the college, the cost of training for one student has changed dramatically since Trinity College began operating with the new model. This table shows the change from 2007/8 financial year to the 2012/13 financial year. The 2012/13 figure is based on converting the actual enrolments, 191, into FTE.

Year	FTE	Cost per student
2007/2008	11	\$75,688
2012/2013	42	\$24,224
Cost per student participating		
2012/2013	191 students	\$5,327

Growth in Participation

Courses	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
Dip PTh	N/A	17	13	16	14
LiMS	150	176	178	223	92
Night School	20	15	0	0	0
Breakdown of LiMS courses by enrolments					
On-Line courses		62	39	20	5
Face to face courses					
Samoan Language	40	31	28	0	0
Tongan Language	50	42	70	93	73
Fijian Language	20	8	10	6	0
English language	40	33	31	104	14

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NZ Methodist Women's Fellowship held its annual national council meeting in September.

MWF national gathering chance to talk, worship, dance

'Encourage effective communication' was the theme of the NZ Methodist Women's Fellowship national council meeting, which was held in Waikanae over the first weekend in September.

Organisers say it was a successful gathering that prompted women to open communication by meeting new people and making connections within the MWF.

About 32 women came from throughout New Zealand - from Dunedin to Auckland - to attend the council gathering and they represented 2,364 members from

all ethnic groups including the new MWF Fijian District.

Rev Cornelia Grant led the official opening with words of encouragement from Colossians 3:8-14 during which five women acted out the reading. Tributes were given to past executive members who died this year: Alison Beeston, Ruth Le Couteur, Noeline Hoddinott, Kath James, Flora Litchfield and Beryl Paine.

One highlight of the annual national gathering of the MWF leadership is the presentation of funds that branches have raised for the year's special project.

This year \$25,970 was given to Christian World Service to support the Ama Takiloa Centre in Tonga, \$9,000 went to the Disability, Spirituality and Faith Network of NZ, \$2,725 from the sale of used stamps went to support a new water supply at Goldie College in the Solomon Islands, and \$2,380 went to the Missionary Children's Orphanage in Bangalore, India.

MWF national president Marie Smith thanks all the congregations and fellowships who contributed to the special projects.

Looking ahead the national executive council also decided upon

its special projects for 2013-2014. The overseas project is The Women's Centre in Sri Lanka, which aims to improve the working and living conditions of women who have become refugees following the civil war.

The New Zealand project is the New Zealand Women's Refuge, which is working with the Brainwaves Trust to train 100 new advocates to improve wellbeing of children who have been living in violent family circumstances.

Marie says domestic violence can be physical, emotional, psychological and financial. It is not an easy topic to discuss in a cultural environment.

"Once we talk about it, we can change mind sets especially in the wider family. Concern was expressed about the number of violent TV programmes and the adverse effect they have on children.

"We encourage our members to write to the broadcasting and television commissions to express this concern."

Marie says many members of MWF are also involved in the National Council Women, which makes representations to

Government on social issues.

Fellowship members are involved in the work of the Methodist Church nationally and locally.

"We are members of the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women and look forward to the Area Seminar in Brisbane in July 2014."

The Church's Smethurst, Kurahuna and Friendship funds have assisted many women and girls with their college or tertiary education and lay leadership training.

The Saturday evening of the national council meeting was a time for Scottish country dancing. Marie says the delegates watched a demonstration then joined in. "It was a good experience, with lots of laughs and definitely something to do again."

Olive Tanielu from Sinoti Samoa's Women's Fellowship was elected MWF president for the 2014-2016 term.

On Sunday the MWF delegates joined Kapiti Uniting Parish Congregation in Raumati to share Communion service and meal.

Theology from Otago

Food for thought



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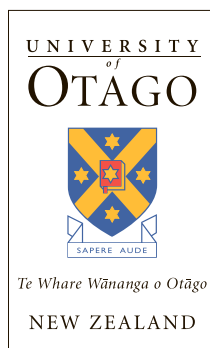
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Distance theological training well received

The Department of Theology and Religion at the University of Otago has been involved in distance theological education for more than 25 years.

Two years ago the Department moved to a blended learning model that involves audioconferences, face-to-face teaching and online learning. Recent data from student feedback shows that these changes have been well received.

Programme co-ordinator Dr Tim Cooper says the Department surveys its students every year on their experience of the distance programme.

"This year the results exceeded even our highest expectations. Those results show that 98 percent of the students are either satisfied or very satisfied with the programme. In particular, they appreciate the standard of teaching they receive, the quality of the course books, the interaction in the teaching days and audio

conferences, and the availability and support of lecturers.

"What came through in the comments was the importance of the contact students have with their lecturers," Tim Cooper says. "Studying by distance can be an isolating experience but our students value the different ways in which they can connect, and the ways we try to bring them together with our campus students."

Tim is pleased with the way this has underlined the effectiveness of the recent changes.

"Any change involves risk," he says "so it's very pleasing to see that we have only enhanced the learning experience of our students."

That has given the Department further confidence to continue with the new model and to try to enhance the learning experience of students even more.

Unveiling timely reminder of butane's danger

By Hilaire Campbell

A year ago Touchstone carried a story on Poihaere Eru, who died 'huffing' butane in a Christchurch suburban park. Last month, to coincide with Poihaere's unveiling, her mother Shelley Wharewhiti organised another march to alert people to the dangers of huffing.

By the middle of 2012, Poihaere was starting to get her life sorted. She'd been in trouble with the police and at school but was enjoying her Maori Studies courses at Christchurch Polytechnic. She loved dancing and music and was getting back into kapa haka. A few months later that was all cut short.

A year on from Eru's death, Shelley says she still feels like hiding away. Instead, she has gone all-out to force awareness of the dangers of solvent abuse.

Soon after Poihaere's death, she led a march around dairies and big retailers in Upper Riccarton, calling for restrictions on the sale of butane.

Last month, she organized a second, larger march to coincide with Poihaere's unveiling at the park where she died.

"This time the mood wasn't so much one of grief, as one of anger and frustration at the Government's lack of action," she says. "They keep focussing on K2 and other drugs, but they're not killers. With butane, you're risking your life every time you use it."

"It's also impossible to detect. It leaves no residue round the mouth, like spray paint, or colour on the hands. The only ones who know about it are the ones who are doing it."

Shelley has made a documentary film of the most recent march available to the coroner's court. It includes interviews with young people at risk. She believes that if they can tell their own stories, it will help others in the same situation.

While it's important to get the cooperation of dairy owners and big retailers who sell butane, Shelley says there is only so much they can do about the problem.

"The biggest problem is lack of communication. If you think your kids are at risk, don't feel ashamed. Talk to them. Talk to anyone. Get

the issues in the public face."

The inquest into Poihaere's death investigated the deaths of two other young people who died huffing butane. "Their parents didn't see it coming any more than I did," says Shelley. "But we'd like to work together to promote greater awareness."

Since 2000, 63 young people in New Zealand have died from inhaling butane-based substances. The majority were under 25 years old, and the youngest was only 12. Nearly half these young people were Maori.

NZ Drug Foundation executive director Ross Bell spoke at Poihaere's inquest. Ross says dealing with solvent abuse is complex compared to other drugs, partly because solvents are so cheap and readily available. Because people use them experimentally, it is hard to identify those at risk.

He agrees with Shelley that there's a low level of awareness of butane misuse right across society: among parents, teachers, police, and young people themselves. Even health professionals are unaware that the misuse of butane is a problem, and how randomly and suddenly it can kill.

If there is any good news, says Sergeant Bevan Seal of the Police's Community Services, it is that all the

relevant agencies are now mobilizing to address the problem.

Christchurch City Council's community support unit is working in conjunction with schools and mental health agencies to campaign for better awareness of the dangers of inhaling butane.

"Huffing's been around a long time," says Sergeant Seal, "but it never comes to our notice until there's a sad incident."

"Two years of concentrated

community policing in Upper Riccarton has paid dividends. We've been able to drive out bad influences and, while some dairy owners are resistant, many are taking a moral stand on selling butane."

In his opinion, butane needs an R18 restriction but he can't see that happening in the near future. "Politicians would rather rely on retailers to keep it out of sight."



Poihaere Eru's family organised a march to make people aware of the dangers of huffing butane to coincide with her unveiling.

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Regardless of the level at which you are studying, loving God with your whole heart, mind, soul and strength is no easy task.

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In April 2013, the Tertiary Education Commission recognised the calibre of research that takes place at Laidlaw and rated us the top small tertiary institution for research quality in New Zealand. The formation of a strong scholarly community that

nurtures and trains emerging scholars by having them work closely with established scholars is a key to the success of Laidlaw Graduate School's Masters programme.

When reflecting on the rationale for pursuing postgraduate study Laidlaw academic vice principal Dr Martin Sutherland said, "It is part of the Christian mission to take on the best thinking the world has to offer, to respond to it with the Gospel and to engage with it in a truly meaningful way. So we write, we publish, we teach, we explore and we seek to be a part of God's mission in this world in a more effective way."

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Myanmar flood victims face food shortages

Myanmar (Burma) like many parts of Asia has been hit hard by continuous monsoon rains and flash flooding this year.

By August 7th, some 73,000 people were living in displacement camps, thousands of hectares of farmland were destroyed and water sources contaminated. While many returned when the water receded, further flooding forced some back to rundown camps with little support.

Long term ethnic conflict in many of the affected areas has left the people very poor. Many families could only cultivate one dry season rice crop a year because they lacked necessary inputs like water.

Access to the affected area has been difficult. Christian World Service partner Church World Service Asia Pacific (CWS A/P) was able to distribute food supplies including rice, cooking oil and beans to 1,550 people in 13 villages in Kayin state.

Having completed a rapid assessment CWS A/P has now launched an expanded appeal to alleviate food shortages for 2,900 households in coming months in Kayin and Mon states.

Villagers must prepare land and plant new rice crops for harvest in October and November this year, and CWS A/P will supply labour, seeds and fertiliser.

Villagers will also be paid through a cash-for-work scheme to build community infrastructure like village pumps and roads. With no other income this will help families buy their own food in the short term.

"The opening of a new embassy office in Yangon this month by the New Zealand government signals a changing relationship in Myanmar. CWS is asking New Zealanders to show their concern for the people of Myanmar who have missed out on decades of development and now face a very uncertain future," says CWS national director Pauline McKay.

In 2008 CWS responded to people affected by Cyclone Nargis when relations were more difficult.



Rebuilding flood-damaged homes is a huge task.



Distributing food supplies in Kayin, Myanmar.

CWS P/A provided some of the only relief assistance in parts of the Irrawaddy delta and has continued its involvement in the country.

Donations to the Myanmar Appeal can be sent to CWS, PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8140, or at www.cws.org.nz/donate or by ringing 0800 74 73 72.



The village of Talafo'ou is evacuated in style.

Disaster training in Tonga

In September four villages in Tonga prepared for impending disaster. The scenario was simple, an earthquake followed by a tsunami rolling up the Piha passage and swamping Afa, Manuka and Makaunga and Talafo'ou in the eastern province.

In practice the alarm was raised by radio, cell phone and siren (though it failed in one village) at 9.01 a.m. The villagers had 23 minutes to get to the nearest highpoint.

The participants took their rehearsal very seriously. Many had bags packed with vital papers and valuables at the ready.

"People really ran," says Daisy Fonua of Christian World Service partner Ama Takiloa.

One grandmother arrived in a wheelbarrow and another was pushed seated like a queen on her walking frame. Young and old raced to the hills where they assembled at the evacuation centres.

Some took the precaution to arrive early to make sure they did not have to rush. Local disaster committee members checked people off on their lists and reported those who were unaccounted for or missing. The army and police went down to the village to find them.

At the evacuation centre the Red Cross assessment team took care of the 'injured' and the Tonga National Youth Congress undertook an assessments, reporting the situation to the National Emergency Management Office (NEMO). The four local schools and one health clinic also took part. Evacuees were provided with refreshments, though water was a little short in one village. The all clear was issued by noon.

In a 'hot debrief' the participants made suggestions for how to improve evacuation. Ringing church and school bells was a sensible backup in case sirens failed. People were warned to leave as soon as they feel significant shaking.

Evacuation routes need to be clearly marked and obstacles

removed for a quick getaway. A path between the village and school evacuation areas would make it easier way for parents and children to find each other out of harm's way.

"The locals were pleased with their efforts and want to do it again soon because they knew what mistakes were made. They are very aware of the potential for flooding which could leave half of Nuku'alofa underwater and seriously affect their villages," says CWS international programmes coordinator Trish Murray.

The simulation exercise was one of three being organised by a consortium of seven New Zealand non-governmental organisations including CWS. One has already been held in Vanuatu and another will be held in Fiji in October.

Funding has been provided through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade aid budget and is a response to the growing awareness of the dangers of disaster in the region.

NEMO, the army, police, fire brigade, meteorological office, Red Cross and Ministry of Health were all involved. Locally CWS worked with Ama Takiloa and the Tonga Community Development Trust to provide observers.

Disaster preparedness is a key part of Ama Takiloa's programme. They have repaired rainwater tanks and taught proper maintenance to ensure a good water supply. Their agricultural extension programme encourages food security including growing disaster resistant giant taro.

Trish says one of the highlights for her was seeing a young woman, who described herself as only a housewife with limited education, taking on significant tasks during the exercise.

"Women had key leadership roles and managed the relationship with the national offices very well. They gained confidence from their involvement and I know they will take the lessons home to vulnerable communities and to outer islands."

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Gang life traded for ringside coaching

By Cory Miller

Once 28-year-old Auckland boxing champion and coach Isaac Paparoa was known by another name - 'Speedy Two Guns'.

It was the title he carried proudly during his days with the Otara-based street gang Killer Beez - days that only came to a complete end just over a month ago.

Today Isaac is back to using his birth-name. He has officially severed ties with the gang and, as he terms it, has "gone legit".

It certainly wasn't always the case but this slim, softly spoken man is now finding out that life can be good and you don't need to resort to crime to achieve it.

Today Isaac works as a youth worker and a boxing coach with Crosspower Ministries, a community organisation working with at risk youth in the Auckland suburb of Otara.

Boxing is the one thing Isaac found that as an energetic kid he was able to commit to 110 per cent. And as New Zealand's 2004 Golden Glove Champion, he is certainly well equipped to teach others how to do it.

Fortunately Isaac is now making the decision to use these skills with his fists not to fight on the streets but to fight in the ring and to teach others how to do the same.

He says it is the way he can channel his energy into something productive and help direct the local kids, who are straying from the legit path.

Isaac was born and raised in Otara, the oldest of seven children. While he has nothing bad to say about his parents, he admits his upbringing was not always easy,

with many "tough, desperate times".

Isaac struggled both at school and at home, eventually dropping out of high school when he was only 14.

A life on the streets ensued: selling drugs and ultimately life as a prominent member of the Killer Beez.

Despite this rather rough start to life Isaac doesn't directly blame his past for getting him involved with the Otara gang. Rather, he says, it was just part and parcel of being an Otara-raised kid.

"I had dreams...we all had dreams. My dream was to get a faster bike, something powerful."

The answers to these dreams were found in the gang lifestyle - or so Isaac thought.

He grins sheepishly admitting there were fun times in the gang.

"It wasn't all bad," he says. "We had fun celebrating what we had done, what we had achieved during the week."

"We got to go travelling. They were some good fun times. The Killer Beez were my family, I knew them, I was going to school with a lot of these guys, I grew up with many of them."

Does he miss it? Isaac shies away from answering, stating matter-of-factly "At the time it was what it was...but it wasn't real."

He doesn't give away too much detail about what such a life entailed. "It was hard and fast," he says. "I was always looking over my shoulder 24/7. I've hurt people, I've hurt families."

"I regret it," Isaac says. "But I thought it was normal."

Coming to this realisation that gang life

came with a high price to pay was not something Isaac admits he came to completely on his own.

Rather it was a "bro", Johnson Brougham, who also coached at Crosspower Ministries, that helped Isaac realise that what he was good at - boxing - could also be useful off the streets.

By working with Crosspower, Isaac says he began to realise there was an alternative to gang life, that rather than taking from the community, he could give something back.

Now Isaac is paying the favour forward, working as a qualified youth worker; taking his skills with his fists to help kids channel their unchannelled energy away from the streets into the gym.

Isaac says he sees who he was in many of the kids that he coaches. "They are following the same path I did."

So he tries, through his example to teach them there are other options.

"I don't just teach them to be physical in the ring, I encourage them to go to school, to use their energy to be positive."

Isaac says this work has given him his purpose - using his skills to give back to the younger generation of Otara.

This sense of purpose has in turn given Isaac his identity back. Speedy Two Guns is gone.

"I lost my whole identity being a part of the Killer Beez, I wasn't a person...the gang life swallowed me. But I am free now, my family now sees Isaac again. They see me smiling."



Isaac Paparoa has left behind life with the Killer Bees gang to coach boxing and mentor young people.

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ON SCREEN

A film review by Steve Taylor

Blue Jasmine

It sounds eerily post global financial crisis: a rich New York socialite (Cate Blanchett as Jasmine) is bankrupted onto struggle street. She turns to her San Francisco-based sister Ginger (Sally Hawkins), in an attempt to rebuild her seeming shattered life.

But like all good stories, the plot will twist and turn. The result is director Woody Allen at his best, a master of a movie as character-drenched as it is plot-driven.

How does a person process the pain when their world begins to collapse? Woody Allen offers us various possibilities. For Jasmine's step son, it is to wipe

the slate clean in order to start again. For Jasmine's husband Hal (Alec Baldwin), it is to respond to shame by taking his own life. For Augie, Ginger's former husband, financially ruined by Hal's fraud, it is to nurse revenge. For Jasmine, it is to hide from reality on a lonely park bench, trapped by her romantic delusions.

'Blue Jasmine' is worth watching for the performance of Cate Blanchett alone. She is the plot pivot that binds together two stories, from two worlds. She is mesmerizing, her descent into mental breakdown captured by the merest twist of a hand gesture.

Woody Allen is an international treasure of the film industry, with a career spanning six decades, and 45 movies. He has won four Academy Awards, been nominated 23 times, and has given us such movies as 'Manhattan' (1979), 'Hannah and her Sisters' (1986) and 'Midnight in Paris' (2011).

Allen is known for his creative movement between reel life and real life, and his use of film and music from the past. 'Blue Jasmine' continues these motifs. The film hints at Tennessee Williams' classic movie 'A Streetcar Named Desire.' The movie references in title and in plot beginning and ending, the Lorenz Hart-Richard Rodgers song, 'Blue Moon.'

The song was a romantic number penned in 1934 for the film 'Manhattan Melodrama'. It offers, for those with a nose for religion, an interesting way to read 'Blue Jasmine.'

The original song was titled 'Prayer', and the lyrics included the following:

"Oh Lord, If you ain't busy up there,

"I ask for help with a prayer

"So please don't give me the air."

Over time, the original words penned by Rodgers were rewritten.

"Oh lord, What is the matter with me? "I'm just permitted to see "the bad in every man."

In Blue Jasmine it was rewritten yet again to become the romantic tune hummed by Jasmine on her lonely park bench, as she remembers the beginnings of her New York high life.

It becomes an intriguing way to read this movie. The words by which a society prays have been rewritten, yet the tune remains.

What is more important, words or tunes, in the human religious impulse? What are the words of faith the church might say if it were to find itself seated beside Jasmine, in her disillusioned post-financial crisis world, on that lonely park bench?



Rev Dr Steve Taylor is principal at the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology, Adelaide. He writes widely in areas of theology and popular culture, including regularly at www.emergentkiwi.org.nz.

St Francis and the animals

Saint Francis of Assisi (1182-1226) was the son of a wealthy cloth merchant. As a well-to-do young man he lived a high-spirited life. While fighting as a soldier he lost his taste for his worldly living and developed deep concern for nature and the poor. After becoming a priest he founded three holy orders committed to these issues. He organised the first Christmas manger scene and used live animals. Church animal blessing are traditionally held on his Feast Day, 4th October.

Bible Challenge

On Day 5 God called forth swarms of water
The first Bible 'animal story' features a
First named class of mammals
Solomon impressed visitors with imported
In spring the voice of the ___ is heard
Absalom died when he was riding a
Last animal named in the Bible
The Prodigal got a job feeding
Jonah was swallowed by a great

C _____
R _____
E _____
A _____
T _____
U _____
R _____
E _____
S _____

Gn 1:20
Gn 3:1
Gn 1:24
1Kg 10:22
SgSol 2:12
2Sm 18:9
Rev 19:14
Lk 15:15
Jna 1:17

The lover likened her beloved to a
Shepherd boy David killed lions and
This animal cannot change its spots
Rebekah left her parent's house on a
Name for *crocodile* or *sea monster*

G _____
R _____
E _____
A _____
T _____

SgSol 2:9
1Sm 17:36
Jer 13:23
Gn 24:61
Job 41:1

Jesus spoke of 2 ___ being sold for a penny
While in hiding Elijah was fed by
Saul went searching for his father's

A _____
N _____
D _____

Mt 10:29
1Kg 17:6
1Sm 9:3

Samson encountered a swarm of
Jonah was annoyed by a plant eating
Aaron turned dust into annoying
Meat found in the wilderness
Dead ___ spoil ointment and perfume

S _____
M _____
A _____
L _____
L _____

Jg 14:8
Jna 4:7
Ex 8:17
Ex 16:13
Ecc 10:1

Answers: creatures, serpent, cattle, peacocks, turtle doves, mule, horse, swine, fish, gazelle, bears, leopard, camel, Levithan, sparrows, ravens, donkeys, bees, worm, gnats, quail, flies.

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WCC and WEA call churches to speak against corruption

The World Council of Churches (WCC), in association with Micah Challenge International, allied with the World Evangelical Association (WEA), invites all churches to join a global call to action against corruption.

Studies have shown that every year over US\$1 trillion are lost from the global economy through bribes, dishonest deals and tax evasion. Corruption hurts poor people the most.

The initiative 'Exposed 2013' predicts illegal tax evasion will be responsible for 5.6 million children dying in developing countries between 2000 and 2015. That's 1,000 children every day.

Exposed 2013 has issued a global call to action from October 20th-14th. The group urges people around the world to raise their voices against corruption.

The campaign offers suggestions for positive and practical engagements of resisting corruption. It aims to hold 2000 vigils across the globe, while collecting 1 million signatures for the campaign and presenting a million more at the G20 meeting set to take place in November 2014.

"Corruption is rooted in and propagated by our prevailing economic structures, cultures and value systems," says WCC general secretary Olav Tveit. "It is driven by greed, relentless pursuit of power, profit and material gain by corporations, political bodies, administrators and individual actors."

For more visit exposed2013.com.



From the Big Bang to God

I consider it a privilege to write this review of Lloyd's latest and perhaps most ambitious book. Considered by many to be New Zealand's most important thinker on religion and its future, the book reflects a lifetime of trying to make sense of religion in secular society.

Over the years Lloyd has refused to be intimidated by his detractors and critics. He has followed his thoughts and expressed them honestly and openly in spite of the consequences for him personally.

In 1967 he came to prominence when he was charged in the Presbyterian Church with heresy, or more specifically doctrinal error and destroying the peace and unity of the church. At the time he was Professor of Old Testament studies and the principal of Knox Theological Hall, Dunedin.

As a result, he brought religion, theology and the future of Christianity in secular society to the forefront of public debate, not only in New Zealand but beyond. Central to his



influence has been the enduring focus of his work: the significance and importance of the idea of God in the emergence and development of the modern world.

This book is Lloyd's 16th. It follows the evolution of the universe, the emergence of life and the development of human culture to the present day.

Integral to this extraordinary development has been 'the coming into being' of humankind, language, and the world of human thought. Through the use of creative imagination human beings not only 'named' the world they inhabited, but also their innate curiosity led them to ask

critical questions about their origins, identity and purpose.

Our human ancestors began to craft stories about who they were, why they were here and how they evolved to their present state. Lloyd argues that the idea of God has played an important and necessary role in this process and the emergence of modernity.

The idea of God can still perform a useful function and serve as an "ultimate point of reference" as it has done in the past. Lloyd sums up our remarkable evolutionary journey that with a quote from theologian Gordon Kaufman: "To believe in God is to commit oneself to a particular way of ordering one's life and action. It is to devote oneself to working towards a fully humane world within the ecological restraints here on planet Earth, while standing in piety and awe before the profound mysteries of existence."

Whether or not one agrees with Lloyd's analysis and conclusions, this book is an extraordinary read. It opens new and provocative ways of understanding ourselves as human beings, and how the idea of God has shaped religion, science and what it means to be truly human.

This book is a 'must-read' for all those who are trying to understand how they as ordinary human beings fit into the universe. It is tour de force and reflects a lifetime of creative, committed and fearless exploration of the mystery of creation and our human place in it. Once again he has opened the space for honest discussion on some of life's deepest questions.

By Lloyd Geering

2013, Steele Roberts, 195 pages

Reviewer: Jim Stuart

Kingdom of Fools: The Unlikely Rise of the Early Church

The blurb on the back cover of this book says: "After their leader's brutal execution, a group of uneducated fishermen claim he has risen from the dead - and win thousands of followers. Locked up as rabble-rousers, time after time the fledgling church's leaders miraculously escape, then immediately repeat their offence. Welcoming low-lives and undesirables, this new movement deliberately turns its back on worldly wealth and influence. How did this ragtag collection of nobodies become the most dominant influence on Western civilisation?"

This gives the impression that this book will provide significant insight into how Christianity managed to flourish in its day. What we actually get is an expanded commentary on the journey of Paul as outlined in Luke and Acts.

The author adds some description of the people in power at that time but at a level of detail that is at best elaborate



and, at worst, distracting.

The book provides a level of detail about the players at the time that doesn't add any insights to the reasons that Paul and a few others were successful in their endeavours. This is a shame because where he does begin to answer the question of 'how' he does it well.

His descriptions of the fundamentally different ways the early followers of the Way were expected to live is enlightening, and the descriptions of some of the early believers quite satisfying. These glimpses were what I was looking for in the book but sadly I found them to be few and far

between, with a great deal of hard work required to get to them.

Page spends a lot of time discussing why the timeframe of Luke or Acts should be considered accurate based on such evidence as the ship sailings of the time. Again he

goes into great detail that is not particularly helpful. This leaves the impression that he is arguing the case for his preferred version of Paul's travels, which is actually an apt description of the entire book.

The style of writing changes throughout the book, and finding early followers compared to 'mudbloods' in the Harry Potter novels is both distracting and unhelpful. Perhaps the author was hoping to lighten the mood of the story but each occasion fell flat.

It is not clear who the target audience for this book might be. It is not someone well versed in the travels of Paul and the stories of Luke and Acts. These people already know the contents of this book. It is not the person who has no knowledge of Luke and Acts: they would find the book difficult to follow as it is clearly written to someone with a reasonable level of understanding of the story already.

Perhaps the answer to the question posed on the back of the book is answered in its last 40 pages or so. I would not know as I could not bring myself to finish it, even though I gave it a number of good tries.

By Nick Page

2012, Hodder & Stoughton, 389 pages

Reviewer: Nanette Russell

Revelations: Visions, Prophecy & Politics in the Book of Revelation

I started reading this book while Revelation figured in the weekly lectionary. Several colleagues had planned a series of sermons on Revelation, while I was studiously avoiding it as usual.

Perhaps Pagels would give me some preaching insights, I hoped, as I settled down to read. She did, but the series on Revelation is as unlikely to eventuate as ever.

I found myself instead reflecting on the amazing breadth of understandings and interpretations in early Christian writings and wondering, as I'm sure Pagels intends us to, why throughout history we have used 'our' particular vision as a weapon against others.

She begins by putting John's startling visions in the context of his life. John was a Jewish follower of Jesus' teaching who had been in Jerusalem in the war-torn years of 66-70 CE when the Romans destroyed both Temple and city centre killing many and causing those remaining to flee.

Some 30 years later, John was living in exile in Patmos amidst temples and statues celebrating the power of Rome. He was reminded of all he and his compatriots had lost and



at whose hands.

So it is that in Revelation John draws on the imagery of earlier prophets like Ezekiel and Daniel to create a thinly disguised polemic against the Roman empire and a cry of faith that one day soon God's day of reckoning would be brought to earth with the return of Jesus. Pagels is clear that John's visions are of a very immediate future and not predictions for the 3rd millennium!

That said, she is quick to point out how John's words, written in the deep pain of crisis, have been drawn upon throughout history in similar times. The Great Plague was seen as the coming of the third

horseman of the apocalypse. During the reformation Catholic and Protestant alike demonised the other side with imagery from the book of Revelation.

This much I remembered from theological college but Pagels took me into new territory. She sets John's Revelation alongside a multitude of other revelations written at around the same time. Some of these were equally violent, while others proclaimed a universalist approach including the recently rediscovered 'Secret Revelation of John', in which

Jesus declares "salvation is available to everyone since God's spirit is essential for life".

Pagels shows how the decidedly more exclusive Revelation we have in our Bibles found favour. This happened first during the early persecution, when Rome was 'the beast', and then once the persecutions ended under Constantine, when anyone considered a heretic became 'the whore of Babylon' or 'the Antichrist'.

Surely Christians attacking Christians was not what John had in mind when he wrote down his visions? Perhaps Pagels' most startling claim is that, in fact, it was. She argues that as a Jew, John was strongly opposed to the teachings of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles who also claimed he had "seen the Lord". It is Paul and his teachings that John attacks in his letter to the seven churches.

All in all an enlightening yet disturbing read. It sheds light on the plurality of 'Christianities' in those early centuries and the way we humans all too quickly turn to thoughts of vengeance when we are oppressed.

It disturbed me because Pagels' discussion of how 'our' book of revelation came into the canon shows we still haven't heard the gospel call to turn the other cheek. I recommend this book to all who are interested in the early years of Christianity.

Elaine Pagels

2012, Penguin Books, 244 pages

Reviewer: Alison Molineux

<p>Discernment Reading the Signs of Daily Life. Henri Nouwen artfully explores how nature, our neighbours and our own hearts reveal God's active presence all around us. Life-giving and beautiful, practical & wise.</p> <p>\$37.99*</p>	<p>A Place at the Table New Hymns written by Shirley Erena Murray between 2009 & 2013, that focus on peace, justice and our faith journey. Spiral bound, full music.</p> <p>\$42.00*</p>	<p>Creation, Power & Truth Tom Wright invites readers to consider the crucial ways in which the Christian gospel challenges the intellectual, moral and political values that pervade contemporary culture.</p> <p>\$29.99*</p>	<p>The Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary Read the Bible with understanding & confidence. Articles on people, places, things, and events in Scripture.</p> <p>\$49.99*</p>	<p>Baker Illustrated Bible Dictionary: Read the Bible with understanding & confidence. Articles on people, places, things, and events in Scripture. 1760pp Hbk.</p>	<p>Order now from</p> <p>Epworth BOOKS</p> <p>www.epworthbooks.org.nz sales@epworthbooks.org.nz</p> <p>PO Box 17255, Karori, Wellington 6147. 338 Karori Road, Karori, Wellington 6012.</p> <p>Toll free: 0800 755 355 Ph: 04 476 3330</p> <p><small>*Plus p&p: \$5.50 for 1 or 2 items, \$7.00 for 3 or more.</small></p>
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A celebration of Agape Fellowship

Every year Wesley Broadway Church in Palmerston North holds a special service to acknowledge and celebrate its Agape Fellowship.

Agape Fellowship supports people with physical, psychological and social disabilities to integrate into the community. It has been active for 27 years, offers activities, mentoring and advocacy services from Wesley Broadway.

Agape secretary John Thornley says members of the Fellowship are made to feel welcome and comfortable, without having excessive demands placed upon them.

The Agape church service was held last month and it had input from four Agape members. Two of those who spoke take part in the

Fellowship's educational programme.

John says from her wheelchair Pohiri spoke of the introductory papers she is taking at Open Polytechnic, and spoke eloquently of her wish to pursue further theological study, reflecting her Christian calling. She is currently doing a sign language course.

David is also wheelchair-bound and studying at the Open Polytechnic. He is seeking a Diploma in communication and ultimately Bachelor of Arts.

Agape coordinator Craig McDonald has helped Pohiri and David negotiate financial barriers and deal with computer breakdowns.

"Craig shared the story of a third student who was not present. Stephen lives with mental illness but he has been taking a course on



Agape coordinator Craig McDonald (right) with student Pohiri Peipi-Scott.

Mental Health through the Open Polytechnic. After three years, he can see light at the end of the tunnel and is close to receiving a Certificate in Mental Health," John Thornley

says.

"The course provides Stephen with skills for his position as a paid assistant support worker with Agape, and much of his practical

requirements for the course have come out of his work situation."

Also during the church service, two members gave testimonies of what Agape meant to them and the warmth and support they receive.

Brian appreciates the way Agape accepts him as a full person, despite his physical disabilities. The fact that he has to travel one hour from home to church, negotiating car traffic on his wheelchair, never puts him off coming to Agape.

Raewyn spoke quietly but clearly of her childhood growing up in a dysfunctional family. Lacking family in her younger years, she found her 'childhood' for the first time, within the Agape extended family.

Unsung Methodist Personalities

FROM POLITICS TO PULPIT

Being a preacher has been a springboard to an active political career throughout the history of New Zealand Methodism. There have been



Henry Ellis

some notable contributions made by such people of all political hues.

It should never be taken for granted that to be a Methodist was to be part of the radical or

liberal end of the party spectrum. Methodists could be as conservative as any.

More rarely did someone forsake the political life for that of the preacher.

Born in Bundoran, County Donegal, in 1828, Henry Ellis was described as a man of refinement and intelligence. His parents, William and Margaret (nee Keane) were involved in a family-run sanatorium renowned for its high standards. They nevertheless emigrated to New South Wales about 1840, and then to Auckland five years later.

Anglican Church but he was converted under James Buller in 1848, and became actively involved in the High St Methodist congregation for a few years. During this time he worked as a draper, then as a general importer and auctioneer.

He must have been a successful businessman for he commissioned the construction of a large two-storey country house of Regency design in

Henry Ellis - 1828-1879

Epsom about 1863. He married Georgina Eliza Beamish of Kilkernmore, County Cork in 1855, and they had one surviving child, Evalyn Alice, who later became the wife of the Wesleyan minister, Thomas Fee.

At the time of the Land Wars Henry Ellis canvassed the establishment of a permanent rifle corps, and advocated a comprehensive volunteer movement. He subsequently became an officer of a northern cavalry troop, seeing active service.

For a time, he withdrew from Church involvement and was active in public affairs. An attachment to the militia may well have created some tension within his preaching ministry, though not necessarily within the settler congregations.

Henry was elected to the Auckland Provincial Council in 1869 and served for four years. In the same year he published the short-lived Auckland Daily News and later worked as a journalist for the Daily Southern Cross.

In 1870 he became a member of the executive committee of the Local Industry League, and with his wife was associated with the moves to establish a 'Women's Reformatory.' He became an immigration agent, and was particularly connected with the establishment of the Vesey-Stewart Ulster Plantation Settlement at Katikati, made up of the families of Protestant Irish farmers.

From 1874, Henry resumed his attachment to Methodism, and was preaching regularly throughout Auckland. He then offered for the ministry, an unusual thing for a married man to do at that time, and even more unusual for the Church to accept.

He was sent as a probationer to Waimate in 1877-1878, and then to Woodend, near Rangiora, in 1878, where he died on June 17th 1879.

Town honours Methodist missionary to Africa

METHODIST ARCHIVES

By Jo Smith, Archivist

It is unusual for a Primitive Methodist minister to be featured as part of a town's public artwork.

In the small market town of Fakenham, in Norfolk, England, Rev Henry Buckenham is depicted in one of the eight icons or motifs that enshrine Fakenham's past.

I was recently in Fakenham, and was much taken by this feature in Market Square. The artwork was designed by Simon Watkinson and erected in 2000. It consists of an arrangement of cast iron panels that echo the form of typefaces. Fakenham was known for its printing industry that employed many people locally.

It is possible to walk over the icons and peer closely at the design. Around the edge of the typefaces, are panels repeating the eight motifs. Rev Henry Buckenham is associated with the ox and wagon-wheel motif. It also represents the cattle market and agricultural engineering.

The other icons representing Fakenham's history include two galloping horses to represent the racecourse, a gaslight signifying the manufacture of town gas in Fakenham from 1846-1965, coats-of-arms of the Fakenham Town Council and Fakenham High School. A ship represents the life and work of Sir Robert Seppings, a contemporary of Lord Nelson. One of the plates depicts a penny-farthing bicycle, denoting the importance of cycle manufacture and the figure of Britannia is the cap badge of the Royal Norfolk Regiment (9th Foot).

Rev Buckenham was born in Fakenham in 1844 but the reason he features in the artwork is because of his heroic journey in Africa which started in 1889. It was a 2000 mile trip from Kimberley to the Zambesi River in southern Africa to establish Primitive Methodist missions there.

This was one of those feats of missionary travel that raised awareness of what the English



Buckenham Memorial Chapel, Fakenham.

missionaries were doing in Africa. He briefly returned to England, remarried, and returned to Africa.

Rev Buckenham died in Africa in 1896 and in the annual address of the English Primitive Methodist Conference to the Church in 1897, he was called "heroic, courageous and self-sacrificing", and his representation in the artwork



Depictions of oxen and wagon wheel Market Square.

alludes to these traits.

The obituary published in the minutes of the Primitive Methodist Church touches on some of the trials he faced as he travelled in ox carts across the African continent on his first trip. Eight of the 12 wagon wheels he brought broke, one after the other, and they were thousands of miles away from the

closest wheelwright.

Rev Buckenham made new sets of spokes and bolts, re-built and re-tired the wheels. He drove the wagons himself, and trained the oxen, repaired the gear and utensils. His first wife died on this journey.

He came up against "dangers which needed courage to face, to difficulties which needed tact to surmount, to delays and disappointment which needed faith to endure, and toil which needed strength and willingness to perform."

Recognition of his missionary work led to the building of the Primitive Methodist chapel in Fakenham being named the Buckenham Memorial Chapel, which was opened in 1908. This building still stands in Oak Street. It has a plaque commemorating the laying of the foundation stone by Mrs Buckenham, his second wife who survived him.

Methodist health board candidate wants focus on people

By Cory Miller

As a grandfather of 12, a father of six and an active member of the church and community, New Zealand-born Tongan, Will 'Ilolahia, has decided to run for a place on the Auckland District Health Board (DHB)

Will attends Wesley Roskill Church and believes as a person of faith, serving on the DHB is one way he can help others.

"As a father, grandfather and Christian, it is my responsibility to ensure we have the best healthcare," he says.

Will experienced for himself just what Auckland's healthcare system was like, after a lengthy illness that left him in hospital for a prolonged stay. It was this personal experience that triggered Will's desire to run for the position as a board member, once he'd regained his health.

Today, thanks to what Will labels as the great care he did receive from the healthcare system, he is able to fulfil his desire.

"From my own experience in hospital, I found the good work the intensive care unit doctors and nurses did for me has enabled me to stand for the Auckland DHB as a community independent on the City Vision ticket.

"I'm standing for the board to ensure the good experience I had as a patient is repaid. So that others too can experience top-quality healthcare."



Will 'Ilolahia

However Will points out the healthcare system is nowhere near perfect. In the years since he was in hospital he has heard from others, who've haven't had the same quality experience he had in Auckland's hospitals.

For Will, this gap is most evident amongst the Pacific community. "The needs of the Pacific people are not being addressed sufficiently," he says.

"When I visit Auckland hospital I see a lot of Pacific and Maori who are disproportionately represented in the hospitals."

A fact he says is bizarre considering the amount of health programmes that are directed towards the Pacific community.

Will says the problem is these programmes are simply not working and are in need of a makeover.

"Some of these programmes are not working. They are too boring or have an ineffective delivery. We are still over-represented in the hospital systems."

Will says being on the board

will help him change the outcomes for Pacific peoples.

He believes his experience as a television and radio producer as well as chairman of the Wesley Roskill property and finance committee has equipped him with the knowledge to change things. He wants to see more funds for effective health care education and prevention.

"Having a voice representing all minority communities on Auckland's health board will give the board the cultural diversity and understanding it needs.

"To date many of the board's decisions, such as appointing a European to head Pacific health providers, shows it lacks cultural understanding.

"I will use my experience and knowledge as a man of Pacific Island descent to ensure the board offers culturally appropriate care."

However Will is also quick to add that while he is making a point of advocating for people of Pacific descent, he is going to be a voice for all people in need of healthcare.

Will believes the DHB needs a reminder to focus on caring for people, not the system.

"I have noticed a shift in the board towards a more system-driven focus rather than a patient focused one. I want to change the focus to people.

"I'm doing God's work. I'm living my Christian beliefs of caring and serving others."



Last month members of the Hawkes Bay Rural Ministry Group visited the Pekapeka Wetlands.

Hawkes Bay rural ministry network reboots for 21st century

By David Hill

Hawkes Bay rural parishes are re-engaging with their communities.

Anglican regional deacon Rev Dr Jenny Dawson says a Hawkes Bay rural ministry group has been re-established involving Anglicans, Presbyterians, Catholics, farmers and the East Coast Rural Support Trust.

A Hawkes Bay rural ministry group was first established around 20 years ago by local ministers. While it went inactive for a while, it started meeting again after last year's Trans-Tasman Rural Ministry Conference in Atherton, Queensland. Jenny is currently its convenor.

"Five of us went over and we came back with the news that Hawkes Bay rural congregations will be helping organise the Trans-Tasman gathering in 2016 in the Wairarapa. We had an ecumenical gathering to discuss the conference and they wanted to keep meeting and it has grown from there."

Since then five meetings have been held. They have focused on local issues including the proposed Ruataniwha Dam, engaging with local iwi Ngati Kahungunu, and pastoral care, Jenny says.

"We have had some really good discussions about the Ruataniwha Dam and we went to the proposed dam site. We will hold some sort of liturgical event at the dam site when they make a decision but we haven't made a stand one way or the other.

"I think it is better that we have a theological position with one another and what it means for the environment. This is not about taking sides but how we use our God-given gift of nature and how we support each other."

The East Coast Rural Support Trust's Hawkes Bay co-ordinator Mike Baram also spoke at a rural ministry group meeting about the trust's role during last summer's drought and the role of churches in networking with rural communities, Jenny says.

"In rural communities church and community can't be separated.

In the city people can go out of their community to another church and not have a relationship with Christians in their community. But in rural areas it is all intertwined - church, school and community."

Jenny says the role of rural ministry is changing, with new models of ministry springing up.

"It used to be that newly ordained ministers would be sent into rural areas to learn, before going into a much larger parish but now that is no longer the case. There are some very experienced rural ministers.

"Nowadays there are many small parishes that don't have an ordained minister. There is quite a bit of enabling, where parishes look after their own worship. I don't like the idea of closing churches, no matter how small they are. It is important for them to remain in their communities."

Jenny hopes to build up a broad base of the churches in the Hawkes Bay rural ministry group moving forward. At present it is mainly an Anglican grouping, with some Presbyterians and Catholics.

"I would like to see it more broadly represent the various churches and denominations in the area, but it is quite difficult as some communities only have one denomination.

"I would like to see us engage more in issues which local farmers are talking about, for example the issues facing the meat industry."

Jenny would also like to tackle other issues like rural poverty.

"Rural poverty is a big issue. People come to live in the country and if they lose their job it can be hard finding work. A local dairy farmer may say 'come and work for me', but it's not always that simple, because if they haven't got the experience it can be quite hard to move up in the industry.

"When you are talking about rural communities you are not just talking about farmers, you are talking about everybody who lives on the land."

She says some local Christians are also keen on green issues, so the group will also be exploring ways of being more sustainable.

'Just Action' encourages Christians to make social justice happen

By Sophie Parish

Social justice and Christianity was the focus of the joint 'Just Action' conferences sponsored by the Salvation Army and Habitat for Humanity last month.

Speakers from around the world spoke to 600 people who attended in an effort to re-energise and encourage Christians to take action, help those in poverty, and be a living example of the gospel and life of Jesus.

The two day event was held at the Vodafone Events Centre in Manukau, September 18-19.

Among the speakers was Shane Claiborne, a founder of 'The Simple Way' which describes itself as a 'web of subversive friends, conspiring to spread the vision of loving God, loving people, and following Jesus'.

"The idea of resurrection should not just be as an event that happened 2000 years ago. We are to participate and practice resurrection every day," Shane said.

He showed pictures of his Philadelphia neighbourhood resurrecting their severely impoverished community through faith-based community work.

During the conference Habitat for Humanity volunteers worked to speed build a house for a Kiwi family in need. The volunteers worked in shifts to build the house in just six days.

Salvation Army social policy director Major Campbell Roberts



Habitat for Humanity 'speed built' a house for a South Auckland family during the Just Action conference.

said, "In South Auckland there is so much need. On a daily basis people don't have adequate and affordable housing. Habitat is helping ease one of the most significant social pressures in Auckland," he said.

Volunteers from all skill levels came to help build the house, from experienced tradespeople, to some who had never picked up a hammer.

Auckland civil engineering student Shawn Kao was thankful he could come out to help build the house, "It's been so great to have hands on experience, we learn theoretically in class, but it helps put the pieces together," he said.

For 19 years Habitat for Humanity's Mike Bourke has supervised volunteers who come from around the world to build houses in New Zealand. Mike said it was an interest in building and helping others that lead him to join the group. "Habitat does not just build houses, it builds

hope," he said.

Maurewa Methodist Church Pastor Rev Vai Ngahe understands the many pressures people experience in his community. He meets with people who walk into the church almost every day looking food and someone to listen.

Vai says hospitality is part of the solution.

"Hospitality should be for all people. We need to suspend our judgement of people. People can stick label on others but they don't know what has happened to them," he says.

Manurewa Methodist church organizes events during the year to bring the community together. Vai plans to host meals for people in need. They would welcome local businesses, local MPs and local council members to allow a space to talk and share in the church. "The work is much easier if we work together," he says.

Sowing grains of peace

By Filo Tu

It's hard to imagine that with the technological advances of the present day, we still need to sow the grains of peace and gather to discuss what justice truly means.

From August 11th to 17th two young people from the Methodist Church of NZ were in Hong Kong to take part in a Christian Conference of Asia youth leadership programme focused on building justice and peace.

Janice Auva'a and Henry Hoglund participated in the event, which had the goals of ecumenical formation, gender justice and youth empowerment. Participants explored issues that affect young people today - violence, conflict, peace-building, mediation and reconciliation.

When asked about the journey, Janice says: "It was an honour to meet new people and

to learn about their cultures and backgrounds but most importantly it was amazing to hear about the situations they face in their home countries; stories that one thinks only ever happens in the movies or books."

Henry responded to the question this way: "I'm very blessed to go on behalf of the Methodist Church. As a Tongan, I was very grateful and honoured to represent my people, church and family."

"I found the whole programme very interesting. I learnt a lot about political and economic challenges, the effects of globalisation, nuclear testing, and discrimination against women and the impact of all of this on children and young people."

Henry had the honour of leading worship on the last morning of the programme.

It's impossible to be a part of such an event without making friends, and Henry spoke of one particular memory that was ingrained in him ever since.

"I will never forget when I spoke to my roommate from South Korea. His name was Li, and he is a university student. He told me he was studying in the field of construction."

"I asked him why he chose that and he said he's seen a lot of the people in his country struggle because of financial hardship with nowhere to stay."

He felt his calling from God was to help build homes for them. I was really touched and I thank God for that"

Those who attend events like this always have the urge to take the tools that they've acquired and apply them to their everyday lives. Janice says she wants to use her new skills for the youth



Henry Hoglund and Janice Auva'a (back row left) took part in a Christian Conference of Asia youth development course in Hong Kong

of the Methodist Church and the youth community of Auckland.

She wants more people to be aware of the reality our brothers and sisters face in other countries.

Henry says some of the things he learned were mediation, peace building, and conflict resolution, skills he hopes will help his work with his youth group.

Janice wants to encourage other young people.

"Build your foundations so that you are sure about what you stand for in life, stand for what you believe in, jump at the opportunities life gives you.

Never regret but look forward

to the future and build wisdom from your family, church community and friends," she says.

Henry quotes Matthew 6:33 saying: "But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all your desires will be given to you." God will open doors that no-one can shut.

Janice and Henry thank the Methodist Connexion, Mission and Ecumenical, their synods and all who helped make their journey possible. May God be glorified in everything we do.

Kidz Korna!

WELCOME TO THE CORNER FOR OCTOBER!

When you read this you will all be on holiday from school. Let's hope the stormy weather has blown itself out and there is plenty of sun.

This month we hear from people in the north of the North Island and the south of the South Island.

a CELEBRATION OF NORTHLAND MUP

The children (and adults) at Kaurihohore Church in Whangarei had great fun when they celebrated mud!

Activities included a mud pile for playing and dancing in, the Muddy Slide, a treasure hunt (in the mud), painting with mud, a gumboot throwing competition, story time and coloured clay face painting. There was also a money scramble which was of course

in the mud.

Before the festival there was a mud-themed church service.

The local Girls Brigade helped with free soup, buns and hot drinks.

This was a wonderful opportunity for the Kauri locals to meet together hosted by the Kaurihohore Historic Church congregation.



Kids at Kaurihohore Church in Whangarei had day full of muddy fun.

Girls Brigade served refreshments to those enjoying the mud.

JELLYBEANS in TIMARU

Hi, my name is Kayla and I am a member of St Davids Union Church in Timaru.

In this picture I am helping Imogene say the prayer of praise at our children's and youth service on August 25th.

I am only nine years old so I needed a



Imogene and Kayla read a prayer at St David's children and youth service.

bit of help reaching the microphone, and our minister helped us write the prayer. I enjoy helping in the worship services.

Each week at the end of the service one of the children gives out jellybeans to everyone

who comes to church, and that's fun because you get to say hullo to everyone.

PUZZLE CORNER

Can you solve this and find the name of a book in the New Testament?

You need to find ONE letter from each clue!

My first is in trust but not in hope.

My second is in love but not in hate.

My third is in home but not in house.

My fourth is in faith and not in doubt.

My fifth is in found but not in lost.

My sixth is in wish but not in dream.

My whole will spell the name of the book.

CHILDREN'S SONG

'I Would Like to Be Like Jesus'
By William Wallace

1) I would like to be like Jesus,
Gentle, loving, strong and true.
I would like to be like Jesus
And see God in me and you.

2) I would like to be like Jesus
When I'm happy, when I'm blue.
I would like to be like Jesus
In the things I say and do.

3) So I'll walk the way of Jesus
In the presence of his friends,
Praising, praying, trusting Jesus
For the love which never ends.
(Text, score and tune available at
www.progressivechristianity.org)

What are the kids in your church up to?

Kidz Korna wants to hear from you so we can share your stories. Send stories and photos of your activities to Doreen Lennox at dlennox@extra.co.nz or to touchstone@paradise.net.nz

K E M I F A K A T A U T E H I N A 2 0 1 3

Tokoni Faka-Ngāue Sēnesi 45:1-15 ‘Apitanga Feohi Faka-tautehina ‘a e VTOA

Oku ‘i ai ‘a e ki’i lea ngaholo faka-Tonga ‘oku tau fa’a ngāue’aki, ko e “**fakatau ma’ama’a/li’aki**.” Pea ‘oku tau ‘ai ‘a e lea ko ia ki ha koloa mahu’inga ka kuo tau holoki hono totongi, pe ko ia ‘oku maheni mo kimoutolu va’inga ‘akapulu, ko e fa’ahinga paasi ‘o e pulu ke tu’unga mei ai ha tu’utāmaki ‘a hoto kaungā-va’inga he tauhoa ‘oku fai mai ‘e he fa’ahi ‘e taha. ‘Oku ngāue’aki ‘e he palōfita ko ‘Ilaisiā ‘a e fakakaukau tatau ki he tu’i ko ‘Ehapi koe’uhi ko ‘ene to’o e ngoue’vaine ‘a Nēpote, ka ‘oku ne fakalea, “*kuo ke fakatau li’aki koe ke fai ‘a e me’a ‘oku tau kovi ki he finangalo ‘o Sihova*” (1 Tu’i 21:20).

‘Oku tau felōngoaki mo e fakakaukau tatau ‘i he ngaahi talanoa ‘oku fai ‘e he tohi ko Sēnesi:

- **‘Uluaki**, ‘oku talanoa ‘a e vahe 3 ‘o Sēnesi ki hono fakatau ma’ama’a ‘e ‘Atama mo ‘Ivi ‘a e tāpuaki kuo fakakoloa ‘aki kinaua ‘e he ‘Otua koe’uhi ko ‘ena tui ki he fale’i ne fai ‘e he ngata, tokua ‘o kapau te na kai mei he fua ‘o e ‘akau ne tapui, te na hoko ‘o hangē ko e ‘Otuā, **‘o ‘ilo ‘a e lelei mo e kovi**. (‘Otua mo e tangata)

- **Ua**, ‘oku lea ‘a Sēnesi 12 ki he fekau ne fai kia ‘Epalame ke hiki mei hono fonua tupu’anga. Ka ‘i he konga kimui ‘o e vahe tatau ne hū ai ‘a ‘Epalame mo Selai ki ‘Isipite, pea fakatau li’aki ai ‘e ‘Epalame hono hoa kia Felo koe’uhi ke haofaki ‘ene mo’ui. (husepaniti mo e uaifi)

- **Tolu**, ko e me’a tatau ne fai ‘e Sekope kia ‘Isoa ‘ia Sēnesi 27. Ke ma’u ‘a e tāpuaki na’e taau ke ‘a ‘Isoā, na’a ne lama ‘a e taimi totonu ke hamusi ai. Ne foki mai ‘a ‘Isoa mei he’ene tuli manu kuo ne ongosia mo fiekaia. Ne lau ia ‘e Sekope ko hono faingamālie ke fakatau’aki ha ipu supo ‘a e

tāpuaki. (ko e tehina mo e ta’okete)

- **Fā**, ‘oku tau felongoaki mo e “**fakatau li’aki/ma’ama’a**” ‘ia Sēnesi 37, pea ko e talanoa ia ‘oku ‘ākitu’a he vahe 45. Ko e fanga ta’okete ne nau fakatau li’aki/ma’ama’a e mo’ui ‘a honau tehina ki he kau fefakatau’aki koloa muli koe’uhi: (i) ko ‘enau fehi’a he ‘ofa makehe ai ‘enau tamai, pea (ii) mo ‘enau ta’eloto ke hoko ‘o mo’oni e ngaahi misi na’a ne fa’a mamata ki ai. Ki he fanga ta’okete, ka ‘ikai fai kei taimi ha me’a ki honau tehina, ‘e mole ‘a e tāpuaki ‘oku taau ke nau ma’u, pea te nau fakaongo ki honau tehina.

Mei he ngaahi “**fakatau li’aki/ma’ama’a**” kuo u lave ki ai ‘oku kehekehe ‘a e tūkunga ne hoko ai, ka ‘oku ‘uuni kinautolu ‘e he alanga fokoutua ‘oku tau ui faka-Tonga ko e “**mole ‘a e feongo’i’aki**” he tauhi vā ‘oku fai. ‘Oku tupu ‘a e fokoutua ko ia mei he mānumanu, hangē ko ‘Ehapi mo Sekope, mei he siokita hangē ko ‘Epalahame, mei he taufehi’a mo e fiema’u mafai hangē ko e fanga ta’okete ‘o Siosifa. Ko e tō’onga pehē ‘oku ne kaiha’asi ‘a e feongo’i’aki mei he feohi ‘a ha taki mo hono kakai (‘Ehapi mo Nepote), husepāniti mo e uaifi (‘Epalahame mo Sela), ta’okete mo e tehina (Siosifa mo hono fanga ta’okete). Pea ‘oku hua ‘ene hoko ‘i ha potu kehe, ka ko ‘ene hoko he lotofale ‘o e fāmili, ko e me’a ‘oku fakaloloma ange fau.

Ko e talanoa ‘oku fai ‘e he vahe 45 ‘o Sēnesi, ‘oku tau hiki ai mei Kēnani ki ‘Isipite – ‘a e potu ne fakatau ma’ama’a ki ai ‘e he fanga ta’okete ‘a honau tehina ko Siosifa – pea ‘oku tatala kia kitautolu ‘e he fatu talanoa, ko e fanga tokoua ne nau māvae he vahe 37, ko eni kuo nau to e felongoaki; kuo to e fehangahangai mata ki he

mata ‘a e tehina na’e fakatau ma’ama’a mo e fanga ta’okete na’a nau fakatau ia. Ko e tūkunga kehe eni ‘oku nau ‘i ai: kuo foaki ki he tehina ne



Nasili Vaka'uta

fakatau ma’ama’a ha mafai lahi mo ma’olunga ‘i ‘Isipite, pea kuo tu’umālie ai ‘a Felo mo hono kakai; ko e fanga ta’okete taufehi’a, kuo nau omi ko e fakatau me’akai he kuo hongē e fonua ‘oku fai ai e nofo.

‘I he lau ‘a’aku, ko e faingamālie eni kia Siosifa ke sāuni e ngāue kovi ne nau fai kiate ia. Taumaia ‘e ‘ilo mai ‘e Sekope ‘o kapau te ne fakapoongi kotoa kinautolu. Kae mālie ‘oku ‘ikai ma’u ‘e Siosifa e loto tāngia ‘oku ou ma’u. ‘I he’ene kukuta tu’u hono loto, na’e ‘ikai ke ne kei lava ke pukepuke ‘ene sio ki he fofonga hono fanga ta’okete (neongo ‘a e ngāue kovi ne nau fai), ‘uma’ā hono tehina ko Penisimani, pea mo e manatu ki he fofonga ‘o e tamai ‘ofa kuo nau tupu ai. Toki hiki ‘ene fākafoa mo ne faka’ilo ia ki hono fanga tokoua, pea mānava ‘aki e lea ‘oku tau ala ma’u pe mei he toko taha ‘oku ‘iate ia ‘a e “feongo’i’aki faka-tokoua” – ‘unu’unu mai, ko Siosifa au ko homou tokoua.

Ko e mānava ko eni kuo he’aki (“unu’unu mai”) ko e fakaafe ‘oku fai. ‘Oku tu’o ua ‘ene hā ‘ia Sēnesi 27:21, 26 – pea ko e lea ne fai ‘e ‘Aisake kia Sekope he’ene ‘alu ke kole e tāpuaki na’e tonu ke ‘a ‘Isoa. ‘Oku hā e lea tatau ‘ia Siosiu 3:9, pea ko e fakaafe ki ‘Isileli ke nau ‘unu’unu mai ‘o

fanongo ki he folofola ‘a Sihova. ‘Oku to e ngāue ‘aki ‘ia 1 Samiuela 14:38 ‘a e lea ko ia ‘e Saula ka ko e fekau ki he kau ‘eikitau ‘o ‘Isileli ke sivi e tupu’anga ‘o e angahala kuo nau mo’ua ai. Ko 1 Tu’i 18:30 mo 2 Kalonikali 29:31 ‘oku hā ai e fakaafe tatau ka ‘oku kaunga ia ki he feilaualau. ‘Oku makehe pe ‘a e ongo ‘o e lea hono ngāue’aki ‘e Siosifa – ‘oku ha’u mo e māfana ‘oku fetāfeaki he vā fakatautehina, pea ‘oku ‘ikai manako ke mo’unofoa he faingata’a ‘o e kuohili, ka ‘oku hohoi ke fokotu’u fo’ou ‘a e fekau’aki tu’unga he “feongo’i’aki faka-tokoua.”

Ko e ngaahi naunau leva eni ‘o e **feongo’i’aki faka-tokoua** ‘oku tau ala ma’u mei he talanoa:

- **Fakamolemole** – ko e koloa mahu’inga he feongo’aki faka-tokoua ‘a e fakamolemole. Ka ‘ikai ha feongo’i’aki ‘e ‘ikai lava ke fai he fefakamolemole’aki. Ne mahu’inga kia Siosifa ke mahino ki hono fanga tokoua kuo ne fakamolemole’i ‘a e ngāue kovi ne nau fai. Na’a ne na’ina’i ke ‘oua te nau mamahi pe tautea kinautolu, he kuo tofa tonu ‘e he ‘Otua hono halā koe’uhi ko e tūkunga kuo nau ‘i ai.

- **Fakalelei** – ‘oku tu’unga ki he fakamolemole ‘a e fakalelei. He’ikai lava ke fai ha vā lelei ‘o ka ‘oku tāngia hoku loto ki hoku tokoua. Ko e koloa ia ‘o e felongoaki kuo fai ‘e Siosifa mo hono fanga ta’okete: na’a ne fekita mo kinautolu ke fakamahino ‘oku fungani hake ‘a e feongo’i’aki faka-tokoua he mafai mo e koloa.

- **Fakamā’opo’opo** – ko hono tolu ‘o e koloa ‘oku fanau’i ‘e he feongo’i’aki faka-tokoua ko e fakamā’opo’opo mo e nofo faaitaha. Ka mole ‘a e ongo ko ia pea he’ikai ha fakamolemole,

‘e ‘ikai lava ha fakalelei, pea ‘e fekainaki mo movetevete ‘a e anga ‘o e nofo mo e ngāue ‘oku fai. Ko e tumutumu ‘o e ngāue ‘oku fai ‘e Siosifa he talanoa ko eni. Na’a ne fekau hono fanga tokoua ke nau fai vave ‘o ‘omi ‘enau tamai ko Sekope koe’uhi ke fakamā’opo’opo honau fāmili ki ha potu ‘e taha, ‘a e feitu’u ‘oku faingamālie ange ke nau ma’u mo’ui mei ai.

Te tau ala fakamā’opo’opo e fekau ‘o e talanoa kuo tau fanongo ki ai ‘o ui ko e “**Fā’i ‘F’**” (4-Fs) – **feongo’i’aki, fakamolemole, fakalelei, mo e fakamā’opo’opo**.

Ko ‘etau kau mai ki he feohi’anga ko eni ko e feinga ke tau ngaue fakataha koe’uhi ko e kakai ‘oku tau tauhi. **Ko e hā e founga ke fai ‘aki?** ‘Oku ou pole’i ‘aki kitautolu ‘a e ‘Fā’i-F’ – feongo’i’aki, fakamolemole, fakalelei mo e fakamā’opo’opo. ‘E holafa mo movete e ngāue kotoa pē ‘oku tau fai ‘o ka mole ‘a e feongo’i’aki faka-tokoua – ko ha kakai pehē ‘oku nau loto tāngia, nofo vākovu mo fekolo’aki. Ko e fakamanatú, tokanga’i ‘a e “Fā’i-F” – **feongo’i’aki, fakamolemole, fakalelei, fakamā’opo’opo**.

Ko e sīpinga fungani taha ‘o e “Fā’i-F” kuo tā ‘e Kalaisi ma’a kitautolu – neongo na’e fakatau li’aki ia ‘e he kakai ne muimui ofi kiate ia, ka ne hulu hake ‘ene *ongo’i* ‘a e fa’ahinga ‘o e tangata – ko e *ongo* ia kuo tu’unga ai hotau *fakamolemole* ‘e he ‘Otua, hotau *fakalelei* mo e ‘Otua, pea mo hotau *fakamā’opo’opo* ki he fāmili ‘o e ‘Otua. Pea kapau ā kuo fai pehē ‘a e ‘Otua, ‘oku taau ke tau fai pehē foki mo kitautolu – Tau **feongo’i’aki, fefakamolemole’aki, mo fakamā’opo’opo** kitautolu, ‘etau ngāue mo e kakai ‘oku tau tauhi foki.

‘Ofa atu fau. Faifekau Nāsili Vaka’uta

KO E FAKALOTOFALE 'IA 'OKATOPA, 2013

'Oku ou kole ke u fakamalumu atu mu'a he talamalu fakatoukatea 'o e fonuá mo e lotú, kuo fa'a tala mo kápuu atu mei he Pukolea ni, kae 'atā mu'a mo kita ke fakafongia atu 'a e fakalotofale 'ia 'o e mahina fo'ou ni.

Ko hotau Siate Folau 'o e mahina ni 'oku pehē hono tala: **Ke tau a'usia mo mo'ui'aki 'a e Tohitapu.** Ko e Kaveinga 'o e mahina ni, 'oku ou fakakaukau 'oku 'i ai hono ngaahi tefito 'i lea mahu'inga 'e tolu (3). Ko e **FETU'UTAKI, A'USIA** mo e **MO'UI'AKI.** Ko e fetu'utaki, ko e me'a ia 'a e Tohitapu, ko e toko taha fetu'utaki ia. Ko e A'USIA, ko e lea fakafiefia taha ia 'o e fetu'utaki. He 'oku fakamahino 'e he a'usía, 'oku hoko lelei 'a e fetu'utaki, pē 'oku mahino lelei 'a e fetu'utaki, pē 'oku a'u lelei 'a e fetu'utaki.

Ko e a'usia, ko e faka'ilonga 'o e tali lelei 'a e fetu'utaki 'oku fai. Ka 'i ai ha fetu'utaki 'oku 'ikai a'usia, pea mahino 'oku teka tu'a 'a e fetu'utaki ko ia, pe

'oku 'ikai tali lelei 'a e fetu'utaki, pea 'oku 'ikai 'aonga mo ola lelei 'a e fetu'utaki na'e fai.

Ko e MO'UI'AKI, 'oku toki hoko ia he a'u lelei mo tali lelei 'a e fetu'utaki. Ko e MO'UI'AKI ko e ola lelei ia 'o e a'usia. Ko e taimi 'oku hoko mai ai 'a e fetu'utaki 'o a'usia, mo tali lelei, mahino 'i, mo loto lelei ki ai, pea 'e nofo fuoloa 'a e me'a ko ia he lotó, 'o ne tali 'a e ngaahi fehu'i 'oku hoko mai he fetu'utaki na'a te fanongo ki ai he halafononga 'o e 'aho, pea 'oku hoko ai 'o tuku-mo-failā 'a e faliunga 'o taimi he'ete mo'ui, 'o 'i ai 'a e 'ulungaanga 'oku te tu'utu'uni ke fai, mo tu'utu'uni ke tuku.

Ko e taimi 'oku hoko pehē ai 'ete mo'ui, ko hono fakamo'oni ia 'oku 'i ai 'a e a'usia fo'ou, na'a te tali he malanga pe fetu'utaki na'a te fanongo ai, pe ko ha fale 'i na'e fai mai kia kita, pea 'oku ngāue fakalongolongo 'a e fetu'utaki ko ia 'iate kita, 'o toki fakasino mai he'ete to'onga mo'ui, ko e ngaahi me'a ia 'oku



Vaikoloa Kilikiti

te mo'ui 'aki.

Ko e veesi folofola na'e fatu mei ai 'a e Kaveinga 'o e mahina ni, Matiu 7:24-25, ko e kongia ia 'o e fakamā'opo'opo 'o e malanga 'a Sīsū he mo'unga. Ko e ki'i talanoa fakatātā nounou na'e fai 'e Sīsū ki he tangata langa fale. Ko e ongo veesi ko 'eni, 'oku talanoa pē ia ki he tangata langa fale fakapotopotó, 'a ia na'a ne langa hono fale he funga maka. Pea na'e tō 'a e

'uha, pea tafe mai 'a e ngaahi vai, pea angi 'a e ngaahi matangi, 'o nau fa'afa'aki ki he fale ko ia, ka na'e 'ikai holo, he na'e tu'unga ki he maka.

Ko e 'uhinga 'o e Kaveinga 'o e Mahina ni, ko e folofola 'a Sīsū kiate kinautolu na'e ta'utu mai 'o fanongo he'ene malanga na'e fai he mo'unga, 'ilonga 'a ia 'oku fanongo ki he malanga, 'a ia ko e fakakaukau ia 'o e fetu'utaki, 'o ne tali, pe 'oku ne a'usia, pea ne mo'ui'aki, te u fakatatau ia mo e tangata fakapotopotó 'a ia na'a ne langa hono fale he funga maka. 'E tō mai 'a e ngaahi 'ahi'ahi vela 'o e mo'ui, 'a e ngaahi ha'aha'a kona, mo e ngaahi peau tā 'o e tahi he mo'ui, 'e 'ikai pē uestia ai 'a e mo'ui, pe fale ko ia, he na'a ne tali 'a e fetu'utaki na'e fanongo ki ai, pea ne mo'ui'aki. 'Oku faingata'a ke ue 'i ha mo'ui pehē.

'Oku 'i ai foki 'a e ngaahi fale ia 'oku mou mea'i, ko e te'eki pē ke fakapāpā mai 'a e faingata'a, 'oku tomu'a pa'ulu

pē 'a e ki'i fale ko ia, pea 'oku kei takai mama'o hake pē 'a e faingata'a, kuo tomu'a holafa mama'o atu pe ia.

Ko e mahu'inga ia 'o e kaveinga 'o e mahina ni: tau tokanga 'o lau 'a e Tohitapu, 'oku 'ikai ko e lau pē, kā ko e lau ke mahino 'i, pea tali 'e he lotó 'o mo'ui'aki, pea 'e fai fiefia 'etau feohi he Siasi, 'e fakalata mo e feohi 'a e ngaahi famili, pea 'e fakamāfana 'a e uouongataha 'a e ngaahi Kalasi'ahó, pea 'e ho'ata atu ki he fonua 'a e huelo māfana mo e laumālie kelesi'ia 'etau ngaahi feohi'anga.

Ka ke faingamālie pea ke laulau 'a e Himi 529:1-4 mo e Himi 512:1 & 3 - Ko Sīsū 'a e Maka kuo toka 'ai, ke langa ai hotau ngaahi famili, pea langa ai 'etau ngaahi Kalasi'aho, mo hotau Siasi. 'I he huafa 'o e Tamai mo e Alo mo e Laumālie Mā'oni'oni.

Tu'a 'ofa atu.
Faifekau Vaikoloa Kilikiti

KEMI FAKATAUTEHINA 2013 FEONGO'I'AKI, FAKAMOLEMOLE, FAKALELEI, FAKAMĀ'OPO'OPO

Na'e lava lelei foki 'a e Kemi Kumi Ivi Fakatautehina 'a e kau Faifekau mo e kau Sētuaata 'o e Vahefonua Tonga 'i he 'aho 12 ki he 'aho 15 'o Sepitema 'i he fai'anga kemi pē 'a e Siasi 'oku 'iloa ko e Kemi Morley. Na'e 'uluaki hū pē foki 'a e kemi he efiafi Tu'apulelulu kā ko e kau Faifekau pē ia mo honau ngaahi hoa pea toki kau atu foki mo e kau Sētuaata mo honau ngaahi hoa he efiafi Falaite.

Ko e toki feohi'anga fakalata mo'oni 'a e felongoaki fakatautehina 'a e kau sētuaata mo e kau faifekau mo honau ngaahi hoa he ko e kau taki kinautolu 'o

e siasi 'i he Vahefonua Tonga. Ko 'eku toki a'usia e 'a e tafe toulaki 'a e Kelesi 'a e 'Eiki mo e lotolotoi 'a e Laumālie 'o e Mo'oni 'i ha feohi'anga. Pea ko e fungani 'o e ngaahi koloa 'o e kemi ni ko e ngaahi ako mo e fakataukei na'e fai 'e he faiako mei he Kolisi Trinity, Faifekau Dr Nāsili Vaka'uta pea tokoni pē ki ai mo e Faifekau 'Alipate 'Uhila. Pehē foki ki he poupu na'e fai 'e he Tokoni Setuata Lahi 'o e Vahefonua, Mafua Lolohea. Pea ko e tāpuaki makehe foki 'o e kemi ni ko e me'a mai ki ai mo e Tangata'eiki Palesiteni Malolo 'o e SUTT, Faifekau Dr 'Alifeleti

Malakai Mone. Tōtōatu e poupu mo e fakalotolahi faka-ngāue mo e ngaahi veesi lauloto 'a e kau faikava. Fielau e talaloto ai pē 'a Teputepu'i Kemi mei Vai 'o e Mo'ui, 'e 'ikai toe tō ia 'i ha Kemi.

Na'e fakatefito foki 'a e ngaahi fakataukei mo e ako na'e fai ki he ngaahi tefito'i fatongia 'o e ngāue fakafaifekau mo e ngāue fakasētuaatā 'i he siasi Metotisi 'o Nu'u Sila. Na'e fakamahino ko e ngāue fakafaifekau mo e ngāue fakasētuaatā 'i he siasi Metotisi kuopau pē ke taliui ia ki he founa ngāue mo e ngaahi

tu'utu'uni 'a e Lao 'o e Konifelenisi 'o e Siasi Metotisi 'o Nu'u Sila.

Na'e fai foki mo e tokanga makehe ki he anga mo e mahu'inga 'o e fetauhi'aki fakangāue 'i he vaha'a 'o e faifekau mo e sētuaata mo honau ngaahi hoa, pea pehē ki honau vā mo e kakai 'o e siasi. Ko e kī ia ki he "mo'ui lelei" 'a e Siasi. Pea neongo ko e ngaahi me'a motu'a pe mo maheni mo e fatongia he siasi, ka 'oku toe hanga 'e he kemi ko 'eni 'o ofongaki 'a e kau faifekau mo e kau sētuaata, ke mahino 'oku 'osi 'i ai pē 'a e founa ngāue mo e lao 'o e siasi

kuopau ke taliui ki ai 'enau fakahoko fatongia 'i he siasi Metotisi. Ko e Kemi 'aki 'eni hono tolu 'a e kau faifekau mo e kau sētuaata mo honau ngaahi hoa, pea ko e fakakoloa lahi mo'oni 'a e ngaahi kemi ko'eni ki he kau ngāue 'a e siasi. Faka'amua ange na'e lava kotoa mai 'a e kau faifekau mo e kau sētuaata 'o e Vahefonua, mo honau ngaahi hoa, ketau 'inasi tataui 'i he fu'u kelesi mo e koloa fakalaumālie mo e ngaahi fe'inasi'aki fakangāue 'o e Kemi. 'Ofa Atu. Kaumavae Minoneti

Children are divine at Dominion Road Church playgroup

By Edwin Talakai

The Divine playgroup at Dominion Road Tongan Methodist Church caters for up to four years old. Most of them are New Zealand-born Tongans. The playgroup is a joy for the children of Dominion Road, Tongan Methodist church.

The playgroup operates during a 'homework session' every Tuesday evening from 5.30-8.30pm and also during Fanongo ki he Ui (or Listen to the call) programme, that is tailored to young couples and young families with young children.

Divine playgroup also operates on Sunday during the main service so mums can attend the service.

The mums help with having their names on the roster to take part on a Sunday and to support the playgroup co-ordinator Siosi'ana Fa'au'i Taukolo.

Siosi'ana grew up attending the Dominion Road Church. She is now married with three young children, a dedicated young mum who rose to the challenge, she says "it is my duty to

serve God and help work in our church."

Divine playgroup gives the future of our church a chance to understand (in their own little ways) who the Son of God is and why he is so important. We do this through story-telling, colouring pictures of different characters in the bible and singing songs of praise.

Every Sunday afternoon, Divine playgroup is filled with fun, laughter and a lot of noise! (Sometimes we are surprised noise control has not been called).

Watching some of our children run wild, others quietly playing with baby dolls and some solving puzzles is a testimony of the amazing works and plans our heavenly Father has for each individual.

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future," Jeremiah 29:11.

