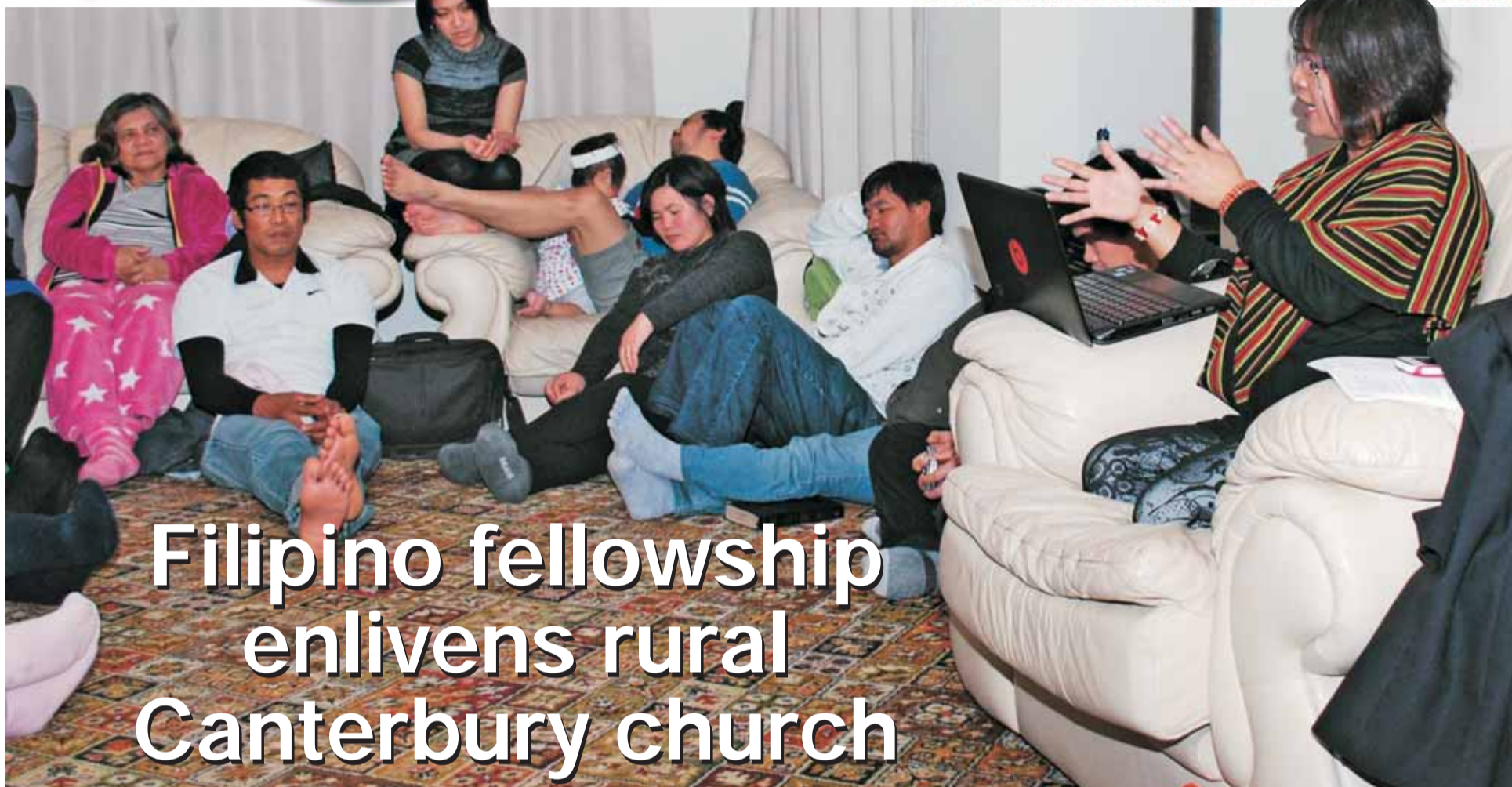


TOUCHSTONE

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



Filipino fellowship enlivens rural Canterbury church

Teena Dela Cruz (right) leads a Friday evening house group meeting of the Life Touch Fellowship.

I imagine your new home: a farm on the Canterbury plains, thousands of miles away from family and friends in the tropical hubbub of your former home in the Philippines.

Once the initial excitement has worn off, the new life can quickly become a rather daunting and isolating experience.

With the expansion of dairy farming and now the Christchurch rebuild, there is a growing Filipino community in Canterbury.

The Dela Cruz family - Orland, Teena and son AJ - arrived in New Zealand two years ago. They live on a dairy farm on Fereday Island in the braided Rakaia River, near Leeston.

Since then they have become part of the local community and are leaders of a new Filipino fellowship that is part of Ellesmere Cooperating Parish.

The group is called Life Touch Fellowship and it is affiliated with

St Davids Cooperating Church in Leeston.

Teena loves New Zealand but she says life is very different from the bustling urban centres in the Philippines.

"In the Philippines, we are used to a bigger sense of community but here it can be so isolated, many find it difficult."

Teena and Orland went to Bible college in the Philippines. She led a women's ministry there while his specialty was music and leading worship.

They formed Life Touch Fellowship to bring together people from the dispersed Filipino community. Every week they gather at Friday evening house groups in Leeston or Lincoln for a shared meal, prayers, worship, and bible study.

The initial group of seven quickly grew to an impressive 50 that continues to gather today.

"Coming together as a group has helped. It has brought many back to life," Teena says. "It's a family away from home."

Life Touch Fellowship is an integral part of St Davids Church. One Friday evening a month Teena leads a festive bi-

lingual worship service at the church.

The doors are opened to anyone who wants to partake in the cross-cultural experience facilitated by the Filipino community. AJ is on the drums, musicians play guitars and sing, and Teena delivers her bible message in both English and Tagalog. The service is followed by a shared meal of Filipino food.

Ellesmere Cooperating Parish minister Rev Paul Eden says the local community has been enriched by the Filipino congregation.

"Filipino people come from as far away as Geraldine, Methven and Christchurch to take part in Life Touch Fellowship," he says. "People from other cultures, including locals, are finding the ministry both helpful and inspiring."

Teena is under the oversight of Paul and the Ellesmere Parish council. The offering taken at Life Touch Fellowship's monthly service is added to the Parish's general accounts.

Paul says many people from the Filipino fellowship join the St Davids

congregation for Sunday morning worship, and Teena gives the sermon at the service several times a year.

"We have all worked hard to incorporate the Filipino fellowship into the church. We didn't want them to be a separate church using the facility.

"We never planned it but through God's plan the Filipino fellowship has had a miraculous impact on St Davids. They have enlivened and encouraged us.

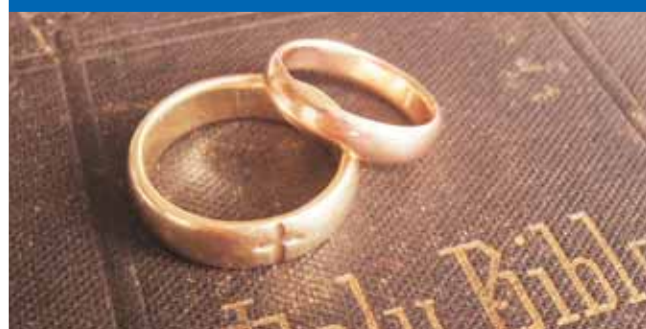
"They have brought a different, more contemporary style of worship. People love Teena's sermons. She is good biblically, and she is vivacious and has a good sense of humour."

Teena says all the things that are happening in her ministry are part of God's plan.

"Things all happen at the right time and the right place, with the right people and the right ministry. I do not take credit but stand in awe of who God is and how God uses ordinary people like us. God is the God of the harvest. It is not about us but all about Him."

INSIDE

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Fiji Methodists seek to reconcile

The military led government has once again given the Methodist Church of Fiji permission to hold a scaled down version of its annual Conference 'Bose ko Viti'.

The Conference was scheduled to take place August 26th to 29th with the induction of the new president on the 25th.

Traditionally Fijian Methodist Conference lasts two weeks, with the first week dedicated to a choir festival.

Communications secretary Rev James Bhagwan says with only four days allowed in the government's permit the time for thorough discussion is limited.

"To maximise the limited time the Church has been given, delegates are forgoing morning and afternoon tea breaks and time for fellowship. We are hopeful that the spirit of unity and consensus will flow through the meeting so that we can keep to the time and make decisions on the important issues."

James says a one aim of the Conference is to set a tone of reconciliation that will allow the Church to heal wounds of the past.

In a radio interview, Fiji Methodist general secretary Rev Tevita Banivanua said a step towards reconciliation will be taken during the induction of the new president, Rev Tuikilakila Waqairatu.

During the induction, former president Rev Josateki Koroi was to join immediate past president, Rev Ame Tugae to bless and place the presidential stole on the new president.

In the late 1980's Josateki's presidency ended prematurely when the church leadership split into two factions, with Josateki on one side and Rev Manasa Lasaro on the other. As a result, Josateki has not yet exercised his role as a past president by officiating in the installation a new president.

"We are trying to bring the two factions together, so that Josateki Koroi and the immediate past president who normally does these things will join together in inducting the new president as a sign that there is unity within the church," said Tevita.

ORAKEI METHODIST PARISH ST. PAUL'S CHURCH, REMUERA

The parish seeks to appoint an organist.
Expressions of interest are welcome.

Rev Dr Terry Wall
14 St. Vincent Avenue, Auckland 1050
Tel 09 522 0729 • lynne.terry@clear.net.nz



NEW PLYMOUTH METHODIST CHURCH (Whiteley Memorial)

Celebrates 50 years of worship in the present building, opened and dedicated by President Rev Robert Thornley on 19th October 1963. To mark the occasion a special service of thanksgiving will take place on Sunday 20th October at 10am followed by luncheon.
All welcome!

Contact np.methodist@extra.co.nz
Office 06 759 9036 • Dawn 06 757 5001

Inequality and the erosion of community

The new book 'Inequality - A New Zealand Crisis' takes a detailed look at what inequality means for our society.

Over the past 30 years income inequality has grown exponentially in New Zealand. This has concentrated more and more wealth in the hands of the top 10 percent of earners.

Shifting more into the hands of those at the top siphons resources and opportunity away from the lower and middle levels of society. People at the bottom have poorer choices for housing and healthcare, and they face more crime.

Inequality is easily recognizable in the sharp divisions between rich and poor neighbourhoods and in rich and poor schools.

The book's editor, Max Rashbrooke, says while there is a common perception that New Zealand is an unequal society, writing the book left him staggered at just how big the gaps between rich and poor are. And those gaps are getting bigger.

Max writes that New Zealand has between 170,000 and 270,000 children living in poverty (depending upon which measure is used), and we have one of the world's worst records of child health and well-being among developed countries.

These statistics are worse for Maori and Pacific communities. While just over half of the New Zealanders living in poverty is Pakeha, only one in 10 Pakeha families are in poverty. By contrast, one in five Maori and Pacific families live in poverty.

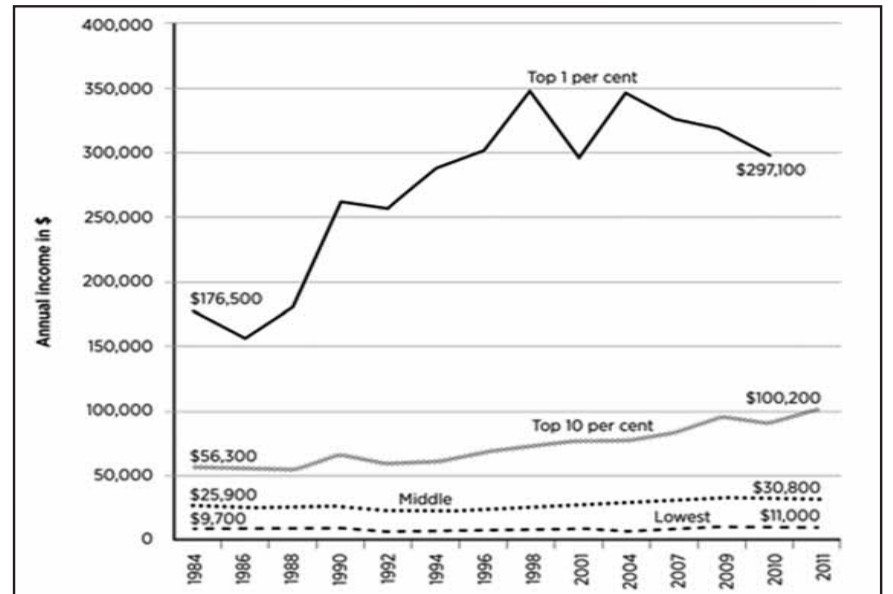
Articles in the book examine the historic factors that contribute to these disparities. They point out that there are also significant inequalities within the Maori and Pacific communities.

Inequality is not only about income. It is also about access to justice, proper housing, and opportunities in education. It is about the availability of preschools and jobs, and about what kind of food we can eat.

With high levels of inequality New Zealand is becoming a segregated society, with people in low income communities caught in poverty traps and cycles of deprivation.

Bad housing is connected to poor health. For children, this means more sickness and absences from school. There are fewer GP clinics and health services in poor communities.

The shops in low income suburbs stock cheap, poorer quality food. There are more pokie machines in low income suburbs,



The bottom three lines of this graph show how much money a single-person household in the lowest tenth, the middle, and the top tenth has to spend each year after tax. The top line shows how much money the average person in the top 1 percent has to spend before tax. Annual average figures are in 2010 NZ dollars. Used with permission.

and more loan sharks who prey on the illusion that borrowing money will bring relief from debt no matter what the interest rate.

Max says the degree of inequality has increased in recent decades, as the accompanying graph shows. This has occurred because of policies, enacted in many countries driven by notions that inequality provides incentives for economic development.

Under such theories, people who are excluded from the economic mainstream are not measured as a cost to development. This is described the fault of individuals and their failure to make good decisions or take employment opportunities. John Key has said people need food banks because they make poor choices.

This ignores the fact that hardworking people can face poverty when owners accept market realities and close down businesses in New Zealand to pay lower wages by operating offshore, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith suggests. The people who lose their jobs in these circumstances may even be blamed because they are not cheap, flexible or efficient enough.

While inequality has a much worse impact on the poor, it is bad for everyone, says Max. Recent research shows that in more equal societies people overall have more opportunities for social advancement

and better health and education.

Contributor Mary Richardson observes "we won't prosper long if we favour only the prosperous, because the success of our economy depends not just on the size of our GDP but on the reach of our prosperity".

Great income equality creates better prospects for young people and more potential for them to achieve personal fulfilment and contribute to the community of life.

Discussion questions for parishes:

- Social justice always puts equality as a prime value and goal because inequality undermines common life. According to philosopher Michael Sandel, when people of different backgrounds come in contact and negotiate with others they come to care for the common good. How can parishes enable this kind of social interaction?
- How does inequality matter to your parish? What kind of sharing overcomes some of the effects of inequality?
- Churches are in communities but are they confined to those communities? How does your church use its resources to connect with people across community divides?

Mayoral hopeful driven by career in ministry

By Marie Sherry

Hamilton mayoral candidate, Rev Ian Hanley, believes his years spent in the Methodist and Anglican ministries will serve him well as leader of the city.

Ian currently has an honorary appointment as priest associate at Melville Anglican Parish and was previously the presbyter of the Whangaparaoa Methodist parish.

He has enjoyed a long and varied career. He served as a police officer for 15 years and rose to the rank of Senior Sergeant, serving throughout New Zealand and in the United States.

Ian's parish appointments have been complimented by service as an industrial chaplain and Navy and Army chaplain where he became principal chaplain. Ian has also served as a seafarers' chaplain and hospital chaplain at North Shore Hospital.

He has a Master of Theology degree from the University of Oxford and has completed the New Zealand Institute of Management executive staff course.

He will continue his work at Melville Anglican Parish if he is elected as mayor or councillor.

"I hope the people of Hamilton can see the value in having someone who has served in the Methodist Church and

is currently servicing in the Anglican Church as their mayor or city councillor," he says.

"In many ways we're all the convergence of all our life experiences. Ministry has been a part of my life for many years and that translates into being a political leader. My faith is very much part of who I am and what I am. I will bring that in dealing with some very difficult questions."

Ian says he is a people person who likes to listen.

"In the police you learn to listen to people and not jump to a conclusion about anything. That is an important discipline. As a chaplain in the army you learn a lot about other cultures and other faiths. As a parish priest and a presbyter you're involved in the community.

"My approach to dealing with issues is not to start with the word 'no', but rather to say 'How can we deal with this or what can we do that will be helpful?' That translates into leading a council.

"Everyone will be there because somebody else has thought they bring a



Ian Hanley

gift on their behalf. It's a matter of honouring that as a team and then finding out where we should go and how we should relate to the city."

Ian has always been interested in politics and is standing as an independent candidate with no alliances to political parties.

"I think that's important because it means you don't have to keep a party line. I

would like councillors to think and reflect for themselves, but in the end we have to see that our decisions are going to be good for Hamilton for years to come."

Ian says he supports fluoride in drinking water, wants to encourage Tainui with the Ruakura Freight Hub, and will promote anti-pollution initiatives for the Waikato River. He wants to develop a business, housing and transport expo to grow the city, and he will expand Hamilton's theatre, arts and sports base.

Ian is married to Gwenda and has two adult children. He keeps fit with Nordic walking and can often be seen around the Waikato riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle.

Methodist congregations walk different paths on same-sex marriages

By David Hill

Methodist congregations and presbyters throughout the country have been grappling with the issue of same-sex marriage.

The Marriage Amendment Act that passed through Parliament in April and took effect on August 19 allows same-sex couples to get married in New Zealand for the first time.

Methodist president, Rev Rex Nathan, and vice president, Jan Tasker, responded with a pastoral letter to the Church, saying Methodist presbyters are permitted to officiate at same-sex marriages but are not required to do so, in line with the legislation. Local congregations can also make their own decisions on the use of their premises.

Some parishes entering this year's stationing process have felt pressure to make a quick decision on the topic. They include Northcote-Takapuna Methodist Parish which has opted not to host same-sex marriages.

In addition to her vice presidential role, Jan is the parish administrator at Northcote-Takapuna, and she says the Takapuna congregation has striven to be an inclusive congregation since the 1980s. Both congregations have had gay lay and ordained preachers in the past, and both congregations welcome gay people to their services.

Earlier this year, the congregations discussed two questions: 1) Would they allow their church buildings to be used for a same-sex marriage? And, 2) Would they be able to station a gay presbyter?

St Lukes Northcote voted strongly against hosting same-sex marriages and narrowly against stationing a gay presbyter. The Takapuna congregation voted narrowly in favour of hosting same-sex marriages, and 60 percent were in favour of stationing a gay presbyter.

"It wasn't what the Takapuna leaders expected," Jan says. "Because the vote was split we as a parish will not go ahead with either gay marriage or appointing a gay or lesbian minister at this time."

Northcote-Takapuna presbyter Rev Abhishek Solomon is willing to conduct same-sex marriages but he would look for another venue to hold the ceremony if he was asked to do so. Abhishek believes the parish will continue to discuss the issues.

Dunedin's Mornington Methodist congregation has opted to open its doors to same-sex marriages.

"Mornington has always been an inclusive church," parishioner Colin Gibson says.

"We would be more than happy for our ministers to conduct a same-sex marriage here. We think that is the logical situation. We have always supported gay rights, so we feel it is a perfectly normal

extension of this now that it's legal within the state."

In many parishes decisions are still pending.

Manawatu Methodist Parish minister Rev Bob Franklyn says his parish has several diverse congregations across four locations and is yet to reach a consensus.

"From a personal perspective, my position is that I would not solemnise a same-sex marriage but I am happy for the church to be used if the parish allows it.

"I want the parish to be able to come to a consensus but it is the type of issue that has the potential to create serious division if it's not handled properly."

A recent parish discussion resulted in one-third saying 'yes', one-third saying 'no' and one-third undecided. Bob says it may take some time before a consensus is reached.

Wellington Methodist Parish superintendent Rev Bruce Anderson says the parish is in the middle of a consultation that involves six congregations across three locations. These include English-speaking, Samoan, Tongan and Fijian language congregations. They have been asked to provide feedback to the parish council in a bid to form a parish-wide consensus.

"My gut feeling is that there will probably be too many divergent views to reach a consensus," Bruce says. His own position on same-sex marriage is much

clearer.

"If I was asked I would be very happy to conduct a same-sex marriage, but I just would not be able to do it on church property at this stage, which is a shame."

While English-speaking parishes are deciding at the local level Vahefonua Tonga decided at the synod level that no presbyters stationed to Vahefonua Tonga will officiate at same-sex marriages and those marriages will not be hosted in any Vahefonua Tonga parish.

Vahefonua Tonga superintendent Rev Setaita Kinahoi-Veikune explained this in a letter to Methodist general secretary Rev David Bush. She wrote that where a Tongan congregation shares the use of a Methodist property with an English speaking congregation, "this will be discussed with the parish council".

Sinoti Samoa superintendent Rev Tovia Aumua says that in line with the presidential team's pastoral letter the Samoan synod is leaving the decision whether or not to host or conduct same-sex marriages up to individual congregations and ministers.

Vase Vase ko Viti superintendent Rev Peni Tikoinaka says the Fijian synod has also left the decision of whether to conduct same-sex marriages up to individual congregations and ministers. At this time no MCNZ Fijian churches or presbyters will hold same-sex marriages.



Kevin Felstead, David Ayers, and Dan Gordon laid a wreath at the Menin Gate, Ieper (Ypres).

Sobering visit to Passchendaele

By David Hill

Visiting Passchendaele was a very sobering experience, says Waimakariri Mayor and Rangiora Methodist David Ayers.

David led a delegation to the opening of a new extension to the Passchendaele Museum in July. The museum commemorates the famous World War I battle near the village and David says it was a moving experience to visit the scenes of battle after the dedication.

Two fellow Waimakariri district councillors Kevin Felstead and Dan Gordon accompanied him on the trip. They visited the battlefields and cemeteries at Passchendaele and Messines and attended a memorial service at the Menin Gate War Memorial, where David read the soldiers' ode.

The Menin Gate memorial is in Ieper (or Ypres in French) and an evening memorial service has been held every day in English since 1928 to commemorate its liberation in World War I.

"To see the names on the memorials dedicated to the many representatives of several different countries who were missing and to look at where the engagements took place with such terrible loss of life, was a very sobering and at times not an easy experience."

The Passchendaele Museum extension

has a new wing entirely dedicated to the Battle of Passchendaele. It has an outdoor trench experience and a remembrance gallery and includes a bay that recognizes New Zealand's involvement.

More than 2,700 New Zealanders died at Passchendaele on October 12, 1917. It remains the biggest loss of life in a single day in New Zealand's history.

Passchendaele is in the Zonnebeke district in the Flanders region of Belgium. The Waimakariri delegation stayed four days in Belgium as guests of the Zonnebeke District Council.

David says the Zonnebeke district is made up of five small villages, including Passchendaele, with a total population of around 12,000.

Waimakariri and Zonnebeke have had a twinning relationship since 2007 and the Waimakariri Passchendaele Trust is exploring ways to develop the relationship further.

The Kiwis also visited Dorking in Surrey and London, where they met with local government authorities. Dorking is the main town in the Mole Valley district.

"Rangiora has had a relationship with Dorking going back to World War II, when we donated 2,400 food parcels to Dorking between 1948 and 1950," David says.

Kiwi's spiritual songs for kids reach international audience

A collection of children's songs by New Zealand Methodist hymn writer William (Bill) Wallace is set to be published on a leading progressive Christian website.

The Centre for Progressive Christianity website will carry the 43 songs that Bill has written for children and teenagers and gathered together under the title 'Sing Young, Sing Joyfully'.

In addition to the words of each song, the website will post its musical score and an MP3 file with its full tune. The MP3 file can be downloaded and played so the songs can be sung and performed by groups without a piano or organ.

"The songs are spiritual without being exclusively Christian," Bill says. "They can be sung in state schools without being construed as attempting to turn everyone into Christians."

"Their inclusiveness also makes them suitable for Sunday school or church services. Some songs were written for particular services such as Christmas but most are on general themes and they are more inclusive than many children's songs.

"I have attempted to put into the words

of the songs contemporary progressive insights that are compatible with the teachings of Jesus. Many of them spring out of my reflections on my own childhood experiences and what it is like to be a child."

The music tracks to the songs all feature piano by Barry Brinson accompanied by percussionist Liam Murray from St Andrews College. Bill is grateful to John McInnes, percussionist at Ngaio Union Church for pointing out the importance of having a good percussion beat in children's songs.

On the website the songs will be grouped under themes such as seeing God, ecology, sorrow, anger, forgiveness, thankfulness, following Jesus, and peace and justice.

A grant from the Prince Albert College Media and Communication Fund has helped Bill offset the costs of preparing Sing Young, Sing Joyfully for publication.

One of the first of the songs to be posted on the Center for Progressive Christianity website is reproduced in Kidz Korna in this edition of Touchstone.

See page 13.



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Roles of Women 1893 - 2013

To the Editor

This September marks the 120th anniversary of women getting the vote in New Zealand.

In England the Peoples (Equal Rights) Bill was not passed until 35 years later.

Twenty years ago in the Far North I visited the local museum where I grew up. There I read some of the names of those who had signed a petition for women's voting rights more than 100 years earlier.

This proved a moving experience due to my recognition of family names known to me. Most signatories lived on farms, in those days a half days journey from the nearest town. Some of those families had Methodist connections.

Today we may look back over 40 years of the progressively greater participation of women in local and national politics. This is not accidental. Many women co-operatively trained themselves for leadership.

However we need to remember those who in the past did have such opportunities. Some were our mothers and grandmothers.

One was a Taranaki woman, Jacqueline Sturm. She was one of the first Maori women to graduate with a master's degree. But her poems and short stories lay unpublished for two decades. As the wife of James K. Baxter, demands of motherhood overshadowed both her and her art.

Laurie Michie, North Shore

An open letter to NZ state primary school principals

Since September I've written to nearly all of you, and, according to one principal, my name is mud throughout your profession.

Some of you said my survey about religious instruction programmes was a total waste of time, diverting from your 'core task' of educating children.

Others welcomed it and asked for a copy of the results. Here they are and I believe they justify the time you spent on them.

My survey identifies 578 schools that have religious instruction classes run during school hours, outside the NZ Curriculum. I believe there are about 260 more still to be identified.

It identifies 62 schools that have dropped religious instruction in the past two years, and quotes 56 principals on the reasons their schools dropped it. High on the list were a dwindling supply of RI teachers and a need for more time for education.

I think the most significant result of the survey is to identify the curriculums used in each school. Last year, a debate raged in the media on whether religious instruction was evangelism in disguise but we lacked information about the actual teaching. Now we have it.

Following the survey I interviewed about a dozen members of the RI organisations and got sample lessons from them. I think I have evidence that some of them are openly evangelistic, others are almost totally values-based, and most are a mixture of the two. The most evangelistic programme is 'Connect', used by 57 schools.

The largest RI organisation is the Churches Education Commission. It has been using Connect but will stop doing so at the end of this year.

The survey revealed 12 schools don't know which organisations run their RI programmes and 56 don't know which curriculums they use.

The Ombudsman's office is following up 261 schools which have still not replied to my questionnaire. Expect a phone call from them. It is the biggest Official Information Act inquiry the office has done, with more than 1000 originally

refusing to provide information.

A bizarre side issue of the survey shows that: 92 schools say they do not teach science, even though this is a compulsory part of the NZ curriculum.

I have posted the results on my website, www.wesleyschair.net. This includes Ministry of Education background details, so others can do their own analyses and find whether these responses have regional or ethnic trends.

I have also posted samples of the actual lessons and a review of them. My hope is that you and your boards will read these and come to the view that none of them can be classed as education, a conclusion many of you have drawn already.

My review of key programmes in brief: The only RI syllabus that comes close to being educational is 'Cool Bananas', designed in Tauranga and taught in about 38 schools. Their coordinator, Grant Vincent, describes it as a values programme presented from a Christian perspective, and I agree. They are written to align the values with those in the NZ Curriculum.

The 'Connect' programme, taught in at least 57 schools, doesn't even pretend to be about values. The publisher's internet listing describes them as 'Australia's #1 Evangelical Christian school curriculum publisher'. There is a large emphasis on sin, and Jesus dying for our sins. A section of the leader's manual describes how to get students to join a church.

Christian Religious Education is a mixture of Bible stories, Christian beliefs and values reinforcing those outlined in the NZ curriculum. I found this misleading. Values are there, but they are co-opted to a religious purpose. It is not evangelism in the Jesus-died-for-your-sins style of Connect, but it is just as much a promotion of Christianity.

If schools' core task is educating children, why are 578 of you taking them out of education for half an hour a week for programmes like these?

David Hines, Auckland

**Got a bee in your bonnet?
Something in Touchstone get under
your skin?**

**Have an opinion about the issues
of the day?**

**Put your fingers on your keyboard
and write a letter to the editor.**



FROM THE BACKYARD

*Ask and you
will receive*

Gillian Watkin

Our driveway is short and tree lined. It also has a very attractive curve that makes it difficult to back out of.

It often surprises us how many people walk up our drive. As well as friends and neighbours, there are school children selling chocolate, religious missionaries of all varieties, and occasionally a sales person.

I was inside and saw the postie walking up the drive. It was little late for mail, although you never know with the mail these days. But no, she asked for some grapefruit. The postie has a friend who makes marmalade for fundraising and she needed some fruit. "I told her the grapefruit are back," the postie said.

For four years we have put grapefruit out for people to help themselves but this year something new has happened as she was not the first to ask.

Alan was standing out in the yard with a man and they were in earnest discussion. Later he told me the man had asked if we would be putting out the grapefruit as they make beautiful marmalade. So two retired gentleman passed the time swapping recipes.

There are those who tell us we are foolish. We should sell our grapefruit. Otherwise people would take them and sell them in their own place. The kids could take them and throw them about.

In fact, the kids did that last year, obviously playing cricket in the road in the middle of the night. The next morning we picked up the bits and

remembered what we used to get up to in our younger days.

We are well aware that if we wanted to sell them it would change the transaction completely. There is a trailer on the main road that is always full of pumpkins. They are marked with the price and there is a locked honesty box on the trailer and a big sign that says 'surveillance cameras operating'.

It is the main source of pumpkins for most of us around here, although there is often conversation about the surveillance and most of us imagine a little old lady sitting behind the lace curtains watching like a hawk.

It is probably none of those things. It is a true act of trust as it is with most honesty boxes and fruit stands throughout the country. Sometimes things go wrong but how important is it that the majority works in good faith?

The grapefruit have been out for four seasons and this means it has become an established custom in people's eyes. They are free to ask and we have made new friends.

How long does it take us to feel confident about asking for what we want? Or does politeness prevent us from asking?

Asking for a favour or a service, or an answer to a question is the act of weaving a silken web of human connection. Ask, and it will be given to you; search and you shall find, knock and the door will be open. (Matt7:7).



God of the past, present and future

President Rev Rex Nathan and Vice-President Jan Tasker

It is relatively easy to see God at work when we look backwards. Some of that has to do with the fact that we most often learn of God from Christ in Scripture, through stories and lessons that took place in the past.

These events were put into written form with the benefit of hindsight, when the authors' ability to see God's presence became clearer. Most of us are much better at looking back than looking around or forwards.

Think of the events that you remember vividly or impressed you in the first Church community you were involved in. These events are important moments in the memories of your church community.

They are so because they remind us of the amazing folks who have been before us. They also serve as reminders of what

has always been at the heart of church life: worshipping God and serving Christ.

We can look back and see how God has used each and every one of us to do amazing things. But can we look around and see God at work in the here and now?

It is obvious that the world is a very different place now than it was when many of us were young. And the role of the church is very different as well.

If we can be honest with each other, we face incredible challenges. Our numbers are far fewer than they were. The Church is no longer the people's first choice of where they choose to get married. We are not unique in these challenges, not by any stretch. Churches have always faced challenges; and these challenges are ours in the present.

Yet, there is something vitally important about what our Church community means now, what it represents to those of us who have chosen to make these places our home for worship and service.

During our visits to different places,

we have heard our people talk about their church and their community. They are comforted and loved by the people that surround them, and they are grateful to be stretched and challenged about the things of faith.

We have learned to put it this way: We are here, and we are committed to serving and ministering to our community. We also know that our society's priorities of 'bigger, better, faster, and stronger' are misplaced and misguided. We know that there is more to life; and we are eager to learn together what that thing is.

What do we really know about what is coming? Perhaps nothing, though we do know it will be unlike anything we might imagine. The pace of change is breathtaking; it can be overwhelming at times. We are old enough to remember when the purpose of a telephone was to call people or for people to call you. Now, telephones with thousands of apps attached are capable of processing more information than the recent Mars rover. Who knows what lies ahead?

But that's not the point. The lessons of Scripture are drawn from the past but more than anything else, they suggest the way forward. Jeremiah (29:11-14) says it this way: "I know the plans I have for you, says God, to give you a future filled with hope." Revelation (21:1-6) expands that thought: "the home of God is among us...God is making all things new!"

We are convinced that what lies ahead is a future filled with hope. As much as God was with us during our beginnings, and as much as God is with us in 2013, God will be with us in the years to come. There will always be a place for a church that knows that there is more to life than meets the eye.

God has been here, is here now, and will always be here. Our role remains to trust in that truth, to act in the confidence and hope that it brings. Thanks be to God!

Acknowledgement: This reflection was adapted from Marthane's Musings: www.marthame.wordpress.com.

A theology of water in thirsty times

Rev Bill Bennett, Rural Ministry Unit, Hawkes Bay

Much of creation, including ourselves, is made up of water. It is the universal element that ensures the continuation of life.

A theology of water is about asking ourselves in what ways water symbolises the life-giving Spirit of God in all creation and how we care for and utilise that resource. This comes at a time when there are a number of debates about how we should use our water resources.

Aotearoa New Zealand is an island nation, surrounded by the vast Pacific Ocean. We are situated in the westerly wind belt, and experience a constant succession of high and low pressure systems, with occasional intrusions from the sub-antarctic and the sub-tropics.

The availability of water was not a major issue for us in the past except for seasonal variations. As we have cut down huge areas of native bush, applied nitrogenous fertilisers to the soils, and intensified our agriculture, so we have altered the local climate, land use and soil profiles.

The net effect of all this has put great strains on natural waterways and aquifer systems, resulting in a degradation of the quality of water. Added to this the High Court has supported the government's

decision to sell four state-owned enterprises. This has bought a response from some Maori lobbyists who wish to claim prior customary rights over water resources.

A theology of water

There are over 700 references to water in the Bible. The Middle East has a relatively dry continental climate. Fertile valleys, rivers, wadis and oases are scattered among arid hills and deserts. So, water as a life-giving ingredient for human life and survival is a vital theme in the biblical narrative.

The first of the Hebrew people's two creation narratives at the beginning of Genesis depicts the centrality of water. The second creation story (Gen. 2:4-25) tells of a river flowing through the Garden of Eden with four tributaries.

To the Hebrews water is primarily a symbol of sustenance and life, a means of cleansing and purification. The abundance of all life comes from water. God is like rain that nourishes and washes. It is a purifying symbol. Water could also represent unknown danger and judgement, as in the stories of Exodus and Noah.

As we move into the New Testament many of these elements reappear in symbolic and sacramental ways. Above all the sacrament of baptism becomes a central act of spiritual cleansing and

renewal.

Water is liturgically and sacramentally developed in the rite of baptism, beginning with John the Baptist's action in baptising Jesus in the Jordan River. Baptism becomes a process of radical change, beginning in the individual, widening into the gathered and dispersed community, and a commitment to seek renewal and transformation in every part of life.

Implications for the wider community

One of the mainline churches' five principles of mission is to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth. Water is a vital ingredient in that commitment.

I have often heard farmers say, 'Because I am just a caretaker of the land I farm, I want to leave it to the next generations in a better condition than when I inherited it/bought it'. But these days farm ownership is complex. Often national or international companies share ownership and may well be removed from the day-to-day decisions on the farm.

Common to all who farm the land is the aim for profitability and a satisfying lifestyle. Currently the Hawke's Bay Regional Council is going through the consent procedures regarding the Ruataniwha water storage scheme that would build a dam on the Makaroro River

to irrigate a large part of the Ruataniwha Plains and reduce nitrate degradation of the Tukituki River.

What is vital for us in the Hawkes Bay is how the Makaroro dam will be utilised. On the face of it this dam will be a tremendous boon to the Ruataniwha region.

Agricultural profitability is a necessary objective. What we need to guard against is greed. Jesus told the parable of the farmer who decided he would build bigger and bigger barns to store his harvests so that he could relax - eat, drink and be merry. He up and died that night!

For us a theology of water is how we think about water as a gift of God, how we care for it and use it when it is abundant and when it is scarce, and how we share out this resource in a way that benefits everyone in the community.

Water is essential for all life. Baptism, along with the Eucharist, is one of the two dominical sacraments. The waters of baptism are life-changing, and signify the Spirit of God in our midst. The Bible starts with God and water and ends with God and water - the water of life (Rev. 22:1).

Bill Bennett has a new book of prayers and liturgies for rural communities and churches entitled 'The Shepherd's Call'. You can order it from him at bwbennett@nowmail.co.nz or 59 McGrath Street, Napier 4110.

TOUCHSTONE
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Touchstone is now available on-line.
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The Methodist Church has asked parishes to work against child poverty, abuse and youth suicide.

We are eager to print articles about what churches are doing in their communities for this initiative.

Write something and send it to us or simply drop us a line to tell us what you are up to.
Email: touchstone@paradise.net.nz or phone 03 381 6912.

Let the children live.



Comfortable lies we tell ourselves

By Laura Black, Methodist Mission Southern

A recent report published in the UK sets out to tackle the 'lies we tell ourselves' about poverty.

The report was jointly sponsored by four churches, including the Methodist Church.* Among its most challenging suggestions is that these lies are popular because they keep us from having to take any responsibility for poverty.

The New Zealand government's welfare reforms are predicted to cut over 6,000 people off benefits because they will 'fail' the new requirements, so it is timely that we also take a look at these myths about those on low incomes.

Myth 1: They are lazy and don't want to work. The greatest proportion of children in poverty in the UK is from working households. In New Zealand, the government plans to spend \$2.545 billion on Working for Families this year, about two-thirds of what it will spend on benefits to non-working families. This suggests that in New Zealand many children in poverty

also have a hard-working parent.

Myth 2: They are addicted to drink and drugs. In the UK fewer than four percent of beneficiaries report any kind of addiction. In New Zealand the government is budgeting for a similar proportion to have their welfare cut for failing a drug test (and that's allowing for the odd bit of pot staying in someone's system for upwards of 30 days.)

Myth 3: They are not really poor - they just don't manage their money properly. Statistics show that the poorest spend their money very carefully. Not surprising when the minimum wage, after tax, for an adult working full-time is less than the cost of renting a house in Auckland.

Myth 4: They are on the fiddle. In New Zealand the Ministry of Social Development's fraud unit found less than one cent in every ten dollars was fiddled.

Myth 5: They have an easy life. We constantly hear that being on a benefit has become a lifestyle choice. If that's the case, I have to ask: Was it simply a

coincidence that living on half the median wage became so popular just as the world economy tanked? Hmmm.

The welfare reforms that came into force in July aim to attack drug taking by those on benefits (but not Working for Families), unanswered arrest warrants for those on benefits (but not Working for Families) most of which will be for traffic fines, and lack of early childhood care for the children of those on benefits (but not Working for Families) at a time when uptake of early childhood education is above 93 percent nationwide.

It is hard to see how these moves will make a positive difference in the lives of those who are not working. Certainly none of these reforms create jobs, which are the only real answer to high rates of unemployment.

But at least it is now clear how New Zealanders might support such moves. Sometimes it's just easier to believe the myths than confront the reality.

*To see the full report, go the jointpublicissues.org.uk website and search for Truth and Lies Report under the Resources tab.

Stories can change the world

By Rev Martin Sungchel Oh, Alexandra-Clyde-Lauder Union Parish

When I recently returned home after a long meeting of the Tauwi Strategy and Stationing in Auckland, I reflected on the meeting.

First I thought what a privilege it is to be a member of this committee. I was ordained into the Korean Methodist Church in 1997 and transferred to New Zealand Methodist church in 2006 before coming to Alexandra, Central Otago. To me, it is still a huge learning curve to understand ministry in Aotearoa New Zealand.

In the Tauwi meeting, we discussed many issues that we as a church must deal with. One of them is family violence and child abuse, which is linked with the 'Let the Children Live' initiative that we launched at Conference 2012.

There are many different ways to deal with this issue. I would like to share a story from the time when I was a student in Methodist Training Unit in Auckland in 2002. One day in class, we had a discussion about family violence. Though I cannot remember all the details I clearly remember the conversation I had with the colleagues during morning tea.

That conversation changed my way of parenting to my two children Esther, who at the time was about six years old, and Harim, who was four.

In Korea smacking and any other form of physical punishments were normal ways to discipline children, both at school and home.

Even in church, I often heard the sermon based on the text "Do not withhold discipline from your children; if you beat them with a rod, they will not die," (Prov 23:13).

When I first became a minister, I preached the same message with these same texts: beat your children with a rod if they do not listen to you or do something wrong.

This was the only way of disciplining children that I had learned and I used it with my own children. I did not have any doubts about this because it had been proved by the Bible text.

But this was a dangerous understanding of a Bible passage to justify my actions without further exploration! It was not helpful to interpret the text in literal terms.

The turning point to me was that conversation I had with two colleagues. They were both mothers and they told me, they do not beat their children to discipline them. I asked them how they deal with their children when they do not listen, and they shared their ways of handling these situations.

They do not use physical punishment but do set certain rules for their children. They could punish their children if they broke the rules. The punishments varied, such as no television for a week or staying in the bathroom for 10 minutes. These punishments were restrictions rather than a form of violence.

Disciplining children requires huge patience. I realized that the discipline of children is not an issue for children. It is an issue for

parents. We all made mistakes when we were kids. Children need to be guided by healthy discipline when they make some mistakes. Not by violence.

It took me a few months to change my way of parenting. It was not easy but I tried and succeeded. Fortunately, Harim did not receive any physical punishment for discipline unlike Esther. This was before the anti-smacking law was introduced in New Zealand.

I feel incredibly sorry for Esther and have asked her to forgive the wrong steps I took while parenting her. Now both of my children are young adults, and we laugh about it.

I was so blessed to learn from my two classmates. Their story changed my parenting from violent to non-violent discipline.

'Stories' are a powerful tool for education and can be life changing. Jesus told many stories to his followers. The disciples remembered those stories and retold them to others.

As his follower and minister I re-interpret and share those stories every Sunday. My interpretation may or may not be the same as others but the intention is same: to know the love of God and how to live as people of God in our context.

You may have different opinions about my story but I hope it will encourage others to share their stories and help parents and children. We cannot transform our world in a second but, by sharing our stories with others, we may positively influence their lives.

HONEST TO GOD

By Ian Harris

The science of religious experience

People who realise they are living in a secular culture are likely one day to get around to exploring the ultimates in life from that perspective.

Most will then probably accept that for practical purposes this world is all there is, and it is in and through our life in the here and now that we will experience all we will ever know of God - so let's get on with it.

Others, who uphold and defend the traditional religious

approach, will often then object by flashing their trump card: "Yes, but what about mystery? What about mysticism?"

I have a problem with that. The card is often played to devalue the worth of secular understanding and experience, as if there really were another world out there which is infinitely more valuable than the one we actually live in.

Another problem is that it perpetuates the old trap of 'the God of the gaps' - that is, using God to explain all the aspects of life for which we have no rational explanation. As the sciences produce satisfactory explanations for more and more phenomena, the gaps have got narrower and narrower, seemingly squeezing out any space for God. But to locate God in areas for which we have no other explanation - yet - is to woefully miss the point of what God consciousness is all about.

More pertinently, some neuroscientists suggest that mystical experiences are not necessarily proof of a world beyond this one but part and parcel of the way people are. Twelve years ago *New Scientist* and *Newsweek* both reported experiments that link certain classic religious experiences to observable changes in the activity of the brain.

At the University of Pennsylvania, Andrew Newberg and Vince d'Aquili collected brain-imaging data from eight people skilled in Buddhist meditation and a number of Franciscan nuns at prayer. They wanted to see whether some parts of the brain were excited or dampened when the subjects felt themselves to be entering a state of oneness with the universe and awe at the mystery of life.

The researchers injected a radioactive tracer into a vein, then tracked the blood flow in the brain. At the peak of the mystical experience, they found that the parietal lobe, which gives a person the sense of his or her bodily separateness and of the space around them, went

quiet. This led to a blurring of the boundaries that confined them and a profound sense of infinite space and eternity.

The scientists also found a link between other elements of

religious experience (such as awe, joy and feelings of deep significance) and heightened activity in the limbic system, deep inside the temporal lobes. The limbic system tags emotions and events as especially important. That is

relevant to rituals, since the repetition of chants, movements or music, and the ritual presentation of potent symbols, can trigger associations that lie deep within the memory.

Millions of people have had experiences such as these, and they did not need the neuroscientists to validate them. What is interesting, however, is that in the recent past researchers have begun exploring the biological bases of religious and mystical experience in so open a way. Some scientists advance the theory that the brain is hardwired for these experiences. A new term has been coined to describe the field: neurotheology.

How people interpret all this will depend on their own preconceptions. Sceptics will use the evidence to insist that it proves nothing about God. Religious people will say that it merely demonstrates how the brain works as a channel for transcendence, and this is all part of God's grand design.

Newberg himself is studiously neutral. "The fact that spiritual experiences can be associated with distinct neural activity does mean that such experiences are mere neurological illusions," he says. And again: "There is no way to determine whether the neurological changes associated with spiritual experience mean that the brain is causing those experiences...or is instead perceiving a spiritual reality."

The neurotheologians have performed a useful service by explaining how these deep and life-changing experiences operate in the brain. In doing so, they have not explained them away. They do, however, help to explain the persistence and even the validity of religion in secular society - the title of Newberg's study is *Why God Won't Go Away*.

Perhaps they may also keep open the door for a more mature understanding of religious experience on the part of some who have been too quick to dismiss it out of hand.



Ian Harris

Liberal chat room abuzz about communion

In late July layperson Frank Cody submitted a brief note to the on-line chat room of the Methodist Church's Liberal Network about his discomfort at the doctrine of atonement that accompanies traditional communion services.

Frank's comment kicked off one of the liveliest exchanges the Liberal Network has had since it was formed six years ago.

He wrote: "To participate in a congregation of folk who are my friends, whom I respect and who enhance my experience of life, I take part in the sacrament of communion in the spirit of showing fellowship with others.

"However, no longer believing the doctrine of atonement there is a troublesome feeling of insincerity. Perhaps it is little different from heartily singing hymns that are composed of long-abandoned theological beliefs. How do others deal with this issue?"

In a later interview, Frank asked why the Church continues to accept the traditional view of Christianity as though there have been no academic discoveries in the last couple of centuries.

"Some years ago it came as a great relief to me to join with respected members of my local church who were studying progressive Christianity and reputable scholarship that provided new understandings of the Bible.

"I was relieved that traditional creeds and dogma that were taught in our youth need no longer be the hallmark of Christianity. In other words I need not believe in what had become to me unbelievable - atonement in particular. I could accept that the good news is that heaven or the kingdom of God is here on earth.

"I continue to be a regular church attender and participate in worship but there is so much going on that is irreconcilable. Almost everywhere we participate in a church or community event, such as funerals and formal occasions, the old beliefs are reinforced."

Among those who responded to Frank in the chat room was Rev Neil Keesing.

Neil wrote: "Who said that to participate in Communion we have to believe certain things about it? No one should exclude themselves for that reason or any other.

"Communion is about koinonia: fellowship and common-union with followers of Jesus and those curious about him taking bread and wine (or juice) as a symbol and a means of expressing togetherness in our broad Christian journey together. These things are especially so within Methodism, and are surely one of our present strengths.

"During the Communion service I always break 'the

Bread of Life' then lift up the 'Cup of Salvation'. I give a very short and simple liturgy with no blood-and-guts theology. My present congregation and two previous ones have affirmed this approach."

Frank Lowry suggested that the sacrament of communion could be likened to a sacrament of compassion, much like Jesus washing the disciples' feet.

"I see the symbols used at the sacrament as a way to recommit ourselves to compassionate behaviour day by day. This is how I now comprehend this monthly event and have done so for some considerable time, not always successfully I must admit.

"What would the church be like and what the world would be like if a practice of compassion was to the forefront of relationships - person to person, country to country, nation to nation?"

David Patchett wrote that the communion has strayed hugely from what Jesus and his friends did when they gathered to share a meal together to reminisce, affirm their strong bonds as friends and think about a very unpromising future especially for the leader.

"They did what people do in times of joy, turmoil and great anxiety, that is they shared fellowship, food and drink and discussed scenarios for the future.

"For a number of years I did not take communion and when I decided to do so again I wrote these words:

Communion

*I feel in touch with my departed loved ones
Those who have influenced me deeply in my life.
It's my tribute to faithful people
Who have upheld their beliefs and ideals
Over many generations.
It's to acknowledge 'Jesus Acts' I see,
The love of one for another,
Small deeds of kindness -- mostly unknown,
The laughter of little children,
The promise of youth,
The blossoming of experience in the not so young,
The development of wisdom,
The fragility of life,
The beauty of the earth.*

New liturgies for Holy Communion on offer

The Methodist Church's Faith and Order Committee has prepared five new liturgies for Holy Communion that will be presented to Conference this year.

The Church's current liturgy is now 20 years old, and rather than update it or replace it with a single new liturgy, Faith and Order opted to provide congregations choice and encourage new voices.

Chair of the Faith and Order's Liturgy Commission Terry Wall says the new liturgies will be presented to Conference in preliminary form in a booklet and will be available on the Methodist Church website.

He encourages congregations to use them and provide comments to the commission about them. Once the feedback has been received the commission will finalise and publish the new liturgies.

"The commission established working groups that prepared the liturgies. They did not set out to revise or update the current liturgy but came up with new and fresh services," Terry says.

"While each one has a different emphasis, they are all full services that congregations can use when they celebrate Holy Communion."

The five new Eucharist services are

1) Liturgy of the Heart, which focuses on the Jesus way; 2) Eucharist of the Risen Life, which focuses on seeing and experiencing new life; 3) For Everyone Born a Place at the Table, which focuses on inclusiveness; 4) Emphasis on the Spirit - Te Wairua, which focuses on the Trinity, and 5) In the Wesleyan Spirit.

Terry says the new communion services are based on contemporary theology and explore such topics as God's hospitality, the subversive memory of Jesus, the sacramental meal that nourishes our spirits, and the promise of new creation.

All of the new communion services are in English but the liturgy commission will support the Methodist Church's Pacific language synods to develop new liturgies that reflect contemporary life in New Zealand.

Commission member Rev Tony Franklin-Ross says the Liturgy Commission is keen to develop a bilingual Maori/English services and also multi-lingual liturgies that can be used in the Church's many multicultural gatherings.

The new liturgies will be posted on the Faith and Order section of the Methodist Church's website. Also in the Faith and Order section of the website, under 'Liturgical Letters', is a pamphlet Terry has prepared on the theology of the Eucharist.



Like Wellington, Drama Christi alive and kicking

By Hilaire Campbell

The latest production of Drama Christi was a home grown production that examined life in the capital in the current political climate.

Drama Christi, is the theatre group based that has been based at Wellington's Wesley Methodist Church since 1947.

The play it presented last month was written by a member of the troupe, Bill Thomas. Bill says his latest effort, *The Man Who Came To Wellington*, is longer than his other plays and it is more controversial.

Sir Wallace Warburton, is the protagonist. He is an unscrupulous business tycoon who sets out to destabilise Wellington's economy in order to prove that his beloved Auckland is the hub of New Zealand.

Needless to say Prime Minister John Key plays Warburton's best card with his recent comment that Wellington is nothing but a bunch of antiquated government buildings. Warburton gets his comeuppance when he is forced to stay with a family in Karori and all his plans unravel. Bill won't reveal the climax



Bill Robinson and Mel Boyce star in 'The Man Who Came to Wellington'.

of the play but he says there is something in it for everybody.

"The play is about capitalist greed and social justice. There's no religious intent but the play espouses Christian values."

It is well produced he says, and the cast is excellent. "Every member of the cast is totally dedicated."

Director Daphne Pilaar says she committed to the play because she has huge respect for Bill and his work. "But we're a little nervous. We usually do something tried and true."

Drama Christi produces on average, three plays a year on a range of themes. Drama Christi

originally produced only religious plays, many of which were incorporated into Wesley Church services.

Now their platform has widened, and many non-churchgoers are involved. Daphne says Drama Christi has an important role in community outreach and caters for people with varying needs. They may be looking for a new direction, or just somewhere to belong.

"There is a place for everybody. The biggest challenge today is finding a play that will support a large cast."

Drama Christi is grateful to the Wesley Wellington Church for its help with publicity, and its provision of a fully equipped 50 seat theatre. Half of all Drama Christi's profits feed back into the church.

Daphne says Drama Christi's next play, *The Fourth Wise Man*, is already in the wings. She says, "We are in it for the long haul." She is keen to assure the wider public that Wellington is indeed a thriving city, not as Warburton would have us believe.

"Drama Christi is like Wellington, alive and kicking, and we expect it to have a great future," she says.

50 years doing hard yards in Palmerston North

An old blackboard and easel helped display the focal point for the 50th anniversary of the Methodist Social Service (MSS) in Palmerston North.

As people arrived for worship at Wesley Broadway on Sunday 11 August, they could see the names of 416 persons who have served as volunteers, 91 who have been employed as staff, and 84 former or present members of the governing board. These were the men and women who have made care and support for others available.

They include counsellors, tutors, shop managers, office and workshop staff, and van drivers, both full and part-time.

Over its five decades of work, MSS staff numbers have fluctuated from four to 15 years, depending on the funds available, and the number of programmes it could provide to respond to needs not being adequately met in the community.

The event especially remembered with love and gratitude those who have died in recent years.

Also on view was a birthday cake without candles, in keeping with the spirit of worship on this day.

Rev Loyal Gibson says the anniversary was not just a celebration of achievements but an opportunity to express thanks for the many friendships made and enriched among those working together at MSS, and for the fulfilling experience of contributing to the wellbeing of the community.

The words on a banner said it this way, 'It is better to light a candle than to



Dr Mervyn Hancock cut the anniversary cake, watched by Una Collins.

curse the darkness', Mother Teresa.

Loyal and Methodist Missions Aotearoa convener Rev Michael Greer led the anniversary.

About 100 people shared lunch afterwards. It was a time to renew friendships and view a 50 year 'time line' of photos and information, displayed around the walls of the hall and prepared by Graham Pritchard.

Dr Mervyn Hancock cut the cake. Mervyn's care for others and professional guidance has benefitted many lives ever since MSS was established in 1963. After this was a 'meeting of memories', when people could share with others.

Three former MSS directors - Roy Bowden, Phillip McConkey and Gail Munro - spoke, as did the current manager, Nici Scott-Savage.

Word for Today available as an app

The Word for Today is a daily devotional written by Bob and Debby Gass and published by Rhema Broadcasting Group. It brings relevant insight to Scripture every day and resonates with readers as they invariably find it applies to their current circumstances.

Often readers express their wonder at how a particular day's devotion appeared to be 'written just for them':

"Yesterday I woke very early and couldn't get back to sleep as my mind kept going over some unwise choices I had made some years ago which have had repercussions since. Many times I have committed these matters to the Lord but when I woke and couldn't get back to sleep this time, it was really bugging me.

"Then I read the reading for the day in The Word for Today. It spoke right into that situation and reminded me that God is greater than our mistakes and when we commit them to Him, He has a way of turning it around so that 'all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose,' (Romans 8.28).

"What a relief! Thank you so much for the encouraging readings in The Word for Today

which so often speak right into my situation at that specific time. Only God can do that for so many people in so many places at the same time."

Every day, tens of thousands of people throughout New Zealand are encouraged and uplifted by its relevant insights. Peppered with practical tips and strategies on applying Biblical principles to life, The Word for Today encourages readers to follow Christ and read His Word - the Bible.

Available as a booklet, via a daily email or online at rhema.co.nz, The Word for Today is also available as a mobile application for Apple and Android phones and tablets.

Apart from the obvious ability to access it when and where-ever you are The Word for Today app has a number of other benefits. You can hear Bob Gass read each day's message, you can read along while listening to Bob, read the day's Soulfood 'Bible in a year' readings, and even search for readings on particular subjects.

The Word for Today app is free and can be downloaded from either the Google Play app marketplace or Apple App Store.

Fresh Expressions Aotearoa NZ - new ministry for changing times

God is at work in our communities and we, as church, need to discover what this means and join in.

This is the idea behind 'Fresh Expressions', the movement to create contemporary styles of Christian ministry.

Fresh Expressions first developed as a joint initiative of the Methodist and Anglican churches in the UK. It has now spread to other countries including the United States, New Zealand and Australia.

It started when the Church of England examined the statistics it collects each year and discovered two facts. One was the well-known trend that overall membership in the church was falling. The other was that 20 percent of the churches were bucking this trend and often these churches were not working with their communities in the traditional way.

The Methodist Church in the UK recognised the potential this research could release and decided to partner the Church of England on the journey. This led to the formation of a national team of people who created Fresh Expressions.

Now Fresh Expressions is one of the most important movements for mission in the UK. More than nine denominations and organisations work in partnership, and they report that over the past eight years more than 1200 fresh expressions of church have been planted.

So just what is a fresh expression of church?

A fresh expression is a form of church for our changing culture. The approach of fresh expressions is to listen to people,

enter their culture, encourage discipleship and form Christian communities.

A phrase like 'fresh expressions of church' can be vague. Sometimes the label is used to cover almost anything - even a new church noticeboard. But the important thing is intention: When a new mission project begins, what is the intention?

If it is to work towards establishing a new community or congregation for those who have never been involved in church or once were but left for whatever reason, then it is a fresh expression of church in the making. A fresh expression of church like this may look very different to traditional church.

The aim of a fresh expression is not to provide a stepping stone into existing church, but to form a new church in its own right. So it is important to decide the direction you are heading in, before you begin the journey.

In New Zealand fresh expressions began in 2011 when a group of people got together who believed that in our fast-changing world fresh expressions would be a way to reach people outside the existing church

Fresh Expression Aotearoa NZ (FEANZ) is now a registered charitable trust. In partnership with Fresh Expressions in the UK, FEANZ is responsible to support and providing training resources. These include vision days for churches, parishes and synods



and fresh expressions ministry courses.

The ecumenical partners of FEANZ are the Anglican Church, the Methodist Church, the Baptist Church, and the Wesleyan Methodist

Church, and conversations are on-going with other others.

A national FEANZ team has been formed along with three Fresh Expression Strategy Team (FEASTs) based on geographical areas of Auckland, Lower North Island and the South Island. These areas will reduce in size as additional FEASTs are established.

Each FEAST is responsible to support, encourage and train people within its geographical area. The national structures will be broad-based and ecumenical and they will focus on grassroots rather than formal structures.

A key aim of FEANZ is to tell the stories of fresh expression happening around New Zealand to encourage those who are working on the ground and stimulate others into forming new ways of being church.

FEANZ organisers say they want to get the principles of fresh expressions into the DNA of its partners. Its light structure allows FEANZ to react quickly to the movement of the Holy Spirit.

For more information see contact Rev Bob Franklyn on bobfranklyn57@yahoo.co.nz or 06 326 7460 or visit www.freshexpressions.org.uk/guide.



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Jeremiah and our mourning earth

Recently, American journalist, environmentalist and Methodist Sunday school teacher Bill McKibben came to speak in Dunedin. Hundreds turned up to hear him.

He discussed the increasingly urgent need for us all to care more for the planet that sustains our common life. If humanity is to have a future we need to take radical action now to severely limit greenhouse gas emissions.

Like Jeremiah centuries ago, Bill McKibben is aware of the human capacity to spoil and defile God's creation. Jeremiah writes of the people of Israel after they had been delivered by God from captivity in Egypt "And I brought you into a plentiful land to enjoy its fruits and its good things. But when you came in, you defiled my land and made my heritage and abomination (Jer 2:7). Nothing much appears to have changed.

According to some passages of scripture God is believed to vent God's anger into the ecosystems that sustain us, when we stray from God's ways of justice

and love. For example, in Jeremiah 4: 28 God declares "For this the earth shall mourn and the heavens above be dark; for I have purposed; I have not relented, nor will I turn back."

The biblical image of a mourning earth is of direct relevance today, whether or not we believe God to be directly implicated. Modern day interactions between the earth and humankind and many of our modern technologies contribute to the earth's grief and mourning.

For example, before the advent of nuclear power stations the tsunami that hit Japan in March 2011 would have had only a local effect. With the destruction of the Fukushima nuclear power plant by the tsunami, however, the ramifications for vast areas of planet earth are far more profound. Each day 330 tons of radiation-contaminated water is dumped into the Pacific Ocean.

The effects of the radiation released in Fukushima on human health, are now being experienced as far away as the United States. Engineers do not appear to

have the technical ability to stem the radiation flowing from Fukushima. The radiation will not decay for hundreds of thousands of years.

In Jeremiah 2 we read "Be appalled, O heavens at this: be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the Lord, for my people have hewed for themselves broken cisterns that can hold no water". The broken cisterns of the Fukushima nuclear power plant continue to pour radiation into the sea.

This is appalling, shocking and distressing for the earth, the sea, the fish, for humankind and for God. Creation is groaning in a way which appears not to be leading to new birth but to environmental poisoning and decay.

In the Season of Creation which we enter during September may we do all we can to pray for and support those who now live radiation-contaminated lives in Japan, the USA, and elsewhere. It is a tragic irony that people living in the United States are now suffering as a result of radiation from Japan, considering what happened on

GREG HUGHSON

REFLECTS ON THE SEASON OF CREATION

Hiroshima Day in 1945.

Let's work for a world where renewable energy projects replace sources of energy which, when destroyed by tsunamis, technical mistakes or human aggression, may potentially contaminate the entire world and plunge the earth and all its species into mourning.

Let us hear once again the urgent words of Jeremiah to "return, everyone from your evil way, and amend your ways and your deeds".

May we draw on the wisdom of God (and of people like Bill McKibben inspired by God) to invest in renewable energy that does not have the potential to poison entire ecosystems. We should withdraw investments from the any industry involved with the harvesting of any more fossil fuel.

Let's prove Jeremiah wrong in Jeremiah 4:22 when he conveys his understanding of God's assessment of humankind "For my people are foolish; they know me not; they are stupid children; they have no understanding. They are 'wise' in doing evil! But how to do good they know not."

Time for the Church to rediscover politics

There is so much that is going on in the world that troubles me. But perhaps what disturbs me most is the silence.

It seems to me that we as Christians have lost our voice and have become content to take whatever the market serves up! Have we forgotten that God cares for all people and not just us?

I have been reading a disturbing book, *Inequality: A New Zealand Crisis* edited by the journalist Max Rashbrooke. It contends that income inequality in New Zealand "has widened faster in recent decades than in most other developed nations," and is "one of the most significant and complex issues confronting New Zealand today."

New Zealand is becoming a profoundly unequal society where the wealth of the country is increasingly concentrated in the hands of the top one percent of the population. The consequences for ordinary New Zealanders will be disastrous. Why

aren't churches talking about what is happening? Are we blinded by possessions and technology?

British historian Owen Chadwick has argued, "Methodism was a response to the coming of machines and the new industrial slums where there were no churches. If the official churches were slow to help them, then let an unofficial church send people out to show them the true message."

John Wesley, the first Methodist grew up in a relatively privileged family. In Wesley's time there existed a kind of 'unholy alliance' between the Church of England and the English class system in particular, the nobility. Artist and engraver William Hogarth (1697-1764), provided a vivid picture of English class society in his engraving of a bishop of the Church of England sitting on a moneymaking machine flanked by the English king and a judge while the machine poured money into a chest with a royal coat of arms.

The emergence of the Methodist movement constituted a second reformation but this time, unlike Luther's reformation, not just for theological reasons but also for socio-political reasons. It sought the alleviation and amelioration of the devastating effects of the Industrial Revolution.

In other words, it sought to end the growing suffering and poverty inflicted on society which ensured the rich grew richer and the poor remained poorer. This dangerous memory needs to be recovered by the people called Methodists. The sooner the better.

It was encouraging to read about the politics of Pope Francis. "Getting involved in politics," he said recently, "is a Christian duty: We Christians cannot be like Pilate and wash our hands clean of things!"

Politics concerns all of us. It is deeply embedded in the gospel expressed in values such as justice, love, compassion, equity,

CONNECTIONS

By Jim Stuart

truth, peace, healing. It's how we give expression to what it means to be human. Jesus knew he had to go to Jerusalem. I suspect he also knew what the cost would be for him.

We cannot turn our backs on the injustices and inequities of society. If we do, we reduce the church to a 'feel-good' community; a private spiritual exercise for the elect.

The incarnation makes Christianity a profoundly political force and no Christian community can afford to remain silent when people are treated unfairly and denied decent work. We need to figure out how to stand up against all that accumulated money and power to demand that every person is treated with respect.

Maybe if we do it church by church we can start something that will spread throughout the land.

Continuity in the midst of change

Peter MacKenzie: Executive Officer of UCANZ

When my parents moved out of the house they had lived in for 50 years, I thought that I had lost the 'home' where my childhood memories were held.

As their new house was being built I could only see the new structure and certainly had no sense that this could become a new place that I could call home (as children of whatever age often call their parents' house!).

It wasn't until my parents had moved in, bringing with them the treasures of a long life, that the transformation happened and the new house became a home. A few familiar pictures, dust collectors on the shelf, and the cat on the chair, all contributed to connecting the old house with the new.

A lot of literature in organisational psychology is focussed on change and helping people adapt to the constant

change that is part of modern society. Change management has become a task in itself and courses are run on how to implement change. What is

there is also an equal push for people to find continuity.

That is illustrated by the child who takes a much loved teddy bear in to hospital, or the elderly person who plasters their rest home wall with memorabilia from their lives. In the midst of change and turmoil, humans long for a connection with their familiar past that eases the stress of change.

Church life is similar. Faced with change, congregations will always find that there are people who hold on to the familiar - relics, traditions, music. Many consider these people to be resisters of change, who need to be managed into a more positive attitude. We've got some wonderful labels for them: stick in the muds, gatekeepers, diehards, dinosaurs, etc. They are seen as obstacles to change and sometimes their views are dismissed quite

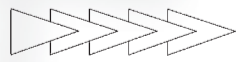
cheaply.

Yet there seems to be a psychological role for such people. They are the holders of continuity. Simply by affirming the past, they remind us that we are connected to a history.

Instead of seeing such people as resisters of change, we might consider them to be advocates of continuity. They remind us of the journey that has brought us to this point, and that is an essential requirement for all of us to accept change.

There is no doubt that the church is facing a huge amount of change at the moment and the reality is that we do need to change. But here's a plea for continuity - remember the journey we have been on, celebrate those who celebrate history, affirm the equilibrium between the new and the old, and share stories of the past along with dreams of the future.

Working Together
Cooperative Ventures



less focussed on is the flip side of change - continuity.

There seems to be a psychological equilibrium between change and continuity. Remember the old saying 'the more things change, the more they stay the same'. It is clear that when there are times of great change

Social housing project to replace Beach Haven church

Low cost housing for people with disabilities is in short supply, and this is especially true in pricey suburbs such as those on Auckland's North Shore. Now a creative initiative by Methodist Mission Northern is going to provide seven 'independent living' units for people with disabilities in Beach Haven.

The development will see Birkenhead Methodist Parish turn the property where the Beach Haven Methodist Church now stands over to the Mission's Airedale Property Trust on a 50 year lease.

The Trust will in turn remove the church buildings and develop the units. The development will be a partnership with the Government thanks to a Social Housing Fund Capital Grant that will pay half the cost of the units.

Airedale Property Trust general manager Bruce Stone says the Beach Haven housing development will provide housing that fits the physical and social requirements of people with disability.

"A number of studies have shown that such pressures as high housing costs, uncertain tenures and poor quality of rental stock can push people with disabilities into residential care and even exacerbate the effects of their disability.

"They are then dislocated from their communities into high cost care and support facilities. This shifts the cost of what is primarily

a housing problem onto the health and social services sectors."

Bruce says the Beach Haven housing development will help address this by providing suitable housing with facilities and amenities that will support people with disability.

"We have experience as providers this type of accommodation. Our sister trust Lifewise provides home care support to 300 people who are living with a disability.

"There is a limited supply of housing for people with disability in the North Shore area. Lifewise sees the impact on North Shore families who have adult children with disability who have to live on the other side of Auckland because there is no affordable housing on the North Shore.

"When people with disability are housed away from their natural support network, it imposes added cost and social isolation on them," Bruce says.

The Beach Haven housing units are designed to foster independent living. Three buildings will provide 15 bedrooms in one, two and four bedroom units. They are close to shops and social services.

The development is scheduled to be completed during 2014. Airedale Property Trust will project manage the construction and the completed properties.

Bruce says a key element of the initiative is a joint approach with



Beach Haven Methodist Church will hold its final service on September 29th.

Lifewise.

"Lifewise is an experienced care provider that currently supports more than 1300 older people and 300 people with a disability in their homes. Lifewise is well-positioned to support the Beach Haven residents if they choose."

Bruce says while it is sad that the housing development will take the place of a much-loved church, it is important that the development will maintain the Methodist name in Beach Haven and the parish retains ownership of the property.

Beach Haven church shuts door on decades of worship and service

When Beach Haven Methodist Church gives way to a new social housing project, it will end a 72 year history of Methodist worship on the prominent site.

The Church will hold its final service on the last Sunday in September.

Parishioner Margaret Gale has attended Beach Haven Methodist Church for more than 50 years and she says it holds many memories of worship, Sunday school, weddings, funerals, church fairs and community use.

Margaret says the Beach Haven church has a tradition of offering activities and social services for the community. It hosted Beach Haven's first 'Community House', and in recent years it has been home to three different Korean Methodist congregations.

The Beach Haven church was 'built in a day' through a working bee in 1939. In 1955 the congregation purchased the adjoining property to erect a hall.

With the opening of the Auckland Harbour Bridge in 1959 the population of the suburbs across the harbour from Auckland grew. The parishes of Glenfield and Beach Haven were combined and a parsonage built at Beach Haven.

Margaret says the 1960s were the heyday of the church. "At its peak the Sunday School had 130 pupils on the roll and 23 in the Bible Class. From 1965 a youth club operated on Friday nights. There were choirs, Women's Fellowship and fund raising. It was a busy, happy group.

"Maori church services were held in the church monthly on Sunday afternoons from 1965 to 1973. A small kitchen was added to the hall so outside organisations could use the building. These included ballet, Keep Fit, Alcoholics Anonymous,

St. Johns and a play centre."

In 1973 Beach Haven Methodist Church formed a joint union with the Presbyterian Church in Birkdale Road, with the title of St Phillips Union Parish.

Church services were held in the Presbyterian buildings and the Sunday school was held in the Methodist hall. In 1975 both church buildings were used as 'community houses'. A relocatable classroom was moved onto land behind the Beach Haven hall to hold a crèche and classes for women and children.

In the late 1980s the two St Phillips congregations dissolved their union. The Beach Haven Methodist Church once again became part of the Birkenhead Parish.

Margaret says in 2001 the Beach Haven parsonage was sold and a relocatable house placed at the back of the church to provide a lounge, toilets, kitchen and two classrooms. The church interior was turned around to take advantage of the new facilities.

"Beach Haven is a real community. We have nine congregations in a three kilometre area. We all join together for an annual Easter 'Walk of Faith' and it always begins at Beach Haven.

"The Beach Haven congregation is now mainly made up of older women though we do have a number of individuals from other cultures who worship with us. The Korean Methodist congregation that worships at the church often use it for prayer meetings and other events. They have been a real joy to us."

Last year Birkenhead Methodist Parish decided it could no longer afford to maintain the Beach Haven property. It entered into a 50 year lease agreement with Methodist Mission Northern's Airedale Property Trust, who will develop the site for social housing.



Tindall Foundation Grants

Methodist Mission Aotearoa is a Faith Funding Manager acting on behalf of the Tindall Foundation, a major philanthropic trust in NZ. By way of Faith Funding Manager grants, the Tindall Foundation provides assistance to a wide variety of community services throughout the whole of NZ.

The Foundation seeks to engage providers in proven and positive ways, to avoid and respond to

problems by supporting, enhancing and mobilising each community's own resources.

MMA regional allocation committees will consider applications from within the Methodist Church of NZ for Tindall Foundation assistance for essential social service initiatives over the next few months.

It is a limited fund and to be considered, an application must qualify within the very clear criteria

established by the Foundation's trustees.

Further information on the criteria, the grants possibly available and if applicable, an application form can be obtained from the Convenor of Methodist Mission Aotearoa: Michael Greer

12A Stuart Street, Levin, 5510

Email: mgreer@gdesk.co.nz

Phone: 06 368 0386

Cell: 021 632 716

In making any initial enquiry, please provide a brief outline of the purpose and nature of the project/service, its "connectedness" to the Methodist Church of NZ and any appropriate financial information.

Tongan 'village' to provide low-income housing

A small Tongan 'village' has cropped up in the Auckland suburb of Mangere. It's a vastly different place than a traditional Tongan village and it is also radically different from the community garden it was a year ago.

When Touchstone last visited the site, it was a flat expanse of land, filled with lush kumara plants, cabbage patches and a range of other tasty vegetables. Now it is

being transformed into a modern housing complex.

Today, the 500 square metre piece of land is being turned into housing for low-income families.

The ground has been dug up, the builders are in full swing and the first of what will eventually be 22 houses are in various stages of completion with several homes already happily inhabited.

This developing housing project

has been long envisioned by the Mangere Lotofale'ia Tongan Methodist Parish ever since the parish first leased the land back in 1991.

The Matanikolo Housing Project, as it is known, has come to fruition thanks to support from the Government and the Methodist Mission Northern's property arm, the Airedale Property Trust.

Lotofale'ia presbyter Rev Goll Fan Manukia says the housing

project is a dream come true for the congregation.

"They wanted to provide ministry targeted towards low-income families to help them to grow," he says. "There is a lot of need in the congregation."

As part of the 50-year partnership with the Government, the expectation is that the houses will be filled with families from low-socio-economic backgrounds, much like a Housing New Zealand

complex.

Airedale Property Trust group property manager Pim Rademakers is responsible for overseeing the project. He says it's all about ensuring that low-income Pasifika families have access to warm, dry homes that meet their needs.

"We don't want to see people living in garages. It's not healthy. We want to help but this project is also about people helping themselves," Pim says.

"It's a dream come true for many. All the families have to do is bring the furniture. The homes are already set up with carpets, curtains and all the appliances."

Pim admits it is difficult to choose who gets to live in their dream home, especially when the number of applicants is more than double the number of homes.

However, Goll points out the project will not end here. "This is the first stage only."

He says eventually the congregation hopes to add an apartment block, homes for the elderly and a community centre to create a true village, where members can come together and share in hospitality with each other.



The Matanikolo Housing Project is a joint venture with the Lotofale'ia Tongan Church, Methodist Mission Northern and the government.

Mission steps up with low-cost housing for Christchurch

Nearly three years on after the earthquakes, Christchurch still faces a major housing shortage that impinges most sharply on vulnerable families and the elderly.

Christchurch Methodist Mission is helping to address this crisis, following its long-established practice of providing affordable accommodation.

Christchurch Methodist Mission is already the largest community NGO provider of social housing for the aged in the city, and it is adding to this by building further units at its Wesley facility in Papanui.

At the same time, the Mission is responding to the emergency shortage of rental houses for struggling families. It has bought an eight unit apartment block and is seeking to partner with the Social Housing Unit, Community Trust, City Council, Ngai Tahu and local churches to develop more low-cost housing.

Christchurch Methodist Mission board member Pam Sharpe says the Mission has increased its supply of affordable housing because it saw the need and no one else was stepping in to meet it.

The proportion of New Zealanders over 65 will grow from about 13 percent of the population now to about 20 percent in the next 15 years. While

some of them will face comfortable retirements, others will not be able to afford warm, dry houses and health care.

"We intend to expand the number of rental units at Wesley Care to help address this need," Pam says.

"We are pleased that many of the people we can accommodate are elderly Methodists, some of whom have volunteered at Wesley Care. It gives Wesley Care a village community atmosphere, and it provides some people the opportunity to live near a spouse or parent who is in care in our hospital or rest home."

Pam says those who rent Wesley Care units can get access to support, and they can use the Falkingham Community Centre, where residents organise social activities and entertainment.

Christchurch Methodist Mission also provides social housing for low income individuals and families that have limited access to affordable, safe housing. The Mission allocates its housing on the basis of need and it is specifically intended for families with young children.

Late last year the Mission bought an eight unit complex near Hagley Park, with support from the Community Trust, to accommodate some of its vulnerable clients.

"We were fortunate to find a

property owned by the Crothall family, who have strong roots in the Methodist Church. They are very supportive of the Mission and its work, so the sale was very smooth," Pam says.

"The block of flats is close to the hospital and the city centre, so it is convenient. All the residents of the complex are on low incomes or benefits. The housing is long-term, and rent is set according to what they can pay.

Pam says good housing is the critical baseline for a safe environment for children. If families do not have secure housing, their health is likely to be harmed and outcomes for their children are worse.

"People on very low incomes often have high and complex needs, particularly in post-earthquake Christchurch. By providing them stable and secure housing we also hope to be able to provide 'wrap-around' services and support."

The same holds true for older people who face precarious housing options.

Pam says with churches in the Central South Island Synod poised to start rebuilding according to their new strategic plan, the Mission would be eager to partner with any congregations who have land available to develop social housing or housing for the elderly.



Christchurch Methodist Mission has purchased an apartment block to provide low-cost housing to struggling families.



New bedsits and apartments are under construction at Wesley Care aged care village.



Flooding has once again inundated large areas in Asia.

Floods again hit Pakistan and Afghanistan

In response to heavy monsoon rains, Christian World Service partner Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan (CWS P/A) has begun distributing food supplies to those affected.

The initial one month food packages have been distributed to 1800 families in Thatta, Sindh.

More than 100,000 people have been affected by the flooding and at least 98 have died. The death toll is expected to increase. More people will be affected as the floodwaters travel downstream.

In Afghanistan CWS P/A is providing two mobile health teams with 10 doctors, two pharmacies, medicines and two ambulances in the Sarobi district, Kabul. Heavy rains and flash floods have claimed

the lives of at least 109 people, destroyed 577 houses and damaged more.

The first round of monsoon rains is currently affecting portions of south and central Asia. Parts of India, Myanmar and the Philippines are also experiencing extensive damage. Water has washed away villages, hospitals, businesses and livestock.

Thousands of hectares of land have been affected and many have lost their livelihoods. Recurrent flooding is putting huge pressure on local resources. Emergency stocks are reported to be low due to lack of funding. Local authorities say that with more financial support they would be better prepared to deal with the consequences of the rains.



Members of Wesley Roskill Church knit booties, cardigans, and blankets for babies at Middlemore Hospital

Craft group embraces babies in need

By Bernice Burton

In the past 14 years members of Wesley Roskill Church have knitted thousands of booties, singlets, cardigans, blankets and other items for babies at Middlemore Hospital.

In August 1999, an article in the New Zealand Herald newspaper discussed the plight of some babies at Middlemore Hospital.

Hospital staff were concerned about the number of babies coming back into hospital in the first year of their lives with respiratory and other illnesses associated with inadequate clothing, bedding and housing. They launched an appeal for baby gear.

This coincided with Wesley Roskill Church's fair and garage sale. When some parishioners were clearing up after the event they approached their minister to see if they could send anything suitable to the appeal. When this was agreed, a few women also knitted some booties and other things, and everything was sent to the Hospital.

In 2000, Wesley Roskill's craft group decided to continue supporting this project and a few more women agreed to knit, crochet and sew for the hospital. They were delighted to get donations of yarn to continue their project and the production of peggy square blankets began.

Each year they have a display in the church and then we deliver the knitted items to Middlemore Hospital, after they had been blessed. Our whole project has been by donations of yarn etc. and money and we have never run out of yarn.

The group averages around 15 crafters, often more with friends and relatives joining in. From 1999 to 2013 articles delivered to Middlemore Hospital included about 710 singlets and vests, 1360 cardigans and jackets, 300 small and medium blankets and quilts, 250 large blankets, 860 beanies and 400 pairs of booties.

All these items are new and tagged with a message 'Lovingly made for your precious baby'.

CWS SYRIAN REFUGEE APPEAL



PLEASE DONATE NOW

Syria's refugees need help now. Our partners know what they need and need you to help them provide this help. Help that feeds, shelters, educates and gives the precious gift of hope. Help us give that gift today.

CWS SYRIA REFUGEE APPEAL

CREDIT CARD Phone 0800 74 73 72 or online www.cws.org.nz/donate

DIRECT DEPOSIT Name of Account: Christian World Service Account number: ANZ 06 0817 0318646 00, ref: Syria Appeal.

Email postal details to cws@cws.org.nz if you would like a tax receipt.

POST Christian World Service PO Box 22652 Christchurch 8140



Bilal and Mohanad Al-Shawish play on rubble created by the 2008 Israeli bombing of their family's farm near the Bureij refugee camp in Gaza. ACT Alliance provided the family a new well and water pump.

Week of prayer for peace in Palestine

CWS is inviting churches and people of faith to take part in a Week of Prayer for Peace in Israeli Palestine from 22-28 September. This year's Week of Prayer immediately follows the International Day for Peace on 21 September.

"Palestinians and Israelis live the tensions every day. You cannot visit the region without seeing how real the conflict is. However, the staff of Christian World Service partner the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees (DSPR) has incredible optimism. Despite every obstacle they hold on to the vision of a shared future," says Trish Murray, Programmes Coordinator.

In 2009 Palestinian Christians released a kairos document 'A Moment of Truth'. In it they reflect on what has happened to the Palestinian people living under occupation for more than 60 years and they ask for support from the international community. "Our word is

a cry of hope, with love, prayer and faith in God." To read the document see: <http://www.kairospalestine.ps/>

The Week of Prayer is an initiative of the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Forum and the World Council of Churches. Churches are encouraged to hold worship services, educational events and organise other acts of advocacy in support of a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians. This year's theme is 'Jerusalem, the city of Justice and Peace'.

New Zealanders have contributed to the work of DSPR through CWS for 65 years. It is the longest partnership and an expression of the continued concern for Palestinians.

DSPR works in Galilee, Gaza, Jordan, Lebanon, and the West Bank, providing humanitarian assistance, agricultural training and support, vocational programmes, summer camps for traumatised children and mother and baby health clinics.

Young People

MYC13 - TAKE THE LEAD

By Filo Tu

"It's been too long," says Ane Kisina of the Wesley Multicultural Methodist Church in Petone. This is the feeling that many young people express when they hear about the up-coming Methodist Youth Conference 2013. But it is happening, and there is hope in the air.

Organised by Taiwi Youth Ministries under the theme 'Take the Lead', Methodist Youth Conference (MYC13) aims to support young people in leadership positions at the parish, synod, regional, and national levels of the Church.

Methodist Conference has decided 2013 is to be a year of celebrating our young people, and this has opened the way to provide an opportunity for youth leaders from across the Connexion to gather together.

MYC13 will be held prior to the Church Conference, from Monday 30th September to Thursday 3rd October, at Wesley College, Paerata.

The organising committee has identified the purpose of MYC13, and that is:

- To inspire, encourage and empower

those in leadership positions to take a stand for justice and spread God's love;

- To provide training for leadership, share resources, offer support, and equip young people with tools and ideas;
- To teach and learn what it means to be Methodist in the 21st century;
- To provide a forum where young people can have a voice on issues that will be discussed at Conference;
- To network with other youth leaders from around the country and discuss the ministry we offer our young people.

The programme is a mix of workshops that will equip young people with skills for leadership positions. It is designed to be informative, historical and structured. However, at the same time, the workshops will be engaging, creative and relevant to contexts that our young people face.

Plus, there will be opportunities to be creative in the areas of worship, dance, drama, spoken word, art and much, much more. MYC13 looks to be a training ground to equip leaders throughout the Connexion through fun and challenging activities.



MYC13 is also an opportunity for young people to renew their understanding of God, and how to know Him better.

In preparation for the Methodist Conference, it is important to provide better knowledge of roles and responsibilities within the life of Te Hahi Weteriana o Aotearoa, and understanding a little bit more about what it means to Methodist - "Meko to the Bone" as put by Osaiasi Kupu of Vahefonua Tonga.

Registration fees are sitting at \$180 per person to cover costs of accommodation and meals.

Synods and rohe are encouraged to engage to make this event a possibility for young people in their areas. This could be through financial support for travel and accommodation.

For further information see the flyer or find the event on FaceBook. Don't be afraid to 'Take the Lead'!

Kidz Korna!

WELCOME TO THE CORNER FOR SEPTEMBER!

I think it must be Spring with all the daffodils flowering in the gardens and fields. What a beautiful sight.

Thank you Whitianga for sharing the ways in which you are connecting to the community, and especially your Messy Church. It sounds great fun and a wonderful way of getting children and their families to learn more about God

Thanks also to William Wallace for the hymn he has sent to Kidz Korna.

CHILDREN'S SONG

"We Are One With the Creatures"

We are one with the creatures,
One with the plants,
One with the life of Earth.
We are one with the waters,
One with the air,
One with each death and birth.
We are one in the wonder,
One with the joy,
One in life's sense of worth.

From the Sing Young, Sing Joyfully collection by William Wallace
Text, score and tune available on the Center for Progressive Christianity website:
progressivechristianity.org/resources/we-are-one-with-the-creatures/

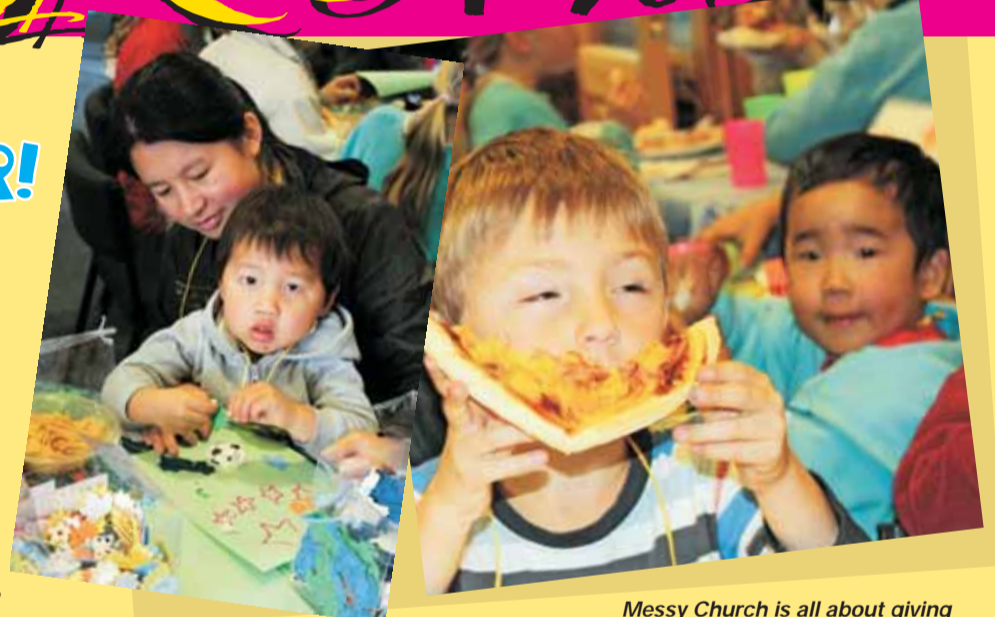
PUZZLE CORNER

Can you change Hate to Love by putting new words on the ladder? You may only change one letter at a time as you climb up.

I've given you 3 clues to help. But, watch out. They are not in the correct order!

- 1) Opposite to early
- 2) Only one
- 3) A country road

LOVE
HATE



Messy Church is all about giving kids a lively, noisy, tasty way to experience God.

Messy Church in Whitianga

St Andrew's By the Sea Community Church in Whitianga keeps looking for new ways to connect with the community.

Many of St Andrew's ventures connect with families, including Mainly Music, Day Camp, Toughlove, Op Shop, and Monday Night Community Meals.

Families of all ages are invited to Whitianga Messy Church on the first Sunday each month 4:30-6:00 p.m. and it is now a congregation in its own right with up to 70 people attending.

Only two families who come to Messy Church had attended any other church before but this is now where they feel they belong.

As the name implies, Messy Church is messy, noisy and creative, but for parents, children, and some grandparents it proves to be a fun-

filled spiritual learning experience. Each session has at least six activities families can enjoy together, including a story focused on connecting with God, and a meal.

St Andrew's 'Exploring Christian Faith' group supports the Messy Church leaders by helping set up activities, prepare food, serve and clean up.

In August 2012, for Messy Olympics, the children put toppings on their own 'discus dinner' and the kitchen team cheerfully cooked 37 pizzas while everyone else was in the worship time in the church.

Families with normal, active children are naturally reluctant to come into the quiet, reverent atmosphere of Sunday morning worship. Messy Church allows parents and children to relax, belong to a church family and know God's all-inclusive love.

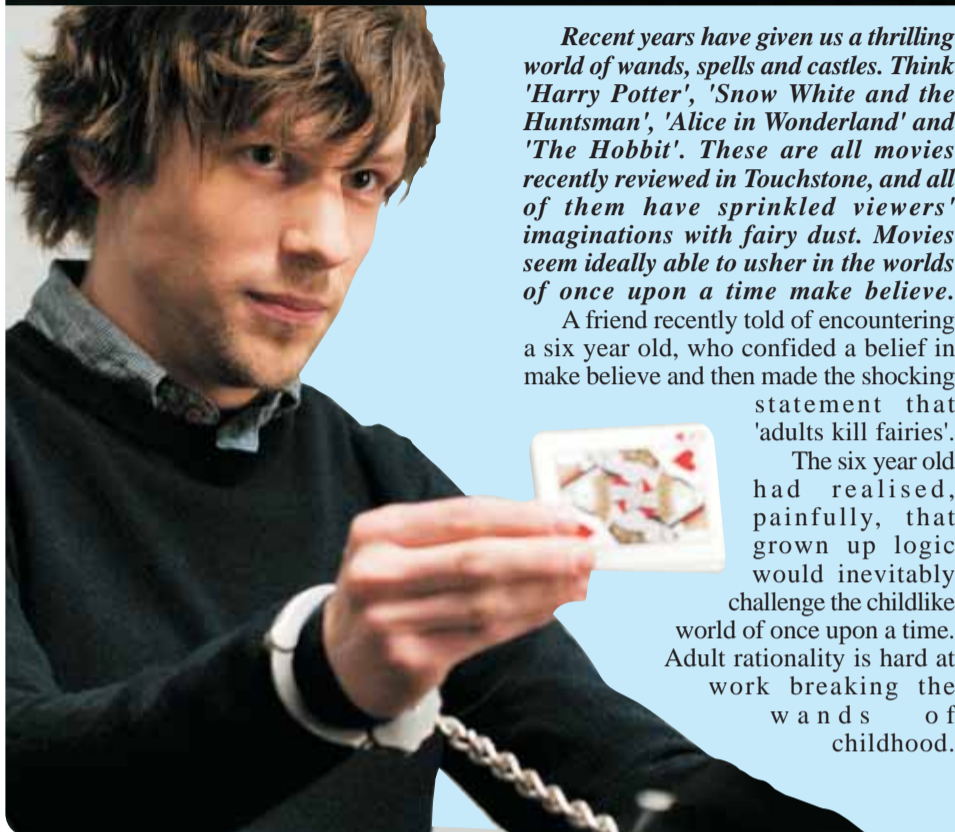
What are the kids in your church up to?

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@xtra.co.nz or to touchstone@paradise.net.nz

ON SCREEN

A film review by Steve Taylor

NOW YOU SEE ME



Recent years have given us a thrilling world of wands, spells and castles. Think 'Harry Potter', 'Snow White and the Huntsman', 'Alice in Wonderland' and 'The Hobbit'. These are all movies recently reviewed in Touchstone, and all of them have sprinkled viewers' imaginations with fairy dust. Movies seem ideally able to usher in the worlds of once upon a time make believe.

A friend recently told of encountering a six year old, who confided a belief in make believe and then made the shocking statement that 'adults kill fairies'.

The six year old had realised, painfully, that grown up logic would inevitably challenge the childlike world of once upon a time. Adult rationality is hard at work breaking the wands of childhood.

This is certainly true of a second strand in the magic movie genre. A number of recent movies have sought to expose the magic of the magician. 'Sherlock Holmes' uncovers the dark arts of Moriarty. 'The Illusionist' showcases a magician using his craft to secure love above his station. 'Prestige' pits magician against magician. Each focuses not only on magic but on the magician, on this worldly pursuits in which logic and rationality triumph over make believe. For truth is surely explainable.

Which brings us to 'Now You See Me'. Directed by Louis Leterrier, like many a magic show, the plot of this movie relies on multiple suspensions of belief. Partial redemption comes through the lights of Hollywood, an A-list cast that includes Jesse Eisenberg as J Daniel Atlas, Woody Harrelson as Merritt McKinney, Morgan Freeman as Thaddeus Bradley and Michael Caine as Arthur Tressler. Now You See Me straddles both magic and magician. We meet the fabled 'Eye', a mysterious collective of elite power, into which four struggling magicians, including J Daniel Atlas and Merritt McKinney, are mysteriously gathered. As the fame of the four grows, they begin to shower their audiences with money.

First, bank notes rain down, robbed from a French bank. Second, audience bank accounts are magically enhanced by routing dollars from a spendthrift

insurance company. Third, the fortune of an investment company disappears as if by magic, from a guarded vault.

Is their magic real? Or is it simply a modern rehash of an ancient two card trick hiding a truth-is-harsher-than-magic world of crime?

It remains a challenge to the religious among us. How might one maintain a faith in angels and demons, miracles and resurrection, in a world with no Santa, wizard or wand?

For many, the six year old included, Christianity stands as yet another brand of fairy killer. We have found ourselves trading in a faith so rational that imagination has lost its magic and saints their sparkle.

The Christian tradition is no stranger to magic and magicians. In Acts 8, Philip performs miracles, which attract the attention of a local magician. Much like The Illusionist or Prestige, the complex motives by which power is sought and brought are sifted, if not spent.

Philip will have none of it. He walks a complex line, convinced that miracles are neither make believe nor for sale.

Rev Dr Steve Taylor is principal of 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.

Season of Creation

In September worship leaders in many countries honour the earth and the cosmos with a programme called The Season of Creation that directs spiritual reflection towards physical respect and responsibility. Each Sunday has a different theme - oceans, flora and fauna, storms, and cosmos.

Towards the end of the Book of Job there is a magnificent poem where God speaks from out of the whirlwind asking questions of the mortal Job that make him aware of his smallness in the midst of Creation. This realisation transformed Job.

We too could benefit by pondering these questions.

Bible Challenge

Where were you when I laid the ___ of the earth?	F _____	Job 38:4
Who ___ its measurements?	E _____	38:5
Who prescribed bounds for the ___?	A _____	38:10
Tell when the morning ___ sang together	T _____	38:7
Who can number the ___ by wisdom?	U _____	38:37
Have you entered into the ___ of the sea?	R _____	38:16
Or ___ in the recesses of the deep?	E _____	38:16
Have you seen the store-___ of the hail?	S _____	38:22
Have the gates of ___ been revealed to you?	A _____	38:17
Who cleft a ___ for the torrents of rain?	N _____	38:25
Can you ___ the chains of Pleiades	D _____	38:31
Do you observe the ___ of the hinds?	C _____	39:1
Who has let the wild ass go ___?	R _____	39:5
Can you guide the ___ with its children?	E _____	38:32
Know when the mountain ___ bring forth?	A _____	39:1
The wings of the ___ wave proudly	T _____	39:13
Is it at your command the eagle ___ up?	U _____	39:27
Is the wild ox willing to ___ you?	R _____	39:9
Do you give the ___ its might?	E _____	39:19
Is it by your wisdom that the hawk ___?	S _____	39:26

Answers: foundations, determined, sea, stars, clouds, springs walked, houses, death, blind, channel, calving, free, bear, goats, ostrich, mounts, serves, horse, soars. © RMS

Religious leaders urge protection of refugees

The World Council of Churches (WCC), the World Evangelical Alliance and other faith-based groups have helped develop a declaration for the United Nations refugee agency.

It aims to strengthen protection for the world's 40 million refugees and internally displaced people.

"A core value of my faith is to welcome the stranger, the refugee, the internally displaced, the other. I shall treat him or her as I would like to be treated. I will challenge others, even leaders in my faith community, to do the same," reads the declaration.

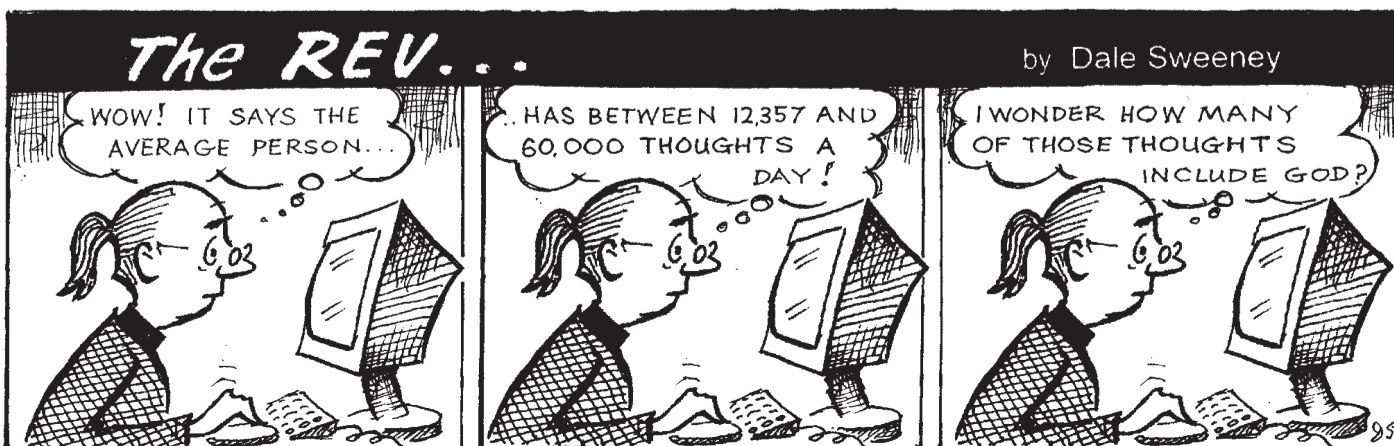
Based on common values of welcome found in Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism, the declaration is titled Welcoming the Stranger: Affirmation for Faith Leaders. It was launched in June in Geneva, Switzerland.

The declaration came out of a meeting called by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees held last year with religious leaders, faith-based humanitarian organizations and government representatives.

Organizations that developed the declaration along with the WEA and WCC include the office of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lutheran World Federation, Jesuit Refugee Service, Islamic Relief Worldwide, the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, the University of Vienna Faculty of Roman Catholic Theology, and World Vision International.

WCC executive for migration and social justice Sydia Nduna says the sacredness of all human life and the sanctity of creation are central to Christian beliefs.

"This affirmation, calls faith leaders to create inclusive communities that welcome people regardless of their age, abilities, ethnicity, gender, class, caste, nationality or race. Our Christian faith compels us to ensure that human life, security and safety are upheld in the law and institutions," Nduna says.



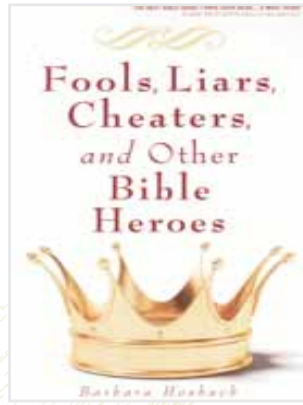
Fools, Liars, Cheaters and Other Bible Heroes

Here is a book by Barbara Hosbach that is easy to read and useful for personal devotions as well as preaching and discussion groups.

It gives some snapshots of men and women you can find in the pages of the Bible. With its title you might have expected to find more disreputable characters from the Biblical scene like Abraham who lied about Sarah being his wife (twice!), or Jacob who cheated his brother Esau of his birthright, or disciple Thomas who doubted the resurrection, or disciple Peter who denied even knowing Jesus.

Some of the people Hosbach chose to depict are in that league. For example, Rebekah who was Jacob's mother and an arch-schemer from a family of schemers, or Rahab who, as a prostitute in Jericho, looked after Jewish spies before those walls fell, or Ananias from Damascus who doubted Paul's conversion.

But many of those portrayed are just plain ordinary people like Reuben (the eldest of Jacob's sons), Ruth (who



refused to leave Naomi) and Joseph of Arimathea (who buried Jesus' body).

So the title may be a little misleading but the stories are none the worse for that.

Hosbach gives us 28 characters to examine, 14 from each testament. Half of these are women and half are men. Whilst this gives gender balance, it does look somewhat artificial, though this does not grate when you are reading the book.

For each of these characters she gives the main biblical text(s) concerning that person, then some background and context as she retells their story. After this she explains how we today can relate to these

people and what we can learn from them. She ends each portrait with questions to continue our thinking. These questions are designed for personal use but could easily be the basis of a group discussion.

There are sure to be some folk that you have rarely encountered elsewhere like Leah (Jacob's first wife), Mephibosheth (King Saul's grandson), Nathanael (a disciple

in John's gospel) and Mary (the mother of John Mark), along with well-known folk such as Gideon, Esther, Martha and Andrew.

Some heroes can put us off. For instance many years ago I read Catherine Marshall's account of her husband in the book *A Man Called Peter*. At the time I was impressed by the man but the effect was practically negative as I thought I could never reach his dedication to God, and it would almost not be worth trying. Some heroes do this to us.

In her book however Hosbach aims to give stories of Bible heroes who are not perfect. This might sound like a contradiction but is not really.

We are not necessarily called to follow these examples, though some are well worthy of this. They are before us so that we can realize that the God who found a place for them in the divine plan, despite all their imperfections, can surely do the same for us too, despite all our imperfections. To this end the book worked and I commend its reading and use.

Review copy courtesy of Epworth Books.

By Barbara Hosbach
2012, Franciscan Media, 137 pages
Reviewer: Peter Taylor

The Triumph of Christianity

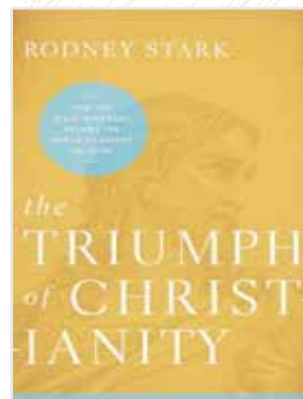
- How the Jesus Movement Became the World's Largest Religion

This is a big book that is worth reading for the author's many challenges to ideas that have become embedded in history.

After a brief sketch of the world in which Jesus of Nazareth conducted his ministry, Stark states that, while many assumptions may be made, knowledge of Jesus relies on what has been written in the gospels. This does not provide enough to write a biography of Jesus, but there is enough to know that he attracted followers who formed the Jesus Movement.

Stark believes that Jesus' family played key roles in this movement (see Acts 1:14). While the first members were Jews, the decision spearheaded by Paul to liberate Christian converts from the need to adopt Jewish culture and customs was crucial for the spread of the movement that would grow into what we know as the Christian church.

Contrary to what is often assumed, Stark believes there are clues in the gospels that Jesus' family may have been reasonably well off and that Jesus tended to draw support



from people who were sufficiently well educated to provide leadership and economically independent enough to embrace a new venture. This includes his closest disciples.

Despite the reference to 3000 people being baptised on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:41), Stark believes this is hyperbole and that the church did not spread by mass conversion but rather through social networks. Many of those attracted to Jesus during his lifetime, and later through the ministry of Paul, were women, and

women's role within the family was an important influence in attracting others.

The church began in small ways and was often persecuted. Christians gathered in private homes until the advent of Emperor Constantine who, in the fourth century, treated the church with favour and raised it to a position of power.

As a powerful institution the church was intolerant of dissent. Power led eventually to corruption. Corruption

provoked a pietistic reaction and a desire for reformation.

By the time of the Reformation there were few Christians outside Europe, but Christianity would eventually be taken by European explorers and colonisers to other continents. While in many parts of Europe Christianity is largely nominal, today it continues to gain converts in Latin America, Africa and China.

Stark considers that a significant factor in the growth of Christianity is its readiness to seek ways of expressing its universal message in terms of local cultures.

In one or two places Stark's own bias shows through. For example, he calls Bishop John Shelby Spong "an extremely vocal atheist". His argument that many of the commonly accepted "facts" of church history have been coloured by imagination and prejudice may raise questions for some readers.

What difference would it make for faith today if Jesus was not a homeless itinerant preacher and the Jesus Movement gained initial traction among the well-to-do? Such questions challenge the complacency that is one of any religion's greatest hindrances.

By Rodney Stark
2012, HarperOne, 506 pages
Reviewer: John Meredith

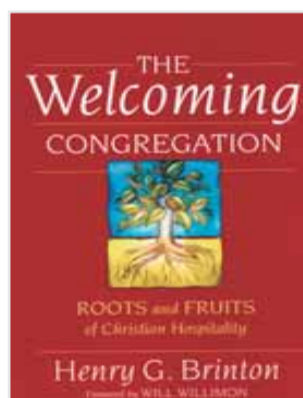
The Welcoming Congregation - Roots and Fruits of Christian Hospitality

Hospitality was one of the recurring themes in the Kitchen Theology columns I wrote for Touchstone, so this book grabbed my attention.

The author shares my enthusiasm for hospitality as an essential expression of Christian faith both personally and in the life of the church. He is the pastor of a Presbyterian congregation in West Virginia but he hasn't written a 'do it like we do it at my place' manual.

Hospitality isn't just being nice, he tells us, and he offers an exploration of the biblical, spiritual, social, political and theological, roots that nourish and sustain congregational practices that welcome.

Part One of the book, 'Roots', considers the elements



that shape good practice. It includes a survey of hospitality in the Bible and traces the historical tradition of Christian hospitality. Practical aspects of providing warmth and welcome in faith communities are discussed: sites (physical and virtual), worship, meals and small groups.

In Part Two, 'Fruits', the author looks at the positive outcomes resulting from true hospitality: reconciliation, outreach, and new perceptions of God's inclusive love.

A particularly helpful feature of the book is the section at the end of each chapter that provides useful questions for discussion, an action plan, and a preaching suggestion. I would like to use these as a series to work with congregations for a hospitality

focus over a month, or once a month for six months. They would be valuable as a theme for a workshop, or a School of Theology, or a reflection time for Parish Councils and Synods.

The inclusiveness of hospitality must be at the heart of our relationships with each other as we learn to work together with our differences of culture and religious tradition, and connect with all those who are suffering.

"We know that doing something - anything - to welcome and include strangers is always better than nothing... We can celebrate the fact that every time people sit down to eat and drink together, there is a possibility that community will grow and people will be reconciled to one another."

A good range of resources are listed in the notes, and the book is reasonably priced.

Review copy courtesy of Epworth Books.

By Henry G. Brinton.
2012 Westminster John Knox Press, 133 pages
Reviewer: Diana Roberts

<p>Destiny Life and Times of a Self-Made Apostle. What is Destiny? What does it stand for? Who are its followers? NZ commentator Peter Lineham delivers a fascinating picture of the organisation.</p> <p>\$38.00*</p>	<p>Godsongz for Kids 1 Felicia Edgecombe & Rosemary Russell with children from Titahi Bay Community Church. 6 lively tracks, 15mins. With words booklet. \$12.99*</p>	<p>Notes to a Friend Joy Cowley borrows from centuries of Christian devotional writings to invite people into relationship with God, but without the "church" language. \$15.00*</p>	<p>Prayer and Prayer Activities: For Worship with Adults, Children and All Ages - Years A, B & C. Versatile participative resource based on the UK & Ireland ROOTS initiative.</p> <p>A4 186pp + CD ROM \$75.00*</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>*Plus p&p: \$5.50 for 1 or 2 items, \$7.00 for 3 or more.</p>
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Church by the Seashore - 60 years of community outreach

'Community supporting community' is the way one resident of Clarks Beach describes the town's relationship with its local church.

Clarks Beach is on the southern shore of Manukau Harbour and the name of its church is Church by the Seashore. It is one of the three congregations in the Pukekohe Methodist Parish.

On Sunday October 27th, Church by the Seashore marks its 60th anniversary. A celebratory service will be held to be followed by a catered lunch at Waiuu Pa Hall. Friends of the congregation are encouraged to attend.

Though it is not a large congregation, its members and the church buildings play important roles in the local community. They host

activities for children and adults, support the local food bank, and provide a library.

Parish steward Ruth Manning says the community activities the Church by the Seashore holds include a fortnightly Kidz Klub during the school terms for children eight to 13, tai chi classes on Wednesday mornings, and the community library on Tuesday mornings.

"We collect for our food bank and we receive generous donations from both the congregation and the community. Donations include food, clothing, curtains, duvets, sheets, and toys.

"We also collect stamps to support the Methodist Women's Fellowship and people in the community often donate them."



Church by the Seashore in Clarks Beach.

Ruth writes a bi-monthly newsletter 'Seashore Snippets' that details the congregation's recent and future activities, has a schedule of services, and provides jokes and

children's games.

It has a print run of at least 380 with 280 copies sent out to members and friends of the church. The remaining 100 are distributed

through local grocery stores and takeaway bars, and Ruth says people in the community are eager to receive it.

Pukekohe Parish presbyter Rev Bernie Meyer will lead The Church by the Seashore's 60th anniversary service on Oct 27 and special guest will be Methodist vice president Jan Tasker. Jung (John) Lee will be the guest singer.

Cost of the spit roast lunch following the service is \$39.

Ruth encourages anyone who would like to attend the anniversary to call her on 09 232 1896 or Pat Owen on 09 232 1736. Or send a letter to R Manning, 131 Torkar Road, Clarks Beach 2122.

Unsung Methodist Personalities

By Rev Donald Phillipps

Until the early 1960s Methodist ministry in New Zealand was shared among a range of people of differing status. Alongside the ordained ministers, now called presbyters, were deaconesses, and home missionaries. It is from within this latter category our subject is found.

We should remember that home missionaries were often treated as the 'poor relation' of the ordained minister. They were the ones who maintained the Methodist cause in the most out-of-the-way circuits, they were paid a lower stipend though, in reality, they did the same job as their ordained colleagues, and

they were moved around at the behest of the Home Mission Department, rather than of Conference itself.

So home missionaries were often used as stop gaps in the stationing sheet and could be moved, it would seem, almost at a moment's notice. They rarely stayed anywhere very long.



James Bayliss. Photo courtesy of Methodist Archives.

In Praise of Home Missionaries - James Bayliss 1888-1966

Spare a very respectful thought for James William Bayliss. The son of a Warwickshire school-teacher, he emigrated to Canada as a teenager, then to Australia, and then in 1906 to Auckland, where he worked as a labourer for about four years.

James must have felt a call to ministry but chose to take himself back to England, where he studied for evangelical ministry at Cliff College - still renowned today for its emphasis on missioning.

When the course was over he returned to Australia and spent a couple of years in the outback of Western Australia. He came to New Zealand in 1915, and for a couple of years was in supply ministry before going overseas in 1917 to serve in the NZ Expeditionary Force. On the way back home, he

spent another year or so in Western Australia but from 1919 until 1951 his whole ministry was in this country.

It may be hard to believe, but in these 39, somewhat broken years of ministry, he served 26 different congregations from as far north as the Bay of Islands to as far south as Cromwell. His longest ministry was at Birkenhead (1946-1950) but he stayed just one year in 13 places.

Though he was never married, the frequency of his moves suggests he was ready to go wherever and whenever called.

James died in Auckland on June 7th, 1966. The tribute to him in the Conference minutes of that year referred to his long retirement. He had

been officially retired when he was 53 years old because of wounds and the effects of poison gas during World War I. But between that retirement and his final retirement, when he was 63 he had served in a further seven places - and that doesn't sound like retirement at all.

The official tribute to him was short. It mentioned he was a 'singularly quiet man' but that his preaching was memorable for its 'thoughtfulness and sincerity.' In many ways, however, he was a paragon among Methodist Home Missionaries - without whom this Church could never have carried out its calling.

Sister Lucy's legacy of practical compassion

METHODIST ARCHIVES

By Lynne McDonald

In 1981, the Conference of the New Zealand Methodist Church prepared a certificate and letter of appreciation to present to Sister Lucy Money. Sister Lucy had served the usual length of time as missionary in the Solomon Islands and was now expected to retire.

The presentation did not take place. It was another 16 years before she officially retired and another four years after that, until she finally had to admit that due to her increasing frailty, she could no longer live on Choiseul Island.

Sister Lucy was renowned throughout the Western Solomons. She served on Choiseul for more than 50 years, from her arrival in 1947, to her reluctant retirement. She died in 2005.

Most of this time was spent at Sasamuqa, on Choiseul. Both loved and feared, she was passionate about caring for the women and children.

She also translated parts of the Bible into the local language, Babatana. With the help of catechist Stephen Gadapeta, she was involved in developing the first and only dictionary of the Babatana language. She also recorded many kastom stories told by the

Choiseulese.

Apart from supervising the maternity services, she continued Sister Ethel McMillan's tradition of looking after orphaned babies on the mission station, and brought older girls in from the villages to train them in nursing skills and domestic duties.

The Seventh Day Adventist and Catholic mission stations on Choiseul did not have well-equipped medical facilities, and Sasamuqa was seen as the 'base hospital', although they could only handle fairly minor conditions such as fevers, injuries, most births and premature babies.

Sister Lucy encouraged the Choiseulese to embrace Western medicine, especially in the fields of childbirth and maternal and infant health. She constantly decried traditional birthing methods which, in her view, were neither efficient nor hygienic.

Traditionally, once labour began, mothers were sent to the birthing hut in the gardens, so their weakened bodies wouldn't attract evil spirits and affect the rest of the village. Men were not allowed to have anything to do with women who had recently given birth, or



Sister Lucy Money served as a nurse and translator on Choiseul, Solomon Islands for more than 50 years. The identity of the man pictured with her is not known.

with women who were menstruating. To some extent, this still applies in parts of the Solomons despite the efforts of missionaries.

Even though Choiseulese were initially reluctant to use European medicine at Sasamuqa, the benefits of an increased perinatal survival rate became clear and the numbers of women arriving for care before and after birth increased.

Sister Lucy described one situation when a woman from a Catholic village suffered a retained placenta. A Methodist teacher brought the woman to Sasamuqa two days after the delivery with the placenta was still stuck fast, and

unable to be removed. Sister Lucy noted that neither mother nor baby had eaten anything since the birth.

In a letter home to her family she wrote:

"Day 1: Why they consider it necessary to starve themselves in such circumstances I really don't know. Fed her milk and some good solid food & filled her with all the dope and injections that could possibly help, then transferred her to hospital. Kept baby. Without penicillin the woman's chances would have been pretty slim. Held her own.

"Day 2: R.C. (Roman Catholic) woman very sick again, stiff neck,

sore throat & won't swallow anything. We've a horrible suspicion it might be tetanus... She could have been infected before they brought her here. Looks as though we will be acquiring a R.C. baby to bring up.

"Day 3: R.C. woman died - fairly certain it was lock jaw (tetanus) - anti-tetanus serum was outdated & insufficient to be effective & she died on Sunday morning. Two of [our] girls were related to baby so they have undertaken to care for him [at the station]."

The baby was named Patarika Katalika, or Patrick the Catholic, and Sister Lucy later wrote home that he had an appallingly huge appetite and was thriving.

Sister Lucy was trained by adversity on the job. If an emergency happened, she had to deal with it. There was no time for theological niceties when she was resuscitating a new born baby. The sheer immensity of her practical tasks dictated a practical mission first and foremost. She has left a rich heritage and a large number of stories.

NA KANA MAGITI KEI NA LOTU

Rev Dr IS Tuwere
Maciu 22:1-10; Luke 14:12-24

Na iVola Tabu e sega ni tuvalaka vakavosa vei keda na ibalebale ni lotu. E vakavuqa me boroya vei keda na iyaloalo me vakadewataka kina na veika eso e vinakata me tukuna. E sega talega ni solia e duabulu ga na iyaloalo me baleta na lotu. E vuqa sara e solia vei keda. Oqori me vaka na Qele ni Sipi kei na iVakatawa Vinaka; na Vuni Vaini kei na Tabana; na iVakavuvuli kei iratou na nona Gonevuli se Tisaipeli; na Masima se Rarama; na Ulu kei na vo ni Yago taucoko, ka vuqa tale.

Meda raica mada yani na iyaloalo ni kana magiti. E rua na kena ivakamacala eda rogoca, mai na kospeli iMaciu kei na nei Luke. Na kana magiti se na solevu edua na ka eda kila vinaka. Eda soqoni vata kina vakaveiwekani ena noda veikidavaki kei na marau, kena veitalanoa, kena sere kei na meke, kena salusalu kei na kumuni iyau. Ena kana magiti, eda veiqaravi ka tarogi edua kevaka e yali.

Meda taroga na taro: A Cava na Lotu? Ka tovolea me sauma na taro oqori ena noda raica vakavoleka yani na kana magiti. E va na taro meda na taroga:

I. O Cei e Veisureti e na Kana Magiti oqo?

E vakaraitaka na iVola Tabu ni veisureti edua na Turaga; edua na Tui. Sa nodra ivalavala na Turaga se Tui me ra dau caka magiti ka veisureti. E sega ni ka rawarawa na veisureti. E tu vata kei na kena oga; na kena veiqaravi. Ni tukuna tiko na i Vola Tabu ni caka magiti kei na veisureti sa nodra

ivalavala na Tui, sa via dusia tikoga na itutu vakaturaga kecega e itutu talega ni dauveiqaravi.

Sa liu taumada na veisureti ka qai muri na kana magiti. Kevaka sa sega na veisureti, ia, sa na sega ga na kana magiti. Na lotu se na kana magiti e sega ni dua na ka me tubu ga vakataki koya, se tu ga vakataki koya. Sa duri rawa ka bula na lotu kei na kena veisolevu kecega ni sa liu tamada na kaci ni veisureti ni Turaga. O cei li oqo e veisureti? E veisureti na Turaga na Tui ko Jisu mai na koro lailai ko Nasareci. E sega ni dua tani e veisureti. E sega ni veisureti ko Kubuna se ko Burebasaga, se Tovata.

Na veisureti sa nona duadua na Turaga oqo mai Nasareci. E sega ni veisureti e dua e vuku ka kila-ka vakalevu, e dua e matai ena vosa se kila vakalevu na i Vola Tabu. E sega ni dua ka bini tu vua nai yau se i lavo. Sega. E veisureti ko koya na Kalou Bula ka kaci vi keda ena bula kei na cakacaka ni Luvena ko Jisu na kai Nasareci.

E na so na gauna se vuqa beka na gauna, sa laki bibi tiko e so tani tale na ka, ka mamada mai ko Jisu. E sega ni bibi na masumasu ka mamada ko Jisu. Na masu e na kana magiti, na kena veitalanoa, na kena marau kei na kena lasa era qai muri taucoko. Sa taumada na veisureti. Ke sa sega na veisureti, sa sega ni yaga ka sega ni vakaibalebale na veika kecega oqori. Sa sega ni bibi na vanua ka mamada ko Jisu. Ke vakakina, sa na sega ga ni Vakarisito na ka kece sara eda qarava. Sa na rawa me vakatokai me duatani tale na ka.

Ni liu na veisureti ka qai muri na kana magiti, liu ko Jisu ka qai muri na lotu kei na kena solevu kecega, sa qai ka bibi kina

vei keda ena noda bula vakalotu: “..... meda vakaraici Jisu matua, 'o koya sa vakatekivuna

e na sauma talega na noda vakabauta.....” (Iperiu 12:2).

II. E vei na Vale ena laki vakayacori kina na Kana Magiti oqo?

Ni da taroga na taro oqo, eda yacova kina edua na vanua dredre ka ni ko koya ka veisureti oqo e sega na nona vale. E kaya na iVola Tabu me baleti koya :

“Sa vaqara na fokisi, sa vakairoro na manumanu vuka, ia,

na luve ni tamata sa sega na vanua me vakadavora kina na uluna” (Luke 9:58-60)

E rawa meda kaya ni fokisi edua na manumanu dravudravua. Na manumanu vuka talega e sega na ka e taukena, ia, e tiko na veitaba ni kau me ro se vakacegu kina. O Jisu e na nona vosa vakataki koya e kaya kina ni rau vinaka na manumanu e rua oqo ni tiko na vanua me rau vakacegu kina. “O koya e sega na vanua me vakadavora kina na uluna. Ia, me qai laki vakayacori evei na kana magiti ka veisureti kina oqo? E sega ni rawa nida tu vakaveilecayaki vakaoqo na sureti yani? E vei na vanua eda vakadavora tiko kina na noda vakabauta kei na noda bula vakalotu edaidai? A cava na vuna eda laki lotu tiko kina ena vei Siga Tabu? Se a cava eda lewena tiko kina edua nai soqosoqo vakalotu?

Sa rawarawa sara me vakayagataki na lotu se na kena lakovi na kana magiti oqo me ivakarawa ga ni ka eda gadreva tiko vakataki keda. E sega ni ko lakova dina mai na kana magiti - na kena masu, na kena veinanumi, na kena marau vinaka. E dua

tani tale tiko na ka ko gadreva mai. Ia, ni da rogoca ni ko koya ka veisureti oqo e sega na nona vale, sa veisureti ga ena dela ni nona loloma levu vei keda, sa qai bibi sara kina meda kakua ni vakau noda ena loma ni lotu. Me vakayacori ga na loma ni turaga ena noda bula.

III. O cei soti e sureti ki na kana magiti oqo?

Era dau lakova ga na soqo ni kana magiti ko ira era taura edua nai vola ni veisureti. Ia, e dau vakalevu ga me ra sureti ko ira era kilai se ko ira ka ra tu ena so na i tutu lelevu. E sega na lako vakaveitalia. Ia, e duidui na kana magiti oqori mai na kana magiti eda vakasama tiko kina. Me vaka ni veisureti na Turaga ko Jisu, eda sureti kece sara. Eda yadua kece sara na i vola ni veisureti oqo. E sega kina ni rawa vua e dua - a i taukei se vulagi, marama se turaga, qase se gone lailai me vakaiulubale. Eda sureti taucoko ki na kana magiti oqo.

Na katuba ni kana magiti oqo e dau dola tu ga. E sega ni sogo. Na bula vakalotu talega e sega ni bula ni sogosogo. Na levu ni kena sogo na levu talega ni kena qiqo. Me dola tu na lotu ki na 3 na ka lelevu :

- me dola tu ga Vua na Kalou
- me dola tu ga vei ira na tani
- me dola tu ki na veigauna tawa kilai ni Kalou, sa tu mai liu.

IV. A Cava eda na Laki Kania?

Na ka eda na laki kania mai kea, ena vakayagataki kina na nona ivola ni caka kakana na vuku ena nona kaya :

“Sa vinaka meda kana rourou ka veilomani ga, ka ca meda kana pulumakau uro ka veicati tiko.”

(Vosa Vakaibalebale 15:17).

Vakayacori nai Matai ni Bose ni Wasewase (Synod)

E na i ka 19- 20 ni vula o June 2013, a vakayacori e na i tikotiko ni lotu e Pitt Street Methodist Church, na i matai ni Bose ni Wasewase ni oti na kena mai tavo ena vula o Maji 2013.

E na loma ni siga rua ni bose oqo e mai vakavotukana kina na veiqaravi kei na veimasulaki sa vakayacori tiko ena vuku ni Wasewase enai lakolako vou oqo. E vuqa sara na ka e veivosakitaki ka vica talega na vakatutu e laveti mai ena bose me vakasavui lesu kina Koniferedi ni Lotu Wesele e Niu Siladi.

Na i matai ni bose a vakayacori e na yakavi ni siga Vakaraubuka, oqo na nodra bose nai Talatala (talatala Qase, talatala era sa mai cegu (retired Presbyter), o ira era vuli Talatala (probations and theological students), o ira nai Vakatawa ni vei vavakoso kei ira na vei liuliu ni vavakoso (Lay Leaders). Ni oti na bose oqori, a vakayacori na vakayacori ni bera ni qai laki vakayacori na Lotu ni veikidavaki ka ratou veiqaravi kina na Tabacakacaka o Viti e Okaladi. E na nodra soli i vaqa vakayalo o Nai Talatala Qaselevu Vakacegu Ilaitia Tuwere, e ra veivakananumi tale e na vuku ni veikacivi ni Kalou e na noda dui bula na tamata lotu vakarisito ka vakauasivi e na nodra bula ko ira era sa tekivu me ra taura na i kalawa kina veiqaravi vaka i talatala. Ni cava na lotu, a laki vakayacori e na vale ni soqo na veiqararavi vakavanua.

E na mataka ni siga Vakaraubuka, a laki qaravi na i karua ni bose, oqo na bose vakayabaki ni Wasewase(July/Annual Synod). Era tiko talega ena bose oqo na Peresitedi ni Lotu Wesele e Niu Siladi, o Talatala Rex Nathan kei na i Liuliu ni Pasifika Ministry o Talatala Aso Saleupolu. E rau vuqa talega na bose ena veivakasalataki kei na veivakadeitaki.

E na nodra dolava na bose, e ra veivakadeitaki nai Talatala Qase Peni Tikoinaka, e na ulutaga ka vakatokai tiko Na Veiliutaki Tudei se na Na Veiliutaki Qaqa (Strong Leadership Team) ka ra

vakadreta ni sa gadreva vakalevu na draki ni veiqaravi oqo ena nai lakolako e da sa vakanamata tiko kina.

E mai vakararama taki ena bose e vuqa sara na ka e na vuku ni noda i tavi kei nai tuvatuva me sotavi e na loma ni Lotu Wesele e Niu Siladi. E mai laveti talega e vica na noda vakatutu mai na macala ni pepa ka vakarautaka mai na Lotu me veivosakitaki, me vaka na Bose ni Koniferedi (Revisit-Two year Conference), na veiliutaki ena loma ni Synod (Lay Superintendent), ka vaka kina na noda vakatutu kina vei tutu vakalotu eso ena loma ni Lotu Wesele e Niu Siladi me vaka na Peresitedi se na nona i vukevuke, na mata ni Tabagone/Matawilivola ni Sigatabu, Council of Conference, kei na veitutu tale eso .

Ni suka na bose, a laki vakayacori na nodra tausoli na i Soqosoqo ni Veitokani ni Marama ena vale ni soqo, oqo me dolavi kina na tobu ni lavo vou ni Wasewase. E sa dua na veivakadeitaki levu ni da raica na veika era vakarautaka mai ko ira na marama. Na kalavata, na nodra sere kei na nodra cau vakailavo e vakaraitaka na nodra marautaka na nodra tavi, mai na gauna lekaleka a lokuci me ra mai tausoli kina.

E na mataka ni Sigatabu, a laki vakayacori e na i tikotiko ni Lotu mai Meadowlands na masumasu ena ono na kaloko ni bera ni qai laki vakacavari tale e Pitt Street na Lotu ni veitalatala vei ira na lewe ni bose.

E na loma ni siga rua ni bose kei na nodra tausoli ni Soqosoqo ni Marama, eda sarava na totoka ni nodra veitaurilaga na Tabacakacaka e rua mai Okaladi ka vakauasivi na nodra veiqaravi na Tabacakacaka o Okaladi e Loma(vavakoso o Pitt Street kei Hauraki). E sa vakavinavinakataki na nodra veiliutaki o na i Talatala Rupeni Balawa, na qase ni lotu kei ira kece na lewe ni vavakoso.

Ena yabaki mai oqo 2014, e na laki qaravi e na i tikotiko ni Lotu e Meadowlands, Okaladi na nodra bose na i Talatala kei na Bose Vakayabaki ka ra na tausoli kina na i Soqosoqo ni Turaga.



Ko ira na lewe ni Bose.



Sere cokovata ni Soqosoqo ni Veitokani ni Marama ena nodra tausoli.