

TOUCHSTONE

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



A decade of telling the Church's stories

By Paul Titus

At its September 2000 Assembly the Presbyterian Church opted to withdraw from the joint Presbyterian-Methodist newspaper Crosslink. Eight months later, in May 2001, the first edition of Touchstone was published, funded solely by the Methodist Church.

Crosslink editor Michael O'Dwyer stayed on as Touchstone editor and I became sub-editor. In 2003 Michael returned home to Canada, and I became editor.

As parishes well-know, anniversaries are the ideal time to reflect on the past and perhaps glance toward the future.

In its 10 years Touchstone has reported on events, issues and decisions that have affected churches and communities across New Zealand and overseas.

Ironically, the biggest news event we have covered, is still unfolding, the Christchurch earthquakes and their affect on church buildings and congregations. This edition carries further earthquake stories as well as reflections on how we see God in the face of disaster.

Another major story Touchstone covered from the perspective of NZ churches was the 9/11 bombings of the World Trade Center in New York. Kiwi church leaders called for a measured response to the attacks and urged Muslims who might be targeted.

In 2003 the Labour government tackled a number of contentious social issues including civil unions and prostitution law reform. Touchstone debated the issues, including whether churches should bless same-sex civil

unions.

In 2006 we followed up with a lead story on two couples, Viv Patterson and Kathryn Walters, and David Hanna and Bronwyn Olds, who had civil unions.

Other issues Touchstone has covered include euthanasia, anti-smacking legislation, the sea bed and foreshore, and climate change. Early in the decade the Methodist Church's bicultural journey was still a hot topic in letters to the editor but it has not been so for years.

Touchstone has covered Methodist Conferences in Auckland, Manukau, Christchurch, Wellington, Rotorua and Palmerston North as well as Uniting Congregation/CV Forums in Hamilton, Wellington, Dunedin, Upper Hutt and Wanganui. The Christchurch Conferences in 2002, 2005 and 2009 all featured services at the now destroyed

Durham Street Methodist Church.

Among the most significant Conference decisions was the 2003 memorandum of understanding that enables the Methodist Church to ordain gay and lesbian people. At the time president Rev Lynne Frith said it was a creative step forward that meant "gay and lesbian people will be able to take part in the life of the Church without having to pretend they are something they are not."

Several ordained gay and lesbian presbyters serve the church in different capacities. Controversy continues over their opportunity to lead the Church, as was evidenced in the 2005 Conference's lack of consensus in approving Rev Diana Tana as its president elect.

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FAIR TRADE FORTNIGHT

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Swap to Fairtrade

Encouraging more people to buy fairtrade is the focus for this year's Fair Trade Fortnight. It will be held throughout the country from 7th-22nd May with both local and national activities.

Christian World Service is inviting parishes to offer A Fair Cuppa after morning worship and to take up the additional challenge of a Fair Trade Bake Off. For those who want to go another step CWS is encouraging people to participate in the national Show Off Your Swap with prizes to be won.

Fair Trade Fortnight is coordinated by the Fair Trade Association of Australia and New Zealand of which CWS is a founding member.

Selling New Zealand's only Fairtrade bananas, All Good Bananas announced in April that they have sold their millionth banana thanks in part to the efforts of

churches that joined the Go Bananas campaign. Paying more for bananas under the fairtrade label has meant that the El Guabo Cooperative in Ecuador earned over \$1 million and has benefitted from a \$90,000 premium in the last year.

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For more details, including worship resources contact CWS, PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8142 or at cws@cws.org.nz and watch www.cws.org.nz.

Tapu lifted from Durham Street ruins

A tapu lifting ceremony by Te Taha Maori Methodist ministers and kaumatua has ritually cleansed the former site of the Durham Street Methodist Church, which was destroyed in the February Christchurch earthquake.

The ceremony provided the family members of the three men who died in the collapse of the building their first opportunity to visit the site.

Durham Street presbyter Rev Dr Mary Caygill invited Te Taha Maori Tumuaki Rev Diana Tana, Rev Rex Nathan and minita-a-iwi John Kopa to perform the ritual of lifting the tapu and blessing the site. John performed the lifting of the tapu.

Diana says generally on occasions such as these, anyone who wishes to attend the ceremony is welcome. Because the site of the church is in the 'drop zone' of several large damaged buildings, Civil Defence would only allow 20 people on the site.

"In carrying out this sacred ritual we are acknowledging the destruction of Durham Street Methodist church and the loss of life that occurred at that time. We remember within the ritual the historic church building as well as the joys, celebrations and sorrows that have been a part of this faith community for many generations," Diana says.

"Many people throughout the country

have had associations with Durham Street and it is important to recognise them as well. The fact that loss of life occurred as a result of the earthquake means it is important for this site to be cleansed and blessed and we endeavoured to carry out this sacred task with love and care."

In addition to family members of the employees of the South Island Organ company who died when the church collapsed, representatives of the parish, the synod, and the Connexion attended the ceremony.

Mary, who lived in the parsonage next to the church, says she has been moving in and out of her home since the September 4th earthquake.

"Once the tapu was lifted I felt a huge sense of relief. I have had an overwhelming feeling of darkness and negative energy around the church property but that has been lifted for me."

Mary says after the tapu lifting ceremony, the family members stayed on the site for an hour. They talked and took photos.

"They expressed a mix of emotions. I think it was a great relief for them to see the site for themselves, and I believe all of them were deeply shocked by the level of destruction."

South Island Organ Company owner John Hargraves expressed that it was a miracle that two of his men were able to escape from the rubble.

Exploring Koinonia

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Uniting
Congregations OF AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

Touchstone's first decade

From Page1

Over the years, I have had the privilege to visit and tell the stories of all Methodist districts and rohes and to report on Waitangi Day celebrations in Waitangi and Mangungu, the annual gathering at Ratana Pa, and coronation celebrations at Turangawaewae Marae.

Reporting on the Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga's annual Conference and meeting with Methodist leaders in Fiji are other personal highlights.

Dozens of writers, designers, proof readers and printers contribute to every issue of Touchstone.

Dale Sweeney has produced 'The

Rev' cartoon for Touchstone since it began. You might recall the Rev grew a ponytail when he jumped from Crosslink to Touchstone.

Other items in the first issue included 'From the Archives' by Presbyterian archivist Yvonne Wilkie and 'Kitchen Theology' by Diana Roberts. Yvonne continues to write stories from the archives, and, though Diana stopped writing Kitchen Theology at the end of 2009, she continues to contribute to Touchstone (including an article in this issue).

A number of Touchstone contributors have won awards from the Australasian Religious Press Association. Graphic designer Julian Doesburg has won our only gold award for best newspaper layout. He also won silver for best front page.

Others who won silver or bronze awards are Jim Stuart for a book review essay, Melissa Martyn for an illustration, Steve Taylor for a film review, and me for a news story.

This issue marks another turning point in the life of Touchstone. Next month we will add four more pages to the paper. The additional space will open more opportunities to the Pasifika synods and Te Taha Maori to share their stories with the wider Connexion.

Thanks to a PAC endowment Touchstone's finances are now more secure than they have been for years. There have been some lean times, however, and along with those who have contributed their words and talents, we thank everyone who has supported us with their dollars.

Touchstone is your newspaper so please share your ideas or stories with us so that we can share them with the wider Church community.

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New media new outreach tools

New media such as Facebook and podcasts can help individuals deepen their faith and help churches reach out to their community, says Methodist Mission Resourcing director Rev Nigel Hanscamp.

In business jargon, Nigel would be called an 'early adopter' of new technology. He says it gives him powerful ways to access and share thoughtful worship and missional material, and to communicate with others.

While there it may take a bit of effort to get up to speed with the new media, it is not difficult to use and can open new horizons.

Podcasts are audio programmes that you can download from the Internet onto your desktop computer or portable digital audio players such as the iPod. News outlets including Radio New Zealand and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation provide podcasts of their programmes, and many Christian podcasts are also available.

One of Nigel's prime sources of podcasts is pray-as-you-go.org. Pray as You Go is an initiative of the British Jesuits. Their free daily podcasts combine Biblical readings, music, prayers and questions to ponder.

"Pray as You Go podcasts are based on the Lectionary and linked to the seasons in the Christian calendar. The music is

reflective and comes from Jesuit monasteries and groups such as Iona and the Taizé community.

"I download a week of the podcasts at a time. Each one is about 12 minutes long. I can then listen to them in the car as I drive to the office, at home or when I'm out for a walk.

"Many of the podcasts are designed for people riding buses or trains and ask the listener to reflect on the people they are travelling with. They are also good to use at the close of the day to think about how you have seen God in the people you have been with."

Nigel says he downloads the podcasts through iTunes. He has tailored his iTunes account to update the Pray as You Go podcasts every week and automatically transfer them to his iPod.

If you do not have an iPod or MP3 player, you can burn the podcasts onto a CD or just listen to them on your computer.

"I also listen to podcasts from the British Methodist Church and Fresh Expressions," Nigel says. "And there are



lots of edgier podcasts available from different organisations. For example, the author Rob Bell produces podcasts of his sermons and there are hundreds of podcast and blog responses to his new book Love Wins."

Nigel has also embraced the Facebook revolution. He says it is an excellent way to connect with colleagues as well as the young people in the congregation where his

family worships.

"I have never felt as connected with my church family as I now am with Facebook. Young people constantly post items about what they are doing on their Facebook pages. When I meet them in church I know what they have been up to so it is easy to start a conversation with them.

"Any church that seriously wants to connect with people under 45 should have a presence on Facebook. Most congregations now have a webpage. Websites are good for posting some types of information such as service times but

they are somewhat static.

"Facebook is better for sharing information quickly, and for conversations. When someone has a good idea, is planning an activity or comes across a good source of information, they share it on Facebook. It might be a website, a thought or personal news. I got a lot of firsthand news about the earthquake in Christchurch through friends on Facebook. We can also offer support or respond to each other.

"The term 'mosaic' is now being used to describe mission-focused churches that use a whole range of media to get their message out to people – the arts, blogs, Facebook, Twitter, websites, YouTube clips, and text messages."

Methodist Mission Resourcing has a Facebook page, and other members of the Mission Resourcing team have their own Facebook pages too. They can link their blogs and other material they produce to the Mission Resourcing Facebook page.

Nigel says while the new media is good, it can have a down side. It is important that people disconnect from technology so they do not get locked in their own isolated personal world. It is vital to spend time with family and friends and alone in silence. Technology and social media will never replace personal face-to-face interactions, corporate or personal worship.

Multicultural MWF encourages young women to get onboard

By Hilaire Campbell

The current national executive of the NZ Methodist Women's Fellowship is based in New Plymouth, where five of its nine members, including president Mataiva Robertson, attend the Samoan Methodist Church.

The daughter of a minister, Mataiva has belonged to her local Women's Fellowship since she was 13 but she only became involved with national body after her district was formed in 1996.

Through a number of scholarships Mataiva has been able to travel overseas to further her learning and help find ways for disadvantaged women to lead more satisfying lives.

"NZMWF has ingrained in me the passion to serve and make a difference in the world," she says. And she is keen to encourage more young women to become involved in MWF.

At 35, Laiga Etimani is a younger member of the executive. She became an MWF member in 2008, "because of all my mother did in family and church, not only in the Samoan Synod, but in the overall national body of MWF. She loved it, and when she died I wanted to follow in her footsteps."

Elected to the executive in 2010, Laiga gives thanks for the support of the other members of the executive. "There's one Fijian lady, and two Palangi. They are holding it really well."

Laiga is the MWF executive's link to Uniting Congregations (UCANZ). She is encouraged by her first meeting with UCANZ in February, and the willingness of 13 Uniting churches in the Taranaki area to participate.

Laiga is also the MWF missions convenor and works alongside the Association of Presbyterian Women (APW) missions convenor on their national and international fundraising special projects. The MWF also raises money for other groups by collecting stamps and coupons.

The 2010-2011 special projects are Habitat NZ and Haiti. The 2011-2012 special projects will be formally introduced at the national council meeting later this year. Other MWF fundraising will provide money for Trinity College students' trip to the Holy Land in August.

Laiga says she is indebted to her role models: "the older women, mothers, Tongan, Samoan, Palangi, some in their 90s, who work so hard for the community. I'd love to see more young ones involved. If they want to serve God

in this way there's a local Womens Fellowship in every District. Feel free to drop in to see them."

Suluama Feaunati was approached twice before becoming a member of the executive. "With fulltime work and being a mum and wife, it's a huge task," she says, "but the time spent is priceless."

Suluama has five children from 23 to 12 years old and has been a member of the Sinoti Samoa MWF since 1998.

"It's a place for women to fellowship and share, for spiritual and cultural mentoring, gardening, sewing, cooking. We try to reach poor women affected by violence with small gifts and encouraging words."

Her work as an advocate for Children and Young People Who Witness Family Violence in New Plymouth sits well with her executive role, which is NZMWF link with the National Council of Women (NCW).

NCW's mission is to work for the betterment of women, families and society, and it provides members, including MWF, the chance to have a say on issues affecting them.

Early this year they discussed the alcohol purchasing



Suluama Feaunati



Laiga Etimani

age, and members were urged to make submissions through feedback cards. Suluama says NCW also invited the police to talk on alcohol related altercations.

Suluama thanks her many supporters and she encourages young women to engage with MWF. "They are more flexible and more aware of what is going on in society. They are the future of our church."



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OF NEW ZEALAND

Lectionary 2011/2012

Orders for the new Lectionary are due by Friday 10 June 2011

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Response to Bruce Tasker – in defence of ‘supernaturalism’

To the editor,

I have been delighted and excited to read some fine and thoughtful responses to my provocative letter on Methodist theology. Thank you!

I was brought up in the tradition of song and social justice, caring and community that is liberal Methodism. My father was passionate for peace and teaching, my mother was unstinting in her love for neighbours of all colours and creeds. God was not an abstract or supernatural idea but love-with-skin-on practicality.

Since school I studied in five academic institutions (not to mention Playcentre), learned feminism, postmodernism, and the theory and practice of several disciplines. Through all the competing claims for truth I grew a conviction that there is a divine truth beyond our lives, a truth that became the foundation of my identity. I knew who I was in Christ. I had put my hand in Jesus' hand and he will never let me go.

I was hurt by the church and walked away but God kept on breaking through into my life, stirring my heart, changing me. Various churches in various ways allowed me to experience God afresh, direct, personal, surprising, amazing.

We often assume that spiritual fervour is for young people but as we mature we grow out of it. Isn't that what you are saying, Bruce, that we have grown out of believing in a real live God? You might be right, I might be clinging to outdated delusions.

But I know what I have seen: God intensely present, healing deep emotional wounds and releasing twisted bodies. I know what I have

felt and heard; God whispering insights and challenges, reshaping my mind and memories to clear away ambivalence, fatigue and pain.

My defence of 'supernaturalism' is not to separate the tangible and the intangible or set one over the other. Rather it is to draw both into God's way of seeing and acting. This includes both physical and spiritual realities and flows seamlessly between them.

Our scriptures and creeds begin with the affirmation that God is maker of heaven and earth, "of all that is, seen and unseen". It is dualism to say that the 'natural' is real and the miraculous is not.

Yes, like my parents I do seek to live according to "what Jesus taught, incarnate, down to earth" (to quote Bruce). But if that's it, if that's all there is to the Christian faith and ministry I would resign tomorrow, because that's too small, too dry, too much like hard work!

Your words make me feel thirsty, Bruce. I need not just the moral teachings of a man 2000 years ago. I need his very Spirit, alive and well, in my heart and mind and bloodstream. I can only minister out of an abundant flow of living water.

I have no intention of growing out of a Biblical faith. I want to grow more passionate for Christ each year that passes, more lost in wonder at God's glory, more effective an agent for salvation, more attuned to his 'supernatural' power at work in ordinary people like me and you.

Silvia Purdie,

Foxton/Shannon Co-operating Parish

Free ourselves from labels

To the editor,

I was given the April edition of Touchstone 'to have something to read'. Perhaps the man should have said 'something to reply to'.

Ruby Martin's letter has moved me to write. I have been interested in how the label of a denomination has not granted me the 'new zeal' I was expecting when I re-located here nine years ago from England.

How right Ruby is to feel the freedom of those who did as Jesus asked to "go and do my work".

He did not hand out labels as on designer clothes.

I have received love at my latest church, which is a meeting of people, not a name and a building. I so pray they keep showing only his love on earth.

So to Durham Street Church: I agree that any rebuild should take off any chains of pride in names and follow His greatest commandment. This is what the people need: the love of Jesus.

Angela Robinson, Waiake

Signposts for the faithful

To the editor,

Page five of April Touchstone refers to a number of theories of the atonement in relation to the significance of Good Friday and Easter. But neither individually nor together are those theories to be regarded as conclusive or compulsory dogma for Christians.

They are the testimonials of those who, like all believers, lived by trusting faith in a God able to forgive, justify, reconcile and free them to grow in grace. It is not by any intellectual theory that this happens, but by believers willingly and humbly accepting God's forgiving graciousness.

A sense of living in such a restored relationship with God, and one's own true self, is an experience that empowers believers to grow in knowledge of God. And this process is 'all God's work' (Paul).

In the almost 2000 years of the Church's journey through history, those theories of the faithful have been signposts pointing believers towards a deeper understanding of the passion of Christ. They are the result of believers' reflecting long upon their own and others faith-experience of the wonderful love of God in Christ.

They are responses to the kind of challenge

given in I Peter 3:15, "Always be ready to make your defence to anyone who demands from you an accounting for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and reverence".

They are a consequence of the faithful obeying the great commandment to 'love God in every way possible, including with all our minds', and of heeding Paul's call to offer ourselves completely to the service of God in our worship (Romans 12:1).

To our 21st century minds older theories of atonement may seem quaint, even occasionally repugnant. They come from a cultural mindset of a bygone age. However, with empathy for a past age of slavery the metaphor of payment of a ransom to free (save) someone from slavery can, if not forced, speak to us.

The Moral Influence theory – the exemplary love of God revealed in Christ, and God's atonement through forgiveness appeal because they are free of such cultural baggage mentioned above. These two present us with universal themes associated with God's graciousness: (his) costly, self-giving love and forgiveness.

Laurie Michie, Northshore



FROM THE BACKYARD Drama of the dahlias Gillian Watkin

It was the dahlia bed that caught my attention as I was studying the garden in an absent-minded sort of way. There were large, tall plants with flamboyant flowers. I was thinking of the weather and the changes coming.

There is a line of trees along the road with one bright yellow one in the middle. Trees change when the air and soil temperature drop. But what would happen to the dahlias? They were flowering abundantly but in a month the frosts would arrive. Will the plants suddenly disintegrate? So my question was what process would take them from the lushness of now to mid winter barrenness.

Dahlias were a new addition this summer. By joining the Dahlia Society for \$5 per annum we were able to get some very inexpensive tubers. There was however, an expectation that we would exhibit in the Annual Show, which we did. To our amazement we came home with certificates.

Dahlias come in all sizes, styles and colours, a bit like people really. It is obvious that within the competitive world of flower shows there are three attitudes to competing. There are those who are competitive and want to grow the very best flower. There are those who love their flowers and like to show them off. And there are still others, like us, who enter a show to make the numbers and contribute to a good showing. The combined energy of these makes for a successful event.

The dahlia is the national flower of Mexico. It is indigenous to Mexico and

other Latin American countries and was used by Aztecs in ancient rituals. We have had a lot of pleasure from our dahlias, taken bunches wherever we have been.

The whole realm of creation is one of colour and gift. So, soon that will stop. To every thing there is a season, a time when all the drama of the dahlias will wither. But in the hard, craggy tuber the potential and genetic material of those amazing flowers rests.

When I go outside I can see the answer to my question, the cold and damp snap has left the plants weakened, disease and insect damage is setting in. The natural world has so much to teach us about the ordinariness of decay.

Swift to its close ebbs our life's little day, Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away, change and decay in all around I see, O thou who changest not, abide with me.

The second verse of the hymn Abide with Me, which figures prominently in many Anzac Day services, reminds us all of the cycle of life and the connectiveness of God. Did not Jesus remind us of the lilies of the fields and God's care for us?

The hymn writer, Rev Henry Francis Lyte knew well the cycle of change and decay. He was dying of tuberculosis and departing for Italy. It was final gift to his congregation, and, unknown to him the world, was finished the day before he left. He died three weeks later. In the midst of life there is death but it is not the end of the story.



CORRECTION:

In the caption in the photo on Page 3 of the April edition we incorrectly identified Roy Tankersley as Roy Tankers. Our apologies Roy.



A reflection by Vice President Sue Spindler

CONVERSATION WITH THE CONNEXION

SHAKEN OUT OF OUR SILOS

No-one "is an island, entire of itself", according to the English clergyman and poet John Donne. Rather everyone "is a piece of the continent, a part of the main". These words were written 400 years ago, yet their wisdom and truth resonate strongly across the centuries, and never more so than at this time in our country's and church's history.

It has been a lesson re-learned since the February Christchurch earthquake. As people reached out to neighbours and strangers alike, amazing caring, generosity and hospitality were offered unstintingly. We discovered that we really did need each other, and we needed to move beyond the boundaries of home and hearth to a new openness to one another.

We have been shaken out of our silos of self-sufficiency, and the walls we

surrounded ourselves with have been breached. At times they have crumbled. This has happened on an individual level but has also been mirrored in our churches. Congregations are sharing worship space and resources. Some have broken out of the confines of a church building into the community in new ways, and are finding that while this brings challenges, it also opens up new possibilities that a traditional church building would have made very difficult.

'Silo thinking' has been an issue that has worried church leadership for a number of years now, with an apparently growing trend towards congregationalism. When things are going well for a congregation there is very little incentive to think beyond their own 'silo'. The idea of working together more closely with another parish in order to share resources and create new

opportunities for mission has often not been well received. It's a case of 'we're OK, we don't need to work with anyone else, we can do it on our own', and 'this is OUR church, and we don't want to give it up'.

Silo thinking has also often extended to the way we relate to other denominations. Instead of focusing on and celebrating what we have in common, what we might be able to give and what benefits there may be, we focus on what we might lose by joining with others.

How often have we sung Colin Gibson's well known song "We are many, we are one", or read Paul's words to the Romans about being members of the one body in Christ? But have we actually taken them seriously? Yet this is what the Connexion is all about. We are here for each other, we are all part of one whole,

and we need each other. Has it taken an earthquake to wake us up to this?

Before us now is an exciting opportunity, not just for the people and churches of Christchurch but for our communities and churches around the country, to break out of our silo thinking and embrace new ways of being church in our communities, risking the uncertainty and the unknown in order for new possibilities to take shape and grow.

This is a good time to remember the words of Joy Dine's hymn, "When we set up camp and settle to avoid love's risk and pain, you disturb complacent comfort, pull the tent pegs up again; keep us travelling in the knowledge you are always at our side; give us courage for the journey, Christ our goal and Christ our guide."

Care needed to chart future of Co-operating Ventures

By Jed Baker

I consider myself an ecumenical Christian and worship where I feel led to do so. I have also been a member of both a Co-operating Venture (CV) and a single-denomination parish and have naturally followed with interest current discussions over CVs.

I believe both single-denomination and CV congregations are genuine expressions of Christian faith. Neither needs to be seen as excluding the other in terms of valid outreach or ecumenism.

Frustrations within CVs, I believe, are partly symptomatic of disappointment in the inability of several national churches to unite in previous decades. This is pragmatically accepted as a reality but the dream has not been forgotten.

Trends in church membership may bring about a union at some point. Surely most would agree that a marriage is more spiritually rewarding and fulfilling when the parties concerned agree it is the right thing to do, not because of necessity or outside pressure.

In the meantime, many CV members feel that they have developed a distinctive identity apart from the national churches, and this should be recognised fully. How can this be achieved if the denominations do not wish to unite at a national level?

One CV leader has used an example of adult children leaving home to make their way in the world while still honouring their parents. Another metaphor could be of adult children, who remain in the family home, have their own space, and contribute to the household.

Both illustrate the same point: adult family members can develop their own identity over time and still support one another.

There seems to be different schools of thought emerging at present. One is that an oversight structure centred on UCANZ will provide the united focus that CVs desire, rather than the divided loyalties and accountabilities that current arrangements provide.

Another is that ecumenism is an evolving process expressed in diverse ways, and, rather than create new structures that may undermine the ecumenical ethos, fine-tuning current procedures will be sufficient to meet CV needs.

Both perspectives appear to have merit, particularly given that congregations, national churches and UCANZ do not seem to want to create another denomination. Most would probably feel that this would be a setback to Christian unity in this country.

The key issue would seem to be how to provide satisfactory autonomy for CVs while retaining ties to the denominations.

Throughout the current discussions, CV parishes will need to keep in mind that the interest of the national churches in their congregations is a legitimate mixture of spiritual, historical and material investment.

The denominations for their part will need to remember that the sense of identity forged during decades of union in CVs is often genuinely distinct from their own traditions.

These viewpoints should not necessarily lead to estrangement or a desire for separation. Some Christians are so used to division and schism that they can only see differing perspectives as competing interests. In such a climate, all parties can lose.

Few things are more disheartening to an individual within a Christian community than to be regarded as a piece of church property, asked to contribute without due regard for personal circumstances and needs. This can happen to congregations, also.

Humanitarian concerns in recent months have emphasised again that different church traditions are insignificant when compared to how Christians respond to people in need.

When this works, it can be profoundly uplifting. When this fails, the scars can be equally enduring. Like others, I can vouch for both types of experience and many in between.

Probably no individuals or groups have fully achieved a Christian ideal, except perhaps in their own minds. Try as we might, it is ultimately up to God's grace.

Healthy Christian communities are open to constructive feedback about themselves and should not need to feel their reputations, status, interests or assets are threatened by other viewpoints. I hope this will be the approach from all participants during the current consultation process on CVs and trust they seek, serve and follow Christ over coming months.

A little Japanese tea ceremony

By Elizabeth Brooke-Carr

Joe Bennett has taken a nip at the ankles of The Church. In his 'Sleeping Dogs' column in the Otago Daily Times (March 10, 2011) he wrote that he was "more than usually annoyed at senior church people getting in on official ceremonies and offering thanks upstairs" after the earthquake.

He also pointed out the fallacy of belief in a loving and omnipotent god who has been "particularly severe on churches while leaving the casino standing". Predictably, there have been yelps from all quarters in response. I'm not sure who is on shakier ground – Joe Bennett or God's representatives? But I will let sleeping dogs lie while I unleash a few thoughts of my own about ceremonies.

Ritual can be a great source of comfort when you are feeling helpless. Before I sat down with that wonderful solace, a nice cup of tea, to join the community of television viewers and the summer crowd gathered in Hagley Park, Christchurch, for the commemoration of events set in motion by the February 22nd earthquake, I lit two candles.

During the two-minute silence I stood alone in my living room with my eyes on the flames, one for Christchurch and one for Japan. At times the golden flares lengthened and grew steady, glowing brightly as if with hope; at other times the flames caught an unseen shift of air, a slight breeze, perhaps, and they wobbled and staggered a little as if trying hard to stay upright against powerful forces.

Although the candles sat close together on the mantelpiece they burned differently, occasionally in unison, but mostly they flickered and glowed, dimmed and danced in their own individual candle ways.

Further along the mantelpiece my father's eyes gazed out at me from a framed photograph. I thought of his post-war prejudice for anything Japanese, and I wondered what he would have made of his daughter lighting candles, weeping simultaneously for Japan and Christchurch, mingling tea and tears as she felt for the loss of so many lives, and for our beautiful, broken landscapes in foreign and familiar parts of the world.

I'd like to think that if my father were still alive he'd be 'over it' by now, that his bigotry, sprung so profoundly from fear, would have morphed into something more mellow and tolerant. But who knows?

What matters is that everything changes, all the time – attitudes, theology, politics, tectonic plates – all shift, with or against our will. Nothing stays the same forever because we live in a

dynamic world.

Sometimes changes jolt and shake, upsetting our stasis, or our sense of how things ought to be. Sometimes they occur almost imperceptibly without our being aware of the shifting process until we look back and compare the 'then' with the 'now'. But, however it happens, we have to learn to tolerate and accommodate the changes. A very different proposition from accepting them, I hasten to add.

There will be few individuals who have never felt the sting of bigotry or never expressed some kind of personal prejudice themselves. Sexism, racism, and ageism along with a multitude of other 'isms' flourish in our communities and feed intolerance. Solutions are difficult and closed minds notoriously tricky to prise open.

Ritual can help. It has a way of bringing together the fearful or the dissenting; and it offers the potential for inclusive and positive connection, of being present to the moment in whatever ways we can. The robust organisation of the Christchurch commemoration ceremony with its framework of comforting words and wisdom from dignitaries and community leaders alike, provided an opportunity for all to meet and stand strong, to feel embraced and revitalised for whatever lies ahead.

Other groups too, meet for ordinary or extraordinary business often with a set agenda, and follow the ritual conventions of addressing the chair in order to reach a resolution. All sorts of rituals are woven into our lives, some so familiar and safe that we follow the steps routinely. The simple act of pouring boiling water onto tea leaves, letting it steep, and sipping the hot brew, alone or with company helps us to go forward feeling revived. At best we may feel enlightened.

In Japan, 'the way of tea' is an ancient and transformative practice that encourages self-cultivation, serenity and harmony with nature – a huge and present irony for those so cruelly assaulted by natural forces in the recent tragedy. However, ritual is a way of restoring order to chaos, of doing something in the face of helplessness.

Outdoors or indoors, in a park or a parish hall, a living room, a marae or on a tatami mat – anywhere, if we are open to it – ritual has the transformative power to centre our thoughts and ease a heavy heart in turbulent and uncertain times. Joe Bennett may have no time for ceremonies that include giving thanks upstairs but I wonder what he would say to a nice cup of tea? One sugar or two, Joe?

This article first appeared in the parish bulletin of the Dunedin Methodist Parish.

Where bullying starts

To the editor,

After watching Q&A on March 27th I have become somewhat disillusioned about the politics of this country. The programme began with Paul Holmes interviewing Phil Goff about the Darren Hughes situation but it soon became an attempt at bullying Goff into giving the answers that Holmes wanted to hear.

I had to admire Phil Goff for the calm way in which he responded to Holmes.

After seeing the news item of bullying by a girl of a fellow student at Whanganui Girls' College just a few days before, I have to wonder what sort of example these types of interviews are giving to our young people. Is it any wonder that bullying is on the increase in our schools and indeed our community? Even on Sunday 3rd April Judith Tizard claimed to have been bullied by the outgoing president of the Labour Party.

At the conclusion of the Q&A

programme of the 27th March, the panellists were asked to comment and all agreed that Goff should have stood down Hughes as soon as he had become aware of the complaint to the police. Their general comment suggested that party politics was of greater importance than individual rights.

Even the privacy of the alleged victim was ignored. Surely the wisest action would have been to allow the police to make their investigation without the media making judgements before knowing the full details of the events that had taken place and for politicians to jump on the band wagon.

I consider it a sad day when politicians and the media can disregard the rights of individuals. In this election year I would suggest that as much thought should be given to the integrity of the candidate as to the policy he or she proclaims. What is the point of having good policy if the sentiment of that policy is ignored?

Rev Jack Wright, Palmerston North

Diversity appreciated

To the editor,

I enjoy the wide variety of opinions expressed in Touchstone and note with interest the conversations sparked by the earlier article by Sylvia Purdie.

The letters from Bruce Tasker and Anton Pringle provided an interesting comparison of ways of expressing our Christianity. Being placed alongside Desmond Cooper's Easter Reflection "At one with God during Lent" and "The challenge of radical goodness" by David Poultny, the diversity of Christian thinking and experience was, for me, exemplified.

John Wesley established his ministry on the basis of four guiding principles – scripture, tradition, reason and personal experience. I like the equal weight given to each by Wesley.

For me, the comparison between a faith based on a literal interpretation of scripture, in which judgement and fear were predominant features of one of the letters, (with the words "I" and "my" noticeably absent) and others in which openness to reason, learning and the richness of growing personal experience seemed to predominate, was palpable.

When I read condemnation of another's contribution to the richness of Christian learning and experience, I am saddened. My walk has been vastly enriched by the depth of reason, experience and commitment to Christ of such as Geering, Spong and Borg as well as studies such as 'Living the Questions'. These all challenge me to personal growth and a deepening awareness of the unconditional love of God for all of God's creation.

I must admit that when I read (or hear) 'I think, I believe, in my opinion, I have found...' I am immediately attracted to what follows. Conversely, when I read 'The Bible says...' I sense that I am not going to hear a statement coming from the heart of the author.

However, I am also convinced that as God unconditionally loves each and every one of us, each one of us is, to quote Stephanie Dowrick, "but a humble instrument of the divine".

Your inclusion of such letters and articles creates a delightful ensemble of such instruments of the divine. Thank you.

Brian Kendrick, Nelson

'Recovery and Renewal' PAC theme for 2011

The PAC Distribution Group met in Christchurch just before Easter to consider the distribution theme for 2011. As the group sought to discern what the spirit is saying to the Church, they were very aware of the two earthquakes in Canterbury, the Pike River Mine explosions and all the unexpected events which affect families, communities and churches.

Two Biblical passages and the Easter story informed their conversation.

Matthew 27:45-56: And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom; and the earth shook and the rocks were split. And Psalm 137:4: How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

When the world changes rapidly familiar surroundings are destroyed. In a moment Christchurch was dramatically altered. Changes in culture and the place of the church have left many congregations feeling uncertain. Both natural disasters and complex social changes make people feel as if they are living in 'a strange land'. How then do we sing the Lord's song?

As we consider the need for recovery and renewal, how might PAC funds assist us to sing God's song of love, faith, hope and peace?

PAC funds are split into three categories: endowments, grants to the Church, and grants to the community.

Seventy percent of the fund is set aside for

Endowments. The endowments invite strategic thinking and funding rather than just year to year.

Grants to Methodist Church and Cooperating and Union Parishes make up 20 percent of the fund while 10 is available to groups outside the Church.

While the theme of Recovery and Renewal grew out of our earthquake reflections it can apply in many settings where there has been dislocation and where church and community are working to help people find their feet again, and to imagine and build new futures.

There are no application forms. Rather the Distribution Group invites people to tell about the project for which they are seeking funding. You should tell about expected outcomes and who will be responsible for the project. Explain how much funding you require.

Financial information is also required including your organisation's latest statement of Financial Performance and Balance Sheet and a budget for the project.

The PAC Distribution Group invites rohe, synods, missions, parishes, and other groups inside and outside the Church to submit stories and applications for this year's distribution.

For further details see www.methodist.org.nz.

NOTE: Applications close on 20 June 2011, which is earlier than in past years. Late applications will not be considered.

Purim – remembering the Book of Esther

Diana Roberts

The Rabbi was wearing a rainbow tee shirt, starry sunglasses and an extraordinary wig of many colours. On his arm he carried a toddler dressed in a furry monkey costume. Children bounced around in fancy dress, and a charming young man disguised as Little Red Riding Hood welcomed us and offered us refreshments.

We were issued with shiny masks and those clackers, known as 'groggers', that are popular at British football matches. Red Riding Hood guided us to our seats in the Beth Shalom synagogue in Epsom, Auckland. The Progressive Jewish congregation fizzed and sparkled with joy and excitement as it celebrated the festival of Purim.

The origin of Purim is in the Book of Esther. It marks the deliverance of the Persian Jews in the 5th century BCE from their oppressor, the vizier Haman, who plans to massacre them. 'Purim' refers to the lots cast to decide the day for the massacre. It is only when the Jewish Queen Esther approaches the King that Haman's evil plan is thwarted.

While there is a serious side to the commemoration, Purim is a night for children. The young people of the congregation presented a puppet play, a Purim spiel, of the Book of Esther. They took an unusual approach to the story of King Ahasuerus, the wicked Haman, wise Mordecai, and beautiful, brave Queen Esther and her Jewish people.

The audience enthusiastically shared in the age-old tradition of drowning out the name of evil Haman every time it was

spoken. We whirled our groggers vigorously, to ear-splitting effect.

The Rabbi invited us all to join in the Hebrew blessing before the reading from the Megillah (the scroll). The words were read first in English, then sung in the beautiful rising and falling of the Hebrew. In both English and Hebrew readings we were encouraged to react noisily to the name of Haman – a clever way to ensure that even the youngest children listened very carefully.

The folding doors between synagogue and hall were flung open and the children marched in a fancy dress parade and everyone received a prize. They raced to supper tables heaped with pavlova and hamentaschen, the special cookies stuffed with poppy seeds, cream cheese or chocolate almond paste and folded into three-cornered 'Haman's hats'.

At supper I heard English accents from all around the world, and Hebrew spoken as an everyday language. I talked to people who explained their delight in this festival that commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people 2,500 years ago. People were eager with questions about Christian festivals.

In an information sheet I was given, a woman Rabbi from the USA comments that Purim is a response to the reality of the unpredictability of life. For the Jews under the rule of Ahasuerus, threatened with extermination, "grief turned into joy, a day of mourning into a day of celebration."

We Christians claim the Book of Esther as part of our heritage, although I suspect we seldom read it. I am so glad I had the opportunity to enter into that Book as it came to life on the festival of Purim.



Methodist Trust Association

Results to March 2011

Income Fund A	7.57%
Income Fund B	6.10%
Growth and Income Fund	4.39%

Income Distributions for the quarter totalled \$3,026,530

Contact email: info@methodist.org.nz

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During Purim celebrants use groggers such as this to drown out the name of the evil Haman.



A handful of hearty souls braved winter weather to hold a vigil on New Brighton Beach and launch the River of Life initiative.

Vigil launches River of Life

By David Hill

A small but dedicated crowd braved cold weather and Christchurch's broken sewage system to attend a vigil on New Brighton beach on April 17th.

It was the inaugural event of 'River of Life', a Fresh Expression initiative of the Methodist Church's Central South Island synod that seeks to create an alternative faith community focused on spiritual awareness of and care for our natural environment.

It is led by New Brighton Union Church minister Rev Mark Gibson. A commissioning service due to be held on March 2 to launch River of Life was canceled following the February 22 earthquake.

The vigil was held on the New Brighton beach, next to the pier and library, and was an opportunity for people to mourn the devastation to the natural environment following the earthquake, Mark said.

"We've had services to mourn the loss of people and the loss of buildings, but we haven't had the opportunity to mourn to destruction to our natural environment.

"Our city's sewerage system is broken, and our rivers are contaminated, the sea is contaminated and people are afraid to go to the beach. Christchurch people took pride in having the purest water in the country coming from underground aquifers, but now that is contaminated."

New Brighton had been changed by the February 22 earthquake, Mark added.

"Gum trees at Rawhiti Domain, which have been part of people's lives for years, have been taken down to make way for temporary housing. Our natural environment has been changed and we need to acknowledge that.

"Summer ended early in New Brighton. People stopped coming to the beach, and important events were canceled – the surf-lifesaving champs and the sandcastle competition, which local cafe owners were holding out for to give them a much needed boost, had to be called off. The New Brighton people have taken a pounding, and businesses have been badly hit."

Among those attending the vigil were local Christchurch city councilor Chrissie Williams, Methodist Central South Island synod co-superintendent Cheryl Brown, and former New Brighton Union Church minister Rev Brian Turner.

Brian said he came to the vigil out of solidarity with the people of New Brighton.

"When I was here in New Brighton, I came to appreciate that the people here are very gutsy. They're very resilient. It takes a lot to bring them down, and I'm sure they'll come together and pull through this."

**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.**

**Write a letter to
Touchstone!**

A teacher's journey across faiths

By Cory Miller

As principal at Auckland's multi-cultural, decile three Avondale Intermediate School, Pauline Cornwell says talking is a part of her job.

But today it isn't her job that has inspired her and prompted her to speak passionately for 40 minutes with barely a pause for breath. Today she is talking about interfaith dialogue.

Pauline's passion for the issue was awarded by the Intercultural Dialogue Platform late last year.

Her interest in interfaith dialogue was jumpstarted when she went to Turkey in 2010 as part of a cultural exchange facilitated by a Turkish non-governmental organisation called 'Pearl of the Islands'. In Turkey she met with 15 different families.

"We met for breakfast, lunch and dinner and talked about New Zealand life," she says. "As we got to know each other, the idea of not just intercultural dialogue but interfaith dialogue became evident."

Back in New Zealand, Pauline attends Mt Albert Methodist Church, which she has done since she was 14. At her school she faces cultural, ethnic and religious diversity on a daily basis.

This has led her to ask, what are my beliefs?

Thanks to the influence of her missionary parents, Pauline says she has always kept an open-mind but she felt she still she didn't know enough about other religions.

Fuelled with the desire to expand her interfaith dialogue and learn more about other religions, Pauline attended an interfaith conference held in Wellington early this year.

She met and talked with people from a large range of religions – from Wiccans, to Catholics, Muslims and Buddhists.

She says the weekend was both inspirational and challenging. Pauline says "I am fortunate to have an enlightened school board of trustees who whole heartedly supported my taking time off work to attend the forum. They realise that increasing my understanding also benefits our students."



Pauline Cornwell

"At times I felt incredibly well-informed and at others remarkably foolish and unknowing. How does one facilitate equal and meaningful discussion between a lesbian pagan, a Buddhist monk and a Muslim holy man? What do they have in common?"

The answer Pauline has learnt from her own life is that different religious faiths have similar beliefs, dogmas and values to her own.

After all, Pauline points out, faith and religion can be two quite separate things.

"Others share a lot with my faith but my religion is different. The expression of that faith through organised religion is different," she says.

"A lot of our values, such as peace and hope and compassion and caring are fundamental to the different groups I have had interaction with."

The challenge interfaith dialogue must meet, she says, is obvious. We must honestly identify the areas of conflict and misunderstanding and maintain a peaceful dialogue across this divide.

The hurdles are many. "They include ignorance, prejudice entrenched beliefs and power, the idea that my religion is better than all others."

She questions, "Having been shocked, criticised openly and publically challenged, made to justify your stance or defend your religious beliefs would you continue to return to engage in the discussion and dialogue?"

"How can we continue to attend interfaith dialogue when it can be so confronting and divisive?"

But it is a challenge Pauline believes is vital, especially for youth.

"It is vitally important that young people, the younger the better, learn to have an open mind about other people's religion and faith," she says.

The answer to the challenge she says is we must always strive for social justice.

"Interfaith is an aspect of social justice through which we can build bridges. The more bridges you build, the more successful you are."

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for something that will outlast it."*
William James

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WHERE DO WE FIND GOD IN NATURAL DISASTER?

Rev Mary Caygill, Durham Street Methodist Church, Christchurch

Taking leave of the parsonage, a houseful of goods stored to capacity in the back of the removals truck, memories afresh in my mind of only months earlier these same possessions being unloaded and carried into the house – a house which stood solid alongside the historic faith-filled stone church on Durham Street.

It was the first church to be built of the local stone in Christchurch, bearing visible witness to a people called Methodist on the move, in pursuit of enacting in word and deed the dream of God for life and life in all its fullness for all. I pause by the lone tree marking the boundary between home, church and Mission – between the public and the private.

The tree was once filled with birds bearing witness to life. Now so eerily silent, its leaves form an autumn coloured cloak on the ever encroaching mound of liquefied mud that all too silently bears its witness to the heaving and rupturing of the land, all too recent, now bearing upon its surface, piles of rubble.

These inert piles of rubble bear witness to death, not only physical, but symbolic in myriad ways and forms. In time new life will come but now I cannot envision how.

I feel deep sadness – sadness that the earth in its endless natural processes of recreation has consumed life in so many forms and ways of being. A chance movement to my right catches my eye. A lone fantail hovers and begins to weave its way in and out, up and over and around the seemingly lifeless branches. I feel myself smile, within and without. The dance continues, for a dance it is, performed in silence, a life-giving silence in such contrast to that which had only so recently encompassed my being.

This exquisite, sacred little bird, messenger of the divine in the midst dances a dance of life so graceful, so grace filled an encounter with the sacred embedded in the natural world which goes on recreating – life out of death and so the cycle goes on.

In one profound dramatic and ever so silent a movement of beating wings this messenger takes its leave, soaring above and beyond and yet in the midst, as does the divine which it embodies and is a part of.

I am still, and in my mind's eye, take off my shoes for surely I am on holy ground.

Rev Silvia Purdie, Foxton- Shannon Co-operating Parish

Even those of us not picked up and tossed around in a major earthquake have been thinking hard. As one little Christchurch kid put it, 'Why did God knock our house down?'

Are the insurers right in calling it an 'Act of God'? Personally I'm right behind the Cathedral team who have kept saying 'This is not an act of God, it's an act of nature. God's at work out there in the people caring for each other'. So where is God in all this? I'm claiming four Big Ideas, which argue with each other, which together forge truth and express our Christian gospel.

1) God creates and sustains. All that is, is because God is. The dynamic power holding atoms and galaxies together has a name and a nature. Tectonic plates run on God-power.

2) God releases. This is where our theology gets tricky, because God chooses to hold back this power in order to create freedom but not humans and for creation.

Earthquakes crack according to their own timing; they're not weapons wielded by a vindictive deity. So Christ is Lord of all creation but not controller of all creation. Tough stuff.

3) God cares. Ours is the radical claim that the God of the universe chose to enter it, to become 'one of us', vulnerable, suffering... in order to love us even more passionately and bust through a way for us to love back. How do we rescue this incredible love from the hollow cliché of 'God loves you'? We've seen how. You folk in Christchurch have shown us how, and we are so grateful.

4) God has a grand design. Yes, God is in the small stuff but God is also telling a vast story. Read Romans 8:18-30 again, it's mind-blowing. All of creation is groaning – yeah, we can hear that quite loudly at the moment (too deep for words) and the Spirit is also sighing, crying out, and deeply (too deep for words) longing for the birth of God's new creation. And that is? Us! A people called out, brought to life, set free.

These are not easy answers, far from it. These four corners create a grid which supports our questions.

They name God as creator and redeemer, incarnate liberator. If we drop off any of these convictions then our theology becomes lop-sided. Yes, God is all-powerful. Yes, God is at work, but not always in ways we expect. Yes, God chooses to fold this power away, choosing instead to woo us rather than dominate us. God acts in partnership with us, creating miraculous things like a glass-fronted Art Gallery that can withstand a mighty earthquake, creating communities of compassion and care.

Rev John Howell, St Paul's Union Church, Taupo

God creates an order, and that brings regularity to the way the world operates. Regularity and order allow scientists, geographers, and historians to study the world, and we can understand the world because of this order. Because the world continues to be orderly, we can plan our lives and learn to live with its patterns.

Take, for example, water. Water allows life to grow in all kinds of ways. Water has the properties of quenching our thirst. But we can also drown in water.

Imagine someone drowning in the lake. Does God suddenly change the properties of water, so that when in water we do not drown? That would upset the order and regularity of the creation.

Or imagine if every time the plates shaking. How would that affect the God intervened to stop the plates static not dynamic.

So God as creator sets an order and regularity to creation. God does not intervene in that order. Rather the way God intervenes is he gave his Son out of love.

As we think about how God acts, I suggest that we can revisit and perhaps discard some of the dualisms in our theological history, in order to focus on a God of love. Move away from using the dualisms of natural/supernatural, of sacred/secular, and nature/grace.

Instead think of God as love, then the ideas of having to appease a god of wrath, or that sufferings or disasters are a kind of judgment, can be seen as primitive, and superseded and replaced by grace.

Easter and Pentecost only make sense in the context and foundation of the cross. We are spiritual people, and we worship God in spirit and in truth but spirit is embodied. (Otherwise we employ another dualism of material/immaterial.)

In particular 'in the spirit' is embodied in Jesus and discovered in scripture, sacrament and worship. Understanding of God as creator and of God as spirit begins with the cross. Jesus is just another martyr unless his life and death is a means of grace.

Life in its fullness is a gift to treasure and requires faith. It is not about security. Earthquakes remind us how vulnerable life is. God as creator is bringing order out of chaos, form out of void. How God acts is through the Word of life, centred in the cross of a suffering servant.

In April Touchstone former Methodist Church of NZ president John Salmon and a group of Auckland ministers posed several questions to focus people's thinking about how we see God in the face of natural disasters such as the Christchurch earthquakes.

They were:

- *How might we think and talk about God and God's activity?*
- *In what ways might we understand the relationship between humans and the earth on which we live?*
- *Why is it that natural disasters and their aftermath seem to impact most heavily on those who have the least?*
- *To what extent is free market capitalism to blame in some of the damage and ongoing impacts of events like earthquakes?*

Touchstone readers were encouraged to respond and we asked several people, including John, to respond as well. These are their response. Some writers have chosen to reply directly to the questions. Others have used the opportunity to share their own thoughts and experiences of the quake.

Rev Marcia Hardy, Hornby/Riccarton Parish, Christchurch

As I think about the questions raised by the Auckland Manukau group, I find that they are not the questions I have needed to ask.

My gut questions have been: Where is God at such a time? How can we find hope in the midst of tragedy, when beloved friends, human or animal, are missing or dead; when buildings we have known over a lifetime are a heap of rubble?

There have been no easy answers. I have never been good at tossing off scriptural references but in the week immediately following the earthquake the lectionary provided an answer to my questions that continues to work for me – Isaiah 49:8-16a.

Isaiah's people were lost in their desolation and they cried out "The Lord has forgotten us". But they were answered in their despair. The Lord said "Can a woman forget the baby at her breast? Neither will I forget you. See I have inscribed you on the palms of my hands."

Isaiah's words reminded me that God is always with us; that God never leaves us to suffer alone. Our God is a compassionate God.

Literally, God suffers with us; God stands alongside us. I love the image of being inscribed on God's hand. Inscribed, engraved, tattooed – but not just by modern skin art with electric needles but by traditional ta moko – a sacred practice using chisels and leaving permanent grooves.

Maori belief ascribes the origin of ta moko to the god Rua umoko who presides over earthquakes and volcanoes and whose name means The Trembling Current that Scars the Earth. Just as the earthquake carves permanent grooves in the land so we are permanently carved into the hands of God.

Our real hope comes when we can say with certainty that we have an indelible bond with the living God.

Jesus has told us that God that loves us like a mother hen loves her chicks; that God brings healing and hope to those who are fearful and desperate; that God doesn't even break a bruised reed but surrounds everything that is fragile and vulnerable with care and compassion.

In his crucifixion Jesus revealed to us a God who is there when suffering comes and death takes its toll. And in his resurrection we have what Jurgen Moltmann has called an 'unquenchable hope'. This is the God I trust in.

Rev Katrina Hill, CWS Youth and Schools Coordinator, Christchurch

I find energy in understanding God as trinity. The trinity is about God as community. The trinity can easily slot into the total jargon basket but for me it allows both mystery and participation.

I think what has been missing from our churches is a dialogue about God that is meaningful in the 21st century. We need new words and images that we can find in talking with each other.

The earthquake has opened up some new conversations about God. It has given an opportunity to think about God, the people with whom I have spoken have asked if God is angry with us but I listen to them to see who they think God is.

Building upon a child's view of God is a challenge if people have minimal involvement with the church as adults or are not journeying through discipleship. One of my questions is – how has your faith changed? Is it expansive and open to new learnings or is it stuck?

God is not static. The earthquake has enabled us in the church (St Faith's Anglican is working alongside the New Brighton Recovery Assistance Centre) to re-establish connections with the local community. The question is what next?

People are finding help in safe places and each other. They don't necessarily see God in that picture.

In regards to how the quake might shape the relationship between humans and the earth: I am more interested in the relationship between humans. Christianity gives us certainty when we serve each other. If we say we are going to look after each other and live in that certainty then we have security even when the earth moves.

I am not sure that the earthquake in Christchurch has more greatly affected those who have the least.

As a Christian World Service staff member, I know that natural disasters hit the most vulnerable the hardest, but here it depends on where you live and what happened to you. If you lose your home or a loved one, it does not matter how wealthy you are.

People have put their security in things rather than each other. Developers have been granted permission to build on unstable land like Bexley, even when there was a lot of community opposition to the development.

People have retired there and face a very uncertain future. There is an impact when you put money before people.

My question now is what will drive CERA and the rebuilding? Who will they listen to? As churches we need to be advocating with local people.

Rev John Salmon, former Methodist Church of NZ president, Auckland

For me, the most important aspect of this challenge is that we think about some of the wider implications of earthquakes – like those in Christchurch – and other natural disasters. Of course, the immediate impact on lives and jobs and property will be uppermost for those most closely affected.

For others of us, it shouldn't be "life as usual" or even "faith as usual". Such severe events impact on our world-view and our core beliefs. Our responses will differ, and it's significant that we continue to examine what we say of God and humanity and society.

Much of my thinking is already embedded in the questions I raised in last month's Touchstone. I want to think about God as 'energy', for example, rather than as an actor that might 'cause' an earthquake or 'save' us from its effects.

That God-energy will be in the heaving earth and its re-adjusting plates, in the rise of plasma and the force of cyclonic winds, as well as in our own lives and relationships. So we would need to take seriously all aspects of that life-giving and life-threatening energy, rather than seeking to ignore or placate a personal God.

For me, the idea of a God who can intervene in human life and affect the physical universe disappeared a long time ago. My focus now – reinforced by recent disastrous events – is on my sense of the spirit of life in all things, and how I might celebrate and respond to that life-energy.

I think we need to pay more attention to the earth on which we perch as temporary inhabitants, and to the implications of this small planet amongst the galaxies of our universe. We humans really are rather insignificant. We ought not to put into the centre either ourselves or any God we shape.

We do well to "think small", to see ourselves as tiny in the scheme of things, and so to act with humility, rather than to assume we can do what we want with or on the earth.

There's much these days on the effects of inequality in society. The uneven impact and response to disasters is an often-ignored result of this inequality.

Where and what we can afford to build, for example, is dependent on our place on the scale of social and financial inequality. It's an inequality we all foster the more we want more; and it's an inequality easily fostered by government policies that support those who have or have access to more.

It's time we stood up and called that damaging economic approach as potentially just as damaging as any earthquake.

I would like to see us in the Christian community take a stronger look at the role of capitalist economy in creating injustice, inequality, and the conditions that lead to conflict and destruction in our communities. Perhaps we should think about those issues at the same time as we think about our view of God.

Audrey Trimmer, chairperson, St John's Parish Council, Whangarei

It was not until the Industrial Revolution that the idea of God as a celestial watchmaker, who has made everything on earth in great detail, was promulgated. The marvellous machines that men had made led to the opinion that God could be compared to a mechanic to explain the great variety of life forms on earth.

It was not the view of the majority among the church hierarchy. It has since resurfaced among the American Bible belt fundamentalists, leading to the theory of intelligent design.

God is a spirit and we worship him/her in spirit and in truth.

The message of Genesis 1 is that creation is a gift to us from God, and Genesis 2 describes the fallibility of humans. While improvements in public health and private medicine have seen the rapid geometric increase in the human population, this is overwhelming the water and land resources of the planet.

In the so called developed countries our 'wants' have far outstripped our needs and sucked precious commodities from other parts of the world to the detriment of the population in under-developed countries. But – do not despair for the planet, it will continue. It is the humans who will disappear.

The planet does not care who is living where, disasters happen to 'the just and the unjust'. I feel it is the sensationalising by the media that leads to the perception that disasters impact most heavily on those who have the least.

The people affected by earthquakes and bush fires in Southern California were not poor, nor the tornado victims in the American Midwest. The financially poorer people have fewer resources to fall back on and appeal for help to the media while others perhaps just get on with things.

Inequalities are always with us. People may be equal in the sight of God and the law, but people's abilities are not equal, so those who care try to assist towards fairer resourcing.

Unfortunately the church's history leaves in people's minds the excesses of gold and silver while peasants starved – not a policy to address inequalities. In recent times American televangelists, and I regret to say, some Polynesian churches, have pressured people to donate money which often left the donors hungry. The church's role should be to speak out against the inequalities in its own house before castigating others.

Human society has always had 'markets'. It is the ethics of the business world that need challenging, if only the bankers and others could follow the golden rule – do unto others as you would have them do to you. Not 'do unto others before they do it to you!'

Everyone strives to improve their standard of living. To some extent this can only be achieved by growth in production to match the population growth.

It feels as if the 'tipping point' is close at hand, when the growth bubble will burst. However, I can point to many such imminent tipping points in the past and humanity has managed to struggle on, though often with grave effects on some people.



ALL IN THE FAMILY

KATHLEEN LONCAR REFLECTS
ON MOTHERS' DAY

One of the well-known dates in early May is Mothers' Day. In New Zealand it falls on May 8th this year. Mothers' Day is a comparative newcomer to the Church calendar but is now widely recognised.

My thoughts on the day this year have a connection with the concerns expressed in the March Touchstone about my February article, which I would like to address briefly here.

In his letter Chris Palmer claims that modern theologians would not accept that Jesus allied himself with workmen but instead with all the poor and downtrodden.

I do not see that his being born into a working-class family contradicts this. I can only assume that Chris has accepted the idea of some current theorists that there were no longer any separate carpenters and builders in Jesus' day. Rather much of the population had been forced into one huge working group to build the temple and Herod's palaces.

This contradicts Biblical accounts in Matthew 13:53-58 and Mark 6:1-6, where, after preaching and performing miracles in Galilee and Judea, Jesus came into "his own country", i.e. Nazareth, and preached in the synagogue. There people poured scorn on his teaching because they knew him as a carpenter, and also knew his mother, brothers, and sisters. If they had all been one huge

army of workmen, they would not have had any reason to pick him out from the crowd.

Also it is clear that in Biblical society, life could not go on if all workmen joined in one huge workforce. Food had to be produced, so ploughshares, water pipes, and other essentials had to be made and repaired. Carpenters and blacksmiths must have been available, no less than ploughmen and fishermen.

Many years ago, a Catholic priest said to me that we must remember that Jesus was perfect God and perfect man, not a little bit of each. He was born into an ordinary working family, and was known in Nazareth as the carpenter. Presumably Joseph had died, and Jesus kept the business going until one of his brothers was able to take it over.

In both Gospels we meet Jesus at an earlier occasion. In Matthew 12:46-50 and Mark 3:31-35 we are told that his mother and brothers followed him while he was preaching and waited to speak to him. However, when Jesus was told his mother and brothers were waiting to speak with him, he said "Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother".

Was he, in fact, rejecting his family? It does look as if he had some problem with his brothers at that stage. In John 7 his brothers challenge him to come to Jerusalem

with them for the Feast of the Tabernacles so that he could show the people the works he was doing.

John comments that his brothers did not believe in him. In other words, they were mocking him. Jesus refused to go with them, though later he did go on his own and did some important preaching.

This incident seems to mark a rift between Jesus' mother and his brothers. She clearly had been pondering over his preaching and his powers and had settled in her own mind that she believed in him. We see in John 2:1-12 that Mary influenced him into what John claims to be the first of his miracles: changing water into wine at the wedding feast they were attending.

Mary asked Jesus to help by producing the wine. Though at first he tried to brush her off, he finally agreed and turned the water in six stone jars into wine simply by making a statement about it.

So we find that Mary had a fundamental belief in Jesus and also had influence on him. The accounts that we have of the latter part of his ministry make it appear that she had begun to travel about with the small group of women who went with him and his disciples. These women are said in Luke 24:1-12 to have come on the third morning to anoint his body for burial but did not find

it in the tomb.

Mary herself had left the scene by this time. In his account of the Crucifixion John tells us (19:25-27) that Mary was standing with the other women near the cross but when Jesus saw her and John there, he said "Woman behold your son"; and to John "Behold your mother". From that hour the disciple took her into his own home.

It is strongly attested in Christian tradition that Mary stayed with John, who became a bishop in the Church set up in Ephesus, until she died. We may look to her as the prototype for Mothers' Day.

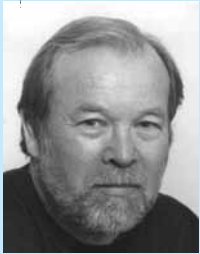
And how do we regard our own mothers? No doubt many people regard them as their guides in growing up, in marriage, and in become mothers themselves. I do not have such memories of my mother. She died of a brain tumour at the age of 43, and I had to do a lot for her and the household during her illness though I was working fulltime as a teacher.

I do remember her when I was little as the perfect mother for a child with an enquiring mind. She always took my numerous and varied questions seriously and gave me a sound answer. Let me advise other mothers to give similar responses and not brush their children's questions aside.

Reading the Bible is political

CONNECTIONS

By Jim Stuart



*This year marks 400 years since the publication of the King James Bible. According to Alistair McGrath in his fascinating book, *In the Beginning: The Story of the King James Bible*, the translation of the Bible and the works of William Shakespeare are the two greatest influences on the shaping of the English language.*

Using the metaphor of today, the King James Bible triggered an earthquake in Western culture, influencing and shaping everything from the English language to politics, poetry, and drama. For hundreds of years of it was the one necessary and invaluable book in the homes of both rich and poor.

It was used to teach people to read, as a record place for family births and deaths, and to spread Christianity around the world.

Its vivid images, stories and metaphors shaped the language of everyday life. People from all walks of life turned to it for solace in the time of loss, for hope in the face of suffering, for guidance when confused and lost.

The revolution that led to the publication of the King James Bible began long before its publication in 1611. About 100 years earlier, the German Augustinian monk Martin Luther challenged the power of the Roman Catholic Church of his day.

In 1515, after meditating on the words of Paul, Luther underwent a profound transformation. He came to see that the righteousness of God, according to Paul, was not something that God alone possessed but rather was a free gift offered to all. He called this, using the language of Paul, "the grace of God". This insight gained from reading Scripture transformed Luther's life. He wrote: "I felt as though I had been born again... from that moment on, the whole face of Scripture appeared to me in a different light."

Luther's new insight became a ticking

time bomb. He realised that because of his access to the original languages of scripture, that is, Hebrew and Greek, and his knowledge of Latin, he enjoyed special privileges unavailable to ordinary people. He also believed the Church of his day had bought into a complete misunderstanding of Christianity.

For Luther Christianity was about grace not works. Salvation was not something one merited or achieved or purchased, it was offered as a free gift by a gracious and loving God. This grace, said Luther, was not the sole possession of the Church but available to all.

Thus Luther opened up Christianity to everyone. He translated Scripture into the native language of his fellow German citizens. Every Christian should have the right and privilege to read the scriptures in their own language, he proclaimed. Individuals should be free to interpret the Bible for themselves.

In 1522, Luther published the first vernacular translation of the Bible. Over the next 89 years an astonishing publishing

revolution took place. Luther's bible was followed by Tyndale's Bible in 1526, the Coverdale Bible in 1535, the Geneva Bible in 1560, the Douai-Rheims New Testament in 1582, and the King James Bible in 1611.

Today translations of the Bible are available in almost every language spoken on the planet but how costly the act of translation can be! For example, William Tyndale who gave us the Tyndale Bible, was strangled for his efforts and his dead body burned in 1536.

Reading history it is obvious that James I's approval and authorisation of the King James Bible was primarily a political act. James had every hope that an authorised translation of the Bible would lead to a unified Protestant Britain. As McGrath points out, "the unity of King, Bible and church would ensure the unity of the English people" and "even stimulate the rebirth of national unity and identity and pride!" Never underestimate the political power of reading the bible in your own language.

Who we see across the table

Robert McLay
Anglican representative on
Standing Committee

*During this past Lent I used a devotional book entitled *Shadows, Darkness, and Dawn: A Lenten Journey with Jesus* by Thomas R. Steagald. The author is a pastor from the United Methodist Church in the USA.*

One of the meditations is called 'Across the Table'. In it Steagald describes what he believes to be one of the differences between happy marriages and unhappy marriages, namely that in the latter, couples look across the table and see only what the other is not. In the former, at least for much of the time, they see "what the other one is, what the other one has been and will be. Each sees the abiding blessing he or she has in the other".

One of the questions for reflection

was to use this analogy to interpret our 'marriage' to the faith and/or the church?

At our one day meeting at Wellington Airport in March, UCA NZ Standing Committee continued the process of commenting on the draft revision of Guide to Procedures for Cooperative Ventures. As the meeting concluded, Committee members were given different sections to consider in the following weeks.

Those of us representing the Partner Churches were asked to focus on the parts that relate to our denomination. In a way we were to look at 'what we are' and 'what we have been' to use Steagald's analogy.

I don't imagine we would be serving on Standing Committee if we wanted

to focus on what the other partner churches are not! But by describing each partner in the first section of the Guidelines, we are highlighting the 'blessing' we have in each other before the document goes on to describe our life together in cooperative ventures.

One of the other items on the agenda at the March meeting was the biennial Forum with the theme 'Beyond the Walls'. Much of the planning had been done but workshops, brochures and publicity had to be finalised. The Forum will be held in Motueka at the Top 10 Conference Centre from Thursday evening, September 1 and concluding at 1pm on Sunday, September 4.

The Forum will be the time when the Guide to Procedures and a new Standing Committee will be elected. It

will also be a time when we sit 'across the table' from each other – at meal times, during discussions after the presentations from guest speakers, during the workshops and in free time. We will celebrate the blessings we see in each other and in the cooperative ventures to which we belong. Above all, we will gather around the table of the Lord, who is the source of all blessing.

A prayer in one the New Zealand Prayer Book Marriage services says, "Grant your blessing then, we pray, to N and N, so that in marriage they may be a source of blessing to each other and to all." Perhaps the N's in the context of this article are the Cooperative Ventures which are one ecumenical expression of partnership in Aotearoa New Zealand.

After disaster, communities wiser than experts, says social capitalist



By Greg Jackson, CWS media officer

The wisdom of the community always exceeds that of the experts, says community rebuilding expert, Peter Kenyon. The Australian based self-described "social capitalist" was in Christchurch recently on a morale boosting trip funded by some of the local Baptist churches.

At last count Peter has worked with more than 1000 communities to help them find ways to stimulate social and economic renewal. He specialises in working with communities in crisis, either through war or natural disasters like floods, fire or earthquakes.

Peter says that it is vital for populations in trauma to be told that they do hold many of the answers to their problems. His own observation about post crisis rebuilding such as that faced by Christchurch is that it always fails if the answers are provided from the top rather than the bottom.

Peter's view of the new Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA) structure with central Government control was that it made good sense for infrastructure repair but very little sense for effective social renewal.

"As an expert sometimes I wish it was not true but the reality is that wisdom of the community will always exceed that of the experts," he says.

It is also important that people emerging from crisis realise that

the future can potentially hold better ways of tackling old problems.

For congregations reeling from the loss of historic churches he has a positive message.

"What they will have now is bare land, a cheque and an opportunity," says Peter.

He cites the case of one fire ravaged church in Australia that took the time to find out what the local community really needed before they rebuilt. The crying need turned out to be for a gym and community centre. That was what was built and as a result a formerly under used site now thrives all week long with Sundays set aside to use the facility as a church.

Peter Kenyon says that one of the key messages he believes Christchurch needs to hear is that now is the time the newly renewed neighbourhood links need to grow.

The care, concern and compassion brought on by the crisis have to be built on.

"You all need to know that this is the way it is meant to be, this is what historically communities have felt like," he says.

The Christchurch earthquake was "normal" in that it produced a flood of goodwill and generosity from around the world.

"People want to help each other. In the Brisbane floods 57,000 volunteers turned out to help."

The urge to rally and help was natural and needed encouragement and support.

In post flood Melbourne the Council appointed a 'barbie officer' to help neighbourhoods bond and support each other over barbeques.

The real test for a post crisis rebuild was not what how things looked but how they felt. "That's the real issue and for that you need people, not experts."

For further information check out Peter Kenyon's website www.bankofideas.com.au.



CWS launches appeal for stricken Japan

Christian World Service has launched an appeal for Japan after the magnitude 9.0 earthquake rocked the north-eastern coast, causing a massive tsunami.

An estimated 28,000 people lost their lives in the disaster and thousands more were injured. Some 151,000 are reported to be living in emergency shelters across Japan, although many more are in emergency accommodation. The situation is compounded by the bitterly cold weather.

The announcement by the Japanese government on April 12 that the severity of the crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant was now at the maximum level of 7 and on par with Chernobyl is of great concern.

The extent of the damage and continuing aftershocks have put huge pressure on local resources. ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) members and Japanese churches are providing basic support such as food, water, medical assistance, sanitation, electricity and fuel. They are focusing efforts on vulnerable groups including the elderly, single mothers and foreign migrant workers.

ACT member Church World Service Asia Pacific responded immediately. Takeshi Komini who has visited New Zealand twice as a guest of Christian World Service never expected to have to mobilise support in his home country.

Early on he reported: "Survivors that I interviewed echo the same point that relief efforts reported in the media are not consistently reaching them, which tells us there is a huge variation on where needs are somewhat being met, and not being met at all. The future is unforeseen for them, and they really do need our help."

A woman sheltering at an evacuation centre in the north supported by ACT Alliance says: "You know, this disaster we thought was something that

happens in far away countries, and we never expected that it will happen to us. Aftershocks come every three minutes, and it is still unbelievable what has happened here."

Then she offers visitors to the shelter a piece of steamed sweet potato, her spirit of generosity stronger than her own wish to eat.

Hideaki Aonuma fled to the mountains when the tsunami came after him. "I did not see the tsunami as I did not look back," he explains. "There were over 1000 people on the hill where I escaped to, and we stayed there for the whole night. Then when I came to see my house one day later, the house was destroyed and all furniture washed away."

The 33-year-old from Miyagi prefecture is among tens of thousands in Ishinomaki city who experienced the same terror. The quiet man that he is, he answered questions one by one with short sentences. His hands were firmly gripped demonstrating his nervousness during the interview.

"Influenza is spreading," he said quietly when asked about conditions in the school room that he must now call home.

Other evacuees in the school report that water, gas and electricity were not available. There was nothing to hint at future plans for them.

"Houses gone, jobs gone, families scattered, we don't know how long we should stay here and where we should go next," one evacuee said. They all say the government was too slow to respond and not open about what it was doing. Temporary shelters were built in areas not affected by the disaster, simply because building products were available in these areas.

Donations can be sent to CWS, PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8142 or at www.cws.org.nz or by calling 0800 74 73 72.

Public Questions for the future of our climate

By Betsan Martin

Climate change has brought humanity to a new situation. We have great knowledge of the world and the universe. We are part of the natural world, as conveyed in the Maori concept of a woven universe. We can now destroy the earth on which we depend for life.

So what is our vision for a carbon-reduced future?

The Climate Futures Forum in Wellington, March 31st - April 1st was bursting with both information and questions:

How can we create a carbon neutral heaven-on-earth?

Can incremental change make the difference needed to meet the challenges of climate change?

Is economic growth possible in a non-carbon world?

How do we adapt if we don't have a lead from central government?

Who is responsible? Is Government

responsible to meet Kyoto protocols? Or are consumers responsible?

How do we meet the social costs of climate change?

Is Gaia a non-religious metaphor for an awareness of the connections between humans and the environment? Would other metaphors engage those with more secular world views?

If I am to take action will it be on behalf of my grandchildren?

It is easy to see climate change as the responsibility of science but community interests must be involved and address the social issues it creates. A vital question is can communities deal with uncertainty, i.e. more frequent severe weather events.

Whereas our economic systems are geared to individual endeavour, the new climate situation requires collective commitments.

Key points from the Forum:

Climate change will impacts greatest on the most vulnerable – the poor and

elderly, and on developing nations.

International responses to protect the climate must be made on the basis of equity and in accordance with respective capabilities. Developed countries have greater responsibilities but negotiations to reach agreed commitments stall on national economic interests.

It may be that climate commitments are too hard for democracies. Climate change is an intergenerational challenge and democracies are geared to three or four year electoral cycles.

Bare facts:

Australians emit 25 tonnes of CO₂ per person. New Zealanders emit 18 tonnes per person. The global average is five tonnes per person. New Zealand has had a reasonably flat emissions rate in recent years which means we are not reducing emissions nor making progress to the Kyoto goal of zero emissions growth.

The languages and cultures of Pacific people displaced by climate change could

be threatened. Niue, Cook island, Samoa and Tokolau have access to New Zealand and their future may be decided here.

Positive Notes:

New Zealanders are pragmatic and adaptable and we create wealth through our resourcefulness.

In a pluralistic society we can work with imagination and we need to gather up an inter-faith approach to climate commitments.

Plans to reduce fossil fuel emissions to 'zero' require substantial investments in wind, solar, geothermal, and wave energy.

Ultimately the climate debate is about values, beliefs and how we organize society. The aim could be to create community responses and preserve the atmosphere as a commons – not a rubbish dump for our energy waste. We could draw on a Scout motto to 'leave the campsite better than we found it'.

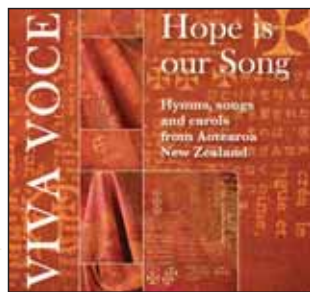
CD Hope is Our Song – Hymns, songs and carols from Aotearoa New Zealand

I approached the task of reviewing this CD with some eagerness – new hymns by New Zealand authors and composers, sung by one of New Zealand's foremost chamber choirs, Viva Voce. It is attractively packaged to match the hymnbook of the same name, and comes with a comprehensive booklet of words that invite exploration.

The CD opens with the sweeping and singable 'God Bless our Land', a song for Waitangi Day. Viva Voce was in full voice, with fine phrasing and diction and flawless intonation.

Another contribution to our civic religion, 'Honour the Dead' (for ANZAC day), receives similarly expansive and stirring treatment. Already, these hymns are finding a place in New Zealand hearts and voices.

Other high points as I listened were 'On a Cool and Autumn Morn', a simple and beautiful southern hemisphere song for Holy Week, 'Matthew was a Lonely Man', an energetic story-telling spiritual, 'Thank you for the night' and 'Beautiful Presence', singable, heartfelt hymns that could be used on many occasions. 'Christ Ascends to God' provides an accessible, inspiring addition to traditional hymns for the season of



Ascension.

However, as I listened I started reflecting on what the purpose of such a recording is. Is it to provide a feast of devotional choral music for people to listen to, or is it a vehicle to assist ministers, worship leaders, musicians and congregations get acquainted with some of the hymns from the latest collection of New Zealand Hymns?

In my view, this recording has some limitations on both counts. Compared to other recordings I have heard from Viva Voce, this was more workman-like than sparkling, more earnest than energetic and more head than heart.

While perhaps it could be said that hymns are intrinsically more workman-like, earnest and intellectual than sparkling, energetic and heartfelt, I feel that some of the hymns chosen would have benefited from a warmer and perhaps more intimate treatment overall.

From the point of view of musicians and congregations learning new music, two aspects of this recording struck me.

First, the selection of hymns. It is a difficult task to choose 27 out of 158 hymns, giving a fair representation of authors, composers, style and form. For me, this selection leans towards

*Sung by Viva Voce, directed by John Rosser
2011, New Zealand Hymnbook Trust
Reviewer: Sally Carter*

those which respond well to very well-trained voices and musicians and those which are written for specific rather than general purposes.

The small congregation with limited musical resources would perhaps benefit from the inclusion of more of the simpler songs and arrangements.

Second, and related, the musical textures used. A pipe organ is an increasingly rare asset in congregations these days and someone to play it even rarer. So much as I love listening to and singing to a pipe organ, I felt that the addition of some other textures would have made for greater variety and listening pleasure.

The use of wind and stringed instruments, guitars and percussion in addition to the (admittedly beautifully played) piano and organ may offer encouragement to congregations using different resources in their music-making.

Despite these reservations, in *Hope is Our Song*, Viva Voce has given expression to hymns with a distinctive New Zealand voice, a warm, biblical and inclusive theology, covering many seasons and human situations. Listeners to the CD will certainly get a feel for the hymns and I am confident that several of them will become loved and familiar additions to our singing faith.

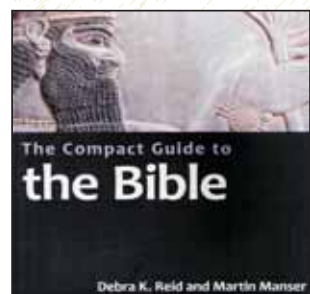
The Compact Guide to the Bible

In the Acts of the Apostles we find Philip asking an official from Ethiopia who was reading from the scriptures if he understood what he was reading. The official responded by inviting Philip to be his guide.

Bible guides aid understanding. In doing this *The Compact Guide to the Bible* draws upon up-to-date scholarship and presents material in concise and well-illustrated form. While the authors admit there are books that provide greater detail, they state that their aim is to offer a clear and reliable overview that will encourage readers to engage in a life-long adventure of exploration.

In my view they succeed in this aim. They have organised their material into 10 chapters and adding a helpful glossary and comprehensive index.

The book begins by explaining that the English word 'Bible' refers to a collection of books, although some of these 'books' are letters or anthologies of poems or songs. There is then an outline of the life and times of the world from which



the Bible emerged, the political and cultural forces involved in shaping the biblical content, and an explanation of how the text has been transmitted through the centuries and translated for English readers today.

Under the heading 'What is the Bible?' the authors draw our attention to the different kinds of literature in the biblical collection, all of which tells of the writers' relationship with God. This literature includes story, law, prophecy, poetry and song, wisdom, letters and apocryphal literature.

The gospels are designated 'story.' The point is made that the purpose of biblical stories is to draw readers in and invite their response, not simply to provide information.

Separate chapters are allocated to a fuller treatment of Old Testament and New Testament. The theme of each book is outlined and some well-known passages highlighted. There is a table of the parables and miracles of Jesus and where these are to be found in the gospels.

Individuals, nations and groups, and places in the Bible

each have their own chapter. The 12 tribes of Judah are listed and also the 12 disciples of Jesus. If we want to know something about the Assyrians, Babylonians or Canaanites, scribes and Pharisees, mountains and deserts, or places associated with the life of Jesus, we will find this, together with much more.

The final two chapters deal with the Bible and Christian belief and reading and using the Bible today. We see how statements of belief expressed in historic creeds were formulated from biblical ideas, and how biblical faith finds expression in worship.

Throughout, the text is illustrated with maps, photographs, reproductions of famous art, many helpful charts summarising events and sources, and coloured panels of highlighted information.

The book really is a compact guide and, on the back cover, is described as "a perfect reference tool." I would agree. An added bonus is the absence of sexist language. Read through from beginning to end, or dipped into as required, there is much to stimulate thought and encourage greater understanding of the Bible.

*By Debra Reid and Martin Manser
2011, Lion, 192 pages
Reviewer: John Meredith*

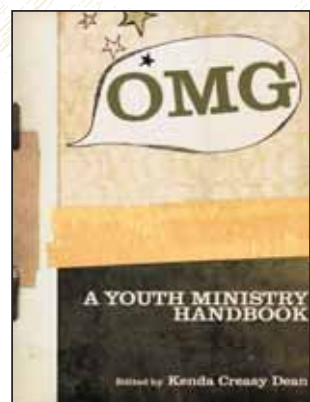
OMG – A Youth Ministry Handbook

At first glance, I wondered what perspective this book would take and whether it would be applicable to the New Zealand context. I was pleasantly surprised to find that it spoke a lot of truth and really does reflect what I see happening in youth ministry here.

Kenda Dean presents an easy to read Youth Ministry book for the 21st century (the information age). OMG or 'Oh my God' in teen speak refers to a phrase that can be used to express a prayer, plea, petition, a note of praise or terror.

Dean challenges us to see where the youth are coming from, what they are going through and really encourage spiritual theology. We are called to encourage young people to be leaders and disciples of Christ. Young people are at a stage in their lives where they are growing in their understanding of faith, identity, culture and the choices are diverse for them.

The line between 'youth' and 'adult' has been blurred somewhat and this can cause problems in terms of identity and responsibility. Youth can be seen as the 'research and



development' wing of the Church in which underlying traditions and doctrines can be challenged and questioned at depth.

The chapters are divided into six sections in which light is shed on ministry with young people including: haunting questions, daunting challenges, enduring themes, promising possibilities, emerging competencies and a maturing discipline. Although the first chapter appeared somewhat pessimistic, it improved with further reading and proved hard to put down.

Dean and the other authors write with sincerity and integrity. It flows well from using scenarios with young people, to more concrete models and theories in youth ministry.

The background of youth groups is explored and it allows us to look critically at how we view youth ministry for ourselves, our church and our congregation.

The authors repeatedly state that congregations must express the importance of young people, not just youth leaders and presbyters.

*Kenda Creasy Dean, editor
2010, Abingdon Press, 163 pages
Reviewer: Jessica Rabone*

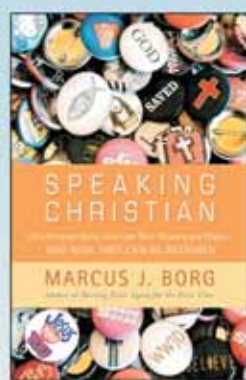
The importance of churches offering power and privileges to youth as they do adults was apparent and the opportunity for youth to share their stories, and get involved in every aspect of church mission (both locally and globally).

We are called to set an example not just by our words but by our lives, and not just for young people but for all people. Rather than looking ahead to what is coming up we are challenged to see what God wants to do in our young people's lives right now and to pursue God's way in all things. We cannot encourage youth to do activities that we would not do ourselves.

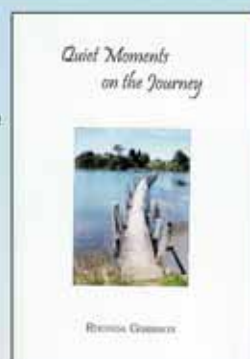
Something that the book neglected to provide is practical tips on activities with youth. This may be due to it being presented as an overview of the topic.

Youth ministry is expressed here as practical theology because it is theological, it is interdisciplinary, and it reflects God through Christian action. This handbook has been a joy to read and I would recommend it to anyone who has a heart for young people.

Review copy courtesy Epworth Books.

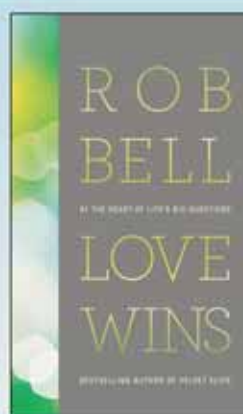


Speaking Christian
Marcus Borg asks if Christian words have lost their meaning and power? He delivers a language for Christians that grounds the faith in its deep and rich original roots, and allows it once again to transform our lives. Hbk. \$49.99*



*plus p&p

Quiet Moments on the Journey
A well constructed collection of prayers for worship and personal reflection by NZ writer Rhonda Gibbons. She covers the liturgical year and seasons, grief, peace, pets and blessings. \$15.00*



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ON SCREEN

A film review by Steve Taylor

NEVER LET ME GO

This is a haunting movie. Directed by Mark Romanek, it remains deeply disturbing long after the credits roll.

The film is based on a novel by Japanese-born British author Kazuo Ishiguro. Short listed for the 2005 Booker and adapted for the big screen by Alex Garland, it provides some profound questions about being human and the person and work of Jesus.

The movie begins with Ruth (Carey Mulligan) watching her lover, Tommy (Andrew Garfield), preparing to be anaesthetised on an operating table.

What follows is a cinematic triptych, elegantly woven together by the evolving love triangle between three friends, Ruth, Tommy and Kathy (Keira Knightley).

The year is 1978 and the friends are children (convincingly played by Ella Purnell, Charlie Rowe, and Isobel Meikle-Smith) at Hailsham School. What seems sheltered increasingly grows sinister. Innocence is hemmed by stories of dismembered bodies and evidence of repressed emotions.

Next, the year is 1985 and the children emerge into adolescence. The tension in

the love triangle escalates and a sinister future becomes frightfully clearer. The three have been bred as organ donors, born to be broken apart in adulthood, spare lungs and limbs to ensure other humans are healthy.

Finally, the year is 1994 and in adulthood the three friends become re-entangled, each forced to confront their past and future.

Much of this makes little logical sense. Why don't these three fight or flee? What events have bred a society in which humans exchange organs? Unnervingly, these unexplained absences, while perplexing, serve to make a plot simply more haunting.

In the final scene Ruth is alone. She contemplates her death, facing a fence on which pieces of plastic flap emptily on the wind. A chilling and senseless isolation is complete. All that remain are Ruth's final words: "Do we feel life so differently from the people we save?"

The word "save" jumped out, the idea that hunks of flesh ripped from one person's body might prove essential to the salvation of another. This brought to

mind the Passion of Holy Week and the Christian gospels, which describe a body whipped and pierced. And the

claim that such an act of brutality was essential to human redemption.

Are we really catching a glimpse of the Christian understanding of the person and work of Jesus?

Perhaps a difference is that of choice. Ruth, Kathy and Tommy are born to die, the days of their lives based on the whim of another. In contrast, in the Garden of Gethsemane we glimpse a Christ choosing to drink from the cup of human suffering.

While at Hailsham, Tommy gives Kathy a cassette tape of a

(fictional) singer Judy Bridgewater. Kathy grows to treasure one song in particular, titled, appropriately, 'Never let me go'. She grasps it not as a love song, but as a mother's plea to her baby.

The song, a recurring musical note running the length of the movie, offers another way to understand the Easter experience. That in and through acts of perverse human brutality is the reality that in Jesus, we realise that God will "never let us go."

Rev Dr Steve Taylor is director of missiology, Uniting College, Adelaide. He writes widely on theology and popular culture, including regularly at www.emergentkiwi.org.nz.



PUZZLE FOR WESLEY MONTH

May is *Wesley Month* for tradition-conscious Methodists. The Wesley family had prodigious knowledge of Scripture. Susanna used the Bible as her children's first reader. The hymns of Charles are crammed with scriptural imagery, often from rather obscure, little known passages.

This puzzle is based on Wesley quotations with references relating to their biblical origin. The passages come from the *Authorized Version* (also called *King James Version*) that was known so intimately by the entire family. Hymn numbers and quotes relate to *With One Voice*, the 'v' identifies the particular verse.

Bible Challenge

Thou of life the ___ art	_____	T	_____
...risen with ___ in his wings	_____	H	_____
'A brand ___ from the burning'	_____	E	_____
...with the shadow of thy ___	_____	W	_____
Then ___ ye lame for joy	_____	E	_____
fall down on their faces and ___	_____	S	_____
on the mean ___ of my heart	_____	L	_____
pure and ___ let it be	_____	E	_____
'For the kingdom of God is... peace and...'	_____	Y	_____
My ___ fell off, my heart was free	_____	S	_____
And depth of sovereign ___	_____	A	_____
I woke, the ___ flamed with light	_____	N	_____
He bids us ___ each other up	_____	D	_____
Thine ___ yoke we prove	_____	S	_____
God and sinners ___	_____	C	_____
Finish then Thy new ___	_____	R	_____
Where O death is now thy ___	_____	I	_____
'...anointed me preach the ___ to the poor'	_____	P	_____
'Here lieth... an ___ servant'	_____	T	_____
Let the living stones cry ___	_____	U	_____
___ from on high, be near	_____	R	_____
...in whom we ___ in whom we are	_____	E	_____

* Words said by his mother Susanna when John aged 5 was rescued from their burning house
 ** Text John preached from his father's tomb when denied the pulpit at his old parish church
 *** Text of John's first open air 'field preaching' in a brick yard at Bristol, 2/4/1739
 **** Epitaph John wrote for himself when depressed and ill with 'galloping consumption' aged 50

WOV	AV
139 v 4	Ps 36:9
227 v 3	Mal 4:2
*Amos 4:11	
139 v 2	Ps 17:8
141 v 5	Is 35:6
144 v 3	Rev 4:10
486 v 1	Lev 6:13
148 v 3	2Pt 3:14
**Rm 4:17	
138 v 4	Ac 12:7
50 v 1	Heb 4:16
138 v 4	Ac 12:7
367 v 2	Ac 20:32
146 v 3	Mtt 11:30
227 v 1	Rm 5:10
148 v 3	Gal 6:15
290 v 2	1Cor 15:55
***Lk 4:18	
****Mtt 25:30	
149 v 2	Lk 19:40
140 v 1	Lk 1:78
51 v 1	Ac 17:28

Answers: fountain, healing, plucked, wing, leap, worship, altar, spotless, joy, chains, grace, dungeon, build, easy, reconciled, creation, sitting, gospel, joyful, unprofitable, out, day/spring, live

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Warner Brothers scoops Roger Award

Warner Brothers has 'won' the Roger Award for the worst transnational corporation operating in NZ in 2010.

The Roger Awards are organised by the Campaign Against Foreign Control of Aotearoa (CAFCA). Other nominees for 2010 were Telecom, British United Provident Association (BUPA), Imperial Tobacco, Vodafone, and Westpac.

Roger Award organiser Murray Horton says Warner Brothers won because of its interference in NZ governance and its treatment of employees and contractors.

"The judges found Warner Brothers' role in the 'Hobbit' affair was an extraordinary example of transnational capital interfering in local politics and influencing the NZ government.

"It was an overt display of bullying that humiliated every New Zealander. Such interference in NZ politics sets a precedent for all future negotiations between the government and transnational corporations."

Murray says John Key and his government won the Accomplice Award for their role in the whole Warner Brothers affair, and Peter Jackson won a special Quisling Award as an individual New Zealander who has done the most to facilitate foreign control of New Zealand for his actions.

Murray says BUPA, which runs the second biggest retirement home chain in NZ, came second because of its poor treatment of both staff and clients.

Imperial Tobacco came third, for selling a product that kills its users and because it set up a fake citizens' organisation to lobby for its product.

Judges for the award were unionist Paul Corliss, writer Christine Dann, activist Sue Bradford, lecturer Joce Jesson, and associate professor Wayne Hope.



Young People

Manukau Camp one out of the box

If you weren't able to be at Manukau District family camp you missed out on a real treat!

It was held at a great venue – Camp Morley at Clarks Beach, on the shores of Manukau Harbour.

It was very well organised – by the team from Crossroads Papakura and Manurewa.

We had great food – provided by the camp cook, Katy Williams, and her team of willing volunteers.

There were great people – from Crossroads Papakura, Manurewa, Waiuku, Papatoetoe and Trinity Howick-Pakuranga churches.

We shared great fellowship – through studies, worship services, camp concert and other activities.

This camp was held from Friday March 11th to Sunday March 13th. About 40 people stayed over the two nights and another 20 or so day visitors came along on Saturday and Sunday. Good natured friendship extended across all age groups. People responded to the need for extra help with the chores without being asked, and chatted

with their neighbours at any opportunity.

The camp concert on Saturday evening was a fun time as many people were willing to take part. A wide variety of acts were presented for the enjoyment of the audience. And enjoy it they did.

During the free time on Saturday afternoon, there was the water slide, accompanied by much shouting and laughter, as well as volleyball and other outdoor games.

There were serious times too, particularly during worship and prayer times, with the camp very much aware of the natural disaster that had hit Japan on the Friday evening, NZ time.

The studies were based on 'Characters of the Cross'. Some of the people who were involved in the crucifixion of Jesus were studied in more detail.

People were allocated to groups by the colour of the jelly-bean they chose. The leader's warning cry was, "Do not eat your jelly-bean until I tell you!" Each group's explorations were incorporated into the Sunday morning worship service.

The fabulously fine weather allowed the 7am Communion service, led by Rev. Peter Williamson, to be held on the beach below the camp.

It was very special to be there with the sun rising,

bringing the promise of another sunny day.

The camp proved to be a great experience all round and people were glad to be part of it.



Manukau District family camp featured a great setting, great food, great people and good fun.

Kidz Korna!

Welcome to Kidz Korna for May.

Message to Christchurch kids

Easter celebrations are over and most of you will be back at school. At St John's church in Hamilton East we had a holiday programme. The children wanted to send a message to the children in Christchurch. These are some of the things they said.

"We can't imagine what it must be like for you, not knowing when the ground is going to shake again.

"We have said prayers for you in church but wanted

to help in another way. We'd been doing things at school. Nina's school held a mufti day; Moala's school made a model of the Cathedral and put money in that. Helu and Lavinia's school had a collection.

"We found out that Doreen was knitting beanies and decided to make some as well. We're not very good knitters but we're getting better and when they are finished we'll send them to New Brighton."



Cory and Helu are modelling two beanies. Lavinia, Moala and Nina are knitting.

All Saints answers question: Who is my neighbour?

Everyone saw on TV the devastation the earthquakes have caused in Christchurch. But up and down the country people have done what they could to help out and send aid to those who have lost so much.

One group that was really touched by the situation was the Kids Church at All Saints Church in Hamilton.

Many of the folks at All Saints supported the Christchurch appeal through other agencies but the leaders and kids at 'KfC' (Kids for Christ) Sunday school wanted

to do more.

They decided to put on the morning tea for church after the Sunday service with all the proceeds going to the Salvation Army Christchurch appeal. The kids baked muffins, cooked pikelets, and decorated biscuits. They had a great time and raised \$190 for the appeal.

So who is my neighbour? Jesus said that it was anyone who really needs our help.



Kids from the KfC Sunday school prepare morning to raise money for a Christchurch earthquake appeal.

BOOK REVIEW

Simon and the Easter Miracle

By Mary Joslin, Illustrated by Anna Luraschi
A Lion Children's book

This story is a traditional tale based on the story of Simon of Cyrene. Simon was on his way to Jerusalem to sell his produce at the market on the day that Jesus was to be crucified. He gets caught up in the crowd and when Jesus can no longer carry his cross the Roman soldiers make Simon carry it.

Simon leaves his eggs and pack by the roadside but when he returns later finds that everything is broken

except twelve eggs. Sadly he returns home and puts the eggs in his shed.

Next morning he finds empty egg shells. Feeling very puzzled he goes to work in his olive grove. Suddenly he hears the sound of wings and sees twelve white doves flying overhead. Simon knows a miracle has happened.

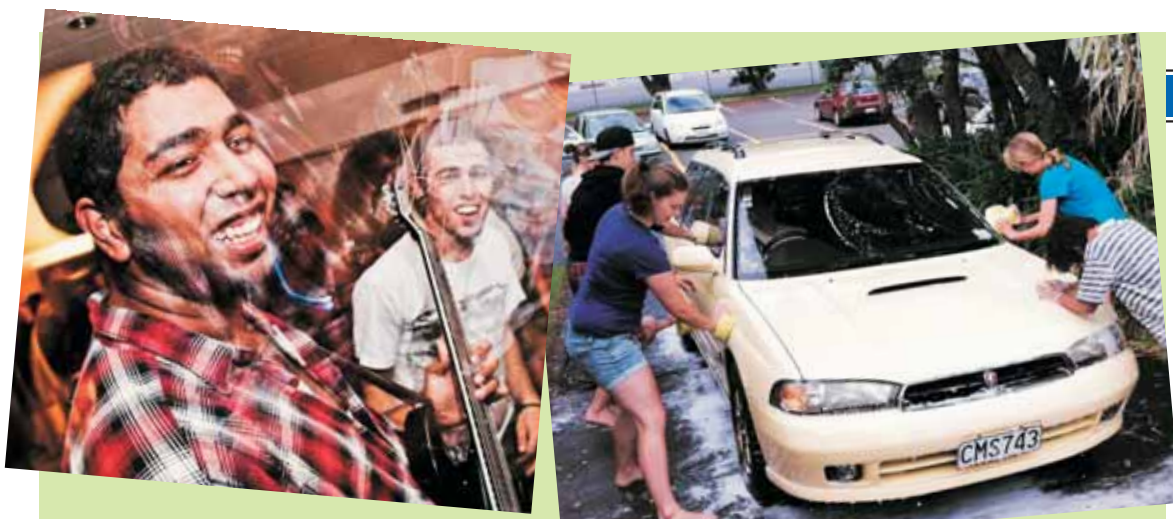
This story would appeal to most children from 5 to 11. As a grown up, I really enjoyed it.



WORD SUDOKU

Fill in the missing letters so that each line down and across and each box has the six letters that spell EXODUS.

X	O	U			S
					U
		E	U		D
D		S	E		
U					
S			X	U	E



Some of the musicians at the the Screamo Metal gig.

The St Johns car washing team hard at work.

Youth group's activities range from mild to wild

The youth activities at St Johns Cooperating Parish in Bucklands Beach range from the traditional to the extreme.

While it is not unusual to find a youth group running a car wash to raise money for a good cause, it is fair to say very few churches would be willing to host metal music gigs. St Johns children, youth and families coordinator Steph Brook explains:

"Youth @ St Johns is our Friday night youth group. On Saturday morning, April 2nd the young people gathered at 10am to wash cars and raise money for Christchurch. They organised themselves into groups to rinse, wash and dry the cars and also sold drinks and gingerbread men," Steph says.

"For six hours a group of 20 to 25 gave their time and energy. Naturally they had a huge amount of fun, and not one of them was dry at the end of the day. Their efforts raised more \$600, with many drivers choosing to pay more than the \$5 price. One family brought three cars to be washed."

That evening a different group of teenagers took over the fundraising efforts. They put on a screamo metal gig in the education block of the church. Some 150 young people gathered to listen and dance to their favourite local bands. It was organised by Macleans College student Tinesh Ragupathy.

Steph says Tinesh and his team have worked in with St Johns in organising and running screamo metal gigs over the last two years.

"Screamo music is distinctive in the way the singer sings. Rather than sing as they exhale as usual, screamo singers sing as they inhale, giving a croaky sound. The lyrics are often well thought out but very difficult to understand.

"It has a very angry and disjointed sound. Many kids who are in the scene are angry and hurting, and this is their way of expressing themselves. However there are some Christian young people within the scene too. They are there for many reasons, among them walking with friends who are involved."

Macleans College has a Christian ethos and students are expected to raise a small amount of money for charity. One of the ways this small group have done so is by holding fundraising screamo gigs. St Johns has supported them by allowed them to hold the gigs in the church buildings, and by providing congregation members as security connections between church and metal scene.

Steph says no drugs or alcohol are allowed on the premises and the police are always informed. "The kids are always very polite and thank us for hosting them. The screamo gig in April raised about \$400 for us."

All proceeds from the young people's fundraising will go to St Johns' partner churches in Christchurch (Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist), which have lost valued people and buildings in the recent earthquakes.

"The Presbyterian component of our giving will help bring a group of 25 young people from Christchurch to get out of the quake zone for a few days. They will explore Auckland and attend the Presbyterian Easter camp at Hunua.

"The Christchurch young people will stay at another local church prior to heading out to Hunua but a team of young leaders from St Johns will join them on the Easter camp. The St Johns youth leaders will definitely be working hard these holidays, as they also lead our holiday programme, which runs during the week leading up to Easter."



Salvation Army unit arms youth with potential

By Cory Miller

Within the heart of Wellington city is a Salvation Army unit offering motivational programmes that enable youth to make positive changes in their lives.

The Wellington 614 unit provides motivational courses, camps, church services, fun evenings and accommodation for troubled youth.

Director Steve Molen says, "Our mission is to be working and living amongst youth. We want to get alongside the youth to help them make a better future. In essence we are a youth church," he says.

Wellington 614 is in fact part of a larger global network of incarnational faith communities, across several countries. Their shared vision is to "rebuild, restore and renew."

Wellington 614's programmes are designed to help any youth in need to develop self-esteem, build self-confidence and prepare for the future.

"If you take our programmes at face value, they equip the youth with skills," Steve says. "But 614 is more significant than that. It's about the ongoing relationship we have with our youth."

However, Steve points out "it's

not a cut and dried, in and out sort of thing", as no two youths are the same.

He says for some youth the journey to success is an easy path, yet others may fall many times before they find their way.

But throughout this journey Steve says 614 consistently makes them feel supported by a wider community.

"It is this sense of community that makes 614 successful," Steve says.

25-year-old Chris, first walked through the door of 614 as a troubled youth two and a half years ago. Today he credits the 614 family for turning his life around.

He saw the 614 Equipt course advertised in the newspaper, enrolled and never looked back.

"I wanted to do more than just sitting at home," Chris says. "My life was quite messed up and I was in trouble a lot."

It wasn't all smooth sailing but Chris says the people at 614 egged him on.

Today he is happy with a job working as a painter.

The alternative? Matter-of-factly Chris states, "I would have been in jail without 614."

An archivist (temporarily) without an archive

METHODIST ARCHIVES

By Jo Smith, Methodist Archives Christchurch

Let me show you around my office. After breakfast each workday morning, I walk downstairs, border collie dog at my heels, to my old 1960s wooden desk. My laptop is propped up on a box, to get it high enough for me to see the screen easily.

I sit on an old kitchen chair rather than a swivelling office chair. A stack of cartons beside my desk is covered with a cheerful tablecloth to give me extra space to spread my files out. Address lists and contact details are attached to a string in front of me with clothes pegs. This is a luxury setup, compared with some of the cramped work conditions others are working under at the moment.

The February 22 earthquake in Christchurch has meant many of us have had to rethink where we work and what we work



Archivist Jo Smith's office is a moveable feast since the Christchurch earthquake.

the Archives Collection, our task was to tackle the mountain of typing that had been generated by earlier volunteer projects. A priorities list was drawn up, and the typing all assembled in one place.

Unfortunately our typing mountain was in my office at 25 Latimer Square, which is

on. Although the Administration Division staff of the Methodist Connexional Office are not at their usual desks at 25 Latimer Square, work goes on as usual.

The Methodist Archives national repository in Latimer Square in Christchurch had already closed for storage development when the earthquake struck.

The Archives volunteer team and I had already put together a full list of projects for us to work on during this closed period to make the most of this time. Our idea was that once we had completed the packing up of

now inaccessible because it is within the Red Zone in Christchurch where no one will be allowed to work for some time.

A couple of weeks after the earthquake, the volunteer team and I met and discussed what we could do during the period the Archives Collection is unavailable. We don't know how long this will be.

We decided to pick up our Methodist cemeteries research project, which we had put on hold while the Archives was closed.

Part of the research we will undertake for this project is to visit local Methodist cemeteries and check that headstones had been transcribed correctly, locate any records still held by the parish, and note this fact. We regularly receive enquires about burials at the Archives and it is helpful for researchers if we can tell them what is still held in the Parish Office.

Another thing we could do is continue with Methodist Nominal Index, a project to index names of those of the Methodist faith in New Zealand. We can readily access Methodist publications which have not been included in this index yet. So that takes care of Tuesdays, when the Archives' volunteers

meet.

For the archivist, during the rest of the week, the main focus over the next few months is to continue publishing information for parishes and researchers about the Archives Collection on the Methodist Church website, as well as answering enquiries. Sometimes this just involves redirecting researchers to another repository.

Many Methodist publications, including newspapers, are held not only by the Auckland Methodist Archives but in repositories such as the National Library of New Zealand in Wellington, Hocken Collections in Dunedin and the John Kinder Theological Library in Auckland. These repositories also hold full sets of the minutes of Methodist Conference.

Information about holdings at the Methodist Archives, plus fact sheets giving information on how to research aspects of Methodist history and other information, can be found under "Archives" on the Methodist Church of New Zealand website www.methodist.org.nz.

VAKAI NOUNOU 'A SIOPAU

Fakafeta'i lahi ki he 'Otua Mafimafi he lava lelei 'a e **Fakataha Vahefonua 'Uluaki 'o ta'u 2011** pea ko e toki fakataha fakalaumalie mo'oni mo melino 'i hono tataki 'e he Faifekau Sea, Faifekau Setaita Kinahoi Veikune, kamata pe mei he Vahefonua 'a e kau Faifekau, ngaahi polokalama ako mo e tokoni ki he kau Ngaue mo e kau fakafongfa, pea pehe ki he Fakataha Vahefonua Kakato. Mahulu atu 'a e tokoni mo e fakahinohino 'a e mataotao ki he mo'ui faka'atamai, Dr Siale Foliaki, ki he fekau'aki 'a e mo'ui lelei faka'atamai mo e mo'ui lelei fakalaumalie – 'aonga lahi eni ki he kau Faifekau mo e kau Setuata.

Toe fakahisitolia foki ko e kau mai 'a e Polokalama makehe ko hono faka'ilonga 'i 'o e kau ikuna 'e toko 50 'i he Polokalama Ako Lotukalafi (Tongan Preachers Programme) 'oku pule'i mo fakalele 'e he mataotao 'o e Teolosia, Rev Dr. Nasili Vaka'uta mei he Trinity Methodist Theological College.

Na'e foaki 'enau ngaahi tohi Fakamo'oni Ako 'e he Faifekau Sea 'o e Vahefonua. Fakafiefia ko e ngaahi husipaniti mo e uafi na'a nau lava'i fakatou'osi 'a e ako.

Toki Hoko Atu. Siopau



Ko Siua Fale mo e hoa ko Luhama 'i he ma'u 'ena Tohi Fakamo'oni Ako.



Ko e pule ako Rev Dr Nasili Vaka'uta mo e ni'ihii 'o e kau ako'.



Ko e kau solo mei Ellerslie (Moia mei he 'Eiki).

KO E FOLOFOLA 'E 7 MEI HE KOLOSI (pea ko e ha honau 'uhinga?)

1. 'Oku ha 'ia Matiu vahe 27 veesi 46 'a e fakamatala 'o pehe; Na'e fe'unga nai mo e hiva 'o e houa; na'e kalanga le'o lahi 'a Sisu, 'o pehe: 'Ilai; 'Ilai; lama sapakatani? 'aia 'oku tatau mo e pehe; 'E hoku 'Otua; 'e hoku 'Otua; na'a ke li'aki au ko e ha?

Ko e fakahaa'i 'e Sisu heni 'a 'ene 'ongo'i hange kuo tuku ange ia 'e he 'Otua, 'i he'ene mafasia 'i he angahala 'a mamani kuo hilifaki kiate ia. Pea koe'uhi ko ia, kuo hange kuo tafoki 'a e 'Otua meiate ia. Na'e ongo'i 'e Sisu 'a e mamafa 'o e angahala kuo hilifaki kiate ia. Pea kuo ne ongo'i kuo mavahe 'a e 'Otua meiate ia – pea ko e toki hoko eni ha me'a pehe ni talu mei taimi ki 'itaniti. Kuo toe fakakakato foki heni 'a e tala fakapalofisai 'oku ha 'i he Saame 22 veesi 1; ko e Saame 'a Tevita, 'E hoku 'Otua; 'e hoku 'Otua; ko e ha kuo ke li'aki ai au? 'O fakamama'o mei hoku Tokoni; mei he le'o 'o 'eku kavekalanga atu?

2. 'Oku ha 'ia Luke vahe 23 veesi 34: 'a e folofola ko eni; 'Ala Tamai,

fakamolemole 'a kinautolu, he 'oku 'ikai te nau 'ilo 'a e me'a 'oku nai fai.

Ko e kakai na'a nau kalusefai 'a Sisu; na'e 'ikai te nau 'ilo 'ae mafatukituki 'o e me'a 'oku nau fai; koe'uhi ko e 'ikai ke 'ilo ko Sisu ia 'a e Misaia. 'Oku 'ikai ko 'enau ta'e'ilo ko Sisu 'a e Misaia ko ha me'a ia ke fakamolemole'i ai kinautolu. Ko e lotu ko eni 'a Sisu; lolotonga ia 'oku nau fai hono manuki'i Ia mo 'Ene tautau mamahi he 'akau; ko e fakahaa'anga 'a e 'ofa ta'e fakangatanga 'a Kalaisi; mo e Kelesi lahi faufaua kuo fakahifo mai kiate kitaua.

3. Ko au e 'oku ou tala atu; Ko e 'aho ni; te ke 'i Palataisi mo au (Luke 23:43).

'Oku fakapapau 'i 'e Sisu heni ki he taha 'o e ongo kaiha'a-akau na'e kalusefai fakataha mo Ia (ko Dismas hono hinga), ko e taimi 'e mate ai te ne fakataha mo Sisu 'i Hevani. Ko e tala'ofa ko eni 'a Sisu koe'uhi ko e fakaha 'e he toko taha ni 'ene tui mo 'ilo'i 'a Sisu. (Luke 23:42)

4. 'E Tamai, 'oku ou tuku hoku

Laumalie ki ho nima (Luke 23:46).

Kuo hokosia 'a e taimi ke pekia hotau 'Eiki, pea Ne tuku atu hono Laumalie ki he to'ukupu mafimafi 'o e Tamai. Ne 'afio'i 'e Sisu kuo lava 'a e kalusefai pea foaki kakato Ia ki he 'Otua (Hepelu 9:14).

5. "Fefine, ko 'ena ho'o tama" Hili ia na'a ne folofola ki he tama ako; "Ko 'ena ho'o fa'ee"

'I he vakai atu 'a Sisu ki he'ene fa'ee, 'oku tu'u mai mo 'Ene akonga ko Sione, na'a ne folofola; "Tama ko 'ena ho'o fa'ee". Ko e fakapapau'i eni 'e Sisu ha taha falala'anga kene tokanga'i 'Ene fa'ee 'i he hili 'Ene pekia. Ko ia na'e 'ave 'e Sione 'a e fa'ee ni 'o tauhi 'i hono 'api (Sione 19:26-27). Fakatokanga'i ange 'oku pehe ne 'osi pekia 'a Siosifa ia kimu'a 'i hono kalusefai 'o Sisu, ko ia na'e uitou 'a Mele.

6. 'Oku ou fie-inua. (Sione 19:28)

Ko e fakakakato eni 'e Sisu 'a e palofisai fakamisaia kuo hiki he Saame 69 veesi 21; Na'a nau 'omi 'ahu ma'aku me'akai; pea 'ihe 'eku fieinu, ko e vinika na'a nau

fakainu'aki. 'I he folofola'aki 'e Sisu 'ene fieinu, ko e faka'ilonga ki he kau sotia Loma ke 'oange ha vinika he ko e anga fakafonua ia 'i he kalusefai; pea toe fakakakato ai pe 'a e palofisai na'e fai.

7. Ko e folofola hono fitu, "Kuo 'osi." (Sione 19:30).

Ko hono 'uhinga 'o e folofola ni, ko e ngaue na'e tuku kiate ia 'e he Tamai: ke malanga 'i 'a e Kosipeli; fai 'ae ngaahi mana, mo e ngaahi ngaue fakaofo, koe'uhi ke lava 'o ma'u 'a e mo'ui ta'engata 'e he fa'ahinga 'o e tanagataa, ko eni kuo lava. Kuo 'osi e ongosia mo e mamahi; 'a e mafasia hono fuesia 'etau angahala kotoa pe he kuonga kotoa pe. Kuo lava hotau huhu'i pea ke tau ma'u 'a e tapuaki 'o e mo'ui.

Si'oku kaunga Pilikimi 'i he 'Eiki; Tauange ke 'aonga atu 'a e ki'i fakamaama kuo fai ki hono 'uhinga 'o e ngaahi Folofola na'e fai 'e Sisu Kalaisi mei he Kolosi. Pea ke tau ma'u ivi ai ke fakahoko'aki hotau ngaahi ngafa taki taka 'i hono sino-hamai ko e Siasi.

'Ofa lahi atu; Faifekau Kilifi Heimuli.

FAKALOTOFALE'IA

Kaveinga: Ko Sisu 'i hotau famili [Sione 14:23; Loma 8:28; Siuta 1:24]

Hufanga atu he talamalu 'o e fonua ka e lafolalo atu 'a e ki'i tokoni faka-Laumalie 'i hotau kaveinga 'o e mahina ni: "Ko Sisu 'i hotau famili"

Ko hai koa 'a Sisu ko ia 'oku fiema'u ke 'i hotau famili? Na'e talaloto 'a e 'Apositolo ko Pita, ko Sisu ko Ia ko e "Misaia, ko e 'Alo 'o e 'Otua, ko e Fakamo'ui 'o mamani" [Matiu 16:16]. Pea kapau ko e fakamatala ia 'o Sisu, pea ko e toe fe ai ha famili tenau ta'e fiema'u ke 'afio 'a e Sisu ko iaa 'i honau famili - he ko e 'Alo ia 'o e 'Otua pea ko e Fakamo'ui ia 'o mamani kotoa.

Ko e me'a mahu'inga taha ki he me'a mo'ui kotoa pe, ko e mo'ui, mo e ma'uma'ulutoa 'o e mo'ui ko ia. Pea ta ko faka'amu ia 'a hotau ngaahi famili kotoa - ke

'afio 'a Sisu 'i hotau famili ka tau mo'ui he ko Sisu pe 'a e Hala, Mo'oni mo e Mo'ui [Sione 14:6]. Hange ko hotau potu folofola, tau tali 'a Sisu pea te Na omi mo e Tamai 'o nofo fakataha mo hotau famili. [Sione 14:23] pea fakamo'oni ki ai 'a e ngaahi folofola ko eni - *Te mau toe 'alu kia hai, ko Koe 'a e Mo'ui Ta'engata* [Sione 6:68]. *Ka 'afio 'a Sisu ha famili, ko e famili ko ia 'e 'ikai tenau humu 'i ha fakatauele pea tenau haohaoa ki he fofonga 'o e 'Otua* [Siuta 1:24]. *Ka 'afio 'a Sisu ha famili kuo nau ma'u 'a e Fakamo'ui hange ko Sakeasi* [Luke 19:9].

Manatu'i 'oku fiema'u ma'u pe 'e Sisu ke 'afio 'i hotau famili, ka he 'ikai lava 'a Sisu ke hu mai kae 'oua

kuo tau fakaafe'i Ia, pea te tau kai 'Ohomohe mo Ia. [Fakaha 3:20]. Tau fakaafe'i mu'a 'a Sisu ki hotau famili ka tau ongo'i mo'oni kuo kehe 'a e mo'ui 'a e famili. Ko e famili na'e fa'a kee kuo melino, 'e liukava ia pea 'e lotolotoi ma'u pe 'a e Melino 'i he famili ko ia, he kuo 'i mamani 'a e Melino [Luke 2:14]. Na'e lata ma'u pe 'a Sisu ki he famili Petani ko e famili na'e fotu ai 'a e melino, fe'ofa'ofa ni mo e nima foaki [Sione 12:3].

Ko e faka'amu 'o e Fakalotofale'ia ni, "Tau Fakaafe'i mu'a 'a Sisu ki hotau ngaahi Famili ka tau ma'u 'Ene ngaahi Tapuaki, - 'io, 'a e Tapuaki 'o e Mo'ui, Tapuaki 'o e Melino, mo e Tapuaki 'o e Haohaoa." 'Emeni.

Faifekau Kepu Moa