

TOUCHSTONE

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



The close of the Conference ordination service in Wesley College's auditorium.

Unity in diversity not without challenges

By Paul Titus

When President Prince Devanandan and Vice President Viv Whimster addressed Conference after they were inducted, they affirmed the cultural and philosophical diversity of Te Hahi Weteriana and then challenged us to move out into the world and make a difference.

The five days of Conference were filled with many illustrations of both the multiple cultures and ideas that make up the contemporary Church and of the need to take on the social issues that confront our nation

and the world.

Along with the variety that is present when Methodists from around New Zealand gather, guests from other denominations and Methodist Churches in Tonga, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, Australia and Ireland also brought unique experiences and points of view.

Some guests brought challenges to the Methodist Church to live up to its ideal of standing with the disadvantaged. They included Labour leader Andrew Little and president of the Diakonia World Federation Rev Sandy Boyce.

Executive director of the environmental group 350 Aotearoa Niamh O'Flynn also challenged Conference. Niamh asked the Methodist Church to

join other Churches that have disinvested from companies that profit from the production of fossil fuels because of the harm they do to the world's climate.

Prince believes the networking he has done in his role as Methodist Mission and Ecumenical director helped encourage more guests than usual to attend this year's Conference.

"I was pleased that Rev Wilfred Kurepitu, moderator of the United Church in the Solomon Islands was able to visit us because our two churches have a good working relationship," Prince says.

"I was originally trained and ordained in the Anglican Church of Sri Lanka so I appreciated the support from Anglican colleagues Bishop Kito Pikaahu

and Bishop Gabriel Sharma at our induction. Presbyterian moderator Rt Rev Andrew Norton also joined us, and two Roman Catholic observers - Sr Sian Own and Carlo David - were with us throughout Conference."

Five Trinity College graduates - Hui Young Han, Oka Ieti, Matafonua Langi, Alipate Livani and Siutaisa Tukutau - were ordained this year. They were brought into Full Connexion along with Rev Maurice McLaughlin and Colin Gordon from other New Zealand denominations.

Viv says the celebratory induction and ordination are traditionally a highlight of Conference and this year was no exception.

"Along with these celebrations of new beginnings were the services to commemorate those who have passed away and retired. This is a time to remember and it brings the mixed emotions of loss and appreciation of lives well lived," Viv says.

"One thing that was different about this year's Conference was the injection of energy and enthusiasm we had from the participation of young people.

"We ran an intern programme that allowed eight young people to take on different roles at Conference, and Trinity College students were also involved in the Conference Arrangements Committee and did a lot of work behind the scenes."

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Solomon Islands Church eyes future with hope

By Paul Titus

Moderator of the United Church in the Solomon Islands (UCSI) Rev Wilfred Kurepitu says his country is facing a number of social problems but his church is well-placed to develop the health and educational services that can address them.

Wilfred attended Methodist Conference and brought greetings and thanks from the UCSI to the Methodist Church of NZ (MCNZ) for the support it has given through its missionary work.

He also used the occasion to congratulate Rev Prince Devanandan as he assumed the MCNZ presidency. The two of them have worked closely together because of Prince's work with Methodist Mission and Ecumenical, which has taken him to the Solomons on a number of occasions.

Just prior to Conference, Wilfred was in Papua New Guinea to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Gospel in Bougainville. While Bougainville is part of PNG, it is culturally closely related to the Western Province of the Solomon Islands where the UCSI has its stronghold.

Since 1922 the MCNZ has supported mission schools, health-care services and ministry training in both the Solomon



Rev Wilfred Kurepitu.

Islands and Bougainville. Wilfred says more than 70 Methodist women from NZ have served as nurses and teachers in the region and the MCNZ continues to support hospitals and training centres today.

Today the Western province of the Solomon Islands is recovering from two major disasters that have affected the country. One was the ethnic riots that rocked Honiara more than a decade ago and the other was the earthquake and tsunami that inundated Choiseul and other western islands in 2007.

"While the riots were in Honiara, on the Island of Guadalcanal in the east of the country, many people from the Western Provinces living there

returned home, so it affected many people.

"Then the tsunami destroyed many villages and schools. I would say we are 75 percent back to normal. Some water supplies are not yet repaired because we have not received funds that the government promised."

Wilfred says the UCSI currently prepared a 40-year vision document that plots a path toward holistic development.

"Currently we face a number of social issues such as teen pregnancies, broken marriages and other negative consequences of modern life. As a church we lack the finances to carry out the work we need to do.

"One way we hope to do this is by helping develop an international airport near the town of Munda [on the Island of New Georgia]. The US built the Munda airport during World War II and there is an effort to work with New Zealand to turn it into a second international airport for the Solomon Islands.

"The Church owns a lot of land surrounding the airport. If the international airport is developed we will be able to build houses to lease, which would provide a good income for the Church," Wilfred says.



Ishara Dhambagolla performing a Sinhala dance.

Sri Lankan flavour at Conference meal

The Methodist Church is no stranger to colourful cultural performances but this year Conference experienced something new - Sri Lankan dances performed to acknowledge President Prince Devanandan's heritage.

Young Auckland woman Ishara Dhambagolla performed two dances at the Conference dinner. Ishara is a second year medical student and she performed a dance from each of Sri Lanka's two main ethnic groups, Sinhala and Tamil.

Prince says it takes a lot of training to master Sri Lankan dance and it was impressive that Ishara performed a routine from the two cultural traditions.

Unity in diversity

From Page 1

Andrew Little was the speaker at the Conference dinner. He complimented the Methodist Church for living out its beliefs on social justice. He reminded Conference that a number of Labour leaders - David Lange, Russell Marshall and David Caygill - have come from the Methodist Church, and cited Prime Minister Michael Savage who said Labour's social security programmes were 'applied Christianity'.

Prince and Viv agree that a highlight of Conference was the presentation by Methodist Church in Ireland president Rev Bill Mullally. Bill spoke about the 30-year journey that led to a covenant between the Irish Anglican and Methodist Churches.

The covenant includes the

mutual recognition of Methodist and Anglican ministers. Under the covenant Anglican bishops lay hands on ordained Methodist president when they are inducted and the Methodist president in turn lays hands on in-coming bishops.

"I personally think the model Bill described is one the Methodist Church of New Zealand could work with," Prince says.

"Most Methodist Churches around the world already have bishops and, in any case laying hands on the ordained member of our presidential team would not change their status within the Methodist Church.

"Methodists and Anglicans in New Zealand can go on bickering about our doctrinal differences, but this seems to be a way ahead so we could work together more

School on Ecumenism in Christchurch

By Terry Wall

There never was a time when the unity of creation was a more pressing need and goal.

Ecumenism may be understood as the desire for the unity of the church, so that the Church may serve the unity of creation. Ecumenism always has mission at its heart.

The third School on Ecumenism is scheduled to take place in Christchurch from 20th-24th February, 2017.

Pioneered by Methodist Mission and Ecumenical, the school has now been accepted as a programme of the National Dialogue for Christian Unity (NDCU).

The course is held in conjunction with Charles Sturt University, Canberra. Three of its staff will join the team of lecturers. Students may choose to write an assignment to be assessed by the visiting lecturers and may have their work accepted for credit toward an undergraduate

programme.

The Australian visitors will be joined by an experienced team of lecturers drawn from a variety of New Zealand churches. They include Cardinal John Dew, Rev John Roberts and Rev Dr John England. The course will cover the history, theology and spirituality of ecumenism.

A local arrangements committee, chaired by Garth Cant, is planning the five-day school. Previous schools in Auckland have brought together lay and ordained people from diverse backgrounds in creative conversations.

The theme Towards a Common Vision is taken from a recent World Faith and Order document on the Church. It surveys the history of ecumenical conversations and asks whether the issues that divide us constitute reasons for remaining separate.

More information is available from Terry Wall at mm-e@methodist.org.nz.

SUMMER SCHOOL ON ECUMENISM

A PROGRAM OF NATIONAL DIALOGUE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY

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The course is held in conjunction with Charles Sturt University, Canberra. It is open to students seeking credits toward a degree or to those who wish to audit.

Cost - Students \$300, audit \$175. Fee includes course material and lunch.

Course content and registration details are available through the Methodist Mission & Ecumenical office.

Guest presenters include Rev Prof Emeritus Robert Gribben, Rt Rev Prof Steven Pickard and Rev Dr Ray Williamson from Australia, and Rev John Roberts and Cardinal John Dew from New Zealand.

For further details contact Rev Dr Terry Wall at the Methodist M&E office:

Email: mm-e@methodist.org.nz

Telephone: 09 571 9142 or 021 083 01510

Those who wish to apply for funding must submit their application to Professional Development Grants before 15th November, 2016.

APPLICATIONS FOR THE COURSE CLOSE
30TH NOVEMBER, 2016.

Conference decisions position Church for the future

Set amidst lush, rolling pasture land north of Pukekohe, Wesley College hosted the 2016 Conference of the Methodist Church of NZ.

The Conference theme was 'Moored to Christ, Moving into Mission', and it nicely sums up both the decisions that Conference made to take the Church into the future and the bold path Wesley College has embarked on to develop its property.

At daybreak on the opening day of Conference Tainui kaumatua Ted Ngataki led karakia and a groundbreaking ceremony to launch the first stage of the major new housing development that will be built on Wesley College land.

A second groundbreaking was then held at the media-friendly time of 9:30 for local Franklin residents, business people and representatives of Auckland City Council.

Ultimately, a new town of 5000 houses will be built on Wesley College land. It will include a transport hub with a rail station, a new primary school and retail businesses.

The development will fund construction of a new Wesley College campus and provide the funds it needs to carry out its special mission - to provide high quality education to disadvantaged Pasifika and Maori students.

Out-going president Rev Tovia Aumua broke the sod at both groundbreaking ceremonies, and Kiwi actor/director and Wesley College old boy Ian Mune spoke at the second of them.

Ian reminded people that change is inevitable and while the College is already quite different than when he attended in the 1950s, he does still recognise its spirit. The building of a new town and a new school is a positive step in its evolution, he said.

Major decisions Conference took are also efforts to help the Methodist Church better manage itself in changing times.

The decision that will have the most noticeable effect on the Church is to enter a six-year trial with a biennial rather than an annual Conference.

In the discussion that preceded the vote on the issue, Trinity College representatives raised concerns about the status of students who enter ministry in the year that Conference is not held.

Methodist general secretary Rev David Bush explained that provision will be made to bring the new presbyters into full Connexion in the year they graduate so they can begin their ministry

and they will then be ordained the following year.

"I was pleasantly surprised that the proposal to move to a two-year Conference was accepted so easily but it reflects the hard work that has gone into it over a number of years. It is a good move because it will give the Church more time to do other work and create opportunities to better resource the Church," David says.

Conference 2016 also approved the proposal Methodist Missions Aotearoa made last year to create the Methodist Alliance, and it gave final approval to the Connexional Property Committee's proposals on standards that church buildings must reach to meet the Earthquake-prone Buildings Act.

The resolution on building codes generated the most discussion at this year's Conference. The Auckland, Manukau and Northland synods proposed an amendment to the resolution that would have relieved some pressure on parishes to meet building code targets.

The Connexional Property Committee's resolution states that church buildings that are less than 34 percent of the current building codes must be closed (unless an engineer confirms they are safe), and parishes should strive to bring all buildings "up to 67 percent of the code or as near to that rating as may be economically and practically reasonable".

The proposal from the northern synods would not have required church buildings below 34 percent to close. It would also have given parishes and synods more flexibility in reaching higher standards so they do not have to commit an overwhelming amount of their financial resources to 'bricks and mortar' rather than mission.

Conference ultimately agreed with the Property Committee's spokesperson Greg Wright, who argued its current proposal does provide greater flexibility than earlier versions and that churches should hold high standards to protect everyone who uses their buildings.

The Methodist Alliance will link the Methodist Missions and parishes around the country. By working more closely together they will be able to combine their skills and resources to promote social justice in ethical and professional ways.

Parishes and other church bodies throughout the Connexion are now invited to join the Alliance, and they will be able to help set it up and establish its code of conduct.



The dawn karakia and groundbreaking for Wesley College's major housing development.



President Prince Devanandan and Vice President Viv Whimster lead the ordination service



Viv Whimster is congratulated after her induction.

Plan B to select next presidential team

By Paul Titus

One of the most important tasks of Conference is to select the next presidential team to lead the Methodist Church. This year, however, the bi-cultural committee with the responsibility to name the pair reached an impasse and no decision was made.

Ironically, the decision to move to a two-year Conference made two days before provided an alternative route to select a president- and vice president-elect before Conference 2018.

Normally, to select the incoming presidential team Te Taha Maori and Tauwiwi decide on their nominees and these are presented to a 5+5 panel that is made up of five representatives from each of the two sections of the Church. The 5+5 meets in

private at Conference, and their deliberations are not made public.

In a pastoral letter sent out after Conference, President Prince Devanandan said the problem this year was that there was no combination of names in common from Taha Maori and Tauwiwi for the 5+5 to name a team that included one lay and one ordained member.

This occurred despite both caucuses reconvening to determine whether they could offer any additional names to the 5+5.

"The result was not about the acceptability of the nominees," Prince says. "This has been a very stressful time for those who allowed their names to go forward, for those who nominated them and also for members of the 5 + 5 panel. Please uphold them in your prayers.

"It is also important to emphasise that the failure to elect a presidential team on this occasion does not mean the system has failed. This system has worked for 30 years and we cannot conclude that it will not work in future."

General secretary Rev David Bush agrees. He says it is important to have faith in the process and those called upon to make the selection.

"We are seeking to work in partnership within the Methodist Church, and just because it is not always easy to get a result does not mean the process is bad. Many people have the gifts and abilities to lead the Church, and the lack of a decision on this occasion is not a reflection on those who were nominated," David says.

The steps to select the next presidential

team begin immediately. Nominations are now open for synods and Hui Poari to offer nominations in the normal manner. Nominations close on July 3rd, 2017.

At their August meetings Hui Poari and the synods will then engage in their own processes to indicate support for their preferred nominees. At that point, another 5+5 panel will be convened to select the presidential team from the names Tauwiwi and Taha Maori put forward.

David says in the case of Tauwiwi, authorised member synods will indicate their support for each of the nominees. The numbers from all of the synod and nominees who receive more than 50 percent support will go forward to the 5+5, as is the practice in the Tauwiwi caucus at Conference.

Action on Supernumerary Fund much appreciated

To the editor,

The annual Methodist Conference meeting in October endorsed a notice of motion calling for a review of the Supernumerary Fund.

Its origins began when a group of nine Supernumeraries discovered that they all shared concerns about the state of the Fund, which has produced no increase in the retirement benefit since 2007.

They sought the help of President Tovia Aumua and Vice President Bella Ngaha to have the church address the serious issues that were causing the Supernumerary Fund to underperform.

In August, six of the nine Supernumeraries met with the President and Vice President. They were assured by Tovia and Bella that the two of them would seek the support of Conference for a process that addressed the problems besetting the Fund.

On the eve of Conference the Presidential team invited two of the Supernumeraries to join with them and general secretary Rev David

Bush to bring to the floor of Conference an appropriate notice of motion. This was done, and Conference unanimously endorsed the notice of motion.

We are writing this open letter to Touchstone to express our appreciation for the way the presidential team listened to our concerns and found ways to address them.

We also want to thank David for his help in shaping the final notice of motion and his support of the motion when it came on the floor of Conference.

The leadership of the Church has heard our concerns. Conference has now endorsed a process whereby the Supernumerary Fund will be reviewed in order that the benefits distributed to members and designated beneficiaries of deceased members of the Fund will be more fair and just.

Revs Mervyn Dine, Michael Greer, Barry Jones, John Roberts, John Salmon, Keith Taylor, Brian Turner, Jill van de Geer, and Norman West.

Poor MCNZ selection process shifts goalposts

To the editor,

I have just heard about the president/vice president selection process at Conference 2016.

When I was principal of Trinity Theological College, I operated on the basis that the more I enabled other people to shine at what they were doing, especially students, the better the whole organization would be.

It is a great shame that Conference selection processes are not geared around the same concept. No matter who are subsequently declared the winners, theirs will be victory at terrible cost. The losers will, in fact, be the winners.

It's rather like the classic experiment in psychology. A group of people can inflict

increasing amounts of physical pain using electric shocks, and the more pain they deal out, the more they become inured to the victims' distress.

In kiwiconnexion.nz you can read a paper I wrote a long time ago called The Caucus Race, which highlighted the absurdity of a church obsessed by process over Gospel. Two yearly Conferences and appointments haven't addressed the real problems at all.

In the meantime, I offer my heartfelt sympathy for those who have been subjected to this race where the rules and the goalposts constantly change.

David Bell, Waiake

Church needs more Pakeha youth

To the editor,

The absence of youth in our mainstream churches is a 'sign of the times'. Are our eyes open? Are we taking note?

Obviously our churches need to change, and this will mean big changes in worship, in what we teach and preach, in leadership styles, in social services, and in how we work for greater justice and peace.

This absence of younger people is particularly obvious in Pakeha congregations, though it may be predicted that it is likely a similar dropping away of support will occur among the Pasifika churches in future decades.

Could the Methodist and Cooperating churches consider the organisation of camps and workshops for young Pakeha of secondary to tertiary ages? These can complement the similar occasions attended by Pasifika youth.

To be successful, the events need to be planned and promoted in full consultation with young people. Quality activities of this nature may need a whole year of preparation and planning.

*Gillian and John Thornley,
Palmerston North*

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The Ageing Experience By Jan Fogg

Healing dementia and other terminal illnesses

When someone we know and love is diagnosed with cancer, do we turn away and leave them to it on their own? Of course not, and neither is this the appropriate response when someone is diagnosed with dementia.

Yes, a terminal illness has an endpoint in this life, but the person is with us the day after the diagnosis and all the days after that.

In the developed world today, medicine is focused on 'cure', i.e. eliminating the disease. Without a cure medical care seems to be a failure, and we feel cheated.

It wasn't always like this. Medicine used to be about care and compassion for the one who was ill. I wonder if we have become so accustomed to the miracle cures of medicine that when someone has an illness in which a cure is not possible, we think healing is not possible either. Unlike Jesus, do we turn away?

So what is healing? A cure fixes a part of the body, whereas healing addresses the whole person. Cancer cures have come a long way over 20 or so years; dementia cures haven't. But healing in dementia has advanced tremendously.

Malcolm Goldsmith, a priest in the Scottish Episcopal Church, has written extensively on changing understandings of dementia. He is concerned that a biological focus can treat a person as an object.

Such a focus regards the disease and not the person as the primary interest. Medicine has a deep commitment to advancing a biological

understanding of dementia, which is a worthy goal, but this approach can be dehumanising.

Malcolm says, "Dementia care is in flux, a mix of the imaginatively committed and the frankly awful, and too often it is a lottery as to which sort of care the person receives."

This is not to belittle the potentially devastating effects of dementia in a person, nor the high stress levels that carers suffer. It is a hard journey.

But recent approaches in dementia care place the person at the centre, honour them as persons, and listen for their individual voice although it may be difficult to hear at times.

This approach focuses positively on what is still possible. It accepts behaviour, speech, confusion and physical decline and strives to enfold the person with dementia with care, concern, respect and reverence to enhance the living of their life.

This is truly the healing of love-in-action. Yes, it asks much of us, but we understand that this is what faith is: giving of all we have to make a difference in someone's life.

As people who respond to the call of Jesus to an abundant life for all, our faith communities might well reflect and improve the ways we work with those who live in the dementia units of our care homes.

We can be shoulders on which carers can laugh and cry. We can be voices of encouragement and hope for those with dementia. We can be healers.

FROM THE PRESIDENT AND THE VICE PRESIDENT

Moored to Christ, Moving into Mission

A month has already passed since we concluded Conference 2016. However, the theme of 'Moored to Christ, Moving into Mission' is still fresh in our thoughts.

Our worship and theological reflection at our induction reminded us what it means to be moored to Christ. As we had informal conversations over meals we gained different perspectives on the business of Conference, and as we listened to our guests from other places we were aware of our God-given diversity.

Andrew Walls points us to the goal of cultural inter-dependence, even as we aim for our own inner transformation by Christ. Andrew writes, "Full humanity is found in Christ alone; our own versions of it at the best, their most fully converted, are only partial. We all come together to the full stature of Christ."

God's Spirit continues to challenge us

as Methodists in Aotearoa today to find meaningful faith that is life-giving. This is not only true for us individually, but also in our parishes and synods.

It is encouraging, for example, to see the Auckland Synod engage with new enthusiasm to revise and reinvigorate the mission priorities for the church.

As we think about 'Moving into Mission', the issues facing us can seem overwhelming. There are certainly too many for any one individual, synod or even Te Hahi, to engage in.

However, God has called us to be active in the contexts where we are placed and there to do all the good we can. We look forward to hearing how parishes, synods, youth, men and women engage in mission in their own ministries across the Connexion.

How do we utilise our resources and people skills carefully and adequately to

carry out our work? The rationale behind the 'Let the Children Live' initiative points us to one way of working: by offering our limited energy or financial resources with existing programmes and services, we can work with one another locally and nationally.

Providing adequate and safe housing is another instance, and explains why the perspective of a politician on this and other social issues was part of the Conference dinner. We invite all of us as Methodists to explore different party policies in the lead up to next year's election.

Methodists are also often at the forefront of interfaith conversations, and many shared in Prayers for Peace with people from other denominations and faiths this month. It is often only as we encounter those who are different from ourselves that we understand our own faith perspective or culture.

So, it is not a matter of waiting until we



President
Prince Devandan



Vice President
Viv Whimster

have decided exactly who we are before we launch into mission. It is by venturing out to take the gospel message in word and deed to others that we also discover who God is and who we are.

As the current Presidential Team, we appreciate the support we have received from our respective families, parishes and wider church as we step into this new role. We look forward to meeting many of you over the next two years and to hearing how you get involved in God's mission while being moored to Christ.

We go forward from here with the work begun at Conference to fulfil our calling.

Notes on the human life of Jesus

By John C. England

Evangelists are often most concerned with how different and how 'divine' Jesus was. Yet, without the sheer quality of his humanity and his astounding human life there would be no Christian movement at all.

The whole Christian revelation was determined by that human life, which he led with friends and with any whom he met. Without this life-with-others there would be no Christian history, no church, no doctrines or creeds, and no theology.

Yet the human life of Jesus is absent from most traditional Christian sources. It is omitted from the canticles, each of the creeds, the Christian year, and even the New Testament letters.

The foundation Gospel is not the story and the theology of his death. Nor is it the schema that tells us to realise our sin, acknowledge the vicarious cross, and be 'saved'. Nor is it in many doctrines of his 'person and work' which have developed from centuries of study and speculation.

Rather, the Gospel is the proclamation that God's rule is upon us and that it is the human life that Jesus lived with others.

The context in which Jesus lived out this good news was first century Palestine, where many Jewish people were devout but sharply divided along religious lines. Wandering charismatics offered prophetic visions, some apocalyptic, some hopeful. And the people faced brutal occupation, oppressive laws and pervasive destitution.

Almost certainly Jesus was born in Nazareth, a frontier but cosmopolitan territory close to many trade routes. The trade city of Sepphoris was only three miles away.

He was part of a family that included brothers, sisters and cousins. He was raised in the home of a 'peasant' woman and her rabbi husband ('carpenter' being a common nick-name for rabbi). Jesus received Rabbinic schooling that covered the Torah, the Shema and the Prophets, and he learned to debate.

He was a disciple of John and knew traditions of the Essenes but developed a more compassionate, 'modest', and inclusive ministry than John. Yet he was a social visionary for people, and offered a new vision of the Reign of God's peace and justice.

His was a charismatic wisdom and he offered the scandalous teaching that, even without any merit, God accepts, forgives, and restores all. This is his Gospel of God's Commonwealth - that love will be all in all - and it redefines the inclusiveness of the Covenant.

Jesus talked all this over with friends. He invited women and men to suppers and seems to reveal most of himself at parties. Note his extensive befriending, especially of women, who were, in the end, his most

faithful friends. He often met friends in cafés and wine-shops for long discussions.

Soon groups formed around him, shared ideas of God's coming Commonwealth, planned urgent reforms, then answered his call and spent time preparing.

Jesus enjoyed 'secular' life on streets and in doorways, on hillsides and seashores and in villages. This is where he was seen and did nearly all his teaching and healing.

Along the way he associated with unsavoury characters - the sick, the scorned, condemned and discarded. But he rejected religious hypocrisy, greed and wealth. These were the evils he most often condemned, calling his friends to do the same.

He led seasonal 'missions' during which he shared companionship and the communion of the road with a partnership of equals. This company on the road is the best model of God's Commonwealth on earth - to be the new fellowship on a quest and in a 'mission' for justice and peace with others.

He said none was good save God alone. He called himself 'son of humanity' and never claimed to be divine. He was at first a not the, Son of God; nevertheless he was, and is, the unique prophet and liberator, forerunner and great Friend.

For this he taught, healed and practised civil disobedience. He was often hungry, thirsty, sad and exhausted while living this counter-cultural 'spirituality' of life-with-others.

Even as a victim of imperial power and religious bigotry, he still acted out an accepting and forgiving love. His earthly death was the inevitable end of such a prophetic life-with-others, not a pre-determined 'sacrifice'. But along with his subsequent 'resurrection', it sealed and guaranteed the sacrificial life he gave to and for us.

Such a life and death with others could not die. It lives on in all who receive his life to be theirs. His life of compassion and consolation, healing and restoration was not destroyed but continued beyond his death, and continues in countless women and men of all peoples, places and creeds who live out such love.

In Jesus' life in our world, we are given the image and embodiment of the eternal people - justice, peace and love in God's coming New World. Just as it is enacted in the Eucharist when we are given the life of Jesus to be our life, as Subba Rao said, "Not to worship you but to live like you, to follow you".

Because his life is the Way, so we are to practise his life of caring and prophetic action, of befriending and conviviality, his tranquillity and righteous anger, and his offering of self in teaching and restoring, liberating and resisting.

The Bible and violence against children

By Dr Emily Colgan

For her Bible study on the third business day of Conference, Trinity College lecturer Emily Colgan focused on the Methodist Church's Let the Children Live initiative, which seeks to end child poverty, child abuse and youth suicide in Aotearoa New Zealand. This is a condensed version of her reflection.

For me, Let the Children Live raises the issue of how biblical images of children shape the ways we relate to children today.

My Bible software program tells me that there are 916 references to children in the Bible. As I trawled through these references, what struck me was that in the overwhelming majority of them children appear in a context of violence.

There certainly are instances when children appear in a positive light. These include the joy when a mother miraculously gives birth to a child of promise (Genesis,) and stories of resurrection where children are brought back from the dead in both the Old Testament (Elijah and Elisha) and the New Testament (Jairus' daughter).

In other stories children are healed, and in the Gospels Jesus welcomes children and insists that "whoever welcomes the child welcomes me".

Nevertheless, in most instances children appear in the context of violence. There is the mass slaughter of children who pose a threat to authority in both the Old Testament (Exodus) and in the New Testament (Herod's command to execute the young male children).

Children are the recipients of vengeful plagues, and they are sacrificed (Jephthah's daughter), orphaned, killed, taken as 'booty' in war or starved.

We read of children who must die for the sins of their parents and we even find violence against children presented as proper 'discipline' in the old classic 'spare the rod, spoil the child' (Prov 13:24; 23:13).

It's not pleasant reading. Moreover, because they are in the Bible these stories lose some of their rhetorical force. The Bible is so familiar to us that these stories become normal. We become desensitised to the violence they depict.

Take, for example, the slaughter of the infants that we find in both Exodus and the Gospel of Matthew. As readers, we are so focused on what we see as the primary narrative - the stories of the infants Moses and Jesus - that we miss or downplay the horrific violence in these narratives.

The 'world-creating power of literature' refers to the idea that the world around us is known and understood through the language that is used to describe it.

Language is the means by which we view reality. The language we use to describe and name determines our knowledge of and attitude towards the world around us. In this way, literary texts, including the Bible, influence our behaviour and action.

In the Biblical world violence towards children is commonplace. While the Bible reflects the attitudes and beliefs of the communities in which it was written, the world-creating power of the Bible has the potential to affirm and perpetuate similar attitudes and beliefs in contemporary Christian communities.

Johan Galtung identifies three types of violence: direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence. Direct violence is an act that violates, injures or kills; structural violence is the ways social systems oppress individuals; and cultural violence is the language and symbols that shape our collective attitude towards violence.

Here we are dealing with cultural violence. The biblical stories don't literally kill or oppress, but they shape our collective attitude towards violence. Therefore, they can affect the wellbeing of children today.

When we read the Bible most of us fail to acknowledge - let alone critique - the violence towards children it describes.

If we neglect to acknowledge this violence, we can miss the cultural violence that is used to justify direct and structural abuse against children. And we continue to reinforce a world in which violence towards children is normal or even acceptable.

In a world where child abuse and domestic violence are at record levels, the violent images of children in the Bible are problematic.

In New Zealand, every two days a child is admitted to hospital with injuries from assault, neglect or maltreatment. Last year alone, police referred more than 58,000 children to Child, Youth and Family because of family violence.

Rather than offer a vision to challenge these horrific figures, the Bible often confirms that this is how the world is. This perpetuates violence against children.

It is not enough just to focus on the positive texts. To challenge the legacy of violence we must identify these difficult texts as potentially abusive, and dare to say that the violence they describe is not acceptable, even when that violence is perpetrated by God.

May we have the courage to speak out against the cultural violence of the text and speak out against child abuse in our communities. We must uphold those stories that present a vision where children are welcomed, healed, and included in God's kingdom.

WCC general secretary visits Aotearoa New Zealand

The general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC) Rev Dr Olav Tveit, visited New Zealand and Australia to meet with church leaders, interfaith activists and community representatives

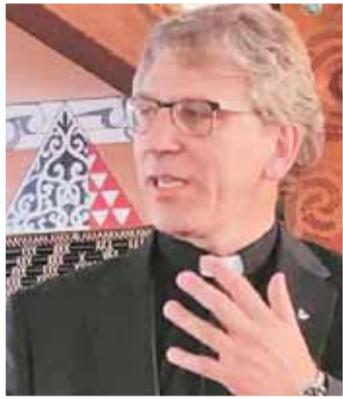
Olav's tour began on 6 October with a powhiri at Te Karaiti Te Pou Herenga Waka Maori Anglican church in Mangere.

to Dunedin where he met with the city's interfaith and ecumenical leaders at a reception given by the mayor of Dunedin, Dave Cull.

Leaders from Dunedin's Anglican, Catholic, Coptic Orthodox, Presbyterian, Baptist, Islamic and Baha'i communities attended.

Dunedin's interfaith community shared the city's history of cooperation among the religions, and heard from Olav about the WCC's recent achievements in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue.

On their visit to Christchurch Olav and other WCC representatives took a tour of the earthquake-damaged



Olav Tveit

city centre, and visited the Christchurch Methodist Mission's Affordable Housing Initiative in Linwood.

The general secretary gave a lecture at the Christchurch North Methodist Church on the WCC's high-level peace-making work in response to situations in Israel, Palestine and Syria.

On Sunday, 9 October, Olav concluded his tour by preaching in Christchurch at a combined morning

service in Knox Church, then again at an evening ecumenical service in Auckland's Holy Trinity Cathedral, Parnell.

At the Auckland Cathedral Rev Dr Tony Surman thanked Olav for "his cultural sensitivity and the thoughtful and artful way he managed to relate the scriptures of the day with the theme of his visit - the pilgrimage of justice and peace."

Olav then went to Australia, with stops in Brisbane, Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Adelaide.

WCC seeks peace with justice in the Holy Land

By Paul Titus

World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary Rev Dr Olav Tveit says Christians must stand up for Israel's right to exist but must not be silent when the Jewish state commits human rights abuses.

Olav spoke in Christchurch during his tour of New Zealand in October. When moderator of the Presbyterian Alpine Presbytery Rev David Coster introduced Olav at the talk he at Christchurch North Methodist Church on Oct 8th, he said Olav both is a theologian and a statesman.

Olav proved this to be the case when, after conveying greetings from the WCC, he delved straight into the difficult and sensitive issues of the Middle East.

To begin his talk, Olav described a recent meeting with Ahmed El-Tayeb, the grand imam of Al-Azhar mosque in Cairo. Ahmed is known as the 'Muslim Pope' because of the prominence of his mosque, which runs a university with more than 2 million students. He met with Olav shortly after he met with Pope Francis because he wants to build better relationships between Muslims and Christians.

Their discussions covered violence in the Middle East, and Olav notes it is important to remember that this violence includes not only violence carried out by extremists in the name of religion but also structural violence in which powerful outside forces support regimes and supply weapons in the region.

The dispute between Israel and Palestine and the war in Syria must be seen in this light. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one the WCC has dealt with for more than 70 years and Olav says there are five "entry points" to approach the issue.

"The first entry point is the strong statement that WCC made in 1948 that anti-Semitism is a sin against God. The Holocaust had a lot to do with how the Churches have spoken about Jews for the last 500 years. This is part of the Christian history of Europe," Olav says.

The second point is that in 1948 the United Nations accepted that there should be two states in the region, Israel and a state for the Palestinians. The WCC has always supported the legitimate status of Israel and called for a Palestinian state.

"But we also believe all people are created in the

image of God, and it is the responsibility of each nation state to recognise the human rights of the other. Israel has to respect the human rights of the Palestinians. This is a theological fundamental of both the Jewish and Christian traditions."

The third entry point is the ecumenical doctrine that Christians give preferential support to the victims of poverty and war. We cannot look at the Israelis and Palestinians as equal powers when one party is occupied and has no military force.

"We cannot speak to the reality of the situation if we take a 'more balance' view. While being critical of Israel can make some Jews feel we do not understand their fear or really accept the legitimacy of Israeli state, this should not stop us from speaking the honest truth," Olav says.

The fourth entry point is the theological perspective and the relationship between the Jewish people and Christians. For Jewish people staking a claim to Israel is more than claiming a piece of land, it is claiming their identity, their homeland.

"But this is an issue for the whole human family and it is still necessary to find ways to live together by respecting others' human rights. It is bad theology to say 'you must leave your homes so that we can realise our identity'.

The fifth entry point is a strong statement that Jerusalem is a holy city for Jews, Christians and Muslims. It must be shared by the three religions and it is our shared responsibility to find common solutions together.

Olav says ultimately there will be no peace in the Middle East without justice and it is a deep theological issue to ask what it means to have justice in a situation like this.

While Palestinians have committed acts that must be condemned, Christians preferential action for the poor means they must look at the situation and opt for those without power. This was the view of the Old Testament prophets.

Olav also discussed the situation in Syria. The WCC supports the Greek and Russian Orthodox Christians in Syria, many of whom are leaving their homes. The WCC also supports Christian aid Agencies such as ACT International, which are supporting refugees.

HONEST TO GOD

By Ian Harris

The Church's secular offspring

These days, people are more likely to tell you they are not religious (and proud of it) than that they are.

Some wear it as a badge of superiority that they have seen through 'all that stuff'. Others will insist that abandoning formal religion does not mean they are indifferent to 'spirituality'.

Their honesty is admirable. But I wonder whether they realise how indebted they are to the religious tradition that has contributed mightily to the secular culture they are part of. Indeed, since it is Western Christianity that gave birth to our secular society, secular people would do well to acknowledge its place in their heritage.

As for church folk, they should not dismiss secular culture as inimical to Christian faith, but rather see it as the legitimate offspring of their faith tradition that opens up new

physical world cannot be over-emphasised. They were prerequisites for the coming of the scientific spirit, which became central to Western civilisation.

The Judaeo-Christian tradition sowed further seeds of change by snapping the link between religious authority and the power of the state. Some trace the decisive moment back to the Israelites' break-out from slavery in Egypt 3300 years ago. The pharaoh claimed to rule by divine sanction, but Moses and his followers claimed their freedom under a higher obedience.

Centuries later the Roman Empire persecuted the early Christians for refusing to worship at the emperor's shrine.

If Christ is Lord, they said, the civil power cannot be sacred. This laid the foundation for an expanding freedom of conscience and democratic institutions which the post-Christian



Ian Harris

West now takes for granted.

One further contribution of the tradition to our modern way of looking at the world is the rejection of moral absolutes. This may seem surprising, because religious authorities are accustomed to claiming divine sanction for their moral codes and promote them as the universal norm.

That, however, falls into the trap of making an idol of those codes, and the Bible is uncompromisingly opposed to idols. Nothing, it says, must be allowed to take God's place - not an ideology, not a dogma, not a church, not even a set of moral absolutes.

Life in community can never be an anarchic free-for-all, so of course there are guidelines for living which any sensible person will follow, for their own good and everyone else's. But with secularisation, divine absolutes evaporate and the onus for creating the values of society falls squarely on the people who comprise it. This opens up a new vista of freedom - and with it a huge responsibility to use that freedom well.

Other influences, such as the 18th-century Enlightenment, played their part in the emergence of secular culture, and it is sadly true that in later centuries the innovators repeatedly had to battle against the metaphysical preoccupation and dogged resistance of the church.

But an alternative script had already been written; and when the time came, those basic Judaeo-Christian affirmations proved decisive in creating the circumstances that gave birth to our secular culture.

opportunities for the future. For it is no accident that secularisation - the process by which Western society and culture were liberated from supernatural worldviews and priestly control - happened in the Christian West.

Why so? The answer lies deep within certain key emphases of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. One pivotal contribution is the way the biblical tradition stripped the gods away from nature.

Instead of every rock, river and tree being charged with a magical energy or spirit, or the sun and moon being worshipped as gods, the Bible sets God apart from nature. That freed people to observe and experiment with nature without violating the divine.

Another dramatic departure from the older religions was that in the Judeo-Christian tradition God gave humankind dominion over nature. This is never presented as a licence to exploit without restraint, still less to destroy. It is rather an invitation to men and women to tend the natural world, live responsibly within it, and so make it a fit place for God one day to dwell on Earth among them.

In later centuries fanciful speculation about a destiny in heaven or hell fudged the breath-taking audacity of this vision, and some churches have still to rediscover it. But it goes hand-in-hand with an even more mind-blowing conviction: that human history is the sphere where God (or Godness) is to be discerned.

The importance of uncoupling nature from the spirit world and of humans' assumption of control over the



Te Taha Maori members Rev Rex Nathan (left) and Rev Keita Hotere (second from left) attended the WCC's workshop on indigenous spirituality in Darwin.

Indigenous theologians share their stories

When Aboriginal leader Ronang Garrawurra declared "God was here with us before Christians came", his words resonated with many at the most recent World Council of Churches (WCC) Indigenous Spirituality and Theology Consultation.

Hosted by Nungalinya Theological College in Darwin, Northern Territory, Australia, the consultation was a two-day event that gathered indigenous theologians from around the world.

A group of Te Taha Maori members travelled from New Zealand along with representatives from the Presbyterian Church's Te Aka Puaho to attend the consultation.

WCC programme executive Katalina Tahaafe-Williams led the consultation and highlighted the ecumenical landscapes and signposts on the journey of indigenous theory and theology.

With its theme 'A Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace Shaping Landscapes of Hope Together', the gathering explored issues relevant to indigenous communities: climate change and climate justice, land, sea and water rights, discrimination, racism and migration.

Taha Maori's Rev Keita Hotere says Darwin was an appropriate backdrop for discussions on the struggles to address the structures that disempower aboriginal people.

"Aboriginal lawyer John Rawley described the current situation in Australian detention centres and human rights violations committed against aboriginal youth.

"Aboriginal Denise Champion led a Bible study that re-articulated how light came into the world. The storytelling was important for it told us about rules for living, our environment, and connections to the spiritual world."

Other participants shared their wisdom on the place of indigenous theologies in their cultures, and through storytelling we began to

unpack Christianity and how it colonises Christian identity.

Limatyla Longumer told her colonial experience as a non-Indian (Chinese) living in India. Tore Johnsen spoke about the Sami experience and the voicing of indigenous theology by being united, standing in solidarity with one another, and being brave enough to find your voice.

"Learning to reclaim culture, language, and what embodies cultural identity was at the heart of these confronting conversations," Keita says.

Land was a common thread throughout the consultation. Tada Sudu of Taiwan shared his understanding of the Creator God who dwells in the soil and with nature. He asked how we can restore earth-centred spirituality to our daily living.

Tadu says it is in the land that we heal the sick, and expressed the opinion that a person who is not deeply rooted in the land is not a citizen, and therefore not present to the fullness of life.

Keita says the storytelling both informed participants and guided them to make recommendations on the future of the WCC's Indigenous Peoples Programme.

Over the next five years their priorities are to support the Programme's current WCC staff member and strengthen connections amongst indigenous theologians and their communities around the world.

"Collectively we agreed that as we strategize on how best to strengthen the presence and contribution of Indigenous Peoples' spirituality and theologies in the ecumenical movement we recognise our own common witness together.

"It was the realisation that no local story stood alone as indigenous and we all share in the struggles and sufferings of indigenous communities globally," Keita says.

PUBLIC ISSUE NETWORK

Climate is church business

By Betsan Martin and Peter Lane
How can the church change in order to contribute to a carbon-free society?

350 Aotearoa executive director Niamh O'Flynn put divestment from fossil fuel industries back on the agenda for the Methodist Church at Conference.

Niamh asked Conference why the Church should profit from businesses that extract the substance that contributes to the world's social and economic suffering, particularly in the Pacific. She said in the absence of urgent action we will see the impact of climate degradation grow significantly within the next 30 years.

The decision of Conference to make no new investments in fossil fuels is a step forward, but misses the point of solidarity with youth-led initiatives for action on climate and the symbolic power of divestment.

An important parallel question to ask is, 'What are we investing in?' Answering this leads into the main question of transitions for climate accountability and the need to look at the business operations of the Church and all of our businesses.

In case you are wondering, the "350" refers to 350 parts per million (ppm) of CO₂ in the atmosphere. This is the level scientists say is the limit we must maintain if we want to sustain the life-supporting capacity of the planet.

By burning fossil fuels we have already reached 400ppm. This means we'll see more natural disasters, disease outbreaks, food shortages, higher sea levels and war.

In October, Peter Lane attended the Australia-NZ Climate Change & Business Conference in Auckland. At the conference France's ambassador to New Zealand Florence Jeanblanc-Risler said it was critical for all parts of society to get involved in developing plans to reduce global emissions.

The conference revealed some positive approaches are already emerging. These include agreements from international commercial airline operators to limit carbon emissions from the sector by 2020. The carbon emitted by international flights falls outside any specific country's Paris

reduction commitments, and so does international shipping.

Anglican economist Rod Oram is setting up a carbon offset scheme for travellers with proceeds going to a Pacific community.

NZ social enterprise charity Ekos and environmental certification programme EnviroMark both have offset schemes that the Methodist Church could use to offset carbon created by its travel.

Peter says businesses put priority on planning certainty, and this puts an onus on policy. One solution is to frame policy as a set of rolling five-year plans. Each year, the organisation reviews its policy platform against its progress to date, and develops plans for the "new" fifth year out.

This approach presupposes that government, businesses and individuals make reasonable progress on each year's plan. If there is significant shortfall from the plan, adjustments may be required to earlier periods.

This approach is similar to the approach of the UK's Committee on Climate Change, which was held up as a good model and one that should be adopted by Australia and New Zealand.

Peter says, "Using rolling five-year plans would appear to be a sensible solution for a variety of social change policy areas, not just climate change. Health improvement, poverty elimination and housing policy would all seem to be good candidates for this approach in the current NZ context.

"There are opportunities to design a new type of excellence in no-carbon communities and cities.

"Planting more trees is still the message of the day, and it has just been reconfirmed by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Environment. This is a consideration for investment and for the use of church assets."

Public Issues notes that the Methodist Conference endorsed the call of the Children's Commissioner to significantly reduce child poverty in NZ by 2017. Church entities were also encouraged to fully adopt the Living Wage for its employees.



Aotearoa executive director Niamh O'Flynn



Methodist Trust
Association

Established by Conference 1978
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Guidelines for Socially Responsible Investment

Contact email: info@methodist.org.nz

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Pipe Organ for Sale

The Anglican Parish of Avonside, in Christchurch wishes to sell its undamaged 1883 pipe organ.

It was rescued from the church just before the big earthquake of February 2012.

It is valued at \$700,000. Offers?

For further information please contact the Vicar, Revd Jill Keir on 021 212 3210, or the Parish office on 03 389 6948.

Service of Celebration

FOR WESLEY METHODIST CHURCH, SOUTH DUNEDIN

Dunedin Methodist Parish will celebrate the life of the Wesley Methodist congregation on the 27th of November at 1pm.

The service will celebrate the ministry of this Church and the closing of its property for worship.

We invite past members and ministers to join us.

Please RSVP to Rev Siosifa Pole on parish@dmm.org.nz or 03 466 4600 or to Ian Bartlett 03 477 2349.

Christ's response to hardship

Throughout the year we encounter difficulties that affect ourselves and the people around us - our families, our communities and the wider world.

As Christians, in our response to those difficulties we dare to endure the tension of living with faith as we work to transform the suffering and chaos of life, and toil to renew the reign of God in our midst for everyone to experience.

In this final month of the season we anticipate a new beginning for all creation, a beginning that God envisioned to restore justice and peace in the world through the One who came as the Prince of Peace.

Therefore, in between the seasons of the Church calendar year, we pause to focus ourselves once again on the nature and purpose of the one God sent and on

Jesus the Christ, whose name we carry and inspiring way of life we dare to live.

These few verses from Luke chapter 23:33-43 paint for us a picture of Jesus' crucifixion. They also give us a glimpse into the reality of how people relate to one another where faithfulness to God and religious arrogance are in opposition. We see how layers of complicated power plays snuffed out any hope of a new beginning in life.

As Luke recorded, the so-called leaders scoffed at Jesus and said, 'He saved others so let him save himself if he is the messiah'.

The soldiers also mocked him. They offered him sour wine and said, 'If you are the king of the Jews save yourself'. Even the criminal who was crucified with him derided Jesus by saying, "Are you not the

Messiah? Why don't you save yourself and us?"

Despite the cross, the insults and the brutality, Jesus obediently and courageously responded with grace as the One who was sent to transform the world into God's reign of peace and love. In his response he offered these words, "Father, forgive them for they do not know what they are doing."

For Jesus to go through these dark depths of hardship and still utter the word of forgiveness cannot help to impress us. May we all be encouraged to follow his ways and endure every hardship in order for God's way of peace to stand as the answer towards the challenge of violence and war.

To the end, Jesus held on to the ways

of God's realm - compassion and forgiveness, non-violent resistance, and trust in and faithfulness to God.

May the essence God's transformative plan through Jesus' life to the whole world be the core of our lives as we encounter hardship together with all those around us.

Despite the forces of power that set us against God, one another and all creation, maintained by nations' selfish promotion of might over mercy, prosperity over equality, and violence over peaceful action, Christ's power of forgiveness sustains us.

As Christ remains at the centre of our faith, let God's vision of creation renewed in justice and peace become a reality. Let it start with us and flow out to our communities and the wider world.

**MOTEKIAI FAKATOU
REFLECTS ON LUKE**

Moments to treasure

As I reported in the August issue of Touchstone, at the end of June I marked a turning point in my life and I embarked on my 81st year of life.

To celebrate I had a party for each decade of living. By the end of the week I was exhausted and needed some time out to recover. I was profoundly humbled by the experience.

Reflecting on my life - something I find myself doing more often these days - I often come back to my favourite John Lennon quote, "Life is what happens while you are busy making other plans".

Looking back over 80 years of living, I can assure that the most significant events and experiences were not planned or even anticipated. They just happened.

What brought this to mind was a long-distance telephone conversation with my brother Jerry who lives in Portland, Maine. Jerry is enjoying his retirement, plays golf



Jim Stuart

five days a week, remains an active member of the local United Methodist Church where he church treasurer, sings in the church choir, and helps plan some of the church's outreach programmes in the community.

Jerry is younger than me, and during our meandering conversation, I talked about my birthday recovery and began to reminisce about our lives, guided by Lennon's words.

In our early years neither of our parents were regular churchgoers. But to enjoy a quiet Sunday breakfast, they sent us off to the local Methodist Church. Encouraged by the local youth programme leaders, we both became very involved in the church. The youth minister, Phil Townsley, lived in the church parsonage and he let us know that if we ever needed to talk about personal issues, his door was always open,

day or night.

One night after dropping my girlfriend off, I drove past the church on my way home, feeling depressed. Seeing the porch light on, I decided to take up Phil's offer. I knocked on the door, Phil let me in and thus began a life-changing conversation.

I told Phil I was struggling with what to do with my life. We talked late into the night and he prayed with me. Throughout my life, I have looked back on that time as a turning point.

Up until that point I was planning to become a doctor, but something changed. Ultimately, I trained for the ministry and have done my best to serve the people who have crossed my path with the same generosity that Phil has showed me.

Looking back, it has been a privilege to be with people as they make life-changing decisions. Ministry has given me countless opportunities to meet with people facing sometimes terrible situations and then watching them work through to

the other side.

I have listened to students worrying about their relationships or studies. I have met with couples preparing to get married and families facing the loss of loved ones. What might seem like a straightforward funeral or wedding can turn into a chance for healing and hope beyond anyone's imaginings.

From Phil, I first learnt how change can happen because someone takes the time to listen. And I can say from experience you do not always know the words to say. Something happens when worries and concerns are shared.

If I wrote a list of my key performance indicators none of these things would count. But for me in my vintage years, these are the memories I treasure. I have made lots of plans in my 80 years, but life happened when I was doing other things.

CONNECTIONS

Sing each other's songs

By Rev Adrian Skelton, UCANZ Executive Officer

It is conference season for many of the UCANZ congregations with Methodist Conference, and Presbyterian and Congregational Assemblies all on the calendar.

Last month's Methodist Conference at Wesley College was my first and I found it most friendly and inclusive.

Naturally, singing was programmed in the worship services - for was not Methodism 'born in song'? But it was the more spontaneous outpourings of song that seemed to have greater energy. One of those songs is still going around in my head:

Help me see I can work for change, and wherever I might be,
Every day in your Spirit, I'll find the love and energy!

(Words: Shirley Murray, Tune: Colin Gibson)

Singing is a human response to life, perhaps more fundamental than speech. Parents and carers encourage children with nursery rhymes and action songs, and as toddlers we can enjoy them ad infinitum. We sing and dance those rhymes enthusiastically before we ever quite understand their meanings.

This may also be true for some of our hymns! It has been said that

what people believe comes more from the hymns they sing than the sermons they hear. For although sermons may inspire and elevate, there is a power in music that can move us powerfully and unexpectedly.

A familiar tune can still stir old memories. Indeed, experience in care homes suggests to me that we retain old hymns when we may have lost much else.

There is even a hymn by Mary Louise Bringle that presents a sensitive approach to the onset of dementia:

When memory fades and recognition falters,

When eyes we love grow dim, and minds confused,

Speak to our souls of love that never alters,

Speak to our hearts by pain and fear abused.

Church music can be divisive precisely because it is so important to us. The melody speaks to our hearts and the rhythm to our instinct for movement and dance.

But hymns and psalms and spiritual songs do have the power to unite us too. One of the most successful ecumenical endeavours has been the New Zealand Hymnbook Trust, which has published several



Music always plays a big part at Methodist Conference.

volumes of home-grown lyrics and music, and promoted the use of hymns that speak to our Kiwi context.

There is no doubt that community singing contributes to our well-being and it is in our churches that congregational singing remains something to be celebrated. I also sing gospel music in a community choir. I love the infectious rhythms and soulful melodies that often originate in Black American churches. Your experiences may draw on equally powerful African or Pacific traditions.

Our particular church's music may all too often reflect only our own brand of theology, but the overall importance of music to our worship does remind us of what we have in common as spiritually-striving human beings.

May we learn to listen as appreciatively to what our neighbours sing as to what they say. We can even come closer by learning each other's songs.

IT TAKES VILLAGE TO BUILD A VILLAGE

By David Hill

A cluster of Canterbury earthquake homes have been given a new lease of life.

Five homes from the Kaiapoi Temporary Earthquake Village were officially opened at a new site next to Linwood Avenue Union Parish in Christchurch on Thursday, October 13.

This small-scale social housing development is a partnership between the Parish and Christchurch Methodist Mission (CMM).

It includes three three-bedroom houses and two two-bedroom houses, which are insulated, double glazed and perfect for young families. In the centre of the development is a communal playground and barbecue area.

Social Housing Minister Paula Bennett officially opened the new development in Linwood at a ceremony that began with a powhiri led by Dr Terry Ryan and Ruawhitu Pokaia of Rehua Marae.

"This has come about as the result of many people putting their food baskets together," CMM executive director Jill Hawkey says. "The Linwood parish had an empty site but no capital and we didn't have the capital either."

CMM was originally quoted \$1.8 million to build some new houses on the site, which was more than it could realistically raise.



Guests at the opening of the Linwood Avenue social housing project in Christchurch.

Then the Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment wrote to the CMM asking for an expression of interest to purchase houses from the Kaiapoi Temporary Earthquake Village, which has now closed.

"Just before Christmas last year a new journey began. It has been an exciting year, but it has not been without its challenges," Jill says.

By getting the houses from the temporary Kaiapoi village, the cost of the housing development was just \$655,000, about a third of the original quote.

"I understand these are the only houses from the Kaiapoi village to be used for social housing," Jill adds.

"Given the shortage of affordable housing in Christchurch, we would ask that the remaining temporary houses be used to

provide affordable housing to those in need."

Jill says the playground was bought off Trade Me and originally came from a kindergarten.

In her talk at the opening, Paula said while no Government funding was provided for the project there was Government involvement in making the houses available at an affordable price.

"We have a massive social housing programme, but it's not Government that has the monopoly on good ideas and this is an example of that," Paula says.

"For us it's about ensuring that people have safe, warm, affordable housing. Unless we get these fundamentals right, people cannot achieve their full potential in their lives.

"It's a pleasure to be here today to see these homes, which will substantially change people's lives."

All five families moving into the development have been on the Ministry of Social Development's Social Housing Register. On June 30 this year there were more than 500 families in Christchurch on the register.

Once the five families have settled into their new homes, the CMM will provide the wrap-around social work support they need.

Cooking up closer ties between Parishes and Missions

A conversation between Hamilton's Methodist City Action and Tauranga Methodists illustrates how the new Methodist Alliance can help strengthen the work churches do in their communities.

Earlier this year Methodist City Action (MCA) director Catherine Hodges addressed a meeting of Tauranga Methodist Parish's Community Concerns Committee. Catherine spoke about what Methodist City Action does in Hamilton and the conversation turned to the issue of housing and homelessness and how this was being played out in Tauranga.

"Parish members said that during the day they see many more people on the street sitting and begging around the shops. Church ministers in Tauranga had held a conversation of how they might provide emergency accommodation such as Te Puea Marae in Auckland was doing," Catherine says.

"I talked about how it important it is to initially speak with other local community groups to work out what services are already offered. Then you can decide whether it is better to support those services. If you decide it is, you should ask them how they want to be supported.

"In this way you do not head off to address perceived needs without fully understanding the consequences, and you make sure you aren't replicating something that is already addressing the need."

Catherine came away wondering how MCA might be able to work with the Tauranga Parish into the future. She thought MCA could help the Parish get funding to employ a person to carry out mission activities.

MCA could also help organise

some of the administrative tasks and provide training and support for that staff member and guide them through some activities that MCA does to see whether they could be transplanted to Tauranga.

It was an ideal example of how parishes and Methodist Missions could better work as the Alliance envisions.

"Since then, three ladies from Tauranga Parish have come to Hamilton to see first-hand what we do and discuss what might work in their neighbourhoods.

"We discussed how to generate interest and support from the Parish and how to make use of people's talents and the resources of the Church. We talked about the other groups that use their facilities and how to liaise with them for other projects.

"We recognised that the most challenging aspect of setting up and providing a service is how to engage with the community in a meaningful way."

Catherine says questions a congregation should ask when setting out to do community work are: What is the aim of the project? What do we hope to achieve? Who is the target group and how will we engage with them? What's in it for everyone involved? And how do we make it fun?

In the case of Tauranga, a big concern was not to place additional burdens on an aging parish. There was also concern about potential health and safety issues. With a clear idea of the aims of the proposed project, it was possible to work through these issues.

This is also how the Methodist Alliance can be helpful. Methodist Missions have already worked through many health and safety issues. They can provide written



Hamilton's Methodist City Action is eager to help parishes host the cooking classes it has developed.

information or run 'training the trainers' classes for churches.

MCA runs cooking classes, for example, and its cooking tutor can provide tried and tested recipes, health and safety guidelines, and inside tips about what it is like to run a cookery class.

These could be how to fit in literacy and numeracy topics. Or what to do when a group has come to learn how to cook and ends up talking around personal and domestic issues such as how to get the kids to behave, issues with social agencies, ways to stretch the budget, and pretty much everything under the sun.

These conversations can help people feel that others have the same issues in their lives. In this way, they can share experiences and build the relationships that build community.

MCA can provide training for any parishes that want to set up cookery classes. It will advertise training courses early next year and expressions of interest are welcome.

Call the MCA on 07 839 3917 for more information.

Cross bears witness to world's refugees

Last month, Mornington Methodist Church in Dunedin dedicated a battered cross brought from the Italian island of Lampedusa.

Lampedusa is the first staging post for thousands of refugees from Syria and elsewhere in Africa, and the cross is made from the timbers of broken refugee vessels.

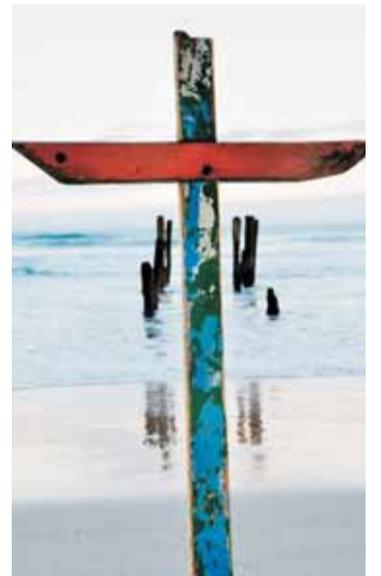
The Mornington Congregation dedicated the cross at a ceremony attended by guests, who included the Catholic and Anglican Bishops of Dunedin, MP Clare Curran, and university professors.

Also present was Sue Price from the Red Cross. Sue is responsible for co-ordinating the arrival and housing of Syrian families now reaching Dunedin.

A prayer came from the Vatican, written by Archbishop David Moxon, a New Zealander who represents the world-wide Anglican Church at the Holy See.

The choir sang a new Colin Gibson song addressed to the Cross as a witness of terrible events that should never have been.

The programme included an image of the cross photographed against the background of St Clair beach by Cam Weston, and included a message from Francesco Tuccio, the Italian carpenter who made the first of such crosses after witnessing too



The Lampedusa Cross.

many drownings just near Lampedusa.

The Mornington Congregation handed over a cheque for nearly \$2000 to the Red Cross Syrian Refugee appeal, raised through its Open Education programme.

The Muslim community was represented by Paul Gourlie, who read from the Koran in recognition that most of the refugees settling in Dunedin are Muslims.

The Lampedusa Cross will move around Dunedin Methodist Parish, and Co-operating churches in the area before going on wider journeys.

The congregation wishes to share this taonga with the wider community as a symbol of deep sympathy and interfaith support for the homeless, devastated families now reaching our shores.

How churches discriminate on basis of sexual orientation

The politics of 'otherness' and marriage equality were debated at a public forum at North Brighton Union Church in September.

A panel comprising former Methodist president Rev Brian Turner, Labour MP and former Black Fern Louisa Wall, and Human Rights Commissioner Richard Tankersley discussed the pink ceiling, i.e., barriers faced by people because of their sexuality.

Brian says New Zealand churches take a range of positions on sexuality, but too often passages of scripture are "taken out of their historical and cultural context" and used to justify positions that exclude others.

He says there are no references in the gospels of Jesus even addressing the question of sexuality, and he believes the words attributed to Jesus to "love God" and to "love your neighbour as yourself" are the essence of faith.

"I got into trouble in one parish by referring to the Bible as 'a tattered toilet roll of contradictions'. You have the contrast between the war and slaughter of the Old Testament and the endless forgiveness promoted by Jesus."

Brian said Methodist Conference passed motions in 1993 and 2006 to conduct the life of the church within the Human Rights Act, but did not always follow this in practice and he questioned whether New Zealand churches were interpreting the religious exemption in the act as it was originally intended.

"It is clear the religious exemption was to allow religious orders that were gender-based, like the Sisters which is predominantly women and the monks which is exclusively men, to continue operating as they were."

Richard says the interpretation of the religious exemption clause has yet to be



Rev Sheena Dickson (back left) with 'pink ceiling' panellists (from left) Human Rights Commissioner Rickard Tankersley, MP Louisa Wall, and Rev Brian Turner.

tested by the Human Rights Review Tribunal. The Tribunal is the equivalent of a court and is only used after the mediation process fails to reach a resolution.

Richard talked about growing as a Maori boy who looks like a Pakeha in a family which was a mix of Catholics and

Presbyterians, and coming out as gay on the eve on the Homosexual Law Reform in the 1980s.

"I left the church and I stopped playing rugby and men's team sports before I could come out because it was too difficult."

He later joined the Anglican Church and

eventually offered himself for ordination with the full support of the Christchurch bishop at the time. However, when he was half-way through training, there was a change of bishop and the process was stopped.

"I have chosen not to serve in the leadership in a faith which will not accept me for who I am. We are good at putting people into boxes.

"It's not just sexuality. In churches you often get congregations who say 'there's no Maori in our church, so why are we using the Maori language. They are othering us.'"

Richard says he is often questioned where sexuality is included in the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights. He says the opening words of the preamble make it clear that declaration recognises "the inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family".

Louisa is a member of the Ratana Church, and she spoke about her efforts to introduce the Marriage Equality legislation into Parliament. Her focus was on the state, rather than religious institutions.

"I was really clear that it was about state discrimination, it was not about telling anyone how to practise their religious beliefs. The state was discriminating against people because of their sexuality in not issuing marriage licenses."

Louisa believes it is up to churches and not Parliament to decide how they define marriage within the context of their church.

"The new law was pitched at the next generation and churches may need to ask themselves 'Is our position on marriage equality actually restricting younger people coming in and being a part of the church?' But that is something you need to debate for yourselves."

Poverty steals from Kiwi kids



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For more information contact the chairperson of Methodist Mission Aotearoa, David Hanna
Post Office Box 9932, Wellington 6141 • Phone 021 403 377 • Email dhanna@wesleyca.org.nz



Graham Reburn unveils the notice board at the entrance to Wesley Garden.

Stoke's Wesley Garden's makeover

The need to demolish their seismically unsafe church has led the Stoke Methodist Congregation to take a number of creative steps that have given new life to their community.

The latest stage in the congregation's journey began with the decision to sell a portion of their 5000 sqm church property and use the funds to redevelop their old hall and Sunday school into a multi-purpose chapel and community centre.

The 'new' facility opened last year, but the Stoke Methodists were not done yet.

In August, they held a special ceremony to dedicate their latest gift to the community - Wesley Garden, an open space and garden on the main street of the town.

During the ceremony parish steward Graham Reburn unveiled the notice board that sits at the entrance to the garden and told the story of how it came to be.

Graham says when property was redeveloped there was an empty area at one end of the section which the congregation decided to develop

as a space for rest and recreation.

Church members "sharpened their tools and got to work, producing an attractive green area. For many years Wesley Garden has provided a place of relaxation for the community," Graham says.

He makes special mention of Jim Short and Adrienne Win for their work in maintaining the lawns and flower gardens.

In recent years the congregation engaged Geoff Sherlock, a gardener who used a drone to take aerial photos of the garden. They used the photos and consulted with Geoff to come up with a new, more attractive plan for the garden.

The dedication of the new garden took place on August 27th. In attendance were Mayor Richard Kempthorne, Council staff, and members of the congregation.

"We are thrilled with the outcome and hope the community will find Wesley Garden even more inviting," Graham says.

He thanked Geoff and Sheree Sherlock as well as Council staff who contributed to the development of the project.

Bittersweet reunion for St John's-Trinity alumni

The Classes of 1979-1981 returned to Trinity-St John's College over the weekend beginning July 22nd. It has been 37 years since the 47 people who gathered were together in ministry, and it was a time to renew friendships made when we studied together.

The weekend began with a social get-together on Friday evening when we caught up with those who had travelled to attend the reunion. One past student had travelled from Samoa to join us.

It was heart-warming to meet up with those who were single students from the Cloisters, and who later fell in love and are now married with children.

Some of those who attended are no longer in ministry with the Church but are still actively involved in ministry through caring organisations and social services.

On Saturday morning we separated into the classes in which we had begun our theological training, and shared stories of our lives since St John's and the many different journeys life has taken us on.

We reflected on the training we received at St John's and how we arrived in Auckland, as for several students ministry training

was the start of second career. Some were newly married and starry eyed, others had been teachers, sheep shearers or market gardeners.

One theme that came through the reminiscing was that we had all come from many diverse backgrounds, cultures, careers and styles of worship, but we shared the common bond of living in community.

The only people missing were Maori from the Methodist Church, who did not train with us. The Anglican Maori taught us much, however, and they certainly made their presence known on the volleyball court, which was a favourite 'keep-fit' pastime.

We all benefitted from the different theological perspectives and were challenged to create and build strong theological foundations for ourselves to prepare for ministry in the wider community.

Living in a community helped us care for, encourage and support one another. It promoted an appreciation of others and led us to acknowledge and respect others' theological stances.

Our weekly Eucharistic services, either in the Chapel or Wesley Hall, were an act of

togetherness and understanding different traditions and churchmanship. Our Anglo Catholic friends gave us an appreciation of the liturgy and the use of incense at worship. We learned tolerance and acceptance of each other's traditions.

The only separate lectures we had were the one hour of Methodism and Anglicanism each week. The Anglicans appeared envious of the 'Horseback Theology' of John Wesley.

On Saturday afternoon, the Anglican principal Rev Dr Tony Gerritson, assisted by four current Anglican students, gave an informative talk on where the College is currently at and its exciting plans for the future.

We recalled vividly how Dr Lewis expressed that the years the ecumenical experience of Anglicans and Methodists training together at St Johns-Trinity was a great highlight for him.

This raises many questions. Have all Dr Lewis' prayerful and diplomatic hours of negotiations, meetings and discussions as well as his countless lectures, teachings and advice been cast aside?

On Saturday evening the reunion dinner was a feast of great food, fellowship and fun. We



Rev Les Ferguson (right) and Rev Leon Fox at the Trinity-St Johns reunion.

shared more happy, amusing and adventurous talks from the past, and a great feeling of camaraderie was very evident.

On Sunday afternoon we reflected on the 1982 Springboks Tour. College students and staff were involved in declaring the Cross for Just in protests against the Tour. The Springboks were met with anti-apartheid protests throughout the Tour.

Sadly, the Tour created much anger and division and left a trail of sad and hurt people throughout the country. The cross that led the

protestors at all the demonstrations was made by Timothy Langley and it is now on display with other anti-tour memorabilia at Te Papa Museum.

From the joy of meeting up with past friends, upon departing our hearts were heavy because Methodists have withdrawn from St John's-Trinity and Methodist theological training seems only to attract Polynesian students.

One wonders if there is a future for Pakeha in Te Hahi Weteriana. Reflecting on what we once had, this seems pretty calamitous.



Faith is a major theme in Bob Dylan's songbook.

Dylan's faith journey to Nobel Prize

By John Thornley

As one who has travelled with Dylan's art since 'Blowin' in the Wind' topped the charts in 1963, it has become clearer and clearer that his art has always been deeply spiritual.

It draws on both his Jewish family roots and his 'born again' Christian conversion in 1978.

While there are three recordings that come from the conversion years - Slow Train Coming (1979), Saved (1980) and Shot of Love (1981) - the evidence of a lifelong exploration of faith issues is there in many of his lyrics throughout his career.

A good critic must show evidence for any big claims so I offer two illustrations.

When he was 21 Dylan wrote a song titled 'Long Ago, Far Away'. The first verse, (which is repeated as the last verse) is:

*To preach of peace and brotherhood,
Oh, what might be the cost!
A man he did it years ago
and they hung him on a cross.
Long ago, far away;
these things don't happen
no more, nowadays.*

Here's a youthful expression of pessimism regarding the liberal faith in the forward march of enlightenment and progress for all. Use of irony reveals a youth wise beyond his years.

The reference to Jesus, whose life and teachings keep appearing in the 50 years of

songwriting, is an illustration of Dylan's many biblical references in his lyrics.

My second illustration is the song 'Ain't Talkin', Just Walkin', from the 2005 CD 'Modern Times'.

The song is a contemporary reworking of Pilgrims Progress in word and music. There's no more preaching, but life now is a walking pilgrimage. Dylan is still in motion, still creating, still walking/working towards his 'higher calling'.

Here's the closing verse:

*As I walked out in the mystic garden
on a hot summer day, hot summer lawn
excuse me, ma'am, I beg your pardon
there's no one here, the gardener is gone.*

The encounter is with Mary Magdalene who mistakes Jesus for the gardener. He talks with her, and then he is gone.

The writer Sean Wilentz, in his book Bob Dylan in America (2010), writes: 'The dark, brooding 'Ain't Talkin' was an arresting mystery that told of the yearning that does not disappear with age, and that also, to my ear, sounded at one level like a narrative of Christ's last days.'

By that reading, the sudden switch to a glowing, hopeful last major chord that concludes the song, and the album, might convey the hope that is the resurrection.'

An excellent introduction to Dylan's religious journey is Restless Pilgrim, Scott M. Marshall and Marcia Ford (Relevant Books 2002).

Volunteers needed to bolster Prison Chaplaincy

By Cory Miller

The Prison Chaplaincy Service of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCSANZ) is looking for volunteers to help it carry out its mission of bringing prisoners 'the hope that transforms lives'.

PCSANZ operations manager Kristine Ford says the service is looking for faith-based volunteers to provide religious and spiritual support to prisoners inside the 18 jails across the country. PCSANZ is also looking for volunteers to help with administration, which suits those who may not wish to work directly with prisoners.

PCSANZ has been running since 2000 when churches across the varying denominations, including the Methodist Church, came together to form the charitable trust.

Kristine says working together as a community to help prisoners reconnect with their faith and make positive changes in their lives provides a good challenge to society's individualistic focus.

"Some of those in prison have had a bad start in life and I think it's unfair," she says.

She says the service gives prisoners a chance to start anew. It provides support across all denominations and it can connect prisoners from other faiths with an appropriate support person.

Prisoners are offered one-on-one pastoral care, Bible studies, other

religious references and spiritual literature. Church services and study groups are held throughout the week.

"The service is all about transforming lives and helping them to reconnect to faith, religion and spirituality.

"It helps prisoners transform their lives inside the wire and when they are released we connect them to a faith-based community. Our aim is to empower the prisoners to continue to make meaningful changes to their lives

when they are released, which will positively affect their whanau and wider community."

Kristine says the service has about 1000 volunteers, but still needs more, in particular in the administration side of the service.

"We really value our volunteers, we feel they do get a lot out of it and I think it's really rewarding work that recognises the part community has to play in helping change others' lives."

Ideally volunteers give at least six hours to the service each year.

While Kristine has been with the service for only two months, she has already witnessed the tangible difference it makes to the prisoners lives.

"It makes a profound difference and it's humbling for me."

To help Prison Chaplaincy go to the service's website www.pcsanz.org and visit its volunteer page where you can fill out an online application form.



Prison Chaplaincy operations manager Kristine Ford.

Gifts of hope for Palestinians

When Ibtissam read about the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees' (DSPR) new programme in her village, she knew it was for her.

In 2002 her husband had been killed by Israeli soldiers when returning from selling his crop of thyme at the local market. She had found work as a farm labourer to support her family in the intervening years, but it was becoming harder to make ends meet.

Her 19-year-old son trained as a mechanic, but he had been unable to get work in the shrinking local economy. When she read about DSPR's support in May last year, her hope for their future returned.

The family lives in a small two-bedroom house in a village outside of Qalquilya in the Occupied Palestinian Territories on the border with Israel and northwest of Jerusalem. Surrounded almost entirely by the Israeli separation wall, residents have lost land and often cannot get to their fields and orchards.

The Israeli military controls access to around two thirds of the land and this makes farming very difficult. Her husband's family owned a 10 dunum (1000 sqm) olive orchard which is now entirely cut off by the separation wall.

Last year DSPR helped 29 households through an agricultural programme in her village. DSPR met with the community and visited each household with a questionnaire which they used to identify those most in need. Under the programme, the community helped the poorest families prepare land for orchards and build accommodation for livestock.

A veterinarian chose 58 pregnant sheep to distribute to the families along with fodder for 100 days. Each received 12 laying hens and five productive trees: walnut, guava, nectarine, orange and lemon.

Now, 18 months later, Ibtissam's family rents extra land for their new enterprise. They milk a herd of six sheep that feeds the family



Israel's exclusion wall makes it difficult for many Palestinians to earn a living.

and enables them to make cheese and labneh for sale.

Ibtissam has learnt how to manage livestock through the DSPR training programme and collects eggs from her hens. Where once she had nothing to do in the afternoons, her life is now busy.

"My kids are sharing this responsibility with me. I have learnt that there is still good in life as witnessed from the help provided by the people in my village and the support received from DSPR and its people," she says.

Purchases of sheep and goats or chickens through Christian World Service's alternative Gifted programme support DSPR's agricultural programme in the West Bank. Write to cws@cws.org.nz or phone 0800 74 73 72 for a catalogue or check on line: gift.org.nz.



Udcile and Anotnion are grateful for food, plastic sheeting, hygiene kits, blankets and ropes delivered their village after the hurricane hit Haiti in October. Photo: ACT Alliance/LWF/Thomas Lohnes.

Haiti needs urgent help after hurricane

After Hurricane Matthew touched down in southern Haiti on October 4, the people knew they were in for a difficult time.

Much of Haiti had not recovered from the devastating 2010 earthquake, the subsequent cholera epidemic and the failure of their country to elect a functioning government.

The hurricane flattened poorly constructed homes and food crops. Landslides, flash floods and high seas added to the damage leaving the people with nothing.

Some 1.4 million people - a 10th of the population - were in need of food relief. Of these 800,000 were extremely short of food.

Christian World Service launched an urgent appeal for the people affected by the Hurricane. The first donations enabled CWS to send a grant to help with immediate relief efforts.

"The people of Haiti are strong and resilient but the damage done by this storm is huge. They cannot manage alone. They need help to survive today and the months ahead," says CWS international programmes coordinator Trish Murray.

The last month has been tough for Haitians hardened by decades of poverty and disaster. Their country has often been rocked by earthquakes, hurricanes, international meddling and dictators. Many found shelter in caves and ransacked fallen trees and crops for food or building materials.

Within days, enterprising locals were burning fallen trees to make charcoal, one of the few sources of income but also the cause of the erosion that strips the country of its topsoil.

Others buried the dead and neighbours helped each other get through the calamity. There is no one else and if aid comes, it may not reach communities isolated in the country's rugged hills.

Relief in Haiti comes with controversy. International aid efforts

to help (including from the American Red Cross) have often failed or been lost in a trail of corruption and exploitation. The lack of an elected government makes the situation more uncertain.

To counter accusations of wasted aid, there is greater emphasis on local ownership. Haitian NGOs see this as the only way to ensure accountability to the people affected.

However, international government donations to Haiti have yet to reach 20 percent of the United Nations initial appeal.

CWS partner the Institut Culturel Karl Leveque (ICKL) is an indigenous organization that operates effectively in this difficult environment. ICKL links with other groups to promote a Haitian response so that poor rural peasants get the help they need and corruption does not block aid.

For years, ICKL has provided information to people on the margins and helped them build and fund schools for their children.

Now they have put aside their regular programmes to meet more urgent needs. After the initial assessment, ICKL has sent CWS a proposal to directly help 10,000 people and provide some support to a further 50,000 families with emergency food, housing material, seeds, goats, water purification tablets, and information about cholera prevention.

The international agency ACT Alliance, CWS belongs to, is also responding through well-managed local programmes.

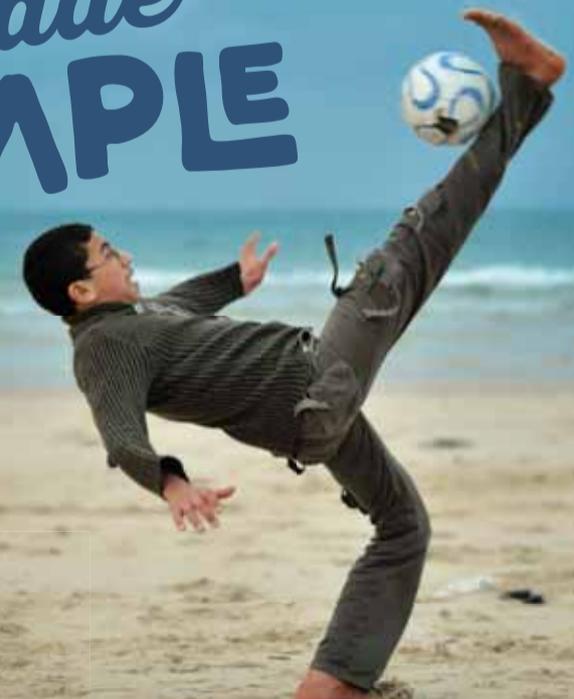
ICKL director Marc-Arthur Fils-Aimé writes, "We know you understand our approach and we expect an appropriate response to ease the plight of families."

Donations to the Haiti Hurricane Appeal can be sent to CWS, PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8140 or online: cws.org.nz.



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Young People

By Filo Tu

Conference 2016: The Interns

Methodist Conference has been happening for more than 100 years now. Sounds like the beginning of a Harry Potter book, but this is about real magic!

Conference is a formidable arena for decision-making, law reform, social justice, partnership sharing, technological advancements, and much more.

This year Conference entered a new dimension with the first ever Youth Internship Programme.

In the lead up to Conference, a brief paragraph enticed enthusiastic young people to apply to take part. The poster stated "Interns will have the chance to serve at Methodist Conference...getting a unique perspective of the inner-workings of Conference, while also assisting 100s of delegates from all across the Connexion."

Among those selected to

serve as interns was Emma Whitla of the mighty Central South Island (CSI) Synod. Emma flew up to Auckland and then travelled to Wesley College in Paerata, outside Pukekohe.

Emma says, "I was part of the first intake of interns. The aim of this programme was to introduce potential young leaders to every aspect of the life of Conference, and give them the opportunity to assist in the day-to-day running."

"Some of the roles included taking the daily record of Conference, recording the decisions of Conference as journal secretary, updating business sheet, summarising the operations of Conference, and greeting people and handing out service sheets."

"As interns, we also had to evaluate what we thought was effective about Conference and what could be done differently."

Unlike the 2015 comedy film,

The Intern, Emma is bright, young and still getting her hands dirty in the classroom. She will finish her graduate diploma for primary school teaching by April, 2017. She also wants to continue serving the Church.

"It can sometimes feel like there is little momentum in the Methodist Church in terms of growth, and yet, at the same time, I don't believe there is any need to necessarily neglect our faith story or traditions to encourage new followers of Jesus Christ," she says.

"In fact, I contend there is a real need for the theology, love and encouragement found within the Methodist Church. Our focus should be to continue to seek the heart of the community and engage outwardly as both Jesus and John Wesley did. Only then will our church be seen as a place where people can turn for guidance and a faith community."



Conference Interns with coordinator Michael Lemanu (standing right) and Emma Whitla (kneeling right).

Emma thinks this can begin from her little corner of the world by seeing where the young adults group at Upper Riccarton Methodist Church (known as The Movement) heads next year.

Among the highlights of Conference for Emma were hearing about the service people have given to the Church during their lives, worshipping alongside young adults, and experiencing the presence of God.

Singing with more than 300 Methodists at the celebration services was an enjoyable feeling, as was becoming familiar with the logistics of Conference. But the most important was engaging with people from across New Zealand and hearing about the

outreach the Methodist Church does in our communities.

"What a blessing it is to be part of the Methodist Church of Aotearoa where we actively recognise and honour our bi-cultural partnership between Te Taha Maori and Tauwiwi, use consensus decision making processes, and find the ability to agree and disagree with kindness. This is the faithfulness that Jesus walked this Earth with, "Emma says.

"Keep sharing your relationship with Christ, and actively demonstrate God's love through your actions. Words and actions continue to bring about positive change within our world!"

Kidz Korna!

WELCOME TO KIPZ KORNA NOVEMBER 2016!

Something different to start with. Are you a tidy Kiwi?

I was having lunch in a café in Hamilton and looked out of the window to see three small boys, all pre-schoolers, running across the square and putting their empty lunch papers into the waste bin. I could hardly believe it!

When I saw them later with their grandma, I talked to her and told her what I had seen earlier. She told me their motto was, 'I'm a tidy Kiwi'.

Are you all tidy kiwis caring for the wonderful world God has given us?

November 27th is the first Sunday in Advent. What are you planning to do in the lead up to Christmas? Send me an email so I can share your stories with other children around the country.

This month we hear from the Samoan children at Wesley Church in Taranaki Street, Wellington.

Thank you for sharing your White Sunday celebrations with us.

White Sunday a special day for children

White Sunday, or Lotu a Tamaiti, is the day when their parents and communities show children how much they are appreciated. The children dress in white clothing and perform to their parents, relatives and friends.

They read Bible verses and perform dances and dramas. The children plan the church service, and practice for several weeks beforehand. Afterwards there is a family feast or to'ana'i where the children are served first.

This is a very special Sunday that brings families together.



Outside Wesley Wellington Church after the White Sunday service.



Tylah Va'ai is leading a prayer of thanksgiving at White Sunday service.

Advent Word Search

When you have found these words in the puzzle the remaining letters will spell out a message.

Advent, Bible, calendar, candles, coming, friends, Jesus, John, prepare, ready, story, wreath

A	N	A	H	T	A	E	R	W	N
G	P	R	E	P	A	R	E	E	L
G	S	R	A	D	N	E	L	A	C
A	C	D	V	E	S	U	S	E	J
Y	A	M	N	A	R	Y	G	T	A
D	N	J	M	E	E	N	N	Y	B
A	D	O	S	S	I	E	A	R	J
E	L	H	G	M	V	R	E	O	B
R	E	N	O	D	F	R	F	T	L
O	S	C	A	M	G	O	D	S	E



For your DVD collection

Car Park Christmas and Other Road Trips

By Paul Clark

Many of you will have read Car Park Parables and this DVD has the same characters as the story books.

The cars are wondering why their owners are at church on a Wednesday and Old Mr T tells them that their owners are celebrating a special birthday. What follows is a modern story of the nativity with shepherds arriving on motor bikes and a very surprising new birth.

This story can be enjoyed by boys and girls of all ages.

Altogether there are 10 stories on the DVD. Great to use during school holidays when there is no formal children's time.



What are the kids in your church up to?

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

ON SCREEN

A Film Review by Steve Taylor

The Daughter is enthralling, a cinematic triumph in which superb acting and smart dialogue yield an emotionally charged finale.

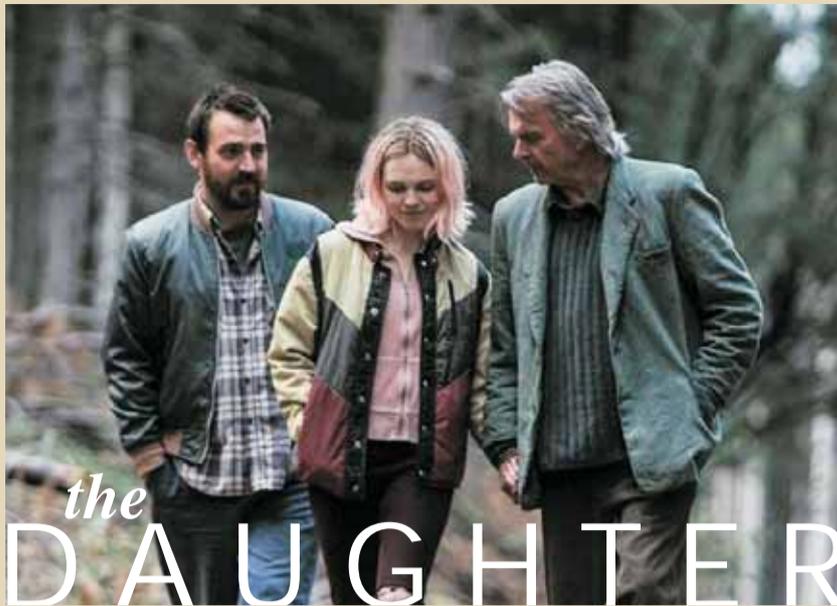
A grown son (Paul Schneider as Christian) returns to the town of his childhood for the second marriage of his father (Geoffrey Rush as Henry). Reunion with his childhood friend (Ewen Leslie as Oliver) and his loved daughter (Odessa Young as Hedvig) results in a sequence of questions. Christian's present grief rips the scabs from past grief.

The acting is superb. Paul Schneider and Geoffrey Rush are fine embodiments of males' ability to remain emotionally distant. The tears of abandonment by Odessa Young and regret by Ewen Leslie express perfectly the emotional power of this slowly unfolding tragedy.

Hedvig is essential to the movie's success. She is lively and rebellious. The result is a joy-filled palette of colours that accentuates the gathering storm clouds. It is an effect magnified by the sombre tones of the movie's backdrop, a rural forest town whose sawmill is facing closure.

The Daughter is inspired by an 1884 play (The Wild Duck) by Norwegian Henrik Ibsen. In a movie that draws from the traditional strength of theatre in plot and character, the clever use of sound plays a significant role.

The first noise we hear is a distant gunshot. Pat Benatar's 'Love is a Battlefield' is an apt soundtrack as the family wedding descends into painful farce. In two



the DAUGHTER

key scenes, the only sound is that of breathing: powerful in anger, pleading in pain.

The New Zealand film industry has connections with this Australian movie. First, when The Daughter is placed alongside 2004 New Zealand movie, In My Fathers Den. The similarities are uncanny.

Both offer a strong sense of place, in which memories are haunted. Both star a man returning to his childhood home and a lively teenage girl growing into maturity. Both compress pain past and present into unfolding tragedy.

This examination of similarities also underlines the differences, particularly the sombre palette that marks The Daughter in contrast to the moments of beauty that gave joy to In My Fathers Den.

Second, through Sam Neill, who plays Walter, Hedvig's grandfather. He is the character closest to the wounded healer, a previously damaged nurturer watching over these wounded in the movie's present.

While theology is difficult to find in The Daughter, Jesus is a word used repeatedly in one pivotal scene. The word is uttered neither in blasphemy nor piety. Rather it is a word of shock, as the hammer blow of an unimagined past obliterates a peaceful present.

In its repetition, it suggests one way to understand the death of Jesus. "My God, My God, why have you forsaken" is equally a cry of incomprehension in the face of overwhelming pain.

It suggests Jesus as a Divine shock absorber. Simple repeated words - "My God" - arise from a person absorbing blows at the limits of human experience. It offers a response both pastoral and theological to the repetitive use of Jesus in the face of profound grief.

Rev Dr Steve Taylor is principal of Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, Dunedin. He is the author of Built for Change (Mediacom: 2016) and writes widely in areas of theology and popular culture, including regularly at emergentkiwi.org.nz.

Bible names in other places

As the year winds down and social activities increase, organisers are on the lookout for fun activities for church socials. This Bible Challenge is a straight general knowledge quiz where the surnames of famous people are supplied. The challenge is to supply their first names. Each personality has a Christian name that can be found in the Bible. If using this as a call 'out the question' quiz competitors could gain another point for supplying a fact about the Bible character.

Bible Challenge

- | | | |
|--|--------------------|------------|
| ___ Lincoln, US President (1861–1865) | ___ B _____ | Gen 17:9 |
| ___ Ko, Korean-born NZ professional golfer | ___ I _____ | Ac 16:14 |
| ___ Scrooge, Main character in 'A Christmas Carol' | ___ B _____ | 1 Sm 7:12 |
| ___ McCartney British pop star | ___ L _____ | Ac 13:16 |
| ___ Watt, inventor of the steam engine | ___ E _____ | Mk 1:19 |
| ___ Webster, compiled America's 1st dictionary | ___ N _____ | Gen 6:8 |
| ___ Roberts, American female film star | ___ A _____ | Rm 16:15 |
| ___ Britten, British classical composer | ___ M _____ | Gen 42:4 |
| ___ Tchaikovsky, Russian composer | ___ E _____ | Mt 15:15 |
| ___ James, American outlaw | ___ S _____ | 1 Sm 16:10 |
| ___ Wood, US actor played Frodo Baggins | ___ I _____ | 1 Kg 18:15 |
| ___ Lumley, English comedy actress | ___ N _____ | Lk 8:3 |
| ___ Lane, girlfriend of Superman | ___ O _____ | 2 Tm 1:5 |
| ___ Swift, author of 'Gulliver's Travels' | ___ T _____ | 1 Sm 14:1 |
| ___ King, US horror novelist | ___ H _____ | Ac 6:8 |
| ___ Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone | ___ E _____ | Ac 19:33 |
| ___ Carnegie, philanthropist keen on libraries | ___ R _____ | Jn 6:8 |
| ___ Hayden, Austrian composer in 1700s | ___ P _____ | Gn 37:3 |
| ___ Hunter, NZ super model | ___ L _____ | Gn 29:9 |
| ___ Defoe, author of 'Robinson Crusoe' | ___ A _____ | Dn 1:8 |
| ___ Jackson, US mega pop star | ___ C _____ | Ju 1:8 |
| ___ Clark Moore, wrote 'The Night Before Christmas' | ___ E _____ | Phl 4:3 |
| ___ Reynolds, artist, painted 'The Age of Innocence' | ___ S _____ | Ex 17:10 |

ANSWERS: Abraham, Lydia, Ebenezer, Paul, James, Noah, Julia, Benjamin, Peter, Jesse, Elijah, Joannai, Lois, Jonathan, Stephen, Alexander, Andrew, Joseph, Daniel, Michael, Clement, Joshua © RMS



Pitt Street's choir performs at the 150th anniversary celebration.

Pitt Street 'part of the Body'

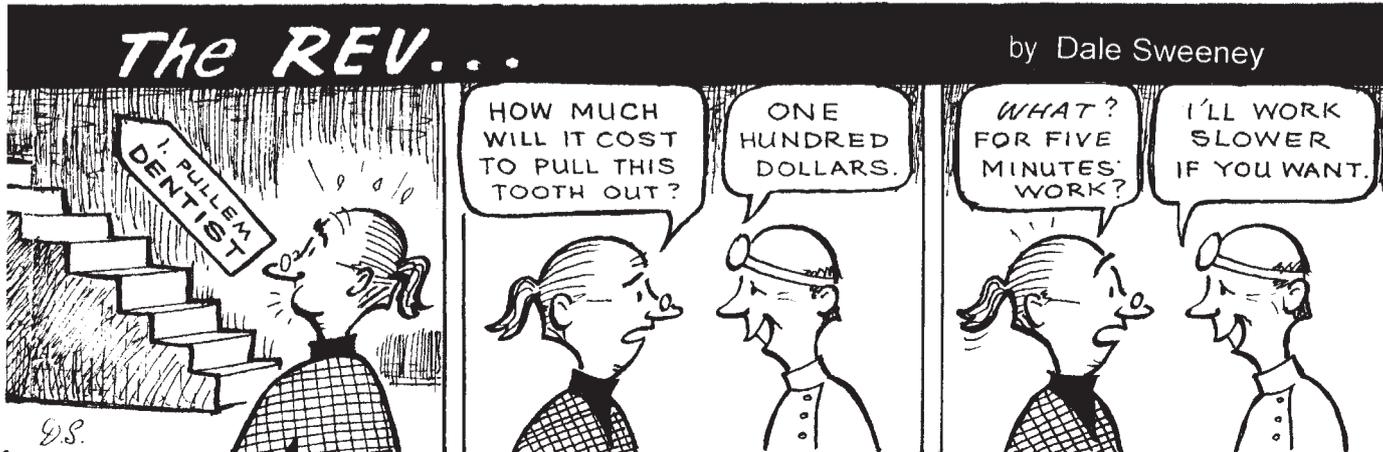
In his book 100 Years in Pitt Street, Eric Hames wrote "There is no sign of death or defeat. The people are cheerful and forward looking. While the building is old and expensive to maintain... the congregation is alive, a part of the Body."

Now, 50 years on Eric's words rang true at the church service celebrating Pitt Street Methodist Church's 150th anniversary.

Hundreds attended the service, on the morning of Sunday October 23. They filled the pews the brim with faces from the past - near and distant - and the present.

Members of the Pitt Street congregation, representatives from the nearby St Matthews Anglican Church, Methodist Church leaders and many others who have been in some way involved in Pitt Street's life came to celebrate the milestone anniversary and look to the future.

Their presence and the words given in song, prayer and the sermon of Methodist President Rev Prince Devanandan highlighted the importance of a living church that reaches beyond its walls to ensure the community's future in decades to come.



Faith in the Face of Empire - The Bible through Palestinian Eyes

By Mitri Raheb
2014, Orbis Books, 166 pages
Reviewer: Gary Clover

Jesus was a Middle Eastern Palestinian Jew. The Bible is a Middle Eastern book. Geo-politics is the starting point for understanding all Middle Eastern religions and Bible history. The Israeli-Palestinian "conflict is an inseparable aspect of European colonial history...what I call here empire...."

"Throughout history...only a small minority was deported... The vast majority of the native people remained in the land of their forefathers (2 Kgs 25:11)..."

"Palestinians today stand in historic continuity with biblical Israel [as] the native people of the land. The Palestinian people (Muslim, Christian, and Palestinian Jews) are a critical and dynamic continuum from Canaan... to the present day".

This makes the modern Zionist state the latest foreign, American subsidized, occupying "empire". The crux of the problem is that "the natives of the land have been made strangers in order to make room for an invented people to occupy the land."

So writes Rev Dr Mitri Raheb, a Palestinian Christian of Bethlehem. He is president of Bethlehem's Diyar Consortium and Dar al-Kalimar University College, the recipient of a number of prestigious peace awards, resident of the Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, and senior pastor of Bethlehem's Evangelical Lutheran Christmas Church.

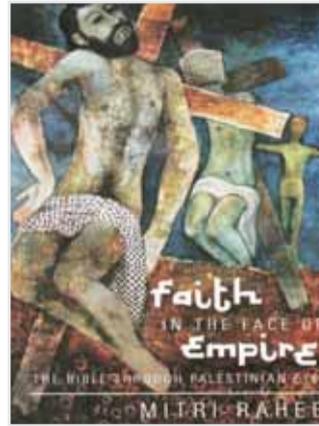
Dr Raheb is author of some 16 books. He also co-authored the 2009 Kairos Palestine manifesto, which declares "that the military occupation of our land is a sin against God and humanity, and that any theology that legitimates the occupation is far from Christian teachings."

Historic Palestine stands in the crossroads between continents and competing empires as a buffer zone and battlefield, occupied, divided, except for brief eras of independence under David and the Hasmoneans. Dr Raheb writes that each occupying empire from Assyria to modern Israel used similar theologies, policies, and tactics to sustain imperial power.

So he highlights the "disconnect" between today's dominant narrative of Israel as the "one and only democratic state in the Middle East" and "the memory of the Jewish people as the ultimate victims in history", and, images of Israel as an occupying military force victimising native Palestinians.

Being supportive of Israel's right to be the one safe haven for world Jewry, I find Dr Raheb's geo-political analysis deeply troubling. It closely reflects today's Palestinian Authority narrative that would ethnically cleanse Israelis from their West Bank villages and Old Jerusalem's Jewish Quarter, which the Jordanians drove them from in 1948.

It would also deny them legitimacy and sovereignty anywhere in British Mandatory Palestine. He discounts strong archaeological evidence of continual Jewish settlement throughout the centuries of foreign "empire", and the treaty commitments, and League of Nations and UN decisions, which legitimised a Jewish homeland in Palestine.



Some Ashkenazi Jews may be descended from non-Jewish converts. But DNA evidence directly links the great majority of Ashkenazi and Sephardi Israelis with Dr Raheb's People of the Land. By contrast, Palestinian Arabs date from just the Moslem conquest, and many of today's urban Palestinians like Yasser Arafat (born in Cairo) were early 20th century economic migrants.

Dr Raheb is on much firmer ground seeking "to create a Palestinian narrative that is both politically relevant and theologically creative."

He argues that Jesus is central to the struggle for a more just and abundant life "in the face of empire".

Also, "God came to defeat geo-politics and he succeeded. Because without God, Palestine would have continued as a land at the periphery. Yet because God chose to reveal himself in this land, it became central to history..."

This is an important little book. It gives an insightful and scholarly counter-narrative to much of today's dominant, uncritical, evangelical Christian narrative.

Its understanding of the Gospel in its Palestinian context is worthy of mainstream Christian reflection. Yet, Israeli Arab Greek Orthodox priest, Fr Gavriel Nadaf, from Nazareth, would likely urge us to treat very cautiously as decidedly one-sided Dr Raheb's geo-political history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Lead Like Jesus - Lessons for Everyone from the Greatest Leadership Role Model of All Time

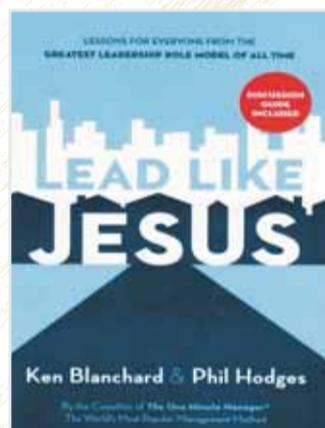
2005, Thomas Nelson, 258 pages
Reviewer: John Meredith

Blanchard and Hodges are American businessmen who founded the Lead Like Jesus (LLJ) ministry in 1999. This is a global leadership development organisation that aims to help people lead more effectively by following the model of Jesus.

In addition to this book LLJ maintains a website and an on-line store, and produces CDs, DVDs and other electronic resources.

It is the view of LLJ that anyone who exerts influence on others is a leader whether in a life role (parent, spouse, friend, citizen), or an organisational role (CEO, pastor, coach, teacher, manager). For Christian people, servant leadership following the pattern of Jesus is a mandate.

Leading like Jesus involves the alignment of four 'leadership domains'. These are (1) Heart. This is an inner motivating attitude. The heart of a self-serving leader Edges God Out (EGO), while the EGO of a servant leader who is following Jesus Exalts God Only, thus modelling Jesus to



others.

(2) Head. This is the leader's belief system and perspective on life. Clearly stated values are essential. Values that must never be compromised by servant leaders are honouring God in everything, building relationships based on trust and respect, maintaining integrity and excellence in programmes and services, and practising responsible stewardship.

(3) Hands. Hands are the acting or doing part. LLJ leaders must move beyond theory to practice. The duty of a servant leader is to be a performance coach who encourages and equips others.

(4) Habits. These include solitude (taking time to explore the heart), prayer, study and application of scripture, accepting and responding to God's unconditional love and involvement in supportive relationships. LLJ leaders never seek to promote or advance themselves at the expense of others.

Leading like Jesus is a daily journey and the book ends

with some 'next steps' including questions to ask, 'emergency numbers for the soul' (biblical quotations for a range of situations), a personal assessment and planning guide and a selection of prayers. There is also a discussion guide where the key concepts of each chapter are summarised and followed by questions.

God is constantly referred to using male pronouns with capital letters. In more than one place it is claimed that 'Jesus is the Answer' but this is stated without exploring questions that faith may raise.

In reading Lead Like Jesus I am left with the impression that rather than thinking for myself I am expected to embrace the authors' formula.

While there is no doubt that serving others is preferable to serving self, I find the general approach of this book unhelpful. The tone is pious and the attitudes are narrowly religious.

Despite being prefaced by extracts from commendations given by 17 pastors, executives and motivational writers, including big names such as Rick Warren and Bill Hybels, it is unlikely the LLJ approach will appeal to those who do not share the writers' religious perspective.

Made for Love - Spiritual Reflections for Couples

By Joy Cowley
2016, Pleroma Press, 104 pages
Reviewer: Peter Taylor

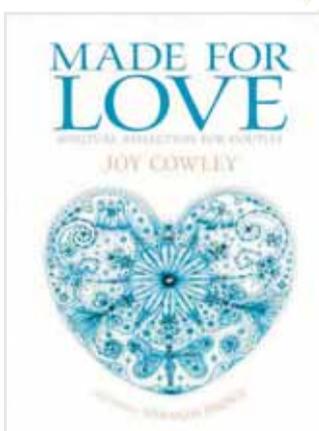
Joy Cowley begins this book with an introduction in which she explains she had been urged to write with gay men and women in mind.

After wrestling with this idea she eventually expanded it to cover all manner of relationships, and it is not hard to see why - love is love whatever the nature of the relationship.

The book is divided into four parts, each with 11 reflections. All 44 are headed by a quote, half of which are from the Bible, and others from a variety of mainly Christian sources.

In the first section it is as if a lover is talking to the beloved, marvelling at what they hold in common and the nature of their relationship. After more than 30 years of marriage I related well to Two Old Trees (though perhaps less with the 'old!').

The second section is about how we can live love, and what love is truly



like. It is about giving away, about the courage to risk, and about being open to pain.

Here love is like a dance. For someone who dances with two left feet this spoke to me. In this section I liked this: "I'll still be a square peg in a round hole. If they want me to fit in with them, why don't they make the spaces bigger?" (p41).

In the third section we meet what love is not. For instance, sacraments do not truly exist without love. Whilst love does have an emotional content, it is much more, as Joy points out when she compares sentiment to "a cardboard heart trimmed with lace" (p60) and suggest that God does not make cardboard hearts.

More than once Joy proclaims the ego as the enemy of true love, which seems a little harsh, though of course we know what she means (see entries: The Enemy, The Struggle and

Forgiveness). The ego tries to prevent us from taking risks that might hurt us, but love insists we must risk pain and misunderstanding, or else we fail to connect with Christ who risked these upon a cross.

The final section introduces some practical workings out of love - random acts of kindness, hospitality, forgiveness, tenderness, being open to seeing love in others' actions, recognising that unless our hands are scarred (as Christ's upon the cross) we are of little use in the cause of love.

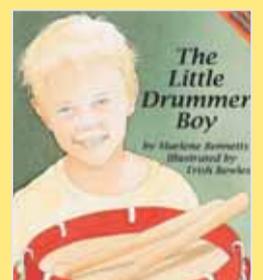
Made for Love is an attractive book. Peppered throughout the book are illustrations by Miranda Brown. These are beautiful and well worth the book on their own. Most have a naturalistic theme showing flora and fauna, in particular birds.

In some ways its subtitle 'Spiritual Reflections for Couples' is a bit of a misnomer, for whilst the love between couples is a major theme, it is not the sole one and many of the reflections have no obvious connection to a couple as such.

Having said that, if reading spiritual reflections is 'your thing' then this book delivers well.

Drumming up support for Opawa Church

A new children's book Christchurch author Marlene Bennetts has been launched and sales will go to support the rebuild of Opawa Community Church.



The book is The Little Drummer Boy and it tells the story of Liam who is looking forward to performing with his drum in the Sunday school play. But how will he be happy when some of his family won't be around at Christmas?

Marlene has been writing books and poems for about 30 years. In 2003 she was appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) in recognition of her services to literature.

The Little Drummer Boy is illustrated in full colour by Trish Bowles. Trish has illustrated more than 30 books. Her illustrated book The ANZAC Puppy was selected as Children's Choice in the NZ Book Awards in 2015.

The book was being launched by Port Hills MP Ruth Dyson MP on Thursday 27th October.

Opawa Community Church was damaged in the Christchurch earthquakes and it will be reopened next month.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

By Jane Thomsen, Director, Presbyterian Research Centre

Not just dusty old documents

On 27-29 September, local ordained ministers (LOMs) from around New Zealand gathered for the first time at the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership in Dunedin to receive three days of ministry development and strengthen relationships.

This was the first of what Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership hopes will be an annual event for LOMs. It was sponsored in full by the Ministers' Study Grants through the Presbyterian Church.

Some of those who attended were first time visitors to the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, which shares the Hewitson Wing of Knox College with the Presbyterian Archives. Many of them were unaware of the rich resources available in the Presbyterian Research Centre, which encompasses the Hewitson Library and Presbyterian Archives.

The Library and Archives tour was

scheduled after lunch on the last day of the intense three-day session. It was a warm spring day and the Hewitson Block gets great afternoon sun and can get quite stuffy, so there were some tired and somewhat overwhelmed faces presented to us on the day.

They did appear interested to know that they could join the Library and have resources posted to them anywhere in New Zealand to support their ministry. Because we did not want to overwhelm them, we kept the Library tour simple. After the Library visit it was time to go downstairs to the Archives.

Assistant archivist Andrew Smith had done his research. He had identified which parish each LOM came from and had brought folders with documents from each of those parishes to the Archives reading room.

This was a stroke of genius, and on a hot stuffy afternoon at the end of a



Local ordained ministers toured Presbyterian Archives and Hewitson Library.

busy three day course the enthusiasm and engagement of this group instantly increased!

They have now discovered that the Presbyterian Research Centre is not just a collection of dusty old

historical documents, but has diverse resources directly relating to their particular Ministry. We feel sure that this experience will inspire them to continue to engage with us in the future.



Sadie Arnold (left) and Bessie Robinson both celebrated their 100th birthday on October 18th.

Levin's remarkable centenarians

Singing 'Happy Birthday' for two of its members was a very special occasion for Levin Uniting Parish last month

On October 18th parishioners Sadie Arnold and Bessie Robinson celebrated their 100th birthday on the same day.

Levin Uniting is a partnership between Methodists and Presbyterians and, appropriately enough, Sadie is from a Methodist background and Bessie is from a Presbyterian background.

Sadie's daughter Eileen Bolitho says Sadie and Bessie now live in separate rest homes. They planned to get together for two separate birthday celebrations but unfortunately Sadie had been admitted to hospital with pneumonia.

"We planned to have a birthday for Mum on Saturday the 15th so her great grandchildren could attend from Christchurch and then have a party with Bessie on the 18th. We did have a small family event in the hospital on the Saturday and Mum is now back home and feeling better," Eileen says.

Bessie's friend Ruth Rushton says the party for Bessie was a special occasion and she was "queen for a day".

"Bessie never married so she does not have a lot of family but some of her cousins and their children were there. The church has been the centre of Bessie's life and she prays for an hour each morning," Ruth says.

Former Levin Uniting Church minister Rev Bob Eyles also attended Bessie's party and spoke about her and her faith.

Unsung Methodists

Charlie Roke - 1907-1977

By Donald Phillipps

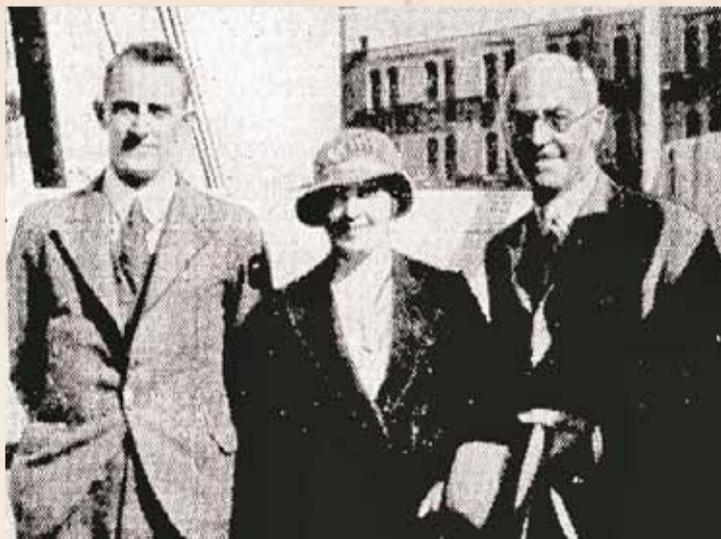
THE GOSPEL SWAGGER

In 1935 a meeting was convened in Wellington to form an association of missions. Not of the organisations already in place representing the principal Christian denominations, but of those working in specific areas, namely the Chatham Islands and the 'Un evangelised Fields' in Bolivia, Syria, India, Ceylon, China, Russia, the South Seas, Egypt and Sudan.

Some had been at work for decades, but one had begun just two years previously. All of them gave expression to the confident assumption of Western Christendom that it was charged with the burden of bringing faith and hope into a darkened world.

The newest group was the Chatham Islands Gospel Mission. It represented the most recent stage in the association of the Methodist Church with that little group of islands about 800kms east of Christchurch. Then, as now, the population was about 650 people - half Maori and half Pakeha, and most of them fishermen. There were few roads and life was, by mainland standards, pretty basic.

John Aldred, an early Wesleyan missionary, paid a visit to the



Rev Charles Roke (right) and wife Gladys with their staunch supporter Harold Vivian before the Rokes sailed to the Chatham Islands.

Chathams in 1842. Piripi Hana stayed on as a catechist until 1847, and later returned as a Native minister in 1856. His place was taken by another Native Minister, Te Kote Te Rato, until 1862 and, finally, Heteraka Warahi was there from 1865-1870.

Then Methodists forgot about the Chathams. From the 1840s there were German missions, both Lutheran and Moravian, on the Islands and they remained there into the latter part of the century. The Anglicans also accepted responsibility

for the people there, and by the 1920s theirs was the only church presence.

Methodism, indirectly, renewed acquaintance in 1929 in the person of Sister Lily White, a former missionary sister in the Solomon Islands, but now the matron of the hospital at Waitangi, the Islands' main settlement.

Whether there was any personal link is not known, but in the year Lily left Charles (Charlie) Roke, a Home Missionary at Raetihi committed himself and his wife

Gladys, to the Chatham Islands. They were to stay there, residing at Owenga on the south east coast, for 10 years, on behalf of the Chatham Islands Gospel Mission.

The Rokes were utterly reliant on the personal support of Harold Vivian, a Wellington Methodist and Aro Street missionary, who had taken it upon himself to promote the Island as a place for evangelisation and Christian nurture. He was largely responsible for raising the funds needed to support the Roke family.

Another member of the Wellington support group, Harry Hart, later wrote about their experience. "It is doubtful if the Rokes ever received from the handful of missionary-minded friends who knew of their work a total of £75 in any one year, with possibly a few parcels in addition."

Their furniture was made from packing cases, and their shelter from a "conglomeration of available materials". Charlie visited New Zealand once only in that period of 10 years. Gladys came to the mainland on three occasions, when each of her three children was born.

Within a year Charlie had established two Sunday schools and

a scout troop. He preached the Gospel at four preaching places. At first there was no horse - he called himself a "Gospel swagger". He carried a tent, ground sheet, rug, blankets, billy and utensils, change of underwear, shaving-gear, camera, Bible and tracts. Later there was a horse.

They had gone to the Chathams knowing life would be hard and that they were on their own. The Home Mission Department couldn't help - it was Depression-time. In fact, Charlie and Gladys spent a decade on the Island, returning to the mainland in 1943 after years of dedicated, even sacrificial labour.

Then for 25 years he served the Connexion and, more particularly, the Maori Mission (as it was then called) in the Waikato, Kawhia, and Tai Tokerau. Charlie's whole life was given, as his tribute said, in humble, faithful service to the Kingdom of God.

Has the world changed so much that it no longer needs people like Charlie and Gladys Roke? The revolution in transport and communication has brought everything, and anything, within reach. Except people, perhaps.



VIIA LE ATUA I LE SOIFUA AUAUNA O TAMA FANAU A LE SINOTI SAMOA

Faataloa atu I le mamalu o le tatou Sinoti Samoa mai le paia o le Auaunaga seia oo lava I se ua aupito ititi o le fanau. Malo le soifua manuia, malo foi le lava papale I fita o le galuega. Ua toe lava o se aga ona tatou taunuu foi lea I le faaiuga o lenei tausaga I le taitaiina alofa a lo tatou Tautai Sili o I le lagi.

Ao sina tala mai le Koneferenisi e pei ona usua ai I le masina o Oketopa o lenei tausaga. Na usua le Koneferenisi a le Ekalesia I le vaiaso muamua o Oketopa I le Kolisi o Uesele, I Paerata. O le taimi tonu lea o le tuuaga o aoga, ma na maua ai le avanoa e faaaogaina ai e le tatou Ekalesia le lotoa ma faleaoga, aua le Koneferenisi o lenei tausaga.

O le Koneferenisi foi lenei na faamuta ai le auunaga faa-Peresetene a le susuga ia Tovia Aumua ma le Sui Peresetene o Arapela Ngaha, ae la faauuina ai le susuga I le alii faifeau o Prince Devanadan ma le tamaitai failauga o Viv Whimster e taitaiina le tatou Ekalesia mo le isi lua tausaga.

Tatou te viia ma faafetaia ai le Atua ona o le galuega na fitaituga iai le susuga ia Tovia ma le faletua ia Leotele Aumua faapea le susuga I le tamaitai foma'i ia Arapela ma lona alii. Tele foi mea lelei ma le matagofie na la'ua faia ma ausia aua le manuia o le tatou galuega lautele. Malo le faatamasoalii I lau susuga Tovia, faafetai le faufautua I lau afioga I le faletua Leotele, tatou patipatia le alofa o le Atua na taumanuia ai oulula faivaalofilima.

O le Koneferenisi foi lenei na molimauina ai le malolo manumalo a le susuga ia Faiva ma le faletua ia Luafalele Alaelua. Faafetai I le soifua galulue ma le soifua tautua Faiva ma Lua. O oulula mama na, faamanuia tele lava le Atua I malologa o le a feagai ai.

Na faapea foi ona tatou molimauina le faauuga o le susuga ia Oka Ieti I lenei Koneferenisi. Malo le tau Oka ma Seleima. Viia le Atua ona o oulula soifua ofoina mole galuega. Ia tafe toto oulula ala, sagai ane 'ai o le tai faaaupogaina oulula I aupega o le taua, ina ia tele ni agaga e maua mole Atua ma lona finagalo.

O le Sini o le Koneferenisi o lenei tausaga o le - TAULA IA KERISO - FITAITUGA I GALUEGA (Moored to Christ, moving into Mission) Na saunua faalaeiau le Peresetene ma le Sui Peresetene fou I le Ekalesia e ala I le la Sini, ina ia silasila toto'a I so'o se mea o lo'o iai le le amiotonu, ma saili I auala ma faatinoga e mafai ona fo'ia ai ma iloa ai lo tatou fefaamaonia'i o I tatou o Metotisi ua moni lo tatou valaauina e faia le finagalo o le Atua.

O le Aso Gafua I le Aso Lulu na taitaiina lotu o taeao taitasi e le Kolisi Faafaipeau ona amata lea o mataupu faatulagaina o na aso. Na faailoa aloaia malo faaaloologia a le Koneferenisi o lenei tausaga. Na auai le susuga I le Sea o le FaaSinoti mai le Koneferenisi a Samoa, susuga ia Masunu Utumapu, e fai ma sui o le afioga I le Peresetene e lei mafai ona afio mai ona o nisi tuagia o le galuega. Na fai foi la le faaaloalo a le tatou Sinoti I le afioga I le Sea ma nisi o faifeau e toalua na latou auai I le Koneferenisi.

Na maua le avanoa o le tatou Sinoti e fai ai se tatou tala faatasi ma le faailoaina I ata le galuega o loo tatou taumafai iai. Na tuuina ata I luga aua le silafia a le koneferenisi ma faailoa le faamoemoe ma le tulaga ua iai talu mai le isi faailoaina I le Koneferenisi I le 2007.

O nisi o fanua na vaai iai ae lei fetau mo le galuega, o tatou falesa taitasi o lo'o iai Matagaluega Samoa, faapea ma sailiga tupe na tatou faia mai, faapea ma le

aofaiga o le tupe ua iai I le taimi nei. Na maea le koneferenisi ona matou talanoa lea ma le failautusi aoao David Bush, faapea le konevina o le Board of Administration (BOA) Don Biggs, faamanatu iai le iuga a le Koneferenisi o le 2007, ina silasila toto'a iai le BOA I lenei faamoemoe, peitai, ai lava na uma lena tausaga ma galo atu ai I le komiti na tuu iai le Mau.

Ma o lea ua talosaga mai ia ma'ua ma le fofoga o le Sinoti ina ia tusi atu ma faamanatu atu le Mau aua le latou fonotaga muamua o le tausaga fou o le a vaai iai. Tatou talosia le alofa o le Atua, e mafaia ai mea uma e faafaigata mo I tatou.

O le isi mataupu na sili lava ona faigata I le Koneferenisi o le nei tausaga, o le filifiliga lea na faia a le 5+5 (5 sui o Te Taha Maori, 5 sui o le Tauivi) aua le Peresetene ma le Sui Peresetene o le isi lua tausaga. Na amata mai lava le latou fonotaga I le Aso Gafua seia o'o lava I le Aso Lulu e lei iai se tasi ua o'o iai.

O le faiga o lenei polosese, o igoa uma e avatu I le Koneferenisi a le Tauivi (Samoa, Tonga, Fiti, Palagi, Routuma, Initia, Korea) e fai ai le palota a le Tauivi ona ave ai lea o ni igoa se lua aua le filifiliga o le Peresetene, ma le isi lua aua le filifiliga o le Sui Peresetene, faapea foi Te Taha Maori latou. o le faaletonu ua o'o ane, e lei tasi lo latou finagalo.

O lea la ua aumai le tusi faaleoleo mamoe a le Peresetene I le Ekalesia e uiga I lea vaega, aua ua mautinoa lava ua iai finagalo ua afaina I lenei mea. O lea la ua faatuina le isi polosese fou e silasila iai le Sinoti a le Ekalesia I le tausaga fou, e filifili ai suafa o tagata o le a faatuina mai, aua le sailiga o le Peresetene ma le Sui Peresetene mo le isi lua tausaga.

E le faigofie lava lenei mataupu, ae faigofie mea uma ina ua mafutaina I tatou uma, ae maise lava le 5+5 e le agaga o le Atua, e taula iai le latou filifiliga. Ia talosia lenei vaega o le polosese a le Ekalesia ia outou talosaga Sinoti.

O le aso 21-24 o Oketopa na usuina ai le mafutaga a Failauga o le Talalelei I Ngaruawahia. O le Sini o lenei mafutaga o le LILIUINA - TRANSFORMATION. Na molimauina le faamalieina o le toatele o failauga na auai I lenei mafutaga I mataupu na tapena ma saunia e le au fai mataupu o lenei mafutaga.

Na malie esee se nota o mataupu o lea weekend, ae maise foi o Fono Tatalo o le vavea o le Aso Toonai ma le Aso Sa na tapenina ma taitaiina e le susuga ia Tau Lasi, faapea foi ma faaevagelia na saunia e Itumalo taitasi e ono o le tatou Sinoti. O le susuga ia Paulo Ieli na ave ma Konevina o le Mafutaga, o le Komiti o le afioga ia Tofa Winterstein, faletua ia Solinuu Semu, Lolila Faitotoa, male tautai ia Saili Ioapo.

Viia lava le Atua ona o le matagofie o lenei faamoemoe. E talitonu foi le lotu ua le gata ina faamalieina le mafuta, ae ua faapea foi ona luitauina le agaga ofoina mole Atua e ala I le tofi failauga o le Talalelei.

Na suia tofi o le Mafutaga aua le isi tolu tausaga o lumanai ai, ma ua toe tulai mai ai le susuga ia Paulo Ieli I le Konevina, afioga ia Toleafoa Tuimauga I le failautusi ma le tautai ia Saili Ioapo I le Teuolua a le mafutaga.

I le agaga faafetai ona o tapenaga a le komiti ua mavae atu, ae faamanuia I le komiti fou. O outou mama na, ia faaaupogaina outou e le Atua aua ana feau ma ana galuega e ala I le Mafutaga Failauga o le Talalelei a le Sinoti Samoa.

Manuteleina faamoemoe o masina o totoe o lenei tausaga.

Suiva'aia Te'o



NA VAKANOMODI NI VULA I TUBUTUBU

Vakarautaka ko Rev Dr Ilaitia S. Tuwera

Eda lako-curuma tiko ena gauna oqo na vula ka kilai tu ni vula i Tubutubu (Spring), ka tekivu mai ena Seviteba.

Eda sa mai vakamadakuya tale oqo na Okotova. E 6 na vula ena nodra ivola ni vula na qase mai Viti e vakatokai me vula itubutubu (Seviteba – Feperueri). Eda sa vakamadakuya vakamalua kina na vula ililiwa ka da vavaca yani na vula ikatakata.

Sa ‘tekivu’ talega na ‘yabaki’ ena Seviteba vei ira na noda qase. Tekivu na vula itubutubu ena Seviteba (vavakada); Okotova (balolo-lailai); Noveba (balolo-levu); Tiseba (Nuqa-lailai); Janueri (Nuqa-levu); Feperueri (Vula-i-Kelikeli kei na Sevu).

E ono na vula itubutubu ka sa gauna ni marau kei na vakavinavinaka ni sa tubu vinaka mai na nodra were kei na ka taucoko era tea. Era dau laki tu mai na nodra were na qase ka ra vosa toka ni vakavinavinaka kei na marau.

Sa sema vinaka tu na nodra qarava na nodra were ena dua na yasana, kei na nodra qarava na kalou ni teitei ena nodra lotu makawa ena dua tale na yasana ni bera ni cabe mai na lotu ena 1835 mai Lakeba, Lau.

Sega ni ka wale na “gauna” e yaco kina edua na ka (event) ena loma ni toso ni gauna ena nona vuravura na Kalou na Dauveibuli eda tiko vakalekaleka kina qo. Tadu mai ena matasawa mai Tubou, Lakeba, Lau o iratou na kauta mai na lotu ena mataka oya, nai ka 12 ni Okotova, 1835.

Ratou tadu tiko mai qo o William Cross kei David Cargill mai Igiladi, ka sala vata tiko mai kei rau o Josua Mateinani mai Fulaga, Lau. Ratou tiko vakalekaleka mai Toga-Matanisiga ni bera ni ratou gole mai ki Viti.

Ni cabe mai na Lotu ena Okotova ni 1835, e vukeya talega na kena ciqomi ni donuya tiko na gauna ni vula itubutubu. Mai raici na nodrau veiwekani voleka na ‘Were’ kei na ‘Kalou’ ka ratou mai kacivaka ka vakadewataka na kau lotu mai.

Ena yabaki 1940 vakacaca, a tukuna kina vei Rev. Allan Tippett edua na qase itaukei mai Viti na vosa qo: “Keimami

qarava vata na Kalou kei na iteitei se neimami were”.

Au a vakamacalataka ena dua na noqu vosa mai Viti ena vica na yabaki sa oti na veiwekani oqo ni qaravi Kalou kei na kena qaravi na Were. Ulutaga levu ni noqu vosa mai na USP na: “Were-Kalou”. Se, na “na Kalou na Were, na Were na Kalou”. Sa mai cavuti talega na Lotu ka cabe mai oqo ena 1835 me Nona Were na Kalou.

Na veiyasa ni lotu se tabacakacaka ni kena veiqaravi (Marama, Turaga etc.) sa dau cavuti talega me ‘taba ni nona were na Kalou’.

E mai rokataka na ibalebale ni lotu mai Viti na veika e koto mai na Were – na kena teivaki...samaki...sikovi...me laki yacova yani na kena matua...na kena sevu kei na kena vakayagataka na ka era tea.

Ni cavuta tiko ko Paula nai Apositolo ena nona ivola vei Timoci: “Sa iyau levu na Lotu kei na loma vinaka” – sa levu sara na kena ibalebale vinaka ni cavuti na tikina oqori mai Viti ka ni sema vinaka tu na kena ibalebale ena nodra ‘caka were’ na qase ena gauna koya.

Na Vakanomodi (Silence)

Edua na iwase levu ni ka ka vakatokai na “bula” ena vuravura eda tiko vakalekaleka kina qo e koto-tawana na vosa oqo - ‘vakanomodi’. Na cabe mai ni ‘veimataka’ ena veisiga, kei na ‘karobo’ sobu ni vanua.

Na cabe mai ni ua mai wai kei na disobu yani ni mati. Na ‘tubu’ cake ni ka e tei, na kena se ka vua, e muria na sala ni vakanomodi. Na veisau ni draki mai na batabata kina vula itubutubu, mai na vula itubutubu kina vula ikatakata. Na nona tubu cake edua na gone kei na veisau e laurai ena nona bula.

Na veika oqori e muria na sala ni vakanomodi. Sa sega ni galu ga...se me sega na vosa. Sega! Ia, sa dua nai wase ni bula vakataki koya na “Vakanomodi” ka da sureti tiko kina ena vula oqo ko Noveba meda ciqoma me noda...bulataka...ka

veiqaravi voli kina.

Kaya edua na turaga: “In our chatty world, in which the word has lost its power to communicate, silence helps us to keep our mind and heart anchored in the future world and allows us to speak from there a creative and recreative word to the present world”.



Ilaitia S. Tuwera

Meda ciqoma ena yalo marau kei na yalo ni vakavinavinaka vua na noda Kalou me noda na vula itubutubu oqo. Meda tuvalaka vou tale kina na noda bula kei na kena ilakolako. ME RAICINI DA TUBU...MEDA TUBU

CAKE TIKO ENA VEIKA VINAKA KECEGA EDA RAWATA ENA NODA BULA VATA KEI NA NODA KALOU...KEI NA NODA VEIQARAVI ENA VEISIGA!

Eda vakanamata talega yani kina vula ‘iNuqa’ (Tiseba) ena gauna oqo ni vula i tubutubu, ka marautaki kina na isolisoli levu mai vua na Kalou sai Koya na Luvena ko Jisu Karisito, na Nona Siga ni Sucu eda dau namaka ka marautaka ena veiyabaki.

Kaya na nona ivola na dau ni Same: “O koya sa tiko ena nona yasana vuni ko Koya sa Cecere sara, ena tiko ga ena yaloyalo i Koya sa Kaukauwa...Ena nomu isasabai kei na nomu ivakaruru na nona yalodina” (Same 91: 1, 4).

Nona “yasana vuni o koya sa cecere sara” sa kena iyau levu na Vakanomodi. Sa vinakati kina na Vakarorogo...na Vakatudaliga! Kua ni levu na vosa! Me levu na vakarorogo!

Sega ni kune na vakarorogo oqo vei Jiutasa Isikarioni. Vakilakila toka ga me yacova ni laki vakamatei koya vaka ikoya. Ena itutu ni veiliutaki, eda raica ni vulagi sara vakalevu ko Pailato na kovana matanitu o Roma ena gauna oya ni tu ena vakanomodi ka sega ni vosa mai na Turaga ena siga ni nona lewai me sa vakamatei: “Sa qai kaya vua ko Pailato: O sa sega beka ni rogoca na kena levu ni ka era beitaki iko kina? A sa sega tale ni sauma

ko koya edua na nona vosa; a sa kurabui vakalevu kina na kovana” (Maciu 27: 13 – 14).

Sa tiko na gauna meda vosa kina...Io...Ia, me vakamuraia na noda tauca edua na vosa na ka ka vola koto ko Paula ena nona ivola kina ivavakoso-lotu mai Kolosa: “Me ia tikoga na nomudou vosa ena yalo vinaka, ka vakatuituinataki ena masima, mo dou kila kina se cava sa dodonu mo dou kaya tale vei ira na tamata yadua” (Kolosa 4: 6).

Sa ka bibi sara ena gauna oqo na tauci ni vosa vei ira ka tu ena itutu ni veiliutaki – ena Vanua, Lotu kei na Matanitu. Moni vakaiyaragi na veiliutaki ena Vakarorogo vinaka kei na Vosa vinaka. Vakamasima vakarauta ga na vosa kece e tau! Kakua ni sivia! Sana kana ca tale kina!

Sa iyau levu na Lotu kei na Loma vinaka!! Sa kunei na iyau levu oqo ena VAKANOMODI...VAKAROROGO...VUA NA KALOU...O KOYA GA NA ILIULIU NI LOTU! Mai soqoni ka tini na “Vakanomodi” ni vula iTubutubu ena Nona Tucake Tale mai na Mate na Gone Turaga ko Jisu na Karisito. Bulu mai na Were ka tucake tale mai na Were: “Ia sa dua na Were ena tikina sa vakoti kina ki na kauveilatai ko koya; ka sa dua na ibulubulu vou ena Were, sa sega ni bulu kina edua na tamata. Erau sa qai buluti Jisu kina, ni sa nodra siga Vakarau na kai Jutia, ka ni sa voleka na ibulubulu” (Joni 19: 41 – 42)...“Ia, ena imatai ni siga ni macawa sa lako mai ko Meri na yalewa ni Makitala ena mataka-caca ni sa butobuto tu, ki na ibulubulu, ka raica ni sa kau tani na vatu mai na ibulubulu” (Joni 20:1).

Sa tu-cake-tale na Gone Turaga ko Jisu. Bulu mai na Were! Tucake Tale mai na Were! Nona vosa: “I mate sa evei na nomu batigaga? I bulubulu, sa evei na nomu gumatua?” Sa mai soqoni vata kece na ibalebale ni VAKANOMODI e dulaki tiko oqo me noda ena Nona vosa oqori na Gone Turaga ka vakamalumulumutaka na mate ena kena batigaga kei na ibulubulu kei na kena gumatua.

KONIFEREDI NI LOTU WESELE E NIUSILADI 2016



Veiqaravi na Sakaramede ni Vakayakavi ni Turaga ko Talatala Tabaki vou ko Rev Alipate Livani



Eratou tucake tu oqo (Mavi) ko Talatala Qase ni Wasewase ko Rev Peni Tikonaika, Talatala Qase Levu Vakacegu ka Talatala ni Tabacakacaka ko Viti Okaladi ko Rev Dr Ilaitia Sevati Tuwera, (Matau) Talatala Qase Levu mai Viti ko Rev Dr Tevita Nawadra Bainivanua..



Era vakarau laga sere na Matasere ni Wasewase ena Lotu ni Veitabaki vei Rev Alipate Livani ena Bose ni Koniferedi ka vakayacori mai Wesley College e Pukekohe.

Ko e uki ke tau faaitaha 'i he 'etau kehekehe neongo e ngaahi fakafe'atungiaa *Unity in diversity not without challenges*

By 'Ikilifi Pope

Ko e uki kuo fai 'e he palesiteni, Prince Devanandan pea mo hono tokoni, Viv Whimster hili hona fakanofu ko e toe fakamahino 'a e ngaahi 'ulungaanga mo e ngaahi anga fakafonua kehekehe, ngaahi filosofia kehekehe 'oku fa'olaki pe ngaue'aki 'e hotau siasi, Siasi Metotisi 'o Nu'u Sila ni. Pea ko e ngaahi fakakaukau ko iaa 'oku ne pole'i kitautolu ke tau oo ki mamani 'o ngaahi ke lelei mo fakalalaka ange.

I he fakakaukau ko iaa na'e fakahaa ai 'i he konifelenisi ko 'eni 'a e ngaahi fakataataa kehekehe 'o e ngaahi ngaue 'oku fai 'e he Siasi Meotisi 'i he lolotonga ni 'o hangee ko e fakakau mai 'a e ngaahi anga fakafonua mo e ngaahi fakakaukau kehekehe 'oku ngaue'aki 'e he 'siasi 'o e 'aho ni' (contemporary church). 'Oku 'ikai ko ia pe ka ko e toe tokanga ange foki ki he ngaahi 'isiuu fakasosiale (social issues) 'oku ne fakafetu'atungia'i hotau fonua ni pea mo mamani foki.

'Oku oo ua mo ia 'a e fakakaukau ki hono fakafe'i mai

e kau taki 'o e Metotisi 'i he ngaahi fonua kaunga'api hangee ko Tonga, Fisi, Ha'amoā, Solomone, 'Aositelelia pea kau atu ki ai mo 'Ailani ke nau lukuluku mai 'enau ngaahi a'usiaa ke tokoni ki he langa ngaue 'a e 'oku fai 'e he Siasii.

Na'e 'ikai ko ia pe foki ka na'e toe fakafe'i mai pea mo e taki 'o e fa'ahi Labour, Andrew Little ke ne kau he kau lea 'i he taha 'o e ngaahi houa 'ilo 'o e konifelenisi koe'uhii ko e ngaahi ngaue 'oku tokanga ki ai 'a e pule'anga Na'e fakalangilangi'i foki 'e Mr Little 'a e kau taki 'o e fa'ahi Labour ki mu'a atu mo e pule'angaa ka ko e kau Metotisi kinautolu hange ko David Lange, Russshell Marshall mo David Gaygill.

Na'e 'ikai ko ia pee ka na'a ne faka'ilonga'i foki mo e palemia ko Michael Savage 'a ia na'a ne fa'u 'a e polokalama social security 'a e Labour na'e kanoni ai 'a e tui fakakalisitiane.

Na'a ne toe fakahihiki'i foki mo e siasi Metotisi koe'uhii ko 'enau mateaki'i pea nau ngaue'i 'a e me'a 'oku nau tui ki ai felave'i mo e totonu he ngaahi me'a fakasosiale (social justice).

Toe Hoko Atu Fili Palesiteni Hokoo 'I He Ta'u Fo'ou *Selecting Presidential Team to Continue Next Year*

By 'Ikilifi Pope

Ko e taha e fatongia mahu'inga 'o e Konifelenisi ko e fili 'o e palesiteni ka hokoo mo hono tokoni (president and vice president elect). 'I he Konifelenisi 'o e ta'u ni na'e fakataha 'a e komiti (bi-cultural committee) 'oku nau tokanga ki he fatongia ko 'enii pea na'e 'ikai ke nau loto tatau pea iku ai 'o 'ikai ke fili ha palesiteni fili ki he ta'u ka hoko mai.

I he founa anga maheni 'oku 'omai 'a e fili 'a e Te Taha Maori pea mo e Tauivi ki he komiti 5 + 5 pee ko e penolo 'oku kau ki ai e fakafofonga 'e 5 mei he Te Taha Maori pea mo e 5 mei he Tauivi ('a ia ko e fa'ahi ia 'oku 'i ai 'a e katoa 'o e Metotisi hange ko e kau palangi, matakali 'Esia pea pehe ki he Pasifiki) ke nau aofangatuku 'a e fili.

Ko e fakataha mo e alea (deliberations) 'a e komiti ko 'enii 'oku 'ikai fakahaa (not made public) ia ka 'oku ngata pe 'ia kinautolu.

I ha tohi (pastoral letter) na'e fakahoko mei he komiti hili 'enau fakataha ki he palesiteni lolotonga, Prince Devanandan, na'e pehee ai ko e faingata'a pe palopalema na'e hoko he fili 'o e ta'u ni ko e fokotu'u pe kanititeiti mei he Taha Maori pea mo e fokotu'u pe kanititeiti mei he Tauivi na'e 'omai ki he komiti 5+5 ke fili ai e timi palesiteni na'e 'ikai ke na tatau.

'A ia na'e 'ikai ke tatau 'enau fokotu'u ki he palesiteni pea pehee

foki ki he tokoni. Na'e iku ai 'o 'ikai ke nau loto tatau ke fili ha palesiteni mo ha tokoni palesiteni ka hokoo. Na'a nau tuku mai foki ke toe fili atu mo ha ngaahi hingoa fo'ou ka na'e kei tu'u tatau pee.

Na'e pehe foki 'e he palesiteni, Prince ko e taimi faingata'a pea fakatupu lotomamahi kia kinautolu na'a nau loto ke 'ave honau hingoaa ki he kanititeiti 'o e fili e timi palesiteni. Ka neongo ia 'oku mahu'inga foki ke tau fakamamafa he fakakaukau 'oku 'ikai ke hoko hono ta'elava ke fili 'a e palesiteni 'i he ta'u ni ko ha me'a ia ke tau pehee ai 'oku 'ikai ke ngaue 'a e founa pe sisitemi ko 'eni 'oku ngaue'aki 'e he siasi.

Ko e founa 'oku lolotonga lele mai'akii ko e ta'u ni 'e 30 pea na'e ngaue lelei pee 'oku 'i ai 'a e tui 'e kei ngaue lelei pe 'i he kaha'uu.

'Oku tui foki mo e sekelitali 'o e siasi, Rev David Bush ki ai pea na'a ne pehee foki ke 'oku totonu ke tau tui ki he founa 'oku tau ngaue'aki pea tau falala kia kinautolu kuo tau fili ke fakahoko 'a e fatongia ko 'enii.

Kaekehe ko e me'a leva 'oku hokoo ko e toe fokotu'u fo'ou pee 'o 'o'ange 'a e hingoa 'o e kau kanititeiti ki he ta'u kaha'u 'o 'oua 'e toe tomui ange he 'aho 13 Siulai 2017. Pea 'i he maau mai 'a e ngaahi fokotu'u mei he ngaai sinoti pea 'e toki hoko atu mei ai 'i he founa tatau pee 'a hono toe fili 'o e palesiteni mo hono tokoni.

Tokoni lahi kau mai kau fakafofonga mei he ngaahi potu siasi ki he konifelenisi

By 'Ikilifi Pope

'Oku fakamanafa mo fakafiefia ma'u pe 'a e tokolahi mo e tokanga 'a e ngaahi potu siasi 'o e Vahefonua Tonga ke 'omai honau kau fakafofonga.

'Oku tokoni foki eni ke nau toe mahino'i ange hono fakalele 'o e siasii. 'I he 'etau hiki mai ki he fonua ni 'o kau ki he Siasi Metotisi 'o Nu'u Sila ni kuo 'osi 'i ai pe 'a e ngaahi filosofia mo e ngaahi me'a mahu'inga (values) kae'uma'a e ngaahi tui fakalotu (teolosa) 'oku ngaue'aki 'e he Siasii.

'Oku tatau pe foki ia mo e ngaahi founa ngaue 'oku tui ki ai pea fakalele'aki 'a e Siasii 'i Tongaa. Kaekehe, ko e me'a lelei 'o e kau mai 'a e kau fakafofonga ko e lava ke toe mahino ange

kia kinautolu 'a e ngaahi founa ngaue mo e me'a 'oku tui ki ai 'a e Siasii.

Ko e me'a hono uaa ko e lava ke maheni ange 'a e kau fakafofonga pea mo e ngaahi matakali kehekehe 'oku nau kau ki he siasi Metotisi 'o Nu'u Sila ni.

'Oku lahi e ngaahi fokotu'u ia 'oku 'oatu mei he Vahefonua hangee ko e fokotu'u ki he fili palesiteni pe ko e tokonii 'oku 'ikai ke loko poupu'u ia 'e he ngaahi sinoti pee ngaahi sekita (sector) kehe 'o e siasii ko hono 'uhingaa ke 'oku 'ikai foki ke nau 'ilo'i pe 'i ai ha'a nau taukei ki he puipuitu'a ngaue 'o e kau memipa ko iaa.

Ko e taha ia 'a e 'uhinga 'oku mahu'inga ai 'a e 'oatu e kau fakafofonga ke kau ki he konifelenisi kae'uma'aa 'a e ngaahi komiti kehekehe 'o e siasii.



Ko Rev Dr 'Ahio, palesiteni 'o e siasi Ueisiilana Tau'atina 'o Tonga (lotomalie) pea mo e kau fakafofonga Tonga na'a kau mai ki he Konifelenisi.



Lotonga e puputu'u 'a e komiti 5 + 5 he fakataha'i e fili palesiteni kuo fakame'ite 'a e ongo hoa 'o e faifekau Dargaville mo e faifekau Hasting, Luseane Fisi'iahi mo 'Akanesi Havea 'a e konifelenisi pea pehe foki ki he palesiteni malooloo, Tovia Aumua mo 'Osaiasi Kupu.



Ko e faihiva lahi 'a e Vahefonua, Kepu Tu'ipulotu pea mo e kau hiva fakatahataha 'a 'Okalani/ Manukau lolotonga e malanga 'a e konifelenisi.

FAKALOTOFALE'IA

Oku 'ikai ko e ma'u sevaniti, ka ko e hoko 'o sevaniti *Not to be served, but to serve*

By 'Ikilifi Pope

The Fakalotofale'ia (Reflection) for this month focuses is the presidential message to the new Methodist ordinands from out-going president, Rev Tovia Aumua. Tovia's message sought to empower and inspire the new ordinands in their new role as presbyters. However, his message – to serve and not to be served – is applicable for all officials of the church such as presbyters, stewards, secretaries, treasurers and other departments.

Na'e fakahoko 'e he palesiteni na'e toki maloloo, Rev. Tovia Aumua 'a e malanga ma'ae kau hilifakinima 'i he ta'u ni. Ko 'ene kaveinga malanga, "Not to be served, but to serve", pe ko e pehee: 'oku 'ikai ko e ma'u sevaniti ka ko e hoko 'o sevaniti'. Veesi malangaa ko Ma'ake 10: 35 – 45: "Na'e 'ikai te ne ha'u ke ma'u sevaniti ka ne hoko 'e ia ko e sevaniti..."

Na'e tokanga 'a e malangaa ke fakalotolahi mo e pou pou ki he kau faifekau hilifakinima fo'ou ki honau fatongia fakatauhisipii. Ko e kau tauhisipii ko honau fatongia ko e sevaniti 'a e kakaii ka 'oku 'ikai ko e kakaii ke nau sevaniti mai kia kinautolu.

Ko e 'uluaki poini na'a ne fakamamafa'ii ko e sevaniti mo e anga faka'apa'apa (serve with respect). Ko hotau siasii 'oku fa'u'aki ia 'a e ngaahi anga fakafonua (culture) kehekehe, ngaahi me'a mah'u'inga (values) kehekehe, mo e ngaahi founga ngaue (protocols) kehekehe.

Ko 'etau ngauee leva 'oku tau fekolosi'aki 'i he ngaahi anga fakafonua (cross cultural model) ko ia.

'I he 'ene pehee 'oku mahu'inga ke tau faka'apa'apa' (respect) 'a e ngaahi founga ngaue kotoa pee, kakai kotoa pee 'oku tau ngaue ki aii 'o tatau ai pee koehaa 'a e fa'ahinga teolosia, founga ngaue mo e ngaahi mo'oni (values) 'oku nau tui ki aii.

Ko e fatongia 'o e kau faifekau 'oku 'ikai ko e fakamaau'i kinautolu ka ko e ngaue fakasevaniti mo faka'apa'apa' i kia kinautolu.

Ko e fakakaukau hono ua na'a ne tokonga ki aii ko e sevaniti mo e lotu fakatokilalo (serve with humility). Ko e fatongia faifekau ko e ui ki he ngaue fakasevaniti (serve) ki he kakaii ka 'oku 'ikai ko e oo 'o 'ai tu'unga pe lakanga (status).

Na'a ne fakataataa'aki 'a e kosipeli 'o e 'ahoo 'a e talanoa ki he ongo foha 'o Sepeti, Na'a na kole ki he tu'unga ma'olungaa ka na'e 'ikai ko e 'uhinga ia hono ui kinaua ke na kau ki he kau akoo. Pea tatau mo ia 'a e paloveape 'a e kau Ha'amo'a 'oku pehee: "O le ala i le Pule o le Tautua."

Meaning: "The Pathway to Authority, is to serve." Ko e fakalea 'e tahaa ko e halafononga ki he mafai/ola lelei pee 'hoko ko e lahi' ko e pau ke te ngaue faka sevaniti.

Ko e poini faka'osi na'a ne lave ki aii ko e sevaniti'aki 'a e 'ofa (serve with love). Ko e oo 'o fai e ngaue 'a e 'Eiki ko e tukupaa ke 'ofa'i 'a e ngauee pea mo e kakaii. Ko e 'ofa ko ia 'oku haa ia he fua e fatongia ko hono tauhi e fanga sipi 'o tatau ai pee.

Pea 'oku fiefia ange 'a e tauhi ke mate kae mo'ui 'a e fanga sipii. Ko e fakalea 'e tahaa ko e 'ofa 'a e tauhi 'i he 'ene fanga sipii 'oku ne tuku 'ene mo'uii ke mole koe'uhii ko e fanga sipii 'o hangee ko e talanoa 'o e "Sevaniti Falengamamahi (Suffering servant, 'Aisea 53).

Ko e fekau ni neongo na'e fakataumu'a ki he kau faifekau na'e hilifakinimaa ka na'e 'aonga ia ki he kau ngauee 'o kau faifekau kotoa, kau setuata pea mo e kau ma'u lakanga kotoa pee he ngaue 'a e siasii.

Ko e faifekau Tonga foki 'e toko ua na'e hilifakinima he konifelenisi ko 'enii 'a ia ko Matafonua Langi pea mo Siutaisa Tukutau.



Ko Siutaisa Tukutau lolotonga 'ene 'oange 'a e sakalameniti 'a e faifekau 'o Onehunga Cooperating Parish, Fakafo Kaio hill hono hilifakinima.



Ko Matafonua Langi lolotonga 'ene 'oange 'a e sakalameniti 'a Tevita Finau, faifekau sea 'o e Vahefonua Tonga, hili hono hilifakinima he konifelenisi 2016.

'A'ahi Komiti Silapa Lautohi Faka-Sapate Ki He Ngaahi Siasi Fakakolo Vahefonua Tonga Sunday School Curriculum Team Visits Parishes

By 'Ikilifi Pope

The Vahefonua Tonga Sunday School Curriculum Team is currently carrying out a review of curriculum and it is visiting congregations throughout New Zealand to do so.

The curriculum reviewed every five years. The aim of the review is to design a curriculum that workable and effective in the current context of Methodist Church of New Zealand especially for children who were born and raised here, says Justin Fotofili, secretary of Vahefonua Sunday School Department.

The curriculum team intends to visit all Tongan parishes under the Vahefonua Tonga to get the views of Sunday school teachers and meet with the Sunday schools as a whole. The work on the new curriculum aims to completed in time for the new curriculum to begin in 2018.

'Oku ngaue malohi 'a e komiti lautohi faka-Sapate ke fakalalakala 'a e silapa 'o e lautohii ki ha tu'unga 'e toe tokoni ange ki he fanau 'i he 'ataakai 'o muli ni, ko e fakamatala ia 'a e sekelitali 'o e Potungau Lautohi Faka-Sapate 'a e Vahefonua Tonga, Justin Fotofili.

Na'a ne toe pehe foki 'oku nau feinga ke fakakakato mo fe'iloaki tonu mo e ngaahi lautohi kotoa pe 'oku nau kau mai ki he Vahefonua kae tautautefito ki tu'a 'Okalani ke 'omai 'enau lau ki he silapa lolotonga. Na'a nau a'u foki ki Dunedin pea mo Christchurch 'i he motu Saute pea ko e me'a fakafiefia ia ki he timi.

'Oku nau siofi (review) 'a e silapa 'a e lautohi ke mahino 'oku lava 'o ngaue lelei pea 'aonga foki ki he lautohi 'o tautautefito ki he fanau 'oku fa'ele'i 'i muli ni. Ko e ngaue ni 'oku faka'amu ke kakato ia pea kamata ngaue'aki 'i he 2018.



Ko Solomone Mahe (tu'u mei mui to'omata'u) mo e timi silapa 'a e Vahefonua lolotonga 'enau 'a'ahi ki Dunedin. 'Oku haa he taa 'a Uanisi mo Tilisa Taungapeau ('otu mu'a) pea pehe ki he hoa e faifekau, Naomi Pole (tu'u mei mui to'omata'u) ko e kau pou pou ki he lautohi faka-Sapate.



Ko Mele Kulu Tafuna (tu'u mei mui to'ohema) pea mo e timi lautohi faka-Sapate na'a nau 'a'ahi atu ki he lautohi 'a e Kolokakala ki Christchurch.



Ko Justin Fotofili (tu'u mei mui fika 3 to'ohema) mo e timi silapa 'a e Vahefonua lolotonga 'enau 'a'ahi ki he lautohi faka-Sapate 'a Levin. 'Oku haa he taa 'a Manu Prescott (tu'u mei to'omata'u mo Silia Manumu'a (otu mu'a to'ohema) mei he komiti silapa.