

***Nau mai rā, Talofa lava, Mālō e lelei, Bula Vinaka and Welcome!***

# Inside

## Food to Go



## Presbyterian Girls' schools



## New community library opens



# Bill to Ban Conversion

## A large, colorful wooden sign that reads "Welcome" in a playful, hand-painted font. The letters are made of wood and painted in various colors like blue, green, yellow, and red, giving it a rustic, handcrafted appearance.

# Therapy Passes First Reading

**In August, Hon Kris Faafoi, the Minister of Justice, presented a bill to parliament to ban conversion therapy practices in New Zealand. The measures proposed were aimed at ending conversion practices that don't work, are widely discredited and cause harm to rainbow communities and the wider community.**

The minister opened his address by saying, “It is with great pride that I stand here to start the debate on the Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill. It gives effect to a Labour Party manifesto commitment at the last election and I want to begin by acknowledging the LGBTQI+ community, our own rainbow caucus, rainbow members of this Parliament, Rainbow Labour, the Young Greens and our young Labour rainbow members who took a petition to Parliament in 2018.”

He added, “Those who have experienced conversion practices talk about ongoing mental health distress, depression, shame

and stigma, and even suicidal thoughts.

“Conversion practices have no place in modern New Zealand. They are based on the false belief that any person's sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression is broken and in need of fixing.”

The bill passed its first reading - 87 MPs voted in favour and 33 NZ National party members voted against. The Justice Select Committee will consider more than 100,000 public submissions before the Bill has its next reading in 2022.

For one Methodist survivor of conversion therapy practices, the passing of the Bill has been welcomed. However, a powerful statement supporting the change in legislation issued by Trinity Methodist Theological College has had an even more profound and personal impact. Alex\* shares their story with Ady Shannon.

\*A pseudonym has been used, not because they are opposed to having their name published but because their story is the story of many who have been through the experience of conversion therapy and they do not want gender or name to disengage people from the story.

## Praying the Gay Away Never Works

### *A survivor shares their story*

“Retrospectively, I always knew I was gay. I just never had the language for it.” Raised in a conservative environment - socially, politically, culturally and religiously - for Alex, the youngest of five children, being gay was cause for shame. “I lied about it. Being gay was an anathema to my upbringing, our social circles, our way of life, and the church. It was illegal. I was ashamed and incredibly isolated. My response was to deny, deny, deny my sexuality. To pretend to be something I wasn’t. It was a destructive way of living.” When confirmed into the Methodist Church in the early 1970s, Alex's friends were focussed on parties, drinking and work. Church was not a part of that environment. It was considered boring and irrelevant so Alex stopped attending.

"By the mid-1980s, I acknowledged to myself that I was gay but I didn't want to be. Why would I? The social language was derogatory and hateful. I felt that I would be further isolated and lose my

family and my friends as well as work opportunities. Society was not a kind place for someone to 'be different'." Re-engaging with church, Alex attended a Pentecostal church. Being "out" was not an option. In a desperate need to feel included and "normal" Alex shared with their pastor the struggle with their sexual orientation. "The pastor and a small group prayed with me. Casting out demons, deliverance sessions, immersing me in scripture, prayer and being open to God's Spirit was the way I could be changed. My understanding of faith was that it was evil to be gay. I had a choice to make and I could choose not to be gay. Gay was not what God wanted."

Giving every spare moment to the development of faith offered some reprieve from the thoughts and feeling of same-sex attraction. Having a sense of call to missionary work overseas, Alex spent some time in the field, returning to New Zealand to undertake theological training at the Bible College of NZ (now Laidlaw College).

*Continued on Page 2*



# Bill to Ban Conversion Therapy Passes First Reading

From Page 1



Bill passing accepts and celebrates gender diversity.

“During my time at Bible College, the same-sex attraction reared its head and caused me significant angst. Being gay was considered a sin and the message was that I could choose not to be gay. College elders enrolled me in Living Waters, a conversion therapy programme where I joined several other gay Christians and two or three leaders for weekly meetings. The message was clear. You cannot be gay and be a Christian. The premise was that being gay means something is broken. You can be fixed. Not being Christian was not an option for me.”

Over 20 weeks in group sessions, Alex and the others in the group were told repeatedly that their psychosexual development was impaired because of 1) trauma 2) abuse and/or 3) bad parenting.

“None of us truly analysed what was happening. Not one of us wanted to be gay. It was constantly about blame and shame. If you were still having feelings you weren't praying or working hard enough. After those group sessions, I attended one-on-one counselling sessions for a year. I was still experiencing same sex attraction - the therapy hadn't worked so I undertook another 20-week group session a year later. I still thought I could be healed.

“While finishing my degree I still felt I was called into ministry I had endured years of being unsuccessful in my conversion and being constantly told, 'You can't be Christian and gay'. This put me in a real dilemma. I WAS gay. Did this mean that I had to give up my faith? Did it mean that I would never be acceptable to God? To try and live the lie of not being gay was killing my identity, my sense of worth and self. To live without my faith, my relationship with God would also be a spiritual death sentence. In a place of such darkness and despair, I felt there was only one way out.

If I couldn't be one without the other, I saw no point in living. I was dead inside. Driving on the Auckland motorway after a counselling session, I decided 'no more'.

Deciding to take my own life, I turned my car to the central concrete barrier. The next thing I knew I was on the grass berm on the outside lane. I heard a voice, saying firmly, 'Who told you you are not my beloved.' It was such a profound moment. I have no recall of how I avoided the concrete barrier and swerved towards the grass but all of a sudden, it was like God was admonishing me and affirming me at the same time.

“I left the Pentecostal church I had been attending and decided to explore further my Methodist roots. I had heard that the Methodist Church was strong on social justice and inclusive. I began attending a cooperating parish and the Presbyterian minister was very warm and supportive. I spent the next decade healing myself of the shame that I had carried for 30 years or more.”

Doing a paper at Trinity College offered Alex a new perspective. “I could see how evil this conversion practice really was. I was wiser and picked a different kind of counsellor to work through my past. In 2003, I came 'out' but then the church was struggling with gay people and leadership. I was advised not to openly discuss my sexuality. It felt as though I was being shoved back in the closet again. I was happy to be a celibate gay person but finding my life partner changed that.

“In 2018, a New Zealand documentary called *Pray the gay away - Homosexual conversion therapy happening in NZ* was aired. Three years later, there are still churches that perceive homosexuality as a sin. Conversion therapy still exists in various formats often under the guise of offering faith-based counselling or prayer groups.

“Everyone wants to belong, so if there is a threat of not belonging because of your sexuality there is the threat of losing friends, family and community. Over the past 20 years, I have walked alongside many whose story is the same as mine. And the percentage of those admitting to wanting to take their own life is very high. I have never met anyone for whom

conversion therapy has worked. For me it is a form of spiritual genocide. There are so many harmful side effects: shame, guilt, helplessness, hopelessness, depression, social withdrawal, substance abuse and suicide.

“The statement from Trinity College is the most solid response I have seen from the faith community. It has been incredibly healing to have that strong and affirming message that says, 'We consider conversion therapy as inherently evil as it diagnoses sexual and gender minorities as “sick” and “sinful.”' It takes away all the evil messaging directed at people whose sexuality is not heterosexual and affirms my identity.

“Reading the statement brought back afresh to me all the things I went through. Like many others, I have been broken by conversion therapy. That kind of brainwashing kills a person's faith, humanity, spirituality and their very identity.

“Those who are struggling with identity need support to explore their identity

with honesty and love. With affirmation and inclusion - not a predisposed ideology that says this needs to be the outcome. The only outcome that should be sought by the Christian community is a healthy relationship with God who is loving, who says you are loved. You do belong. Isn't that what we all want - to belong?

“I am at peace with myself and those who were part of my journey. Although I would not wish the experience of conversion therapy on anyone, it has made me who I am. Broken yet healing, strong yet soft, grateful yet intolerant of exclusion in all of its forms. Society has changed significantly over the past 30 years. Gender diversity is no longer an issue for the generations that have come after mine. I understand that it is not about me that people can't deal with gender diversity - it is about them. My number one prayer is that churches become a place where humanity in all its diversity is considered sacred.”

*If this story has triggered memories for you please consider approaching a mental health professional. If you would like to*

## Haere Mai - Na Harihari o Ngāti Ruanui - Verse II

This is the second in a series of reflections by Tara Tautari, based on the waiata “Haere Mai”  
Translation by Keita Hotere.

<b>Tēnā e ngā iwi rauhitia mai te mōrehu tāngata</b> <b>Hei whāriki ake mo Ihu Karaiti te uri o Rawari</b> <b>Ko te kūkupa tērā i tukua hei rapu i te rau ōriwa</b> <b>Ko te tokoīwa ia o ngā wairua i runga i te āka</b> <b>I tu takawaenga mai ia i roto i te tokowaru a Noa e.</b>	<b>Everybody bring together the survivors,</b> <b>To be a mat for Jesus Christ descendant of David</b>  <b>Being the pigeon (dove of peace) sent to look for the olive leaf and the ninth spirit of the ark.</b>  <b>He was directly descended from Noah.</b>
What does it mean to be a survivor? What scar tissue pain do we continue to carry with us, as the result of the trauma and catastrophe that we have endured in our lives? What healing do we pray for?	Me pēhea te āhua o te mōrehu? He aha ngā tino mamae ka kawea e mātou, nā ngā mahi tūkino me ngā taimahatanga kua pā mai ki a mātou? He aha ngā hua o te inoi whakaora?
In the waiata, Jesus is gifted the solidarity of survivors, a metaphorical whāriki/mat – not unlike the palms that were laid on the road before him as he entered Jerusalem, the week before his death.	I te waiata nei, ka tukua ki a Ihu he whāriki mō ngā mōrehu – he rite ki ngā manga nikau i whakatakatoria i te huarahi i tōna hōunga mai ki a Hiruharama, i taua wiki i mua i tōna matenga.
The whāriki of survivors is a story of lived experience, of endurance and resilience.	Ko te whāriki o ngā mōrehu he pūrakau, he kōrero ā rātou ake wheako nui, o rātou kaha, o rātou maia hoki.
The whāriki of survivors is laid bare before Jesus, who himself is about to undergo great suffering for all humankind.	Kua whakatakatoria te whāriki o ngā mōrehu i mua i a Ihu, i muri mai i tōna mamaetanga nui mō te ao katoa.
Critically, it is only in the meeting of the two, that healing can begin. Jesus as the dove of peace, gifts us the promise of new life, echoing God's covenant with Noah.	Nā reira, i te huinga o ngā tokorua, ka timatahia te whakaora. Ko Ihu te kūkupa o te rangimarie, ka tukua ki a mātou te oati o te oranga hōu, e kārangaranga ana i te kawenata o te Atua i a Noa.
This is our whakapapa promise – our resurrection hope, made alive in Christ.	Ko tenei tō mātou oati whakapapa – tō mātou aranga ake me te tūmanako, i roto i te Karaiti.





## New Insurance Assistant

**Georgia Stent, recently appointed as the Administration and Insurance assistant, spent the first two weeks of her new employment working from home and engaging with colleagues via Zoom. It was an unusual induction, complicated by having to share her home and work space with her busy toddler.**

Formerly employed as a personal assistant and office manager for a financial advisor and more recently part-time receptionist for a Christchurch paint and panel workshop, 22-year-old Georgia is enjoying the challenge of



Georgia Stent recently started working at Weteriana House.

full-time work in a completely new field. Juggling her role as a mother to Oakley, her 20-month-old son, and starting a new job was a bit of a trial during level 4 lockdown. "My wee boy is very busy and with no childcare centres open during lockdown, I found it quite hard." Now she is back working at Weteriana House, learning the ropes of Javlin - the new insurance programme currently being developed - and other MCNZ workplace systems.

Georgia is adapting to the work swiftly and enjoying tackling new tasks, as well as meeting face-to-face with her colleagues. "The biggest challenge right now is working out what to prioritise and trying to establish my schedule."

## Fighting apartheid in 1981 and 2021

**Earlier this year, John Minto, former National Organiser of HART (Halt All Racist Tours) and current National Chair of PSNA (Palestine Solidarity Network Aotearoa) embarked on a national tour to talk about the impact and legacy of the 1981 Springbok Rugby Tour. Despite some positive outcomes, he sees parallels of that former South African apartheid regime playing out with the Israeli government.**

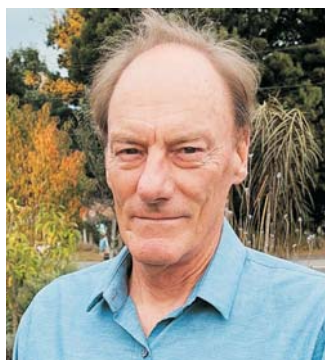
This year marks the 40th anniversary of the 1981 Springbok rugby tour of New Zealand.

Images of the passion and fury from the protests against the tour reverberated in South Africa and around the world. It was a traumatic event for New Zealand, as it was for South Africa, but looking back 40 years on, the protests left a positive impact on both countries.

The crunch point of the protest movement came with the second game of the tour due to be played at Hamilton's Rugby Park. Police called the game off after 300 protestors invaded the field. The impact of the cancellation was dramatic.

On South Africa's Robben Island, the penal colony off the coast of Cape Town, the long-term political prisoners quickly became aware of the situation as prison guards were tuned in to the game. Nelson Mandela was in his 18th year in prison (he would serve over 26 years in total) for his role in leading the anti-apartheid struggle. Mandela said that when the prisoners learned of the game being called off because of an anti-apartheid protest on the other side of the world, they grabbed the bars of their cell doors and rattled them around the prison; he said it was like the sun came out.

The tour helped tighten the international sports boycott and helped bring apartheid in South Africa to a quicker end. Meanwhile Māori activists had challenged the anti-tour movement asking how we could be so staunch on racism 6,000 miles away and ignore it in



John Minto.

our own backyard?

Nine years earlier, groups like Ngā Tamatoa had confronted Pākehā about racism here and the debate was deepened and accelerated by the events of the tour and their aftermath.

A few years later, the Waitangi Tribunal was given authority to look at historic breaches of the Treaty (previously it had only been

mandated to look at future breaches) and so began the Tribunal's investigations into the history of iwi and their historic Tiriti o Waitangi grievances. This process has improved our democracy by bringing some acknowledgement and monetary compensation for the wrongs of colonisation that continue to resonate in the present.

2021 also marks the turning point in another struggle against apartheid, this time in Israel.

Nobel Peace Prize winner and South African Archbishop, Desmond Tutu, has described Israel's policies towards Palestinians as worse than that suffered by black South Africans under apartheid.

Tutu says when it comes to Israel the world should, "Call it apartheid and boycott!" Human rights groups have begun delivering the same message.

In January this year, the largest and most respected Israeli human rights organisation B'Tselem released a landmark report that says:

"...A regime that uses laws, practices and organized violence to cement the supremacy of one group over another is an apartheid regime..."

Three months later B'Tselem was joined by the US-based, Nobel Peace Prize winning organisation, Human Rights Watch, which released a 213-page report detailing how Israeli policies constitute "crimes of apartheid and persecution" against Palestinians.

Palestinian groups have long called for sanctions against Israel. It is time New Zealand tackled Israeli racism and apartheid head on, as we did with apartheid in South Africa.

As the tide turns strongly in support of the Palestinian struggle, the campaign against Israeli apartheid has become the anti-apartheid struggle of this generation.

## Community Matters



The team effort involved the North Shore Men's Shed, who built the library, artist Jenny Firth, who painted it, Brian Peak and Chris Gregory who installed it and Jan Tasker and Cathy Fraser who helped with the signage and the launch.

**Takapuna Methodist Church (TMC) has a long history of innovative community development and a reputation for providing leadership within the national Methodist church for seeding effective community work. Examples include:**

- 50 years of providing Nancy's Afternoon, a monthly social outing for up to 12 rest homes on the North Shore
- working with four other churches to provide Takapuna Interchurch Community Service (TICS) from the neighbouring

Richardson Centre

- Know Your Neighbour partnership with Lifewise (later police) provided a Community Development Worker to support local communities and led to Neighbours Day Aotearoa (NDA)

A new initiative was the launch of a new Community Little Library that was blessed by Rev Peter Norman and unveiled by North Shore MP Simon Watts. The idea is for the public to take a book and share it with their neighbours, circulating great stories in the community, at the same time as making connections and forming new friendships.



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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

# Necessity is the Mother of Invention

President, Rev Andrew Doubleday.

**Once again, we find ourselves in uncharted waters. Last year, a truncated Conference allowed us to do the basic business of the Church. This year, with a full muster, we are doing it all online. Welcome to the third decade of the 21st century!**

Who could have imagined 20 years ago that we would be here? Google was not really a 'thing' - the full implications of the explosive power of this nascent technology still on the radar of only a few. Even five years ago, could we have imagined the Methodist Church of New Zealand, a dinosaur in so many ways, launching with a measure of enthusiasm and bravado into such a venture?

Yet, this is where we are. Could it all go wrong? Yes, it could. There are no guarantees. But isn't that the nature of faith? Called toward the edges, those

places of uncertainty?

I have been reflecting on how much we have learnt over the past two years. Particularly as church. All forged within the crucible of struggle and uncertainty, and the need to respond in effective and life-giving ways to the situation in which we have found ourselves. We have seen several of our leaders preparing evening prayers for the Connexion - something I imagine few of us would have been willing to attempt before being forced to explore new ways of communicating. We have tried new things and often discovered that it wasn't as terrible as we feared. It rarely is. Actually, some of us have found that we quite enjoy it!

Often, it is in times of crisis that we make the greatest steps forward. Tragically, many of the greatest technological advances are made in times of war as each party has sought an advantageous edge over the 'enemy'. We notice this in technologies we now take for granted in peacetime e.g. the

use of nuclear energy and technologies such as radar. Who would have thought that a worldwide pandemic would result in a battery of very effective vaccines delivered in a time frame that is a tithe of what would historically be expected?

Just as the PC and the internet have helped us take huge leaps forward in our access to knowledge, we can expect that the new technologies arising out of dealing with Covid - especially the mRNA vaccines - will likely give rise to a whole raft of therapies for previously largely untreatable conditions in years to come.

The challenge for us as the church is to not simply fall back into old practices and patterns of behaviour once the crisis has passed. We must allow what we have learned and how we have learned it to embolden us to be less timid and more adventurous in how we share the good news that we know is



Andrew Doubleday.

ours. After all, isn't that the point of it all? Am I nervous about how Conference will go? Yes, just a little. There is much over which I have absolutely no control. In

addition, I am invited to trust others who have a much better understanding of the challenges we face and how they may be overcome.

For some, sitting in front of the computer screen and engaging over Zoom will be a sufficient challenge. I am confident however, that once you have the knack (which you will), you will see all sorts of other opportunities for connections that will enrich your lives. It may even start by simply confronting a fear of technology you have by resolving to be present for Conference 2021.



## Life in its Fullness from a Methodist Tradition

Rev Siosifa Pole, Director Mission Resourcing

**We are in a critical time in terms of our health and life in general because of the spread and threat of the Covid pandemic. The government and health officials have advised us to stay home, take care and be kind. Individuals, families, community and church leaders are responding in different ways. Some are strongly supporting this appeal and others are against it because of misinformation gathered from social media.**

Those who support the government and health officials' campaign are well versed in the information about how best to care for the lives of others. They comply willingly with the government's restriction rules and need for the Covid vaccination. In doing so, they are protecting their own lives and avoiding spreading the virus in the community. In contrast, those who are going against the government's appeal and refusing to have the vaccination are risking the wellbeing and security of our community. They show a disregard for the life that God created and gifted to humanity and all creatures on earth to enjoy.

From a theological point, we are given responsibility to be good stewards of the life God gave us. The two creation stories in the book of Genesis convey clearly the priority of life. The author of the book of Genesis states, "Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living being" (Genesis 2:7). The author explains that life came from the very being of God, God's breath. To deny or endanger life is to defy

God's intention for humanity which is to nurture and cherish life. This was the understanding that Jesus had in his ministry. He knew the uniqueness of life and therefore he had the compassion to save, restore, heal and nurture it. In his words, he declares this powerful statement, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10b).

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, saw life as a priority in his ministry and developed a theology that would guide him to fulfil that purpose. In his book, *The John Wesley Code*, author James Stuart claims that John Wesley's theology was centred in the word "compassion" as a guiding principle.

Compassion motivated John Wesley to engage in a mission for moral revolution and for social change. Stuart remarks, "For Wesley, compassion was a fundamental Christian way of relating to others. Faith necessarily required expression in compassion towards others where the suffering and struggle of others to be human invited one also to be human. This compassionate love was the theological foundation of the Methodist movements."

John Wesley established health clinics to provide care for the sick and infirmed, especially for the poor. He produced books with explanations of remedies and their effectiveness to restore life. Stuart states, "Wesley published in 1747 his *Primitive Physick* which contained over 900 remedies for most illnesses afflicting the poor." Methodist tradition emphasises the value of life and the priority to enhance and cherish it. If any person or organisation is working to undermine the value of life by their political or religious stance, especially regarding the spread of the Delta virus, it is counter to our Methodist tradition of compassion as our guiding principle. Like Jesus, we are accountable for the wellbeing of others.



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## The Search for Religious Authority

To the Editor,

An abundance of Christian leaders and denominations claim to be heaven's best spokesperson and a representative of the church most approved by God. Some claim authority by having been in direct conversation with God as a prophet. Others as having restored pure original Christianity in our day from their superior interpretation of the Bible, possessing new holy books, tracing lines of succession back to the 12 Apostles, or more faithful adherence to statements of faith written in the 16th and 17th centuries.

There is no universally accepted collection of religious truths or method of finding it. There are many ways of designating one institution or person as the paramount font of true doctrine and practice. There are at least nine grounds for asserting authority: leaders, prophets, personal experience with the divine, rational thinking, correct interpretation of the Scriptures, conscience, appointment by person previously in authority, election by the laity, long history of the same doctrine and practice, adopting the church of one's family and neighbours for the sake of peace and fitting in (community standards). And varying combinations of each. How can an individual Christian decide which is the most important consideration? There is no general rule, and Christianity has no supreme court to decide which is more important than another.

Difficult questions arise, beyond simple answers: How can authority be gained and increased? Can authority be delegated, limited or lost? Can church authority be

divided or shared, as in a secular federal union? Who can punish those who abuse their authority? Who today possesses the powers of Jesus that He did not specifically grant to the apostles? The answers to these questions, each in a different way, account for there being 30,000 Christian denominations, each claiming to possess the best and highest truth.

Thus, there is no universal agreement on the highest and best authority in Christianity, and there is no rule for singling one out as acceptable to all. This accounts for the phenomenon that one person researches the teachings of many denominations and chooses a particular one as the only true or truest, while another seeker makes the same study and joins a different denomination.

Instead of searching for a neutral and uncluttered authority that might never be found, a more practical approach is to accept the guidance of a church near enough to your home that you can attend and participate in readily. As well as geographical proximity, the church should provide opportunities to help others, support for your spiritual and moral growth, regular worship services, Sunday school and other Christian training, and personal meaning in its particular worship format (liturgy).

This is the situation in which you live and need to search for spiritual and moral guidance, rather than researching the doctrines and claims of thousands of Christian denominations.

**David W T Brattston (abridged)**  
Nova Scotia, Canada.

## HONEST TO GOD

Ian Harris

### John Shelby Spong: A Champion for Change in the Church

**There are those who think nothing in the church must change and there are those who know it has to. American Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong, who died on 12 September aged 90, was emphatically one of the latter.**

Many New Zealanders know that well. He visited four times between 1991 and 2001, speaking to appreciative audiences and stirring hostility among those who prefer not to be disturbed by new thinking.

Spong has long been in the forefront of such thinking but he didn't begin that way. Early influences in his North Carolina home were Presbyterian fundamentalism and high church Anglican fundamentalism, and he grew up absorbing all the prejudices of his time and place about blacks, women and homosexuals.

Driven, however, by a deepening understanding of Christian faith, an uncompromising intellectual rigour and a discipline of study from 6am to 8am every day, he became over time a champion of racial justice, women's equality and homosexual liberation - especially in the church.

Spong was acutely conscious of the huge expansion of human knowledge in recent times and the need for Christianity to take account of that if it is to be relevant to men and women of the 21st century. This led him to probe beyond interpretations cemented into traditional church life and find a way of understanding scripture, for example, that is in sync with the world we actually live in.

His motivation was to go deeper into the heart of the tradition in order to identify and affirm more appropriately its core. He was willing to explore beyond creedal formulas about God, the work of Christ, the church, prayer, worship: if they don't connect, they are not much use. Biblical literalism appalled him.

A living religion is in a dialogue between spiritual insight and new knowledge, he said. It is therefore always in flux and always evolving. Arrest the process and it slowly dies: "The heart cannot worship what the mind rejects".

Spong was prepared to follow the evidence wherever it led. He abhorred dishonesty and anything that stood in the way of expansion of life. A key to this was "Christpower", a term that summed up for him the sense of love,

forgiveness and expanded being, associated originally with Jesus. Christpower offers the ability to change, to grow and to embrace the radical insecurity of life as free, whole and mature persons, which is the essence of faith.

A major contribution was Spong's exposition of the Jewishness of Jesus'

life, reflected also in the gospels and Paul's letters. Early in his career it spurred him to reach out in dialogue with the local Jewish community. Breaking down barriers became a central theme.

The responsibility he felt as a leader - he was Bishop of Newark, New Jersey, from 1979 to 2000 - prompted him to share the insights of his studies more widely through a succession of books. He wrote 26 in all, introducing his theological hot potatoes with *A bishop rethinks the meaning of Scripture*, *A bishop rethinks the Virgin Birth*

*and the treatment of women by a male-dominated church*, and *A bishop rethinks human sexuality*.

Spong saw himself as struggling for a Christianity of integrity, love and equality. While many responded with warmth and gratitude, antagonism from the church's conservative wing gradually led to his disillusionment with its institutional workings.

"The church of my dreams and visions," he wrote, "the church I had glimpsed periodically, the church I loved, was being drowned in a sea of dated theological irrelevancy undergirded by biblical ignorance."

In his later years Spong's prime audience became those who were open to a new Christianity for a new world, an audience of "church hangers-on and dropouts, atheists and agnostics, anyone on a spiritual journey who is seeking meaning, integrity and God".

Always he knew how to ask the right faith questions. Inevitably, this stirred controversy. Anger: "Burning you at the stake would be too kind." And appreciation: "You have made it possible for me to remain in the church."

I honour Spong not for having all the answers for a church in transition but for his commitment to spurring it on that journey, mindful of what it's really about: "True religion is, at its core, nothing more or less than a call to live fully, to love wastefully and to be all that we can be. That is finally where life's meaning is found."

The fact that secular audiences could hear him gladly but many in the churches could not is worth reflecting on.



John Spong.



Ian Harris.



**YOUTH LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**  
**Ngā Rangatahi o Māramatanga**  
*Youth advancing religious diversity*

### OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUTH WITH AN INTEREST IN RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

The Religious Diversity Centre (RDC) is looking for young people aged 16 to 35, to join their Youth Leadership Council and foster appreciation and understanding of religious diversity in Aotearoa.

The two-year course involves a commitment of 1.5 hours every six weeks. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about other faiths, build connections, become an influential voice in the intrafaith and interfaith movement, and provide input into RDC initiatives.

Over the past six months, the RDC team has been consulting young people to create a space for rangatahi to be involved in their work. The Youth Leadership Council will work to tackle the challenges and opportunities - locally and globally - alongside other young people.

*For information or to apply, email [ylc@rdc.org.nz](mailto:ylc@rdc.org.nz).  
Applications close 9 October.*





# The InterChurch Bioethics Council

**Dr Rev Barbara Peddie is the Methodist representative on the Interchurch Bioethics Council. In this article she explains the role of the council.**

At every Conference there is a report from the ICBC. The report is 'considered', presented and accepted, along with its recommendations, however, I suspect that many Conference members have not read it and nor do they really know what the report is dealing with. The ICBC will celebrate its 20th birthday next year so it is timely to refresh Te Haahi's memories about why the ICBC exists and what its significance is to our members.

In 2000, the NZ government decided to set up an InterChurch Commission to explore the implications of genetic modification and decide what to do about it. It can come as a jolt these days to remember how new that concept of genetic modification was back then! The Commission was set up specifically to look at the Christian implications of this new development. Although there were, and are, committees that monitor ethics, none had a mandate to consider the spiritual implications of these new developments. The Commission finished its task in 2002, but some of the denominations decided that the new technologies still needed a voice to speak out on the spiritual issues raised.

The Commission was renamed the "InterChurch Bioethics Council" in 2002 and was given a broader brief to raise issues relevant to the cultural, ethical, spiritual and theological issues in the use of biotechnology in New Zealand. It was

genetic modification  
climate change  
organ donation  
transgenics  
beginning of life issues  
end of life issues  
genetic information  
cloning  
epigenetics  
reproductive technology  
stem cell research  
nanotechnology neuroscience

also asked to explore the consequences of new developments and to increase the knowledge and understanding of church members and the wider community, so as to enable and encourage people to make informed decisions and to take action on these issues. In these times of false information flying round the internet, it is more important than ever to encourage people to take time to make informed decisions.

The ICBC today is a unique cross-cultural body: one of the few ecumenical bodies currently active in our country. It is supported by the Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian denominations and has a good relationship with the Nathaniel Centre - its Roman Catholic counterpart. ICBC members, between them, have expertise and knowledge in science,

ethics, theology, medicine, education and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge). The term 'biotechnology' relates to biological, medical, environmental and agricultural technologies derived from science. This means that bioethics is an interdisciplinary category of ethics that provides a framework for policy and decision-making with regard to scientific research and resulting technologies, including future consequences, legal, political, commercial, theological and social aspects.

Over its lifetime, the ICBC has never had any shortage of issues to deal with. The challenge is to decide which should take priority each year! One of

the results of the speed of new biotechnological advances is that the law is always needing to catch up and so the ICBC makes submissions about proposed law changes. Last year New Zealanders were asked to vote on the End of Life Choice referendum and the Cannabis Reform referendum - for referenda it is especially important to get information out in the media.

In earlier years the ICBC has made responses to the Law Commission on issues relating in vitro fertilisation (IVF). Issues considered included: what happens to eggs and sperm that have been frozen for more than 10 years, how much information should children have about biological parents, or surrogate parents, and what should the parents

know. There is the question about how far we should go with information now available about the genetic makeup of embryos. There are issues about organ transplants and organ donation, and about how long someone should be on life support. There have been proposals about genetic modification in the horticulture industry. Most recently there has been Covid-19. In the coming months the ICBC will be focusing on climate change. There is never any shortage of important issues.

The ICBC supports the Centre for Science and Citizenship (CSC, [www.nzcs.org](http://www.nzcs.org)), initially piloted as the Bioethics Roadshow. The CSC's enQuiring minds student workshops involve several thousand intermediate and secondary students each year in interactive workshops where the young people can think seriously about contemporary ethical issues while enjoying lively debate and discussion. The ICBC also offers financial assistance for teachers and youth workers from faith-based schools to attend professional development seminars run by CSC in collaboration with the Nathaniel Centre.

For members of our congregations, the most important part of our work will be found on our website, which is continually updated and includes a list of the current ICBC members. Every congregation should include [www.interchurchbioethics.org.nz](http://www.interchurchbioethics.org.nz) as a resource. You can also find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/InterChurchBioethicsCouncil](https://www.facebook.com/InterChurchBioethicsCouncil).

In closing, ICBC asks all ministry units within our supporting denominations to undertake the "EcoChurch" survey developed by A Roche ([www./ecochurch.org.nz](http://www./ecochurch.org.nz)) and choose one action point from each area to complete over the coming year.

## C A R I N G F O R O U R P E O P L E

# Siaola - Masters of the Quick Response

**When the Prime Minister announced the imminent alert level 4 lockdown on 17 August, Kathleen Tuai-Ta'ufo'ou, Director of Siaola Vahefonua Tonga Methodist Mission, and her team hit the ground running to create a community food bank hub at the Ellerslie Tongan Methodist Church, Moia Mei-He Eiki. The team is highly efficient at providing bulk food at short notice for local community families in need. The all-out effort in August is the fourth time they have swung into action.**



Food parcels include many staple items.

With financial support from the Ministry of Social Development, Kathleen and her team of 45 worked incredibly long hours during Auckland's lockdown purchasing, packaging and distributing food parcels:

an average of 400 parcels per week. Siaola works in an interfaith collaboration with many other churches in the area. Along with preparing parcels and making

contactless deliveries in PPE gear, members of the team work behind the scenes liaising with families and other church leaders to identify areas of need, collating data and providing statistics that assist in directing resources in response to the community needs.

The statistics are impressive. "In four weeks we have worked with 2000 families, 10,000 people. 87 percent of the families are Tongan with Samoan and Māori making up the rest. Typically the families are big: 80 percent have between 9 - 13 people living in a household, including parents, their children, their partners and the grandchildren," Kathleen says.

As well as assisting with food parcels, Siaola have been encouraging families to get vaccinated. Based on the success of supporting the MMT Malu'i Ma'a Tonga vaccination clinic together with groups such as The Fono, the Tongan Health Society- Langimalie and the Takanga 'e Kau Taki Lotu - 3,827 Tongans queued up for their jab over three days. SIAOLA is also supporting the Vahefonua Tonga Youth "Gotcha Shots Toks?" Pop Up vaccination hub and the Northshore Tongan Church Leaders Pop Up Vaccination hub.





# Always Be Kind

Trudy Downes

The Nephew (an apprentice electrician) sent me this message that his mate received from his employers. I was gobsmacked

← [Icons: Download, Delete, Email, More] →

Hi everyone

Things have changed in the last 24 hours in that it appears all our clients are now saying if you have no covid-19 vaccine, you can't be on site. They are citing Health & Safety regulations due to being legally obliged to keep their customers and staff safe. See example letter attached.

Therefore, we have no choice but to implement the same policy of no vaccine, no work, on all our clients' premises as well as our own.

There are a few of you not yet vaccinated which means unfortunately you will need to stand down on no pay until such time as we can find work for you somewhere that does not require vaccinated only people on site.

At the moment we have no such sites to send you to. If you need to use your accrued holiday pay, if you have any, that will be acceptable.

If there is a medical reason that you can't be vaccinated, please provide a letter from your GP or health specialist explaining the reason. There is a chance you may be allowed on site if you have a good medical reason. We can only try on your behalf.

Please note you will need to show proof of your vaccination to site managers. It is not our

employer has no work for you. Furthermore, an employer cannot make you take annual leave unless it is agreed two weeks earlier.

If vaccination is a condition of employment that was not previously in your employment contract, then it needs to be agreed to for it to become part of your contract.

These points don't even touch on the Human Rights aspect of the invasion of privacy into your medical conditions or the status of your vaccination.

Most importantly to me, and the saddest aspect of this message, is that it is a terrible way to treat people who work for you. Conveying that decision via email without the decency of having a discussion around it is beyond civilized words for me to describe.

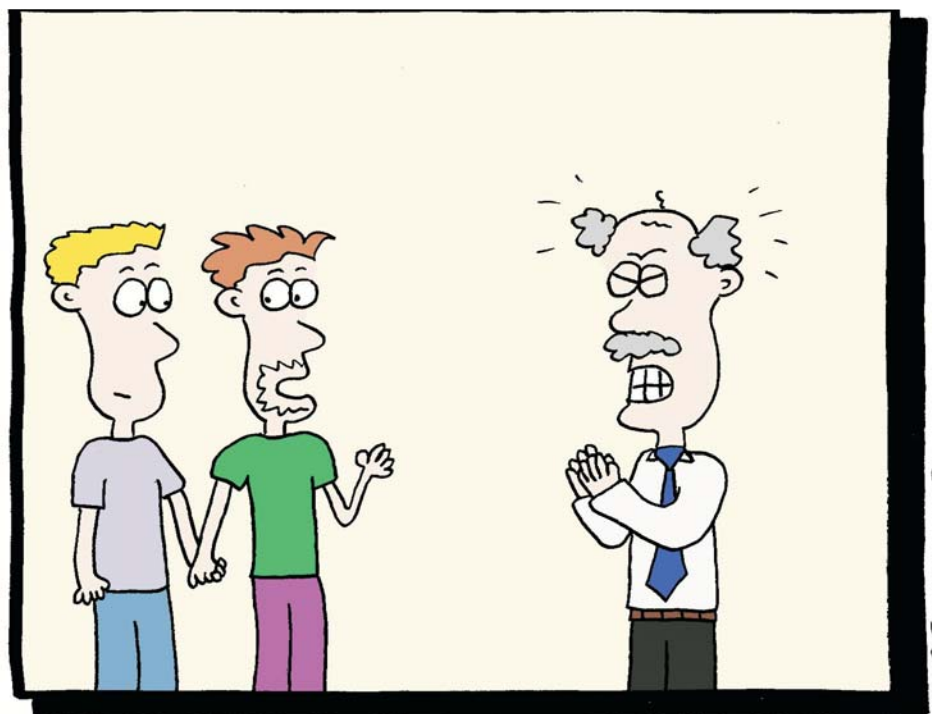
There are issues regarding the "Are you vaccinated?" question that people should stop and think about.

Somebody could be vaccinated but due to an underlying condition the vaccine won't work well for them. According to the employer's message, this person would still be able to work even though they pose the same risk as if they were unvaccinated.

**Firstly, it is illegal. If you have an employment contract for fixed hours you cannot be stood down with no pay if your**

If someone has an underlying condition meaning they can't be vaccinated, are they then being made redundant?

If you hadn't already booked your vaccination and received this message



**"We should let Harold know that God loves him just the way he is ... so he doesn't have to try and pray the grey away."**

from the employer you would be looking at a potential stand down period until such time as you can get the vaccine. How are you and your whanau supposed to survive in that time? Who is supporting you?

The employer offered no support to assist anyone to get vaccinated, nor did the employer ask for feedback or say that they were discussing the issues with their clients.

Do you feel incensed about the situation? Do you feel outraged that these apprentices are being taken advantage of?

Welcome to the world of misinformation. I have no doubt that the message is real, however I was only sent an extract. For all I know that employer may have addressed all the issues of concern to me.

It does however, raise the question, "Are we within the Church being kind to each other when it comes to vaccinations?" When NZ reaches a 90 percent vaccination rate, how kind will you be to unvaccinated people who wish to participate in public worship with you?

If you try to insist on finding out

someone's vaccination status are you also going to confirm if they have had a recent prostate check or mammogram? After all, more people in NZ have died from cancer than have died from Covid-19.

How are you supporting people to be vaccinated and removing the barriers that might stop them from getting there?

Sinoti Samoa have been encouraging vaccinations by providing free shuttles to get people to and from vaccination centres. Vahefonua Tonga have organised mass vaccination events. Mum and dad's marae offered a vaccine, with a cup of tea, a biscuit and a kōrero.

Key messages are still relevant whether you are vaccinated or not:

- Stay home if you are unwell
- Wash your hands frequently
- Wear a face mask
- Wash your hands again.

We are a team of 5 million. Be kind.

Ko te mea nunui, ko te aroha The most important thing is love.



## Obstetric Fistula is a devastating and debilitating health condition

**Globally, for every mother who receives life-changing fistula surgery, at least 50 go without.**

After a traumatic childbirth Maimunat, from Nigeria, suffered the loss of her dignity because of obstetric fistula. With a tear in her birth canal, the fistula allowed bodily waste to escape uncontrollably, causing her to smell. She became depressed and isolated. Her daily life was unbearable. Adding to her misery, Maimunat and her husband could never afford to pay for her surgery and post-surgical care. All hope was lost.

But thanks to generous people like you, Maimunat was healed from decades of shame and heartbreak. She was found by a **cbm**-funded health care worker and soon after received life-changing fistula surgery at a **cbm**-funded hospital.

There are many mothers like Maimunat suffering decades of daily misery, shame and humiliation, but your generosity can set them free from obstetric fistula!

Today, please help restore hope and dignity to sick, heartbroken and rejected young mothers like Maimunat.

**cbm**  
christian blind mission

[www.cbmnz.org.nz](http://www.cbmnz.org.nz)  
0800 77 22 64





# Protecting Creation

Rev Andrew Howley, Minister at Alexandra Union Parish and co-chair of UCANZ.

**A great display of ecumenism and church unity more than likely went unnoticed by both the church and the mainstream media.**

At the start of this month a joint message for the protection of creation was released. Significantly, it was co-authored by Pope Francis of the Roman Catholic Church, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, Bartholomew 1 of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury of the Church of England. They write because our common home is under threat.

"Caring for God's creation is a spiritual commission requiring a response of commitment. This is a critical moment. Our children's future and the future of our common home depend on it."

Sadly, the church is known more for its division than its unity. Except perhaps in times of crisis. A number of our cooperating ventures arose out of crisis



and a belief that they were stronger working together. Some arose from the hoped-for Church Union movement. Are we as churches able to work together and express unity not just when things threaten us but also when we are experiencing the better times? We need to remember that it is Christ's call that we are to bring God's kingdom to earth through our unity.

The call to unity, but specifically to caring for creation, our shared home is not new. In the 1970s, the World Council of Churches began to recognise the connections between justice, peace, and



ecological sustainability. At the Vancouver Assembly in 1983, the WCC encouraged member churches to publicly commit to addressing environmental concerns as part of a common effort to promote Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation. The Methodist Church's mission statement includes "to care for creation". The Presbyterian Church has as one of its five faces of mission as "making Jesus Christ known through caring for God's creation". Therefore, we as God's church should be doing more collectively in ensuring the integrity of creation.

We all should be committed to praying for the United Nations Climate Change Conference being held in Glasgow from 1-12 November. Representatives of our world's nations are to commit to targets for 2030, track progress on humanity's attempt to achieve a less than 1.5 degree temperature rise on earth, and to lay foundations of a sustainable financial system. To solve the world's climate crisis will take commitment and unity of the entire world. No mean task but one that we as the church can and should be able to model.

## A fresh look at the Letter to the Hebrews

Joy Kingsbury-Aitken

**In October, the lectionary works through a series of readings from the Letter to the Hebrews. This book is an enigma. While called a letter, it doesn't follow the conventions of first century letter writing by beginning with the author identifying themselves and their intended audience, and by pronouncing the obligatory blessing.**

Some scholars suggest that *Hebrews* is not a letter but a sermon. If so, *Hebrews* begs the question about the length of sermons in the early church. The author claims to have written "briefly" (Heb. 13:22)! After a concluding benediction, there is an addendum of personal greetings and news that Timothy has been released from prison. This supported the now widely rejected belief that the author was Timothy's mentor, the apostle Paul.

Who were the *Hebrews*? They were assumed to be Jews because the author anticipates a high level of familiarity with the Torah and the Psalms. However, many Gentiles attended synagogue services where they heard the Torah and Psalms read and explained every Sabbath (cf. Acts 15:21). These Gentile God-fearers were receptive to Paul's teaching that did not require them to convert to Judaism. The *Hebrews* were probably an ethnically mixed congregation, meaning we should discard the idea that *Hebrews* is an exhortation to Jewish Christians to remain faithful to Christ and not return to the synagogue. Nothing within *Hebrews* indicates that



this was what concerned the author. Rather *Hebrews* is an exposition of how Jesus fulfils all that the Mosaic covenant points to and prepares for.

*Hebrews* assumes familiarity with Leviticus, a book about holiness which modern Christians seldom read. Unlike flawed human high priests, Jesus is the

perfect mediator serving in the heavenly temple of which the wilderness tabernacle was a replica. He fulfils the rituals of the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16), by being both the sinless high priest who officiates and the sinless sacrifice that purifies. As Jesus was not a Levite he must belong to a priestly order predating the Aaronic one, the existence of which our author finds indicated by the Psalmist who compares the Davidic king to the priest-king Melchizedek to whom Abraham paid tithes (Ps. 110:4, Gen. 14:17-20). At his enthronement a Jewish king was proclaimed to have that day been "begotten" as a son of God (Ps. 2:7). *Hebrews* tells us that Jesus is the true regal Son of God, who by being begotten not created is even superior to the angels, also called "sons" of God in scripture (e.g. Job 1:6; 2:1; 38:7). The good news is that Jesus makes it possible for us to become children of God so that "the one who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one Father" (Heb. 2:11).

Historically Christianity has used *Hebrews* to justify an attitude of superiority over Judaism. This wonderful book illustrates the truth that God's on-going revelation does not abolish what has gone before but builds upon it. Those who read *Hebrews* in conjunction with the Torah and Psalms will be richly rewarded.

## Recovering the Art Form Called Conversation.

Rev Dr Mary Caygill

**As part of the new daily rhythm of being at Covid level 4 for an extended period living and working in Auckland, I have become acquainted again with a very important sheet of paper pinned above my desk, headed Daily Quarantine Questions. There are six questions listed: 1. What am I grateful for today? 2. Who am I checking in on or connecting with today? 3. What expectations of "normal" am I letting go of today? 4. How am I getting outside today? 5. How am I moving my body today? 6. What beauty am I creating, cultivating or inviting in today? I confess that some days I do better than others in fulfilling all six questions and in a manner that leads to a depth of enrichment rather than a task that I feel compelled to achieve.**

I have come to value with a deep richness my daily evening discipline of being in conversation with one of my dearest friends and rotating around connecting with siblings in other parts of the country. I'm not a great conversationalist on the telephone or through various forms of social media, given my more dominant introverted personality but these regular daily times set aside for the singular purpose of having conversation in order to maintain connection have proved to be a blessing. They have also caused me to reflect on what I see as the lost art form of engaging in conversation.

To this end, I have found myself adding to my daily reading a recently published book by C. Christopher Smith *How the Body of Christ Talks: Recovering the Practice of Conversation*. Smith claims that in the highly mobile, highly charged, rapidly paced, social and political environment we find ourselves immersed within, we are losing the capacity to converse well with others, especially with those whose backgrounds and points of view differ from our own. He explores why conversation has become such a challenge in this 21st century and how we might, within our respective church and local communities, revitalise conversation as a spiritual practice. In community, we learn what it means to belong to others and to a story that is bigger than ourselves.

Over the years I have come to understand the very nature of pastoral care as an intentional act of being in conversation, the intent being nothing less than holding and locating our own human stories with the past, present and future sacred story of God. Conversation becomes an act of sacred care. To share in pastoral conversation is an extraordinary gift. We are invited into the most intimate spaces where people seek to have conversation about the very nature of their being human. "Let me see your face, let me hear your voice" – says one lover to the other in the wisdom literature of The Song of Solomon. In essence, and as sacred gift, the very nature of conversation at heart is to be so present as to see each other's face and to hear each other's voices, for when people are seen and heard, they find new and life-shaping speech.

It must not only be in the seeming 'hothouse' of enforced level 4 lockdown living whereby I seek to give focused time and presence to the art of conversation but rather to find the way as the author CC Smith suggests, to revitalise conversation as nothing less than sacred pastoral conversation.



# The Administration of Justice during a State of Emergency

Ruby Manukia-Schaumkel, Legal Advisor

**A critical question during lockdown and any state of emergency has been how does the government decide whether a state of emergency exists? In any statutory framework of rules, the law governs the operation of government. Constitutional law defines the competences of government institutions. Administrative law controls their everyday operation, and individual rights delineate the outer limits of their powers. Governance must be exercised through rules and not simply through threats or use of force.**

'The rule of law' is supposed to protect persons by subjecting governmental power to the requirements of legal rules and principles, and the supervision of legal institutions. However, circumstances of emergency challenge the law's control over government action. The need for a decisive response



challenges constitutional structures, favouring swift executive action over slower legislative processes. The extraordinary character of the emergency calls into question the adequacy of the usual legal restrictions on administrative power and the ordinary balance between the empowerment of government and the protection of individual rights.

In NZ an epidemic notice was issued by the prime minister under section 5 of the Epidemic Preparedness Act 2006. A state of national emergency was declared under section 66 of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, and the Covid-19 Public Health Response Act 2020 was enacted. A state of emergency can challenge the law and its protections.

This happened for the MCNZ when a recommendation for conference to move to an online zoom format was affirmed. A review of the MCNZ law and the legality of an online conference was to ensure that there were no impediments of any constitutional matters on the rights and privileges of the Ministry or Laity. These are important challenges to the law, justified as exceptions to the rule of law under exceptional circumstances. It is an ideal of legality that goes beyond mere conformity to the rules or status quo because of barring situations.

## Exceptions to the rule of law governed by responses to emergency

Legal rules, including those found in statutes, regulations and court decisions, are central to the ordinary operation of modern law. Even in ordinary times, however, legal rules do not fully determine governmental action or judicial decision making. Administrative agencies and courts often employ the exercise of discretion, with varying degrees of constraint. Discretion is inevitable and often a valuable part of the life of the law, especially when there is a state of national emergency. Deviation from the rule of law is granted for narrow and limited use under exigent circumstances only, when the existence of rules and their ability to guide behaviour are prominent features of ordinary legality. Thus, due to the demands of justice or exigency, some balance between the rule of law and discretion is required. Any balance will face challenges of that time because emergencies are often unpredictable but we can be prepared through the experience of the past and prediction of the future.

## New Zealand's current position in the rule of law

NZ has a rich history of an unwritten constitution following in the Westminster tradition. However, there is increasing

discussion about the need for a written constitution as our nation develops and matures, especially considering states of emergencies. Any drafting process for a durable constitution should be able to survive situations of turmoil. Most constitutions internationally have provisions that allow for extraordinary powers to be granted, and some basic rights to be derogated from, in situations of emergency, for the public order to be restored as soon as possible.

There are some situations where the normal separation of powers and legal process is not capable of delivering a timely response to an imminent threat to the nation, or the required response requires a temporary departure from legal norms. Any written constitution for New Zealand should have a provision for such emergency measures for the constitution to remain relevant in times of turmoil. Emergency provisions often allow the executive to take extreme measures with fewer, if any, checks from the other branches of government. Although this helps to facilitate a timely response, this power is open to potential abuse. Therefore, it is important that any provision inserted into a constitution for New Zealand is drafted in a manner that limits any potential for abuse, whilst remaining sufficiently wide in scope for necessary actions to be taken when there is an emergency.

METHODIST ALLIANCE

## Connections & Connexion

Carol Barron, Methodist Alliance National Coordinator

**Social connection is a fundamental human need. We are hard-wired to be social and interact with each other, to live in families/whānau and communities that interact with each other.**

As Brene Brown puts it, "A deep sense of love and belonging is an irresistible need of all people. We are biologically, cognitively, physically and spiritually wired to love, to be loved and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don't function as we were meant to. We break. We fall apart. We numb. We ache. We hurt others. We get sick."

That feeling of social connectedness, of belonging, of acceptance, of love, of inclusion has never felt so essential for us than during lockdown when we have restrictions on how we can safely interact with others. And that is why we find lockdown so hard.

It is our strong supportive social connections that sustain and improve our quality of life, boost our mental health and contribute to our wellbeing. Being understood, accepted and connected to others is so important that it is a significant health determinant. People in relationships of high trust share resources and look after each other. People with strong friendships and social supports increasingly report feelings of belonging, purpose, happiness, reduced levels of stress, improved self-worth and confidence. And of course the opposite is true - people with insufficient perceived social support are the most likely to suffer mental health disorders including anxiety and depression. Some research has also shown that social connections help us to

live longer. Research has also shown that people of faith live significantly longer too - so if it's a long life what you're after, going to church may be the answer to your prayers.

Connexionalism is at the heart of being Methodist and all Methodist organisations. It is fundamental to how we understand the Church and how we relate to each other. The essence of being connexional is the sense of belonging, mutuality and interdependence. It is acknowledging that we are stronger and better when we are connected in a real way - sharing our knowledge, experience, skills, resources and supporting each other to be the best we can be. Our connexionalism is our greatest strength. It takes away many barriers other churches have when trying to respond collectively to a national issue. Our connexionalism gives us an advantage, as we are all in the same waka together - he waka eke noa. Our structure makes us nimble and agile so we can respond quickly to need and demand in our society when we all work together.

One of Weteriana's social principles is, "to work for justice for any who are oppressed in Aotearoa New Zealand, keeping in mind the implications of the Treaty of Waitangi. To share resources with the poor and disadvantaged in Aotearoa New Zealand and beyond." This is our connexionalism and our social connectedness in action.

This principle is our call to action, much like the late Rev Ruawai Rakena's message to Conference in 1975 of Kāore mā te waha engari mā te ringa - don't tell me, show me" provides a framework for how our members work. Rev Rakena said, "Far more often than not we have remained content merely to tell people we care, or that God cares for them, rather than getting down to the business of really showing them we care, and that in

and through us, God cares too. To tell people they matter is one thing; to actually show them they do is quite another and, of course, is far more in keeping with Gospel living."

All our Missions grew out of small parishes that were working for justice for the oppressed and sharing their resources with the poor and disadvantaged. Our Connexionalism means that we are ALL charged to do this. As Methodists, as Weteriana, we have a responsibility to show the poor, the disadvantaged, the oppressed, the marginalised, the excluded, that we care and that we are taking positive action to make their life better.

As Methodists we have social justice in

our DNA, we are generous and know how to share our resources. We are working collectively and ecumenically. We know we are living in times of great change where the housing crisis means that our most vulnerable people are living in unsafe environments. We are building intentional communities and supporting them to thrive by using our land, our skills and our experience to care for them.

Our connectedness and connexionalism gives us the courage to get out of our comfort zone and to take action - as we can achieve great things together. This is when great things can happen and how we show others we care. We all have a part to play in responding to the housing crisis and the most vulnerable in our communities.



**If your parish is engaged in community or social service work, you should join the Methodist Alliance.**

**The Alliance supports the work of its members by leveraging collective skills and experience, providing resources and information, and raising the profile of the work you do.**

If you would like to join the Alliance please contact the National Coordinator Carol Barron:

03 375 0512 • 027 561 9164  
Carol@MethodistAlliance.org.nz  
PO Box 5416, Papanui, Christchurch 8542  
[methodist.org.nz/methodist\\_alliance](https://methodist.org.nz/methodist_alliance)



**Preface:****Keita Hotere**

Upholding of our membership in prayer throughout the nationwide lockdown has been important for everyone. The following reflection on 1 Peter 1:6-7 and inoi whakamutunga concluding prayer comes from Kaikarakia Shirley Rivers, a longstanding member of our Waikato Rohe. Shirley has been one of the many Methodist faces who has contributed to the daily evening prayers. In these extracts taken from her evening prayer she helps us to see the moments when we experience the joys and wonder in life during times of uncertainty. Being present to the power of encounter lifts and restores our faith in one another, and also reveals the unmasked beauty of our own vulnerabilities in challenging situations.

**Inoi mō te ahiahi pō: Shirley Rivers**

**The passage 1 Peter 1:6-7 acknowledges that we will have trials in our life, and that our faith will be tested. We are currently experiencing the challenges of Covid. Once again, we are being tested. However, we have experienced this before. Our faith supported us then and will support us again.**

Our government has been promoting vaccination for all as a strategy to protect us against the serious consequences of this new Delta variant of Covid. Many people in our country are vulnerable, as they do not have the immune system to fight this virus. Others live with challenging health conditions and require additional support to fight this virus.

In making the decision on whether or not to be vaccinated, it helps to be informed and to know what to expect. When I

booked my first vaccination, I was apprehensive and not fully committed.

After completing the first processing interview, checking my name and contact details and receiving a card that tracked my injections, I was asked to sit down in a special area. There were no chairs left, however a young couple invited me to sit in the chair occupied by the woman. Her partner was standing by her as there were no other available chairs. The young woman then asked me, was this my first or second injection. I told her it was my first and she replied it was their second and spent some time reassuring me that I would be fine.

I was overwhelmed by her compassion and sensitivity. Here was a complete stranger, someone very young, with such generosity of spirit. She was patient with me, calm and thoughtful in her words and manner. I was reminded of the message from our Prime Minister to 'be kind'. To

experience such kindness at a time of 'trial' restored my faith - not my faith in God - in people.

When we met again in the waiting area after receiving our injections, she asked me if I was alright. To have this stranger provide genuine compassion and care was a gift.

So be truly glad as proclaimed in 1 Peter 1 vs 6. There is joy ahead, even though you must endure trials for a time. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. This chance meeting gave me faith that we can overcome Covid with compassion, genuine care and kindness for one another.

**Inoi Whakamutunga**

Gracious and loving God, as we come together in your name, in these times of distress, restore in us the faith to do your work. Open up in us a generosity of spirit, a compassion for others, strength to reach out a helping hand, to give words of encouragement, words of reassurance to those in need. Help us to develop a loving and

caring presence for others, in these challenging times. Show us how to act in ways that demonstrate a genuine regard for others, to live and express our faith in you.

Thank you, Lord, for the gifts you have provided, for your care and protection. Look after those people and their families who are living with Covid, help them in their recovery. Care for all the essential workers who put themselves at risk every day to provide for our needs. Support the community of Auckland who bear the hardship of being the community that is most at risk.

We pray for the family in Auckland who recently lost a loved one to Covid. We ask that you look after the families, the communities overseas who are still living daily with the Delta variant of Covid, those families who are infected, in distress and those who have lost loved ones.

Support us through these challenging times. In Jesus name we pray Amine.

## O U R P E O P L E

**A Journey of Faith and Learning**

**Dr Richard Davis, Director of the Centre for Faith in Public Life at Wesley House, Cambridge, was baptised at the Waiwhetu Methodist Church (now Waiwhetu Uniting Church) in Lower Hutt, where his parents Arthur and Pam still worship. We ask Richard to share his faith and career journey that has spanned many years, countries and centres of learning.**

**Q Tell us about your upbringing and how that impacted your career choices and faith journey?**

I was brought up in a Methodist home where you were expected to go to church in your Sunday best. I enjoyed youth group and Methodist Youth Conferences. I was also active in the Student Christian Movement in Otago and Wellington, which was formative in my realising the possibilities of intelligent Christianity. While doing my MA at Victoria University, Wellington I was a Methodist appointee to the Joint Methodist-Presbyterian Public Questions Committee and then became its Research Executive Officer. This was a great job but I felt that I needed to know more about the church and Christian theology so I enrolled for some theology papers through the University of Otago. By this stage I was attending St Andrew's on the Terrace, Wellington. Becoming a Presbyterian made me eligible for a Council of World Mission PhD Scholarship.

**Q Schooling and study beyond?**

I was a third generation student at Hutt Valley High School. I wasn't good at English and focused instead on the sciences. It is amazing to me that I now read and write for a living after only just passing School Certificate English. My first degree was business studies but my

career in that area faltered with two redundancies from government agencies and my not finding that work very satisfying. After some travel, I returned to university and pursued religious studies, political philosophy and then theology, finishing up with a PhD in public theology from the University of Edinburgh. That was a tough journey but very worthwhile in the end.

**Q You spent six years at Pacific Theological College, Suva, Fiji teaching theology and ethics. Did the Pasifika students differ from colleagues and counterparts in more urban /European locations?**

I loved my students at Pacific Theological College. With students from so many places and cultures from across the Pacific, I learned something new from them in every class. PTC students are generally older than elsewhere and they are usually ordained and married, which means that they have to balance family and church commitments with study. A big difference with other students I have taught was that because they were predominantly church placed students, they were guaranteed a job at the end of their studies, either in the church or teaching. One unfortunate difference with students in New Zealand is that Pacific students have a lower life expectancy. Sadly, I have had two of my students die since they graduated. This is a great inequality and injustice.

**Q What does your working week look like?**

Currently my time is divided between supervising PhD students, who are mostly in Africa, and my work in public theology that is more UK-based. Through a partnership with Africa University and Wesley House, I have five PhD students from United Methodist Churches across Africa, Liberia, Mozambique, Kenya and Zimbabwe. This is an amazing opportunity to contribute to the

development of the church in Africa and learn about new places. When Covid-19 restrictions are reduced, I will travel to Zimbabwe for face-to-face training of this cohort of students.

I direct the Centre for Faith in Public Life at Wesley House, Cambridge. I have been busy getting this established on a firm footing as a global hub for Methodist public theology. We recently held a series of inaugural webinars on public theology for the new normal and climate change. We are actively recruiting Methodist students and sabbatical visitors to come and work with us on public issues from a theological perspective.

**Q Life beyond lecturing?**

Outside of work our activities have been curtailed due to lockdown but so far my wife Ruby and I have enjoyed exploring Cambridgeshire by train and foot. It's a great place for walking with lots of green spaces nearby although I miss mountains.

**Q Are you still engaged in academic study?**

I'm not doing any further formal study but I am always learning. I do have study to finish off if I ever get the chance. When I was working for the Church, I pursued a Certificate in Not-for Profit Management at UNITEC. This was great training and I wouldn't mind finishing that sometime. Now that I am living in Europe again, I might try to improve my terrible French.

**Q What motivated you to leave the comparative safety of Fiji for the Covid ravaged UK? (How the tables have turned in the interim – as the UK looks to engage strategies of learning to live with the pandemic, Fiji is battling a rising death rate).**

We couldn't predict what would happen with Covid. Moving continents during a global pandemic was challenging but



Richard Davis.

doable. As pleased as we are not to be in Fiji during the current outbreak of Covid-19, we keep Fijians in our prayers. It is good to see the New Zealand government assist Fiji. Maybe after things improve, the New Zealand government can ask the Fijian government about the ongoing human rights abuses and lack of democracy in Fiji.

The big challenge for me now is being able to return home to see family and friends. New Zealand's MIQ system makes it very difficult and expensive to return. Not every Kiwi abroad is living the high life and can easily afford to return home. If we are not careful soon only the rich will be able to move around freely.

The framing of the New Zealand government is that Kiwis abroad are either stuck offshore or wanting to come home to NZ. This is not true. I want, at some point, to be able to plan to visit family in NZ and then return to the UK. I've said repeatedly that if you seek to eliminate the virus, you will soon start to eliminate people and I think New Zealand is at serious risk of doing that (by limiting our citizenship and creating xenophobia toward those outside the country).





## NZMWF OCTOBER CONVENTION GOING ONLINE

# A New Vision for a Sustainable Future

*Siniva Vaitohi, President  
NZMWF*

**As we continue to journey through this Covid-19 time of lockdown and restrictions, vaccination and immunisation, we are counting down the remaining days before our online NZMWF Convention 2021 being held on Friday 15 and Saturday 16 October.**

The theme for the Convention is "A New Vision for a Sustainable Future" (Revelation 21:1-5 and 22:1-5) from the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women. This theme coincides with the UN Sustainable Development Goals 13, 14 and 15 allocated to the NZMWF to raise awareness of the devastating effect of global warming from the 2018 South Pacific Area (SPA) Seminar held in Fiji. The WFMUCW is committed to working for the United Nation's SDGs. Resource material is prepared annually and placed on their website.

We will also celebrate the achievement of our 2019-2021 goals. We thank all our members throughout the country for their care and support of each other in this challenging time and for how they have put into action our themes:

- Proclaiming Life and Hope - for



women and children (2019-2021)

- To Know Christ and to Make Him Known (ongoing)
- A New Vision for a Sustainable Future (Convention 2021).

These themes all aim at uniting members in prayer, fellowship and service to support the work of the Methodist and Uniting churches, encouraging them to make a Christian witness of life and hope for women on a worldwide mission. They have become a reality

through newsletters, Touchstones and e-Messengers. Members have been encouraged to share their faith stories proclaiming life and hope in Knowing Christ and Making Him Known.

### The Online MWF Convention

Changes to the traditional four-day Convention programme are based on what the National Executive considered 'doable' to suit the situation and the uncertainty of further interruptions beyond our control. The programme will run over two days and will include reports, guest speaker presentations and special services.

### Registration is free

However all Convention members and participants need to register to join. The free registration provides an excellent opportunity for those who are thinking of supporting the MWF vision and

In closing, I leave you with an overview of two MWF themes that we have focused on in previous communications:

1) Knowing Christ and Making Him Known is like longing, moreover trying to reflect Jesus in all that we say and do. It is essential to enjoy a personal relationship with Christ and when we do, we grow from strength to strength in greater depth. As Paul said in Galatian 2:20, "It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me." Knowing Christ and making him known also comes with the will to destroy our ego and crucify our selfish nature to cultivate Christ's loving nature.

2) Proclaiming Life and Hope for Women and Children is a mission of sharing God's love, grace and movement in our lives through His saving grace and actions. The life of Jesus and the hope we have for Jesus is not just a story in the Bible. It is the story of our lives and what brings us to life. We are simply sharing with women and children how God works in our lives which means we share the story that shapes our individual journey and life story. For example: (i) when we show Christ through our daily work and lives, that expresses thanks to the loving God and care for the common good; (ii) when we invite others to the church where Christ is

proclaimed; (iii) when we confess in worship our faith through words and songs; and (iv) when we offer encouragement to friends and others who are ill or in need.

Friday 15 October	Day one	
10:00am – 12:00pm	Session 1	Opening Service, Introduction, Acknowledgement, District Representation & Participants, Reports
1:00pm – 3:00pm	Session 2	Guest Speaker, Financials, Reports
4:00pm – 6:00pm	Session 3	Special Project Presentations 2020-2021 2021 – 2022 Special Projects
Saturday 16 October	Day two	
6:30am – 8:00am	Pre-Session	Prayer Breakfast hosted by the MWF Young Women
9:00am – 10:30am	Session 4	Guest Speaker & Reports
11:00am – 12:30pm	Session 5	Reports / Remits / Recommendations
1:00pm – 3:00pm	Session 6	Remits / Recommendations / Tributes / National Exec Committee
4:00pm – 6:00pm	Final Session	Closing Service, Induction of Incoming President & Committee (Handover at the conclusion of the programme)

## cbm changing mothers' lives in Nigeria

**Dr Murray Sheard, Chief Executive Officer of cbm New Zealand, has worked in international development for over 15 years. He reports on an initiative that is changing women's lives in Nigeria.**

Obstetric fistula occurs during birthing when a hole (or fistula) develops in the birth canal, causing urine and faeces to leak uncontrollably.

The main contributors to obstetric fistula in developing countries are extreme poverty, the low status of women and girls, and the under-resourced health system. Malnutrition also contributes to stunting, when the female skeleton does not fully mature, leading to birthing difficulties like fistula.

An estimated 2 million young women live with untreated obstetric fistula in the developing world, and according to the WHO, between 50,000 to 100,000 women worldwide develop obstetric fistula annually. Globally, for every woman who receives treatment, at least 50 women go without.

Women living with fistula are often excluded from daily activities, their husbands may leave them, and many are pushed out of their village because of



Murray Sheard.

their incontinence. They become isolated, stigmatised, and are often severed of all means of livelihood. Many women live with the condition for decades, unable to access vital medical intervention that can transform their lives. The consequences impact the entire family, devastating the lives of its victims and lead to extreme socio-economic deprivation.



Through the generosity of cbm supporters, Maimunat (left) received free life-changing fistula surgery. She is with Victoria, from cbm-partner hospital SFHF.

Nigeria is placed among the top 10 most dangerous places for a woman to give birth and accounts for 40 percent of fistula cases worldwide - the highest of any country globally. Women endure the scourge of fistula for life, largely due to the lack of medical care during labour.

cbm, also known as Christian Blind Mission, is an international Christian

development organisation, whose mission includes delivering life-changing surgeries to those disadvantaged by poverty and disability. cbm-funded partner hospitals can provide corrective surgical repair for women who experience obstetric fistula, free of charge.

To find out more about our work, visit [www.cbmnz.org.nz](http://www.cbmnz.org.nz).





## C O N C E R N I N G F A I T H

A bi-monthly column exploring questions concerning faith issues.



## Ask Auntie

Auntie welcomes your queries. No concern is too small, whether it is an opinion, advice or information that

you are seeking.

Please email the editor with your questions. We respect your privacy.

You are welcome to choose a pen name for anonymity.

Dear Auntie,

**How can I be faithful to my culture and to Christianity when they teach different things about how the world began? Rahera**

Dear Rahera,

When answers can't be found, humans seek answers through stories. Persons of all ethnicities have wondered how they came to be here and all cultures have stories about how the world came into being. Most of these stories were passed down and reshaped by countless generations before the invention of writing. Creation stories, along with all god stories, were all developed by humans.

Most ancient cultures concluded the earth nourished life and saw the Earth as Mother. The ancients also recognised powers that controlled the earth and thought of these unseen forces as male sky gods. Folklore and mythology carry the deep truths of particular cultures.

The Hebrew stories of creation were influenced by Babylonian myths. Adam and Eve are sacred to Jews and Christians as the stories of Papat\_nuku (the Earth Mother) and Ranginui (the Sky Father) are to M\_ori. Both deserve respect. Sharing stories is a human essential. There is a wealth of sacred myths to explore in all religions and it's fascinating to note the truths different cultures hold in common.

Faith delves into 'why' not 'how.' Faith embraces mystery and is experienced as a way of being. Science seeks measurable facts. Both are vessels of truth, and both develop and change. Truth is like love - it cannot be scientifically measured and differs between cultures and individuals. Science itself is an act of faith. Its 'proven facts' last only until new discoveries cause alterations. Look for truth in science and stories, and keep an open mind. There are always new concepts to discover and new connections to experience.

**Value truth wherever you find it, Auntie**

Dear Auntie,

**How are our children/youth supposed to grow spiritually, if our elders or role models showcase hypocrisy regarding their lifestyle which tends to be a contrast to their teachings? Kaelo**

Dear Kaelo,

Having good role models does make it easier for children and youth to develop into good people. However, most small children have a strong sense of what is fair, and most young people have a gut feeling for what is right. Youth tend to make quick judgements and see things in black and white when life is mostly lived in many shades

of grey. We don't know what has shaped the behaviour we observe in others. What we do know is that those unable to behave decently are damaged people who have, or are, suffering from physical or emotional trauma or neglect. Even saints and heroes let themselves (and their fans) down occasionally. You can love family while not agreeing with all they do and say. If you feel your elders are not making good moral decisions or have little to offer you spiritually, find better role models. Youth need to explore, make their own discoveries, and sort out for themselves their personal beliefs and ways of being.

**Be the best person you can be, Auntie**

## Welcome to October Kidz Korna

How did you celebrate Fathers' Day in your church?

Our church was having services on Zoom because of the lockdown. The Tongan Sunday School teachers at St John's, Hamilton East, had a really bright idea; they organised an online Father's Day card competition and had a Zoom meeting to announce the winner. Each of the eight entrants received a prize as well as the overall winner.

It's hard when you can't get together with your friends because they are not in your bubble but great when you can meet them online.

As I write this most of you are back at school. Let us think of all children in Auckland who are still working at home. I hope they will soon be back with their friends and family outside their immediate bubble.



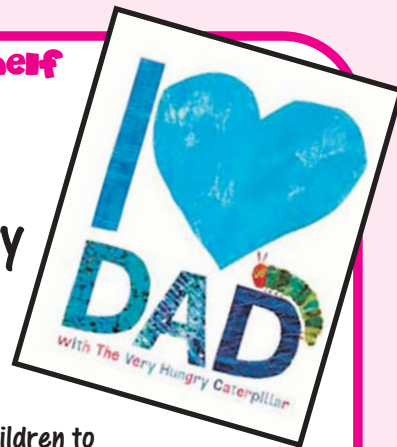
## For your bookshelf

## I Love Dad with The Very Hungry Caterpillar

Eric Carle

Publisher: Penguin NZ

This is a delightful little book for young children to share with their dads at any time and show how much they love them. Each page has a beautifully illustrated picture of animal dads and their babies. The Hungry Caterpillar appears on each page. It is a special book to treasure.



## Father &amp; Son Quiz

Can you match these fathers with their sons?

ADAM	ISAAC
NOAH	DAVID
ABRAHAM	HAM
SAUL	CAIN
JESSE	JONATHAN

(Answers: Adam and Isaac, Noah and David, Abraham and Ham, Saul and Jonathan, Jesse and David)

**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 [dlennox02@gmail.com](mailto:dlennox02@gmail.com)





# Statement on the Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill 2021

Trinity Methodist Theological College, Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa, has a tradition of looking at issues of public interest through a theological lens. Recent topics that have come under scrutiny and comment include the black lives matter movement, the referendum on end of life choices and euthanasia and recently, the issue of a powerful statement supporting the Bill to ban conversion therapy in New Zealand.

The team of management, academic and adjunct staff involved in creating the statement included Te Aroha Rountree, Rev Dr Nasili Vaka'uta, Dr Emily Colgan, Rev Dr Jione Havea and Dr George Zachariah. Dr Zachariah says, "This is a theological and ethical issue. We have used the opportunity to create more awareness and to initiate a deeper conversation by members of the church and Connexion."

The statement - referred to in the cover feature article by Alex - is reproduced below.

**The Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill has been introduced to criminalise conversion practices directed towards people of different sexual orientation and gender minorities. The conversion practices are performed with the intention of changing or suppressing sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.**

The democratic system in Aotearoa provides us the opportunity to express our opinions on the Bill by making public submissions. As Christians it is our responsibility to participate in the public debates conscientiously, informed by the imperatives of our faith, to make our nation and society just and inclusive. We issue this statement to assist our faith communities in their discernment process.

The objectives of the Bill are to "affirm the dignity of all people and that no sexual orientation or gender identity is broken and in need of fixing, prevent the harm conversion practices cause in New Zealand and provide an avenue for redress, and uphold the human rights of all New Zealanders, including of rainbow New Zealanders, to live free from discrimination and harm." The Bill defines conversion practice as a practice that is "directed towards a person because of their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression; and performed with the intention of changing or suppressing their sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression."

We affirm that the objectives of the proposed Bill are in consonance with the tenets of Christian faith and scriptural witness. As the Bible testifies, all human beings are created in the image of God. Our

Christian faith understands sexuality as a divine gift that we ought to celebrate. We believe that the differences within our gender identity (male, female, transgender, nonbinary, and intersex) and sexual orientation (heterosexual, homosexual, bisexual, and asexual) are not deviances or abnormalities that need to be fixed. Rather these differences need to be recognized and celebrated as God's creation.

However, hetero-patriarchy and its doctrine of heteronormativity continue to demonize and criminalize what they perceive to be "deviant" sexual orientations and gender expressions. In this process, they use the Christian faith and the Bible to legitimize the violence inflicted upon LGBTIQX+ communities. Invalidating and demonizing people created in the image of God is a sin against God whose love embraces all of us as we are.

We consider conversion therapy as inherently evil as it diagnoses sexual and gender minorities as "sick" and "sinful." It is harmful and violent, and responsible for the growing number of youth suicide in our nation. We empathize with the victims and survivors of this abusive therapy and call upon the perpetrators to take responsibility for the harm caused.

We consider the CPPL Bill to be an acknowledgement of the trauma caused by such abhorrent therapies that attempt to deny, denigrate and dehumanise, te tapu o te tangata (the sacredness of human life). We recognise that conversion therapy is not in keeping with Māori practices and indeed completely contradicts a Māori holistic approach to health, which attends to the well-being of te tinana, te hinengaro, me te wairua. We affirm and support takatāpui communities and the sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression of all peoples as valid and life-giving.

We are cognizant of the concerns expressed against the Bill by a section of church members. We do not consider this Bill to be against the Christian faith or our faith practices. The Bill does not prohibit just and safe parental engagement with children. The focus of the Bill is on unethical professional practices. We are encouraged by the condemnation of conversion therapy by the Aotearoa New Zealand Association for Social Workers and the New Zealand Association of Counsellors.

While we endorse the proposed Bill to prohibit conversion practices, we raise the following critical observations for the consideration of the parliament:

We share the apprehensions of the gender minorities that "in its current state it [the Bill] defines conversion practices as not including conversion practices which are carried out in a healthcare setting. This allows healthcare providers to continue to engage in conversion practices with vulnerable patients, and effectively excludes transgender and intersex people from protection in the setting where they are most likely to experience conversion practices."

We propose that the focus of the Bill should take a restorative turn from criminalization and punitive measures such as incarceration to delegitimising professional conversion therapy practices, holding practitioners accountable for the harm they cause, and supporting survivors. Instead of criminal penalties, we suggest that the Bill should impose professional disciplinary measures on practitioners and support for the survivors.

We call upon the faith communities in New Zealand to make public submissions on the Bill and support such initiatives to make our nation a safe and just society, celebrating our diversity and differences.





# Catastrophe threatens Afghanistan

**As winter closes in on Afghanistan's mountains, Christian World Service is deeply concerned for its people. Thousands of people fled famine, drought and conflict before the Taliban takeover but now the situation is worsening day by day. Over 18 million people were already in need of food, water, sanitation, shelter, and hygiene before the conflict erupted.**

"We have been truly heartened by the steady stream of donations to our appeal for Afghanistan. People have been very generous however we understand more help is needed as our local partners struggle to meet needs in a very difficult operating environment," says Murray Overton, National Director.

The first stage of CWS's appeal will fund cash transfers

directly to the most vulnerable families. By mid-September local partner, Community World Service Asia had only been able to distribute funds to ten desperate families. The planned cash transfers have been delayed because of the shortage of cash in the country and the tight controls on withdrawals. Community World Service Asia is checking the practicality of new rules before proceeding with the plan. International banking sanctions affecting the sending of aid are adding to the complications faced by aid agencies.

Families like Azeem's have found temporary shelter in cities after the conflict became unbearable in their villages. With his wife and five children, he first fled to Kunduz City. His parents refused to go with them. When Azeem returned, he found most of the houses bombed and his parents dead. He buried them and returned to Kunduz City with the tragic news. When the conflict intensified in Kunduz, he took his family to Kabul where a relative gave them space to shelter. His family survives on the little food donated by communities while he waits for a cash transfer.

Community World Service Asia operates 26 schools for girls and four community-based schools. The primary schools are continuing without major challenge. However, the latest ban on secondary education for girls has forced them to advocate with the authorities, and the United Nations cluster in an effort to reverse the decision.

"The situation is extremely difficult for people in Afghanistan and for many they have family and friends trapped with nowhere to go. Please remember them in your prayers," adds Murray.

CWS has been following the situation closely and participating in local advocacy. Last month CWS, the Methodist Church,



When fighting came to his village in Afghanistan's Khanabad District, Azeem fled with his family to Kunduz City and then to Kabul. After a week living and sleeping in the open air, a relative offered them shelter. They are surviving on small amounts of food donated by neighbouring villagers. With the arrival of winter, this will not last. More help is needed. Photo credit: Community World Service Asia.

Presbyterian Moderator Right Reverend Fakaofa Kaio, Archbishop Philip Robinson and Pihopa Don Tamihere signed an open letter to Foreign Minister Nanaia Mahuta. The 61 individuals and groups asked her to provide more government aid for humanitarian assistance and to resettle more Afghans here. A letter writing campaign to all MPs followed this.

"The New Zealand Government spent 20 years and hundreds of millions of dollars in military expenditure as part of the international intervention in Afghanistan. We have an obligation to the people of Afghanistan to stand by them now. Be it the provision of aid, or safe pathways to New Zealand, the time for response is immediate and the cost of inaction is high. We now call on you to do more," ends the letter.

**Donations to the Afghanistan Emergency Appeal and information about the advocacy campaign can be found at [cws.org.nz](http://cws.org.nz) or by phoning 0800 74 73 72.**



## Get one. Give one.

**Christian World Service is pleased to be supporting the 'Get One Give One' appeal, initiated by Anglican Missions. The campaign has raised over \$100,000 from people who donate the cost of their Covid vaccination through the campaign's Give-a-Little Page at:**

**[givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/get-one-give-one](http://givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/get-one-give-one)**

A donation of \$10 will pay for someone else to be vaccinated. The money raised through 'Get One Give One' is being sent to the COVAX Alliance, made up of United Nations' agencies. The funds provide vaccines to low-income countries who cannot afford to buy their own.

"This is one great way to save more lives and protect us all from Covid. If you can, please donate so someone else can have the vaccine, to help them, their families and their communities," says Murray Overton, National Director.

**Resources to promote the campaign can be found at: [cws.org.nz](http://cws.org.nz)**

## Afghanis urgently need food, water, hygiene supplies and shelter

**Donate now to the Afghanistan Emergency Appeal**



**Christian  
World Service**  
ACTION AGAINST POVERTY

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## REVIEWS

## C I N E M A

**In lockdown, Aotearoa is confined. Yet, in lockdown, any of us can travel. Not physically. Yet through books and movies, each of us can daydream our way into other worlds.**

Released during lockdown, *Upstream* is the creative work of English nature-writer Robert Macfarlane (*The Old Ways*, *Landmarks* and *The Lost Words*) and filmmaker Rob Petit. Available online ([www.upstreamthefilm.com/](http://www.upstreamthefilm.com/)), the movie offers those confined an imaginative and beautiful escape. Filmed entirely from the air, the viewer floats like a bird. For 27 minutes, one is free to explore the River Dee in Scotland, from sea to mountain source.

*Upstream* was filmed over three years and six challenging expeditions. The making of the film includes experiences of disorientating blizzards, expedition-ending injuries and winds that made walking impossible. The challenges of making the film endorse the reputation of the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland as Britain's Arctic.

*Upstream* has no human characters. There are no signs of people: neither bridge nor pylon, road nor wayside



rubbish. Instead, there is only river and rock. Water is a continuous, yet everchanging thread, as the River Dee meanders over pebbles and rushes over rock. The black of Aberdonian granite provides a stunning visual texture, a dramatic backdrop for a morning sun rising over windblown winter snow.

Watching *Upstream* invites a reversal in how we imagine our rivers. We all know that sticks dropped from bridges flow downstream. Seldom do we consider sources and beginning. Such is the gift of *Upstream*. Downloaded amid lockdown, it becomes a way of lifting our eyes to the hills (Psalm 121), a reminder of God's good creation.

*Upstream's* dream-like meander is enlivened by Macfarlane's spoken word poetry and accompanied by a stunning musical score by Oscar-nominated composer Hauschka. The sparse words, voiced in English and Gaelic by Oscar-nominated singer Julie Fowlis and the poet Niall Gordan, suggest a nature spirituality hewn from river and rock.

The spine of this spirituality is an introductory quote from Scottish poet Nan Shepherd, "One cannot know the rivers till one has seen them at their sources." For Shepherd, moving upstream toward mountains invites a primal journey, in which one is "awakened in

*Review by Rev Dr Steve Taylor*

oneself." As humans tramp the wilderness, they enter, according to *Upstream*, "the place where their spirit cracks." What is curious is how in this spirituality, the human maintains a role as a central actor.

Christian theology offers a different sensitivity. It is not the elements but the relationships which define identity. Over water, the Spirit hovers in creative action (Genesis 1:2). Water is separated (1:6), then gathered (1:9), so that life might flourish (1:20). Flourishing finds shape in Jesus, transforming water to wine in affirmation of wedding feasts and village festivities (John 2:1-11). These divine acts of creating, sustaining and redeeming awakened humans into relationships that respect and nurture the good gifts of creation.

These relationships of gift and grace find expression in the psalms of creation. The poetry of Psalms 8, 19, or 121 celebrate the beauty and abundance of nature and locate humans in relationships of gift and grace. Such are the responsibilities of all who dare to imagine travelling upstream.

*Rev Dr Steve Taylor is author of "First Expressions" (2019) and writes widely in theology and popular culture, including regularly at [www.emergentkiwi.org.nz](http://www.emergentkiwi.org.nz).*

## O N P A P E R

## Helen Kelly: Her Life.

**Author: Rebecca Macfie**  
**Publisher: Wellington Awa Press, 2021. 410 pages.**  
**Reviewer: John Meredith**

For eight years prior to her premature death in 2016, Helen Kelly was President of the Council of Trade Unions, a job about which she was passionate.

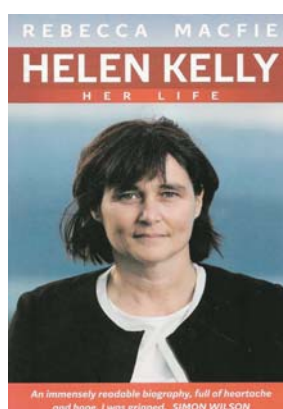
From her earliest days Helen absorbed the activist, political and social views and values of her parents and argued these at school and among her friends. As a student at Wellington Teachers' College, she became president of the students' association.

Helen worked as a teacher for only a short time before taking on a role with two closely allied unions that merged to become the Combined Early Childhood Union of Aotearoa (CECUA). Quality affordable childcare and the wages and status of early childhood workers was, for her, an immediate concern.

The Employment Contracts Act 1991 made individual contracts, rather than collectively negotiated agreements, the basis of employment. Unions were defined as no more than voluntary bargaining agents. Union membership plunged dramatically. Despite this, Helen's energy, drive, commitment, infectious enthusiasm and clear, focused thinking achieved improved pay and conditions in the early childhood sector.

As President of the Council of Trade Unions, she gained wide publicity when she supported the right of New Zealand actors to seek a collective agreement with the producers of *The Hobbit*, being filmed in New Zealand. Opponents claimed this could lead to the film being produced offshore. The dispute became

highly polarised and Helen was accused of placing jobs at risk. She was ridiculed and abused, however, as an advocate for workers, it was obvious she was not someone who was going to yield when the going was tough.



Helen argued strongly for better protection for workers in the dangerous forestry industry and additional compensation for the families of workers killed, whether they were union members or not. She also stood beside the families of the 29 miners killed in the Pike River mine explosion and sought a judicial review of the decision to take no action against the Pike River

company or its manager. A spokesperson for these families said, "She was our friend. She genuinely cared." A member of another union said, "We related to her through her humanity."

In the last few months of her life Helen kept working for as long as she was able. She showed no self-pity and never complained. She had work to do and friends and family to love and be loved by.

In beautifully clear prose, Rebecca Macfie tells the story of Helen's life with attention to detail and a collection of photographs. Her admiration for Helen is apparent on every page. Helen emerges as someone who was highly intelligent, analytical, insightful, immensely hard working, with natural charm and determination and who was never spiteful even when things were going against her. Her commitment to the right of workers to fair compensation that would enable them to live with dignity was life-long. What is deeply moving is the story of Helen's commitment to justice with compassion.

## The Precipice:

*Existential Risks and the Future of Humanity.*

**Author: Toby Ord**  
**Publisher: London: Bloomsbury, 2018. 468 pages.**  
**Reviewer: John Meredith**

Although published before Covid-19 was known to the world, pandemics are one of the features the author identifies as possible risks to the future of humanity. He posits that we are standing on the brink of a precipice from which we could plunge to irreversible destruction. The challenge of our time, he argues, is to protect the future of humanity by addressing existential risks, i.e. risks to our existence, with rigorous thinking, positive vision and practical action. Ord sees protection from existential risk as a universal public good yet one that is too often dismissed as grossly expensive or electorally unacceptable.

While there are possible life-threatening global catastrophes such as asteroids or comets crashing into earth and super volcanic eruptions that could blow the world apart, the risk is low. Ord's concern is with the risks of human action such as nuclear war, climate change and environmental damage.

If a nuclear war should break out, the immediate effects would cause untold devastation and kill millions of people at the sites where nuclear explosions occur. Radioactive fallout would have deadly consequences but a greater existential risk is that black soot from firestorms would spread across the stratosphere and block sunlight. Known as nuclear winter this would have potential for causing widespread crop failure and starvation.

Driven by warming of the atmosphere caused largely by burning fossil fuels, the effects of climate change include increased rainfall and increased drought,

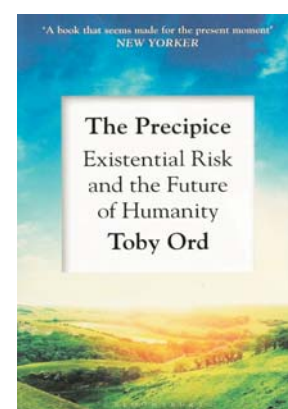
reduced harvests, increased tropical diseases, rising sea levels and ocean acidification. This is all part of the environmental damage that human action inflicts on earth. Ord sees that there could be other future risks from uncontrolled or deliberately released pathogens and artificial or robotic intelligence that could surpass human abilities for decision-making.

Ord is a Senior Research Fellow in Philosophy at Oxford University. Although he believes there are risks that could destroy humanity, he is not a scaremonger. Yes, humanity faces threats to its future but catastrophe is

not inevitable. As most existential risk comes from human behaviour, he counsels the need to modify or abandon behaviour that creates risk. This includes acting to remove carbon emissions and nuclear weapons from earth.

There are choices to be made. Beginning now there is a need to reflect on the kind of world we want to build for future generations. Ord is realistic when he states that we need a public conversation in academia, government and society about the future of humanity. We need to explore possibilities in serious works of fiction and the media, to talk between friends, families and groups where people meet. If the conversation is to be fruitful it needs to be informed, responsible, constructive and never polarising, partisan, prejudiced or ready to blame.

Ord draws attention to important issues in the very readable eight chapters that cover just over half the pages in the book. Appendices, comprehensive notes and suggestions for further reading complete the book. If we are to safeguard the future and build a society that is just and humane, Ord provides much to think and talk about.







## Presbyterian Education in Aotearoa

Jennifer Jeffery, Presbyterian Research Centre (Archives).

In the April edition of *Touchstone*, Jennifer presented a brief history of Presbyterian boys' colleges. In this second part of the two-part series, she looks at the history of Presbyterian Church girls' schools in our country.

### RANGI RURU, CHRISTCHURCH

The origins of Rangi Ruru stem back to the Gibson family who founded a school at Arawa House in Christchurch. When Arawa House moved locations to Webb Street in the 1880s, the College was renamed Rangi Ruru. During the spring of 1923, the College relocated once more, this time to Hewitts Road where it remains today. In 1951 Malcolm William Wilson became acting Chaplain for Rangi Ruru. He was originally the minister of Knox Church in Christchurch and was later Moderator of the General Assembly from 1962 to 1963.

### COLUMBA COLLEGE, DUNEDIN

Columba College, Dunedin, was the second of eight schools to be established by the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand between 1914 and 1919. The man behind the foundation of Columba College was the Reverend Alexander Whyte who travelled Otago and Southland in the hope of gaining monetary support for this venture. In 1913 Whyte submitted his report to the committee who were appointed to encourage the establishment of Presbyterian Schools in Dunedin. The students at Columba were to be equipped with knowledge and skills and with a greater understanding of their own worth.

### SOLWAY COLLEGE, WAIRARAPA

Solway, Wairarapa, was created when



Third form students at St. Andrew's Collegiate School, Dunedin, with their teacher, thought to be Margaret Smyth, possibly taken in 1917.

Marion Beatrice Thompson was propositioned in 1915 with the task of becoming principal of a girls' boarding school in the Wairarapa. Thompson accepted, after much deliberation, and work began on renovating the nine-roomed colonial homestead, 'Solway', which was surrounded by 18 acres of trees. In 1916 Solway opened, with the directive to incorporate spiritual teaching into the academic curriculum - where religious instruction permeated into school life, enriching the character.

### IONA COLLEGE, HASTINGS

Iona College, Hastings, was officially opened on 24 February 1914 by the New Zealand Prime Minister, the Right Honourable William Massey, due to the Presbyterian Church's commitment to education. In 1911, General Assembly agreed to a proposal from Hugh Campbell who offered eight acres of land in Havelock North. The Assembly also accepted the offer of Mary Isabel

Fraser who agreed to work for five years with no salary as principal.

### QUEEN MARGARET COLLEGE, WELLINGTON

The move of Scots College from Hobson Street, Wellington, in 1919 offered an opportunity to use this space to facilitate education for girls and it became Queen Margaret College. The school buildings had to be renovated to appeal to females but the school grounds were considered appropriate. N Jobson was appointed principal, with the aim to provide for girls a sound and moral education built on a strong Christian character.

### ST. ANDREW'S COLLEGIATE, DUNEDIN

St. Andrew's Collegiate, Dunedin, was established when Margaret Smyth, a recent graduate from an Arts course at the University of Otago, was searching for a teaching position at a secondary school in Dunedin. When discussing her

misfortunes with Rev Dr Rutherford Waddell in 1902, Waddell suggested she establish her own school. In February 1903, four pupils began their educational pursuits. By 1905, the roll blossomed to 33 students, which made the Trade Hall they had been using unfit for service. The First Church classrooms were requested, and the school remained there for 13 years.

### ST. ORAN'S, LOWER HUTT

St. Oran's, Lower Hutt, originally founded in 1958, was seen as a solution to the escalating roll at Queen Margaret College. Practically bursting at the seams, with long waiting lists and being the only girls' Presbyterian school in Wellington, it was decided that a new college would help reduce the growing pressure on Queen Margaret College. A suitable location was found and the proposed school, legally known as Hutt Valley Presbyterian College for Girls Incorporated, was established. Five years later, the Board of Governors was established to discuss uniforms, mottos and the official school name. In February 1959, Wellington Presbytery officially approved St. Oran's School.

### ST. CUTHBERT'S COLLEGE, AUCKLAND

St. Cuthbert's College, Auckland, originally opened 1 February 1915 under the name Auckland Presbyterian Ladies' College, and was located on Stokes Road, Mount Eden, Auckland. Shortly after opening, it became St. Cuthbert's College, with the motto 'By Love Serve'. By the time the roll reached 190 students - including 38 boarders - the College had to relocate. In 1925 a location at Epsom was found and that is where the school remains today.

## Unsung Methodists

Rev Donald Phillipps

## Silent Sundays

In February 1919, the Church learned that one of its chaplains, Fred Rands, had died in Germany where he was still serving in the aftermath of WW1. Not all service men returned home at once and many, like Fred, were unavoidably caught up in what was called the Spanish 'flu epidemic, out of control around the world. Fred was a young minister held in high regard. He came from a family of Methven Methodists and his wife was the daughter of a minister. He was buried at Cologne, aged 37.

New Zealand at that very time witnessed the peak of the devastation wreaked by the epidemic. In the summer months of 1918-1919 there were more than 9,000 deaths in New Zealand from the plague form of pneumonic influenza. Estimates



Fred Rands. Credit Methodist Church of New Zealand Archives.

of global deaths range from 17.4 million to 100 million, with an accepted general range of 25-50 million, making it one of the deadliest pandemics in human history. Quarantine is a word we have become familiar with but it was, in a way, even more of a problem then. It is an accepted fact that the return of the ship

## The Epidemic and the Church - 1918-1919

Niagara to Auckland, with so many infected people on board and no quarantine required on arrival, was a major factor in the infection of the whole country.

In early December 1918, the *New Zealand Methodist Times* carried an article entitled Silent Sunday. It is worth re-reading today as churches react to the return to Level 2 of the Covid-19 regulations. How do we compare the attitudes then with what has become a familiar reaction to our self-regulation in 2021? The following extracts are from the first item on the first page of that issue of 7 December 1918.

"Some recent Sundays have been to many of us among the strangest we have ever known. With a view to check the epidemic that has swept with such terribly fatal results through New Zealand, the health authorities have issued an order closing not only all liquor bars, race meetings, picture shows and theatrical performances, but also all the Churches." In those days there were so many things we wanted to distance ourselves from. Attempts were made to institute open-air worship but they do not seem to have

been successful. The health authorities did not regard outdoor services as an acceptable alternative.

The editor of the newspaper, WJ Williams, considered the long-term effects of such a lock-down - today's term, not theirs. Loss of collections was the first mentioned but then he realistically pointed out the publicans and picture-show proprietors were equally affected. He also noted sadly the loss being suffered by Sunday school children, deprived of their weekly teaching. What might happen if the silence became permanent? No more proclamation of the Gospel. "To cut the Churches, with all they stand for, out of the life of the community would be the greatest conceivable moral disaster."

As we return to worship, surrounded by restrictions, how do we think of the future? Do we simply want to return to what we ordinarily do? Has not our world been changed forever? The lessons of history are disturbing when they are applied to a future we can scarcely imagine. Some might say, however, that these are exciting times.



# E SILI LE PUIPUIA I LO LE TOGAFITIA



O le ata lena o le TALANOA live 17 Setema 2021 @9am

**I le agaga faafetai tele e faafeiloai atu ai i le paia o le tatou Sinoti, susu o susuga i le Aufaigaluega ma faletua, Taitai ma faletua, tama malolo, faletua malolo, tuua sinasina, le mamalu o le Sinoti i ona tulaga faalupelupeina seia oo lava i alo ma fanau laiti. E talitonu o loo taufai manuia tutusa i tatou uma i le alofa tausii vaatele o lo tatou Atua.**

E ui lava ina afea i tatou ma le lalolagi atoa i lenei faama'i vaogata tele ma le pipisi, ua toatele foi soifua ua maimau ai. Ae tumau pea le talitonuga ma le faatuatua, e le mafai lava ona tuulafoaina i tatou e lo tatou Tapa'au Sili i le lagi. Ua moni ai upu a le aposetolo i le Ekalesia i Roma: "Afai ua 'au ma i tatou le Atua, o ai se faasaga tau mai ia i tatou?"

Ua matua moni ma faamaoni lafoga a le aposetolo, aua ua le po a malae i lau tou maitau i le nei vaitau i le alu saosaoa o le fa'ama'i lea ua iai nei. Ua lapataina ai lava i tatou uma e le Palemia ma le malo, ina ia tautuana, ia tatou o e fai o tatou tui puipua e 2, fai foi ma a tatou test. E leai a se malosii, leai se potu e tu ma tete'e atu i le faama'i lenei ma lana sau lea e sau ai. Ua outou silasila i talafou o lea aso ma lea afiafi, i le faaopopo pea, i le toatele o e ua aafia, ae maise o nai o tatou tagata Samoa ua matua toatele ua afaina. O lena foi vaiaso na matou

faalogo ai i le TALANOA live i le saunaoga a le afioga ia Tuala o ia o le taitaifono a le ASA Foundation. O i latou o loo taumafai e tufa atu taumafa i nisi o nai o tatou aiga ua matua manaomia lava taumafa. Peitai ane, na matua tigaina i le falema'i ina ua maua i le koviti, nao le tasi le tui o lenei tamalii na fai, o loo faatali lona tui lona 2, ae ua le mafai ai e le faama'i ona alo ese ai. Na faaali mai totonu o le falema'i i lona tigaina, i lona taumanava ma taufai mai se tala ia matou. O le Aso Faraile lenei i luga o le TALANOA live aso 17 Setema, o loo tusia ai lenei article, na toe saunoa ai Tuala ua te'a i tua ua manuia, ma aioi mai i le mamalu o Samoa uma, o loo i Aotearoa nei, faapea le lalolagi o faafogaga mai. FAAMOLEMOLE o e fai outou tui puipua, e lei lava le tasi o le tui e puipua o ia ma lona toalua i le faama'i. Na ia matua faamalosii mai, ona o le aafiaga na matua tuga ma lailoa ai i le falema'i. Saunoa Tuala nate le toe fia o'o i ia tiga ma mafatiaga na iai. E fiva faasoloatoa, tiga le tino atoa, tau le mafai ona manava, nao le tagi ma olega i le Atua ina ia alofa mai. Le paia e, o le tatou Sinoti Samoa, afai e lei faia lou tui poo ou tui uma e lua, o le augani a le pumate, o le tata



Fala Jr Mann-Taito waiting for his first vaccination.

atu o le logo a Masefau, faamolemole o nei e fai outou tui. A tou alofoa i fanau, aiga, ma oe lava ia, alu nei, ave lou aiga, ia fai uma outou tui puipua. O le upu a le atunuu, e sili a le puipua i lo le togafitia.

O le faalaeiau a le aposetolo, i le Ekalesia i Roma, o le faamalosii foi lena mo tatou uma, e leai se isi lava mea e faate'aeseina le alofa o le Atua mai ia i tatou uma lava, e o'o lava i le tui lenei, ao le alofa lena o le Atua, e te alofa atu ai i lau fanau, lou toalua ma lou aiga, ma ou matua. Ave uma le aiga e fai outou tui, ina ia puipua mai le nei faama'i matautia ma le sau ua afea ai Aotearoa.

**O la outou auauna, Suivaia Te'o**



Tama o le Sinoti Muaimalae Te'o getting his last vaccination.



Weyno Mann-Taito.





### Na Kalou na Dau ni Veibuli - God the Creator



Rev Rob Fergusson (Lower North Island Synod Superintendent) with some members of the Women's Fellowship at Wellington Methodist Parish, Fijian Congregation.

#### Lesoni;

**Same 24:1 A nei Jiova ko Vuravura kei na ka kecega sa sinai kina. A vei vanua kei ira era sa tiko kina.**

#### Scripture;

**Psalms 24:1 The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it.**

In the season of Creation, God's mysterious identity can be experienced in Creation. It's possible to experience God in the ordinary, common everyday things of life. Naturally, the rising of the sun, rain and growth of the plant. Paul had the same idea when he said that the visible world was designed to make known the invisible things of God, there are no excuses Rome 1:20). We can find common things of life and countless source of signs which lead people to God if they only read them right. Anyone who does not encounter God in Creation will not encounter God in the Church either.

E dau vaka gauna e na vei yabaki noda donumaka ka dodonu me da vei vakananumi tale kina e na nona veibuli na Kalou. Sa sega nai ulubale me da tukuna se vaka lecalecava kina ni nona ga, ka lewa na Lomalagi kei na Vuravura na Kalou. E vakatakilali koya kei na nona kaukauwa e na nona i bulibuli mai na cabe ni matanisiga, na tau ni uca kei na tubu ni veika bula. E da wili ka vakalougataki kina ko keda na tamata ni da nona i bulibuli uasivi duadua na Kalou.

E vakila ka vakadinadina taka ko Paula, 'ni sa kune na veika ni Kalou e vuni tu... ni sa kilai oti e na veika sa buli mai na gauna sa buli kina ko vuravura. O koya ogo sa sega kina na nodra i ulubale'. (Roma 1:20). Vakarawarawa taka sara e dua na dau ni volavola, ka vola, 'Kevaka e da vinakata me da kila vaka vinaka na Kalou, kei na nona kaukauwa, me da rai vaka volivoliti keda ga'. If you wish to know God, look around you'.

Sa ka bibi na noda raica ka vaka duavata taki keda kei nai bulibuli kece ni Kalou. Kevaka e da na sega ni raica rawa ka semati keda vata kina, e da na sega talega ni semati keda rawa vata vakavinaka kei na Kalou e na loma ni



The funeral of the late Mrs Temalesi Rayasi, wife of the late Manasa Rayasi. Temalesi was a pioneer of the Fijian Congregation in Wellington that began in the early 1970s.

noda Lotu. Dua nodra i vakarau makawa na Jiu nodra vaka veiwekani taka na Kalou kei na nona i Bulibuli (Jews connects the Spirit of God with Creation), me rawa ni ra raica ka vakaibalebale kina vei ira nodra qaravi Kalou.

#### Vakabauta na Kalou na Dau ni Veibuli

Nai Volatabu sa vakadeitaka na noda Vakabauta, 'E nai vakatekivu, sa bulia na lomalagi kei na vuravura na Kalou' (Vakatekivu 1:1). Sa vakabauta ka vakalagilagia na dau ni Same ka vola, 'Sa nei Jiova ko vuravura, na vei vanua kei ira era sa tiko kina' (Same 24:1).

Na Gone Turaga ko Jisu Karisito a mai bula taka saraga ka dau vakatavuvuli se vunautaka na dina qo.

E vakadavara kina na Lotu na vei vakadeitaki e na i tukutuku ka da dau cavuta e na noda Vakabauta (Statement of Faith), 'Au sa vakabauta na Kalou, na Tamada sa sega ni yalani na nona kaukauwa, ko koya ka bulia na Lomalagi kei na Vuravura ....

E na i ka ono ni siga ni nona veibuli 'A sa vakaraica na Kalou na ka kecega sa bulia ko koya, ka raica sa vinaka sara' (Vakatekivu 1:31).

Ni oti nona cudruva ka vaka luvuca na Vuravura na Kalou e na gauna nei Noa, sa vosa yalayala talega kina ni na sega tale ni vakarusa na nona vuravura ka a bulia. 'Ia ka'u na sega ni vakarusai vuravura tale e na vuku ni tamata, ka'u na sega talega ni cudruva na ka kecega sa bula. Ni sa tiko ko Vuravura, e na sega ni mudu na vula i teitei kei na vula i kelikeli kei na liliwa kei na katakata .... kei na siga kei na bogi' (Vakatekivu 1:21-22).

Nai vakatakilakila matata duadua ni nona vakatakila nona Loloma levu qori na Kalou sa mai vakatakilali koya kina e na nona bula na gone Turaga ko Jisu Karisito (Joni 1:14). Mai bula saraga vaka Tamata mate ka tucake tale me da bula na kai vuravura (Joni 3:16). E da sa na bolei kina na Tamata vakabauta e na noda raici keda kei na nona vei vakarautaki na Kalou levu qo.



Office bearers and lay leaders of the Fijian Congregation at the Wellington Methodist Parish.

#### (Apostles Creed 1).

Sa vu ni noda Bula duadua ga ko koya. Sa na dodonu kina me kua tale na vakatitiga e na vuku ni noda raica nona i bulibuli na Kalou sa vakaibalebale taka vei keda na i Volatabu.

Me da laveta ka bulataka tikoga noda vakabauti Jisu Karisito, sega e na vosa ga, ia e na cakacaka. Ni sa i Jisu Karisito na "Vosa ni Kalou" koya a veibuli kina mai nai vakatekivu, ka yaco me mai buli keda vou talega kina na tamata i valavala ca me da rawata na Bula.

Au sa tinia e nona vakacautaka nona veibuli na Kalou na Dau ni Same 8 - I Jiova na neimami Turaga "... O ni sa vakaraitaka nomuni lagilagi mai Lomalagi e cake .... na cakacaka ni qaalo ni ligamuni ... na vula kei na kalokalo ko ni sa lesia. A cava na tamata mo ni dau nanumi koya kina, kei na luve ni tamata mo ni dau talevi koya kina.

Me ceguva ka Vakalougata taka na Kalou nona Vosa sa volai vei keda nikua. Emeni.

Nai Loloma Levu mai Jesirieli e na Koroturaga.



## Ngāue 'aonga'aki 'a e faingamālie

'Oku tui 'a e talekita 'o e Siaola, Kathleen Tuai-Ta'ufo'ou 'oku mahu'inga ke ngāue'aki 'e hotau kakai 'a e faingamālie pea mo e ngaahi tokoni 'oku 'omai 'e he pule'anga. 'I he lolotonga 'o e fakataputapui ni [lockdown] 'oku fakapa'anga mai 'e he pule'anga 'a e ngaahi tokoni kehekehe ki hotau komuniti pea mo e kakai 'o e Pasifiki.



Ko e timi eni 'a e Siaola lolotonga 'enau fakaheka 'enau me'atokoni mei he Fono. The Siaola team load food parcels to distribute to families.

'Oku kau 'i he ngaahi tokoni ko 'eni 'a e tokoni ki he fanauako kae fakafou pe 'i he ngaahi 'apiako 'oku nau ako aii. 'Oku kau heni 'a e 'oange 'enau tivaisi [devices] hange ko e komipiuta laptop, idpad pe chrome book ke nau ngāue'aki ki he 'enau ako. 'Oku 'i ai foki mo e faingamālie ai ke nau fakatau 'enau tivaisi [device] 'i ha totongi ma'ama'a 'okapau 'oku nau fiema'u. 'I he 'uhinga ko ia 'oku mātu'aki fu'u mahu'inga 'aupito ke fai ki ai ha tokanga tautautefito ki he ngaahi fāmili tokolahi koe'uhi ke ngāue'aki 'e he fānau ki he 'enau ako.

'Oku 'i ai foki 'a e tokoni fakame'atokoni kae fakafou 'i he ngaahi kulupu ko honau tefito 'i fatongia ko e tokoni fakame'akai ki he ngaahi fāmili. 'I he ngaahi faingamālie tokoni pehe ni 'oku tokoni 'aupito ia ki he ngaahi fāmili koe'uhi he 'oku nau ma'u ai e me'atokoni ta'etotongi kae malu'i e seniti ke fua atu'aki ia ha ngaahi kavenga kehe. Ko ia 'a e uki 'oku fai mei he ngaahi kulupu 'oku nau fai e ngaahi fatongia pehe ni, ke tau ngāue'aki 'a e ngaahi tokoni ni pea mo e faingamālie foki. Ko e taha ia e ngaahi fatongia tefito 'oku fakahoko 'e he Siaola pea mo e To'utupu Tonga Trust ko hono uki mo faka'ai'ai 'a hotau kakai ke ngāue'aki 'a e ngaahi faingamālie ko 'eni. 'Oku 'ikai ke ngata pē he kau memipa 'o hotau siasi kā 'oku kau kotoa pē ki ai hotau kakai Tonga. Ko e taha foki e ngaahi faingamālie fakamuimui taha kuo tuku mai mei he pule'anga ko e \$1 miliona ke tokoni ki he huhumalu'ii pea 'oku 'atā ki ai 'a e ngaahi kulupu komunitii ke nau tohi kole ki ai. 'Oku 'ikai pe ngata he tohi kole ki ai ka ke tau ngāue 'aonga'aki 'a e faingamālie hangee ko e oo 'o huhumalu'i he 'oku kuo 'osi fakapa'anga 'e he pule'anga ma'a kitautolu. Hangē ko e huhumalu'i na'e fakahoko 'i 'kolo Tonga' 'i Tuingapapai na'e fakapa'anga 'e he pule'anga 'a Langimālie pea mo e Fono ke nau fakahoko 'a e huhumalu'i ma'a tautolu 'a e komuniti Tonga. Ko ia 'oku mātu'aki mahu'inga 'aupito ke tau ngāue'aki 'a e ngaahi faingamālie kuo tuku mai he ko e 'ai ia ma'a kitautolu. He'ikai hala ke tau pehē ko 'etau pa'anga pe eni mei he 'etau ngaahi tukuahau 'oku tanaki 'e he pule'anga 'o fai mai'aki hotau tauhi mo hotau tokanga'i 'i he tafa'aki 'o e mo'ui.



Ko e ni'ihī mei he komiti 'a e komuniti 'oku nau tokoni ke fakalele 'a e polokalama huhumalu'i. L to R: Maka Pailate, 'Una Taufā, 'Ikilifi Pope, Melino Maka, Manase Lua [Pakilau] pea mo Simulata Pope. Members of the Tongan community working committee who are responsible for advertising the vaccination programme for the kolo Tonga/Tongan village.



Ko Henalieta Vete-Kamitoni [Fono] pea mo Simulata Pope [To'utupu Tonga Trust] lolotonga 'a e polokalama huhumalu'i ma'ae kāinga Tonga. Henalieta Vete-Kamitoni from Fono health provider and Simulata Pope from Tongan Youth Trust during the vaccination programme for the Tongan community.



Ko Tevita Finau, sea e poate 'a e Siaola lolotonga hono faka'eke'eke 'e he mitia. Tevita Fi.



Ko Kathleen mo e timi Siaola lolotonga 'enau tufaki 'a e puha me'akai 'e lau afe ma'ae ngaahi fāmili. Kathleen and the Siaola team distributed thousands of food parcels to families during lockdown.



Ko e kau ngaue ai pe eni 'a e Siaola 'i he fa'o 'a e ngaahi puha me'akai. The Siaola team packing food parcels.



## FAKALOTOFALE'IA – MONTHLY DEVOTION

## Kaveinga/Theme:

# PUPUTU'U - FRUSTRATION

**Potu Folofola/Verse:**

## Sione 14: 1 - 3

puputu'u nomou loto: tui pikitai ki he  
'Otua, tui 2 pikitai foki kiate au. 'I he 'api  
o 'eku Tamai 'oku lahi 'a e ngaahi  
nofo'anga: ka ne 'ikai, pehē kuo u tala  
kiate kimoutolu, he ko 'eku 'alu 'eni ke  
teuteu ha potu moomoutolu. 3 'Pea  
neongo te u 'alu 'o teuteu ha potu  
mo'omoutolu, ka 'oku ou toe ha'u pe,  
pea te u ma'u kimoutolu kiate au;  
koe'uhi ko e potu 'oku ou 'i ai, ke mou  
'i ai foki

1 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me.

*2 In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

*3 And if I go and prepare a place for you,  
I will come again*

Ko e puputu'uúheni 'oku 'uhinga ia ko e faingata'a'ia 'a e lotoóko'e'uhii ko e taulōfu'u 'a e faingata'aá pea 'oku 'ikai ke 'ilo'i 'e he 'atamaií mo e lotoópe 'e solova fefee'i e ngaahi ta'au mo e faingata'a ko iaá. Ko ia 'a e faingata'a na'e fetaulaki mo e kau akoó'i he mahino 'e puli pe 'e hiki atu e takií [Sisu] meia kinautolu. Ko e fononga ta'etakií [pulía 'a Sisu] 'oku 'ikai ke nau 'ilo pe koehā e me'a 'e hoko mai 'i he kaha'uú Ko e mo'ui fakafalala na'a nau fai ki he takií [Sisu] he'ikai ke toe kei ma'u ia. Mo'oni pē 'a e palofitaá, "...na'a nau hangē ha fanga sipi kuo taa'i 'a e tauhií pea kuo movete 'a e ākanga...". Ko ia 'a e akonaki [metaphor] 'oku talanoa ki ai 'a Sione 'i he lesoni ko 'enif.

'Oku ongo vevela e puputu'uúhe taimi  
'oku mole ai 'a e husepanitií mei he  
familií , he 'oku ongo'i 'e he uaifíí 'oku  
toutounoa he kuo anga ia he hili e  
mamafa 'o e tauhi e familií he  
husepanitií [man of the house]. Ko e  
puputu'uúmo e kafo e lotoó'oku 'ikai  
ko ha me'a si'isi'i ia, pea mo'oni e 'aunoa  
'a e punake, 'ka pahi pe tutue e lotoó'o  
'ikai si'i ke na'a'.

Ko e taha he taimi puputu'u taha kuo  
fepaki mo e siasi' i he taimi ni' ko e 'ikai



Say Hi to the TYT crew if you're at the MMT vaccination drive-through.

ke lava ke fakahoko honau ngaahi  
fatongia anga maheniif ‘o makatu’unga  
‘i he ngaahi fakataputapui [ lockdown].  
‘Oku ngutuhua ‘a e ngaahi ma’unga  
kelesiif pea mo e ngaahi houa lotuú  
koe’uhiif he ‘oku lava ‘e he Vahefounuaá  
ia ‘o punipuni mai ‘a e ngafa fatongia ko  
iaá. ‘Oku ‘ikai ke ngata ai kā ‘oku lava  
‘e he ngaahi fai’angalotu ni’ihi ia ‘o  
fakahoko pē ‘a ‘enau ngaahi ma’unga  
kelesi ‘o ngāue’aki ‘a e tekinolosiaá.

Ka 'oku toe 'i ai 'a e ngaahi 'isiū ia 'oku fetaulaki pea mo e ngaahi siasi ni'ihi 'oku toe faingata'a ange ia. Ko e taha 'o e ngaahi faingata'a ko iaā ko e ma'u'angaā [income] 'a ia 'oku fakafalala foki eni ki he ngaahi misinaleé. 'I he ta'u kuohilí na'e lahi 'a e ngaahi misinale na'e fakatatafe ['ikai ke fakahoko] 'o makatu'unga 'i he Covid pea mo e ngaahi fakataputupui [lockdown]. 'I he 'ene a'u mai ki he ta'u ni ko e me'a tatau pē. Ko e konga lahi 'o e ngaahi fai'angalotu 'o Aokalani mo Manukau 'oku nau misinale 'i 'Akosi 'o e meimei ta'u kotoa.

Ka 'i he ta'u kuo 'osi' pea mo e ta'u ni  
'oku 'ikai lava ha misinale ia. Pea 'oku  
kei tāutoloi 'a e ngaahi fai'angalotu 'e  
ni'ihi kae'oua kuo mahino 'a e tu'unga  
'o e mahakif . Ko e faingata'a pea mo e  
puputu'u lahi 'oku hoko aif' koe'uhi' he  
'oku 'ikai ke tu'u ai e ngaahi fakamole  
anga mahenif ia.

'A ia ko 'ene tu'u 'i he taimi nií 'oku 'ikai

ke 'ilo 'e he ngaahi fai'angalotu 'e ni'ihī  
pe 'e koehā e me'a 'e hoko 'i he kaha'uū  
Ko e misinaleé foki ko e ma'u'anga  
pa'anga [income] pē ia 'e taha 'a e siasif  
pea 'oku tu'o taha pē 'i he ta'u 'o hangē  
ko ia 'oku tau maheni mo iaá.

‘Oku toe faingata’a ange ki ha ngaahi  
 fai’angalotu ‘oku teu ha’a nau ngāue ‘o  
 hangē ko e langaa [building project].  
 ‘Oku ‘ikai ke ngata he fiema’u seniti ke  
 fua ‘a e ngaahi fakamole anga mahenif  
 kākō e toe kau atu ki ai mo ‘enau ngāueē.  
 ‘I he ngaahi taimi pehe nīf ‘oku fua ‘e  
 he kau takiif [kau setuata mo e kau  
 faifekau] ‘o e siasif ‘a e faingata’a ia ‘i  
 hono fakakaukau’i pe ‘e anga fēfē ‘a hono  
 ma’u ha seniti ke fakalato’aki ‘a e ngaahi  
 fiema’u pehe nīf . Ko e ngaahi taimi eni  
 ‘oku ho’ata ai ‘a e puputu’uúpea mo e  
 faingata’a iaā. Tuku kehe ange ‘a e  
 ngaahi faingata’a ia ‘oku hoko ki he siasif  
 ‘okapau ko ha palopalema ‘oku fetaulaki  
 pea mo ha famili ‘o hangē ko e mole ha  
 me’ui he taimi fakatapatapai levolo 4  
 [lockdown level 4].

‘Oku tanaki atu ki he puputu’u ko iaá ‘a e tu’unga ‘oku ‘i ai ‘a e mahakií pea mo e feinga ke ngāue fakataha ‘a e kakaií ke malu’i ‘a e mo’uií . Kuo feinga mai ‘a e pule’anga á ke a’u ‘a e fa’ahinga kuo huhu malu’i ki he 90%. Ka ‘oku kei lahi pē hotau kakai ‘oku ‘ikai ke nau tali ‘a e huhu malu’ií . Ko e puputu’u lahi ia ‘e taha!! Hangē ko ia ‘oku mou me’a’ii ‘oku

feinga 'a e Vahefonuaá ke lahiange 'e  
peseti 'o e kakai kuo 'osi huhu malu'ii  
koe'uhii kae foki kakato e lotuu. Ka 'oku  
te'eki pē ke lava ia ko hono 'uhingaa  
he'ikai foki ke pule ha taha ia ki ha taha  
ka ko e fakakolekole pē ngaue fakataha  
'a e ngaahi siasii pea mo e kau takií ka  
nau lava 'o fakahoko 'a e ngāue ko 'enif .

Ko e taha 'a e solova'anga 'o e puputu'uú  
'i he fakakaukau ko eni 'a Sione' 'i he  
lesonií ko e **'fakafoki mai 'a Sisuúke  
ne ma'u kitautolu ma'ana'**. 'Oku 'i ai  
e lau ki ai 'a e punake, **"..foki Sisu mei  
langi 'o toe ala pe, 'oku fai vaivai 'a  
e fai 'a ho Siasií ..."**. 'Oku 'ikai 'uhinga  
eni ke tala-ki-tu'a 'oku kovi pe ta'e'aonga  
e ngāue 'a e Siasií . Ka ko e ngāue'aki 'a  
e motolo mo e founga 'a Sisuúke tokoni  
kia kitautolu he taimi 'oku tau  
faingata'a'ia aíf . 'A ia ko e fakakaukau  
pe teolosia 'o e **'toe foki mai' pe ko e  
'tokoni 'a Sisuú**, p ē teuteu'i 'etau mo'ui  
ko hono nofo'anga [temipale] 'oku ne  
fakatau'ata'ina'i 'e ia mo tatala e  
puputu'uúka tau ongo'i tau'ataina mo  
loto lahi ke hoko atu 'etau fononga' 'i he  
mo'ui ni. 'I he fakalea 'e tahaá, ko 'etau  
mahino'i ko **"Sisu kuo ne foki mai"**  
pea **" 'oku he 'i heni pē mo kitautolu"**,  
'o hangē ko 'ene folofolaa, **'....pea teu  
'ia tekimoutolu 'e au 'o ta'engata..'** 'I  
he 'etau tui/fakakaukau pehē, 'oku tau  
tali ai 'oku 'ia Sisu 'etau mo'uui pea 'oku  
hanga 'e he ivi 'o'ona/ngaahi akonaki  
'a'ana 'o fakaloto lahi'i kitautolu pea mo  
tatala 'a e faingata'a mo e puputu'u 'oku  
ne fakafaingata'a'ia'i 'a hotau lotoó

Ko e fakakaukau ia 'oku ou faka'amu ke tau fononga mo ia 'i he mahina ni. Neongo 'a e puputu'u 'a e siasif, fonua mo hotau mamani 'i he ngaue 'a e Covid ka 'oku 'i heni pe 'a Sisu pea mo kitautolu ke fakaloto lahi'i kitautolu, ako'i mo fakahinohino kitautolu ki he talangofua pea mo e taliangi ki he ngaahi tu'utu'uni 'a e pule'angaa, fonua mo e **mahu'inga'ia 'i he mo'uif**. Ko 'ene lava e ngaahi me'a ko iaá 'oku tokoni lahi ia kia kitautolu 'i he lotomo'ua pe puputu'u 'i he fu'u taimi faingata'a'ia ni.

'Oku fu'u kei fiema'u 'aupito 'a e huhumalu'i ki hotau kakai Tonga

**'Oku hā mai mei he  
ngaahi fakamatala  
setisitika mei he  
potungāue 'oku tokanga  
ki he mo'ui [health  
providers] 'oku kei  
tokolahi pe hotau kakai  
Tonga 'oku te'eki ke nau  
huihumalu'i'i 'o  
tautautefito eni ki  
'Aokalani.**



Ko Simulata Pope, John Tagi mo 'Ikilifi Pope mei he To'utupu Tonga Trust na'a nau kau atu ki he tokoni he polokalama huumalu'i ma'ae komuniti Tonga.

Youth leaders, Simulata Pope, John Tagi and 'Ikilifi Pope from Tongan Youth Trust joined other community groups to help in the Tongan village vaccination centre.

'I he ngaahi uike si'i kuo toki  
maliu atu na'e fakahoko ai e  
huhumalu'i fakamatakali pea  
na'e kamata'aki kitautolu

Tonga. Na'e ngāue fakataha ai 'a e ngaahi kulupu komuniti'i hangē ko Langimalie Clinic, Fono, Siaola [Vahefonua Tonga], To'utupu Tonga Trust, siasi 'o Tuingapapai, kau taki komuniti'i pea mo e kau takilotu na'a nau kau fakataha mai ke fakahoko 'a e ngaue lelei ko 'enif . Na'e fe'unga mo e toko tahamano tupu 'a

kinautolu na'a nau lava mai 'o huhumalu'i [vaccinate]  
'i he 'aho 'e 3 na'e fakalele ai 'a e polokalamaá.

Na'e tokoni lahi foki 'a e Siaolaá ki he polokalama  
huhumalu'ni ni 'a ia na'a na tufa ai e ngaahi vausia sopingi  
he Pac n Sav \$100.00 'e lau afe pea pehē ki he ngaahi  
hinainu ta'etotongi ki he me'alele kotoa pē na'a nau lava



Ko Kathleen Ta'ufo'ou pea mo 'ene kau ngaue Siaola lolotonga e polokalama huhumalūi ma'ae komuniti Tonga.  
Kathleen Ta'ufo'ou and staff from Siaola during the vaccination programme for Tongan community at the Kolo Tonga/Tongan village centre.

'i ai foki mo e ngaahi pasi 'e uta mai mei he ngaahi potu  
siasii ke fakamahino 'oku lava ke a'u mai 'a e tokotaha  
kotoa ki he fai'anga huhumalo'i'i . Kuo tuku mai foki mo  
ha kole mei he faifekausea 'o e Vahefounua, Kalolo Fihaki  
ki he kau faifekau pea mo e kau setuata 'o e ngaahi  
fai'angalotuúke nau tokoni 'o uki mai hotau kakai' ki  
he ngāue mahu'inga ko 'enif .

mai 'o ngāue'aki 'a e faingamālie  
huhumalu'i ko 'eniif . Na'e lā mahino mei  
heni 'a e mahu'inga ke ngāue fakataha  
'a e komuniti Tonga koe'uhi ke ma'u 'a  
e ngaahi faingamālie pehé ni. Na'e  
fakahoko eni 'i he 'api siasi Ueisiliana 'o  
Tuingapapai.

Makatu'unga 'i he kei tokolahi pē 'a e kakai 'oku fiema'u ke huhumalu'if kuo fai ai e alea mo e kole ke fakahoko ha huhumalu'i ma'ae Vahefounaá kae fakalele eni 'e he potungāue talavou pea mo e lautohi faka-Sapate. Ko e taha eni he faingamālie mahu'inga koe'uhii he ko e faingamālie ia ki he 'etau fanau ke nau ako ngāue ai pea 'ikai ko ia pee ka ko e penefiti [benefit] ai hotau kakai . 'Oku