



Tō tātou Tiriti (our Treaty)

Te Aroha Rountree, Emily Colgan, Jione Havea

There's a common misunderstanding that Te Tiriti o Waitangi (hereafter, Te Tiriti) is an agreement only between Māori and Pākehā (usually understood as those descended from British settlers). But Te Tiriti is not just for Māori (tangata whenua) and those with British ancestry. Rather, Te Tiriti is for all Tauwi (non-Māori, tangata tiriti) who have come to – and whose offspring have given birth to generations of diversifying iwi in – Aotearoa New Zealand.

Tauwi have come from ngā hau e whā (the four winds), in the footsteps (or bootstraps) of the British Empire – owing in large part to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Te Tiriti has played a significant role in the formation, development, and preservation of Aotearoa as a nation and society.

Te Tiriti is formative, but many in the diverse, modern Māori and Tauwi communities are unaware of and even unconcerned with, the roles and impacts that Te Tiriti played in the formation, development, and preservation of Aotearoa, New Zealand as a nation and society.

Te Hāhi Weteriana and Te Tiriti

Te Tiriti has played a key role in shaping the bicultural partnership imbedded in the culture of Te Hāhi Weteriana / Methodist Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand. It is central to how we are and do church. This is evident clearly in two places:

- (1) the declaration in the mission statement of Te Hāhi Weteriana: 'The Treaty of Waitangi is the covenant establishing our nation on the basis of a power-sharing relationship, and will guide how we undertake mission'.
- (2) and the decision at the 1983 Methodist Conference (Takapuna) that affirms the vision to be a bicultural church for the purposes of, among other concerns, 'sharing of power'."

Te Tiriti is formative for Te Hāhi Weteriana, but some members of Te Hāhi Weteriana are not aware and even refuse to see the impact of Te Tiriti in how we are and do church in Te Hāhi.

Tō tātou Tiriti

At Conference, we will launch a collection of essays that encourages engagement with Te Tiriti, inviting all members of Te Hāhi to treat Te Tiriti as our treaty.

The impetus for the book has also come as a response to a growing desire to revitalise our connexional relationships, to know and live into our shared whakapapa as Te Hāhi. The energy was consolidated after a panel on Wesley Day 2024 (25 May) that discussed the relationship between Te Hāhi and Te Tiriti.

The members of that panel were Arapera Ngaha, Nicola Teague Grundy, Susan Thompson, and Sylvia 'Akau'ola Tongotongo. The panel was facilitated by Tara Tautari, with an audience of both Māori and Tauwi. The presentations by the members of the panel, together with the framing narrative that the facilitator provided, were revised, updated, redirected and included in this book – to provide the pou and frame for the conversations that this book seeks to inspire.

Other participants at the Wesley Day 2024 celebration, as well as some diehard friends of Trinity Methodist Theological College, were invited to contribute short reflections to complement the concerns raised by the panel. This book is, therefore, a collaboration, calling on all readers to "listen up" to and be responsible for Te Tiriti.



Tō tātou pukapuka

Tō tātou Tiriti (our Treaty) is the second volume of Kōrero mai – a book series by Trinity Methodist Theological College. Each contribution has its objectives and drives, but together, they share the desire for readers to take Te Tiriti o Waitangi seriously. As (members of) Te Hāhi Weteriana, we are who we are, and we do what we do in the shadows of Te Tiriti.

Te Tiriti is our treaty, hence the title for this edition of Kōrero mai – Tō tātou Tiriti (our treaty). This is not about

ownership and being possessive but about being responsible and accountable; and more importantly, it is about 'setting the table' and inviting kōrero / talanoa (conversations).

We invite congregations and communities to use the contributions to this book as starting points for group study and kōrero / talanoa on critical matters to our church and society. We draw special attention to matters related to bi- and multi-culturalism, power-sharing, Bible, theology, climate justice, and worship. We suggest taking a chapter each week for members of your congregation and community to read and then come together to discuss your observations and responses. You do not need to agree, but to open up to the wisdom of the gatherings!

You may start with the questions for further reflection at the end of each chapter, together with the inoi / prayer. But you should not end with those. Rather, you should raise your questions relevant to your settings and concerns.

2024+

It is our dream that there will be a follow-up collection in the vernacular languages – te reo and sister tongues. Watch this space!

Wesleyan Missionaries at Te Tiriti o Waitangi signings

Rev Ian Faulkner

Recent discussion related to the introduction of the Treaty Principles Bill into Parliament has led to questions being directed to the Wesley Historical Society (NZ), with a request to provide clarification of some statements made about the involvement of the Wesleyan Missionaries and the influence that they had at the locations where some signings took place.

The WHS requested that Rev Gary Clover record a summary of what is contained in available writings. He provided a detailed and informative account of which missionaries were present /not present at a number of significant signings, with accompanying references to recognised historical publications. This is a brief summary of the involvement of the Wesleyan Missionaries at signings at Waitangi and Māngungu, Whaingaroa, Āotea, and Waiharakeke, based on Rev Gary's account.

Waitangi, February 5-6, 1844

Samuel Ironside - arrived in New Zealand on 19 March 1839, so he had just 10 months of NZ experience. He had developed some fluency in te reo and was invited by Tamati Waka Nene to accompany him to Waitangi. Signed as a Wesleyan witness.

Māngungu, Hokianga February 12, 1844

John Hobbs – NZ missionary since August 1823, Chairman of NZ Mission, 1839-1844; Hobson's interpreter at Māngungu.

William Woon – 2¾ years' experience in Tonga, 1831-33; NZ missionary and printer since January 1834; stationed at Newark (Pākanāe), 1839-40. A Wesleyan witness who signed at Māngungu.

(Reputably, 56+ signatures were gathered here: the greatest number at any one signing)

Kawhia District:

James Wallis & John Whiteley – at Whaingaroa (Raglan), Āotea, and Waiharakeke (inland Kāwhia Harbour)

Wallis arrived in NZ on 1 December 1834. Whiteley arrived in NZ on 21 May 1833.

While there were many other signings of the Treaty of Waitangi and/or Te Tiriti o Waitangi around New Zealand/Aotearoa, there is no record of any of the Wesleyan Missionaries being present or exercising what may have been regarded as an influence at any of these.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Finding Hope and Love in Changed Circumstances

MCNZ President Rev Peter Taylor

"Only two years? It should be five." Presidency of Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa, the Methodist Church of New Zealand, used to be for one year and was increased to two more recently. Some have told me it should be longer. I am glad my tenure is ending at Conference, for several reasons.

1) Two years is what I 'signed up' for. 2) I increasingly feel presidency as burden. 3) The longer someone is in the role, the more difficult it is to lay down the burden. 4) Some future Presidents with five years might become 'power mad', God forbid!

I have never sought power in life or ministry; I intensely dislike it. I do not enjoy the responsibility, though I have never regretted being called by God to presidency, nor to a ministry of over 40 years. Both have been burdens which I am glad to lay down, having gladly undertaken them as God's call.

This idea of calling is not limited to the role of President or Vice-President. It is commonly used in church for all those who are presbyters or deacons, for whom it is not merely a job, but a way of life. So, in retirement it can seem as though you have lost that calling, causing confusion and spiritual distress.

Of course, sadly, some in ministry have had their call cut short, through illness or death. I cite the recent passing of presbyters Siosifa and Utumau'u, humble men whose ministry in our church has been cut short through their untimely deaths.

They say, "where there's life, there's hope." Hope is bound up in purpose and purpose is what gives us the energy to keep going. For Christians even when there is death there is hope. Because our hope lies not in ourselves, our faith nor any sense of calling but in the promises and love of God.

I have given and received much love as President, and I am grateful for all of it. I have just finished reading (again) *Lord of the Rings*, with its themes of love given and received which conquers all, and hope when hope seems lost. I extend my thanks to those who have encouraged me or enabled me to encourage them, especially where hope seems scarce.

Following my retirement, my wife is worried that I will spend my life doing nothing very much. She has a point but I need a break. I am lucky; I reach retirement in good health and with some energy left. But in time the feeling of being 'on permanent holiday' will wane and what then?

I realise that endings, whether they are sudden or planned, can be difficult to manage, for the people themselves and for the ones who love them most. As we approach Conference and its special services, pray for those who grieve the most for those who have died whom we will honour, and for those who are retiring – that all will find hope and love in their need and changed circumstances.



Recreate; a successful swap, repair and mend meet

Ady Shannon

In the eastern suburbs of Ōtautahi, a series of community events is helping to support, unite, feed, clothe and entertain a diverse group of locals, with a little help from friends and whanau from further afield. Ady Shannon pops out to Bromley to see what happens at a *Recreate swap and mend meet*.

It is Thursday afternoon, school has been out for an hour and the playground in the park outside the Bromley Community Centre is packed with toddlers and tamariki sliding, swinging and climbing on the colourful play equipment. In the carpark, a volunteer sits in front of a large skip, offering preloved toys, trikes and other treasures to people passing. Inside the community centre, adults, rangatahi and tamariki are engaged in a range of activities.

Some have come for the free kai – a trestle table is laden with boxes of bananas and bags of new potatoes. Others sort through clothes on racks, in boxes and in suitcases lining the walls of the main hall. Wide doors open to another large room where three sewing stations have been set up. On one side of each table a 'sewist' discusses mend and repair strategies with people who have come with clothes and accessories that need mending. It is a hive of activity. The sound of sewing machines and overlockers in full flight competes with the lively banter of people gathered as they wait patiently to bring their tee-shirts, pants, skirts and shirts to the attention of the skilled trio operating the sewing machines.

This event has been curated and organised by the Christchurch Methodist Mission. Their Community-Led Development team has a base at the New Brighton Union Church, just a few kilometres from Bromley. Team lead Fionna Chapman and her colleagues Elizabeth and Tracey are overseeing the fifth in a series of six CMM Recreate events. Each one is slightly different and all have been arranged in collaboration with key community partners. The first iteration of Recreate was held as part of the Christchurch City Councils' Youth Week celebration in May 2023.

Recreate successfully combines grass-roots social research with local resources, delivering events tailored for the needs of the local communities. Promoted via social media, Facebook and word of mouth, the events have attracted growing interest as people of all ages are drawn by the congeniality, services, clothing and goods provided.

"We realised that youth wanted something to do. They were keen on grabbing clothes and rejigging them," Fionna says. "Other Recreate events have grown from there. Rather than reinventing the wheel, we partner closely with our local communities and work in with what already exists to meet the need."

"After our first Youth event, through our social media campaigns, members of the community were asking if we were going to hold another event for adults. After our first adult event, people were saying they were unable to attend that and could we please hold another one at a different time and day, so we really have been guided by our community."

More than Mending

The collaborations result in shared skills, resources and personal. Justine Balcar works for a community collective in Belfast and has come to the Bromley event - along with her sewing machine and assorted accessories - to help with sewist duties. Replacing Velcro on a sun visor is proving difficult as the glue on the Velcro is needle resistant.



Auntie Tui, the owner of the green pōtae that is breaking needles and thread is not bothered that her visor might be beyond resurrection. Swapping ideas and chatting about plans for her own community ventures is equally as important as getting her visor repaired. She is keen to start a kaumātua coffee club in conjunction with the central city Ōtautahi Sports Association she has long supported. Sharing ideas on where to source food and financial donations is helping to make her concept a reality.

Hemming trousers and skirts, shortening sleeves, sewing on buttons, patching holes and repairing rips accounts for the bulk of the mending work. Due to time constraints and the popularity of the mending stations, replacing zips is a no-go. "Too time consuming getting them out and having to use different footers on the machines makes it too complicated," Elizabeth says.

Looking Ahead

A plus-size upcycling clothing swap and mend event at their New Brighton Union Church base in October will conclude the Recreate programme. Fionna and her team will evaluate the series before deciding whether they will repeat the programme. Whatever the outcome, the local community can be assured their voices and needs will determine all future event initiatives supported by the CMM team.



Organist Myra Caldwell – 80 years making music.

Robyn Brown

Te Aroha Co-operating Parish is fortunate to have three organists who play regularly for their Sunday worship. Myra Caldwell, the most senior of the group, has been playing the organ in the Te Aroha area and throughout New Zealand for more than 80 years. At the age of 96, Myra still plays regularly at St David's services.

Myra has lost count of the number of worship services, funerals, weddings and other events she has provided music for over the past 80 years, but some performances and venues stand out.

"A special memory I have is of playing the organ in the Caldwell Church in Rolleston, Loughborough, England – home of my husband's relations - and the organ in the Colby Church on the Isle of Man – my father's birthplace. What a thrill that gave me. That was purely for my pleasure and satisfaction."

Beyond playing the organ, Myra has sung alto in numerous choirs and groups. She has performed with Malvina Major on four occasions as part of a four-part harmony group, The David Qualtrough Singers, started by her brother David.

Myra continues to play the organ at Te Aroha parish services on a roster that she shares with Tom Luxton and organist/harpist Diane Bellamy. Te Aroha Co-operating Parish Office Secretary/Parish Coordinator Robyn Brown says the parish is blessed to have Myra in their midst, and she is cherished and admired by the congregation and her huge family. "Myra lives by herself in her own home, drives quite long distances and is well loved and supported by her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well as her Church family. "



World Homeless Day 2024: A Community United in Hope

Karen Coleman, Lifewise

On October 10, 2024, Auckland's St Patrick's Square became the heart of unity and hope as the city celebrated World Homeless Day. This event brought together social service providers and the community in a show of solidarity with our street whānau.

Auckland Mayor Wayne Brown highlighted the need for systemic change stating, "It's disappointing that New Zealand's cradle-to-grave social welfare system seems to be letting us down. We aren't going to arrest our way out of homelessness." His words echoed the urgent call for a compassionate approach to the issue.



Auckland MP and co-leader of the Green Party Chlöe Swarbrick emphasised the importance of collective effort in driving change. "No one person changes the world alone. It is going to take all of us working together in the interests of justice," she said, inspiring the crowd to come together in unity and love.

Genevieve Sage, a member of the Waitematā Local Board, highlighted the role of education and job opportunities in breaking the cycle of homelessness. Haehaetu Barrett, Chief Executive of Lifewise, lauded the relentless efforts of outreach teams. "This is hard mahi, and the government needs to hear our voices. They need to know that a brutal approach won't stop us," Barrett affirmed.

The event was a tapestry of joyful moments, with activities like haircuts, singing and face painting for children. The boil-up by the Merge Café team was a crowd favourite, embodying the warmth and community spirit of the day.

Auckland businesses were extremely generous; Kiwiharvest, Nandos, Lifewise Merge Cafe, Rescue Kitchen, Kindness Collective, Starbucks, Fairfood, Sunday Blessings, and Woolworths provided free food. Orange Sky offered showers and laundry services, and Brown Pride provided haircuts.

Common Equal distributed clothing, and Hirepool offered free generators and fencing, and discounts on portaloos. Carlton Party Hire contributed BBQs, beanbags, and gazebos. Warehouse Newmarket printed and framed photos for a whānau exhibition, and St Patrick's Cathedral generously shared their square and water supply.



Despite a last-minute technical issue with Speedy Signs' LED display, the gesture was appreciated. The Auckland Council Waitemata Local Board played a vital role, arranging the venue and covering logistical costs essential for the event's success.

At Lifewise, business community support was pivotal. Ed Ackman, a Lifewise donor, developed an ad campaign at no cost, while Dynamo, part of the Omnicom group, secured media packages from Stuff, Phantom Street Poster, and OOH! Media. Artists Mike Weston and Otis Frizzell sold limited edition "HOME" prints, donating half their proceeds to Lifewise. Fred Soar of SCG printed posters designed by Ed Ackman, enhancing awareness of homelessness and Lifewise.

World Homeless Day 2024 in Auckland was not just an event; it was a testament to the power of community, generosity and an unwavering commitment to a future where everyone has a place to call home.



Lindisfarne Part of Invercargill Prayer Initiative

Rev Tania Shackleton

A collaboration between Invercargill church leaders of many faiths and denominations is saturating the city in prayer and engaging people of all ages in community projects that are enhancing and improving the local environment.

The Soaking our City in Prayer initiative was borne out of a response to a spike in suicides in the Southland region some years ago. Revived in 2023, this year the initiative started in May and over 20 weeks, 20 churches responded to the collective call for prayer. Each church was scheduled a weeklong period for intentional prayers. At the conclusion of their devotions, each church passed on to the next church scheduled to pray, a lamp and a journal where the parish recorded what they did for the week.

Lindisfarne Methodist Church took a novel approach that involved the congregation and grabbed the attention of many passing non-church goers. Rev Tania Shackleton says, "We started our intentional week with our Sunday Service, taking our prayers for our city written onto fabric and tying the fabric prayers onto our fence. This was a fabulous conversation starter as folk asked what the significance of the fabric was. We could share, and people really liked the thought that we were praying."

Members of the congregation gathered at specially scheduled lunchtime services to reflect and pray. Tania says the parish was motivated to participate in the programme by their willingness to be involved in the community beyond their church. "I really want us to be part of our city. We joined the initiative with no expectations - I am always surprised by where these things lead us."

Central Baptist Church Pastor and Churches Together Coordinator Keith Harrington distributed a prayer guide to each of the participating churches, inviting them to pray for:

- Those in leadership
- Salvation
- The Church
- Young People
- Those who are vulnerable

Serving the City

At the conclusion of Soaking our City in Prayer, some of the churches – including Lindisfarne – were motivated to take church to the community in a practical display of caring for God's creation. On Sunday 15 September, 200 volunteers from five churches embarked on 14 projects ranging from planting trees, to clearing up untidy public sites, overhauling pre-loved cycles, cleaning windows and numerous other gestures of generosity.

Lindisfarne parishioners chose 'South Alive' for their working bee and in lieu of attending the Sunday Service, a troupe from the congregation grabbed bins, bags, paint and brushes and devoted their morning to picking up rubbish and revamping fencing in local parks and laneways.

Tania says, "Going forward, we are looking forward to being in community praying and serving and sharing. "



He Kōrero: nā ngā Manu Pūmanawa mō te Ao.

Preface by Rev Keita Hotere

Our final Enabling Ministry Training Wānanga for Te Taha Māori took place at the end of September at Whakatuora centre in Tamaki Rohe. In keeping with the Church's decade theme 'Rekindle the Vā of Papatūānuku' our whānau delved into Trinity College's publication Kōrero Mai: Earth our Parish.

Reflections

The reflections for this month come from two of our **Waikato Rohe members, Sharon Waaka and Tarati Tia**. These reflections are extracts from their essays reviewing the book and Te Aroha Rountree's chapter Taiao, Tangata, and Tiriti: A Call to Planetary Solidarity, Ecology, Humanity and Treaty. Although not the first time these writers have submitted work in Touchstone, I celebrate these wāhine for their generosity in sharing their gift of wisdom words again.

Sharon says of the book, "Issued in 2023, it is a collection of reflections by faculty members of Trinity College that seek to raise awareness and engage conversations on climate change and its disastrous effects, on the earth as a whole, but particularly indigenous communities that often bear the brunt of environmental disasters. The book lends its support to the Methodist Church's commitment to create a more equitable and sustainable world for existing and future generations, encouraging congregations to think about or re-imagine our roles as caretakers of God's creation.

Te Aroha Rountree's offering looks through a Māori lens. With the statement "Ko tatou te taiao, ko te taiao ko tatou" (we are the environment, and the environment is us) she highlights how Māori have always been physically and spiritually intertwined with the environment. With a deep sense of respect and reciprocity with nature, this philosophy has guided Māori cultural practices of sustainability. Central to this belief is the spiritual connectedness to God the creator of all things, and as such we are kaitiaki or guardians of those creations. To destroy our environment not only threatens our existence, but the existence of our whakapapa or future generations. Sustaining future generations she says, is our covenant, or treaty, with God to maintain this community of creation".

Tarati describes a climate justice response raising the issues of expectations and actions stating, "I am angry that the powers on earth have brought us to this time of environmental disaster. But to expect those same powers to enforce and enact positive change; and it to be timely, is wishful thinking. Expectation is an act placed on somebody else. I cannot expect others' actions to be actioned as per my expectations. Just the same as others' cannot expect my actions to be actioned as per their expectations. So, I can only live up to my own. To do what I can, when I can, where I can. If it aligns with someone else's expectations then that is the bonus. Expectation is like change. It is a personal process and choice. For change to happen in anything and anywhere, it must start within oneself.

How we shape our behaviour can be found in our pūrākau and whakataukī and speak of the relationships that bind us to the natural world, and our role as kaitiaki. The narratives we share with each other, the values and meanings they carry, shape who we are, what we value, and the choices we make. This awareness ripples and influences those near us, and further afield. Our kaitiakitanga responsibilities require us to 'keep well' the mutual relationships between people, nature and our planet. While remembering what worked in the past, we are committed to protecting and regenerating the mauri of our treasured taonga – te whānau, te awa, te whenua, te hāpori for present and future generations.



Aspirational Advent series available online.

Elizabeth Viljoen, Church and Community Engagement, cbm New Zealand

Cbm NZ (Christian Blind Mission) invite you to spread the good news and invite other friends and family to join a free four-week long inspirational online Advent series, starting on the first day of December.

"A Saviour has been born to you; He is Christ the Lord." – Luke 2:11

By registering online, participants have access to a personalised webpage, with suggested scriptures for prayer and reflection, stories of lives transformed, crafts, colouring-in activities for younger children, meaningful gift ideas for Christmas and more.

The cbm Advent series includes stories of people whose lives have been transformed by cbm's intervention and ministry that brings God's hope, peace, joy and love to people with disabilities in the world's poorest places.

An example includes the story of an eight-year-old boy named John who was going needlessly blind from congenital cataracts. He lives with his parents and younger sister in the Philippines. He is a star student and he dreams of becoming an engineer, however, those hopes were fading along with his eyesight.

He needed a miracle and it needed to happen while it was early enough for cataract surgery to be successful. His parents were struggling to earn enough money to buy food and other basic needs so they were not in a position to pay for specialist eye surgery ... But there is hope for John. Join cbm's advent series to hear more.

Participants can enjoy and deepen their experience of 'Advent at Home' or share these online activities with a home group, book club or coffee group.

If you feel moved by the Holy Spirit, please consider sharing this inspiring series, complete with slides, with your church leadership. Together, we can unite with cbm and other churches in Aotearoa to celebrate Advent, the true meaning of Christmas.

One previous participant said, "I'm really being blessed as I have taken the time to celebrate advent for the first time, in my 81st year!"

Others say: "...weekly PowerPoint slides were a blessing for busy clergy."

"...beautifully crafted, reflective and meaningful."

If you or your Church would like to view the Week One Advent presentation to see how it could support your Advent services (including the short video), please email [Elizabeth](mailto:Elizabeth@cbm.org.nz) by 15 November.

May God bless you during this Advent time.



Aging with Grace and Joy

Rev Susan Thompson

Working in aged care, I think a lot about the processes of aging, which - as I'm discovering at the ripe old age of 59 - seems a long way off until, all of a sudden, it isn't.

In his book on growing older well, the novelist Robert Dassaix says that time exists objectively; it's up to us how we decide to inhabit it. We can take up arms against it - fighting against the course of time - or we can work within it - finding some way to live within the passing moments as fully and joyfully as we can.

In some regards, fighting against the course of time is a good thing to do. If we want to stay well in body and mind, it's important to stay as active as possible. However, there comes a time for all of us when our bodies start wearing out. The processes of aging can be slowed, but they can't be stopped. We're not made to live forever.

When that happens, and we start to feel the limitations of age, it's up to us how we respond. We can get angry and frustrated with life and ourselves, or we can accept that life has changed and learn to live in a new way. At Tamahere, I see people doing both of these things. Those who seem the happiest are those who find a way to live within this new stage of life, embracing the gifts that old age brings them.

One of those gifts is the gift of not having to be in a hurry. Our residents have time to be fully present in the moment: to sit quietly in the sun, to walk in the garden, to listen to the birds and to know that they are part of God's good creation.

They also have time to connect with family and friends, both old and new. It's often a surprise and a blessing for residents to discover that even in a rest home, they can make new friends with the person across the corridor, the man who was born in the same city, the woman who also likes to play Scrabble.

Old age can offer an opportunity for residents to reflect on the story of their own lives. It's a joy to hear about the things that have given their lives depth and meaning. It can be a time for gratitude, for understanding, for tenderness towards others and themselves and maybe even for forgiveness and new beginnings.

Most of all, in this new stage of life, when residents can no longer do some of the things they once did, I hope they might learn that it's OK to simply be. In the end, who they are is more important than what they can do or even what they have done. For we are all loved just as we are by the God who is Love and in whom we live and move and have our being.



Hamilton East Celebrate Fijian Language Week

A celebratory service led by Rev Tau Lasi to mark the beginning of Fijian Language Week at St John's Methodist Church in Hamilton involved special guests, talented musicians and three outstanding choir groups.



The Ecumenical Basis for Mission

Rev Andrew Doubleday, UCANZ Facilitator

Appeals for an ecumenical future will often reference Jesus 'Upper Room discourse' found in John's Gospel chapters 13 through 17. These chapters champion a Trinitarian basis for our relationship with one another - both with God and inside the relationship with God.

Our relationships with one another are to reflect the relationships within the Trinity – relationships of absolute mutuality and interconnectedness – and are to be lived within the Trinity itself - "that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me, and I am in you. May they also be in us - so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:21)

Let's notice three things in this prayer of the Son

1. That in our relationships with one another, we imitate the relationships with God.
2. That we are included in that relationship with God – now a fourth entrant into the relationship we have known as the Trinity – in our loving of one another and God, we belong in God.
3. That this, our interrelatedness in God, then becomes the basis of our mission in the world. It's who we are in God with one another that becomes the most powerful advocacy for the life-changing efficacy of the Spirit's work within us. 'Eternal life' becomes seen by those who observe the strength of our in God relating with one another. Those 'outside' see us and say to themselves, "I want what they've got".

Imagine, instead of seeking ideological conformity, we celebrated our differences, celebrating the graces we each bring, and prioritised our relating to one another within our Hahi - in open, generous, and honouring ways? At personal, local, regional, and national levels?

Imagine, then, moving beyond our sect, we extended this same grace to other Hahi? And maybe, imagine moving in this grace even beyond other Hahi – recognising that the underpinning basis of all mission is "God so loved the World".

Imagine if, rather than seeking to bend others to our way of seeing, we received each other as reflections of the life and love of God - recognising that we are all equally loved by God, difficult though we might find that to believe.

The most difficult part is that it needs to start with me, with Andrew Doubleday, and with each me among us.

Just imagine ...



Jim's Cartoon

Brendan Boughen

Our regular cartoon that finds the funny side of faith.



NZMWF National Council Meeting 2024

Diaconate Link Selina Lavaka-Manukia

NZMWF representatives from all over Aotearoa came together at the Sudima Auckland Airport hotel from 10 - 13 October to reflect on their mission, membership, achievements and plans for the year ahead.

Our theme is supported by Philippians 4:19: "And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus".

The NZMWF Council Meeting included District leaders, Presidents, secretaries, and treasurers. These 40 representatives come from various regions, including six from Sinoti Samoa, Wasewase Fiji, NZ District; two representatives from Auckland central, North Canterbury, Dargaville, Waikato Thames Valley, Waitemata, Wellington and the NZMWF executive team.

A wonderful celebration of faith, unity and young talent

We were honoured to have Vice President of the Methodist Church, Te Rito Peyroux-Semu, as our esteemed guest speaker. Her inspiring address and words of encouragement set the tone for a productive and uplifting gathering. We were also blessed with vibrant performances from: Mangere Methodist youth, Papatoetoe Saione Sunday school and Sinoti Samoan Manurewa Methodist youth. These talented young people brought energy and joy to our meeting, emphasising the importance of inclusivity and unity within our faith community. Rev Kalo Kaisa from Avalon Parish led our thought-provoking Bible study and closing service, further enriching our spiritual journey.

Key initiatives included:

Effective communication with quarterly newsletters, regular contributions to *Touchstone*, and NZMWF updates online.

Grants and scholarships from the Smethurst Fund and Friendship Scholarship Fund to assist girls and women.

World Assembly 2026 NZMWF will host the next World Assembly in 2026. We expect up to 1,000 Methodist women from around the world. The Local Arrangements Committee (LAC) will be led by Vice President Simulata Pope.

Constitution Review A thorough review of the constitution is currently underway, guided by Ruby Schaumkel, the church's legal counsel.

Review of Executive Roles In addition to the constitution review, a task group reviewed job descriptions. Special thanks are extended to Simulata and Dr. Soana for their expert guidance in revamping these descriptions. The recommendations are now being presented to the review committee for endorsement.

New President Judith Herbert from the Waikato/Thames Valley District has been nominated to succeed President Lesieli Tiulipe Pope as the new president of the New Zealand Methodist Women's Fellowship (NZMWF) for the 2025-2027 term. This nomination was confirmed during the recent NZMWF Council meeting, where the new executive team for 2025-2027 was elected.

Moving forward; the aim is to unite all in prayer, study, fellowship, and service, with a focus on connecting with young women, in pursuit of our mission to grow in Christ and be a life giver. Leading the NZMWF has been a humbling experience, and I am deeply thankful for the dedication and expertise of our president and my team. The rest, "God will provide all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus".



Preaching Advent hope in a climate emergency.

Rev Dr Steve Taylor, on behalf of CWS

What does the climate emergency mean for our Christian life? Christian World Service is responding to this question by providing ecologically focussed Advent and Christmas resources, available now for congregations throughout Aotearoa.

In August this year, Fe'iloakitau Kaho Tevi, Advisor to the current Bishop of the Diocese of Polynesia, challenged the church. He called for the ocean to be "front and centre" in our prayers and preaching. What might it mean to sing *Away in a Manger* as rising sea levels impact the daily lives of our neighbours in Oceania?

A few months later, in October, the Consultation on Transforming Discipleship and Creation called for a "global ecological conversion." Hosted jointly by Te Rūnanga Whakawhanaungatanga i ngā Haahi o Aotearoa and the World Council of Churches, the consultation called for honest accounts as expressions of solidarity.

Christian World Service is responding to these challenges. The annual Christmas appeal includes worship outlines and preaching resources that read the Advent and Christmas Bible texts ecologically.

Over five weeks, the Gospel of Luke and *Away in a Manger* are brought into conversation with restless seas, soil habitats and Oceanic wisdoms of restraint. Koru patterns made from locally sourced flowers and leaves replace traditional Advent wreaths.

Listening to honest accounts from our neighbours in Oceania generates fresh wisdom. In the Solomon Islands, some church leaders now mix daily prayer with collecting weather information. To build solidarity, we in Aotearoa are invited to make our own rain gauge this Advent. This provides ways to compare local rainfall with the cyclones that lashed the Solomon Islands during Advent 2023.

The worship outlines and preaching resources from CWS come highly commended. The Right Rev Rose Luxford, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand says, "The effects of climate change are very real for our neighbours living in the Pacific Islands. This CWS Christmas Appeal talks of hope and provides a way in which we can give tangible support. I commend it to you."

The worship outlines and preaching resources are an Advent gift for congregations here in Aotearoa. They provide one way for the ocean to be "front and centre" in our prayers and preaching this Christmas. Resources are available on the Christian World Services [website](#).



Ngā mihi nui

Ady Shannon, Editor Touchstone

Email: adys@methodist.org.nz

Phone: 021 209 9702

Touchstone Contact Details

I welcome feedback on content included in Touchstone.



THE HOLY LAND ... IS IT!

Rev Donald Phillipps

The other day I happened on someone who had not long returned from an extensive trip to Israel and the Middle East - particularly to follow up a lifetime interest in what they called 'The Holy Land.' Their awareness of and reaction to the situation unfolding in the region was a surprise.

I asked whether they had been aware of the bitterness of the conflict between present-day Israel and its neighbours. Rather, to my surprise, they said they had not really been aware of the tension. They had felt safe enough in the places they had visited and had satisfied their interest in biblical antiquity. Maybe they did not want to know.

A century ago we would have similarly found something of that same fascination here. A brief article in a Central Otago newspaper published in June 1924 referred to the 'Americanising of the Holy Land.' Already in 1924 that process was under way. The Jews of the United States had established a colony in the Valley of Jezreel and had given it the name of Balfouria, in honour of the British politician so influential in encouraging the return of Jews in Europe to their 'homeland'. Also, about 1200 acres had been purchased by the "American Zion Commonwealth" on the shores of the Mediterranean just north of Jaffa (at a cost of £50,000) to create a city 'on American lines.' It was further reported that the methods of this organisation 'are being imitated by other undertakings of a similar character'.

We should not imagine that the eventual establishment of a Jewish State in 1947 happened all at once. The impetus for it had started 40 years earlier. How far it was influenced by a sort of idealism that could take little or no notice of the real human situation (e.g., borders) within that part of the world is a question that must now be answered in terms of practical humanity in this present day and age. The head of the State of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, has made it plain that his response to the larger question is to be found in scripture. The Holy Land is based on a promise he believes in that the Jewish people have a right to live in the land promised to them by the God of Israel. It is likely, is it not, that countless Christians will agree.

What is new and decisive, however, is that the methods of modern warfare are entirely different from those based on hand-to-hand combat. Weapons of mass destruction made their appearance less than a century ago. International borders are no barrier to air-borne missiles. Accuracy in hitting the target may be claimed, but the fact of the matter in Palestine and its neighbouring region in these present days is that such claimed accuracy is no excuse for the indiscriminate slaughter of over 20,000 women and children - 'caught in the crossfire' as they say.

In the last issue I spoke of the 1924 Peace Conference. In the 30 days since that appeared the situation in the Middle East has become even more internationally menacing. Regardless of who the instigators of the present situation might be, the historical truth of the matter is that its beginnings lie in the period prior to the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. There simply must be an unconditional cease-fire. But who will take the lead?