



In March David McKenzie made it possible for a group of us to join the Salvation Army Rapid Response team and help them ascertain the needs of those affected by the Christchurch earthquake. Most of us worked in teams of 11 to identify individual needs and attached to each of our teams were an extra two people with a small car to follow up if possible, any needs identified. Others had administration rolls or were attached to a WINZ office. I was part of a great team of people ranging in age from mid 20 to 70, male and female, Australian and Kiwi, from Salvation Army, Presbyterian, Wesleyan Methodist, Anglican and Vineyard backgrounds.

We spent most of our time listening to peoples' stories, often after some prompting as many initially said "we are fine". Everyone was stressed to some level and just being able to talk about their experience was helpful for many. But others were grieving for family members, had lost their jobs or could no longer live in their homes due to liquefaction and other damage caused by the earthquake. For these people getting back to normal is a long way off and their lives may never be the same again.

We had been provided with resources to help people in practical ways including grocery, petrol and clothing vouchers, food parcels, weekend getaways, \$500 debit cards as well as being able to offer people counselling among other services. The days were busy and long but we bonded really well as a team supporting each other with lots of humour and coffee at McDonalds. Each day ended with debriefing, support and care from the Salvation Army Headquarters in Sydenham. Senior Salvation Army Personnel from Australia and America who had come to help brought with them many years of expertise and experience. There are lots of stories of communities supporting each other, of courage and resilience but the need is ongoing and Christchurch continues to need our prayers and support. It has been a privilege to be part of this work.

**Deborah Taylor**  
**Flagstaff**

In mid March I had the privilege of answering the call of Southern Presbytery to volunteer with the Salvation Army in Christchurch for 5 days as they canvassed the people to find out the needs of the communities who were affected by the earthquake. Probably most of the time was spent listening to people's stories, but we also were able to give vouchers for clothing, fuel and groceries as well as a one-off \$500 special gift through Westpac for special needy cases. While my co-worker and I heard many heart wrenching stories, we were also very impressed with the resilience of the folk who have stayed in their homes and are determined to re-build their lives and communities in Christchurch.

The other aspect of my time there was to learn about the role of the many and various churches. Having contacts with Youth Workers in the city I was able to learn of the 24/7 scheme where Christian Youth Workers have been placed in most Secondary Schools and have become invaluable to the education sector by being asked to be the first line for counselling for the students and teachers alike. Also some denominations combine each year to run Easter Camp attracting 4000 young people last year. This year the committee wondered if they might cancel Camp as it could be a huge strain on the volunteers who work there each year as many of them are picking up the pieces of their lives. However the deputy Mayor asked for the Camp to be run this Easter as in the Council's mind the young people need the Camp. I praised God that the 'powers that be' recognise the work of the Christians in Christchurch for what they are doing. I also heard of many local congregations who are out there door knocking in their own areas checking on folk and offering help. Church buildings not affected by the quake, have been opened up to other denominations and fellowships who have no place to worship, and they are now sharing the facilities, in some cases 4 different services each Sunday. Christian leaders of all denominations are meeting together for prayer, support and strategy planning.

When we were having devotions one morning we had a time of silence to listen to what God was telling us, and I clearly heard him say "You show them my love and I will heal them" I certainly saw God at work in and through the Christians in Christchurch.

**Nancy Burnett**  
**Makarewa (Southland)**

### **Applications to the Synod Mission and Evangelism Fund:**

Forms are available from the Southern Presbytery Clerk, or you can download them from the Synod website:  
[www.synod.org.nz](http://www.synod.org.nz)

Applications need to be in the hands of the Southern Presbytery Clerk, **by 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011. No late applications!**

#### ***Please note:***

*There are new forms. Do not use an old form you have saved on your computer.*

*Forms sent in the old format will be sent back to you.*

### **Southern Presbytery Council**

meets at Matura on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June at 11 am. Any business and reports to the Clerk by 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011