



sPanz

Spanning Presbyterians In Aotearoa New Zealand

September 2007, Issue 32

Serving Vanuatu

Our response to a troubled paradise

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Should we have a theological perspective on technology?

Recent PhD graduate Stephen Garner weighs the interface between technology and humanity

In our garden there is a path that runs from the back door to the clothesline. At the start of the path, the boundary between path and lawn is easy to see, but by the time the path gets to the clothesline it's less obvious. The lawn has encroached upon the path, and the boundary between grass and concrete slabs is now blurred. A similar blurring of boundaries is also a recurrent theme in discussions about contemporary technology. Under pressure from new digital and biotechnologies, the borders between human and non-human, organic and inorganic, natural and synthetic, creature and machine are sometimes hard to discern. In many ways technology has ceased to be just a tool we use, but instead is now the

very environment in which we exist. It is as if we have become invisibly wrapped in media.

Awareness of this dependence upon technology, and its power to reshape our world, is seen in both a sense of wonder that human beings can achieve such things, and also in a sense of anxiety that we will misuse this power. In particular, recent cinema has seen a progression of films that ask questions about what it means to be human and how to live with the consequences of human technological power. These responses to technology mirror a Christian understanding that human relationships with technology are ambiguous. On the one hand, those relationships can become idolatrous and displace God, and technology can be used as an unjust instrument of power over others, including the natural world. On the other hand, technology can become the vehicle through which human beings carry out their response to God in creative, compassionate and just ways.

When we look at the environments that we live within, such as our workplaces, our churches, our schools and our homes, it is critical that we ask ourselves whether the technologies we use are appropriate to a calling to be creative, compassionate and just before God. Are the technologies we employ appropriate to the task at hand; do they solve the perceived problem; what other problems do they create? Are they ecologically sound and sustainable, not just for our local community, but also in light of other more distant communities that might be affected by them and their production? Do the technologies we use create social injustices, working in ways that marginalise or dehumanise parts of our community? And do these technologies affect us at a personal level, possibly becoming idols in their own right?

Answering these questions will be an ongoing process, but it is critical to address them if the Church and its members are to understand what it means to be the people of God in a technocultural world. It will involve listening not only to the voices



Dr Stephen Garner

of the technologists and theologians, but also to the voices of everyday people who use and are affected by technology in our society.

This means that we must listen to the voices of those who have grown up within a culture permeated with the presence of home computers, video games, the Internet and participatory media, as well as those who haven't. It means listening to how technology affects our workplaces and businesses, as well as listening to those on the wrong side of the "digital divide", where issues to do with poverty, debt and other forms of disadvantage work to establish an "information poverty". The voices of those involved in areas such as medicine, teaching, and pastoral care also need to be heard, as do the voices of those who are served by those areas. And finally, it will involve talking to members of our congregations – young and old, male and female – about how the technologies in their world shape life and faith.

By listening to these various voices, and the hopes and fears that they express about technologies in our society, we can build up a better picture of the world around us in order to speak back into our individual lives, our church communities and the wider communities that we belong to, and to act in ways that use technology creatively, compassionately and justly before God.

Stephen Garner recently completed a PhD in Theology at the University of Auckland engaging with emerging digital technologies. He is a contributor to the Wikiklesia Project (www.wikiklesia.org) and blogs about science, faith, technology, and pop culture at www.greenflame.org.



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Photo credit: Martin Baker

The Right Rev Pamela Tankersley contributes a regular column to sPanz

Moderator's musings

Christ-centred, community-facing mission is what we have been focussing on in parishes and presbyteries. I have been encouraging parish engagement on a local level, calling us all to "seek the shalom of the place where we have been sent, for in its shalom, we will find our shalom". But what do we understand by the concept community in this individualistic and isolationist New Zealand of the 21st century?

Most city churches are gathered communities, drawing folk from all over the area. Some come because it is their local church but others come because of long-established family ties, or preferences for a theological stream or worship. Others come because the age structure provides more opportunities for children's ministry or a youth peer group. Which is all fine and typical of other institutions in our society – aren't those big housing subdivisions in Auckland and Christchurch designed to be dormitories rather than communities? We recognised this in our Assembly decision a few years ago when we abolished the concept of parish bounds.

In rural NZ, we might think being the centre of a local community is easier, but in my travels I've discovered that what has always been taken for granted is no longer so. Our farmers will tell you that community spirit is a shadow of "what it used to be" especially in those areas where the type of farming is changing – particularly as sheep farming has given way to dairy farming in mid Canterbury or to vineyards in Marlborough.

But then the question is well asked: who and what is the community we are called to serve in mission?

Community "used to be" formed in and through our churches but contemporary folk make community instead within schools and pubs, sports clubs and coffee bars – and often these activities and groups are not located in a specific area, but are "gathered" communities too, with minimal demands of belonging and contributing. How do we as church engage with this kind of community?



Pamela with Vaughn Milner, CEO of Presbyterian Support Upper South Island, on the occasion of a celebration of a new partnership between Support and St George's Iona, Christchurch

I've been pondering on the tensions between being an attractional church and an incarnational one. In simple terms, the attractional church says, "come and find the Christ among us" – the incarnational church says Christ is "out there" and calls us to join him.

While I strongly encourage worshipping communities that bring glory to God and empower and equip each other for a life in Christ, I wonder if we need now to be churches that play the "away game" more frequently. It takes us out of our comfort zone, but maybe we will find Christ in those communities of interest that our society has established outside the church. It will create some interesting partnerships for us, as we listen to, walk beside, and engage with those who have yet to find the transforming love of Jesus in their lives. And maybe in this way we will bring about new community.

Lots of questions, but as we journey on being *Christ-centred and community-facing*, they are questions we need to grapple with.

May Christ be with you and your community as you journey as people of the Way.



Have we failed
Vanuatu?

Vanuatu is the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand's primary mission partner, but what does that really mean? Amanda Wells talks to past and current missionaries to find out what lies beneath sunny skies and palm trees.

Search for stories on Vanuatu and you get either paens to paradise or tales of aid, poverty and corruption.

Attracting tourists has become vital to the country's economic health, with tourism accounting for 16 percent of Vanuatu's gross domestic product and generating 75 percent of total foreign earnings. Most of these sun-seekers come from New Zealand and Australia.

In 2006, a survey conducted by the United Kingdom-based New Economics Foundation declared that Vanuatu was the happiest place on Earth, according to their "Happy Planet Index". The index combines life expectancy, the degree of contentment reported by a country's inhabitants, their use of resources and other such statistics ranging from hard data to subjective factors (New Zealand came 94th).

But Kiwi Presbyterian missionary Jon Parkes says this label is too simplistic. "In Vanuatu there are suicides, there is islandism (racism), there are major land ownership issues, there is HIV-AIDS and heaps of sexually transmitted diseases."

Jon and Viv Parkes, and their children Phillip, Simon, William and Connie, are spending two years at Talua College, near Luganville. Jon is teaching English at Talua College and also some classes in basic business skills at Navota Rural Training Centre.

Before arriving in Vanuatu in 2006, Jon had visited several times and gained an awareness some of the challenges they would face. "One thing that took me a while to get my head around was the amount of time and energy required for simply existing/surviving; it seems a drain on any productive work."

But Jon says there are many positives about working in Vanuatu. "Over here it is so easy to help, because things are at such a basic level that anyone from New Zealand could help. The only danger would be a co-dependent person self-exploding from all the requests to do this, that and the other thing – you need good boundaries."

He says financial accountability can be an issue, particularly in terms of where aid money or donations end up.

For more than 100 years, New Zealand Presbyterians have been forging friendships with the people of Vanuatu. Assembly Executive Secretary Martin Baker visited Vanuatu in June. He says the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand's future role will include supporting and engaging with the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, as well as continuing to raise awareness of the country's situation.

Vanuatu's population is only 200,000, dispersed among 29 islands, with many more islands uninhabited. Thirty-five percent of the population attend the Presbyterian Church.

Says Martin: "we have a country that has all the indications of a poor developing nation. That in itself is a startling reality. By every indicator in New Zealand, these people are impoverished."

"When Jesus talks about the poor, he's talking about these people who are our neighbours. What is our response to real poverty? The situation in Vanuatu puts New Zealand's issues into perspective."

The New Zealand Government is giving Vanuatu \$85 million between 2006-2010, managed by development agency NZAID. The main goal of this programme is poverty reduction, particularly in rural areas, to help support stability and economic growth.

China, Taiwan, Korea, the European Union all appear to see Vanuatu as having a strategic role in the Pacific, with a concomitant flow of aid. Martin says it is noticeable that in Port Vila, Vanuatu's capital, many countries are spending a lot of money creating aid organisations and setting up embassies, obscuring some of the local economy's harsh realities.

"There's the sense of a good deal of money being poured into that place. It almost adds to the confusion."

The Rev Neal Whimp, who served in Vanuatu between 1969 and 1980, says one of the big needs in Vanuatu is training in money management. The way in which foreign aid is used often becomes a source of cultural misunderstandings, he says.

But Jon Parkes cautions against jumping to judgement; "in the West, our extravagance is more of a crime".

The consumerist trappings of Western society are starting to change Vanuatu's agrarian way of life, Jon says.

"With radio, Internet, DVDs, satellite TV and tourists, the 'god of money and self' is forcing itself into even the most remote villages... with this new flow of information into Vanuatu, youth will have a very different worldview from their parents."

Jon is aware divergent views exist about Vanuatu's future; "one staff member here thinks that in 10 years' time, what happened in the Solomons last year could happen here, with land ownership issues getting out of hand and a change in culture from the old ways."

Australian property developers have been selling shorefront leases for huge amounts, increasing social tension as some benefit while others remain empty handed. There is no protection against international hotel chains buying land from one tribe, to the detriment of inter-tribal relations, or against massive profits being taken offshore.

Jon says Kiwis need to consider carefully the best way to support Vanuatu. "My opinion is by not helping too much and instead creating ongoing friendships and relationships with churches and people here. Send a team to a village, ensure your visit does not cause any financial burden on the locals, and work together on a project – whatever size your group can handle. It's the coming over, the sitting on the roof chatting and the hanging out together that really helps; enforcing our Presbyterian work ethic does not help. Don't turn up and do the work on your own; work and play and enjoy God with the locals."

"In the end, it's not about the project, it's about relationships. If you are really serious, raise extra money and host some of them to your church for a week or too; then they can really see all our bad habits in their full glory."

Global Mission Enabler the Rev Andrew Bell agrees that hosting Ni-Van trips to New Zealand is "stage two" of mission trips. Many New Zealand churches are organising short-term trips to Vanuatu with the help of the Global Mission Office.

Two teams from St Paul's in Katikati recently headed out one after the other to work on the same building project, immediately followed by a team from Ellesmere Co-operating.

Similarly, Blenheim's Wairau Valley Community Church is working on stage two of a project started by Tauranga's St Columba.

Andrew says one downside of this approach is that a limited number of places receive a huge benefit, but experience has shown that if the effort is spread wider but more thinly, "we almost achieve nothing". By working together and developing meaningful local relationships, these Kiwi church groups are making a lasting impact, he says.

It can be difficult for the Ni-Van to turn down offers, even if they don't fit well in their context, Andrew says, partly because of the history of missionary assistance. For example, some New Zealanders might decide to donate a truck, then visit Vanuatu six months later and find it's standing in a field. "Did you check if they had money to pay for diesel?"

Subsistence farming means working from dawn to sunset to feed yourself and your family, rather than producing capital that can pay for things like fuel.

He says the history of mission in Vanuatu has fostered a culture of dependency. "Millions have been poured in there over the years, but we've done it few favours. I'm not convinced the relationship should be perpetuated in the way it is. We talk about partnership, but a better word is 'friendship'".

Andrew says the integrity of the Ni-Van is important to him. "I prefer not to do something if by doing it I violate their integrity as people. I want us to meet as equals; as brothers and sisters."

Neal Whimp talks of observing the move towards political independence during his time in Vanuatu, which the country achieved in 1980: "when I arrived, they would say 'white people brought the church here: you must show us how to run it'".

He has been back to Vanuatu several times, most recently in 2005 to teach a short course at Talua. He says independence has worked well for the Church in Vanuatu. "I've been really impressed by the strength of the leadership."

He says work parties can be good for establishing relationships "but they've got to be very consciously cooperative ventures, not just us going over there and doing something for them".

It's better for Ni-Van communities to be supported in building their own infrastructure, he says, otherwise an inability to carry out on-going maintenance is likely to sabotage the project's intent.

"The main thing about a work party is to find ways to interact with people where they are. We need to continue to look for strategic training opportunities to help people equip themselves, opportunities that interface their culture with global culture."

But as Jon Parkes says, it's worth remembering that "my responses are coloured by my Western worldview that is not all it's cracked up to be".

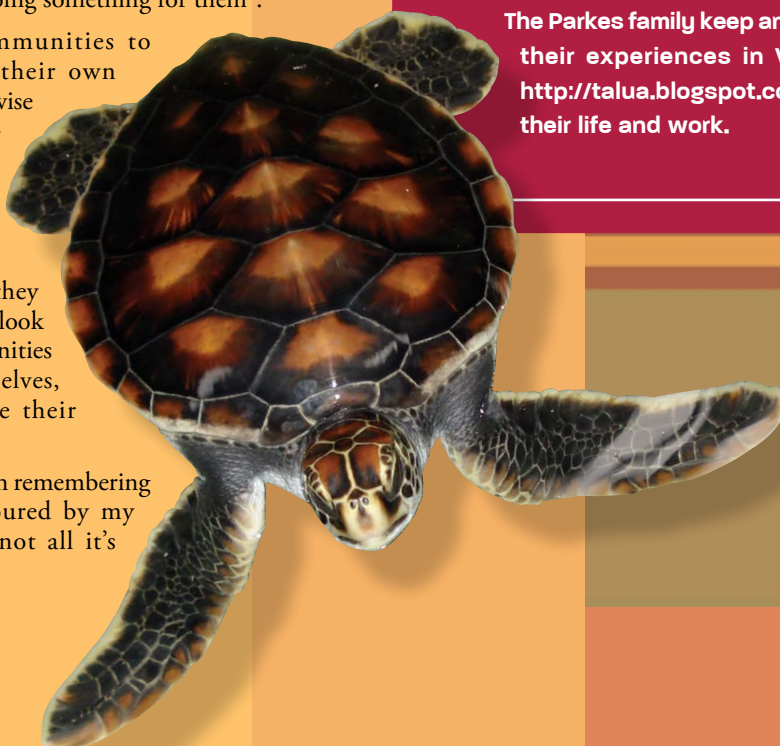


Want to serve in Vanuatu?

The Global Mission Office is always looking for people to undertake a task in Vanuatu. Whether you are an individual or a church group, the GMO can broker an opportunity that is just right for you. Email globalmission@xtra.co.nz to get in touch.

About the Parkes

The Parkes family keep an online diary detailing their experiences in Vanuatu: check out <http://talua.blogspot.com> for the latest on their life and work.



Presbyterians contribute funding to new theology and public issues centre

Generous donations from the estate of businessman Howard Paterson and the Synod of Otago and Southland will bankroll a theologically informed voice on social issues from the University of Otago.

The head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, Professor Paul Trebilco, says the new Centre for Theology and Public Issues will view prominent social issues through a theological lens, collaborate with other disciplines to produce research, hold conferences, make submissions to select committees and generate comment for media.

The Howard Paterson Chair in Theology and Public Issues is being advertised at the moment, and Paul says it is hoped that the successful applicant would start in April or May 2008. Paul says the work of public theology involves defining society as it is, rather than getting caught up in left or right arguments. The centre will focus on developing a respected voice that contributes to the public debate with both humility and confidence.

He says there exists an openness to a clearly articulated religious outlook. "If we do our homework well, there is an interest in what we have to say."

"We will be up front that we are a centre for theology, having an explicitly Christian point of view."

Issues up for discussion could encompass law and order, race relations, religious conflict and terrorism, the construction of good communities, poverty, and social welfare.

Howard Paterson, a businessman who died unexpectedly in 2003, had studied the phenomenology of religion at Otago and retained an interest in theology. The Paterson Charitable Trust has made a major donation towards the Centre, with support also coming from the Synod of Otago and Southland, and Southland businessman Ian Tulloch QSO and his wife Annette.

The Leading Thinkers initiative means the government matches every dollar of private contributions. Paul says the new centre was one of the last projects to secure this funding, which has seen 25 new positions created across the university.

The centre's \$1.175 million in private donations take its initial capital to \$2.35 million.

Work on the centre, which will be based in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, started about three years ago. The Synod of Otago and Southland was the first to promise funding, as well as giving another grant recently.

Paul says having adequate start-up capital is significant because some centres in other countries have been bedevilled by the need to continually fundraise.

The centre will work with and serve the Churches, he says, with the intention to develop partnerships and work across denominations.

The chair will teach one paper a year, starting in the second semester next year. This paper will be on theology and public issues and offered through the distance teaching programme, for third and fourth year, with a different paper offered the following year. The chair will also supervise research and PhD students.

"Hopefully the staff numbers will grow through securing outside funding for research."

Paul says one of the new appointment's first tasks will be to establish which issues the centre will focus on in the first two or three years. He says the centre will develop a perspective that's informed both by theology and by research in other areas. For example, a significant contribution to the environment debate needs to be informed both by a theological and public policy perspective.

Paul says there are many Christians working in different disciplines who have expressed interest in being part of this type of collaboration.

The centre will also be part of a global network of public theology that was established in May; a meeting which senior lecturer Murray Rae attended. Murray says there are three or four particularly well-established centres that provide useful models.

By Amanda Wells *sPanz*



Professor Paul Trebilco, head of the University of Otago's Department of Theology and Religious Studies

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More than 150 youth leaders from the Far North to Southland spent the first weekend in July being inspired and equipped at this year's Connect conference, held at Forest Lakes Christian Camp near Wellington.

Twenty-five delegates from the Council for World Mission's Pacific Region youth conference were also part of Connect, adding an international perspective.

The new Presbyterian Youth Ministry staff team of Stephanie Redhead, Robyn Burnett and Judy Te Whiu provided organisational effort, guided by the Focus Group, which is a team of experienced youth workers from around New Zealand that provides ongoing input into PYM's direction.

While Gore-based Stephanie was appointed late last year and Christchurch-based Robyn started in her role this year, Judy's appointment is more recent. She lives in Northland and will balance her role at PYM with work for Open Tent Ministries.

Judy says the Connect experience was "overawing". "I've been blown away by the energy and servanthood of the Focus Group." She says the initial focus of her PYM role will be listening to youth leaders about where and how they need support.

Judy spent a lot of time with the international guests, who were enjoying the passion of Connect despite the physical temperature difference from their homelands. "It's inspired them to go back and talk to people in their churches about trying new things."

The CWM delegates came from Papua New Guinea, American Samoa, Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa, Tonga, New Zealand, the Solomon Islands and Kiribati. Three Vanuatu youth leaders also attended Connect as guests of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Kiwi Presbyterian delegate Andrew Colgan



Action at the Connect basketball tournament

says it was the first regional youth conference of its type for the Pacific and will hopefully be a regular event in the future. It had the theme of "transforming youth in the communities of the Pacific", with speakers on: children's ministry, youth issues, HIV/AIDS, youth Alpha, Christianity and culture, fair trade, leadership, culture and personal boundaries, mission and going somewhere.

Andrew says the highlight of the conference was the relationships formed and the energy for continued and frequent interaction between youth of Pacific churches in future.

"The international guests were very impressed by Connect and all wished it had been longer."

Connect 2007 keynote speaker Neil Carter, youth worker at St John's Rotorua, focussed on PYM's guiding principles of "in, around and out", with a particular emphasis on how to build young people into disciples.

As in previous years, worship lead by the Connect Band from PIC Newtown was one of the high points of the weekend.

Wet weather meant a basketball tournament instead of the usual outdoor games on

Saturday afternoon, with winners receiving PYM hoodies. Participants included a team comprising Moderator Pamela Tankersley, Assembly Executive Secretary Martin Baker and National Mission Enabler John Daniel, although their team failed to advance past the first round.

Saturday night saw the dinner hall decorated for a special meal, after which the CWM delegates introduced themselves and performed some songs.

Other dinner entertainment included one quiz on aspects of Presbyterianism, won by the table at which the Moderator happened to be seated, and another on the Pacific, at which the CWM delegates proved strong.

Sandy Gorman, a first-time attender from Dunedin's Otago Peninsula Presbyterian Parish, says she found Connect inspirational. Sandy started as youth worker at her church at the end of April, with the aim of establishing a youth group, after realising that their 10- and 11-year-olds had nowhere to go next.

"I'm so excited to come here. I've met so many people and it's so supportive."

By Amanda Wells sPanz

Connecting for the first time

As a first-time goer to Connect, I was quite excited to hook up with national youth leaders. My expectations were: to make some awesome, lasting connections, to fill my headspace with any new ideas that might bring a new freshness or deeper level into my youth ministry (the VIP CREW from Lumsden Balfour Kingston Church), and to chill out with like-minded, youth-passionate people.

Well, my expectations were not just met but exceeded. Even though the weekend was pretty full on, it was done in relax mode. We had the privilege of a fantastic main speaker and for me it was

so encouraging to hear that making disciples and not converts is really what is on God's, YHWH's, heart for the Church throughout NZ. The workshops we could choose from were so practical and relevant that it was so difficult to choose only two out of the 12! That was for sure time well spent.

One thing that made Connect for me was the small group time – Group 10 you rock ☺. For it was in the small group that we got to know each other better, throw ideas around and made awesome new friends – and yes, we are still keeping in touch. And for me that's what Connect is all about.

Did I mention the worship time? The Connect Band was so Spirit-filled and fun that it was hard to stop worshipping when another session started. I just loved the fact that we had heaps of

Fronting up- Robyn Burnett

What does your role involve?

I have two very exciting new roles; for half of my time I am the youth director at St Margaret's Presbyterian Church in Bishopdale (Christchurch) and for the other half of my time I am assistant to National Youth Coordinator - South and am the regional youth coordinator for Christchurch. As youth director at St Margs I get to hang out with some fantastic youth leaders, some amazing young people and oversee the youth ministries that happen there. In my national/regional role I am here to support youth leaders and youth ministries in Presbyterian churches mainly in Christchurch. Also I support and assist Stephanie Redhead in her role as National Youth Coordinator - South.

Why did you choose this ministry?

Arguably this ministry chose me... I have always been a people person and have also had a big heart to help people. After university I was working in a "dead end" job and while overseas I decided I wanted more. After coming back I began an internship at Bible College of New Zealand with Hornby Presbyterian Community Church. Throughout that journey I discovered a passion for young people that naturally progressed into what I'm doing now.

What have you learned about God through this work?

One thing I've learnt... A friend e-mailed me recently with Philippians 4:13 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me". I guess I always thought I understood this but since beginning this new chapter in my life, these two new jobs, I have been



learning that if he calls you he will remain faithful and will give you the strength you need to face every challenge that comes your way; and they will come.

What is the most exciting thing about being involved in it?

I am passionate about young people reaching their potential and growing to know God. What I love about my two jobs is one that I get to hang out with some amazing young people and journey with them and it's always exciting to see God become real for them. And two I get to see and work with some fantastic people who are doing really great stuff in their own patches yet they're having an impact on the whole country. I am excited about what God is doing in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, particularly in youth ministry and am constantly challenged about what God has in store for us in the future.

What have been the biggest challenges?

For me it's been seeing beyond my own perceived limitations. I often feel like Moses who didn't want to take up his God-given leadership. I am learning that God has chosen me so I just have to keep putting myself in his care and he will do the rest.

Who has inspired you?

God has blessed me with amazing people in my life so it's difficult to narrow it down but

here are a few. My Grandmother inspired me because she was the person who I always felt the most love from as I was growing up. My parents constantly inspire me, they love God above all and I wouldn't even have a relationship with God if it wasn't for them. Janice Talbot inspires me she has walked the journey with me never judging me and her love for people even in her own difficult situation is so inspiring. Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King Jr, Bono. There's so many more but I should stop there...

Where to from here/ what are future plans?

Well...I would have never in a million years thought I would be doing what I'm doing so all I can say is watch this space. However I am planning on seeing and connecting with as many people in Presbyterian churches as possible, so if you're in Christchurch (particularly but not exclusively) and I haven't contacted you then PLEASE contact me.

Do you have any recommended books/ CDs?

CDs: I recommend anything from Dave Matthews, U2, Third Day, and Brooke Fraser.

My favourite books have to be *Blue Like Jazz* and *Searching for God knows What* both by Donald Millar. Also *Wild Ones* by Michael Duncan and *Finding Life* by Ashley Barker: these are books put out by Urban Neighbours of Hope, and I've found anything put out by them has been life-changing and inspiring for me. I highly recommend them.

Where can I learn more about what you do?


You can contact me on robyn@stmargaretsbishopdale.co.nz or call (03) 359-0149 or 027 367-1168. I would love to hear from you especially if you're in Christchurch and I haven't met you yet.

praise and worship sessions - good on the PYM Team - for we were there because we love the only true God and what is more awesome than to worship and praise Him for what he did and who He is and get energized through it (or that might have been all the free chocolates and lollies).

Saturday night was a very special event, starting with dinner and finishing off with an awesome worship time. Finishing Connect with communion was very cool for it just reminded us that even though we are doing our own thing throughout NZ, we are still part of one body; the Church, but also taking it bigger, Jesus Christ. What an amazing encouragement that was and is. It was so difficult to say good bye to precious new friends and leave the camping ground that we missed our flight back to Christchurch due to being late, but Steph was so cool in the way she handled it!

Being back in my own patch, Northern Southland, again, Connect has made me feel part of something bigger and that I belong somewhere. Even if we will just see each other once a year at Connect, I have all the contact details of everyone that was there on a list - thanks PYM Team - and that makes me feel I'm not alone in youth ministry!

So if you're reading this and wondering if you missed out, well, the answer is YES YOU DID, but the good news is CONNECT IS EVERY YEAR! So get on to it and make sure you don't miss it again!!!

By Maddy Erasmus 

Trust to honour

Alan Brash

The Very Rev Alan Brash, former Moderator and a pioneer of the ecumenical movement in New Zealand, is being honoured with an appeal to mark the 50th jubilee of an organisation he helped establish.

The Christian Conference of Asia, of which Alan Brash was a founding member, has established an endowment fund to provide education, peace, justice, aid and development programmes in various countries.

The appeal offers New Zealanders the opportunity to honour his life and his contribution to ecumenical endeavours by contributing to the Alan Brash Memorial Fund. In December 2007 the funds raised in New Zealand will be donated to the CCA Endowment Fund.

In the spirit of CCA, the appeal is an ecumenical initiative, and Christian World Service is involved in collecting donated funds. The Right Rev Pamela Tankersley, who is the New Zealand representative on the CCA's General Committee, explains that CCA plans to use the funds raised to support initiatives such as:

- Theology scholarships for deserving candidates from developing countries like Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia
- Bringing together Asian theologians to produce theologies that are contextual and relevant for our times
- Bringing together practitioners from diverse faith communities to draw out the ethical, religious, theological and missiological implications on issues of ecology, global warming and genetic research

Contributing to the Fund, which will be administered by CCA, is "about helping us play our role in the Asian church," says Pamela.

Alan Brash is recognised as a strong pacifist and was prominent for many years in the ecumenical movement in New Zealand. He was awarded an OBE in 1962 in recognition of forging closer links between New Zealand and Asia.



His children, who include former National Party leader Don Brash, have given their warm support to the initiative and former Governor General Sir Paul Reeves has agreed to be a patron of the appeal.

Pamela, who was present at the Auckland launch of the appeal on 26 August, says the steering group chose the two locations for the launch – Mairangi and Castor Bays (North Shore) and St Ninian's Riccarton – because of Alan Brash's involvement in these parishes during his retirement.

Pamela says one of the main purposes of the appeal, alongside raising funds for programmes, is to honour the former Moderator, whom she describes a "one of our ecumenical heroes".

Parishes or persons wishing to make a donation to the appeal can do so via Christian World Service by phoning 0800 747-372 or visiting their website at www.cws.org.nz. Or for more information, check out the Presbyterian website at www.presbyterian.org.nz

By Jose Reader *sPanz*

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Koinonia Fund KiwiSaver update *Chris Grantham says:*

August 2007

1. The sun is streaming in today. At the weekend it's going to rain. Typical.
2. I'm saving for a rainy day and for a sunny day. Like, retirement.
3. Koinonia Fund enquiries are streaming in today.
4. In 5, 10 or 15 years the money could be streaming out to happy retirees. Like me.
5. Koinonia Fund is a KiwiSaver scheme for employees of churches and other Christian organisations*.
6. To maximise your returns, give the KiwiSaver deduction form to your employer quick as. You've still got 3 months to choose your *actual* KiwiSaver scheme.
7. You can choose Koinonia Fund if you're an employee of a church or other Christian organisation*. Contact us!
8. All profits go to Koinonia Fund members. Like, you. If you join, that is.
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*Like church schools, rest homes, service agencies, other mission groups.



Chris Grantham
KiwiSaver Consultant
for the Koinonia Fund

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Maungapohatu land

On Saturday 4 August, a special service was held at Maungapohatu, in the Ureweras, to return land from the Presbyterian Church to the local people.

Te Aka Puaho and the Presbyterian Church Property Trustees conducted lengthy negotiations to return the title of the land to the Te Mapou Papakainga Trust of Maungapohatu. Negotiations started in 1991 but stalled several times; they resumed last year and the Rev Wayne Te Kaawa carried out extensive research into the complex history of the property and its title.

Wayne says this research revealed that the property was originally part of a 60 acre Mapou Papakainga block that belonged to the people of Maungapohatu, with ownership residing with the hapu rather than any individual.

In 1923 the Crown purchased part of this Papakainga block. In 1927 it sold this property to the Presbyterian Church for £10.

“It is wonderful that the property is returning to the Mapou Papakainga Trust, completing the circle.”

The Rev John Loughton started a mission and school on the land in 1918, both of which operated until 1950, after which the buildings gradually fell into disrepair. The property will be restored to maintain its unique character, with uses under consideration including housing, a school, Kohanga reo and retreat centre.

given back to local hapu



The school house at Maungapohatu in winter, during the 1940s

The handover celebrations started with a visit to the grave of Sister Annie Henry, who had established a school and mission in Ruatahuna in 1917, both of which are still operating.

After this a special service was held in Maungapohatu, with several hundred guests including the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, the Assembly Executive Secretary, representatives of the Church Property Trustees and the Council of Assembly, and many connected with early missionary families.

On the Sunday a special service was held to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the relationship between the Presbyterian Church and the Tuhoe Iwi. The relationship

began when Sister Annie Henry established her mission and school in Ruatahuna and Mrs Annie Gorrie started her school and mission in Te Whaiti.

The weekend of celebrations concluded on Monday 6 August with an invitation from Whakatane Museum to the people of Maungapohatu and Ruatahuna to view some taonga of the Tuhoe people. These taonga were gifted to the Rev John Loughton and Sister Annie Henry while they ministered in Maungapohatu and Ruatahuna. Included among the 50 artefacts are a cooking pot that belonged to Captain James Cook and a carved gourd brought to Aotearoa New Zealand aboard the Mataatua waka in 1350.

By Amanda Wells 

Presbyterian decision prompts wind-up of CASI

The Presbyterian Church's withdrawal of funding from the Churches Agency on Social Issues has resulted in a decision to wind down the agency at the end of this year.


The Council of Assembly decided at its March meeting that the Church's mission goals would be better served through vehicles other than the agency, for which the Presbyterian Church provided the majority of funding.

After consultation about the Presbyterian Church's decision, the Methodist Church

and the Associated Church of Christ decided to bring the work of CASI to an end on 31 December 2007. Paul Thompson, CASI's Research and Liaison Officer, will conclude his work when his contract ends on that date. Presbyterian Church Assembly Executive Secretary Martin Baker says an occasion to give thanks for the work of CASI will be held towards the end of the year.

Up until the end of the year, CASI will continue its work on climate change resources, on its themes for 2007 (families under pressure, climate changes, crime and punishment and binge culture), continue the bi-monthly publication of *Broadsheet*, and make submissions to parliament on

several bills. See CASI's website for more information: www.casi.org.nz

Martin has directed the Assembly Office communications team to develop resources that will allow congregations to engage with social issues. He says it's intended that these resources will provide a good analysis, a strong commitment to sound Biblical and theological reflection, and engage both church members and those seeking to explore with what a Christian view-point might be on a particular issue. The creation of the first of these resources, which explores issues surrounding aging, was contracted out to Presbyterian Support Otago, and its distribution was planned for September. 

Book Reviews

George: The Secrets of an Ordinary Kiwi by George Bryant

Juliette Bowater evaluates the autobiography of a multi-talented minister

George is the autobiography of the incredibly busy George Bryant. The book begins with his birth in pre-war Ashburton and traces his life (and emerging faith) as he became, at different times: schoolteacher, budding politician, principal, globetrotter and, finally, minister.

I enjoyed reading this book for several reasons. The first being, literally, an accident of birth, in that Bryant belongs to what social researchers term the “silent generation”. There’s nothing silent about Bryant and it’s an interesting insight into an age group that undeservedly gets little airtime.

Another reason that I liked this book was the strength of the writing. Let's be honest, not all autobiographies are well written. Bryant frequently alludes to his struggle with the written word but I'm pleased to say that in this book he is relational and sweeps the reader along on his journey. In fact, parts of the book strongly reminded me of another writer – Harper Lee.

However, the real standout is Bryant's passion and enthusiasm for what he does and believes in. He has a point of view and he isn't afraid to share it! Although I didn't necessarily always agree with Bryant, it was a refreshing and challenging read.

I cannot really fault *George*. Of course, as with every autobiography, the reader is at times left wondering about the inclusion or emphasis placed on a particular episode in the writer's life – and its significance. Thankfully, these moments are few and far between here. Bryant is clear at the outset what it is he wants to impart to the reader. sPanz

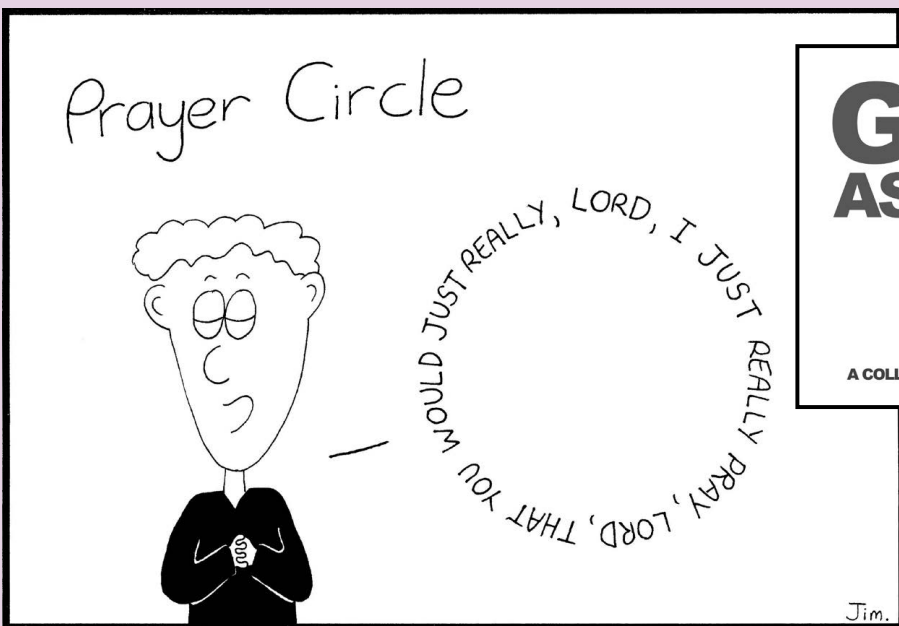
Gone Astray: A collection of (sac)religious cartoons by Jim

Jim is the alter ego of Brendan Boughen, who grew up in the Australian Lutheran Church and now lives in Auckland.

Most of his cartoons poke gentle fun at religious culture, in the way that only someone with intimate familiarity can. As Boughen says in the introduction, “for the first 30 years of my life, my life was the Church.” But after years of immersion he started to examine previously unquestioned beliefs. His cartoons trace a journey that has involved an unflinching examination of forms and traditions.

As *Gone Astray*'s back-cover blurb says, "religion and cartoons are a dangerous mix", and the easily offended may perceive insult within its pages. But it's hard to imagine anyone who has sat through a church service failing to raise a wry smile. Like Adrian Plass, Boughen practices a brand of humour that magnifies the foibles of the Church without negating its heart. His subtle attacks are aimed at "churchianity" that forgets its foundation rather than Christianity itself.

I love these cartoons. They're intelligent, funny, and moving. Despair over bizarre traditions or institutionalism is transmuted into the sense that with laughter comes hope, and that perhaps even God might even laugh. Collected together in this book, the individual cartoons form a greater whole and reward repeated viewings. **Reviewed by Amanda Wells** [sPanZ](#)



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Auckland Mayoress urges people to support their communities

Auckland mayoress Diana Hubbard is urging people to support their communities through donating their time and/or money to worthwhile causes.

Speaking at a luncheon organised by Presbyterian Support Northern (PSN) for its Auckland Bequest Society members, she said society relies on not-for-profit organisations, charities, volunteers and donors.

"There's a great deal of need in the community and only so much Government funding to go around, that's why not-for-profits and charities, volunteers and donors are so critical."

Actively involved in the community and a supporter of numerous not-for-profits and charities herself, she commended "all the good hearted people who give so generously".

"Many aspects of our life depend on the willingness of people to share their time and their money to support others. It's lovely to see people continue to provide for present and future generations."

Her sentiments are echoed by PSN's Fundraising Manager Linda Stratford.

"While we have funding for some of our work we rely heavily on support from the community in order to meet the demand for our services and programmes," she says.

"We know the support we provide to children and their families, older people



Auckland mayoress Diana Hubbard

and younger disabled people is having a positive impact and we want to ensure that current and future generations can continue to benefit from it – but we need more volunteers and donations in order to guarantee that. Whether it's a \$50 donation or a larger bequest any support we receive is greatly appreciated"


Linda explains that bequests are one way of supporting Presbyterian Support Northern.

"Leaving a bequest in your will can serve as a lasting and significant memorial," she says.

Over the past 18 months, Linda has been leading a bequest promotion programme, including setting up bequest societies in Auckland, Tauranga and Hamilton as a way of building relationships and improving communication with loyal PSN supporters.

"This includes organising bi-annual luncheons for the bequest society members that provide us with an opportunity to thank our regular supporters and to acknowledge the generosity of our committed bequestors."

"They're also a chance for the society members to learn more about our organisation and the support we provide and to hear from interesting guest speakers like the mayoress of Auckland, Diana Hubbard, and Tauranga Art Gallery Director Richard Arlidge, who spoke at the Tauranga Bequest Society luncheon earlier this year.

Linda is planning to organise bequest society luncheons in Auckland, Tauranga and Hamilton in November. 

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Prison conditions

place strain on chaplains

Prison chaplaincy is "frontier ministry", getting more demanding by the day and undergoing huge changes in its relationships with the Corrections Department.

"The growing number of prisoners with mental health problems, personality and behaviour issues and yet who do not have a clinical psychiatric illness is placing increasing pressures on both prison staff and chaplains, and their needs cannot be ignored," says the Rev Doug Mansill, current chair of the Prison Chaplaincy Service of Aotearoa New Zealand (PCSANZ) and recently retired from the Presbyterian parish of St Giles in Auckland.

His concerns are echoed by the Rev David Connor, another Presbyterian who has just handed over the Executive Manager position at the PCSANZ to Wellington-based Salvationist David Major. "Prisoners are a lot less predictable now than they were when I started in 1974," he says.

Mostly that stems from drug abuse. But it impacts strongly on chaplains' ministry, which draws heavily on volunteers. "At one point in Auckland Prison, I had 1500 volunteers. Now it would be under 500 because security requirements have tightened up." No longer is it possible to take children into a prison service, no matter how good it would be for prisoners. All volunteers have to be over 18, with no more than 12 in a group.

In 2000, management of prison chaplaincy changed drastically; from an employment arrangement to a service contract, and David says that has also changed the way the 50 chaplains work.

"Their responsibility now ends once prisoners leave," he says. That's another change. "When I was employed by Corrections as a minister, I could choose to go on working with someone once they left prison. Now the Department buys chaplaincy services inside prisons, so we run worship services, we provide religious education, pastoral care (to staff

as well as prisoners), and we're responsible for all prisoners of whatever faith. So we network with the Muslim Association, the synagogues, the Jehovah's Witnesses and so on, so they can have people who come in and meet specific needs.

"It's a frontier ministry because we are dealing with many people who have had no formal connection with the Church. They're looking around for different life options because, despite what you read in the newspaper, very few prisoners actually like their lifestyle in or out of prison and all want something better for their children.

"Very often you don't see results. I've never worried about the numbers who come to chapel. One prisoner who had done eight lags said he used to go along to chapel services 'just to see the girls'. But the last time he got out, he started to get into trouble again, but he said he remembered something that had been said in chapel... And now he's been out 10 years, and said

he earned more as a builder last year than from all the jobs he ever did."

Presbyterians are both at the forefront of prison ministry and right behind it. "We are very supportive of the chaplaincy service," says Assembly Executive Secretary Martin Baker. "There is no ambiguity in the Gospel about ministering to prisoners." New Zealand's high imprisonment rate concerns him. "We're locking up people sooner for longer and often away from their families and support people.

"As a Church we have a long-term commitment to reconciliation. Our primary concerns are for victims – and also for justice. Incarceration at our present rates is not going to lead to a safe and peaceful society.

"We are very proud of our Presbyterians' efforts and commitment in this challenging task."

By Julia Stuart *sPanZ*



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Pioneering teacher

plans second North Korean trip

Tim Kearns, who believes he is the first Westerner to have taught in a North Korean school, is raising money for a second trip to the isolationist country next year.

Tim, a teacher at St Joseph's School in Papanui, Christchurch, has secured a \$6000 grant from the Council for World Mission to help fund three months in North Korea next year.

He taught English in North Korea from April to June 2006, after an introduction from the New Zealand Democratic People's Republic of Korea Friendship Society, of which Presbyterian minister Don Borrie is a member. Tim says the society, and Don in particular, are highly regarded in North Korea. NZDPK has a relationship with a farm and with one of the schools at which Tim taught.

Tim made contact with the society while researching possibilities in North Korea. He had lived in Japan for several years, visited North Korea as a tourist, and become interested in doing some volunteer work.

He says that, as far as he is aware, it was the first time that a foreign teacher had been allowed to teach in a North Korean school. He would ask teachers in the schools how other visitors had done things, and they would reply "you're it".

During his visit, Tim spent two days a week at three different schools in Pyongyang, the capital. One of these was a typical middle school, which covers students aged between 11 and 16, while the other two were focused on elite students. Tim says he was surprised at the strength of English in the students at these schools. "You could have pretty good conversations with 13 year olds."

He found life in North Korea "simple and generally uncomplicated". He lived and ate in a hotel, with washing and cleaning done for him. He would teach every morning, have a break in the early afternoon and then hold a seminar for teachers in the late afternoon. Coming up with resources was his main challenge, he says, with the teachers open to new ideas to a much greater degree than he had expected. By the end of the three months, he was holding small-group planning sessions rather than presenting information in the more usual North Korean lecture-style.

At the end of the day he would often go for a run; there was one street down which he was permitted to go unaccompanied. At other times, he would always have a translator or guide with him. Tim says "security issues" were the reason given for this, with an emphasis on his safety and the provision of correct hospitality.

Other expats in Pyongyang talked of hitting continual brick walls and finding relationships hard to develop, but this wasn't his experience. He says he found people to be genuine and easy to get along with, and had plenty of opportunities to socialise with other teachers, who were very curious about New Zealand's education and way of life.

"I came out of some teachers' meetings just feeling exhausted. They really wanted to know things; particularly about our education system but also definitions of terms like 'top 40 chart' and 'club sandwich'.

"I found them pretty open minded. I didn't really find I had to change myself for them."

Tim says a long term aim would be hosting a couple of North Korean teachers so they could learn about the New Zealand education system.

He hopes to raise additional funding before his next trip so that he can take some resources with him, as well as taking some materials donated by New Zealanders. Even things like chalk and blue-tack are useful, he says, along with A4 paper, chart paper, white board markers and scissors. Ideally he also hopes to have a laptop and data projector to take with him, as well as educational DVDs.

Don Borrie says the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand has been the major support agency for work in North Korea.

A relationship has been developed with the Korean Christian Federation, which has two churches in Pyongyang and also runs some theological education programmes. Tim says he visited one of these churches several times, while also attending services at a Catholic church.

Parishes interested in donating resources or material to North Korea can contact Tim via timkearns@hotmail.com

By Amanda Wells *sPanz*



Head girl Ta'ase lives out her faith

Seventeen-year-old Presbyterian Ta'ase Kelente captains her rugby team and is head girl at Porirua College but still finds time to teach Sunday school.

Keeping the faith at school can be hard, she acknowledges, but hanging out with other like-minded students in a fellowship group helps. The group meets at lunch time most days for fellowship and sharing stories, thanks to the efforts of a pastor from a local church, Ta'ase says.

Described by her minister, the Rev Perema Leasi, as a well-presented and articulate young woman who is sensitive to the needs of others, Ta'ase is active in her local church – Porirua's Pacific Island Church – including attending a Bible class called Youth Ignition.

Before Ta'ase was allowed to take up the role as head girl at Porirua College this year, there was a mandatory Outward Bound course to attend.

She says the course, which is all about inspiring personal and social development through learning in an outdoor environment, was challenging. When the going got tough and she felt like giving up, her faith helped get her through, she says.

According to Ta'ase, the hardest part of the course was the survival test, where participants had to live in the bush on limited rations for three days. While most people weren't keen on this aspect of the course, Ta'ase says it gave her a chance to reflect.

The course was supposed to be about developing leadership and fitness skills, she explains, but was surprised to find that for her, it



As captain of her Porirua College's girls' first fifteen, Ta'ase was invited to a dinner with the All Blacks earlier this year. She is pictured here with Reuben Thorne and the captain of the boys' first fifteen.

was a spiritual experience as well. "I couldn't rely on family. God was the only person I had. I really got to know Him. He helped me through a lot of it."

Ta'ase counts her minister, the Rev Perema Leasi, as one of the people she has been inspired by, "because of the way he connects with the young people of the congregation". For instance, members of Youth Ignition do readings during Sunday services, as do the other youth groups that are part of the Pacific Island Church Porirua family.

She also counts her grandad and the pastor of her school fellowship group among her influences.

When asked what the future holds for her, Ta'ase says that she is interested in a career in ministry and is considering becoming a minister of religion. Listening to a sermon about goals was the trigger for this potential career path "because I realised how you could touch people through this work" she says. **By Jose Reader**



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Community dinners grow out of youth work

Six months of aimless basketball with Brockville's youth paid off for Andrew Scott, whose community ministry is now attracting 60 people to its monthly dinners.

The Rev Andrew Scott spends most of his time as one of the ministers at Kaikorai Presbyterian but also works with Dunedin South Presbyterian and Brockville Community Church.

The development of a youth ministry in Brockville, which is an area of Dunedin often known for its economic deprivation, started with six months of basketball, says Andrew.

He then began a more conventional youth group, and in 2006 two people volunteered to become involved in youth leadership and another group was created.

One group, called "Explosive", focused on the intermediate age while the other concentrated on this group's younger siblings. This second group, called "Fish", soon had 25 kids turning up on a regular basis.

Andrew says he started thinking about how to involve the children's parents. "It's no good trying to pull kids out of holes if you're not going to do anything about families."

So they invited the family of each young person to dinner once a month, on a Sunday evening.

Andrew says the meal is deliberately structured round a small-group activity, such as a quiz or creating sculptures, so that there is little down-time for kids to get bored and "charge around".

The first dinner in February this year had 35 people present; about 60 people were present at the most recent dinner, with 60 percent of these being children. Andrew says the same people are continuing to attend, with probably only 100 different people in total so far.

The evenings are about trying to build relationships, he says. "In a community of 4000 people, we need to create multiple villages."

"We would like to be able to say that we are dramatically impacting the Brockville community, not just the ones who are connected to the faith community."

Andrew says that the team is upfront about "who we are and why we're doing it; we're not backwards about it".

"If we're not going to talk about Jesus then let's not waste our time."

But he says that helpers at the dinners don't have a lot of time to sit and talk faith with parents; "it's more that they see we're not 'weird' Christians".

"It's been a really steep learning curve figuring out what works and doesn't work." Changes since the start have included having more people helping, spending more time preparing and setting up the venue, and having the teenage leaders much more prepared in terms of their role.

"We'd like to think that parents will start coming because they want to come not because their kids are there." While children can turn up for the meal alone, they are not allowed to stay afterwards unless an adult is with them.

Andrew says the ministry has developed only because the Kaikorai and Brockville

churches have given it the necessary space. "They funded me playing basketball for six months with no obvious outcome at that point."


He's now talking to the Department of Internal Affairs about funding a community worker full-time for three years; a proposal that is being seriously considered for 2008/2009. The Dunedin City Council is also talking about the possibility of a community grant.

Andrew says he sees part of his role as "telling the story". "I think that's more important than we give it credit; nothing we've done has been particularly complex or difficult."

"We really need to be targeting and nurturing people who can do this kind of work." **By Amanda Wells sPanz**



Fish members enjoy a girls' day out



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Dr Lynne Baab

US communications expert takes up theology post at Otago

The “very general job description” and the flexibility that came with it was one of the things that made a lectureship in pastoral theology at the University of Otago attractive to Dr Lynne Baab.

“All the other jobs I applied for were very narrow and very focused on one area and I didn’t like that,” she says.

“The other advantage was being able to leave the United States. This is not a good time to be an American; bad things are happening in our country.”

Lynne moved to New Zealand from Seattle at the end of June with her husband, David, a retired dentist.

With a background in ministry and communications – her PhD from the University of Washington is in communications – she is ideally suited for her new role.

She was writer-editor for Presbyterian Church (USA) publications before she became an ordained minister, then served as associate pastor at Bethany Presbyterian Church, in Seattle, from 1997 to 2004, when she left to complete her PhD. She has also written six books on topics from fasting to beating burnout in congregations, and has lived 11 years outside the United States, in six different countries.

“I did my PhD thesis on congregations’ websites. This whole high-tech thing is [very much] what I’m interested in,” she says, adding that very rapid technological changes bring challenges for the Church.

Lynne spent two years studying websites created by three types of Protestant congregations in the United States, choosing those she believed might represent possible future directions for the Church.

They were evangelical megachurches, most of which each year attract more people; vibrant liberal/mainline churches, because of the increasing “religious left” presence in politics; and emergent churches because of their young demographic and the media attention they have attracted. Her dissertation can be read on her website at www.lynnebaab.com.

In Dunedin, Lynne has hit the ground running, teaching the “Person in Ministry” paper within days of arriving in Dunedin.

The course, part of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies distance learning programme, covers such topics as spiritual gifts, spiritual discipline, boundaries and living by grace.

“It’s about how to be a whole person in ministry, lay or ordained,” Lynne says.

The 15 students enrolled in the paper are from all over New Zealand.

The small class is “wonderful”, she says.

“I’ll be teaching only one paper each seminar.”

Lynne already has begun formulating the content of “Communication and Ministry” for semester 1, 2008, and is obviously looking forward to it. “It’s everything except communication from the pulpit,” she explains. The paper will include using as communication tools newsletters, oral announcements, “websites, blogs, anything”.

Her University of Otago appointment is a five-year one and its part-time nature fits in well with writing commitments, which include contracts with American publishers to write a book on congregation identity and an online adult curriculum. However, her teaching and writing workload will still enable Lynne to be available should other teaching and research opportunities arise.

Describing herself as “here to learn, not just teach”, she says she and David find Dunedin “very beautiful” have “been so impressed with the people”.

“People have been so kind, so helpful, so friendly.” **By Gillian Vine**

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Global youth gathering breaks down barriers

A Franciscan friar, an Orthodox priest, a Presbyterian minister and a Southern Baptist walked into a room... It sounds like the opening line of a bad joke, but it's actually a true story! In January this year I found myself in St Louis, Missouri, sharing stories and learning from 50 diverse young leaders from around the world at a "Consultation for Emerging Leaders" organised by the Institute for World Christianity. The week-long conference aimed to encourage collaboration and unity across the many cultures and denominations of the Christian Church.

We had come from all corners of the earth, and from all sorts of Christian traditions. I was the only person from Oceania, but others had come from as far as Zambia, Serbia, Myanmar and India, representing nations as powerful as the United States and as tiny as Moldova. There were Presbyterians, Catholics, Pentecostals and Orthodox – and everything in between (the most obscure church was undoubtedly the Transylvanian Hungarian Church of Romania!). There were students, professors, ministers, community workers and leaders of various organisations, aged from 20 to 50-something. Each person had a unique and amazing story to tell of their life and work, and I spent much of my time just sitting listening.

Joining in prayer and worship with Christians from so many different traditions was amazing – we shared in everything from a formal liturgical service led by a Franciscan friar, to First Nations (Native American) drum songs, to a lively Pentecostal prayer meeting. For some people it was the first time they had ever seen or participated in forms of worship different to their own tradition, so it was a learning experience that required plenty of graciousness! The experience was significant for all of us, as we saw that although there was extreme diversity in the forms of worship we shared, we were all worshipping the same God who is revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ – and we are all part of the same body of Christ.

We had speakers come and share on different topics that were really interesting, but for me the most significant part of the week was hearing stories from around the world, both in personal conversations and also as part of the programme as each person had a chance to share. A profound and humbling experience for me was listening to people from many nations tell how Western countries have exploited their people and their resources for centuries, and have refused to listen to and respect the indigenous people of these lands. In many cases Christians have played a major role in this problem. This information itself wasn't new to me – I've read books, seen films, listened to lecturers and written essays dealing with these very issues. Yet somehow it hit home in a new way when I was sitting across the table from a new friend, hearing about how these theoretical issues affected their lives, their families, communities and churches.

Through these discussions two major messages stood out to me – firstly, that wealthy countries (such as our own) need to stop exploiting others for our own gain; and secondly, that we must engage with "developing" countries on their own terms, and not on ours. It seems that Westerners have a bad habit of assuming we know what is best for other communities – even when we're actually trying to help, such as through development programmes



A diverse group of young leaders from around the world

and missionary work. When I asked some of my new friends how New Zealanders who want to be involved overseas can help appropriately, the response was this: "Come. Visit. Be our friends. Get to know our community. Learn about our culture. Let us teach you about the issues our community is facing and what we need to deal with them. Then, maybe you can use your unique skills and resources to join with us in helping our communities."

Of course, going overseas often isn't practical or necessary, and it seems that there's heaps we can do from our own contexts in New Zealand. When I asked Nelson, a missionary leader from Zambia, how young people from New Zealand could help make a difference in the face of global issues that are so overwhelming, he responded, "simply do what you can, where you are, with what you have". Regardless of who we are or what our situation is, we all have something to give, we are all in a community of some sort, and so we can all be involved in bringing about change, even if our contribution is small. **By Jo Ryan** *sPanz*

From the Moderator

Many of us were deeply impressed by the faith and commitment of our visitors to the General Assembly last September from the Presbyterian Church in Myanmar. We heard that to be Christian in Myanmar requires much courage in the face of adversity and oppression.

With the help of Global Mission, I am launching an appeal for a project to help our partner church the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar, in its quest to be self sufficient.

We have identified four major projects that we would like to support them with: Buffalo and cart, community chicken farm, Tedim Manse and modern equipment for the Zo Synod office. Your support would be greatly appreciated, please fill in the tear off slip below and send your contribution to the Global Mission Office.

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- ☐ Myanmar Water Buffalo
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- ☐ Myanmar Zo Synod Office

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Donations over \$5.00 are tax deductible.

Sisters support young people in troubled Timor

East Timor's independence in 2002 heralded a new era of optimism for the future, with new leadership, and hopes for peace and prosperity for many young people. However, the reality is that its people have been traumatised by decades of violence and have for too long lived in fear and uncertainty for their future.

In April 2006, a march through the capital Dilli turned violent as soldiers attacked a market run by people from the East and youths turned on one another and the community. More than 120,000 people fled for their lives to the hill country and many have yet to return to Dilli in fear of further violence. An estimated 98,000 people remained and sought refuge within the compounds of churches and convents. UNHCR tents became temporary homes to many families. There are still up to 37,000 displaced people in Dilli today.

In June of this year, Nobel Peace laureate Jose Ramos-Horta won the presidential election by a majority. Questions remain as to whether his new leadership in itself is enough to curb the level of civil unrest that has plagued this new nation.

CWS has been supporting the Dominican Sisters in Dilli well before this crisis and in particular their work with young people in Dilli. Two youth groups, St Camillus and St Dominic, have benefited from CWS funding since 2002 with a fishing boat, a youth training centre, computers, and the development of a training farm in Natabora. However, since the crisis, many of the young people who participated in both these groups disappeared, some moving to villages in the hills. Many have not yet returned to Dilli.

The Sisters continue to support those who have remained. The convent became home to 1200 displaced people for 10 months; two thirds of these were children. The convent community had access to a visiting doctor once a week and all the adults and children were involved in daily chores – collecting firewood, maintaining gardens and feeding animals. The younger children were sent to Natabora, another community in the hill country, to escape further episodes of violence. With CWS funding, the Sisters were able to purchase two motorbikes to help transport some of these children to a nearby school, while others walked the long distance.

Some of the older male teenagers who were involved in the St Dominic youth group engaged themselves in their own education, computer training, tending gardens, selling produce at the local market and making marmalade to sell locally. They also designed and wrote a range of educational resources for a preschool; also supported by the Dominican Sisters.

For these talented young people it remains imperative to hold on to the prospect of furthering their education. Despite living through such uncertain times, they remain highly motivated and politicised. The voting age in Timor Leste is 17 and a large majority do vote. These young people envisage themselves being part of this new nation and using

their skills in building a brighter and peaceful future for Timor Leste. The Sister's gentle way of befriending has also instilled in them this hope for the future: "with optimism, we endeavour to venture onto a brighter dream for a nation of peace, unity and reconciliation."

CWS staff member Mary Cavanagh recently visited the Sisters and met with both youth groups, and says "they seemed highly motivated to care for their families and to really make a difference for the good of their country".

CWS continues to support the work of the Dominican Sisters to provide new opportunities for young people. Funds also raised by the year's Association of Presbyterian Women and Methodist Women's Fellowship special project will assist this work.

By Ruth Greenaway **sPanz**



Sister Nini and Sister Malu, originally from the Philippines, have worked in Timor Leste for several years.



Young children from a pre-school programme supported by the Dominican Sisters benefit from reading material produced by young people participating in the St Dominic youth group, supported by CWS.

"RESTORATIVE HOME SUPPORT" WORKSHOP

Enabling older people to exercise choice in their lifestyle with individually tailored support when required is the philosophy underpinning "Restorative Home Support" and was the focus of a workshop for health professionals convened by Presbyterian Support in Wellington on 22 November 2006.

Opened by the Minister of Health, the Honorable Pete Hodgson, the workshop followed the release of findings from a study comparing three different approaches to providing community-based support for older people. The Minister commented that it was good to finally have some evidence to support the "positive ageing" philosophy.

In this study the "restorative home support" service, being implemented by Presbyterian Support Northern in the Waikato, was found to be effective in enabling older people with high and complex needs to remain living in the community for longer with greater levels of independence. Not surprisingly perhaps, those older people who were able to remain living in the community were happier (reporting greater life satisfaction) than those who were not able to.

Dr Matthew Parsons (Auckland University), who was responsible for the research, outlined key elements - working with the client to identify the day-to-day things that are most important to them, and something in particular they wished to achieve (like cooking a meal for family or friends). A support plan was then developed which enabled the client to build or recover capabilities so that the activity, and thereby the goal, could be achieved. Dr Parsons said that this was about improving the quality of how home support services were delivered and involved training and increased supervision for support workers, together with sufficient time for service coordinators (health professionals) to work with the older person to ensure the service is appropriately tailored to their needs and circumstances.

Shereen Moloney recounted the early experience of Capital and Coast Health in implementing their approach, which involved Presbyterian Support Central, highlighting how important it was to treat clients individually, and support providers to improve their approach over time.

As part of a panel, Wendy Rowe (Presbyterian Support Northern) and Maurice Burrows (Presbyterian Support Otago) both shared their experience of implementing positive ageing services, such as Community FIRST. The common theme was respect for the client,

enabling the client to live their life of choice, and supporting people to participate in their family and community in a manner that was meaningful to them. Gill Genet (CareerForce), also part of the panel, described the development of new training programmes to develop support workers to improve the quality of service delivery.

Three workshops gave participants the opportunity to address critical issues. One on Contracting and Funding Models, facilitated by John Baird (Alexander Consulting) highlighted that there was need for an approach to resource allocation which better recognised the needs of the older person and enabled a flexible response from a provider when required. From one on Workforce Development (facilitated by Gill Genet) there was agreement that there needed to be greater investment in staff, both in terms of training and in terms of remuneration/recognition. The third (facilitated by Julie Martin, Presbyterian Support Northern) looked at integrated services, and generated discussion on the way in which positive ageing services interacted with other necessary services to ensure the client was fully supported.

Gillian Bremner (Workshop Chair) from Presbyterian Support Otago summed it up saying "there is a high level of acceptance in the community for the positive ageing approach, and we need to work in partnership with the DHBs to make progress with implementation. The success of the approach relies on the relationship between the helper and the client."

The conference proceedings are available on www.ps.org.nz or from PSNZ, PO Box 19222, Wellington.



Presbyterian Support

PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT OTAGO

Shop on Carroll is the shop with a difference. Yes, it's a treasure trove of quality garments and special collectables - but there's more! Now open at 10 Carroll Street, Dunedin, Presbyterian Support Otago's new initiative is a great example of generosity in action. All the goods on display are donated and we delight in turning them into funds to support our many programmes and services throughout the region.

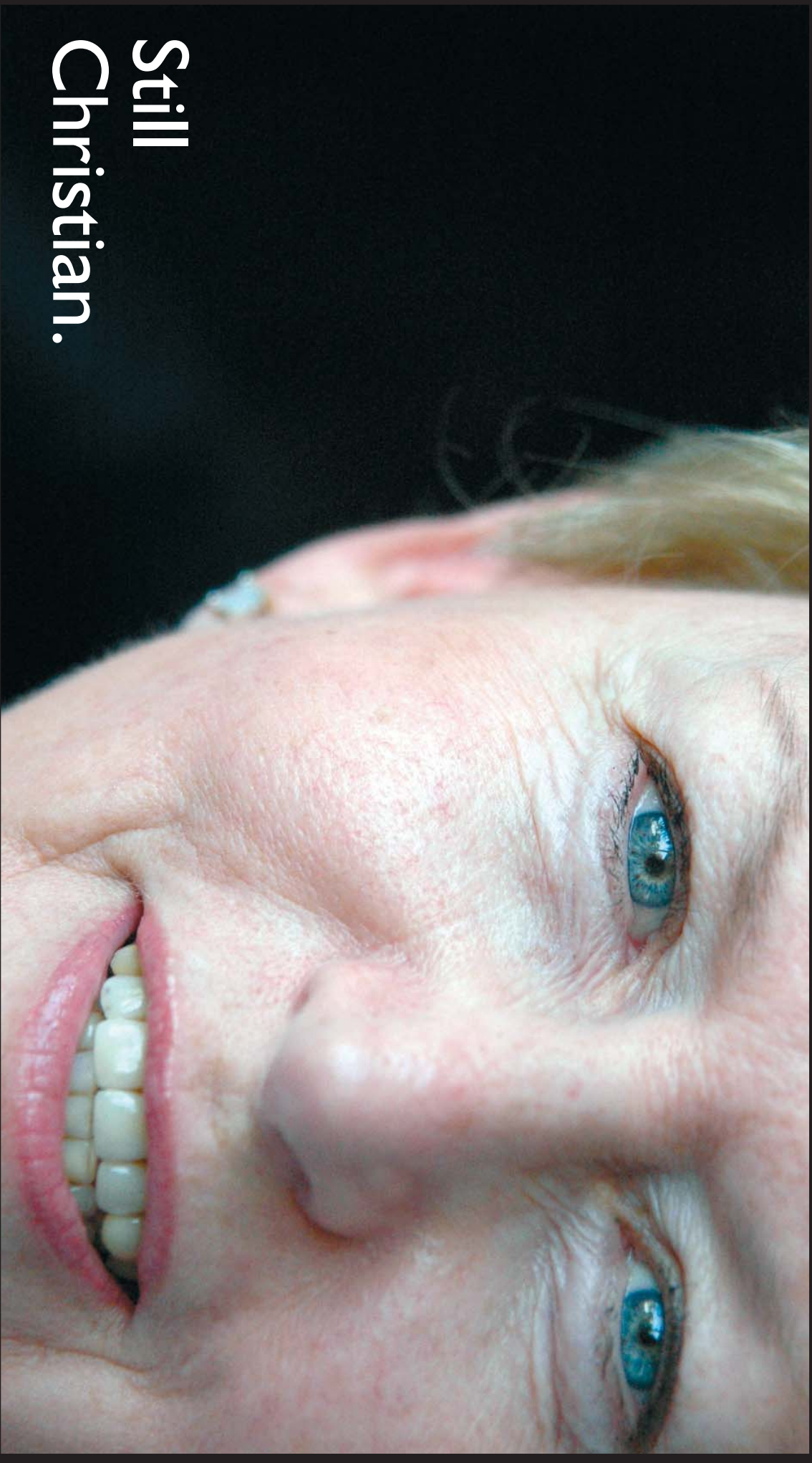
This exciting initiative came about when we were looking for new premises for our warehouse (where our lovely volunteers and staff prepare the donated clothing and other goods for sale) last year. Having identified a suitable building, we were delighted to find that it had a shop frontage with "possibilities".

Feedback so far has been "amazing" says retail manager Chrissy Anderson. Shop on Carroll is fast becoming a "must visit" for lovers of vintage, retro and contemporary designer garments and collectables.

Does this mean that we have abandoned our classic OpShop in St Andrews Street? Not at all - it has been repainted with the Family Works livery and with a dash of lime green to ensure that it stands out amongst its neighbours. The Family Works OpShop will continue to sell affordable clothing for families and people who like a bargain well into the future.

Do come and visit us at 10 Carroll St, Dunedin - open Tuesday to Friday from 10am to 5.30pm and Saturday from 10am to 4pm. Telephone (03) 471-8249.





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