

# Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

SPRING 2016, ISSUE 67

Looking forward to

General Assembly

[www.presbyterian.org.nz](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz)



# Safety advocate a reluctant recipient of Queen's Birthday honour

**My first inclination when asked if I would accept a Royal award [2016 Queens Birthday Honour] was to say NO – not in any circumstances. While I fully support the Royal awards for bravery, special talents or exemplary service, I thought that all I had done was my job. As life-long Christians, my wife and I have been richly rewarded in many ways, and we have never looked for “rewards” in this life. We reflect on the Apostle Paul’s words in 1 Corinthians: “Eye has not seen nor heart and mind imagine, what the Lord has arranged for those who love Him”.**

Nevertheless, I had some suspicions as to who might have nominated me and very reluctantly I was persuaded to allow my name to go forward. That person’s reasoning was that many of the teams I had worked with would feel some reflected satisfaction, and we both hope this is so.

Our company, Pacific Helmets, is based in Wanganui and now we mostly design and manufacture safety helmets for use by emergency services. I won’t go into all the background (you can read more at [www.pacifichelmets.com](http://www.pacifichelmets.com)). The people who wear our helmets frequently work at the extremes of barely survivable situations, and our helmets provide the opportunity for them to carry out their jobs and get home safely.

In earlier years we manufactured helmets for cycling, and we were supporters of a school cycle helmet programme. This programme provided standards certified

helmets for \$30 when many retailers were selling equivalent helmets for \$100. We couldn’t make our helmets fast enough, especially from 1993 when the government moved to make wearing cycle helmets compulsory. We rate this as one of our greatest successes, as deaths from cycling accidents fell dramatically and serious head injuries were almost eliminated. Head injuries can have life-long effects.

We have sold fire and rescue helmets in 90 countries, and regularly sell to 50 countries each year. The helmets are manufactured and certified to many international standards, and the culture of the business and planning of the helmet designs is to not just to meet minimum international standards, but to exceed them. The potential market is huge, and we are barely scraping the surface, but there are competitors with questionable standards, compliance claims that cannot be substantiated.

For these and many other reasons, I am not one of those who see all manufacturing moving to lowest cost locations. Our reputation rests not just on the appearance and functionality of the helmets, but the safety they provide the wearer. We are determined that the factory will stay in Wanganui and we take great pride in our skilled staff and the safety culture our staff have.

As owners of a private company we have time, resources and opportunities to help. In the last four years I have been able to help the team who worked to get the Westmere (Wanganui) Presbyterian Memorial Church seismically restored. This building may be the only New



David Bennett

Zealand Presbyterian church built as a WW1 memorial still with weekly services. In 2012, we learned that the government had set aside special funds to restore all war memorials and it took nearly three years to get our house in order and the funding approved. We think we have completely restored the church to 110 percent of code, and stages 2 and 3 will follow – Wanganui city is growing west in our direction.

Around the same time, the then-chair of the Wanganui City Mission asked me to join the board. What I didn’t know was that there was conflict there. The Mission does valuable work with a foodbank, emergency housing, and other services, but the management needed some help and it took a couple of years to sort things out. Sometimes people are opposed to change and you just have to work through these situations. I credit my mother for her Christian upbringing and beliefs; they have been at the centre of all my activities, past, present and future.

– David Bennett is an elder of the Westmere Presbyterian Memorial Church, Wanganui, and CEO of Pacific Safety International Ltd. He was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2016 Queens Birthday Honours for his work with helmet safety.



# Spanz

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Jane Dawber

## MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

The Right Rev Andrew Norton contributes a regular column to *Spanz*



## Seasons

**We try to squeeze life into minutes and hours, days and weeks. Measures of numbers to be added, subtracted, divided and hopefully multiplied. We separate time into fractions and facts, certainties and segments of work and life, the mundane and the extraordinary, forever in the pursuit of meaning.**

Time is best understood as both measure and meaning. Chronos, quantitative time, is measured as sands through the hour glass and the numbers of days. Kairos, qualitative time, is meaning; it is a time within time and signifies a period or season in which significance happens. Kairos is an opening in time through which an arrow finds its ultimate destination or the moment the shuttle passes through threads on the loom.

While many people complain of being time poor, it is a poverty of meaning and not of minutes that is our real concern.

Within the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, I believe we have become obsessed with the measures of minutes and numbers – property, finance and bums on seats – and are failing to ask the deeper questions of meaning. We need to ask what season we are in because it will tell us what we need to do in that season. “This is the gift of God.” (Ecc 3:13)

“There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under  
the heavens:

a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,”

Ecclesiastes 3:1&2

May God give us the wisdom of understanding the seasons and the courage to embrace the gift of the one we are in.

## Seasons

For the last couple of years  
I've been wearing a watch with no numbers,  
for me the time is always now.  
Each day I check my calendar to see what day it is,  
it is always today.

The numbers of days labour with words  
but the seasons wait in silence for a listening  
beyond the noisy centre;  
a conversation not shouting to be heard.

Looking out the window  
I see the last of the Japanese maple leaves  
holding tight,  
refusing to let go  
of the changing season.

Endings are announced in the brilliance of  
gold and crimson;  
a signature of beauty to a season past.  
The signs were there all along but I refused  
to let go  
to this glorious ending.

There was no eulogy or mournful song  
as the last leaf fell dead to the ground.  
In silence the soul waits with no respect for time.  
I entered the darkness  
so it too could become my friend.

Somehow, in a grace not of my own there is  
an opening,  
a spaciousness to which I'm invited.  
The mute sings a song of joy as light breaks the  
fast of darkness.  
I hesitate, can I give myself fully to this opening?  
Knowing if I did, I could not remain the same.

To whom or what shall I make of this return?  
Extravagance is empty if not for another,  
a path of plentitude,  
a harvest of grace,  
a grateful heart,  
silent,  
broken,  
open  
and shared.

As for my time?  
What I do have is not mine to own,  
fleeting moments passing with each breath,  
yet shaped and into a story,  
of each season's passing.

Andrew Norton *Spanz*



In November 2016, the Church will gather for its biennial General Assembly meeting. For the second time, a resourcing conference will run alongside General Assembly to inspire and equip church leaders in mission.



Moderator designate Rev Richard Dawson in St Davids Theatre where GA16 business will be debated.

## LOOKING FORWARD TO **General Assembly & Hope Conference 2016**

**General Assembly will consider a wide range of matters at this year's meeting, including discussion on building strength standards, social justice matters, proposed changes to the beneficiary fund, ecumenical group membership and more.**

**Some of the key proposals are highlighted here, and full details of these and other matters to be considered by General Assembly are available in the White Papers which will be published in October.**

### **Establish a voice for the Church on social issues**

Alpine Presbytery is asking General Assembly to consider establishing a standing committee or networking body that will assist the Church to have a stronger voice on social and ethical issues in our society.

The proposal notes that it is hoped that the establishment of such a body would reverse the apparent silence from the national Church on major social issues such as homelessness, poverty and abuse.

### **Request for new policy on building strength standards**

A proposal from Northern Presbytery requests that the Church Property

Trustees align their requirements for earthquake strengthening of buildings with recently enacted law in this area.

New legislation has come into effect since the September 2015 update of Church Property Trustees' Earthquake Prone Building Policy, and the proposals note that a situation now exists where the Policy applies standards that go beyond the requirements of current law.

Particular areas of concern noted in the proposal are differences in the period of time for compliance, and the level of compliance with the new building standard required by the Trustees (67 percent) compared with the standard applied by most local bodies (34 percent).

### **Request for Church to become full member of ecumenical group**

Southern Presbytery is asking General Assembly to consider applying for full membership of the New Zealand group, National Dialogue for Christian Unity, whose members currently include the Catholic, Methodist and Anglican churches.

The proposal notes that the Presbyterian Church currently has observer status on this group, and that full membership would not only continue our rich history of ecumenism, but is of particular

importance because it is the only entity dedicated to facilitating bodily unity between New Zealand's denominations.

### **A change to when the Moderator starts their term**

Northern Presbytery is seeking to minimise the burden on the Moderator-Designate and their parish (if applicable). It is proposed that effective from 2018, the Moderator starts their term at the end of each Assembly, rather than the beginning.

This change will have the effect of ensuring that the period of the greatest activity occurs while the Moderator is in office. For instance, the outgoing Moderator would organise the General Assembly at the end of their term, rather than the one at the start of their term as is currently the case.

### **Proposal to hold a national mission week**

Northern Presbytery is asking General Assembly to consider holding a national mission week that would occur every second year in the year that the General Assembly doesn't meet. The Moderator would take the lead with co-ordinating the event.



## PresCare urges Church to say "no" to tax cuts

In its report to General Assembly, PresCare advocates for government policy that will create a more equal society.

PresCare – the partnership between the Church and Presbyterian Support that looks for ways our shared faith and commitment can respond to the needs and nurture the wellbeing of children and families in Aotearoa – is calling on Assembly to say "no to tax cut lolly scrambles that do not meet the needs of the most vulnerable".

Instead, says the PresCare report, the government's promised tax cuts should be redirected towards the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities, and a review of our taxation policies is needed to reflect a more equitable society.

## More flexibility for local ordained ministers

The Leadership Subcommittee is proposing changes that will provide greater flexibility for local ordained ministers to train and be ordained to positions outside parish ministry. Current regulations limit local ordained ministers to serving in a parish context, and if General Assembly agrees to the changes, they would be allowed to serve in a broader range of roles such as chaplaincy and special ministry positions.

## Appointments to stated supply ministry roles

Southern Presbytery is asking General Assembly to reconsider the existing one year limit on appointments to stated supply positions.

## Proposed changes to the Beneficiary Fund

Following on from a review requested by the last General Assembly, the Council of Assembly has proposed a series of changes to the way the Church provides retirement support for its leaders.

The changes, which include closing a section of the beneficiary fund and various other recommendations, aim to bring about a retirement support programme that better recognises all forms of ministry, is more sustainable

in the long term, and removes undue financial risk from parishes.

Under proposed changes, the beneficiary fund would continue to exist, albeit in a different format.

The changes have been discussed with fund members, annuitants and parishes, in a series of gatherings around New Zealand in the lead-up to General Assembly, where Commissioners will be asked to vote on the changes.

Jenny Flett, Beneficiary Fund Workgroup Convener, says that the recommendations for change haven't been made lightly, and are the result of much analysis and research by the Workgroup and its advisers.

She highlights that the Church's commitment to honouring and valuing the contribution of our ministers and their families has been at the forefront of the Group's work.

## Leadership standards

A proposal from Central Presbytery invites General Assembly to ensure that the Church's leadership criteria focus on values, skills, ability and call, rather than family configuration, including the deletion of the section of the Book of Order that prohibits those in relationships outside a faithful, loving marriage between a man and women, from being considered for leadership positions.

## Special legislative procedure matters

In addition to the proposals outlined above, there are three matters to report back on that were voted on by parish councils under our special legislation.

The results of this voting will be presented to General Assembly for ratification. The three matters that General Assembly 2016 will be asked to ratify are; a decision that allows ministers to only conduct marriage between men and women, the adoption of a statement on being a cross-cultural church, and changes to the way commissioners are selected for General Assembly.

Jose Reader Spanz

# Hope Conference

## streams and workshops

**Non-Commissioners (delegates) will be able to participate in a variety of GA Hope Conference streams and workshops. Commissioners will also be able to attend a Hope Conference workshop on Friday. We look at four streams and workshops on offer in November.**



Dr Marty Folsom's stream - Can Relational Theology Provide Hope for the Church? – will run over three sessions.

Marty will be asking attendees what would it look like if theology was less talk about God and more of letting God talk?

"What difference could it make if we saw God as existing in dynamic relationship, and believed relationships are God's primary concern?

"We will discuss theology in a hopeful, holistic way, providing a vision for churches to align with God's activity in our congregations, neighbourhoods, and personal lives. This quest requires rethinking how God exists, how persons grow, and what it means to be a theologically relational church."

His first session on Wednesday – *Finding Hope in Knowing God Relationally* - looks at personal relationships. What do we mean by a personal relationship with the triune God? It explores how we miss love in our relationships and how to find hope in God's relational agenda.



The Thursday session – *Personal Growth that Brings Hope* – explores a new paradigm for thinking and acting in ways that deepen our relationships and fulfil a biblical vision.

His final session on Friday – *The Relational Church* – asks what a healthy relational church looks like. What are the pitfalls and what are the possibilities? There will be a discussion on how to evaluate and create community with God, in the church family, and in the neighbourhood.

His workshop – *The Relational X-Ray: Mapping the Relational in Your Church* – will discuss and apply the skill of using a “relational x-ray” to assess where relationships are currently in your church and how to move in a hopeful direction.

“Building on the idea that perfect love casts out fear, needed for the health of all relations. The nature of a functional and dysfunctional church will be implicit in our discussion, and how to take steps towards positive health.”

Marty says these sessions are for those who want to discover the way to bring renewal to a church, the nurturing of personal relationships that move us to transformation as God’s people.



**Rev Dr Lynne Baab’s stream – *Leading Communal Spiritual Practices* – will show how to lead small groups or whole congregations into communal spiritual practices: various forms of prayer, contemplative approaches to the Bible, journaling, fasting, simplicity and Sabbath-keeping.**

Lynne says this stream will help participants gain understanding of why spiritual practices matter and how to lead groups into spiritual practices with joy.

“All Christians engage in spiritual practices: various forms of engagement with the Bible, various kinds of prayer, as well as communal participation in worship. We understand increasingly that humans learn by doing, not just by reading or thinking, and spiritual practices help us grow as disciples because we engage our whole selves.”

Lynne teaches by discussion. She will bring handouts with quotations to discuss and resources for you to use as leaders.

“I will also lead participants into some spiritual practices as a part of the stream as a model for how to lead groups.”

Lynne believes spiritual practices help us grow in intimacy with and obedience to God, and doing them together is fun, interesting and exciting.



**Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph will present a workshop on *Cross-cultural relations in the church*.**

“For some people, cross-cultural experiences can be meaningful and enriching; for others they can be distressing and painful. People can either continue to work through ethnically and culturally diverse relations or they can retreat into ones that reflect familiarity or remain the same. Church congregations face exactly this challenge. This workshop will explore such a challenge.”

Tokerau hopes people will be interested in the cross-cultural experience.

“New Zealand already has a diverse cultural mix which brings its own challenges. The reality is we need to work with and alongside people from different ethnic backgrounds in life and in our local congregations.”

He says New Zealand’s population is changing and this affects how people relate to one another.

“I hope, at this workshop, to show how to relate well to others rather than to isolate. My workshop will be interactive – certainly not a lecture. I will get people to move (physically) to demonstrate how we understand ourselves in relation to others (those who are ethnically similar and different) and how we understand our relationship with them. Our attitudes and practices impact how we relate with others. I hope people can explore this in a positive way.”

He hopes participants in the workshop will be encouraged to better understand diversity, how when we work through the differences and challenges it can enrich our community. We shouldn’t see differences in a negative light but embrace the distinctiveness of our diverse culture together.



**Rev Hamish Galloway will present a workshop entitled, *Empowering the Next Generation*, which is about creating inter-generational church.**

“It is about how the older generations can reach out to the younger generations regarding Christian faith,” says Hamish.

He believes in today’s world we have an aging church that is not engaging well with the younger generation. “If that trend continues the Church in New Zealand is on course to pretty much disappear! The task of generativity, empowering the next generation, is urgent.”

He will cover three main topics in the stream: Where the generations stand with faith issues; the need for the older generations to empower faith in the younger generations; five principles that will encourage that to happen.

“There are effective ways to engage with the next generation – we need to find them, share them and use them,” says Hamish.

Fritha Tagg [@spanz](#)



**For General Assembly 2016,** the Moderator designate Rev Richard Dawson has invited Presbyterians making a difference in the world to talk to the Assembly about their lives and their missions. One such Presbyterian is Paul Somerville.



Paul Somerville, director of Empower Asia, pictured with his "right hand man Elijah Bell". Paul will both challenge and inspire General Assembly attendees in November 2016.

## Creating a safe place for kids at-risk

**At-risk youth have very much been the centre of Paul and Carlie Somervilles' life for over three decades. Their passion has taken them, and their charity Empower Asia, all over Asia in search of young people who, because they live in extreme poverty, are at-risk from bonded labour, slavery, and prostitution.**

The Somervilles' passion goes beyond rescuing child prostitutes throughout Asia. "Our aim has always been to develop Christian leadership in Asia," says Paul.

The journey began in the 1980s in Tokoroa, where Paul led the youth group at St Mark's Presbyterian Church and where he had the chance to work across cultures with kids at-risk. A visit to Bangkok, in the company of good mate Hamish Crooks, opened their eyes to the flourishing sex trade there.

"I was amazed at the numbers of white middle-aged men picking up boys for sex in Bangkok," Paul says. This led to the decision to move to Bangkok to work with street kids – a tough task.

Working with child prostitutes is very difficult, Paul says. Realising that prevention is better than cure, the Somervilles quickly moved out of the big city into a village setting near the border with Cambodia, an area where many children targeted for the sex trade live in very tough circumstances.

Empower Asia formed safe houses for kids at-risk on location and their efforts soon got noticed. Requests to set up such safe houses for boys and girls came from across the border, from Myanmar, Cambodia, Nepal, and West Bengal.

Empower Asia's ministry today caters for 250 kids in 17 discipleship or safe houses in seven countries. When the kids leave the safe houses and go to university, Empower stays in touch with them. "We encourage them to get educated, then go home and put that knowledge to good use in their communities."

Empower purposely works with local leadership. "Locals have access to areas

inaccessible to westerners," says Paul. This has allowed Empower to deal with people groups that historically have been very resistant to the Gospel.

Many graduates from this ministry have become medical doctors, lawyers, social workers, engineers, teachers, pastors, high school principals or cross cultural missionaries.

Mar Cho, a Burmese Shan girl who came close to falling into prostitution explains. "I know of only two paths for the girls after school. First they try to help their parents in the corn and rice fields. Then they get married at about the age of 16 years. Then they become disappointed because of the lack of income and the fact that there are no prospects for them. So of their own free will they will hop into the vans of the rich people when they drive up in to our village and "go to Chiang Mai" crossing the Thai border with them. From here they become "bad women".

Empower Asia allowed Mar Cho to continue her education. She has a degree in history, and she now works at a girls' home as an assistant to the house parents.

While the Somervilles spent 12 years in Asia, they returned to NZ long ago to focus on fundraising. In the early nineties they managed to live on \$1,500 a month. Now they need \$1,000 a day. "At the moment we exceed our monthly budget by \$4,000," says Paul.

He works out of his lounge in Invercargill, to promote the work and takes every opportunity available to speak at churches and develop his network of supporters.

At a personal level, the journey hasn't been without its challenges. Carlie Somerville has had several miscarriages, and developed a form of bone cancer due to a blood disorder. But that has never been a reason for them to give up.

"If it seems like you're not getting some miraculous answer, then you just have to carry on," Paul says. "Being sick does not have to be a barrier to what you do, but you have to adjust the way you do it."

For more information see: <https://empower.asia/>

Janine Baalbergen Spanz



# Church helps neighbours in need

**As the housing crisis bites in Auckland, with families sleeping in cars and garages, the congregation of a 100-year-old Presbyterian Church in Remuera is rallying to provide basic necessities for families living in emergency accommodation in neighbouring Glen Innes.**

Somervell Presbyterian Church congregation member, Eleanor Black, first discovered the Island Child Charitable Trust, run by Danielle Bergin, a few years ago when she bought Christmas trees from the Trust.

Media coverage about the Trust's financial struggle to provide emergency accommodation for struggling families encouraged her to spearhead a church project to regularly donate basic household items for homeless people moving from the crisis housing centre into state houses.

"It bothers me that these people are homeless and struggling, just five minutes from our Church," she says.

"Some people arrive on Danielle's doorstep with just a garbage bag of their only possessions. We collect things like bedding, warm clothing, kitchen utensils, unopened boxes of cutlery.

"Our congregation is mostly from Remuera. It is only right we do what we can to help. When I speak to the congregation it does not have to be a sales job. It's only on a small scale, but the benefit to these people is massive," she says.

Her husband Tim Watkin, a church elder, says church members have also taken part in working bees to help with maintenance of the Trust's property – for example, the youth group upgraded the driveway.

"If anything, church has to be about helping neighbours and we can do something on our doorstep," he says. We do practical things to help. It is



Som Youth group renovate the Island Child Trust driveway, from right, Joanna Laxon, David Laxon, Joshua Anandarajah, Megan Laxon, Martin Lauder, Tim Watkin, Sarah Anandarajah and Vivian Pettigrove.

mainly a drop-off situation. We know where our limits are. A lot of people coming through the houses are in fragile situations, they don't want a lot of people charging around."

For several years the church has raised money for the Presbyterian Church's Global Mission India partnership supporting a girl's hostel, and Island Child was a chance to help a local mission.

Danielle established the Island Child Trust 12 years ago, which now provides emergency accommodation for up to 35 families a year. A former homeless solo mother, she houses about three families at a time on her property.

"It is a constant struggle to provide emergency housing. We are dealing with the poorest of the poor. We give them temporary shelter, work out why they are homeless, and advocate for state or social houses.

"It is not just about housing. It is about restoring them to become contributing members of society," she says.

There has been a huge increase in the need for emergency housing over the past six years, she says, with governmental bureaucratic changes resulting in some people waiting up to a year for a state or social house.

She presently has two sisters staying, with their three and five week old babies. They were living with 15 other family members in a three bedroom house, sharing a single bedroom with two teenagers.

"There are lots of young mums with babies needing emergency housing. There is so much demand. I cannot jam

more people in here. We are in the middle of a housing crisis with high rents and the average house price in Auckland now a million dollars.

"For a family living on \$35,000, there is no way they can buy a house. We survive on the smell of an oily rag, but sometimes there is not even oil or a rag," she says.

The Trust is listed on the Givealittle website and has a Facebook page.

Somervell minister, Brett Johnstone, says the congregation is mainly middleclass, aware of the reality of the world around them, and very sympathetic to the cause.

"It is not always cute kittens. It is what people need. Last winter it was cot blankets. People are living in cars, garages and other people's houses. A family moving from house to house and living in overcrowded situations ends up with just a carload of stuff. The number of people living in the rough is minimal – overcrowding is the problem," he says.

He likes the way the congregation is outward looking, helping people in the community.

"It is easy for congregations to get insular, but looking outward to other parts of the community is part of Christianity's DNA," he says.

He was delighted a neighbouring Presbyterian church in Kohimarama has joined the donation scheme.

Danielle says a Presbyterian church in Glendowie also donates small items. "We are so grateful. It is wonderful assistance," she says.

Kay Blundell **Spanz**



# MINISTER HAS TRUST ~ OF ~ PRISONERS



Rev Perema Leasi was recently recognised for his commitment to young people and his work rehabilitating prisoners and former prisoners.

**Rev Perema Leasi's passion is to provide hardened criminals with a sense of belonging and self-worth to enable them to turn their lives around.**

Leasi has been the minister of "Christ the King" Porirua Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church in Cannons Creek, for over 14 years and he and his family provide home visits for prisoners to help them reconnect with the community and their families.

A man who has been in jail for 23 years is about to start visiting Leasi's house in Cannons Creek one day twice a month when he is released on parole.

"We are trying to help him, provide some love and care, a sense of belonging. My kids are already asking when my new friend is coming to visit. We want to help people turn their lives around," he says.

Leasi has been visiting him for about two years, and has developed a trusting relationship through conversations and studying.

"You have to have a love for people. On my first visit I just listen. First they need to know someone cares, someone loves them, wants to walk alongside them, their family and their church family. It is a new direction," he says.

He found it rewarding seeing people rehabilitated back into their communities.

Born in Samoa, Leasi started working as a teacher. Moving to New Zealand, he served as the minister of St Andrew's

Presbyterian Church in Te Awamutu from 1995. Around that time a scripture from the Book of Matthew made a huge impact on him.

"I needed clothes and you clothed me. I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." These words became his mission - to work with prisoners, help them rehabilitate and get re-established in the community.

He was particularly proud of two prisoners he visited in Waikeria Prison who became involved with youth programmes in the community, encouraging young people to stay out of jail.

Working with prisoners and building trusting relationships takes time, Leasi says: "Sometimes the hierarchy in prison does not see their achievements."

"On a first visit to an inmate, I do not say much. I just listen. They need to know they are important in God's eyes. It is my faith and love that keeps me going," he says.

"Spending time with prisoners, taking them out, walking alongside them after the tough times they have gone through, helps them discover a new direction and helps them reconnect with their families and communities," he says.

While focusing on youth and his local community - "the community is my family," says Leasi - he still manages to visit prisoners in the Wellington region and, with a group of inter-denominational ministers, plans to

have a team visiting prisoners on a regular basis.

Last year Leasi was honoured with a Porirua 50th medal marking the city's milestone birthday. He was recognised for his commitment to young people and his work rehabilitating prisoners and former prisoners. Although he was grateful, he said he did not do it for the recognition. "I am just like everyone else," he says.

His family and home parish at Cannons Creek were very proud of his achievement.

Thanks to community members like Leasi, Cannons Creek is slowly shaking off the negative stereotype that has dogged it for so many years - the stereotype of poverty, crime and rundown state rentals. Crime statistics have plummeted, coloured murals have replaced tagging and housing upgrades are underway. A new sense of pride in the neighbourhood is visible as new families move in and refurbish houses, relishing a community where neighbours know more than just each other's names.

Serving the community, from the youngest to the oldest, is something Leasi has always done.

"This is just what I do. I want to change people's attitudes towards prisoners," he says. He also keeps in contact with prisoners he has helped in the past.

"My passion is for the Lord. That is what I do and who I serve, to try and turn people's lives around," he says.

Kay Blundell [Spanz](#)





# CWM GA creates contacts

Presbyterian Church of Myanmar and Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand representatives at the Council for World Mission General Assembly in South Korea.

## Networking. It's a simple word with a big meaning.

That's certainly what Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand attendees at the Council for World Mission (CWM) General Assembly in South Korea discovered in June this year.

One of those attendees, Global Mission Coordinator Rev Phil King, says the opportunity to network with other people from around the globe was a key reason to attend the CWM General Assembly.

Held on Jeju Island from 18-23 June, Phil was one of six members of the Church who attended the event. His first ever CWM General Assembly was, he says, "an incredible experience".

"The main reason the Assembly meets every four years is to elect a new Board of Directors for the next four years," says Phil. "But another key reason is to allow members to meet and network in a cross-cultural context. Members of our Church engage in mission in some of these countries, so it was a valuable experience to be able to meet and facilitate opportunities for our members."

The theme for this year's event was *Healing, Hope in Action* and it provided members with the chance to hear stories from those whose lives are so different from the New Zealand experience.

"We heard incredible stories of struggle, but also of hope and healing," says Phil. "For example, in one Bible study group, a woman from Bangladesh told us how her husband, a Bishop, had received

death threats from radical Islamists. And another woman from Madagascar spoke of how her only son had been killed in a car crash but she was unable to get justice because her country was so corrupt."

It was, he says, an "immense privilege" to hear such stories. "It helps us put our own lives and stories into perspective."

The General Assembly was also significant for the Very Rev Pamela Tankersley, who finished her term as Council for World Mission moderator. Pamela believes it is essential that the Church has a robust relationship with CWM.

"Central to CWM's policies is the post-colonial notion of partnership in mission, so that mission is from everywhere to everywhere," says Pamela. "Each of the 32 member churches has equal access to the resources of personnel and funds and they have the same expectations placed on them to work in partnership, though CWM ranges from member churches with less than 20 congregations to millions. CWM's current theme is to create missional congregations, which is our emphasis in the Church too."

Some of the highlights of Pamela's four-year stint as Moderator include forming deep friendships across the world, encouraging and supporting women, and visiting churches such as the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar and the United Church of PNG, "where the church is so important in societies that struggle for justice and peace".

Pamela's parting gift to CWM was a large (2mx 1.2m) quilted banner which she

made from fabric she was sent from each of the 32 churches, including Welsh wool, silks from Asia, bold cottons from Africa and tapa cloth from the Pacific. The banner now hangs at CWM headquarters in Singapore.

Another attendee, Jenny Flett, Deputy Convenor of our Council of Assembly, was appointed a director of CWM, representing the Pacific region. Although already very busy, Jenny is looking forward to her new role.

"When I was nominated I had a strong sense that God might be calling me to take on the role of director of CWM," says Jenny. "I love that CWM is a diverse interdenominational body and look forward to the challenge of working with people from a range of cultural and theological backgrounds."

Jenny agrees the event was a great opportunity to engage with fellow Christians from many diverse cultures. "As we unpacked the scriptures during Bible studies, it was inspirational to engage with others who interpret Scripture through a different cultural lens than my own. I learnt a lot!"

Rev Wayne Matheson, Presbyterian Church Assembly Executive Secretary was another attendee, and said being at the CWM General Assembly was a "good reminder that we are part of the larger worldwide family of God".

"I heard stories of the struggle, oppression and persecution our sisters and brothers in faith face on a daily basis," says Wayne. "But along with that were stories of the joys, celebration and advances being made around the world for the Kingdom of God."

Sharon Stephenson 



# Drought

## won't break southern spirit

**One of the longest South Island droughts in living memory is showing no sign of easing. When the ground first started baking, so did church members.**

"Farmers are resilient and climate-dependent, but so little rain gets everyone down," says Rev Nancy Jean Whitehead, minister for Kowai-Cheviot Parish and Amberley and Waikari Church in Canterbury. "We asked ourselves, 'How can the city help the rural area?' given how generously 'the farmie army' had stepped in to help clean up after the Christchurch earthquakes."

Last winter, Christchurch churches put out an appeal to their congregations for home baking. "It was a joint initiative with the Anglican Church but not in any way an attempt to recruit new members, just a 'thinking of you,'" says Nancy Jean.

Working with the Rural Support Trust, teams of volunteers from the Presbyterian and Anglican Churches in Hawarden hand-delivered baking to 400 households. It was a simple yet effective gesture that brightened people's day, reflects Hurunui District Mayor Winton Dalley, who is also a Presbyterian church elder.

"One young couple found biscuits in their letterbox and were so moved by the experience that, despite their dire situation, they reached out and sent baking to Wanganui in response to floods there," he says.

The local churches are planning another round of baking for delivery this spring, again working with the trust.

Winton and his wife Jean have farmed for 35 years. The couple has two daughters also farming in the area. Although they have been through times of drought before, Winton struggles to remember one that lasted this long.

The area went under the radar when the drought began in the summer and autumn of 2014/15, but by May 2015 it was clear the district was going into winter by a feed shortage. There has since been a mass exodus of stock, with 10,000 sheep a week exiting the district for slaughter or away-grazing, and a corresponding mass restock with hay and baleage from out of the district.

By December 2015, most lambs were grown and away before the summer heat kicked in. In January there was exceptional rainfall of up to 150mm across the district but this was followed in February with hot, dry north westerlies that sucked all the moisture out of the ground.

The best therapy for hard times, Winton says, is to do something for others. The district's mayor is not afraid to load people up with jobs for local clubs and groups.

"I try to keep the community engaged and busy. We're not looking for handouts but rather to offer a hand to each other. This community is still strong and I'm really proud of the way stock welfare is being handled. There's a lot to be positive about."



Presbyterian church elder and Hurunui District Mayor Winton Dalley, pictured with his wife Jean, is proud of the way stock welfare is being handled during the drought.

Last year, the focus was on practical support, he says. The Rural Support Trust went out to farmers for technical field days, helping them make hard decisions about slaughter and grazing. They also took rural professionals on visits to ensure farmers understood the warning signs of stress and how to get help. Meetings with the banks also created pathways of support.

This year, the focus is on just being there and listening.

"We just need presence now," says Winton. "That's my role and the role of my rural committee that's coordinating support efforts. And we need empathy from people, not sympathy or pity."

Nancy Jean is based in Amberley and travels to both Cheviot and Hawarden to conduct services there. She tries to keep all her worship services and liturgy relevant to the times. There are also moments of levity that help put the situation in perspective. "I remember one day when it did rain, the sheep were looking at the sky with surprised looks on their faces," she remarks.

Regular prayers would be much appreciated from congregations around the country and by the national Church, says Nancy Jean. "We feel most supported by that, as we do feel forgotten at times."

Offers of holiday accommodation, to give farmers a break from the relentless stress, would also be welcome.

The government has extended the Drought Declaration for a third time, to December 2016. This extension has brought a financial top up for the North Canterbury Rural Trust.

To keep up with what's happening in the drought region follow the Hurunui Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/HurunuiDrought2016](http://www.facebook.com/HurunuiDrought2016)

Jade Reidy Spanz





# Date with Den

**Rev Dennis Flett**, of Waitara Presbyterian Church, had a very pragmatic reason for starting what has become the highly successful Date with Den programme.

"When I came to my first parish, Waitara Presbyterian Church, ten years ago, the expectation was that I would visit the old people" says Dennis.

"I thought 'That's lots of cups of tea and time'. My wife Jen and I talked it over and said, 'Why not have people come to us?'"

"Hospitality is big on our radar screens. In the Bible there are no programmes, but there is hospitality. So we decided to show hospitality and give people something really good. Not Girl Guide biscuits and club sandwiches, but really good scones with dates in them and cream and jam. And real coffee, not the cheap powdered stuff.

"We decided to have a faith story at the heart of the event – where someone talks about how they came to faith or what a difference it has made to their life. It can be about their whole life or an incident."

Date with Den is held every second month. Attendees are aged 55-plus.

"We invite them personally, by sending out a snail-mail letter to about 70 people, and we encourage them to bring friends. We usually get more than 40 attending."

The first half hour, from 10.30am, is for socialising. Then Dennis invites people to ask him anything they like about the Presbyterian Church. "I am there for them, so I say, 'Ask me any question.'"

"Then I introduce someone with their faith story. We have never had a story that hasn't been engaging!"

"One couple talked about becoming missionaries in Uzbekistan, doing eye health, as the husband was an optician. Before they came home they adopted a child, which many people told them they could not do. They felt it was part of their faith journey.

"One of the men told his story about growing up in a very poor family in England, where he worked as a farm labourer, and coming to New Zealand to be a herd tester. He had a threat of

Baden Jeffery shares his story during Date with Den. Baden trained as a butcher before working for many years with the Christian mission organisation, Youth With A Mission (YWAM).

cancer and came to faith one day on the farm. You could say he met God down the back of his farm.

"I close by asking God's blessing. It's succinct – only an hour, but a quality hour.

"People sometimes talk about how they have come to faith and how their partner has followed, how they have wrestled with their marriage and come through. It's real life – that's the key. It's their story – earthy reality. The church culture is earthy. It's your faith. It's got to work for you on the ground.

"Our congregation spans babies through to people in their eighties. We try not to compartmentalise. So older people pray for the youth. Last year the 18-25 year old group, Vidorra, which means to 'live it up' in Spanish, asked some of the older people to come and tell their life story. They loved it. We are like an extended family. We say, 'Jesus sits at my table.'"

Dennis grew up in Bay of Plenty towns. "My parents were Brethren, but I attended the Assembly of God youth group in Tauranga. I spent the next 25 years in the Pentecostal church. After doing a Masters degree at Bible College of New Zealand, I was employed by St Andrews Church, Mt Maunganui, as a lay pastor for one of their congregations. I liked what I saw in the people who ran the Presbyterian Church and threw in my lot with them."

Since Dennis has been at Waitara Presbyterian Church, the old church building has been replaced by a new one, which has a commercial kitchen, gym, utility rooms and a state of art auditorium. "It is a versatile space. It is used every day of the week – sometimes for two or three events at one time.

"People come to the Church not because they are necessarily Presbyterians but because they can have an encounter with God, or get in touch with that process. People do come to Date with Den who don't come to a service, but it is still church" says Dennis.

Jane Tolerton **Spanz**



# Clevedon hatches new expression of church

**A successful pastoral experiment at Auckland's Clevedon Presbyterian Church has become a shining example of church and community co-operation.**

Clevedon Presbyterian Church launched HATCH in mid-2015, bringing people together on Sundays for a free supper, faith-based music and games. The concept, says Clevedon minister and HATCH founder the Rev Martin Baker, was expected to draw up to 20 people, but its popularity soon attracted scores more.

Delighted with such clear validation for the church's efforts to establish a fresh experience for the community, Martin says they quickly recognised that "something important and special was happening".

"It was obvious almost immediately that the level of interest was far higher than we had anticipated. Each Sunday, we average 65 to 110 people."

Church elder Andrew Hill likens the gatherings to a third Sunday congregation. He has been instrumental in providing oversight and guidance to HATCH.

"It seems to be evolving into a new church of sorts. It has certainly doubled our numbers on Sundays."

Rewarding as it is, such rapid growth meant Clevedon had to take steps to ensure HATCH was sustainable, and it approached the Presbyterian Church's Press Go Board for help.

Martin's proposal to the board described HATCH as an "exciting" and natural extension to Clevedon's ministry, and he believed it was a good fit for the board's requirements. His application explained how the Sunday suppers welcomed people "without charge or agenda", but said the numbers were rapidly overwhelming the church's limited resources.

The Press Go Board was established in 2008 to help facilitate growth projects within New Zealand's Presbyterian



The Rev Martin Baker, far right, says Clevedon's free Sunday socialising and supper averages 65 to 110 people.

churches, aimed at helping support initiatives that would add new vitality to congregations across the country. Since launching, it has funded 14 projects and invested a total of \$1.6 million.

Lisa Wells, the Press Go Catalyst, says the concept is about far more than simply providing funding for projects – it also helps church leaders inspire others, and provides leadership to help build capacity and skills within a congregation.

"We work across three strands to do this – inspiring mission, building capacity, and through seed funding. Funding is generally for a year, and throughout that time we monitor the project's progress."

Clevedon received a generous \$17,000 through Press Go which, when combined with the \$15,000 made available through their own church funding, secured HATCH for another year.

Martin's gratitude is heartfelt: "Our thanks to the board for their support of our new mission venture. A huge thank you to all of you for the blessing and support you provide our community through your help – I love being part of such a generous and supportive Church!"

One person unsurprised by HATCH's success is Clevedon's family ministries team leader Lynette Burton. She says around 550 people a week attend family ministry activities, and she never doubted HATCH could become an extension of that.

"We have an open-door policy here that has built up strong relationships. It follows that people involved in those

activities would take to HATCH. We have had great buy-in from the community."

HATCH has evolved in other ways. Evenings that used to finish around 6pm now end later, Martin says, and families are joined at the tables by enthusiastic teenagers and single parents.

One young man, Chris Jarrett, described HATCH as a "really good example" of the way Jesus calls on people to come together regardless of their backgrounds.

"I feel the love of God in HATCH. For me it is about the people who give up their time to make it happen and the way that everyone is welcomed."

Another regular, Taylor Maxwell, says the fellowship makes it easy for people to forget their fears and just enjoy being together.

HATCH's core group of volunteers are key to making the magic happen.

Clevedon parishioner Neil Bretherton is one of them. He is particularly drawn to the way HATCH gives without the expectation of something in return, and finds it is less about a demonstration of faith and more about faith's message of love.

"We are giving people a different way of integrating with the church and with Christianity. I find it immensely rewarding to be in a situation that calls on me to serve other people."

"HATCH is becoming a third congregation at Clevedon... it's kind of cool really."

Viv Posselt Spanz



# Scholarships support Synod's students

**A scholarship set up by a Pakeha doctor in the 1980s for Presbyterian Māori students continues to bear fruit today.**

The Dr Allan North Scholarships are awarded to members of Te Aka Puaho, the Presbyterian Church's Māori Synod, for tertiary study. "This year, a total of 11 scholarships of up to \$1000 were provided to needy students" says the Rev Wayne Te Kaawa, Moderator of Te Aka Puaho.

"Dr North was a medical doctor in the Urewera from the 1950s. He was Presbyterian and at the time he was the only medical doctor in the region. He worked specifically with Tuhoe and Ngati Whare," says Wayne, who is of Tuhoe descent.

When Dr North died in 1980, his family left a bequest from his estate to the Māori Synod to provide scholarships for members of the Synod to assist with tertiary study.

"As a 17-year-old, I remember being there when Dr North died and his family brought his kawē mate (memorial) to the Māori Synod. Some of his family married into the people of Te Whaiti who still live there today and continue his legacy."

Another part of his legacy is the scholarship, which, says Rev Te Kaawa, has "grown substantially" over the years.

"We have around \$91,000 in the fund now, which is why we were able to offer 11 scholarships this year."

Applicants have to be a member of the Māori Synod and be tertiary students about to start tertiary study, or be at boarding school. Preference is given to students from the Māori Synod with Tuhoe and Ngati Whare tribal affiliations.

Rev Te Kaawa, who is based in Whakatane, says he was overwhelmed with the range of disciplines covered by this year's recipients.

"We had students doing civil engineering, marine biology, design and innovation, as well as sports and leisure courses. It makes me incredibly pleased to see our Māori students doing so well out there in the world."

One of the recipients of the 2016 award was Ramari Rakuraku-Foster, who is currently studying a Bachelor of Arts at Auckland University.

"Ramari needed a laptop to be able to successfully complete her studies, but because of other educational expenses was unable to afford one" says Rev Te Kaawa. "She wrote to the scholarship committee saying that the scholarship allowed her to buy a laptop, which was a wonderful blessing for her and her whanau during a difficult time."

Two other recipients were Tania-Rose Taitoko, currently majoring in Accounting in her final year of a Bachelor of



The Rev Wayne Te Kaawa, Moderator of Te Aka Puaho, was overwhelmed with the range of disciplines covered by this year's recipients of Dr Allan North Scholarships.

Business degree through the Open Polytech, and her son Jardyn Tamati, a boarder at Palmerston North Boys High School.

Tania-Rose says "I received the scholarship to help with my study costs and Jardyn's scholarship was to help with the cost of his boarding."

Jardyn is a Year 11 first-time boarder at Palmerston North Boys High School and the scholarship allowed a portion of the costs of boarding to be covered.

"Palmerston North Boys High School is steeped in tradition, grows good men and has high academic standards and leadership opportunities in school, sport and the community, so we were very keen for Jardyn to attend" says Tania-Rose. "We are thankful for the support from Te Aka Puaho and are sure Jardyn will progress into adulthood with the qualities of a respectable and successful Māori boy."

In return, Tania-Rose says her whanau are deeply supportive of the Church. "Our whanau currently live in the Eastern Bay of Plenty. Jardyn's grandmother is an Amorangi minister in Te Aka Puaho so the whanau support to the church is maintained."

Te Urukaipoa Ruru, currently studying for a Bachelor of Design and Innovation at Wellington's Victoria University, was another recipient of this year's North Scholarship. His mother, Dianne Ruru, says her 18-year-old son, the only Māori student in this year's design and innovation intake, does not receive a student allowance.

"This scholarship will enable Te Urukaipoa to meet his study and living costs. We are very grateful for it" she adds.

Wayne, who administers the scholarship with a panel of five, says he looks forward to following the progress of this year's recipients and receiving interest in next year's scholarships.

"We are keen to hear from other tertiary students from the Māori Synod for next year's applications."

Sharon Stephenson Spanz



# Mentored youth transforms lives through musical gift

**Ruby has played the saxophone for five years, starting with a school band and weekly lessons. Three years ago, during the Christmas season, she accompanied her Mum Rowena to the City Mission to deliver presents. Seeing real poverty for the first time, the idea of busking for charity was born.**

"I was only eight then," says Ruby. "I felt really sad to discover that there were poor people, and wanted to do something to help them."

Dad Gary says the family didn't bring up the idea again but waited to see if it had taken root in Ruby. It had. They sorted out a busking licence and since then Ruby has been touching people's hearts with God's love in places where retail therapy more often fills an inner emptiness. Christmas shoppers at Sylvia Park, Eastridge in Kohimarama, Greenlane Events Centre, Matakana Winter Wonderland and flea markets at Mission Bay have contributed to the \$1,600 she has raised, which all goes to charity.

"I get a lot of comments about how wonderful she is," says Gary. "Some families who've directly benefited come up and tell me how appreciative they are."

After Ruby appeared on TV1's Good Sorts in late 2015, the family received a phone call from a viewer wanting to donate a further \$500 for her City Mission fund.

"I had to go out and shop for more presents!" Ruby says. "Last year I was also allowed for the first time into the 'back room' where they sort out the presents. They let the parents wrap them for their own children, which is so cool."

The Wright family emigrated to New Zealand from South Africa before Ruby was born. Now in year 8 at Remuera Intermediate, she will go on to Selwyn College next year. She has one younger brother, and the family attends St Heliers Church. Through St Heliers, the family was introduced to the Transformers programme that raises up young leaders in a Christian context. Run by Kids Friendly, the programme teaches practical leadership skills and attributes such as service, innovation, communication and self-esteem.

Each year in August, children aged 10-13 are invited to a live-in Transformers Camp. Ruby went along in 2015 and was so 'jazzed' by it she went a second time last month, in Ngaruawahia.

"The best thing was being with other Christians because there aren't many at my school," says Ruby. "I really enjoyed that feeling - sharing my beliefs with them."

The young Kids Friendly team of mentors at the camp were also easy to relate to, she says. After the first camp, she paired up with a mentor in her local church who shares her interests.



Ruby busking at a market.

Amy Gulvin is in her mid 20s and also has music in her blood. The daughter of a performing arts teacher, she wrote her first song as a teenager, and is now helping Ruby learn to write Christian songs.

"Amy helps me with ideas and understandings. I get to see what she does in the church," Ruby enthuses.

Ruby took part in a musical performance composed by Amy, called *Supernova*, exploring the theme of darkness and light. Supernova Studio is part of the St Heliers Centre Music School. A video from the performance, *All We Have Is Now* is on YouTube [<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xS8EqIyuEec>]. Ruby is learning the keyboard, guitar, bass and ukulele, and plays in several bands and orchestras, including a jazz band and ukulele orchestra.

"I really want to write songs and a musical, like Amy does," says Ruby. "And I'm writing a musical now. I also love to work with little children."

As a young leader at St Heliers for the Sunday Jigglers programme, she tells Bible stories to the restless under-fives.

"My favourite is the story about the shepherd counting his sheep to make sure they're all there. Everyone is important," she explains.

Ruby has dyslexia and dyspraxia – a developmental coordination disorder – so she understands that life can be a struggle at times for everyone in different ways. Music has helped her a great deal with her coordination, and so it has become her way of giving back to others.

Jade Reidy **Spanz**



# Interns graduating from KCML in 2016



## Leriko Afamasaga

As the first-ever intern from PI Synod Presbytery I greet you: Malo e lelei, kiorana koutou katoatoa, fakalofa lahi atu, taloha ni, bula vinaka and talofa lava. My name is leriko Afamasaga from Tamaki Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church.

I have been happily married to Aliitasi Vaai for nearly 13 years. God has blessed us with a son, RJ Saoifalealii (11) and two daughters, Punipua Rewalina-Jane (9) and Lolenese Judith Totana (6).

After many years of serving God in a number of leadership roles in the church and the community at large, I felt a strong urge to become an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

I am serving my 19-month internship in Malae-o-Fatugatiti, a Samoan PIPC, and two months at St Columba's Church in Botany, Auckland.

I look forward with joy to serving God as a national ordained minister, in any context.



## Marty Redhead

For as long as I can remember there has been a call of God on my life into full-time ministry as a preacher and pastor. It gives me the greatest joy to see people of all ages and in all stages of life and faith be reconciled and connected to the goodness of God.

I believe the greatest thing anyone can do is start and cultivate a relationship with Christ and live the life that God has called us to. I am passionate about preaching and building the local church, believing that there are great days ahead.

I am married to Steph, and we have almost three children: Ella (6) Josiah (4) and "number three" due in November. I have Southland roots but am currently serving at Trinity Presbyterian, Temuka. I love spending time with my family and friends, eating good food and drinking good coffee.



## Mo Morgan

I'm married to Kirk and we have three children, Bryn (8) Lucy (6) and Callum (4). For the last eight years we've made our home on the banks of the Whanganui River. I served my internship at St James Presbyterian Church in Whanganui East, and have really enjoyed being part of a church that has chosen to plant new seeds to become more community facing and kid-friendly.

Over the years I have studied Maori, theology, music and guidance counselling. I have been a piano teacher and youth worker, worked for Praxis, and was the Presbyterian Youth Ministry national director in the early 2000s. I enjoy hanging out with friends and family, spending time in the hills, reading, and creating music with others.

I'm passionate about creative worship, being present and involved in the community, and creating spaces for people to relate, create, and grow in their faith together.

Profiles of the graduating students are available from Rev Allister Lane, who co-ordinates introductions and discussions between final year interns and ministry settlement boards. For more information, please email Allister, [a.lane@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz](mailto:a.lane@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz)

## Expressions of Interest

St Andrews  
Mount Maunganui



**St Andrews, Mt Maunganui** is a dynamic evangelical congregation in the growing city of Tauranga. We are committed to living with a resurrection mind-set, and a mission heart.

We have 5 five congregations reaching a range of different age groups as well as a commitment to local and overseas mission. We are looking for a senior minister to join and lead our team of staff and elders. If you are a Nationally Ordinated Presbyterian Minister (or a minister of another denomination willing to become a Presbyterian minister) and you feel that God might be calling you to St Andrews, please contact: The convenor of our Ministry Settlement Board, Rev Simon Mcleay

PHONE/ 027 270 5426 EMAIL/ [simon@stpeters.org.nz](mailto:simon@stpeters.org.nz) for a church profile.





## So'o Fa'atui

Greetings, kia ora, kiaorana, fakaalofa lahi atu, anyoung haseyo, talofa lava. My name is So'osemea (So'o) Fa'atui. Being Samoan, church was and still is the very centre of who I am as a person. My youthful passion -- to be a church minister -- has burned stronger since I migrated to New Zealand 17 years ago.

I am a trained secondary school teacher. My wife Alice and I have two children - son Tui (15) and daughter Jada (13). We live at Laidlaw College campus where I undertook theological studies. Previously, I worked as a youth advocate for Maori and Pacific island youth at Manukau and Auckland youth courts. In my spare time I enjoy walking, fishing and gardening.

My family and I are serving our internship at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Henderson, West Auckland. Being part of the multicultural story and identity of the Presbyterian Church, I look forward to serving God together with parishioners, listening and weaving together our different stories within God's bigger story.



## Solomon Premkumar Rajan

Born and raised in India, my family and I immigrated to New Zealand in 2006, the year I was called to full-time ministry. I studied at the Bible College of New Zealand, (Laidlaw, Post-graduate Diploma in Theology) and am currently in the last phase of my Masters in Theology.

I was raised in the 60s and 70s in the missionary movement in India and missions form the core of my Christian journey. My missions involvement in India includes extensive work among the Irula tribes and village church planting.

In New Zealand, God has enabled me to take the Gospel to immigrants of other faiths especially from India and Sri Lanka. My passion is teaching and preaching the word of God. After serving the first year of my internship at St David's in the Fields, Auckland, I am in my final year at Somervell Presbyterian, Auckland.

My wife, Belinda, a trained pianist and software professional, assists me in my ministry. We have two lovely children, Sarah (16) and Isaac, (6). In my spare time I love reading, cooking and walking.



## Tengar Paniora

I am a Cook Islander by birth, born to a Christian family. I am married to Anne and we have been blessed with five lovely children, three living in Australia and two here in New Zealand.

I have been involved in chaplaincy work for a youth group, Newton PIC, listening to their stories and providing advice. My roles include leading youth services both in the parish and in fellowship with other parishes, prayer meetings, Bible studies and home visitations. I worked on the Auckland Harbour Bridge doing bridge maintenance before commencing my studies at Laidlaw College in 2010. I began my internship at First Church, Dunedin, in 2015.

My wife is a qualified caregiver and would offer her services to the aid of others, especially the elderly. In my spare time I love listening to music, gardening, fishing, having conversations with elderly people and listening to their stories.

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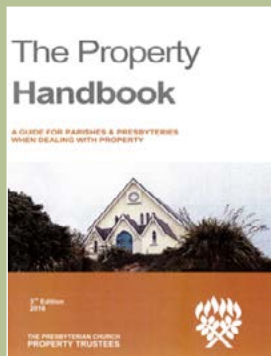
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## THE NEW PROPERTY HANDBOOK



The Trustees have recently completed a new edition of the Property Handbook that will provide parishes and Presbyteries with a comprehensive guide to the wide variety of property matters they now have to deal with.

It covers the processes around selling, buying and leasing property, undertaking major renovations and building projects, subdividing land, the use of capital funds, borrowing by parishes, gifting of property or funds and lottery grants.

There's also information about dealing with the property of closed congregations, about the constraints of land use that can result from heritage listings and local authority controls, about health & safety and earthquake prone buildings, and about property maintenance and insurance.

In order to keep the Property Handbook right up to date and relevant, it will not be printed in hard copy. Instead, it is available on the Trustees' page of the Church's website, where it can be updated whenever necessary. You can now view and print the whole Handbook, or just the particular section you need.

**Find the 2016 Property Handbook at**  
[www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-parishes/church-property-trustees/the-property-handbook](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-parishes/church-property-trustees/the-property-handbook)

**Enquires for the Trustees can be made to:**

**The Executive Officer, Kos van Lier**  
**Presbyterian Church Property Trustees**  
**PO Box 9049, Wellington 6141**

**(04) 381 8296 or [kos@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:kos@presbyterian.org.nz)**

# THEOLOGYMATTERS

## A theology of strategic planning? Yeah right!

**As I began a previous ministry placement, a respected church member asked if I had a strategic plan. With a somewhat mischievous glint, I promised one. But only once the price of petrol in four years' time was confirmed. If it went up, I explained, then our strategic plan would require more small gatherings in homes and less large gatherings on Sunday. A humorous response, which points to the complexity of long-term planning in a world of discontinuous change.**

With a new team and with the encouragement of the wider church, we at KCML have spent the past few months clarifying our direction. But how to strategically plan in times of change? Can a strategic plan be mixed with theology and theological colleges?

My approach to strategic planning is shaped by Luke 10:1-12. The passage suggests intentionality, accountability, flexibility and discernment in community.

In Luke 9:51, Jesus sets his face with intentionality toward Jerusalem. For the remainder of the Gospel, the entire mission of Jesus is focused toward the events of Easter.

Jesus sends the disciples ahead to every town and place he will go (10:1). This brings accountability. It is an early form of Ministry Development Review. The disciples' use of resources, particularly time, will be examined.

The disciples enact flexibility. They go seeking a person of peace. The specifics only emerge on the doorstep, in the interaction between the disciples and the unique local community. Clarity is gained on the road, in the middle of mission.

The plan requires discernment in community. The disciples act not as lone rangers but in twos (10:1). Revelation of the Kingdom of God (10:9) only occurs in houses, through communal acts of eating (10:7).

Moderator Right Rev Andrew Norton has called the KCML plan a model of discernment. With such a blessing, how has our strategic plan been developed?

First, it began with intentionality. We started by asking ourselves when in the last 12 months had KCML been at our best? As each person shared we identified important phrases, which were written on the whiteboard. It was a form of *lectio divina*, a listening for the Divine, for the work of God in our life. The apostle Paul begins each of his New Testament letters by naming specific ways God has brought life.<sup>1</sup> Each letter is different. Each community has seen God bless it uniquely. The unique themes reappear in the ethical exhortations that end each of Paul's letters. This provides intentionality: clarifying what God blesses guides future behavior.

Second, it was flexible and discerned in community. Once the team had explored where God was bringing life, I introduced external voices. Five people who knew KCML well were asked the same question: when in the last 12 months has KCML been at its best? These external voices provided encouragement. They also offered a reality check. We needed wider community perspectives to challenge us.

Third, it involved accountability. Over seven months, the plan was tested with stakeholders: formally, with groups like Council of Assembly; informally, in presbytery gatherings. What was the wider Church affirming? What needed further work? This was stepping into accountability, testing dreams in community.

The words theology and strategic planning rarely appear together. Yet if theology matters, it must embrace the whole of life. A strategic plan is stewardship, expressing who we are and what we value. Luke 10 suggests that strategic planning can be intentional, accountable, flexible and discerned in community.

But will the price of petrol affect the KCML plan? Check out future editions of SPANZ for more about the KCML plan and decide for yourself.

– Rev Dr Steve Taylor, Principal Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, Dunedin.

<sup>1</sup> For more see Mark Lau Branson, *Memories, Hopes and Conversations*, 2004.



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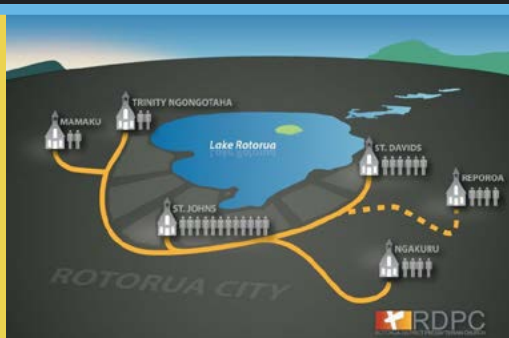
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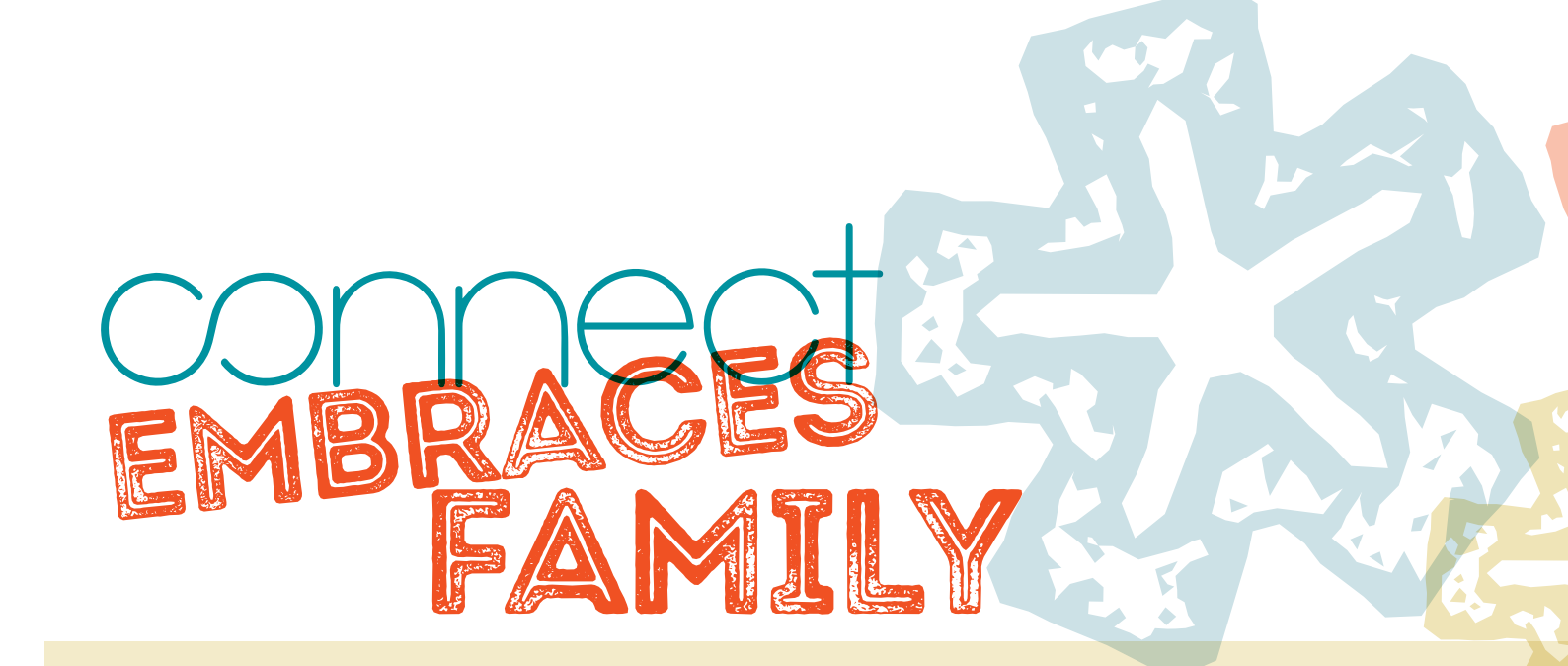
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# connect EMBRACES FAMILY

**Google the word “whanau” and the global search engine will throw up almost 30 million results. At its simplest level, the Māori word means an extended family or community of related families who live together in the same area.**

But for around 180 youth workers and more than 10 ministers at this year's Presbyterian Youth Ministry (PYM) national youth leader's conference, Connect 2016, the term took on a very specific meaning.

Matt Chamberlin, PYM Youth Ministry Director, says this year's theme of whanau was about encouraging broader connections.

“We really wanted to embrace the wider context of whanau, of not just family but the connection with the wider community,” says Matt. “We get so busy ministering to young people in our own sphere that we can forget about the tremendous assets located in a young person's whanau.”

Held from 15-17 July in Waikanae, this is the third Connect event Matt has directed. He says he developed four distinct takeaways for youth workers around the whanau theme at this year's gathering:

1. that we be intentional about connecting with, and communicating well with, parents on a regular basis
2. that we work to help parents be a hero in their children's lives and become familiar with helpful people and resources that can support and encourage parents in their roles
3. that we become aware of other people and organisations in our community who can help support our young people (school guidance counsellors and local youth aid officers are often a helpful first port of call), and

4. that, as we make these connections, it is really important that we know who we are as followers of Christ and what our capacity is at the local church, so that we don't get overwhelmed or dilute our DNA as we try to meet our community's needs.

“It's easy for youth workers to feel like they need to be the hero when they're helping to keep a young person on the rails. But we wanted the message to be that, first of all, Jesus Christ is the number one hero and parents are second. Our message at Connect 2016 was very much about recognising and supporting the role parents play in a young person's life, because they are the ones that are the real heroes.”

This year the annual event was held at El Rancho, a retreat/Christian camp facility in Waikanae, north of Wellington. Matt says that every year they struggle to find suitable venues to fit the number of attendees so he was pleased this year to find El Rancho.

“As a venue, it worked out really well for us. So much so, we're going to be holding next year's Connect there too.”

There were other changes in this year's line-up, including an earlier start. Matt says many attendees travel so far that they really want to get the most out of the weekend. “So this year we pushed the starting time out to 2.00pm on the Friday. I have to admit, we did wonder whether it would just be myself and Gordon Fitch (PYM national Manager) waiting by ourselves for five hours for people to show up! But more than 80 per cent of the attendees were there at 2pm, which was great to see.”

Also this year, for the first time ever, the format included a mihi whakatau. “Tamati Norman, a kaumatua from one of the local churches, was invited to lead the welcome,” says Matt, “and one of the

Pakeha regional youth co-ordinators who'd been learning Te Reo, Mike Dodge, was thrilled to be able to respond to the mihi.

“It was also my first time speaking at a mihi whakatua and it was an absolute privilege. Opening Connect 2016 with this traditional welcome was really significant for us, and is something we will definitely repeat in future years.”

After the welcome, there were two workshops and a keynote session from Matt and Gordon around the vision, values and resources developed by PYM to support youth ministry which, in hindsight, was too much to pack into the day.

“Everyone was pretty exhausted by then, including us. Although folk were very encouraging, it was a little like the walking dead speaking to other walking dead!”

But after a good night's sleep attendees awoke to a sunny day and a full line-up of workshops and speakers, including Zane Scarborough from The Parenting Place, an Auckland-based organisation that offers support, advice, educational courses and workshops to help make family life enjoyable and fun.

“Zane was an amazing speaker, and his challenge to youth workers this year was around the concept of making parents the hero in young people's lives. He really reinforced our key message that after Christ, parents need to be the hero in their children's lives.”

On Saturday evening, Presbyterian-based youth ministry legends Jo Kisono, and Tama and Miriam Bucknell, continued to challenge and encourage attendees around the whanau theme, bringing learning stories from their own practice. On Sunday morning, Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship Director, Nigel Pollock, also challenged the group on how





Presbyterian Youth Ministry's Gordon Fitch and Matt Chamberlin, pictured (from left to right) with Tiare Tuakana, Myana Tuakana, Mareta Matenga and Orapa Pritchard.

to keep their Christian DNA as they live as a minority group in their respective communities.

Worship at Connect took on more of a creative element this year. Alongside musical worship led by Rev Malcolm Gordon and his team drawn from Studentsoul, participants were blessed by creative contributions of dance and art.

Token Veloso, a member of the Howick Presbyterian Church, opened worship with a thought-provoking dance.

Local artist, Beckie Phillips, was commissioned to paint a piece for Connect 2016, which she created progressively over the weekend. Beckie also set up a 'paint by numbers' giant jigsaw-style artwork of Jesus that all Connect participants were invited to fill in. "It was amazing watching these develop over the course of the weekend," says Matt. "It was a way into worship outside the norm. It was great to model new ways of worshipping together."

One encouraging feature this year was the presence of a dozen or so ministers. Matt says several came as participants, many attending with youth ministry teams from their parishes. "It was great to have them with us. Hopefully, they too were encouraged by the event and equipped with new insights on how they can support youth ministry in their churches."

One of those ministers was Rev Allister Lane from Wellington's St John's in the

City. Allister says Connect's focus on identity and context was refreshing. "The theme of whanau was discussed and modelled in such a way as to acknowledge and appreciate the important relationships young people have," says Allister.

"Youth ministry that collaborates with the significant whanau in a young person's life is enriched both in meaning and effectiveness. As a minister of a congregation that includes young people, I appreciated the intentional recognition of roots and relationships: the roots of our Trinitarian theology that worships God as 'Being in Communion' – or, if you like, whanau – and recognising the relationships given to us in our communities where young people are part of immediate families, a church family and the Presbyterian tribe, as well as the many other networks of communities they belong to, all of which form the context of ministry to young people."

Allister says he would commend Connect to all ministers who want to engage with young people in connecting faith and life.

One of Connect 2016's attendees, Emma Page, the Northern Presbytery Youth Coordinator, says she always looks forward to Connect.

"I'd say that 2016 has been my favourite year so far," says Emma. "The opportunity to connect with leaders from around the country and learn from a variety

of different workshop and keynote presenters is always a highlight. I especially enjoyed worshipping together and exploring different ways to worship creatively."

Emma also believes the theme of whanau is a positive one. "The keynote presenters emphasised the importance of involving family in the lives of the young people we minister to, and also reminded us that we all belong to God's family. When whanau are included and involved in our youth ministries, parents become better informed about what takes place at youth group, it allows for conversations to continue at home about youth group, parents can act as great advocates and affirm the youth ministry, and it also encourages positive relationships to form between the leaders, parents and young people".

Emma says Connect 2016 was more than just an enjoyable weekend with her peers. "Connect has sparked some thoughts and ideas about how I can provide opportunities for these conversations to continue in the near future".

Matt is deeply appreciative of all the people who lent their time and talents to make Connect 2016 another wonderful gathering. "I'm especially thankful to my colleague Gordon and for all the volunteers in the hospitality team who worked so incredibly hard before and during Connect to make it such an encouraging event."

Sharon Stephenson [Spanz](#)





## PRESBYTERIAN SCHOOLS BUILD FIJI HOMES

**Mention the word Fiji and most people immediately think of sunshine, turquoise waters and postcard-worthy white sand.**

But for students from Presbyterian schools, St Oran's College in Lower Hutt and St Cuthbert's College in Auckland, a week in Fiji was spent getting blisters and sore muscles.

On two separate trips, year 12 and 13 students visited small villages as part of the Habitat for Humanity (HFH) programme, which helps to provide basic housing for those in need.

Anna Wong, St Cuthbert's College Values Programme Manager, was one of two adults accompanying 14 students from her school when they flew to Fiji on 3 July.

"St Cuthbert's College has a long standing relationship with Habitat spanning more than 10 years," says Anna. "Our college motto is 'By Love Serve', and we encourage our students to volunteer and give back to the community. At St Cuthbert's we have a number of boarders who come from the Pacific Islands, so we consider the islands to be a part of the extended College community."

It's the third time the Epsom college has sent a team to Fiji and this year the team built a transitional shelter in Loqi Settlement, about an hour's drive from Nadi. Transitional shelters are built by volunteers to provide temporary accommodation following cyclone damage and are built to withstand category five cyclones. The shelter the

St Cuthbert's team worked on was a one room basic structure for a family of five.

It was hot, hard work, but Anna says the students loved it. "The feedback from the girls has been very positive. In the past we were hosted by the village we built in, but this time, due to the threat of the Zika virus and dengue fever, we stayed in a hotel."

Students are required to self-fund the trip, although when they return, they fundraise to buy tools for the team visiting the following year. "We've found it's beneficial to bring tools for the team – especially sharp saws to cut the hard Fijian wood! Each team member pays a donation to fund the materials for the build as part of the trip cost. In addition, we donated hammers, saws, metal cutters, clothing, shoes, medical supplies and three lap tops which were distributed through Habitat Fiji."

Anna says she will be signing up students for another HFH trip next year. "This trip is an ongoing annual project for St Cuthbert's. Habitat is starting to branch out into other Pacific islands like Samoa and Tonga, but Habitat Fiji is very well established and doing some great things in their country. The people are so welcoming and their build team is so patient and friendly. Working with teenage girls can be quite challenging – let alone supervising them hammering a house together! But it's such a rewarding experience for the girls and they come back changed by it."

Meanwhile Debs Siegert, an English teacher at St Oran's College and leader of her college's delegation, took eight students to Fiji on 2 July. "It's the first time we've been to a HFH build in Fiji and it was easily one of the most rewarding experiences any of us has had," says Debs.

"Our school motto is 'Without the Lord in Vain' and our vision statement is 'Empowering young women to be the best that they can be'. We encourage students to be actively involved in service and opportunities where they can assist in making a difference for others. The students on the Fiji trip reflected our four core values of resilience, respect, resourcefulness and responsibility."

The St Oran's team was based in the small village of Legalega, 35 minutes from Nadi. The house they built was for a couple in their 50s.

"The five days of building really put us to the test, physically and mentally," admits Debs. "The 30 degree heat, combined with the workload, pushed our physical capabilities to the limit. Hours of digging, sawing, hammering, making concrete, cutting aluminum and strapping, left us with sore muscles, blisters and sweat. But, most of all, it left us with a sense of accomplishment that made all the hard work worthwhile."

In fact, Debs says nothing can compare to seeing the joy on the family's faces when they entered their new home.





St Cuthbert's College students worked with Habitat for Humanity to build a transitional shelter in Fiji.

"By building this house, we were able to help them have a better future because they have somewhere safe to live and can now focus on working and looking after their family. This trip is something we will remember for the rest of our lives and it wouldn't have been possible, or as memorable, without the hard work."

St Oran's has an eight-year history of mission trips with Onesua Presbyterian College in Vanuatu and plans to make the Habitat build an annual service trip.

Rev Sharon Ross Ensor, director of the Presbyterian Church School's Resource Office accompanied the students on their

trip. She agrees it was "hot, hard work" but says it was a real joy to hand over the transitional shelter to the Fijian couple.

"This shelter will provide a real boost for the family's future well-being," says Sharon.

The trip was timely for Sharon, who is currently developing resources from the Presbyterian Schools' Resource Office to support schools in their service projects. These resources will offer a Christian theology of service, along with ideas for enabling students to reflect on, and process, their service experience both during and after the trip.

"The opportunity to travel with the St Oran's group gave me a good chance to experience a service trip and 'try out' some of the resources I've been working on," says Sharon. "I also appreciated the opportunity to lead evening prayer and reflective time with the group at the end of each day. Not only did it enable the students, staff and myself to process our experiences, it also allowed us to think about 'what now' as we prepared to travel back to the comfort of home, school, friends and family after such a challenging and eye-opening experience."

Sharon Stephenson Spanz

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## Taiwanese mission creates connections

**Erana Taka of Te Aka Puaho and Darren Koo from the Auckland Chinese Presbyterian Church recently represented the Presbyterian Church at "I Love Taiwan", the annual mission programme run by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. Darren shares his experience of an exciting and enlightening time.**

Darren Koo says the multicultural faith-based mission I Love Taiwan is not only a once in a lifetime opportunity for individuals, but a global opportunity for the Presbyterian Church.

"It's good for the Church because while it's about personal spiritual development, it is also about the development of the churches. I would like to see it not just in Taiwan but round the world."

Darren, 31, who is a member of the Auckland Chinese Presbyterian Church, attended the inter-faith programme in Taiwan in June and early July this year, along with Erana Taka from Te Aka Puaho. They both received a grant from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand to assist with their attendance.

Darren moved to New Zealand from Australia with his IT job three years ago. He was looking at church options and found the Auckland Chinese Presbyterian Church on the internet. "I looked at it online, and on the same morning my Mum texted me from Brisbane asking me to go to that church!"

"I found it a welcoming, warm place, and I enjoyed the structure of the programme" he says. Darren was baptised last year, and is currently involved in the music team, particularly helping with the technology – his forte. He also runs a free table tennis club at the church, with a focus on outreach.

He says that minister the Rev Dr Stuart Vogel talked about the I Love Taiwan programme, which is for 16 to 35 year olds, in church one Sunday during notices and asked if anyone had a calling to go.



Darren Koo, left, was based at a church in Taiwan with fellow I love Taiwan programme participants: Jora (Taiwan), Noelle (Canada), Choong Man (South Korea), Yiting (Singapore) and Nina (Canada).

Darren did – and was prepared to use all of his annual leave.

Only about 10-15 per cent of the Taiwanese people at I Love Taiwan spoke English. Darren had the advantage of speaking Cantonese, which is similar to Mandarin – the official language of Taiwan. "A native language called Mother Tongue is rather like Māori," says Darren. "I did not understand a lot of what people said, but I understood enough to get by."

He describes the mission as having a camp feel with "lots of people from different countries doing everything together – worshipping, eating, sharing rooms. We slept four to a room, on sleeping mats. It was a very warm, receptive environment, and I quickly felt a close connection with a lot of people." He says he was surprised at who was there – mainly people from South East Asia (though not Indonesia or the Philippines) and the Pacific Rim, as well as Americans and Canadians, but no one from Australia, Britain or Europe.

The participants were sent to local churches, some of which had been hit hard by the super typhoon. Darren was assigned to Changhua Church for a fortnight and to a summer camp for children in a mountain area.

"We taught them the song 'Let Me Stay'. I had to learn it in Mandarin. At the end they were singing it and crying. They really did want to stay!"

Jane Tolerton **Spanz**

Would you like to attend

**I LOVE TAIWAN  
2017?**

Enquiries about the programme can be made by contacting the Presbyterian Church's Global Mission Coordinator, the Rev Phil King, email [phil@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:phil@presbyterian.org.nz) or phone (04) 381 8294.

The main cost of the programme is return airfares to Taiwan. Successful applicants will receive a subsidy from the Presbyterian Church's Global Mission. The remainder of the costs need to be borne by the applicant and his or her church.

I Love Taiwan is run by the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan between late June and early July each year. Young adults aged 16-35 years, from all over the world, participate in a multicultural faith-based event. Participants learn about the life and culture of Taiwan, and share in the mission of the church, while meeting like-minded young adult Christians.





## Ni-van visitors welcome in Hawera

**Hosting a Ni-van couple from remote North Santo has been a rewarding cultural and spiritual exchange.**

Shirley and Norman Manua from the village of Jerivu wanted to experience New Zealand church life first-hand, and get help with logistics for the next stage of a new community building under way in their village, which is being supported by St John's Presbyterian Church in Hawera.

Andrew Murch is the church's outreach elder, and a builder and farmer. He was keen to host the couple, as Norman has lots of influence in Santo's Big Bay.

"He's got a finger in every pie," says Andrew. "That's why we particularly wanted him to be the one to come here."

The relationship began two years earlier when Andrew approached Rev Phil King, co-ordinator of Global Mission, to ask what his family could contribute to the Church's global mission. Phil encouraged Andrew, Karen and their daughter Natalie to visit Vanuatu.

"Phil had a place in mind he thought no-one would go to," explains Andrew. "It's a remote village in North Santo's Big Bay, called Jerivu, which was unaffected by Cyclone Pam. We're always up for an adventure."

That adventure led to the village's ruling elder Norman and his wife Shirley taking the even more daunting journey to New Zealand in June this year.

"Although Norman and Shirley have been to Vila before, it was their first time out of the country," says Andrew. "They live in traditional grass huts with dirt floors, so getting out at Auckland Airport was overwhelming for them. Shirley was reluctant to step onto the escalator. And when we took them to New Plymouth, the sight of a train nearly scared the living daylight out of them."

Apart from sightseeing trips up the mountain, out on farms and to Brooklands Zoo, the Manuas were able



Shirley Manua and Karen Murch at St John's Presbyterian Church in Hawera, Taranaki.

to see how the practice of church has evolved in New Zealand, says Andrew, and what faith in God looks like when uncoupled from superstitious beliefs.

"There's a fair bit of black magic still goes on in Vanuatu and they still do church like the missionaries taught them 150 years ago," Andrew explains. "In a traditional church, one man does everything and no-one else speaks, whereas here, everyone participates. They enjoyed seeing that and intend to make changes back home to the way things are done."

Around 50 members of the Hawera congregation turned out on a winter's night to see how the plans for the new centre are shaping up. The 24m x 12m concrete building will serve as a church, safe house, evacuation centre, community centre, conference facility and more. Jerivu has a population of around 130, from two extended families. The new centre will be a shared resource for the eight villages in the parish, dotted along the Big Bay.

Some funding for the new church is coming from Global Mission, but the remaining \$30-\$40,000 is being raised by St John's. The Church has already sent money to continue taking the building

to completion. The village has paid for, and is constructing, the foundations themselves. With only two moulds, the concrete blocks needed are taking time to create and set in place. Next June, a team of volunteers from the Church will head up there to finish whatever still remains undone. In the interim, a container of materials will be shipped from Napier to Luganville, on Santo's southeast coast. From there, the materials will get to the village, bit by bit, on a copra boat that takes supplies to the area on a monthly run and picks up the crops.

The new building is not the only visible change happening in the village. As more seasonal Ni-van workers come to New Zealand from Jerivu and send money home to their immediate families, the village is being transformed, slowly but surely, with tin houses and modern amenities.

The Murch family also anticipates having a long-term relationship with this remote part of North Santo, and bringing further changes. They would like to take international speakers there and hold conferences in the new facility.

"We'll take the world to them, as well as taking them to the world," says Andrew.

Jade Reidy Spanz



## Churches' peace agenda for troubled South Sudan

**A fifth birthday is meant to be a time of celebration but it was not for the world's newest nation, where conflict simmers and occasionally flares. South Sudan achieved independence on July 9, 2011, after decades of war. The hopes of its people were quickly dashed as conflict continued with Sudan and its elected leaders fell out. By 2013 they were at war. Throughout these troubles, the church held fast to the vision of a country at peace with room for everyone.**

Churches have worked to transcend tribal differences and improve livelihoods. Working together, church leaders have made peace-making a priority. They have taken responsibility for the well-being of all people, making sure their voices are heard. The South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) has been present at international peace negotiations and is represented on the peace agreement monitoring group.

The World Council of Churches and the All Africa Conference of Churches is supporting SSCC in a task that is challenging and parallels international diplomatic efforts. Meanwhile, ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) is deeply involved in humanitarian and development programmes in South Sudan and assisting refugees in neighbouring countries.

Taking on the peace and reconciliation task is a difficult process, especially when new conflicts can erupt at any time. Last year heads of churches drew up a vision for peace. Advocacy was the first of three pillars in their peace action plan. They agreed to facilitate communication between the people and political leaders, and with neighbouring countries.

The second pillar is conducting what they call "neutral forums", bringing groups together at all levels. During the civil war in Sudan, churches played a critical



Susan fled Juba with two of her children after her husband and two older children were killed.

mediation role in local and tribal conflict. The forums draw on their experiences of resolving disputes and fostering peace. The third pillar is reconciliation - which cannot happen until hostilities have ended.

Tension between President Salva Kiir and his former vice-president Riek Machar grew into war when government and rival factions attacked each other in December 2013. Violence quickly spread, splitting the country along ethnic lines. A peace agreement was signed in August 2015 after international pressure, but this has proved fragile.

According to SSCC, churches are the only institution that transcends ethnic and regional differences. When fighting again broke out in July this year, churches struggled to provide food and shelter for those seeking safety. SSCC appealed for calm and international support. In a statement they said, "We condemn all acts of violence without exception. The time for carrying and using weapons has ended; now is the time to build a peaceful nation."

The United Nations warned earlier 4.8 million South Sudanese are hungry and more than 2.5 million displaced - about half the population. In a country with a small international profile and only 200km of paved road, raising funds for food and delivering it is near impossible. The security situation means many will miss out unless peace can be restored.

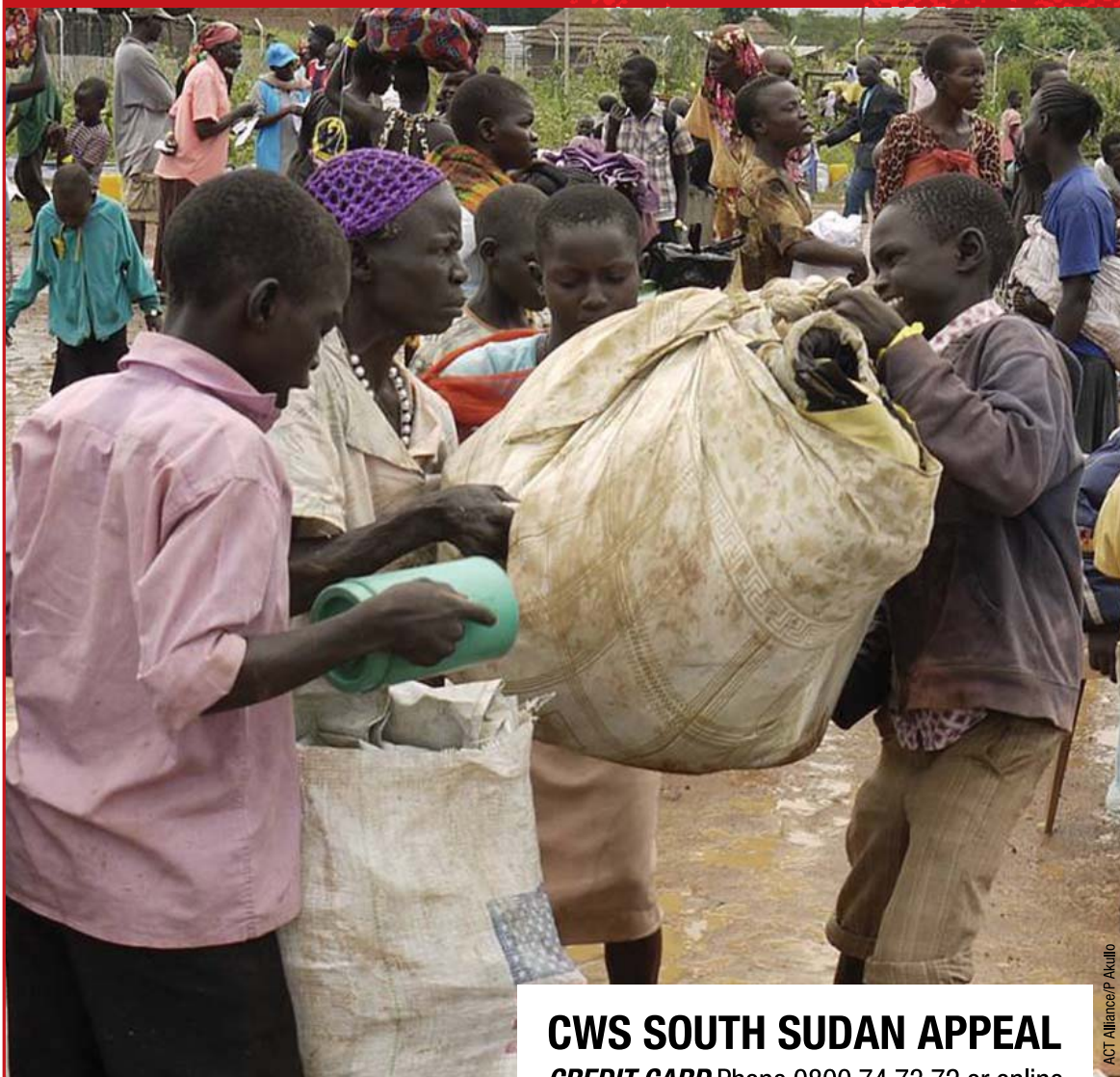
Christian World Service (CWS) has worked in South Sudan for decades, partnering with what was the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC). NSCC developed peace-making expertise even as the war for independence raged with the north. Cattle raiding was common and when grass was short, tribes that moved with their herds could end up fighting with others that stayed in one place. NSCC visitors to Aotearoa told stories of women withholding sex or leaving all male children to the care of village men, as a successful strategy to force them into mediation.

Now CWS works with the Maridi Service Agency in the more stable west. MSA resettles displaced people, sets up livelihood programmes, and runs schools, vocational training and the local radio station. ACT Alliance is providing vital relief in South Sudan and neighbouring countries. In Uganda, it runs the Elegu registration centre and provides food, water, shelter and sanitation in nearby camps.

Susan, pictured, fled Juba with two of her children after her husband and two older children were killed. They hid in the bush, terrified, and then headed south with little to eat or drink. Fortunately someone gave them a ride in a truck. "This is the fourth time I am fleeing into Uganda. I am tired of continued violence and war," she says.



# WE NEED FOOD, WATER AND PROTECTION



ACT Alliance/P Akullo

## PLEASE DONATE NOW

*Please give now so  
the people of South  
Sudan survive.*

### CWS SOUTH SUDAN APPEAL

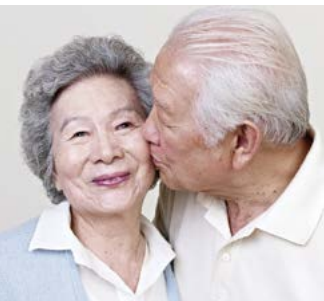
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## Some things make for happier, healthier living, **no matter what your age or ability.**

- A sense of community
- Friends, family, whānau
- Being able to give and receive
- Being able to make decisions for yourself
- And, most of all, practical support when you need it.

At Enliven we work alongside you and your family to achieve these things.

### **Enliven services include:**

- Home based support
- Community based social and day activities
- Retirement living options
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