

sPanz

Spanning Presbyterians In Aotearoa New Zealand

December 2006, Issue 29

GA06: Decisions and aftermath

plus... Dunedin's student church takes off

www.presbyterian.org.nz

Jose Reader explores reactions to the GA06 sexuality and leadership decision

Tackling the media at General Assembly

General Assembly-related media coverage will always be an issue within Presbyterian circles, with many bemoaning the focus on sexuality and leadership and believing coverage was sensationalised.

I have a couple of yardsticks for whether an issue has been sensationalised – unnecessarily prolonged coverage and emotive (rather than fact-based) reporting. Because neither of these factors were present in the General Assembly-related coverage that I saw and heard, I don't believe the coverage was sensationalised. When we consider that the majority of reports were largely confined to the four days after the decision, accurately reported the facts surrounding the decision and included comments from both perspectives, it is difficult to find evidence to support calls that the reporting was "sensational".

Stories on sexuality in leadership ran in every major news outlet in the country including *The New Zealand Herald*, *The Dominion-Post*, Radio New Zealand's

Checkpoint, the *Otago Daily Times* and numerous other regional daily newspaper and radio stations. And, of course, there was also coverage in Christian media like *Challenge Weekly*.

So why did the sexuality in leadership issue get so much coverage? Each news agency runs stories that are of interest to their respective audiences, so different stories (or aspects of stories) will be highlighted in different media outlets. The community at large is grappling with issues around same sex and de facto relationships, which is why this issue received prominent coverage across the board. The community is interested in this issue, so mainstream media report on it.

For this reason, we shouldn't be surprised that the sexuality and leadership issue received so much coverage. Instead, we should welcome the community's interest in what we have to say and look at ways we can take advantage of the opportunity it provides us to inform and advance public discussion.

When thinking about media coverage, we should also consider the chicken and egg argument: does media coverage shape community opinions or do community opinions shape the media coverage? I believe it's a bit of both. The stories covered and the way they are reported are influenced by the community (those who attended the recent media workshops run by the Church's communications team learned some techniques to assist with this), and in return, the resulting coverage helps inform the community's views. It is all good and well for us to bemoan the coverage we receive, but we need to take responsibility for that coverage – both locally and nationally – and for reaching out and giving the Church a more prominent voice in our communities.

This is about much more than just responding to issues as they arise (as in the case of General Assembly), it's also about being proactive and vocal on issues of importance to congregations.



Moderator the Right Rev Pamela Tankersley conducting a live radio interview during GA06

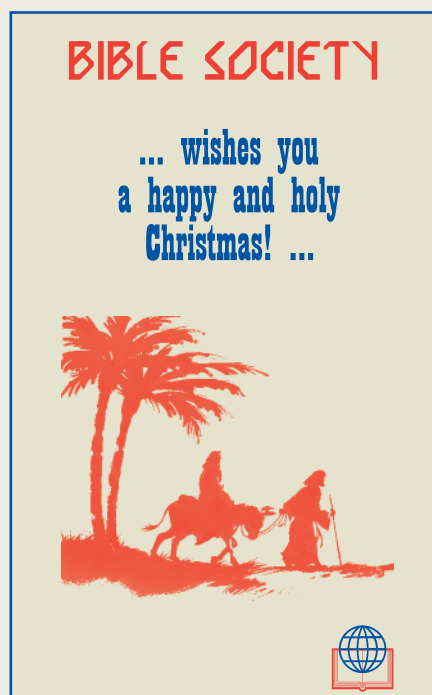
Proactively sharing our stories through local media can make a positive difference to a congregation's profile and outreach programmes.

Many within the Church have given up caring about what is reported in mainstream media, but the reality is that we should not only care, we should actively pursue coverage in newspapers, radio and other media to communicate our important message.

Media coverage (both negative and positive) has a massive impact on how those in the community perceive the Church. Thousands of people read the newspaper every day in New Zealand, and what they read plays a part in informing their thinking. If those in the Church give up on the media, we're missing out on a wonderful vehicle for communicating with and reaching out to those the Church is here to serve.

Being Christ-centred and community-facing was the theme of this year's General Assembly. During her opening sermon, Moderator the Right Rev Pamela Tankersley spoke of the Church and its identity, encouraging commissioners to re-establish our identity in today's world and to embrace opportunities to engage with our communities. Local media can be used as a tool to re-connect with our communities, and while this may involve doing things differently than they've been done before, I encourage congregations and Church leaders to embrace the opportunities presented by the media for us to become more Christ-centred and community facing.

Communications Manager Jose Reader is currently on a year's parental leave



Who we are

sPanz is published quarterly by the Presbyterian Publishing Company Ltd, PO Box 9049, Wellington, New Zealand

ISSN 1175 5202

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Next issue

March 2007
Advertising deadline
20 December 2006

Design

Tangerine

Printing

Lithoprint

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Cover Photograph

Commissioners spill out of the St Kentigern College chapel on the first day of General Assembly 2006, held in Auckland from 28 September-2 October.

Frances Oliver Photography

Wandering congregation finds new home, new ministry



Princess Anne meets Lesley and Mervyn Aitken of St James' Church.

Inner city Auckland's St James' Church was once on a site now graced by a sculpture of a pohutukawa flower, next to the Nelson Street motorway off-ramp. When that church was taken out by motorway construction, the congregation moved half a kilometre to the Congregational Church in Beresford Street. In 1994, the church and land was sold and since then the congregation of St James Church and Community has wandered around the inner city. Now it has a new home, combined with a new ministry, at the downtown International Seafarers' Centre, and the congregation is responding well, according to St James' minister the Rev Mervyn Aitken.

Since July last year, the congregation, which has survived and grown a little during its peripatetic existence, has had an agreement to use the Mariners' Chapel in Quay Street for its worship and group meetings. Part of the arrangement is that Mervyn takes his turn on the chaplain's roster. This involves visiting ships in port as well as helping staff the Centre, which is the base for the International (formerly British) Sailors' Society, the Flying Angel Mission (Anglican) and Stella Maris (Catholic).

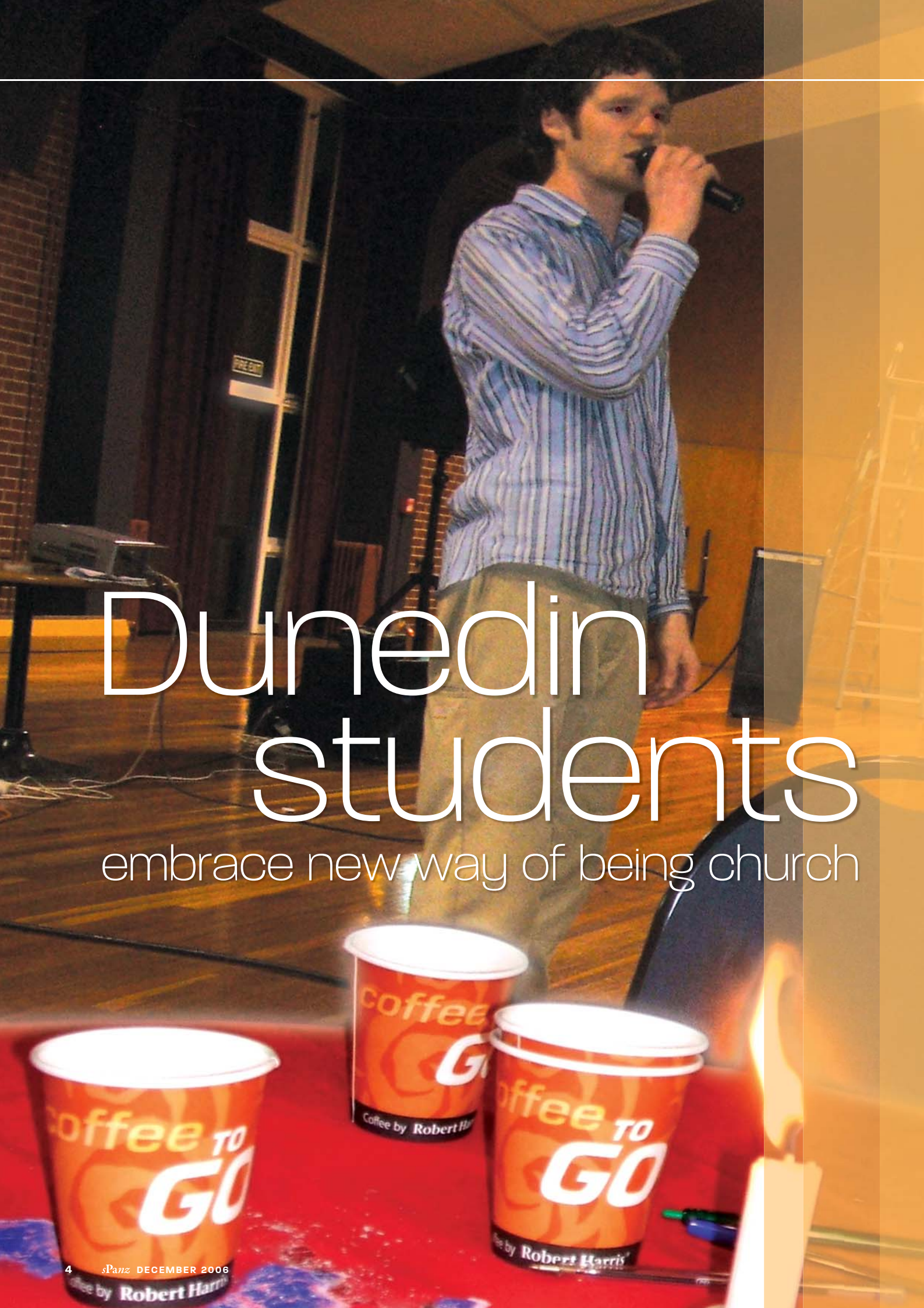
Seafarers' centres provide visiting ships' crew with a much-needed safe and welcoming shore base. The centres post and receive mail, provide phones, light refreshments, can arrange translators and sell phonecards and inexpensive souvenirs. Recreation with locals and other ships' crews – pool tables, cards, books, TV – provides relief from the sometimes claustrophobic life on board the big ships with small crew that still ply the world's oceans.

Short turn-around times in port mean the waterfront Centre runs 10 hours a day, seven days a week. St James' congregation maintains its regular life – worship, small group meetings, social events – and seafarers often get caught up in the church's activities. It helps that the congregation has a significant Asian membership and some can help with conversation – the Rev Sunday Tsoi, for example, who works from there and is chaplain to Asian university students – speaks five languages. Translators can be arranged for crises but many of the seafarers just want to chat.

"Help with phoning home is an important part of our service," says Mervyn. "The seafarers are desperate to talk to their families. So often the connection is poor, and we get called in to help. You can see the seafarer sliding into despair as the link is lost, and then finally the joy as the caller gets through."

The centre is vital for help during a crisis. Filipino seafarer Rossano Santos, along with 24 others, was in limbo for five months during an ownership dispute over his ship. There was no money to pay the crew their wages or fares home, and back in Manila his family was suffering without the regular allotment from his wages. The centre staff were all involved – with personal support and advocacy through liaison with the Seamen's Union, the ship-owner's agents and others involved.

The Auckland Mission to Seafarers is 150 years old this year, with a special service of celebration in July and a visit from Princess Anne marking the occasion. It seems fitting that a congregation as long-lived as St James (founded in 1862) has found a base to the benefit of all. **By Julia Stuart**

A photograph of a young man with dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped long-sleeved shirt and khaki pants, singing into a black microphone on a stage. The stage has a wooden floor and a brick wall in the background. In the foreground, three orange paper cups with the 'Coffee to GO' logo are on a red surface. A lit candle is visible on the right side of the foreground. The text 'Dunedin students embrace new way of being church' is overlaid in white.

Dunedin students

embrace new way of being church

A

Presbyterian experiment in Dunedin bridges the gap between youth ministry and church. Amanda Wells tells the story of Studentsoul, a church based on the University of Otago campus, which began in 2001 with 20 people and today counts more than 200 part of its community.

Run by the Rev Helen Harray, studentsoul encourages students' personal growth and leadership potential.

Says Helen: "There's nothing else in the church that's filling this transition period. It's a dark hole.

"If you give the 'whatever generation' the safe environment and trust them with their incredible leadership, they stop being apathetic and take responsibility"

Says one student: "studentsoul has made me believe in the Church."

Not only is studentsoul retaining students with Presbyterian backgrounds who head to the city to study, but it's also starting to draw others from different traditions.

And studentsoul has created a core of leaders who says they are proud to be Presbyterian and who are seeking opportunities to serve the Church as they grow into their leadership potential.

Recently the first studentsoul leader has been accepted for training as a Presbyterian minister. Twenty-four-year-old Malcolm Gordon starts at the School of Ministry in 2007.

Malcolm says he wants to be part of a new dynamic emerging in the Presbyterian Church, while appreciating the importance of the denomination's heritage. "Change needs to be an organic process".

Helen says the current generation of students has grown up with a strong focus on interactive entertainment. "We're not capturing them by the traditional means of talking."

But she says that analysis of learning styles has implications beyond generational boundaries, with Christian education often struggling to reflect different learning preferences.

Her focus on interactive worship has been informed by a book called *The Dirt on Learning*, from United States company Group Publishing, which covers different styles of learning in relation to Christian education. Helen will spend time at Group Publishing's Colorado base during study leave between September 2006 and January 2007.

She says today's student generation is after teaching that includes practical "how-tos".

For example, a service on anger incorporated aspects of psychology, as well as providing a theological point of view, then moved into an exploration of the practical impact this could have in terms of relationships with flatmates.

"Giving them relationship skills is the key. It's about trying to teach this generation how to do it better."

Studentsoul meets on Sunday evenings in the University's student union building, which is set up café-style, with students sitting around small tables. Services are structured to take into account the way that we process information. "People remember beginnings and they remember endings. They lose what's

in the middle". So services are organised around defined segments, including clips from movies, short dramas, time for "get to know you" chat, worship, a short message, and small group discussions of the message that feed back into a large group discussion.

For example, students walked into one service to find a lidded bucket sitting on each table. During the service, Helen asked them to open the bucket. Inside they found lollies, party things like streamers and hats, surgical gloves, and the elements for communion (cups, star-shaped bread and juice). The service focused on the parable of the wedding feast, with participants taking the part of the guests and the service concluding with an invitation to the feast and communion. Helen says the group celebrates the sacraments regularly, usually incorporating some kind of response and interactive element.

Studentsoul's ministry has grown mostly via word of mouth, aided by advertising in Southland and Otago churches. In the early days, a group from student hostel Salmond Hall started to attend and this link was strengthened when Helen became the Hall's chaplain. By the end of the second year, about 50 people were attending regularly, and a strong core group had developed.

Today average weekly attendance is about 100 people, with about 200 part of the student soul network. Studentsoul has become one of the biggest student Christian communities in Dunedin.

But Helen says studentsoul isn't in competition with established Christian clubs on campus and there is some crossover of membership. However, the growth of studentsoul has affected other churches in Dunedin, such as the Baptist and Apostolic churches near the university that had previously picked up large numbers of young people from Presbyterian backgrounds.

Studentsoul has a special relationship with St Stephen's Presbyterian in Leith Valley. Helen says the support of this parent church, as well as of Dunedin Presbytery, has been a vital component in studentsoul's success. Perhaps surprisingly, students who become involved in studentsoul often start to attend Leith Valley in the mornings to hear more traditional Biblical preaching.

Studentsoul has developed students with leadership potential through what Helen calls "Gel" groups. These provide a structured way of introducing students to facilitation skills, as well as providing space to reflect on their evolving development. "It's about observing what is happening, and being open and honest about it".

The Gel groups grew out of a leadership camp held at the end of studentsoul's first year and have developed into a three-year programme. In 2006, the first group to complete the three years started to look at presentation and speaking skills, with some of this group also becoming leaders of Gel groups themselves. About 30 students have been involved in the Gel programme this year.

Having gone through the three-year Gel group system, this year Malcolm Gordon is leading on of the first-year groups. He says the Gel groups mean being intentional about leadership development. As well as identifying leadership potential, studentsoul creates places in which leaders are needed. Students develop awareness of how they function in a group, why they react to certain people in certain ways. Malcolm says students find this approach a refreshing contrast to their day-to-day focus on external information.

Studentsoul could not continue without having students as part of its ministry team and heavily involved with organising and leading services, says Helen. "They carry it".

This dynamic has been nurtured despite the fact that in student ministry, with students coming and going every three or four years, "you're always starting again". Some participants have chosen to stay in Dunedin after finishing their undergraduate study and have become key leaders.

Helen says it is hard to see the leaders that she is nurturing find their place in a traditional parish; instead their drive is to plant new, studentsoul-like gatherings that draw those of their own generation. "They've got to be given some resource to get out there and do what they do best. We've got to think outside the square and find the ways to resource this."

Anticipating the start of his training next year, Malcolm says he recognises that the parish church in which he eventually commences ministry may not share the dynamic of studentsoul "but that's okay as long as I'm not expected to keep it that way".

Malcolm started going to studentsoul in 2003 after being invited along by a friend. He was immediately given a job to do: "I became the sound guy".

Involvement is part of studentsoul's ethos, he says, because people need to feel they are needed and "not spectators". Studentsoul cannot be experienced as a social club at which you are entertained, he says, because of this "culture of need and dependency".

For example, one weekend in September, there was a big concert on the Saturday night, three teams were heading out to take services in different churches on Sunday morning, the Sunday evening service was happening as usual; "and we're not short-staffed".

The studentsoul model could prove vital for the Presbyterian Church, he says, as it bridges the gap between healthy youth involvement and young adults dropping out.

"The only place that that's being done is studentsoul. Perhaps it needs to be a goal of the Presbyterian Church to have five studentsouls in the next 10 years."

At the moment, studentsoul has a plethora of leaders with this vision and passion, Malcolm says. "Personnel are always harder to find than money. People who have vision and ownership of ideas are worth gold."

The future of student soul is difficult to predict, Helen says. The project "felt pretty vulnerable" for the first two to three years" and still faces multiple funding applications on an annual basis.

At the moment, studentsoul is funded by grants from the Synod of Otago and Southland and the Presbyterian Foundation. Helen says other funding opportunities are being considered but that it is difficult to find the necessary time and expertise to pursue them.

Now that the group has grown beyond 100 regular members, there is the need for more paid staff. "If we had more resources, we could do a lot more. We're at a crucial point.

"We really need to put this in place in other centres, tertiary institutions and help them plan how to bridge build into communities and plant their own churches.

"The seed is there." sPanz

'Finding Heaven'

Studentsoul put on an original musical in August that attracted more than 1000 people to its six performances.

The musical, written and directed by student Malcolm Gordon, took two years from inspiration to performance.

More than 50 studentsoul members were involved in "Finding Heaven on Ward 4", which tells the story of a student who gets into a fight, is taken to hospital and becomes convinced he has died and gone to heaven. His interactions with staff and patients play out issues of delusion and redemption.

Malcolm says the primary motivation for the production was to draw in those on the fringes of the studentsoul community, particularly younger students. "Doing stuff is how you build relationships."

A secondary motivation was fundraising for the Watoto Children's Ministry in Uganda, for which studentsoul has the long-term goal of building a house.

Local churches gave the musical great support, Malcolm says, with five performances in Dunedin and one in Oamaru.

The musical was intended to be something to which students could feel comfortable bringing non-church friends while still conveying a subtle Christian them.

To produce something created and performed solely by studentsoul members was inspirational, Malcolm says.

"Unbelievable and inspirational don't do it justice. It was overwhelming."

While people in Dunedin are talking about a sequel for 2007, creating a new musical in less than a year will be a definite challenge, he says. sPanz



What happened at GA06?

The previous issue of *sPanz* explored potential hot topics at this year's General Assembly. Amanda Wells reports on the outcomes of GA06, held at St Kentigern College, Auckland, between 28 September and 2 October.

Sexuality and leadership

General Assembly agreed that those involved in a sexual relationship outside of faithful marriage cannot be trained, licensed, ordained or inducted, confirming the decision of the 2004 Assembly.

Rev Dr Kerry Enright in his role as Assembly Executive Secretary presented the motion to the Assembly, with many media and spectators present in the public gallery. As is the tradition of the Presbyterian Church, open and robust debate followed the motion. Strong feelings were expressed on either side by commissioners, and some people indicated their uncertainty about the preferred direction. After voting by ballot, it was announced that the motion had been carried by 230 votes to 124 (65 percent in favour).

At the request of the Moderator, the Right Rev Pamela Tankersley, news of the decision was met with silence, as commissioners were encouraged to hold it in God's hands. In her closing prayer, Pamela asked that the Church keep in mind that this issue is not about winning or losing, but about finding God's way. She remembered those whose lives will be deeply affected by this decision and prayed that "we will be able to deal with each other in love, even when we disagree".

There has been substantial media coverage of the decision, both on Friday 29 September and subsequently. Parishes not in favour of the rule have been expressing their dissent by writing letters to the editor of newspapers and speaking to reporters. In the statement provided by Assembly Office in response to reporters seeking comment on parish dissent, Pamela points out that the Church has clear processes to be followed when someone comes forward to be trained, licensed, ordained, and inducted, and this rule is now part of that process. It is not retrospective nor does it establish a new ground for discipline.

"There are people and parishes who disagree with the decision and are expressing their disappointment. People are welcome to express views about the rule," she says.

Kerry made these comments in response to reporters' questions during October: "If people object to a decision, we have a process for dealing with that:

- "If someone within a parish objects to a decision relating to their parish, they can appeal to the presbytery, which would ordinarily set up a judicial commission to consider it.
- "If someone within a presbytery appeals a presbytery decision, an Assembly commission would ordinarily be set up to consider it. Presbyteries are accountable to the Assembly."

The School of Ministry review

The proposal to establish the Centre for Christian Leadership, which involves moving away from a residential model and instituting internships for students, while ensuring as much interaction as possible among students, was accepted. Knox College, Dunedin, will be retained as the principal base for the centre, which will train and equip elders and other leaders as well as ordinands. The Rev Dr Graham Redding has been appointed director, effective from 1 February 2007 (see p 18 for a profile of Graham). The centre will also have a dean of studies based in Auckland.

The stipend review

Assembly decided to:

- from July 2008, link annual increases to the basic stipend to the Average Weekly Earnings Wages Index rather than the Consumer Price Index.

- abolish the existing Seniority Allowance and replace it with a new one, bringing target ministerial remuneration for a minister with 11 or more years' experience to around \$42,700 from 2007 and \$48,000 from 2008.
- give parishes discretion to pay a minister up to 20 percent above the basic stipend without having to get presbytery approval.
- require parishes to regularly review, with their minister, the adequacy of their financial package.

The Focal Identity Statement

After an attempt to introduce amendments after commissioners had received their Assembly papers, much debate occurred at GA06. Eventually the matter was referred back to the task group and it was made clear that further consultation and adequate time for consideration of changes were vital.

Book of Order rewrite

The result of nine years' work, the new Book of Order was approved by general acclamation. It has been adopted ad interim and will be referred to presbyteries under the Barrier Act before facing final approval at General Assembly 2008.

Many other issues were canvassed at GA06 and many decisions were made. To see a day-by-day account with stories on every major development, please check out www.presbyterian.org.nz/ga06. *sPanz*



Photo credit: Francis Oliver Photography

10 questions Ryhan Prasad



What does your role/work involve?

I work with young people from a wide spectrum of society both in a secular and ministry role. I am also involved in project management, and funding and administrative work. That's the great thing about working at BGI (Wellington Boys

and Girls Institute); you get to learn and use so many different skills while doing youth work.

Why did you choose this ministry?

It could be argued that the ministry chose me! I have been a youth worker of some description for about 12 years now, in both voluntary and paid roles. I used to work in a family business as a sales manager but my wife Ani and I both said if we were going to be serious about our ministry, then we had to do it full time if the opportunity presented itself and then with BGI it did.

What have you learned about God through this work?

I have learnt that God is about grace and love above all else; that he is relational in nature and that we need to show this grace and love in the relationships we have with each other.

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

Being able to run the youth ministry at St John's in the City through BGI is really amazing and fun. BGI allows us to be very creative and forward-thinking in all the programmes we run. Being able to transfer that energy and resourcing over to local

parish ministry is a great blessing. As I said, being able to do so many different things is a constant challenge and motivation. One week we could be taking 50 young people on a camp to Parachute and the next we could be sitting down with city councillors discussing a new café in Wellington for young people; pretty exciting stuff!

What have been the biggest challenges?

The biggest challenge as always is funding; never knowing if next year a particular programme is going to have enough money to keep going. Also working in the secular industry as well as in ministry can create some tough situations with different points of view on certain issues, but this is a good tension to be a part of because it lets two different world views interact and dialogue together, hopefully with a positive solution and way forward.

Who has inspired you?

Jesus Christ (pretty standard answer I guess), Ani my wife (who is the most amazing, beautiful person ever!), Graham Redding, Ross Davis and all the young people who I work with everyday.

Where to from here/what are your future plans?

At the moment we have just had a three-month-old baby boy called Elihu and bought our first home, so I am splitting my time between work and being a dad and trying to get the balance right. Youth ministry is where God has called me to be right now but wherever the Spirit leads I hope we as a family are brave enough to follow.

Do you have any recommended books/CDs?

The Bible, Pilgrims Progress (really dry at times but such a well-thought-out and clever book), Tracey Chapman's CD New Beginning and some of Kanye West's stuff is just awesome!

Where can I learn more about what you do?

Check out www.stjohnsinthecity.org.nz or give us a ring at BGI on (04) 385-9549

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Choirs celebrate together

Albert Wu is a passionate and creative leader from St David's Khyber Pass in Auckland. He works with Chinese young people from churches all across Auckland. Some have immigrated to New Zealand with their families, others are New Zealand-born Chinese, but all enjoy spending time together during the activities Albert organises. Both the choir and basketball team provide opportunities for young Asian Christians to get to know each other and also bring along non-Christian friends to fun activities.

Each Saturday morning, those that love to sing join in the 100-strong choir whose members come from 26 different churches. This choir recently enjoyed a visit from the Taiwanese Heavenly Melody - a group from the Overseas Radio and Television ministry during their New Zealand/Australia tour. In the afternoons, the Chinese Youth Basketball league gathers at Marist gymnasium for practice and competitions. The teams also go on retreats and hosted its annual multi cultural tournament in September.



Albert organises an annual Multi Cultural Choral Evensong every August. Initially, this involved youth choirs from Presbyterian churches all over Auckland. Albert intentionally sought out different cultural groups to be involved so that there would be a variety of styles and input into the event. Over the years, choir enthusiasts from other denominations have also asked to be involved. This year's event had 10 participants representing four denominations, which totalled 300 voices. An additional 200-plus people attend the event, which overfills the sanctuary. The event has to be shown through onto a TV in the foyer to accommodate the numbers.

The evening consists of each group presenting two items, a time of corporate worship, a message - this year's was from the International Chinese Church Music Association President - awards for the participants, and a time for supper together in the church hall. Although some groups introduce themselves nervously, without fail the singing was strong and full of enthusiasm. The talent and variety were amazing. Some groups were small, some sang in other languages, and some sang original compositions, but they were all extremely talented. The variety of songs was fantastic, including traditional, contemporary, gospel, and cultural items.



A standout performance came from St Andrew's Otahuhu, a first-time participant. This evening provided great inspiration for the group to challenge their young people to put some items together. They performed at their church's youth service for practice, organised matching shirts for

the mixed age group, and even chartered a bus into town to ensure everyone's availability. Their bright blue shirts were only outshone by their bright smiling faces while they were singing. Many compliments and invitations for further performances have followed. [sPanz](#)

 **Presbyterian Youth Ministry**
MAKING JESUS CHRIST KNOWN 

National Youth Coordinator – 2 positions

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand is looking for 2 passionate, motivated people to fill the role of National Youth Coordinators – one based in the South Island, one based in the North. Both positions are for 30 hours per week with responsibility to support, encourage and grow the work of Presbyterian Youth Ministry and its youth workers/leaders/volunteers. Successful applicants will work together to care for those in Presbyterian youth ministry and grow its mission of making Jesus known.

The positions will focus on 4 key areas of work:

» **networking**

» **resourcing**

» **training**

» **advocacy**

For an application package please apply to:

National Mission Enabler
PO Box 1131
jckd@maxnet.co.nz
Tel (03) 477 7948

Applications close 6 December 2006

DZIAH DANCE CREW

Dziah Dance Crew are currently making a huge impact in the NZ dance arena. The group has only been together for three years but in that time have formulated a unique style that has become internationally recognised. Four of its members attend St Martin's Presbyterian Church in Papatoetoe, Auckland.

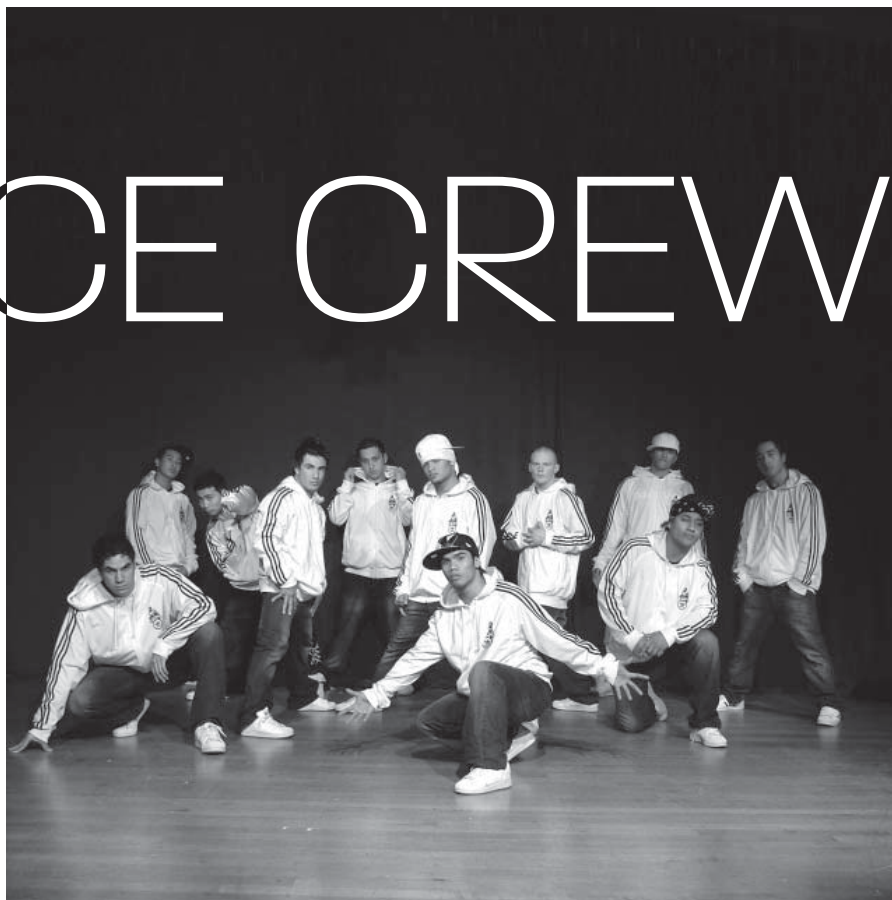
Dziah is made up of 11 individuals aged between 18 and 25 who between them are trained in contemporary dance, American jazz and gymnastics, as well as having members who are renowned for break-dancing and hip-hop choreography.

Its members are not only multitalented in different dance genres. Dziah is also a multicultural group, with representatives who are Canadian, Niuean, Cambodian, Samoan, Maori, Filipino, Irish and Scottish.

Dziah holds the title of second best dance crew in the world, winning silver at the July 2006 Hip-hop World Championship held in Los Angeles. At the same time as training for world championships, Dziah also made a strong contribution to the performing arts and entertainment sector in New Zealand, performing at many top community and corporate events (NZ Printer's Awards 06, Pasifika 06, Vodafone Events, Fashion Week 06, Ballroom Dance Nationals, to name a few).

While all the dance competitions and performances have kept Dziah dance crew extremely busy, they have also found time to establish their own dance studio - at which they can be found frequently practicing or teaching dance classes open to anyone in the community. Five members of the group have graduated from two years with Excel Performing Arts School, enabling them to pass on their knowledge to others.

Dziah's latest project, "Desire to Dream", is a mentoring programme being run out of their studio. They are training about 60 young people (aged from six to late teens)



from all over Auckland, in "new school" hip hop as well as encouraging them to dream big and to achieve their goals. The big finale of the eight-week programme is a showcase at the Telstra Events Centre in Manukau.

Although Dziah has achieved internationally to a high standard, its members continue to strive for excellence in all that they do.

To find out more about Dziah, you can phone (09) 274-7966. [sPanz](#)

Presbyterian Synod of Otago & Southland

invites applications for the position of

Mission Advisor

This Dunedin-based position involves working with congregations throughout Otago & Southland to assist, encourage and enable parishes and presbyteries to develop and refine their mission strategies.

The position is open to both ordained ministers and lay people.

Contact Heather McKenzie for details.
email: synod.otago.southland@xtra.co.nz
phone: 03 477 7365 or 0800 76 22 22

Applications close
20th December
2006

Nine graduate from School of Ministry

'It's been a wonderful two years,' says Chris Konings of his time at the School of Ministry in Dunedin.

He and his wife, Mary-Jane, were among the nine people whose graduation was marked on 11 November by a valedictory service at Highgate Presbyterian Church, Maori Hill.

The other graduands were Dennis Flett, Alofa and Nimarota Lale, Chris Purdie, Nuka Tauevihi, Stephanie Wells and Tekura Wilding.

Each graduand received a stole, the gift of Silvia Purdie, who crafted them for her husband, Chris, and each of his classmates. "It's awesome," Chris Konings says.

The Konings and their four children went to Dunedin from Knox Lower Hutt, where he was youth pastor and she worship co-ordinator. Previously, Chris had been a youth pastor in Pakuranga, Auckland, and the couple wrote *Mentoring: The Penguins' Guide* as a youth ministry resource.

Although a diverse group, there were three common strands – commitment to the Church in a post-Christian society; significant pre-entry Church involvement, particularly in youth ministry; and high levels of tertiary education. "Students are already qualified and experienced in one sphere of life," Mary-Jane says.

She is a good example of that. A former teacher, Mary-Jane has a teaching diploma and a first-class honours degree in agricultural science – "I'm still in the agricultural field, pastoral care," she quips. She also completed a Bachelor of Theology degree before entering the School of Ministry. Her husband held a BSc and BMin when he entered Knox, and Masters degrees are almost commonplace among their classmates.

But ministry training is about much more than academic excellence. "Good relationships have been formed, continued and deepened, and there has been lots of good conversation," Chris said. It was "great having time to talk about issues" with people who had a similar perspective.

Chris Purdie's background was similar to Mr Konings'. With his wife, Silvia, and their three children, he went to Dunedin from Hutt City Uniting, where he worked half-time as a lay minister and half-time as youth co-ordinator.

It was through lay ministry that Chris began to consider entering the School of Ministry, although he recognised that – unlike, say, Australia – there was no infrastructure for a long-term career as a youth minister. "Ideally, youth ministry is a ministry in its own right and we [the Church] should be able to provide a career path for those who want to remain in youth ministry," Chris says.

His future might well combine both, as he is investigating the option of chaplaincy in the armed forces. "Military chaplaincy means you have to get out of a parish environment and work in a way that makes

the Church work for people [many of whom have no Church background]."

Whatever direction they take, the Purdies will still be linked to the School of Ministry as Sylvia was accepted this year as a new ordinand and will continue her studies through the distance-learning scheme.

The Konings were looking at shared ministry, which had worked successfully in various parishes. "The advantage is you bring twice as many gifts and it's fresh time, not tired time, when it's shared," Mary-Jane says.

Of the other graduands, two have been called to parishes – Stephanie Wells to Maniototo, Central Otago, and Tekura Wilding to Winton, Southland. Ecclesia Niue student Nuka Tauevihi expects to return to work in Niue.

By Gillian Vine [sPanz](#)



Graduating ordinands Chris and Mary-Jane Konings.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

We wish to express our deep disappointment with the Scripture Union advertisement appearing on the back cover of the June issue of *sPanz*.

The Scripture Union wishes to encourage Christians to read their bibles regularly, a commendable aim, and undoubtedly the 39 books of the Old Testament contain many powerful and inspiring passages. The verses quoted in the advertisement (2 Kings 2:23-24) describe the brutal mauling of 42 youths by two bears. Readers of any shade of theological opinion would surely be repelled by this horrifying story. To make matters worse, the Scripture Union describes its selection as "pretty cool stuff".

Colleen Potter (president) and 14 others

St Stephen's Women's Fellowship
Hamilton

Readers are reminded that feedback is welcomed. Preference will be given to matters discussed in *sPanz*. Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words and may be edited for clarity or length. Letters should be sent to amanda@presbyterian.org.nz and should include the writer's full name, home address and daytime telephone number.

Dear Editor

Saddened as I am, and determined to see the recent decision of the General Assembly overturned, I have a strong feeling that in fact the administration of the unfortunate decision as a new regulation is an impossible task for the Church to implement.

I would be interested to hear how it is going to be determined who in fact are "gay" or not.

Would it mean that every candidate for training for ministry, or every prospective elder, would have to sign a declaration under oath that they were, or were not, homosexual? If so, how does that line us with the Human Rights Act for those who refuse to do so, because to be done properly it would need to include all candidates? How does it line up for Justices of Peace if requested to take such declarations?

I believe we need to appoint a judicial commission under a High Court judge for an appropriate determination.

Arthur Budd

Timaru

Note: Both of these letters have been edited for length



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SPANZ 3/05

Presbyterian Support Otago marks 100 years

A weekend celebrating a century of Presbyterian Support Otago was an opportunity to renew acquaintances and exchange stories, and also learn about the current work of the organisation, chief executive Gillian Bremner says.

At the beginning of the 20th century, life was harsh in Dunedin for those on the margins. In the absence of any government assistance, there was a need for charitable relief in the form of food, clothing and medical care. The plight of orphaned and neglected children moved a group of deaconesses, headed by Sister Mary McQueen, to open a series of children's homes under the banner of Presbyterian Social Services Association (PSSA), now Support.

Their work marked the beginning of a developing social conscience and the recognition that the Presbyterian community had a role to play in alleviating social ills.

That vision for Otago was New Zealand's first and the services provided so successful that it was replicated throughout the country.

The first centennial function, on September 22, was the launch of a history of Support Otago, *Making a Difference* by Jane Thomson and Ian Dougherty. Launching the book, former Support Otago director the Rev Ken Irwin said: "I salute Jane Thomson, who died while working on the book. Thanks to Jane, there's a framework and a precision... that makes a platform for the book."

About 130 people attended the launch, at which copies of the book were given to life members, board members and special guest Dunedin Mayor Peter Chin, who spoke of his involvement with Support, including his present role as a member of its Ethics Committee.

On the Saturday evening, Lin Hatfield Dodds, national director of UnitingCare Australia and president of the Australian Council of Social Services was the speaker

at a centennial dinner. She spoke on the role of a faith-based social service agency.

The following morning, 400 people gathered at First Church for a thanksgiving service, a feature of which was a procession of 12 banners made over the past year to depict a locality, group of people or area of Support service.

As well as the continuing redevelopment of Ross Home, Support continues its work with children and young people through its new initiative, Family Works. Children, young persons and their families, through such services as the Buddy programme, Cameron Centre welfare and counselling, and YouthGrow. A unique youth training programme teaching horticultural and retailing skills, those at YouthGrow are paid proper wages, not just training rates.

Family Works is also responsible for research and advocacy programmes to tackle issues of poverty and the need for adequate housing for low-income families.

By Gillian Vine 



Dunedin Mayor Peter Chin (left) and the Rev Ken Irwin.

More than just a Farm and a Ministers' Holiday Home...

The principal asset of the McNutt Trust is a farm property in central Hawkes Bay. The Estate requires that proceeds from the farm are used to maintain holiday accommodation on the site for Presbyterian Ministers and their families.

For over forty years Ministers & their families have enjoyed holidays at the Homestead and adjacent residence.

Another requirement is that from time to time there shall be distributions to benefit 'needy children'. This is a development [by Act of Parliament] from the original wish to benefit orphans and orphanages.

Last year over \$100,000 was distributed from the Trust and used for the benefit of work amongst needy young people.

It is the task of the Church Property Trustees to manage the farm and the Trust.

Before the next distribution there will be call for applications from interested groups. Any special conditions will be detailed.

Further details are available from:

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Contribution for the Noticeboard?

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Diary this date...

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Promoting development from Nicaragua to New Zealand

In a relaxed bush setting near Ohope beach in the Eastern Bay of Plenty sits Te Maungarongo marae, home to Te Aka Puaho. Meaning 'to hold on to the ways of peace', Te Maungarongo is home to Te Wananga a Rangi, which is currently being developed as a centre dedicated to theological education and research.

CWS staff and long-time partner of CWS, CEPAD (The Council of Protestant Churches in Nicaragua), recently visited Te Maungarongo. CEPAD works with many rural communities. The focus of their development programmes is to "promote justice, peace and equitable solidarity". The overall aim is to empower people to carry out their own development. Damaris Albuquerque, and Gilberto Aguirre are executive director and programme director respectively, for CEPAD.

"This was a rare opportunity to hear from people deeply involved in the complex issues facing the Nicaraguan people: widespread poverty and high levels of conflict and injustice. The churches in Nicaragua are working together to turn the situation around through strong community development and advocacy programmes that deal with the causes and offer hope to the people," explains Jonathan Fletcher, CWS national director.

CEPAD delivers programmes in organic farming, sustainable agriculture and marketing skills; training for women in small-scale home gardening, peace, human rights and advocacy training; theological education and funding to support adult returning to secondary/tertiary education.

The CEPAD visit to Aotearoa/New Zealand in September was an engaging schedule of visits and meetings with local parishes, Christchurch presbytery, schools, a youth café focussed on fair trade, a Parliamentary function and meetings with NZAID and the Foreign Affairs Select Committee. For them, an unexpected highlight of their visit was the opportunity to connect with local Maori.

Damaris and Gilberto shared their theology of ministry to one's own communities, and the relationship of a development agency with churches. Wayne Te Kaawa, our host, shared his hopes for Te Wananga a Rangi, that it will "contribute to the wider life of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand by offering the following: theological education to members of Te Aka Puaho, research opportunities and the archiving of Maori church history among other projects."

The indigenous peoples of Nicaragua, the Miskito, share a common history with Maori, in terms of land confiscation, the adoption of Christianity, and the need to re-claim language. Gilberto, defined a "common humanity" as that which is expressed through messages of peace across cultures; and found in the work of healing past injustices. "Looking for freedom, looking for self-esteem, self respect, for the person is the same all over the world. I felt it was important to listen to the history of the Maori people, who are proud to be

indigenous, and are people who have a strong identity... it moves you".

"The time that we were blessed to have with Damaris and Gilberto was very much a time of peace. We were able to share openly and honestly with each other about our cultural experiences and histories," says Wayne. "More than that, we were able to share why our Christian faith is so important for indigenous people on the opposite side of the world. Our experiences and faith seemed to bridge the physical gap."

To coincide with this visit by CEPAD to New Zealand, CWS has launched a postcard campaign "Take Action Against Poverty" calling on our government to set a target for aid to meet the internationally agreed 0.7% GNI on overseas aid by 2015. CWS also has a video study series "Making change – economic challenges in Nicaragua" For copies of either of these contact cws@cws.org.nz or visit www.cws.org.nz

By Ruth Greenaway [sPanz](#)



Standing in front Of Te Maungarongo Marae, Ohope, are Damaris Albuquerque and Gilberto Aguirre of CEPAD and CWS National Director Jonathan Fletcher.

Photo credit: Ruth Greenaway, CWS

Martin Baker - The new AES

General Assembly 2006 marked the appointment of the Rev Martin Baker as the new Assembly Executive Secretary. Martin takes over from the Rev Dr Kerry Enright, who leaves the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand after 10 years to take up a global mission-focused role with the Uniting Church in Australia.

Martin brings 22 years in ministry to the role. He has extensive parish experience as well as a management background in both mission and community development. Currently minister at First Church Dunedin, he has a high community and church profile.

He holds a Bachelor of Social Science and a Bachelor of Divinity from Otago and a Master of Sacred Theology from Union Theological Seminary, New York. More recently, Martin has completed courses in organisational leadership and human resource management at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government.

Tracey Patterson asked Martin a few questions about his upcoming role and where he thought the Church was heading in the future.

Tracey: What made you take the position of AES?

Martin: To be involved in the national life of the Church at a time which is so full of hope and possibility is a very exciting and challenging opportunity. While I do feel a strong sense of God's Call to this work, as a continuing part of my commitment to Christian Ministry, I also can hardly imagine being in the midst of a more stimulating and interesting environment. I see the fact that we can work together with our ethnic, theological and situational diversity as expressing something very special about the Christian community. Treating one another with respect and an acknowledgment of our mutual giftedness lies at the core of our identity as people brought together by the Holy Spirit. Witnessing to the outworking of this kind of community is like being there on the day of Pentecost.

I feel an enormous sense of privilege with this appointment.

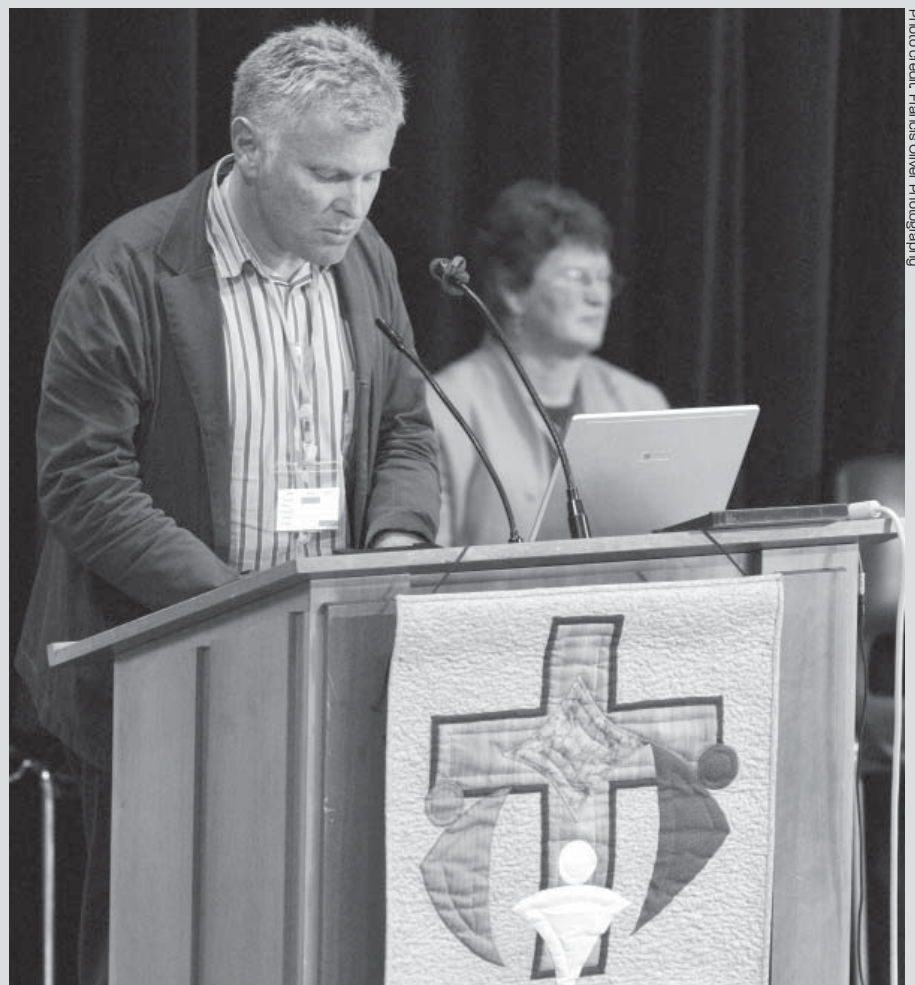
What do you see as challenges in the role?

One of the challenges of this work is the enhancement of organisational trust. Creating a sense that we can do more together than we can apart. That money and resources given locally, regionally and nationally are used well and express our mission as God's people together. I would hope that congregations around New Zealand will feel increasingly excited about being part of the Presbyterian Church and really want to contribute to the work of the national Church because they see that as extension of their own local congregation's outreach and ministry.

Just imagine, for instance, if we each had enough confidence in our Presbyterian Church that we would all work to free up even 10 percent of our capital assets and to allow that resource to fund the planting of new congregations and support the development of dynamic and outreaching Christian communities around New Zealand. While I have no desire to build a bureaucracy, there is a role, I believe, for national coordination and a degree of centralisation in order to build the resource base that will support local churches in these initiatives.

Where do you see the Church heading in the future?

Our church can be an enticing beacon of hope and possibility for the people



The Rev Martin Baker addresses General Assembly 2006, with the Moderator to his right.

Photo credit: Francis Oliver Photography

of our country. I like Kevin Ward's description of "fewer churches but more congregations". I personally believe that the economic and perhaps historic model of a single church supporting a full time minister to provide a once-weekly service for a largely mono-cultural congregation is already becoming a thing of the past. I do not believe that that is a sustainable model of organisation nor is it reflective of our mission context. I think we can affirm our commitment to well trained and educated leaderships, collective and democratic decision-making and also develop and support new modalities for our church. If we can take the initiative now that will support these development, then we will be able to avoid the worst of the conflict and pain that often accompanies changes that we will be forced to make further down the track.

What do you wish to achieve in the role of AES?

Our first obedience must be to the proclamation of the Gospel and a confession of Christ's sovereignty over our lives and the life of our Church. While unity is a sign of the work of the Spirit, it is not an end in itself. The most exciting and challenging aspect of the church and central to its identity is found in its life work as the bringer of Good News. As AES I will have the privilege of working culturally, organisationally and corporately to enhance and support the church's faithfulness to the claim God makes on the life of the Presbyterian Church. Ultimately, for me in my role, it comes down to real things. The reaching of the lost; the transformation of lives; the stewardship of God's wonderful Creation. I am looking forward to serving a Church committed to seeing these things happen.

Martin takes up his appointment as AES on 13 November 2006. *sPanz*

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Moderator Designate takes leadership role at revamped School of Ministry

The Rev Dr Graham Redding looks set to become one of the best known people in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, having not only been selected as Moderator Designate for 2008-2010 but also appointed director of the Centre for Christian Leadership.

Graham takes up his position at the centre, which has come out of an extensive review of the School of Ministry approved by General Assembly 2006, on 1 February 2007. He is currently minister at Wellington's St John's in the City and spent nine years at Somervell Church in Auckland prior to that.

St John's is entering a challenging time, with the Rev Helen Martin, its other minister, exploring a Call to another parish that may result in her departure during 2007. The two ministers' plans were announced to the congregation at the same time in late October, and Graham says that once the news sunk in, people have expressed their support. "It gives them the opportunity to start with a clean slate and think about the best models of ministry for mission going forward."

Graham says his first focus as director will be on setting up the centre's infrastructure, such as staffing and delivery of programmes, both for ordinands and for lay leaders. "The next two years will be very much about establishing the new centre and giving it credibility and traction."

By the time Graham becomes Moderator at the 2008 General Assembly, this establishment phase will have been completed. Between 2008 and 2010, he will be half-time in the director role, with the combined workload being "something that needs to be carefully monitored".

The director will not carry a large teaching load, and the Moderator's travel can be timed so that Graham is present in Dunedin during key periods. "There's an ability to blend the two roles at certain points." For example, travel involving the Moderator role would also give the opportunity to run workshops in conjunction with presbyteries. And it's likely that one of Graham's themes as Moderator will involve exploring theological education and ministry formation.

Students starting training in 2007 will have the option of the current residential model, though some will choose distance learning. Those starting in 2008 will be able to choose the new internship model, which will be the only option from 2009 onwards.

Graham says there is a clear need to monitor the transition carefully, particularly in light of concerns raised at GA06 over the loss of the residential model's community experience. Several students are learning under a distance model at the moment, and Graham says he will be speaking to them about its advantages and pitfalls in order to inform the centre's course planning.



Spending time on internship in a parish is a key component of the new model, and Graham says he is aware of comments that many parishes will not be able to afford an intern. "One of my first roles will be to test the market," he says. It is possible that presbyteries will help support the students, and the centre also has a budget allocation to assist in this area. "We do not want to have students placed in financially precarious situations. The students mustn't become guinea pigs."

A dean of studies will be appointed in Auckland, and other staff transitions will occur at the end of 2007. The new centre will have roughly the same number of staff, though roles will be slightly different. Graham says existing staff will have the opportunity to apply for the new positions.

Graham has already spent seven years living in Dunedin, where his two eldest children were born, having been master of Selwyn College before entering the ministry. He says he's looking forward to returning to the southern city.

Discussions over issues such as subordinate standards, sexuality and leadership, and Assembly Assessment are all symptomatic of a Church going through a time of enormous upheaval and change, he says. The centre will provide and equip leaders for this Church who are "reconcilers and enablers". "The Church is not just a collection of theological and political segments but rather is an integrated whole."

"At this stage, I have an enormous sense of privilege and excitement about the roles."

By Amanda Wells **sPanz**

Snapshots

Photo credit: Francis Oliver Photography



ABOVE:

Immediate past Moderator the Very Rev Garry Marquand at the new Moderator's induction service, with outgoing Assembly Executive Secretary the Rev Dr Kerry Enright in the background. Kerry delivered one of the three keynote speeches at GA06; other speakers were incoming AES the Rev Martin Baker and Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector the Honourable Luamanuvao Winnie Laban.

Photo credit: Francis Oliver Photography



LEFT:

Moderator the Right Rev Pamela Tankersley embraces former Moderator the Very Rev Michael Thawley after her induction service at General Assembly.

RIGHT:

Many people attending GA06, held at St Kentigern College in Auckland, took the chance to see displays set up by different groups, including the different teams in Assembly Office, charitable partners and other Christian groups.

If your Parish has a contribution for this page, send the photo and caption to Spanz, PO Box 9049, Wellington.



Photo credit: Francis Oliver Photography

Putting chapiancy among the animals

A Uniting Church minister in Melbourne has been appointed to a position that may be a world first – a chaplaincy based in an animal hospital.

The Rev Barbara Allen, currently dean of field education at the Uniting Church Theological College in Melbourne, will take up the new post at Lort Smith, the largest animal hospital in Australia.

It's a chaplaincy for the people. The hospital has about 80,000 animal patients a year, euthanases about 300 a month that can't be healed ... and one result is a lot of human grief.

"At least 150,000 people a year go through here, including lots of kids," says the Rev Ric Holland, the hospital's chief executive officer, who also happens to be a Uniting Church minister.

And it's not just pet owners who suffer. Staff – there are about 120 of them at Lort Smith Animal Hospital – can also be affected.

"Life and death are happening here every day, and that's what prompted me to think about the need for a chaplain," says Ric.

He encountered six people acutely aware of life and death standing outside the hospital in April, not long before the board meeting that approved the chaplaincy post.

Two sisters and their children had just been told that nothing could be done for their pet. "They were all standing around crying. They didn't know what to do. They were in total disarray".



A canine patient is treated at Lort Smith.

Barbara's responsibilities at Lort Smith Animal Hospital will include promoting the vital importance of the human-animal bond, being a resource person for staff and volunteers (several hundred of them), providing pastoral care, and offering appropriate funeral and mourning strategies.

The hospital can use that. It has all the facilities and frustrations of a normal human hospital: emergency ward (open 24 hours a day), operating theatres, recovery ward, kitchen staff, an ambulance service, outpatients and a morgue.

A walk through the centre shows dogs and cats hooked up on IV machines, dogs on the operating table, cats awaiting surgery, special receiving wards complete with special wash basins ... and the worried humans.

By Bruce Best, *Crosslight*, the newspaper of the Uniting Church in Victoria & Tasmania [sPanz](#)



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Teresa Curran spent 2005 on The Council for World Mission's Training in Mission Programme (TIM). Eleven young people from around the world came together in South Africa and India for theological training and practical placements. Teresa worked in a kindergarten in Cape Town, a fishing village in Tamilnadu and an Interfaith Institute in Hyderabad. She is enrolled in a Graduate Diploma of Teaching (Secondary) in 2007.

“In the space and time that I've had to think and reflect on my mission trip last year, one particular scene keeps jumping into my head. About this time last year I was standing on a mountain in Chennai, Southern India. It had been raining for a week; not cool refreshing rain but the humid steamy rain of the tropics. There was none of the camaraderie that had characterised other trips. We were exhausted, bad-tempered, one of the team had Delhi belly and I had lost my voice. I had spent the night wide awake, wondering if it was really worth the bother.

Doubts, of course, are nothing new and I'd come to the right place, for this was no ordinary mountain; legend has it that St Thomas died there. It's home to a small Portuguese church built in 1523, complete with relics of the martyr himself.

TIM had shattered some of my best-loved illusions and had left me grappling for answers as to my purpose both on the team and in my life. Overwhelming poverty and suffering left more questions than answers. But I've decided that questions are great. Since when is it wrong to admit that we don't understand everything? Since when is it wrong to ask God to clarify something? Read the account of Job, or the Psalms. Both are filled with uncertainties, complaints, and questions of God. Thomas is just one in a long line of faithful people who have raised their voices to ask the hard questions.

Faith takes work, because it puts us in uncomfortable places and begs us to ask tough questions and that's okay. The experiences of 2005 may have hurt, but my goodness, they have made me strong! I didn't realise that at the time.

We can love each other; we can preach acceptance, but we need to live it. We can be responsible with what we have had entrusted to us by God. We can respond to people in need; we can be worthy of God's trust. Others will come to faith, not by what we say, but by the way we live God's love. That is mission!

Shattered illusions and uncomfortable places



Teresa Curran (far left) and friends in Cape Town, South Africa.

I began by speaking of doubts, here is what I know...

I do not believe that God wills hunger for the planet's children

I do not believe that God won't accept questions and doubts

I do not believe that God wishes us to accept everything without debate

I do not believe that God denies people liberty and freedom

I do not believe that God approves of what people have done to religion

I do not believe that God speaks only through words

I do not believe that only scholars can understand God

I do not believe that God is limited by human description

I do believe God loves us

I believe what I can see and feel and hear and also what I cannot touch but know deep within

I believe, God help my unbelief. ”

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CWS Christmas Appeal: 'Water, the gift of life'

Water is precious, to be cared for and shared by all. Like millions of people around the world, the woman pictured in this year's poster is grateful for water, the gift of life. The World Health Organisation's recognised minimum domestic water consumption is 100 litres per person per day but many people in the world receive far less. Today, there are more than 80 countries with 40 percent of the world's population subject to water shortages.

This year's CWS Christmas Appeal focuses on the rebuilding efforts of four partners. Creating easy access to safe drinking water is a vital part of the long-term capacity building needed for these communities.

Building a better future in Zimbabwe – the Zimbabwe Council of Churches is training women to build water tanks for their communities. In the past five years, 2000 tanks have been built. In rural areas, it is mostly women who take on the daily task of walking miles in search of a clean water supply. Rain-water harvesting programmes have enlivened communities, improved health conditions, and allowed families to plant kitchen gardens near their homes and grow fruit trees where none grew before. The extra time made available has meant communities can focus on other needs, such as the introduction of more fuel-efficient stoves.


Water in a dry land – in occupied Palestinian territories, the issue of water is becoming more significant. Water is increasingly scarce due to a combination of natural causes, population growth and recent political conditions, coupled with an economy in crisis. At least 45 percent of Palestinian communities suffer from a lack of water-supply services. The Department of Services to Palestinian Refugees is helping to alleviate the situation for some Palestinian families, by building water tanks for homes, and latrines in communities.

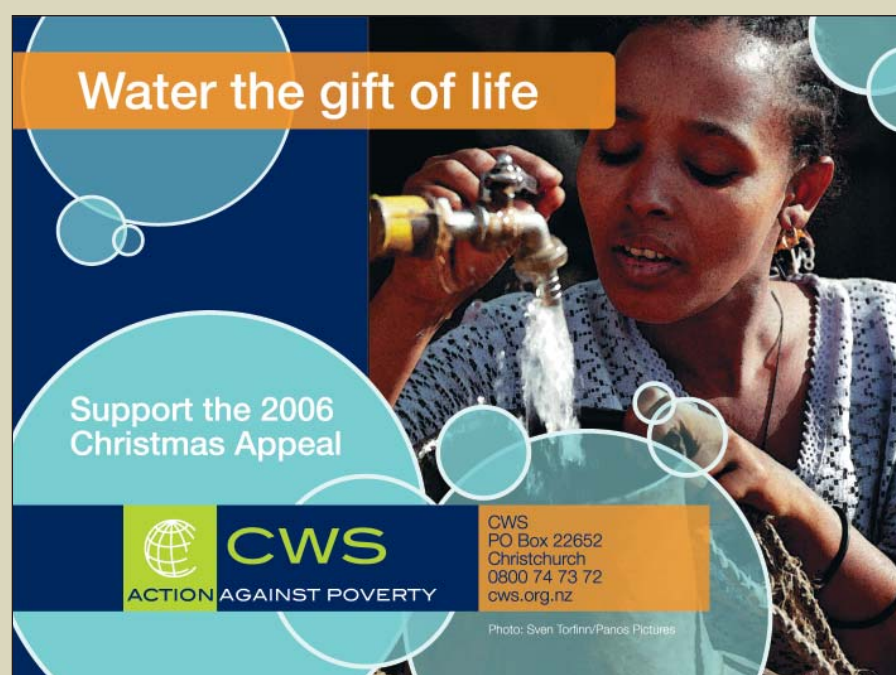
Supporting families in the Solomon Island – the Women's Human Development Programme in Lauru/Choiseul works with

young people and their families from tribal groups to achieve self-determination through self-help. Values are placed on the respect for basic human rights, access to services and education for all, and in maintaining traditional values and a respect for the natural environment.

Holding fast to livelihoods and the environment – the fourth partner featured in the Christmas Appeal is the Neythal Women's Network in south India. Since the 2004 tsunami, Neythal has supported fishing families to re-build their homes and to return to their traditional craft and


main source of income: fishing. There has been much pressure from the government to move fisher families inshore to make way for new big business on the coast. But for many, to live with the sea and tides, to maintain a traditional diet and to sustain an income source from fishing is the gift of life for these communities.

A Christmas Appeal resource kit with information on these partners, worship ideas for advent, and a reflection for Christmas day are available by mail order. Contact: cws@cws.org.nz 

A poster for the 'Water the gift of life' campaign. It features a woman in a white patterned top drinking water from a yellow faucet. The text 'Water the gift of life' is in a white box at the top. Below it, 'Support the 2006 Christmas Appeal' is written. At the bottom, there is a logo for 'CWS ACTION AGAINST POVERTY' and contact information for CWS in Christchurch.

Water the gift of life

Support the 2006 Christmas Appeal

 **CWS**
ACTION AGAINST POVERTY

CWS
PO Box 22652
Christchurch
0800 74 73 72
cws.org.nz

Photo: Sven Tortinn/Panos Pictures



Presbyterian Support

PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT UPPER SOUTH ISLAND

New 'HomeShare' initiative

Presbyterian Support Upper South Island has developed a new day programme for older people living in rural areas. Called HomeShare, it is being implemented initially in mid Canterbury.

PSUSI has been exploring ways of building community-support activity for older people as part of its commitment to aging in place since the sale of its rest homes four years ago. HomeShare combines Presbyterian Support's expertise in day activity programmes for older people with the idea of in-home day-care schemes for pre-schoolers. The resulting innovation is a unique community-based response to the growing need for safe and regular structured activity and respite that supports older people living in the community. HomeShare revolves around private contractors using their homes as the base

for day activity programmes. A full-time co-ordinator is based in Presbyterian Support's Ashburton office, the Trevor Wilson Centre, to recruit, train and support the contractors, as well as managing the referral of clients.

HomeShare contractors open their homes on agreed days for small numbers of older people, providing activity and a meal in a companionable setting. The aim is to enable older people who don't have good access to services to experience regular social interaction with others in a different environment. There is an added advantage in giving the older person's usual carers a break.

Initial funding has come from a mix of Presbyterian Support Upper South Island's own funding, a generous legacy from the late Mrs Marion Lane of Ashburton and similarly generous grants from the Trevor



Wilson Trust. It is hoped that District Health Board funding may be accessed over time.

The programme has started with five contractors, with HomeShare bases in Rakaia, Tinwald, Allenton, and Eifftleton. It is planned that HomeShare will gradually expand to other rural areas in the upper South Island as its success becomes established.

PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT CENTRAL

Innovative Partnership Supports Independent Living

A groundbreaking partnership involving Presbyterian Support Central and the South Taranaki District Council aims to provide improved social services to tenants of the Council's pensioner flats. Believed to be a national first, the partnership took effect in early this year.

While the council retains ownership of the 77 flats, located throughout South Taranaki, and has responsibility for major maintenance work, Presbyterian Support Central has assumed management duties. It employs two Supported Independent Living Coordinators to manage the tenancy agreements and act as the central point of contact for residents. The coordinators attend to day-to-day maintenance issues and provide advocacy, information and social support for residents.

"It is best that older people retain their independence and stay in their own homes as long as they are able," says Coordinator Jocelyn Crompton. "But they need support and social contact to avoid feeling lonely and isolated. Our job is to not only ensure that tenants are well and comfortable but also to encourage them to broaden their social networks."

Hawera resident, Mrs Jean Vince, is delighted with the enhanced services being offered by Presbyterian Support Central. "I feel really secure knowing that someone is looking out for me," says the Tainui Court tenant. "Jocelyn phones me one week and comes to visit the next," says Jean. "I tell her 'You know where the jug is' and we settle in for a good old chat over a cup of tea. I really enjoy having the company," says Jean.



Jocelyn is also enjoying the relationships she is establishing with the tenants. "I've gradually managed to build a good rapport with them," she says. "They're all responding really positively to the personal touch we're offering and to seeing a friendly face on a regular basis."



shaping faith in a young generation



Scripture Union's **WAY2GO** children's ministry training events inspire, encourage and equip children's ministry leaders from churches all over New Zealand. **WAY2GO** offers high quality training for those working with pre-school, primary, intermediate and all-age groups.

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