

# sPanz

Spanning Presbyterians In Aotearoa New Zealand

December 2007, Issue 33



Non-stop prayer  
hits NZ

Plus... Global mission in Myanmar

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

# Family violence – It's not OK

Bonnie Robinson discusses the Government's latest campaign

Recently I had one of those “a-ha” moments. You know them; that point at which the penny drops and you finally get something. Not just understand it, but feel it, know it, believe it in a way that will forever change you. I was talking with a group that provides alternative education for young people who have dropped out of school. At the request of the kids, they were reading Alan Duffs' *Once Were Warriors*. They had got to a part in the book where Jake was hitting his wife and children. In talking through the chapter, the

general consensus amongst the girls in the class was that while hitting the kids might not be OK, the wife had asked for it because she had been “lippy”.

Suddenly all that academic information I had read about generational patterns of family violence became real. Many of these kids have grown up seeing violence, and hearing violence. Many have been hit themselves. Some will go on to hit or be hit in their own relationships. They'll go on to expect it. Not to want it, for no one wants to be hurt, but to see it as inevitable and normal. Unless something breaks the pattern. Unless New Zealand really takes on board the message of the current ad campaign – “Family Violence – It's Not OK”.

I have to admit I felt very proud when these ads against family violence started showing on TV a few weeks ago and there amongst all the famous faces was a Presbyterian minister. It felt good to have someone from my church represented (even if the public wouldn't know) and giving a strong message that family violence has to stop.

Child abuse gets a lot of media attention, but the wider issue of family violence tends to be less known. However, the correlation between domestic violence and child abuse is clear and high. Violence against children is also violence against women – both now and in the future.

And it's killing us. The evidence is that one in three women in New Zealand will experience physical or sexual abuse at the hands of a partner in their life-time. A study of police data in 2000 found that 50 percent of homicides were considered to be family violence related. On average, every year 14 women, 10 children and six men die as a result of family violence. Last year the New Zealand police dealt with more than 65,000 calls about family violence – one callout every seven and a



Bonnie Robinson

half minutes – but they estimate that only 18 percent of family violence incidents come to their attention. The annual cost of family violence in New Zealand is at least \$1.2 billion.

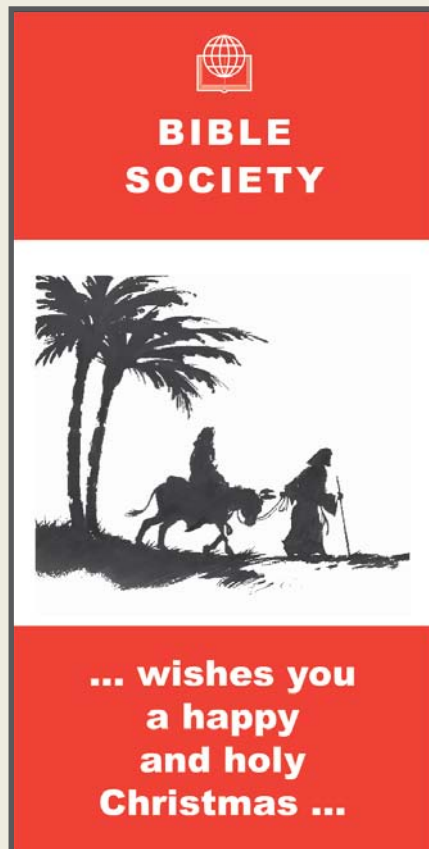
The social services founded by the Presbyterian Church live this data daily. Presbyterian Support's child and family services, called Family Works, last year assisted over 3,000 families. For many, family violence was part of the mix of challenges they were facing.

But there is hope. Parenting programmes, counseling and social work support, and special programmes to educate and deal with family violence do shift attitudes and behaviour, both in individuals and communities.

Change is possible. What it takes is leadership. I am proud of the individuals in our Church who have stood up and said this. Leadership, prophetic voice, caring for the least amongst us; it is what Jesus taught us, in word and by example. So let's support this campaign, and be one of the voices for change. Family violence - it's not OK.

*Bonnie Robinson is a Presbyterian Minister and member of Somervell Presbyterian Church in Auckland. Bonnie works as the Community Facilitator for Presbyterian Support Northern, assisting Presbyterian Support Northern to build partnerships in the community to meet social need, and speaking out on behalf of the vulnerable people \erves.*

→ See article on p10 for more on this topic



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## Cover Photograph

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The Right Rev Pamela Tankersley contributes a regular column to sPanz

# Moderator's musings



**It was a great joy to officially open a new church complex in Winton last month – for the Central Southland Presbyterian Parish. These folk have journeyed courageously over many years, agreeing to amalgamate five rural parishes and become a “regional church”, reducing their many preaching places to only two. They’ve listened hard to the vision and hopes of the wider community and created an open-door place that is engaging and hospitable. Central Southland is a booming dairy area, and the parish is ready to catch the wave. A great blueprint for many other churches!**

Something is becoming very clear in our Presbyterian Church; buildings are a huge issue. We own an astonishing amount of property and we are still building furiously – new auditoriums and new foyers on the old church are a common sight. Many are in poor condition, in the least populated areas of New Zealand, and under-utilised. It seems they all matter deeply to us as spiritual homes and sites of significant memories.

However, in my more cynical moments, I wonder if we only exist as a church through our buildings. Is it possible that care for old buildings and planning for new

ones take up so much of our energy, time and resources, that we don’t get round to doing mission with them? Of course, we know that the “church” is the gathering of the people, not the buildings where we worship, but does our absorption with the stewardship of our physical resources suggest otherwise?

I’m fascinated by how the “body language” of our church buildings conveys hospitality. How do they create opportunities for engagement and enhance our mission in the community? How do they interface with the street; how do we ensure they are user-friendly; how can they convey a message of warm welcome to all? For it is Christ’s message and mission, not ours. We remember how he welcomed into his presence the outsiders – the children, the diseased, the unholy, the lonely, and the rejected.

On the other hand, there are few other buildings in our communities that aim to be places of sanctuary, solace and inspiration. Our worship centres remind us to be still and know that God is God. Is this too part of our mission?

I want to encourage you all to consider whether we now need to sit lightly on our stones and mortar, and to ask hard questions about the legacy we are leaving. Our splendid buildings, whether old or new, will not save us.





# Non-stop prayer excites churches



**P**resbyterians praying day and night in dedicated rooms, coming out after their allocated hour eager for more. Sound like a future fantasy or reminiscence of past glory? It's neither. Amanda Wells investigates.

A round-the-clock prayer movement is starting to spread around Presbyterian churches in New Zealand. 24/7 prayer takes prayer out of its slot in a church service and into the realm of community activity, and has its roots in a phenomenon that began on the other side of the world.

Talk to Kiwi Presbyterians involved in 24/7 prayer and a common thread emerges immediately: the book *Red Moon Rising* by Pete Greig and Dave Roberts, which relates what grew from a month of non-stop prayer at a youth-oriented church in Chichester, in the United Kingdom, in 1999. This month was itself inspired by Pete Greig's visit to Herrnhut, a European monastery where Moravians had prayed continually for 125 years. As he says, it's hardly a new idea.

*Red Moon Rising* chronicles the explosive growth of the 24/7 movement (as in "24 hours a day for seven days") through the UK, Europe and Australia. It also explains that the wave of prayer isn't just about setting up prayer rooms but about consecrating the spaces where people seeking God can be found; the streets, night clubs, and the inner city.

Omokoroa Community Church in the Bay of Plenty has embraced the concept, holding a staggering seven continual prayer events during the past two years, with more planned for next year.

Pastor Fergus Keith says Omokoroa conducted a visioning exercise at the start of 2006, which resulted in a decision to refocus on prayer. Shortly afterwards, he read some Salvation Army magazines that profiled 24/7 prayer and then "devoured" *Red Moon Rising*.

In 2006, two sessions of 24 hour prayer over three days were held, along with one 24/7 that coincided with Holy Week. This year, the church has prayed 24/3 three times and held a 24/7 at Easter. In 2008 the three 24/3 sessions are planned, along with two 24/7s.

Fergus says the shorter times seem to work just as well as the week, which he says helps give extra focus to Easter and preparation during Lent. Next year the second 24/7 will coincide with a mission trip to Malawi that will be a focus for the prayer.

More and more people are becoming involved in praying, he says. The church has three services on a Sunday that range from traditional Anglican to youth-focused, with about 150 people attending in total (Omokoroa is a co-operating church with Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist links). Between a third and half have spent time in the prayer room, and Fergus says it's been a unifying force for the church.

The roster sheets are put up on the wall "and for a while people don't do anything". Then a couple of days beforehand they start to fill up and people sign up for more hours during the week itself.

Fergus says the church has gone through a period of tremendous change and growth in terms of its mission, with the congregation seeing the prayer movement as an important part of that. "It's raised the level of prayer in our church. It's just been huge and absolutely central to our life in the church in past couple of years."

One issue has been how to take this energy out from the church into the community; "how do we do this 24/7/365?" Fergus says a teaching series on prayer is planned and other outwardly focused resources are being explored.

Further north, Forrest Hill Presbyterian on Auckland's North Shore spent five weeks praying during July and August 2007.

Worship team leader Bernie Bristow says the parish council was talking about the need to pray for leaders, and at the same time prayer was being organised for someone going on a mission trip.

"Some people in the congregation had been reading *Red Moon Rising*, and Peter [her husband, the Rev Peter Bristow] was doing a series on prayer, so they decided to set up a prayer room for five weeks to coincide with this."

The room was decorated with candles, books, large crosses that had been made at Easter, a "wailing wall" of intercessory prayers that people could add to, and art supplies to create with. For the first four weeks, the room was open between 6am and 9pm, and in the final week it was run 24 hours a day.

"People just really got excited," Bernie says. "People would often say 'I don't do that kind of thing', step into the prayer room for five minutes then sign up for an hour." The room became a kind of holy ground, she says. "Most people who went in took their shoes off."

Forrest Hill youth intern Fiona Sherwin expresses similar sentiments. "It's instantly a calming place," she says.

The youth group held a special night in the prayer room, with four different stations set up. The first of these involved lots of candles and sitting in the dark in silence for 20 minutes. "They couldn't believe how quickly the time passed."

Another part of the room was decorated with glow-in-the-dark stars, and designed as a meditation on reflecting light in darkness. A third concept was centred on beauty from brokenness, with people writing down frustrations and worries on pieces of colourful paper that were then torn up and made into a tree (see facing page). The fourth station was a prayer chain with people's names written and then linked together.

Fiona says the young people were blown away by the different experiences of prayer. "They might say 'I don't know what to say' but this was different creative activities where they don't actually have to say anything."

"Young people crave authentic experiences."

Bernie says, "people were amazed that they could pray for an hour; there was always something to do. Prayer wasn't sitting there in a quite corner with your hands together. It just changed the whole idea of what prayer is."

Forrest Hill is planning to hold another period of prayer, probably post-Easter 2008.

Bernie says she would really encourage other churches to explore the idea and recommends reading *Punk Monk*, another book by *Red Moon Rising* author Pete Greig, which she describes as "really thought provoking". "It's about stepping out and being a follower of Jesus differently; looking at what is it we're actually trying to do."

The movement has also spread to farther south, thanks to a family connection.

Mosgiel Presbyterian decided to test the waters with a 24/1 prayer event, which involved praying for 24 consecutive hours. Parish secretary Josephine Keith, who's the mother of Omokoroa's Fergus Keith, says it was such a positive experience that they are hoping to hold to a 24/2 event soon, perhaps in association with the completion building work in November 2007.

Josephine says she was inspired by reading *Red Moon Rising* during a visit to Fergus and returned to Mosgiel eager to run a local prayer event. She started telling people about the book and bought three copies to pass around, enthusing Otago and Southland mission advisor Bruce Fraser in the process. Bruce says after reading it he's

also started giving copies of *Red Moon Rising* to parishes in the Synod of Otago and Southland area.

In Mosgiel, the church hall was set up as a prayer room with the help of some of the parish's young people. It featured a number of stations offering different avenues into prayer. There was a blackboard where people could write whatever was on their mind and then erase it; a wall on which prayer requests for other people could be pinned; maps to mark places to pray for; a cross surrounded by cushions that could be knelt on; and a water feature that people could sit and listen to; and a painting station at which people could paint their prayers; and the hall was filled with candles.

More than 30 people spent time in the prayer room, including the youth group who spent time there during the middle of the night.

She says feedback from the event was very positive. One pray-er wrote to say she wished she had signed up for three hours rather than 30 minutes, with others expressing similar sentiments.

"We just don't do enough praying," Josephine says.

National mission support manager Heather Simpson coordinates a loose network of pray-ers around New Zealand, sending out an email every month or so highlighting key needs.

"We all pray differently," she says. "Some people need a list of things; other want to concentrate on a specific person or church."

A well-known Presbyterian pray-er is minister emeritus the Rev Catherine Hollister Jones QSM. Catherine says she's aware of the 24/7 movement and has spent time in a Salvation Army 24/7 prayer room in Tauranga.

She says at the moment she feels a strong calling to prayer for cities, particularly for people working at city councils. Catherine attends a regular prayer meeting for staff at the Tauranga City Council, and would like to see this happen in other cities around New Zealand. "My vision is to saturate cities in prayer."

In the Maitua presbytery, there is even a paid position dedicated to prayer.

Margie Rae is prayer pastor at Tapanui Presbyterian. Her role was established in 2001, when the church decided to employ someone 20 hours a week specifically to foster and encourage prayer.

Part of Margie's role is to run corporate prayer times, whether during services or at meetings or other gatherings. She also prays with people who drop into the church. "Every now and then people just walk in off the street." And there's an administrative aspect to the role, with the coordination of a presbytery-wide prayer support network that organises parishes to pray for each other.

She says the church's strategic prayer team has held several 24-hour prayer sessions, one at the church where other local churches were also invited, and one where people picked timeslots and prayed in their homes.

While people might have thought her key task was to be a prayer coordinator "in actual fact it's a whole new box". "It's about understanding that nobody prays the same and growing in that understanding. Our whole prayer experience can grow."

Margie observes that people are often keen to learn new songs or read that latest book, but we don't always have the same culture of learning new ways to pray.

"I've always said that I'm not a super-spiritual person. I'm just an ordinary person, but it's really exciting when ordinary people pray and there's so many different ways in which we can do that."

## Want to find out more?

Check out [www.24-7prayer.com](http://www.24-7prayer.com), the official site of the 24/7 movement. If you register your prayer event, they will send you resources such as a sign-up sheet and reminder cards, and other resources are available for sale. The site has a useful list of frequently asked questions about the movement and about the logistics of organising 24/7 prayer. The site also tells you how many groups are praying at the moment in how many countries.

*Red Moon Rising* by Pete Greig and Dave Roberts (Kingsway Communications: 2004) costs \$24.99 and is available from Epworth Books ([www.epworthbooks.org.nz](http://www.epworthbooks.org.nz)), Christian book shops, or the Hewitson Library.



Part of Forrest Hill's prayer room



*Red Moon Rising* by Pete Greig



# Pacific Island Church offers free tertiary training

**More than 35 people from PIPC Newtown in Wellington are taking advantage of free management courses held at the church in partnership with a local polytechnic.**

They are studying towards the New Zealand Institute of Management Certificate of Management, which the church began offering in October in conjunction with Whitireia Community Polytechnic.

Classes are held in the evenings on the church premises. Many of the participants are young, working parents, while there are also a handful who left school without qualifications.

Tauiliili Nari Auelua is on the church steering group that made the course happen.

She says its community-centred nature means students will be able to support and encourage each other.

Whitireia approached the church at the start of this year, as part of its strategy of delivering programmes via the community.

Mike Fermanis, Whitireia's dean of business and information technology, told those gathered at the course launch that the tutors would learn as much from their students about teaching



**Students gather for the course launch in October, with the Rev Tauinaola Tofilau in the foreground**

in a Pacific, community context as the students would learn during the course.

Students will study the eight papers of the Certificate of Management, completing two this year and the remaining six next year.

Parish minister the Rev Tauinaola Tofilau says the opportunity is "wonderful news for our Pacific communities here in Newtown".

"The NZIM course will allow our community to engage in education that will hopefully lead to better employment and better incomes for our people and our families." **By Amanda Wells** *sPanz*

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# Fronting up- Judy Te Whiu

## What does your role/work involve?

*Tuturu tonu a Ihu Karaiti inanahi, inaianei, a ake ake (Nga Hiperu 13:8)* – Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8) *Tuatahi, nga mihi nui ki nga kanohi ora o te motu, tena hoki koutou katoa.* What a privilege and honour it is to serve our God in this way. As one of Presbyterian Youth Ministry's coordinators, my role is to make Jesus Christ known throughout this nation: by connecting and networking with youth leaders and youth workers who are already making a difference in the lives of nga taitamariki (young people) throughout Aotearoa; by providing a database resource that will help connect people in the mission field; by making time to visit and meet with leaders over coffee, and by offering my support, sharing ideas, and keeping youth leaders informed of up and coming events through our fabulous *Fuel* magazine and website. Also by being available when ever and where ever, to set up and run leadership training workshops, and offer advocacy support.

## What have you learned about God through this work?

God never ceases to astonish me, as he continually reveals himself through the gifts and talents of others around me. He is showing me the emerging youth workers and leaders who are running with fire in their bellies to meet the desperate needs of the youth in this nation.



## What have been the biggest challenges?

The biggest challenge for me (coming from an Anglican background) has been trying to understand the whole dynamic of the Presbyterian Church. I like what I see, the traditional, the liberal and the charismatic blending together. Wow!

And the distance to anywhere, from where I am at the top of the North Island (Waitangi/Paihia).

## Who has inspired you?

Toku hoa rangatira (my husband) Wi. He has encouraged me and supported me in this work and is my biggest advocate.

## Where to from here – What are your future plans?

I'm about to involved in a new project creating a youth wellness resource for our Church. I'm hoping to discuss the dynamics of whanaungatanga (uniqueness of family), and the health and welfare status of young people in our nation. So watch this space...

## Do you have any recommended books/CDs?

I have just finished reading *The Wounded Heart* by Dr Dan Allender. It's intensely

personal and looks specifically at the most soul-deadening form of abuse, sexual abuse. It is a book that speaks of damaging human experiences and puts these experiences into perspective of a loving and compassionate God.

A CD would be Lakewood Live "We Speak To Nations" - it's an oldie but a goodie. Listen to the lyrics and hear what God is really saying to the nation.

## Where can I learn more about your work?

Check out [www.presbyterian.org.nz](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz), our PYM pamphlets (coming soon), or just give me a call, I'd love to hear from you.

## New Dates for National Assessment:

### 20 December 2007:

Presbytery recommendations and student papers to be sent to the Registrar, School of Ministry, Knox College, Arden Street, Dunedin 9010.

### May 2008:

National Assessment weekend.

More details can be found on the School of Ministry website at [www.schoolofministry.ac.nz/nationalassessment.htm](http://www.schoolofministry.ac.nz/nationalassessment.htm)

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# Youth work builds bridge to high school



Hornby's three youth workers: Jay, Mitch and Rach

**Churches around the country can be inspired by an innovative youth programme in Christchurch, says Robyn Burnett, who is the city's Presbyterian Youth Ministry coordinator.**

The 24-7 YouthWork programme, developed by the Spreydon Youth Community of Spreydon Baptist Church, has been embraced by Hornby Presbyterian Community Church. The programme involves youth workers from the church spending 10 hours a week at Hornby High school, to serve its students and staff. Hornby now has three youth workers involved in the programme, and has seen its youth group almost triple in size as a result.

Robyn, who previously worked at Hornby but is now based at St Margaret's Bishopdale, says the programme helps create a positive culture in school and can make a big difference to the church's youth programme.

She says some of the young people from Hornby High have become involved in Hornby's youth group, with some progressing to the Going Somewhere leadership and discipleship course.

Robyn is keen for St Margaret's to get involved and would like to see other churches in Christchurch and around the country pick it up. She attended the August Presbyterian Schools' conference in the Hawkes Bay with South Island Youth Coordinator Steph Redhead, where some feedback from schools suggested that connecting students with the local church was a key.

Warwick Moffat, youth pastor at Hornby Presbyterian Community Church, says the strength of the programme is that it involves a local partnership

"It's real strength comes from a local church and local school working together for the benefit of both; we're all part of the same community."

He says it means their church now interacts with local young people it would otherwise never meet or see, a significant number of whom become involved with the church.

"We haven't had to invite people; they've just started coming to our youth group."

Spreydon Baptist had youth workers in three different high schools for a number of years before the programme was given the name 24-7 YouthWork in 2000. In 2003, within the same week, both Hornby High School and Hornby Presbyterian had contacted Spreydon expressing interest, says Warwick. "It just kind of snowballed from there".

The programme is now operating in nine schools in Christchurch and has been started in Auckland.

Warwick says the youth workers aren't at the school to preach, and don't talk publicly about their faith unless specifically asked – they are simply there to serve the school and its young people. But the majority of students and staff are aware that they are Christians from the local church.

For the first four years, Hornby Church had two youth workers involved, but this year a third person has been added. Each spends 10 hours a week at the school, mostly during lunch times, simply hanging out with students and running the odd event,

as well as helping in some classes, with the prefects and student council. They have also been involved in extracurricular activities such as coaching sports teams and school productions. In addition to hanging out with the students, the youth workers also spend time with staff.

The youth workers also help out with the church's youth group, giving an instant "connection" because the youth workers the young people meet at school are also the leaders at youth group. Five years ago, Hornby's youth group had about 20 people attending, with only a handful from Hornby High whose families went to the church. Now it has up to 60 young people turning up, with about half of these students from Hornby High who have no other connection to the church.

"It is huge for us, and brings a few challenges," Warwick says, because some of the young people have difficult or troubled backgrounds.

The church's prayer groups pray for the programme and recently the youth workers have been interviewed during services to better connect them with the congregation.

Warwick says he'd like to enhance the church's sense of connection to the programme, including perhaps having more of the other youth group leaders spend time down at school.

In order to fund the programme, the school contributes a significant portion of the money required, while some comes from the church, and some from the community. For example, the Christchurch City Council has been and continues to be a strong supporter. **By Amanda Wells** *sPanz*

# Church takes stand against family violence

**The Presbyterian Church has added its voice to a national campaign calling for action on family violence.**

The “Family Violence – It’s not OK” campaign was launched in early September and is designed to change the way New Zealanders think and act about family violence, according to Families Commission chief commissioner Rajen Prasad.

“It draws on the growing community feeling against family violence,” he says of the campaign that is led by the Families Commission and Ministry of Social Development.

The Rev Lapana Faletolu of St Paul’s Trinity Pacific Church in Christchurch features in the television adverts that are part of the campaign, which will see around \$14m spent on anti-family violence initiatives over the next four years.

Lapana believes the campaign is long overdue, and says it’s good for Presbyterians to have a voice on this important matter.

“It’s good that we are counted.”

In the commercials, Lapana appeals to Kiwis to take responsibility for stopping the violence: “don’t look the other way and say it’s not our problem”. He also asks that people don’t use their culture as an excuse for doing things that they know are wrong.

In addition to Lapana’s involvement, the Right Rev Pamela Tankersley has thrown the Church’s weight behind the campaign with a public statement endorsing it.

“We believe that nurturing and supporting families is the best way to improve the health of our society,” she says.

“Every time we hear the latest report of another child killed by a relative we all sigh and say ‘enough is enough’, but simply sighing and moving on it isn’t good enough – we actually need to do something about it.”

Condemning the country’s deplorable record of violence against women and children, which sees police respond to a family violence incident every seven and a half minutes, Pamela says that it’s important for individuals and organisations like the Presbyterian Church to put some action behind their good intentions.

“It’s time to stop the rhetoric. Let’s start by asking ourselves the hard questions: Who’s created the society where people learn behaviour that’s destructive to relationships and families? We need to look at ourselves. What positive things are we as individuals doing to help young people and families?”

In addition to Presbyterian Support’s work with families around New Zealand, she says congregations also provide family support services like early childhood education, after-school programmes and fellowship gatherings for children and families. But the Church – like the rest of the community – can do more, Pamela believes.



She confirmed that the Presbyterian Church was involved in meeting of Christian leaders in early September to discuss the role that churches can play in developing practical solutions to family dysfunction and child abuse.

The Church is also planning a comprehensive resource that will encourage congregations to reflect on the issues associated with family violence, Pamela says.

“The resource is part of a social justice series, and is part of how we are encouraging parishes to be Christ-centred and community facing. The resource asks congregations to take action in their own communities, as well as calling individuals to take personal responsibility for making a difference,” she says.

This resource, which is expected to be available in March 2008, will be the third in a series of resources aimed at encouraging reflection and advocacy on issues of importance in our communities. The first of these, on issues associated with aging, was distributed in October 2007.

## **The hard and sad facts**

- » half of all murders in NZ are domestic-violence related
- » 35 per cent of NZ men report being physically violent to their partner
- » Police deal with more than 70,000 family violence calls each year
- » on average 14 women, six men and 10 children are killed by family members each year
- » NZ rates 3<sup>rd</sup> highest for child homicide out of 27 OECD countries
- » Family violence is estimated to cost NZ society billions of dollars every year in economic costs to families, the health and justice systems and workplaces.

By Jose Reader sPanz



# Charities registration process starts

**An agreement has been reached with the Charities Commission as to how Presbyterian parishes can register as charities and maintain their tax exempt status.**

The agreement means registration of Presbyterian parishes is being handled at presbytery level, with each presbytery submitting a list of its parishes to Assembly Office in October 2007.

Assembly Office will lodge the registrations with the Charities Commission, which is likely to take about three months to process them, according to Doug Langford, who negotiated the agreement with the Charities Commission.

Doug, who was previously the Secretary of the Church Property Trustees, wrote to

presbytery clerks and parish treasurers in early August explaining how registration would work. He says presbytery clerks he has subsequently spoken to seem comfortable with the process.

The Charities Act 2005 increased regulation of the charities sector, with the aim of making more information about charities publicly available. All charities must be registered by 1 July 2008 to maintain their tax exempt status.

If a parish doesn't register, it will automatically lose its donee status and the Inland Revenue Department will issue default tax assessments. On the positive side, registering means that the parish's income is exempt from income tax and that the parish can issue receipts for donations that allow donors to claim back tax.

Once the registration process is complete, presbyteries will be advised of their registration number, which they will pass on to parishes.

The registration will cover parishes' regular committees and any Boys Brigade Company attached to the parish. However, it will not cover any separate legal entities, such as trusts and preschool trusts that are separately incorporated.

Union and cooperating parishes are not covered by this process and will be given separate advice by the Uniting Congregations of New Zealand.

Doug will continue to be available to provide assistance and advice on the registration process, and can be contacted via [doug@langford.co.nz](mailto:doug@langford.co.nz)

## Standing Out in Your Community:

CWM-funded workshops start early next year

**Want to hear inspiring stories of mission from Presbyterian churches making a difference in their communities? Early next year the communications team will begin running regional workshops where you'll hear about exciting projects happening in churches large and small around New Zealand, and be given a toolkit of resources to help your church to stand out in its community.**

All of this is being funded by a grant from the Council for World Mission specifically targeted at helping our Church better communicate its identity.

If you attended the media skills workshops run in the first half of 2006, you'll have an idea of what to expect. These "Standing Out in Your Community" workshops will also be interactive and will focus on ways of raising your church's profile in



your community, with the discussion of particular initiatives encouraged.

Because this project is bigger in scope, it has allowed the production of a range of resources. At the workshops you'll be given some inspiring mission tools, including a DVD telling the stories of a handful of churches around New Zealand doing something different, along with a CD of useful resources. You'll also have the chance to develop your own ideas and make project-mentoring connections with similar churches in other parts of the country.

The workshops will be run between mid-February and June next year. Everyone attending the workshops will receive a pack of resources, and all Presbyterian and Uniting churches are strongly encouraged to send at least one representative. There is no charge for the workshop or the resources.

**For more information and to register, see the brochure inserted in this issue of *sPanz*. If you'd like extra copies of the brochure, please contact (04) 801-6000 or email [info@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:info@presbyterian.org.nz).**

# Book Reviews

## Jesus for the non-religious

By Bishop John Shelby Spong

Reviewed by Juliette Bowater

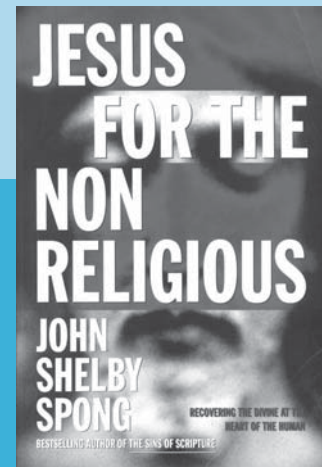
**Due to the controversy Spong's work has attracted in the past, I will start my review with a few spoilers: at no time does Spong deny Jesus as the Christ; he does not deny the existence of God; nor does he belittle the Biblical writers. Disappointed? You shouldn't be.**

Instead, Spong questions how it is that a Church based on the teachings of Jesus has become a bastion of iniquity – condoning intolerance, social injustice and even war in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Spong posits that it has reached this dire state via a fundamental flaw in the way the Gospels have been interpreted. He asserts that the Gospels were not written as historical records but in the Jewish liturgical tradition of the day. And, it is from this tradition, and not Jesus himself, that we have inherited a worldview promoting a vengeful God who takes sides between nations and within communities, and who demands the ultimate blood sacrifice for our sins. Thus Spong sets about his task of separating Jesus from this tradition so that his true message and meaning may be revealed.

In the epilogue Spong notes he began formulating and researching the idea for this book in 1974. This is evident in the detailed and methodical way he has dealt with the matters before him – although curiously less so for the area of prayer (perhaps

Harper Collins: 2007

\$39.99



the subject of a future book?). That aside, this is definitely a challenging read, as Spong deconstructs ideas central to many Christians' faith. He acknowledges this and it is noteworthy the pains he has taken to not be unnecessarily provocative or hurtful.

For me, the effort was worth it as I found explanation for niggling suspicions I have held for some time. This book also gave me a sense of hope that, just maybe, if the Church was to focus on Jesus as the giver of life (as opposed to a God that takes lives), that it too may start to live again and once more become a life-giving force through the Earth.

## The Kiwi Bible: some of the early stuff

By Chris Grantham

Reviewed by Juliette Bowater

**Like Spong, Chris Grantham seeks to re-interpret the Bible for the masses. However, Grantham's approach is not to tackle the underlying message but to "translate" it into "Kiwi".**

I'm always slightly bemused by attempts at recording the essence of Kiwi-speak as I always encounter words and phrases I've never heard of. And that's saying something given I come from a rural background where the vocab tends to be somewhat more inventive. This book is no different as it tenuously links far-flung sections of the Old Testament together to create a narrative of Fred Dagg-style prophets wrestling with evil family members and a blood-thirsty God while decimating all animal life on the planet.

Unfortunately by the third chapter the style begins to grate, particularly the section on Psalms. It's poetry – leave it alone, it's fine just as it is! However, the chapter on Ecclesiastes is the most annoying, with the word "random" used no fewer than 35 times in 16 pages. Why? Actually, I'm not really sure. It reminded me of a game where my brother and I would try to

Penguin Books NZ: 2007

\$19.95



work into conversation a catchphrase from an old TV show as many times as we could in one day. My particular favourite was "solid" from "The Mod Squad".

In saying that, the book is funny in parts, although I struggled to work out who it is intended to appeal to. The arbitrary selections of the Old Testament means the book is pitched too low for most adults whilst I'm not sure if children would make sense of the "lingo". I will be interested to see how this book fares in the bookshops. Solid.



# PSDS to support ministry internships

**Parishes participating in the new internship scheme for ministry training will receive significant funding from Presbyterian Savings & Development Society.**

Each of the three interns who start their training in 2008 will receive \$8,000 support next year, once their host parish has applied to PSDS for this funding.

PSDS promotions and development manager Barbara Jones says that PSDS has had several particularly good years, which have increased both its reserves and the amount available for grants.

Any surplus that PSDS makes, along with any gifts or bequests received, is given to Presbyterian parish or national projects. Kids Friendly is the other national project to have benefited from PSDS funding.

Barbara says PSDS has to reassess its level of grants each year but its intention is to provide long-term support for the internship programme.

"We recognise that it's quite a challenge for a parish to take on an intern for two years."

She says PSDS hopes that the funding will encourage more parishes to consider participating.

Barbara says it's important to remember that the grants are possible only because people choose to invest their money with PSDS. "We couldn't do this without our depositors; those people who've been faithful to us for many years and invest knowing they're helping the wider Church."

School of Ministry principal Graham Redding says the news is very welcome. "We're delighted with the generosity of PSDS but also with their ability to understand the nature of the internships and the needs of parishes supporting them, and their commitment to leadership development and ministry formation."

Having this extra funding available will encourage parishes "who can't see how the numbers will work at the moment" to come on board, he says. "It's a very significant development in that regard."

From the start of next year, the School of Ministry will be known as the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership.

By Amanda Wells *sPanz*



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## The Pacific Island Synod annual conference: **Excellence and Success**

**By Leulua'iali'i Olinda Woodroffe  
(member of Council of Assembly) and  
the Rev Asora Amosa, co-clerks of the  
PI Synod**

The 9<sup>th</sup> annual conference of the Pacific Island Synod at the PIC Newton church, Edinburgh Street, Auckland in July was well attended by the various Pacific ethnic groups from throughout New Zealand that form the PI Synod.

Our English-speaking group hosted the two-day conference. Our English-speaking group is something that makes the PI Synod unique. The PI Synod Constitution recognises the need of our New Zealand born *fanau* who may not speak their parents' mother tongue. Although the English speaking group is small in numbers, they rose to the occasion and made all those who attended welcome, fed them well, and organised conference materials in a way that we were proud to use and give to our guest speakers. *Malo lava!*

The conference was chaired by our Moderator, the Rev Tala Fa'amausili. She opened with a message of hope, love and unity.

The conference was conducted professionally, yet sensitive to the needs of the young and old and the needs of those with language barriers. All were constantly reminded that the PI Synod exists because we believe in one God, we are Pacific people and we are Presbyterians.

"Excellence and Success" was our theme last year and the same theme was repeated in July. The Synod executive believes that we can achieve excellence and success by improving communications and by the working cooperatively. The representative of PI Synod to Council of Assembly ended her report by these words: many hands make light work – *"ole tele o lima e mama ai le avega"*

The excellence and success of the PI Synod also requires improved communication and working hand-in-hand with various arms of Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. This requires Church office holders "to come to the party". It is time that we talk to each other. It is in the light of this that PI Synod invited office holders of the Church to the conference.

The PI Synod expresses thanks and gratitude to the Right Rev Pamela Tankersley, the Rev Martin Baker, the Rev John Daniel, the Rev Dr Graham Redding, John Trainor and Heather MacKenzie, who willingly attended, addressed the conference and patiently answered questions. Thank you all for the Christian spirit in your messages.

Dialogue throughout the conference clearly showed the need for the Church to have continuous and transparent dialogue with its Pacific Island members.

It is worth noting some of the issues that need ongoing discussions.

There is an attitude that needs to stop.

The Moderator the Right Rev Pamela Tankersley expressed in her address on "Christ-centred and community-facing" at the PI Synod's Annual Conference these words: "we must all be missionaries... there is need for us to be alive and visible... there is need for reconciliation, justice and peace... it is not about legalism."

Conversely, when a speaker from the floor raised a matter that was contrary to what is in the Book of Order, the Church's Moderator correctly advised the co-clerk to inform the speaker of the rule in the Book of Order.

The Book of Order is full of legal rules and regulations that govern all Church members. The Church uses legally qualified persons, including judges and queens counsels as advisors. It is simply wrong and unfair to tell Pacific people not to be legalistic, and, as sometimes happens, not to instruct lawyers.

There are ongoing issues relating to church properties. Pacific people regard church properties in New Zealand as community properties for church services and for other community functions. The Pacific perspective on church properties differs markedly from the perspective of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Church Property Trustees.

Let us continue in this positive way forward. We can all achieve "excellence and success" in serving God.



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# Transforming theology in a five-star mud hut

The Rev Reuben Hardie of Somervell Presbyterian Church in Auckland was one of the 35 young theologians to attend a consultation on *Transforming Theology and Life Giving Civilization* in Korea in August this year. The Asia-Africa consultation, jointly sponsored by the World Council of Churches and Council for World Mission, had the extraordinary task of starting to set a new course for theology, spirituality and mission in the new millennium. Participants came mainly from Asia and Africa, with Reuben being the only person from the Pacific region.

The aim was to gather young theologians and activists from Asia and Africa who could lead a new ecumenical movement. Participants were invited to share new theological insights and set a course for further development of a transformative theology growing from the African-Asian context.

"People are recognising that further work needs to be done in the convergence of Christianity and the cultures of African and Asia," says Reuben. "With increasing numbers of Christians in Asia and Africa, many believe that it will be from here that a new theology and impetus for the future development of the ecumenical church will emerge."

Presentations and discussion during the consultation focused on *ubuntu* (African) and *sangsaeng* (Asian), two concepts of living in harmony with each other and with God's creation. These highlight justice, diversity and interconnectedness, and were seen as modern expressions of the Biblical *koinonia*.

The consultation gathered in the Hanmaun community, an organic farming collective in Changseong, South Korea. This community was born out of local farmers' struggle for social justice. Today it acts as a place of retreat and refuge from the large surrounding cities and as a bastion for traditional forms of Korean building, farming and cultural expression. At the end of each day the participants at the consultation were invited to share in the community's creative activities of weaving, dance, and pottery.



"Usually conferences of this nature meet in hotels," Reuben said. "Our accommodation was different – we stayed in mud huts. These weren't your usual mud huts, however, they were amazing – they were like five-star mud huts."

"We all thought that the decision to base the conference at the Hanmaun community was inspired. This community was a concrete example of *ubuntu* and *sangsaeng*, connecting people with nature and with the traditions and culture of that place."

The participants were asked to prepare a paper on the critical issues in theology in their own countries, and the challenges currently faced.

Reuben said he spoke about the struggle for identity in being a Pacific nation, and being New Zealanders in that context. He talked about the great challenge New Zealand churches face in connecting with where people are at these days, and the need for a new way of being church in the community.

"In some respects I felt a bit different from other participants," he said. As a New Zealand Pakeha I hadn't experienced the suppression of my culture or economy by Western forces. But I was very conscious that a Pacific perspective/s would contribute a great deal to the development of this new life-giving theology. One of the questions that they sent me home with is to discover what would be New Zealand/Pacific words that express similar concepts to *ubuntu* and *sangsaeng*."

The new millennium needs a new emphasis on holistic theology like that found in these African and Asian concepts, according to the statement from the week-long consultation: "Such a theology would speak to an accumulation of issues that have built up over previous centuries:

- issues of memory, shame and guilt of the past, enabling liberation for all God's people and for creation;
- denial of dignity and sanctity of people, which leads to issues of identity and belonging;
- privatisation and commodification of life and elements of life, such as water, land and knowledge;
- the need for reaffirmation of the lived experience of people and cultures."

"Attending this consultation was an amazing experience and a steep learning curve," Reuben says. "It's the beginning of a very ambitious and yet very pressing task."

"New ideas of ecumenism, in particular, were very exciting, looking beyond traditional church-to-church relationships to reaching out beyond the walls of churches to different expressions of life and religion."

"As we talked and shared together in those mud huts, there was a lot of energy and excitement about what this new theology and life-giving civilisation could mean, mixed with realism that there is still such a long way to go."

By Julia Stuart *sPanz*



# Parish dangers exposed through workshops

**A series of health and safety workshops is giving parishes a new perspective on what it means to be welcoming.**

The seminars are part of a project aimed at encouraging and resourcing parishes to improve their health and safety systems, says employment advisor Juliette Bowater.

Describing the Auckland workshop she attended as “thought-provoking”, St Peter’s Ellerslie minister the Rev Sandra Warner says it opened her eyes to compliance issues that churches never used to have to worry about.

For instance, the workshop was the catalyst for Sandra introducing a health and safety briefing before her annual pet blessing service. She says the workshop helped her appreciate that the church was open to liability if one of the pets harmed a child.

Sandra recommends that other parish ministers attend the workshops, saying “they were interesting and informative, but the logistics of implementing a health and safety programme in a small parish where money is short, and where personnel are short, is daunting”.

Both Auckland presbytery and St Peters are planning to bring the issues raised at the workshop to their respective leadership groups.

In Auckland presbytery’s case, they will be considering the appointment of a buildings officer whose responsibilities would include a health and safety component, explains Auckland’s presbytery clerk, Trevor Mosley.

The Rev Simon McLeay from St Columba at Botany Downs has been involved in the development of the web-based resource presented at the workshops, which is designed to assist parishes develop their own health and safety systems.

He explains that for around \$20 a month, parishes get a health and safety training tool that will help them develop a system suited to their own environment. The resource includes a training component, templates such as hazard registers and accident recording forms, as well as a section with resources for keeping children safe.

Four parishes have already signed up to purchase the tool, Simon says.

He believes that a huge culture change is needed within the wider church, so that health and safety considerations become a core part of parishes’ activities.

Simon says that the web-based resource is a good place to start because it includes training and other information to help build understanding of what’s needed, as well as the templates needed to develop a health and safety system.

Those involved with rolling the project out to parishes say it’s often the simplest things that can make a difference – putting a lock on the cupboard with cleaning chemicals in it or putting up a hand-rail so that less-able parishioners can make it into the church more safely.

Trevor agrees, saying the workshop “caused people to think about ordinary situations in their own churches and realise that many potential dangers are often simple ones to correct – loose electric cords, impeded entrances, holes in the car park – and can be easily overcome with good general oversight”.

By Jose Reader sPanz



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# Scottish Moderator emphasises ecumenism

The Right Rev Sheilagh Kesting



**The Church of Scotland's Moderator left Kiwi Presbyterians in no doubt about the importance of ecumenism in the life of the Church during her recent visit down under.**

Having been the Church of Scotland's ecumenical relations officer for the past 15 years, before taking up the Moderator's post, ecumenism is an important part of the Right Rev Sheilagh Kesting's ministry. She is making reaching out to other Christian denominations a priority for her year-long term as Moderator – which is part of the reason for her visit to New Zealand.

From what she saw while here, Sheilagh believes that ecumenism is alive and well in New Zealand, and may even be ahead of where Scotland is at the moment. She says denominations in this country "are not afraid to work together", and cited examples of small informal ecumenical groups working on particular initiatives. This willingness to work together is not so common in Scotland, she says.

Presbyterian and Uniting parishes the length and breadth of New Zealand extended hospitality to Sheilagh and her chaplain the Rev Shelia Maxey during their week-long visit in October.

Sheilagh spoke highly of New Zealand's multiculturalism – something that she says is not as prevalent in Scotland. Her first night in New Zealand was spent speaking with people from Pacific Island and Asian congregations, and the visitors were also treated to a traditional Maori welcome hosted by Te Aka Puaho's Wellington pastorate later in the week.

In Church of Scotland's case, membership is currently around 500,000 but is decreasing by around 30,000 per year, she says.

"Scotland is becoming increasingly secular and multicultural, and we're learning about what that means for us."

As in New Zealand, declining membership has implications for the number and location of church buildings. A recent Church of Scotland General Assembly decision asked presbyteries to identify mission priorities and the resources (including buildings) needed to achieve these mission goals.

Presbyteries have taken a consultative approach to developing their plans, including discussion with parishes, according to Sheilagh. For instance, where it is identified that a particular building is not suited to the mission plans of that area, the presbytery has been asked to make time-bound plan for resolving that issue.

The decision of Assembly to reassess mission priorities and resources only happened within the past few years, says Sheilagh, so the Church is only now starting to see some changes emerging as to how land and buildings are used in support of each region's mission programme. **By Jose Reader** *sPanz*

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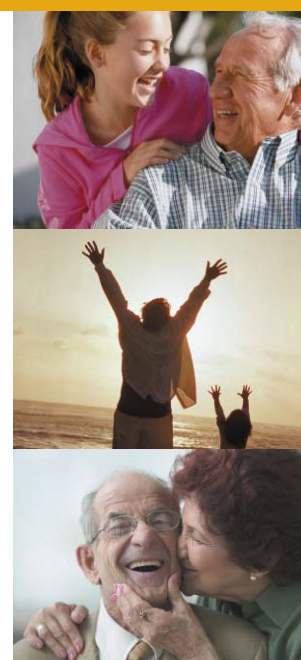
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# U2's music

## woven into Christchurch communion

Love came to town at the beginning of October when Christchurch hosted the South Island's first U2charist.

Servers at the U2charist communion



**More than 300 people turned up to Hornby Presbyterian on a windy evening to hear U2's music integrated into a framework that followed the outlines of a Christian service of worship, with the celebration of communion at its core.**

Knox Presbyterian minister Geoff King devised the event and said afterwards, "the response was wonderful. It went really well and was well worthwhile". It was his idea to have a presbytery-wide celebration. Keen to do something positive to celebrate unity within diversity, but "not fudging our differences", he looked at an American Episcopalian service created by Sarah Dylan Breuer and first presented in Baltimore in 2004.

"The U2charist movement unashamedly seeks to integrate U2's music within a framework that follows the outlines of a Christian service of worship, with the celebration of communion at its core," Geoff says. "In the course of a simplified communion service, bread and wine are offered to all present, in the hope that sharing in this symbolic meal and reflecting on the experience of worship that surrounds it will encourage those present to consider and give to others who lack the necessities of life."

Since 2004, U2charist has taken off, at first throughout North America – initially within Episcopalian churches – and is now being celebrated around the globe. Like U2's music, the appeal of U2charist is mainly to the under-40s, both church members and the unchurched, but Geoff said before the Christchurch event he was surprised and thrilled by the level of interest from older people.

"It's not just a younger generation thing," he says. "It has brought a wide cross-section of people together."

U2, formed in Dublin in 1976, is one of the world's most successful bands, having sold more than 170 million records and won 22 Grammy awards.

But U2 is not just about fame or making money: the band is active in human rights and strong exponents of social justice.

"They've always had a strong social justice element and a spiritual [aspect] to their music," Geoff says.

He pointed to a line lead singer Bono sings in *Acrobat* on the 1991 album *Achtung Baby* – "I'd drink bread and wine if there was a church I could receive in" – as something to which he wanted Christchurch Presbytery to respond, so that people could see one what the Church had to offer.

October's service was the first U2charist in the South Island and consideration is being given to running it on an annual basis.

"You could call this a pilot scheme," Geoff says.

He believes it could be used effectively in other regions. "It's potentially exportable to other parts of the Church."

He and the others involved in the Christchurch event were now looking at the option of a U2charist roadshow but that is "dependant on resources".

Bono and the rest of U2 didn't appear in person at Hornby but they made a generous gift: no copyright fees are payable on U2 music played at events like this as long as any money raised is not retained by the church but given to approved aid agencies to help reduce poverty.

All proceeds of the offering from the Hornby event are being given to Christian World Service to contribute to making poverty history by promoting more and better aid.

"The offering for the event was \$770.20 so with KOHYA (Government subsidy) added it is a grand effort of \$3851 heading to partners overseas," Geoff says.

By Gillian Vine sPanz

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# Kiwis face rising tension in Myanmar

**Three New Zealand Presbyterians visited Myanmar in September, just before marches against the ruling military junta gained international prominence.**

Global Mission Enabler the Rev Andrew Bell, St Columba at Botany's the Rev Andrew Norton and his daughter Angela Norton spent six days in the country, each of them describing it as an overwhelming experience.

Andrew Bell says even the subject of the country's name is complicated, with Burma being a British colonial transliteration of Bamar, the original name, which does not seem to be particularly favoured by the country's inhabitants. The military regime changed Burma to Myanmar and this is the name used by the country's Presbyterian Church. Christianity is legal in Myanmar, if not particularly favoured, and services can be held openly.

Most international visitors go no farther than Yangon, known by the British as Rangoon, but Andrew's group visited the Chin hills, where the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar (PCM) is based. This appeared to cause the military regime some nervousness, Andrew says. When they arrived in Tahan (also known as Kalaymyo-Tahan), their passports were confiscated, despite the fact that they had already entered the country in Yangon, and they were assigned a detective who shadowed them during their stay. They had to stay in the government hotel, not venture past military checkpoints stationed four miles out of town, and adhere to a 9pm curfew. A chaperone submitted a written report on their movements every night.

Andrew Bell says the PCM took a risk hosting their visit, of which they were conscious, especially as tension increased during their stay with the growth of protest marches in Yangon. "There was always stuff going on in the shadows."

The day before the three left, their hosts drove them to the university for a planned visit, but when they were getting out of their vehicle, the principal appeared in an agitated state and they were bundled back in. When they turned off on to a secondary road on the way back into town, an army jeep appeared alongside them with the driver shouting out of the window to turn back.

On their last evening, they went to a church service but were suddenly told they must return to their hotel, and rushed back braced for a visit from the military that never eventuated. But they were being so closely watched the next day that proper goodbyes would have put their hosts in danger.

The group had decided beforehand that, if questioned, they would be very open about what they were bringing into the country, which included six secondhand laptops donated by St Columba members that were gratefully received by PCM.

It's a micro-wage society, with ministers earning \$1 a day at the most, and teachers only 50 cents a day. A street sweeper working 12 hours a day, seven days a week, earns 30c a day. Andrew Bell says, "I fed about 10 street children for \$1; it's very difficult to not come across as extraordinarily wealthy".

In this kind of micro-cash economy, mission projects need to be small and practical. "Imagine what our Church could do



Street scene in Kalaymyo

if it mobilised itself; if we said 'for five years we're going to do everything we can for the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar'".

PCM has eight synods, which correspond to the eight tribes of the Chin hill people, three of which are particularly impoverished.

The Moderator's appeal for Myanmar, launched by the Global Mission Office last year, will be continued through the next year and Andrew says it's already one of their most successful fundraising efforts. Donations via the appeal have established a chicken house and bought a team of water buffalo for the Zo synod. The Tedim synod's manse burned down earlier this year. As well as housing the minister, it includes the synod office and the worship centre itself. The GMO is raising money to rebuild it. Rebuilding itself presents difficulties because permission must be officially gained and the payments for this are considerable. The Chin tribe is discriminated against, and Chin people who are Christians find any official dealings doubly difficult. The Lairum synod will be the next that the GMO works with, and while he was in Myanmar Andrew Bell invited them to identify a project.

At a national level, the GMO facilitates scholarships for postgraduate study. Andrew says he's talking with the Association of Presbyterian Women about scholarships particularly targeted at women because although many are studying at the theological college, cultural norms mean they are not put forward for the existing grants.

Andrew Bell says he would like to give some specific help to the Agape medical clinic in Tahan, which has primitive facilities by New Zealand standards. "They were washing their rubber gloves. It's just horrific."

The regime shut down the country's one Internet service provider when the troubles started, and Andrew says he has received only limited news since their visit.

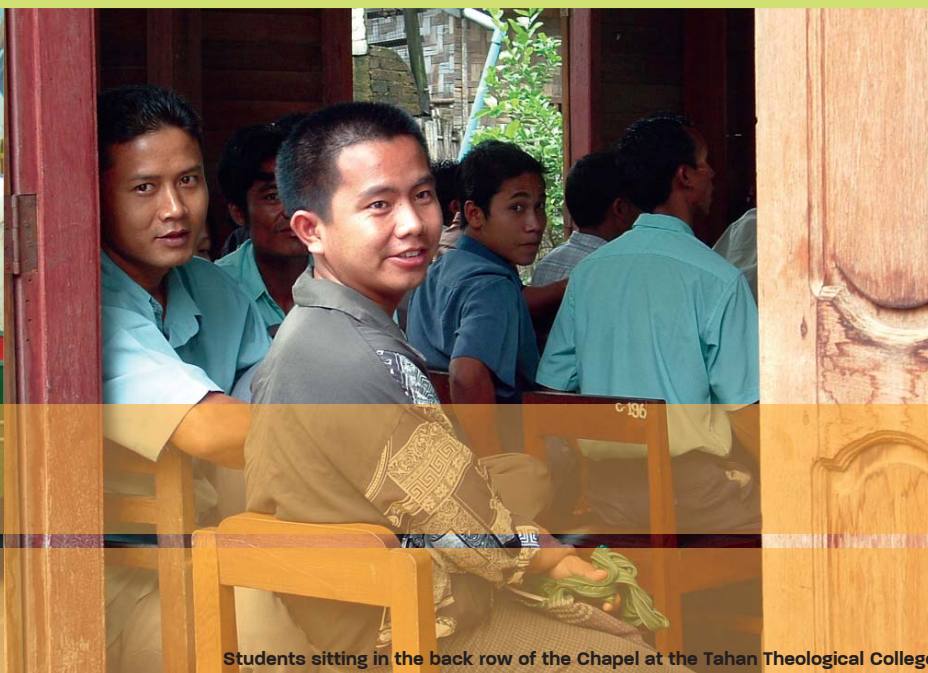
For Andrew Norton, the trip was part of his study leave, during which he examined how a local church can best go about establishing a mission partnership with a community overseas. "One of the key things for me was seeing the potential for harm is actually equal to the potential for good," he says.

"Whose needs are being met? Are we placing them in any harm or danger? Are we giving them what they need or what we want to





A typical street scene in Yangon



Students sitting in the back row of the Chapel at the Tahan Theological College

give them? If we've got the money, we've got the power. But that's not actually a relationship."

"It's about realising that your visit actually costs them," he says – in terms of exposure to risk and in terms of accommodation, food or gifts that cultural considerations might demand, but that might be very significant costs for them.

"The last thing the oppressed need is well-meaning people who've heard from God to go and save them. What they do need is relationships."

Andrew Norton says the relationships formed during the trip were special and significant, and that it was an overwhelming experience.

He says the response from St Columba has been overwhelming, with the prominence of Myanmar in the news during the three weeks after his return heightening the sense of connection.

Angela Norton says people have been hugely interested in their trip because of media coverage, not only at church but also in the workplace. Angela is a private bank executive in the investment division of the Bank of New Zealand.

She says what struck her most during the trip was the generosity and kindness of the people; "their ability to still have a smile on their face in the midst of all this oppression". "Everything they do, they have to get permission for." While it would be theoretically possible for people to plant vegetables in their backyard and support themselves, they can't because of the need for official approval.

St Columba has identified four project areas in which to work together with the PCM. The first of these is "pilgrimages of pain and hope", which are two-way visits designed to build relationships. The second is resource exchanges, which covers training in microenterprise development, short-term professional exchanges, and used laptops. Next is identified humanitarian aid: 10 hospital beds and an x-ray machine. The final area is development projects, with the goal of establishing one microenterprise unit per synod (each costs \$10,000). Microenterprise means lending small amounts of money to people so that they can set up small businesses. This work in Myanmar has already been kick-started by a visit earlier this year from four Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa

New Zealand young people, lead by Andrew Colgan, who have set up the Aotearoa Development Cooperative to fund microenterprise projects in Myanmar.

St Columba has already raised enough money for the hospital beds. Angela says her home group is planning a silent auction that could fund further visits, whether to Myanmar or bringing people from PCM to New Zealand. The auction would give people who couldn't donate money the opportunity to give time or professional skills, she says.

Andrew Norton says what stood out more to him than the poverty was the oppression, which took the form of having to seek permission to do anything. While he always felt safe, when he asked their hosts "are you safe?" their reply tended to be "don't worry about us, we know what to do".

He says he was struck by the vibrancy of the people and their outlook on life. "It made you feel overwhelmingly humbled. When I look at their faith, it's just a wonderful example; it's who they are, it's how they live."

Andrew Norton says he's keen to help other churches work through some of the issues that St Columba has been processing in terms of doing global mission. It's about shifting away from sending missionaries to forming partnerships with local communities, he says. "Partnership means that both are able to give and receive."

By Amanda Wells *sPanz*

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# Building a better future in Sudan

**Life has been challenging for Alice. She spent most of the past 20 years as a refugee, and lost three of her four children to the hardship and fighting of Sudan's civil war. Now back home in Maridi, South Sudan, she has six grandchildren and an ill husband dependent on her in a region with few services, little infrastructure and extreme poverty. Despite so much adversity, Alice remains determined to improve conditions for her family and community. With the assistance of CWS partner, the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC), she is doing just that. This year's CWS Christmas Appeal celebrates the achievements of people like Alice as they build better futures and gives you the opportunity to support their work.**

During the fighting, which claimed over two million lives, displaced millions of people and left much of South Sudan in ruins, Alice sought refuge in camps in Khartoum, Egypt and Uganda. To help her family survive she would cross-stitch all night and sell the finished articles all day. "Life was tough," she says. She returned home after the 2005 peace agreement. The situation remains fragile but "life is better now," says Alice. "Young men, boys and girls are no longer forced into the army."

Alice's main concern is education for her grandchildren. Most South Sudanese missed out on schooling during the long civil war and want the next generation to enjoy the opportunities education brings. The SCC is helping meet this goal.

CWS is the sole funder of SCC's Maridi programmes, which include skills training, vocational education, small loans for income generation and youth mentors raising awareness of HIV and AIDS, girls' education and peace building. Alice is part of a women's group that used an SCC loan to establish a poultry project. "It is making a steady profit," Alice says proudly as she displays her meticulous accounts.

The women purchased bicycles to ride to outlying villages and buy chickens to sell in the Maridi market. There is no public transport in South Sudan, very few vehicles and the unsealed roads are often impassable. The village women previously had no way to get their poultry to market. Alice's group makes a small profit that supplements the sale of chickens they raise themselves. With this new income, they are able to send children to school and buy necessities such as shoes and medicines.

The poultry project is inspiring other initiatives in the community. Eighteen-year-old John, the son of another woman in the group, is now raising pigeons. He sells

them locally for food and uses the money for school fees.

Alice knows the difficulties are not yet over. "Please pray for Sudan," she asks New Zealanders. "Peace has only been signed on paper, not in people's hearts." Like so many people CWS partners work with, Alice continues working hard to make a better future against incredible challenges. Knowing that people in New Zealand care enough to support that work means a lot. Please give generously to the CWS Christmas Appeal. Look out for an appeal envelope during Advent or contact CWS: 0800 74 73 72, [www.cws.org.nz](http://www.cws.org.nz)



Chickens are helping these children get an education in South Sudan



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For an older person, change can be hard to cope with. For that reason, having a service provider offering a complementary range of ongoing accommodation and support services, can be a huge benefit.

Presbyterian Support Central's continuum of care often starts with our popular Community Support Service. Community Support's main aims are to give older people choices, to promote independence, and to enable greater participation in family, whanau and community life.

Further along the Continuum of Care, Presbyterian Support Central's residential facilities are recognised as among the best in the region. Enthusiastic, friendly and professional staff are dedicated to the welfare of residents in our rest homes, hospitals or specialist dementia units.

The values of justice (care), faith (supporting) and mercy (enabling) underpin everything we do, both in residential care and in the wider community.

Presbyterian Support Central's four Family Works Centres provide counselling, parent education and support programmes, and many other services to help families in need. While some Government funding supports these services, it is nothing like enough to cover costs. Many people using Family Works can't afford to pay even a contribution. It's donations from supporters that make it possible for us to make these services available at minimal or no cost.

If you would like to become a member of Presbyterian Support Central or make a donation towards our work, please phone:

**freephone 0508 TO HELP**  
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**Remember,** it's our members and supporters that make it possible for us to help over 5000 people annually.



**Presbyterian Support**

## PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT CANTERBURY LAUNCHES HOMELINK SERVICE

A future filled with meaning is something we all strive for. HomeLink, a new Enliven positive ageing service, has been launched by Presbyterian Support in Canterbury to enable frail older people to continue to age in place.

HomeLink is an innovative home-based service which focuses on sustaining or restoring the abilities and interests of clients in their daily life, both at home and in the community.

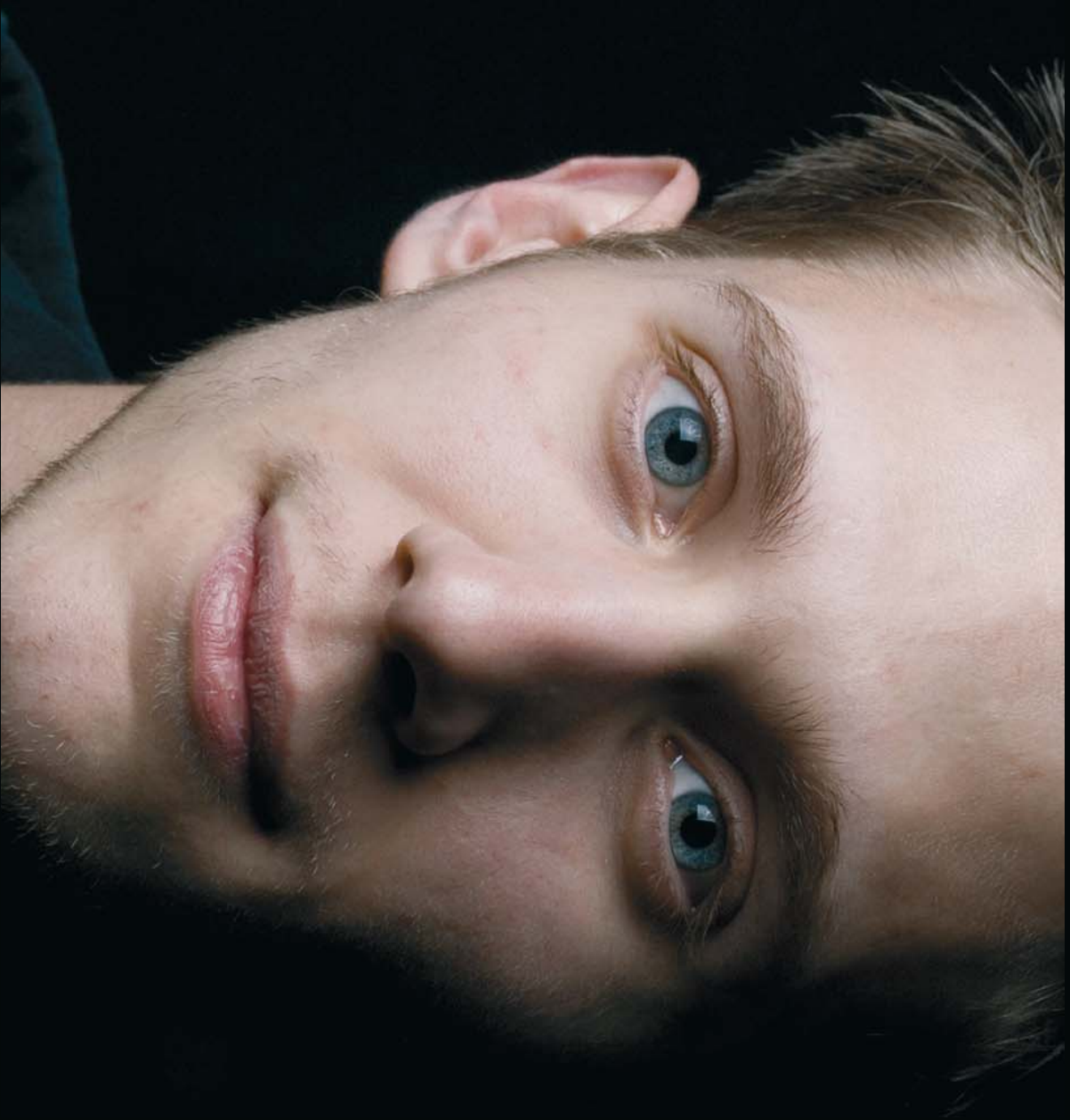
"When frail older people wish to remain living in their own home, they may need support to ensure their health and wellbeing are not compromised, but they also need to be able to participate to their fullest ability in decisions about their own lives," says HomeLink project manager Ruth Buhrkuhl. "Our service seeks to build on the individual person's strengths and interests, with support options to meet their particular objectives in a way that promotes their independence, self reliance and quality of life, and enables them to remain part of their community."

The way in which support services are offered to older people is a key component of their quality of life. "HomeLink is a personalised service. How we support a client is decided between the client and our co-ordinator. Their family or spouse or carer can also be involved, and we will not take over what other people are doing to help."

Support can range from ensuring people get access to relevant health and welfare agencies to enabling them to continue with interests or return to activities they enjoy.

HomeLink has teams of qualified health professionals and community support workers in Christchurch, Ashburton and Rangiora. The service is available to people over 65 years who have been assessed as needing it, and they and their family or carer agree it would be helpful. It is being funded by the Canterbury District Health Board.





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