

# Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

SPRING 2015, ISSUE 63

Celebrating  
women's ordination  
in the Church

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

## The Demon Drink No Longer?

**When it comes to alcohol, times have certainly changed. This is not altogether surprising. Change happens. And even in relation to alcohol, Presbyterian attitudes have changed substantially on more than one occasion: different attitudes and responses have prevailed at various times in our Church's history.<sup>1</sup> In New Zealand, consumption of alcohol was not widely repudiated in the early years of European settlement. By the late nineteenth century, however, earlier Presbyterian drinking cultures were widely supplanted – initially by support for temperance revivalism, and then by a long period of vigorous campaigning in support of prohibition.**

These approaches have each faded from church life in the wake of wider cultural changes. In many places, less restrictive attitudes to alcohol have gradually become more prevalent. It is now more common and acceptable for alcoholic drinks to be available at certain functions, while for social and economic reasons many churches have eased restrictions on consumption for groups hiring their facilities. Alcohol even plays a part in experimental evangelistic activities in different parts of the country.

In this climate, by contrast with earlier ages, Presbyterians don't seem to talk about alcohol very much. Or when we do, we are at least as likely to speak as connoisseurs as to offer cautions about the perils of booze. No doubt these shifts are partly a reaction against earlier patterns. Images of Christians as wowsers and killjoys run deep in our culture; these stereotypes are pernicious, and unsurprisingly many churches are working hard to overturn them. Nevertheless, there are good reasons to remain attentive to alcohol-related issues, and perhaps to talk about them a little bit more.

Pastorally, the issue of alcohol consumption is as relevant for churches as it has ever been. It is irrefutable that misuse of alcohol is a significant source of harm in New Zealand. That reality cannot be assumed to exist only "out there". Alcohol-related harm often manifests privately, behind closed doors, in families, bank accounts and medical centres. As such, it can persist unnoticed by outsiders for considerable periods of time. Misuse of alcohol is not restricted to particular groups either – to youth or men, to certain socio-economic or ethnic groups, or indeed to secular people. There seems no obvious reason to believe that church communities are immune from alcohol-related problems that are widely experienced within society. If this assumption is correct, what difference might it make? Do we need to be able to talk about such issues more freely?

In recent years there has been renewed public debate about the place of alcohol in New Zealand society, particularly with regard to stubbornly ingrained cultures of excessive consumption. Legislative changes have been repeatedly on the agenda. Church contributions to these debates have been relatively muted. The Presbyterian Church has, alongside others, endorsed the 5+ Solution proposed by Alcohol Action. Leaders have also occasionally made other comments. Constructive as they are, these contributions have been quite limited. One wonders if our churches could have more to say. In the present age, commentary on public issues is especially valued when it draws upon expertise and experience. What relevant experience do our churches and our Church bring? What guides our attitudes towards alcohol, and how might these understandings contribute to wider debates? It would be surprising if we had little more to offer.

Perhaps a key challenge here is simply to keep thinking through the issues openly, in the context of a bigger vision, considering the particular communities in which we are located. As followers of Jesus, we share in his project of bringing about a new society of love – a



Geoff Troughton

society marked among other things by restoration, healing and liberation, as well as celebration. What exactly does such a society look like in this context? What part might alcohol play in it? No doubt there is room for different answers, but it is as well to be asking the questions.

In the heyday of the prohibition campaign era, many supporters regarded that cause as a key to ushering in the kingdom of God. They identified alcohol as a critical factor in many societal ills; they considered self-denial for the sake of others (for the common good) as both progressive and a basic Christian principle; they also believed that bold ideas were necessary in order to effect meaningful social change. There is now, quite rightly I think, little nostalgia for our prohibitionist past or the restrictivism associated with it. Few Christians today would feel comfortable making alcohol a core preoccupation for the churches, or treating teetotalism as a central tenet of the faith in the way that many a century ago did. In other respects, however, I wonder if these forebears may still have constructive things to teach us.

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Note: In July 2015 the Church released a media statement, "Church calls on local councils and communities to provide more alcohol-free activities" which you can download from the Church website, <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/speaking-out/what-weve-said/media-releases/church-calls-on-local-councils-and-communities-to-provide>

<sup>1</sup> I have surveyed some of these issues in "Re-deeming the Demon Drink: New Zealand Presbyterians and the Question of Alcohol," *Social History of Alcohol and Drugs* 27, no. 2 (2013): 133–155.

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## Who we are

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## Correction

Winter 2015 sPanz ["Kid's Friendly Going Global" pg.14] refers to Roger Harrington as a minister of St Andrew's Invercargill; Rev Nyalle Paris is the minister, Roger is an elder.

## Cover Photograph

Rt Rev Andrew Norton

## MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

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



## Following signs of resurrection

**The Undertaker of Life called and told me the Church is dying. "Just look at the numbers," he said "4.7 per cent (11,091) of your members are 65 or older<sup>1</sup>. Death has a 100 per cent success rate, which means the Church is dying."**

Not so!

While it is true that over the next 10 years our Church will have more funerals than ever before, the Church is not dying. I have 2000 years of historical evidence that says it won't die. The church in every age has experienced its ups and downs but the work of the Spirit of God in each era has seen the church renewed and revived, even in some of the most unlikely of situations.

Call a truce. Stop beating up on aging congregations, throwing up your hands in despair or hanging your heart on the hook of fear. Despair is not the Christian story. At the very core of our message is a faith that goes beyond death. We are the community of resurrection and life.

The power of the resurrection transforms death as winter relents and spring bursts into life.

### We are being invited to experience life giving resurrection

There is no resurrection without death. Everything about resurrection is counter intuitive. You want resurrection but

don't want to die. It's like walking on the stage of life with the wrong script, you know where the story line is going but you will do everything you can to make it not go that way! When it comes to singing the great hymn of faith, "I surrender all" the lips are moving but the heart is not in the song.

Jesus invited his followers to live a new story of resurrection; life found by losing it, poverty of spirit generates plenitude, humility brings honour, and surrender is the pathway to life. Death is a semi colon; not a full stop. The Jesus story confronts Dr Death with a very different reality: "Unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit."<sup>2</sup> Jesus invites us into a different conversation asking, "What part of you is willing to die?" "What are you willing to let go of so that new life can come?"

### From loss into legacy

I'm not so sure the Church believes its own message. The death narrative holds as tight as the clenched fist of power and control. What if the resurrection story could be retold from one of loss into a living legacy? Death is not the end! But our dominant story is how we can hold on or even avoid the inevitable. Really? I thought our faith was bigger; a faith transcends death and lives on from one generation to the next.

Is our faith worthy of the legacy that has been gifted to us?

### Signs of resurrection

I love the conspiracy of spring; just when I'm ready to give up in the middle of winter the magnolia flames into life. A few weeks later the first jonquils announce their fragrant presence. These signs of life are winters hidden secret. In the same way we need to look for the hidden story, these new signs of life. These signs are everywhere but seen only by those who have an eye for the spring and not the winter.

"Look around you: Winter is over; the winter rains are over, gone!

Spring flowers are in blossom all over. The whole world's a choir—and singing!"

– Song of Solomon 2:11-12

<sup>1</sup> PCANZ 2014 Statistics members not including associate members

<sup>2</sup> John 12:24



# CELEBRATING

## THE anniversaries of women ordained as ministers and elders in the Church

**Flashback to 1955: the first McDonald's opens in the US, Velcro is invented, Bill Haley and the Comets' *Rock Around the Clock* is top of the charts and the first women elders from the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand (as it was then known) were approved and ordained.**

That momentous event took place on 4 December 1955 at St James' Presbyterian Church in Newtown, Wellington and was presided over by the Rev Dr Lloyd Geering. This year, the Church is rolling out the red carpet to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the first women ordained elders in the Presbyterian Church.

However, it isn't the only milestone the Church is celebrating this year, because 2015 also marks the 50th anniversary of the first woman to be ordained as a Presbyterian Church of New Zealand minister – Margaret Reid (later Rev Dr Margaret Reid Martin) – who was ordained to the ministry of word and sacrament on 13 May 1965.

Rev Dr Susan Jones, minister of St Andrew's on the Terrace, agrees it's a red-letter year for women in the Presbyterian Church.

"We are thrilled to be able to honour the brave pioneering women who paved the way for those of us who came after," says Susan.

"This anniversary reminds me that ministry is a privilege, and that in 1965 our Church was forward in the world of Presbyterianism in admitting women to eldership and the ministry of word and sacrament."

The 50th anniversary of Rev Dr Margaret Reid Martin's ordination has special significance for St Andrew's, because that was the location of Margaret's ordination.

And while events have been, and will be, held around the country to commemorate these dual anniversaries (see below) Susan says the service held at St Andrews on Sunday, 17 May was particularly poignant.

"More than 100 women attended the anniversary service," says Susan, who led worship. A special part of the service was the song written by Rev Malcolm Gordon, the Church's national Music Enabler, to commemorate the 'Mothers of our Faith'. The song has since been widely distributed throughout the Church and has been used in anniversary celebrations around the country."

Susan explains that women were first ordained in the New Zealand Presbyterian Church as deaconesses.

"Deaconesses were single women trained in Bible study and pastoral care and employed, usually for a pittance, as missionaries by parishes or church-based social agents. They were not trained for sole charge ministerial positions nor for administering sacraments such as communion or baptism."

Women elders were approved at the 1955 General Assembly after considerable discussion and study. The first four women ordained and elected to the leadership of St James Newtown had all been attending their local session for several years as associate members during the ministry of Rev Dr Lloyd Geering. The four women, ordained at a service on 4 December, 1955 were: Miss Jenny Hall, headmistress at Wellington Technical College; Sister Margaret Hewson, city deaconess; Miss Hetty Walker, and Mrs Lena Mitchell. Sister Hewson represented St James on the Wellington Presbytery, and was the first woman to be appointed Presbytery elder.

A decade later, Margaret Reid Martin also made history.

Rev Sharon Ross Ensor, who interviewed New Zealand's first female Presbyterian minister earlier this year, says Margaret completed full deaconess training, alongside her BSc degree.

"Margaret says she was surprised to be the first ordained woman minister, but she went on to do years of great work in



The Rev Margaret Reid (later Rev Dr Margaret Reid Martin) was the first woman to be ordained as a Presbyterian Church of New Zealand minister. She was the first ordained woman minister to be elected Moderator of the General Assembly in 1988.

the Church and became the first ordained woman minister to be Moderator of the General Assembly in 1988."

Sharon believes the dual anniversaries are an opportunity to "celebrate the life we share together in the Church, women and men enabled to live out their calling to ministry, without the barrier of gender discrimination".

"They are an opportunity to honour those who have 'gone before' and paved the way for the life we share today. Both men and women in the Church made the ordination of women possible through their courage and persistence and for that I'm deeply grateful."

When Sharon began in parish ministry in 1988 (as a 26-year-old), it was at the tail end of the resistance to women being ordained ministers.

"In my first congregation a number of older members of the congregation seemed to feel obliged to tell me that they had voted against me coming as their minister because I was a young woman. I was often referred to as the 'lady minister' (much as women doctors at the time were called 'lady doctors'). I remember feeling that the day we stopped having our gender added to the description of our role would be the day that we had moved into a different place of acceptance."

Rev Dr Susan Jones agrees, saying the anniversaries remind her that "traditionally women have not been seen as equal to men in many areas of life – it reminds me there is still work to be done in this area, for example in pay equity and other arenas of our society".



Church elder Mrs Joan Anderson was elected the first woman Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in 1979.



At the St Andrews on Terrace Presbyterian Church, Wellington, "Honouring the Struggle" service, 17 May 2015, women honoured other women they have found influential by writing their names on cards and tying them to poles. The service ended with a circle dance around the poles.

Susan points out that Vivienne Adair's publication *Women of the Burning Bush* (available from the Presbyterian Archives in Dunedin) shows that in the first 25 years after ordination, women had a very difficult time becoming accepted by both women and men in the Church.

"Thankfully, this has improved, though some women ministers are still not 'heard' as well as men in some areas of the country and by people with particular kinds of attitudes. The Church is still being offered male-oriented models of leadership as the norm and women are chosen less often for the role of Moderator of the national Church, with only five female Moderators since 1965."

Despite being ordained in 1995, Susan has achieved some "firsts" in her time, being the first and only woman minister to be licensed by Mātaura Presbytery and the first woman associate minister at Knox Church Dunedin in 2002.

"This shows the still patchy acceptance of female leadership in the Church, depending on place, position, status of both the woman and the individual parishes. But accompanying women and men on their spiritual journeys is a sacred trust. It is a privilege to minister in the Church whatever your gender. It's a demanding role as we progress our understanding of Christian ministry into 21st century mode."

Rev Margaret-Anne Low, moderator of Northern Presbytery and the minister of St John's Papatoetoe, has been the first woman minister in almost every church she's gone to.

"It was the men who decided the issue and I don't get any sense it was pushed by the women at the time," says Margaret-Anne. "Rather there was as much resistance from women as from men, which would be expected, as women in general are the keepers of the tradition. Certainly in many parishes, women were often the most resistant to women in parish ministry. However my experience today has been that after a few months we all just get on with the task."

Lafulafu Vanila Ekenasio, national Convenor of Presbyterian Women Aotearoa New Zealand, is keen to see more female Pacific ministers.

"I pray our Pacific congregations will call our Pacific women ministers to their parishes," says Lafulafu. "I also pray that all Presbyterian women, who are born leaders, will continue to pass on the torch so the light never goes out. Many powerful and life changing messages have been preached by our women. We remember our pioneering women with thankful hearts for the challenges they faced, the doors they opened and the roads they paved, making it easier for us as we take up leadership roles in the Church."

For the Rev Rose Luxford, moderator of the Church's Southern Presbytery, this year's anniversaries are a "reminder that what we can take for granted – women involved in the decision-making courts of our Church and in visible ministries – is only relatively recent in our country, and we need to ensure that it is valued."

"The Church is richer because of women's involvement," says Rose. "I love my vocation as a minister and to think that

I couldn't have it because of my gender is quite sobering.

"I think we need to be very grateful for those who worked hard to get women into eldership and ministry within our Church. Some women had a difficult time of it and faced opposition. Some still do. So as we celebrate, we also remember those who have struggled along the way."

Rev Diane Gilliam-Weeks, convenor of the Presbyterian Church's Leadership Sub-Committee, is "very proud of the Presbyterian Church for recognising, before most denominations, the gifts women have for leadership in the Church".

"Today all of us stand on the shoulders of giants who suffered disbelief in the leadership qualities of women," says Diane.

#### **Some of the events held around the country to commemorate the anniversaries include:**

8 March in Ashburton - the celebrations were held on the same day as International Women's Day.

8-9 May in Christchurch for Alpine Presbytery.

10 May at Mt Albert Presbyterian, Auckland – moderator of Northern Presbytery, Rev Margaret-Anne Low, attended on behalf of Presbytery.

13 May in Dunedin – Dunedin women clergy celebrated 50 years of women as Presbyterian ministers of word and sacrament with a special lunch.

17 May at St Andrew's on the Terrace, Wellington – afternoon service and refreshments.





Around 50 women gathered at St Andrews in the City Presbyterian Church, Palmerston North on 11 July 2015 for the Presbyterian Women Manawatu /Whanganui celebration. The service celebrating the ministry of women was led by the Very Rev Pamela Tankersley, pictured front row with the Very Rev Marg Schrader. They are two of the four women elected Moderators of the Presbyterian Church since 1901.

19 July at Knox Church, Dunedin – Rev Iris Woods, one of the earliest women ordained, spoke of her parish ministry in the Maniototo, Lyttleton and Tahunanui (Nelson) parishes in the 1980s and Joan Sinclair spoke of her many years as an ordained elder. A tree with bare branches at the front of the church was decorated by many in the congregation bringing forward cards to tie onto it with the

names of women elders and ministers who had inspired them. The branch was then transformed into a creative, living memory.

4 August in Temuka for the South Canterbury region.

31 October the Northern Presbytery will hold its meeting and on behalf of the national Church is planning to re-enact

the Assembly and the debates around the passing of the legislation allowing women ministers and elders. Following this, there will be a service at St John's Church, Papatoetoe, as this is the church that put the motion to accept women in eldership to General Assembly (via South Auckland Presbytery).

Sharon Stephenson [Spanz](#)

## JOAN ANDERSON THE FIRST WOMAN MODERATOR

**In 1979 church elder Joan Anderson was elected the first woman Moderator of the Presbyterian Church. She is the only woman non-minister to be elected to this role. Joan's many years of service to the Presbyterian Church were recognised with her appointment as a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 1987. The following is from Joan's eulogy, "Honouring Very Rev Joan Anderson," by the Rev Dr Allan Davidson, 7 May 2013.**

"Joan described how when she was at Otago University the Student Christian Movement '...changed my life – rubbing shoulders with people who were seeking a faith'.

During the war Joan heard 'about Dutch SCMs [Student Christian Movement] who wore the yellow Star of David so

that in their country they couldn't be distinguished from Jews'. That profoundly affected Joan who was put in touch with 'the world wide fellowship of Christians', the ecumenical movement, which 'became a part of ... [her] life'. Her concerns about issues of social justice and human rights were also stirred.

The ecumenical dimension of her service to the Church was outstanding. Joan was appointed a Presbyterian representative on the Joint Commission on Church Union in 1968. Active in local ecumenical affairs, Joan also became involved internationally. Following her attendance at the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Nairobi in 1975 she served on the Council's Central Committee for seven years.

On notes she left for her funeral Joan referred to a significant visit she made to South Korea in 1980 when she was Moderator. She went to help open up contacts with the Korean Presbyterian

<sup>1</sup> Joan Anderson, "Address by the Moderator, Mrs Joan Anderson to the Greymouth Regional APW Conference, 22.3.80". Joan Anderson's Papers, Envelope, "Diary, APW Conference Programme 1980".

Church that had known considerable persecution.

Joan was very aware of the significant role that lay people and woman in particular play in the church. She demonstrated a willingness to accept responsibility for leadership among students, among women through the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union and Association of Presbyterian Women and more widely in the church in which the majority of members were women but the leadership and governance was very much in the hands of men."

### Past Women Moderators of the PCNZ and PCANZ

Four of the Presbyterian Church's 102 Moderators have been women:

- 2006 Very Rev Pamela Tankersley
- 1995 Very Rev Margaret Schrader
- 1987 Very Rev Margaret Reid-Martin
- 1979 Mrs Joan Anderson



# Church mentors at-risk young women

**Mahurangi Presbyterian Church was keen to support at-risk teenagers in the local Mahurangi Presbyterian Church was keen to support at-risk teenagers in the local community. So they launched GIRL, a group mentoring programme specifically for female high school students.**

The programme, run through Mahurangi College, aims to help the girls set attainable goals and make good choices, including regular attendance at school and positive engagement in classes. The girls who attend are at different levels of risk — some are on the verge of being kicked out of school, while others are struggling socially.

“We looked at what the 24-7 YouthWork programme had been doing in Christchurch, the connections between local churches and local schools there, and we really liked it,” says Mahurangi youth leader Sarah Crocombe. “People in our community had been asking whether we could do something for at-risk girls, so we adapted the 24-7 programme and came up with GIRL.”

GIRL is designed to teach, inspire and mentor girls in a group environment. It supports meaningful relationships, and provides an opportunity for youth workers to connect and engage with girls and provide positive role models. The environment is open and encouraging, and creates an opportunity to explore how to handle life's challenges.

“The girls we work with are referred to us by school counsellors or community groups,” says Sarah. “We work on their

communication skills and cover things like relationships, personalities and health and safety.

“We also all have dinner together each week, which is a powerful way to connect further. It allows us to get a window into what has been happening in the girls’ lives, and it allows the girls to safely share their experiences. Often, they have never sat at a dinner table before — all media devices are banned and we just talk and eat. We also follow the girls on their social media sites, which helps us to be part of what’s happening for them.”

The programme has been run by the church’s trust – Mahu Vision Community Trust – since 2012, and now, thanks to extra funding, two groups are able to be run concurrently. The groups usually comprise of six girls and three mentors: Sarah; Hannah Dunne, an intern from Mahurangi Church; Lara Armstrong, a local mum with a passion for the work, also assists.

At the end of each course, students and parents are interviewed to measure the influence the program has had, and reviews are held with the counselling staff of the College to gauge changes in the students’ behaviour. Improved attendance and attitude are two of the most notable outcomes.

“One of the girls who took the course was on the verge of leaving school. She just hated it,” says Sarah. “But now she is in year 13 and is doing really well. Her attitude just completely changed thanks to the mentoring she received.”

One father whose teenage daughter completed the course last year said, “I have three daughters. Prior to this program she was the one I worried about the most — now she is the one I worry about the least. I can’t thank you enough for your contribution guiding her through a tough year. She’s developing into a very special individual who is learning to make good decisions.” This dad then requested that his other young daughter attend the 2015 programme.

The girls themselves can’t speak too highly of the programme either: “I wish I could do it again next year,” said one. “I’d do it all again in a heart-beat. An overall amazing chance, and I am so glad I got the opportunity to attend.” “GIRL was an awesome, fun and extremely helpful programme and I am really going to miss Wednesday afternoons and Sarah, Lara and the girls,” added another student.

The programme has also brought some of the girls into the church. “One student attended Easter Camp 2015 with our youth group this year, and four students regularly attend youth programs in the church,” says Sarah.

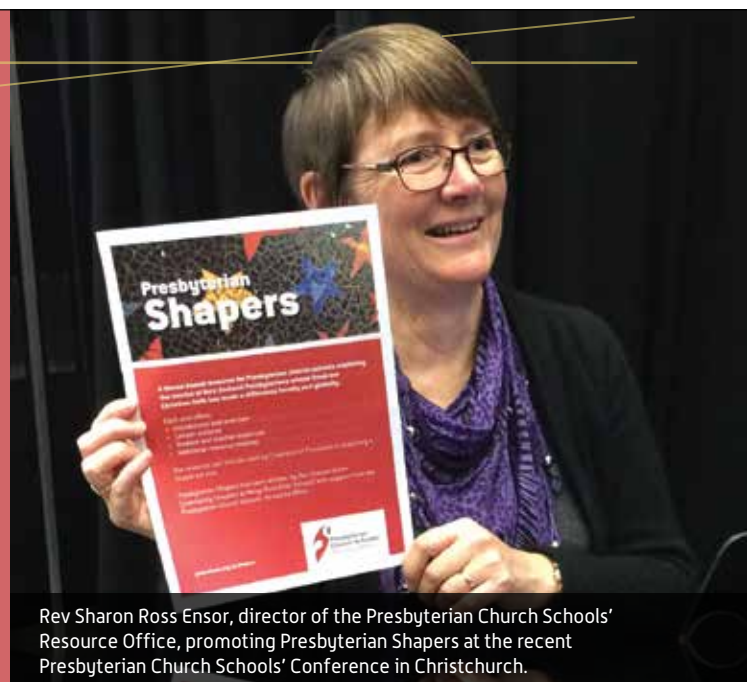
The Mahurangi Youth Action Group, which is made up of school, health, community and Police professionals, has confirmed the effectiveness of the GIRL programme and its positive impact on the community, and has recommended it continues. Looking to the future, the church and the College are considering a similar course for at-risk boys.

Kate Davidson [Spanz](#)



# Kiwi Presbyterians are role models for a better world

**Kiwi Presbyterian heroes will be the role models of the future thanks to an educational resource promoted at the Presbyterian Church Schools' Conference on 6 August.**



Rev Sharon Ross Ensor, director of the Presbyterian Church Schools' Resource Office, promoting Presbyterian Shapers at the recent Presbyterian Church Schools' Conference in Christchurch.

The Rev Sharon Ross Ensor, Director of the Presbyterian Church Schools' Resource Office in Wellington says, "The resource tells the stories of six past and present Presbyterians who have shaped society through their generosity for those in need, efforts on the health care front, support of prison inmates, determination to combat injustice in the workplace and more. It looks at the Christian ethos behind these stories, and how they connect to the current world that students live in."

The resource – Presbyterian Shapers – is designed for classroom study in New Zealand's 15 Presbyterian church schools and can also be used as the basis for discussion elsewhere. It's divided into three units, each of which comprises an introduction and overview, lesson outlines, student and teacher resources, and additional resource material.

Its inspiration was an, "If I have to mark another assignment on Mother Teresa I'll scream!" comment by one of the school's religious education teachers, says Sharon. "It occurred to me that rather than look overseas for role models we have our own stories to tell – remarkable people within our Church who've made a difference because of their faith."

Dunedin minister, Rev Rutherford Waddell (1850/2 – 1932) was selected for the pivotal role he played in the reformation of social and labour laws – in particular the banning of sweatshop working conditions – across New Zealand in the late 1880s.

The Dingwall siblings, David (1846-1927) and Sarah, merited their inclusion because of their compassion and generosity during and after their lifetimes. Their Dingwall Trust has

provided housing, care, education, and support for thousands of children and young people in the 88 years since it was established.

Paediatrician Dr Margaret Neave (1924-2007) is the fourth Shaper, included because of her dedication to improving the health and wellbeing of children in New Zealand, the Pacific and Vietnam.

Two living Presbyterians are also included: Kathryn McDaniel, who leads a parish outreach project in Thailand with international prisoners and their families, and Mo Morgan, for her ongoing work with youth in New Zealand.

Information on the six was gathered from a range of sources – books, university symposiums, media articles, and interviews. Rev Yvonne Smith, a former teaching chaplain at Rangi Ruru Girls School, shaped the information into a teaching and chapel service resource.

"I didn't know very much about the Shapers," says Yvonne, "so it was exciting to explore their stories and look at ways they could connect with the lives of the students in our Presbyterian church schools."

She was particularly struck by Dr Neave's story. "I went to Vietnam with Rangi Ruru students in 2012 so while writing the unit on Dr Neave, I could imagine the area she was working in and understand some of the challenges she faced. So much of her work resonates with the current health-related challenges that go with child poverty in New Zealand.

"There is a temptation to feel weary at the thought that the same issues of inequality, injustice, poverty and need are prevalent in our contemporary society in New Zealand," says Yvonne,

"but it's a privilege to encourage students to exercise leadership by making a difference for the better."

The Presbyterian Shapers resource is online and free from the Presbyterian Church Schools' Resource Office website: <http://pressschools.org.nz>

Joan Begg [Spanz](#)

## Presbyterian Church Schools' Conference – transforming society

Forty-five principals, chaplains, board members and others from New Zealand's 15 Presbyterian church schools gathered at Rangi Ruru College in Christchurch on 6 and 7 August 2015 for their annual conference.

The theme was "Forming for Transforming | Te Whakahou: Helping students to transform society". Professor David Tombs, director of the Centre for Theology and Public Issues at the University of Otago, set the scene, exploring the biblical mandate for all to participate in God's transformation of society.

The presentation by Tracie Shipton, director of the Dingwall Trust, was a highlight. She talked of the strong connection students from Saint Kentigern College and Girls School had built with the Trust's homes and the children and young people who lived in them. The power of music in transforming society, a Celtic take on leadership, and ideas on how to enable people to become who they were meant to be, were the themes of other presentations.



# Mission focus at Island Bay

**Living among some of the world's poorest people in an inner-city slum is about as far from the Kiwi experience as it's possible to get, but that hasn't fazed Wellingtonians David and Maria Cross who've spent the past five-and-a-half years doing just that.**

The Island Bay Presbyterian Church members moved to Manila in 2010 to live and work among those on the fringes of society. They are part of a team from Servants to Asia's Urban Poor, an international organisation started by Kiwi, Viv Grigg, 30 years ago.

"We felt the call to be with the most vulnerable people, to show them that they're not alone," says David.

The couple recognised the "real need" for pastors and ministers to be embedded among the people, to learn the language and culture and not simply be seen as charity workers.

"It's about being their friends and neighbours, about walking among them."

One of the first things the couple did was to establish a small church, which partners with a local pastor to hold formal services. The church also plays a key role in supporting community members.

"Poverty strips people of their dignity but the church provides a sanctuary for them to participate in growing their community and lets them know that God is with them."

In a region prone to devastating flooding, they also work with the community to help families who've been impacted by floods, as well as providing practical advice.

"We've run disaster relief reduction seminars to help the community better prepare for flooding. We've also introduced initiatives such as the plastic-free project, aimed at reducing the use of plastic bags because they block the waterways. In New Zealand, using eco bags instead of plastic bags is common, but that's not the case in Manila. We're trying to introduce that concept."

The couple also partnered with a local company to provide solar lighting, which



David and Maria Cross work with Servants to Asia's Urban Poor and are raising their children Toby (3) and Dylan (1) in the slums of Manila.

will allow children to study at night and reduce the incidence of fires caused by candles and kerosene lamps.

So committed are they to the cause that their two children – Toby (3) and one-year-old Dylan – were born in Manila and are being raised in the slums.

"Obviously we're concerned about the health and safety aspect of raising children in these conditions, but we're very conscious of the importance of good hygiene."

In August, the family returned to New Zealand for four months to reconnect with family and friends and to reflect on where they are going.

They will also be speaking at churches and taking a service at Island Bay Presbyterian Church, before returning to Manila for another two or three years.

Meanwhile, back in Island Bay, church members have also been busy on both the local and global fronts.

Minister Rev Nathan Perry says 10 years ago the church underwent a discernment process, aimed at plotting a path forward.

"The outcome was two-pronged – a greater connection with the local community and a strong global focus," says Nathan.

The latter has involved actively supporting David and Maria's work in Manila as well as providing support to Vanuatu, which was ravaged by a cyclone earlier this year.

"It's important to have that personal connection to a cause, as we have with

David and Maria. One of the families in our church, the Mauautaaavas, are from Vanuatu and after the cyclone, they told us what had happened to their village. We held a couple of garage sales and also collected clothing and blankets which we shipped to the village."

Thirteen church members also heeded the Moderator's call to spend their winter holiday in Vanuatu.

"He said if you're going to get some winter sun, why not go to Vanuatu where you can combine your holiday with good work, so we took over books and stationery to Seaside Primary School in Port Villa, as well as spending time in Mele Village."

Their fundraising efforts also provided solar lighting for six teachers' houses at Onesua College, which needed rebuilding after the cyclone.

On the local front, the church is planning for a part-time community minister, a more evangelistic role which will "help us enter into spiritual conversations with our neighbours", explains Nathan.

"The position will initially be funded by Presbytery Central and we're excited about having someone in our community who can work across the board, from young people to families and the elderly. We are currently developing a job description and hope to start advertising this summer."

Sharon Stephenson [Spanz](#)

# Survey reveals which Bible stories Kiwi kids know

The Bible still permeates everyday language and customs, despite the increasingly secular nature of New Zealand society. A new survey of what Kiwi kids and their parents know about the bestseller of all time has revealed results that – like the book itself – are surprising, perplexing and inspire hope.



Three-quarters of Kiwi children surveyed knew the story of Noah.

According to the Bible Society Nielson Biblical Literacy survey, more than a third of Kiwi children aged 8-15 have never read, heard or seen the story about the birth of Jesus, although most still celebrate Christmas. The real celebrity, it turns out, is Noah, with almost three-quarters having heard this timeless story in one way or another. The story of Job was the least recognised.

Despite that, 36 percent correctly identified which stories, from a list of 17, were from the Bible. This figure rose to 65 per cent for Christian children.

Many parents were surprised about what their kids knew, as only half thought their offspring had encountered Noah and his ark and other stories. Children were also better informed about what other bestsellers weren't from the Bible. Around 90 per cent knew that neither *The Hunger Games* nor *The Hobbit* were Bible stories, while around a quarter of parents mistakenly thought *The Hunger Games* and *The Da Vinci Code* were biblical stories.

The "Pass it On" survey was commissioned by the Bible Society NZ and is the first time such a range of questions has been asked in this country. Four hundred parents took part, with 44 per cent identifying as Christian. This percentage matches the 2013 Census figures for religious affiliation.

The Church's Kids Friendly national coach Jill Kayser is upbeat about what the survey reveals.

"Too often when we read research of this type our natural default is to beat ourselves up and lament for our failures," she says. "I'd hope instead we can use it as a challenge to open the Bible with the next generation, to be more intentional about finding effective ways to share our story with those in – and not yet in – our churches."

Non-church parents, she says, generally don't object to their children participating in church-led programmes and since most people come to faith before the age of 12, sharing the story of God with children is pivotal.

The word most used by children in the survey to describe Bible stories was "interesting", which indicates receptivity to biblical teaching, she believes. Almost half of all parents believed Bible stories still matter because they provide values for a good life. Combine these two ingredients and you have a recipe for hope, says Jill.

"The stories play a fundamental role in how children encounter God and discover their part in God's Big Story," says Jill.

The survey revealed low levels of Bible reading. The reason most cited by parents for not reading to their children was time pressure. Kids Friendly advisor Cheryl Harray points to the pivotal role grandparents can play in bridging the gap.

"Reading the Bible is an important relational activity. Churches need to recognise that the passing on of faith has always happened most effectively

through loving and encouraging relationships," she says. "We need to promote and resource faith sharing between the generations."

Churches are also relational spaces, Jill says. "Maybe we need to role model reading in our church communities by introducing 'child friendly' versions of the Scripture alongside adult versions."

Rev Douglas Bradley of Auckland's Glendowie Presbyterian Church was so impressed with the *Jesus Storybook Bible* by Sally Lloyd-Jones he decided that the whole church would follow its curriculum.

"Every Sunday the kids would explore a story from this Bible and I would preach on the same story," he says.

Kids Friendly recommends a range of Bible books for children on Pinterest. Go to [www.pinterest.com/KidsFriendlyNZ/recommended-childrens-bibles](http://www.pinterest.com/KidsFriendlyNZ/recommended-childrens-bibles):

Technology also opens up relevant and exciting opportunities for Bible sharing:

- » "Guardians of Ancora" has just been launched. Free to download, the interactive game follows the incredible adventures of Bible characters.
- » Superbook is a website and app that encourages both parents and children to interact with its text in ways that are normal for digital natives.

The survey full report is available for purchase from the Bible Society for \$40 at [www.biblesociety.nz/biblemonth](http://www.biblesociety.nz/biblemonth)

Jade Reidy Spanz



# JUSTICE ACTION

## PresCare resource launched

**It's *Justice and Action*. Moderator, the Rt Rev Andrew Norton, emphasises the "and" as he discusses the recently launched social transformation booklet produced by PresCare – the joint initiative between the Church and Presbyterian Support.**

The *Justice and Action* resource booklet looks for ways to respond to the needs of, and nurture the wellbeing of, children and families in Aotearoa through our shared faith and commitment.

Andrew says the resource, which is now in most parishes, calls for action on two of the country's most enduring problems: child poverty and family violence.

The booklet equips congregations with information, resources and practical suggestions to start the process of bringing about change for children and families living with violence or poverty.

Andrew says that he "made a commitment to myself that I would not speak out on issues like these unless churches up and down the country were equipped to roll up their sleeves and take action in their own neighbourhoods. This is what this resource is about.

"Once upon a time our Church was a voice to the nation. We have largely fallen silent in recent years, and it would be great to once again give prophetic leadership to our country on social issues like child poverty and family violence.

"My prayer is that through this resource, the Church may again find its mandate and its voice as expressed by Jesus at the beginning of his ministry."

Andrew was spurred to action by a discussion paper by Presbyterian Support Northern, "*The Courage to Change*" which outlined the very sobering facts on child poverty and family violence in this country.

The facts speak of the need for fundamental change in our communities, Andrew says. It's estimated that as many as 260,000 Kiwi children are living in poverty – nearly a quarter of the nation's children – and more than half of all reported violent crime in New Zealand is family violence related.

Andrew believes that the Church is called to be an agent of change in our communities, but, he says, while many local congregations are involved in advocacy and transformation some appear to have disengaged from this work in favour of "experts" like Presbyterian Support.

The booklet provides an opportunity to re-examine and refresh our mission mind-set, he says, and resource congregations to



Presbyterian Church Moderator, the Rt Rev Andrew Norton and Anne Overton of Presbyterian Support Northern at the 2 September 2015 launch of the PresCare *Justice and Action* resource booklet.

look outwards to their communities to see how they can help bring about meaningful change for those in need.

Child poverty and family violence are two areas where there is obvious need across New Zealand, he says.

Justice and Action talks about how low family income has been linked with a range of negative health, educational and social outcomes for children who are more likely to suffer health problems, do worse at school, and have early contact with the justice system, among other things, he says.

"These things don't only affect children now, but their future prospects as well. Is this what we want for our nation's children?" he asks.

Children affected by family violence don't fare much better, and while the Government has poured a vast amount of resources into prevention in recent years through things like the "It's Not OK" family violence campaign, there is still much more to be done if you consider that Police are still called to around 200 domestic violence incidents each day.

"It can seem as though these problems are so big that nothing we do will make a difference, but the good news is that we can contribute to change," Andrew says. "Change starts with you and me – all we need to do is decide to take action."

Social transformation is a long process and involves sacrifice and patience, but this shouldn't deter us, Andrew says.

"Throughout our nation's history people like Kate Sheppard [activist for women's right to vote], and Tohu Kakahi [who led the peaceful resistance movement at Parihaka] have been catalysts for change, and while the issues of today are different, we can be part of the movement for change like our forefathers."

*Justice and Action provides a framework for parishes to examine the unique role of the Church in transforming society. Copies have been mailed to every parish and extra copies can be obtained from Assembly Office, email [office@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:office@presbyterian.org.nz) or download from the Church's website: <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/prescare>*

Jose Reader Spanz



Rev Dr Bruce Hamill

# Church speaks out on climate change

**It's been called one of the great moral challenges of our time: climate change.**

Also known as global warming, climate change is the process where human activities like driving cars, farming, burning coal and cutting down forests release greenhouse gases that gather in the atmosphere, wrapping around the earth and trapping the sun's heat.

The Presbyterian Church, which has long agitated for action on climate change, recently presented a submission to the New Zealand Government about the need to set New Zealand's post-2020 climate change target.

"The Presbyterian Church has committed itself to action to oppose climate change," says Rev Dr Bruce Hamill, who helped prepare the Church's submission.

The submission called on the Government to commit to a low carbon future by cutting emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2025. This target, believes Bruce, will challenge both New Zealand and other nations to pay the price necessary for "both the survival of future generations and of the most vulnerable nations already being drastically affected by climate change. Our neighbours Kiribati and Tuvalu are already preparing themselves for the loss of their island homes".

"Such action acknowledges that we are called by God to care for the natural world and for our neighbours, especially

the most vulnerable. People around the world need to acknowledge the urgency of the situation and the enormous cost, both financial and moral, of a failure to act now."

The proposed climate change target was based on 2014 reports from the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), which found emissions need to peak and then fall by between 40 and 70 percent by 2050.

"This target is consistent with the degree of global action needed to achieve this," says Bruce. "Anything less will embarrass New Zealand internationally."

The submission comes on the back of a Council for World Mission (CWM) climate change forum in Fiji which Bruce attended in February.

"The forum was an opportunity for political and church leaders from the Pacific, India and Bangladesh to focus on how climate change was impacting on these nations, which are some of the most vulnerable in the world."

While the forum highlighted the plight of "climate refugees" from these countries, Bruce believes more emphasis needs to be put on how the rest of the world can change the capitalist lifestyle that's a leading driver of climate change.

"It would be helpful if people could meet those whom their lifestyle is affecting and see what a catastrophe it would be if people have to be evacuated from their homes because of rising sea levels.

It might make them change the way they live."

In June, Pope Francis weighed into the debate, issuing an encyclical on the environment which called climate change "one of the principal challenges facing humanity in our day".

In a show of support for the Papal statement, the Presbyterian Church issued a media release welcoming the Pope's stance.

In the release, Moderator, the Right Rev Andrew Norton, said the Pope highlighted issues of climate change in the context of the exploitation of the poor, and the abuse of our environment.

"Many of the world's faiths recognise the significant challenge of climate and the urgency of speaking out," said Andrew in the media release. "Nationally and internationally, our faiths are uniquely positioned to encourage all people to live in a sustainable way, to encourage governments to commit to binding climate change agreements, and to be the voice for those without a voice."

Andrew says the Papal encyclical aligns with decisions and statements previously made by the Presbyterian Church, including the recent post-2020 target-setting submission and last year's General Assembly decision to divest from fossil fuel investments, which was championed by Bruce along with the Rev Anne Thompson.

"The Church declared investment in the fossil fuel industry to be unethical, socially irresponsible and contrary to the Church's mission of 'caring for creation'," says Bruce.

"This declaration had the support of the Church in October 2014. The Church now waits to hear from the Church Property Trustees when the process of divesting the Church from fossil fuel investments will begin.

"Climate change needs action on several fronts and it's important to remember that it's not just an issue for politicians and scientists, it's for all of us. We need to ask ourselves how our culture of over-consumption is plundering the land and abusing the world's poor."

Sharon Stephenson Spanz



# Leader in disability theology to offer course in Dunedin

**Professor John Swinton will present a course titled 'A Practical Theology of Disability and Mental Health: what does it mean to be human?' in Dunedin next February. The course is jointly offered by the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership and the Department of Theology and Religion, University of Otago.**

Professor Swinton's course will explore the spiritual dimensions of disability and mental health issues.

He aims to give course participants "a revised understanding of what it is to be a human being and what it is to faithfully represent God in the world. And in practical terms, I hope it will provide a renewed appreciation of the meaning of people-centred care."

Professor Swinton is the professor Practical Theology and Pastoral Care at the University of Aberdeen and a Church of Scotland ordained minister.

"Normally we talk about mental health in psychiatric terms. We attach names like depression, schizophrenia and bi-polar to various forms of human experience. But psychiatric terminology is not the only way in which we can tell the story of mental ill-health," he says. "Important as pharmacy and therapy may be, you are dealing with a person. Our theological stories are profoundly important for faithful understanding and meaningful spiritual care."

Professor Swinton began his career in nursing, originally in the area of mental health and then intellectual disability. He moved into the academic world and was ordained into ministry – and now reflects theologically on the issues in which he has so much medical background.

His first major work was *Spirituality and Mental Health Care: remembering a forgotten dimension*, a breakthrough book introducing the idea of the significance of spirituality in relation to mental health issues.

"One of the problems with the field is that it is unclear what 'spirituality' means. Let's take its basic definition – that it's the search for meaning, purpose and hope," Professor Swinton says.

"When we relate that to depression, it becomes clear that depression is a spiritual issue; people become dispirited, find life meaningless and lose a sense of purpose.

"Likewise with schizophrenia. It's a big medical diagnosis. But when you speak to people living with it, it is not always the medical issues that are the problem. Stigma and exclusion are often the main problems. Experiences such as withdrawal,



Professor John Swinton has previously worked in the areas of mental health and intellectual disability.

loneliness and alienation are seen as symptoms, but they are consequences.

"It is these spiritual dimensions that are often lost within the big, powerful story of medicine. But they come out clearly as we listen to the day-t- day stories of those living with such conditions.

"The questions you ask change when you deal with spirituality as well as pharmacy and therapy. The information becomes more personal and less clinical, and it moves you into genuinely people-centred care."

Professor Swinton is the founder and Director of the Centre for Spirituality, Health and Disability at the University of Aberdeen. Last year he established the Centre for Ministry Studies there to enable academics, researchers, practitioners and educators to work together to develop innovative and creative research projects and teaching initiatives.

He is currently involved in a highly successful project on with the Scottish government and the National Health Service with 'chaplaincy spiritual listening'.

"One of the things general practitioners comment on is that people come to them with no real issue – perhaps vague aches and pains. It is clear that something spiritual is going on with these patients, and the project places a chaplaincy spiritual listener with the patient."

"People who have used it have found it very positive partly because as you hear your own story as you speak to someone safe, you get a different perspective of yourself."

Professor Swinton's latest book is *Dementia: Living in the Memories of God*.

"We tend to think that dementia is a neurobiological thing – to do with brain damage and deterioration. But the neurological dimensions have important relational, communal and psychological dimensions as people with dementia are often overlooked or written off. We say they lose their memory. But it's not only a case of the person forgetting, often they are forgotten.

"Their sense of self is not destroyed by dementia because it is held by God. God remembers even when we cannot."

Professor Swinton's course in Dunedin will run from 1-5 February 2016. Presbyterian Church ministers can attend the course as part of their professional development. For further details contact Catherine van Dorp, registrar@knoxcollege.ac.nz or (03) 473 0783.

Jane Tolerton [Spanz](#)

# Connect 2015 shares spiritual direction

The weather may have refused to co-operate but torrential rain and freezing temperatures weren't enough to deter 200 youth workers who came together in July at Ngaruawahia for Connect 2015.



Around 200 youth workers gathered in Ngaruawahia in July for Connect 2015.

Presbyterian Youth Ministry National Director Matt Chamberlin, who directed the 13th annual event, says it rained so heavily during the weekend that attendees had to be driven to various venues at the Ngaruawahia campsite.

"Fortunately, there was so much good stuff going on inside we didn't have time to worry about the weather too much," laughs Matt.

That "good stuff" included a programme packed with speakers, workshops and plenty of opportunities for networking.

More than 43 churches attended the two-day programme which was themed around the concept of 3D.

"It was about emphasising another dimension to youth ministry, about equipping people to do their ministry well," says Matt. "In a busy ministry it can be hard to care for other people unless you're in a good place yourself because you can't give what you don't already have.

"Connect 2015 was about helping our youth workers to create healthy youth ministries, to focus on holistic self-care by first having a healthy relationship with God."

Keynote speaker Bill Maston of Nexus International asked attendees to think of the Christian life as a tree, with the roots representing the relationship with Christ, the trunk representing the relationship with other believers and the branches representing the resulting character and ministry.

"If a tree's roots aren't strong, it will wither and die or fall over in the wind. Connect 2015 was about helping youth workers nurture the roots of their relationship with Christ and therefore their ministry," says Matt.

A key component of this, and new to the annual event, was the use of 25 spiritual directors who came from across the North Island, donating their time to conduct a series of half-hour, one-on-one sessions with youth workers.

Matt says he was pleased that so many spiritual directors heeded the call to help youth workers reflect on where they are going spiritually.

Feedback from the attendees was overwhelmingly positive and included the following comments:

"I was very grateful for the sessions as I'm a youth worker and hear others' experiences a lot, but less frequently can I talk in depth about my own in a private space."

"It helped me know I am unique. It was helpful to think through destructive and constructive aspects of my faith/journey."

"It was wonderful to be listened to and directed to what the Lord desires for me and helpful to reflect where God's presence is in the everyday."

One of the spiritual directors was Dr David Crawley, senior lecturer at Laidlaw College. Alongside others, David spoke at the keynote session on Saturday morning and joined his colleagues in leading the one-on-one sessions.

"Youth ministries can be busy and challenging and the Church recognised that it would be helpful for those involved to have someone outside of their context to talk to - someone with wisdom and experience, who could help them recalibrate their lives in the midst of their ministries," says David.

For his keynote speech, David chose to focus on the importance of spiritual direction, and how it can be helpful to someone in ministry.

"I spoke for 15 minutes, using the analogy of the Paris Opera House to expand on how ministries are essentially a performance," explains David.





Dr David Crawley, senior lecturer at Laidlaw College, was a Connect keynote speaker on spiritual direction.

"People are watching you and you're putting your best self forward. But behind the scenes, there's a huge part that audiences don't see. It can be very chaotic backstage, with lots of stress and tension. And so it's the same for us – behind the scenes, we might have a lot of worries and anxieties and maybe a sense of inadequacy for the role. If the front and backstage are out of synch, then we can have problems. One important aspect of this is paying attention to our spiritual well-being, and that's where spiritual direction can be helpful."

The keynote session also included two of the spiritual directors interviewing each other about their experience of giving and receiving spiritual development, as well as a 10 minute role play by another two spiritual directors, so the audience could witness a session in progress.

David says he was pleased to have been part of Connect 2015 and congratulated the organisers on the event.

"It was no small feat to coordinate 25 spiritual directors from across the Auckland and Waikato regions and get them down to Ngaruawahia for the day. Thanks especially to Jeannie Martin-Blaker, one of the spiritual directors who did just that."

Connect 2015 kicked off at 4pm on the Friday with regional networking, designed to get people from nearby areas together.

"In a sea of 200 or so people, it was nice to feel some connection with people who come from the same area, or nearly the same area, as you," says Matt.

Friday and Saturday night's keynote speaker was American Bill Maston, whose organisation Nexus International is involved with training more than 1000 youth leaders from 53 nations each year. Bill spoke about "Multiplication vs Addition", the concept that the most strategic way to grow our ministries and God's kingdom is by investing very heavily in a few people and developing them so that in time they will be able to develop others.

Following Saturday afternoon's spiritual development sessions, a much-loved feature from last year's Connect made an appearance – Connect's Got Talent.

Although it was much less formal this year, says Matt.

"It wasn't really about winners and losers, but more about youth workers blessing us with their skills. This year we had singing, dancing and the spoken word and it was a lot of fun."

On Sunday, the Connect keynote speaker was Mareta Ford, a senior community adviser for youth at the Hamilton City Council. Having been involved in numerous youth initiatives, including establishing community leadership programmes throughout Hamilton, Mareta was well placed to speak about how a church can be a blessing to its surrounding community. Mareta also had the audience rolling in the isles with laughter and, says Matt, should seriously consider becoming a stand up comedian!

Matt admits managing his first Connect event was a challenge, but he's pleased with how it went.

"I'm thankful to Gordon Fitch, PYM's national manager, for his support and guidance; to the Waikato-based hospitality team who worked so hard over the weekend to look after us; and to the Connect working group who helped us to plan and implement a great event. I'm also pleased we focused on the basics of youth ministry and on the holistic aspects of looking after our souls as the most vital part of our ministries. Everything else flows from that."

Sharon Stephenson [Spanz](#)

# Interns graduating in 2015 from the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership



**DAVID KIM**

I am what sociologists call a 1.5 generation Korean-Kiwi. Regardless, I am here making home with you of different origins, together in Christ. Since I was 11-years-old, I have lived here in Aotearoa NZ, worshipping with the tangata whenua and those who have arrived subsequently to make their home in this place.

I have lived in Albany, Auckland for all those years, and have been part of the family at Albany Presbyterian Church until two years ago when I moved to Whakatane, Eastern Bay of Plenty, for my internship placement.

Before training for ministry, I studied history and theology. I had been a youth leader for my home parish for many years as well as a youth pastor for a Korean migrant church for three years. After having trained to become a teacher, I journeyed toward parish ministry.

I am passionate about cross-cultural ministry, for the richness, beauty and wonder that cultural diversity brings. I tune to the rhythms and melodies that have shaped peoples. I persevere in tuning into and reaching harmony for the reality of a Kingdom community of belonging within the church and with our neighbours.



**CARLTON JOHNSTONE**

I am an engineer's husband. Sarah and I have two kids, Max (5) and Holly (2). I am an intern at The Village Presbyterian Church in Christchurch where I have had the opportunity to be part of, and learn from, the journey of two churches coming together to form one. It has been formative being part of a church exploring what it means to participate in what God is doing in their life, and the mission God is calling them into.

Sarah and I are excited about where God might lead us following the internship. We would love to be involved in a church that takes seriously the challenge of living a life of loving God and neighbour, not to mention one another. This involves a desire to participate in God's mission within their local context and an openness to any new and creative possibilities that this might lead them toward.



**JIN SOOK KIM**

I am from South Korea and have two grown-up children – Angela and Michael. Originally trained as a secondary school English teacher in Korea, I was always interested in studying Scripture in relation to various issues of life. This led me to become involved in school chaplaincy, community outreach activities, and eventually this internship.

I am currently doing my second year of internship at St Philip's, Grants Braes in Dunedin where I am enjoying the open and welcoming atmosphere of its faith community.

Throughout the internship, I have become more aware of the importance of cross-cultural aspect in church, in the context of the ever changing demographic landscape of New Zealand. Each individual's faith and culture is important and is mysteriously woven into one big beautiful story of God. I want to continue to explore this idea with others throughout my internship and beyond.

In my leisure time I enjoy a variety of activities, including listening to music, watching movies, drawing pencil art based on biblical themes, meeting people, walking and reading.



**JORDAN REDDING**

Having interned at Hope Presbyterian, I have enjoyed the challenge of being part of a large, vibrant, multi-congregational parish.

In my spare time, I like to relax with family in Dunedin, mull over a good book, crank up my stereo, or noodle away on my guitar. I am passionate about worship and drawing people creatively into the mysteries of word and sacrament.





### JOHN SCHONEVELD

I'm married to Jan and we have two daughters, Johanna and Catriona.

Over the years I've been involved in children's, youth, adult, families and all-age ministries in a variety of churches with diverse flavours, both in New Zealand and Scotland.

I've done my Knox Centre internship with St James Presbyterian Church in

Pukekohe and St John's in Papatoetoe, as well as spending six weeks with the Kids Friendly team.

My passion for working with all generations, for opening Scripture and for outdoor adventure has been nurtured, in part, by my involvement with Scripture Union (including four-and-a-half years on their team as a schools and camps worker).

I am excited about the potential for church to be a community of God's children sharing God's life and love together, and shining this life and love into their local community and beyond.

In my spare time, I enjoy adventuring outdoors, reading, photography, movies and spending quality time with Jan and our girls.



### MICHAEL FROST

Hi, I'm Michael. I am married to Nathalie and we have three children: Ben, Chloe and Ruby. I grew up in South Auckland, attending St Andrew's Presbyterian in Clevedon, which is where we were married.

We moved to Otahuhu in 2006 and worshiped at St Andrew's Presbyterian. I completed my Bachelor of Applied Theology degree at Carey Baptist College.

In 2008 we moved to Oamaru where I worked as Christian youth worker for North Otago Youth Support (developed by Waiareka-Weston Presbyterian Parish). My work encompassed programme development, pastoral care, mentoring, chaplaincy, religious instruction in schools, management of The Youth Centre – Oamaru and working with community organisations.

Within the Waiareka-Weston Parish, I was ordained as an elder and ministered in a complementary capacity to my youth worker role. I have been at Papakura East Presbyterian Church (PEPC) for my two-year placement, and my ministry there has included regular preaching and worship leading, pastoral care and mission leadership.

I am passionate about working with communities, discipling people, sharing Christ and leading the church so that it is engaged with the mission of God in compelling ways.



### MOSE TAUMAOE

I have been in New Zealand for over 40 years. This year my wife and I will celebrate 23 years together. We have four children.

My home church is Greyfriars Epsom Presbyterian Church where I was an elder and involved in the youth and Sunday School ministries as leader and coordinator. I completed my Bachelor

of Theology degree through Otago University.

My internship has been at Howick Presbyterian Church. My family and I have been blessed to be at Howick and the internship continues to stretch my abilities in pastoral ministry, preaching, leading worship and integrating myself into all aspects of the day-to-day life of the church.

I am an evangelical at heart, but also love traditional worship styles. In the changing face of Aotearoa New Zealand, which many ethnicities now call home, I believe God continues to teach me to use my experiences to empower people, to help them in their walk as they grow spiritually, so that they can be released into our communities to spread the good news.



### ROXY GAHEGAN

I have been married to Mark for 27 years, during which time we have lived in England, Australia, USA and New Zealand. We moved here nearly eight years ago and feel like we have finally found home. Our two children have grown up and have (so far) successfully flown the nest. I have spent my internship at two very different placements in Auckland, which has made for a rich

learning environment. I'm looking forward to a new community context where I will continue to learn and grow alongside God's people.

I'm passionate about being part of growing God's kingdom. I'm also passionate about discerning God's presence and action at work in the world and joining in. I enjoy reading, movies, loose-leaf tea, cooking and keeping fit, and love spending time with family and friends.



Profiles for the eight graduating interns are available from the Rev Allister Lane, who coordinates introductions and discussions

between final year interns and Ministry Settlement Boards. For more information, please email Allister, [a.lane@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz](mailto:a.lane@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz).



**Does your minister  
need a holiday...**

**Does he or she  
know about**

**Glen Innis...**



Glen Innis is a working sheep & beef station south east of Waipukurau in Central Hawkes Bay administered by the Church Property Trustees. It was gifted to the Church to provide free holiday accommodation just for ministers.

There are two comfortable homes, both with all modern conveniences, set in park-like grounds in a superb rural landscape. Tennis court, swimming pool, games room – it's all there. From Glen Innis, your minister and his family can explore Hawkes Bay's beaches and bush walks, go fishing, visit the wineries and generally enjoy all the region has to offer.

Graeme & Margaret Black have recently retired after 25 years as the Glen Innis managers. New managers, James & Stephanie Carter are looking forward to continuing the long tradition of welcoming both active and retired ministers as guests of Glen Innis.

Have look at the story of Glen Innis on the website and perhaps pop a brochure into your minister's sermon notes!

[www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-ministers/glen-innis-ministers-holiday-home](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-ministers/glen-innis-ministers-holiday-home)

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**(04) 381 8296 or**

**[kos@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:kos@presbyterian.org.nz)**

# THEOLOGYMATTERS

## Rethinking ministry today

**Recently I was involved in the induction of the Rev Malcolm Gordon as National Music, Worship and Arts Coordinator with the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, a role he has been fulfilling since his appointment last year. This is a new ministry position in the Church and one which is proving very significant; there are demands for his time not just in New Zealand but also Australia and Scotland.**

In discussing with him how he came to this position, and what future ministry might be like for him, it illustrated for me once again what has become a common theme of discussion and conversations recently, particularly among our younger leaders; that our current understanding and model of ministry in the Presbyterian tradition is creaking at the joints and not serving us very well. We are increasingly trying to squeeze the increasingly wide variety of ministries we need into a very narrow box, and for many the fit is increasingly uncomfortable. This was Malcolm's experience as he tried to fit the calling and gifts he had for ministry into the only real place we have, as Minister of Word and Sacrament in a parish setting. I would like to suggest that we need to undergo a significant re-thinking of the theology that underlies our practice of ministry in order to better meet the needs of our context.

Our inherited understanding and form was primarily developed by John Calvin during the Reformation in the context of Christendom, when everyone belonged to the church and was Christian. There ministry took place in the church, and was aimed at ensuring everyone was truly Christian. This was to be done by ensuring the gospel was purely preached and the sacraments rightly administered, hence Ministers of Word and Sacrament. On top of that a third element was added, discipline or pastoral care. In looking at

the ministry gifts set out in the important text in Ephesians 4, Calvin saw only pastors and teachers as continuing gifts; apostles, prophets and evangelists were temporary gifts needed for the establishment of the church where it did not exist and had since ceased. This understanding served us well during the period of Christendom which in one form or another still existed in Western societies till the middle of last century.

However to many of us it seems clear that is now an inadequate understanding for the post-Christendom context we are in today. If the Church is to continue playing a vital role in societies like New Zealand where the church is no longer central, then its ministry cannot be focussed solely, or even primarily, inside the church. In a world where the church is now marginal, or in some cases absent, we need to find ways of equipping and ordaining those who have apostolic, prophetic and evangelistic ministries (and maybe others also), to enable the ministry of Christ to reach into places and communities where the church is not. We still need those who are gifted as pastors and teachers to serve as Ministers of Word and Sacrament in the church, but these other ministries need people trained and ordained to serve alongside equally as ministers of the gospel, as the church endeavours to reach into new fields of those who are not yet part of Christ's church.

Over the past two years I have heard this cry repeated by those who are finding our current model is not serving us well in many contexts: rural communities, in planting new churches, in many of our ethnic contexts, with young adults and in community ministries. It is important that we do not just respond pragmatically to make this possible, but do what the Reformers did centuries ago and re-examine the Scriptures and the tradition of the Church in which we stand in the light of the new context we find ourselves in and allow the Spirit to open our eyes to new ways that God might be able to work in our midst and our communities today.

*- Rev Dr Kevin Ward, acting principal  
Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership,  
Dunedin.*



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## YOUTH MINISTRY

**In Dannevirke, Knox Presbyterian Church elders Ally and Brian MacKay recently retired from youth ministry after many years of service. They share their experiences and the joy of working alongside young people.**

Ally and Brian are both teachers at Dannevirke High School, so their connection to young people in the community has always been strong. "It was a really natural fit," says Ally. "We began our involvement with youth ministry back in 1986. I think the reason we devoted so long to it is that we have a strong passion to see teenagers come to know God and grow in God's care."

"It's about the relationships you build with the kids," adds Brian. "You can learn as much from them as they can from you."

Many teenagers that Ally and Brian worked with were from unchurched backgrounds, so seeing them grow and choose to follow Jesus was especially rewarding. "A few years back, I asked the kids I was working with what they liked most about youth group," says Ally. "It was a group of 30 unchurched and 10 church-ed teenagers, and the unchurched group said they loved the fun, the relationships and the discussions about God. It wasn't an answer that many people would expect to hear

from teenagers, but they enjoy exploring the concepts."

Most of the young people didn't choose to follow Jesus while they were part of the group, but they loved their involvement in youth ministry. "Our role as youth leaders was to show them God's love and to plant seeds and pray that God will bring them to fruition in time," says Ally.

"One great reward of youth work is seeing the teenagers you've worked with growing up and embracing adult life. I think one of the most special things for us is when we attend weddings, 21st birthday parties and baptisms of our ex-youthies," says Ally. "We get inspired by their passion and enthusiasm to follow Jesus. It's also really cool to see the roles reversed — to see them leading youth groups and student ministries. I've sought out resources and ideas from some of our ex-youthies and they have been able to teach and guide me!"

The rise of social media means there is another way for Brian and Ally to stay connected with the teenagers they've worked with. "We sometimes hear from young people 10 or 15 years later, and it's lovely to know they're still following Jesus or that they've got back into the church," says Ally.

When asked what advice he would give to someone starting out in youth ministry, Brian again stresses that relationships are the key thing. "I've seen examples where the adults haven't related to the kids well," he says. "You have to stay a bit zany, but also really put time into the

relationships. The kids learn from what you do rather than what you say."

He adds that asking questions and encouraging independent thought is vital. "I remember one young guy getting frustrated that Ally was asking so many questions," he recalls. "He just wanted the answers! But we explained it's about lighting a fire and getting involved in the journey rather than Bible-bashing."

The team you have around you is also extremely important, says Ally. "A great team is the reason we stayed with youth ministry for so long. The team is often five or six people — the kids see the interaction between the team members, the warmth and the connection, and it really builds something for them. The support of the minister and the church is so important too."

There have been many inspirational moments for the couple over the years. "I remember once when we started a Bible study group, outside the main youth group, it started with four kids in a house," says Ally. "Over the next few weeks, the group grew to about 27 young people! We had to move into the church building as it got too big — it was very rewarding."

Finally, Ally shared some advice she was given when she was starting out in youth ministry. "I was told that if you keep your relationship with God fresh, you'll always have something to share. Then you're running on God, not just on you. It's so true."

Kate Davidson [Spanz](#)





## Cross-cultural congregation celebrates 20 years

This year St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, celebrate the 20th anniversary of the parish's Korean congregation. Over the years there has been change to the size and demographic of St Andrew's respective congregations – New Zealand worshippers seem to be getting older and reducing in number, the Korean congregation tends to be younger and slowly increasing in number.

**It can sometimes be hard finding reasons to celebrate in May: summer has left the building and the cold, wet and grey weather is descending.**

But in May this year, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Hamilton found a great reason to celebrate – the 20th anniversary of the parish's Korean congregation.

Rev Tae Ju Ham, St Andrew's Korean minister, says the first Korean immigrants starting attending the 130-year-old church in 1994.

"They were Christians looking for a place to worship and so they started coming to Sunday worship and began to have Thursday prayer meetings. At this time, parish council considered how best the church could serve the Korean newcomers" says Tae Ju.

At a meeting of the church elders, it was agreed that the Korean congregation should be free to use St Andrew's. From the beginning, the Korean worshippers have been members of the Hamilton Korean Church within St Andrew's and St Andrew's has one parish council, with Kiwi and Korean elders, and one budget.

In 1995, the then minister of St Andrew's, Rev Richard Lawrence, met with the Rev Paul Kim, who was the Presbyterian Church's first Korean minister, and St Andrew's invited Paul to lead the Korean congregation. He and Rev Richard Lawrence were a very successful team, where "one church, two congregations" was the philosophy," says Tae Ju, who has been at St Andrew's since 2010.

"But four times a year we come together for joint services – for Easter, in June, September and then in December for Christmas services."

Tae Ju says the Korean worshippers were accepted by St Andrews from the moment they arrived. "People have told me how there was never any 'them' and 'us' – it was more a case of we are one body and a friend in Jesus. It doesn't matter where you're from – we're all here for the same thing."

The interim minister of St Andrews, Rev Bruce Hellyer, agrees.

"Both congregations get on very well together and we all enjoy the combined services every three months," says Bruce. "Their

dedicated Korean minister, Rev Tae Ju Ham, works hard with his people to equip them in the Gospel and in Christian living and endeavour. Tae Ju and I also get on very well together, and encourage each other in Christ and in the ministry of St Andrew's."

Probably the biggest change over the years has been to the size and demographic of St Andrew's respective congregations – while New Zealand worshippers seems to be getting older and reducing in numbers, the Korean congregation tends to be younger and is increasing slowly in number.

"As more Koreans move to Hamilton, they are finding their way to us," says Tae Ju. "We also reach out to new arrivals, inviting them to things such as the Full Moon Festival which we celebrate in September or October each year."

Tae Ju is also rightly proud of the role the Koreans played in helping to fund The Link, a \$1.9 million community centre which serves both the church and the wider community.

Korean parishioners held garage sales and singing competitions to help raise money. They also dug deep, donating over \$126,000 towards the debt-free centre, which they now use every Sunday for a shared lunch and Sunday School after their 11.30am service.

According to the Rev Kyoung Han, the Presbyterian Church's Asian Ministries Coordinator, the cross-cultural ministry at St Andrew's is a "concrete expression of the hospitality and encouragement of the Presbyterian Church towards Asian migrants".

"The 20-year journey of St Andrews has become a strong foundation and good example how two churches can work closely. It is a positive role model for all of us."

Tae Ju, who sits on the parish council as well as leading the monthly Kiwi- Korean liaison group's meeting, says he is delighted to be involved in a dynamic, positive church like St Andrew's.

"There is still work to be done, but we willingly join together with the Kiwis to do this. We aim to work creatively to take the next steps for our mission in Hamilton."

Sharon Stephenson Spanz

# Using Windows XP poses risk to church data

**From April 2014, users of the Windows XP computer operating system stopped receiving online from Microsoft security patches, application updates and support, making these computers far more vulnerable to attacks by viruses and identity thieves.**

Despite the increased risk of personal and financial information being compromised, churches are among the worldwide users who continue to use Windows XP, as well as the soon-to-be outdated Windows Vista. According to Net Application Web statistics from March 2015, Windows XP remained the second most-used computer operating system with almost 17 per cent of all PCs worldwide (an estimated 254 million users) still running it.

So why are users sticking with Windows XP even though it leaves their data so vulnerable? The two main reasons are the cost of upgrading to a newer computer that can cope with the requirements of a more modern operating system (for example, Windows 8.1 or 10) and familiarity with the XP operating system that's been around since 2001.

For some churches cost need not be a barrier.

Individual churches that have completed their charities registration with Charities Services may be able to receive help from TechSoup New Zealand, a not-for-profit technology organisation. It works with world leading IT suppliers to provide registered charitable organisations with both donated and discounted computers and software.

These include refurbished computers and a range of software from companies such as Microsoft, Symantec and Kaspersky.

On their website you can read case studies [<https://www.techsoup.net.nz/case-studies>] about how they have assisted faith-based not-for-profit organisations, including the Bishop's Action Foundation and Methodist City Action.

What are your options if you are unable to update through TechSoup? Unfortunately updating from Windows XP may not be possible if your computer is more than 10 years old as many older machines are physically unable to run Windows 8.1 or 10 (Windows 7 is no longer being sold although it can be sourced via online trading).

The biggest limitation for older machines is a lack of random access (system) memory, or RAM. If the only compatibility issue for your computer is a lack of RAM you can have additional memory installed for a relatively small cost.



A rough guide to see if your computer will be capable of running Windows 7 to Windows 10 is: a full size desktop computer built from 2005 onwards with minimum 2GB RAM and at least 20GB free hard drive space.

You can check if your computer is capable of running Windows 8 by downloading Microsoft's free Upgrade Assistant tool. It will scan your system and check that it meets the hardware requirements, and scan for the compatibility of any connected peripherals, such as your printer.

If your computer does meet the hardware requirement to run Windows 8.1 or Windows 10 the upgrade from XP is relatively easy. Either direct download the upgrade from Microsoft or buy the Windows disc via a computer store or Microsoft online.

Before you upgrade you will need to back up all your data (to cloud storage or onto USB, DVD/CD, external hard drive) as the install will wipe your computer clean.

To install from a disc your computer boot order needs to be altered for your computer to "see" the disc before the existing Windows XP that's on it. Do this by accessing the computers BIOS (press the Delete or F8 button when you start up the computer but before the operating system loads, then select the DVD player as first boot device).

Instructions and free tutorials on how to install Windows 8 (or 8.1 or 10) are available online from Microsoft.

If you purchase a computer that has Windows 7 or Windows 8/8.1 preinstalled you will receive online the offer of a free upgrade to Windows 10. This free offer is valid until 29 July 2016.

For those users who decide not to upgrade to a newer operating system and to keep using Windows XP (or Vista as it nears its end date for support) there are steps you can take to try to protect your information from spyware, malware, viruses, and potentially very harmful data miners. You can download this information here [http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/sites/public\\_files/s/If\\_you\\_decide\\_to\\_keep\\_using\\_Windows\\_XP.pdf](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/sites/public_files/s/If_you_decide_to_keep_using_Windows_XP.pdf) from the Church website. Note that these steps might lower the risk of a security breach but none of these measures are the equal of using a fully supported operating system to protect your church's information.

Graham Singer Spanz



# Strengthening ties between New Zealand and Korea

Rev Dr Kang Sil Lee knew very little about New Zealand before she arrived in June for a three-month sabbatical.



"All I knew was that it's a very beautiful country with no nuclear plants and a very good environment," says the 56-year-old Korean minister and human rights advocate.

Two months into her sabbatical and Kang Sil is pleased she made the journey down under.

"New Zealand is a very democratic and peaceful country. The environment is beautiful and the people are very kind and happy."

Kang Sil is a vice-pastor, alongside her husband Han Sang Lyul, of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PROK). She says her trip came about because of her church's relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

She has spent the past two months at Knox Church in Dunedin, working alongside church members and educating the public about her abiding passion – the social movement for democratisation, reunification and women's rights.

"The division of my country into the North and South is terrible and has been the ultimate cause of its socio-political problems. We have hatred and distrust of each other, because during the Korean Civil War we killed each other. Reunification is not only about geography and political unity, but it's also about mental unity. What we need is forgiveness, reconciliation and co-operation."

Kang Sil also presented two seminars on the subject at the Peace and Conflict Centre and the Centre for Theology and Public Issues, both at Otago University.

"New Zealanders don't know what's going on in my country. I wanted to share with them what we are doing in the reunification movement."

Kang Sil, who studied teaching and theology at university before working as a theological researcher, has personal experience of the horrors of her country's regime.

"My husband was imprisoned from 2010 to 2013 because he visited North Korea for 70 days without permission. That's why he didn't come to New Zealand with me, because he is not allowed to travel out of the country."

Ask Kang Sil if she got homesick while being in Dunedin and she'll laugh.

"No, no time to be homesick! I was very lucky that I had many opportunities to meet, discuss and share my experiences as a minister, a social activist and a feminist."

She was hosted by five Knox families and as a mark of her gratitude, made each the traditional Korean food, kimchi, a fermented side dish made with a variety of vegetables.

"It was a joy to bring my culture into their homes."

Despite the cold Dunedin winter, Kang Sil has had no problem adapting to the weather.

"It gets colder in Korea during the winter, so I'm used to it. The only issue is that I am missing out on summer at home. I will have two winters this year."

Kang Sil will spend her last month in New Zealand at St Andrew's in Mt Manganui, as well as time in Auckland.

The Rev Dr Kang Sil Lee

She intends to keep spreading the word about reunification and the role her church is playing in that process.

"Since the beginning, the PROK has been working for reunification. I think Korean Christianity can play a significant role in reunification, because it should be led by spirituality based on the trinity of Christianity."

Rev Phil King, Global Mission Co-ordinator, says Kang Sil's sabbatical was a chance to "strengthen ties" between Korea and New Zealand.

"Following our visit to Seoul last year, we are developing our relationship with both our partner churches in South Korea – the PROK and the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK)," says Phil.

"One of our young people, Max Westropp, did an internship there from November to February this year and now we are hosting Kang Sil. We have plans for another student from Dunedin to go over this summer."

Phil believes the exchanges are beneficial to both Korean and New Zealand churches. "From our perspective, there are now many Koreans living in New Zealand, so these exchanges give us the opportunity to better understand the Korean context. Kang Sil, for example, has shown us what the division in her country means for South Korea and what it means to live with this major divide. And of course her teachings about reunification have a message for all of us about the importance of forgiveness and peace."

Sharon Stephenson Spanz





## Youth love Taiwan exchange

**"Growing global followers of Jesus Christ" is the tag-line of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa's Global Mission.**

It's also what inspired two young Auckland students, Elisa Soerjadi and Thomas Loho, to take part in the *I Love Taiwan* programme, a two-week cross-cultural exchange that brings 16 to 34-year-olds from across the globe to Taiwan.

Both Elisa and Thomas are members of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Symonds Street, which has English and Indonesian speaking congregations. They are both active in the Indonesian congregation's youth group and say they heard about the annual *I Love Taiwan* programme from Rev Dr Stuart Vogel.

"Stuart encouraged us to apply and as I'd never been on a mission before, but had always wanted to, I jumped at the chance," says Elisa (20), who is currently in her final semester of an accounting and commercial law degree at Auckland University.

"What interested me was meeting other people from different countries and understanding the culture and church of Taiwan. I was also keen on seeing what learnings I could bring back to New Zealand," says Elisa, who moved to New Zealand from Jakarta when she was seven years old.

This year's programme, which was hosted by the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, ran from 1-18 July, but Elisa and Thomas flew to Taipei a few days earlier to take in the sights and catch up with their respective families.

The programme kicked off with a three-day Christian youth camp, which brought together the 180 or so participants from 16 countries. They were divided into groups of six to eight and were then sent out to different parts of Taiwan.

Elisa was sent to Hualien, on the east coast of Taiwan, a rural area where the living conditions were a little challenging.

"I didn't expect it to be so basic. We stayed in a small house and slept on the floor. The conditions also weren't very hygienic."



The Rev Mark Wen and Wen Shimu of the Taiwanese - Auckland Presbyterian Church prayed for a safe trip for Elisa Soerjadi and Thomas Loho. On behalf of Te Aka Puaho they were entrusted with Papiera Tapu, the Maori Bible, to present to the Pingtung Church in Taiwan.

But Elisa says it was a good reminder of how unimportant material possessions really are.

"The locals had so little but they were so happy. It was a real eye-opener."

Elisa's group helped to run a camp for children whose parents were at work. "They weren't Christian but that didn't matter. We taught them Christian songs and prayers."

She also worked with the elderly, learning how to weave and cook dumplings, and Elisa says something similar could work with the church's elderly in New Zealand.

It was also Thomas' first mission trip and he says he was motivated to join the programme by a desire to give back.

"I currently lead the Indonesian youth group and play the piano for the church but I wanted to see where else I could help."

Thomas (24) is currently finishing his chemical engineering degree at Auckland University. He had quite a different experience to Elisa, staying in Taipei at the Shulin Presbyterian Church.

"I thought I'd be doing physical work, such as building or digging trenches, but I ended up mentoring at a teenage church camp," says Thomas. "However, I trust God wherever he puts me and

although I thought I would be useless because I don't speak the language, we had translators to help. It was a challenge, but a good challenge."

Thomas was in a group of nine with participants from the US, Hong Kong, Canada, Malaysia and Korea, as well as two local youth, and says he particularly enjoyed working with the elderly during his mission.

"On a Tuesday afternoon, they get the elderly together as a social event but also to talk about God. These people are lonely because their children and grandchildren are at school or work but the afternoon sessions give them something to do."

Having now completed their first overseas mission, both Elisa and Thomas are keen to undertake another one.

Rev Phil King, Global Mission Coordinator, has thrown his weight behind the *I Love Taiwan* programme.

"It's a great opportunity for young adults from the Presbyterian Church to learn about life in Taiwan, to cross cultural barriers and get to know their peers from all over the world," says Phil.

"The focus isn't on evangelism, it's about expanding participants' world view and experience. I'd encourage any of our young people to apply for next year's programme."

Sharon Stephenson [Spanz](#)



## New ventures in Vanuatu

**Highgate Church in Dunedin and St John's Presbyterian Church in Hawera, Taranaki are both embracing new Global Mission projects on Paama and Espiritu Santo Islands.**

Andrew Murch, outreach elder of St John's, explains that the church was looking for a mission opportunity. "We've done one-off things, but we wanted to do something practical and build a long-term relationship," he says.

So Global Mission Coordinator Rev Phil King suggested Jerivu village in Big Bay on Espiritu Santo. "I'd met with the community there to assess their need for a new church building," says Phil. "When I got home, Andrew called asking whether there were any potential building projects his congregation could consider in Vanuatu, and this fit the bill."

Initially, Andrew made a visit to Jerivu with his wife Karen. "The people were very welcoming," he says. "It's extremely remote. There are no roads and it was quite an experience to visit."

In July, Andrew returned with a team of seven to spend three days in the village, getting to know the people and measuring up the building. "The villagers have laid the foundations and poured the concrete floor, and we're looking at going back next year to help finish building the church," says Andrew. "Everyone who went on the trip loved it, and I'm confident we'll have plenty of volunteers. Our parishioners are really getting on board."

Some funding for the new church will come from Global Mission, but the remaining \$30-40,000 will be raised by St John's. "It's a lot to raise, but we're hopeful," says Andrew. "Once we've built the church, we're hoping for a long-term relationship with the village. We'd like to bring international speakers to the church to run courses on things like healing and gifts of the spirit."

Andrew, who is a builder and a farmer, was asked by Phil to visit Navota Farm as well. Historically, the New Zealand



Members of St John's Presbyterian gather outside the old Jerivu village church with its minister and Sunday School.

Presbyterian Church has supported the farm, which provides food and income for the Talua Ministry Training Centre. Andrew and the team joined retired farmers Roy and Nancy Burnett of Invercargill, and met with key people at Navota.

"Roy was part of the team who went to Vanuatu in 1963 to help set the farm up," says Andrew. "The purpose of this visit was to investigate the farm's future and report back to Global Mission, who will take a recommendation back to the Vanuatu General Assembly."

Meanwhile, the Rev Geoff Skilton of Highgate Church was looking for a new school connection in Vanuatu for Columba College, where he is chaplain. "The roots go back to 2011 when two year nine girls asked why the College was not involved in mission," says Geoff. "Until then, our parish hadn't been connected to Vanuatu."

Geoff visited Hog Harbour in Espiritu Santo with Phil last year, following a recommendation from the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu Education Secretary. "The Hog Harbour Principal was supportive of Columba College making a connection," says Phil. "We hope this will develop into an ongoing relationship between the schools."

Although Espiritu Santo was spared the worst of Cyclone Pam, it did mean Geoff's scheduled visit to the school this year couldn't take place. "We hope to go next year, and in the meantime, Columba College has sent \$8,000 over to assist," says Geoff.

The church is also connected with Vaum Junior Secondary School on Paama, and a group from the parish is hoping to go over to work with the school. "It's an educational, friendship and cultural exchange," says Geoff. "We ask what they'd like — for example, they wanted people to speak English with the children. They then asked for science lab equipment, so we fundraised for that. Sadly, it was destroyed by the cyclone, so we sent funds to replace it."

"We're currently exploring what the ongoing relationship could be," Geoff adds. "It'll be driven by the response from Vanuatu. We're having conversations about me visiting to look at what needs to be done and how big a team we need to do it."

Whatever happens, the desire to continue the good work is strong. "Between Columba College and the parish, we're keen to keep a connection going," says Geoff.

Kate Davidson [Spanz](#)



## Invest in Girls

At 13-years-old, South Sudanese refugee Amah Gaj Maler is anxious to do her homework. Left an orphan by the 19 month conflict at home, she is determined to build a life for herself. She is now resident in Uganda's Adjumani Refugee Camp – which is home to a small portion of the more than half a million people who have fled war and hunger in South Sudan. Fortunately Amah has the support and protection of a foster aunt, and thanks to the ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together), of which Christian World Service is a member, she now has her own hut and can go to school.



South Sudanese refugee Amah Gaj Maler is an orphan and determined to build a life for herself.

In South Sudan school is much more than learning how to read and do maths – it is part of a strategy to stop girls from getting pregnant and to improve their life options. In Maridi County, girls can attend high school thanks in part to donations to the Christmas Appeal and through the CWS Gifted programme. Lack of money is not the only reason girls drop out from school. Girls are often forced to marry young – some as young as 12-years-old. In parts of the country girls are used as compensation when someone is killed or to “sell” in return for a dowry of goats or cattle.

CWS partner the Maridi Service Agency (MSA), which runs the local high school as well as two preschools – a third was recently closed because the community could not find new land. For the first time in 2015, final year high school students sat the new South Sudan School Certificate rather than travelling to nearby Uganda to sit exams. It was a challenging year as there were no textbooks for the new syllabus. Out of a class of 18 senior students, four were female, but last year 44 percent of first-year students were female. A grant from CWS paid running costs and scholarships for 10 female students who had previously dropped out of school.

MSA has campaigned effectively to protect young girls. The local radio station, Maridi FM, is run by MSA. It hosts weekly awareness programmes on the importance of education for girls, the responsibilities of those in authority to promote their rights, and sex education. They successfully lobbied the Local Legislative Council to punish men who make students pregnant – in South Sudan most justice is administered at a local level.

Education is a rare commodity in South Sudan. According to the United Nations only 16 percent of its women are literate compared with 27 percent of the total population. Decades of war for independence has left the majority of South Sudanese with little education. Despite the country's rich resources in oil, other minerals and plenty of land suitable for growing food, the outlook for the world's youngest country remains grim unless they can resolve the governance issue and begin to build a nation.

In June, Maridi was attacked and fighting broke out between soldiers, residents and the raiders. When the school principal heard the news, he quickly sent the students home. Sadly the first casualty was one student who did not have time

to put his books inside before he was shot down. Altogether 14 people were killed, shops and the only hospital were raided, and 196 homes burned to the ground. For three weeks MSA could not work, but they are now assessing how they can help the thousands that have been displaced by this fighting.

As well as running schools and local radio station, MSA has made helping young adults a priority. Last year they ran an adult literacy programme for 17 students, 10 of whom were women. Once their domestic work was over they attended class for two hours each day. The curriculum had four subjects: English, maths, Christian religious education and social studies with a civics education component. The deeply committed students passed the first level and are keen to do more. MSA also ran a youth farming programme to bring more land into food production as well as a small savings and credit scheme.

Their programmes have been highly successful – the community had food and many high school graduates found jobs or earned enough income for their families.

You can help with “Schooling for Girls” part of the CWS Gifted programme: <http://gift.org.nz/>



# GIVE GAZA A BREAK



**PLEASE  
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# Creating a better life for generations to come

After taking care of your loved ones in your will, a legacy can make a positive impact on future generations of Kiwis. A legacy gift to Presbyterian Support will create stronger communities and fund social services that help make New Zealand the best place to raise children. You'll bring forward the day when the aged, disabled and other vulnerable groups maximise their independence. You'll help create a better life for everyone.

## What your gift will achieve

Legacy gifts of the past have already helped us achieve so much. Some examples include:

- Social services for at-risk young families in some of the most deprived areas of New Zealand
- Research into how to improve dementia care
- Nutritious food items and practical support for emergency foodbanks
- Mentoring programmes for young people.

Family Works walks alongside children and families to help bring positive and lasting changes in their lives. Our Enliven services enable people to thrive and stay healthy and engaged with their communities. We also offer hands-on support to enable the financially disadvantaged to move from debt to financial independence.

**Please contact your local bequest manager to discuss leaving a gift in your will.**

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*"I have been associated with Presbyterian Support as a supporter over many years, and have followed their work with increasing interest. I am particularly enthusiastic about the amazing work that they are doing out in the community at large, in so many ways."*

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