

Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

SPRING 2011, ISSUE 48

Election issue: 2011
the well being of children and families



www.presbyterian.org.nz

COMMENT: Pete Cowley

The Politics of Alcohol: imagine NZ without alcohol damage

I recently attended a conference, on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, organised by Alcohol Action NZ, to make New Zealanders aware of the damage that alcohol causes and the reasons why change is being so strongly resisted by our politicians.

The conference was very much an eye-opener for me. Although I was aware that some of us have problems with drinking too much, I was not prepared for the reality: alcohol is a drug that kills 20 New Zealanders a week and is implicated in 200 physical and sexual assaults a day!

That certainly got my attention.

Apart from the facts and figures, several things stood out for me.

Firstly, how the supermarkets are selling alcohol below cost and how this practice is fuelling those with low control over their drinking – making alcohol easily accessible and affordable. It is not hard to see how we got into this situation in the first place. One of the key elements in Alcohol Action's manifesto is to raise the price of alcohol and eliminate sales in supermarkets. A side effect of supermarket sales is the so called normalisation of alcohol to upcoming generations.

The second thing that stood out is how the industry lobbies government and tries to direct our attention to issues that are actually relatively small – for instance that underage binge drinking is the problem. The statistics actually show that it is people in middle age who are the binge drinkers.

The alcohol industry has learnt from the slow death of the tobacco industry, and has initiated new tactics to try and push the blame or collective responsibility away. They use messages like, "We don't force people to drink" and "If people don't drink responsibly, it is not our fault". On the surface these do indeed ring true, but whose responsibility is it to regulate poisons? Whose responsibility is it to look after each other?

The conference speakers filled in what was missing from my limited and industry constructed understanding of the issue and

helped me to understand the wider picture.

One of the most passionate, personable and informative lectures was by Shane Bradbrook. He spoke about the tobacco industry and the devastating effects smoking has on Maori – it was moving and riveting! The similarities between how the tobacco industry tried to pull the wool over everyone's eyes is very similar to what the alcohol industry is trying to do currently.

I had expected a panel discussion involving three MPs discussing their respective party positions on alcohol to be interesting, and it was – but not for the reasons I thought!

I anticipated great divisions between the parties – there was nearly 100 percent agreement between each of the MPs who sat on the select committee considering the legislation. However, the National Party MP clearly stated that the problem of introducing strong and effective legislation was being stymied by party ideology.

Yet again, it seems, political ideology wins over uncommon good sense and large numbers of New Zealanders suffer and die needlessly.

Professor Doug Sellman and Alcohol Action New Zealand are proposing what they call the 5+ solution as outlined below.

Unfortunately, education campaigns alone and the hope that individuals will spontaneously begin to act with more self-responsibility have not been shown to be effective strategies. Effective regulation is needed to turn the tide of New Zealand's harmful drinking culture. The 5+ Solution is a set of policy directives which are a real solution to the national alcohol crisis:

1. Raise alcohol prices
2. Raise the purchase age
3. Reduce alcohol accessibility
4. Reduce marketing and advertising
5. Increase drink-driving counter-measures

Plus: Increase treatment opportunities for heavy drinkers

The 5+ Solution is a set of policy directives based on the internationally acclaimed, World Health Organisation sponsored, publication, Alcohol: No Ordinary



Commodity by 15 of the top alcohol and public health scientists in the world (Babor et al 2003). It has recently been further endorsed by a paper in the leading medical journal The Lancet (Anderson et al 2009).

It is proving to be difficult to get the government to accept what they see as unpopular measures because of their ideology.

Meanwhile 20 New Zealanders die each week and alcohol is implicated in 200 physical or sexual assaults each day.

As we have seen on the news around the world, collective action to say "no more" is often the only way to convince the government. Before we can do that we need to know and understand for ourselves the issues we face.

I encourage everyone to find out more by looking online at <http://alcoholaction.co.nz/> If you don't have a computer or are not computer literate ask your children or grandchildren to look it up for you and increase their and your knowledge.

Pete Cowley is a member of the social justice group of St Andrew's on the Terrace, Wellington.

General Assembly 2010 endorsed action against New Zealand's drinking culture. In its submission on the Government's proposed alcohol law changes, the Presbyterian Church urged the Government to implement all of the Law Commission's recommendations on alcohol law reform, and endorsed the 5+ Solution promoted by Alcohol Action NZ.

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Presbyterian Church of
Aotearoa New Zealand

SPRING 2011 Issue 48

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Spanz is published quarterly by the
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ISSN 1175 5202 (print)

ISSN 1179 3473 (online)

Next issue

Summer 2011
Advertising deadline
1 November 2011

Design

Tangerine

Printing

Lithoprint

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Cover Photograph

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The Right Rev Peter Cheyne contributes a regular column to *Spanz*

Moderator's Musings



At its last meeting, the Council of Assembly received the report of a strategy group that has been meeting and consulting the Church over the last couple of years. Issues arising from the report will undoubtedly go to the next Assembly for adoption (or otherwise) but Council adopted the report ad interim.

The report contains a vision statement that reads:

So imagine the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand as a growing, united and vibrant movement of people who have been saved by faith in Jesus Christ, whom we are wholeheartedly committed to following, empowered by the Holy Spirit. As a consequence we see the good news of Jesus heard and new believers disciplined so that individual's lives are transformed, relationships are restored and strengthened, the vulnerable are served, and the Kingdom of God is evident within society and creation.

Vision is a picture of what might be; of what should be; of what perhaps can be. It is the dream of a better tomorrow. It was the picture Martin Luther King painted in his "I have a dream" speech.

A church's vision should always come from God. What dream is God putting in our hearts? Is our dream true to the scriptures?

The vision above talks about the nature of the Church and the mission of the Church. It talks about people being brought into a relationship with Jesus and then, as followers, changing the world!

Once we have a vision, we need to discern God's strategies for achieving it. It might mean a great deal of hard work and it might mean doing things differently, but having a sense of hope is a first step.

This is a very difficult time for our Church. The statistics are dismal. Many individuals and churches are working hard with few visible results. But can we still imagine, one day being a growing, united, vibrant movement...?

I am not giving up yet! I believe that as we submit ourselves to God we will see lots of new life in this Church.

Soon our politicians will also be presenting their visions for New Zealand. We will be asked to choose one and to choose the people we believe can best accomplish it. Our voting will influence the future shape of our society. Either we will move closer to or further away from being an expression of the Kingdom of God. Which party's vision best reflects that?

As Christians we measure the health of a society not only in terms of financial prosperity, but using yardsticks reflecting ethical questions and the treatment of the vulnerable and marginalised. We will be troubled by the symptoms of societal sickness such as our "drunken state", the amount of violence and the appalling abuse of children.

Our politicians can, if they do the right things, be part of establishing the Kingdom of God. However, it is a huge mistake to think that we can have the Kingdom without the King. The Kingdom of God will not be established through politics. The Kingdom of God exists where God is acknowledged as King and we live according to God's ways.

Ultimately, Jesus is the saviour; not politicians nor pressure groups. We won't be, and our society won't be, saved through political power and law changes. We need Jesus.

Which brings us back to the Church. As Bill Hybels is fond of saying, "The local church is the hope of the world". Let's have a vision that sees the Church (not just the Presbyterian Church, obviously) as a vibrant movement in this country, lifting up the name of Jesus and helping people to get to know God. First people must become citizens of the Kingdom. Then they must be taught to live as citizens of the Kingdom, caring for the poor, standing alongside those suffering injustice, and introducing yet more people to the King.

We have a big God. It is possible.

Election 2011:

Well being of children and families

*There are many issues for voters to consider on 26 November, **Andrea Candy** looks towards the coming election and focuses on one issue that has been particularly important to the Presbyterian Church over the past year – the well being of children and families.*

In February 2011, the Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Support launched PresCare, a partnership to encourage communities to care for children and families. Its first project was to develop resources for parishes to use during Lent. Other projects are planned for 2012 linking Kids Friendly, Presbyterian Youth Ministry and Presbyterian schools.

So, how do New Zealand's parliamentary parties plan to support the well being of New Zealand's children and families if elected? We have gathered together their policies and also sought the views of a range of people within or associated with the Church as to why this issue is particularly important to them this election.

Presbyterian Church leaders agree that the issue of improving the well being of children and families goes beyond politics to fundamental attitudes. Moderator the Right Rev Peter Cheyne says, "The Church already provides many services for children and their families but should be on the lookout for other things that can be done."

"Beyond that though, many needs have a spiritual dimension. There is a sickness in our society that can be addressed only partially by government policies. The deeper need is for people to be saved through faith in Jesus and our society transformed to reflect more fully the Kingdom of God. The Church is God's agency for that transformation."

The Very Rev Dr Graham Redding, principal of the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, points out that the biblical notion of covenant enshrines a strong commitment to the well being of children and families.

Graham will be looking for party policies "that build a sense of community, encourage good parenting, provide stimulating and safe environments for young people, and provide support for the most vulnerable."

Ruby Duncan, President of NZCCSS, says the critical issue is "ethical, values-inspired, compassionate and articulate leadership".

"While poverty, youth unemployment and parenting failures are critical issues, the key question is whether our politicians have the ability to call us to a sense of communal responsibility and the sacrifices that will be needed to invest in the poor and vulnerable. As long as rich and poor, strong and weak, dependent and independent, stand back to back with a widening gap between them, we will never be able to stand side by side and make progress together."

The Rev Richard Dawson, who helped set up Studentsoul and is moderator of the Southern Presbytery sees teaching relationship skills as a priority.

"I hope the incoming government will put resources into helping people enter marriage and family life with much better skills. In party policies, I will be looking for a commitment to family life and to helping families cope."

Jill Kayser, the Church's national Kids Friendly coach, shares Richard's concern: "I'd like to see more government funding for organisations that educate and support parents in their parenting."

Lisa Wells, of Presbyterian Support Otago, says political solutions tend towards a 'one size fits all' approach, while community-led solutions like Presbyterian Support's Youth Grow has seen its funding diminish, in spite of its success with troublesome young people.

"Now it's down to supporting 10 rather than 30 young people a year. It would be good if the government would listen to what is working."

Shona Goldsbury has nearly 25 years experience in children and youth ministry at Clevedon Presbyterian Church. To address the issues that affect youth the most, she would like the drinking age lowered and stronger penalties for alcohol and substance abuse.

Maori and Pacific Island communities are over-represented in many of New Zealand's worst statistics.

Most of the parishes within Te Aka Puaho are situated in small rural communities that struggle with unemployment and low incomes. The Maori Synod moderator, the Rev Wayne Te Kaawa, and children's ministry coordinator Jackie Coleman say the consequences are "... a feeling of hopelessness within our communities. This is one manifestation of poverty. Te Aka Puaho have a desire to support and nurture communities; we

see the need and we are working with families but the work we do is limited by a lack of funding. Government departments are loath to support churches at the local level."

Roka Ngarimu-Cameron has helped hundreds of children and families through the Te Whanau Arohanui Trust which she and her husband Kerry set up 25 years ago. They offer pa-style foster care and whanau-based support to teach young people culturally-focused life skills.

"A lot of whanau haven't got good parenting skills. And so many of the young people we see have lost touch with their culture. Our aim is to help children and whanau but you have to respect their culture and find the best way to heal the damage through that."

Similar challenges are also faced by the Tokelau and Tuvalu communities among whom the Rev Linda-Teleo Hope, an ordained Presbyterian minister, works as a voluntary community minister.

"Addressing Pacific issues would mean successive governments working together and implementing the research recommendations already in their possession. In practical terms this means better coordination of government agencies, and working with Pacific communities and church leaders to target ethnic specific initiatives such as bilingual language and educational programmes."

The Very Rev Pamela Tankersley agrees that greater support for English for speakers of other languages in schools would make a big difference to the migrant Pacific and Asian families with whom she works as Global Mission coordinator.

Those working with families and children in parishes see the need for more financial and practical hands-on help for parents.

Funding cuts to MSD initiatives including OSCAR and social workers in schools are a major retrograde step, says the Rev Ian Hyslop, minister at St Andrew's in Geraldine.

"It's really important that resources are made available to strengthen family life. In this election I will be looking for policies that address issues like parenting, education and care for lower-decile families."

The Rev Lance Thomas' church in Rotorua is another that intentionally welcomes children and their families. St John's Presbyterian runs a children's gym programme twice a week for 80 to 100 families. The foodbank has developed into a social hub.

"We're developing a culture that values people, and doesn't just treat them as bludgers. The richness of a society is seen in the treatment of our oldest and our youngest. The young in particular are the first victims of families on the fringe of viability. I would like to see financial and welfare policies that develop a richer society, not just a wealthier one."

Parliamentary parties policies on the well being of children and families.*

ACT NEW ZEALAND

Action - appoint mentors to teach parenting and life skills.

Benefit - less family violence. Fewer damaged children. Thriving families less of a drain on the taxpayers.

Promote the traditional family unit by removing disincentives in the welfare and taxation sectors. Encourage personal responsibility, self-reliance, a return to the workforce, up-skilling and continuing education.

- The Social Welfare department will identify dysfunctional families with children that are at risk. Families so classified will be eligible for mentor support.
- The role of the mentor will be to diagnose the real problems facing that family and rehabilitate the family into full community participation and self-sufficiency.

GREEN PARTY

Provide increased resources for Family Group Conferences and training for FGC convenors.

Give every child the best possible start in life:

- Introduce a Consumer Price Index-adjusted Universal Child Benefit (\$16.50 for the first child and \$11.50 for each subsequent child, as at 2007)
- Extend paid parental leave to a total of 13 months paid leave.
- Make the first \$5000 of everyone's income tax-free.
- Work towards setting benefit amounts at a level that is sufficient for all basic needs.
- Work towards full employment that provides a decent income.

Plan to bring 100,000 children out of poverty by 2014; extend Working for Families for all low income families; reinstate and extend the Training Incentive Allowance; to provide better support for sole parents and beneficiaries to study at university; and, raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour immediately.

NATIONAL PARTY

Give all children the opportunity to succeed. We are taking action to improve life, particularly for vulnerable children.

More maternity support with a focus on first-time mothers. 24-hour Plunketline fully funded.

88% of under 2s fully immunised – the most ever.

3,500 more places in ECE in low-participation areas.

Support in schools for those children who are falling behind.

Police safety orders preventing family violence.

- CYF social workers in main hospitals in every DHB.
- \$15m support for teen parents, the most ever.
- Independent Experts Forum to identify the gaps vulnerable children fall through.
- Overhauling the \$29m Family Start early intervention programme to focus on child abuse prevention, and make sure help reaches families who need it the most.

Extra funds over four years for maternity services with a focus on first-time mothers. Includes 54,000 more WellChild visits.

Extra funding over four years to allow as many families as possible to access early childhood education.

Extra funding to improve services for 4,500 children in state care over four years.

Priorities are the reduction of child abuse (Green Paper), community responsibility around child abuse, and focusing on the 5,000 children in government's care.

LABOUR PARTY

Has developed a new, fresh family and whānau policy narrative, not based on the government bringing up children – families and whānau must be able to do what most families do well. It is families who work through the stresses and challenges of contemporary life. And it's the family that needs to provide a secure place where

children have a reliable rock, basic care and support and where they can learn about relationships and responsibilities.

In the 3 – 5 years framework Labour will focus on enabling every child access to good quality, free early childhood education, building up the supply of quality education services in low income areas to meet the needs of Māori and Pacifica children, in particular, which must be a high priority.

Putting Children First – new programme. Our agenda for change will have 3 main components:

- Legislative and structural change.
- Crucial early phases in children's development, and thirdly.
- Breaking the cycle of socio-economic deprivation.

MAORI PARTY

Relationships are key- whānau need to make their own decisions. Focus on projects to reduce rheumatic fever and improve sexual health; extension of the in-work tax credit for children of beneficiaries; removal of GST from food; eliminate child poverty by 2020; greater emphasis on primary care; and commit to cultural competency in schools.

- Health is a basic human right. Children and young people should not be excluded because of their whanau employment status, ability to pay or where they choose to live. We believe in free preventive health care to under-six year olds and over-sixty-five year olds.

To ensure all children get the best possible start in life, we support a shift in the emphasis of health investment towards primary care. We will invest in a sustainable well-paid health workforce in public, non-government and not for profit sector. The Māori health workforce shall get 'equal work for equal pay.

UNITED FUTURE

- We place children and parents firmly at the centre of all our policy and planning; we exist as a party to keep government focused on the family in all its shapes and sizes.
- Invest in those on whom children rely for their well being is key – namely parents.
- Promote strong families and vibrant communities.
- Collaborative solutions, an annual state of the family report with Government's policies on the economy, carers and parents, health and education rated according to family friendliness. Also want a network of one stop shop family services centres, respite care for carers, access to parenting classes.
- Retain the Families Commission and Children's Commissioner.
- Introduce income splitting for couples with dependent children. Each partner is taxed as if they had earned 50% of the household income, which would result in a significant reduction in income tax. It attributes equal value to the different roles each parent plays, whereas our current tax system does not recognise the stay-at-home parent's contribution.

MANA PARTY

- Increase benefit incomes to a living income, including extending the in-work tax credit to the children of beneficiary parents
- If there is no work or people are unable to work, decent benefits allow people to get through difficult times with dignity and respect. The current welfare system is far too complicated, wastes huge amounts of taxpayers' money on administration, and does not provide even minimal adequate support for most beneficiaries. All too often people coming to Work & Income for help are treated with disregard and contempt. All this needs to change.
- Improve the standard of living of low income whānau in terms of housing, income, and employment. An adequate level of housing, a liveable income, and a job with good work conditions where people are in charge of their lives, are key determinants for whānau health and well being.
- Introduce restrictions on the advertising of unhealthy kai, including that of fast food chains, to children and young people, and to more strongly regulate what goes into processed foods and beverages.
- Introduce a tax on fast foods.

* We did not receive the policy of Progressive and it was not available online.

Pacific Island community SAYS NO to family violence

More than 200 people came together at the Pacific Islanders' Presbyterian Church, Newtown, Wellington, for a conference to discuss the prevention of family and domestic violence within the Pacific Island community.

Conference moderator the Rev Chris Nichol says that the fono, held 24 and 25 June, was about sharing ideas and resources and sent a strong signal that the Pacific Island community is both aware of its family violence problem, and determined to do something about it. This message came through strongly in the conference theme, "The solution to family violence is within us -O le taofiga o Sauaga o loo iā i tatou".

The reluctance among Pacific Island cultures to report domestic violence was addressed head-on by a panel of Police officers from Wellington, who were among the speakers on the first day of the conference. Officers reiterated the importance of reporting family violence. They highlighted that the days of old are long gone: Police no longer consider domestic violence a matter to be dealt with in the home, and confirmed that all reports are taken seriously and responded to immediately.

The conference, organised jointly by Matagaluega Pacific Island Presbyterian Church Fono Samoa Wellington and Presbyterian Support Central's Family Works, built on a 2010 gathering also dedicated to reducing family violence.

Family Works' parent organisation, Presbyterian Support Central, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Matagaluega PIPC Fono Samoa Wellington earlier this year. This partnership aims to pool both groups' knowledge and experience to work towards achieving their shared goal – a community free of family violence.

Conference attendees came from as far away as Invercargill and Auckland and packed into the church in Newtown with a determination to resource and equip people to deal with the problem of domestic violence in Pacific Island families.

Participants took part in 20-minute question and answer sessions following guest speakers which included New Zealand's only female Pacific Island District Court judge, Ida Malosi and the Hon Hekia Parata, Associate Minister Community and Volunteer Sector. The conference also broke into smaller workshop groups to discuss ideas and potential solutions to family and domestic violence.

Family Works General Manager Julia Hennessy says the workshops aimed to put plans into practice: "You can have the best ideas in the world, but if you don't have the help you need to make them a reality, it's hard to make a difference."

The Ministry of Social Development sponsored the conference enabling the event to be free of charge for those working within the Pacific community towards a violence-free society. Matagaluega PIPC Fono Samoa Wellington chairman, Rev Tauinaola Tofilau, says the ability to make the conference free was a big factor in

getting so many people along to the event. He hopes the event will lead to a positive outcome for the Pacific community.

"Our aim and hope is to dig out the knowledge, ideas and expertise so that we can equip ourselves to help stop domestic violence, and to also equip ourselves to help someone who has been violated.

"I am thankful that the response from the community has been so great. I'm thankful that those in the know have been glad to be part of this. I am grateful to the Lord for that."

Conference organisers weren't the only ones pleased with the outcomes of the gathering. Fono attendee, Carole Scott from the Salvation Army said, "It's good as a palangi to get the intercultural experience." She described the fono as uplifting and useful and added that it was great to attend a conference which included a faith element, which she believed provided a strong foundation for the conference.

Fa'afetai Feliua'i, one of several Bachelor of Nursing (Pacific) students attending the conference as part of their course requirements, said that he enjoyed the speakers, and was really inspired by Judge Malosi's address. "It gave me a lift and was useful to hear about what's happening, especially with youth."

By Jose Reader [Spanz](#)



One of the keynote speakers at the fono, Government minister, the Hon Hekia Parata.

Churches share gift of generosity in Christchurch red zone

In an act of remarkable generosity parishioners from three churches in Christchurch gave 365 \$200 New World supermarket vouchers to Eastern suburb homes affected by the Christchurch earthquakes.

On 14 August 2011, parishioners from St Stephen's, Bryndwr, St Mark's, Avonhead and St Giles, Papanui, walked the vouchers door-to-door in the red zone after Sunday service.

The vouchers were offered to every home the 130 walkers came to, says the Rev Martin Stewart, who was the driving force behind the project and minister at St Stephen's Brndywr and moderator of Christchurch Presbytery.

"As we expected, half of the homes were damaged and had no people in them, so we redirected people with vouchers left over to other areas.

"There was no means testing. We went door-to-door and if we found someone home we offered them a voucher, no strings attached. We knocked on the doors of homes in an area perceived as not needing help, so they hadn't received much."

Martin says that while he was aware there would have been strong media interest in the churches giving he did not involve the media prior to the event because "it might have appeared like our churches were involved in an opportunistic grab for publicity and exploiting families. This was about helping the people in the Eastern suburbs, not about helping ourselves. We, of course, all felt good to have helped in this small way but we also felt that there had already been so many people prying into the lives of those in the affected suburbs that we did not want to contribute to that. This was about quietly helping."

Another important reason for the giving being anonymous, Martin says, is that it "made us feel more comfortable that our motivations were more pure in that the recipients are free of feeling obligated to make some sort of payback to us. We

figured that people are more likely to pay forward than pay back if we kept ourselves in the background".

Of the more than \$70,000 donated Martin says \$45,000 came from outside Christchurch. The idea for fundraising for supermarket vouchers came in April when Martin's former church, Highgate Presbyterian Church in Dunedin, gave him and his wife Anne money to distribute in Christchurch. They were to distribute the money as they saw fit.

"So the next day we gave the first \$1000 of that money to a young family we did not know, and that we had heard life was tough for. I wrote about it on my blog and then someone from Wellington sent \$15,000, it soon ballooned to \$70,000."

Martin says that while 365 vouchers to 365 homes barely addresses the ongoing need in the Eastern part of Christchurch city, the parishioners who took part in the distribution were moved and uplifted by the experience, even those who initially had doubts about taking part in door-knocking.

"Without exception those who handed out the vouchers were touched by the welcomes they received."

A number of the parishioners who participated emailed Martin their experiences of the day and wrote of what a privilege it was to have helped. Said one, "I found it very emotional – we saw pain and stress in people's eyes and they were so grateful for the thoughtfulness. We received hugs, and in one case, kisses. It brought a tear to my eye and I felt honoured to be able to take part. Although I was out of my own comfort zone, and was initially nervous, with the very first visit everything changed and I didn't want to stop."

Martin says that he has received messages of thanks on his blog from those who received vouchers and has even read letters of thanks in *The Press* newspaper.

"One letter quoted our little message from the cards we included with the vouchers and added, 'The kindness continues. We in the red zone are so appreciative. Thank you'."

After the event Martin says a statement was released to the media explaining the motivation for the giving. "We believe that Jesus' kingdom of God is in this and we simply don't know what kind of ripple of hope the vouchers will generate in the lives of the people we share them with. We are sure something good will come of it and that in a multitude of ways people who receive vouchers will pay it forward in some way".

You can read more about the gifting of vouchers on the Rev Martin Stewart's blog <https://marttherev.wordpress.com/page/2/>

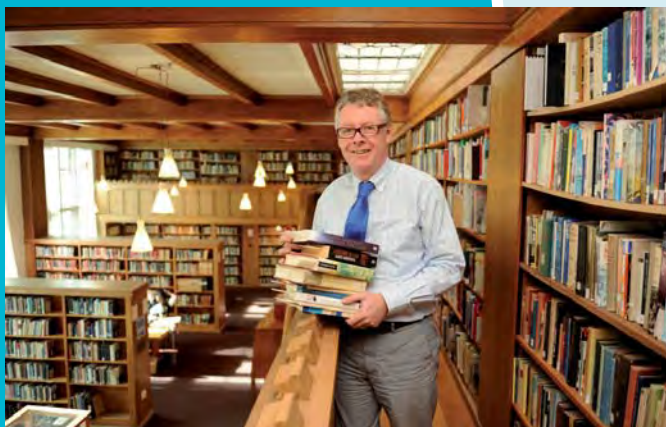
By Angela Singer Spanz



Martin Stewart

Parishioners prepare to take 365 supermarket vouchers door-to-door.

KNOX CENTRE FOR MINISTRY & LEADERSHIP



Hewitson librarian, John Timmins, with some of the library's 68,000 volumes.



The new Knox Centre tukutuku panel by Roka Cameron and her husband Kerry is named Te Maungarongo after the marae in Ohope.



Water colour painting of the refurbished Knox College and Hewitson Wing by Dave Baab.

Knox Centre embraces change

Four years on from the start of a new model for training Presbyterian ministers, the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership is experiencing an increasing number of young people showing an interest in ordination.

The average age of this year's 18 internship students has dropped from mid-40s to late-30s. Some of next year's applicants are in their 20s.

Principal the Very Rev Dr Graham Redding says the flexibility of the new training system minimises disruption to students and their families, making it a more attractive option for training than in the past, when students were sometimes out of the workforce for five years while they completed degrees and prepared for ordination.

Interns spend 70 percent of their time working in a parish and 30 percent on academic work and block courses at the Knox Centre in Dunedin. The residential system, where trainee ministers spent two years together in Dunedin, was phased out in 2008.

During their two-year parish placements, students are supported by a mentoring minister, a supervisor, and a parish ministry reflection group, as well as Knox Centre staff. While it has sometimes been a challenge finding suitable churches that are willing to host an intern, there are now more churches offering placements than students to fill them.

Graham says this is another sign that the programme has settled in and is well-received by the Church in general.

"There is considerable presbytery and parish involvement in the ordination process, so there's a strong sense of ownership and awareness of what's going on. And it's strengthened the relationship between the Knox Centre and the Church because we're more in touch with parishes."

In spite of some concerns that distance learning would result in a loss of collegiality, Graham says interns do experience intense times of learning in community during block courses as well as in their host church. Placement in parishes has proved to be a real strength.

"It enables a robust action and reflection model of learning and highlights the importance of being formed for ministry in context. There is value in learning by doing and being able to reflect on real situations."

Leadership development among young adults is one of the Knox Centre's strategic goals for the next two years. Twenty-nine theological scholarships were awarded this year to young church leaders undertaking biblical and theological studies. Up to ten recipients of music scholarships will attend a two-day music and worship workshop in December.

Going Further, held on Great Barrier Island each summer for those aged 18 to 30, and organised jointly by the Knox Centre and Presbyterian Youth Ministries (PYM), is an opportunity for deeper engagement with faith and spiritual experience, says Mark Johnston, Knox's Auckland coordinator.

"Part of Knox's role within the Church is to raise the levels of Christian education and formation. Many of these young adults are at significant transition points in their lives, but they're not a significant presence in most churches. We want to immerse them in a holistic growing and learning experience so that they return and

engage with their churches with renewed motivation and a sense that they are the Church and can contribute to the wider mission of God, wherever their studies or careers take them.”

Another expression of Knox’s youth focus comes with the establishment of the Presbyterian Church Schools Resource Office this year. All 13 Presbyterian schools fund the office through an annual levy to the Knox Centre, which runs the office on their behalf.

In addition to these initiatives, the Knox Centre intends to offer a two-year internship-based Diploma in Youth Ministry, and develop a youth minister’s track within its ordination studies programme by 2012. The *Connect* national Youth Leaders Training Conference organised by PYM provides another opportunity for Knox Centre staff to run workshops and talk to young people about ministry training options.

Graham says, “The Knox Centre is being quite deliberate about targeting young adults, encouraging them in ministry, and helping them explore options for development.”

As well as training ordinands, the Knox Centre continues to be heavily involved in continuing formation for existing ministers. Senior lecturer Kevin Ward trains reviewers and advises ministers of options for development. In relation to this, two groups of ministers in Dunedin and Auckland are meeting in a pilot scheme over 12 to 18 months to work through Alan Roxburgh’s missional leadership material.

Mark Johnston facilitates seven ministers in Auckland.

“The tools for ministry that ministers acquired assumed a relatively stable environment. The thinking was that if you preached well, pastored well, provided the church with direction and mobilised local leadership, then church would ‘work’. But it doesn’t work like that any longer because the social environment has changed, and it’s different in ways we’ve never experienced before. So leaders require capacities that will help them and their congregations adapt to the new challenges.”

Kevin Ward, who facilitates the Dunedin group of nine, says that the process is more effective than workshops and seminars.

“So far I am finding that working intentionally with ministers over 18 months is a very helpful way to assist them to make the kind of changes they need in understanding, and the personal competencies to do this.”

Kevin also teaches three courses in the University of Otago’s Master of Ministry programme, which is geared toward the ongoing professional development of mid-career ministers of any denomination.

Other kinds of leadership are also resourced by the Knox Centre. There is a growing number of Local Ordained Ministers (LOMs), for instance, whose formational training is conducted by the presbyteries in partnership with the Knox Centre. LOM adviser and Dean of Studies, Jason Goroncy is currently working on a handbook which will provide some clarity around this form of ministry.

Jason says the Knox Centre’s ‘on the ground’ approach to training and development shows a flexible approach to pastoral leadership. It recognises the gifted leaders who have already emerged in parishes.

“While there are clearly some financial and other practical benefits for the Church in this arrangement of parish leadership, and while the Church still has some way to go in its understanding and support of LOM ministry, we ought to rejoice that God continues

to raise up a diverse range of pastors to serve the gospel in a variety of situations.”

Knox also has input into Local Ministry Teams (LMTs) and an ongoing relationship with Amorangi ministry training, offered through Te Aka Puaho. All interns are exposed to Maori culture, protocol and spirituality, and time is spent on guided reflection on aspects of theology and ministry important for Maori people and communities.

The Knox Centre is in continuing discussions with the Pacific Island Synod and Council of Asian Congregations as to how to develop leaders and ministers best suited to their contexts and futures.

Eldership training is another Knox focus, with a *Handbook for Elders* produced in March by Graham, and workshops for those who are called to that role. Graham says about 300 copies of the handbook have been distributed so far, and feedback continues to be positive.

The consolidation of the Knox Centre’s programmes and services parallels the centralising of its facilities in the refurbished Hewitson Wing (former Theological Hall), alongside the Hewitson Library and the Church archives.

A tukutuku panel was recently commissioned from Roka Cameron and her husband Kerry for near the entrance of Knox. Named Te Maungarongo after the marae in Ohope, it means ‘the bringing of peace and harmony’ and is testimony to the value the Knox Centre places on its bicultural journey.

Also unveiled in June was a water colour painting of Knox College by Dave Baab. Dave says, “I loved putting in the detail of the motto, ‘gratia et veritas’ (grace and truth, from John 1). I hope that motto reflects the activities that go on inside the building, and I sense that Graham’s leadership is helping to fulfill that.”

A book newly launched at Knox, *Challenge and Change*, by the Rev Dr Simon Rae fills out the historical details of theological education and ministry training in Dunedin since 1976. He concludes, “This modernisation of the old Theological Hall block embodies both continuity of site and renewal of purpose as the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership moves confidently into what should be, at last, a settled future of growth and development.”

Hewitson Library, in the Hewitson Wing, has also experienced recent growth. It recently acquired 85 boxes containing an estimated 7500 volumes of the Rita Mayne England Asian Studies Collection, gifted by Dr John England in memory of his first wife. In acknowledgement of his gift, Dr John England was recently inducted as the first member of the newly created Society of Benefactors of Knox College.

Another significant addition to the library is the Chrysalis Seed Trust Collection on art and faith from Christchurch. The collection provided the context for a conference on theology and art organised by Knox and University of Otago in July.

The library’s Presbyterian Collection contains published material by or about the Church from earliest times in New Zealand. The earliest English language title is a 1574 publication by Jean Calvin, and there are rare books in Latin, French and German.

Hewitson librarian, John Timmins, describes the library with its 68,000 volumes as a “very rich and valuable resource” serving University of Otago students, the staff and interns of the Knox Centre, ministers of Presbyterian parishes, and the public.

By Andrea Candy Spanz

Friends of Elmslie make house a home

The Friends of Elmslie House, a lively group of volunteers, have made a house a home for the 30 elderly residents of Wanaka's Presbyterian Support Otago Elmslie residence.

The Friends of Elmslie group has supported the rest home and hospital since 2005 with activities and outings designed to bring a personal touch to the lives of the older people who live there. A number of the group attend the Upper Clutha Presbyterian Parish, which organises a church service in the home on alternate Saturdays. Some members of the group are in their 80s themselves; others have relatives or spouses in residence.

"We're a small community so we know a lot of the residents before they go into the rest home, and some of us may end up there ourselves one day," says parish treasurer Carol Orbell.

One of the first events the group organised for the home was a garden fair, with the goal of establishing Elmslie House as part of the community, as many locals had never visited before. That first year's fair raised about \$1,000 which was used to purchase Christmas, birthday gifts and Easter eggs for each of the residents.

The group's success did not go unnoticed; the Friends of Elmslie won a TrustPower Community Award in 2006 in the health and wellbeing category. These days, their main form of fundraising is through raffles – the best spot for selling tickets is outside Wanaka's only supermarket.

Over the years, the group has made a number of purchases for Elmslie House, including a wheelchair ramp for the van, a barbecue and garden umbrella, TV unit, DVD player and a bookcase for the lounge. Next on the list is a good sound system. Then there are the little home comforts such as a hair dryer, cushions, hot water bottles and bone china coffee mugs.

Nina Lunn, newly appointed manager of Elmslie House, says she's never worked before in a rest home with a group like the Friends.

"I think what they do is great. It's a real luxury to have people who want to spend time and energy looking after us like this."



Original Friends of Elmslie at their 5th birthday celebration. Back row: Carol Orbell, Shona Watt Colleen Leith, Bonnie Grimmet. Front row: Mabel Collie, Enid Fraser, Edna Hanafin, Anne Tompkins.

Regular events and outings are part of the group's activities. William and Kate's royal wedding, for instance, was an excuse for a party – complete with a cake, wedding dress-ups, songs and photos.

"It was a wonderful day for everyone", Carol Orbell says.

"It touched us all when a 13-year-old visitor, dressed like a bride, pretended to walk down the aisle on the arm of her 95-year-old great-grandfather. We all knew he wasn't going to be around to see it happen in reality, so it was a lovely thing to do."

Sometimes the Friends of Elmslie take residents out on lake trips or to visit restaurants, gardens and the autumn colours at Arrowtown (pie-and-pint outings are popular with the men). Back at home, poetry parties, games or crafts evenings, a Spring Ball and mid-winter Christmas dinner all add to the fun and friendship. Residents and visitors enjoy dressing up for posh afternoon teas and each year the Wanaka Women's Institute puts on a party with homemade cakes.

"We try to think of things that are not too much effort for the residents. Some of them are happy just to sit at home, but once we encourage them to get out and about, they just love it," Carol says.

The care that Elmslie offers was extended recently with the opening of a brand new retirement village on the same site, a few streets back from the lake. Last year, the Ministry of Health granted Elmslie House a rare four-year operating certificate, along with three other rest homes owned and

operated by Presbyterian Support Otago. This certification puts Elmslie House in the top 10 of 716 rest homes in New Zealand. The auditors found the level of service was "fantastic".

There's no doubt that the care and attention lavished on residents by the Friends of Elmslie, and Presbyterian Support Otago's philosophy of valuing the lives of older people so that they continue to have personal choice and the kind of lifestyle they are used to, contribute to the ongoing success of Elmslie House.

By Andrea Candy [Spanz](#)

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Synod of Otago and Southland springs green shoots

Signs of growth are everywhere you look in Otago and Southland, thanks in part to the Synod's funding of new initiatives.

Covering the lower third of the South Island, including 76 parishes and the Southern Presbytery, the Synod of Otago and Southland maintains church buildings and manses, supports educational organisations and contributes to community projects throughout the region.

We look at just five of the many "green shoots" the Synod has helped sprout and nurture for the benefit of its parishes and communities:

Te Anau Youth Worker Trust

Local community worker Dale Wairau considers it a privilege to hang out with the young people of Te Anau.

Weekdays you might find Dale at a family group conference helping a young person in trouble. Friday nights Dale is at the Lighthouse Youth Centre where up to 40 young people gather for activities. Dale is also chaplain to three local schools.

The Trust that employs Dale is supported by three local churches, including Lakeside Presbyterian Church, whose minister, Karl Lamb is the chairman. While the Trust receives support from community grants, local businesses and individuals, both Dale and Karl say none of the work would be possible without seed funding from the Synod of Otago and Southland - \$32,000 over three years to establish the role and a further \$10,000 for operating expenses and a van.

Cook Island camp

Attendance has grown steadily since Putokotoko Labour weekend Cook Island camps began in 2003. More than 80 people came last year.

In previous years Synod grants have helped subsidise camp fees, especially for older people or those with large families, and this year event organisers have applied for another \$4,000.

The camps sprang from a desire to revitalise the spiritual and cultural life of the Cook Island community.

Rev Tau Ben Unu, immediate past moderator of the Synod of Otago and Southland says, "Cook Island people are not ignorant of the gospel but they often struggle with the concept of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ".

Elder training

Parish council meetings aren't what they used to be at Tokomairiro Cooperating Parish in Milton. In fact, church leaders are not even called parish councillors any more. They ditched the term after coming to a new understanding of the role of elders, says Martin Williams, the church's local ordained ministry probationer.

Previously, says Martin, session meetings often focused on church business. Now, those tasks are the responsibility of a separate works committee and the elders meet to pray, study books, and talk about how they can work for the spiritual good of the church.

Elder training is one of Synod Mission Advisor Bruce Fraser's passions. Although his services are a gift from the Synod to parishes in the Southern Presbytery area, he's been asked to conduct elder training in other parts of the country and in Canada. He also runs workshops and works alongside congregations to help them focus on the mission in their area.

Bruce says much of his mission advisory work has a long-term aspect to it and can't be measured.



Community worker Dale Wairau with kids at The Lighthouse Te Anau Youth Centre

"Having said that, it is exciting to see the slow changes in attitudes as people have come to grips with what we are doing together...My hope is that our hearts and minds can be more and more attuned to Jesus and our lives individually and corporately will be changed more and more into God's likeness."

Youthful energy

Stephanie Redhead, the Synod's Youth Advisor, is into her third year nurturing 34 youth ministries in the Synod's area. Once a term, she organises a networking meal for leaders in the Southland and North Otago regions to build relationships and share resources. Combined youth services in those areas have just started.

In Invercargill, 22 young people from four churches have begun the *Going Somewhere* national youth leadership development programme.

Another encouraging development Steph has nurtured is Bluff-Greenhills Cooperating Parish's youth and children's ministry under the guidance of Rab and Kate McNaughton. With prayer and hard work, the Friday night group attracts 10 to 15 teenagers, and seems to be growing weekly.

"It's fantastic to see. It's such a privilege to be able to journey with and support them in this venture."

Good news for children

Cheryl Harray, Kids Friendly advisor for Otago and Southland says there is plenty happening in the children's ministries in her area, although it doesn't look much like the Sunday schools of previous years.

Cheryl's fulltime role is a gift from the Synod to Southland and Otago parishes, around 50 of which have some activities connected with children.

According to Cheryl, about 85 percent of Presbyterian churches have contact with less than 20 children each week, but she believes there are many opportunities to engage with children.

"Ministry with children and families is a wide open door into the community. But we need to go where they are rather than expect them to come to us."

Wakatipu Community Parish told Cheryl they had no children. Cheryl discovered nearby the new Remarkables Primary School. The parish took a welcoming morning tea to the school staff and have since volunteered to assist in classrooms and help children learn to read. The parish also runs three popular Mainly Music groups and is exploring what church might look like for these community families by offering breakfast church at the Queenstown centre and Messy Church in the Arrowtown hall.

By Andrea Candy Spanz



Connect 2011 at Living Springs, Christchurch, was a sell out. We had 212 youth leaders from around the country, we would have had even more but some could not make it due to the volcanic ash cloud that grounded many domestic flights.

We were welcomed on behalf of the Christchurch Presbytery by the Rev Martin Stewart who shared some inspirational stories of people's generosity and the mix of hope and despair felt by people. On the Saturday night we took up a collection for Martin's supermarket voucher fund and collected close to \$800.

Jo Leiua from Porirua Pacific Island Church was a keynote speaker on the Friday night. We were challenged to pay attention to the invitations young people offer us on a regular basis to be part of their lives. Sometimes this requires us to stand with young people in some very difficult situations.

Dr Andrew Root, associate professor of youth and family ministry at Luther Seminary, St Paul's, USA, was the keynote speaker on Saturday and Sunday. Relational youth ministry was the theme for Andrew's three keynote addresses. He contrasted forming relationships

We need to bring a point of difference as a church – if we spend our time trying to look and think and talk like our youthies we lose our point of difference. It is in the point of difference that an invite comes. As youth leaders we need to look for the invitations extended to us by young people and when we get it, to go in and be led by them.” – Jo Leiua, Connect 2011 keynote speaker.

"One of the Connect interactive worship activities involved a large New Zealand map and broken bricks from St Paul's Trinity Church, Christchurch. People took a piece of brick, on which they wrote their name, and then placed the brick on the map where they were from. Later people took someone else's brick so they could pray for them. On the Sunday this map formed the communion table with over 60 churches written on it. The Moderator, the Right Rev Peter Cheyne, led communion." – Carlton Johnstone

with young people in order to influence them with forming relationships that have no other agenda other than to share their humanity. All of the keynotes are available online on our website www.pym.org.nz

Andrew stayed on to teach a block course on relational youth ministry that some students credited towards their theology degree at either Laidlaw or Carey Baptist College. It was a good sized class of 33 (12 from Presbyterian churches), which represented an awful lot of experience in youth ministry. A big thanks, once again, to Presbyterian Women New Zealand for their fundraising efforts – they enabled us to bring Andrew to New Zealand.

There were around 34 workshops at Connect and all of them were of exceptional quality. Presenters included

youth workers, ministers and lecturers. The biblical/theological stream proved popular once again with the likes of Dr Chris Marshall taking workshops on the parables of Jesus, and Dr George Wieland, from Carey Baptist College, facilitating discussions about leadership insights from the Book of Acts. And, of course, our own Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership staff took several workshops.

There was time together in groups, these were based on the number of years experience people had in youth ministry; it was very encouraging to see over 50 youth leaders in the group that had more than five years experience. Youth ministry is seeing people stick around longer, and environments that are more sustainable for youth workers are part of the reason for this longevity. If your

church is fortunate enough to have youth leaders, look after them so that they will still be working with young people in the years to come.

Connect is now a premium training event for our youth leaders. Next year it will be in Rotorua where we will explore what it looks like to dream big in relation to youth ministry, the gospel, and Church.

By Carlton Johnstone [Spanz](#)



From left: Presbyterian Youth Ministry's Robyn Burnett, Emily Wotton, Steph Redhead, Gordon Fitch, Carlton Johnstone, and keynote speaker Andrew Root.



"At Connect we had a well-used art space – people could paint, write or doodle during the main sessions and throughout the weekend. One of our youths, Joseph, presented Andrew with one of the paintings he did over the weekend. Watching people paint on the main screen during worship added a reflective dimension." – Carlton Johnstone

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THEOLOGYMATTERS

I recall one of the first occasions I was asked to lead a prayer in worship. Thrown into a state of panic by the request, I sought advice, and was told, "Just pray what's on your heart".

Although this advice helped steady my nerves at the time, I have since had cause to question its wisdom. After all, didn't Jesus tell his disciples to pray in a particular way (Matthew 6:9)? And didn't he warn against heaping up empty phrases (Matthew 6:7)?

Jesus' teaching suggests to me that prayer is a learnt activity, summed up in the title of a 19th century prayer classic (by Andrew Murray): "With Christ in the School of Prayer". The prayer Jesus taught his disciples is still instructive for us. I would note in particular the following lessons:

God is addressed as "Our Father..." not "My Father..." While praying what's on my heart might work in personal devotions, public prayer is an altogether different matter. At the end of a prayer the congregation should be able to say together, "Amen" ("So be it"), confident that the prayer has articulated their devotion, needs and concerns, not just those of the person leading the prayer. This means the petitions that comprise the prayer will likely be more general than those which I might bring before God in private. It also implies that the prayer will be audible, for how can people affirm what they have not heard? Clear delivery, not a mumbled utterance, is essential.

Every word counts. The Lord's Prayer is a model in succinctness. God is addressed just once, at the beginning of the prayer, not at the end of each line or the beginning of each petition as many extempore prayers today are prone to do. The prayer is refreshingly free of: (1) filler phrases such as "We just pray that..."; and (2) mini-sermons and rambling narratives disguised as prayer.

At the heart of the prayer is a yearning for the coming of God's reign (or kingdom), which provides the basis for the remaining petitions. When prayer is detached from this core yearning it tends to be reduced to a rather arbitrary wish-list, directed at a wish-list-granting God. By way of contrast, when we yearn for God's reign, we find ourselves seeking the mind of the One who proclaimed and embodied that reign. To pray in the name of Christ is to seek God's mind, to discern what the Spirit is saying, to pray as Christ would have us pray and to live as God would have us live.

Yes, this is a daunting proposition, but it is precisely when we feel the weight of our own inadequacies that we are encouraged by the Apostle Paul's assurance that the Spirit comes to us in our weakness and intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words (Romans 8:26). What a wonderful thing it is to discover that in prayer we are not left to our own devices, and that prayer, far from being a duty laid upon us, is nothing less than the "utterance of our participation in the life of Christ" (John McLeod Campbell).

When it comes to prayer, the people who have influenced me most are not those for whom prayer is merely a form of self-expression, but rather those who are themselves well schooled in the ways of prayer, who humbly follow the lead of Christ, their brother and guide, and who know the Spirit to be their help and intercessor. What about you?

By Graham Redding, Principal of the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership

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Presbyterian schools build on good foundations

The importance of “good foundations” took on special meaning for Carolyn Kelly shortly after she started her new role as director of the Presbyterian Church Schools’ Resource Office.

The earthquakes in Christchurch and other natural disasters have highlighted major questions about God and faith for many involved in religious education, Carolyn says.

“Terrible things do happen and we need to ask ourselves – what are the deeper resources our church school communities can draw from? What does our Christian tradition offer in this time of mourning, suffering and rebuilding?”

Carolyn’s role is to support the 13 Presbyterian schools around New Zealand – resourcing them through promoting good relationships and networks between principals, chaplains, religious educators and boards.

She believes special character schools do have something very valuable to offer the wider community, beyond their historic traditions and iconic buildings which, in Christchurch at least, are now under threat.

“The dislocation caused by the earthquakes cautions us to remember our localised human frailties, but also calls us to frame the meaning of our lives in a bigger, eternal picture. This might mean drawing on resources and values we have neglected.”

After six months spent visiting schools and “getting a feel for what’s already happening”, another priority for Carolyn is to find ways to support religious education teachers and chaplains with ongoing training and professional development.

“We don’t have a good record of formal training in religious education teaching compared with some other countries and denominations, although there are some networks. It’s a matter of finding out what options there are and how we can perhaps collaborate with other groups to design training for the future. Many of our educators are serving out of a lifetime of Christian faith and I want to encourage them, without adding pressure to people who are already working hard in sometimes stressful scenarios.”

To strengthen the network, Carolyn has already sent out several newsletters and plans to set up a website. In August 2011, a conference for chaplains and religious education teachers preceded the Presbyterian Schools’ Conference, which provided a good opportunity to build relationships and encourage new chaplains.

“We talked about Christchurch and a special part of both conferences was

people sharing their experiences. It was a moving and profound time as we talked about how to support and care for those who are themselves supporting and caring for others. Some chaplains feel quite isolated but a number said how helpful it was to be able to connect with others.”

Carolyn, who is married to Mark Johnston, Auckland coordinator for the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, brings to her work her own experiences of teaching, chaplaincy and theological training. This semester she is teaching a third-year paper on religious themes and the arts at University of Auckland. She recently completed a PhD in Theology and Literature from Aberdeen University, her thesis was on George MacDonald, the 19th century Scottish fantasy writer who influenced C S Lewis and J R R Tolkien.

“Part of my interest in this job is how imagination is engaged with faith and how literature and the arts might help shape the minds and imaginations of young people as part of their education and faith process. Special character schools do that well – they have access to older resources and traditions, and the classic works of literature and art are valued.”

“The challenge for Christian practitioners is to express a faith that is not restrictive or about compulsion – ‘this is the way we’ve always done it’ – but express one that is vibrant, credible and engaging for young people.”

By Andrea Candy [Spanz](#)



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Press Go brings together St John's in the City and Knox Waitara

Wellington's St John's in the City has become the first congregation to be matched with a church-growth project via Press Go.

In August, the St John's session agreed to donate \$300,000 to Knox Waitara in Taranaki to support a \$2.4m redevelopment project which involves demolishing an existing building and replacing it with a multi-purpose community facility.

The congregation agreed to gift \$60,000 per annum for the next five years toward Knox's redevelopment.

Knox is having a huge impact on Waitara, says the Rev Ray Coster, chairperson of the Press Go board, which has also contributed \$500,000 to the Knox project.

Knox, which is well known for its youth work, attracts many children and families not associated with the church including many from homes with limited means. The congregation has doubled in the past five years, but further growth is being curtailed by the lack of room and substandard facilities.

Ray explains that the Press Go board immediately saw the potential for growth in this congregation because of the excellent leadership amongst the people, which is why Press Go promised \$500,000 to the project if Knox Waitara could raise the rest.

"As Knox is part of a decile-one community, \$2.4m seemed an impossible dream – the mountain was simply too high.

"Press Go financial support not only showed them that someone outside of themselves believed in them, it spurred them into action.

"And then Knox astounded both themselves and us by raising about \$1.2m."

There was still a shortfall, so the Press Go Board agreed to talk to other congregations to see if they would be interested in helping the Knox Waitara project, and the first church approached was Wellington's St John's in City.

While the gift from St John's is among the most generous of any individual or parish to the work of Press Go, the gift is much more than just the money, Ray says.

Paul Ramsay, session clerk at St John's, agrees saying that a key factor in the session's decision to support the Knox project was the willingness of St John's members to get involved.

"We need to care and support one another to do God's work in the community. This initiative creates the opportunity for us to work together, and we would love to walk alongside Knox in this journey."

St John's in the City was attracted to the project because, "Knox is committed to being an active part of its community, and a positive influence both for good and for God," Paul says.

"The commitment of the Knox Waitara congregation to its mission and outreach programmes – and what has already been achieved to date – is impressive. This is also an opportunity for St John's to learn from these programmes, and to share our own experiences."

In a letter of thanks to St John's in the City, Graham Armstrong, session clerk at Knox Waitara, expresses the sentiment of the Knox congregation:

"What thrills us as much as anything is the fact that you are obviously giving willingly and joyfully, which is wonderful to see. Also, the fact that some of you are keen to become actively involved is a great encouragement to us. God is very obviously at work in this project and your decision brings God more glory."

The Knox Waitara redevelopment initiative is just one of the projects currently supported by Press Go, which was established by General Assembly 2008 to create a mechanism to collectively fund promising growth ideas.

In addition to Knox, Press Go has also provided an \$85,000 grant to Bethlehem Community Church to train a person in church planting, contributed \$25,000 to building refurbishment at South Kaipara, and provided funding to establish a ministry at Welcome Bay Presbyterian in Tauranga. You can read more about these and other Press Go projects at www.presbyterian.org.nz.

By Jose Reader [Spanz](#)

Criteria for Press Go funding

The Press Go board considers projects according to these criteria:

The likelihood of the project contributing to the number of persons participating in the worshiping life of a congregation.

The relationship between the cost of the project and the likely benefit.

The project's sustainability or likelihood of being self-funding in the long term.

The strength of endorsement by, and commitment to, the project from a congregation, presbytery, Te Aka Puaho, Pacific Island Synod or the Council of Asian Congregations.

The ability of the project to be replicated or provide learning and resourcing for the wider Church.

The level of funding required from Press Go.

Payment of Assembly Assessment or endorsement by the Resource sub-committee.

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GLOBALMISSION

Mahurangi speaks the language of welcome

For the past three years, members of Mahurangi Presbyterian Church, Warkworth have reserved their Sunday afternoons for running an English language programme for migrants to help them practise English and learn more about life in New Zealand.

Most of the participants have emigrated from Kiribati (pronounced Kiribas) and Tuvalu, though people from Tonga, Sri Lanka, Columbia and a number of Asian countries also attend the programme.

The church is now in the process of appointing a part-time community worker and Presbyterian Support Northern (PSN) has provided funding to explore other ways to support migrants and build relationships within the community.

“This is a great example of the church stepping out, acknowledging a need, meeting that need and joining God in the neighbourhood,” says Anne Overton, PSN’s community mission liaison worker.

The programme began after the church studied Rick Warren’s Forty Days of Community. In response to the challenge to reach out to the local community, some members decided to provide English language support for the church’s Kiribati and Tuvaluan members. About 200 Kiribati people live in the Rodney district, mainly in Warkworth.

Jonathan Lee, who currently coordinates the English language programme, says migrants and hosts can find it difficult to accept one another.

“As Christians we want to wholeheartedly welcome migrant communities, regardless of their background or religious tradition, and seek to support them in the sometimes complex and difficult process of integration and adaptation to a new home, culture and language. We believe it is an essential part of the ministry of Mahurangi Presbyterian Church to assist, facilitate and support such individuals and communities as best we can.

“We also recognise that as a largely white, middle-class church, this presents us with

many cross-cultural challenges and accept that we need to learn and listen in order to better serve and support.”

The programme is now open to anyone who has English as their second language. Three adult classes and three children’s groups meet in the church hall every Sunday afternoon, and a class that evaluates people against the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) is held on Tuesday evenings. Tuition is free and all the teachers and support staff are volunteers.

The church also invites guest speakers to talk to English language programme students about aspects of New Zealand life, such as parenting, fishing regulations, the road code and how to fill in forms. Church members help in practical ways too – they assist with fundraising, gifts of furniture and food parcels, and finding Christian music or film resources in the Kiribati and Tuvaluan languages.

Following the appointment of its community worker, the church hopes to provide more pastoral support and extend the programme, possibly to include more evening tuition and an after-school homework club. They also plan to organise more social activities and events designed to

facilitate cultural exchange between church members, migrants and the community as a whole.

“We need to provide opportunities for such communities to talk to us about their cultures as well as their aspirations. We trust that as a result of these events, the Kiribati community and others will feel welcomed, affirmed and supported,” Jonathan says.

There is a growing relationship between Presbyterians and the Kiribati community at a denominational level as well. The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Kiribati Protestant Church both belong to the Council for World Mission, which has just given a grant to explore how the Presbyterian Church in New Zealand can support migrant peoples in the Pacific.

The Very Rev Pamela Tankersley, Global Mission coordinator, says the Mahurangi church’s efforts are a great example of how to engage locally in international mission.

“As happens with all such hospitality, everybody’s horizons are widened – they all find what it means to be part of the global village.”

By Andrea Candy [Spanz](#)



A Tuvaluan dance performed at a cultural evening held at Mahurangi Presbyterian Church. Copyright©JLee, 2011, by permission. All rights reserved

GLOBAL MISSION

Chaplain's mission to turn the tide for visiting sailors

Sailors visiting New Zealand shores, who find themselves in need of someone to talk to, will find a warm welcome, advice and a hot drink waiting for them at the many International Seafarers Centres around the country.

Presbyterian minister the Rev Dr Stuart Vogel is a seafarers chaplain for the Ports of Auckland, one of 230 ports around the world where International Seafarers Centre chaplains offer spiritual support, emergency care and fellowship to the tens of thousands of sailors that pass through the world's ports annually.

Almost 1,800 vessels visit Ports of Auckland each year, and Stuart visits most ships three or four times a week, more often if it is cruise ship season.

What the crew need most often is simply someone to talk with, explains Stuart.

"The sailors are literally thousands of miles from home, and they can feel isolated, homesick, or on occasion there can be conflict or friction between the crew. Often someone to talk to or a simple phone call home can make all the difference."

On Stuart's ship visits his focus is more often on the crew rather than officers, because crew members are typically contracted for longer periods of time – up to one year – so can spend very long periods away from their home and families.

"The need for companionship and a warm welcome is really important."

Stuart describes his work on the ship as "loitering with intent", and he usually starts off in the crew mess (dining room) striking up conversation with whoever is around. He takes donated magazines, books, Bibles and maps and distributes these to interested sailors as he walks around the ship.

Having lived in Taiwan, Stuart is able to converse with Chinese-speaking crew members, and he says it is also easy to



Seafarers chaplain the Rev Dr Stuart Vogel with Ports of Auckland Seafarers Centre volunteer Penita, and visiting Filipino and Indonesian sailors.

make conversation with the largely Filipino crews who visit Auckland because most speak enough English to get by. "And when all else fails there is always pointing and gesturing to get the message across."

All of New Zealand's port cities have chaplains, though not all have seafarers' centres. The Auckland Seafarers Centre, where Stuart is chaplain, is a partnership between the Anglican Missions to Seamen (Auckland), the interdenominational International Sailors Society Auckland and the Auckland Branch of the Catholic Society Apostleship of the Sea (Stella Maris).

An important part of the support network for in-port sailors, the Auckland centre offers foreign exchange services, pool tables, free tea and coffee, TV programmes in native languages, and services for helping sailors keep in touch with home including cheap telephone calls, internet and email services. The centre is open seven days a week, and Stuart generally spends Wednesday and Thursday evenings there, talking with some of the 50 sailors who use the centre each day.

Stuart's work as chaplain is funded by the Community of St James, which meets at the Seafarers Centre. Services are offered every Sunday and sailors can join in worship if they wish.

Like many organisations, the International Seafarers Centres rely on donations and

volunteers to provide their services. Stuart says that there are lots of ways congregations can get involved in this important mission.

For those who live in a port city, he suggests "adopting a seafarer for the day". This can be particularly useful over Christmas and New Year when ports are shut down for days at a time due to statutory holidays. Sailors can be in port for several days when local facilities are closed and there is little to do, so the offer of companionship is appreciated.

"It can be as simple as showing them the local sights, sharing a meal and taking them to a service at your church," says Stuart. "Just having someone different to talk to can help."

Seafarers centres are also always looking for volunteers and resources, Stuart says. Children's books, magazines – especially women's magazines such as the Women's Weekly – are well received by sailors who take them home to their families. "A call to your local seafarers' mission office will identify what volunteers and resources are needed."

For more information on the work of the Auckland International Seafarers Centre visit their website www.aucklandseafarerscentre.co.nz/

By Jose Reader Spanz

GLOBAL MISSION

Children connect across the Pacific

Sharing God's love for children everywhere is the aim of Kids Connecting, a new venture launched by Kids Friendly, Global Mission and Otaki Waikanae Presbyterian Church.

The Kids Connecting programme uses scrapbooks to link children in Vanuatu with their peers in New Zealand. By exchanging stories, drawings and letters about their lives, it is hoped that the children will make new friends and learn more about children in other parts of the Pacific.

The project was launched in April when Annie Christie, national coordinator of Kids Connecting in New Zealand, visited Presbyterian schools in Vanuatu.

"I visited three schools and one Sunday School group on the island of Efate, Vanuatu. When I delivered the scrapbooks our Waikanae Girls' Brigade group had made, the teachers and students were really excited about the idea. One group wanted to get working on their scrapbook straight away!

"I was amazed by the happiness and friendliness of the people on Efate, despite their less than ideal circumstances. Everyone is so enthusiastic and keen to learn. It will widen horizons in many ways if we can get one-to-one connections happening between children in Vanuatu and New Zealand," Annie says.

As project coordinator, Annie is in her element. With her primary teaching experience, and long-held desire to work in mission, the Kids Connecting idea "sounded just like me", she says, even though it took a long time to come to fruition.

Initially, Annie found that there did not seem to be the right opening or time for mission work. She sent her application to the Church's Global Mission office offering to do some short-term projects then, "waited, wondered, hoped and prayed for ages" before the call came from the Very Rev Pamela Tankersley, the Presbyterian Church's Global Mission coordinator. With



School children in Vanuatu receive a Kids Connecting scrapbook from children in New Zealand.

support from the Rev Carol Grant, her minister at Otaki Waikanae Presbyterian, and some good advice on the need to "go with the flow" in Vanuatu, Annie was on her way with a fellow member of the church's missions group.

"I was told that things don't always happen as you might expect in the islands, but that there would be other blessings and that was good advice. Initially the focus was on the schools but we also went along to a church service one Sunday. It happened to be Palm Sunday and there must have been about 80 children all dressed in white in the procession, singing and chanting. It was very moving for both of us.

"When I saw them, I thought there was an opportunity to include them as one of our connecting groups, so I spoke to their leader and she was keen. I've not had any links with Vanuatu myself before this, but I was made to feel very welcome."

Annie teaches fulltime at Kapanui School in Waikanae (her Kids Connecting role is part-time and voluntary) but hopes to travel around New Zealand, finding Sunday Schools, kids clubs and Girls' Brigade groups to link with Vanuatu children. She liaises with Jill Kayser, national coach of Kids Friendly, to make the connections.

"Once the connections are made between the school groups in Vanuatu and the

church groups in New Zealand, the churches can take the project in whatever direction they want. This could include letters, adopting a class, or even visiting," says Annie who will maintain strong continuing links with all the groups involved in the project.

Pamela describes the Kids Connecting partnership as not primarily about giving financial or other material support to the schools.

"It is about establishing healthy relationships between peer groups of children. We want to enhance children's understanding of mission being about relationship and sharing, not just raising money to send missionaries 'over there'. We hope to raise a new generation of leaders who have knowledge and experience of global mission, through developing friendships across cultures and countries."

The Presbyterian Church has a long history of involvement in Vanuatu. Eventually, 70 schools will be handed over to the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu to run in conjunction with the government.

To find out more about how your church or group of primary school aged children can join the Kids Connecting project, contact Annie Christie, phone 06 364 0042 or email anneedee@yahoo.com

By Andrea Candy [Spanz](#)

GLOBAL MISSION

CCA leader encourages church cooperation and collaboration

Encouraging New Zealand churches of all denominations to recognise the need for a wider ecumenical vision was the message delivered by Dr Hope Antone, a leader of the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA), during her recent visit to New Zealand.

In July, Hope delivered talks at Presbyterian and Methodist churches where she promoted ecumenism and the role that women, in particular, can play.

Hope has long had an interest in the intersection of ecumenism and women's theology. She describes women in Asia as active in the church, yet in status they are considered to be below the men.

"We need to overcome ingrained inequality, sexism and caste."

A decade ago Hope attended a number of educational courses through the CCA, with the assistance of the church she attends in the Philippines, the United Church of Christ.

"Through this ongoing involvement I became joint executive secretary of one of the CCA's core programmes – Faith, Mission and Unity – in 2003."

CCA currently has 95 member churches, including the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, and the organisation represents 55 million Christians.

Among its priorities are the strengthening of the koinonia of Asian churches and Christian communities, the healing of divisions in the churches and society, ecumenical formation, and revitalising ecumenical vision, thought and action in regard to the emerging challenges in Asia.

Learning more about the challenges faced by those who have been affected by the Christchurch earthquake was another reason for her recent visit to New Zealand, Hope says.

"I came to listen to the people who had been affected, to learn from them, to stand alongside them and express in person CCA's support for them."

"They have shared with me many stories of how out of this disaster there have been wonderful examples of ecumenism. In Christchurch we see the opportunity for churches to collaborate and bring people together into community."

During her visit Hope gave a seminar on Asian ecumenical theology to interns of the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership (KCML).

For KCML intern Blair Stirling, Hope's talk raised "ideas for consideration around the multicultural task of ministry and the impact of historical issues around colonialism".

"Hope made me think more about the changing nature of ministry in a multicultural context. Here in Christchurch, particularly, we are all looking for community. We are now starting to see

congregations with a greater mix of cultures, more Maori and Pacific peoples, this is not something we saw previously down here in the South; multiculturalism is usually something we would have associated with the larger centres.

"It's a very good thing to be exposed to different ways of thinking about church."

Hope says that even those who are formally trained in theology can take away something from her talks on wider ecumenicalism.

"During my travels I am reaching out to member churches and sharing what other Asian churches are thinking. It is a broader way of thinking, a different mindset. Wider ecumenicalism differs from traditional ecumenicalism in that it is the uniting of humankind across religions."

"I know that when I talk of uniting, some Christians just think in terms of Christian unity. What the Asian churches are seeing is that there are so many problems a single church alone cannot face these."

"We need to work together with different faith communities, not compete with each other or oppose each other and encourage animosity between denominations. This weakens us all. Together we form a far stronger force. We are all in the household of God, we are all children of God, we are many people, many religions, not just Christian. We need to overcome the barriers and engage in dialogue with each other."

By Angela Singer [Spanz](#)

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GLOBALMISSION

Changing lives in Palestine

Sheep, chickens, greenhouse vegetables and fruit trees are key ingredients to a better life for hundreds of Palestinian families on the West Bank. In an area with high levels of poverty, many families struggle to feed themselves. Christian World Service is funding a food programme, bringing some degree of security to an extremely difficult political and economic situation.

Tulfik Mariq's family is enjoying the benefits of the programme. They were provided with materials to construct a greenhouse and animal pens. After these were built, the family received two adult sheep, 10 chickens and a mix of fruit trees and other plants. The Mariqs have now established a small but flourishing farm on their household land. They receive ongoing support for animal vaccinations and veterinary care. The farm provides for Tulfik and his five brothers' families – 25 people in total, although some members continue to supplement their income with paid work in the surrounding area.

The Mariqs have grown spinach which is harvested after 60 days, as well as tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers. In the first year, they used approximately 80 percent of the crop for their own consumption and sold 20 percent locally.

Tulfik's wife Mahmud says that the farm has changed their lives. She milks the sheep and the family uses some as milk, but she also makes butter and cheese "and we don't buy eggs anymore."

Nearly half the Palestinian households in the West Bank are living in poverty. One third do not get enough food. The problem isn't the amount of food available; it is the high cost and lack of income to access it. There is enough food in the West Bank but most of it is imported and the costs of imported food are continuing to rise. Even those lucky enough to have paid employment are struggling. Government employees have been protesting because their wages no longer cover daily needs.

The majority of families spend more than half their income on food. The high prices mean they are forced to make cuts in the quality and quantity of food they buy, which impacts on health and wellbeing. Many have to borrow money to pay for food, pushing them into a cycle of debt and leaving little for education and medical costs. The high cost of food means poorer health and nutritional status, excessive indebtedness and loss of future opportunities for higher skills and better paid jobs.

Such food issues are increasingly common around the world, even in New Zealand. The people of the West Bank, however, are especially vulnerable because of the political crisis in which they live. The failure to resolve the Israel Palestine conflict, and the ongoing loss of Palestinian land, is trapping the people of the West Bank in a potent mix of poverty, loss of rights and despair.

Where Tulfik lives, the people used to be small farmers. But the continued land encroachment by Israeli settlements, illegal under international law and the peace process, is cutting people off from their traditional lands and water sources. Last year alone, 100 greenhouses were demolished, ending the livelihood opportunities of many families.

CWS partner, the Middle East Council of Churches' Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees, is working in a variety of ways to provide decent and sustainable living conditions for Palestinians. They advocate for their basic human rights and steps towards a

viable and just peace in the region. The food security programme in the West Bank will include preparation of 3,600m² of land, provision of greenhouses, 100 sheep and feed for six months, 500 chickens, 750 tree seedlings and 5,000 vegetable plants.

The benefits to individual families like the Mariqs and their neighbours are immense. Nutrition and income are both improving. But the wider community is also benefiting. As more locally produced food enters local markets it is hoped the cost of food will come down and the people of the West Bank will be able to eventually feed themselves.

To help support this work, you can donate directly to CWS (phone 0800 74 73 72 / www.cws.org.nz) or "buy" a chicken from the Gifted range. These fun gifts fund the work of CWS partners. Donations from chickens are directed to the food security programme, allowing more Palestinian families to raise their own hens. See www.gift.org.nz



Mahmud is now feeding her family fresh milk, butter and cheese and selling the surplus for a small income.

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