

# Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

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**Election 2017:**  
can policy solve  
the housing crisis?

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

## COMMENT: STEPH REDHEAD

# Supporting BraveGirls

I was over the other side of the world when I found out my dear friend had been diagnosed with breast cancer. I wanted to do something but I was too far away to be helpful. I didn't want to send her pity flowers, I wanted to send her a gift that declared strength and bravery as she prepared for her fight. I wanted her to know that I was standing with her and cheering for her in her fight and that she **COULD BEAT THIS!** I couldn't find any gifts that said that or any way that effectively communicated that message. I wanted to connect her with another of my friends who had been through the breast cancer journey so she could get encouragement, inspiration, hope and practical tips as she embarked on hers. I began wondering...

Wouldn't it be great if there was a place where people could go in the midst of their battle to hear stories from those who have been through the dark tunnel and come out the other side? That those brave women could speak hope, faith, wisdom and love to the women in the middle of their darkness.

The vision for *BraveGirl* was birthed and I began my mission to help women find the courage to live their lives with purpose and to be strong enough to endure and overcome whatever obstacles, struggles or sadness comes their way.

The reality is that *everybody* is fighting a battle of some sort or has a challenge to overcome, but equally just the pressures of everyday life are taking a toll on women physically, emotionally, spiritually and mentally. Interestingly, and very unfortunately, instead of asking for help or sharing our struggles together we seem to do the exact opposite and portray



Steph Redhead

'perfect' lives at church and on social media leading people to believe we have it all together, which fosters a negative climate amongst women of comparison instead of collaboration. The vortex of overwhelm and isolation continues to swirl and the result is a whole lot of weary, struggling women slapping smiles on their faces and pretending everything is fine.

The heartbeat of *BraveGirl* is to inspire, equip and encourage women to live with authenticity and purpose and to help them stir up their courage for each day no matter what they are facing. To acknowledge that life is hard at times *but* we are brave and "*can do all things through Christ who gives us strength.*" (Phil 4:13).

The call of the *BraveGirl* organisation is to show up where women are and in today's world a lot of women spend a lot of time behind devices (phones, computers and ipads) so we have built our platform and ministry predominantly online with our website, blog and online shop. We have built a positive presence on social media. Our website and blog posts are the stories and messages that stir up courage, inspire faith, give perspective,

*BraveGirl* is a modern way of doing women's ministry. Being online means inspiration and encouragement are available whenever you are...

and empower women. We run events because we believe women are stronger when we do real life together! We provide opportunities for our growing tribe to gather together from behind the isolating devices and be inspired and equipped whilst cheering each other on and having a whole lot of fun.

*BraveGirl* is a modern way of doing women's ministry. Being online means inspiration and encouragement are available whenever you are – it means people can access us in the lonely moments in the dark of night, in the waiting room at the doctors office or in the fleeting moments of quiet amongst the chaos of life. If you are a woman with internet access and need to stir up courage then join us as we "*throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.*" (Hebrews 12:1).

– Steph Redhead is the founder of "*BraveGirl*" [www.bravegirl.co.nz](http://www.bravegirl.co.nz). Her background is in Presbyterian youth ministry where she has worked as a youth pastor and as a youth advisor in both national and regional capacities.

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## MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

The Right Rev Richard Dawson contributes a regular column to *Spanz*.

# Mental health and the Church



**Mental illness is the modern leprosy. We prefer it to be hidden away. It is a label – despite the wonderful work of Sir John Kirwan – of shame. There is also a kind of mystery around it because it can hit anyone in society no matter how healthy they look on the outside.**

Chronically underfunded and suffering from what might be called a significant class war between the medically trained psychiatric service and the somewhat less recognised counselling based service of psychologically trained professionals, mentally ill people get lost in the cracks of this landscape all the time.

Professionals like ministers have little place in this menagerie until they can show that they can abide by the unspoken rules of the system. This may be fair enough, since it really only amounts to professional courtesy – but try challenging the assumptions of those in charge and all bets are off.

However, I don't want this to become another mental health services bashing exercise. I'm sure all those who serve there are doing their best. We in the Church need to put our house in order first and that's why I simply want to put the question to us all – what are we doing about mental health in our churches? Have we ever preached on it? Have we ever tried to help people in our church who are struggling with mental health feel as if their illness doesn't define their humanity? Have we ever tried to understand a little more about mental illness?

The first thing that must happen if we are to break the curse of mental illness is to talk about it openly and honestly. I myself have had a brief brush with depression. It was when I was 14 and occurred after a very bad year at school. So dark was that year that I had nightmares about it for years afterwards and the memory of how I felt brought dread to my soul well into adulthood.

But my journey was nothing compared to the people I've met along the way in my ministry: people whose lives have been brutally broken by long periods of depression; whose marriages have fallen victim to these episodes and whose families have struggled to understand and relate to their illness. And others whose illness had become such a poison to the family that the only thing to be done was to separate from their family causing further isolation and delivering them to a life on the streets.

Mental illness is a highly destructive disease which we must work to both understand and deliver the best of our healing science to. I don't think we're there yet – do you?



# General election 2017: the housing crisis

## **It's almost that time again when New Zealanders go to the polls.**

Every three years we are asked to make decisions about who should govern the country.

But as the clock winds down to this year's election day, 23 September, what are some of the issues weighing on Presbyterian minds? Is it housing, particularly the lack of affordable houses and rentals, especially in our biggest cities? Or is it the state of our health system which, in common with many New Zealanders, is struggling to keep its head above water? Perhaps it's the thorny problem of immigration – is the government letting in too many migrants, or not enough? And do those migrants have the right skills, or are they taking New Zealanders' jobs and buying up land and houses?

On the one hand, there are issues like the rising age of superannuation, our ageing population and a lack of infrastructure to accommodate them and, on the other, youth unemployment and a lack of programmes and facilities to keep them engaged and out of trouble.

There's no doubt there is a lot to consider before casting your vote this September.

SPANZ spoke to Presbyterian and Uniting churches throughout the country to find out what is most concerning for their communities this election year. Affordable housing was the hot issue most remarked upon.

### **Rev Brett Johnstone, Somervell Memorial Presbyterian Church, Remuera**

For many people in the Somervell congregation, the issue of affordable housing is a major election issue. Affordable housing for Somervell members can be divided into two clear parts: the first is affordable rental

accommodation for school leavers in areas close to where they work or study, and it's a major concern. The lack of affordable rental places for students pushes up room rents, till the gap between the living allowance and the room rent makes it uneconomic for young people to leave home. That's why many young people remain living with their parents long after leaving school.

The second issue is the cost of housing for young Auckland home buyers, which is making Auckland less and less attractive as a place to live.

Somervell also has experience of supporting emergency housing providers. Currently the congregation supports Island Child an emergency accommodation provider in Glen Innes. Alongside this practical support, two Somervell members serve on the governance board of Monte Cecilia Housing Trust, an emergency housing provider in South Auckland. While the Government has increased support for emergency housing in the Auckland area since last winter, what is not happening is an increase in the supply of social housing in the Auckland region. We believe that this issue, which came to prominence last winter with the reporting of more than 50 families a night sleeping in their cars in the south Auckland region alone, is still very relevant and all political parties should have a clear policy on this in the lead up to the general election.

### **Adrian Whale, Chair, Tai Tokerau Emergency Housing Charitable Trust (representative of St Andrews Church, Whangarei)**

We have seen, particularly over the past two years, more and more people putting up their hands for our help in a last ditch attempt to grab the last rung of

the accommodation ladder before they drown in desperation. It is heart-breaking for our staff to have to turn families away, knowing that they have nowhere else to go. We currently have so many inquiries that, on average, we are turning away 10 households per week because we only have the capacity to house 22 households at any one time.

The government's policy of putting families into motels and leaving them to languish is worrisome, especially without any social work support to assist them to find more permanent housing. It is both hiding and delaying the problem of a lack of affordable housing. We acknowledge that there is a lot of money being spent to finance the government's emergency housing policy, but this needs to be matched by spending on building more affordable homes if the issue is to be addressed properly.

Our main concern for this general election is that affordable housing for those people on low-incomes is not being well served by the free market. The system is broken and it will take all of us to put it back together again. Housing is so central to the wellbeing of our families and communities that unless we can focus and collaborate to get the housing issue sorted, we won't be able to improve the health, relational and educational futures of children in poverty, no matter how much money we throw at these problems. We want to make it clear, though, that the issue is solvable in smaller centres like Whangarei if we do something now and not wait until the crisis gets bigger.

### **Rev Hamish Galloway, Hope Presbyterian, Christchurch**

We recently had a meeting where we discussed the issues facing members of our community in the coming year.



Probably the biggest was the cost of living, which has made day-to-day living incredibly difficult for many, and impacted on beneficiaries and the working poor's need to access support to get through.

It is apparent that the "working poor" sector in our community is increasing, due to the rising cost of housing and basics, and this is putting a lot of stress on families. Housing access is also a problem, with the need to get people out of overcrowded situations to create a healthier environment. The amount of social housing isn't adequate and people often have to go into temporary/crowded situations or emergency housing for the interim.

The ongoing post-earthquake environment in Canterbury and the need for children to access counselling still continues to challenge the community, with wait lists common across most counselling and mental health services.

In suburbs like Hornby, transport is a continual issue for people who don't drive. Getting to appointments at the Older Persons Health unit at Burwood takes at least two bus changes and around 80 minutes. If the person can't use a bus, then a taxi will cost at least \$60 each way; even with taxi chits paying for one way, \$60 is a lot for pensioners.

#### **Rev Sa Si'itia-Asi, St Giles' Presbyterian Church, Mt Roskill South**

I recently attended a community meeting where we discussed the issues facing our communities now and in the future. One of the main ones for my community in Mt Roskill, and indeed for many Auckland communities, is the lack of affordable housing. People need cheaper rent as well as better rent-to-buy schemes. The quality of Auckland's housing stock

also has to increase – in its current state, much of it has a detrimental effect on residents' safety and health.

Other issues that political parties need to address this election year are multiculturalism and racism – where are we going with this and how are we going to make it better? Multiculturalism is, in essence "integration" – a diverse nation that adapts and grows to form a coherent whole with all people playing an equal part. We also urgently need a gender mechanism to empower women's equality economically, politically and socially.

#### **Rev Ian Pittendreigh, Bethlehem Community Church, Tauranga**

Housing is a huge problem in Tauranga and the Bay of Plenty where house prices have soared and people can't afford to buy or rent, so instead families are moving to smaller towns and commuting. Tauranga has a high percentage of aged/ ageing people, but we don't have enough business and economic development taking place.

Youth employment is an issue, and it can be hard for our young people to find jobs, especially jobs that pay well, although there currently seem to be a lot of opportunities in the building trade.

Another concern is that people are struggling on benefits because benefits are not rising at the same rate as other expenses. Those on benefits are under intense pressure at times and have to fight often lonely battles. It would be good to see a more compassionate approach to those on a benefit. I'm pleased to say that the churches in Tauranga do a lot of good work and provide support in many ways for people on benefits.

Sharon Stephenson [@spanz](#)

## **Political parties' housing policies**

According to the 2017 Demographia Annual International Housing Affordability Survey\*, New Zealand's increasing inequality is seen clearly in spiraling house prices, which in Auckland have reached ten times the median household income.

In his foreword to the survey Dr Oliver Hartwich, executive director of The New Zealand Initiative writes, "We need to tackle housing affordability urgently because the effects of unaffordable housing on society are becoming more visible by the day. Policies that raise housing costs are always likely to hit those on low incomes the hardest... High house prices are not a sign of city's success but a sign of failure to deliver the housing that its citizens need."

In its May 2017 Policy Watch\*\*, the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services writes that Catholic and Anglican church leaders are calling for more quality affordable housing, especially for those on low incomes: "Churches and church agencies up and down the country are directly supporting those who are struggling... Families are paying to live in places that are simply not fit to live in, places that make them and their children sick. There are no consequences for landlords, but significant consequences for all taxpayers..."

So how do the main Parliamentary parties plan to respond to the growing crisis of not enough quality housing, and unaffordable house prices and rents? We look at their housing policies:



## NATIONAL

*Shortly after becoming prime minister, Rt. Hon. Bill English abolished the position of Housing Minister. In his 7 February 2017 speech at the opening of Parliament, he outlined his housing vision which is largely a continuation of the Government's current housing policy.*

- Creating special housing areas in high demand areas across New Zealand to fast-track the building of homes.
- A \$1 billion Housing Infrastructure Fund to accelerate new housing in the high-demand areas where it's needed most. The Fund will focus on financing infrastructure like roads and water to support new housing.
- Setting up independent Urban Development Authorities to speed up housing development in high-demand areas.
- Reforming the Resource Management Act to make it easier for councils and developers to get houses consented and built.
- Tightening rules to ensure people buying and selling property for profit pay their fair share of tax.
- Requiring Councils to ensure land supply for housing keeps pace with growth.
- Passed legislation to restrict Council development charges to reduce the cost of building.

### Full policy:

[www.national.org.nz/features/nationals-comprehensive-housing-plan](http://www.national.org.nz/features/nationals-comprehensive-housing-plan)

## LABOUR

- KiwiBuild programme will build 100,000 high quality, affordable homes over 10 years, with 50 per cent in Auckland.
- Create an Affordable Housing Authority to fast-track development in cities.
- Remove the Auckland urban growth boundary and free up density controls.
- Ban foreign speculators from buying existing homes.

- Tax property speculators who flick houses within five years.
- Consult on rules around negative gearing to prevent abuse by speculators.
- Make Housing New Zealand into a public service rather than an SOE, and substantially increase number of state houses.
- Help 5,100 more Kiwis into emergency housing every year.
- Require all rental homes to be warm, dry, and healthy.
- Dole for Apprenticeships policy to subsidise employers to take on 4,000 young people for on the job training including in building and construction.

### Full policy:

<http://www.labour.org.nz/housing>

## GREENS

- Increase acquisition and building of state housing by at least 3000 a year for the next 3 years.
- Maintain an income-related rental policy of 25 per cent of income for Housing NZ tenants.
- Funding to third sector housing organisations for min. 1000 units a year for the next 3 years.
- Create a legally binding duty on the public sector to ensure housing needs are met.
- Support third sector organisations working for homeless people.
- Reduce speculative investment in the housing market by tightening the rules around loss attributing qualifying companies and introducing a capital gains tax on all but the family home.
- Introduce a Universal Child Benefit that can be capitalised towards the child's first home.
- Increase provision of low interest financing for house purchase for low-income households.
- Shift the standard tenancy conditions towards more secure and predictable tenure arrangements.

- Provide matched funding for local authorities that take active measures to support social housing or low income retrofitting programmes.

### Full policy:

[www.greens.org.nz/page/housing-policy](http://www.greens.org.nz/page/housing-policy)

## NZ FIRST

- Provide government assistance for first home buyers.
- Establish a new state agency to acquire land where Special Housing Areas have been designated for sustainable residential development.
- Sell residential sections under long term agreements for sale and purchase (up to 25 years) to first home buyers, on a cost recovery basis.
- Interest at 2 per cent per annum for at least five years, then rising to lowest market rates.
- Non-residents who are not New Zealand citizens would be ineligible for home ownership except if a genuine need to do so can be demonstrated.
- Provide low cost government funding to local authorities for new elderly persons housing and public rental housing projects. Long-term 2 per cent loan finance would be made available.
- Encourage private investment in upgrading rental housing through the taxation system. Owners of rental houses could invest in specified qualifying home improvements.
- A New Zealand Housing Plan will be developed to revamp the housing market.

### Full policy:

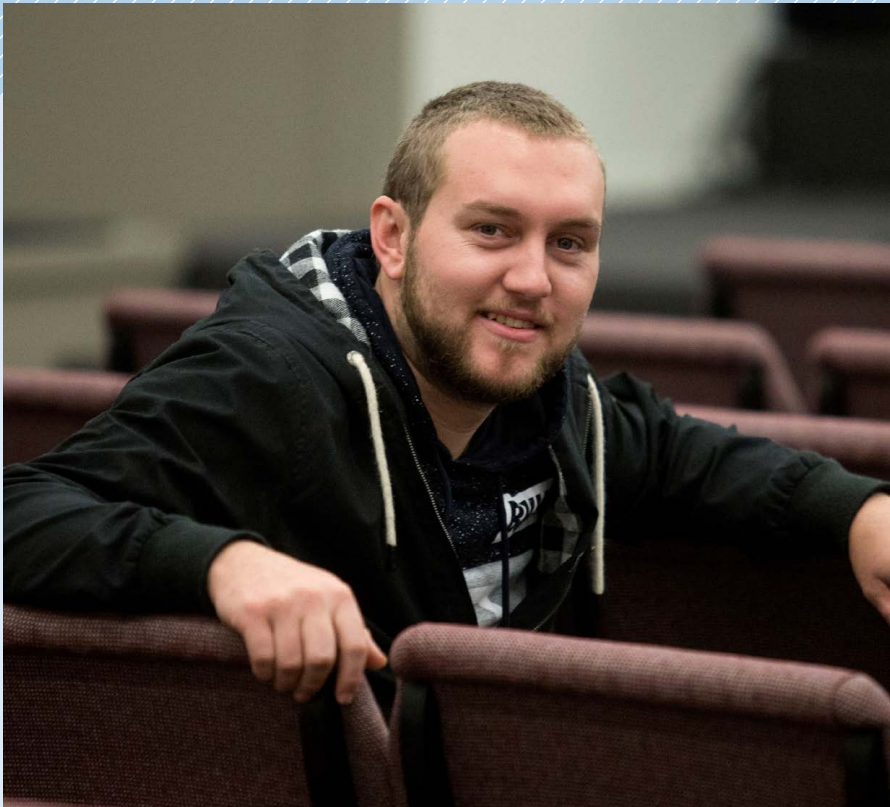
[www.nzfirst.org.nz/housing](http://www.nzfirst.org.nz/housing)

\* <http://www.demographia.com/dhi.pdf>

\*\* "We must speak up about our housing crisis..." <http://nzccss.org.nz/news/2017/05/must-speak-housing-crisis/>

Angela Singer Spanz





Sam Parsons was recognised for his Waitara youth work with an ASB Good as Gold award. He used the \$3000 cash donation to take 45 young people to Easter Camp.



something they would not say in a group, like that they are finding something difficult or that something went well for them.

"One thing that we try to keep on top of is swearing. We have a rule that you can't swear at youth group, or at least round the leaders. Now we find that if someone swears, one of the others will pull them up on it. You have to develop a culture. It's not instant, but you do see changes because it is an ongoing thing," says Sam.

After arriving back from Christchurch about two years ago, the couple hovered round the edges of the youth group, watching it attract about 20-30 young people. When they became more involved, they deliberately held back from programme-based work.

"We think that running a programme is a good thing, but it is really just a programme. The relational aspect is more important than getting kids into groups or running a game. The Wednesday night group is now run more like a hang-out night. We have some structured sessions, but mainly we provide a place in which people can relate to each other," says Sam.

"There's musical talent in this town, and we try to tap into it. We have quite a few kids who join in with Sunday worship. On Wednesday nights we get the guitar out. At the Easter camp, six girls entered the talent quest."

Sam's day job is making kitchens with his father, which he does part-time, while Theresa is administrator at Knox. They both do 24/7 youth work at Waitara High School. "We do a lot of different things, but it's good. At times it's tiring, but it is energising. Helping people is important, and you feel good about it," says Sam.

Both Sam and Theresa find their work rewarding.

"You have those rare breakthrough moments where kids open up about something you did not expect, and you realise that they trust you," says Theresa.

"It teaches you to be patient," says Sam.

"And humble," Theresa adds.

They both say: "We've got some big dreams for this town."

Viv Posselt [Spanz](#)

## Knox Waitara's golden youth leader

**Sam Parsons was given an ASB Good as Gold award for making a difference in his community through his youth group work in Waitara.**

TV One's Seven Sharp set out to surprise Sam with the award, and they certainly did that by turning up unannounced at a Wednesday night EPIC youth group gathering at Knox Presbyterian Church to hand over the award.

A segment featuring music-loving Sam receiving the award, which included a new electric guitar, tickets to the February Guns and Roses concert, and a cash donation to the youth group, screened on TV One in February.

Sam, who was nominated by sister Lisa Parsons, community support worker at Knox, used the \$3000 cash donation to take 45 young people to the Easter Camp at Feilding.

Sam and Teresa Parsons, both 25, have devoted themselves to the youth of Waitara since returning to the Taranaki town two years ago. Teresa is the daughter of Knox minister Rev Dennis Flett and his wife Jenny, the Presbyterian Church's Council of Assembly convenor.

Sam believes that community involvement is vital.

"I think the best thing a church can do is to make connections in its community. The more you get yourself out there and become known, the more you become a stable identity in the community. The more connection points you have during the week, the better it is. If you have something for two hours on a Wednesday night, it may not be enough to build relationships with the kids.

"You have to be in their lives more and involved in activities with them that they think you would not take part in. So we do quite a lot outside the Wednesday nights – movie nights at home or volleyball at the gym at Knox and group dinners on Sunday nights," explains Sam.

The group now attracts 60-80 young people each week. The team leaders make a point of providing rides "just so they get there" he says.

"A lot of them won't come if they can't get a ride because they live too far away. When we are in the car, they might say

# North Shore Koreans break the mould with op shop outreach

**A North Shore Korean Presbyterian congregation has stepped outside its comfort zone recently by taking on the management of an op shop.**

This may not seem special, but it is in fact rather unique, says the Presbyterian Church's Asian ministries co-ordinator the Rev Kyoung Gyun Han.

"Asian church communities in New Zealand tend to focus on their own people and do not normally get involved with other nationalities and cultures. This shop is a great example of community service by an Asian congregation and a great journey for them."

Cheol Jeong, the North Shore Korean Church's mission manager confirms this: "The initial reaction of our parishioners was, 'Why should we?' It was an unexpected and even foreign concept for them and it took them some time to get used to the idea."

The mission team had to work hard to get their fellow believers on board. And that was exactly what they did. "The church is very happy about this venture," says Cheol.

The unique opportunity to run the op shop was right on their doorstep, or rather in their basement. The Korean church shares a building with the Glenfield Presbyterian Church, who had run the tiny op shop from the basement of the building used by both congregations.

When the Glenfield congregation decided that the time had come for someone else to take over running of the shop, naturally they approached the Korean congregation, who were a bit taken aback initially, but later decided it was the perfect challenge for them. Cheol describes the motivation for this ground-



Although it is unusual for a Korean Presbyterian church to run an op shop for the wider community North Shore Korean Presbyterian have embraced being "pioneers".



breaking enterprise. "We want to share our materials with those in need," he says.

"We want to be pioneers and help the local community at the same time. We prayed about it as a congregation and discussed how best to run the shop and what to do with any profits." Initially, Cheol did a PowerPoint presentation for parishioners about the work and its possibilities, and now he gives the congregation a monthly update as their support is vital.

The team officially took over the management of the shop last December. The shop has a manager who is assisted by several volunteers, which are not just members of the Korean church, but also come from the Glenfield Presbyterian Church and from several other churches in the area.

"We are fortunate to have two experienced retail people on the team," says Cheol. Work hours for the volunteers vary; some serve all day, others just an hour or two each week.

The response to the change in management has been great so far. Church members have donated goods, as have people and businesses from the surrounding community. "Someone gave us lots of toys as well as cricket gear for

kids just the other week," says Cheol. "A local clothing store brought in brand new jeans and sweaters a while back. The flow of goods is fairly constant."

The sense of ministry, mission and service to others is strong among the team. Prices in the shop are deliberately kept low as part of their philosophy of service to the community, although, sometimes even low prices are not enough, says Cheol. "Some of our customers come looking for something specific and many are willing and able to pay, but if they cannot pay we give it to them." Fulfilling an urgent need is more important, he says.

"We try to build a rapport with our customers, and though we sell material things to help people, what we really sell is Jesus," he says.

While this op-shop may be unusual for Asian Christians, this particular parish is no stranger to outreach. Twice a month the mission team has been going to South Auckland to serve lunch and distribute clothing.

Cheol says the shop is happy to share with any church that needs clothing and the team welcomes more volunteers as well as new ideas and donations.

Janine Baalbergen Spanz



# Neighbours Day a gift for new residents



East Taieri School, across the road from East Taieri Church, proved to be the perfect venue for a special Neighbour's Day tea.

## There were some heart-warming touches to the way Presbyterians around the country marked Neighbour's Day 2017 in late March.

Presbyterian hands of friendship were extended all over New Zealand, both to established neighbours and to some of the country's newest and most vulnerable people still trying to find their feet.

Among the latter were several migrant and former refugee families who have entered New Zealand from more than 20 different countries over the past year, many of them fleeing persecution or worse in their homelands.

Neighbour's Day 2017, coinciding with Lent, and was marked over the weekend of 25-26 March. The ethos behind it is one of connection – bringing people together to strengthen communities, reverse isolation, make people safer and offer a sense of belonging.

Started by Lifewise in 2009, Neighbour's Day Aotearoa took off as a national initiative in 2011.

This year saw Presbyterians reach out in a variety of ways: lawns mowed, activities and food shared and stories told.

For some, help and a warm hello also came in the form of grocery and gift vouchers offered through PresCare – a partnership between the Presbyterian Church and Presbyterian Support. In support of Neighbour's Day, PresCare gave ten \$50 grocery or Prezzy cards to churches to gift to former refugees and new migrants living in their communities.

Paula Levy, a ministry intern with Palmerston North's St Albans Presbyterian Church, had a hand in selecting a local Samoan family as the recipient of one of the vouchers.

"The family started coming to our church not long after arriving here about 18 months ago," Paula says. "We have helped them with food in the past, so decided to give them one of the gift vouchers to buy something they needed. They were very grateful."

A migrant mother and son from China were given a \$50 grocery voucher by Rev Donald Hegan at St Columba Church in Tauranga. He says visa issues had impacted the mother's ability to work, and they were "absolutely delighted and grateful" to receive the voucher.

Janice Bridgeman of Leith Valley Presbyterian Church in Dunedin said heartfelt gratitude was expressed by a Syrian couple with one child when they were gifted a \$50 grocery voucher. Rev Dr Paul Prestidge of Miramar Uniting in Wellington elected to give a grocery voucher to a new and hearing-impaired Iraqi migrant who had been brought to his attention through an Iraqi pastor whose congregation uses Miramar Uniting's facilities.

Rev Sharon Ross Ensor is a Red Cross refugee support volunteer. She gifted two vouchers – one a grocery and the other a gift voucher – to two Syrian families with differing needs, while Somervell Presbyterian Church's Jann Ensor says that the Syrian family they gave a \$50 grocery voucher to was "very happy" with the gift.

Former refugee and migrant families were among locals who joined parish-hosted Neighbour's Day activities around the country.

Joy Davis, community facilitator at Mosgiel's East Taieri Church, said Neighbour's Day had been a great success for them. They gifted a \$50 grocery voucher to a new resident family, and parishioners partnered with neighbouring East Taieri School and other community groups to organise a special morning tea which included a free bouncy castle provided through Stopping Family Violence.

"One family made invitations and went around all their immediate neighbours a week or so out," she said. "We had wonderful support from everyone."

The Mt Albert Presbyterian Church youth group was tasked with offering gardening help to an older person in their community.

Laga Fuimaono, youth leader and elder at Mt Albert, said they had mowed lawns, created a new garden patch for vegetables and did hedge trimming.

"We offer to help with any chores the seniors may be unable to complete around their home. It can range from gardening to washing windows or cleaning the car. The ongoing 'Help your neighbour' project has taught us a lot, including communication skills. Our seniors show us what to do and we follow. We've had nothing but positive feedback."

Viv Posselt [Spanz](#)

# Building support for city flats

It started with a simple bowl of soup. But for the Rev Dr Bruce Hamill and the residents of Wellington City Council's Granville Flats, it has turned into so much more.



Every Tuesday at noon, Bruce and four volunteers from the Island Bay Presbyterian make and serve soup for around 10 to 12 residents of the council flats.

Bruce, who started as a community minister in Island Bay last year, says it's about more than just a hot, nourishing meal.

"It's also a space to build friendship and to connect with people who are struggling in the current economy, as well as those who are lonely or withdrawn," says Bruce.

"Some of the residents might be dealing with mental health, addiction, benefit or system issues, as well as trying to make ends meet, so to provide a space where they can come and talk without being judged is invaluable."

The food is prepared by the congregation, often from produce supplied by Kaibosh (a food rescue charity), with bread and baking provided by the Boys and Girls Institute and generous local businesses.

Running in tandem with the weekly lunch is the Berhampore Fruit and Veggie Co-op which the church started earlier this year to provide access to cheaper fresh fruit and vegetables.

"The cost of getting to the market and buying veggies can be challenging for some, so we've started the Co-op where residents of Berhampore and surrounding areas can order and pay prior to the Tuesday drop-off."

Bruce says around 50 residents have registered for the \$12 weekly bags which contain around three to four different seasonal fruit and veggies. "We costed it

Every Tuesday Rev Dr Bruce Hamill and four volunteers from the Island Bay Presbyterian Church make and serve soup for residents of Wellington City Council's Granville Flats.

and to buy the same costs about \$25 in the supermarket, so this is a low cost service delivered to their area."

Bruce, who ran a similar community lunch at his previous parish in Dunedin, says feedback for both the lunches and the Co-op has been positive.

"It's intrinsic to my role and to my life as a Christian to work with and learn from those who are struggling and vulnerable. Both the lunches and the Co-op help to do this and bring people together."

Across town, St John's in the City has been running a weekly cafe with residents of the Dixon Street council flats since September last year.

The concept for the community outreach followed the death of an elderly resident, who was discovered two weeks after he had died.

"It caused a ripple of unease in the community, the thought of someone dying alone," says Rev Allister Lane, minister at St John's in the City.

"The time seemed right to reach out to our neighbours across the street."

In consultation with Wellington City Council, the Boys and Girls Institute and Housing New Zealand, which owns the Dixon Street flats, the weekly cafe has been held in the flats' common room every Thursday from 10am-2pm. Since starting in late September, it has attracted up to 50 residents every week.

St John's provides the tea and coffee, while up to six church volunteers are rostered on every week to bring home baking and to support the initiative. They also share puzzles and bring newspapers for the residents each week.

Some church members also drop off baking and another church member volunteered his time to repair the common room furniture.

Allister says there has been a positive response to the cafe with some residents staying the whole four hours.

"People do appreciate it and for some it's an important part of their week. Older residents, particularly, enjoy the opportunity to interact with their neighbours where previously they weren't doing this."

Allister says there isn't an overt religious aspect to the weekly cafe but it's more about reaching out and connecting with the residents.

"It's really their cafe and we want them to take ownership of it. We're just there to support them and to listen. There is a very high density of high-need individuals living in the Dixon Street flats, most of whom live on their own or are unemployed and many who don't have anyone to talk to. It's an honour to be invited into their space and to be able to help foster community in a neighbourly sort of way."

Sharon Stephenson **Spanz**



# Amorangi inspired by previous generations

Newly ordained amorangi Kerry Cameron from Opotiki sums up his, and wife Rokahurihia's, life of service to others as the experience of God's love enabling them "To work together all these years as a couple. We are happiest when we can share with others".



Amorangi Kerry Cameron and wife Rokahurihia Ngarimu, who is a master artist of raranga whatu (Māori fibre weaving).

Kerry's focus is now on church ministry, not that much will change for him. "Our mission is still to do God's work, be shepherds, feed the little lambs."

Life has more than prepared him and wife Rokahurihia Ngarimu - a social worker and master artist of raranga whatu (Māori fibre weaving) - for church ministry. Their work has always been inspired by the shining examples of their grandparents, aunts and uncles.

Kerry believes that his ordination journey began long ago, at his own birth. His life choices have been heavily influenced by the ministry of his grandfather, the Very Rev J G Laughton, a former Church moderator and pioneer missionary in the Ureweras, and the service of his parents, uncles and aunts, cousins and other relatives.

Education runs deep in his whanau: Kerry's father was a school principal, his mother a senior school teacher and extended family have been educators as well. Not surprisingly Kerry too became a teacher.

"My grandfather had a big influence on our lives," says Kerry. "Granddad was a loving man and very revered. We felt the love and grace of God flowing to us through our grandparents," he says.

He credits their attitude of love and constant giving to others as the reason his grandparents were given access to

world of Rua Kenana, the Māori prophet who welcomed them into the Urewera in 1918. "They wandered into parts of the Maori world no Pakeha had seen," says Kerry. John Laughton developed an enduring friendship with Rua Kenana, a mutual acceptance that motivates the Camerons today.

Kerry and Rokahurihia lived in Dunedin for 20 years establishing a care and protection unit under the auspices of Ngai Tahu, and a learning centre.

They bought a building and a block of land to start a school - all with their own money. "It was God's calling to help others," he says. They established a learning programme, and Rokahurihia taught weaving. "All under the banner of Christianity," he says.

"No one believed in our kaupapa at the time, so we cashed in our superannuation to start Te Whanau Arohanui Trust." They had run a number of social welfare homes over the years and wanted to do things differently, while still reflecting their Christian heritage.

Kerry is Presbyterian while Rokahurihia is of the Ringatu faith and together they wanted to honour both traditions, working side by side as John Laughton and Rua Kenana had done.

After twenty years they decided it was time to return home to the Bay of Plenty to help their whanau, hapu and iwi.

Centred around the Ringatu marae of Hawaii they continued their work, establishing an arts and crafts centre, teaching weaving.

"I have always been on a journey to God's mission. I had so many great role models, and their sacrifice, commitment, graciousness and unselfishness inspires me to this day," says Kerry.

He started his amorangi training in 2005, but life, and the mission they were on, got in the way.

As various projects began to wind down he says the call to ministry became louder and louder until one day Rokahurihia said it was time for him to finish his training.

Just as his forebears shared their lives with the next generation, so too have the Camerons' children shared in their parents' work. "I really pay tribute to our children who shared everything they had with other kids, from their parents and grandparents to their toys, rooms, even pocket money," says Kerry.

His plan for his amorangi ministry will continue to be focussed on the street: "I want to help those in need and who need God's love. We have the facilities here now on the marae to give them that love," he says.

Janine Baalbergen Spanz

# Fund wind-up moves forward

Sweeping changes to the retirement scheme for Presbyterian ministers are well underway.

The changes, agreed to by last year's General Assembly, include winding up the defined benefits section of the current Beneficiary Fund and replacing it with a new scheme, and making other changes that bring the scheme in line with new regulatory requirements.

The Church Property Trustees, who are responsible for oversight of the Fund, are implementing the changes, and there are two main strands to their work: winding down the current scheme and developing a new scheme.

As part of the wind-up, the 650 or so members of that part of the Beneficiary Fund will receive a wind-up payment, which Church Property Trustees expect to be paid in around November 2017.

Members and annuitants will have the option of being paid out their wind-up entitlement, or they can transfer membership and all or part of their wind-up funds to the new scheme.

While the specifics of the new scheme were still being ironed out, it is anticipated that it will offer cash, conservative, balanced and growth options for members to choose from, similar to KiwiSaver, explains Margaret Galt speaking on behalf of the Church Property Trustees.

Obtaining the necessary compliance and legal registrations for the new scheme is a time-consuming process, and even if

this hasn't been fully completed by the 30 June deadline, Margaret confirms that the current scheme will still be legally wound-up on this date to allow the Fund's accounts to be audited and wind-up payments determined.

The Trustees are working to have the new scheme up and running on 1 July, however, if this isn't possible interim arrangements will be put in place to allow ministers and parishes to continue to make contributions. These will later be transferred to the new scheme, says Margaret.

Unless they choose otherwise, retirees will continue to receive payments in the period between 30 June and the actual wind-up distribution to members, says Margaret. Any payments would be deducted from the November wind-up payment, she confirms.

Members and annuitants spoken to by Spanz welcomed the change to the Church Beneficiary Fund. The Rev Brett Johnstone, minister of Somervell Presbyterian Church in Auckland, was a commissioner at Assembly, and voted for the change for several reasons.

On a personal level, he says the winding up of the current fund and the distribution of the money will "give me a greater flexibility for my future. I will not be locked into a superannuation scheme that is not portable".

From Brett's perspective, other selling points included the fact that the new Fund will not need as much financial support from parishes (currently around 43 percent of Assembly Assessment goes to the Beneficiary Fund).

The changes agreed by General Assembly have necessitated a review of the Assembly Assessment levy explains Anne Edgar, convener of the Resource Subcommittee.

"Assembly Assessment levels are being recalculated at the moment to recognise the reduced burden on parishes to contribute to the Beneficiary Fund. New Assembly Assessment levels will come into effect on 1 July this year," says Anne.

Rev John Wilkie, minister at St John's

Presbyterian Church in Hawera, also voted in favour of the changes at General Assembly.

"The changes will provide security for me and my fellow ministers," says John. "The impact on parishes and parish staff include saving money in terms of not making two payments – to KiwiSaver and the Beneficiary Fund. Plus it will provide a greater deal of equality between staff."

The changes to the Beneficiary Fund are only one aspect of the sweeping changes to the Church's programme to support its leaders in retirement. General Assembly also agreed to a raft of changes to the ministerial support package and encouraged parishes to make KiwiSaver contributions for all those not eligible for membership of the Beneficiary Fund at the same rate as Fund contributions for national ordained ministers.

Jose Reader Spanz

## Charitable – Fund –

Once all wind-up entitlements have been paid to members, it is anticipated that a surplus will remain. General Assembly agreed that a charitable fund be established using these funds.

Within the broad purpose established by Assembly – the advancement of religion and in particular the benefit of ministers – the Council of Assembly has established a task group to examine the criteria under which grants could be made, who would be eligible and other matters. Ministers and annuitants are represented on the task group, as are the Trustees who will be responsible for administering the charitable fund.





# First Aroha grant to nourish community

Getting to the heart of the matter in many rural communities is about putting food on the table. Taneatua is doing just that with the support of an Aroha grant.

Taneatua is a rural community in the eastern Bay of Plenty with just 225 houses and a predominantly Maori population. The median income is \$16,300. Whanau, says the Rev Chris Barnard of Whakatane Church, live under constant fear of unexpected expenses.

Chris and two long-time residents of Taneatua, Rev Tamiana and Honey Thrupp, had been running heart-to-heart events that reached out into the community for four years. The need for food security was apparent. Tamiana and Honey began to feel a new calling from God, to create a sustainable community garden that would feed the tamariki and grow fundamental life skills.

The Heart Strings pilot project Te Taurahere Whatumanawa that evolved was the first recipient of an Aroha grant. Aroha grants are made available from the Mission Enterprise Fund, 20 percent of which is dedicated to supporting ministry with vulnerable and socially disadvantaged whanau and communities.

Press Go partnered with Whakatane Presbyterian Church, Te Aka Puaho and Presbyterian Support Northern to support the \$34,000 application, which pays for Tamiana and Honey to run the community gardens and a budgeting advice service. Although the couple has no formal training in community

enterprise, they are both keen gardeners. They have also led countless youth groups, prison ministry, children's church and street ministries in the area.

Press Go catalyst Lisa Wells says the decision to fund Heart Strings was straightforward. "It met all the criteria. All three parties are involved in a robust way, so the project is well supported. We've also built in a degree of flexibility as you never quite know where these 'experiments around the edge' of communities will go."

Phase one of the project involves just one street of 20 households. The quarter-acre of land for the garden was unexpectedly donated by a local community member while the project was being planned. It has since been covenanted and a party was held last November to celebrate community ownership.

Taneatua then made national headlines in April when neighbouring town Edgumbe was badly flooded. The land for the new garden also vanished under water. Fortunately, the planter boxes were still being constructed at the local school so the plants had yet to be put in the ground, and it has since dried out and had additional drainage installed.

A committee has been formed to manage the garden, which will also have chickens and eventually provide a source of income so the garden becomes self-sustaining. The committee includes the local district councillor and some of the street's teenagers and children, who are encouraged to have a say. The team has been busy creatively raising money for garden materials through raffles and an Easter hangi.

It is this element of community ownership that will make all the difference to the garden's success, says Chris.

"The secret behind something like this working is that those 20 households own the project. Otherwise these projects tend to fall flat," Chris thinks. "There's such an excitement. The adults are still finding themselves in this new space but the kids are leading the way, quickly forming relationships. It's great to see their potential to become guardians of a small socio-economic enterprise."

The community development project aligns with the national push for Maori to revitalise their gardening skills. The project is also a collaborative effort between the three Protestant churches in the area, and Chris sees it as a "tool of vision".

"We're embracing a different model to the one employed for the past 500 years. It's about not being confined to four walls, but rather sharing the gospel through love, acceptance and walking alongside people, reaching Taneatua one person, one household, one street at a time."

If the pilot is successful in its first year, funding will be sought for additional Aroha grants for a further two years, by which time the project should be self-sustaining.

*Applications for an Aroha grant will be accepted at any time, but anyone wishing to apply is encouraged to first get in touch with Lisa Wells on 027 4455 723 or email [LisaW@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:LisaW@presbyterian.org.nz)*

Jade Reidy Spanz



# 500<sup>TH</sup> anniversary of the Reformation

## Is the Reformation still relevant today?

Five hundred years on, some people assume that Martin Luther and the Reformation are no longer particularly important or relevant. Many Catholics, despite the Pope's call to commemorate the event, are understandably unenthusiastic about Luther and the Reformation: they recall Luther helped precipitate a massive schism, permanently breaking the unity of western Christianity. Protestants too can be ambivalent about the Reformation, and uneasy about its strong doctrinal stances, angry rhetoric and fierce conflicts. They may know that Luther, although brilliant and courageous, had significant flaws.

The enduring relevance of the Reformation lies in the theological truths and principles it emphasised, many of which had undoubtedly become obscured or lost, and which are still highly important for the church of Christ.

First, there was a re-discovery of the New Testament teaching that we cannot be saved by human merit or works or religion, but only through the grace of God in Christ, to be received by faith.

Luther had desperately tried to earn his salvation through monasticism and religious effort, but only found lasting peace with God when he came to the spiritual understanding that we can only become righteous through the righteousness of Christ. These principles of salvation were later summed up in the Lutheran catch cries of *solo Christo* (in Christ alone), *sola gratia* (by grace alone), and *sola fide* (through faith alone).

The second great Reformation principle was the primacy of the written Word of God, as the main way in which Christ the living head exercises his authority over the Church.

Luther came to assert the primacy of Scripture over human philosophies and reason, tradition, church leaders and superstition. Before the Holy Roman Emperor and Germany's most powerful people, Luther famously declared he could only be "convinced with evidence from the Holy Scriptures", and "my conscience is captive to the Word of God". Scriptural primacy meant the rejection of any doctrine or practice inconsistent with Scripture. It also meant that the preaching and teaching of the Bible should be central in the Church, and that the Bible should be read in every home.

From those two principles, much else followed. These included: church services in the people's own language, priests became pastors, the calling of all believers was emphasised, congregational singing was re-introduced, and pastors were free to marry. Many medieval beliefs and practices were abandoned, such as purgatory, relics, indulgences, masses for the dead, and the veneration of Mary.

The time for Protestant-Catholic hostility has gone. But the 500th anniversary of Luther and the start of the Reformation makes this a good time to reflect on what the Reformers achieved.

– Rev Dr Stuart Lange (Presbyterian minister and Senior Research Fellow at Laidlaw College).

Martin Luther, painted by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1528).





## THE REFORMATION WAS A GLORIOUS EVENT, BUT WE SHOULD NOT GLORIFY IT

**T**he Reformation is inspiring, not least because it reminds us that for God nothing is impossible, and that within a generation or so, quite new perspectives can catch the imagination of ordinary people. It's hard to sum up the Reformation in a few words, though, so here are some snappy one-liners – a bit like Luther's 95 Theses!

Luther never wanted to found a new Church.

He began as a loyal Catholic; many other Catholics wanted reform.

But those in power around the Papacy were too obdurate.

So maybe we can see the Reformation as a cruel necessity.

There had to be a radical change, but those in power resisted it.

Protestantism, then, came as a surprise – as an accident of history.

Martin Luther was a pastor and a biblical teacher.

His aim was to open up the Bible to all Christians.

So he translated it into people's everyday language.

One layman summed it up: "I never knew Jesus spoke such good German!"

The Bible was not a book for Luther; it was God's living word of freedom.

The warmth of his hymns, his prayers, his sermons remind us of this.

Maybe only 5 percent of the population could read and write.

So what spread the Reformation was a new sort of preaching.

At its heart was the promise of a forgiving, loving God.

Luther saw this God in the cradle at Bethlehem, on the Cross.

You don't reach God by trying to live a godly life.

You don't reach God either, or rather God doesn't reach us, by clever words.

The secret is faith and trust in the loving God we see in Jesus.

The Reformation pruned away a lot of popular piety.

There's nothing wrong with pilgrimages and fasting and saints' days.

But the Reformers wanted a focus on the essentials: God and one's neighbour.

They reminded folk that the Church was no organisation, but God's people.

In it, ministers are servants and all of us are priests to one another.

Luther was part of a big team, not a loner.

He had lots of faults; he wasn't our Protestant saint!

The tragedy of the Reformation, too, is that it fragmented Christendom.

It even led, against the intentions of Luther, to religious wars.

So the Reformation was a glorious event, but we should not glorify it.

It is the Word of God which lasts forever, the Reformation proclaimed.

– Peter Matheson



## LISTENING LEADERSHIP

**I have been discovering across life that so often the most profound opportunities for transformation arise from the simplest of commitments.**

Take “listening” for example. It requires a willingness to step beyond the narrative or preoccupations looping in one’s head and heart, or the desire to be noticed and heard, and to pay full attention to another for as long as they need it. Simple, right?

And if we listen what might happen?

By listening, we might discover things that we don’t know, but need to. We might hear a perspective that casts new light on a story or a viewpoint. New truth could be uncovered, relationships gifted or deepened, imaginations fired, and possibly, hope, forgiveness and mercy emerge; and in encountering Jesus Christ, we might be changed.

Last year I was part of a course developing transformative leaders. I was struck by the deep commitment to paying attention that was modelled, and which we were invited to practice throughout. In the space that was created, each person was honoured for who they said they were.

Listening required us to love mercy and walk humbly because each story and each idea was treated as sacred ground. People risked vulnerability very early because we knew we were held. As a result, we became a community creating plenty of room for imagination and transformation. We learnt that to bring change, we need to live change, and that deep change is best enabled when we are heard, when we listen, and when we hold space for one another.

I found Jesus walking the landscape of that course among people of many faiths, and those of no faith. I was the only declared Christian; they taught me again the importance of paying attention and of listening for transformation. I am not the same for being among them.

I don’t always find listening easy. It takes commitment for this extrovert. But I know that it is water for seeds.

It can also bring light into darkness.

Mark’s gospel tells a story of listening. In 10:46-52 Jesus and a large crowd are leaving Jericho. Bartimeaus, begging on the side of the road, hears Jesus is coming

and, taking a risk, cries out for mercy. Many around him, we are told, sternly tell him to be quiet. But Jesus stops and calls him over. Instead of telling Bartimeaus what he thinks he wants to hear, Jesus chooses to listen, asking “What do you want me to do for you?”

He then acts on Bartimeaus’ reply: this man living with blindness is healed.

Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership (KCML) has commissioned a project of listening - called the Thornton Blair Research project - to meet the continuing education needs of ministry leaders. Rather than assuming that we know what is needed, the question KCML will be asking is, “What do you want us to do for you?” Responses will help us design advanced leadership development initiatives, which will seek to transform participants in Jesus’ name.

But offering listening leadership is not for KCML alone to do in the landscape that we now find ourselves in. All of us who follow Jesus should be in the business of asking and listening wherever and with whomever we find ourselves. New life and possibility is birthed from spaces that hold the other, spaces in which is found the Spirit of God.

To listen is a simple but intentional commitment. At stake could be the profound transformation of us all.

– Dr Rosemary Dewerse  
Thornton Blair Research Fellow

a faith as  
intelligent as it is  
courageous



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# Knox Centre adapts training to equip whole Church



Dr Rosemary Dewerse, is the first Thornton Blair Research Fellow, a new initiative of KCML.

**I**N the year of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership (KCML) has committed to continue to adapt.

KCML will apply the historic Presbyterian commitment of reformed and reforming to the equipleaders for the changing ministry and social environment of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Analysis of the Church's leadership training programmes, carried out last year by KCML has been endorsed by the Council of Assembly and the Leadership subcommittee as the basis of a new strategic plan for the next four years.

The changes include six key strategies: "New Mission Seedlings" - community-based ministry initiatives; a National Learning Diploma; presbytery partnerships; life-long learning; an intercultural Code of Practice and online learning.

KCML principal the Rev Dr Steve Taylor says in four years they envisage there being seven new mission seedlings in seven presbyteries and synods; a national innovation learning network; 15 "pioneer" leaders; 90 people growing in ministry skills; two postgraduate courses involving 10 Presbyterian ministers and online learning programmes to deliver learning.

These new strategies will sit alongside the existing internship model for training ordained ministers, which will continue to run in its current format. This year seven new interns are beginning their training, and five people are expected to graduate in 2017.

Steve says the new way forward "represents a significantly different KCML", and he explains that the strategy review came about "in light of the changing context of Aotearoa New Zealand".

"At the core of being Presbyterian is a commitment to a genuinely educated church. KCML want to provide accessible training for the whole people of God. This will include a core set of modules around Presbyterian identity, mission, spirituality and electives that grow people across a range of leadership and ministry functions of the contemporary church."

The new Diploma will be taught by a mix of face-to-face and online training. "This year we hope to begin with training in worship leading, preaching, listening in mission and intercultural capacity," Steve says.

Life-long learning for ministry and mission will provide high quality ongoing study opportunities for ministers, he says. "A commitment to life-long learning is at the core of what it means to be genuinely educated. The call to proclaim the Gospel in a complex and changing culture requires high quality ongoing study opportunities that celebrate and enhance the practice of ministry."

"While the team is greatly energised by this plan, we are also aware of the resource challenges," Steve says.

The Council of Assembly, Leadership subcommittee, Resource subcommittee and other groups are supporting the investigation of funding options for the programme.

Steve says some funding has been secured to help research the life-long learning strategy and design some pilot courses. This has enabled some encouraging first steps.

Already in 2017, three ministerial interns in Alpine Presbytery have begun exploring New Mission Seedlings. Conversations are also underway regarding a new form of church for South Dunedin, he says.

The aim is to take church to people in the community rather than expecting people to come to church.

"It is responding to the changing social environment. A set of skills is needed to create church where people are. Church in New Zealand used to be people coming to us. We also now need to create church where people are," he says.

He uses a children's rhyme as an analogy to describe the challenges faced by the church.

"It's like the kids game, 'put your hands together, here is the church, here is the steeple, open the doors and here are all the people.' But how can we nurture Christian spirituality beyond the church building, when the spire is no longer the highest point in our towns and cities?"

The initiative is not linked to falling congregation numbers, he says. Rather, it is mainly focused on what it means to be Presbyterian, what it means to be a minister and what it means to be the people of God in this time and place. That is what the missionaries did in the past, go to places where they were guests. We want to help leaders and ministers be guests."

There is a difference between the new initiative and the old colonial work, he says. "We are paying attention to what God is





## KNOX CENTRE FOR MINISTRY & LEADERSHIP

up to in communities and joining in rather than the colonial practice of assuming God arrives with us, dressed in our cultural clothes.”

In the Presbyterian Church, theological education has a history of change.

“Forty years ago ministers’ training was largely classroom based, 10 years ago it was an apprenticeship style and now we are focused on a ‘guest’ ministry,” he says.

Mission seedlings could include projects such as working more closely with a community garden, or developing closer ties with Presbyterian schools to create stronger connections with churches.

Referring to the Maori health concept of “te whare tapa wha”, which offers four cornerstones of a house – social, physical, intellectual and spiritual - he says it is important to the Presbyterian Church to make sure the spiritual (Christian) pillar is strong.

With a new team and the encouragement of the wider Church, KCML has clarified its direction, Steve says.

“The words theology and strategic planning rarely appear together. Yet if theology matters, it must embrace the whole of life. A strategic plan is stewardship, expressing what we are and what we value,” he says.

### Fellow to help design programme for church leaders

The Knox Centre has appointed Dr Rosemary Dewerse as the first Thornton Blair Research Fellow.

The two-year position is a new initiative of KCML to better deliver on its commitment of life-long learning.

“In a rapidly changing world, the need for leaders to keep growing is essential,” says Steve.

The objective of the Fellowship is to listen to key stakeholders to design and provide learning opportunities that meet professional ministry standards and educational post-graduate requirements.

Rosemary is, according to Steve, “a highly trained missiologist, skilled theological educator and experienced academic administrator, with a passion for the Gospel as good news for the Church and the world”.

Rosemary was the post-graduate coordinator at Uniting College in Australia from 2012 to 2015, where she worked with over 60 postgraduate students in university and private education roles.

She has designed and taught online courses for Laidlaw College, Uniting College, and has trained ministers in seminaries in Central Asia and Australia, and most recently St John’s College in New Zealand.

Born in Rotorua, Rosemary says that taking up the Fellowship feels like a home coming.

“I am really glad to have the opportunity to serve the Church that nurtured me.”

Her father, Rev Max Garrity, is a Presbyterian minister. Ministry took the family from Mangakino to northern Christchurch and then to the Waikaka Valley near Gore.

“My parents’ ministry was always about participation, empowering people,” she says.

Rosemary attended St Paul’s Trinity Pacific Presbyterian Church in Christchurch while she was studying at university.

“I experienced small town New Zealand, an urban parish, and a country parish. At St Paul’s there were several hundred Pacific islanders. It was wonderful.”

Alongside her studies in Te Reo, she describes working for a Maori theological wananga in Rotorua as a highlight.

“It was very significant for me. I was adopted by those people.”

“After all the combined experiences, I now have a feeling of coming home and feel the privilege of that.”

“I am being asked to listen to the Church and its expression of its needs, gaps and hopes in order to design courses and programmes that will further equip church leaders,” she says.

Rosemary has a PhD in intercultural leadership development and has taught in theological education for 16 years, encompassing four different cultures. She is widely published, including a book on intercultural leadership and articles on indigenous theology, missiology and online curriculum design.

She has also published books in partnership with indigenous peoples in Australia and New Zealand.

Rosemary is married to Roelant and they have two children.

Kay Blundell Spanz

# YOUTH CHALLENGED BY CHRISTCHURCH GOING FURTHER



The 32 attendees of the 2017 Going Further camp worshipped at Christchurch's cardboard cathedral.

**The decision to take this year's Presbyterian Youth Ministry Going Further discipleship camp to Christchurch brought an unexpected richness to the experience. There are some things, perhaps, that only a wounded city can teach.**

The annual PYM Going Further has for several years provided a platform for young adults to enhance their faith alongside like-minded people. The retreats aim to give rise to spiritual practices that embed in the lives of those taking part.

It has successfully steered those aged 17 to 30 on an exploratory spiritual journey that for many has gone on to define their roles as Christians.

Going Further camps have traditionally been held either on Great Barrier Island or in the central North Island.

This year, a choice was made to take participants out of that traditional comfort zone and into the hustle and bustle of a city. When planning the 2017 camp, Presbyterian Youth Ministry, youth director Matt Chamberlin and national youth manager Gordon Fitch, focused on crafting what they hoped would be an altogether "different experience".

"We made a strategic decision to take the camp somewhere different," Matt explains. "We know that when leaving home for the first time many young

people move to a city for either study or work, so we chose to engage them in an urban environment for the camp.

"Gordon suggested Christchurch, and we both agreed that the rebuilding narrative Christchurch could offer would provide something very special. We felt a city with that sort of story to tell would have something to teach around rebuilding, redesign, and moving on from grief."

The resulting camp experience was very different this time around, Matt says.

"While I think it was the most meaningful and helpful Going Further camp we have ever run, it was the best that we will never deliver again because we simply didn't get the numbers. The city destination didn't have the same allure, but it was able to teach people more in other ways. We will certainly try to incorporate some of those learnings into future camps."

Going Further attracted 32 people in all – six of them as leaders, says Matt. Among attendees were five from Vanuatu and four from Korea, additional participants that Matt described as a "wonderful blessing to us".

Once installed at Christchurch's Rolleston House, camp participants divided their days between a variety of structured and free activities.

Echoing a normal city rhythm, the group commuted together in the mornings, weaving what Matt described as a sacred thread through the streets to the iconic

Christchurch cardboard cathedral.

"We made that a time when we all listened to God's word though an app on our phones," he says.

"As we walked, we reflected and prayed. We spoke about our mission in the context of the city that we were in. We reflected on its different geographical parts and what each of those said to us about the people who have been through those challenges and tragedies.

"We joined together at certain times of the day, and there were opportunities to participate in more meaningful ways as well. Some volunteered at the Christchurch City Mission. We were particularly lucky to have been given the opportunity to help refurbish the earthquake memorial '185 White Chairs', in which each chair pays tribute to an earthquake victim.

"The chairs had just been repainted, and we were able to lay grass down around them and replace the chairs in the space. It was a very special moment for our people."

That emotion-filled element of the camp left a deep impression on all the participants.

One of them, 20-year-old Iona Robinson, said of the experience with the Empty Chairs Earthquake Memorial Sculpture: "It was really special to be involved with something that means so much to the people of Christchurch... just a little way





for us to help them on their journey of recovery.”

A minister's daughter and third-year university student, Iona decided to attend the Christchurch camp after having enjoyed earlier ones. Its “urban pilgrimage” character appealed to her city-girl preferences this time around, and the fact that she has cousins who were affected by the Christchurch earthquakes helped firm her resolve to go.

Iona made friendships, and says a talk by guest speaker Andrew Root on “God’s narrative vs society’s narrative” will remain with her for a long time.

Andrew Root and his wife Kara were guest speakers at the camp. Based in the United States, Kara is the pastor at a Minneapolis Presbyterian church and is a trained spiritual director and certified Christian educator. Andrew gained his PhD from Princeton Theological Seminary, and is the Olson Baalson associate professor of youth and family ministry at Luther Seminary in Saint Paul, Minnesota.

They spoke to participants on ways to help find themselves in God’s story.

Hamilton couple Mareta and Tapaki Matenga were both adult leaders on the 2017 camp.

Mareta, who is a Cook Islander born and raised, is an elder at Westside Presbyterian Church, where both she and Tapaki are youth leaders. She is

now in her 15th year working with the Hamilton City Council, and says she has been involved in the city’s youth sector for more than 25 years.

“I’m passionate about supporting young people to be the best they can be. I always learn so much from just being with young people.

“As a leader of the camp you give out such a lot and don’t know what to expect out of it. But God always reminds you. If he brings you to it, he will bring you through it. The people at this camp were a highlight for me – their interactions, conversations, their observations. I also loved the different expressions around prayer and the different tools of prayer. They are practical tools to use in everyday life.”

Mareta described the stories shared in Christchurch as having left a mark on her. “They really impacted me – on how God has been and how our brothers and sisters in Christ have journeyed. This was encouraging and somewhat challenging to hear.”

The friendships she made are being nurtured, and she was quick to remark on how well the camp had been organised and run.

“It was great that it was flexible and was able to change when appropriate. I would definitely recommend the camp to others.”

Iona echoed that sentiment, saying: “Matt,

Gordon and their team are brilliant at putting together great events. I have already recommended the camp to others... I think it is one that every young person in the Church should have a chance to go to.”

The change in venue brought with it a different set of challenges for the organisers.

“Discipline was one of them,” says Matt. “There is no phone reception on Barrier Island... finding phones chirping everywhere we went in Christchurch was in sharp contrast. We encouraged people to be really intentional around the use of their phones, and there were times we surrendered our phones.”

The other side of that coin is the novel “pay-as-you-go” app through which camp participants engaged in special prayer times – suggesting there could be a yin and yang element to the use of technology in Christian life.

At 30 years of age, Central Southland Presbyterian’s Amy Williams knew that while this was her first Going Further camp, it would also be her last. She was seeking a clearer direction in her life and wanted to spend time with God, away from her work with the parish’s children’s holiday programme. The possibility of a move within the church had arisen, and Amy wanted to know if it was a God move.”

“The camp was very different from what I had imagined. There was a great awareness of brokenness... it was quite challenging. But we were given the space to connect with God in different ways and that was very satisfying. I have made some good connections that I will take into the future.

“The camp definitely gave me the tools and resources I needed to make that important life decision.”

The next Going Further discipleship camp will be held at Ponui Island in the Hauraki Gulf. Also known as Chamberlin’s Island, it has been in Matt Chamberlin’s extended family for generations.

Viv Posselt [Spanz](#)

# Church prepares for next emergency

**As natural disasters become increasingly common, Christians are challenged to step up to help others.**

Even before the latest spate of natural disasters to hit the country, the Church had swung into action working on the creation of an emergency preparedness plan. This came, in the first instance, from the learnings gathered following the 2011 Christchurch earthquakes.

This initial plan was developed further, with additional external input, into protocols and procedures to help church leaders in their role at the "coal face" when disaster strikes.

In early 2016, Alpine Presbytery asked the Rev Dr Colin Marshall, to assist with its review of what happened during and since the Christchurch earthquakes. With a background as a parish minister, in corporate management, emergency rescue work, mission work in Africa, as a chaplain and a voluntary ambulance officer here in New Zealand, Colin's mix of skills was ideally suited to this work.

As part of the detailed research Colin undertook, a questionnaire he developed was distributed to a whole range of people for anonymous responses and that was followed up with interviews.

"We wanted as wide and honest a picture of what was done well and not so well in response to the quake," says Colin.

"The Church is on the ground at times like these and in Christchurch it did well. On reflection, though, it is clear that our response could have benefited from having an emergency preparedness plan and training in place. Our response was too ad hoc to be truly effective."

Case studies developed as part of Colin's research focus on specific areas of the city and the impacts on ethnic communities. For example, the multicultural Pasifika community suffered a series of tragedies during this period including the death of a senior minister from illness likely exacerbated by stress, and loss of the historic St Paul's Trinity Pacific Church. The Korean Church saw a massive exodus of its business-focussed community. The Iconic Knox church sanctuary in the central city was all but demolished. The issues and resources available for rural and city communities differ in the wake of natural disasters. Many rural areas were flooded with "earthquake refugees" whilst simultaneously offering aid to urban areas.

The new emergency preparedness plan addresses both immediate and mid-term responses. Christchurch research highlights the need for support to be ongoing. Mental health and youth issues have escalated in the intervening six years since the 2011 earthquake struck, yet there is less support available now.

"A number of relief services pulled out a couple of years ago, not realising the long-term implications," says Colin. "The Church of course remains on the ground and often bears the brunt of ongoing trauma."

In future it is anticipated that Church response to significant natural disasters will be spearheaded by a national co-ordination

team including people with key government connections. The emergency preparedness plan asks each presbytery and parish to identify key response team members. Other issues covered by the plan include assessing what the critical needs are, to addressing building issues, creating a safe hub, transport issues, spiritual and financial support.

"The Church was fortunate in Christchurch that there weren't serious subsequent injuries through the use of unsafe premises," Colin remarks. "There was a real lack of understanding by parishes about structural safety, and who had authority to make decisions."

The plan stipulates that personal safety is paramount. Ministers must make themselves and their families' top priority, and take time out for self-care as needed. It also acknowledges the role that the national Church needs to play in supporting ministers whose congregation size can change dramatically.

"The trend is for the focus to go on rebuilding the inner city, but many people move to the fringes where the Church has to look after them," says Colin. "Ministers' livelihoods can be impacted by losing their congregations, and the red zoning of east Christchurch resulted in a 40 percent decline in Church membership in the area."

A fund will be created for interim stipends in such cases. The new emergency preparedness response protocols and procedures were signed off by the Council of Assembly in May and will be distributed to all parishes. The plan will also be part of general training for ministers and elders, and will continue to evolve.

Jade Reidy Spanz

## The Tindall Foundation Funding Applications

Presbyterian Support New Zealand is The Tindall Foundation Faith Funding Manager for Presbyterian organisations and parishes. We are pleased to invite applications for the 2017-18 funding round.

The Foundation allocates funds to PSNZ for distribution to projects undertaken by Pres-

byterian Support regional organisations and Presbyterian and Union parishes under the Supporting Families and Communities criteria.

Donations of up to \$15,000 per project can be made. Applications for projects meeting the criteria are now open.

**The closing date is Friday 23 June.**

For funding criteria and application forms please visit our website: [ps.org.nz](http://ps.org.nz)





# Filmmakers' faith on view

**Stories told through a camera lens have a special way of connecting with people. Few know that better than two young filmmakers whose faith helps guide the shutter button.**

There are some parallels to be found in the way Jason Williamson and Mike Gamble flirted with film as youngsters.

Jason, of Mosgiel Presbyterian, says his dad frequently had a camera at hand, and Jason remembers dabbling in sixth-form filmmaking. Mike made films at primary school, no doubt the legacy of having a professional photographer for a grandfather.

Both men subsequently went on to become professional filmmakers themselves and share the belief that film is an ideal medium through which to shine God's light in the world.

"I'm part-cynic and part-optimist," Jason concedes. "Maybe I'm naïve, but I believe that through film and a Christian approach, we can make the world a better place."

Both men have guided eager Presbyterian youth through the Church's annual film festival, helping them explore ways in which to tell Christian stories through the camera.

The Southern Presbytery Filmfest is open to those under 25, and calls on entrants to weave a story into a five-minute film suitable for both adults and children.

As amateur filmmaking has become more accessible through technology, so interest has grown, and Jason and Mike's pathways to going professional are now encouraging others.

It was soon after that episode of sixth-form filmmaking that Jason found himself in a bit of a bind. He wanted his own video camera to make another film, but wasn't old enough to finance one himself.

"My parents could co-sign, but they were away, so I asked my gran to help. I told her I needed it for university in Wellington."

Jason's grandmother agreed, and that \$1000 video camera ran hot until he graduated with a degree in industrial design.

While studying, he worshiped at St Barnabas Presbyterian Church in Plimmerton, Porirua, where his involvement with youth saw him enter the annual film festival and help his group net several successive wins. He later judged festival film entries and assisted in running the event.

After he graduated university Jason took a job in the communications field in Auckland, but the pull of camera remained strong; videography work he did while studying re-ignited his passion for film and resulted in him taking on more film work before establishing his own film business – which he took back to Mosgiel with him.

Much of the filming he now does is with NGOs, churches or Christian organisations, which means his work seldom conflicts with his faith.



Professional filmmaker Jason Williamson says films seen through a Christian lens can help people see good in the world.

"I have turned the odd job down. I just want to interpret events through film, and present them in a way that makes people see good in the world. Sometimes you have to shine a light on what is broken to make the world a better place."

Mike Gamble met Jason at St Barnabas church Plimmerton as a teenager. His family's home movie camera had already piqued an interest in filmmaking, and he was soon involved in entering the film festival, leading his group to a "best film" title twice along the way.

After a time assisting a professional cameraman at stadium and television shoots, Mike decided to study film in Dunedin. Since then, he has notched up an impressive resume of work that includes helping with the new 'Pork Pie' movie, doing commercials, providing film coverage of national and international events, working on New Zealand television's news and current affairs programmes, and filming shows including the Paul Henry Show and Campbell Live.

In late 2016, Mike went out on his own, establishing a freelance operation that covers video production and television work throughout the country.

"Film is an incredibly interesting way of starting a conversation with people, but it can lead to some very emotion-filled situations. There are a huge number of stories to be told...I see a lot of God in them. Film brings your faith into sharp focus," he says.

Viv Posselt [@spanz](#)





## Hamilton couple help Vanuatu Church

**It was a perfect storm that led Martyn and Annette Vincent 2323km from their home in Hamilton to Port Vila in Vanuatu.**

The couple had a long-standing connection to the Pacific island through a Ni-Vanuatu family who joined Hamilton's Knox Christian Centre six years ago, the same church the Vincents belong to.

"We kept in contact with this family when they returned to Vanuatu, which prompted us to take an interest in the Global Mission of our Church in Vanuatu, led by Rev Phil King," says Martyn, a Knox church elder.

In 2015, the couple decided to have a holiday in Vanuatu and while there, they visited Lenekal College on the island of Tanna, to bring back news of staff and students following the devastating Cyclone Pam.

Not long after returning home, the couple received the news that the company Martyn worked for was closing down and he would be made redundant in August 2016.

It was something of a turning point. "We felt that the Lord was opening a door for us to work with Global Mission," says Annette, Knox's children's ministry co-ordinator and one of its music leaders.

When Pastor Allen Nafuki of the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (PCV) approached Phil seeking help with the financial area of their operations, Martyn seemed the perfect fit.

The couple moved to Port Vila in March 2017 and plan to be there for six months, although this may extend.

Martyn is currently working with the finance team at PCV, helping to improve their financial systems and producing annual reports for the last four years. Annette, who is a quantity surveyor and has been teaching quantity surveying at Waikato Polytech for several years, has been assisting with proposed building



Martyn and Annette Vincent are enjoying their time in Vanuatu.

projects for PCV and the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union (PWMU). She is also helping Onesua Technical College to have one of its courses accredited with the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority.

The couple, who left their adult children in the Waikato (and London), say they are enjoying their time in Vanuatu.

"The people here are so friendly and it's easy to start a conversation with total strangers," says Martyn. "Vanuatu is a beautiful country with many attractive beaches, walks and abundant natural beauty."

They are also enjoying attending the International Christian Church which is predominantly made up of ex-pats and volunteers from around the globe. "It's a truly multicultural congregation which also includes some Ni-Vans," says Annette. "We find the style of worship similar to Knox and are receiving good scriptural teaching."

In fact, the only hurdles they've encountered include the heat, termite dust and illness in the first two weeks.

"Adjusting to the daily 30 degree temperatures and the low of 23 at night was a challenge," admits Martyn. "We had hoped to be able to visit a Ni-Van church but are planning to do so once the worst of the heat is gone."

They have also been busy making friends, including fellow Global Mission volunteers in Port Vila, Neville and Gloria Jones. "They are also here for the rest of this year and have been giving us wonderful support and encouragement. We've been having fun and have formed a strong friendship," says Martyn.

"Our Ni-Vanuatu landlord and his family have also been wonderfully supportive and PCV staff have been very good about helping us settle in. In fact, they were very concerned about our health as we adjusted to the heat in our first few weeks."

At this stage, it looks like Martyn and Annette will remain in Port Vila until November this year.

"What the future holds is in God's hands," says Annette. "We will consider coming back next year if God and PCV want us to. Martyn's project may well extend, but at this stage is set to finish later this year, and my work may also extend. But there is a lot of work for the Global Mission team here in Vanuatu, including working with schools, adult education and health, so we would be honoured to come back and continue this work."

*Editor's note - Interested in joining or working with the Global Mission team in Vanuatu? Contact Rev Phil King, phil@presbyterian.org.nz.*

Sharon Stephenson Spanz



# Rice Bowl Mission projects growing

**The Church's partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar is going from strength to strength, and is a testament to the power of personal relationships.**

Many people experience reversals of fortune, but few are as dramatic as that of Henry Van Thio. A worker at the Balclutha freezing works, Henry was in Dunedin with his wife Anna Hluan, who was studying for a PhD in Theology, when landmark elections were announced for Myanmar (Burma). He decided to stand, and in late 2015 found himself vice-president of his newly democratic country.

The Rev Helen Harray and her husband Wayne had befriended the couple and decided to make Myanmar one of their stops that year on a six-month exploration of where they could best express ministry in another country.

"Everything seemed to fall into place with Myanmar," says Helen, "so we approached Rev Phil King to see what opportunities might be available."

The Harrays accompanied Global Mission coordinator Rev Phil King on another visit to Myanmar in March this year to look at a specific project at the Presbyterian Church's Tahan Theological College, in the Sagaing District bordering the Chin State. One of the least developed and poorest areas in the predominantly Buddhist country, the Chin State's almost 500,000 inhabitants are 85 percent Christian.

Tahan Theological College is seeking to be more self-sufficient. There is land for gardens and livestock, which Wayne – a civil engineer and farmer – would develop and manage. The food would feed the 140 students and potentially become a source of income. Helen is keen to teach, and to empower women.

"There is any amount of work to be done in the Bible College and, further afield, existing projects that need oversight, or



With staff from the Tahan Theological College, Rev Helen Harray and husband Wayne look at land in Myanmar to develop and manage.

new ones to develop," she says. "There are so many opportunities."

And a few hurdles yet to jump before they can leave Dunedin in October for the new adventure. The Harrays need business visas for their anticipated three-year mission, which are a pre-requisite for renting accommodation in Myanmar and keeping costs affordable. Funding is being sought through a first-of-its-kind partnership between the Council for World Mission (CWM), the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar (PCM) and the Church.

In their late 50s, the Harrays expect to be living for the first time in a tropical country, with language, culture and climate challenges. They will likely be the only Europeans in Tahan/Kalaymyo.

For Phil, the visit in March was the first opportunity to see up close the projects the Rice Bowl Mission has been funding in the Chin State for over a decade. The region has been off-limits to visitors until very recently.

"I took loads of photos," he says. "One of the key things for me is to communicate well with our donors, so they can see the money is being well spent."

The long-term partnership has been so successful that Phil was also presented, at a meeting in Tahan with the PCM, with a lengthy list of new projects to consider, totaling \$200,000. Aside from development and income generating projects, the Rice Bowl fund supports

scholarships and disaster relief. Phil says he is keen to see resources being directed to capacity building rather than physical buildings.

"I think training and education should become our primary focus," he says, "and the members of the Myanmar Support Group, who help to decide on project funding, get excited by projects that help develop independent thought in young people," says Phil.

Under military rule, all freedom of expression and thought in Myanmar was discouraged and punished. The national youth department of the PCM last year led political education seminars to help young people to think critically, funded by the Rice Bowl Mission.

Presbyterian Youth Ministry is partnering with Global Mission to lead a young adults "Going Global" programme to Myanmar in November/December this year. Designed as short-term cultural exchanges with partner churches, this year's Myanmar programme is being planned to give university students the opportunity to participate once their exams are over. Applications have already closed, but there are other Going Global programmes still available. To view these, and to read the latest Mingalaba newsletter on Rice Bowl Mission projects see [www.presbyterian.org.nz/national-ministries/global-mission](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/national-ministries/global-mission)

Jade Reidy Spanz



## Join Operation Refugee for Syria

*"Let us be grateful to the people who make us happy: they are charming gardeners who make our souls blossom."*  
**Fatima, Doa'Zeinab and Isra, Syrian women participants in DSPR Jordan's programmes.**

There is laughter and chatter as Syrian and Palestinian refugee families squash into the special tent set up for the afternoon's performance. After a day at the children's forum run by Christian World Service (CWS) partner the Department of Palestinian Refugees in Jordan, the signs of worry have gone from their faces. Excited about the upcoming performance, memories of the war they have fled slip to the back of their minds.

One by one, the groups perform a mixture of traditional dances and songs and their own creations. Free from the burden of being a refugee, the children are once again Syrian, proud of the deep traditions of their homeland.

### Operation Refugee challenges Kiwis to help

Thanks to last year's Operation Refugee, a fundraising initiative designed as a way to encourage New Zealanders to stand with refugees, and donations to the Syria Appeal matched by the New Zealand government aid budget, CWS has been able to fund the operation of 16 children's forums.

The children make puppets, play games and talk under the guidance of tutors who understand what it is like to lose family members, friends and a home. The regular meetings are a highlight in the often bleak existence of people living in exile and traumatised by more than six years of war.

The Operation Refugee challenge asks participants to live on refugee rations for five days and raise funds to get desperately needed help to refugees. This year's challenge is being held from



16-20 June, and a two-day version is also available for school students, explains Pauline McKay national director of CWS. Funds raised will provide food, education, medical care and other livelihood support to some of the more than 1.7 million Syrian refugees now resident in Jordan and Lebanon.

Participants sign up on line: <http://www.cwsoperationrefugee.nz/>, download the kete of resources, design their own fundraising page and invite others to support their effort. The incentive of bonus food items when fundraising goals are met will make the Operation Refugee diet tastier, says Pauline.

CWS will send the first 150 people a food box containing beans, lentils, flour, fish (which can be swapped for more pulses) salt and vegetable oil, and participants are asked to supply their own rice. The kete includes recipes created by chef Grant Allen and lots of fundraising tips.

Last year's trial boosted the CWS Syria Appeal by \$40,000, which was enough to pay for 566 family emergency food parcels or for 1,600 refugees to have a free medical check-up. This year CWS aims to double that figure. The team led by Presbyterian youth ministry national manager Gordon Fitch topped the donations chart last year, so the challenge is on to do even more this year, says Pauline.

### On the ground

Refugees depend on global support to survive. Any money they brought with

them has long been spent. Mothers are increasingly desperate as rations, schooling and medical care are cut. Nearly half of primary age children are missing school in Lebanon and most lack access to basic healthcare. Older children are being sent to work and growing numbers of girls are married off before reaching the age of 18.

DSPR, established by Middle Eastern churches in 1949 to respond to the needs of Palestinians who had fled their homes in the Nakba, know exactly what new refugees need. From the beginning, they have mobilised voluntary help from medical staff at Jordan's hospitals to hold free medical days for Syrian refugees, including treatment, referrals and workshops. They work through a system of self-help groups and run training for their leaders. In this way, Syrians learn from each other and build good relationships with existing Palestinian refugees. In some of the informal and Palestinian camps where Syrians are sheltering, DSPR organises classes and training for school-aged children who need extra tuition or special help. They also provide emergency food or cash grants help when possible.

CWS invites congregations to mark Refugee Sunday on 24 June to pray and reflect on our responsibilities as Christians to refugees. Worship and appeal resources will be available at [www.cws.org.nz](http://www.cws.org.nz)





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