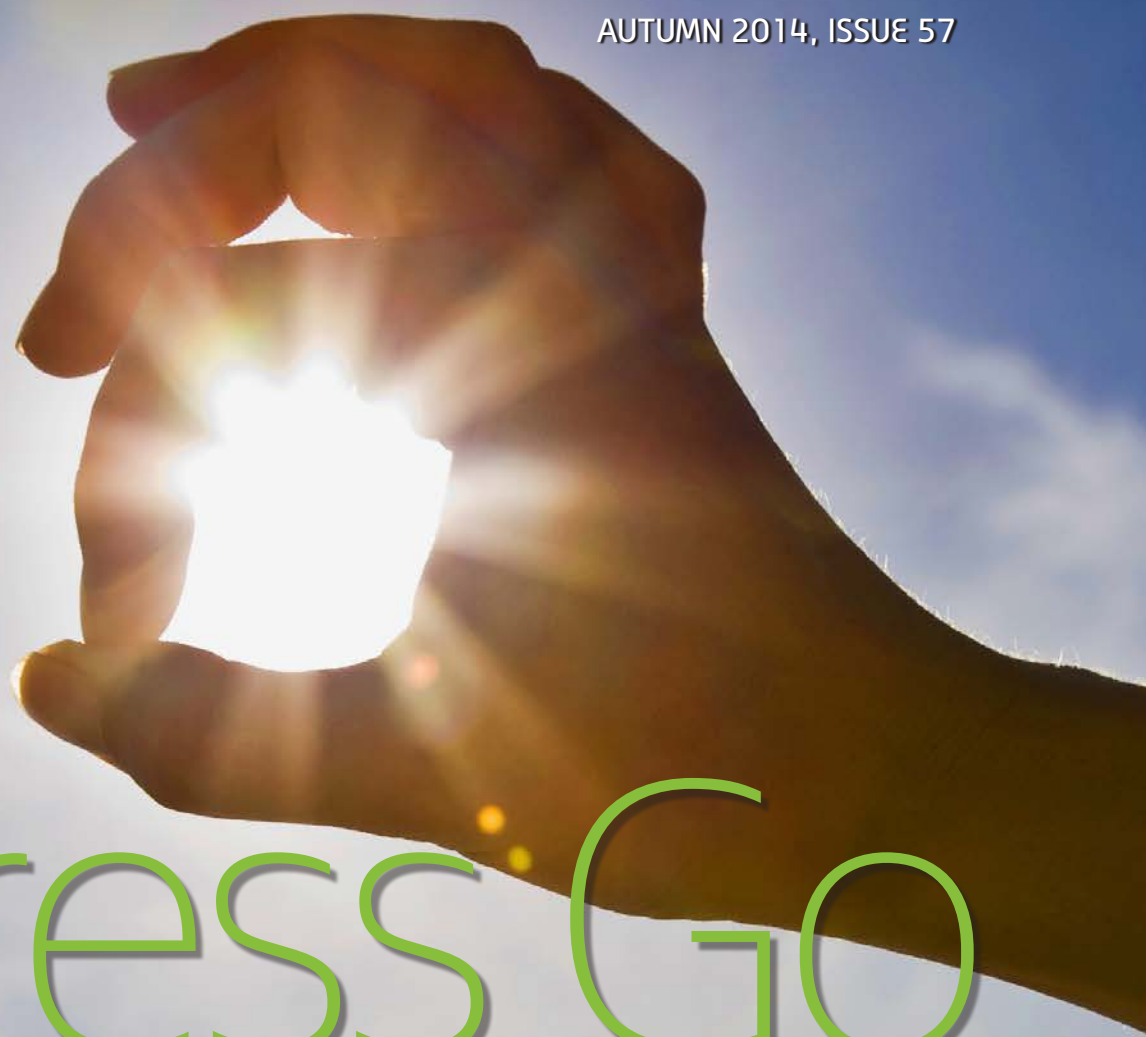


Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

AUTUMN 2014, ISSUE 57



Press GO

CHANGES FOCUS

www.presbyterian.org.nz

The Census, Christianity and Presbyterians

The results of the 2013 Census are slowly being released piece by piece. This is true of the figures for religions also, which makes more detailed analysis difficult. Some of the analysis in the mainstream media has been inaccurate on some points. But the main trend is clear. The overall decline in Christian affiliation or identity is continuing and, as one headline put it, "Census shows Christians are no longer a majority in New Zealand."

In 1961 Christians made up almost 90% of the population. By 2006 it was down to 56% and by 2013 48%. The biggest increase was in those stating no religion which rose from just over 30% to 39% of the population, a 26% increase. Those identifying with religions other than Christianity also increased from about 4.5% of the population to 6%. These three trends have been happening since the 1960s.

The major change in this census is that as a US report indicated "the decline narrative reaches evangelicals." All branches of the church declined between 2006 and 2013. Baptists and Pentecostals who had increased since the 1960s showed decline in this census, and Catholics who had bucked their decline in the previous two census returns also declined. The overall rate of decline when worked out on an annual basis remained about the same. (We need to be aware that this census covers a seven year period instead of the usual five).

For Presbyterians the decline continues, down from 385,000 in 2006 to 316,000, in percentage terms from 9.5% to 7.5% of the population. In some research I carried out in 2003, which I have written about elsewhere, I predicted that looking at the age profile of the Presbyterian Church (as well as that of Anglicans and Methodists) 2015 would be a significant year. These statistics indicate this as the rate of decline accelerated from 1.3% annually between 2001 and 2006, to 3.1% between 2006

and 2013. This is faster than the overall rate of decline for Christians which has seen the Presbyterian proportion of the Christian community decline from 18% to 16.4%. These are sobering figures for both the Presbyterian Church and the state of Christianity in New Zealand in general.

Looking at the regional data for Presbyterians its strength in the community remains in the south where it makes up slightly over 20% of the population in Southland and almost 16% in Otago. Next highest is Canterbury with almost 9%, mainly in the rural districts south of Christchurch. In Auckland where the country's population is concentrated, it is slightly over 6.5%. In moving to Auckland a point to note is that it has the highest percentage of religious people at almost 60%, compared with 55% nationally.

This latter point is, of course, largely a result of migration patterns. Again I have written elsewhere that the only way the church is growing in New Zealand, as in most western societies, is through immigration. Because a very high percentage of migrants are religious other religions also increase. This is one of the reasons the older strong secularisation argument is being discarded or significantly changed. With the ethnic / religious data correlations not having yet been released we cannot make any specific comments on this. But it is obvious for the Presbyterian Church that without Pacific Island and Asian immigrants our figures would be even worse.

The other data set missing is correlation with the age cohorts. It will be interesting to discover whether the decline is just due to the aging and death of those lifelong loyal Presbyterians, which is likely to continue as the Bible Class generation of the 1950s grows older (the last of these now entering that group) or whether considerable numbers of younger generations are also disaffiliating.

Overall church attendance in NZ seems to have stabilised since 2000 at about 10% on a Sunday. Christian identity though continues to steadily decline. This would support the argument made by sociologists that religion depends on community / institutional expression to be maintained



Rev Dr Kevin Ward

But the main trend is clear. The overall decline in Christian affiliation or identity is continuing and, as one headline put it, "Census shows Christians are no longer a majority in New Zealand."

and transmitted long term, and the longer Christian believing (identity) is separated from Christian belonging (church going) then the weaker it becomes until it too fades away for many.

The challenge for the church is how can we connect in meaningful ways with the nearly half of the New Zealand population who still identify with Christianity, which for the Presbyterian Church is still some 316,000 people.

The Rev Dr Kevin Ward is a lecturer at the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, Dunedin, and an adjunct lecturer in Theology and Religion at the University of Otago.

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MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

The Right Rev Ray Coster contributes a regular column to *Spanz*



“When a player makes the All Blacks they’re given a book. It’s a small black book bound in fine leather and beautiful to hold. The first page shows a jersey, that of the 1905 Originals, the team that began this long whakapapa. On the next page is another jersey, that of the 1924 Invincibles, and on the page after another jersey, and another, and so on till the present day.

It’s a visual whakapapa layered with meaning, a legacy to step into. The next few pages of this All Black handbook remind you of the principles, the heroes, the values, the standards, the code of honour, the ethos, the character of the team. The rest of the pages are blank. Waiting to be filled. It’s time to make your mark, they say. *Your* contribution. It’s time to leave a legacy. *Your* legacy. It’s your time.”¹

In his book *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell reminds us that nobody is a self-made person. We all stand on the shoulders of someone else. We have all inherited a legacy of some sort from someone.

This year of 2014 marks the bicentenary of Christianity in New Zealand. This year we remember the wonderful legacy and the solid foundation we have been given by the Christians who have gone before us. Maybe we in the Presbyterian Church should produce a little black book similar to the one an All Black receives to give to every new member of our church. The first few pages would tell the highlights our wonderful story and the next ones will be blank – waiting for each member to write their legacy of faith to pass on to someone else.

One page of that book would have to tell the significance of Maori taking the Gospel throughout NZ. Within 40 years of Marsden preaching that first sermon at Oihi Bay in 1814 there were 440 Maori missionaries or teachers ministering the gospel and only 23 pakeha.² It was Maori who were the first to build on the solid foundation following the early pakeha missionaries. This year let’s honour people like Ruatara, Te Kooti, Rua Kenana, Tahupotiki Wiremu Ratana, Wiremu Tamihana, Piripi Taumata-ā-Kura and Ihāia Te Ahu. Another page could tell of John Dunmore Lang and John Macfarlane – the early Presbyterians.

But the bigger question for me is, “What is the legacy we are leaving for the generations that will follow us?” What will they write about our era?

A big part of the ethos of being an All Black is that an individual cannot ‘hide’ behind the team. Each person is expected to make their contribution. Each All Black is expected to write their own story in their book that one day will be part of the overall story.

In the same way that the All Blacks are one team, we are one denomination. I encourage us all as we think about the legacy we are laying down for the next 10, 20, or 200 years, to think about the important part each of us as an individual plays in the Presbyterian Church. Each of us has an important story to tell. As followers of Jesus we have experienced the power of the Cross, we are motivated by the Resurrection and we are empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Let us all become more passionate about our faith and more authentic in our expression of it. Let us in our Christian faith outdo the All Blacks’ fervour for rugby.

¹ Taken from *Legacy* by James Kerr p. 183

² <http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/nga-hahi-maori-and-christian-denominations/page-1>

Refocus for



Since its establishment in 2008 Press Go has moved its focus away from being a grant provider. The Rev Andrew Norton explains why and what the future holds for Press Go.

To make sure it was staying focused on the Church's evolving needs, Press Go decided in the middle of last year to take a step back and evaluate how well it was achieving its objectives.

The result, a strategic plan and an acknowledgement of the strengths and weaknesses of the existing model, led Press Go to reposition itself away from a focus on providing grants to a broader vision of resourcing and equipping mission.

Despite the change Press Go is still very much about providing a mechanism for collectively funding promising growth ideas.

Press Go was established with the vision that every church or presbytery committed to a growth project would receive the resources it needs. While this core belief remains at the heart of Press Go's work things are done a bit differently now, explains the Rev Andrew Norton, convener of the Press Go board.

"Previously, we put a lot of effort into funding projects. But this isn't sustainable in the long-term and we quickly realised that some of the biggest needs in the Church required building greater capacity rather than simply giving money.

"So we now have three focus areas: inspiring mission, building capacity, and providing seed funding."

Once of the catalysts for change was that the Press Go board noted a scarcity of the

skills that were necessary to successfully drive major new initiatives.

"In the applications we were getting, we recognised a real need in many churches for strategic mission development, financial management, project management and fundraising skills. Without these abilities it's difficult for a project to be successful. So we sought to integrate capacity building into what Press Go does.

"Another shift in our thinking resulted from the Christchurch earthquake. The impact on churches throughout New Zealand has been phenomenal. We've got congregations who need to go through massive change as a result of needing to reconsider the future of their buildings. And they can't consider buildings without first considering mission."

Among the most obvious of the changes that has been put in place to facilitate the re-focus on resourcing mission is that all applications to Press Go must now be accompanied by a mission action plan.

"Our application forms are still on the web but the paper application is simply a document that says 'let's have a conversation'," says Andrew. "It's where everything starts. The more of those conversations we've had the more we've been able to help without it costing any money."

"At the moment, we're working directly and indirectly with many parishes on their mission action plans."

One of the other changes we can expect is that we will see more Press Go-led equipping events like last year's very

successful Offspring gathering which saw people from around the country meeting in Wellington to hear from those involved in new missional ventures.

Gatherings where people can come together to share stories and learn from one another will be an important part of what Press Go does going forward says Andrew.

And the other big change is that Press Go has decided to create and fund a new role called Press Go Catalyst. The Catalyst will work alongside parishes with promising missional ventures to help them build applications that meet the Press Go criteria for funding.

Inspiring Mission

A core element of Press Go's plan going forward is to inspire congregations in their mission. Telling stories will be a big part of this, explains Andrew.

"There were lots of stories told at Offspring. They weren't always perfect stories but it's about encouraging the mission mindset. As we hear the stories of what God is doing at work in the church, and what congregations are doing as they respond to God's prompting, we are inspired."

Press Go will be holding a stream for sharing inspiring stories of mission at 2014 Assembly Week.

Capacity Building

"To ensure the success of projects we need to lift the professionalism across the Church in areas of finance, property, mission planning and capital fundraising. These are really specific skills and sometimes they aren't present within the congregation."

So Press Go has created a new national role of Catalyst which is a full-time position focused on supporting parishes that have promising missional ventures and want to apply for Press Go funding. At the time of writing the Catalyst position had yet to be advertised but whoever is appointed to the role is expected to bring some of the specialist skills – project management, financial management, strategic planning – that will help make projects successful.

The ultimate purpose of the Catalyst, says Andrew, is to help parishes examine their proposed missional ventures with a critical eye and discern the best way



People from Knox Church Community Centre in Waitara, Taranaki gather for fellowship and food.



Better facilities for South Kaipara's young people is one of the many mission ventures supported by Press Go.

forward by enhancing their planning and understanding of their mission context, finances and other resources.

“The Catalyst will facilitate a planning process that considers the context of the congregation, its mission objectives, its financial position, its challenges and imperatives, its options and choices.”

Press Go has been doing this sort of thing already but to date this work has been reliant on the time and skills of Press Go board members, explains Andrew.

“While this has been rewarding it is also been demanding and time-consuming. The Board believes that it’s crucial to continue to have a hands-on connection with the congregations and the Catalyst will enable this process.”

Seed Funding

Andrew acknowledges that seed funding is the smallest part of the Press Go budget.

“We started out as a granter and really quickly that saw that it was a problem in that a grant can build a dependency factor. It’s like a hand-out rather than a hand-up. So now our focus is on providing seed funding,” he says.

Press Go has funded several feasibility studies and Andrew believes this is money well spent because it tests a project’s assumptions and offers insight into the initiative.

“A study might tell us we’re thinking too small. It might identify some alternative revenue streams. But overall it provides an independent assessment of the merits of the project. From there the parish can decide how to respond.”

So far, Press Go has been able to deploy \$1.6m to assist with growth initiatives and while some money remains in the kitty further financial support from parishes will be necessary to continue to collectively fund promising initiatives.

Press Go is also increasingly looking to broker relationships between churches who have funds and those that have projects, as it did with St John’s in the City who financially supported Knox Waitara’s building replacement project.

The resources the Church holds are for the collective good of all. Matching up potential funders with those who have projects will be important going forward.

The Future

So what does the future hold for Press Go?

“The ultimate measure is that we are partnering an increasing number of successful missional ventures that are bringing the Good News to people.

“To make that happen we need to get the Catalyst role up and running. Identifying funds to assist with projects will be a necessary focus as well,” says Andrew.

A proposal to put a small portion of funds from property sales into a Mission Enterprise Fund is expected to go before Assembly for consideration in 2014.

Monies generated from this fund would help to collectively fund promising growth initiatives.

Press Go is also expecting to continue working on strategic relationships with the Church Property Trustees, Presbyterian Savings and Development Society, presbyteries and others. “We need to work together to be successful.”

So far, Press Go has provided funding and/or expertise to support these projects:

- ›› Building replacement for Knox Community Church Centre in Waitara
- ›› Programmes co-ordinator for St Andrew’s Waipukurau youth ministry
- ›› Church planter training for Bethlehem Community Church
- ›› Regional conference centre development led by Crossroads
- ›› Replanting of Lighthouse Church
- ›› Support for South Kaipara building refurbishment
- ›› Lakeside Te Anau building expansion
- ›› Support for Asian Ministries Co-ordinator role
- ›› Mission worker for Auckland CBD Mandarin community
- ›› MicroChurch network in Taranaki
- ›› Support for Wadestown Presbyterian’s community minister
- ›› Support for national role for Worship, Music and Arts enabler
- ›› Church plant in Rolleston led by Hope Presbyterian
- ›› Support for Christchurch minister to attend urban redevelopment conference

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)

Inspiring Mission

ASSEMBLY WEEK 2014

Steve Taylor is Assembly Week 2014 keynote speaker

Moderator-Designate, the Rev Andrew Norton, has invited the Rev Dr Steve Taylor to be the Assembly Week keynote speaker at the 2014 General Assembly.

Steve was an inspiring and well received speaker at the Press Go Offspring gathering in Wellington in October last year. He is the Principal of the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology in South Australia where he also lectures in missiology and is a senior lecturer at Finders University.

Assembly Week 2014 will be held over five days from Friday 3 to Tuesday 7 October at Saint Kentigern College, Pakuranga, Auckland. Steve will give keynote addresses on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

He is planning a set of three studies based on narratives from Luke's Gospel. Steve has chosen "Hospitality - your place or mine?" as his theme. "I want to look at how Jesus so often did mission at someone else's place, and tell stories of what that looks like in our world today," he explains.

Steve hopes listeners will take away "the encouragement to look for what God is doing in their context, the challenge to think about mission as playing away from home, giving up our notions of any home ground advantage".

"I tend to speak in a fairly interactive way – mixing visuals, stories, hands-on engagement."

Steve is a New Zealander and is married to Lynne. They have two daughters. Before following a call to ministry he worked in the orchards of Central Otago.

"I became fascinated by growing people and healthy communities as well as plants. So I trained for ministry with a mission focus at Carey Baptist College."

Steve completed a Masters degree exploring images of Christ in contemporary culture, and a PhD in contextual mission and new forms of church. He lectured at Carey Baptist and Laidlaw colleges during his 15 years of ministry with the Baptist Church.

In 2010 Steve left New Zealand to serve at the Uniting College where he is now Principal.

Steve says he has found during his travels and working with a variety of denominations that mission becomes a unifying theme. "Whatever our context, we are aware of rapid change and sense God's call to something new. That provides an energy and focus."

Offspring was not Steve's first experience of speaking at a Presbyterian gathering. He says that "at the risk of being irreverent, I do have one classic Presbyterian story. I was asked to preach at an annual service in North Canterbury. As I was introduced I heard someone behind me say, 'At least he isn't Presbyterian and won't make us feel guilty'. I'm sure that's not a fair impression of your Church!"

You can follow Steve on his blog: emergentkiwi.org.nz

Angela Singer Spanz



The Rev Dr Steve Taylor.

"Inspiring Mission", the Assembly Week logo, is now available for download from the PCANZ website <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/about-us/general-assembly/assembly-week-2014> Keep checking our website for information on Assembly Week. It will be posted here as it becomes available.

Would you like to be involved in Assembly Week? The Church is seeking expressions of interest from people who are interested in contributing in the following areas:

- Networks that can work together on a particular area of ministry or mission
- Resourcing, for example, on fresh expressions of church, preaching and spiritual growth
- Storytelling, for example, stories of churches making a difference in our society
- Inspiring speakers from throughout New Zealand
- Writers of songs, poems and prayers are invited to send submissions for a prayer resource.

Email the Moderator, the Right Rev Ray Coster: moderator@presbyterian.org.nz

Presbyterian re-establishes chaplaincy at Mt Eden Prison



The Rev Amiria (Judy) Te Whiu coordinating ecumenical chaplain at Mt Eden Prison.

The most rewarding part of re-establishing chaplaincy services at Mt Eden Prison is being there for prisoners and staff, says the Rev Amiria (Judy) Te Whiu coordinating ecumenical chaplain at the privatised Serco facility.

“Offering prayer in time of doubt, hopelessness and uncertainty and extending my hand in friendship, saying I’m there and that I care. That’s what I signed up for and I won’t let paper work or administration consume what I’m best at, and that’s being with people.”

Amiria (Ngāpuhi, Tainui, Te Arawa) was seconded to Mt Eden in April 2013 from her position as coordinating ecumenical chaplain at Ngāwha Prison near Kaikohe.

The 56-year-old, who is also regional link chaplain for Northland and Auckland, faced the unenviable task of re-building the relationship between Prison Chaplaincy Services Aotearoa New Zealand (PCSANZ) and Serco who had parted ways 18 months earlier.

“I don’t think the relationship ever fell down completely. They just allowed each

other to move in different directions and when God’s timing was right they’ve come back together.”

Amiria managed a handover period from Prison Fellowship New Zealand, which had provided spiritual guidance in the interim, and one of the first challenges she faced was creating a new place of worship.

“When I arrived, (the chapel) was basically a little room with a cross on the wall which didn’t reflect the spiritual needs of prisoners and staff at Serco.”

However with the support of prison director Gareth Sands, who Amiria describes as an inspirational leader, she was able to transform a cold institutionalised visiting area in the old women’s prison into a thriving place of worship.

“When Gareth and I walked through the visiting area he asked: ‘could you turn this space into a chapel?’ I added to the dream and made it a reality, and it’s become a multicultural, multi-purpose space.”

The complex encompasses a spiritual garden, a chapel and a smaller chapel where men can sit and reflect on their offending.

The main chapel features 15 ornate pews donated by St Paul’s Presbyterian Church in Devonport that are almost 100 years old. On the walls are six whakairo (carvings) representing the hapu that identify as mana whenua of greater Auckland. These set the boundaries of the whare (meeting house) named Te Puna Wananga.

Tapa cloth hangings acknowledge Pacific Island prisoners offering them a sense of cultural identity and belonging. And while there are no Islamic symbols in the chapel there is an understanding that Muslim inmates are welcome to use the facility.

Amiria also commissioned staff and prisoners to paint the 13 Stations of the Cross and these grace the walls within the chapel. “They had no idea what the Stations of the Cross were or what they looked like

and I was simply able to walk them through it and say ‘now just go away and interpret what you’ve seen through your own eyes’.

“I’ve been in a lot of chapels and I have to say that this one is by far the best. It has a beautiful feeling in it. It’s distinct and I’m certainly proud of it,” says Amiria.

Another initiative has been to introduce an email request app on the prisoner kiosk system to allow inmates to contact chaplains directly whether it be for a Bible, to see a chaplain, for communion or some other need.

“We’ve got almost a 1000 prisoners in our prison and we’ve got 2.5 chaplains so the ratio is huge and we had to work smarter not harder.”

Amiria, who oversees two part-time Catholic chaplains, an assistant chaplain and has a database of 200 volunteers in Auckland, admits she has to be organised.

Within New Zealand’s prisons 51% of the inmates are Maori and Amiria says she is able to provide a Maori perspective to chaplaincy and to bring a female viewpoint and provide the necessary balance required in tikanga Maori within the prison system.

“As a Maori, a Maori woman and a minister I’m able to capture that for Serco,” she says.

Moreover, as a mother of six and grandmother of 10 she is a maternal figure to many inmates.

“I try and help all prisoners but in particular young Maori prisoners who have gone astray and struggle with reintegration back into society,” says Amiria who has in the past had prisoners released to her Northland parish.

“Mine is an inside outside story – what happens inside is reflected by what happens on the outside in the continuation of my walk with them back into society. And that is what my ministry is all about.”

Robin Martin [Spanz](#)

Church leaders connect through blogging

An increasing number of Presbyterian church leaders and ministers are using online “blogs” to communicate with their communities and build and strengthen relationships.

A blog is a personal website or web page on which an individual, or sometimes a group, shares opinions, thoughts, news and links to other web sites. A blog post is a comment published to a blog web page, done with as much ease as posting a postcard: the blogger writes a subject line and whatever they wish to say then click a publish button. The blog software takes care of all the rest, making the blogger’s words available for the world to read, or perhaps respond to, via a device that can access the internet such as a computer, tablet and smartphone.

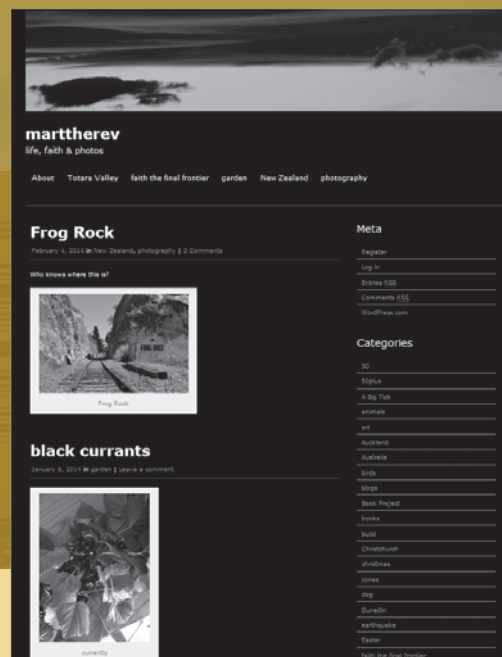
For the Rev Martin Stewart (<http://marttherev.wordpress.com>) blogging is, “a way of networking and conversation that traverses the usual circles one operates within both geographically and theologically”.

“I guess I want to encourage community and the opportunity to connect with perspectives that encourage good thinking and imagination”.

The Rev Dr Mark Keown (<http://drmarkk.blogspot.co.nz/>) says that he finds online discussion with readers of his blog to be particularly rewarding. “I simply speak into the ether and whoever is interested reads it. I will respond and have discussions with people who read my blog and comment. Some of these have been very long and interesting threads with atheists, agnostics, the doubtful, and faithful commenting. Sometimes it gets quite intense. I have learned an immense amount from people who have commented, particularly those whose view differs from my own.”

But we need to take a step back; before you can share ideas in a blog post you must first sign-up for a blog. One of the most popular free blog services is WordPress (<http://wordpress.com>). To create your own blog you visit the website, supply your email address, and choose a username, password and blog name. Then you’re done and can start sharing your thoughts with the world.

Although there are many blogs on the internet, most are quite different from each other. Look at the blogs by those interviewed here and you will see how each differs from the other: they look different; each person writes about different topics; some write often, others infrequently. Yet each is reaching out to readers, inviting them in to share the thoughts and experiences of the writer.



Martin says that his “blog reflects my interests, ideas and thoughts... ranging around theology, music, books, photography, humour, earthquakes and aftermath, and lifestyle”.

By responding with their own comments to a blog post, readers can transform a monologue into a dialogue or a conversation with many participants.

As the Rev Phil King, Global Mission coordinator, has found, the Global Mission blog (<http://www.globalmissionpcanz.blogspot.co.nz>) attracts “an unexpected audience with people overseas finding the site and making occasional comments and requests for more information. One was a film-maker researching the history of mission in the Pacific, leading to an email exchange helping him find more sources for his research”.

The key to a good blog is that it is a genuine expression of the writer. It should represent who they are and what their concerns are. Mark explains that he began blogging “because I like writing and thought that I would create my own vehicle to express my view on stuff. I am also aware through my ministry that there are some people out there who seem to value my viewpoint. I have a sense of calling to comment I suppose. I have no real goals with the blog except to express my point of view amidst the cacophony of voices that run through our world. I have a strong faith in God and have studied Scripture and wanted to give an evangelical perspective on issues in the world. I hope it causes people to think more about the world through the lens of Christ”.

Mark is concerned with authenticity too. He says about the length of his blog posts: “In trying to keep short you can evacuate the blog of any real depth of thought. You have to strike a balance between brevity and depth of thought. Being succinct and thoughtful is the challenge.”

For the Rev Cate Burton (<http://kei-te-pai-catie-pie.blogspot.co.nz>) genuine expression has seen her writing, “honest reflections on life and faith that people could relate to. So, I have shared on my blog ways I have encountered God in some everyday situations, as well as poetry which at times reflects a deeper truth I cannot explain any other way, and also reflections from my own life

The Kids Friendly Blog

NEWS
 WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2013
 Feeling the fear by Silvia Purdie

SEARCH THIS BLOG

RECENT POSTS

Feeling the fear by Silvia Purdie

I received a blog contribution from Rev Silvia Purdie this week (Wilson Combined Church) reflecting on her love of her team... and finding helpful ways to cope with and respond to it. It resonated with my observations while working with the Protestant Churches in Baden, Germany this month. Fear of losing what they love often prevents their leaders and congregations from embracing new ways of being church. Fear can be a negative force that debilitates change, but when named, it can be the first step to change. Discernment with the status quo is crucial for bringing about change in organisations, so when a church acknowledges that they are ministering effectively with children, they are ready to start the Kids Friendly review and dream new ways of being.

Feeling the fear by Silvia Purdie

God has a way of moving the past. I'm getting on with work and dishes and doing and sometimes emotions rise up out of nowhere. I guess that's God's way of making sure stuff doesn't stick to the bottom and burn. Stuff like fears. There's this week's challenge, anyway. Fear.

I don't have an anxious disposition. I tend to be positive, optimistic. But the more we invest ourselves in anything, the more we open ourselves up to fear. If we are willing to desire anything we risk losing it.

So... I like to have a tidy house but I really don't care that much. There's no deep fear in me of drowning in mess, and no high calling to have a spotless house. But when it comes to my kids, I care

Indian Church Protest Against Unjust Treatment of Dalits

Can you recall the last time senior officials from the Church were arrested and incarcerated for protesting about the institutional injustice being meted out to members of their community? Such an event would be extremely rare in New Zealand's history, but this was the reality for officials of the Church of North India (CNI), and other major denominations, in New Delhi in December 2014. The General Secretary of the CNI, Akshay Mishra, other members of the CNI Executive, and National Council of Churches in India representatives, were protesting about the poor treatment given to the class of people known as Dalits - the group of people who, in the former Indian caste system, were officially outside the caste system - 'untouchables' - and were known as untouchables.

Christmas in Mysore - Not What We Expected!

In December 2013 a team of young adults from the Wesleyan Church of New Zealand...

May I hug you? The Church of North India

is our mission partner in India, and we support the kind of projects described in this article. I talk quite often by the story. I thought I would catch it!

Fulness of Life in Jagadiri

My second visit this year to Jagadiri, India, was a valuable time of learning for me, and of relationship building.

The blog states dramatically with an account of Agassi's final dramatic march at the US Capitol. That chapter alone is worth the read. The story is best of the story. I don't just talk and report for you, but I am an engaged account of the whole. I don't just talk and report for you, but I am an engaged account of the whole. I don't just talk and report for you, but I am an engaged account of the whole.

Mark Keown

The blog of Mark Keown, New Testament lecturer at Latimer College, Auckland, New Zealand. It involves comments on theology, life, sport and whatever comes into Mark's random mind.

Open, Andre Agassi

Sally the holiday is over, and there is one more holiday-making blog I want to comment on. Open by Andre Agassi.

What a brilliant book! And I mean brilliant! I couldn't put it down. I am not alone in this sentiment, with many people saying 'I really enjoyed it' and 'I want to thank Agassi and Gracie for giving it to me for Christmas, and so on'.

The book states dramatically with an account of Agassi's final dramatic march at the US Capitol. That chapter alone is worth the read. The story is best of the story. I don't just talk and report for you, but I am an engaged account of the whole. I don't just talk and report for you, but I am an engaged account of the whole.

journey and relationships. I want to share with people my stories and God's stories so that they may just have the encouragement and the boldness to share their own".

Martin describes his blog as "a vehicle for relationship". "Or at least one level of relationship. I have a range of congregational members who access it. Blogging has allowed me access to other blogs and the wonders and tragedy of internet life, thus I am influenced and affected — but the upsides are that there is a community within the congregation who connect a bit through my 'agency' and things I post are the occasional topic of conversation. I have some deeper friendships with some people because they feel they have a better sense of what I am on about because of the blog."

Motivation to begin a blog can come from many sources, Jill Kayser, Kids Friendly national coach (<http://thekidsfriendlyblog.blogspot.co.nz>) began her blog at the suggestion of her daughter, Jessica, who blogged throughout her Masters thesis.

"In 2012 I was heading to Cambridge University in the UK for a sabbatical of reading, researching, exploring and discovering and Jessica said: 'Mum you should blog. It's a fantastic way to record your impressions, experiences, reflections and research.' She's right."

What started out as a way for Jill to record her experiences became something more inclusive when Jill opened the blog to all those involved in Kids Friendly.

There are many bloggers on the internet for whom the main motivation for starting a blog is to make money, through promoting a product or allowing advertising. While it's important to earn a living, a financial motivation can distort the communication and expression of the true self. Martin says he would "encourage constant examination of your motivations... do you want and need an audience vs are you making a contribution to the betterment of things?"

So is the time regular blogging requires worth the investment? Phil balances his desire to share Global Mission against work and travel constraints.

"The biggest hurdle is my lack of time to write the blog and add photos. I always travel with a camera, and like to include photos to help tell the story. This adds value to the blog but editing and selecting photos also takes more time. My blog tends to have long periods of inactivity, and I sometimes wonder if I have bitten off more than I can chew; but I think overall it is better to have it than not."

The rewards of finding the time and energy to blog are considerable, for both readers and writer, as Cate explains. "Blogging has made me better at self-expression, and made me a better writer too. I have been delighted when people have identified with what I have written on my blog, when they have a 'me too!' response and were just waiting for someone to say it 'out loud.'"

Miraz Jordan [Spanz](#)

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The Rev Tani Haunga in her office at Mt Albert Presbyterian, Auckland.

Church welcomes first Tongan minister

Ask the Rev Tani Haunga why she's the one who has become the Presbyterian Church's first Tongan minister, and she says it's because she was invited into leadership roles at Greenlane Presbyterian Church and then allowed to develop at her own pace.

And that, she says, is what churches should be doing with those who could become leaders, particularly young people and immigrants. "Hurrying people along the development process can scare them away."

Tani started going to Greenlane's main service after marrying her husband Iki. His father, Tauni Uasike, had started the Tongan fellowship there.

"At the beginning I was terrified because I was outside the comfort zone of my culture," she says. "But I started enjoying the environment – a contemporary, friendly family environment. My kids grew up in that environment and learnt to become comfortable in another culture.

"When they asked me to become an elder, I felt so scared. But they explained to me that they needed someone. Looking around me and seeing nobody else, I thought, it's got to be me. My

father-in-law encouraged me: 'You can do it, just go along'. I was only in my early twenties and if Greenlane hadn't pushed me, there's no way I would have put up my hand," says Tani, who is 42 now.

"I sat there in the session meetings and said nothing – for years, it seemed like. They accepted me and allowed me that space to absorb everything until I was comfortable to contribute. They gave me leadership roles – in reading, praying, singing – and that helped me grow slowly, at my own pace."

The calling of the Rev Emma Keown to the church was a revelation. "Initially it was a shock to me as a Pacific Islander that a woman was coming. B, but I realised it was also a liberation. She became a role model."

Tani started study at Laidlaw College in 2006 and completed her Bachelor of Ministries. Her planned Masters degree was scaled down to a Post Graduate Diploma in Theology, "because I just couldn't stop doing ministry," she says. "I had to either commit to this study or not – and ministry won."

Tani is now the minister of Mt Albert Presbyterian. She, Tani says their major challenge is "the same as everywhere – the lack of young people who feel comfortable to step into leadership roles.

"I feel they have not been welcomed into the church as young people. Kids are confined to the Sunday School rooms as the only place where they can be kids. But church is designed for the older, well-behaved and tidy. Kids grow to be teenagers and young adults and they continue to feel that they are not allowed to be themselves in church," says Tani, who as a keen player of volleyball, touch rugby and indoor netball, gathers up young people to take part in local sports.

To involve younger people actively in the church, she is starting a monthly family service. "It's a chance for anyone who is willing to take part. I only started advertising yesterday and I've already got keen families. I'm hoping this service will encourage more participation from our young people and in a few years, they may feel comfortable to be part of our leadership and committees, and be able to develop from there," she says.

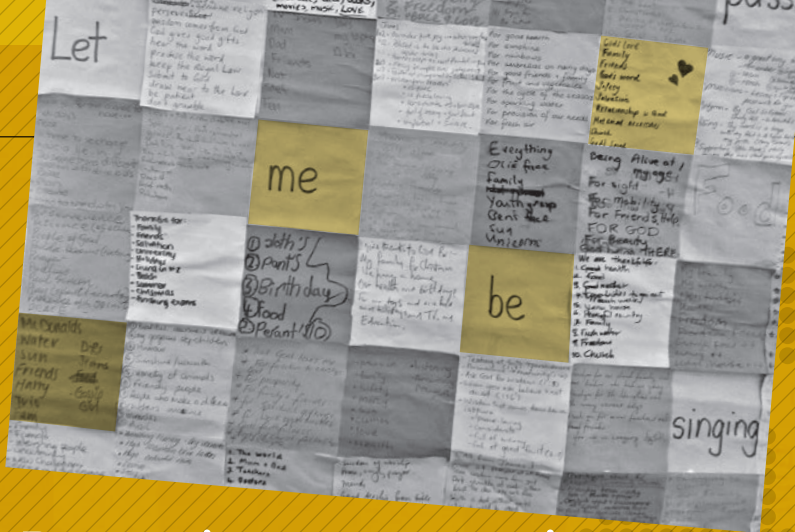
Tani, who describes herself as a computer geek, is now putting her weekly sermons on the church's website, and sees this as a mission activity. She's also a keen volleyball, touch rugby and indoor netball player and gathers up young people to take part in local sports.

Before training for ministry, Tani worked in accounts at Fletcher Challenge Forests. "I remember my boss calling me in and saying, 'Are you sure you are making the right decision?'"

"I said, 'God will provide' – and I really meant it. It was a hard journey financially as we have two children and I was the main breadwinner. But when I look back God provided through different means. One time the water cylinder at home burst and at church at morning tea a woman asked me how things were going at home. When I told her about the cylinder, she said, 'Let that be my contribution'.

"Today, as my needs change, God continues to provide."

Jane Tolerton [Spanz](#)



Post-it note project finds 10,080 reasons to praise God

At Flagstaff Community Church in Dunedin a favourite congregational song became the inspiration for an ambitious visual project.

The past couple of years has seen the song 10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord) by Matt Redman and Jonas Myrin become a firm favourite in churches across the country. At Flagstaff Presbyterian Church Cheryl Harray was enjoying singing the song when the thought struck her... what would 10,000 reasons to praise God actually look like?

Cheryl, who is Kids Friendly Advisor for the Synod of Otago and Southland, decided to create banners from 1,000 Post-it notes, each listing 10 reasons to praise God. Each banner would spell a word in one colour of Post-it notes – “bless”, “sing”, and “live”.

“We wanted to create something permanent, but in a manageable way,” says Cheryl.

“We worked out the dimensions and the logistics of how many notes we’d need, bought the materials and launched the Post-it note praise project on a very cold day in Dunedin with only about 20 people in church!”

The small congregation loved the idea. Flagstaff is currently without a minister and Cheryl says it can feel like a bit of a waiting game for a new minister to be called. So the project took on extra significance as a chance to practice thankfulness and giving praise. But the congregation knew that to reach the huge target of 1,000 Post-its they would need outside help.

Cheryl says that “as Kids Friendly Advisor, I travel around and attend training events.

So wherever I went I encouraged people to get involved. It was great to get them to write down 10 reasons on the spot. It was instant praise”.

Cheryl also asked several other churches to get involved - from Leith Valley in Dunedin to Bethlehem and St Peter's in the Bay of Plenty churches were keen to contribute.

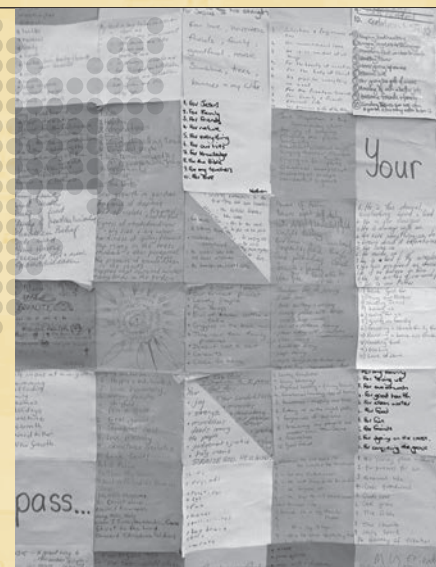
The Rev Helen Harray at Leith Valley based an all-ages service around the importance of giving thanks and gathered about 150 Post-its from the congregation, including many from children. “It was a wonderful idea so I was keen for the congregation to join the wider movement,” she says. “It was a reminder to be a people of praise and gratitude and a chance to help the children build this into their lives. Plus 10,000 Reasons is one of our favourite congregational songs.”

The Rev Ian Pittendreich of Bethlehem Community Church in Tauranga was previously minister at Flagstaff. In fact it was his wife Jacqui who introduced

10,000 Reasons to the Flagstaff congregation. He says “The Post-it idea was received really enthusiastically at Bethlehem and our congregation contributed about 50 Post-its, or 500 reasons.”

“It was really neat,” Jacqui adds. “To begin with people wondered how they'd reach ten reasons. But then suddenly they had heaps. We make lists when we pray anyway. But to actually write down and number the reasons to thank God, there's something about that process that's good.”

On 22 December 2013, nearly six months since the start of the project, the finished banners were revealed to the Flagstaff congregation. “We saw it grow before our eyes,” says Cheryl. “It was very exciting



Banners were created from 1,000 Post-it notes over a six month period.

and encouraging to see the banners fill up. The recurring themes on the Post-its were thankfulness for friends, family, the beautiful country we live in, and God's love.”

Cheryl took the banners with her when she went on holiday to the Bay of Plenty so the congregations of Bethlehem and St Peter's could see the finished work.

And she is keen for them to continue on and be shown to other churches too.

“The banners enhance worship in a visual way,” says Cheryl. “Close up you can read all the reasons. And when you stand back the visual effect strikes you and the words jump out. It's a cooperative sharing of something, an offering to God that goes beyond words to become visual praise. It's thrilling to see all the different styles of writing, from the beautiful cursive script of the elderly to the big, bold children's printing giving praise for mum, dad, the cat, and the dog! Seeing so much thankfulness is truly humbling.”

- › Each banner is 1.8m long and 1.2m wide
- › They are made of calico, and the Post-its are attached with glue
- › There are 336 Post-its per banner
- › $336 \times 3 = 1,008$ notes, each one with 10 reasons to praise God... that's 10,080 reasons.

Kate Davidson [Spanz](#)



New Youth Advisor for the Synod of Otago and Southland

Brad Kelderman says he learnt early in youth ministry that relationships were more important than programmes – and he has found the same applies whether in Brown’s Bay, West Auckland or Holland, and whether in Presbyterian, Brethren or Anglican churches.

Brad Kelderman, new Youth Advisor for the Synod of Otago and Southland, with his wife Marissa and daughters Torah and Annemijn.

“I saw that you could spend a lot of energy on programmes, lessons and games. But they didn’t necessarily bring success. Building relationships with the kids and their families did.”

Brad, 30, recently moved to Dunedin, with his wife Marissa and young daughters Torah and Annemijn, to take up the position of Youth Advisor for the Synod of Otago and Southland.

Brad was born in Auckland into a Brethren family that moved to Sydney and back again. Marissa has a Presbyterian background. She spent three years of her childhood in Wyndham where her father, the Rev Paul Andersen, was the minister at Wyndham Presbyterian Church. He is now minister at St John’s Waipawa in the Hawke’s Bay.

It was on a Christian camp as a teenager that Brad felt a calling to ministry; after that he knew which direction his life would take. After studying at Laidlaw College where he gained a Bachelor of Ministry, his first youth ministry assignment was in Brown’s Bay Presbyterian Church.

“I learnt by doing, and trying things out. Everything was new and I was on my own, so I learnt as I went,” he says.

Marissa was involved in a voluntary capacity, and the couple married there. They ended up sharing Brad’s next role, in a Brethren church in West Auckland.

“Marissa was working at a bank but doing youth ministry in the weekend. I didn’t think it was fair being able to sleep in on Monday morning so we split my job in half and studied. It was better for the youth ministry and better for our marriage.”

Brad started a Master of Theology degree, writing a thesis on Romans 9-11 and Paul’s use of Remnant Theology from the Old Testament.

As they both have Dutch ancestry, after five years in West Auckland the couple spent the next three years in Holland, again job-sharing, this time at an Anglican church.

“It was fun and exciting. It was a very international church so people came and went frequently. About one-third of the families would change every year because people were moving with work,” says Brad.

Brad found once again that he was coming up with new ideas rather than applying a formula. “The same things apply across the board but in a different context and a new culture, and you have to constantly tweak

them. You learn to be adaptable. That set me up for this new role because again I am working with a range of people.”

Brad says the major challenge of the role is to connect youth with the church community – and to encourage youth to take on leadership responsibilities, something that is harder now than it was when he himself became involved.

There was a very strong set of candidates for Brad’s new position, according to the Synod of Otago and Southland Mission Advisor, Bruce Fraser. “We were thrilled with the calibre of the candidates. We were spoilt with what we had to choose from.

“Even though he was unknown to the South we chose Brad because of his wealth of experience in a relatively short career and the way he presented himself.”

He says Brad has made a strong start in covering the huge territory of the Synod, which covers the southern one-third of the South Island – and 76 churches. “We were going to escort him round the district. But whenever we say we are going here or there we find he’s already made his own plans for going there.”

Jane Tolerton [Spanz](#)



Children from Kohimarama Presbyterian Church with Holly and other buddies.

Presbyterians Buddy Up

Presbyterians were among the hundreds of people that adopted a buddy as part of the annual Buddy Day event which helps raise awareness about child abuse.

Before Buddy Day arrives school children decorate life-size cardboard children.

These “buddies” are then adopted by adults who look after them for the day. The buddies’ carers take them into their communities and workplaces as props to generate conversations about child abuse and the responsibility every adult has to help protect children.

Child, Youth and Family figures show there were more than 21,000 confirmed cases of child abuse during 2012, approximately 60 every day. These figures are considered to be the tip of the iceberg, says Anthea Simcock, chief executive of the national child advocacy organisation Child Matters, which runs Buddy Day.

“New Zealand has one of the highest rates of death by child abuse out of 31 OECD countries. And for every child death in our community there are thousands more children being neglected and abused.

“Educating the adult population about where they can go if they suspect abuse, and empowering them to speak up if they do, is part of the solution to preventing child abuse. Raising awareness is also very important. That’s what Buddy Day is all about.

“The learning for our children is about what a child needs to be safe, happy and

healthy. Buddy Day demonstrates to children that adults are here to care for them and love them.”

This sentiment was taken to heart by the Revs Nikki and Richard Watkin, Northern Presbytery moderator, Roy Christian, Anne Overton from Presbyterian Support Northern and Christine Renner, who were among the hundreds of carers adopting buddies.

Christine, Kaimai Presbytery’s administrator, decided to get involved in Buddy Day this year because she had had an interest in the event for some time.

“I feel challenged by the levels of abuse and poverty in a so-called developed country like New Zealand, and sometimes wonder what I could do to make a difference. This was something I could do to show that I cared.”

Christine and her buddy Bob ran many errands together throughout the day, including a trip to the local mall for running repairs when Bob’s hair started coming unstuck! They also went to a presbytery council meeting together.

“Bob was certainly a point of interest and helped start various conversations.

People were very open to talk and many knew about Buddy Day. People were willing to sign Bob’s diary to say that they knew it takes a community to raise a child.”

2013 was the first year that Buddy Day has been rolled out beyond Hamilton. So it was the first time Anne, Roy, Nikki and Richard had cared for a buddy.

Anne encouraged parishes to get involved and hopes more will get on board next year.

“Taking a buddy around with you is a good creative way to start the conversations that are the key to breaking down some of the taboos around family violence. Presbyterian Support Northern got behind Buddy Day because it’s so in line with what we do in Family Works – supporting at-risk children and their families. By getting involved in Buddy Day we are helping communities address complex issues like abuse,” says Anne.

The Buddy Day launch for Auckland was held at the Ellerslie Events Centre and Anne, Nikki, Richard and Roy collected their buddies at a special breakfast.

“I was really impressed when we went to the launch that morning that there were young people, men and women their twenties and thirties, taking buddies,” says Anne.

Anne took her buddy Holly to work that day and, as carers are allowed to keep their buddies or return them, she also took Holly to church at Kohimarama Presbyterian that weekend. Nikki and Richard, who are ministers there, introduced all the buddies to the Kohimarama children and explained what Buddy Day was about.

Anne is so fond of Holly she now has pride of place in the reception area at Presbyterian Support Northern and was last seen dressed as an elf celebrating Christmas with her new friends from Presbyterian Support. Who knows, maybe next year Holly will get a sister or brother to keep her company.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)



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THEOLOGY MATTERS

Of all the tributes to Nelson Mandela that were penned following his death last year, it was one by his former prison chaplain that moved me the most.

Whenever the Rev Harry Wigget conducted Holy Communion in Pollsmoor Prison (where Mandela was transferred from Robben Island), a warder had to be present to keep an eye on proceedings, to be sure that the chaplain was not passing on or receiving any politically inflammatory messages.

On one particular occasion, Wigget said, when he reached the Passing of the Peace, Nelson Mandela gently stopped him and went over to the young warder on watch. "Brand," he asked, "are you a Christian?" "Yes," the warder, Christo Brand, responded. "Well then, you must take off your cap, and join us round this table. You cannot sit apart. This is Holy Communion, and we must share and receive it together."

To Wigget's utter astonishment, Brand meekly removed his cap, and, joining the circle, received Holy Communion.

Wigget writes: "To appreciate the significance of this incredible act of inclusive love, one needs to be aware not only of its spiritual, but also of its political

significance. The fact that Christo Brand was white, and that he had responded to an invitation from a black, and so naturally, was deeply moving. Brand had political power, but submitted to the power of the Spirit working through Nelson, the prisoner. In Christo Brand's Dutch Reformed Church, blacks and whites were not allowed to worship together. Nelson had Christo joining us in worship. Our Sanctus must truly have gladdened the Trinitarian heart that morning. That is the Nelson Mandela I know and love and pray for. That is the spiritual Nelson Mandela who, through his loving and living of life, and seeing all in the image of God, belonging to one another, that has brought hope not only to those of this multi-faceted nation, but also to millions throughout the world. He truly shone with the light of Christ."¹

For me, the power of Wigget's testimony lies not only in what he says about Nelson Mandela's character, but also in what he says about Mandela's grasp of the essence of the Lord's Supper. And I am humbled by it.

Rev Dr Graham Redding, Principal of the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership.

¹ <http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2013/13-december/news/world/%E2%80%98he-shone-with-the-light-of-christ%E2%80%99>

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Transpose brings Papakura youth together

Youth pastor of the First Church Papakura, Tom Mepham, on stage sharing the vision for Transpose.

A dream to serve the young people of Papakura by providing a free event where they can be encouraged in their faith led to the first ever Transpose Festival.

Two-hundred South Auckland young people turned up for the event organised by Papakura Alive and Transformed, a multi-denominational church group.

Event organisers wanted to create an environment that nurtured and encouraged faith through music, creative arts, and workshops says Tom Mepham, youth pastor from First Church Papakura, who came up with the idea for the festival.

Before coming to Papakura at the start of 2012, Tom had been at Flagstaff Church in Dunedin where he had been involved with Samstock, the inspiration behind the Transpose Festival.

“One of the things I valued about Dunedin was that there was quite good regional connectivity. When I got to Papakura it was great to see some of that here as well. And I saw opportunities to build more connections between youth leaders and groups in the area. Because I was new, I had some new ideas and energy to commit to making it happen.”

Tom discussed the idea with his church leadership and youth leaders from other parishes, all of whom were enthusiastic. And so Transpose was born.

“The initial idea was the easy part,” says Tom. “Since there hadn’t been a Transpose before, getting the ball rolling and organising things was more difficult.”

“Our first priority was to provide an end-of-year event for our youth groups. It was about bringing churches together to have a celebration. Secondly, we wanted to have an event that was prophetically speaking into the community about what it is to be living like the kingdom of God.

“In Papakura there’s a lot of young people, and a lot of social issues. There’s a huge need in our place for people to know the love of God and for the Church to act as a blessing for everyone. In some ways, we just wanted to provide a great day for the church and community.”

The programme was designed to be as interactive as possible and included Christian artists like Keron Niles, Talia Caradus, Funtwo and Black Boy Peaches. There was also a touch rugby competition, a talent quest, workshops, a prayer tent and a creative space.

Most of the young people who attended were linked with local churches and the hope is that future festivals will build on this and include people from the wider community.

Tom was pleased with how the event went despite the last couple of acts not making it to the stage because of threatening rain.

“At the heart of it I was aware that we were just beginning something. I wanted to start something so we could continue it. The youth leaders that came together to help get the event going forged an identity around Transpose and now we have a new sense of community.”



Some of the two-hundred young people who enjoyed the Transpose festival.

The team that pulled Transpose together was made up of youth leaders from First Church, Harvest, Presbyterian East, Salvation Army, Red Hill Wesleyan and The Gate.

“All of the key youth people from those churches were pivotal. They also mobilised their leadership teams to get involved. We had many volunteers on the day. Without them the event wouldn’t have been possible,” says Tom.

Support from the community was also a big part of the event’s success. Grants from the Presbyterian Foundation and PSDS as well as the Papakura Youth Council along with donations from local businesses ensured the event was free to attend.

Rosie Archer, youth leader from Presbyterian East Church in Papakura who was also on the organising committee, enjoyed the

event and is keen to see Transpose grow into something that fits the emerging culture of Papakura.

“I think this year served as a good first try to find out what works and where we need to have greater impact. Amalgamating youth groups to run an d attend the event is a great idea and one I think that bodes well for the future in terms of creating a supportive Christian community in Papakura.”

Feedback from festival goers was positive with people saying the music was a real highlight. Organisers will be taking what they learnt about what worked well and what might need changing to shape this year’s Transpose Festival planned for November 2014.

Jose Reader Spanz



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Going Further: listening for God

Providing space for the church's young people to hear what God is saying, as well as some intentional time for reflection, is what Going Further is all about.

This year was the first time Ivan Martinez, Dunedin's Studentsoul pastor had been part of Going Further.

As one of the small group facilitators, Ivan led twice-daily sessions that allowed everyone to explore what they'd discovered throughout the day.

Ivan says the conversations at these sessions really helped his group examine what discipleship is and what it might look like in their lives.

"In one of the sessions I facilitated the group spent an hour or so wrestling with the idea of living generous lives. Even for those on a student allowance, which was the reality for some in my group, this income put them at around the 75th wealth percentile by world standards. This meant some frank conversations as participants sought to understand how they could put the teaching about discipleship into practice in their lives."

Ivan believes the opportunity to engage with God outside the humdrum of normal life is one of the best things about Going Further.

"Sometimes we need to go away to find God. It's easy to miss God in our own backyard, and getting away from the constraints of everyday life provides the space to allow us to hear what God is saying."

Ivan was one of seven leaders who contributed and mentored the young people during the week-long retreat at Blue Mountain Outdoor Adventure Centre in the central North Island.

The keynote speaker was Tim Keel, who has also spoken at national youth leader conference, Connect, and General Assembly. Tim led discussions on this year's theme "The shape of discipleship: learning to live the gospel". Other teachers included Carolyn Kelly who spoke about "Where God Happens" and the Rev Darryl Tempero who led sessions on spiritual practices.

Although learning is a fundamental part of Going Further, the programme is designed to help everyone grow physically and mentally as well as spiritually.

So, as well as the dedicated learning time, the 22 young people at this year's Going Further had the opportunity to try out a range of Blue Mountain's adventure activities including the high ropes course, abseiling, kayaking, tramping and caving.

Zach Salisbury, 22, a youth worker at St Margaret's Bishopdale, thoroughly enjoyed the caving and adventure activities and said a real highlight for him was the time spent in small groups reflecting on the teaching.

"It was great to be with some people who were at the same stage as me. As a youth worker I'm helping others on their journey and the small group discussions provided some time and space for me to explore things and focus on my own learning and growth."

Jose Reader 



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Presbyterian Support New Zealand was appointed as one of seven faith funding managers in 2005 and now receives an allocation of funds from the Tindall Foundation of around \$180,000 each year. Presbyterian Support distributes the funds to initiatives that support families and social services.

Initially, the funds were available for Presbyterian Support activities but in recent years this has been expanded to include qualifying projects led by Presbyterian and Uniting parishes.

“By agreement with the Tindall Foundation around \$60,000 per annum is distributed to parish projects with the remainder going to Presbyterian Support community services,” explains Christine Hurley, national executive officer of Presbyterian Support New Zealand.

The number and quality of applications from parishes is on the rise which means that there is strong competition for funding says Christine.

“In any one year about 50 percent of applications typically receive some sort of financial assistance, although it may not be the full amount asked for.”

While the Foundation sets the maximum grant at \$15,000, grants range from several hundred dollars up to several thousand.

Christine urges parishes to look closely at the funding descriptions and exclusions to ensure their proposal closely matches what the Tindall Foundation will fund.




Children performing at the Mahurangi Presbyterian Pasifika Festival December 2013.

“The Foundation has a focus on seeding projects that will last and excludes the purchase of land and buildings, education and health-related initiatives among other things. So it’s important that parishes tailor their application.”


One initiative that was successful in securing Foundation funding last year was a Pasifika outreach programme run by

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Kids Can Cook – an initiative of the Paeroa Community Support Trust – teaches primary-age children basic cooking skills and provides them with a safe, structured environment to hang out. Run twice a week, 30 kids are currently learning how to cook nutritious meals like shepherd’s pie and lasagna, thanks to an \$8,500 grant from the Foundation.

Kids Can Cook co-ordinator John Budge says the idea came about a couple of winters ago after seeing young children in shorts and jandals at the local supermarket buying fizzy drink.

“I thought we can do better than that with their \$1,” says John. Initially half a dozen boys joined in the cooking classes that were funded by the Trust. But as the programme grew in popularity external funding was needed to keep the cooking classes going.

Applications for this year’s funding round open in mid-May and close on 31 June. Application information can be found at www.ps.org.nz.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)



Taiwan offers first taste of Asia for young Kiwis

Baby octopuses, turkey feet, and “stinky tofu” were just a few of the challenges dished up to Rebecca Pritchard and Mendy Elikana on their recent mission trip to Taiwan. There were also food poisoning and culture shock to contend with. But that didn’t stop them from describing the experience as “amazing” and “life changing”.

Rebecca and Mendy, two 19 year olds from Auckland, joined the Rev Dr Stuart Vogel of the Church’s Asian Council and eight other teenagers on the month-long mission visit to Taichung, a large city in central Taiwan. The diverse group included Korean, Samoan, Cook Island, Pakeha and Taiwanese kiwis.

This was the second of what Stuart hopes will be an annual exchange between the partnering Northern and Taichung presbyteries. It was part of the wider Barnabas Project and provides an opportunity for young New Zealanders to gain insight into a radically different culture as well as to share the Christian Gospel with kids in Taiwan. “It’s a chance for them to grow, both spiritually and intellectually,” says Stuart.

Rebecca says her only experience of Asian culture before going to Taiwan had been Chinese takeaways. “It was a complete culture shock,” she laughs.

She says she had already felt God calling her to mission, so when she heard about the the visit to Taiwan at a youth rally she jumped at the chance. Mendy joined the mission in the hope that it would help give her some future direction.

“I was so lost after school. I didn’t know what I wanted to do or be,” she says. “I thought going on this trip would help me figure it out.”



From left: Peter Lin (Auckland Taiwanese Presbyterian Church), Mendy Elikana (Onehunga Cooperating, Cook Islands) Rebecca Pritchard (St Paul’s Manurewa), Sunny Park (Good Neighbour Korean Church, Auckland), Cara Cheng (ATPC), Rachel Harris (Lincoln Union), Annie Lee (The Lord’s Church, Korean, Auckland), Dean (back), and Robin Hsu (ATPC).

Over the course of a month the group spent time at four state primary schools around Taichung and also ran an afterschool programme at a church in Puli. Rebecca says the trip was nothing like she expected.

“When I thought of mission I thought of building houses and doing physical things. Dirty work!” she says. Instead, she found herself in the role of cultural ambassador - teaching English, sharing about New Zealand culture and her Christian faith, and playing games with the kids in the schools and churches.

“God taught me a lot through interaction with others,” Rebecca says. “The kids were the best. Even though I couldn’t speak their language I had a lot of fun with them. Those little moments of teaching them, those were the best for me.”

Mendy agrees. “The children were the highlight of the trip. On our last day it was so hard to look at them because they were all crying and saying ‘please don’t go!’”

Stuart says a highlight for him was seeing the teenagers grow. “They were thrown in the absolute deep end and each of them saw their strengths and their limits. There’s no doubt about it, all of them grew.”

Rebecca says that she learned how to be considerate and respectful of another culture and a different way of life. “We

all have our different views. But you can’t impose your own beliefs on other people.”

For Mendy, the trip was a chance to grow in confidence. “It was challenging for me. I wasn’t that confident before. But I came out of my box in Taiwan!”

The pair speaks warmly about the hospitality of their Taiwanese hosts.

“Before we left I thought, ‘I’m an Islander. What are these people going to think of me?’” Mendy says with a laugh. “But they were so welcoming and they really wanted to get to know me.”

Coming home has been a bit of an adjustment for the two young women who are now looking at their lives with fresh eyes. “At home you have to adapt,” says Rebecca. “I’m more grateful for things now. Man, we have free education here!”

“I felt sad leaving Taiwan,” says Mendy. “It felt like home to me by the end.” Just as she had hoped the visit gave Mendy a clearer idea of what she wants to do with her life.

“I want to go back to Taiwan and help in some way,” she says. “I’m thinking about nursing.”

Stuart Vogel is planning another mission trip to Taiwan over the summer break, Dec 2014 – Jan 2015. Young people from any church in the PCANZ can apply. To find out more contact the Rev Dr Stuart Vogel, s.vogel@xnet.co.nz or phone 09 620 5595.

Anna Costly Spanz



Passion for justice fuels Peace Train

Back in the 70s, when Cat Stevens sang about the Peace Train, he could hardly have imagined that four decades later 130 people from 16 countries and various Christian denominations would spend 20 days travelling from Berlin to Busan on just such a train.

The Rev Rilma Sands was the only Kiwi on the inaugural journey which began in October last year to promote the peace and reunification of a divided Korea.

"It's always been a dream of mine to travel across Russia on the Trans-Siberian," says 68 year old Rilma.

"Peace and justice has also been very strong in my ministry and I've long wanted to do something practical to contribute to helping the poor, the needy, the afflicted and the innocent. To be able to marry those two dreams on the Peace Train was an opportunity I couldn't pass up."

Rilma had not long retired as a Teaching Elder at Feilding's Oroua Parish when she saw an advertisement for the first-ever Peace Train.

"The trip was developed to mark the 60th anniversary of the ceasefire treaty that ended the Korean War and six decades of division between North and South Korea. It was organised by the National Council of Churches of Korea and the Evangelical Churches of Germany to coincide with the World Conference of Churches' 2013 General Assembly in Busan."

The dilemma, of course, was how to finance the trip. Rilma approached the Rev Phil King, the Church's Global Mission Co-ordinator, to help fund the US\$2,000 train journey. Various fundraising efforts and personal contributions covered the cost of flights and accommodation.

Rilma's journey started in Berlin with a candlelit service for peace at the Brandenburg Gate before the train whisked participants to Moscow, Irkutsk, Beijing, Pyongyang and, finally, Busan.



The Rev Rilma Sands joined 130 people from 16 countries on a peace journey from Berlin to Busan.

It was a fantastic opportunity to learn about other people and issues from all over the globe, says Rilma, who was born in Uruguay and raised in Argentina before moving to New Zealand more than 40 years ago.

"Spending time with people from places such as Nigeria and Ethiopia as well as Germany and South Korea was awesome. There were Presbyterians, Mennonites, Lutherans and Orthodox people on that train. But we were all on the same page when it came to issues of justice and peace."

Rilma was especially heartened by the number of young people who signed up for the trip. "Their passion for justice and Jesus blew me away! These young people are the hope of the Church and its future. I came home rejoicing that all is not lost."

Sadly not all her memories are pleasant. Rilma says she was "freaked out" by some of the stories she heard in Berlin of people who had tried to escape from the East to the West.

"We heard some terribly sad stories, especially of children being killed. The suffering was immense."

Following the train journey Rilma joined around 3,000 others at the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches. It was, she says, something she'd always wanted

to do and the Assembly's theme - God of Light, lead us to Justice and Peace - dovetailed nicely into the Peace Train's mission.

A desire to fight injustice has always been a constant in Rilma's life. The Peace Train, she says, simply added fuel to the fire.

"I've come back with an even greater need to help those who are suffering. More than ever I believe we need to ask more questions of the powers that be. Because it's the decisions of these people that most affect the vulnerable. And I'm going to be the one asking the awkward questions!"

The longest serving minister at Knox Church, Feilding, Rilma plans to continue her work with the town's Manchester House, which is engaged in social outreach.

"I now have a renewed commitment to the community," she says.

Phil King, who helped make the trip possible, admits he was thrilled to be able to say to Rilma, "Get on that train!"

"It was a fantastic opportunity for someone from our Church to be part of it,"

he says. "Not only is Rilma able to translate the experience into her own spiritual growth, she's also using the things she learned and saw to contribute further to the Church and the wider community."

Sharon Stephenson [Spanz](#)



A dress rehearsal of a drama about the harassment of women is performed at the Women's Centre in Sri Lanka.

The fundraising ability of Presbyterian Women is legendary. The steady sale of produce and craft or collection of old stamps has funded many a mission project and paid for worship essentials. The women's care and concern for each other is matched by their commitment to respond to what is happening in our world.

Presbyterian women work to end violence

Through methods tried and true these women have made the church what it is today.

One of the cornerstones of their mission work is the Special Project undertaken jointly with the Methodist Women's Fellowship. Each year the Project focuses on an international and a national dimension linked by a common theme. The 2013/4 focus on overcoming violence supports the Women's Centre in Sri Lanka through Christian World Service and Women's Refuge in Aotearoa New Zealand.

On a street in Sri Lanka's free trade zone off duty factory workers are intensely involved in street theatre. A beautiful young woman is trying to fend off the unwelcome advances of a male superior. She tries to put him off through humour but when that doesn't work she speaks more loudly, drawing the attention of her colleagues. The man backs off and the women start a well-rehearsed dance routine, reminding the women they don't have to put up with that sort of behaviour.

Once it is over the women hand out leaflets to those watching and encourage them to come to the Women's Centre where they can read, relax, have computer time and health checks. The street theatre troupes are well known for their lively performances and educational programmes. The scene is lively and for new workers an offer of support in a difficult environment.

The long gruelling hours in the factory are a shock to new arrivals from Sri Lanka's poor rural areas. The women come determined to earn much needed cash to send home, knowing they will be tarnished with the "garment factory worker" tag.

The factories are eager to employ workers they see as more obedient and shy while boarding house operators are keen to take their rent money and more. The work is long and hard with constant pressure to work at impossible speeds. The accommodation is cramped and facilities few. In a survey 90 percent of women workers reported they had been harassed. Women have sought illegal abortions and are often afraid to complain.

In the Women's Centres it is a different story. After their extended days the women aged between 18 and 40 have space to meet and access to newspapers and computers. The constant stress at work also means they are often in need of medical treatment and somewhere to discuss their rights as workers.

In a country where ethnicity is a tool for division the Women's Centre fosters fair treatment and understanding. During the heat of the civil war staff organised visits to the border region for Sinhala women to meet their Tamil sisters. The trips were long and required the navigation of

military checkpoints. They took food and small gifts and shared stories. After the war ended in May 2009 they established links with Tamils held in camps through some Catholic sisters. The Women's Centre has provided friendship and practical help: household items, gardening tools and more for Tamils left with nothing.

Helping some of the predominantly Sinhala factory workers understand the situation of Tamils has provided a good basis for recent developments. Like Sinhala women before them young Tamils with no other employment options are coming to the Free Trade Zones seeking work. Factory managers employ them at lower rates of pay and the boarding house owners are housing them in backrooms in miserable conditions. The Women's Centre is finding they must continue the struggle for fair treatment, this time with Tamil workers. And just as important is the work they do to help the two divided communities live and work side by side.

It is this deep commitment to practical peace building that appealed to Presbyterian and Methodist women choosing this year's project. Giving to the Special Project is a call for change in a world where violence and strife are all too common. Please support their fundraising in your church.

Understanding multiculturalism is free

The latest Church social issues study guide, *Understanding multiculturalism in the church and in New Zealand* is now available free to parishes.



UNDERSTANDING multiculturalism in the church and in New Zealand

 Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

Understanding multiculturalism in the church and in New Zealand was recently sent to all parishes. The study guide explores the biblical mandate for multiculturalism, the changing face of New Zealand, some of the barriers to becoming multicultural and examines what all of this means for our communities and churches.

Understanding multiculturalism in the church and in New Zealand is the latest of 11 studies produced by the Presbyterian Church for use in group or Bible study groups to help with prayerful reflection on some of the key issues facing us and our communities.

To order free printed copies of this booklet, of any of our other study guides, email office@presbyterian.org.nz or phone 04 801 6000. You can also download all of our study guides from the Church website <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/speaking-out/resources-for-speaking-out>



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