



Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

SUMMER 2013, ISSUE 56

Offspring

SUPPORTING GROWTH
OF NEW
MISSIONAL VENTURES

www.presbyterian.org.nz

COMMENT: REV MARTIN BAKER

In September 2013, the Church's Assembly Executive Secretary, the Rev Martin Baker, travelled to India to attend the triennial meeting of Church General Secretaries, organised by the Council for World Mission (CWM), and hosted by the Church of North India in Delhi.

There is a tiny Presbyterian church on the edge of the vast area of mangroves and mud islands at the delta of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers. If you travel to Gosaba, near the border of India and Bangladesh, and then board a ferry, you can see the church on the left a couple of kilometres downstream on the way to Bali Island where there is a small, locally run, village-based tourism venture.

This area, on the edge of the UNESCO world heritage Sunderbans National Park, is best known for four reasons: it is the biggest mangrove swamp in the world; the land mass itself is in a constant state of change as the river and ocean currents daily create and engulf, thousands of tiny islands (a wonderful account of this area can be found in Amitav Ghosh's "The Hungry Tide"); it is home to a large number of tigers; and its social history includes the early 20th century social experiment of a Scotsman Sir Daniel Hamilton.

Hamilton, who became wealthy through a Kolkata-based shipping enterprise, bought up vast tracks of the Sunderbans in the hope he could establish a new community free from the caste and religious systems which he believed were damaging Indian society. The environment, and especially the tigers, made this a somewhat difficult venture but his legacy does continue in a number of cooperative medical, educational and business ventures. Interestingly, Hamilton's vision, influenced by Mahatma Gandhi, pre-dates the very significant place that the Communist Party has held in Bengal politics.

Though the social history of the community is fascinating, I have to say that I was especially hopeful of seeing a tiger. Accompanied by my wife Sandy and my trusty cell phone camera, I was ready

to snap one of these 200 kg beasts, whose roar can apparently be heard more than 3 km away. The villagers were not so sure that looking for tigers was an especially sensible enterprise. With a significant number of deaths from tiger attacks every year, seeing one of these glorious animals has been, for some, the very last thing they ever see.

Safe inside the compound run by a local community trust, Sandy and I enjoyed hearing extraordinary stories from people who had not only seen tigers but had survived their attacks. Our cook was quite famous in the community for surviving not one, but two attacks.

Travelling on a slow boat through the swamps, we saw some rare fresh water Irrawaddy dolphins, a few crocodiles, some odd worried-looking small deer, and many nice-looking birds. But no tigers (they swim well apparently!).

London Missionary Society (LMS) missionaries had come to this area in the 19th century and the churches built in this most challenging of environments are testament to their endeavours. In fact, their presence was why the CWM meeting was held in India. The LMS (renamed the Council for World Mission in 1977) sponsored the triennial meeting of the General Secretaries of CWM's 31 member churches. During my time in India, prior to my Sunderbans holiday, I had enjoyed the hospitality of the Church of North India and the company of colleagues who share a similar role in their church.

While the CWM history contains stories of missionaries facing ordinate hardship and real danger, one of the most humbling realisations that comes from meeting other General Secretaries is that even today, for those committed to proclaiming the Gospel, deprivation, sacrifice and suffering remain a reality for members of the CWM community. Some of these challenges come about because some CWM churches represent a small minority in societies suspicious of or hostile to Christians. On other occasions, the prophetic role that CWM churches have taken in addressing issues of injustice or social deprivation has been met with violence and oppression.



Rev Martin Baker

I enjoyed hearing extraordinary stories from people who had not only seen tigers but had survived their attacks. Our cook was quite famous in the community for surviving not one, but two attacks.

It is a privilege for our Church to share these relationships and this extraordinary history. Our participation as part of CWM continues to benefit us with resources and opportunities. Please keep an eye on our Church website for the opportunity to participate in one of CWM's many programmes or visit their website for more information <http://www.cwmission.org/>.

- The Rev Martin Baker is the Assembly Executive Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

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MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

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



During my trips to Mongolia I never tire of hearing stories of how so many people have come to be followers of Jesus in a country that a little over 20 years ago had no Christian people.

When I met Naara, and his lovely wife Bagi, he was the pastor of a large church in Darhan near the Siberian border. Some years before he was a hardened criminal, feared by the police and having spent many years in gaol. He had no time for any sort of religion.

His mother, a Buddhist lady, was ashamed of her son's ways and tried many times to help him reform, but to no avail. I do not know where she found a copy of Luke's gospel in the Mongolian language, but one day she arrived at Naara's prison with a copy and told him, "Read this book for in it is the story of a man who makes bad people good".

Naara told me he had no intention of reading it. But he did to please his mother. When he came to Luke 5:32 he felt the power of Jesus' words hit him. "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." These words kept going round and round in his mind for a month and then he changed his mindset, his way of thinking (repented), yielded his life to Jesus and prayed asking Jesus to help him. Not long after he was released from prison, met other followers of Jesus and has now planted a number of churches in this wonderful land.

At Christmas time we of the church celebrate the birth of Jesus, Immanuel – God with us. In all the pageantry and wonderful celebrations let us always remember that Jesus came among us as the man who 'makes bad people good'. He is the one who sees people as they are – maybe

struggling with pride and arrogance, poverty or need, despair or behavioural problems - and seeks to help them. As his followers, we need to do the same.

Many people feel like they are circling the drain, caught in an eddy on their way down. It can be a frightening feeling. The commercialism and hype of Christmas can exacerbate the problem for struggling people. It's so easy when we feel that things are going wrong in our life, or see things going wrong in the communities around us, to have a panic attack. But God's method is always a plan of attack.

Have you got a plan of attack or are you having a panic attack in life?

John Maxwell says, "If you want to be distressed, look within. If you want to be defeated, look back. If you want to be distracted, look around. If you want to be dismayed, look ahead. If you want to be disappointed, look to people. If you want to be delivered, look up."

Christmas is not only a time to look down at a baby in a manger. It's a time to look up to the resurrected Lord walking in our communities today and reaching out to people like my friend Naara.

Let us as the Presbyterian Church not have a panic attack about all of society's ills. Let us have a plan of attack. Christmas is one time of the year when churches traditionally go the second mile, go to help people in need. Maybe you will support the CWS Christmas appeal? Maybe you will take food parcels and gifts to needy families in your community? Maybe you will support the Angel Tree appeal and help the children of people in prison?

Followers of Jesus living with a resurrection mindset will have a plan of attack to reach out and make a difference this Christmas to the lives of the poor, the needy, the vulnerable, the marginalised.

What will you do this Christmas? Please have a plan of attack to do something to go the second mile.



Offspring gathering supports mission

In October Press Go hosted Offspring, a gathering for church leaders involved in new missional ventures either attached to existing congregations or in new faith communities within the Church.

Press Go board member and Offspring's main organiser, the Rev Sharon Ross Ensor, says "quite a few of our churches are involved in new missional ventures and Offspring provided them the space to come together to share their stories and learn with and from one another".

"Of those who took part some had received Press Go funding, some are in conversation about proposed projects, some are in new missional ventures that are not connected with Press Go, and some came to listen because that's what they are doing in their own location – listening to their community, their congregation, and to what the Spirit is saying to their church."

Press Go committed \$15,000 to running Offspring at the Silverstream Retreat in Wellington. Sharon says the weekend was "very well received" by the 70 church attendees.

"The feedback we had was that it was a positive experience, that people went away with some really good ideas, and that they felt energised with a strong sense of hope for the future of our churches."

The weekend had a full programme Sharon says. "Speakers included the Rev John MacDonald who gave a popular talk about his new mission in Auckland's CBD. Workshops included those presented by the Rev Andrew Norton on leadership,

Kids Friendly national coach Jill Kayser and Presbyterian Support Northern's Anne Overton."

A "very well received" speaker was the Rev Dr Steve Taylor, Principal of the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology in South Australia.

"Steve was really fantastic. He spoke about story; what we learn from stories, where we find ourselves in stories - in Scripture, in local stories and those from the wider church and our forebears. On the Friday everyone could tell their stories in small groups. We listened to the themes, challenges and questions. People have been keen to access the resources that Steve shared."

Sharon says that some of those who attended were not familiar with Press Go's projects and Offspring provided an introduction.

"The Rev Andrew Norton, Chair of the Press Go board, spoke about Press Go's work and how we are looking for ways to offer greater support for mission and to build capacity, responding to the changing context we are in. We have more work to do in letting churches know how we can assist them, be it with resourcing and other support or helping them apply for funding for projects that meet our criteria. Offspring also gave us the opportunity to introduce some new mission ventures Press Go is supporting, for example the Rev Malcolm Gordon and his wife Vanessa's national music ministry," Sharon says.

Another gathering has not been planned yet, Sharon explains, because "we are asking the Offspring attendees what they think should come next and we will be responsive to that. A good suggestion from Steve Taylor was that next year we host a gathering for the Church's Māori, Asian and Pasifika 1.5 generation and hear their stories".

Splice – a new expression of mission in Auckland's CBD

In 2012 two inner city Auckland church communities, Aotea Methodist Chapel and St James Presbyterian Church, decided to refocus their mission within Auckland's central business district. With additional support from the Northern Presbytery, the Auckland Methodist Synod, and the Methodist Mission Northern (which also provides project oversight), Presbyterian minister the Rev John MacDonald was employed as an inner-city chaplain-at-large in February 2013. John's first decision in his new role was to do...nothing. For 12 months. Nothing except listen, get to know people, and get a feel for the heart of the city.

"Splice" is the name of this new expression of mission which, John explains, is about developing relationships that join people together in actions that strengthen the whole community. "The multiple strands of life in the city centre can make for an amazing, binding, familial community of diversity.

"Splice grew out of me connecting with the CBD, which appeared to lack a unifying gum. There are a multitude of wonderful things happening every day that could be better known if there was a 'gathering soul' large enough to invite everyone to share in them."

Although John expected to spend 12 months watching and listening, over this period he has written, "Be-loving in downtown Auckland: A new expression of mission in the city".

"It's a narrative that is still being tweaked for publication. I have been preparing people to delve into the dream; from homeless folk to civic and corporate folk, from visitors to the city to those who live in its heart, from all walks of life, a number of religions and broad ecumenical interests. I have talked with so many people who dream of a way of being an enriched CBD. I have invited organisations to consider partnerships on this journey and the



Malcolm, Vanessa and Sam Gordon.

response has been very encouraging. I have also experimented with a number of small gatherings and happenings.”

John considers the Aotea and St James churches to be “blessed in not having physical church walls”.

“The Presbyterian parish model prefers not to live with the vulnerability of having ministers-at-large, being who they are called to be. I live in a community that has more cultures than I can count, including New Zealand’s poorest people, homeless people, and in Lamborghini country. The contrasts in this community are amazing. My missional journey has bought me to a place that in many ways I have never known before. My experience is that I meet Jesus in this place more readily than I do in many places of personal devotion and spirituality.”

When John shared the story of his mission at Offspring he says he felt “a spirit of expectation of something new happening”.

“I received a great reception. But something happened which was unexpected. After my presentation many people just wanted to talk about the freedom I have to create this expression of mission and ministry apart from the normal constraints of the church. That was quite overwhelming. Since then I have had numerous folk make contact and comment that they are finding the old ministry model not working for the Gospel.”

John says that Splice is going to need a lot of support “not least financial. Aotea and St James are seeding this, but it is going to require resources beyond their capacity. I have a feeling that once the Splice vision is spelled out, and it starts having its way in the town, people, partnerships

and organisations will be only too happy to help”.

Couple share new nationwide music ministry

Press Go is partly funding a new three-year national music ministry position, Worship, Music and Arts enabler, through the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership.

A number of sources will fund the role, including donations from Presbyterian ministers.

The Rev Malcolm Gordon, supported by his wife Vanessa, will take up the national half-time position in February 2014. They will be based in Auckland and will work with churches throughout the country enabling and encouraging songwriters, creating contextual resources for worship and deepening awareness of the theology of worship.

Malcolm says together they hope to “develop relationships with churches that can commit to engaging with a process of discernment and reimagining”.

Vanessa, who plays piano and has led a worship youth band, says they “will work with churches where they are on their journey”.

“We appreciate the breadth of the Church and the value there is in both the hymn singing tradition and contemporary songs. We will work with parishes to help enrich their understanding of why they do what they do, helping them to inform the act of worship.”

Malcolm is well known in the Church for his music, which is also appreciated outside of the church; his third and most recent album “Into the deep” reached

number six on the NZ Album charts. He says he feels tremendous gratitude towards his supporters for the success of his music but doesn’t need to be thought of as a “Presbyterian celebrity”.

“I think the rise of the celebrity has made the average person feel...average. We have Chris Tomlin and Matt Redman thrust in our face as the ideal worship leader and songwriter, meaning the rest of us feel like we could never measure up. What is forgotten is the crucial role of context and community. This is where my theology of music blurs with my understanding of the Incarnation. Being in a place, knowing people, sharing in life together, these are what enable creative people to lead and articulate the prayers and praises of God’s people. That’s why a worship leader can’t be transplanted easily. We need to know the stories of those we lead - who’s grieving and who’s thriving. So I always try to put people at ease when I work with them, because they’re more qualified to lead in their context than I am, and certainly more qualified than any of the celebrities that we’re taught to look up too.”

Malcolm plans to run music ministry workshops during the 2014 Assembly Week. His music is available at www.onevoice.org.nz

For more on Press Go and Offspring see the Church website www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-parishes/press-go-for-church-growth

Angela Singer Spanz

Churches help offenders... and their children

Stacey Russell was serving nine months home detention for drug dealing and had lost custody of three of her five children when she attended a course that transformed her life.

She was one of 11 women offenders who attended a pilot programme hosted by St Andrew's Mt Maunganui and facilitated by Jude Simpson, family violence prevention advocate for Presbyterian Support Northern.

The women met in a room at the church four days a week for six weeks. They named the course themselves: "Whakamanahia Wahine – Strengthening Foundations for Women". The programme was developed by Jude in conjunction with the Corrections Department and was designed to help offenders identify achievable personal goals and build their self-esteem, with the ultimate goal of reducing re-offending. A number of local agencies, including the Police, Citizens Advice Bureau and the Bay of Plenty Polytechnic also provided input for various modules.

St Andrew's minister, the Rev Iain Dickson, says the church very much enjoyed hosting the women.

"For me personally, what left a lasting impression was witnessing the transformation that took place in each of the 11 participants. At their graduation they shared how the course had brought positive changes to their lives. They shared how it helped them to identify positive pathways, focusing on their skills and talents that they could use to make a difference in their world."

The church provided home baking for the women's morning and afternoon breaks and staff shared lunch with them once a week. The Women's Fellowship purchased matching hooded sweatshirts for the women to wear for their graduation and provided lunch for the 100 guests. A number of Auckland churches also donated money for a personal gift for each graduate.

Each woman graduated with three NZQA unit standards and all of them were inspired to work on positive goals for the future. Stacey is now free of drugs, has regained custody of her children and obtained her full driver's licence.

"I want to be a community social worker so I can help other people to overcome the bad times I went through," she says.

The Presbyterian Church in Whakatane is also actively involved in facing up to the realities of family violence.

It's part of the Eastern Bay of Plenty Family Violence Network and contributes to major events like White Ribbon Day and Family Works initiatives. It recently lent planning and behind the scenes support to the "Yeah, Nah – It's Not OK" song quest that encouraged local teenagers to write and perform an original sing about how they are affected by bullying, family violence or abuse.

Community agencies were invited to church services during community support month in June to speak about what they do. After its Heart to Heart expo and family festival this year the church also hosted a seminar on living without violence with Jude Simpson and other anti-violence advocates as speakers. Agency workers, along with their clients, were welcomed by church members who provided supper and childcare.

Whakatane's minister, Rev Chris Barnard, says the church first became involved out of a desire to understand what life was like for people living on their doorstep. They also wanted to show they care by supporting frontline workers.

"We realised there are a number of agencies doing a lot of the work the Bible calls us to do as Christians. We don't want to reinvent the wheel but to come alongside these agencies, offer our skills and time and build relationships," he says.

Chris says it takes a long time to build trust. But he's encouraged by the growing sense of connection and cooperation in

the community over the last two or three years. He also says that by getting actively involved his congregation now has a far better understanding of its mission. Feedback, both from within the church and from the community, has been overwhelmingly positive.

"The events we've been a part of have informed and educated our people about how to support and help each other. It's about empowering ordinary people to take up the challenge to walk alongside the broken and vulnerable in our community. It's very healing when we can do that together."

Family Works family violence response coordinator for the region, Helen Holt, agrees with Chris about the benefits of collaboration.

"It means all the agencies are on the same page when it comes to dealing with violence of any kind, and it raises social awareness of the issues. It's also about giving people tools to know what to do, so the whole community can take responsibility for violence," she says.

Angel Tree spreads Christmas spirit

Sixteen Presbyterian churches provided Christmas gifts for the families of prison inmates this year through the Angel Tree project.

Organised by Prison Fellowship New Zealand, Angel Tree is designed to demonstrate care for the "invisible victims" of crime – children who have lost a parent to prison. A suitable gift is suggested by the inmate who also writes a message for their child's Christmas card. Church and community volunteers then buy a gift, valued at around \$25, on behalf of the parent. The gifts are taken to a central collection point to be wrapped before delivery to prisoners' families.

Glendowie Presbyterian has about 30 people buying, wrapping and delivering gifts each year. One of those who helped with deliveries last year, Jeanette Bell, says it's a wonderful experience.

"I usually wear a Santa hat or something Christmassy and ring first to check it's okay to come around. Often the children will be waiting at the door. They're so delighted to see you and their caregivers are very grateful. Sometimes you hear about the situation and what it means for them to receive a gift. I met a grandma who was looking after the children while both parents were in prison. We often have



A team of 30 at Glendowie Presbyterian Church buy, wrap and deliver presents for Angel Tree.



Women offenders who attended the pilot programme "Whakamanahia Wahine – Strengthening Foundations for Women" hosted by St Andrew's Mt Maunganui.

no idea how hard it is financially for these families. It's a minor thing we're doing really, but it's so rewarding to spread God's love in this way."

Volunteers at Papakura and Districts First Presbyterian are so enthusiastic that coordinator Sue Chadwick is sometimes overwhelmed with offers of help.

"I've been asked if we can get more names. But we're only allotted so many each year. People appreciate the opportunity to give to someone else in this way."

Clevedon Presbyterian Church has a long history of involvement with Angel Tree.

But it also has its own special relationship with prisoners at Auckland's Paremoremo Prison. Every November church members and the youth group bake enough cookies to provide 250 inmates with a plateful each. The minister, the Rev Mark Chapman, used to personally deliver the cookies to the prison in time for Christmas but now the prison chaplain makes the trip.

Youth director Shona Goldsbury says Mark and his wife Heather brought back the idea of "Cookies for Crookies" from the Crystal Cathedral church in the United States years ago and it's grown since then.

"We've had some great feedback with amazing thank you cards from the prisoners. They say things like how it reminds them of baking with their grandmother."

In 2011 Prison Fellowship extended the Angel Tree ministry to provide long-term support for prisoners' children through camps and monthly family events. Some areas also organise a Christmas meal and donations are welcome for these activities too. For more information, visit www.pfnz.org.nz or phone 0800 777 887.

Andrea Candy Spanz

St John's Recipe for Effective Mission

In winter 2012, Spanz magazine featured a story on St John's Presbyterian's loss of its Hastings church hall in an arson attack and its plans to reconnect with its community by developing facilities more suited to an outward-facing ministry. Today, the church is gifting up to 35 meals each week to families in need in Hastings and Flaxmere. Chris Nichol discovers how the St John's is serving its community through hospitality.

The August 2010 fire that destroyed St John's 80-year-old church hall was devastating, but the congregation embraced the new opportunity for mission that arose from the ashes.

For some weeks before the fire, St John's minister, the Rev Paul Loveday, had been encouraging what he calls "a season of prayer" to help the congregation discover who they could become.

In early 2011 five couples began meeting to discuss and pray about their common interest of reaching the wider community. Within a month, the idea of providing meals for people in the wider-community seemed to surface as a mission opportunity. One member of the congregation was already delivering food to a couple of families in need, and another had been involved with supplying community meals in Upper Hutt. Paul himself comes from a kitchen and catering background. "Yet another member of the congregation, Michael Andrews, had long-term experience cooking at camps", Paul says, "and has a passion to feed the masses."

"We felt God was tapping us on the shoulder to support people in the community who need food as part of respite care." St John's ComCare mission (short for Community Care) was beginning to take shape.

Meanwhile, the new hall was being built. "We were given a larger kitchen than we asked for", Paul says. "It seemed to suit the builder's design better."

The Eastern and Central Community Trust came to the party with a \$12,000 grant for setting up the kitchen. Michael, who has

taken on the role of chief cook, couldn't believe he would be working with such beautiful new equipment.

Aware of the initiative St John's was taking, a community agency began to make suggestions, referrals, of those who could benefit.

When ComCare began one person was doing the deliveries. But increasingly more people have become involved and now there are 10 delivering respite support through meals.

"It helps us share the load and build up relationships and trust, to show the love of God", Paul says. "We try to match the people taking the meals with the people receiving them, so that if someone needs practical help or someone to talk to, the right person is right there in front of them."

But to provide meals for people in the community you need a ready supply of food. "Members of the Hastings business community and individuals have been extraordinarily generous", Paul acknowledges.

ComCare receives 2 trays of eggs each week, frozen vegetables, fruit from orchards and vegetables in season. They've even had a whole cattle beast donated. Michael and his team use these gracious offerings, prepare the meals and then freeze them for later delivery.

"Michael gifts his time", enthuses Paul. "He has such a generous heart. He just loves it and he loves involving others. He's been a gift to the parish".

Paul says that ComCare had been preparing between 25 to 50 meals each week. "Gifted freely with no expectations. There is a growing need for this practical kind of help in the Hastings area."

ComCare has now evolved into a wider Hospitality Ministry that actively involves around 30 members of the congregation.

On Wednesday nights St John's offers discipleship and exploration opportunities where people can get a wider understanding of Christian faith. A meal is provided. The cooks deliberately over-cater and anything left over is frozen for later ComCare distribution.

"We also do catering for funerals", says Paul, "and in November we're catering our first wedding. The couple had pretty much decided to cancel their wedding reception because of the cost of feeding 60 adults and 30 children. We did the numbers and quoted them a figure they were very, very happy with.

"Family members were blown away that the church family was doing that for them. Again, we'll over-cater and they're really pleased that anything that's left over goes to ComCare."

The help that ComCare provides extends to training; trainees from Te Tai Whenua O Heretaunga [a regional Iwi support organisation] have had work placements in the Hospitality Ministry's kitchen. It is likely that a group of nine people will begin a short baking/cooking course to be held in the church's kitchen.

"All of this is a huge encouragement for me", Paul acknowledges. "It's breathed life into our congregation. We knew we couldn't continue as we were. We've committed to who we can be and the Hospitality Ministry has nurtured us as we've worked to create a family.

"People in the wider community recognise that our commitment is genuine. There's no pretence. It's genuine love for all people, a genuine welcome for all who come."



Michael Andrews preparing 75 free meals in the St John's Presbyterian kitchen.

Church warms feet and hearts at Porirua school

Feet that were once wet and cold from the walk to school were snug and warm this winter thanks to a mountain of slippers that were hand-knitted for the children of Cannons Creek School in Porirua, Wellington.

A group of around 30 knitters from the Johnsonville Uniting Church hand-made 196 pairs of slippers for children from the school which is located in one of the most disadvantaged suburbs in New Zealand.

Beverly Donovan, convener of the mission and community committee, led the project and says it was inspired as the congregation considered how it could contribute to the vision launched at the 2012 Methodist conference "Let the Children Live". The vision aims to end child poverty, child abuse and youth suicide in New Zealand within the next 10 years.

Beverly says the idea to do something for school children was planted by God. She made a call to the nearby Cannons Creek School to ask how the church could help and was told the children would benefit from some warm socks or slippers to wear at school.

"I was told that the kids often turn up at school soaking wet and freezing cold after having walked to school in the rain. Those that have shoes then have to take them off so that they can dry out and most children spend the day in bare feet, hence the need for something warm to wear in the classroom."

It took around four months to knit enough slippers for the whole school and Beverly, the Rev Anna Gilkison, minister at Johnsonville Uniting, and one of the knitters went to a school assembly in May to present the slippers to the children.

The response from students and teachers was moving, says Beverly. One teacher



Before presenting the slippers to the school, the Rev Anna Gilkison blessed the slippers in a special ceremony at Johnsonville Uniting Church.

cried, and there were beaming smiles from the children along with lots of "oohs" and "aaahs" as the colourful slippers were unveiled. A couple of weeks after the presentation Beverly received photos and letters of thanks from some of the children.

The project was a good match between a community need and the skills of the parish as there are many accomplished knitters amongst the congregation says Anna.

Beverly was initially told the school would need 160 pairs but the number grew to 180 if every child was to receive a pair. It was great to reach the target which, she explains, was at times a little daunting.

But the whole congregation pulled together to make it happen. It wasn't just the knitters who were involved/ The whole parish got on-board with the project explains Anna.

"Worship is an inclusive experience for us. If there is something pertinent going on, then it has a place in worship. We showed slippers, we talked about the project and about how things were going. Worship in our church is a way of all of us acting in solidarity with those involved."

All of the wool and materials were donated and the project didn't cost the parish any money says Beverly. "People would simply walk into the service and leave wool on the entry table and it would be picked up by a knitter and returned as slippers."

She says one of the most satisfying aspects of the project was how the whole congregation – and many beyond – took up the challenge.

"Worship is an inclusive experience for us. If there is something pertinent going on, then it has a place in worship."

"Even those who didn't knit were involved. Some purchased socks or slippers to add to the knitted items and others donated wool. Even extended family members of the congregation played a part. They heard about the project and we got socks sent from as far away as Taranaki. My hairdresser even whipped up several pairs when I told her what the parish was working on!"

Feedback from the school was warm and Anna and Beverly were surprised how much the slippers were welcomed.

"Small things often mean a lot to people who have very little," Anna says.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)



Pauline and Sean Gulliver, Mathew Seymour-Wright and Lilliana Chapman, together with Jack and Max Gulliver and Nathaniel and Benjamin Chapman, help out at the Presbyterian Support Foodbank.

Church has heart for the community – young and old

Mairangi and Castor Bays Presbyterian Church may be small but it has a large heart for community members – both old and young.

The church, which has a regular attendance of around 70, was recently certified as the first Kids Friendly Presbyterian parish on Auckland's North Shore. About a dozen children attend the regular 'K@MP' programme while more turn up for the less formal interactive service for all ages once a month. About 25 small children come to Mainly Music every week with parents or grandparents.

Sunday School teacher Pauline Gulliver says they are slowly building up the family activities programme and encouraging children to live out their faith in practical ways.

"We have a lot of boys so we have to keep it moving with activities that will engage them, such as service for others."

Inspired by PresCare's 'Love Reaches Out' art competition, the group visited the Presbyterian Support Northern (PSN) Foodbank to deliver a mountain of non-perishable food items they had 'earned' over a five week period instead of pocket money. The children also stacked shelves, and helped pack food parcels while learning about families in need and the work of Presbyterian Support.

Pauline's 11-year-old son Jack returned to PSN a second time with disaster relief kits he and others had put together for a school project. The kits contain basic hygiene and medical items and will be delivered to low-decile schools for families who might struggle to put together their own emergency supplies.

"The message for our children was that they live relatively privileged lives while others have to work hard just to survive. We encourage them to think about questions like, 'What can we do to help others? What does love look like in action?'" Pauline says.

The church continues to provide weekly contributions to the PSN Foodbank. Members of the congregation also put together nearly 50 Christmas gift boxes this year for Family Works to distribute. Others volunteer as teacher aides at the local primary school and lead Girls' Brigade or help with games nights.

Family Activities Coordinator, Stephanie Chapman, says the younger families were so blessed to have the faithful support of the older people for their activities. "They are our heritage in the role models they provide for our children in living out our faith."

Dee's Groups

Many of the older church members also volunteer at Dee's Social Groups for people with dementia who live at home. The first group was set up three years ago in response to a community need identified by PSN's work with older people. Fortnightly meetings at Mairangi Bay then became weekly and another group was established at St George's Presbyterian Church in Takapuna. Both groups are coordinated by PSN facilitator and health professional Margaret Pont.

About 35 volunteers from both churches help out. Every school holidays a group of senior students from Rangitoto College also volunteers as part of their community work. The team receives basic training but it's their ability to make members feel comfortable and confident that matters most, says Margaret.

Each four-hour session consists of games, exercises, music, and plenty of conversation to provide friendship and stimulation for the people who attend. Once a month the Mairangi Dee's Group joins in with the church lunch group.

Val Harper, aged 90, loves attending both Dee's Groups. "They make everyone feel so welcome and special," she says. Val is fiercely independent and lives on her own. She is physically fit and agile but, no longer able to drive, she was becoming bored, lonely and frustrated. "Dee's Group has given me back my zest for life," she says.

Her daughter Linda Padoa agrees that the groups were a lifesaver for her mother. "We are very grateful to Margaret and her team. They make an incredible difference to the lives of the members and their families."

Stewart Milne, clerk of the parish council and chair of the PSN board, is a key link in all these community activities. He led the children on their visit to the Foodbank and is on the roster of volunteers at Dee's Group.

"We identified social contact for older people as a huge need in our community. One thing I've learnt is that those with dementia respond positively to social contact and organised activities but it takes a little time. These are great people to work with and the caregivers are very grateful for the little we do."

Andrea Candy [Spanz](#)

Growing NZ Leaders – the Te Whaiti Scholarship

At Sir Rodney Gallen's funeral Justice Joe Williams recalled Sir Rodney explaining to him how he had personally won the Rugby World Cup for New Zealand. "It was easy. I awarded Israel Dagg a Te Whaiti Scholarship, and the rest is history."

Back in 1972, Sir Rodney and John Te Rangihau saw an opportunity to develop Māori leaders through the establishment of the Te Whaiti-Nui-A-Toi Scholarship with profits from the Te Whaiti-A-Toi farm school. When the Māori Synod decided to sell the farm the proceeds were set aside to further assist Māori boys and girls to attend Hastings' Lindisfarne College and other boarding schools including Turakina Māori Girls' College.

Israel Dagg isn't the only national sporting hero the scholarship has produced. Former All Black captain Taine Randall is another to have benefitted. "It gave me a path to a school that really wasn't a possibility for my parents at the time", Taine says.

"Cricket was my sport of choice in those days and a teacher from Lindisfarne spotted me playing junior rep cricket and recommended me. Once I got to Lindisfarne it was just assumed I'd be going to University after I finished school."

Which he did. Taine completed a double degree at Otago in Commerce and Law and now runs both an investment company and a food processing company with his wife.

"Through the Te Whaiti Scholarship, I was constantly bombarded with opportunities that challenged my abilities, tested my resolve and fortitude, and helped me learn who I was and who I was to become."

Taine has recently been appointed one of the three Trustees of the Te Whaiti

Scholarship. "I want to help. I've been fortunate to know the difference the Scholarship can make and I want to give other Māori boys the same opportunity so they can find their career paths and at the same time serve their people and work with local iwi."

One of the first two holders of the scholarship was Allan Hawea. Today he divides his time between roles in Tikanga Māori of the Anglican Church and working with iwi in the settlement of Treaty of Waitangi claims.

"I began as a scrawny third former sent to a boarding school where 98 per cent of the school roll was Pākehā. The kaupapa at Lindisfarne was that, regardless of race and culture, there are aspirations and values common to all, and this has undoubtedly shaped my understanding today.

"My time at Lindisfarne gave me a different kind of ambition. I came to see the importance of education for Māori, to seek a good standard of living for my own and others' whanau, and for iwi Māori to strive for greater economic wealth and the benefits that come from that."

Allan made many good friends at Lindisfarne, developed a fondness for apple crumble, realised he had a good mind even though he didn't like school work, and discovered he was a hopeless rugby player.

"I received a good education. Lindisfarne, as a special character school, has its ties to the Presbyterian Church and maintains a recognition of the Christian faith. This Presbyterian scholarship allowed me an education my parents could not otherwise have afforded.

"I see the scholarship as an expression of the vision of our kaumatua, Māori and Pākehā,



Taine Randall, recently appointed a Trustee of the Te Whaiti Scholarship, at the 40th reunion Te Whaiti Scholarship dinner.

I received a good education. Lindisfarne, as a special character school, has its ties to the Presbyterian Church and maintains a recognition of the Christian faith.

many who are no longer with us, and I pay tribute to them. At Lindisfarne we carried the dreams of our people for the future, the future of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, of Te Aka Puaho, of Ngati Whare, of Tuhoe."

Today 22 Māori students hold Te Whaiti Scholarships at Lindisfarne College and their results are consistently significantly better than the national average for all students. The school's rector, Ken McLeod, is in no doubt about the value the scholarship.

"It has brought some wonderful young men into the school - scholars, sportsmen, musicians, artists - and we have benefited from their presence and contribution.

"They brought Te Reo and Tikanga Māori into what was a largely Pākehā environment, especially in the early days of the scholarship, and exposed the wider community to elements of culture they had little understanding about.

"They certainly broke down barriers between the cultures and today are another strand in the strong cord that makes up Lindisfarne."

Chris Nichol 

Youth key to St John's growing evening service



The continued growth of Wellington's St John's in the City Presbyterian evening service can be attributed to the commitment of its young adult congregation, the Rev Stuart Simpson says.

Since 2009 St John's in the City has taken its evening service in a more youth-focused direction. Older hymns are still sung, but to a faster rhythm, accompanied by drums, bass and guitars.

"The Rev Allister Lane and I rely on the evening service leadership team to coordinate volunteers for the smooth running of the service. They roster people to set up, welcome, run the music group, sound desk and data projector, make tea and coffee, and prepare the popular evening meal at the end of the service."

Every Sunday at 5.45pm, about 50 people gather for the service that is distinctly Presbyterian yet has a highly creative and flexible structure. Held in the church's conference centre, people gather café-style around coffee tables.

"The service is based on traditional liturgy, yet it is contemporary. We sing some of the old hymns but at a faster rhythm accompanied by drums, bass and guitars."

The evening service's group discussion time has become a highlight for many, Stuart says. "A focus group within the congregation is responsible for suggesting themes. These have included: What is the problem with sin? Is Christianity a straitjacket? Is the Church responsible for injustice? How can a loving God send people to hell? We have had some really honest, thoughtful and lively conversations around questioning faith."

Stuart says in 2009 Ryhan Prasad [now minister at Khandallah Presbyterian] was employed by St John's to coordinate the evening service and take it in a more youth-focused direction. Since then the congregation, which covers a wide age-

range but the majority are students and young professionals, has grown from 30 to up to 67 people. "If we had everyone attend on the same evening there would be 80 people."

Because so many in the congregation are students, attendance can fluctuate. "They might attend one Sunday but not the next because they are studying for exams. Or they stop coming along because they are off travelling. About every three-years a significant proportion of the congregation changes; new students come along and those who have finished their studies move away. It's a dynamic that's both wonderful and challenging," Stuart says.

St John's does not promote its evening service to Victoria University, students usually hear about it through word-of-mouth or through their home church.

A friend invited James Wilcox to attend the St John's evening service in late-2011. "I went along and saw a number of familiar faces. It was everything I needed at the time – a relevant sermon and a great community of friendly people my age. At my previous church I was somewhat of an outsider, so to be invited so warmly into a faith community was outstanding."

James says that he appreciates the "opportunity during the service for people to stand-up and share a prayer or a story about what God has been doing in their lives; it's refreshing, real, and in my experience, unique".

Sophie Macaulay, daughter of the Rev Dr Martin Macaulay of East Taieri Church, began attending the evening service in April 2010.

"It's a very transient congregation - we're mostly students and young professionals - but I'm still in touch with many friends who have moved away.

"I like the sense of community. I like that everyone is involved, that it's casual, that the ministers care about what's going on in my life, and that I can cry there and that's ok. I like that I get the opportunity to preach sometimes, and that I can be part of creating the service. I like that we have dinner; it's way easier to talk to someone over a meal than awkwardly standing around after the service."

Jono Ensor, the son of the Rev Sharon Ross-Ensor, is a youth group leader at Wadestown Presbyterian and has attended St John's evening service for the past 18 months "primarily for the fellowship".

"Having a place where you can meet like-minded people who are going through the same things you are is something which cannot be overvalued. Students leading the music, and reading the prayers for others, helps you feel more involved in the service and not like a spectator. The shared meal enables you to meet new people - especially when you have to sit next to people you've never met before due to a lack of space. It really encourages a feeling of community."

Angela Singer [Spanz](#)



Going Deeper inspires young leaders

Presbyterian youth have fun at Easter Camp 2013.

A recent Going Deeper course has helped inspire, equip and resource 17 young leaders to be more effective in their ministry with young people.

Youth pastor at Mahurangi Presbyterian Church in Warkworth, Sarah Crocombe, organised the training following feedback from her team that they wanted to be better leaders.

Sarah's team of 11 volunteers was joined by another five leaders from nearby Waiuku and Districts Combined Churches after Sarah put the word out among her Skype network of youth pastors.

Going Deeper in youth ministry explores some of the fundamentals of youth ministry leadership including safety practices, fostering faith development, developing relational youth ministry relationships and understanding the characteristics of youth ministry and Christian faith in young people.

From Sarah's perspective the purpose of the training was to provide resources and ideas to help her leadership team be more effective.

"I was hoping they would be empowered, that they feel valued as leaders and that they would develop a deeper understanding of what leadership is."

The highlight for Sarah was the "a-ha moments" where she saw things "click" for people who, between them, are responsible for programmes that cater to around 50 young people.

"As a result of what they heard during the course they were questioning the current practices at our church and wondering if we could do things differently. It was great to see them taking stuff on board."

Josh Dunne, 27, who is currently a youth leader at Mahurangi was really inspired by what he heard at Going Deeper and has just applied to join the PYM internship programme. If successful this will see him studying full-time next year.

"The highlight of Going Deeper for me was that it reiterated the direction I wanted to go in."

Josh says the course really helped him think about the harder elements in youth ministry.

"The course delved into areas I hadn't thought about before and it reminded me that while it's a lot of fun there is also a lot of responsibility that comes with working with young people."

Sarah was deliberate about including all Mahurangi's leaders on the course – the youngest attendee was just 13 – because she believes it's important to acknowledge and value everyone's contribution.

"While there was some material that was over the head of younger leaders we worked through this stuff with them one-on-one later."

At Mahurangi there is an intentional mentoring programme to foster up and coming leaders where older youth leaders are paired with younger people and they run activities together. Younger leaders typically have fewer responsibilities and

are supported in their work by their more experienced colleagues.

Since the training Sarah has noticed that the team are better at problem solving, especially the younger leaders.

"I put it down to them feeling more empowered that they can solve the problem and developing an understanding that they are just as important as the other leaders, that they've learnt some things to help control a situation and they don't have to wait for someone older."

Sarah has noticed other changes in the team since the Going Deeper training as well.

"They can debrief better and they also better recognise the need for debriefing. They've also been a lot more intentional about the safety stuff. I think as a team they are better at supporting each other."

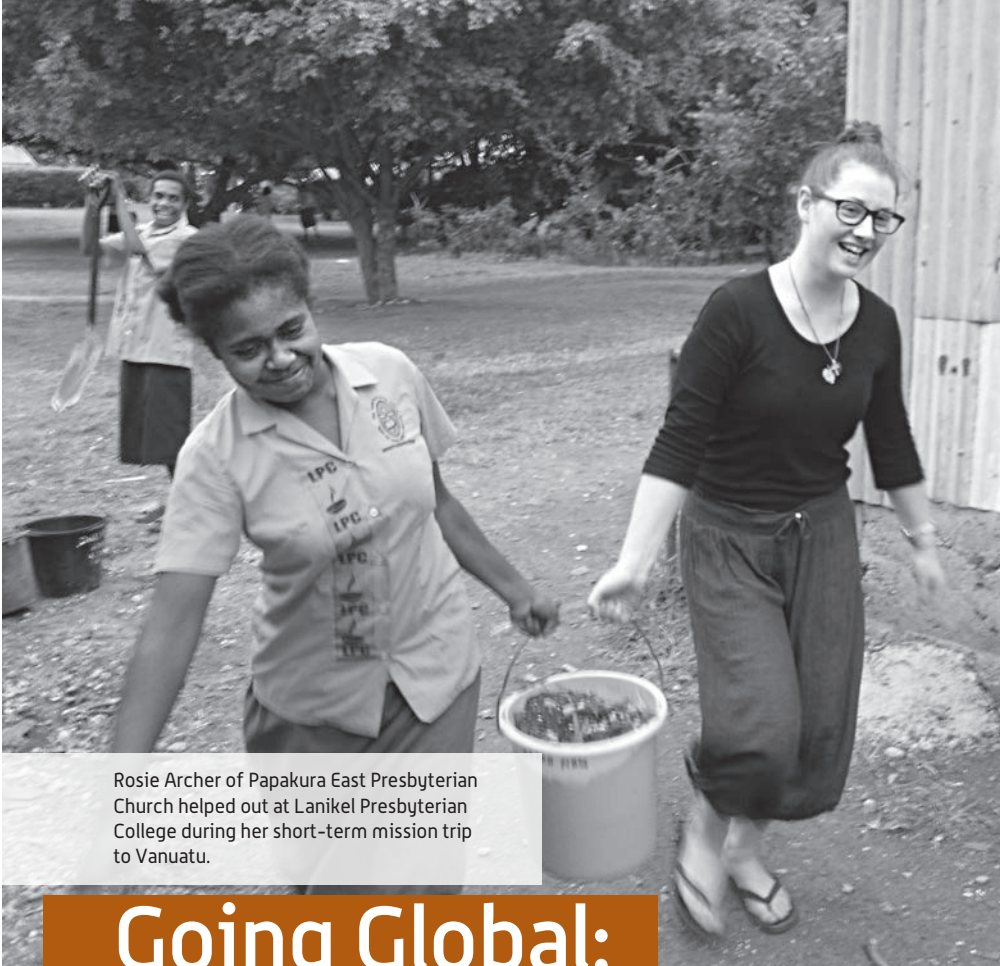
Training is only one element of how Mahurangi supports its youth leaders. Sarah also organises leaders' nights, where the leaders, right from year nine to those that have left school, just hang-out.

"It's about making sure they feel valued and supported. I want our leaders to believe they're important and valued within their roles. It's our goal to do these nights twice a term."

Intentional reviews of activities at the end of each term to see what worked well and what needs improvement are also an important part of the youth leadership culture at Mahurangi.

For more info about Going Deeper, check out www.pym.org.nz

Jose Reader Spanz



Rosie Archer of Papakura East Presbyterian Church helped out at Lanikel Presbyterian College during her short-term mission trip to Vanuatu.

Going Global: long-term benefits to short-term mission

Short-term mission programmes sometimes get a mixed press. Some people dismiss them as “mission tourism”. But the Going Global team from Papakura East Presbyterian Church, who spent 10 days in Vanuatu in July, found their time there much more enriching and enlightening than any holiday.

Team leader Rosie Archer admits that at first she wrestled with the purpose of the visit. They weren't responsible for delivering tangible benefits to the community they were visiting – no health care, no buildings, and no new infrastructure. But that was never the point.

Before the team of 10 young adults and a “big sister” left for Vanuatu, Rosie attended a course on leading short-term mission at Laidlaw College where she was told that mission is about changing lives. She and her team discovered how true that was, and that the lives changed were their own.

The Going Global programme is a mission trip initiative begun last year as a partnership between Presbyterian Youth Ministry (PYM) and Global Mission. PYM's leader Dr Carlton Johnstone underscores the value of the visit for the sending church.

“The mission visit is about both dwelling amongst another community of the body of Christ, discovering how they practice Christianity. As a result, it's also about learning how better to be who we are by critiquing our own community and culture.”

At the end of the visit, in his farewell speech to the visiting New Zealanders, Shim George, Principal of Vanuatu's Lanikel Presbyterian College, emphasised the contribution the team had made to his school. “The programme is about building bridges between your youth and our youth. We can all look to the youth in our churches who are involved in ministry as a source of hope.”

Months before leaving for Vanuatu, the Going Global team commenced a thorough preparation: together they worked through six training modules that focussed on gaining a richer understanding of mission; the nature of partnership, community and culture; identifying and responding to conflict, and the meaning of “development”.

Team members, enthusiastically supported by their sponsoring parish Papakura East Presbyterian, undertook extensive

fundraising including a church gala, a quiz-night and a barbeque as well as approaches to trusts and services groups.

As a result of working and training together so closely, by the time they were finally on the plane the 10 individuals had become a team.

After arriving in Vila the team travelled to Lanikel College on the island of Tanna. “We thought we would ask the school how we could best be of service to them”, says Rosie. “But the response received was, “What do you want to do?”

“After watching their devotions the first evening we ended up taking morning and evening devotions each day. We'd learned to introduce ourselves in Bislama (Vanuatu pidgin) and that was really appreciated.”

As the team spent time being amongst the Ni-Van students playing sport, laughing and singing, visitors and hosts each gained a new understanding of the other's way of living in the light of Christ.

Those who have taken part in short-term mission are certain of who benefits from these visits - just about everyone.

Some have found the experience transformative. One team member who was terrified at the very thought of speaking in public ended up confidently leading worship at Lanikel College and now does so at home too. As Rosie says, “For some the trip has been a direct answer to prayer and others have developed leadership traits that will serve them and others well in the future.”

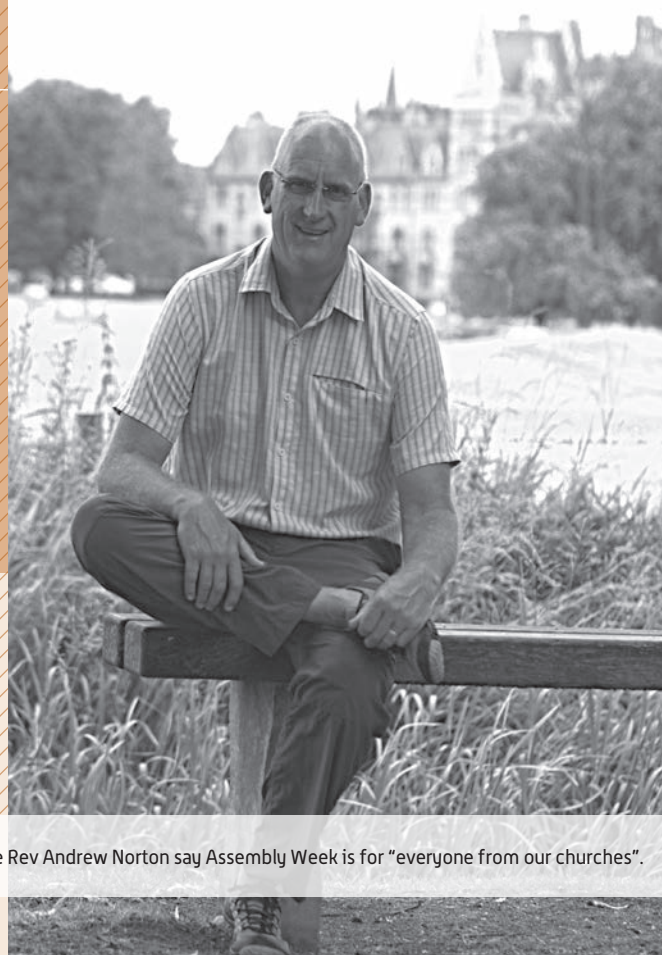
Shin George is very clear that Lanikel is a beneficiary too. His closing remarks in an address to the New Zealand visitors were full of gratitude, “We thank you for helping us and our students, for equipping us and showing the way forward towards Christ.”

Papakura East's minister, the Rev Dr Geoff New, says the opportunity for his congregation to support the team, to share their hope and uncertainty, has been nothing short of a gift. “It's been a galvanising experience of healing and hope, reminding us of why the church exists. It's gathered us as a community. It's been a vibrant experience of grace.”

Carlton is delighted that the Going Global programme is meeting its objective because “through this kind of programme the Presbyterian Churches of Vanuatu and Aotearoa New Zealand continue to grow and cement their ongoing relationship”.

Chris Nichol [Spanz](#)

General Assembly becomes Assembly Week 2014 – and everyone is welcome



Moderator-designate the Rev Andrew Norton says Assembly Week is for “everyone from our churches”.

Assembly Week 2014, from 3 to 7 October, will be for all the Church, not just for commissioners says Moderator-designate the Rev Andrew Norton.

“This Assembly will be about including everyone from our churches in shaping our Church. We will gather for five days, still for decision making, but also to encourage, inspire, equip and resource one another.”

Running concurrently to business and dialogue groups will be “streams” that attendees (who are non-commissioners) can attend which will include resourcing and workshops.

“At this stage we are thinking these might include, and be run by and for, different groups within our Church. We have confirmed streams run by Press Go’s Offspring team, Presbyterian Youth Ministry, Global Mission, and Te Aka Puaho. These streams will be their own gathering but they will also join in with commissioners outside of business sessions and share some of their discussions. Resourcing sessions currently confirmed will be by Kids Friendly, Presbyterian Support Northern, Rural Ministry and music and worship.”

Andrew says that Friday 3 October, the first day of Assembly Week, will be a minister’s only day facilitated by KCML “providing our ministers with the space and opportunity to gather and reconnect with one another, share their stories, and receive the kind of resourcing they have requested. The morning will focus on resilience in ministry and the afternoon on transformational leadership.”

A big change from previous General Assemblies will be that no business will be held in the evenings however there will be the same amount of time for business as at the last Assembly.

“Previous Assembly feedback tells us that after a full day of business, commissioners feel discerning and decision-making in the evening is very tiring so there will be no business after dinner. That time will be used instead for listening to inspirational speakers, storytelling, musical events and sharing with one another.”

As Moderator, Andrew says he will not have a theme and will instead share one of his strengths during his term – recognising, encouraging and developing leadership potential.

Andrew, who is senior minister of St Columba Botany Downs, Chair of the Press Go board and Leader of Executive Wilderness Retreats, says congregations are welcome to download his recent book, ‘Courage to Lead’, which combines poetry and images to encourage reflection on, and provide insight into, your own personal leadership style and journey.

Andrew hopes that those taking part in the various Assembly Week sessions and streams “will begin each day with prayer and pray as they need, this way prayer is a part of the week and not something we schedule for a Sunday”.

The cost of attending Assembly Week will be announced soon and work is underway to make it as affordable as possible.

“The more people who attend, the more costs will reduce. We have made a commitment to keep the cost at less than the previous Assembly because this Week is for the whole Church, so we want as many people to be able to attend as possible. For some people attending the entire five days will be a wonderful opportunity they can make time for but for others it may not be practical and they may only be able to come along for a few workshops, or just for a day or two. We are working on making a range of options possible,” Andrew says.

The Church’s General Assembly – Assembly Week 2014 will run from Friday 3 to Tuesday 7 October, 2014, at Saint Kentigern College, Pakuranga, Auckland. Check the Church’s website for more information, updates will be posted over the coming weeks <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/about-us/general-assembly/assembly-week-2014>.

Download the Rev Andrew Norton’s book “Courage to Lead” for US\$5.99 at <http://store.blurb.com/ebooks/198733-courage-to-lead-by-andrew-norton>

If you want be involved in GA14, please contact the Right Rev Ray Coster, moderator @presbyterian.org.nz with your expression of interest.

Angela Singer Spanz



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THEOLOGY MATTERS

Moving from a theology centred around place to a journey theology

Over the past few years I have increasingly found myself being asked to provide some input to, or work as a consultant with, a variety of parishes and local churches, presbyteries and dioceses, that are struggling with their futures. It is very clear that a good number of churches in New Zealand are no longer sustainable, at least in anything like their current form, and are under threat of closure. Largely this is a consequence of the aging demographics of so many churches, but has been heightened by all the earthquake issues now facing many buildings. This has caused a great deal of anxiety, anger, conflict and grief among many people for whom their relationship with God has been significantly tied to a particular building. Without their buildings sadly many disappear from church.

As I have come to understand the issues found in these places I have come to realise that at a basic level it is a theological issue, and as I have reflected on that two comments from insightful church leaders have rumbled around in my mind. The first was shortly after I had come into the Presbyterian Church and my role at Knox, from the Rev Dr Kerry Enright while discussing with him what he had done on study leave. His comment was that far too many of our people have an inadequate theology for the 21st century. They have a theology centred around place rather than a journey theology. The other comment was from the person who has been the most influential in my own faith and ministry journey, the Rev Murray Robertson. In interviewing him for the book I am writing on his remarkable 40 year ministry at Spreydon Baptist Church, I asked him what was essential to sustain that. His immediate response was “Well, first you have to have a theology of journey”.

I think these perceptions are profoundly true. Too many who see themselves as followers of Jesus have a theology of place

rather than a theology of journey, which following implies. Their understanding of what it means to be God’s people is defined around the building where they gather for perhaps a couple of hours a week. Place implies stability, security and permanence, although the heightened awareness that we do indeed live in the shaky isles has shaken that a bit. Journey on the other hand implies change and uncertainty, a willingness to leave some things behind, that you have no fixed abode. If there is one thing true about living in the world that has emerged in the 21st century, it is that it is full of change and uncertainty, and a theology that is founded on permanence and stability is quite unsuited to that.

Of course we should always have known this, because it is the theology we find for God’s people in both the Old and New Testament scriptures, from the call of Abraham in Genesis, through the gospels and ministry of Jesus with those who followed, on into the ministry of the apostles. My thoughts on this came to a head while preaching through the lectionary readings in Hebrews 11, 12 and 13 in August, where we are reminded that, “we walk by faith and not by sight,” living as “aliens and strangers on earth... looking for a better country”. I am sure it was the faith with which our “pioneers” set out from Scotland, not knowing what lay ahead, but trusting in God as Abraham had. In all the security and stability we thought the modern world had brought for us, we seem to have forgotten the theological foundations that underpin our existence as God’s people, our trust in the God who is always moving ahead of us, and have instead come to place our trust in some of the temporary way stations we have established on route. For many it requires a re-digging of our theological foundations from the quarry of Scripture.

– Rev Dr Kevin Ward, Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership

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The Marsden Cross, in the Bay of Islands, is named for the Reverend Samuel Marsden.

Christmas celebration of the bicentenary of Christianity in New Zealand

Christmas Day 2014 will be the bicentenary of Christian beginnings in New Zealand – 200 years since the Reverend Samuel Marsden held his first service in the Bay of Islands.

While in physical terms the focus will be on the Marsden Cross in a bay near Kerikeri, in historical terms the focus should be on the engagement between Māori and Pākehā, says the Reverend Dr Allan Davidson, historian and Presbyterian minister, who is on the Marsden Cross Trust Board, its interdenominational Church Advisory Board, and the 2014 Bicentenary Planning Group.

“Oihi, Bay of Islands, is seen as a site of national importance because it was the beginning of European settlement,” says Allan. “But its importance is also as a place of accord, of engagement, Māori and Pākehā learning from each other.”

Allan points out that the Marsden crossed the Tasman with Ruatara, Hongi Hika and other Māori, and that the missionaries who settled at Oihi, Bay of Islands, came at the invitation of Māori.

“There is a tendency by some historians to look at these beginnings negatively. For example, the title of the biography of Thomas Kendall is ‘the legacy of guilt’. But there are also some very positive dimensions. For example, the first attempt was made to put Te Reo into writing, Māori very quickly took up reading and writing, and indigenous evangelists are part of the story of early Christianity in New Zealand.

“That first 25 years of engagement between Māori and missionary was an incredible turning point in our national history. Without the missionaries there would have been no Treaty of Waitangi.”

Allan has also undertaken research on the First World War and is very aware of the centenary of that conflict which will be commemorated from August 2014.

“There are three significant anniversaries within six months – the bicentenary of the arrival of Christianity, the 175th

anniversary of the Treaty of Waitangi, and the centenary of the landing at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915,” Allan says.

“These are all significant and they all need to have their place. We need to make sure the commemoration of the beginnings of Christianity in New Zealand are not overshadowed.”

The Marsden Cross Trust Board has purchased 20 hectares of land at Oihi - the Presbyterian Church contributed \$40,000 towards this purchase - and is building a striking portal at the roadway which frames the view of the Marsden Cross. From there, going down the walkway, there will be storytelling posts illustrating aspects of both Māori and missionary history in this place. The Board is working closely with Ngati Torehina (the local hapu), the Department of Conservation, Historic Places Trust and other partners.

Allan is giving seminars in 2014 and editing a book of 14 essays on New Zealand Christian beginnings. Many other activities are being planned for 2014 including the launch of a Summer of Pilgrimages by the New Zealand Church Missionary Society, promoting 10 walks in various parts of the country.

“While it was an Anglican missionary society that begins the Christian involvement in New Zealand it is also the beginning of the story of institutional Christianity here and so it is something that belongs to all churches. The church I attend, St Luke’s Presbyterian Church in Remuera, has a stained glass window showing Samuel Marsden and Ruatara.

“So it’s a story that belongs to us all. For example, the Reverend John McFarlane, the first Presbyterian minister in New Zealand, arrived in Wellington in 1840. He conducted several weddings in Māori and criticised the New Zealand Company for not honouring the Tenth, land they promised to set aside for Māori.

“I encourage all churches to look at their own beginnings and how and whether their local story involves Māori and what the role and mission of the church is in our day.”

Allan retired in June 2009 after 27 years of lecturing at St John’s Theological College in Auckland. He was made an Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit for services to history in the 2010 New Year’s honours.

Gospel bicentenary website: www.gospel2014.org/

The New Zealand Church Missionary Society pilgrimages: www.nzcms.org.nz/2014-pilgrimage/

Ministering with multicultural congregations

Ministers and congregations are stepping out of their comfort zones as they seek to connect with people and communities that differ from their own cultural backgrounds.

Rev Amos Muzondiwa, from Zimbabwe, describes his congregation – Inglewood Uniting Church in Taranaki – as multi-ethnic. It's a small congregation made up primarily of people of European and African descent and everyone worships together.

For Amos the pursuit of multiculturalism is a sometimes uncomfortable but necessary part of ministry.

"I've come to realise that in a different cultural environment my life is richer and more wonderfully complex because of the uniqueness of others and different sets of the truths in which I have to engage. This engagement has forced me more and more to move out of my comfort zone."

Amos seeks to build bridges between the different groups within the congregation and between the congregation and community by sharing some African traditions and language.

"African groups from the community have been invited to church celebrations, lunches, breakfasts and seminars. Sometimes they just attend. Sometimes they preach or give presentations and respond to prevailing Kiwi views on poverty, justice and morality from an African perspective."

Michelle Shin, a Korean-born minister and part of Hutt City Uniting ministry team, thinks the worst enemy for cross-cultural ministry is fear.

"As human beings we fear something that is unknown, something we cannot understand. If we are afraid of people we don't understand and have difficulty communicating.

"We need to be able to walk in their shoes. We need to address and work towards being free from our fear. Empathy is really the key. 'Treat them as you want to be treated' is not only a nice saying, it is biblical.

"Sometimes cross-cultural ministry is about creating a space, creating common ground, creating a breathing space where all are accepted and valued," believes Michelle who practices this in her ministry.

The Waiwhetu parish, one of the Hutt Uniting congregations in which Michelle ministers, has recently created space in its church for refugees from Myanmar to learn English. The congregation identified this mission opportunity after recognising that the community near their church included many new migrants from Myanmar with young families.

Similarly, St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Queenstown recognised a need to reach out to their town's large migrant community. This resulted in a new ministry called Global Wakatipu Community [profiled in *Spanz, Spring 2013*].

Bronwyn Hartley from St Andrew's has enjoyed her engagement with the Spanish and Portuguese speaking community despite not speaking either language.

By looking for visual clues, gestures and having some patience as well as getting someone to interpret when needed, "we can generally work out what is meant", she says.

"I try and understand our cultural differ-

ences by asking questions, exploring their language and social community structure and how this works in our country."

Bronwyn has been building bridges between the St Andrew's congregation and the Global Community by helping the Community leaders find their way around St Andrew's, attending their evening services and encouraging others from the parish to come along or be involved by just bringing supper.

Bronwyn, like much of the St Andrew's congregation, grew up in Southland in a time when there was little cultural diversity. She believes some parishioners feel a little bit out of their depth and are struggling to see how they can be practically involved in the Global Community ministry. She is hopeful that over time the congregation will come to embrace and engage with the newcomers more.

Examples abound of churches reaching out and fostering multicultural relationships through special events or simply in their day-to-day ministry – Clevedon Presbyterian's intercultural lunches; Northern Presbytery's annual youth sports day; Whakatane Presbyterian and Waimana Pastorate's heart-to-heart and family festival; PIPc Newtown's many classes that bring together its multicultural community. As more congregations pick up the reins and reach out in love to embrace and engage with the diversity in their communities the church will increasingly be demonstrating its heart for mission.

Editor's note: The next edition in the Church's social justice booklet series "Understanding Multiculturalism in New Zealand and the Church" will be sent to parishes in December 2013.

Jose Reader **Spanz**




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Presbyterian Archivist to retire after two decades of service to the Church



Jane Dawber

Presbyterian Archivist, Yvonne Wilkie, is retiring but will keep on doing historical research.

The best moment in Yvonne's Wilkie's two decades as director of the Presbyterian Archives, now known as the Presbyterian Research Centre incorporating the Archives and Hewitson Library, and based at Knox College, came in the Otago Foundation Trust Board office in Dunedin in 1997.

"We had gone to pick up property plans they wanted to get out of there. I never can go in without looking around, and I asked, 'What's in those trunks there?' – two tin trunks on a high shelf.

"In one there were the original documents signed in 1847 by the Lay Association in Scotland for the settlement of the Otago Church, set up with the New Zealand Company, including the Land Deeds purchased before they arrived."

Another exciting find was a trunk of invoices under the Port Chalmers church. "They were from 1854 to 1930. They give more detail than a cash book. You could see what they ate at the Sunday School picnics, for example. Another interesting feature is the print culture, changing from handwritten invoices to ones with many fancy fonts."

Yvonne was an intermediate school teacher who had just completed a Post Graduate Diploma in history at the University of Otago when she saw the Archives job advertised 20 years ago. With her three sons grown up she had been thinking of doing a PhD in Canada and was considering selling the house to fund it.

"Then this job came up. I was born and bred a Presbyterian and I knew a lot about the Church, so I applied.

Yvonne Wilkie surrounded by research documents in the Presbyterian Archives at Knox College, Dunedin.

"I loved it from the beginning. I love the processing, getting the material arranged and described and catalogued. And I could research all day.

Twenty years ago she was in sole charge of 550 linear metres of material in a basement. Getting new facilities, including a reading room in 2009 was a major turning point.

Now there are four staff members and 2500 linear metres of resources including about 200,000 photographs.

"With churches closing down and merging we are getting more and more records," says Yvonne. "When I first started it was mainly the General Assembly committees' archives and those from Otago and Southland parishes. Now it's basically the whole of New Zealand. We used to have regional repositories in local museums. But many are backing out as it's too costly for them to maintain our material. So they're sending it to us." These institutions included the Auckland War Memorial Museum and the Christchurch Public Library.

Genealogists are the largest group of about 300 users each year, followed by historians based at the University of Otago and researchers from overseas.

"We have a very good missionary collection – particularly Vanuatu, China and India. An associate professor from the University of Hong Kong Science and Technology is coming over this month to look at material on the Japanese invasion of Canton and background information," says Yvonne.

Users are usually charged \$20 per day. Church and parish users and students have

free use. If the archivists do the work for people who can't get to the archive the usual charge is \$50 an hour.

Most of the funding comes from the Presbyterian Church but Yvonne has raised money for special projects, including \$150,000 for the photographic collection, and she successfully applied for Lotteries funding for a microfiche reader. The Outlook and The Presbyterian have now been microfilmed.

Yvonne hopes the catalogue will be online early in 2014 making it much more readily available.

She has mixed feelings about research libraries digitising large amounts of material. "I find it disturbing. It's wonderful, but it is going to become a problem if people won't go past looking online. What about what's not digitised?"

The lack of imagination of historians who don't spend time on archival research is another concern. "One of the things that makes me cross with some academics is that they are primed to use the same material over and over again.

"It's important to seek out new resources that help to enlarge our story. It's encouraging to see more use being made of our collections by Otago students."

Although Yvonne is retiring, she will be spending plenty of time back in Archives next year doing the research for an updated history of the Synod of Otago and Southland she is writing for its 150th anniversary in 2016.

Jane Tolerton [Spanz](#)

PresCare: Caring for families together this Lent

An annual children's art competition and Lent resource are just two ways the Church and Presbyterian Support are demonstrating their shared commitment to the wellbeing of children and families.

Since its inception in 2010 PresCare, which funds and resources joint projects like the Lent resource and art competition, has worked to strengthen relationships between the regional Presbyterian Support teams and local churches so they might work together in their local communities to support children and families.

The partnerships in each region are evolving and are as varied as the churches and the communities they serve. Some are at the stage of having conversations about possible opportunities for shared outreach while others are looking at participating in community events together.

Some national projects – like the Lent resource and art competition – have also

been put in place. More recently approval has just been given to fund a pilot that will see Presbyterian Support and selected parishes working together to participate in national Neighbours Day.

The 2014 edition of the Lent resource is due out in December and includes a biblical reflection, a Presbyterian Support reflection and a Kids Friendly activity for each week during Lent.

It builds on the previous Lent resource which was well received says Lisa Wells who has co-ordinated the project on behalf of PresCare for the last two years.

Lisa explains that survey feedback from churches about how they're using the resource shows "we're pleasing a greater number of people" and the changes to the format and style in the last couple of years have made it easier to use and more accessible.

Making the resource available earlier (in December rather than February), a move to a weekly rather than a daily format, and including material written by ministers from a variety of backgrounds all seem to have resonated well with church goers.

Lisa believes the Church and Presbyterian Support working together locally and nationally makes real sense.

"We share a name and heritage, and we have a shared commitment to the wellbeing of children and families. The Lent resource is a tangible way we can keep the plight of children and families in front of people.

"Presbyterian Support can take a role in the advocacy of the Church, and the Church can take a part in the service of Presbyterian Support. Together we're stronger and more effective."

The PresCare art competition is also very popular and this year attracted a high standard of entries. Jill Kayser from Kids Friendly and Anne Overton from Presbyterian Support project manage the competition. Entries came from all over New Zealand, with children from parishes, those linked with Social Workers in Schools, and the Family Works Buddy Programmes all participating in the competition.

Some of the winning artwork, which this year was based around the theme "Love reaches out – we can make a difference", features in the Lent resource.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)



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Moderator on world stage

Representing the Church at events is one of the Moderator's many tasks – one which is both richly rewarding and at times tiring, according to current Moderator the Rt Rev Ray Coster.

Ray has had the opportunity to represent the Church at many events since he took office in 2012, most recently at the World Council of Church's (WCC) 10th General Assembly, held in Busan, Korea.

The Assembly gathered around 3,000 people representing 345 WCC member churches, including youth, WCC staff members, stewards, co-opted staff, interpreters and more than 1,000 Korean church members and day visitors. Altogether these participants came from over 100 countries.

Ray was invited to moderate one of 21 ecumenical conversations at the gathering, "The Korean Peninsula – towards an ecumenical accompaniment for Building Justice and Peace".

Around 300 people participated in the 90-minute conversation which explored the issues, challenges and obstacles for building peace and reconciliation on the Korean peninsula that could be addressed by the ecumenical movement.

"I felt very honoured to moderate this discussion as this is the only time the world church has met on the Korean peninsula in living memory. It is now 60 years since this nation was divided along the 38th parallel and it is still under the strong influence of foreign powers. There is a real sense of urgency, not only to talk but to see some

action on bringing justice and peace to this peninsula."

To prepare for the November gathering the WCC flew Ray to Geneva in September to meet with the other ecumenical conversation moderators and the WCC staff who were assisting with the facilitated conversations. Ray was also trained in the operations of the WCC including consensus decision-making.

As part of the Body of Christ Ray believes participating in events like the WCC General Assembly is one way the Presbyterian Church can play its part in ecumenical initiatives.

"In matters of justice and peace we can't turn a blind eye to situations in the world. And neither can we be much influence on our own. But as part of the wider church we can be a voice.

"It is very clear from the Bible that God has a real heart for justice, peace, righteousness, caring for the marginalised, the vulnerable and the poor. When we, as a Church, are involved in these matters at an international ecumenical level we know we are working in the heart of God."

Networking with other church leaders is also an important part of these events, says Ray, who took the opportunity to meet with representatives from partner churches like the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea to reaffirm and strengthen our existing ministry connections.

Ray says the exposure to other ways of being that he observes and experiences while travelling is enriching his ministry.

"It is broadening it and increasing my understanding of the Church globally. For example, to be able to talk with a church leader from Syria and hear about what issues the church is facing in Syria and Lebanon. Or to talk to a church leader from



Opening prayer of the World Council of Church's (WCC) 10th General Assembly, held in Busan, Korea.

Bethlehem and hear what it is like being a Christian in that community."

As well as representing the Church at international events like the General Assemblies of partner churches and the annual gathering of trans-tasman moderators, Ray also represents us at events throughout New Zealand. On behalf of the Church he attends Anzac celebrations, ecumenical events, social justice gatherings and important national events like Waitangi Day celebrations at Waitangi which this year he attended alongside Te Aka Puaho Moderator the Rev Wayne Te Kaawa.

In New Zealand Ray also represents the Presbyterian Church on a church leaders' group that meets to discuss matters of importance to the community and church. The twenty-two denominational leaders meet twice a year and representatives of this group meet on a regular basis with government and opposition leaders to speak about issues of concern to the churches.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)



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The Rev Steve Jourdain presented the Talua Memorial Lectures in August this year.

Pastoral visit provides Talua lecture opportunity

Paula and Roger Levy, who have been working in Vanuatu at Talua Ministry Training Centre for five years, recently had a visit from their home church minister, the Rev Steve Jourdain.

As part of its oversight, the Presbyterian Church's Global Mission office provides for a pastoral visit to the Levys. Back home in New Zealand they are members of St Albans Church in Palmerston North, so it was agreed that their minister Steve and his wife Shirley, good friends of the Levys, would visit.

Paula teaches English to theological students and their wives at the Talua on the northern island of Espiritu Santo. Roger assists with repairs and maintenance. Paula, Roger and their three children - David, Grace and Josh, are financially supported by the Council for World Mission, the Presbyterian Church and contributions from individuals.

When the Rev Phil King, coordinator of the Church's Global Mission office, heard that Steve was going he saw an opportunity.

"Talua has a special programme of lectures each year – the Talua Memorial Lectures. In 2007 Martin Stewart and I had presented them and it occurred to me that if Steve was going to be in Talua he could give the lectures in August this year", Phil says.

The Talua Centre was established in 1986 when two other long-standing colleges were merged. About 75 students live and study there for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church, the Anglican Church of Melanesia and the Church of Christ. The Centre offers Diploma of Theology, Diploma of Mission and Bachelor of Ministries programmes. Graduates from the college go on to become church leaders and evangelists to isolated villages.

"I was really impressed with the quality of the programme I saw there", says Steve. "Talua must offer one of the best ministry training options in the Pacific. Its Principal, Pastor Fiama Rakau, is very open to new ways of training and is especially keen to offer Bible-based and contextualised academic teaching, critical thinking and spiritual formation."

The lectures themselves consisted of eight hours of teaching and discussion over two mornings. Steve's focus was on the nature of leadership in the church, and the family.

He spoke about the things he had learned during 30 years as a minister and explored the Biblical characteristics and key qualities of effective leadership and self-care in ministry.

"As leaders it's important for us to have a good degree of self-awareness of the baggage we bring into ministry and the potential this can have for problems", he says. "This idea generated some real interest and considerable conversation."

Another topic that provoked discussion was Steve's reflections on leadership in marriage and the family. He explained how New Testament teaching went well beyond the attitudes of the Greco-Roman world where women were treated as chattels of men. "After this session a couple of people approached me to share that too often attitudes in Vanuatu were the same as 2,000 years ago."

"People really respected and valued the links with our Presbyterian Church and recalled the Levy's New Zealand

predecessors who served in Vanuatu in the past", Steve comments.

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand contributes to the partnership with the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu in many ways, including assisting with the salary for the assistant librarian at Talua and providing scholarships for Bush Missioners.

Steve found the ministry of Pastor Tony Wan particularly impressive. Tony, a Korean who had lived in Auckland from 1993, had studied at the Bible College of New Zealand with Paula.

"Tony is now in charge of the Bush Mission which trains teams of Ni-Vans to take the Gospel into the traditional villages on Santo. They do this in a very respectful and relational way, first offering water tanks, medical and educational support, and then sharing faith."

"This work involves many hours of trekking through rain forest and is physically demanding as well as spiritually challenging. It is really the cutting edge of mission to unreached peoples and only three hours plane trip from New Zealand!"

Tony's eldest son is presently studying in Palmerston North and attends St Albans youth group. Next year Tony is planning a sabbatical and for the family to join their son and to start their younger son in high school. Steve looks forward to having them at St Albans and continuing to build the church's special relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu.

Chris Nichol [Spanz](#)



Church young leader comes Face-to-Face with mission

Jordan Redding returns from the Council for World Mission's Face-to-face programme in Fiji and looks forward to an internship at Hope West Melton Church in Christchurch. Jordan Redding had his idea of missionary work turned upside down at a recent Council for World Mission programme in Fiji before starting his ministry internship at the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership in Dunedin.

"Often we have the view that mission is all about giving. But in Fiji for me the most important thing was receiving," says Jordan. "As a first-world country we can think it's top down. But I discovered that in many regards we are part of the problem."

"The individualistic culture of the Western globalising world is now invading village life, which is focussed around the wellbeing of the community and still operating at a subsistence level."

"You add in this Western desire to make a lot of money and it has a nasty effect. Villages are having issues with kids with internet and Facebook. Some are worried the teenagers are no longer interested in the village lifestyle. The middle aged and elderly people were in the village while the young people were at boarding school or living in town."

Over the seven weeks of the CWM Face-to-face Programme, a cross-cultural learning experience for young theological students, Jordan was placed in three different areas with students from all over the world including Africa, Europe and Jamaica. They were "very different cultural settings, so that helped us step outside our own cultural bubbles".

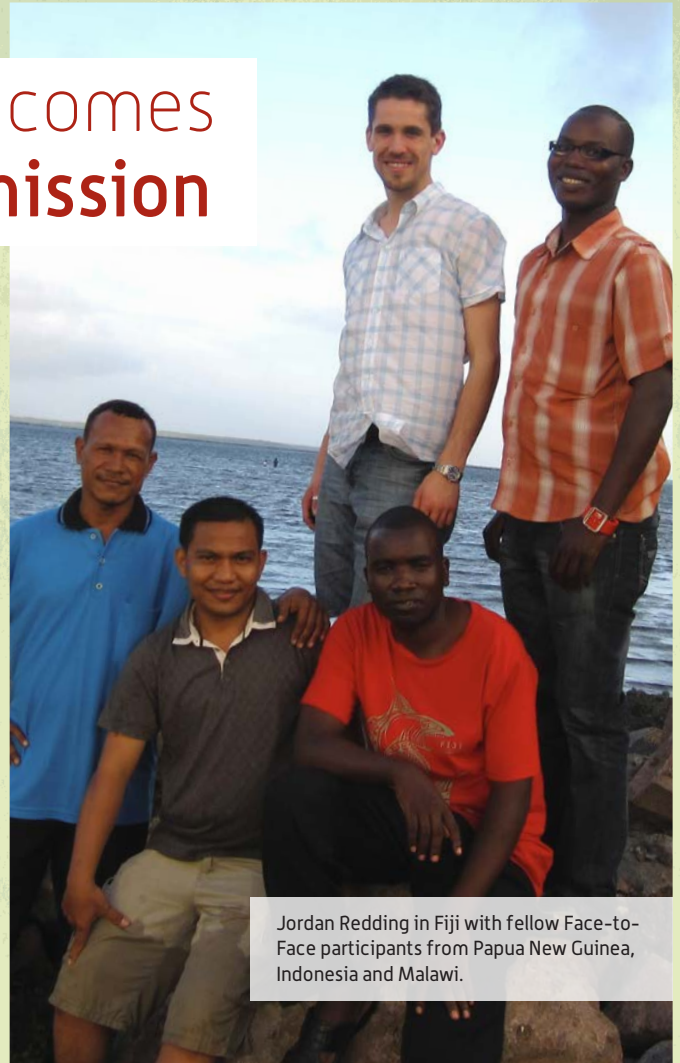
"One of our placements was a squatter settlement in Suva populated by people who had moved to the city in the hope of a better life. Another was a fishing village where we planted mangroves to help with the effects of rising ocean levels and learnt that fish are harder to find because of overfishing by international fishing companies."

"Part of mission is about being and dwelling with people, living with them in their hardships, receiving from them, hearing what they have to say and then acting with them as part of the community as opposed to being outside the community."

Jordan, who is the son of Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership principal, the Very Rev Dr Graham Redding, has begun his internship training and is looking forward to settling in Christchurch, where he will be based at Hope West Melton Church over the next two years.

"Hornby is an area of significant growth. The church community is growing too. In a couple of years it's gone from about 10 to 60. The question for me is how best to interact with the growing church community and empower them to interact with the community at large."

Jordan says that some people have a suspicion of the Church as an institution. "The church doors act as an invisible barrier. A lot of my friends have never stepped inside a church. But while



Jordan Redding in Fiji with fellow Face-to-Face participants from Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and Malawi.

church attendance in this country has never been that high New Zealanders are still quite spiritual. Many believe in God as a higher power but they don't want to be restricted by dogma."

Jordan attended the Offspring missional ventures gathering in Wellington in October and heard about the creative ministry being undertaken in a city hard-hit by earthquakes. "Hearing the stories from Christchurch, I can see myself being part of it. And maybe that's where the Fiji experience comes in – in how to interact with poorer communities in the cities."

He looks forward to dynamic change in ministry. "Over next 25 years the Church in New Zealand will look very different. The shape will change from the 40 hour week minister of a parish to creative ministry alongside another career path. There will be a lot more options and ways of doing ministry."

Jordan's visit to Fiji made an impact on his thinking in that direction. "The cultural background of the Pacific is very different to New Zealand. It really struck home when I came back and thought, 'What are we doing as a Church? What am I doing?'"

"I'm not sure I can see myself doing long-term mission work but it definitely challenged a lot of my assumptions, and I think it is going to affect where and how I do ministry once I am ordained."

Jane Tolerton [Spanz](#)



PHIL KING

2013 Christmas Appeal: water is a gift of God for everyone

Luis Robles and his new watering system for his crops.

Gurgling water through a brand new watering system is a sound of hope for Luis Robles. At last he has water for his crops no matter what the weather brings his way. The fear of wasted effort and little food has been replaced by plans to expand.

For Luis this means that he will not need to worry about his family. He can now sell produce at local markets and feed his 16 month old daughter Ingrid Alexa. "Her health is going to be better, her life is going to be better," says Luis with a smile.

It has not been easy. Luis, the 23 year old leader of his community made up of people displaced by Hurricane Mitch, has been very worried.

"Because of the disordered climate, the drought this year was long and hard. We had enough clean water to drink, but we didn't have enough water to cultivate. So, it was amazing when CEPAD brought the *riego* (pump) and trained us how to use it," says Luis.

The pump is a gift from CEPAD, the Council of Protestant Churches of Nicaragua, which has been working with the Malacatoya community for about five years. It is a small rural village nestled in a dry tropical rainforest 700 metres above sea level. Like many in rural Nicaragua the people here are very poor. They live on what they can grow or trade – not much when

there is an intense drought like the one at the beginning of the year.

The pump is not the first gift. Through their training programme Luis has learnt much more. Where once he grew just corn now he grows more than 25 different crops. CEPAD has provided not only seeds and plants but also the training to help him grow food using organic techniques that cost little. With the new pump, which he shares with two other farmers, he is not afraid for the next dry season.

Luis is one of hundreds of small farmers CEPAD has helped in the past year. Like many of Christian World Service's partners CEPAD has a strong focus on helping families eat better and improve their livelihoods. Growing a richer variety of food for less is one way of preparing them for a future with increasing costs and an uncertain climate.

Making sure they have adequate safe water is another vital part of the equation. The demand for water is rising fast. The smallest farmers are likely to miss out as those with more influence and resources get the upper hand. For some it is because big businesses use expensive irrigation systems that leave waterways dried up and useless. For others it is the disappearance or contamination of wells.

Changing weather patterns and climate are adding to small farmers' inability to make a living off their plots of land when

costs continue to climb. Drought is more frequent and rains more intense. Land that once produced food to eat is now growing fuel to power automobiles. The need to look at water management is urgent. How will poor people manage?

The 2013 Christmas Appeal with the theme *Share Water, Share Life* explores some of the actions Christian World Service partners are taking to make sure people like Luis can manage. Some build wells and rainwater harvesting tanks while others distribute bottled water. But underlying the practical help is the need to make sure there is water for everyone. Many CWS partners are pushing for those who make decisions on water management to take the needs of the poorest people into account. In a world where large businesses are grabbing water in the same way as they grab land it is important that people stand up for the right of all people to have the water they need.

The UN estimates that 783 million people do not have access to clean water and almost 2.5 billion do not have adequate sanitation. Water is God's gift to everyone and, as made visible at baptism, central to our spiritual life.

On Advent Sunday, Christian World Service launches the 68th Christmas Appeal – Share Water, Share Life. More information and resources are available at <http://christmasappeal.org.nz/> or from 0800 74 73 72.



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