

## SA22 News Thursday 28 April 2022

### Assembly Devotions

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Moderator Right Rev Hamish Galloway has invited Katerina Solomona and Rev Dr Selwyn Yeoman to deliver morning devotions to the Assembly. Katerina delivered the 9am Thursday morning devotion, read more about Katerina below. *(Note: we will add video of the devotion if/when available).*



#### **Katerina Solomona**

Katerina is the Deputy Convener of the Church's Council of Assembly. She has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Education and Maori Studies, as well as a Post Graduate Diploma in Counselling Theory from the University of Auckland.

She has worked in Local Government for 26 years in the areas of governance, policies and strategy before taking up a role at Central Government, Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities, as the Quality Assurance Manager, specialising in the Building Act and Regulations

Katerina is passionate about mentoring and championing change, focusing on people and continuous improvement in keeping things simple

She is from the beautiful islands of Samoa and Rotuma.

### CWS Report

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Following the departure of the former national director of Christian World Service (CWS) Pauline McKay, new director, Murray Overton, brought the report Pauline prepared to the Assembly. Liz Whitehead was also associated with the report.

Murray, who joined CWS last August, has a background in education. He has taught overseas in Bangladesh and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as well as 20 years as a school principal. He and his wife are in the process of becoming members of St Mark's Church in Avonhead, Christchurch.

Christmas 2020 marked 75 years since the first CWS appeal in New Zealand, providing three generations with access to food, warmth, shelter and justice. Recent issues the CWS has tackled include gender justice, climate action and modern slavery.

Covid has been the biggest challenge the CWS has faced in the last two years. Local organisations concentrated on protecting their communities from infection and hunger but the pandemic revealed the vulnerability of the poorest people in terms of health care, food and hygiene supplies.

Overseas, Sri Lanka, with a chaotic government response to the pandemic, reported an increase in violence to women as well as rising unemployment. Strict government measures such as curfews in Uganda and South Sudan have resulted in low case numbers and deaths though this may also be a reflection of a lack of testing.

Closer to home in the Pacific, the impact has been economic. Unemployment has risen sharply in countries dependent on tourism such as Fiji.

The CWS launched the Coronavirus Emergency Appeal assisting families in Haiti, India, Palestine, Sri Lanka and Uganda with food, hygiene items and health education in 2020. In 2021 it was part of an international effort in India to ensure everyone had access to vaccination.

In the last two years CWS has concentrated on growing their donor base and increasing income. Thanks to their ethical giving programme welcoming new donors, their income has increased by 192%. As well, four seasonal appeals have come in on, or over, budget.

Operation Refugee stalled during Covid but new events and an extended time frame proved popular. CWS recognised the need to assist refugees in Ukraine, the Middle East and Afghanistan.

The CWS board is committed to fostering a greater involvement with Maori and Pasifika churches over the next three years and has begun by increasing the ethnic diversity of its membership.

### **Assembly endorses Big Hearts Connected World Campaign**

The Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the Big Hearts Connected World Campaign. CWS is one of the lead agencies for this campaign launched in 2020.

The campaign asked for:

- A 20% boost to the overseas aid budget
- A doubling of finance for climate action overseas from new and additional sources
- A timeline for getting aid spending to 0.7% of gross national income by 2030.

The New Zealand government is currently a long way from that goal at 0.27%, 18th out of 29 OECD countries. From 2018-21 the government spent only \$1 out of every \$100 on overseas aid.

Murray noted our Pacific neighbours especially require our support to fight poverty and build carbon neutral economics. As well Covid is undermining decades of progress to end global poverty and discrimination. He said the CWS believes now is not the time to lose focus on helping those in need overseas.

## A Rocha presents Eco Church

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Assembly saw a video presentation today from A Rocha on their Eco Church NZ project. Their goal is to support churches across Aotearoa New Zealand to actively care for God's earth as an integral part of their mission. See the Eco Church [website](#). Watch the [video here](#). A Rocha Aotearoa NZ is a Christian environmental conservation organisation.

## Special Assembly Keynote Speaker

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Adapting to the online format, Moderator Right Rev Hamish Galloway engaged in a Q and A with Special Assembly keynote speaker James Beck today which was played to the Assembly. We hope to be able to share this video with you. Until then, here's a little about James...

James Beck has most recently worked as the content director at the Parenting Place. Before that he worked for Attitude and was the manager of the team of lively presenters. With passion and his quirky sense of humour, he has delivered presentations to over 200,000 people nationwide, helping them make better choices around drugs and alcohol, sex, depression, youth suicide,

technology, social media and getting on with their family.

## TELT reports on long and often arduous process

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The theological education and leadership training (TELT) task group has been through a long and arduous process to submitting its report.

This was acknowledged at today's presentation, introduced by Moderator Right Rev Hamish Galloway. "I'm inspired by your persistence and resilience in what has been a long, arduous process," he said.

Task group Convenor Rev Simon McLeay agreed that they had faced "more than rigorous feedback" in their work to map a new direction for the wider Church in theological education and leadership training.

"Fundamental assumptions needed to change," he said. "Programmes need to be revised from the bottom up to be adaptive to the culture we are called to minister in... People all over the Church are doing what once a minister did. They are less resourced and recognised."

Sub-Convenor Rev Erin Pendreigh agreed. "There is a chasm between how we resource ministers and everyone else. We have no real national strategy for educating leaders other than ministers in leadership roles... We need fresh eyes on theological education and ministry to be nimble and quicker in how we respond."

The TELT's purpose also includes reviewing the place of both Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership and the Presbyterian Research Centre.

Questions focused on ensuring that a new order of ministry does not inadvertently enhance the very power, privilege and participation issues that have been inherent in theological education.

Rev Dr Stuart Lange made a point that, although he had some concerns about establishing a new order, it has been 481 years since reform was formulated in Geneva and that “change was not unreasonable at this time.”

Commissioners went into dialogue groups before lunch, and Assembly will hear this feedback tomorrow morning, ahead of a vote on a suite of recommendations.

The TELT task group is one of three Council of Assembly taskgroups whose reports were deferred from GA21 to SA22.

## **Book of Order Amendment reflects a modern reality**

Assembly passed an amendment to the Book of Order chapter 5.10. It stated that the presbytery must appoint a Commission to review the future of a congregation, with the option of continuing its mission, renewing life and mission, or if need be, dissolution where a) the total number of adults attending public worship falls below an average of 40 a week for 12 consecutive months and/or b) the presbytery has reason to believe that a congregation is no longer fulfilling the expectations for mission contained in section 2.

Rev Diane Gilliam-Weeks told the Assembly that the current wording is regarded as unworkable and is largely ignored by smaller presbyteries.

Diane said a less prescriptive amendment was required to reflect the modern reality of smaller viable congregations. This would also reflect new expressions of church which often begin with fewer than 40 worshippers.

The Book of Order chapter 5.10 was amended to: “5.10 Review of a congregation on the initiative of presbytery: (1) A presbytery may appoint a commission to review the future of a congregation, with the options of continuing its mission, renewing its life and mission, or if need be, dissolution.”

## **Covid Impacts Nominations to Committees**

The Nominating Committee’s role is to make nominations to the General Assembly for appointments and election to the Church’s national committees.

Convener of the Nominating Committee Liz Whitehead moved that Rev Vaione (Pennie) Togatama-Otto be appointed to the PressGo Committee and that Efi Efaraimo be appointed to the Book of Advisory Committee. The motion was passed.

Liz noted that during Covid they had struggled to get people to commit to joining committees, hence the low number of nominations today.

## **Amendment to Terms of Reference of Doctrine Core Group**

Discussion on this amendment was suspended yesterday following further investigation into previous decisions. As a result, it was agreed today that Rev Dr Stuart Lange be given leave to amend the motion, “The Doctrine Core Group may bring to the attention of the Church or General Assembly public matters which have significant implications” to “That the terms of

reference of the Doctrine Working Group be referred to the Council of Assembly for review and development.”

## **Supervising ministers for today’s changing contexts**

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Today saw the Leadership Sub-committee’s report completed, with a range of recommendations passed.

Most of the recommendations focused on the Certificate of Good Standing. To maintain the certificate, and thus remain on the Ministerial Roll, ministers now must every three years obtain a police check and attend mandated Church ethics and risk management workshops. They are also required to attend regular professional supervision and provide the presbytery annually with an attendance report from their supervisor.

For a provisional certificate to remain valid, presbyteries must monitor the study schedules for new or incoming ministers and sign these off annually as progressing or completed.

Co-convenor Rev Ryhan Prasad said there had been a lot of transitional changes in both KCML and Sub-committee leadership, and heavy workloads. On the positive side, he singled out the Listening Exercise undertaken during 2019, with the aim of providing support to presbyteries when and how it is needed.

“We wanted to be proactive in addressing resourcing issues,” he explains. “We also found that when we talk early and often with presbyteries we get a lot of good traction.”

Some questions were raised by Commissioners about the need for professional supervision and for monitoring.

“We’re in an era of transparency and accountability,” replied Ryhan, “and we’ve seen instances of not enough follow up with ministers on training requirements.”

Amended requirements for ministers of other denominations to be received onto the roll were also approved:

Eligibility criteria has been expanded to include those holding a religious worker work visa.

A 12-month membership of a Presbyterian congregation has been replaced with an approved induction programme.

On a different matter, Local Ministry Team has been renamed Local Shared Ministry (LSM), to align the Church with the nomenclature of the Anglican and Methodist churches. Special Assembly approved establishment and appointment processes for the new LSM team, and the appointment of trained enablers to support the ministry. There was some discussion about the use of the word team, which is not part of the new title, but no changes were made.

In the Book of Order, chapters 9 and 10 will be amended to give effect to the changes proposed in the Leadership Sub-committee’s report. In Defined Terms, the definition for supervision has now been amended by deleting the words “collegial and or.” This last was to ensure that no-one is supervising a person they are in a working relationship with.

## **Assembly Recognises Climate Action Required**

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The importance of acting on reducing emissions to limit climate change was reflected in the overwhelming support given to the recommendations put to Assembly by Rev Dr Jordan Redding.

The evidence for climate change was set out in the last IPCC report. The Uniting Church in Australia has adopted a National Climate Actions Plan from which New Zealand can learn and adapt to our situation.

Assembly supported the recommendations that the Council of Assembly:

a) Establish a working group for an initial period of six years to:

i) promote initiatives to help the various part of the Presbyterian Church reduce carbon emissions by 5% per annum

ii) report to the General Assembly regarding how the Church is progressing in reducing carbon emissions

iii) in due course recommend to the General Assembly steps that could be taken to further the objective beyond the six years.

b) Adopt a framework to monitor carbon emissions of Assembly operations, make best endeavours to reduce carbon emissions of Assembly operations by 5% per annum, monitor progress in achieving that objective and report progress to each General Assembly until 2030, taking advice from the work group if it is deemed helpful.

## **Church to consider additional support for PresCare and PSNZ**

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Assembly has asked the Council of Assembly to consider lifting its support, in the next budget round, for the Church's annual contributions to PresCare.

Over the years the Church has supported the work of PresCare and NZCCSS with an annual \$15,000 contribution, with PSNZ paying any additional costs. PSNZ asked Assembly to consider inflation, rising costs of membership, advocacy and community outreach when determining the Church's contribution in the future.

Through meetings with Prescare, PSNZ is aware of the varying capabilities of engaging with presbyteries. They endorsed Presbyterian Support Northern's Agreement with Northern Presbytery's Mission Enabler and sought the support of the Assembly to endorse this as a progressive method of engagement. Other regions had found it difficult to engage.

The Assembly passed the motion, "that presbyteries be encouraged to find consistency of method of engagement with Presbyterian Support, that can enable and motivate presbyteries and congregations to initiate more joint activities in the interest of the community we serve".

### **PSNZ Report**

Chair of the national council of PSNZ, Andrew Johnston, highlighted the various PSNZ bodies working in the community in his report to the Assembly.

Presbyterian Support New Zealand is one of New Zealand's longest standing and largest community-based social service organisations with seven regional bodies delivering services out of more than 50 offices and almost 200 schools.

Enliven works with older people, providing residential care and retirement village support in four regions. Their Homeshare teams work closely with Dementia New Zealand and DHBs to identify older people with dementia or the beginnings of dementia who may require support.

Family Works assists whanau and young people in crisis, such as those involved with Oranga Tamariki. It provides counselling, social work and parenting programme support as well as practical assistance to families in need.

PSNZ also helps women to reintegrate back into the community on release from prison.

The Central region has developed a children's rights framework to ensure children's voices are heard while other regions provide parenting through separation courses. The Northern region has recently acquired national contracts to deliver family violence related support to Shine and Lifeline. These two services will eventually be integrated so individuals in crisis have a seamless experience getting help. Its Youth Services provides a wrap-around service for young people eligible for the youth payment or young parent programme.

PSNZ also advocates at policy levels. As a member of the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (the PCANZ is not a member of NZCCSS but is involved via PSNZ) PSNZ meets with the Prime Minister in the hope of influencing government policy on housing, poverty and income as well as New Zealand's response to Covid.

## PSNZ video presentation



Assembly watched a video today prepared for it by Presbyterian Support NZ and Moderator Rt Rev Hamish Galloway on the work of PSNZ and the Church. [Watch the video](#) on the Church's vimeo channel.

## PWANZ Continue to Support Women Locally and Internationally

A number of recommendations in support of women were passed by Assembly this afternoon.

PWANZ National President Faaolataga Leasi noted that 90% of the increase in underemployment as a result of Covid was felt by women, who are often the ones bearing the stronger burden of coping with children and working from home.

Presbyterian Women's work has included promotion of gender equality through work with the National Council of Women, United Nations Association and the International Caucus of the Ministry for Women. They also submitted in support of the Abortion Legislation Bill (now enacted). In 2019, they attended the 63rd Commission on the Status of Women in New York in 2019. They also hosted a parallel event exploring gender equity for older women experiencing both sexism and ageism.

A 2016 Assembly recommendation that a special collection be taken on the Sunday nearest International Women's Day each March for PWANZ has resulted in generous contributions.

The six recommendations passed today were that:

1. Presbyterian Women Aotearoa New Zealand national and international projects and outreach be supported and actively encouraged within congregations and presbyteries.
2. That opportunities for full participation of women and girls in church courts, committees and other formal groups be actively and intentionally provided.
3. That the Government be urged to take urgent and decisive action to enable all children and their families to enjoy a good life, through eliminating child and family poverty, making healthy housing the norm, and improving food security for children and families.
4. That the World Council of Churches' Thursdays in Black campaign, committing to a world free from violence and rape, be actively supported and promoted throughout the Church.
5. That the disproportionate burden borne by women and girls as a result of human-induced climate change, especially in low-and middle-income countries, including our Pacific neighbours, be recognised and the Government be urged to take strong action to achieve climate justice and effectively care for creation.
6. That the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women in Aotearoa be recognised by advocating for responses to the pandemic that protect women's rights and achieve gender equality.

## **Joined-up decision making proposal deferred to next General Assembly**

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One of today's more contentious proposals on connected decision making was referred to Council of Assembly by Commissioners. Proposal 3 was a joint initiative by three presbyteries and sought to address a perceived disconnect across the Church.

The Kaimai, Northern and Pacific presbyteries' proposal was introduced by Rev Dr Emma Keown of Northern Presbytery.

"There are three main aspects to this," said Emma. "Presbyteries working in isolation from each other, presbyteries having little or no input into decisions made by the Council of Assembly, and lack of alignment between the National Office work programme and the work carried out by presbyteries."

Emma also pointed out that recommended changes made by GA 2012 to improve consultation with presbyteries on the business of Assembly and to align their visions had not been implemented.

"General Assembly is not a gathering of presbyteries," says Emma. "There is still no place for the voice of presbyteries to be heard."

Today's recommendations focused on the make-up of Council of Assembly members. They sought to give presbyteries more representation by revising the voting and non-voting membership. Assembly currently appoints all 13 members and the initial response from Book of Order Advisory Committee member Rev Dr Kerry Enright was that the proposed changes to introduce nominees from each of the presbyteries would limit the freedom of Assembly.

Questions revealed considerable uncertainty in the wording about whether the Nominating Committee (and therefore Assembly) or the presbyteries would have the final say on nominees.

During the break, a notice of motion was formulated and later put forward by Rev Anne Thomson. It

sought to refer the concerns raised with the proposal back to the Council of Assembly for them to engage and collaborate with presbyteries, and report to the next General Assembly.

Rev Ryhan Prasad spoke in favour of the motion, offering feedback from the Listening Exercise carried out by the Leadership Sub-committee in 2019.

“None of the participants wanted more involvement with the Council of Assembly. We need to grow up and do better ourselves at talking with each other. This is not the right tool for the problem.”

Although there were speakers both for and against the motion, the vote in favour was carried by a clear 111 to 33.

Very Rev Richard Dawson, who chaired the debate filling in for Moderator Right Rev Hamish Galloway, thanked everyone for what he said was a “great, considered debate”.

## White Ribbon Ambassador Very Rev Ray Coster thanked



Moderator Right Rev Hamish Galloway invited Very Rev Ray Coster to Zoom into the online Assembly where he was thanked for his work for the Church. Ray has been a White Ribbon NZ Ambassador since 2016 and this year will retire from the role. Hamish also thanked Ray for his ecumenical work. This includes serving on the international World Council of Churches committee, and as Chair of the NZ Board of the International Christian Blind Mission.

Ray expressed the pleasure he has had in serving the Church.

Watch the [livestream](#) of the final day of SA22 on YouTube from 9am Fri 29 April 2022.

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