

Candour



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of Aotearoa New Zealand

NEWS AND VIEWS FOR MINISTERS

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Preaching and Leadership



Candour 2014

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Contributions

We welcome responses to published articles. If you would like to write a piece replying to any of this month's featured articles, please contact:

The editor at loisandbob@xtra.co.nz or phone (04) 801 6000.

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Variety and Change

Bob Eyles, *Presbytery Central*

Welcome to this the final issue of *Candour* for 2014. The ten issues published in the past two years have covered a variety of topics - the themes being: "Discernment and Decision-Making in Assembly", "Mission and the Three-fold Office of Jesus Christ", "Ecological Christianity", "Cross-Cultural Church", "The Theology of Marriage", "Spirituality", "Social Justice", "Bicultural Church", "The Role and Function of Presbyteries" and, in this issue, "Preaching and Leadership".

The editorial committee has tried to cover a wide variety of complex, sometimes divisive and usually difficult issues facing the life and ministry of the Church at all levels. The number crunchers in Assembly office tell me that *Candour* readership is steady, and my impression is that both contributors and readers represent a wider portion of the theological spectrum of ministers than was the case some years ago. Certainly, in each issue, I read and edit superb contributions that are thoughtful, well written and interesting! My hope is that *Candour* - either in hard copy or on the computer screen - is a publication that our ministers will read, enjoy and see as expressing collegiality as we open our minds and hearts to our colleagues.

I welcome our new Moderator, Andrew, and Assembly Executive Secretary, Wayne, who will write regular columns, along with Graham, the Principal of Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership. I am also pleased to announce that two new columns will be written as from the first issue next year. These will be by Wayne, Moderator of Te Aka Puaho, and Nathan, Moderator of the Pacific Islands Synod. After the well-received issues on "Cross-Cultural Church" and "Bicultural Church" it seems to me that regular columns by Wayne and Nathan will represent the evolving nature of our Church.

A further change is the departure of our review editor, Jason, to a new job in Australia. Jason has been hardworking, methodical and effective in his ability to attract reviews of newly published books. For busy people it is often useful to read a thoughtful review before investing time in the book itself. We thank Jason for his contribution to *Candour* and wish him every blessing in his new ministry.

To the present issue - the one you are delving into! The first article did not arrive in time to be included in the September issue on the role of presbyteries. It is included now because, as a cry from the heart, it is a good starting point. Rory Grant points out that many of our churches are in the "red zone" of their life cycle, with aging and declining congregations in which tried and true methods of discipling are less likely to be effective.

One consequence of the "red zone" is that more and more parishes can no longer afford full-time ordained ministry; this means that more lay preachers will exercise a ministry. Our second article is by Allan Little, a lay preacher who received his certificate last year. Allan outlines some of the key influences on his spiritual development. Geoff New, in his article, shows that a mind and spirit open to God's Holy Spirit, can still be inspired by the traditional words of scripture while Stuart Vogel speaks into one of the new realities of our Church - its growing cross-cultural nature.

I wish you thoughtful and fulfilling reading!

Church in Massive Change

Rory Grant, Southern Presbytery

The Presbyterian Church in Aotearoa New Zealand is in the middle of a massive sea-change. Our society and our culture are hugely changed from that which our parents and our grandparents have known. This is true whether we are pakeha or tangata whenua, pasifika or palagi, Korean or Kiwi, 1st, 2nd, 1.5 or 57th generation! Church at the centre of kiwi culture and power is largely a thing of the past. Our congregations are in decline – in my town our June statistics have dropped at the rate of roughly 5 percent per year throughout the 00s and, looking back, probably for the thirty years before that too. More and more work is being expected of fewer and fewer people.

Some of us are doing OK. A few of us are doing more than OK. But overall the story I hear again and again is that what used to work just doesn't work any longer. We've been trying harder, but many are just about ready to give up. Nehemiah 4:10 resonates through our church: *"The strength of the burden-bearers is failing, and there is too much rubbish so we cannot rebuild the wall."* (WEB, paraphrased).

At the Knox Centre presbyteries retreat last year Alan Roxburgh spoke to us about the life cycles of the church. (For more information on this retreat and the material covered, please contact Mark Johnston at KCML). The "green zone" is full of energy and buzz, it is full of experimentation and new forms of engagement with the wider community. It's about figuring out what "works" and

The role of presbyteries is to restore the hope that we can be known by our love for Christ and our love for one another.

what doesn't when it comes to mission. It's also a place of chaos and (potentially) conflict. The "blue zone" is where we all want to be: we've figured out what works well and the focus is on excellence – taking what we already do and doing it better. But when something fundamental changes, the tried and true techniques of the blue zone no longer perform as advertised, and seemingly simple issues have the tendency to blow up in our faces. This is the "red zone".

Last week I attended a regional ministers' cluster and the guest speaker shared his view that something had changed in the climate of the church in the last two to three years. The balance has shifted. We know that we need to move on to something new, we need a spark, but our fuel tanks are empty. It doesn't matter how strong your spark is, if you're out of fuel, then your engine won't run.

In the midst of all this, we're restructuring the church. Our tried and true presbyteries have been replaced by something that most of us don't quite understand. Is this going to help or hinder us? The red zone seems like a crazy place to build something new. It's not possible to "jump start" a red zone church straight into blue zone efficiency and health. But it *is* possible to make genuine change, because only in the crisis of the red zone do we genuinely come to believe that we *need* to change.

I was asked to write something describing the role of presbyteries in the 21st century church. I believe that the role of presbyteries is this: to understand that Church in the 21st century is not business-as-usual. The red zone is an opportunity to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. The red zone is an opportunity to remember that we are called to build one another up in love. The red zone is an opportunity to cross the boundaries that have kept us out of each others' lives and to take seriously the call to *be* the body of Christ, taking special care of the weaker members. Our "batten-down-the-hatches, hard-working, running-on-empty" people are not sure whether it's worth the risk to engage with clusters and pods and missional church. The role of presbyteries is to restore the hope that we can be known by our love for Christ and our love for one another.

Preaching and leadership

Kevin Ward, Southern Presbytery

Increasingly when the challenges facing the church are discussed, leadership becomes a major focus, whatever the polity is or whether it is at a local, regional or national level.

As church decline continues in western societies such as New Zealand so there is considerable concern to find people who are highly skilled and gifted as leaders and so can turn the trends around. There are now a very large number of books on leadership in the church, but sadly if you pick up almost any of these books I can almost guarantee you will find nothing on preaching. In the minds of many ministers or pastors, preaching and leadership are two different things. So, many ministers concerned to grow their churches by providing good leadership give a small amount of time to the task of preaching so they can spend time on planning, organising, administering, strategising, chairing team meetings and so on. To all appearances rather than looking like ministers of word and sacrament they look more like corporate CEO's. Mobile phones and computers are more their symbols of trade than the bible.

As Presbyterians we belong to the reformed tradition of the church. A key principle of the reformation was *ecclesia reformata semper reformanda*, "the church reformed is always being reformed". The reformers didn't just reform the church back there once and for all time, but recognised that it would need to be continually reformed. But the principle by which it would continue to be reformed was to be the same – in the light of the Word of God. As Luther said when declaring he had no choice but to stand against the powers of the church as it was, it was because his conscience was bound to the Word of God. And both Luther and Calvin primarily reformed the church through their preaching. That is why they devoted so much time to it themselves and why they saw the primary responsibility of the minister as that of giving themselves to the task of preaching. Many of us today struggle to preach once a week. Luther and Calvin did it multiple times.

And so, while the church was to be ruled by a plurality of elders the ministers as teaching elders, ministers of word and sacrament, had a particular responsibility. They were to ensure that the church continued to be a true church. Both Calvin and Luther said similar words when defining the church:

"Wherever we see the Word of God purely preached and heard, and the sacraments administered according to Christ's institution, there it is not to be doubted, a church of God exists". The Church of Scotland building on this has very helpfully defined the role of ministry this way:

God has gifted the ordained ministry of the Gospel to his Church to represent Christ in the faithful proclaiming of the Word and the right administration of the Sacraments and so ensure the possibility of such reform and renewal. As the Church wrestles with questions of structural reform and spiritual renewal today it needs a ministry whose calling is to keep before it the Gospel of Jesus Christ in all its fullness.

I often hear Presbyterian ministers comment that our polity prevents ministers from leading. I am told that we are only moderators and that prevents us from providing leadership. However the minister is given responsibility for the worship and preaching and also for providing "devotions" at the session or board meetings. All of these provide ample opportunities to provide leadership in shaping the vision, mission and culture of a church. Indeed, I believe, the balance of having the minister able to do this through worship and preaching and then needing to work to bring consensus through moderating the leadership in the church is a healthy balance.

Much of the talk today about the need for visionary leaders focuses on having a leader who will be able to bring a vision for what the church should be and what it should be doing. This is seen in much of the contemporary church leadership material as the most important role and ability of leaders. Among the criteria that most of the programs that analyse and list factors that make for healthy or growing churches, such as Natural Church Development, visionary leadership that gives a clear sense of direction always comes somewhere near the top.

I agree with that, but would want to modify it. A prior question is, whose vision is it. What vision is it we should keep before the church? Is it the pastor's vision? Dave Hansen writes:

"My ideas for the church, even those inspired by the Holy Spirit, have no place in the pulpit; they are not the material for proclamation. Preaching our visions and ideas for the church is cheap leadership and it is not preaching."

Sadly I would have to say I have seen far too much visionary leadership which is merely the ministers, or sometimes even the elders, vision for the church and is often far removed from what I suspect Christ's vision for the church is. We always need to remind ourselves in the words of Paul in Ephesians 1:

"God appointed all things under his [Christ's] feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way". And in Colossians 1 "He is before all things and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the first born from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy."

We who are ministers need to be constantly reminded of that or else we get carried away with our own self-importance. It is not our church it is Christ's, and therefore in our preaching it is our task to present Christ, the living word of God to people, so that they might encounter him and in doing so be transformed by the Holy Spirit into the kind of the community that really does reflect that we are his body – people who think, and live and act like Christ. When true preaching takes place the main actor is not the preacher, nor the congregation, but God – a living, breathing, visible, communal sign of the presence of Christ and in breaking of the kingdom of God. As Tom Wright puts it: *"Preaching is meant to be an occasion when so to speak, God happens... and we know we have been addressed, healed, confronted and kindled by the one who made us and loves us"*. And when that happens we are transformed. And so as leaders we are not forcing change but creating situations in which God can act through Christ and the Spirit so that lasting change is brought.

This is preaching's awesome and wonderful task; to evoke an alternative community that lives for a different agenda, that of God and God's kingdom. Walter Brueggemann says that:

"Pastors are world makers. Like the prophets of Israel, we render a new world through our words... And if you won't let God use you to make a new world, through faithful words, then all you can do is service the old one."

Notice that in the understanding of role of the minister in the definition used above, it is related to the renewal and reformation of the church, not just the individual. The reformers were concerned with the reformation of the church not just reforming individuals. One of the weaknesses I see in much preaching is that it is addressed purely to individuals, either addressing personal needs or calling individuals to live better lives. There is an element of this which preaching addresses but primarily in the context of the church it is addressed to the community, calling it in its life together to bear witness to the gospel and setting before it a vision of what that might look like in their particular context. This is the role of leadership and so nothing is more central to leadership than giving ourselves to the task of preaching, that helps those who are our church understand what it means to live under the rule of Christ in ways that connect with the community in which we live.

So the critical question for us as preachers is, "What is the Word of God from this text of scripture for this people in this place today?" There is an immediacy about this question so it might not just be a historical lesson about what happened 2000 years ago, but the voice of the risen Christ into the situation in which we are living and wrestling with what it means to be faithful to Christ today. I might add this is why we cannot really preach someone else's sermons. We might be able to gain some helpful insights from them, but they are not addressing this people, in this place today. So we must give ourselves to the hard work of this as we wrestle between the world of the biblical text and our community to discover what it is.

Michael Quicke in 360 Degree Leadership writes:

"Instead of operating independently, eyeing each other suspiciously, preaching and leadership must embrace and do gospel business together. Preaching needs leadership as much as Christian leadership needs preaching. When Jesus calls preachers he creates unique leaders for his church – those who declare his Word today so that by the grace of God people and communities are transformed."

If we are not committed and faithful to this task of preaching, then our churches will simply be reflections of the pastor's ideas of what the church should be, or the elders, or maybe even the ideas of the culture in which we live. And if any of those reign supreme then it can no longer be the place in which Jesus Christ reigns and so cannot adequately be his body that reflects to the world what life in a right relationship with God empowered by the Holy Spirit can be like: a sign, witness and foretaste of what God is doing.

How My Approach to Preaching Has Changed

Allen Little, Presbytery Central

Gregory the Theologian, a 4th century Archbishop of Constantinople, was considered to be the most accomplished rhetorical and classically trained orator of his time. I came to appreciate him while considering “Rhetoric” as part of my Toastmasters training. As I have matured in my faith perspective and heard many preachers at their craft, it has become evident that those who get results use the four pillars of rhetoric: arrangement, style, memory, and delivery.

Over the years I have learned from men and women of faith, for example, Mahatma Gandhi, a Hindu who employed non-violent civil disobedience as an expatriate lawyer in South Africa. After returning to India in 1915, he set about organising peasants, farmers and urban labourers to protest against excessive land-tax and discrimination. Gandhi attempted to practise non-violence in all situations and advocated that others do the same. He lived modestly and wore the traditional Indian dhoti and shawl; he ate simple vegetarian food and undertook long fasts as the means to both self-purification and social protest. Gandhi’s words endure long after he has gone. “The words of his mouth and meditations of the people’s hearts” were not simply around popular themes. Gandhi’s utterance’s were purposeful articulations of social justice for common people.

Serving as a lay preacher I try to inform, persuade, and motivate the congregation to hear and respond to a message for everyday living. Aristotle might refer to this as “logos”, “pathos”, and “ethos”. I try to transfer God’s love into bite-size pieces for people to hear and understand how vitally relevant our shared faith is. The relevance of the Church is important. The media is quick to portray Christians, churches and their activity as irrelevant. Critics are quick to argue we are past our use-by-date, just surviving in a fast paced, super-connected world saturated with advanced knowledge.

James 1:20-25 says:

“Human anger does not achieve God’s righteous purpose. So get rid of every filthy habit and all wicked conduct. Submit to God and accept the word that he plants in your hearts, which is able to save you. Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to his word; instead, put it into practice. If you listen to the word, but do not put it into practice you are like people who look in a mirror and see themselves as they are. They take a good look at themselves and then go away and forget what they look like. But if you look closely into the perfect law that sets people free and keep on paying attention to it and do not simply listen and then forget but put it into practice, you will be blessed by God in what you do...”

This states the process and philosophy which changed my life and continues sustaining me today. In preaching I try to have a practical application for the congregation to consider so the people become “doers” not just hearers. One lesson I have had to learn is to “live as I preach”, consistently evidencing God’s will and word in my daily living.

One preacher who inspired me was Alan Brash (1913–2002) who had a passion for building up the universal body of Christ. I remember Dr Brash saying at the 5th Ecumenical Youth Conference: “God Loves All People Always Equally”.

My preaching has changed from being rather simplistic and literal to what I hope is more sensitive and tolerant. It seems to me we have a “reach out” responsibility which may involve debate; this does not necessarily mean inflammatory or insensitive words which hurt or malign others. I believe it is essential to foster and promote social, emotional and spiritual well-being rather than simply coercing an individual into submission. Building up and encouraging is important; we need to remember not to fight over words because it does no good. I try to speak words of the Holy Spirit and do my best to deliver what He lays on my mind for His people, I try to keep away from profane and foolish discussions which drive people farther away from God.

Over recent years in my devotional time, I have been reminded about the preacher’s responsibility not to lead others astray by misquoting Scripture. In Galatians 5:7ff Paul has some timely warning about false teachers. Today many people are influenced by mass media, tele-evangelists and the electronic church. Through the sound teaching and preaching of Gordon Mackie (1937–1991) I

came to realise there are many zealous false teachers who seem orthodox and credible but are in fact “wolves in sheep’s clothing”. It has become important for me to know the word which sustains the weary (Isaiah 50:4). It has become a personal priority to “talk up” our hope and faith rather than embracing post-modernist notions. I believe it to be a priority to sustain the weary by listening, encouraging, nurturing and reassuring the “tired and heavy laden”.

Colossian’s 3:16 says:

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”.

This speaks to me of an overall bringing together of the congregation’s worship experience. As we head into the third millennium and a supposed post-modern, post-Christian era, some question the future of mainstream Christianity. I have become conscious of a need to encourage a seeming dwindling and aging congregation, reaffirming their faith and hope. I try to build-up and encourage people to hold onto things learnt in the past because they are still significant. Great preachers like Luther, Calvin, Bunyan and Whitefield, still speak through history and stand tall as eloquent orators and expositors who faithfully proclaimed the Gospel.

I try to consciously pass on the things God lays on my heart and mind. I have learnt from reflecting on the ministry of St Augustine (354- 430) a few critical lessons about preaching.

- Bring people to faith in Christ and build-up those who are already followers.
- Believe in the authority, power, and effectiveness of the Bible.
- Let people hear the eloquence of God in the words of the Bible.
- Help and encourage others to teach and preach.

As it says in Psalm 131:1 *“My heart is not proud, Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.”* St Augustine’s style and teaching grew out of his own personal engagement with God, with the Bible, and with his congregation. He lived his faith and used:

- simple speech so everyone could understand his words
- variety to help people to listen and to see the point of what he was saying
- Bible stories to illustrate Biblical teaching.

My approach to preaching may have changed over the years but the message is the same. People may be more sophisticated and worldly-wise in our increasingly complex world, but their needs remain as ever – to re-establish a right relationship with God. For me preaching is about putting flesh on bones as the four pillars of rhetoric might suggest. In the liturgy I seek to have a theme with arrangement, style, memory, and delivery, so the people can hear the “still, small voice of God” rather than just be entertained.

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Preaching and Leadership Inspired by Ezekiel

Geoff New, Northern Presbytery

“The Lord is there.” I came across those words the other day by accident. When I saw them – they immediately had my attention. “The Lord is there.”

They are the very last words of the Book of Ezekiel. I had been leafing through the pages of my Bible on my way to another part of Scripture; but these words stood in my way. “The Lord is there.” So I stopped. The first thing that struck me was that they seem to be at odds with the essence of the Christian proclamation: “The Lord is *here*.” That is, the message of the incarnation and the blessing of Pentecost. “God with us.” The Christmas story and then the promise of Christ that His followers will not be left as orphans because He will send the Spirit. Yes – I know that Ezekiel is centuries before the fruition of the plan of God in Christ – but still... that was my first reaction to Ezekiel’s last words.

God’s... grace and power is deepest in the deadliest places; like on a Roman cross.

Then I remembered how the Book of Ezekiel begins. The first chapter can be summed up as “The Lord is here.” The scene for Ezekiel 1 is the place of Israel’s exile; Babylon. This opening chapter groans under the weight of the vision of the Sovereign Lord God appearing to the prophet. The first chapter of Ezekiel is stunning and extraordinary as Ezekiel exhausts his vocabulary in trying to convey the wondrous vision he witnesses. The Lord enthroned. The Lord on the move. The glory of God having departed the Temple in Jerusalem and now here with His rebellious people in exile. Jewish rabbi’s placed a R30 rating on Ezekiel 1. No one under the age of 30 years could read it such was the explicit vision.

So, we could say that the message of Ezekiel is one which goes from “The Lord is here” (Eze 1) to “The Lord is there” (Eze 48). How might this help us as preachers and leaders?

If we take the complete book and message of Ezekiel as the raw material to construct a definition of preaching and leadership, it would be: *“Preaching is leading people from ‘here’ to ‘there’ so that their dwelling place may be with God”.*

If Ezekiel was the only book from the Bible at your disposal you would have enough to discern the redemptive plan of God. If Ezekiel was the only book to guide you as a preacher and leader you would have enough guidance and direction to fulfil the purposes of God in your own generation.

Consider the sweep of the story of Ezekiel. In the darkness and despair of exile, the prophet encounters the living presence of God and is called and commissioned to preach to a recalcitrant people (Eze 1-2). Part of the call was to digest the Word of God. And God does not sugar-coat what kind of ministry lies ahead for Ezekiel. It will be tough but God promises to make Ezekiel tougher still (Eze 3:9). Then what follows is chapter-after-chapter of Ezekiel preaching and revisiting Israel’s history of faithfulness and faithlessness. He preaches to give meaning and understanding to the people for their disconnection from God. It is bleak reading and tough preaching. The unthinkable happens (the glory of God departs from the temple - Eze 10) because the unthinkable had happened in the temple (rank idolatry - Eze 8). Many analogies are given (e.g. Eze 16; 23; 24); much is asked of Ezekiel in that he literally re-enacts the exile through drama (Eze 12) and his wife’s death is also the occasion for God to make a point through his servant’s grief (Eze 24). The prophet’s message also goes international as God delivers His word to the nations (Eze 25-32). Nations and their leaders

are confronted by the majesty and justice of the God of all. There is the message to the shepherds of Israel which contain stunning advice and warning for any pastor anywhere and in any age (Eze 34). There is a message of promise. A wonderful exchange is promised; their heart of stone will be replaced with a heart of flesh (Eze 36). And then there are the moments of hope with the breath-taking (and breath-giving!) prophecy to the Valley of Dry Bones (Eze 37).

Then in the last 18 chapters of Ezekiel a new vision is cast for Israel of new land, new temple, new leadership, new worship and new life. In the midst of that a river flows from the throne of God in the temple (Eze 47). Note that the depth of this river of life goes from being ankle-deep nearest the temple of God and is deepest at the *furthest* point from the temple. It is so deep the prophet could not cross it. The river brings life to the barren and dead places and providing life and healing along the way. It is a river which transforms marshlands, salt plains and resurrects the Dead Sea. Right there is a beautiful picture of the redemption of God. His grace and power is deepest in the deadliest places; like on a Roman cross. Finally in Ezekiel 48, the city of God is described. The name of this city is "The Lord is there." Revelation 21 reasserts and reaffirms the vision of Ezekiel in this regard. So why does all this matter to the preacher?

Preaching is leading people from "here" to "there" so that their dwelling place may be with God.

It is into such a majestic and mysterious mess that we are invited to preach and lead. It does not require much imagination to see the commonalities between the human issues that Ezekiel speaks to with divine inspiration and what continues to confront humanity today. It is into the kind of rhythms of Ezekiel-esque context of faithlessness and faithfulness that we too are charged to preach and lead people from "The Lord is here" to "The Lord is there." It is with a message to the nation and nations that the message entrusted to you is one which speaks of a new heart and a new home; here and now – and – there and then.

In the tradition of Hebrews 11, we preach the enduring promises of God and a vision of a new city called "The Lord is there"; even though such a promise seems maddeningly delayed. But we take heart from those who have gone before us and demonstrated mind-blowing faith (Heb 11:13-16):

"All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance, admitting that they were foreigners and strangers on earth. People who say such things show that they are looking for a country of their own. If they had been thinking of the country they had left, they would have had opportunity to return. Instead, they were longing for a better country—a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared a city for them."

May you know the same resilience and energy given to Ezekiel. May you be given a toughness that is greater than the tough context that you preach in. May you be given fresh vision of how the Spirit replaces hearts of stone with a heart of flesh. May you be given a new imagination to see where all this is headed because of the love and presence of Christ. May you preach and lead your people from "here" to "there" so that their dwelling place may be with God.

In Rev 21:1-5 it says:

"Then I saw 'a new heaven and a new earth' for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.' He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true'."

Preaching to the (Chinese) Choir

Stuart Vogel, Northern Presbytery

“I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed. I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any” – Mahatma Gandhi

In September this year, the members of a Chinese choir in Auckland asked me to preach a sermon during their service at the Marsden Cross in Oihi Bay. They wanted to see where the first sermon in New Zealand was preached 200 years ago. They wanted to sing and worship – in Chinese, English and Maori – at the foot of Marsden’s cross. Some of the choir members – all migrants from China, Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia – brought along their grandkids, “Chiwi kids” growing up in this country. There was even a home-stay student from inner-Mongolia. It was one of those utterly wonderful, slightly absurd, situations that God puts you in sometimes. And for me, it is never going to get more multi-cultural and multi-generational than this.

Nevertheless this was still not “cross-cultural worship”. It is always wonderful to see Christians of different cultures and generations coming together and worshipping together. However, cross-cultural interaction means far more than that. Somehow, literally at the foot of the cross, where the Rangihoua people first heard the Gospel, this group of Christians needed to grow together through “cross-pollination” and “cross-fertilisation” of their experiences, understandings and faith in Jesus Christ.

It occurred to me to invite everyone to turn around and look at the beach. I asked them to imagine Samuel Marsden, 200 years ago, riding his horse up and down on the sand in front of us. Some of the Maori people who were gathered there watching that historical day had never seen a horse. They assumed that Marsden was riding a big dog. They were, in terms of scientific classifications, of course, completely wrong. A horse is not a dog. However, from another point of view, they came to an intelligent, highly rational conclusion. They drew out of their context and their understandings of life of all that they knew – which included dogs – and came to an appropriate conclusion. Did they do the same with Marsden’s sermon? From their worldview and context, what did they think he was talking about? I asked our people to “cross-back” over 200 years and try to put themselves in the position of the Rangihoua people. What, as far as we can possibly imagine, might they have made of the horse and Marsden’s sermon?

It is, of course, impossible to make that leap over time. Nevertheless, as the Maori people grappled with Marsden’s horse and his message, a cross-cultural process began in Aotearoa. That process continues on today as we try to “cross-over” into each others’ often fast changing worlds. When I asked our people at the foot of the cross, what they thought about all this, I was delighted that the young people spoke up naturally and freely – in English, or starting in Chinese and moving to English. If I had been a Chinese minister, they may well have waited to be personally invited before saying anything. But I represented the Kiwi world that they now live in everyday and at school where they are encouraged to speak up. The cross-cultural process was again at work.

I do not consider preaching to be a particular personal strength. Nevertheless, I have tried to identify what “seems to work”, especially when preaching to Asian congregations. So here are three key (oh, so Presbyterian!) points:

1. Relationships (“guanxi” in Chinese) are all important. Last Sunday I began by talking about the power-cut in Auckland the week before. I talked about missing my morning coffee and the first half of the All Black test replay. Silly stuff really; but it is a way of reconnecting with my people: “this is me this week and I am here as your fellow-traveller and pastor, who experiences the same things you do” (actually, most of the congregation live in areas that didn’t suffer from the power-cut, but the point remains). Then I moved on to ask if they ever feel a “spiritual power-cut” in their lives as though God is not there.

2. I stick tenaciously to the text. In my experience, Asian Christians come to church expecting to have their minister open up the text of the day, to “exposit” it and explore with them what it means for them personally and for the Church today. They want to hear God’s word from the text.

The pastor “pays the rent” by delivering on the expectation. Asian Christians are, we might say, evangelical. However, here again we need to think cross-culturally. Western Christians would do well to leave their preconceptions about evangelicals and liberals at the Church door.

Firstly, the questions which I hear Asian Christians ask are, I believe different. Few question the fact and reality of the resurrection. In the simplest and probably silliest possible way; let us imagine for a moment that Confucius and Jesus were two very smart guys who are now very dead and have been for a long time. They both said similar, great things which inspire us and make us think today. Confucius’ bones lie somewhere in Shandong Province and Jesus’ bones are somewhere in Palestine. Why, a Chinese Christian might ask, would anyone change one set of chopsticks for the other, if the noodles in the bowl are basically the same? What makes Jesus different? What can an ancient wandering Jew offer modern Chinese people?

... We try to “cross-over” into each others’ often fast changing worlds.

Secondly, Korean and Taiwanese Presbyterians have a long history and legacy of social and political involvement; they have been leading educators, thinkers, politicians, healers and social game-changers. Evangelical theology does not necessarily mean political and social conservatism and does not mean apathy, if that is what you are thinking. Quite the opposite: it means taking the word of God and applying it to the world as it is. Preaching takes the culture of the text and *translates* (Latin for “*carry over*” or *cross over*) it into the culture and situation of the people who are listening.

Thirdly, I never try to preach like a Taiwanese minister when I am preaching for the Taiwanese congregation. They don’t want me to do that and I would crash badly if I tried. Rather, I find that I rely on my Kiwi (preaching) roots *even more*. Recently I quoted a poem that Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote in prison in 1944, entitled “Who am I?” In doing so, I realised that I was drawing on a heritage of sermons preached by Peter Marshall at St Ninian’s, my home Church in Christchurch, in the 1970s. It was not only *the fact* that I was doing this that struck me, but *the manner and reasons* for my doing so perhaps lay way back then. Could this possibly be relevant?

I then thought of a poem by Rev Dr Kao Chun-Ming, General-Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan in the 1980s. He too wrote a poem while he was imprisoned for defending a human rights activist. His poem (in English: “God’s Way is the Best Way”) used the image of a butterfly emerging from a cocoon, as a way of expressing the power of God’s comfort, transformation and resurrection. The poem is, in a Taiwanese way, pure Bonhoeffer and expresses the power of the Spirit to sustain those who strive for justice. Cross-cultural preaching is about finding universal applications of timeless principles.

I realise now that my understanding of cross-cultural preaching has been highly influenced by paintings by the Italian Jesuit, Guiseppe Castiglione, which are on display in the National Palace Museum in Taipei. Castiglione went to China in the 17th century, where he studied Chinese painting. He developed his own distinctive style by “infusing” or “breathing into” his art, new ideas which emerged out of both Western and Chinese artistic styles. He did not just “take the best of both worlds and combine them”. He did not create a kind of artistic stew of sweet and sour pork and spaghetti bolognese. *He created a whole new art form*. His paintings transcend both Chinese and Western artistic styles. They are neither.

His paintings are incredibly beautiful, but to both Chinese and Western traditionalists, they are profoundly unsettling. Castiglione broke the rules, customs and practices of both of kinds of art. His paintings are strangely familiar and yet they also challenge and change all that we know of

art. They emerge from the glories of the old and yet leave those glories behind to create something profoundly new. As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" I would like to preach like that.

Cross-cultural is not primarily about affirming or "re-newing" anyone or any culture (although it can do just that). It is not about judging certain actions, situations or cultures (although at times it does that as well); it is fundamentally about changing people and their communities to help them follow Jesus. Out of all our cultures and mindsets emerges something startlingly new. It takes faith and courage to hear the call and to climb down the rocky path to the cross and the beach.

A painting of horse by Castiglione:



Are you seeking a Ministry position with twice as many opportunities? Then St James and St Paul's Presbyterian Churches in Ashburton may be what you are looking for.

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These parishes are located in Ashburton which is a progressive, diverse and growing provincial community located on SH1 86km south of Christchurch. The Ashburton town has a population of approximately 19,000.

To obtain the parish profiles for these parishes please contact co-convenor of the Ministry Settlement Board Liz Depree, l.depre@interlead.co.nz.

Applications close with Liz Depree on Monday 15h December 2014.

Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming

Reviewed by Jason Goroncy, Southern Presbytery

Catherine Keller's *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming*, is a wonderfully-creative, beautifully-written, and seriously provocative read. An entanglement of biblical studies, poetry, and feminist and process theologies, Keller offers a profound commentary on a most neglected Hebrew text, Genesis 1.2: "... the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep...".

The book represents Keller's effort to take seriously Genesis's claim that creation is not *creatio ex nihilo* (creation out of nothing) but *creatio ex profundis* (creation out of the deep waters, creation as the germinating abyss). She sees this in stark contrast to the tendency in western theology to emphasise the creative and omnipotent Word which is, in a sense, spoken against creation with a view to taming and ordering its chaos. She writes:

"Christianity established as unquestionable the truth that everything is created not from some formless and bottomless something but from nothing: an omnipotent God could have created the world only ex nihilo. This dogma of origin has exercised immense productive force. It became common sense. Gradually it took modern and then secular form, generating every kind of western originality, every logos creating the new as if from nothing, cutting violently, ecstatically free of the abysses of the past. But Christian theology... created this ex nihilo at the cost of its own depth. It systematically and symbolically sought to erase the chaos of creation. Such a manoeuvre... was always doomed to a vicious circle: the nothingness invariably returns with the face of the feared chaos – to be nihilated all the more violently."

Our tradition, she says, has leaped from Genesis 1.1 to 1.3, from the beginning with God to the divine speech, "Let there be light". In this view, God does not work *with* the "formless void and darkness" but, in a sense, against it. But wedged between these two verses, she reminds us, is "a churning, complicating darkness" which "refuses to disappear". She writes:

"It refuses to appear as nothing, as vacuum, as mere absence highlighting the Presence of the Creator, as nonentity limning all the created entities. It gapes open in the text: 'and the earth was tohu vabohu, and darkness was upon the face of tehom and the ruach elohim was vibrating upon the face of the mayim'"

To make her case, she engages constructively with the work of Augustine, Barth, Deleuze, Derrida, Whitehead, and others. My favourite chapter was on Melville's *Moby-Dick*, wherein she suggests that "the infinity of a chaotic hermeneutic signals... not a dearth but an excess of meaning, a meaning-fullness or meaning-flux released by the refusal of hard lines and clear boundaries". Religion which tries to protect us from the risk of "being eternally stove and sunk by [the great Leviathan]" (Melville) has, Keller avers, "offered us cartoons instead: a God-thing, an evil thing, and a creation full of things, surrounded by nothing". "When religion pretends to 'systematized exhibition', it removes us both from the streets and from the deep".

One real achievement of Keller's book is how effectively it reminds us that creation is not a beast to be tamed, but a deep mystery – a mystery that we experience the echo of in our own times of chaos and deepest prayer, and over which the "wind from God", the *ruach elohim*, "vibrates". We are, in our most primordial reality, vulnerable creatures of this earth in which the "formless void and darkness" from time-to-time reasserts itself. Where Keller's work is less satisfactory, however, and that characteristically so for a process theologian, is in the absence of any serious Christology – the journey which the kenotic God undertakes into and with creation's dark and formless depths. Put otherwise, while Keller certainly plumbs the subterranean depths of creation, and that with some existential bite, she stops short of going where God in Christ goes, and so where a fully Christian account of creation bids theologians go.

Reading Keller's book reminded me of Arvo Pärt's *De profundis*, and led me to reflect more deeply on three texts from the Hebrew Bible (Pss 47.2; 139.5–12; Gen 15.12–13), and two verses from the Second Testament (Mark 15.33–34). Perhaps the true test of any book, however, is whether or not it lures one to prayer. Keller's did that for me:

O God, who created the heavens and the earth, for whom nothing that is apart from you, and who mends all the tears in the canvas of creation, we bless you.

We thank you for the promise that nothing in all creation can keep us from your love, even while we confess that that love is so often a stranger to us and that our lives are more often characterised by anxiety than by the courage to enter the deep caverns of creation and of your love's mysterious shadows.

We mostly live in the shallows, and for that we are relieved of the burden of constant darkness – our greatest fear that the sense that our very being is under threat. And sometimes we find ourselves in water too deep, where your presence is marked by an absence, and our presence is marked by our own nightmares, the storehouses of forgotten memories and open wounds that recoil at your gracious promise of healing and redemption. Thank you that even the darkness is not dark to you.

Give us a candle of your Spirit, O God of the depths, as we encounter and are encountered by the deeps of creation's being, that these might be for us the spring of new life, and that our service in your name might bear witness to the profound depths that you have traversed and continue to transverse in Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (London/New York: Routledge, 2003)
ISBN: 978-0415256490; xx + 307pp.**

Sexual Ethics

The latest social issues study guide is available free to all parishes.



Sexual Ethics

 Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

Sexual Ethics will be sent to all parishes in December. The study guide examines biblical sexual ethics and considers issues like marriage, divorce and contraception. Aided by biblical narrative and discussion of these issues in the context of history and modern society, the guide encourages users to think about their response, and that of the church, to these important ethical issues.

Sexual Ethics is the latest of 12 studies produced by the Presbyterian Church for use in group or Bible study groups to help prayerful reflection on some of the key issues facing us and our communities.

To order free copies of this booklet, or any of our other study guides, email office@presbyterian.org.nz or phone 04 801 6000. The study guide will also be available for download from the church's website: <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/speaking-out/resources-for-speaking-out>

Argula von Grumbach (1492–1554/7): A Woman Before Her Time

Reviewed by Mike Crowl, Southern Presbytery

Peter Matheson published his first book on Argula von Grumbach in 1995. It focused on her writings and letters. Since then, he's spent a good deal of his time discovering more about this woman whose star burnt brightly for a few short years in the first days of the German reformation. This new book is a biography, and covers her life in detail.

Brought up as a member of Germany's nobility, Argula's life was normal enough for its time. She would have been forgotten in history if she hadn't taken up her pen to write against those who used Christianity as a weapon to stamp out Christian views that went against the prevailing thinking. Though she never intended her writings to be published, they were picked up quickly because of their relevance to so many people coming to grips with the Scriptural revelations Luther introduced. Her writings offended the establishment – it didn't help that she was a woman, and one untrained in theological thinking. Nevertheless, her acute understanding of Scripture's consistency, and the way that one piece of writing connects with another, gave her the edge in theological arguments. Her writings were immensely popular for a period, but her outspokenness also caused her family a degree of deprivation and brought them some dishonour. After her first husband died, her activities became much less public, although she continued to correspond with a wide range of Reformist thinkers of her day.

Argula was never meek and mild. Her strong-mindedness was evident long before she came to be regarded as something of a prophet, and continued on long after she went back to her "normal" life. She was a prime example of the wife in Proverbs 31 – her energy seems to have been boundless – except that her husband didn't admire or understand her strengths. He seems to have been no match for her forcefulness, and preferred the status quo. When he died, she managed the family and household with considerable success, making sure all four children (including her one daughter) were as well educated as her finances allowed. Three of the children (including her daughter) died in their twenties; her three boys seemed to have followed their father in being weak in character.

She was willing to die for her faith, but was never called on to do so – though some friends and other contemporaries were. Instead she was required to live out her later life in continuing to deal with practical matters: shortage of money, children in debt, mismanagement of properties by others, and abuse from those who saw her as too big for her boots. She was generous whenever she could be, she was loving though not always loved in return, and she maintained her faith through more daily trials than most of us have to deal with. In her last years she spent a great deal of time in legal wrangles with her sister-in-law about property and other financial matters, something that isn't easy to reconcile with her faith, but is certainly typical of her character.

Because her great moment was brief the book spends a good deal of time on the years in which she lived in relative obscurity. It takes a number of pages before we see why she is still remembered. The long period after her fame died down is of interest, but not overwhelmingly so. However, in terms of her stand for the truth, she might well be regarded as a feminist saint: she believed woman had as much right as men to speak out about Christian thinking and doctrine; "your sons and daughters will prophesy" was a kind of watchword to her. She was willing to stand up to the men of her day without qualm or waver.

For over two decades Matheson has worked at uncovering more and more information about this strong-minded woman. She showed that a bright intellect immersing itself in the Scriptures, and a determination for the truth, is more than able to combat error.

Peter Matheson, Argula von Grumbach (1492–1554/7): A Woman before Her Time (Cascade Books, 2013) ISBN: 9781610977548; 222pp.

Never Trust a Kicking Horse or a Praying Man*

Andrew Norton, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

“Never trust a kicking horse or a praying man.” These were the words of my father-in-law when I first started dating his daughter. I’ve never forgotten these words, but only just recently have come to understand them. I think they have something to do with power?

On my recent tour of Israel I was reading Ethics of the Sages (Pirke Avot), a body of rabbinical literature, some of which would have been familiar to Jesus. These are a series of proverbs, sayings and stories that applied the teaching of the Torah to daily living.

Here’s a saying to consider: *“Love work, shun clerics and do not get cosy with the government”* (Pirke Avot 1:10)

Why? Because both clerics and politicians have incredible powers. Clerics and politicians are both in the business of power. Power is always present in the exercise of leadership but nowhere is it more evident than in political and priestly functions. This is not to say power is inherently bad, but it can easily be misused and abused. Power is inherent in the role of leadership and can be cultivated even further through fear. Fear of God or the common “enemy” gives clerics and politicians additional power, potentially seducing them by exercising great evil in the name of a greater good.

The soil you are to till is the soil of self,
the dust of your incarnate being.

Jesus did not mince his words on this topic! See Matthew 23.

“Love work, shun clerics and do not get cosy with the government.”

The antidote! Love work!

Work in the rabbinical context refers to the work of the land. This is the real work! An honest day’s work is working the land; the humus from which we were created; *“from dust you were made, to dust you will return”* (Ecc 3:20).

So what is the soil you are to till? Before you have any grand ideas of your importance, the soil you are to till is the soil of self, the dust of your incarnate being (Gen 2:7).

Before you attempt to work on others, work on yourself! This will keep you safe from the abuse of power, clerics and politicians. This work will keep you “grounded” - the foundation of humility.

Get your hands dirty, work on yourself! Rabbinical literature also uses “flour” as a metaphor of work. This describes the process of cultivating, planting, harvesting and milling to provide for the bread of life. This is your work. This is your job description. Your work will keep you grounded. This is your daily bread.

But know also the words of Jesus, *“Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God”* (Mtt 4:4). Man does not live by tilling the soil alone, but by the God-breathed word of life that makes you a living being. Your task is to till the soil of self, prepare the ground and

let the word of God (the seed) find its place, take root and produce a great harvest. The soil you are to till is the soil of self, the dust of your incarnate being.

"And some seed fell along the path, and the birds ate it." Are you prepared to till the soil of your unique path? Not the well worn and beaten path of everyone else but your very own path. If you don't, it will be stolen by the birds of "others" who will say "this is the way"; end up listening to them and you will live their life, walk their path and have your birth right stolen. Are you being true to the God who created you from the dust and breathed into you the breath of life? Are you being true to your calling, your path?

Live a "no blame" life. Tend the soil of your own heart and you will produce a harvest that is beyond your wildest dreams.

"And some seed fell on rocky places; shallow soil where the seed could not take root and grow". Are you prepared to till the soil of the hard places of life? Become familiar with the hard places of pain, for this could become the most fertile soil ever. If not, you will flourish quickly and fade even quicker when the going gets tough. Cultivating depth of life is breaking through the superficiality of ease and experiencing deep pain. Are you up to it?

"And some seed fell among the weeds and as they grew the new life was choked out of them and they died". Are you prepared to till the soil of weeds? You know what they are, anger, bitterness, jealousy, unforgiveness, all those things that suck the living day lights out of you!

What is choking the life out of you?

"And some seed fell on good earth and produced a harvest beyond the farmer's wildest dreams". There is no such thing as bad soil, for a good farmer knows how to get the best out of all soil types. In the same way as a good carpenter does not blame his tools, so also a good farmer does not blame the soil. He tills it and brings the very best out of it that it may produce a harvest beyond his wildest dreams. Don't blame the soil, work with it!

I was in an Irish bar late one evening. It was packed with people, so much so that you could not move without bumping into others. As a table came free there was a mass movement of people to take a seat before anyone else. The table was bumped and a red wine went flying over a beautiful woman in a cream evening dress. Embarrassment and apologies flowed as freely as the red wine and Guinness, until Mary the bar manager came over to clean up and place new drinks on the table with these words, "Not to worry, this is a no blame bar!"

Live a "no blame" life. Tend the soil of your own heart and you will produce a harvest that is beyond your wildest dreams.

A final word... In the rabbinical tradition rabbis would carry with them two pieces of paper. On one piece it had written *"I am dust"* and on the other it had written *"I am created in the image of God"*. It is all about knowing which piece of paper to read and when. On days when you are feeling your own sense of importance read, *"I am dust"* and on days when you are feeling insignificant, know you are created in the image of God, fearfully and wonderfully made!

This is the work of tilling the soil of your heart.

There are some words from the induction of Rev Wayne Matheson, Assembly Executive Secretary of the Presbyterian Church on 21 October, 2014.

Have a Very Messy Christmas...

Wayne Matheson, Assembly Executive Secretary

This year I will not be preparing Christmas services. I will not be thinking about Christmas carols and wondering if the creative folk at St Paul's Anglican in Symond St have produced another fabulous clip I can use; or if Jill Kayser will send out a much-needed email with new resources that I could look at using; or if PYM have ideas that I have noted in their updates; if I should use the Christmas version of "Hallelujah". I will not be thinking about Christmas dramas; or what to ask the children on Christmas Day; or what new and/or insightful things I might preach about. I will not be thinking about carols and lessons and choirs. This year I will not be thinking about any of those things.

I have been thinking about the importance of this Christmas. It marks 200 years since Samuel Marsden preached – as he recorded it – from the second chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, and tenth verse: "Behold! I bring you glad tidings of great joy". I have been wondering if the simplicity of that message ends up getting lost – lost in all the other things we seek to do and say and create. I wonder if also we have forgotten to note that Marsden preached because he was invited. I have been trying to live with those words from Luke 2 a little differently. The text reads:

"The angel then said to the shepherds, 'Don't be afraid. I bring you good news, great joy which will be for all people everywhere. Today in the town of David a Saviour is born and this Saviour is the Messiah... You will find this baby born in a barn, wrapped in rags, laid in a feed trough.'"

Jesus started his life in a mess... Mess doesn't scare him at all. It's his signature.

I have been reflecting... it is ironic because whenever I see a nativity scene in somebody's home or in a shop, or in a church, it always looks so neat: people in the nativity scene look like they have just got out of the shower and sprayed their hair. Barns are messy places. Is that part of what we tell? The fact that Jesus was found in this condition is a tip-off – that this is Jesus and no ordinary king.

He will show up in the messiest place you can imagine. No power. No money. No fanfare. No applause. No newspapers. No headlines. Born in a barn, wrapped up in rags, surrounded by animals, entrusted to this poverty-stricken young couple – this is Jesus' signature. There is no place he will not go, because there is no thing he will not do, because there are no depths he will not descend in order to bring God's power, love, grace, peace, goodness and his presence to anybody who will have him. This will be a sign about this Jesus. We see God in a messy place.

The reason this is good news to us is because we are messy people – we live in a messy world. Every day it gets a little messier. Pick up a newspaper and the headlines say here is how the mess of our world got a little worse yesterday. It is not just the world. We all contribute to the mess in our own little ways. We take the stuff we treasure in life the most, people that we love, families that we cherish, and they often get more messed up than anything else.

"Behold! I bring you glad tidings of great joy" – Jesus started his life in a mess, dressed in rags, laid in a manger and he ended his life in a mess wrapped in rags and hung on a cross. In between the first day and the last day, he mostly hung out with some pretty messed up people. He kept loving them, and embracing them and showing them another way. Mess doesn't scare him at all. It's his signature.

So let's be people of glad tidings of great joy. Let's reflect on Marsden's first Christmas Day service...and join in affirming the prayer he prayed "that the glory of the Gospel may never depart from its inhabitants, till time shall be no more" And as we do, let's have a very messy Christmas...

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Applications are invited for the position of Principal at the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership in Dunedin, New Zealand. The Knox Centre forms and trains theology graduates for ministry and leadership in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. This includes running a two-year internship programme for people training for the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. The Principal is both an executive leader and a lecturer. As well as having requisite skills in leadership and education, candidates should be familiar with the Presbyterian-Reformed tradition, have a proven background in Christian ministry, and have either a D.Min or a PhD in Theology.

A FULL JOB DESCRIPTION can be obtained from the Registrar: registrar@knoxcentre.ac.nz. Applications should consist of: **1)** A letter of application, **2)** a CV, **3)** two letters of reference, **4)** a draft curriculum for one of the seven papers taught by the Knox Centre (a list of the papers can be found on the Knox Centre web site: <http://knoxcentre.ac.nz/diploma-of-ministry>), and **5)** a sample article or chapter of no more than 12,000 words. Applications can be submitted to the Convenor of the Advisory Board, care of the Registrar. The closing date for applications is 5 December 2014. We plan to conduct interviews the week of 19 January 2015.

Editorial Note on Book Reviews:

If you have just read a book that has “gripped” you and that you think may help others in ministry, you are invited – in the interim until a Review Editor is appointed – to contact the editor, Bob Eyles, to see if the book is suitable for review in *Candour*. Please don't send an unsolicited review.

Candour has received the following suitable books and if you would like to review any of these volumes, please contact Bob Eyles at: loisandbob@xtra.co.nz:

Clive Ayre, *Earth, Faith and Mission: The Theology and Practice of Earthcare*

Greg Barton, Paul Weller and Ihsan Yilmaz, eds., *The Muslim World and Politics in Transition: Creative Contributions of the Gulen Movement*

Jeremy Begbie, *Music, Modernity, and God: Essays in Listening*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters to London: Bonhoeffer's Previously Unpublished Correspondence with Ernst Cromwell, 1935–1936*

Neil Darragh, *But Is It Fair?: Faith Communities and Social Justice*

Noel Due, *Seeing God as Father*

Cornelius Ernst, *Multiple Echo Explorations in Theology*

W. Frei, *The Identity of Jesus Christ, Expanded and Updated Edition*

Diana Garland, *Family Ministry: A Comprehensive Guide*

Paul S. Fiddes (ed.), *Faith in the Centre: Christianity and Cultureans*

Bartha Hill, *Teaching Hundreds To Heal Millions: The Story of Dr Beryl Howie*

Richard Kidd & Graham Sparkes (eds.), *God and the Art of Seeing: Visual Resources for a Journey of Faith*

Stuart Lange, *A Rising Tide: Evangelical Christianity in New Zealand (1930–1965)*

William R. McAlpine, *Four Essential Loves: Heart Readiness for Leadership and Ministry*

Jan Morgan, *Earth's Cry: Prophetic Ministry in a More Than Human World*