

Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

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Are we a cross-cultural Church?

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Act Justly: Stop gender-based violence

From 3-10 March this year, members of Te Komiti Moana Nui (a joint committee of Te Aka Puaho and the Pacific Islands Synod) represented the Presbyterian Church at the 10th General Assembly of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) in Honiara, Solomon Islands. The theme for the gathering was “Micah 6:8: Act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God”.

PCC is an ecumenical organisation of churches, theological institutions, National Council of Churches, and non-government aid organisations whose mission fields are the island nations and indigenous churches of the Pacific Ocean. Founded in 1961, PCC is a voice of unity on issues of justice, peace and integrity of creation throughout the Pacific.

PCC has 10 programmes, one of which is women’s development mission, and this is the focus of my commentary.

PCC is committed to growing women in the life and mission of church and society, to strengthening women as analysts and advocates for prophetic witness, and to support women into governance and leadership roles.

It was recognised as early as 1970 that these aspirations were never going to be achieved unless, collectively as Church, we accepted and upheld women as being equal with men in the sight of God. Members also accepted that early missionary teachings had a major influence on the subversion of indigenous cultural traditions which contributed to gender subordination.

Incredibly, in 2013 women are still found majorly in church and community roles subservient to men and there are very few women in governance and leadership positions. In preparation for the 10th General Assembly, PCC representatives gathered together in February to strategise an action plan to “Act Justly: Stop gender-based violence”.

What is gender-based violence? In the PCC context, the term describes any physical, sexual, psychological and spiritual abuse

intended to destroy, disable or damage women and girls just because they are women and girls. Gender-based violence can be found in every church community and within most cultures. It is a human rights issue and the United Nations in its 2009 Elimination of Violence Against Women campaign commented that globally 70 per cent of women and girls will experience violence in their lives.

How does PCC intend to act? PCC is committed to challenging and changing cultural, social, economic and church traditions that normalise violence upon women and girls one mindset at a time. Eliminating gender-based violence in our churches begins by re-examining Bible texts that have been wrongly interpreted to condone institutional and domestic violence on women and girls in their own homes, churches, schools, and workplaces.

PCC maintains that it is not God’s will that women and girls should live with gender-based violence; to condone gender violence is to dishonour God.

Many groups and organisations are already combating violence on women but PCC recognises that church programmes that include men and sons as partners and advocates for non-violence have a better chance for success.

This leads me to ask what the Presbyterian Church does to challenge gender-based violence within our own church contexts. Are there Presbyterian “traditions” which make women and girls vulnerable to physical, sexual, psychological and spiritual abuse? Does the Presbyterian Church actively challenge gender-based violence in its theological and ministry training programmes? Are all elders and ministers required to undertake training to eliminate relationship violence? How does the Presbyterian Church honour and value its women and girls?

In 2018, the Presbyterian Church will have the opportunity to contribute to PCC’s ongoing mission to eliminate gender-based violence in the Pacific as we welcome the



Dr Helen Papuni

Church programmes that include men and sons as partners and advocates for non-violence have a better chance for success.

Conference to Aotearoa New Zealand for its 11th General Assembly.

I thank Te Aka Puaho for the opportunity to join Te Komiti Moana Nui whanau in Fiji and Honiara. We give God our thanks and praise for PCC and the host churches of Fiji, Honiara and the Solomon Islands, their leaders and communities. In closing, a special word of remembrance for Fr. Jone Teana from the Anglican Diocese of Polynesia who passed away during the Assembly – moe mai e te Rangatira.

- Dr Helen Papuni is of Ngati Porou, Whakatohea and Tahitian descent and is married to the Rev Wayne Te Kaawa, current moderator of Te Aka Puaho. They have a blended family of five adult children and one almost-adult daughter and are nanny and papa to seven mokopuna/ grand-children. Helen holds two doctoral degrees in philosophy and science education with a focus on indigenous spiritualities and knowledge constructs.

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MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

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



I recently spent a week in Taiwan attending the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan General Assembly. This was my first experience of travelling alone to a foreign country. I was a stranger in a strange place. I could not speak the local language or read what was written. It was a very good learning experience for me and an opportunity to gain some insight into what it might be like for people of different nationalities coming to our country. With a feature in this edition of Spanz focusing on the Church's outreach to new immigrants, let me share four points about my short experience in Taiwan.

Hospitality. The more I travel and meet people, both in New Zealand and overseas, the more I see the strength and beauty of the biblical gift of hospitality. Hospitality crosses cultural barriers. I don't know any church that would say it was not friendly, welcoming and hospitable. My concern is that some of our churches are friendly and hospitable to the people they know, and then sometimes only between 9.30 am and 12 noon on a Sunday! My experience in Taiwan was that I sensed being cared for 24 hours a day; someone was looking out for me and my interests at all times, even when not with me. They attempted to put themselves in my shoes and think of ways to make my stay enjoyable.

When people of other nationalities come into our communities, let us look for ways of being hospitable in a God-like way.

Identity. Honour a person's identity. At no time did I ever sense anyone expected me to become a Taiwanese or Chinese person in my ways and habits. Of course, I was there only for a short time and was not planning to become a long-term resident. But the principle is still the same. I remained a Kiwi, thought like a Kiwi, spoke like a Kiwi – though I did try to learn key phrases in both Taiwanese and Mandarin. A person's identity is important and we should not attempt to take or change that identity when people come to our nation.

Adapt. But that does not mean that I did not have to adapt. I did in many ways. I never held a knife or fork for over a week – only chopsticks. But I never went hungry! I never ate any Western food. I had to practice the art of gift-giving – something that I respect greatly, but that does not come naturally to me. I had to learn the skill of giving with two hands. I had to have a supply of name cards (or business cards). It seems everyone wants to exchange cards! The list goes on. When people come to New Zealand, they too must be prepared to adapt with our culture in little ways.

Accept. There were times when some local customs were very different from what I was used to. I could choose to allow these to frustrate me or I could simply accept that this is the way things happen in Taiwan and relax and enjoy this new experience. I chose the latter.

There are many passages in Scripture that show the heart of God for God's followers towards the stranger in the land. For example, Ezekiel 47:23 "In whatever tribe the alien settles, there you are to give him his inheritance," declares the Sovereign Lord.

At the end of my time in Taiwan I came away feeling like the stranger that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 25. "I was a stranger and you invited me in, ... I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, ..." May we as a Church be like that to visitors and new settlers in this country.

Welcome home: Church considers cultural change for Asian members

At the request of General Assembly 2012, churches will have the opportunity to engage in dialogue about what it means to be a cross-cultural Church.

In October 2012 at the General Assembly in Rotorua, the Council of Assembly was asked to initiate a discussion about the implications of declaring the Presbyterian Church to be a cross-cultural Church within the context of a bicultural Church, with a view to adopting a short statement on the nature and priorities of the Church as an ethnically diverse community in and for its mission and ministry.

Discussions have been initiated by the Church's Asian Council, which brings together and assists Asian ministers, elders, and congregations to be part of the mission and ministry of the Church. The Asian Council also trains and prepares the next generation of Asian leaders for leadership.

Asian Council Executive Secretary, the Rev Dr Stuart Vogel, says that the shift of focus from a multicultural to a cross-cultural Church would express the changing nature of the emerging and future Church, and it is therefore important that the whole Church discuss this shift and grasp the significance and meaning of the words.

Multicultural means the preservation and celebration of the various cultural identities within the Church. Stuart says this places an emphasis on protecting, treasuring and nurturing the language and culture that people bring to New Zealand.

"Cross-culturalism places the emphasis on engagement between different cultures, bridging the differences so that there is understanding and cooperation between cultures. Multiculturalism and cross-culturalism are not two entirely different things, cross-culturalism presupposes multiculturalism. You can't engage with another culture unless you have your own identity and a strong sense of your own culture. The difference is that cross-

culturalism demands mutual interaction and prayerful reflection together."

The Church has been multicultural for "quite some time" Stuart explains, "so it's timely for our churches to begin to engage in cross-cultural ministry together as well as focussing on separate ethnic ministries."

Stuart suggests the shift to cross-culturalism could gradually happen through churches intentionally interacting together during key events in worship, such as Easter and Christmas; and through joint outreach and mission both local and overseas.

"We need to become more multi-lingual and flexible in the way we carry out our joint ministries through presbyteries and congregations. We can identify areas of common concern and make social comment together."

Cross-culturalism in no way threatens the cultural identity of those who arrived more recently, such as our Pacific Islands and Asian members, or the Tangata Whenua, Stuart says.

The Rev Wayne Te Kawa was involved in helping to set the terms of reference for the General Assembly cross-cultural recommendation on cross-culturalism as moderator of the Church's Maori Synod, Te Aka Puaho, and as a member of the Council of Assembly.

Wayne is supportive of the shift in emphasis for the Church from multicultural to cross-cultural.

"It is a very good thing as it moves us from our individual cultural silos into actually engaging one another at grass roots level. Relationships constantly change and evolve and this redefinition shows that our relationships are alive and not some historic memory. As Maori we are used to change without losing sight of who we are, so we look forward to engaging with others at another level, especially with our Asian whanau."

Te Aka Puaho plan to sit down and meet face-to-face with the Asian Council: "Not in a political get-together but to get to know each other," explains Wayne. Te Aka Puaho is currently in discussion with Stuart about forming a relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan.

It is not only between Maori, Pacific, New Zealand European and Asian ethnicities that cross-culturalism occurs in New Zealand. Stuart notes the example of the Taiwanese community in New Zealand where cross-culturalism is occurring within its cultural life. "Young Taiwanese are growing up as Kiwis, or 'Taiwis', at home both in Taiwanese and new cultural settings. They are, in a way, a different culture to their parents so the different generations are learning how to live and work together and transition from one context to another".

The change from multiculturalism to cross-culturalism is important to Asian people, Stuart says, because "we can no longer think of the Church as the host and our Asian congregations as our 'guests'. The time has come when the guests have become part of our family. That's something that this change will acknowledge".

Statistics New Zealand 2010 National Ethnic Population Projections forecast that in 2026, 16.6 per cent of all New Zealanders will be Kiwis of Asian background. "That percent will be even greater in the Auckland region where the Asian population is very evident," Stuart says. "A large number of Asian people within that percentage will also be younger, and even though NZ Europeans will still be the majority, they will be much older."

This isn't a change to be alarmed about, Stuart says, because what is important is that God is bringing people into the Church, not what race they are.

"I know some people question why the NZ European section of our Church is losing members and why the Asian is growing. Well it's evangelistic growth; people come to our country and become Christians because the Asian congregations are very good at connecting with, and bringing people to faith, which is a gift and skill that perhaps many of the rest of us have forgotten. We shouldn't be concerned or threatened by the Asian congregations' growth; we should be concerned with why NZ European congregations are declining and what we are doing in our ministry that isn't working. We can ask if there



Jai Tamati Taitoko, son of Te Aka Puaho Administration Officer Tania-Rose Taitoko, greets the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Korea, Rev Dr Dal Ik Son, at the opening of General Assembly 2012 at the Church's national marae at Ohope.

Want to learn more about what it means to be a cross-cultural church?

Dr Kevin Ward of Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership has written a helpful resource and discussion document for use in the Church titled, Cultural diversity and unity in Christ: the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand in a land of many cultures. The first draft was read by the Rev Don Ikitoelagi, the Rev Wayne Te Kawa, the Rev Dr Kyung Gunhun and the Rev Dr Stuart Vogel, and incorporates feedback from them in the final version which is available on the Church website http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/sites//default/files/Multicultural_churches.pdf or from KCML.

is anything we can learn from our sisters and brothers.”

“My children went to a school in Mt Roskill, Auckland, where there were 92 different ethnicities. The churches in Mt Roskill have the challenge of reflecting the people within their community; they cannot be a NZ European enclave. And that goes for all of our churches in multi-ethnic areas, they need to adapt for multicultural groups - that means that people are welcomed into worship no matter where they come from. For a church to be shown to be welcoming, some of practices of the past may need to change. For example, on Auckland's North Shore, Korean is the second most-spoken language. There you might only have two or three Korean families at a church's English language service but we could be welcoming by beginning the service with a benediction in Korean. Or we could invite the Korean people to bring kimchi (traditional Korean pickled cabbage) to a pot luck and get the Kiwis to try it.”

Stuart says that fewer and fewer churches can say that they do not have any Asian people in their vicinity.

“Churches that are 80 to 90 percent NZ European or palangi with Scottish heritage,

and still reflect their wider local community, will soon be the exception. These churches will find that they need to be welcoming to an increasing number of Japanese and Chinese visitors. And they will be part of a regional and national Church ministering to increasingly multicultural communities, so we need to think about how these parishes can contribute to this ministry.”

If the Church were to redefine itself as cross-cultural, Stuart says it would need to look at alternative ways to govern itself.

“Within our Church, Asians try to do things the Kiwi way but we acknowledge and adapt to Korean or Taiwanese ways too. For example, Korean congregations have a small number of elders, often just two; our Pacific congregations have a large number, and the NZ European have perhaps one to 30 members. There would need to be flexibility around how we form a session and the role of the minister. For the Koreans, evangelism is a top priority, which challenges presbyteries to consider how to call people into faith when we have traditionally been a settler Church which assumes people have faith.

“Korean and Taiwanese people are also concerned about what we call the 1.5 group, the generation born in Korea and

Taiwan and Hong Kong that have grown up in the Church here, who want the opportunity to be leaders in their churches, in youth ministries, and in presbytery. Preparing people for leadership is a challenge, but one that we need to embrace if we are to become a different Church.”

Angela Singer Spanz

Clevedon Church makes a place at its table for Chinese community

Weekly intercultural lunches has become a highly popular event at the recently established Clevedon Presbyterian Church Family Centre, located 35 minutes from Auckland's CBD.

Heather Chapman, wife of Clevedon Presbyterian Church minister the Rev Mark Chapman and coordinator of the Family Centre, says that it is thanks to the generosity of a sponsor that the church has been able to create the new Centre to serve the community.

The Centre's sponsor is not a member of the parish and has provided the building for three years. Heather sees the Centre as "an extension of the wonderful outreach ministries that are part of the Clevedon Church, in particular our family ministries".

"What we endeavour to offer to our community is an open door, unconditional love, and friendship, alongside programmes that will support and encourage all ages and ethnicities."

Heather says the idea for the intercultural lunches, which have been running for almost a year, came from her friend Judy Jin, who told her of a number of elderly Chinese people sitting for long lonely hours in the Papatotē Mall.

"Judy asked if she could bring a group to the Family Centre to help them to learn a little English, share a meal with us and learn about Kiwi culture. These are people who are very lonely and isolated; their families are away during the day at work or school. Even though some of the Chinese people have been here upwards of 20 years they have no English other than one or two words," Heather says.

"Judy, and her husband Jack, have been our friends since they arrived in Clevedon from China. They ran a fruit and veggie business near to us and over the years we have become very close; they named their oldest son, who is now 10, after Mark, and they asked Mark to choose the name of their youngest son, Aaron. Judy and Jack are Buddhist but that hasn't stopped Mark becoming like a spiritual father to them."

Judy says that after speaking with Heather about her lunch idea she put a small ad in the local Chinese newspaper asking people to contact her.

"I thought a few people might be interested in the lunch but a lot of people called. Many more than I expected. I thought 'this is becoming too big, what have I started?' because more and more people kept calling from all over Auckland and I couldn't say no. I spoke to Heather and she said 'Let them come. We will make them welcome'. So I made a big waiting list of over a 150 people and asked them to be patient. When I call them three or four months later to come to lunch they are very excited."

Those who attend the lunches have never met each other before, Judy says. "It is very good that some have become friends from this. The lunch is more than cultural; more than showing how to use a knife and fork and try Western food. Mark and Heather are our very good friends and my husband and I are showing this at the lunch, showing how we all enjoy being with one another and



Ginny Kington (left) and Judy Jin introduce Chinese guests to Kiwi culture at Clevedon Presbyterian Church Family Centre intercultural lunches.

helping people together. Some of those who come to lunch see this and try being volunteers in their own communities."

Judy says around 18 people attend each lunch "and afterwards they tell their friends about how nice it is, so then the friends call me and want to come too; so we always have a long waiting list".

There are a variety of beliefs among the lunch participants, Judy says. "They know this is offered to them by the church's Family Centre. When they come along some tell me they believe in God and go to church often. Some have no religion, some are Buddhist, and when they are with us they feel the love of God and they tell us that we have touched their hearts."

"We are trying to help like we were helped. When we arrived in Clevedon from China it was Heather and Mark who came to us and invited us to their home, and I sometimes also went to the church. I really feel that they love all peoples and work for God. They show unconditional love; they show you must always try to help people."

The lunch is made by Heather and Centre volunteers, Judy says. A typical menu is soup with bread or salad with croutons - the vegetables come from Heather's garden - followed by lasagne. Dessert is apple crumble, cake or poached pears. "Heather teaches us all what is in the dish and how to make it".

Lunch participants are often experiencing Western food for the first time even though they may have lived in New Zealand for many years. "They really like the food and often want to know how to make the dish. They are quite proud of what they have learnt and can't wait to tell their friends that they know how to cook Western food and use a knife and fork," Judy says.

The lunch guests thank the Family Centre volunteers by preparing them a Chinese meal at the end of each month. "They return with a special Chinese dish from their homeland for their new Centre

Heather sees the Centre as “an extension of the wonderful outreach ministries that are part of the Clevedon Church, in particular our family ministries”.

friends. That’s the special way they want to say thank you. I explain what the dishes are so people can decide if they want to try or not. We usually finish with a sweet soup”.

Judy says that just as Westerners dining in Chinese restaurants will not order a strange dish because they do not know what is in it and so stick to old favourites such as fried rice and sweet and sour pork; it is the same for the Chinese when they dine out in Western restaurants. “We, too, stick to the few dishes we are familiar with. Many Chinese have no idea what is in the dishes and do not have the language to ask”.

Ginny Kington is the hostess of the Family Centre’s intercultural lunch; she has attended the Clevedon Presbyterian Church for the past year and met Heather through her friendship with Heather’s daughter.

Ginny explains that the hostess is there to “help build a bridge between the Asian and Western or Kiwi cultures”.

Ginny, who is Taiwanese, taught English in Taiwan where she met her Kiwi husband. They have lived in Clevedon for the past 14 years.

“When I heard of the lunch idea I volunteered to help because I knew I could translate for Heather and our Asian friends. I could tell the Asian people about the Kiwi culture and explain to Heather what the Asians might be fearful or confused about.

“The lunch serves as an introduction to Western culture through the sharing of a meal. This might sound odd, but many Asians have never had the opportunity to find out what Kiwis eat in their homes. They don’t know how to use knives and forks. They don’t know how to use an oven. I do, so I can answer their questions.”

Ginny says the lunch is an opportunity for “our Asian friends to get to know NZ Europeans and for NZ Europeans to make Asian friends. Language is the barrier and love is what transcends it. At the beginning of the lunch we are strangers and by the end we are friends”.

Ginny has been involved in hosting the lunches from the beginning. “I mainly teach our Asian guests how to use a knife



Ginny Kington hostess of the intercultural lunch demonstrates eating with a knife and fork.

and fork and about Western table manners. It can be funny at times, but at the end of the month when we have the Chinese meal the tables are turned. Our Centre helpers and friends get to try chopsticks and that is funny too. It brings us closer together to know how each other feel.”

Although some lunch participants are initially concerned that perhaps “we are trying to sell them something, this all changes by the end of the meal. We tell everyone that the Family Centre is part of the church, and we pray before the meal, but Christianity is not being pushed - we show love. Soon everyone is smiling because they feel the love from Heather and Judy and Jack and all the helpers. And they go away feeling loved; you can see they are moved like we are”.

The Family Centre offers a wide range of programmes to the Clevedon community. If you would like more information on the Centre’s programmes or the intercultural lunches contact Heather Chapman on (09) 292 3085 or hchapman@clevedonpresy.co.nz

Angela Singer Spanz

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Supporting schools – churches, social workers and community groups

Jack is a bright boy with a cheeky grin. Aged eight, he's fascinated by bugs and fish, but he struggles to read and often plays up in class. At home, he's looked after by his Nana because his Dad died a couple of years ago and his Mum only sees him occasionally. Isolated from her own whanau, Nana finds it difficult to make ends meet and provide adequately for her grandson.

Jack's story is typical of many children in low decile primary schools who struggle with education, health or social development because of complex social issues in their communities. Unemployment, substance abuse, poverty, separated parents and poor nutrition are common and there is a high level of absenteeism from school.

Social workers in schools (SWiS) are part of the answer, but parishes can also play their part by serving the schools in their community in practical ways.

Family Works Northern is currently the largest SWiS provider in New Zealand, contracted by the Ministry of Social Development to employ 50 social workers in over 90 schools from Turangi to Northland. Other Presbyterian Support regions employ SWiS in Hawke's Bay, Nelson, Timaru, Ashburton, and Christchurch. Later this year, there are plans for more SWiS when the service is expanded to all decile 1 to 3 schools.

Family Works Te Hononga, based in Manurewa, has a large team of 19. SWiS. Service Manager Liz Thomas explains how cooperation with the work of other community agencies, including churches, is a vital part of the social workers' role.

"Our contracts have three main strands – individual casework with children and

families, group programmes, and helping families access community support. Those links with the community are really important – some of the churches are fantastic – they come up with all sorts of practical things and we couldn't do without them. The level of support never ceases to amaze me, and it's often those who have the least that are the most giving."

One example is the holiday programme that St Paul's Manurewa hosted last year. The programme was funded and facilitated by Te Hononga SWiS, and church members provided food and the young people helped run some of the activities in the church hall.

Another successful collaboration is the Randwick Park School breakfast club run by St Columba at Botany. Three years ago, the school invited the church to become involved because hunger and sickness were keeping children away from class.

Steve Farrelly from St Columba found funding and sponsors and now, each day of the week, a team of church members and parents provides breakfast for 30 to 50 children.

Steve and his team also sponsor a sports curriculum, and have started a food bank with help from local businesses. They have also linked Randwick Park with other schools that donate food, clothing or sports coaching in return for help with Maori and Pacific cultural programmes – the donated food, clothing and household items are passed on to the school's social worker to distribute to needy families.

Steve says it's a privilege to be invited into schools like Randwick Park where teamwork has brought such positive results and he hopes the collaborative model can be used in other schools.

"SWiS is there as a social service to the kids. If we identify any issues in the children's lives, we don't deal with them ourselves but refer them to the social worker via the school. We saw a need and were able to help but it's the school's vision and we just provide the resources. What we wanted to achieve is happening – truancy has dropped and learning is going through the roof."

Many churches are exploring new ways to be connected with their communities, particularly by "adopting" a school. However, parish involvement in schools alongside government-funded social workers can highlight the tension between professionalism and volunteer work.

The SWiS service is contracted by Child Youth and Family and framed by a partnering agreement between the provider and the school, says Robyn Corrigan, Professional Practice Leader for Family Works Northern. Any connection a church may have with the school is completely independent of that agreement.

"Parishes cannot be involved with SWiS. They can be involved with schools that may have SWiS. But the agreement is solely between the school and the provider to deliver specific services."

Social service providers have good reason to be careful, given that incidents of abuse and inappropriate proselytising by church groups have occurred. On the other hand, the high standards expected of those working in social services may put pressure on churches to perform beyond their capability. Fewer church-goers these days have time to volunteer; smaller churches may lack the time and expertise required to train volunteers and manage the risks involved.

In spite of these issues, however, church involvement in schools is generally considered very positively. Family Works service managers, SWiS team leaders and school principals speak highly of the support they receive from parish-based ministries.

In Paera, the Cooperating Parish's mission initiative "Children's Carehouse" opened the door for other churches to be involved in the primary school. The principal is "enormously thankful" for the way Christians have impacted the lives of children and families.

"We love it. We now have the Baptists doing our gardens, the Catholics helping with reading programmes and the Anglicans teaching our kids to knit!"

Jack's story is typical of many children in low decile primary schools who struggle with education, health or social development because of complex social issues in their communities.



Family Works Northern Social Worker in Schools, Kim Gerhardt, works one-on-one with 9 year old Ngarimu Harte.

In the Hawke's Bay, Family Works manager Pam McCann supervises seven SWiS in 21 schools. Family Works also has an arrangement with a Maori Christian organisation to provide programmes and services for youth in the area.

"Our SWiS can't do everything for everyone, so they will work with other people who can support our goals. I'm a firm believer in collaboration and bringing many minds together to engage with school communities."

Presbyterian Support Otago does not employ SWiS but its community development workers partner closely with schools and parishes.

In the Dunedin suburb of Pine Hill, Family Works links the school and St Mark's church through an afterschool sports programme and community garden. The newly appointed ministry intern at the church doubles as a youth worker alongside community development worker, Tracey Fuatavai.

"It builds a stronger community when we're all on the same page – it's a win-win for all of us. The school has become a hub for the community and it would be great to have the church as another focal point – a good safe place for people to be," she said.

The principal at Halfway Bush Primary School enthusiastically endorses the work of volunteers from Flagstaff Community Church who help with reading and run an afterschool club.

"Our kids had very little other activities outside of school. Now the children are connecting with positive people in their own community which is a huge bonus for them. For us it has been fantastic - the help is there all the time."

For St Andrew's Invercargill, engagement with the local primary school was a turning point. Six years ago, the congregation was in decline, with the average age of parishioners at over 70. They sensed it was time to look outward and began to seek opportunities to connect with their community.

After their first venture of giving Easter buns to their neighbours, one thing led to another and further initiatives included: a men's breakfast, art classes for children, help with a school garden and remedial reading, Bible-in-Schools, and distributing donated food to struggling families.

The church now has a growing, multi-cultural congregation and a thriving youth group. With funding from the Synod of Otago and Southland, they were able to employ a chaplain and a youth worker for local schools. There are continued signs of growth and new life as the congregation builds on these connections.

Relationships with the community have also enriched the life of Papakura East Presbyterian Church. Minister, the Rev Dr Geoff New, says that while no one has joined the church as a result of their involvement with Edmund Hillary

School, the community and the church have become "like family" for each other.

"We enjoy a very collegial relationship with the school and other community agencies as a result of our joint experiences together. It's gone beyond a 'project' to knowing names and faces, developing relationships and friendships.

"We began working with the school because we felt increasingly compelled to express our faith by just turning up, and 'being among' our community, as Jesus was in his. Community and school leaders have said to us, 'Don't stop. You are a light in this community.'"

For parish volunteers and social workers alike, however, the greatest reward is seeing children's lives transformed.

Jack, whose story started this article, is a happier boy now, thanks to the all-round support he receives. He's started attending a programme at school that helps children process grief or loss. He meets regularly with the school social worker, who liaises with specialist learning support teachers and contacted Jack's Nana to make sure she has the support she needs. Sometimes, Jack has breakfast provided by a church group. Another church volunteer helps with his reading. His teacher says his behaviour in class has improved, he's more interested in learning and relates better to other children, and it's great to see him smiling again.

Andrea Candy [Spanz](#)

Faith-based gardens growing in Tauranga

An allotment community garden in central Tauranga is providing inspiration for communities as well as fellowship and food for more than 50 local families.

The garden, which sits on a quarter acre of council reserve, has 58 individual raised beds, a number of green-thumbed Presbyterians involved, and is the vision of Anne and Al Gourley.

The catalyst for the gardens came in 2008 when their good friend was made redundant, and was struggling financially. Anne was praying for her friend as she drove towards her house to deliver some home-grown produce.

“God was talking about taking our faith outside of the church walls. The vision for Let’s Get Growing and the picture of that first garden came to me in a flash,” Anne explains.

“That first glimpse provided the ongoing plan of action - from the overall structure and replicability, to establishment of what is now the ‘pilot garden’, through to the creation of more gardens in other communities.

“Environmental stewardship, community resilience and inclusiveness have been strong values all along. Achievable gardening for everyday people is our by-line.”

Anne says subsequent research has confirmed the wisdom of developing an allotment-style garden where people rent their own garden space and own what is growing in it, rather than the type of community garden where people collectively tend a single piece of land and share the produce.

“We discovered that volunteer burn-out and lack of financial sustainability were the main reasons behind community garden failures, and that’s why we implemented a model where people pay a small fee for using the plots.”

Three years on, this seems to be a successful strategy – there is usually a waiting list and the garden is financially self-sustaining.

Not only is the garden for the community, the community had a big hand in its development, explains Anne.

A local church – Mt Mosiac – had won an award for community facing activity, so Anne and Al approached them for advice on how to proceed. The Mt Mosiac congregation was so excited about the project that they raised \$5,000 from their own congregation as ‘pay-it-forward’ seeding finance, and also obtained a \$5,000 grant from Bay Trust on behalf of the project.

Prayer groups involving local congregations also helped provide prayerful support for the project even before the first gardens were created, says Anne.

It was on the first weekend of Spring in 2010, that the Otumoetai Community Garden came to be - more than one hundred locals turned up with shovels and wheelbarrows and built and filled almost all the gardens in one day.

Anne acknowledges God’s hand in the project.

“It had to be God – it wasn’t just our doing. We had the sense of God’s calling, God’s vision and God’s providence. We have loved watching it unfold - looking exactly as it was first shown to us.”



The Otumoetai Community Garden is the vision of Al and Anne Gourley.



Percy Jones, 89, of St Columba Presbyterian Church is one of the experienced gardeners that readily shares his knowledge at the Otumoetai Community Garden.

The gardens are genuinely a community facility with people from all walks of life getting involved; management is by a team of local gardeners.

“We have lawyers and beneficiaries working alongside each other. When we get our gumboots on it doesn’t matter where we come from,” says Anne.

One of the great joys for Anne and Al is the sense of community that comes from the garden.

“We were attracted to the idea of gardening in community because we felt that was what was missing – the community part”.

“Gardeners are generous people – they share seeds, knowledge, a cuppa. Over-the-fence sharing happens very readily in a garden setting.”

There are a handful of experienced gardeners who have gardens, including Percy Jones, 89, who is a member at St Columba Presbyterian Church. They all readily share their knowledge with less experienced gardeners – and for the Christian gardeners like Percy, the gardens have become a natural mission field.

Others who visit the garden are inspired and excited by what they see, Anne says. So much so, that the Otumoetai garden has provided inspiration for other communities.

“We just had the official opening of another garden in Mt Maunganui, and Bethlehem Community Church is working towards a garden in its grounds, too. Establishing ‘faith-based’ gardens is where we always knew God was leading this.”

People typically keep their garden plots for about 18 months.

“We’re delighted when a tenancy comes up because it usually means that they’re confident to continue gardening in their own backyard. It’s exactly what we dreamed,” Anne says.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)

The logo for Offspring, a gathering for leaders involved in new expressions of church.



offspring

New mission ventures leaders invited to inspiring gathering

Press Go will hold a gathering for church leaders involved in new missional ventures in October this year in Wellington.

The “Offspring” gathering is for leaders involved in new missional ventures, whether these are attached to existing congregations or planting new faith communities within the Church.

Churches already receiving, or thinking of applying for Press Go funding are also asked to encourage their leaders to attend the weekend event, to be held at Silverstream Retreat Centre from Friday 4 to Sunday 6 October 2013.

Press Go board member, the Rev Sharon Ross Ensor, says the gathering is a chance for church leaders involved in new expressions of church to share stories, learn, reflect, worship and pray together, and to share good food and good company.

“A good number of churches are involved in new missional ventures within the Church”, Sharon says. “These are churches that have passionate people intentionally involved in something new. Messy Church is one example of a new missional venture but there are many other new forms of church. We want people who are passionate about, and involved in, new forms of church to come along to the gathering so we can help to resource them and build our leadership capacity.”

Offspring will provide a place to gather together and share ideas and imagination, Sharon says. “There is some degree of risk in beginning anything new and church leaders can feel isolated when they initiate something different from what others in the Church know as ‘church’. We want to acknowledge that new missional ventures take courage and provide opportunities to share with each other what we are learning through our challenges and our joys. We know that in sharing our stories we will find commonalities.”

Sharon says that Press Go is not just about making grants, although grants are important for seed-funding new missional work. “This gathering is an example of the other ways we can support and encourage churches in their new and creative missional ventures. If these ventures are to grow we need to support our leaders in the ways that are helpful for them. Rather than this being a conference where those attending are passive observers, we see Offspring as an opportunity for all the participants to share their particular experience in order for us all to hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church.”

The weekend event will include an afternoon of workshops on topics relevant to those involved in new missional ventures “led by people actively involved in these areas,” Sharon says. “For example topics will include growing your neighbourhood

connections, cultivating disciples in new faith communities, social enterprise and new faith communities, and children and discipleship in new faith communities.”

The Rev Dr Steve Taylor, Principal of the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology, the Uniting Church’s centre for discipleship and ministry training in South Australia, has been invited to act as a resource person for the gathering. Steve has experience in church planting with the Baptist Church in New Zealand, and has a PhD investigating new forms of church.

Other resource people involved in Offspring will include the Rev Mark Johnston; the Moderator, the Right Rev Ray Coster, who is a former convenor of the Press Go board; Moderator-designate the Rev Andrew Norton, current convenor of the Press Go board; and the Rev Darryl Tempero, formerly of Hornby Presbyterian and now pioneering new forms of church in post-quake Christchurch, who will coordinate worship.

To make the event affordable the gathering has been subsidised by Press Go at \$100 per person. Sharon says Press Go would like as many Southern and Northern church leaders as possible to attend and to this end Press Go is offering churches north of Taupo and in the South Island two travel subsidies per church of \$80 each.

To register your place at the Press Go Offspring gathering, visit the Offspring website, www.pressgooffspring.wordpress.com. If you would like to discuss Offspring, contact the Rev Sharon Ross Ensor, email sharon.rossensor@gmail.com or phone 027 810 4358. For more on Press Go see the Church website <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-parishes/press-go-for-church-growth>

Angela Singer Spanz

Two resources aim to equip elders

In sharp contrast to the level of training offered to ministers, anecdotal evidence suggests that less than 20 percent of elders are offered training.

This gap in training resources for the church's more than 1,000 elders is the driving force behind two resources aimed at equipping and resourcing elders in their roles.

While the mechanics of eldership are dealt with by the Church's Book of Order, the resources produced by Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership (a booklet titled *Handbook for Elders*) and the Synod of Otago and Southland (a DVD titled *By Word and by Spirit*) are more about understanding the spirit of what it means to be an elder.

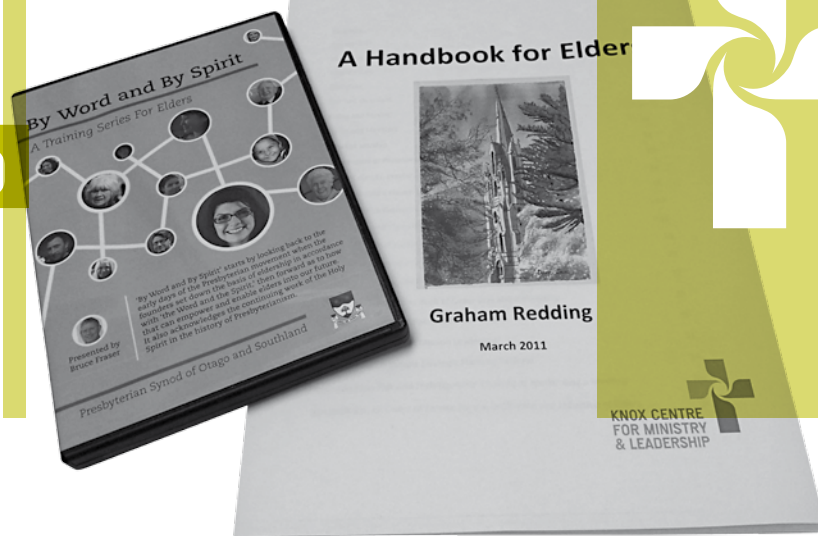
In response to the 2002 General Assembly decision that affirmed the importance of eldership and the need for elders to be trained, the Synod commissioned research on how elders saw and understood their call.

"Our research showed that there was a general lack of understanding and ignorance of eldership, it's history in the Presbyterian movement and it's Biblical base, and the relationships between teaching and ruling elders," explains Bruce Fraser, moderator of the Synod of Otago and Southland.

"There was a failure to see that at every level of Presbyterianism leadership is always collegial and collaborative, seeking the will of God through the collective wisdom and diversity of people. Our founders worked hard to build a biblical model of collective leadership and not one based on one person. We've lost something of that," Bruce says.

Bruce explains that there were many hands involved in the development of the DVD. The Synod's research informed the content, as did work on an eldership resource started a few years ago by the former National Mission Team.

The DVD drew heavily on eldership training workshops developed and delivered by Bruce, and was developed in consultation



The Synod of Otago and Southland and Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership have produced resources aimed at equipping and resourcing elders.

with Dr John Roxborough; Marty Redhead oversaw technical production.

The Synod's eldership DVD and KCML's elder's handbook are complementary resources and it is envisaged that the DVD will be viewed alongside the handbook.

The Very Rev Dr Graham Redding, principal at KCML says the *Handbook for Elders* is designed to help elders work through questions such as: How does eldership relate to other forms of leadership? Why are elders (and ministers) ordained, and what is ordination anyway? Is the distinction between ruling and teaching elders relevant anymore? What are elders actually expected to do?

The *Handbook* also seeks to address gaps identified in the Synod's research, and Graham acknowledges the 2007 work of Dr John Roxborough and the Rev Mary-Jane Konings, which was an influence on the content of the handbook.

Graham authored the *Handbook for Elders* in consultation with 30 ministers from around the country and says that the lack of training and resources for elders means that people base their eldership practice on what they've observed.

"In this way you can only ever replicate what you've seen. You don't have the opportunity question or reflect.

"Very little has been produced on the office of eldership since Lester Reid's *Resource for Elders, Sessions and Parish Councils* in 1985, and we hope our resource will help rectify this imbalance."

Graham also points to "transitional frustrations" around the changes to the

Book of Order regulations about church management and governance structures, as another reason behind the development of the handbook.

"There was, and still is, confusion about how the introduction of parish council structure impacts on the office of elder," he says.

Both the Synod's DVD and the *Handbook for Elders*, cover the history and theology of eldership, as well as providing some practical guidance about pastoral care, ruling and serving, discernment and consensus. The resources also discuss the distinction between, and importance of, teaching and ruling elders, and their roles in the context of worship and church leadership and governance.

The *Handbook* produced by KCML has been well received according to Graham who says that so far several hundred handbooks have been distributed and around 300 people have attended eldership workshops based on it.

The *Handbook of Eldership* was the first in a series of resources produced by KCML to equip church leaders. Other titles in the series include the *Pastoral Care Handbook* (2012) and the *Leadership Handbook* (2011).

The *By Word and by Spirit* eldership DVD was launched at the Synod's Annual Meeting in April, and will be sent out to all parishes in the Synod's catchment, as well as being available to borrow from Assembly Office or directly from the Synod.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)

Khandallah Church makes space for the young

Last year when the Rev Ryhan Prasad was called to Khandallah Presbyterian Church in Wellington, he realised he had to involve the older members to invite in the young.

“The thing that struck me was that we had to grow the church. To do that the whole church has to buy in to what’s happening and own it. You have to take people with you on the journey. We are an older congregation and we need to foster the life among us. But there’s no point in saying you’re “kids friendly” if no one wants to be.

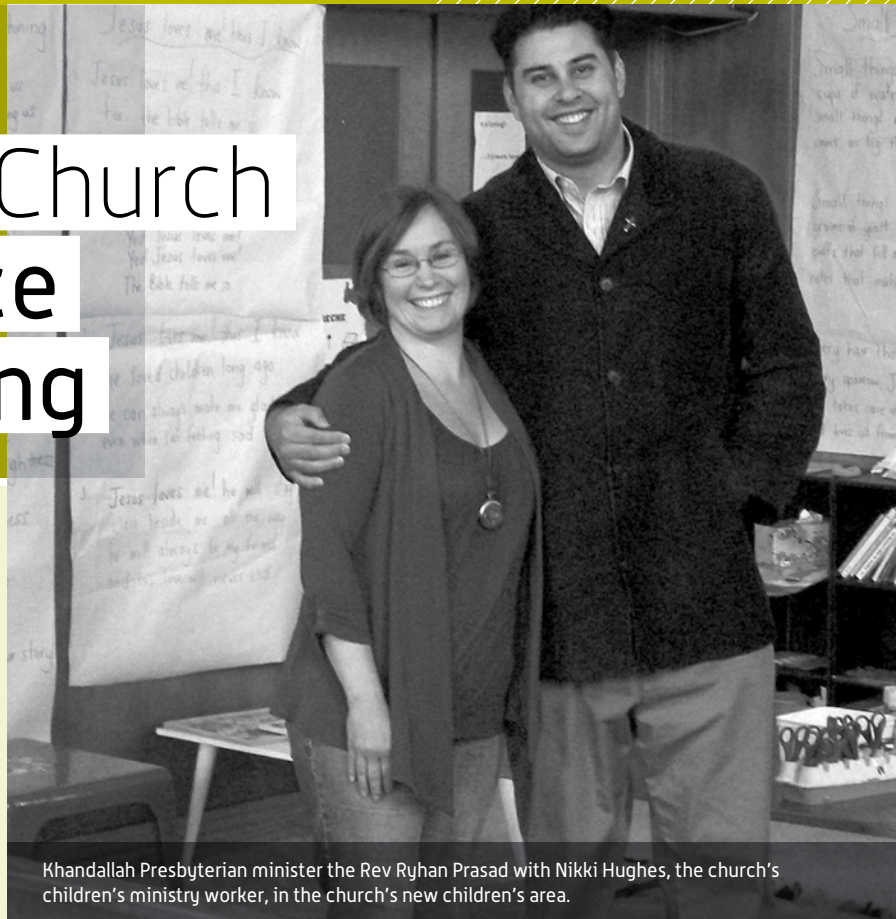
“In my second week at Khandallah we had an after-church talk. About 60 to 70 people turned up to see the new kids on the block.”

Ryhan had recently completed training at Knox Centre of Ministry and Leadership, and he and wife Ani have both had considerable experience with youth ministry, including at Wellington’s St John’s in the City Presbyterian.

“I said at the talk, ‘Who are we as Christians?’ I started on the theology and then the practical. I said ‘Christians were people of change. They have always embraced change.’

“There was widespread agreement on trying to ‘green’ the church and see its life full again, and to do so without compromising who we are as a Presbyterian church, but to really get back our understanding of what our teaching role is with our youth – in a way they can hear, not the ways we have always been saying it.”

There have been two key changes in the Sunday services. “One is having specific slots during services where kids are involved. For example, the second hymn is a kids’ hymn, but we all sing it together. We take the readings for the day or the sermon and make a simpler version. And we say the Lord’s Prayer slowly so they can say it with us.



Khandallah Presbyterian minister the Rev Ryhan Prasad with Nikki Hughes, the church’s children’s ministry worker, in the church’s new children’s area.

“Kids don’t have to have something different. We are all learning together. A lot of churches are struggling to teach the tenets of the Christian faith. The Sunday service is the only shot we have got.”

The other key change is designating the front left corner of the church the children’s area. “It doesn’t matter if they make noise,” says Ryhan. “That’s what the microphone’s for – we turn it up. If they get too loud we say, ‘Hey guys...’ You can still worship and have sacredness without being formal.

“The forms change but the function is still to gather together, praise God, confess and hear the word of God – and be sent back out into the world. So we have a pretty traditional Presbyterian service.

“You can change stuff, but the important thing is that all these people want to be here to worship together.”

The church also has a vibrant Mainly Music programme run by Nikki Hughes, the children’s ministry worker who covers both outreach and the Sunday ministries.

The results have been encouraging. “We started with one kid on Sundays – my son, Eli (Ryhan and Ani now have another son, three-month-old Theo.) Now we have 10 kids on a good day and it’s a real buzz for the church. The older people are really cool with it. They want to see this again - they

have seen church alive and vibrant and full and they want to see that again. They are happy when they see young children in the church.

“The key thing is that we are teaching our young people what it is to be Presbyterian so that when they are grown up and looking for a church, they will look for a Presbyterian church because they know what it means.”

Kids Friendly national coach, Jill Kayser, says Ryhan is a role model of how to include younger people in the church.

“It’s risky to do things differently, but he’s doing the right stuff in involving the whole church,” she says.

“The church is so well-placed to promote intergenerational friendship. There are so few places where children can have older friends. Think how influential older people were in your own life. We need to facilitate that influence within the church family.

“Kids Friendly is very intentional about coaching churches and helping them change their culture so they start taking on this ethos of being child-friendly. You have to be quite intentional – like the Khandallah Presbyterian Church.”

Jane Tolerton [Spanz](#)

Knox and Salmond colleges refurbishment completed

The \$12m refurbishment of Knox and Salmond colleges in Dunedin has secured the future of these halls of residence for future generations.

The refurbishment included significant earthquake strengthening to Salmond College and the 103-year-old Knox College, as well as adding a total of 63 rooms to the facilities.

A new floor was also added onto the Gray Wing at Salmond Hall. Somerville Close was completely rebuilt and now houses 36 students instead of the original nine.

Earthquake strengthening was required because the buildings had been designated as “earthquake prone”; Knox and Salmond are now 75 percent compliant with the new building standards for earthquake resistance.

Dr John Kernohan of the Knox College Commission, who was responsible for overseeing the massive project on behalf of the Church, says that student enthusiasm for the refurbishments – both returners and those new in 2013 – has been a real highlight of the project.

Students have been in residence at Knox for three months and their excitement for the refurbished facilities is evident in comments made in February to Knox College staff and the *Otago Daily Times*.

The strengthening of the main Knox building has not been at the expense of its history or charm. Students still describe the first time they walk into the large wood-panelled main dining hall with its stag trophy heads gazing down as “like arriving at Harry Potter’s Hogwarts School”.

The refurbishment has even won a local award recognising excellence in heritage building projects. Sean O’Neill, from Hanlon and Partners, the structural engineers associated with the refurbishment, took out top prize in the earthquake strengthening category.

Dunedin City councillor Lee Vandervis, who headed the building judging panel, describes the project as, “A large extraordinary earthquake strengthening project shoe-horned into the tightest



of time frames without compromising heritage features and still managing to maintain a very sensitive level of attention to detail”.

The earthquake strengthening alone involved a massive amount of work – including removing every bit of skirting board throughout Knox College, and removing plywood from walls on the first and second floor. The original rimu floors are intact, but are no longer visible, as new flooring was built over the top as part of the strengthening work.

Among the reinforcing required to bring Knox and Salmond up to the necessary building standards are large steel plates which were affixed to the internal walls. These are not visible, thanks to being recessed into the floor and walls.

Arrow International carried out the extensive building works and project manager Sam Cadden had up to 120 people working on the project, 12 hours a day, six days a week.

This demanding work schedule was essential to ensure the project was finished in the tight 10-week window available between when students finished their studies in late 2012, and returned again for the start of the 2013 academic year.

Sam Cadden says that a lot of effort went into preserving the history of the buildings.

Old doors were recycled and used as wall panels; and wardrobes containing the names of past room occupants were carefully removed and fitted into new wardrobes (students writing their names on the backs of these doors is a tradition at Knox).

“Now when you look down the hallway corridors, there’s not much visually different from before. We’ve been able to retain the original character and the aesthetics of how the rooms look from the outside,” Sam says.

Attention to detail was essential to retain the character of Knox, and Sam explains that Arrow event went to every effort to do just that, including sourcing the original building plans for Knox College.

Because doors in the 103-year-old building had been changed over the years, simply reproducing the existing doors was not going to have the desired effect, so the building’s original plans provided some guidance.

“From these drawings we were able to replicate the exact design and pattern of bedroom doors, which was great,” says Sam.

With building works now complete, “Knoxies” (as Knox residents refer to themselves) can enjoy these two Presbyterian halls of residence for years to come.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)

Waitara opens new church for its community

A focus on serving the community is evident in every aspect of Knox Waitara's new \$2.8m church that opened in February 2012.



The Right Rev Ray Coster unveils the Knox Waitara dedication plaque during the church's official opening celebrations in early February 2013.

Everything from the building materials used, to the church's name and the facilities have been designed to make church as accessible as possible to the people of Waitara.

The building's features combine to make a space that is intended to be as welcoming to newcomers as it is to the congregation - from the youth-friendly interior wall cladding that will handle the odd bang, to the non-traditional architecture (viewed from the outside the building looks like a large industrial warehouse), and the sprung-floor gym (a facility for the Knox's numerous youth initiatives).

Even the church's new name - Knox Church Community Centre - demonstrates the congregation's commitment to putting community at its centre.

Moderator, the Right Rev Ray Coster, echoed this sentiment when he spoke about how the church is for the whole community in his sermon and address at the church's official opening on the weekend of 16 to 17 February 2013.

Members of the Knox congregation are unequivocally enthusiastic about how they expect the new building to further enable their mission.

"It's about the people being the church. It's not about the building," says congregation member Diane Hunger.

Diane, who has been involved with the congregation's children's ministry for many years, is also excited about how the new facilities will support the church's ministry. "Not having a dedicated space for children didn't speak of the value of young people," she says.

Previously, the crèche doubled as the tea rooms, and Diane says, "If God was moving and there was a teachable moment, we wouldn't always have the opportunity to explore that, because we needed to clear up quickly so that tea could be served!"

Youth leader Daniel Chapman is over the moon about how the new facilities will make it easier to connect with Waitara's young people.

He says that their youth ministry has been restricted by the lack of technology and physical space. The 90-or-so young people who attend Knox's youth group were spread around several rooms in the old church, which made it difficult to connect.

Daniel, who is also the church's worship leader, believes that music is a pathway to getting involved in church, and now that the new facilities are available, he and his team are planning to offer music lessons at Knox.

It's hoped that the lessons will break down barriers to entering a church for those attending the weekly Impact programme at Waitara High School, which is run by Knox young people.

Minister, the Rev Dennis Flett explains that the church has had and will continue to have a big focus on hospitality.

"There are no programmes in the Bible, but there is hospitality. We want people to come in, to sit and talk. We want them to feel welcome.

"We want this [building] to be a bridge to Jesus for the community. This sense of community is one of the things that makes us who we are," he says.

Funding for the new church came from a variety of sources including \$1

million donated by the Knox Waitara congregation, a variety of community grants, and a substantial gift of \$300,000 from Wellington's St John's in the City Presbyterian.

A dozen people from St John's, including minister the Rev Allister Lane, attended the opening.

"The opening celebration was a time for us to soak in an atmosphere of profound conviction about the adventure of mission God has called this congregation to journey on; they acknowledge with gratitude the blessings God has given them and seek to share the love of God with others. For so long they have been people faithful in prayer, worship and service - it's only the buildings which are new!" Allister says.

The partnership between St John's and Knox is about much more than the financial gift, the congregations are already building some meaningful connections through visits and learning from each other's experiences and understandings of being church, Allister says.

Waitara is a satellite town of 6,500 people located 15km north of Taranaki's largest urban settlement, New Plymouth. The town's unemployment is around twice the national average, and around a third of the town's population earn less than 20,000 per year. All schools in Waitara are either decile 1 or 2, and around 29 percent of families are solo-parent families.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)



LIFE IS PRECIOUS EARTHQUAKES SHATTER LIVES

Parishes have a legal and moral duty to ensure their congregations, other building users and the public are not put at risk from earthquake prone buildings.

Has your parish obtained its initial evaluation (IEP) yet?

This is the required first step in assessing a building's safety or its potentially fatal vulnerability.

The Church Property Trustees' Policy on Earthquake Prone Church Buildings can be downloaded from the Church's website www.presbyterian.org.nz following the links to Parishes and the Church Property Trustees.

First marae Messy Church attracts 80 for family activities

The first Messy Church day at Waimana was a great success – but without a name change it wouldn't have worked.

"I liked the concept of Messy Church," says Waimana Church elder and children's ministry lead Honey Thrupp. "To me, it was all about the coming together of families – kaumatua, parents and children. I started talking to the people of our church about it, but it didn't go down well. The kaumatua didn't like the idea of...making a mess in church!

"So I asked my husband to find a Maori name for it."

John, who is the Amorangi minister at Waimana Church, near Whakatane, came up with Te hahi o whakawhanaungatanga hakinakina – the church of coming together as a family to do activities.

Honey persuaded the church to hold the day on the marae. "We said, 'We have got a lot of people coming to church, but to go out to the un-churched, going on to the marae would be better. People would come to the marae.'"

About 80 people attended – mainly women, some men, and about a dozen teenagers as well as children and toddlers.

Waimana also reversed the usual order of Messy Church – putting the fellowship before the craft activities.

"At 10am we registered everybody. Then my husband rang the bell – that's what we do for church – and everybody went inside.

"In Messy Church there's a 15-minute celebration of the theme. Our theme was: 'I am the light of the world'. So we blackened out the room and had fairy lights and came from the darkness into the light.

"Then we went back into the whare kai [dining hall] and did craft activities on half a dozen tables – stained glass windows, creative hats, glittery stars, Chinese lanterns, play dough and making lighthouses out of plastic and foam cups.

"We encouraged all the families to get involved. In the centre of the room was a mat where the infants could sit and play with toys. Our mokopuna [grandchild] was the youngest, at nine months. One of our ladies dressed up as an angel and read them books.

Honey says that feedback on the day was that everyone "just loved it". The church gave \$200 to fund the day and Tairua School provided materials.

"The kaumatua and parents were absolutely excited and asked if we could hold it fortnightly. There are 11 marae in the area and we are hoping to meet monthly at a different marae and have a fundraising day on the Saturday and Messy Church on the Sunday".

Jill Kayser, Kids Friendly national coach, would like to see parishes round the country try Messy Church. She says Messy Church grew out of Britain's Fresh Expressions movement – "encouraging people who have a heart for mission to be the church outside the church context, to provide church for the un-churched.

"You still have liturgical elements – the gathering, call to worship and welcome, for example – but the focus of activity is craft."

Started by Lucy Moore, a minister's wife, there are now around 1300 Messy Churches across the world.

As a result of the Messy Church day at Waimana, some people who attended said they would start going to church. But Honey took a strong line with those who wanted to pledge regular church attendance. "I felt we were going to have people say that. I said, 'Don't say to me or to anybody that you are going to come to church every Sunday. It doesn't work like that. It has got to be in your heart, that calling'.

"I said to one young mother 'Don't say you are going to come to church every Sunday because there are some Sundays when even I don't want to go to church, and if you miss one you'll be too shy to come back.'"

Jill is delighted by the Waimana Church experience. "We are constantly challenging churches. We tell them you can tweak what you are doing now, but the reality is that only 8 per cent of New Zealanders go to church, according to the census. I say one in 10 – to be more positive!

"Most churches are very stuck in the ways they worship so we encourage them to look beyond and say, 'How can we be the church in the community?'"

The first Messy Church on a marae has shown how it can be done.

Jane Tolerton [Spanz](#)

You can also contact:

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*Director of the Center on
Older and Adult Ministries.*

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Session 2. International Intergenerational Gen2 Gen Ministry.
Session 3. Faithful Ageing.
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Caption: Dr Carlton Johnstone, PCANZ national youth ministry development leader (left) with PYM interns Aimee Coffey, Courtney Forrest and John Simpson.

Students of Bachelor of Ministry PYM Internship are enthusiastic about course

Three young people passionate about broadening their spiritual horizons are studying for the Bachelor of Ministries Presbyterian Youth Ministry (PYM) Internship.

The Internship, which had its first intake of youth workers this year, is a specialised youth ministry track within the Bachelor of Ministries degree.

While studying towards the degree, interns also work towards a Diploma in Presbyterian Youth Ministry, which is a Presbyterian Church-based award.

Presbyterian Church national youth ministry development leader, Dr Carlton Johnstone, who was involved in getting the youth ministry-focussed course off the ground, is excited about the new training option.

“One of the exciting and encouraging things about the diploma aspect of the internship is that it represents the Presbyterian Church’s commitment to youth ministry and the training of youth workers. More deeply, it recognises the importance of having well-trained practical theologians dedicated to working with young people. This is also why the diploma sits within the context of a ministry degree.

“The integration of theological learning and a supervised ministry context provides a richness that cannot be achieved in the classroom alone,” Carlton says.

There are three young people currently undertaking the course, which is a collaboration between Presbyterian Youth Ministry, Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, Laidlaw College or Carey Baptist College and the church hosting the intern.

Courtney Forrest, 24, has been involved with youth ministry for the last six years, and is studying part-time. He is in the first year of study at Laidlaw College and started the Internship to satisfy his hunger for practical biblical knowledge.

“I wanted to empower my own personal spiritual walk with God, and I also wanted to effectively and passionately live out this gained knowledge in my everyday life, so that I could better demonstrate Christ to the young people that I journey with.”

Courtney is doing the internship component of his study at Hope Presbyterian in Hornby, and completes 30 hours a week there as a youth worker.

He says the Internship has challenged him to think more critically about the Bible.

“I have begun to start asking the harder questions and looking at the Bible in a

more critical sense. I’ve been trying to unpack the purpose and the importance of what is written rather than going to the Bible as a ‘feel good, spiritual refill tool’, which I was frequently doing.”

The Internship is also encouraging John Simpson, 19, to look more critically at the Bible, and he says that his understanding of God is being pushed and growing each day with what he learns.

“My entire day is drenched in the faith, learning about our good and great Father. What I have enjoyed is not only being able to learn about God in my studies, but also to worship him and know him myself.”

John, who is studying full-time and is completing his internship at St Andrew’s Church in Geraldine, says what he enjoys most about the Bachelor of Ministry PYM Internship is “learning about the history of the faith from the early church and how this shapes where we find ourselves now. I have enjoyed it all. The introduction to ministry has been valuable for practical reflection in my ministry context.”

Aimee Coffey, 26, is undertaking her first paper in the Internship programme this year, although she has already completed papers on adolescent pastoral care, and philosophy for youth ministry from Carey Baptist College which will be credited toward the BoM PYM Internship.

Aimee has been in youth leadership roles previously, and is currently working toward taking responsibility for running a youth group at Brockville Community Church, Dunedin, where she is completing the internship component of her study.

She says the course is helping her to become more disciplined in how she engages with others, and is providing her with new tools and strategies to be more effective in ministry. She is also enjoying the opportunity to watch and learn.

All of those studying the Bachelor of Ministry PYM Internship course are enthusiastic about recommending it to those who feel a call to youth ministry.

John says, “The Church needs youth workers who are not only enthusiastic – and somewhat brave – to work with young people, but also youth workers who are theologically trained to deal with the issues that are facing young people.”

“I’ve learnt that it doesn’t matter where you come from or what you’ve been, God wants you. You can make a difference,” Aimee says.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)

Going Further challenges young people with new adventure

In late-January 2013, 26 young people from around New Zealand gathered in the central North Island for a week of intentional learning and fellowship.

For the first time, the Going Further discipleship camp for people aged 17-30 was held at the Salvation Army-run Blue Mountain Adventure Camp in Raurimu.

Dr Carlton Johnston, Presbyterian Youth Ministry national leader, event organiser and member of the camp leadership team, the new venue enhanced the sense of community and closeness for those who attended.

Course literature describes Going Further as “helping young people go beyond the superficial noise and easy words to the stuff that really matters by clearing some space to receive, pray and reflect on what’s happening”.

The course is advertised through Presbyterian Youth Ministry networks, through national Church publications, in churches, and through youth groups, but it is often comments from young people who’ve attended previous Going Further events that encourages people to get involved.

Madeline Enright, 20, from Wellington signed up after discussing the event with friends who had been before.

The small groups into which all participants were organised was a real highlight for Madeline. Groups did activities together and met several times a day to intentionally reflect and discuss what had been going on for them.

“The group I was in gelled really well. It was just really amazing to be able to do these adventure activities together, but then to also reflect and share with each other.

“After an amazing week in community with some great people, learning about them, about myself and about God, the biggest challenge remains to be bringing what I have learnt into everyday life and continuing the journey once back in the ‘real world’,” Madeline says.

This sentiment is echoed by Mani Pesi, 20, Sunday School teacher at St Paul’s Pacific Island Church in Manurewa, who has been to every Going Further event since they began four years ago.

Mani says he is also working on putting into practice what he’s learnt.

“I’m working on slowly setting up little daily habits to help my faith grow, and I’m also working on letting God’s presence be felt during the day so that God may bless it.

“There’s just something special about this camp. I keep going back because it’s where I first felt God’s love for me. Every year I’ve learnt so much in so little time, and this camp has helped me grow maturely in my walk with God,” Mani says.

With a jam-packed programme that included learning times, worship led by participants, morning and midday prayer and daily sessions on spiritual practices, attendees were busy from 7am till early evening.



Group activities are an important part of the Going Further programme.

Spiritual formation is an important part of the Going Further programme, as is being in community with each other, so event organisers ensure intentional time for social interaction is also provided.

Everything from water fights (not on the official programme, but a fondly-remembered impromptu activity!), eating together and working in small groups, to taking advantage of the spectacular outdoor adventures on offer at Blue Mountain – white-water rafting, high-rope confidence courses – help build this sense of trust and community, which is something all participants rate highly.

As well as the fun and fellowship, Going Further provides an intentional space for learning.

Christina Paterson, 21, from Taranaki enjoyed the opportunity to learn from others.

“I loved being in an environment where everybody wanted to grow in their faith. It was great to be able to ask questions about difficult topics and get answers that encouraged us to think for ourselves and make a stand where we thought right.”

Talks on spiritual practices were mentioned in course feedback as a real highlight for many participants, including Madeline.

“The spiritual practice talks were very helpful, particularly on solitude and being silent, which is what can also help you be truly present when you are with people,” she says.

Carlton says feedback from all contributors was very positive, including on Dr Chris Marshall’s series of five sessions on the parables and discipleship.

“People were challenged, encouraged, and started thinking about what it means to be a disciple in ways that they had not thought about before.”

PYM and Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership have started to plan Going Further 2014, with the Rev Tim Keel already booked in as one of the main teachers for the week.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)

Interns graduating in 2013 from Knox Centre of Ministry and Leadership

ANDREW CALLANDER

I am married to Marie and we have three sons – Jeremy, Samuel and Rohan; three daughters-in-love – Alice, Rachel, and Alli; and three grandchildren – Evie, Odin, and Tirian.

I trained as a secondary school teacher and for over 20 years taught economics, business and finance at Southland Polytechnic before returning to the University of Otago in 2005 to study theology.

I am currently a ministry intern at both Knox Waitara and Knox Fitzroy (both in north Taranaki), and Marie works as a commercial lawyer. I have been involved in various churches preaching and teaching in a lay capacity for more than 30 years.

The passage of Scripture that speaks most powerfully to me concerning the kind of minister I aspire to be is Isaiah 50:4 – “The Lord God has given me the tongue of a teacher, that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he awakens – awakens my ear to listen as those who are taught.”

For relaxation we enjoy outdoor pursuits in the mountains and lakes; home-based activities in the workshop and garden; and reading, writing and music. We very much enjoy visiting with our children, daughters-in-love and grandchildren in the South Island and further afield.



CATE BURTON

I grew up in the Western Bay of Plenty, on a kiwifruit orchard 10km south of Katikati. After leaving high school I began a Bachelor of Ministries with Laidlaw College and then spent the next three-and-a-bit years working as a children and families pastor at St Paul's Presbyterian in Katikati. For two of those three-plus years, I also had a role at the local community centre. This experience encouraged me to pursue a call to ministry in the church and the community.

I spent the first year of my internship at St Paul's Katikati, where I stepped out of my previous role as children and families pastor and tackled something new. I am currently interning at St Peter's in the City in Tauranga and am enjoying the diversity of an inner-city congregation.

I am passionate about meaningfully incorporating all ages, from infants to elderly, into the life and worship of the church. I love community, and seek to see our communal life centred on the life of Christ, for those inside and outside the church.

I like to spend time playing hockey, reading stories, writing stories, knitting hats and catching up with family and friends.



ED MASTERS

Together with our son Adam (1), my wife Jo and I currently live in Eastbourne, Lower Hutt, Wellington, where I am completing a two-year internship at St Ronan's Presbyterian Church.

I grew up in Melbourne, and lived in Dunedin for eight years before moving to Eastbourne in 2012 to begin my internship. I studied theology, political studies and management at the University of Otago, and during my time in Dunedin was involved in StudentSoul and Leith Valley Presbyterian Church, where I worked for two years as a youth worker.

I am passionate about the local church – both as a worshipping community and a missional community. I believe that worship and mission cannot be separated, as each informs and encourages the other. I am convinced that God is actively at work in church and the world, and through our regular worship we practise recognising God's activity so that we can join in.

In my spare time I enjoy cycling, tramping, hockey, reading and gardening.



NATHAN AND LIZ PEDRO

Malo ni – greetings. Hi, my name is Nathan Pedro, and I am married to Elisapeta (Liz). We have a 3-year-old warrior – Paulo Charles Chu. Liz and I are of Tokelau, Tuvalu ancestry. We're both undertaking ministry training and are currently based at St John's Presbyterian Church in Papatoetoe, South Auckland for our internship.

I served in the United States military service for 20 years and have also worked with the United States Small Business Administration for a number of years. I sensed the call at a very young age, though hadn't confirmed it until my early years in the military.

I've served in various denominations throughout my military travels and have witnessed God's grace and mercy through "thick and thin", both in my life and in the lives of others.

Liz was brought up in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand where her parents the Rev Liu Tepou (retired) and the late Kailelei Tepou served as pioneering Tokelau and Tuvalu ministers to their communities.

Liz has always been involved in Sunday School and youth ministry. She currently works as a centre manager for a Tokelau early childhood centre in West Auckland.

Liz says, "It is so important that seeds are sown in children at an early age. I am always thinking of ways of sharing the Word of God that is comprehensible and meaningful to a child."

We are excited to be witnesses of God's redeeming work in the life of his sheep and those outside the fold.

Our hearts are very much entrenched in mission work and pastoral care. We are thankful for the opportunity of serving God through the Presbyterian Church here in New Zealand.

See you in the trenches.



REBECCA CONNOR

My name is Rebecca Connor and I am unashamedly passionate about the role of the local church! I am 28, and despite my young age I have been involved in ministry, on a volunteer or paid basis, for 13 years now.

I thrive in helping the church find ways to become an all-age community of worship and mission. Having worked with youth, children and families, I love thinking about ways to better integrate them into our churches and our communities.

I grew up attending St Columba at Botany, Auckland, and also spent two years working for the Baptist Church in a youth role. In 2010 I felt a calling back into the Presbyterian Church. Being someone who has always loved the Presbyterian way, theology and structure, it wasn't long before I began to discern the call to ministry!

Currently an intern at Somervell Presbyterian Church, I have enjoyed learning about church management, and found myself truly at home when creating and conducting a flowing and meaningful worship service. I have learnt that there is enormous benefit in getting to know the unique flavour of a church and its culture, and I am deeply inspired when I hear the stories of people and their wider community.

I have also worked with the Somervell team to implement new Kids Friendly ideas with the hope being that strengthened relationships between young and old will be fostered, and ultimately, that children might be more meaningfully connected to church community.

I cannot wait to see what else God has for me on this journey with the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand!



TANI HAUNGA

I have been married to Iki for more than 20 years and we have two children – Joseph (21) and Sela (soon to be 18). I was born into the church in the friendly islands of Tonga, and moved to New Zealand to study as a 15-year-old. Before I went into ministry, I worked in accounts and funding for various corporate companies.

As an immigrant, I am a 1.5 generation and therefore have a passion for working in a multicultural church or context. I've been part of Greenlane Presbyterian Church for over 20 years, and have been an elder there since about 2005.

Through encouragement from family and church members, I spent six years in theological studies at Laidlaw College and left with a BMin and a Postgrad Diploma. I've spent my ministry internship years serving at St Andrews, Symond Street in the heart of Auckland city, with three months at St Johns, Papatoetoe.

My passion naturally lies with a multicultural context but I also have a big heart for small and struggling parishes. I enjoy preaching, leading worship and singing, and I used to run youth and children's ministry for many years.

Outside the church, I enjoy sports, computers and meeting people. As a minister, I, through the grace of God, will bring all that I've learned through the years, with hope that it will encourage spiritual growth in the family of God.





The Rev Nikki Watkin has been working alongside Jill Kayser as a new Kids Friendly coach.



The Rev Nikki Watkin welcomed to Kids Friendly team

Since early this year, the Rev Nikki Watkin has been working alongside Jill Kayser as a Kids Friendly coach, helping ministers and congregations involve and intentionally minister to, and with, the children and families in their communities.

Nikki and her husband, the Rev Richard Ward, both ministers at Kohimarama Presbyterian Church, have four children. Nikki works with Kids Friendly, the children's ministry of the Presbyterian Church, 10 hours a week while their youngest son is still at preschool.

Nikki was attracted to the role with Kids Friendly because of her long-term interest in children's ministry. She completed her dissertation on nurturing faith in children, and looked at who was primarily responsible for nurturing faith – the church or the family.

"The more I read, the clearer it became that it's the family – but too often we think in terms of taking children to Sunday School like taking them to swimming or ballet. You can't leave it to a professional. It's Deut 6: '...when you sit at home and walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.'"

Nikki thinks the church often forgets about its role in teaching parents how to nurture faith in the family. "With my minister's hat on I can see it isn't straightforward. We can't just have child-friendly services all the time because we are dealing with all ages. But nurturing children's faith is so important that we've got to get our heads around it in every church."

"Our four-year-old was sitting in a Good Friday service, and it was not a particularly child-friendly one. I had a piece of paper and said to Reuben, 'Draw what's happening today.' He drew Jesus on a cross on a hill – smiling. I asked why he was smiling, and he said, 'Because he's giving life to everybody'.

"We forget how much they're taking on board. We say, 'Kids are the future' and that sort of stuff, but they need to be nurtured now."

Nikki grew up in a Presbyterian household in Palmerston North. "I remember my Sunday School teachers being significant and what happened in the home being significant. I had my birthday on a Sunday one year and our Sunday School teacher took us to the beach and they'd made a cake. I realised how special I was in God's family.

"My father was an elder and my mother was incredibly faith-filled. She still supports my ministry. She rings me up at the beginning of the week, and asks what evenings I want her."

Nikki says did not have a moment when she decided to make a commitment to God. "I struggled with that as a teenager because people talked about having a conversion. But God has always been very real to me, and I came to see that as a blessing."

She met her husband Richard at university where she was studying for a Bachelor of Social Work and saw herself working in slums in New York; Richard was studying horticultural science and planning to do aid work overseas. "We both ended up changing direction. It's been great. It's been one of those callings from God that has had costs to it, but has been great."

It was at a Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship conference that Nikki felt the calling to be a minister. "We were asked where God was leading us, and I heard an audible voice saying, 'Knox College'. I have never had an audible voice before or since, but I think I needed it as a woman because so many people challenged me: 'Why do you need to do this, why can't you just be a minister's wife?'"

"Richard and I decided to train together so we applied as an engaged couple and started training as newly-weds."

In their first congregation in the Manawatu township of Feilding, the couple started Kids Time on Fridays with afternoon tea, activities and singing. "The first time we advertised it and waited to see if anyone arrived. Ninety came, and 60 attended regularly. It's about thinking of things that make the connection and then you build relationships.

"If you make the effort you reap the rewards – and the greatest reward is that you are changing lives."

Jane Tolerton [Spanz](#)



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Presbyterian Women support disability awareness and women's empowerment projects



Empowering women to generate income through traditional activities like weaving is one focus of the Presbyterian Women supported Ama Takiloa programme.

Faith communities becoming more welcoming to those with disabilities is the aim of one of the special projects supported by the Presbyterian and Methodist women's groups this year.

The 2012/13 special projects, which conclude this month, include support for an initiative that promotes awareness of disability issues within New Zealand faith communities, and a project that is empowering Tongan women and their families.

Presbyterian Women Aotearoa New Zealand mission convener, Joan Roberts, confirms that \$18,000 is expected to be raised to go toward development of the "Welcoming Churches" resource.

The Disability, Spirituality and Faith Network (DSFN) is developing the resource which will be a comprehensive guide and check-list towards making churches fully accessible and welcoming to everybody.

Although still in the early stages of development, DSFN secretary, Peter Cowley, explains that the resource is expected to consider the physical and sensory aspects of the church environment, as well as addressing the types of attitudes that welcome, include and respect those with disabilities.

He says the resource will also include a section on the theology of disability.

"It will look at how traditional biblical interpretations have been very unhelpful in either blaming it [disability] on sin or the 'sins of previous generations'. We want to showcase a contemporary understanding and hence a theology of disability."

Peter explains that a lot of work will go into the welcoming buildings section of the resource, which will look at what is needed to make buildings not just accessible but welcoming for people with disabilities.

"This is a lot harder than it seems at first," explains Peter. "There are a variety

of existing resources available, and the DSFN doesn't wish to duplicate these resources. We want to produce a coherent, comprehensive and up-to-date resource that is focussed specifically on the needs of faith communities."

Peter says that once DSFN publishes the resource, they are hopeful that parishes will read and take on board as much as they can about making churches welcoming places for those with disabilities.

"We understand that monetary resources are a problem for everyone, but still, being aware of the issues means parishes can take appropriate action when the opportunity arises."

The other project supported by Presbyterian and Methodist women in 2012/2013 is the Ama Takiloa programme run by the Tonga Community Development Trust. Presbyterian and Methodist women's involvement in the project is facilitated by CWS.

"We work closely with CWS who have multiple partners working in many parts of the world. This relationship has become an important and effective model of the Church and CWS working in partnership with poorer communities overseas," Joan explains.

The Ama Takiloa programme aims to empower local women to improve the health of themselves and their families, increase food security, self-sufficiency and income, and focuses on the most needy groups, which are typically those on the outer islands. There are 320 active village-based women's groups with a total membership of around 3,800.

The money raised by Presbyterian and Methodist women will go toward helping these women's groups with training and support on a range of topics: family nutrition, organic vegetable gardening,

home-based piggery and poultry, income generation, budgeting, small business development, and sanitation and water supply.

In addition, the programme also incorporates disaster risk assessment and preparedness through workshops aimed at enhancing traditional coping mechanisms.

Joan says this project was chosen because, "We felt that they are so vulnerable to earthquakes, tsunamis and cyclones, that they need help in preparing their people, and putting in place programmes for teaching and meeting economic and social developments."

Work is underway to choose the projects for 2013/2014, and Presbyterian Women expect to confirm the new project to its members in August.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)

DISABILITY AND FAITH NETWORK: AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- » To encourage and promote dialogue within and between the faith and disability communities.
- » To provide a place for disability communities to explore spirituality.
- » To advocate for disability issues within faith communities.
- » To engage in theological reflection on disability within Aotearoa New Zealand.
- » To promote discussion on ethical issues including those that affect human rights.
- » To encourage and promote programmes for, with and between disability and faith communities.

AMA TAKILOA PROGRAMME GOALS

To empower women by encouraging them to actively participate in development through:

- » food security
- » environmental protection
- » good governance
- » leadership development
- » human rights.



Young adults from Hope Presbyterian travelled to North India to experience how the local people live.

Mission trip with a difference

Young adults from Hope Presbyterian, Hornby, Christchurch, have just returned from a cultural exposure trip to North India. This was not a typical mission trip, though – there was no building of wells, teaching English, or spending time doing the things that often form part of mission trips.

Instead, says Jess Dreadon, trip leader and one of the youth directors at Hope Presbyterian Church (formerly Hornby Presbyterian Community Church), the group experienced what God is already doing in India through the local people.

“The purpose of the trip was to go with an open heart to discover the ‘jewels’ that God has placed in Indian culture and help the young people identify them and use them to share the Gospel message.

“We wanted the young adults to experience how other people live. We wanted them to see that we were not bringing God to India, because God is already present there, and doing amazing things through individuals and organisations,” says Jess.

She explains that the philosophy underpinning the trip was very much about “not encouraging the sometimes unconscious attitude of Westerners that we are here to ‘save you’ because we have all the answers”.

The team of eight, including Jess and husband Berne, visited Sano Diyo, in Siliguri, which is near the border to Nepal. Sano Diyo is a family home that cares for 40 children, and has been supported by Hope Presbyterian for some years.

The home houses children that come from heart-breaking and difficult circumstances and have been legally adopted by Arpana and Prasanna Khaling. Through sponsorship, the couple also care for and support another 45 or so children from a nearby village.

As well as visiting Sano Diyo, the Hornby group visited several local villages in conjunction with HIMserve, an organisation that works with support groups in remote villages.

The group got hands-on experience at Freeset, a fair trade business offering employment making bags and t-shirts. Freeset helps women trapped in Calcutta’s sex trade to develop

reading and writing skills as well as providing them with healthcare.

The group’s visit to Mother Teresa House required a “thick skin, a strong tummy and a soft heart,” says Jess, as they visited with the sick, the mentally and physically disabled, did laundry and volunteered.

Jess says it was a deliberate decision to take young adults on the mission trip because they’re at the stage of deciding what they want to do with their lives. The group, aged between 18 and 23, included a nurse, youth leaders and a worship leader.

“We wanted them to see God’s heart for the world, and provide an opportunity to deconstruct their theology through experience, and put it back in a more solid, deeper way.

“This sort of experience can influence important decisions. It can change perspectives and ultimately what people choose to give their lives to in faith and in their careers.”

The mission trip was 18 months in the planning, and Jess says the group did plenty of preparation including fundraising over \$5,500 to subsidise trip costs. They also attended several workshops including sessions on keeping healthy and understanding the cultural norms in India.

Senior pastor Hamish Galloway, who also went on the trip, believes that visits like the one to North India really impact on young people.

“We find that it’s a hugely eye-opening for them, and it’s a two-way thing.”

For Hope Presbyterian, the trip is about fostering deeper connections, says Hamish, who believes that personal contact is an important element of successful mission partnerships.

The other partnership supported by Hope Presbyterian, is a ministry in Laos led by a couple from the church.

Hamish visited the couple in Laos, where they teach English as a second language, before joining the rest of the group in Calcutta.

While freedom of religion is enshrined in Laos’ constitution, in practice the government restricts this right, so Christian teaching in the mainly Communist/Buddhist nation is limited, and not conducted openly.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)

Church to continue its journey with Jagadhri missions

A Global Mission visit to India and Myanmar provided the opportunity to reconnect with Presbyterian supported initiatives, and investigate new mission opportunities.

The three-week trip led by Global Mission coordinator the Rev Phil King, and supported by the Friends of Jagadhri, the key group within the Presbyterian Church supporting mission in India for many years, included visits to two potential new education-based outreach opportunities in India, as well as visiting several other projects that are currently supported by New Zealand Presbyterians.

First stop on the trip was Myanmar, where Phil and Robert Stewart from Ellesmere Cooperating Parish in Christchurch, visited projects of the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar. These projects are supported by Presbyterians through the Ricebowl mission.

Phil explains that travel in Myanmar is fraught with difficulty – flights are irregular and unpredictable, and notoriously hazardous road conditions, worsened by the introduction of motorised vehicles in recent years and lack of driver discipline, made getting to their planned destinations a challenging experience.

The first visit was to Tahan Theological College, which has received significant funding from the Presbyterian Church over the years. Phil was invited to speak at a student graduation which coincided with their visit.

“It was a privilege to be asked. It was quite an emotional experience for me to stand in front of 700 people in Myanmar and speak at such an important occasion.”

Next Phil travelled to India, where he was joined by Heather Laxon and Brian Rowley from Somervell Presbyterian Church in Auckland. They visited with representatives from the Church of North India (CNI)



First year nursing students from Jagadhri Christian Hospital take part in the lamp lighting ceremony where they take the Florence Nightingale pledge.

to assess ways in which the Presbyterian Church might increase its support.

Historically, New Zealand Presbyterians have supported outreach in Jagadhri - including the Christian Hospital, Christian Middle School and later St Thomas School. This support is in a state of change as Friends of Jagadhri and the Church's support evolve to meet the changing needs of those in the north-west city of Jagadhri.

“The Church of North India diocese tells us that St Thomas School has been so successful that it no longer requires funding from external sources. It is quite independent,” Phil says.

“Our vision is that Church support provides the opportunity for children from poorer families to have access to education, and now that St Thomas doesn't need our help anymore, we're looking at other outreach opportunities.”

Heather Laxon explains that for Somervell, the visit was an exploratory trip.

“We wanted to have a look at some projects, and meet the people and congregations running these projects, with a view to forming a mission partnership.”

CNI organised two school visits for Heather, Brian and Phil - a girls' school in Ptathankot and a boys' school in Palampur. Phil asked that they be shown schools that would continue the ethos of St Thomas of providing education for underprivileged children.

They were given tours of the school facilities and their hostels, met those running the schools, as well as joining in worship with the students.

Heather says, while the goal of the trip was to return with a recommendation for Somervell's session about a possible mission partner and project that they could be involved in, they are in the process of gathering more information before a recommendation can be made.

As well as visiting these potential new outreach opportunities, Heather, Brian and Phil also visited Jagadhri Christian Hospital, where plaques on the wall commemorate the many gifts and substantial support from New Zealand Presbyterians over the years.

When the Presbyterian Church started supporting the hospital nearly 100 years ago, it was a practicing hospital, but these days the main focus has shifted to the training of nurses.

“A ceremony for first year students was on the first night we were there, and we were faced with traditional drums and dancing. It was spectacular and moving.”

“Even though things there are changing, I think we need to continue to be committed to, and faithful to, the generation past who helped the Jagadhri missions get to this point. Those generations helped the hospital become effective in their work and witness. It's incumbent upon us to continue to journey with them.”

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)



Korea's Presbyterians wield major power

The 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches will be held in Busan, South Korea.

The decision to hold the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Busan, South Korea this year reflects the growing influence of Korea's Christian community.

Within this community the Korean Presbyterian Church is a dominant force and a key reason that South Korea has one of Asia's largest Christian populations.

There are about 20,000 Presbyterian churches affiliated to the two largest Presbyterian denominations. South Korea lays claim to the second largest membership of any Presbyterian denomination in the world.

With a strong conservative and evangelical influence the South Korean Presbyterians also send more missionaries abroad – only the United States sends more.

Two recent South Korean presidents have been Presbyterians reflecting the major economic and political clout of the Church.

There is even speculation that part of the reason South Korea has become such an economic powerhouse is because of the huge influence of the Protestant work ethic.

Regardless of this, the Korean Presbyterian Church is a major force in most aspects of South Korean life and a powerful player in international Protestant circles.

It has enjoyed explosive growth since the first Korean Presbyterian Minister, Suh Sang-Ryun, founded the church in 1884.

Korean Presbyterians can also be found in other global organisations, including the World Council of Churches. Christian World Service hosted a visit last year from the WCC Asian Secretary, the Rev Kim Dong-Sung. He is part of the new wave of leadership in the global ecumenical movement having served along the way as the junior ecumenical relations officer for the Presbyterian Church of Korea.

South Korea was selected to host the 10th WCC Assembly because of the unique ecumenical perspective that it can offer the wider ecumenical movement.

It will be the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches to be held in Northeast Asia. It is hoped that an ongoing result of the Busan WCC Assembly will be an increased receptivity to the ecumenical movement among Korean churches.

CWS national director, Pauline McKay, has attended planning meetings for the Assembly, in Switzerland on WCC funded trips, as the representative of the specialised ministries (specialised ministries are aid

and development wings of church groups such as Christian World Service).

Pauline says that the choice of Busan for the Assembly reflects the changing nature of the global Christian community and is an acknowledgement of the increased importance of Korea in that evolving picture.

“Just as we are witnessing new centres of political and economic power emerging in the global economy, we are also seeing this happen in the ecumenical movement with new powerful players emerging onto the world stage. South Korea is one of those new powerful players and the Busan Assembly reflects this new reality,” she says.

The Koreas (North and South) both have connections with the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.

The Rev Richard Lawrence has been able to visit North Korean Christians several times in visits facilitated by the DPRK New Zealand Friendship Society.

South Korea also hosted representatives from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand at a conference on peace and reconciliation.

Interchurch Unity: Churches Working Together – a social issues study booklet for Presbyterian and Union churches

The latest Presbyterian Church social issues booklet titled, *Interchurch Unity: Churches Working Together* explores how churches of different denominations can find ways to work together in a joint sense of mission.

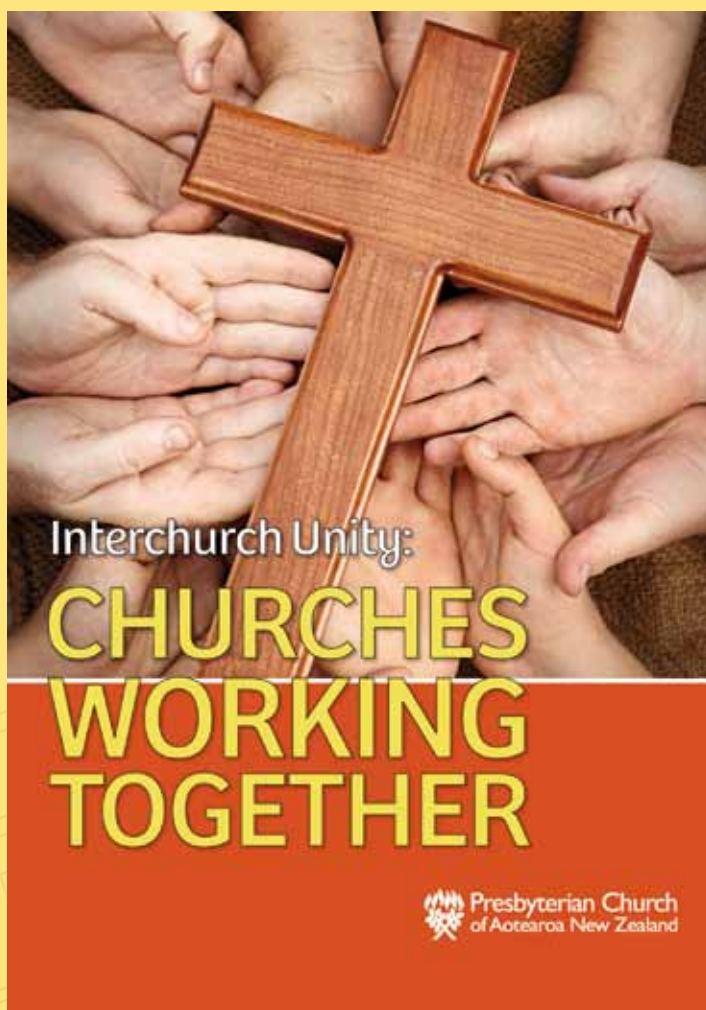
The booklet looks at what ecumenism and interchurch cooperation means, its history, evolution and its future.

It explores the biblical mandate for the unity of the church and examines the similarities and differences between denominations. It suggests how churches can engage effectively with other denominations, and challenges us to give a greater priority to working with other Christians in our communities.

The booklet also discusses how our Korean and Pacific congregations are contributing to what it means to be Presbyterian.

The study emphasises the importance of cooperation, especially for declining congregations, and in times of natural disaster.

This is the tenth in a series of group study booklets produced by the Presbyterian Church to encourage congregations to reflect about contemporary issues that are impacting our communities.



Copies of Interchurch Unity: Churches Working Together will be sent to all churches in early March.

If you would like more free copies please email office@presbyterian.org.nz or phone (04) 801 6000 or download copies here <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/speaking-out/resources-for-speaking-out> Free copies of the other social issues study booklets are also available.

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