



Saturday 19 November

GA16 White Ribbon

During Assembly, Commissioners have had the opportunity to participate in three White Ribbon events: yesterday Friday 18 November a white ribbon installation was created by Commissioners under the Otago University Clock Tower, spelling out the word HOPE; on Thursday 17 November two Serve the City projects were White Ribbon events - at Knox Church and First Church, Commissioners joined with the public in tying white ribbons to the churches fence railings.

The Presbyterian Church has long been committed to supporting the White Ribbon campaign and each year many of its churches take part in events aimed at educating about how to prevent and stop violence against women. Today that commitment has become even stronger with the announcement that former Moderator, the Very Rev Ray Coster has been appointed by White Ribbon as an Ambassador. Read the media release and see the White Ribbon website.

GA16 Video and Images

[Download and watch video](#) from GA16 including the three keynote addresses by Dr Rod Wilson, outgoing Moderator address by the Very Rev Andrew Norton and video of the Presbyterian Pioneers. Download images from the Moderator induction.

Hope for the World GA16 Songbook

Download the "[Hope for the World GA16 Songbook](#)" that Rev Malcolm Gordon, Worship, Music and Arts Enabler, Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership has made available.

Malcolm says, "These songs have been written by people within the Presbyterian Church for us to sing together, and help us connect with the theme of 'Hope for the world'. May they fill your church and your community with God's hope."

Moderator Designate appointment affirmed

Following announcement of the Very Rev Andrew Norton as the Moderator Designate on Friday, on Saturday General Assembly affirmed his appointment, and passed a resolution to stand behind him as he takes up the role of Moderator in 2018.

General Assembly also agreed to refer the procedure for nominating and electing the Moderator to the Moderator's Task Group established at this General Assembly.

Assembly thanks Rev Wayne Te Kaawa

Assembly gave thanks for the long and dedicated service of outgoing Te Aka Puaho moderator, the Rev Wayne Te Kaawa.

Assembly Moderator, the Rt Rev Richard Dawson, spoke of Wayne's gracious service to the Church and the wider community, and acknowledged how he has been an agent of change, during his six years as Moderator, and before that as he supported his mother, Millie Te Kaawa, moderator of Te Aka Puaho.

"Your leadership will be sadly missed. We honour you for all that you have done," said Richard.

Wayne thanked the Moderator and General Assembly.

"It has been an honour and privilege to walk with you on this journey. When I'm with you, I used to say I was with friends, now I am with whanau," he said.

Wayne finishes his term as Moderator of in February 2016 and the Moderator Designate of Te Aka Puaho, Ms Elizabeth Marina Rakuraku, will be installed into her new role at Ohope Marae on 25 February 2017.

Book of order changes approved

General Assembly agreed to a raft of changes to the Book of Order during the course of the 2016 Assembly.

The Very Rev Pamela Tankersely of the Book of Order committee introduced the changes and highlighted several key areas.

Of particular note, she said, were the changes that give greater power to presbytery councils, which are necessary in the new context of larger presbyteries. Pamela highlighted that presbyteries had been consulted in the development of the new regulations, and the amended regulations before Assembly were the result of these deliberations.

Other changes agreed to by Assembly affect regulations relating to ministers' entitlements when a congregation is dissolved, ministry settlement boards, and a technical change relating to voting under the special legislative procedure.

Changes were also agreed to clarify that congregations must gain approval when applying directly to community trusts whose grants are funded from gaming proceeds as well as applying directly for lotteries grants (previous regulations only required approval of lotteries grants applications).

Support for bioethics roadshow

Support for the Bioethics Roadshow was unanimously endorsed at this morning's Assembly.

The Roadshow is a central resource of the Interchurch Bioethics Council. It was initially set up to educate high school students on bioethics issues, but is available to all parishes and congregations.

One of the key tasks of the Council is to engage in dialogue with church members on the spiritual, ethical and cultural issues of biotechnology, and the Presbyterian Church's representative on the Council Helen Bichan says the roadshow is the ideal way churches to do this.

"Biotechnology research affects us all," she said. "It has enormous potential for good and comes with inherent risks. There are social justice issues about who benefits and who misses out. What do we develop, prioritise and fund?"

Parishes are encouraged to get in touch through its website: www.interchurchbioethics.org.nz

Presbyterian Pioneers

Moderator Rt Rev Richard Dawson interviewed three of the Church's pioneers in social agency and video recorded the interviews. These were played yesterday and today during Assembly. [Watch the videos here.](#)

Nikki Denholm

Nikki Denholm has spent 20 years travelling the world, photographing stories of people in times of war, famine, persecution and crisis. Her projects include the global refugee crisis, child trafficking in Nepal, Manila's street dwellers and the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Africa.

Nikki says her calling came from a deep sense of privilege and resources. "Our faith allows us to go into the dark areas of life and bring light. If there's one thing I could say to the Church, it's that we need to engage and not be afraid of getting out of our comfort zone."

Greg Foster

Greg Foster has been vice-president for Europe and Africa at Habitat for Humanity International since 2008. He grew up in New Zealand, where his father Jack Foster was a Presbyterian minister who served the Church with distinction in a variety of parishes throughout the country. Greg studied at Otago University and began his career working with at-risk youth in Christchurch. In 1990 he was awarded the NZ Commemorative Medal for services to young people, then went on to do a Masters in Development in the USA.

Before Habitat for Humanity, Greg spent seven years in Tanzania, where he managed a microfinance institution on behalf of the Canadian International Development Agency and developed the Tanzanian Ministry of Health's malaria prevention programme. He also worked in Jordan, Iraq and Bangladesh

Greg is married to Faye and they have two adult children, Alana and Jared.

Paul Somerville

Paul Somerville founded EmpowerAsia over three decades ago, with his wife Carlie. Their mission venture works throughout south-east Asia with at-risk youth.

Paul's introduction to Asia was the Bangkok sex trade area 25 years ago. EmpowerAsia formed safe houses in rural areas of Thailand to prevent young girls being lured into the trade. Helping young people who live in extreme poverty or are at risk from bonded labour, slavery or prostitution is the primary task but the couple's main aim is to develop Christian leadership in Asia. Many graduates from their ministry have gone into professional careers.

Paul became a Christian at the age of 14 and faith is still the cornerstone of his life. The couple now lives in Invercargill, from where they promote and fund their charity. EmpowerAsia needs to raise around \$1.2 million a year so Paul says he relies on God all the time and must take calculated risks. His message to the Church is to have core beliefs and don't compromise on them, but be friendly

Colin Marshall on emergency planning

As the aftershocks continue, religious leaders are again being reminded that they are the front-line in any national emergency.

Rev Dr Colin Marshall has been putting together an emergency preparedness plan for the Presbyterian Church, based on learnings from the Alpine Presbytery experience during and after the Christchurch earthquakes.

This morning he presented to Assembly the bones of the plan. The plan will operate at three levels: national, presbytery and parish.

"It starts with an overview of how we respond – what to expect, what preparation we put in place and what's needed in the short, medium and long term," Colin explained.

He emphasised that ministers' first responsibility is to take care of themselves and their families before reaching out to their congregations. Communication is also critical. The national office has relief funds and these can also be applied for.

The plan is still in the development stage. Those with valuable experience are welcome to contribute and are invited to contact Colin.

No National Mission Event

A proposal to establish a national mission event was lost.

Brett Johnstone, who spoke to the proposal on behalf of Northern Presbytery, advocated for the establishment of an event that would become the focal point of our national life, and grow to incorporate Connect, Kids Friendly, Global Mission, Presbyterian Women, and other cultural and mission expressions of our Church.

Brett said that in recent years General Assembly has been held concurrently with a mission event – this year the Hope Conference – and that the two events had different audiences and purposes and would ideally be held separately to better cater for the unique purpose of each event.

The proposal, which went to dialogue groups for extended discussion, attracted mixed feedback from commissioners.

Concerns raised about the cost, time and carbon footprint of hosting an event, and commissioners wanted to understand more about how other events like Connect would be impacted by this decision.

Those who were in favour spoke of the need for an energising mission event that refreshes, and renews people. “Say yes to this proposal and let us try. Don’t squash what could be amazing,” said Hannah North of Northern Presbytery who seconded the motion.

In brief

- General Assembly agreed to adopt a statement about being a multicultural Church. The Book of Order (chapter 1.5) will be amended to include the statement. Church councils had the opportunity to vote on the matter under the Church’s special legislative procedure prior to General Assembly 2016.
- General Assembly approved appointments to various church bodies based on recommendations from the Nominating Committee.
- Four recommendations were agreed this morning that support and encourage the projects delivered by Presbyterian Women Aotearoa New Zealand. The recommendations re-affirm the Church’s commitment to gender equality and that policies be reviewed to ensure decisions taken reflect the voices of women in the Church.