

CANDOUR

News and Views for Ministers

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Connecting with your community

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Advertising

These are the new advertising rates effective from 1 July, 2005:

One-quarter page: \$80 plus gst
(8 x 12.5cm, approx 180 words)

One-third page: \$95 plus gst
(8 x 16.5cm, approx 210 words)

Half page: \$130 plus gst
(12 x 16.5cm, approx 390 words)

Themes for 2005

Spontaneous contributions on these or any other topics are always welcomed:

July: Pastoral counselling; supervisions; boundaries and confidentiality; legal issues; dealing with bullying and intimidation.

Deadline: 30 June

August: Finance and resourcing; 2005/2006 budget

Deadline: 29 July

Contributions to *Candour*

Please submit articles for specific issues according to the deadlines. Other articles are welcome at any time. Articles can be 500-800 words, reflections 300-400 words, reviews 300-500 words and letters to the editor 100-200 words.

Please email contributions to:

candour@presbyterian.org.nz

Changes to *Candour* delivery

The Assembly service team is taking all measures possible to reduce this financial year's deficit. For the remainder of the financial year (till 30 June 2005), *Candour* will not be printed in a paper form.

Instead of receiving a paper copy with the monthly mail out, you will be electronically sent a copy of *Candour* that you can easily print out or view on your PC. It will still be in magazine form; only the method of delivery will change.

June update

It is likely that the July issue of *Candour* will be offered in a printed format. For this reason, we have not made changes to this issue's format to make it easier to read online (but thank you for the feedback about the layout). We want to know what you prefer: would you like to keep receiving *Candour* electronically? Or do you appreciate receiving a printed copy? Please let us know, as your feedback will very much guide the form *Candour* takes going forward.

Please email candour@presbyterian.org.nz or telephone Amanda Wells on 04 381-8285

Website revamp

In early June, we launched a new-look website, which includes a revamped stylesheet that better complies with accepted practice and a reorganisation of content that should make material easier to find. We are also moving to a new Web hosting firm in June; this is likely to cause brief disruption. Once these changes are completed, we should not experience a recurrence of May's technical problems.

Check out the changes at:

www.presbyterian.org.nz

Glen Innis Vacancies

July 18 - 25	Cottage
July 25 - August 1	Homestead/Cottage
August 1 - 8	Homestead/Cottage

Where is your community?

Kerry Enright, Assembly executive secretary

The elders weren't used to it; being individually and repeatedly phoned and petitioned by friends, neighbours and strangers telling them they were wrong and threatening legal action. The leaders and congregation of St Paul's Wanganui had decided to buy a former boy's hostel to create a home for psychiatric survivors. Locals did not want "this kind of person" in their "backyard". Fed by dramatic stories in the local paper and astute local politicians, opposition was strong. Over several session meetings, we decided, nevertheless, that it was the "right thing to do". The house was bought, management contracted, initial struggles overcome, and during the 18 months before I left that parish, none of the residents had to be hospitalised. Previously most had lived alone in inadequate housing and had been in and out of hospital. Twelve years later, it remains a feature of the community focus of St Paul's Wanganui.

In Christ God is active in the world, healing, empowering, forgiving and teaching. The Church is true to its purpose when it participates in the mission of Jesus Christ in the world. Jesus' bias is towards people who are excluded, ostracised, and poor. It was no accident that ministry among psychiatric survivors was our choice because they were being labelled "murderers, abusers, and paedophiles". A parishioner psychiatrist working at Lake Alice and Wanganui Hospital helped us understand the issues. So when a fierce debate about placing a medium-security psychiatric establishment at Wanganui Hospital provoked large public meetings (I can still see the faces on the front page of the *Wanganui Chronicle*), it seemed right to speak in favour of the move. This began a journey of involvement that led parish leaders to join in establishing a Community Living Trust. Following Jesus was meant to be costly, taking us into awkward and sometimes unpopular places. Ministry, after all, is cross-shaped.

It's true to our heritage. The reformation was not in order to produce a pure and orthodox sect, but for the reformation of society and the church catholic. Our worship, theology and ministry is "public".

It's not always welcome. Just this week, the *Dominion Post* reported the results of a survey conducted in many overseas countries, including Australia, in which 75% of people did not believe the Church should influence politicians. Thank goodness we are not driven by public opinion, although it affects our confidence. Faith is

taking risks outside security and the known (community ministry), and in so doing we learn to live from resources that only God can provide.

It's right and good that this month our Moderator is among other church leaders meeting with the Prime Minister and other senior cabinet ministers offering (not telling nor dictating) some insights into: what it means to be a robust civil society, housing, family incomes and services for older people. It's proper that congregations and ministers find ways to partner local bodies, retailing associations, schools, local radio stations etc.

When Winston Peters uses parliamentary privilege to name Iraqi immigrants, there is worldwide movement to "Make Poverty History", section 59 of the Crimes Act leads a jury to acquit a mother who hit her son, and the election agenda is being set, I sense Jesus calling us to offer compassionate, reasoned, and Christian voices.

Pleasant Point

"The name says it all."

Pleasant Point – a town set in a thriving rural community.

Are you interested in joining us in our faith Journey?

We are seeking an enthusiastic and committed person to lead us forward in a mission-focused ministry.

Key features of such a ministry would be:

To build up the existing church family.

To reach out into the community (particularly to young families)

To develop caring pastoral relationships.

To bring a fresh approach consistent with the needs of our changing world.

This will require a person of vitality, vigour and lively faith!

We invite expressions of interest from ordained clergy.

Further information and a parish profile are available from:

Alan Blair,

Nominator,

Albury/Pleasant Point Presbyterian Parish,

No 1 RD, Ashburton

Don't abandon children's mission

Margaret Liow, St Columba Presbyterian Church, Botany Downs and Pres. Rep. Auckland CEC committee

“Churches will focus most of their mission work on adults rather than children” — This is the fourth mission proposition delivered to Auckland Presbytery by the Right Rev. Garry Marquand in his “Propositions for mission churches in a new world.” The leadership task suggested is “stop children’s programmes and start family programmes”.

This is contrary to international research, which shows “evangelism is most effective among kids” (the title of a research study by George Barna)¹. This study “indicates that nearly half of all Americans who accept Jesus Christ as their saviour do so before reaching the age of 13 (43 percent), and that two out of every three born-again Christians (64 percent) made that commitment to Christ before their 18th birthday. One out of every eight born-again people (13 percent) made their profession of faith while 18-21 years old. Less than one out of every four born-again Christians (23 percent) embraced Christ after their 21st birthday”.

The definition of “born-again” Christians is: “those who have made a personal commitment to Jesus Christ that is still important in their life today and who also indicated they believe that when they die they will go to heaven because they had confessed their sins and had accepted Jesus Christ as their saviour”.

Consultation with New Zealand ministries suggests our figures are probably higher. Furthermore, those who become Christians before the age of 13 are more likely to have a lifelong commitment.

The church is often reactive rather than proactive. The model is that of an ambulance at the bottom of a cliff picking up the pieces of shattered lives. There will always be a need for this, but the most effective strategy is proactive – preventing the fall over the cliff. This is where children’s ministry is vital. When a child becomes a Christian, their life is moulded by Jesus. Who knows what they will become? When an adult makes a commitment, which is less likely, they have a shorter lifespan ahead and are less open to change.

Developmental studies show that a person’s belief system is established before the age of nine years, therefore presenting the gospel before this time is crucial. To suggest that we “stop children’s programmes, and start

family programmes” is illogical. Certainly we need to minister to the families within our churches, but we live in a society of dysfunctional families. Who is going to reach those outside the church walls? Jesus particularly reached those outside the synagogue and outside of society. He had stern words of rebuke for those who tried to send children away: “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.”

I have taught children within the church and have been teaching religious education in schools (Bible in Schools) for 30 years. In the schools, we are reaching children on the minus side of the Engels scale and bringing them to a realisation that there is a God and who Jesus is. A young man approached me at a Christian workers’ training day. He was aged about 16. He asked, “do you remember me?” As he towered above me, I could not recall him. He said, “I was in your Bible in School class. You were the first person to tell me about Jesus. Do you remember that prayer you taught us?” He promptly recited it to me. I had no recollection of that basic simple prayer. His family were not Christians. Eight years later, I experienced the fruit of my ministry.

When recruiting RE teachers, I was told by a night nurse who was prepared to teach after a night’s work, “I became a Christian through RE. I want to give something back to the children.” A Christian businessman in a million-dollar industry set aside one year to teach in a local school because God had touched him years before through RE.

I would like to pay tribute to those who do the churches’ work in the community, reaching children: the unsung heroes of Religious Education in Schools, Youth for Christ, Rock Solid, Scripture Union and Children’s Bible Ministry.

Jesus in the Great Commission commanded, “Go, then to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples.” Aren’t children people? If we ignore children, we omit a large part of society. To do so we would be a “stumbling block”.

¹ Bana, George., “Evangelism Is Most Effective Among Kids” www.barna.org

Moderator's response: Families first

Garry Marquand, Moderator of the General Assembly

Thank you for the invitation to respond to Margaret Liow's article and to continue dialogue about the future. Let me state clearly that nothing in my exploration below is a devaluing of the work, passion and sacrifice of those involved in children's ministries.

For those who have not heard my presentation, my mission proposition that churches of the future will "focus most of their mission work on adults rather than children" is just one facet of a radical paradigm shift required for us to engage more effectively in our mission context. I have observed that whenever there is a challenge to mission, there is often an almost immediate gut-level reaction to speak of initiating a ministry with children, with the assumption that such a ministry is the most effective and the most appropriate.

Such a view reflects a Christendom way of thinking that Presbyterians brought to New Zealand and the resulting way of operating in which we primarily engaged with the children of parents connected with the church, nurturing them through infant baptism to confirmation. It was an approach that worked reasonably well in days of higher attendance and wider acceptance of the church. The more evangelistic aspect of children's ministry probably owes its roots more to the emergence of denominations over recent centuries. Both approaches integrated compassionate ministries in response to social deprivation.

However, today local churches are working in a context that is clearly post-Christendom and increasingly post-denominational, and therefore they need to find more effective ways of mission.

I am aware of the research on people coming to faith. However, any research results beg questions about the sample used. US-based findings need to take into account the culture and much higher church attendance there. In our NZ setting, we have never been a particularly churched culture and I suspect now that the sample of such surveys will get progressively smaller.

Regardless, my viewpoint is not that we should exclude children from mission. The modelling and teaching of Jesus would preclude such a view, and children are part of the church today. However, there are very good reasons for not working with children alone. Hence: "stop children's programmes and start family programmes". In

other words, we should be working intentionally, compassionately, and evangelistically with both parents and their children.

Firstly, there is also research to suggest that the most effective way of working with children is to work with and to win their parents, especially fathers. The family is the most influential factor in the development of a child, so if we win that child's parents to the Christian faith and world view we provide a 24/7 environment for faith nurture and holistic well-being. There is "no comparison" with the half-hour or even two-hour programme a church or Christian may provide. Although, of course, even such limited contact can bring real and lasting kingdom fruit.

Secondly, there is an ethical dimension to be explored. While the involvement of children in a programme is normally with some sense of parental permission, if we work with children alone, we introduce the possibility of spiritual disunity with their family and potential conflict with them. Is it not much better to work proactively with the whole family?

Thirdly, in the mission context of the early church as described in the New Testament, there is nothing to suggest that working with children was practiced as a key mission strategy. While it is a very reasonable assumption that children/families were embraced in the community of faith given the teaching of Jesus, the focus was nevertheless on adults. In the mission context of today this is where the focus increasingly needs to be.

Fourthly, there is a pragmatic reality. For many churches, the realities of decline and aging are impacting the ability to sustain their life. They have neither the resources to contemplate children's ministries, nor do they have the 15-20 year timeframe to bring such children to the place where they can sustain the life of the fellowship. Their hope lies in working with adults and, where possible, with families.

In conclusion, my mission proposition is not an absolute, rather a strategic mission priority. It is obvious that some people are especially gifted to work with children and we should encourage them. An even stronger strategy is to build wider teams to work just as intentionally with their parents and other adults. I believe our mission context demands it.

When service becomes growth

Jill Kayser, executive officer of St Heliers Church and Community Centre

Fourteen years ago, St Heliers Presbyterian was a quiet urban church with under-utilised facilities, a staff of two and a declining congregation. The St Heliers Church and Community Centre now employs 31 staff, is supported by a number of volunteers and counts 60,000 people coming through its doors each year. The Church and Community Centre runs over 70 educational, religious and welfare programmes and offers pastoral care and support to the ever-diverse community of East Auckland.

Church attendance continues to grow at a rate of 25 percent a year, counter to trends, and the organisation has become the largest of its type in the country. So how did this happen and can others learn from the experiences of St Heliers Presbyterian?

Martin Baker was appointed minister to the parish in 1991 shortly after a major development of church facilities. With funds depleted but building resources in abundance, he decided to forego the traditional church secretary for a community outreach coordinator. Gaynor Larson, a woman of vision and enormous energy, had valuable insights into the needs of the community and also into the mission of the church. Together she and the minister, supported by the session and congregation, launched a centre offering a limited range of community education courses as well as specific social support events including conversational English, immigrant support group and lunch for the elderly. Increased contact with the community revealed a need for quality early childhood care and after school care, so the church set about developing these services and later offered holiday programmes, Kids Club and community youth groups. In 1993, the church negotiated a contract with Auckland City Council and continues to work in cooperation with them to meet the needs of the community.

The current success of St Heliers Church and Community Centre did not happen overnight or without duress. The development of a vision, mission and strategic plan has at times been quite haphazard and not fully embraced or understood by the majority of the congregation. The church's mission to be "an active worshipping church committed to spiritual growth and service to meet the needs of the congregation and community" really came to life with the development eight years ago of a new logo and slogan: "Reaching out, Welcoming in".

This slogan is widely publicised and forms the basis for all our interactions. Staff training consistently explores how we own and express this and parishioners are constantly challenged to bear witness to these words.

Today the fruits of our labours are reaping their rewards. While we have strived to serve our community unconditionally, the inevitable effect of God's love in action is an increase in church attendance and participation. Our challenge over the past seven years has been to seek ways to provide worship that is meaningful for the diverse range of people associated with our church and community centre. In trying to achieve this, we now offer three different church services a week including a community service, slightly more traditional service and, in association with Christian City Church, a teenage "Primal" service. We also offer a range of special events, creative showcases and Christian education opportunities.

The recent calling of Pauline Stewart to the parish and a newly renovated worship space has further enhanced our ability to offer quality all-age worship.

Our ministers' extensive experience in and commitment to working with communities and reputation for thinking outside the square are further challenging St Heliers Presbyterians "to reach out and welcome in". The temptation is for us to think we have arrived, but the Stewarts are determined to empower the congregation to build on its base of success.

The biggest hindrance to ongoing growth is space. With a staff of 31 and programmes running at full capacity, there is no more usable space (and a dearth of parking) at the venue. Future plans include working cooperatively with other Presbyterian churches and seeking opportunities to significantly outreach into new development areas in the Auckland Presbytery.

The church also aims to develop its pastoral care and spiritual nurture programmes for children, youth and families, and aims to become a resource centre for children and families ministry through the Kids Friendly Project.

The community centre initiative was inspired by a Biblical notion of the church's role to provide hospitality and service. These outcomes could not have been achieved without the church's willingness to use its financial and

human resources to actively support a vision of mission beyond itself. (The initiative was largely funded by the generosity of the parishioners for the first five years).

However, I believe the biggest ongoing challenge for St Heliers Presbyterian and all churches is to constantly grapple with the uncomfortable question “who are we here for?” Or to seriously consider the suggestion of Mark Chapman of Clevedon Presbyterian, that “the un-churched is our community”.

This is not to say we should not care for our own, but how do we impact, embrace, serve and invite those not already attending our church?

St Heliers Presbyterian believes the answer lies in its mission to “reach out and welcome in to a vibrant community that lives out the difference Christ makes”.

Working together

Sally Carter, Christchurch North Presbyterian Parish and the Belfast Community Network

The Christchurch North Presbyterian parish has two buildings, one in St Luke’s, Redwood and one in St Philip’s, Belfast. Over the past few years, two things have come together – a sense that it was time to consider whether or not we would continue worshipping in St Philip’s, and a growing realisation that there were many needs in the Belfast Community.

The results of this coming together were that the Belfast Community Network was formed, a community worker was hired and the parish offered its building for several hours a week as a base for community work in the Belfast area. The network is governed by an executive board that includes local ministers, the school principal, the local GP, community constable and other local residents with valuable skills and knowledge. Naming the need and putting in place the structure to meet it has resulted in a steady increase in the impact and scope of the work of the network. The network employs, in addition to Lynda the community worker, three youth workers and several casual workers for after school and holiday programmes. It became clear after a couple of years that the limited availability of the building was an obstacle to continued growth of the network’s work.

So, earlier this year, the network and the parish had a conversation which resulted in the Belfast Network becoming a “priority user” of the St Philip’s building.

“Phil’s Place” is now host to a Friday night youth café, a shopping service for elderly people in the area, a Plunket pre-school playgroup, girl guides, OSCAR after-school and holiday programmes, craft clubs, Pillars (work with children of people in prison) and other groups. In addition, the network and local ministers’ association organise significant events on Waitangi Day and at Christmas time.

This meant that we had to consider the role of the building as a church in the community. Everyone felt that it was important that the building remain available for services when needed, particularly for milestones such as baptisms, funerals and weddings, as well as significant moments on the journey of the church and the community. How would we retain the sense of sacredness and allow the maximum flexibility of the spaces in the building? A similar challenge is faced in terms of the people of the church. How do we as members of the parish retain a sense of our mission –being the hands, eyes, ears and feet of Christ – in the Belfast Community alongside the Community Network.

The opportunity to be in mission in Belfast in this way is an exciting one for both parish and community. It is a work in progress, as you can tell. Each step is undertaken with good conversation with the Network, the parish and the City Council, as we work together to bring life and health to our community.

PS. A planned development with a road through our building is another challenge for us to work through together!

Vacancy: Island Bay Presbyterian Church

Island Bay is a picturesque suburb on Wellington’s southern coastline. The Presbyterian Church constitutes a significant and vital presence in the community - a place where life and faith meet. This is reflected both in the church’s worship, which is creative and participatory, and in its commitment to pastoral care and outreach.

In a nutshell, the congregation see its mission as helping people of all ages connect with God, and is looking for a Minister of Word and Sacraments to help it accomplish this more effectively. Standard terms of call apply.

Expressions of interest and/or applications should be directed to: the Acting Nominator, the Rev. Graham Redding, St John’s in the City, PO Box 27-148, Wellington, ph. 04 385-1546, g.redding@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz by 25 June.

Reaching out through music

Jackie Smales, Knox St Columba Presbyterian Church, Lower Hutt

I have had the privilege of leading a group in our church for nearly five years. Our group started off with 45 pre-schoolers with their mums/dads/caregivers and grandparents in one class - now we have 120 on the roll, three classes each Thursday totalling 100 kids, and over 30 on the waiting list.

Mainly Music was started in New Zealand at Hillsborough Baptist Church, Auckland, in 1992 by Jo Hood – the director of mainly music. These groups are all over New Zealand, Australia, Canada and England.

Mainly Music is music, movement, rhymes, fun, morning tea, fellowship, evangelism. In short, Mainly Music is a platform and a catalyst for ministry. It forms the first contact point between the church and the community.

Mainly Music provides a set-up package and regular ongoing resources and support. A membership contribution is charged to the families as part of your door charge to support the visions of the society and to cover some of the expenses involved in supporting the network with information and resources.

Each week parents and caregivers bring their children for a 30-minute music session - adults participate with the children. An emphasis on contact between Mainly Music and the families who attend is of memories - of fun event days, of time spent between parent and child, of gifts presented and of encouragement given.

After the music session, morning tea is served, giving time for contact between church and community. It is a focussed opportunity for the church to meet the community, love them with the message of the gospel (words) and meet needs (works). We also know that an understanding of the works and words of the gospel working hand-in-hand are essential ingredients for mainly music to work successfully.

Aims of Mainly Music

- To ensure that all those who attend hear a clear concise, loving, balanced gospel message. We share this priority with Jesus.
- Also to nurture parents, meet practical needs, encourage the parent/child bond through our music time, provide an environment of networking with parents.

Mainly Music benefits

1. You're getting involved with something that works
2. Networking of ideas
3. Conferences and training events in main centres
4. Protection of copyright on approved music
5. Newsletters to distribute to local families
6. Newsletters to leaders with ideas, resource details and more
7. Buying privileges for material to use during Mainly Music

How does all this happen?

People who are committed to seeing families in their local community being touched by the gospel message are the ones who make Mainly Music happen. People who are pray-ers and talkers; who are not scared to get involved in people's lives. Without their commitment, Mainly Music becomes a music appreciation club; not a ministry. Church leaders need to commit to the aims of those who are intimately involved to ensure they receive the ongoing support and encouragement required. The local church needs to regard Mainly Music as a ministry of the total church - not an isolated weekly event. A minimum group of six people is required to set up a mainly music.

In our church, Knox Presbyterian in Lower Hutt, we have a great team of volunteer workers. I have three other leaders to take their turn at upfront leading, a roster of four grandads who man the sound desk, a retired minister and wife who greet the kids/parents and give them stamps, two ladies on the front registration desk, five ladies who come and look after the babies, plus 15 ladies who take their turn three at a time in the kitchen. We have formed a very solid, close and prayerful team and love every minute of it. We have shares in the "\$2" shop where we buy instruments such as drums, clackers, bells etc. It's tiring work each Thursday but so worthwhile in presenting the gospel in an exciting way.

We are now seeing families from mainly music coming along and bringing their kids to our Sunday kids alive programmes.

For more information go to www.mainly-music.org.nz or you can email me at ajsmales@paradise.net.nz and I would love to share things with you.

Sustaining your community spirit

Ian Guy, Kaikorai Presbyterian Church, Dunedin.

Legend has it that Kaikorai, as its name suggests, is a place of sustenance. Early Maori who were lost, weary and weak found in our location a place of shelter, security, food and water. A place they could rest and grow strong before resuming their journey.

Upstream and 1000 years later, our spiritual forebears planted a church: Kaikorai Presbyterian Church, established to bring glory to God and care for God's people. Today, we continue this tradition of worshipping God and serving our neighbours in the Kaikorai and surrounding communities.

This puts us in good company here, for way back in our history the Israelites were told quite clearly that their worship was empty unless it was matched by genuine care and concern for their neighbour, especially the disadvantaged. A point that Jesus slammed home with his answer to the Pharisees: "Love the Lord your God and love your neighbour as yourself."

As Jesus himself demonstrated, love must be more than words. God's love is rooted in involvement with purpose and with all people: Jew and gentile, poor and rich, male and female. God has no favourites but seeks to be involved in all of our lives to give life; the life that can be found through a relationship with Jesus. Today, Kaikorai Church seeks to "share the love of Jesus" with those within our community and beyond. We do so for the same reason that God chose to be involved in the human story: to give life. Now that is something that we are not able to do, but we can do and are called to do the next best thing; namely to introduce people to Jesus the giver of life.

Ultimately this lies behind all that we as a church do in relation to our community. We seek to be involved so that we can help people meet Jesus.

So how do we do this?

The most obvious approach we've made in recent years has been through the use of the Alpha programme. This programme, despite its off-the-shelf image, quickly takes on the feel of the local situation, largely because of the personalities of those running it and those attending. In the last five years, something like 50 people have attended an Alpha course at Kaikorai, most having

come from some previous experience of Christianity and virtually all attesting to the refreshing and maturing of faith that the programme encourages. The greatest strength of Alpha is not the format (which is good), it is not the dinners (which are scrumptious), or even the teaching of Nicky Gumbel (which is excellent) but is simply the relationships formed within each small group. This is why Alpha works for us.

Yet good as it is, Alpha does not stand alone. In fact without a whole lot of other relationship building opportunities and non-conditional service to our community, I doubt Alpha would have made much headway.

So the key for us is getting involved in our community. This ranges from big events like Kaikorai Carols (food, song, fun - all for free), to bed-pushing in the hospital, and individuals and families genuinely caring for others. It involves anything from cuddling a confused grandmother's teddy bear, to supporting a young girl who has just overdosed "again". It involves providing bread (and more) for a struggling family and sanctuary for a frightened teen, and a cheer squad at the rugby. It involves singing in rest homes and holding hands in waiting rooms.

I could write about the other programmes we run: Mainly Music; Rest Home services; Friendship Centre; play group; youth group; holiday programmes and children's work - but these are just the vehicle. The important bit is the motivation and the relationships formed. Jesus got involved because of his/God's overwhelming love for people. As followers of Jesus Christ, we too are called to be involved; to laugh with the joyful, to weep with the sad, to walk alongside the people of our community.

Today as we come into contact with the lost, weary and weak, it is our prayer that all will be strengthened, encouraged and ultimately come to know what we know: Love without end; love that understands; forgives, heals and restores. The love that is revealed in Jesus.

An indispensable part of the community?

Nancy Parker, Waiareka-Weston Presbyterian Parish, North Otago

I titled this article, “Our church – an indispensable part of the community” because that is our aim. We are a long way from reaching it but our goal is to be as involved in our community as much as we can and also to make our church a warm, welcoming place within the community. It is very helpful that we are the only church in Weston. We have found that, for us, our involvement is in many little ways. I share some of these because mostly what counts are the ordinary things that happen in the course of community life and the opportunities that we develop as part of our community.

Bible in Schools teaching at the local primary school is very important for us and appreciated by the school. We therefore encourage our people to be involved in this important part of our mission and we have always managed to provide the nine classrooms with Bible in Schools teachers. We stay at the school for morning tea afterwards and every term we provide morning tea for the staff. Our youth worker also helps out with the sporting programme at the school and consequently relationships with senior children are formed. Often these children come to youth group from Year 8 (Form 2) upwards. The school is also happy for us to advertise Friday Nite Club for 7–12 year-olds in the weekly school bulletin and at Bible in Schools. Many children come and enjoy the programme. Again, it brings parents and families in through the church doors.

We also welcome the local Pippins, Brownies and Guides into the church every Wednesday. The group is led by one of our members and is growing. This means that the church is a busy place on Wednesdays and parents come and go, picking up children, staying for a chat and enjoying the warm inviting facilities we offer. We don’t charge any fee; we want our buildings to be a meeting place for as many as possible.

There is also a parents and pre-schoolers group, which consists of young mothers and their children, some from the church family, but many through other associations with the church – maybe they were married in the building. This group is very popular and provides programmes for the mothers and entertainment for children. The monthly seniors coffee morning is also a great venue for connecting with the community. Seniors in the community who have suffered bereavement are always invited and find it a welcoming, friendly place to come. Seniors love to meet with the minister so I am always in atten-

dance. Our church-going seniors bring their friends and the warmth of the friendship and fellowship is always heartening.

We also provide worship for our community. We were asked two years ago to hold a Harvest Thanksgiving service for the Harvest Home celebrations on the Totara Estate. We took the plunge this year and closed the Weston Church and held our weekly service in the Estate Granary. This was greatly appreciated by the community. We also organised and participated in the service at the beginning of the Mobil Silver Plough competitions. We feel these opportunities to provide worship are very important.

The establishment of the Waiareka Youth Trust with the help of presbytery and employing a youth worker has also enhanced our community profile. Our youth worker, Elizabeth, has a wonderful rapport not only with the local primary school but also one of the high schools in our town. She has done chaplaincy training and is a valued person on-site at the high school. Last weekend, she attended a funeral with young women from the high school hostel who were grieving for a friend’s mother. She finds that building relationships with young people in the community is vital and important.

Our latest community project is to establish a Youth Centre in the local Scout den. The Scout den was built 40 years ago to commemorate the deaths of four young men on a railway crossing and so it is valued by our community. The Scouting movement was struggling to continue in Weston. Our Youth Trust has taken a lease on the building and will renovate it, providing toilets and improved parking. This will provide a place for young people to gather. We will encourage the Scouts also to re-develop their programme if at all possible.

We find that as we mix in the community, walk alongside people in grief and in their joyful times, that warmth and relationship develops. We are finding that some new families from our community are beginning to attend Sunday church services.

The understanding of what is church has changed. Belonging is usually formed by relationship, not by Sunday attendance in the building. We feel increasingly that even though our church building is small, our church community spreads far beyond the Sunday gatherings.

Connecting with Keri the Kereru

Sally Carter, co-convenor, *Connecting with Society* policy group.

An article caught my eye recently. It was called ‘Jesus hustles an invitation to the city’.¹ The author observed that church noticeboards often say “St Mumbo’s welcomes you”. And many of us gathering in congregations value hospitality and many of us are indeed friendly and welcoming to the people who come in. But we are learning from research and from our own experience that however much we who are inside say “Welcome”, the step through the church door is a huge one for the person outside to take. WE are safe inside the church building and it is not risky for US to say: “Come inside and see if you fit in with us. Come inside and see if we are your sort of person. Come inside and we will see if you are our sort of person.”

Whether it is increasing our understanding of the issues which face our society globally, such as war, economics, poverty, climate change and human rights, or nationally as we rush into the polemic and rhetoric of an election year, or locally as we discover what life is like for the people who live in the local community of our parishes, we are called OUT to join Christ in the world in which we live.

Wouldn’t it be great if our schools, shopping malls, airports, and workplaces carried metaphorical signs at their doorways saying “Presbyterians welcome here!”

Connecting with Society is the policy group working most directly towards understanding and networking with the fifth face of mission – concern for justice, peace and the integrity of creation. There are two key areas in which we operate:

- Communicating the Church’s identity (in conjunction with the Service Team)
- Public leadership – ensuring that members and leaders are well-equipped to contribute to debate on matters of spiritual, cultural and ethical matters of importance.²

The policy group is supported by the interchurch Churches’ Agency on Social Issues (CASI). CASI provides parishes with excellent studies and information on a range of challenges faced by our society. You can explore many of those resources on their website (www.casi.org.nz). CASI also participates in government through preparing and assisting others to prepare submissions to select committees and through regular meetings of church lead-

ers with key people in government. The church brings a unique perspective on pieces of legislation (or potential legislation) that influence our life in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The major project that Connecting with Society is undertaking this year is encouraging participation in the Decade to Overcome Violence. It is our belief that one of the key ways in which we can connect with society is to offer alternatives to violence as a means of addressing the issues that cause brokenness and pain within our families and our communities.

We are using the Keri the Kereru kit prepared in response to the international Decade to Overcome Violence (2001-2010). The kit includes a puppet, a CD with stories relating to non-violence and a comprehensive set of resources to support both worship services and children’s activities. In addition, we are using a board game that takes a journey through New Zealand, with stops along the way to resolve (non-violently!) the situations which arise. We are hoping that we can bring this game into schools in our communities.

The kit can be used in the wider community as well as in church and it encourages groups to consider how they might put the principles of non-violence and peace-making into practice. In addition to the material resources, Keri’s journey is being tracked through a web-site (www.ccanz.net.nz/dov). Over the next few months you may find Keri flying by in your presbytery. Perhaps you might take him on a trip into your community.

The Church is most fully itself when it discovers its heart for reconciliation and love in interaction with the world IN the world. And that discovery takes place in “asking in small and personal ways to be let into the community and its life”.³

¹ “He Stayed Two Days,” *The Journey with Jesus: Notes to Myself*, Daniel B. Clendenin, *Journey with Jesus Foundation*.

² ‘Directions’ document 2003-2004

³ “He Stayed Two Days,” *The Journey with Jesus: Notes to Myself*, Daniel B. Clendenin, *Journey with Jesus Foundation*.

Where does CASI fit in?

Lesley Shaw, CASI Presbyterian co-convenor

The Churches' Agency on Social Issues consists of members appointed by four churches: Presbyterian, Methodist, Churches of Christ, Society of Friends (Quakers).

What CASI does

1. **Research** and information gathering. Top topics for 2005 include:

- children and well-being, including resourcing parents
- race relations, including material from a Capital City Forum held in March. This will be available in July.
- election issues – we are focusing on rich/poor gap, sustainability, and building strong communities.
- employment, including work/life balance
- sustainability and spirituality

We tackle other topics as requests come to hand.

2. **Consultation** with people in local churches, congregations, faith communities about topical issues. This includes encouraging local churches to tackle issues in their community or region or topics that are specially important to them. In 2004, we issued the Social Justice Resource Kit, for parishes and groups, on undertaking social justice initiatives at local level.

We encourage and support the development of local social issues and community action groups, and have a network of over 50 people to whom we send a monthly newsletter on submission opportunities, action possibilities and resources. To join this network, contact the office. We also encourage and facilitate the linking of parish and local groups (through seminars and speakers), to draw encouragement from each other and work together on topics of mutual concern.

3. **Reflection and discussion**, focussing on Christian perspectives on social issues. The CASI Theological Rationale (on our website) outlines the basis for our work. Every submission we make relates the issue under scrutiny to our Christian faith and church mandate. All our resources incorporate material on relevant Biblical and faith dimensions.

We have nearly finished cataloguing our specialist library, from which books and papers can be borrowed by members of the CASI churches at no cost. The catalogue will be available by post, email and on our website, which has been significantly revised with the focus on current

issues. Find it at www.casi.org.nz.

4. Undertaking **representation** and advocacy, by making submissions at any level of government, and by encouraging member churches to bring influence on decision-makers and help shape policy. In the last year, we have presented submissions on legal parenthood, poker machine site conditions, shop trading hours, tertiary education student support, citizenship, oaths and affirmations, and civil unions. We are a member of the Housing Policy Reference Group and provide papers and support church leaders in their face-to-face discussions with politicians on critical issues of the day.

How CASI works

Topics and issues are often brought to CASI's attention through emails and letters from local church social issues groups, or church-organised meetings. We respond to resolutions passed at national and regional church councils, and to direct requests from member churches, and report back to them each year. We welcome requests for information by phone or email. We work closely with ecumenical agencies such as the Interchurch Bioethics Council (ICBC) and the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) to complement their initiatives and network it into the congregations of our member churches.

Publications and Resources

CASI produces the eight-page newsletter *Broadsheet* six times a year. This goes to all Methodist and Presbyterian clergy, to Quaker and Churches of Christ representatives, plus about 600 individuals and group convenors. Anyone can subscribe on request.

Our website (www.casi.org.nz) contains a wealth of material and links to resource sites as well as CASI's submissions, the latest *Broadsheet*, statements and papers.

CASI is based in Laughton House, 100 Tory Street, Wellington. P O Box 9049, Wellington, Telephone 04 381 8295, fax 04 801 6001, casi@casi.org.nz

Research and Liaison officer: Julia Stuart, tel (office) Monday, Wednesday, Friday, 04 381 8295 or 027 444-2244 (anytime).

Harnessing the power of the media

Jose Reader, Assembly Office communications manager

“Why bother with the media?” is a question I hear a lot. The answer I always give is that radio, TV and newspaper reports help people to shape their views about the world and things in it, including the Church. If we want to be part of the decision set when people are considering their faith and spirituality, then we need a presence in these forums.

Skepticism about the media often arises from fear of being misreported or a perceived inability to cover issues accurately. But the reality is that ignoring the media means turning our backs on a potentially useful tool for sharing the Word with hundreds of thousands of New Zealanders.

Harnessing the power of the media isn't as difficult as you might think. This article provides some tips for how you might use the media as a tool to engage with your community.

How do I get the media interested?

One way to start is by considering a local issue. Do a little research and take note of what issues are important in your community (housing for the elderly, pollution of a local river, domestic violence etc); then match these to what is important to your congregation. Hey presto, you've got an issue the media will be interested in.

Highlighting social justice issues is only one option; there are plenty of other activities that your community newspaper or local radio station would find interesting, such as:

- church anniversary or jubilee (you should consider doing publicity in the lead-up period, and after the event)
- opening an upgrade to church facilities or a new centre
- outreach initiatives that have a significant interaction with the community, such as a food bank or children's holiday programme
- contemporary worship such as café church (anything that is different from the traditional view)

- fundraising efforts
- an interview with someone who is embarking on or has returned from an international mission initiative
- you can stage your own event (like your congregation adopting a local river and keeping it clean)
- the historic significance of your parish/manse
- induction of new minister/current minister leaving
- Christian holidays – talk about how your parish is connecting faith with everyday life
- Use the letters to the editor column of your newspaper to comment on key issues.

It is important to make connections with local reporters. The aim of this is to demonstrate that your congregation is interested in local matters and is available to comment on issues. If you make interesting, relevant comments, over time it's likely that the reporter will proactively seek out your comment on all sorts of issues, not just those you approach him or her about.

Have realistic expectations, and don't expect every idea you pitch to result in an article. Instead focus on building relationships.

I should note that there is a distinction between “proactive” (as outlined above) and “reactive” media management. That call-out-of-the-blue when we can be forced onto the back foot about an issue is covered below.

How do I choose a news agency?

Once you have decided what topic(s) you want to comment on, you need to identify the news agency best suited to that sort of story. Some stories are better suited to radio, others to community papers, others to national newspapers. Community papers, generally published weekly, are a good place to start as they are more likely to publish “soft news” and have high local penetration.

A reporter rang me out of the blue!

These calls can be a bit daunting, so here are a few tips to make things go a little easier:

- Take time to gather your thoughts. Never, ever answer questions straight away (see the myths and realities section below for more detail). Explain that you will find the relevant information/gather your thoughts and call back in a couple of minutes, making sure to get the reporter's contact details and deadline.

- Prepare for the interview. Think about what the reporter's angle is likely to be, and what you want to say in response. Then distill your thoughts down to no more than two or three key points.

- If the issue is controversial, ask someone to do a practice interview with you and include some curly questions.

- Use the broken-record technique if the reporter is pressing you on a question you have answered or don't wish to answer. Remain polite, and simply restate your answer in a slightly different way – the reporter will eventually get the message.

- It is rarely a good idea to make disparaging comments about another organisation – these conversations are best had face-to-face rather than through the newspaper. Remember that the most controversial thing you say will become the focus of the article.

- Use the language of those you are talking to. For instance, in a Christian publication you might talk about making Jesus Christ known as the purpose of the Church, where as in a secular publication your intentions might be better served by saying the Church's purpose is "about connecting faith with everyday life". This isn't "spin" – it's saying the same thing in a way that resonates with a particular audience.

This is a small selection of some of the techniques that can be used to manage a call-out-of-the-blue. The Assembly Office communications team has considerable experience working with the media and is available to provide advice or guidance as required. Give us a call if you want to have a quick chat before calling a reporter back.

How to get your message across

The biggest thing to remember when giving an interview is that you shouldn't try to say too much. Come up with one or two key messages and stick to these, repeating them in different ways. Think about what you want the audience to remember and this should be your

message(s). Ideally, you should be able to articulate it in a couple of short sentences, no longer than 20 seconds. Any longer and it's too complex – the readers, listeners and watchers will be lost. This may sound simplistic, but it is a reality and mastering the sound bite is the best way to get your message across.

Should I comment or not?

I would like to dedicate a bit of time to discussing about the option of saying "No comment", which is often touted as the best response.

Rightly or wrongly, "no comment" equals "guilty as charged" in the eyes of most people. A perceived unwillingness to talk gives the impression you have something to hide. In almost all instances, your cause will be better served by making a statement or giving an interview.

If you decide not to comment, the only voice that will be heard is that of your detractors. What they say will become the truth in the eyes of those reading the article. If you choose to comment, the reporter is obliged to include some element of your statement, which will give the article some balance.

There are only a few circumstances where I would recommend a qualified "no comment": firstly, where there are judicial processes are underway, and secondly, where the negative emotional loading is so high that your comment would escalate the issue. Take this example: an elderly lady is being evicted from her residence because she hasn't paid her rent. The landlord has the right to evict her and has even tried to find her alternative accommodation at a shelter, but, in this instance the landlord will be the "baddie". The negative emotional loading is so high that it doesn't matter what he says, he will look uncaring. In this sort of situation, he is better off making a qualified "no comment" statement.

Some common misconceptions exist about the way the media works, and it is important to understand these processes because it will help you achieve your programme goals.

Media myths and realities

Myth #1: the reporter will give copy for approval. Don't bother asking to see the article before it goes to print because most journalists will refuse and will feel that you are questioning their professionalism (unless

you strike a rookie). Instead make yourself available for clarification after the article has been written; the reporter may be amenable to checking facts or quotes, but little else.

Myth #2: you can talk “off the record”

There’s no such thing as off the record (ask Prime Minister Helen Clark about the Peter Doone matter). If you don’t want it reported, don’t say it.

Myth #3: everything you say/write will be used.

In reality, the reporter is only intending to use a portion of what you say or write because of time and space limitations. For example, a typical report on the six o’clock news is around one minute and 40 seconds, but the reporter will have collected around 60 minutes of footage for that item – that is why it’s important to distill what you say into a couple of key messages, and keep reiterating those points.

Myth # 4: the media is out to get you.

Journalists are rarely out to get anyone. If they feel you are hiding something, or being untruthful, then it’s a different story, but, in most instances, all they want to do is file a report. You can influence the way the story is reported by your approach to the journalist and the subject matter. Be confident and open and you shouldn’t have any problems.

Myth #5: you have to answer straight away.

The importance of giving yourself time to gather your thoughts can’t be overstated. Never answer the reporter’s questions straight away. When you get the call, take the reporter’s name, what publication they represent, and ask what the lines of questioning will be, and then undertake to call them back in some mutually agreeable timeframe. It is also useful to ask who else they are interviewing about this matter (there are always two sides to a story), and knowing this will help identify what the likely issues will be. Deferring comment gives you time to gather your thoughts (even if it’s only five minutes). Reporters are used to this, and won’t think it is unusual. If you don’t know the answer to the question, it’s OK to say that you will check your facts and give them a call back.

This column is too short to go into too much detail, but needless to say there is plenty of untapped potential to share our stories through the media. I hope that this commentary has provided some food for thought about how you could apply these ideas in your area. Remember using the media to connect with your community isn’t mission-impossible; it’s a mission opportunity.

Regional workshops

“harnessing the power of the media”

Using the media as a tool to connect with your community can be an important element of any outreach programme.

The Assembly Office communications team plans to run a series of interactive workshops in late 2005 that will work through case studies of other parishes’ approaches and provide practical tips for engaging with the media.

Costs are mostly covered by a grant from the Council for World Mission, although there may be a small charge to cover materials.

If you are interested in getting more information about the workshops, please register your interest by phone (04 381 8284) or email (commsmanager@presbyterian.org.nz).

St Andrews Presbyterian Church Takaka, Golden Bay

Part-time Ordained Minister’s Position

A ¾ time (three-year) position is available to a person with energy and enthusiasm who can encourage the congregation to fulfil their mission. We are looking for a person who is passionate about sharing God’s Word, and is able to discuss Biblical principles with a diverse group. Priorities in ministry include: leading worship; pastoral care; equipping members to share the good news; and helping them plan for the future.

Golden Bay is nestled between Kahurangi and Abel Tasman national parks, with a stunning coastline and lush farmland. It features places of unspoilt natural beauty such as Waikoropupu Springs and Farewell Spit.

If you are interested in learning more about this position, write to Rev. John Malcolm, 42 Muritai St, Nelson or email minister@tahunanui.presbyterian.org.nz by Sunday 23 June 2005.

Ministry training: A changing community

Kevin Ward, School of Ministry, Dunedin

In the Focus on the Future forums held during recent months, leadership development came up as a top priority overall in people's concerns for the future. Obviously within the current Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand environment, this puts the School of Ministry at the centre of considerable interest. Just what does happen down there in that faraway place called Dunedin. What is the nature of ministry training today?

I'm pretty new to both the Presbyterian Church and to the School of Ministry, and one of the things that has struck me pretty quickly is how fragile the connection is between the smaller community I belong to (the School of Ministry) and many of those in the wider community of which it is a part (the Presbyterian Church). Many do seem almost totally unaware of what is happening at the moment, so this seems like a good time and way to catch some of you up.

The location of the School at Knox College means that in many people's minds, what we are doing is the same as what used to happen in the Theological Hall, only under a different guise. However, the way in which the Church has redeveloped its ordination programme means that the theological foundation for those going into ministry is no longer is provided by us but can be obtained from one of three different providers in New Zealand – Otago or Auckland University, or the Bible College of New Zealand. On top of that, we recognise equivalent training from overseas providers where appropriate.

The School then provides a two-year programme that is focussed on building on that foundation by endeavouring to form people so they are ready for ministry. In this we recognise four key dimensions: cognitive learning; emotional maturation; the developmental of professional skills; and the nurturing of Christian discipleship. This emphasis on the formation of the whole person for ministry is different from theological education, which tends to focus only on the first, or ministry training, which tends to focus mainly on the last. We seek to develop each of these, but above all to integrate the elements together so people engage in ministry with the whole person rounded and developed.

Different parts of the programme focus more heavily on one element. The academic courses we do, for instance, focus on cognitive learning. Within these, however, we

seek to incorporate some of the other elements. We seek to further emotional or personal maturation through the focus on tutor groups, community life, learning to give and receive evaluation, supervision and, where it is felt helpful, psychotherapy. The development of professional skills comes primarily through field work assignments, but also through presentations in academic courses (for example, the preaching of sermons that are evaluated, leading of worship or moderating meetings). Finally, the nurturing of Christian discipleship is facilitated through regular chapel participation, relationships with a tutor and spiritual director, and the flow of community life. In their synthesis, which is the major document that ordinands submit before their graduation, they seek to integrate all of these four dimensions together while exploring a topic that is personally significant for their life and ministry.

This programme began only in 1997 and we have made considerable developments over the years in response to our own reflections, feedback from students and from the wider church. We are always open to changing and improving how we go about the task of forming persons for ministry, but increasingly the feedback we get from those involved in the process is extremely positive regarding what they are gaining from this. Perhaps the value of this new approach is seen in the fact that of the 59 graduates since we began, 54 were placed into Presbyterian parishes, one went into ministry in another denomination, and only four have not gone into ministry. Today of that 59, 49 are in ministry in Presbyterian work, three are in other denominations or sister churches overseas, one is doing postgraduate study (using the postgraduate scholarship) and six are not currently in ministry, although half of these are intending to return to it.

I have been significantly involved in two of the other major training providers in New Zealand and I think what has been developed here in the School of Ministry has a framework that is difficult to better, and, as it has been refined, has begun to offer a very high quality process of formation for those going into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament. We are seeking to make this more widely available and are now able to offer distance options, block courses and hopefully in the near future NZQA accreditation will open it up even further.

In addition to what we provide in preparation for the ordained Ministry of Word and Sacrament, we have become

involved in helping form people for other forms of ministry within the church: Local Ordained Ministry, Local Ministry Teams and Amorangi Ministry. We also run a partnership with Ekkelesia Niue to train ministers for that Church. We are developing more ways in which we can resource and develop other forms of ministry for the Church and also ways to provide resources that will continue to help form and better equip those who are already in ministry. In addition, we also endeavour to carry out and facilitate research that will be helpful for the church as it moves into a very different, challenging future.

Quite a large brief and often, it feels, with inadequate resources, but one which all of us are excited to be part of. We look forward to further challenges and changes as we seek to be responsive to and well connected with that wider community of which we are a part: the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and, ultimately, the wider church community of New Zealand.



United
Theological
College

PRINCIPAL



Applications are called for the position of Principal of United Theological College, Sydney, theological college for the Uniting Church in Australia NSW Synod.

Applicants should be highly qualified in some field of theological education and possess skills in administration and institutional leadership. Applications are welcomed from qualified women and men who are members either of the Uniting Church in Australia, or members of a church in a related tradition. The appointee must be willing to accept and adhere to the Basis of Union of the Uniting Church in Australia.

The position is available from 1 January 2006.

Full details of the position may be obtained from:

Professor Barry Leal, Chairperson of the College Council,
16 Masons Drive, North Parramatta NSW 2151 Australia
Fax +61 2 9683 6617 or email utc@nsw.uca.org.au
with whom applications close on 31 August 2005.

SUN!
SURF!
SOULS! We're on a mission !!

StAs seeks a full time pastor to join the staff team as we impact the coastal strip for the Kingdom of God.

We're looking for a servant leader whose vision is aligned with the Senior Minister and has the giftings of:

- leadership
- pastoring
- evangelism
- communication
- creative presentation

The logo for StAs, featuring a stylized mountain range with a cross in the center and the letters 'StAs' in a bold, sans-serif font.

St Andrews Presbyterian Church
Dee Street
Mount Manganui
ph 07 575 9347
stas@maxnet.co.nz

Leadership and pastoral responsibilities will include:

Sunday 10.10am service; midweek alternative event; children & youth ministries

Contact us for details of our vision, our mission and information on this position.

The Pastor's Family: The Challenges of Family Life and Pastoral Responsibilities. By Daniel L. Langford. (New York: Haworth Pastoral Press, 1998)

Held by the Hewitson Library, Knox College, Dunedin

Reviewed by Mary-Jane Konings

Langford explores the challenge of balancing family life and the call to ministry with insight and honesty. The author has been a nursing home social worker, school teacher and pastor/church planter in California. He is still married by the grace of God and the determination of his long suffering wife. Even his children are still talking to him, although this was not a predictable outcome at points during the story.

The book contains both research and firsthand experiences. Much of the reflection is painful and will challenge all those in ministry and their supporters. A major part of the reflection is stimulated by the different gender based expectations on those in ministry. For example, if you went to a meeting at the minister's house, would you take supper or expect the host to provide it? Does your answer change if your minister happens to be a woman?

There are plenty of oppressive attitudes around even in this day and age. Langford writes "The male minister's spouse is more likely to be enslaved as a congregation's Cinderella while the female minister's spouse will likely live as a prince" (p. 24). Even in New Zealand, where the highest offices in the land are occupied by women, there are many examples of "two for one" deals around the country in ordained and lay ministry where the wife is expected to "volunteer". The same expectations are rarely made when we employ married women.

Obviously, we need to ask whether this is appropriate or healthy. Many of our unchallenged assumptions do not respect the dignity, individuality or unique life goals of women. It is time to carefully consider whether the price paid by partners is too high. This is an issue of health for the congregation as well, and Langford offers some alternatives to encourage change and growth.

The minister's family is dragged into church life whether they want to be or not. This can create difficulties for both partners and children. Langford explores the struggles his children had dealing with the expectations of the community regarding behaviour and their confusion between God the Father and their earthly, imperfect father. While there are no easy answers, there are helpful and less than helpful attitudes and approaches to take.

The book offers valuable insights into the perils of ministry for families and partners, and points to some preventative measures. It is written in an accessible style and very useful for those preparing for ministry as well as those already juggling.

Mission-shaped church – church planting and fresh expressions of church in a changing context. (Church House Publishing London, 2004)

Reviewed by Kerry Enright

The Church of England is encouraging the development of different expressions of church. This report, with a foreword from Rowan Williams as Archbishop of Canterbury, offers a comprehensive outline of those different forms of being church and reflects theologically on the developments.

As Rowan Williams says:

If "church" is what happens when people encounter the Risen Jesus and commit themselves to sustaining and deepening that encounter in their encounter with each other, there is plenty of theological room for diversity of rhythm and style, so long as we have ways of identifying the same living Christ at the heart of every expression of Christian life in common.

The Anglican strategy is to nourish a mixed economy of parish churches and network churches. No one strategy will be adequate for the diversity of ways people now live.

Communities are now multi-layered, comprising neighbourhoods, usually with permeable boundaries, and a wide variety of networks, ranging from the relatively local to the global... the changing nature of our missionary context requires a new inculturation of the gospel within our society

After a sociological outline of the changing context it highlights the rising significance of networks.

In the network society the importance of place is secondary to the importance of "flows". It is the flows of information, images and capital that increasingly shape society.

Networks are changing neighbourhoods so that community and a sense of community are often disconnected from locality and geography.

To live in one place no longer means to live together, and living together no longer means living in the same place.

The communities of the global age generally have no local centre. In this context people are less inclined to make lasting commitments yet the Church is challenged to develop ties of loyalty and faithfulness through Christ.

The book outlines many Anglican responses to that dynamic. It includes a great variety of church plants/transplants/seeds/grafts, cell-church, café church, seeker church, basic ecclesial communities, church schools, and emerging communities.

In light of the report, I wonder if our almost single-focus on “congregations” is placing too much emphasis on one strategy of mission in such a multi-faceted culture. I sense local expressions of church need other words beyond the word “congregation” to describe our existing experience of church where many people connect without congregating, and where “sending” is key.

A healthy dynamic of the book is its principled approach. Although there is much to learn from other contexts, we often do it as if our own tradition is bereft of mission histories, experiences and possibilities. We seem to be creating a duality between being Presbyterian and being mission-focussed. Tensions are named in the book, and owned, and lead to further thoughtful engagement.

The Bishop of Chester, Peter Forster, told me the major practical issue was resourcing. No head-in-the-sand traditionalist, he nevertheless felt that enhancing the parochial model reaching every corner of England and letting development happen more gradually was a more effective strategy than investing in a “mixed economy” eating up sparse resources in high-risk efforts.

So the matter is not straightforward.

I commend the book to all wanting to consider ways of engaging our changing communities, thinking theologically as we do so.



SAINT KENTIGERN SCHOOL

CHAPLAIN

Saint Kentigern School is an Independent Presbyterian School for boys aged 5 – 12 (years 1 – 8) in Shore Road, Remuera, Auckland. Since 2001 the School has had its own fulltime Chaplain. The Saint Kentigern Trust Board is seeking a suitably qualified person to take up this role from mid-January 2006. Strengths needed:

- Teaching experience or aptitude (registration preferred)
- Enthusiasm and skill for faith brokerage, and leading relevant worship (tertiary theological qualification an advantage)
- Willingness to engage with school community through interest and involvement in co-curricular programme
- Interpersonal and communication skills, especially in relation to pastoral counselling
- Understanding of the Presbyterian heritage

The Trust Board believes the Saint Kentigern School Chaplaincy is a unique opportunity for innovative Christian mission to boys, families and staff, and invites expressions of interest. Information pack and application form available from:

The Principal, Geoff Burgess,
PO Box 28 790 Remuera, Auckland
Phone 09 520 7682 Fax 09 520 7699

Email admin@sks.school.nz

Website: www.saintkentigern.com

Applications close 4pm 1 July 2005.

Hawera Presbyterian Parish

is seeking applications from a

Spirit-led, evangelical minister

to lead us.

Our mission is:

“To glorify God and enjoy Him forever!”

and we see ourselves as

“Bible based, Family focussed, Mission minded.”

If you feel that God may be calling you in this direction, contact the Nominator, Rev John Mattock, Phone 06 7628863, by 30 June for further details.