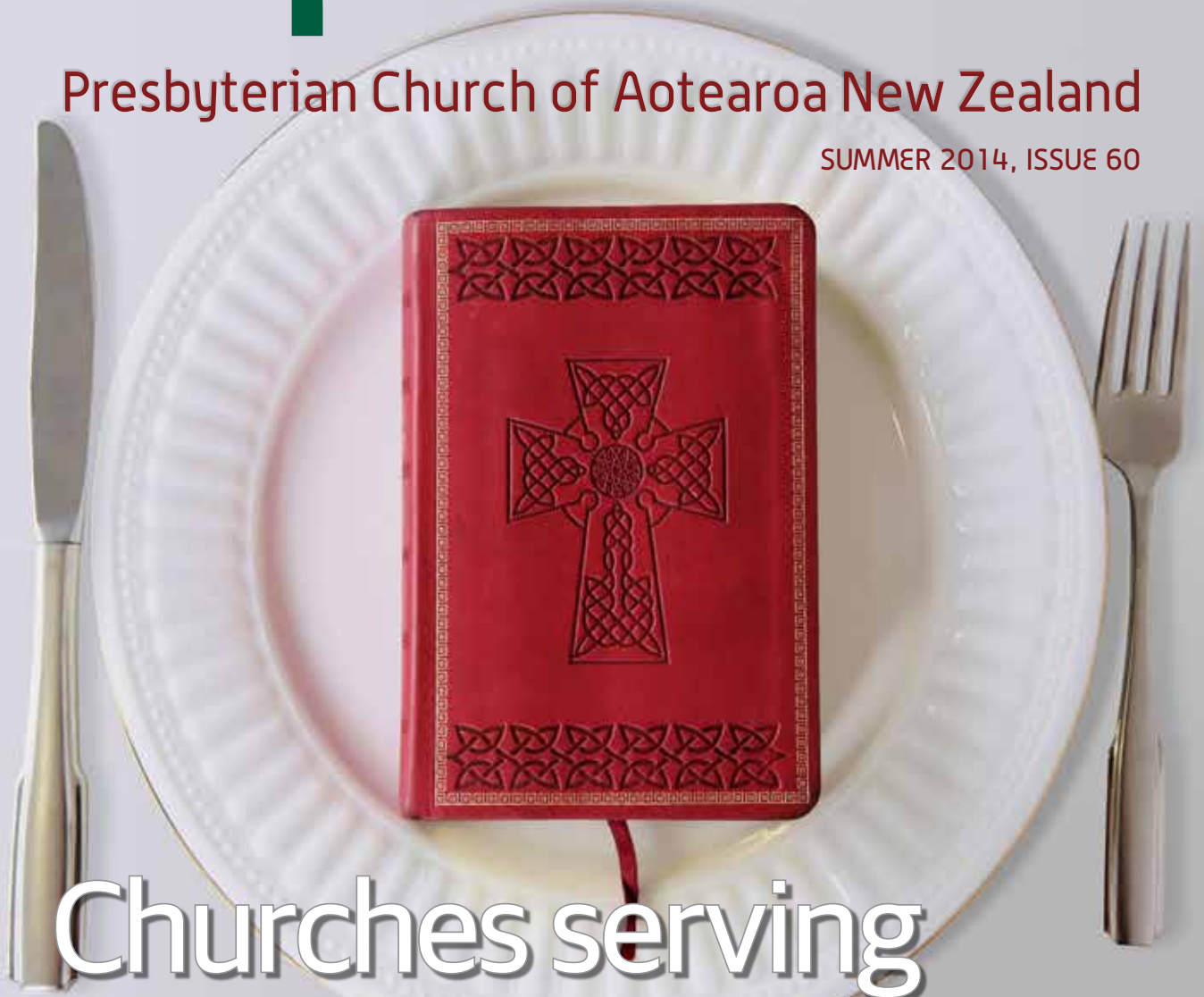


# Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

SUMMER 2014, ISSUE 60



Churches serving  
their community

Plus...

General Assembly 2014

[www.presbyterian.org.nz](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz)

## COMMENT: PETER BRISTOW

# See, I made a place for you

**“Wow, what’s happened to the church? I love how it’s so Asian!” Barb exclaimed having returned to our church from five years in the mission field. These are the changes she saw: People of varying Asian origins at morning worship, mixing with white-middle-class North Shore Kiwis.**

As the congregation slowly gathered, it was obviously culturally very diverse. Greeting people as they arrived was a youth leader of Indonesian background, and a young Malaysian woman. The worship team has Samoan, Korean and Chinese singers, an Indonesian guitarist, a white middle-aged pianist, all led by a music leader of Irish origins. This is Forrest Hill Presbyterian Church in the 21st Century.

How did this happen and what are the values that have driven this change?

Out of a common ‘church catastrophe’ came a sense of mission that changed us forever - and for the good. Our neighbourhood changed. We noticed our new Asian neighbours were struggling with language and customs, and in this we saw our mission staring us in the face. Out of this mission arose values that have grown within us and guided us:

**Hospitality:** Is offered both informally and programmatically. People have become great at inviting one another to dinner, quite deliberately across cultural fences. Preparing for our church events means making sure people of different cultures are invited and included.

**Helping:** Encouraging our new members in conversational English is a part of an exercise – conversation is an often disregarded spiritual gift. This leads us to our programme called SpeakEzy where people from many language groups interact. Staffed by Forrest Hill volunteers, this programme often leads people to try both worship and social events. We have found personal invitations to join in to be a very important part of this.

**Proclaiming:** Or sharing the good news requires some thought as to language, use of images and delivery. Not just in preaching but also in home groups. People

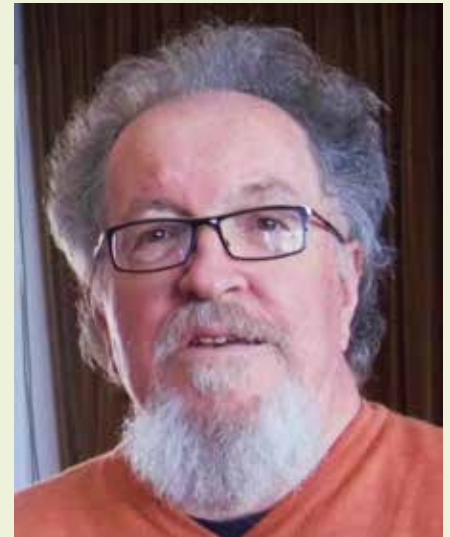
feel welcomed if they are able to follow and contribute to the conversation. We also have a group who before the service study a Korean translation of sermon notes, this is apparently very helpful.

**Inviting:** I have discovered that our Korean people do this naturally. “Come and try worshipping with this bunch of friendly Kiwis – they are really loving and patient with us,” they say. The rest of us are catching up, but as yet it is a more aspirational value. The importance of inviting in an intentional way is important for our Mainly Music and CAP Money programmes as we deliberately include and make room for Asian cultures.

**Including:** After a few years of this wonderful cultural richness we realised we had no one to talk to about cultural issues at either managers or Session, so we went looking for people from our growing Asian membership to take leading roles. We found that the democratic way did not always work. Listening for who it is that is respected was a better key. Now we have elders and managers, musicians and worship leaders, youth leaders, welcomers and hosts from all of our widely varying cultures.

Theologically we are inspired by Isaiah’s vision of people coming from all points of the compass and by Pauline passages about unity in the diversity of gifts – applied to cultures. And as a culturally diverse community, we have chosen not to provide language-based services. We have rejected both the Homogeneous Unit Principle and assimilation as inconsistent with the Gospel and much of the Bible. Rather, we see and celebrate that Jesus crossed cultural boundaries to reach others with his story.

And now, 11 years along our journey, we regularly see Asian people make up 40 per cent of our worshipping congregation. When I tried greeting our congregation in their own languages I spoke English, Maori, Samoan, Cook Island Maori, Tongan, Korean, Mandarin, Indonesian, Gujurati, Filipino, Gaelic, Basque and Afrikaans!



Peter Bristow

“Out of a common ‘church catastrophe’ came a sense of mission that changed us forever – and for the good.”

*In September 2014 the Rev Peter Bristow, senior minister at Forrest Hill Presbyterian Church, presented at the ‘Migration, Cultural Diversity and the Church’ conference held at Carey Baptist College, Auckland.*

# Spanz

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## MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

The Right Rev Andrew Norton contributes a regular column to *Spanz*



## What kind of God?

**You know you are getting older when you realise you are asking different kinds of questions than you were a few years ago. Once I asked questions of belief in God. Now I find that belief in God comes more easily but I find myself asking, "What kind of God is it I believe in?"**

"What kind of God?" is a personal reflection on my journey of faith. It is a conversation I have with myself about that journey. I offer it not as a statement but in a poetic way to pose questions about the kind of God we believe in. For the kind of God we believe in will ultimately shape how we see and the way we live in the world.

### What kind of God?

*I don't believe in your god.*

*The kind of God I'm looking for is not found in your eyes,  
nor felt by the touch of your hand.*

*Your god lives in a house,  
my God soars with the eagle and dances on mountain tops.*

*Your god plays by the rules,  
my God is wild; untameable by the laws of nature and the words of man.*

*Your god is heard through the noise of many words,  
my God is a wind whisper.*

*Your god has locks and keys,  
my God is foolish in love and extravagant in grace.*

*Your god judges sinners,  
my God gets angry with the righteous who are filled with their rightness.*

*Your god seeks power,  
my God serves at tables and cleans up after my mess.*

*Your god watches,  
my God watches and weeps.*

*Your god goes to church only on Sundays,  
my God goes to work six days and on the seventh recreates.*

*You pray to your god to change the world,  
I pray that God may change me.*

*I'm pleased I don't believe in your god because if I did I would see the world through your eyes.*

The name of God is too easily thrown around these days. We run the danger of becoming the namer of God rather than those who are named by God.

Listen very carefully to the echo of the centuries as God breaks into our world this Christmas. By what name does God come?

Emmanuel; God with us.

Jesus; God saves.

Prince of Peace.

That's the kind of God I could believe in and who believes in me.

Grace and Peace to you

Andrew



# Meal for Veterans strengthens New Zealand-Korean bonds



Veterans enjoyed a sumptuous meal prepared by the congregation of the Korean Presbyterian Church in Henderson.

**Forty Korean War veterans were thanked at a special lunch hosted by the Korean Presbyterian Church in Henderson, Auckland, on 21 June this year.**

The veterans, aged in their 80s and 90s, enjoyed a sumptuous meal organised by the church's congregation, followed by brief speeches from dignitaries and musical entertainment.

The mid-winter lunch was timed to coincide with the anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June 1950. It is the fourth annual function the church has hosted in honour of the veterans.

"For Koreans, the Korean War means more than World War 1 or World War 2," says Jae Ahn, church member and organiser of the event.

"The main purpose of this occasion was to recognise the courageous role of New Zealanders in helping secure peace on the Korean Peninsula," says Jae, who is also a member of the New Zealand Korean Veterans Association (NZKVA). "Their involvement continues to be highly valued by Koreans here and in the Republic of Korea."

New Zealand was one of the first of 16 nations to respond to the United Nations Security Council's call for combat assistance when war broke out. Some 4,700 New Zealanders served as part of Kayforce, offering artillery, transport and support elements under United Nations

command. Of those, 33 New Zealanders died on active service, 79 were wounded, and one was taken prisoner before the armistice of 27 July 1953 came into effect. A limited force stayed on in Korea until July 1957.

Jim Newman QSM was 17 when he joined Kayforce in 1951. The newly appointed Vice-President of the International Federation of Korean War Veterans Association (and recently retired president of the NZKVA) gave a brief but punchy account of his time guarding the western seaboard of the Korean Peninsula, carrying out shore raids in the northern part of Korea, and destroying a power station up the Yalu River.

"For a young lad of 17 it was a bit of an eye opener. But it was an experience never likely to be forgotten," says Jim, who recently visited Seoul to present a new constitution to the international federation. It was his sixth visit to Korea since the war.

His talk was one of the highlights of the occasion, says the Rev Kyoung Gyun Han, the Presbyterian Church's Asian Mission and Ministries Coordinator on secondment from the Presbyterian Church of Korea.

Although too young to have been alive at the time of the war, he spent three years from 1996 to 1999 on the border between South and North Korea as a chaplain in the Korean army.

"That experience gave me an understanding of the environment those New Zealanders fought in," he says.

"Listening to the testimonies of the New Zealand veterans at the lunch – most of whom were only in their teens and early 20s at the time – and the courage they showed, was very touching."

He credits the role of the New Zealanders in the war for the subsequent establishment of diplomatic relations between New Zealand and the Republic of Korea in 1962, within a decade of the armistice. Koreans have not forgotten the significant agricultural and technological help New Zealand gave to the Korean people following the war, helping them rebuild their devastated country.

"The Korean people and church members very much honour and value the sacrifices of those who fought during the civil war and the contributions New Zealanders made following it," says Kyoung.

"The New Zealand-Korean relationship continues to strengthen," he says. "And this year is very special as it marks 30 years since the first Presbyterian Korean Church opened in New Zealand in Brooklyn, Wellington. The Auckland church opened four years later. Today about 90 percent of New Zealand's more than 30,000 Korean migrants are Christians and many of them belong to Korean Presbyterian churches."

Joan Begg [Spanz](#)



At Christmas time Whakatane Presbyterian provides children of prisoners with a traditional Christmas meal prepared by members of the congregation.

## Church cooks special Christmas meal for children of prisoners

**Last year, the Whakatane Presbyterian Parish held a Christmas meal for the children of local prisoners. It was a huge success, and they plan to make it an annual event**

The community meal for the children was the brainchild of the Rev Chris Barnard. The idea came about following conversations with a congregation member who is involved in Prison Fellowship New Zealand, an organisation that aims to equip both faith and wider communities to support prisoners, their children and their families. Chris asked him if there was anything the Church could do for the children of prisoners.

“We started off by doing an Angel Tree,” says Chris. “This is where the prisoners are given slips of paper on which they write their child’s name, age, and the type of gift they’d like. Then anyone who wants to buy a gift to that value in the name of the parent can do so. Someone from our congregation delivered the gifts to the families’ homes. However, while it was lovely for the children to receive these gifts it didn’t allow for a connection with them. And that’s how the idea for a Christmas meal came about.”

Chris had been saddened to hear that many children of prisoners don’t get a sit-down Christmas meal at home under normal circumstances. The Prison Fellowship, knowing this, had already organised Christmas meal events for prisoners’ children in Wellington and Auckland, so the Whakatane Presbyterian Parish took what had been done there and adapted it to suit their local community. They got the names and addresses of the prisoners’ families from the Fellowship and sent them a very private and special invitation.

The turnout for the event last year was impressive, 90 children, caregivers and helpers flocked to Knox Church hall. Thanks to

donations from the parishioners and the local community the children enjoyed a clown, presents and games, as well as a lovely traditional Christmas meal lovingly prepared by members of the congregation and people in the wider community. The congregation decorated the hall beautifully for the event and the children and caregivers were overwhelmed at what they saw when they walked in.

“They kept saying, ‘Did you do this for us especially?’”, recalls Chris. “They were so touched by the gesture, which was great as we were a bit worried that it could be a bit too much for some of the children and that it might scare them. But they loved it and the caregivers all said ‘Please invite us again next year even if our partners are out of prison by then!’ So of course we have.”

With another list to come from the Prison Fellowship for this year’s event and all the past participants to invite too, the Church is gearing up for an even bigger turnout this time round. Donations are coming in thick and fast. Parishioner Reinette Kok of Coastal Computers has raised \$1,100 toward the event by raffling a television that her business had won from a supplier. Other local businesses and residents have been involved too, donating raffle prizes to the good cause.

“The first Christmas meal event last year turned out to be a huge success,” says Reinette. “This year we want to make it even bigger, better and more memorable.”

One of the biggest benefits of the event for the prisoners’ families and the Whakatane Presbyterian congregation is the chance to make connections and meet new people from the community.

“It enables people who would otherwise be marginalised to connect with others,” says Chris. “The children of prisoners shouldn’t be treated as if they’ve done something wrong, as of course they haven’t and they can’t help their circumstances. The sad fact is that many children of prisoners do grow up to be perpetrators themselves, and there is currently a big drive to show them that it doesn’t have to be that way. The Christmas meal event is a part of this. Our congregation enjoys connecting with these children and families they’d never normally get to meet. So it’s a great event for them too.”

Kate Davidson [Spanz](#)





**THE  
HUB**

feeding  
body  
& soul

Working hard in The Hub kitchen preparing food for hungry workers are Riversdale/Waikaitia Presbyterian Church home group members (back from left) Aubrey Weir, Brett Harniss, (front from left) Gwen Grimm, Heather Gullick and Pip Gardyne. (Photo: The Ensign/Sandy Eggleston)

**Each calving and lambing season The Hub in Riversdale provides home-cooked meals for local farm workers.**

The Hub, part of the Riversdale/Waikaitia Presbyterian Church and administered by the Waimea Christian Trust, is a centre for activities including discipleship courses and youth work. Around 10 years ago, under the leadership of parishioners Linda Waples and Murray Shallard, The Hub started providing meals. Each Tuesday through the calving and lambing season up to 80 workers can come on a Tuesday night for a welcome hot dinner. The parish's home groups take turns to make the meals on rotation over eight to 10 weeks.

"There's lots of dairying in our area and it seemed a nice idea to give the workers some good Kiwi tucker free of charge," says the Rev John Gullick. "The meals are substantial and there's usually dessert too. Initially take-up was fairly limited, with 15 to 30 people turning up. But in recent years it has been more like 50 to 80."

The farm workers are a very international group, including people from the Philippines, Argentina, Switzerland, Germany, South Africa, and of course New Zealand. "Everyone merges and mingles and it's very social," says John. "They make connections. It's good fellowship. Last year we started running the Alpha Course alongside the meals. The take-up was small but it's certainly something we're looking at developing in future."

"The events are definitely not overtly religious, but we do make connections," he adds. "For example one German girl came along and enjoyed the strong youth culture we have. She then became a Christian and is now part of our youth group. It just happened naturally."

Recently, The Hub celebrated its 40th birthday. It was established in 1974 as a youth centre where young people would gather for worship, prayer, Bible study and fellowship. Over the years it has been the venue for many events, seminars and services, including children's holiday programmes and providing relief accommodation for the

town and for visiting fishermen. When John came to the parish in 1988 the number of young people attending The Hub had diminished, but currently there is a revival among the senior youth in Riversdale with people coming from quite some distance to attend.

The 40th anniversary was marked with a pot luck dinner. "It was a great event," says John. "Lots of younger and older people attended, a real range. There were about 80 in total. It was a good mix of cultures, and the founders of The Hub attended too. I think they were really moved by what's happening here now and the huge life changes we see on our discipleship training courses. For example, one very troubled girl did the course four or five years ago, and has gone on to be a top forensic law student. She turned her life around so dramatically. The courses really do change lives."

The Hub's 3D Mission discipleship training school has been highly successful since its inception in 2009. The courses now run in Tonga as well as Riversdale, and there's a possibility of a school opening in Australia too. Recently a second course has been added at Riversdale with a focus on local outreach.

"When 3D Mission started there were eight students and one leader and The Hub was used for the lecture phase where all the core subjects of the Christian faith are taught, albeit briefly," recalls John. "At the end of this phase the team travelled to Tonga where what was learnt in the classroom was put into practice. They were able to teach in schools, care for the poorer people and also do radio, television and prison programmes."

Thanks to the great success of the courses the team staffing 3D has grown dramatically. John is still the director and Foliaki Taufa took up the position of deputy director about three years ago. There is also an administrator and several other programme workers and leaders.

"There's such a good team at The Hub," says John. "It's much more than just a building. After 40 years we're as busy as ever and we look set to continue our ministry well into the future."

Kate Davidson [Spanz](#)

# Hastings church's multicultural ministry of mutual respect



**It's not unheard of to hear the Gospel read in five different languages on any given Sunday at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Hastings.**

At the height of the horticulture season ni-Van, Tokelauan, Tuvaluan, Cook Islanders and Pakeha New Zealanders all gather to worship at the Hawke's Bay church.

But despite this obvious embracing of multiculturalism it is actually the special bond between the church's Cook Islands and European congregations which makes St Andrew's that extra bit special.

The Rev Adrian Skelton explains that when Cook Islanders began arriving to work in the Hawke's Bay in the 1950s and 60s they began to congregate at St Andrew's and simply stayed on.

"I think very early on decided they didn't want to have a separate Cook Islands church. They wanted to be part of the Presbyterian parish and they came in numbers. So a sizable part of St Andrew's has been Cook Island from quite an early time," he says.

Unlike some migrant groups the Cook Islanders didn't meet at private homes and save to build their own church. Instead they cemented their relationship with St Andrew's quite literally when they played a significant role in the building of its new church.

"They not only helped fundraise but gave great practical help. There was a builder among them and they basically did the block work for the current St Andrew's Church," says Adrian Skelton.

The church celebrates a distinct Cook Islands service at midday to help preserve the language and allow their

The multicultural congregation of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church Hastings, Hawke's Bay.

congregation the opportunity to practise their distinctive Reo Metua singing. St Andrew's Cook Islands members are however fully integrated into the leadership of the wider church and Cook Island elders were ordained into the church from early on. Today the parish council includes six Cook Islands members and the church has a Cook Islands secretary.

Current secretary Tarani Ioane says a mutual respect exists between the two groups and the shared governance works for each of the communities.

"It's special because we are allowed to do our own thing. We do our own service in Cook Islands language and then, once in a while, we have a combined service where it is part English and part Cook Islands."

The Rev Skelton for one would like to see even more combined services, especially considering the fact that the European congregation is ageing in comparison to its Cook Islands counterpart.

"I'd try and push integration as far as possible. The separate service to protect the language you respect, but I wonder if a more integrated service more regularly might be the way forward. Of course you wouldn't push that to the extent that anyone felt their culture was being squashed or diluted."

The Rev Skelton says the arc of history has shown the benefit of a genuine cross-cultural approach at St Andrew's and the Cook Islands congregation has stayed loyal despite approaches from newer churches which have moved into the area.

"There are friendships across the ethnic boundary that are quite profound. It's a constant factor of life here."

Also in the mix at St Andrew's are a Tokelauan and Tuvaluan congregation who rent the church for a 3pm service, and a ni-Van group which chooses to worship alongside the main European congregation at 10am.

"They come to the English service which really pleases me," says Rev Skelton.

While the Cook Island Maori and main European congregation come together five or six times a year, all three services are combined from time to time in one multicultural melting pot.

"It is exactly how the church should be. The church at its ideal best is a slice of society – all ages and whatever racial background you have in the area – and Hastings does have that range of ethnic groups if not in great numbers," says the Rev Skelton.

It's a point picked up by Mrs Ioane who says the experience becomes a celebration of their shared faith and also an opportunity to appreciate their differences too.

"It's an awesome feeling to be all together worshipping one God, the whole of his people worshipping together and being united together. It's a very good feeling to be united in one church and to have that difference in the music, because we do have our own music and languages and then we can all sing in English."

Robin Martin [Spanz](#)



# SPLICE

## building community in central Auckland

**The first thing you notice when talking to chaplain-at-large, the Rev John McDonald and the rest of the Splice team is the excitement they have for their work.**

Phrases like “meeting people where they’re at”, “connecting” and “building community” crop up regularly as they describe what Splice is about, and what they are trying to achieve.

Splice came about in 2013 as a result of two inner city church communities – Aotea Methodist Chapel and St James Presbyterian – deciding to re-focus their mission in Auckland’s central business district. They appointed John as chaplain-at-large with a brief to show leadership and direction in serving the needs of inner city Auckland.

“Splice seeks to work with the wide range of people that use this area or call it home – local residents, students, street workers, artists, homeless, city workers, the 200-odd different nationalities that are present just in the city centre,” explains John.

With around 30,000 residents, maybe 60,000 students, 90,000 workers, and some 5,000 visitors every day, Auckland’s city centre is a diverse area full of contrast including some of New Zealand’s most affluent citizens as well as some of the poorest.

Because of the suspicion it generates among the unchurched people with whom they work, John, Laura Giddey and Charlotte Billing – the current Splice team – shy away from describing Splice using traditional labels like “ministry”. But Christian virtues underpin and are at the heart of everything they do, explains John.

“We must look for connections that enable a new expression of mission in the city and find a language that works for all our people. The challenge is to communicate through words and actions.”



The Rev John McDonald along with 100 people participated in the Lifewise Big Sleepout to raise awareness and funds for youth with homelessness. (Photo: Zoran McLaren / Zoran Studio)

“Investing in relationships is important to build bridges that get over the initial suspicion of giving something for nothing,” explains Laura. “As our networks grow, this gets easier.”

Cultivating relationships and giving people an occasion to meet those around them is one of the things Splice does to help achieve its vision “to nourish courage, compassion and community in downtown Auckland City”.

In the last 12 months, Splice has hosted, been part of or facilitated BBQs in the park, street entertainment workshops, poetry reading events, yoga sessions, sewing classes, and the theatre production “Whore” which was a collection of stories about street sex workers in Auckland.

In early July, John, along with 100 or so others, was made “homeless” to raise awareness and funds for Auckland’s young homeless population at the annual Lifewise Big Sleep Out. Progressing social justice is one of the three focus areas for Splice.

Exploring identity is another area of focus. John, Laura and Charlotte practice radical and generous hospitality “where everyone is welcome at our table”.

“We’re inviting people from across inner city Auckland to engage in an adventure of unravelling who we each are and developing relationships that join people, groups, organisation and networks together in action,” explains John.

Developing relationships is the third area of focus. The Splice team isn’t out there doing it on their own – a deliberate part of their strategy is working alongside others and building leadership capacity so that

Splice isn’t reliant on the presence of a single person for its success.

Auckland Council, Lifewise, the Police, New Zealand Prostitutes Collective, all partner with Splice in one way or another.

Auckland Council has recognised Splice as a community development agency, and has supported their work with the use of council facilities, council staff and funding for projects.

Among the most recent activities funded by the Council are a mobile community BBQ, pop-up poetry events, street performance workshops and craft workshops.

Sewing in the city is an initiative where second-hand clothing is collected and members of the community gather to repurpose it into other items. The Council has funded this project as well.

Splice’s success has been the result of much hard work and patience. John was appointed in February 2013 and spent the first twelve months simply watching, looking and listening so that he could get a feel for and understand the heart of the city.

Rather than the traditional induction into his chaplain-at-large role, John instead opted for a céilidh (a Gaelic social gathering). Around 200 guests attended including local poets, street musicians, storytellers and church folk as St James and Aotea Chapel introduced John to the broader community.

Community engagement has been a hallmark of Splice since John’s appointment, and continues to be the standard by which Splice measures its success.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)



# Churches raising hope in rural Taranaki

**In Opunake an ambitious joint venture with Knox Church Waitara is attempting to answer the question: can a church be regenerated by raising up an effective Christ-centred Children, Youth and Families ministry?**

It all started with a holiday club. Three years ago Jennie McCullough, Children, Youth and Families coordinator at Knox Church, headed to Opunake with a teenage team keen for a rural mission. The holiday club they set up went really well. Jennie says, "The parents were thankful and the children were excited. We were asked to come again and, of course, we said yes."

The next year the team set up a treasure hunt for the children around the town and the beach. "We got talking to people in the town," says Jennie. "The shopkeepers said how great it all was and that the kids and teens in Opunake need something like that more regularly. The youth are roaming the streets with nothing to do."

This got Jennie thinking. She and a colleague approached Ann Smith from Opunake Co-operating Church. Ann explained that the church congregation is mainly elderly. They have the love for God but not the energy or the knowhow to reach children and young people in today's culture.

So Jennie wrote up a plan for a year-long project to begin to regenerate the church and presented it to Anne and the elders. Part of this plan was to take on Hamish McDonald who had been an intern at Knox Church, and was now looking for more experience and time to grow.

"The Church said they'd like to take Hamish on," says Jennie. "They took a step of faith and the people were really excited about it."

At the start of the year Jennie and her colleagues talked to parents, social services, the Police and shop owners. "The Church was, of course, keen for local people to come to church," says Jennie, "but you have to be realistic and start somewhere, remembering that most of the parents have never been to church themselves."



In April children enjoyed a holiday camp at Opunake run by a team from Waitara and Opunake churches.

Hamish started to set up the protocols and Police checks and establish a team in Opunake. A team from Waitara headed to Opunake in the first term of the project to set the scene. Hamish did a profile on the church and the community and the holiday club returned and found a young person from Opunake to help.

The team is now a mix from Waitara and Opunake. This term it has set up an after-school programme. "We tried to set up an evening youth group but that hasn't eventuated yet," says Jennie. "It takes time to reach high school youth and build trust so it's probably best to start with the intermediate age. We're discovering important things like this along the way."

There are now 20 children attending the after-school programme each week and four people on hospitality and providing tasty food. "We're still looking and praying for people to lead from the Opunake community," Jennie says. "We're running another holiday programme with two young people from Opunake joining our team and we'll be holding a family service in the holidays too. We're testing the water."

Jennie says there are a number of achievements she'd like to see by the end of the year including an effective children's ministry with more connections between the church and the community, a youth

group up and running and people from the district getting involved and being open to the Gospel message. Long term she looks forward to the opportunity to hand over to local people who can lead this community mission.

"It's very ambitious. But God has already opened doors with people we can talk to which is a start," says Jennie. "The day before the last holiday club started we only had 12 children registered and we were feeling downhearted. But I opened The Word to see Zechariah 4:10: 'Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin, to see the plumb line in Zerubbabel's hand.' It was a word from God. The next day 30 children turned up and the day after that there were 40! I believe we're ploughing the land and sowing the seed."

Kate Davidson Spanz

# Malcolm Gordon in tune with Family Works

*“Am I so invisible that my tears can’t catch your eye?*

*Am I so unlovable that no one out there hears my cry?”*

Written by talented musician, Rev Malcolm Gordon, the song “Hey Stranger” captivates with a call to action from an anonymous child who is struggling with the pain family violence brings. The song is part of the album “The Cobbler’s Grandson” and was also used as the soundtrack for Family Works’ Guardian Angel promotion.

Family Works – a service of Presbyterian Support – is committed to assisting family groups to work together as a whole. “Rather than pulling the child out of the family, Family Works is about helping the family to work well together. It’s about the fence at the top of the hill, rather than the ambulance at the bottom of the mountain,” says Malcolm.

As a father himself, he put a lot of thought and contemplation into the formation of the song. “I think the lyrics really address that habit we have of minding our own business. Although we would like to think the best of people, sometimes these people are involved in situations that are incredibly harmful and we need to reach out rather than close our eyes.”

Since it was released in October, the album has managed to make it to the Top 10 of the New Zealand Album charts and, in only the first week of being on sale, raised \$1,000 for Family Works. “It’s very encouraging, for a small-time musician, to see yourself on the charts next to names like Shihad and The Datsuns. These people have massive media machines behind them and it’s great to see that even after only a week or two, you are footing it with the big guys.”

Five dollars from every copy of the album goes to support Family Works, and Malcolm says it is not just the money raised that makes this album special.



The Rev Malcolm Gordon with children from Glen Innes Primary School, Auckland, who sang on his song “Hey Stranger”. (Photo: Wayne Martin, Howick and Pakuranga Times)

“There are a number of ways to raise awareness and sometimes what drives us emotionally can be the best motivational tool.”

Malcolm feels particularly privileged to have his single utilised as part of the Family Works programme and he believes it is important that each song in the album gives people in vulnerable places a message of hope. Although he is known for writing songs of worship, he wanted the songs on this album to resonate with everyone, no matter what their faith. “This is a strong message Family Works is trying to convey – we need the support of everyone in the community.”

An ordained minister since 2008, Malcolm has lived in Katikati, Dunedin and Tauranga where he was the music director at St Peter’s in the City. This year he moved to Auckland to become the Presbyterian Church’s national Music and Arts Enabler, encouraging creative people to use their gifts in ways that benefit the church.

Apart from writing and singing each of the album’s songs, Malcolm was also involved in the filming of the video “Hey Stranger” which has become part of Family Works’ promotional campaign

televised throughout the country. The clip can be viewed on [onevoice.org.nz](http://onevoice.org.nz) and YouTube. It features children from Glen Innes Primary School, some of whom have experienced family violence personally. “It was humbling to chat with these young people and they couldn’t wipe the smiles off of their faces when they finally got to see the finished product.”

Every hour of every day young children become victims of family violence in New Zealand. Our country’s statistics make shocking reading. Family Works Guardian Angels can help make a difference. A contribution of \$30 or more each month can help families access much needed support. Donations can be made of any amount.

Family Works provides a range of services including family counselling, fun and play for young people to work through the pain they are struggling with, parenting programmes to teach parents new skills and counselling for families as well as emergency food parcels and budgeting support.

To find out more about Guardian Angel, visit [www.angel.org.nz](http://www.angel.org.nz). To download the album, visit <http://malcolmgordon.bandcamp.com>.

Lucy Mullinger 



# Churches declare *Love* IS NOT VIOLENT

**Working with Presbyterian Support Northern, six Presbyterian churches in the upper North Island are set to support the White Ribbon campaign against family violence.**

White Ribbon is a national movement to raise awareness of and help prevent family violence. The campaign particularly centres on men and encourages them to pledge never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence towards women.

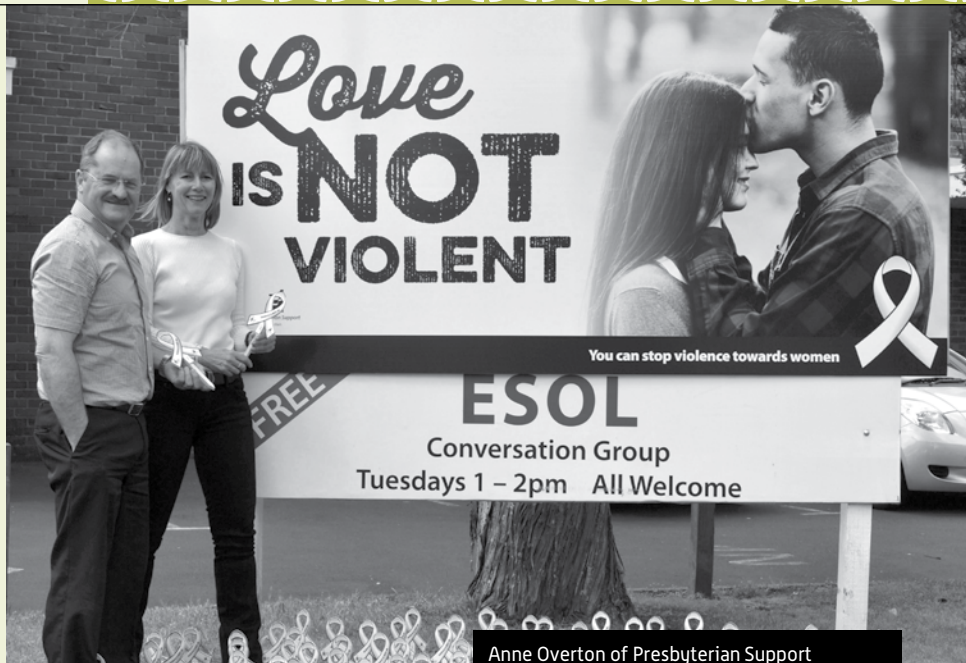
The congregations involved will plant hundreds of white ribbons on sticks in their grounds. They aim to “put a stake in the ground” in the lead up to White Ribbon Day, 25 November. Presbyterian Support Northern have supplied posters and flyers to invite local people to plant a stake, and billboards proclaiming ‘Love is not violent’.

Ministers say their congregations are getting involved because of the relevance of the message to their communities.

“Around here there is a history of family violence, often across generations”, says the Rev Howard Cross from Kaitaia’s Hope Christian Centre.

“People often don’t know how to respond, but doing nothing isn’t an option. Making a stand for White Ribbon is one way we can voice our opposition to family violence.

“Because of the high levels of family violence here, there is a drive in the local community to raise awareness and do something about it. For planting the ribbons – our Church fronts onto the main street. It will create a focal point for the community.”



Anne Overton of Presbyterian Support Northern and the Rev Ben Dykman outside Greenlane Presbyterian Church. The church wants to send a clear signal of its opposition to domestic abuse.

The Rev Simon McLeay from St Peter’s Presbyterian, Tauranga and The Lighthouse, Welcome Bay speaks of heartbreak at the heart of the congregation.

“One reason we’re involved is that one of our ladies was murdered in a family violence incident. She was a parishioner, and her second husband was the perpetrator. She was a very much loved member of the congregation. It was a tragedy, and it highlighted the issue for us.

“We’ll be doing special services at The Lighthouse on 23 November and at St Peter’s on 30 November. St Peter’s has a big public front lawn where we’ll plant the ribbons. The Lighthouse also has a big green area and two of our elders are organising a mail drop of flyers to invite local residents to plant a ribbon.”

The Rev Glynn Cardy, minister at Community of Saint Luke in Remuera, identified the campaign as reflecting some of the principles at the heart of the congregation’s identity.

“St Luke’s promotes wellbeing, cooperation and community as key values. Violence and abuse are something we want to take a stand against. And we also offer healing to those who are violated and abused. We’ve been a centre of counselling for a long time and we run courses connected with wellbeing, nurturing and restorative justice.

“We’re keen to communicate to the community that this is a place of healing and to stand up against violence. We’ll be placing a large white corflute ribbon on the church tower, and we’ll make the small ribbons available inside the

church for people to plant in the grounds. We’re happy for members of the public to join in.”

The Rev Ben Dykman says Greenlane Presbyterian Church also wants to send a clear signal of its opposition to domestic abuse. “We want to make a clear stand against all forms of family violence. We believe this endemic problem has been ignored for too long. I have heard from members of our Police force that a large percentage of their time is taken up with domestic violence. This is a sad reality that, if allowed to continue, will seed itself in the lives of children who will in turn perpetuate the cycle of violence. We believe the home should be a sanctuary where the love of Jesus Christ is lived out, not a battle ground.”

And the Rev Chris Barnard in Whakatane says his congregation knows it has no choice but to take a stand. “We acknowledge the high rate of violence in our area and have realised we can’t just be bystanders to what is not right in our community. We want to make a positive difference in the lives of those who are disabled, marginalised or disenfranchised by family violence.

“Jesus paid particular attention to those who are hurting, abused and broken by life events beyond their circumstances, and he calls on us to do the same. We want to be part of turning Whakatane and our neighbourhood into fun, friendly and safe places to be.”

Kate Davidson [Spanz](#)



The business hall was packed during the opening of General Assembly on Saturday 4 October.



A huge wooden 'LOVE' artwork, supplied by the Moderator, greeted commissioners outside the business hall.

# General Assembly 2014 – our Spacious Church

**The General Assembly Assembly Week 2014 was held over five days in early October at Saint Kentigern College, Pakuranga, Auckland. The Assembly Week was designed to be far more than just a business meeting. It was envisaged as a time for church leaders to focus on resourcing and inspiring the Church during a time of change and opportunity.**

## Past, present, future leaders

In his inaugural sermon, the newly installed Moderator, the Right Rev Andrew Norton, offered the Assembly a vision of a spacious church.

Andrew spoke of a church with a spacious heart, freed from self-service, giving itself cheerfully and generously. "Let our mission be measured not by the size of our church but by the size of our heart inspired hospitality, kindness and compassion", he said.

He pictured a church that also had a spacious soul providing living water for a soul-starved community. "This church is Christ centred. It is not to be confused

with a social service agency, social club or pop concert."

It will have a spacious strength, able to achieve more than any of us ever think possible. The spacious church's commitment to love, he said, will move us beyond ourselves and into the world as agents of change, investing every ounce of our being and strength in that cause.

In his outgoing address Andrew's predecessor, the Very Rev Ray Coster, used a different image to affirm a similar reality, inviting the Assembly to live with the Resurrection mindset. "We are saints in God's eyes", he said. "If that truth could take root, the Church today would be unstoppable."

Ray told a packed Assembly hall that while parish is still the highest ministry, the Church has been overly focused on parish life. "For too long we have kept people busy in the parish setting instead of sending them out into the community and the marketplace," he said.

The Assembly elected the Rev Richard Dawson of Dunedin as Moderator-Designate. He will take up the role of Moderator at General Assembly 2016.

After eight years as Assembly Executive Secretary the Rev Martin Baker gave his final address to Assembly.

Martin's key message was the need to acknowledge our interdependence. "The Church stops being the Church when it stops being a saved and saving presence," he said.

The Assembly warmly welcomed former Council of Assembly Convenor, the Rev Wayne Matheson, as Martin's successor.

## Resourcing for Mission

The tone of the Assembly was set on Friday 3 October, before the official opening on Saturday, when staff from the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership led a ministers' training day focussed on resilience in ministry and transformational leadership. Ministers described the opportunity to get together and focus on issues for ministry as "encouraging", and "affirming". About 180 ministers gathered for refreshment, renewal and collegiality.

Moderator, the Right Rev Andrew Norton, had instituted the ministers' training day to provide ministers with the opportunity to work through issues in a collegial atmosphere.

## Assembly Week

On Monday 6 October Assembly commissioners had the opportunity to take a break from business and attend one of eleven mission workshops with a range of focuses including 200 years of Gospel in New Zealand, human trafficking and slavery, sticky faith and sermon preparation.

During Assembly the Inspiring Mission programme ran concurrently with business. Twenty-four workshops and three streams – Global Mission, Inspiring Offspring and the National Youth Conference – were offered. Assembly business concluded at 5 pm allowing everyone to attend the Inspiring evening programme of music, inspirational speakers and stories.

## Guests

Many of Assembly's international guests addressed the Assembly and





Moderator the Right Rev Andrew Norton and his wife Sue, centre, with 12 young people from around the developing world who are being hosted by the Church in New Zealand as part of the CWM Training in Mission programme.

participated in the Inspiring Mission programme by resourcing streams and workshops. Guests included Dr Deidre Palmer, Uniting Church South Australia Moderator; Rev Dr Victor Hsu, Associate General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan; Rev Kyung In Kim, Deputy General Secretary of the Council for World Mission; and the Rev Dr Min Heui Cheon of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea. From the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu Moderator Rev Ova Kalorongo, Mission Secretary and General Secretary designate Rev Allan Nafuki, and the Rev Jackson Talivo and wife Jenny.

## Decisions

Assembly provided potential relief for parishes confronted with significant costs to improve the standard of their buildings. It asked the Church Property Trustees to allow congregations to upgrade their buildings to 34 percent or similar of the New Building Standards rather than the current 67 percent.

The Assembly also supported a call to encourage the Trustees, along with congregations and church members, to consider divesting from fossil fuel investments. It declared investment in the fossil fuel industry to be unethical, socially irresponsible and contrary to the Church's stated mission - in particular care for creation.

A significant decision was taken to affirm that the richness of the Gospel can be found in sharing experience, wisdom and learning from many different cultures when the Assembly adopted a statement that affirmed the Church's commitment to being cross-cultural.

"The statement affirms all cultures" said Moderator the Right Rev Andrew Norton. "It recognises both the centrality of the Church's bicultural relationship through Te Aka Puaho and that we engage in mission cross-culturally. In affirming the Church to be cross-cultural the church is also affirming that the Christian Gospel creates community across cultures".

Assembly made some decisions providing significant structural support for mission including approving a new Mission Enterprise Fund (MEF). Ten percent of the net sale of property, unless exclusions apply, and 10 percent of the interest on PIF funds, if individual parishes agree, will be released to the MEF.

Eighty percent of these funds will be used to support presbytery-approved projects in conjunction with Press Go. The remaining 20 percent will support ministry among the vulnerable and socially disadvantaged, partnering with Te Aka Puaho in the first instance.

The Council of Assembly was asked to engage with partners including UCANZ and the Synod of Otago and Southland about the development of the MEF and its use by CVs and Union parishes.

The creation of two new presbyteries was approved by Assembly - Alpine and Central. They join the Kaimai, Northern and Southern presbyteries making a total of five geographically defined presbyteries and two synods (Te Aka Puaho and Pacific Islands Synod) with presbytery powers covering New Zealand.

Assembly further agreed that the Council of Assembly will now include one person

from each presbytery and synod. An Asian/multicultural representative will also be a full member, reflecting the journey towards becoming a fully multicultural Church.

From the next General Assembly commissioners will be selected on the basis of membership numbers in each presbytery, rather than the number of congregations. Under new regulations, a presbytery will commission one elder or minister for every 100 members, and will allocate the commissions across the congregations within their presbytery.

The Assembly agreed to a new rule, effective immediately, to be added to the Book of Order to make clear that "a minister may solemnize marriage only between a man and woman". The rule will be brought back to General Assembly 2016 for ratification under the special legislative procedure.

Supporters of the proposal believed the church requires clarity and direction on this matter and noted that the Church needed to make certain that its practice remains consistent with its beliefs.

Others argued that we must find a better way to discuss what is a complicated issue. The Rev Hamish Galloway ended his speech by laying down his voting cards and leaving the Assembly floor. Approximately 100 commissioners also abstained from voting by leaving the floor. Other speakers advocated for a spacious approach that would recognise the diversity of strongly held views within the Church.

Assembly agreed to launch an initiative to promote peace and called on congregations, church schools, and Presbyterian social service agencies



The Very Rev Ray Coster and the Rev Wayne Te Kaawa share the story of the new Korowai Tapu with Assembly. Behind Ray is the Golden Jubilee quilt Presbyterian Women presented to Assembly that will hang in the Church's Hewitson Library, Dunedin.



Six Kids Friendly young Leaders in Training shared a lunch with the Moderator the Right Rev Andrew Norton and Moderator of Te Aka Puaho, the Rev Wayne Te Kaawa. The children joined the Moderators at the head table for part of the afternoon business session.

to establish "Just Peace", a programme based on the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Call to Just Peace 2011.

Congregations were encouraged to become peace churches, to support the work of WCC, CWS, Peace Movement Aotearoa, the Peace Foundation and other peace initiatives.

*A full list of decisions made at Assembly as well as the texts of key sermons and speeches, video and photos are available on the Church website <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/about-us/general-assembly/ga14-assembly-week/ga14-take-home-information>*

### Alpine and Central presbyteries

At General Assembly a milestone was reached on the journey of Presbytery reformation with new Alpine and Central presbyteries confirmed.

The Church now has five, rather than 22 presbyteries. The restructure also sought to reform a culture that task group convenor the Very Rev Garry Marquand says was inward and factional.

"The core of the culture change has been to make Presbyteries more missional," he says. "How they achieved that was up to them. We said, 'The ball's in your court, make it work in your setting'."

Each Presbytery's structure reflects this degree of freedom. Alpine moderator the Rev David Coster chairs a council that meets monthly, under which sit two committees and a range of task groups. Central has chosen to restrict the role of regional moderator to providing pastoral and ceremonial ministry only, and appoint a convenor for business affairs.

Having a smaller number of decision-makers is working well.

"A council of 11 or 12 makes better decisions and can face up to hard issues," David says. "Where little parishes used to feel threatened at times, we have a broader perspective and are better able to act."

Central convenor the Rev Steve Jourdain says there is still some resistance to a smaller team of people making the business decisions, often electronically. The transition to less regular Presbytery meetings is taking time to adjust to. Developing clusters to continue relationships is the next challenge.

"It was most often the business of Presbytery that drew people together," Steve reflects. "Now, new missional and fellowship reasons for meeting need to be identified."

Both David and Steve see the changes as positive. "The presbyteries as they were functioning had major difficulties fulfilling their obligations," says David. "People were tired. New council members are elected and want to be there."

While there were fears of large geographical regions disadvantaging rural areas, larger numbers mean the presbyteries can do more. They are holding central gatherings twice yearly and workshops on a regular basis in geographical mid points, with a focus on creative ways of doing church and God's mission.

"People are embracing these bigger-picture gatherings, especially the lay leaders in our church," Steve says.

The task group that created the model is now disbanding but the need for oversight continues.

"They're still grappling with the transition into larger areas," says Garry. "The task now is to put in place a new process for monitoring the ongoing journey."

*Alpine Presbytery: former presbyteries of Nelson-Marlborough, Christchurch, Ashburton and South Canterbury, and the West Coast Uniting Church Council.*

*Presbytery Central: former presbyteries of Taranaki, Manawatu-Wanganui, Gisborne-Hawke's Bay, Wellington and the Wairarapa Presbytery and Union District Council.*

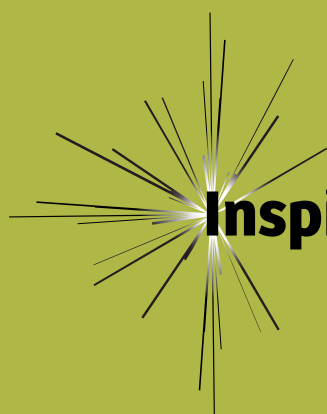
### New Korowai Tapu inspired by Laughton's mission

A tradition dating back 30 years was continued at General Assembly when a new Korowai Tapu was placed by the Very Rev Ray Coster on the shoulders of incoming Moderator the Right Rev Andrew Norton.

"I always wore the Korowai Tapu with pride," Ray says. "It's the only symbol our Moderator has. It reminds me of the people who have gone before me as Moderator and on whose shoulders I stand. It also speaks to our bicultural commitment and acknowledges the important of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in the life of this nation."

Rev Erana Manihera began weaving the new cloak in January, with the help of her sister Sharon Te Kaawa. The original Korowai Tapu was also made by Erana in 1983 for the Very Rev Tame Takao. Intended for him to retain, Tame





## Inspiring Mission

ASSEMBLY WEEK 2014

placed it on the new Moderator Alistair Rae. The tradition has since continued unbroken.

Erana says much thought went into an original theme and plan.

"I didn't know where to start then one day I was looking at an old photo of the Rev Hoani Laughton wearing a stole," she says. "I would begin at the beginning."

The bottom of the cloak tells the beginnings of the mission in the Ureweras and of the origin of Te Aka Puaho. Moving up the cloak, the green, white and black speaks of the bush, the rain, the mists, the people of Te Urewera in which weaver Erana lives and has her being. Across the top it speaks of the snow-capped mountains.

### PSDS combines funds with Baptist Savings

In his report to the Assembly Simon Bilton, PSDS general manager, explained that PSDS has joined with the Baptist Savings and Development Society (BSDS) in response to significant and rising compliance costs.

Changes to the legal environment in which PSDS operates were expected to increase annual costs by \$350,000 - \$500,000, which was not sustainable.

According to the longest-serving current director George Wadsworth, PSDS directors were determined to maintain the availability of secured loans for Presbyterian parishes and grants to support mission. The changes imposed by the Reserve Bank and the Financial Markets Authority (FMA) only affected

two charitable organisations so applying for an exemption was the first logical step.

"PSDS directors put significant effort into submissions and discussions," he says. "It was a real disappointment they weren't prepared to consider granting us an exemption as we've built up an equity and deposit base since 1970 with no loss of depositor funds. We've proved our ability."

The PSDS then explored a range of alternative business models and chose the BSDS.

"BSDS was established in 1962 and has over \$100 million in deposits," Simon Bilton said. "The size of its fund means they can more readily absorb higher costs."

The arrangement negotiated ensures that Presbyterian churches will continue to receive preferential loan rates and depositors will continue to be able to support the Presbyterian Church.

The change is effective from 31 October, and depositors have the option of continuing their deposit, or withdrawing funds. All depositors are being individually contacted. To date investors have agreed for \$20 million worth of deposits to be transferred to the new fund, \$5 million will be refunded and the fate of the remaining \$16 million is still to be confirmed.

"All directors feel an acute sense of loss," adds Simon, "but recognise that it's the start of a new era. Nothing has changed in our outcomes, only in how we achieve those outcomes."

The equity built up over the last 43 years will continue to be owned and managed by a renamed Presbyterian

Development Society (PDS). Interest earned through investments will continue to fund grants and the office will stay open to maintain records.

Loan applications can be made as normal through the website and will continue to be assessed for approval in the usual way.

### Two hundred years of mission celebrated

One of the workshops offered at Assembly was on Gospel 2014.

Moderator the Right Rev Andrew Norton and the Very Rev Ray Coster will be attending Bicentennial celebrations later this month at Marsden Cross, marking the earliest recorded church service at the first permanent European settlement in New Zealand Christmas Day 1814.

Two ecumenical and historical events will be held at Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands. The Governor General will open a new Rangihoua Heritage Park on 21 December, and on Christmas Day an ecumenical service will be held at Marsden Cross.

The Presbyterian Church contributed in 2005 to the purchase of a parcel of land between Oihi Road and Rangihoua that gives access to the Cross.

"It's a historical marking point in our nation and for the Church," says Andrew. "The bicentenary recognises the invitation by tangata whenua to be ambassadors of the Gospel in this land."

While the bicentenary is a significant event Andrew says the real work starts afterwards.

"Events in 1814 began our bicultural journey. Today, our work is the Church's ongoing relationship with the Māori community," he says. "The historical task is addressing the misconception that the Church was a colonialist in this country, whereas the initial evangelism wasn't so much by white Europeans; it was an indigenous movement. That truth has been clouded over by later injustices."

Both celebrations are open to the public. To find out more, see [www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-parishes/gospel-2014](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-parishes/gospel-2014)

# Rev Richard Dawson elected Moderator Designate



The Rev Richard Dawson will be the Church's Moderator from General Assembly 2016.

**While waiting in the wings, Richard Dawson has a very clear idea of the message he will be giving the Church when he becomes Moderator.**

Elected at General Assembly 2014 as Moderator-designate, Richard says, "I don't want to be too 'previous' but my big concern, and the issue I hope to develop in my time as Moderator, is how the church operates as a community. By that I mean how functional it is in terms of creating healthy and attractive communities.

"We have tended to get so caught up in issues of process and strategy that we have forgotten that the church is meant, first and foremost, to be a community – a very healing and approachable community.

"Any family has to ask itself how it is a family – apart from the genetic ties. Those questions are very important because if you want a family to be healthy you need to address what makes it a family.

"It seems to me we haven't addressed these sorts of issues for a long time. We have allowed some practices that are destructive to community to continue, and I fear we may also have lost many of the skills and abilities necessary to go about creating community.

"The sort of things we used to rely on in society to create community have broken down significantly. For example, because of a breakdown in volunteering, the administration of our sports clubs are in crisis.

"The church has an advantage in that its goals are far deeper than simply playing a numbers game around who is in church.

Our goals are about life transformation. If we are serious about these goals, we have to be serious about community because that provides a context in which you can demonstrate and test life transformation.

"If you can't get along with the people who believe the same things about Jesus there's a real issue. It's one thing coming to faith in Christ. It's another learning how to live with his disciples. That should really be our major test of faith."

Richards says the national Church has been characterised by political conflict in the past 25 years, and Assemblies dominated by the issue of sexuality.

Now, community has to be built from the bottom up and the top down. "I think of our witness at the most basic level of community, the parish level. If there is disunity and only a shallow level of community there, then no matter how effective we are at mission, people are going to struggle to live and develop within that context.

Richard is minister at St Stephens/Leith Valley where he practices team ministry with his wife Fran who works almost full time as programme director. They have three adult children.

Born in Dunedin, Richard majored in educational psychology at the University of Otago and completed his training at the Presbyterian Theological Hall in 1988.

But in between those two bouts of study, he took on a job with Youth for Christ helping young people to work – in the forestry contracting industry – as part of

the Voluntary Organisation Job Creation Programme.

Richard says he learnt a lot about community and respect in that context.

"I got to see life from the angle of someone doing physical work in a dangerous industry. That's been a very important life lesson for me. I rubbed shoulders with the toughest guys, and there was a bit of teasing and ribbing because we were the Christian gang from Youth for Christ – but that didn't matter if you did a good day's work.

"We had to earn their respect. And this background makes me think the church needs to earn the respect of the wider community. We have assumed we would get respect just for being who we are."

Richard has had two parishes, his current one and the South Otago Presbyterian church of Stirling/Kaitangata/Lovell's Flat – from 1990 until 1999.

In 2002 he helped launch studentsoul, a ministry to Otago students and the Otago Polytech, which is hosted by St Stephens/Leith Valley Presbyterian.

He has served as Moderator of the Presbyterian Synod of Otago & Southland, as well as on the Council of Assembly and the National Assessment Committee, and was convenor of the committee which created Kupu Whakapano, the new confession of faith.

Richard will take up the role of Moderator of the Church at General Assembly 2016.

Jane Tolerton [Spanz](#)



# FUTURE LEADERS EQUIPPED AT ASSEMBLY YOUTH GATHERING



Presbyterian Youth Ministry's Gordon Fitch and Matt Chamberlin, centre, with regional coordinators, youth and youth leaders.

**Around 40 young people attended a pilot National Youth Gathering that ran in parallel with the General Assembly's business session this year.**

Presbyterian Youth Ministry National Youth Director Matt Chamberlin said its aims were to develop a future generation of leaders who feel equipped to exercise mission and contribute to society, and also to give them the chance to get to know one another.

"We told our young people it's not a spectator event," Matt says. "We expected them to step out into leadership of workshops and worship. And that's exactly what they did."

Hannah North from Warkworth was attracted by the idea of expanding her networks but also uncertain what to expect from the gathering.

"I went into it unsure what it'd be like," she says. "Being among so many different people gave me a much broader view. You get out of your little community and realise the Presbyterian Church is so much bigger than just your area."

She set herself a goal of growing beyond her comfort zone.

"I pushed myself into choosing workshops that were new subjects, like dynamic prayer and spiritual gifting. It was great," Hannah says. "Running a group with strangers was also new and I liked it. And now I can see where I'm going with developing my gifts, especially with spiritual gifting."

Spiritual gifting develops qualities such as charisma, encouragement, prophecy and leadership. Many participants

identified new gifts. They came to understand that the true meaning of worship is to focus on God and not on the performance.

"What I've learnt more than anything though from this weekend is to help the audience [in worship], to usher them to God and make God their main focus," says Nikki Brand from Waitara.

Tackling complex social problems like alcohol abuse and smoking was also on the weekend agenda for workshop discussion. Nikki says workshops were valuable for exchanging ideas with other young people on how they can take action together.

"We want to put out a media release to Radio Works with a recorded message or song," Nikki says. "Songs are one way to raise money to support families struggling with alcoholism."

Good young leaders are emerging in the Church, says Matt. This generation's particular qualities are pragmatism and belief in the importance of networking and collaborative action.

"Every generation inherits the challenge of keeping the Church a viable part of mission in the world," says Matt. "We continually wrestle with what's the substance of who we are and what forms need to change. This generation asks, 'how can we do this together?' Their heroes are always a team, not superman. I'm looking forward to seeing how they might re-imagine future General Assemblies."

The young adults also took part in practical and fun tasks to support Assembly Week. Some went out into

local communities on a service quest, 'to serve others the way Jesus served us'. Hannah was part of a window washing team.

"I was voted to go inside and talk with the lady," says Hannah. "Actually, she talked to us for a whole hour and we listened. I guess she was lonely. It made me realise the impact you can have on one person from doing something really simple."

A talent quest provided a lot of fun and a chance for the young adults to sharpen their musical gifts. Twelve young people from around the developing world are being hosted by the Church in New Zealand as part of the CWM Training in Mission programme. This impromptu group of international musicians had the gathering on its feet dancing.

Matt expects this year's pilot will take hold for future General Assemblies. At \$99 per person it was affordable and well attended.

"There's been strong encouragement from the people involved to do it again. The only issue is where and when," he says. "We have some thinking to do about the benefits of having it yearly or bi-annually and whether it should move from place to place or be held in a main centre."

*To watch the CWM Training in Mission youth performance at the National Youth Conference and interviews with participants, see <https://www.dropbox.com/s/36e5bj7t3zduhpm/PYM%20National%20Youth%20Gathering.mp4?dl=0>*

Jade Reidy Spanz



## Our Church and its Property Resources

The Church as a community is committed to good stewardship and the importance of this for future generations. One way of doing this is to use our property resources more strategically.

Everyone who makes decisions about property or finance within the Church is a "trustee". However, it falls to the Church Property Trustees, guided by the recommendations of Presbyteries, to make the decisions in relation to property proposals.

In order that the Trustees have all the information they require to make prudent property decisions, a robust application and approval process is essential.

First and foremost, the Trustees want to see that all property proposals fit with both the local mission goals of parishes and the regional strategic development of Presbyteries. They also want to see congregations fully involved in all discussions and decisions around property proposals.

**New property application forms** have been in use for the past few months. The new forms incorporate what were previously called the Supplementary Questions. These questions have been updated to reflect both their importance in the Trustees' decision-making and the General Assembly guidelines. The answers to these questions are now strongly regarded as "fundamental" to a proposal not "supplementary."

The new forms are available on request from the Trustees' office or from your Presbytery and replace all previously used forms.

The Trustees are confident the new forms are helping parishes and Presbyteries to focus on the reason for each property application and how it contributes to the mission and growth of the Church.

Enquires for the Trustees may be made to:

The Executive Officer, Kos van Lier  
Presbyterian Property Trustees  
PO Box 9049, Wellington 6141  
(04) 381 8296 or  
kos@presbyterian.org.nz

# THEOLOGYMATTERS

**In increasingly paying attention to making a difference in our communities in the name of mission we run across one very alluring temptation. This is to think we can do something 'for' God. To think we do something 'for' God is to diminish God's agency and raise the stakes on human agency. In older theological terms we are straying into "works" territory. This is, I suggest, to misrepresent what God has done in the crucified Jesus and is continuing to do in our midst in the resurrected Christ.**

One of the central motifs of Paul's theology when he speaks of our relationship to God through the cross is "in Christ". This participatory language indicates that God's acting in redeeming and healing creation cannot be reduced to an event that somehow 'we' must apply to the world. God has in Christ brought into being a reality, a kingdom, a new world, to which we are invited as participants. The presence and action of God is something already happened, continuing to happen and that will happen in the future. The Spirit makes us aware something surplus is occurring 'in Christ' which we do not create, but which we respond to, participate and have a share in. This means attention to what God is doing through Christ is at the heart of mission.

But given the kind of social climate we live in today it is not always easy to discern God's generative presence and action. One of the outcomes of living in a 'secular' society is our capacity to live and act as if God doesn't exist even when we claim to believe in God.

The primary institutions our society train us to section God off from are our everyday experiences. As Eugene Peterson puts it: "Most of us have a difficult time understanding history with God as the major and definitive presence. We have grown up getting our sense of history from historians, scholars and journalists for whom God is not germane or present in what they study or write. We are trained by our schools, daily newspapers, telecasts to read history solely in terms of

politics and economics, human interest and environmental conditions, military operations and diplomatic intrigue... But the biblical writers do it the other way round; they fit us into the history in which God is the primary reality."

We can end up with a form of practical atheism in our churches where mission places all the attention upon what we do to achieve desired results. What then are the implications of paying attention to God's agency for mission today?

Firstly lets admit that maybe we have squeezed God's agency out of our mission equations. It is God's mission, which gives the church its mission. Secondly the first and primary act of mission is to discern what God is already doing by his Spirit in the midst of our present contexts and our ordinary existence.

As we seek to know where we are being invited to participate in what God is already doing, there are often more signs than we imagine. We cannot rope off the Spirit into a spiritual world that is somehow distant and abstracted from the material world of everyday history and embodied life. To limit the Spirit to extra-ordinary and peak experiences is to eliminate the Spirit's immanent and empirical significance as the giver and lover of life.

Thirdly there are biblical patterns to the missional ways in which the Spirit as agent communicates God's presence and activity that can guide us. The Spirit is involved in the crossing of boundaries and in the encounter with strangers and welcoming the 'other'. The Beatitudes make a strong claim for God's presence and activity coming in the midst of powerlessness and amongst the impoverished materially and spiritually. The Spirit can also be traced to be present and active in times of chaos and disruption. Finally Jesus reminds his disciples that 'Where two or more are gathered in my name, there I am in your midst' and that has a much wider scope than simply what we may be doing on Sunday in church.

Rev Mark Johnston. Auckland Coordinator, Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership.



## MINISTERIAL VACANCY

The ministry of the Alexandra Clyde Lauder Union Parish will become vacant from January 2015. The parish is seeking a three-quarter (3/4) Minister.

The congregation, as with many churches today, are fairly senior. But there is a good opportunity of ministry to a healthy, lively and sports loving population of young people.

The area boasts excellent schools both primary and secondary and excellent child care centres. Add to this the brilliant and health giving weather evidenced by the TV weather report each night.

The church has splendid buildings, and in Alexandra, a Community Centre with facilities that provide for the activities of a good number of community organisations.

Further information is available by contacting the Convenor of the Ministry Settlement Board, the Rev Eric Mattock  
**PHONE** 03 4449340 or  
**EMAIL** erkim@xtra.co.nz

## Contribution for the Noticeboard?

Please contact: Jose Reader  
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## FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



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Programme will include Dedication Service on 14 February, followed by an evening dinner, and a Communion Service on Sunday, 15 February to farewell the Rev Richard Gray. A pot luck lunch will follow.

For more information or if you wish to attend please register with:  
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**SOUTH:** Blenheim, Christchurch, Darfield, Ashburton, Timaru, Oamaru, Dunedin, Gore, Invercargill, Te Anau, Cromwell & Geraldine



## RESEARCH STUDY:

Caught between Cultures: New Zealand Presbyterian Missionary Children 1930-1960

Were you a child of a Presbyterian missionary family between about 1930 and 1960? Or are you descended from someone who was a missionary child in those years? Do you have in your possession old records of the family in those years that you would be willing to be looked at for research purposes? Are you interested in having some of these stories told for the benefit of the wider church or community?

If any of these apply then I am very interested in: talking with you further with respect to examining and making copies of some of that material; interviewing you; or both if applicable.

I will need either up to a day of your time (to look at the materials) or two hours of your time (for an interview), at a time to be arranged with you.

If you are interested in talking further with me then please contact me as follows:

**Dr Hugh Morrison, College of Education, University of Otago,  
PO Box 56, Dunedin 9054, New Zealand,  
PHONE** 03 479 4240 (work) or (03) 473 9693 (home);  
**EMAIL** hugh.morrison@otago.ac.nz

This project has been reviewed and approved by the College of Education, University of Otago

# New Assembly Executive Secretary – Rev Wayne Matheson

**Wayne Matheson describes the role of Assembly Executive Secretary as something that sounds prosaic but is also prophetic.**

As Wayne has served on the Council of Assembly for six years, the last two as Convenor, he is walking into the position with his eyes wide open.

With its concern for compliance and governing rules and regulations, the job can sound pretty routine, he says. But its bottom line is working with the leadership team to make sure the priorities set by the Presbyterian Church actually happen. Its core functions cluster around work with the Council of Assembly including the smooth running of the General Assembly.

Wayne doesn't have to move for his new role. He and his wife Adrienne live in Lower Hutt where he was previously the minister at the Knox-St Columba Presbyterian Church. He also served on the Board of Proprietors of Lower Hutt's St Oran's College.

Wayne was born in Christchurch and grew up there. He jokes that he was the proverbial boy who went to school to eat his lunch before leaving for a job with the Public Trust.

He had got a promotion to Invercargill, and that's where he was when the call to Ministry came. He resigned from his job and worked for a year at St David's Presbyterian Church as pastoral assistant to the Rev Murray Talbot.



The Rev Wayne Matheson is the Church's new Assembly Executive Secretary based at Assembly Office in Wellington.

He and Adrienne married just before he was accepted for training, and by the time he had completed his Bachelors degrees in Arts and Theology they had two children.

The family spent several years in Balclutha in the early 1990s, moving to Whangarei in 1994 and then to Lower Hutt in 2007.

Though many of the Assembly Executive Secretary's concerns may be prosaic, the role also has a prophetic element, which Wayne sums up as focussing on "where are we going and how are we going?"

"We are becoming a smaller Church in terms of numbers. What does that mean in terms of our congregational life and training of ministers?"

"In many European congregations we are facing greying congregations. People volunteer and willingly give to the church. But as they move into their senior years and the church gets smaller who is going to pick up these responsibilities? Meanwhile, we have vibrant multicultural churches where we have a real opportunity to engage children and young people."

Wayne says he enjoys the mix of blue skies thinking and on-the-ground action he's seen in his involvement with the Clarity for Mission paper.

"The Mission Clarity paper invites congregations to think about their location – whether they are in a rural community, a suburb or inner-city – to look at the opportunities and challenges they face in responding to the call.

Rather than being prescriptive it invites them to engage with the community.

"I think there are opportunities in terms of ways and means of being the church. There are ways of engaging with migrant and immigrant communities. For example, in Warkworth the congregation has recognised their community has changed with the arrival of migrants and has offered them hospitality and pastoral care – and these people are now part of the wider church community.

"The opportunities are through hospitality, care and continuing to re-evaluate how we make Jesus known.

"I am a real optimist. I think that the Church continues to need to respond to the call of God to be faithful witnesses to Jesus in a changing and complex world. If we are able to continue to be bearers of good news of great joy, we'll be fine.

"People might feel that continually telling people about Jesus is too hard, so they become more of a social agency. But I say, you can help people in terms of their whole life and with their relationship with God – but our relationship with God should be the driver."

Wayne was inducted as Assembly Executive Secretary at a service at Wellington's St John's in the City on 21 October.

His predecessor, the Rev Martin Baker, has been called as minister at Clevedon Presbyterian Church in Auckland.

Jane Tolerton [Spanz](#)





## Progressive spirituality builds momentum

Rachael Kohn (L) interviewing guests Alexa Johnston, Ani Jangchub La and Wally Hirsch about what sustains them in their public and private lives on day two of the Beyond the Borders conference.

**The Community of St Luke, in Auckland, organised and hosted the country's inaugural progressive spirituality conference in August.**

Around 180 people attended the four-day Beyond the Borders conference, which provided the catalyst for establishing a network of people interested in progressive spirituality, says the Rev Glynn Cardy, minister at St Luke's.

"It is hoped that the network will coalesce around more events in New Zealand," says Glynn.

One of the sponsors of the conference was the Common Dreams network – an alliance that brings together spiritual progressives in New Zealand, Australia and the South Pacific. When Common Dreams organise speakers and events for Australia, says Glynn, the New Zealand network may see if it can tap into this to have those same people deliver something in New Zealand at the same time.

The hope is that future progressive spirituality events can be held in different parts of New Zealand, he says.

A new progressive spirituality website was launched to coincide with the August conference and the idea is that the website, which is now hosted by St Andrew's on The Terrace, will provide a means for engaging with people and building the movement here in New Zealand explains Glynn.

While no national progressive spirituality group exists at the moment, he believes the new website and connections that were made at the conference will provide a focal point for continuing engagement.

Bronwyn Angela White, a Kapiti Coast-based liturgist, poet and writer who contributes to the website, believes an important aspect of progressive spirituality is that it provides space for many views.

"In social justice and political debates, especially, a spectrum of voices from Christian and faith communities needs to be heard."

Glynn describes progressive spirituality as a merging of a number of streams – the scientific and rational, the biblical and historical, social justice and spiritual.

"When we're dealing with God we can believe things and hope things. But it is hard to 'know' things. The phrase 'I don't know' is a legitimate point in the journey. Questioning and enquiring is at the heart of the progressive movement."

Rev Keith Rowe, St Luke's associate minister and one of the conference organising team, says: "Most people live within clearly defined borders. Most churches live within rigid borders that inhibit exploration or engagement with the emerging scientific and social wisdom of our day. Progressive spirituality recognises that no single person or group has all the wisdom."

Among progressive Christians there is huge diversity in views. Recognising that diversity was an important aspect of the conference.

"We had to ask ourselves how to create something that was meaningful for all. What sort of music? What sort of liturgy? What will worship look like?" says Glynn.

The progressive spirituality movement is often only associated with interest in issues like same-sex marriage and ordination of gay leaders. But political issues like these weren't on the programme at Beyond the Borders, he says.

Feedback about the inaugural conference was overwhelmingly positive. People from many different faiths – Jewish, Buddhist, Muslim, Baptist, Presbyterians, Anglican and Catholics – joined together to engage with more than 30 speakers who were involved in interview panels, short talks, workshops, reflections and prayers.

The conference programme included a range of topics including keynote addresses on the parables, quick fire talks on "Living the Muslim Spirit in a Secular Society", "Give Holy Communion the flick: Celebrate the Jesus Banquet", and more.

"We had a variety of teaching styles throughout the conference. In particular the pop-up poets were especially well received. They spoke with urgency and earthiness. Their poetry was powerful and resonated with a lot of people," says Glynn.

More information about progressive spirituality can be found at [www.progressivespirituality.co.nz](http://www.progressivespirituality.co.nz)

Jose Reader Spanz

**Matt Chamberlin, who took up the role as Presbyterian Youth Ministry National Youth Director in June 2014, knows what it's like to be a rudderless young person attracted to the Presbyterian Church – specifically Howick.**

"I was in a space at university where I was asking questions around meaning and purpose in life. My closest friend had become a Christian and I was really jealous of what he had – interaction with something real, a living God. I became really intrigued by the sense of meaning and purpose he had gained and began my own investigation – spending time with some people who were in faith already, asking questions and doing a bit of reading.



Matt Chamberlin pictured with wife Stephanie and their daughters Hannah and Lila.

## Matt Chamberlin – new Youth Director of Presbyterian Youth Ministry

"I had observed the Christians I knew had not exactly a 'code of conduct' but knew where they were going while I was in a sea of indecision, trying to figure out who I would be as a person.

"When I started going to Howick Presbyterian Church I was hungry to connect with God. I found it a terrific place to do that and I slowly built up an understanding of the people and relationships. But it still feels like walking into a completely different culture to me."

That's helpful in his new role as Youth Director, Matt says, because he can see it from the point of view of the people he is helping. "For 22 years I wasn't a Christian, so I viewed it through the lens of an outsider coming in and thinking, 'Why the heck do you do these things?' I can still provide an outsider's perspective," says Matt, now 37.

Before taking up his new position, he was General Manager of the Young Life New Zealand Trust, an organisation mainly helping local churches in East Auckland to do community-based youth work, including placing youth workers in schools.

"Churches have provided a brilliant service for young people in schools and built relationships of trust. There are a lot of ways to measure the effects of having youth workers in schools but the evidence I like best is the principal who said, 'I don't know what it is, but when you are in my school it's a better place'.

Matt went into youth work reluctantly. "In my early twenties, I felt a strong call for evangelism and went to a Bible College for missionary training thinking I would go and minister to adults in other places in the world. But as I was preparing for that I felt a strong tug to be around young people in my own backyard. It felt like a traitorous urge. I thought, 'I don't want to look after kids. I'm not a babysitter! But the tug on my heart was very strong.'"

Meanwhile he worked as a physiotherapist in hospitals and private practice. "I had a lot of fun connecting with different cultures in multicultural Auckland." He also explored counselling and is now studying part time toward a Masters in Counselling at Auckland University.

Having enjoyed conversations with Dr Carlton Johnston, Matt was "pleasantly

surprised" to find out the Church's former Youth Director had recommended him for the position he was leaving. The then Assembly Executive Secretary, the Rev Martin Baker phoned him "out of the blue" to suggest he apply.

"When my wife Stephanie and I sat down and looked at the job description she said, 'Matt, this is you.'" But the couple decided to turn down the opportunity as moving to Wellington with their two young daughters was in the too hard basket. Doing the national job from Auckland has turned out to be a win-win.

Matt believes the challenge ahead is to make the church "a really welcoming place for young people, a scenario that begins when adults in the church genuinely want to mentor and disciple young people.

"One of the vital aspects of the role for me is encouraging new models of ministry and exploring how we do faith in the context of our society as it is now. There's a real need for on-going innovation – to continue rethinking and trying new things. I hope to inspire, celebrate and share innovation as I see it happening around the country."

As he was rethinking and trying something new himself when he first walked into Howick Presbyterian Church, this is a task he is approaching with great enthusiasm.

Jane Tolerton [Spanz](#)



# Disability rights: looking to a more inclusive church

**Presbyterian church members Janice Gordon and Antonia Hannah returned from the Council for World Mission's first Conference on disability in Kuala Lumpur in July fired up at the prospect of a world in which people with disabilities, like their sons, might grow up confident, able to join in and enjoy life in their churches and communities.**

Representing the Presbyterian Church, they spent four days discussing disability, life stories, and options for change with 63 like-minded people from 30 other countries. Some of the delegates had disabilities. Some, like Janice and Antonia, had children with disabilities. And some worked in the disability sector. They came from the Asia-Pacific region, the Caribbean, Africa, and the United Kingdom.

The two women, both involved in disability advocacy and support work in New Zealand, were stunned at some of the stories they heard of people whose disability was considered a curse from God or a punishment.

"I was surprised that people in some countries still believe this," says Janice, an elder at St David's Presbyterian Church in Palmerston North and mother of a 35-year-old son with intellectual and physical disabilities. "It felt as if we had gone back in time."

From the outset, the conference organisers – the Council for World Mission and the Ecumenical Disability Advocacy Network – were at pains to demonstrate that beliefs like these have no foundation in the Bible or the church.

"The conference really hammered that point home," says Antonia, a member of St Helier's Presbyterian Church in Auckland and mother of a 10-year-old son with Down Syndrome. "All persons are equal before God and are valued in God's creation. Disability is a common human experience and a defining characteristic of human beings ... all of us make the 'whole'."

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)



Antonia Hannah pictured with her son Max who has Down Syndrome. Antonia was one of the Church's representatives at the Council for World Mission's first conference on disability – "Building an Inclusive Community – moving beyond accommodation to affirmation and advocacy for people with disabilities".

was another key focus of discussion. Although many delegates came from countries that had ratified the convention, few had seen evidence of the words put into practice. Some from developing countries described a fear of disability in their communities, feelings of shame, as well as physical inaccessibility due to a failure to implement adequate building codes.

New Zealand rated relatively well in comparison. "We don't hide people with disabilities, as they do in other countries, and adhere largely to the UN convention," says Janice, who raised her son at a time when parents of babies with disabilities were routinely advised to leave them in institutions and when places in special schools – there was no mainstreaming yet – were limited. As it turned out, there wasn't one available for her son.

"But there is still room for improvement."

Antonia agrees. "People are still uncomfortable with disability. We need greater awareness and systems in place to promote positive outcomes. Children are not fully included at school and access to extra-curricular activities is limited. Adults with disabilities struggle to be included in workplaces and in community activities. So people with special needs end up largely participating in specialist activities with other people with special needs."

She sees what is happening in society reflected in the church.

"People with disabilities can come to church, but churches are not necessarily aware of their disabilities."

Both point out that churches sometimes overlook the physical and other needs of their congregations. Is there a ramp for those with Zimmer frames, prams, or wheelchairs? Are the visually impaired able to follow a sermon that relies heavily on power point presentations? And are families affirmed and acknowledged? Are they welcomed to coffee mornings and playgroups? Are there opportunities for discussion about disability? Are inclusive values and love taught to children?

Both think their congregations are on the right track.

"Church is definitely a part of my son's life and a place he feels welcomed and safe," says Antonia. In light of the conference's findings, St Helier's set up a disability network so that people with disabilities or family members with disabilities can connect.

But she is concerned that "the wider church relies on good pastors rather than a systematic awareness of the diversity of needs."

And that is what the conference aimed to change.

*In late October CWM released a booklet outlining the steps churches can take to make sure that the rights of people with disabilities are met and that they are included within their churches and the community. Download the booklet from the Council for World Mission website [www.cwmission.org/about-us/publications/](http://www.cwmission.org/about-us/publications/)*

Joan Begg Spanz

<sup>1</sup> A recent UN report on New Zealand's implementation of the disability convention highlighted areas still requiring action, including elements in the education area and payment for family carers.





## Vanuatu minister gains insight into life of seasonal workers

**For Jackson and Jenny Talivo, a minister from the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu and his wife, arriving in New Zealand in July was their first time ever outside of Vanuatu.**

Jackson and Jenny spent three months in the South Island finding out what life's really like for ni-Van seasonal workers who make up over half of this country's quota of 7,000 seasonal workers. In the wintertime they work long days pruning, thinning and tying grape vines, so Pastor Jackson and Jenny visited the men in their accommodation in the evenings.

Jackson says, despite the long work days the men are very well looked after, unlike in the early days of the seasonal worker schemes when significant problems affected the men.

"They get baking dropped off, free sky, internet, furnished homes, a cleaner... They like the work, despite the cold," he says, "There is always room for improvement but I feel the scheme has come a long way since it began. It definitely isn't slave labour. All the same, they were glad to see us. We share the Bislama language."

Seasonal work is still Vanuatu's second-largest source of foreign exchange earnings after tourism. The income pays for electricity, education and building houses back home. Employer Seasonal Solutions pays for pastoral care that includes weekly visits to accommodation; help with sending money orders home, doctors' and dentists' visits and actual pastoral care.

Although the Talivos had never been overseas they were hosted in Blenheim by a ready-made family, church members and pastoral care workers Gloria and Neville Jones. The Jones led a five-year mission from 2007-11 by the Wairau congregation in Vanuatu's Utas village in south-east Ambrym Island where Jackson was minister. Members repaired the church's roof, built new classrooms and repaired a historic well.

"We worked through Pastor Jackson when sending all the materials. He was our key link for making sure everything got through and was held safe," says Gloria. "We built a lasting connection between the village and our church by taking teams up there every year."

During this time they were also providing pastoral care at home for seasonal workers.

"Integrating isn't easy," says Gloria. "With big differences in language, climate, culture, health and finances, making time for ni-Vans can be a stretch for busy people, hence the need for a dedicated minister."

The Talivos led Bible study, prayer and worship sessions. Jenny led prayer ministry. She spoke at cell groups and played a strong role in nightly devotions. The couple also joined in the general church timetable of meetings, rest home visits and home groups.

"We learned to teach the Word of God in another context," Jenny says, "to preach in English and to work on a computer to time Jackson's sermon."

Gloria has high praise for the visit. "It was an amazing experience for them and they did an amazing job," she says. "Pastor Jackson has a graceful manner

about him. He got a lot of respect and was well liked. He spoke strong. He was a good pick."

The Talivos prepared a report on their visit which they presented to General Assembly in October before flying home. It details what, if anything, could be developed as an ongoing ministry. A central recommendation is to shift the focus for pastoral care to the wives.

"We need to recognise the importance of offering pastoral care to the wives and families who remain behind in Vanuatu while their men are here," says Global Mission coordinator the Rev Phil King. "Relationships are strained and marriage break-ups result from long periods apart."

"It's harder for the women," agrees Gloria. "They're at home alone with the kids. There's 15 men from one village here in Blenheim, so all the wives get together at home and support one another. But it's lonely. They can get depressed."

At this stage, Phil says, there are no plans to bring another minister out, although the Church will continue offering pastoral care to seasonal workers.

"It has been a long, slow process but much good has come out of it in terms of deepening and strengthening our cross-cultural engagement with Vanuatu. I hope the visit models a way forward for us to continue working alongside Vanuatu in shared mission."

Global Mission is grateful to donors of the project, minister Brendan O'Hagan, hosts the Jones and the congregation of Wairau Parish.

Jade Reidy Spanz



Global Mission coordinator the Rev Phil King with Jackson Talivo, a minister from the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, and his wife Jenny.





## Aotearoa Development Cooperative – communities working their way out of poverty

**Before meeting with staff from the ZMF Bank, Kay Thi Aung was struggling to make a living. Like many people in Myanmar she didn't have the ability or monetary backing to make a start on changing her life. But in August this year she was able to buy the equipment and materials which would enable her to set up a stall where she could sell fried bread.**

Kay Thi Aung is one of the many entrepreneurs who have benefitted from being able to access loans from a bank that does not charge huge interest rates, enabling people to take control of their lives by using their creativity and skills.

To date the ZMF bank has provided more than 500 clients with over \$180,000 in loans. Around 90 per cent of those loans have been paid off within the allotted timeframe. This level of repayment success is partly due to a joint-liability lending criteria, where finance is given to a group of people rather than an individual. If one person in the group is unable to meet repayments the others are expected to pay on that person's behalf. This creates a strong incentive for the whole group to monitor each other.

The ZMF bank is one of two partner banks which works alongside the New Zealand not-for-profit organisation the Aotearoa Development Co-op (ADC). The bank is funded by the ADC with the help of charitable donations and fundraisers. The ADC also began working with the Ekwendeni Savings and Credit Department in Malawi just over a year ago.

The ADC is the brainchild of a two members of The Community of Saint Luke Presbyterian Church, Remuera, who were travelling through South Asia in early 2007 and found themselves in a small town in Myanmar. Andrew Colgan (a litigation solicitor at McElroys) and Geoff Cooper (who has a Masters degree in Economics) and their group of friends decided the town would be a good place



Sarah Colgan of the Aotearoa Development Corporation recently shared their inspirational story at the Beyond the Borders conference held at The Community of Saint Luke Presbyterian Church.

to create sustainable microfinance in order to develop the region.

The ADC began by funding and providing technical support to the ZMF Bank, which is owned and operated by locals. Since the partnership began ZMF has gone on to become incorporated as a Non-Profit Organisation (NPO). ZMF was then able to apply for a license to operate as a microfinance institution (MFI) and this was approved earlier this year. "Now that ZMF has a formal license to operate we hope the bank will be able to expand its client base and, as it grows, look into diversifying the range of products it offers," says Andrew.

The ZMF Bank currently makes loans of between NZ\$100 and \$250 to entrepreneurs, assisting them in beginning economically sustainable businesses. The loans are repaid at minimal interest rates. "The aim is that, over several years of circulating loan capital and economic activity, the whole community is lifted out of poverty."

"Our motivation is the positive opportunity to partner with people taking control of their own economic destiny, rather than pity or guilt. It's certainly a great environment to be part of."

The ADC does not operate as an advisor. "Our assumption is that many people, although poor, are financially literate and have far more knowledge about their local market than we ever would."

Thanks to the low interest rates and the opportunities these loans give creative and hardworking people, there has been a huge change in both the political and economic development of the region. According to Andrew, and many of the other ADC volunteers, the change the loans have made for the community are palpable. "Every time I talk to someone from the organisation who has gone back to visit the community, they always comment on how unrecognisable the area is compared to how it was in 2007," smiles Andrew.

For the ADC to continue generating funds to sustain the banks in Malawi and Myanmar the organisation needs a regular cash flow. The ADC holds a number of events and appeals throughout the year, however the most important source of funds is people who contribute regularly through their automatic payment system.

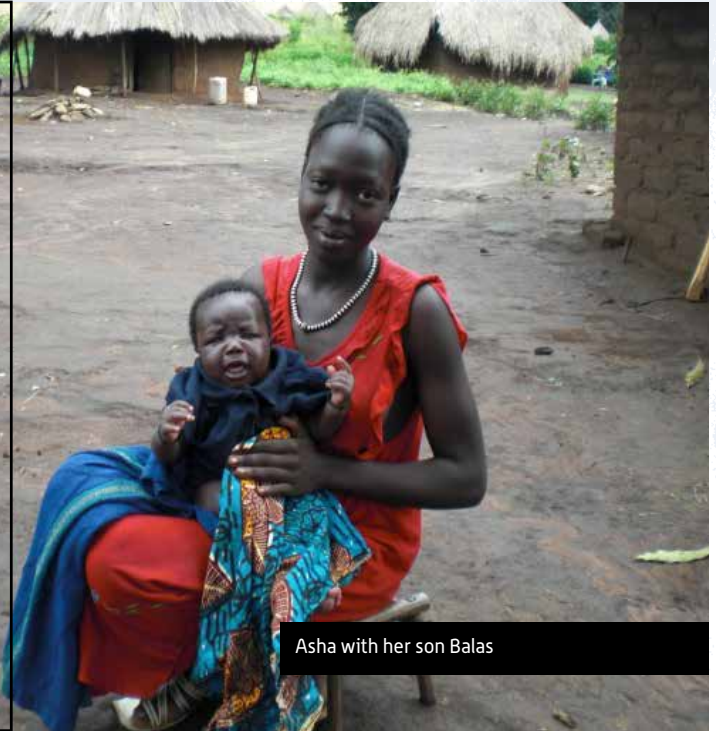
If you would like to assist the organisation in helping people to reach for their dreams visit [www.adc.org.nz](http://www.adc.org.nz).

Lucy Mullinger spanz





# BUILD HOPE FOR TOMORROW



Asha with her son Balas

**In her 22 years Asha has seen more suffering than many of us experience in a lifetime. Now married with a home and family to care for, she hopes her troubles are history. She does not want her son to endure the violence and hardship that have marked the lives of many citizens of South Sudan. Freed from the clutches of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a violent rebel group, she wants her new country to find the peace that has been so elusive in its first four and a half years.**

Born shortly before the outbreak of war between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement and the government of Sudan in 1992, Asha is one of her country's many survivors. Fearful of the fighting her mother Tabitha moved the family from the country into town where she thought they would be safer. At seven Asha began primary school but after three years had to drop out. Her mother could no longer afford the fees, uniform or books. Instead she stayed home to fetch water, cook, grind the family's grain by hand on a stone mill and help grow the cassava, grains and groundnuts on which they lived.

Her troubles really began in December 2009. Late at night the LRA appeared from nowhere. The sleepy villagers were forced from their homes to sit silently outdoors while the rebels rushed to loot their houses. Her grandfather and three

neighbours were killed in front of her eyes. The LRA forced Asha to carry two heavy tins of beans into the bush with them. Along with seven others from the village, she was tortured and mistreated. "One of them forced me to be his wife. I tried to refuse because I felt I was still a child and afraid of men. But I had no option and nobody to help me escape," remembered Asha with terror in her face.

After living in the bush for three months at gunpoint, Asha managed to escape when her "husband" was killed by Ugandan troops. After being rescued she found her way back to Yambio, the capital of Maridi county, where her mother came to collect her. "When I arrived home my family was all shocked and looked at me like I was a ghost. They believed I had been killed," she added. Once they realised who she was the neighbours joined in a loud cry of welcome.

Traumatized by all she had experienced, Christian World Service partner the Maridi Service Agency helped her find the strength and hope she needed to recover. They gave her counselling and support – soap, clothes for the baby, food and other items. When she gave birth, she named her son Balas, an Arabic name meaning "for free" or "everything cancelled".

While conflict continues in much of South Sudan, Asha's home in the west of the country is relatively calm. There

is food for the family and a little more to sell at the local market. Much of the rest of the country remains in the grip of war as government troops and the former vice president's forces are locked in battle. Fighting continues with Sudan on unresolved border issues.

"I have been through a hard life with serious effects from the abduction, separation and inhumane conditions in the hands of the LRA. I hardly believed I would see my family again, but with the mighty power of God I'm still alive and together with them. I will continue to praise the name of God for the wonderful help He has given me in spite of my suffering and missing education."

Gifts to the 69th Christmas Appeal will enable local partner groups to assist people like Asha recover from disaster. On the first Sunday of Advent Christian World Service launches the 2014 Christmas Appeal, "Build Hope for Tomorrow". It highlights the work partners do within the communities they know best and for as long as help is needed. Through the work of its 20 partners Christian World Service seeks to make God's love for our neighbour real.

*For more information, posters and worship resources for your parish to use during Advent please contact Emma at 0800 74 73 72 or download them at – [christmasappeal.org.nz](http://christmasappeal.org.nz)*





**CWS**  
ACTION AGAINST POVERTY

69th Christmas Appeal

# HOPE



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# Creating a better life for generations to come

After taking care of your loved ones in your will, a legacy can make a positive impact on future generations of Kiwis. A legacy gift to Presbyterian Support will create stronger communities and fund social services that help make New Zealand the best place to raise children. You'll bring forward the day when the aged, disabled and other vulnerable groups maximise their independence. You'll create a better life for everyone.

## What your gift will achieve

Legacy gifts of the past have already helped us achieve so much. Some examples include:

- Social services for at-risk young families in some of the most deprived areas of New Zealand
- Research into how to improve dementia care
- Nutritious food items and practical support for emergency foodbanks
- Mentoring programmes for young people.

Family Works walks alongside children and families to help bring positive and lasting changes in their lives. Our Enliven services enable people to thrive and stay healthy and engaged with their communities. We also offer hands-on support to enable the financially disadvantaged to move from debt to financial independence.

**Please contact your local bequest manager to discuss leaving a gift in your will.**

Presbyterian Support Northern  
Suzanne Ward (09) 520 8628  
suzanne.ward@psn.org.nz

Presbyterian Support East Coast  
Sylvie Gibbins (06) 877 8193  
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Helped through Family Works.



*"I have been associated with Presbyterian Support as a supporter over many years, and have followed their work with increasing interest. I am particularly enthusiastic about the amazing work that they are doing out in the community at large, in so many ways."*

Supporter who intends to leave a bequest to Presbyterian Support.

[www.ps.org.nz](http://www.ps.org.nz)

  
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