

sPanz

Spanning Presbyterians In Aotearoa New Zealand

September 2006, Issue 28

The rise
of religious
education

www.presbyterian.org.nz

COMMENT

Shaun Robinson of the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services talks of the government's track record on keeping New Zealand children safe.

Who is looking after our children?

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services scores the government's performance as 3 out of 10 for improving the care and protection of children.

The Council is seeking meetings with the parliamentary working party on family violence and other key ministers and civil servants to discuss its views.

NZCCSS' highly critical report "Is any progress being made in care and protection for New Zealand children?" points to five successive plans to reform or restructure services for families in as many years, and matches that with a 60 percent rise in cases of abuse and neglect and pronounces government initiatives a failure.

There has been a lot of planning, reviewing and research, but the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services feels compelled

to ask, is there a plot? Are we getting any closer to an effective system of support for children and families that will put an end to New Zealand's appalling record on care?

A lot of paper has been produced in the last five years; unfortunately a lot of children have been murdered, abused and neglected as well.

We see politicians of all parties become very animated when a high profile case arises. There is invariably a grand new plan with a fresh round of consultation and a high profile programme, and nothing really happens.

There has been a failure to understand communities and families, and this is central to New Zealand's appalling record in the care and protection of children.

All families need support from a community of relations, friends and neighbours. When that breaks down, family members become vulnerable to violence and all forms of abuse. This can be repeated over generations. Local community people are often aware of these vulnerable families and it is only through local relationships and trust building that the situation can be turned around.

It is extremely frustrating for community agencies working with families, day in, day out. If bureaucrats and politicians saw both the hardship and hope that we see they would have a much greater sense of urgency.

There are no quick fixes, but there are some immediate actions that will help a lot.

There needs to be a continuum of services; from broad support for young families, to services to prevent vulnerable families from reaching a crisis, to crisis intervention. It is vital that all of this continuum is in place or none of it can be successful.

The preventive services constantly fall off the agenda. Significant resources must be channelled to local community-based

services who are trusted by local families. These might be iwi, pan-Maori, Pakeha or Pacific-based. The key is that they are local and are resourced for high quality preventive support.

The focus of service relationships and decisions within Child, Youth and Family needs to be at the local office level so that trust and knowledge of local communities can be built. For example, the centralised call-centre should be disbanded and local intake and assessment re-established.

Local community co-operation and planning between services needs to be actively promoted. This must engage the full community including health, education and other relevant sectors.

To support these "on-the-ground" initiatives, the chief executives of Health, Education, Justice, Social Development, Corrections and Police should have clear goals for their contribution to care and protection within their annual performance agreements with their respective ministers. These should include evidence of inter-departmental collaboration.

The Prime Minister should urgently establish a joint ministerial team to improve New Zealand's performance in care and protection.

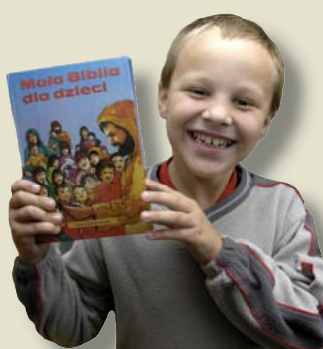
NZCCSS challenges all political parties to publicly commit to work cooperatively to improve New Zealand's child wellbeing and safety as a nationwide priority. This will mean:

- agreeing to publicly acknowledge the collective responsibility of all New Zealanders in ensuring the care and protection of children
- acknowledging that mistakes will be made - some services will fail, some instances of poor performance will emerge.

It can be done. For our children's sake, lets get on and do it!

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Cover Photograph

Pictured is former Scots College chaplain the Rev Richard Gray making a presentation to student Kelvin Scholtz. Photograph supplied courtesy of Scots College.

Snow doesn't stop ministry



June's extreme snowfall provided challenges for parishes in inland Canterbury.

The Rev Chris Bedford of Ellesmere Cooperating Parish is shown in the photo above surveying his street in Leeston, where 15cm of snow fell.

Chris says most people in Leeston didn't lose power and many also have a secondary source of heating such as a wood or coal burner. There was greater concern about whether the thawing snow would cause subsequent flooding.

But the snow stayed on the ground for an "astonishing" two weeks, he says, and people are hopeful that the melt-water will replenish subterranean water levels depleted over summer. "We've gone from drought to bog."

The Rev Shona Bettany of Mackenzie Cooperating Parish, who with her husband the Rev Phil Bettany is based in Fairlie, says half a metre of snow fell on their roof at home in about 12 hours. "It just came down and the power went off in the middle of the night. Everyone woke up that morning to no power and lots of snow."

Shona says being without power was most difficult for households that have converted entirely to electricity, which includes many elderly people no longer able to manage coal ranges. "They were the first people that we called on to see how they were."

Some of the more frail older people were shifted into a local rest home, which made extra beds available.

Shona says there's a strong sense of community in the area and people

automatically look out for each other during difficult times. "In rural communities, people pull together." A resource centre coordinates help and runs a foodbank, leaving the church to focus more on meeting spiritual needs.

Mackenzie Cooperating Parish has two worship centres in Fairlie and is also responsible for the Church of the Good Shepherd in Lake Tekapo. The big snowfall on Monday 12 June meant a wedding of a couple from overseas booked for the Church of the Good Shepherd on the Wednesday could not be held, as Burkes Pass was closed.

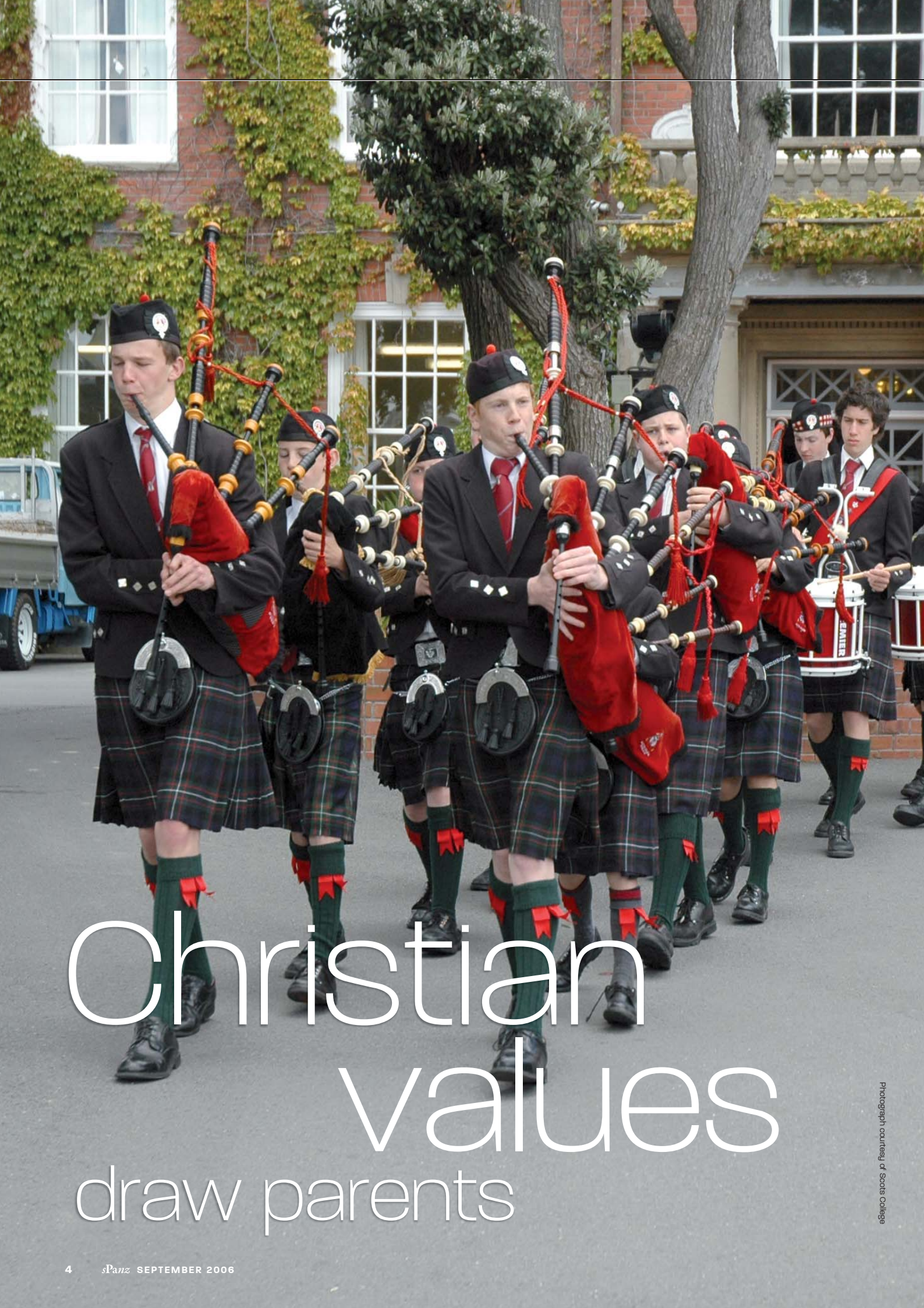
Other adjustments to normal life included leaving taps on overnight in older houses so they didn't freeze, Shona says. Most children had a week off school or kindergarten.

Some people living on farms, including parishioners in the Burkes Pass area, were without power for 10 days. Because of the need to feed out to livestock and the poor condition of the roads, they were unable to attend church services. Shona says a side effect was improvising by playing CDs when neither of the congregation's two pianists were able to make it.

The first half of July continued to be very cold in Fairlie, with frosts of between -10 and -12 degrees Celsius. At lunch time, the temperature would edge above zero, perhaps hitting 5 degrees by three o'clock, before it started to get cold again.

Things were "pretty much back to normal" by mid July, though some spots in all-day shade had up to 20cm of snow remaining.

Amanda Wells **sPanz**



Christian values draw parents

Photograph courtesy of Scots College

Church schools

typically have a chaplain, a Christian element to assemblies, and religious education classes. But what else sets them apart from the schools developed by the state system? Amanda Wells reports.

Tradition, clear values and pastoral care are proving strong drawcards in the education market, with Presbyterian schools spoken to by *sPanz* experiencing demand that outstrips the number of places they can offer.

Grant Lander, rector of Lindisfarne College in the Hawkes Bay, says Christian values are promoted in the relationship between staff and students, between parents and staff, and with the wider community. "We have a caring and family-type atmosphere."

"If it's only in the chapel, we're not doing it right. It has to be lived out in the relationship and interactions that exist on a day-to-day basis."

He says the college takes practical steps to ensure its values are reflected in its operations, including worship services three times a week, on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday evenings. Five times a term, between 400 and 500 people, including a large number of parents, attend the Sunday service.

Mr Lander says that the values-based Christian ethos appears to be a major attraction to parents.

Lindisfarne has a roll of 485, with 215 boarders, making it one of the largest boarding schools in the country. This year it will accept 85 new students for the 2007 year – out of 245 applications.

Lindisfarne is integrated, meaning it receives the same government funding for each student as a state school but as the buildings and land remain privately owned, it can charge a fee to meet the costs of property development and maintenance.

Mr Lander says it's important the school roll continues to reflect its rural and urban community in the face of this strong demand. "We don't want to be an elitist institution."

Lindisfarne has a special relationship with Tuhoe, accepting 28 students under the Te Whaiti Nui-a-toi scheme.

Mr Lander says his only concern about Presbyterian Church education is that it is not responding to the level of demand in the community.

"We've got five Presbyterian boys' schools and it's been that number since 1953. When is the sixth one going to come? Where is it going to come?"

"Is the Church going to be more proactive?"

"We have a real role to play in evangelising and passing on the message that has perhaps been underestimated in the wider Church."

Mr Lander says opportunity exists in areas of population growth. For example, the government will invest about \$237 million over the next 10 years to build seven new schools in Flat Bush, Manukau City. The schools are needed to meet population growth in Flat Bush, which is projected to increase to 40,000 by 2020. That includes more than 8,500 school age children.

Parents who were brought up connected to the Church often seem to want a Christian education for their children, even if they are no longer involved, Mr Lander says.

However, an interesting recent trend is that some parents have kept attending Sunday worship even after their children have left the school, he says.

Lindisfarne's prospective students need to have a commitment to the Christian faith, which Mr Lander says often deepens during their association with the school. Ten students from years 9 and 7 are being baptised this year.

Lindisfarne also has a strong link with St Andrew's Presbyterian in Hastings and worships with this congregation on a regular basis.

Milada Pivac, deputy principal (pastoral) of Wellington's Queen Margaret College, says being a Christian school means modelling Jesus' injunction to love God and your neighbour as a matter of course.

"In terms of behaviour from the girls, it means as much as the individual can be convinced to exhibit it, but the school will not let up in its modelling or its specific teaching."

Students attend a religious education lesson and chaplain's assembly every week, and Ms Pivac says it is very rare for anyone to seek to be excused on the ground of moral objection.

Ms Pivac characterises the college's relationship with local Presbyterian churches as "one of mutual respect", with annual services at St Andrew's on the Terrace and St John's in the City.

Looking ahead for Christian education, Ms Pivac says its essential values will remain eternal. "We will and must stay faithful to them... and yet we must be fluid and relevant in the way we deliver them."

Scots College principal Tim Oughton says being a Church school is not so much about being Biblical but about being values-based and "walking the talk".

Scots' programme of religious instruction covers other world religions and ethics, as well as Christian education.

Care and concern for others, tolerance and being accepting of difference underpin the college's day-to-day life, he says

Mr Oughton says the school has developed strong links with St John's in the City and St Christopher's in Seatoun.

An independent school, Wellington-based Scots has close to 700 students from years 1 to 13. The roll has increased by 150 over the past four years but there are no further plans to grow beyond this "optimal" size, he says.

About 50 students start in the secondary school and 60 in the primary school each year. Mr Oughton says 2007 is already closed to new students, which is a trend that has emerged only in the past couple of years.

"There must be something going on. Parents are very concerned about values." *sPanz*

Photo facing page: The Scots College pipe band in full uniform.

CD Picks



The Flaming Lips

At War with the Mystics

After their previous record, 2002's *Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots*, moved this oddball Oklahoma trio as close as they've been to the mainstream during their 20-year career, *At War with the Mystics* returns the group's sense of fun and adventure to the centre. Despite goofy song titles like "The wizard turns on the giant silver flashlight and puts on his werewolf moccasins", the group's music is surprisingly emotionally affecting, as front-man Wayne Coyne confronts weighty issues like his own mortality. Hitting reference points from seventies Pink Floyd to Brian Wilson, *At War with the Mystics* takes its share of chances, and is somewhat uneven as a result. But with some absolutely stunning highlights it's well worth the effort.



Nathan Tasker

Must Be More

Sydney-born Nathan Tasker has recorded seven albums over the last decade, recently gaining wider recognition in the mainstream Pacific Songwriter of the Year competition. It is difficult to avoid comparisons with Tasker's compatriot Paul Colman; Tasker's message is similarly clear and direct, whether he's analysing relationships like a singer-songwriter, or leading worship in the excellent "You Are Worthy". Recorded in Nashville with a roster of notable musicians from Jars Of Clay, Out Of The Grey and Sixpence None The Richer, *Must Be More* is arguably more polished than it needs to be, but Tasker's songs are well written and full of truth, and this subtle album will get under your skin if given half a chance.

Graham Fyfe is a musician for Knox-St Columba Church, Lower Hutt

Fronting-up

Emily Wootton talks to *sPanz* about her new role supporting parishes within the Auckland Presbytery.

What does your role involve?

I support youth, child, and family ministry in the Auckland Presbytery. We follow the national framework for this position, so I provide networking, resourcing, training, and advocacy as well as involve myself in events happening around the presbytery.

Why did you choose this ministry?

I've worked in YCF ministry for many years. I enjoy being a part of introducing young people and children to the potential they have through a relationship with Jesus. Through my involvement in the national Presbyterian Youth Ministry focus group, I became more and more passionate about seeing the need for a more strategic approach in order for us to be more effective at what we do. Simple things like communication and sharing of ideas can relieve a lot of burdens and loneliness that YCF workers/leaders may feel as they serve alone in their little patches.

What have you been involved with in your region?

Now that the structure for my position is fairly well set up, I'm working on getting around and meeting everyone. It has been fantastic seeing the diverse and creative ways that different churches fulfil their mission. We're getting excited about running our second year of "Going Somewhere" this term – this is the course for developing young leaders. Another focus this term is getting ready for General Assembly. Auckland Presbytery is very busy making sure we host a successful Assembly at St Kents.

What have you learned about God through this work?

The importance of a childlike faith. Not childish – it's important for our faith to mature and grow. But working at retaining some of the simplicity of a child's faith – wonder, amazement, passion, awareness. Not allowing life's busyness, the complications of society and the adult world to crowd out a phenomenal relationship with God.



What is the most exciting thing about being involved in it?

When a young person or child realises just how much God loves them. Especially if they haven't had much awareness of this in the past. The hunger and thrill with which they receive this news is exciting. Seeing them follow through and develop a relationship of meaning that changes their lives is even more exciting.

What have been the biggest challenges?

Life's random events have been the biggest challenges. We've walked alongside people facing some enormous pressures and unthinkable events. These have tested faith, friendships, and abilities.


Who has inspired you?

My mum. Although we used to find her consistent friendship evangelism embarrassing at places like the supermarket and library, God used her openness many times throughout her life to connect with many people in a moment of need.

What are your future plans?

I just started this role in February, so plan to be here for the foreseeable future.

Can you recommend any books or CDs?

Dangerous Wonder – an adventure in Childlike faith by Mike Yaconelli. I love any CD by NZ band Eight. 

Connecting for Christ

Every year in the middle of winter, Presbyterian youth leaders from around New Zealand get together for Connect. Andrew Colgan reports on this year's event.

Forest Lakes camp near Otaki (Wellington) was again the venue, and the 5th Connect saw 150 people, ranging to the young to the young at heart, examine the theme of incarnational evangelism – the “out” of Presbyterian Youth Ministry’s “in-around-out” focus.

Keynote speaker Lloyd Martin explored the concept of a mission paradigm of youth ministry – going beyond simply looking after the young people already in our churches, or seeking to attract more young people to boost numbers – to a place where we are an active part of our wider communities caring for and serving those beyond our immediate youth groups. Lloyd also gave us a close look at some important relational dynamics, which many of us often struggle with, allowing important

reflection on ways of interacting with and ministering to our young people.

As usual, a number of optional seminars allowed us to pick up more tools to take home at the end of the weekend. These included exploration of our calling, the use of art and creative expression, safety of those in our care, the centrality of social justice to youth ministry, worship leading and global mission possibilities.

The worship was led by the amazing Connect band from PIC Newtown (I'm still not sure whether there's a link with the name) and this was a highlight of the weekend, as was the communion service on Sunday morning.

Prescribed fun was again on the agenda – getting us out in the sun on Saturday afternoon and giving us a taste of the all-important chaos to which we subject our young people on a weekly basis – it is an integral part of group-building which is foundational to youth ministry. Karaoke has become an important part of Connect over the years and 2006 was no exception, as performance after embarrassing performance continued until the early hours of Sunday morning.

But the most important part of Connect is the opportunity it gives us to do just that – connect! Being surrounded by a group of people who are paddling the same canoe in different places all around the country; being able to share the ups and downs of youth ministry with people asking the same questions and facing the same challenges is an incredibly uplifting experience.

As always, I left Connect feeling refreshed, inspired and ready to put a whole lot of new ideas into action. A big thanks to the PYM focus group and especially to Jo Ryan and Kathryn Grant for all their hard work in making this very special weekend happen. sPanz



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What's hot at GA06?

Sexuality and leadership

GA06 faces a decision on whether to confirm the ruling of the 2004 Assembly, which excludes from the offices such as minister and elder anyone in a sexual relationship outside marriage. The ruling does not apply to homosexual persons who have been licensed, ordained or inducted prior to 2004.

General Assembly 2004 voted to adopt this ruling ad interim, meaning that it applied immediately. The motion then had to be approved by a majority of presbyteries before it could be sent back to GA06 for adoption. The presbytery vote was conducted during 2005, with a majority of presbyteries voting in favour of the exclusion motion.

GA06 has several options. It can choose to vote or not vote on the proposal to make the exclusion binding. If it chooses not to vote and to move on to the next item of business, then the proposal lapses. This would mean that the 2003 Church Judicial Commission decision would be the most recent interpretation of the Church's policy. The commission, headed by Sir Duncan McMullin, determined that there was no binding rule preventing the licensing, ordaining or inducting of homosexuals.

If GA06 votes on the motion, then it will be either passed or lost. If passed, then it would be confirmed as a binding rule. If lost, the McMullin decision would represent the most recent interpretation.

The stipend review

The review proposes that the remuneration for a senior minister increase by nearly \$6,000 over the two years from 1 July 2007 over and above the normal increases. This comes out of a context in which ministers' income has fallen behind wage movements since 1987, because it has been linked to the consumer price index rather than the wage index, to which the paper proposes it should in future be linked. The proposal also suggests, among other things, that parishes should, at their discretion, be able to pay to their minister another 20 percent on top of stipend without presbytery approval.

The School of Ministry review

The paper before GA06 proposes that the training of ministers move away from a residential course in Dunedin to internships in parishes around the country. The Centre for Christian Leadership would be a training network offering seminars and refresher courses for all leaders within the Church. Assembly Executive Secretary the Dr Rev Kerry Enright says that whatever model is used for leadership training, there are some core values for the Presbyterian Church, such as having an educated

ministry that will remain. "What we aim for is to provide the best training possible within the financial capacity we have."

The Focal Identity Statement

This proposes that the doctrinal basis of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand should be re-articulated for a new generation. In practice, this means adopting a new confession of faith. All ministers and elders when ordained or inducted state their belief in the fundamental doctrines of the Reformed faith, drawn from the Westminster Confession of Faith. That Confession was drawn up in 1647. Mr Enright describes the new statement being presented to GA06 as a "robust Reformed confession, consistent with our tradition".

Book of Order rewrite

Mr Enright says many parts of the existing Book of Order cause difficulties because of a lack of clarity and inconsistency with the direction of the Church and the law of the land. Parts of it from 1876 are out of date. The Book of Order Rewrite task group has been working since 1997 on the version that is being presented to GA06. It is written in clearer language

and aims to make procedures more flexible, compliant with today's legal environment and consistent with the mission of the Church.

Assembly Assessment review

The task group reviewed Assembly Assessment and has recommended a retention of the assessment with several alterations. Mr Enright says there has been strong support for the basic elements of the existing Assembly Assessment in the feedback received to date. The alterations proposed include increased flexibility for parishes that encounter exceptional financial circumstances, such as receiving bequests tagged for specific non-core purposes.

Another potential hot topic is the General Assembly meeting review's suggestion to reduce numbers attending Assemblies to between 230 and 250 people.

More information about these matters can be obtained from presbytery or by visiting the General Assembly section of the Presbyterian website: www.presbyterian.org.nz/ga06

by Amanda Wells 



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SPANZ 3/05

Medical missionary honoured

The University of Otago has awarded an honorary degree to long-serving Presbyterian missionary Dr Beryl Howie, QSO, who dedicated her life to serving women in developing countries.

Dr Howie, who is currently a member at Somervell Memorial Presbyterian Church in Auckland, studied medicine at the university and received the Honorary Doctor of Science degree at a graduation ceremony in May.

Dr Howie is a former professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at the famous Christian Medical College and Hospital in Ludhiana in the Punjab, India. After postgraduate training in the United Kingdom, she spent more than 22 years at Ludhiana. During her time at the College, 1,100 medical students graduated and 118 students received speciality postgraduate training in obstetrics and gynaecology.

Before she left, all the expatriate senior teaching staff were completely replaced by trained national staff, who have remained in charge. Many others moved on to positions of responsibility in hospitals throughout India, where they have been making a fine contribution to meeting the great medical needs of the community says Dr Howie.

She was delighted to have the opportunity to revisit India and the College in 2001 to meet up with many of her former students and postgraduate trainees.

“So many good friends and ex-colleagues who have been contributing so much. They are serving with competence, real dedication and devotion, and also often teaching others.”

When asked of the highlights of her work she says, “It’s the great privilege for all of us who are Christians to choose to serve in the place where the Lord wants us to be, doing what He plans for us to do, and what He enables us to do”.

In announcing the honorary doctorate, Vice-Chancellor Professor David Skegg said he was delighted the University was able to recognise Dr Howie’s selfless service to others.

“Dr Howie exemplifies many of the finest qualities Otago seeks to instil in its graduates: personal commitment, the willingness to take up new challenges and a desire to improve the lives of her fellow human beings.”

After receiving her honorary degree, Dr Howie gave a convocation address to graduating students, where she spoke of distinguished British woman Edith Brown who was one of the United Kingdom’s first female doctors. She explained how Ms Brown responded to God’s call to go to India in 1891 to care for the needy women there, and later founded the Christian Medical College, which would have been an “enormous challenge and quite impossible without God’s leading and provision” says Dr Howie.

During her address, she also emphasised the challenge and responsibility that the contemporary graduating students had to build on the foundation that had been laid in the degrees. Dr Howie challenged them to add to their knowledge and to use their valuable training to contribute to meeting the needs of people around the world.

The honorary degree is added to Dr Howie’s other academic achievements which include being a Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in England, and becoming an Honorary Fellow of the Australasian College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in 1984.

From 1984 to 1989 Dr Howie travelled widely as medical adviser for Interserve (formerly the Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship). In 1986, her handbook, *High Risk Obstetrics for Third World Countries*, was published. [sPanz](#)

Church farm wins environment award

Efforts to protect the environment have seen a Church-owned farm win the best dairy farm award at the Wellington region's Ballance Farm Environment Awards.

Sharemilkers Keith and Jo Dennis were awarded the accolade at a function earlier this year.

The couple's environmental efforts have included planting rows of poplars and alders across the farm in a bid to minimise wind erosion on the 165-hectare property, which can see gales of 100-120 km per hour between September and January. The trees will also provide shade for the cows and reduce moisture evaporation.

The Dennises have been on the Wairarapa farm since 2002 and during that time their efforts have seen milk production per hectare increase by almost 50 percent. For the Church as well as the Dennises, this means more income and, in the Church's case, more money to distribute to mission initiatives.

During the 2005/06 year, around \$130,000 was distributed from the Church Property Trustees-administered Clarke Estate (this is the formal name of the farm) to the national Church for mission. The Church uses the money to support initiatives led by the global mission and national mission enablers.

Convener of the Church Property Trustees farm committee Maurice Brown says the couple entered the awards with the Church's blessing, and he pays tribute to their efforts in bringing about increased dividends for the Church as well as getting the farm up to standard after a period of neglect.

"Ninety-nine percent of the credit goes to Keith and Jo for putting in place good farm management practices."

Mr Dennis explains that the couple didn't hesitate to enter the awards when it was suggested to them.

"This farm was in a real state of neglect when we arrived and it had major ragwort problem. We feel all that has been achieved here needs to be celebrated."

The award judges agreed, saying, "the entire operation at Flaxburn demonstrates an extremely well-planned, considerate, forward-focused outlook, designed to enhance both the productive and innate qualities of the land to ensure it remains sustainable."

By Josephine Reader 



istockphoto.com/Brian Wathen

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For more information contact:

**Douglas Langford, Secretary
Church Property Trustees
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Wellington**

Phone : 04 381 8290
Email: doug@presbyterian.org.nz

Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor

I am writing to the readers of *sPanz* and in particular the ladies of the Presbyterian women's fellowships who raised a marvellous sum last year to support hospital chaplains in New Zealand.

As chairman of the support group for the Auckland hospital chaplains, I want to thank the Auckland fellowships, as their fundraising has meant we can continue to support two "ecumenical" chaplains.

Yes all chaplains work ecumenically, but most at Auckland City Hospital are paid by one denomination. We have two, one specifically for psychiatric and rehabilitation wards, the other for women's health (including the birthing unit) who are not

supported by any particular denomination. Apart from health board subsidies, we rely on contributions from various churches to pay their stipend and other expenses.

Around New Zealand support groups made up of representatives from many denominations, will be grateful for the money received from the women's fellowship fundraising.

Where churches were not part of that great effort, I am sure their local hospital chaplains would be pleased to receive support in cash or moral encouragement from a local congregation or individual.

Well done New Zealand ladies. Thank you all.

Pam Garlick (Mrs) 

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Readers are reminded that feedback is welcomed. Preference will be given to matters discussed in *sPanz*. Letters to the Editor should not exceed 300 words and may be edited for clarity or length. Letters should be sent to Editor, PO Box 9049, Wellington, and should include the writer's full name, home address and daytime telephone number.

Ministry study grants awarded

Ministry study grants totalling almost \$30,000 were awarded to eight ministers for their continuing ministry formation earlier this year.

The grants are made possible by the generosity of the Mary Ann Morrison and M.S. Robertson estates, which are administered by the Senatus of the School of Ministry.

Juan Kinnear of the School of Ministry confirms that applications are invited in April and September each year, and that those interested in applying should keep an eye out in Church publications such as *Bush Telegraph* and *Candour* for more details.

He says that to be eligible for a grant, the proposed course of study should aid the applicant's professional development; there should be potential benefit to and probability of significant service to the Church; and parish and presbytery approval must be obtained for the study. 



Synod grants \$1.5m for projects

A record \$1.5 million was allocated to over 40 community groups and Presbyterian parishes at the Synod of Otago and Southland's annual meeting earlier this year.

The projects that were approved range from building a new church to support for educational programmes.

The Cromwell Presbyterian Parish received the largest grant from the Ecclesiastical Fund, which provides for Presbyterian buildings; \$300,000 was allocated over a period of two years for building a new church. The Central Southland Presbyterian Parish also received \$200,000 to expand their Winton church complex.

In making the Ecclesiastical Fund Committee's recommendations, convener Lyn Murray says, "We have indeed been blessed and continue to be so. Our God has been so good to us, and we believe that, as his servants, we have a tremendous responsibility to allocate the fruits of His goodness wisely".

Mr Murray was one of several committee conveners who paid tribute to the Otago Foundation Trust Board for its excellent stewardship, saying, "Once again they have produced an income which has considerably exceeded their budget, which means that the Synod's funding committees have more income to allocate".

The establishment of a part-time regional youth co-ordinator to provide support for the youth ministry workers within Synod boundaries was one of the highlights from the Mission and Evangelism Fund allocations. Initiatives with a proven track record like student.soul and the Synod mission adviser also received grants in this funding round.

In his report, Synod Life Committee convener Fergus Syme says that there have been encouraging reports about the work that the Synod's mission advisor Mr Bruce Fraser is doing, and that a review of the position, which was established last year, will be undertaken in the near future.

Around 40 percent of the distributions from the Educational Fund Committee, which makes allocations for both secular and religious educational purposes, went to support minister training and development at the School of Ministry. Tertiary chaplaincy at various locations, the churches education commission and support for the religious studies curriculum at Columba College were among the other initiatives supported.

As well as the grants made for various projects, the other main highlight from the meeting was the installation of a new Synod moderator. The Rev Dr Alan Kerr, minister of Knapdale Waikaka Parish, was installed into the position for a period of one year, and he succeeds Mr Lyn Murray, of Waitahuna. [iParaz](#)

This new church under construction at Cromwell is one of the many projects that received Synod of Otago and Southland funding at the Synod's latest annual meeting.



Bartha Hill

Reviews

by Edward de Bono

A New Religion: H+ (plus)

Random House (July 2006)

The cover of this slim tome bore the subtitle “How to live your life positively through happiness, humour, help, hope, health”. The fight to hold cynicism in abeyance began immediately.

You may remember de Bono as the “hats” guy; the self-proclaimed inventor of lateral thinking and pin-up of many corporates and local bodies around the world.

De Bono’s “new religion” is all about us. “In H+ there is only a belief in the potential of yourself and in the potential of your fellow human beings.” To me this seemed a vaguely familiar concept: H is for humanism, perhaps. (In fact, on p 20, de Bono reveals that H+ stands for “Human plus”).

De Bono claims H+ represents a way of life compatible with any other religion including Christianity. “You can keep all the belief and values of those other religions and simply add H+ to them... there is no contradiction at all.”

However, hackles may rise at de Bono’s emphasis on what we might term “works”. He says H+ is about doing positive things because “your self worth arises from your achievements”. In other words, you must do certain things to be worthy. This does not seem to me an idea that sits in comfortable coexistence with Christ’s sacrifice on the cross.

“H+ is entirely positive. The emphasis is not on sins to be avoided but on things that are to be done.” De Bono advocates that people should fill a pre-determined daily quota of “pons” (positive, helpful actions; one of the many nonsense-like words coined during the course of this small book). He is careful to point out that giving to a beggar should not be determined a “pon” because “it may be antisocial behaviour to encourage begging by providing beggars with an unearned source of income”. Your “pons” must be spontaneous and not part of charitable endeavours you are already involved in.

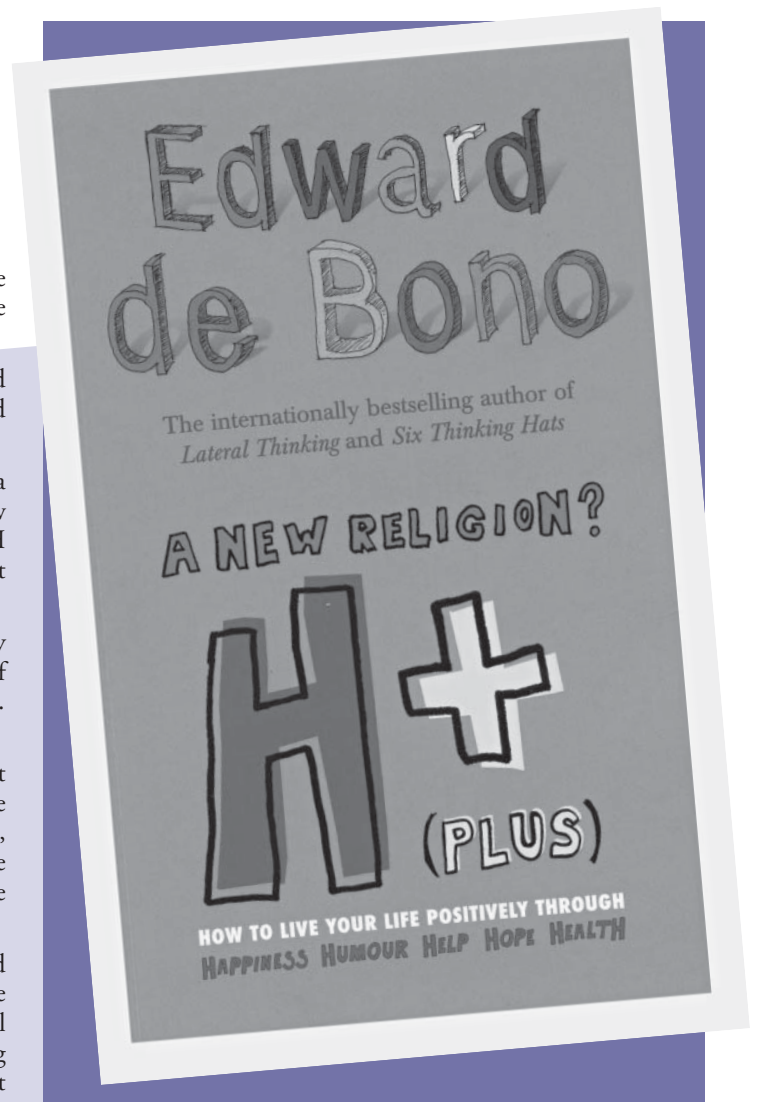
He says it is totally acceptable that your motivation for doing these acts may be to boast of them to others. In fact, groups will arise on the Internet where people gather to proclaim their quota achievements, he suggests. “It is not a matter of *being* a good person. You must be a person doing good things”.

De Bono suggests that those failing to fulfil their self-assigned quota of “pons” should fine themselves and proposes that this money be sent to the H+ headquarters.

But wait, there’s more: a “pointless” daily ritual, a secret nose/hand signal to recognise fellow believers, and a demand that all practitioners register with de Bono’s central database.

As I reached the end of the book, which notches up 93 pages only because two or three paragraphs are printed on each page, I wondered if H+ was a cunning satire. But I fear de Bono is in earnest.

Reviewed by Amanda Wells 



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Years of service by seniors celebrated

On 30 April there was a celebration at the Waiareka-Weston Church – 17 over 80 year olds were honoured.

This particular date was chosen because every 5th Sunday the parish's three worship centres gather together.

"We wanted to honour and recognise these wonderful seniors who have throughout their lives given themselves sacrificially to serving the church and the community. The example of their faith and lives is legendary," says the Rev Nancy Parker.

The emphasis of the gathering, called "Patchworking together", was on the value and importance of every piece in the patchwork, just as every person in the church has a valued and special place, says Nancy.

"Without everyone the church and community would be incomplete."

Invitations were sent to seniors' families and to the seniors themselves, and the church was packed with those from the church family as well as many visitors from the community and beyond.

Certificates were presented and stories told of the amazing and worthwhile contributions made. Both young and old enjoyed one another.

The church's young people and children were totally involved in worship, including presenting songs and reading the tributes. The children presented the certificates and helped put together a patchwork that was made to illustrate the occasion.



Annette Booth who created the patchwork together with some of the children involved in the service Back row: Melanie Grasmueck Front row: Emma Middlemiss, Amy Bearsley, Selene Kane, Justine Middlemiss.

Nancy says it was a wonderful day and families – grandparents, parents, young people and children – all valued the opportunity to celebrate, and valued each other and the good life and stability that Christian faith has offered to their lives.

"We recognised that these wonderful people have formed the foundation of the life of this church through their commitment, faith and dedication.

"A month later, people all over our community were still talking about the celebration, and our seniors' coffee morning was crowded in May. People young and old gained a fresh sense of belonging.

"It was so good to celebrate the faithfulness of God and to recognise the varying roles of each person and the differing ways that people have contributed in the ongoing patchwork of this church," she says. **sPanz**

www.presbyterian.org.nz/ga06

General Assembly 2006: 28 Sep - 2 Oct



check it out!

'Channels of good news' the way of the future

Having started in September 1996, this year's General Assembly marks the end of 10 years of service as Assembly Executive Secretary for the Rev Dr Kerry Enright.

Change has characterised the Church's life during this time according to Kerry, who believes that the future will bring more change along with many reasons to celebrate.

He speaks with enthusiasm about the opportunities that exist for the Church saying, "the Gospel has amazing potential to change people's lives and society".

He says that society's increasing interest in spiritual matters provides those within the Church more opportunities to act as "channels of Good News". The challenge, Kerry suggests, is how we respond to these opportunities as both individuals and as a body.

Living faith communities that are warm, relevant, supportive and encouraging

to which people wanting to explore spirituality can be pointed are part of the answer, he says.

"Our purpose is to participate in the mission of Jesus Christ, not primarily to serve those who are already members. We've been saying this for at least 20 years, but haven't grasped it in our being."

Kerry believes that some people within the Church have become disheartened, when they've seen that the Church is not what it was 40 years ago.

"What I find heartening are the faith convictions which stand at our core, the perpetual thinking about how these call us to act, and the innovative ways churches are engaging their communities."

The Church of tomorrow will probably be more diverse, with fewer parishes with full-time ministers, a leaner infrastructure and more informal networks and ways of gathering suggests Kerry.

"Larger regional churches have emerged with several staff, alternative funding

streams, fresh styles of worship, and many community initiatives. At the same time, effective small congregations are emerging. Gatherings outside Sunday worship and church buildings have become normal."

With worship happening in 14 languages around the country, Kerry also believes "the next step is to understand that those of anglo-celtic descent are but one strand, not the norm".

He adds that he has felt truly blessed experiencing the wealth of cultures within the church and also in the personal relationships built up in the church world-wide.

Kerry concludes by saying, "being AES has been a wonderful privilege and opportunity for service".

While Kerry has yet to decide what the future holds for him personally, it is certain that his ministry will continue in one form or another as he, and the rest of the Church, seek ways to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the future.

- A selection panel will recommend to General Assembly 2006 that the Rev Martin Baker (currently minister at First Church in Dunedin) be appointed to the position of Assembly Executive Secretary. Should Assembly approve the recommendation, Martin is expected to take up the role toward the end of 2006.

What does the Assembly Executive Secretary do?

- » Champions mission across the church
- » Leads the Assembly service team including goal setting and managing performance
- » Liaises and advises on polity and judicial matters
- » Shares in representing the Presbyterian Church to other denominations and organisations
- » Provides support to Council of Assembly, committees, task and work groups
- » Maintains and updates policies and regulations

by Josephine Reader 



Building is Calvin's new mission tool

A building extension featuring a 500-seat auditorium is the new mission base for Calvin Community Church in Gore.

Explaining the purpose of the \$1.2 million building extension at the official opening, senior pastor the Rev Peter Cheyne said: "It would be so easy to fall in love with the building, as if the church exists for the sake of the building. In fact, of course, we know that the building exists for the church. The building is merely a tool".

The upgraded building is almost unrecognisable from the original, because it is bigger, taller and has more facilities than the old structure, which was built in 1959. Among the new features are an auditorium that seats up to 500 people and is kitted out with multimedia gear, a large and welcoming foyer, new office space, a lounge and resource room.

"It feels very much as if we're entering a new era in the life of the church. Life is going to be different from now on," says Peter.

The project has been 12 years in the pipeline. The idea for an enhanced building came from a "Future Options" team, which was tasked with investigating prospects and opportunities.

In an overview of the project to the congregation, convener of the Future Options team Eric Roy described the group's vision for the new building as solving the shortcomings of the existing one in light of the parish's expanding programmes and increasing numbers.

The new facility was used for the first time in April this year, with its opening marked by two special gatherings – firstly a "thank you" function for all the building contractors, neighbours and volunteers who helped out on the project, and secondly an official opening and special service.

Over 500 people attended the opening service, which was led by Calvin's youth ministry team. The guest speaker was one of last year's NZ Idol finalists, Steve Broad.

In a move that helped the congregation connect with the new facility, each person was asked to write the names of those they wanted to see saved on stairs in the auditorium and the carpet was laid on top. During the dedication service, the congregation prayed for those people.

Peter explains that the congregation quite deliberately did not go to the community for funds, believing instead that "we support the community, they don't support us".

Peter explains that the congregation was asked to pray and hear God's call. Through this prayerful deliberation, the congregation contributed a significant amount of the total project cost. Peter describes as the process "faith-raising rather than fundraising". The funds from the congregation were supplemented by a \$200,000 grant from the Synod of Otago and Southland and income from other sources.


Already the vision as a base for mission that can also be used by the community is starting to be realised. In recent months, a school held its junior concert in the auditorium and the local




Inside the new auditorium, which seats up to 500 people.

polytechnic is regularly using the kitchen facility to hold its barista training courses.

Gilbert Reid of Win-Win Projects was responsible for project management, and brought a framework to the project that he had previously used and continues to use on other church projects with which he is involved.

Explaining the framework, he advises that the Church was the purchaser of materials, services and sub-contractors, which helped keep costs down by minimising the "in-between margins" that are charged by groups at various parts of the supply chain. 



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Singing with conviction

As part of the Singing with Conviction pilot project being delivered at 5 prison sites throughout the country, earlier this year a small choir concert was performed at the Faith Based Unit at Rimutaka Prison.

People arrived slowly, looking for seats that would give them the best view of the choir that was about to perform for the first time in front of a live audience. An expectant buzz filled the air and apart from the ominous high fences topped with barbed wire outside the performance venue you would never have guessed that this concert was taking place inside a prison. The choir for this very special performance was a group of nine prison inmates and the audience was made up of invited guests and fellow inmates from the Faith Based Unit.

Leading the group was Brenda Shearer (musical composer, singer and tutor) and followed by a brief introduction, the

choir swung into action with a version of Jesus is alright with me, followed by the old favourite Lean on me, followed by a rendition of Amazing Grace in the Blind Boys of Alabama style.

The audience responded with great enthusiasm. Two soloists also performed, both accompanying themselves on an electric piano. One sang an Italian aria and the other performed his own original composition.

Three further songs were performed by the choir followed by a supper generously provided by Prison Fellowship. The Faith Based Unit choir will be recorded by an audio technician as a record of this highly successful arts based program for inmates, facilitated by Arts Access Aotearoa.

Article reprinted with kind permission of Inside Out, the Prison Fellowship magazine.




About the Faith Based Unit

This 60-bed Faith Based Unit opened in October 2003 in partnership with the Prison Fellowship of New Zealand.

The unit provides a transformational community environment, characterised by Christian programmes, activities and daily prayer.

Weekend "retreats" within the prison are held every six months, engaging with volunteers from local churches. Worship, support and spiritual activity involving external church groups are also features of the unit.

Normal prison regulations apply to inmates in the Faith Based Unit. 



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Snapshots

Photo credit: Ian Thomson



Photo credit: Amanda

ABOVE:

Ministry students and their families recently attended rural retreat in Lawrence and Tapanui as part of their training programme. Many students come from urban environments so the retreat provides first-hand experience of life in a rural ministry context, says the Rev John Roxborough. The group is pictured on one of the farm visits that were part of the weekend's activities.

LEFT:

Around 150 people from parishes around the country attended Council for World Mission-funded regional media training workshops, given by the Assembly Office Communications Team. This seminar at Calvin Community Church in Gore was one of 25 workshops held.

RIGHT:

The Presbyterian Archives website www.archives.presbyterian.org.nz will shortly be highlighting the work of the Deaconess movement in its popular quarterly photo gallery. Starting 1 September, and using many colour images taken almost 50 years ago, this shot of Sr Catherine Hollister-Jones spreading the Christian message through rural evangelism in India is one of the images that will be showcased.



If your Parish has a contribution for this page, send the photo and caption to Spanz, PO Box 9049, Wellington.

Harvest of promise for APW

The first impression was the most striking one. Delegates to the Association of Presbyterian Women (APW) conference, held in Christchurch during April, were met by a group of busy Presbyterian women carrying out registration tasks while wearing elegant tiaras!

Alison Blackler, of the Christchurch conference committee, confessed that the idea had been hers. "It was to distinguish the committee members so delegates could find them when they needed to know things. If you have a problem, talk to anyone in a tiara," she explains. While the committee members' tiaras were a light-hearted joke, they were also effective as the rest of their conference organisation ran equally smoothly.

The conference theme, "Harvest of Promise", was reinforced with each table carrying a floral arrangement of wheat. A scarecrow held protective arms over a dramatic autumn display of pumpkins, tomatoes, flowers, nuts and fruit.

The formal conference opening included a roll call, where each Presbyterian marked its presence with corn dollies that were decorated to support the "Harvest of Promise" theme. Each dolly had been assembled on a simple cross of wheat stalks, in itself a potent symbol. The dollies were colourfully decorated with symbols of their region, and – once pegged across a line behind the speakers – formed a colourful reminder of their origins.

The meeting acknowledged the wonderful work of *Harvest Field* (APW's magazine) over the last century, and at the conference dinner, a special 56-page centennial edition was unveiled.

While *Harvest Field's* good work was acknowledged, there was also discussion during the conference's business session about whether the magazine could continue to be published in future.

Speakers described how *Harvest Field* had been a means of communication between the mission fields and the mission groups back home, and there was much discussion about the benefit of the magazine and the challenges of publishing in the future. Eventually, around 70 percent of those at the conference voted to discontinue publication of the magazine.

After the vote, the Moderator of the General Assembly, Rt Rev Garry Marquand, who chaired the business meeting said, "*Harvest Field* as we know it has come to an end. Generations of women have been enriched by this publication. It has grown; it has changed as it reflected its readers' needs... One season is over. A new season is beginning."

The conference agreed that the Wellington region would take responsibility for the editing of electronic news bulletin *Gleanings* to keep APW members up-to-date in future.

In other discussions during the conference, the central role of Christian mission in the APW's life was emphasised, and the value of the co-operation of Methodist Women's Fellowship was also acknowledged.

In her report, Convener Natalie Watkin spoke of the real value of mission projects. "Mission began the PWMU [Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union] and it continues to be an important aspect of our reason for being."

Natalie also spoke of the importance of communication and networking, particularly the impact of e-mail. Many delegates mentioned APW members' growing use of computer systems and internet communication in advancing its work. Members were encouraged make better use of the APW website, which already it contains a range of resources for Bible studies and programmes.

"We are resilient women... We need to be open to whatever new path God is setting us upon," Natalie says in her report, which was carried by acclamation. **By Trevor Agnew** *sPanz*



Photo credit: Trevor Agnew

The conference theme 'Harvest of Promise' was captured in this display which shows a scarecrow among the sheaves of wheat and pumpkins.

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Music is instrumental for mission

Kirsten Bevin from Opoho Presbyterian Church in Dunedin reports on what she hopes to do while serving at Onesua College, Vanuatu in 2007.

Much as it is hard for me to believe, this time next year I will be in the middle of my year-long mission experience, teaching music in Vanuatu. There will be no more frosty mornings and definitely no days off work for snow! Life will be very different.


Since I was young my life has involved huge amounts of music at home, school and church. Music is now my main work. I spend most of my time teaching, learning or playing music professionally or for fun. I guess you could say music is my way of life. Going to Onesua College, Vanuatu is a really exciting opportunity for me to strengthen my faith in God and to follow His call for me to serve in Vanuatu.

I have always wanted to do things with my life that were useful and had a purpose, and while studying flute at Otago University I often wondered how my playing could benefit anyone but myself. I guess I had not yet appreciated the joy that others got listening to me play even though I enjoyed listening to others! Now, in all the concerts in which I perform – from home family concerts to professional paid performances or rest home concerts at Christmas – I can see the smiles and happy memories being created.

Music is a way to show joy, to celebrate life, to praise God, to make friendships and to have huge amounts of fun, *most* importantly with other people. I love it when people come up to me and say they remember a particular concert, not necessarily because it was good, but because they had fun.

Next year I am going to share my enthusiasm for music with the students at Onesua College. As music is not currently taught as part of the school curriculum I will teach it as an extra-curricular activity. I plan to teach the keyboard, guitar and recorder, and am currently fundraising to purchase instruments for the school as their resources are limited. I can't imagine what I would have done at high school without all the musical opportunities I had and I would like students at Onesua to have a chance to develop their gifts in this area. However, I am sure I will learn as much from them as they will from me.

I feel blessed and excited that God has given me this opportunity to combine my loves of music, people and Him together in this useful way. I can't wait to be in Vanuatu meeting people and learning how I will fit in, live and teach in another culture. I don't think my music degree will provide me with the wisdom I need for this, but my upbringing in the Church and the prayers of all those supporting me will inspire me to put my faith in God and make the most of this experience.

I am already so encouraged by people who have approached me wanting to support this adventure. It is great to know people think you can do it and that they also think it is worth doing. This support will help me now, but even more next year when I remember everyone who is behind me. Thank you! I also want to acknowledge the generous donation of musical instruments for Onesua from KBB Music. I know the students will get so much enjoyment out of these instruments and your support is really encouraging. Thank you. 



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The changing face of Palestine

'It is the wall that has the biggest impact. Everywhere you go, you see the wall.'

When Christian World Service projects coordinator Trish Murray visited Palestine in May this year, she was struck by the expansion of the wall and Jewish settlements in the West Bank. "The wall dominates the landscape. It meanders through Jerusalem, is always in view in the West Bank and surrounds Gaza completely," she says. "We're talking about eight metre high concrete," she continues. "In some places it is 12 metres. It is not a fence or wall as we would understand but a massive barrier that impedes daily life."

The wall is making life harder and harder for the Palestinian families that CWS's partner, the Department of Service to Palestine Refugees, seeks to assist. CWS has supported the DSPR, a programme of the Middle East Council of Churches, for over 25 years. The plight of the Palestinian people – their efforts to survive, secure basic rights and live some semblance of normal lives amidst the violence and political conflict – is the focus of their work. The programme was recognised by the Association of Presbyterian Women and Methodist Women's Fellowship, who made DSPR's work their special project in 2005.

Large areas of land have been cleared to construct the wall. Well-established olive groves, a main source of income for many Palestinian families, have been demolished in the process. In one village, Trish met an elderly man who used to have olive trees "over there"; the area is now an empty tract of land serving as a no-go zone around the wall. Once able to support his family with the income from the olives, he can no longer take care of them.

What struck Trish the most about these stories was the resigned acceptance of the Palestinian people. "They know there is no hope for them to stay on their land." The growth in settlements has pushed many from their homes and farms. In Jerusalem, a city belonging to three religions, people are being cut off from the centres of their faith.

Far more life threatening is the issue of water. There are large aquifers under much of the West Bank. In such a dry, arid place, water is power. Some Jewish settlements are exercising this power, controlling the flow of water to Palestinian villages further down the valley. To help, DSPR has built tanks to collect rain water, providing families with their own water source and freeing up money for other household needs. DSPR also assists villages to negotiate water supply with local and Israeli authorities.

International politics makes others vulnerable. Abdel-Muhsen, a policeman, told Trish that like all civil servants, he had received no pay since the freeze on funds to the Palestinian Authority. He had been the main breadwinner for a large extended family. For 3 months he continued going to work, only stopping when he could no longer afford the bus fare. The DSPR provided his family with a water tank, which has enabled them to have their own vegetable garden. At least now they are able to eat well and no longer have to find the money to buy water.

In such ways, the DSPR works to improve the human rights and living conditions of disadvantaged Palestinians and Palestinian refugees in Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon and Israel. Their programmes include health-care (especially for infants and mothers), children's education, water access, vocational and



The cyclist in the foreground gives a sense of the size of the wall that divides life in the West Bank.

agricultural training, and support to establish small businesses. DSPR promotes community participation and peace within the wider communities, and through its work, hopes to support Palestinian people through the current difficulties and work towards a just political solution to this long-standing conflict.

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Presbyterian Support

Presbyterian Support: Celebrating Families Conference

Building strong families was the focus of the Celebrating Families Conference, hosted by Presbyterian Support New Zealand and Royal New Zealand Plunket Society, in Wellington on 25 May. The conference began with key speakers, followed by a panel discussion, with interactive workshops over the afternoon.

Dame Silvia Cartwright, Governor General, opened the conference by expressing the view that the family is the most important social institution that we have. She suggested we should focus on what the family does, rather than try to define family as a particular structure. She was followed by Dr Cindy Kiro, Children's Commissioner, who emphasised the importance of the family environment for raising children who are safe, nurtured, educated, healthy and have hope for the future.

Those themes were reinforced by Principal Youth Court Judge Becroft who made a link between family functionality and teenage offending, and advocated a "needs audit" for each child as s/he enters the school system so that an appropriate support plan can be implemented at that point. Other panel members discussed the importance of the community support for families (Presbyterian Support), support services for young children (Plunket), the desirability of an education/ public health intervention for adults to foster strong positive adult relationships within families (Rhonda Pritchard), the law as a tool to support family functioning (Dr Bill Atkin) and the preference for early (preventive) rather than remedial intervention (Ministry of


Social Development) and the challenges faced by Child Youth and Family in working with children and their families who have actually reached the intervention stage (CYF).

Three workshops gave participants the opportunity to apply collective wisdom from practice and theory to problems faced by every family. One workshop, on Discipline and Guidance, made use of real life examples to consider the effectiveness of smacking relative to other forms of discipline and guidance. Another, on Fostering Achievement, identified the need for families to have sufficient resource including information (e.g. training on parenting), community based support, and most particularly time to spend with each other doing positive activities. Building Family Relationships (the third workshop) recognised the enormous changes that have taken place over the past decades and anticipated more to come. That will require families, their communities and government agencies to work together, sharing information, improving support service networks and committing to effective partnerships.

Lindsay McIntyre (Chairman, Presbyterian Support New Zealand) summed it up, saying it was an excellent opportunity for the people at the front line of family services to advance a productive dialogue with Government agencies and funders in order to achieve better results for New Zealand families. "There are a number of different perspectives on how to build strong families and that diversity was reflected in the workshop proceedings".



The conference proceedings are currently being produced, and will be available on www.ps.org.nz or from PSNZ, PO Box 19222, Wellington.



DURING THE BATTLE, ABSALOM
CAME UNEXPECTEDLY UPON SOME
OF DAVID'S MEN. HE TRIED TO
ESCAPE ON HIS MULE, BUT AS HE
RODE BENEATH THE THICK
BRANCHES OF A GREAT OAK, HIS
HEAD GOT CAUGHT. HIS MULE KEPT
GOING AND LEFT HIM DANGLING IN
THE AIR.

Check it out in 2 Samuel 18:9

Read that part yet?

You'd better start checking out your Bible.
It's got some pretty cool stuff in it.

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