

Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

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Election issues special

The parties front up to our questions

www.presbyterian.org.nz

I'm excited about spiritual disciplines



Lynne Baab

Lynne Baab sees a flowering of interest in Christian spiritual disciplines, particularly among younger followers of Christ

What is a spiritual discipline? Any practice that helps us draw near to God. Bible study, prayer, service, fasting, Sabbath-keeping and other disciplines have been practiced throughout the history of the Church. Today they can take many new — and sometimes ancient — forms, such as *lectio divina* as a way to meditate on the Bible, contemplative and centring prayer, Taizé singing as a way to rest in God's peace, and mission trips to help with disaster relief.

I'm buzzed about Christian spiritual disciplines because they address several trends that are emerging in our time:

The desire to be connected to our history. Modernism looked to the future rather than to the past, and the Church in the modern era placed little emphasis on historic Christian traditions. With the rise of postmodernism, younger Christians are rediscovering these ancient practices.

In the first few centuries after Christ, Christians fasted frequently to free up money and food to give to the poor. The 40-Hour Famine, popularised by World Vision and practised all over New Zealand, is one example of reclaiming an ancient spiritual discipline, linking fasting to prayer and care for the poor.

The desire for authenticity. In a post-Christendom world, people feel no pressure to attend church. Churches today must help their members engage in expressions of faith that feel honest and address real-life issues. Many kinds of spiritual disciplines help Christians bring their faith into their everyday lives in an authentic way.

One example is breath prayer, when we breathe in God's love and peace, and breathe out our worries and concerns into God's hands. Breath prayer can be practiced in the car at stop lights, in front of a computer when a website is downloading, or in the queue at the supermarket. Many other "small" spiritual disciplines can be practiced as we move through our days, and can help us understand at a deep level that God truly cares about our whole lives.

The desire to participate. The days are past when people came to church only to hear the choir sing, the minister preach, and the worship leader pray. Churchgoers today want to participate in worship and service. Spiritual disciplines are one way in which Christians can engage in the life of faith at church, at home and even at work. Spiritual disciplines require active participation, and most of them can be exercised alone or with others in community.

The desire to experience God rather than talk about God. In my young adult life, it appeared that many Christians liked affirming truths about God more than experiencing God. Now the pendulum has swung the other way. Spiritual disciplines can help nurture an experience of God's presence.

I have been an enthusiastic Sabbath-keeper for many years, and on that day of rest I experience the comforting — and challenging — truth that God runs the universe and I don't. As I have learned to relax on the Sabbath and allow myself to be God's trusting child, I experience God's enfolding love and care in a deep and healing way.

All of these are reasons why spiritual disciplines are flowering in our time. What are the practices in your life that help you draw near to God? How can you nurture them in yourself and others?

Rev Dr Lynne M Baab (www.lynnabaab.com) is the author of several books on spiritual disciplines, lecturer in pastoral theology at the University of Otago, and adjunct tutor at Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership.

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Want to learn more about Christian spiritual disciplines?

Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices that Transform Us by Adele Ahlborg Calhoun (InterVarsity Press, 2006).

The Sacred Way: Spiritual Practices for Everyday Life by Tony Jones (Zondervan, 2005).

Celebration of Discipline by Richard Foster (HarperOne, 1988).

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Angela Singer

The Right Rev Pamela Tankersley contributes a regular column to *Spanz*

Moderator's musings



Recently our interim minister Jim Symons asked at a St David's church council meeting, "How do you *do justice* at St David's?" (He was quoting Micah 6:8 - "What does the Lord require of you, O mortals, but to do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God.")

We recognised that he was not asking us to define justice; it was the *doing* of justice that he was challenging us to think about. His view is that being active in *doing justice* is an essential ingredient of a Christ-centred, community-facing church. I would agree. We will do justice, along with acting compassionately and listening with humility, to what God calls us to be.

In 2008, Christian churches in New Zealand are more likely to be found out at the margins than at the centre of society. Does this give us a freedom that our forebears, who were the guardians of the morals of society, did not have? Martin Luther King said, "We are called to be the church that is maladjusted." We Christ-followers are called to be non-conformists, not to support blindly the status quo with our civic religion, but rather to challenge and critique from the margins, prayerfully discerning the perspective of the Kingdom of God.

In the politics of justice, how do we discern when to speak up? Where can we make an impact and for what reason? Our passion for Christ-centred justice is so diverse - different from congregation to congregation - so who decides where we put our energy? The choice needs to be based in the loving service in which we are involved as individuals and congregations. It is about not only walking the talk, but also talking from our walk. Our actions and

engagement with the community should inform the way we *do justice*.

It's because the members of the Upper Clutha Presbyterian Parish each take responsibility for their impact on the environment that the parish can involve itself in advocating green policies in the Wanaka District. It's because the Tapanui Church-on-the-Way puts energy into supporting its young people that it can raise a voice advocating for the safety and well being of all teenagers in the area.

I am grateful for the partnership of Presbyterian Support, whose staff can tell us what they find in their weekly encounters on the ground. Such information gives credibility to our advocacy on a national level as a Church concerned with those who don't get a fair deal in our society.

In this election year, we are already seeing a multitude of issues of public concern being raised. You will see that my colleagues, the leaders of the Anglican, Baptist, Catholic, Methodist Churches and the Salvation Army, and I are reminding New Zealanders of what it is to be a just and compassionate society. We have launched a programme called "Aroha tetahi ki tetahi: Let us look after one another". I hope you will find in these offerings a sense of the core concerns of Christ, who calls us to be his hands *and* his voice in a needy world.

As each congregation engages with its local community, it is earning the right to speak about the injustice it finds there. I challenge you to be a congregation that *does justice* in your place, both by bringing compassionate healing and by raising a prophetic voice.

Ka kite ano

Many blessings

Pamela



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Debating

In April 2008, *Spanz* invited each of the political parties to answer questions on six issues identified as of key concern to Presbyterians. Eight of the ten parties participated and their answers, along with our questions, can be found on the following pages. We also asked an array of commentators to characterise this election's key issue. Angela Singer introduces the responses.

Green Party policies largely back Labour, and for Labour it's business as usual; a continuation of existing Government policy. The most surprising answers to our questions came from National. We are used to the two main parties, Labour and National, offering quite different directions for New Zealand, but National is promising to keep Labour's policy on climate change and support New Zealand's anti-nuclear policy. Our interview with scientist Kevin Tate highlights his concerns about the development of environmental policy.

The robust attitude that NZ First brings to justice issues is questioned in an interview with Kim Workman, retiring executive director of the Prison Fellowship of New Zealand.

Ian McKinnon, deputy Mayor of Wellington, brings our attention to tertiary education. The former headmaster identifies lessons he believes are important for all the parties.

All the political parties have policies supportive of more funding and resources for aged care. Lin Hatfield Dodds, National Director Uniting Care Australia, says by this they are demonstrating they are both in-touch with societal attitudes and likely to gain the populist vote.



'Environment must take priority'

The environment should be high on the agenda this election and we ignore it at our peril, warns Kevin Tate, who is a scientist, part of the Church's Ecological Task Group and a member of St David's, Palmerston North.

"We were all given a heads-up last year from three global reports, all warning of global environmental change that if unheeded will imperil all life by the end of this century."

The reports talk about signs that show we are not living sustainably on the planet and how the planet is heating up in response, says Kevin. "Increased heat is a consequence of 200 years of very cheap energy in the form of oil and coal." He says that there is no denying the benefits these cheap fuels have brought us, with huge growth in economies and populations. "But now we're seeing the other side of the coin; we haven't been taking the planet into account in terms of the cost."

"The reports say we need to ensure that global warming temperatures don't rise above two degrees by the end of this century; that means we need to cut emissions by the middle of the century and stabilise emissions by 2020-2025, which is alarmingly only 12 years away."

The Government has been doing a pretty good job in trying to meet those targets, he says. "They want to encourage by 2025 the planting of 250,000 hectares of new forest and encourage the early introduction of electric cars. They see the emissions trading scheme as a tool to help companies and institutions to get their emissions down."

Kevin laments the fact that some organisations are resistant. "There are companies hand-wringing about the carbon trading schemes, saying it will be too costly and so on, but there is little talk about the benefits it will bring, such as new economic opportunities that will often outweigh the costs. The biggest challenge is for politicians to get across that we really do have to cut our emissions. They have to get across the benefits for our grandchildren; they are the ones who will suffer."

"Global warming is the biggest environmental issue politicians face this election, and we live in a world where we can no longer separate economical and environmental issues. The things we need to do are so urgent they need to be non-partisan and adopted by all the political parties: the politicians have to stop bickering about this."

Kevin says one of the most common questions he's asked is "what can people do?" "Firstly the government needs to help people make a difference. There's no point in saying 'leave your car at home' if there is poor public transport. But if you do have it and then use it, no excuses. If people go to the Carbon Zero website (www.carbonzero.co.nz) they will see it is practical to get their carbon emissions down and ultimately achieve carbon zero."

the issues

From their responses, it can be seen that the two new Christian parties, The Family Party and the Kiwi Party, were at this point in the campaign light on policy. Political scientist Professor Ray Miller questions whether there is enough support in New Zealand for any Christian party. Current polls show Christian parties recording negligible ratings. As at end of April, polls also put National well ahead of Labour, with National's gain appearing to come at the expense of the smaller parties and not from Labour (which is still polling the kind of numbers it was getting prior to winning the past election). Expect to see the polls change many times during the election campaign; like the people they survey, polls are highly changeable and only offer a snapshot in time. In the past, polls wrongly predicted John Hewson would be Prime Minister of Australia and Neil Kinnock Prime Minister of Britain.

As the election gets closer, expect the minor parties' policies to gain more attention, which could result in a rise in support at the expense of the larger parties' votes. The smaller parties may yet end up in a position to decide who governs. For the larger smaller parties - the Maori Party, NZ First and United Future - who are not clearly aligned with either of the two main parties, it will be interesting to see which party they choose to work with post-election and why. Will the Maori Party and NZ First be able to work together despite divergent policies on race?

Election year is a chance for the Church to question and speak out on pressing issues facing our communities, and to intensify discussion about the type of society in which we want to live. If you would like to facilitate discussion within your community, you could hold an election candidate's meeting. The Presbyterian website has a "how to" document that you can download from our Social Justice section.

	LABOUR PARTY	NATIONAL PARTY	NZ FIRST PARTY
Children and Families How will you work towards creating communities and an environment that we and our children can be safe in? New Zealand ranks poorly on the world scale when it comes to the wellbeing of our children. What will you do to address this?	Labour wants to give every child the best start in life with Working for Families tax credits, early intervention support services, cheaper doctors visits and free early childhood education.	We are committed to improving the wellbeing of children. We are concerned by signs of an emerging underclass and will address it. This includes lifting education standards, and promoting tax and welfare policies.	NZ's position regarding children in some international statistics is cause of concern. The welfare state is a crucial safety net for the most vulnerable, individuals/families must be allowed to regain/maintain independence wherever possible.
Preventing Family Violence How will you help to create a culture within our society where violence is unacceptable? What will you do to address the issue of violence in the home?	Eliminating violence is a significant priority for Labour. The Taskforce for Action on Family Violence will change attitudes through the It's Not OK! campaign and ensure support is provided for families.	A National Government will send a clear message that family violence is unacceptable, give police power to issue on-the-spot protection orders to protect from domestic violence, judges power to issue more serious sentences for crimes against children.	We take a robust attitude towards violent offending, particularly directed at those least able to defend themselves. Agencies dealing with family violence must be adequately resourced. Violent offending, is completely unacceptable, sentencing/parole should reflect this.

'Churches must care for their community'

The church is dying and care organisations are growing, says Lin Hatfield Dodds. As head of Uniting Care Australia, the national body for community services in the Uniting Church, and as a national director of the Uniting Church of Australia, her comments carry weight.

But there's no need to be frightened, says Lin, because there is a huge opportunity for the Christian church to think differently about what it means to actively engage in mission with its communities. "I can tell you now it will not look like a congregation. I'm 42, I've grown up in the church and I love the church to bits. I think the church as it's currently constructed was dead in the water when I was born; it's just taking a while to die. I don't think my children will be worshipping in a traditional congregation.

"In Australia our caring organisations are growing almost in direct proportion to how much our congregations are shrinking and people are frightened by that, but I say 'don't be, it's still the mission of God in the world'."

Look through the sweep of Christendom over the last 2000 years, she says, and you will see very few churches that have "just sat around doing services behind a stained glass window". "When we are at our best as churches is when we are a fully integrated part of our communities - because that's part of the essential call of God.



"If churches and people of faith are serious about the call to stand in solidarity with those who are the most marginalised, we need to be involved in being there with people when they are at crisis point; right through to primary services, through to advocating for just systems, good social policy and for adequate funding for caring services. To me they are all part of the same thing."

In Australia, UnitingCare provides an important link between the caring role of community services and the political action and advocacy of the Uniting Church.

"I describe UnitingCare's advocacy as being like a three-legged stool; one of the legs is the vision and values of the Uniting Church, another the expertise of our service providers and the third most critical leg is

the lived experience of those who use our services. Together they form a very solid base on which to advocate."

As the largest non-Government provider of community services in Australia (with 35,000 staff and 24,000 volunteers), UnitingCare has no difficulty being heard. "We have a very solid reputation at Parliament. Most of our advocacy work is conducted out of the public; we have quiet meetings in the Prime Minister's office and influence that way rather than through the media. I don't think you change Government policy through a conversation in the media; media can get you a space at the table but it's normally an adversarial space that's not that useful."

Lin admits that the Uniting Church would not have its voice heard at Government levels without UnitingCare. "That's the reality in a post Christendom world, I get frustrated with church people who say 'but why doesn't Government listen to us?' What I always say is that a moral voice is not enough and no one cares anymore; you have to speak from more than that."

With New Zealand in an election year, Lin says she is wary of parties that say they speak for Christians. "I'm wary of any organisation that says they represent the Christian church. There's no such thing as a homogeneous church that speaks with one voice; I don't think there ever has been and I suspect there never will be. The Christian church is so diverse, and at our best we honour and respect that diversity."

GREEN PARTY	UNITED FUTURE PARTY	MAORI PARTY	FAMILY PARTY	KIWI PARTY
The Green Party supports initiatives to end isolation and poverty, access to parenting courses; early intervention and wellbeing checks for every child etc. We believe our policies should consider children's interests first.	Concentrate on wellness of mothers before/after birth; prioritise extended support by maternity carers and Plunket. Establish family service centres. Promote income splitting to recognise work involved in raising children.	One of the three pou (pillars) of the Maori Party is whanau; we support increased min wage to \$15 per hr, increased incomes for benefit families, extending Working for Families to beneficiary parents, more govt resources for whanau restoration.	Govt is a poor substitution for functional families in terms of providing a safe, healthy, stable environment. Our priorities are strengthening family structure, supporting parents at every level, and encouraging family life.	We will promote parenting courses; prenatal, preschool and right through teenage years. The courses would continue to be delivered by charities and iwi. The goal is to have all Kiwi parents participate.
Non-violence is one of the four principles that guide the Green Party, Addressing violence in the home is as much a priority for us as climate change. We support continuation of the Govt 'It's Not Okay' Campaign. We support an ongoing review of police and justice systems.	More social workers in schools. Promote free family mediation. Require family group conferences to be rehabilitative, reparations or apologies enforced. Ensure police co-ordinate closely with agencies to improve responses to domestic violence/child abuse.	Address domestic violence, more investment by govt in whanau restoration, create drug and alcohol free homes. Support elimination of institutional racism, and development of cultural audit to ensure govt responding to whanau in culturally safe ways.	We recognise family violence is a very real issue. A departure from traditional values, financial pressures, dependency, family breakdown and alcohol/drug abuse are all key contributors towards family violence that are the focus of our attention.	We are committed to a Royal Commission to both understand and address the causes of family breakdown, family violence and child abuse.

'Prisoners need our compassion'



Every election year throws up issues around crime and punishment, says Kim Workman, retiring executive director of the Prison Fellowship of New Zealand, because the issues are vote catchers.

"It appears to the political parties that the tougher their stance on crime and punishment, the more votes they catch. We saw the parties use it last election and it wasn't original then, it's a populist thing that started in the 1980s; anyone promising to be tough with offenders caught votes."

"Labour increased sentences and tightened up parole eligibility in 2002. Numbers of people in prison increased dramatically; we have seen a 50 percent rise in the prison population in the last eight years."

What excites Kim about these depressing

facts is that he senses New Zealanders are no longer satisfied with simplistic responses to the problem. "Parties target older, conservative people; they try to frighten them with statistics. What we need to do instead is listen to the people with the facts.

"The facts show we do not have high crime rates and we need to stop agencies from putting out information saying we do. For the past 15 years, offending in general has been down; only in the last year have we seen a slight increase in violent offending."

Paradoxically, Kim, a former police senior sergeant, says that the slight increase may be a sign of confidence in our police. Success of campaigns such as "It's Not OK", can result in otherwise unreported crime being reported, resulting in an overall rise in reported offences.

He says that political parties advocating tougher sentences need to understand that 40 percent of criminals have mental health and alcohol problems that prisons do not address, and which remain on hold till the person is back in the community. Two-thirds of prisoners will re-offend after release.

The dilemma for National and Labour this election, explains Kim, is that "neither will want to appear like they have gone soft but they will want to appear smarter than they have been". "National's Fresh Start is them having their cake and eating it too. They promised support for youth offenders but now say part of the programme will be carried out in military establishments. The programme is perceived to be a boot

camp; research shows boot camps do not work. New Zealand has a punitive streak in its make up and political parties keep appealing to it."

Christian parties present Christians with a problem, says Kim. "In their race for political power, they overtake on the right. They adopt the views that give them the most votes.

"The Family First party in liaison with the Sensible Sentencing Trust advocates for harsher penalties for child abuse. That does not sit well with Christian compassion and mercy.

"These parties seem to come up with policy statements without doing prior research. The Kiwi Party is calling for a Royal Commission into child abuse. If they did their homework, they would know an interdepartmental committee is looking into this issue now. A Royal Commission does not take you far; it is a recommending body not an actioning body."

Kim, who worships at the Christian Fellowship of Upper Hutt, says that Christians should remember "we are challenged by the gospel". "Prisons are places of Jesus; Jesus talked constantly about prisoners (Matthew 25) and his first public sermon was about setting prisoners free (Luke 4:16-22)."

New Zealand prisons have, he says, 3000 Christian volunteers. "I'm proud to say that is the highest number in the world."

	LABOUR PARTY	NATIONAL PARTY	NZ FIRST PARTY
Caring for Creation What is your attitude to nuclear power being used as a means of mitigating greenhouse emissions? What strategies do you have for the treatment and reduction of emissions caused by our agricultural sector, which causes most of NZ's emissions?	Labour is proud of New Zealand's nuclear-free stance. Even apart from the environmental concerns that many have about nuclear power, it is not a solution for economic reasons. We aim to reach 90 percent renewable energy by 2025 – achievable due to our plentiful wind/geothermal energy resources. We will be the first country in the world to include agriculture in an emissions trading scheme, in 2013, providing incentives to reduce emissions. We are investing in research to make a difference in livestock emissions.	National supports the ratification of the Kyoto Protocol and aims to reduce New Zealand's greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent by 2050. We will make long-term funding commitments for research into reducing agricultural emissions, because we think this work has the potential for big gains – both economic and environmental. We do not believe nuclear power is an option for New Zealand.	We maintain the role of state is to strike a balance between economic progress and appropriate environmental goals. Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions is an important area of policy development. We support policies that contribute to NZ's obligations under the Kyoto Protocol. We respect NZ's nuclear-free status; party attitudes reflect that of the country. Any change would be a radical departure from current policy requiring debate; we perceive NZers do not wish to change nuclear-free status.

'Christian parties' ambitions don't match reality'

What chance do the three Christian parties have in the upcoming election? It's a question that Dr Raymond Miller, Associate Professor of Political Studies at the University of Auckland, has been considering. He's pessimistic about any of the parties winning an electorate seat or reaching the 5 percent that would give them seats in Parliament.

"It would be difficult enough to get votes if there was just one Christian party representing the views of conservative Christians; but there are now United Future, The Family Party and the Kiwi Party to split the vote. Back in 1996, there were two Christian parties that formed a coalition that allowed them to get to 4 percent; still not enough to get seats.

"In 2002, there was Christian support for United Future, with several of the elected candidates coming from a conservative evangelical tradition. It wasn't exclusively a Christian party but it had a Christian values base. In both the 1996 and 2002 elections, the Christian parties avoided the kind of competition that will exist in 2008."

Raymond also questions whether demand for Christian parties exists. He says University of Auckland surveys show that three quarters of people who see themselves as being religious express satisfaction with the current party system and see no need for setting up new political parties to represent their interests. "What's interesting is that [while] there is no evidence that there is a



significant following for the people setting up Christian parties, they clearly have a personal ambition around being elected to Parliament. The people setting up these parties are former or present MPs."

Raymond says those on the centre and left of the political spectrum with Christian convictions are by and large working happily within the present party system. "The ones who are unhappy with the system tend to take an extreme view on social issues and come up with a morally conservative right wing agenda."

Political naivety is a problem for Christian parties, says Raymond. "Gordon Copeland for instance has made a number of quite basic mistakes since he broke away from United Future. A Christian party was attempted last year and it fell apart before it even got started."

It concerns Raymond that sometimes the Christian parties almost claim to represent people of Christian belief. "I think they look at how many people attend church (around 13 percent of the population) and think 'there's our constituency', when in fact a great majority of that population would not consider voting for these parties simply because they stand for things that many Christians are fundamentally opposed to."

Raymond is the editor and author of a number of books on politics and has collaborated on a number of election studies. In 2008 he is co-authoring a book on the decline and renewal of democratic governance and a survey on attitudes to political representation and the role of MPs.

GREEN PARTY	UNITED FUTURE PARTY	MAORI PARTY	FAMILY PARTY	KIWI PARTY
All Western countries with nuclear power legislated to make taxpayers liable for any accidents/clean-up, because nuclear power is not insurable. This is not tenable in NZ. The industry touts its power as carbon neutral, but the mining, processing, transport, storage of uranium plus the carbon footprint of plant construction and dismantling negate any carbon benefits from the production phase. Nuclear power fails as a solution to climate change. Agriculture sector must face the "price of carbon" earlier than 2013.	Animal-based agriculture is vitally important to national economy. The approach we have taken to mitigate greenhouse emissions is through promotion of forestry within the agricultural sector. In particular, we support the Permanent Sinks Initiative; would defer income tax on forestry-derived income until harvest; and encourages farmers to return non-viable farming land to forests.	We support the Kyoto Protocol and extending NZ's current commitment to emission reductions. A number of factors make nuclear power an unacceptable option including toxicity and cost. With carbon emissions we need to target the sector that is problematic – dairying. We support initiatives to limit growth of dairying in favour of other land-based activities. Investment important in emission-reducing grasses/crops, promoting growing organic products, utilising organic feed.	We affirm responsible stewardship of environment and resource for future generations and are committed to protecting NZ's clean green image. We are unconvinced that Kyoto protocols and global warming taxes are necessary, the hefty costs of which will be borne by NZ families. We have not ruled out nuclear energy as a viable future power source providing effective measures for waste disposal are found.	Presently, NZ has better alternatives to nuclear power. We support no regrets policies in regard to carbon emissions. We are concerned about the effect of agricultural emissions upon our waterways.

'Schools shouldn't be blamed'

Presbyterians still place strong emphasis on good, sound education, says Ian McKinnon, deputy mayor of Wellington and former Headmaster at Scots College. "The purpose of education is to produce a person who is trained, to produce thinking people who think creatively and to produce civilised people who respect the differences in each other."

People are mistaken, says Ian, if they think that schools are the only providers of education. "Schools can't do it all by themselves. Family, community and school are the providers of education. The family's role in education is to give a warm, nurturing environment where a young person develops the confidence that comes from feeling secure. If a young person doesn't feel secure they are not necessarily going to give expression to their talents and abilities. The community provides the young person less-structured experiences. If you see those three as a triangle with the young person in the middle, one side of the triangle non-functioning impacts on the other sides.

"We know we have too many young people slipping through the net of the schooling system. Is the breakdown in the family? Is there a breakdown in community? When there is a breakdown, schools can become a less appealing and less successful place. Part of the reason why is that schools are having to concentrate on countering the

shortcomings of the other two and not give enough emphasis to what they are there for."

While young people today can look more adult, Ian says, people should not mistake this for genuine maturity. "Though young people look considerably more sophisticated than previous generations, often because of the experiences they are having, it doesn't mean they are any more mature in being able to cope with the pressures of life. Just because young people now can jump into bed with each other because we give them condoms and a sex lesson in the fifth form, it doesn't mean to say they've got the maturity to manage what that means in terms of a relationship. Just because young people can drink alcohol furiously doesn't mean to say they have the judgement to realise when to stop. It's maturity that allows people to stand up to the pressures of life, not being sophisticated."

Ian is unconvinced that studying youth issues is the most effective way to help young people. "I get so frustrated; nobody has been more analysed than the adolescent. By the time I finished headmastering, I had shelves on adolescent development and if even half the energy had been extracted from that and gone into a direct connect with young people, it would have been better. Everybody who writes deep tomes about how to manage the adolescent should have to teach a class of 15 year olds on a hot Friday afternoon."

The New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) has launched an election-year information programme to raise public awareness of social justice issues, under the theme "Let us look after each other – Aroha tetahi ki tetahi." Working with the six major denominations, including the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, NZCCSS aims to promote social justice and compassion to church congregations around the country. Five awareness-raising booklets will be sent to all parishes this year, starting in May and ending in September. They will cover support for families and communities to nurture and protect children, dignity for an ageing population, poverty elimination, access to affordable housing, and government support for community-based solutions. Presbyterian Church moderator the Right Rev Pamela Tankersley says the Church fully supports the call for more action. "We support local churches to become involved in public issues and social action, to speak out in our communities, to respond to the call to serve those on the margins of society and to bring important issues to the fore. It is as a Christ-centred and community-facing church we bring our faith to everyday life."



	LABOUR PARTY	NATIONAL PARTY	NZ FIRST PARTY
Youth Suicide What funding and additional resources will you commit to strengthen the mental health system so that it can better support young people?	We are committed to growing our mental health workforce, and making access to mental health services easier for young people, eg through the four year workforce plan, an interactive website for young people and depression awareness.	We are committed to improving the quality of primary care. Greater co-ordination between primary-care providers will improve services for patients and strengthen the mental health system. Unlike Labour, we will ensure extra health spending goes to frontline services, not bureaucracy.	Young people face a complex and challenging environment. Youth suicide is unacceptably high, we would like Youth Suicide Prevention Services better funded, and additional resources allocated to youth mental health services. We support more funding for youth health in general.
Services for older people In order to make it possible for people to stay in their homes as long as possible, government support is required in terms of building design and staff resources. How will you care for the elderly?	The Positive Ageing Strategy set out our vision of "a society for all ages". Labour is committed to affordable and accessible health services, including support for older people who wish to stay in their own home.	National believes older people deserve access to the very best care while maintaining their independence. We have proposals for improving aged-care services and establishing sector specific training.	The Rt Hon Winston Peters is Associate Minister of Senior Citizens; this reflects both his and our emphasis on enhancing the well being of older people. The pursuit of policies such as the SuperGold discount card etc is part of this.
Housing and Poverty What will you do to ensure a decent standard of housing is available to low income people? What will you do to increase investment in quality social housing?	Affordable housing is a top priority for Labour. We've restored income-related rents and boosted the accommodation supplement. We've added 7500 more state houses and we're taking active steps to help with home affordability eg KiwiSaver, helping people save the deposit for their first home.	National wants everyone to be able to own their own home. We will free up the supply of residential land, ensure people's take-home pay puts them in a stronger financial position etc. We will retain income-related rents for state housing, allow state house tenants to buy their own homes.	New Zealand First believes housing is a neglected area of successive govts. Scarcity of quality affordable housing has a severe impact on families, elderly, low-waged. We want more land made available, etc. and social housing improved/expanded and NZers given priority under social housing allocation.

* The Progressive and ACT parties were invited to participate in this Election 2008 article but did not submit responses.

Clevedon celebrates past while gearing up for growth

This year Clevedon Presbyterian Church celebrates 150 years since the opening of the first church in the greater Wairoa area.

In the year 1858, St Andrew's Presbyterian as it was known then began as an expansion of the national church to bring Christian love and teaching to the rural south of Auckland. The life and ministry as it was first established with St Andrews Presbyterian continues to thrive after nearly 150 years as we continue to grow in the Clevedon area.

With the anticipated growth and development to the Clevedon and surrounding districts planned in the next few years, Clevedon Presbyterian is looking forward with plans of building another church building. The vision and plans for this new development are already underway with land purchased and discussions with local councils well advanced. This new church will reflect the mission that has been a part of the congregation for years,

with the hope of drawing people closer to the heart of God. Everything from the layout of the land, the ministries and support to the people who will serve there will bear witness to the faithfulness of the first pioneers.

Plans to celebrate this year include: an anniversary country dance with supper, a church production later in the year, open days for the community at Play group, Mainly Music and Clevedon Kidz in the first week of December, youth group reunion with past/present leaders, past/present members, past/present musicians, and the big weekend of events with opportunities to meet old friends who have moved away from the parish, an anniversary dinner in the Clevedon Hall with a keynote speaker, presentations and social time, and on the Sunday an anniversary service followed by a shared lunch. The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church will speak during the service.

By Lori Hill [Spanz](#)

GREEN PARTY	UNITED FUTURE PARTY	MAORI PARTY	FAMILY PARTY	KIWI PARTY
The Green Party support ongoing implementation of the 1998 Blueprint for Mental Health Services. Urgent increases in child/adolescent mental health funding are required as these are below Blueprint targets. We'll ensure early psychosis intervention services for adolescents/ young people.	Fund child and youth mental health inpatient beds at a level sufficient to achieve the Blueprint for Mental Health Services target level. Increase number of community-based mental health workers to ease high caseloads. Resource adolescent mental health services to include 16-18 year olds.	Maori are over-represented in mental health issues and suicide statistics. We support New Zealand Suicide Prevention Action Plan and Maori Mental Health National Strategic Framework; both under resourced. More participation by Maori in mental health system required for their success.	Richard Lewis has experience with youth suicide from policing South Auckland. Issue is very real to us. We recognise family breakdown and drug/alcohol/substance abuse as key contributors to youth mental health issues. We support funding/initiatives to tackle these problems while strengthening families as the ultimate proactive measure.	The Royal Commission into family related issues would affect, in a positive way, the mental health of adolescents. Our approach is a fence at the top of the cliff.
Increased funding is needed in aged care to address low pay of aged care service providers, staff recruitment and retention and poor levels of staff training.	Provide sufficient community nurses, welfare agencies so people treated at home where possible. Support pay parity between nursing staff across all nursing sectors. Provide in-home carers with travel allowances.	We advocate for free medical consultations for superannuitants. We seek whanau-based and home-based care enabling older people to choose to remain in their homes. We support increased superannuation.	We support the intergenerational family and will support measures that keep families together at all life stages, ensuring elderly are esteemed and cared for. Our aim is to engage elderly more effectively in family, business, community.	We support aging in place, or group care for older Kiwis. We are committed to improving the status, training and pay for age care workers.
We will work with local authorities, NGOs etc to improve housing for those in need. We will introduce measures to support older people on low incomes and disabled people to maintain their lifestyle in their own homes, or move to nearby housing suited to their needs.	Ensure surplus state houses do not lie empty whilst long waiting lists exist. Sell state houses with very high valuations to purchase other properties to be used as state houses. Establish rent-to-buy to assist families to buy or to purchase their state house.	Decent housing is essential to good health. Zero toleration of low standard Housing NZ homes. Retrofit of older homes to minimum standard needs additional funding, better checks of the work. More realistic options to get low/medium income earners into home-ownership.	Making home ownership a reality for all NZ families is a cornerstone of our policy. Immigration, land supply, exorbitant land costs and red tape all contribute towards housing affordability. Lower tax without compromising core services, income splitting and assistance for first homebuyers are priorities.	We will ensure the release of land supply and reduction in compliance costs to improve home affordability and we are committed to the Government aggressively encouraging home ownership.

Kiwis asked to answer call for old phones

Remember your old mobile phone lurking somewhere in a drawer? The big clunky one with scratches and few dings? The one that your kids said was just too old and uncool for them or for you?

Many of us have an old mobile phone that we have never got around to disposing of that can be recycled. TEAR Fund, with partners Enable Community, Vodafone and Centre for Community Transformation (CCT), has launched a scheme to re-use old mobiles by sending them to micro-enterprises in the developing world that cannot afford access to communications. The "Answering the Call" scheme asks Kiwis to bring any make of old mobile phone and accessories like batteries and chargers to their nearest Vodafone outlet, Noel Leeming or Bond & Bond store, where they will be sent for recycling for this cause. Normally phones are ground up and some parts salvaged, so Kiwis who donate a phone will help those in need and help the planet by cutting back on landfill. If you cannot get to a store you are encouraged to free post your old mobile phone to: Freepost, Vodafone Handset Recycling Programme, Private Bag 92222, Auckland.

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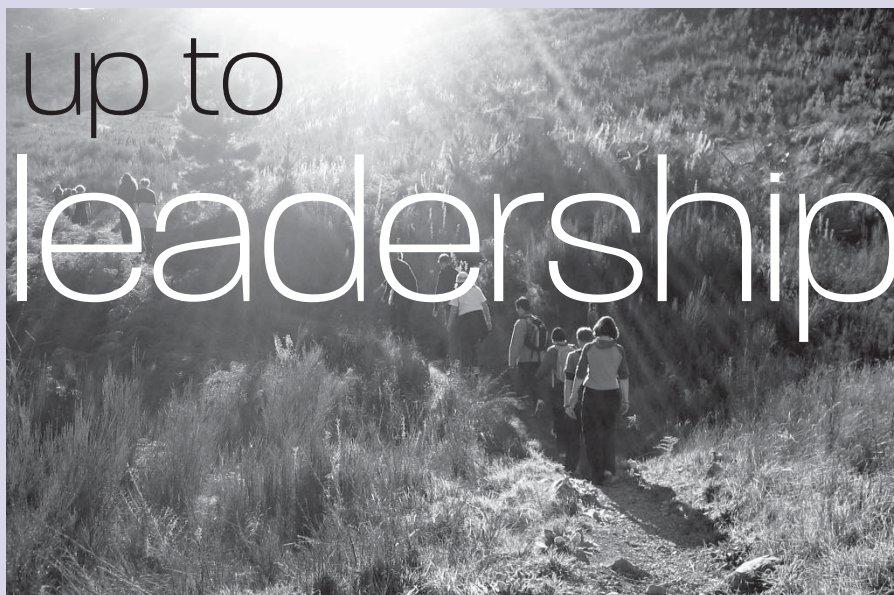
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Stepping up to leadership



"Going Somewhere" is an eight-week regional leadership programme for people in their senior high school years, at tertiary study or starting out in their first job. It's for people who've got potential to make a difference but need some encouragement and empowerment to do it. Going Somewhere is also a great opportunity for young adults to meet and be inspired by other leaders in their regions.

What have people said about Going Somewhere?

"Growing up all my life in a Presbyterian church, it is surprising how little I knew about what the Church does or how I hardly knew of any other Presbyterians around my age. Going Somewhere for me was a great way to get to know some more Pressies my age from all around Canterbury. I was looking at the December issue of Spanz and for the first time the people in the magazine weren't just faces in a picture or people who had written a particular article; they were people I had met, talked with and could tell you something about.

Going Somewhere also taught me about staying strong in faith, and letting things happen the way God wants it. As a youth leader it is so easy to have all these plans and ideas about how things are going to work, forgetting that God has plan and if you put him first and honour him, things will work out greater than you could imagine.

Going somewhere was a great experience for me, all the people I met, the things I learnt and the fun times we had every Thursday night!"

Rose Edgar (Hoon Hay Presbyterian Church, Christchurch)

"Always one to leave it until the last minute, I decided I'd go in the final week of registration. Not knowing what to expect, I walked in the doors of Knox Church. I was greeted by two lovely guys, which eased

my nerves a little. I then made my way to where the majority of the population was congregating. Again I was surprised to receive yet more warm welcomes. I later realised my apprehension was completely unnecessary when I discovered what an awesome and open bunch of people they are.

I would look forward to Thursday every week for the next term. Getting to meet up with a bunch of Christians was a totally foreign concept to me. I began to learn lots about myself, about God and how He works. I made new friends and just had an all-round great time away from my normal life. The camp at Akaroa was a real turning point for me. I had indeed learned a load of things, but was still struggling with the feeling I had no direction for my life. It was here I learnt not only how to roast a chicken to perfection, that youth leaders like to steal road signs (and put them back... I think), but how God uses us in so many diverse and wonderful ways to build His kingdom here on earth. I am still not entirely sure what my gifts are, but it doesn't bother me anymore. I don't feel lost. I know God wants to use me, and He has my life all planned out just as He promised in Jeremiah 29:11. I just have to trust Him, and listen out for what He's saying."

Kate White
(Amuri Co-operating Church, Culverden)

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check it out!

CD Review

"Spirited People"

by Festival Singers

Musical director: Rosemary Russell.
Festivity Production, Wellington.
Reviewed by Roy Tankersley

Festival Singers is a well-known community choir with a history and practice of working alongside the Church through services and concerts. This album presents recent works by New Zealand composers that they hoped would appeal through the immediacy of the texts and the accessibility of the music. They have succeeded.

The first track opens with the poignant solo voice of Janey MacKenzie singing "Virgin Birth" – music by Colin Gibson and words by Joy Cowley. Straightaway one is linked to Rebecca Gilling's beautiful cover design based around the image of a flame.

Talented performer and composer Jonathan Berkahn leads us into his spirited "The New Song" with its punchy dialogue between men and women. His "Te Deum" that follows gets to the heart of the text with its Celtic flavour throughout. This is no "clip-on" Celtic style – these are traditional sounds blended beautifully with the vocal lines. One wants to get up and dance when one hears the Irish folk jigs and reels in such movements as "Day by day we magnify you...!"

The tone of the choir is warm and gently vibrant while being well blended. Although at times one may wish for a little more energetic edge, they sing from heart with assured intonation and communicate the text throughout with subtle gradations of tone.

The centre piece is Colin Gibson's "The Spirit Within", commissioned by St John's in the City, Wellington, in 2000. (This

reviewer had the honour of preparing and conducting the premiere performance.) Gibson tells of God, the majestic and awe-inspiring, whose Spirit surprises us in our dreams or in a flash of light. He also provokes us to respond to poverty and injustice. It is good to have this work accompanied by string quartet, organ and piano with sensitivity and style. Four soloists and four readers perform well throughout the work and complement the thoughtful singing from the choir.

For the recording Festival Singers chose the wonderful ambience of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart – so much better than using digitally enhanced ambience. The CD is well engineered throughout and accolades to Rosemary Russell for guiding these spirited people with such creativity and understanding.

Builder erects sculpture of Jesus

The body of Jesus, "calmly victorious, his arms poised to welcome and embrace", greeted those attending the Easter service at Glendowie Presbyterian Church, Auckland.

Created by Rudy Vogels, an elder at Glendowie Presbyterian Church, the sculpture was inspired by the last words of Jesus on the cross as recorded in John's gospel.

"I had a mental picture of an Olympic gymnast on the rings, suspended in mid air, arms outstretched and in control," Rudy explains. "The perfect human form

impressed on me the possibility of a physical and spiritual expression of Jesus and his victory on the cross."

Made from chicken wire and recycled construction timber, the sculpture was erected at the front of the church on Easter Sunday.

Rudy, who is completing papers at Carey Bible College, runs a successful building business. He has been encouraged by his minister, the Rev Douglas Bradley, to use his builder's skills to rediscover his artistic talent. Rudy says he is heartened by, "a general rekindling of appreciation of the

arts by the wider Christian community. To be a part of that movement has been a joy for me and a bit of a risk is turning out to be rewarding."



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Conference considers keeping kids safe

Those who work with at-risk children and families recently had the opportunity to meet with others in their field and share what works to keep children safe.

Hosted by Presbyterian Support Northern in Manukau City last month, the Keeping Kids Safe conference sought to find ways for better collaboration between community and government organisations providing services to families.

Attending for the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand were Moderator the Right Rev Pamela Tankersley, the Rev Judy Te Whiu of Presbyterian Youth Ministry and Jill Kayser. Jill, the Church's Kids Friendly coach, found the conference by turns inspiring and saddening. "I was greatly inspired by some of the speakers, who shared success stories from their communities. What saddened me was that the churches are not perceived to have an authoritative voice on children's issues. It made me realise how crucial it is that as Christians we respond to this issue individually and collectively. With Kids Friendly I'm trying to get across to parishes that they need to know who the children are in their community, what their needs are and how they can meet those needs. That's how we can make a difference in children's lives."

As one of the conference's opening speakers, Pamela recounted the safe community that she and many others took for granted in their childhood.

"The land I grew up in was certainly safe; many of us can tell romantic stories of licence to roam freely around our local neighbourhoods, of a ready supply of food and of little adult supervision, indeed of encountering all adults as trustworthy. But is it so anymore? Now it seems we hear horrifying statistics of 20,000 children who go without breakfast, of overcrowding and much neglect; these are real heart-breaking stories."

Pamela noted that those at the conference experience these stories first hand in their daily work and that often the "world outside just does not want to know".

She asked conference delegates to consider

how we might change the culture and spirituality of the nation to consider our children not as a statistical problem but "as our delight, our most precious taonga, with each child able to fulfil in freedom and safety the potential that is their gift from God".

Addressing the anger and futility that many feel when dealing with child abuse, she asked the conference to consider that, "when we shake our fists at God and say, 'how can you let this happen to our children,' perhaps God speaks back to us, 'how can you let this happen to our children?'" **By Angela Singer** [Spanz](#)



As part of the Presbyterian Church's ongoing commitment to our children and young people, the Church with the assistance of Presbyterian Support Northern is producing a new information and study guide that covers issues that affect New Zealand's children, and equips people to take action to keep children safe from harm. Entitled "Caring for our Children"; the study booklet will be distributed to all parishes in early June 2008.

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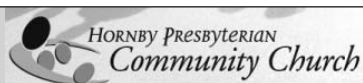
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Presbyterian minister takes Uniting role

Becoming the new Executive Officer of the Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand was not a matter of the Rev Peter MacKenzie accepting a position; it was a matter of him honouring a call to the role. "The opportunity was there and I felt called to tackle the job. I feel like it was right place, right time for me."

Peter was attracted to the Uniting Congregations as part of the ecumenical journey. "Uniting Congregations offer breadth and depth. You find some Uniting churches are more Presbyterian and some more Methodist. There is range and diversity, much the same as the Presbyterian Church itself, which has diversity."

Peter says his role is essentially that of a communicator. "A large part of my work is to act as a facilitator of conversation between Church partners, regional and local. I'm here to get people talking to each other, whether the issues be complex, exciting or just plain difficult."

His main challenge will be, he suspects, "the need to find a space. As our partner Churches redefine themselves, the economic strains on the denominations make conversation more difficult. I foresee finding ways to help start those conversations."

Strong communication skills are essential for the role and Peter's qualifications include being a Presbyterian minister with a Masters degree in organisational psychology. "My training helps me to not make value judgements; the emphasis is on analysis rather than evaluation."

The first six months of his role will be a time to "take the lie of the land and find out who needs to talk more to whom."

The future of the Uniting Church in New Zealand is difficult to define, says Peter. "I believe the Uniting Church has a future but I'm not sure what form that will take. The Church is at a critical point of defining relationships with our denominational partners. The partners are not talking as well as they could be at this time, so there is a need to work harder to get them around the table together."



Uniting churches are showing growth and promise, he says. "In Kapiti, we have an example of a successful Uniting church that is working in the community and connecting with people to make positive difference in lives, which is key to ministry. The Uniting Church has many exciting projects. A new Southern joint regional committee covering Southland and Otago is showing promise and we should see it develop. Throughout New Zealand, we are realising our regions need to be larger so that is something we will pursue."

By Angela Singer **Spanz**

New office complex for Te Aka Puaho



Two years in the making, the new office complex of Te Aka Puaho (the Presbyterian Maori synod) was officially opened on 3 April, 2008.

Named Laughton House, the office complex commemorates the late John and Horiana Laughton, who were missionaries to Tuhoe and other iwi. The premises previously occupied in Wellington by Assembly Office were also known as Laughton House but this building was sold in 2006.


The Rev Tom Hawea of Te Teko officially opened the complex. A minister for 50 years, Tom requested that "ministers of today" and not retired ministers officiate during the ceremony as, he laughingly explained, "this is about the church moving into the future rather than looking back; we're yesterday's news."

As part of the ceremony the puihi (maiden) who first entered the office was Hayley Taka of Whakatane, granddaughter of the Rev Meri Caton, the first Maori deaconess and a Presbyterian minister.

Laughton House is situated at 67 Hinemoa Street, Whakatane and houses the Moderator Millie Te Kaawa, clerk of Synod the Rev Awatea Tupe and Te Ahorangi the Rev Wayne Te Kaawa.

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Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership officially opens

"Today represents a new beginning for us... and an acknowledgment of history," principal the Rev Dr Graham Redding told about 100 people gathered at the opening of the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, in Dunedin, on 11 February.

The decision to disestablish the School of Ministry and establish the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership was made by the 2006 General Assembly.

The main change is the placement in parishes of students of the two-year ordination studies programme. The students will spend about 70 percent of their time in supervised ministry experience in parishes and 30 percent in structured learning through block courses and parish-based assignments.

There are three interns this year, seven students completing their final year under the old, Dunedin-based system and three distance students.

Graham says formation for ministry is as much about character formation as it is about skill acquisition.

Because the centre would "necessarily involve a great number of parishes", it had a very positive aspect in that it would "generate a greater sense of ownership".

Although Graham acknowledged that there would be some losses, he felt the gains would be numerous, from freeing staff to become more involved in regional activities to "strengthening of relationships north of the Waitaki".

"The Knox Centre exists to serve the national Church."

By Gillian Vine Spanz

"Reformed and reforming" logo unveiled



GAO8
REFORMED +
REFORMING

The Moderator of General Assembly 2008, the Rev Dr Graham Redding, says his theme is about what makes Presbyterians unique.

"Reformed and reforming" talks about the foundations of Presbyterianism as well as its ongoing engagement with change, he says. "A lot of issues that have come up in recent years throughout the Church have raised questions of identity."

During his two years as Moderator, Graham, who is also principal of the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership,

plans to explore what it means to be part of the reformed tradition in our New Zealand context today, within a multi-faith environment that lacks the denominational boundaries of the past.

"Reformed and reforming" raises the question of direction, he says. Decline in the numbers going to church has led to greater focus on mission and restructuring of the way we do things, which also raises theological questions.

For example, he says, the concept of *sola scriptura* (Scripture alone) has informed generations of Presbyterian thought. "How do we understand the role Scripture plays in our church?"

The theme is not about change for the sake of change, he says. "We need to make

sure we're not being blown by the winds of fashion but by the core convictions that are theologically informed."

Graham says worship during GA08 will pick up on the theme. Knox Centre students, who will also be his chaplains, will lead a devotion every morning and night of Assembly. There will also be two major worship services, on the Thursday and Sunday.

The Rev Professor Randall Prior, the keynote speaker at this year's Assembly, will elaborate on the theme in his addresses. See the GAO8 section of www.presbyterian.org.nz for more information.

By Amanda Wells Spanz

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Pancakes in the park



The churches in Wadestown decided to celebrate Shrove Tuesday a little differently this year.

They turned the tradition of Christians eating pancakes on the eve of Lent into a community celebration of Summer.

For a number of years the local churches have organised Carols in the Park. This event, which last year attracted over 300 people, is now anticipated by the wider community, who come early to get a good seat and stay long after the carol singing is over to enjoy socialising in our local park.

The idea of Pancakes in the Park built on this tradition. We offered a great jazz band,

Hot Club Sandwich, generously funded by Wellington City Council. We provided juice, a sausage sizzle and hundreds of pancakes with delicious toppings.

People were encouraged to bring along a picnic tea or buy the food on offer and enjoy a summer evening in the park listening to good music with other people from their community. Extra entertainment was provided in the form of local identities taking part in a pancake-tossing challenge, an idea which the children enthusiastically embraced as well.

We decided to step up a level in the standard of advertising this event and received generous sponsorship, which

enabled us to design and print some classy flyers and posters. Our two congregations tramped the streets delivering flyers into 1700 letter boxes.

The only problem was the weather. A cold southerly blew into Wellington the day before the event and refused to leave until the day after! We begrudgingly shifted indoors to the church hall and while this had an impact on the numbers who attended, we were still happy that over 130 people, including a good number from outside of our church communities, joined with us to celebrate summer through music and food.

By Sharon Ensor Spanz

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Chaplain takes faith to soldiers

Think of an army chaplain and who comes to mind? For many the only image is kindly Father Mulcahy from television series "MASH":

Respected for this decency and wise advice, Mulcahy's chaplain assisted soldiers beyond his spiritual duties. So how close is this TV portrayal to the real role?

"There's a few similarities," says army chaplain Chris Purdie. "As I recall, Father Mulcahy had the luxury of a room of his own, as do I, and he'd help in the camp; in my role I also help out. Currently I'm with the soldiers on training exercise; heavy pallets and parachutes thrown out of planes, it's hard work."

Having been an army chaplain for one year, Chris is based at Linton Army Base. There is no particular reason why he became a military chaplain, he says, "I met a military chaplain who thought I would be suited to it; that probably planted the idea."

Chris had worked for seven years as a youth worker and spent several years as a lay preacher at a Uniting church before he was accepted to study at the School of Ministry. After graduating, he went straight to Linton, where he is one of four chaplains. The camp is divided into four parts, with each chaplain having a section for which they are responsible. Every three years Chris can move sections or shift to another base.

Dressed in camouflage gear with officer rank slides on his shoulders, there is no confusing that Chris is not only a chaplain but also a Queen's commissioned officer. Only the crosses on his collar and the friendly smile give away the nature of his commission.

While some chaplains may feel a conflict between their faith and being part of a fighting force, Chris does not. "I have not been issued with firearms. On deployment I would be issued with a handgun to protect myself with."

"I appreciate that some in the Church have strong opinions on this; we have an honorable history of pacifism. Issues of conflict



need to be addressed by the Church because the way battles are fought has changed so much. I ask myself, the 18-year-olds being sent overseas into frightening situations, if I am not there for them who is?"

The reality of modern warfare is something six military chaplains experience each year. It is likely that Chris will be deployed to East Timor, Afghanistan or the Solomon Islands at the end of this year. "Chaplains are fortunate," says Chris, "in that we are consulted. We get to discuss which chaplain will go where and when." For such a deployment Chris will need the support of an understanding family, and he has one in his three sons and wife Sylvia, who also graduates from the School of Ministry this year.

So does Chris see himself as a Mulcahy? Not quite, Chris laughs, "As I remember, Mulcahy was a boxer and I'm no supporter of pugilism so we differ there."

By Angela Singer Spanz

Force-full ministry

If Chris Purdie's choice of ministry has piqued your interest, the New Zealand Defence Force has ongoing vacancies for chaplains.

Male and female ordained ministers with five years' successful pastoral experience are welcome to apply. You must be reasonably physically fit and willing to accept postings to various parts of New Zealand. Deployment overseas for periods of up to six months is likely. Terms of service are at least equal to those of parish ministry. As a chaplain you will be required to fit in with the ethos of the Defence Force. Further information is available from Senior Denominational Chaplain (Presbyterian), Rev Dr Harry Swadling, 58 Bodmin Tce, Camborne, Porirua, phone (04) 233-9988, email harene.swadling@clear.net

Secular artists find meaning in the cross

Great artists have long created great religious art but today there is little contemporary religious art in public galleries. To counteract this trend, St Heliers Church, with the support of the Presbyterian Foundation and private donors, organised an Easter exhibition of the Stations of the Cross, which is the depiction in art of the final hours of the life of Jesus Christ.

The exhibition, the result of many months of planning, ran from 13-25 March 2008 at the prestigious Gus Fisher Gallery in Auckland.

Fifteen artists were invited to participate: Octavia Cook, Darryn George, Tony Lane, Jae Hoon Lee, Niki Hastings-McFall, Peter Madden, Ani O'Neill, James Ormsby, Peter Peryer, John Pule, John Reynolds, Natalie Robertson, Hamish Tocher, Philip Trusttum and John Walsh. Each artist drew a station from a hat and then interpreted it

using their preferred medium.

The artists, who hold a range of religious beliefs including atheism, were asked to respond from whichever point of view, and in whatever form, they chose.

To accompany these visual works, New Zealand composers were invited to contribute a piece of music. Work by Jack Body, Eve de Castro-Robinson, David Hamilton, Leonie Holmes, John Rimmer and Alex Taylor, among others, were performed at set times during the exhibition.

The random matching of artist and composer to a station was intended to test the idea that within each station there is an essential human experience that can be explored irrespective of religious beliefs.

Assembly Executive Secretary the Rev Martin Baker, who opened the exhibition, was critical of the treatment of religion in contemporary art, and the cynical attitudes adopted by many artists. "It seems to me that contemporary art journals are not

interested in discussing religion unless the work in question is what we could call transgressive. If we were to ask the art-going public to name a contemporary work of religious art, the response is likely to be Tania Kovat's "Virgin in a Condom" or works by Andres Serrano.

"The fact that the biggest controversy surrounding a cross today is who actually owns it [referring to a work by Colin McCahon created some 40 years ago recently involved in an auction dispute] contrasts rather sharply with the perception of contemporaries of Jesus, who saw the cross as an object of torture, oppression and death."

He went on to commend all the artists involved in the exhibition for creating works that speak to the viewer whether they are moved by religious impulse or not.

"This initiative has meant that they have embraced the opportunity to be taken on journeys in their art that they might not have otherwise considered."

Organisers were thrilled with the positive feedback the exhibition received and hope to find a patron to make the Stations of the Cross an ongoing Easter event.

By Angela Singer Spanz



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Origins of the Punjab Mission

Will Porteous left Dunedin at the age of 19 to study medicine in Edinburgh. Seven years later he would become the first missionary doctor to India from the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand.

Will's parents were God-fearing, prayerful people and it is not surprising that he responded to the challenge of Dr John R Mott "to evangelise the world in this generation".

His friend and colleague, S K Datta, turned Will's thoughts to India. Professor Hewitson of Dunedin asked Will if he was willing to become the Church's first medical missionary to India.

Events moved quickly. In 1907 the General Assembly instructed the foreign missions committee to arrange for the opening of missionary work in India. Will was asked to visit India after graduation in 1908 to select a suitable area.

After extensive touring in North India and meeting many missionaries, Will recommended that a mission be established in East Punjab, near where some American Presbyterians were already working.

Back in New Zealand in 1909, Will spent five months visiting the churches and raising funds to build a hospital. Then he was off to England to marry Edith Rayner, a trained dispenser. Finally the young couple arrived in Bombay and travelled north to the Punjab to stay with Scottish missionaries. They gained valuable experience in the working of a mission hospital, but also spent much time learning Urdu.

In October 1910, Will and Edith travelled to a small town called Shahabad to begin their work. For some months Will and Edith lived in a tent. Their dispensary was an old three-roomed shed that they cleaned out and whitewashed.

On opening day, the young couple with their two untrained Indian helpers knelt to commit their work to God. Seventy patients came the first day and later as many as 250 came in one day. Every day the Indian evangelist preached the Gospel to the waiting crowd.



Inside the operating room at Jagadhri Hospital in 1914

Eventually finding Shahabad an unsuitable centre from which to work, they decided to move to Jagadhri, a larger town in the midst of a densely populated rural area. In 1911, land for two bungalows and a hospital was purchased and an old renovated building became a temporary hospital. A school for girls was established, evangelistic work in the villages continued and a new hospital opened in 1914.

Celebrations of the centenary of this work will start at this year's General Assembly in October.

By Doreen Riddell Spanz

Watch out for the next Global Mission Gazette in September! We've combined the June and September editions into a six-month bumper issue that will cover 100 years of mission to the Punjab, international guests at General Assembly 2008, the latest projects in the Pacific, and much more.

For subscription information, contact globalmanager@xtra.co.nz



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How New Zealand churches helped Pakistan's earthquake survivors

"People's lives in North West Pakistan are really changing," says Takeshi Komino. "They are able to stand on their own and that is something everyone who supported earthquake relief can feel proud of."

Takeshi, an emergency coordinator for Church World Service Pakistan/Afghanistan, was recently in New Zealand to thank the government and churches for their support through Christian World Service and explain how the rehabilitation process continues long after the disaster has disappeared from world headlines.

A large area of Pakistan's mountainous North West was devastated by the earthquake on 8 October 2005, which measured 7.6 on the Richter scale. Over 73,000 people died, 106,000 were injured and 3.3 million left homeless. What followed was a massive humanitarian relief effort dealing with the challenges of isolation, underdevelopment and tribal cultures in addition to the earthquake damage.

The first phase was immediate aid: water, food, medical care and shelter. Then came longer term relief and rebuilding. "People's lives cannot be rebuilt quickly," explains Takeshi. "It is not easy to rebuild communities. It is much more than just replacing infrastructure."

Land issues have made the process slower. The earthquake caused landslides and many people lost not only their homes but the land their houses had stood on. They had to be relocated. Debates over ownership caused delays and in some cases areas are unsafe to rebuild on. The lack of roads, electricity, water and livelihood opportunities also hampers relief.

Takashi explains that Church World Service does not believe it should provide services that are the government's responsibility. "But what can you do?" he asks. "You can't leave the people with nothing." They have put in water systems as part of rebuilding villages. As is common in disaster zones, people can end up with better conditions in the camps than in their homes. Minimum standards for water and sanitation, food, shelter and so on are better than communities living in poverty have access to. People chose to live in the camps for the first couple of winters after the earthquake rather than facing the harsh winter conditions in their villages. Church World Service worked to slowly close the camps while assisting people to improve their ability to withstand the region's ongoing natural hazards.

Church World Service works through local partners and has been in the region over 27 years. They were the only organisation able to reach some affected communities. "You need to understand the leadership, understand the communities, recognise and use their strengths," argues Takashi. Livelihood programmes matched community needs. Men were given tools and certified training in construction work such as welding, carpentry, and plumbing. They now have ongoing skilled work, receiving six times the pay they used to get. It was not culturally appropriate to train women as builders, so Church World Service offered a different livelihood programme for them. They were given livestock, and training in care and manufacturing produce. Now they make their own butter – improving family nutrition, saving money spent in the market



and earning income from selling the surplus. Thousands have been trained and with their new jobs have made real advancements in their lives. By learning the skills to rebuild, people are partners in reconstruction and not just aid recipients.

Financial support from partners like CWS is critical. "It enables us to respond quickly," says Takashi. "People in poor countries don't have the resources to cope alone. We really appreciate your help."

"Blessed are the Peacemakers" Jesus

Find out how you can work with Christian World Service partners and New Zealanders to make peace a reality.

Take part in a Global Youth Encounter:

18-20 July at Te Maungarongo Marae, Ohope

Or

25-27 July at Camp Wainui, Wellington

Or

1-3 August at Cracoft Centre, Christchurch

The GYE is open to young people from 15-25 years old and costs \$60 if you register before 27 June.

Group travel may be available.



GLOBAL YOUTH ENCOUNTER 2008



For more information contact Liz:
Phone: 0800 74 73 72
Email: youth@cws.org.nz



ENLIVEN POSITIVE AGING SERVICES AVAILABLE ON THE EAST COAST

Lorna Cowan General Manager Enliven says "since the sale of residential care two years ago, Enliven Positive Aging services on the East Coast have established a range of community based services for older people. Our staff now number more than 40. We have 14 services working with 300 older people". Our portfolio currently includes;

Enliven Restorative Home Support: Flexible, strength-based home support for older people with high and complex needs.

Enliven Day Programmes: Socialisation, physical activity and fall prevention via Tai Chi for older people who may be socially isolated or at risk of entering rest home care.

Enliven Connect – The Information Directory: A one-stop web-based information directory specifically designed for Hawke's Bay older people in collaboration with District Health Board, Councils and Eldernet.

Enliven Befriending: A third-age volunteering and visiting service offering socialisation to isolated older people.

Enliven Homeshare: a service that carefully matches an older person with a spare room who would like some assistance with household tasks and a mature student who in return for accommodation will provide up to 8 hours assistance a week. Enliven Homeshare coordinator ensures a safe and monitored match.

Men Can Cook!: Cooking classes by men for men. Socialisation, a few laughs and shared meals whilst learning new skills.

Caring for Carers: offers training, education, support and socialisation to unpaid carers.

enliven day programme
Positive Ageing Services
PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT EAST COAST

enliven homeshare
Positive Ageing Services
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The Information Directory for Older People

FAMILY WORKS SOUTHLAND

Responding to changing community needs

The past year saw some massive changes at Family Works Southland with staff numbers doubling and new service delivery sites in Gore, Invercargill and Queenstown.

We had only just appointed a Co-ordinator in response to calls for a Buddy Programme in Gore when the Ministry of Social Development advertised for organisations willing to take over the troubled Invercargill Family Start Programme from the local DHB.

Family Start works with parents/care-givers of newborn to five year olds to enhance health, education and welfare outcomes for their children. The programme, which has around 200 client families, has been operating in Invercargill for about 7 years.

Presbyterian Support Southland could see several good reasons to pursue the contract:

- » We believed we could add stability to the programme, giving certainty to those using it.
- » It complemented the services already offered through Family Works making it easier for those clients to access Family Start and vice versa.
- » Family Start gives us additional links into our community, particularly the Maori community.
- » We believed the programme was fully funded.

Once we started contract negotiations it became apparent that most capital items were worn out there were no reserves available to replace them, also the funding offered could not cover running costs and capital replacement.

It took a great deal of commitment from both MSD and Presbyterian Support Southland to find a solution to ensure the programme's ongoing viability before we finally took the programme over on 1st June.

The biggest challenge then was integrating Family Start into the Family Works suite of services/programmes with a minimum of disruption for clients while still operating from two sites.

It wasn't until late last year we were able to purchase a building large enough to house the expanded service (with room for expansion). While the timing wasn't ideal staff moved in just before Christmas and we were able to start the New Year with a one stop shop for those accessing Family Works.

We also improved the accessibility of our services in Queenstown during the year when the Disability Resource Centre offered us space in their new building at a very reasonable rental.

This has allowed us to establish a service base for the Buddy Programme and our Supportlink service for older people. Both services had been based in their respective Co-ordinators homes due to high office rental costs in Queenstown.



The new Family Works building, 183 Spey Street Invercargill.

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