

Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

SEPTEMBER 2008, ISSUE 36



The sustainable
church

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Living sustainably in God's world

Bill Lee and Phil Scadden talk about their church's attitude towards environmental responsibility

The first decade of the new millennium has catapulted environmental issues into the news. Our new vocabulary includes terms such as "peak oil", "global warming", "carbon trading", and "sustainable living". All over the world, prices for basic commodities such as food and fuel are increasing, and environmental costs associated with our unsustainable lifestyles are escalating. How do we as Christians respond to the challenges of living within environmental limits that may require us to radically change our lifestyles?

For the past year, our small group at Leith Valley Presbyterian Church in Dunedin has been exploring what it means to live sustainably in God's world. We have undertaken studies on living simply, shared ideas about recycling and energy efficiency, completed an ecological footprint analysis of our church, and



explored how we can adjust to the increasing environmental and commodity costs associated with living in New Zealand.

Our desire to go down this path was precipitated by several things. Although many Christian traditions have a long history of living simply with minimal possessions and resource needs, nowadays we are often linked to the materialistic lifestyle of many Western nations. Some historians even argue that Christians are responsible for global pollution and resource depletion because we appear to have little concern for the present and act as though we have a mandate to consume as much as we want. While the charge is poorly grounded both historically and Biblically, the sentiment is widely held. If we want to break out of this caricature, we have to demonstrate by the way we live in our local communities that we care for God's Creation, and that we accept the need to share Earth with other creatures. Loving our neighbour means allowing people everywhere to have equal access to Earth's resources for food, clothing and shelter.

Exploring environmental issues provides an impetus to rediscover authentic Christian living, based on a more reflective, gentle, and relaxed lifestyle. We need to engage with activities that bring us closer together as communities, and give us all more time for God.

Currently we are exceeding Earth's capacity to provide for everyone on the same resource-use basis that we in the developed countries have achieved. We are all required to make lifestyle adjustments, beginning right now. For churches, these represent exciting opportunities to renew our focus on living simply, fostering community, and sharing with our neighbours. Already community gardens are emerging, and families are reordering priorities to cope with less travel, working locally, and strengthening involvement with activities nearer home. We can all participate in this - older generations have experience that we need to tap in to, and younger people are often motivated for change.

As Christians we share the hope of the Gospel that all of Creation will one day be renewed. Living sustainably within the Creation order is a restoration blessing for all.

Bill Lee is an ecologist and Phil Scadden is a geologist. Both worship at Leith Valley Presbyterian Church and both are employed by Crown Research Institutes, Dunedin.

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Cover Photograph

Angela Singer

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

Moderator's musings



I am on the home stretch. I'll be relinquishing the role of Moderator of the General Assembly in October. Thank-you for your support, encouragement and hospitality; I've had a great time.

It's time to take stock and consider where we are as a Church. What are the issues that give us hope and delight? What worries us and gives us a sense of despair? What pervades our conversations and the meetings around our Church?

What's most concerning is not often spoken about. It's an "elephant in the room"; massively present but unacknowledged. It's the question of the growth of our Church, and also its counterpart, which is clearly demonstrated in our national statistics and keenly felt in our smaller congregations: decline.

We've all got theories and explanations about why we have been in decline as a Church: the influence of societal changes such as secularisation and individualism; alternative decisions by younger generations; the growing of the Pentecostal megachurch. It's much harder to strategise for an arrest of the trend. What would it mean to have a growth plan in every congregation? Or is the trend inevitable?

So what are we planning? Many will have already heard of "Press Go", a strategy to be presented at the General Assembly. By using the unified resources of the whole Church, this strategy is designed to promote growth ventures, particularly in places where present congregations struggle to find funds. It is based on the type of church outlined in Acts 2 and Acts 4: "None of them claimed that their possessions were their own, and they shared everything they had with each other" (Acts 4:32b).

There are others who advocate growth in terms of our Christian maturity and theological depth. The Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership has set up some great workshops to encourage training in leadership.

I have been encouraging parishes to measure their health not just in worship numbers, but in their influence and impact on the wider community. A "Christ-centred, community-facing" church, with an incarnational approach, touches the lives of many more than those who worship on Sundays.

The Communications team's "Standing Out" and my "Tools for Mission" workshops throughout the country have been instrumental in encouraging "growth" in the difference churches make to a community's shalom – in peace, justice and compassion. However, we must be mindful that to carry out this mission, we need increasing numbers and committed people.

Growth in numbers; growth in theology; growth in mission: will our strategies be enough to stem the decline? Perhaps that depends on how faithfully we listen to what the Spirit is saying to the Church. We will know God's blessing if our strategies to implement growth, rather than being self-seeking attempts to ensure our survival, are aligned with the Biblical vision of "the kingdom of God, close at hand".

We are in God's hands. Let us praise the one who gives a sure future.

Grace and peace be with you all,

Pamela



The sustainable church

"Global warming is a hoax". "There are plenty of animal and plant species left for us to use". "There's still enough oil to last for years". You may have heard these kinds of comments in casual conversation, so prevalent are they. In spite of the constant news reports that tell us our world is in serious trouble, there are those who argue against scientific evidence that we need to change the way we live to avert global ecological disaster. Within the voices raised on this issue, have you heard a Christian response? Is there even such a thing? If so, how are we addressing these complex challenges within the Church?

Angela Singer investigates

The Bible has many profound insights into "environmental issues" (or what the Church might term caring for God's Creation). Both within and outside the church, Christians can offer the environmental movement a valuable spiritual understanding and a response that ultimately evokes hope.

Across the world, Christians are working denominationally, ecumenically and at an interchurch level to create projects and programmes that meet the most pressing environmental concerns. Within the past year in New Zealand, a number of international nondenominational Christian ecological organisations have begun to make an impact.

Not that there aren't locally many organisations and long-term projects aimed at lessening, or even reversing, our impact on the environment. Throughout the land, Presbyterian Church congregations have initiated a diverse range of projects aimed at caring for Creation in their communities. In doing so they are carrying out one of the faces of mission of our Church: "as Christian people, discipleship and mission, including priority for the poor and stewardship of Creation, will drive our actions" (*The Directory for Worship* Chapter 7:5).

It was at General Assembly 2004 that caring for God's Creation was adopted as part of the Church's mission statement. General Assembly 2006 went further, passing a motion that "urged congregations to be conscientious in ordering congregational life

on sound principles of sustainability, to honour our responsibility to be God's stewards for Earth and to be pro-active in their local communities in challenging and educating people about sustainable living". Moderator the Right Rev Pamela Tankersley's theme of congregations being "Christ centred and community facing" has supported this call to action.

In October 2008, the Church's Ecological Task Group will offer its declaration on caring for Creation for General Assembly's approval.

Our Church is not alone in recognising the importance of confronting these issues at the highest level. The Uniting Church in Australia Assembly 2006 passed a resolution on "the rights of nature and the rights of future generations".

The Church of Scotland 2007 and 2008 General Assemblies recognised the urgency with which major changes are needed to avert the worst consequences of climate change, as well as concluding there should be a focus on energy conservation and meeting future demands from renewable sources. However, the Church recognised that the moral and ethical dimensions of transport are complex, given the duty to go into the world in mission and in care for others. They urged the need for well-thought-out travel; travel that is for educational reasons, socially essential or prompted by faith, and is also economically productive rather than being wasteful or self indulgent. The Church also reiterated its commitment to the Eco-Congregation Programme (see A Rocha story on p.9), which has been hugely successful in Europe. Its effectiveness demonstrates the need for workable ecological, environmental and theological resources.

The *Directory for Worship* (which can be found at www.presbyterian.org.nz under "ministers' resources") contains a section on caring for Creation and life with the following components: "God's Mandate", "Worship and the Care of Creation" and "Stewardship of Creation". Around the country, congregations have taken these messages to heart and have found ways to practice the principles of stewardship of Creation in their churches, homes and community. Here are just a few of the projects that parishes have been involved in:



An environmental house group at **St Columba's, Havelock North**, is one of the longest-running church-based environment groups. The group has been meeting monthly since the early 1990s to converse with environmentalists and participate in field projects. Congregation and group member Jim Watt says they are science-biased, "but *Darwin's Angel* helps us with the bridging". (The book *Darwin's Angel* by John Cornwell is a response to Richard Dawkin's *The God Delusion*.)

"We generally muster 10-20 people each meeting," Jim says. Before it became standard practice, the group was promoting recycling and energy conservation. An environmental audit of the St Columba's precinct sharpened their thinking "but we still felt we were talking into the wind".

In 2000, the group focused on "their own backyard" and involved the wider community in restoring the Karamu Stream. With the support of the Regional and Hastings District councils, the stream was cleaned up and the banks planted over four years. Local schools and other groups became involved, and ongoing maintenance of the stream continues to be a principal activity.

The growing and sharing of food is the focus at **Awatere Joint Christian Venture, Marlborough**. Young mums arrive at the church for pre-school to find a table laden with free freshly grown vegetables, donated by the congregation.

Wellington's Khandallah Presbyterian has also used green thumbs to enrich the earth and those in need. At the last Harvest Festival, the congregation brought to church home-grown herbs and vegetables. Those who attended the festival were invited to take what they wanted and leave a donation. A total of \$150 was raised for children's charity KidsCan.

To mark **Wellington Presbytery's** 150th anniversary, its churches were asked to commit to carrying out environmental projects in their communities during 2008. In response, **Wadestown Presbyterian** and **Ngaio Union** hosted 30 people for a picnic and guided walk in Trelissick Park/Ngaio Gorge, with Trelissick Park Trust members discussing plans to restore the area to its original wilderness state. **St James, Newtown**, invited a group of migrant women to establish a community garden in their grounds and to

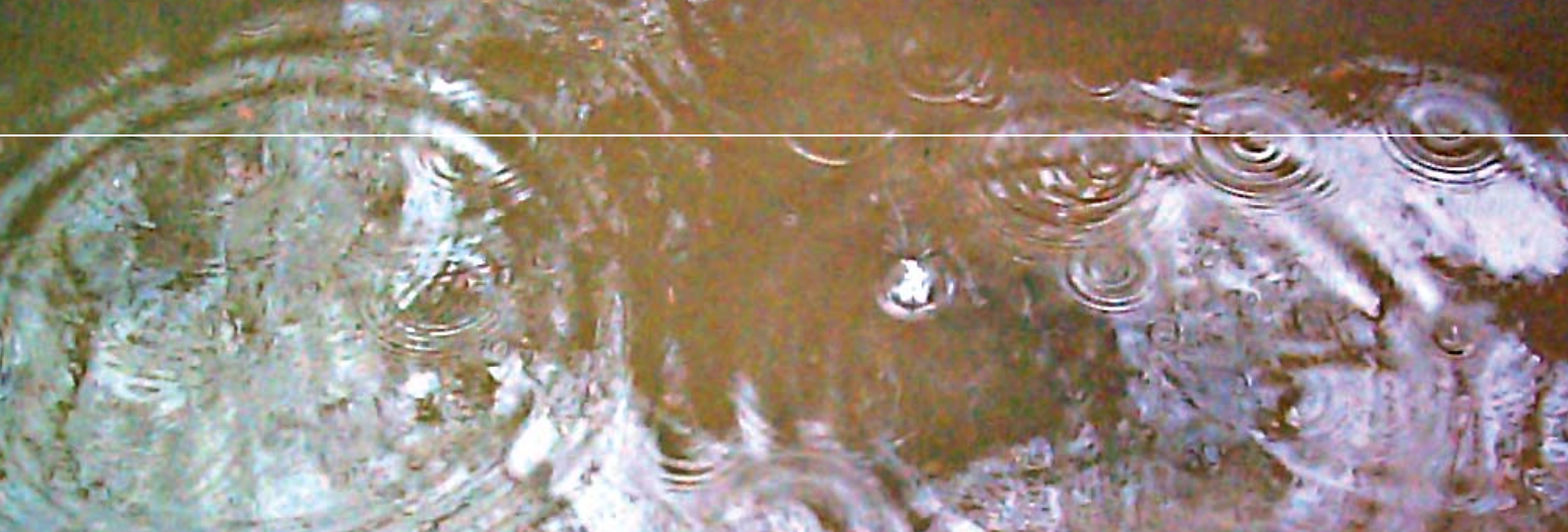
use rooms in their old manse as an office. **St Timothy's, Titahi Bay**, is developing a worm farm and has a working bee once a month to "beautify" church grounds. The congregation's young and able pick up rubbish in the main shopping centre opposite the church. **St Andrew's on the Terrace, Wellington**, has committed to helping its congregation recycle and is advocating with Wellington City Council for inner-city recycling. **Otaki-Waikanae's** plan is to plant 20 native trees around the church to encourage bird life into the area. **Upper Hutt Uniting** weeded the graves in the cemetery they own and picked up rubbish in picnic areas along the Hutt River bank.

Island Bay Presbyterian, also in Wellington, has created a church garden that grows vegetables all year round for those in need. Their composting bin feeds their vegetable patch as well as the native garden they have planted. The church has hosted a presentation given by the Sustainability Trust, a Wellington-based group helping communities address sustainability-related issues, on a local project to reduce car use. They played the DVD "What would Jesus drive?", which is part of a United States campaign featuring prominent evangelical leaders speaking out on the morality of transportation choices.

St Luke's, Rongotea, runs fortnightly recycling in their rural area near Palmerston North, which is not included in the city's recycling scheme. At Easter they leave recyclers a packet of hot cross buns and an Easter message.

Wellington's Wadestown Presbyterian celebrated Lent this year with "Lenten eco-walks". Minister the Rev Sharon Ensor says the idea was to introduce a spiritual discipline during Lent of caring for the environment. "It's based on a resource from a United Kingdom book called *Eggs and Ashes*, which I expanded somewhat" she says.

Recently Sharon nominated one of the congregation for a Ministry for the Environment Green Ribbon award. "Bruce Anderson is committed to recycling. He sorts our church's and our neighbours' recycling each week. He also operates a couple of compost bins on our property and sells the compost for us," she says.



“live as God's stewards until the day
when God will make all things new”

St Stephen's Presbyterian, Christchurch, takes its youth group to a reserve for eco weekends. Minister the Rev Martin Stewart says, “we talk over issues regarding the Gospel and how we live on this planet. The reserve is a living example of what we are exploring”.

St Stephen's Leith Valley Presbyterian in Dunedin formed, less than two years ago, a “sustainable living in God's world” group that has been exploring how the congregation can live more gently and use less resources. The group have undertaken an ecological footprint analysis of their church (which is nearly completed). They have also explored the work of A Rocha, completed a study series on living simply, watched and discussed the “Wasted” television programmes, facilitated recycling of rubbish from the church and undertaken church Kidztime talks discussing caring for creation.

Upper Clutha Presbyterian belongs to Sustainable Wanaka, which is a trust dedicated to sustainable development. “We've stopped orders of service to conserve paper,” says minister the Rev Diane Gilliam-Weeks. “We actively promote the use of cloth bags at the supermarket, and we recently held an Aspiring Faith Community Summer School on “The Christian Response to Climate Change”.

Kapiti Uniting Parish minister the Rev Norman Wilkins says his parish is “putting a lot of energy into helping initiatives arising in our community. Having said that, last year we ran a successful Sustainability Expo that 400 people attended and 25 different groups exhibited at. This led to our parish being involved in establishing Transition Towns Kapiti [which is a group that aims to develop sustainability at the local level].

“We also initiated Kapiti Interfaith to try to build good relationships across faith and ethnic divides. Lloyd Geering is a regular and very popular speaker at these meetings; his talks often have an environmental aspect to them. We have had a speaker from Whareroa Farm talk on conservation work. Nearly everything we do involves the wider public”.

For more than five years, a small group at **St Ronan's, Eastbourne**, have supplied workable environmental ideas to the rest of the congregation. The group belong to local trampng clubs and Forest

and Bird, and have been involved in cleaning up beaches, caring for the harbour dunes, weeding and re-vegetation both in the bush and at harbour boundaries.

Recently their emphasis has shifted to looking at sustainability. Congregation member Jenny Orange says they are examining their local council's recycling policy and questioning why some material is sent offshore for recycling. Church members have been involved in growing native seedlings for replanting, making wooden penguin boxes, building a worm farm, beautifying school grounds and participating in the East Harbour Carbon Reduction Action Group.

“God calls: Touch the Earth Lightly” is the theme for the May 2009 **Association of Presbyterian Women** triennial business and study conference, national convener Heather Tate says. “Through Bible study and workshops, we will discuss God's creation, our stewardship, the challenges of world grain shortages, the plight of environmental refugees, and the never-ending demand for greater economic growth despite scarce natural resources and very expensive oil”.

The Rev Howard Carter, minister at **Ahuriri/Putorino Presbyterian, Hawke's Bay**, tackles cutting carbon emissions by cycling as often as he can in his “vast rural parish”. He also admits to being a committed recycler “of jokes in my sermons”.

A series of lectures titled, “Faith and a Sustainable Future” inspired the congregation at **Knox Presbyterian, Christchurch**; they agreed to buy minister the Rev Geoff King a bicycle. Geoff says: “in 2006 I made a commitment to cycling wherever possible and have not made a claim on the parish for petrol since August of that year”.

Cycling isn't the only way parishes can make energy savings. Assembly Office has coordinated an offer of solar panels for parishes from Right House, an agent for Meridian Energy. Right House has offered to supply and install electricity-generating solar panels to churches at a special price (price based on the position and location of the church). To date, 22 parishes have expressed interest. For more information contact Brendan Sweeney on brendan@presbyterian.org.nz.



Sustainability resources

The Interchurch Bioethics Council (ICBC), with scientist Kevin Tate of St David's, Palmerston North, has produced a study for churches that explains what individuals, congregations and communities can do to reduce climate change.

Titled *Real Urgent and Personal: A Christian approach to global climate change*, the study looks at the theology underpinning the need for Christians to be actively involved in caring for Creation.

According to the Christian tradition, there is an intrinsic value in Creation and all creatures. All Creation is good; all Creation belongs to God; all Creation praises God; Creation reveals the eternal power and divine nature of God; Christ demonstrates how *imago Dei* is most perfectly fulfilled – caring for all through loving, sacrificial service.

The study explores environmental ethics and focuses on what we should do regarding caring for nature. As Christians we recognise a responsibility both to present generations and those to come, and towards non-human creation. For these reasons, global climate change is an environmental, theological and social issue.

A challenging, interactive section of *the report* questions whether we are people living lifestyles of consumerism or stewardship. Christians need to support measures that will reduce the effects of climate change, despite the fact that in some instances there will be financial costs as well as benefits. Christians, say the ICBC, have a responsibility to put ethical values first.

Real Urgent and Personal: A Christian approach to global climate change can be downloaded from Interchurch Bioethics Council Resources on the Presbyterian Church website <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/4599.0.html#c16598>

ICBC was set up in 2000 by the Presbyterian, Anglican and Methodist churches. Members of the ICBC have expertise in ethics, theology, philosophy, science, medicine and cultural issues and are available for presentations to church and community groups. To discuss their availability, contact chairperson Dr Audrey Jarvis, jarvis.ab@xtra.co.nz

Assembly Office in Wellington has also made an effort to reduce its carbon footprint. Paper is recycled and excess printing is discouraged by a wearisome process of logging into the photocopier; old computers have been recycled to schools instead of contributing to toxic landfill. To save trees, monthly newsletter *Bush Telegraph* is delivered electronically, as are most copies of leadership journal *Candour*. Those involved in planning for General Assembly 2008 are doing their best to ensure ecologically sound options are taken where viable. In recognition of the importance of cutting emissions, 50 percent of Wellington-based staff now choose to either swap their car park for public transport passes, or regularly walk or cycle to work instead of driving.

The Church's Ecological Task Group is investigating the possibility of reducing travel by switching Church meetings to video conferencing.

All this work being undertaken throughout the country by our congregations and at a national level demonstrates that there need not be a divide between the Church and the environmental movement. Congregations engaged in the enormous challenge of caring for Creation are finding that, although difficult, it leads not to despair but to greater engagement with their communities.

"In worship Christians rejoice and give thanks to God, who gives and sustains the created universe, the earth and all life. They acknowledge God's command to be stewards. They confess their own failures in caring for Creation and life. They rejoice in the promise of the redemption" and renewal of the Creation in Jesus Christ, proclaimed in the Word and sealed in "the Sacraments. They commit themselves to live as God's stewards until the day when God will make all things new" (*Directory for Worship*: Chapter 7).

For resources, links, ideas and local examples on the many ways you and your congregation can make your church environmentally sustainable, see the Presbyterian Church website social justice pages: Home » Social Justice » Social Justice and Advocacy » Sustainable church resources www.presbyterian.org.nz/4968.0.html

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A Rocha:

Sowing eco-congregation seeds

Christians should be involved in conservation for four reasons, according to A Rocha, an international Christian nature conservation organisation now working in New Zealand. These are: love (to show our love for God), obedience (to obey God we must be good and responsible stewards of the natural world), justice (often it is the poor who suffer first when the environment is damaged) and hope (while those who care about the environment can easily become depressed, the Bible provides much-needed grounds for hope).

Founded in Portugal over two decades ago, A Rocha works in 18 countries to demonstrate God's love for Creation. Working alongside individuals and organisations with many beliefs and backgrounds, A Rocha is committed to community-based conservation projects.

A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand is A Rocha's newest national organisation. Established just a year ago, it already has local groups in the Waikato, Palmerston North and Christchurch.

Richard Storey, chair of A Rocha Aotearoa NZ, says "A Rocha is having a profound influence globally; both in the church and in the secular conservation world". "Its message that Christian faith compels believers to care for the environment is changing thinking."

"We live in a country where environmental awareness is very high, and there are many conservation groups," Richard says. "Even so, there continues to be a deep divide between the Church and the environmental movement. Many Christians who care about the environment feel their faith and their environmental concern

are separate or even in conflict. A Rocha's message is that caring for the Creation is an essential expression of faith in the Creator, which helps these Christians bring two parts of their lives together. Furthermore, caring for God's Creation is an essential part of the Church's mission, and the Church needs leaders who will promote such care. Many non-Christian New Zealanders think that Christians don't care about the environment. We want to show New Zealand that the Church does care."

One programme that A Rocha runs for churches is called "eco-congregation". Hugely popular in Britain and Ireland, this free ecumenical programme helps congregations understand environmental issues and make appropriate practical and spiritual responses.

Many of the denominations using the programme speak of it as a tool kit that helps churches begin to address environmental issues in all that they do. Churches are encouraged to use the resources to look at three main areas of church life: spiritual; worship and teaching (this might include services, preaching, work with children and young people, small groups, practical things to do with buildings, land and church management), and mission.

As well as taking action in their own church life, eco-congregations are working together in networks and promoting the programme to other churches.

A recent report to the Church of Scotland's Assembly said the eco-congregation programme's small actions add up to big results, with 187 Scottish congregations having environmental projects underway.

If you are interested in using or finding out more about the eco-congregation programme, visit www.ecocongregation.org or contact A Rocha www.arocha.org

Bethlehem vision takes form

Bethlehem Community Church members have given an average of \$11,500 each to see their dream of a church building become reality.

The church, which has grown from 19 people to 150 people attending two Sunday services during the past six years, had been meeting in the Bethlehem College chapel.

In May, a purpose-built facility valued at \$1.6 million was opened on a prime site next to the main road through Bethlehem, near Tauranga.

Not having a facility to use during the week was inhibiting the church's mission and growth, says minister the Rev Jim Wallis.

Jim says the church was fortunate that 40 years ago the Presbyterian Church had bought a large paddock in what was then a rural area. "If we'd had to buy the land now, we wouldn't have been able to do it."

The new facility cost \$1.2 million to build, but would have needed another \$400,000 if huge amounts of labour hadn't been donated. A church member who was a developer acted as the project manager; another who was a carpenter became the site manager. "God seemed to bring people along who had the skills."

Fundraising for the building began in 2004, when people were invited to commit an amount over three years: \$702,000 was pledged. Repeating this opportunity a second time several years later saw an additional \$150,000 promised. Another \$200,000 was obtained via a suspensory loan from the national Church, and \$50,000 came from a local trust.

Jim describes the new building as looking more like a service station than a church. French doors open up the sides of the building to courtyard areas, blurring the boundaries between public and inside space. The foyer can seat 200 people, and in time the church hopes to build stage two of the project, which would create a hall with the capacity for 350 people.

More than 250 people attended the opening of the new facilities, which include a commercial kitchen and space that can be hired out for community functions.

Previously Jim was minister at St John's in Rotorua, which constructed a new facility in 1989 and had experienced strong growth. In 2001 Jim recovered from a brain tumour, then the following year he was called to Bethlehem during a period when the congregation had nearly dispersed after difficulties. Planted by St Peter's in the City in 1997, it had grown at one point to 100 people, but some left to follow a minister stepping away from the Presbyterian Church and others left altogether. Jim says those remaining when he arrived had gone through a traumatic time but their vision was strong and they remain a key part of the church today.

In 2002 Jim had a particularly vivid dream, in which God told him to go to Bethlehem. Not being used to having or acting on

this kind of experience, he told God that he needed a clearer word. After six months it hadn't materialised, but then one day Jim picked up a pamphlet and a verse on the back caught his eye: "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." (Luke 2:15)

Jim had heard about the difficulties Bethlehem was experiencing. The congregation didn't have the resources to fund a full-time minister, but it did have substantial reserves built up from renting out its manse. Although he declined the congregation's offer to work part-time, Jim said he would take on the charge full-time if the parish would use its assets to pay his stipend for as long as that was possible. "It was a step of faith. It never crossed my mind that it wouldn't work."

"There are a lot of churches with huge reserves but they don't even have a full-time minister. If you employ someone with a vision for growth, then use your reserves.

"It's about encouraging people to leave a legacy that will outlast them, so that their grandchildren might have the opportunity to experience Christ."

Slowly the parish became financially viable and they started to consider building on their site.

Bethlehem used a version of Saddleback's Time to Build programme, adapted for the local context. The theme was "equal sacrifice not equal gifts," to make sure people didn't feel pressured to give. A pack that included a detailed explanation of the programme as well as a devotional guide was sent to everyone who attended the church, and lots of congregational meetings were held, but money was deliberately not sought from those not connected with the church, Jim says.

The church is continuing to grow. Jim says growth, like decline, has a momentum that carries its own energy. He describes Bethlehem as "community facing", and says the church has begun the transition into building community ministries. On Mondays a drop-in service will operate, with free manicures available.

Bethlehem's surrounding community is affluent and booming, with house and land prices extremely expensive. The demographics are mixed, with a lot of young families but also a significant proportion of retired people.

Before the building project started, the church surveyed local people on what their needs and concerns were. The survey revealed that the lack of community facilities where people could hold meetings or gatherings was a major issue. In new subdivisions, developers often build only dormitory and commercial spaces, and one new development not far from Bethlehem will hold 7,000 homes.

Regular letter-box drops keep people informed about special programme and activities, like the church's monthly movie night.



“Maybe less than 1 percent respond, but if you do 2,500, that’s five new families. We do a letter box drop every six weeks.”

“Even if only one new person comes along a week, in a year that’s 52 people.”

The contemporary service uses the latest worship songs and a relaxed format, but still has space for reflection and prayer, Jim says. There’s a traditional service later in the morning that attracts a mostly older audience, but also those who prefer a more “classical” style. Jim says this service also offers a more familiar entrance point for people than the contemporary service, which can seem more intimidating to some people, particularly those who have grown up with hymns.

Between 30 and 40 people attend regular movie nights, which Jim says are designed as an outreach rather than being a kind of club for the congregation. “It’s really important to provide flight paths in.”

A series of lectures has also been planned that will engage intellectually with some of atheism’s arguments.

Another project still in gestation is a Sunday night “jam” gathering, which will be a café-style service where people can play music or read poems they’ve composed. Jim hopes this will kick off in August, with a group from the congregation providing the energy and organisation.

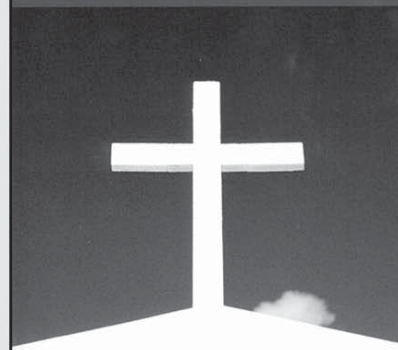
The church put careful thought into the look and style of its signage, employing a designer to create the logo, which puts a stylised cross before the church’s name and gives the word “community” significant prominence. “Everything we do has it on it: from PowerPoints during worship to newsletters and even fridge magnets. It says something about us.”

By Amanda Wells | [Spanz](#)

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Mystery envelopes serve community

Sending congregation members out into the community with envelopes of \$20, \$50 or \$100 to give away generated a huge reaction in Papakura.

The initiative at Papakura East Presbyterian was part of the Rev Geoff New's study towards a doctorate in ministry, which required creating an innovative mission project.

The subsequent project had only two rules. The first was that people couldn't give the money back to the church; they had to use it to make a difference in someone else's life. The second was that they had to link up with at least one other person in the congregation to combine their envelopes.

Not having many rules and regulations was important, Geoff says. "It could easily become tied up in bureaucracy and then it would lose its magic."

A lot of trust was involved, he says: the church leadership trusted the congregation, with no system of accountability for the money; and people had to trust each other to pool their resources and decide on a project together.

Geoff says he discussed the proposal with the session and the board of managers, with both groups quickly becoming supportive. "I was expecting a two-hour discussion but before I'd even finished putting the proposal, one of the elders was moving it."

The money came from a proportion of offerings that Papakura East sets aside and distributes four times a year to Christian organisations and ministries; generally it totals about \$5,000 a quarter.

Before giving out the money in May this year, Geoff preached on the Parable of the Shrewd Manager (Luke 16), which ends with the phrase, "you cannot serve

both God and money". There is a sense of urgency in the parable concerning living life and the use of limited resources, Geoff says, and he asked the congregation to imagine what they could do with \$20, \$50 or \$100, before reaching behind the pulpit and pulling out two baskets of envelopes.

Anyone older than 13 was invited to take an envelope when the baskets were passed around.

"People were stunned... it was pretty quiet at the end of the service, rather than the usual buzz."

Geoff says some people really struggled with whether they would take an envelope, and many felt a weight of responsibility in deciding what to do with the money. There was a strong sense that because this money was from someone else's offering to God, it must be used wisely.

Envelopes were taken by 191 people and the money was used in a myriad of ways: a bigger vehicle was hired for a family holidaying with a wheelchair-bound son; a doctor's appointment was paid for; bike helmets were bought for children of a refugee family; a solo parent was given money to buy shoes for their child; money was given to a person in debt after an expensive vet bill.

Responses ranged from tears to feeling overwhelming to heartfelt expressions of gratitude. One person said, "Your thoughtfulness came at a time when I was very low. To know there are good people such as yourselves caring makes things look brighter". More than 90 percent of the recipients had no connection with Papakura East.

Rather than the money being used to seed some kind of programme or project that could be continued, "one off" innovative

mission might allow for the ongoing gift of gratitude. "I think we've discovered a new culture," Geoff says.

Papakura East has been doing mission-oriented projects for many years. "What this did was bring into focus that each of us has ministry in our own lives Monday to Sunday. People are already in the mission context just by being alive and by knowing Christ."

Rather than expecting the community to come to a particular programme at the church, this was about meeting them where they were, Geoff says.

"It challenged us about discipleship and what it's really about."

After the project, people were asked to report their experiences and feedback anonymously via a questionnaire. People were keen to repeat the experience, with a few adding qualifications or suggesting minor changes, Geoff says.

Eight people shared their experiences with the congregation during a Sunday service. "It's become part of our story now."

If any other parish is considering a similar innovative mission, Geoff says his advice would be "don't burden it with a whole lot of rules and regulations".

"People are already in mission situations but they don't always know it. They are already 'dwelling among'."

By Amanda Wells [Spanz](#)

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Kids Friendly

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Recently Cheryl Harray and the congregation at Mosgiel North Taieri Presbyterian Church took part in an activity. Minister the Rev Ken Harray (also Cheryl's husband) had written words on balls and hidden them throughout the church. Both adults and children were asked to find the balls in order to read the message they collectively formed. As hard as the congregation looked, there was one ball they could not find, which contained a word crucial to the sense of the message. A few Sundays later, one of the children in the congregation happened upon the missing ball and declared, "I've found Jesus!" The significance was not lost on the adults or the children, says Cheryl.

Helping children come to Christ is at the heart of Cheryl's new role as Dunedin presbytery's Kids Friendly coach.

"I saw the position advertised and I thought, 'wow, I would love to do this'. It really spoke to me. I felt the excitement, the energy, the passion I have for working with children in the church."

The full support of her family made taking up the role an easy decision, she says. "My husband and I have four children who are very involved in youth groups and leadership. It makes us extremely proud to have raised children who can now nurture kids to find their gifts and to feel how valued they are".



Cheryl took up her appointment in April and will work 10 hours a week. She describes the role as that of "a coach who walks alongside a church asking, 'how can I help you involve your children more in the life of your church? How can I help you reach out to the children in your community?'"

Having recently completed training in Auckland with national Kids Friendly coach Jill Kayser, Cheryl says she feels inspired.

Jill says she's thrilled to see the Kids Friendly seed she helped plant in Dunedin presbytery blossom into Cheryl's appointment. "I am quite overjoyed to see Dunedin presbytery's long-term vision in action; they have made a wonderful and important investment in our children."

Within Dunedin presbytery there are currently seven Kids Friendly churches and six churches working to become Kids Friendly.

Cheryl says one of her aims is to create a nurturing and empowering network of children's ministers in Dunedin presbytery. "I look forward to hearing your stories and working with you to reach out to children and families. I'm very excited to be a part of a church that values and supports those who work with children".



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Knox Centre lures Kiwi back for Auckland position

The Rev Mark Johnston has been appointed to the newly created role of Auckland coordinator of ministry formation and leadership development, commencing January 2009.

Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership principal the Rev Dr Graham Redding says Mark's priorities will be to oversee the ministry internships in the top half of the North Island, encourage and facilitate ministry training opportunities in the greater Auckland region, and help resource the processes of ministry formation within Te Aka Puaho, the Pacific Island Synod and the Council of Asian Congregations.

Some will remember Mark as former minister at Wadestown Presbyterian in Wellington. For the past five years he has been in a slightly chillier climate, as associate minister at Cove Church in Aberdeen, Scotland, where he focused on community, children and youth.

Cove Church is part of the Church of Scotland's initiative to start new forms of church that engage with contemporary society. Mark describes the congregation as "small but energetic by Church of Scotland standards".

"It meets on Sundays at a primary school in a slowly expanding housing estate, with other gatherings during the week at people's homes and community facilities. It's predominantly a working-class area, but this is changing gradually as more expensive developments are built. Our challenge is finding the right 'key' to minister and relate in.

"It has felt like a spiritual wilderness for a long time", he says. Consumer lifestyles, "glacial" relationship building and a reluctance to engage with the

institutional church for anything other than the traditional rituals of passage pose significant barriers.

But small breakthroughs have occurred, through community ministry projects such as "Blue Horizon", which works with disaffected teenagers and their parents as well as being a resource for the local high school, police and social work agencies.

Mark says he's enjoyed the freedom to spend time and energy working beyond the bounds of the church in the community. "I have been able to look back upon the church or what we call 'church' and ask questions I didn't get to ask when I was immersed in ordained ministry in the middle of a parish system."

The newly created role that Mark will take up was created to support the intern-based model of training that began this year. He says the idea of nurturing leaders is appealing, particularly maximising the gifts and strengths of others and preparing them for different ministry contexts. "We can train people to drive cars, but if in 20 years time we will all be taking public transport it's probably going to be more important to train people to catch buses.

"This might mean being part of a church-planting team as a training ordinand, being encouraged and supported in starting a spiritual focus group in the local gym, doing a placement as a chaplain to a rugby league team, or spending three months creating a children's church in a primary school. The skills and awareness learnt in this context may turn out to be as important as learning to preach."

However, Mark says that this doesn't mean de-emphasising spiritual focus, disciplines and capacity for theological reflection.

By Amanda Wells Spanz



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What's hot at GA08?

General Assembly 2008 looks set to have structural focus, with Assembly asked to consider the most effective ways of organising the Church and its resources to promote growth.

GA08 will be held in Silverstream, Wellington, from 2-6 October. More than 300 commissioners from Presbyterian and Uniting churches around New Zealand will meet to consider key decisions for the Church's future.

The reform of presbyteries (our regional bodies) will be high on the agenda at GA08, with the Presbyteries Task Group having made significant changes to its initial proposals after several rounds of feedback. The model suggested by the group separates the governance and

resourcing functions of presbyteries, and also vesting some governance functions in national bodies. The group also recommends reconfiguring presbyteries into larger bodies.

Another group has been working on a subordinate standard for the Church that would replace the Westminster Confession. The group is continuing its work and will make a presentation to GA08 on progress to date.

The Press Go strategy will also be discussed by GA08. Its vision is that every church committed to a growth process will receive the resources necessary. You can find more information about this strategy on the brochure included in this issue of Spanz.

A related but separate discussion will be around guidelines for the use of capital funds. There will be a proposal that allows their use for both capital and growth projects, rather than just capital projects as is the case at the moment;



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but with specific parameters in place around this.

If you're not attending GA08 but want to keep up with the proceedings, sign up for the daily GA08 news email at www.presbyterian.org.nz

Big numbers Stand out

More than 620 people attended the 16 Standing out workshops that were held around New Zealand between February and June.

Just over 40 percent of parishes were represented. The biggest workshop was in Christchurch, with 74 people present, though a total of 110 people attended the two Auckland workshops.

The workshops included interactive exercises on how to connect with your community, managing impressions and communicating mission projects. Resources, including a DVD and series of booklets, were also distributed.

Many positive comments were received from those who attended, including: "It was good to get together with others who have a vision that the church can touch and inspire a community and have a great impact back on their church"; "we have now a number of constructive ideas which are practical for outreach"; "we drove home brimming with ideas and one idea in particular I think will take off."

Parishes that did not have a rep-resentatives at the workshops have been sent a copy of the resources. If you would like



Standing out in Wellington

the material to run the workshop in your parish, contact Communication Manager Amanda Wells on amanda@presbyterian.org.nz or phone (04) 381-8285.

More copies of the publications distributed at the workshops are also available: email info@presbyterian.org.nz or telephone (04) 801-6000 to request them.

Spanz subscription charge dropped for parishes

As of 1 July 2008, Spanz will be free to parishes, which have previously been charged a nominal per-copy amount.

The decision to drop this charge was made as part of setting the General Assembly 2008/2009 budget. A strong level of advertising covers much of the magazine's production costs. Parishes that are not currently subscribing to Spanz will be sent a sample copy of the September issue.

Sex-selection of embryos challenged

The Interchurch Bioethics Council is speaking out against a report commissioned by the Government that recommends allowing parents to choose the sex of their child.

Chairperson Dr Audrey Jarvis says sex selection based solely on the personal wishes of the parents suggests that the value of a child depends on its gender. She says gains made in New Zealand towards gender equality and a just society are potentially threatened by the concept of sex selection for social reasons.

Audrey says the council supports the use of pre-birth testing to prevent serious illness. This involves the selection of healthy embryos in situations where a family is known to be at risk from a major disability. "The parents would make their own decision to undergo testing, and decide what to do about the results. The benefits of embryo selection for medical reasons are accepted as outweighing cultural and social concerns".

This is a community issue, Audrey says, and she encourages everyone to have their say. Concerned readers can write and express their view to the Associate Minister for the Environment, at Parliament Buildings, Molesworth Street, Wellington

6160, their local Member of Parliament or Toi te Taiao: the Bioethics Council, PO Box 10362, Wellington.

The complete report, "Who Gets Born? A report on the cultural, ethical and spiritual issues raised by pre-birth testing" can be obtained free from Toi te Taiao: the Bioethics Council by e-mailing info@bioethics.org.nz or downloaded from www.bioethics.org.nz/publications/who-gets-born-jun08/index.html

The Interchurch Bioethics Council was set up by the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist churches to consider biotechnology's spiritual, ethical and cultural dimensions. Contact jarvis.ab@xtra.co.nz for more information.

By Angela Singer Spanz

Analysing your communication

When you think of communication in a congregation, what comes to mind? The sermon? Verbal and printed notices?

In the past two decades, we've experienced an explosion of new communication technologies, and congregation leaders find themselves asking new questions. Should we have a website? Does our existing website work? How can we best stay in contact with younger people who use Facebook and Bebo all the time? Are mission statements still important? Would a congregational blog help us?

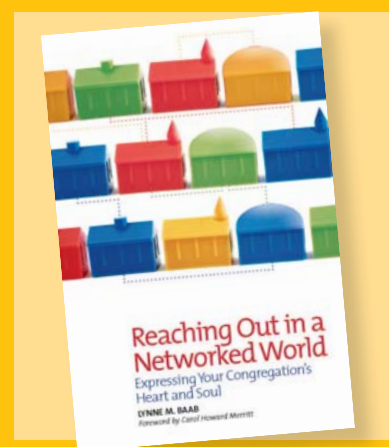
Because of this explosion of communication options, and because many people in our communities know so little about the church these days, I recommend that congregational leaders take the time to conduct a communication audit. Imagine that you are a visitor to your church. Walk through the church

building, look at all the paper publications, study the website, and listen to your voicemail message. If you were a visitor, what impression of the congregation would you get? What congregational values would you perceive? What information might you want to know about the congregation that isn't available? Then repeat the same process, imagining that you've been attending the church for a year or two, and evaluate all your forms of communication and the ways they give information for people who've been attending a while. Then do the same for long term members.

In order to reach out in our time, congregations need to express clearly and effectively the values that come from their faith as well as the unique priorities of their congregation.

By Lynne Baab

Rev Dr Lynne Baab (www.lynnebaab.com) is lecturer in pastoral theology at the University of Otago and adjunct tutor at the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership. Her doctoral degree is in communication. Spanz



Lynne Baab's new book *Reaching out in a Networked World: Expressing your Congregation's Heart and Soul* helps leaders of congregations understand the opportunities new forms of digital communication offer, as well as how to conduct a communications audit. The book is available from www.alban.org.

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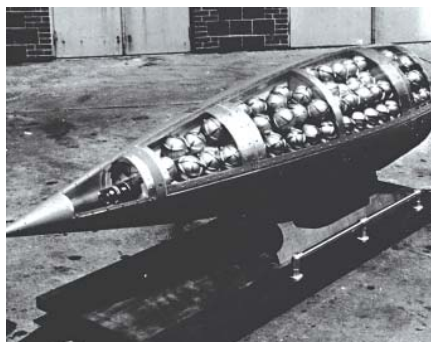
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Christians push for cluster bomb ban

Mark Zirnsak, director of the Justice and International Mission Unit of the Uniting Church Victoria and Tasmania, is on a mission to ban deadly cluster bombs.

In Wellington in February to attend the international Conference on Cluster Munitions, Mark, who is also co-ordinator of the Australian Network to Ban Landmines, says cluster bombs pose a particular threat to civilians because they have a wide area of effect and because unexploded bomblets remain dangerous for decades.

Accompanying Mark to the conference was Kerry Clarke, social justice officer of the Justice and International Mission Unit of the Uniting Church Victoria and Tasmania, and secretary of the Australian Network to Ban Landmines. Kerry, whose family lives in Tauranga, was delighted that New Zealand has been a leader in both calling for the ban and hosting the conference.



People often do not understand how cluster bombs kill, says Kerry, "cluster munition weapons open mid-air, scattering hundreds of smaller bomblets that create multiple explosions. They are aimed at military targets but when released in populated areas the bombs do not distinguish between military and civilians targets, resulting in the death and maiming of many. Often the bomblets fail to detonate on impact and remain on the ground as live duds."

Working with the church, says Kerry, allows her to make a positive difference in the world. "We have had civilian survivors (of cluster bombs) visit our churches; they are an inspiration. After hearing their stories many are moved to support total disarmament, which is in keeping with Jesus' message of peace."

New Zealanders can be proud of their Government's efforts towards positive change, says Kerry. "New Zealand has presented a strong diplomatic voice." The Right Rev Pamela Tankersley, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, joined other representatives of faith communities in April to sign the Christian World Service call to ban cluster bombs.

On 30 May 2008 in Dublin, Ireland, a total of 111 states, including NATO allies the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany and France, formally adopted the Cluster Munitions Convention. This historic treaty bans the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of all existing and future cluster bombs. Existing weapons must be destroyed within eight years. However, a new policy recently announced by the United States, which did not take part in the Convention process, will see continued use of its large cluster bomb stockpile for at least another decade.

To find out more on the campaign to ban cluster munitions visit:
www.banclusterbombs.org.nz

By Angela Singer Spanz



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L'Arche creates home for all abilities

Not far from Wellington, in a town by the sea, is a community of people living, working and thriving together.

L'Arche began many years ago as a French Catholic community for people both with and without learning disabilities, says the Very Rev Marg Schrader, who is on the council of the L'Arche community.

The community attracts young people from all over the world to Paraparaumu, and currently has assistants from Japan, Switzerland, the United States and Germany. "We appreciate all our assistants", Marg says, "but we would love to also have some New Zealanders".

L'Arche has two houses with four core members living in each. Assistants live and work with the core members full-time, for short or long periods.

Marg says that coming into the L'Arche community is made easier for each assistant by the assignment of an accompanier, who is someone to whom they can talk and get feedback from.

"Our assistants are often young people who have experience of learning disability in their own families", Marg says. "They are attracted to the spirituality of L'Arche. I can understand that; in many ways it is my spiritual community."

The assumption that their disabilities stop L'Arche members from participating is wrong, says Marg. "Some of the members work. We have great community involvement, with voluntary help from retired teachers and other people from the community who teach our core members art, drive vans and participate in services. Our core members attend church. We are not hidden away; our doors are open to visitors". L'Arche welcomes the wider community to its events on the first Wednesday of every month at 7.30pm.

Catholic at its inception, Marg describes L'Arche as now "deeply interfaith". Prayer is an important part of the life of the community. Each core member has a friend and prayer partner. "They pray together every night. One of our members has limited speech so another member, Emmett, helps her by saying the prayer with her."

Marg says that it is not surprising that L'Arche has a long waiting list of families who would like a family member to be a part its community. As L'Arche approaches its 10th anniversary, it is working on ways to grow so that more members can be welcomed. "We are excited about extending into a third house," Marg says.

Those interested in becoming a L'Arche assistant or who would like to donate, volunteer, visit or participate in a L'Arche event, can contact Marg Schrader at margschrader@clear.net.nz

By Angela Singer **Spanz**



Two helpers at L'Arche

School of Theology



Emily Colgan is studying towards a PhD

"I majored in Biblical Studies for my Bachelor of Theology and one of my favourite courses was Women in the Bible. At the same time I was studying for a Bachelor of Arts, majoring in Māori Studies. I could see many similarities between the women in Māori tradition and the women in the Bible and I became inspired by so many of them. The School of Theology provides a really stimulating learning environment because the lecturers are so passionate about their subjects. You will meet a lot of people of different faiths and walks of life through this degree programme."

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From the archives...

The Presbyterian Church Archives Research Centre holds a collection of 144 glass Lantern slides of various scenes from the Holy Land. The majority appear to have been taken in the latter years of the 19th century. To see the display, visit <http://archives.presbyterian.org.nz>



Jewish men & women praying at the Western (Wailing) Wall, Jerusalem.



Three Arab women, Bethlehem.



Sheep being herded outside the Damascus Gate, Jerusalem



Jacob's Well at Shechem, where Jesus met a woman from Samaria.

"You meet people who forget you. You forget people you meet. But sometimes you meet those people you can't forget. Those are your 'friends' "

MARK TWAIN

It is a rare thing to have a truly good friendship. Acquaintances are a dime a dozen. But true friends are far more costly. When I immigrated to New Zealand 12 years ago, we tried to mitigate every risk we could identify in advance. But I can remember encountering a challenge soon after I arrived and literally reaching for the phone, only to realise that I had not mitigated one of the greatest risks of all: I had left all my friends behind.

I am pleased to say that I now have a number of special friends in New Zealand who I can call at any time. But what about developing friendships across thousands of kilometres with people who are strangers? How about forging a friendship that requires you to understand a foreign culture and brush up on your secondary school history? How about even beginning to learn another language? I can tell you from first-hand experience that despite all the challenges and the inescapable hard work, friendships like these become people you can't forget. I can tell you about people living in places as diverse as Zambia, Myanmar and Vanuatu who I now list as my friends. These are people who I can never forget.

Such a friendship is a special thing. It makes your ears prick up every time you hear mention of the region on the news. Crisis in their home city becomes a crisis that you feel. It lasts long after the news media moves on. You find it incredible that others don't feel their pain like you do. You get annoyed when people find your enthusiasm boring. In a very real way, the friendship puts you on the edge. It sharpens your focus. It gives your prayers a point.

I am not trying to suggest that the concept of friendship has a single, static definition. The entire concept of friendship is dynamic and means different things to different people. Friendship is culturally and contextually defined. There is a significant body of research on the concept of friendship and allied subjects such as loneliness for those who want to delve into the subject a bit more.

But it seems that Jesus side-stepped the debate about a definition of friendship by simply saying "love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44 NIV). It stands to reason that if you love your enemies long enough, they will become your friends. For residents of war-torn countries where people are separated by sectarian loyalties or government-sponsored walls, an enemy is easy to identify. But for New Zealanders it is far harder and is usually reduced to snide remarks about Aucklanders or Cantabrians or farmers or city



dwellers. But let's face it, there are the strangers in our midst who we would prefer to forget: Burmese refugees who don't have a clue how to read a power bill or enrol their kids in school; seasonal fruit pickers from the Pacific who are forced to live in a freezing cold caravan; a boorish South African family who have no friends. Often the work of global mission is as close as the family next door.

Jesus said "Greater love has no one than this, that they lay down their lives for their friends" (John 15:13).

The Global Mission Office is undertaking a self-imposed review. We have invited all congregations to complete a simple survey form and to submit written comment as well if they so choose. We also gathered a group of people for a GMO summit in early August. There is still time to contact us, and have input in this process. Please don't hesitate to get in touch. **By Andrew Bell** [Spanz](#)

Opportunities for young people

Are you called to experience the breath-taking mountains of Nepal and meet the beautiful people who live there? **December 2008.**

Do you want to go to Zambia and South Africa in **January 2009**? Closing date end of September 2008.

Do you want to go to Thailand and become involved in the prison ministry of Kathryn McDaniel? Two months from **Dec to Jan 2008/2009.**

Or do you feel God calling you to become a Global Intern and study, work and be involved in Mission? A flexible year at the Global Mission Office; **2009.**

Are you interested in applying for the **2010** Training in Mission Programme? This is fully funded.

If YES, then contact the:

**Global Mission Office
Presbyterian Church of
Aotearoa New Zealand**

Phone: 09-276 4313

Mobile: 027 2155 145

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A recipe for disaster:

Understanding the global food crisis

A lethal blend of unfair trade rules, expansion of bio fuels and cash crops, rising oil costs, underinvestment in food production and changing weather patterns has triggered a worldwide food price crisis. The dramatic increase over the past two years is pushing 100 million more people towards starvation on top of the 862 million who were already malnourished. While New Zealand has not been exempt, the crisis is a matter of life and death in developing countries. CWS partners say the rapidly rising cost of food must be treated as "an emergency for the poor".

What makes this crisis unforgivable is that it is a disaster caused by people. The world grows more than enough food to meet the

nutritional needs of everyone on the planet. However, since the start of 2006, world prices for essential commodities have risen drastically: rice by 217 percent, wheat by 136 percent, and maize by 125 percent. Prices are expected to stay high through 2015. Poor families are spending up to 80 percent of their budget on food and can no longer buy the food they need. In India, where the cost to feed a family has doubled, an additional 1.5 million children have become at risk of malnutrition. People cannot afford to send their children to school or seek medical care. In Kenya, farming is becoming too expensive. The cost of fertiliser has trebled this year. In response to higher food prices, people are cutting back to one meal a day.

CWS and its partners have warned of such a crisis as the world embraced free market economic policies at the expense of guaranteeing food security. Access to food at affordable prices was policy in Sri Lanka until, under pressure from the World Bank and IMF, they changed to free market policies. "The market has failed to ensure this right to food at affordable cost and resulted in very serious situations of malnutrition and anaemia," says a people's petition supported by CWS partner MONLAR. MONLAR reports "in addition to the high rates of malnutrition and hunger, the growth in suicide rates and growing indebtedness are clear indicators of the poor being pushed beyond the threshold of survival."

Trade liberalisation has forced developing countries to remove the tariffs that protected domestic food production, opening their markets to the heavily subsidised food exports of richer countries. Cultivation of flowers, tobacco, bio fuels and other cash crops for Western markets has squeezed out food crops in many areas. Small farmers have been pushed off their land as "market forces" made their production unviable.

During the 1990s, Haiti was forced to remove import tariffs on basic foodsuffs. Their rice market was flooded with US-subsidised rice. Local growers couldn't compete. Previously a net exporter, Haiti now imports 82 percent of its rice consumption and spends 80 percent of export earnings on food. Today, US farmers are devoting more land to growing crops for biofuels – to benefit from generous subsidies – leading to rice shortages in the Haitian market and a further escalation

in costs. Most of Haiti's farmers have gone. Many domestic farming sectors have been weakened in this way, leaving poor countries over-reliant on increasingly expensive food imports.

This food crisis must be met in several ways. The first is to support emergency food relief for communities unable to feed themselves. The second is to continue support for sustainable agriculture through local community development. Even the World Bank now suggests a return to small scale farms using mixed cropping and environmentally sustainable processes. This is the approach CWS has always supported through its partners. The third is to campaign for a fundamental change in agricultural and trade policies, especially from rich countries who continue to benefit from the inequities. Unless there is a pro-poor approach, such global food crises will continue to occur. Even more challenging is the Sri Lankan call to have food declared "an essential service" rather than "a commodity for profit making."

CWS is working on all these fronts. Parishes have the opportunity to help. CWS will have resources available for World Food Day, which is 16 October. Contact CWS 0800 74 73 72 or see www.cws.org.nz.

With thanks to Christian Aid's report *Fighting food shortages, Hungry for change*. This can be viewed at www.cws.org.nz

Christian World Service



CWS partners in India and elsewhere are helping small farmers to produce food in an affordable, productive and environmentally sustainable way, so they can ensure their communities are fed.

DARFUR APPEAL



LET'S WALK TOGETHER

Over four million people suffer because of the continuing conflict in Darfur, western Sudan. At least 2.5m are homeless, forced to live in tents and makeshift camps. Christian World Service and Caritas Aotearoa New Zealand, working through international partners and Sudanese relief organisations, are providing health care, clean water and sanitation, agriculture and education services.

Darfur people need your continued support.

Help us to build a better future for Darfur.

PLEASE DONATE NOW TO



Christian World Service 0800 74 73 72
PO Box 22652, Christchurch 8142 cws.org.nz





Presbyterian Support

PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT CENTRAL

enliven
Positive Ageing Services

Enliven – Positive Ageing Services

Presbyterian Support Central has recently adopted the **Enliven – Positive Ageing Service** brand. **Enliven** is used by Presbyterian Support widely, to promote our work with older people living in their own home or in one of ours.

Sometimes change can be very hard for an older person to cope with. Using one service provider, someone who can offer a complementary range of support services and ongoing accommodation can make life a lot easier. **Enliven** gives clients and residents the ability to move through a continuum of services as their need requires, without changing service provider.

In June 2008 Wellington's Kilmarnock Heights Home was approved as an Eden Alternative™ Registered Home. The Eden Alternative™ philosophy affirms that no one should suffer from loneliness, helplessness or boredom and concentrates on maintaining meaningful relationships.

This means we work to create vibrant living and working environments for residents and their caregivers. We encourage residents to maintain their own routines and continue with hobbies and interests. Residents' pets, the daily presence of children, plenty of plants and gardens, and a high level of local community involvement are a part of our homes' everyday life.

Kilmarnock Heights Home also welcomes older people to a Community Café for morning tea or a nutritious and affordable lunch. The Community Café is a great place for people to meet like-minded people in a warm and friendly environment and helps address social isolation.

Presbyterian Support Central's **Enliven – Positive Ageing Services** for everyone.

PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT OTAGO



Children's programme increasingly popular

Family Works counsellors at Presbyterian Support Otago are finding that their programmes focusing on children are increasing in popularity.

With encouraging comments like "fantastic programme, has increased child's confidence", "more aware of others' feelings", "you made my child feel great!" and "thank you! Fantastic for our whole family" ringing in their ears, the counselling team is certainly putting hope back into the lives of both parents and children.

Growing Taller, a seven-week activity-based group programme now in its fifth year, is focused on showing children how to recognise and manage different emotions.

"We see some amazing growth in the children and feedback from parents often indicates other family members benefit as well," says Rupi Riley, the Family Works child psychotherapist leading the programme along with facilitator Rayleen Hubac.

As well as developing strategies in managing emotions, the children learn social skills, ways of dealing with conflict, making and keeping friends, and how to enjoy being themselves. Rupi said there was a noticeable trend in children needing help coping with separation and blended family situations.

The Buddy Programme, where volunteer adults are matched to children needing friendship, fun and encouragement, is also enjoying considerable support.

"These Big Buddy volunteers are making an enduring contribution to the best predictors to true success in life: happiness achieved through positive interests, attitudes and behaviour, and healthy social interdependence," says Buddy Programme Manager Russell Beal.

Counselling Services Team Leader Mark Chignell runs Incredible Years, a programme for parents and care-givers who want skills in helping keep lines of communication open between them and their children. Mark said that parents usually asked "what do we do when things go wrong?", whereas he believes the more important question is "how do we help thing go right?"

Setting clear limits, being consistent, providing encouragement and being a good listener, are skills Mark imparts to course members seeking help in handling the ever-increasing pressures modern children place on parents.

Mark and his Family Works' counsellors have been in "full flight" since the beginning of the year but say the sense of achievement they get from their services makes the pressure all worth while.

Does your congregation lack caring?



Recently churches were sent copies of our latest social issues publication, titled *Caring for our Children*. If for some reason your church did not receive this useful resource, please phone or email and copies will be sent.

Caring for our Children

has been written to raise awareness of the status of children in our society and stimulate an effective response. Easy to use and understand, the booklet can be used for individual reflection, small group discussions or workshops.

Caring for our Children

is the third in a series of studies encouraging congregations to reflect about contemporary issues affecting our communities. Copies of the previous two study guides, *Connecting with Young People* and *Bring on the Baby Boomers: Coming of Age* are also still available. Email info@presbyterian.org.nz or phone Sandra on 04 801 6000.

All three studies can be downloaded from the Presbyterian Church website Home » Social Justice » Social Justice and Advocacy » Resources » Studies



Presbyterian Church
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