

# Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

SEPTEMBER 2009, ISSUE 40

## Looking for Justice

The Sycamore Tree Story

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

# Amorangi ministry takes root in Te Aka Puaho



Wayne Te Kaawa

***Te Amorangi ki mua; ko te hapai o ki muri. This Maori proverb (Let the message of God come first, the enhancement will follow) is an apt description of the Amorangi ministry within Te Aka Puaho (the Maori synod).***

**Of the original group of Amorangi ministers, only two remain alive today: Jim Hunter and Rangi Rakuraku, who recently celebrated his 80th birthday. Rangi and Jim would not have envisioned the challenges and developments that Amorangi ministry would experience during its 29-year history.**

The geographical areas of Te Aka Puaho pastorates are quite large in comparison with most Presbyterian Church parishes. The Amorangi minister was to be an assistant minister, who helped the full-time minister (Amorangi means “the bringer of good tidings”). Over a period of time, retirement and death took their toll on the ranks of full-time ministers, so that today most parishes within Te Aka Puaho are staffed only by Amorangi ministers. Some Amorangi are sole charge in their parish, while others have formed Amorangi ministry teams. No matter which way we look at it, this leadership model has to be working, because many parishes are starting to show signs of flourishing.

Parishes were encouraged to nominate long-serving elders to train. These elders were offered an intensive training course of two to three weekends over the course of six months, focussing on the sacraments, with their home parish as their placement field. Once these studies were completed, the Amorangi were ordained and inducted into their home parish; an internship of some sorts (sorry Knox, we thought of it first!). To financially support themselves, they would work for a living like everyone else, and parishes would give them some financial assistance if needed. Sounds good, but when you are required to take time off work to answer a call, what do you do when your employer says, “choose between your ministry and your employment”? Well, the fact is that under pressure from employers, some have indeed put their ministry first, walking out of their jobs. Some have chosen part-time employment so as not to affect the time they give to their ministry, while others live on some form of government benefit.

Financial support is the sad part of Amorangi ministry. Knox students are fully funded by the Church, while the Amorangi training is not. The cost involved in training an Amorangi minister amounts to over \$4000. To lessen the expense borne by the students, innovative cost-saving methods are found, and grants are often successfully applied for. If one student receives a grant, they often share this with their colleagues. As the Maori proverb says, “my food basket and your food basket and we will feast together”. This keeps the costs down to about \$1000 per student. A late Amorangi minister once remarked on the lack of financial support to Amorangi ministry saying, “the pay is not that great but the retirement plan is out of this world!”

In the programme’s lifetime, 29 men and 16 women have been ordained Amorangi ministers, with three of them being non-Maori. Any notions that Amorangi is for Maori only have been proved wrong; to qualify one has only to belong to a parish of Te Aka Puaho, regardless of culture or gender. This was seriously challenged when a non-Te Aka Puaho parish within the Presbyterian Church asked if one of their Maori members could become an Amorangi minister. Creative solutions were found around the rule book, and this person is now exercising a wonderful ministry in the King County. Seriously, what is wrong with Amorangi ministers serving in non-Te Aka Puaho parishes of our Church? Where there is a parish that has a high population of Maori, could an Amorangi minister be positioned there to work with that particular parish, helping them to develop their mission to Maori while also working with that particular Maori community? Mission context must inform our ministry.

Presbyterianism has a major emphasis on Christian education, and Amorangi ministry is included in this. The short intensive Amorangi course has now developed into an 18-month programme consisting of 500 hours of taught classes and 500 hours of practicals. Lecturers from the Knox Centre are also lecturers at the Amorangi weekends, as well as many friends from throughout the wider Church. The emphasis on education does not stop there, as some of our Amorangi have a range of University degrees, including Masters degrees, while another is planning PhD studies. Having a University degree is fast becoming the norm for an Amorangi. Those who do not have University degrees are now actively pursuing their degrees in theology via the long-distance programmes offered by Otago University. This has to be positive, and the Moderator the Right Rev Dr Graham Redding must be acknowledged for encouraging this.

What I find really exciting in this development is that Amorangi ministry has become inter-generational. By this I mean that in 2008, three sons from the original class of Amorangi ministers 29 years ago followed the path blazed by their parents and became Amorangi. This year, it has become three-generational, with one of the students having his father and grandfather as previous Amorangi ministers. The Amorangi ministry has truly taken root within Te Aka Puaho.

In July, the Amorangi students and ministers hosted students and staff of the Knox Centre. This was truly a special time, and along with the upcoming covenant between Knox and Te Aka Puaho, this brings the two closer in a mutually supportive relationship. During their stay at Ohope marae, the Knox Centre was given a brief glimpse into Amorangi ministry and I can tell you it was an extra special time and an honour to witness these ministers in action. Today we have 24 Amorangi ministers operating in 12 pastorates. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

*The Rev Wayne Te Kaawa is Te Ahorangi of Te Wananga a Rangi and minister of Putauaki Maori Pastorate.*



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Australasian Religious Press  
Association Awards 2008  
Most improved publication:  
Silver Award

The Right Rev Dr Graham Redding contributes a regular column to *Spanz*

## Moderator's Musings

Suppose you are asked to choose one biblical text that you believe has done more than any other to inspire mission, what would it be? Chances are, you'll choose Matthew 28:19 – "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

No question, this is one of *the* great missionary texts.

But the Great Commission does have its limitations. For example, it's not the text I would choose if I was asked to sum up my *theology* of mission. For that, I think I would opt instead for 2 Corinthians 5:19, which declares that "in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us".

There are five things I like about this missional statement:

1. Its *scope* – nothing less than the world is the object of God's reconciling activity in Christ. Not just Christians, not just the elect, not just the lovable, not just human beings even, but the whole of Creation. Staggering!
2. It is *God*, not the Church, who is the primary agent of mission. Thus understood, the Great Commission only makes sense when it is placed in this larger context called the *Missio Dei*, the mission of God. Discipling is about equipping people to become active participants in the full scope of God's redemptive purposes. That's what following Jesus leads to.
3. It's about *reconciliation*. It might be many other things too, but God's core business is reconciliation. Reconciliation does not mean mere co-existence; it means a vital, restored relationship in which the disruptive effects of sin have been dealt with once and for all.
4. It's *complete in Christ*. It's not about church programmes, Christian activism or outreach committees, but about the one who "for our sake was made sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21). John Calvin called it the "miraculous exchange".



Neil Mackenzie

5. The core business of those who have been entrusted with this message of reconciliation (the Church) is simply to *make it known*. There is nothing so simple or as challenging as this, for the constant temptation is to either settle for less or to try to do more. You know the Church has settled for less when it becomes indistinguishable from other voluntary organisations; you know it's trying to do more when it thinks everything depends on its own institutional survival and growth.

In light of the above, why not try the following mission audit in your church? It consists of a few simple questions:

What is the scope of mission in this church? How expansive is its vision? Who or what tends to be overlooked?

Who is the primary agent of mission here? What are the main indicators or signs of this being the case?

To what extent is the Gospel of reconciliation evident in the life and witness of this church? How well do the structures, processes, commitments and activities of the church serve this primary missional mandate?

How well do the people in this church understand themselves to be a reconciled and reconciling people, with all that that entails?

If you substitute the word "presbytery" for "church", what happens then?

And if you substitute the name "Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand" for "presbytery", what happens then?

When I do that, I see plenty of things to affirm. I also see plenty of scope for reform.



# Throw away the key?

**N**ew Zealand has recently recorded its highest-ever prison population – surpassing the previous record of 8457 set in September 2007. Our country has the second-highest imprisonment rate in the developed world, behind only the United States.

**According to the Department of Corrections, research shows that imprisonment doesn't reduce the chance someone will re-offend. About 68 percent of released prisoners are reconvicted within four years of release. But a Biblically based restorative justice programme is making a difference.**

**AMANDA WELLS reports on the Sycamore Tree.**

The Sycamore Tree, a restorative justice programme run by Prison Fellowship New Zealand, aims to make offenders take responsibility for the impact their crime has had on its victims.

It does this through bringing together six prison inmates and six people from the community who have been victims of crime; these victims are unconnected to the specific offences of the six inmates. They spend eight two-hour sessions together over the course of two weeks, working through ideas of empathy, forgiveness and justice, culminating in each person telling their own story to the group.

Janet Sim Elder, a Presbyterian elder who facilitates the Sycamore Tree at the Otago Correctional Facility near Dunedin, says the programme forces inmates to confront the idea that their actions have consequences.

It's being run in 11 prisons around New Zealand, with between 30 and 35 courses being delivered every year.

The programme belongs to Prison Fellowship International and was developed in the United States, though it has been significantly rewritten to fit the New Zealand context.

In June 2009, Prison Fellowship published an evaluation of outcomes for the 361 inmate participants in the Sycamore Tree since 2004. Because most are still in custody, re-offending cannot yet be measured, but the evaluation shows very significant changes in terms of inmates' attitudes. Prisoners are given a questionnaire before and after participating in the programme that gauges five different attitudes, including their general attitude to offending, how much they perceive their crime to have hurt their victim, and how worthwhile they believe a life of crime to be.

On average, significant shifts are recorded across all attitudes.

Jackie Katounas, Prison Fellowship's manager of restorative justice services, says the Sycamore Tree has exceeded Corrections' expectations.

"It's staggering the change that's happening in people through this programme.

"Generally prisoners and offenders don't personalise crime. If they have an opportunity to hear that heart-wrenching trauma [from victims], we hope that makes a world of difference as to whether they would offend again."

The programme is funded by private donations and grants from funding bodies.

Janet Sim Elder facilitates the Sycamore Tree at the Otago Corrections Facility near Milton. Janet, who is also an elder at Dunedin's Knox Church, describes the programme as "very intense work".

She has run five courses since March 2008, and says Corrections staff have told her they notice a big difference in the inmates who participate.

"For many of the guys it's the first time they have ever confronted the kind of impact their actions have had on other human beings."

As well as using the questionnaires to record attitude change, Janet interviews each participant before and after the programme. Some of their comments are extraordinary, she says.

One offender told her, "I've learned what forgiveness is about. I've learned that it is a way of life. It stops the fights. [Other inmates] are asking what's happened to me."

Janet says offenders often think that their crimes don't hurt anyone, or that the victims asked for it. "We challenge these thought patterns."

The hardest part, she says, is finding people from the community who have been victims of crime and who would like to participate.

The community participants are given a good idea of what to expect before they participate in the programme, including briefings on the experience of going inside the prison and the security measures taken to protect them. Janet describes them as "an amazing, courageous bunch of people."

"They want to make a difference but they get stuff out of it too."

Mary (not her real name), a community participant, says she found the programme "really worthwhile".

She had experienced violent crime many years ago, but was confident that she had dealt with it and moved on.

When participating in the programme, "my biggest surprise was to realise deep down that I'm still affected by it".

"When I relived the experience [in front of the group], it brought back all the trauma.

"My story was quite powerful, in that they saw it could still affect you even though it was a long time ago; that it actually stayed with you."

Mary was buddied up with the inmate sitting next to her, who happened to have committed a violent crime. "I tried to tell him that change wasn't insurmountable. That it was achievable... I said to him, 'we're all sinners'."

She says it became apparent that the man had never thought of forgiveness in the way that it was presented in the programme. "He apparently became transformed [afterwards]".

Janet says community participants are often shocked when the inmates start to talk about the type of upbringing they have had.

"The tragedy is that we have people in prison who have been hugely victimised themselves. The community people note that every time. The sort of childhoods they say they have had have been horrendous; the parenting they have had is nonexistent."

Jackie Katounas describes the Sycamore Tree as "victim-based process. Victims get the chance to tell an offender the pain they've caused".

"It's not a soft process; it's tough for both offenders and victims to do."

Jackie says it can and does turn around the lives of victims, as well as offenders.

"Victims have got to be given a voice. They continue hurting when they're not heard."

At the heart of the programme is the concept of forgiveness, which our society finds difficult to associate with crime, she says.

"Forgiveness isn't something that happens overnight. And it may never happen for some people at all, but it's an opportunity for this to occur.

"We don't often talk about forgiveness in our own communities; it seems too hard. But it's the forgivers who receive the gift of freedom and letting go."

Janet says that people who have been victims of crime often struggle with fear. "They want to face their demons; they've been dealing with these demons for years. [After the programme] people are saying, 'this is what's turned my life around'."

Both Janet and Jackie talk of the effect that media coverage of violent crime has had in creating and feeding community fear.

Jackie says, "our country has become obsessed with punishment".

The context of the Sycamore Tree is explicitly Christian, and nearly all the community participants hear about the programme through churches or other Christian connections.

"We always open with all 12 people in prayer," Janet says. "At the end, we all hold hands and pray as we go." Even inmates who have negative initial reactions to prayer end up commenting on its calming effect, she says.

The Bible is the heart of the programme, specifically the stories of Zacchaeus (see below), David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11ff), and the beginning of Joseph's story (Genesis 37).

Janet says Knox Church has been very supportive of her work, providing gifts at Easter of a flax cross, chocolate eggs and small card to everyone at the Otago Corrections Facility. The 400 crosses were made by the congregation during a church camp, and Janet and her husband John spent Easter Sunday at the prison giving them out.

"Some faces gave nothing away, but others lit up."

## The story behind the Sycamore tree

Zacchaeus is the chief tax collector, reviled as a thief by his community. Zacchaeus climbs a Sycamore tree to get a better view of Jesus passing by, but Jesus stops underneath and addresses him: "hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today". The reaction of the crowd to Jesus' decision is far from approving: "all who saw it began to grumble and said, 'he has gone to be the guest of one who is a sinner'." But Jesus' attitude brings about a sea-change in Zacchaeus' thinking, and he offers to give money to the poor and richly compensate anyone he has defrauded. "Then Jesus said to him, 'today salvation has come to this house, because he too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek out and to save the lost'" (from Luke 19:1-10, New Revised Standard Version).

## Want to find out more?

More information about the Sycamore Tree programme, including evaluation of its results, can be found at [www.pfnz.org.nz](http://www.pfnz.org.nz)



# Kids' craft club gives church new lease of life

**A church in Oamaru is running a successful Friday night club for kids – despite everyone in the congregation being over 55.**

Columba Church in Oamaru was very conscious of its age profile and “felt the need to start something new”, says youth worker Michael Frost.

Now every Friday fortnight, up to 25 kids aged between seven and 11 learn and experiment with crafts under the guidance of older volunteers from the church.

Three or four different crafts are covered each term, like making pom-poms and “personalised pizzas”. There’s also been a family movie night, and a kite-flying and BBQ day on a Saturday.

The programme is changing the culture of Columba, Michael says. “They’re just so excited. It’s wonderful that kids are coming, but the greater reward is the value that the people of Columba are seeing in themselves.”

Despite having all the skills – from being school teachers, leading scouts or parenting – the congregation was a bit apprehensive about what they had to offer. There’s a group of about 20 volunteers, with people having to commit to only a couple of evenings each term. “But there are some volunteers who come to every Friday night club,” Michael says.

“The hard thing was getting them to believe that they could do it.

“A lot of the Columba people believed that they were completely detached from current culture and that they didn’t know how to connect with young people.”

Michael is employed by the Waireka Weston Youth Trust but contracted to Columba, which supports the trust for half his time.

When he began the job in early 2008, he started a process where the church spent “six months thinking”. “I’m a youth worker: they believed I’d start a youth group”; but there were already two successful youth groups running nearby.



New Zealand Herald

## Creating culinary magic together

A large primary school is close to Columba, which has had a strong history of children’s ministry. A core group of four people, Les Whyte, Jane Knewstubb and Tom Weir, along with Michael, decided to develop the idea of a Friday night club that offered simple crafts for children.

Weston Presbyterian Church already had a Friday night club, and part of the planning process saw number of Columba people attending one evening to see how it worked.

To attract children to its new club, Columba started with a school holiday programme, which was three morning sessions of 2.5 hours and advertised through fliers at the primary school. The Friday night club kicked off the following week.

Children pay \$2 for the evening, which includes supper. While they’re eating, they hear a Christian story, with a memory verse challenge for the next time.

The volunteers run the programme, Michael says; his role has been to transfer expertise to them. The Friday night club is

also supported by \$3500 in Synod of Otago and Southland funding.

Michael says the club’s purpose is not to bring people into the Sunday morning service, which is very traditional. “There is nothing wrong with this, but the current culture finds it hard to connect with God in this style of worship.

“We don’t want the families to feel like we’re trying to buy them. It’s a service to the community and the kids, and we care about them.”

Most people in the Columba congregation understand the families won’t come along on a Sunday morning, he says, though it’s not always an easy concept that something new is needed. “But the fear of the church dying is a stronger feeling.”

“Friday night club is actually church for those young people,” Michael says. “They sing Christian songs, hear a Christian message, then go home and memorise a Bible verse.”

By Amanda Wells [Spanz](#)

# Church overcomes closure threat by serving community

**Rosebank Peninsula Church in Avondale faced closure until the minister of its shrinking congregation found some innovative ways to open the church's doors to the community it had served for more than 100 years.**

The Rev Vaituulala Ngahe is minister of Avondale Union Parish, of which Rosebank is a worship centre along with Avondale Union Church. He says, "we had a very small congregation but I did not want to see this church that has such a history closed. As a minister, you preach love in the pulpit on Sunday, but you also want to reach out and show that love in a practical way; I knew we could do that by making the property another face of mission."

After much fundraising, the church building is newly renovated and community groups are beginning to use it. "We turned the old church into a community centre from which we can offer pastoral care, and educational and outreach programmes."

Vai says that once the decision was made to make the building available in this way, help and support followed.

"We had some great support to make this happen, from Auckland City Council, Auckland Presbytery, local businesses that gave us discounts on renovating materials and tool hire, and we had huge ecumenical help. It has been overwhelming."

The yet-to-be renamed church continues fundraising to pay for renovation costs, and for resourcing of the programmes it will offer.

Unable to afford to pay for labour, Vai says they were fortunate to have so many in the community donate their time and skills during regular working bees. The most unexpected helpers came to the church through a contact at the New Lynn Department of Corrections.

"People that have to complete a certain number of hours of court-ordered, supervised community service regularly helped us, and their contribution was just huge. We had plumbers, carpenters, floor sanders. These people live in our community and are part of it. I got to know them over food I cooked for them, and now that some have completed their time and no longer have to assist us, they still return and help."

Another success for the church and community has been the after-school Homework Club, run by parishioner and teacher Sui Kaufanga. Held two nights a week, from 6pm to 8pm, the club already has 15 regular attendees. "These are 15 young people that never came to church even though their parents did, but now they attend our church on a Sunday. I never asked them to; you have to leave the space for them to come to that decision."

Vai says the church still has Sunday worship for his Samoan congregation, and every month on a week day there is café worship. "We gather in a circle and have muffins and tea and reflect on life. We have great respect for the wide range of theological positions and for other faiths."

The church has attracted the interest of a number of community groups keen to find out how they can use the new centre; the Deaf



New Zealand Herald

**The Rev Vaituulala Ngahe and Rosebank's homework club**

Fellowship has booked to hold sign-language services twice a month for a year.

With stage-one renovations nearing completion - "we put the first coat of paint on this week" - fundraising for stage two is beginning. "We are located in an industrial area and we need to explore how our successful neighbours might assist us. The Warriors' Stacey Jones owns a Subway near us and former All Black Inga Tuigamala has a funeral business nearby, so maybe we can get them to help".

Vai says the Homework Club is in need of computers, and that the church will soon need help to set up its own website, "so that community groups can check to see what's on when, and also so that we can show the long history of our church and how we are making our own chapter in that history".

By Angela Singer [Spanz](#)

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# Hidden cost of alcohol spurs law-reform lobby group

**New Zealand has a "once in a generation" opportunity to change patterns of alcohol consumption, according to Professor Doug Sellman.**

Doug is the director of the National Addiction Centre in Christchurch and is part of the recently formed group Alcohol Action New Zealand. This group is spearheading a public campaign to tighten our liquor laws, which are being reviewed by the Law Commission.

The Commission published a discussion paper in late July called "Alcohol in our Lives" that proposes redrafting the Sale of Liquor Act. Its suggestions are wide ranging and include: making it easier to refuse a liquor licence, closing off-licences overnight, restricting bars' sale of alcohol in the early hours of the morning, raising the age to buy at off licences to 20, making it an offence for an adult to supply liquor to a young person without their guardian's consent, increasing the excise tax on alcohol, making drunkenness in a public place an infringement offence, and reducing the blood alcohol limit for driving.

Doug describes New Zealand as being "in the grips of an under-recognised national alcohol crisis".

People accept the alcohol-related harm in our society, he says. "But if it was anything else that was a simple factor causing this amount of damage, then we'd all be up in arms."

"Most cities in New Zealand now, people feel scared to go into the middle of town after dark; and all of that is because of alcohol."

According to Police statistics, one-third of all people apprehended will have consumed alcohol before arrest. On a typical day in New Zealand, 326 offences occur where police note that alcohol was involved, including 98 offences for drink driving.

An estimated 18 percent of the Police budget is used to deal with offenders and victims who have consumed alcohol. Alcohol is involved in one-fifth of traffic crashes and one-third of violence offences.

But alcohol has even wider-ranging health implications.

According to a paper published in international medical journal *The Lancet* in late June, 4.6 percent of all ill health and premature death worldwide is due to alcohol.

In addition to diseases directly caused by drinking, such as liver disorders, a wide range of other conditions including mouth and throat cancer, colorectal cancer, breast cancer, depression and stroke are linked to drinking, *The Lancet* says. The Law Commission's paper cites the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer's recent classification of alcoholic beverages as "carcinogenic to humans" and in the same category as asbestos, formaldehyde and tobacco.

Doug says New Zealand sees more than 1000 alcohol-related deaths each year.

Law Commission president Sir Geoffrey Palmer told an Alcohol Advisory Council conference in May, "we are not just talking about binge drinkers".

"Quite simply, the risk that you or I will develop chronic diseases (including a range of cancers, heart disease and liver disease) at some point in our lifetime increases with the amount of alcohol we consume over our lifetime," Sir Geoffrey said.

Research in Australia has defined a low-risk drinker as having less than 1 in 100 chance of dying an alcohol-related death. Under this Australian definition, low-risk drinking is up to 14 standard drinks a week for both men and women.

In New Zealand, the Alcohol Advisory Council (also known as ALAC) recommends men drink no more than 21 standard drinks a week, with not more than six on any one occasion. For women, ALAC recommends drink no more than 14 standard drinks a week, with not more than four on any one occasion.

"That's low-risk drinking – and anything more than that is risky," Doug says.

The Law Commission report cites research showing New Zealand's per capita consumption of pure alcohol has increased 9 per cent in the past 10 years.

"I'm not happy using words like responsible, moderate and safe," Doug says. "They are the words that the [liquor] industry likes to use."

"The public needs to know what low-risk drinking is. The government should be telling us all, using the best science possible."

Doug says he enjoys a drink every now and then, "though like most people, I drink less as I get older".

He says it's changing the behaviour of the 25 percent of New Zealanders who are heavy drinkers that would have the most impact on crime and health statistics; but this can only be done by making changes to the drinking environment. "People don't change by education alone or spontaneously becoming more responsible."

Doug and Alcohol Action want a multi-pronged approach to reducing alcohol harm, tagged as the "five+ solution":

1. Raise alcohol prices.
2. Raise the purchase age.
3. Reduce alcohol accessibility.
4. Reduce marketing and advertising.
5. Increase drink-driving counter-measures.

+ increase treatment opportunities for heavy drinkers.

"This is the best public health advice in the world, it's that simple," Doug says.

*The Lancet* paper cites a meta-analysis of 112 studies that proves increasing the price of alcohol reduces consumption. The researchers also conclude that price increases and a set minimum price for alcohol have a much greater effect on heavier than on lighter drinkers.

Doug says a small increase in the price of alcohol or decrease in its accessibility are "a very small price to pay for a safer and healthier society".

The key question is not "do you want to pay more for alcohol?" he says, but "would you support an increase in its price if you knew that that would lead to a safer society?"



“The first think to look at is a minimum price for alcohol. But for that to come in, there has to be a recognition that alcohol is not an ordinary commodity. We’ve really got to treat it differently from fruit and veges.”

Other countries are trying this approach: at the moment Scotland (where one in 20 people are dying from alcohol-related diseases) is investigating a minimum price policy, with the Government proposing that the cost of alcohol be no less than 40p a unit. This means a bottle of vodka containing 26 standard drinks will cost a minimum of £10.40 – instead of being on sale for less than £7.

In New Zealand, alcohol can be bought for as little as \$1 per standard drink, and the Law Commission says it’s watching the Scottish experiment with interest.

But increasing the price alone is not enough, Doug says. Making alcohol less available and reducing alcohol advertising also have strong evidential backing.

“The five+ solution being promoted by our campaign is based on the best international evidence related to effective public alcohol policy.”

According to *The Lancet*, systematic reviews and meta-analyses show that policies regulating the environment in which alcohol is marketed are effective in reducing alcohol-related harm.

Doug says he expects strong opposition from the liquor industry to the campaign, which has been developed by professionals in the addiction treatment and public health fields but is being endorsed by health and medical services, social services, police, councils, churches, iwi, schools and other groups.

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand is supporting the campaign. Moderator the Right Rev Dr Graham Redding says the five+ solution being advocated by Alcohol Action constitutes a positive response to a very real problem

### How much is too much?

A standard drink is equivalent to 10 grams of alcohol; the label of every alcoholic drink tells you how many standard drinks the bottle contains.

As a rough guide, if you divide a bottle of wine that contains 13 percent alcohol between six glasses, each 125ml glass is about 1.25 standard drinks. If you divide the bottle between four glasses, each glass is about two standard drinks. A pint of average-strength beer is about two standard drinks.

ALAC recommends that women should drink no more than four standard drinks at any one occasion, and drink no more than 14 standard drinks a week. Men should drink no more than six standard drinks at any one time, and no more than 21 standard drinks a week.

“The Presbyterian Church supports moves to expose and combat destructive behavioural habits, including current patterns of alcohol consumption, which are exerting a terrible toll on New Zealand society,” Graham says.

Doug says increasing numbers of individuals are also expressing their support. “Judging by the response so far, without any publicity at all, there is a huge groundswell of ordinary New Zealanders who want change and will give strong support to the campaign.”

“The majority of the campaign’s supporters enjoy drinking alcohol but all are alarmed by the scale of unhealthy and dangerous

### Want to know more?

[www.talklaw.co.nz](http://www.talklaw.co.nz) – download the Law Commission’s detailed but very readable “Alcohol in our Lives” discussion paper. You can also give anonymous feedback on the proposals through the site.

[www.alcoholaction.co.nz](http://www.alcoholaction.co.nz) – more information about the Alcohol Action campaign and the research behind it, as well as the itinerary for Professor Doug Sellman’s public workshops.

[www.alac.org.nz](http://www.alac.org.nz) – a guide to identifying problem drinking and suggestions for help.

You can complete an anonymous online questionnaire to get an instant assessment of whether your drinking is low risk.

drinking in contemporary New Zealand.”

“I have a lot of faith that this kind of sense will prevail.”

Doug is taking three months’ sabbatical to hold 37 public meetings around New Zealand to promote Alcohol Action’s campaign, delivering a lecture titled “10 things the alcohol industry won’t tell you about alcohol”.

The Law Commission’s report says, “the New Zealand public needs to decide where the balance should lie between the benefits we derive from alcohol and the harm being experienced by individuals and society at large”. **By Amanda Wells** [Spanz](#)



Is a Christian youth organisation serving the needs of young people in the our sunny Central Hawke’s Bay and is based in the community of Waipukurau.

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- [ Committed to raising the life chances and attainment of young people in Central Hawke’s Bay.



This year Presbyterian Youth Ministry's annual conference for youth leaders was held in Henderson, Auckland. We asked three young people to write about their experience:

# Connect 09:

**After arriving at Connect somewhat bedraggled (we flew JetStar to save money, but ended up wasting a lot of time!), we were able to settle in and relax. The automatic coffee machines were a wee treat!!**

A team of four of us came this year from Hornby Presbyterian and we all really enjoyed Connect. This year in particular, my highlight was the workshops. They were well-organised, interesting and there were lots of options! Carlton Johnstone's workshop challenged my thinking regarding the way we often create a fantastic culture of belonging within our youth communities - which are very age segregated. However, this same sense of belonging doesn't always exist within the wider Church, or it is harder to find. I want to find ways in which we can practice intergenerational relationships in our youth programmes and activities.

Matt Chamberlin ran a workshop called "Presence-based Youth Work". This idea of presence-based or incarnational youth work means we go to where the young people are, be that schools, skate parks,

the local dairy etc. It is not about getting to know them so they will come to programmes, but simply getting to know them. This continues to challenge me every day; really, how open is my life to young people? Will I let them interrupt my plans and timetables? The Message paraphrase says: "The Word became flesh and moved into the neighbourhood" (John 1:14). It is a daily discipline, learning to be a presence, and allowing young people to be part of my life.

A huge thanks to the PYM team and focus group for organising an enjoyable and mind-stretching weekend, you guys rock!! – Rach

**Where to begin? Connect 09 was great. Between trips to Wendy's, weird spoken word poetry rap, the most intense games of ping pong you've ever seen, constant trips to the kitchen for mochachinos, sing-alongs on the balcony, roast dinners, pranks involving 99 red balloons, going to bed at four in the morning, mingling with new people, trampolines, coffee, dance**

**battles, awesome cover bands, naps, basketball games, free food, strange interpretive art and wrestling matches, there was still time to get through four awesome seminars. These featured such Presbyterian celebs as Graham Redding (aka the pope of NZ), Carlton Johnstone and Howard Carter, worship, small group discussions, communion and other faith-related activities. But long lists aside, Connect was awesome and not just because it was heaps of fun.**

As a first timer, I was blown away by the event. The level of commitment shown by the organisers was amazing and the diversity of the people attending was not only surprising but inspiring. There were seminars for everyone; those new to youth ministry like me, and those who have been kicking around the circuit for a while, and they covered a huge range of topics. However, the best thing about connect was not the all the seminars and activities on offer (although they were great) but just seeing that youth ministry is alive within New Zealand. –Tim





# The people speak...

**'Welcome to Connect!'...we received a warm welcome at registration and even got cool bags with the Burning Bush or in-out-around logo – a great start to the weekend. Howard Carter was our keynote speaker with an awesome theme: YOU TOO 360. He's a U2 fan and shared how when the band performed they were "intimate" with the audience (so it feels like you're right there in the band). This is how it should be for us – it's all about relationships in which our faith should be lived out and worked out! I loved how he always started his session with God's Word and then applied it to reality.**

For example, Exodus 18, where Moses' father-in-law(Jethro) gave advice to Moses that he cannot handle it alone, but needs to select others who are trustworthy and fear God – sharing the load.

A few other highlights:

Cool MCs – big ups to Mareta and Marty – YOU ROCK!

Intimate worship – "I am a friend of God" was the anthem for the weekend

Small groups – great way to meet and greet new people (eh Spiderman!)

LOTS of Workshops to choose from – thanks to all presenters!

Yummy FOOD and Fantastic VENUE – thanks Carey Park Christian Camp

Saturday night fun – live band – boogie on down – good times!

Time to Connect – mix'n'mingle with others in your bunk rooms... toasting marshmallows at the burning bush... playing b/ball... or even having a jam and singin' old-skool until early hours in the morning (you know who you are -LOL).

If you haven't been to Connect before, I encourage you to check it out next year, it's totally worth it! And to everyone at Connect 09 – "Pressy's hard-core!" (Famous words by the Rev Mua Strickson-Pua).

– Joy





# St John's in the City steps outside the square

**Every Sunday at 5.45pm, about 30 people gather for a uniquely Presbyterian, interactive worship experience at Wellington's St John's in the City.**

Most are aged between 18 and 30, though the diverse group is rarely the same each time.

"Every week, we've got someone new," says Ryhan Prasad, who's coordinating the service on a half-time basis - while also working for youth work provider BGI and completing his theology degree.

St John's session clerk Paul Ramsey says that after a planning day last year, the church identified the 18-30s age group as its top priority. "It's almost a missing generation in many churches."

Many of those who participate in St John's successful teenage programme leave Wellington for tertiary study, while the traditional morning service was not generally proving attractive to young people arriving in Wellington.

A team from St John's looked at other models around the country, while a core group of young people on the periphery of the congregation met every week to thrash out a vision and how it could work in practice. This home group continues to meet and attract new people, and its original members are taking key roles in service leadership and organisation.

Average attendance has grown significantly since the service began in March, with as many as 50 some weeks. As well as students, it's attracting young professionals; some new to Wellington and others who have been looking for a church for a while.

The growth has been organic, with no advertising. People are inviting their friends, Ryhan says. And some young people who

come to check out the morning service are then coming along in the evening - rather than being lost to the church, as has often been the case in the past.

The shape of the service is distinctly Presbyterian but also interactive and flexible. Ryhan says they often follow the lectionary, but not always. In June, there was a four-week series on mission, both overseas and domestic, with guest speakers talking about real experiences.

Early in the service, there's a break to share the peace and grab a cup of coffee. Ryhan says he tries to explain the significance of the peace, and of other components of the service, each week so that newcomers get a sense of the meaning behind the structure.

At the end of a 15-minute sermon, the speaker poses three questions, which people break into small groups to discuss.

St John's elders act as facilitators for these discussion groups, creating an environment in which people feel comfortable sharing questions and concerns.

The discussion has been "huge", Ryhan says, with the chance to question and talk vital for the target age group.

The music is modern worship songs, rather than the organ and choir style that characterises St John's morning service,

The benediction is usually given by the Rev Allister Lane, St John's senior minister, who is also closely involved. After the formal service ends, all the tables are pulled together and a meal is provided that virtually everyone stays for. Ryhan says volunteers from within the new service have created a roster to cook the meal, which is playing an important part in building community.

The new service is still part of the St John's congregation, Paul says. "This is a church plant inside the body of St John's."

However, there is not necessarily an expectation that evening service attendees will ever join the morning service.

The evening service is held in a hall rather than the church itself, which could present some challenges if attendance grows, Paul says. "Do we move into the church, and what implications might that have for its layout? Perhaps it might even feed into some changes in the format of the morning service."

St John's subsidises the meal's cost by \$100 a week, which supplements an offering taken up at the service.

Young people in new cities present a prime opportunity, Paul says, but at the moment "that's where we lose them."

He describes St John's new service as "also a ministry for the wider Church". "Maybe these people will then move elsewhere, and go to another Presbyterian church."

Ryhan says he really wants to encourage other churches to engage with the young adults in their community. "We need to provide forms of ministry that people actually connect with, not what we think they will connect with."


"It's not as scary as everyone thinks it is. All you need is a committed group of volunteers and a bit of leadership, and you can make it happen."

By Amanda Wells **Spanz**

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# Internet fast forwards fundraising

**Do tweeting and twitter make you think of birds or micro messaging? You're not alone if you said the former; according to a New Zealand internet report, just 10 percent of people over 50 have ever used a social networking site. Only those aged under-30 are regular users: of this age group, 40 percent (and rising) visit social networks such as Facebook, Bebo and MySpace daily.**

You might think that social networking is a fad with silly names and that it's not worth your time, but there is one very good reason why your church should have its own social networking pages: they offer new opportunities to raise money.

Far from being short lived, it looks like social networking is here to stay; Facebook, MySpace, and Bebo have now been running for more than five years, and New Zealand non-profit organisations that use them are reporting fundraising success stories.

One has described the process: you make a request on your page for volunteers and donations of goods and money. You start a conversation on the discussion board about your project and why it needs help. You join in the discussion and then a few people commit their support. Their friends see they are supporting you and also offer support, as do their friends' friends, and so on.

Because each person on the site has their own network of friends (often hundreds and

even thousands), a snowball effect unique to social networking sites can occur. It sounds simple, but successful users of the sites have a word of caution: the one thing that is essential is time. If the discussion and content on your page is not fresh (which means updated at least weekly), people will not return and your network of potential donors will not grow.

Before you jump into social networking, you might want to read the advice of social media expert Beth Kantor. Her highly respected blog, called "How non profits can use social media" (<http://beth.typepad.com/>), is updated daily.

Social networking is not the only new form of media being utilised for fundraising. Organisations are finding creative ways to use YouTube, blogs and online auctions to create new sources of income.

The charity auction is far from a new fundraising idea for churches, but an auction every week attended by all of New Zealand is!

One of New Zealand's most accessed websites is the online auction site Trade Me. It has over 2 million active members and over 5 million unique (not repeat) visitors every month. Its auctions combine fundraising and promotion; because auctions might be viewed hundreds of times, there is an audience to promote your project too.



Recently, Trade Me set up a programme to work with registered charities to run fundraiser auctions. Items for auction could be donated by the parish, local community, businesses and personalities, or you could use a social networking site to request them. (The expression one man's junk is another man's treasure was never truer than on Trade Me!).

There are costs involved in running an auction. Trade Me charges a success fee, but this has been reduced for fundraisers (the success fee is usually 6.9 percent, up to a maximum of \$149; for fundraisers, Trade Me donates 50 percent of the success fees back).

Parishes interested in running a fundraising auction can contact [angela@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:angela@presbyterian.org.nz) for advice.

By Angela Singer [Spanz](#)



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For more information contact:  
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email [trustees@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:trustees@presbyterian.org.nz)

# Muffins and cakes surprise volunteers



Angela Singer

**The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand marked Volunteer Awareness Week in June by extending a special thank you to people who give generously of their time, energy and talents.**

Four parishes around the country took to the streets outside their churches and gave passers-by muffins and thanks for all the volunteering they have done in their lives.

Although the weather was a dismal mix of snow, rain, hail and wind, the hardy folk at St Andrew's on The Terrace, Wellington; St David's Presbyterian, Auckland and Fairfield Discovery Christian Centre, Hamilton, made many people's day with the unexpected treat. First Church of Otago was a little delayed in handing out their muffins as the delivery truck could not get through the snow!

Responses from the grateful recipients were mostly surprise and delight at having their volunteering recognised. Many were eager to share their long history of volunteering.

Speaking on Radio Rhema about the event, Moderator the Right Rev Dr Graham Redding said that the "thank you" was a way to draw attention to the great work that all volunteers do, and to get people thinking about how they can volunteer.

Graham said that most of the Presbyterian Church's 30,000 regular churchgoers volunteer at their church or within their

**St Andrew's on the Terrace's half-time minister the Rev Dr Jim Cunningham gives muffins to passers-by in thanks for their volunteering work.**

community or both. He stressed the need to show volunteers just how appreciated they are each day throughout the year. A recent NZ study estimated that more than 70 percent of volunteers in religious activities also donated to other sectors of the community.

Assembly Office in Wellington also marked Volunteer Week, with staff bringing in home-made "thank you" cakes for the Wellington Central Budget Service and the budget advisors at the City Mission. Many volunteer budget advisors are also Presbyterian church-goers, and Assembly staff wanted to both thank them and acknowledge how much more difficult their work is during the recession.

By Angela Singer [Spanz](#)

## Want to understand volunteering better?

Information on how your parish can enter a churchgoer into a draw to attend the 'Volunteering Unleashed: New Zealand National Volunteering Conference' in Wellington, 28-29 October, is available at [www.presbyterian.org.nz](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz). There are nine free conference places available and an allowance will be paid toward travel and accommodation.





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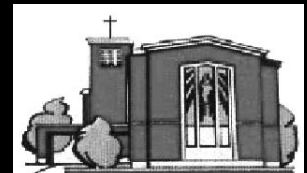
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# Singer celebrates Otahuhu church roots



**Singing songs to Placido Domingo in New York might seem a world away from hymns in a Presbyterian church in Otahuhu, but not for Linn Lorkin.**

Raised on a farm in Tokoroa, Linn's parents moved the family to her aunt and uncle's hometown of Otahuhu when she was 12 years old.

"They were stalwarts of the St Andrew's Presbyterian Church and we were welcomed there;

my uncle was an elder and my Aunt Betty was in the choir, as were her two sons." The church choir, which Aunt Betty encouraged Linn to join, was to have a profound affect on Linn's choice of career.

"I hadn't really sung before I joined the church choir, other than singing with my mother, so that was the beginning."

Linn says the St Andrew's choir was fortunate in its choir mistress, Lola, as she was keen for them to learn new music. "The choir rehearsed long hours at her house as she had us attempt quite ambitious, difficult anthems that had lots of hard parts. I don't recall us learning the very traditional hymns; these were more contemporary and I think Lola sent to America for them. We were quite a good choir, quite large (we took up four pews) and fortunately we managed to pull off most of what we attempted."

Sunday was the day the choir worked towards. "I would go to church for Bible class, and then in the early evening the choir would perform the anthem we had learnt and lead the congregation in the hymns that the minister had chosen. What has stuck with me all these years is the music of some of those hymns, because they were written by very good composers and had marvellous melodies; sometimes the melodies were taken from old folk tunes, so they were very nice, very catchy. I always liked it when minister Mountjoy would choose one of my favourite hymns that had interesting and more adventurous chords.

"I have been influenced by some of those hymns in my own song writing. For example, there's a traditional hymn that goes, "Be thou my battle shield..." [Be thou my vision], it has a really nice melody and reminds me of Edward Elgar. I really enjoyed hymns with similarities to those kinds of melodies and chords; it made them a bit more contemporary, more adventurous, more enjoyable to sing than some of the older hymns that I found frankly really boring".

Linn continued to attend St Andrew's and sing in the choir during her university years. "After I got my MA I received a scholarship to study French linguistics in France, so I left the choir when I left the country."

At the time Linn thought her career would have to be that of a lecturer. It was only after living in Europe that she realised she was prepared to pursue being a professional singer no matter how hard it would be. And she did find it difficult, but persevered and worked as a singer in New York for nine years before returning to New Zealand to record an album. She has recently re-released this album, "In the land of music", on CD.

The Presbyterian hymnbook influence is strong in several of the songs on the CD. Linn says. "There's one song called, "I was a singer in Tutankhamon's band" that's quite stately; it's about the reverence ancient Egyptians had for female singers. Whenever I hear it I think how it has a similar sound to one of the hymns I used to sing. "These wings of mine" is another song of mine influenced by hymns. I'm sure there are other songs that I have written that have been influenced by hearing that music in church so very often from such a young age. It stays with you, fortunately".

Linn performs weekly in Auckland, singing in French as part of the trio *French Toast*, and performing her original songs with trio *Linn Lorkin and the Larrikins*. She also sings with the *Jews Brothers Band*.

By Angela Singer Spanz

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# Kumbayah enables unique worship community

**People with profound intellectual disabilities have found a place to worship together at St David's in Palmerston North, after moving into the community after decades in an institution.**

The Kumbayah congregation meets once a month on a Sunday afternoon. The service is run by the Rev Anne Bennett, an Anglican who previously worked as ecumenical Chaplain at Levin's Kimberley Centre, and who is supported in her work at St David's by a Presbyterian Foundation grant.

Kimberley's residents, who often have multiple disabilities, were moved out over several years before the Centre closed in October 2006, as part of a shift away from institutions towards community-based care.

After living together at Kimberley for 40 years or more, residents were resettled into communities all over the North Island. They were relocated into small group houses in the community, with full-time carers looking after their needs.

Most of the men and women have responded well to their new way of life, Anne says, though it has taken a while in some cases.

Following the closure of the institution, Anne had an 18-month contract (funded by the Ministry of Health) working as a Community Liaison Chaplain and assisting ex-residents as they adjusted to a new lifestyle. "I was very much wanting to make sure their spiritual needs were going to be met and that people could keep in touch with their friends, who had often been resettled in another part of the country.

"For 40 years, these people have lived in community together and they have life-long friendships. They're like family to each other."

The partings as residents left Kimberley for their new homes were sometimes traumatic. "As people left, some of their friends remaining thought they had died, because that was what it usually meant when someone wasn't around anymore."

Anne visited ex-residents around the country and took photos that she could

bring back and show to their friends to help explain what was happening.

The chapel at Kimberley had been a focal point for the residents. "It was part of the rhythm of life. Many have a deep and simple faith and love to worship."

Anne says she has worked hard to integrate former Kimberley residents into regular Sunday congregations, but there is also a need for special services where these men and women can gather and worship together in their own way.

Early in 2006, she established a monthly service in Levin that's attended by many of the 150 people from Kimberley living in Levin, Waikanae and Paraparaumu.

Anne wanted to establish something similar for the 60 people who had gone into Palmerston North and Fielding, and so she contacted St David's.

"I wrote a letter to the Parish Council (asking about hiring their building) and I was totally amazed at the letter I received back. It wasn't just 'yes', but 'yes, it would be a privilege - and there's no charge, and what else do you need?'" At the time, Anne says, there was still a level of opposition in the Palmerston North community to having people from Kimberley housed nearby.

The monthly service started in October 2007, and was called "Kumbayah" after a favourite song from the Kimberley chapel services that is also used as a basis for prayers. The service features a lot of singing and music-making with percussion instruments. Anne says some people love waving coloured scarves to music, and others enjoy dressing up to act out the Bible story.

The service is geared to the needs of people with intellectual disabilities, including those who have always lived in the community, though most who attend are former Kimberley residents. "It's very encouraging that volunteer helpers and some family members also come and enjoy worshipping with us."

The 40-50 people who come along every month to the Kumbayah service see St David's as their church, Anne says. "St David's folk have been really supportive,



**The Kumbayah Christmas Service, December 2008: Margie Whitehead (left) Alison Kippax (right) and volunteer Lynette Fordyce (obscured)**

coming along to help set-up and welcome people."

St David's the Very Rev Pamela Tankersley says that when Anne's community chaplaincy contract ended in June 2008, St David's didn't want to lose the ministry. "Once we got involved, we realised this was a call on us."

So the church applied for and received a Presbyterian Foundation grant that would support Anne to work 20 hours a month.

Her ministry has been a huge privilege, Anne says, and working with people who have multiple disabilities has changed her perceptions. "I think about the mystery of what it means to be made in the image of God."

Pamela says Kumbayah has become part of St David's identity and ministry. "Sunday morning worship is not the only way. Kumbayah is another congregation; like family worship on a Friday night once a month; or communion for older folk on a Thursday afternoon."

"They're actually changing us too; worship with that group is so authentic. In whatever way they can, these men and women participate fully. They believe they belong in this place."

By Amanda Wells [Spanz](#)



## Refugee expert slates alarmist talk on climate change

**Don't be alarmed by sensationalist headlines like "future flood of 'climate refugees' ahead?" or "loss of coral triangle may trigger refugee flood to Australia and New Zealand", says a visiting migration expert; they are just media buzzwords that promote fear.**

Philippe Boncour, Head of International Dialogue for the Geneva-based International Organisation for Migration says in reality, there is no such thing as a climate or environmental refugee, because the 1951 convention that governs refugee status makes it mandatory that there must be persecution by a state to qualify.

"There is an ongoing debate around what will happen to people who have to cross into another state because of environmental and climate issues; for those people there is a legal and protection gap, they have no rights. The humanitarian community is lobbying to have some kind of acknowledgment at Copenhagen [United Nations climate change conference, December 2009] of the humanitarian impact of climate change."

In Wellington in July as keynote speaker at the "Climate Change and Migration in the South Pacific region" symposium at Victoria University, Philippe says the Pacific region is likely to be one of the areas most affected by climate change, due to the high risk of increases in sea levels and salinisation of land.

"Many of the Pacific countries are very vulnerable, and within those countries women, children, the elderly and the

disabled are even more vulnerable, and they deserve our special attention."

Philippe says he's often asked how much sea levels will rise in the Pacific, but this is difficult to predict because there are different scenarios put forward by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Some scenarios have many of the Pacific islands still habitable; other, more extreme scenarios would see islands "sinking" and those living there having to resettle elsewhere.

Whether these people would go primarily to Australia or New Zealand is, Philippe says, something that has not been determined in any way. If there was relocation, it would not be as extreme as the headlines suggest. "Because we are talking about a gradual process, something that would not occur overnight, so discussions should take place on a regional and global level on how to deal with that. The Pacific island countries are small, therefore it is much easier to plan for this, and if movement needs to occur it could happen with dignity."

"What we have observed in our work is that even in very difficult circumstances, people want to go back to the place they belong - even if they know that a similar extreme weather event can occur again, people want to return. They view the migratory option as the worst-case scenario."

There are many places in the world where temporary labour schemes, like the New Zealand's Recognised Seasonal Employer scheme, are in place for seasonal agricultural workers. The temporary nature

of these schemes, Philippe says, has proved to be very efficient at alleviating the burden on areas affected by the impacts of climate change.

"The workers benefit from learning new agricultural techniques to take back. Over a number of seasons, they get familiar with new ways of life and the understanding between the community of origin and the host community improves dramatically. One option for New Zealand would be to enhance this temporary labour programme to make it eligible to people coming from affected areas."

The issue of relocation - as has happened in the Carterets Islands, where the people have relocated to Bougainville - or resettlement, is something that Philippe would like to see given greater consideration. He asks whether there needs to be "a more open spirit, and not telling people what place they should go to, and not telling a country they should welcome x number of people."

Philippe says that the Pacific region deserves a lot of credit for the climate change initiatives it has taken. "At Kyoto, New Zealand and the Pacific countries, as part of the coalition of small islands, were the first to plead that greenhouse gas emissions be cut; and the Pacific islands, NZ and Australia were the origin of the recently adopted resolution on "Climate change and its possible security implications" at the UN General Assembly. New Zealand and the Pacific countries have the potential to lead other nations".

By Angela Singer [Spanz](#)





“Recently I was talking with people from Kiribati who were telling me how their country has to build walls and plant mangroves to stop the rising tides entering their homes and fields. Although many might leave to come to NZ and Australia to live, I got the impression that there are also many who want to do as much as they can to continue to live on their home islands. I sensed they had hope but mostly they seemed frustrated and worried. Hope, because they can see that planting mangroves is working for now, and frustration because they don't believe they caused the change in climate and yet are suffering the consequences of that change.”

**The Rev Stuart Simpson,**  
Global Mission Office



“The Pacific communities are facing a brand new threat - climate change – one they have never had to encounter before. They have always faced adverse weather conditions and have lived to tell the tale. This has strengthened their resolve that with God on their side, everything is possible, and that God had promised Noah there would not be another flood, so they place their fate in God's hands and will not be moved by anything to leave their homes. This view is common with the elderly. The question here is not a matter of wanting to leave or not to leave home but the question of survival.”

**The Rev Asora Amosa,**  
Pacific Island Synod



“There will be an imminent threat of wide-spread relocation of Pacific peoples and nations in the near future. Our Church members are already informing us that this will become inevitable if nothing substantive is done to ensure a comprehensive adaptation programme is conducted throughout the entire Pacific region. However, I find it disconcerting that the media are primarily focused on Pacific islanders flooding into Aotearoa and taking New Zealand jobs. Sensation does sell and this issue might mistakenly be labelled as such, but climate change in the Pacific isn't a sensation, it's a reality. We need to address it from the angle of 'our collective responsibility to act justly and with compassion'. Our recent Church Leaders' Meeting was a clarion call to our collective need to act now. The outcomes statement, “The Moana Declaration”, was the Churches' call to a comprehensive action on the issue of climate change and resettlement.”

**The Rev Fe'iloakitau Kaho Tevi,**  
General Secretary Pacific Conference of Churches



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Visit the School of Theology stall at The University of Auckland's Courses and Careers Day on Saturday 29 August from 9 to 3 pm. We will be located in the Recreation Centre, Mezzanine floor, 17 Symonds Street.



# Weeknight service targets 'post church' people

**"A typical Presbyterian church trying something different" is how the Rev Jon Parkes describes Ripple Effect, a Wednesday night gathering at St David's in Richmond.**

It targets people in their 40s and 50s who Jon describes as "post church" – they might have once been involved but found church didn't answer their questions.

Richmond, near Nelson, has a population of just under 12,000, with an unusually high proportion already attending church. Jon says local ministry leaders combined their weekly attendance figures to estimate that 20 percent of the community goes to a service on Sunday.

"We don't want to take people from other churches."

St David's has between 50 and 60 people coming along on a Sunday morning, most of them over the age of 60. "There's a realisation that the church needs to do something different."

Jon knew that he couldn't both start something new and maintain existing pastoral visiting, and the parish council discussed this reality, while spending time in planning workshop to develop a new strategy.

So Ripple Effect has its own leadership team and is coordinated by Kay Jones, a church member who is also studying full-time for a Laidlaw College theology qualification through Nelson's Bishopdale Theological College.

Ripple Effect's launch was publicised through free community paper advertising and a letter box drop, which has been repeated.

"Every time the flier goes out, we get a new person coming along," Jon says.

Every Wednesday at 7pm, about 12 people gather for coffee, dessert and discussion. Kay uses an ice breaker, then includes a poem or reading before posing a couple of questions for discussion; first in small groups, then in the larger group. At about 8.30pm, she wraps up the discussion and closes with a prayer, though often people stay on to discuss the topic further.

Four weeks are spent on each theme, followed by a guest speaker then a movie night, before the next series starts.

Kay says there are about 20 regular participants, with people not necessarily coming along every week. Four people attending haven't gone to church for many years, if ever, she says, which shows that they are reaching their target audience.

Jon describes Ripple Effect as "a church you can wear jeans to; you can be relaxed".

"People can say what they want and they're not shot down in flames. I'm conservative in my theology but I've got no qualms with that at all," he says.

"I think God's grace is bigger than that. Sometimes we leave with no answers. Is that good or bad?"

Jon says he's always been interested in the different pathways by which people are called to God.

Church needs to embrace key elements of local culture, he says, and if people's weekends revolve around sport, family or work commitments, week nights can suit them better.

Jon says Ripple Effect is a separate church, and the idea isn't to get people eventually coming along on Sunday morning.

Most the Sunday congregation's response to the new initiative has been positive. "It's hard when we hear some people thinking 'when are they going to come to church?'. But I've been really blunt about that; this is a new church. It might even start meeting in a café or pub."

Ripple Effect has to have a mission of its own, Jon says. "My job is to encourage them to develop that."

"We haven't got it all sorted as a church. Any church can do this. But there needs to be a realisation that New Zealand's culture has been changed and Sunday morning isn't necessarily the time for church anymore. People do different things in the weekend now."

Jon hopes to also launch a breakfast church along the lines of Dunedin's B@TCH later this year.

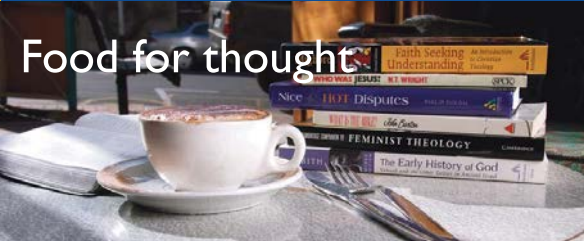
Kay says she's happy to talk to anyone considering something similar to Ripple Effect for their church.

"We have to cater for the people's needs, and I think the people's needs are changing," she says.

"This isn't a replacement for Sunday morning, it's something to complement it and attract a different type of person."

By Amanda Wells Spanz

## Theology from Otago




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## Vanuatu comes to Bethlehem

**An influx of Ni Van workers under the Government's seasonal employment scheme has seen a new mission field appear on Bethlehem Community Church's doorstep. Congregation member Paul King reports.**

Our church's relationship with the archipelago started quietly. On holiday in Vanuatu, church member John Taylor visited the island of Nguna and saw the need for roofing iron on a local community building. We raised funds and shipped the iron to complete the job.

Shortly afterwards back in New Zealand, Junior Nikiatu, a chief and, attended one of our morning services with two other men. He is the great-grandson of Yarvis, a cannibal warrior chief converted by Scottist missionary John Paton, whose conversion stopped the killing of missionaries and was the catalyst for change right across the country.

Junior was looking for a church home; for himself and for the other kiwifruit workers based at nearby Te Puna. And then there were 30.

Today, many men and women from Vanuatu are contracted to work on New Zealand orchards. They are reliable workers, needed to tend and harvest the crops so vital to our economy. Coming to New Zealand can mean affording an education for their children, providing electricity for their communities or building a home for their families.

However, integrating into our culture hasn't been without its problems. Often lonely

and homesick, the Ni Vans struggle with language, climate, health problems and handling their own finances.

After the congregation at BCC had met their immediate needs for warm clothing and footwear, we began looking for ways to integrate them prayerfully and thoughtfully into our community and church culture, without stripping away the essence of what makes them Melanesian. While they were aware of the world outside Vanuatu, their challenge was in dealing with the vast cultural differences. Ours was helping them to adapt – without creating an extension of our social services.

This necessitated a shift in thinking. It's easy to be tempted to throw our money at their problems; while from the Ni Van point of view, the perceived wealth of New Zealand can give us a richest-people-on-earth appeal. This is a difficult perception to overcome when some of the islanders worship at the red cross of the cargo cult Jon Frum, which teaches that the misplaced wealth of the West will someday be theirs, if they repudiate all aspects of European society and embrace traditional customs.

As we juggle our time between jobs, family and daily life, making time for the Ni Van can be a stretch that challenges our priorities and exposes our intentions. God's plan is that we all benefit when we reach out to others; in the case of Bethlehem Community Church, the mission field had come to us. This was overseas ministry from the safety of our own pews!


Starting simply is the first step to effective cross-cultural ministry. Having a go at the



**Yarvis Nikiatu (known as Junior): a chief and also great grandson of the first man converted on Tanna Island, Vanuatu**


Ni Van pidgin language Bislama, with its pervasive “blongs” and “longs”, is not only enjoyable, but opens other lines of communication. We continue to reach out by inviting our visitors to movie nights, men's breakfasts, and sharing at their Sunday evening devotional meetings. To date, at least five men and women have given their lives to Christ.

Like us, their desire is for fellowship, and through it we have all been blessed. Although not all Ni Vanuatu are Christians, and Jon Frum is still deeply entrenched in some areas, the legacy of John Paton is alive in Vanuatu. Junior understands his position and authority as chief, and his people's need for the Gospel. His desire is to reach the unsaved amongst them, and we know that *we* are sharing in his efforts.



Presbyterian Church  
of Aotearoa New Zealand

and the Association  
of Presbyterian Women



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# Climate change creates hunger

**For 10-year-old Lerma Villaruel, climate change already affects her day-to-day life. She lives on Tabon, in the central Philippines, where climatic changes have dried up the soil. "I know that climate change is now happening in our island," she told CWS. "It is difficult to grow vegetables and rice, and there are few fish for fisherman like my father to catch. Parents have to cross the island in order to buy water."**

All around the world, CWS partners are reporting the same challenges. Fish stocks are declining, making it difficult for fishing communities to feed their families and sell surplus for income. Rains are becoming unreliable and the planting seasons are changing. Small-scale farmers, who have historically adapted to normal climatic variability with creative and indigenous practices, are no longer able to do so. Food production is becoming more fickle, leaving millions facing hunger and loss of livelihood. Now estimates say that the number of people living in constant hunger has risen to one billion.

Forecasts from climate-change scientists show this will get worse. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that by 2050, 30 million



**Lerma Villaruel (far right) and friends in tabon, the Philippines**

more people will go hungry as agricultural yields fall and food prices rise. CWS partners fear it may be grimmer.

In Nicaragua, the farming season traditionally runs from May to November. "But now the rains are falling very irregularly and the farmers hesitate to plant," says Damaris Albuquerque, director of CEPAD. "Rains fall very heavily washing the soil away and causing landslides." In Sri Lanka and Haiti, weather patterns are changing. The timing of the rains is shifting. Farmers no longer know when to plant. In the Philippines, fish stocks are declining and some species are disappearing. Changes to the environment and coastal erosion are destroying the food chain, explains Tet Navaral, director of Developers Foundation. "Now we are eating a lot of juvenile fish, which never used to be on sale in markets." Pacific island communities have found rising sea temperatures are changing fish-breeding patterns and sea currents, which have moved fish stocks. They find it harder to catch fish and have to travel much further out to sea, say reports to the Pacific Conference of Churches.

CWS partners are helping their communities adapt. They are teaching soil conservation and other new farming techniques, cleaning up their environments, teaching waste

management and recycling, planting trees and campaigning for better protection.

"We don't wish for things to get any worse," says Lerma of her Filipino island home. "The water from the sea and flood waters are flowing into places that used to be dry before. I think that the land inside our island is getting smaller, eaten up by water from the sea and actually shrinking. That is why the children of Tabon are doing many things together with our parents to help stop climate change." The problem is they can't do it alone. Climate change is a challenge that all countries and communities need to address.

CWS wants to ensure the plight of poorer communities, which have done little to contribute to climate change, is considered at the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen in December and that their right to food guaranteed. Churches have been sent climate change kits, including postcards to be delivered to the Prime Minister. The postcard calls on the New Zealand Government to bargain hard at Copenhagen to ensure that wealthier countries pay their carbon debt and support a measure to cut domestic carbon emissions to 40 per cent of 1990 levels by 2020. It also asks the international community to provide poor countries with the means to adapt to the changing environment and provide additional assistance so they can develop with clean technology to escape poverty.

You can help. Please collect signatures for the "clean up the climate" postcard campaign. CWS and New Zealand churches will be delivering these to the Prime Minister later in the year. During October, join CWS in its focus on food for World Food Day on 16 October. Additional information is available on the CWS website – [www.cws.org.nz](http://www.cws.org.nz) or contact CWS on 0800 74 73 72.

"I believe that there is still hope for all of us," says Lerma. Read more about her community's action against climate change in the latest CWS World Watch, a magazine for 7-12 year olds.

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# Snapshots

**APW:**

APW held its national conference in Palmerston North from 1-3 May; pictured are the National Coordinating Group for 2009: (back row, from left to right) Rae Simpson, Jocelyn Hannay, Lois Diaper, Lafulafu Ekenasio, Mary Mc Intyre; (front row) Jill Little, Heather Tate, Marjorie Empson.

RIGHT:



LEFT:

**Transformers:**  
In April, Kids Friendly held its first ever "Transformers – Raising Up Young Leaders" camp at Glentui Meadows, Canterbury; children aged nine to 13 years had fun exploring "what it means to be a leader".

RIGHT:

**Fono samoa:**

The Fono Samoa Pacific Island Presbyterian Church Conference was held in Wellington from 23-25 April 2009 at the Horticultural Hall and Town Hall in Lower Hutt.





# WHAT YOUR CHURCH NEEDS FROM YOU: JUNK

It's amazing how in demand old junk is on auction sites such as Trade Me. From damaged retro clothing to rusty tools, people are paying good money for things you might consider fit for the rubbish! Your congregation could auction its unwanted junk on the internet to fundraise for your parish, mission work or community projects. This is just one of the practical ideas in **Giving and Getting**, the latest Church social issues booklet. It examines issues that affect why we give, how we give and what we give – from money and goods to prayer and time. It explores questions such as, what is the Biblical mandate for giving, and what is it that we owe others as followers of Christ?

**Giving and Getting** is the sixth in a series of group study booklets produced by the Presbyterian Church to encourage congregations to reflect about contemporary issues that are



impacting our communities. Copies of the previous five study guides, *Caring for Creation*, *House to Home*, *Caring for our Children*, *Connecting with Young People* and *Bring on the Baby Boomers* are also still available.

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All six studies can be downloaded from “publications” on the Presbyterian Church website  
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## Let's Press Go together

Press Go is about coming together to fund innovative projects that grow the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. We're calling for donations from individuals and parishes, but we're also calling for bright spark ideas from churches. What ideas would you have to grow your church, if money wasn't a barrier? We want to pool resources so that dream growth projects around New Zealand become reality.

Check out [www.presbyterian.org.nz/pressgo](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/pressgo) or contact  
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