

# Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

SEPTEMBER 2010, ISSUE 44



How  
to fight  
loneliness

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

COMMENT: Hugh Morrison

# What a difference a century makes

In June 1910, a host of mainly Western and Protestant Christian leaders met in Edinburgh at the celebrated World Missionary Conference. This has been well-documented over the years, and it still casts a long shadow over recent Christian memory. It was perhaps as much a statement about Western self-confidence as it was a marker of global Christian progress. One hundred years on, a more truly international group met again in Edinburgh for three days in July, under the auspices of the "Yale Edinburgh Group on the History of the Missionary Movement and World Christianity". This annual event is not especially world-shattering in its deliberations; yet it continues to reflect how much has changed over the past century. John Knox, whose dramatic statue dominates the courtyard of New College Edinburgh (the venue for both meetings), may well have wondered at the differences.

The two events reflect the great reversals of the last century. In 1910, the great European migrations impacted all sectors of the globe. In 2010, the "Great Reverse Migration" of non-Western peoples has brought the world to the West. Consequently, to coin a phrase used by historian Andrew Walls, mission is now from "anywhere to anywhere"<sup>1</sup>. The first conference was dominated by Western Christians. By way of contrast, the 2010 conference was begun and ended by a Gambian scholar working in the United States, facilitated by postgraduate students from south-east India, Nepal and South Korea, and attended by people from around the world: China, South Korea, India, Eastern Europe, Nigeria, Ghana,

South Africa, as well as the usual bunch of North Americans, Europeans, British and (one) Australasian. Conference papers reflected this geographical diversity.

Women delegates and presenters were much more high-profile than in 1910. It must be noted, however, that amongst those at Edinburgh in 1910 was a small group of New Zealand Presbyterian women, attending as unofficial delegates of the Presbyterian Women's Missionary Union. The 2010 meeting was also a venue for younger people; postgraduate students and emerging scholars. As one speaker noted, they represented the shape and energy of future global Christian thinking and action.

This year's theme was "consultation and cooperation"; more often than not an ideal rather than a reality, as many of the papers pointed out. However, I went away with three other words highlighted in my consciousness: boundaries, culture and memory. They are, perhaps, all interrelated. Christianity has been, historically, a religion of the borders and frontiers. Perhaps we are appreciating that more keenly now that we no longer function with a "Christendom" model, and now that non-Western Christians are statistically more dominant. Missionary thinking and activity has always existed in those "border zones", engaging with other religions and cultures. Where and when Christianity has become more settled, new growth and new intercultural issues have arisen to force change and movement. Andrew Walls suggested that it was often at these points that missionary conferences were convened to tackle the issues and chart the way ahead. They could not, however, always successfully envisage how things might turn out, enmeshed as they were in particular cultural ways of seeing both the world and Christianity. So it was in 1910 and so it will continue to be.

Christianity in New Zealand owes its origins to such dynamics as missionary encounter, indigenous appropriation, transplantation and multi-cultural migration. There is



Hugh Morrison



great potential for tapping into both the continuities and discontinuities inherent in such a legacy. In four years time, we will be given pause to remember, celebrate and reflect upon 200 years of formal Christian presence in Aotearoa. As I grow older, I am increasingly reminded how fraught a thing memory can be. As a historian I am continually grateful for the existence of archivists and archives, who help me access a record of memory that is more fully rounded and nuanced. Both Arul Siromoney and Lamin Sanneh were right in saying that we are lost without our religious archives. They help us to connect past and present, and to more effectively recall and rethink the dynamic and ever-changing nature of Christian faith. About this, I'm sure, John Knox would agree.

*Dunedin-based Hugh Morrison teaches in the College of Education at the University of Otago, and writes on the history of religion and Christian missions with respect to New Zealand. He is currently involved in the Te Whakapapa o te Whakapono/Lineages of Faith research group (University of Otago and Te Wananga a Rangi), and in a team writing the history of the Anglican Diocese of Auckland.*

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Walls and Cathy Ross (eds). *Mission in the 21st Century: Exploring the Five Marks of Global Mission*. (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2008)



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Presbyterian Church of  
Aotearoa New Zealand

SEPTEMBER 2010 Issue 44

## Who we are

Spanz is published quarterly by the  
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa  
New Zealand,  
PO Box 9049, Wellington, New Zealand

ISSN 1175 5202

## Editor

Amanda Wells  
amanda@presbyterian.org.nz  
Ph 04 381-8285

## Advertising

Jose Reader  
spanzadvertising@presbyterian.org.nz

## Subscriptions

Katrina Graham  
katrina@presbyterian.org.nz  
Ph 04 381-8283

## Next issue

December 2010  
Advertising deadline  
18 October 2010

## Design

Tangerine

## Printing

Lithoprint

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## Cover Photograph

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

# Moderator's Musings

**A few weeks ago I attended a Fresh Expressions conference in Christchurch. The keynote speaker was Bishop Graham Cray, who heads up the Fresh Expressions network in the UK.**

Bishop Cray defines Fresh Expressions as a form of church for our changing culture, established primarily for the benefit of those outside the church. He was at pains to point out that it is not a "bridge project" designed to bring people into the existing church; nor is it "church-lite", a watered down version of the real thing. Rather, it is church with a strong mission focus and a consequent willingness to re-imagine church in order to relate to a particular culture or sub-culture.

Having heard too many advocates of Fresh Expressions, alternative worship and the so-called Emergent church bag existing forms of church, I was pleased to hear Bishop Cray say it's a both-and situation. The driving force for fresh expressions of church must be a commitment to sharing in God's mission in the world, not a reaction against certain forms of church, often dismissively referred to as "traditional". Just as jazz musicians require a solid grounding in the theory and practice of music in order to be innovative, so Fresh Expression exponents must be well versed in the patterns and principles of Christian worship lest their innovation become little more than an aping of the latest fad or an endless cycle of uninformed experimentation.

For Bishop Cray, one of the measures of a Fresh Expression's authenticity and sustainability will be its potential to: (1) become a mature expression of church shaped by the Gospel; and (2) exhibit the enduring marks of the church within its particular cultural context. A Fresh Expression will therefore be committed to the principles of listening, service, incarnational ministry and the hard yards of making disciples. It will not exist merely to give people a new kind of "worship experience".

One of the key learnings of the Fresh Expressions movement is that people tend to be converted to community before they are converted to Christ. Mission, therefore, is integrally related to hospitality.

For more information about Fresh Expressions and some examples of what a Fresh Expression looks like, visit the web site: [www.freshexpressions.org.uk](http://www.freshexpressions.org.uk)

In the likes of StudentSoul and B@TCH, we have some homegrown examples of



Neil Mackenzie

fresh expressions. Some congregations have also seen the potential in developing worship and pastoral care dimensions to their Mainly Music programmes in ways that are consistent with fresh expression principles.

As with all good conferences, I came away with as many questions as I did answers. For example, originating as it does in the United Kingdom, the Fresh Expressions phenomenon seems to presume a cultural setting that is predominantly Western. I'd be interested to know what it might look like in a Pacific Island, Asian or Maori context. I'd also be interested to explore ecumenical possibilities. Back in the UK, Bishop Cray chairs a Fresh Expressions council comprising representatives from several denominations; he is adamant that Fresh Expressions should be an ecumenical enterprise rather than serving a denominational agenda. How realistic is that here? Finally, what are the implications of taking seriously the claim that buckets of energy and raw enthusiasm are not enough, and that Fresh Expression exponents need to be well-trained people of mature faith and a discerning eye, with appropriate levels of resourcing? Are we willing to invest what it takes?

On that note, I'd like to sign off this quarterly column. I've enjoyed offering a selection of thoughts from my perspective as Moderator over the past couple of years. Thanks for your feedback. But more importantly, thanks for your prayerful support, which I am sure will be extended to the incoming Moderator, the Rev Peter Cheyne. I was both encouraged and humbled by the number of people I met around the country who assured me of their prayers. Thank you. Ma Ihowa koe e manaaki.

# Volunteer visiting fights loneliness

**Most New Zealanders dread chronic ill health in old age but research suggests they should be more concerned about loneliness. Forty-four percent of older New Zealanders say they are lonely, with at least 45,000 “severely lonely”. Research indicates that loneliness and social isolation can lead to a range of serious health and social problems, including heart disease, stroke, dementia, depression and entry into rest home care.**

**Churchgoers have responded to this hidden problem by developing and participating in programmes that alleviate social isolation by visiting the loneliest people in our communities. ANGELA SINGER reports.**

Age Concern’s Accredited Visiting Service (AVS) has been operating for 20 years and offers a safe way for lonely older people to receive visits from a volunteer. More than 1700 older people, who are 80 percent female and 68 percent living alone, receive AVS visits.

AVS volunteer visitors, many of whom are churchgoers, are trained, monitored and supported by coordinators, who match them with elderly clients living alone who have similar interests. Weekly visits to the client’s home usually last an hour. However, visitors and clients can choose to have longer visits.

Wellingtonian Nishanie Pereira visits Norma for two hours each week. Nishanie was matched with Norma by AVS when her PhD studies brought her to New Zealand two years ago. She says spending time with older people is the norm in Sri Lanka, where she is from.

“In Eastern cultures, older people are respected for the contributions they have made to society and their families. It is considered a privilege to be able to listen to their lived experiences.”

Recently Norma was unable to continue living alone in her home and began to look for a suitable rest home. Nishanie visited these with her. During one such visit, “we were walking back to the bus stop and Norma asked if I would continue to visit her at the rest home”.

The AVS programme only covers people living in their own homes, but Nishanie is still visiting her friend. “I also saw this as a way of enabling Norma to reduce anxiety associated with the change.”

Nishanie says that Age Concern did “a really good job of matching us”.

“Spending time with Norma puts my life, my anxieties and my worries into perspective. Nothing seems scary after talking to Norma. She advises me, listens to me and sheds new light on things in my world. She also refocuses me and gives me new outlets to use my energy.”

Nishanie, who studies full time and works part time, says she sets aside the same time each week for their visits. “If I am behind on work, I come to the office on the weekend to catch up instead of using the Friday afternoon. My friends know they can’t get me between 3 pm to 5 pm Friday. I only spend a very small amount of time with Norma and I give her my undivided attention”.

Nishanie also tries to phone Norma at least once mid week to “find out what she is interested in so I can do a wee bit of preparation and look for things online or check something out of the library”.

How they spend their time together is entirely up to Norma, Nishanie says. “When she was at home we would go shopping or see an exhibition at Te Papa.” In colder weather, Norma prefers to stay in doors. They both like reading and introducing each other to new authors. Nishanie has shown Norma how to use her computer; how to email to keep in touch, how to search online and how to view video clips. Norma says she tries to send one email a day, “and just doing that has made a huge difference as it has put me in touch with my young relatives and friends”.

Norma says it is a long time since she thought of Nishanie as her AVS visitor rather than as a close friend. Nishanie “has a cultural influence where she has sensitivity to the elderly and a genuine regard that you do not often see in young people today. Who wouldn’t respond to that?” Norma says.

All week long, Norma looks forward to Nishanie’s Friday visit. “She comes regularly and I know I get her undivided attention. I miss having undivided attention; it’s something I had from my husband when we were happily married for 40 years. When he died, I lived on my own for 10 years. I can really talk to Nishanie because she is a dear friend. I have gotten to know her husband too. There are so many things that I would never have explored without Nishanie.”

Being taken care of at the rest home is something Norma is still getting used to. “I am recently out of being independent, living alone; I’m not used to living at close quarters with complete strangers. I’m not complaining, I can’t be at my own home and I like it at this new home. It’s not a home where I have to adapt to it; they let me make decisions.”

Norma says Nishanie has helped her to set weekly goals. “One is to try to have a weekly conversation and watch that I do not do all the talking. I am quite deaf and I have friends who are profoundly deaf, and people here at the home are mostly deaf so talking isn’t hard, everyone wants to talk; listening is the problem. Now on the phone to Nishanie I begin by saying ‘hi, what’s new’ because before she couldn’t get a word in! I firmly believe you are never too old to learn.”



Another programme aimed at alleviating the loneliness of older people living alone has recently been started by Presbyterian Support Northern. "Connecting the Generations" was initiated by Anne Overton, PSN's community mission liaison, and pairs an older person in need of company with a student from St Kentigern College, Auckland.

Selina, a client of Presbyterian Support's Enliven service, says that since early this year she has been doubly blessed to be visited by Fie Anderson and Jade Crawford, two St Kentigern College students. She says she can't stress enough how much she enjoys the girls' visits.

"They are very bright, polite and caring. When you are home alone day after day, it is wonderful to know you will have company to talk about all sorts of things with once a week. I really appreciate their time."

Selina says her family do not visit regularly, "they come and go, so when I get sick and go to hospital they don't know".

Fie and Jade are interested in her life story, Selina says, because it is so very different to their own. "It really surprised the girls to learn how hard I had it. I came to New Zealand a young woman alone and without a job or a school. I had to find work and earn money to send home so I worked during the day and went to school at night and I went without lunch to save. I was able to buy a home and bring my family out to New Zealand, one by

one. I wanted them to be educated and today some of my nieces have university degrees."

Learning to share the little she had with family and others who arrived in New Zealand with nothing was very hard, Selina says, "but when you have little you learn to budget very carefully. The girls tell me about their generation; they have things so much easier, they can have what they want and at their age I couldn't. I tell them they are very lucky they do not have to go through what I did."

That her own nieces and nephews are reluctant to send money back home is disheartening for Selina. "They say that those back home should stand on their own two feet but helping family should remain important in our community. Young people should learn to care for others."

Fie says that becoming a regular weekly visitor to Selina was an easy decision as she misses her grandparents. "I've lived in different countries overseas with my parents most of my life so I have not had much time with my grandparents."

The first few times that Fie and Jade visited Selina they spoke about "news and current events and our lives and backgrounds. One thing that Selina has been keen to talk with us about is drinking. We told her that we go out at the weekends and go to parties and she thinks that isn't good; girls didn't go out in her day, she had to

Nishanie and Norma



Angela Singer

make money to send home to Tonga. She says booze is pointless, a waste of money.”

Fie says Selina has definitely had an impact on her and Jade’s lives. “We sit in awe listening to her telling us of the things that she has gone through. Selina came here from Tonga alone, her parents wanted her to get an education but she was very isolated and worked hard to support her family. She said everything was strange and different here; in Tonga no one locked their cars.”

One of the differences that Fie has noticed between her generation and Selina’s is the way they communicate. “Selina is far more talkative than we are; we will send a text instead of having a conversation. When we talk with Selina she has a good laugh at us for saying ‘like’ a lot”.

It has been fun, Fie says, for her and Jade “to have opened Selina’s life up a bit with new technology”.

“It was a challenge. Getting Selina to be able to move the mouse from one side of the screen to the other took ages and she laughed and laughed; it was a real eye opener to Jade and I as we just use computers without thinking.”

Fie says she will soon move again with her parents, this time to Chicago in the United States. “I knew we would be moving when I began visiting Selina so I brought Jade along on visits to take over.” Fie says that Selina is a bit sad about her leaving and is counting down the number of visits they have left.

Before they began visiting Selina, Fie says she thinks she spent a lot of time in her bed not doing very much. Fie has been reflecting on who might be there for her in old age. “I’m an only child, no siblings to rely on. I don’t think I can rely on friends either as they might need people to care for them. I hope that family will care for me so I know I need to take care of them.”

For Jade Crawford, the desire to visit Selina came from the recent loss of her grandfather. “I’d been thinking about how I helped my

grandparents when I went to see them, how they were always so happy to see me and I don’t think I really appreciated how much my visits meant to them. I want to support Selina now in that way.”

Selina is, Jade says, very conscious of “the differences in teenagers today compared to the teenagers of her adolescent years. She has noticed the trends toward less clothing and more alcohol, but instead of being disgusted I feel like she is open-minded and concerned about safety and morals. I sometimes tell her about problems teenagers like me have”.

“Virtually every time we visit she mentions how much our visits mean to her and how grateful she is. I don’t think she realises how much she gives back to us. I hope that I can better show her this in the future.”

*\*If your parish would like to take part in the AVS visitor service, contact your local Age Concern or their national office on (04) 801 9338.*

*\*Auckland parishes that would like to be involved in Connecting the Generations can contact Anne Overton at Presbyterian Support Northern on (09) 520-8624. If you would like to help run Connecting the Generations in your region, contact Anne or your local Presbyterian Support Enliven office.*

Selina





# Families attracted to “messy” church

**Making your church “messy” might not sound appealing but you should think twice, says the Rev Sue Fenton.**

“The concept doesn’t get its name from encouraging people to tip over the pews; Messy Church is about creating an alternative congregation to the Sunday service, one that has permission to be messy and not perfect.”

The evening gathering, which includes a shared meal, has a structure and pattern but lets both adults and children express their creativity through craft.

“We experience worship and we sing action songs to CDs. There are no sermons; instead we have teachings from the themes in the Messy Church books, stories from the Bible that we make relevant to today, and contemporary prayer. The evening is interactive and highly adaptable, and suitable for children with disabilities.”

“There are plenty of messy families in the Bible and we need to show that God works with that too. One way is to create a service that fits families, not the other way around.”

Sue, who has a degree in sociology, is employed part-time as the pioneer mission ministry coordinator for Wellington Presbytery’s 31 churches. For most of the past year, she has also worked one day a week on a Messy Church pilot programme at St Mark’s in Lower Hutt (which is part of Hutt City Uniting Congregations).

Sue says the pilot was sparked by her work with the Rev John Turton, an HCUC minister, who had offered Sue a part-time role as a youth educator. But Sue saw a problem; St Mark’s had no youth.

With help from John and the St Marks’ congregation, Sue carried out research that revealed “the church was disconnected from the community”. Thirty mainly older people attended the weekly Sunday service, and although there were some interested families they were not coming along regularly.

At the same time, Sue had been studying the United Kingdom book *Messy Church* with the Wellington Presbytery book club. It describes a model developed by



St Wilfred’s Anglican Church that she and John felt would be a good fit for St Mark’s - and potentially for other churches in Wellington Presbytery.

“Thanks to generous funding from the Presbyterian Foundation, the Messy Church pilot programme has been running for almost a year. In December we will reapply for funding as we now have other churches in the presbytery keen to give it a go. We are also thinking of ways we can develop it regionally.”

Messy Church appeals to families and people of all ages, Sue says. “We see families come along who have connections to St Mark’s but did not want to go to church as there was nothing for the children to do.”

She says these families may never want to go to a Sunday morning service: “Messy Church should not be seen as a stepping stone. It’s a new congregation within the parish. It’s a way for the church to respond to the community and what it wants, so that people do not have to fit into a style of service that does not fit them.”

Messy Church sits alongside Kids Friendly in a complementary way, Sue says, because both are about welcoming families.

About 55-60 people attend Messy Church at St Mark’s each month, but Sue says it isn’t just about the numbers. “It’s about families coming back to the church through this service, and about building relationships with new families.”

Also exciting to see, Sue says, is how well the pilot scheme has worked at catching the imagination of other churches. “We are getting groups from other churches coming along to watch our service, and we now have two more churches in the presbytery wanting to start their own Messy Church.”

*\* If you want to find out more, check out Messy Church and Messy Church 2 by Lucy Moore, available from Whitcoulls, Epworth Books and Mana book stores, or see the website [www.messychurch.org.uk](http://www.messychurch.org.uk). A Messy Church conference is being held in Christchurch from 18-19 September – check out [www.theologyhouse.ac.nz](http://www.theologyhouse.ac.nz) for more information.*

By Angela Singer Spanz

# Sandwich-making builds relationships



**For the past two and half years, four members of Tahunanui Presbyterian Church in Nelson have been helping local school children make healthy lunches.**

The church wanted to engage in more community outreach, so approached Tahunanui School with an offer of breakfasts.

Elder Helen King says the news at the time was “full of stories of children going to school hungry”.

The school, while grateful for the offer, did not have children arriving hungry. After discussing together what the children did need, the school and church came up with the “Sandwich Club”, where the church would provide healthy food and teach pupils how to make healthy lunches. The school appointed a teacher responsible for organising the children who wanted to take part.

The club has been running since early 2008 and is so popular that children have to apply to take part. Four different groups of eight children attend the club four times per month. Each session lasts 40 minutes and starts with putting on name tags, washing hands, and finding out about the week's sandwich ingredients. Then the children and the four helpers each make their own sandwich and prepare some fruit.

The meal is shared sitting on the floor together, having a conversation. At the end of the meal, the children help wash the dishes and sweep the floor.

Tahunanui Church pays for all the food, which the four church members take turns sourcing. Helen says the children get to eat things that they might never have seen before. “Some can be resistant to trying new things; we had dates and we got ‘what’s that?’ We had the same response from a few to celery and to sweet turnip. Some of the children haven’t had spreads or salad dressing.”

Club staples include wholegrain and wholemeal bread and buns, boiled eggs, canned fish, shaved ham, cottage cheese, sliced cheese, lettuce, grated and sliced carrots, beetroot, tomatoes and nuts. Fruit is usually kiwifruit, apples or pears.

“You get the sense that for some of the children sharing a meal with others is a new experience. We talk together as we eat; the children tell us what they get up to on the weekends, they talk about their brothers and sisters and sometimes we know them if they attended the club a couple of years back. There are those who are a bit shy about sharing with an older person but we get over that.”

Bringing to the club their experience as grandparents is something that the church

helpers enjoy, Helen says. “I am aware there are a lot of single-parent families in our area, and I wonder how many have grandparents. I’m in my late 70s, as is one of our male helpers: we may be the only older people that the Sandwich Club children have contact with. You do wonder if you have an impact, especially if a child tells you they don’t have any grandparents and that they enjoy talking with you.

“I was recently told that one boy who is having counseling was asked by his counsellor who he trusts and his reply was that he trusts the four of us running the Sandwich Club. And I remember another boy coming to Sandwich Club and sharing about his grandma who had just died and at the next week he told us about the funeral. They are great children and we appreciate them.”

Helen says that Tahunanui Presbyterian hopes to engage more with the Tahunanui School. At the end of last year the church's Association of Presbyterian Women group invited the school's choir to perform at the church, and parents were also invited to attend. “We had the pleasure of 80 children singing to us. Many of the children were wide-eyed as they had never been inside a church before”.

By Angela Singer [Spanz](#)



# Chaplain helps prisoners find compassion

**Getting the prisoners at Christchurch Women's Prison to knit hats, mittens and blankets for Moldovan orphans is just one of Carol Frost's successes.**

Carol, who is a Presbyterian chaplain at the prison, says the knitting for orphans living in temperatures of -25 degrees Celsius (Operation Cover Up) helps to pass the time. It is also "often the first time many of the women have ever done anything for another person".

Keeping the women busy can be a challenge, Carol says, because they spend such long hours locked in their cells and many have neither a television nor a radio.

"Due to staff shortages, lock down is from 4:45pm to 8:15am, so not being able to afford their own TV or radio to pass the time with can be very hard. They often do not have friends or families who will give or loan them one so donations are appreciated."

Helping those in prison is something to which Carol has long felt called. After 15 years volunteering with Prison Fellowship at a men's prison, she was very happy to be invited by Christchurch Women's Prison to apply for the chaplaincy position.

Carol says chaplaincy has its ups and downs but there have been success stories, such as the woman "who came to the Lord and I saw it change her whole life, she was the first one to be baptised by immersion at the prison".

Chaplaincy can also be disheartening at times, Carol says. "You make this commitment to the women and then they let you down - a lot". But this isn't surprising, she says, when you hear about the women's difficult backgrounds. "I keep in mind that the women are no different than me, they just grew up in a different family from me. Many have been sexually abused."

Carol is assisted in her work by volunteers and by an assistant chaplain who runs the Sycamore Tree programme. Carol holds Sunday service for inmates and has a Bible time mid-week that ends with a discussion. Other duties include memorial services for both prisoners and staff.

The prison employs Carol as a chaplain for 20 hours per week and as she is a trained

counsellor and psychotherapist, she spends a number of those hours counselling the prisoners. "The women might approach me directly when I'm on the floor interacting with them, or I might be approached by a social worker or a corrections officer might refer someone to me."

Carol is a Presbyterian but she says denomination makes little difference to the women "because many of these women have very little knowledge of God". Carol says that she loves to bring women to faith in Christ "because I know it makes for real change".

That the women's faith journey might cease once they are released from prison is something about which Carol is very concerned. "Here is an opportunity that churches are missing."

"After the women have left prison, I encourage them for the first time in their lives to go along to a church; and because many of these women have never set foot in a church, going into one is scary. Unfortunately, what is happening is that instead of being welcomed by the congregation, they are ignored, so they leave."

What would work, Carol says, is if churches were "to send someone along to visit with the women who are soon to be released, just a few times, then they would have a church to go to where they would see a friendly face and be encouraged to stay. It's about providing hospitality and discipling".

Carol says the women need to get connected quickly with a church on the outside, because they are being released into the same environment that dragged them down.

Christchurch churches interested in inviting women who have left prison to attend their church can contact Carol at the chaplaincy office, phone (03) 344-6875.

Carol adds that many of the women who are knitting are also in need of warm clothing themselves. "We have women sent here from Northland and Christchurch is just too cold for them, so donations of tracksuit pants, jumpers, cardigans and warm sweatshirts without hoods would be most appreciated."

*\*Churches that would like to donate warm, clean clothing and blankets, TVs or radios to the prisoners can contact Prisoners Aid & Rehab (PARS) national office in Wellington on (04) 527-7091, Canterbury region's Jane Hossack on (03) 371-9181 and Taranaki/Wanganui's Steve Treloar on (06) 345-5969.*

By Angela Singer 

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Rev Helen Harray  
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or phone 03 474 9470;

or Rev Mary-Jane Konings,  
or 03 686 1981



# Tiny church grows by reaching out

**On the verge of death six years ago, South Kaipara Presbyterian Church has quadrupled its congregation and developed innovative ministries for those struggling in its community.**

The church is about to shift into a larger, more flexible facility, which needs substantial renovations. Press Go has granted \$25,000 towards this work.

Minister the Rev Warren Howes says that when he was called to the church in 2005, its Helensville congregation consisted of 12 people with an average age over 70. The parish also has a congregation in nearby Kaukapakapa.

Warren says that part of his appointment was an understanding that the congregation would embrace change, starting with a shift from a traditional to a contemporary-style service, as well as being open to the Holy Spirit.

It's been "a hard slog" at times, but the congregation has grown to 40 adults, with an average age of 40, and 10 children.

They achieved this growth by targeting primary-school-aged children, starting

a kids church on Sunday mornings and developing relationships with the local primary school. "They are now the basis of our youth group."

Many of the children's families come from difficult backgrounds and struggle with poverty, addictions and unemployment. "We deliberately say that we take anyone at our church."

"These people are living lives that most of us have only ever seen on TV."

Many families have experienced several generations on the unemployment benefit or drugs.

Recently one of the youth group's adult leaders brought along a cake to share. Warren says the teenagers, used to a takeaways diet, were amazed that she could make that kind of food at home. "That just blows me away."

"It's really challenging, exciting and scary."

More than 30 percent of Helensville's adult population have no formal qualifications, and the median income is \$23,100 (compared to the Auckland region median of \$26,800). One-parent families make up nearly a quarter of Helensville's families.

Warren says people can belong to the church before they believe; "it's about getting them involved and building a relationship".

The church's existing three buildings needed significant amounts of repairs and maintenance, and didn't fit with plans for growth. They managed to sell the buildings at the height of the property boom, and then lease back the church building from the new owner.

An ideal new, larger building was found, resource consent obtained and the church managed to purchase it with the sale funds. The new property is on Helensville's main road and highly visible. At the moment, a hospice charity shop is a tenant and can be accommodated in the church's plans, which also allow for function rooms and office space. The site has more than 50 off-road car parks.

The church has identified a range of ministries that target the community's needs and which its new building will help make possible.

At the moment, the church provides lunch for a handful of children at the local primary school. They plan to extend this to breakfast packs, and make them available at the church so that children don't feel embarrassed by having to eat at school.

The church has also organised a registered nurse to visit the school weekly and check for head lice, which could be carried out more sensitively offsite.

A homework centre, teaching basic cooking skills and musical instrument tuition are other ways in which they want to reach out to young people. Another idea, suggested by the school, is to provide a laundry facility so that students can wash their uniforms and take more pride in them.

The community's needs can seem overwhelming, Warren says, but "we just work with what we can do and try our best".

He says the church sees itself as an oasis for all those who need help, especially people often ignored by churches.

They took possession of the new building in early July but some alternations and local body consent are needed before they can move in; perhaps October at the earliest. The church also needs to find another \$100,000 towards the work's total cost, in addition to the Press Go grant.

They are holding a special offering on 1 August and will be looking for local grants and other sources of funding.

By Amanda Wells **Spanz**



**The children's church operates in cramped conditions**





## Press Go backs Waipukurau youth work

St Andrew's Waipukurau's booming youth ministry is being supported by Press Go.

A new role focusing on "faith-based" work with children has received a \$60,000 grant plus a \$60,000 interest-free loan over six years.

About 200 children and young people are involved in St Andrew's Sunday school and youth groups and an additional 200 take part in the church's community-facing work, which is managed, together with the ministry work, under the umbrella of Epic Ministries.

David and Kirsty Tilyard are sharing the new role, with David working 32 hours a week and Kirsty 16 hours. David coordinates "everything overtly faith-based" that the church does with children, from youth group to Bible in Schools work, while Kirsty focuses on the Sunday morning children's programmes. Both play hands-on roles, as well as managing the 40 volunteers involved.

Minister the Rev Ian Pimm says the new approach is going really well. Sunday morning children's ministries are being refocused into an outreach programme; "it's not just a nice, neat thing for Christian kids and families".

About 50 children are part of St Andrew's children's church, another 70 come along to its intermediate-age programme and 70 are part of its high-school-age youth group.

David and Kirsty have also recently started a new youth service called Fuel on Thursday evenings, with 50 young people taking part. Held in the hall rather than the church, Ian describes the service as "a bit different".

More young people are also starting to come to church on Sunday mornings, "because their friends are there".

Ian says that while David and Kirsty's initial contract is for three years, it's hoped that as St Andrew's continues to grow, the new role will be funded from its operating budget.

Epic has five full-time youth workers, including Tama Bucknell who coordinates the community side of the work, which Ian describes as about building relationships and values. "It's huge in terms of the opportunity we have to work with a whole lot of kids in our area," Ian says. "The credibility we have developed is stunning."

The church has a good relationship with Waipukurau's high school, including mentoring students, and with the local primary schools. It runs a Bible in Schools style programme for years seven and eight at three schools.

About 200 adults attend the church's Sunday services, although about a third will be away on any given Sunday, Ian says.

St Andrew's has doubled in size in the past 10 years, and aims to double again in the next five years.

The church can seat only about 120 comfortably; more than that and people are put off, Ian says. At the moment, the church is full enough to inhibit further growth. But this doesn't mean leaping into a building programme, he says, and the church will continue experimenting with multiple services.

"We want to put our resources into people."

By Amanda Wells **Spanz**



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# INSPIRING EACH OTHER AT CONNECT 2010

**O**ne hundred and sixty youth leaders from 66 churches came together for Connect 2010, held at El Rancho. Wellington turned on the weather for a fantastic weekend of learning, connecting, being inspired and worshipping God.

Many participants commented on the quality and range of the workshop programme. One said, "too many great workshops to choose from. I don't know if this is a criticism or an accolade...will have to come to 2011 and hope they are repeated."

There were 40 different workshops with 22 different speakers, including ministers, youth workers, and lecturers. Streams included: discipleship, church, mission and community, youth praxis, and worship, where participants ended up jamming together as well as reflecting on the nature of worship. The enthusiasm for the Biblical/theological stream suggested a hunger for going deeper in our understanding of faith.

As worship curator, Vanessa Gordon created a broad range and experience of worship. Her team of talented musicians took us on a journey, starting with God creating the world. On Saturday, we engaged with Jesus' creation of a new humanity and the Holy Spirit's role in forming a community of belonging. Sunday morning had an outward theme, as we shared communion together over lunch.

Participants said they loved the use of other mediums of worship. "There was something for everyone in every worship session. It wasn't just singing, or just reflection."

Guest speaker Tim Keel spoke on about what it means to be lost, and how this is actually a good thing. He challenged us not to reach for quick fixes of the next and latest model of youth ministry. Instead, we need to stop and seek God among us, consider what he is doing that is specific to our context and then join him in whatever this might be. Then Graham Redding took us on a whirlwind tour of John Calvin's thinking and its ongoing relevance for us as the people of God.

Connect 2011 is all go, with guest speaker Andrew Root, author of *Revisiting Relational Youth Ministry*, already booked. Check out the video promo at [www.presbyterian.org.nz/pym](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/pym). See you at Living Springs, Christchurch, 1-3 July 2011!

By Carlton Johnstone **Spanz**

Bede Robertson, Jessie Boston and Petra Malcolm get ready for action





The registration desk: Bede Robertson,  
Gina Williamson and Rose Morris



## SOME PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS:

"This is the best Connect I have been to! The workshops were fantastic and relevant for me; an awesome selection!"

"This Connect has been food for the body, mind and spirit."

"Highlights were connecting with people, creating new relationships and maintaining old ones."

"High points were networking with others; playing soccer on the field with the Moderator."

"I can honestly say I had so many highlights that I was overwhelmed at the unity and value I was able to tap into. The weekend, speakers, and workshops were so relevant. I feel equipped, renewed and even excited to get home and start building on all I've taken in this weekend. Malo lava [well done]."

## Young people dig deep for Presbyterian Support clients

**Six Auckland Presbyterian youth groups came together during May's "Youth Week" to carry out some acts of kindness in their community.**

Project Co-op was organised by Emily Wotton, who is the youth, child and family ministry coordinator for Auckland Presbytery, and Anne Overton, Presbyterian Support Northern's community mission liaison.

Emily says young people are keen to express their faith in a practical way, but often aren't sure how.

For the past three years, four churches in Auckland's Eastern Bays area have been providing funding for a Presbyterian Support Family Works office in Panmure. Anne says she was keen to give the churches - St Helier's, Somervell, Kohimarama and Glendowie - greater ownership of the partnership.

So Emily asked the churches if their youth groups would like to help some of the office's clients, and she extended the invitation to other churches in the area, with St John's Mt Roskill and Mt Martin's Papatoetoe accepting.

On the day, more than 50 young people met at the Family Works office for a short devotion before each youth group headed to a site, taking with them afternoon tea and a first aid kit.

Anne had asked Presbyterian Support Northern service managers to nominate clients, and she says it was easy to find people keen to participate.

Two were clients of Coactive, which provides home support for disabled people; two were clients of Family Works, which works with children and families; and two were clients of Enliven, which offers home and community support for older people.



Emily said those being helped seemed to enjoy spending time with the young people, as well as appreciating the results of their work.

For one of the Family Works clients, who has two children with disabilities, the young people dug a new, bigger vegetable garden. They were also able to extricate her lawnmower from where it had been accidentally padlocked under her house, and mow her lawn.

Another home had been lived in by the same person for many years, and he was having trouble caring for his property. The team disinfected the kitchen, washed the windows, put a lot of effort into an overgrown garden and took away a whole skip full of rubbish.

The client "just loved it," Anne says. "He was almost in tears."

Anne was able to secure donations of timber (from TimberWorld East Tamaki and soil (from Auckland Landscape Supplies), as well as a discount on seedlings and on a skip.

"I just told them what we were doing and people were so willing to buy in. We were able to fund it on a shoestring thanks to the generosity of people in the community."

Because Emily had registered the event as part of Youth Week, it was on the official website and was seen by their local Member of Parliament. Peseta Sam Lotu-liga, MP for Maungakiekie, visited several of the sites and encouraged the young people.

After the work was done, the youth groups gathered at Glendowie Presbyterian, with everyone contributing to a shared meal.

Emily is considering repeating the day as a Christmas project, and running it again next year during Youth Week on a wider scale.

Anne says they would like to identify young people with leadership potential and train them to become coordinators for the project, each organising a team. "It's also about training and raising up young people to become project managers."

Others in their churches who aren't able to do physical work can also get involved by baking or cooking food.

Anne says the Co-op Project was a good starting point. "It's a very real way that the church can easily connect with their community. We could create ongoing connections."

"We've got the resources; we just need to help people to see that it's not difficult."

*\* If you would like to receive Anne's "Community Connection" newsletter, please email [anne.overton@psn.org.nz](mailto:anne.overton@psn.org.nz)*

By Amanda Wells Spanz

# Letters to the editor

**T**he letter from the Rev Brian Turner on the threat of dismantling Union parishes was especially interesting to me as I was a founder member of the Chartwell, St Alban's (Hamilton Cooperating Parish) 30 years ago.

In the early days of this new venture, I was elected to go as representative to the Anglican synod. Taking an early opportunity, I spoke enthusiastically about Union. It was obvious this was not generally popular there, as when we went into morning tea afterwards, I was left severely alone. That is, until one older clergyman from the senior ranks came up and said, "I thoroughly agree with what you have said, but I can tell you now it will never happen. The clergy from the top ranks will vote against. The reason, there is far more money in our Pension Fund for Anglicans than the other churches have in theirs and they don't want to share it". Was he right?

From my reading, I have noticed the preference of the Anglican Church is to move towards closer association with the Roman Catholics. Note the invitation of the Pope to Anglican clergy in the United Kingdom to transfer to the Roman Catholic Church.

Have we, the Anglicans, built up a corporate structure that no longer reflects the philosophy of he who walked humbly with God? One senior man who was very helpful, in the early days of St Alban's, was the late Archbishop Johnstone. On his retirement, he came to live in our parish. When St Alban's was without a minister for a while, he offered his services, acting as our vicar for some months. Truly this was a man who, despite his senior rank, walked humbly with God. If the churches moved towards true Union, they would free the clergy from mountains of paper work. The present situation where each denomination is holding tightly on to what is theirs means clergy in Cooperating parishes are drowning in paper.

**Eva Richards**  
Gisborne

All of these letters have been abridged for space reasons. Spanz welcomes letters to the editor. Please email [amanda@presbyterian.org.nz](mailto:amanda@presbyterian.org.nz)

**I**n response to Brian Turner's letter (June 2010) and Geraldine Coats' response, as a member in a Cooperating Venture (Waiwhetu Uniting Church in the Hutt City Uniting Congregations Parish), I am all too aware of how parent Churches' courts have sapped energy from well-intentioned members of our parish through their demands, procrastination, and power plays. We can all give examples of egos getting in the way of true discipleship, and we recognise we are as guilty as anybody else in this regard.

Our partner Churches have a mission of reaching out to transform the world, in love, justice and peace. Yet one of our partners talks of "adopting the corporate model". The true mission of a corporate body is to maximise their profit for the shareholder. Where does this fit into mission?

Through history right back to as long as we have records, in times of rapid change, people retreat into what they know. We see this particularly happening in the fundamentalism of Christianity and Islam. But isn't this in a way what is quietly happening with our parent denominations in Aotearoa New Zealand as they retreat back into denominationalism, which inevitably diminishes their commitment to the CVs?

At Waiwhetu we like to keep the tradition of all that is good and wholesome of Presbyterianism and Methodism, while continuing to pursue the long-term desire of our parents' "uniting" organically at the national level.

We fully endorse the five points made by Geraldine but suggest the parent denominations should gift to the CVs what rightfully should be in their ownership and has been paid for largely by the parishioners themselves at each location.

There are far too many layers of governance, and we should call for a flatter management structure, with the Uniting Congregations of Aotearoa New Zealand being the only body we report and relate to, so we can more readily fulfil our mission.

It is now long overdue that we cut the apron strings, and whilst people will say that the property will take a long time to sort out, remember it is they who are putting stumbling blocks in our way. It will take time but if we listen to where the Spirit is leading and plan carefully, everything is achievable where there is a will.

**Arthur Davis**  
Lower Hutt

**A**t a recent training event for Christian and Religious Education teachers, we discussed the fact that very few State intermediate schools have CRE lessons. This appears to be a trivial observation, until one considers that children's ability to process concepts abstractly does not normally kick in till about 10 or 11 years of age. As I reflected on this, it occurred to me that the lack of Christian education beyond this age may have significant impact on the Church's witness.

Participation in the Judeo-Christian tradition means learning to process concrete images in ways that children up the age of 10 or 11 are unable to do. This is not to exclude them at all, but simply to note that their capacity for theological reflection is limited in significant respects.

One response to this concern is to say that we must therefore focus our education on the life of Jesus. However, this merely highlights the crucial issue for the Christian revolution of the Judeo-Christian tradition: for Christians, God is conceived as triune. Again the thinking involved assumes developmental capacities that are usually not present at primary school age (and all lessons about steam, water and ice should be banned immediately!).

My concern is this. If our CRE opportunities are limited to a period where children's developmental capacities mean that they are likely to emerge with concrete images of God (perhaps as an old man on a cloud and Jesus as a "biological" son of this old man) then our children's worldview will be essentially pagan and will in all probability be deconstructed very quickly at high school and university as a "childish thing". Now I have done no research on the relationship between CRE and adult practicing Christianity, however I am willing to bet the statistics are not good. This is not a slight on the work of CRE per se but, I suspect, an outcome of the missing link.

What can be done? Currently it seems as if the next opportunity to seriously take a further step in Christian education is a theology course at University. I wonder how much consideration the church has given to the missing link and the consequences of not addressing it, whether in the Christian community or in schools.

**Rev Dr Bruce Hamill**  
Dunedin



# General Assembly speaker pushes radical discipleship

**GA10**  
**MAKING**  
DISCIPLE-MAKING  
**DISCIPLES**



**The keynote speaker at General Assembly 2010 describes himself as someone who has spent 35 years making disciples.**

Auckland-based Mick Duncan has lived in a Manila slum for nine years, pastored churches, written books and gained renown on the international speaking circuit.

He says his own discipleship journey was strongly influenced by Murray Robertson in the 1970s. Murray, a long-serving minister at Christchurch's Spreydon Baptist, "had a profound influence on the kind of Christ-follower I became," Mick says.

"The thing that I really liked about what Murray Robertson did with me was that he poured his life into me... instead of me being poured into a programme."

Mick says he's uneasy about our contemporary "fixation" with programmes, which make discipling "someone else's responsibility".

Discipling is about communication between one person and another "at a profoundly intimate level," Mick says. It's "incredibly labour and time intensive, and because of that, people shy away from it".

"Without wanting to be unkind," Mick says, he suspects that many people in churches have lost the ability to develop effective relationships with people in need.

"I do think we are kind of relationally retarded."

This isn't because we lack compassion, he says, but because the opportunities and skills to cross relational barriers are becoming less common. People who are "different and difficult" often become the responsibility of medical or social-work professionals, and we are taught from a young age to mistrust strangers.

"We increasingly feel excused from walking towards the stranger in our midst."

He says at Assembly he'll be encouraging people to recognise that person in their

existing world "who they can get alongside in such a way that that other person does end up a disciple-making disciple".

"People like to say, 'I love the poor and the lost and the lonely'. We've got to concretise this; to put a face to that kind of statement: it's a particular lost and lonely person in our world.

"What does it mean to get alongside that person so that we walk with them and they walk with us?"

People inside the church easily become insulated from the torment that those living without God can face, he says.

This can be because they've been brought up in Christian homes, or because after being converted they become "very quickly enmeshed" with church culture and "lose the sharpness of that memory".

"These two groups have got to do more time with lost and lonely people in our society."

Seeing Jesus as "some kind of life coach" also raises Mick's ire.

"We take to him our [life] script and we say, 'Jesus this is our script, your job is to make a better script. Make me a better person so I can live a fulfilled life'.

"But he rips it up. Then he says, 'let's write a new script: this will not necessarily be about you; it will be about others, the stranger in your midst'."

Living in the slums of Manila, with the organisation Servants for Asia's Urban Poor, was one way Mick sought to live out this calling.

After nine years, Mick and his family left the slums and returned to New Zealand. He says one reason was due to feeling "burnt out as a person" and becoming a poor decision maker as a result. He'd become an adrenaline junkie, living off the stress caused by the slum's constant challenges.



**Mike Duncan**

"In the end that's going to fry your nerve endings and your immune system is going to suffer. It took me a number of years to recover."

"I had to go on a learning curve", he says, and find out how he could keep following his calling.

His experiences in the slum didn't mean he dismisses New Zealanders' sufferings as less valid.

"The pain and the suffering that middle New Zealand feels is different from the pain and suffering that the absolute poor face, but the pain is just as real.

"Why is it that people think that learning how to love the poor is sexier than learning how to love the middle class? My learning how to love the middle class has been more difficult and more costly than learning how to love the poor in the slums."

*\*General Assembly 2010 is being held at St Andrew's College in Christchurch from 30 September to 3 October. Find out more at [www.presbyterian.org.nz/ga10](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/ga10)*

By Amanda Wells Spanz



## Church Property Trustees

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Proposals must be approved by the whole congregation, and a good majority should be in favour. Presbytery and Church Property Trustees' approvals may take several weeks each, and longer between December and February.

For more information contact:

Heather McKenzie

Presbyterian Church Property Trustees

P O Box 9049 Wellington 6141

ph 04 381 8290 or 0800 424 872

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# THEOLOGYMATTERS

## No faith is an island

*"The last thing in the world I want is a personal relationship with God. Our relationship with God is mediated. And that's the reason why without the Church, we know not God ... Our faith is a mediated faith through people reformed by Word and Sacrament. So I would never trust myself to have a personal relationship with God."*

While American theologian Stanley Hauerwas could have more clearly articulated a distinction here between "personal" and "individual", his basic point is right. We believe as members of the communities – secular and sacred, living and dead – of which we are part. Our faith is formed by their practices, even more so than their explicit doctrines. Only within the communion of saints can God's call be heard and followed; only insofar as we make ourselves accountable to the judgement of others do we learn who we are. Authentic lives are impossible apart from what others – especially those most unlike us – make of them. This is the

glorious burden of authentic discipleship. Perhaps the "modern" trend to avoid knowing oneself in relation to the other is related to that other "modern" trend to avoid knowing oneself in relation to our Other, that is, to God.

So I drag myself out of bed on a Sunday morning not because I feel like it but because my faith in God is literally impossible apart from the community of God's people. My faith requires testing against that of a community with a baptised memory. My short history thrives on frequent checking against the community's longer story.

The converse is equally true: the faith of the community too can be tested against the faith of the individual. That's one reason why "heretics" and "conformists" need each other. Faith involves both risk and doubt, some forms of which are too overwhelming and potentially destructive to be shouldered by the individual alone. Jesus' community is where the burdens of doubt can be shared safely, where the things too heavy to be borne individually can be borne corporately. This quality of sharing is not to be interpreted as an exposure of weakness but rather as charismatic, that is, as a gift.

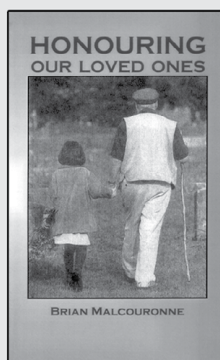
Faith can be celebrated and faith's loves embodied in the practices of community-forming liturgies whereby we dramatise our graced convictions and spur each other on to participate in, and be continually recreated by, the faith we share and which has taken hold of us. At the core of this action, participation and recreation is the Eucharist, that event around which communities gather both to remember and be re-membered. The community called by God and re-membered around generous helpings of broken loaves and poured-out bottles of pinot noir is ever the apostolic community. It is always a people being "sent" out into a strange land in order to invite others to fruitful sharing together.

By Jason Goroncy Spanz

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# Helping struggling stepfamilies work together

**Many people who have attended Adele Cornish's "blended families" course say it's "the best thing that ever happened to our family".**

Adele says she suspects her work elicits such an enthusiastic response because of "the lack of support that was out there for blended families".

A member of Lower Hutt's Knox Presbyterian Church and a trained social worker, Adele's interest in blended (or step) families comes out of her own experiences. She is a stepdaughter, and has been stepmother to husband Mike Cornish's two children for 16 years, as well as mother to their three boys together.

Six years ago, Adele says she felt a calling to help blended families that were struggling. "I thought God wanted me to write a book on blended families, so I looked in bookshops in Lower Hutt to see if there was a need and found there was. A friend of Mike's suggested I conduct a survey online to see if people would want my book. I had 500 replies, all positive".

In 2008, Adele wrote and published her book *Blended Family Success: Practical solutions to step family challenges* and followed it up with her website "The Blended Family Resource and Support Network", where people can sign up for weekly tips or for one-on-one, Internet-based counselling.

Adele says her Christian faith shines through in her work. "My seminars are based on Biblical principals for a secular world. For example, forgiveness is something that comes up when we talk about ex-partner issues."

Adele runs her Blended Families courses through Parents Inc and at churches throughout the country, with participants usually charged about \$10. She is assisted by Mike, who has led many Divorce Care courses.

A statistic that Adele would like to see turned around is the high rate of blended families that fail in the first five years. "Sometimes couples have come to the



**Adele Cornish**

course as a last resort; they are ready to split up because as time goes by their blended family gets harder not easier. When the blending of the family goes wrong, coaching, counselling and seminars can help because blended families need very specific advice. Couples increasingly realise this and are coming along before they blend, so they can prepare for remarriage with children."

Some of the most common problems that blended families face are conflicted loyalties for children between the absent parent and the one with whom they are living, stepparents feeling as though they are competing with stepchildren for the biological parent's time, parents allowing guilt about previous marriage breakdowns to affect their parenting, and parent and stepparent disagreements about discipline for the children.

Debbie, who attended two of Adele's courses with her husband Tim before and after their marriage, says it is possible to avoid some of the problems.

"We began to live as a blended family last November - in the space of one year we had married, bought a new home and blended our family of five teenagers, who are all

dealing with puberty. They all get along well, even though they are experiencing three different parenting styles."

For ongoing support, Debbie says she and her husband lean on Adele's book and the Parent Centre's Toolbox resources. "We know we are fortunate to have blended our family in a time when there is support and I'm so grateful for people like Adele who have walked our path and have a heart to help."

The desire to learn ways to support blended families in his work as a counsellor is what brought Frank Eijgenraam, a member of St Columba Presbyterian Church, Naenae, to a Blended Families seminar at St Columba last year.

Frank says he was impressed by the way Adele and Mike used their own experience to bring hidden issues into the open. "Some couples were dealing with anger around the other divorced parent. It was surprising for me to hear just how difficult it can be."

Frank says that the course was not all serious stuff, "there was laughter and it was very interactive, not a talking heads situation. The best thing Adele and Mike do is provide hope that the family can move forward together."

Adele says that some course participants are on track and come along to confirm this. Dara and her husband attended the Blended Families course to "get confirmation that what we were doing was right".

Dara says she didn't want to repeat the mistakes made in her previous step family. "I had to make sure that my new partner was right not just for me but also as a stepfather to my children, because my children come first and I wouldn't be with a man who would make me choose."

Adele says that feedback from course participants is clear: they want more. "The two-hour course is a hand up but couples want hand-holding too, so in response we are trialling a six week follow-on course".

*\*You can find more information about Adele's courses at [www.stepfamilyhelp.info/blog/](http://www.stepfamilyhelp.info/blog/) and sign up to receive free tips.*

**By Angela Singer** Spanz

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



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# Communal meals draw people to church

**Levin Uniting Church is reaching out to its community with food, through a Sunday night meal and informal service, and a newly launched breakfast church.**

Minister the Rev Phil Bettany says the church's main 10 o'clock service is filling a niche for the 90-100 older people who attend. Instead of attempting to modernise it, the church has sought new possibilities for growth.

An "evening fellowship meal" for families at six o'clock on Sunday nights attracts many people who are struggling financially. It's preceded by an hour of games including air hockey, pool and table tennis, and followed by an informal church service.

Phil says between 50 and 70 people come along to the meal, which began after some church members recognised the need in the community. For many of those who come, it's their main meal of the week.

"We don't ask for a set fee, just a koha."

The simple, filling food is cooked by a team lead by elder Jack Gibson, who also coordinates the service held afterwards.

Because the koha doesn't cover the costs of the meal, the organisers rely on a combination of other donations and fundraising sausage sizzles.

People often offer to help out with the cooking if they can't contribute financially, or help to set up the hall where the meal is held.

Phil says the meal tends to attract people who are struggling or on the margins of society. "I can see there might be the need to employ a social worker for that ministry at some point."

About half those at the meal stay for the service, which focuses on life skills like how to have good relationships. Phil says it usually takes more than six months coming to dinner before people start to stay afterwards.

A few people from the congregation come along to support the ministry and supervise the games.

"It's grown like topsy," Phil says. "As it's got bigger and bigger, we've realised we need some governance structure".

The church runs another meal once a month for older people. This "loaves and fishes" midweek lunch in the church lounge has a nominal charge and attracts about 30-50 people.

Phil says many attendees are church members, but it also attracts people on the fringes of the "quite traditional" morning service.

More than half the congregation are over the age of 70 but numbers are kept relatively stable by the people retiring to Levin and joining the church. These newcomers help bring freshness and ideas, Phil says.

Levin, which has a population of just under 20,000, is a popular retirement destination, with seven rest homes. Phil says they take seriously the need to invest time and energy in ministering to the town's older people.

The church's newest endeavour is a "breakfast church", modelled on Dunedin's B@TCH (which is part of Highgate Presbyterian Church).

A dress rehearsal was held in June, with the official start at the end of July.

"What we're wanting to do with breakfast church is something that's mainly contemporary," Phil says.

Keyboards and a bass guitar are being used, with lots of interactive, Kids Friendly elements to the service.

Breakfast of cereals, toast, real coffee and orange juice runs from 7.45am to 8.30am, followed by a worship service that ends at 9.15am. People are asked to pay \$2 a person, or \$5 a family, for the breakfast.

Levin Uniting Church was formed in February 2008, when St Andrew's Presbyterian Church and St John's Methodist joined forces. Earlier this year, all worship activities were shifted to the St Andrew's site, now known as Levin Uniting Church on Oxford. It's the only church on Levin's main street, and can comfortably fit 300 people.

Phil and Shona were called as ministers in October 2008.

"People have recognised that we need to keep things moving, in terms of change."

Most people from the two congregations have become part of the new church, and Phil says they have been sensitive to the loss that people have felt, particularly with the consolidation to one building.

"We walked as a church and brought the treasures over to the St Andrew's building," which now has two communion fonts, and banners from both worship centres.

"But most people want to get on with things as a uniting partnership".

"They have recognised that if we don't do something now that's different, in 10 years time we may not have a church."

By Amanda Wells **Spanz**



People enjoy Levin Uniting's "evening fellowship meal"



# Prisoners' children suffer harsh sentence

**How many children of prisoners are there in New Zealand? About 20,000.**

Verna McFelin, chief executive of Pillars, says her organisation's research confirms that "when a parent is sent to prison it is often the children who suffer the real punishment".

Since 1988, Pillars has been providing adult mentors to children with a parent in prison. At the moment, about 70 prisoner families in Christchurch and Auckland have mentors, many from churches.

Verna says "we firmly believe that if every prisoner's child in New Zealand was matched with a mentor, the crime rate could be reduced by as much as 50 percent in 10 years."

The impact of the stigma attached to having a parent in jail should not be underestimated. Without intervention, children of prisoners are known to develop the health, emotional and social problems that can lead to criminal behaviour. Children of prisoners are about seven times more likely to end up in prison than any other child.

Peter Kipfer, who attends St Columba @ Botany Downs in Auckland, says he had been a regular volunteer with a prison ministry when he read a Pillars mentoring brochure. "I thought it would be something I could do, so I approached Pillars two years ago and offered myself as a mentor".

It was through his wife Barbara, who leads a prison ministry with others from St Columba, that Peter first became interested in helping prisoners and their families. "Barbara goes into prisons to take Bible study, and she would always come home from her visits excited because she found it so satisfying to see the difference made".

Once Peter had his application accepted by Pillars, he was put through rigorous background checks and training. "They have a good screening process including police checks that need to be there because you are working with children. I had many interviews with Pillars prior to being accepted; they really get down to why you

want to mentor. I needed all of the training because I do not have children myself."

Earlier this year, Peter and three other Auckland mentors were matched with prisoners' children. "Pillars try to find common interests. Children and potential mentors are asked what hobbies they have and what kind of activities they like, such as indoor or outdoor. I was matched with an eight-year-old boy and our first meeting was for each of us to see if we thought it was going to work, if we were a good fit."

The mentor relationship was a little awkward at first, Peter says, "because you are going on an outing with someone you don't know, which is not so easy for a child. We were very lucky because on that first outing we clicked."

The activities that child and mentor do together don't have to be expensive, he says. "Pillars try to get free tickets to things such as the zoo, and if we go to

something like that we write a thank you note afterwards, which is something he hadn't done before.

"Otherwise we have fun doing free things. On our first trip out together, we walked up a mountain and chased rabbits for an hour and half. We also go to the park and play ball, go to the beach and collect things. He has been to my home - we bought a fruit tree and planted it in my garden."

The relationship is not always easy-going, Peter says. "He's eight years old. Sometimes he can be unmotivated and not want to go anywhere or do anything. To get over that, we had a planning session and we worked out some things he wants to do. He wants to do cooking and learn a language so we will. After a few ups and downs, we are in a good place."

The topic of the boy's father being in jail comes up, Peter says, and through his Pillars training he knows neither to "initiate it nor push it; when it comes up naturally we just discuss it".

Pillars mentors make a commitment to work with their child for at least one year, which Peter says is fair or else the child learns to trust someone who could walk out on them. "We are already six months in and the time is flying by. He has told me that I am the only one that ever comes and does fun stuff with him."

*\*For more information about Pillars, check out [www.pillars.org.nz](http://www.pillars.org.nz)*

**By Angela Singer** Spanz



**Pillars mentor Peter Kipfer**



# GLOBAL MISSION



## Missionaries keen for more Vanuatu service

**Back in New Zealand briefly for the birth of their third child, Roger and Paula Levy hope to return to their mission work in Vanuatu on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand.**

Along with their children David (who's six and half), Grace (five) and Joshua (born in March), the Levys will head back to Onesua Presbyterian College, a secondary school about an hour's drive from Vanuatu's capital, Port Vila, where they've been living for the past two years.

They would like to return to Vanuatu till at least the end of 2012, if they succeed in raising enough financial support.

The college has about 350 students, who come from Vanuatu's many islands to board at the school. Onesua's classes are carried out in English, which is usually the students' third language after their local dialect and Bislama, which is Vanuatu's main language.

The Levys are part of Palmerston North's St Alban's Presbyterian Church. Roger has a background in mechanical work and his initial role in Vanuatu was at the Ebule agricultural training college, near Onesua, which struggles to remain viable and closed down soon after they arrived (it has since reopened, with some support from the Uniting Church in Australia).

Roger then completed a number of maintenance and repair projects at Onesua College, including making a new carpentry workshop more secure, fixing the school's water pump and reconditioning one of its diesel generators. There are "endless" numbers of maintenance tasks that can be done at the school, he says, which like much of Vanuatu has suffered from years of infrastructure neglect.

The Levys also look after school groups visiting from New Zealand, organising their programme and acting as cultural



Grace, Paula, David and Roger Levy

liaisons. Presbyterian schools St Kentigern's, Turakina, St Oran's and St Andrew's have visited during the past two years.

They also ran a youth group for students in year 13, meeting once a fortnight for a meal and Bible study or discussion. Paula says about half of the year group attended.

Schooling in Vanuatu is very selective, with students having to pass exams in years eight, 10, 12 and 13 to graduate to the next level. "If you don't get through, you're out." Only about 30 percent of teenagers attend high school because of this and because of the cost.

Paula's roles included helping out with the preschool and working part-time in the school library. Last year she produced a magazine for the college, for the first time in many years.

The Levys lived in a one of the staff houses on the college grounds, which had running water and electricity for about five to six hours a day during the week. There was no washing machine, or running hot water. Internet access is very limited, as are telephone services.

Paula says they would travel regularly to Port Vila for groceries, but also grew a lot of vegetables in their garden.

"Anything you want" is for sale at the supermarket in Port Vila, she says, "it's just expensive". For example, cheese costs four times as much as in New Zealand.

They would offer hospitality to their neighbours, inviting people round for dinner every week – something that others often could not afford or did not have enough space to host. But there is a strong culture of reciprocity, Paula says,

and people would always offer a similar gesture in return.

Paula says their children really enjoy life in Vanuatu and are keen to return. The "lovely environment" including a beach 100m away and lots of swimming, freedom and fresh mangoes were all positive aspects of their life at Onesua.

David and Grace quickly mastered Bislama, Paula says, while she and Roger became "reasonably fluent".

Roger says they always knew the initial learning curve would be steep. "The first year was incredibly hard." They had previously spent six months in China, so were prepared for the realities of living in a foreign culture.

Living a more communal life took a while to get used to, with dinner often interrupted by students asking if they could use their computer or printer, and Paula often given cake-baking duties for feasts or celebrations. "We taught a lot of people how to make self-saucing chocolate pudding."

*\*You can sign up to receive the Levy's monthly updates by emailing paula.roger@maxnet.co.nz. Financial support for the Levys is being coordinated through Assembly Office. If you would like to help, you can send a donation to Global Mission, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand, PO Box 9049, Marion Square, Wellington 6141, indicating that it's for the Levys. Or you can contact Katrina Graham on (04) 381-8283 or katrina@presbyterian.org.nz to talk about other ways to give.*

By Amanda Wells Spanz



# GLOBAL MISSION

Mark Pierson



Building the new milk treatment station, brick by brick

## Church brings whole community into Malawi partnership

**Omokoroa Community Church's work in Malawi has changed its community's view of the church, says the Rev Fergus Keith.**

More than 50 people in Omokoroa, which has a population of 2700, now sponsor a child in Malawi, thanks to the church's promotion of mission trips and associated fundraising, as part of a partnership with World Vision.

"It's certainly caused a shift of attitude in our community towards our church," Fergus says.

The church has created a relationship between Omokoroa's primary school and a school in Malawi, and people who aren't part of the church but have useful skills to offer have gone on mission trips.

Omokoroa's congregation, which has about 200 members, has organised three trips to Malawi since 2006, when Fergus heard the then-chief executive of World Vision New Zealand, Helen Green, speak at a presbytery meeting about the challenges of HIV/Aids in Africa.

According to Unicef, Malawi's population of 14.8 million has a life expectancy of 53, with Aids the leading cause of death for people over 15. About a million people are infected with HIV, including 83,000 children.

In mid 2006, Fergus went on his first trip to Malawi along with a doctor from the congregation. They spent two weeks in Mikolongwe, in southern Malawi, which has been the centre of a World Vision development programme since 1999. Fergus spent a week training about 40 ministers in church leadership and HIV/Aids awareness, while Dr Neil de Wet spent a week doing some medical training.

Before the trip, Fergus had approached Omokoroa Point School about developing a relationship with Nsoni School in the project area. Gifts were sent with the mission team, and the school's student committee decided to sponsor a child on an ongoing basis.

When Fergus and Neil arrived back in New Zealand, Omokoroa Community Church held a fundraising drive that purchased 45 bicycles for the pastors in the area.

A second team went to Malawi in 2007 and included a dentist, poultry farmer, and children's ministry worker.

For each trip, the partners in Malawi produce a list of skills that they would like training in, and Omokoroa tries to match this from their community.

"We've asked them, 'would you like us just to send all the money [that the trip costs]?' They say that they want us to send money - but also that they do want us to keep coming and that they value the relationship."

To minimise the burden on their hosts, the teams don't stay in the village but instead use a hotel in the city, and pay for their own food.

A third team went in 2008, including a nurse, the principal of Omokoroa Point School, an agricultural trainer and a business coach, while Fergus took the pastors through a marriage course. He says it's "very humbling" when the pastors tell him, "we'd like you to come back because you're the only person who trains us".

Omokoroa didn't make the trip in 2009 because of the New Zealand economic downturn. There was no trip in 2010 because of the Football World Cup, which dramatically increased the costs of travel to Africa during the window of time that a mission trip is workable.

But a team will go in 2011 and another in 2013, before Omokoroa reevaluates its involvement in line with World Vision's 15-year time limit on development projects.

The church has also begun to invest in an ongoing infrastructure project that will help the area's farmers get better returns on their milk.

World Vision started a dairy farming project that has grown to 400 cows, each providing milk that families can drink and sell, as well as fertiliser.

But each farmer had to undertake a two-hour return trip to deliver their milk to a collection point, twice a day. Power at the collection point was not reliable, and if the milk was not kept cool, the farmer would receive no pay out.

So the farmers formed a collective and purchased some land at a more central location.

Omokoroa invited members of its congregation to set up an automatic payment to World Vision to pay for the building and establishment of the collection point, including a refrigerated tank, generator, lab and class room. Cutting out the middle man means the farmers get double the price for their milk.

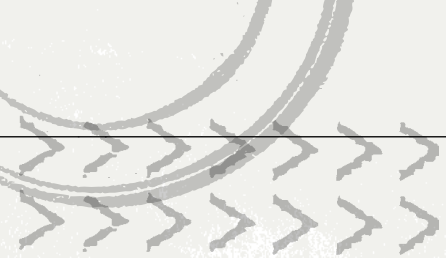
Mark Pierson, World Vision's Christian commitments manager, says the aid organisation has a handful of similar, tailor-made partnerships with churches around the country, although Omokoroa's level of community involvement makes it stand out.

While churches might not always associate World Vision with Christianity, Mark says he's working to challenge that perception.

"We are a Christian aid and development agency. But on the ground in an overseas country, we're there to do whatever needs to be done; not to proselytise or evangelise."

By Amanda Wells [Spanz](#)





## Rice Bowl Fund makes a difference in Myanmar

**St Columba @ Botany Downs and the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand have launched the Rice Bowl Fund nationwide, to help support the people of Myanmar.**

Myanmar Partnership Coordinator Angela Norton says that in the past six months, the fund has made a significant difference to the lives of people in Myanmar.

Some money has been put towards rebuilding villages in the Chin Hills that were devastated by wild fires earlier this year. Each home costs US\$1300 to build but often shelters up to a dozen members of an extended family under that one roof.

The rebuilding is a long term project, Angela says, that needs long-term funding commitments.

"What they've lost is possibly only a straw or wood house. But they did lose everything they had."

Other funding has gone to the Agape medical clinic (for which St Columba has previously raised funds for hospital beds) for a new ablutions block. Previously, the floor of the two-storey building that housed the maternity and post-surgery wards had no toilet or washing facilities.

Drip stations, used to rehydrate patients suffering from malaria, have also been funded.

As well as this humanitarian aid, some funding is designated for "mission gifts", Angela says. "We want to bless them in carrying out their calling and ministry in their community". For example, 14 motorbikes have been provided for pastors in remote areas so that they can better connect with people in their communities.

Other projects have a focus on long-term sustainability, such as the provision of water buffaloes that can return an income to families.



Wayne Martin, Howick & Pakuranga Times

**Angela Norton**

Few villages in Myanmar have a secondary school, so some congregations in these villages are looking to establish boarding houses, so that families in outlying areas can send their children to be educated.

Angela says the main focus of her role is to educate people in New Zealand about these needs. Her work is overseen by St Columba's Myanmar Oversight Group, which manages the spending of money raised in conjunction with the Presbyterian Church of Myanmar.

Angela says she's been contacted by a number of congregations around New Zealand enthusiastic about the idea of a mission partnership. "It's really started to develop momentum."

In July, Angela visited Christchurch and Timaru, speaking to presbyteries, local parishes and Association of Presbyterian Women groups about how they can engage in the Myanmar partnership.

"You don't have to be a big church to engage in mission, or always travel to Myanmar. It can be just as simple as engaging in your own community."

For example, the Timaru Presbyterian Parish has established a community garden

group, which sells produce to members of the community, with any profit going to the Rice Bowl Fund. In addition, the church's op shop has donated money for the drip stands mentioned above.

Angela is planning another trip to Myanmar late this year or early next year.

She says the change at St Columba has been noticeable since the two mission trips in February this year. "That passion has spread through our whole congregation. It's just about showing people that it's possible and that they can have a part to play."

Angela says while those who went in February were expecting to be horrified by the difficulties that people in Myanmar experience, they found their main impression was of people's friendliness and the strength of the relationships that they established.

"People over there have so much to teach us. In some ways, we're the ones that need their help."

*\*Find out more about the Rice Bowl Fund at [www.stcolumba.org.nz/rice-bowl-fund](http://www.stcolumba.org.nz/rice-bowl-fund). You can contact Angela for more information or to sign up for the regular Mingalaba email newsletter at [myanmar@stcolumba.org.nz](mailto:myanmar@stcolumba.org.nz)*

By Amanda Wells Spanz



## Yacht delivers Bibles to remote islands

**When their yacht Dayspring III foundered on a reef off Wallis Island (between Fiji and Western Samoa), Ron and Aggie Russell thought their life's work of distributing Bibles to remote Pacific islanders was over.**

They hadn't counted on the enthusiasm and energy of four former Dayspring crew, who were determined to see the yacht mission revived. Wellingtonians Chris Bryan, Mike Cornish, Colin Salisbury and Roger Bolam, who had all sailed with Ron on Dayspring III, formed the Dayspring Ministries Trust in 2008, with the intention of purchasing and operating a new mission yacht. The trust has strong Presbyterian connections, as both Mike and Colin attend Knox Presbyterian in Lower Hutt, and the Rev Doug Pa'u, Presbyterian minister at Knox St Columba, Naenae, is on the trust's board of reference.

Mike says Chris was the initial driving force as he had the strongest connections with Dayspring III. "I crewed on voyages with Ron from 2000-2005, taking Bibles to Fiji, Vanuatu and New Caledonia. Ron was a great inspiration to me," Chris says.

It took three years for the trust to be in a position to buy a new mission yacht, although things did not go smoothly. "It might sound easy, even fun, to find and buy a yacht but it was really difficult as we couldn't find a suitable vessel," Mike says. "The journey was hard and we prayed about it at Knox, asking God, 'do you want this?' because we kept coming up against brick walls. Then my mother, who was praying with us, said that we would find the right boat in Fiji, and that's just what happened. We bought the yacht Seahawk in early 2009."

Mike says the boat was purchased with the help of the Bible Society of New Zealand. "We reestablished the Dayspring Ministries' relationship with the Bible Society, and they supply us with Bibles

translated into Pacific languages. They also provided us with a \$55,000 interest-free loan to buy the boat, [while] we raised the \$100,000 required for the boat's refit from trustee loans and donations."

Chris says that because the boat is registered in Fiji, "we have to deal with some very strict and specific requirements when it comes to licences and quality of workmanship for the refit. There were so many challenges that we asked God if we were missing something, but we know that good things get tested too. We questioned ourselves on 'what we are in this for?'; we never prayed together as hard as when things went wrong," Mike agrees. "When things go wrong month after month, you wonder if maybe it's us that need to get right first. In overcoming those obstacles, we relied heavily on the support of our churches and on the Rev Doug Pa'u."

Doug says he has watched the four trustees go from being acquaintances to friends to brothers. "They caught something bigger than their local church, yet they are still doing the work of their church in another location."

When things are challenging, Chris says he thinks about the reaction they get from the islanders when the boat arrives. "There is something nostalgic for them in seeing a sailboat come into the harbour carrying the word of God". Doug adds that the "boat

reminds them of their remoteness and the degree of effort it has taken to reach them. God has not forgotten them."

Part of that huge effort Chris says is the work involved in translating the Bible into Pacific languages. "Ron was in Tokelau around 25 years ago and in June last year we were finally ready to deliver the New Testament in Tokelauan. Unfortunately we couldn't as Tokelau was closed due to fears about swine flu but we will deliver the Bibles later this year."

Dayspring's mission trips began in June 2010 and will continue until October. Visits are planned to Samoa, Lau Group, Savusavu, Lomaiviti, Suva, Vanuatu and lastly Tuvalu. An estimated 100 villages will be visited and up to 12,000 Bibles distributed.

Chris says they will need around \$60,000 for the 2010 season's costs and parishes are asked to help support the yacht mission with money and prayer.

"We hope in the future to offer people from the churches the opportunity to be more involved, perhaps as crew for a week at a time," Mike says.

*\*If you would like to support Dayspring visit their website [www.dayspring.org.nz](http://www.dayspring.org.nz) or email [info@dayspring.org.nz](mailto:info@dayspring.org.nz)*

By Angela Singer Spanz





# GLOBAL MISSION

## World Cup emphasises African disparity

**African World Cup euphoria had to be seen to be believed, says Christian World Service staffer Mandla Akhe-Dube.**

Zimbabwean-born Mandla, who lives in Christchurch, took six weeks off to witness the World Cup and catch up with friends and family in Zimbabwe.

"I knew that for me it would be a once-in-a-generation experience, and also probably the last chance to see Nelson Mandela in the public arena," says Mandla.

The contrast between the superb organisation and spirit of World Cup South Africa and the drab decay of his homeland are amongst his most vivid impressions from the trip.

"It was amazing that for an event that brought nearly 700,000 visitors to South Africa, I was still able to land and be



**CWS is helping fund conservation farming in Zimbabwe, which works well even in drought-prone areas**

through international airport checks in two minutes," he said.

The event had brought all of Africa together in spirit for a pan African moment of euphoria and satisfaction that he believes will leave a lasting legacy.

"It was a bit more than just a massive sporting event, for Africa it was a sign of maturity and growth that brought us together across the traditional divides."

The sad side of witnessing so much enthusiasm, tourism and good spirits was when he realised that probably none of the energy and spending would make it over the border into Zimbabwe.

"It would have done wonders for the comatose economy," he said.

Getting into Zimbabwe via a broken-down customs station took three hours.

A rollout of fibre optic cable was one of the few positive signs he saw in Zimbabwe, where industry is working at perhaps 10 per cent of capacity, and there is massive unemployment and poverty.

A significant drought also recently hit four out of the country's 10 provinces.

Mandla visited his old primary school to donate supplies of stationery, pencils and soccer balls, and says he was struck by the contrast with the education system he had known as a child.

"The school was just a shell; no furniture, no windows, no doors and maybe 10 per cent of the pupils with shoes or uniforms.

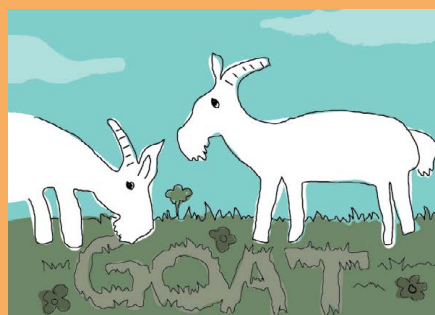
"When I left school in the 80s, everyone would have been in uniform and everything you think of when you hear the word 'school' would have been there," he said.

Mandla is keen to get other Zimbabweans in New Zealand involved in funding basics for school pupils. He is also asking New Zealanders to support CWS partner Christian Care so it can extend its innovative conservation farming initiative. This successful programme has been highlighted in the international Church campaign on the right to food.

"We can't wait for the Government, we have to try and make sure this generation gets some of the same chance we got," Mandla says.

*\*CWS is inviting parishes to take part in an international Food for Life week of action from 10 - 17 October. Details available at [www.cws.org.nz](http://www.cws.org.nz). Donations for CWS partners in Zimbabwe can be sent to PO Box 22 652, Christchurch 8061 or if you would like Mandla to speak in your parish, contact him on 0800 7473 72.*

**By Greg Jackson, CWS** Spanz



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# Family Works Services Lead the Way

Presbyterian Support offers a wide range of services and programmes under the Family Works banner. Although the services available in each of the seven PS regions are not identical, they are all based on an understanding that every family has strengths, but may need help from time to time. In providing that help, we encourage the development of strong families and the building of healthy communities. Increasingly our work is carried out in the community.

**The Nikau Centre** in Napier supports a small group of 11-14 year olds who are not in school for a range of reasons with a unique teacher and social worker partnership. To date 78 percent of these difficult students have been supported to return to education.

Collaboration is an important way to work across diverse communities and Family Works Tairāwhiti is working with the Tairāwhiti Men Against Violence and Te Whare Tu Wahine in launching the **Tauawhi Men's Centre** which provides counselling, social work and advocacy support for men along with access to a respite house. This active region also employs Youth Court Lay Advocates who support Te Koti Rangatahi, the Marae-based Youth Court.

Family Works Northern has initiated a **mobile Budgeting Service** for parents of eight Manurewa schools. The service is accessible and friendly. One satisfied client, Malvina, says "I can't thank Morganan (my budgeter) enough for his help. He has taken so much trouble and stress out of my life and given me the knowledge to be confident and disciplined with money. He is really sincere about wanting to help people get back on track and caring and compassionate about their situation too." Working with the schools is proving to be successful because help from the mobile service is available within walking distance of parents' homes, making it easy to approach and get ongoing support.

In Ashburton a **Pacific community liaison officer** and a health promoter have been appointed to work amongst the region's booming Pacific community, where diabetes is a major concern.

Several programmes are under way, mainly aimed at improving health and nutrition and promoting physical activity. Cooking demonstrations and supermarket tours have helped residents learn more about adapting favourite meals and making healthy choices. A community garden has sprung from this and Torika Patterson, the Family Works health promoter is delighted. "A lot of families come from the islands and costs are pretty high, so vegetables are the last thing they tend to buy. A lot of families also have no idea what grows in Ashburton, so this is a great way to get everyone involved", he says.

**YouthGrow**, a programme for "troubled and troublesome" young people who face barriers in entering the workforce, is going strong. This Family Works Otago programme is based at the YouthGrow Garden Centre in North Dunedin and gives young people a job, a sense of worth, strong positive peer

support, committed supervisors, training and assistance with other issues such as social work support, budgeting, addictions, and mental health diagnosis. The "real work for real pay" philosophy has been hard won from funders, but this two-way commitment to making it work has ensured that YouthGrow is viewed as a real job, not just a training scheme. The Garden Centre is open to the public and goods are available at the Otago Farmers' Market. A full range of plants, shrubs, trees, annuals, vegetables and herb plants are available. Young people are given the chance to succeed as they grow in skills. It has been said that the "grow" applies just as much to the young people as the plants they propagate and nurture.



Torika Patterson, getting the community garden underway in Ashburton. (Courtesy of the Ashburton Guardian)



Presbyterian Support

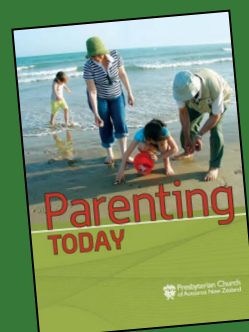
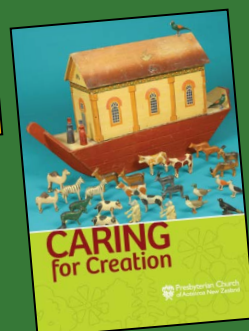
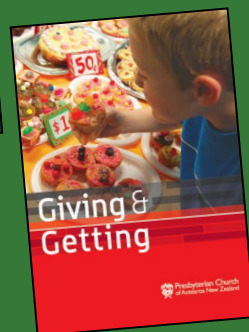
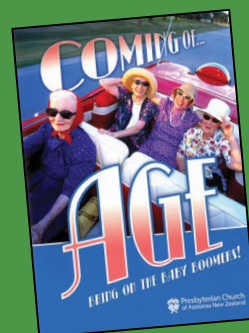
# JUSTICE FOR ALL PARISHES

Parishes will soon receive *Crime and Justice*, our latest social issues booklet. Few issues today evoke such a strong emotional response as crime and its consequences. It can create a society both anxious and mistrustful. For Christians, there is a special challenge. When faced with a regular media diet of violent crime, we can feel inadequate, threatened and unsafe and this can be difficult to reconcile with Christian teaching about love and forgiveness.

*Crime and Justice* explores how our changing communities are affected by crime; what actions we can take to keep ourselves safe and what the Christian responses to crime and justice are and could be.

*Crime and Justice* is the eighth in a series of group study booklets produced by the Presbyterian Church to encourage congregations to reflect on issues that affect our communities. Copies of the previous seven study guides *Parenting Today*, *Giving and Getting*, *Caring for Creation*, *House to Home*, *Caring for our Children*, *Connecting with Young People* and *Bring on the Baby Boomers* are also still available. Email or phone Sandra on (04) 801-6000 and us know how many free copies you would like.

All eight studies can be downloaded free from the Presbyterian Church website [www.presbyterian.org.nz/speaking-out/resources-for-speaking-out](http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/speaking-out/resources-for-speaking-out)



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