

Spanz

Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand

AUTUMN 2015, ISSUE 61

YOUTH



www.presbyterian.org.nz

COMMENT: IAVANA SEUALA

Be the Best You Can Be

Kia orana, talofa lava, malo e lelei, fakaalofa lahi atu, bula vinaka, namaste, kia ora and greetings to you all in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. My name is Iavana Carlito Seuala, and I come from Manurewa in South Auckland. I am 14 years old. I am a grandson and son of Tamaki PIPC, Glen Innes, Auckland.

Thank you Lord for this opportunity to share all that you have blessed me with.

It all started with my speech at intermediate school two years ago. It was about "Be the Best You Can Be".

In my speech, I shared about my education journey from primary school onwards, and how I took my education for granted and needed to change my attitude toward my school work.

I talked about how my teachers showed me the importance of being positive and about how they helped me to stay focused and be well-disciplined. I also talked about how they helped me receive the messages from their teachings and use what I learnt to help me be the best.

From their teachings, I wanted to listen, I wanted to learn, to read more and write more.

And most importantly of all, I started to respect my teachers, my peers, my school and my principal.

I also shared that my parents and my grandparents are the reasons why I want to be the best – I was inspired by stories about how my grandparents came to Aotearoa leaving their families behind in Samoa for a better future for their kids. I am one of those kids from South Auckland and I want to show that education is alive on the south side [of Auckland] and that I get the same educational opportunities like everyone else in New Zealand.

That speech blessed me with second place in the South Auckland Interschool Lion's Speech Competition. From there, my journey to use my talent to share with the community began:

- Last year, in February, I was approached by the Ministry of Education to be the face of the Festival of Education. It was an honour and privilege to take my tama Rev Leiite Setefano and tina Lealofi Setefano to the Festival dinner where I performed my speech dedicating it to them and their service to my family at Tamaki PIPC.
- I had my first ever plane trip to Wellington for the Festival of Education.
- I shared my speech at the Sir Peter Leitch fundraiser dinner for Kidz First where I met the Prime Minister John Key and MP the Hon Paula Bennett.
- I was the MC at the Prime Minister's Pacific Youth Awards.
- I had my second plane trip to Hawke's Bay to share my speech with three schools. I was honoured to take my papa Talamalie Seuala, my Dad and my brother with me. It was exciting for my brother because it was his first plane trip.
- I performed in the videos for the Vodafone Pasifika Music Awards 2014.
- I shared my speech at the Vodafone Events Centre for the Dr Ben Carson event.
- Introducing Dr Ben Carson at the Duffy Books fundraiser at the Langham Hotel.
- I shared my speech at a diabetes fundraiser.
- I had my first MC gig at the launch of the National Party election campaign at the Vodafone Events Centre.
- I shared my speech at the Pasifika Women Manukau Breakfast.

Watch Iavana Seuala present his speech "Be the Best You Can Be" on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/90184195>



In December 2014, Iavana Seuala compered the PM's Pacific Youth Award event. The NZ Herald reported: "...but all eyes have been on Manurewa schoolboy Iavana Seuala, 13, who has been master of ceremonies".

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MODERATOR'S MUSINGS

The Right Rev Andrew Norton contributes a regular column to *Spanz*



Place making

God is not a concept but is experienced in "place". God's activity in the world is in "place making". These are a couple of insights I have gleaned from my tours of Israel. I have not appreciated the importance of geography (place) and our experience of God. God can only be experienced in place. Our place shapes our experience of God. As I read the Bible in Israel, it is like reading a different book. I begin to notice where God's activity took place. Every action of God has a physical address. This is not "somewhere over the rainbow" but a physical location and when I locate the physicality of "God action" a whole new world of the sights, sounds, smells, touch and tastes all come alive. Washing feet, drinking water, breaking bread and walking up and down all take on new meaning.

An example of this is the dust of Israel.

"Make your home a meeting place for the wise. Sit in the dust of their feet and drink their wisdom thirstily." (Pirkei Avot 1:6)

Jesus would have been familiar with this saying from rabbinical literature, but it is only by being in Israel that you can begin to make sense of it.

At the end of each day (with summer being 36-46°C) the first thing you want to do is to wash the dust off your feet.

To sit in the dust of someone's feet is to learn from their daily walk. If you come across a wise person you will want to learn from their journey. You will want to follow in their dust. You will want to welcome them into your home.

Look into the New Testament and find examples of dust.

When Jesus told us to shake the dust from our feet of those who would not welcome us, the good news he was saying was you cannot learn from these people. There is a direct relationship between hospitality, welcome and wisdom. (Matt 10:14)

When Jesus washed the feet of his disciples (John 13) he was not only demonstrating service but was also saying, "I am willing to learn from you". How amazing is that!

When Jesus called his disciples to "come follow" he was literally saying, "Come follow in my dust".

Another feature of this climate is that you get really thirsty. To stay alive you have to drink a lot of water. Each day on our pilgrimage, I would tell everyone "drink, drink, drink!"

Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty let them come to me and drink". (John 7:37)

As much as a cold beer at the end of the day is wonderful, there is nothing that can do the job of quenching your thirst like water!

In this saying water and wisdom are given the same meaning. Without water and wisdom you will die.

In Israel you will die for the lack of water. In New Zealand we may die for the abundance of it. I say this because familiarity with our environment and our abundance can dull our senses: "As a deer longs for streams of cool water, so I long for you oh God," (Psalm 42:1) becomes an optional extra rather than a case of life and death.

As I return to Aotearoa I am confronted by a whole new set of questions.

How does the geography of this land determine and shape our experience of God?

In what ways does God act in "place" of sea, mountains, bush, plains and fault lines?

How does the church participate in God's mission of "place making" for the people of this land?

Editor's note: Andrew is planning his next pilgrimage tour of Israel for 2016.

NORTHERN YOUTH

SHARE RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS



The youth group at Greenlane Presbyterian Church baked for their local rest home and gardened.

have someone suggested by Presbyterian Support Northern."

For Anne, Project Co-op was the perfect marriage of need and supply.

"We had access to the clients, mainly through our Enliven home care service, which maximises independence by supporting older people to remain in their own homes. And, on the other side of the fence, we also had a ready supply of young people willing and able to help. It made sense to put the two together."

While the participants focused mainly on activities that the elderly were unable to do for themselves – such as cleaning and gardening – Anne says there was also a strong emphasis on simple things like baking for them and stopping to chat.

"A lot of the youth had never done things like gardening before and for many, this was also their first time experiencing the sense of well-being and self-esteem you get from working as part of a team and helping others. It was good for them to feel this."

For many, Project Co-op was also a lesson in having compassion and empathy for others.

"Many of our youth come from affluent families and have never seen poverty or hardship. Being a part of Project Co-op has helped give them a better understanding of what happens in other people's lives and a bigger picture of the world. They had fun, plus they also blessed someone."

Anne co-ordinated the recipient side of the equation, contacting elderly clients

The term "Random Acts of Kindness" is believed to have been coined in 1982 when Anne Herbert, an American editor, scribbled the following words on a placemat in a San Francisco restaurant: "Practice random kindness and senseless acts of beauty".

It's unlikely that the young people from the Presbyterian Support Northern (PSN) region have ever heard of this story. But that didn't stop them from creating an entire initiative around random acts of kindness, many of which were aimed at the region's elderly residents.

According to Anne Overton, PSN community advocate, the initiative was named Project Co-op and had its genesis in 2011.

"It all started with a group of our youth who came together to do random acts of kindness for older people in our community who needed it," says Anne.

"It was pretty simple stuff – some gardening, rug doctoring carpets and cleaning kitchens. But the point of difference was that the youth then joined together to have a meal after their work. It was hugely successful, but hard to co-ordinate as some groups finished before others and so on, so we decided to drop

the meal and continue with the acts of kindness."

And so was born Project Co-op, a community outreach project run alongside PSN, where youth groups from the Northern Presbytery were encouraged to serve in their community.

But, says Emma Payne, youth co-ordinator for Northern Presbytery, the 2014 iteration came with a twist.

"It was decided that each youth group could now choose their preferred serving project within their community," says Emma. "Encouraging youth groups to choose a serving project allowed them to use their strengths and talents for others, have the opportunity to meet the needs specific to their community, and bond together by serving God as a youth group."

And so from late July through to the end of August 2014, Project Co-op saw youth groups serving everyone from elderly people and members of their church congregation to young mothers in a variety of ways, including baking and cooking meals, washing windows, cleaning and gardening.

"If a youth group didn't have a person or organisation in mind, they were able to



The St Aidan's Presbyterian Church youth showed their appreciation to members of their congregation by baking for them.

to ask what they needed doing. She then visited the person to assess the scale of the job and to determine how many people would be needed, what equipment was required and how long the job would take.

"That helped me build the relationship with them but also managed the safety aspect because we could tell the older person exactly who would be calling them to set up the work."

Both Anne and Emma were thrilled to see so many youth groups take up the challenge and amazed at the range of activities undertaken. These included:

- Massey Presbyterian Church's youth group channelling their inner Nigella/Jamie by cooking from scratch a number of lasagne dinners for families in their church.
- The youth group at St Andrew's Community Presbyterian Church cleaning the windows for an elderly woman in Otahuhu, with the boys taking charge of the external windows and the girls seeing to the inside of the windows. After all their hard work, the group then helped out at their church's op-shop for the afternoon.
- The St Andrew's Presbyterian Church youth group warming kitchen and hearts by baking delicious treats for five families in the community, with each family receiving a large plate of biscuits and muffins which were delivered to their home.
- The youth group and Sunday School kids from Mairangi and Castor Bays Presbyterian Church undertaking a variety of different serving projects for people both in their church and in the community, including clearing shelves and sweeping leaves from the driveway after a major storm. They also did a beach clean up at Mairangi Bay as well as packing shelves and food parcels and collecting cans for the PSN food bank.
- The youth group at Greenlane Presbyterian Church baking for their local rest home and gardening for a lady in Remuera. So successful was the latter that every term the youth group visits this particular woman to do a general tidy up outside her house.
- The St David's in the Fields youth group also flexed their baking muscle by baking and delivering biscuits, muffins and slices to two families and people in their church.
- The youth group at St Aidan's Presbyterian Church did the same, showing their appreciation to members of their congregation by baking a variety of different treats for them.
- The youth at Glendowie Presbyterian Church continued serving in their community at Glen Innes Primary School where, every Wednesday morning for 45 minutes, they run remedial maths and conversational English groups. As part of Project Co-op, they added activities which allowed them

to use their imagination and creativity and, importantly, to have fun!

For their part, the youth involved praised the initiative, adding they got a lot out of it.

"Our group enjoyed the serving project," says Sandy Hsiao from the Auckland Taiwanese Presbyterian Church. "We put in a lot of effort to do a good job and I'm proud of what the group accomplished. We would be happy to participate in projects like this in the future."

Thomas Loho from St Andrew's Presbyterian Church in Symonds Street said: "Project Co-op has been a great opportunity for us to give back to the community and share God's love in Auckland!"

There was also a positive response from youth leaders with Pauline Gulliver from the Mairangi and Castor Bays Presbyterian Church youth group saying: "Because of this project I managed to make new friends, get to know other members of our church better, share meals and understand the plight of others in our community. Thanks Project Co-op!"

Andrea Palmer from St Aidan's Presbyterian Church in Northcote summed up the experience for many when she said: "It's always much more fun working with others".

Anne says she's very much looking forward to seeing Project Co-op in full swing again next year.

Sharon Stephenson Spanz



St Andrews College, Christchurch, students take part in twice-yearly service trips to Cambodia where they volunteer with six organisations.

Serving others part of St Andrew's student curriculum

"The greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves... I am among you as one who serves."
(Luke 22: 26-27)

It's certainly what students at St Andrews College in Christchurch are finding, says Paul Morrow, College chaplain and head of religious studies.

"A lot of our students come from affluent families, so they don't tend to want for a lot. Getting involved in community service gives them a fantastic perspective of others less than fortunate than themselves and how they can serve those people," says Paul.

In fact, a key philosophy of the 1300-member school is that the gift is in the giving.

"We want our students to understand and experience the sense of well-being you get from giving more than you take, for helping those who need it."

The last five years have seen a groundswell of support for St Andrew's community service programme, to the point where senior students are now required to complete 30 hours of community service over two years as part of their senior college diploma. It can be for any cause that helps others, from feeding the homeless

to helping animals at the SPCA, but it must be in the students' own time.

One of the most popular community service initiatives are the twice-yearly service trips of 16 students to Cambodia (Siem Reap and Phnom Phen) in April and December.

Paul says students spend 16 days in Cambodia working with six organisations, including an eye clinic in Siem Riep.

"One of the key organisations we partner with is Hagar, which works to get children and women out of the sex trade and help them find independent, sustainable work that gives them an income and dignity. We also work with Partnership Cambodia, which recognises that education is the key to getting out of poverty and raises money to help young Cambodians attend university."

The students also work with Big Brother, Big Sister Cambodia, to mentor youth who would otherwise end up on the street, as well as visiting a slum school to assist with activities.

"When the first group visits in April, they go to a local village to help with the Easter service, and the December group helps out with the village's Christmas service. It's another practical way students can help the locals."

All Year 12 students who embark upon the Cambodian visits are required to attend the College's Kapa Haka group, which enables them to take a little of New Zealand's culture and heritage to their visitors.

"Research shows that people don't want volunteers to sweep in, build something or paint a wall and then disappear. They want to build a relationship with us, for us to share our culture with them and to build strong bonds. After four years of working with these organisations, we're starting to see the fruits of our labour."



Paul says the two “life changing” Cambodian trips are currently oversubscribed, with more students wanting to do them than there are places. Students are required to pay for their own flights, with many parents stumping up half the cost, and students fundraising the rest.

Students also have to fundraise between US\$200-\$300 each, which is then distributed among the six Cambodian organisations the College works with.

“So many of the students have told me how much these trips have changed their lives, and the lives of others. One of the most profound was three years ago, when a student was given US\$1000 by his father to give to someone who needed it. Our group got talking to a Cambodian guy who worked at a restaurant who said he earned US\$8 a day for an eight hour shift. He wanted to go to university but it cost US\$460 a year and any savings he had he’d used up buying a motorbike to get to work.

“Our student ended up giving him the thousand dollars, plus his family in Christchurch agreed to fund this guy through university, if he passed. Later, our student and another person raised \$5000 off their own backs to send to Cambodia, by running the Christchurch Marathon. They both said how much the trip had changed their view of the world.”

But St Andrew’s community service isn’t just about getting on a plane to do good. Students once again took part in World Vision’s 40 Hour Famine, raising a massive \$18,000 for Malawi, which was this year’s focus country. It’s the most the school has ever raised and tops the previous year’s 40 Hour Famine tally by about \$9,000.

“All the Year 10 students took part in the famine as part of their Te Waka programme and for our efforts, we were awarded the World Vision Platinum Award for being in the top five percent of schools in New Zealand.”

Food is also the focus of another community service initiative – but this time, giving it, not doing without it.

Since the beginning of the year, Year 11 students have provided food for homeless and underprivileged people at Christchurch’s Latimer Square every Sunday morning, giving not only their time but also bringing and preparing food for distribution.

“I’ve heard so many students say that they would only go once, but once they attended, they were so fired up, they’ve come back again and again.”

Rev Sharon Ross Ensor, who supports and resources the special character (the Christian ethos and Presbyterian/Reformed tradition) of the 13 Presbyterian-connected schools in her role as the director of the Presbyterian Church Schools’ Resource Office, echoes Paul’s sentiments regarding community service at St Andrew’s College.

“By encouraging students to engage in community service, the College is helping them to look beyond themselves and their own community of knowledge and open their eyes to the world,” says Sharon.

The programmes of St Andrew’s and many of the other church schools’ community service programmes also sit well within the Christian context of selflessness and giving to others, she adds.

“The effect on the students is amazing, particularly those who take part in overseas trips, such as St Andrew’s visits to Cambodia. For many of them, it’s the first time they’ve seen such material deprivation and it often re-orders their priorities. Paul and the team at St Andrew’s are doing an amazing job to help these students take their place in the world.”

Sharon Stephenson Spanz

Interns make a difference



Max Westropp of Dunedin's Knox Presbyterian Church is a Global Mission intern at the Korea Support Centre for Foreign Workers. He holds a souvenir from the Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), a strip of land that serves as a buffer zone between North and South Korea.

A variety of internships are available throughout the Church. We look at just a few taking place during 2015.

Presbyterian Youth Ministry internships

The PYM Bachelor of Youth Ministry internship has been run for three years, and aims to ensure that young people in the Church are supported by youth ministry practitioners who are well trained theologically and practically.

On completion of the internship, which takes three years to finish, interns are awarded a Bachelor of Ministry and a Diploma in Presbyterian Youth Ministry.

Presbyterian Church national youth director Matt Chamberlin says, "I think the real strength of this internship is the additional support and community that we provide. Participants get to engage in additional learning experiences together - like a bicultural visit to our Church's marae in Ohope - and build up a real sense of community."

Past intern, Conrad Demmocks, says, "Having the support of other PYM interns throughout the country has been particularly epic. Not a week goes by without being in contact with at least one other, discussing our ministries and studies or just chatting about life."

Madeline Enright, who has completed the internship, decided to get involved because she was studying theology and wanted a practical and challenging way to utilise what she was learning. "My teenage years included a significant amount of change, and I wanted others to know the importance of Christ, especially in a time of change."

To find out more about the PYM internship, visit www.pym.org.nz

Global Mission intern

During his time at the Republic of Korea (PROK) migrant centre in Seoul, Max Westropp has seen how much difference one person can make.

The Dunedin Knox Presbyterian Church member was given the opportunity to travel overseas when a Global Mission Internship became available in May.

Max is working alongside Dr Haesung-Kim, the founding minister of the Korea Support Centre for Foreign Workers, which assists migrant workers with Korean language skills, medical services, and workers' advocacy.

For Max, witnessing how God works in this part of the world is eye opening. "It has inspired me to see what positive change I can make before my time is up on this earth."

Max is being pushed out of his comfort zone by some of the food and cultural differences, and advises future interns to travel with an open mind. "If you have any pre-dispositions or pre-judgements, your internship will not work out so well for you," he advises.

Thanks to Max's positive experiences in Korea, Global Mission coordinator the Rev Phil King hopes to make the Global Mission internship available to other young people.

Kids Friendly connections

During her ministry training, the Rev Silvia Purdie became involved in an informal internship where she spent a month working with Jill Kayser, the Church's national Kids Friendly coach.

After completing the internship, Sylvia was excited by what she had learned. "I believe that an internship is a marvellous opportunity to get involved 'boots and

all' in a different ministry context. It is a far more effective (and more biblical!) model of ministry training than sitting in a room doing seminars."

In 2013, Henriette Wentink from Westminster College at Cambridge University joined the Kids Friendly team for six weeks as an intern.

Her internship was a huge success and inspired Jill to begin an internship which would be available to Presbyterians who have an interest in sharing the Kids Friendly vision.

This year the first official Kids Friendly internship will be undertaken by John Schoneveld, a ministry student at the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership (KCML).

Waitara's effective disciples

Another intern programme, the Christian Leadership and Mission internship, is offered by Knox Presbyterian Church in Waitara.

The internship was the vision of Knox children, youth and families co-ordinator Jennie McCullough's late husband, and been running for three years. It aims to develop young people to become effective disciples of Christ.

Past intern, Lisa Parsons says, "By taking part in this internship I had the opportunity to grow in my faith and experience many different things.

"My highlight was travelling to different places around New Zealand to help other young people learn about Christ and leadership. This included running a Transformers camp in Ngaruawahia."

For more information on the Christian Leadership and Mission internship see www.waitara.org.nz

Lucy Mullinger Spanz

SAMSTOCK

GOING STRONG AFTER

14 YEARS

Samstock Music Festival began 14 years ago as a fundraiser for a mission trip, and judging by its popularity this year, the event is sure to continue for many more years.

Held in Mosgiel in the South Island, the youth festival includes sports events, tournaments, talent quests and an excellent line up of musical acts.

For those who can sing a good tune, recite a poem or show off a funny party trick, fans can also perform on the main stage.

Through the wide variety of workshops, festival-goers also have the opportunity to learn more about their faith and discuss the big issues that young people face each day.

Since 2011, Eddy Davis-Rae and Josua Chignell have organised the successful festival which Eddy says is all about providing a platform for young people to learn about God as well as hang out with each other and listen to great music.

"We hope to encourage young people in their faith and provide a setting where they can feel safe and excited about God's work," says Eddy.

Josua agrees, saying that there is something for everyone at the event. "One person may never leave the stage and appreciate every single artist who plays over the weekend. Another person might not see any music, and just hang out in the village and play games and meet new people all weekend long. What really makes Samstock special is that each person can get something different out of the festival."

Young people from churches of all denominations throughout Otago and

Christchurch attend and many churches come back year-after-year to participate in the fun.

This year, Presbyterian youth leader Jeremy Selfe took 30 young people from Youth East Taieri – something which has been a bit of a tradition for as long as he can remember.

"In my mind, this is a great opportunity to get our group together and away for the weekend, where we can zone in on forming good quality relationships with our young people over two full days.

"It was awesome to sit around in the tents and chat or sing a bit of worship together, or have a game of volleyball. I really enjoy how it brings a group together and you can have good quality conversations with young people that don't often happen back in your normal environment.

"We also include quite a few young people from non-church backgrounds, so it was great to see them check out the main stage and hear the Christian message."

Jeremy's stand-out experience of Samstock was Christian Hip Hop/Rock band from Wellington - Rapture Ruckus.

"After attending 10 Parachute festivals, it was great to see the band on a small stage in a more intimate environment."

Although Jeremy has attended Parachute and other bigger musical festivals, he appreciated the smaller, more personal quality of Samstock.

"It might mean we don't get the huge band line-ups of other music festivals but you don't feel like you are just one among



Enjoying the Samstock festival: Tim Jones, Tim Coates, Amber Clark, Jeremy Selfe and Rodger Larson-Hewitt. Photo by Erin Roy.

thousands. You feel noticed!"

According to Luke Benton of Leith Valley Presbyterian Church, who took along 18 young people, the festival was a "meaningful weekend camping with my group and enjoying some great music. Most of us were volunteers, which is a great way for them to show the example of Christian community".

He believes that Samstock reflects the perfect example of what the Christian church was intended to be: "There is a great group of people running the event and doing an excellent job of putting together a quality experience."

As regular fans of the Samstock Festival, Luke and Jeremy truly believe that this event should be on every youth group's radar.

Luke says: "I have been to Christian music festivals all around the world and the quality of Samstock is right up there with the rest. It is smaller, but that creates a very neat atmosphere and is something more people should experience".

If you would like to bring a youth group to the Samstock Festival next year, visit their Facebook page www.facebook.com/samstockfest for more details.

Lucy Mullinger Spanz

Presbyterian making a difference for south Auckland kids

It's not easy finding a slot in Steve Farrelly's diary.

The genial 61-year-old, who received an Auckland Local Heroes Medal in 2014, is one of the busiest men you'll ever meet.

Take for example a recent Wednesday at 1pm: Steve has already criss-crossed Auckland delivering a tonne of rice to food banks, worked the phones to help raise the \$24,000 needed to host 600 people for Christmas lunch and manned the toaster at the Breakfast Club, a social enterprise he set up in 2010 which now feeds around 40 hungry three to 14-year-olds every week day at Randwick Park, Glen Innes Primary, St Pious X and Glen Taylor Schools.

St Columba Presbyterian Church at Botany, where Steve is a long-time member, is one of the key supporters of the Breakfast Club which has since morphed into a network offering everything from parenting skills to sports coaching.

"I saw a need and decided to do something about it," says the gentle giant, in what you quickly realise is his customary unassuming manner.

To find out how the former policeman became one of Auckland's Local Heroes, you need look no further than the Bible.

"My wife was at a conference in Denton, Texas when the speaker, Dutch Sheets, quoted the Passage of Jesus: 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to preach to the poor'. It started me thinking about what could really be done and I knew that eventually I would get involved."

Ironically, a week later back at St Columba, Steve heard the same words in his own church.

"It was my 'A-ha' moment. I thought, I've now heard this same message twice in a week, it must be a sign. I knew I needed to do something to help, but I just needed to find the right people."

It didn't take long for those people to present themselves: Steve was helping a friend redistribute books when he realised that the students at Randwick Park School, a decile-one school in Manurewa, were grappling with a major problem.



Milo Kids Hamiora Samuels [9], Sonny Pawa [11] and Heperone Kiao [11] enjoy a break with Steve Farrelly before starting the morning at Randwick Park School in Manurewa. Photo: www.newspix.co.nz

"Many of the kids were coming to school hungry and others were being kept at home because their parents couldn't afford to send them to school with lunch. The school had been thinking about a breakfast club for a while so I put my hand up."

Sanitarium and Fonterra had previously sponsored supplies two days a week through the Kickstart Breakfasts programme, but Steve and his wife Brenda soon realised five days' worth of food was needed and so funded the other three days out of their own pockets.

Eventually they knocked on enough doors that other organisations stepped into the breach.

"Steve is a very persuasive person and is hard to say no to," laughs the Moderator, the Right Rev Andrew Norton.

A strong motivator was research showing that kids who have breakfast learn better, says Andrew.

"Steve also understood that kids who come to school for breakfast are less likely to be truant."

But his crusade wasn't just about filling empty bellies. Steve also worked alongside the schools' social workers to address issues students were facing at home.

Steve's work now also encompasses the provision of school items such as uniforms and stationery, community support for families including appliances

and furniture, clothing op-shop, food bank and a sports academy, which focuses on the natural strengths of children in the sporting arena.

Steve is rightly proud of the success of all these initiatives but is particularly pleased at how quickly the sport academy fired the imaginations of the participants – in 2013, for example, 40 kids applied for 30 positions and a year later, that number had leaped to 87 applications for the same 30 slots. Steve is also pleased at the support they've received from everyone from the Auckland Blues and Vodafone Warriors to the Breakers, Silver Ferns and Les Mill gyms, as well as neighbouring Saint Kentigern College that offered coaching support from their rugby and netball teams.

"Saint Kent's have offered so much to our kids who might not otherwise have access to facilities and equipment and mentoring services."

It's a partnership that's obviously working: one of Steve's charges has recently been granted a Saint Kentigern College scholarship.

"We've only been going two years and already the sports academy has opened up such a great opportunity for this 16-year-old. He's an extraordinary rugby player. He's a credit to his Samoan heritage and to his parents in the way they've raised him."

Sharon Stephenson **Spanz**

Asian women's lunch lifts spirit, builds friendship

What started as a social gathering of Korean women friends on a wintry weekday in Dunedin last year has evolved into bringing more Asian women into the church.

Hannah Park has been married for 27 years to Mornington Presbyterian's Asian Minister, John (Jae-Sun) Park. She is a self-employed hairdresser who meets many people through her work, but still felt something was missing in her life.

"Last winter it was especially cold for me. My daughter had left home for a job in Auckland," Hannah says. "I discovered my friends were in similar situations to mine so I invited a few Korean friends over, made my home warm, and roasted sweet potatoes in the fireplace."

Hannah opened her house every Wednesday and the word soon spread among Dunedin's Asian community, which currently numbers around 6,000 and is set to double by 2021.

The Wednesday lunches are Hannah's "baby" and she settled on the name Happy Day.

"I told my friends we should call it the senior ladies centre but they were strongly against it saying they were still young," she says. "So we named it Happy Day... Most of the time we laugh loudly. Our depressed feelings have been swept away."

For the first few weeks of the lunches, Hannah and a Korean friend demonstrated Korean cooking, making Kimchi stew, vegetable leaf wrap and hand-torn noodle soup.

"I felt like we were Korean ambassadors," Hannah says.

Women began bringing their own national dishes – from Taiwan, Japan, Malaysia, China and Thailand – and it soon became an international banquet. The topics of conversation were equally global.

"We felt like we were in a public square to lift our voices for the presence of our own opinions," says Hannah. "Talking about global issues gave an opportunity to share Christianity to non-Christians. A Christian and a Muslim friend prayed together hand-in-hand calling dear God for a serious problem."

The women were careful to talk only about their own nation, especially if there was national conflict or war with any of the other nationalities that were present. What they discovered, however, was that emphasising the benefits of their own culture resulted in a depressed mood.

"We discerned we could not stay in our past or own culture – we are finally here in New Zealand," she reflects. "Focusing on our present life, out of the nations, has connected us in the unique and the sameness."



Hannah Park is joined by ladies from Dunedin's Asian community every week for fellowship and lunch. The women immigrated to New Zealand from Korea, Taiwan, Japan, Malaysia, China and Thailand.

Speaking English is another unifying factor.

"Imagine that primary, intermediate and high school students are in the same class," Hannah explains. "The better ones encourage the weak to speak out. The weak learn listening from fluent ones. We hardly use 'pardon'; instead we try to understand each other using our sense of the feeling."

The result of six months of international friendship has been a gradual shift for some women out of their marginalised relationship as "foreigners".

Happy Day is one of many initiatives Mornington Presbyterian has to welcome migrant groups. The church has voluntary English teachers and English classes to facilitate church involvement. John translates the Sunday sermons into Korean, and for him church life is also a way to feel more involved with Kiwi society.

Senior minister the Very Rev Peter Cheyne is aware the church's migrant strategy needs further action.

"We've done a lot of talking and haven't made much tangible progress," he says, "so it's great to see grassroots, organic activities springing up that provide a low-key introduction to a Christian context."

The Presbyterian Church's national Asian Mission and Ministries coordinator the Rev Kyoung-Gyun Han calls Happy Day "a miracle".

"It's such an effective and wonderful outreach programme to those who need Christian sharing," he says. "God works through this gathering of people and they enjoy Hannah's heart, how she encourages them to enjoy a happy day."

Rev Han visits Dunedin four times a year as part of his "travelling ministry", to share his wisdom and support congregations with understanding Church regulations.

Happy Days continues to evolve and the women who attend are now reading a children's Bible.

"I was drawn by a thought that happiness comes from our friendship," reflects Hannah, "and extreme happiness comes from doing God's work. I hope Happy Day will become a stepping stone for bringing more people into the church."

Jade Reidy Spanz



Waikato Hospital ecumenical chaplain Rev Dr Jan Calvert talks to patient Charlene Foong.

Life as a hospital chaplain

Ask people about the phrase “being there” and they might mention the 1979 movie starring Peter Sellers and Shirley MacLaine.

But to a group of dedicated Kiwi hospital chaplains, the term means something else entirely.

“The primary motto of our chaplains is ‘being there,’” says Rev Sandra Wright-Taylor, ecumenical chaplain at Christchurch’s Princess Margaret Hospital.

“Hospital chaplains often work under a great deal of pressure, dealing with trauma, death and major crises on a daily basis. They are there to listen, support, encourage, offer spiritual care and sit alongside people of all faiths – or no faith at all – to pray, to help people find meaning and to provide comfort. This includes patients, their families and staff.”

Sandra is part of the Interchurch Council for Hospital Chaplaincy (ICHC), a partnership with the Ministry of Health, which sees accredited healthcare chaplains – and trained volunteer chaplain assistants – visit hospitals and hospices around the country to support those going through physically and emotionally challenging situations. She currently leads and supervises a team of eight volunteer chaplaincy assistants.

Sandra says chaplaincy is very different from parish ministry.

“I have been a parish minister and at the moment I also work as a minister to children and families at St Marks Presbyterian Avonhead, yet the hospital is where I sense a very deep call to ministry.

“I enjoy being alongside people at the best of times, the worst of times and all times in between. It’s about meeting the spiritual, emotional and pastoral needs of people, bringing comfort and hope, giving patients a sense of control over relevant life circumstances and reducing the impact of stress and trauma.

“Loss is the major theme I work with, whether it’s loss of memory, independence, mobility or loss attributed to going into residential, hospital care or death. Patients receiving the best clinical care may need to reflect on and work through their story and as a chaplain, I get to listen to people’s fears, hopes, pain and joy.”

Often, she adds, there is a deep search about the meaning of life and death, along with the “Who am I?” and “Who and where is God?” questions.

Sandra’s remit extends to five hospitals within the Canterbury District Health Board and as chaplains are available 24/7, she is also part of the on-call after-hours and weekend roster.

“I may be required to sit alongside a dying patient and their family, a mother who has just given birth to a baby who has died, or other urgent cases.”

One of Sandra’s roles is to conduct blessings, whether that’s the closing of a ward or the launch of a new area or piece of equipment.

“Blessing rooms after someone has died is a real privilege, filled with God moments as I pray for that person who died and their family and give thanks for the amazing care provided by so many staff, from the tea ladies to the medical teams, and prepare the room to welcome the one who will come into that space.”

Someone who also knows all about the rigours of chaplain work is Rev Dr Jan Calvert. One of three ecumenical chaplains at Waikato Hospital, Jan is part of a team including two Catholic chaplains, a Maori chaplain and 26 volunteer chaplaincy assistants, which together helps almost 30,000 patients, family and staff through hardship, trauma and loss each year.

“It’s probably the most challenging and rewarding work I’ve ever done,” says Jan.

“It’s a real privilege to meet such a range of people and to be able to support them in what they’re going through. For so many people, it’s someone who they can talk to who will listen to them.”

Jan relocated to Hamilton six years ago to be closer to family and, after time spent with family members in hospital following serious illnesses and car accidents, decided to pursue her dream of becoming a hospital chaplain.

“One of the greatest gifts a chaplain can offer is to listen attentively in a way that makes people feel they have been heard, understood and accepted.”

Jan is also called upon to lead Sunday worship, which is tailored to suit the healthcare setting and is pastoral in nature, as well as supporting staff through times of illness and stress and participating in a variety of prayers and blessings.

As with many organisations, demand for the ICHC’s services has increased (particularly following the Canterbury earthquakes) but funding has not. It’s why the ICHC is constantly in fundraising mode, says Jan.

Sharon Stephenson **Spanz**



Auckland church wins right to remove old building

After more than a year of legal wrangling with Auckland Council, the Homestead Community Church, Point Chevalier, finally won the right to have resource consent processed which allowed them to remove a rundown and unsafe church building from its property.

The church's journey began with a report they commissioned that found its Homestead building – a late 1800s villa – used as a Community Centre by around 20,000 people a year, had an extensive borer infestation in its piles, decay damage, a lack of insulation and was suspected to contain asbestos. It was also a long way from meeting the new standards for building strength, and the cost of refurbishment was prohibitive, says Homestead Community Church's minister, the Rev Sandra Warner.

After consultation with the community, the decision to rebuild rather than refurbish was made, and the church consulted with Auckland Council about what was required to remove the old Homestead building and build a replacement facility. The parish was advised to obtain consent to work around two protected magnolia trees located near the Homestead building.

In September 2013 the parish applied for resource consent to undertake work within the drip line of the protected trees. This was issued in October, but consent was unceremoniously revoked by Auckland Council in November 2013.

Workers were literally in the process of placing the building onto a trailer when the instruction to cease was given.

The interruption came as an immense and unpleasant surprise to Sandra, who understood that the church had done everything it needed to remove the building.

Council argued that the removal was in breach of a pre-1944 building demolition control rule in the proposed Auckland Unitary Plan, which came into effect on 30 September 2013. This is despite issuing the resource consent in October 2013 and Auckland Council also advising that "there are no new relevant matters that require consideration under the proposed Auckland Unitary Plan".

Sandra says that in 2007 the Council had assessed the building as not worthy of heritage listing. "We were advised by Council to get a consent to work near the trees, which we got. And the resource consent issued by the Council in October stated that

The Homestead Community Church's villa was on a trailer and in the process of removal when Auckland Council unexpectedly called a halt to the work. Photo: newspix.co.nz

there are no new issues in the Unitary Plan for us to consider. We had no reason to believe that there were any barriers to removal."

Despite official complaints to the Council about their handling of the matter, the church found no remedy and after a further unfavourable decision by the Council's Hearings Committee requiring notification of building removal, the parish was forced to take Auckland Council to the High Court.

A judicial review of the matter found that Auckland Council's decision to require notification was unreasonable and should therefore be set aside.

Of the decision, Sandra said: "We are very thankful that it has been acknowledged that we did all we could to seek and follow advice and obtain all necessary consents prior to the removal of our old building.

"We are very grateful to all our supporters who have stood by us. Particularly the support of our legal and planning advisors, the building removal company that has been storing the old building, the Albert-Eden Local Board, the many community organisations and locals who support the project."

While heartened that the decision has gone their way, defending the Church's position in court has come at a cost says Sandra.

"We are saddened that Court action was necessary. The past year has been hard for our small church and our local community. We have limited resources and this building issue has unnecessarily taken up a great deal of our time, energy and money."

With this issue now behind them, the parish is looking forward to putting its efforts into the redevelopment plans for the new building, which will enable the congregation to continue its long-time mission of serving the Point Chevalier community.

"The Homestead rebuild is about more than just a building. It is also about community, about well-being and hope. Our congregation has been praying that the new building will be able to be completed so that our community identity in this place can be restored," says Sandra.

The replacement building will look almost the same from the outside, which will ensure the building is in keeping with the character of the surrounding neighbourhood. It will also be a much safer building for all to use and is much anticipated by the Point Chevalier community says Sandra.

Jose Reader [Spanz](#)

Big Changes to Charities Act and Financial Reporting Standards

A range of resources have been developed to help churches transition to the new financial reporting requirements that come into effect in April this year.

The new reporting standards mean that for the first time there are government requirements for financial and non-financial reporting for churches.

The Government allows significant tax breaks to registered charities, and better visibility over activities and accounts is behind the legislative changes to Charities and Financial Reporting Acts, explains Brendan Sweeney, the Presbyterian Church's Finance Manager.

For the first time financial and activity reports will have to be posted annually on the Charities Services website.

Reporting requirements vary based on the level of expenditure of the church entity (in this sense the church entity includes all trusts and other bodies which are under the control of the church), and almost without exception, Presbyterian and Uniting parishes fall in either tier 3 or tier 4 reporting, (see chart).

As well as more robust accounting standards, Brendan says one of the big changes for parishes to get their heads around is how to account for non-financial transactions like goods or assets that have been donated, and volunteer efforts – all of which must be accounted for under the new financial reporting standards.

"Volunteer efforts, for instance, must be captured. Parishes need to consider how to treat and reflect in their annual accounts an estimate of, for example, the hours of work provided by volunteers," says Brendan.

The Church has invested in a range of resources to support parishes to transition to the new reporting standards – the most significant of which is a church-specific finance system based on popular accounting package Xero.

"The specialised financial accounting system has been commissioned by us to

meet the needs our parishes, and around 30 parishes have already signed up," says Brendan.

"Xero for Parishes has been developed to be as easy-to-use as possible. It's been designed so that a non-accountant can produce annual reports to the required standard. Feedback from church users of Xero for Parishes has been very positive.

"At around \$38 per month for an average sized parish, the solution is very cost effective. It will save a lot of volunteer time through automated processes and provides for easier transition when there is a change in treasurer."

Xero for Parishes automates the production of parish balance sheet and profit and loss to the standard required to comply with the new reporting standards.

As well as the new financial software, there is a recommended payroll package and a comprehensive range of printed resources to support parishes. General advice is available from Assembly Office, and a range of specialist advisors have been organised to assist parishes with set-up of their new systems (some of which charge for their services).

These tools, which parishes are encouraged to consider implementing, are being demonstrated at workshops around the country in February and March, where Brendan is taking parish leaders through the new reporting requirements and what they mean for

parishes. The workshops also showcase changes to Charities Act reporting and registration which are coming into effect shortly.

Non-Financial Reporting Requirements

For the first time, churches will be required to lodge non-financial information in the form of two reports – Entity Information and Statement of Service Performance.

Much of this work is straightforward and will not have to be repeated after the initial set-up of reports, explains Brendan.

The Entity Report is essentially a summary of key facts about the parish – parish name, charities registration number, main source of income and other details, while the Statement of Service Performance largely replicates what is already collected and reported in the church's membership statistics.

Charities Act Registration Changes

Previously, the Presbyterian Church has had a blanket charities registration for all parishes. From 30 June 2015, parishes will be required to individually register and report annual financial and non-financial data to the Charities Commission in order to maintain charitable status.

Jose Reader Spanz

NEW REPORTING STANDARDS

TIER 4	<p>Operating expenditure less than \$125,000 pa <i>Requires simple format cash accounting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Statement of Receipts and Payments » Statement of Resources and Commitments » Notes to Accounts <p>Non-financial reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Entity Information » Statement of Service Performance
TIER 3	<p>Operating expenditure over \$125,000, and less than \$2m pa <i>Requires simple format accrual accounting</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Statement of Financial Performance » Statement of Financial Position » Statement of Cash Flow » Statement of Accounting Policies » Analysis and Notes <p>Non-financial reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Entity Information » Statement of Service Performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » While Tier 3 and 4 churches will not have a statutory requirement to be audited, the PCANZ requirements for an audit or independent financial review remains. » Full explanation of reporting requirements and examples of each report type are available from Assembly Office. Email info@assemblyoffice.org.nz 	

Hope finds inspiration

Last year, the Rev Hamish Galloway of Hope Presbyterian Church in Christchurch attended the annual conference of the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) in Salt Lake City, Utah. What he learned there has helped inform his own church's redevelopment project.

"I found the conference hugely beneficial and enjoyable," Hamish says. "The CNU movement promotes walkable, mixed-use neighbourhood development, sustainable communities and healthier living conditions in towns and cities. The emphasis has a biblical ring to it and it's a movement the church needs to take note of!"

Hamish found the breakout group at the conference that looked at the place of the church in new urban developments particularly useful. It was hosted by Chris Elisara, a director of the World Evangelical Alliance and a member of CNU.

"In good urban design the church is a focal point of the town square or community centre," says Hamish. "New Urbanism likes the way traditional neighbourhoods devote unique sites to civic buildings, including churches. Churches need to be seen, not hidden away. They can provide a sense of built heart and soul to a neighbourhood."

New Urbanism also stresses that churches should have their doors open seven days a week in community-facing activity. Ideally, the church should be within walking distance for those who attend.

"With declining congregations walkability is becoming less likely and may not be achievable for us, so the important thing is accessibility by various means," says Hamish. "Centrality to the heart of communities is achievable though. As we rationalise and rebuild we should choose our sites very carefully and continue to find ways to set up new churches in central and visible places."

Hamish did lots of networking at the event and established useful contacts, including Chris Elisara who comes to New Zealand often as he runs an environmental school out of Kaikoura. Hamish says, "Chris is a valuable ongoing resource person for the Presbyterian Church and for New Zealand society generally. He has a heart for the church's place in good urban design, and is a live-wire who loves to connect people."

Of course, urban renewal and urban design is big news in Christchurch in the wake of the devastating earthquakes. Hamish admits that previously he had not really participated in Christchurch's urban design debate outside the church arena. "I now realise that was wrong," he says. "I came away from the conference with renewed energy to enter the debate, to encourage Christians in that debate and to cajole others to get involved!"

"There is a message to preach here," he adds. "It is a grounded message about the ecology of the built environment. As Christians we have not had much voice here, but now we need to work for towns and cities that are built and rebuilt with beauty, neighbourliness and wellbeing in mind."



The Rev Hamish Galloway of Hope Presbyterian Church.

New Urbanism likes the way traditional neighbourhoods devote unique sites to civic buildings, including churches. Churches need to be seen, not hidden away...

Following Christchurch's earthquakes the elders of Hope Church had discerned a need driven by population growth in West Melton and Rolleston coupled with growth of mission and ministry activities at Hornby and the growth of the church's mission at Sano Diyo girls' home in India. A redevelopment project was initiated as a response.

Last month, four architects from Visioneering studios in the USA visited Hope to work on concept planning for the projects at Hornby, Rolleston and West Melton. "It was a great process involving key stakeholders in each place," says Hamish. "Plans were unveiled at the end of their visit, and these are the basis of ongoing discussion with Visioneering about the final concepts we'll take to the congregation for their approval."

Hamish attended the conference at the request of and with funding from PressGo, the project established by the Presbyterian Church with the vision that every church or presbytery committed to a growth project would receive the resources it needs. Since its establishment in 2008 PressGo has funded 14 projects and invested a total of \$1.6 million in church growth projects. It recently repositioned itself away from a focus on providing grants to a broader vision of resourcing and equipping mission.

Kate Davidson [Spanz](#)

Moderator completes quest to 'revive the flame'



The Very Rev Ray Coster (right) who was in Geneva for the WCC Central Committee is pictured with Schulamit Kriener of Germany and Rev Kam Cheon Po of Hong Kong walking a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace.

Over the last two years the Very Rev Ray Coster traversed New Zealand several times in his role as the Church's Moderator.

He travelled for special church events and official meetings and to touch base with a cross-section of Presbyterians working in and beyond the church.

As well as listening, offering support, and thanks, Ray was on a quest.

"I wanted to inspire and encourage the Church in the culture of mission," says Ray, who handed over the mantle of Moderator to the Rt Rev Andrew Norton at the Presbyterian Church's General Assembly on 4 October.

"Churches, like many institutions, spend endless hours talking about 'role' – who does what, what they are called and how much they are paid," says Ray. "And we talk ad nauseam about 'structure' – committees, rules and regulations, buildings, property, strategy."

"In my mind all of this has very little to do with the mission of the church. 'Role' and 'structure' must serve culture. Culture will eat strategy for breakfast every morning!

"Culture is the heartbeat. It's what people feel when they walk into a church. It's the deep beliefs and behaviour, values and actions."

Which is why, as Moderator, Ray's key emphasis in his work with churches was on helping them think about their culture and its impact on mission. He saw this as an integral part of 'Reviving the Flame', his moderatorial theme that aimed to help church people adopt a resurrection mindset, reverse the trend of falling church numbers, and take the church out of the wilderness and into a significant place in each community.

"I was very encouraged by the response in many places," says Ray, "and a number of people closely identified with what I was saying. I did not find any negative reaction, but people may simply have been being polite to the Moderator!"

As Moderator, Ray's goal was to "pastor the pastors, minister to the ministers and give leadership to our leaders.

"I think that our ministers are our greatest human resource in the church. They have been called, trained, resourced and commissioned to lead our Church in mission."

"Of course they do not work as individuals but as part of the team," says Ray. "But expectations are often high and the work not always easy. Sometimes it can be lonely. I wanted to spend time with as many as I could, thank them for what they are doing... and let them know that the Church they serve appreciates them."

Ray is convinced however that the call of God for most Presbyterians is not in the church but in the market place. He believes 'ministry' – "living as a Christian, showing the ethics and values of Christ to others, caring for people, caring for creation, is the call of God on all Presbyterian people regardless of where they work."

During his travels, he met Presbyterians across the workforce – in Parliament, local and regional councils, in health and education, in the Police force, the media, and elsewhere.

"Many of them believe God has called them to their profession, their work in the market-place just as much as a minister is called to serve God in a local parish. Not many of them would use the term 'ministry' but that is exactly what I see them doing."

He believes ministers should empower and encourage, support and bless church members as they live their Christian life in the market place.

"I simply wanted to bless, affirm and encourage them in their work and thank them on behalf of the Presbyterian Church for the work that they are doing for God in our communities."

¹ Ray produced a four-part Moderator's Bible study on the theme of 'Reviving the Flame'. It formed a basis for discussion at the General Assembly in 2012. It is available on the Church website http://presbyterian.org.nz/sites/default/files/ga12/F_5883_PRC_BiblyStudy_Lores.pdf

Paul Linwood, the General Manager of the Ashburton Hotel, was one of those he visited. Paul was bowled over by the visit from the Church's Moderator.

"I really appreciated it that Ray – the head of the Presbyterian Church – made the effort to come to Ashburton and talk with and thank me," he says. Although Paul hadn't thought about his work as 'ministry', the suggestion "struck a chord. It's made me think more about what I am doing in my work."

Paul is an active member of St Paul's Presbyterian Church – an elder, a member of the parish committee, and an occasional lay preacher.

Dunedin public law and environmental law barrister and elder of Knox Church, Dunedin, Dr Royden Somerville QC, also appreciated Ray taking the time to visit him in his work place. Discussion touched on the relationship of the church with educational and social support organisations, and "the role of eco-theology in his environmental work". Dr Somerville said "It was good that the Moderator was considering how the Church could be more actively involved in work places".

So what now for the former Moderator, in addition to his day job as senior minister of St Andrew's Church in Mount Maunganui, that is?

Call it serendipity, but the end of Ray's two-year stint as Moderator has dovetailed rather neatly into the start of an eight-year term on the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches (WCC), as representative for New Zealand's member churches – the Anglicans, Methodists and Presbyterians.

Ray was appointed to the Central Committee at the WCC's 10th Assembly in Busan, Korea, in November 2013 and attended its first meeting in July 2014.

Ray is looking forward to building on the connections forged with his global counterparts during his time as Moderator, as well as meeting with his Presbyterian colleagues and Anglican and Methodist counterparts to discuss the issues they want raised and report on what is discussed.

He describes the World Council of Churches as a voice for those without a voice on issues of justice and peace. It wrestles with the big issues of our time – poverty and Inequality, migration and human trafficking, climate change, economic justice, proxy conflicts and wars, human rights.

And it's large. Assemblies are held every eight years and some 3000 delegates from 345 member churches across 110 countries attended the most recent in Busan. The central committee itself numbers 154.

The size doesn't faze Ray. In fact, as a fan of the ecumenical approach on both the domestic and global front, he'd gladly see the council extend membership beyond the Orthodox and Protestant Christian churches to include the Roman Catholic and Pentecostal/Independent churches as well.

"Jesus called his followers and prayed for his followers to 'be one'," says Ray. "This working together in unity is a powerful witness to the Gospel. Together we can always do far more. The needs of humanity are far more than any one church can achieve on its own."

Joan Begg Spanz



Palmerston-Dunback (St James) Presbyterian Church, Otago seeks full-time Minister

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- » **Share our vision to reach our community for Christ, inspire us in outreach & become part of the community.**
- » **Be a team builder and encourager.**
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For more information about parish and community see:-

www.stjamespalmerston.org.nz/ and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palmerston,_New_Zealand



CPT's Big Pot of Money – If only...

People get the strangest ideas. One we hear quite frequently is that the Church Property Trustees are sitting on a great pot of money that could assist church building projects or be otherwise used by the wider Church.

The reality is that the Trustees are just that – they hold money “on trust” for others.

The Trustees hold the Beneficiary Fund for ministers – both active and retired. They hold the PIF deposits entrusted by Congregations and Presbyteries and bequests (including two working farms) that can only be used in accordance with the wills in which the bequests were made.

All property where the Trustees are named as the registered owner on the title, is held “in trust” for the respective parish as part of the wider Church. The Trustees can do only what is allowed by the Presbyterian Church Property Act 1885 and by the Book of Order.

All trust money held by the Trustees is separately accounted for and audited. They have no legal right to use any of it themselves or to transfer money from one trust to another.

The only money the Trustees control for themselves is a relatively small “float” built up from various fees levied. This funds the running of the CPT office and the salaries of our staff.

A freely available big pot of money – if only!

Enquires for the Trustees may be made to:

The Executive Officer, Kos van Lier
Presbyterian Property Trustees
PO Box 9049, Wellington 6141

THEOLOGYMATTERS

Leadership, Transformation and Gospel

Leadership is a word we hear a lot today, whether in sport, politics, business or even the church. The latter is interesting because for much of recent history there was considerable suspicion of leadership, especially for Presbyterians. Indeed much of our polity was set up to stop one “man” having too much power.

As research and writing on leadership began to appear from the 1970s, some of the most significant came from James MacGregor Burns who contrasted two types of leaders. The *transactional leader* discerns the needs of followers, and performs leadership as a set of expectations to be met, a series of jobs to be done. Leadership is then a transaction between the expectations of the followers and the meeting of those by the leader. The *transformational leader* seeks to do more than managing the felt needs of followers. The transformational leader refuses to be trapped or driven by conventional expectations and rather calls people to a higher purpose, so transforming the organisation or community and its members, redefining their mission and vision. As one writer puts it, “the transactional leader works within the organisational culture as it exists; the transformational leader changes the organisational culture.”

My doctoral research looking at why churches in New Zealand have declined so dramatically since the 1960s found it was primarily because massive social and cultural changes occurred over that period and most churches continued doing business as usual, without adapting to the changes: transactional leadership, “maintaining the normal flow of operations”, “keeping the ship afloat”.

Many writers have produced lists contrasting the characteristics of western societies prior to the 1960s with those that had emerged by the 1990s. The challenge we still face is that many of our churches and leaders, have continued to operate as if they were still operating in a world that has long since disappeared for most. And so there is now an almost complete absence of people aged under -50 in many of our churches.

Sociologist Nancy Ammerman did a large study looking at how different congregations had fared in this period of rapid change. She notes that where the congregations failed to “adapt” to their changing communities, it was often because they lacked pastoral leadership, and the pastors themselves often confessed to a lack of necessary leadership skills to face the challenges the congregations were experiencing. Some were unable and others unwilling “to undertake the difficult (and often conflictual work) of dislodging old routines.”

This would suggest that if we are going to be the transformational leaders required for the Church today, whether we are ministers or lay leaders, we need to engage with some of the many helpful resources and programmes that are available to help us develop the understandings and skills needed. A key part of our role at the Knox Centre is to help train and resource leaders who can do this.

So where does this all fit in with the Gospel? Isn't it all just social science and management stuff? What has theology got to do with it? I would argue that being a transformative leader means believing that God is always making all things new, even us, and that change, conversion, transformation is what the Gospel calls us to, and the gift of faith leads us in. It is the story of God's people from the call of Abraham, through the ministry of Jesus and on into the ministry of the apostles. Jesus so radically *transformed* the community of God's people that we now talk about the “old covenant” and the “new covenant”. Paul in Romans 12 calls us to “not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind”, and 1 Corinthians 3 tells us that that the ministry we are exercising in the “new covenant” is such that “all of us are being *transformed*... from one degree of glory into another”.

William Willimon writes that “from my observation, far too many pastors are too willing to settle into present arrangements, too willing to manage the church as it is, rather than stretch themselves and risk envisioning the church as God intends it to be”.

Our calling as leaders today, whether ordained or lay, is not simply to meet the needs of people as they are, but rather through our ministry open them both individually and as God's new community to being transformed as they hear the word of God in the Scriptures.

Rev Dr Kevin Ward, acting Principal of Knox centre for Ministry and Leadership, Dunedin.



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GOING GLOBAL INDIA 2015

November 17 – 3 December 2015

Applications are now open for next year's Going Global Mission trip to India in November. This will be a great opportunity to experience the sights and sounds of India, and learn about the long and deep mission history the PCANZ has there.

Numbers will be limited so get your application in early.

Download the application pack from the Church website
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Familiar face is new Master of Knox College Dunedin

The Very Rev Dr Graham Redding, former Principal of the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership, is the new Master of Knox College Dunedin.

Graham is moving only 50 metres for his new position – “from one side of the quadrangle to the other”.

He arrives not only with a body of academic work, financial and management experience and an extensive pastoral background but with plenty of involvement with Knox College under his belt – as well as an early stint as warden at Selwyn College.

His main aim in his new position is “to develop the college to be much more than a hall of residence but a community in which personal growth occurs – so that while academic goals are achieved, community life provides opportunities for service and all-round personal development”.

He also wants to provide a period of stability so that recent changes can bed in, and to develop the culture of the college – “which includes the worshipping life but also the student culture. I want to strengthen chapel life, both musically and liturgically, and continue to develop the pastoral care system”.

Even before he arrived, he and Maurie Jackways of Salmond College had discussed the prospect of introducing a leadership development programme at both colleges.

Graham previously did an accountancy degree and worked as an auditor in a chartered accountancy firm in Auckland.



The Very Rev Dr Graham Redding outside Knox College, Dunedin.

He arrived in Dunedin in 1985 to study theology. In his final year he was encouraged to look at ordained ministry as a vocation, and did an extra year's training at Knox College to prepare for this new direction.

Then he spent three years as warden at Selwyn College before spending nine years in parish ministry in Auckland followed by six in Wellington. He has been Principal of the Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership for the past eight years.

He sees all the elements of this background providing relevant experiences that will inform and shape his work at Knox College.

The accounting provided the tools of financial and organisational management; his pastoral years gave him experience of life-in-community, and his time at Selwyn College means he has experienced the running of a residential college – ironically the one that is the traditional cultural and sporting rival of the one he is cheering for now.

The principalship just next door has cemented an already close relationship – as he is not only a former student of Knox College but has been on the governing body for the past eight years and is a Fellow of the college.

He and his wife Jenni are also the parents of former Knox resident, Oliver, who now teaches at Scots College in Wellington. Their second son, Jordan, is training for ministry in the Presbyterian Church, and their daughter Melanie is studying law and arts at the University of Otago.

“It's an advantage that our three children are, or have been, Otago students and are in approximately the same age range as many of the residents,” says Graham.

He believes life is harder for students than when he was one himself. “The high cost of tertiary study and student loan schemes put today's students under financial pressure – with no surety of employment in their chosen field. The social pressures are also more acute, including issues around the availability of alcohol and peer pressure involved.

“But there are also increased opportunities. Many of our young people come from schools where they have been given huge opportunities for growth. They look at offshore options early on in their lives – for study and work. And unlike my generation, I don't think they feel so obliged to come back. They see themselves as global citizens and they think globally.”

Graham had his own later-in-life stint of OE when he did a doctorate through London University. This resulted in his 2003 book *Prayer and the Priesthood of Christ in the Reformed Tradition* and forms the basis of a liturgical theology paper he will teach this year at the University of Otago.

As he crosses the quadrangle, he leaves the Knox Centre in good heart. “After eight years of establishing the training programmes, my work is largely done, and it is poised to go on to the next stage under new leadership.”

Jane Tolerton Spanz

Thesis examines ethnic relations in the Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand upholds a rich theological imperative for the unity in diversity of the church, says the Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph – pointing to verses such as Galatians 3:28: ‘There is neither Jew nor Gentile... for you are all one in Christ Jesus’.

“But how do we actually live out this Christian relationship in terms of ethnic relations in the church?” he asks. And that’s what his thesis, titled *Ethnic Flames of the Burning Bush: an exploration of ethnic relations in congregations of the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand*, explores.

“My research was a work in practical theology examining the tension between the stated ecclesiological understandings of the Presbyterian Church – encouraging its members to live out a diverse life together – and the reality of its congregations.

“As source material Tokerau used oral interviews and written surveys with both parishioners and ministers.

What he discovered was that in New Zealand, as elsewhere, “people prefer to organise their religious life along ethnic/cultural lines. Presbyterian congregations tend to be ethnically homogenous rather than multicultural and they are usually ethnically matched with their minister”.

“Ethnically diverse congregations may be richer in terms of colour, ethnicity, culture and ecclesiological expression but there are very few of them.”

Tokerau was born in the Cook Islands and arrived in South Auckland when he was five. He went to the Otara Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church whose congregation, he notes, was ‘Pan Pacific’ rather than confined to one island group.

When he was called to ministry he and his wife Tangi, also from the Cook Islands, already had three of their five children and he was working at the Department of Social Welfare.

“It was a big change for us, coming to Dunedin from Auckland, but I saw it as a very positive move,” he says. “When your sense of call is strong, you just focus on that.”

Tokerau graduated with an Honours degree in theology and was offered a post-graduate scholarship. But when his “home church” called him to be a minister there, he went.

Five years later he returned to take up the scholarship for a Master of Theology degree, staying on for his PhD and a half-time job as a minister at First Church of Otago.

Tokerau looked at four broad ethnic groups, European, Maori, Pacific Islander and Asian, for his thesis.

“I found that although the four ethnic groups were represented in the populations of the areas in which they were located, their representations in congregations were much higher. So, Presbyterian congregations are more ethnically homogeneous than the areas they are in. And people are prepared to cross geographical boundaries to worship with others like themselves.



Rev Dr Tokerau Joseph and wife Tangi.

“In spite of the church’s efforts to encourage cross-cultural engagement, the ethnocentric tendency of its members has affirmed homogeneity. For example, Pacific Islander churches that were initially established as Pan-Pacific communities are increasingly ‘island specific’ in character, and Asian congregations have remained largely distinctive in terms of national identities such as Korean or Chinese or Indonesian.

“I don’t think that having ethnically homogeneous churches is a bad or wrong thing. But I don’t think that is all we can be.

“The recent decision at General Assembly to be a cross-cultural church is a very important one.

“The challenge is: how do we live that out?

“We shouldn’t just rely on having ethnic representation on committees at the national level. Cross-cultural engagement has to filter down so it becomes part of our reality as congregations.

“Cross-cultural engagements can raise awareness of our biases and prejudices that usually incline us to others like ourselves. It requires honesty, courage and love to reach out to others from whom we are different. This is difficult, which is one of the reasons why diverse congregations are so few in number.

“I took the unconsumed burning bush, the emblem of the Presbyterian Church, for my thesis title because it is a sign of the mystery of God that speaks of hope to God’s people, and conveys the complexities and richness of ethnic relations in the Church, seeking not to consume but to enhance its witness of unity in diversity.”

Jane Tolerton Spanz

Don Ikitoelagi appointed director of CWM funded centre for Pacific Island theology

The Pacific Island Theological Reflection Centre will be a turangawaewae for Pasifika Presbyterians, says Don, who is the Pacific Islands Synod Presbytery clerk and will carry out his new job half time.

The two year fixed-term role has been made possible by funding from CWM which was given for this purpose some years ago.

"The centre will be 'a place to stand' where we can promote Christian faith in the Presbyterian Church from the point of view of Pacific Islanders."

A lot of good work has already been done but much has not been re-evaluated or recorded, says Don. "We have not moved fast enough from the oral tradition. The Reflection Centre is a base from which we will be able to encourage people to write more and read more and document our Pasifika theology here and now in Aotearoa – which is quite distinct from that in the Pacific Islands.

"Some of the community here continues to operate as a diaspora – strangers in a strange land. But we have a growing number of people who were not raised in the islands. They are New Zealand born and they identify as Kiwis with a strong heritage from the islands and they are beginning to articulate this identity.

"So in terms of theology, there is not just a theology of displaced people but of new communities that have risen out of the migration."

Don says he will work closely with the Church's Knox Centre for Ministry and Leadership in Dunedin.

A number of excellent theses and dissertations on theology in the Pacific have been produced by University of Otago students as well as "syntheses" produced in the School of Ministry days, but this work has often not been followed up.

"I want shoulder tap the authors and ask them what their experience has been in ministry, and ask what they think now – on reflection. I want to stretch them into theological thinking. This will help them in their cross-cultural ministry."

As ministers retire Pacific communities need new candidates for ministry, he says. "Some of our ethnic groups are in dire straits. We are looking at a decline in the next five years so part of the Church's role is to look at a succession plan to nurture leadership – whether ordained or lay. One of the new centre's roles will be to work in the training of local ministers, working hand in hand with the training in Dunedin."

Don was raised in Nuie where his father was a Congregational minister. He went to the University of the South Pacific in Fiji, studying towards a Bachelor of Science degree, and worked for the Inland Revenue Department after arriving in New Zealand, gaining a Diploma in Accountancy.

He and his wife Ere both trained as ministers. Ere gained a Bachelor of

Theology and a postgraduate diploma and Don added a Masters to his first degree.

They then shared in a joint ministry at Wanganui's West United Presbyterian Church – "two for the price of one," as Don puts it. "We had to undo the thinking that she was a youth leader and only for the women. We changed the roles around.

"Working together as two ministers we are clear that we support each other but we know the boundaries of that support. We don't mess up the other by being over-critical or force each other to be involved in our area."

The couple have raised 10 children, some of them adopted, and Ere is now minister at Knox Presbyterian Church in Parnell.

Don became co-director of the Mission Resource Team, and then went to Melbourne from 2006 as Director for Cross-cultural Mission and Ministry.

In 2011 he was appointed as the Presbyterian Church's Pasifika Misionare – "that's our name for a mission enabler". His specific focus was on youth, "relooking at ministries among young people, from traditional to contemporary, and offering some alternatives. I thoroughly enjoyed that," says Don.

He has started meeting with Pasifika communities in the church to discuss the role of the Pacific Island Theological Reflection Centre.

"We have caught the dream but now the question is how do we work together to formulate the centre," he says.

"There's an element of ensuring people buy in so that it is not just for theological thinkers but is church based and grounded in the Presbyterian Church's Pasifika community."

Jane Tolerton Spanz

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Neighbours Day is a piece of cake 2015

"Getting to know your neighbours is a piece of cake¹," says Presbyterian Support Northern's Community Advocate, Anne Overton.

Anne, who is also Prescare project manager, means that literally and figuratively.

She is calling on church members in her region to pool their baking skills and create cakes to hand deliver, slice-by-slice, to their neighbours for Neighbours Day Aotearoa on 28 and 29 March.

Neighbours Day is an initiative that has taken off across the world over the last decade. It was introduced to Auckland by Lifewise and the Takapuna Methodist Church in 2009, and by 2011 events were being run nationwide on the last weekend of March.

Its aim is to turn streets into neighbourhoods and strangers into friends.

As well as being an effective and inexpensive way to get to know a neighbour,

¹ "Getting to know your neighbour is a piece of cake" is a neighbour event first run by Te Raranga, Christchurch in 2014.

the Auckland initiative is an ideal opportunity for the more experienced in the church to help younger members develop their culinary acumen.

It's just one of the many diverse neighbourly acts of kindness being planned by parishes and Presbyterian Support for this year's Neighbours Day.

At St Peter's Presbyterian Church in Ellerslie, Auckland, the congregation is hosting a BBQ. As well as dropping off invites in neighbourhood letterboxes, church members are encouraged to invite their own neighbours to the bring-something-to-share BBQ on 28 March.

Pancakes are the food of choice for Wadestown Presbyterian Church in Wellington. That's not surprising, given the congregation is celebrating a little earlier – on 17 February – to coincide with Shrove Tuesday. They're combining forces with neighbouring St Luke's

Anglican Church (with some local council funding) to put on a carnival in the Wadestown Plunket Park.

Further south, pooches are the draw-card. Carolyn Sims, a community worker at Flagstaff Community Church in Dunedin, hopes to get a coffee cart, dog groomer and vet, along with dog owners, for a Neighbours Day get-together at the local dog walkers' park.

Neighbours of East Taieri Church will be treated to a continuous afternoon tea, which will provide the background for mingling between the church and its community. There will be a family focus for the event with activities for children.

How can you make the most of Neighbours Day? Find out what your church and/or local community are planning or start up your own event. You could:

- Share baking or home or parish-grown produce
- Host a progressive dinner party
- Start a neighbourhood book club, walking group, or regular movie night
- Organise a meet your neighbours BBQ or street party
- Organise a games afternoon in the local park

For more ideas and resources check out www.presbyterian.org.nz/for-ministers/prescare/neighbors-day

Joan Begg Spaz

A movement of people building community in Auckland's City Centre

We're making the city centre a place where community can flourish through relationships between residents, visitors, and anyone with a creative idea for what they want to see happening here for themselves and for others.

If you'd like to be a part of Splice check out what we're up to on facebook.com/Splice2014. We're quickly becoming a platform for creative locals to see their dream projects through. If you'd like this to be you get in touch!

Splicers come in all shapes, sizes, orientations, abilities, backgrounds, faiths, and every other identity imaginable!

Sign up for our mailing list by sending your name in an email to info@splice.org.nz

Splice
Courage Compassion Community

New Coordinator for Rice Bowl Mission

The Rice Bowl Mission in Myanmar is now full steam ahead after two significant breakthroughs.

One is the appointment of new coordinator Joanne Wieland, after a gap of six months since Angela Norton left the position. The other is that transmitting money to Myanmar is now much easier.

Four new projects are also up and running.

A bookshop in Phai Synod and a variety shop in Falan Synod are two small-scale but important income-generating projects, Joanne says. "They will help both the church community and the wider community, employing local people and cycling the profits back into the local community and its people."

In the Lairam Synod a manse is under construction, the previous church building having become decrepit.

"Again, there is a strong community element," says Joanne. "The manse will become a place for pastoral care and events but also for wider community use. Local people are doing the physical building of the manse, so this creates employment."

The Rice Bowl Mission, which is based at St Columba@Botany in Auckland, has a strong relationship with the Tahan Theological College, providing ongoing financial support for both administration and teaching funds.

Partnership is at the heart of the Mission's kaupapa – which is why the job appealed to Joanne, who is thrilled to have a development job she can run from her own home town.

She previously did an internship at TEARFund NZ in their education and advocacy department.

Before that she added an Honours degree in Development Studies to her University of Auckland under-graduate degree in Psychology and Anthropology.

"I did a dissertation on holistic development and partnership with a company based in India. I became aware of the positivity that can come from



Joanne Wieland

genuine partnerships across continents and am passionate about putting them into practice.

"I was looking for a job to do in the development field. The Rice Bowl position popped up, and I could see that partnership was at the heart of it – the foundation.

"Over time, Rice Bowl has built relationships with the people – rather than saying, 'This is what you need.'"

"Synod representatives make the decisions, but these are based on those made by the local people about what is important to them. That's how I got interested in it – because of the structure. That partnership aspect came through really strongly, and my research is all to do with that. So it was a very good opportunity for me and one in which I can directly build on my previous research and knowledge."

Joanne moved to Auckland from Scotland as a child when her father was appointed to a position at Carey Baptist College.

She has not been to Myanmar but expects to go in May for a round table discussion with other development organisations.

She also plans to lead a group to Myanmar in late 2015 or early 2016 – following on from earlier trips in which women and young people have worked on specific projects with a teaching or craft focus – "depending on the need at the time".

Meanwhile, high on her agenda is developing the profile of the Rice Bowl Mission and support for it among parishes.

"I strongly believe that when people become aware of what is going on in the world they want to be a part of the change.

"The Rice Bowl Mission is a Presbyterian Church initiative. It is a small but very important contribution and it would be good to see people becoming more invested in it. Even just raising the issue in conversations and knowing what's going on is a contribution to raising the profile.

"Myanmar has gone through quite a shift in the past five years – from being under a military junta to being a more open country.

"From a development perspective we have to make sure we are not taking away from the local people. There's the approach of 'let's send over a team and do something.' But it makes much more sense to develop strong partnerships and empower local people.

"It's not just that we want to give to them, but we have got lots to receive from them too."

Sign up to the free Rice Bowl Mission newsletter, Mingalaba through Rice Bowl's website: www.ricebowlmission.org.nz

Jane Tolerton Spanz

Global Mission welcomes Vanuatu Volunteers

A new wave of volunteers for Global Mission has just headed into the humid monsoon season in Vanuatu.

For some, like Gloria and Neville Jones of Blenheim, the sprawling archipelago is already like a second home. For others, the experience of serving the Church in a tropical Pacific nation will be a step into the unknown. Everyone agrees, however, that the decision to go was all about timing.

"It all fell into place with a feeling of peace and excitement," says Gloria. "We've been doing short-term mission since 2007 and this calling to serve long-term feels like the right thing to do."

Gloria is a dental assistant and is based in Port Vila at the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (PVC) health clinic, undertaking dental education. For the local Ni-Van people, personal hygiene, including teeth, is one of the main health challenges - along with smoking, diet and boils.

Husband Neville is also in Port Vila, teaching at a local Bible School. The couple hopes to continue the relationships with Ni-Van seasonal workers and their families they have built up over six years as pastoral carers for these men. They've been busy improving their Bislama fluency, sorting out their house and assisting short-term mission teams with practical details. They also expect to be called on to travel out to other islands during their two-year stint.

Responding to local need is central to how Global Mission works, says Global Mission coordinator the Rev Phil King.

"Although each of the three couples emerged out of their own sense of calling," he says, "their placements came firmly from needs identified on the ground in Vanuatu."

Graeme and Maebry Reid are living and working at a high school in Onesua, an



Gloria and Neville Jones of Blenheim with Seth, a Vanuatu seasonal worker they assisted by helping to raise money for an operation he needed.

hour from Port Vila. They both completed NZQA accredited TESOL courses in Christchurch before departing for six months. Alongside teacher aiding, the Reids expect to be pitching in with childcare, kitchen, library and grounds work, and possibly evangelical mission.

The couple met and married in their 60s, after a lifetime of service to their communities and raising children. While her children were teenagers, Maebry responded to a long-held feeling of being called, and travelled with Servants in Asia's Discovery Team to a slum area in Calcutta. That journey planted a seed.

"You end up with so many questions about life, poverty and justice - more than you went with," she remarks. "I laid those questions on my heart and left them there for years, until now."

Graeme was a lay pastor for 25 years in Spreydon, where he developed community services, before transferring recently to St Margaret's in Bishopdale, Christchurch, where he is a church member. "I've always had an interest in crossing borders," he says. "Myanmar was mentioned but we're both knocking 70 and I have diabetes. We preferred somewhere closer."

Aucklanders Shirley and Don Anton have replaced Roger and Paula Levy and are living on campus at the Talua Ministry Training Centre in South Santo. They will serve on the staff for up to two years. The centre offers a Diploma of Theology, Diploma of Mission and Bachelor of Ministries programmes.

Shirley finished full-time teaching a few years ago and spent two weeks at the end of 2013 relief teaching at the centre in

the Foundation class. Then everything changed.

"The Spirit must have been working," says Shirley. "My husband quit his job and decided he wanted to join me in mission work."

At Talua, change is the flavour of 2015; even the principal is new. Ni-Vans run the centre and the ex-pats support indigenous lecturers, who since 1986 have been training church leaders in various denominations and evangelists for isolated island villages.

"We walk alongside the students and staff sharing skills," Shirley says. "That's really important."

Shirley had prepared a range of teaching materials adapted to the local context. How the couples themselves will be moulded by new experiences remains to be seen.

"I believe anyone stepping out of a New Zealand culture into a Pacific way of life will be changed by the experience," says Neville.

Gloria agrees. "I have a love for these people and feel I can be a blessing to them just being me. God is going to use me here."

The Church provides free accommodation and the volunteers pay all other expenses during their time with Global Mission. Pastoral care and oversight are also provided. To find out more about Global Mission, see www.presbyterian.org.nz/national-ministries/global-mission

Jade Reidy Spanz

Special Project to support Vulnerable Fishing Communities

If the media want to interview someone about ending global poverty, the southern coast of India would be a good place to look – the people living between the land and sea have been working hard to survive in tough circumstances.

Ten years after the Indian Ocean tsunami took loved ones and livelihoods these coastal people are becoming stronger in the face of large-scale development that is undermining their way of life.

This year's Presbyterian Women and the Methodist Women's Fellowship Special Project is raising funds to help the hundreds of thousands of fisher folk displaced by the tsunami forge a better future for themselves.

Funds raised by the Special Project will enable the work of Neythal, a Christian World Service partner. Neythal, one of a few local groups that have stayed with the people since the tsunami, has broadened its programme to support the fisher folk improve family income and have some say in their future.

The fierce tsunami waves took away people and belongings, but it was the government that said they had to move at least 500 metres inland, away from the coast where they have lived for as long as people can remember. Some resettled without problems, but many more lost tiny businesses or day jobs and were left destitute, and promises of government compensation for displacement and loss of income have not eventuated.

Getting out of poverty can be as simple as buying an icebox to store fish for sale, or as expensive as taking a legal case to the environment court. The fisher folk who process and market fish as well as mend nets and boats, know the path out of poverty is tied up with access to the sea.



Malathi speaks at a meeting about a community-owned well that is in danger of salinization due to sand mining activities.

According to Gandimathi, Neythal's director, the government is diluting environmental legislation to allow foreign trawlers into coastal waters, construction of massive power plants, large-scale sand mining and ship breaking operations, more shrimp farms and new tourist developments.

With each new operation, land is fenced blocking fisher folk from the coast. With soil erosion and pollution already a problem, sand mining and shrimp farming are causing extensive harm to the coast.

Malathi is one of a number of women leaders who, with Neythal's help, are advocating for her people. She was elected president of Thillaivilagam Panchayat (council). While often ignored by larger political interests, Malathi with the support of her husband, is determined to stand up for the 7,400 people who live in its eight fishing hamlets. She is fronting the council decision to withdraw the sand mining license from a local landowner who is now taking the Panchayat to court.

Cutting down coconut trees to enable more sand to be sold has greatly increased local erosion and community-owned wells and local agriculture are in danger from increased salinization. The Panchayat is also trying to find a solution to effluent from the 154 shrimp farms operating within their boundaries, which is damaging waterways, mangrove forests and agricultural land.

They have submitted petitions to government, organised hunger strikes and public protests, and filed litigations

against these practices – all to no avail. Now with Neythal's legal help they are hoping for more success. Christchurch's Charles Manning, former Environment Commissioner and member of Sumner Uniting is offering advice and support.

Neythal is standing up for more than half a million people living on Tamil Nadu's coast and helping fishing communities, women workers and local panchayats learn from each other. Although many cannot read or write and have few resources, they don't want to be ignored. Neythal's legal and organising skills are protecting livelihoods and achieving legal victories to stave off some threats.

At the core of Neythal's work are local women's sanghams (associations) advocating for communitywide interests. Some organise campaigns against alcohol consumption and violence against women, or for community services like public water supplies and street lighting. Through local microcredit schemes they support each other to set up new businesses to sell fish further inland or street stalls. Working this close to the margin is not for the faint-hearted, and like all people they are entitled to fair treatment and fundamental human rights.

By supporting Presbyterian and Methodist women in this year's Special Project, you can help Neythal make sure fisher folk have a say in their own future and improve their life prospects. It is a challenge they should not face alone.

Would you like more *Sexual Ethics*?

The latest Church social issues guide, *Sexual Ethics*, was recently sent to all parishes. More free copies are available.



Sexual Ethics



Presbyterian Church
of Aotearoa New Zealand

Sexual Ethics examines many issues: How are we to remain relevant without jettisoning Scripture? What makes marriage, a marriage? How do we respond to the fact that living together without getting married is the new “normal” for many New Zealand couples? How are the more explicit images common in today’s media impacting on relationships and families?

This study guide examines these questions and many more in the context of the Bible, history, and today’s world. The guide provides the opportunity for readers to return to the Bible and think more deeply about how they have engaged with questions around sexual ethics to date.

To order free printed copies of this booklet, or any of our other social issues study guides,

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Presbyterian Support Southland
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