



Chaplains from universities all over Aotearoa gathered for a National Conference in 2022

Chaplains at Large - Ministry Beyond the Parish

The term Chaplain originates from the old Christian story of St Martin who offered his Chappelle (coat) to someone in deep distress and gave him a covering, lifesaving protection: in a similar manner to the parable of the Good Samaritan; offering kindness, compassion and a Christ-like presence, journeying alongside those in need.

Throughout New Zealand chaplains work in schools, hospitals, prisons, aged-care facilities and universities, providing support for the spiritual and moral wellbeing of students, patients, prisoners, residents, service personnel, and their whanau.

In this article we invite a current and former university chaplain to share an insight into their pastoral work, and how their chaplaincy role differs from parish ministry.

University Chaplaincy

The University of Canterbury website states, “UC Chaplaincy offers pastoral and practical support regardless of someone’s background or beliefs. Chaplains see themselves as ‘The Department of Spiritual Engineering’

on campus”. That is an apt description of a service that is available to students and staff at every university and Te Pūkenga (polytechnic) in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Rev Olivia Dawson joined the team of Otago Campus Chaplains in July 2018. She was ordained as a Baptist Minister in 2010 and served in parish ministry and hospital chaplaincy before starting work at Otago. Olivia says one of the greatest differences at university is that unlike at church or in a parish, the role is less defined and less specific, so the delivery of pastoral care is more generalist. “At university not everyone has a Christian background. We recognise that everyone has a spiritual wellbeing that needs to be nurtured so we offer emotional and spiritual support. Everyone needs that.”

Otago university chaplains - ecumenical, Māori, Catholic and Muslim - work in close association with other campus support services although they are one of the only services that work alongside students and staff. Olivia says the time spent with students versus staff varies amongst chaplains, however in general, students are better versed at seeking

At university, not everyone has a Christian background

campus support than staff.

Chaplaincy services operate year-round on campus, and chaplains are reachable at any time of the day. Although Olivia says there is no typical day, there are rhythms to the academic year that influence the focus of the chaplain’s time. “During exams we spend a lot of time in general chats and dealing with office appointments.

When asked to comment on the best and worst of times, Oliva says, “Sometimes the high moments and the low moments happen at the same time. “During critical incidents spiritual and emotional needs are abundant. This results in challenging and meaningful conversations and interactions.”

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The impacts of Covid are lingering as students have spent so much time over the past few years working and studying at home. "It takes more effort to speak up if they are unsettled, but in general this generation of students has the language for expressing themselves but they often need assistance in finding the tools to deal with their mental, spiritual and emotional health." Chaplains are not hired to be counsellors; pastoral care involves listening, reflecting, nurturing, caring, encouraging mentoring and coaching and offering professional friendship.

Beyond the impacts of Covid, there are some issues unique to life on campus, including academic pressures and the stress of making life-changing decisions. "Students in the 18- to 22-year-old age bracket are asking big questions like, What do I do with this life? How do I make it all meaningful? There are general themes we all struggle with and when you add exam and other academic pressures, suddenly a demanding situation they may usually handle with ease becomes paralyzing and they need extra support," Olivia says.

Rev Greg Hughson was university chaplain at Otago University from 2000 until he retired in 2019. As part of a team providing pastoral care and emotional and spiritual support to diverse student and staff communities, Greg says people visit their chaplains for many reasons that are not always associated with faith. In an interview at the time of his retirement, Greg shared an analogy that symbolised his almost 20-year tenure at the university. When he first started, he was handed a saltshaker and a candle - two items that underpinned his approach to his role. (Matthew 5 vs. 1-15).

"Salt has the capacity to change the flavour of food and to make a difference to the taste of food. Chaplaincy has to do with changing and ideally improving the 'flavour' of institutions - wherever Chaplaincies are planted, wherever institutions choose to allow room for



University of Otago ecumenical chaplains. Credit Greg Hughson.

them to be present.

"The candle is a symbol of the privilege Chaplains have of bringing light and hope into dark and difficult situations."

Greg identifies many differences between parish ministry and university chaplaincy, starting with the number of people he was potentially available to offer pastoral care and spiritual support to (i.e. approximately 18,000 students and 3,000 staff) and the reality of representing the entire Protestant church rather than a single denomination. In place of Sunday worship responsibilities, he might be involved in arranging interdisciplinary academic gatherings on campus. And in contrast to parish engagements, university ministry is predominantly to young people, many of whom have no church or faith background. Diversity of the international community served - students from over 80 countries study at Otago - and the unique cultural and spiritual values of Māori and Pasifika students also create differences between campus and parish ministry. "Māori and Pasifika cultures realise the centrality of taha wairua. Te Whare Tapa Wha, including spiritual health, provides a "way in" for chaplains in predominantly secular environments," Greg says.

Dealing mostly with younger people has other profound implications. "At

university there is more sudden death to deal with than parish ministry, where funerals are largely for elderly people. At university, it is younger people who die unexpectedly because of illness, accident or suicide," Greg says. Specialist skills include an ability to respond appropriately to critical incidents and to have a deep knowledge of other faiths/religions.

During his time at Otago Greg noticed demand for counselling services increased considerably for students experiencing more pressures and uncertainties due to a range of issues and circumstances. "Many face the prospect of uncertain job opportunities and carry large debts on graduation. A sizable number drop out after their first year. Many lose their first friend or family member during their time at university."

Olivia comments that chaplains benefit from the pastoral support they receive from their own faith communities and a National Conference for university chaplains in 2022 that brought together approximately 35 colleagues to share experiences was empowering and inspiring. "We are all doing similar work the best way we can. It is a privilege to work alongside other chaplains and student support services, all involved in caring for the wellbeing of our tertiary population in New Zealand."



Hamilton Youth Embrace Leadership Workshops

In late May, MCNZ President Rev Peter Taylor visited Hamilton to lead a workshop on 'Public Speaking' for the St John's Methodist youth group. The youth group comprises 13 to 30-year-olds of Tongan, Samoan and Fijian heritage and includes high school and university students as well as young professionals. Youth group co-leaders Sianiti Nakabea and Siona Lasi report on a series of leadership workshops known as Project Tautoko.

The workshop led by Rev Peter was the last of five workshops to complete phase one of a leadership initiative called Project Tautoko. Rev Peter



MCNZ President Rev Peter Taylor, centre back row, with members of the Hamilton Youth Group.

talked about his wide experience in public speaking and provided advice on building confidence as well as running interactive activities and discussions.

Other workshops focused on Emotional Intelligence, Problem Solving, Team Building and Personal Development. These were led by influential community leaders in the Waikato region. The initiative was designed to help build and extend the leadership

skills of the youth members. In response to youth feedback, Sianiti and Siona say, "Our young people wanted to be equipped to do more community outreach."

"We are grateful to Rev Peter for giving his time to invest into the development of our youth. It is our prayer as we embark on the second phase of Project Tautoko that our youth will use what they have learnt to be the best leaders they have been called to be."

Kapiti Couple Celebrate 65 Years of Marriage



Church stalwarts Daphne and George Forster receive a greeting from King Charles and Queen Camilla.

Daphne and George Forster recently celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary. Rosalie Sugrue reports on a lifetime commitment to each other and of service to church and community.

Achieving 65 years of marriage is no small achievement as accolades from international and national leaders testify. Amidst an impressive collection of cards on display in Forster's lounge, there is a congratulations card from the Palace from King Charles and Queen Camilla along with a 60th anniversary acknowledgement from Queen Elizabeth II. Recent official cards are from Prime Minister Chris Hipkins, Governor General Dame Cindy Kiro, and the Minister for Seniors Hon Ginny Andersen.

George and Daphne met at a Methodist 'Winter School' (a live-in study programme for youth) at Bridge Lodge, Otaki in 1953.

As an accredited lay preacher, George led services for 50 years. Daphne completed 33 years as a Girls' Brigade Officer. Both were involved in Sunday School teaching and for 17 years they helped organise and cook for Church family camps.

George chaired the Property Committee at Kapiti Uniting for some years and was a parish representative to the Wellington Synod. Their hobbies include wood-turning and handcrafts - knitting, sewing, embroidery and restoring old linen. Over 20 years of supporting Kapiti Uniting Parish's church fairs with their skills they personally raised thousands of dollars.



John Wesley Day Celebration

Crossroads Methodist Church, Papakura

Members of the congregation from Crossroads Methodist Church and Manukau Synod.

Rev Suresh Chandra

Crossroads Methodist Church on Sunday, 28 May held a combined service with Manukau Synod to celebrate Wesley Day - also known as Aldersgate Day - an anniversary observed by Methodists.

The theme: 'A Heart-warming Experience' encouraged us to reminisce on the day, 24 May 1738, when priest John Wesley unwillingly went to a group meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, where after hearing someone read Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, he felt his heart strangely warmed. He felt the change which God

worked in his heart through faith in Jesus Christ. This crucial moment in his life ultimately led him to the development of the Methodist movement.

The parish and synod members were informed of this celebration a few weeks earlier and many were curious and looking forward to the evening service. Parish presbyter Rev Suresh Chandra welcomed everyone and Rev Misilei Misilei (co-superintendent) led the service. When Misilei welcomed 'Rev John Wesley' it was like going back to 1738. When Wesley took his seat for an interview with the television

reporter, Lynette Buchan, it was revealed that it was Rev Norman Brookes, a Wesley enthusiast. He gave a reflection that seemed as though John Wesley was preaching.

Presbyters from the synod, including Rev Motekiai Fakatou, Rev Vaitu'ulala Ngahe and Rev Amos Muzondiwa (co-superintendent) joined together for the service..

To conclude, in-house chefs Lupe Smythe and Sela Loveday prepared freshly baked treats. The delightful evening provided an opportunity for many to catch up with friends and church leaders and helped enhance the celebration and feeling of oneness.

Parishes Celebrate Wesley Sunday

The Waitakere Methodist Parish remembered the 285th anniversary of John Wesley's conversion with a combined service at Glen Eden Church prepared and led by Rev Augusten Subhan. Guest preacher Rev Dr Trevor Hoggard reflected on the early experiences of the Wesley brothers and how trust in that transformative power is as relevant today as it was then. Doreen Sunman reports.

When John and Charles Wesley asked to do something small for God - take the Gospel to the native Americans of Georgia - their mission was not what they imagined. They returned to England dejected. Soon after, first Charles and then John attended a meeting in Aldersgate Street, London, where they had their conversion experiences. The brothers soon learned that God had a mission field which was much bigger than Georgia. They were to take the Gospel to the industrial heartland of the world's first industrialised nation. In the 19th century the transformative

power of Methodism helped people to lift themselves out of poverty.

Methodists today need to unite and trust in this same transformative power and take the light of God's presence into our world. Rev Trevor urged the Methodist Church to put its house in order and unite to meet these challenges, as the Wesley brothers met the challenges of their time, taking the spiritual and social Gospels to our world.

The Henderson church music team led rousing renditions of some favourite Charles Wesley hymns with piano, organ and two violins. As a reminder of the strong influence of Methodism in the Pacific, one Bible reading was read in Samoan and the other in Tongan, with the English versions on Power Point. Lay preacher Richard Small led prayers before the final hymn and the benediction before everyone joined for fellowship over morning tea.

Rev Augusten Subhan and Rev Dr Trevor Hoggard.





July is Bible Month

Last year, Bible Society NZ and Nielsen undertook research on public engagement with the Bible. Results indicated that Bible ownership has dropped to 53 percent of New Zealanders owning a Bible with 9 percent of owners reading it daily. The three main reasons cited by Christians for not reading their Bibles were:

- a lack of self-discipline (21%).
- distracted by other activities (20%)
- not a priority for them (20%).

Bible Society has a mission to help to make the Bible accessible to everyone and encourage interaction with it and

Bible Month is a key event aimed at fulfilling that mission. This year's theme is, 'The Bible is Life', and specialised free resources are available for church leaders, small groups and individuals including:

- a beautifully designed, easy to follow 31-day Calendar with a verse a day
- a 31-day devotional - Reflections on Life. A downloadable booklet, ideal for small group discussions or studies written by staff and friends of Bible Society.
- a YouVersion reading plan with devotionals from the Reflections



on Life

Other resources available for Bible Month include regular resources created by Bible Society for church and ministry leaders - 'Book a Speaker', RightNow Media and LYFE Course subscriptions and a Bible Guide.

To find out more about Bible month, to donate and to access free resources,

Ō TĀTOU TĀNGATA • OUR PEOPLE

Praying For Our Ministers

As we are halfway through 2023, it is timely to reflect on being in the role of Vice President of the Methodist Church of New Zealand.

Over these past months, I've had the pleasure of visiting, engaging with, and learning about a variety of groups and individuals throughout the country, who currently make up our Weteriana whānau. It has been humbling to be warmly welcomed and embraced by newer faces, and good to reunite and reconnect with familiar faces from years (or even decades) gone by.

I have enjoyed being able to attend ecumenical and interreligious forums and events on behalf of our hāhi. In addition to being able to share of our own journey and insights, these have also offered opportunities to learn from our Ecumenical tuakana and teina.

Recently I had the privilege of attending the Special Installation Mass for Archbishop Paul Martin SM, as the Archbishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wellington. Having observed and respected the leadership of his predecessor, Cardinal John Dew, over the years, and having also followed with interest the work of Archbishop Paul while he was Bishop of the Diocese of Christchurch, I didn't want to turn down the invitation and opportunity to witness this special occasion.

Similar to some of our own special Weteriana induction services, this mass

was rich in cultural and religious traditions, and social and spiritual wisdom. While there are obviously certain things that are uniquely different about our traditions, I really appreciated the beautiful way in which te reo me ngā tikanga Māori were embraced, as well as the very natural way that women, laity, and young people were part of leading this mass.

Archbishop Paul's homily was refreshingly on point. One of the simplest, yet most profound things that I came away with, was a humble request to pray for him. I will most certainly continue to do this. This simple request served as an invaluable reminder to remember and to pray for the ministers of our hāhi as well.

Often our ministers are the ones who we call upon to initiate and lead services, to maintain our various ministry and outreach initiatives, to make pastoral visits, take devotions and of course, lead us in prayer, yet how often do we remember to pray for them?

Whether they be minita-i-tōhia, minita-ā-iwi, ordained, lay, presbyteral, diaconal, stationed or not stationed, supply, student or retired, choosing to follow one's calling and dedicating one's



TeRito Peyroux-Semu

life to service in and for the church doesn't exclude our ministers from needing to be upheld in prayer. In the same way, choosing ministry does not exempt a person or their family from the social, political, economic, environmental, health and housing vulnerabilities of our current times.

Living God, we give thanks for the lives and service of all our ministers. We pray for your continued peace upon them and their families. Equip and surround them with your strength, wisdom, compassion, and grace; And guide their ministries so that hope and fulfilment will always be found in and through you. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.



The Meaning of Spirituality



Ian Harris

Spirituality? Once the word seemed to me to suggest a rather woolly groping after religious experience without religion, which sold both short. Now I see its value in broadening our religious insight for the secular world we live in.

But what does it mean? Today the word is used of an interior experience. It's totally subjective - you can't transfer your spirituality experience to anyone else. It's life-enhancing, a dimension of our awareness that we can't readily explain or pin down, but has to do

it carries a sense of connectedness with the totality of the life around us. There's a touch of sacredness about it. Bring all these together - inwardness, life-enhancing, connectedness, reaching beyond, sacredness - and you're getting close to a spirituality right for our times.

That must include fostering a spirituality that embraces the earth, a spirituality of action and hope. Has our Christian heritage anything distinctive to offer here?

I believe it has - as long as we're willing to expand our understanding of religion and spirituality to encompass the new story of creation, the new challenges and new responsibilities that our new millennium presents.

For me, the role of religion is central because, properly understood, it touches every aspect of our lives as individuals, societies and denizens of planet Earth. Italian religious historian



@cartoon by Jim.

from there. We see that clearly in Christianity, for at the heart of Christian faith lies the concept of the Incarnation - that is, God or Godness enfleshed in our material world and in the human

Here there's a marked shift away from the teaching of past centuries, when the church focussed on men and women as essentially souls in need of salvation from sin, with the ultimate prize of everlasting bliss with God in heaven. That doesn't

resonate with secular New Zealanders any longer.

The social gospel, important in my Methodist upbringing, sought to raise ordinary people out of poverty and despair, and give them a new dignity within society. A modern spirituality needs concern for the earth on which life pivots, but it also

needs more. For starters, we can open our hearts and minds to "another way of seeing" - beyond the purely rational and scientific, beyond received economic assumptions, and certainly beyond consumerism.

We can pick up that definition of religion - "a total mode of the interpreting and living of life" - and determine our place within it, with emphasis on our total mode of the interpreting and living of life.

We can locate our spirituality firmly within the everyday material world, never thinking that whatever we do is too trivial to make a difference. When added to what millions of others are doing, our efforts in re-using, repairing, recycling and disposing of rubbish do matter.

The same goes for buying lots of stuff we don't need, so let's structure our daily living around the economics of enough. Our lifestyle expresses our relation to the earth.

Of course the scale of the climate crisis demands much more than each of us doing a bit better with our household waste.

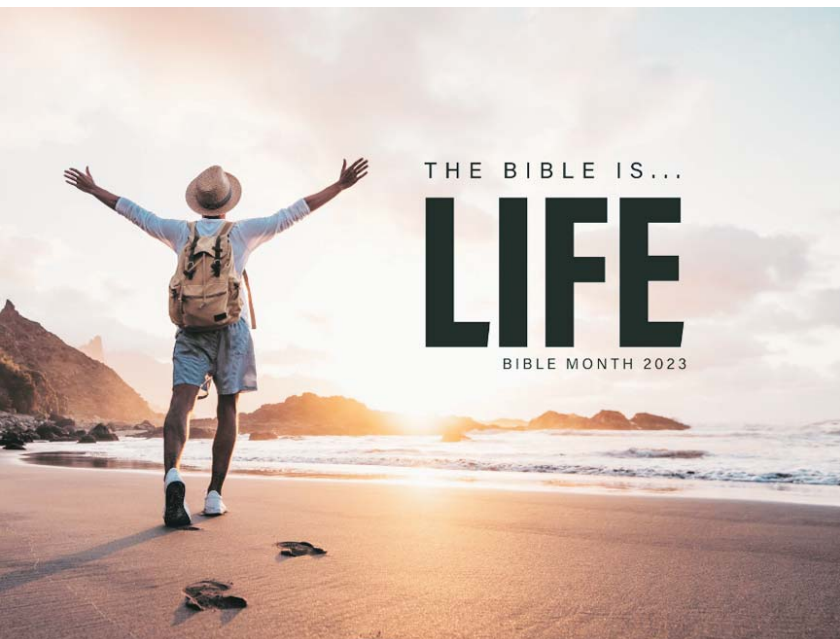
Government action to curb fossil fuels, protect key environments, penalise pollution, limit population growth, re-orient business towards carbon neutrality - all that and more are urgently needed.

A modern spirituality needs concern for the earth on which life pivots, but it also needs more

with our feelings, our yearning for "something more" beyond the bread-and-butter, work-a-day routine. It's an experience that helps give meaning and direction to our lives. At best

Carlo Della Casa defines religion aptly as "a total mode of the interpreting and living of life."

That total mode begins with our immersion in the material world and builds



Observations on Bible Month

Rev Andrew Doubleday, UCANZ

It's easy to either hold the Bible up as a God-breathed, word-for-word textbook with a verse for every situation we encounter in life today or to dismiss it as a curiosity, a relic of a by-gone age that properly should be largely ignored in the light of contemporary science and our more enlightened understanding of the nature of reality.

I'm not sure that either extreme is either desirable or necessary.

I've long been helped by an observation of Myles Coverdale, a 16th century English ecclesiastical reformer, who believed everything needed to be contextualised. It's when we see the trajectory of Scripture, the overall direction that unfolds, that we have a more life-giving way of interpreting it in our own day and context.

While the text of Scripture may have been completed 2000 years ago, this does not mean that God has stopped speaking and no longer speaks today. It

is not difficult to extrapolate forward the life-giving principles laid out in Scripture and allow them to be touchstones for us in our current age.

Yet, rather than interpreting Scripture through a love-based lens, we so readily default to interpreting through the lens of fear. As a result the church is portrayed as reactionary and backward looking. We are much more readily identifiable as what we are against than what we stand for in a positive and life-giving way. And rather than see this as a problem, we see it as a virtue. That the world hates us for our bigotry, our small mindedness, our meanness of spirit, we wear as a badge of honour - after all, we expect to be persecuted for our faith. How the Spirit of grace must grieve.

As we engage with Scripture this month, how about we seek to think about what's going through our hearts and minds as we read? Are we interpreting through the eyes of fear or love?

Mystery and Joy in the Gift of Music



Rev Dr Susan Thompson

The great neurologist Oliver Sacks (1933-2015) once wrote, "I have found only two types of non-pharmaceutical 'therapy' to be vitally important for patients with chronic neurological diseases: music and gardens". At Tamahere I've seen the therapeutic value of music for all of our residents and especially for those who are living with dementia.

Music plays a big part in the daily life of the care home. We have music playing in most of our units during the day; the diversional therapists lead regular singalongs; every week residents are entertained by musicians in the chapel; we sing hymns at all our worship services and music often plays in the rooms of those who are dying.

Music brings a smile to people's faces; it calms and consoles; it inspires and energizes; it connects us to our memories and emotions; it may even remind us who we are. It's amazing to see people who often seem lost and confused start tapping their feet, swaying to a familiar tune, humming and singing, even on occasion getting up to dance.

I love seeing the way many of our residents love to move to music, even those in wheelchairs. Watching their delight, I often wonder if they've always been dancers, or did they dance as children and then give it up when they took on the responsibilities of adulthood? If so, is this newfound ability and enjoyment one of the strange gifts of dementia?

To me, how music comes to have such therapeutic value is a wonderful mystery. There is still so much to learn about all the ways we can care for the needs of our residents, especially those who are living with dementia. But music has a rare ability to engage our bodies, stimulate our minds, feed our spirits and connect us to others. It evokes emotion which brings memory and so nurtures wellbeing. I thank God for the mysterious gift of music.



Climate Justice Working Group

Te Hāhi Weteriana: Para Kore working towards Zero Waste

Te Aroha Rountree

Me mau tonu ki ngā taonga tapu ā ōu matua tupuna,
koinei ngā taonga nā tō tātou Atua, tō tātou Kaihanga
Hold steadfast to the treasures of our ancestors,
For these are the treasures of God our Creator



Conference 2022 affirmed the kaupapa of Climate Justice as the focus of Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa MCNZ for the next ten years. The Climate Justice Working Group has highlighted within that theme the challenge of Para Kore (Zero Waste).

As a church we have committed to be engaged and aware of the impacts of waste on our environment and endeavour to educate and enable the church to reduce waste. The journey towards zero waste for many of us requires a change in lifestyle and mindset. Part of the process of moving toward zero waste is unlearning what has become ingrained in our beliefs of what we need to survive or to live comfortably.

According to the Community Recycling Network, “Our well-being depends on

us transforming our relationship with material and energy flows.” This means educating ourselves about recycling and recovery systems that will deliver cleaner, quality materials. The Para Kore movement like most environmentally engaged kaupapa, is also focused on building community capacity and economies.

Communities are encouraged to seek recyclers that deliver quality services, while also serving the outcomes of local economies. By choosing local recycling contractors, communities can maximise local spend and generate localized income. Often the motivation to initiate and maintain a zero-waste approach is challenging and there are many strategies that are contributing to the necessary change including landfill fees and bans on materials that

can be recycled or composted, and recycling fees for tyres and e-waste.

There are many communities and government-led organisations that have taken up the challenge of zero waste. Para Kore is one such organization with a te ao Māori emphasis, that was initiated by Waikato Regional Council to help marae to minimize their waste. The vision of the organization is “We educate and advocate from a Māori worldview to strengthen connection to Ranginui and Papatūānuku.”

The Para Kore initiative was built-up over time with the support of the Tribal Development Unit of Waikato Raupatu Lands Trust, Xtreme Zero Waste and Greenup Ltd. A pilot project was established with Poihakena Marae (Raglan), Tūrangawaewae Marae (Ngāruawāhia) and Kirikiriroa Marae (Hamilton). According to Jacqui Forbes (Kaihautū Matua), “The purpose and the value of Para Kore is to educate and advocate from a Māori worldview for a world without waste.” Para Kore has committed to empowering and supporting marae, kohanga reo, kura kaupapa and other Māori organisations to reduce waste within frameworks of kaupapa and tikanga Māori.

As Te Hāhi we can join the Para Kore movement taking small or significant steps to reduce our waste and our carbon footprint. Weteriana churches across Aotearoa are encouraged to seek advice and guidance when developing your strategic plan to include a principle of zero waste. This means seeking information that can help us to prioritize our strategic goal to reduce waste and we can begin with the helpful leaflets provided by the Climate Justice Working Group on our Methodist Church website, www.methodist.org.nz. We want to encourage each parish, rohe, synod, board, committee and entity within the life of Te Hāhi to take up the Para Kore challenge as a whanau, and the first step is to talanoa/kōrero/talk.



Thanks for the Memories

“For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them” - Matthew 18:20

Juanita Salevao

As we come to the end of our term of being in the New Zealand Methodist Women's Fellowship (NZMWF) National Executive, I can't help but reflect on how much I have learnt as a young Samoan tamaita'i (girl) in my role of Liaison Link during the past two years. Coming into this role, I had little knowledge of what I was supposed to be doing as a Liaison Link. As the months progressed and visits to different districts started happening, I learnt and grew more each day. I am truly grateful for this calling to serve God through this role and for being able to reach out and connect with other districts.

District visits are important because they help our President and the National Executive to be visible and show support to our districts. The visits help us know what goes on the different districts and if any districts have any concerns.

Reflecting on our theme, “If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together,” this reinforces the importance and the purpose of district visits. The visits act as welfare checks and make sure we are all moving forward TOGETHER so that we may go far and pave the way for the next generation who will carry on our legacy in the NZMWF.

We were also lucky enough to start our term as Covid-19 restrictions were beginning to ease up, so we were able to travel and have large gatherings again. Our visits to the districts have been a combination of face-to-face and Zoom.

I thank our District Links who have reached out and set dates for the NZMWF President to come and visit each district. We have enjoyed being a part of many meetings and fun activities. I thank the districts for the gifts we received, the royalty treatment, the many teachings and the food provided. Our hearts are full and we look forward to reconnecting soon at our National Convention in Auckland.

We look forward to our up-and-coming visits - see you soon Waikato District - and we welcome hearing from any district that we have not already visited. Please contact us so that we can organise a time to visit before Convention.

God Bless you all.

Mafutaga Tama'ta'i Sinoti Samoa Ekalesia Metotisi Niu Sila.



NZMWF Auckland..



NZMWF Manurewa.



A day in the life of a Methodist Youth Worker

Carol Barron, National Coordinator

Methodist Alliance members offer a range of services to whānau around Aotearoa New Zealand. Our kaimahi that work with young people, are passionate about and speak highly of the rangatahi they work alongside.

One of these passionate and dedicated kaimahi is Fred Ama, a Senior Youth Worker based at Wesley Community Action in Waitangirua. Fred works with a programme called Te Roopu Tiaki Rangatahi (TRTR), a role he has had for five years. We ask him about his mahi:

What do you enjoy most about your work?

Working alongside my team; Wesley (Waitangirua) has a fun and exciting culture that brings out the best in people. We support each other and ensure that we are inspired to inspire others. A great management team values the work we do and our wellbeing.

What does a typical day look like?

We start our day with a team karakia and after we see what everyone is doing for the day. We have a quick debrief for our youth team, to check what's on and what's coming up. If they have any issues or concerns we can korero - discuss this. We also share highlights with the group.

Our most popular programme is 'Switch', an outdoor programme that could be mountain biking, kayaking, volunteering, outdoor cooking or hiking. We prepare the gear and head out. At the end of the day we return our gear and head back to the office for a bit of administrative work.

What do you love most about your job?

Creating opportunities and pathways for our young people. I'm excited to be part of their journey. I love having

the freedom to create a space where young people feel safe to express themselves, where they can feel no judgement and where they know they can thrive.

What have you learned since you started?

If you create a positive environment in your workplace or whatever space you

own special way.

If you could give one piece of advice, what would it be?

"Opportunities don't happen, you create them."

Fred's responses show how his values reflect those of the Methodist Church and his work reflects our Methodist social principles. You can support the



Fred Ama helping young people in the 'Switch' outdoor programme.

are in, you create an environment that people want to be part of.

This is what Wesley offers. I speak about this a lot with young people.

If you could change two things about the world, what would you change & why?

Global Warming - there is so much going on with our world around this issue and so many contributing factors. If we don't do anything about it, the next generation will have to deal with the consequences. Big changes need to happen immediately, not small changes.

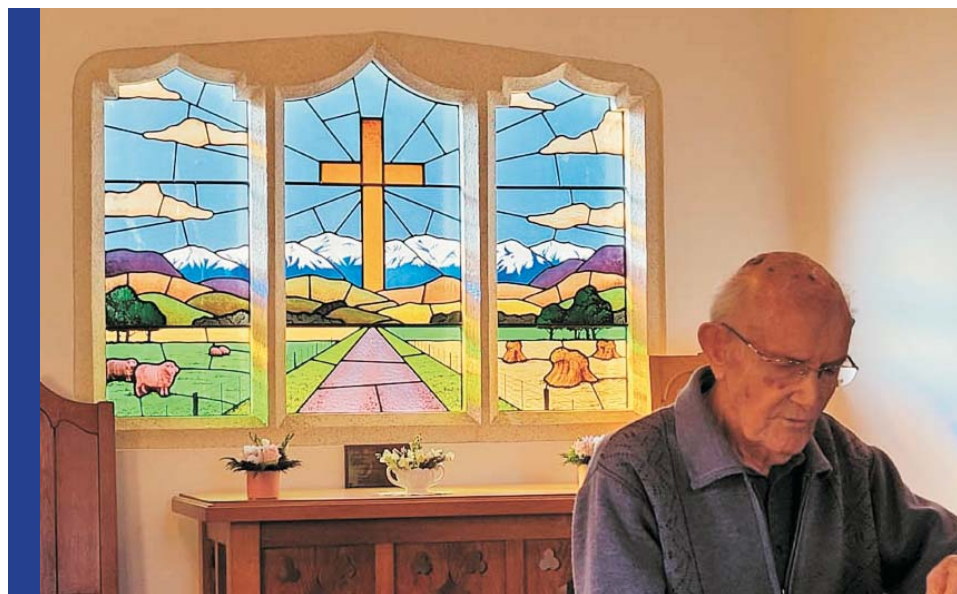
Racism - it still exists today. No culture is better than or superior to another. No language is better than another. We all may look different on the outside but we are 100 percent the same on the inside. We are all unique in our



mahi that Fred and his team at TRTR do at Waitangirua, by donating to Wesley Community Action - <https://www.wesleyca.org.nz/donate/>. Feel free to contact Wesley Community Action to find out more, or how your support can make a difference in the lives of the rangatahi - young people they work with to realise their dreams.



A Poignant Pilgrimage



Rev Loyal Gibson in front of the stained glass window depicting a rural Canterbury scene.

Rev Loyal Gibson is the longest serving Methodist Presbyterian in the South Island. His first appointment was in 1951 and he was ordained at Conference 1954. Recently his two children, Dawn and Mark, took their almost 96-year-old father on a 50-kilometre pilgrimage from his home at WesleyCare, Ōtautahi Christchurch to Greendale. Rev Mark Gibson reports on the journey.

After an absence of more than 70 years, our father returned to live in Canterbury last year, where he was born, raised and candidated for ministry. The Greendale circuit was his only Canterbury-based ministry. He served there from 1955 to 1960. During this time, a new church was built and still stands despite the rupturing of the Greendale fault line in 2010. The church has a stunning stained-glass window that our father designed. A framed photo of this window is prominently displayed on the wall in his room at WesleyCare. He was keen to return and see it for one last time.

The minister in the Malvern Cooperating Parish (which includes Greendale), Rev. Lynmaree Sopoaga (Aunty Lyn) caught the spirit and importance of this journey right from the moment I contacted her. She wanted to meet us there, along with other local parishioners, to welcome Dad and hear his memories. As the day neared, she advised us that the word had got around and there was significant interest in this pilgrimage

and many folks were keen to pay homage to Dad.

In late autumn, Lynmaree and 11 lay people from the congregation welcomed us and offered amazing hospitality. Lynmaree led us in prayer acknowledging the significant deaths in our family in 2022. I responded and then Dad spoke. He took with him a copy of his memoirs, titled *Loyal's Story 1927-2012*, to frame his thoughts and, sitting on his walker, spoke to the congregation.

He shared his thoughts on why he and mum (June) were so well received in the circuit. His rural background in North Canterbury and early working life experience with a stock and station agent helped. Many years earlier, his mother Hettie, as a young woman, had worked for one of the prominent Greendale families as domestic help. Our mother also came originally from Oxford, not far away.

During his reminiscing, Dad shared the story behind the stained-glass window that he had so much wanted to see again. He had helped the congregation of that day to see the window as a collective memorial for all their honoured predecessors.

He was quite averse to the usual themes of stained-glass windows, with biblical figures and halos. His original sketch which became the basis of what emerged featured the Canterbury plains, wheat and sheep, looking toward



the Southern Alps.

Dawn and I also spoke about the importance of Greendale to both of us. I was born in nearby Darfield, during these years, first walked on Greendale soil and was baptized in the wee church. Dawn started school there. It was also where her late husband Rob helped to lead day retreats during the years of his Christchurch-based ministries in the Methodist and Presbyterian churches.

The locals gathered then asked questions and shared their own memories and connections. Finally, we sang a hymn and I ended the service with words of blessing.

Before sharing an amazing country-style lunch, Dad stood in the pulpit for a few minutes to prompt more treasured memories. It was a beautiful couple of hours. Rich in memory and saturated in gratitude for the past and for the warm connections and reconnections made on the day.



Inoi Whakawātea

Letting go with Grace - A Farewell to Everil Orr Village



On Friday 9 June, friends and staff of Everil Orr Village gathered to farewell the buildings Tyler House, Aroha Hospital and Garlick House. Each of these buildings have served the church well and it is now time to let them go. Arapera Ngaha reflects on the significance of the occasion.

In May 1940 William Astley donated his property, a large residence in Allendale Rd, Mt Albert to meet the need for a home for elderly women. Rev Orr, Missioner at that time, opened the facility that was the beginning of the Everil Orr Village. The Martin Brothers Memorial Wing was added, Aroha Hospital, the hospital wing, Tyler House, a wing for elderly men, Caughey House, Garlick House, the Leigh Haven Cottages, and the Bond Chapel completed this complex which focussed on care for the elderly.

In October 1995, Everil Orr Village Community Centre was opened to provide services for the growing number of elderly in the community.

In 2012 Airedale Property Trust proposed a ten-year re-development project of the Everil Orr site to include 300 residents in licence-to-occupy units, apartment suites and hospital beds. Later reports to Conference note that the development at Everil Orr Village required significant pastoral support which was provided by Methodist Mission Northern with a part-time chaplaincy position.

This year it was time to farewell the

road-front buildings. It was important to remember what was, to acknowledge and give thanks for the service given by people, their generosity in donations of land, buildings and care. Many of the contributors were remembered by name and their service acknowledged.

What more can we do to acknowledge and farewell? We are very good at delivering eulogies when a person passes away but tangible assets when left behind, removed to make way for something else, are a different matter. Acknowledgement of what has been, must take place and must reflect the role that asset has played in the life of what is to follow.

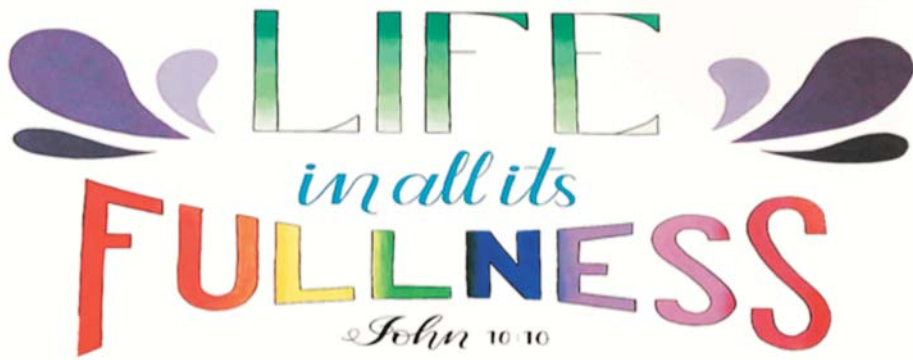
For Māori, whakapapa connections are important to recall and celebrate. Whanaungatanga connections, relationships nurtured and continued albeit in different ways must be acknowledged and celebrated, in making way for new directions, new ways of being.

Dean Shields, Airedale Property Trust Chief Executive, acknowledged the long-service staff, and others spoke of what this place has meant to them as individuals working in this space. They were appreciative of having a way to say goodbye, letting go with grace.

Our Prayer

Living God we give you thanks for all your many blessings to us this day. We remember with grateful thanks those who gifted this land to provide sanctuary for elderly care. We, the church remember them, they will never be forgotten.

These old buildings will disappear but memories of those who lived here, who died here, were cared for here and cared for others and their families here, remain. Something different will blossom to continue the dreams of those original donors. Watch over the workers who will carry out this work that they do so safely. These things we ask of you Lord, Amen.



World Methodist Council Social Affirmation

Carol Barron, Methodist Alliance National Coordinator

The Methodist Church has a strong tradition in social justice and that is reflected in our Social Principles. In 1986, the World Methodist Council adopted this Social Affirmation:

We believe in God, creator of the world and of all people;

and in Jesus Christ, incarnate among us, who died and rose again;

and in the Holy Spirit, present with us to guide, strengthen and comfort.

We rejoice in every sign of God's Kingdom;

- in the upholding of human dignity and community;
- in every expression of love, justice and reconciliation;
- in each act of self-giving on behalf of others;
- in the abundance of God's gifts entrusted to us that all may have enough;
- in all responsible use of the earth's resources.

We confess our sin, individual and collective, by silence or action:

- through the violation of human dignity based on race, class, age, sex, nation or faith;
- through the exploitation of people because of greed and indifference;
- through the misuse of power in personal, communal, national and international life;

- through the search for security by those military and economic forces that threaten human existence;
- through the abuse of technology which endangers the earth and all life upon it.

We commit ourselves individually and as a community to the way of Christ:

- to take up the cross;
- to seek abundant life for all humanity;
- to struggle for peace with justice and freedom;
- to risk ourselves in faith, hope and love,
- praying that God's kingdom may come.

Thy kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. Amen.

This affirmation is as relevant today as it was nearly 40 years ago. It reminds us to rejoice in every sign of God's Kingdom when human dignity is upheld, and in every expression of love, justice and reconciliation.

We also need to take accountability and responsibility for our individual and collective silence, inaction or action when human dignity is violated, and people are exploited because of greed, indifference and apathy.

Budgets and Taxes

Decisions made in the budget reflect what we value most and taxes are how we resource these priorities. Most of us want the same things and share

similar values, like ensuring:

- everyone has a safe healthy affordable home to live in
- access to a high-quality education system
- access to health services when we need them
- access to a social support system that protects the most vulnerable and enables them to actively engage in their community and flourish
- protection of our environment.

We are all subject to the same rules and we all have input into decisions made by government. So we have a responsibility to design our economic and welfare support systems to overcome the causes of poverty and ensure our tax dollar is spent responsibly on achieving our shared values and goals. Together we can thrive and create a positive better future for all of us.

We are all subject to the rules of our tax system and we can change the rules. We can also influence and lobby to ensure where our tax money is spent.

We hope that the resource the Methodist Alliance Working Group has created will help build on the knowledge everyone has about the inequalities and inequities in our systems and provide questions to further decisions on income security, wealth distribution and debt to government. Together we can seek and advocate for an abundant life for everyone in Aotearoa New Zealand.





Climate Talks Must Deliver



In the Philippines a local fisherman on Tabon Island points to the coastline which he says is disappearing by a metre each year. Photo: Kathlene Soo

Last month's climate negotiations in Bonn failed to focus on the real agenda according to the ACT Alliance (Action by Churches Together) Climate Justice network. The negotiations were part of preparations for COP 28 (Conference of Parties), United Nations' climate change talks to be held in Dubai beginning on November 30.

"A lot is hanging on the next round of climate talks. Rich countries need to change their ways and take seriously their responsibility to people and the planet. As Christians committed to climate justice and the care of God's creation, we need to push them to cut emissions and mobilise funds for the communities most at risk," says Murray Overton, National Director of Christian World Service, part of ACT Alliance.

"The climate crisis is a justice crisis that cannot be paid for by the communities with the

smallest footprint," said ACT Alliance after the talks.

Climate finance is urgent. Developed countries are not living up to their promises or providing the urgently needed funds to assist people who have lost homes and livelihoods because of drought, floods and conflict caused by the climate crisis.

ACT Alliance is campaigning for visible progress on loss and damage at the COP28 talks. Loss and damage are the impacts that cannot be avoided by adaptation or mitigation, for example loss of land to rising seas.

"The loss and damage fund should guarantee rapid and scaled up finance to vulnerable communities to protect lives, recover livelihoods, and for reconstruction following climate disasters," says Julius Mbatia, ACT Alliance.

CWS encourages people to pray for the negotiations and join climate justice actions.



Donations fund a network of women's sangam or associations supported by the Women Development Resource Centre, a partner of Christian World Service. The women learn about their legal rights and support each other to demand fair treatment. Credit Trish Murray CWS.

Dalits Challenge Unjust Caste Practices

Dalit communities in Tamil Nadu, India face grinding poverty, violence and daily discrimination. Dalits, once known as Untouchables, are at the bottom of a caste system which is hard to escape.

Buneswari lives in an area set aside for the Dalit community where members are expected to avoid others in the village. At school their children are separated, undertake the cleaning jobs and eat last. Buneswari finished school at standard three and then worked with her family in the burial ground.

Late last year her husband died. When she returned from the burial ground women from the dominant caste shouted abuse at her. She and her son were beaten, and the women threw chili powder into their eyes.

When Buneswari and her son reached home, other Dalit women marched to the police station and demanded action, citing government legislation meant to protect Dalits and others. At first the policeman refused to register the case but he gave in when he saw that the women's sangam (or association) members were determined.

"However much I try to help you people, the dominant caste has made all this their business and habit, and they will not be stopped," he told them.

Training Dalit and Tribal people in their rights under Indian law is the first step in making long term change possible. Working together as a sangam supported by a network of lawyers and activists increases the likelihood of their success. More than 25,000 women are members of village sangam.



The Dark Interval Towards a theology of story

Author: John Dominic Crossan
Publisher: Polebridge Press, 1994.
130 pages.
Reviewer: Adrian Skelton

In this book, before discussing parable as a form of story, the author sets out a theory that all narratives, all literature, lie on a spectrum from Myth to Parable. In between lie Apologue (e.g. Animal Farm), Action (most novels), and Satire (e.g. Gulliver's Travels).

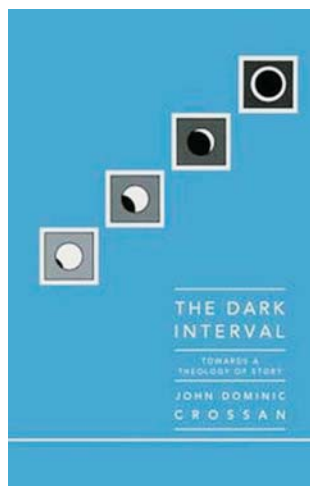
Apologue, the category closest to Myth, comprises fables or allegories with a moral message. Satire, close to the Parable end of the spectrum, blatantly makes fun of stupidity, often in a

political context. Parables, rightly understood, are far from being allegories.

Myths build us a picture of the world: examples are the symbolic tales of religion and the metanarratives of scientific theory. We need myths to live by, to orient ourselves.

We rightly associate parables with Jesus. Parables upset the world and break down familiar attitudes.

We need not only myths to live by, but also parables: to challenge our assumptions and puncture our pretensions. Like good art, parables impart shock value, not as an end in



itself but in order to unsettle us so that we rebuild, re-mythologise on contemporary and relevant foundations. Many of our misunderstandings in religion are category errors - especially mistaking parable for allegory and metaphor for myth.

The irony for me is that we have turned the life of Jesus into a myth and not paid enough attention to the parables, often allegorizing them and removing their power. The great liberal project of the 19th century was to begin to apply narrative theory to the Bible. The task was never completed because Church institutions realised the threat to their power. Two hundred years later, the same scenario is played out in relation to Islam, the Qur'an and its "satanic verses".

Wounded World and Broken Church Sermons towards healing

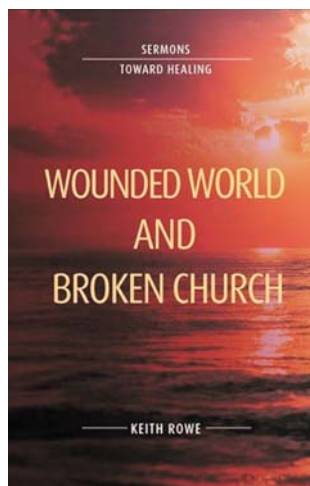
Author: Keith Rowe
Publisher: Coventry Press, Melbourne, 2022, 198 pages
Reviewer: John Thornley

This collection of sermons warrants a wide and ecumenical readership. The term 'ecumenical' embraces an interfaith focus, reflecting the author's contribution to the interfaith journey over several decades. Content focuses on the four Gospels - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John - and the life and teachings of Jesus.

The audience for any published sermons requires a more readable text than the solid scholarship written for and within

an academic institutional framework and in each chapter we hear the speaking voice of the writer, mixing the idioms of conversation with the heightened rhetoric of a storyteller and poet.

The sermons are a challenge to go deeper into the biblical texts. Integrated within the exposition of the Bible passage is the relevance for our ministry and mission today. There is a prophetic voice in these sermons, sadly missing in mainstream churches today. Truth to power, yes! The author wrestles with the 'wounded' world and



'broken' church:

The closing words hold on to the Way of Jesus as a pathway through 'wilderness' times for the world and church:

The discussion goes on for, in the end, Jesus fits no formula. ... What does continue is the invitation 'to do' Jesus, to so live that his renewing energy is set free in our ailing world ('God so loved the

world' - not the Church). The future of the church, of the Christian adventure and, I think, of humanity, requires that there will always be a people in whom the Way of Jesus is growing and who by whatever name they call him continue to build the road for which he laid the foundations.

The book can be ordered online from Pleroma Books, Otane (\$39.99).
order@pleroma.org.nz



Thomas Aquinas

1225-1274

Rev Abhishek Solomon

Thomas Aquinas was born into a noble family in Italy. He studied at the University of Naples where he learnt about the ancient Greek and Roman authors whom Christian academics had previously ignored. While in Naples, Aquinas also encountered the Dominicans. He was intrigued by them and decided to join the order against the will of his family.

Eventually, the family came around and accepted their son's wishes to join the Dominican order. Subsequently, Aquinas went to the University of Paris where he spent much of the rest of his life teaching theology and writing books. He became a prolific author writing some 200 pieces on Christian theology. The two works for which he is best known are *Summa Theologica* and *Summa contra Gentiles*.

At the University of Paris, Aquinas's career was off to a rocky start. It was a time of intellectual and theological turbulence. Aquinas was caught between those who promoted the introduction of the philosophy of Aristotle and those who opposed it. Eventually, his own reasoned response achieved a synthesis between Christian theology and Aristotelian philosophy.

After reading Aristotle, Aquinas concluded that even though Aristotle was not Christian, he had many great ideas and we can learn from him. He admired Aristotle and made a highly important argument for the compatibility of religious belief and rational thought. As a result, his writings are both philosophical and theological as he seeks to present the Christian faith in the form of a rational system.

One of Aquinas's central concerns was to understand right from wrong. He proposed that the universe operated according to two kinds of law: 'natural law' and divine 'eternal law'. For example, we could find out for ourselves how to smelt iron, build roads or organise an economy. But there were



revealed 'eternal laws' that reason could not arrive at on its own, or so it was assumed at the time.

Aquinas argued that "it is not necessary that the human mind should be endowed with any new light from God in order to understand those things which are within its natural field of knowledge."

Aquinas's fundamental move was to create a valid space for 'natural law'. He argued that relying solely on the Bible could overshadow personal observation and experience, leading people to discount their own discoveries. People would be so impressed by revelation from authority that they would discount the power of observation and what they can discover on their own. What Aquinas was trying to achieve was to show that both natural and revealed laws are equally important. The problem emerges when we exclusively favour one above the

other, depending on our biases.

To this day, the tension between higher authority and personal experience remains. Though today authority doesn't always mean consulting the Bible. In modern sociology, it is known as the tension between autonomy and control. It often manifests in a struggle between a minority group or an individual and larger social forces.

The main point for Aquinas is that 'natural law' is an integral part of 'eternal law' and can be discerned by using the power of independent reasoning. As a man of deep faith, Aquinas provided a framework for the process of doubt and open scientific inquiry. He reminds us that wisdom can spring out of surprising places. From the Bible and tradition, but also from rationality and empirical reasoning; from science and research, but also from revelation and introspection.



Plaques to be Mounted at Pitt Street Methodist Church

Ian Faulkner, President Wesley Historical Society

Recently I was asked whether I knew what had happened to the memorial plaques that were in the entry way / common area at the former Trinity Methodist Theological College, Grafton. This is the prominent red brick building with white Oamaru stone facings on Grafton Road that was originally the site of the Wesleyan Native Institution established in 1844. The Theological College served the Methodist Church on this site from 1929 to 1970.

The building has been restored and is now the headquarters of the Church of Scientology, New Zealand. I responded that I could account for five plaques.

That I know about these five plaques is testament to the energy of the late Helen Laurenson, who as the then President of the Wesley Historical Society, along with her husband Eric, approached the Church of Scientology about the plaques. Helen was

One of five plaques that have been returned to the WHS. Credit Susan Thompson and MCNZ Archives.

concerned that these plaques were memorials to part of the New Zealand Methodist / Wesleyan experience that should not be lost. The Church of Scientology gifted the plaques to the Wesley Historical Society and they have been in storage since.

The five plaques are: an appreciation to John Edson; two detailing appreciation to John Probert; and two as a memorial to “former students of The Theological College who gave their lives in the Great War”.

In 1918 John Edson established a Trust to purchase and maintain a pipe organ for the Theological College Collegiate Chapel, and for the purchase of music. The terms of this Trust were later modified by the Methodist Theological College Edson Trust Extension Act 1928 to allow the funds to be applied in a less prescriptive manner. John Edson was a benefactor to a range of other Methodist causes, one of these being to establish the Library at Trinity College.

John Probert was a significant benefactor of Trinity College. This plaque details appreciation in a most fulsome manner. The story of the Probert Trust was the subject of the 1982 Proceedings of the 1982 Wesley Historical Society NZ. Written by E.W. Hames the account titled The Saga of

the Probert Trust makes compelling reading.

Those listed on the memorial plaque to “former students who gave their lives in the Great War” are:

- i. Frederick Rands, Chaplain, died in Germany, 14 February, 1919
- ii. Alexander Allen, Chaplain, killed in service, 8 May, 1918
- iii. Aldwyn R. Gordon, M.A., 2nd Lieutenant, died of wounds, 26 August, 1918
- iv. George B. Sheridan, 2nd Lieutenant, killed in action, 15 September, 1916.

A detailed account of their war service may be found in Allan Davidson's New Zealand Methodist Chaplains and Ministers at War: The First World War Through Their Eyes, published by the Wesley Historical Society in 2016.

It is intended that these plaques are mounted in the stairwell on the north-western corner of the Pitt Street Methodist Church in Auckland Central.

This has been supported by the Pitt Street Trust and congregations. Once they are repatriated to a Methodist / Wesleyan setting, they will have emerged from storage and be able to be viewed by successive generations of Methodist / Wesleyan people. The stories memorialised in this way will not be forgotten.



HONOUR BOUND

Sister Merle Farland

1906- 1988

Rev Donald Phillipps

Recently newspapers were full of tributes to those who had received recognition through the King's Birthday Honours List. This twice-yearly ritual provides a convenient opportunity for New Zealanders to acknowledge other New Zealanders who have served their country well and in many ways. The Methodist Church is sparing in its use of this means for honouring its own. And ministry is, relatively speaking, rarely so recognised. Rarely has a minister received an award for their bravery while carrying out their calling - being a minister is not usually a dangerous vocation these days.

But one such was Merle Stephanie Farland, born to Elizabeth Ellen and Harold Farland of Christchurch and later of Auckland. She was educated at Epsom Girls' Grammar and during that time the call to missionary service and nursing became clear. She trained in nursing at Auckland and graduated in 1933. To better prepare herself for the wide-ranging demands of nursing in the Solomon Islands mission field, she spent extra years gaining qualifications in both maternity and Plunket work. In 1938 she went, with her friend Joy Whitehouse and Dr Alan Rutter, to the Helena Goldie Hospital at Bilua. Here she made a name for herself as an exceptionally able professional. She was well enough known to be someone, after the outbreak of war in the Pacific, for whom Methodist children in NZ might pray before they went to sleep at night.

Merle had decided to stay on as long as possible. She ministered to the sick and needy and in the course of those duties travelled extensively by canoe and on foot. This courageous stand was of great value to the local people though the coast watchers were very concerned for her. Well they might have been for Merle herself ran a coast-watching operation for a time. It is not surprising therefore, that they took an early opportunity to have her evacuated by a Catalina flying boat. She made this rendezvous at the south end of New Georgia, travelling there by canoe a good hundred miles through enemy lines. Having reached safety at New Caledonia, she immediately joined the NZ Forces as a nursing sister in the 3rd Division and returned briefly to the Solomon Islands in that capacity. She was posted to the hospital ship Maunganui and served on it until the end of the war. For this exceptional commitment to duty she received the MBE in 1947.

After the war and further training, Merle became a nursing administrator and served for four years as a Tutor Sister at the Lautoka Hospital in Fiji. She had additional training in midwifery at Edinburgh, in tropical medicine at Liverpool and then became involved with the World Health Organization. She served them in many developing countries, and she was seconded to a hospital in North Pakistan (Dacca)



Baby Clinic - Apia Western Samoa Credit MCNZ Archives.



Merle Farland and Joy Whitehouse Credit MCNZ Archives.

specialising in the treatment of the many who suffered from smallpox.

In 1960 she returned to the Pacific where she was involved in a major survey of the need for maternal and child health throughout that region. She retired in 1967 and settled in Auckland, becoming part of the Mission Bay congregation.

Merle Farland was someone who never stopped learning. The honour she received in 1947 was a small recognition of a lifetime of exceptional service - of skill and commitment, of bravery and duty. It is an honour, in fact, to share this outstanding life with you.