

# Rongopai

WORKING TOGETHER TO TAKE THE GOOD NEWS BACK TO NEW ZEALAND

Rongopai is  
the newsletter  
of the Christian  
Community  
Churches of  
New Zealand Trust.  
Summer 2016



**CCCNZ**  
Together Works Better

As we shine like  
stars, holding out  
the word of life.

I have no happy childhood memories.  
I came from a deeply dysfunctional background,  
made all the more painful with the separation of  
my parents, a split full of anger and loss.

Things changed in my early teens. It started when my neighbour  
invited me to a Christian youth group. Having nothing to lose, I  
went along and that's when I saw, for the first time, how functional  
families worked.

I saw dads loving their kids and kids respecting their parents. I saw  
husbands loving their wives and wives honouring their men. I saw  
people who, suffering like me, found God's help and love in the  
midst of their difficulties.

It was *the gospel*, fleshed out by dozens of ordinary people.

Timothy Keller summarises the gospel: *"Through the person and  
work of Jesus Christ, God fully accomplishes salvation for you,  
rescuing you from His judgment for your sin and into fellowship with  
him, and then restores the creation in which we can enjoy our new life  
together with him forever."*

## The gospel is powerful

From the day I believed this good news, the Holy Spirit has been  
transforming every part of my life. My marriage is different because  
of the gospel. So, too, is the future of each of my children. Even my  
career has been shaped by it!

Beyond the boundaries of individual lives, the gospel even has the  
power to change nations. Since its arrival on our shores, the gospel  
has shaped New Zealand in remarkable ways.

That's one of the reasons we've called the  
CCCNZ newsletter *Rongopai* – the Maori word  
for the gospel. *Rongopai* also represents our  
hope; that the good news of Jesus Christ will be  
proclaimed throughout our land, just as it was in  
the early days.

## The gospel needs partners

When I recall my own journey to faith, one of  
the most striking things is how many people  
God used to help me understand who Jesus is.  
Different individuals. Different groups. Different  
families from within those groups. Even different  
churches.

That's why our churches need to work together more. If we pool  
our resources and look for opportunities to work side-by-side, we're  
more likely to be effective in sharing the gospel. With families. With  
business owners. With Muslim friends. With secular classmates.  
With our neighbours.

## CCCNZ can help

As many of you know, CCCNZ is a new national service Trust  
working in partnership with Stewards, GC3, Pathways and  
PastorLink.

The reason we exist is to encourage and equip our family of  
independent churches and support ministries to *work together*  
so as to flourish as families and to impact New Zealand with the  
Good News.

One way we'll do that is by telling you what other believers have  
been doing. In this our first newsletter, you'll read about churches  
who have already created partnerships with others. Our hope is  
that you'll be inspired to find your own way of linking up with other  
churches to do great things.

When you do, would you tell us all about it?  
We'll then publish your story so the rest of our  
churches can be encouraged and motivated  
to do likewise.

*May our Father bless you and your church  
richly as you shine like stars in the world,  
holding forth the word of life.*

MARK Grace  
CCCNZ Ambassador



## Will you be our Rongopai contact and distributor for your church?

We are looking for people to receive copies of Rongopai for their church and to ensure they are inserted into newsletters.  
Is that you? Please contact Sheri Franklyn at CCCNZ if you are interested. Her email is [sherifranklyn@cccnz.nz](mailto:sherifranklyn@cccnz.nz)



"What concerns me about the church is the lack of confidence in the Bible."

Nigel Pollock, the keynote speaker for next year's Regional Conference, made this observation when discussing the conference topic: *How do we increase our engagement with Scripture?*

Behind the comment are Nigel's personal convictions about Scripture:

*"I strongly believe that the Bible is relevant to the whole of life. In fact, I think Scripture is foundational to who we are and what we're called to be in the world. Should we increase our engagement with Scripture? Actually, I think that understanding and applying scripture is the core task of pastoral leadership."*

From talking to pastors throughout the country, Nigel firmly believes that one of the root causes is the competing priorities in different models of church leadership.

*"I remember talking to a pastor about the possibility that preaching was no longer a priority among the churches. He said 'What do you mean? Preaching is a top priority for me. It's definitely in my top 10, probably number seven on my list.'"*

*"Number seven on his list? I thought, what six things has he placed ahead of explaining and applying God's word to God's people? So I said to him, 'What would you say of a restaurant where food was number seven in their list of priorities?'"*

*"That's how important I think the words of God are. They are to church leadership what food is to the restaurant. But if pastors think less of the Bible, it will undoubtedly show in the quality of their preaching."*

Which begs the question: If God's children are not hearing great preaching on a regular basis, what effect is that having in their lives?

*"Subconsciously, congregations are taking their cues from the pulpit. If the preaching is insipid and grey or if it's merely a series of shallow sound bites designed to entertain, people will come to expect very little from reading their Bibles, if they read them at all."*

Nigel's other concern is how such preaching encourages a fast-food approach to Bible reading where believers expect quick fixes in exchange for little effort.

*"If we preach to entertain, demanding very little from listeners, we kill the capacity to work and to genuinely seek God. And encountering God is the reward for that work. Ironically, in our efforts to make things simple and easier, we're actually making it more complicated and harder for people to connect with God through His word."*

*"The downsides are not just felt inside the walls of the church. A poor biblical diet will manifest, unavoidably, in the world outside."*

*"Engaging with Scripture is essential for evangelism in the 21st century and for making disciples. If believers are scripturally malnourished, if we're not relating to God through His word, we won't be able to help others encounter Him either."*

*"Ask any elite athlete; they understand the connection between internal health and their performance on the field. As a coach of representative hockey, I work with athletes who take their nutrition and hydration very seriously. They know that what you do off the pitch has a direct bearing to what you can do on the pitch."*

*"Spiritual life is no different. You can't take easy short cuts and expect to make an impact in the world."*

The good news is, the trend can be reversed.

*"God is gracious and continues to advance His kingdom. He keeps His promises. His power is at work in us and through us. We can grow our confidence in God's word. We can make rich, biblical preaching a priority in our churches. We can, as Paul says, discipline our bodies like an athlete, training it to do what it should. And we can learn to engage with Scripture so that 'the word of God dwells in us richly.'"*

That's where Nigel will be leading us next year.

#### PAUL WINDSOR ABOUT NIGEL POLLOCK



*"For more than a century, 'truth through personality' has been a common understanding of what preaching involves - and Nigel Pollock provides an uncommon illustration of it. His ability with the truth of God's word as a clear and faithful teacher is hitched to a warm, vibrant and humble manner that enables people to hear God speaking to them - even through the Scottish accent!"*





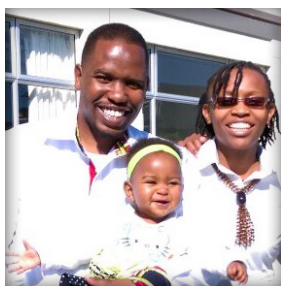
# When Gravity Shifts

## How God used missionaries from Kenya to help transform His church in Whanganui

How does God help Whanganui believers share the truth of Jesus Christ, when they've been culturally conditioned to keep quiet? He gives them leaders from another culture.

The church is Ingestre Street Bible Chapel, the pastors are Alice and Kinyua from Kenya, and this is how God brought them together.

### A Disturbing Question



Kinyua, Kara and Alice

Back in 2009, Alice and Kinyua were in full-time theological studies in Kenya. During that time, they were confronted with the idea that a missional shift was taking place in the world: more missionaries were now being sent from the South and East to take the gospel of Christ to the North and West.

A disturbing question arose in their minds: "What if God is sending us from Africa as missionaries?" As Alice recalls, she was not at all comfortable with this direction. "I was not enthusiastic about the idea. I was comfortable in Kenya and the thought of leaving Africa scared me."

She and Kinyua prayed. "What else could we do but at least make ourselves available to the possibility that God might use us in this way?"

Five years passed during which time the couple completed their studies, married, and became fulltime pastors in their church. Then, in 2014, the possibility of taking the gospel to the West became decidedly real.

Alice and Kinyua's church, Mamlaka Hill Chapel, had received an invitation from the Church Missionary Society. The invitation was

to send missionaries to help with evangelism in New Zealand for one month. Alice and Kinyua were among the 12 who were sent.



10 of the 12 Kenyan missionaries (and their families) that came to New Zealand in April 2014

"Each of us was attached to a different church in Dunedin," says Alice. "We did outreach work every day for three weeks. After that we were sent to Timaru where we did exactly the same thing."

### Paralysis in New Zealand

During that time, Alice noticed a kind of paralysis that was common among New Zealand Christians. "They wanted to reach out to people, to tell the truth about Jesus, but they felt so unqualified. The believers were paralysed. And I could see why. New Zealand society seemed very loud in its anti-Christian attitude. It was

overpowering, like a kind of social persecution which made many feel that their gospel message was irrelevant and unwelcome. The believers really took this to heart."

The Kenyan disciples also sensed a lack of faith in the Gospel's power, that God's message of grace had the capacity to transform others. "They definitely knew that the gospel had the power to convict them" explained Alice, "but they were not sure that the power was there to move another person. I think that's why New Zealand Christians seemed resigned to encouraging one another in their salvation."

## Uninterested or Uninformed?

In spite of her own confidence, Alice also experienced resistance from those who were unwilling to hear her Christian message. But even among these people, she discovered that ignorance, not hard-heartedness was the reason for their hesitation.

"I met two teenage girls and told them what we were doing and why we were in New Zealand. I invited them to an event but they were reluctant to come. When I asked about their spiritual background, I was surprised to learn that neither they nor their parents had ever been to church. They asked me 'What happens in your church?' I realised that they were not resistant – they just had no idea of what Christianity was about. They were completely unreached! This made me wonder how many other New Zealanders were seeking but uninformed."

## Called to Return

Upon returning to Kenya, Alice and Kinyua felt to pray about returning as missionaries to New Zealand. Their prayer was simple: "If the Lord opens a door for us to go back to New Zealand by the end of the year, we'll go."

Within six months, they'd received three invitations to interview for pastoral positions – two from churches in Christchurch and one from Ingestre Street Bible Church (ISBC) in Wanganui. Initially, the interviews were via Skype, but in March 2015, Kinyua was flown back to New Zealand for face-to-face interviews with the ISBC leaders.

Alice recalls: "All of us felt that God was in this; Kinyua even received several confirmations that Whanganui was God's mission field for us. But even though we were supposed to start in 2015, we couldn't travel since I was expecting our first child."

In fact, it was a full 10 months later than the expected start date before Alice, Kinyua, and Kara were able to set foot in New Zealand. "That was a long delay, a long time for the church to wait for us. But they were so convinced about Kinyua and me, they were willing to wait."

The couple started work in May 2016.

## Missionary Pastors

Though they were employed as pastors for ISBC, both Alice and Kinyua felt that they were also missionaries and needed to approach their work as such. "We both felt strongly about this," said Alice. "The culture here was completely new to us, so we needed to

take the time to learn about New Zealand life and the people, and to be accepted by our local community and neighbours. It was no different than if a Kiwi had come over to serve in Kenya."

God's wisdom in bringing this couple to New Zealand was apparent. As missionaries from outside the culture, Alice and Kinyua were not conditioned to expect gospel resistance. As pastors of a local church, they were now in a place to lead their people into the freedom and confidence they had always enjoyed.

Alice puts it like this. "Even though Kinyua and I do not regard ourselves as Evangelists, we do feel we have something to offer our New Zealand friends. As Kenyans, we are more willing to share with others and not paralysed about telling our gospel story."

## How do you help others share Jesus?

It's one thing to be confident in your own gospel sharing; it's another to help others to overcome their fears and do likewise. Alice explains their approach:

"The first thing is not to be in a hurry to change people. There is no hurry, no need to push in the first few months. At the same time, we constantly focus our people's hearts and minds on the purpose of God for us, His work of making disciples and our part in that work."

"One very important key is that Kinyua and I demonstrate how we do it; we show them so that they can see a living example, rather than just hearing exhortation from the front."

Another practical thing we do is to help our people think through their own story so that they feel sure about what they have to share. Then we challenge them: 'Share with one person and pray intentionally for them.' Praying for someone is so important, because that's how love is cultivated, and in evangelism, love is the most crucial thing."

In spite of the preparation and excitement, many are still apprehensive about sharing their faith. Alice and Kinyua understand. "It will take time, there's no need to rush. We will push a little when the time is right, and God willing, we will all begin to experience the joy of seeing others come to know Jesus."

"And not just us. We want to share ideas with other churches and to do God's work with them. Together is always better!"



Celebrating Kara's 1st birthday with ISBC members that have now become our new family



# Sharing the stage, the speaker, and the pool



*The CCCNZ churches in Dunedin are finding ways to pool their resources and work together*

In the week-to-week business of a local church, it's easy to become insular. You know other Christians are out there, but since you rarely engage with them, it feels like it's just your small band of believers at work in the world.

Not so in Dunedin. Down there, the CCCNZ churches are doing good things together.

It started when the leaders of Caversham Community Church decided to invite other churches to an evening service. The invitation was not simply to attend, but to join in and mesh their talents with everyone else's.

Every church said yes. So on May 15th, Cornerstone International Bible Church, Riverside Chapel Henley, and Queens Drive Gospel Hall joined with Caversham to celebrate.

Such was the willingness to unite, the worship team became an amalgamation of each church's musicians and singers. The band became the embodiment of what the evening was all about.

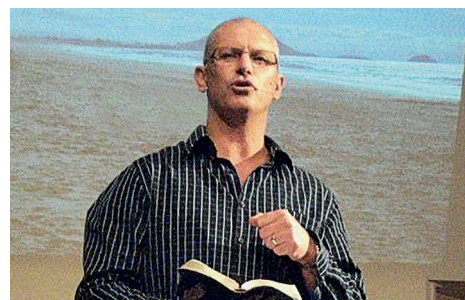
One of the big upsides of the gathering was the reconnection of old friends, people who knew each other from way back but had lost touch. For many, the sense of togetherness was palpable. Simon Lim of Cornerstone, commented: *"On our own, it's easy to feel small and isolated. But when our churches came together, you realise that we're part of something bigger. It was quite moving."*

That combined service became the springboard for other joint initiatives. Next time, it was Riverside Chapel that took the lead. When their elders learned that Tom McIvor was to be the guest speaker at a Cornerstone morning service, they organised to have Tom speak again in the evening and invited all the churches to come over to Riverside to listen.

Once again, it was the most enriching time. As people reconnected, the supper conversations threatened to spill over into Monday!

With every joint initiative, the lines between US and THEM or OUR STUFF and THEIR

STUFF becomes more blurred. Need to baptise some people but don't have a baptism pool? *Easy, says Queens Drive Gospel Hall; come on over and use our pool and run the celebration service at our place.* Which is exactly what Cornerstone did.



*When Tom McIvor was the guest speaker at Riverside, all the CCCNZ churches in Dunedin were invited to come and listen.*

BECAUSE TOGETHER WORKS BETTER IN DUNEDIN.

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Want to stay up-to-date with what CCCNZ is doing?

Here are two ways to find out about people, events and initiatives around the country.  
1. OUR WEBSITE: Go to [www.cccnz.nz](http://www.cccnz.nz)

2 OUR EMAIL NEWSLETTER: subscribe on the CCCNZ website, or contact Sheri Franklyn at [sherifranklyn@cccnz.nz](mailto:sherifranklyn@cccnz.nz)