

Rongopai

WORKING TOGETHER TO TAKE THE GOOD NEWS BACK TO NEW ZEALAND

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GOD'S VISION FOR A GLOBAL CHURCH



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RONGOPAI EDITOR

Have you ever looked around church on a Sunday morning and noticed a room full of people who look exactly like you?

Same age and stage of life.

Same level of wealth and privilege.

Same political views.

Same skin colour.

Same *culture*.

Maybe it's human nature, maybe it's circumstance, or maybe it's a mark of our society. Whatever the reason, our church families often represent silos of New Zealand culture—separate bodies that are self-contained and content.

As New Zealand culture shifts we are noticing changes. The impact of cheaper air travel, globalisation and the ongoing migration crisis have brought the nations to our communities. Our increasingly secular society means the New Zealand Church is looking to our brothers and sisters in the global church for solidarity, support and encouragement.

The everyday, local, down-the-road, New Zealand church is becoming increasingly multicultural and diverse.

Cover pic: Some of the guys from Campbell Forlong's running group; Kiwis, Afghans and Eritreans.

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“So how do we ‘do’ church in a way which reflects this multicultural picture? How do we love one another when we’re different from one another?”

A multicultural Church is not a recent invention or idea. All the way back in Genesis, God promises Abraham that, “...all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” The big picture of this blessing is ultimately realised in Jesus Christ.

How did God achieve this?

Through the death and resurrection of his Son. Ephesians 2:13-14 reminds us that at the cross the racial hostility and racial barriers between Jew and Gentile have been destroyed and that we—as people from all ethnicities—are able to be one in Christ *through* his blood shed on the cross.

The resurrected Jesus reminds the disciples of his authority and power and gives them a commission: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

In the Book of Acts we see the growth of the Church to include both Jews and Gentiles—God’s vision for his people is global, multi-national and unified in Christ.

Indeed, significant chunks of the New Testament letters focus on how Christians ought to make this special unity work out practically as they seek to serve God, grow in godliness, love one another and persevere in the faith.

God’s promise powerfully culminates in the picture of the great multitude described in Revelation 7:

“After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice:

“Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

But we’re not there yet. So how do we ‘do’ church in a way which reflects this multicultural picture? How do we love one another when we’re different from one another?

This issue of Rongopai looks at some of churches in our movement seeking to answer these questions—they’re all at different stages and face challenges unique to their situation, but I hope you’ll be as encouraged as I am to read about how they prayerfully step out in faith where God leads them.

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AN INTERNATIONAL HARVEST IN OUR OWN BACKYARD

Rongopai Editor Sophia Sinclair talks with Dr Merv Coates about the unprecedented opportunities for multicultural ministry in Auckland because of globalisation.

Demographers tell us that Auckland is one of the world's most multicultural cities. I gather you're excited about the implications of this for local mission?

For sure! I saw a great headline from a New Zealand-based mission magazine: *The people of the world: Coming to a street near you*. It's obviously true. The international diaspora is arriving here—in tens of thousands. Whatever your views on immigration, the 'Lord of the harvest' is sending these people to us.

These newcomers are arguably New Zealand's most responsive demographic; look at who's being baptised in New Zealand and Australian churches, especially in the big centres! These people in transition are very open to new friendships and new ideas; and are at least curious about Jesus—and quite a few are responding to him.

Can you give us any examples of this responsiveness?

Two Sundays back our assembly heard two testimonies:

One, a Middle Eastern woman who experienced God's love and power after her Christian friend prayed for her life situation and gave her a Bible. This opened her heart to know Christ.

The other testimony came from a Chinese university researcher who came to New Zealand a couple of years ago, and through an 'intentionally intercultural' church found the meaning for life he was looking for—beyond career success



Nothing builds connections like eating together.



Chinese graduate Scott is baptised, Merv Coates is on the right.

and a comfortable lifestyle. 18 months ago, he was baptised along with his wife and daughter. Now this family hosts our International Life Group in their home, with a dozen recently baptised believers from Japan, China, and India, and others still on their way.

Last Saturday they joined us and 70 others for an outing on Auckland Harbour in an old steam tugboat. 30 of the participants were from the Middle East, and 15 were families of women in our assembly's ESOL and Bible study group.

We refer curious international university students to 'intentionally intercultural' churches. God has worked through two of these churches in a way that has ignited our confidence in the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit to touch people's lives—with dozens being baptised each year.

What are some ways of engaging with these newcomers to New Zealand?

Most of it is small stuff; everyday friendships, eating together, helping fill out CVs, proof-reading essays, praying with them, showing them our beautiful country, enjoying outings... and celebrations!

Spending time celebrating events like graduations, citizenship, exam success, and children's achievements. Also celebrating cultural festivals. For example, FFF family and friends celebrated a colourful Middle Eastern New Year festival with ethnic dancing, music, food and table discussions, and at the end of the night, several took Bibles or Jesus DVDs in their language. In December these friends will be invited into various homes to 'Celebrate Isa' (Jesus), including an explanation of why we celebrate Jesus' birth. Fun! Meaningful. Fruitful.

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Great to hear! Any more specifics on how the Good News can be introduced to international friends?

As we eat together, become good friends and do stuff together, we understand more deeply what matters to each other. And some of them welcome an opportunity to join us in short courses that introduce the Christian faith, such as modified Alpha courses, which have subtitles to make it easier to understand.

For ESOL guests we've developed our own course handouts, combining the best parts of Youth Alpha and the Alpha Film Series. If anyone is interested we're happy to share these handouts and video clips and discuss the merits of various alternatives. We've also experimented with Christianity Explored and Long Story Short—all good in particular contexts.

Some university groups simply read and discuss segments from Luke or John's Gospel, watching the relevant pericopes from movies such as *Son of God* or *John* (from *The Visual Bible*). We've done this with Hindu men and women, Middle Eastern and Nepalese PhD candidates; Buddhist and other childcare mums; and Unitec students, many of whom have been impacted as we let Jesus speak for himself in the gospels.

Importantly, we pay attention to their questions, like: 'Why did they kill him?' A question from a Hindu friend, touched after watching Jesus' words on the cross from the *Son of God* movie. Many say they've never read the gospels before.

In personal conversations, we offer to pray for whatever hopes and heart-aches these new friends share. Then watch how the Living God answers these prayers. Like a couple of weeks back, when an adult student from another faith announced: 'I'm so excited. Last week you all prayed for my son's visa—which had been rejected before. That night he rang from India to say it had been approved!' Welcome to the Living God.

What about churches in our movement? Over the next 5-10 years, how will we allow the new reality of globalisation to reshape us?

I hope that within the next five years, we'll see more assemblies with more of these 11 marks of an intercultural church:

- Leaders that model inter-cultural hospitality and relationships
- Preaching, testimonies, and mission statements that direct attention to the world at our doorstep
- A cultural mix in church leadership teams, and worship teams
- 'Welcome to New Zealand' Saturday mornings (ask Eden Community Church about this)



Outings to Karangahake Gorge build friendships.

- Multiple language resources—booklets and DVDs—available in church foyers
- Public prayers for countries represented in the fellowship
- Acknowledging key cultural events such as Lunar New Year
- Sermon note summaries available for ESOL people
- Sometimes singing verses or saying benedictions in other languages
- ESOL classes, along with simple English Bible studies (ask Northcross Church, Eden Community Church, Lincoln Road Bible Chapel, or Ngaire Avenue Bible Chapel)
- International home groups or language-based life groups for those with limited English

Obviously, these changes won't happen quickly or without resistance. Even the first century church took decades to appreciate the radical truth of being ONE people under Christ... walls broken down ... a new humanity made visible. A truly, radically intercultural church is a powerful testimony in a globalised world.

Merv Coates is available for consultation with any groups who want to move in these directions. Merv taught at Laidlaw College for 20 years and wrote his doctoral thesis on 'Missional Churches in an Age of Globalisation'. He has also taught at Pathways College, NZ Assembly Bible School, and GLO, as well as block courses in Eritrea and Myanmar. Contact Merv: merv.coates1@gmail.com

Want to get started right away? Why not begin with Merv's recommended reading: "Building International, Multi-ethnic or Multi-cultural Churches." By Peter and Elizabeth Anderson and Warren and Doreen Payne.



HOW CULTIVATING A HEART OF COMPASSION DEVELOPED A MULTICULTURAL CHURCH

‘What did Christ value?’

This was the key question the people of City Bible Church (CBC) in Hamilton asked when they began developing their church’s values and vision. Their desire was for these values to become identifying markers of their church community.

One of the six values they landed on was this: *We value compassion for the needy*. Senior Pastor Campbell Forlong says that at the time this was one area where they needed to develop: “We felt like out of all the values we had identified, this was our weakest—that this was a muscle we needed to exercise and grow.”

So, the whole church spent three months delving into what it means to have compassion for the needy—reading the Bible together, hearing testimonies, and getting involved practically in their community. Their prayer was that they would have eyes open to see where God was leading them.

One of the results of this time of praying, seeking and listening was the development of the Agora Community Trust. CBC had just purchased 13B Kent Street in Frankton which provided the opportunity to express their love for their local community in the form of an event centre and café.

And as their desire to practically love their community grew, so did the opportunities.

The profits from the café are given away to charities, many of them based in the local community, through the ‘50 cents a cup’ initiative—where Agora has pledged to donate 50c from every hot drink sold to the designated charity of the

month. Over the past 9 years more than \$130,000 has been given away to meet local need.

One of the first charities the café ever supported was Refugee Services (now Red Cross). At that time Campbell was invited along to a pōwhiri welcoming a group of Colombian refugees to their new home in Waikato. “God, if there’s someone here from another country who you want me to befriend, let me know.” He prayed. “I was open to where God was leading and what he had in front of me”.

And that’s where Campbell met Abelardo, Doralba and their family who were fleeing violence and civil unrest caused by a 50-year civil war between the Colombian government’s armed forces and guerrilla soldiers, paramilitaries and drug cartels. After striking up a conversation, Campbell and Abelardo began meeting regularly for coffee to help Abelardo develop English conversation skills.

Through Abelardo and his family the wider Colombian community became a part of the CBC family—people started coming along to church, joining life groups and making friends. Along with CBC, some of the Colombian Christians organised and hosted a Fiesta, a celebration for their wider neighbourhood.

As needs developed CBC was able to employ a Community Worker, Victoria Forero, to help facilitate and support the church’s outreach, and Campbell says that CBC’s partnership with the Colombian community opened up the door to the wider former refugee and migrant communities: “Many Latino families have connected with our community

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Campbell and Abelardo having their weekly coffee together in the early days.

and now once a month on a Sunday evening we gather upstairs at Agora for Spanish Worship. Every Sunday morning our regular worship is also translated live into Spanish by Victoria.”

The church now runs ‘Converse’ a conversational class for ESOL students: “What began as an informal English class several years ago has developed into a multicultural community of migrants, former refugees and Kiwis who gather each Wednesday for English lessons, as well as regularly connecting through seasonal events and experiences.” But it’s not just formal events or meetings, says Campbell: “We’ve really tried to focus on the importance of relationship, and encourage people in our church to connect with one another. These friendships have built community and encourage us to practically love one another.”

More recently, some people in the church have been deepening friendships with those in the local Muslim community—particularly with refugees. Abul is a young man who fled bombing in his home of Kabul, Afghanistan, after his father went missing. Abul’s mother managed to get him and his six brothers and sisters to relative safety in Pakistan, and then after two years to New Zealand.

Campbell met Abul and his family at Converse two and a half years ago. They’ve been friends ever since, and Abul and his younger twin brothers are part of Campbell’s trail running group. Through contacts at CBC Abul and one of twins are now employed full-time, learning the trade of building: “We were running recently and Abul pointed up to the hill with pride and told me, ‘I’m building that house’. It had been a dream of his to build houses since he was a child in Kabul.”

As the years have gone on, and the church family has become more and more multi-cultural. “It’s taking us a while to fully embrace the rich diversity that is developing,” says Campbell. But in the past few years people from the church have started to engage in seeking to contribute to growing a multicultural community. They have seen this in a number of ways: “From offering knitting classes to baking supper, teaching card-making or woodwork, helping teach English or offering transport.”

Coming together as a variety of cultures is not always an easy process; there are different ways of doing things, language barriers, and—in the case of many refugees—often complicated emotional and physical health needs. “Stories have been a helpful way of grounding why we should show compassion, why we should care,” says Campbell, “for us, telling the stories of refugees and former refugees has been powerful in helping Kiwis realise what people have been through.”

It’s personal for Campbell—he’s become good mates with Abelardo and their families are close friends. Abelardo is now a fully-trained arborist working in Waikato, and his wife Doralba serves on CBC’s leadership team representing her Latino community.

City Bible Church’s vision to become a growing multi-cultural community grew out of their desire to live like Christ, and as they followed that desire God led them to opportunities. As a leader, Campbell encouraged people to ask: ‘Who is my neighbour and how am I loving them?’ “We aim to help people see what’s practical and in reach, but to contemplate the next step out of their comfort zone. We’re in the process of reviewing our church mission again—looking at how we can reinvigorate and revive a church-wide passion for what Christ values.”

Story by Sophia Sinclair



The boys at Converse English class at Agora.



AN UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITY

Nearly ten years on from pastor Campbell Forlong's first meeting with Colombian refugees in Hamilton (see our previous story), the New Zealand government recently started to home Colombian refugees in Southland—Sophia Sinclair continues the story of how God is working through people in the CCCNZ movement.

In July 2017 Reuben and Evelyn Smith began to pray and seek the Lord's guidance over a two-year plan for their family's future. Motivated by their love for the gospel and spurred on by a heart for Paraguay (where Evelyn was born and grew up) they committed to regularly praying and connecting with local leaders there, with the plan for Reuben (who works as a high school teacher) to make several trips over to bless and encourage the church. During this time God worked unexpectedly to bring South America to their doorstep—from Colombia to Southland, New Zealand.

In March 2018 the first lot of Colombian refugees were settled in Invercargill; just some of the millions of Colombians displaced during a decades-long civil war between Colombian government forces and guerrilla soldiers, paramilitaries and drug cartels. Over 100 Colombian refugees are expected to be resettled in Southland by the end of 2018.

Both Reuben and Evelyn speak Spanish—a vital asset in helping Southland's newest citizens adjust to life in New Zealand. This adjustment is something Evelyn understands intimately; when she moved to New Zealand she had to learn English to get a job, but now it is because of her Spanish Language skills that she is able to work in the area of refugee support and resettlement. Evelyn currently works alongside families with WellSouth, helping them to access medical care and support systems.

The Smith family attend Rosedale Bible Chapel (RBC), where the community has also chipped in—along with the help of Ellis Road, Lochiel, and Edendale—to make sure the new arrivals would be warm enough over winter, by providing firewood and blankets.

There are a number of ways for churches to reach out to help refugee communities across New Zealand. Red Cross teams provide volunteers with good training and support. Language skills are appreciated, but essential is the willingness to know and understand someone from a different culture. Many refugees are fleeing very traumatic circumstances and have complex needs, providing an opportunity for churches to live out Christ's mercy and compassion.

Top image: Pablo, Jose, Maria and Nidia; some of the recent Colombian refugees who have made their home in Southland, NZ.

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Reuben and Evelyn Smith with Lynelle and Josh Honiss.

While the initial response was practical, the Smiths and the wider church community have been praying for ways to share their faith and bless the Colombian community spiritually—and God has provided.

Jose and Maria, along with their daughter Nidia, have been attending church regularly and are very keen to learn more about the Bible and grow. Pablo is young Colombian guy who is being discipled: “A month ago I asked Pablo if he had put his faith in Jesus. He said he wasn’t ready yet. On a

recent hunting trip I asked him the same question. He replied: ‘Yes, and I’m growing closer to God each day.’ I noticed last week that he took communion for the first time.”

Reuben and Evelyn have started a Bible Study and they are taking the group through a Spanish Language translation of ‘Fundamentals of the Faith’ from Grace Community Church (USA).

God has provided other Spanish-speaking Christians, Josh and Lynelle Honiss, to help support and disciple those who are seeking. People from RBC have stepped up to provide transport and learn greetings in Spanish. The Smith family, along with the wider RBC community, are continuing to pray for the wider Colombian community as they ask God to equip them for this new area of ministry.

The Smith family’s connection to Paraguay continues in partnership with believers over there, with Reuben visiting for two weeks in July 2018, and another trip planned for 2019. For Reuben and Evelyn Smith, it is a heart for reaching out with the gospel and willingness to serve the Lord in what he has placed before them—whether in New Zealand or Paraguay.

FRIENDS OF FRIENDS

Rachael and the *Friends of Friends* team at Eden Community Church write about monthly dinners where community friendships have been developing.

We have had a wonderful time this past year hosting monthly dinners for friends from all over the Middle East, India and Africa. Most are new to New Zealand and just keen to make friends with Kiwis.

Our dinners began a bit over a year ago when we spent time praying for our friends during the month of Ramadan (a special month of fasting for many of our friends). At the end of the month we invited our friends to join us for a special meal that we would cook for them. They were so touched that we would go to this trouble to cook for them!

A lot of people knew me from my English classes, but others who came were work colleagues, neighbours, and even from a ‘chance’ meeting on the bus!

We had about 50 people enjoy that first dinner and since then usually get about 40-50 on a Sunday night, although now everyone brings food to contribute.

We have even started a bit of a children’s program which has been wonderfully assisted by a lovely Brazilian couple.

Each time we give a talk from the Bible and then discuss it in small groups at the tables. Sometimes we even sing a worship song and share prayer requests and answers to prayer.

We’re beginning to build some very close friendships with the people who come regularly and try to visit in between the monthly dinners.

We also have an awesome team of helpers from Eden Community Church who help with the table discussions, meal and serving.

P.S. The food is incredible!

“We’re beginning to build some very close friendships with the people who come regularly and try to visit in between the monthly dinners”

CONNECTION POINT

Rongopai Editor Sophia Sinclair caught up with Matt Cameron and Alistair Pike from Church Street Chapel in Timaru to learn more about how a local hostel for international students became a connection point for multi-cultural ministry.

Tell me a bit about the history of the hostel and how it all runs: how many students, and how long has there been a connection with the church?

The hostel was bought in about 1995 by a member of the local fellowship, Mr David Bruce, who then sold it a few years later, however he continued to manage the hostel. He encouraged many students to attend our church and ran a mid-week Bible study at the hostel. Mr Bruce is still there today and continues to manage the affairs of the hostel – called “North Haven”.

In what ways has this ministry changed in the past years—as God has brought different students from different backgrounds and countries across your path?

The cultures have changed over time – many Japanese people came at the start, then Pacific island cultures and other Asian nationalities... there has been a mix of cultures.

Several students have married Kiwi people and either gone back to their home country or stayed in New Zealand. As our church has welcomed students from different cultures we have found that non-students from different cultural backgrounds have also felt comfortable coming along.

We started to host an international dinner, where people of many different cultures shared a meal, and it became a kind of annual smorgasbord attracting non-Christians from the community. At our international dinner we have a guest speaker to present a simple gospel message.

How has this ministry challenged and encouraged members of your congregation?

We have had different times when the church members have shared a greeting in their language. Some of the preaching

“A big part of making connections and reaching out to international people is their desire to learn English”



Church Street Chapel church camp, 2018.

team type out their notes for those who have English as their second language, so they can follow along, and visual prompts like a slide show. We have used the Good News Bible in the pews to assist with easy reading.

Are there any stories you'd like to share of how this experience as students has changed lives and hearts for the Kingdom?

We can think of a number who have become Christians and been baptised and gone back to their country of origin and continued to serve and follow Jesus. One older man who did a “Discover the Way” course (an introduction to Christianity, see www.discoverthebible.co.nz) sent a gift of \$1000 back from Korea to be used for Kingdom work.

If there was another church out there interested in practically caring for international students, what tips or encouragement would you give them?

Well, buy a hostel... ha, ha! A big part of making connections and reaching out to international people is their desire to learn English and so having the gospel presented in easy-to-understand ways is a key part of our work. We use pictures in the notes to present our messages. We have offered Christianity courses and English language classes.

We've noticed that cultures welcome cultures. There have been times when a Japanese lady in our fellowship has recognised another Japanese person in town and ‘cold-turkey’ greeted them and invited them to our Sunday morning service.

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BROUGHT TOGETHER TO BE A BLESSING

Immediately after the February 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, Rutland Street elder Lincoln Rout attended a gathering of pastors and church leaders. During the meeting Baptist leader Murray Robertson encouraged leaders in the west of Christchurch to connect with leaders on the east—where quake damage was the greatest, and the communities hit the hardest.

“As I looked across the room it occurred to me that I knew of assemblies out east, and their leaders typically wouldn’t have been present at any of these meetings,” says Lincoln, “after the meeting I looked up Brethren.org and just went through the list, calling each one. I rang the number for Ekalesia Au Uso Kerisiano Samoa (EAKS), said hello and asked how the church was.”

At that stage the EAKS church building was doing fine, but many from the assembly were without power, and were staying with Pastor Faafetai Vaoga. “I asked if they could use some supplies to keep everyone well-fed, so those of us from Rutland Street helped out by taking them some meat and some chilly bins to keep everything cold.”

Pastor Faafetai says it was the beginning of their unique, God-ordained partnership, “God had put Mark Broughton

“God had put Mark Broughton on our journey to assist us with necessities and continuing God’s work. We were also very fortunate to have been blessed with Lincoln and Rutland Street Church at this time as well—the beginning of a great family.”

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Then, just before Christmas, another big aftershock hit and damaged the EAKS church building—making it unusable: “At that stage we had one big combined service together,”



Combined services include everyone singing songs in both languages.

says Lincoln, “and EAUKS began meeting at Rutland Street every Sunday afternoon after we’d finished our service. Sometimes people would travel across town several times to transport their whole family to church.”

This began the tradition of the two congregations gathering together once a month for a combined service—something they continue to do, even now that EAUKS has moved back to Linwood for regular Sunday worship.

WELCOMING THE NATIONS

Coming together has encouraged people to look forward to where God will take them, says Pastor Faafetai: “The effect on the people is amazing, they just want to experience the new challenge. On Sunday worship we respect each other’s way of worship and we have to go with the flow. Although hard at times—when it comes to dancing and different types of music—both sides are learning from each other. Worshipping with Rutland Street Church really make us feel welcomed, allowing us to be free with our culture, which I believe is what makes our worship time together work well.”

Lincoln says the greatest impact has often been for others looking on: “We have become a much more multicultural church since beginning our partnership with EAUKS. Since that time, we’ve had people from India, China, Korea... and many others join us. When people see the warmth we have towards EAUKS they conclude they’re welcome too.

We’d like to think we were always welcoming, but there was nothing to indicate that in the past.”

Lincoln says there here have been other changes too:

“The most obvious thing for Rutland Street—a happily conservative Open Brethren church, typical South Islanders—has been a change in emotional expression. Reserved emotions are just not the Samoan way, and we’ve learnt that it’s fine to be excited about church on Sunday! We’ve changed as a church to honour God in a more extroverted way.

“Now, at the end of a sermon the audience will clap, this is an outward expression of the Samoan heart honouring God for his word declared. There is also a willingness to show appreciation and enthusiasm.”

Meeting together has helped ground the global nature of Christ’s Church in reality and relationship, says Lincoln: “There’s been more conversation in terms of multiculturalism, mission and the gospel. I’ve been reflecting on Scripture differently, seeing it through another mindset. The Western mindset of the gospel typically sees ‘guilt and innocence’, while an Eastern mindset sees ‘shame and honour’. I wouldn’t have had the interest to look at it this way if it wasn’t for walking alongside our Samoan brothers and sisters.”

There has also been a partnership in outreach, says Pastor Faafetai, “Outreach is something that we work together on; raising money for good causes and people in need. Rutland Street has always come to our aid since the earthquakes and continue to do so—whether it’s church events, supplying equipment and just making the time to help us out in the community giving to those who are in need.”

NAVIGATING DIFFERENCES

Crossing cultures means navigating language and cultural differences. Lincoln says that over time the different congregations have adjusted, “if we were going to do anything differently, I think Rutland Street could have asked more questions to try and uncover cultural no-nos. For example, our combined service is always followed by a lunch; one of the elders picked up a broom and was cleaning, and I picked up a tea towel... We were firmly discouraged by some unhappy women from EAUKS—cleaning up was not the place for the elders! We hadn’t considered their view of how to honour people and show respect in that context—and that it might be different from ours. Our EAUKS brothers and sisters have been so gracious with our blunders.”

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“Language is difficult, but we believe God is with us and anything is possible. We are touched to have folks greet in Samoan and really give our culture a chance and once again making us feel very welcomed. Having both churches really give each other’s culture a good shot is both hilarious and a blessing.”

It is an understanding that God is at the heart of this family that has enabled people to work through differences, says Pastor Faafetai. “Language is difficult, but we believe God is with us and anything is possible. We are touched to have folks greet in Samoan and really give our culture a chance and once again making us feel very welcomed. Having both churches really give each other’s culture a good shot is both hilarious and a blessing.”

Combined services include everyone singing songs in both languages, and screens featuring the Bible in English and Samoan. Where possible, leaders have communicated face-to-face or via text messages—limiting the difficulty of phone conversations.

When the relationship has hit cultural barriers, one of the things both sides commit to is hearing and listening to those who are unhappy, then addressing the problem immediately. “We choose not to sweat the small stuff

and to just get on and look for the good God has in this,” says Lincoln.

And it has been good!

Pastor Faafetai says: “I believe, that if God did not have his hand over this partnership, this partnership would have been over before it started. It’s truly a miracle for us to have been blessed with Rutland Street Church—their time, resources and caring hearts have made this journey together an experience so great. All we can say is ‘faafetai, faafetai lava (thank you) to Rutland Street Church and, most importantly, our Heavenly Father.’”

Lincoln says: “God has blessed us greatly with our EAUKS family and the partnership we share. We feel very clearly that God had brought us together to be a help and a blessing to each other, that allows us to think and look for the good.”

Story by Sophia Sinclair



EAUKS members perform an item during the recent Everyday Disciple Making Regional Conference.

ENCOURAGING MULTICULTURAL LEADERSHIP

Dennis Fountain is an elder at Porirua Gospel Chapel; a multi-cultural church in Cannon's Creek, a Porirua suburb in the Wellington region. *"We realised we needed to address the issue of leadership development with the whole church and ran a camp for all members. A large proportion of adults in our church came along to learn and discuss what godly leadership looks like and how we should be cultivating future leadership as a group."*

Fellow elder Peter McKenzie says that finding a pattern has been a process: *"The former elders would have preferred to follow the normal assembly pattern of inviting younger members to join with us and, after a period of working with us and being trained by us, be proposed to the church as full elders. We attempted to do this over several years and could not attract one of the younger people to join us. It was then that our younger people—sensing our dilemma—offered to call the weekend conference and lead the process of finding new leaders."*

Four potential leaders came forward as a result of the camp and began a transition period as a 'Vision Team': *"Over a period of time the former elders have transitioned leadership to that team,"* says Peter, *"I believe the older process was healthier as it avoids a 'them and us' situation developing. This has not been without some tension, but we are grateful for the way God has used this new—even if imperfect—process to bring about change."*

The plan is to have two original elders remain and be joined by new leaders once the remaining elders stepped down. Dennis says, *"We're nearly at the completion of this period of transition, with an election coming up shortly."*

Dennis says the time of transition has been a key in working through issues and getting ready: *"Transition is important. It's better to have a transition so we can work through some of the things that are issues for our church."*

The church has been a multicultural one from the beginning in the 1960s; but helped by groups of refugees moving into the Porirua community in the 1980s. *"This has been something which we have worked hard to encourage and cultivate as a community; but it's a big issue for leadership to navigate,"* says Dennis, *"to be truly multicultural we should be multicultural at all levels—especially at leadership. We must encourage and develop up new leaders, resolve cultural misunderstandings and build unity in the Body of Christ. These things take time, discernment and wisdom. It hasn't always been easy."*

Dennis affirms that God has always been faithful: *"We are grateful for God's help in this process. Issues we continue to wrestle with include helping new leaders to undertake Biblical training and developing skills needed in a multicultural fellowship."*

Story by Sophia Sinclair

"Dennis Fountain is an elder at Porirua Gospel Chapel; a multi-cultural church in Cannon's Creek, a Porirua suburb in the Wellington region."



2019 EVENTS - BOOK US IN YOUR CALENDAR NOW!

REGIONAL CONFERENCES

Our regional gatherings are for anyone: mums, dads, students, retirees, labourers, business people, church leaders... if you know and love Jesus we'd love to have you along. These events are for ordinary, everyday people—just like you—who want to be encouraged and challenged in their Christian walk. We'll open the Bible and learn together and connect with people from like-minded churches in your region.

- Lower South Island: 6 April, Riverside Chapel, Henley, Otago.
- Waikato: 4 May, Raleigh Street Christian Centre, Cambridge.
- Canterbury: 14 – 15 June, Rutland Street Church, Christchurch.
- Central/Lower North Island: 24 August, The Anchor Church, Whitby, Porirua.
- Auckland: 21 September.



YOUTH

Youth Summit

A national get-together for Youth Pastors and Key Youth leaders with time for training, planning, prayer and co-ordination.

- 20 – 22 May, Totara Springs Christian Centre, Waikato.

FIRST training

Bring your future leaders! FIRST training is leadership development for 16–18 year olds with a focus on leadership, skills, self-awareness and personal devotion.

- Upper North Island: Camp Whakamaru 9–11 July
- Lower North Island: Forest Lakes, Otaki 16–18 July
- South Island: Dates and venue TBC.

Summer School

A summer training school for all youth leaders, pastors and volunteers.

Coming January 2020





CHURCH PLANTING FORUMS

For church leaders interested in seeing their church plant another church and for those interested in being church planters. Hear how other churches in the CCCNZ movement are navigating planting, share your church's journey, and connect with a prayerful group of like-minded people keen to see new churches planted across NZ.

- 2 April, Life Centre, level 1, 21 Hania Street, Mt Victoria, Victoria.
- 21 August, Bryndwr Chapel, Christchurch.



CCCNZ PASTORLINK PASTORS AND SPOUSES' RETREAT

A retreat for pastors and their spouses to unwind, de-brief, connect and be fed from the Word of God together.

- 6 – 9 August, MiCamp, Taupō.

ADMIN

Child Protection Workshop

Equipping churches to navigate best practise in the care of children and vulnerable people.

- 25 March, Manurewa Bible Church, Auckland.
- 27 March, Christchurch.

Governance Workshop

A workshop to assist boards and support ministries to effectively run meetings and create processes that best support their organisations and management to achieve their goals.

- 5 June, Manurewa Bible Church, Auckland.
- 6 June, Christchurch.

HR and Employment Workshop

A workshop focusing on best practise and legal framework for employing staff within our churches and support ministries.

- 28 August, Manurewa Bible Church, Auckland, and via webinar.

Finance Workshop

Learn more about the best practise and legal requirements for stewarding church finances.

- 7 October, Manurewa Bible Church, Auckland.
- 9 October, Christchurch.





CONSIDERING MINISTRY

A workshop for those considering study, receiving scholarships, or currently studying theology/ministry training; either for the purpose of preparing for future ministry, or for developing current ministry.

- 2 April, Life Centre, level 1, 21 Hania Street, Mt Victoria, Victoria.
- 21 August, Bryndwr Chapel, Christchurch.

MOVEMENT OF THE WORD

Movement of the Word is an event which invites leaders to come together as learners over a four-year cycle, intentionally digging into a book of the Bible together with the purpose of developing tools for preaching, teaching and leading others—growing others into leadership with and through Scripture.

Location: Grace Church, Nelson.

Men's Training Courses

- June 10-12
- November 11-13

Women's Training Days

- June 14
- November 15

NATIONAL BOARD MEMBERS' RETREAT

A time where Board members from Support Ministries which include service providers, campsites, hostels, funders and parachurch agencies can be together and work to focus on how best to support our movement's churches and each other to see the gospel grow.

- 6–8 September, Willowpark, Auckland.