



NEWS, ARTICLES AND STORIES  
FROM  
**BAPTIST NZ**  
APP & WEBSITE

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This newsletter is a print version of the latest articles published on the Baptist NZ website and app. The app now replaces the *Baptist* magazine and is available to download on Google play and App Store. For those in the Baptist family who prefer to read hardcopy, check out what God is doing in our faith communities in this newsletter, sent bimonthly to churches. If you have email and would like this document to be emailed to you, sign up to our newsletter at [baptist.nz](http://baptist.nz)



CHARIS FOTHERINGHAM

## What causes you to weep?

*An overview of the goings on at our National Hui 2022 – Ngā mahi whakamiharo: The spectacular acts of God.*

**Day 1:** What a day! In a remarkable way! It all began with a pōwhiri welcoming representatives of the Baptist whānau into Bethlehem Baptist Church, where the ripples of Hui 2022 have begun. This concluded with a yum feed, an already important event that I learned is even more important in this context because it lifts the tapu from the manuhiri (visitors). We are all together.

**Keynote 1: Spectacular Jesus** (Charles Hewlett and Kathryn Heslop)

*When the Baptist movement has its eyes fixed on Jesus, we know where we are going.*

Charles demonstrates how passionate we should be about this by expressively going off script :)

Jesus shows us we are to be:

### Compassionate

Here is the big question: *What causes you to weep?*

Read some responses from our whānau in the following articles.

### Others centred

When we have our eyes fixed on our spectacular Jesus, we see that greatness comes from humble service.

*Where do you take a servant posture?*

### Valuing all people

*Where are you found with the unpopular?*

Jesus sets an example of actively reaching out to marginal groups.

### Challenging the status quo

*What actions do you take that challenge the normal?*

*When did you last effect positive change?*

Jesus restored broken lives.

It's not just about identifying what makes us weep but what we can do about it.



You can watch the keynotes of our Baptist national Hui on our website: [baptist.nz/videos](http://baptist.nz/videos)

### Do you have any stories of gospel renewal in your community?

You can share them by emailing [stories@baptist.org.nz](mailto:stories@baptist.org.nz)

### Feedback

If you would like to give feedback on this newsletter, write to our Communications Director at the Baptist Support Centre: **P O Box 12 149, Penrose, Auckland 1642, New Zealand.**

Here are some responses shared by our representatives at the Hui (note the 5-minute time limit to discuss!):

- Injustice to Māori. Get the narrative right – understand the story so we can understand what we do. Trust Māori.
- Breakdown in families
- Meeting people where they are rather than waiting to meet them in a church building. Fast, pray and be intentional about building relationships.
- The unmet need for Jesus
- We don't need programs; we need the power of the Holy Spirit at work within us so that all we speak about is him. So the supernatural becomes natural to us. Listen before we speak.

We finished the talk by celebrating the creativity of the church.

Here is an excellent celebratory question Charles threw at Clint Harris, Creative Arts Pastor at Bethlehem Baptist Church: *What are you loving about Jesus at the moment?* (Break your next prolonged silence with someone with that!)



The Common Good Coffee truck made afternoon tea extra exciting, providing a fair way of getting caffeinated. A powerful prayer time commenced. Fired not by caffeine but by the Holy Spirit.

Then CELEBRATION TIME!!!

We unfolded our arms, and some even busted out a dance move. More importantly, we honoured the service of our president, Ravi Musuku, long-standing leaders, returning Global Workers, boards, councils and our COVID-19 Response Team. We celebrated Carey's Ministry Training graduates, newly registered Baptist leaders, and boards. We also welcomed a new fellowship and church to the Baptist Union and remembered leaders who had passed away.

**Day 2:** So much to take in, learn and action from day 2! The “two sermons today were needed” voiced a representative from our Baptist whānau. They were, indeed!

### **Keynote 2: Spectacular calling**

John Tucker unpacks the priority, purpose and paradox of our calling found in Colossians 1:28-29.

*He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ. To this end I strenuously contend with all the energy Christ so powerfully works in me.*

Getting back to basics.

Basics make all the difference. **What are the basics of your calling?**

*The priority of our spectacular calling is proclaiming Jesus.*

*We proclaim Jesus with our actions, but actions alone are not enough. We need to remember to proclaim Jesus through our words.*

Remembering numbers is tricky, but here is a memorable statistic John assures us is from a trustworthy study: The average length of a sermon in the UK is 12 minutes! Are our sermons starting to shrink this much in New Zealand? If they are, does this indicate that we are losing confidence in words? Words are significant when faith is strengthened by constantly hearing the Word of God.

John goes on to say:

*Maturity doesn't happen automatically...Disciples are made, not born.* In focusing on maturity in the church, we do not neglect the need for the gospel in our communities – maturity is missional. As a result of maturity, churches grow.

In this journey of growing disciples, do we cut people out of the picture because of how we perceive them? Do we miss out on the giftings and potential that God sees in a person because we see difficulty or difference in that person?

John continues to encourage us that wherever our local community is, to focus on that, and the numbers will take care of themselves.

He also reminds us that *we don't bring gospel renewal. Jesus brings gospel renewal and invites us to join him.*

**What captures your heart about the spectacular calling of gospel ministry?**

**How do we encourage people to pursue their gospel ministry calling?**

Creative celebration: Haka expressing the book of revelation composed by Manakinui Te Kahu

### **Keynote 3: Spectacular church**

Matt Renata launches us off with Isaiah 43:19-21

What is the new thing God is doing?

Matt showed us the importance of looking back to move forward because of the power in our story and testimony. A story of particular importance to the future of the Baptist movement is the story of the church in Aotearoa.

The Holy Spirit has moved powerfully among and through Māori and still is in incredible ways, as Matt described from his time at Ihumātao. But not

like before because of the unjust events towards Māori in our story which led to the loss of identity, belonging and a communal way of life.

This summary isn't doing Matt's talk justice. You can't shorten it to a 12-minute sermon, either. It is something we all need to hear more than a summary of, but listen through and actively integrate into our movement of churches. If you haven't heard Matt's talk on the spectacular church, a video recording is available on the Baptist NZ website in the Hui 2022 series: [baptist.nz/videos](http://baptist.nz/videos)

This is the question we discussed afterwards:  
**How can we ensure our ethnic diversity displays the wisdom of God?**

In a nutshell and another 5-minute window, here is a snippet of our response: Be in a place of humility and curiosity. Repent. In repenting, we change the direction of our story.

Now for this exciting part of the day:

### **The business session**

Launching with who we are as the Baptist Union:

*A collective of faith communities bringing Gospel renewal to people and places in their local neighbourhood.*

Charles Hewlett presented 15 strategic achievements to help bring gospel renewal, emphasizing number 8: We have a leadership that is increasingly being marked out by the posture of Ephesians 4:1-2.

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.*

He also highlighted the importance of thriving youth in our local church.

Moving on, the 2022 Annual Report was passed, and Wayne Schache, Operations and Finance Director for the Baptist Union, presented the financial results.

Wayne described the Baptist Union as being all of the local Baptist churches together; what one church does impacts the others.

You can view the vote results for Assembly Council, Mission Council, Carey Board, Baptist Women's Board in the online version of this article.

Ravi Musuku's term as President is extended for a further 1 year.

Charles Hewlett's term as National Leader is extended for a further 3 years, from March 2023.

### **Arotahi: An evening with a mission**

You may have heard of the new name for NZBMS.

The name Arotahi was officially launched at Hui with the slogan 'hand carved mission'. Every calling, community, people, and relationship are unique and uniquely directed by the work of God.



We listened to a panel of our Global Workers who had some spectacular and challenging stories and words to share.

Adding to the theme that the Holy Spirit inspired this day, Ants (global worker) said: *well before the works we did, God was there.* We were encouraged to grow more together as human beings and to pursue relationship. Cindy (global worker) told us how the church in her missional neighbourhood is poor but has a lot of wealth to share with us. Are we building mutually transformational relationships with our brothers and sisters overseas? As Ants said, we are not the church without the poor. But are we going to the poor? Outlined was a distribution problem. Are we congregating where we are comfortable? God hasn't stopped calling us to mission, we've stopped listening.

Luke Kaa-Morgan, Te Pouarataki Mō Te Hīkoi for Arotahi, wrote and shared a beautiful song called He Tangata, He Whenua about our mission.

**Day 3:** It may be the last day of Hui, but the conversations it ignited are far from over. When you hear the same message repeatedly through different people's talks across the three days, it is definitely something to respond to!

The call towards treating all brothers and sisters as participators in the Church rather than recipients and building two-way beneficial relationships was confirmed in the keynotes today. God works through the marginalized, where his power is displayed and through our youth – the NOW of the Church.

**Keynote 4: Spectacular Youth** (Sam Kilpatrick)

John 13:34-35

*A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*

Sam asks, how well are we demonstrating love to young people?

*Their youthful enthusiasm brings new life and vitality to our sometimes stale places... They are essential to the body of Christ, yet they are struggling to find a place in our local churches.*

Sam challenges us to think more carefully about the place of the youth in our faith communities.

How do young people feel when we say they are the 'future of the Church'. Sam explains how this saying can be damaging, implying that youth are to wait their turn when they have something to contribute now. Are church leaders and elders positioning themselves as the passers and youth as the receivers, or are different generations learning from each other?

What should our relationships with youth have?: *Authenticity. Empathy. Collaboration. Companionship.*

*Healthy churches reach young people, and young people make churches healthier.*

Sam asks us if youth are experiencing a sharing of faith, responsibility and space in your Church? On day 1 of Hui, Charles Hewlett asked us what makes you weep? For Sam and many of the representatives at Hui, it is the youth who are no longer part of the faith.

**Young people want to belong; in what ways do you think our churches help and hinder that belonging?**

Significant conversations followed this question to overflow from Hui into your local churches. You can read some of the responses on the online version of this article at [baptist.nz/hui-2022-day-3-the-future-is-now/](http://baptist.nz/hui-2022-day-3-the-future-is-now/)

There was a lot more to say, and we can come away acknowledging the need for family-wide involvement in supporting our young people.

#### **Keynote 5: Spectacular Future**

(panel: Hannah Cossey, Jonathan Edmeadas, Eduardo Mendonca and Tanya Lameta)

Jeremiah 29:11

*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.*

**What is the Church you lead going to look like?**

Here is some of what we heard from our fantastic panel:

Putting relationship with God before working for God. Hannah shared a word she received from God: If you want to receive what I have for you, you have to get close enough to me to receive it. She also shared Psalm 27:4.

It's going to look like experienced leaders working alongside emerging leaders. Everyone is heard, valued and taken seriously and participates in discerning God's voice together.

Going off Philippians 3, Eduardo explains that if we run a relay without the Gospel as our baton, we are running a meaningless race.

Tanya shares the value in the Samoan culture of weaving together, demonstrating its relevance to the Church. She says *We are losing the value of meeting face to face, identity, and practices of sitting, conversing and forgiving because they're slowly becoming irrelevant... It's time to tell our stories, to share our stories of measina, our taonga, our treasure...*

**Keynote 6: Spectacular power** (Michael Rhodes)

*What you don't know can hurt you. It can hinder you from getting to where you want to go.*

Are we seeing the marginalized as participators or recipients? Michael illustrated this point with soup kitchens and potlucks. Are we scooping our familiar recipes into people's bowls or joining God in preparing the table for their unique and flavoursome contributions.

God spoke to many of us through this talk. We heard that the things we think disqualify us or others are the very things God uses for his kingdom.

Our Hui finished with a poroaki appreciating all who made this Hui happen. Our hosts, Bethlehem Baptist Church passed on the putorino to Manakau City Baptist Church, our hosts next year.

MELISSA WILSON

## **What makes me weep: The 1 in 4**



*At the Baptist Hui 2022: Ngā Mahi Whakamīharo, The spectacular Acts of God, Charles Hewlett and Kathryn Heslop spoke about our spectacular Jesus. When we fix our eyes on Jesus, we see a demonstration and calling to compassion. A significant question arose from this: What makes you weep? Melissa Wilson, Senior Pastor at Beachlands Baptist Community Church, shares her response.*

In our first Spectacular session of Hui, Kathryn and Charles asked the question: what makes us weep? And then we, as the gathered body, went on to weep in many spaces over our time together. I wept alongside you whānau for the people we considered and brought to the forefront of our conversations.

But there is a group of people that my heart weeps for regularly.

As a young 27-year-old pastor, I sat in a hospital waiting room surrounded by heavily pregnant women. I was there for surgery to remove remnants of my chemical pregnancy (an early miscarriage in the first five weeks of pregnancy). My pregnancy hormones were not decreasing, which can be a huge risk of infection and, in extreme cases, death.

There I sat, my heart so broken. After four years of infertility, a round of IVF treatments, countless needles and several surgeries – I finally had my first embryo transfer. My husband and I were so excited. Two weeks later, we were absolutely crushed. Here I sat, with rounded pregnant bellies all around me, something I had longed for, for so long, and I came for a very different reason.

I would go through three more embryo transfers that year, each one slowly eroding my soul to breaking point. The final one that year saw me as a shattered woman. After counselling and much prayer, I was in a place for another try. With new drugs to try and much prayer, we welcomed our miracle, our daughter, into the world nine months later. And four years later, two transfers saw us have our second miracle daughter.

One in four New Zealanders experiences infertility, and one in eight requires medical assistance to achieve pregnancy. Infertility is not as rare as some think, simply because WE NEVER TALK ABOUT IT. My husband and I were very vocal about our struggle, especially in the struggle. Because of this, we have been able to walk alongside many other couples as they go through this terrible grief.

It's not simply primary but secondary infertility, those suffering from multiple miscarriages (some coming close to death from blood loss) and stillbirths. And the hardest for me is the young teenage girls I have journeyed with who have had to do fertility treatments to freeze eggs as they journey through endometriosis and other conditions that may render them unable to have children.

There is a level of shame, embarrassment and undefined grief that so many couples walk through. We don't talk about it: "don't tell anyone you are pregnant until after 12 weeks, as the risk of miscarriage is high". So we don't tell and then go through the immense loss alone. We hold that shame of our bodies being unable to do something that should be so natural, and so we keep quiet. I cannot tell you how many couples I know have split up from their infertility journey: those who end up unable to have any children and even those who do. The struggle to get pregnant, the struggle of

pregnancy, and the struggle of newborns - it's a recipe for divorce if you are not taking care of your relationship amid grief.

I encourage couples we go through this journey with to be brave and vocal and build a village of support around them. I equally warn them that people will say things meant as well-intentioned but end up hurting them.

Whānau, I encourage you as you walk with a couple struggling with infertility (they are in your churches, I assure you) to think very hard before you speak. The number of people I had (all with the best of intentions) praying for my womb, assuming that I was the problem! They wanted to lay hands on me in prayer. No one ever wanted to lay hands on my husband's reproductive parts; it was just assumed that I was the issue.

Responses ranged from simple things like the above to full-on stupidity. "Is there something in your past you haven't repented from?", "why not just adopt?", "who is the problem?", "are you sure you are doing it right?". A person already blaming themselves, questioning why God is not giving them a child, and barely keeping a marriage together does not need these thoughts or questions thrown at them.

So how can you best support a couple going through this journey?

Firstly, take a leaf out of Job's friends' books and just sit with them. Take notes from Jesus and weep with them in their grief. Be slow to offer advice and quick to offer love and grace.

Secondly, educate yourself! Spend a day on doctor Google and learn about fertility treatments and statistics in New Zealand. Watch some YouTube videos of people talking through their journey, and understand some of the lingo. Learn some fundamentals about human reproduction, so when you speak with a couple, they don't have to explain what they are doing in their medical assistance continually.

Thirdly, and most importantly, ask, "how can I help?" Pray for them to know God's love. Pray for protection over their marriage. If you see that it's been a rough day, drop around a meal and a hug. Every person walking through infertility will be different and need different things – so ask them what they may need.

Who do I weep for?

- I weep for the 17-year-old hearing the news that she may never have children as she is crippled in pain from endometriosis.

- I weep for the couple whose marriage is now broken from the silent struggle of infertility.

- I weep for the mother who miscarries her child at home alone and must clean up after herself.

- I weep for the husband who feels the need to be the support for his wife while he deals with his own grief in quiet.

- I weep for those who have walked away from the church, from the hurtful comments that have been tossed their way in a throw-away fashion.

Will you weep with me?

If anyone may be going through infertility and needs some prayer or someone to talk to, they are more than welcome to email me

at [melissa@beachbap.org.nz](mailto:melissa@beachbap.org.nz).

Would anyone else would like to share what makes you weep? Email [stories@baptist.org.nz](mailto:stories@baptist.org.nz).

ZACH BARTLEY

## What makes me weep: Our response to the rainbow community



Trigger warning: youth suicide

*At the Baptist Hui 2022: Ngā Mahi Whakamāharo, The spectacular Acts of God, Charles Hewlett and Kathryn Heslop spoke about our spectacular Jesus. When we fix our eyes on Jesus, we see a demonstration and calling to compassion. A significant question arose from this: What makes you weep? Zach Bartley, Youth Pastor at Petone Baptist Church, shares his response.*

At Annual Hui this year, the prompt from Charles and Kathryn: ‘what makes you weep?’ resonated in my mind and spirit. In ministry, it’s often easier to roll with the punches, and while being aware of a larger narrative, we try to focus on the here and now, the situations before us. But in this moment of reflection at Hui, it all came welling up.

The time-after-time I have sat with a young person as they come out to me about their gender or sexuality, seeing the fear as they expect judgment and condemnation.

The time when I sat with a young person who had just come out in a camp setting and was then told by a ministry leader, “you’re not going to heaven”.

The countless times where I have seen young people leave faith because they can’t reconcile the

love they have for their rainbow friends with a church that condemns them.

The way we are pastorally responding to our rainbow community is what makes me weep.

Now, this article is not a theological argument for one belief or another. I am neither qualified nor eloquent enough to write something of that nature. And as I write this, I recognise there is a breadth of opinions and viewpoints on the theology of sexuality and gender within our Baptist movement of churches.

What I do feel qualified to write about is my own experiences, my own struggles and how our pastoral response as churches to the LGBTQIA+ community has been lacking. A focus on pastoral response is important. When we get tied down in arguments about whether it is sin or not, it continues to dehumanise a community that has been dehumanised by society for generations.

New Zealand has some of the worst youth suicide rates in the world, and our rainbow community suffers even more drastically. The New Zealand rainbow community are taking their lives at a five times higher rate.

Studies have found that connection to faith communities increased suicidal ideation in the rainbow community. An American Journal of Preventative Medicine study found that gay and lesbian people of faith experienced 38% higher rates of suicidal ideation than their non-faith peers, with sexuality questioning individuals almost three times as likely to have attempted suicide recently if they reported that religion was very important to them.

Who do I weep for?

- I weep for the youth too afraid to come out at home because of what their parents have said.
- I weep for the youth who is contemplating suicide because they’ve been told God can’t love them.
- I weep for the people who feel isolated in a place where they should find belonging.
- I weep for the youth who just needs to be told they are loved.

Will you weep with me?

If you are wanting to engage more on how to respond to our rainbow community, please feel free to email me at [zach@pbc.kiwi](mailto:zach@pbc.kiwi)

SCOTT MUSPRATT

## A new thing!: Otūmoetai Social Supermarket

*A social supermarket has sprung at Otumoetai Baptist Church. Senior Pastor, Scott Muspratt, tells us all about it.*

At the National Baptist Hui, we heard the words of the prophet Isaiah:

*See, I am doing a new thing!*

*Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?*

*I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.* (Isaiah 43:19 NIV)

This month we have seen something new spring up at Otumoetai Baptist Church – a social supermarket.



At the Otumoetai social supermarket, local shoppers can buy their weekly groceries for a fraction of the price they would usually pay. It's not a food bank, and it's not a supermarket in the traditional sense, but perhaps it is somewhere in between. The social supermarket looks a bit like a superette. It's bigger than a dairy or a pātaka kai, but it's certainly more like a Four Square than a PAK'nSAVE. And while it still has that supermarket smell, everything is 'priced' in 'points.'

\$20 - \$50 provides a shopper with 50 to 100 points which can be used to buy around \$100 to \$200 worth of groceries. It is not rescued, surplus, damaged or close-dated food. It is fresh, new, and in perfect condition food. It is not preselected for shoppers. They can choose anything on the shelves up to the point limit they have been allocated.

I know that sounds a bit like a Ponzi scheme. However, the initial fit-out and setup costs were covered by Foodstuffs. Continued support from Foodstuffs and the generosity of suppliers and donors will meet ongoing expenses.

Local community organisations like schools, doctors, and marae refer shoppers to the social supermarket. They are given vouchers and can book a timeslot to come and do their shopping. These referral agencies know the members of our community and understand their needs. The social supermarket can help when a sudden cost comes up or for those extra things that are hard to cover, like school camps, joining a sports team or buying a new school uniform.

The whakataukī, “Nāu te rourou, nāku te rourou, ka ora ai nga iwi” - with your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive, has been a

guiding principle, along with Michael Rhodes' catch cry “It's a potluck, not a soup kitchen.” We believe everyone has something of value to bring to the table, including the shoppers, suppliers, donors, referral agencies, volunteers, and the church.

Around 18 months ago, as a church, we began exploring how we might engage missionally with our local community. (Yes, Charles' “Neighbourhood” webinars did have an impact!) As we began to explore the needs and potential opportunities within our local area of missional concern, a providential moment saw a member of our local community have a crucial conversation with a member of our church about establishing a social supermarket.

Was this the thing God was calling us to? It would require us to sacrifice the use of our church hall, the second largest of our three main spaces in our church complex, on a full-time basis. Everything we used to do in the hall would need to find a new home or be re-imagined. We had a church meeting – if we could sort out the non-trivial aspects of how it might work and how it could be paid for, would we support using the church hall to demonstrate the love of God to our community through a social supermarket? It was a special church meeting in every possible way. Many people spoke, and even more sensed the Spirit of God speaking through the words of our church members. We voted overwhelmingly in favour of ‘giving it a go,’ knowing that there were hurdles to overcome but also recognising that the same God who had somehow led us to this point has an exceptionally good track record of faithfulness.

The opening included CEOs, MPs, a City Commissioner, local Principals and even a few Pastors. (Foodstuffs need to get some PR for their money, after all). But the most impressive things for me have been:

- the steady stream of people coming through receiving food with dignity and respect
- the opportunities for volunteers from our church community to walk through the supermarket with shoppers, sit with them, have a cup of tea, talk to them and get to know them
- the number of people who have just shown up wanting to help

Ours is not the first social supermarket to launch in New Zealand, but it is the first to launch in a church, and it doesn't have to be the last.



Please either pass this newsletter on to someone else or recycle.

JONATHAN ROBINSON

## **“Paying with Dignity”: A mustard seed story**

*Jonathan Robinson is the outgoing pastor of Musselburgh Baptist Church in Dunedin and the incoming New Testament Lecturer at Carey Baptist College (starting in January 2023). In this article, Jonathan shares the impact of hosting conversations for the church, community, experts and practitioners to network and address issues close to heart. Food insecurity is one of those issues. As a result of the community forums at Musselburgh Baptist Church, the report "Paying with Dignity" was produced, discussing the positive and negative impact the church can have in the food charity sector.*

It can be amazing how one thing can lead to another with God. Like how a mustard seed can start so small yet grow so big!

After successful community forums in 2020 around the cannabis and euthanasia referendums and the general election, Musselburgh Baptist Church felt we should do more of "this sort of thing." But what? So in 2021, with the help of connections through my part-time role at the Otago University Centre for Theology and Public Issues (CTPI), we hosted some community forums around topical issues that were dear to the hearts of members of our congregation: Mental health; the housing crisis; and food poverty (more properly called food insecurity). We invited experts from the university and practitioners from the town to form panels and made contact with successful projects around the country to contribute by zoom or video. The evenings were a mix of presentations, interviews and questions from the floor, with the opportunity for informal conversations afterwards. We were amazed by the interest from our local community. The church building was full for each forum, with a mix of folks from other churches, local social, health, and council agencies, and the general public.

We put on the events for our own benefit, to help us consider these difficult issues and to give a positive witness to our local community of Christianity that is compassionate, thoughtful and ready to listen. One thing we didn't anticipate was that these forums were great opportunities for people involved in these issues to connect and network. Put social workers, academics, politicians and church pastors in a room together, and it turns out they all care about a lot of the same things!

One special connection came about when it turned out that one of the university's food insecurity experts, Dr Katharine Cresswell Riol, was a huge fan of the work of one of our church members,

retired nutritionist Dr Winsome Parnell. As we got talking, Katharine asked me if I had any ideas about communicating her research to churches. She had noticed that churches and Christian agencies were doing most of the work in the food charity sector. As a university academic with no Christian connection, she had no obvious route to communicate her research to them. I offered to help her tailor a report for churches to turn her book-length research project (!) into something more digestible for those in ministry and social work. The CTPI was keen to be involved and offered some funding for publication costs. After a conversation with Charles Hewlett, so did the Baptist Union (thank you Baptists!). The finished report is called "Paying with Dignity". It's an important discussion of how churches are making a difference in the food charity sector and how we can become part of the problem without realising it. You can access it on the University of Otago Archives website.

The report is essential for several reasons. First, it is unique in focussing not on the numbers that agencies or the government collect but on the voices and experiences of those on the receiving end of food charity. Secondly, it recognises the valuable and vital work churches do and the difference we make. Thirdly, however, it alerts us to ways we can inadvertently make things worse for people and impact society. There are real issues to address in both our delivery of food charity to individuals and our influence on the broader forces at play.

As my time comes to an end at Musselburgh Baptist Church this year, I'm so pleased to have this report published. It has come about through connections between our local Baptist church members, the theology and geography departments of Otago University (who don't usually talk much!), and the Baptist Union.

On November 24, the report was endorsed by the Salvation Army, Catholic Social Services and the Baptist Union in New Zealand and has been picked up by researchers/activists in the USA and UK. The connections are growing! The academic side of me is excited to have something published that will hopefully make a difference worldwide as churches and faith-based social agencies respond to the growing hunger crisis. But the pastor side of me is most excited that all this happened because a local church wants to connect with its community. It's not the only thing that's happened either, but those stories will have to wait for another time.

So, to paraphrase Zechariah 4:10, "Don't despise the day of small things!" I hope you read/use the report and come to the launch. But even better, I hope you can be inspired to start something small

for God's kingdom and see how it might grow.

MYK HABETS

## Celebrating Baptists flying high on the world stage



Two Baptist scholars have recently been celebrated on the world stage:

Greg Liston, Mount Albert Baptist Church, senior lecturer at Laidlaw College, has just released a book with the prestigious publisher T&T Clark. His book, *Kingdom Come: An Eschatological Third Article Ecclesiology*, provides a constructive reflection on the status of the church in light of what it is destined to become and how the Spirit is presently conforming the church for that destiny.

In a time when news about the church is often critical and depressing, Liston reminds his readers that God has created the church, indwells it by his Spirit, and is conforming the church to the image of Christ.

The work contains a rich and textured consideration of the book of 1 Corinthians and deals with the Lordship of Christ, Communion, and mission. The work has already been praised by international scholars and is destined to become a core text in studies of the church.

The book is available in the Carey Baptist College library.

We congratulate Greg on this fine achievement. You can hear Greg talking about the ideas in his *Kingdom Come* book on episodes 1 and 2 of the *Cross-shaped Community* podcast, hosted by Ken Keyte on the Baptist NZ Podcast Network.

A second Baptist scholar is to be celebrated: Myk Habets, Albany Baptist Church, Head of Theology at Laidlaw College, has just been elected President of the Thomas F. Torrance Theological Fellowship.

This Fellowship is an international association of scholars dedicated to studying the work and theology of Scottish theologian Thomas Torrance, the most noted and celebrated English-speaking theologian of the twentieth century. Habets was elected president based on his many contributions to

the Torrance scholarship, his academic work, and the role he has already played in the Fellowship. The Torrance Fellowship meets annually as part of the American Academy of Religion and hosts podcasts, seminars, retreats, and public lectures worldwide.

We congratulate Myk on this fine achievement.

KATE DUNSTAN-BROWN, JULIE POLGLAZE, GRACE IRWIN & ANDREW MEEK

## A home and family away from home

*Did you know we have some super story-filled Baptist student hostels in New Zealand?*

**Central House in Wellington** is a Christian student hostel hosting up to 27 students in the heart of the city. A story from the past year that is a real highlight comes from a fundraiser for Relay for Life. A second-year student approached me, wanting to form a fundraiser to support cancer survivors. They thought going through the Central House would be a good way to serve, build community and connect to something wider in the country. A small team of two students, myself and my husband, committed to shaving our heads to fundraise for Relay for Life. We called it “Chop the Mop”. Over a few months, we raised just under \$5k. A local hairdresser supported the event for free, and the whole house showed up to support the event. Two more students even joined on the night. It felt like a real Jesus moment of caring for those who suffer and building community. - Kate

At the end of January 2022, I began my role as on-site pastor and manager at **Queen Street Student Apartments (QSSA)**, Auckland. For decades it had provided a safe space for students to live while they navigated life and faith away from home. I have seen friendships develop from awkward first introductions and watched while these amazing young adults have supported and loved each other through what has been a challenging year for many. My students – and I say ‘mine’ with affection and a strong sense of responsibility for their well-being – have asked big questions about identity, relationships and, for some, grief. It has been a privilege to journey with the young adults who call QSSA home. I’m grateful for the laughter, food, conversations, and fun this year. I’m thankful for the prayer, the discussions, the questions, and the tears. Because that’s what real life is. There is uncertainty and unknowing in life. Yet the space I hold is to remind others (and myself) that we are being held in the loving and secure arms of Jesus, even when life doesn’t work out the way we expect. - Julie

Once I decided to study at UCOL, I applied to stay at the **Baptist Student Hostel** (Palmerston North).

Some of my favourite things about being in the hostel are the friends I've made here. All the adventures I've done with the people here...mostly, it's the day-to-day things that make it a great place to live. The support from your friends in the hostel, with study or having someone there to talk to - It's a great first step out of home for any first-time student. - Grace

**Chester House** has operated as a ministry of Oxford Terrace Baptist Church in central Christchurch since 2011. Since then, it has offered a supportive Christian living environment to over forty students and young workers moving to Christchurch for their first year of flatting. Over this time, it has been a joy to watch new flat members nervously arrive and quickly form close friendships, building confidence to stand on their own two feet. Let me tell you about Renee, who joined Chester House in January 2021 for a dive instruction course. Though she'd never even visited Christchurch before, she quickly built close relationships with flat members and other young adults living nearby. She enjoyed her experience so much that she wanted to stick around, serving as the live-in supervisor at Chester House this year. Not only this, Renee realised God had given her a heart for youth, so she enrolled in Praxis and was brought on as a youth worker in our church. Renee is a wonderful example of how Chester House helps young Christians to thrive in study, work and life! - Andrew

## Getting to know...Christa McKirland

*In this column, we discover more about our Baptist whānau, meeting someone in our team of 40,000 each post. This time we are getting to know Christa McKirland, Lecturer in Systematic Theology at Carey Baptist College.*



**What is something you think everyone should experience at least once in their life?**

Boiled peanuts. This is a Southern American delicacy and can be found at all of the best gas

stations (in the Southeastern part of the U.S.) in a crockpot that's been on simmer for several hours.

**If you could be a pro at any one thing, what would it be?**

I would be a professional guitar player. I cannot play any instruments, and I think it would be awesome to be able to pick up a guitar and play—especially in Aotearoa!

**What is a random interest that has completely nothing to do with your study or work?**

I love going for walks, especially in the bush. Raya (my 6-year-old) often asks, "Mommy, what's your favourite thing to do?" and I always tell her, "Exploring new places with my family!" A close second is playing Halo :)

**What is the oddest fact you know?**  
Most muppets are left-handed.

**What is the most boring thing you've ever done?**

When I was young, my mom would have me proofread land title deeds with her. She would read them out loud, and I would follow along with a typed copy to make sure there weren't mistakes. Fortunately, she paid me to do this.

**What is your favourite way of connecting with God?**

I love writing retreats. This is often a time to get away and work on a specific project. Since my work projects are all about God, I find that these are times I feel most connected and least distracted in my relationship with God.

**Can you describe a significant moment when you experienced God's love?**

Honestly, every time I teach. That famous quote from Chariots of Fire rings true for me: when I am walking in my gifts, "I can feel God's pleasure."

**What is your favourite thing about the neighbourhood where you live?**

We love so many things about our neighbourhood—from the Grotto with a massive lawn across from our house, to our neighbours next door, to the Reduced to Clear at the end of the street—we love our home in Onehunga.

**What do you love most about being Baptist?**

What I love most about being Baptist is that we are committed to covenanting together. The dominant metaphor for the church in the New Testament is that of family. When you are family, you are committed to one another no matter what. I think this is beautiful and also so hard! Fortunately, I believe we have the empowerment of the Spirit to unify us—not so much ideologically—but to consider my brother and sister before myself (Phil 2:1-5).