



NEWS, ARTICLES AND STORIES

FROM

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MELLISSA POWEL AND MORGAN THEAKSTON

## **Not just waiting for modern slavery law**

*Melissa Powell has a public health background and a Master of Human Rights. She's interested in how products, people and traditional cultural norms and values traverse geographic borders in a globalised world. She's experienced in facilitating cross-cultural conversations, which require understanding and responding in a way that empowers communities. She lives in Sunnynook with her whānau, attends Windsor Park Baptist Church and loves e-camp at Finlay Park!*

**Your money matters; it's like your voice. Where you spend it makes a loud statement.**

Our money is the biggest advocacy tool we have to stop slavery. We may not see slavery with our own eyes in Aotearoa, but we are surrounded by products that could have been made by enslaved people in countries with weaker labour legislation. To be honest, it's hard for consumers to tell the difference. Products fill our shop shelves, and persuasive advertising campaigns tempt us to buy them. So when we pay money for these products, we could be unwillingly and naively endorsing slavery. Of course, none of us would do that intentionally! So, we need to pay more attention to where we spend our money.

Our Government is addressing slavery. In 2021 they implemented the Plan of Action against Forced Labour, People Trafficking and Slavery, which sets out the all-of-government approach to combating exploitation, which has a particular focus on supply chains.

While our Government is working through these policies (and eventually towards a Modern Slavery Act, similar to Australia),



What do we need to know about the Word that shapes us, the World in which our faith is to be lived out, and the Work that we are called to do? Listen to the Word World Work podcast to find out more. Audio episodes online : [baptist.nz/podcasts](http://baptist.nz/podcasts)

### **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.**

we can all do our part to prevent slavery. Baptists have been leading the way on this issue. Ten years ago, just after the Rana Plaza collapse, Baptist World Aid produced the first Ethical Fashion Guide. They have since partnered with Tearfund to produce an annual report to help us make decisions about the products we buy. So, when you're tempted by that latest pair of jeans, take a quick look at the [Ethical Fashion Guide](#) and make an informed decision. Your money matters; it's like your voice, and where you spend it makes a loud statement.

*[baptistworldaid.org.au/resources/ethical-fashion-guide](http://baptistworldaid.org.au/resources/ethical-fashion-guide)*

**Ten years on from the clothing industry's darkest hour; New Zealand is still waiting for a law which will change the way we address modern slavery.**

*2023 marks the 10th anniversary of the clothing industry's darkest hour, coinciding with the same year in which the New Zealand Government is poised to introduce a bill to address slavery in our supply chains. However, this is at risk of being added to the next tranche of 'reprioritisation'. Here's what might've happened if modern slavery legislation was in place when Rana Plaza collapsed.*

***By Morgan Theakston, Advocacy Campaigns & Communications Manager, World Vision NZ***

On April 24th, 2013, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, workers reported to the Rana Plaza factory building to start gruelling shifts sewing clothes for major fashion brands. They hesitated upon seeing cracks spidering the walls but entered the building after threats of losing their pay. At 9am the walls caved in, and the entire building collapsed.

The Rana Plaza disaster made headlines globally – it killed more than 1,100 garment workers and injured thousands, ripping open the seams of the tight-lipped clothing industry to reveal its exploitative underbelly. This tragedy awakened the world to the real cost of clothing: severe exploitation and zero accountability from companies. In a pursuit to make clothes that fly off shelves, companies engage in a race to the bottom for the cheapest price with no interest or concern toward the people toiling to make the clothes. It's an unspoken boardroom mantra 'out of sight, out of mind'.

A decade on, has anything really changed? When we browse clothing racks in New Zealand's malls or tap "add to cart" online, we still cannot be confident that those whose hands have painstakingly made the clothes we're buying have not been forced into labour or robbed of their childhood.

Many countries have since put laws in place to address exploitation and modern slavery in supply chains, and while New Zealand has made progress towards its own modern slavery law, delays and setbacks from the Government are leaving us deeply unsettled. The Government closed consultation on their modern slavery law proposal in April 2022, promising to introduce a bill to parliament by the end of last year. It has yet to deliver on that promise.

The proposed law would require companies to assess the modern slavery risks in their operations and supply chains based upon their industry, products, and countries they source from. Then they'd have to identify and address cases of slavery. Companies would have to disclose these risks in a reporting statement, which would be publicly available in a government register, inviting accountability and scrutiny. In effect, laws addressing modern slavery flip the traditional business paradigm by prioritising the risk to people over risk to profit.

If laws focused on modern slavery existed 10 years ago, they could have made a huge difference to the workers at Rana Plaza. They could have saved lives.

If companies had assessed the slavery risks in their supply chains, they would have known that more than 25,000 children work in deplorable conditions in Dhaka's garment factories, including enslaved children. They would have known that it's common for traffickers in Bangladesh to force both children and adults to work the garment industry. Had companies undertaken due diligence with new suppliers, they could have avoided making their products in an illegally constructed building with blocked fire escapes and no routine safety inspections. The building could have been unoccupied when it collapsed, rather than being full of people that were buried under rubble for up to three days, forced to drink their own urine to

survive.

If companies had been required to know who their suppliers were and publicly disclose factory locations, they would have known immediately if they were connected to the tragedy. Families of the deceased wouldn't have needed to sort through rubble to find garment tags from companies like Mango, Zara, and Benneton to determine which companies were at fault.

Under modern slavery legislation New Zealand businesses would have had to decide whether to improve the conditions of factories like Rana Plaza or walk away, knowing that the risk of irreparable reputational damage through public disclosure was too high.

Like the Rana Plaza building, New Zealand's approach to modern slavery is outdated and sub-standard. It is unsafe for businesses and workers. It has cracks. And we need to do something about it – now.

The 10-year anniversary of Rana Plaza should be a wake-up-call, and the Government needs to stop hitting snooze. The safety of millions of workers who are exploited to make the goods we buy hinges on the Government's decision to act. Until we have a law to address modern slavery, catastrophes like Rana Plaza will continue to happen and Kiwis will never be certain that the products they buy are free from child and slave labour. A modern slavery law gives companies the impetus and framework to do the right thing.

Our Government is at a critical juncture: they can delay addressing modern slavery and perpetuate it as a cornerstone of our society or respond to the call of tens of thousands of Kiwis and introduce legislation to eradicate it. But the Rana Plaza tragedy has left no room for feigned ignorance. To delay addressing this issue is a deliberate act to entrench slavery as a normalised and accepted part of our culture.

For more information on the work World Vision is doing right now to advocate for Modern Slavery Legislation visit: [worldvision.org.nz](http://worldvision.org.nz)

*Photo: By Wesley Mc Lachlan on Unsplash.*

KATHRYN HESLOP

## People centred leadership: Introduction



*Welcome to 'People centred leadership: A different perspective'. In this series of articles, Kathryn Heslop reflects on the topic of leadership, drawing on her background in social work and counselling and her role as Executive Assistant to the National Leader of the Baptist Churches of New Zealand, where she is surrounded by incredible leaders every day.*

*In these short articles, Kathryn reflects on six characteristics she believes are crucial for leaders today: Attuned, Responsive, Inclusive, Attentive, Honouring, and Partnering.*

*Her thoughts challenge some of the more traditional views on leadership. Her ideas are grounded in practical experience and a passion for serving God and others. She hopes these musings will bring you a fresh and valuable perspective on what makes an effective leader today - a leader who must, at their core, be centred on people.*



*Kathryn Heslop (BSocWk (hons), PGDipEd (Counselling and Guidance))*

Society is shifting at an incredible rate and accordingly, our leadership styles need to adapt and evolve so as not to become irrelevant and get left behind. Authoritative, top-down, leader-centric leadership has now become outdated.

No longer do we rely on the knowledge and expertise of the leader to confidently direct the best course of action. Instead, we pivot towards collaboration, teamwork, flexibility, diversity and inclusivity.

And so, the leader of today needs to look different than what we often saw yesterday. We usher in an age of collaborative, people-centred leadership that values all voices, where the team works together, learning from one another, using the skills and expertise of the whole rather than the select few.

Relational, people-centred leaders. Leaders who are willing to lay down their rights, for the rights of those they lead. Leaders who don't need to be the expert, but instead can focus their attention on loving others, caring for them, inspiring them, empowering them, valuing them, and in so doing, getting the best out of them.

As I reflect on the life of Jesus, I find his leadership style over 2000 years ago incredibly relevant for us today. When we looked for a king in all his grandeur, he came instead as a humble servant riding on a colt. When we were ready to cast stones and condemn, he gave only grace, love, and forgiveness. When the twelve were looking to him to lead, he took a lowly posture, got down on his knees and washed their feet. When he saw those in pain and suffering, he empathised with them and brought them healing and hope.

Jesus tipped authoritative top-down leadership on its head. Instead, he echoed love, humility, and deep character. He was a leader centred on people. Jesus taught us that to lead, is to serve. And as we reflect on the life he led, let's follow in his footsteps and do the same.

I invite you to journey with me as I look at six characteristics I believe are crucial for leaders today.

**If you would like to read Kathryn's people centred leadership series, ask someone in your local church to print them for you from: [baptist.nz/articles-news-stories](http://baptist.nz/articles-news-stories).**

*Footnote:*

*I Hunter, J. C. (1998). The Servant: A Simple Story About the True Essence of Leadership.*

*Currency.*

*Photo: From National Baptist Hui 2022, by Charl Louw*

CHARLES HEWLETT

## Update from Norway



### Highlight of day 1

*Our National Leader, Charles Hewlett, was in Norway representing us at the Baptist World Alliance gathering.*

Charles writes, "How amazing it is to be with so many Baptists from all around the world. Wow – New Zealand Baptists belong to something very big!" A highlight of Day One was hearing the presentation of the BWA President Tomás Mackey (pictured above with Charles).

As Tomás' states, "Having listened to the experiences of different conventions and churches regarding the way in which they live the mission, I could perceive that there are many mission fields that they have visualised in unanimity. It is true that there are more, but I mention here four." The four mission fields he focused on were:

#### **1. The mission field of those under serve pain**

For example the earthquake in Turkey and Syria, the war between Russia and Ukraine, and the violation of human rights in Myanmar and Nicaragua. Tomas noted that 13.5 million, 25.5% of all 51 million Baptists face the most significant levels of vulnerability.

#### **2. The mission field of the new generation**

He talked about: "better discipleship for the new generations, clearly identified priorities for ministry to the new generations, churches involved in the social, cultural, and ethical challenges that confront the new generations, and being a source of hope in the name of the Lord.

#### **3. The mission field of extreme polarisation**

Interestingly Tomas noted, "It frequently happens that a large group of people do not agree with the extreme positions. They are even far from these positions, but for different reasons they are silenced and do not get actively involved."

#### 4. The mission field of extreme secularisation

He talked about how only in 3 countries do we Baptists exceed 5% of the total population of those countries. In the vast majority of the countries where our members live, Baptist are less than 1% of the total population.

Charles writes, “The theme of the conference is ‘Send’. We have been reminded how Baptists are a missionary movement. The speakers are constantly challenging us by the phrase ‘here am I send me’. This is an extremely important question for New Zealand Baptists as we endeavour to bring gospel renewal in local neighbourhoods in Aotearoa New Zealand.”

### Highlights of day 2

*There were plenty of highlights for Charles and Joanne Hewlett on Day Two of the Baptist World Alliance conference in Norway.*

Firstly, Charles spoke with excitement about having the opportunity to talk with Elijah Brown - BWA General Secretary. Charles comments, “Elijah was extremely interested in us New Zealand Baptists. He expressed a strong desire to visit us and we are talking together on how to make this happen (soon). I would love you to meet him – very contagious when it comes to the gospel and mission!”

Second, Charles loved the opportunity to participate in a small group session with the National Leaders from Austria, Romania, Ghana, United States, the UK, Italy, Palestine, and Australia (see photo below). Charles comments, “We talked together for 90-minutes on what might be our biggest challenges over the next 5-years. Despite the differences in our group, it was amazing how similar our answers were. Everyone shared about the shortage of pastors for the future (well except Ghana – they have too many people wanting to train!). We talked about practical ways we might turn this around. What a privilege to be part of this group.”



Thirdly, Joanne participated in a special BWA Women’s session (picture below are the regional BWA Women leaders). Joanne comments, “The session was an opportunity to hear about how God is at work in the seven Baptist Women’s continental unions. Major themes included prayer, the encouragement of one another, and meeting the very practical needs of women in their localities. The passion and commitment of these women was inspiring.”



Finally, how awesome to see the Baptist Churches of New Zealand being mentioned twice in the proposed Resolution on Dignity and Justice for Indigenous Peoples. Charles comments, “Elijah specifically mentioned to me the important role Matt and Rachel Renata played in seeing this Resolution being established and voted on. Matt and Rachel represented us at the BWA last year.” Read the full Resolution online at [baptist.nz/update-from-norway-highlights-of-day-2](http://baptist.nz/update-from-norway-highlights-of-day-2)

Charles writes, “The enormity of the BWA is overwhelming at times – but what a privilege for Joanne and I to be here. We have been inspired in our calling:

- to know how mighty and powerful our God is
- to focus our eyes firmly on Jesus
- to have confidence in the Gospel’s ability to bring renewal
- to have big Kingdom dreams (like the South American Baptists who aim to plant 5000 churches in 5 years!)
- to be thankful people, thinking about, “whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy.”

May these things mark out New Zealand Baptists.

### Highlights of day 3

Firstly, Charles writes, “What a privilege to have a front row seat for an informal conversation with renowned theologian Miroslav Volf - the Henry B. Wright Professor of Theology at Yale Divinity School. What a treat! Dr Volf mostly talked about what it means to flourish as humans, and followers of Jesus. He suggested that the things important to us were of little importance to Jesus. And, that the things important to Jesus seem to be of little importance to us. Lots to process here!”

Secondly, Charles mentions, “A massive highlight of the BWA conference is meeting people whose lives are so different from mine, yet share the same love for Jesus. In the picture below I am with Tchalieni from Niger. The Baptist Churches of Niger were welcomed into the BWA for the first time today – how awesome to get to stand next to my brother!”



Another significant event of the conference was the launch of the BWA’s Vulnerability Index (view online at [baptistworld.org/vulnerability-index](http://baptistworld.org/vulnerability-index)). The index brings attention to those within our global family living in the most vulnerable and challenging countries in the world. It is defined by four key factors: hunger, livelihood, violent conflict, religious freedom challenges. It offers a global reflection based upon a unique scoring metric in order to highlight these challenging realities and to call the global Baptist family to stand together in prayer and solidarity. Charles reflects, “This conference is challenging me, and NZ Baptists too, to think a lot bigger!”

### Highlights of day 4

*Charles Hewlett mentions three things that stood out for him today at the Baptist World Alliance conference in Norway.*

Firstly, most of today was about participating in

the Asia Pacific Baptist Federation gathering (see the picture below). With both India and China in our Federation this is the largest BWA region numerically.



Charles writes, “While much of the gathering was focused on the suffering people are facing in our region, I was given the opportunity to speak about the ministry and mission of New Zealand Baptists. I also had the privilege of praying the closing prayer (photo below). We were given a warm welcome!”



Secondly, Charles mentions, “A personal highlight for me today was the sermon preached as part of the morning worship time. While the preaching style was out of this world, I was deeply challenged by the content.”

From Acts 8 the speaker highlighted how the gathered church became the scattered church as the result of persecution. He then shared four things that happen when the church is scattered:

1. We become a movement and not an establishment (8:4a)
2. We become more courageous than cautious (8:4b)
3. We become more vocal than voiceless (8:4b)
4. We become good news spreaders rather than good news holders (8:4c)

He preached, “May Baptists from all over the world not be involuntarily sent, because we didn’t voluntarily went!”

Thirdly Charles mentions the conference celebrating the publishing of the book, ‘Seeds of

the Church; towards an Ecumenical Baptist Ecclesiology.’ He writes, “I am keen to make you aware of this book, as it contends that the distinctive Baptist ecclesial vision is best embodied in twelve core practices of Baptist churches and their interrelationship: covenanting, discerning, gathering, befriending, proclaiming, equipping, baptising, discipling, caring, theologising, scattering, and remembering.”

‘Seeds of the Church’ highlights what is possible when Baptists engage with people of other Christian traditions in the exploration of the common heritage of people belonging to the one household of faith.

### “On my mind...”

Charles writes of the enormous honour it has been for him and Joanne to represent us in Norway. He talks of the many things going through his mind:

- Baptists are a missionary people – mission is New Zealand Baptists DNA.
- We need a fresh understanding of the greatness of our God – the sovereign, powerful, holy one who has no equal.
- As a result of such confidence in God we need a greater expectation of what he is able to do, and what he can achieve through us. Let’s set bigger goals!
- We need to have a greater commitment to prayer - it must become the foundation of all that we do.
- It’s important we have an active global awareness - being insular, naval-gazers will limit our Kingdom contribution.
- There are many people in the world suffering because of their Christian faith and service.
- Relying on New Zealand media for international news is inadequate.
- We have so much to learn from the people who are different from us.
- Our desire for comfort and security hinders the spread of the gospel.
- Getting side-tracked by unimportant things is such a tragedy.
- It is good for New Zealand Baptists to be part of the BWA - to join in their initiatives, to participate in their leadership, and contribute to them financially.
- We need a greater focus on church-planting.

- We need to learn how to engage intelligently and biblically with young people on the issues that are important to them.
- I love New Zealand Baptists!

JO HOOD

## Curious: Needed and known

*Curious, by Jo Hood, is a monthly column. Jo is the Visionary/CEO of mainly Ministries. Most of the time, she loves walking into a room where she knows no one - curious to learn about others. But she finds there is a certain kind of buzz to recognise another and be recognised. She loves providing hospitality and honouring her late husband’s legendary cooking (hers isn’t that legendary though!)*

I’m curious. Have you ever walked into a room, scanned it quickly, and realised you know...no one?

For the evangelist, this is pure gold. So many people to talk to and find out where their faith is at. For the gregarious, who loves an audience or to be the life of the party, what a dream! For most, that sense of feeling lost and unknown can be daunting. This requires additional emotional energy and sometimes takes the shine off the experience.

When whānau/families are new to a location, they can often experience this ‘I know no one’ feeling everywhere they go. When mātua/parents are new to parenting, this can be a regular experience. How can we reduce the energy required to assimilate into this new space?

A mainly Ministries partner has a team member who is the welcomer. This person is alerted and takes the newcomer to meet others after registration. On the way, they explain what will happen during the morning, where the bathrooms are located, and they get to know whānau/family members. By introducing matua/the parent to others, the newcomer ‘lands’ or at least can start to relax. Then during kai/food time, the welcomer also checks in again. During the week, whānau/family is sent a TXT or email, reinforcing they are welcome and how the team are looking forward to their return.

As the weeks pass, newcomers assimilate into the group through introductions to others with similar interests or tamariki/children of the same

age. The group they've just joined becomes a friendly and engaging place with all of the team making it a priority to talk to whānau/families, regardless of whether they're new or almost part of the furniture.

### **What else helps whānau/families to be needed and known?**

Knowing the names of the adults and tamariki/children is significant. As we aren't all blessed with memories that link name and face, nametags can assist. Being satisfied to know a handful of people well is a great goal. Noticing detail when whānau/families arrive or while chatting becomes a way to make them feel known. While we know that loving on their tamaiti/child extends to loving on their matua/parent, it's also important to acknowledge the adult in some way so they don't feel like an 'extra'.

When someone offers to bake ("I'd love to bring a plate of brownies next week"), say YES! This indicates they've reached a place of belonging.

### **During the week**

Hospitality in your whare/home is like the gold star level of people feeling known. Inviting people home for kai/food, like soup and bread or toasted sandwiches, is all that's required. It's the sharing of time, the engagement around the table, and the rich conversation that follows; that's what people enjoy. Your whare/home doesn't have to appear as a designer version, ready for sale – its warmth will be in the invitation.

*Photo: supplied by mainly Ministries, from iStock*

**If you would like to read more entries in Jo's column, ask someone in your local church to print them for you from [baptist.nz/articles-news-stories](http://baptist.nz/articles-news-stories)**

KERRY BREWERTON

## **Venison distributed across North Canterbury**

*Kerry Brewerton is part of Rangiora Baptist Church and is an elected member and Chair of our Assembly Council.*

As the Lead Pastor of a church who connect at five gatherings across three locations in North Canterbury, it was a joy to see our Hope Community Trust distribute nearly a ton of free

meat to food banks and community organisations in our region, as well as distributing some to those in need within our own local network.

Because of the generosity of recreational hunters who participated in the North Canterbury Hunting Competition last week, literally a truckload of animals were donated, which were processed by a team of skilled locals, with 870kg of mince, and 50kg of steaks being donated. Our church kitchen has never seen so much meat!



The Hope Community Trust summed up the extent of this local initiative on their Facebook page: "Not only will 100's of whānau receive this food, but it will feed 1000's of people. This is such a precious gift given to the community when many are facing the daily reality of economic and financial pressure."

It was great to see how the Hope Community Trust, that already provide a Food Bank, was trusted to distribute this amazing gift of kai that came as a unique and generous donation from the wider community in our region.

*Photos: from Hope Community Trust public Facebook page.*

KEVIN ROBERTSON

## **Salt of the earth: Grandpa**



*Columnist Kevin Robertson, or 'Kev the Rev' as some people call him, is a gumboot-wearing-chainsaw-*

*wielding-farm-hack and pastor-of-people at Te Awamutu Baptist Church in the beautiful Waikato region. Salt of the earth: it's what Jesus says we are. Paul the Apostle encourages us to season our conversations with salt. This column is about that: telling stories of salty people, inspiring us to imagine something we haven't thought of before, or helping us taste something differently. Porridge is better with salt!*

Attending Baptist National Hui isn't really my thing. So many Baptists in one place! But my wife sent me last November. Not sure why she's so keen to see me gone for a few days. It's not that I don't enjoy them (hui), but rather there's always so much that can be done back in the church. I also have a tendency to critique everything – in Carey Baptist College terms, is this a strength or a weakness?

There's always a highlight at Hui, and this last time for me, it was Craig Vernall's in-depth exegesis of Luke 15 – the lost chapter: the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son. Drawing from the depth of his theological training, he beautifully explained and portrayed that the verses covering the 'celebration' were far in excess compared to the verses of the 'lost'. Oh, how often we look towards what is lost rather than to the celebrations we are invited into.

This was my experience during the address of one of the keynote speakers at Hui. Matthew Renata eloquently and enthusiastically shared about the New Thing that God's spirit was doing among Māori. I rejoice with him! To do so, he wanted to go back – back to the history of Māori and their engagement with God and the church. There were highlights shared – celebration! And there was 'lost-ness' lamented, and rightfully so. It was in the midst of this painfully felt lament that I found celebration! Now please hear me... take a deep breath... I'm not celebrating the pain, the loss or the wrong, but sometimes there are small things to celebrate in the midst of pain and suffering.

During the feedback session after Matt's address, the question was asked, "What can we do now? How can we respond now?" Someone on the far side (from where I was parked) gave a great answer. He said, "We must have the right narrative. There is the historical narrative and the actual narrative, and the actual narrative is the

right one" (my paraphrase). Now that sounds all good and dandy, but it still isn't the full narrative! Sometimes in the mists of history, there is the 'lost' narrative, and this very unknown 'lost' narrative can cause the heart to celebrate in the midst of injustice and pain. At times we all hurt because of the injustice of the past – our history. I sometimes get hurt now. As I get older, with over 40 plus years of ministry experience, I have heard the lament from Māori because of the injustice and pain of colonialization and rightfully so. But within the church circles, I've also witnessed Pākehā apologizing on behalf of and for their tupuna's actions. Pākehā have asked for forgiveness, and there has been much grace from tangata whenua, and they have forgiven. But sadly, at times, it seems that the narrative does not match the forgiveness given. Is there still guilt and blame for the forgiven? Why, at times, do I feel like I'm being held responsible (again) for the past when on behalf of the actions of the past, I have asked for forgiveness? Anyway, back to the small celebration in the midst of lament.

There is much published about the integration policies and disrespect by the Pākehā towards Māori in the education system. It's well-documented. It's true. But is there a hidden narrative which is a light in the darkness? Was there anything we could celebrate? Sometimes it seems that the rightful judgment dished out towards colonialization and its negative effect was universal. Were there any voices supporting Māori? Yes! Hello Grandpa!

My Grandpa! (Second from the left in the photo below: Kenneth I Robertson.)



Grandpa was a deeply religious man, a Presbyterian, but we won't hold that against him. He was 'proper' in every way and always a gentleman. He was educated and moved up the

corporate ladder in the education system. He was a school inspector, think 'a one-man band ERO!' And then, in the mid-1950s to early 1960s, he held the role of "Officer for Māori Education". Here we find the man that I'm so proud of and who is my tupuna. Here is a man who spoke for the Māori, advocated for them and continually pressed the case for Te Reo and Māori education. He believed that Māori culture was the birthright of every Māori child in the education system. He argued for the inclusion of Māori legends, arts and crafts, poi, waiata, and haka! He compelled the case for Māori history, legends, song and dance as necessary for the personal development of Māori! And I celebrate his efforts even in a system that did not embrace his ideas. Is this just hearsay from a Pākehā family who wants to believe the oral stories passed down about an ancestor? Actually, some of Grandpa's articles can be found in the National Library!

So is there a hidden narrative? A silent narrative that challenges the norm? One that we can celebrate! And maybe, as Craig Vernal said, we need to shift our narrative to acknowledge the 'loss' but to major on the 'celebration! I'm not talking here about the things of the past but rather the 'loss' we are feeling for whatever reason – is there something to celebrate even if we find ourselves in a time of loss, pain and suffering?

*Photos: Header image: Kevin's legs with his gumboots and chainsaw. Four men: supplied by Kevin Robertson.*

**If you would like to read more entries in Kevin's column, ask someone in your local church to print them for you from: [baptist.nz/articles-news-stories](http://baptist.nz/articles-news-stories)**

DAVID EE

## **The Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award celebrates 60 years in New Zealand**

*David Ee is a member of Pakuranga Baptist Church, and a big advocate for The Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award of which he is a recipient of, and also a member of the 60th anniversary advisory committee. In this article David shares his own story that weaves together his church community involvement, successes through the Duke of*

*Edinburgh's Hillary Award in NZ, and even being a medallist at the Special Olympics World Winter Games in alpine skiing. All of this while living with dyspraxia.*



I am from a Christian family which emigrated from Singapore to New Zealand twenty-five years ago for my future and a better learning environment. In those days in Singapore, addressing the needs of intellectually challenged children was still in its early stages, as there was a lack of understanding in interacting with them.

I was introduced to The Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award and achieved my Bronze in 2007, Silver in 2008, and Gold in 2009. I received the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Diamond Challenge, celebrating Queen Elizabeth's Diamond Jubilee in 2016, which has made an important contribution to the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Charity ambition to inspire even more young people to discover their true potential. Overall, these experiences shaped my character, grit, and dedication.

...Being someone who has had a late developmental dyspraxia diagnosis, and experiencing (and overcoming) bullying whilst I was in college, I am extremely thankful to my parents, teachers, Bruce, Jinny Patrick, and Pastor Andrew Brown during my years of service and contribution to our Baptist Churches, as well as my current mentors, who have all assisted me greatly on my journey.

...Currently, I am on the 60th Anniversary Advisory Committee for The Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award. I am currently studying at Carey Baptist College to develop my Christian faith and professional development.

As my journey continues, I anticipate future opportunities and challenges. However, I am

strengthened by the knowledge of the part my church and The Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award have played in my life, equipped me with tools and learnings to support my endeavours.

If you're part of a Baptist faith community and would like to share (write about) your experience of The Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award in this 60th anniversary year, or would like to celebrate it by having a party together, please email us: [stories@baptist.org.nz](mailto:stories@baptist.org.nz)

*Photo supplied by David Ee*

ODELE HABETS

## **A call to prayer: People who have ceased attending church**



*The week of 18-25 June 2023, we were called to prayer by our women. Prayers included openness to God, cultural inclusion, those suffering loss and grief, those under pressure to conform, women of Carey Baptist College, relationships, Baptist women in positions of leadership, and people who have ceased attending church.*

*Thank you to Baptist Women New Zealand who have called us to pray.*

**25 June**

Odele Habets, Senior Pastor at Albany Baptist Church, prays for people who have ceased attending church.

Lord you are an amazing God, we love you and give thanks to you.

Thank you for your mercy, thank you for your faithfulness to us.

Thank you that we can enter your throne room and be in your presence In Christ,

Thank you that you hear our prayers and know them before we even speak.

Today we pray for those that are no longer part

of a church family.

We pray for those who have left due to unresolved conflict with other church family members, we ask that by your Spirit you bring healing, that you help them to forgive and that you draw them back so that restoration and reconciliation can take place, or if this is not possible that they seek a new church family to grow in faith with.

We pray for those who no longer see church as a safe place. We ask Holy Spirit for your healing and ways in which this can change for such people, where in fact church is a place where they are to flourish again.

We pray for those who have left due to anxiety of being near others which has been exacerbated by COVID and lockdowns, we ask that you give them peace and comfort. Holy Spirit still their minds from worries and anxiety. We ask that you bring Christians into their lives that can walk alongside and them and be their church family.

We pray for those that have become lazy in their faith and perceive being part of church is too much work for them. By your Spirit convict them, encourage them, stir within them a longing to know you more and to wake up. That their relationship with you will grow again in Jesus Christ and through your Holy Spirit and your church.

Hear our prayers for our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Amen.

## **We Baptist National Hui !**

**Join us for three days from  
2 – 4 November 2023.**

If you are Baptist, you are welcome. There is no 'pastor prerequisite' to attend Hui and we are looking forward to gathering with people from across our New Zealand Baptist whānau. Imagine if there were delegates from every one of our 250 faith communities!

Early bird registrations open from 7 August.

## Getting to know...

### Blue Bradley



*In this column, we discover more about our Baptist whānau, meeting someone in our team of 40,000 each post. In this edition we are getting to know Blue Bradley, who is many things including Director of Northern Easter Camp, and an elected member of our Baptist Assembly Council.*

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

Take a long walk. My wife and I have walked the Camino Santiago in Spain twice. Hands down one of the best things we have done in life. It's amazing where God will show up when you get away from the normal routine of life. It doesn't have to be Spain; plenty of great walks here in Aotearoa.

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

A really great singer/songwriter. A great song can make you shed a tear, change your life, help you love/forgive others and remind you about how to live. I think many songwriters are our modern day prophets, they challenge us about how the world could be and what matters. Who wouldn't want to write great songs?

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

I am the envy of many because I own a 1962 EJ Holden Special Station Wagon, and I am restoring it to be better than new. I know many may look at it as a rust bucket that's been sitting there way too long, but they don't see the beauty I behold. Not long now!!! (It's going to be a minute).

**What is the oddest fact you know?**

I know that frogs close their eyes when they swallow. I know this is useless information for daily life. That is unless you use it in a sermon to highlight what happens when we swallow

half-truths that hurt us and others. Do we also close our eyes?

**What is the most boring thing you've ever done?** Systematic Theology. I'm sorry, but I'm just wired for other things. I loved my other subjects at Carey:)

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

I'm a Strengths Coach, and I get to hear about what makes people tick, their hopes, passions and dreams. I hear the thread of God in their story, and I see a glimpse of the imago Dei in their eyes. In those moments, I often feel like I have encountered God through the fellowship that has happened between us. It's a privilege to sit with people, listen to their story, and see them for who they are.

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

I was praying for our young people on the stage at Easter Camp. I felt the Spirit of God overwhelm me and hold me. It was so overwhelming that I ran off the stage, hid my face, and wept. I often hide my face when I am overwhelmed by the presence of God's love. Isn't it so funny that the very thing I long for, love, can be the most terrifying thing to encounter? Maybe it's because that's where I feel most vulnerable. I think we can all be a bit like that at times. It was a significant moment for me that still fuels me in my faith.

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

I live in such an eclectic community in Morningside, Auckland. You don't find the perfect community to live in; you create it. After chipping away at community projects for fifteen years, I'm amazed at how strong we are together. Crave Cafe was flooded three times in the recent weather, and fifty community members came to help. While Community Spirit is not uncommon around the country at the moment, it's one of the things I love most about living here.

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

I think one of the best things about being Baptist is our long history with youth work. Young people are amazing, and we have done youth work really well in the past. We have hit a few bumps over the last few years, but we are gearing up to help youth work flourish in Baptist churches.