

the **+**Helper



Women at Work

Straight-up stories from GPCNZ ladies

On the Farm

In the Classroom

At the Office

At Home

At Church

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Editorial

Welcome to another edition of *The Helper*.

In this edition we have chosen to look at some of the issues relating to 'work'. From the beginning of creation, work has been a feature of the mandate given to man and woman (as his helper). For many years there was a marked distinction between what was considered 'male' compared to 'female' work. Religion and culture played a significant part in how this was defined, although the rearing of children and focus on family has clearly been a significant factor for woman. Involvement in other forms of employment outside the home has varied markedly through the years. Back when my mother married in the late 1940's, she was not permitted to continue being employed by the New Zealand Government. I also remember one of my favourite teachers having to stop teaching as soon as she married.

In 1874, 20% of women in New Zealand worked outside the home. By 1971 this had risen to 39% compared to 82% of the male population. The 2001 census shows 60% of women were in the workforce compared to 74% male. No doubt, it will be even higher now. One of the features since 1986 of this growth has been increasing numbers of parents with young children joining the work force.

As Christians seeking to follow God's pattern for living, family is central. But what does this mean in today's world with the increasing opportunities and pressures on women to be part of the paid workforce? How do women, who decide to

stay at home and focus on their family, face those insinuations of inferiority and failure to contribute to society as a whole? What are to be our attitudes to work in whatever form it takes? What does Jesus require of us as we relate to others that we rub shoulders with every day? Are there still some areas of work that are more suitable for women, despite what the world may say? How are Christian young women to approach the many opportunities that are available to them in the world today and still maintain their Christian integrity? These are only a few of the questions we need to ask ourselves as we consider this whole area of 'work'.

For those interested, the Government's Women's ministry website - <http://www.mwa.govt.nz> - has some very interesting topics relating to women and also gives a timeline of important events relating to women from the early 1800's.

We hope the articles included in this edition will encourage you and stimulate your thinking. Again we are grateful to those who have contributed. Also it is great to read some of the ministries and outreaches taking place in some of our congregations. Perhaps your own group will be inspired to try something new in this coming year. We look forward to hearing your story in a coming edition.
On behalf of *The Helper* Team.

- Nola Young

Gaining *Wisdom* in Work & Life

- Margaret Reynolds
Covenant, Manurewa

When I was growing up, work was an essential part of every-day life. We lived on a large rural property in Otago and it was not unusual to see me with an axe chopping firewood or a grubber clearing land.

As an adult I worked hard, first as an office clerk and then as a nurse. When I became a wife and mother my work was centred in the home and now as a pastor's wife my work has a ministry and counselling orientation. In recent years I have worked as a student gaining expertise in the area of counselling.

For many years my zeal for work was challenged as I faced chronic fatigue. I would look longingly at the garden but feel a profound lack of energy. Then I was introduced to the idea of *rest* which was an alien concept. This led to considering other activities which might bring some balance into my life. But deep within my soul I longed for that rest I knew could only be found in the Lord.

Biblical Considerations:

Work originated with God. The Triune God was active in the *work* of creation (Genesis 2:2). As we work we image God. Work can be considered "an essential, constitutive part of our God-imaging humanity." After God rested from his work, he passed on a mandate regarding work to the man he had created, *The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it* (Genesis 2:15). It is not hard to imagine that at this stage every effort would have been richly rewarded and man would have known a deep contentment coming from being at peace with his Creator and the creation.

However, after the fall into sin everything changed and the curse fell upon man, including his work (Genesis 3:17-19). Wenham, spells out the implications of this curse:

1. The land is cursed (v. 17) and produces *thorns and thistles* (v.18).
2. Work is now described as *painful toil* (v. 17) *by the sweat of your brow* (v. 19) indicating that man works hard, but produces less, resulting in frustration.
3. The end of man's work will be death (v. 19).

For women the curse means painful labour or work in the bearing and raising of children. She also shares in the frustration that comes as she, along with the man, seeks to fulfill their mandate to fill and subdue the earth (Genesis 1:28).

But Christ speaks into our predicament a word of life and hope:

Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will

give you. The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent (John 6:27, 29).

The gospel of Christ has the power to redeem our work, changing it from back breaking toil to a fruitful labour of love. With Christ at the centre of our lives, we have the potential to see the purposes of God worked out in our personal domains. But what does this look like in our day-to-day lives?

Getting it all into perspective

Christ must be at the centre of our lives. It is his life-giving Spirit which empowers us and work has meaning as we walk with Christ using the gifts that he has given. The writer of Hebrews encourages us to *fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.*

Understand the difference between **responsibilities** and **concerns**. Paul Tripp has developed this concept showing that responsibilities are those activities for which God holds me accountable. Concerns are areas beyond such ability and for which I need to trust God. For example I am responsible for my family, but I am not responsible for friends. This can give great freedom in the use of time and resources.

Pray for a heart of wisdom. Time is a commodity that needs to be used well. Jesus shows us that he was very purposeful in everything that he did. We also see this in the Proverbs 31 woman who used her gifts, time and energy in a way that brought fulfillment to her and great benefit to others.

Work for six days: *Six days you shall labour and do all your work* (Exodus 20:8). This means that work not completed in one week can spill over into the next. We need to learn to work within the limitations of time, energy etc. as well as our own personal limits and stage of life.

The importance of rest: *The seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work* (Exodus 20:9-10). We cannot work well if we do not rest. Rest is an essential part of our health and wellbeing.

Jesus said work for that which endures for eternal life. The best use of our time, energy, and resources is for that which lasts forever. Included in this is being involved with non-Christians for the purpose of extending the kingdom of God on earth. We are also called to care for those in need: *Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers* (Galatians 6:10).



WORK

Blessing or Curse?

Imagine you are meeting a group of people for the first time. The most likely question that will come up in conversation is “What do you do for work?” If you happen to be attending a workplace seminar with a bunch of high flying executives, you might feel uncomfortable saying you are a receptionist. Or if you are attending your husband’s end-of-year work function and have been doing battle with toddlers all day, you probably find yourself trying to think of some creative title to describe your role as a mum. “I’m a home executive!” In western culture our status and identity is often tied to what kind of work we do, and “work” usually means paid employment.

Asking a further question “Why do you work?” causes us to pause and think. You might find yourself giving several of the following answers:

- I have to earn a living to pay the bills
- I have a mortgage to pay
- I want to achieve something
- It gives me a sense of purpose
- I enjoy serving others
- It enables me to earn money to support the ministry of the church
- I want to work hard so I can retire early
- I want to use my gifts and abilities to serve God

When the Scriptures talk about “work” they mean work in a much broader sense. It includes what we do as a job as well as all the other things that we do in order to live. John Stott defines work as *“the expenditure of energy (manual or mental or both) in the service of others, which brings fulfillment to the worker, benefit to the community and glory to God.”*

As we go about our daily lives in a fallen world we are aware of the tension that work is both a blessing and a burden. We know that as people created in the image of God, we are called to be engaged in meaningful activity and it is our task to be responsible caretakers of God’s creation (Genesis 1:26-31). After the Fall, work has also become toil and is accomplished against the hostility of the environment (Genesis 3:16-19). Work has become subject to abuse (idleness, overwork, exploitation of workers, dishonest or immoral work, dissatisfaction in work and unemployment).

The coming of Christ has restored a consciousness of the creation purpose and a sense of God’s guidance which gives our work purpose and satisfaction. There is no secular/sacred division of work, whatever we do is to be done to God’s glory. Colossians 3:23 *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord and not for men...”* Our work, therefore, has importance because God has declared it to be so. His desire is that we offer ourselves and all that we do in service to Him.

So practically speaking, what does this mean? We need to recognize that our work is a holy calling. God in his providence has led his people to have occupations (Abraham tended flocks and herds, the disciples fished and Paul was a tentmaker). To consider our work as holy means that we are to set it apart. This applies whether we are teaching the Scriptures, running a business, or mothering several pre-schoolers.

“Most Christians believe that they can be a Christian at work. To do so involves being a diligent worker, being honest in one’s dealings with an employer and witnessing to fellow workers. But this still leaves the work itself untouched by one’s Christian faith. The original Protestants were right in going beyond this and claiming that the work itself is a spiritual issue and a means of glorifying God. We can be Christians not only in our work but through our work if we view our work as an obedient response to God’s calling.” (Leyland Ryken)

When we view all our work as “unto the Lord” this radically transforms how we work. We are primarily to please Christ (not just the boss) and we are called to high standards of integrity and faithfulness in what we do. How we treat others should also reflect that we are one of Christ’s servants. Do we treat others with honour and respect (even the difficult-to-please)? Do we show appreciation for what others do? How do we treat those who work under us? Do we consider the needs and struggles of those around us? Are we friendly, supportive and helpful to our fellow-workers?

As we consider the example of Jesus, let us seek God’s mind about how to best serve Christ wherever he has placed us. Let us be humble, caring, hardworking, faithful, and dedicated ambassadors for Christ as we fulfil our humanity and glorify God in our work.

- Anne Camp
Covenant, Manurewa

References:

John Stott: *Issues Facing Christians Today*
Leyland Ryken: *Work & Leisure in Christian Perspective*
Gene Edward Veith: *God at Work*
Jerram Barrs *Work: A Holy Calling*
(www.covenantseminary.edu/resource)

DecisionsDecisions

Women in the twenty-first century Western world have more opportunities than their grandmothers probably ever dreamed possible. They are entering tertiary institutions in unprecedented numbers (while the number of men is declining) and are strongly encouraged to pursue the traditionally male dominated fields of science and engineering. They are free to choose any occupation from bus driver to Prime Minister and are even able to serve in military combat on the same basis as men. Women are free to choose if and when they will marry, and due to unlimited access to contraception and abortion they are able to control their fertility to a large degree. But are women flourishing in such an environment? Reality would seem to indicate otherwise. Women suffer from depression, self-harm, eating disorders and violent abuse from their partners at unprecedented levels. Divorce rates continue to climb, and many women find balancing home and career both stressful and exhausting.

So how can you as a Christian woman wisely steer a path through the plethora of choices? As high school draws to an end (or when considering a major change or transition at a later stage) the most basic question is, "how can I best prepare to serve the Lord through my life and my vocation?" Things to consider are:

- 1 Gifts and abilities (What are you good at or passionate about?)
- 2 Academic aptitude (What subjects do you excel in, what areas are you keen to explore further?)
- 3 Personal inclinations (What do you dream about doing, are you a people person or do you prefer to work alone? Personality tests such as Myers-Briggs can be a useful tool.)
- 4 Financial resources (How do you plan to pay for this course? e.g. learning to fly can be an expensive business!)
- 5 Family circumstances (Do you want to become part of the family business or do you want to try something new?)
- 6 Providential openings (What possibilities has the Lord opened up? e.g. work experience in an area that you are interested in, or admission to a course that you are really keen on.)
- 7 Your Attitude (A disciplined, motivated learner who desires to serve Christ and others.)

Some of you may have a clear idea of what you would like to do and can map out a specific course of preparation. For others, a "gap" year working, travelling, or serving as a volunteer can help you to explore where your talents may lie. Given that God expects whatever work we do to be a service to Him, this is also a good time to do some formal Bible training so you can be more effective in whatever vocation you choose.

As you consider the future, I believe it is important to think beyond just the next five years, and give some thought to the different seasons of life that lie ahead (singleness, marriage, family) and the implications this has for the choices you make. God has created us as feminine creatures and this is worked out in the way we relate to others and the different roles that we are called to in our lives. This will also have some bearing on the types of work we choose to pursue. The scriptures make it clear

that the bearing and raising of children is a first priority for those called to marriage and family life and so during this season of life, other types of work will need to assume a lesser priority. Some women, however, will be single for their whole life, others may be single at different stages, and therefore it is wise to make the most of training opportunities that develop the individuals' gifts and abilities to enable effective service to God and society.

Recent changes in society mean that families are under considerable financial pressure if they choose to own their own home, as it often requires a two-parent income to sustain a mortgage and living costs. An increasing trend is that women are better educated than men, which again has financial implications when women choose to stay at home during the child-rearing years. Western society is very happy to promote a materialistic society where women are pressured to return to the workforce as soon as possible and nanny state will willingly take care of their children in daycare. Sometimes we need to challenge the rampant materialism and ask ourselves if we are willing to live a more sacrificial lifestyle that places more value on family than finances. There are, however, no easy answers. Many couples choose to delay parenthood until they are financially secure. Others are reliant on extended family to help out with interest free loans, or providing regular babysitting while young mums work part-time.

When planning for the future, Christians can easily fall into two extremes. They either assume that young women will marry and therefore whatever work they do beforehand is considered a matter of "filling in time" or they encourage women to reach their "full potential" no matter what the personal cost and impact on family, friends and church life. Many young women will marry and have a family so it is good to ask: Is this vocation one I can take up again on a part-time basis when or after I have children? Is this something I could do from home in later years? Am I learning transferrable skills that could be used in a different sphere at a later time? Consideration of service-based industries can be a good place to start as there tends to be flexibility in these areas for women to take time out and return on a part-time basis. Take your local hospital as an example. They employ everyone from doctors to nurses, audiologists, physiotherapists, radiographers, midwives, occupational therapists, administration workers, policy planners, legal and financial advisers, cooks and cleaners. That is quite a variety! There are many other types of work that allow for job-sharing or can be adapted to suit family needs.

Given the current challenges and choices before us, we need great wisdom and creativity to live courageously for Christ, knowing that it will involve both great sacrifice and blessing in the years ahead.

- Anne Camp
Covenant, Manurewa

Helpful references:

Garry Friesen: *Decision Making and the Will of God*
Os Guinness: *The Call (Finding and fulfilling the central purpose of your life)*

Women & Work - *Teaching*



Teaching has been something I have wanted to do right from a very young age. Having a father involved in education, however, I was encouraged to think further afield in terms of a career. Although I looked into journalism and even TESOL and despite taking a few years to get there, in the end I did in fact settle on teaching as my career path. As some of you know, I spent 9 months over in Japan teaching English alongside other church ministries. It was during this time that I discovered my passion for teaching. I found the language barrier a little frustrating at times so I also came to the conclusion that ESOL teaching was not my area of strength. My interest in primary teaching again became stronger and I decided to apply for the post-graduate diploma in teaching, which was a one year course offered at Auckland University, Epsom campus. On completing my one year training in 2006, I then began my career at Bucklands Beach Intermediate school in 2007 and have been teaching there ever since.

There are many opportunities to be a witness for Christ in my workplace. Taking them up is the hard part. Firstly in the classroom itself, my witness can be seen in the way I speak to each child and in the way I conduct myself. Something I have tried to do more regularly is to pray for specific students on my way to work in the morning. It has helped me to see difficult students through God's eyes and given me strength to come up with new ways of dealing with them in the classroom. Of course I still have a lot of work to do in this area.

I love my job and I am really passionate about children and

education, but this is not to say that it doesn't come with its own set of challenges. Teaching in a state school is both rewarding and challenging as a Christian. One of the major concepts or questions I struggle with is how to be an effective Christian within a secular classroom environment. This is not to say that I am ashamed to be a Christian and to make that known to my class, but I also know I do not want to take advantage of my position to promote my own ends. This has meant that I have had to think creatively about how to bring issues of God, morality and beliefs into my classroom without just coming across as pushing my own agenda.

I think a common misconception in teaching is the idea that the teacher has all the answers and is there to fill the empty mind of the child. Some of the most effective lessons for me have been the times when students have given their own opinions on a particular controversial issue and then have listened to each other and discussed the differing opinions in the class. Rather than giving my view and expecting them to come to the party and agree with it, I have listened to their ideas and facilitated the discussion. After some time, many students became interested to know my thoughts on the subject and it was then that I was able to give them my biblical

perspective on the issue. Having listened to their ideas and given them time to explain their reasoning, they were much more open to hear my thoughts on the matter. Instead of rubbishing their views, I left them with questions that challenged them and got them thinking. I have found this process to be an effective way of sharing my faith without taking advantage of my position.

Not only are there opportunities for witness in the classroom but also in the staffroom. I have been blessed with the opportunity to work amongst a lot of Christians, which has often been an encouragement to me. The way I approach my work and the way I

relate to management are all opportunities for me to show my love for Christ. I am not saying I do this perfectly, in fact this is an area of constant struggle for me, but I am thankful that I have the encouragement of other Christians to spur me on to become more effective in my witness.

- Louise Kennedy
Covenant, Manurewa

“There are many opportunities to be a witness for Christ in my workplace. Taking them up is the hard part.”

Living in the Country

On a lovely September afternoon 29 years ago I became a 'farmer's wife'. I had always been very 'city', having worked in busy Queen Street offices for 12 years, and I loved the vibe of being in the centre of the city. So, despite vowing never to marry a farmer, I had. It was with both delight and fear that I stood at the door to my new life. I had not only to swap 'city' for 'country' but high heels for gumboots, and I felt quite daunted by my pending life of isolation on the farm with lots of cattle for company!

I soon discovered that the frequent visitors, whether farm related or friends, all required 'the time of day'. It wasn't just a quick chat at the door; tea and cake were vital to the whole encounter. The baking and tea were just fine... but the conversations! What were scouring calves? Why was the meat schedule so important to our lives? What were flood gates and the dreaded Taranaki gates? The conversations rolled on and so did my questions. I felt like a foreigner in the land. In those moments a wee coffee in High Street with a wee chat about the season's new fashions seemed very appealing. I was not really feeling too concerned about the need for rain to ensure an abundant spring growth at that point!

Only a few months went by and I became a 'hay contactor's wife'! It was busy - the phone calls, buying replacement equipment and the finding of obscure entrances to farms/paddocks to deliver food or parts to my husband is what filled most of the days of my first summer. If a near meltdown moment was to occur, it was when asked to assist with stock. I was reasonably at ease being the 'third dog' and despite being very keen to do the right thing, I took a while to be trained. I was not quite as obedient as the real thing! Being in the cattleyards drafting stock was and still is my greatest challenge. I have learned to climb the yard rails very fast at times and still ask constantly, 'Can I go now? Are we finished?'

Even though life was busy with church and family commitments, the birth of our two children opened up a new chapter. I moved into an era of playcentre and school. I then discovered that in the country people know who you are long before you know who they are. As I approached my first



school camp, I was a little nervous. The camp was great fun but as camp concluded one by one my fellow mother-helps came to me and said, 'we were really worried about you coming on camp as we thought you would spoil our fun but we have had a great time; you are so different to what we expected'! Needless to say I was shocked. The fact that I was a Christian was a real concern to them, but the relationships forged on that camp are still firmly in place today.

My involvement in schools increased over the period with Board of Trustees and office administrative positions. Thinking that my training as a Legal Executive would provide no local employment opportunities, I soon discovered that my office skills were indeed transferable. When approached to apply for the positions I was told that what was required was 'someone honest, who did not gossip, as well as office skills'. I was reassured to know that I qualified.

Our church involvement has changed not only according to the age of our children but according to our age also. Firstly it was leading Sunday School, then we progressed into Youth Group and church music, and now we have more of a pastoral care role and lead Bible Study Groups. Laurence also manages the church Stock Scheme and is an Elder.

The beauty of the farm and river has been a drawcard for many friends, university students, and school, church and community groups. Our busiest summer brought 1000 visitors to the farm! The interaction with visitors has been an absolute highlight. Wonderful friendships have been created, and we are so happy to share our farm with others and delight in seeing their enjoyment.

The tranquility and beauty of the farm are what I appreciate the most, but also our farming friends who have become like family. I still really look forward to a spot of shopping and love the busyness of the city, but the farm is now my home.

Today as I made my fourth date loaf for the week, ponder what dessert to make for men's cell group next week, planned ladies bible study, and saw Laurence dash out the door to finish fencing the new church property, I wondered what words could be used to describe the past 29 years: definitely challenging, unexpected with many turns in the road, fun, blessed and most certainly protected.

Annette Bond is a farmer's wife from Kaiaua.

Working for God on campus

“He is no fool who gives up what He cannot keep to gain what He cannot lose.”

These are the words of Jim Elliot, a missionary to Ecuador who was killed while attempting to share Christ with the Waodani people. It is similar to Matthew 6:20, “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal.” These words help me to keep what is important in the long term in sight daily. In many ways, it would be easy to seek after and do the things that this world tells us are satisfying. However, Christ has called us to something besides what this world offers, to live for our future home!

Earlier this year, I really felt God leading me to stop work at Otago University as a Reviewer in Quality Advancement. While this was supposed to be a part time job and an “in” to the community and university for us, it often required me to work more than part time. Because of this, it didn’t allow me as much time as I wanted to support Josh and be on campus with the girls, for which the Lord really grew my desire. Stopping this job has enabled me to put time and energy into the many needs that God brought along while I was working. This change however, like most things, brought challenges along with the good. I suddenly went from having a very structured day to having to decide how and where it was best to spend my time. I found this difficult at first and it took a bit of getting used to, but the Lord has given me clear direction for what He wants me to be doing. Another area of adjustment has been the void of status and praise that I received for my efforts when in the work force. I saw that quietly in my heart I valued this recognition, when my complete identity belongs in Christ. Going down to one income was also another thing to get used to, but it is reassuring to know that God always promises to provide all we NEED, not always all we WANT. His continued provision has shown us that he is faithful in this.



Kirsten Eyre (middle)

Christ’s sacrificial love fuels me for all the work and purposes He has for my life. I know that in and of myself I do not have the strength or the capability to do all that He would have me do, and to love everyone all the time like He does. If Christ is the most important thing to me and the thing I desire most, then He will be the overflow of my heart, and my husband and the students we minister to are blessed and benefit from this.

Seeing the guys and girls who have had time invested into them grow in their spiritual maturity and love and passion for Christ, and seeing new ones come to a faith in Him, refuels my joy in the Lord. It can seem a daunting task, but it is surprising how taking a small step coming alongside another and being real about our faith, our highs and lows, can encourage pursuit of Christ.


I see it as a privilege to be used by the Lord in the lives of young men and women at Otago University who will, Lord-willing, lead our future church.

In Him,

- Kirsten Eyre
Grace, Dunedin

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord, not for human masters.

Colossians 3:23



From Left: Karla with Tobias, Christopher, Amelia, Oliver, husband Paul, Wilbur, Sophia & Joshua.

'Just' a stay-at-home Mum

Hi there. I am Karla and I am married to Paul. We have two girls and five boys – which makes for a lot of odd socks. I'm a 'homeschooling mother of seven'. You must be thinking, 'she must have long skirts, long hair and believe God opens the womb and closes it'. Well, you would be wrong on two of the three. On the third I do believe God has blessed me with many children but I also believe he invented microsurgery.

My homeschool journey began nine years ago in Nelson. With no real options for Christian education, I read up about homeschooling. I knew another family who homeschooled and was impressed with their children, so I was keen to give it a go. We often marvel at how God worked in our lives, because if we were in Auckland at that stage we never would have considered homeschooling and only had a couple of kids. But, God has different plans to ours and sometimes we have to hold on for the ride. Once we had settled on and got excited about homeschooling, Air Nelson opened up a base in Auckland and Paul got a captaincy position there. So we moved to Auckland. Now we were in a church with a great Christian school and we were going to homeschool Sophia. I felt really guilty, but I have received nothing but encouragement and help from the staff.

I'd better get to the 'what it's like being a homeschool mum' part. As a mum with her kids at home all the time it is hard to get time alone. I can't even have a shower without being interrupted. Sometimes I have to lock myself in my bedroom and then my ensuite to have a conversation on the phone. So I do my personal devotions at night time. I find with a lot of little ones I don't choose what time I wake up but I do have more control at the other end of the day. People say 'start your day with God'; mine usually starts with crying.... the babies first then sometimes I may join them. I also don't get a chance to sit down and read a book since I am on the go from 7am to 9:30pm (on a good day), so I have found audio books from the library or online and online sermons a real blessing. I download them to the ipod and will listen while I cook or push kids on the swing.

Being at home limits your participation in outside activities. I would love to visit people in hospital, but I exceed the allowed persons in the room by about six so that is not an option. This

made me feel quite useless until I found out I have a gift of writing letters. So even though it seems a small thing, I feel like I have a part in encouraging others. I mainly write about my naughty children, whom I have dubbed 'House of Horrors'. I can also cook meals for people, which I thoroughly enjoy, and Wally Behan or PG Wodehouse keep me company.

One day I was with the younger three and the three year old said 'Let's play hide and seek' and I thought, sarcastically, 'Yeah I've got nothing better to do than play hide and seek with you' and then I genuinely thought, 'yes, I have nothing better than playing hide and seek'. It wasn't a long game, but we had a laugh and what can be better than happy boys. I think this probably sums up my attitude about being a mum. I am not out at work earning money or achieving a lot in the worldly sense, but I enjoy being around my kids and love seeing them grow up right in front of me. We are always performing scientific experiments in our house like: how much hair can we grow on an apple hidden under a bed? Or how many towels does it take to dry a flooded bathroom? How long does the smell of a tea bag put in the toaster take to go away? Our education never ends.

Now I am getting to the stage of motherhood where training your children to do housework, bake and make dinners starts to pay off as my children do a lot of the housework themselves. OK, it looks like an 8 year old cleaned the shower or washed the floor but one day my children-in-law will rise up and say thank you mother-in-law for teaching your children to cook and clean. Another benefit is they can help other mums with young children in need, whether it be cooking and cleaning or playing. It is the ultimate in living vicariously through your children, but it is one way I can offer help.

Well this article was not much of an ad for homeschooling or having a lot of children but I really love my job and am thankful for all of the wonderful support I have through different friends and parents. It really is the best job in the world and is only by the grace of God I can do it... and a lot of chocolate.

- Karla Burton
Covenant, Manurewa

THOUGHTS *on being a Christian*

We approached some women in paid employment to answer three questions:

- > *What forms of paid employment are you involved with?*
- > *How do you approach your work as a Christian woman?*
- > *Are there any particular challenges you face in your work as a Christian?*

This is what they said:

Jeanette Brown

Trinity, Takanini

> I own and operate (with my husband) a wholesale business which sells decorative interior trimmings and fabrics to interior designers.

> In the running of the business I do not think I do anything different to anyone else; i.e. I go to work and do my daily job to the best of my ability. But when it comes to making important decisions concerning business matters often we seek the Lord's guidance and share our thoughts/plans with fellow Christians.

> I have customers both Christian and non-Christian that are aware I am a Christian and I have not noticed any 'negativity' from non-Christian customers because of this. Because I operate the business, I do not have issues with management telling me to do things that are not ethical.

Katherine Young

Redeemer, Manukau

> I am a registered nurse in the children's emergency department at Middlemore hospital.

> My work is an opportunity I am given to serve God and others (though sometimes I do forget this). I endeavour to approach each patient and their family as people made by God, who need love and care. Especially on hard and busy days it is simply, "Lord, I can't do this, I need your help!"

> Shift work and staggered lunch breaks makes it slow work to build relationships with colleagues as you can go days without seeing individuals and often you do not have time to make conversations. It is very easy to become cynical and uncaring when faced with unhelpful or abusive parents and with pain and suffering.



Fiona Sijemore

Grace, Dunedin

> I am principal at Liberton Christian School, Dunedin. We are a state-integrated Christian school. It is an awesome and humbling experience to work in a Christian school.

> With God's help I aim to approach everyday in His grace using the abilities and opportunities he has given me. Prayer is essential along with His goodness and grace.

> Not really as we are a Christian organisation and therefore our aim to serve the Lord and His community is up front. I work with a great team of teachers, a committed Board of Trustees and a very supportive community.

June Tordoff

Grace, Dunedin

> Senior Lecturer, School of Pharmacy, University of Otago

> It is important to work diligently and to see that the students get a fair deal. In addition it is important to be helpful and supportive to colleagues and to pray for our colleagues and work situation.

> One or two colleagues are antagonistic towards Christian beliefs. I avoid conflict with them as it would be unproductive with the individuals concerned. Writing this I feel challenged to pray for them more.

Another challenge is finding time for everything other than work! Most academics in our School work more than full-time to fit everything in as they are expected to teach, research and take on administration roles in an under-resourced environment. However it is a privilege to have interesting work and to influence young lives, and I am thankful for such employment.

Jan Jopson

Grace, Dunedin

> I work part time as an assistant research fellow in a university setting. I do some field work and lots of office work, largely in a support role under senior researchers.

> As a Christian woman who is also a wife and mother, I see my paid employment as secondary to roles of wife and mother. So I limit my work to be able to fulfil those roles as best I can; and also leave time and energy for some work in the community and church. I believe I have skills and abilities given by God which are valuable to my work setting. I work with integrity, do quality work, and attempt to be a good co-worker. I seek to befriend those I work with and share with them what makes me tick. My immediate colleagues certainly know I am a Christian, as do many others I work with.

> I feel very blessed to be in a role that is reasonably flexible so that I can meet my primary obligations. I never feel I have to do anything immoral - I rarely have any work commitments that interfere with my worship or family time; although there are some limited times of travel which are a challenge. I know many others struggle much more with this. I had an odd experience recently when I participated in a nationwide conference which was held on a marae. It was interesting and sad- dening that there were accepted times of prayer in Maori, but it would not have been allowed if in English or if from a distinctively Christian perspective. I did not have a particular problem with anything that was translated, though the name of Jesus was not raised. This is an emerging area in NZ, at least in the South Island, which I have mixed feelings about.

Jamie Worth

Grace, Dunedin

> I work full-time as a doctor mainly at two sites, Dunedin Urgent Drs where I do Accident and Medical cases as well as private paediatrics, and then Queenstown Lakes District Hospital. In addition, I do a fair bit of travelling both around NZ and Australia to take up Paediatric locums where they are short of staff.

> I approach my work as a Christian woman by bearing in mind that the Lord said whatever we do for one of these little ones we do for Him. I try to be very aware of my language and attitude to patients and I see my medical practice as my main personal ministry. This includes medical missions I do with my children in the Philippines. I do not have a ministry in the church apart from hospital- ity that Richard and I do together.

> Yes there are challenges and one of the main ones is continual disappointment in the colleagues who identify as Christian in a church setting but will not discuss it in the work setting, even to a fellow Christian, or let it impact on how we treat each other as brethren in Christ. I have also faced discrimination as a Christian particularly in my training for Paediatrics in Dunedin Hospital. When you get one person in a position of authority (as a supervisor!) who hates you because you're a Christian (and a family woman among other things), they can make your training very difficult for you. As for moral issues such as abortion I find them a very good opportunity to witness for my faith and to ensure that others actually know I'm a Christian. On other issues, such as the anti-smacking law, I made the radical move of not renewing my membership with my own Paediatric Society which embraces the law.

Opportunities through Plunket



I had been at home for 16 years with 3 kids when the Lord gave me this great job at Plunket.

It was a time when my last child had gone to school and I was wondering what the Lord would have me do

with the rest of life. A friend who had just started work with Plunket encouraged me to apply, which I did and the position enabled me to do a return to nursing course. Although I was very apprehensive at first, I was amazed how the Lord opened up the way and how it has been a huge blessing to us as a

family. Because I work in an area of high need I have had lots of opportunity to encourage families that are struggling with many of life's real issues.

Some families have needed help and assistance in many of the basic areas we take for granted. Health and education are two of the main areas Plunket focuses on. Because of this I am often able to offer the church and its various ministries. These include Pre-school, Christian school, English language classes, literacy classes and music and more sessions. Our ladies bible study group has also on a number of occasions put together food parcels, clothing and blankets which have been gratefully received, and it has been an incredible blessing to those who have given. I am really thankful for the Lord blessing me with a job in the community. It provides huge opportunity to connect with a needy community and show the Lord's compassion.

- Janet Boyd
Covenant, Manurewa

Booties, Babies & Bountiful Lord

A small group of ladies from Redeemer, Trinity, Covenant and Providence began in January 2010 with an amazing idea - to outreach to woman who would be at the Papakura Maternity Unit in December, around 150 new mums and their babies. How? Give them a gift pack that includes the Christian message of Christmas.

Beginning with willing bootie knitters, the task commenced. A child's Christmas story-book was found and purchased. Donations began to come. One committee lady said her ultimate goal would be to give each lady a coffee mug. I thought this was nice but probably unattainable. We had struggled to find suitable books and

obtain funds, but God is so good. Nice coffee mugs were found, reduced from \$5.99 to \$1.00, and there was 150 just waiting to be wrapped and taken home. Then 150 tea bags were donated. Baby lotion, wash cloths and body wash for mums were obtained. "NZ Healthy Food Guide" gave us back dated magazines. Grace Church's advertising features on the card and on the Bible Society Christmas leaflet.

A preparation day was held and various tables provided ladies opportunity to share together as they used their skills. One group knitted booties, getting closer to the 150 pairs of booties, another group made 150 cards to attach to the gift packs and a third group

painted nativity scenes to go on the walls of the maternity unit.

Next a packing day was held. Again the co-operative work of a group of ladies packed all the gifts into colourful, recyclable bags ready to give to the mums.

We pray that in this way, the new mums will see the generosity of God - Christ came for us, a free gift that gives grace and hope to all who receive Him.

- Shona Rakete
Redeemer, Manukau

(see back page for photos)



Over the next few months several of our young women are embarking on short term mission trips. Do pray for them as they go into new environments and face the many challenges they will encounter.

Rosalie Evans (Gisborne) will be serving as a doctor in the Mukinge Mission Hospital in Zambia (SIM) for 11 weeks between Dec 2010 and February 2011. The hospital has 200 beds for inpatient care as well as outpatient services. She will be working with long-term doctors, nurses and other staff (both Zambian and from around the world) as well as other short-term visitors.

Jess (and husband Ash) (Gisborne) are in Mumbai working with Empower to assist local churches to spread the gospel. Follow their mission on <http://ajibaparadesi.blogspot.com/>

Karyn Lean (Invercargill) departs January 24th to go to Danja Hospital in Niger (SIM) to serve as a physiotherapist until early April (returning just 5 weeks before getting married to Sam Duthie - student pastor at Gore).

Rebecca Diack (Wyndham) a 3rd year Occupational Therapy student is off to serve in a mission hospital in Lilongwe, Malawi for five weeks over February/March 2011 (Pending final approval). She will be working in a children's rehabilitation centre which serves over 600 children with disabilities.

Katherine Young (Redeemer) is heading to Mexico City for 3 weeks in February to investigate a possible longer term mission work from the beginning of 2012. She will be involved with a community centre, using her nursing skills and being involved in children's ministries.

Christine Bayne (Dunedin) leaves on January 9th for a one year posting to work as an Occupational Therapist at a foster home for special needs children in Asia. Presently the home cares for about 40 children and Christine will help to establish a new therapy centre. She goes under the oversight and backing of GBC Dunedin as well as support from others around the country.

Work & Ministry Combine

At Sunshine Preschool



Sunshine Christian Preschool opened in August this year and is run by the Manukau Christian Charitable Trust which has a close association with Redeemer Church. Sunshine Preschool is now nearly at its maximum capacity of 50 children per day. We have children attending from nearly 60 families representing 18 different nationalities. There is tremendous opportunity to teach the children about the Lord and help them educationally to be ready for school and also to outreach into their families, most of whom are not church attenders. Several Redeemer ladies either are employees or give voluntary help at Sunshine.

Pictured in the photo - *Front row:*

Diana Grant is our head teacher. "I come from Fiji, and have been in NZ for 11 years and have worked in many early childhood centres. Working in Sunshine Christian Preschool is a real privilege and an opportunity to finally have the freedom to talk about God's world and Christianity."

Rosita Saufoi: Rosita's job is to help the teachers, help look after the kids and do some of the cleaning. It is her first job for many years as she has been at home looking after her husband and 5 kids. She really enjoys her work. Rosita originally came from Samoa

Sharon Bracefield: Sharon is a university student studying to be an accountant and does most of the accounting work for the preschool. She enjoys getting the practical experience to use what she is studying and working in a Christian environment.

Bex Fitch: "I'm 19 and I'm from England. I have come to NZ for 4 months to do some voluntary youth work and work for Sport4Christ. I have also been working in the preschool for the past 3 months as a preschool assistant. I have loved

every minute of working there. It has been a privilege for me to be able to have a small impact in the lives of so many kids from the area."

Pictured in the photo - *Back row:*

Deborah Song: initially from Korea has worked for 2 years as a preschool teacher. "I am currently working at Sunshine Preschool and it pleases me because it gave me the opportunity of experiencing different cultures and point of views. To be honest, before I began to work at preschool I had no idea about Kiwi culture. The best moment of being with children is when they laugh. As I look at those children who once fought with their friends and were told off by teachers but just forget these things soon and laugh, they remind me of Jesus saying that no one can enter the kingdom of God if they are not like children. I really thank God who allowed me to work at this preschool."

Sue Bracefield works as a volunteer. She transports a van load of kids (up to 9) 4 days a week from families who have no transport and would not otherwise be able to send their kids to the preschool. She also follows up contacts for new enrolments, and gives other practical help from time to time. "When the kids play up in the van I remind myself that this is a ministry and pray that God will use the wonderful opportunity these kids have to go to a Christian preschool to change their lives."

Ruth Solomon: "I'm Ruth Solomon, hailing from India, predestined to be in His Family by His Grace, since my birth. Through His plan I've been blessed to live in New Zealand for the past two years. I have enjoyed my teaching vocation for the past fourteen years, teaching and counselling children of different age groups. Presently, I'm a teacher at Sunshine Christian Preschool, and this opportunity enables me to teach and to show God's love and purpose for the little ones."

Rita Williams is initially from the USA, and has served with Mission to the World in Europe for many years with her husband Steve. "I do administration for the preschool. I enjoy welcoming parents and children to our centre, then showing them around. Later I enrol the children and take care of all paperwork required. I assist the parents and teachers with their administrative needs. I consider it a blessing to serve Christ at Sunshine Christian Preschool."

Others from Redeemer have also provided significant voluntary help, especially **Noa Ah Poe** who has visited prospective parents, helped with cooking and does community pastoral care and health promotion, and **Maria Chuang** who helped with resourcing and the initial setup.

In Brief

News & Prayer Points from around the Country

While not all our congregations feature in this edition, please still be faithful in praying for them in their work of the Kingdom as well as those listed below. We trust you are encouraged by what you read, gain new ideas for what would also work for you, and are helped to pray more effectively for each location.

Northern Presbytery

MANGERE

Providence Presbyterian Church

Give thanks for our recent ladies meeting where we studied some of the teaching from Edith Schaeffer's book, "Affliction". This was a follow-on from our combined Grace Ladies Edith Schaeffer Day. We had a great evening with a coffee and dessert, study and testimony. For some of our ladies it was their first attendance at one of our meetings. Our wonderful youth group ran a crèche and did the dishes.

In the July holidays we held a successful holiday programme and from that we have now got a weekly children's club which Megan and Bruce Levi run. Some of the local children are now attending church and we have also seen some parents come along.

A playgroup has also commenced on our premises and one of our ladies, Denise, coordinates this. It is under the auspices of the Good Seed Trust. It runs five days a week. Parents are expected to attend with their child and so this is a good opportunity to make new friends from the community.

GISBORNE

Grace Church Gisborne

- **Ruby Williams** at 96 is still keeping good health. Pray for her witness to the Lord in Dunblane Rest Home.
- Pray for **Hawea Carter's mum** (Marie's grandmother) Ripeka who is 95 and has dry gangrene in both her legs. There are no plans to operate, but she is showing remarkable strength. Pray for the whanau that they would be 'infected' by Nan's Jesus.
- Pray also for **Mere Haig** who has terrible pain in her feet. Pray that she would find rest in Jesus.
- Uphold **Amie Robertson** and hubby Logan as they care for their new son Tyler (Oct 10) who has had surgery for a hole in his lung.
- Give thanks for the **ringawera** (hot hands) that helped to bake for the A&P Show outreach tent and prepare the food for the Outreach Dinner.

Central Presbytery

WELLINGTON

Grace @ Wellington

On Saturday 6 November 2010, Grace @ Wellington held its annual one day **Women's Conference**. This year, the speaker was Sue Bracefield who kindly made time in her busy schedule to come and speak at the conference.

The theme was about women at home and at work. We had lots of opportunities for discussions. For example, we discussed that a woman is to glorify God at home, at work; in the church and outside of the church. In short, a Christian woman should live a godly life i.e. this encompasses all areas of her life.

So, whatever we have been called to do, we are to do it faithfully and do it well for the glory of God. Even the mundane, menial tasks that we do can be glorifying to God. As Luther puts it:

Your work is a very sacred matter. God delights in it, and through it He wants to bestow His blessing on you. This praise of work should be inscribed on all tools, on the forehead and the face that sweat from toiling. For the world does not consider labour a blessing. Therefore, it flees and hates it. . . . But the pious, who fear the Lord, labour with a ready and cheerful heart; for they know God's command and will. Thus a pious farmer sees this verse written on his wagon and plow, a cobbler sees it on his leather and awl, a labourer sees it on wood and iron. — What Luther Says, ed. E. Plass, Vol.3, p.1493.

It was a good opportunity to get to know the other ladies in the church more.

ASHBURTON

Evangelical Presbyterian Church

Ashburton EPC has been running a Tots n Tunes program since the beginning of this year. It is a service to preschool children and their carers in the community. Sandy Hoekstra is our very able upfront lady and Leanne Kuipers fills her shoes well when Sandy has to be away. Some of us older ladies and men assist with reading the Bible story and the all-important morning tea, as well as joining in with the music and activities and all that is involved with setting up and cleaning up. Other ladies provide baking as well.

We have Mums, Grandma's and Caregivers bringing children along. The in-home carers PORSE have endorsed us, so we have several of their mums bringing children along. The children are



Ashburton 'Tots n Tunes' in action!

mostly three years and under with many two year olds, which brings some challenges. Yet we have a glorious time together. Friendships have begun or developed between all the ladies who attend. One young mum said last week she loves the way the story, songs and actions are integrated together. We plan to have a family barbecue on December 4 to end the year.

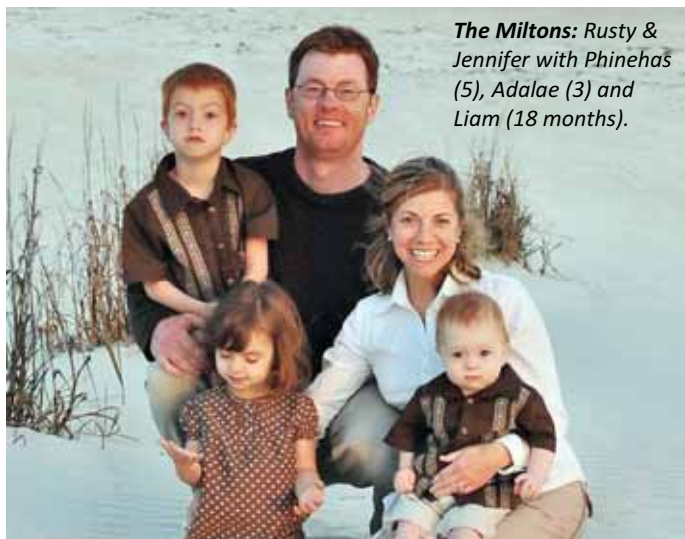
CHRISTCHURCH

Grace Presbyterian Church

Rusty Milton has arrived in Christchurch along with his wife Jennifer and three children: Phinehas (5), Adalae (3) and Liam (18 months). Rusty studied for his MDiv at Covenant Seminary in St. Louis. Upon completing his degree, he and Jennifer were bound for the mission field when God re-directed them into the pastorate. A small country church in Clanton, Alabama (Bible Belt of America) called Rusty to be the solo pastor. They experienced God's mercy as they laboured with fellow Christians to see many conversions and growth to that church. After about 5 years the church was flourishing with many young families, a Youth and Family Minister labouring with Rusty, as well as a small staff for administration, music and children. Much to their surprise, some connections Rusty and Jennifer had with New Zealand lead to a visit in October 2009 and the eventual call to GPC, Christchurch.

Rusty and Jennifer both have a heart for missions and cross-cultural ministry. Rusty studied Intercultural Studies at Wheaton in Chicago, Illinois, and Jennifer studied International Studies. Much to their delight, God has called them to a church of roughly 17 different nationalities. Rusty and Jennifer both had missions opportunities in Asian countries and God developed in them a heart for the least and the lost. It is their hope that God will use them in Christchurch, New Zealand to reach non-believers through evangelism and hospitality, and to build up the Christian body through the preached word, fellowship and Bible studies.

In addition to ministry the Miltons love the outdoors, ethnic food and family time. Rusty is a keen gardener, fisherman and hunter. Jennifer enjoys tramping, horse back riding, photography and sewing. They look forward to exploring New Zealand's mountains, water ways, beaches and forests. They are blessed



The Miltons: Rusty & Jennifer with Phinehas (5), Adalae (3) and Liam (18 months).

with three lively children and have been glad to get them enrolled in a Christian school, music classes and playgroups. Phin likes soccer and Legos, Adalae is all about baby dolls and ballet, and Liam is just happy to be along for the ride.

Southern Presbytery

DUNEDIN

Grace Bible Church

Give thanks for:

- The student year and the ministry opportunities that Kirsten Eyre and others involved in Grace Student Ministry have had in 2010.
- The women in our church who practise the ministry of hospitality by opening their homes to host some of the many small groups in the life of GBC Dunedin. These women and their families provide safe, warm and friendly places for our people to meet, fellowship and grow together.

Pray for:

- A group of students who are headed to Aussie to be a part of the Summer Beach Project. Pray that this will be a time of personal growth in their relationship with Christ as well as the challenge of sharing Christ with other beach goers.

WYNDHAM

Wyndham Evangelical Church

'Women in the Bible' is the present focus for our Wednesday morning Bible study group. We plan to begin a Saturday morning women's prayer time on a monthly basis, followed by breakfast for those who can stay. The recent holiday programme was an encouraging time as children attended with eagerness and gave good attention during the story on the life of Gladys Aylward. A team of teachers continues to go in each week to take Bible in Schools at the local primary school and we continue to be thankful for the wonderful support the school gives to this programme.

INVERCARGILL

Grace Presbyterian Church

At this time of the year, we start thinking about and gathering items for our Christmas Hampers. These Christmas Hampers are distributed to families in the areas around the church building. With the amazing generosity of our church-family, we were able to put together 10 hampers last year. This year we are hoping to distribute even more.

In our Thursday Bible Studies (morning and evening) we are growing through a series of studies on the Psalms. We all, at times, feel as if our soul is afflicted, downcast or sick; we become troubled by worry, sin, problems, suffering, fear or guilt. Through these six studies we are finding the medicine for our souls, which is the Word of God. We are investigating how the psalmists dealt with adversity, fear, temptation and despair. We are learning to do as countless saints before us have done: run to Christ, delight in Him, knowing that despite life's ups and downs, we are secure in Him.

The Back Page

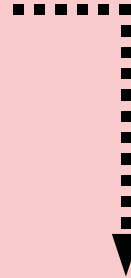
Photos from Northern Presbytery Ladies Outreach (see page 12)

Preparation Day:

Ladies arrive at Redeemer Church, ready to...



knit booties



paint pictures



make cards



Packing Day:

We pack the gifts into bags...



wrap them up



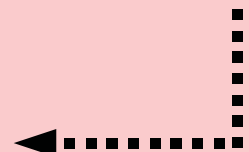
box them up



Bless the mums & their babies!



Decorate Papakura Maternity hospital



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