

SEPTEMBER 15, 2009

Minute for Mission

New Zealand Christians Work Together in Cooperating Parishes



The Rev. Fakaofu Kaoi is the pastor of the Onehunga Cooperating Parish in New Zealand. Photo courtesy of the Onehunga Cooperating Parish.

Many of the parishes in the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand are cooperating parishes. That means that they have combined with other denominations, and often ethnic groups, to form new churches.

One such parish is the Onehunga Cooperating Parish in Auckland. This church combines three denominations (Presbyterian, Methodist and Church of Christ) and five nationalities (New Zealand, Tokelau, Samoan, Cook Islands and Niue). Monthly combined services are celebrated in four languages: English, Samoan, Cook Island and Niuean.

The pastor, the Rev. Fakaofu Kaoi, often preaches in three or four languages on any given Sunday. For those languages that he does not speak, he prepares a sermon that is then translated. He delivers the sermon by reading it phonetically.

This growing and vibrant church is reaching out to those who want and need a church. Each nationality has its own night at the church for choir practice, Bible study and social events. By working together, the members have created a wonderful ecumenical spirit, without which it would not be possible for all to have a church that they can call home.

Prayer: God, you who have created each and every one of us in your image, bless those who worship and pray together. By working together they glorify your name through the recognition of the value of each of your children. Continue to bless them as they continue to love one another as you have taught us to do. Amen.

The Rev. Stuart Vogel
Overseas Mission and Partnership, Council for Mission
Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand