



TAUIWI YOUTH CONFERENCE 2017 REPORT

Ngaruawahia CYC // February 3-6 2017

Background

Over the recent course of our history, the Methodist Church of New Zealand has struggled to show real and dedicated investment into the ministry of its young people. The neglect and lack of vision over time has led to there being an entire generation of young adults that are simply *missing* from our churches. No doubt, there are (and always have been) many people who are selflessly dedicated to ministering to youth and walking alongside them in their journey but historically, we have struggled to be a church that hears, values and provides platform for the voice of young people within the life of Te Haahi Weteriana o Aotearoa.

In 2015, we began a journey to ensuring the current generation of young people in our church do not go on to become another lost one to our church. Our gatherings were sharply focussed around one recurring word: **UNITY**.

From this, the vision of Taiwi Youth Conference was born.

After much prayer and discernment, as well as facing a few challenges and obstacles in the lead up, we were finally able to bring to life this vision, this past Waitangi weekend at Ngaruawahia Christian Youth Camp.

This report will provide an overview of the Conference, as well as what we hope will result from this Spirit-Led weekend, for young Methodists all across the Connexion.

#321UNITE

The theme for TYC was chosen as #321UNITE, after much deliberation, discussion and prayer. The idea was to have a theme that was easy to remember and embodied the pursuit of unity we were hoping to achieve. The "321" was left open to interpretation – a countdown, a reference to the trinity and others were suggested as links to this theme.

Our key passage, which we constantly returned to, was Ephesians 4.1-16: The unity of the body. We were clear and deliberate from the outset that we desired as a team to bring unity to forefront of our young leaders minds that were in attendance.

Friday February 3rd

TYC began on Friday evening with our early arrivals being able to share in fellowship over pizza and other snacks. This set the scene for our weekend – where we would aim to provide as much opportunity for *connection* between different youth leaders as possible.

From here we began our Friday opening service, with President Prince and Vice President Viv bringing words of welcome. We greatly appreciated their brief, but meaningful time with us, in spite of having an incredibly busy weekend of Waitangi commitments. Many thanks to Prince and Viv for

being among us! Michael Lemanu brought the opening message, focussing on the key scripture and also looking at Matthew 7.7 – encouraging our young leaders this weekend to take every opportunity to *Ask* questions, *Seek* opportunities to grow and develop and *Knock* on these doors of opportunities that TYC was providing for them.

Saturday February 4th

Every morning began with a 7am exercise and prayer session, affectionately knick-named *Praisercize*. These sessions, run by Osiasi Kupu and his team, combined fitness and faith together in a fun and empowering way. We would encourage our MCNZ Conference to adopt something similar to begin each day!

After Praisercize and breakfast, we had our morning service and devotion, with David Lawson of CWS being our morning speaker. We placed great emphasis on morning devotion, believing that a Spirit-Led start to each day would set us in the right direction. In line with this belief, we also had a 24/7 prayer space set up for the duration of TYC – available for any delegates needing to escape busy-ness, and hone in the Holy Spirit.

We thank David for bringing a challenging message – reminding us of the obligations we have to prayerfully consider every part of the body of Christ, especially those who are affected by war and other injustices.

Resource Station Rotation

Following morning devotion, we had our first workshop, the *Resource Station Rotation*. Our young leaders were split into mixed groups and spent 15minutes at a different resource station. Each station provided them with a resource, idea or game that they could take back to their respective local youth ministry. Stations covered a wide array of things – from icebreaker games, bible study samplers, to information on upcoming CWS events and other informative sessions.

CANVAS – Creative Corners

Saturday afternoon and evening was dedicated to our Creative Corners workshop. We ran 6 intensive workshops which each focussed on a creative art – Dance, drama, music, spoken word, fashion and art/multimedia. Workshops were run by highly skilled creatives, in their respective fields, from internal and external connections.

Each group spent the afternoon workshopping around how to bring to life the theme of #321UNITE through their chosen creative art. In the Saturday evening, each workshop was asked to present as part of our Creative Corners showcase and Open Mic evening.

We were truly blessed to witness the creative talents and minds of our young people at the showcase, where each group took a unique interpretation of the theme and gave new meaning to *creative worship*. For our young people, Sunday morning worship in their context doesn't always resonate with how they connect with God. Our creative corners equipped our young leaders with ideas on how to approach worship creatively, with amazing results. Huge thanks to our facilitators, for their time, dedication God-given talent and for bringing out the best of our young creatives at TYC.

Our Creative Corners facilitators were:

Eseta Penaia – *Dance*
Lavinia and Moses Uhila – *Drama*
Mele Tamanilo – *Fashion*
Elianna Maka – *Multimedia*

Amelia Takataka – *Art*
Nastassia Wolfgramm – *Music*
Zech Soakai – *Spoken Word*

Sunday February 5th

Sunday morning began again with early morning Praisercize, energizing and preparing our young people for the day ahead.

After our Saturday sessions of resourcing – practically and creatively – Sunday was centralised around leadership development, with heavy Connexional input.

Many guests were invited during the course of the day to partake in Conference activities however Sunday began with a powerful message from one of our own, Osaiasi Kupu. Oz again focussed on our central scripture Ephesians 4.1-16, bringing with it his own mix of energy, passion and God loving faithfulness.

At this service a Spirit-Led decision was made to make a call for any young people to respond and give/rededicate their lives to Christ. We had more than 30 young people respond to this call and come forward which was a powerful reminder that God is anointing, calling and working through the young people of our church – So much so that we can ignore the sound no longer. We were fortunate at this time to Rev. Dr Trevor Hoggard with us to pray over these young people and set them on what we hope will be a life-lasting journey. Follow up for these courageous young people has begun and we are working to create support systems for them, within their respective contexts.

LEAD

Following this profound morning of spiritual nourishment, the platform was set for the rest of our day where we would look to equip our young leaders with various tools in their toolkit that make an effective leader – within and outside of the life of the church. Our leadership workshops were facilitated by Trinity College, who willingly gave their time and full dedication to these awesome sessions. We were blown away by the content and approach of these workshops by the college – giving our young people a taste of what our college has to offer and inspiring them in many ways. We are excited for the future in further nurturing the relationship between the work of TCYFM and Trinity, and thank the staff deeply for their involvement at TYC.

The Method of a Leader

Our first leadership workshop, *The Method of a Leader*, had a focus on giving practical tips and guidance on strengthening/identifying the habits and qualities of an effective leader. This workshop, predominantly facilitated by Rev. Dr Mary Caygil, encouraged our young leaders to think deeply about leadership, their own role models and their own approaches to leadership. We believe this session was highly effective in upskilling our young leaders with practical resources to take back to their own contexts.

The Spirit of a Leader

Our second leadership workshop, *The Spirit of a Leader*, focussed on giving our young leaders ideas for their own Spiritual nourishment.

The workshop begun with a testimony from one of our young leaders, who shared a common story of struggle for purpose and future that became one of redemption and clarity in God and His devotion to him at his lowest point and highest joys. This testimony was powerful and relevant for many of our young people currently in school or beginning university.

Coming back to the workshop, we identify Spiritual *burnout* as being one of the chronic problems faced by youth leaders, and so sought to address that issue in this workshop, which was facilitated by Dr Emily Colgan. This workshop gave simple yet highly effective suggestions around how to approach prayer – in a variety of different ways. Leaders were then encouraged to try different prayer techniques and implement them into their daily routines. This workshop was profoundly inspiring to our young people, again giving them practical tools for their leadership toolkit.

TYTANZ Talanoa

Following the first two workshops of the day, we set up a space for our *Talanoa* discussion. During the course of TYC, we encouraged young people in attendance to think about questions they would like ask the leadership of our church – These could be as open and honest as they wanted, and would be asked in a safe, encouraging environment. We separated our leaders into age groups, then spent time forming questions for the wider *Talanoa* discussion. We invited a cross representation of leaders from all across our Church –

Rev. Dr Trevor Hoggard – *Mission Resourcing*

Rev. Dr Mary Caygil – *Trinity College*

Rev. Abhishek Solomon – *Mahurangi Parish*

Te Aroha Rountree – *Trinity College, Te Taha*

Maori

Nicola Grundy – *Trinity College*

Rev. Misilei Misilei – *Papatoetoe Parish*

Filo Tu – *Sinoti Samoa*

Siu Williams-Lemi – *Central South Island*

Synod

Osaisi Kupu – *Vahefonua Tonga*

Following brief introductions, we attempted to simply engage in conversation – with the questions as the guide to keeping our *Talanoa* heading in the right direction. Some of the questions we received were deeply challenging, some were revealing and all were eye-opening. Although cut short in time, we felt this workshop opened up a reality to our young leaders – that there are indeed leaders in our church who want the same things they want and are willing to walk alongside them. We believe this was highly effective panel discussion and one which we hope to do with regularity in the near future. We thank all our panellists for partaking in this discussion! Keep an eye out for these questions, as we will be doing everything we can to have them answered over the course of 2017.

The Faithfulness of a Leader

After dinner we had our final leadership workshop, which also doubled as being our closing service for the weekend. This workshop/service was called, *The Faithfulness of a Leader*, and was facilitated by Filo Tu. In this workshop, we wanted to draw back on the importance of being faithful to Gods calling on our lives as leaders, and to trust Him unwaveringly to work through us in accomplishing His will on earth.

The workshop began with hearing the testimonies of two of our young leaders, one in person and had just completed a 12 month internship in Chiang Mai Thailand for the CCA, and another via video who was just beginning her internship journey in the same role.

Following this, Filo led us in a workshop which had a mix of faith, fellowship, energy and revelation. Filo is stalwart of youth ministry in our church, and a pillar of undying faithfulness. He shared his journey with our leaders, inspiring them to display an unshakable faithfulness, beyond any circumstance or season.

After Filo's powerful message, Rev. Abhishek Solomon led our Conference in Communion, with Oz serving alongside. This was a fitting way to bring our day to a close – Remembering the covenant made at the cross, for all of Gods people, *young and old* alike.

Monday February 6th

Finally, after a full on weekend of faith, fellowship, food and fun we came to our last day. Typically in a camp/conference, the last morning brings with it a tired and worn group of delegates, with home-time on the horizon. Not TYC! Our young people arrived to morning devotion full of energy and enthusiasm reminiscent of the first night.

The day began again with Praisercize, waking up our young people spiritually and physically, for the day to come. From here we had our final morning devotion, led by Siu Williams-Lemi of CSIS and opened up with a powerful testimony from the young leaders representing the Central South Island Synod. It should be noted we were treated throughout the weekend, in that we got to hear from the three real faces of youth ministry for our church at TYC – Oz, Filo and Siu.

Siu brought a creative and inspiring message around the how our young people are to always be thirsty to take on more knowledge but also be willing to pass this on to others. It was an inspiring and fitting message to draw the threads of TYC together.

Following this, we partook in our evaluation, asking our participants to honestly evaluate TYC, identify ways they were equipped, and look at ways to better the next TYC/Youth Conference event. Judging by our feedback, we believe TYC to have been a resounding success, in reinforcing the Theme, equipping young leaders and most evidently – reflecting a Spirit-led UNITY that embodied the early vision of what we wanted TYC to represent.

We believe through Taiwi Youth Conference, we have ignited a flame in the hearts of our young leaders who were in attendance. We feel with a strong conviction that there is revival at our doorstep, and that our young people are absolutely crucial *here&now* to being a legitimate part of the next phase of our journey as church family – Diverse in culture, language and even theology, but dawn together through Christ the common thread and strongest weapon of UNITY in our arsenal.

We want to thank our church leaders who supported the initiative of having Taiwi Youth Conference and are relentlessly committed to the ministry of children and youth all over Te Haahi Weteriana.

As mentioned, we have ignited a flame in the hearts of our young leaders. The question now is this - What will our local, regional and Connexional leaders in response, to ensure this flame not only continues to burn bright but burns in a house that values its worth and presence among them?

He waka eke noa – We are all in the Waka Together

Team TYTANZ

Tauivi Youth Conference Organizing Committee

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Neomai Maka, *Manukau*
Alilia Molitika, *Waikato-Waiariki*
Amelia Takataka, *Waikato-Waiariki*
Siu Williams-Lemi, *Central South Island*
Tumema Faioso, *Sinoti Samoa*
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(For this report, photo and video, and other resource material, go to www.missionresourcing.org.nz/tyc-2017)

