

Tauiwi Youth Conference 2018

To know Christ | #2KC

Mi Camp, Lake Taupo

January 23rd-26th 2018

Background

In 2017, the Methodist church of New Zealand held its first Tauiwi National Youth Conference since 2013. This event drew together Methodist youth leaders from around the Connexion, with the aim of connecting leaders, resourcing local youth ministry and empowering young people on their own personal faith journeys. **TYC #321UNITE** was a monumental event, in which a glimpse of the future of our church was realised in the present. Leaders grew to understand their place as young people in Te Haahi Weteriana and see the potential impact of ministry that is carried out with unity being an unshakable pillar.

#2KC | To Know Christ

The TYC organising committee moved into 2018 seeking to build off of this foundation and embark on a new journey for our Methodist TYTANZ. It began with a team retreat in Piha where there was a great deal of meticulous planning, prayer, discussion and visionary ideas.

Throughout this retreat, what became evident was that in every session, ideas would generally land back on one key idea: **IDENTITY** – In ones community, church and in personal life.

This became the mantra of TYC 2018 – That our identity must be founded on *knowing Christ*. Hence, **To know Christ | #2KC** was born. Matthew 16:13-20 was selected as the key text for TYC, focussing on the key conversation that Jesus had with his disciples, asking them a key question – *Who do you say I am?*

The beautiful MiCamp Taupo was chosen as the venue for TYC. Every session overlooked the stunning Lake Taupo and was a great reminder of the beauty of Gods creation – with His work and wonder on constant display.

#2KC | Day 1

TYC began day 1 with a focus on giving attendees the chance to get to know one another. One of the strong focusses of TYC is for it to be a safe, comfortable and encouraging community for all people who are part of it. This year there were 9 pre-selected prayer groups that attendees were in for all group activities throughout TYC. Our TYC prayer groups were

1. **VICTORY:** 1 John 5:4
2. **PRAISE:** Psalms 150:6
3. **WORSHIP:** Romans 12:1
4. **BLESSED:** Psalms 1:1-2
5. **COURAGEOUS:** Joshua 1:9
6. **FAITH:** Matthew 17:20
7. **TRUTH:** John 14:6
8. **DELIVERED:** Psalms 3:8
9. **HOLY SPIRIT:** Acts 1:8

Each team was first tasked with coming up with a unique team chant to present back to the other groups. Following this, there was time set aside for groups to begin to get to know one another and introduce themselves, their churches and synods that they were representing.

We were proud to have an extremely diverse group of leaders present at TYC this year – with representatives from 9 of our 11 synods, ages ranging from 16 to mid 50's, and a mix of cultures and ethnic makeup. With a wide mix of cultures and backgrounds, it opens all attendees up to a new world of experiences and perspectives that they might not have been exposed to in the comfort of their own respective synods.

Opening Devotion

Following dinner, we had our opening gathering, officially welcoming our guests and laying down the challenge for what our week ahead would be about. The TYC worship team, who led faithfully throughout TYC, opened the gathering with some high-octane worship (burning calories on stage), before Michael Lemanu brought some opening words and greetings to all.

The main point of what was shared on night 1 was the idea of God sometimes seeking *simplicity*. To simply trust in his will, follow his calling and bare witness to the wonder of what he will do. Sometimes, seeking to be fancy or extravagant in carrying out Gods work can obscure us from our unchanging Christian mission – *To Know Christ*.

This was then what we set out to do at TYC – *know Christ*, so that we could readily identify his presence through the various aspects of our lives, church and leadership.

#2KC | Day 2

Praiser-cise

Every morning at 6am throughout TYC #2KC, an awesome session of praiser-cise kicked off the days festivities – Combining morning exercise with prayer and reflection. Being located at the beautiful Lake Taupo, we were surrounded by fields, walking treks, and of course Lake Taupo itself! Every morning praiser-cise took on a different feel and look.

The first morning session focused on fitness, providing a shock to the system for our early morning risers, as a way to prepare them for the intensive day ahead.

Morning Prayer & Prayer Hub

Following praiser-cise every morning, there was a morning prayer session held in our prayer hub, where prayers in different languages were offered up and then an old style hymn was sung.

Our prayer hub was set up as the engine room for TYC – with everything we did being powered with prayer and devotion. The prayer hub also had many interactive and meaningful stations set up, which allowed attendees to drop in any time during the day and partake in a time of quiet reflection and prayer whenever needed. The prayer hub was one of the most frequently occupied spaces throughout TYC and a space which we believe is integral to having TYC be a Spirit-led event.

Morning Devotion 1

After the morning activities and breakfast, we engaged in our time of morning devotion. Our first morning devotion was led by Siu Williams-Lemi, Youth Coordinator for Central South Island Synod. Siu brought a powerful message to our leaders, touching on the topic *what does it mean to be church?* We believe that church is a verb before a noun – something that is acted out as opposed to something that is attended – and this was strongly emphasised in Siu's message. Siu used four key

ideas in her message to represent the idea of being church. These ideas were: ***Plug it in, Charge it up, live it out, pass it on.***

Also central to her message was the idea of belonging to a community of faith that support, nurture and care for one another. That *being* the church means that you belong to something greater than yourself.

As our day was to be strongly focussed around the idea of the Methodist identity, Siu's message was timely, powerful and challenging to our leaders in attendance. This laid the foundation for our day ahead.

TYTANZ Talanoa

Our Talanoa this year returned, this year with a strong panel of female leaders representing the breadth of our church. Our panellists were

- Viv Whimster – *Vice President of the Methodist Church of New Zealand*
- Rev. Setaita Kinahoi Veikune – *Director of Pasifika Ministries, Mission Resourcing and President Elect for the Methodist Church of New Zealand*
- Nicola Grundy – *Administrator and Academic Registrar, Trinity College and Vice President Elect for the Methodist Church of New Zealand*
- Dr. Emily Colgan – *Lecturer in Theology, Trinity College*
- Te Aroha Rountree – *Lecturer in Maori Studies, Trinity College and Te Taha Maori*
- Felicia Muliaina – *Trinity College*

A point of difference to this year's Talanoa was that our panellists came to TYC #2KC with some questions of their own which they asked our young leaders in attendance to ask. These questions were

1. *As young leaders of the Methodist Church, what are the top 3 issues the church should be addressing?*
2. *What is one thing you would like Methodist Church leaders to know about Methodist young people?*
3. *What kind of resources would be helpful for you in your context?*

In the 9 prayer groups, our leaders were given time to go away and come up with answers to these questions. While this was happening, our panellists also went away and worked on questions that were collated from TYC attendees.

What transpired was a great, deep, honest conversation which touched on some interesting points for further discussion and conversation. (Full more on this, head to www.missionresourcing.org.nz/tyc2018)

Expression Sessions | #ToTheBone

The biggest and most exciting new undertaking of TYC #2KC was the introduction of our *Expression Sessions*. The Expression Sessions aim was ***To educate leaders on aspects of our Methodist story and identity through creative mediums.***

Using the Mission Statement of the Methodist Church of New Zealand and its 11 accompanying principles as a guide, we created 10 workshop streams which related to these principles and focused on three overarching questions

1. What are the core values we by as Methodists in NZ?
2. How are such values expressed and upheld?
3. What is a Methodist in New Zealand?

Each of the attendees were given the choice to pick a workshop stream. The workshop topics were

1. The Bi-cultural Journey | *Te Aroha Rountree and Nicola Grundy*
2. John Wesley and the Methodist Movement: From Oxford to Aotearoa | *Viv Whimster*
3. Let the Children Live | *Alisi Tatafu*
4. The Ecumenical Movement | *Felicia Muliaina*
5. Global Mission | *David Lawson*
6. A House with many rooms | *Siu Williams-Lemi*
7. Every Member a Minister | *Osaiasi Kupu*
8. Caring for Creation | *Lusia Feagaiga*
9. Exploring Evangelism: The Wesleyan Quadrilateral | *Emily Colgan*
10. Born in Song: Music and Methodism | *Wesley Machee*

Each workshop began with speakers presenting on the topic for 30-40minutes. Following this, each group was tasked with taking the information attained in their workshop and coming up with a presentation to share back to the whole conference in our evening showcase, using creative mediums – ie. Dance, drama, music, spoken word etc. The idea would be that our attending leaders would be able to bring to life their topic, the Mission Statement of our church, and educate one another in a way that was engaging, creative and of course entertaining!

The evening showcase was an amazing night of not only outstanding talent and creativity, but also the interactive and informative passing on of knowledge and ideas. Expression Sessions achieved and exceeded expectations, helping our young people to become more aware and in touch with their Methodist DNA and heritage.

To round off a long day of action packed activities, Ronald Vatau of Sinoti Samoa shared a powerful testimony, touching on the story of Haratio G. Spafford and his writing of the inspiring hymn *It is Well with my Soul*. This fittingly closed off a big day of activities for TYC Day 2.

#2KC | Day 3

Praiser-cise

TYC day 3 started bright and early once again with 6am Praiser-cise. This session was lead by the awesome Dan Belchamber, youth leader at Wesley Methodist Tauranga. Dan set up 9 prayer stations throughout the campsite walking trek – with each stations asking for prayer for a specific group, leader, ministry or individual. This activity was done in our 9 prayer groups and was a beautiful way to actively and prayerfully begin the day.

Following this, we again had our morning prayer session held in our prayer hub, where prayers in different languages were offered up and then an old style hymn was sung.

Morning Devotion 2

Morning devotion 2 was led by Nathan Dunn, an invited guest to TYC who comes from a strong Presbyterian Methodist background. Nathan's background in Business, boys brigade, and Christian volunteer work made him a more than worthy addition to our TYC program and also great asset for our leaders in attendance.

Nathan's morning devotion was based on the key text *Matthew 16.13-20* and touched on challenging points – How we live in comparison, how social media allows us to provide a snapshot of our lives but can also create a false reality, and how at the end of the day we must realise that we are Children of God. Nathan also presented a question to our leaders in attendance – *Who does Jesus say YOU are?* Nathan's thought provoking message was timely and exactly what was needed for our day, where we would look to further explore the idea of knowing Christ personally, as Messiah and Son of the living God.

Servant Leadership

Following a great morning devotion, we moved into our next workshop which was titled *Servant Leadership*. This session was also ran by Nathan, this time with him speaking from the context of business owner and leader in his professional field.

For this workshop, everyone was split into their prayer groups and tasked to complete a challenge called the *Human Knot*. This is a teambuilding challenge that requires teamwork, communication, patience and perseverance. Each group had a different set of limitations to mix it up – some were unable to talk at all, some had an outside person providing orders etc. The challenge was only complete when all 9 groups had untangled their respective knots.

In evaluating this activity, we heard some great feedback and learnings. Some groups shared about need to take a step back in order to see the broader picture, others about how close they were to giving up but the encouragement of those around them keeping them going, others about how they could pinpoint the exact moment where a mistake led to catastrophic results. All in all though, the exercise demonstrated the power of working together and attempting to model a servant approach – best modelled by Jesus himself.

Synod Station Rotation

After lunch, we moved into another new session which was being done for the first time at TYC – *Synod Station Rotation*. One thing we commonly encounter in our church is that many of people are completely unaware of who and what other synods, beyond their own, are. We attempted to address this through our Synod Station Rotation session.

In this session, each of our attendees were grouped into the synod they were representing and spent 15-20mins "visiting" each synod station. Each station had a presenter from a synod who spoke about what their synod looks like, what work was currently happening and what ways our synods can more strongly work together. There was also time for questions and Talanoa from intrigued leaders covering a range of topics.

This session was an interesting experience of seeing the different rooms of our Methodist house interacting with one another. For smaller synods, it was encouraging for them to see what could potentially be achieved to get to the level of our bigger synods. For bigger synods, the challenge was laid down to them in exploring further what can be done to work together with smaller synods who need more support and connection.

Following this, we had free time for reflection and also a range of activities were offered for attendees to partake in.

Night Devotion

Our final night devotion was led by our one and only Osaiasi Kupu. Oz again unpacked the text of *Matthew 16.13-20*, and brought forth a strong call to our young people that they must surrender and know Christ personally, in order for their identity to take shape. With powerful testimony and

gospel truth, Oz encouraged our young leaders in attendance to seriously consider whether they actually *know* Christ or not. For those who didn't but wanted to, or those who did but had since strayed from their faith journey, the call was sent out and the altar was open.

Our final evening devotion saw many of our young people commit/recommit their lives to Christ. This led to a powerful ministry time of prayer, worship and spiritual revelation. The whole conference joined together in a powerful exchange between surrender and anointing. This perfectly brought together what TYC set to be about – forming young people of *influence*, who sought to have an identity forged on knowing Christ. After all the meticulous planning and preparation, this moment of clarity in Christ made everything at TYC #2KC worth it.

After devotion had concluded, we gave synod groups a chance to touch base. A spirit of worship and joy was tangible as synods prayed together, sang together and embraced each other in fellowship and unity. This topped off another fantastic day at TYC.

#2KC | Day 4

Praiser-cise

Our final morning of TYC began once again with praiser-cise – this time on the edge of the beautiful Lake Taupo. We ventured down through the track that led us across SH1 and to the pristine lake, where Mena Petaia and the courageous team led us in some lakeside Zumba, stretches, reflection and prayer. This was again an awesome session and perfect way to kick off our final morning in Taupo.

After saying goodbye to praiser-cise until next years TYC, we again had our morning prayer session held in our prayer hub, where prayers in different languages were offered up and then an old style hymn was sung.

Final Morning Devotion

Once everyone had fuelled up on breakfast, we gathered for our final morning devotion. Our morning devotion was led by a powerful testimony by our Wakaito-Waiariki Synod youth convener, Amelia Takataka. Amelia inspired attendees sharing her story of what her faith journey has been. Her raw, honest and ultimately faithful story of God being at work through her left a lasting impression on all and encouraged our young leaders to never forget the undeniably *real* impact that God makes on all things.

Following Amelia's mighty and poignant message, we were fortunate to have Waikato-Waiariki Synod Superintendent Rev. Dr Susan Thompson, lead us in an optional communion. This was a perfect way for us to bring together the threads of what had been an intense and ultimately rewarding week – having the opportunity to once again to come Jesus' table and partake in Holy Communion.

Once this was done, we ventured outside for our group photos, before one final big clean up, lunch and then departure.

Special thanks to all people who helped to make Taiwi Youth Conference an amazing experience!

MiCamp | For their gracious hospitality and kindness

Churches and Synods | For your unfailing support of the vision of TYC and for allowing us the space to be who we are

Parents and Whanau | For your support, trust and for love

Our Mighty GOD | Whose immeasurable love meant he'd send his one and only Son, Jesus