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Ngā mihi ki a tātou katoa,

Below, a short article relating to this Waitangi season.

Also, with some urgency, we alert you to the forthcoming Second Reading of the Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill (possibly this coming week).

Kia kaha,



Dr Stuart Lange

National Director



Gayann Phillips

General Manager

and the NZCN Team

P.S. If you haven't yet caught up with the cancellations of the Forum and Congress, see [here](#).



Some reflections about Waitangi, Christians, and bi-culturalism

- A key background to the Treaty of Waitangi was the evangelical Christian humanitarian movement in Britain, which was concerned about the negative impact of western colonisation on indigenous peoples around the world. Some evangelical leaders persuaded the British Government to annex New Zealand – by way of a treaty – so as to regulate the colonisation of New Zealand and prevent its worst effects.
- A crucial factor in many Māori chiefs accepting the Treaty was the widespread Māori acceptance of Christianity in the preceding decade, and Māori trust in the missionaries.
- As colonial settlement increased, so did colonists' hunger for Māori land. Tragically, by the 1860s, this resulted in war, loss of life, land confiscations, and much unjust legislation. These injustices cast a long shadow, and also adversely affected Māori Christianity.
- As Christians, we can recognise the broad biblical principles that lie behind the Waitangi Tribunal claim processes: respect, justice, apology, forgiveness, redress.
- As Christians, whether Māori, Pākehā, or another culture, we recognise and affirm the God-given worth and dignity of everyone, and embrace God's call to us all to be agents of reconciliation.
- We also *pray* for reconciliation, and for the nation's spiritual healing.

Join us on Zoom: 8–9pm Monday 7 February

Special Waitangi prayer focus

Watch Stuart Lange's message from last year, "[Understanding Waitangi](#)"



**PRAYAS
ONE NZ**
Christians Uniting for Aotearoa

Read the Gospel Bicentenary Statement

URGENT PRAYER ALERT

The forthcoming (and crucial) second reading of the
Conversion Practices Prohibition Legislation Bill

A few days ago, the Justice Committee issued its [report](#) on the Bill. The Committee received 107,000 public submissions, and (putting aside 'form' letters) it considered 38,900 of those. It heard 3,400 oral submissions!

Sadly, the Committee rejected the concerns of those tens of thousands of submitters who feel the Bill as currently worded is ideologically one-sided, unclear, and a serious potential threat to the rights and responsibilities of parents, the right to free conversations, and the right of people to seek the advice and support they want.

Let us be very clear: the New Zealand Christian Network agrees with the Bill that New Zealand law should affirm 'the dignity of all people' and uphold the 'rights of all New Zealanders' including rainbow people 'to live free from discrimination and harm'. NZCN is opposed to any pastoral or counselling practice that is uninvited, coercive, unloving, or demeaning, and accepts in principle the two stated purposes of the Bill, i.e. (1) to 'prevent harm caused by conversion practices', and (2) to promote 'respectful and open discussions regarding sexuality and gender'.

We don't agree with the Bill's ideological assumptions that *gender* identity is completely changeable, while *sexual* orientation is completely *unchangeable*. In our observation, some people *do* change, and change can be in any direction. We believe everyone should be free to seek whatever help or moral support they feel they may need.

Our key concern is that as currently worded the Bill does not distinguish between 'harmful' conversion practices and appropriate, open-ended and respectful conversation, counselling, and pastoral support. Because of that, we believe the Bill does not advance its second stated purpose, the promotion of 'respectful and open discussions regarding sexuality and gender', and would instead significantly inhibit free discussion on sexuality and gender, across society. Parents, for instance, may fear that they could be criminalised for advising a child not to take puberty blockers, a counsellor may be unwilling to help some who ask for help, and anyone may be reluctant to give advice or prayer to those who seek it. All of this compromises a number of human rights set out in the New Zealand Bill of Rights.

NZCN has thus proposed that the Bill be amended with an additional clause in Section 5 (2), that:

[in this Act, conversion practice does not include—]

(g) respectful and open discussions regarding sexuality and gender, and advice, guidance, prayer, or support given to anyone by anyone else including parents, family members, friends, counsellors, religious leaders, or health professionals, when such advice or support is requested, and is respectful and non-coercive.

We believe that this one extra clause, or something similar, would greatly reinforce the Bill's second stated purpose, ('respectful and open discussions regarding sexuality and gender'), and would protect open discussion in every context, providing it was respectful and non-coercive. This short amendment, just 44 words, would address the majority of concerns which many people have expressed about the Bill. Good legislation spells things out clearly, and thus gains widespread support.

We strongly deplore the fact that a sensitive and complex moral matter such as this is being pushed through as a Government/party political measure, and that many MPs will not be allowed to vote according to their own conscience.

While many Christians may disagree with ACT on some matters, ACT has strongly and insightfully critiqued this Bill, and declares that the Bill fails to achieve the balance that is required (see here, the final section in the Justice Committee report).

We urge New Zealand Christians to be much in prayer about this matter, especially for those courageous few MPs who will speak out and seek to have the Bill amended so it is more fit for purpose, and less dangerous to several important liberties.

It would also be appropriate to communicate your concerns to some MPs.

--- Churches united in cities ---

- INVITATION -

Hear two champions of unity in the UK share stories

about what churches are doing together right now.

> Be encouraged <

> Find the ideas that might work for you



DETAILS

Thursday 24th February 2022

New Zealand - 11am

Australia (Brisbane / AEST) - 8am

Address: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/304590871>



INVITATION

Hear current stories from two champions of unity in the UK

Brought to you by NZ Christian Network, City by City & Shining Lights Trust

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Find ideas - and take what might work for the pastors of your city or town!

What they will share includes things churches are doing in outreach *with success during Covid.*

Who this is for: Pastors who serve or facilitate unity in their cities and towns across NZ and Australia.

Freely invite other pastors who serve unity alongside you in your city or town.
(We can raise up leaders by exposing them to vision!)

Details: For NZ this is **11am, Thursday 24th February** on Zoom

Zoom link

Employment Opportunities

Listed on our [Job Board](#) by our Church and Christian Organisation members



Communications
Manager

Wellington preferred,
other locations
considered
Full-time / Part-time



Staff Workers

**Auckland, Christchurch,
Dunedin**, with vacancies
across the country
Full-time / Part-time



Office Administrator
and Receptionist
Wellington
Part-time



Partnerships &
Fundraising Manager
Based anywhere
Full-time / Part-time



Office Administrator
ELEVATE CHRISTIAN
DISABILITY TRUST
Onehunga, Auckland
Part-time



Partnership &
Development
Manager
MISSION WITHOUT
BORDERS
Auckland
Full-time



Senior Minister
ST ALBANS PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH
Palmerston North
Full-time

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Help spread the news...

New Zealand society is in a period of significant change, much of it away from the Christian faith and values. Christian voices in society are either ignored or scorned.

We need Christian voices which are positive, sensible, reasoned, well-informed, and clear.

Forward to a friend



NZ Christian Network

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