Reflections: My Life in The Lamb of God Community

This month, we have Greg Hall [Auckland], a member of the Lamb of God National Council, sharing us his thoughts for our December Reflections.

To talk about my life in community is to go back over a long period of time. When Maryanne and I first became engaged, we both expressed a desire to live a more committed Christian lifestyle. After we were married, we decided to move North to Dargaville, intending to purchase land and develop a community. At the same time, we had both experienced a community retreat, part of the development springing from the preaching of Fr Riccardo Lombardi which led to the dissemination of the “Exercises for a Better World.” After several years, Maryanne and I returned from the North to start our family and reconnect with our Better World group, meeting with five other couples every Monday night for shared prayer, singing praise songs, and group discussion.

During this time while examining our lives, we reflected that although our experience of the group was very positive, it lacked a charismatic spirituality that we hungered for from the days in the early seventies. So in 1982, we invited our “Better World” group to attend a talk at St. John Vianney’s parish hall where John Carroll from Brisbane and Roger Foley from Christchurch, spoke about a new concept of a charismatic ecumenical community. Having heard that vision shared, we were inspired and decided that it was a lifestyle commitment that we wanted to be a part of.

We were then invited to the Maranatha Covenant community’s general gathering which met weekly at the Glendene Community Centre. We started to meet two to three times a week for teaching in community formation, a small support group in Pakuranga, and a Sunday general gathering with families mainly from West Auckland. At that stage, there were two communities under formation in Auckland: Maranatha and the Servants of the Good Shepherd, both communities being discipled by the Emmanuel community in Brisbane. The Lamb of God Community in Christchurch, later on, took over the discipling of the Auckland communities.
The Holy Spirit was stirring up these groups to focus on living a more committed lifestyle in unity, to guard against the serious secularisation affecting the Western world and the Church. And in 1985, following sometime of prayer, prophecies, and reflecting on the word from Isaiah 54:2 [Enlarge the site of your tent, and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out; do not hold back; lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes], the Lamb of God extended an invitation to various communities and committed prayer groups to join together and establish a national community in June 1985. The Servants of the Good Shepherd community relinquished its name and identity and then became the Auckland branch of the Lamb of God Christian community. In the following year, the Maranatha Community dissolved its covenant and released its members with a number of us subsequently joining the Lamb of God.

In 1988, in responding to the teaching on developing deeper committed relationships, we sold our home in Pakuranga and moved to the suburb of Three Kings to form the first cluster of homes. Then the leadership of our branch of the community was dissolved, and I suddenly found myself elected to lead the community in Auckland.

In 1992, a member of our branch and previously an elder, Br Ray Parsons who worked in the parish of St. Anthony’s in Mangere, asked the branch to run a Life in the Spirit Seminar [LISS]. Following this, some Samoan families and one Singaporean family joined the formation process of the community, and we moved our Sunday gathering location from Owairaka to St. Joseph’s school hall in Onehunga. At the same time, an Encounter Jesus youth meeting was set up which met each Friday night in the St. Anthony’s Parish Hall in Mangere.

In 1995, we met the first Indian migrants at St. Therese Parish in Three Kings, and after speaking with them, we invited them to attend our community gathering that afternoon. Thus Patty and Ajit Pinto, Lorraine Pinto, Brian and Ruby Lowe, Harry and Maureen Lowe, and their children started coming to the community. That started a work of the Lord as many more Indian migrants joined through their personal contacts. Br. Ray reminded us that in the early 1980s, they received a word that said: “You will have a mission to India.” He then quirked that God had got tired of us not sending anyone there, so now He was sending India to us!

The Lord did bless us with many people joining us through the changes in the immigration laws, and this has mightily blessed the community. The children’s ministry flourished during these years.

With our new brothers and sisters getting jobs and renting houses there grew a desire once again to form a closer cluster of homes, so Maryanne and I started discerning where to live. Eventually, nine families joined in purchasing properties in Peninsula Park in Mangere over three streets within walking distance of each other. In the cluster, we meet to share the Lord’s Day prayers each Saturday night together and share a meal together on the third Saturday night of each month.

An ecumenical community bounded by a covenant of scriptural promises that we make before each other and before God with a vision to develop both inner lives together and a joint mission is a counter-cultural commitment needed for this age and an increasing challenge to live against a “me first” philosophy lived by the world today. I know that if I had stayed a “Sunday only” Christian, I would not be the same person that I am. I have realized that growing closer to God and others...
is a lifelong task and commitment. I am offered continually opportunities to grow emotionally and spiritually and that if I do not take up these offers, the Lord presents them to me again.

The community life is also a call to hospitality, and we have been able to welcome other community people from Australia, Fiji, UK, USA, and Germany over the years that have fed into our lives.

My mission outreach has not always been successful, but that does not mean that I do not still say to the Lord “use me.” Having an awareness of living in the mercy of the Lord, I have felt a call to works of mercy after reading the words of Matthew 25:36 - ‘I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick, and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’ The prison visiting ministry has been as much a blessing to me as it is to those we meet with in Mt. Eden.

I have experienced redundancies, the loss of a still-born daughter, and the leaving of people from the community that I thought we had a lifetime relationship commitment with. But even as I draw to an end my service as an elder, I know that the Lord is still calling me to evangelise and grow deeper in relationship with my brothers and sisters in the Lamb of God community. I still hear that call to deeper commitment which started over forty years ago.

Greg Hall

OUR PEOPLE

With sadness, yet confidence in the Lord, we remember:

- Darren, Julie, and Francesca Humphries [Christchurch], as Darren’s father passed away recently.

NEWS AND ARTICLES

LAMB OF GOD ASHBURTON SNIPPET

Lamb of God Ashburton had their Christmas breakup early with just four of us - Joan Corbett, Bronwyn Harborne, Annette Fletcher and Mariana Gorra from Sword of the Spirit, Mexico. (See photo below.)

Usual attendee Trevor Wall is currently in Papua New Guinea assessing the safety for returning to build a church up there in the New Year. Pauline Marsden is currently managing the St Vincent de Paul shop and very busy, and Anne and Don Hooper, great stalwarts, are babysitting grandchildren over Canterbury’s long weekend.

We wish you all a Happy and
You've guessed right. It’s Spring! And what better theme for the evening…

So, dressed in the myriad colours of Spring, the Auckland Branch gathered to celebrate the Lord’s Day. Greeting us at the door, the Welcome Team gave each of us a coloured wrist tie that marked our teams.

The evening began with Ishaan and Renella leading us in prayer as we welcomed the Lord's Day.

Then, for some awesome home cooking, shared in paired pastoral care groups before grouping into teams for the games.

In game one, we had to name over a dozen flowers, ranging from Larkspurs to Daffodils. Teams with avid gardeners mowed down the rest, hands down.

In the next game, we had to list names of one member for each letter of the alphabet with a mention of something unique about them. The twist involved finding a member, asking them to share something unique about themselves and marking them so no other team could then approach them. Amid all the competition and camaraderie we learned that one member had climbed Mt Everest and two others had just gotten engaged. An innovative way of learning more about our brothers and sisters.
Before the evening came to a close, we had some invigorating tutorials in barn dancing which left the onlookers in splits of laughter. All in all an evening of fun, food, and fellowship, leaving us with cheer in our hearts and a spring in our steps.

Thank you, Renita and Nicole for being awesome emcees and to the organising team of the Martis’ Pastoral group and the YCP [Young Christian Professionals] Pastoral group.

“Flowers appear on the earth; the season of singing has come, The cooing of doves is heard in our land.” Song of Songs 2:12 (NIV)

‘He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new”’… Rev 21:5 (NIV)

Shalini Saldanha

MEN’S BREAKFAST WELLINGTON BRANCH

The brothers from the Wellington branch had a special men’s breakfast on Sunday 19 November at the Glasshouse Bar and Grill, Thorndon Hotel, in the city. The brothers had a great time just chatting together and catching up with one another’s lives as they enjoy an eat all you can scrumptious breakfast meal together.

The brothers were joined by Ivan Moraes, who previously led the branch before moving to Sydney more than ten years ago. Ivan, together with wife Greta and Ruth, their daughter, lives in Sydney.
CHALLENGES IN LIVING TOGETHER AS A COMMUNITY
Resource for Reflection or House Group Discussion by Tom Caballes
Being a Light in the Darkness - December 2017

You yourselves used to be in the darkness, but since you have become the Lord’s people, you are in the light. So you must live like people who belong to the light, for it is the light that brings a rich harvest of every kind of goodness, righteousness, and truth. [Ephesians 5:8-9 GNB]

Walking in the dark can get you into trouble – you can stumble and fall, bang your toe, or bash your head. All of us are drawn to the light because light paves the way for us to move safely. The world we live in, in a way, is very dark – the erosion of core moral values and family life, the “me” mentality, and relativism are among the current trends that are not of God. And the world we live in gets darker every day. The darker the world gets, a small source of light stands out even more – and is more crucial. In the midst of the darkness, God wants us to be the light of the world. So, no matter how dark our environment is, people around us should see some hope and encouragement – if we live like the light in the darkness. Do you see yourself as a light-bearer in this dark world? What happens if there are many “lights” in your situation?

So How Do You Become Light in the Midst of Darkness?
1. Live a respectable and reputable life – no hypocritical or double life. Little by little, grow in holiness and character like Christ’s. Be patient, kind and loving, but do not aim to be a people-pleaser; be a God-pleaser. Aim to be respected rather than be liked by others. Actions speak louder than words; before you can say anything, people tend to look at your behaviour and attitude. Be able to sleep well at night, knowing you lived the day in good conscience. Live as if you will one day account for your life – because you will.
2. Choose to do the loving thing. Loving others is easy to say but hard to do. Your ability to love is limited; seek God’s love, patience, and forgiveness when yours ran out. See how loving and forgiving God is to you.
3. Avoid arguments; be open to sharing your opinion with others without being apologetic about it – only if your opinion is asked. Do not generalise and be judgmental, but be kind and considerate of others’ views. Start your sharing with “this is my view about it…” Your opinion has more weight if you have the reputation and the character – being loving, patient and considerate, etc. - to back it up. Your goal in sharing your view is not to prove them wrong or yourself right, but to bring them closer to Jesus. Consider sharing why you believe in such a way, or how you used to believe the same way as they do, and why you changed.
4. Know your faith well. You do not need to be a theologian or a philosopher to explain your faith, but you need to know the basics and the “whys” of your beliefs. Learn and practice how to share the basic gospel message. Practice sharing your personal testimony with others. Seek opportunities to share your testimony – it is something they cannot dispute or challenge.
5. Know that God calls you to be a light bearer in your unique situation at this time and age. Be faithful to your call. Ask yourself: how can I be a mini-Jesus in my family, work, school, church, and community? How can I work with other light bearers around me, so together we can produce an even bigger light?

OTHER SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:
1. “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. [Matthew 5:14-16 ESV]
2. Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. [Colossians 4:5-6 ESV]
3. Other references: Romans 13:11-14; Philippians 2:15-16; 1 Peter 2:9 and 1 John 1:5-7;

FOR REFLECTION OR SHARING:
- How do you make a difference in your workplace or school? Do people around you see a difference in you, or are you “one of the crowd?” Do people around you see the light of Christ in you?
KAIROS NEW ZEALAND YOUTH NEWS
Kairos New Zealand and Singles Schedule of Events - 2017/2018

7 to 11 January 2018        Summer Oasis 2018 [for high schoolers and up]

WEBSITES WORTH NOTING

KAIROS South Pacific Web Site – check it out at www.kairossp.com
You can network and chat with other young people by going to this website: http://www.kairossp.com/kairosspnzchatroom.htm
We designated every Friday night at 10 pm as a time to meet other young people.

Go and visit the International Kairos Media website: http://www.kairos-media.org/

We updated our Lamb of God website—www.lambofgodcommunity.net. We also have two new domain names which point to the same website: www.lambofgod.nz and www.lambofgodcommunity.nz. Try them!

The Sword of the Spirit website is www.swordofthespirit.net. This website is where we can know more what is happening in our communities around the globe. The Lamb of God is a community of the Sword of the Spirit.

Sign up [free] for Youth Culture Newsletter
The most recent edition of the Youth Culture Newsletter is now available online. Please visit the website below: http://www.kairos-na.org/youthculturenewsletter.htm
This link is a recommended Sword of the Spirit publication for youth and parents.

Living Bulwark Sword of the Spirit – Highly Recommended!

This Sword of the Spirit online publication has received more than 43,000 visits (an average of 135 visits each day) in its first year. All back issues for the past 12 months are available at http://www.swordofthespirit.net/bulwark/archives.htm. To view the current issue of the online magazine, go to www.swordofthespirit.net/bulwark/index.html.

SENDING NEWS FOR CHRONICLE PUBLICATION

Branches are encouraged to email news, photos, happenings and snippets to Tom Caballes at office.lambofgodnz@gmail.com. We close on the 20th of the previous month.
IMPORTANT NOTICE ABOUT OUR RECORDS

Membership Records and Data: Branch leaders are responsible for keeping updated records and then emailing all new attendee additions, deletions, address, phone changes, births, deaths, transfers, etc. to:

Tom Caballes – email: office.lambofgodnz@gmail.com

BIRTHDAY INFORMATION

[Day and month, but the year is optional.] Branch leaders are asked to keep updated records and email all new attendee additions to:

Tom Caballes – email: office.lambofgodnz@gmail.com

GETTING CHRONICLE & OTHER NEWS BY EMAIL

[1] If you are receiving The Chronicle as an electronic edition, we just need to hear if and when you change your email address. Notify Lamb_of_God@clear.net.nz.
[2] If you are receiving this by hard copy but you have an email address, please send your email address to Lamb_of_God@clear.net.nz.
[3] The Chronicle has a national and international mailing schedule. If you want to add an email address we can send the Chronicle, please notify office.lambofgodnz@gmail.com.

Wedding Anniversaries - Happy Anniversary!

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Birthdays for This Month - Happy Birthday!

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<td>Russell Mendonca</td>
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Joel De Zoysa 02/12 Auckland
Chris Fredericks 03/12 Blenheim
Althea Misquita 04/12 Auckland
John Tham 04/12 Auckland
Alfred Saldanha 04/12 Auckland
Ron Blackwell 05/12 Central
Desmond Vessaokar 07/12 Auckland
Jonathan McKenzie 07/12 Christchurch
Danielle Lim-Kwan 09/12 Auckland
Rachael Martis 09/12 Auckland
Luke Goodseeker 09/12 Christchurch
Andrew Black 10/12 Christchurch
Father John Rea 10/12 Christchurch
Nicola O'Malley 11/12 Central
Juanita Ashfield 12/12 Auckland
Aly Fernandes 12/12 Central
Sharon Powick 13/12 Nelson
Daniel Vessaokar 14/12 Auckland
Alwin D'Souza 15/12 Auckland
Karen Geelen 15/12 Central
Niul Kay 15/12 Christchurch
Jaime Sequeira 16/12 Christchurch
Pogia Afamasaga 19/12 Central
Jeremiah Afamasaga 19/12 Central
Amanda Saldanha 20/12 Auckland
Carol Fernandez 20/12 Auckland
Tom Caballes 21/12 Central
David Aberhart 22/12 Blenheim
Cheryll Lobo 23/12 Auckland
Melissa D'Souza 24/12 Auckland
Peter Stoddard 26/12 Auckland
Anitelea Afamasaga 26/12 Central
Dennis Hollingsworth 28/12 Auckland
Veronica Foley 29/12 Christchurch
Nathan Murray 29/12 Christchurch
Chriselle Fernandez 30/12 Auckland

PRAYERWATCH

SOLDIERS OF CHRIST, ARISE  Fight the good fight.
Reinforce the guard, station the watchmen, prepare an ambush! The Lord will carry out his purpose. Jeremiah 51: 12 NIV

Last month, I looked at some of the battles Moses fought while leading the Israelites through the wilderness while being faithful to the Lord God in bringing the chosen people to the Promised Land. One man who was close to Moses was Joshua, who I will focus on this month. Joshua, along with Caleb, were among the twelve spies Moses sent into the Promised Land [Deuteronomy 1: 19-46] who reported back the land was good and bountiful, but the other ten were fearful of the people and the fortified cities. Hearing the ten spies, the Israelites rebelled against God’s plan, so Joshua and Caleb were the only men of that generation to enter the Promised Land after forty years of wandering in the wilderness. The rebellious people failed to remember what the Lord God had done in leading them out of Egypt, defeating the Egyptian army at the Red Sea and how food and
water were provided and clothes and footwear did not wear out. **What a mighty God we serve.** Moses died as the Israelites approached the Jordan River and the Promised Land and the Lord God spoke to Joshua. **Joshua 1: 6-8 NIV**

*Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their ancestors to give them. “Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.*

Joshua’s first task was to cross the Jordan River which was in flood at the time, as soon as the priest’s feet touched the waters the Lord God cause the river to stop flowing, so the Israelites crossed on dry ground. [Joshua 3 & 4] Once through the river the waters returned as they were and Joshua and the Israelites turned their focus to Jericho, the first fortified city. Joshua sent two spies into Jericho, and they ended up being protected by Rahab and her family whom they promised to save. [Joshua 2:] The Lord God instructed Joshua to have the Israelites armed men march around Jericho silently once each day for the next six days. [Joshua 6:] On the seventh day they marched around the city seven times, then on the last time the priests sounded a blast on trumpets, and the people shouted. At this, the walls fell, and the city was taken, and the people destroyed except for Rahab and her family. Rahab [Matthew 1: 5] is listed in the lineage of King David, a shepherd boy who became one of Israel’s greatest kings. Now, let look at the battle for Jericho in more depth, what army would march around a city some time over a week to take it. In human eyes, it looks stupid, but here the battle is spiritual rather than physical, Jericho was an evil city, and the battle was between good and evil, light and darkness. Obedience was most important in this spiritual battle, and the Israelites were obedient to God their commander and the victory was achieved God’s way without loss of life. **What a mighty God we serve.** We need to be righteous in spiritual warfare today and totally obedient to God’s way as we are light in a world of darkness. Watch out for more on Joshua next year.

**Soldiers of Christ, Arise, and put your armour on, strong in the strength which God supplies, through His eternal Son.**

If you have any comments or questions concerning the Prayerwatch, then please send them to me or give them to one of your branch leaders to send to me. God bless and watch over you all.

Alan McKenzie - National Coordinator, Prayerwatch

**LAMB OF GOD PRAYERWATCH - PRAYER INTENTIONS**

**SPIRITUAL WARFARE**
Against strongholds of Apathy, Witchcraft, Confusion and other named spirits.

**INTERCESSORY PRAYER**
**COMMUNITIES** Protect and bless the life and mission of SWORD OF THE SPIRIT, Patmos & Cornerstone Lamb of God [Fiji], Families for Christ [Melbourne], Vanuatu Group, Light of Christ [Nelson], The Covenanted Community For Christ, [Penang & Taiping],

OTHER NEEDS: Auckland: Clifton & Anora D’Costa, Southern: Florence & Susan Quigley,

HEALING CANCER: Central: Ron Blackwell, Rosemarie Buladaco, Blenheim: Carol Cullimore, David Aberhart, Christchurch: Mary Anngow, Robin Corbett, Trevor Wall, Bev Cummins, Southern: Christine May,

HEALING HEART: Auckland: Collin Sequeira, Maryanne Hall, Central: Paul Oliver, Blenheim: Chris Fredericks, Philip Middlemiss, Christchurch: Dorelle Ham, Undine Cavanagh, Niul Kay, Andre’a Forster,


COVERING PRAYER
National Council, Kairos Ministries, Branch Life, Lamb of God Centre, Branch Visits, Clustering in Auckland, Ministry of Fr John Rea, Employment of Members, Light of Christ Special Ministry, Wellington branch [sickness among extended family], and the Ashburton Group in Christchurch.

“I have made you a Watchman” Ezekiel 33: 7