

NOW MADE FREE

HOPE for all

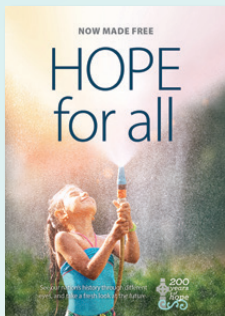
See our nation's history through different eyes, and take a fresh look at the future.



A diverse group of Christian churches throughout New Zealand have come together to give this booklet to every home. It contains remarkable stories from our nation's early bicultural past. It highlights the message that is still changing hearts and lives two centuries later... it's a story of hope.

Since Jesus lived on Earth, his teachings have been transforming our world in more ways than we can possibly imagine.

In this seventh 'Hope for all' booklet, we look at how we came to believe in human rights and freedoms in the way we do.



“As for you, my friends, you were called to be free. But do not let this freedom become an excuse for letting your physical desires control you. Instead, let love make you serve one another.”

From the Bible, Galatians 5:13

STORIES OF HOPE FROM THEN AND NOW



Celebrating 200 years of the Christian message in Aotearoa



Our society has believed that human rights ARE real.

The fact that our society genuinely believes people have 'human rights' in the way it does is quite amazing!

- We believe people have the **right to life and freedom** — in contrast to the slavery of most nations and empires in history. We also believe slavery to be wrong for everyone — not just our own nation or culture.
- Our concepts of freedom include the **freedoms of information, speech and religion**. This stands in contrast to many places even today, where newspaper publishers can only print what the governments permit.
- As another example we believe people have the **right to own possessions and land** — with laws in place to stop people with power taking our things.

A cruel world

Secular historian Tom Holland loved studying ancient cultures, but over time he increasingly realised how little he had in common with his heroes of history. For example, Julius Caesar was said to have killed a million Gauls and enslaved a million more. At that time wailing infants could be found left to die on roadsides or on rubbish heaps — though female infants might have been rescued to serve as slaves or been sold to brothels. Holland found himself increasingly repulsed by the way the ancient Greeks and Romans *“seemed to lack any sense that the poor or weak might have even the slightest intrinsic value”*. But why?

He realised, *“In my morals and ethics, I was not a Spartan or a Roman at all.”*¹

1 Tom Holland, *Dominion — The Making of the Western Mind* (Little, Brown Book Group, 2019).

A starting point — Humans are unique

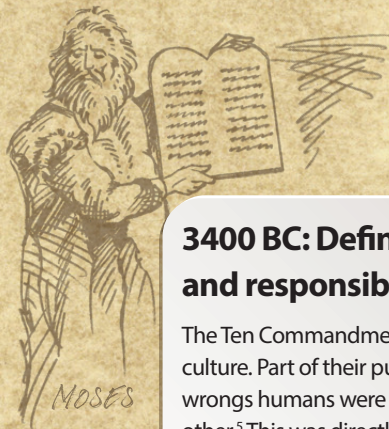


The way a culture defines its belief in human rights comes from its core beliefs.

A foundation for our own culture's thinking on human rights was the idea that God uniquely created human beings 'in his image' and loves every single one.² Human lives have therefore been viewed in our culture as being of immense value.³

2 In 'human rights' here our intended meaning is objective (fixed, real, universally applicable) rights. Regarding 'in his image', see Genesis 1:27 in the Bible.

3 We note that our nation failed to protect Māori in this way. The Waitangi Tribunal exists in recognition of this wrongdoing.



3400 BC: Definitions of rights and responsibilities expanded

The Ten Commandments⁴ deeply affected our culture. Part of their purpose was to limit the wrongs humans were capable of doing to each other.⁵ This was directly connected to a growing understanding of human rights and equality. For example, the instruction ‘Do not murder’ implied that people had a right to life. The instruction ‘Do not steal’ implied that people had a God-given right to own property and possessions.

Rather than limiting personal freedom, the rules helped to establish it, for example; by stopping the powerful abusing the weak, and men abusing women.⁶

“Only under the rule of law is there freedom!”

— Indian philosopher Vishal Mangalwade

- 4 See the full list in Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5 in the Bible.
- 5 The first three commands are about God’s ‘rights’ to our respect and worship as our creator. The rest relate to human well-being, as above.
- 6 In a male-dominated society, limiting sexual activity to marriage protected women, as well as the well-being of future children.

30 AD: Love for all (and a limitation on Government powers)

Concepts of grace and forgiveness toward people were then expanded through Jesus — like in his ‘Golden Rule’: *“Do to others as you would have them do to you.”*⁷ The implication was that God expected all people to be treated with equal kindness and justice.

The idea that this might apply even to those in power was particularly provoking — and Jesus made that point too. One day the religious leaders asked Jesus if Jews should pay taxes to Caesar. Jesus replied, *“Give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”*⁸

For hundreds of years many of the Roman, Greek and Persian leaders were also the religious leaders of their empires. Many were also prayed to as gods. Jesus clarified that God was above and separate from governments. The implication was clear: a ruler’s powers were not to be used for personal gain — but instead to protect the God-given freedom and rights of the people!

7 Matthew 7:12.

8 Mark 12:17.



50 AD: The early Church breaks protocol — and affirms equality

20 years later the Apostle Paul, an early Christian teacher, stated, *"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 3:28). Paul declared the equality of all people.

Because beliefs led to behaviour, this community began to pioneer new ways of treating all the various groups in its society.

390 AD: A brave pastor confronts the Roman Emperor

To illustrate how the idea of 'human rights' slowly took hold, in 313 AD the Roman Empire ended 250 years of Christian persecution. 50 years later a man named Ambrose was appointed as Bishop in Milan, Italy.

In 390 AD the Emperor Theodosius massacred seven thousand people in Thessalonica to end a rebellion. Ambrose was so appalled that he refused the Emperor entrance to his church. He said, *"Do you not realise how great your crime was?"* Your hands are *"stained with the blood of such an unjust massacre"*.

What is amazing is that Ambrose, having just challenged the leader of the known world, did not lose his head!

The idea that governments existed to uphold the God-given rights of the people was now taking hold.



THE APOSTLE PAUL

432 AD: A foundation for community law

In 432 AD, having earlier escaped from captivity in Ireland, British-born Patrick returned to take the Bible's Ten Commandments to the Irish people. From that time the Commandments became the foundation on which they based their civil law. Saint Patrick's Day is celebrated in memory of him.



890 AD: King Alfred the Great — a foundation for British law

In 890 AD Britain's King Alfred made the Ten Commandments and Jesus' 'Golden Rule' the basis of his system of law in England. This established a foundation for the rights and therefore freedom of the British people.

Alfred remains the only English Monarch ever to be called 'the Great'.

KING ALFRED THE GREAT

1215 AD — The Magna Carta (‘The Great Charter of Freedoms’)

At a time when the King was abusing his powers, English Archbishop Stephen Langton helped to negotiate a peace agreement known as the Magna Carta.⁹ It guaranteed the King peace if he would recognise the rights of others to justice, protection from illegal imprisonment, and relief from his ever-increasing taxes. The God-given rights of the people were being increasingly recognised.

A monument on the place on which the agreement was signed says, “The birthplace of modern democracy”.

9 Magna Carta Libertatum. The initial agreement was about protecting of rights that the Barons (Lords) believed they should have. Various versions of the agreement came about over the centuries that followed. Its influence became broad. E.g. Clause 27 of the *Magna Carta* 1297 is still part of New Zealand law today.

1500 AD: The freedoms and protections kept spreading

- In the 1500s John Calvin, a French lawyer and theologian took similar ideas related to the rights of people, values, Government and law to Geneva¹⁰.
- A student of his named John Knox took these ideas to Scotland — resulting in a successful battle to protect religious freedoms.
- The 1765-1783 American battle for freedom from British rule and taxes was about a defence of these same rights and freedoms — including freedom of religion. Their resulting independence is commemorated on ‘Independence Day’.

10 In modern-day Switzerland.



1840 AD: New Zealand recognises rights of race and religion

When Britain's William Wilberforce and friends had success in ending the slave trade, many involved gained the confidence to try to bring other changes. Protecting native peoples from colonisation became one of their goals.

Māori Chiefs had recognised the need for a treaty with Britain. With missionaries as a connection point, friends in the Colonial Office in Britain put a plan into action. Te Tiriti o Waitangi was the result.

For Britain, the way this agreement recognised the equality and rights of the Māori people was history-making!

For Pākehā (non-Māori), because New Zealand was already recognised as a Sovereign Māori State prior to this,¹¹ the Treaty gave them the right to live here as New Zealanders.

While this Treaty's betrayal is a tragedy beyond measure, the more recent efforts through the Waitangi Tribunal to honour the agreement have reflected again the way this idea of equal rights has become a part of who we are.

¹¹ This was the case following He Whakaputanga — The Declaration of Independence in 1835.

When Catholic Bishop Pompallier requested that a so-called 'fourth article' be added to the Treaty guaranteeing religious freedom, it is of note that no-one present had a problem with this. The idea of 'freedom of religion' was already a shared value here.¹²



- 12 The addition of this so-called 'fourth article' was the only time in the 19th century that the British gave indigenous beliefs the same weight as Christianity. While the fourth article is not recognised in New Zealand law, all New Zealanders are guaranteed religious freedom under section 21 of the Human Rights Act, and section 13 of the New Zealand Bill of Rights Act.

1854 AD: Our Parliament's first debate

The first-ever debate of the New Zealand Parliament was about who would open it in prayer. The question wasn't which religion would pray, for it was assumed we would be a nation built on Christian values of justice, equality and fairness. The question was instead, which Christian denomination would pray? For example, if an Anglican prayed, would that make New Zealand an Anglican nation?¹³

A man was sent out to the street to bring back the first pastor (Minister) he found — and that is how the problem was solved!

- 13 At that time the word 'secular' meant 'to be of no particular Christian denomination'. The absence of Māori representation in honour of Te Tiriti o Waitangi is noted.

It is not without reason that we enjoy the levels of freedom, equality and prosperity we do as a nation. Despite many errors and mistakes along the way, our nation has been greatly blessed by its 'Christian' past.

Faith brings hope.

Here are some other stories to illustrate this hope.

1: RAKI'S STORY

2: TWO NGĀTI RUANUI MEN

3: MANDY'S STORY



STORIES OF HOPE 1

Becoming the father he never had — **Raki's story**



When Raki was just nine years old his mother died. Unable to cope, his father became lost to the bottle for a period — and Raki found himself at home in charge of two younger siblings. To find clothes he began to steal them from people's washing lines, and also stole food to eat.

Leaving school at age 12, Raki was soon involved with alcohol and drugs. A victim of years of molestation, he longed to belong somewhere — and was attracted to the gangs. Next thing he knew he was in a youth justice facility. Where was hope?



Three years later, when arguing with a lady, he noticed that she was staying calm and wasn't intimidated by him. She seemed to genuinely care — and he couldn't work out why. He discovered she was *"one of those Christians"* and, to cut a long story short, her example of love inspired him to consider faith in a God of love.

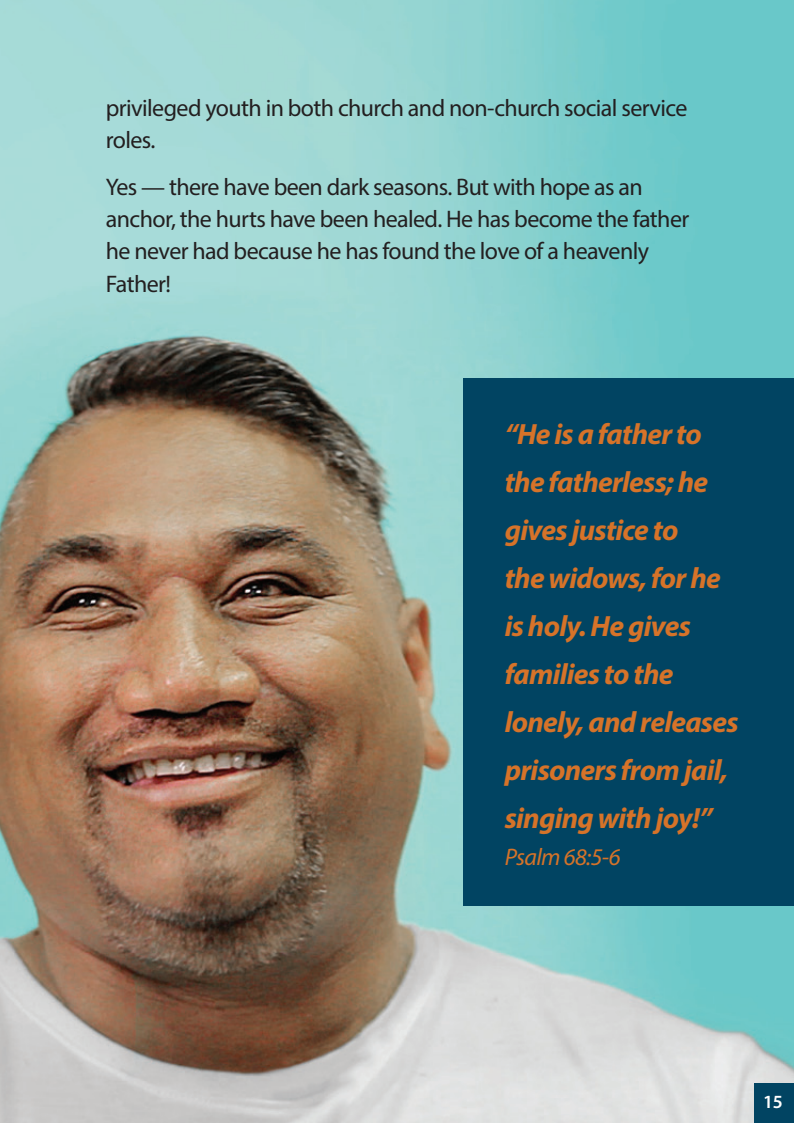
A profound change began.

The change started with the music he listened to — but within two years it had extended to the friends he spent time with. It was then that he decided to attend a church, where he met a girl, and the rest is history. While the odds were statistically against him, and also his marriage, 30 years later life is still going well and the couple's marriage is strong. They have four children and three grandchildren with good relationships amongst them all. Raki has spent years working with under-



privileged youth in both church and non-church social service roles.

Yes — there have been dark seasons. But with hope as an anchor, the hurts have been healed. He has become the father he never had because he has found the love of a heavenly Father!



***“He is a father to
the fatherless; he
gives justice to
the widows, for he
is holy. He gives
families to the
lonely, and releases
prisoners from jail,
singing with joy!”***

Psalm 68:5-6

STORIES OF HOPE 2

Two Ngāti Ruanui men who gave their lives for peace

As a young man Te Māni'era Poutama was captured by the Waikato people, and then by Ngāpuhi. Missionaries then bought his freedom. His various experiences included travel with them as far as Tonga before he returned home to South Taranaki. Once home he became a noted Christian leader among his Ngāti Ruanui people.

Late in 1846 there was a meeting of over 2000 Christian Māori from various tribes at Putiki, Whanganui. At this meeting Te Māni'era announced a courageous plan. He sensed a call from God to go to the Taupō region to preach Christianity and peace among Ngāti Ruanui's old enemy, Ngāti Tūwharetoa.

The people warned him that it was far too dangerous. Te Herekieke, a Chief of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, sent a message to him saying, *"Wait for me and I will give you safe passage."* But Te Māni'era replied, *"God waits for no man"*, and carried on.

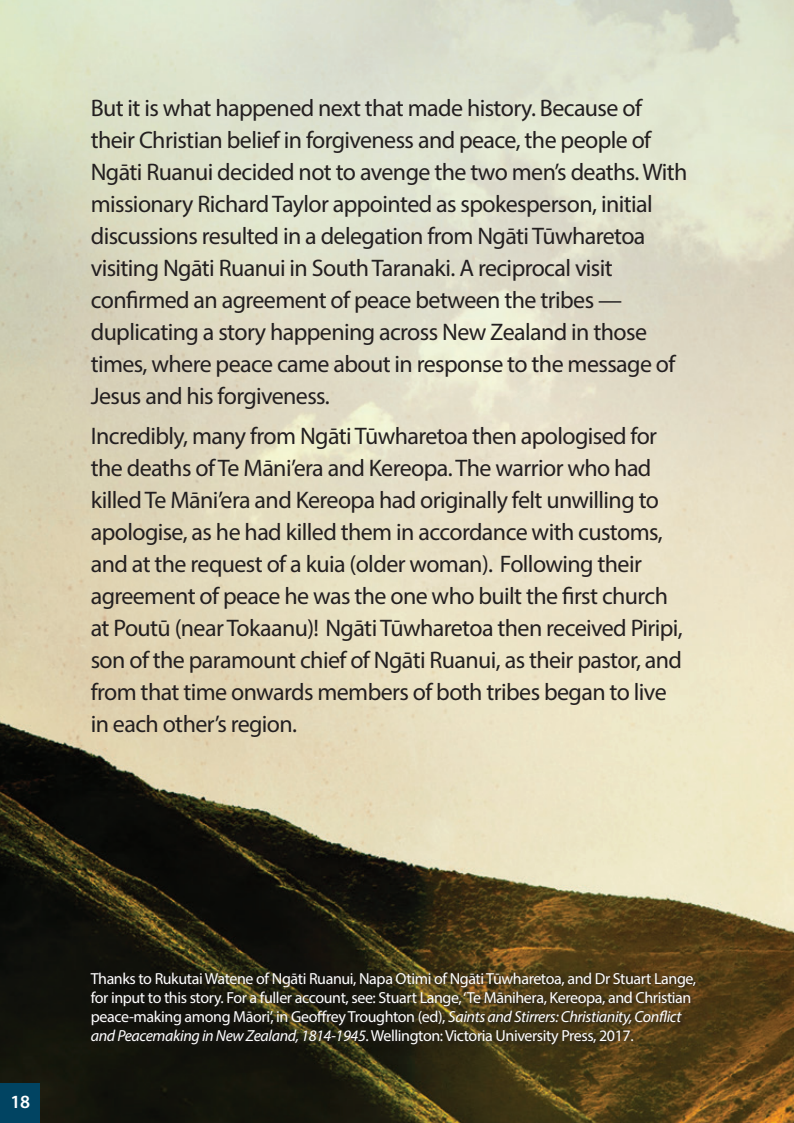
As Te Māni'era and his friend Kereopa arrived, enemies lay in wait. As they approached Tokaanu they were ambushed and tragically killed as an act of tribal utu (pay back or revenge).¹⁴

¹⁴ Because they went to take the message of peace, their people usually view them as Christian martyrs.

ho



THE MURDERERS OF MANDHERA AND KEREOFA ASSEMBLED AROUND THEIR GRAVES



But it is what happened next that made history. Because of their Christian belief in forgiveness and peace, the people of Ngāti Ruanui decided not to avenge the two men's deaths. With missionary Richard Taylor appointed as spokesperson, initial discussions resulted in a delegation from Ngāti Tūwharetoa visiting Ngāti Ruanui in South Taranaki. A reciprocal visit confirmed an agreement of peace between the tribes — duplicating a story happening across New Zealand in those times, where peace came about in response to the message of Jesus and his forgiveness.

Incredibly, many from Ngāti Tūwharetoa then apologised for the deaths of Te Māni'era and Kereopa. The warrior who had killed Te Māni'era and Kereopa had originally felt unwilling to apologise, as he had killed them in accordance with customs, and at the request of a kuia (older woman). Following their agreement of peace he was the one who built the first church at Poutū (near Tokaanu)! Ngāti Tūwharetoa then received Piripi, son of the paramount chief of Ngāti Ruanui, as their pastor, and from that time onwards members of both tribes began to live in each other's region.

Thanks to Rukutai Watene of Ngāti Ruanui, Napa Otimi of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, and Dr Stuart Lange, for input to this story. For a fuller account, see: Stuart Lange, 'Te Mānihera, Kereopa, and Christian peace-making among Māori,' in Geoffrey Troughton (ed), *Saints and Stirrers: Christianity, Conflict and Peacemaking in New Zealand, 1814-1945*. Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2017.

To give this story context, it was 30 years later that these same Taranaki people supported Te Whiti in his peaceful resistance at Parihaka — continuing the same remarkable values of grace and forgiveness learnt from Jesus.

As the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 13, *“And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.”*



*St Paul's Anglican Church at Tokaanu
hosts commemorative graves for the martyrs,
Te Māni'era and Kereopa.*



STORIES OF HOPE 3

A hope
greater than
the grave

— **Mandy's story**



In 2011, at age 30, Mandy, a South African mother of three, was diagnosed with an aggressive breast cancer. She feared for her children, and dug deep into her faith in God to find strength. She got through the treatment with hope, but little did she know her journey through pain was just beginning.

The day after being declared free of cancer there was a car accident. Mandy not only lost her sister and nephew; she lost her only daughter. Words could not express her grief. Yet the story of Mandy's life is one of hope. Despite the crushing grief, she chose to trust God's love. She considered Jesus' suffering on the cross and was reminded that our God is not one who watches our sufferings from a distance. He is with us. Time and again she felt reassured of God's presence and found peace.

As she surfaced from her journey through grief she took on a new job — and it happened again. The very next day she had a routine health check-up. The cancer had returned, and in two areas of her body! But the challenges had caused her faith to grow stronger, not weaker. Despite the treatments and prognosis she had hope. During this time Mandy even took on a role leading a sizeable church children's work in Tauranga. Despite the sickness and grief, faith enabled her to live with joy and freedom — and she still does.

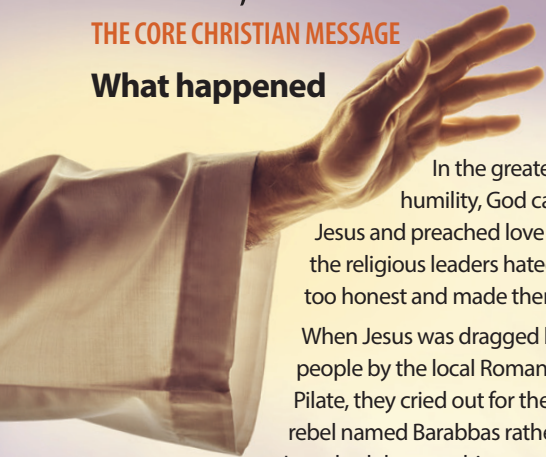


Faith brings hope. It's that simple!

Jesus, faith and hope

THE CORE CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

What happened



In the greatest-ever act of humility, God came to Earth in Jesus and preached love and hope. But the religious leaders hated him. He was too honest and made them look bad.

When Jesus was dragged before the people by the local Roman ruler, Pontius Pilate, they cried out for the release of a rebel named Barabbas rather than Jesus.

Jesus had done nothing wrong. Pilate knew it. The crowds knew it. But the mob rioted and overruled. The religious leaders falsely accused Jesus. Others mocked him. The soldiers tortured and killed him. Jesus died.

But the surprise is that the Bible says it was Jesus' choice to die. He wasn't forced to die by Caesar, Pilate, Herod, the priests or the crowds! Jesus said, *"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep"* (John 10:11; Mark 8:31).

Three days later, to the astonishment of even his closest followers, Jesus was restored to life. When they saw him alive again they were changed! Never have such timid men become so bold. All but one was eventually killed for what they told about Jesus — and the movement kept growing.

What this means

Just as we might not like to live in a filthy house, God has a problem with the 'dirt' created by our selfishness, pride and greed — yet loves us still. This is why God came in Jesus. He died to take the punishment for our wrongs. The sinless 'shepherd' died for the 'sheep' — because he loves us!

As a result, forgiveness from God is offered, enabling friendship with God, partnership in his purposes on Earth, and the hope of going to be with him when we die.

... but the one who loves us will not force us to trust and accept him. It remains our choice.

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb... I am fearfully and wonderfully made."

(Psalm 139:13-14)

► YOU ARE LOVED BY GOD

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". (Jeremiah 29:11)

► HE HAS A PURPOSE FOR YOUR LIFE

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me." (Revelation 3:20)

► HE INVITES ALL TO CONNECT WITH HIM AND THE HOPE HE OFFERS PERSONALLY BY FAITH

Thank you for reading this booklet. There is an optional prayer on the next page, and some weblinks if you want to find out more.

Please freely visit a church near you.

A PERSONAL PRAYER

“

God, our creator, in spite of all I have done wrong, and all the good I have failed to do, I thank you for providing for my needs, and for giving me life.

Thank you, Jesus, for taking my punishment when you died and for inviting me into friendship with you. Today I choose that friendship.

Please forgive me for the selfish and wrong things I have done.

Please help me to live a life that pleases you.

Help me to understand the Bible, to find friends for this new journey, and to love others as you have loved me, for I know this is what you want.

Thank you.

”

SOME OPTIONS FOR YOU:

Take the 10 Day Challenge

(a simple introduction to the Christian faith)

This is a series of 10 short devotional videos, with reflective questions. Go to 10DayChallenge.co.nz or download the app by searching 'Why Jesus?' at the app store.

You could also:

Visit a church near you.

Find one on the map at
10DayChallenge.co.nz/churches

View stories about hope at
HopeProject.co.nz

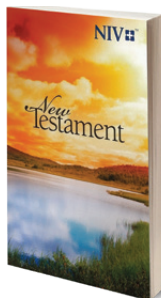
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Supported by a diverse group of Christian churches throughout New Zealand, who came together to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the arrival of Christianity in New Zealand and the beginning of a 'hope-filled' bicultural partnership with Māori.

In this spirit, let's make New Zealand a more hope-filled place.