

Waikanae Refresher Weekend, March 17-19, 2023

“The 4 E’s” was the cryptic theme for this year's Refresher Weekend at El Rancho Christian Camp on the beautiful Kapiti Coast, an hour north of Wellington.

Martin Bailey from Melbourne was our guest presenter. Martin is a qualified business mentor who has provided support to over 650 business owners in Victoria, organised and run over 4500 business events, and spent 13 years in productivity improvement and training for some of the world's largest companies.



The 4 E's are a four-step process focusing on developing people for ministry participation and leadership.

They are “Engage, Equip, Empower and Encourage”. After a session giving an overview of the three ministry avenues (Faith, Hope and Love), Martin gave a session on each of the four E’s. We all really enjoyed his relaxed and personable style, punctuated with short video clips and spiced with a liberal dose of humour.

Martin focused on equipping and empowering us to share the gospel with others by simply being ourselves, real and authentic. Repeatedly asking the questions “How would you walk, how would you talk, how would you look?” in order to more effectively share the gospel, he kept pointing us back to the practical application of the message. We need to be attractive to others, to care for them and see things from their perspective, acting in love so that we make other people’s eyes shine. He encouraged us to start with something small, such as a smile, a comment, the offer of a cup of tea, and see where this leads. Small things can make a big difference—a small hinge can move a large door. Jesus’ interaction with the Samaritan woman started as small as “Can I have a drink?” and ended with a whole village coming to believe in the Messiah.



The intention wasn’t just for us to learn and feel good, but to seek the Spirit’s guidance toward what we might actively put into practice. To this end, Phil Baldwin is sending a letter to the attendees suggesting they commit to trying one or more of Martin’s small-step ideas in their own lives and talk about the results at our Ngongotaha Celebration in September. Members who attended the Refresher are encouraged to share their learnings with others so the whole church can benefit.

After dinner on Saturday night Phil Baldwin screened an episode of “The Chosen”, a video dramatising the life of Jesus, and moderated a discussion on how the movie had impacted us.



Around 30 members participated in the weekend, as well as a couple of fantails and a number of sparrows which flitted around in the ceiling during some sessions! We were delighted to welcome Bob and Kathy Regazzoli, who were in NZ for a family holiday, but were able to take time out to join us.

El Rancho was once again an ideal location for the weekend. With the accommodation, meeting hall and dining room

just a few metres apart, we were able to spend plenty of time in fellowship and sharing. As usual the meals were healthy and filling, and were supplemented by delicious morning and afternoon teas and suppers put on by Brenda Gordon and Sue Richards.

After some rain on Friday, the sun came out on Saturday and Sunday, and the weekend weather was very pleasant, with temperatures in the low 20's. Several of us made the half hour trek on Saturday afternoon along the Waikanae River to the beach for a close-up view of Kapiti Island, and some keen walkers went again on Sunday.

Phil Baldwin started each of the sessions with a short devotional service and Rex Morgan led a communion service which was a fitting way to conclude a wonderful time together.

The board members stayed a further night for a meeting on Monday morning. Dennis Richards presented his strategic directions update, reporting progress achieved and challenges ahead. He concluded by noting 2023 is midway through the Home Office Three Year Plan: last year introducing the Three Avenue ministries underpinning GCI's missional aspirations; this year establishing these operationally; and next year settling these into the life rhythms of the church.



The board next reviewed and discussed the latest financial reports. It was noted that 2022 was an unusually tough year for investors, with both shares and bonds showing sharp declines. This affected the Church's investment income, but our finances are still in good shape. The audited annual report was accepted and will now be sent to the Charities Services department.



The board agreed to send a contribution to the Christian Broadcasting Association, who are putting together 16 hours of Christian programming across two of the country's biggest talkback radio stations (Newstalk ZB and Today FM) this Easter. This is an opportunity to reach hundreds of thousands of listeners with the message of Jesus, and we recommend you to tune into these programs if you can.

Lianne noted that she needs information from the church areas (any changes in times and locations, planned events etc.) so she can keep the GCI-NZ website up to date. This sort of information is also solicited for the NZ Update. We would ask that someone from each area keeps us informed on any local developments, so we can share these with the rest of the church.



The board discussed progress towards the introduction of an "Inside Life Podcast". They also considered the need for food assistance in Vanuatu following the recent cyclones. This is being covered from our general Vanuatu outreach funds, and Australia has offered to send some assistance money to help with this.

There is also a need to rebuild our dilapidated guest house at Rory, and the board agreed to contribute support of \$5000 towards this, and also to set up a Givealittle page to invite donations from the public for this purpose. Les and Kaye Evans are planning a trip to Vanuatu in July to supervise the building program, but the Rory members will begin the work in the meantime.

The next board meeting will be held after the September Retreat in Rotorua.

