

# WORD ON THE STREET

*'Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break and all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is in you.'*

*L.R. Knost*

## Generosity & Compassion

This is the beauty of humanity and God working through and in our midst.

A few weeks ago, I noticed the quote above by L.R Knost, a woman whose life is not void of challenges, regarding her children and her own health. The words inspired and encouraged me as I reflected upon them and they reminded me of the power of love when we go and give in such a generous and unconditional way.

With the horrible environmental disasters that have been happening around the world and especially the close events of the Whakaari/ White Island eruption in NZ and the bush fires of our neighbours in Australia, it is heartwarming to see people giving so generously to help others. It's amazing how these fruits of the Spirit of love, compassion, generosity and self -sacrifice shine so incredibly brightly through humanity in these times of darkness and struggle.

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In our own neighbourhood, I am grateful, as I see these same fruits expressed in generous and compassionate people such as; one of our grandmothers who, week after week, month after month, year after year sources and gives out food and clothes to families she knows are in need; our positive Teddy who daily smiles, laughs and creates a beautiful warmth around her even though she lost her son Jordyn to cancer a few years ago; and Atawhai who loves and is known by all the locals at the Skate Park and creates a sense of peace and safety by his presence. This is the beauty of humanity and God working through and in our midst.



The words 'Intentional Community', have become more and more spoken of and common place, in our churches and Christian environments, over the past couple of years. We have seen a growing interest in a group of people, who are wanting to learn and live differently. They want to be more intentional about their faith, their neighbourhood and the relationships within them.

## Intentional Community?

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### **South Manurewa Intentional Community**

As members of Manurewa Baptist Church, we have been involved in teaching and training a small group of passionate Jesus followers. It has been a blessing to see them radically follow their call, by intentionally working together. These families have sold their homes to relocate into a neighbourhood in Manurewa South so that, they can live closer to each another and support one another, as they become intentional in building relationships with their neighbourhood. They have stepped out into a new way of life, with children in tow and we are sure, God will bless them and their neighbourhood, as they continue to seek and serve him.

### **Randwick Park Intentional Community**

Short, sweet and instant, is not the norm when we talk about living intentionally. It's been nine years living in Randwick Park, and it's taken time and the move of God's spirit to have others join in our neighbourhood practices where faith, place and relationship are important. We are grateful to have four homes involved; we have Teddy our local mum who we have known for many years, the flat where Atawhai has moved into with his sister Kataraina and we have had the joy of new neighbours, Nicole and Francois. They are a young couple who have bought the home that backs onto ours. We are thankful to the generosity of our old neighbour to negotiate a private sale. We now have opened the fence between our properties and converted part of their garage into a chapel. This is where we meet for prayer every morning Monday to Friday. Food is always important and so we share a meal together once a week, laugh, be vulnerable and play games. It's been such a special relationship.



### **Mission Exposure to Intentional Communities**

In early December, we had three people wanting to come visit and stay with us to learn about neighbourhood development and what we do. This interest grew in numbers to eight and so we decided to run a Mission Exposure week. It was lovely to have one of our local mums involved where she shared her story and hosted some of the group. We also had two street **BBQ celebrations** with bouncy castles. In previous years the weather has washed us out. But this year, it was a great time to catch up with our neighbours with fun and food. The young adults were a blessing helping with the BBQ and managing the kids that flocked to play on the bouncy castle.

## **Baptist Union - Orbit**

Throughout history, there have always been groups of Christians attempting to reach into places the church doesn't usually reach in society, or to express worship and gathering together in fresh ways. These groups 'orbit' the majority expression of church and mission, and speak in prophetic and challenging ways to those at 'the centre'. Over time, the centre may shift in focus and practice in response to these movements, but can also react and reject. Both centre and edge can fail to know how to be understood and communicate with one another.

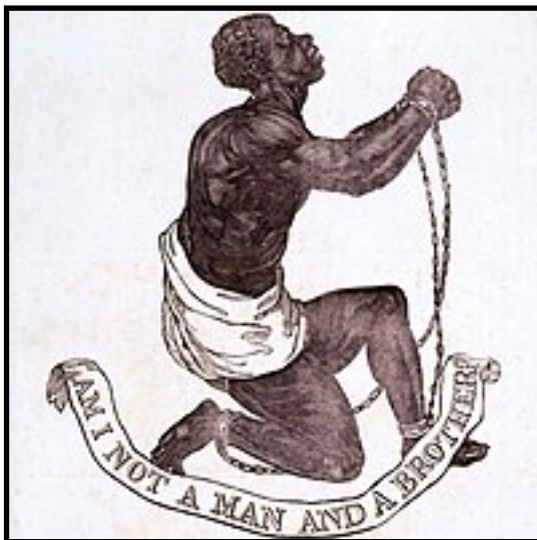
During 2019, Dave was employed one day a week, alongside Ruby Duncan, to explore how the Orbit concept works within the Baptist circles. Dave connects more with the Edge and Ruby more with the Centre.



## **Can you unshackle someone**

## **in chains?**

*All I could think was "Thank God, I am free." After two and half hours of facing this horror, we decided to leave. It was a history, soaked in the blood of dreadful cruelty and hideous acts of humankind.*



The images, writings and displays made me feel sick to my stomach, as I moved from station to station, looking, reading and reflecting, on the history and legacy of the transatlantic slave trade, inside the 'International Slavery Museum, Liverpool, England.'

My family, had travelled half way around the world to trace our whakapapa and to visit the Liverpool home of our forefather, but I was not aware of its massive seaport and the inhuman trade that occurred involving America and the West Indies. In 1699, Liverpool was granted status as an independent parish, but in this same year it was also 'recorded' as sending the first slave ship for Africa.

For all of our family, the horrific history was heavy, and depressive. The shocking fact, is that the disgusting treatment of people to slavery, still occurs today. The tour of this museum was so dark, so crippling and so powerful to experience, that our family did not fully complete viewing all the displays. All I could think was, "Thank God, I am free."

After two and half hours of facing this horror, we decided to leave. It was a history, soaked in the blood of dreadful cruelty and hideous acts of humankind.

**Can you unshackle someone  
in chains? Continued....**

As I walked down the pathway to our home, a guy with a hoodie pulled over his head and shoulders slumped, wondered a few metres in front of me. "Hey, Jimmy (not his name) is that you?" I asked. The figure stopped and turned toward me with head down. "Hey, Jimmy it's good to see you. How are you?" His eyes glazed, slowly looked up at me and in a quiet voice he said, "Hi."

It was clear, he wasn't in a good state and he seemed uncomfortable and embarrassed that I was seeing him as he was. I sparked up a conversation and we chatted for a while. We knew each other and I felt privileged, that he was willing to share some of his current story with me. My heart dropped, as I listened and looked at this young man, who only a year ago, was smiling, joyful and seemed so full of life. To me, he was and still is a guy with heaps of potential and so, it was hard to believe, this was the same guy I saw motivated, enthusiastic about life only 6 months earlier.

Jimmy had lost his job after getting sick with the pressures of work, as his boss had expected more and more hours from him. This was exasperated by the fact, that he had to leave a few hours earlier each morning because he didn't have a car and had to catch a ride with a mate. The hours were long and I remember thinking a year ago, how is this guy going to keep up at this pace? Well the fact is, he didn't.

*I still wrestle with how and what I should do, as I watch my own neighbour shackled and burdened in chains.*



With the stand down from work and the pressures of home; drugs and alcohol began to creep back into his life, The chains that were once beginning to unlock from his body, were now clenched firmly around his wrists and ankles. I knew his childhood story of foster care, abuse and abandonment and I wondered how anyone, could become a success in life, when one started with a life already in chains. Life was unfair and unjust. As we left and went back to our homes, I wondered how I could unlock the shackles from his body.

Could we find him some work in one of our social enterprises? Would this offer give him hope and help him see people cared, and valued him. If he hung out with some of the work guys, would that encourage him to try and get his life back on track? As I shared his story at home, Dave reminded me that firstly, Jimmy needed to begin unlocking his own shackles.

But I questioned, "How can he do that, when he is in such a state?" Dave reminded me again, that it wasn't my role to try and unlock his shackles. He had to come to a place where he wanted to unlock his own shackles. Only then, would the shackles have a greater chance of staying off. My heart sank. Sometimes life sucks.

I know some of you have faced similar situations, where you have wanted to reach out and help, but then have wondered if this is the best way to help.

My heart is still heavy as I think and pray for Jimmy, and ask for God to intervene and give him courage and strength to change. I still wrestle with how and what I should do, as I watch my own neighbour shackled and burdened in chains.

# Soufpac – so much more than just a Youth Club

*Soufpac highlights the ‘abundance of appreciation’ that sits just below the surface of the neighbourhood.*

What images, meaning and emotions do the word SOUFPAC evoke? 'Souf', as in South Auckland. 'Pac', as in a group, a pack of kids. Soufpac is a youth club that has been running for over 8 years in Randwick Park. Ben Tamarua, founder, describes Soufpac to be like, *“A child looking towards something with a big smile on their face, while a youth leader stands alongside them with their hand on the child’s shoulder, encouraging the child to play*

In many ways Soufpac is like a typical youth group – lots of kids, laughter, mess, food, games and outings. However, it’s also very unique. It’s run totally by local neighbourhood volunteers. Many of the young leaders come from deprived backgrounds, live locally and most don’t have any church background. Soufpac is much more than a youth club. It’s a counter cultural example of living differently in the face of professionalism. Mike Frost, suggests that professionalism, “is killing the mission of the church.” (1) The demand for excellence often excludes others from participating. Soufpac acknowledges that everyone has something to contribute.

Soufpac highlights the ‘abundance of appreciation’ that sits just below the surface of the neighbourhood. The kids love the leaders, they love

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any activity, game or story. A small van trip up the road, is a real adventure. The kids appreciate the simple things and they soak up any experience, any words of encouragement and they love hugs, ... boy, they love hugs. Every time they see a leader, there are hugs, laughter and more hugs. We know the kids are not saints; they fight and can get stroppy, but they have a heart of gold.



Recently, Kataraina attended a ‘teachers training placement’ at one of the local schools. A teacher was telling her about how she had become aware of a local youth club, because her kids kept writing stories about the adventures they had been experiencing. Kataraina had great joy sharing with her about the years she had led Soufpac.

One really special story of Soufpac, is about a particular person called Franco. Franco initially started Soufpac as a kid, when he was 10 years old. This was where Franco found a place to belong. His youth leader, Heather, also invited him to join in with extra activities during the week; like baking biscuits for others. Franco was a shy, quiet kid who was softly spoken but, slowly his confidence grew. School was a very unhappy place, where he experienced bullying and struggled academically. Gradually, Franco grew older and with then he became a junior leader. He is now 18, and has become part of Warriors of Change (2), having been a youth club leader of Soufpac for a few years.

Franco also works part-time for our social enterprises; Stepping Stones (3) and Clean for A Cause; this involves him with park maintenance and cleaning Manu Tukutuku (4) - the Community Centre. He loves Jesus and his family and is very reliable and committed to the neighbourhood.

Over the years, Franco has gained skills and experienced success; he can plan, lead, visit parents, deal with conflict and be part of a team. Gaining skills has been transformational; he can now be loud and bossy. His confidence has grown and with his work, he has gained some independence. Independence has given Franco resources, dignity and courage to reach out to others. He is a key support person for some of his friends and generosity oozes from him. Martin Brokenleg, a psychologist and author in the fields of trauma, resilience, and Native American studies, calls this transformation 'Circle of Courage' (5) – a circle of youth development that follows: belonging, mastery of skills, independency and generosity.

So, not only does Soufpac create a safe place for kids to belonging, a place where kids can just be kids but, it can also be a place that creates an environment to give dignity, and encourages and recognises the beauty that is within each person, especially those that are quiet and can easily be forgotten.

1. Mike Frost excellence article <https://mikefrost.net/five-cultural-trends-killing-the-churchs-mission/>
2. Warriors of Change (WOC) is a discipleship and leadership programme. Lafoai Luaitalo wrote a great mini-book about WOC called Seeds of Influence, which can be found here
3. [www.steppingstoneslawns.co.nz](http://www.steppingstoneslawns.co.nz)
4. [www.manutukutuku.co.nz](http://www.manutukutuku.co.nz)
5. Reclaiming Youth at Risk: Futures of Promise (Reach Alienated Youth and Break the Conflict Cycle Using the Circle of Courage) Third Edition by [Larry K. Brendtro](#) (Author), [Martin Brokenleg](#) (Author), [Steve Van Bockern](#) (Author)

## Who's Home is This?

*It's not only children who grow, parents do too. As much as we watch to see what children do with their lives, they are watching us to see what we do with ours. I can't tell my children to reach for the sun. All I can do is reach for it myself.*

Joyce Maynard

Silence descended upon us as we unlocked the door and walked inside... the kitchen bench was clean and tidy and there were no dirty dishes left lying around in the lounge. The bedroom floors, were clear of clutter and the beds were neatly made. Where were we? Was this OUR home?

Have you guessed? Yes, all the kids have finally left home and we are now facing the 'Empty Nest Syndrome.' It's a weird feeling and stage of life and one which we had a brief taste of six years ago. However, we decided back then, to take on a 12-year-old foster daughter and our boys boomeranged home un-expectantly, when their flat dispersed. Some how, I feel this time the movement is more permanent.

So...now it's a season to re-vision and dream again. With a lot more freedom and flexibility, we have wondered how we can use the gift of our home and the resources we have, to share with others. Personally, I don't like the quiet home, even though I am more of an introvert than an extravert.

One issue we are noticing is that older single adults find it difficult to find somewhere affordable and comfortable to live. When their children leave home or their relationships change, they can find themselves in a different situation. We also know it is incredibly difficult for the younger generation to enter the housing market. Our **next big dream**, is to see if we can find others to support us in redeveloping our own home and site along with our next door neighbours' home. We want to explore how we can accommodate a more co-housing/ boarding environment, where people can enjoy both communal spaces and private spaces of living. We also want to find a way of helping others own their own space. It's a huge dream and is going to require a real intervention of God, but we think it's worth the adventure.

We began having conversations with council planners, architects and a developer last year and this year more energy, research and design will be invested into it. We are calling it 'Pa Harakeke' and I would love to have Te Reo Māori interwoven into its framework. This will also be the end focus of my (Denise's) study towards a Masters Degree, which I begin this year as a part time student. If you are wanting to support this new venture in any way, by sharing ideas, skills or finances let us know as this is a new faith journey and we are interested to see what we learn and how it unfolds.