



EFM Matters

August 2023

Wellington Mentor Training



1pm, Friday 10 November — 5pm Saturday 11 November 2023

Home of Compassion, 2 Rhine St, Island Bay, Wellington

EfM is a way to continually deepen the journey with God in the company of a group which provides challenge and support and co-learning opportunities. It has both academic rigour and a holistic, grounded way of applying that rigour to the realities of 21st century life, living into what it means to be disciples of Christ in our particular time and context.

To support the life of EfM groups and provide for the possibility of new groups forming we need to have mentors who are trained in the skills needed to facilitate these co-learning groups

A mentor is not an expert, or a tutor, but a co-learner with group members who has the added group skills to ensure that a safe, honest, non-judgmental learning environment is fostered.

If you think that you might have what it takes to be a mentor, and/or are interested in stepping into the adventure that is EfM, fill in the [registration form](#) and come along to the training event in Wellington. (If the link doesn't work on your browser try www.efm.org.nz/events)

Coming to the training does not commit you to being a mentor! Come, taste, and see!

If you have questions or want more information email Educationforministrynz@outlook.com

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Audio Bibles

Some EfM participants have been using Audio Bibles so that they can listen to the readings while doing other tasks—cooking, cleaning, even truck driving.

Education for Ministry would like to include some recommendations for Audio Bibles on their website.

If you have experience using an Audio Bible please share your learnings:

Michael Crawford-Butler Email: educationforministrynz@outlook.com



Please distribute this newsletter widely amongst your networks in the community

Graduations

Congratulations to **Shirley Arnold, June Chestnut** and **Evelyn Masoka** who completed their four years of Education for Ministry study in July. Your certificates from Sewanee have been ordered and should be in New Zealand soon.

A big thank you to **Liz Lightfoot** who mentored the group.

This group started in 2015 but was disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. It was a tenacious effort by Liz and the group participants to keep going.

2023 Interlude Book

Every year EfM use two interlude books which are studied by students in all years together. These books explore issues of our faith. A review of this year's books is given and EfM graduates are encouraged to read these. In USA, EfM used "Healing Our Broken Humanity" by Grace Ji-Sun Kim & Graham Hill where we used "Huia Come Home".

"Reading the Bible From the Margins"

Miguel A. De La Torre

De La Torre must have learned a lot about how to explain difficult concepts about biblical interpretation by teaching undergraduates right out of their church youth groups at an evangelical college. He has used his classroom experience to write a crystal-clear, focused and even entertaining book explaining that our interpretations of the Bible are culturally influenced in such a way as to reinforce ideas and practices that baptize our own privileges and justify the oppression of others.

The first several chapters of the book are as clear an explanation of how biblical interpretations can be culturally flavoured in such a way as to under gird the reader's self-interest as I have read anywhere. However, De La Torre never depreciates Scripture or undermines its value and authority. He is unabashedly Christian. He affirms his commitment to his faith and the book which is its foundation. At the same time, he is clear that Scripture has commonly been read and interpreted by the advantaged and learned in such a way as to justify racist, misogynist and homophobic biases.

He uses illustrations from his own experience as a Hispanic man to help his readers begin to understand that what often seems straightforward and obvious in Scripture isn't necessarily so. He has also carefully listened to African-American, Asian-American, feminist and gay thinkers; he includes in his book their thoughts about how their ethnic and class perspectives open to them new insights into the meaning of Scripture that the dominant church culture usually misses.
Dean J Snyder 2003.

The book maintains that anyone who reads the Bible does so from a particular social location. "We are all born into an on-going society that shapes us," said De La Torre, who is an assistant professor of religion. "When we turn our attention to the biblical text as the source of our theological perspectives, we participate in a dialogue between the written word and the meanings our community taught us to give to these words."

"Many of us have been taught to read the Bible through the eyes of white, middle-class males," he said. "Yet, can the text liberate those who are oppressed because of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or class? To do so, it must be read with the eyes of the disenfranchised."

"Reading the Bible from the Margins" explores how the Bible can be used to liberate those who suffer race, class and gender oppression.
Hope College 2002

This book is available from many online retailers at prices from \$NZ51.95 plus shipping in August 2023

“Huia Come Home”

Jay Ruka

This year is the second time EfM has used this book as an interlude book. Many of you will have read it already. For those who haven't it is a “must read” for all New Zealand Christians.

Once the sacred guardian of New Zealand's native forests, the huia was a symbol of the land's unique beauty and spirituality. The rare bird's tragic extinction in the early 1900s represents a shot to the heart of Aotearoa and is a potent metaphor for a country's conflicted history.

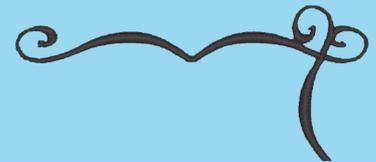
Using the story of the untimely extinction of the huia, Jay Ruka offers a fresh perspective on the narrative of Aotearoa; a tale of two cultures, warring worldviews, and the things we lost in translation.

Revisiting the early missionaries, the transformative message of the gospel and the cultural missteps of the Treaty of Waitangi, Huia Come Home invites us to reconnect with the unique story of by the indigenous Māori lens.

In relearning the history that lies in the soil of Aotearoa, we might just find a shared hope for the future and a recovery of national treasures once thought to be extinct.

“Huia Come Home” can be ordered from huiacomehome.co.nz. In August 2023 the price was \$28 plus shipping.

Trainers' Corner



A place to find some ideas for EfM groups

One of the questions all those involved in the delivery of EfM have to ask themselves is how the methods used and the readings and books being studied are staying relevant .

As we gathered for the second training of mentors this year, the topic of misinformation and disinformation was being raised on various media platforms, particularly as it applies to what effect that might cause in an election year.

As part of the training, we decided to make that topic the focus of a theological reflection which proved illuminating and challenging. Yes, the method of theological reflection that EfM uses is robust enough to explore current, hard and frustrating topics. More than that, the process does lead to learnings and inspire actions .

Online Group in 2024

Education for Ministry New Zealand will be introducing an online group in 2024. This will make our course available to people in areas without in-person groups. If you are new to EfM or would like to pick up where you left off then this may be what you are looking for. Enrolment is one year at a time so you are not committing to all four years when you start.

If you are interested please contact Michael Crawford-Butler educationforministrynz@outlook.com or phone 021-246-0672. At this stage we are only seeking expressions of interest to gauge the numbers. Enrolment will be available from late November 2023.

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