



The Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand, and Polynesia
PARISH OF MANUREWA

. . . worshipping at S. Luke, Manurewa and S. David, Wiri

Vicar: The Reverend Father **Ross Browne**, S.S.C., B.A., L.Th., L.T.C.L., R.T.S.C.A.(N.Z.), C.F.L.E. Cert.



To Whom It May Concern

Re: Selwyn Group

2nd April 2011

We have had the good fortune to have a Selwyn Group established in our Parish for some years now, and it has been my experience that the work which is done here is a very significant part of the service offered by our Parish to the community.

Manurewa is a very low-decile area in the main, and contains a large number of Pacific Island people, Māori people, and a huge number of immigrants, primarily from the Indian subcontinent and from the Middle East, principally from Iraq. The traditional "New Zealand *Pakeha*" is very much in the minority – in the High School nearest the Church, Pakeha number only 7% of the total school population, and a little further down the road, a large neighbouring Primary School has only 2%. Unsurprisingly - and as a consequence - as the *tikanga pakeha* parish in the area, our numbers are very low.

There are a very significant quantity of professional social service agencies working in this area, targeting Māori and Pacific populations, and others focussed on the immigrant community. Add to that the unimaginably prolific range of conservative evangelical/charismatic churches (almost literally one on every street corner) which also concentrate on the same demographic, and the fact that South Auckland in general has a population pyramid very heavily weighted in the under 30y.o. age range, and you have a situation where there is little provision for the more mature citizen (particularly those of *pakeha* origin) to find a place to feel at home.

Our two Selwyn Groups have provided such a place. There are large "Retirement Villages/Old Folks Homes" in the area, but they are dedicated to the needs of their own constituency. Our groups provide a place to gather, share stories, enjoy good company, a little gentle exercise, and to feel alive and valued in a community which by and large is unconcerned about and oblivious to the sort of people who join us and choose to spend time with us each week. People of various ethnic origins have become members of one or others of our groups over the years, so I would not want it to appear that we have some sort of a "*pakeha* only" policy!

Members of our parish have found a ministry and a vocation in working with our Selwyn people, and it is a programme we are pleased to be offering in the name of Christ. I commend it to you as an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the people in your area, and to do a useful and blessed work among the more mature citizens who are often invisible in our community programmes and outreach.

Yours in Christ's service,