EFM Matters

June 2025 Revised

What's happening at EfM

While I am writing this column the 50th anniversary celebrations for EfM are taking place in Sewanee. I would dearly have loved to be there but I have a duty of love to some old dogs and travel is not possible. Jean Malcolm and Leanne Munro are representing EfM New Zealand.

This week I began reading Steven Charleston's *The Four Vision Quests of Jesus*. He says in the first chapter "... the quest is not an answer. It is a deeper question".

It reminded me of my first experience of EfM 40 years ago. At the end of 4 years I was asked what I had learned. My answer was that I came to EfM with a truck load of questions expecting to get the answers. My main learning from four years was that I now had better questions.

What did you take away from EfM?

MJ Butler

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The New Curriculum

Fall in Love with EFM -
again of for the first time

Education for Ministry is launching a revised curriculum in 2026. Over the last 18 months, more than 75 people have participated in creating and shaping the revised curriculum. If it has been a while since you took EfM or if you are new to EfM, now may be the time to join a group.

Although there are new books and texts, the focus of the EfM: Classic programme remains the same: four consecutive years covering the Old Testament, New Testament, Christian History, and Christian Ethics and Spirituality.

A new voice is joining the Classic program this year – called EfM: Wide-Angle. Wide-Angle is an overview of the spiritual journey that introduces participants to EfM: Classic by touching on the Old Testament, New Testament, Christian history, spirituality, and ethics within one year.

The programme still involves weekly meetings for 1 1/2 to 2 hours in groups that worship and pray together, discuss the weekly learning material, and reflect theologically. EfM is now utilizing an online learning platform, which means you receive podcasts, videos, art, and essays as part of the weekly assignment, offering rich and modern material.

Eighty people across the world, including one in New Zealand, have piloted the revised curriculum. Here's what they say:

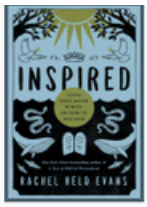
- Great content, lots of thought-provoking study, and excellent group discussions
- The richness of using …. videos, paintings, etc., has expanded how I have engaged with the material and EfM.
- Everyone is delighted with the readings (we have people reading all five years, including Wide Angle). There was the expected grousing about Pathwright early on, but even our most technologically challenged members have gotten the hang of it and like it now.
- Very excited to use this programme. It is fantastic.
- These readings brought guidance on spiritual practices I can use. Yes, I can make a difference!

Please distribute this newsletter amongst your networks in the community

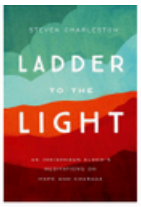
Are You Interested in EfM: Wide Angle?

EfM New Zealand would like to know how much interest there is in EfM: Wide Angle. The fee for 2026 has not yet been set but will be substantially less than in2025.

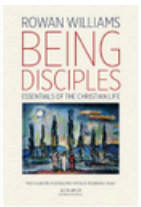
There are 5 books used in Wide Angle plus one book common to all years. The books are:



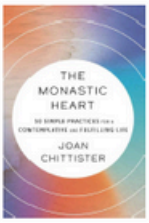
Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking on Water, and Loving the Bible Again by Rachel Held Evans (2018)



Ladder to the Light by Bishop Stephen Charleston (2021)



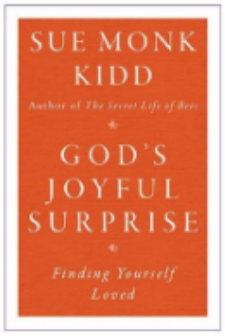
Being Disciples: The Essentials of the Christian Life by Rowan Williams (2016)



The Monastic Heart: 50 Simple Practices for a Contemplative and Fulfilling Life by Joan Chittister (2022)

Church Meets World by Winnie Varghese (2016)

There is also one community book (a new name for what used to be an interlude).



Sue Monk Kidd. 1989. *God's Joyful Surprise: Finding Yourself Loved.* Harper San Francisco.

If you are interested in EfM: Wide Angle could you please email Michael, educationforministrynz@outlook.com to let him know:

- How likely you are to do EfM: Wide Angle (definitely / probably / possibly)
- The town or city you live in
- Would you want an in-person group, a zoom group or either?
- Would you consider mentoring a group in your town or city?

Please distribute this newsletter amongst your networks in the community

Mentor Training -
12:30pm Friday 22 August to 5 pm 23 August 2025
St Francis Retreat Centre, Hillsborough, Auckland

EfM (Education for Ministry) is a program of study devised primarily for lay people (though ordained folks benefit from participating too!). It provides four years of study material at a tertiary level, in a learning environment where the reading and reflection undertaken by the individual members of the group is then reflected on together at weekly group meetings and applied to everyday life and ministry.

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 on page 11 and come along to the training event in Auckland. There is a link to the form on the EfM Website at efm.org.nz/events.

Those attending the training will be asked to complete a 2 hour online training module. This gives basic information about EfM and asks about your skills in group leading so that training can be focused. Registrations close on 1 August 2025

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

Trainer's Corner

Action Follow-up Questions

You may have heard of FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions).
In typical EfM style, this turns a well-known idea around, so that we have AFQs
-Action Follow-up Questions.

At the end of our Theological Reflections we always leave space for participants to ponder and decide what they have learned or noticed as a result of reflecting together, what the implications of those learnings are, and what action they are willing to commit to, in order to address those implications.
AFQs help to keep us accountable to those Actions.

1. Invite group members to write down a question which they would like the group to ask them next time, to follow-up on their commitment.
eg. Sam realised that he rushes out the door in the mornings without thinking about what God is asking him to be part of in the day… the ACTION he committed to was to make a poster and put it on the inside of his front door saying: PAUSE – LISTEN TO GOD – STEP INTO THE DAY TOGETHER.
So his AFQ might be: Ask Sam: How did it go with pausing before going out the door each day? or: Ask Sam: What things did God invite you into over the past week?

2. Have someone type the questions onto a document, and email the document to everyone in the group the next day.

3. Print copies of the document to bring to the next meeting.

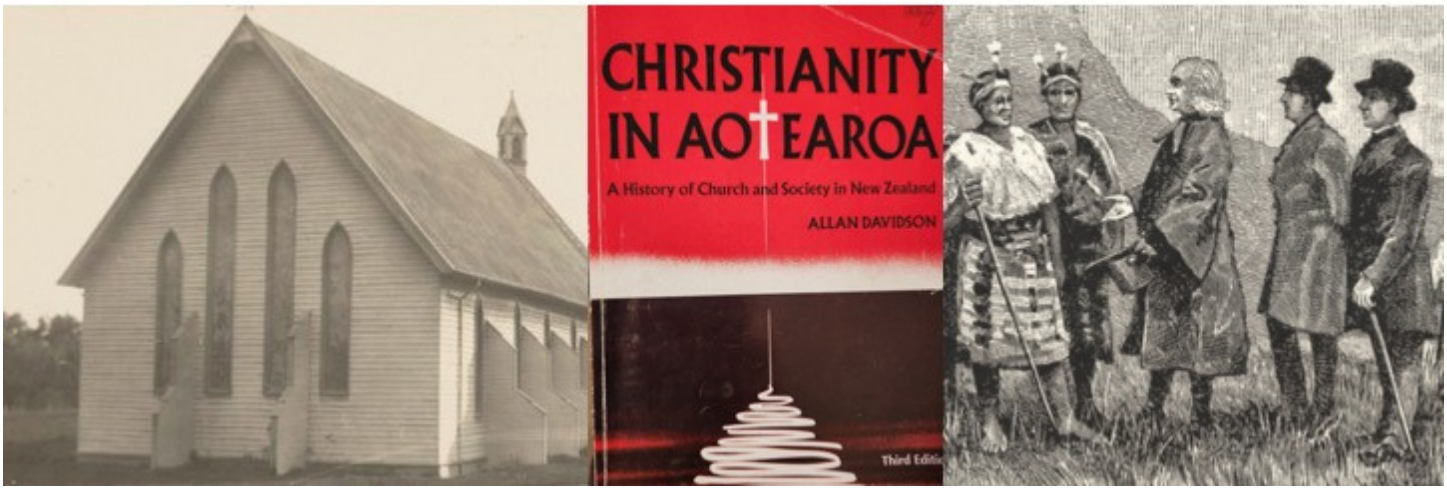
4. Begin the meeting by inviting someone to choose a question, ask it of the person whose question it is, and hear their response… then the person who has given their response chooses the next question to ask…. etc.

E.F.M

Exploring Faith Matters

The Church in Aotearoa New Zealand

A 10 week exploration of the history of Christianity and the Church in Aotearoa New Zealand



This fascinating course will be offered by Zoom on Tuesday evenings commencing on July 8. Each session will be about 90 minutes.

The cost is $90 which includes a copy of "Christianity in Aotearoa" and the 70 page study guide.

For more information contact Michael Crawford-Butler

educationforministrynz@outlook.com

Chair's Report 2025

Tena koutou katoa. Greetings to you all.

Someone recently said to me that EFM was in decline, that this had been the case for some time. However in reviewing our activity I want to challenge that.

2024 continued to be challenging, but there were encouraging signs of growth – not massive but there. We continue to be supported by a generous grant from St John's Trust Board, for which we are grateful. Last year was about consolidating what we have and introducing something new, homegrown, that would allow people to commit to a short EFM course, with the view that it might be an entry into the longer programme. This was essentially written by our administrator, and based around the book by Rev Jay Ruka, Dean of Taranaki Cathedral, *Huia Come Home*. So far this year, four of these courses have been run, another is currently underway and a sixth looks to start (by Zoom) at the end of May.

We began a small Zoom group with new participants undertaking their first year of study. Added was one new mentor who is still completing the 4 year programme, co-mentoring with one of our more experienced mentors. That group has continued into 2025.

Administrator Mike Crawford-Butler has done an amazing job of working with the folks in Sewanee to understand the new curriculum and how it could affect us. To this end he will be working with some of their staff to see how we can integrate some our Church in Aotearoa New Zealand material.

As always there is a tension between advertising who and what we offer and then having the mentors to guide the groups. The board remains grateful to those who give of themselves to run these courses. There is interest in an online group to undertake the 12-week Church in Aotearoa New Zealand course and we are working to find mentors to guide this.

Small signs of growth. The recent Mentor Training weekend in Wellington had mentor trainees from the Wellington region and one from Dunedin! There was a theme of hope at the training event, and commitment by those there to the EFM 'way' of theological reflection. The above small groups centred on an issue that is very much in our minds at present – the connection between faith and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Let's be realistic about the challenges, but let's not be negative or dismissive of those whose passion for EFM is borne out of personal experience of lives enriched by the programme.

(continued next page)

Chair's Report - continued

Those people include mentors, trainers, participants – and board members. Some people occupy all four groups! However we do need new board members. We farewelled Canon Rev Brent Swann during the year, and will be voting on a new board member at this meeting. But ideally we would welcome another 2 at least. Several board members have been on for some years, and under guidelines for charities should come off, for a period of time at least. Yes, it's disappointing that we had to cancel the reunion retreat weekend in August, but we will be endeavouring to find a way to bring some of that to the EFM NZ family by Zoom later in the year.

June 5-8 will see Rev Jean Malcolm and I attending the 50th Anniversary celebrations at Sewanee, Tennessee, the 'birthplace' of EFM. While we are looking forward to it, we are aware that travelling into the USA at this time could have its own challenges, so I would ask for your prayers for both of us the first week of June, as we travel. While there we will have the chance to talk with other mentors and trainers about the redevelopment of the EFM programme and gain a better understanding of what it will mean for us here in Aotearoa New Zealand.

As I said, Canon Rev Brent Swann resigned from the board at the beginning of 2025. We are grateful for Brent's commitment and wish him and the whanau blessings for the future.

Thanks to all our board members, and special thanks to our Administrator Mike. Not only does he deal with the paperwork – he cooks for the Wellington mentor training!

To our trainers and mentors – without your commitment the courses wouldn't be able to be offered.

To those of you who have been and are participants – thank you for your commitment to your faith journey through the EFM programme.

There is no denying the challenges. However, EFM continues to offer a way for people of faith to explore the connection between their lives, their faith and their calling as disciples. Thank you for being part of that connection.

Kia tau ki a tatou katoa te atawhai o tō tatou Ariki, o Īhu Karaiti,
me te aroha o te Atua,
me te whiwhinga tahitanga ke te Wairua Tapu,

Āke, ake, ake, āmine

Rev Leanne Munro
Chair

Introducing New Board Member Frank Nelson

Frank's EfM journey began by being dropped in at the deep end. A new ministry in Hong Kong saw the need for a mentor to take on an existing group. Frank reached out to Paul Dyer who suggested he join the five-day Training of Trainers in Lower Hutt. Somehow Frank survived and went on to mentor groups in Hong Kong, Lower Hutt and Wellington, and latterly Adelaide. Along the way Frank became an EfM Trainer both in Aotearoa and Australia.

On a more personal level, Frank says, EfM has encouraged (perhaps even forced) him to keep reading, to keep questioning, discovering, being challenged, and has enriched his preaching, teaching and work as a leader of retreats. EfM's rootedness in baptism, tradition and theological reflection sits well with his other passion, the Benedictine concept of balance found in stability and continual conversion.

Now retired after forty-five years' full-time ordained parish ministry (much of it exercised in Cathedrals in four different countries), Frank looks forward to serving on the Board of EfM.

E.F.M

Exploring Faith Matters

Education for Ministry
Administrator: Michael Crawford-Butler
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Phone 021 246 0672
educationforministrynz@outlook.com

SACRED SPACES
of Wellington

Guided visits through Wellington's spiritual history...

Experience sacred spaces of Wellington which draw on centuries of faith and tradition. Choose one or a small number or take a European style pilgrimage.

TOUR SCHEDULE & FULL DETAILS

Thursday October 30

12 noon
Old St Paul's 24 Mulgrave Street.
"ESTABLISHMENT & EXOTIC CHURCHES IN WELLINGTON"
A Talk by Peter Lineham, emeritus professor, Massey University.

1.30pm **WELLINGTON CATHEDRAL OF ST PAUL** 2 Hill Street.Built:

3pm **CATHEDRAL OF THE SACRED HEART** 40 Hill Street

4.30pm **ST ANDREWS ON THE TERRACE**, 30 The Terrace

Friday October 31

9.45am **CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH**
46 Boulcott Street

11am **ST MARY OF THE ANGELS**
17 Boulcott Street

12.15-12.45pm
Unity Books 57 Willis Street.
WHY DOES WELLINGTON HAVE A REPUTATION AS GODLESS? talk by Peter Lineham. No charge.

1.30pm **BETH AL ORTHODOX JEWISH SYNAGOGUE & HOLOCAUST CENTRE**
80 Webb Street

3pm **THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY**
19 Marion Street

4.30pm **ST PETER'S CHURCH**
211 Willis Street

5pm
'WHAT IS DIFFERENT ABOUT RELIGION IN WELLINGTON? A talk by Peter Lineham.

6.15pm St Peter's Garden Room, 211 Willis Street. **A PIE AND A PINT** (and other refreshments)

Saturday November 1

9am **ST JOHN'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
170 Willis Street

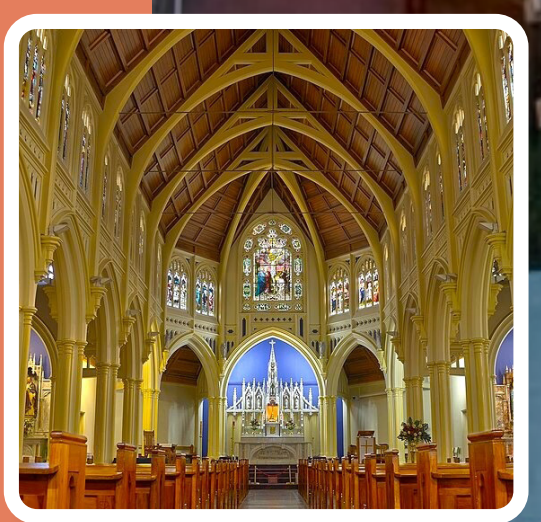
10.15am **CHRISTIAN SCIENCE READING ROOM** 197 Willis Street. Morning Tea available.

11.15am **WESLEY CHURCH**
Taranaki Street

1.30pm **ST JOSEPH'S**
152 Brougham Street

2.45pm **GREEK ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL**
3 Hania Street, Mt Victoria.

4pm **SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS)**
7 Moncrieff Street, Mt Victoria



PRICES:
$15 for each visit
(*to assist with organising and the costs of host venues*)
Book 5 and more visits at $12 each.
Book more than 10 and all visits @ $10 each.
Book by September 30 for Early Bird discount 20% off your total booking fee.

WELLINGTON HERITAGE FESTIVAL
18 OCT - 9 NOV 2025

Architecture • Art • Music • Inspiration • Stillness

Education for Ministry NZ

Exploring Faith Matters

Registration Form

Basic and Inservice Mentor Training

Friday: 12:30pm, 22 August - Saturday: 5pm, 23 August, 2025

St Francis Retreat Centre, 50 Hillsborough Rd, Auckland 1042

Purpose of Training

- To offer training in the EFM curriculum both for those attending Basic Training and for Inservice mentors
- To provide guidance in using Volume D of the latest Reading and Reflection Guide (RRG), particularly Unit 1 (Spiritual Autobiography and Listening) and Unit 2 (Theological Reflection as a Life Skill)
- To provide an opportunity for mentors to develop group skills and to share resources

Name	
EFM Group and Year/s (if currently mentoring)	
Previous EFM involvement	☐ (**If yes**, please outline previous involvement eg as mentor or group member, graduate, group mentored, year/s completed, etc.
Email address	
Postal Address	
Phone numbers (home and cell)	
Dietary restrictions / requirements	
Transport	☐ I do require help with transport
Accommodation	☐ I do need accommodation overnight **Friday** **Please contact the retreat centre if you would like accomodation for Saturday night.**

- The training will be led by EFM Trainers: Raewyn Berkahn and The Rev'd Julie Guest.
- New trainees, and mentors fulfilling the regular in-service component will all be expected to attend for the **entire event.**
- The training will begin at 12:30pm on Friday 22nd August, and finish at 5pm on Saturday the 23rd.
- Accommodation for Friday night, lunch and dinner on Friday, breakfast and lunch on Saturday will be provided free of charge.
- EfM may be able to provide grants to cover the travel costs if that is an issue.
- All participants will be required to do some **reading** and **preparation before** the Training Event.

The resources for this reading and preparation will be provided when you have registered.

Preparation for the training

All participants will be required to do two hours of online study to be completed by Sunday 16 August. The online study will be available from about 6 August. Details will be sent to you once it is set up.

Basic Training

Mentor training prepares a mentor for the task of starting work with an EFM group. Since the beginning of a group is a very important time, basic training covers the initial stages of a group's life together. The mentor is trained to handle the administrative work connected with an EFM group, to present the first few sessions to a new group prior to doing theological reflection, and to understand better the process of theological reflection. This training will also include familiarisation with the EFM curriculum.

Participants are given feedback before the close of the training event regarding their readiness to begin an EFM group without further training.

Once trained and accredited to begin a group the mentor receives a start-up kit for use in forming a group.

The Start Kit contains:

- Mentor registration form and letter of agreement
- Group Enrolment Form
- Participant enrolment forms and letters of understanding
- Information about the new EFM curriculum and resources
- Posters and information brochures

All participants in this training event will be required to prepare a short presentation of a portion of their Spiritual Autobiography, which will have been prepared before the event based on the resources provided by email.

Inservice Training

Inservice training is normally a requirement for all active mentors each six months after Basic training for the first year, and annually thereafter.

Current mentors/inservice training – the preparation is the same as the above. In addition, participants please bring:

- a short session of worship (5-10 minutes) that you have led with your EFM group. Please bring 15 copies. (We will use one or two of these at the training, and talk about worship, sharing our offerings amongst us as a take-home resource)
- questions or issues relating to your current groups.

Questions?

Contact Jean Malcolm, EFM Trainer
021 2942122
jean@stpetersonwillis.org.nz

Please return registration by email by Friday 1 August, 2025 to:

EfM NZ Administrator (Michael Crawford-Butler)
educationforministrynz@outlook.com