

Annual Report of The Theosophical Society in New Zealand Inc.

1 October 2006 to 30 September 2007

The National Convention was held at New Plymouth in January with the guest speaker Vicente Hae Chin Jr. from the Philippines. Vic shared with us various aspects of the spiritual journey in his unique style, which touched everyone's hearts. We also had special guests Jeanette Wilson who shared with us her work in education of children, and Prof. Kathryn Pavlovish, who shared with us some of the work she is doing as an Associate Professor at Waikato University - introducing a deeper spiritual aspect into her programmes. It was certainly very heartening to see the results from some of the students from her courses.

The School of Theosophy was this year held for 10 days at the Tauhara Centre with guest Ravi Ravindra. Ravi spent 10 days with the very well attended school exploring aspects of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali with us. Ravi's personality and style made this a very rich experience. We hope to have these sessions available on DVD eventually.

Regional Groups It has been quieter for the regional groups this year but there has been some work going on in the central region with the sharing of speakers between the various branches and especially in providing some support for Nelson Branch at the top of the South Island. It is really valuable to see branches working together.

Branch support. The National Office has continued this year to provide programme facilitators to branches around the country. These have included, Murray Stentiford, Warwick Keys and Pamela Zane, Sandy Ravelli, Val White, Hazel Menehira, Erika Bianca, Clive Conland and John Vorstermans. Many branches are also now organizing tours within their own regions and organizing regional get-togethers.

Over the last few years there has been a collective focus to see branches become more independent yet to also provide support where it is needed with regard to branch programmes. The emphasis has been to try and support the branches programmes with appropriate speakers rather than simply offering speakers as one off sessions with no backup. Therefore each branch has been encouraged to use the National Speakers as a means of drawing in the public and then to follow up with sessions exploring the topics presented to a deeper level, or to stimulate a more practical approach to Theosophical study and action.

Branch Programmes are important and a balanced programme of Service, Meditation and Study is something that the Theosophical Society promotes in New Zealand. This year we have seen several branches start or continue with meditation and yoga and tai-chi sessions, some of them including a form of healing service. We have also continued to promote the Section Meditation on a daily basis for all our members.

Study in branches has been variable, some branches being able only to hold public meetings. This means that there is no opportunity to go into more explorative depth with the membership, something that is important if we are to really gain a depth of understanding in theosophy, as long as it is balanced with reflection and put into practice. Some of the subjects studied in branches this year are:

Man the Bridge between two worlds
Navigating the Spiritual Supermarket

Exploring our Inner Journey
Inner Guidance Seminar Series

Spirituality & Art	Delve into Theosophical classics.
Self-Transformation – the first step: becoming aware	Karma in our Lives
Dealing with deep patterns of belief, behaviour	Reincarnation
Theosophical Principles and Practice	Prayer, meditation and mindfulness
The emergence of polarity in the Universe,	Practical and Spiritual Healing
An Introduction to Theosophy	Meditation and Yoga
The Eight Limbs of Yoga	Karma in Families
Perfected Humanity—Adepts, Masters the Soul Journey	The Unusual Beginnings of the TS

The National Council have met three times over the past year. They looked at various issues, among which was to look at the idea of the Theosophical Society applying to be able to appoint Marriage Celebrants, which it was agreed to not pursue, and an investment policy which was requested by the convention. A small group was setup to seek expert advice on this and come back with a report.

The new **Charities Act** which has now come into force has required a great deal of work. We have requested to be accepted as a group by the Charities commission and are still awaiting their decision on acceptance of our application.

The Five Year Plan was updated, after review by branches following the National Council in November 2006. The latest version is always displayed on our Website. This plan forms the basis for the Section's work today.

Theosophy in New Zealand (TheoSophia). This year we have seen the work of the magazine working group come to fruition with the publication of our magazine. A lot of work has gone into this by the working group, Clive Conland, Warwick Keys, Jo Barnsdale and John Vorstermans. Jo Barnsdale, as editor has done a tremendous job of bringing everything together and getting each publication out. The magazine is one of the many ways we get our message out to the public and the new format is proving positive in this regard. Thanks to Peter Quin for putting the publication into a printable form and H&A Print in Wanganui for the printing. They are all members who put many hours of effort into each publication.

Office Holders for the NZ Section are as follows:

<i>Office</i>	<i>Holder</i>	<i>Term ends</i>
National President	John Vorstermans	January 2008
National Vice-president	Murray Stentiford	January 2010
Treasurer	Graham Eden	January 2010
Education Coordinator	Melanie Closs	January 2010
Editor of Theosophy in NZ	Jo Barnsdale	January 2010
Section Librarian	Sharn Laurie	January 2010

Management Team is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Society and meets once every four to six weeks. This team comprises the following members:

National President	John Vorstermans
National Vice-president	Murray Stentiford
Treasurer	Graham Eden

Education Coordinator	Melanie Closs
Extra Member at large	Allan Morse (term ends in January 2010)
Extra member at large	Aroon Parshotam (term ends in January 2008)

Nominations for the National President for the 2008-2010 (term ending January 2011 following convention) were taken during the year and a postal vote resulted in the appointment to this role of Warwick Keys – to begin after the convention in January 2008.

Membership has this year decreased when compared to last year. The membership at the end of last year was 993 and at the 30 September 2007 was 982, which shows a decrease in membership of 11.

Appreciation goes out to all those members who have been active in supporting the work of the New Zealand Society over the last twelve months. I would especially like to thank Murray Stentiford for his support as the National Vice-president for the past year. Murray began his role as Vice-president this year and has fitted into a role where the skills he has can be of most benefit.

This has also been the first term for Melanie Closs in the role of Education Coordinator. Melanie has slowly come to terms with the demands of the job and has now settled in well.

Jo Barnsdale, our Magazine Editor is also new and has done an incredible job with the new look and feel of the Theosophy in New Zealand – TheoSophia magazine.

I would also like to thank our Treasurer, Graham Eden, and the Librarian, Sharn Laurie, for their work over the year.

I would especially like to express my appreciation to Marilyn Hannah, our office manager, without whom much of the work of the Headquarters would not be done. She does it with such ease, efficiency and pleasure. It is a real pleasure to have had the privilege to work with her.

There are so many who are working behind the scenes to make theosophy a reality that I have not mentioned. My heartfelt thanks go out to them all.

Members who passed away during the year were:

Rose Pollard	Kathleen Sanders
Joan Hill	Gordon Shepherd
Gavin Laurie	Geoffrey Adey
John O'Donnell	Mary Hampson
Kenneth McDonough	Mark Tilson
John Pennington	Erna Stokes
June Skentelbery	

John Vorstermans
National President