

The Christchurch Rebuild:

The Role of the Transitional Cathedral as an Ecumenical Centre

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要 旨

ニュージーランドの南島の東海岸に位置するクライストチャーチ市を象徴する建物として知られているのが、クライストチャーチ大聖堂である。イギリスの植民地時代に建てられたこの大聖堂は、100年以上もの間、人々の祈りの場としての役割を果たしてきた。大聖堂の周辺広場は、祭り、式典、祝いなど特別な場として使われ、人々と共に歴史を歩んできた。大聖堂とその周辺広場は市の名所となり、多くの市民や観光客が集まり、いこいの場となっていた。2011年2月22日、市中心部から西に5キロメートルの地点を震源とした大地震が発生した。この地震により、185人の命が失われ、市の中心部では多くの建物が倒壊した。クライストチャーチ大聖堂も倒壊し、尖塔は崩れ、瓦礫と化した。

2018年に著者がクライストチャーチを訪れた際、大聖堂は、依然地震直後の状態のままであった。また、著者が、過去3回、2015、2016、2017年に同市を訪れた際も、大聖堂のすぐ近くの市内中心部は、人口40万人が暮らしているとは思えないほど、歩行者、交通量などが少ない状態であった。これは、半壊した大聖堂を撤去するか、再建するか、修理するか、住民たちの意見が対立した状態が解決せず、市の象徴である大聖堂の修復計画が未定であり、大聖堂周辺を訪れる人々が減少したままであるからである。今回著者は、別の大聖堂「トランジショナル大聖堂」を訪れた。これは、当初クライストチャーチ大聖堂が修復再建されるまでの間の一時的な建物として建築された。この研究は、「トランジショナル大聖堂」が考えられた経緯、その設計と構造、及び市内での現在と未来における役割を考察することを目的とした定性調整方法に基づいている。そこで、先行研究の分析、及び「トランジショナル大聖堂」建築の提案者であるグレイグ・ディクソン牧師とのインタビューを通して、今後のクライストチャーチ市における「トランジショナル大聖堂」の機能と役割について分析する。

1. Introduction

Christchurch, located on the east coast of the South Island of New Zealand, is named after its churches of a variety of Christian denominations.¹ It was here that the Anglican Cathedral, a gothic structure with British roots, stood as a symbol of the city for over 100 years. The building was originally conceived in 1853 and built over a period of forty years between 1864 and 1904 with the city expanding outward from the structure so that it remained firmly within its reaches. Originally, like other churches, the Cathedral's purpose was first and foremost a place of worship, although this would change over time, as the number of parishioners declined in

line with a fall in religious affiliations in general. Located in Cathedral Square, the area surrounding the structure became a “special place for celebration and fun; farewell and homecoming; worship and commemoration. Or [as a place to] simply sit and enjoy the unique space.”² From the time it was conceived in 1850, Cathedral Square underwent many changes with its look, feel and function moving from a “muddy thoroughfare in the early days to a more formal pedestrian-oriented place for hosting civic and social gatherings”.³ Subsequently over time, it came to be ringed by buildings of various styles and came to include amenities such as hotels and banks, and entertainment such as bars and cinemas, which brought people and businesses into the central city of Christchurch.⁴

It was thus natural that the Cathedral and its surrounding square became a city landmark, with locals and tourists from within New Zealand and from around the world flocking to it to experience the quaint charm of the structure and the relaxed surroundings of the area, before this was abruptly ruined along with much of the rest of the city by an earthquake in February 2011. Ritchie has fond memories of Christchurch in the early 2000s and recalls being awe-struck by the gothic cathedral in the Square and the general laid-back nature of the central city itself, witnessing Japanese tourists taking photos and generally enjoying the low-rise, stress free experience. He also remembers having fish and chips in the square and listening to the Wizard of Christchurch⁵ preach to passers-by and sitting on the steps of the Cathedral watching strangers playing chess using the giant chess pieces on a board opposite the building as the last remaining street tram rattled by, looping through the central city precinct.

Then the fortunes of the city changed in an instant at lunchtime on February 22nd, 2011 when a severe earthquake with an epicentre located just five kilometres west of the city centre struck. On that day 185 people tragically lost their lives and thousands more were injured. Like many of the central city buildings, the Anglican Cathedral, built of masonry was not spared, the entire structure being extensively damaged, and its spire toppled into a pile of rubble.

It was during a fourth trip to Christchurch in 2018⁶ that the authors visited the ruined cathedral once again to find it just as it was during previous post-quake visits: a lone fenced off sentinel, still in disrepair, exposed to the elements, and in a very sorry state. This was in contrast to much of the rest of the city outside of the square precinct, which was abuzz with reconstruction activity and beginning to move forward with the opening of several key infrastructure projects such as the new central library that opened in September 2018.⁷ Yet there the damaged Cathedral stood, almost as it was on that fateful day in February 2011, and as a consequence the surrounding area appeared devoid of any meaningful activity apart from a few tourists or construction workers buying lunch from one of a number of vendors that had recently appeared. Indeed, the authors had noted during previous trips in 2015, 2016 and 2017

that the city centre immediately surrounding the Cathedral was lacking the foot traffic which one might expect from an urban centre of more than 400,000 people, this perhaps exacerbated by the fact that the symbol of the city remained out of commission seven years on, with little indication that this issue would be resolved in the foreseeable future. “Tear it down! Rebuild! Repair!”, were the conflicting cries of Christchurch residents, with the fate of the building still unresolved even as late as September 2018.

As part of their fourth visit to the city, the authors decided to pay a formal visit to another Cathedral, the Transitional Cathedral — a structure which had originally been conceived as a temporary building to replace the original Anglican Cathedral while the City Council and the Anglican diocese were determining the fate of the original one. This study is based upon a qualitative survey with the purpose of gauging how the Transitional Cathedral came about, its design and structure, and its current and future roles within the city. The study is a culmination of first-hand reports, previous studies and an interview held with the individual who had the initial idea of establishing the structure, the Reverend Craig Dixon.

2. The Transitional Cathedral in Context

The second violent earthquake which took place on February 22, 2011 struck with such force that it literally tore the spire off the Anglican Cathedral, mortally wounding the structure and laying waste to great tracts of central Christchurch. Subsequently, the many parts of the central city were closed off and remained uninhabitable for years afterward. The authors observed the state of this area three years after the quake:

Following lunch on the first afternoon we began to see signs of the damage caused by the February 2011 earthquake as we exited Hagely Park and headed into the central part of the city and into the former “red zone”. At this point we were faced with remnants of what could be described as a former war-zone, or perhaps akin to severe inner-city decay, as can be observed in some of the rust-belt cities of the United States. On entering the central city, through which the River Avon flows, we observed row upon row of fenced-off, dilapidated buildings which were interspersed with numerous empty lots which were all abandoned. What struck us most at this point was the profound silence that there was on this Sunday afternoon, since one would expect that an area such as this within a major metropolitan centre would have been bustling with residents and tourists at such a time of the day. The entire area of Christchurch Cathedral Square, which had formerly been both the spiritual and literal heart of the city, was all but abandoned even three and a half years on from the quakes.⁸

On the day of the quake, the then marketing and developing manager of the original cathedral, Rev. Craig Dixon, was himself nearly a victim.⁹ However, fortuitously Dixon survived. Following the mortal wound which the building received, the city began organising concerts and other events in the square, and he discovered an advert in a magazine about Shigeru Ban, the famous Japanese architect who had designed a 'paper church' for post-quake Japan, which looked, in his words: "Stunning"¹⁰. Dixon then made contact with Ban via email about the possibility of him visiting Christchurch to hold a consultation on the construction of a similar, temporary church which could be used in place of the out of commission original building.¹¹ To Dixon's surprise, Ban immediately responded positively, and soon after made an initial visit to Christchurch during which the two discussed logistics and a possible location for the construction of a temporary church. Subsequently, Ban made a total of twenty-six trips to New Zealand at his own expense and without payment, with many locals and businesses coming together to offer support at little or no charge. A team of consultants, engineers various and other contributors also volunteered their time.¹²

Initially intended to be a temporary structure, a decision was soon taken to make the building semi-permanent, or last fifty to seventy years in order to meet the strict requirements of the new post-quake building codes established by Christchurch City Council. According to Dixon, "We were still having lots of earthquakes, so we were supposed to create something that was one-hundred percent to code, and so this become a permanent design. The cost went up and the building became bigger ... it's a very safe building and very functional actually and it's used an awful lot. At that stage no one knew long we would be out of the building in the Square, and in the end, it is probably going to be twenty years."¹³

Despite some media and public scepticism regarding plans for a 'cardboard' church, construction began on July 12, 2013. Created from rows of cardboard tubes and covered by a light-weight roofing skin made of polycarbonate, with a cardboard cross and a triangle window at the entrance, the entire structure sits on two rows of shipping containers. In designing the cathedral, Ban incorporated elements of the original structure, such as its basic geometry and also the rose window.¹⁴ Although he recognised that many people might not make the connection consciously, he believed that they would feel comfortable in the building and find it somehow familiar.¹⁵ In using an outer skin of translucent polycarbonate, Ban stated that the most important feature was that natural light should come through the spaces between the tubes and also through the rose window.

Even though the Transitional Cathedral became colloquially known as the "Cardboard Cathedral" it became one of the most famous buildings in New Zealand attracting a huge number of tourists and locals. Indeed, on the day of the author's interview with Dixon, the cathedral was filled with people from many walks of life who were interacting and mingling with one another.

er, taking pictures and enjoying a wonderfully constructed space which incorporates a delightful use of natural light that brings the internal space to life. The building clearly demonstrates what can be achieved in a post-disaster environment regarding the swift construction of effective, purposeful buildings that can contribute towards an area quickly getting back on its feet and bringing a suffering community closer together. In the aftermath of the Christchurch quakes, Shigeru Ban and Craig Dixon were together able to realise a vision of completing a church and community centre which is capable of housing seven-hundred people within a matter of months, a significant achievement at little cost, and created with a little ingenuity and foresight which could show the world that Christchurch was back in business — this being no small feat in any post-disaster situation. In the end, the Transitional Cathedral was constructed for a cost of around 6.5 million New Zealand dollars, with the Anglican diocese contributing 4.5 million and a local businessman 1.5 million.¹⁶ The final result represents a piece of iconic architecture which has been designed by one of the world's preeminent architects for free, a space which the people of Christchurch can be undoubtedly proud of moving forward.

3. Reaction: An Ecumenical Centre

The Transitional Cathedral is one of the most recognisable and most photographed buildings in all of Christchurch. According to Dixon, the people of Christchurch are delighted with the result:

“Everyone was really pleased with it. They liked it and it's pretty easy to live in and it's warm and the other building was really cold. But I was concerned that this should be a building for the whole city and so I argued strongly that it should be a place where you could eat and drink. The Cathedral in the Square, because of the Maori WhareKai [Dining hall], a place where you eat as opposed to a meeting place where no food or drink is allowed. And they treated the cathedral like that and said, “No you can't even eat and drink in it.” Even though sometimes people had food down the back. We said, “You have got to let people eat and drink in here.” So, this is used for all sorts of events including weddings, breakfasts, the launch of new cars, or whatever. So, people come along and they use it.”¹⁷

The fact is that people are able to make use of the Transitional Cathedral freely, in a very accommodating and welcoming space. Over the years, people from a number of countries have also taken the opportunity to write their thoughts in the Cathedral guestbook, which upon a casual glance by Ritchie was found to be full of praise regarding the design, the atmosphere and the inclusive nature of the church.¹⁸ Furthermore, according to Dixon, the Transitional Cathedral offers so much more than a traditional Cathedral. “The Cathedral is steeped in life. Religious, civic and cultural activities pulse through this building... many of the visitors to this

living Cathedral find the warmest welcome, rest and blessing.”¹⁹

Dixon also emphasised that the Transitional Cathedral has a much broader role than the original Cathedral, and that it is used for “all sorts of events including weddings, breakfasts, the launch of new cars, or whatever.”²⁰ In a sense, the Cathedral plays a broader role within the community, one more similar to how churches operated in the past, where they were more than just places of worship and acted as the centres of other activities.²¹ Dixon also iterated that because the cathedral plays such a diverse role, the people love the building and have pride in it, and it remains a hugely popular attraction, attracting people from all over. He also said that the building acted as a memorial where people could come to remember those who had died, and “functions in many interesting ways.”²² He was also keen for the building to remain faithful to his vision of being an ecumenical centre, with a broad community role, unlike the old Cathedral which gave precedence to more traditional worship and choir events, even though parishioner numbers had been in decline for years. He was of the opinion that it was better to focus on the new Cathedral which is up and running than to “... plough millions and millions of dollars and time and effort into that building.”²³

4. The Current Status of the Transitional Cathedral

Since the Transitional Cathedral first opened its doors to the public on August 6th 2013, its primary purpose has quite naturally been as a centre for Christian worship. Due to the great damage it suffered in the earthquake, the Victorian neo-gothic cathedral which dominated the centre of the city in Cathedral Square lies in partial ruins and remains unusable. As a result, the Anglican congregation of this much-loved building required a new location for the religious services and other activities formerly held there, and slightly less than two and a half years after the earthquake the Transitional Cathedral provided it. Subsequently, it has been the site where the various services previously held at the original cathedral, including Holy Communion, Choral Eucharist and Choral Evening song as well as weddings and funerals, have taken place.²⁴ The Transitional Cathedral has become home to the famous Cathedral Choir which has sung at Anglican services since the 1880s, and also to another choral group called the Cathedral Singers.²⁵ In addition, with its modern facilities and total seating capacity for 700 people, the Transitional Cathedral has hosted a variety of both religious and non-religious civic events including concerts, recitals, conferences, formal dinners, lectures and public meetings. In this way it has become an important asset for the broader community of Christchurch, particularly in the aftermath of the 2011 disaster which devastated so much of the central city. In the words of the current Dean of the cathedral, the Very Reverend Lawrence Kimberley: “Cathedrals are by nature multi-dimensional. They are places of spiritual exuberance and quiet beauty, expressions of visions that transcend human knowing, meeting places for the spirit, libraries of stories, cornucopias of artistic achievement. And they are places

where worship takes place in countless forms, music pours forth in daily offerings of resonant beauty — where spiritual growth and education deepen the mind and spirit, and where people meet in search of common ground and a common good.”²⁶

Shigeru Ban designed a structure to exceed current earthquake building specifications. Shortly before its opening, in an interview with Auckland University Professor of Architecture Andrew Barrie, Ban expressed his belief that the building would in fact last far longer than half a century: “[Barrie] The building was originally intended to last just 10 years and then be moved to some other site. It has now become permanent. Did you want to retain the feeling of the building being temporary or provisional? [Ban] For me, there is no difference between temporary and permanent. I think this building will probably be there forever; however, it was important to me to keep a kind of temporary quality.”²⁷ If and when the original cathedral is rebuilt,²⁸ it is planned that the Anglican congregation will return to the site on Cathedral Square, after which the Transitional Cathedral will be gifted to the parish of St. John the Baptist Church on whose land it sits.²⁹ In the meantime however, it will continue to serve the spiritual and material needs of the citizens of Christchurch, and it has also become a well-recognised landmark which symbolises the ongoing reconstruction of the city as a whole. This illustrates the fact that the Transitional Cathedral plays another important role in the life of New Zealand’s Garden City in addition to those related to the holding of religious services and other community events. Not only has the building become a popular destination for the large number of tourists who visit the city from many parts of the world, it also represents a symbol of hope for the many people whose lives, homes and businesses were severely affected by the February 2011 disaster.

Even prior to its completion, the Transitional Cathedral had already become a location which was attracting international interest. In October 2012 the well-respected producer of worldwide travel guides Lonely Planet published its recommendations for ten cities it regarded as worth visiting during the following year. One of the recommended cities on this list was Christchurch, and the article on the company’s website drew particular attention to the Transitional Cathedral which was at the time still under construction.³⁰ Subsequently, the building has arguably become the most famous landmark in the whole city (perhaps alongside the partially ruined original cathedral), and in terms of the buildings that have been reconstructed or built anew since the earthquake, it almost certainly is so. In the view of Professor Barrie, the overall significance of the Transitional Cathedral is even greater still. In an interview with *The Guardian* newspaper he stated: “Internationally it is the most recognised building in the country’ Part of the importance of the Transitional Cathedral was that it is the first non-commercial structure to be built in the city centre after the earthquakes Barrie believes the Transitional Cathedral shows that amid all the bureaucracy associated with recreating a city, progress is being made. He says the ruined cathedral has come to represent the

earthquake itself. [Whilst] ‘the cardboard cathedral is a symbol of moving on.’ So while a fully intact stone cathedral still remains on the city council’s letter head and the top image in a Google search, there are signs of a city doing just that. When visitors to Christchurch get a tourist map, for example, the cover of it features a newer vision — a cathedral made of cardboard.”³¹

It is indeed the case that the Transitional Cathedral has proved very popular among foreign visitors to Christchurch, and this was witnessed first-hand by the authors who met and spoke with members of a party of Japanese tourists who were visiting the building at the same time as they were in September 2018. Moreover, a perusal of the numerous reviews of the site posted by visitors from different parts of the world to the popular Trip Advisor website paints a similar picture.³²

5. Personal Impressions

Regarding the authors’ personal views of the Transitional Cathedral, Ritchie took the opportunity to visit the structure on numerous occasions during his visits to Christchurch, specifically in 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, and 2019. During his initial visit in 2014, the building certainly stood out, since it was, as mentioned above, the first public building to be constructed in the post-earthquake period. Here one must recall that there had been severe damage to the entire city, with particular damage to the central precincts.³³ So it was during this time when the city centre was devoid of human traffic that the Transitional Cathedral stood ironically as a rather isolated and somewhat lonely structure, especially due to its location in a large, flat precinct of the city which had been completely ravished by the earthquakes. Ritchie remembers entering the Transitional Cathedral during a weekday, and while finding it to be an impressive architectural feat, noticed it was empty of people and activity. It seemed odd at the time that that was all the city could apparently muster in the face of such adversity, and it was no wonder that many people were frustrated with the pace of the rebuild.

However, it was during subsequent visits that Ritchie came to appreciate that the structure with its simple design was indeed warm, enticing and welcoming, especially following the initial five-to-six-year period following the earthquake when there was a distinct lack of foot traffic in the central city. Moreover, as the city began to recover, the immediate area was steadily transformed into a hybrid of activity as roads were slowly repaired and businesses reopened, and fundamentally people returned. It is Ritchie’s opinion that as the locals and tourists began to once again make their way into the city, it was at that point that the Transitional Cathedral took upon itself the challenge of fulfilling a destiny that the old Cathedral had been unable to achieve: to attract worshippers, visitors and other people from all walks of life. This positively impacted the Christchurch community by bringing people closer together and providing hope

that the recovery was indeed underway, and also instilled a sense of normality within the walls of this unique building constructed of cardboard built upon shipping containers, with its beautiful rose window, a nostalgic reminder of the other Cathedral, whose outlook remained unknown. It was during the September 2018 visit undertaken with Short that Ritchie noticed that the Cathedral had in fact fulfilled the role that Dixon had envisioned for it, with locals intermingling with visitors from all around the world and generally enjoying the wonderful space. It was also very pleasant to have the opportunity to speak with a number of elderly Japanese tourists, and to discover that they were similarly impressed by the warmth and hospitality shown by the staff and pastors, and also the uniqueness of the building itself, as they paid their respects to the twenty-eight Japanese who had perished in the Canterbury Television Building which was located just across from the Transitional Cathedral.

Short has visited the Transitional Cathedral on two occasions and his overall impression is that it is a singularly uplifting and inspiring place. On entering the building, due to the steeply sloping sides of its A-frame shape there is a strong sensation of space and openness overhead, and one's eyes are naturally drawn up to the apex at the top of the triangle. The building's shape, coupled with the colours of the materials used within it, and the fact that between each of the large cardboard tubes lining the walls are floor-to-ceiling window-like spaces which allow external light to enter, together these features combine to communicate an affecting sense of lightness within. This 'lightness' is perceived both in the sense of a relative abundance of light and the use of soft colours for the walls and furnishings, and in the sense of what could be described as a relative absence of 'heaviness' in the building as a whole. This is not to suggest that the building gives the impression that there is any danger of it lifting off its concrete foundations, but in distinct contrast to the sturdy gothic solidity of the original cathedral, its Transitional counterpart seems to rest lightly on its foundations rather than standing on piles which have been driven deep into the earth.³⁴ The overall ambience therefore is one of a sense of warmth and calmness; it is a place for communication and contemplation, and perhaps a refuge from the busy necessities of everyday life, and also of course from the distressing effects of the February 2011 earthquake.

6. The Consequences of the March 2019 Massacre

It has been stated that roles which the Transitional Cathedral has played and continues to play are as a symbol of the reconstruction of Christchurch and as a new centre for various aspects of community life in the city. Following the tragic events which took place on Friday March 15th, 2019, it took on another role — that of being a focus for the outpouring of shock and grief that swept across the city. On that day a white supremacist carried out gun attacks on two Mosques in Christchurch claiming the lives of fifty-one people and injuring fifty others, many of them seriously, this representing the deadliest mass shooting in the history of New

Zealand.

In the immediate aftermath of the attacks the Transitional Cathedral issued the following statement on its Facebook page: "In the light of today's shooting, The Christchurch Transitional Cathedral wishes to express its love for, and solidarity with, the Christchurch Muslim community at this time of horror and loss. Please be assured of our support and prayers as brothers and sisters within the wider faith families of our Abrahamic inheritance. We also extend our deepest sympathy and love to those who are seriously injured and to their families; and pray for the emergency services, the police, and healthcare professionals who are caring for the injured. We ask for your prayers for all involved in this horrible incident."³⁵ Later in the day this statement was followed by a letter of support sent to the Muslim community of Christchurch on behalf of the whole Christian community of the city.³⁶ In the subsequent days a number of events were held at the Transitional Cathedral and its immediate vicinity in remembrance of the victims.

After closing entirely during the late afternoon and evening of March 15th due to fear for the safety of parishioners and visitors, the Transitional Cathedral reopened on the morning after the attacks in order to offer pastoral care and a place to seek solace for members of a community that found itself in a state of profound shock. Later that day the Anglican Church of Aotearoa New Zealand launched an emergency appeal to support the victims of the attacks which was similarly posted on the Transitional Cathedral's Facebook page.³⁷ On Sunday March 17th regular services were held once again at the cathedral but events were of course dominated by the tragedy that had occurred two days earlier. A plan to hold a multi-faith service on that day to honour the victims was forced to be cancelled on the advice of the police who were concerned about the ongoing unstable security situation. A number of attendees of the services which took place on that day expressed some reticence about entering the Transitional Cathedral due to fears that it might become a target for retribution attacks carried out by extremist members of the Muslim community; however, no such events occurred there or at other locations in Christchurch.³⁸ Six days after the attacks on Thursday March 21st a multi-faith service of remembrance was held in the park of Latimer Square which is located directly in front of the Transitional Cathedral; this service was jointly led by leaders of the Anglican, Catholic and Muslim communities.³⁹ This event was then followed eight days later by a national memorial service held in Hagley Park which was attended by more than 20,000 people including the New Zealand Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern.⁴⁰

It goes without saying that the shock and sadness felt by the people of Christchurch was also felt throughout New Zealand. In the days following March 15th 2019 numerous demonstrations of support and solidarity with the Muslim community took place across the country, including spontaneous performances of the Haka which were carried out by groups of students,

sportsmen and women, and also members of motorcycle gangs.⁴¹ Coupled with the multi-faith commemorative events that took place within the city, these expressions of condolence and brotherhood also had something of an unexpected influence on an ongoing debate within Christchurch, that concerning the future of the partially-ruined cathedral standing in Cathedral Square. In an article published three weeks after the attacks on the popular New Zealand news website Stuff, internationally-acclaimed actor and former Christchurch resident Sam Neill expressed the view that the original cathedral should not be rebuilt, and that instead it should be replaced by a new building with no religious affiliation in which people of all faiths or of none can meet and spend time together in an inclusive and harmonious atmosphere. Neill criticised the estimated cost of restoring the original cathedral to its pre-February 2011 state and argued that doing so would not be representative of the multi-cultural and multi-faith city that Christchurch has become. In addition, he also stated that Christchurch now possesses an Anglican cathedral which seems perfectly suited to the needs of its congregation in the 21st century — the Transitional Cathedral:

The plan [for the original cathedral], as I understand it, is to rebuild this relic, at vast expense. I seriously doubt the wisdom of this. If ever there was a time to start again, it is now. That is also true for the Anglican Church. Just as we have all had to recalibrate the way we think about each other, about our community, we need to think again about the fabric of our place.

What's needed is a completely rethought centre, a new true heart for Christchurch. A place that represents and belongs to all of Christchurch. An architectural symbol of a different unified Christchurch. Somewhere to meet, to sing, to talk, to be quiet, to debate, to laugh, to perform, to get to know one another, to listen. Somewhere without hierarchy but rather fellowship. Somewhere without any particular creed, and that embraces all our cultures. Somewhere to believe, or not, as you wish. A place full of life; with theatres, meeting halls, even prayer rooms ... a dynamic social hub.

I do not suggest that there should be no Anglican cathedral. There already is one — the Cardboard Cathedral. It is brilliant — very cool — practical, humble and positioned as far from the centre as all other places of worship in Christchurch. And it's about the right size for its congregation these days. It is appropriate in a way the old ruined Cathedral never really was. Let's quietly and respectfully dismantle the old wreck, sad as that may be for many. Let us make an entirely new start. It would cost far less and mean so much more. An inclusive heart in the very centre of a great resurgent city, and make Christchurch a byword for a new harmonious world.⁴²

The case put forward by Neill in this article understandably stimulated considerable debate both within and beyond the Garden City⁴³ regarding the physical structures that are most required at the heart of cities which are striving to embrace diversity and inclusivity in the 21st

century. Indeed, to some extent the authors find themselves in agreement with his views. Nevertheless, in a response to the article also published on *Stuff*, the Anglican Bishop of Canterbury Peter Carrell stated that a binding decision to restore the original cathedral had been taken by the church's ruling body in 2017, and subsequently an agreement to provide the necessary funding for this had been reached between the government, restoration campaigners and the Anglican church in 2018. Therefore it was unfortunately too late to halt the rebuilding process at this stage. However, he expressed support for the proposal that the rebuilt cathedral should be open to all of the communities living in Christchurch: "It will welcome people of all faiths and none. The reinstated Christ Church Cathedral will be a place of welcome for all people, to gather, to connect, to build relationships, and to talk through the issues that affect humanity.' He said he was open to talks about an interfaith hub. 'It is entirely appropriate that people pause and reflect after the horrific Mosque massacre. We must all learn from these events and we've seen that reflected in many areas of New Zealand life. The outpouring of love and solidarity for the Muslim community shows that hope is breaking through, and that love is the most powerful agent of change there is. If there is to be an interfaith hub in Christchurch, this needs to be generated from conversations between the faith communities themselves. The Diocese of Christchurch is happy to be part of any such conversations.'"⁴⁴

7. The future role of the Transitional Cathedral

In the opinion of the authors, Christchurch's Transitional Cathedral looks to have a bright future. There are many reasons for this. Firstly, as mentioned above, despite the fact that the building was designed to have a lifespan of 50 years, its architect believes that it may become a permanent addition to the reconstructed cityscape of New Zealand's Garden City. Considering the number of important roles that the Transitional Cathedral now plays in the life of a city which has endured two major disasters within the last decade, it seems unlikely that current or future residents in Christchurch will wish to see this iconic building fall into disrepair and ultimately disappear from what is increasingly becoming a rejuvenated urban environment.

The fate of the Transitional Cathedral is clearly intricately linked to that of its partially-ruined elder relative located in Cathedral Square. Following the formal decisions taken by the aforementioned key stakeholders in 2017 and 2018, barring another unforeseen calamity it seems almost certain that the original cathedral will be fully rebuilt, likely with added strengthening in order hopefully to withstand possible future seismic events, in spite of the opposition voiced by commentators such as Sam Neill. It is estimated that this rebuilding process may require anything up to a decade to complete,⁴⁵ at which point the Transitional Cathedral will enter a new phase in its history. Regarding this, the authors do not wish to speculate on the intentions of the parishioners of St. John the Baptist Church vis-à-vis the building that is standing on the

site of their previously demolished stone church. However, due to the variety of ways that the Transitional Cathedral is contributing towards both religious and civic life in Christchurch, they are of the opinion that in the future it is likely that a decision may be taken to keep it in its current state in perpetuity.

Fundamentally therefore, what does the Transitional Cathedral actually represent for the city of Christchurch? First and foremost, it is a consecrated site in which Anglican services are regularly held. It is also a highly evocative internal space in which a wide variety of both religious and non-religious events are held, of which some of the latter simultaneously serve as an additional source of income for the surrounding parish. In addition, the building has and continues to serve as a place to seek solace for the residents of a city which has endured two great tragedies within a relatively short period of time. The uniquely designed building itself symbolises the spirit of a city which is striving to overcome these tragedies on both a physical and an emotional level. Furthermore, the Transitional Cathedral is also a popular tourist destination which communicates an atmosphere of welcome and inclusiveness that emanates directly from its affecting historical experience, not least in the sense of the role it has played in the promotion of inter-faith and inter-community understanding in the wake of the attacks of March 15th 2019. Based upon a simple architectural design and using inexpensive materials, it is held that the Transitional Cathedral has become something of a treasure within a wounded but gradually recovering Christchurch, and it is the hope of the authors that it remains a powerful symbol of both reconstruction and healing for many years to come.

Notes

- 1 At the time of the earthquakes in 2011, there were 49 churches in the greater Christchurch area. Following the quake in February 22nd 2011, people flocked to the remaining 14 churches of 20 in the greater Christchurch City area to worship, pay their respects to the victims of the quakes. It was about, "Coming together to pray for those affected by the quakes." The New Zealand Herald, *Christchurch earthquake: Faithful flock to church services*; 27 February, 2011, retrieved August 2019; <https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?cid=1&objectid=10709120>
- 2 This quote from an information board in front of the now ruined Cathedral outlining how the space and building were used in the past. Numerous examples are provided, including pictures of large crowds gathered to welcome returning soldiers from the Great War in 1917 or when people gathered at the ceremonial unveiling of the Citizens' War Memorial, Christchurch in 1937. Later, people would gather for festivities in the Square, as for the 2004 Buskers Festival, or celebrations for New Years.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 The self-titled Wizard of Christchurch, eccentric and non-conformist Ian Brackenbury Channell regularly addressed the crowds in Cathedral Square on a variety of topics. One of his ideas was to have the world map inverted so that New Zealand would appear at the top. The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, *The Wizard of New Christchurch*; n.d, retrieved August, 2019; <https://teara.govt.nz/en/>

- photograph/10375/the-wizard-of-christchurch
- 6 Ritchie and Short have been researching the impact of the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 on the city and community since 2014.
 - 7 More information can be found on Turanga (The Christchurch City Central Library) on the Christchurch City Council homepage. Christchurch City Council, *Turanga (Central Library)*; n.d., retrieved August, 2019; <https://www.ccc.govt.nz/culture-and-community/central-city-christchurch/explore-amazing-things/central-library/> Ritchie also visited Turanga during a separate visit to Christchurch in March 2019, just a few months after it had opened.
 - 8 Ritchie Z., & Short, J. (2015) Challenges to community resilience in a post-natural disaster context: observations and reflections on the Christchurch earthquakes of 2010 and 2011, in *The Bulletin of the College of Community and Human Services*, Rikkyo University. pp. 93-94
 - 9 In an interview carried out on September 11, 2018 at the Transitional Cathedral, Dixon started by saying that he was a few minutes away from certain death, as he had planned to climb the tower to remove a banner and had placed a ladder against the tower. He returned to his office at the Eastern end of the cathedral, which is underground. That is when the earthquake hit, "Like a big truck was dumping rubble". An interview with Rev. Craig Dixon, carried out by the authors on September 11, 2018. Refer to the Appendix for a full transcript of the interview.
 - 10 Dixon is referring to the Paper Church that was designed by Shigeru Ban and built by church volunteers in Kobe following the Great Awaji-Hanshin earthquake in 1995. This church also incorporates many of the design techniques used in the Transitional Cathedral, such as the polycarbonate sheeting and paper tubes. It was decommissioned in 2005. For more information on the Paper Church and other projects by Shigeru Ban refer to Shigeru Ban Architects: http://www.shigerubanarchitects.com/works/1995_paper-church/index.html
 - 11 Rev. Craig Dixon Interview
 - 12 Ibid.
 - 13 Ibid.
 - 14 Ibid. Also refer to: The Huffington Post, *Cardboard Cathedral By Shigeru Ban Opens After Years-Long Delay*; August 8th, 2013, retrieved August 2019; https://www.huffpost.com/entry/cardboard-cathedral-shigeru-ban_n_3750324. There was much local and international media attention toward this project.
 - 15 Architecture Now, *Christchurch Transitional (Cardboard) Cathedral*; July 2nd 2013, retrieved August, 2019; <https://architecturenow.co.nz/articles/christchurch-transitional-cardboard-cathedral/>
 - 16 Ibid.
 - 17 Ibid.
 - 18 This is based upon casual observations of the Cathedral guestbook and is by no means a quantitative study. It is just a casual observation that visitors seem overwhelmingly satisfied with their experience of visiting the Cathedral.
 - 19 Dixon interview.
 - 20 Dixon interview.
 - 21 Ibid.
 - 22 Ibid.
 - 23 Ibid.

- 24 Christchurch Transitional Cathedral, Opening Hours and Regular Services; n.d., retrieved August 2019; <https://www.cardboardcathedral.org.nz/pages/information>
- 25 Christchurch Transitional Cathedral, the Cathedral Choir, the Cathedral Singers; n.d., retrieved August 2019; <https://www.cardboardcathedral.org.nz/pages/the-cathedral-choir>; <https://www.cardboardcathedral.org.nz/pages/the-cathedral-singers>
- 26 Kimberley, Lawrence (Rev.), Dean of Christchurch, *Welcome to the Transitional Cathedral*, information pamphlet, n.d.; Christchurch Cathedral Transitional.
- 27 Architecture Now, *Christchurch Transitional (Cardboard) Cathedral*; July 2nd 2013, retrieved August 2019; <https://architecturenow.co.nz/articles/christchurch-transitional-cardboard-cathedral/>
- 28 This issue is discussed in section 6 below.
- 29 The St. John the Baptist Church suffered extensive damage in the February 22nd 2011 earthquake and as a result the decision was taken to have it demolished. This opened up an area of church-owned land upon which the transitional cathedral was constructed.
- 30 Lonely Planet featured article, *Christchurch Revival: why New Zealand's comeback city is a must-see for 2013*; October 2012, retrieved August 2019; <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/new-zealand/christchurch-and-canterbury/christchurch/travel-tips-and-articles/christchurch-revival-why-new-zealands-comeback-city-is-a-must-see-for-2013/40625c8c-8a11-5710-a052-1479d27783cb>
- 31 The Guardian, *How temporary 'cardboard cathedral' rose from the ruins to become most recognized building in Christchurch*; September 17th 2014, retrieved August 2019; <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/sep/17/temporary-cardboard-cathedral-ruins-christchurch-new-zealand-earthquake>
- 32 Trip Advisor Hong Kong: Christchurch, traveler reviews of the Cardboard Cathedral; n.d., retrieved August 2019; https://en.tripadvisor.com.hk/Attraction_Review-g255118-d4735869-Reviews-Cardboard_Cathedral-Christchurch_Canterbury_Region_South_Island.html
- 33 For more observations on the aftermath of the earthquakes, refer to Ritchie Z., & Short, J. (2015)
- 34 Short freely admits that the description here represents little more than a personal impression and is by no means based upon specific architectural knowledge.
- 35 Statement issued by the transitional cathedral on its Facebook page; March 15th 2019, retrieved August 2019; <https://www.facebook.com/ChristChrChCathedralNewZealand/>
- 36 Christchurch Inner City Ministers' Association, *Letter of Support to the Muslim Community of Christchurch*; March 15th 2019, retrieved August 2019; http://anglicanlife.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Ministers-Assn-Letter-of-Support.pdf?fbclid=IwAR0fb0Bdjv5qm_cxY3ri-d-YPVY7GuE6q_5-ldtOzFkuvXWKZlxJjFFVsAc
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- 38 ABC News, *Churchgoers pay respects to Christchurch shooting victims after multi-faith city service cancelled on security grounds*; March 17th 2019. Retrieved August 2019; <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-03-17/christchurch-shooting-church-services-security-fears/10909492?fbclid=IwAR2lOKU8cz9-xl87PsAMgYNUw8b-ZhK-dhHgPiB9J3vTq29MHR11hTc7jM>
- 39 Stuff New Zealand, *Muslim leader says Christchurch terror attack has brought community together*, March 21st 2019, retrieved August 2019; <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/christchurch-shooting/111472151/muslim-leader-says-christchurch-terror-attack-has-brought-community-together>

- 40 The New Zealand Herald, *National Remembrance Service for victims of Christchurch terror attack*; March 29th 2019, retrieved August 2019; https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12217364
- 41 The New Zealand Herald, *Mass haka and waiata performed outside Christchurch mosque to honour shooting victims*, March 21st 2019, retrieved August 2019; https://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=12214811; BBC News, *Christchurch shootings: How Maori haka unite New Zealand in mourning*; March 22nd 2019, retrieved August 2019; <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-47648393>
- 42 Sam Neill opinion piece published on Stuff New Zealand, *That relic, Christ Church Cathedral, must go*; April 5th 2019, retrieved August 2019; <https://www.stuff.co.nz/national/christchurch-shooting/111794941/that-relic-christ-church-cathedral-must-go>
- 43 Christchurch is also known as the Garden City.
- 44 Stuff New Zealand, *Anglicans respond to Sam Neill's call to dismantle Christ Church cathedral*; April 6th 2019, retrieved August 2019; <https://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/111847360/anglicans-respond-to-sam-neills-call-to-dismantle-christ-church-cathedral>
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Appendix

Below is a partial transcript of an unstructured interview with Rev. Craig Dixon, carried out on September 11th 2018 at the Transition Cathedral in Christchurch.

Interviewers: Ritchie and Short

Duration: 30: 10

(Following introductions)

Ritchie: I am recording. Craig, go ahead.

Dixon: [On the day of the second earthquake on February 22, 2011] I had been away for a week and we had had a Floral Festival which is an annual event and that cathedral was quite involved in that. And we had a big banner under tower running across it. And it needed to come down. It hadn't been taken down. I was responsible for marketing and development and at that stage. I said, "I have got to get that down." And I got someone to hold the ladder up the side of the tower but he was having lunch and said he would be back in about ten to fifteen minutes. So I went away and about ten minutes later I got up to go and the earthquake started. I was in my office at the eastern end of the cathedral, the opposite end from the tower underground and could hear something coming down like a big truck was dumping rubble. But if I had been up the ladder, it was exactly where the tower came down. I would have been instantly killed. So I was pleased that he ate his lunch when he did.

Short: That is incredible. What was your role at the time?

Dixon: I'm clergy. So I'm ordained. But at that time I was working not in that role, but in communications and events management, basically promoting the cathedral, extending its activities around the city to concerts and various other events and then post-earthquakes this became a project [The Transition Cathedral] that I initiated by seeing an advert on Shigeru Ban. It was in a design magazine and I asked the dean if I could perhaps get in touch with him and he could come.

Short: Why did you think of him?

Dixon: I saw a design for a church he had post-earthquake in Japan and it was very quick to build, and it looks stunning and it was still in use. So I thought, "Well brilliant." I like design and things that are well-made and well thought through, and so it caught my imagination and we were in exactly the same situation to Kobe. We had had this earthquake and the cathedral here is quite central, quite iconic for the city. So it seemed to be something that we should try to respond too quickly. So this became the first post-earthquake community building to be constructed. Initially I thoughts were that it would go up very quickly and it would be just a temporary structure. When we started to design this it became very clear quickly that the city council was not happy having a temporary building go up because of safety. We we're still having lots of earthquakes so we were forced to create something that was to one-hundred percent to code. So this become a permanent design, a permanent building. So the cost went up, the building got bigger. So here it is now. It's a very safe building and very functional, actually. It's used an awful lot and at that stage no one knew how long we would be out of the building in the Square. So in the end it is probably going to be twenty-years, probably. So, this is perfect.

Short: When you saw the church that Shigeru Ban had designed in Kobe did he respond immediately?

Dixon: Yes he did. And between him responding — it was within two or three days — and him coming over, which was about six weeks, the large offshore earthquake and the tsunami occurred. He was also in-

volved in temporary housing post that. But no, he came over and I think that in all, he made twenty-six trips here.

Ritchie: That is incredible.

Short: All on his own expense. Amazing

Dixon: Well, we paid part. We paid his travel. We didn't pay anything for the design or for the consultancy. One of the local hotels, The George Hotel, put him up for free of charge. We got together a team of Consultants who all either volunteered their time or at cost helped us. So we had engineers, architects, lighting engineers ...

Ritchie: What was the final cost of the structure?

Dixon: I think it was 6.5 to 7.5 million dollars.

Short: In the end did the city put the money in for that.

Dixon: No, there was a whole debate over that actually. Initially we priced it up at around four-point-five million but it cost more than that. And that money was taken from the insurance money from the cathedral in the Square. But a group of people who wanted to see that rebuilt as it was, as opposed to what it became for the bishop: A project to build a new modern Cathedral. Because of that debate, the people we wanted to see the re-establishment of the cathedral in the Square and took the church to court and said they were against the use of the money for the repair. So in the end they won that battle, but the church found the money from elsewhere. And I found a local man who was willing to put in one-point-five million to underwrite it. The church found that money later on elsewhere and repaid him, so we got it going that way. But yeah, there was a big debate and as a result of that, some people were against this building only because they sold the money transferring across. But the majority of people were in favour and they liked it. New Zealand doesn't have a building that has this sort of heritage and this sort of connection to an architect like Shigeru. He won the Pritzker Prize for Architecture the year after we finished this. And we did things like there are shipping containers one, two, three, four. You can see it there [Points to the shipping containers on which the cathedral sits]. And from the outside it is more obvious. So when all the shipping containers had been taken away this building will remain some kind of memory or monument to the earthquakes and the response. This was the first civic or public building, plus the containers we used are right next to the CTV site where so many Japanese in particular were killed. So it's great and that is what was built, and it will probably last forever. It was Shigeru's interpretation and it is a permanent structure. It's a building that people love so they will keep repairing it and they will replace this or that, whereas he said a temporary structure is like a tilt-slab concrete building and when an earthquake comes it shatters it and it's temporary. This is permanent.

Short: So it seems that Shigeru obviously put his heart and soul into the project. He had over twenty-six visits, and that was over and above the responsibilities he had in Japan, where there was such enormous damage.

Dixon: Yeah, that's pretty impressive. And he loves it New Zealand. He said to me, "Craig, I work on projects all around the world. There is so much corruption and it's so hard, you know. And it can be like a battle but everyone here was so nice." he said. So he said he really loves it. And he's coming back, and he has now designed a building for Cathedral Square. So I see him every time he comes back. Last time he was back, he said Craig, "Why don't we go back to the church. Will you do that?" And I said well, "I really like community assistance and development type projects. I would love to do something with affordable housing." We have got real issues in New Zealand with housing.

Ritchie: We were talking about that and how they are putting these apartments up and trying to re-populate the city centre end in the population is down to about 24 thousand from around 20 thousand in the inner city, and they aren't selling that well.

Dixon: And some of them are selling to investors. So when I said to Shigeru about this, he got quite interested, and I said, "Are you interested in being part of this?" And, he said, "Of course." So he is just designed me two home, a single story family home a dual-plex two storey two bedroom home and his staff I currently drawing them up. So he will be back and he will work with us as we build a couple of these.

Ritchie: Are you going to see how they go and go from there? And how many are you actually building?

Dixon: It could be hundreds, because the problem is in New Zealand we don't build very well and we don't build very cheaply, and heating is poor, and there are a lot of housing stock that needs to be replaced because we have had quite high immigration and the population is booming.

Ritchie: Even in Christchurch are you seeing this?

Dixon: In Christchurch not so much, but the problem in Christchurch is a lot of social housing has been damaged by the earthquakes and they have to build or replace about 6000 State Houses or something. The City Council has to replace that stock here in Christchurch as well as try and build new homes. But the price they're putting on so called affordable houses is too high for people so we are trying to do something that delivers and even better product for less money.

Short: Can I ask a bit about the timeline that got to the stage? So you made the contact and when did the construction begin?

Dixon: I don't think we started construction for about a year or more afterwards.

Short: So it was back in full with Shigeru by email then?

Dixon: He would come over every six weeks. [Short: That's amazing]. [Ritchie: You said he did twenty-six trips].

Dixon: He would come over every six weeks and work with the team. Because he doesn't have all the information about the supplies and also consenting issues. So he needs to work with local Architects. He worked with Warren and Mahoney. All the people who worked with him really enjoyed the experience Naler Love who built this, they were very impressed with him and they said, "Look if something goes wrong, generally everyone blames the builder." But there was one issue that they had and Shigeru said, "No I told you to do that and it didn't work so I will pay for it. And they just thought, "Wow, that happens and this is amazing." So you know it was quite beneficial.

Ritchie: He sounds like quite a character.

Dixon: Yeah, he is incredible. And also Yoshie Narimatsu who came with him every time. She was twenty nine. I think when she first came over. An associate architect. A young woman, fantastic. So those two worked together and Shiguru is mentoring her as his protegee. So she was really good. She knows everything about this building.

Short: Is she based in Tokyo?

Dixon: She is based in the Paris office. She travels to Tokyo a bit, because her parents live in Tokyo.

Short: About a year after the earthquake, construction began and how long did it take to put it up?

Dixon: Good question. I should remember the stuff. I will get you one of the books to take away. There's a place over there I will just check. [Dixon retrieves a booklet, *Light Out of Darkness: Building Shigeru Ban's Cathedral*]. The details are in here. This is just in short. I wrote it because we had a very interesting experience and a new bishop arrived just before the earthquakes and she was quite difficult in many

ways. Lovely in many ways, but quite difficult in others. And in the end my position was disestablished two months before they opened it [The Transition Cathedral]. Because we had a certain amount of insurance money. That ran out. And so income from the cathedral in the Square relative to what the income was here was minimal relative to that, so we couldn't keep all the staff on, and had finished my job basically and said, "I didn't mind really. Disestablish my position, and I didn't need to carry on." So they did. But afterward, there were a few things that happened where I thought, "Well, this is not really fair." I mean I think the last payment was held back from the construction company and they put in so much time and some of their own money. So, I wanted to make sure all of the people who worked on this were acknowledged. So, in the back of this book are all the people, including some individuals who contributed to this project. So I wrote this book to tell the story. So probably the details of the time frame of construction are in here. It was about a year and a quarter or something like that.

Short: What was the reaction of the parishioners when it was done?

Dixon: Yeah, everyone was really pleased with it. They liked it and it's pretty easy to live in and it's warm and the other building was really cold. But I was concerned that this should be a building for the whole city and so I argued strongly that it should be a place where you could eat and drink. The Cathedral in the Square, because of the Maori WhareKai [Dining hall], a place where you eat as opposed to a meeting place where no food or drink is allowed. And they treated the cathedral like that and said, "No you can't even eat and drink in it." Even though sometimes people had food down the back. We said, "You have got to let people eat and drink in here." So this is used for all sorts of events including weddings, breakfasts, the launch of new cars, or whatever. So people come along and they use it. So it was the way in which cathedral were used and operated in years gone by. They were places for the people and things took place inside and [all sorts of things took place], like trade and other thing. And this is very much like that. So, people really love it. In fact the City Council, I was talking to the deputy mayor not long after we opened it and she said, "We really love the cardboard Cathedral." It's just a really nice meeting place and it's being used and is hugely popular. And it's a place where people can gather. And of course, it has attracted a lot of visitors from overseas.

Ritchie: Yes, well, we saw that yesterday didn't we James? A Japanese party came in.

Dixon: It's slow season at the moment as we were building it I had media from all around the world. I was constantly talking to people, being interviewed by people all around the world, so it got known and it was on TripAdvisor as the number one for the building to see in two thousand and whatever it was. It was great. Of course it brought some income for them, which helps. But also more importantly it became a place where people could come to remember those who had died. Memorial services, too. So it functions in many interesting ways.

Short: It is such an interesting space.

Dixon: Yeah, it's quite cool. The only thing I regret is that I wanted to sneak a bottle of whiskey up into the top of the cross, but they put it up before I could do it. [Ritchie laughs]

Ritchie: Just a question regarding the Cathedral in the Square. So, you said it could be up to another twenty years before it reopens? So they decided not to demolish it, and they are going to keep it? So what are your thoughts on that and its role?

Dixon: My argument all along has been to the church that building is going to take a lot of money to fix, far more than they are being quoted.

Ritchie: That always happens though doesn't it?

Dixon: For the church that really revolves around working with and for people it doesn't make sense that now that you've got this building to therefore plough millions and millions and millions of dollars and huge amounts of money and time and effort into that building. The government and the city council have said we want to re-establish, and a lot of people in Christchurch has said the same. So, that's fine. Give them the building as it is and give them the insurance money which is forty-million dollars and you can get involved, you can assist them, you can re-establish it. And that will allow them to do something that is in sympathy with what else is going on in the Cathedral Square, and they won't be hampered but the problem that always existed when we owned the building and it was operating: Is it a worship space, is it a visitor centre? And, I wanted to have events in the early evening and, and they'd say, "No, the choir is singing evening songs." And, okay, "And how long would it take." Half an hour." So we couldn't have the event because five people were coming to evening song. So to get around that but mainly to get away from the massive task of rebuilding and the massive amount of money that would be expended, I said, "Give it Away." Give them the insurance money but sell the land. And you would walk away with fifteen or twenty million. And you've got this, and seats the same number of people, seven hundred. It was built using similar dimensions to the cathedral in the Square and uses the memory of the building and you don't have the responsibility, that axe will go on for years and years. And now it appears they decided not to do that. And now I think that building will be at least two-hundred million to rebuild, to repair and it will take eight to ten years and the church has decided to, in tandem with government and the council to do it, but it is going to be such an effort. The church will end up with a building worth around 300 and 350 dollars and my argument is why, why do you want that? A 350 million dollar building it's going to cost a thousand dollars a day to insure. When the Anglican diocese in this country and in the city particularly is massive decline, partly because it is addressing its own needs and wants, rather than engaging with the community.

James: It is the same situation in the UK too. My mother has been a pillar of the community Church for many, many years is a member of the Salisbury diocese and they are facing exactly the same issues with the changing population and demographics. And of course they are constantly in need of funds to maintain these buildings, but do they serve the community in which that located?

Dixon: Yeah, so if the church sit down and see what are the paradigms on which we can stand and you wouldn't find an owner of expensive buildings there. So I just can't understand it. I think it's going to come to a bit of a sticky end and become a huge problem.

Ritchie: It was a symbol of Christchurch wasn't it? So when it reopens it will be a symbol again. But perhaps it's the wrong symbol.

Dixon: Well no, that's fine. But we don't need to own it. I'm not against it being re-established. That's fine. But we don't need to do that given that the government and the city council and a lot of people outside the church have said, "We really want to see this done. We really want to do it." So do that, but actually it's not our knitting. We have got this building, and we are actually involved in community housing, and we are involved in this, and we are involved with people.

Ritchie: So when they reopen it what will its role be?

Dixon: Well, the church and everything that goes on here will shift over to that building and we remain in this building. This building will remain. This building will be an iconic building for New Zealand and I think the City Council would probably buy this because this sits on the apex of what will be a massive new rugby stadium right next door. And I think that unfortunately maybe thirty of forty parishioners will

go back into that 350 million-dollar building and they will think that, "Well, actually, we are a bit lonely." So, it's a fascinating topic and it will be interesting to see what happens

Short: So the debate will continue, then.

Dixon: No, there is not so much debate now because the decision has been made, but the church, the diocese, have said, "We won't be giving one cent more than our insurance money into that building." So you can imagine that it gets to the point where the budget blows out and they need another sixty or eighty million, and the church says, "Well, don't look at us." You can imagine what sort of PR disaster that is going to be.

Ritchie: Where are they going to get that money from?

Dixon: Well they have a fundraising group. They've already gone and raised about thirty million, so yeah.

Short: How much time do we have left? A few minutes? So, can you tell us what are you involved in now?

Dixon: My other project was to extend out when I was a vicar of an Anglican parish lower socio-economic area of Christchurch, I started a fruit and vegetable cooperative. So people were eating pizzas and fish and chips and unhealthy food, and we said, "We will get you healthy food at a cheaper price, and come along to the church, and for six dollar you get a bag of fruit and vegetables straight from the market." So that carried on, and I started that thirty years ago and I carried it on. And when the earthquakes occurred a lot of people out in the East particularly lost their supermarkets and it was difficult to get around and access, all sorts of things, including food. So working with some other community groups in other churches we started eight of the hubs around Christchurch they grew up big time until we will supplying 2500 families a week with these little community groups finding trucks full of fruit and vegetables. We weren't giving anything to anyone, but they were purchasing it but at about forty-percent less. So when I left here I took on the role of working with those groups and I started a trust and I source in bulk, and buy the produce access whatever these groups need, and start up other groups. There are groups all around New Zealand and here in Christchurch I buy for these groups. There are other groups in Dunedin and Wellington.

Ritchie: What is the name of your cooperative?

Dixon: It's called Food Together. So, I do that. So, I am in the market for about three days a week at 5:30 in the morning purchasing produce.

Ritchie: So, it is all locally sourced then?

Dixon: Yeah, well we buy through one wholesaler who import bananas and other produce but the bulk of the produce we buy is seasonal and all locally grown (The remainder of the interview is abbreviated).

Short: Well, this has been a brilliant conversation and it has given us lots of ideas. Thank you very much for your time.

Dixon: You are welcome.