

I love the Transformers, not the movie versions- but the old school series (including the 1986 Movie featuring Unicron). That's it; there is no deep insight, no link to a bible verse, and not a fancy introduction to this years report. It is a simple statement about what I love. It reflects a part of who I am, just as your viewing choices reflect you.

Others cannot stand the Transformers, they prefer Shortland St, others like Greys Anatomy, and others still prefer Dexter. One of our great strengths as Incedo is that we are not all the same, we do not all think the same, and we do not do mission the same. What does unify us is Christ, our friendships, and the shared values of Incedo. So while you may not like what I like, I embrace that as strength as opposed to seeing it as a weakness. Why? Because this means we place our hope in Jesus as the foundation of our relationships and mission community, not our own human emotions and views. The values of Incedo are what unify us, not how we outwork them in our various communities.

Like all movements we have faced our challenges, and we have a lot to celebrate; we have had moments of joy, and we have struggled. We should not be lament the hard times we have faced, nor should we deny that they happen in life- but we should recognize them for what they are. They are growing pains, they are chances for us to find new ways to respond, and they are proof that we are still grappling with what it means to operate as a community. So we should celebrate the fact that it has not been plain sailing, because to be stretched is to grow- in the same way that building muscle requires hard work and can be painful.

Be assured that God is building our muscle, and while it may have felt that we have been wandering in "the desert", we need to remember that in the Old and New Testament, Yahweh used "desert times" to prepare, test, and strengthen his people and His Son. Our muscle is being built for what lays ahead for us as Incedo NZ; at the gathering we will share where we feel God is leading us over the next season, and what we will look like in years to come. This will not be a "flag waving, strategic plan, vision document presenting" session, it will be a time where we share, based on what we feel God has been saying to us as a community.

Both Paul and Glen have decided that their season has come to an end as part of the MLT. While we acknowledge their input and wealth of experience they have brought to the leadership, we do not farewell them from Incedo- instead we just pray God's peace and blessing on them. On a personal note, I have a huge amount of respect and love for both Paul and Glen, and I know that I have learnt a huge amount from both these men.

Hannah and Melody both joined the MLT this year, and bring a set of skills, experience, enthusiasm, and wisdom to the leadership of Incedo. As Incedo heads into the next year, Hannah and Melody will have an important part to play in the way we discover what community look likes for us across NZ.

Lastly, I want to thank Blair, Sue, Tracy, and Gus for serving (often in the background) Incedo NZ. They have grappled, and prayed on our behalf. They have brought their flavour, wisdom, and a willingness to be used by Yahweh to the leadership of Incedo. The MLT and Board operate closer than they have in the past, and will continue to do so; the board is not separate to the leadership of Incedo, they are part of the leadership of Incedo. We are indeed fortunate to have people willing to sacrifice time, and head (and heart) space, and for that I thank them.

I feel a huge debt of gratitude to Gus as he steps away from the role as Board Chair at this years Gathering. He has poured himself into the role with passion, and determination. Gus has been pivotal in forging closer links between the leadership of Incedo over the last year. He has spoken on our behalf at an international level, he has given of himself in many ways: most of which are unseen- and yet he still connects with a bunch of young people in his community. Thank you to Marg for being, in some ways, the silent partner to Gus, but Marg has also brought her skills and wisdom to the leadership of Incedo- whether she knows it or not.

So whether we have laughed, or cried; skated, climbed, whether we have spoken Te Reo Maori, Arabic, Korean, Russian, or English; whether you are older or younger; whether you are Baptist, Catholic, Pentecostal, or anywhere in between; and whether we have disagreed on issues- We should all celebrate that we serve the One God, and are what makes Incedo, Incedo. For that-I thank you.

Shalom.
Karl