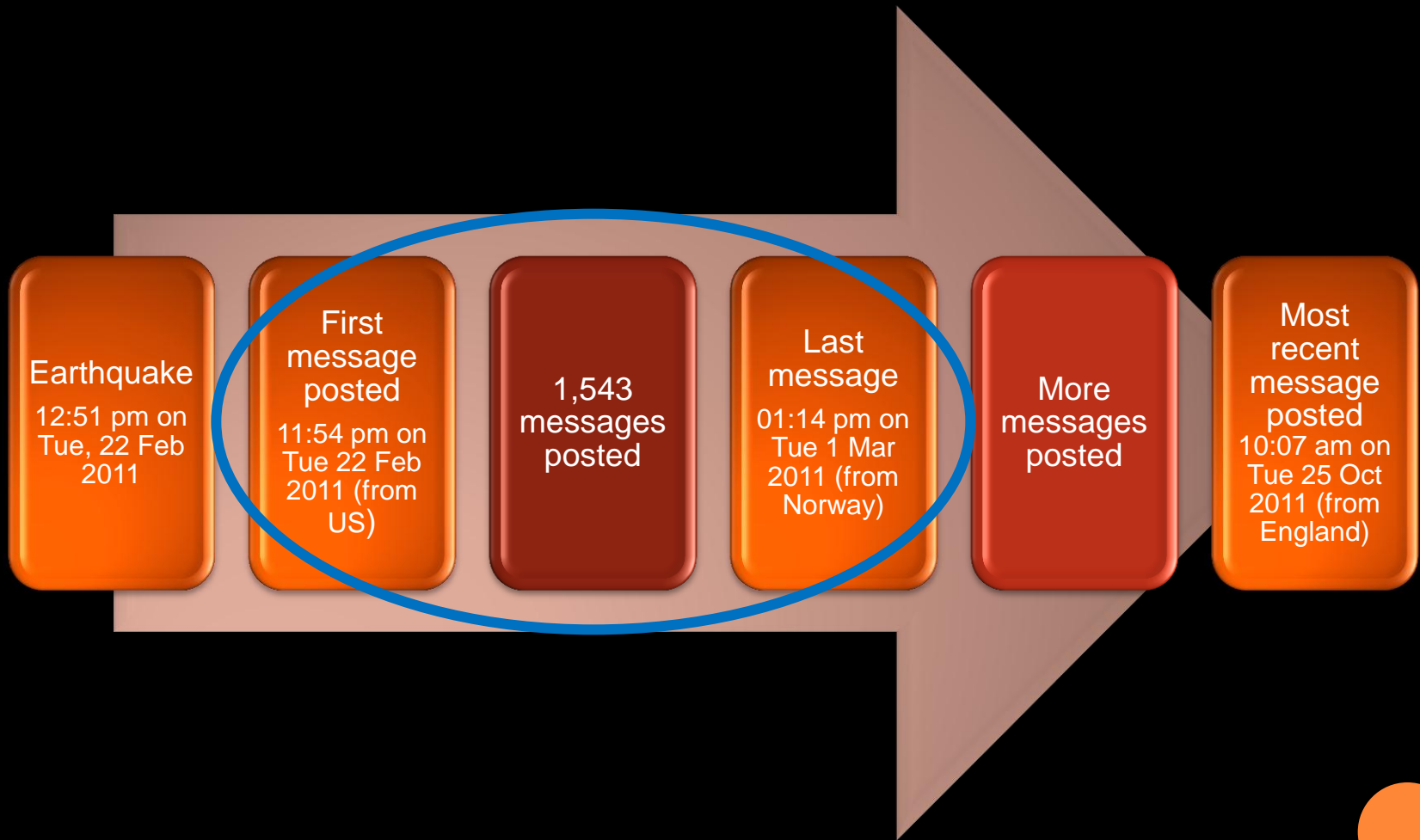




THE LANGUAGE OF SUPPORT: THE CASE OF THE CHRISTCHURCH EARTHQUAKE

Dr Petra Theunissen

TIMELINE



“SEND YOUR MESSAGES OF SUPPORT TO THE CANTERBURY EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS”

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_i. The browser's address bar and toolbar are visible at the top. The main content area displays a news article with two comments. The first comment, by 'nakiman' from the United States, is circled in red. The second comment is by 'Anna' from England. To the right of the comments, there are sections for 'Related Tags', 'your news', and 'Your Views headlines'. The 'Related Tags' section lists categories like 'Australasia' and 'Christchurch earthquake'. The 'your news' section includes a link to 'Find Florists in your area'. The 'Your Views headlines' section lists various topics for discussion, such as 'Who should be the next Labour leader?' and 'Should voting in NZ be compulsory?'. At the bottom right of the browser window, the zoom level is set to 105%.

2209 comments
Add

order by
Latest | Oldest | Most Liked

nakiman (United States)
11:54 PM Tuesday, 22 Feb 2011

My heart goes out to you, Cantabrians. I am devastated by the lives lost and destruction I am seeing (from Iraq). I am praying for those who are trapped. God bless, from a Kiwi in Iraq who studied in Chch for 6 years.

102 likes
Reply Like Report

Anna (England)
12:20 AM Wednesday, 23 Feb 2011

I'm from the Uk and was so shocked to hear the news about Christchurch this morning. I'm due to come out to Christchurch in April and my heart truly goes out to Christchurch, and all the New Zealanders that have been affected by this. You may be on the other side of the world but you will be in alot of peoples thoughts in the UK today. Stay safe.

100 likes
Reply Like Report

Related Tags

- Australasia
- Canterbury
- Christchurch earthquake
- New Zealand
- Opinion
- Your Views

your news

Be part of the news.
Send pics, video and tips to nzherald.
Send »

Find Florists in your area

Your Views headlines

- Who should be the next Labour leader?
- Should voting in NZ be compulsory?
- Should the 'Occupy' protesters be forcibly removed?
- How do you feel about the outcome of the 2011 general election?
- Should NZ stick with MMP? (vote now)
- Should bullied kids hit back?
- Which places of natural beauty are on your bucket list?
[PHOTOS](#)
- What's your favourite camping area in New Zealand?
- Should Zac Guildford remain an All Black?
- Has NZ First been sidelined by the media?

ferns-flowers/
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105%

NATURE OF THE MESSAGES

- Ranged in length and style; mainly English; some in Spanish, French & Afrikaans
- Mostly in the form of a simple message to an “imagined” community; some in the form of a prayer; others in the form of a poem
- Expressions of anger were generally absent; if present, anger was expressed at 3rd parties (looters, own governments)



Cloud tag

01 08 09 10 11 **2011** 23 24 25 26 27 affected **all** am
australia beautiful been bless can canada **christchurch** city country
earthquake england everyone family **feb** feel friday friends **from** get go
god goes had has **have** heart hearts help here hope **i** just kia kiwi kiwis know
like lost **love** loved many may **my** new news now NZ one ones other **our**
out **people** prayers sad safe saturday see **so** states stay strength strong
sunday thinking **those thoughts** through **thursday** time tragedy uk **united** up
us very **we** wednesday were what **who** wish world **you**
your zealand

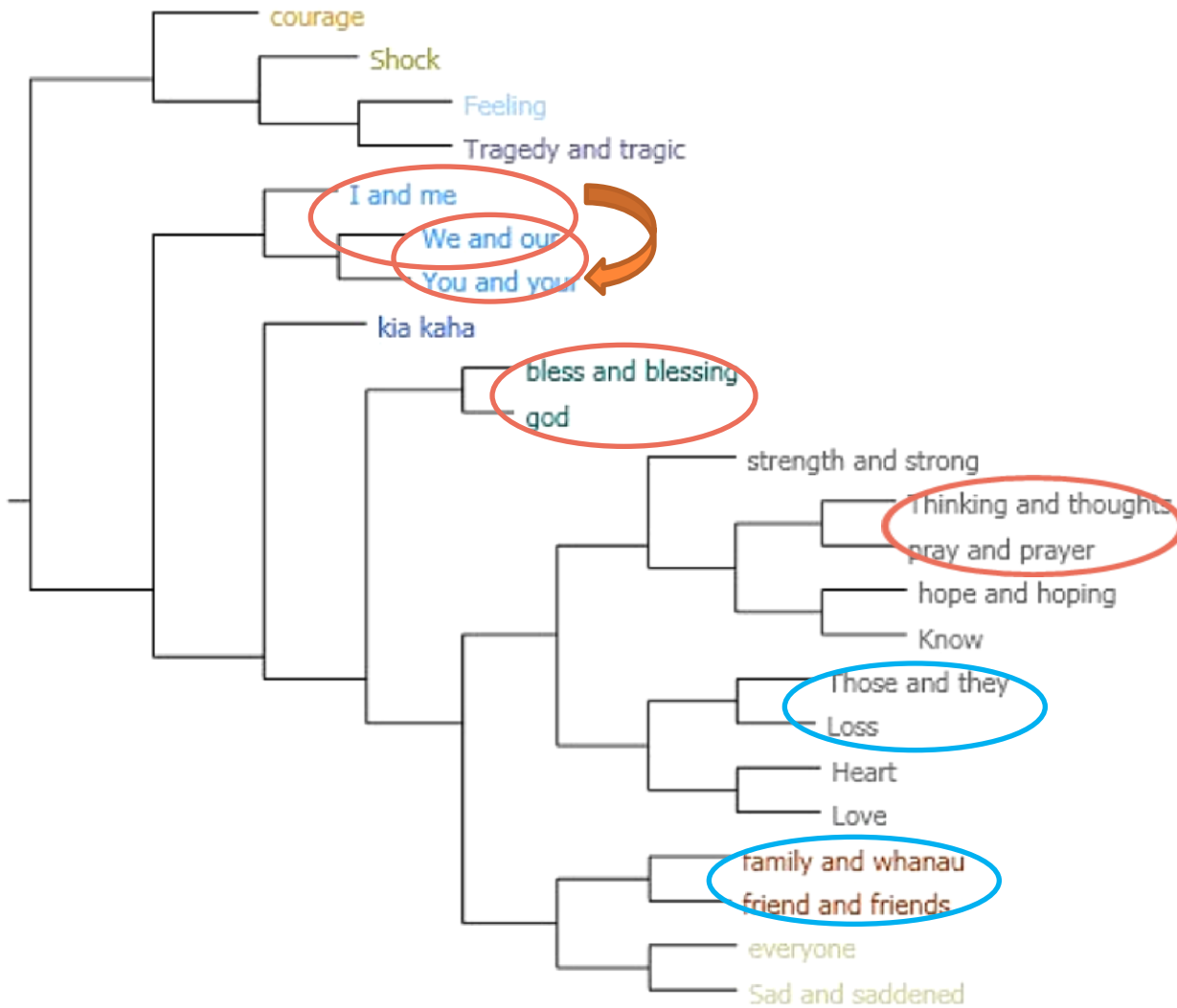


WORDS WITH MORE THAN 1% COVERAGE

Ranking	Word	Length	Count	Weighted Percentage (%)
1	you	3	2076	2.95
2	i	1	1736	2.46
3	all	3	1568	2.23
4	2011	4	1552	2.20
5	feb	3	1480	2.10
6	my	2	1205	1.71
7	we	2	1095	1.55
8	christchurch	12	919	1.30
9	our	3	799	1.13
10	have	4	786	1.12
11	from	4	720	1.02
12	new	3	715	1.01



Nodes Clustered by Word similarity



SOME OBSERVATIONS

- Discourse changed alongside news reporting (emotional images etc.)

I cried when I saw the pics on the website.

[RED (China) | 04:18PM Thursday, 24 Feb 2011]

Even seeing the All Blacks Player shovelling wheelbarrow loads from peoples gardens was so true of this kiwi spirit.

[The Cookies (England) | 01:04PM Monday, 28 Feb 2011]

- Majority of messages were religious in nature, future-oriented and positive. (Does media influence religious discourse?)

And I am sure that God will save our lovely Christchurch and the kiwi people will rebuilt it.

[Amedeo (Romania) | 10:32AM Monday, 28 Feb 2011]



IN CONCLUSION

- Messages of support are *affective* and *symbolic* in nature & have become *ritualistic* (like the process of sending support messages)
- The prevalence of “I”, “you”, “we” and “our” establishes a personal relationship and creates an “imagined” community that is not bound to geographical boundaries
- Discourse suggests that this community provides strength and communality, reminiscent of a collectivist approach
- Suggest that those affected are encountering hardship & must remain strong (underlying religious discourse of testing faith?)



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