



Dunedin Methodist Parish

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz

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| Presbyter: | Rev. Siosifa Pole | 455 2923 |
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| | Dr Richard Cannon | 477 5030 |
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PARISH BULLETIN

25th September 2011

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 2nd OCTOBER 2011

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| 9.30am | Mornington | S Pole |
| 9.30 am | Mosgiel | G Preston |
| 11.00 am | Glenaven | G Hughson |
| 11.00 am | Wesley | G Preston |
| 1.00pm | St Kilda | TBA |
| 4.00pm | Broad Bay | G Preston |

EXPLORERS GROUP - Meets 4-30pm Sunday 26th Sept in the Mornington Church Lounge. All welcome.

GLENAVEN METHODIST CHURCH (Chambers Street, North East Valley) is holding a pot-luck lunch for the parish today, September 25th, Social Justice Sunday. We gather at the end of the morning service, around noon, and finish about 1.30. Hot and cold drinks will be provided, but please bring a plate of finger-food to share. Some may want to arrange car-pooling for people from outlying areas. Inquiries Helen W White (467 2936).

MORNINGTON AGM

Mornington AGM meeting on the 2nd of October at Mornington church after the morning service. A reminder to all those who should provide reports to make sure that you forward these to Sarah at the Mission Office (sarahc@dmm.org.nz) by Monday the 26th of September.

OTAGO TERTIARY CHAPLAINCY AND DUNEDIN ABRAHAMIC INTERFAITH GROUP - ANNUAL PEACE LECTURE

Compassion, Justice & the Pursuit of Peace: Ten Years On from 9/11
Associate Professor Chris Marshall, *Head of the School of Art History, Classics and Religious Studies Victoria University*. 5.30-7pm, Monday 26th September 2011, St David Lecture Theatre University of Otago. Followed by supper in All Saints Anglican Church Hall, 786 Cumberland Street. All welcome. Inquiries: Greg Hughson 479 8497

greg.hughson@otago.ac.nz **Also: A CONVERSATION WITH CHRIS MARSHALL** 1.00-1.50pm 26th September Burns 5 Lecture Theatre (Hosted by Centre for Theology and Public Issues) ALL WELCOME.

PEOPLE NEWS

Our sympathy and condolences to Stan Jones and the family for the death of his wife Jean Jones who was a member of Mosgiel congregation.

ADMINISTRATOR RELIEVING OPPORTUNITY

21 November 2011 - 16 April 2012

Sarah Campbell, the Main Office's Administrator, will be on leave from late November to mid April. The Main Office needs a reliever to cover for her absence. The role is 30 hours per week, worked 8.30 am to 3 pm with a half hour lunch break. We are seeking a well-rounded, mature, experienced, capable, person with administration and reception experience, to fill in. If you know of anyone who might be interested in this opportunity please ask them to contact Laura Black laurab@dmm.org.nz Pip Hannah, Financial Administrator, piph@dmm.org.nz, phone 466 4600 for more information. Enquiries close 7th October.

CELLISTS OF OTAGO

The Cellists of Otago will present a charity fund-raising concert for the Dunedin Hospital Chaplaincy Fund in the Hospital Chapel at 3pm on Sunday 2 October. This will be the final concert for this year - the last was in Marama Hall and almost a sellout with 150 attending. The programme will include Bach's Prelude and Fugue, and well-known Air on the G String; Handel's Sonata in G Minor for Two Cellos; Faure's Pavanne and Albeniz's Cataluna and Tango. There will be a violin solo of Bach's Sonata No 1 in G Minor by Sarah Claman and Myles Chen will present Tchaikovsky's Pezzo Capriccioso. Admission: \$10 adults; \$5 children and students.

This will be a stand-out concert. Parking will be free, but please be early as the Chapel will hold just over 100.



Recently I have been reading the speech 'Fundamentalism, Christianity, and Religion,' which was given by Professor Philip Almond of University of Queensland on 25 October 2001. This was delivered as an academic speech just two weeks before the tragedy of 9/11 in the USA.

In the article Almond analyses the place fundamentalists occupy within the whole spectrum of religion, but most of all within Christianity. He points to the well-known measures by which fundamentalists identify themselves and others: an unquestioning faith in the authority of the Bible; singular, literal interpretations of biblical passages; the notion of "inerrancy" i.e. that scripture is without error – any attack on this point opens the whole fundamentalist faith system open to a criticism which can ultimately lead to atheism; fundamentalists attempt to reproduce the world of the Bible; the preacher delivers God's word, not his/her own interpretation; speaking in catchphrases like "infallible word", "second coming", "personal saviour"; almost always using only the Authorised Version of the Bible.

In other ways too, Almond sees important relationships: with science – once fundamentalists (some still do) identified themselves in opposition to science, particularly Darwinism, but since the 1970s most have moved to a more comfortable point of "progressive creationism"; on the Fall and Redemption – most believe man is born sinful and therefore the Fall of Man is a key part of the history of mankind; on redemption - to be saved or redeemed we must be "born again" and accept Christ as personal Lord and Saviour; and those who have been saved in this process where time seems to stand still will be brought to Glory in the Second Coming.

Here we see an analysis which clearly divides the world's population in two – one is either saved or not. Those who believe in these fundamentalist tenets fear being tainted by the rest and lump them all (including liberal Christians) into those responsible for the moral decay of society. This trend is probably most obvious among the US Moral Majority and their support of right-wing politics. This notion of "a nation set apart" and being the true and only Christians is the definitive policy and driver of actions for fundamentalists. Being tolerant of these believers will not necessarily find any reciprocation of kindness. Fundamentalism is essentially judgemental and the judgements for liberal Christians are cruel because the

fundamentalists believe them to be most in error – that is, liberals know the truth or have read it, but they just don't live it. Fundamentalism is the quintessential either/or philosophy. It does not, and cannot stand compromise or criticism.

Where then does Dunedin Methodism stand in all of this? We tend to see ourselves as followers of "liberal theology." However, we must accept that less than a century ago we were more like fundamentalists than we would care to admit. The two worlds are diametrically opposed. How did we get from there (fundamentalist) to here? We call ourselves liberal, although if you scratch the surface of some of our more conservative members in the parish, you might well find within a reservoir of fundamentalism.

We liberals tend to believe in a generous, beneficent God, where you can find God in all. This is too sweeping for fundamentalists. However, despite all our individual foibles and inadequacies, we are just profoundly glad that God accepts us. And if he (she) accepts us, the same goes for all mankind, regardless of position, race or present belief. In that sense, liberal Christians can join with other co-religionists in a universal redemption – all those who accept the Deity are "saved" on way or other. Now, one can see this is a step too far for many, particularly the older parish members whose memories will be of learning Christianity much more in the fundamental style.

Perhaps the whole matter was brought to my mind because of the decade anniversary of 9/11 but more because of the tragic death on Tuesday of Afghan ex-President and chief peace negotiator Burhanuddin Rabbani in Kabul while meeting with the very people he was trying to draw into the peace process. Afghans mourned for Rabbani yesterday, on World Peace Day, and as liberal Christians we pray for all – the peacemaker and the killer. Fundamentalism from any source essentially divides us all. The question here is really about whether we want a world divided, or one where the peacemakers are in the majority.

I must apologise for the scanty treatment given to this matter. My friend in Canberra, Prof. John Moses, who gave me the article to read would be critical of this rapid and relatively shallow response. However, I hope some of you who read it may think about where your position is on the fundamental – liberal divide and be prepared to challenge me on what I have written.

George Davis, Thursday 22 September 2011