



# Dunedin Methodist Parish

*Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone*

[www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz](http://www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz)

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## PARISH BULLETIN

13<sup>th</sup> October 2013

### WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 20<sup>th</sup> October

9.30am	Mornington	R Mitchell
9.30 am	Mosgiel	S Pole
11.00 am	Glenaven	R Mitchell
11.00 am	Wesley	S Pole
1.00pm	St Kilda	TBA
6.00pm	Broad Bay	S Pole

### NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BROAD BAY METHODIST CONGREGATION 5pm, Sunday 20 October 2013, in the lounge.

For discussion – the future viability of the Broad Bay congregation and church building. Come with thoughts, ideas and concerns about the future. There will be no pressure to make any decisions on the spot, we just want to get a feeling for where the congregation wants to head. Anyone with an interest in the Broad Bay congregation is welcome. Enquiries to Jenny Winter at 478 0491 or [mcleanwinter@clear.net.nz](mailto:mcleanwinter@clear.net.nz).

### FROM THE METHODIST CONFERENCE

Hilda and I went to the Methodist Conference held at Wesley College from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of Oct. It was a great gathering of the People called Methodists. This was an opportunity to strengthen our network as Methodist Family. It was a wonderful feeling to see the presence of Rachael Masterton, Nigel Pitts, and Laura Black for different capacities at conference. Hilda will prepare a brief report about the Conference for next Sunday but I would like to mention at this time that the President Elect is Tovia Aumua, a Samoan and the Vice President Elect is Arapera (Bella) Ngaha, who is Maori. Please pray for these people who will be inducted next year to lead our church.

Thanks, Rev. Siosifa Pole



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY** to Caitlyn Elkins who turns 10 on 16<sup>th</sup> October.

**FAITH THINKING:** offered by the Department of Theology and Religion, University of Otago in conjunction with some local Dunedin churches.

**VISUAL FAITH: The Gospel Told Through Art  
by PROFESSOR MURRAY RAE**

**Friday October 18, 7.00-9.00pm;  
and Saturday October 19, 9.00am-12.30**

Venue: Elim Church, 67 Harrow Street, Dunedin Cost: \$30  
(Students/Unwaged \$20)

**REGISTER and pay in advance** to the Summer School and Continuing Education Office, Central Library, University of Otago (corner of Albany and Cumberland Streets).

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The political impasse in the United States is the stuff on which cartoonists and satirists thrive. Pomposity, pigheadedness and perversity have all conspired to halt in its tracks the legitimate process of democratic government, with seeming unthinkable consequences. 800,000 federal workers have been "furloughed" (sent home) with no guarantee they will be paid. As a result, the nation's finest parks, museums, art galleries - even the Statue of Liberty and the US Antarctic Base - are closed until further notice. Even worse, some of the most essential activities of the state such as safety inspections across a wide spectrum - food, health, transport - have been curtailed. Ironic, indeed, that such is their pathological hatred of Obama and Obamacare that the right wing Tea Party, for whom national security is a sacred cow, have themselves been the driving force behind the gridlock that has severely weakened the US in innumerable ways. It's a classic case - straining at the gnat, only to swallow the camel!

Be that as it may, the analysts are agreed the worst is yet to come in the form of the looming Debt Ceiling Crisis. Now I don't pretend to understand this any

more than most of us, but in its simplest form the consensus appears to be that unless the Congress agrees to pass Mr Obama's federal budget by October 17, the United States, the most heavily indebted nation in the world, may well default on its loan repayments. And, so they say, in even simpler terms, Uncle Sam will be "bankrupt" and his creditors (Japan, China, Germany, Swiss bankers etc) will be entitled to call in their loans. Imagine that, if you will!

It won't happen, of course. Even the most unaccommodating President, and the most perverse Congress will not allow it. Something must, and will, break the deadlock. Methinks, quite soon, if not already! But huge questions remain to be answered, among them the most obvious - how can it be that a nation so richly endowed, so magnificent in aspiration and so powerful in influence, could allow itself to be so pitifully paralysed?

But there are other realities in our great American "best friend" more profoundly disturbing than even a notionally bankrupt economy, and that is military spending so far out of control that it makes the alleged excesses of Obama's health care reforms look puny. I've been alerted to this from a number of articles gleaned from the Counterpunch website, in particular one by Ralph Nader, long time consumer advocate, and the bane of successive big-spending administrations.

Nader puts military spending, est. \$716 billion, under a microscope. By comparison, China's military gets \$106 billion. Indeed, he says that if one were to add the next ten largest of the world's military budgets together, they would still not match that of the United States - a budget that is marked by reckless, unsupervised management and profligate waste. I'll mention just two of Nader's examples.

The Navy's latest aircraft carrier the *USS Gerald R Ford* is expected to cost \$12.8 billion. Three more of the same been ordered by the Pentagon at a projected cost of \$48 billion. But Nader points out the Navy already has 11 such carriers in service, not one of which is matched in size or capability by any navy ship of any other country on earth. Yet despite this fact the Navy continues to order, and have approved, increasing numbers of these behemoths.

Much the same pattern of excess can be seen in the increasing production of strike fighter aircraft and ballistic missile submarines. Nader cites that 187 F-22 fighters were built of a planned 648 at a cost of \$80 billion. None were ever flown on a combat mission before they were replaced by the newer model, the F-35, at a development cost of \$400 billion and rising. Like its predecessor the F-35 has been plagued by reliability and performance costs. In the case of the subs, the Navy has plans to add a further 12 to its already formidable fleet at a cost of \$100 billion - but the question is asked - what potential global adversary exists today that possibly warrants such an overkill of strike power, mindful, as

Nader points out, that Russia has undertaken to proportionally reduce its own nuke subs if the US will do the same. Yet quite the opposite is the case.

Nader has much more to say, and his collective detail is frightening. It is not just in the grandiose spending but in the prodigious wastage endemic in the US military world. He says "absurd spending sprees have become routine for the ravenous, corporatized military - \$269 billion in 2008 in cost overruns alone, \$15 billion more than the entire European Union's military budget, and 1/3 more in estimated wastage than China's total defence budget in the same year!

So why fill these small bulletin pages with these astronomical, arguably unrelated facts from outside our own orbit of interest? Simply for a context. The Prime Minister has just returned from the APEC conference in Bali where apparently he was something of a star. The Conference began with the premise that with Obama absent facing his own problems in Washington, the ability to make progress on major issues would be much diminished. But in actual fact a consensus was that the reverse was the case and much more was achieved than many dared hope for. Without the attention disproportionately heaped on the American president there was room for others to shine and "lesser" causes to win attention.

There's a lesson here for us New Zealanders and for the many smaller countries that for generations have hitched their star to the great U S of A. The diminished moral authority of Washington, the self-serving greed of Wall St, the fragility of the dollar, the obscenity of excessive military power, and the loss of respect for American influence world-wide, are factors which together confirm it is time for us to reconfigure historic allegiances. The United States of today is not the same nation to which we were so drawn in the wartime and post-war era. It is too rich and powerful for its own good, too much consumed by parochial debates, and too much fixated on the voracious appetite of the military/industrial complex.

By every comparison we are small, but in today's world small and independent is beautiful. We should remember that when/if we win a seat on the Security Council. Let's un-hitch from any bigger star that would woo or exploit us. Let's start by freeing the dollar from the greenback, and seek our own financial fortunes. It's a journey on which we have already begun. Let's not lack the courage to continue.

*Ken Russell*