

DUNEDIN METHODIST PARISH

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz



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PARISH BULLETIN

7th March 2021

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 14 March 2021

9.30am	Mornington	C Gibson
10.00am	Mosgiel	D Poultney
11.00am	Glenaven	C Gibson
	St Kilda	TBA

DATES TO REMEMBER

Wednesday 17th March, 7.30pm – Open Education Programme (Mornington)

A RARE OPPORTUNITY

OPEN EDUCATION 2021 begins with a presentation by Dr Najib Nafraie, former Foreign Minister of the Afghan Government, now resident in Dunedin, in which we learn at first hand of the challenges confronting modern Islam as (like our own faith) it faces the 'new normal' world. Don't miss this chance to listen and ask questions of a leader in a community still reeling from the mosque attacks in Christchurch. The Royal Commission report on those attacks has just been published, providing another point of interest. Come along to the Mornington Methodist church, Galloway Street, on Wednesday 17 March at 7.30pm and bring a friend; spread the news. A koha of \$5 will help us cover costs.

WEST PAPUA UPDATE Part 2

One of the features of the West Papua conflict on which we report from time to time is that heroes and villains are damnably difficult to distinguish.

West Papuan "freedom fighters" are the ones carrying the hopes of those like us, longing for the day when their people will be freed from the yoke of Indonesian oppression. But their operations are by nature carried out with stealth, and their modus operandi is violent. As a result, they are feared as much by the indigenous Papuans as by the Indonesian authorities who occupy their homeland.

By the same token it is wrong to characterise the Indonesians as "all bad". Many of their people who come to West Papua and make their homes there come with the most altruistic motives, and make a significant difference to the lives of the indigenous people. Even the much defamed Jakarta government pours millions of dollars worth of genuine support and aid into the West Papuan community, without which poor people would be very much poorer. The net result is that for many of the people in the hundreds of rural and semi-urban communities that make up the West Papuan nation there is no

question as to who is their friend and which is the hand that feeds them?

A case in point came in a news feed this week supplied to our New Zealand network supporting W.P. liberation.

On February 8 last month about 600 residents of Intan Jaya took refuge in a church over fears of being targeted by armed groups rampant in their district acquiring food crops and enlisting support among the young males of the community. The church was overwhelmed but sought assistance through its own connections on the Indonesian mainland. As a result, religious groups in the town of Freeport were moved to action and despatched 5.3 tonnes of staple foods such as rice, sugar, instant noodles and cooking oils to support the Papuan church and their huge refugee community. To add to the relief effort, members of the staff of Papua's Grasberg Gold Mining Company, many of them Indonesian nationals, hearing of the emergency, volunteered their services unpacking the aid and distributing it among the uprooted people. Latest reports are that slowly the villagers are gaining the courage to return to their homes.

Reports such as this are not exceptional. Indonesian occupancy of West Papua is sufficiently established that many authorities give little thought to how it is that much of the global community considers West Papua an integral part of Indonesia. These people have a huge vested interest in making West Papua a good place to live, and the indigenous people their neighbours - for better or for worse.

As we continue our support for a meaningful liberation of West Papua let's never pretend that the goal will be easily achieved. Indonesia is a ruthless invader of a country to which it has no right in International law. But the tyrant has a human face and as time goes by is at greater pains to present that face to the world.

Ken Russell

LENTEN STUDIES - Each THURSDAY @ 2pm in the MOSGIEL METHODIST CHURCH HALL All very welcome PLEASE COME TO SUPPORT DAVID as he puts a lot of effort into our studies which helps us to centre on EASTER.



STORY FROM THE MISSION

Waihopai Youth Transition House (YTH)

Another resident who has been with the YTH for 7 months, has been accepted into the SIT accommodation and will be moving in a couple of weeks. She has come a long way since entering the home. She is excited, although slightly anxious to transition out but has worked well with myself and Taituarā a Hāpori (Specialist Support) to ensure she doesn't miss this opportunity. Her resilience, self-confidence and patience have developed hugely since coming into the house. She is looking forward to the independence and feels she now has the skills to head out on her own.

All the staff are very proud of the rakatahi and of the YTH. They all work hard to ensure it feels like their home and they all contribute together to keep it that way. The front patio has a welcoming look with a colourful shoe-bucket display and a lovely corner with succulents and rock painting art. One of our supervisors has a skill around rock art and has encouraged the rakatahi to use these to decorate the front patio to look colourful and welcoming.



CHARISMA : A dangerous gift

Charisma is a high value attribute. Often one hears politicians, royalty, leaders celebrities and evangelists, etc being described admiringly as charismatic. Should any of these individuals lack this characteristic they are likely to be described as 'boring and ineffective. Charisma can be considered more important than ability, competence, truth and integrity. Historically leaders and other notables, worthy and unworthy, have been acclaimed as charismatic by the sheer power of their personalities, swaying public opinion for good or ill.

The Oxford Dictionary defines charisma as 'attractiveness, charm'. At the individual level, charismatic people are often extremely popular with their peers, extroverted and frequently the 'leader of the pack'. We might say 'they could charm the birds out of the trees'. I'm reminded of the various evangelists/ministers who have crossed my path over the years. They mostly exhibited charisma to some degree, but some had more charisma than substance and their ministries came to a rather inglorious end.

At the political level charisma can massively influence the success or failure of a politician. Television and social media have amplified the undeniable advantages of the 'charismatic/telegenic' personality. These politicians become highly skilled in using all mediums to greatest advantage and are able to sway public opinion significantly. Charisma becomes problematic when it obscures the 'truth' about a person. Should that person be in a position of trust or power, the fearful, the unsuspecting (at best) or unquestioningly gullible, can be duped into making unwise choices.

Unfortunately, when charisma and demagoguery merge, the potential for political and social mayhem increases dramatically. This often gives rise to the 'cult of personality', usually to the detriment of all except

the demagogue and adoring minions who will stop at nothing to advance his cause. It's the dangerous outcome of highly persuasive charismatic demagogues intent on amassing power, political and fiscal, over populations who are feeling disenfranchised and fearful of the future.

This is a serious threat to democracy.

Hitler was said to have had considerable charisma. One only need watch a doco of him mesmerizing the crowds with his manic oratory, every one worshipfully spell bound as he spews his hateful rhetoric to his adoring public. We are all too familiar with the horrendous outcome of that 'charismatically' evil demagogue and his diabolical cohort.

Worryingly, there are a number of contemporary examples happening right now.

Used wisely and with integrity, charisma can be an extraordinary asset. We don't have to look too far back in history to find examples. Martin Luther King Junior used his power of persuasion and charisma to great effect as did Gandhi and Nelson Mandela. They were flawed individuals (as are we all) but they retained their integrity, authenticity and truth in their struggle for justice and compassion.

They must have understood well that their gift of charisma required a generous amount of self awareness and self reflection, crucial for maintaining integrity, authenticity and groundedness.

Sometimes it's difficult to discern authenticity and integrity when presented with an individual who

has highly persuasive charisma. It's only with respectful questioning, fact checking, vigilance and an open mind can we make a wise choice. Even then we may not always get it right, but at least we've done due diligence.

I wonder if Jesus had charisma. There must have been something very compelling about him. After all he changed the course of history.

Perhaps it wasn't an expression of charisma that might have impressed in the 21st century. Maybe it was his inherent authenticity, and way of being in the world that appealed. Initially he may have come across as rather intense and a little scary, but the more one questioned and observed him, the more his fundamental honesty and integrity would be revealed.

When Jesus appeared before Pilate as a prisoner stripped of all his rights, his quiet authenticity and authority spoke volumes. Pilate shrank from his presence, wanting no part of him.

We know that personal power and self aggrandisement never interested Jesus. He was interested in power WITH not power over, and it was the power of love rather than political or fiscal power. Not the romantic, sentimental 'governed by hormones' love, (eros, although that's great) it was the verb, agape love. The practical expression of agape love is compassion and justice.... for all, not just the rich and famous. He held a mirror up to the people, reflecting back to them their truth. Not for Jesus the self interested rhetoric of a power hungry charismatic demagogue.

Don't get me wrong, Charisma is wonderful gift used wisely and well. But when it is not it becomes a weapon that, combined with demagoguery, can wreak havoc.

If there is a choice I will settle for goodness, integrity, truth, authenticity, competence and boring, over charisma anytime.

Trish Patrick