



Dunedin Methodist Parish

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz

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PARISH BULLETIN

7th August 2011

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 14th AUGUST 2011

9.30am	Mornington	S Pole
9.30 am	Mosgiel	K Russell
11.00 am	Glenaven	S Pole
11.00 am	Wesley	K Russell
1.00pm	St Kilda	TBA
4.00pm	Broad Bay	No Service

MORNINGTON WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The next Meeting for Women's Fellowship will take place on the 8th August, at 2p.m., in the Church Lounge. The Speaker will be Mrs Liz Brooke-Carr. The subject - "Pigtails in the Inkwell" - (learning to write). See you there.

MINISTRY TRAINING SEMINAR

The parish will run a ministry training seminar for all the lay people of the parish on Friday the 2nd and Saturday the 3rd of September 2011. The time and the venue for this training are still yet to finalise. Val Nicholls from Trinity College will lead this training seminar with assistance from the leaders of the parish. This is obviously an opportunity for those in the wider parish who would like to involve in a more active role in leading worship to attend. This notice will continue to appear in the bulletin to encourage our people to turn up to this seminar as we are looking toward the future with hope.

MOSGIEL MID ~ WEEK SERVICE

2pm Wednesday 10th August. All Welcome.

OPEN EDUCATION:

On Wednesday 17 August, at Mornington Methodist Church starting at 7.30pm, the Open Education programme will bring the Reverend Greg Hughson to tell us about his participation in the Ecumenical Peace Convocation, arranged by the World Council of Churches in Kingston, Jamaica, this year. Greg was the sole New Zealander among a family of nations: he has pictures to show and songs for us to sing. Join us to help celebrate and affirm peace and non-violence in the world.

As usual, Judy Russell will provide a delicious pre-session dinner starting at 6pm. Ring her to book your place (455 3727). The charge for the meal is \$15, for Greg's talk \$5.



It is often said, or inferred, that small nations such as New Zealand have limited ability to significantly influence a world dominated by the interests of super-powers, by economies inseparably linked to the profits of huge multinational corporations, and propped up by mega armies. There's truth in that, of course, but as today the American giant wrestles with its trillion-dollar debt crisis, and wallows in the mire of near bankruptcy, the myth of the impotence of being small, and of consequent vulnerability, is laid bare for all to see. The undeniable fact is that in the real world right now, Wellington is in better shape than Washington.

And then there is Norway, a country often compared with New Zealand for size and geography. Recent terrible events have projected Norway and its people into the world's spotlight. The killer, Anders Behring Breivik could have harboured his evil obsessions anywhere in the western world where religious tolerance and multiculturalism are beginning to flourish, but it was an accident of history that he is Norwegian, and that it was in his own country that the gun-loving fundamentalist Christian chose to exact his rage, 68 people left dead and many more injured. The stench of death on the island of Utoya, a few minutes by ferry from the capital, Oslo, is

something the survivors of the Labour Party youth camp say they will never forget.

First, to put this slaying in some kind of perspective. The loss of life from their July 22 home-made terror attack is almost double that of New York 9/11 when taking relative population size into account. And to make it worse, Norway's dead were mainly young, under the age of 20, among the brightest and best. Second, a further perspective. Breivik, single-handed, mounted the most devastating attack on a Scandinavian country since the Second World War. In that period, the *Global Terrorism Database* has recorded only one fatality in Norway, and 13 injuries, from incidents fitting the criteria of terrorism. In the same period, the US has suffered over 2300 acts of terrorism on home soil, and tens of thousands of deaths. It is clear, says the *GTD*, that until Utoya, Norway was perhaps unparalleled as one of the most peaceful countries in the world.

So what are some of the conclusions to be drawn from the way that Norwegians have responded to the gross violation of their peaceful space? First, and most obviously, with roses. I doubt there has been a more poignant witness to peace in recent years than the quiet gatherings in the towns and cities of Norway, people standing quietly, with huge dignity, in a silent collective covenant to reaffirm their country's commitment to the best principles of peace and democracy. The pictures of that resolve, several hundred thousand people in Oslo, shoulder to shoulder with their red and white roses, are freely available from internet sites. They should be savoured. Couple the pictures with the pledge of Norwegian Prime Minister, Jens Stoltenberg. "We will mourn our dead. We will take care of each other. Tomorrow we shall prove that the Norwegian democracy will be even stronger. No one shall bomb us to silence, no one shall shoot us to silence, and no one shall scare us out of being Norway."

The world will not have lost sight of the fact that Oslo is perhaps best known as the home of the Nobel awards, the epitome of recognition for the best aspirations in many fields of human endeavour. Would it not be appropriate for the rest of the world to nominate the people of Norway, collectively, as themselves worthy recipients for the Nobel peace prize?

I have sought to draw contrasts, not with the idea of ridicule, but to simply exemplify that the biblical David and Goliath analogy still has powerful potency in the modern world.

America's 9/11 prompted the so-called War on Terror. It has translated into the invasion of Iraq, the ill-conceived campaign in Afghanistan, and the consequent fear and terror heaped on millions of innocent people in countries drawn into the "war" for or against the American strategy. It is a strategy that has escalated many-fold the concept of righteous killing. Successive presidents and army generals have spoken with great earnestness of "taking out" the evil doers like Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden, and hundreds of thousands have died in the process of the doing of it.

Despite one of its citizens being totally besotted with such a doctrine, and with such terrible consequences, Norway is among other small Scandinavian countries that have resisted American overtures. By contrast, they have perhaps the best social security in the world, far better gun regulation, far less crime, little in the way of armed forces, humane prisons and no death penalty. And one thing of which Anders Breivik can be certain when in due course he is brought to justice is that the people on whom he has heaped such terrible grief and offence will ensure his punishment is delivered with dignity and without recrimination.

We New Zealanders have much to learn from our alter image in the northern hemisphere. Some would say we have lost the advantage we once enjoyed as a small enlightened nation boxing well above our weight in social equity and justice. The rich are getting richer at the expense of the poor, and clean green is not as clean, nor as green as once it was. But it is not all bad and there is still time to take a renewed grasp on the mantle of being small, enlightened, independent, tolerant and inclusive. Let's take a good look at Norway and learn.

A final memorable image is from the funeral procession of shootings victim Bano Rashid, a Kurdish refugee who had made her home in Norway and joined the Labour Party. A Lutheran priest and a Moslem Iman led the procession following an inter faith service that embraced Bano's tragic death as a potentially transformative event. Commenting on the funeral, an Oslo newspaper put it thus. The irony is that in the end, "Breivik's ultimate legacy will not be that of his twisted goals, but that of a nation that refuted his violence and hatred in a way that will set an example for the rest of the world to follow." By all means.

Ken Russell