



Dunedin Methodist Parish

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz

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PARISH BULLETIN

28th August 2011

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 4th SEPTEMBER 2011

9.30am	Mornington	K Russell
9.30 am	Mosgiel	S Pole
11.00 am	Glenaven	K Russell
11.00 am	Wesley	S Pole
1.00pm	St Kilda	Comb. Wesley
4.00pm	Broad Bay	S Pole

MINISTRY TRAINING SEMINAR

The parish will run a ministry training seminar for all the lay people of the parish on Friday the 2nd 7.00pm-9.00pm and Saturday the 3rd of September 9.00am-2.30pm at the Methodist Mission Conference Room. 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.

GLOBE THEATRE (104 London St) features 18-28 August Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, with the well-tryed team of John Watson and Harry Love (*Home* and *All's Well that Ends*) in the leading roles. The cheapest seats for non-members are \$10 on the first night. Ring the Globe, 477 3274, for bookings / information. There are 2pm matinees on both Sundays, otherwise it's 7.30pm.

EXPLORERS GROUP

Meets on Sunday 29th August, at 4-30pm in the Mornington Church Lounge. All welcome.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

To Kakala Pole who celebrates a birthday on 1st September.

Youth Challenge with CWS: *Live Below the Line on \$2.25 per day.*

CWS invites young people to Live below the Line. The Global Poverty Project has chosen CWS as a partner for their national fundraising effort 22-26 August. The money raised will help young people in Maridi, South Sudan with education, sports programmes and to build hope in a difficult situation.

The Global Poverty Project is an international movement of young people taking concerted action to end extreme poverty. The challenge is to live on \$2.25 or less a day and raise sponsorship support. Contact youth@cws.org.nz if your group would join the challenge.



SAND CAN BUT SNOW CAN'T

My previous article in Connections was entitled "Rock can't but Sand can". In that article I made a comparison between rock and sand as a real life experience in nature and how it became a metaphor for any kind of human relationship. In this article, I will endeavour to compare sand and snow and hopefully we can extract out from it another metaphor that might become an analogy for good Christian living. Sand and snow are both components of the natural environment but they do not always staying together or even mix well with each other. However, their commonality

and differences make them special in their contribution to our natural world. They both contribute to the beauty of nature.

Since our arrival in Dunedin in the beginning of this year we have admired the beauty of St. Clair sandy beach where we stay nearby. On a sunny day we can stand at one end of the beach and look to the other end with admiration of its beauty, purity, and whiteness. It is so clean to a point that it can reflect the sun's rays into our eyes, which requires wearing sun glasses. However, my experience of the cleanness of the sandy beach was changed on my first experience of snow on Sunday 24th of July 2011. As a person who came from the tropical island of Tonga my first experience of real snow was a mixture of surprise and excitement. It was a surprise to me, in a sense, that the whiteness and the beauty of the snow covered the purity of the sand. It was also an exciting experience for my family and I as our first ever experience of a real snow! In our excitement we drove from one place to the other to view the beauty of the snow, despite the danger of slippery roads. It was indeed the whiteness and the purity of the snow that attracted our attention. No wonder why Psalm 51:7 uses 'snow' to symbolise the abundance of God's forgiveness. In that verse the Psalm says, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." The Psalmist doesn't use sand, for it is not close enough in terms of its purity to compare with the power of God's forgiveness. He rather uses snow as a more appropriate metaphor.

However, looking at it from an Oceanic perspective, snow is not able to endure the harshness of Oceania's weather. Most of the island nations in Oceania have a tropical climate. They don't have snow but they have white sandy beaches. Since we have been in New Zealand, we have spent most of our life in Auckland. While we were in Auckland we never experienced snow but we always went swimming in the sea, alongside white sandy beaches. We were always thrilled by the purity of the sand and its coolness during Summer time. We also admired the capacity of the sand to withstand the power of big waves and stormy weather. On one hand the sand would never give up or back off for it will always endure and persevere even when the season is changing. The snow on the other hand is not able to survive the changing of the weather. Summer weather will cause the snow to melt! The purity and whiteness of snow can be seen only when the weather remains cold but when circumstances change the snow melt. Although snow and sand are both important parts of the natural world only sand can maintain its beauty and purity when things heat up and the journey gets tough.

As I continue to look with anticipation at the contrasting performances of sand and snow it brings to mind how our human behaviour and attitudes respond when life gets tough. How do we react when we are in difficult circumstances? What does our Christian faith teach us when life is too hard to bear? Can we still maintain our human integrity when circumstances are changing? It is quite tempting to give up as a reaction when things are not going well. If there is any time for facing tough situations it is the present time. We look around the world and its current affairs and we worry. The increase of violence in many parts of the world, the loss of jobs and the lack of employment worries many low income families, crimes among young people are increasing, and the increase of poverty is a major concern among our communities. In the church, there is a concern about declining membership and increasing of cost of ministry, the need to provide a ministry that is effective for our youth, and the concern for the unfair treatment of responsible people in the church. Surely, the easiest way to pursue at these times is to escape and run away. If we were to do this however we would certainly lose our integrity and identity as God's people. As followers of Christ, let us never forget that we have "sandy ingredients" to uphold. Sand can but snow can't. Snow is whiter and purer, but sand can be tougher in hard times – and still maintain its purity.

I believe that if the writer of Psalm 51 had grown up in Oceania he would have used – 'sand' instead of 'snow' as a metaphor for God's enduring forgiveness as emphasised in verse 7. The Psalm therefore would be rewritten, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than [sand] snow." Sand can be used as a metaphor for both purity and endurance. So when you next visit the beach and see sand, or think about sand, let sand remind you about our Christian tradition of perseverance in hard times as a vital part of our call to discipleship. Dietrich Bonhoeffer in his book entitled, *The Cost of Discipleship*, claims, that the call to follow Christ is a call to endure suffering moments. Sand can but snow can't. Enjoy your next visit to the beach.

Siosifa Pole