



Dunedin Methodist Parish

Finding Good in everyone Finding God in everyone

www.dunedinmethodist.org.nz

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PARISH BULLETIN

12 February 2012

WORSHIP FOR SUNDAY 19 February 2012

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
6.00pm	Broad Bay	S.Pole

HELPERS NEEDED FOR BAG- PACKING, from 9am TUESDAY 14th February

The Otago Combined Christian Groups (CCG) committee has once again agreed to serve OUSA and our wider University community by providing people power to fill individual College-packs for new students, from 9am on Tuesday 14th February. The venue this year will be the Old Gym in Cumberland Street, just to the north of the Otago Museum. (The Union Hall is not currently available, hence new location). Our CCG Scarfie Guide goes into each pack along with a Chaplaincy Homesickness Booklet and other goodies. We need as many helpers from local Churches as possible to get this job done. OUSA will provide lunch. Please let Aaron Thomson (aaron.thomson@studentlife.org.nz) James Allaway (james@tscf.org.nz) or Greg Hughson (greg.hughson@otago.ac.nz), 479 8497) know if you can help out with this fun task! A great opportunity to meet new friends and serve together, even for an hour or two on the 14th.

REQUEST FOR BAKING AND FRUIT FOR ORIENTATION WEEK

The Otago Combined Christian Groups will have a tent on the Museum lawn (near corner of Great King and Albany Streets) during University Orientation week (20th-24th February). We would greatly appreciate contributions of baking and fruit to distribute to newly arrived students, from our tent. You can bring contributions to the Chaplaincy office at 229 Leith St during Orientation week, or bring supplies directly to our tent. Further information : Aaron (021 843288) , James (021 903293) or Greg (027 2121048 or 479 8497)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Freddie Sussman who is 11 years old today
 Finbar Shanahan who will be 12 years old on the 15th
 Samuel Jones who will be 12 years old on the 16th



The South Dunedin Farmers Markets are running every Wednesday from 3-6pm so you can get it fresh on your way home with. plenty of convenient free parking available on site. Talk to the growers and find out loads more meal ideas each week on the Corner of Macandrew Road and Thomas Street just down from King Edward Street.

SUPPORTING AUDIENCE WANTED

The Raise it Up Talent Quest AUDITIONS are being held on SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 18th at St Lukes Church 10am to 12.30 (Come and go any time.).

Admission - FREE. Refreshments for sale.

Please come along and give support to our local young people.

A PARRISH COUNCIL MEETING - A parish council meeting will be held on Wednesday 15 February at Broad Bay Methodist Church at 7:30 PM

Mornington Church leaders meeting

7.30 next Tuesday 14 February.

MORNINGTON WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Our first Meeting of the year will take place on the 22nd February in the Church Lounge & Sunday School. This will be held at 12 noon with

a luncheon - so please bring along a tasty dish to share. The speaker will be Prof. Colin Gibson - the subject being "Music & Food".

See you there. All welcome



Hi Jo

From Green to Gandhi

I'm glad you weren't too fazed by my taking the lid off my secret ballot at the general election last November (in "Tea Party Topics", *Connections*, 27.11.11). Actually, a number of people gave me the Green light on my admitting who got my party vote. But setting aside my own preference, there's been a notable related event in the aftermath of the election.

I have Freeview at home, but I haven't yet summoned up the dedication required to tune in to the Parliament TV channel. So I missed an historic speech in the Address-in-Reply debate in December. Even the mainstream media pretty well glossed over it, but at least four individuals have spoken up on the significance of the speech by the co-leader of the Green Party, Dr Russell Norman.

My first alert came from a fellow member of the Methodist Liberal Society, Michael Dymond, who passed on the text and video link. He added that he had been moved to tears by the spirited relevance and power of Russell Norman's words.

Next came the cautious political commentator, Colin James, under the caption, "Christian values seen as not just for believers" (ODT,

27.12.11). He began by saying, “It can at times take an atheist to remind us of some of the true messages of Christmas”.

Then I spotted “Passing Notes” by Civis, headed: “Norman’s address deserves attention” (ODT, 7.1.12). I’m not at all keen on anonymous columns or editorials but at least Civis was open about not having voted for a Green candidate or for the Green Party. Yet he began his own assessment by saying, “It [the Address] has been described as ‘the best ever Christmas sermon preached by an atheist’”.

Finally, there was a “Faith and Reason” column by Ian Harris, headed: “Values for all to share” (ODT, 13.1.12). Harris suggested that “there was much for Christians and non-Christians to learn from the wisdom of political leader Dr Russell Norman”, adding that “unlike many who profess atheism, [Norman] was open enough to find much good in Christianity”.

So what did Norman say? You could read the full text at <http://inthehouse.co.nz/node/11150>, but here are a few of his points at the beginning of the speech:

“...The story of the incarnation of God in a baby born in a stable is remarkable even to me an atheist... It’s a story about that god decreeing that...freedom and equality must characterise life here on earth... I’m not a Christian and there is not historical certainty about the records in the Christian Bible. But what I admire about the Christmas story is that it speaks to values I share... Mahatma Gandhi said: ‘I believe that Jesus belongs not only to Christianity but to the entire world, to all races and to all people.’ Gandhi was right. The hopes and values Jesus Christ articulated during the course of his short life are too important to belong only to Christians. They belong to us all: believers and non-believers alike... I identify with the Christianity that teaches love and compassion towards each other, especially the most vulnerable... I identify

with the Christianity that demands we live with truth and justice between one another... I identify with the Christianity that teaches an awe and respect for the natural world... Those values of love, generosity, and a reverence for nature should not sound so out of place in this Parliament. But the talk in here is dominated by a different kind of worship – one of economic growth at all costs...”

He went on to propose some of the concrete implications of what he called “applied Christianity”. But critical as these are, I want to focus on the claim from Norman and Gandhi that Jesus belongs to believers and non-believers alike. There is an aspect to this that is both neglected and distorted by most Christians.

I begin by hazarding a guess as to how most Christians and churches would respond to such statements as Gandhi in his time and now Norman have made. The immediate reaction, before any articulated comment, would be one of satisfaction at what is perceived as a compliment, followed by a comfortable sense of security in the knowledge that for those within the faith the picture is even clearer, even more compelling. In fact, so the conviction goes, the picture is only perfect from within the Church.

There is, of course, much to support the assumption that the Church, the Bible, and Christianity are the conduits through which the Jesus legacy has been transmitted. There is ample support for it in the New Testament texts themselves, which after all were a product of the early, if not exactly the primitive, Church. Yet scattered here and there among them are ample hints (I’m sure you can think of some) to suggest that a closed shop mentality runs the risk of disguising the authentic Jesus.

All that we can safely say within the Church is that we own the most venerable and prevailing version of Jesus. That is not quite the same as owning Jesus altogether, and if it were, it would be a

denial of his free spirit. When Gandhi adopted passive resistance he picked up from under the noses of the British colonial power a trait of Jesus that had been smothered by western Christendom.

So too, in the 19th century, much earlier than Gandhi, Te Whiti and Tohu employed similar tactics at Parihaka in Taranaki. Nothing in my childhood church life in New Plymouth gave me the slightest inkling of that particular Jesus influence, yet, with little thanks to the Church, the reverberations of it are still to be felt. Echoes sounded on Waitangi Day this last week during National Radio interviews with Taranaki Maori.

While Russell Norman is likely to remain an atheist, he has, in his own way, made a leap of faith to identify with the hopes and values of the particular Christianity he caught a vision of at Christmas. But it takes two to tango. It will take a giant leap of faith in the other direction for Christians to identify with a hope-filled and value-filled belief-free, Jesus-inspired commitment that struggles to be born all around us. Jesus belongs to us all: believers and non-believers alike. Are we capable of getting our heads around that?

So far, not so good. But if, without burning our bridges to the glorious Gospel story, we could be bold enough to contemplate a Jesus without a godlike gloss as one other meaningful option for many, it would have a profound effect on our Church ethos, worship, and outreach. And what if we Christians turn down the invitation to tango? The aching gap between us and the rest of our contemporaries will go on widening relentlessly and an epoch-making opportunity will have been lost.

David Kitchingman



Methodist Church of New Zealand Te Haahi Weteriana O Aotearoa



CENTRAL SOUTH ISLAND SYNOD

1st February 2012

On Tuesday 31st January 2012 the Canterbury Earthquakes Royal Commission considered the loss of the lives of three men on 22nd February 2011 in the Durham St Methodist Church, Christchurch.

The families of the men who died were present and we were all aware of the cost and their grief experience. It was not possible to be there without being aware of the families as well as those present from The South Island Organ Company.

The purpose of this letter is not to provide a detailed report on the submissions and cross examination. It was, as you might expect, a long and stressful day. However there are some matters I feel it will be useful to share with you.

The decision to remove the Organ was with the approval of the Christchurch City Council, against the background of a determination by Heritage groups that Durham St Church must be saved and restored. The Organ had to be removed to enable both the repair and restoration of the Church and the organ.

The decisions about safe entry to the Church were made on the advice of the Consultant Engineer who consulted also with the Church's Property Manager. One of the issues settled before the process of removal began was safe access to the building for staff. There was considerable questioning about the process used to determine safety.

The final witness was an independent Consultant Engineer, assisting the Royal Commission, who gave full support to the Engineering process used to determine safety. His report was a vindication of the safety assessments.

Some news reports are suggesting the Church removed the organ knowing The Durham St Church could not be saved and repaired. The decision to remove the organ came before the Church received

the report from the Consultant Engineer. This report, received on 17 February 2011, recorded that in the Consultant Engineer's opinion it was increasingly unlikely the Church could be saved and restored. No decision on the future of the Church had been reached at the time of the February earthquake.

After meeting the requirements of the City and consultation with heritage groups, and after making safe the entrances and putting in place safety systems, the removal of the organ began on 14th February 2011.

Now we await the report of the Royal Commission knowing that it is not possible to change what happened that day, when three men lost their lives. Families lost their loved ones.

As Methodists we will never forget that day
and the loss of lives in our Church.

Norman West
Co-Superintendent
Central South Island Synod

Co-Superintendent

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