

## We Start With...

A two minute period of silence - a moment of peace.

### From the ‘Chair’

At September’s meeting we heard from Glenda Hall, counsellor with the Otago Community Hospice, about Advanced Care Planning. She took us through how creative and valuable it is to think about how we want to live our lives to the end of our lives. This is not a usual topic of conversation, and I felt Glenda introduced the subject carefully and respectfully – but without beating about the bush. If we think about these things now – in the clear light of day - then we, our families and caregivers are immensely helped when decisions have to be made at times of stress, when we may not be able to speak for ourselves.

The Hospice movement is promoting Advanced Care Planning nationally, together with a programme from the USA ‘Begin the Conversation’ which is a more substantial programme also leading to advance care planning. Information can be found at <http://www.advancecareplanning.org.nz/> and <http://www.begintheconversation.org/>.

If you look on the national Sea of Faith web site you will see the strapline ‘Exploring values, spirituality and meaning’. The Dunedin SoF newsletter has the strapline ‘Exploring meaning in life’. What do we mean by this word meaning? Come to our October meeting, where David Kitchingman will give his take on this important word.

*Gretchen*

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## Peace Action

Every day we read and hear of violence somewhere. It seems to get bigger headlines than its opposite value. We have heard that there have been about 136 school shootings in recent times – not deaths but rampages, in US schools. The President is often photographed with a ‘how-can-we-grow-a-brain-and-stop-this-nonsense?’ look on his face. The forces ranged in favour of violence and mayhem seem to have the upper hand there.

However, the Pope stands for peace and wherever he goes hundreds of thousands turn up to cheer him – presumably because they believe in what he stands for. That makes me hopeful.

### Conference happenings - Gretchen

## What is MEANING? David Kitchingman

Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> OCTOBER

Highgate Church buildings,  
Maori Hill  
Tea and Coffee will be available  
From 3pm

## NEW TIME

The programme will start  
at 3.30pm

*Contribution - \$4*

## Bryan Bruce

Last evening Bryan (well-known TV documentary maker... he made *'Jesus the Cold Case'* amongst others) gave the annual Quaker Peace Lecture to a packed lecture theatre at Uni. He reflected that he and John Key both had the same free state-house and free-education background and yet now they stand on different sides of the economic fence. Our Prime Minister is a follower of the Chicago school of economics and he is a Keynesian. He reminded us that having sold so many state assets to raise funds we are in more debt and less happy than when the process started in 1988 – so has the process worked?

OK – silly question.

In America, Bernie Sanders is asking some fundamental questions and in UK Jeremy Corbyn is asking even more fundamental ones. He is unlikely to become Prime Minister – who wants a man who would do away with the nuclear deterrent (which can never be used), who would talk to leaders of opposition parties such as Hamas and Sinn Fein and who believes the state should run essential services not for-profit companies? Those who don't like the idea of him talking to the opposition should remember Kenya, Mau Mau and Jomo Kenyatta. I remember as a boy reading about those 'terrorists' slaughtering Britons in their beds but later read that there were very few such deaths, it was a press beat-up.

Bryan Bruce reminded his audience that economic decisions are moral ones. To choose to look after people in warm, dry houses owned by the state and rented at reasonable rates or to let the market decide and have the state pay accommodation subsidies to help individuals pay the high rents they are being charged.

Jeremy Corbyn believes that there should be a Living Wage so that people don't need auxiliary state handouts to make ends meet. He believes

that those handouts are effectively a subsidy to the employers who are paying low wages.

Bryan reminded us that New Zealanders voted in the current party with its economic policies. A million or so folk didn't vote and his investigations have led him to discover that a lot did not do so as they don't want to be on the electoral roll which helps them to be found by debt collectors and such like.

In England, some churches are becoming payday lenders to help overcome the high interest rates that are being charged for people struggling with debt – and in our community we know how easy it is for folk to get embroiled in debt as a result of trying to meet obligations to family.

In India, micro-loans are helping women in villages to become more independent. That is not Chicago school philosophy either.

If I were to mark the report card of the Chicago School of Economics and I was doing so from a personal point of view as editor of this newsletter, I'd give them an F for 'Fail'. If I was doing so from inside the elite camp of employers who get \$4million in wages per year whilst laying off workers, I'd give them an A+.

As spiritual people we cannot help but be involved in all these issues. We can speak out whenever we get the chance and encourage people to think about choices and to vote when the time comes. We can attend rallies, sign petitions, march for causes, write to MPs and the newspaper and generally be a force for good.

As a simple soul, I think the Kingdom of Heaven is very much about Social Justice and I think Jesus asked all his followers to make it happen here and now – in this world.

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