



Sea of Faith – Dunedin

Exploring Meaning in Life
Newsletter **FEBRUARY 2016**



We Start With...

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

From the ‘Chair’

There were a number of Sea of Faith members at the funeral of John Angell, clearly a very special person given all we heard from his family and special friends. We will take time at our next meeting to remember this gentle and kind member of our group.

February meeting

At the 2015 conference David Hines (past-chair, Auckland Branch) held a session ‘Bible in Schools, no: Teaching about all beliefs, yes’. There are many issues within in the topic, one being ‘What would children miss out on if they didn’t know the Bible stories?’

This is the topic for our first meeting of 2016. Members are asked to choose a story from the Bible that has particular significance for them. It might be an Old Testament event or a New Testament parable.

- How would you tell the story to a group of children in 2016?
- How would you make it relevant to them and their lives today?
- What meaning would you want them to take from it?

We will each have 3 to 5 minutes to present our story and respond to comments from the group.

If you go to dans.faithweb.com/150stories you will find a list of 150 stories. I encourage you to select a story that appeals to you, tell Marion, then give it some thought as to how you would tell the story to a small group of today’s youngsters.

Book your story with Marion Christie 456 2298
marion.christie@xtra.co.nz

Gretchen

gretchen.kivell@xtra.co.nz (03) 473 0031

Should Sea of Faith be an activist group?

At our November meeting we discussed the pros and cons of remaining a discussion group, but

What Bible stories might you tell children?

Everyone

Thursday, 25th FEBRUARY

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

**The programme will start
at 3.30pm**

Contribution - \$4

not an activist one. Our discussion fed into national Chairperson Laurie Chisholm's 'Last Word' column on page 12 of the January Newsletter. You'll see he advocates a new stance for Sea of Faith when it comes to our very future ie Climate Change. We'll take time at our February meeting to see whether Laurie's arguments have been persuasive.

A Dunedin Treasure

Frances Smithson alerted me to the new website doc.govt.nz/royalcam a free, 24-hour live feed where you can watch an albatross couple raising their chick. It's a restful but compelling site; so much goes on but at the pace of nature. I hope you will enjoy this wonderful view of the real world, in sight of our special city of Dunedin.

Faith Schools

You will have been following the debate about the new school for Muslim children being built in Dunedin. We already have Christian schools in the city and they are divided into Catholic, Presbyterian and Anglican. There is a full primary Christian school in Mosgiel. Is there any difference between the concept of a faith school for Muslims and Christians? Does it depend on how liberal the teaching is? Should the faith teachings be eternal (ie as in the Sacred Book of that faith) or can they be brought into line with the law in secular New Zealand (for example the issue of same-sex marriage)?

Many people in this country refuse to believe that there should be any reference to faith in the secular state school system, and Bible in Schools is anathema to many. But are the children missing out when they don't know about the parable of the Good Samaritan or the parable of the Talents? What about David and Goliath?

When the programme committee met late last year the feeling was that there are some stories that are part of our heritage and they are all the better for being kept rather than being lost. That's what this month's programme is about.

Kings of the Gym

This is the name of a play currently running at The Fortune Theatre in Dunedin. Part of the story concerns a young Māori girl who is part of an evangelical Christian movement and who brings her firm beliefs into the school. She encourages some children to attend a church youth group and to take a pledge (not to have sexual intercourse before marriage). The story deals very cleverly with the challenges to her faith by the other teachers and also the challenges she faces when she gets carried away at an after-match function.

This production sits very well with our theme this month.

It is set in a school gymnasium and the other characters are the Principal and two Phys Ed teachers. One of them is just the same as a chap I taught with in 1967 in England. I laughed until the tears rolled down my cheeks – it is a good night out and a very thoughtful one too – from a playwright who had four plays opening on the same night in this country – how good is that?

William Shakespeare

This year marks the 400th anniversary of his death. From what I can gather, Will was celebrating his birthday on April 23rd but overdid it rather and died as a result, so his birth day was also his death day (not in the same year of course). Do we celebrate him in New Zealand? Is celebrating 'The Bard' just an example of colonialism? Is it a 'Good Thing' (remember '1066 and all that') to include some of his plays in the New Zealand curriculum? We come again to our theme this month of what stories are really part of our heritage – to be prized and handed on?

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