

It's not fair!

As a parent, I have heard those words a lot from my children. And if I'm honest, I remember saying them to my parents when I felt one of my sisters was getting a better deal than me. However, my perceived injustices were usually based around who got a bigger slice of cake or some equally trivial thing.

We've been talking and thinking a lot over the last month about Justice and Action, based on the Presbyterian Church's statement. This can be found at <http://www.presbyterian.org.nz/speaking-out/what-we-believe/we-say-yes-statement>

The Oxford English dictionary defines justice as 'the quality of being fair and reasonable'. Action is defined as 'the fact or process of doing something, typically to achieve an aim'. I thought the example was quite appropriate for this Messenger 'ending child labour will require action on many levels'.

*Learn to do good;
seek justice,
rescue the oppressed,
defend the orphan,
plead for the widow.*

Isaiah 1:17

When we think of justice we usually think of social justice – ending child labour, supporting refugees, stopping family violence, and so on. As one of our recent sermons pointed out, it's very hard to do this on our own. The task seems overwhelming, and we're only one person – how can we make a difference and achieve justice? Where do we even start?

The answer is by taking one step at a time. For example, to help end child labour and sweatshops, we can choose to only buy products and services from companies who do not use these practices to produce their offerings. Buying Fair Trade coffee is one example. There are a couple of apps listed in this issue that may also help. Talking about your position to your friends, family and school or work mates is another way – anything that helps to get others thinking (and then hopefully acting) about how they can be part of the solution to achieving justice for others less fortunate.

In the words of an old shampoo ad: 'it won't happen overnight, but it will happen'. Every time we choose to act ethically, sustainably, and with empathy for others, we are making a difference and acting for justice.

Elizabeth Gibbs
Editor

Justice and Action

Ground up ...or Top down?

There is an African boy in Niger named Maman, that I have known of over the last 13 years. Actually, he is now an adult. And I have been his World Vision supporter ever since I responded to a talk by Tony Campolo at a Parachute Music Festival, about Christians acting for justice for others around the world. I know many of you will be child sponsors, including our youth at St John's. What is it that compels us to make a connection with others and to make a commitment to act for justice?

Justice and Action is a topic we have been exploring at St John's, encouraged and resourced to do so by our wider Presbyterian Church network. We are asking questions about how our faith stirs us to act for justice. And it feels to me that there are two common ways we may feel stirred to act.

The first is from the 'Ground up'. This is where we become aware of a need, and a corresponding awareness of our ability, and responsibility, to address that need.

Another way we may feel stirred to act is from the 'Top down'. This is where we feel a nudge from God to share the blessings we have received, and then look around to see

what we might do. I know many of you who have been stirred in both these ways as part of your faith journey.

And, perhaps like me, you've sometimes felt there is a mix of both that moves us to take action.

I can still vividly remember sitting on the dried summer grass at the music festival hearing the simple, and yet deeply stirring, message of Tony Campolo: there is no doubt Jesus would help someone in desperate need. The Big Story for Christians is that Jesus has helped us all, and expects us all to share what we have been given. God spoke to me through the message I heard that day. And at the same time there were Christian workers from World Vision presenting the needs of real people in a way I had not given thought to before. It was a pincer movement, engaging my heart and mind; feeling like both a 'top down' and 'ground up' movement happening together.

I hope we can courageously recognise the call Jesus makes: "Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." (John 13:34-35) And that we have the discernment to recognise the channels of grace that allow us to bring justice to others, and take action.

Allister Lane

Allister has been a minister at St John's since 2008. He is married to Naomi and they have four children His email is a.lane@stjohnsinthecity.org.nz

Youth group changes

The St John's Children, Youth and Families survey highlighted a need for us to take another look at the transitions between age-specific ministries and encouraged us as a church to take more risks. As a result, EPIC and Thrive (the junior and senior youth ministry of St John's) have successfully sought and found approval to adjust the year allocations of each youth ministry.

The youth ministry leadership team took time to explore the highlighted issues and discovered a number of factors to consider, including;

- Many changes happening in the lives of young people at the point of transition
- A diverse age range makes it difficult to wholly cater for
- Not enough effort put into transitioning out senior youth ministry into the morning or evening service

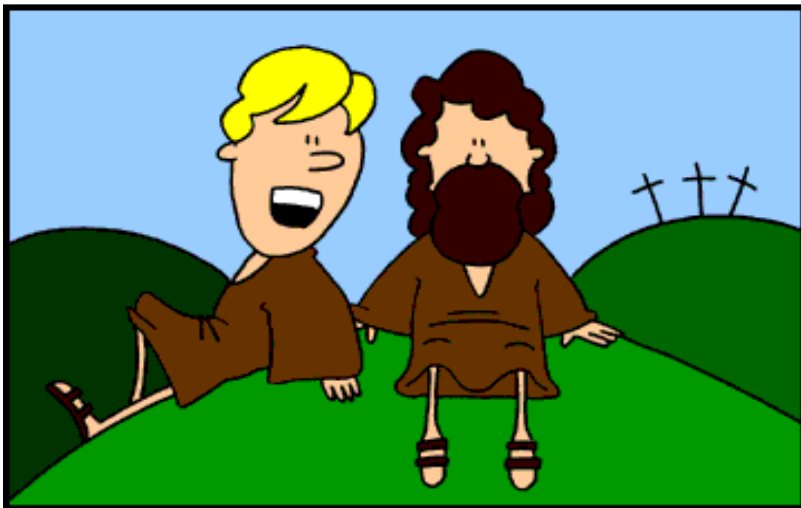
In light of this, EPIC and Thrive proposed to move the point of transitioning back. Young people would now stay a year or two longer in EPIC (until the end of year 9 or 10). Thrive would extend to additionally cater for 1st and 2nd year university students.

Steps have been taken to implement this change and over the next couple of years we'll continue to fine tune the ministry to answer the call of these and future issues. If you'd like more information about the youth ministry, including how to join a youth group and what they do, contact Dave Adams or Richard Hpa.

Dave Adams

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(See John 19:17-37)

04-09-1998

SO JESUS, HAVE YOU MADE ANY PLANS FOR EASTER YET?

Have you ever asked, “Can we believe in politics?” Perhaps you wonder how your faith bears on public life in terms of the candidates for whom you vote, the policies which you support, or the causes for which you advocate. Maybe you worry if we can trust our system, our leaders, or even our neighbours.

If you're asking these big questions we're putting on a series called “Keeping Faith in Politics” that aims to give serious answers.

The University of Otago Centre for Theology and Public Issues - in partnership with St. John's, St. Andrews on the Terrace, The Salvation Army Policy and Parliamentary Unit, Wellington Cathedral, and Victoria University the Program in Restorative Justice— is putting on a monthly event leading up to the September elections. We will gather in a variety of venues and engage important issues in various formats in conversation with leading voices in church and society.

The series will run on the final Thursday of each month from March to August. The schedule is as follows:

30 March - Seeking the Common Good in a World of Self-Interest

27 April - The Least and the Last in a World of Growing Inequality

25 May - Protecting the Planet in a World of Ecological Crisis

29 June - Liberation and Restoration in a World of Mass Incarceration

27 July - Welcoming Strangers in a World of Global Migration

31 August - Honest Leadership in a Post-Truth World

Don't just worry and wonder about keeping faith in politics. Join these conversations and work out your own convictions. See you there!

Can We Believe
in Politics?

Do you wonder how faith bears on public life?
Do you worry if we can trust our political system?

Centre For Theology
And Public Issues
Wellington

Turning justice inaction into justice in action

Paul tells us in Romans 7, “I realise that I don’t have what it takes. I can will it, but I can’t do it. I decide to do good, but I don’t really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don’t result in actions” (The Message translation).

My own experience of the Christian life tells me that he’s quite right. I expect that each of us has faced situations in which these words ring true. Even so, I suspect that when it comes to issues of justice, our experience is more the former than the latter.

It’s not so much that we do the injustice that we will not to do. Rather, we don’t do the justice that we will to do. In the words of the classic prayer of confession, it is “what we have left undone,” rather than “what we have done,” that requires forgiveness.

Sometimes we leave things undone out of ignorance. We don’t know what’s going on. We can’t see what our doing does. Because our lives and our economy are, as former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams once put it, “caught up willy nilly” in the lives of others, we are unwittingly—yet, nevertheless, culpably—enmeshed in

networks of production and consumption that devastate social relationships and decimate natural ecosystems.

Other times, we leave things undone out of despair. So much seems to be going so wrong in ways that are so far beyond our control, we can’t see what our doing otherwise could do. Because the powers that be seem so damned strong, it’s hard to see how any of us alone—or even many of us together—could have the power to do a blessed thing about them.

In other words, most times, it is our inaction, rather than our action that leaves justice undone.

Our task, then, is to turn this justice inaction into justice in action, so to speak. Our plan is to reflect together about the PCANZ’s congregational resources in order to acquaint ourselves with the biblical and theological principles that guide our church’s social witness. Our goal is to respond together to the PCANZ’s denominational statement in order to orient ourselves to social justice.

Justice inaction or justice in action? What say you?

Derek Woodard-Lehman

Derek is the Lecturer in Theology and Public Issues for the Centre for Theology and Public Issues at the University of Otago. He is based in Wellington with his wife and two children.

Meet the Team: Fennie Dewar



Many of us have heard her cheerful voice when we call the Church office or seen her smiling face when we call in, so we thought it was time to find out more about Fennie.

What's your role?

Parish secretary.

How long have you worked at St John's?

On and off since 1998.

What's your favourite part of your job?

Putting together the Bulletin, and helping and getting to know the parishioners.

Congratulations

Lala Simpson turned 40 in Jan

Jonathan Boston turned 60 in Jan

Grace Boston and Sam McCauley
are engaged

Anne and Kenneth Simpson back to Scotland

Eric Sidoti became a member

Brett Reid and Alexa Tomey are engaged

Rio and Susianni Honggowidjojo have been
granted NZ Residence Visa

Baptism of Lydia Clarke

All those who had successful exam results

What do you like to do when you're not working for St John's?

Go for long walks, catch up with friends, and keep up with the science and wildlife news.

Ethical Apps

A recent sermon mentioned how one person can start making a difference in the world (using the example of buying Fair Trade coffee). If you're not sure where to start, the two apps outlined below may help. Both apps are available for iPhone and Android users.

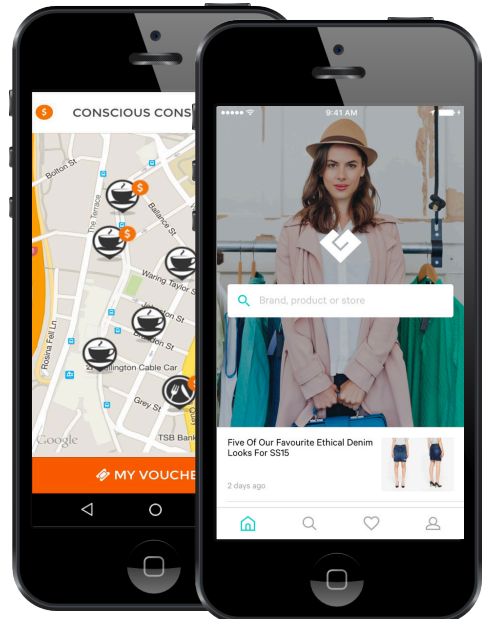
Conscious Consumers

This app gives a financial incentive to businesses who have or are considering adopting ethical practices. During the registration process you can highlight three or four areas you are most concerned about ethically (such as fair trade, climate change, recycling and locally-sourced products). You will also be asked to register your debit and credit card numbers (which will be held securely and not shared with anyone).

The app will then highlight local businesses who have conscious consumer 'badges' for your highlighted areas. When you purchase from those businesses, it will notify them that you are a customer because of that conscious consumer accreditation and tell them the key issues that concern you. This is powerful as businesses are able to directly see the financial incentives for incorporating ethical practices and get a direct view of what their customers care about.

Good on You

This app provides consumers with a real-time ethical rating of different clothing producers. Each business gets rated on their practices surrounding environment, labour policies and animal impact/testing. Fashion is one of the world's biggest polluters, yet it can be difficult to distinguish the ethical producers from those doing harm (especially as there seems to be little correlation between ethical practices and price). Good on You provides clarity to consumers, empowering them to 'vote with their money' and support those who are doing good.



What's Happening at St John's?

March

1	Lent (begins), Ash Wednesday Session Meeting
3	Wine & Theology
5	Lent 1, Picnic Church, visit from Waipukurau youth
12	Quarterly Communion, Lent 2
15	Council Meeting
19	Lent 3, Church Service with Scots College -Aitken House
26	Lent 4

April

2	Lent 5
5	Session Meeting
7	Wine & Theology
9	Monthly Communion Palm Sunday, Scots Easter Service at 5pm
11	Fellowship Group - Easter Service
14	Good Friday
16	Easter Sunday
19	Council Meeting
30	Alpha Course starts

May

5	Wine & Theology
14	Monthly Communion, Church Service with Scots College - Uttley House
17	Council Meeting

ALPHA 2017

We are running ALPHA courses at St John's in Term 2, 2017
- starting the evening of Sunday 30th April.

ALPHA is a series of interactive sessions run over 10 weeks exploring the basics of the Christian faith. It allows anyone to explore life, faith and God in a friendly, open and informal environment. In each session there's food, a short talk, and discussion in small groups.