



# **KNOX LIFE**

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## At the Table of Hope: a playful conversation between friends



Martin Luther King, Seneca, Harvey Milk and Jesus meet for a meal.

Martin starts off the conversation, as you might expect, by saying “I have a dream”. To dream is to envisage something better. To dream is to throw oneself into entertaining a counterfactual – a “what if” based on what we think ought to be. Martin hoped that people would be judged on the content of their character, rather than the colour of their skin. He hoped for a world that was just and inclusive. As a Christian minister, Martin brings hope to the table.

From the other side of the table, Seneca says “Martin, you’re dreaming! Hope is destructive. You ought to be teaching your people not to hope. The source of all anger in the world can be traced to hope frustrated. If people didn’t hope so much, if they didn’t entertain in their minds’ eyes great and wonderful things, then they wouldn’t get frustrated when things don’t work out. Help the people be more realistic in their expectations, and they won’t be so angry. You’ve got to govern back their hope.”

Harvey Milk objects. Being the first openly gay person elected to political office in the United States, over the years Harvey has received many phone calls from young people who have felt isolated, marginalised and frightened.

In a speech a few days after his election, Harvey had said: “you have to let them know there is hope for a better world, there is hope for a better tomorrow; without hope, not only gays, but the blacks and the Asians, and the disabled and the seniors, the “us”es, without hope the “us”es give up. I know that you cannot live on hope alone, but without it, life is not worth living. And you, and you, and you, have got to give them hope.”

Jesus has been listening. He’s good that way. He then speaks. “Can you believe that I had four biographers, and in all their combined work they only used the word ‘hope’ four times – and never to say anything about Christian hope! But that’s OK, because hope is not something we talked about – hope was something we **did**. It was the whole quality of our life. Some people think about hope as *pure future*; but for us, hope was the way we engaged with the now. John Macquarrie put it well: *hope ‘could be the wishful longing that things might get better in one respect or another, but this could scarcely be more than a passive waiting. It could not be an active hope, dedicating the will and energies to chosen goals. Hope implies that there is, so to speak, an empty space before us that affords us room for action’*. Hopeful living, active, joyful, confident engagement with the present, looking forward in trust. For us, **that** was hope.”

The four diners notice that dessert is about to be served. Seneca wasn’t expecting dessert, so he’s delighted. Martin has been dreaming of dessert. Harvey has been hoping there’s enough for everyone to enjoy. Jesus knew the dessert would come, so has just been enjoying the company of his friends while they waited together. Sure and certain hope has improved his time with them.

As for John Macquarrie (not at the table), he never hoped to be quoted by Jesus!



John Macquarrie, smiling.

The quote from John Macquarrie comes from his book “Christian Hope”, Mowbrays 1978.

I have made a few copies of the first chapter of this book and left them on the table, near the sermon box. Feel free to take one if you’re interested.

# What might Living with Hope mean?

One dictionary states: hope (n) = belief, ambition, confidence, faith, longing; and (v) = believe, anticipate, aspire, keep one's fingers crossed, trust.

When I was thinking about this issue of Knox Life the word hope kept coming into my mind – we are now in the season of Advent and approaching Christmas – a known season of Hope and Love. After I put the notice in the Order of Service, I was reminded, that Outreach is the next theme.... and I replied “ I feel ‘Outreach’ will be a better fit with the opening of the new church, and we will use it then. So for those of you who were expecting Outreach .. my apologies, you will have that opportunity in the next issue.

I am sharing with you some thoughts that resonate with Hope, even when the word is not mentioned.

From Michael Leunig in “When I Talk to You.”

*Dear God, it is timely that we give thanks for the lives of all prophets, teachers, healers and revolutionaries, living and dead, acclaimed or obscure, who have rebelled, worked and suffered for the cause of love and joy. We also celebrate that part of us, that part within ourselves, which has rebelled, worked and suffered for the cause of love and joy.*

*We give thanks and celebrate. Amen.*

All of us who live with and in hope will recognise the times we have rebelled, worked and sometimes suffered for Love.

From Suzanne Maher in “Philosophy”.

## *Be the Change*

*When you do nothing, you feel overwhelmed and powerless,  
and when you get involved, you feel the sense of hope, and accomplishment  
that comes from knowing you are working  
to make things better.*

From “The Gift” by P'Taah Channelled by Jani King

*You are the orchestrator of your own life.  
You are the composer and the conductor,  
and all of the instruments in this grand orchestra.*

*You may create wonderful, wonderful symphonies.  
We suggest that you become fascinated with the beautiful music  
you create, that all of your life you may bring forth  
the harmony of it.*

Hope appears in our lives in many different forms and we need to support and encourage ourselves to respond willingly.

A Universal Law

*What you resist persists.*

This simply means that as you put forth energy in resistance, the universe, without judgment, will support you absolutely, and will give you more of what you are putting your energy into.

I found this saying difficult, until I heard my inner voice “why should I? or “I’m no good at that”. Later I wondered why opportunities kept coming up. And it was only when I said “ Yes, I’ll give that a go”, my energy, and the energy around me changed. I learnt to trust and hope and welcome new challenges, rather than resist them.

Thank you for your support and I wish you all a happy and hope-filled Christmas.

Judith Challies - Editor

## **Song of Hope \***

At that hour  
when the sun slinks off  
behind hills and night  
-- a panther --  
crouches ready to spring  
upon  
our unsuspecting city.

i want to sing  
the coiled desires of this land  
the caged dreams  
of forgotten men.

i want to sing  
of all that was but no longer is  
of all that never was but  
could have been

i want to sing  
the obsidian unspelled hopes  
of our children  
i want to sing  
to remind us never to despair  
that every hour  
every minute  
somewhere on the face  
of this earth  
it is glorious morning.     -     Cecil Rajendra

Human beings are creatures of hope. It is this which separates us from other creatures - as far as we know. [Animals do have expectations however, and future experiments in animal psychology may surprise us!] In the human world hope is a universal experience, although hopes are not always for the good of the individual or of society [people like Hitler, Stalin and Pol Pot were full of hope.]

The hope of which we speak is grounded in an ethic aimed at the welfare of all creation, which means that our primary hope should be for the earth and for the integrity of all life. It is only within this wider understanding of hope that we may hope for that which is personal, local and regional,

The urge to go on hoping is strong and a very human thing. We hope for what is to come, and because we are not certain what form it may take we hope for the best. Our personal hopes are also shaped by the faith we share and are given life and purpose by our relationship with Christ.. The theologian Jurgen Moltmann describes it in his book 'Theology of Hope' :

"those who hope in Christ can no longer put up with reality as it is but, beginning to suffer under it, move to contradict it. Peace with God means conflict in the world because the goad of the promised future stabs into the flesh of every unfulfilled present."

For hope to move towards fulfilment requires not merely a response to the 'goad of the promised future' but an on-going support for, and involvement in, programmes which work in partnership with people caught up in poverty, conflict and natural disaster. Such programmes as the C.W.S. Christmas Appeal [see separate information] give all of us an opportunity to participate in building 'Hope for Tomorrow' the theme for this year's Christmas Appeal.

St. Paul said "three things remain: faith, hope and love and the greatest of these is love." [1 Corinthians 13]. Conversely the 20th century French mystic, Charles Peguy, said:

Hope leads everything.  
For faith only sees what is,  
But hope sees what will be.  
Love only loves what is,  
But hope loves what will be -  
in time and for all eternity.

Kim Bathgate

\* 'Songs for the Unsung" World Council of Churches, Geneva. 1983

*God hugs you.  
You are encircled by the arms  
Of the mystery of God.*

*Hildegard of Bingen 12<sup>th</sup> Century Mystic*

## **Beyond the Borders Some Observations by Bob Fendall**

*(Editor: Due to a computer malfunction, this piece was missed off the September Knox Life. My apologies Bob, and thank you!)*

I was privileged to represent Knox at the Progressive Christianity "Beyond the Borders" Conference held at the Community of St. Luke in Remuera, Auckland. This well organised event ran smoothly over the 4 days when we were stimulated, challenged, encouraged and were well catered for gastronomically.

We were exposed to a varied programme of stimulating addresses, thoughtful worship – "Be still and be centred," interview panels, quick-fire talks on a variety of social and religious topics, "pop up" poets stunningly evocative, workshops ranging from "Who, where and what is God? Is God within our

boundaries?” to “Taking Jesus seriously in the emergent religious communities after the death of Christianity;” from “Spirituality Free from Guilt: issues in Gay Spirituality” to “Hymns and songs for a Progressive Church.” What joy it was to meet up with friends from the past! The informal discussions over meal breaks was a chance to reflect on faith journeys which explored the boundaries.

Highlights included three stimulating and thoughtful presentations from Bernard Brandon Scott, a leader in the Progressive Christianity movement in the USA, an eminent New Testament scholar and professor at Phillips Theological Seminary, Tulsa, Oklahoma. In his focus on the parables he reminded us of Jesus’ lowly background as a Galilean illiterate peasant who belongs to an oral culture rather than a literate culture – an artist who painted word pictures rather than an abstract thinker. He spoke of Jesus pushing the boundaries. The parables he said are meant to provoke – they don’t provide an answer.

In his second presentation he addressed the question of “Who is the Founder of Christianity?” Brandon took us on a journey through the Greco-Roman world and the place of Judaism within that cultural background illustrated through images from archaeology and ancient texts. Was Jesus the founder? Or Paul? No Jesus was a Jew and Paul remained a Jew. He even made a case for Emperor Titus who took Judaism out of the picture and finally settled on Constantine who makes Christianity the official religion of the empire. Why do we look for truth in the past rather than the future? Thought provoking stuff!

In his final presentation the focus was on rediscovering Paul. He ventured that Paul viewed himself as the last of the great prophets following an intensive experience of conversion as life changing event. A moment of enlightenment for me was the realisation that, in Paul’s language (Romans 3:26), “...God justifies the one who has faith in Jesus” is more accurately translated as “... justifies the one through the faith **of** Jesus.” In other words, we live on the basis of Jesus’ unconditional confidence in God. We are called to be faithful like Jesus. This is not a matter of belief but of ethics.

Val Webb, whose background includes microbiology, public relations, art and religious studies, has a degree in Science and a Ph.D. in Theology and lives in Australia, gave a keynote address “From Insiders to Outsiders to People beyond the Borders.” Her emphasis was that Christianity has too often been within the lines and needs also to be outside the lines. Some gems that I caught - “Faith embraces doubt; belief gives explanations;” “The Trinity has squeezed out other expressions of God;” “The spiritual journey and the life journey are the same.”



I should mention Australian Broadcaster, Rachel Kohn's interviews with people like Walter Hirsh, former trade relations conciliator, Val Webb, Alexa Johnston on creativity, Brenda Rockell, a Baptist Contemplative, Ani Jangchub La, Buddhist Zen teacher, Star Gossage, artist and Wilf Holt, an Anglican Deacon who works with the 'street people.' I am indebted to Colin Gibson for new songs of faith to sing and to Rex Hunt, Progressive Theologian and Liturgist, for his quick-fire talk on Wisdom and Imagination along with his offering of a "Jesus Banquet" liturgy as a fresh expression of Communion.

This is enough to give you the flavour of "Beyond the Borders." I trust the next Progressive Christianity Conference will be well attended by Knoxonians!

## **A conversation between our new Organist, Daniel Cooper and Judith Challies**

**J.** Welcome to Knox Church Daniel. I know the Knox community is eager to know more about you, and given your youth, how you came to be our organist.

**D.** Thank you. I have always been interested in music. My grandmother was a concert pianist so maybe I inherited my musical passion from her. When I was in year 5 at Elmwood School, I wrote the music for the final assembly. I love composing and improvising, which is easy to do on the organ.

**J.** How much time do you spend practising?

**D.** Currently I play 1<sup>st</sup> Trombone in the Christchurch Boy's High School Orchestra, Jazz and Dixie Band and after school I'm involved with the Girls' High School orchestra, the Rangi Ruru Sinfonia and the Rangi Ruru Jazz Band. Every morning I practise at 7.30 am. I also have 2 organ students I teach from home. I practise at least 2-3 hours every day.

**J.** What are your current qualifications? And I believe you have been part of an overseas exchange programme.

**D.** I have an F.T.C.L for piano and an A.T.C.L for organ coming up. I went to Melbourne on an exchange programme, studied with Thomas Heywood, playing in the Melbourne Concert Hall, on the largest organ in the southern hemisphere. I was with people of a similar age – there is a great organ

culture in Melbourne. I was challenged and inspired, giving me new confidence. I am also a member of the NZ College of organists which meets every 2 years in Auckland.

**J.** What drew you to apply for the position here at Knox?

**D.** I have been the Organ Scholar at the Pro Cathedral working with Don Whelan, and a member of the choir. I'm now looking for new challenges. I still play the organ once a month at the Pro Cathedral. I am excited at being part of the Knox Community. My family is Presbyterian from way back so I feel at home here. I'm watching the installation of the new organ with great interest, and look forward to playing on it very soon.

**J.** What are you enjoying about Knox so far?

**D.** I like the semi-circular setting where people can see each other and I feel a real part of the congregation – not apart or distant. I appreciate people coming to talk after the services, letting me know they enjoy the music... even when it is improvised – organists love doing that.

**J.** What excites you about the future?

**D.** Firstly the opening of the new church. Then the possibility of young people being attracted to Knox and perhaps helping to create a new larger choir. I hope we will be able to provide organ and instrumental recitals on a regular basis and be involved in the 'Big Sing' regional and national competition. We could also consider hosting the Recital Series for Young Organists in September 2015, as a lead up to National Organ Week.

**J.** I'm enjoying your energy, enthusiasm and passion for music Daniel. I have even considered dancing more than once, and I imagine I'm not the only one! Your ability to improvise is amazing. Thank you.

You will be finishing year 13 next year. What are your plans for 2016?

**D.** I plan to attend Canterbury University, complete a music degree, followed by teacher training, in order to become a music teacher.

**J.** Thank you for your time today Daniel, and on behalf of the Knox community, I wish you every blessing as you settle in with us, and make your dreams a reality.

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## **CHRISTMAS BAKING FOR THE REBUILD**

Grateful thanks to all who took part in any way with the Christmas baking for the rebuild – those who baked, especially Doug who made all the Shortbread and Afghans, those who helped pack and those who got all the orders. We cleared \$3100 a great effort . So thank you all very much indeed!

**Jennifer McKinnon**

**BUILD  
HOPE**  
FOR TOMORROW



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69th Christmas Appeal

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Christian World Service relies on you to share with your parish and community the stories of the work we do together. Our partners have responded with food, water, medical care and comfort in Gaza. They have helped displaced people in Iraq, provide education for rural children and rebuild gardens in Tonga. They have worked long and hard, sometimes at great risk to themselves. Through your support of the Christmas and emergency appeals, they have been able to help many more people get what they need in difficult situations. Because our partners live in the communities where they work, they are known and accountable to the people that we seek to help. Thank you for your support – we count on it!

Yours in Justice and Peace

Pauline McKay  
National Director

**ADVENT 1 (30 NOV)**

**Training Young People in Gaza.**

In Gaza, young people have dreams and hopes like people everywhere. They want jobs to help their families make ends meet. Specialist training is hard to get in its crippled economy, but the Department of Service to Palestinians now has long established

**ADVENT 2 (7 DEC)**

**Supporting Workers in Sri Lanka.**

In Sri Lanka, the long grueling hours are a shock to new arrivals to the country's Free Trade Zone factories. How many are families coming from the north where their families are destitute five years after the civil war ended. When factory owners and landlords exploit them, it is the Women's Centre that pushes for better

**ADVENT 3 (14 DEC)**

**Educating South Sudanese.**

In South Sudan, the people celebrated their newly won independence in July 2011. Three and a half years later political conflict has pushed the country to the brink of disaster. In the township of Maridi, the Marie Service Agency is building something new. Decades of war and poverty have depleted most South Sudanese

**ADVENT 4 (21 DEC)**

**Equipping Teachers in Haiti.**

In distant Haiti a small group of highly experienced development workers help rural people to keep living at bay. KOK works with isolated communities to find out what they need and how to make it happen. In a country regularly rocked by natural and political

**CHRISTMAS DAY (25 DEC)**

**Growing Food in Kiripati Tonga.**

In Tonga, new gardens promise food security for residents of the Kiripati island group.