

## We Start With...

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

## From the 'Chair'

We remember with gratitude the life of Dr Evelyn Entwistle, a long-standing member of our group. She had not been well in recent years, and with her husband's death last month we can recognise the peace that comes with the end of a busy and involved life. As with all of our members, when the grief subsides, the memories are happy ones and bring a smile about shared happier times.

March is AGM time. We have had a good year and look forward to an interesting 2016-17. We have a small committee - too small for our task - and I am looking for two or three members to put their name forward for election. The work is not onerous - two or three meetings per year, assistance with the programme, and assistance at meetings. We're a good group to work with, and I hope you will consider joining us.

*Gretchen*

[gretchen.kivell@xtra.co.nz](mailto:gretchen.kivell@xtra.co.nz) (03) 473 0031

## March Meeting

This month's meeting is a combined effort by Frances Smithson and myself. 'Religion for Atheists' by Alain de Botton has an interesting thesis - that religion provides for the human spirit better than anything else devised so far - and much food for thought. We'd like to share this book with you.

## Suffragette

I hope that most readers will have been to see the excellent film about the struggle for votes for women - if not - a treat is in store when you go. We need to remember what it was like for women then...

- Women the property of their husband
- Women's property passed to the husband on marriage
- Expectation of obedience to their husbands
- No voting rights
- Little compensation for injury at work
- Wife beating largely acceptable - no such thing as raping your wife
- Unequal pay
- No work when pregnant
- Full suffrage in England only in 1928

## AGM

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## Religion for Atheists

Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> MARCH

Highgate Church buildings,  
Maori Hill

Tea and Coffee will be available

From 3pm

The programme will start  
at 3.30pm

*Contribution - \$4*

**Mornington Methodist  
Open Education Programme**

Sea of Faith members are welcome to attend these sessions, held on Wednesday evenings in the Mornington Methodist church in Galloway St near the corner with Whitby Street.

Each session begins at 7.30 pm. Entry \$5. A separate pre-session meal is held in the adjoining hall at 6 pm. Bookings for the meal can be made through Judy Russell (455 3727) and the cost is \$15 on the night.

**The speakers for 2016**

16 March	Dunedin Mission Speaker
20 April	Rev John Franklin (Spiritual Growth Ministries)
18 May	Rev David Clark MP
15 June	Bishop Richard Randerson
20 July	Science DVD
17 August	Colin Gibson – "Gloria"
21 September	Prof David Tombs (Public Theology, University of Otago)

***More detail about this month's session:***

Jimmy McLauchlan, Business Development Leader from the Dunedin Methodist Mission talks about the current state of social services in New Zealand, including the conditions placed on vulnerable clients, new challenges for social providers and the prospect of the privatisation of social services, all in the context of the Mission's work in Dunedin. An opportunity to catch up on what has happened and may happen for the poor and disadvantaged in our society. This talk might leave you appalled or angry; it will not leave you unmoved or indifferent.

The 15<sup>th</sup> June meeting with Bishop Richard Randerson is a joint meeting with Sea of Faith.

**Otago Daily Times**

Bless that paper and its editors for including the *Faith and Reason* feature on a regular basis. We used to have Ian Harris as a fairly lone voice but now we have as lively debate as the paper is calling in theological muscle from a variety of quarters. Lloyd weighed in a couple of weeks ago to rebut some of Murray Rae's arguments and support Ian Harris – none of us will be surprised about that but when you take a step backwards the fact that a newspaper does allocate so much space to a regular feature on faith makes us all realise that faith issues are very much at the forefront of many minds – irrespective of attendance at churches.

The letters to the editor which invariably follow the articles show the diversity of belief in our community. Would that many of those writers would join our Sea of Faith group.

I must admit to being disappointed with those writers who play the man not the ball. *Ad Hominem* attacks in legal lingo. Generally when that happens on the sports field it is a sure sign that the person being attacked has superior skills and is a real threat to the opposition. In a debate, for me it signals the loss of the argument as the attacker has no logic or reason to offer in rebuttal. *Not so much thinking as rearranging his prejudices* according to one of my teaching mentors or maybe just restating them more loudly and aggressively.

It surely should be possible to say "well this is where I am up to in my thinking and understanding and as a fellow member of the human race I can accept that you believe differently from me".

***Newsletter Editor:***

Alan Jackson  
55 Evans Street  
DUNEDIN 9010  
Ph: 473 6947  
[alanjackson@xtra.co.nz](mailto:alanjackson@xtra.co.nz)