

**“Salt-seasoning brings out God-flavours” a sermon preached by Kerry Enright at Knox Church Dunedin New Zealand on Sunday 5 February 2017, the day before Waitangi Day, based on Matthew 5:13-20**

Two weeks ago I talked about the beginnings of the Jesus movement, the context for it, the nature of it.

Last week I talked about the Jesus movement as a movement of blessedness, a particular kind of blessedness – Jesus blessedness. Jesus presented a manifesto, a series of promises to the poor in the spirit, the meek, the merciful, the people who hunger and thirst for right living and right relating and a right economy, the people who are vilified for what they do. And we are called to be a community of blessedness, to embody and to exhibit blessedness.

So have talked about who are we and what we are to do. Today Matthew suggests how we are to embody and exhibit the movement, the blessedness.

Who we are. What we do. How we do it.

Two images - tasty salt, light on a hill.

I want to focus on the image of salt.

In recent years a major theme is being emphasised in the church. Let me give some examples.

Robin Meyers book about the church is called *The Underground Church – Reclaiming the Subversive Way of Jesus*. It is a call to work underground to undermine the empire, the prevailing framework that creates inequality, sidelines the poor, promotes violence, desecrates creation, dishonours God. Meyers puts himself in the progressive movement.

Shane Claiborne’s book about Christianity is called *the Irresistible Revolution, Living as an Ordinary Radical*. Claiborne lives in Philadelphia and is regularly arrested for protesting against the death penalty. He calls for a new monastic movement to embody the gospel in lived community. He will be here in Dunedin next month at Holy Name and I encourage you to hear him. Claiborne comes out of the radical evangelical movement.

Brian McLaren's book is called Everything Must Change – he writes about the Jesus movement in the face of environmental breakdown – four crises - a prosperity crisis leading to environmental degradation; an equity crisis with economic inequality; a security crisis with resentment among peoples and a desire to secure our safety with weapons; a spirituality crisis – that overlays all this with a blessing. McLaren is called a progressive evangelical.

Tom Sine's book is called the New Conspirators, Creating the future one mustard seed at a time.

New Zealanders Jenny and Justin Duckworth have written a book called Against the Tide, Towards the Kingdom. Justin is the Anglican Bishop of Wellington.

Do you get the drift?

Moving from an era when some emphasis was put on the church supporting the establishment, maintaining society, to an era when emphasis is put on enacting a different future, disturbing the establishment, overturning prevailing values.

It is there in the image of the tasty salt.

Salt soaks through, but it needs to be tasty to make any kind of difference. It's insidious. And it hints at subversion, infiltration, change from within, working underground.

This is Waitangi weekend so its proper we talk about what salt and light mean in light of the Treaty.

The first Chief Justice of this country was Sir William Martin, a reserved careful and quiet figure, who arrived in New Zealand in 1841 and took up his role that year. The Martins built their home in Judges Bay, in Auckland, around from the Parnell look-out. It was away from other homes because that is how the Martins preferred to live, not through snobbishness, anything but, but because they were somewhat reserved.

But inside the quiet, careful reserved nature, William Martin had spirit and a strong sense of justice. He was a man of faith, a friend of Bishop Selwyn who in later life wrote a biblical text.

He was careful in his judgements, but at least twice he courted controversy, both times in defence of Maori rights. He had learned the language and respected the people.

The first was over supposedly unoccupied Maori land. In the 1840s, the British Government decided the Crown would take the land. Governor Grey had to implement the decision although he disagreed with it. But Martin and Bishop Selwyn vigorously opposed it because Maori Chiefs had entered into a solemn agreement with the Crown. To cut a long story short, the decision was not implemented.

The second was over the invasion of Taranaki. Tribes claimed land at Waitara. The Crown surveyed it for selling to settlers. One of the tribes pulled up the survey pegs. As a result of the dispute, martial law was imposed in 1860 and troops moved on to the land. Martin was bitterly opposed and he wrote carefully argued pieces that the dispute was a land quarrel and should have been dealt with by the courts not by officials and politicians. What we now know as the Land Wars, he says, started through the improper use of military force.

Martin believed that agitation for self-government was a good thing. He believed Maori could be given self-government in the same way that Scots were given self-government. This was when the prevailing view was that land should be given to settlers. For his views he was criticised by the Government and many of the people.

Martin was salty. He brought to the system a strong sense of justice framed by faith. And he used his professional skill as a lawyer to do what he could for the sake of justice.

But often it is difficult.

Friends tell me about people in their workplaces who resent them using Maori words, and who voice their opposition because they imagine they are speaking for the majority view. And those friends find the need to support and encourage each other in learning Maori and in speaking Maori.

Friends tell me about people who resent Maori protocol at the beginning of an event at school or church or university. Principals and teachers and ministers say how important it is that the policies of their institutions mandate partnership and how much they look for encouragement from people.

People tell me about how in their families stereotypes are still promulgated. It is hard in that context. I continue to be inspired by my father and mother who frequently took us to the marae, who spoke some words at home, and who kept emphasising the importance of treating people with respect. And when my father heard family speaking disparagingly – I heard him say quite directly – you will not speak like that in my home.

The newspaper yesterday reported how few New Zealanders know much about the Treaty and the history of Treaty relationships. Friends, we have no excuse. And there is so much online.

And in the Church, where we are called to embody and exhibit the empire of God, in our rituals, in our speaking and writing, in our relationships with the community, we can be people of the Treaty, and followers of Jesus.

Relationships between Maori and Pakeha are still work in progress. Prison and health statistics show the impact of colonisation.

The church had a central role in persuading Maori to sign the Treaty. There is an obligation on us as people of the church to ensure it is honoured in every part of our national life.

We can be salt and light in our workplaces, in our families, in the church, in expecting that the honouring of the Treaty in all respects will be who we are, how we are, what we do.

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