

Synod of Otago and Southland
AGM 19th - 20th April 2014
Mission Advisor's Report

This past year has once again been a busy one with me being out of the office on an average of once a week visiting parishes in the Synod. I really value the time meeting folk and working with you and it is most humbling and gratifying that after 8 years as Mission Advisor you still call me. The Synod is a family and I always feel welcome whenever I meet with you. My grateful thanks.

This past year I have found myself coming back again and again to Jesus words in John 14:12 'I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.'

I have also been mindful that in 2002 the General Assembly said that the core of ministry in the church is the whole people of God. If this is the case, and I believe that Scripture makes that clear, then ministry is the business of every follower of Jesus. We simply have different functions and gifts to bring.

Jesus' words in John 14:12 speak right into this. All followers are ministers, (Peter calls us a royal priesthood) and the church as the Body of Christ is called to continue in our time and place what Jesus would be doing if He were here in person. Each of us has parts to play and together, with the diversity of God-given gifts among us, that work will continue. Because the Holy Spirit is within us, wherever we are that same Spirit is present - in effect Jesus is present where we are. When Jesus said that greater things will be done because He was going to the Father, He simply meant that because He is in many ways multiplied by the number of believers, the potential for greater effect applies. The book of Acts demonstrates this and so does church history at those times when we see people grasping this and the Spirit being then free to work in and through them. Our own denomination is no exception, nor a stranger to this work.

We need to rediscover this. It is through our relationship with Jesus that His Spirit is able to work in and through us to continue His mission that He demonstrated when He walked this world.

Mission is less about programmes, policies and procedures and much more about Jesus and our ever deepening relationship with Him. Neither is mission about Church growth or perpetuating a particular model of church, it's much more about Kingdom proclamation and demonstration, the result of which is the growth of the church. Size is not the issue, but a passion for Jesus. Neither is 'success' (usually defined numerically), but faithfulness.

A quote from a young church leader, 'The Kingdom of God is not advanced by programmes or budgets, but by men and women who are radically surrendered to Christ.'

Jesus said, 'Apart from me you can do nothing.'

My time as Moderator will be focused on this.

Thank you for the privilege of serving among such wonderful people.

Bruce Fraser
Synod Mission Advisor
March 2013.