



Rev. Dave Clancey

## Editorial

The gospel is news. Good news. That is what the Greek word means, and the English transliteration of that word forms the root for our ‘*evange*’ words. We are *evangelicals* for the heart of our faith is the good news—the gospel—of God. In Jesus, God became man to die in our place and was then raised as Lord to new life so that we, by faith in Jesus, might be forgiven and reconciled to God. We *evangelise* because we believe that this good news is indeed both of those things—‘good’ and ‘news’. People need to hear of this news, for it is the power of God for salvation for all who believe.

This good news is inclusive news. It welcomes all who hear it. No one is excluded from hearing and responding. Jesus turned social conventions on their head as both women and men, socially significant and the unimportant, Jews and Gentile—all people—were called to respond to him and his kingdom. And all who responded were granted forgiveness and eternal life in his kingdom.

This good news is compelling news. Those who hear this news must do something with it. It is impossible to receive this news and for nothing to change. As Jesus said, ‘he who is not with me is against me’ (Mt 12:30). But hearing the gospel forces us to not only be recipients of it, but also promulgators. Those who hear become those who speak. This news not only offers forgiveness for our sins, but declares the Lordship of Jesus, to whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess his rule. Evangelicals have always been at the forefront of world missions, bringing this good news to those who have not heard it.

This good news is demanding news. The Lordship of Jesus necessarily requires repentance, as we turn from self-rule and self-determination and submit ourselves to the rule of Jesus. Words and worldviews, attitudes and actions are all brought to him and transformed by his Spirit. Our values and determinations of what is right and wrong, and decisions about what he requires of us, must all be reassessed in light of his word—the whole canon of Scripture.

This year marks the first formal proclamation of this good news in these Islands. Throughout 2014 we will be reminded that this gospel is indeed

inclusive, as Maori and Pakeha and all who now live in these islands are offered the hope that Jesus alone brings. This inclusive understanding of the gospel was what compelled men and women to leave home and family and come to New Zealand so that those who didn’t yet know Christ might hear his offer. This year is not a time for us to simply remember the past and be proud of our heritage; those who went before us must motivate us to continue the work of reaching out to all who have not yet heard this good news.

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But as we are compelled to proclaim this gospel, we must also be compelled to stand for this gospel, against all and any changes. The demands of the gospel have not changed. In living out our faith and obedience we face many different challenges compared to those who first proclaimed the gospel in these islands, and those who first heard it. But we are still called to obey Christ in all things, and to proclaim his gospel—not one of our own design. Of course we do this sensitively, winsomely, and above all lovingly, but we must declare this inclusive, compelling and demanding news. For at the end of the day, it is not our news. It is God’s news, of what he has done for us through his Son in the power of his Spirit. It is not ours to change or tweak, to add to or subtract from. For only God’s news is good news. Let us then, as evangelicals, stand firmly on our heritage and both live and proclaim this gospel. Let us call all Anglicans to live and proclaim this inclusive, compelling, demanding gospel—calling all people to respond in repentance and faith to the Lord whom God has given them. And let us pray that God will continue to grow his gospel in our lives and in the life of our church. For his glory we ask it.