

The National Religious Discussion Network

Sea of Faith

Exploring Spirituality, Religion and Ethics

CONFERENCE 2017

“Reformation 2.0: Luther lit a fuse, what happens next?”

Monday 6 to Wednesday 8, November 2017

Silverstream Retreat, 3 Reynolds Bach Drive, Silverstream, near Wellington

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It is 500 years since Martin Luther nailed his 95 theses to the church door in Wittenberg, protesting against corruption in the Church of the time. This provides a starting point for a consideration of how events unfolded since then, and more especially, how religion and spirituality are evolving in our time. What are the present day corruptions? What are the reforming initiatives today? What new spiritual/religious developments are needed in our time as we face a cultural situation and ethical issues that were simply not there in previous centuries? What needs to be discarded, challenged, or radically renewed?

Western society's history, development and ethics have evolved largely from its Christian inheritance. This has been the case in New Zealand since the arrival of Pākehā. It is not to exclude other influences, but acknowledges our Christian heritage as a major contributor to New Zealand's cultural development.

The mythologies that sustained Christendom, Islam, and other classic faiths have little meaning for many people today, embedded as they are in a materialistic way of life, and drawing down so dangerously hard on the earth's diminishing resources and ecosystems. Any new direction may need a new spiritual underpinning (Reformation 2.0). How might this be facilitated among politicians, economists, business leaders, and we citizens?

We see the critical importance of having some understanding of history if we are to move forward with any sense of purpose and meaning. So we want to pick up the symbolism of Reformation to help link past, present and future, and move beyond the current politics and economics of short term expediency with its goal of economic growth.

Speakers and Subjects

Lloyd Geering “500 years: From the Reformation of the Church to the Reformulation of Christian Faith.”

Hal Taussig The current need for reformation within the Christian church, and the Progressive Christian take on this

Rachael Kohn A wider view on the need for reform in the world's religions, we hope including Islam, Judaism, and also within the Catholic Church.

Sue Bradford “Making it real: Beyond reformation to transformation in Aotearoa 2017.” Over the last three decades New Zealand has evolved into a country where gross inequality, the pursuit of individualism and studied heartlessness on the part of successive governments are accepted as societal norms. Cold charity is preferred to redistributive compassion. Sue Bradford has fought for radical change all her life as a street protestor, community organiser - and parliamentarian. In her talk to our 2017 conference she will share some of her story and reflections on a life of fuse-lighting, before posing a series of challenges about where we might go from here if we would like to conceive not just a reformed but a transformed Aotearoa.