

MODERATOR'S EASTER MESSAGE 2017

ENGAGE WITH THE WORLD: EASTER HOPE

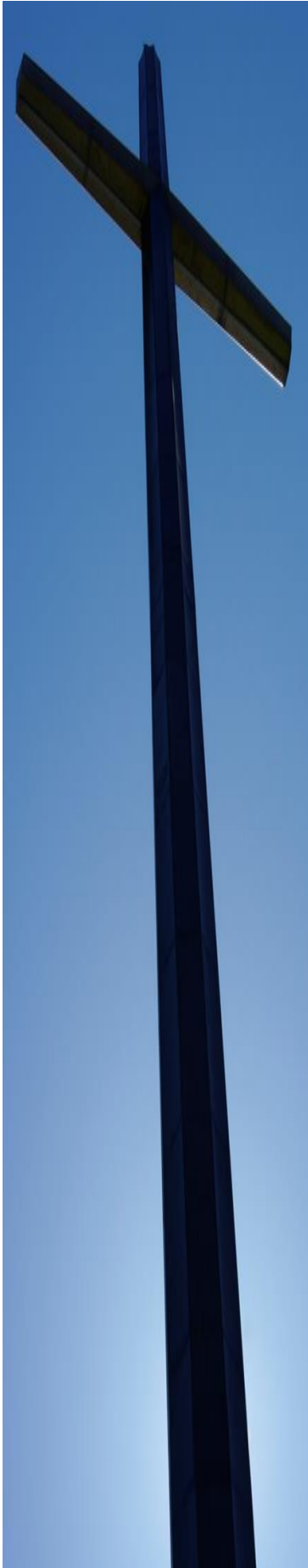
I read a good quote the other day. It goes: "Everything good is uphill". It's true in my experience. No matter what we do, the good stuff costs. It costs time, it costs energy, it costs all the other things that we could be doing which may be more enjoyable for us. Easter is perhaps the ultimate demonstration of the truth of the saying. The very best thing in the universe cost the life of the very best person – Jesus Christ, the son of God.

There's a kind of "cargo-cult" around the Church these days that insists that it's God's job to just give us stuff and that somehow we are all owed the best of everything. Now, I believe God is our provider and I believe that God wants the Church to be a place of abundance, but I don't believe that God ever just lands us with that abundance because we want it.

As a parent I know that doing something like this for my own children would never have been good for them. Learning the cost of something was always necessary for them to understand the value of anything.

At Easter we're given the greatest gift of all – time: the gift of a new relationship with God, free, gratis and for nothing. God is ready and willing to engage with anyone who will take God's word for it. Believe and receive, but this means we must engage. The Gospel is the greatest message of hope in the world. But how can we let the world know in this day and age of incredible apathy and cynicism around Christianity?

The answer begins with the same dynamic that characterises the whole Easter event in the Gospels – we must engage. The Church has arisen from God's deliberate plan to engage a rebellious and lost world. We need to follow this example and engage the world with the Easter story. Up and down the country churches are preparing to invite their communities to experience Easter by holding walk-through or even drive-through audio-visual experiences of the Easter story. Others are holding special invitational services, and some are trying other



new things that are creative and engaging.

I would love to highlight what you've done this Easter, so please record the event and send me some pictures and a description of what you did and how it was received by the wider community. Let us know so we can post something about it on the Church Facebook page. Share with our wider family the hope you are bringing to your community.

He is truly the hope of the world. Let's help the world to realise this!

God Bless you and yours this Easter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Richard Dawson'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard Dawson
Moderator Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand