

Views from the Pews - Legacy

Announcements of the New Year's honours recipients and the death of Dame Tariana Turia have possibly generated discussion about what constitutes achievements that contribute to fields of expertise and what is lasting legacy. Dame Tariana, most would agree, fits the latter leaving a significant legacy in politics and Te Ao Maaori. The Cathedral's three Dames also made significant contributions in their respective fields and legacy in their faith communities. While many of us won't attain national recognition for our achievements, does this preclude us from leaving a legacy?

Inheritance and heritage, two important biblical themes in old and new covenant theology, are closely related to the concept of legacy. Biblical legacy focuses on what will endure and embodies the notion of living intentionally to build into future generations. In our communities, we witness the opposite wreaking havoc for future generations. This societal tsunami is not new, biblical history is suffused with a similar history.

Hebrew culture considered heritage and inheritance, primarily, a 'right' of the first-born son. As Christians our origins are less about these two matters and more about legacy. We are birthed in it, and God instructs us to give it our full attention, for the sake of our children and grandchildren. As image bearers we are also called to be peacemakers and reconcilers, both of which, support lasting intergenerational legacy but aren't mutually exclusive to those with children. Euphemisms such as seed sowing, referring to good deeds or reputation, share this idea of intentionality, hard work, and hope of harvest.

The same sentiment was reflected in a recent Radio Rhema advertisement with the phrase 'legacy of hope'. While all legacy requires intentional investment of time and energy, biblical legacy also requires obedience and perseverance informed by wisdom. In Genesis, Eve's unwise disobedience, forfeited mankind's legacy of an intimate relationship with God, for knowledge. Jesus later redeemed us by his supreme act of sacrificial obedience on the cross and ever since, we have had access to salvation, reconciliation and hope, our God intended legacy.

Many of us may have been blessed with an intergenerational legacy of faith. Regardless, we are all called to be legacy leavers through the lives we lead. As God's image bearers we are exhorted to take on this responsibility with intentionality, also considering what sacrificial act of obedience we will make to see a hope - filled heavenly harvest (Ps 71:17-19).

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