

Saturday 3rd August 2019



A Million Dreams

And afterward, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions.

[Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17]

In his opening address, our new Vice President of the Methodist Conference, Clive Marsh, used a range of different music styles in worship, including many that were not overtly Christian, encouraging us to engage with the culture we live in. In that vein, one of the biggest films of 2017 was *The Greatest Showman*, by Twentieth Century Fox. The film, about the historical P. T. Barnum, has been a sensational hit. In some of my churches, this is the film that will be the basis of our next Bible study, drawing out some of the key themes that appear in the well-loved soundtrack.

One of my favourite songs from the film is 'A Million Dreams', where Barnum and then later his daughters, sing of the many dreams they have for the future. Dreams are a natural part of human nature, as is dreaming for a better world, a better future. It is such dreams that lead Extinction Rebellion and the children who walk out of school to protest against climate change.

The Bible is full of dreams for the future, and as Christians we don't believe that these are pie in the sky dreams, but visions of the future that God wants us to have, for ourselves and for the whole of creation. One of the most powerful of these is the vision of the new creation towards the end of Revelation.

Many of our hymns also speak of visions of a better world, such as 'Beauty for Brokenness' by Graham Kendrick (*Singing the Faith* 693) which, in the form of a prayer, spells out a vision for a better world; or perhaps 'Let us Build a House (All are Welcome)' by Marty Haugen (*Singing the Faith* 409), which speaks of a vision of the church where everyone is truly welcome.

*God of dreams and visions,
thank you for inspiring us and challenging us;
thank you for the visions you have given us, that give us hope in the future.
When our world seems dark and all seems hopeless,
help us to hold on to the vision of your kingdom,
the vision of a new creation perfectly in tune with you.
Give us the inner peace that comes from knowing that this promise is assured.
Amen*

Prayers for August 2019 by Revd Claire Rawlinson
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