

# *Oikos* AUSTRALIA

MAGAZINE

## The SOWER and the SEEDS

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**OUR VISION** - To network and encourage the new ways of 'being church' that God is bringing about in Australia today.

**Director:** Phil Brown

**Editor:** Phillip Walters

**Sub Editor:** Bessie Pereira

**Layout & Graphics:** Phillip Walters

**Article Contributors:**

Carl Musch	Ian Thomson
Phillip Walters	Molong Nacua
Phil Brown	Andrew Francis
FelicityDale	Roger Thoman

For more information on OIKOS Australia, please contact us at:

**Mail:**

OIKOS Australia  
64 Amethyst Cres  
Mt Richon W.A. 6112

**Emails:**

philbrown@oikos.org.au  
editor@oikos.org.au

**Website:**

www.oikos.org.au

**Mobile:**

0409 137 988 (Phil Brown)

**Subscriptions:**

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**Next Edition:** The Summer edition of OIKOS Magazine will appear in late December. Suggestions and news are welcome. Please send them in by November 15th.

OIKOS Australia is a friendship ministry to home churches, simple churches and similar missional gatherings that are happening across our nation and around the world today.



### I used to promote church planting ...

**As a church planter, I used to promote church planting** as the solution to the lack of growth of the church within Australia! My emphasis has changed to focus on making disciples as the core activity for believers. It is the core command of Christ in the Great Commission (Matt 28:19). The imperative is to make disciples and the participles *baptizing* and

*teaching* form part of the process.

New believers are only properly disciplined when they will make other disciples, which is the basis of the amazing growth of the early Christian movement. Early Christianity was a movement, more than a "church organization," at least as we understand "church" from our experience.

So is the church unimportant? No – the church is the body of Christ of which Christ is correctly the head (Eph1.22). When disciples are making disciples, there is growth and disciples naturally want to meet and gather with other disciples in the name of the Jesus. It is the presence of Jesus through his Spirit that is central to a true expression of the church (Matt 18:20, Eph 2:4).

The emphasis in church planting so often has been on the gathered church meeting and having a building and a pastor and the focus has often been to establish these features as the core goal, and as quickly as possible. However this does not usually result in many new disciples being made, but often attracts people who are already Christian. The energy of the Group quickly becomes focused on the weekly "worship service" and other activities of "the church" instead of on "making disciples" as Jesus commanded.

At its best, the church as a loving faith community will be attractive to people who it is in relationship with. However we need to focus on the core command of Jesus before anything else. In this order I do still promote the formation of faith communities as a consequence of making disciples.

**And it was such communities** that I recently visited on a trip to the Philippines in August, starting with some time spent with Molong Nacua (featured later in the Magazine), a leader in the Central Philippines island of Cebu. Molong heads up a discipling movement which is very focused and intentional in its approach. I then travelled to Siquijor to meet with the ICC (International Children's Care) staff, and simple church leaders for equipping, training and vision casting. The training was based on the discipling calls of Jesus and included discovery bible study, training in sharing one's testimony, listening prayer, blessing and principles for simple Church gatherings. I had the opportunity to share a number of hours with the leaders who run simple church groups and then also shared with Lloyd and Maricar Walahan's group of approximately 25 in their weekend meeting. One of the groups was a 3rd generation youth group with 7 non-Christians attending led by a lady who has come to faith only months ago.

I then travelled to Bataan and Pampanga. In Bataan I caught up with the One Hope project, which has 30 micro-finance groups involving 686 people (mostly women) and growing towards a target of 900. The staff meet weekly with these groups and include a devotional time. I spent time in training, and practice as well as visiting with 3 of the "fellowship groups". This gave me a good feel for the groups, and the people's needs, basically food and medicine following the typhoon/floods. The people are very open. Approximately 8-10 women responded to an appeal to follow Jesus and the leader is following them up.

**Then back to Australia** and the many faith communities that relate to Oikos. May we also truly experience that presence of Jesus that, as I said, is central to a true expression of His church, and which results in the making of disciples as our core activity.

Blessings ... Phil Brown



# RED DIRT GOSPEL

Robert Warren with Carl Musch

HOLY BIBLE  
New International Version

Author Robert Warren (*From Here to Kingdom Come*) talks with Carl Musch, one of the inspiring story-tellers at the 2013 OIKOS National Gathering, about his work among Indigenous communities across the top end of Australia

Carl Musch has escaped enraged knife-wielding assailants and spear-throwing adversaries; he has survived the threat of crocodile attacks and the hardships of the remotest regions of Australia. He is a man acquainted with troubles, often having nowhere to lay his head and little to eat. Carl, who is part Apache Indian and a former Queen's Scout, was well prepared by the Lord for what he was to face in the far reaches of Australia.

**RW:** *Did you always want to be a missionary or did God call you in some special way?*

**CM:** As a child, I was frequently asked what I wanted to be when I grew up. Like most ten-year-olds I didn't have any idea and so I would tell my inquisitors that I wanted to be a pest control man or a butcher; that seemed to satisfy them. During school holidays I was packed off to Church camps, partly I suspect

because my mother was not well and it was the best value childcare on offer. They were great. One of the young camp leaders was sharing about the life of the disciples, also his own experience as a disciple and that Jesus was looking for disciples. I got so excited I blurted out ... "Well, if I can be a disciple of Jesus then there's nothing else in this world worth doing more than that!" With that exclamation came an explosion of power inside me, surging through my whole body! The first thing I wanted to do was tell another kid who missed the 'devotions' that he could be a disciple too and we told Jesus together that we both wanted to follow him.

Two years later, at the age of twelve, I had a life-changing dream. In the dream I saw a vast landscape and gatherings of dark-skinned people. I was talking with them in a circle and I placed a Bible on the ground, stepped back from the circle and went away





but when I returned I could see people still gathered around the Bible. This happened about three times then I woke up with the presence of God filling my heart like I'd never known before. I knew God was calling me to be a missionary. I thought though that the landscape was Africa.

**RW:** *You were very young when God called you. How did you prepare for this calling?*

**CM:** Because of my mother's illness and a church background in which healing was 'unexpected', church attendance became just another burden which she could do without and so did the rest of the family. However I had been taught that if I read the Bible God would speak to me through it and guide me. So I read it pretty much daily with expectation. He spoke and guided as promised. That dream I had been given was set in 'the Bush' so I rejoined Scouts which I had quit, but now there was a purpose to the effort of camping and hiking and training in survival and leadership skill. I hope some young people read this. School, they told me was to prepare you for your adult working life so I took seriously every opportunity to gain skills in public speaking, music and drama because these were skills that I had come to see as relevant from my little bit of time in church.

After High school I knew I was called to the mission field but didn't know how to get there. I worked a few jobs, started a tutoring business and did a bit of study, but I was really seeking God's direction. I know it sounds funny but I was so long out of the habit of going to church it hadn't really entered my mind as a place I would find God's direction.

Not long after this in 1987 I was praying, "Lord, You called me to be a missionary. When are you going to send me to Africa?" Then I was startled by God's audible response ... "If you don't leave now, you never will!" I was nineteen years old at the time. 'Now' meant 'immediately'. I felt bad that it took me a whole three days to give away my car and business. You might think a person would find that hard but I tell you that 'Word' from God made it so easy. Check out Romans 10:15. I decided to hitchhike to Darwin where I could maybe get work on a boat to get across to Singapore where I had a job offer, and from there, travel to Africa. It was a pretty rough plan. I had no knowledge of visas or anything.

When I arrived at Darwin I got invited to a Spirit-filled church passionate about evangelism and disciple making. They advised me to do some ministry training with them, which was fair dinkum on-the-job training; street evangelism, and lots of meetings - prayer, Bible study, gospel band (writing our own music), adult Sunday School ... it was full on.

I was startled by God's audible response ... "If you don't leave now, you never will!" I was nineteen years old at the time. 'Now' meant 'immediately'.

**RW:** *Why didn't you go to Africa like to you expected to?*

**CM:** For a few months, in Darwin, I was living in the parks or under buildings with

mostly Aboriginal people. One Saturday I was with some of them who were planning a buffalo hunting expedition. They were in the truck ready to go when one of them called out, "Hey, white-fella, you wanna come?" I didn't need to be asked twice and dived in through an open rear window of the already overloaded old truck.

Out past Kakadu in Arnhem Land with them, I was holding onto the front of the bull-catcher (a 4 wheel drive vehicle with the roof cut off to allow for clear shooting) when we burst through the long grass on a ridge. There I saw the Arnhem Land floodplains and escarpments for the first time in my life. Yet I thought, "I've seen this before." It was the same place that I'd seen in the dream when I was twelve years old! Mine was the only white face for miles and I realised that I was with the people to whom God had called me. I realised that I didn't need to go to Africa! God had ordered my steps to right where I was meant to be.

I continued to attend that church in Darwin but I never told them that I was homeless. They eventually found out though. You see, I only had one pair of pants, and the bottom was seriously threadbare. So I would go to the local post office and gather pieces of free packaging tape on my arms, then go into the public toilets, remove my pants and use another layer of postal tape to hold the threadbare bottom together for a few more days. I'm very grateful to Australia Post for their generosity in keeping me decent. The fact that I crinkled when I walked eventually gave me away and I moved into a church ministry house. Six months later they had me running one.

**RW:** *How did you step out into the ministry which God had prepared for you?*

**CM:** I just moved a gear in my head, from one of *preparing to doing*. I suppose I just went to work. I started to study the Bible with a few people, visited hospitals, talked with people about God and life on the streets. I just helped people in any way I could. I prayed with a few people who said they wanted to follow Jesus, and I would 'follow them up'. Then when I asked the pastor if he could go to the Aboriginal communities to hold meetings, he sent me! I went to Bagot first, and that



Toni and Kim's baptism

led me to Barunga and Beswick communities down past Katherine.

Some Barunga believers had asked that we hold a crusade in their community. I had never conducted a crusade before but God's grace was overwhelming. God had even visited the community Chairman in a dream and told him we were coming with a message from God for his people. We saw broken bones miraculously healed and cancers disappear. One lady said she had just broken her foot and wanted our assistance to come to the meeting, so we prayed that Jesus would heal her then and there. The damage must have been substantial for us to notice that a black leg was purple. Most of the family were sitting around drinking when she rose from her chair and began banging her foot on the ground (no pain) giving glory to God. Obviously impressed, her family put down their beers and walked over to the meeting with her.

But the most remarkable healing miracle I saw was that of a man named Jeffery. He had some eye disease. His eyes were a reddish-yellow colour and he could not look into the dimmest light. They were so badly infected, and he was so badly intoxicated, that the puss, which had been flowing from each eye, had dried onto his cheeks, in his beard and it had even run down onto his tea-shirt. Not only that but what looked like dead flies were stuck in the dried puss! It wasn't a pretty sight.

Anyway he came out for prayer for healing! I must admit I did not want to put my hands on him, so I closed my eyes and braced myself. I prayed and when I opened my eyes, he had both hands in the air praising God. His eyes were totally clear, and he was not shading his eyes from the dim light anymore. But what amazed me was that he seemed stone cold sober and to top it off, all the puss and flies had gone, off his face, and even off his shirt! God had healed him *and* cleaned him up as well! I

think God showed us all that night that if He could clean up the outside of someone who looked like that then He could do the same for any willing human heart.

After a few days we had 160 decisions for Christ (a third of the township) but there were no Christian leaders on the community with the confidence to lead or teach them in God's new life. So they asked me to stay and be the pastor and I

was even offered a two-storey air-conditioned house - the best house on the community. After being homeless for so long, the idea was more than a little attractive. I asked God but got a surprising "No". I felt that God wanted me to return every six weeks though to teach on being a disciple of Jesus. After six months I dropped in at Barunga for a surprise visit, and I found about 100 people sharing Bible readings,

The way Aboriginal people do church 'naturally' almost inevitably runs into conflict with practices of denominations or church 'traditions'

singing and praying for the sick. I was so blessed.

**RW:** *You and Gail have been serving God in the ministry now for more than 20 years. What have been the highlights and the low points of your ministry together?*

**CM:** There is a big difference between what we have come to accept as normal church life (with a huge dependency on an institutional program and the 'minister') and personally 'following Jesus'. Without a doubt, to see and play a part in empowering Aboriginal people to begin to take ownership of a genuine relationship with God, and be passionate to share that with others; that has been the highlight. Right now, I'm as excited as I've ever been about what I'm seeing happening. I'm seeing believers, in community after community, doing what *they* can do rather than looking at what they lack or for someone else to do it for them.

The low points? Well when you do things differently to the norm I suppose

you set yourself up for criticism. But Gail, in particular, has been pretty hurt by the rejection at times by some in the established church. In the same vein the 'colonial spirit' over mainstream Australia seems to demand that Aboriginals (and even those who minister to them) conform to the ways of white people. That's just not reasonable! There is nothing more disappointing than to see someone make huge strides out of animism and witchcraft or addictions and crime, to again fall back into these bondages because they can't find a place where they fit in, even among God's people. Associated with that disappointment for me is the sense that I haven't had the material or human resources to provide the needed support to keep them from falling away.

**RW:** *Although you have a few church connections, you are not directly affiliated with any particular denomination. Many have wanted to draw your organisation, Indigenous Ministry Links Australia (IMLA), under their umbrella. That would have been more comfortable for you, so why have you opted to remain as a para-church organisation?*

**CM:** Through circumstances beyond my control I suddenly found myself 'denominationally unaligned' and subsequently surprised by the barriers this has removed and the liberty it has given me, to do what God has called me to. The way Aboriginal people do church 'naturally' almost inevitably runs into conflict with practices of denominations or church 'traditions'. I have seen what are basically 'cultural' misunderstandings with denominational leaders destroy developing indigenous leaders in particular. As such it is important that whatever affiliations Aboriginal believers make be their choice and not imposed on them by virtue of their association with me. I try to give people the liberty to practice their faith biblically but without pressure to deny who God has made them (please read Acts 16:19, 17). When on a remote outstation community, 'church' of any flavour at all might be hundreds of kilometres of dirt track and a day's drive or more away, so



Preaching at Manmoyi



# The SOWER a



IAN THOMSON (BRISBANE) shares: Recently at our little gathering we had a boisterous time reading Matthew 13, Jesus' parables of the kingdom. Here are some things we learned from the Sower.

We saw that only one of the four soil types was described as "good soil". A good farmer would surely be aware that the three inferior soils would not produce good crops. But this is not about a farmer. This is about a sower who sows not sparingly but widely and profusely, with joyous abandon.

We could see that the results of sowing seeds of the Kingdom of God vary. But here, the human heart is hidden from the sower's view. Like Jesus, the sowers—his disciples—must sow generously and not prejudge whether certain 'soils' are worthy, even though they are aware that only the good soil will produce a crop.

"Whoever has ears, let them hear." (Mat 13:9—17)

We were impressed that Jesus keeps stressing this. So it is a very important phrase, used 5 times in the Gospels, 8 times in Revelation, plus there are similar sayings scattered in the NT. We were deeply challenged to take note!

We noted the obvious: hearing is what ears are for! The Greek *akouo* (to hear) also means to obey, to heed, to act. The strong implication is that if understanding does not follow then it is critical that the listener finds out, asks. So this is what his disciples do. They ask.

# and the SEEDS

He tells them and us that the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven is given “to you”: “to you who have left everything to follow me”. These secrets are not even revealed to many prophets e.g., John-Baptist and “righteous” people.

Jesus assures us: There is abundance for those who see it, who hear it, who get it! Those in the Kingdom. To those outside the kingdom everything remains puzzling, parabolic, mysterious. Even what they have will be taken from them.

Of the crowds, Jesus quotes Isa 6:9,10: ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people’s heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.’

We thought: what a terrible fate, to remain without this precious understanding.

We saw with great sadness, that many of Jesus’ listeners, like those in Isaiah’s day were happy to listen to stories like this but avoided the truth in them in case they understood and were disturbed out of their complacency into action. So today, many are like those in Isaiah’s day and are like the crowds who clamoured for his touch and yet remained without understanding. Complacent. Sterile. Unfruitful. Stagnant. God’s frozen people. Valleys full of dry bones.

We could see that the true people of God are now found outside unbelieving Israel. This is the true flock of God who are identified in Isaiah and the O.T. prophets

as the righteous remnant of the chosen people. And the true people of God are now today also found outside the unbelieving churchgoers.

We could see that Jesus’ parables gradually took hold on the disciples. They followed him and understood the radical new way Jesus was starting, especially post-Pentecost.

**Like Jesus, the sowers must sow generously and not prejudge whether certain ‘soils’ are worthy, even though they are aware that only the good soil will produce a crop**

As we 21st century disciples, listened to Jesus explaining the various soils, we sensed the dreadful, the tragic, the hopelessness of merely hearing Jesus’ words but not understanding and those precious words being snatched away (sown on a path). Then, sadly, for the ‘rocky ground’ there was joy for starters, but when trouble came and the word had failed to

take root, then the precious spark of life dies. So also among the “thorns” when people inside and without the fellowship of believers, allow the world, or worry, or wealth to choke the treasured word.

Only on the good soil is the word heard and understood and obeyed and a crop produced. This is the meaning of a disciple, to bear much fruit.

This parable is very relevant for us following as it does the previous words and practices of Jesus about the ready harvest and the sending of the disciples on mission.

The metaphors Jesus uses, we saw, are organic! The Kingdom of God is not institutional. And the gathering (church) of God is never seen as an institution in the Bible! We must stop reading institutionalism (a tradition of men) into the biblical text.

So what have we learnt from this parable?

1. We are sent to sow seeds of the kingdom, spreading seeds abundantly.
2. It’s not up to us to decide the worth of the “soil”, to discriminate.
3. Seeds are powerful, they will germinate—the sower expects plants!
4. Everyone has ears, but few have ears that will hear, heed, that is, obey, act, change, turn, fear God.

This hearing is a matter of the heart. Hard, calloused hearts cannot hear. Here is a call for us to examine our hearts –do I have “ears” that can hear and obey the word of God? or a hard, calloused heart, a heart that does not want to hear and so cannot hear?

We ask ourselves, does our soil produce abundantly from the seeds of God’s word? Or, are we stuck in doing things our way, the safe way, the known way, like everyone else, tradition? Am we capable of hearing Jesus’ voice above the noise of tradition, the world and earthly wisdom? Would we love to be producing abundantly?

There is a design from above. We are to listen to Jesus, ask him, study him, let him teach us. We realise we must not just assume that the way our mentors, our teachers, have practised, is Jesus’ way. The road to fruitlessness is paved with assumptions.

Copy Jesus.



**Ian Thomson** and his wife, Joan, live in Brisbane, where, since the 1960s, they have been involved with small home groups and numerous other local Christian gatherings. Ian says he has “a special interest in the shaping of small believing communities living in a post-modern world”. His other interests include gardening, permaculture, local people, environment, family, keeping fit and encouraging others in the scriptures. You can follow Ian’s regular blog at [www.ianthomsonian.org](http://www.ianthomsonian.org)



# The Barkadas of

Molong, Albert, Jommie, Julian, Louie Dan



Phillip Walters (Oikos Magazine editor, Yeppoon) shares on a distinctive Filipino work of God

**It was 2009 and I was on a return visit to the Philippines** to catch up with a young pastor above Manila who had reappeared on my radar after a period of crash and burn. He'd made contact again and I was on a mission. Wanting to make the most of my trip, however, I thought I'd surf the net and see what there was in the way of house churches in the Philippines (with the hope of connecting my restored friend to a form of church that would support his restoration rather than bring him down again). And that's how I met a young apostle to the Philippines by the name of Molong Nacua. His scattered writings (which I later brought together into a

blogs site) connected with my spirit and we finished up spending 5 wonderful days with him and his wife Lisa and their extended family on the Central Philippines island of Cebu.

The story of Molong (or as he says, 'Long' for short) is one of a gradual journey through traditional style church (youth pastor, worship leader) to traditional style homechurch (doing the same but in a house) to a less structured homechurch (but still based on attending a weekly meeting), to his current passion, simply building a company of disciples for Jesus. While we were with him he coined the phrase *'The Barkadas of Jesus'* to describe them – a *'barkada'* being a wonderful Filipino word referring to a company of friends joined in a common bond of friendship and loyalty. No set meeting times or programs but what he refers to as a life of



# Jesus



Molong Nacua



Jommie baptising Julian

'intention – relational discipleship', mainly based on reading the Bible, learning to listen to the Spirit and learning how to disciple a friend for Jesus. We did a lot of listening and talking while we were with him but the highlight of our visit was an unintentional demonstration of the 'barkada'.

It happened when a young recently graduated high school student, Jommie, turned up with his friend Julian, who he had recently invited to become a disciple of Jesus. Jommie had been discipled earlier, beginning with the same invitation, by Albert, who had been discipled by Molong. Albert had baptised Jommie the Saturday before we arrived and now Jommie was ready to baptise Julian. So we headed down to the sea to baptise him.

Two days later however, the three boys turn up at Molong's house with a new friend, Louey Dan, a not-yet-believer who they were working on. Over lunch the Gospel was explained to Louey Dan and an invitation given to become a disciple of Jesus. He was ready, having observed his young friends for some time. An hour later Julian, baptised only two days earlier, was praying over his friend as he baptised him into Christ.

Later, as we celebrated over Dunkin Donuts, I took the opportunity to quiz the members of this growing Barkada of Jesus about what they had done and how deep was their grasp of the Gospel. Each man impressed me with his grasp of repentance and faith, one of the most articulate being



Louey Dan. We finished our donuts and the boys hung around for a meal with Molong and Lisa and then headed home.

And three days later we headed back home ourselves, back to our own nation of Australia with a whole new understanding of what Jesus meant when He simply said (my paraphrase),

*"Go and preach the Gospel, making disciples, baptising them and teaching them to obey me. And lo I am with you to the end ... every day, not mainly on Sundays, not mainly in your meetings, not mainly via the Pastor, but moment by moment, day by day, until I come again."*

## SIMPLE, QUICK AND FAST

*Here's Molong with his own take on Making Disciples*

**Making disciples should be simple, quick and fast to reach the growing population.**

Remember, we have the 'Helper', His Name is Holy Spirit, who was sent to live in every person who will be born in the 'Second-birth' into the Kingdom. This 'Helper' is the 'Discipler'. Perfect match of Jesus who owns the disciple. For what purpose do you think that this Helper comes if not for this? This makes making disciples easy because our job is only to 'make' and not 'to disciple.'

### MAKE FRIENDS

Jesus makes friends, that's how He looks for people to be His disciples. Of course, He knows even before He calls them. Like Nathaniel, "I saw you under the fig tree". Just what do you think Nathaniel was doing under the fig tree? Meditating. He's prepared, he's hungry, he's ready. So one thing surely Jesus does, He's friendly.

### FAITHFUL MEN

How to find 'faithful men' in the circle of your friends? Jesus looked for people who 'believe in Him.' In the same way you look for people who will 'believe in YOU'. Show your light, don't do 'hit and run' evangelism ministry. As Gary Goodell would say, "Quit winning souls, start making friends". Spend time building relationships. And when they become your friend, make them Jesus' disciples. Jesus says, "Follow Me." You tell him, "I will make you a disciple." The reason that we have to 'say' it is because Jesus 'said' it. If you will not tell your friend he will not know. Jesus is intentional in everything that He does. His intention is He will make the person His disciple. Your intention is you will 'make' people His disciple, not yours. Who's disciple is he? Jesus'. And who is his Discipler? The Holy Spirit. What did you just do to him?

'Make' him one. So there you go, you did it quick, simple and fast!

So, your job is to 'make' disciples, the Holy Spirit's job is 'to disciple' and Jesus job is to 'build' His Church. Many people make things complicated. First they 'try' discipling the person and worse they 'try' building Jesus' Church. See, He is not pleased, not when we do nothing, but when we do something that He didn't told us to do.

### LEAD FOR AWHILE

We have people around us who 'believe in us' and 'trust us,' they see our lives worth 'following for.' Let them follow you, as they normally look for 'leaders.' So lead 'for awhile' then. Like John the Baptist, he only led his disciples 'for awhile.' The question is either you continue to let them 'follow you' or push them to hear Jesus voice and 'follow Him.' Yet you stay close as their 'father in the Lord,' that is a 'lifetime of relationships' not a 'lifetime of discipleship'. Normally the people whom you make disciples, people who believe in you, are younger than you. This is why they will become your 'children in the Lord.' These are the 'faithful men.' Easy enough? Make sense?

### HOW TO MAKE DISCIPLES

Normally we make disciples from 5 minutes at least to 15 minutes at most. We do it quick so that in turn the one that we make disciples can easily do it quick as well. We don't worry about 'theological' or 'doctrinal' stuff. This can be dealt with on 'relational' time together. [See, my article "Relational Discipleship"]. One time, the one that I make disciples, named Albert, does 3 baptisms in about 30 minutes. He's not baptizing 3, but only one. And one he baptizes makes disciples to his friend and baptizes him and so on. One who can make disciples is the one baptizing the person. This all happens while they went swimming in a nearby beach at my house. And this all happens while I was in my trip, 2 hour flight and 8 hours by bus away from home! I was not there and this was happening. And when I was in my trip, I have made a



disciple also in 15 minutes and baptizes him right away! Honestly, it amazes me. This is the Holy Spirit's work!

One guy named Jomie, 21, whom Albert made into a disciple, made Noel, a 14 year old, into a disciple. After 5 hours, Noel made a disciple to an 18 year old girl named Cherry Mae. And now this time Noel made disciples to his 65 classmates in High School! We didn't 'disciple' Noel, we only saw him three times for the past 5 months since he was made into a disciple, yet this is what happens to him! Wonderful work of the Holy Spirit. You cannot fully appreciate the Holy Spirit until you have tasted Him fully!

Search my site for all these stories. We blog them in 'detailed accounts.' You will surely love it. And by the way, Albert, 18 yr old, just recently baptizes his father. On my blogroll you can visit their 'own' sites. Yes, they blog and there is still more disciples will be blogging!

### CHANGING THE NEXT GENERATION

I believe that the next breed of Believers shall not be called by their denominational names as these new disciples are 'unchurch' — they have never been to a 'Sunday Church Services.' They will be called by His Name, disciples of Jesus Christ, not 'church-goers' but the 'church-going' community. They are 'being church together as family'. They are fathered and mothered by their old generation, us, and raise them up as our own sons and daughters 'in the Lord'. This



can get rid of birthing spiritual orphans that have been roaming around from church to church. Jesus said, "I shall not leave you as orphans," "You shall have hundreds of fathers, hundreds of mothers..." "Children, obey your parents in the Lord", "My son Timothy..." "You have thousands of teachers but lack fathers and I have become a father unto you", "My dear children, I write these things to you." These are 'fathering cries' to the 'fatherless' generation.

This is how to change churches and in turn change the world turning it 'upside-down.'

How can making disciples be the job of everybody and not one-man? Make disciples through your friends who believe in you, trust you and are loyal to you. You can make them because they are your friends, they have their belief and trust in YOU - not with me, and surely not yet with Jesus. Lead them to Christ! As my friend Mike Peters would say, "We are only taking men to Christ for him to be discipled!" I love it.

**Editor's note:** To better understand Molong's take on 'making' a person a disciple it is probably more helpful to think of the term 'make' as 'initiate'. Our job, with the Spirit's help, is to bring a person to the point of dying to self, initiate them into Christ through baptism and then walk along side in community as the Holy Spirit discipled them into Christ.

**Molong Nacua** is not new to a number of Aussies connected with the Australian/Filipino simple-church scene. Both Criss Matesic (NSW) and Phil Brown (OIKOS Director - Vic) visited him recently. You can catch up with him on his various websites, such as [www.discipleshift.net](http://www.discipleshift.net) [www.molongnacua.wordpress.com](http://www.molongnacua.wordpress.com)

## RED DIRT GOSPEL Cont. From Page 5

'denominationalism' seems like another thing bush folk simply can't afford. Sadly, joining one group seems to isolate you from others and I really believe that what God wants to do in this country requires a Kingdom of God approach. The Bible says we believers are brothers (Mat 23:8) and when "brethren dwell together in unity...there the Lord commands a blessing" (Ps133). I just think given the demonic assault against Aboriginal people (which seems to extend to those who



minister among them) we need all the blessing we can get. We are affiliated however with *World*

*Outreach International* which is a cross-denominational/cross-cultural networking ministry, structured to achieve 'Kingdom of God' objectives. We are using whatever gifts we have (and those gifts we find in other people) to expand Christ's Kingdom influence throughout the Aboriginal community. I love the Family of God. Over the past 15 years, in one way or another, it has been our privilege to have worked and networked with at least half the Aboriginal pastors of all evangelical denominations in Australia.

Our regular ministry circuits range from Cape York in Qld across the Gulf of Carpentaria, through the greater Arnhem Land region of the Northern Territory. In recent years we have concentrated on outstations *ie.* the remotest regions where there is a real hunger for God. They feel neglected; they feel that Australia and the 'church' has forgotten them.

**RW:** What does the future hold for Carl & Gail Musch, IMLA and your missionary endeavours?

**CM:** A lot of people join the chorus of conventional wisdom in saying that the 'Missions Era' is over. I would have to say there were simply a lot of things that just had

to change. It seems that the old things had to die to make way for the new things on God's agenda. Today we're about partnering with indigenous Christians to fulfil the desires and visions God has put in their hearts. There is still a huge role for God's people in addressing the awful injustices and inequities facing many Aboriginal Australians and in doing so restoring the credibility of Christ's Church and Gospel to the community. I am committed to being available to mentor or help others called to this field in whatever way I can.

Education is one such area. Indigenous students who saw the missionaries kicked out and replaced with Government programs when they were in school, are now community leaders who are now crying out "Please bring back the missionaries!" for their children and grandchildren's sake. In response to this we are inviting suitably skilled and motivated 'Kingdom' people to form what I am calling the 'Education Access Team' or EAT. God willing, we will partner with parents and community leaders to empower them to provide a holistic education, training and guidance for their people, from preschool through to adult, vocational, tertiary, even business mentoring.

We want to do much more than what we are currently doing, and we want to do things better. We have some runs on the board in the arena of evangelism, ministry training/mentoring and church planting, but we need to build on and multiply this success across Aboriginal Australia. We need a lot more partners in the field with practical, hands-on (e.g. mechanics and building trades) and ministry skills, and behind the lines praying and resourcing. Everything costs money to do and in the Australian outback it costs more than almost anywhere else. I honestly believe God is going to reward those who give financially and sacrificially to support those who are committed *long term* to making disciples, more than those who want a *preaching holiday* in the Outback.

It has proven a huge challenge to get people to support Aboriginal ministers who are really making a difference. For example,

an Aboriginal pastor (I'd call an apostle really) from Western Australia, who probably had the most significant Holy Spirit ministry I have ever witnessed, could not get ongoing support for what he was doing. Magnificent healings crowned his efforts, with many hundreds even thousands coming to the Lord as a consequence. I was with him when he spoke at twelve city churches and people were in awe of what he was doing, yet they did not support him on an ongoing basis.

He was driving the ancient Aboriginal walking paths and drove 120,000km in one year. That equated to about \$30,000 in fuel costs alone (@\$2:50/L in remote areas), and an occasional offering or a feed here and there from a few bush churches was not going to get this job done. He died suddenly last year literally from a burst heart. I think he died with a heart breaking for his people and partly because he could have done so much more if he'd had the partners who would've faithfully supported the work and his family.

There are other Aboriginal ministers, also associated with IMLA, who need ongoing support. We want to see such men, who are making a difference, released to accomplish what God has called them to do.



**CARL MUSCH**, his wonderful wife Gail and their two daughters, Hope and Joy, live in Mareeba, North Queensland. To receive regular newsletters and support their ministry contact Carl through the IMLA website [www.imla.org.au](http://www.imla.org.au) or email him at [imla@imla.org.au](mailto:imla@imla.org.au)



# Snapshots of Community

## A Sofa for the Street Girls

*The latest from Andrew Francis*

Last Monday, as a result of my tooth infection, I was able to have a night off from my regular caring work. It was lovely to join my family for dinner. Not only were my two youngest children present, but also four others. Dinner had been beautifully prepared by YN, our latest resident. A week before Sharon had gone in to one of the brothels and met YN. She is in her early forties, originally from Vietnam. She had shared her very sad story with Sharon and why, due to ongoing medical conditions, she couldn't continue working in this industry. Already she had had to spend nights sleeping on the streets. Shaz, in her typical fashion, told her to call if she was ever in this situation again and offered her at least a couch if she needed somewhere. Two nights later around midnight, the call came and YN and her best friend soon ended up in our lounge room. Her best friend, also a working girl, returned to Sydney, and YN has now moved into the spare room recently evacuated by BO who has moved into the caravan evacuated by my son, who has gone to Jakarta. YN has ongoing medical issues which means she sleeps alot, but most evenings she proudly prepares delicious Asian meals for everyone. This was one of those evenings. Like many people we meet, she has no family in Australia.

Not only did we have this magnificent dinner, but also the company of ML, a Christian man who has sought me out from time to time because of his struggles with same sex attraction. Whilst he has obeyed God as best as he knows how he often feels very isolated in his church and unable to share with others about his difficulties. This means he tends to keep to himself a lot. He had taken me up on my offer to join us for dinner and was obviously enjoying the silliness and humour of our table conversation. Young 15 year old MC, who also moved in two weeks ago to get away from the constant fights and arguments with his alcoholic mother, is now sleeping in my study. He also was there, along with BO who has been living with us nearly twelve months now. Finally, LU turned up, another ex working girl who we baptised last year. She is much loved by my children. And so we had a wonderful evening of jokes, laughter and poking fun.

I couldn't help wondering at God's work. I am an introvert by nature and really do like my personal space, yet I wouldn't have it any other way. When my wife told me of her invitation to YN, and then when the invitation was taken up, far be it for me to stand in the way. This is not to say that there haven't been times when I have said "no" or asked people to leave, but we had a spare room and this vulnerable woman had few options. I also couldn't help but reflect that in the early days the women and men that are now an integral part of our lives lived in a world that seems very different to the world I grew up in. It is a world very different to the 'church' world. But as Sharon and I have continued our journey it has become very apparent that the people God brings into our lives are very much just



photo: Mullermax22 - flickr.com

like us. Rarely have we been ripped off, taken advantage of or abused. Rarely have our children been exposed to anything overly traumatic as a result of this willingness to have people in our home. Often they have been blessed through the relationships that result and often they become a means of blessing to those who don't have family or whose families are deeply dysfunctional.

I have been reflecting on the parable of the Good Samaritan in preparation for preaching at a local fellowship on Sunday and it has struck me that the only difference between the Samaritan and the religious people who passed by the wounded man, was that the Samaritan was willing to stop and get involved. He was also willing to pay a cost once he had assessed the need. It was not really rocket science.

On Wednesday evening we had a good night at the bar. After a good theological discussion with IV, discussing Job and the nature of faith and encounters with God in which IV continues to confess his inability to simply have faith, JN turned up, wearing next to nothing and shivering from cold. I offered JN my jacket and prayed that God would keep me warm. At least I had long-johns under my trousers and a long sleeved t-shirt. JN gratefully received my jacket. I then drove him to the local police station where he presented himself. His sister had said he was missing and was concerned he might have attempted suicide. His mum suicided a few months ago. JN told me he is moving from place to place as he doesn't like being at home with his dad who is now taking out his anger on him since his mother has gone. JN lives in the next suburb when he is at home so I let him know that if he ever needs a meal or somewhere to sleep he can give me a call. NY came in to catch up with me and had a good time talking to John, one of the Christian guys who has been joining me from time to time. He then took me for a walk to get dinner and again he wanted to introduce me to his friends at the adult shop. I sometimes wonder at the places this ministry takes me and some of the strange situations I end up in. Some are quite uncomfortable



and confronting and the adult shop is certainly a place I would prefer to avoid. Nonetheless we returned to NY's house to have a cuppa together. My night was made when he proudly informed me that the book I had given him was now on the table beside his bed. The book he was referring to was the New Testament I gave him for his 50th birthday. I trust he is also doing some reading of his NT. Please keep praying for NY, JN and others that I have mentioned.

Finally, yesterday WA sent me a text with these words written on it, "what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole.."

What indeed? Mark 8:36. I wonder mate, I really do! W" As I often write, this work is slow but I continue to be heartened as different people I connect with increasingly wrestle with the Scriptures and the Gospel that I gently share with them. The seed is slowly taking root. Pray for the watering of God's Spirit. God Bless, Andrew

*Andrew's journaling is regularly posted on the OIKOS Blog. You can follow on [www.blog.oikos.org.au](http://www.blog.oikos.org.au). Type 'Andrew' into SEARCH.*

## THE CONSPIRACY OF THE INSIGNIFICANT

*Roger Thoman comments on God's real agenda.*

**Perhaps the church is neither emerging nor re-structuring so much as re-claiming its true nature as an underground, insurgent movement.** By that I mean that the truest work of the Holy Spirit always seems to be initiated among the least and the unseen bringing forth true kingdom life that is contrary and even subversive to the surrounding culture.

Tom Sine, in 'The New Conspirators' talks about "joining the conspiracy of the insignificant": *In spite of the fact that our world is changing at blinding speed and the church is going through some very tough times God is still at work in ways that aren't always immediately apparent. For some reason, God seems to delight in conspiring through the small, insignificant and ordinary to renew the church and transform the world. Eugene Peterson wrote, "The metaphors Jesus used for the life of ministry are frequently images of the single, the small and the quiet, which have effects far in excess of their appearance: salt, leaven and seed."*

He goes on to say: *Changing the world through the conspiracy of the insignificant has always been God's strategy. God chose a ragtag group of Semite slaves to be the insurgents of a new order. God sent a vast army to flight with three hundred men carrying lamps and blowing horns. God chose a shepherd boy with a slingshot to lead his chosen people. And who would have dreamed that God would choose a baby in a cow stall to turn the world right side up?*

Perhaps the real emergence of today's church, the primary re-structuring that needs to take place, is in our own hearts. That we would be willing to be the unseen, unheralded ambassadors who heroically refuse to walk in the ways of this world for the sake of demonstrating a love that throws money-changers out of temples, embraces sinners, and forgives those who nail us to a cross.

Maybe, the moment we are no longer underground (unseen) nor insurgent (counter-cultural), we are no longer really the church.

Maybe, the moment 'our movement' is recognized, written about, or even blogged about, it no longer has the characteristics of the true church.

Maybe, the moment we receive an accolade or an applause for what we are doing, it is time to look to see if the recognition has come because we have begun to agree more with our culture than the radical kingdom that Jesus preached and demonstrated.

Perhaps it is the underground, insurgent nature of the church that needs to be re-claimed above all else and maybe, just maybe, all of the 'emerging' and 're-structuring' will take care of itself.



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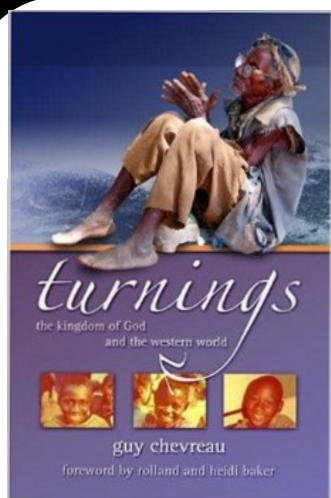
**ROGER THOMAN** [www.simplechurchjournal.com](http://www.simplechurchjournal.com)

describes himself as a man who is "on a journey home desiring to take as many people as possible with me". See 'Surfing Simplechurch' (back page) for more.



# Reviews

There is an ever-increasing library of resources related to simple church and missional movements on the market. For a broader selection go to [www.oikos.org.au](http://www.oikos.org.au) or [www.house2house.com](http://www.house2house.com)



## Turnings - the Kingdom of God and the Western World by Guy Chevreau

Although this book was written nearly ten years ago, "Turnings" has many profound challenges for those engaged in missional disciple-making movements, especially in the West.

Guy has worked closely with Rolland and Heidi Baker on several mission trips to Mozambique. His constant refrain is, "Why there, and not here?" Why so many people eagerly turn to the Lord and why so many are healed and lives transformed, when in the West, the story is so different. He brings a growing challenge to the West as the book moves along.

He describes the poverty, the sickness and the desperation of people who would journey by foot, sometimes for days, to reach a place where they knew the Good News of Jesus is to be proclaimed. He contrasts the spiritual hunger of these people with the complacency of people in the West.

Guy tells us some of the ways in which these experiences have changed his walk and work in the Kingdom radically. He refers to these as 'turnings'. "...it is about seeing God and ourselves, life and ministry in new ways" (p.15). Some of these 'turnings' provide those of us brought up in traditional Western Christianity, strong food for thought!

### Some of Guy's turnings I found particularly challenging –

- *Repentance* – This isn't merely feeling, or just blithely saying, that we turn around from our sins in order to gain a place in heaven, but rather he describes the call to repentance as good news, because the presence and transforming power of the Kingdom of heaven – not human sin – should have priority in our thinking about the Gospel (p.30). Repentance is the beginning of the opening of the eyes and the giving of the graced ability to see into the unseen realm of the Spirit, made manifest in the person and ministry of Jesus. He stresses the call of Jesus to those who would follow – "Repent.....believe.....follow me".
- *No Time for Prayer?* – Guy gives an analogy of the difference between the action of a canary to that of an eagle and he states ".....eagles don't sweat. Canaries do as they flap, flap, flap. But eagles don't flap, they soar. They

rarely fly; rather, they ride the updrafts. Work without prayer cannot be considered ministry. God initiates and we respond" (pp.43 & 45).

- *Get low and Stay Low.* "Humility ... may be the only key there is to revival." The author describes the many African mission workers who are so poor, so hungry, so weak, and sick, and because they are uneducated, and untrained, they have no 'strength' or 'might'. But they humble themselves and they will wait on the Spirit. Then, in His strength and in His might, they rise with a power they know is not their own" (p. 77).
- *Intercessory prayer.* Guy points out much of the traditional thinking and manner of intercession that we have taken for granted, and questions the basis of our practice. The base line is that any "intercessions" that are of human origin, are not in accordance with God's will (p.103).
- *Praying future Kingdom reality into present situation.* "We reach into the fullness of Kingdom future, into the unseen realm of Spirit and draw some of that future to transform more of the present here and now. In this light, a miracle can be understood as a finite expression of infinite means" (P.173).
- *The supernatural and the Western world,* and in particular, healing, as signs of the Kingdom.

If you think you could do with fresh inspiration, a good 'shake-up' to your faith and a push forward in growing obedience to the call for each of us to 'Go, and make disciples...' (Matt 28:19), then this book is for you. He used it for me. **Bessie Pereira - OIKOS Team**



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# Getting RELIGIOUS THINKING Out of Ourselves

**Felicity Dale writes:**

**Someone said : It's one thing to get the person out of the institution; it's another thing to get the institution out of the person. It is difficult to get religious thinking out of our inner system.**

But I want to work at this with the same fervency as Jesus who said: Don't be like those religious people who are focused on externals thus missing the real, internal encounter with the living God. Don't do it!

So, here are some of the tendencies that I still find lurking in my heart that pull me back into religious, institutional ways:

1. Give me a structure and a plan to follow, not just a Person to cling to.
2. Give me a comfortable program to do, preferably with other believers, not a mission and purpose that propels me out into the brokenness of the world.
3. In fact, give me safety and routines over an adventure most days of the week.
4. How about just a few rules to follow, or unique doctrines to believe, that allow me to feel assured that I am part of the 'right' group and that I am 'in' with God.
5. And maybe a spiritual leader to please would be good. God's approval is, well, hard to feel sometimes, but a little bit of man's approval can go a long way.

6. And can't I just 'go' to church (even a house church) as my primary form of worship? That's so much easier than acknowledging that I 'am' the church and where I go, the life and presence of Jesus goes. Do I really want to walk in that reality, as powerful as it is, on a daily basis?

There are many boxes that I find myself drawn back toward and they all pull me away from the dynamic and enthralling life that Jesus calls me to live with Him. May I find greater freedom!



**Felicity Dale** is a cofounder (along with her husband Tony) of House2House magazine/website and author of "An Army of Ordinary People" and "Small is Big!" (formerly "The Rabbit and the Elephant"). She and Tony helped pioneer simple church concepts while in medical school in the UK and later in the East End of London. They are both actively engaged in training church planters and travel widely promoting the principles of simple church. They have four grown children and live in Austin, Texas. Follow her at [www.simplechurch.com](http://www.simplechurch.com)

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Want more help or information on doing simple church? How about a seminar in your area? Or a contact with someone from one of our Regional Teams? Or maybe you'd like to support the vision of Oikos Australia.

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### What is Organic Church?

Frank Viola writes in his book, "Finding Organic Church" - *"Organic Church is a church that is born out of spiritual life instead of being constructed by human institutions and held together by religious programs. Organic church life is a grassroots experience that is marked by face to face community, every member functioning, open-participatory meetings (as opposed to pastor-to-pew services), non-hierarchical leadership and the centrality and supremacy of Jesus Christ as the functional Leader and Head."*

By contrast, whenever we sin-scarred mortals try to create a church the same way we would start a business, we are defying the organic nature of church life. An organic church is one that is naturally produced when a group has encountered Jesus Christ in reality (external ecclesiastical props being unnecessary) and the DNA of the church is free to work without hindrance. It is the difference between standing in front of a fan and standing outdoors on a windy day.

The difference between organic churches and non-organic churches is the difference between General Motors and a vegetable garden. One is founded by humans, the other is birthed by God. One is artificial, the other is living.

### What Organic Church is not:

- It is not traditional, congregational style church
- It is not dependent on fixed premises or a building
- It does not need to happen at a fixed time once a week
- It does not rely on the leadership of a trained professional "pastor"
- It does not rely on a skilled musician to "lead" the worship
- It is not defined by a time of singing followed by a sermon
- It is not something we do – it is something we are
- It is not rule bound – it is not stuffy and it is definitely never boring.

Organic Church does not refer to a particular 'model' of church. (It's doubtful that a perfect model even exists). Nor is it an

attempt to do church like in the New Testament – that would not be possible because we are culturally, sociologically and technologically too far removed from those days. Furthermore the New Testament does not really give us a church model per se. What we do see from the New Testament, however, is a set of principles that point to the organic nature of the church. i.e. church as a living, breathing, dynamic, mutually participatory, every-member functioning, Christ-centred, communal expression of the body of Christ. Organic Church strives to get back to those principles and thus requires that we remove those inorganic things that we have allowed to creep in and which have become obstacles to natural, organic church growth. In the West we do a lot in the church out of habit and it works for us because it's there and we're used to it. When trying to establish new churches in an environment where the dominant worldview is non-Christian, it becomes painfully and abundantly clear that about 80% of what we consider as accepted and normal "church practice" is actually traditional and cultural baggage that we cannot and should not transplant. [www.organicchurch.org.au](http://www.organicchurch.org.au)

### What is the difference between a housechurch and a cellgroup?

A *house church* is a 'stand-alone' group or network of groups that are on a 'level playing field'. They are independent of control from any hierarchical structure. There are home churches under denomination umbrellas, but these only work because they are encouraged by their denomination to have an independent and missional focus.

A *home group attached to a traditional church*, however much it seeks to be outwardly focused, inevitably must feed into the central church system. They are controlled and led by the parish/local church and its leadership. Very often they are either bible study groups or fellowship groups. Home churches are neither of these but would contain elements of both. *Cell church* is a pyramid structure of house churches with a hierarchical leadership system and programs.

Another way to see it is that in a traditional church the Sunday larger Worship Service is the main event and the small group is an added extra for the more enthusiastic, whilst in a housechurch the small gathering is the main event and the larger gathering is a less frequent event, gathering housechurches in a given area for a specific purpose or focus. [www.oikos.org.au](http://www.oikos.org.au)

**If you have a question regarding Simple Church we'd love to have it. Drop us a line at [editor@oikos.org.au](mailto:editor@oikos.org.au)**

## Surfing Simple Church Sites worth checking out on the Web

*It has been said that the current worldwide interest in Simple / Organic Church owes a great deal to the invention of the internet. Here's a couple of sites worth checking out. And if you come across more let us know.*

[www.simplechurchjournal.com](http://www.simplechurchjournal.com) is a blogsite administered by Roger Thoman, whose insightful writings have been featured in the last couple of editions of this magazine. For newcomers to simple church Roger's site has a section called The Basics and also a six-week online course for anyone who wants to discover more fully the



principles of organic church. His ebook 'Simple/Housechurch Revolution' is also available there for free.

[www.everywherechurch.com](http://www.everywherechurch.com) is one of a number of sites dedicated to seeing simplechurches established ... well, everywhere. As their homepage says it, *"God has made us hungry for authentic churches that actually gather in the everyday places of life... where people struggle, dream, laugh and hurt. Friends pulling together, making a difference for someone who needs it, and following Christ with unhesitating abandonment... that's how we long to see church take place."*

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