

OIKOS australia

SUMMER 2014

Adventures in Mission

Just Make Disciples™ *Alan Knox*

What About the Plumbers? *Gil Cann*

Revival in Parramatta *John Watsford*

Agnes' Birthday *Tony Campolo*

This is Normal! *Amanda Reurich*



Kingdom Kickstart with **Torben Søndergaard**



I have a heart conviction that the Lord has been bringing to me, with regards to Oikos and to those involved in simple church life, which I wish to share.

Many of us are involved in missional faith communities, simple churches, house churches, kingdom ministry or whatever term we use to describe the gathering of disciples of Jesus in what is commonly called "church". There is also a growing kingdom focus of Christians in the market places, businesses, educational institutions, sports clubs, chaplains, cafes, etc.

We have a conviction that when these disciples gather, it is most effective when there is an environment that is highly relational and interactive, that allows each person to be accountable and to actively participate, learn and grow as disciples of Jesus. The simplicity of these gatherings allows the focus to be on these things and on being missional in connecting with people in the broader community.

In addition there is strong evidence that this was the general pattern followed in the New Testament and the early church. These characteristics were also found in many of the movements in Christian history. A few of the many examples that embodied many of these principles are the Priscillian movement, the Celts, the Moravians, the Waldenses, "Luther's third order of service," the Anabaptists, and the Wesley movements (*Wolfgang Simpson - Houses That Change the World pp 59-75*)

Most current examples of movements in the world where there is explosive growth of the church such as in China, India, parts of Asia and Africa also follow this pattern.

BEWARE A CRITICAL ATTITUDE

However, we must be careful not to be critical of other expressions of church. It is evident that God works amongst groups and churches wherever people are hungry for him and have a heart for those who are not yet followers of Jesus. Established, conventional and even more institutional churches in many cases also reach and disciple people.

This leads me to a conviction that the Lord has been bringing to my attention. If we have at any stage engaged in a critical or judgmental spirit toward other expressions of the church, we need to seek the Lord's (and others') forgiveness. God blesses unity and love within the body of Christ, which we are all part of regardless of how we gather.

I am also amazed at how God is doing a work amongst leaders and churches to lead many of them to become more focused on the harvest, on making disciples, and on supporting movements. It seems that there are real opportunities to encourage, support, and in some cases to partner with larger established churches to accomplish the expansion of the kingdom of God. I have seen examples where mega churches have blessed, released and continue to support missional agencies that are focused on reaching the lost and making disciples. These are optimal and exciting developments.

Movements involve rapid multiplication, which typically results in groups of disciples meeting in simple missional groups in all types of places - homes, work place environments, public buildings etc. There is adaptability and a flexibility that is necessary when there is rapid growth and multiplication of disciples and groups.

Oikos has a twofold focus – to support a discipling, missional and movement focus amongst established churches and to be part of supporting new movements of disciples who make disciples with a kingdom focus. Many of these will be fresh expressions of church.

For myself I want to have a clear foundation for God to bless, both individually and as a team, and I invite each of us to pursue the same.

bless you, Phil Brown

OIKOS Australia

Multiplying missional communities by making disciples who make disciples

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Suggestions and news are welcome. Please send them in by February 28th.



A KINGDOM KICK START

with Torben Søndergaard

In September and October a number of Australian cities played host to the visit of Danish evangelist Torben Søndergaard, a man with a passion to see ordinary people “kick-started” into what he sees as normal Christianity - a Spirit led journey into a lifestyle where healing, deliverance and radical transformation are the norm.

Here’s a brief excerpt from his book “The Last Reformation” followed by some great stories from people impacted by his ministry.

Equipped For Ministry

After Jesus was taken up into heaven, the Christians continued with Jesus’ method of teaching. The gifts that Jesus had were divided among the fellowship so that even today we can function as Christ’s body here on earth.

And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting ... (Eph. 4:11-14)

Here we read about the offices that Jesus passed down to us. We call these offices (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers) the five-fold ministry. The purpose of the five-fold ministry is to equip the holy ones to serve, just like we read. An evangelist’s purpose is not just to go out on the street and proclaim the gospel. No, his primary task is to equip the believers to evangelize and to serve. The same goes for the teacher. A teacher’s task is not only to teach believers, but also to train up believers to break down and share the Word themselves. It is so important for us to get this straight; otherwise, the fellowship is not going to grow as it should.

Many people today have the wrong belief that the purpose of an evangelist is to go out and proclaim the gospel so that other

Christians do not need to do so. Many believe that teachers should teach so that we do not need to read God’s Word for ourselves, and prophets should prophesy so that we do not need to listen to God ourselves. This is not at all what the New Testament teaches us.

It is true that not everyone is called to be an evangelist, a teacher, a prophet, etc., but every Christian should learn how to share Christ, teach others, prophesy, etc. This is part of the ministry that everyone has received. The five-fold ministry has been placed in the church to equip the saints so that they can do the work of the ministry.

For an example, I work as an evangelist and have the gift of healing the sick, but the reason why God has given me this gift is not so everyone can see me on a platform proclaiming the gospel and healing the sick. This might be part of what it means to be an evangelist, but it is not my primary role. I have been given to the fellowship to equip the saints with the gifts that God has given me. In the house fellowships of which we have been a part, about ninety percent of the people share Jesus on a daily basis. The same goes for the gift of healing; around ninety percent of the people in these fellowships have prayed for a sick person and have seen them healed.

These numbers are much higher than what we see in other places. The only difference is that, in house fellowships, we tend to make use of the gifts that God has given us much more often than those sitting in a traditional church setting. Those in house fellowships are using their gifts to make disciples through the authority of example, just like Jesus did. They are using the gifts God gave them to equip the saints to be able to serve, which, among other things, involves sharing Jesus and healing the sick. I have done a teaching called “Healing the sick – an hour is all it takes.” It is a short lesson on what the Bible says about healing the sick, with a very practical side to it.

A Short Lesson

Many years ago, I was asked to teach a workshop at a Bible camp. I decided that my teaching would be called “Healing the sick – an hour is all it takes.” It was a short lesson on what the Bible says about healing the sick, with a very practical side to it. I really wanted a fresh testimony and not just empty words

You do not become a disciple by sitting, year in and year out, just listening to teachings. You become a disciple when someone takes you by the hand and says, “Come, follow me.”

when I said it only takes an hour to “learn” how to heal the sick. So the day before I was to teach, I contacted a new Christian who had been saved only one month. I asked him if he would be willing to pray for the sick, see them healed, and if I could have an hour of his time? He agreed. I looked at the clock and saw that it was 3:36 PM. I told him that we would stand in the same place, and by the time it was 4:36 PM, he would have shared the gospel of Jesus, prayed for a sick person, and seen that person healed.

We jumped into the car and drove to town. On the way, I gave him a short lesson on praying for the sick. When we arrived, I said: “Come, follow me.” We walked around a bit, and, at some point, I started talking to some people on the street. The guy followed me and saw what I said and did. One woman had pain in her back, and I prayed for her. After this, I said to the new Christian: “Come with me. It is now your turn.” We walked around while I assured him that he just had to do what he had seen me do. I caught sight of a young man and sensed that we should go to him. I told the new Christian what he should say. He put his hands on the young man and prayed. The man’s knee was instantly healed, and both young men were very excited about what had happened.

Within that hour, four people had been healed, and we had shared the gospel with even more. The new Christian had prayed for two people, and I had prayed for two. He was extremely enthusiastic and went all around the Bible camp telling people what had just happened, even though I told him that he should not tell everyone.

This young Christian learned a lesson he will never forget. There is nothing as exciting as experiencing God working through you! Again: we remember much more of what we do than of what we only hear.

This is just one example of how we should teach today. If we start using these teaching methods again in our fellowships, people will grow like never before. Now, imagine for just a moment that we could see the whole five-fold ministry functioning in the same way.

There would be no limit to what could

happen. The fellowship would grow like never before, in a balanced way, where all gifts work together.

Come, Follow Me

What that new Christian learned in just an hour many Christians cannot do after ten years in the church. They have heard that they should tell people about Jesus, and they know that they can pray for the sick, but do they do it? No! Often, they are not doing it because the step from sitting in the church pew to going out and doing it all by themselves in the world is simply too big. They are full of fear, and I cannot blame them. They actually need someone to equip them. They are missing the element of discipleship. You do not become a disciple by sitting, year in and year out, just listening to teachings. You become a disciple when someone takes you by the hand and says, “Come, follow me.” It is about being together and sharing life. It is about being taught by more mature disciples with whom you spend time. A disciple is someone who makes others into disciples. As disciples, we should learn from those who are more mature how to live out the Christian life on a daily basis. Learn how to be a husband or wife, raise children, look after the house and home, give and reach out to each other, etc. This principle actually applies to all areas of life, not just to sharing Jesus and praying for the sick. We have to begin to build biblical fellowships, fellowships that make people into disciples, because that is what Jesus has commanded us to do.

Several things happened at the Bible camp that day. In addition to four people getting healed, the new Christian had a day to remember. There is nothing as wonderful as being used by God. It is something we need to experience over and over again in order to keep us burning and feeling alive. When the young man prayed for the last person who was healed in that hour, I let him do it all by himself. I went far away, for his sake, so that he would know the healing had nothing to do with me and that he was “trained” and could continue on his own without me being there. And so he did, even after I had driven away.

Some readers are bound to think this practice sounds robotic, and many will not like it that I say I teach people to heal because only God can heal. I agree. Only God can heal! The truth is that He has given this gift to the fellowship in order to guarantee

that we Christians continue His work on the earth. It may seem weird to some that I did this only to have an illustration for what I was going to talk about the next day. The truth is that, even though it might seem that way, God was in on it. He has made His will clear once and for all: “And heal the sick there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’” (Luke 10:9)

A Confirmation

The proof of how much God had been involved in all of this came the very same evening. I went to a meeting where the worship leader suddenly asked if we could pray with her for her son, who was not living for God. His name was Jeppe. The whole fellowship began praying for him. When I heard his name, I thought: “Jeppe. We prayed for someone named Jeppe today.” When the worship leader got down from the stage, I asked her if her son had a problem with his big toe. She looked at me, completely shocked, and said, “Yes!” I then said: “Well, he does not anymore!” I then told her how we had met him, how the newly saved Christian had prayed for him, and that her son had been healed. This all confirmed that my little “experiment” was actually an answer to the prayers of other people.

If we desire to see people grow and serve the Lord in their everyday lives, we have to use the gifts that God has given to the fellowship. Through the authority of example, Christians can learn in just an hour what many still do not dare to do after 10 or 15 years of sitting in the church. Do we want to use these gifts and return to working and training by example so that fear will disappear?

If we dare to put our culture behind us, forget what we usually do, and begin doing what Jesus and the first Christians did, we will see a fellowship rise where people are freely living as disciples of Jesus Christ in their everyday lives.

There are many different ministries and gifts in the fellowship. I’m not saying that everyone should do the same things I am doing. I am saying that I, like many others, have been given to the fellowship to equip other believers.

It is sobering to see a newly-saved young man experience more in one hour than

many Christians who have sat in church for years. The way forward is for these gifts to be used in the right way again. The church is not being equipped by sitting and seeing an evangelist holding one campaign after another, or a prophet giving one prophecy after another. No, the five-fold ministry must equip believers so that everyone can get started, not only with using their gifts, but also teaching others to do the same.

Further, we cannot help each other grow as Jesus' disciples by only meeting each other a couple of hours on a Sunday morning. If people are to learn to live a life of commitment to God and His Word, then we must spend time with them and train them through example.

May God raise up role models in our land so that the fellowship can grow as it should grow.



TORBEN SØNDERGAARD

lives in Denmark in the city of Aalborg with his wife, Lene, and their three children.

Follow his ministry at www.thelastreformation.com

KickStart Stories

Torben had "kickstart" meetings in Brisbane, Melbourne and Perth. Here are some of the stories resulting from those meetings. More stories can be found at www.blog.oikos.org.au

Torben Søndergaard wrote in Facebook The Last Reformation, Sept 26-27 2014

Saturday: Great day here in Brisbane. Several were baptized with the Holy Spirit. One of them was a girl only 7 years old. A boy, 9 years old, prayed on the street for a man who was healed in his hand after long time with pain. The man was in shock. Yes, God can use anyone regardless of gender and age. God is good and this was only a little of everything that happened today. Sunday: Total amazing day. Never seen that before. We have just had the most amazing afternoon. I'm never going to forget this day. We went down to baptize 8 people but we ended up baptizing over 20 people. When the first person got baptized we saw the power of God as he was shouting and manifesting as a demon was coming out of him. This created a big crowd and many people came to see. As we were baptizing in the middle of a pool in the city [Ed: Brisbane Southbank Parklands] many people came to watch. There were crowds of more than 120 people watching in shock as people which were getting baptized were set free from demons and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Between baptisms we shared the gospel to the crowds which ended up with over 20 people getting baptized as the people in the crowds accepted Jesus into their lives, then got baptized and also filled with the Holy Spirit. Today I felt like John the Baptist in the River Jordan. God is awesome!!!!

None of us had ever experienced something like this and we were able to capture it on video so we can put it into the movie THE LAST REFORMATION which will be out next year, something we are all looking forward to. God bless you all!

Kim Tompsett, Port Macquarie, NSW

The home church in Port Macquarie are now going out and talking and praying for people, one has been baptised at the beach. We had a communion picnic on the Town Green where passers-by could see we were reading from the Bible and sharing the Good news in the glorious sunshine. Then we talked to a couple of people on the break wall. Individually we are talking and praying with people during the week, sharing the word, even the Brisbane experience and what we witnessed [Ed: with Torben]. Praise God! God is so good, what an honour it is to serve Him.

Michael and Sally Butler, Brisbane West

Last night a small group of us went to the Darra Street Markets to talk to people, pray for the sick and generally introduce people to the Gospel. One or two were healed, and another one or two will be followed up this week after they expressed interest in hearing about the Gospel. This group [a Brisbane Westside network formed after Torben's visit] is a good way of staying connected for those who want to pursue Making Disciples as the Lord commanded.

We had a good time yesterday at the Darra Street Festival. We chatted to quite a few people and prayed for a few which was encouraging. Quite hard to start with but as we got into it we all felt more confident. Michael and I found a lovely old Vietnamese couple who asked us to pray for peace in their family and then mentioned the husband had a stroke 3 months ago and his arm was not yet functioning properly. Michael prayed and laid hands on his whole arm, hand and shoulder. We chatted a bit more, then left. Just before we set off to our car they came up to us and his hand which was numb when we started to pray was then

completely better! He was so excited and so were we! Praise God.

Glenn Ford, Atherton, Far Nth Qld

I have been there for people on the streets of Atherton and Cairns and seen some healing. I have "kickstarted" my wife who is now on fire for God. There is also a brother in the church where we attend who will be "kickstarted" next week when I get back from a work project where there are men who don't know God as yet but am believing they will by the end of the week.

A grandmother, Esk, Qld

So good to hear that the spirit of evangelism and the love and compassion for the lost keeps growing. I attended the weekend with my grandson and we were very inspired by the messages of Torben. To hear the down-to-earth gospel preached and applied blessed our hearts. Our grandson, Jonathan, was so inspired that weekend and touched by The Lord that he has already brought many street kids to the Lord and 5 got baptised in water and with the Holy Spirit. Hallelujah! Daily he is following up the converts and reaching out to more. We are praising The Lord for this breakthrough in his life and believe for more to follow. This week I leave for the Philippines and believe and expect great things to happen. Many Christians are so hungry for more of The Lord, so let's take the opportunities given to us. I hope the testimony of my grandson will inspire many others.

John Engelhardt, grower near Coffs Harbour

We preached and prayed for a truck driver who takes plants for me to Melbourne – he got a bad infection in his leg. He rang from Melbourne to tell us "we did some good to him". Of course not us but Jesus is the healer and physican.



Nundah Markets outreach, Brisbane

Ruth Goozeff, Nowra

I wanted to write as quickly as is possible for me, to let you know that the healing that I received in my leg and hip on the Friday night when we all prayed for each other, [Brisbane, 26th Sept 2014] has continued to remain with me. I cannot tell you how much I praise God for this not only does it mean I don't carry the low grade pain I had had, but I am once again able to walk on my "walking machine" as well as in the streets. This is something that I battled all year. So from my body point of view I received a lasting healing. Please pass that on if people are asking the question, "have the healings lasted?"

Russell Duffield, Brisbane West

Several of us have been reaching out in to the "harvest field" at the riverside walk along Nadine St in Graceville on Saturday mornings and have made some good connections and have had many opportunities to pray for people. We are looking forward to great breakthrough in healing as we meet and pray for more. My hope is that people would come and seek us out for prayer as a need arises. I would also like to invite you to join us at Graceville from 6.30 to around 9.00 am at Simpson's Playground. Please let me know if you want to come so we can manage the outreach walks. I feel led to go to places like Annerley shopping centre at some stage also. Some could go to the river walk along the Brisbane Corso. You may have an area that you would like to attend and we could arrange others to join you in support. We have found that going out in a male/female pair is most effective. We look forward with great anticipation to what God will do through willing hands and feet as we reach out.

Jenny Curtis, Toowoomba, Qld

I just love working in a library where random people walk in with so many

needs. This week I prayed for a work mate, invited a lonely lady to the Park fellowship, prayed for an Asian girl with a sore wrist that "felt better", encouraged a desperate man with nowhere to turn to cry out to his God who loves him, showed a Baptist man some great Christian reading...for all those people that think being a librarian is boring—you are so wrong! Wherever people are, the harvest is ripe and there is exciting work to be done in Jesus name. Just don't tell my manager!

Oct 22. What an awesome day! I was walking with and chatting with a young PNG guy today. Prayed for his knee and it stopped clicking and catching. (He was planning to have an operation). I was encouraging him to get baptised and explaining the normal Christian life when the above mentioned desperate man walks by. On calling him over, my new friend says "I know him, we were in jail together!" Turns out the Aussie guy had encouraged the PNG guy with scriptures whilst they were both in jail. They were pleased to see each other and I gave them both my number and suggested we get together for fellowship at Church in the Park or anywhere really. Aussie guy had a temporary place to stay and looked so much better than a week ago. Praise God for the chance to reconnect out of work time. They both know where they can find me at work, church or by phone. God is sooo good!!!! Please pray for them both.

Jane Silcox, Brisbane West, Oct 18

I talked with a Pacific Islander lady who shared her Jesus story with me, she had walked away but was coming back to the Lord with the encouragement of her mother. I got to pray for her husband and children.

Jordan Johnston, Brisbane West

I prayed for one of my work colleagues today who was very sick with the flu. She really appreciated it and was able to get through all her patients. I was glad that I took the opportunity because it nearly slipped me by.

Regina Pfeiffer, Wagga Wagga NSW

It was the last day of the Brisbane Festival Saturday 26th Sept. and there were heaps of people around at Southbank, in Brisbane. The first group we met were people of peace. There was only one girl whom we didn't see fully healed—she had a headache. She was the last person in the group and I didn't want to put her on the spot in front of her peers. Then Gijo and I also came across a group of about 5 or 6 Muslim youths on whom we laid hands for healing. One guy wanted prayer for his parents. I felt that I needed to give him a hug; we then came across 3 skateboarders. Two of them had legs out of alignment and pain somewhere else. Their friend who had a sore arm was not a person of peace even though his friends were telling him it "really works".

Oct 19. I invited a new brother in Christ to come over and have lunch with us. He is keen to get baptised in water. We shared lots of things about the Holy Spirit, healing testimonies and about demons being cast out. We were doing "church" over our kitchen table. After lunch he was baptised in the Holy Spirit with speaking in tongues. It was so cool he got the giggles.

Facebook, Oct 2014: At Federation Square, Melbourne on Wednesday afternoon, 1st October, we met a tourist called Andre from Hungary. His back pain disappeared in the name of Jesus. Then I found out that he was a medical doctor. When he heard that demons can come out via the ears, Andre said his ears popped. Then there was a guy called Matt with his two children. He had bowed legs and I commanded them to straighten in Jesus name. He is Catholic and had something to do with the charismatic movement that went through the Catholic church in the mid 80's. He noticed that the pain in his knees disappeared as soon as his legs straightened. I seemed to sense he was a person of peace. So I said "can I show you something?" I got him to grow his son and daughter's legs out so that they were even. We talked and shared a little more, and he said that he would check out www.thelastreformation.com and The Pioneer School.

Jeremy Davis, Sydney

Prayed for my friend's mother who has suffered arthritis since 2006 described as 10/10 pain and needed injections for pain relief and she was healed. The pain came back as a 5/10 so then I prayed another 4 times *Continued on page 14*

This is the **NORMAL** Christian Life!

This is an update of our lives in Robertson NSW. Holy Spirit has been doing a great and deeper work in me. A few weeks back, in my desperation to live a life that mirrored the early believers we find in the book of Acts, I began a fast. I feel I need breakthrough in areas of fear and unbelief in my life and I'm pleading with God to do this work in me as I deny my flesh and feed my spirit with more time in the word and prayer. In this time, Luke and I have also been watching Torben Søndergaard on YouTube, his pioneer school, *The Last Reformation*. There are 20 lessons there and I can feel Holy Spirit provoking me and imparting to me from this man's testimony. I can't encourage the church enough to make time to watch and chew on this stuff then go and do it.

I was baptised and filled with the spirit before the age of 10. I've received the gift of tongues and God speaks to me and leads me through dreams and visions, prophecies etc., but I have not experienced the healings, signs and wonders, casting out demons, etc., like so many of the church in the West. As I read the book of Acts now, I say to myself and anyone who will listen..."This is the NORMAL Christian life!" And this is what I desire!!!

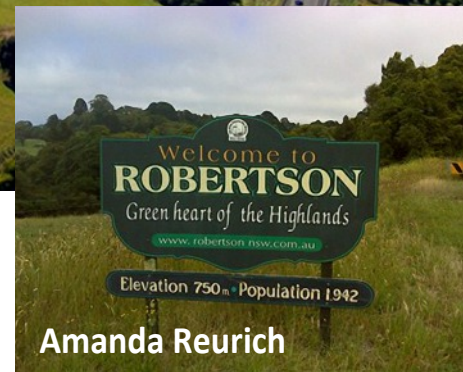
Recently I've been prayer walking Robo (Robertson) more frequently, early every Saturday morning and on Wednesday and Friday morning when I walk Isaac to preschool. In this time I have been especially asking God to show me how to

connect with any of my neighbours that are ready for the kingdom of God as I myself do not know how to make this happen. I'll come back to this...

In the mornings I've started reading passages from Acts or other places in the New Testament with my three boys, and discussing it with them and praying together before school. On Friday morning I read Acts 2 with them and said "This is supposed to be the normal Christian life boys! And I know we don't look quite like this yet but we're asking God to change us so we do. Do you know the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is in us when we have died to ourselves and been raised in Jesus?!?"

Danny got so excited. "Mum, I want the power of God in me! This is so exciting!" He exclaimed. I said "Well, are you ready to get baptised?" Danny has thought about getting baptised often but hasn't wanted to go under the water! But his desire overtook his fear finally this day and he said yes! We spent the rest of our morning watching some of Torben's YouTube videos of healings and miracles. I watched their faith grow! During the day, I met with my sister who was having a lot of ongoing pain in her body due to her being hyper-flexible. I shared with her what God is doing in my life, and so myself and Criss and Ailsa (Matessic) prayed for her three times for healing! Each time she felt some area gain relief. She felt a burning in her arm and a release in her back. She was surprised! I was encouraged! I'm still believing God to heal her completely.

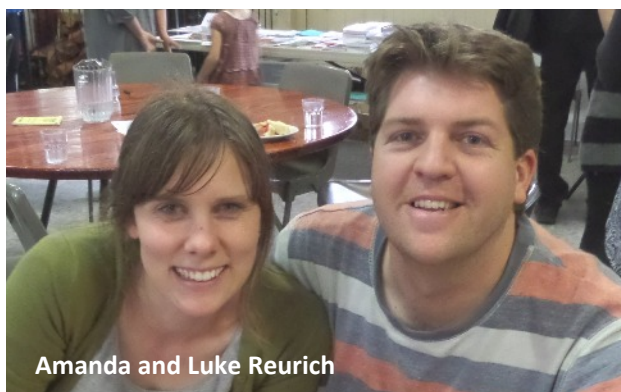
That same afternoon when Danny got home from school, the whole family went down to the beach for some baptisms! During the car trip there, Danny told us that he had been sharing Jesus with one of the girls he goes to school with on the bus! He had informed her that Jesus still heals people today and that his power is in those who believe in him. The little girl, Charlotte, is the daughter of one



of the women I've been sharing Jesus with and praying for. Charlotte said to Danny, "I think I believe in God now", and Danny said, "Do you want me to teach you how to pray?" And then he prayed for her. Luke and I grinned at each other as he told his stories! How I am challenged by the bold and simple faith of children!!!

When we got to the beach I first baptised my husband Luke (as he hasn't been baptised), then Luke and I together baptised Danny. Isaac then informed us that he too wanted to be filled with the power of God as well, so we baptised him also! There was a great sense of joy among us! When we got back to our car we realised we'd been robbed while we were there. All our phones and wallets, gone! We decided to praise God anyway and trust him. We went to my dad's house and he has been suffering a lot of pain after his shoulder operation. I got Danny to lay hands on him and pray for him. Even though we saw no immediate recovery, I think it is important for me to keep reinforcing to my children that they carry the power of Jesus everywhere they go. They have his spirit and can now heal the sick, cast out demons, preach the gospel and baptise those they lead to Christ!!! In the car on the way home I told the boys they can baptise their little brother David when he's ready. It was fun watching them process that :)

Danny asked if he could get up early with me on Saturday morning to prayer walk with me. He also wanted to fast breakfast with me too! So off we went hand in hand asking Jesus to bring his Kingdom to Robertson. I love his passion for Jesus! Later that morning I was hanging my washing and heard Holy Spirit speak to me, "Go down to [Continued on page 9](#)



Amanda and Luke Reurich

REVIVAL IN PARRAMATTA, 1840

Stories of the moving of the Spirit in our nation are not new. The earliest church in Australia came out of the fires of the Wesley revivals and the cottage meetings birthed as a result. Here's an account of revival in Parramatta in 1840, as told by John Watsford, one of the laymen involved.

I might tell of many of the laymen of that day who were earnest workers in our church, and to whom Methodism is largely indebted.... Some of the local preachers and leaders in Sydney and Parramatta were men of great spiritual power, men who believed in prayer and fasting, and who did not depend upon a stranger coming now and then to hold special services and bring sinners to Christ. They believed in the Holy Ghost, and pleaded for His coming in connection with the ordinary services. As a result, there were 'showers of blessing', glorious revivals, wonderful displays of the Holy Spirit's power in convincing and saving men. We used often to see a whole congregation broken down and unable to leave the church; and numbers, night after night, coming to the house of God and finding salvation, and this no matter who was conducting the service. A more particular account of some of the revivals with which I was at this time connected will not be uninteresting to the reader.

REVIVAL

The first revival in Parramatta that I know of was in 1840. Religion had been in a low

state. The minister of the Circuit was a good man, but old and nearly worn out. He was greatly opposed to noise, and marked the men who were very much in earnest. It was the custom then to call by name a few persons to pray in the prayer-meetings, and any who were at all noisy were never asked. Two of our most excellent and devoted local preachers, who were always seeking to save souls, were placed on the list of persons not allowed to take part in the prayer-meetings. Very soon I was added to the number.

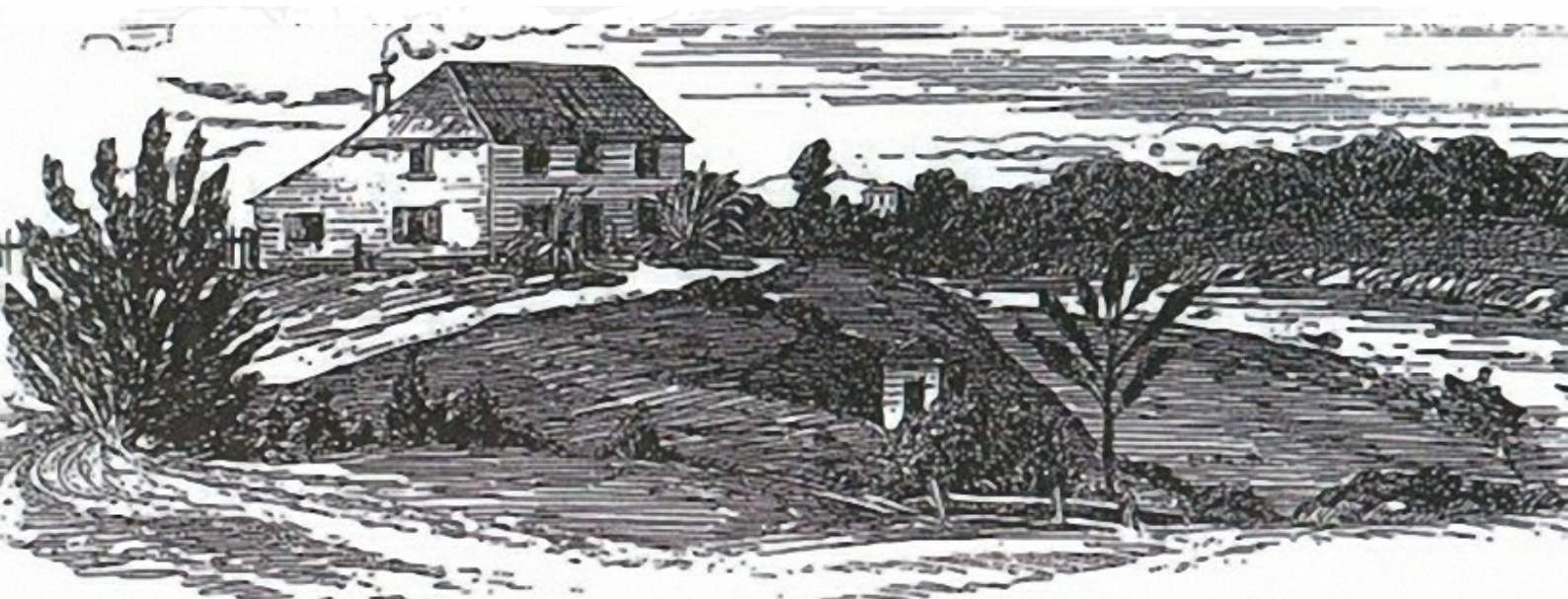
THIS IS OUR PLAN

One day the two brethren to whom I have referred said to me, "We are going specially to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the revival of God's work, and we want you to join us. This is our plan: Every morning and evening and at midday to spend some time in pleading with God to pour out His Spirit; to observe every Friday as a day of fasting and prayer; to sit together in the meetings, and, though not permitted to pray aloud, silently to plead for the coming of the Holy Ghost." I think they were a little afraid of me, as they gave me this caution: "Now mind, you must not say a word against our minister, or have any unkind feeling toward him, because he does not allow us to take part in the Parramatta and New Testament Church Growth meetings. He knows what he is doing, and has his own reasons for it. If we complain, or speak against him, the Lord will not hear our prayer."

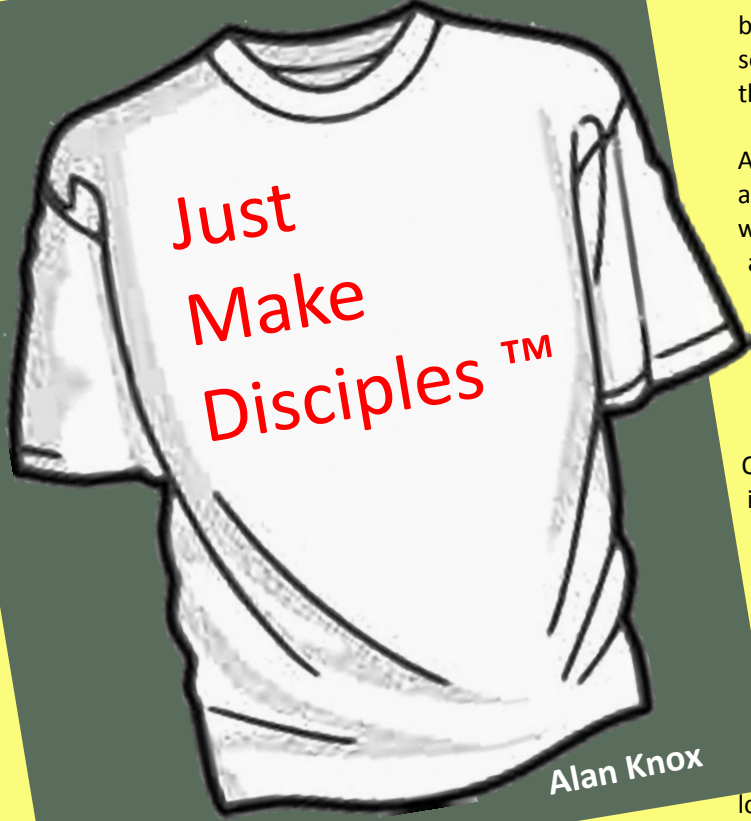
BROTHER WATSFORD, PRAY!

We carried out our plan for one, two, three weeks, no one but God and ourselves knowing what we were doing. At the end of the fourth week, on Sunday evening, the Rev. William Walker preached a powerful sermon. After the service the people flocked to the prayer-meeting, till the schoolroom was filled. My two friends were there, one on each side of me, and I knew they had hold of God. We could hear sighs and suppressed sobs all around us. The old minister of the Circuit, who had conducted the meeting, was concluding with the benediction, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God" — here he stopped, and sobbed aloud. When he could speak he called out, "Brother Watsford, pray". I prayed, and then my two friends prayed, and oh! the power of God that came upon the people, who were overwhelmed by it in every part of the room! And what a cry for mercy! It was heard by the passers-by in the street, some of whom came running in to see what was the matter, and were smitten down at the door in great distress. The clock of a neighbouring church struck twelve before we could leave the meeting. How many were saved I cannot tell. Day after day and week after week the work went on, and many were converted.

Excerpt from AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN LIFE FROM 1788 Iain Murray, Banner of Truth Trust, 1988



Rangihū: the Rev. Samuel Marsden's cottage at Parramatta.
Sketched by the Rev. Richard Taylor in 1838.



I'm tired of gimmicks, mottos, slogans, mission statements. Why can't we just make disciples? In fact, I think that will be my new motto: "Just Make Disciples".

I shared this idea with a few friends, and they were all very excited about the idea of spending time with one another – discipling one another – helping one another live our lives in conformity with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and encouraging others to do the same.

One of my friends has a t-shirt printing business. He told me that he could print some t-shirts with "Just Make Disciples" on it. I think this will be a wonderful way to encourage people to spend their time making disciples instead of doing so many other things that seem good, but distract us from our mission. I was planning to get together with my friend this afternoon,

but he's working on the design for the logo, and buying t-shirts, and setting up his screen prints, and talking to Christian retailers. He thinks "Just Make Disciples" will become a huge brand.

Another friend is in marketing. He thought this idea was wonderful also. He said he knew some people that he needed to spend time with in order to just make disciples. His mind works so fast that he already has ideas for a print campaign, a radio spot, and maybe even a TV commercial. He knows a couple of actors and authors who may be interested. I was hoping to have lunch or dinner with him, but he's very busy putting together these marketing plans for "Just Make Disciples".

One of my friends is one of the elders of a local church. He thinks this idea will revolutionize the church. He says that it is so simple that any believer can take part, and it is so effective that only a few people who just make disciples will change their neighborhoods and city. He had to cancel our plans to get together because he's working on a small-group study and a sermon series designed around our new motto "Just Make Disciples".

I have a friend who is a lawyer. He thinks he needs to spend more time helping the people in his practice follow Jesus. He's looking forward to spending time to just make disciples. Of course, he said, we have to be very careful with our brand. Someone could steal it, or mimic it, or denigrate it. He's looking into a formal copywrite. For now, he says, we should try to trademark "Just Make Disciples™". We were planning to get coffee together tonight, but he has to do some research and fill out the right forms in order to protect "Just Make Disciples™".

So, my afternoon and evening is free. I was planning to get together with several friends to just make disciples, but they're all busy with "Just Make Disciples™". You know, now that I think about it, what we really need is a web presence. And, since I'm a web developer, I think I can come up with a great web site for "Just Make Disciples". There could even be a discussion area where people can hang out and spend time with one another online.

So, like I said, I'm tired of all those gimmicks, mottos, slogans, and mission statements. I want to just make disciples. I think "Just Make Disciples™" is exactly what we need today.



www.alanknox.net

THIS IS NORMAL! Continued from page 7)

the local park". In all honesty I felt nervous and not really like going. "What are you going to ask me to do God?" I wondered. I could feel that fear and unbelief trying to rear its ugly head. I felt myself trying to make excuses. I could feel Holy Spirit saying "Do you want what you're asking for or not?" So we got on our bikes and rode to the park. I meet a family that live a few streets away while we're there. Wasn't much opportunity to talk Jesus but they seemed keen to catch up again one day. On the way home, an elderly woman was standing on the corner looking at me. It was like she was waiting for me so I stopped to talk to her. I found out her name was Jo and she lives just across the street from me!!! I asked

her if she was very connected in the community and she replied that most neighbours just wave and say hi but are too busy for relationship. I instantly invited her to come over for a cup of tea anytime she'd like. She thanked me genuinely and she said she would and then invited me to do likewise at her place! I went home praising God. Just like that he connected me with my neighbour...but I had to be obedient and go out from my house when he spoke for that to happen. Thank you Holy Spirit for giving me the grace and courage to go and thank you for answered prayer and connecting me with my neighbours!

So there you go! My last few days have been exciting and full of the Spirit's work and leading! I'll be honest and say it doesn't

always feel easy. I feel stretched and totally out of my depth most of the time. It feels uncomfortable and risky. It hurts my flesh to tell it to die and obey. I really see why fasting is so important for solidifying that truth in our lives in other areas of obedience and being Spirit led. I have so far to go. I still fear men too much. I still don't fully realise who Christ is in me and I still wrestle with unbelief, pride and complacency. But I'm giving this broken vessel of my life to Jesus one day at a time and with more faith than I think I've ever had, I'm believing for HIS strength and power to shine through all the cracks and do immeasurably more than I can even ask, dream or imagine!

What about the PLUMBERS?

Gil Cann

GIL CANN speaks out in favour of the 'lay' person's ministry as the most vital (and under-acknowledged) work of the local church.

I had just finished speaking to a large congregation in regional Victoria. I had tried to emphasise the great need for church leaders to see their members' daily spheres of influence as important ministries of their church.

A church member, a tradesman, shook my arm and firmly said, 'You're right, but in this church we don't do that. In this church we pray for the pastors, the elders, the deacons, the youth leaders and the Sunday School teachers but whenever are we going to pray for the plumbers?'

A very good question! And for the teachers, bus drivers, business people, labourers, computer programmers, nurses, tradies, farmers, students, unemployed, retired —when are we going to pray for them?

Soon after this I met a young Christian brick layer in Melbourne. He told me, 'I belong to one of the largest and best known churches in Australia. But nobody there seems to know or care that five days a week I have to work with a builder from hell!'

A few days later I was a customer at a large, well known bulk store. As I spoke to the young saleswoman it became apparent she was a Christian. We rejoiced in the privilege of knowing the Lord and then I asked her how many people worked in that store. She thought about one hundred and twenty.

I asked, "about how many of your fellow workers are Christians?" She

replied, "as far as I know I am the only one."

Reflecting later on these conversations I could not help but think about how little encouragement, support and prayer is offered to and for such people at our Sunday services. And also, how rarely is the importance of their daily spheres of influence recognised on those occasions. All of these people want to honour the Lord in their workplaces. They have little or no contact with other Christians during the week. They do not enjoy the fellowship and encouragement experienced, for example, by pastors and church members involved in conducting church related activities. They are isolated and scattered in a very different 'world'. They are unseen and unsung heroes of their churches.

TAKING MONDAYS SERIOUSLY

So what kind of gathering do they need to be part of on Sundays. They need not simply to attend a service but to belong to a church which takes their 'Mondays' seriously on Sundays! Tragically such churches are very hard to find. This huge deficiency is, I believe, a major cause of the current growing disillusionment of many Christians with their churches.

Recent surveys bear witness to this malaise. Current observations suggest that 70% of Australian Christians are now 'occasional' rather than weekly church offenders. A Transforming Melbourne survey in 2006 revealed that in Melbourne alone 9000 people leave churches every year, the equivalent of one sizeable congregation every week! Similarly, two major denominations have found that 70% of members saw little or no connection between their faith and work.



I notice also a more frequent use of terms like 'churchless faith' or 'churchless Christianity'. More Christians are exploring 'virtual church', i.e. 'church' via the internet or TV. We see more churches becoming houses and houses becoming churches. The house church movement itself is growing steadily, the direct result of many Christians leaving larger, more institutional churches and looking for something more authentic. In the past we often regarded Christians leaving churches as disloyal, 'backsliders' or immature. Now often the opposite is the case. It is often the more mature rather than the 'immature' who are troubled by their churches and considering leaving.

Few churches are exempt from this trend. Some of the world's best known churches have recently been dismayed to discover this same attitude amongst their most mature people. These people want to follow the Lord wholeheartedly. But they are troubled by how poorly their churches address the issues and challenges involved as Christians try to honour the Lord in their everyday lives. Christians all over the world long to find churches who will take their 'Mondays' seriously on Sundays.

For example, Gordon Preece in his Zadok paper 'Everyday Spirituality', quotes former vice-president of Bethlehem Steel in USA, Bill Diehl. "In the almost 30 years of my professional career my church has never once suggested to me that there be any type of accounting of my on-the-job ministry to others. My church has never offered to help me improve those skills which could make me a better minister, nor has it ever asked if I needed any kind of support in what I was doing. There has never been an enquiry into the ethical decisions I face, or whether I seek to communicate my faith to my fellow-workers. I have never been in a church where there has been any type of public affirmation of the ministry I fulfil through my career. In short, I must conclude that my church couldn't care less as to whether or how I minister in my daily work!"

This is a devastating indictment of many church leaders' attitudes towards their members' workplaces. This tragic situation is true in churches of all kinds throughout Australia.

And notice this businessman's terminology — 'my on-the-job ministry to

others', 'a better minister', 'my ministry in my daily work', 'the ministry I fulfil through my career.' These are not the words of a clergyperson. They are the words of a 'layman', a manager, a church member who, every day, rubs shoulders with many people who know little or nothing of God's love.

This is not a man whose major Christian activity, like thousands of his peers, should be to support his church and minister. This is a man, who like thousands of his peers, needs to be supported by his church and minister.

Recently I met a Christian District Nurse. 'How many homes do you visit each week?' I asked. 'About forty' she replied. 'About how many would be non-Christian families?' At least thirty', she replied. I asked, 'Do you know that you visit the homes of more non-Christians in a week than most pastors?' "No", she said, 'I have never thought of that.' Does anybody in your Church know about what you do?' I asked, 'perhaps the pastor or the elders?' No 'she replied 'only my best friend at church knows.' Her church was not interested! This is not at all uncommon. This is amazing given that these days, for most Christians, the greatest amount of contact they have with non-Christians is in their work, neighbourhood, community, sporting and study situations. Given that 90% of Australians do not attend a church and 40% don't even know anyone who does, this attitude is astounding.

BLUE COLLAR MINISTERS

How can we expect Christians to believe their daily work is important if their church leaders apparently don't? And never more so than regarding 'blue collar' work. Very few such people, proportionately, are Christians. This means that Christian tradesmen, few though they may be, ought to be the most valued of all our members. One of the most effective personal evangelists I know is an electrician.

My friend the District Nurse and thousands of other Christians, need to know that what they do each day is regarded as a very important ministry of their church. Who is going to tell them?

And we must back up our words occasionally with pastoral support and public affirmation of their ministries. The harder to follow Christ in daily life, the greater the need for such churches becomes. The more faithfully Christian people want to honour the Lord the more they will look for churches whose top priority is to really help them do so. I have a friend who has worked in a large factory for many years. He is the only

Christian on his shift. He seeks to relate well to his fellow workers and prays for opportunities to share the gospel. After eight years of working alongside an apparently disinterested man, suddenly, 'out of the blue', the man said to him, 'It's Easter soon but I haven't got a clue about it. I know you're a Christian Robert, so can you tell me? Who is this Jesus guy? Is this whole Easter thing real? I really want to know!'

Eight years later Robert got the opportunity he'd been praying about for so long. Nearly every church has one or two 'Roberts'. Do they ever pray for them personally and publicly on a Sunday, that God will give them patience, wisdom and courage? In most churches, never!

A young school teacher I know was recently appointed to teach Sunday School. The same day he stood before the congregation while they prayed for him as he took up this new role. Sounds good. But he told me later he was very troubled by this. Why? Because he'd been a school teacher for ten years and they had never prayed for him once! He shook his head sadly. 'That says it all', he said.

His experience reminds us of a desperate need for churches to grasp a more biblical understanding of their primary ministry. It is not what the minister does, important though that is; it is not a church's regular programs and activities, fruitful though they may be. The primary ministry of a church is the sum total of everything which every one of its members says and does in every situation on every day of every week.

By this definition of ministry even a small church has a sphere of influence way beyond anything that its leaders and members ever imagined. If your church, however small, listed the names and addresses of its members, and the spheres of influence it has through them in their places of work, study, community involvement, their neighbourhoods and family circles, and if all of that was displayed on a large chart or screen and unveiled one Sunday morning as the 'primary ministry of your church' everyone would be amazed! And all of that already exists! But in most churches it goes unrecognised.

Furthermore, it all exists without another dollar spent; another committee meeting, another late night, and another program to make your people busier than before — it all already exists. *Continued on page 15*

AGNES' BIRTHDAY

This true incident happened to Tony Campolo a few years ago. Tony, who grew up in inner city Philadelphia, is professor emeritus of Sociology at Eastern University in St. Davids, Pennsylvania. Founder of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education. Dr. Campolo has provided the leadership to create, nurture and support programs for "at-risk" children in cities across the United States and Canada, and has helped establish schools and universities in several developing countries.

A few years ago Tony flew to Hawaii to speak at a conference. The way he tells it, he checks into his hotel and tries to get some sleep. Unfortunately, his internal clock wakes him at 3:00 a.m. The night is dark, the streets are silent, the world is asleep, but Tony is wide awake and his stomach is growling. He gets up and prowls the streets looking for a place to get some bacon and eggs for an early breakfast. Everything is closed except for a grungy dive in an alley. He goes in and sits down at the counter. The fat guy behind the counter comes over and asks, "What d'ya want?"

Well, Tony isn't so hungry anymore so eyeing some donuts under a plastic cover he says, "I'll have a donut and black coffee."

As he sits there munching on his donut and sipping his coffee at 3:30, in walk eight or nine provocative, loud prostitutes just finished with their night's work. They plop down at the counter and Tony finds himself uncomfortably surrounded by this group of smoking, swearing hookers. He gulps his coffee, planning to make a quick getaway. Then the woman next to him says to her friend, "You know what? Tomorrow's my birthday. I'm gonna be 39." To which her friend nastily replies,



"So what d'ya want from me? A birthday party? Huh? You want me to get a cake, and sing happy birthday to you?"

The first woman says, "Aw, come on, why do you have to be so mean? Why do you have to put me down? I'm just sayin' it's my birthday. I don't want anything from you. I mean, why should I have a birthday party? I've never had a birthday party in my whole life. Why should I have one now?"

Well, when Tony Campolo heard that, he said he made a decision. He sat and waited until the women left, and then he asked the fat guy at the counter, "Do they come in here every night?"

"Yeah," he answered.

"The one right next to me," he asked, "she comes in every night?"

"Yeah," he said, "that's Agnes. Yeah, she's here every night. She's been comin' here for years. Why do you want to know?"

"Because she just said that tomorrow is her birthday. What do you think? Do you think we could maybe throw a little birthday party for her right here in the diner?"

A cute kind of smile crept over the fat man's chubby cheeks. "That's great," he says, "yeah, that's great. I like it." He turns to the kitchen and shouts to his wife, "Hey, come on out here. This guy's got a great idea. Tomorrow is Agnes' birthday and he wants to throw a party for her right here."

His wife comes out. "That's terrific," she says. "You know, Agnes is really nice. She's always trying to help other people and nobody does anything nice for her."

So they make their plans. Tony says he'll be back at 2:30 the next morning with some decorations and the man, whose name turns out to be Harry, says he'll make a cake.

At 2:30 the next morning, Tony is back. He has crepe paper and other decorations and a sign made of big pieces of cardboard that says, "Happy Birthday, Agnes!" They decorate the place from one end to the other and get it looking great. Harry had gotten the word out on the streets about the party and by 3:15 it seemed that every prostitute in Honolulu was in the place. There were hookers wall to wall.

At 3:30 on the dot, the door swings open and in walks Agnes and her friend. Tony has everybody ready. They all shout and scream "Happy Birthday, Agnes!" Agnes is absolutely flabbergasted. She's stunned, her mouth falls open, her knees started to buckle, and she almost falls over.

And when the birthday cake with all the candles is carried out, that's when she totally loses it. Now she's sobbing and crying. Harry, who's not used to seeing a prostitute cry, gruffly mumbles, "Blow out the candles, Agnes. Cut the cake."

So she pulls herself together and blows them out. Everyone cheers and yells, "Cut the cake, Agnes, cut the cake!"

But Agnes looks down at the cake and, without taking her eyes off it, slowly and softly says, "Look, Harry, is it all right with you if...I mean, if I don't...I mean, what I want to ask, is it OK if I keep the cake a little while? Is it all right if we don't eat it right away?"

Harry doesn't know what to say so he shrugs and says, "Sure, if that's what you want to do. Keep the cake. Take it home if you want."

"Oh, could I?" she asks. Looking at Tony she says, "I live just down the street a couple of doors; I want to take the cake home, is that okay? I'll be right back, honest."

She gets off her stool, picks up the cake, and carries it high in front of her like it was the Holy Grail. Everybody watches in stunned silence and when the door closes behind her, nobody seems to know what to do. They look at each other. They look at Tony.

So Tony gets up on a chair and says, "What do you say that we pray together?"

And there they are in a hole-in-the-wall greasy spoon, half the prostitutes in Honolulu, at 3:30 a.m. listening to Tony Campolo as he prays for Agnes, for her life, her health, and her salvation. Tony recalls, "I prayed that her life would be changed, and that God would be good to her."

When he's finished, Harry leans over, and with a trace of hostility in his voice, he says, "Hey, you never told me you was a preacher. What kind of church do you belong to anyway?"

In one of those moments when just the right words came, Tony answers him quietly, "I belong to a church that throws birthday parties for prostitutes at 3:30 in the morning."

Harry thinks for a moment, and in a mocking way says, "No you don't. There ain't no church like that. If there was, I'd join it. Yep, I'd join a church like that."

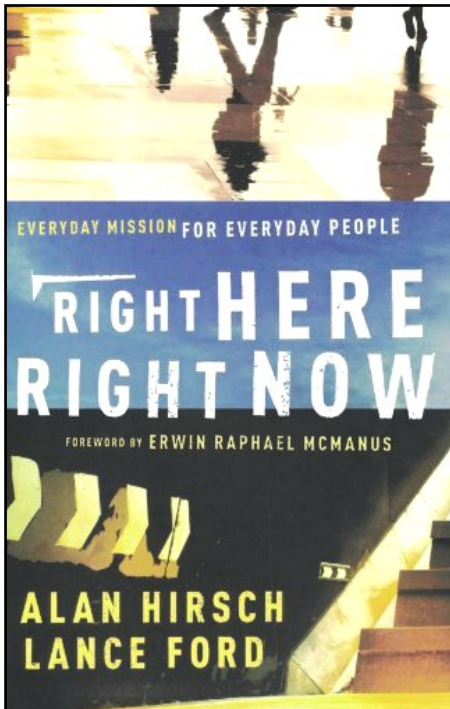


TONY CAMPOLLO
www.tonycampollo.org

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 or
www.house2house.com



Right Here, Right Now: Everyday Mission for Everyday People Alan Hirsch and Lance Ford

Last edition we reviewed another book of the same name. This one is not free but sounds like it is worth adding to your Kindle, iPad, etc.

As one who is aspiring to be a Missional Leader, I consistently am drawn to any and all books discussing the ideas of the mission of God and how He develops His missional people (the church). I am a huge fan of Alan Hirsch (Forgotten Ways is one of my most influential books), so I immediately picked up this book.

The intention of this book is to equip the everyday person to live a life as God's Missionaries in the world they are sent. The Subtitle (Everyday Mission for Everyday People) greatly summarizes this concept. This book (co-authored by Hirsch and Lance Ford), was written in a unique fashion. Hirsch, who tends to be very technical in his writing, lays the foundation for a missional people while Ford does much of the application to Hirsch's theoretical snippets. I find this to be very nice for the average reader. While I enjoy the thick language of some of Hirsch's previous works, this has much more of an approachable sense that the every-day Christian can understand the concepts.

They take quite a bit of time throughout the book to discuss reasons why many

people are not living missional lifestyles, specifically Consumerism. Hirsch has stated repeatedly elsewhere that he believes the greatest threat to the Christian Missional lifestyle is not paganism but Consumerism. They do an awesome job of debunking the myths of Consumerism and call each of us to reorient our whole lives, including our finances and lifestyle, around Mission. To go along with the book, they have put together a website filled with additional resources to help engage the reader in missional living. They have videos to go along with each chapter as well as discussion questions that you can go through with others to challenge one another. Although I did not use them too much in my reading, these can be extremely helpful to take the reading to another level.

Filled with stories and examples of how normal people are fulfilling an extraordinary calling, this is a great read for all believers to truly understand their standing and calling as Missionaries. I highly recommend it.

Justin C. Westcott (Seattle, WA) Amazon

KICKSTART STORIES Cont. from page 6

and she is completely healed as of today.

Prayed for a friend's finger that he couldn't move in a certain way and had 7/10 pain due to a cricket injury, and finger flexibility and pain was healed. Some pain came back 3/10 but the

finger flexibility is still there and I haven't had a chance to pray again.

Prayed for a workmate's wrist that had 7/10 pain since doing self-defence classes and went to 5/10 as he described, but pain came back. I haven't prayed for him again since but will do. He introduced me to other believers in Christ at work that do the same thing which has encouraged me and helped me with my walk today.

Prayed for my girlfriend's brother whose toe got better but didn't keep going till completely healed; also has a skin condition which is incurable to doctors which didn't see any breakthrough as of yet but will pray again another time.

Today prayed for a guy at the gym that had pain in the shoulder since June and was healed.

Surfing Simple Church Sites worth checking out on the Web

www.thelastreformation.com This is Torben Søndergaard's site and, if you have been inspired by the stories at the start of the magazine, you might like to invest in his 20-part Pioneer School YouTube series. It's free. You can also access them and follow his ministry from his facebook page www.facebook.com/thelastreformation

www.alanknox.net Alan Knox (Just Make Disciples™) actually has a very thought provoking blogsite entitled "The Assembling of the Church". He describes himself as a follower of Jesus and an IT manager who loves running, coffee and ecclesiology. Apart from some challenging blogs his site has a good podcast page for those who are looking for some more 'in depth' teaching on the nature of the church.

Stay up to date with news, events and challenging articles on the
OIKOS Blog - www.blog.oikos.org.au

REREADING THE GREAT COMMISSION

“Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matt 28:18-20)

I grew up thinking “The Great Commission” was a mandate for Christians to pack their bags, move overseas, convert the natives, and teach them to memorise the Bible (don’t laugh at me – I grew up in an evangelical, Bible-memorising, missionary-sending church with a passion to “win souls to the Lord”). I figured pastors and overseas missionaries were the only ones obeying the text, and set my heart towards missions work from an early age (as a woman, the role of “pastor” wasn’t open to me, back then).

However, over the years I’ve learned to re-read this section of the Bible, and three main points have leapt out at me (that I never saw when I was younger).

1. It’s not talking about overseas missions.

It’s easy to get confused by the reference to “all nations” and think Jesus was telling us to pack our bags and head somewhere “over there” – where we need to spend many years learning the language and culture and customs, and probably will never be fully accepted as a local. Sure, there’s room for that approach, but it’s one part of the big picture. God has cleverly placed each one of us within a community, within our extended family, in our workplaces and schools and sports teams, as a minister of reconciliation. We already know the language and culture. We already have connections and relationships. We are strategically scattered throughout the nations, to have maximum impact and be part of an unstoppable, grassroots movement. What brilliant planning on God’s part!

2. Discipleship begins before conversion.

This one gets me really excited. This changes everything. We can start to invite our unchurched friends and relatives into a God-centred, others-focussed way of life long before we see any outward signs of conversion. I find my unchurched friends are very open to joining me in my “ministry” (welcoming newcomers and looking after some of the lonely people in our area) – more open than many of my church friends (and often more socially appropriate). In the process, they start to change and become more open to God and His ways, and some of them have made a commitment to Christ (the Holy Spirit’s doing, not mine!). I never invite anyone to church anymore – I find they invite themselves when they are ready for that form of input. I’ve learned I am not responsible to “convert” anybody – that’s up to God – but I am responsible to actively and intentionally model God’s ways for others to observe and follow.

3. It’s about obedience, not memorisation.

Nearly every “discipleship” course I’ve ever done has involved memorising verses and sections of Scripture. Most churches I’ve been part of have been obsessed with “Biblical literacy”, and knowing what Jesus said, rather than just going out and doing it. There is a place for knowing your Bible, but Jesus instructed us to teach people to obey, not memorise. Those two key words make all the difference. I’ve realised my friends don’t have to quote a single memory verse in the process of hands-on, real life obedience.

Re-reading the text has opened me up to a bigger picture, a more sustainable and effective plan for reaching the world than most churches currently practice. Jesus set a movement in motion when he gave “The Great Commission” – a model for naturally-occurring reproduction of “Jesus-followers” throughout the world. He never intended his people to farm out their responsibilities to the paid professionals – he wants all of us to intentionally and organically live as disciples, who make disciples...who make disciples!

KATHLEEN WARD resides in Perth, Western Australia with husband Kevin-Neil. Catch up with their work at www.churchinacircle.com

WHAT ABOUT THE PLUMBERS? Cont. from page 11

WHO’S DEAD!

While I was still serving as a pastor and this understanding of a church’s primary ministry began to dawn on me I decided I had better start putting it into practice. So I went to the workplace of a member of our church, to better understand her working situation, so that when I preached and prayed and spoke to her I could support her in her workplace ministry.

However, when Edna saw me arrive at her workplace, she was shocked. In great alarm she blurted out ‘Who’s dead?!’ I was shocked! I said, ‘Edna, relax, no one is dead!’ She calmed down a little and then said, ‘Then, what’s wrong?’ I said, ‘Edna, it’s OK, nothing is wrong’. And then, obviously perplexed, she asked, ‘Then why

are you here?’ How about that for a revelation of a typical Christian’s understanding of the work of a pastor! ‘Who died, what’s wrong, why are you here?’ A book could be written about that! No wonder we are not in mission mode!

Then I explained to Edna why I’d come. She found it very difficult to believe. Eventually she said, ‘Well, if that is really true, come with me’. She then introduced me to the 25 people she worked with each day. We spent a couple of minutes with each one.

Then she took me to her office. There was a large glass partition through which we could see most of those people. She went round them again. ‘See that man there, see that girl there, see that lady over there’. She told me how she was seeking to pray for this one, encourage that one, support this one, and share her faith with that one.

When she had finished I said to her, ‘Edna, you are the pastor in this place’. Astonished she replied: ‘Am I really?’ I repeated, ‘Edna, you are the evangelist in this place’. And she responded, ‘Am I?’ Then, after a thoughtful pause she said, ‘If I really am, then let’s pray together for these people amongst whom God has placed me as their pastor and evangelist’.

We did. When I left Edna’s work place it had become like a new world to her. Not because I was anyone special. But because for the first time in her life, instead of Edna going to church the church had come to Edna, instead of Edna supporting the church, the church was supporting Edna.

GIL CANN and his wife Cathie live in Gilderoy, Victoria. Gil has spent many years in pastoral and revival focussed ministry within the Uniting Church.

Q & A

QUESTION: Jesus instructed His disciples to open their eyes and see the harvest. What do we need to similarly see a harvest in Australia?

ANSWER: The following excerpt from Neil Coles' book "Cultivating a Life for God" is worth considering.

Jesus was a busy man. He was going about all the cities and villages preaching in every synagogue, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness (Matt 9:35). For most of us our depth of compassion diminishes the busier our life gets, but not so with Jesus. In the next verse it says, "And seeing the multitudes He felt compassion for them because they were distressed and downcast like sheep who have no shepherd (Matt. 9:36)."

In that context he instructs his disciples that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few and then tells us where to find more workers...on our knees begging God for them (Matt. 9:37-38).

In Matt 9:35-38 Jesus shows us that the workers must come from the harvest itself. In the verses that follow (10:1-5) He transforms the twelve from being disciples ("students" or "pupils") in 10:1 to being apostles ("sent ones") in 10:2. They went from praying for the harvest to preaching in the harvest in one verse.

We can draw from the flow of this passage a simple chain of action that can be a road map for an abundant harvest: If we can't see them, we won't love them (Matt. 9:36). If we can't love them, we won't pray for them (Matt. 9:36-38). If we can't pray for them, we won't win them (Matt. 10:1). If we can't win them, we won't send them (Matt. 10:2-5).

What is needed for a harvest? Prayer and workers. The more prayer we offer, the more workers we will see. The more workers raised up, the greater the harvest. This is a simple solution that Jesus gave us because He wants more than anything to be a shepherd for the lost sheep who are distressed and downcast

The only barrier we face to a greater harvest is a lack of compassion that motivates prayer, which releases workers, which yields the harvest.

James says, "You have not because you ask not" (James 4:2). My friend Bob Logan has said, "You ask not because you care not." I would add, "You care not because you see not." We need to see what's going on. Jesus said, "Lift up your eyes and look on the fields that they are ripe for harvest (John 4:35)."

QUESTION: What do we do when our group gets too big?

Often the size of a group depends on the number of children involved. A group growing beyond 12 to 15 adults is becoming too large. Relationships are less likely to allow for trust and loyalty to develop, sharing may only involve the more vocal members and be more shallow, groups will emerge within groups, and then some will slide out of the group altogether.

We are careful about our terminology! We don't 'split a group, but seek to plant another group around new enquirers with one or two of the existing group meeting with them for a time. It is helpful then for the two groups (and however many others there may be in a network), to come together for informal gatherings and also occasional celebrations with singing, testimonies etc.



ANNOUNCING Central Queensland Missional Gathering March 21-22, 2015 in Yeppoon, Central Qld

This coming March Oikos Australia is hosting a Gathering in beautiful Yeppoon, CQ, for all who would like to join us. Our main guests will be Phil and Kate Brown (Oikos Directors) and also David Lawton (Praxeis Australia). There will be plenty of time for stories and teaching and prayer. Plus time for BBQs and the beach.

Contact Phil Walters - 07 49394117 - yeppoon123@gmail.com for more details plus help with camping or accommodation.

If you have any questions for the Q&A column we'd love to get them. Drop us a line. Note also that the OIKOS website has a Q&A page that covers many frequently asked questions.

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