

ESSENTIALS

SUMMER 2014

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Editorial

Our day is not unique in being concerned for effective methods to proclaim the gospel. There seems to be no end to the different means by which the gospel can be proclaimed. Amongst churches that aren't too keen on an evangelical gospel, the methods of evangelicals still seem attractive. But the search for good means to evangelise can confuse us.

Such a search assumes that we are the organisers and leaders of evangelism. But this is a mistake. God is the Evangelist. And it is he who chooses and uses his own methods. Of which there are three: his gospel, his Spirit, and his disciples. We are one of the means and part of the method. Although we have found that the Holy Spirit has used us in some particular ways in the past, we should not be confused about what has happened. We can look back at large gatherings for evangelism (Whitfield, Moody, Graham). We can remember small scale efforts (Dialogue Evangelism, Alpha). We know about personal evangelism, and apologetics, and church planting. But merely repeating the method does not necessarily produce the same effects.

Because those means are not the primary means. Gospel, Spirit, Disciple – they are the means.

Another temptation we face is to make the gospel sound reasonable. To put it in the terms which our hearers want to hear it. To clothe it in a form or style that makes the hearers feel comfortable. This is different to stating it in terms that they can understand: in their language and in thought forms which they can grasp. Always we should try to make the gospel clear and plain.

But the gospel intentionally subverts humans' demands to have it expressed according to the way they view reality. It intentionally appears foolish and weak. That is part of God's really effective method. Explaining the foolish message of the crucified Lord does require some careful tracking to make it clear in plain language without adapting it so that it is no longer the gospel but just an agreeable religious message.

That is one reason we need to follow the Spirit as the chief Director of Evangelism and not get too carried away with the really good ideas we have tried out or read about.

In this issue of *Essentials* we have a lot about Mission. Lots of books and practical ideas. Quite a few are set in the context of Islam. Evangelism amongst Muslims, I think, is a good case study of the poverty of methods and the power of God's means. Grant Lock's *Shoot Me First* is a wonderful testimony to God's power. I hope you are encouraged by this issue.

Dale Appleby

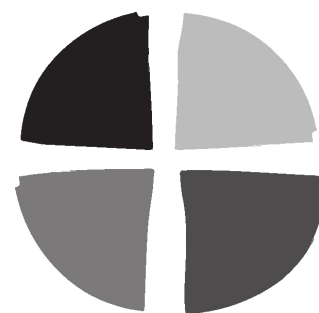
*Dale Appleby is the rector
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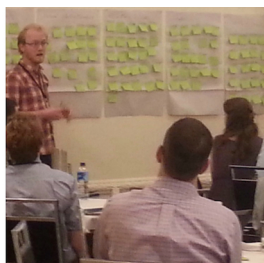
Essentials Summer 2014

Promoting Christ-centred
biblical ministry.

Essentials is the journal of
the Evangelical Fellowship
in the Anglican Communion.



efac



Elizabeth Culhane reports on the recent EFAC *Emerging Leaders Conference*

What stories will people tell about your leadership?

So began EFAC Australia's *Emerging Leaders Conference*, held in Melbourne from 21-23 September 2014. Twenty-seven young leaders from around the country met to discuss the opportunities and challenges of being Christian leaders and Anglicans in twenty-first century Australia.

In the morning Bible studies, Tim Johnson helped us to consider the gifts and limitations of the two emerging leaders on view in 1 Samuel 9: Saul and Samuel. Our attention was drawn to the fact that it was a servant, not Saul, who consults and relies upon God for wisdom (1 Samuel 9:6), foreshadowing the later issues in Saul's leadership. Saul's CV would have looked good, Tim remarked, but did he display the godly character required for leadership? Accordingly, do we choose leaders on the latter basis? Tim reminded us that godliness is essential for spiritual leadership (cf. 1 Tim 3:1-13).

The Conference was an excellent mixture of formal content, informal learning, and networking. We visited local churches and glimpsed the many different forms of Anglican ministry within Melbourne.

Andrew Katay spoke on how to think biblically about leadership, challenging us to consider it as broader than preaching and praying alone. Leadership has to move beyond just completing tasks, argued Katay. Instead, we need to consider our theology of church and discipleship, and how best to bring this vision to fruition with God's help. He highlighted the necessity, for leaders, of reading books such as Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Life Together*, and encouraged us to refrain from referring to the church where we work as "my church", but rather as "Jesus' church".

In Adam Lowe's workshop we listed our views of the opportunities, challenges and sources of encouragement in our local churches and

the Anglican Communion as a whole. Adam artfully categorised and graphed the results before we met in groups to discuss the most frequently nominated challenges.

The delegates' chief local challenges were making and maturing disciples and healthy church communities, whereas our primary sources of encouragement were seeing faith in action, evangelism and mission, and encouraging co-workers. In regards to the Anglican Communion, delegates' chief concerns were theological heterodoxy and uncertainty about Anglican identity.

Stephen Hale then gave an excellent address on how to live as an Anglican in the Church's 'Cross-Over Era' from institutional and societal prominence to a more marginal position. [See page 2]

Delegates' learning was also greatly enriched by evangelist Lindsay Brown's lecture on the current status of world mission, and by Julianne Laird who encouraged ministers to lead by example in evangelism. In addition, we spent time praying for our churches, Australia, the world, and each other.

The Conference was superbly organised by Adam Cetrangolo, along with Adam Lowe and Stephen Hale. EFAC's 2014 *Emerging Leaders Conference* was a resounding success, and I would highly recommend anyone nominated to take up the opportunity to attend next time.

Elizabeth Culhane studies theology at Ridley Melbourne, and enjoys reading, writing and cake-eating. She tweets at twitter.com/e_culhane



Living in a Cross-Over Era

An outline of Stephen Hale's talk at the EFAC *Emerging Leaders Conference 22nd* September 2014



1. Three Stages of Human History

Ancient World

Problem – fact of death

Solution – resurrection and new life

Medieval World

Problem – forgiveness and satisfaction

Solution – grace by faith

Modern/Post Modern World

Problem – is there any purpose to the universe

Solution – maximise choice – any solution is okay as long as it works for you

2. The Five Eras of Church History

a. 0-500 – Foundation to Christendom

b. 500-1000 – Holy Roman Empire to Great Schism – East and West split

c. 1000-1500 – Dark Ages up until the Great Reformation combined with Communication Revolution (Printing Press)

d. 1500-2000 – Spread of Church by Empire/Migration

e. 2000 - ? – Post Christendom/New Mission Era/Communication Revolution (Internet)

3. Where we are now?

A Cross Over Era

One way of being Church is coming to an end

A New Way of Church is emerging

An Era of Great opportunity – Church Planting/Re-planting

An Era of Significant Tension – Theologically/Ecclesially

An Era with a perplexing number of ideas on the way forward

4. Possible Responses to Where We Are Now?

i. Orthodoxy of Theology or Orthodoxy of Practice

Big 'R' Reformed and small 'a' Anglican or Big 'A' Anglican and small 'r' reformed

Many Australian Anglicans are in one of these places in their Diocese

ii. The Quest for Certainty

Endlessly pursuing reformed thinking

Endlessly pursuing Anglican thinking

iii. Denial and do nothing – the standard institutional response

'nothing worse than doing the same thing again and again when you know it's not working.' (Borden)

Definition of insanity – 'doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.' (Einstein)

iv. Embracing Change and the many opportunities
eg. Network Churches – Adelaide, Kew

v. Mono Method Mania – everyone doing the same as everyone else

vi. Finding your own way/views/running with your hunches in a context where there is a perplexing array of opinions/movements/gurus

vii. Church Planting / Replanting
eg. Diocese of London

viii. Mission is everywhere and everywhere
-Local and Global

-Through church gathered and church scattered

5. St Paul's Threefold Mission Vision/Purpose

2 Corinthians 10:15b-16a

Our hope is that, as your faith continues to grow, our sphere of activity among you will greatly expand, so that we can preach the gospel in the regions beyond you.

i. Ongoing growth in faith (maturing as disciples)

ii. Expanding gospel work locally

iii. Preaching to people by planting new congregations/churches

Every church needs to work through:

What is our purpose?

Why are we here?

What are we particularly seeking to contribute to the kingdom of God?

Mission

(Why are we here?/What is our purpose?)

Vision

(Where do we hope to end up?)

Values

(Who are we?)

Strategic Directions

(How will we get there?)

The lead article in the November 2014 edition of *Christianity Today* posed the question of whether Christianity in the Middle East is on the edge of extinction. Kimberly Smith looks at the decline of Christianity in the Middle East through the lens of the troubled nation of Iraq – a country which has rarely been out of the international news during 2014.

Can Christianity survive in the Middle East?

The crisis in Iraq

Ancient Iraq

For many centuries the Iraq of modern times has been referred to as the “cradle of civilisation” – a term describing the Tigris–Euphrates River Valley region of southern Iraq. Historians believe that the world’s first writing system emerged during the 4th millennium BC, during the time of the Kings of Sumer (i.e. southern Iraq). The Sumerians were the first to harness the wheel and create city states. Early writings of the time also record the first evidence of mathematics, astronomy, astrology, written law, medicine and organised religion.

A nation of continuous conflict

Conflict has been a characteristic of the Middle East ever since Sargon of Akkad conquered all the city states of southern and central Iraq and subjugated the numerous kings of Syria in 2200 BC.

During the 20th century BC the Canaanite speaking Amorites began to migrate into southern Mesopotamia and set up kingdoms in the south – one of which was the small administrative town of Babylon - which later became a major city in the region. Not long after Babylonia had been sacked by the Hittite Empire (around 1595 BC) another foreign invader from the Zagros Mountains of Iran invaded the region and ruled over Babylonia for almost 600 years.

Various Babylonian and Mesopotamian kings who followed were unable to prevent new waves of West Semitic migrants entering southern Iraq during the 11th century BC. Conquering Assyrian rulers later built an empire stretching from Persia and Parthia in the east to Cyprus and Antioch in the West – and from the Caucasus in the north to Egypt, Nubia and Arabia in the south. During the 10th and 9th centuries Babylon fell to yet another foreign dynasty - that of the Chaldeans. Around 325 BC Alexander the Great arrived on the scene. Yet another round of conflicts engulfed the Iraq region during the

Roman-Parthian wars, the conquerors actively supporting Brutus and Cassius in the Roman invasion of Syria.

Modern Iraq

The Christian population of Iraq in 2013 was believed to be in the vicinity of 500,000 - down significantly from 1.5 million before the 2003 war. Following a mass exodus during 2014, some think as few as 200,000 are left today. The majority of the remaining Christians live in the far north of the country.

According to *Religious Freedom in the World – 2014*, by July 2014 jihadists will have driven out all faith communities from Mosul, including non-Sunni Muslims. Christians have been forced to choose between converting to Islam or leaving the region. They were given a deadline, and the Islamic State declared that if they failed to comply, “there is nothing for them but the sword”. A city of up to 30,000 Christians, Mosul suddenly had none – and for the first time in 1600 years there is now no Sunday worship in that city.

Spiritual Conflict

From the time of Jesus Christ, there have been Christians in what is now Iraq. The Christian community took root there after the Apostle Thomas headed east in the year 35. But now, after nearly 2000 years, Iraqi Christians are being hunted, murdered and forced to flee. Many churches have been destroyed or abandoned.

Not that the various churches in Iraq were ever in agreement theologically over the centuries. *Operation World* observes that Christianity in Iraq has for years been characterized by fragmentation – denominationally, ethnically and politically, despite the great opposition all Christians face. The majority are in the Catholic-linked Chaldean Church, but others are part of the Assyrian Church of the East, Syriac Orthodox, Armenian Apostolic, Protestant denominations or even a Muslim-background believers’ network. OW’s Prayer Guide states that some in the historic denominations are being impacted by revival; others resent and oppose what they perceive to be aggressive proselytism, and a money-spinning focus of the newer Protestant groups.

Outreach to the Muslim majority remains a terrifying prospect to most, although compassionate ministry by some Christians to all in need sees many Muslims profoundly touched. Understandably many good leaders have fled the country – many others are dead, specifically targeted by Islamists. Christian leaders in Iraq invite us to pray for their equipping and enabling. With a young population and many Muslims coming to faith, leaders who are gifted in discipleship and teaching are crucial.

Pray for peace. Pray for Christians remaining in Iraq, and for the return of leaders who have fled, for the development of new leaders and for protection of all who shepherd God’s people in Iraq.

Kimberly Smith is a retired Melbourne chartered accountant now helping to establish the evangelical integral mission agency Anglican Relief & Development Fund Australia.



ANGLICAN FUTURE CONFERENCE 2015

25 – 27 MARCH, 2015

Join us in Melbourne to be part of developing a strong, faithful future for the Anglican Church of Australia, as we respond to the challenges before us.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

The Rev'd Canon Dr Ashley Null

SPEAKERS & PRACTICAL WORKSHOPS:

Kanishka Raffel, Eliud Wabukala, Peter Jensen, Peter Adam, Stephen Hale, Glenn Davies, Tracy Lauersen, The Centre for Public Christianity and more...

WWW.AFUTURE15.ORG.AU

The challenges before the Anglican Church of Australia are enormous. The pressures of rapid social change, a growing secular agenda, and confusion about how to address these things, are presenting us with an uncertain future.

This conference will address these issues head on, and grapple with what it means for us to be on mission in the 21st Century and to continue "to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3).

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Essentials asked Mark Durie how they went about combining three parishes into a team and how it worked out.

Making it work in the parish

1. Which parishes did you combine and why?

St Catharine's South Caulfield, St Clement's Elsternwick, and St Mary's Caulfield partnered together for three years from 2012-2014. The three parishes are located next to each other in the inner southeast region of Melbourne. We partnered together in order to help launch a new young adult congregation at St Clement's and renew the parish of St Catharine's.

2. Can you give us a simple overview of the process that led to the parishes agreeing to combine?

At the start of the partnership the three churches, although next to each other, were in very different situations.

St Mary's had previously declined through the 1970's and 80's, and for a time its future had been in doubt. However the launch of a contemporary service in the early 1990's led to the development of a thriving congregation which today totals around 160 people, including many young families. For the past decade this community has been growing steadily.

St Catharine's was a small suburban church with a good site and a strong community with a wide variety of ages, but its congregation was small and for decades it had been a struggle to keep the church open.

St Clement's site is well located on a busy main road, but during a long incumbency it had gradually declined to a congregation of around a dozen mostly elderly regulars. Like St Catharine's, St Clement's was being sustained financially by a property lease, but its human resources had reached the point where it was unable to renew itself.

The Diocese, through our local Archdeacon, Brad Billings, invited three neighbouring parishes to consider partnering with St Clement's to assist it to find a new direction. St Mary's proposal was to plant a young adult congregation in the evening at St Clement's: the church site is in a prominent position at the end of a busy shopping strip which attracts many young adults. St Mary's proposal was received favourably by our regional Bishop, Paul White, who invited us to include St Catharine's in the relationship.

It so happened that the incumbencies of St Catharine's and St Clement's were vacant at the same time. The outcome of all this was that the three churches came together to partner for a three year period.

3. What does the new entity look like?

The partnership was created by two mechanisms, as laid out in a memorandum of understanding.

One was the appointment of a common incumbent. I was already serving as the incumbent of St Mary's, and was appointed as Priest-in-Charge of St Clement's and St Catharine's.

The other mechanism was a shared clergy team of four people who worked together across the three sites. I and Rowan Fairbairn, who were at St Mary's before the partnership joined up with Adam and Heather Cetrangolo, who came in from outside to focus on the church renewal and planting projects. The clergy took on evolving roles across the three churches as circumstances changed during the three years.

To simplify administration the clergy were paid through St Mary's, and the other two churches made contributions for staff costs according to the services they received. The three churches were in other respects formally distinct, each with their own vestry and wardens. Each church functioned separately, while sharing a staff team. However the congregations of the three churches came together for special events a few times a year, such as a Maundy Thursday passover meal.

4. What team (paid and volunteer) do you have and what do they do?

Each church's story is different. At St Catharine's the goal was congregational renewal. A small enthusiastic lay team led by a capable group of wardens welcomed change. Heather

Cetrangolo took responsibility for worship, pastoral care, discipleship and developing a new vision - in short everything needed to grow the congregation - while I as priest-in-charge worked in the background with the wardens, looking after governance, budgeting, and property. There was much work to be done, changing service styles, discontinuing the organist's appointment - which the parish could no longer afford - and launching a new vision. Evangelism and discipleship programs led some on the fringes to come to faith and become committed members. A band emerged to support the launch of a new contemporary service. Exciting new programs such as a monthly community dinner proved a great success and helped bring new people into the church.

At St Clement's Rowan Fairbairn took on the task of assisting the existing congregation to grow in acceptance and support for the partnership. Under his experienced care they warmly embraced change, and the existing evening service was discontinued to make way for a new service. At the same time, while working at St Mary's for a year, Adam Cetrangolo was gathering a team of young adults to plant the new service at St Clement's. The new SALT service was launched in the middle of the second year of the partnership, and has drawn local young adults into the church. With a contemporary feel the SALT community has had the freedom to connect with young adults using forms of worship and discipling which appeal to its focus generation.

St Mary's community has continued to grow during the partnership. There are paid staff and a large team of volunteers involved in family programs such as Sunday School and playgroup. For the first two years Heather Cetrangolo, in addition to her duties at St Catharine's, also led

a combined youth group based at St Mary's which drew young people from both St Mary's and St Catharine's. After a year of growth this work was taken over by a dedicated youth worker.

An unexpected parallel development during the partnership was the launch of a thriving Iranian congregation under the auspices of St Mary's. This arose from the work of an evangelist who became connected with St Mary's, and my interest in outreach to Muslims.

5. In what ways has it turned out to be a good idea? Has it been successful in stimulating evangelism and growth?

At this point the partnership is about to conclude.

From 1 October St Mary's and St Clement's are merging to form one parish, and St Catharine's will be standing on its own two feet with Adam Cetrangolo as the interim locum, while it continues its program of renewal, reaching out to unchurched people in its neighbourhood. The three church partnership gave St Catharine's new hope, and helped establish a base for the future. A good deal of enthusiasm exists

in the parish to continue their efforts to grow the community.

A new service - SALT - has been established at St Clement's, which is reading out to the young adults in our very secular and unchurched environment. An older dying congregation at St Clement's has been renewed in hope for the future as they have warmly embraced the

emergence of SALT. Meanwhile St Mary's community has continued to grow and thrive, and has been blessed and enriched by a diverse staff team, with its varying and complementary talents.

St Mary's and St Clement's have merged into a multi-site parish in order to minister to all ages from the base of their complementary sites.

The partnership has been a fruitful training environment for two younger clergy, and enabled us to pool the gifts and experience of a team to achieve things which we would not have been able to do if we were working independently.

The final proof of what we have done will be apparent in the years ahead, as the many initiatives begun over the past three years continue to grow and bear fruit.

Dr Mark Durie, the Senior Pastor, and Pastor for the 10.30 am service at St Mary's, is a theologian, human rights activist, and Adjunct Research Fellow of the Centre for the Study of Islam and Other Faiths at Melbourne School of Theology.

<http://www.smac.org.au/>

<http://www.markdurie.com/>



Encouraging Missions in the Parish

Peter Schendzielorz reviews:

Becoming Global

by Bruce Dipple. Sydney Missionary & Bible College 2011. ISBN 9780646562278



Bruce's wide ranging experience of missions (as a pastor and in serving and leading with SIM) and mission education (lecturing at SMBC and missions conferences) is well captured in his book *Becoming Global*. Whilst there's a depth of insight that could fill many books, the gems captured in its 138 pages are a firm foundation. Its particular focus is for churches to understand their role in God's global mission and be equipped to fulfil it by putting

mission back at the core of church ministry.

One of the goals of the book is to help churches create a culture of mission, rather than just have it as an aspect alongside other ministries. In creating this culture, the church is then resourced to fulfil its mission to reach the whole world with the gospel, not just leaving it up to a select few. This change in culture also involves the church actively partnering with mission agencies, rather than relying on agencies to be the only ones on mission.

To ground its usefulness, three situations where this book would be especially useful are:

1. A church starting a missions committee;
2. A group that's planning a short term mission; and
3. A pastor seeking to equip and promote mission in their congregation

At Curtin we've used *Becoming Global* to provide content for our theology of mission topic in student training. Of most use has been the extra practical resources provided by Bruce such that we didn't just explore ideas and theology, but also how to implement them.

The best part about this book is the practical resources that it provides. Rather than just raising ideas about mission education there are resources (books, outlines, websites, and talks) that can help -

ranging from how to conduct a helpful missions interview in church; prepare a weekend church camp programme with a visiting missionary; to establishing a missions committee or training a short term mission group

Since it's a short book, and one that can be used widely across different churches or contexts, there's scope to extend the content as appropriate. In some cases to provide more supporting Biblical theology or exegesis, or to consult further with partner mission agencies to draw on the resources they have.

The final chapter closes with "a special note to pastors". In it Bruce emphasises the need to continue to preach and teach faithfully from the Bible, noting that if the Bible contains the story of God's missional work, then that needs to be reflected in how we expound, teach and apply the Bible to equip God's church. Well worth reading.

Peter Schendzielorz works with AFES at Curtin University in Perth, having previously worked with CMS WA and studied at SMBC. He is keen to see students equipped for life-long gospel ministry and mission.



Bishop Tony Nichols suggests ways in which parishes can better encourage and support Missions and Missionaries.

God has commanded that the Gospel of the Lord Jesus should be taken to all peoples (Luke 24:46-47; Romans 16:25-27). Whatever our particular calling or vocation, we are bound as Christians to recognize the priority of the Gospel, and to support its proclamation in our own neighborhood, and to the "gospel poor" in God's world.

As a church we need to be challenged regularly to fulfill God's command. We also need practical help from experienced practitioners and Christian leaders from other countries. Mission is now "from everywhere to everywhere".

Some suggestions

1. Look for ways to co-operate with other churches and not just do our own thing. There are many fine missionary organizations that enable us to do that.

2. As Anglicans, it is natural for us to support, in particular, the *Church Missionary Society*, which is Bible based and committed to training long term workers.

3. Make sure that the missionaries and organisations we support are known to the whole congregation and not just the leaders. Feature them regularly on notice boards and in the church intercessions.

4. Be disciplined and good stewards by supporting a few missionaries that we know well and are committed to – and prioritize them. It is helpful to distinguish our level of support by using terms such as “partners”, “friends” (or “affiliates”), and “short termers”.

5. Set aside money to help missionaries to visit us and to spend time with our congregation. This will benefit both them and us.

6. Consider sending out members on short term assignments with the goal of ultimately sending them out for the longer term. Such initiatives must have the support of national Christians and partners in the field, lest they are burdensome to their hosts or embarrassing “loose cannons”.

7. Encourage the congregation to grow the missions’ budget by teaching the Biblical principles of world mission partnership. A “Global Missions Month” with guest speakers from other cultures (including indigenous Australians) can be inspirational.

8. Give opportunity to non Anglo members of our congregation to tell their story and give us honest feedback.

9. Form a small Mission Committee to advise the Rector and Church Council and provide updates on mission partners. One member should liaise and co-ordinate dissemination of prayer material and monitor care of mission partners on furlough.

10. Fifty per cent of Perth’s population was born overseas. Many struggle in relating to the dominant Anglo culture or to the English language itself. Learn about the demography of your own suburb. See the ABS statistics. What groups are not represented in our church? Why? How can the church reach out to these people? What about overseas students?

11. ESL courses are an excellent form of outreach. But leaders need cross-cultural training and appropriate methodology and resources.

Bishop Tony Nichols has served as a University teacher in Indonesia, as Bishop of North-West Australia, Principal of Nungalinya College and of St Andrew' Hall.

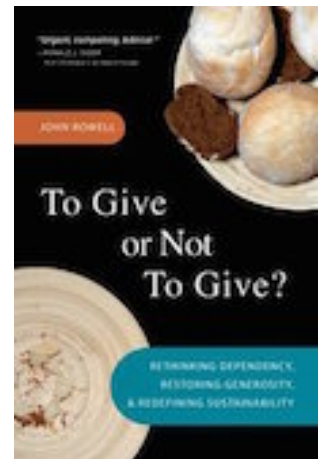


Dale Appleby reviews a landmark book about mission giving:

***To Give or not to Give? Rethinking dependency, Restoring generosity, & Redefining Sustainability* by John Rowell, Biblica Publishing. 2006.**

ISBN 9780830857739

At one level this book challenges the “three-self” paradigm of modern mission practice (self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating). But it does so in a global context in which the author describes rich western churches deciding not to give generously to new churches in poorer countries in case they become dependent. At another level it is about giving and generosity. The discussion is set in a mission context. The author has been working together with Bosnian Christians to see churches planted in that war-torn country.



The author has been working together with Bosnian Christians to see churches planted in that war-torn country.

Rowell traces the origins of the three-self paradigm back to the English Anglican Henry Venn, the leader of the *Church Missionary Society* from 1841. (His father was the pastor to William Wilberforce.) However Venn's concerns differed from today's discussions. He was concerned with the mission equivalent of colonialism, namely ecclesiastical imperialism. His concern was not dependency but domination. He wanted to bring an end to outside governance not outside giving.

One of the features of the book is the attempt to understand why western Christians have been so unwilling to give to the poorer churches. The author documents the development of ideas about giving to the poor in the history of the United States. He traces this development from what he calls Social Calvinism, a way of giving by persons to persons in their community but which distinguished between the “worthy poor” and the “wayward poor”, through Social Darwinism (eliminating or allowing the unfit not to survive), through to Social Universalism which eliminated both personal giving (the government took over responsibility for welfare) and any distinctions about whether people actually needed welfare help. The result of the latter welfare programs was a cynicism that the public support programs didn't work. “Compassion fatigue” set in.

Rowell also documents the generally poor contributions of his home nation to the poorer nations. His claim is that both as a nation and as churches, 98% of all income is kept at home. He says that a mere 0.18 percent of church income goes to outreach ministries aimed at lost people living in already evangelised cultures, and only 0.02 percent

goes annually to help reach truly un-reached peoples with the gospel.

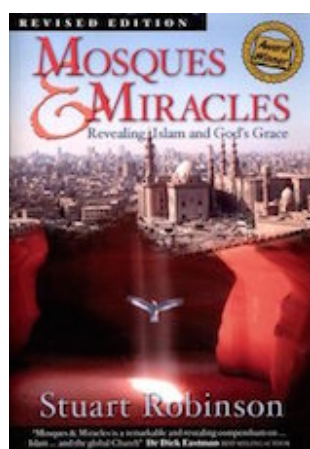
His major plea is for western rich churches and Christians to work in covenant partnerships with churches in poorer nations as partners who contribute different things. He compares the Lend-Lease policy of the United States during World War II, and says that those with money can add it to those with human resources and expertise on the ground. Rather than fearing a welfare mentality he says we should be thinking of a warfare mentality in which we pool whatever resources we have for the good of the gospel.

He promotes the idea of compassionate conservatism, which is roughly a personal giving based on relationships, distinguishing between the worthy poor and the wayward poor, and setting a high value on the employment of heads of households. He outlines what he calls a Missionary Marshall Plan (modelled on the plan that helped re-establish the economies of some European nations after the second World War). This gives the primary responsibility for mission ministry to the local church not to outside donors. It also focuses efforts in areas where the Lord has opened doors to work.

One of the major themes running through the book is that Christians need to practice biblical generosity and not use the three-self paradigm as an excuse to withhold gifts to those in need. He has many strong things to say about the self-interest and greed of western churches and Christians, and also challenges the lifestyles of western missionaries who work among the poor. Rowell includes a helpful section on how Christians can help tackle poverty.

Overall the book is well thought out and practical. It comes from solid biblical study informed by personal experience and practice.

It should be read by church leaders, members of Church Councils, Boards of Deacons or Elders and those involved in mission outreach. It is an impassioned and challenging but practical book which has many important things to say to affluent western Christians.



Books for Mission

The Top Five Mission Books

Essentials asked a number of Mission Agency leaders what their top five Mission books were.

Here are the nominations from Bishop Tony Nichols and Rob Healy (BCA WA).

Tony Nichols

David Bosch *Transforming Mission*, though more than thirty years old, remains a classic text. (See review on page 13).

Bruce Dipple's recent *Becoming Global* has good practical advice for the local church, but in my view is not strong theologically. (See review on page 6).

Rob Healy

Out of the Saltbaker and into the World - Rebecca Manley Pippert
ISBN 9781844744282

This was one of the first books I read about personal evangelism/mission. Pippert uses Biblical truths and stories to inspire the individual and churches in mission.

Christian Mission in the Modern World – John Stott
ISBN 9780830844104

Stott shares a model of mission that engages with people's needs both spiritual and physical. There is a link between the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.

When we focus on one or the other mission is unbalanced and ineffective.

Transformed! People – Cities – Nations: Ten Principles for sustaining genuine revival. Alistair Petrie ISBN 9781852404826

The Transformation Movement has had an impact around the world; especially in the 3rd World. This book encouraged me in seeking to build relationship with other Christian Leaders as we engage in mission. It highlights the importance of unity of purpose, and the bond of peace, in the Holy Spirit, for the struggle of mission is not just against flesh and blood.

Operation World – Jason Mandryk ISBN 9780830857241

My family used this book as part of our devotions. It gave us great encouragement in prayer for mission. It helped our children to see the broader picture of God's mission to the people of the world. When we welcomed a Sudanese Refugee Congregation at Holy Cross Hamersley, it was a given that they were our brothers and sisters in Christ.

Mosques and Miracles – Stuart Robinson ISBN 9780987089137

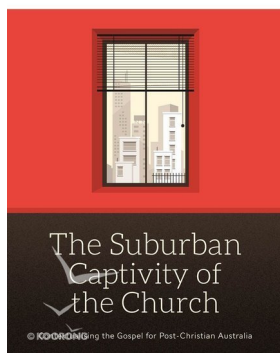
A book for the present times and our response to Islam. Without understanding a culture there can be little effective mission. When we understand something there is also less fear and a far greater willingness to engage in dialogue. I have learnt not to be a critic of Mohammed and the Koran, but to point to Jesus as the “Hukum Dunia” (Judge of the World). It is a good idea to get to know the judge before you must stand before him.

The Suburban Captivity of the Church **by Tim Foster**

Acorn Press 2014. ISBN 9780992447618

Reviewed by Stephen Hale

TIM FOSTER



“The truth of the matter is, unless we think really carefully about who Aussies are, what they believe in, what drives them, what makes up their culture and worldview, and then think about how the gospel addresses those issues, we are going to continue to be ineffective in reaching people in our generation.” said Richard Condie at the Book Launch at Ridley College.

Tim Foster's book seeks to address these very issues. The issue is how we contextualize the gospel: that is, how we take the eternal truths of the scriptures that God has revealed to us, the gospel, and communicate it in such a way that people in contemporary Australia can understand it. I didn't realize this was a controversial issue until I attended the City to City Conference earlier this year. Tim Keller helped to unpack some of the themes in Centre Church related to this important mission principle. The people I was with loved it. It was a surprise to discover afterwards that not all were convinced of the need to contextualize!

Tim Foster's book is very helpful because it tackles these questions in an Australian context. The first part of the book deals with our understanding of the gospel. Tim argues for a gospel story that is more about how God is fulfilling his purpose in the world, rather than a punitive gospel. These chapters are challenging and well argued but won't be without controversy. The view presented here is about how we converse with people with God's story and how they fit into it, rather than a set piece that we present if we're giving a talk.

In the Second Part Tim looks at Good News for three different groups - Suburbanites, Urban dwellers and Aussie Battlers.

I've mainly ministered with suburbanites and lived as a suburbanite and the analysis rings true from my experience in two cities. But if your ministry is more amongst Urbanites or battlers, then there is also a feast of cultural analysis and gospel observation in the book for you as

well.

“Tim is concerned that we understand the hearts of the people we are trying to reach, and tell them the gospel story in a way that opens them up to it rather than turning them off. The thesis that drives the book is that mostly the gospel we preach has been held captive by suburban values, hence the title. That it is more suburbia than gospel. If he is right, and I think he is, this captive gospel will fall short in even reaching suburbanites, let alone battlers or urban dwellers or people from other cultures in our midst.” Richard Condie

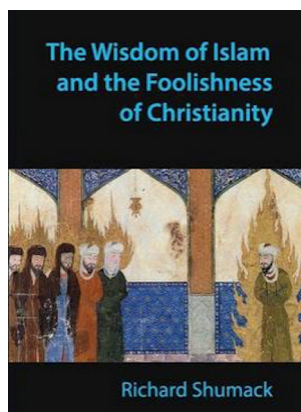
The final part of each chapter in this section of the book reflects on the key gospel themes that speak to the culture of the three segments of society that he looks at. Tim is a member of the church I lead and it was encouraging to see that we are reflecting his vision of how to communicate in a suburban context.

Lately I've been reflecting on the Americanization of the Australian church with a year of Conferences with speakers from the US. It is refreshing to read an Australian book that speaks into our context and both inspires and challenges us.

Stephen Hale is the Vicar of St Hilary's Kew and Chair of EFAC Australia.

Graham Stanton considers

The Wisdom of Islam, the Foolishness of Christianity, and the Challenge of Youth Ministry



The Wisdom of Islam and the Foolishness of Christianity is a new book by Richard Shumack. Shumack is a graduate of Moore College with a doctorate in Islamic studies. In this book he engages with nine objections to Christianity held by Muslim philosophers.

Each chapter begins with an objection that Muslim philosophers have to the Christian faith. Shumack presents each objection with care and respect and interacts with prominent Islamic scholars. He then explains why the objection is not philosophically necessary. His aim is to show that Christianity is not as foolish as Muslim philosophers claim. Each chapter finishes by arguing why the Christian approach is the more persuasive alternative.

Shumack shows that the fundamental disagreement between Islam and Christianity concerns how God and humans interact. In Islam human beings relate to God as servants relate to their king: a legislative model. Servants have no need to know the sovereign as a person, all we need is to know the sovereign's will and to obey it. Christianity

operates on a fellowship model: God is not only the Lord, he is also Father. Shumack's aim is to 'show how the adoption of this fellowship model removes many of the Muslim objections to Christian belief and opens the way to a much richer conception of human knowledge of God' (p.14). The book sets out to help Muslims see that the Christian faith is not only plausible, but captivating, beautiful and true.

This book is a wonderful example of the sort of tone to use when Christians discuss and debate with others. Shumack has an obvious respect for the Muslim scholars he interacts with. He makes frequent reference to the sincere affection he has for his Muslim friends. Is there any other way for us to debate as Christians? How can we urge people to put their faith in the God of love if we do not conduct our debates as people of love? Shumack's winsome and gracious tone is in itself a commendation of the Christian faith.

But it's not just those engaged in Muslim-Christian dialogue for whom this book is essential reading. It may be surprising that I think Shumack's book will be particularly helpful for youth ministers!

Many young Christians seem to share the Muslim approach to each of the issues Shumack discusses. This is particularly so among those who have grown up in conservative churches. They long for certainty in place of doubts. They want God to make himself plain to them and the world. They have optimistic views about human capacity to do the right thing. They find the doctrine of the Trinity confusing and irrelevant. They regard the incarnation more like God making himself just look like a human rather than

actually becoming just like us. They often use simplistic and unjust presentations of the atonement. They are unsure of how to respond to the human

It may be surprising that I think
Shumack's book will be particularly
helpful for youth ministers!

authorship of Scripture or the imperfections in the transmission of the text. They tend to have a legalistic approach to ethics and look for ways to exercise political power to bring moral change. In short, I suspect that many Christian young people reach adolescence with a legislative model of divine-human relations.

Perhaps what I am observing is the result of conservative theology that has operated in a legislative model of how we relate to God. This is the 'older brother' church that Tim Keller has identified (*The Prodigal God*, 2008). But even for children raised in a more healthy fellowship model, the way teenagers take on childhood beliefs often leads to legislative thinking. There is a normal process of questioning that comes with adolescence. This is often a destabilising experience for young people. It is especially so when the church hasn't supported or encouraged that process. The searching involved in adolescence should identify and strengthen central convictions, while leaving room for unanswered questions and uncertainties. Without searching and questioning, many teenagers just retreat back to the security offered by a legislative model of interaction with God.

Effective youth ministry needs to wean young people off familiar

certainties. We need to walk with young people as they examine and rework their childhood faith. This will prepare them to become mature Christian young adults. Shumack's book is a wonderful resource to help adult mentors assist young people in that search.

Mature faith is able to live with uncertainty and mystery because we have seen the plausibility and beauty of Christ. Young adult Christians will need that sort of maturity to hold on to faith amidst the variety of beliefs the world throws at them. That sort of maturity will also help them respond with the same wisdom and grace that Richard Shumack has shown in his engagement with Islam.

Shumack, R. The Wisdom of Islam and the Foolishness of Christianity: A Christian response to nine objections to Christianity by Muslim philosophers. Island View. 2014 ISBN 9780992499709

Graham Stanton was the founding Principal of Youthworks College, Sydney. Among other things he is currently serving as the youth ministry advisor for the Matthew Hale Public Library in Brisbane alongside pursuing research in practical theology at the University of Queensland.



Shoot Me First. A cattleman in Taliban Country. Twenty-four years in the hotspots of Pakistan and Afghanistan, by Grant Lock. Broad Continent Publishing 2012 Also available as an eBook and on CD ISBN 9780980526417

Reviewed by Dale Appleby

Someone once told me that if I wanted to understand the troubles in Palestine I should read *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* by TE Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia). It was good advice. I think if anyone wants to understand better the events in Pakistan and Afghanistan they should read *Shoot Me First*.

Here is an amazing testimony of God at work in places where you wouldn't think God was present at all.

John Thew (former CMS Federal Secretary) said, "It's a missiological book but it reads like a thriller." It is certainly a great read. Short

chapters, lots of action, tension, humour, threat. In some ways the book is like an anthropologist's road movie with story after story describing in fascinating detail the interactions, confrontations and heart-warming love of an Aussie couple attempting to cross cultural and language divides.

In this book you will also get up close, on the ground, insights into Islam for ordinary Pakistanis and Afghans.

It is a personal book, full of hope, fear, frustration, love, and danger. It is also a missionary book that shows how the gospel and the love of Christ can make progress in the most difficult places. Here are eyewitness reports of the power of God at work in very dark places.

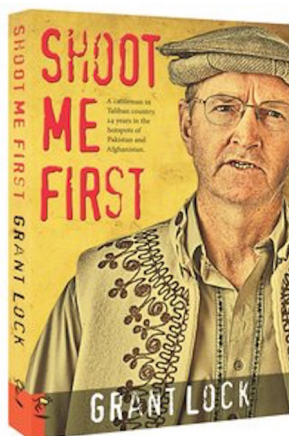
Grant says that the aim of the book is to give people an insight into Islam on the ground, and to give people insights into cross-cultural ministry and an understanding of development. "I challenge people in the west," he says, "to love Muslims but ask big questions about Islam and Sharia law."

The politics of Western aid and intervention are seen with insights only an expat on location can see. The practices of Islam in Taliban territory are described by an eye-witness who lived there for 24 years. He asks questions that people in multi-cultural Australia should ask.

And the final story of the man who turns to Christ in prison after visions of Jesus ought to encourage every person who prays for people to turn to Christ.

It is no wonder that this book is one of Koorong's best sellers. Worth reading - and giving away.

<http://www.shootmefirst.com/>



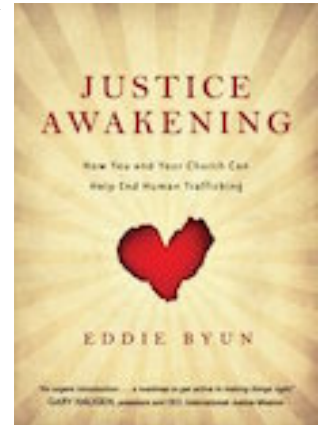
**For other books on Islam and Christianity
See page 15**

***Justice Awakening* by Eddie Byun**

**InterVarsity Press, 2014. ISBN 978-0-8308-4419-7
(includes questions for group discussion after each chapter).**

Reviewed by Cassandra Nixon

We celebrated the 200th anniversary of the end of legalised slavery in 2007, but slavery isn't over! Byun's book is written to draw our attention to ongoing slavery, and to encourage us to lead our congregations into awareness and action against it. Eddie Byun is (apparently) a United States citizen, but is the pastor of a large church in South Korea. When he was made aware of how ubiquitous slavery was while reading *Not For Sale* by David Batstone, he gathered his church into action, initially in Thailand and Cambodia. Later he found out that there are about one million women in sexual slavery in his own country of residence - South Korea.



His statistics are frightening: someone is sold into slavery every eight seconds, and there are about 30 million slaves in the world – many more than the population of Australia.

We are dimly aware that there are people in sexual slavery even in Australia, and those of us in WA saw and read headline news earlier this year when market gardens north of Perth were raided by the Immigration Department and dozens of agricultural slaves were found living in prison camp type conditions.

Byun's book is light and easy reading (if you can say that about a book on slavery) and has lots of practical suggestions on how to make a congregation aware and active against slavery of all kinds.

He suggests:

Getting informed (he provides lots of background information on how modern slavery works)

Praying (one of the ideas that caught my attention was praying every time you stop at a red light, for the red light districts in your town, and the enslaved women who may be in them.) No red lights in Manjimup though, and no obvious brothels either.

Fasting

Supporting ministries among men, families and youth to strengthen and keep them away from use or involvement, especially in sexual slavery

Joining with organisations already involved, so as not to have to start a ministry from the beginning

Working together with other churches in your area or denomination

Researching what is happening locally, and in places where your congregation may travel for business and tourism.

The book as a whole is readable, practical and Biblical.

Byun spends several chapters spelling out the Gospel, and how God's character and love for people leads to God's passion for justice and the church's calling to speak and act for justice. He probably spends too long doing this, especially considering who his readers are likely to be, but it is emotionally compelling material – good source for sermons and bible studies. There are useful appendices with lists of organisations, resources (not surprisingly nothing Australian) and case studies.

I found the book a bit irritating in the way it focused so much on Byun himself, and his own feelings and actions.

I have my own criteria for books:

Would I buy this book for my own library with my own money? **No**

If I had free access to this book, would I keep it in my library? **No**

If I had a copy, would I give or lend it to someone? **Yes**

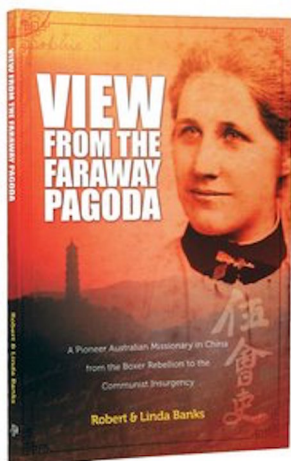
Would I encourage the church to buy copies for group study and discussion? **Yes**

If your church does not already have a social justice activity of some kind happening (don't spread yourself too thin!) I could recommend this book as way to inform, challenge and lead to action as a whole congregation or in a small group.

Cassandra Nixon is doing a long locum in the Southern Forests of the Diocese of Bunbury (including Manjimup, Pemberton and Northcliffe).

View from the Faraway Pagoda by Robert & Linda Banks Acorn Press 2013 Also available as an eBook. ISBN 9780987132956.

Reviewed by Peter Schendzielorz



View from the Faraway Pagoda recounts the life and missionary service of Sophie Newton (the grand-aunt of Robert Banks), who served in south-east China from 1897 to 1931. Her work in establishing schools and training local Christian women happened amidst events like the Boxer Rebellion, the Nationalist Revolution and other local conflicts.

The book captures Sophie's trust in

God in serving abroad and is an encouragement and challenge considering the ongoing gospel needs and conflicts in the world today.

As a biography, it's encouraging to read of an Australian missionary. Anyone familiar with Sydney suburbs such as Newtown and Burwood, or country areas like Katoomba, Singleton and Yass will find an identification with Sophie's journey. CMS Summer School events are mentioned regularly as missionaries report back and are re-commissioned after furlough. These references in particular give insights into the priorities and mission of the *Church Missionary Society* (formerly Church Missionary Association) that continue today, and the role of local churches in sending and supporting missionaries.

The book is an easy, engaging read. Historical events are interleaved with personal reflections and reconstructions based on journals and letters. This balance of details and facts alongside emotion create a sense of connection and empathy with the events that are taking place. It's also interesting to read about some of the conflicts and opportunities present in China over time, particularly in understanding the openness of the past, and in understanding the challenges since.

It's somewhat surprising to read of the effectiveness of communications and committees despite not having instant means of sharing information as we do today. The book makes reference to mail arriving in Sophie's location every 2 weeks. Yet she was able to achieve much in the space of 3 years in preparing to serve abroad.

Another insight the book gives is to Sophie's reliance on God, particularly in her scripture reading and prayers. A motivating text for Sophie is Psalm 37:4: "Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart." which impacted her life in preparation for mission, and also her reluctant (and short lived) retirement.

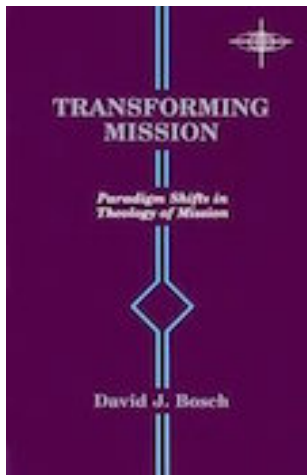
Her reliance on God is also reflected in the value placed on the prayers and partnership of others, despite the geographical distance separating them. There seems to be a knowledge and support of mission (and Sophie) that many churches or missionaries would be envious of today. A passion and concern for those they support, and a longing to hear from them that is perhaps less prevalent today despite easier means of communication.

As a model of ministry, Sophie's emphasis on equipping local people for ministry (an approach that sometimes put her at odds with other missionaries) has left a legacy in the areas she served. Her impact was effectual to the extent that on her final retirement (having had an interim retirement due to poor health) the local church requested that CMS send a replacement to continue her service.

View from the Faraway Pagoda isn't just a good book to read for those connected with China. I'd recommend it to anyone considering long term ministry or mission particularly in the way it portrays a life of service to Jesus.

**Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in
Theology of Mission, by David J. Bosch**
Orbis Books, Maryknoll New York 1991.
ISBN 9780883447192

Reviewed by Dale Appleby



This massive work is Number 16 in the American Society of Missiology Series, written by the former Professor of Missiology at the University of South Africa, who died a year after this work was published. Although now more than 20 years old, it is nevertheless a classic that should be re-read.

Bosch examines five major paradigms that have described how God saves, and how people respond

to God's salvation. He then outlines a "post-modern" paradigm for an emerging ecumenical mission theory.

Bosch examines the history of "mission", noting that until the sixteenth century, the term was used exclusively with reference to the doctrine of the Trinity. The Jesuits introduced the word into the vocabulary of the spreading of the faith. The new expansion of the faith throughout the world in the following period was closely associated with European colonial expansion into the non-Western world.

More recently the assumptions which underlay this missionary expansion have been modified, questioned and in some cases abandoned altogether. Bosch identifies a major crisis in mission itself, that has to do with the authority, aims and nature of the mission.

This crisis is linked with a wider crisis in the church at large. His analysis of this crisis is very informative. He lists six elements:

1. The advance of secularisation.
2. The steady de-christianising of the West - the traditional base of the whole modern missionary enterprise.
3. A change from a world divided into "Christian" and "non-Christian", to a religiously pluralist world in which the followers of some faiths are more aggressively missionary than many Christians.
4. The guilt of Western Christians because of their involvement in the subjugation and exploitation of coloured peoples.
5. The increasing gap between rich and poor, and the fact that the rich are those who consider themselves to be Christians; which leads to anger and frustration on the part of the poor, and a reluctance on the part of affluent Christians to share their faith.
6. Western ecclesial ways, and Western theology are now suspect and have been by and large replaced by various indigenous practices and theologies in the Third World. This has added to the confusion in

the Western church.

Bosch attempts to show a way forward and provide a paradigm for a mission practice that takes modern realities into account.

He introduces the book with an "interim" definition of mission which the book spells out in detail. He has thirteen elements in his definition:

1. The Christian faith is intrinsically missionary.
2. Missiology is not neutral, but views the world from the standpoint of Christian theology.
3. But this must be continually reassessed, so a narrow or permanent definition is not possible.
4. A necessary foundation for mission lies in God's self-communication in Christ.
5. The Bible does not give a set of unchangeable laws of mission. Mission is an ambivalent enterprise which remains an act of faith.
6. The entire Christian existence is a missionary existence.
7. Foreign missions is not a separate entity to home missions. Both are grounded in the gospel.
8. Mission is God's mission. Missions are particular forms of participation in God's mission.
9. The missionary task includes the whole set of needs and aspects of human life.
10. Mission is thus God's "Yes" to the world.
11. Mission includes evangelism as one of its crucial elements. "Evangelism is the proclamation of salvation in Christ to those who do not believe in him, calling them to repentance and conversion, announcing forgiveness of sins, and inviting them to become living members of Christ's earthly community and to begin a life of service to others in the power of the Holy Spirit." (p. 11)
12. Mission is also God's "No" to the world.
13. The church-in-mission is a sign in the sense of pointer, symbol, example or model. It is a sacrament in the sense of mediation, representation, or anticipation.

Bosch has an extended survey of New Testament models of mission. He discusses the early church's missionary practice and considers whether there were alternative approaches that may have made the ultimate exclusion of Jews from the church less likely. He outlines missionary paradigms of Matthew, Luke and Paul.

He traces four subsequent historical missionary paradigms: that of

- * the Eastern church;
- * the medieval Roman Catholic church;
- * the Protestant reformation; and
- * mission in the wake of the Enlightenment.

The concluding section outlines elements in a post-modern ecumenical missionary paradigm. These include: Mission as the church-with-others; as *Missio Dei*; as mediating Salvation; as the Quest for Justice; as Evangelism; as Contextualisation; as Liberation;

as Inculturation; as Common Witness; as Ministry by the Whole people of God; as Witness to People of Other Living Faiths; as Theology; and as Action in Hope.

Bosch offers a profile of what mission is in terms of six aspects of Christ's ministry: Incarnation; The Cross; The Resurrection; The Ascension; Pentecost; and The Parousia. His insights about how these great events affect the nature and method of our mission are very suggestive.

He concludes by raising again the modern criticisms of mission, exemplified in John Mott's question asked before the Edinburgh Conference, "Do you consider that we now have on the home field a type of Christianity which should be propagated all over the world?" Bosch rejects the idea that mission is merely western colonialism in disguise, and points to its origin in the *missio Dei*. It is not the church which undertakes mission but the *missio Dei* which constitutes the church - and purifies it.

"...mission is, quite simply, the participation of Christians in the liberating mission of Jesus, wagering on a future that verifiable experience seems to belie. It is the good news of God's love, incarnated in the witness of a community, for the sake of the world." p.519.

Transforming Mission is a mighty work, that deserves to be read by clergy and all who are thinking and planning in any area of the church's mission.

***Tactics for Teen Ministry* by Scott Petty** **Anglican Press Australia, 2014.**

ISBN 9781922000972

free sample: <http://tiny.cc/e0w7ox>

Reviewed by Stephen Ritchie



Not too big, not at all boring and just a little bit fancy.

Scott Petty speaks straight to the point on essential youth ministry topics that leaders will always have questions about. Including the most recent ones of evaluating and navigating the online world in a positive way. He has a gift for articulating his topic comprehensively and concisely,

proven already by his successful series of *Little Black Books*. It is easy to see why *Tactics for Teen Ministry* was shortlisted for the 2014 Australian Christian Book of the Year Award.

Throughout this comprehensive and well structured handbook, we are convinced that every teen ministry tactic should be for the purpose of producing whole-hearted disciples of Jesus:

"If you are going to the effort of running a youth ministry, it should be one that honours God and puts his Scriptures into action, one that harnesses the energy of your leaders for maximum kingdom impact and aims to grow disciples of Jesus."

Every meeting, every camp, every small group and every talk is for this purpose. Petty has undeniably achieved a more succinct and updated form of Ken Moser's in depth and detailed work entitled, *Changing the World through Effective Youth Ministry*. In fact I would promote Petty's contribution to pastors as "the version that will actually get read" by volunteers, whilst keeping Moser's series of four books close at hand for further reference. Petty packages his years of experience for an Australian context, sharing his own helpful snapshots entitled *How We Have Done It* including seven very welcome practical appendices. Just while writing this review I have easily adapted his *New Leader Package* (Appendix 1), *Camp Leadership 101* (Appendix 5) and his *Small Group Evaluation* questions (p.50) for my own volunteer team.

Perhaps the best way to set this parish resource apart from others, is to understand the significance of its finishing focus on communication (Chapter 9) and families (Chapter 10). Having addressed the common tendency towards highly attractional youth ministry models and events, we agree that without authentic relationships (1 Thessalonians 2:8) we are building in vain. However the fatal flaw many churches fail to avoid is perceiving and engaging Christian parents and family members (biological, nuclear and wider church) as the primary disciplers of kids and youth. The youth ministry team simply backing them up. Is your youth ministry setup almost entirely disconnected from families and the wider church family? This is the immediate area that any fresh energetic youth practitioner needs skills in: a strategy for communication with parents and an insight into the significance of family ministry for a parish context.

"The implication for our youth ministries is very plain: if we attempt to raise mature young Christians without the influence of older Christians (be they parents or other older mentors), we will doom ourselves to failure in many instances."

Visit Youthwork's youth ministry website Fevr.net (easily the best in the world) and follow their book review link or find the free sample here: <http://tiny.cc/e0w7ox>.

Stephen Ritchie is a PK who became a High-school Chaplain before studying at Trinity Theological College and now serves passionately as Kids and Youth Minister at Dalkeith Anglican Church in Perth.

Some other books on Islam and Christianity

Jesus and Muhammad

by Mark A. Gabriel. Charisma House. 2004
ISBN 9781591852919

This volume explores the surprising similarities and differences between two of the most important religious leaders of all time--Jesus and Muhammad. Born into a Muslim family in Egypt, Gabriel is a converted Christian and former professor of Islamic history at Al Azhar University in Cairo. [Publisher Notes]

Islam and Christianity on the Edge

by Peter Riddell, John Azumah. Acorn Press 2013
ISBN 9780987132949

This collection of essays by scholars and human rights activists engages with some of the most pressing issues in Christian-Muslim relations, addressing matters of theology, the encounter between civilisations and inter-religious affairs. These are key questions for the 21st century. [Publisher Notes]

Christianity Alongside Islam

by John W Wilson. Acorn Press 2010 ISBN 9780908284917

An excellent book for the person who wants to know how to respond to questions about Islam. Is Islam about war, peace, politics or pietism? What does Islam say about Jesus, the Bible, human rights, women? [Publisher Notes]

The Third Choice

by Mark Durie. Deror Books 2010 ISBN 9780980722307

Mark Durie's book exposes the history and ideology of surrender - the 'Third Choice'. The worldview of dhimmitude, he argues, offers indispensable keys for understanding current trends in global politics, including the widening impact of sharia revival, deterioration of human rights in Islamic societies, jihad terrorism, recurring patterns of Western appeasement, and the increasingly fraught relationship between migrant Muslim communities in the West and their host societies. [Publisher Notes]

Liberty to the Captives

by Mark Durie. Deror Books 2013 ISBN 9780987469106

Mark Durie presents unique resources for ministering freedom from the yoke of Islam, both for those who have lived as non-Muslims under Islamic dominance, as well as those who have come to Christ out of a Muslim background. The prayers and declarations provided here have been tested across four continents, and have proven value for setting people free from fear, breaking spiritual strongholds, and releasing men and women to be bold and effective witnesses to Muslims of the saving power of Christ. [Publisher Notes]

Dale Appleby reflects on the incarnation

Shocking Christmas

Christmas is quite shocking. At least the big event at the heart of Christmas is. It is like the good shock we get when a very important person visits our home unexpectedly. We may wish later that the place had been cleaned, or that we had said at least something that was intelligent, but as we recover from the shock we feel pleased that we were honoured by their visit - even if we are not quite sure why they came.

We could feel like that about the birth of Jesus, because this is the creator of everything coming to visit and live with his creatures. Presumably he thinks this is important. Or he thinks we are important. Or we could think we were important because of his visit. All of that is true. But why?

Why did the Son of God want to, need to, take on human life, become a human being while still remaining God? And here is a different kind of shock. It was not so much that God needed to do something but that we needed him to do something. He saw that we had a problem that is focussed on death.

Heb 2.14-15 Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death.

We see the answer to why he became human by observing what he did with the humanity he took to himself. Did he turn it into something glorious and noble, did he become the epitome of the legendary great human? Quite the opposite to start with: as a human he seemed very ordinary and weak.

Phil 2.7,8 but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death- even death on a cross.

The great shock is that he took the humanity to death. He killed it off. He took on humanity in order to put it to death.

Heb 2.17 Therefore he had to become like his brothers and sisters in every respect, so that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make a sacrifice of atonement for the sins of the people.

Gal 4.4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.

To redeem humanity, to bring it back because of its sin, its rebellion, its turn-your-back-on-God and treat-him-like-a-servant attitude. Because it not only deserved death as Adam was told, but needed it.

Rom 8.3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh

Which doesn't paint humans in a very good light. But then God is not a painter, he is a creator. His interest is not in renovating humans, or giving them a make-over, but in recreating them.

The greatness of the shock of bringing Jesus' humanity to death is deepened when we see what God did next. He raised it from death. He didn't leave the humanity in the grave as though he was finally rid of it. He raised it to a new life.

1 Cor 15.21 For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead has also come through a human being; for as all die in Adam, so all will be made alive in Christ.

The raised Jesus is the human divine Jesus who was killed. He took the humanity of Adam to death, and through death to a new life which is now directly connected with Christ rather than Adam. A new start has been made, a new

humanity created out of the old. The shock is that God intends that humans should live in an entirely different way. The new life for humans is directly connected with the life of Christ. Who is no longer on the earth.

Eph 1.20 God put this power to work in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come

It is the same human and divine Christ who is now seated in the highest place. The humanity has not been left behind. The shocking fact that he has taken humanity to the throne of God gives a clue to God's intention for us.

Eph 2.6,7 God raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

But how shall we enjoy this new life? It is not a life given to us independent of Jesus. It is not ours to do with as we like. It is the life of God as we know it in our relationship with Christ.

Col 3.2-4 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth, for you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life is revealed, then you also will be revealed with him in glory.

So many shocks. That God sets such value on us that he goes to such great lengths to bless us in this way. And also that he declares that we do not deserve this life but that we have forfeited what he gave us in the first place.

In fact that we live under the shadow of death - a death promised by God in the beginning. But it is through death (the death

of the New Human) that God does away with the judgment that hangs over us, and also brings to an end the old corrupted humanity and from it raises up a new human, united with himself in Christ.

Such a wonder. That humans who were once made as the image of God, should in the end share the likeness of God's only Son.

1 John 3.2 Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

Why did God the Son take human flesh? Why did he want to become a human? Why did the Father send his only Son into the world?

1 John 4. 9,10 God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

So? These are the kind of shocks applied to someone whose heart has stopped beating. Do you, will you, live for this God who loved you so much? The new life is directly connected with Christ himself.

2 Corinthians 5:14,15 For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.

1 John 4. 11,12 Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.



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EFAC is a group of Anglican clergy and lay people who value the evangelical heritage of the Anglican Church, and who endeavour to make a positive, constructive contribution at local, diocesan and national levels. EFAC Australia is part of the world-wide Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion.

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To maintain and promote a strong biblical witness in and through the Anglican Church so as to advance the cause of the gospel in Australia.

The aims of EFAC

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2. To promote this biblical obedience particularly in the areas of Christian discipleship, servant leadership, church renewal, and mission in the world.
3. To foster support and collaboration among evangelical Anglicans throughout Australia.
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5. To provide a forum, where appropriate:
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