

Welcome to the first National Mission Ezine May 2009

This ezine has a focus on Mission, Leadership, Innovative Church,
Mental Health and Trends in Society

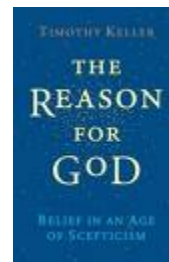


BOOKS

Reason for God: belief in an age of scepticism, by Timothy Keller.

In this book of Christian apologetics, Keller mines material from literary classics, philosophy, anthropology and a multitude of other disciplines to make an intellectually compelling case for God. Written for skeptics and the believers who love them, the book draws on the author's encounters as founding pastor of New York's booming Redeemer Presbyterian Church.

One of Keller's most provocative arguments is that all doubts, however skeptical and cynical they may seem, are really a set of alternate beliefs. Drawing on sources as diverse as 19th-century author Robert Louis Stevenson and contemporary New Testament theologian N.T. Wright, Keller attempts to deconstruct everyone he finds in his way, from the evolutionary psychologist Richard Dawkins to popular author Dan Brown.



The first, shorter part of the book looks at popular arguments against God's existence, while the second builds on general arguments for God to culminate in a sharp focus on the redemptive work of God in Christ. Keller's condensed summaries of arguments for and against theism make the scope of the book overwhelming at times. Nonetheless, it should serve both as testimony to the author's encyclopedic learning and as a compelling overview of the current debate on faith for those who doubt and for those who want to re-evaluate what they believe, and why.

*Highly recommended- Keller talks about the book in a [video on the book's website](#).
Dutton Adult, February 14, 2008 - hardcover – paperback due in August 2009*



UnChristian: What a New Generation Really Thinks about Christianity... and Why It Matters, by *David Kinnaman and Gabe Lyons*.

Kinnaman, president of the Barna Institute, was inspired to write this book when Lyons (of the Fermi Project) commissioned him to do extensive research on what young Americans think about Christianity. Lyons had a gut-level sense that something was desperately wrong, and three years of research paints exactly that picture.



Mosaics and Busters (the generations that include late teens to early 30-somethings) believe Christians are judgmental, anti-homosexual, hypocritical, too political and sheltered. Rather than simply try to do a PR face-lift, Kinnaman looks at ways in which churches' activities

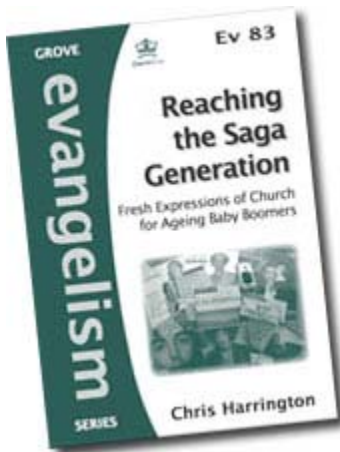
actually may have been unchristian and encourages a return to a more biblical Christianity, a faith that not only focuses on holiness but also loves, accepts and works to understand the world around it. It would be possible to get lost in the numbers, but the authors use numerous illustrations from their research and life experiences and include insights at the end of every chapter from Christian leaders like Charles Colson, John Stott, Brian McLaren and Jim Wallis.

This is a wonderful, thoughtful book that conveys difficult truths in a spirit of humility. Every Christian should read this, and it will likely influence churches for years to come.

Baker Books (October 1, 2007) [[YouTube video with Kinnaman here](#)]



Reaching the Saga Generation: Fresh Expressions of Church for Ageing Baby Boomers. (Ev 83)



With the baby boomer generation of post-war Britain came the first post-modern values and new attitudes. Forty years on, these 'first teenagers' are becoming known as the 'Saga generation.'

Ironically, they are being largely forgotten by many churches in the desire to reach the new younger generations. This study suggests it is time look again at this group and radically proclaim 'This church needs more older people!'

[Grove Books, UK](#) - link includes some other Grove titles on older people and the church. Grove Books are an Anglican publishing house, but their books cover a wide

range of areas of value to other denominations.



Making Room for Leadership: Power, Space and Influence, by *MaryKate Morse.*

"Although I have read many books on leadership, this is the first I've seen that spells out servant leadership in such fresh and down-to-earth terms. So I commend this book to all would-be leaders, and especially those who teach leadership, not only because it's new and groundbreaking, but because it's based on a very old truth. For when God modelled leadership for us he did it by sending his Son in the flesh, coming into space and time in an embodied way.



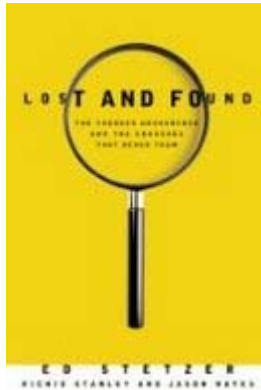
If we are going to lead like Jesus, then we too must know how to use the power of space and body in a way that empowers others. This is an important book, breaking new ground and speaking biblically and practically to a blind spot in our leadership. In every chapter I have learned something valuable. Most of all I commend it because I know how Dr. Morse embodies in her own leadership what she has written for us."

From a review on [Amazon.com](#)

There is a much longer review on Amazon (at the same link), and [one of the blogs I read regularly endorses it strongly](#).



Lost and Found: The Younger Unchurched and the Churches that Reach Them,
by Ed Setzer, Richie Stanley and Jason Hayes.



In a poll result highlighted by CNN Headline News and USA Today, nearly half of non-churchgoers between the ages of 20 and 29 agreed with the statement, "Christians get on my nerves." In this book, researchers behind the larger study present a blend of dynamic hard data and modern day parable that tells the real story of an unchurched generation that is actually quite spiritual and yet circumspect, open to Jesus but not the church.

Lost and Found is written to the church, using often-surprising results from the copious research here to strike another nerve and break some long established assumptions about how to effectively engage the lost. Leading missiologist Ed Setzer and his associates first offer a detailed investigation of the four younger unchurched types. With a better understanding of their unique experiences, they next clarify the importance each type places on community, depth of content, social responsibility, and making cross-generational connections in relation to spiritual matters.

Most valuably, *Lost and Found* finds the churches that have learned to reach unchurched young adults by paying close attention to those key markers vetted by the research.

Published by B&H Books (February 1, 2009)



INNOVATIVE CHURCH

A recent report in the *Gore Ensign* focused on Innovation in the local churches:

Innovation Keeping Churches Relevant.

It cited a variety of ways in which Gore churches were moving away from traditional modes of operation and focused on Gore Baptist's workshops as an alternative to a traditional service and their community services, such as a team of four maintenance people who look after gardens and such and a nurse-led service for the elderly which focuses on dealing with people's feet (!) Calvin's EXO Day gets a mention, along with their Angels and Heroes Day, Mainly Music, and the new community pastor role. St Andrew's Presbyterian is mentioned for the way the minister walks among the congregation when preaching. [Well, all things are innovative in their time!]

New Media clippings, 9.4.09

And a different kind of 'Church?'



Where Kiwis Buy and Sell

TradeMe, it turns out, isn't just a place to buy and sell - the message board area has a life of its own, quite unrelated to retail therapy.

- * Between 5000 and 20,000 messages are posted on the message board every day.
- * The average age of someone who posts a message is 35-plus.
- * The boards are largely self-censored, with 98 per cent of threads monitored by the online community and every member able to "vote" to remove a thread if they believe it is not suitable.
- * Message topics are *most active on personal or social issues, be they grief or happiness.*
- * There are 20 different categories for messages, from books to parenting. *General and Opinion* tend to be the most frequented.

Greer McDonald, in an article entitled, [Web of support for the grieving](#), writes about the way in which Julie Adams happened on the TradeMe message board almost by chance, and discovered a world of fellow New Zealanders who were prepared to go the extra mile, offer support and encouragement, and even try and discover what had happened to Julie's missing husband. (His overturned car was eventually found on its roof in dense bush 50 metres down a steep bank just below the summit of Rimutaka Hill, Upper Hutt.)

It may not be 'church' as we know it, and it may not be 'community' as we know it, but it's certainly a place for Christians to be keeping tabs on.



Talking Point

David Fitch writes on theologians:

There is a need for people who think, lead and pastor out of the church context and then write seriously out of this same context. These pastor theologians are in the position to write some of the most impactful theology. (Think Augustine (bishop of Hippo), Luther, Wesley, Barth (early on), Yoder (ecumenical engagements, post WW 2 Europe reconstruction peace church activities) theologians who were active pastors. But too often, too quickly, academic Ph D's are swerved into pursuing an academic job at all costs.



Yet in a time when seminaries, and religious departments in universities are shrinking, there are less and less of these jobs available. And those that get those jobs find them suffocating and extremely inhibiting in terms of offering little time to think, write and minister. Writing theology then becomes a task reserved out of the guild for the guild. I therefore urge Ph.D.'s to consider ministry and adjunct teaching as a vocation. You can still participate in the guilds as much as before. Seminaries need these kinds of teachers. And you'll get more time to write, a better context from which to write and you'll also probably (all-told) make more money .



LEADERSHIP

The following quotes focus on leadership in general but in each case they have parallels in Church leadership

“Whenever we’re trying to change a deeply structured belief system, everything in life is called into question—our relationships with loved ones, children, colleagues, our relationships with authority and major institutions. One group of senior leaders, reflecting on the changes they’ve gone through, commented that the higher you are in the organization, the more change is required of you personally. Those who have led their organizations into new ways of organizing often say that the most important change was what occurred in themselves. Nothing would have changed in their organizations if they hadn’t changed.

“All this seems true to me, but I think the story is more complex. Leaders managing difficult personal transitions are usually simultaneously opening new avenues for people in the organization. They are moving toward true team structures, opening to more and more participative processes, introducing new ways of thinking. They are setting a great many things in motion inside the organization. These ripple through the system; some work, some don’t, but the climate for experimentation is evident. A change here elicits a response there, which calls for a new idea, which elicits yet another response. It’s an intricate exchange and co-evolution, and it’s nearly impossible to look back and name any one change as the cause of all the others. Organizational change is a dance, not a forced march.”

Margaret Wheatley in “[Goodbye Command and Control](#)” an article in **Leader to Leader**, July 1997

“I came to understand that one of the greatest secrets of leadership is talking to people. Tell people where you want them to be, paint a picture for them and put them in it. Tell them when they’re really great, tell them when they’ve done something fantastic, and tell them when they haven’t and they’ve got to fix the problem. It works.”

from [Christine Rankin – still lighting the flame](#), by **Brent Leslie**, in *NZ Management*, April 2009.

“...We as executives have to resist our natural tendency to avoid or minimize risks, which, of course, is much easier said than done. In the movie business and plenty of others, this instinct leads executives to choose to copy successes rather than the try to create something brand new. That’s why you see so many movies that are so much alike. It also explains why a lot of films aren’t very good. If you want to be original, you have to accept the uncertainty, even when it’s uncomfortable, and have the capability to recover when your organization takes a big risk and fails.”

Pixar co-founder Ed Catmull

As good as Joe Myers’ book [*Organic Community*] is (and it is excellent), it is a minority voice in a crowded market of people trying to sell the exact opposite of what Joe is writing. The leader/pastor has been so ingrained in how we see the church and we have spent so much time [building up those people], it is going to take a long time and a lot of discussion for the church to move away from it. Ironically, for the first bit,

it may even take a strong leader to have the church to stop thinking in terms of hierarchical leadership and start thinking in terms of community (rather than just blather on about it).

[Jordan Cooper](#) on the *JordanCooper.com* blog



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

This section looks at an important area in NZ society

A Deathly Silence, an investigative report by *Quentin McDermott*.

This is an Australian Four Corners report on the after-effects of a person's suicide. It focuses on Campbell Bolton, a 17-year-old who killed himself. Four Corners looks for insight into this social catastrophe by exploring the promising life and wasteful death of Campbell Bolton. On the surface nothing was wrong; Campbell came from a high-achieving, middle-class family with no background of drug abuse, violence, psychiatric illness or divorce.

This [report](#) is available as an online transcript of the original video. It dates from 2006. There are also transcripts of interviews that didn't go to air, and other resources, including the possibility of acne treatments affecting the brain.

Also available from Four Corners' website: '[The Bullies' Playground](#).' Includes an online video of the original program, plus additional interviews, reports and resources (including a good deal on cyberbullying) and some additional newsreports.

There's a new [New Zealand site on depression](#), its effects, ways to get through it and a host of other information. *John Kirwan* does the introduction in a live video, and there are a number of other short videos of people who've got through depression in a variety of ways. Heaps of information, and well thought through.



MISSION

In an innovative approach to mission, *John Drane*, the well-known Scottish theologian, has for some years been using *Tarot cards* to reach people attending psychic fairs and the like. It turns out that Tarot cards are actually full of Christian symbolism, and these days are less used for predicting the future and more for gauging where a person is on their life journey. To read more about it, [check out the National Mission blog](#), where there's a recent post on Drane talking to students at Trinity College, Bristol, and some background to the way in which the cards are used. He's also written a book (along with Ross Clifford and Philip Johnson) on the topic.



Change what your church measures. *Dallas Willard* has said that most church measure the ABCs: attendance, buildings, and cash. These are all institutional

markers, not necessarily missional markers. Determine a way to measure how many people in your congregation have at least one meaningful relationship with another believer (other than their spouse) with whom they can be vulnerable and challenged to grow. Or begin to measure how often people are engaging Scripture on their own and praying.

Skye Jethani, author of the new book, [The Divine Commodity](#), in a response on the [Reclaiming the Mission blog](#).



SOME QUOTES

Don't let the past dictate who you are, but let it be part of who you become.

The brother of the main character in My Big Fat Greek Wedding. (Script by Nia Vardalos)

Trust is the greatest motivating factor you can give any human being. If trust is highly developed everyone knows where they are with each other. When people feel that they are respected and trusted, they know that they are valued. This leads to people making a greater discretionary effort which directly affects organisational effectiveness.

My uncle had lunch in his office every day and invited different managers to join him, He would also go round and talk to each of the staff and he knew about the things that were important to each of them. Everyone who worked for him felt that he or she mattered, and would have walked on broken glass for him. That wasn't rocket science, but it is certainly no different to what you and I would respond to now. It is just showing people that they matter.

Both quotes from an interview with Richard Joseph in Management Matters, April 2009.

“...the western tradition especially was always tempted to substitute an undialectical monotheism heavily informed by a Christology emphasizing the divinity principle and downplaying Jesus' true humanity. The result, in the hands of the simplifiers, is what H. Richard Niebuhr rightly named 'a new Unitarianism of the second person of the trinity' - or, in the plain and oft-repeated slogan of popular evangelicalism, the simple declaration: "Jesus is God." Individualist paradigms make us prone to special kinds of theological error. Errors in ontology [the nature of being] eventually become errors in ecclesiology, and errors in ecclesial practice cause us to neglect Trinitarian foundations - a dark spiral of reinforcing error.”



Douglas John Hall, quoted on the [NextReformation](#) site under a blog post entitled [Trinitarian Leadership](#). *Original source:* Douglas John Hall, "Confessing Christ in a Post-Christendom Context." Address to the 1999 Covenant Conference of the Presbyterian Network, Atlanta, Georgia. November 6, 1999. 4.

We are losing our Christianity because Christianity is a creed for heroes, and we are harmless good natured people who want everyone to have a good time.

-William Ralph Inge- *source unknown*.

To give real service, you must add something which cannot be bought or measured with money, and that is sincerity and integrity.
Douglas Adams (*author of **The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy**, and other equally inventive stories*)



RESOURCES

Fresh Expressions.

There's a website called [Share](#) which is for all those involved with *fresh expressions* of church - practitioners, people in training, encouragers, supporters and researchers. It also has a Guide section which contains how-to-do-it advice on starting, developing and sustaining fresh expressions of church based on shared experiences. It explains what fresh expressions is all about, how it develops, how to encourage discipleship, how to support it.

There's a blog which contains posts from a wide variety of people involved in fresh expressions, or people who are asking questions about it, and where the comments are often as insightful as the posts themselves. And there's a question and answer section which gives basic responses to a number of regular questions on fresh expressions.

Worth a look!

Inside the World of Executive Pastors, a (January) 2009 survey by Leadership Network.

This is an intriguing survey. It included respondents from 41 US States, but also Canada, Australia and New Zealand, (unfortunately, it's not possible to differentiate the Australasian responses). Executive pastors are also known as Administrators, Directors, or Chiefs of Staff.

At first glance it seems to be talking about a world that is a long way from the NZ scene, but a quick skim down the pages soon shows up evidence that what's happening here is what's happening elsewhere. 'Feeling emotionally drained and overwhelmed are the two top stressors regularly felt by executive pastors,' for example. Nevertheless, most of them felt happy in their role. However, the bigger the church, the more time executive pastors spend on administration. 'For some, this is a definite drawback: "I don't feel very pastoral," wrote one respondent. "I want to touch people more. I want to impact the world."'

Copy of the report in Mike C/Summaries and Resources.



SOCIETY



A parallel Maori justice system was proposed by Green Party Law and Order/Maori Affairs Spokesperson **Metiria Turei** at the recent Crime Summit.

"Because Maori are more likely to be stopped and searched, arrested rather than cautioned, and receive higher sentences than Pakeha offenders, Maori crime and imprisonment rates are elevated," Mrs

Turei said today. “Maori are both over represented in criminal offending and victimisation, but the two are often linked because of the *systemic racial* profiling that unjustly criminalises Maori.”



Don't forget to check out the [National Mission blog](http://nationalmissionresource.blogspot.com/)

*We welcome your feedback.
If you find this ezine useful
please forward it to others who might enjoy it.*

missionadmin@maxnet.co.nz