

National Mission Ezine June 2009

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



BOOKS

Leaving the Church to Find God, by John Fenn



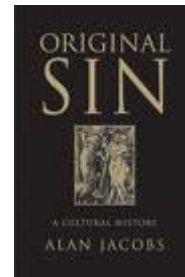
Fenn and his wife had been ministers in a wide variety of institutional church situations, but like many others discovered that they were becoming increasingly hemmed in and dry. Ultimately they left the well-known structures and set out on their own, eventually starting up a house church, and finding God within that setting. Fenn's concern is for the thousands of people who no longer find the institutional church satisfying and are looking for more in the way of community, ministry and spiritual growth. House churches work for these people who aren't visible on the radar of church statistics, but are still functioning fully as Christians.

Dog Ear Publishing, 2007

You can read some of this book under [Google's online book system.](#)

Original Sin: A Cultural History, by Alan Jacobs.

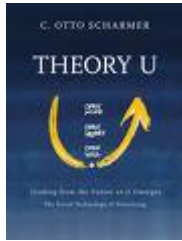
Jacobs's own foreword introduces his topic by acknowledging its near-universal vilification. The East has never seen anthropology in these terms, and the West, since the Enlightenment, has attempted to mount a vigorous moral refutation of this particular aspect of its own moral foundation. But Jacobs is not writing merely to enjoy his own prose. He believes that the notion of original sin is useful for us to consider, now.



One of his consistent tactics is to provide a biographical context into which we can fit the sometimes repugnant-sounding theorists of human wretchedness, so that when we get to what Augustine of Hippo and Jonathan Edwards actually say, we can hear them, with an ear even for how we might transfer useful insights to our present situation without being immediately impeded by a moral gag reflex. This is a courageous thing to do: to dignify by historiography, and in some cases to stand up for, ideas which everyone seems to think are unpleasant. If you happen to think this book's subject unpleasant, then its author, publisher, and reviewers agree that you are its intended audience. Jacobs doesn't approach his topic from a theological perspective, primarily, but one that engages his reader by providing a cross-section of viewpoints.

This is adapted from a [review](#) on Amazon.com

HarperOne, 2008



Theory U: Leading from the Future as It Emerges, by [C Otto Scharmer](#).

To address the current challenges and emerging complexities in the age of globalization Scharmer proposes a new model for understanding and conducting profound change and deep learning in the field of leadership and management. Instead of analyzing and referring to old patterns of the past which are often inadequate in addressing the current challenges of our time and which might be even part of the problem itself, his new focus is on learning from and bringing into life the best of all future possibilities - a process that he calls presencing: how we approach or attend to a situation before we actually do something.

Scharmer calls this unwillingness to go to our 'inner place' the blind spot of our time, especially in leadership and science. It's a way to find innovative solutions to current problems whether in your personal or professional life, in management or global processes. (*adapted from an [Amazon.com review](#)*)

Paperback edition: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, January, 2009

You can [download the Introduction and 2 other chapters here](#). There's also an extract below under **Leadership**, from a blog which quotes Scharmer and the book.

How The Mighty Fall: And Why Some Companies Never Give In, by *Jim Collins*.

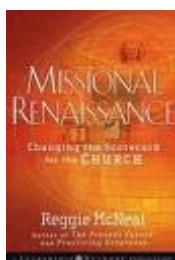
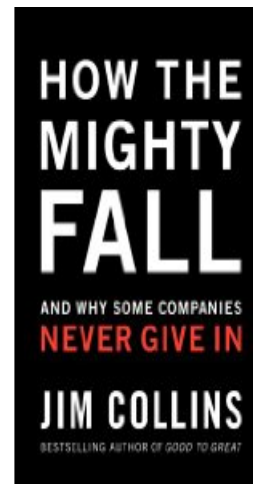
Collins looked at various great companies and wondered why did they fall? He confronted this question and came up with five stages heading towards fall, five things to avoid if you want to keep the company afloat:

1. Hubris born of success
2. Undisciplined pursuit of more
3. Denial of risk and peril
4. Grasping for salvation
5. Capitulation to irrelevance or death.

They sound somewhat similar to the processes many people go through in life.

Collins shows that some companies have got as far as stage four and recovered. As always the book is full of insights that are applicable beyond the area of great companies.

Published by Jim Collins, May, 2009



Mission Renaissance: Changing the Scorecard for the Church, by Reggie McNeal,

McNeal says about his book: With everyone getting on the missional bandwagon, and everyone talking "missional," and labelling so much as missional, there is a real danger that what it *really* means to be missional will become lost in the clutter. I wanted to write a book that distils the basic DNA of what missional really is.

Second, I wanted to give church leaders a way to talk about missional in ways that people would "get it." Third, I wanted to help leaders develop a scorecard that rewarded their missional efforts. The church growth era certainly had a scorecard (one that we are still using) that declared winners and losers at that game. We need a scorecard that gives expression to the multi-dimensional facets of the missional church.

McNeal sees this as a major timeshift, which we won't be able to go retreat from. It's not just in the church, either, though it's affecting the church hugely. He focuses on three particular things that are happening in the secular community:

- The emergence of the altruism economy
- The search for personal growth
- The hunger for spiritual vitality

These make a difference in the way people think, people act, and in what they believe. Churches have to move from:

- From an internal to an external focus, ending the church as exclusive social club model
- From running programs and ministries to developing people as its core activity
- From church-based leadership to community-engaged leadership

You can read a chapter of this book by [clicking here](#). (You may find you have to register with Leadership Network; this is free to do.)

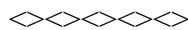
Published by Jossey-Bass 2009



CHURCH

In the latest NZ Institute of Management letter a Business Forum is announced with the subject: Today's Business Challenge...it's not a setback, it's a test.

Perhaps we could use this for the church: Today's Church Challenge...it's not a setback, it's a test...



I thought the following slightly adapted piece(originally by Jim Taylor) was interesting in terms of the way many church committees/presbyteries/sessions etc function:

Building Consensus

Our organizations might be better off without either the American text on Parliamentary Procedure (Robert's Rules of Order) or the Bourinot, the standard used by the House of Commons in Ottawa, although both Bourinot and Roberts agree on some basic principles.

One is that there can be no discussion until a formal motion defines the issue.

Another is that each person may speak only once (except the mover, who may also close the debate).

However, it's been said about these: "If you've only got one chance to speak, you tend to come out with all guns blazing to support your position. You have no idea yet how others will react, so you shoot down any opposition before it can come up."

It's hardly a process for building consensus.

I can say this, having had – for one period of my life – a reputation for writing absolutely scathing memos to colleagues in another office, memos that have since appalled me. But I know why I did it. Because I had only one chance to convince them. Their decision would affect my reputation. So it was all or nothing.



I've often seen meetings where every speaker argued against an imagined opposition. When the actual vote came, everyone was in favour. The opposition was never there. In a group of friends, ideas are traded, pros and cons weighed, implications considered... a consensus emerges.

The aboriginal practice of a circle works well, too, if the group is not too large. Everyone gets a chance to speak; everyone listens. No one interrupts; no one dominates. If there's no consensus, you go around again.

But it can take a long time. So larger bodies tend to fall back on the rules of parliamentary procedure to expedite debate and discussion.

But there are other ways.

One church organization allows a speaker two minutes to present an idea. Any idea. It doesn't have to be a formal motion – the official decision could get shaped later.

After two minutes, the other delegates indicate shades of support:

1. I love it, and I'll work for it.
2. I agree.
3. I can accept it.
4. I disagree, but I won't block it.
5. I disagree strongly, and I'll block it if I can.

If the mood seems generally favorable, further discussion takes place. But if enough people oppose the proposal strongly enough to resist it with any tactics short of terrorism, the proponents may withdraw their proposal, or take time to make it more acceptable.

It's a much more practical process.

From the Rumors ezine, 29.6.09



CULTURAL

The Department of Labour's International Migration, Settlement and Employment Dynamics (IMSED) recently launched a new research report entitled "[New Faces, New Futures: New Zealand](#)". IMSED Research has the lead role within the New Zealand government for immigration-related research and evaluation, and their latest

report draws on the findings of the Longitudinal Immigration Survey: New Zealand (LisNZ).

LisNZ is a collaborative study with Statistics New Zealand whereby interviews are conducted with immigrant permanent residents in three ‘waves’ – after six months, 18 months, and three years in New Zealand. More than 7,000 responses were gathered at six months – the first wave.

LisNZ is a study designed to produce detailed information on the settlement of migrants over time. It allows researchers to provide a comprehensive overview of early experiences. Along with detailed descriptive information on the profiles of the migrants six months into residence, the report focuses on their skills and resources, labour market activities and economic integration, as well as their social integration and settlement.



Highlights of the first report are on the [Asia Online website](#).



LEADERSHIP

1. Retromovement activists: “Let’s return to the order of the past.” Some retromovements have a fundamentalist bent, but not all of them. Often this position comes with a revival of an old form of religion and faith-based spirituality.

2. Defenders of the status quo: “Just keep going. Focus on doing more of the same by muddling through. Same old same old.” This position is grounded in the mainstream of contemporary scientific materialism.

3. Advocates of individual and collective transformational change: “Isn’t there a way to break the patterns of the past and tune into our highest future possibility – and to begin to operate from that place?”

Scharmer goes on to encourage the reader with this claim, “I believe that the current global situation yearns for a shift of the third kind, which in many ways is already in the making. We need to let go of the old body of institutionalized collective behaviour in order to meet and connect with the presence of the highest future possibility.”

From Theory U: leading from the future as it emerges, by Otto Scharmer, pg 5. quoted in this [blog post](#).



MENTAL HEALTH



Exploration of Pacific perspectives of Pacific models of mental health service delivery in New Zealand, by T. Suaali-Sauni and others.

This report was first published this year in the *Pacific Health Dialog*, volume 15, number 1, and

summarizes the findings of the 2004 '[Pacific Models of Mental Health Service Delivery in New Zealand](#)' study, which looked at concerns about the mental health of Pacific Islanders in New Zealand, and the way in which the various Pacific Island groups are not being well catered for in the general health system. There is discussion of the ways in which mental health has been dealt with traditionally, and how to a degree this still suits the older generation. However, it is not longer 'a neat fit' for the younger people.

Another issue is the fact of very different cultural viewpoints amongst the range of Pacific Islanders living in the country. One model will not suit all. There has already been a good deal of work done to bring traditional models together with contemporary viewpoints, and the study acknowledges the part Christianity plays in the lives of Pacific Island people.

The report can be found [here online](#).

A second important item from the Pacific Health Dialog is:

Development of a child, adolescent and family mental health service for Pacific young people in Aotearoa/New Zealand, by Allister Bush and others.



The report describes the development of a dedicated Pacific Island mental health service in Porirua. While there is a mixed PI population in the area, the report tends to focus on the Samoan people and their approaches to children and family in the mental health context. This perhaps gives it a more specialised focus than it might otherwise have, but the focus helps to show that each Island group needs to be addressed in a different way.

The report can be found [here online](#).

Men and Mental Health

And in case you haven't had enough about mental health in this issue, here's a third link, this time to a 36 page pdf from Mind, a British mental health group focusing on better mental health. While the information pertains to Great Britain, most of it is very relevant to the New Zealand scene.

The report is called: [Men and Mental Health – get it off your chest](#). It has some interesting and occasionally surprising things to say about men's mental health. One of its recommendations, for instance, is that health professionals should take gender into account when discussing treatment options with men. In other words, men have tended to be treated as less important in the mental health scene for a number of reasons which are discussed during the report, amongst them a tendency for services are often 'feminised.' Many men 'act out' when having mental health issues, which often leads them to be criminalised because of their anti-social behaviour. The report reminds us that professionals need to recognise that 'aggressive and violent behaviour is a potential indicator of mental distress.' Men feel more comfortable discussing their issues in men-only groups, and if men are unemployed for too long they are likely candidates for depression. While partners or spouses may understand the man's mental health, other family members often deride it.



There is also some discussion of mental health and gays, blacks and other minorities, and the elderly. Altogether this report makes essential reading.



Helping Yourself...

A group of teenage mums is using fashion to reach out to those affected by mental health. Students from He Mataariki School for Teen Parents have designed t-shirts to raise self-esteem and spread the word about where to get help for mental health.

They are now organising a fun event, Reach Out, Speak Out, to raise awareness in Northland youth.

The group of about seven teen mums started the project as part of a NCEA level two, or year 12, health class. Teacher Roz O'Shea says in a health promotion exercise the students decided to tell youth how to access mental health support in Northland.

Ms O'Shea says mental health was top of the list for the students because they are conscious of depression and youth suicide rates but were unsure where youth could turn to for help.

From a report in the [Whangarei Leader](#).

One last item in this section. The Mental Health Foundation of NZ runs regular polls. [Their most recent stated](#): 24th June (*not July as listed on the site*) was International Self-Esteem Day (*I'm sure you knew that already!*), and then they listed five actions you might be likely to try:

1. Take time to do things you enjoy;
2. Get something done you've been putting off;
3. Wear something that makes you feel good about yourself;
4. Learn something new or improve your skills;
5. Do something nice for another person.

It's interesting that nobody polled for number 3 on the list, and the majority polled for number 5. There's hope for NZ society yet!



MISSION

It is not any longer possible...that we sit in some command centre telling other people how to go forth. I'm speaking in particular to those of you who are clergy. You cannot preach about, encourage or motivate or mobilize people into mission unless you model what missional proximity looks like. You cannot sit in some ivory tower spending days and days preparing sermons which are seeking to motivate people into mission unless you yourself are



prepared to embrace that similar commitment to proximity. Do you follow what I'm saying? I'm not just talking about proximity like "our building is on the street corner on the main street with a gigantic sign and everyone knows that we are there." I'm talking about personal, relational, and geographic proximity to people.

Mike Frost, [quoted on the Blind Beggar blog](#) (original source unknown)



QUOTES

If you've got talent, people want more of you. They ask you for this or that or the other thing. They ask nicely. They will benefit from the insight you can give them. The choice: You can dissipate your gift by making the people with the loudest requests temporarily happy, or you can change the world by saying 'no' often. You can say no with respect, you can say no promptly and you can say no with a lead to someone who might say yes. But just saying yes because you can't bear the short-term pain of saying no is not going to help you do the work. Saying no to loud people gives you the resources to say yes to important opportunities.

[From Seth Godin's blog.](#)

Strange travel suggestions are dancing lessons from God.

Kurt Vonnegut (quoted in a number of places on the Net, but never with a reference.)

Alex Haley: "The death of an old person is like the burning of a library."

By my rules, caring for troubled people always took precedence over enjoying delightful people, and the line of troubled people never ended. Sitting there with corn stuck between my teeth, I wondered why I had not changed that rule sooner.

Leaving Church: a memoir of faith, by *Barbara Brown Taylor*, pg 119

It is better to deserve honors and not have them, than have them and not deserve them.

Mark Twain



RESOURCES



A practical reference to religious diversity

This [overview of religious practices](#) in New Zealand is published by the Māori Pacific Ethnic Services Police National Headquarters.

It looks at the major religious groups in the country in turn, beginning with Maori, moving to Buddhist, then to Christian,

Hindu, Islamic, Jewish and Sikh (those after Maori are in alphabetical order, in case it isn't obvious). In each case there is an overview, a discussion of death and related issues, information about gender roles and family, physical contact and other sensitivities, and finally a section on the various religious practices - and policing.

Since the booklet is laid out for police workers primarily, things are focused from their viewpoint (hence the last section in each case). This in no way reduces its value for people outside the force; in fact, because it is laid out in a clear and succinct way, it is definitely of value for anyone wanting to have some basic information at hand about religions other than their own.

Find it online under the link above.



Don't forget to check out the [National Mission blog](#)

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

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