

Mission Possible EZINE FOR MONTH ENDING 30th Sept, 2009

Much of the information found in this ezine also appears on the [National Mission blog](#) - often two or three weeks before this ezine comes out.

BOOKS

Unusually, we have very few books in this month's ezine- although a couple of others appear in different sections.

The Next Evangelicalism: Freeing the Church from Western Cultural Captivity, by Soong-Chan Rah.

This book, critical as it is of American white evangelicalism (and therefore also of NZ white evangelicals) sparks a strong critical [review from one Amazon writer](#), an Assemblies of God pastor. His biggest concern is that Korean-born Rah sees the white culture as one big negative. For him, Rah forgets the very many strong and positive traits of Western civilisation, and lumps all white Christians together as one homogenous group.



That aside, however, he has some good things to say about the book, and admits that in spite of its 'flaws' it points out something that is needing to be said in regard to the group that is 60% of the world's Christian community: the Africans, the Asians and the Latin Americans.

"No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't escape the conclusion that Rah - to a significant degree - is right. The American evangelical church is declining, or at least its Anglo component is. But as Rah points out, the non-Anglo component of the American evangelical church is thriving. This is true in my own denomination, the Assemblies of God.

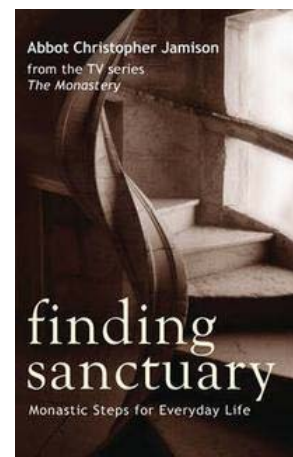
"...the Anglo-evangelical church in America declining, it is guilty - in various parts and to varying degrees - of practicing an individualistic, consumerist, materialistic, and racist form of Christianity. Why do we focus on personal evangelism rather than also on social transformation? Why do we think the three B's - buildings, bucks, and butts in the pew - are indicators of a church's success, if that's even an appropriate word for a church to use? And why do we presume that non-white culture is a mission field that needs our contributions and competence, rather than the other way around?" To sum up, "correction does not mean the total negation of the one culture nor the total affirmation of the others. It requires a balancing off of weaknesses and strengths."

Intervarsity Press, May 2009

Finding Sanctuary: monastic steps for everyday life, by Christopher Jamieson.

This book came out as a result of a BBC television series called **The Monastery**, in which five men from various backgrounds stayed at Worth Abbey for forty days, guided and helped by the monks who live there.

The book mentions the television series as a starting point, but its real focus is the Rule of St Benedict, which the monks live by. Benedict's 'Rule' isn't a set of rules, but a



series of chapters in which the reader is encouraged to learn how to be more at peace in his or her daily life, whether that life is lived out inside a monastery or in the everyday world.

The book is simply written, and, as one reviewer says, Jamieson is ‘generous with his insights, but never self-righteous, smug or preachy.’ I’m reading the book at the moment, and am finding it valuable in thinking about how to keep the spiritual focus in my life more to the fore.

Orion Publishing Group 2006

There is nothing so pitiful as a young cynic because he has gone from knowing nothing to believing nothing. ~ Maya Angelou

LEADERSHIP

There’s an equation in business that many organisations and managers use involving profits, goods and services, and people. It appears to me that most businesses get this equation wrong because they put profits first, then goods and services, then the people who work for them. But the most successful organisations, the best places to work, the world’s greatest leaders will all tell you the same thing – put people first.



It’s one thing to say you do it, but do you behave like you do, and do your people believe it.

After a survey in which 68% of the staff said they were happy, Kendall’s firm decided to find out where they were going wrong with the other 34% - and then put them in charge of getting it right. The latest survey shows that their new approach works: no unhappy staff.

Adapted from a piece in NZ Management (Sept 09): **On People Ahead of Profit**, by [Annette Kendall](#).



Two comments from [Pat Snedden](#) on Leadership:



What I’ve been attracted to all along- maybe it’s the Catholic influence – is what I call servant leadership. It’s the capacity to be confident enough to put your skills and resources in the service of the various agenda you have running but not to run it with tickets on yourself. In other words, it’s not about you – it’s about the thing you are trying to be part of.

What about seeing New Zealand as a place where there are a lot of people who spend a lot of time resolving difficult social issues and selling that IP across the world. How might the Treaty process work in Palestine?

Quoted in the Sept 09 NZ Management magazine, pg 40. The full article is called [Pat Snedden: on transformation and servant leadership](#).

God listens to knee mail.
Bosco Peters

MISSION

Librarians Get Missional

*Some interesting comments from a newish book called **Virtual Worlds, Real Libraries**, edited by **Lori Bell & Rhonda Trueman**. The book's subtitle is: **Librarians and educators in Second Life and other multi-user virtual environments**.*

*What was interesting to me is that librarians are thinking **missionally**. In the Introduction, they ask: **Why Should Librarians Be There?** and go on to say:*

From April 2006 to February 2008, the number of accounts in the virtual world known as SL [Second Life] increased from 180,000 to more than 12 million. Other virtual worlds - including [Active Worlds](#) and [World of Warcraft](#), as well as [Webkinz](#), [Club Penguin](#), and [Whyville](#) for children - are experiencing similar strong growth, and new virtual worlds seem to be appearing almost daily.

What is happening is that the web, which has evolved over the past 15 years from displaying just static text to graphical, dynamic web content and mashups, is becoming more and more interactive. Increasingly, sites seek to engage users and



involve them in the processes of using and creating information. Static web pages, no matter how attractive, are no longer enough to impress users of the next generation - or perhaps any generation now using the Internet...

Libraries need to look at places on the web, including virtual worlds, where potential library users are active and assess how library services might be integrated into these environments. Many individuals now involved in virtual worlds may not be traditional library users. By putting ourselves where these users are, librarians have a remarkable opportunity to increase use of the brick-and-mortar library, promote library services and materials, and support education initiatives in SL and other virtual worlds.

If we were to change just a few words in that last paragraph, we'd get:

Christians need to look at places on the web, including virtual worlds, where seekers are active and assess how church services might be integrated into these environments. Many individuals now involved in virtual worlds may not be traditional church attenders. By putting ourselves where these people are, Christians have a remarkable opportunity to increase use of the brick-and-mortar church, promote church services and materials, and support Christian initiatives in SL and other virtual worlds.

Published by Information Inc 2008



“The Anabaptist writer and practitioner, [Stuart Murray Williams](#), has been the most trenchant critic of the tendency of older church plants to copy the outward forms and style of their sending church, without asking whether the new mission context was different. This can result in failure to let the shape and form of the new church be determined by the mission context for which it was intended. The call for new kinds of churches can become subverted into the production of MORE churches.”
Pg 20, **The Mission Shaped Church** (various authors)



Similarly:

In *The Open Secret*, [Lesslie Newbigin](#) said: “the significant advances of the church have not been the result of our own decision about the mobilizing and allocating of “resources” [rather] the significant advances have come through happenings of which the story of Peter and Cornelius is a paradigm, in ways of which we have no advance knowledge.”

(both quotes courtesy of the [Next Reformation blog](#))



The concept of six degrees of separation, sometimes referred to as “the human web” has applied to human social engagement for many years. According to the new mobile provider; 2 Degrees, “in New Zealand everyone knows someone, who knows someone who knows them,” making it *two degrees of separation*.

This has to be good for mission in our community.

Thanks to Social Media and the expansions of Web 2.0 communities the degree of separation between you and spiritual seekers is closer than you may expect.

Adapted from a [piece in BusinessBlogs](#)

Any government that takes credit for the rain should not be surprised when it gets blamed for the drought. Dwight W. Morrow

QUOTES

[[Soong-Chan Rah](#)] *also finds the term "emergent church" offensive*, saying "the real emerging church is the church in Africa, Asia, and Latin America," which now makes up 60 percent of the world's Christian population. He says these immigrant communities form a social network that cannot be extricated from their religious practices. The community helps people find jobs and homes, and white Americans can learn much from immigrant communities.

From a book review of "The Next Evangelicalism" by Soong-Chan Rah, reviewed by Greg Taylor

What you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say.
Ralph Waldo Emerson

SOCIETY

Nomophobia is the fear of being out of mobile phone contact, and the fear of law or laws. The term, an abbreviation for "no-mobile-phone phobia," was coined during a study by the UK Post Office who commissioned YouGov, a UK-based research organisation to look at anxieties suffered by mobile phone users. The study found that nearly 53 percent of mobile phone users in Britain tend to be anxious when they "lose their mobile phone, run out of battery or credit, or have no network coverage." The study found that about 58 percent of men and 48 percent of women suffer from the phobia, and an additional 9 percent feel stressed when their mobile phones are off. The study sampled 2,163 people. Fifty-five percent of those surveyed cited keeping in touch with friends or family as the main reason that they got anxious when they could not use their mobile phones. The study compared stress levels induced by the average case of nomophobia to be on-par with those of "wedding day jitters" and trips to the dentists. Ten percent of those questioned said they needed to be contactable at all times because of work.



More than one in two nomophobes never switch off their mobile phones. The study and subsequent coverage of the phobia resulted in two editorial columns authored by those who minimize their mobile phone use or choose not to own one at all, treating the condition with light undertones or outright disbelief and amusement.

Photo by [Herbert](#)



The British Government has decided that happiness is of great importance to the nation and has appointed economist [Richard Layard](#) our first "Happiness Tsar." His mission is to build some positive thinking into the workforce from childhood, so children will develop into more resilient adults. In his book, *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science*, he writes: "There is a creative spark in each of us, and if it finds no outlet, we feel half dead. This can literally be true: among British civil servants, those who do the most routine work experience the most rapid clogging of arteries."





*There's an article in the latest **Presbyterian Candour** called **To Those Growing Older and Soon to Part** by **Rev Jim Battersby**, a gentleman in his eighties who lost his wife some 11 years ago.*

This is an excellent 'letter' to another couple in their eighties explaining the need to prepare for the loss of the spouse - however painful that might seem - to take practical steps about how the one left will cope, where to find things, how to do things that you don't normally do, what to talk about before the day, living with infirmities, living with independence, living with grief.

Rev Battersby packs a great deal into less than two pages, and this should be required reading for anyone in your parish who's married, not just those in their twilight years – although obviously they are the ones most likely to be affected.

You can [access the article online](#).

*(Because **Candour** is a closed publication that it isn't publicly available or promoted outside the circle of Presbyterian leadership roles you need to enter a username and password. These are 'minister' and 'candour' respectively. The September issue will come up as part of the archive.)*

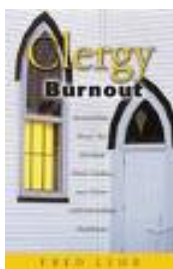
Joy is the serious business of heaven.
C.S. Lewis

WELLNESS

The **Church Times archives** has an article from 2007 called [What Price Priesthood?](#) by Rachel Harden.

It discusses clergy burnout, stress, the difficulties of being ill and then having to recover within the parish, long hours with little time off, and other problems of ministry. **Yvonne Warren**, the author of [The Cracked Pot](#), the state of today's **Anglican parish clergy**, and herself the wife of a clergyman for 40 years, notes that the Church in the 21st century is experiencing a cataclysmic time of change, with huge implications, and says, *"This has affected patterns of ministry more than most, and many clergy are feeling the impact of this, not just in terms of workload, but in their sense of frustration and feeling of increasing irrelevance in a largely secularised society."*

Another book is mentioned in the article: **Clergy Burnout: Recovering from the 70-hour work week. . . and other self-defeating practices** by **Fred Lehr**. Lehr had a terrible time saying "no", and loved feeling needed.



"In reality it exhausted me, and I hated constantly being caught between my family and my congregation. I found myself helplessly falling in what we call burnout."

He sought help, and used his experience to work on a specialised treatment programme.

The [Society of Martha and Mary](#) produced a report in 2002 called, *Affirmation and Accountability*. In it they called on dioceses and other church structures to provide more constructive solutions for clergy who were on stress-related sick leave.

The article is fairly long, but well worth checking out. There are several personal statements at the end from people who have been through burnout and similar struggles.

Unfortunately, *The Cracked Pot* is now out of print. It's available through Print on Demand at the publishers, Kevin Mayhew, at a very expensive price, or from [Blackwells](#) where they can apparently supply it at a better price. *Affirmation and Accountability* is also hard to get hold of in NZ (there is one copy, at the Kinder Library). [Clergy Burnout](#) is more readily available.



I wrote about the Men's Sheds movement in Australia in last month's ezine. At the time I didn't know that the movement had reached New Zealand as well, so was pleasantly surprised to read in the paper that a *second* Shed in Dunedin was just up and running. They're actually calling them "Blokes' Sheds" here. The [first Dunedin shed](#) was established at Taieri Airport about a year ago (Taieri Airport now being a place where only little planes take off from), and the second shed is in the grounds of the Kings High School. It goes by the name of the **South Dunedin Blokes' Shed**, and officially opened on Saturday the 5th Sept, 2009. (Apparently Alexandra is also in the process of setting up a Blokes' Shed, as is Wellington.)

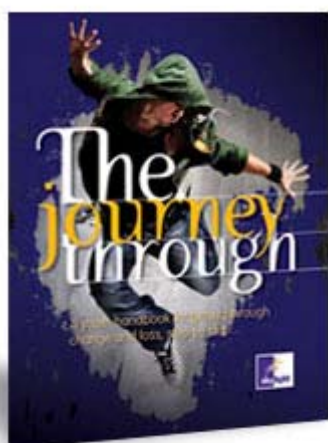
You can see a [video report from Channel 9](#) on the Taieri Blokes' Shed.



When Work Stress Gets Too Much, by Peter Tynan.

This is an article on work stress that appears in the latest **NZ Management** magazine (Sept 2009). It lists causes of stress, ways in which stress shows up, and ways to reduce stress. It always lays out ways for employers to reduce stress amongst their staff particularly from a management point of view.

The article can be accessed [on line by clicking here.](#)



Supporting Teens Through Tough Times

[Skylight](#) has launched an innovative new single edition youth support magazine, '[The Journey Through](#)', which honestly and frankly tackles the very difficult issues teens and young people face. It's been written specifically for young people in New

Zealand, and features many stories, words and photos, kiwi teens have contributed.

The media release says: Life can be really tough. The issues teenagers face are diverse and include changing schools, moving to a new city or country, losing your friends, bullying, parents breaking up, living in a blended family or absent parents, peer pressure, terminal illness or death of someone close to them, mental health issue, disability and too often trauma, abuse or violence.



In an era when labour strikes were common and Australian parliaments were transacting labour legislation concerning workers' wages and hours, [F. W. Boreham](#) wrote articles to the newspaper about the importance of play in society. These were a variation on nature's principle of rest, rhythm and retreat.



His editorials addressing '*A philosophy of play*' were pitched not only towards politicians but teachers and parents to encourage them to realize that toys and play were equipping children with the skills for "the game of life".

As an interesting development of this theme in a later editorial, Boreham suggested that teaching children to play well was preparing them "*to enjoy to the utmost the majestic merriments of the eternities*".

In one of his earliest Tasmanian editorials, Boreham expressed the "*need for more parks and reserves in Hobart*" and called upon politicians to ensure that further playgrounds were provided for its people.

**Check out the [National Mission Blog](#)
for the latest updates**

In the book of life, the answers aren't in the back.
Charlie Brown