

National Mission Ezine May 2009

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



BOOKS

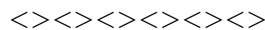
Night Vision, by Jon Oliver.

Jon Oliver was involved in mission to the club scene long before anyone thought up the term 'mission-shaped'. Here he reflects on the kind of mission that everyone is now talking about - the church going out to where people are, in this case to the clubs and city streets in the early hours, when most churches would be locked up.

Part One looks at the changing face of mission among young people, asks whether clubbing has a spiritual dimension and makes the case for mission and evangelism in places that are about as far removed from most people's idea of church as you can get. Part Two tells some great stories from the front line by others working in mission to the club culture, e.g. Turning a typical parish church into a 'Church for the Night' - a spiritual oasis for dehydrated clubbers, bottled water and pastoral care, how to be a Christian and a clubber or DJ, engaging with young people who have no contact with the church, and more.

Canterbury Press Norwich (2009)

See more below under 'Church'.



Leaving Church; a Memoir of Faith, by [Barbara Brown Taylor](#).

The simple facts of Taylor's 'career' are these: baptized Catholic, she wandered in and out of a few Protestant denominations, attended Yale Divinity School in the seventies on a scholarship; was among the first women ordained in the Episcopal Church USA a few years later; served a large church in Atlanta for a decade as one of several clergy; sought and found a rural parish to lead on her own; and quit after several years, exhausted, taking a job teaching religion to college undergraduates. The demands of being priest to all people at all times got to be too great. Ultimately, Taylor's leaving the church and the priesthood put her in a jeopardy that is easily understood by anyone who has questioned or struggled to find their vocation: "By leaving church, I was about to leave everything I knew how to do and be." However, once gone from her pulpit, Taylor revelled in being a religious 'amateur' once again, and the book climaxes in

her understanding that being in Christ and community is more important than what had gone before.

The book came out in 2006, and Taylor has recently followed it up with another, **Altar in the World: a Geography of Faith**. In this book she shows how possible it is to see God's hand and spirit in all manner of daily things; how each part of the humdrum can be far more than just 'normal.' Her aim is to show that we are so busy we can miss the importance of the ordinary.

Both books published by HarperOne, the first in 2006/7 and the second in 2009

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Reaching People Under 40 While Keeping People Over 60: Being Church for All Generations (TCP Leadership Series), by Edward H. Hammett, with James R. Pierce.

Established congregations face a dilemma - how do they reach younger adults without alienating those over 60? The future may lie with this younger cohort, but the financial support and leadership of many congregations is to be found in the older group.

While the book has a "church growth" feel to it, the authors recognize that we have entered a postmodern era where the church must embrace a missional understanding of itself. The focus is not just adding members, it's ministering to the world in which the church exists. For pastors of traditional congregations it's important to hear that younger people aren't all that interested in what Hammett calls "nickels and noses." They want to make a difference and don't have time or energy to spend on committees or details. Mission, not business, is the focus.

Part of the aim of the book is get the two groups to talk to each other; and then there are those in the middle: the Baby Boomers, the ones the author sees as needing to lead and interpret, the glue that holds the other groups together.

Further, the older group needs to see itself as missionaries to the young, learning their culture, understanding their views, empowering them and mentoring them.

This review adapted from one on Amazon.com.

Chalice Press, 2007



INNOVATIVE CHURCH

Church for the Night. St Peter's Church is slap bang in the middle of the club scene in Bournemouth, and is usually closed during the night. However, a group of club chaplains (by which I presume they mean they're chaplains to the clubs) decided to open up the church for a night, with decorations, mince pies, music, lights, visuals and heap more. Before they'd even got the doors open at 11 pm, a young girl sitting on the steps with a group of teenagers was desperate to get in, and kept on asking if they could pray with her. As soon as the doors were opened, a stream of people, including bouncers from the clubs, came in to look around, to ask for prayer, to seek counseling and help, and to show a host of other needs. The chaplains were constantly busy, and



couldn't even close at the time they'd decided on. Since then the church has been opened on other occasions, with similar results. There's a [full version of the article here](#), and a [website with more stories here](#), plus there's a book, **Night Vision**, that was published in February this year.

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I work ridiculous hours. I run on adrenaline. I keep to a schedule that damages my health and even some of the relationships that are most important to me. I do it all quite consciously, and I do all this because....(and this is still hard to admit) *I feel personally responsible for the decline of the church!*

I feel responsible, but I'm *not*. I was just born at a particular time in our cultural history. More importantly, it's not my job to 'fix' the decline – to get things back to the way they were. In fact, the decline may very well be part of God's plan for God's people – leading us to freedom. What *is* my job in this situation is *to discern that holy freedom, and to support, encourage, protect and promote the new forms of church and ministry that God is calling into being* (and perhaps to 'chaplain' or even 'euthanize' the forms of church and ministry that have come to the end of their journey).

from *It's not my fault* (and it's not yours either), by Andrew Dutney. Australian Leadership May/June 2009



LEADERSHIP

[Andy Stanley on leaders](#). "Uncertainty is why we need leaders."

"God gets more out of chaos than out of wrinkle-free days." If every situation were clear, no leadership would be needed. "Uncertainty underscores the need for leadership. Uncertainty is the arena in which leadership is recognized." For leaders,

"Uncertainty is job security!"



When you're uncertain, focus on two elements: clarity and flexibility.

Clarity means focusing on your original calling. What's the essence of your ministry? That can and should remain crystal clear even amid confusing circumstances. Flexibility means knowing the difference between your vision and your plans. Don't mistake your plans for your vision. Your plans can and must change frequently. But the vision remains the same. Are you an evangelist? Keep presenting the gospel even as your methods change. Are you a

disciple maker? Keep developing converts into well-grounded followers of Jesus even as the starting points and the pressing applications change.

"Be confident even in uncertainty. Admit that you don't know the future."

from the [Out of Ur](#) report on Stanley's talk at Catalyst West Coast (USA), 2009



MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

[As part of a study](#) recently launched at The University of Auckland, young people around the country will trial an innovative new ‘e-therapy’ that uses computer gaming to teach self-help for depression.

The e-therapy – called ‘SPARX’ – uses an interactive 3D fantasy game to teach young people the skills they need to cope with challenges and manage their mood. The goal is to help lift young people out of depression and prevent symptoms from returning in the future.

Depression is common among young people and accessing help can be difficult. One in five New Zealanders will have experienced clinical depression by their eighteenth birthday. Three quarters of young people with depression never receive treatment, and those who do have often progressed to very severe depression. “We want to intervene earlier and more effectively,” says Dr Merry.

The study will enrol up to 600 New Zealanders aged 12 to 19 years with mild to moderate depression.



MISSION

Reggie McNeal, in an [interview with NextWave](#), answers the question: *What are the three shifts you say are called for by this understanding of missional church?*

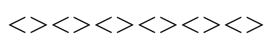
“The first one is one that most people think about when they think of missional—the move from an internal focus to an external focus of ministry. Many people, however, think that missional is some community engagement so they run out and do a weekend of service and claim they are missional; or, they see missional as a set of activity rather than a way of being church in the world. This shift raises the question, “what business are we in—the church business or the kingdom business?”



“The second shift is the shift from being program-driven to being a people-development culture. We often think of how churches as a collection of the programs we have developed. This perspective really pegs us to an activism and consumerism that is deadly to life. This question raises the question, “what product are we producing?” For many churches the answer is programs; the missional church is concerned about producing followers of Jesus who are enjoying the abundant life he promised and pointing others to it.

“The third shift is the shift from church-based leadership to kingdom-based leadership. The former is institutional; the latter is leadership of a movement. The former is confined to church activity; the latter is leadership that is deployed across all domains of culture. The question here is, “what is our scorecard?” or “what will we celebrate?” Leaders make those choices, and missional leaders have the courage to ask “how are people doing?” or “how is our community doing?” when they think about the ministry of the church.”

The whole [article is here.](#)



Rather than looking at the Web through the eyes of a [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#) and [Twitter](#) user, we're still looking at the Web through the eyes of a Sunday bulletin reader. That approach works for the people who are already attending our churches. It completely ignores the people we are trying to reach. And that's the problem. We view the Web as an add-on. After we've figured out how we're going to do ministry, then we want to know how to use the Web to promote our ministry.



Instead, the churches that have influence within our online culture look at ministry differently. They assume the people they're trying to reach are online. They assume the people who are connected to their ministry are online. Rather than looking at the Web as an add-on, they consider their web strategy as a fully-integrated part of how they help people take steps toward Christ. They are a church online as much as they are a church in a building located on the corner of First and Main.

from: *The New Traditional Church: Web Strategy*, a [blog post](#) by Tony Morgan



QUOTES



When a person tries to act in accordance with his [or her] conscience, when he tries to speak the truth, when he tries to behave like a citizen, even in conditions where citizenship is degraded, it won't necessarily lead anywhere, but it might....Even a purely moral act that has no hope of any immediate and visible effect can gradually and indirectly, over time, gain in political significance.

- Vaclav Havel



'What do I fear most? To forget who I am, to be lost in what I am not.'
Thomas Merton, Journal 1966



It's the single biggest error firms make in times of crisis: repeating the past. When the world around you is undergoing discontinuous change, repeating yesterday's mistakes is the quickest path to decay and dissolution.
[Newspapers Don't Learn from their Mistakes](#) – Umair Haque



"Whenever you get into a jam, whenever you get into a crisis or an emergency, become the calmest person in the room and you'll be able to figure your way out of it." Rudolph Giuliani (quoted in Leadership Wired, 13/5/09)



Non-contextuality is the mortal sin of the disciple community.
Douglas John Hall (1989), *Thinking the Faith*. – p99



Surely it's no coincidence that the word 'listen' is an anagram of the word 'silent'.
Found in the weekly 'Rumours' ezine, 31.5.09



RESOURCES

The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion.

Resources *par excellence!* Just to list the most obvious:



1. Short lectures, articles and commentaries relevant to current issues in science and religion. These are posted under [Current Issues](#) and vary from time to time. As of the time of writing, there's a piece by Nick Spencer on Darwin's Religious Beliefs, but earlier pieces are available in links.
2. The [Faraday Papers](#): these provide the general reader with accessible and readable introductions to the relationship between science and religion, written by a broad range of authors who are expert in the field.
3. [Faraday Lectures](#): lists up and coming lectures, but also has an archive of earlier ones.
4. The [Multimedia page](#). This archives dozens of papers, talks, discussions, lectures, many of them available as MP3s, or streaming video. Most can be downloaded as videos, and a good number are available as htmls or pdfs. They cover a wide variety of topics from bioethics to cosmology, and others that link religion and science in different ways.
5. A number of news items are archived.
6. Half a dozen [research](#) projects are listed and described.
7. Archives of [seminars](#), including news about up and coming ones.
8. The [shop](#) sells CDs, DVDs, books and papers.
9. As if you hadn't had enough, there's a [page of links](#) to other sites of interest.

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[Video: Struggletown.](#)

A report from **TV One's Sunday** programme which profiles New Zealander [Billy Graham](#), who overcame his impoverished childhood to become a successful boxer, a motivational speaker and most recently, a father-figure to dozens of boys – and some girls - in the Wellington suburb of Nae Nae. He encourages them to overcome aggression, anger, lack of discipline and self-control through training them in boxing routines. Graham is a Christian, who notes in his [memoir](#): “God plays a big part in my life, and it's a great feeling in the old heart department to know I am not alone” (pg 142). *You can see the video by clicking on the link in the title.*

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Kim Hill interviews [Andrea Needham](#) on *Face to Face*, on Workplace Bullying.

This episode of the *Face to Face* (a program no longer on air) [can be found here](#). New Zealander HR expert Needham is the author of *Workplace Bullying: a costly business secret*, published by Penguin in 2004.

“Without a doubt, Andrea Needham's book is the best I've read on the topic, and certainly the one book I'd most recommend to business



leaders. She carefully uses stories she gleaned from a great many personal interviews. She documents the damages done to them and gives them sage advice with understanding, compassion and a significant measure of encouragement prodding them forward towards relief and recovery.” (Robert Mueller, [reviewing the book](#) on Amazon.com)

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A Message of Hope for a Generation in Despair.

This British-made video (from Wales) is about ten minutes long, and consists of an introduction in which a guy with a shaved head goes full on at the camera telling us that the suicide is one aspect of the approach of the 'thief who comes to destroy', and that Jesus came to 'give us life'. Following this are several young people, all of whom have tried to commit suicide as well as self-harming on several occasions. Their testimonies have an edgy and scary reality, and they don't hold back on what's happened to them. In each case, Jesus has literally been their salvation. The video ends with the first guy inviting people to think about what they've seen and get in touch with them at [igniteme.org](#). It was made in response to a recent spate of youth suicides in South Wales, and stars Ignite's Mark Beacher, Dai Hankey, Richard Stanton and Jess Wilson.

You can view the [video here](#), or on the [National Mission blog](#).

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And a feature-length movie about men, their needs, their feelings, their emotions (and the inability to express them). **Men's Group** takes six men and pulls their lives together through a series of meetings. It's raw, the language is blunt and down-to-earth (they *are* Australians, after all) and it's

made a huge impact wherever it's been shown. Boris Sokratov, of the Out of the Blue depression awareness campaign, wrote: *Men's Group explores dark territory: anger, remorse, fear and regret. In 'man speak,' Men's Group is a story about men talking about stuff: touchy feely emotionally hard stuff. Regrettably many of those who might benefit the most by seeing the movie are unlikely to go near it. On the other hand the more of us who do go the better. Definitely worth a look.*

You can see a [trailer of the movie](#) here, and the [website is here](#) (though it's a bit thin on information about the film itself). The film has been showing around the main centres in May, but for a limited season. Hopefully it will soon be available on DVD.

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On the relatively new [Like Minds, Like Mine](#) site you can find several profiles at the moment about people who've suffered discrimination as the result of their mental illnesses, including a video featuring the Rev. Imoa Setefano. He talks about his experience of mental illness, discrimination and his journey to recovery with the support of his family. This section of the site is only going to be available until the end of July, as the site is focusing on different issues for different periods of time. However, the video is available on [You Tube](#), and also on the National Mission blog.



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If you have a need for short, pithy sayings that are clever enough *not* to make non-Christians (and Christians, if it comes to that) go *Duh!*, then check out Australian writer Grantley Morris' collection of one-liners. [The Digital Evangelism Issues site](#) says 'They avoid the pitfalls of being trite, slushy or religious.' I wouldn't agree with that entirely, but there's a big enough range of them for anyone to find the right statement for their church or website. [You can find them here.](#)



SOCIETY



Family First NZ is welcoming the latest statistics on marriage, civil unions and divorce showing a declining rate of divorce, and an increasing number of marriages over the past decade. While the marriage rate has retained its demand and relevance, the demand for civil unions has been negligible. "The civil unions legislation has proved to be a complete white elephant," says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ, "despite the claims by the previous government that it would supposedly strengthen human rights and support the choices of apparently 300,000 people who were not married but lived in stable relationships." According to Statistics NZ data released today, there have been only 1,646 civil unions registered between April 2005 and March 2009 . These comprised 1,330 same-sex unions (594 male and 736 female) (80%), 312 opposite-sex unions and just four transfers from marriage.



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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