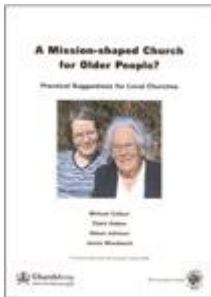


# Mission Possible Ezine

## July 2010

### BOOKS

*We often talk about older people on the National Mission blog, the increasing numbers of them, the way they are the mainstay of many smaller churches, the way their skills and abilities are often unrecognized.*



However, it's still taken me three years or so to catch up with this book: **A Mission-shaped Church for Older People?** - *Practical Suggestions for Local Churches* by Michael Collyer, Claire Dalpra, Alison Johnson and James Woodward.

The book is published by Church Army and the Leveson Centre, a group that focuses on the study of Aging, Spirituality and Social Policy. It is readily accessible resource that should be invaluable for anyone who wants to think about the issues, problems and opportunities posed by an ageing population, and then to take action.

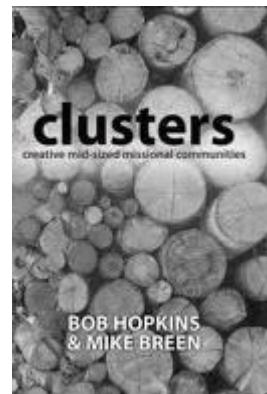
*In his Foreword Dr John Sentamu says 'The way the book is set out will be warmly welcomed by busy and hard-pressed church leaders. In the first part, three modules (thirteen sessions including an introduction) are explained and planned - the leader has simply to familiarise themselves with the content and provide supportive material for each session. The second part contains a whole range of helpful related material which should be placed in the hands of anyone who ministers among older people: the range is quite extraordinary.*

You can find a good review of the book from the [Church of England newspaper](#), and can buy a copy on the [Leveson Centre site](#). You can also download a copy from the same address.

**Clusters: creative mid-sized missional communities**, by Bob Hopkins and Mike Breen.

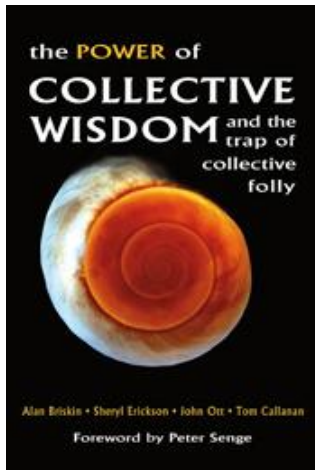
Though I discovered I had a reference to this book in one of the files on my computer, I don't ever seem to have followed it up. The paperback edition came out in 2008, so it's not brand new, and seemingly, because it's not an American book, it hasn't made a big impact.

Mike Breen is one of Robert Warren's successors at St Thomas' Church, Crookes, in Sheffield. The Anglican church joined with the Baptists at one point in their history, and have never looked back. Like all churches they've had their ups and downs, and have grown, dwindled and grown again. At present they work from a former industrial estate called Philadelphia (a name significant already in their history) and continue to be pioneering in their outlook.



Small groups are one of their effective ongoing approaches, and two or three of these form a ‘cluster’ – groups of up to 50 people. They’re missional in their outlook, in a wide variety of ways.

Read a [potted version of their history here](#), and a good [review of their book](#) by Henry Dirkson. Published ACPI, 10 July 2008



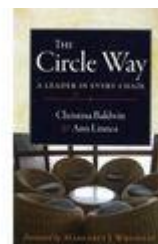
**[The Power of Collective Wisdom: And the Trap of Collective Folly](#)** by Alan Briskin, Sheryl Erickson, John Ott & Tom Callanan

“...When human beings gather together, a depth of awareness and insight, a transcendent knowing, becomes available. Based on nine years of research *The Power of Collective Wisdom* shows how we can tap into the extraordinary co-creative potential that exists in every group. Collective wisdom is elusive and unpredictable – it can’t be willed into being, but the authors describe six commitments people can adopt that will increase the likelihood of its appearing. Stories and historical examples throughout serve to illuminate and illustrate how collective wisdom has emerged in a

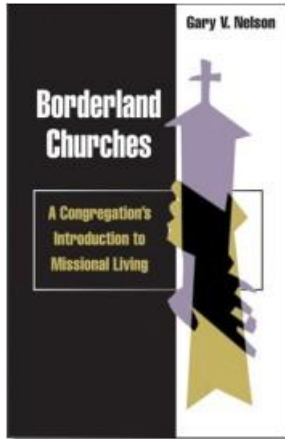
range of settings and through the lives and traditions of varied cultures. Equally important, the authors describe how to recognize the pitfalls of polarization or false agreement, either of which can lead to collective folly – a phenomenon with which recent history has made us all too familiar. And they offer a set of practices to help readers maintain the key lessons of the book.”

**Parker J. Palmer** writes - “*The Power of Collective Wisdom is an important book, not least because of the second, sotto voce part of its title: “...and the trap of collective folly.” We Americans have a long way to go in learning how to access the wisdom of community, despite example after homegrown example of how powerful it can be in everything from technical creativity to peace-making. This book, full of experience-based principles and practices, can help us do exactly that, freeing us from the cultural trap of radical individualism. Equally important, it can help us avoid the power of collective folly -- and, I might add, collective evil -- of which we have seen too much in our time. For anyone who gathers with others in hopes of finding a better way, this book is a must-read.*”

*The information above came from the [Prodigal Kiwi\(s\) site](#). Paul Fromont adds, in relation to another book: From the same publisher, and related to the important practice of appreciative enquiry is [The Circle Way: A Leader in Every Chair](#) co-authored by Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea. Again, Wheatley and Parker Palmer are associated with it.*



Both of these books, it seems to me, get at the important change happening **and needed** in the field of leadership and leadership practice.



“It is obvious to [secure leaders] that vision and possibilities emerge from the community and not just the leaders. Borderland leaders are community builders that draw vision, giftedness, and relationships out of the community while warring against the tendency toward going it on their own. In this cultivated atmosphere, the missional imagination of members emerges in greater clarity. It is a vision that does not come from pre-planned strategies void of dialogue or process, but from the community’s shared experience of God’s moving in its midst.” (77)

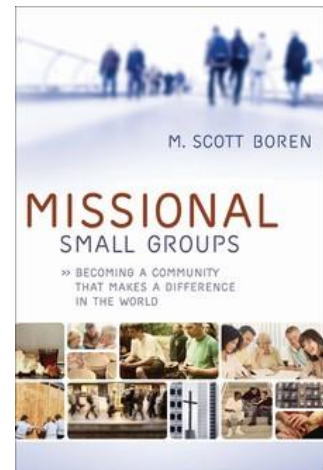
“All the literature on leadership points to the idea that leaders shape values and mobilize people through character, not just through technique and efficient management frameworks. Efficiency and technique may create good processes and systems, but they do not build deep communities of faith that effectively move into the borderlands of mission and ministry.” (80)

“Borderland churches need borderland-friendly clergy, comfortable in the worlds they so passionately and purposefully encourage people to engage. Leaders wired only for the Christian sub-cultures find it difficult to encourage borderland living because it is impossible to guide others to places .. where you are not willing to go yourself.” (80)

Published by Chalice Press 2008

[\*Missional Small Groups: Becoming a Community That Makes a Difference in the World\*](#), by Scott Boren.

Boren artfully places his assessment of the challenges facing small groups as well as his proposed solutions to these challenges in a narrative framework. For too long churches have viewed small group ministry as a sort of program to be added onto people’s already overly-busy lives. Boren argues that, if we’re going to authentically grow in the direction of participating in small groups that are missionally defined, we will need to reframe the fundamental “rhythms” that weave together our lives. This is what his insightful book helps us do.



Boren combines theory and practice so that this is not merely a theoretical book on what small groups “should be,” nor another one of those “how to” books to help small groups bond together. Rather he provides very helpful spiritual disciplines that groups can immediately begin to engage in while also providing the theoretical context in which these disciplines make sense. In the end, becoming a missional small group is about gracefully cultivating the “rhythms” of the kingdom into the life of the group.

Baker Books July 2010

[See also Stop Press at end of this ezine]

## LEADERSHIP



Supposedly an example  
of authoritarian leadership style...  
at least in Legoland

[Lawrence Miller](#) writes: “[a synergist is]...a leader who has escaped his or her own conditioned tendencies toward one [leadership] style and incorporated, appreciated and unified each of the styles of leadership on the life-cycle curve. The best managed companies are synergistic.”

[John Mabry](#) says: "Doing spiritual guidance is an exercise in humility. First, we must empty ourselves of the notion that we know what we are doing. We do our best work when we do not have an agenda. Once we feel we have our clients all figured out and know exactly what is 'wrong' with them and how to fix it, or

how to 'get them' from point A to point B, then we might as well hang it up and go into some other business, because we are not going to be any help to the Divine - or our clients."

[Len Hjalmarson](#) writes: “...Alan Roxburgh describes the role of the Synergist in comparison to the leaders of Celtic communities in the fifth to ninth centuries. These Abbots and Abbesses did not function as authoritative command and control personalities, but rather they were people who best embodied the living ideals of the community. They were concerned more with cultivating healthy environments rather than shaping specific actions, setting direction or developing programs. They were not managers, but spiritual elders. Joseph Myers writes in [The Search to Belong](#) that the leaders of tomorrow “shape environments as opposed to creating groups. When the environment is healthy, people will find connection on their own...”

## MINISTRY

*An extract from a post by [Bob Hyatt in the Out of Ur blog](#), again on the [topic of where 'job' ends and 'vocation' begins](#) - or vice versa.*

First, as always, I need more fully to embrace the Gospel at a personal level. My failure at turning off ministry and making true rest a part of my weekly rhythms reveals within me a basic disbelief of the Gospel truth that Jesus is enough and that my identity can and should be rooted in his finished work for me--not the results I get, the church I pastor, how well (or poorly) it's doing, or whether I think people are approving or disapproving of me based on the amount of access I give them to myself and my time. The only way we pastors will ever find sustainability and longevity in ministry is if we do what we tell other people to do **ALL THE TIME**: Rest our souls in the finished work of Christ. Stop getting our identity from our job/ministry. Take some time to unplug, unwind and, more importantly, connect with God, our families and our own souls again.

You can never plan the future by the past.  
Edmund Burke

## MISSION

In an article entitled [Why we must shift our attention from 'save newspapers' to 'save society'](#) by [Clay Shirky](#), he notes that when Guttenberg invented the printing press, the results were initially chaotic...

“Only in retrospect were experiments undertaken during the wrenching transition to print revealed to be turning points.....That is what real revolutions are like. The old stuff gets broken faster than the new stuff is put in its place. The importance of any given experiment isn't apparent in the moment; big changes stall, small changes spread. Ancient social bargains, once disrupted, can be neither mended nor quickly replaced, since any such bargain takes decades to solidify...



Photo from Wikimedia Commons

“And so it is today. When people demand to know how we are going to replace [all kinds of things- add your favourite institution here] .. they are demanding to be told that the old systems will not break before new systems are in place. They are demanding to be told that ancient social bargains aren't in peril, that core institutions will be spared, that new methods of spreading information will improve previous practice rather than upending it. They are demanding to be lied to.

“There are fewer and fewer people who can convincingly tell such a lie.....The future is already here. It just isn't evenly distributed.”

*What Shirky discusses is very similar to the way mission works, the way the 'emerging' church works (and you can think of 'emerging' in any way you like), and even the way a person converted from the old life into a Christ-life 'works'. Though the article focuses on the on-going crisis seen in the newspaper industry, it has resonances far beyond that.*

Thanks to [Len Hjalmarson](#) for bringing this to our attention.

Planning is bringing the future into the present so that  
you can do something about it now.  
Alan Lakein

# SOCIETY

[Some recent stats](#) from [Statistics NZ](#) on Pasifika people in NZ.

- The Pacific population in New Zealand grew from just 2,200 people to 266,000 between 1945 and 2006 and now makes up 6.9 percent of the total New Zealand population.
- Samoans are the largest Pacific ethnic group in New Zealand, numbering 131,100 in 2006 and making up almost half the Pacific population. Their numbers grew by 98 percent between 1986 and 2006.
- Tongans have been the fastest-growing Pacific ethnic group in New Zealand in recent years, with their numbers increasing more than threefold between 1986 and 2006.
- Three out of five Pacific people living in New Zealand in 2006 were born in this country. Cook Islands people, Niueans and Tokelauans are the most likely to have been born in New Zealand.
- The proportion of Pacific people identifying with only one ethnicity decreased from 80 percent in 1991 to 70 percent in 2006. Multiple ethnicities are more common amongst younger Pacific people.
- The median age of the New Zealand-born Pacific group is 13 years compared with 39 years for the overseas-born. The Pacific group as a whole has a much younger age structure than the total population, having a median age in 2006 of 21 years (36 years for the total population).
- *Pacific peoples are highly urbanised, with 97 percent living in urban areas in 2006 and 66 percent living in the Auckland urban areas alone.*



Today's Pacific population is mostly New Zealand-born, predominantly young, and highly urbanised. It is also a diverse population made up of many different ethnic groups.

## [Update stats relating to Internet access and usage](#)

Statistics NZ reported in July that:



Image courtesy of [Scrape TV](#)

Mobile access plays an increasingly important role as New Zealanders use the Internet both at home and away from home. In over half of households with the Internet in 2009, a laptop or a hand-held computer was used to access the Internet at home, *five times* more than in 2006.

25% of Internet users in 2009 used mobile phones or wireless hot-spots to access the Internet while they were away from home. This compared with 14% of users in 2006.

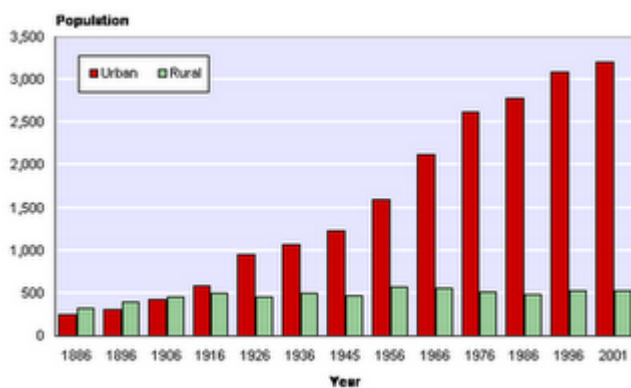
“The increase may be because laptops are much more affordable now, and wireless connection technology is increasingly a standard function for laptops, Hand-held devices, and mobile phones,” Statistics NZ manager Gary Dunnet said.

There are still rural areas without broadband (rural in NZ Stats terms is an area with a population of less than 300). But even in more populated areas, cost is still a factor when it comes to using broadband.

At December 2009, almost half of New Zealand households not planning to get digital TV in the next 12 months cited cost as a reason for remaining on analogue broadcasting. This was followed by over 40 percent of households who stated they simply do not want it. {*Nothing like a bit of the reactionary!*} The move to digital TV by New Zealanders will allow analogue television to be switched off in the future. This will free up spectrum for other uses such as mobile broadband.

Over half of New Zealanders indicated they would *vote online* in general and local elections. Younger people and those earning higher incomes were more likely to vote online. These groups also have higher proportions of Internet users than other groups.

## Get ready Church!



*In the August 2010 North & South magazine Mike White presents some interesting statistics and projections regarding New Zealand's population. Every one of these stats affects how we do church. Remember that Israelite king who knew that something bad would happen to his children's generation and basically said, why should I care? We need not to be like that.*

Currently 4,369,977 according to NZ Stats today (19.7.10)  
 By 2027 our population could be up to five million  
 Another person is added every 20 minutes.  
 Some 700,000 NZeders live overseas.

In the year to March 2010, the population grew by 56,300, the fastest growth rate since 2004. It wasn't the result primarily of migration.  
 In 2009 there were 62,543 births and 28,964 deaths with a net gain of 33,579.  
 Net migration only added 21,253.



An argument for increased population is that if we want to maintain our lifestyle without excessive cost, we will need more people. Our infrastructure at the moment is costing more than we can afford given how 'few' we are.

Auckland Regional Council estimated the region is growing by more than 50 people a day, requiring 21

new homes, and resulting in 35 extra cars on the road.

Auckland is predicted to grow by 570,000 by 2031, reaching two million (the equivalent of adding all of Wellington and Dunedin to Auckland).

Auckland needs to consider and *fund* several major transport projects:

- Second harbour crossing at \$4 billion
- Underground CBD rail loop at \$1.5 billion
- Rapid-rail link with the airport at \$1 billion
- Completion of SH20 at \$2 billion.

There's too much talk of migration making the difference to the population – bringing people in with money and then being able to charge them for living here – compared with making sure that young people stay here in the country rather than t go off overseas and not return.

In 2009 one in eight NZeders was over 65.

By 2061 it's predicted that one in four will be - some 1.44 million people.

Life expectancy for men will be 85.6 and women 88.7 in 2061.

The median age in 1971 was 25. Currently it's 37. In 2061 it'll be 43.

In the late 1960s, children made up 33 percent of the population. in 2061 they'll be just 17%.

Currently 67% of the population is working age; in 2061 it'll be just 58%.

## SOCIETY



Binge-drinking is a major canker on NZ society's skin. All manner of reasons have been put forward to explain its rise in the last decade. In an opinion piece in the Otago Daily Times, **David Seymour**, a policy analyst in Saskatchewan, Canada, and an expatriate New Zealander, focuses on a word which is implied rather than use in his article: *hopelessness*.

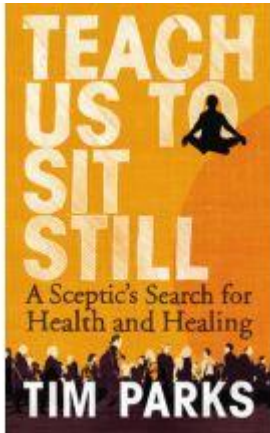
"The result is thousands of youth in education devoid of real meaning."

"[youth] come to believe that our way of life is unsustainable, even immoral, and any success they have in it will be nullified by environmental costs"

"The only real long-term solution to youth alcohol abuse is to attack its root cause; the diminishing ability of youth to make a difference in their own lives."

[You can read the complete article here.](#)

## STOP PRESS



Got my iPad yesterday. Played with it. Meh. Gave it to my wife.

*Tweet from Alan Jacobs*

While checking up on the [Book Depository site](#) today,

I came across this title. The blurb from the book (see below) describes this pretty well, but if you want a longer review, check out Tom Cunliffe's excellent [review on A Common Reader](#).

'Just when the medical profession had given up on me and I on it, just when I seemed to be walled up in a life sentence of chronic pain, someone proposed a bizarre way out: sit still, they said, and breathe...'

"Teach Us to Sit Still" is the visceral, thought-provoking and improbably entertaining story of Tim Parks' quest to overcome ill health. Bedevilled by a crippling condition which nobody could explain or relieve, he confronts hard truths about the relationship between the mind and the body, the hectic modern world and his life as a writer. Following a fruitless journey through the conventional medical system he finds solace in an improbable prescription of breathing exercises that eventually leads him to take up meditation. This was the very last place Parks expected or wanted to find answers; anything New Age simply wasn't his scene. Meantime, he is drawn to consider the effects of illness on the work of other writers, the role of religions in shaping our sense of self, and the influence of sport and art in our attitudes to health and well-being. Most of us will fall ill at some point; few will describe that journey with the same verve, insight and radiant intelligence as Tim Parks. Captivating and inspiring, "Teach Us to Sit Still" is an intensely personal - and brutally honest - story for our times.

*This book is brand new - it was published in July this year by Harvill Secker. It seems to me to be of value in relation to our continuing work in the National Mission Office relating to wellness, particularly for those who are heading towards burnout, or dealing with stress-related illnesses.*

Keep up with the latest posts by subscribing to National Mission's [Mission Resource Blog!](#)

