

Mission Possible Ezine

June 2010

A slightly shorter ezine this month as a result of a heavy workload in other areas.

BOOKS

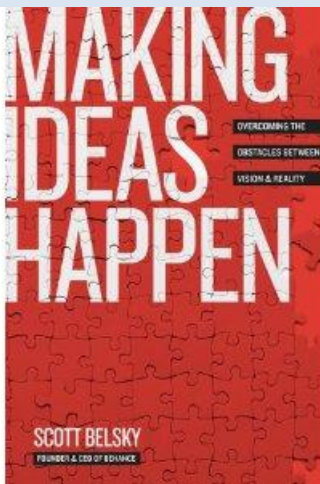


NetCasters: Using the Internet to Make Fishers of Men by Craig von Buseck

Von Buseck presents a unique overview into the vast and growing potential of the digital media to share the good news of Jesus. There has been no title like this since Andrew Careaga's books in the early days of the Web. Its well-researched and visionary coverage, interviews and case studies are indispensable to anyone needing to understand the nature of the new media and how to use them effectively. And since we all now live in a 'digital communication culture', this surely means all of us: Jesus-followers at any stage of our spiritual journeys, as well as pastors and leaders, college students and faculty (it's an ideal textbook), or mission staff and believers from diverse cultures and countries. And remarkably, we don't need technical knowledge for this!

B & H Publishing Group ISBN 978-0-8054-4784-2

[Interview with author](#) – and [sample chapters](#).

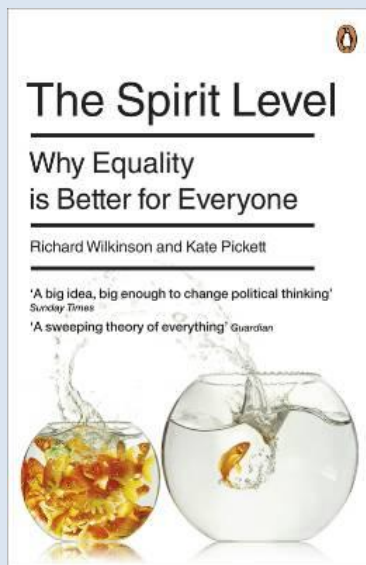


Making Ideas Happen: Overcoming the Obstacles Between Vision and Reality, by *Scott Belsky*.

This book first came to my notice on the [Out of Ur blog](#), where it's highly recommended by reviewer, Scott Wenig. He writes: *Belsky's passion is to help people put their best ideas into action. As the founder and CEO of [Behance](#), a company devoted to empowering and organizing the creative world, he and his team interviewed hundreds of productive people and teams over a six year period to discover the principles behind their success. The result of their empirical research is this book, a systematic presentation of the necessary steps needed to bring ideas to fruition.*

In my opinion, a great number of pastors and Christian leaders could readily benefit from [Making Ideas Happen](#). We're often creative, idea-oriented types who love to cast the vision or promote the mission of our church or organization. But, as one noted Christian leader has said about vision sermons and mission statements, "If it's hanging on the wall but it ain't happening down the hall, it ain't happening." Belsky has given us an accessible guide to creating church and ministry systems that will produce what we've preached and promised. It's helpful, of course, to read the whole review, and there are a number of other positive ones on the Amazon link in the middle of the review. And if you've got ten minutes of down time, check out the Behance site (I assume it's related to 'enhance') – there are some wonderfully creative and inspiring people networked there.

Belsky notes: “*very seldom is anything accomplished alone*” and there is “*tremendous power waiting to be unleashed in the network*” of most groups.



NZ columnist [Tapu Misa recently noted](#): Inequality, as epidemiologists Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett argue in their 2009 book [The Spirit Level: Why More Equal Societies Almost Always Do Better](#), hurts us all. As well as links to higher crime, ill-health, shorter life expectancy and a range of social pathologies, inequality drives a wedge between people, corroding trust and raising levels of anxiety. Perhaps we shouldn't be too surprised then that an annual Massey University survey has found we've become more tolerant of income inequality, even as we've become more unequal.

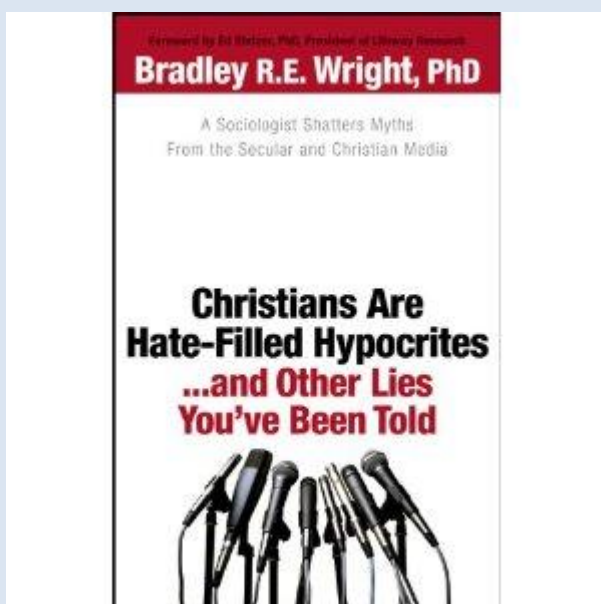
An Amazon reviewer points out: Within the 400+ pages of this book, [Wilkinson and Pickett] emphasize that it is not the poor and the deprived in isolation who suffer from the effects of inequality, but also the bulk of that nation's population.

According to their findings, incidences of mental illness, for example, are 500% higher across the whole population spectrum in the most unequal societies than they in the most 'equal' ones. [My italics]

*Misa also notes: In his 2009 book [Justice](#), the Harvard professor of philosophy **Michael Sandel** writes that while politicians have largely ignored inequality, philosophers have been debating the just distribution of income and wealth since the 1970s.*

He argues an important reason to worry about the growing inequality of American life is that "too great a gap between rich and poor undermines the solidarity that democratic citizenship requires".

Published by Bloomsbury (Dec 2009) – at 352 pp rather than 400 plus (!)



Christians Are Hate-Filled Hypocrites...and Other Lies You've Been Told: A Sociologist Shatters Myths From the Secular and Christian Media, by Bradley Wright.

This book is interesting because we deal here at the National Mission Office with stats and trends on a daily basis. It's particularly interesting in light of the comments below about George Barna, normally regarded as reasonably sound in his approach. The review comes from [Publishers Weekly](#).

Wright is a sociologist at the University of Connecticut. Here he examines recent survey

data on Christian evangelicals to see if they substantiate the often misguided and hyperbolic public perceptions of this faith group. Separating the wheat from the chaff, he explains how some poorly worded, ill-sampled statistics give the wrong impression of evangelicals and why people should avoid giving them credence.

Though he often blames the media for gleefully reporting bad news about devout Christians, he doesn't spare evangelical polemicists such as Josh McDowell and Lee Strobel for their false exaggerations of evangelical shortcomings. His biggest target may be the pollster George Barna, whose surveys on Christianity have generated intense controversy. Wright's colloquial writing style gives this volume the feel of a folksy college lecture series. The abundant use of graphics adds to the impression the book's genesis was cribbed from introductory sociology of religion classes. The conclusions drawn here--no surprise--are that the most committed Christians practice what they preach, performing better than the rest of the population on a host of social measures including divorce, domestic violence, sexual misconduct, crime, substance abuse, and everyday honesty.

Published by Bethany House, July 2010. [Bradley Wright's blog.](#)

If they can get you asking the wrong questions, they don't have to worry about answers. *Thomas Pynchon*

"Good management consists in showing average people how to do the work of superior people."

John D. Rockefeller

"When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us." -

Alexander Graham Bell

"What you cannot do locally at your place, you should not also expect globally of the church at large..."

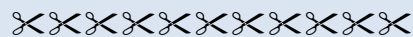
J. Moltmann

MISSION

Brad Brisco: nine points on [Moving in a Missional Direction](#).

1. Start with spiritual formation
2. Cultivate a missional leadership approach
3. Emphasize the priesthood of all believers
4. Focus attention on the local community
5. Don't do it alone
6. Create new means of measuring success
7. Search for third places
8. Tap into the power of stories
9. Promote patience

*The details relating to these headings can be found in Brisco's article (see link in title above), and is worth reading alongside Wayne Jacobsen's [Why I Don't Go To Church Anymore](#). That article lays out Jacobsen's reasons for not going to church, but for *being* Church. Interesting arguments worth reflecting on.*



Paul Fromont, the NZ blog, [Prodigal Kiwi\(s\)](#), wrote an interesting post called, [Re-Thinking Priesthood for the Sake of Mission, the Present and the Future](#). The focus is Anglican, but what he says applies to all churches where the priest/minister/pastor is the person who's regarded as 'doing' the ministry in the church. Here are some of his points (he comments further on them, in the post):

- The existing path to ordination is predominantly focused on the parochial or parish model.
- The gender and demographic mix of the majority of Anglican congregations is reflected in those offering themselves for selection. This raises real issues particularly with regards to demographics, and especially the reality that missing demographic groupings (broadly speaking – those under 45 years of age) are seldom represented.
- If the occasional younger person is attracted to the possibility of ordination and a call to a traditional parish, they would more than likely typically feel comfortable in that context and as a consequence largely maintain the status-quo, rather than initiate and direct the hard work of re-imagining the context and the possibilities for contextual ministry and local mission. Youth isn't always a predictor of a missional engagement or the skills to transition a congregation.
- Missiology and missional-shaped questions, reflection, and the quality of candidate reflection, responses and/or experience are currently not even a part of the selection categories which include Theology, spirituality, ethics, pastoral and relational skills,

leadership, communication, liturgical practice and sacramental understanding, and self-care.

MENTAL HEALTH

From a report in the [WesternLeader](#) 10.6.10

Lifeline Aotearoa cultural adviser **George Hill** thinks it's time to do something about suicide rates among young Maori. So the kaumatua from South Head's Haranui Marae is working alongside clinical director **Dr Stephen Edwards** to trial a community-based suicide prevention course.

A marae setting, cultural protocol and detailed introductions are among changes to a Canadian programme which is already taught in communities world-wide. The Applied Suicide Intermediate Skills Training or ASIST course teaches the basics of recognising signs of someone at risk of suicide and making the right response.



Dr Stephen Edwards

"It's almost like CPR," Mr Hill says. "It's about keeping that person alive until there is more comprehensive help." Dr Edwards says young Maori men are over-represented in the suicide statistics. "New Zealand has one of the highest suicide rates in the world compared to other OECD countries." [Read the [rest of the article here](#).]

[The YSP \(Youth Suicide Prevention Program\) site](#) notes this about warning signs relating to suicide:

Most suicidal young people don't really want to die; they just want their pain to end. About 80% of the time, people who kill themselves have given definite signals or talked about suicide. The key to prevention is to know these signs and what to do to help.

Watch for these signs. They may indicate someone is thinking about suicide. The more signs you see, the greater the risk.

- A previous suicide attempt
- Current talk of suicide or making a plan
- Strong wish to die or a preoccupation with death
- Giving away prized possessions
- Signs of depression, such as moodiness, hopelessness, withdrawal
- Increased alcohol and/or other drug use
- Hinting at not being around in the future or saying good-bye

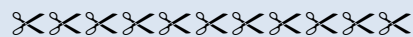
These warning signs are especially noteworthy in light of:

- a recent death or suicide of a friend or family member
- a recent break-up with a boyfriend or girlfriend, or conflict with parents
- news reports of other suicides by young people in the same school or community

Other key risk factors include:

- Readily accessible firearms
- Impulsiveness and taking unnecessary risks
- Lack of connection to family and friends (no one to talk to)

[Mike Crowl notes:] Around 25 years ago, three young men who'd been connected with our church - and a fourth who went to another Pentecostal church - killed themselves. In each case the main reason was a recent breakup with a girl friend. We have a tendency to think that young men aren't affected by relationship break-ups - and certainly, many don't appear to be - but even without these 'warning signs' from ASIST, I would have placed this high on the list of possible reasons for a young man committing suicide.



*[In an excellent article on the Sojourners site](#), Catholic priest, **Richard Rohr**, looks at the way the inner life of men is hugely neglected in modern culture - with disastrous results. Here are some extracts - but please read the whole article, which is full of wisdom.*

Take a typical woman, educated or uneducated, of most any race or ethnicity, and give her this agenda: “You are not to have any close friends or confidants; you are to avoid any show of need, weakness, or tender human intimacy; you may not touch other women without very good reason; you may not cry; you are not encouraged to trust your inner guidance, but only outer authorities and “big” people; and you are to judge yourself by your roles, titles, car, house, money, and successes. People are either in your tribe, or they are a competitive threat—or of no interest!” Then tell her, “This is what it feels like to be a male, most of the time.” Maleness can be a very lonely and self-defeating world.



If you can't access this article online, please contact me at missionadmin@maxnet.co.nz for a copy.

One day of autonomy produces things that never otherwise emerge. *Dan Pink*
[Watch the video this line comes from.](#)

We've been doing great since we redefined success as a slowing of failure. *Dilbert*

*Don't forget to check the:
The National [Mission Resource Blog](#)
You can have each post sent to your
Outlook email box to keep you up to date.*