

## **J S BARCLAY – 2011**

*Families in cross-cultural ministry – a comprehensive guide and manual for families, administrators and supporters*

Families have been an integral part of the modern missionary movement since 1793 when William Carey left for India with his family. Cross cultural ministry presents significant challenges to the family at every stage from recruitment to retirement. Many of the pressures inherent in living in another culture (transitions, language and culture learning, and various issues that arise during the life-cycle of families prior to their eventual re-entry) are unique compared to their peers who remain 'at home'. In recent decades greater attention has been paid to the impact of cross-cultural living on families. The development and provision of 'member care' has emerged from the study and analysis of cross-cultural ministry. The increasing awareness of what missionary families face, identifying causes of attrition, adopting measures for retention, and developing models of 'best practice', have resulted in better care of families serving cross-culturally - by families themselves, and their mission administrators, sending churches and supporters.

This Project traces the development and impact of member-care for cross-cultural Christian workers against the backdrop of global missiological change. Pollock's 'Flow of Care' model provides a basic sequential framework for the various stages in the cycle of cross cultural ministry, from recruitment to re-entry/ retirement. At each stage there is a complex range of issues that calls for responses by the key players – the families (with particular reference to Third Culture Kids), their sending church/es, the mission agencies, and the communities in which they serve. These issues are explored and analysed on the basis of personal experience, reference to relevant literature, and theological reflection. In addition, responses from interviews with fifteen couples with at least ten years of cross-cultural ministry experience provide substance and contemporary life illustration to this work.

In the light of the growing numbers of families from the 'New Sending Countries' who are serving cross-culturally, one section examines specific issues that emerge from the differing cultural backgrounds, missiological context, and socio-economic circumstances of cross-cultural workers from Korea and India.

Since this Project is intended to be a guide/ manual, an important supplementary feature is the PowerPoint presentations in the Appendices.

## **H BEGBIE—2006**

*In this Sign Conquer: Being a Chaplain to Soldiers in Time of War. A Theological and Experiential Exploration of War with Implications for Military Chaplaincy*

Just War theory may create the impression that some wars are good. The argument of this thesis is that all wars are like a 'dark gravity' that draws all involved into a chaotic and hurtful world. War is a form of 'exclusion', a descent into chaos that destroys the balance between 'separation' and 'binding' inherent in the world of Genesis one and two. War is an extreme part of the fallen world that thrusts the Chaplain into tension and into a world without grace.

Chapter One is an introduction. Chapter Two outlines a theological framework for ministry in wartime looking at the nature of sin and the role of the God who is both judge and saviour. The question of whether or not there is a link between God and War in Old and New Testaments is examined as is the language of war in the bible. The question, 'is war good' leads to a negative answer although the sovereign capacity of God to bring good out of war is retained. The doctrine of the Trinity and its implication as a model for inclusion and grace is then considered leading to a final paragraph examining the command to love our enemies. A metaphor introduced in this section and repeated in the last chapter is that the Chaplain is 'called to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land', to maintain some resonance of grace in ungracious world, to be the one who above all others remembers that the enemy belong to God, creatures for whom Christ died and for whom prayer is appropriate.

Chapter Three presents a series of illustrations of the failure of the Church to fulfil this mission. Examples are given of the church seeking military power or providing a theological framework for others to do so. The chapter consists of three sections, the first looking generally at the question, the second examining anti-Semitism and the third looking at church leaders during World War I.

Chapter Four aims to draw the new Chaplain into the reality of war leading in Chapter Five to a study on the effect that war has on language, both at the national level (propaganda) and at the individual level.

The overall argument woven into the thesis is that war will pervert language into a binary system of 'them and us' 'me and the enemy', depriving the enemy of their humanity and often dehumanizing them. The Chaplain's great temptation is that he will be drawn into this seductive tribalism providing unreflective moral and theological support for the exclusion of the enemy. If this occurs the Chaplain will ultimately lose his integrity and the soldier whose conscience is beginning to hurt through the process of killing will not feel comfortable with him. By reflecting on the process, on the message of the Bible, on the nature of the Trinity, the grace of God in the world and the command to love the enemy, the Chaplain endeavours to hold onto and reflect the grace of God. There will be no escaping in this world or in this time the tension this creates and all the Chaplain can do is to 'retrieve' as much of the way of the kingdom of God as he can. The great challenge is to maintain some sense of the grace of God, to keep the song of the Lord alive amongst the noise of war, to reveal a little of what it means to love the enemy so that the soldier bruised by war and killing will see in the chaplain a person through whom hope and forgiveness can be found.

#### **K BOATENG -2011**

*Serving the Lord In A Strange Land- An Enquiry into Southern Sudanese Worship In Melbourne*

Most Southern Sudanese Christians came to Australia as a result of approximately four decades of civil war in the Sudan between the Arab north and the Black south. A significant number of Sudanese migrants have joined Australian churches but others have planted their own churches. This ethnographic study attempts to examine how dislocation and relocation, and Australia's socioeconomic culture have impacted or impacting the Christian life of members of four Sudanese Pentecostal/Charismatic churches - International Revival Church, Sudanese Community Church, Kingdom Builders' Church and Sudanese Fellowship in Melbourne. The research design involves data collection on a small sample of thirty-three people, and participant observation.

The first section of the study is the introduction, setting out the purpose and methodology of the project.

Chapter one explores pioneer missionary activity in the Sudan towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries. It particularly highlights the missionary activity of the Roman Catholic, the Episcopal (Anglican) and the Presbyterian Church during the "Anglo-Egyptian Condominium of 1899-1956" as well as the birth of the Pentecostal/ Charismatic churches in the Sudan in 1970s.

Chapter two examines the socio-political context of the dislocation and relocation, its nature and general impact on Southern Sudanese people in Victoria.

The third chapter attempts to describe traditional Sudanese worship practices after the expulsion of missionaries in the Sudan in 1964 as well as during the civil wars from 1955-1972 and 1983-2005, and also in peace time. It also investigates the impact of the war on liturgical practices of the mainline churches as well as the worship practices of the newly formed Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches.

The fourth chapter examines changes that might have occurred in Sudanese mainline and Pentecostal/Charismatic worship practices since arrival in Victoria. Analysis and interpretation of interview responses of questions 1-3 is included in this chapter. The chapter

also looks at changes in denominational affiliations and the formation of Sudanese ethnic churches in Victoria.

Chapter five further explores the forces upon Sudanese church life that come with social dislocation and relocation. This chapter includes analysis and interpretation of interview responses of questions 4-15, mostly in relation to the impact of relocation and Australia's socioeconomic culture on Sudanese Christian life.

The final chapter six evaluates the research project and draws conclusions. The conclusions include suggestions for future action and the contribution of this project to the practice of ministry.

### **M BRAGGER – 2008**

*A Critical Analysis of 'Policy Governance' as a Model for Church Leadership.*

In recent years, many churches have chosen to implement a form of governance known as Policy Governance (PG), a model originally developed by Dr. John Carver for the governance and leadership of non-profit organizations. The ideological core of PG is that effective leadership is the result of the establishment, and proper use, of policies; and the primary role of effective governing boards is to concern themselves with the establishment of those policies.

In order to achieve this the Policy Governance Model aims to produce a culture change in an organization, to create an environment where the board (eldership or leadership team in a church context) is set free from involvement in management in order to concentrate its time on providing an effective leadership function. The CEO (in the church context Senior Minister) is then correspondingly set free from board 'meddling', and so empowered to develop and exercise strategies that will achieve the organization's goals. The board provides leadership by setting policies which are succinct 'minimum verbiage', global policies for the organization's 'Ends' or mission objectives, and also Executive Limitation policies, or boundaries, within which the CEO is given total freedom to achieve the organization's goals.

This study critically analyses the Policy Governance model, to assess its theological legitimacy in the light of the principles that underlie New Testament ecclesiology, and agrees with the consensus of scholarly opinion that the NT does not provide any prescribed model of church structure and leadership for all times and places. The position taken is, that it is the Trinity that informs the shaping of ecclesial communities, and the NT shows a process of development in the leadership structures of churches, having both pragmatic and theological aspects. Such a 'developmental flux' actually provides, subject to the NT essences for Christian  $\tau\omega\upsilon\tau\alpha$ , a 'divine permission', or freedom, for churches to develop Trinity-reflecting structures appropriate to their context. The PGM does actually provide the freedom for a congregation to construct a model appropriate to its situation, a freedom reflecting the 'divine permission'. The Carver model also uses language that resonates more with an organic rather than a technocratic model, and such a model allows the possibility of a congregation that reflects the 'unity-with-functional-diversity' characteristic of the Trinity. This reflects the model that we see in Paul's 'body' analogy in 1 Corinthians 12, and which can allow the gifts and abilities of members to be harnessed in freedom for the benefit and growth of the whole.

However, a major concern is the question as to whether the PGM will foster an environment that encourages and nurtures the type of Trinity-reflecting communities witnessed by the NT. Other concerns relate to the secular nature of the Carver model, which, if uncritically applied, may provide opportunity for the ecclesial vision of Christ to be usurped by the 'principalities and powers', resulting in a reliance on human endeavour for effective ministry, rather than it being a direct work of the Spirit and the grace of God. In the light of these concerns, an in depth analysis of five significant churches which have implemented policy governance, has been carried out involving pastoral staff, elected leaders and office bearers, and congregational members.

The dialogues with staff and members of these churches indicate agreement, by the overwhelming majority, that significant benefits in terms of the ministries and mission of the churches have resulted. However, there is also a widespread perception that there are negative effects, particularly in terms of a lessening of the accountability of the leadership to the congregation, and a diminution of pastoral care for members, which have resulted from the new models.

Despite the real concerns regarding the Policy Governance model however, our conclusion is that, in the light of the theological and pragmatic insights gained in this study, it is possible to construct an adjusted Carver-based model of governance for the contemporary evangelical church that would preserve its triune characteristics.

## **A CETTOLIN—2006**

*AOP Pentecostal Spirituality in Australia: A Comparative Study of the Phenomenon of Historic Pentecostal Spirituality and its Contemporary Developments within the Assemblies of God in Australia*

The Pentecostal movement emerged at the turn of the twentieth century stressing the *experience* of the Holy Spirit evidenced by glossolalia. It passionately advocated a return to a pristine early Christianity in which empowerment by the Spirit was seen as essential. Recent practice in the Assemblies of God in Australia (AOG) appears to be playing down features of historic of classical Pentecostalism. It gives the impression of moving towards more mainline expressions of the Christian life. Sociological theory proposes that as organisations, including churches, develop they tend to become more structured, moving from spontaneity towards order and routinisation. Tensions begin to develop between the institution and charismatic freedom. This study is seeking to understand what is currently emerging in the Pentecostal spirituality of the pastors in the AOG. The hypothesis is that: growing institutionalisation is changing the pastors' (Pentecostal) spirituality.

The first chapter contrasts the understanding of "spirituality" in Christianity with its secular usage. For Christians it is more than the human quest. It is the attraction to things of the Spirit and the conscious living of a Christian way of life. Pentecostal spirituality, as a form of Christian spirituality, particularly emphasises God's Spirit working in the process of sanctification and empowerment for ministry. However, its essential nature is wider than what is described in Pentecostal theology and requires out empirical observation and analysis.

Chapter two outlines the origins and developments of Pentecostalism, setting the context for an exploration of AOG (Pentecostal) spirituality. This thesis seeks to elucidate what particularly distinguished the Pentecostal understanding of the Christian life, at least until recently. Various views are surveyed in chapter three to distil the essential features of AOG (Pentecostal) spirituality. There is considerable consistency despite the varied global phenomena. At the heart of these diverse Pentecostal spiritualities there is a shared *experience* of the Holy Spirit and the *practice* of the spiritual gifts that unifies the variety.

In chapter four contemporary expressions of AOG (Pentecostal) spirituality are considered through analysis of the results of a national survey of AOG pastors, the views of key ministers and personal observations. Support is found for the hypothesis that AOG spirituality is changing. Although Pentecostal experience is still important it appears there are changes in certain practices and beliefs, particularly Spirit baptism and glossolalia.

This study concludes in chapter five with a consideration of various views of AOG ministers and some personal observations. Sociological, biblical and theological insights are employed and a Pentecostal ecclesiology with Trinitarian perspectives is offered. An essential aspect of AOG (Pentecostal) spirituality is its inherent flexibility and adaptive, innovative nature. Despite humble beginnings the AOG is now reaching the middle class in Australia. Although there are tensions over charismatic freedom, an organisational structure has developed facilitating the movement's preservation and ongoing growth.

## **M CHUA—2006**

### *Sabbath rest and renewal for pastors in Peninsular Malaysia: A Theological and Practical Consideration*

It is hypothesized in this thesis that due to the impact of modernity and cultural expectations, pastors in Peninsular Malaysia tend to compromise the Sabbath rhythm, thereby leading to sustained stress and burnout. There are two basic areas of consideration: understanding ministerial stress and burnout in Peninsular Malaysia, and the theological perspective on Sabbath.

Historical, modernity and cultural factors which combine to affect the lifestyle and ministry of Malaysian pastors, making ministry particularly stressful, are studied. These factors form the context of pastoral ministry in Malaysia.

Research from the West indicates that there is a high level of stress and burnout among pastors in the West, and that this affects their life and ministry. Continual stress not only produces anxiety and fatigue, it also brings harm to the body, while burnout is an emotional exhaustion which blunts the capacity to relate to people and results in cynicism and feelings of disillusionment. The ability to minister effectively is drastically curbed by stress and burnout.

In order to understand the extent of stress and burnout among Malaysian pastors, a survey instrument was designed for this purpose, and results indicate that a substantial number of them are experiencing a fairly high level of sustained stress, while a smaller number suffer from burnout. Although proportionally less than what is found in the West, it is not an insignificant issue for Malaysian pastors. The survey also indicates there is a direct relationship between stress and burnout and the failure of pastors to observe the Sabbath rest, and that this is due to the busy lifestyle of pastors and the expectations placed on them. Many pastors are unable to take regular rest that they need.

The issue of Sabbath has been controversial throughout church history, and it is re-examined afresh here. In particular, its meaning and relevance for humanity today is reflected upon. Sabbath is an external ordering of a rhythm of life which flows into the context of God's grace. This external ordering of life is premised upon an internal ordering of finding joy and delight in God, in His works of creation and salvation. Sabbath is a gift of time that calls pastors to find rest in God in a rhythm of life that is ordered by God. The principles of Sabbath were not abrogated in the New Testament, but were affirmed and lived out by Jesus. Sabbath, as God's provision, is an antidote to stress and burnout. More than that, Sabbath keeps pastor centrally focused on God, and on a lifestyle that is in keeping with the principles which have been laid down by God. Keeping Sabbath in the Malaysian context requires a substantial change of attitude and of lifestyle on the part of pastors. Pastors need to learn to keep and teach the principles of Sabbath, and synchronize his Sabbath rhythm with that of the congregation. The experience of Sabbath rest and renewal can be a redeeming experience, and a foretaste of the future rest in eternity.

## **M COATES—2005**

### *Missional Churches in an Age of Globalisation*

The study begins with a sociological analysis of the "three faces" of globalisation – the *socio-economic*, *socio-political*, and *socio-cultural*. Within this context of globalisation, it is important for the church to have a clear sense of its nature and purpose. Therefore a *missional ecclesiology* is enunciated, following the Gospel and Our Culture Network, Lesslie Newbigin, and Karl Barth, according to whom "the church exists in being sent and in building up itself for the sake of its mission" (CD IV/1, 725).

Mission is one of the essences of the church, not simply one activity within its sphere of responsibility. Unlike, but not inconsistent with, the GOCN's expressed goal to engage the deep culture of western societies, this study sets out to focus on the missional task of churches in the unprecedented context of accelerating globalisation. Utilising Robert Schreiter's notion

of the “New Catholicity”, it formulates components of a “global ecclesiology” that are especially pertinent to this new context, showing how the global church’s unity, pluriformity and reciprocity take on fresh significance in the age of globalisation. These themes guide us in our final chapter, to a five-fold vision for globally oriented missional churches, five capacities through which they express their missional nature. The missional church is presented as a multi-cultural worship community; a centre of cross-cultural hospitality; a partner in international mission; a prophet; and an educator / discipler for mission.

### **R CONDIE -2010**

*Church, Culture and Change: A Case study of an Australian strong culture church.*

This paper is an ethnographic case study of St Jude’s Anglican Church Carlton, over the period 1975-2008, using the lens of organisational culture to examine the life and resilience of the church. Organisational Culture is a root metaphor for understanding the life of organisations. It is a pattern of shared assumptions learned by a group in making sense of their problems in the internal and external worlds that is taught to successive generations. Churches can be studied through this lens, and in particular understood through organisational ethnography.

The paper explores organisational culture, and how this applies specifically to research of church life. It draws on a cultural taxonomy to classify types of church experience. Through the methodology of semi-structured interviews, participants from the church reflect on the cultural life of St Jude’s over a period of 35 years. An ethnographic description of the cultural history of the period is presented.

From this history it emerges that the dominant culture of the church has changed through this period, but that strong sub-cultures from previous eras remain part of the wider church life. The absence of major conflict is noted as a key feature. The paper explores cultural, worldview and theological reasons for this unity in diversity, and suggests ways in which the church might continue to develop in the future.

### **D CRONSHAW—2006**

*Towards an Australian Contextual Theology of Pastoral Ministry*

Australian historical images are a fruitful source for theological reflection to develop models of pastoral ministry. History includes a number of myths of typical Australians – the convict, bushman, gold digger, and the Anzac ‘digger’. These images and their historical periods helped shape Australian culture and so shape context for ministry. A conversation between historical themes and Christian tradition suggests a number of models for pastoral ministry in Australia that suit different contexts. Chaplains, for example, get alongside people in the midst of their work; although colonial chaplains were seen as distant moral policemen and their role in evangelism was limited by their government employment. As transportation ceased and settlement spread through the bush, ministry as shepherding with clergy who cared for their flocks replaced chaplaincy. Curiously, ministry has rarely been described as mateship which facilitates mutual support, though this is critically important in our egalitarian society.

Pastoral ministry in Australia has often included moral teaching, though the wowser image was and is problematic. The Labor movement, furthermore, considered ministers irrelevant because of their lack of advocacy for social justice. The Australian value of a fair go for the underdog suggests a place for ministry as prophetic advocacy, and ministry as service fits Australian humanitarianism and the Anzac spirit. Servant leadership is popular today, even in business circles, though pastoral leaders can also reclaim a model of ministry as friendship which is more mutual than servanthood and broader than mateship.

Australia has become more secular and consumerist, yet paradoxically more open to spirituality. Pastoral ministry as marketing seeks to connect by identifying, targeting and

meeting felt needs, though this fosters commodification of the gospel. By contrast, pastoral ministry as spiritual companionship focuses on spiritual search and growth in faith. Spiritual companionship is more at home with the Australian longing for everyday spirituality as articulated by contemporary social commentators such as Michael Leunig, and is more consistent with a paradigm of ministry as friendship. No one model is complete in itself, but the notion of pastoral ministry as friendship is a paradigm through which other models can be evaluated.

## **L DOUMA -2011**

*An exploration of pastoral care methods by elders in the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia relevant to the circumstances of 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia.*

This research project has reviewed, as well as investigated and trialled a revised model, in terms of the pastoral care provided for church members by the elders of the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia by means of the home visitation program.

In the CRCA system of church governance the elders together with the minister are responsible for the pastoral care/ spiritual growth to maturity of the church members. Anecdotal evidence, and a review of CRCA bulletins, magazines, makes a case for concluding that the system of care provided by the elders is failing. Added to that is the decision by the CRCA national synod to adopt a four fold vision that refers to a revision of structures, increased spiritual maturity and passion, evangelism and church planting, and training and equipping members for ministry. Even if the current system of oversight provided by the elders were functioning, it can be argued that it is not what is needed to fulfil the synod vision nor provide for the members in the circumstances they find themselves in 21<sup>st</sup> century Australia.

The research project has investigated the strengths and weaknesses in the current pastoral care system by the method of focus groups. A revised model of pastoral care has been devised that is more proactive, more suitable to the changed circumstances of both the elders providing the care and the church members receiving the pastoral care, while remaining true to biblical principles and the confessional standards of the CRCA. The project has achieved the above by means of a team of elders using the Action Research approach, allowing the elders to determine for themselves, with the researcher facilitating, a very practical way forward. The proposed method is considered to provide a proactive approach to pastoral care that develops a process of spiritual maturity as well as an increased capacity for discipling/ evangelism by the church members of the CRCA.

The potential significance of the research project will not only be in terms of knowledge, but the training and development of the elders involved in the project, with the potential for a training system for all elders in the CRCA.

Examiner requirements: Those being considered to examine the thesis and its appendices would need to have insight into:

1. The history and practice of the place of elders in the Reformed Churches and their role in pastoral oversight, especially by means of the home or family visitation, the requirements of the Church Order and the Reformed understanding of the New Testament teachings on eldership. The examiners would need to be of a Reformed Church with Dutch origins in the USA, South Africa, New Zealand or Australia.
2. The theory and practice of Focus Groups and (especially) Action Research (AR). The use of AR as a research methodology is the preferred method of the ACT for Doctor of Ministry projects. Thus it must be recognized that this research is not a theological dissertation nor a biblical study nor even a review of the Church Order, but the establishment of best practice in the current Australian context by a team of elders by means of the AR process.

## **N FOORD – 2008**

### *Serving two masters; the shaping of the ministry of Sydney Anglican Chaplains*

Anglican clergy who take up ministry as Chaplains in Sydney Anglican schools find themselves in a unique situation in that they effectively minister under two authority structures – the church and the school. As Anglican clergy, they have made ordination vows and are licensed by the Archbishop to minister in the school. In this respect they are accountable to the Archbishop and church law. But they also find that they are required to be employed by that school, with the result that they are also accountable to the school leadership. In effect they now serve two ‘masters’. This position raises the possibility that situations will arise which result in a tension in the life of the Chaplain concerning the shape of their ministry. Whilst Christian ministry is always challenging, this situation provides an extra challenge for the Chaplain.

While some material has been produced generally on the role of Chaplains in Schools, very little has been written about how the ministry of Chaplains in Anglican schools has been shaped and is currently being shaped by this unique situation.

Following from an historical overview of the situation as it now stands, the paper then reports the results of a series of in-depth interviews with Chaplains that sought to explore the shape of Sydney Anglican School Chaplaincy in light of this unique feature. Emerging from the interviews was a number of common themes. These themes were subsequently analysed in some detail. These themes included the models and metaphors of ministry that chaplains are using; the dynamics of religion in Anglican Church schools; the place of the chapel in the church school; and finally a consideration of the explicit ‘Christian’ purpose of Anglican Church schools.

The final section offers some findings and suggestions for the three different groups involved (Chaplains, School leadership and Diocesan leadership). The central suggestion relates firstly, to the need for all three parties to recognise the potential for tensions to exist over certain key issues. And secondly, the subsequent need for regular, effective communication to take place on a number of levels between the various parties, especially between the Chaplain and School leadership. The paper suggests a special need for an orientation program to take place for Chaplains before their appointment to a Chaplaincy role. The ultimate goal of the paper is that the exploration, analysis and suggestions might enhance the ministry opportunities that the school environment offers.

## **M FROST – 2008**

### *In a League of their Own? An Examination and Assessment of the Claim of the Forge Mission Training Network and its Related Emerging Missional Church in Australia.*

While the emerging church has been making dramatic claims about the development of a distinctly missional ecclesiology, anchored in an understanding of the need to see the West as a cross-cultural missions environment, its critics have questioned whether at best it is merely a protest movement of disillusioned ex-churchgoers, or at worst, an heretical group advocating a postmodern epistemology that compromises orthodox theology. At the core of this debate there seems to be two parallel (and occasionally intersecting) trajectories being pursued by the participants – those who are concerned with the maintenance of an orthodox epistemology and those seeking to develop a contextualised missiology for a postmodern culture.

This paper explores the strains of those two trajectories and examines where the emerging church in Australia stands, bearing in mind that the bulk of this debate is taking place in the USA. To date, no research has been undertaken with local emerging churches. Including interviews with emerging church leaders from across Australia, a distinctly localised model of the emerging church is presented, against which research into the attitudes and practices of members of emerging churches is measured.

What emerges is a small movement of churches that takes missional-incarnational practice seriously, and which is proactively mobilising young adults in reaching out to postmodern people, but which is unconcerned with the development of a distinctly postmodern epistemology. It appears that the criticisms that it is a protest movement or that it is heretical are unfounded in the Australian context.

Warnings and recommendations for the Australian emerging church are also offered.

## **S GAN—2006**

*Towards an Authentic, Achievable and Sustainable Christian Spirituality for English-Speaking Presbyterians of Chinese-Descent in Modern Singapore*

The aim of this ministry focus project is two-fold. First, it seeks to make suggestions as to what constitutes the most appropriate biblical, functional and effective approach to helping English-speaking Presbyterians of Chinese-descent (or ESPCs) live an authentic and attractive Christian life in today's modern Singaporean society. Second, it undertakes to propose the way pastors and church leaders in Singapore can motivate and guide their flocks towards cultivating a true Christian spirituality which they can consistently live out, which would be deemed as relevant to non-Christians and thereby be an effective witness for Jesus Christ.

The project begins by identifying the need to cultivate and build a generation of Christians with a true and vibrant spirituality as a great challenge confronting many church leaders in Singapore today.

In chapter two [*An Apologetic for a Contextual Spirituality*], it is established that (a) God has created us in the image of God as a spiritual being, not merely physical, so that it is possible for human beings to relate to God in an intimate and meaningful manner, and that (b) there is a need for a contextualized spirituality that would make sense to believers and enable them to lead a consistent Christian life. Toward this end, a questionnaire was designed to gather data from the ESPCs that would provide an essential, contextual profile in terms of their socio-economic circumstances, cultures and worldviews. This profile is analyzed and presented in chapter three [*A Contextual Analysis of a Segment of the Singaporean Society*].

The next important consideration is to understand the extent of influence the Reformed Tradition has on the ESPCs. This is examined in chapter four [*The Influences of the Reformed Tradition*], where it is shown that many Presbyterians (the ESPCs included) are not conversant with the Reformed (Presbyterian) distinctives. It is concluded that the latter's influence on the spirituality of the ESPCs is minimal. The need to review the Reformed (Presbyterian) tradition so as to rediscover its rich and varied spiritual resources was also established. It is specifically noted that, following John Calvin, the authentic Reformed tradition does not advocate a spirituality that is purely cerebral in nature but one that celebrates the paradoxes of life, refuses to rationalize ambiguity, and welcomes mystery at the heart of the faith.

In chapter five [*Essential Components of Christian Spirituality*], a total of sixteen essential components of spirituality are described and classified into three categories as those that will (i) Deepen Intimacy with God, (ii) Foster Relationship with Neighbours, and (iii) Strengthen Christian Influence in Society.

The final shape of the project is derived from a critical interface between the essential components of Christian spirituality highlighted in chapter 5 and the anthropological/contextual profile of the ESPCs identified in chapters 2 and 3, while at the same time taking into consideration modifications concerning the Reformed tradition suggested in chapter 4. This is presented in chapter 6 [*Toward a Functional Christian Spirituality for English-speaking Presbyterians of Chinese-descent in Modern Singapore*] in terms of the five Rs of Retreat, Reflect, Recharge, Return, and Remember.

## **V GRICE – 2008**

*Pastor's Kids A Study of the Impact Upon the Spiritual Belief Systems and Practice of Young Adults Aged 18-35, As a Result of Being the Child of Parents Involved in Pastoral Ministry with Baptist Churches of NSW/ACT.*

While there is some peer-reviewed and empirical research on US children of clergy, woefully little research has been done on the children of Australian clergy. This is a study of the perceptions of young adults aged 18 – 35 concerning their experiences as the child of a NSW/ACT Baptist pastor. It is based upon data gathered via twenty four face to face interviews and twenty nine anonymous questionnaires. It is essentially a phenomenologically-based study. That is, it approaches the 'Pastors Kid' (PK) experience through the perceptions of the PK's themselves, rather than via purely objective analysis. To this end, the research is predominantly qualitative rather than quantitative, although there is some of the latter. After examination of recent literature pertaining to sociological forces informing faith development and church engagement of adolescents and young adults in general, and the experience of PK's in particular, the study explores the adolescent and young adult experience of being an Australian Baptist PK. It argues that these pastors' children encounter unique positive and negative pressures as results of their parents' role and status. It examines PK attitudes to personal faith, the institutional church, parental availability, imposed expectations, living conditions, parents' views on ministry, the possibility of the PK's entering church work themselves, and the overall advantages and disadvantages of being a PK. The study then seeks to discover any distinct correlations between these perceptions and current faith and church involvement. As a consequence of the relatively small sample group, the thesis does not seek to make tightly predictive general conclusions about Baptist pastors' children. However, in terms of the cohort studied it concludes that the three top negative stressors were external to the clergy family: Church Mistreatment of Parents (perceived or real), Church Conflict, and Moving Home, and that negative PK perceptions in these areas correlated somewhat with disconnection from church involvement, yet were not linked to loss of personal spirituality. The study reveals that this group of PK's held generally positive overall perceptions about the PK experience. It argues that this cohort of PK's reveals no major differences in faith position and church involvement compared to non-clergy peers.

## **D HAMES—2005**

*An Evaluation of the Styles of Conflict Management in Church Associated Families*

This thesis is an endeavour to explore the topic of the styles of conflict management within the context of church associated families. It will demonstrate the need for a Christian perspective of family conflict management, a suitable model of the conflict styles, and a strategy for instructing individuals and families about selecting an appropriate approach for handling family disputes. The structure of the study is defined by this threefold purpose.

It begins with an examination of a biblical perspective of conflict theory. This dissertation seeks to determine if the Christian faith provides believers with a standard to evaluate the various models for handling family disputes. It appraises the worldview which is foundational for an theory of Christian conflict management through the framework of: the relational God; the relational nature of humankind; sin and broken relationships; and finally the restoration of family relations and transformation of lives with Christ as the model of human relating. It then discusses the nature of conflict, evaluates current conflict terminology, reviews the concept of the family as a developing system, and considers the relevance of conflict for healthy personal and systemic change and growth.

In the following part the project applies these insights to one approach through a theoretical examination of Balswick and Balswick's model concerning the styles of conflict management in families.

This section seeks to determine if the Balswicks' approach is consistent with the biblical view of handling conflict, and is applicable to family conflict as they claim. The two central

features of the Balswicks' model, which are the three axes of concern (for Self, Others and Relationships) and the five conflict styles, are expounded and evaluated theologically and theoretically.

Finally, this research addresses the application of Balswick and Balswick's model to church associated families. It will consider how the family can be a healthy place to teach people about conflict management, and examine why individuals and families may need to change the way they handle their differences. The thesis then will consider ways of implementing the Balswicks' model into the lives of pastors, to their families, and in their ministry to church associated families by presenting a training programme which pastors and parishioners can employ to select a suitable conflict style.

The conclusion is reached that firstly, there is a Christian worldview by which one can evaluate the plethora of models of conflict management; secondly, Balswick and Balswick's model of the conflict styles is theologically consistent and coherent with a Christian perspective of conflict management; and thirdly, that this model may be implemented in the ministry and relationships of pastors, individuals and church associated families by utilising an appropriate approach for managing family conflict which will enable constructive conflict management and assist healthy family functioning.

#### **N HAWKES—2004**

##### *An Apology For The Scientific Credibility of Faith*

The thesis develops an apologetic tool that makes a case for the scientific credibility of faith. A questionnaire was conducted amongst tertiary trained, non-church attenders to ascertain their beliefs about science and faith. The structure of the thesis is based on the results of the questionnaire and the long experience of the author. The first chapter addresses unhelpful historical understandings about the relationship of science to faith. Chapter two addresses epistemological understandings which are unhelpful to faith and makes a case for consonance between the disciplines of science and technology. The third chapter explores why we need to take the order of the universe seriously and shows why such unlikely order makes belief in God scientifically reasonable.

However, the universe also shows evidence of randomness and suffering which might indicate the non-existence of a directing, beneficent God. Non-Christian metaphysical explanations for this are examined in chapter four but are shown to be inadequate. The fifth chapter suggests that without a greater input from conventional Christianity, an adequate explanation for both the order and disorder of the universe cannot be found. The final chapter presents a practical way of applying this apologetic, particularly to the young adults of today.

#### **P JOE-ANDAH—2006**

##### *The Religio-Cultural Milieu of the Akan of Southern Ghana: A Contextualised Missiological Approach for Christian Ministry*

The spiritual needs of the Akan Christian (and probably the African Christian) have not been fully served by the way Christianity has been presented. This is evidenced by the tendency for many Akan Christians to seek spiritual solutions from 'higher powers' when confronted by daily misfortunes. This situation is partly the result of the rejection by the early missionaries of the Akan worldview and culture in general. Another reason is the presentation of the gospel without the demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The concern of this thesis is to develop a contextual approach to the worldview of the Akan of Southern Ghana. To do this, the study defines and critiques the concept of contextualisation. Four models of contextualisation are examined and the synthetic model chosen as it best describes the concept of contextualisation. This is because it treats the biblical text as basic and takes the sociocultural context into account.

The main body of the thesis is composed of seven chapters. It begins with the rationale for the thesis and analysis of the background and concept of theological contextualisation. In the discussion, the threat of syncretism in the process of contextualisation is analysed.

Further to this, there is a discussion of the Akan worldview and its encounter with the Christian faith.

Chapters 4 and 5 posit a contextual approach to the Akan religio-cultural milieu as informed by the preceding chapters. Chapters 4 and 5 continue with the discussion of theological reflection upon the key themes or major beliefs and practices (namely: ancestrality, witchcraft and rites of sacrifice) of the Akan religious traditions and its inter-connectedness with the culture. This is crucial as these beliefs pose a challenge to the formation and application of the theological contextualisation.

Practical applications and recommendations based on the discussions in the preceding chapters are given to help church workers, seminaries, pastors and Bible schools in their contextual approach. This is important since the institutions help to prepare the local leaders working with the Akan believers. Analysis of the Bible schools indicates inadequacy and irrelevancy in preparing those people who will implement the contextual approach for the Akan. Finally, based on the findings, a field manual has been developed to assist Christian workers in making the gospel message culturally relevant to the Akan people of Southern Ghana.

## **PLI -2009**

### *A Grounded Theory on Conflict Resolution*

During the last three decades, Australia has witnessed a gradual influx of Hong Kong Chinese migrants which also contribute to the increase in Chinese churches and congregation size. Complications arise when leaders in the Chinese churches found themselves in two cultures (Australian and Chinese) that approach conflict differently. Where conflicts were not properly resolved, a trail of hurts and grievances followed. This dissertation is an exploratory research using a grounded theory approach to study conflict resolution in Sydney Chinese churches. It aims at exploring and gaining an understanding in the ways conflicts are managed. Data were collected mainly through face-to-face interviews with 32 fellow Chinese Christians about their personal experiences. Supplementary data were also gathered through phone interviews, analysis of correspondence (email and personal letters), church documents (minutes and public letters) and casual discussions. The grounded theory data analysis and synthesis processes led to the emergence of the grounded theory of “theological sanctioning”. “Theological sanctioning” depicts two incompatible conflict management approaches by leaders in the Sydney Chinese churches: “God serving” and “men pleasing”. The “God serving” approach is biblical and is actively pursued by faithful leaders. The “men pleasing” approach is unbiblical and is vigorously adopted by self pleasing leaders who exploit their power in the church. Such exploitations are made possible by subsuming biblical principles under the Chinese culture. This study demonstrates how the Chinese collectivistic culture with its ingrained hierarchical relational power structure significantly impacts the ways conflicts are managed in Sydney Chinese churches. To the best knowledge of the researcher, this is the first study that looks at the impact of Chinese culture in church conflict management. The study develops an understanding grounded in empirical data from personal experiences of fellow Chinese Christians. Such a new understanding contributes to both research in conflict and provides directions for future research.

## **A P L I N G -2010**

### *Pastoral Ministry: Business Practice or Spiritual Pursuit*

Whilst the church growth movement has been re-branded church health, it has been the narrative of a generation or more of ministers operating out of a more bureaucratic business oriented framework of pastoral leadership. This paper will research what impact, if any, there has been on pastors and churches from the market driven approach to pastoral leadership.

There are outcomes that need to be researched, particularly the potential for increased stress, anxiety, and burnout as pastors endeavour to meet expectations and fulfil market goals and growth targets. It is harder for both pastors and church leaders primarily because churches are becoming more specific in their performance-expectations of their pastor, and more likely to initiate a termination if the pastor doesn't meet those expectations.

The hypothesis is that the framework of leadership typical of secular management contexts has a potentially detrimental effect on pastors. Whilst it is apparent that there are those who thrive in the more management driven framework of pastoral leadership, there is anecdotal evidence that it may result in damaging outcomes for some pastors, leading to increased stress and possible burnout. Part of the research is to consider factors which differentiate between pastors that suffer additional stress and burnout in this environment while others appear to flourish.

## **J L O N G -2010**

### *Developing a Method for Teaching Theology: Incorporating Insights from Educational Philosophy, Theology and Quantitative Field Research*

While theology is one of the core subjects taught at most theological institutions, there seems to be a growing dissatisfaction with its relevance for Christian faith and ministry. Part of this is a perception problem, but part of it may be a reflection of the way theology is currently being taught. In order to address this issue research was conducted from three different areas to obtain insights that might be used to develop a new method for teaching theology.

The first area of research was in educational philosophy. There have been significant recent developments in the area of adult education that appear to have had little impact as yet in the traditional teaching of theology. These were explored to see how they could contribute to the teaching of theology. In particular, the approaches of three educational theorists were explored in more detail; namely, Jack Mezirow, Jane Vella and Parker Palmer. Each of these theorists contributed some key ideas that were later developed into 'A Transformative Method for Teaching Theology'.

Theology is a particular area of teaching and learning which differs to secular studies in that it can directly impact the personal life and faith of the student. Therefore research was also undertaken into the teaching of theology within the broader structure of theological education as well as an exploration of what insights might emerge from within the subject of theology itself for the way that it should be taught. The context of theological education is changing significantly and moving away from full-time residential study (of mostly male students) to a situation where there is a much greater diversity of life situation, gender, age and experience within the student community. The importance of formation of students and integration of learning with life are increasingly being recognised, but this is not yet significantly impacting the way theology is being taught. From within the subject of theology itself, emerged a recognition that the subject of theology is God and rather than an objective and disconnected subject, God is actually both teacher and subject who engages with us in a personal and transformative way.

In identifying the issues for teaching theology, a number of assumptions were made about how theology was currently being taught in the Australian context. These assumptions were tested by the third area, quantitative field research. Firstly faculty involved in teaching theology were surveyed to determine their goals and teaching techniques. Secondly, students

from three different colleges were surveyed to gain insights into their attitudes towards theology, the goals they had in studying, and their preferred learning styles. While the results from this research were very mixed, one clear finding was that both faculty and students were intentionally seeking to develop the students' faith through their studies.

All three areas of research identified the key issue of personal transformation as important for teaching theology. Therefore a method called 'A Transformative Method for Teaching Theology' was proposed. This was expressed as a series of key principles that incorporated the insights from the three areas that had been researched. The method recognises the importance of personal transformation as part of learning and employs the techniques of Dialogue Education, but at the same time also recognises that method is not everything and the character of the educator is also of prime importance.

The implications of the method extend beyond just the teaching and learning of theology. It has implications for the personal life of the educator as well as the students. It also affects the whole structure of the way theology is taught. Therefore there are implications for curriculum development, the institutions where theology is taught, and the accrediting bodies for those institutions.

'A Transformative Method for Teaching Theology' draws upon current developments in adult education as well as from within theology itself. The method proposed is one attempt to improve the relevance of theology and does not claim to be the final answer. It is hoped that it will be a catalyst for further thinking, research and testing of educational methods for teaching theology for personal transformation.

#### **G NICHOLS—2006**

##### *Towards a New Paradigm for Sharing Christ with Muslims in Australia*

The problem was concerned about the role and significance of contextualization in shaping the strategies being used for sharing Christ with Muslims in Australia.

The study has established the function and therefore importance of contextualization because it can be seen how the gospel message needs to be adapted in order that it becomes meaningful to the hearers, impacting their worldview, and meeting their felt needs.

The Koran and the sacrifice of Abraham's son can be used as a bridge.

It has shown those areas where a cross-cultural witness must themselves become culturally like Muslims, in order to share Christ. Dress codes, gender relationships, respect for the extended family and the male's role are all important but keeping the Fast and dietary regulations have little consequence.

There is a diversity in the level of contextualization ranging from a presentation of in terms of a traditional Christendom paradigm, through to insider movements, an emerging paradigm, where people change their allegiance to following Christ while still considering themselves to be Muslims, and remain within the community of Islam.

The Christendom paradigm, used by full-time workers, who are seeking to share Christ with Muslims in the major cities of Australia, is as effective as the new emerging paradigm which is currently being used. As each different paradigm is appropriate for a particular audience, the degree of contextualization must therefore be suitable for its target group.

The traditional, emerging and the new emerging paradigm which has been proposed have all confirmed the function and therefore importance of contextualization in helping to shape the different strategies being used for sharing Christ with Muslims in Australia. How far the gospel should be contextualized is therefore to be defined by the nature of the target group.

These are my own views and I understand that Muslims may interpret them differently. I have tried to look at the following issues academically.

## **R J NICHOLLS**

### *Catechisms and Chants A Case for using Liturgies in Ministry to Muslims*

The challenge of fostering the spiritual growth of Muslims interested in following Jesus Christ forms the basis of this study. The impetus for it arose from an Islamic context which typically is hostile towards Christians and any movement towards Christianity. It was an issue being considered by a group of national Christians ministering to such Muslims and who were also seeking to be more effective. This study aims to provide those Christians not only with an answer but also a model.

Three principle factors guided the study: the challenge of the change these Muslim seekers encounter; the nature of spiritual growth leading to spiritual maturity and a meeting context. The meeting context was chosen because the questions of spiritual growth most frequently arose following the fellowship meetings that these national Christians had arranged for these Muslim seekers.

The first step was to identify the particular needs of these Muslim seekers embarking on this journey of change in order to identify the directions, the particular challenges and also the type of teaching and support required. Also, since the spiritual change involved has its goal 'Christ-likeness', issues of conversion and the nature of spiritual growth were explored. In relation to spiritual growth, the role of the spiritual disciplines emerged as a means for fostering spiritual growth. Given the Islamic context issues of contextualization were considered especially those relating to the implications of the Islamic context itself and the need to teach Christian truths and lead Christian lives within that context. Teaching Christian truths presents a challenge since the Bible itself is the expression of many cultural eras; the people transmitting the Bible truths are from another (sub) culture ministering in yet a third (different sub) culture.

Because the context is a 'meeting' the topic narrowed down to 'fostering spiritual growth through a meeting using the spiritual disciplines'. In dealing with culture and contextualization anthropological issues also arose and given the meeting context, lead to a consideration of the nature and role of cultic ritual. The rite of intensification was identified as a model appropriate to the meeting context. This suggested a study of Islamic rituals not only with the view of identifying their characteristics but also to gain an understanding of possible cultural 'forms' that could be used within that meeting context. A similar exploration was made of Christian worship where it became apparent that liturgy not only had the benefits of being a cultic form but also was an expression of the Christian spiritual disciplines.

Theoretically, a solution to the problem of fostering Muslim seekers spiritual growth was to develop culturally relevant and purpose focused liturgies. These liturgies while reflecting Islamic culture express Christian truths as a type of rite of intensification. Given that the Islamic salat reflects both the Jewish prayer cycle and the monastic 'daily office' the ritual form of the 'Daily Service' of the Anglican tradition was chosen as the structural model. The result was a distinctive structure informed and influenced by Islamic culture which also allows for flexibility and creativity to respond to the particular meeting situation and the needs of the Muslim seekers within that meeting.

## **C PHILIP—2006**

### *Spirituality and Burnout: A Study of the Pastoral Implications of the Spiritual Practices of Christian Health Care Professionals in India*

This study examined the relationship of spirituality and religious coping to burnout in Christian medical doctors in India. It was hypothesised that Christian medical doctors who employ collaborative and surrender styles of coping will experience less burnout when dealing with stressful situations. The sample consisted of 108 Christian doctors from India.

The following instruments were used in this study: Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale (DSES), Religious Problem-Solving Scale (RPSS), Surrender Scale (SS), Organizational Religiousness

Measure (ORM), Copenhagen Burnout Inventory (CBI), external sources of support, and relevant demographic information.

The results confirmed the hypothesised relationship between collaborative coping and burnout. Surrender correlated with only one dimension of burnout. Since surrender to God is a common cultural feature of Indian spirituality, irrespective of religious persuasion, it was decided to do a partial correlation analysis controlling for surrender. The result showed that the Deferring Style of Coping is clearly positively associated with burnout in Indian Christian doctors.

Three dimensions of the Daily Spiritual Experiences Scale significantly correlated with all aspects of the CBI. After validity tests, these components were combined to form a single separate variable called External Spirituality.

Among the demographic variables used in this study, doctors' age, hours of work and denominational affiliation showed significant correlation with burnout. Younger doctors appeared to experience more burnout than older doctors. Those doctors who worked long hours seemed to suffer from work related burnout and those doctors who belonged to the Interdenominational group indicated as suffering from work related burnout. Further analyses showed that those demographic variables which positively correlated with burnout negatively correlated with External Spirituality and Collaborative Coping.

Multiple regression analyses were performed to study the relationship among all the variables that significantly correlated with burnout. Hours of work, Age of the participant (AGE), Denomination (Interdenomination), External Spirituality (EXTSPRIT), Collaborative Coping (COLLABORATING), and Deferring coping (DEFERRING) were entered into the regression analyses as predictors and the three subscales of CBI as dependent variables. External Spirituality (EXTSPIRIT) and Collaborative Coping (COLLABORATE) emerged as the main predictor of lower (reduced) burnout. Deferring Coping (DEFER) is the most important predictor of higher (more) burnout. Age appears to be a moderate predictor of client burnout and hours of work had a significant correlation with work burnout. The other variable (INTERDENOMINATIONAL) showed moderate significance with work burnout.

The subjects of this study demonstrated a remarkably low level of work and patient burnout and a higher than normal level of personal burnout. This is contrary to the general assumption that stress among health care professionals is induced mostly by emotion-laden patient contacts. This phenomenon was further investigated in the light of studies of volunteer satisfaction, volunteer behaviour, and maladaptive values of organizations.

The study shows that not all forms and practices of spirituality are healthy or desirable. Some forms of spirituality can be dysfunctional. Similarly, attitudes to work and workplace attitudes can be a reflection of individual's and organizations' spiritual orientation. Maladaptive spiritual values, whether of an individual or an organization, can lead to stress and burnout. Implications of these findings to pastoral care are discussed.

## **C PRESTON—2007**

### *Bioprinting: Theological, Ethical and Pastoral Reflections*

Emerging biotechnologies have given rise to ethical and theological issues previously considered inconceivable in science, medicine and theology, as they provide us with the capabilities to manipulate, and fundamentally alter, the human body and psyche. The effects of these biotechnological advances will also have significant pastoral implications for the Church of the 21st century, implications we are hardly equipped to cope with. The future of such advances can only be responsibly negotiated as the scientific and theological communities engage in humble dialogue, thoughtful reflection and collaborative action. Through the introduction of, and engagement with just such an emerging biotechnology, *bioprinting*, our research identifies the relevant ethical and theological issues this technology raises for reflection, with a special focus of the ever-present debate regarding human personhood. Using bioprinting as an example, we then apply such insights to emerging

biotechnologies in general. Finally, we introduce a set of bioethical-theological principles (or *biotheology*), with which to evaluate bioprinting, and biotechnologies generally, and propose a model of bioethical engagement between the pastoral and scientific communities.

(Bioprinting is a technique being developed in the USA by which tissue, organs and, theoretically, bodies, are 'printed' by what is essentially an ink-jet printer in which cells of different types replace the coloured ink, a gel replaces the paper, and a computer controls the printing pattern onto successive sections of gel in order to build up a three dimensional piece of tissue or organ.)

### **J SKRZYPASZEK-2009**

*Examining Trends in Contemporary Conversion Patterns in the Seventh-day Adventist Tradition in Australia: Suggested Strategies for Arresting the Inertia which Impacts Conversion Growth in the Contemporary Australian Culture*

The purpose of this research is to explore the dynamics of the contemporary conversion experience in the context of the Seventh-day Adventist Tradition. It involves an analysis of a dialogue between the grounded data, related to what converts tell us about the most effective entry point to the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the organization's cultural lenses, related to values, mentality and paradigms of the denomination's executive leaders. The overall aim of this research is to discover principles which will enable the Seventh-day Adventist church to connect more effectively with the contemporary culture and propose possible ways of redressing the trend in decline of conversion growth.

The research examines two important areas. First, it explores a significant phase in people's life experience – the transitional change linked with the entry to a community faith. Second, it explores current challenges associated with the limited effectiveness of the methods designed to connect with contemporary, post-Christian culture.

In the initial research, three parallel trends have been identified, which although moving in the same direction, create what may be observed as a void in conversion growth effectiveness in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. These are,

- a) Evangelistic thrust launched by organizational leadership
- b) Undercurrents of reactionary responses coupled with congregational malaise and scepticism
- c) Delayed efforts to educate church members to understand the contemporary culture

### **A TURNER -2010**

*Developing the Ministry of Adult Spiritual Transformation – Andragogy meets Theology*

My personal concerns regarding a perceived lack of spiritual transformation taking place in many Australian churches and Christians' lives, led to an examination of similar concerns being expressed by a wide range of others also involved in pastoral, theological, and Christian educational ministries. These preliminary investigations led to deeper examinations within the two disciplines of Biblical Theology and Adult Education.

Research into Biblical Theology firstly investigated the relationship between both spiritual formation and spiritual transformation. This investigation included the inherent elements of physiological, psychological, and social formations and transformations, involved in both the normal human maturational processes toward adulthood, and spiritual growth toward maturity in Christ. A brief historical overview was also conducted of how the church has engaged in these processes throughout history, including Jesus' personal human maturational processes, and his methodologies employed in spiritually developing his twelve disciples. The conclusions drawn were that adult spiritual transformation is a biblical imperative, and is a simultaneous and dialectical process comprising of a *gift*, a *goal*, and a *task*. The *gift* is comprised of redemption and regeneration through faith in Christ and the work of the Holy

Spirit; the *goal* existing in the full replication of the image of Christ within the believer, however, not completed until the resurrection; and the *task* being the formational processes of the application of the Word, by the church and the believer, in collaboration with and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Research into with Adult Educational theory and practice, primarily through Jack Mezirow and Paulo Freire's writings, including other associated authors, explored andragogical principles within their transformative educational theories. This approach uncovered the significant differences between andragogy and pedagogy, involving the different learning needs and abilities inherent within adults when compared to children and adolescents. During that process some common threads between adult educational theory and practice, and the emerging discipline of Practical Theology were also uncovered, specifically identifying the usefulness of the concepts of dialectics and praxis in relation to developing the ministry of adult spiritual transformation.

In an effort to uncover the degree of actual 'spiritual transformation' being experienced in believer's lives, four local churches in the Ringwood area of Melbourne's outer-east were engaged, and twenty-five people, including the four senior leaders and five or six congregants from each of those churches were interviewed. From that entire investigative process, and careful analysis of the interview materials, emerged the six transformational themes of personal Bible engagement; small group interaction; empowering leadership; missional expressions; conversational prayer; and Holy Spirit encounters.

These emergent transformational themes were critiqued, in the light of theological imperatives, and the methodologies of Jesus and the Apostles, and then in the light of adult educational theory and practice. In each case they proved to be in fundamental agreement with these six emergent transformational themes. Applications were also found in both Adult Education and Practical Theology that bore remarkable similarity to relevant elements of the six emergent transformational themes.

A participatory and reflective praxis-based model for small group operation was then formulated around the six emergent transformational themes, having suitable application in a congregational setting toward developing the ministry of adult spiritual transformation. This praxis-based model utilises the four 'action points' of personal Bible engagement within the context of daily living; critical personal and theological reflection; small group dialogue with critical theological and reflective wrestling; and integrative alignment with biblical values, actioned as necessary. Within the context of a local congregation that is supported by an empowering leadership who practice conversational prayer, individual small groups would function with their own empowering leadership supported by conversational prayer within each group. These groups would function around the four 'action points,' each 'action point' being supported by conversational prayer, and dependent on Holy Spirit encounters, in order to nurture transformative processes that lead to missional expressions in daily living. Also, each of these 'action points' become transformational trigger points in the ongoing process of adult spiritual transformation toward full conformity to Christ's image, being completed in the resurrection.

## **J P WILSON -2010**

*An analysis of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria's progress over 30 years since union with a view to identifying blockages to growth and suggesting ministry changes to overcome these.*

I analyse the Presbyterian Church of Victoria's progress over 30 years since union (1977 – 2007) with a view to identifying the church's progress or regress, postulate possible reasons for the trends observed and then suggest the way forward for the denomination.

I begin by establishing "point zero" i.e. what the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (PCV) was at the time of formation of the Uniting Church in Australia and what continuing Presbyterians said about themselves and hoped for.

In the major analytical chapter I rely on the records of the General Assembly of the PCV, especially the official Annual Statistics of churches, secondly the records of the National Church Life Surveys in its 5-yearly snapshots of Australian religious life, and thirdly, but in less detail, the record of the 1986, 1991, 1996, 2001 and 2006 Australian Federal Government Censuses.

The research project does not rely exclusively on statistical records of the church, but I am able to assess this 30-year span, to make inferences and draw conclusions on the basis of personal experience in the PCV for 38 years, and especially now as denominational administrative head.

I then identify a number of hindrances to health and barriers to growth. My thesis is that in at least nine areas of church life the PCV is not in good health, including areas in which I have laboured.

The final chapter suggests a way forward and is my own conclusion based on years of leadership in the church, as well as the last eight years' reflection on reading and coursework within the ACT DMin program.

