



Christian Mission for Tasmanians

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Foreword

This study is a gift to the Tasmanian church. It is freely available on the diocesan website but I invite you when you use it for personal or group study to make a donation of \$10 per person to the Church Missionary Society of Tasmania. Either make out cheques to 'CMS Tasmania' and send to:

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Andrew Lake

Introduction

The aim of this study is to help you to get a better understanding of the privilege and task of mission with which God has entrusted us. The opportunity to write this came with an invitation to produce the unit on mission for the Tasmanian Certificate of Theology and Ministry, followed by a time of preparation and missionary deputation before going to Syria to pastor All Saints Community Church. Missionary deputation in parishes across the State has given me the opportunity to think through the basis and practice of Christian mission and introduce the layperson to the study of the science of “Missiology” and at the same time to challenge them with Jesus’ call to make disciples of all nations. It also draws on my experiences and reflection of Christian ministry and mission in the four eastern states of Australia as well as two years in India and eight years in Indonesia. Thanks go to David Rogers-Smith and Judith Calf who kindly read the draft and offered a number of helpful suggestions.

My hope and prayer is that this study will help put mission front and centre of the church’s agenda. I make no claim to infallibility and will have achieved my aim if this has helped start some fruitful conversations about mission.

This material is aimed to help Christians in Tasmanian churches to make disciples. This is not primarily a comprehensive survey of mission theology so if you want to explore the various mission theologies that have come out of the ecumenical and evangelical streams there are some suggested websites in the appendix.

There are three ways to use this material. The **FIRST** is to study it in a home group using the questions at the end of each chapter. The **SECOND** is to read and keep it for reference or pass it on to a friend. The **THIRD** is to respond to the “Think about” sections with written answers and thus complete a unit of the Tasmanian Certificate of Theology and Ministry.

Loving Tasmania

There are some striking things about Tasmania. It is beautifully insular. There is no other place on the earth like it. Granted, the island continent of Australia has similarities to the island of Tasmania in terms of flora and fauna. But whereas at the heart of the continent is the red monolith of Uluru, a place of great spiritual significance to the local aboriginal tribes, at the heart of Tasmania is a wilderness of lakes and peaks. At the very heart of this island are glacial tarns silently reflecting the clouds driven by the westerly winds and at night the galaxies of the southern skies. Ringing this main island and the outlying islands are inviting white beaches, grassy dunes, formidable black sea cliffs and alluring coves painted orange with the lichen-covered rocks. Variety and unpredictability are the secret ingredients. Where else in the world do weather forecasts so often describe the coastal winds as “confused”?

Tasmanians have a strong link with their natural environment for work and recreation. Compared to other Australians they are more likely to have wood heaters; to be fussy about the particular variety and freshness of the fish and potatoes they eat; to go hunting or fishing and eat ‘rarities’ like abalone or wallaby.

In Tasmania it is easy to understand biblical language about snow-capped mountains, dry wells, stone-buildings, vineyards, olive groves, rugged fishermen, flocks of sheep, eagles’ wings, delight in horses, and connection with ancestors. The history of the place is replete with stories that resonate with the bible about the dispossessed, the prisoners, the exiles, the redeemed and the reformed.

The current resource-based booms of Western Australia and Queensland are fast changing the demographics and societies of those states. By contrast, Tasmania’s growth is unhurried, like the Huon pine. Tasmania has developed very slowly as opposed to other States like Victoria which in the first ten years of its Gold Rush increased sevenfold from 70,000 to 490,000. By contrast it has taken Tasmania over 150 years to achieve the same increase. The population of Tasmania would fit eight times or more into the cities of Sydney or Melbourne. Yet Tasmanian society is far more deeply rooted. That, together with such geographical variety, means that there are distinct regional differences and, in some cases, rivalries. Unlike the Mainland States there is no big metropolitan daily – just three tabloids that define regional status: the “*Advocate*” for North-westerners, the “*Examiner*” for Northerners and the “*Mercury*” for Southerners.

In contrast to other Australians, Tasmanians are more likely to have met the Governor; be personally acquainted with their local, state and federal politicians; and know people who have done something famous ...or infamous. Tasmania could be described as “40 degrees South and 2 degrees of separation”. Hence the famous Tasmanian clannishness - not in some type of Appalachian or Scottish Highlander sense of bitter feuding but in living in close proximity to several generations of their family and valuing those links. It is not unusual at the baptism of an infant to have four generations present. A walk around any country cemetery brings up names that are still common to the area. This is because Tasmania was settled early and has not had the same type of population upheavals of mainland states. Perhaps related to this Tasmanians tend to be less judgemental about the failings of others.

Sea-changers and tree-changers who relocate from the Mainland to pretty little Tasmanian towns need to be aware of all these things. To love Tasmania and the people means to look beyond romanticised, tourist brochure views of the place. It reminds me of the comment from a Midlands church council that one quaint, sandstone cottage in their town had rapidly changed hands four times much to the joy of the local real estate agent. Perhaps the interstate buyers should have looked

beyond the dinky main street to the back streets with the flaking weatherboard cottages, the firewood stacked in the overturned rain-tanks and the red kelpie chained up beside the half-eaten wallaby carcase.

Loving God

The power, beauty and wisdom of God the Creator is so clearly evident in Tasmania for those with eyes to see. An old friend, who was not a church-goer, told me that he felt closest to God when he was in his lobster boat watching the sun coming up over Maria Island. Most of us could testify to such moments when the natural beauty of these islands strikes a chord deep within us that resonates as worship of the Unseen, Eternal One.

But Christians take a big step further and know God as Saviour. We even tie this down to a revelation of God that happened two thousand years ago on the opposite side of this planet and authoritatively recorded in the Book. This knowledge only came to Tasmania a little over two hundred years ago with the first British settlement at Risdon Cove in 1803, yet has so profoundly affected our culture that human time is measured backwards and forwards from the estimated year of the birth of Jesus Christ.

1. THINK ABOUT: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart..."

1. Read Psalm 148

Write a psalm of thanksgiving about Tasmania

2. Read Luke 7: 36-50 and Ephesians 3: 14-21

Why do you love Jesus?

How much do you love Jesus?

If to love someone is to seek to know them, how well do you know Jesus?

How is your love for Jesus lived out or expressed?

A great sadness

Turning our attention to the situation or, a better term, the plight of Tasmanian churches, there are many congregations where the mean or median age is 70 years, and many others where 70 years would be described as at the low end of the age spread. If a generation is about 25 years it would be fair to conclude that as a whole the Tasmanian churches stopped seriously making disciples at least one, if not two and possibly three generations ago. Was it because we Christians lacked the love and zeal to evangelise and nurture our neighbours or was it because we failed to adapt our church culture to respond to the rapid changes in society? We may take comfort from the fact that the Christian faith is remarkably resilient whereas a modern, “scientific” ideology like communism, which a generation ago seemed to be threatening our own civilisation, has fizzled out. But that is not an excuse.

There are any number of books and websites that will provide you with the latest “you beaut!” how-to-grow-a-successful-church techniques from somewhere else, whether Seattle or London or Sydney. Their usefulness ranges on a scale from highly useful to downright dangerous. I will leave you to track down and tap into these resources and make up your own mind. With the exception of a handful of medium-sized, multi-staffed churches in Hobart or Launceston the typical Tasmanian congregation numbers somewhere between three and forty “regulars”. The majority are faithful Christians but they have “run out of puff”. They have served on Parish Council or taught Sunday School or helped build the parish hall but they are tired and are ready to hand over to the next generation of Christians ... to find that they are missing.

There are two questions we should be asking and which this study seeks to address:

“How did we stop making disciples?”

“How do we start making disciples?”

There is a third question we may be asking:

“Haven’t we reached the point of no return?”

The answer is, humanly speaking, yes. But with God nothing is impossible. That is why this material has been written.

2. THINK ABOUT: “You shall love your neighbour as you love yourself...”

Read Luke 10: 25-37

Who is my neighbour?

There are about 5 billion people on the planet. So which particular neighbours does God want you to focus on loving?

If to love is to seek to know, how well do you know these neighbours?

How is your love for your neighbour lived out or expressed?

Read 1 Timothy 2: 1-7

How can we imitate or reflect God’s love for all people?

Back to first principles

In the New Testament the Church has some beautiful descriptions like the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ. But humanly speaking what we see are numerous self-perpetuating institutions. Stipends have to be paid, buildings have to be maintained and consequently money has to be raised. In the process people get together to make decisions, sing, pray, read the Bible, eat and drink. There are lots of payoffs. Lots of basic human needs are met. For instance relationally oriented people get to enjoy friendships; goal-oriented people get to undertake and complete fulfilling projects; and the altruistic get to help others. Churches provide a sense of belonging and identity. However, like any other organisation, there is a dark side. If we are not vigilant our churches provide excellent opportunities for people to engage in dysfunctional behaviour like domination of others, sexual and emotional manipulation, obsessive behaviours like religious mania, all in an environment where the victims or co-dependents are caught unawares because of the church's ambience of "sweetness and light". All the while, in the process of being so happily busy, the Church may have forgotten its reason for being.

As they say "If you don't have a target, you'll never hit it". It is worth recalling the memorable words of C.S. Lewis *speaking* about the God-given purpose of the Church:

...the Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became Man for no other purpose.¹

Hence, at the core of this material lies "the Great Commission", the purpose and task that Jesus gave to that very first generation of disciples.

Matthew 28: Jesus' Great Commission

The definitive expression of Christian mission known as Christ's Great Commission, is found in



AN APOCRYPHAL STORY

Just after Jesus had ascended to heaven He saw the angel Gabriel.

Gabriel said, "Jesus, so good to see you back in heaven. How did it go on earth?"

Jesus said, "Gabriel, it was awesome. The Father allowed Me to do some incredible things while I was there. I cast out demons. I healed the sick. I calmed the storms. I made the lame to walk and the blind to see. I was crucified on the cross but rose again three days later to show God's resurrection power."

"Wow, that is unbelievable," said Gabriel. "But I just have one question. Now that you're gone, is all that good stuff coming to an end?"

"On no," said Jesus. "You see, Gabriel, while I was there I had this plan to entrust all My teachings to twelve guys who will teach others. My plan is for them to keep it going."

With a puzzled look on his face, Gabriel said, "But Jesus, what if it doesn't work? What if they don't do it? What is your back-up plan?"

Then Jesus looked at Gabriel and said, "Gabriel, I have no other plan!"

different versions in the four Gospels and the Book of Acts. In each case the risen Jesus is speaking to "the Eleven". The best known version is Matthew chapter 28 verses 18 to 20. It is such a succinct, memorable and "Big Picture" statement, that it has always been a major inspiration to Christians. So it comes as no surprise that Jesus gave the Great Commission to his disciples on a mountain because not only is it a good place to withdraw from the wants and cares of everyday existence but it literally and metaphorically provides a vantage point on life.

It is worth learning it by heart because it is one of those Bible texts like John 3: 16 which sums up key teachings of Jesus in a memorable way:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."ⁱⁱ

So let us examine it in greater detail:

Then Jesus came to them and said: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me..."

The Risen Jesus is speaking. His authority is as Son of God and as risen eternal Lord. He is the one referred to in the Book of Acts as the Lord and the Spirit who directs the disciples, now apostles, in His Mission.

"Therefore" points to the inevitable, logical step of God the Father making his Son Lord over everything. The eleven disciples had the privilege of being the first to recognise and appreciate Jesus as Lord during his ministry in Galilee and Jerusalem. Now they have been given the responsibility to make disciples following in the steps of their Master.

"Go" is more than a command to go on just a geographical journey. Jesus is about to push his Jewish disciples way beyond their prejudices, their comfort zone and their expectations. The mission is to become universal and multicultural. In Matthew 10:1-10, as part of their training, the Twelve had been given authority by Jesus to drive out evil spirits and to heal, and then were sent out to preach that "the kingdom of heaven is near" to fellow Jews only. Just for the period of this assignment they were called "apostles" which literally means "sent ones", in other words "missionaries" or "ambassadors". They are not called apostles again in Matthew until their training is finished and the Risen Jesus sends them

out – permanently - to Samaritans and Gentiles as well as Jews.

So the command to “go” is integral to all those whom God calls to participate in his rescue of the human race: trailblazing Patriarchs, outspoken Prophets and bold Apostles. So who does this command apply to? Just to the Eleven? Solely to ordained ministers? Only to those called missionaries? To every Christian? No, let us put away our individualistic thought and see that it applies to Christ’s Body as a whole. Just like the African proverb “it takes a village to raise a child” so it “takes the whole Body of Christ to make a disciple”. It takes pray-ers, encouragers, parent-figures, preachers and teachers just to name a few.

“All nations” covers the whole human race. The term “nations” referred specifically to the “*goyim*” (in Hebrew), the “*gentes*” (in Greek) or the Gentiles (in English). This was a radical departure from the general tone of the Old Testament and even Jesus’ ministry where the main focus was on Israel or the Jews. And yet when we look closer we can see that God’s plan to bless the whole world through Jesus is there from the beginning. There are whole bookshelves in college libraries devoted to this topic. Here is an attempt to put it in a nutshell:

Genesis 1 to 11 set the scene by describing the nature and extent of human rebellion against God, culminating in the rather depressing story of the Tower of Babel. In Genesis 12 God’s loving purpose to redeem the human race began in a small and seemingly unpromising way with his calling of an elderly childless couple, Abraham and Sarah, and making them a ridiculously big promise. He promised that they would have a son who would be the beginning of a great nation; that the land they were sent to as aliens would be the homeland for this great nation; that people would be judged by God on the basis of how they treated the old couple; and through this promised son and his descendants the whole world would be blessed. It took close to a thousand years of struggle, to the reigns of David and Solomon, before Abraham’s and Sarah’s descendants became the greatest nation of the region. In books as diverse as 1 Kings (8:41-43), Isaiah (56:3-8) and Jonah (ch 4) we see that God’s plans extended far wider than the Jews. But it still took many more centuries of national decline, disaster, God-wrestling and soul-searching before Jesus came and ushered in the new era of God blessing all the people of the earth. We are still in that era, the season of the Last Days, when to quote Jesus ⁱⁱⁱ“*the gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations.*” Although during the time of his earthly ministry Jesus focussed on the Jews he intimated that the Kingdom of God would be opened to the Gentiles. In response to the Roman centurion’s faith in Matthew 8

(Jesus) was astonished and said to those following him, “I tell you I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. I say to you that many will come from the east and the west and will take their place s at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.”^{iv}

In the New Testament era Paul declared to the Athenians that God “...has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation...that they may seek him ...”^v The final book of the Bible describes the fruit of the Church’s universal mission gathering to worship their Lord: “After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands”.^{vi}

3. THINK ABOUT:

Look up the other versions of the Great Commission in Mark chapter 16 verses 15 to 18, Luke chapter 24 verses 46 to 49, John chapter 20 verse 21, and Acts chapter 1 verse 8.

1. Compare each of them with the Matthew version.

2. *What are the differences and similarities in the time and place of the encounter with Jesus?*
3. *What is the nature and scope of the commission he gave them?*
4. *Try blending them together to come up with a comprehensive version of the Great Commission.*

Jesus the disciple-maker

Jesus was very deliberate in choosing and calling his disciples, teaching and training them and, as a final step, commissioning them. It can be inferred from Matthew 28: 19-20 that making a disciple is a two part process. First there is ***“baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”***, in effect recruiting and initiating them. In baptism the new believer publicly expresses his or her allegiance to God as revealed in Jesus. So prior to this there needs to be some kind of proclamation of the message and a positive response from the hearers. In some way they must start to grasp God’s favour towards them as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ who makes sinful human beings his holy children by means of the saving work of his Son and the ongoing work of the Spirit. They do not need to completely comprehend all Christian truth before they are baptised but rather to humbly recognise it is the true path and to set forth on it. And they do so in the safest of learning environments - the safety and security of God’s fatherly love.

Second there is ***“teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you...”*** Jesus summarized all God’s commands as two all-embracing precepts: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and you shall love your neighbour as yourself”. In modern English usage “love” is primarily about desire or affection for an object or a person. However in the Old and New Testaments “love” is primarily about personally knowing and being known by someone with an underlying element of commitment and self-sacrifice. This type of love, whether towards God or towards others, requires nothing less than our best, hence Jesus’ language of absolutes “with all your heart, all your mind, all your soul and all your strength.”

A disciple is a devoted follower of a leader but more than that a disciple is a lifetime learner from a teacher, a permanent apprentice of a master. So how did Jesus make disciples? The following are some of the strategies he used.^{vii}

(a) Jesus concentrated on a small group. (read Mark 1: 16-10, 2:13-15)

Jesus taught the crowd, but he regularly taught the twelve in a small group setting. Sometimes he only took Peter, James, and John. He had very little time, less than three years, but he never seemed to think that teaching such a small group was a waste of time. Jesus concentrated on building up the twelve disciples. He illustrated a fundamental principle of teaching: the smaller the class, the better the learning. In a small group learners feel secure with each other. It encourages freedom to ask questions and interact. This method not only enhances their participation and discussions, it also helps them to be known individually by the teacher or master.

Jesus brought the disciples together as a small community. They shared the same money bag, used the same boat and ate from the same table. He built a community of learners, a team that fellowshiped and shared dreams together. Jesus did not encourage competition, but rather companionship as fellow followers of Christ. It was no accident that the majority of the Twelve were fishermen. Their livelihood, in fact their lives, had depended on teamwork. Their fishing methods, the way they handled their boats and the way they shared out the catch and looked after their equipment necessitated a high degree of trust and understanding. After the ascension of Christ, they stood firm together for the resurrected Lord. Learners need to belong to each other, so they can learn from each other. This is especially true as adult learners, for their vast life experiences comprise a huge resource for the community to which they belong. Community life is crucial to our maturing process. Christianity is all about relationships: our relationship with God and our relationship with others. Growth in our developing walk with Jesus will be, in part, proportional to our accountability to others.

(b) Jesus used stories and illustrations (read Mark 4)

Jesus used many parables, drawing object lessons from everyday life. He drew his illustrations from familiar experiences of farming, fishing, housekeeping, business and family life. He frequently combined them with his miracles. Indeed, many of his miracles may be considered acted parables. In the Gospel according to John, each miracle is followed by a discourse. For examples, after the feeding of the five thousands, the discourse was on "I am the Bread of Life" (chapter 6); after the healing of the blind, his teaching was on "I am the Light of the World" (chapter 9). Thus his teaching was interesting, memorable, and life-oriented. Using all teachable moments, Jesus helped students visualise. When asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He picked up a child.^{viii}

(c) Jesus modelled his lessons (read John 13: 1-17)

Jesus' approach to discipleship was life-oriented. He took the disciples with him in the various circumstances of life that he encountered on a daily basis. The disciples walked with him in the real world. Jesus did not just teach from mouth to ear but from heart to heart. His goal was not simply "getting the lessons across" but transforming students toward Christ-likeness. For this to happen, proximity and intimacy is necessary. Thus, Jesus stayed with his disciples. All Jesus did to teach his disciples was to draw them close to himself. He was his own school and curriculum. Jesus taught and lived truth before his disciples. He demonstrated what he expected them to learn. Jesus did not ask anyone to do or be anything which he had not first demonstrated in his own life. Jesus matched his words with actions e.g. forgiveness. He taught his disciples to pray "as we forgive others" and told them "to love your enemy." He told them the parable of the unforgiving servant to explain why it is important to forgive. On the cross he prayed for his crucifiers "Forgive them, Father". He forgave and restored Peter after he had denied and forsaken him. Discipleship is not a communication of knowledge, but a communication of life. In a discipleship relationship we do not teach the other person to know what we know but to become what we are. So we teach more by living than by talking. The quality of life is caught, rather than taught.

(d) Jesus knew that people learn more by doing than hearing

(read Matthew 10: 1-16)

Jesus engaged his learners with questions and actions. One time he asked, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" and later he asked, "But what about you? Who do you say I am?" He would not give them a straight-forward answer so that he could engage their minds. He also engaged them in action by sending them out two by two, by twelve and by seventy. The disciples had to put into actual practice what they had seen and learned from their master. So Jesus sent them forth. He first gave them some briefing instructions on their mission^{ix}. When the disciples got back they reported to Jesus all that they had done and taught^x. Jesus trained the disciples to take over the tasks that he was doing. Their responsibilities grew as their maturity developed. He sent them out on their own, then gently correcting them, instructing them still more, as in Mark 9:17-29, until the time when he could leave them altogether. Learning by doing is the most effective way of learning. Jesus used an integrated approach to teaching. He did not only focus on the lesson content but also on the disciples' character and conduct. He expected his disciples not just to understand but also to value and actually do what they were taught. He was concerned with the development of the *head* (cognitive), the *heart* (affective) and the *hands* (skill) or the knowing, being and doing. His educational approach equipped the disciples in theological reflection, spiritual formation and ministry skills. After his ascension Jesus delegated his disciple-making to these apostles.

Tuned in to Mission Control

Jesus concluded with the promise:

“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

This precious promise means Jesus will always guide, empower and give us joy as we undertake this huge, daunting, wonderful, sometimes discouraging task.

After his ascension to the Father the first disciples prayed until the Spirit came upon them and only then with Jesus’ abiding presence did they start making disciples. This is a reminder of our need to be always prayerfully reliant on our Lord as we carry out his mission.

Jesus’ promise is a vital reminder that we need to rely on him as we make disciples because there will be hardship, struggle and opposition. We will be arrayed against the false values of the world, our sinful human nature and the wiles of Satan. We need to be equipped with the “full armour of God”.

Looking at Ephesians 6 verses 10 to 20 we are reminded of the nature of the spiritual battle and the resources God equips us with. “Standing” which means holding your ground and persevering is the emphasis in verse 13. The armour relates to our identity in Christ: he is our truth, our righteousness, our peace, our salvation. God’s message and the Spirit’s gift of prayer are our offensive weapons. The emphasis is not on technique but rather on the sufficiency of what God has equipped us with.

There is no doubt that when we seek to serve God and to bring people from spiritual darkness to spiritual light, from being strangers and even enemies of God to becoming his children there is a spiritual battle. Currently, one area of difference among Christians in this area is the teaching about territorial spirits. This is the concept that Satan has deployed specific demons in specific territories and that consequently the ministry of Christian prophets to discern who these territorial spirits are and then prayer warriors to bind them in order for evangelism to succeed. Proponents of this view would point to passages of Scripture and also anecdotal evidence to prove their case. Those sceptical of this view would point to the lack of Scriptural evidence; the subjective nature of the anecdotes; the focus away from the importance of knowing the truth and power of Christ to the importance of identifying specific demons; and that the “spiritual discernment” necessary for this type of spiritual warfare leads to paranoia and judgementalism. You will need to make up your own mind about this issue. For the two different views compare and contrast the information on the websites of two very effective mission agencies: New Tribes Mission and YWAM.

4. THINK ABOUT:

1. What is your preferred learning style?

Listening to lectures or sermons

Hands on/practical

Discussing in a small group

Reading a book/surfing the net

Other...

2. How could your church adapt its teaching styles to be more effective in making disciples?

3. Which parable of Jesus means most to you? Why?

“Acts chapters 1 to 28”: a good start

Delegation is different from abdication. Jesus’ ascension to the Father was not an abdication from his role of making disciples. It just broadened his mission of disciple-making which he had delegated to his disciples. From heaven he now could oversee the missions expand from making disciples of Jews to making disciples of all nations. Let us turn to the Book of Acts which illustrates how the risen, ascended Jesus did this.

Jesus’ authority

For Jews religion was not just a personal matter. Spiritual authority was of pre-eminent importance. Hence Paul testified to King Agrippa that on his fateful trip to Damascus he was going “with the authority and commission of the chief priests”^{xi}. He then described how the risen Jesus confronted him and authorised and commissioned him to convert the Gentiles^{xii}. The apostles preached God raising Jesus from the dead as proof of Jesus’ authority both to Jews (2: 32-36) and to Gentiles (17:31). Jesus’ statement in Matthew 28: 19 that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to him by the Father was demonstrated as the apostles healed, cast out demons and proclaimed the gospel “in Jesus’ name”. “In Jesus’ name” is not a magic spell. It is an appeal to his authority.

All people

As a strategy for making disciples going and reaching out is the opposite of staying and attracting. By the end of Acts 2 we can infer that the apostles thought they had fulfilled the Great Commission because they had made disciples of Jews out of all the nations. Following their dramatic success in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in making disciples of the Jewish pilgrims who had travelled from their homes among all the nations the apostles could assume that they could carry on their mission by staying in Jerusalem. It took the smashing blow of concerted persecution to drive them out of Jerusalem to the Jews and Samaritans outside and the strong and persistent guidance of the Holy Spirit to realise that God was pushing them way outside their comfort zone into the scary and morally repugnant world of the Gentiles. It took the firm intervention of the ascended Jesus to direct Peter to make a disciple of the Gentile, Cornelius, and his household, and in Acts 15 Jesus directed the whole church to embrace this new move. The compromise was that Jewish Christians would retain their Jewishness but not force it on Gentile Christians, other than to require them to refrain from practices that would prevent fellowship with Jewish Christians. In the fires of this hotly contested issue the key doctrine of justification by faith alone was clarified.

The key personality in the mission to the Gentiles proved to be Paul. In one of the greatest speeches recorded in Acts Paul confidently asserted to King Agrippa that “I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen – that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and the Gentiles.”^{xiii}

Preaching, conversion and baptism

In chapter 2 there was a natural progression from hearing the gospel preached to responding by repentance and then seeking to be baptised. The same pattern continued with each new stage of the ascended Jesus’ mission - to the Samaritans and then to the Gentiles. The main difference was in the content of the preaching which varied according to the cultural background of the audience. With the Jews the apostles referred to the Old Testament. However they dealt differently with the Gentiles. In chapter 17 Paul sought to connect with the Athenians by pointing to their Altar to the Unknown God and quoting their poets. To the Lycaonians Paul and Barnabas started with nature and the seasons to talk about the Creator.

The teaching

In 2: 42 the three thousand baptised on the day of Pentecost “devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching”. In 5: 42 “Day after day in the temple courts and from house to house, they (the apostles) never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.” Teaching was such a priority that when the apostles were being overwhelmed by administrative duties they said to the gathered disciples, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables” (6: 2) and thereupon appointed Stephen and the others to distribute food to widows. When Peter was involved in converting people in Joppa (9: 2-43) and Caesarea (10: 48) it mentions that he then stayed a number of days, no doubt to teach them. For a whole year Barnabas and Paul “taught great numbers of people” in Antioch (11:26). In 14: 21 -28, 15: 41, 18: 23, Paul and his accomplices returned to newly established churches to strengthen and encourage them. In 18:11 after baptising many Corinthians, Paul stayed a year and a half “teaching them the word of God”. The teaching about Jesus also involved dealing with false teaching (15: 1-2, 20: 28-31). The concluding verses of Acts describe Paul in Rome making disciples: “For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught them about the Lord Jesus Christ.”

The content of the teaching can be found in the epistles. In amongst the local issues and controversies there is still a discernible pattern. The pattern is two intertwining themes which are celebrating what God has done for his people and exhorting them to gratefully respond by living lives of holiness and love.

Jesus’ presence

A startling phenomenon is the special joy the apostles experienced at times of persecution. For example in 5: 40-41:

“They called the apostles in and had them flogged. Then they ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name. Day after day, in the Temple courts and from house to house they never stopped teaching and proclaiming that good news that Jesus is the Christ.”^{xiv}

Throughout Acts, particularly at critical times of the mission to make disciples of all nations there is reference to Jesus intervening directly. Different terminology is used e.g. the appearance of Jesus in visions; the term “the Spirit of Jesus”; references to the “Lord” guiding and helping; and the ministry of angels. Whatever the terminology it is clear that the risen, ascended Jesus is acting decisively to forward his mission.^{xv}

5. THINK ABOUT

*(If you find this too time-consuming it could be tackled as group work)
Find the passages in the Book of Acts that relate to people being baptised*

1. *What led to the baptism?*
2. *Is there mention of the Holy Spirit in the event?*
3. *What preparation were they given before they were baptised?*

4. *What follow-up were they provided with after their baptism?*
5. *Follow up any links with these new disciples in latter passages in Acts or in Epistles that relate to their church. How and what were they taught?*
6. *How does the way the first Christians made disciples compare to what happens in your church? How is it the same? How is it different? How do you explain any differences?*

“Acts chapter 29”: from Paul to the present

Christian history seesaws between times of complacency about “making disciples of all nations” and times of great missionary zeal. Between the times of the apostles and when the Roman Emperor Constantine proclaimed Christianity as the official religion of the whole vast Roman Empire the church endured several major episodes of persecution. More often than not these trials helped the churches grow in numbers and maturity. In fact the very first systematic persecution, recorded in Acts chapter 8, led to the evangelisation of the Samaritans and Gentiles.

The “Dark Ages” saw barbarian tribes contribute to the collapse of the Roman Empire. Even during this bleak period many missionaries from Ireland and England sacrificed their lives taking the gospel to the different Germanic peoples of Europe.

Gradually the gospel spread north and east until the Viking lands and the Slavic people also embraced the Christian faith at the same time as Muslim armies were conquering the ancient Christian lands of the Middle East, North Africa, Spain and Portugal.

In 1054 AD the great cultural gulf between Latin Catholic and the Greek Orthodox was formalised, leaving Christianity split between Eastern and Western forms. Not long afterwards the Western Branch of “Christendom” committed itself to the Crusades, three centuries of warfare aimed at regaining the Holy Land as a Christian stronghold. Not all Christians had the same aggressive approach to Muslims. The Italian, Francis of Assisi, and the Catalan, Ramon Lull, both sought to win Muslims over with the love of Christ.

In 1492, the very same year that the last Muslim kingdom in Spain fell to the conquistadors, they had a new opportunity with the discovery of the Americas to conquer the New World under the banner of the cross. Again, in amongst the shameful linking of the cross and the sword, there were some outstanding Christians like Bartolomeo de las Casas who realised that the way of Jesus was not to use force against the indigenous people of the Americas.

At the same time the Spanish and Portuguese took trade and the gospel east, with the Spanish taking the Philippines and the Portuguese establishing trading colonies in India, China, Malaya and as far as Ambon and Timor. Outstanding Jesuit missionaries include Francis Xavier (India, Japan, the Moluccas and China), Robert de Nobili (India) and Matteo Ricci (China)

It took another two centuries before the Protestants embraced the implications of the Great Commission and sought to make disciples of all nations. The first off the mark were the German speaking Moravian Brethren. The great pioneer of missions in the English speaking world was William Carey. This coincided with the British settlement of Australia which became a base for missions to the indigenous people of Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea and all the other Pacific Islands.

The middle years of the twentieth Century saw the collapse of the European colonial empires, the retreat of Christianity in Europe and the rise of indigenous missionary movements in Asia, Africa and South America. Today four of the biggest missionary-sending nationalities are Indians, Koreans, Nigerians and Brazilians.

Biography of missionaries is probably the best way to get a real taste for mission history. However the reader needs to show some discrimination. There was a stage when missionary biography was more like “hagiography” in the way missionaries were idealised as saints with any perceived moral failures

being carefully edited out. Further, missionary biographies sometimes have a polemical purpose, to justify a particular brand of theology. Missionary biographies from the days of the British Empire tended to assume that white civilisation was morally superior to other civilisations and that imperialism was justified. Nevertheless the study of missionary biography breaks the popular stereotype, which is perpetuated in academic circles, that generally Christian missions were “a bad thing” and that missionaries were “destroyers of culture”. In fact much cultural anthropology and studies of other religions have been carried out by missionaries as they have sought to love and understand the people God has called them to serve.

6. THINK ABOUT

Find out anything you can about someone who has served overseas as a missionary. Specifically:

- 1. Why did they go?*
- 2. What training did they receive?*
- 3. What type of work*
- 4. What difficulties and challenges did they encounter?*
- 5. What did God achieve through them?*

A few suggestions:

<i>Hudson Taylor</i>	<i>(founder of the China Inland Mission)</i>
<i>Samuel Zwemer</i>	<i>(pioneer missionary to Middle Eastern Muslims)</i>
<i>William Carey</i>	<i>(pioneer missionary to India)</i>
<i>Amy Carmichael</i>	<i>(pioneer woman missionary to abused women and girls in India)</i>
<i>Gladys Aylward</i>	<i>(missionary to China)</i>
<i>Robert Morrison</i>	<i>(translator of the Bible into Chinese)</i>
<i>Robert Moffatt</i>	<i>(pioneer missionary in Southern Africa, David Livingstone’s father-in-law)</i>
<i>Mary Slessor</i>	<i>(pioneer missionary in West Africa)</i>
<i>Adoniram Judson</i>	<i>(pioneer missionary to Burma)</i>
<i>John Coleridge Patteson</i>	<i>(pioneer missionary to Solomon Islands)</i>
<i>Cameron Townsend</i>	<i>(pioneer linguist and founder of SIL)</i>
<i>George Chambers</i>	<i>(pioneer Australian missionary to East Africa)</i>
<i>Sylvia Jeanes</i>	<i>(pioneer Australian missionary in the interior of Sabah)“Riding the Rapids”</i>

The Development of Christianity in Tasmania

To understand the present we need to appreciate the past. While ministering in the south-eastern corner of Tasmania I made a study of the history of the area with a particular interest in three key pioneer Christians. Every other area of Tasmania also had pioneering Christians who are worth learning about. In examining Knopwood, Murphy and Cheek I am seeking to understand, rather than criticise. It is grossly unfair to judge people of the past by the changing standards of the present. One of the first people to write about Tasmania's history, John West, warned that "...character can never be fairly judged when separated from the circumstances in which it is developed." ^{xvi}

The Chaplain: The Reverend Robert Knopwood

For Knopwood we have the resource of his journals, which provide a unique and unparalleled account of the first thirty years of white settlement. In 1817, two years before the diary entry, the population of Tasmania was a tiny 3,114. In his diary Knopwood describes the first ever church service in Sorell, at that stage called Pitt Water. He accompanied Lt Governor and "Mrs" Sorell. ^{xvii} The spelling has not been corrected.



Figure 1 The Rev. Bobby Knopwood accompanied by Spot

November 1819:

Thurs. 4 At 9 His Honor & Mrs S., Humphrey Esq. J.P., Mr. Evans the surveyor, Lieut. Robinson the Govnr Secretary

and self took the Govnr's boat and went to Kangaroo Bay where we took our horses and rode 12 miles to the bluff opposite Mr. Thorn's farm. Took the boat and went across, the horses in another boat. We rode by James Gordon's Esq., to Mr. B. Reardon where we arrived at 7. Had an excellent dinner at the Govnr's marque and at 9 Mr. Humphry rode with me and Mr G. to his house. Mr. Gordon gave us a good supper and very comfortable we slept there.

Frid. 5 After breakfast we rode to Mr. B. Reardon's who was taking the G. Muster. I see the finest country ever seen; the plains were very extensive and the finest crops ever known. Many of the farmers return was from 60 to 70 and Mr. B. Reardon's 180 acres of wheat besides peas, beans and potatoes. Returning to James Gordon's, his mare kicked me and hurt my leg very much.

Sat. 6th A. H. W. Humphrey & James Gordon Esqr. rode to the muster. At 12, I rode to Mr. Silas Gatehouses' he went with me to the Lt. Govnr. marque where we dined and Mr. Riseley of Orielton Park, belonging to E. Lord Esqr. I rode to James Gordon's.

Sund. 7 After breakfast I rode to the marque. At 11 performed D. V. Service attended by His Honor and the gentlemen with him and all the settlers and their families, all the ticket of leave men etc. etc., the whole settlement at Pitt Water, the first time Divine Service was ever performed. We had a very excellent dinner in His Honor's marque; Mr. Riseley dined with the Lt. Govnr. They rode to see E. Lord's house etc. – a very fine place, 3500 acres at one spot. I was at Mr. B. Reardon, my leg so painful.

Mond. 8 At 11 the same party left Pitt Water with His Honor the Lt. Govnr. and went to Mr. Crowder's ferry where we took refreshment, mounted our horses and came to Kangaroo Point,

where we took the Lt. Govnr's boat and returnd to Hobart Town to dinner, 6 p.m. after having a most delightful excursion.

On the next occasion the service was held in a barn. When Knopwood describes how he “church and xtiand many children”, he is referring to the ceremony of the “Churching of women” where God is thanked for preserving new mothers through the dangers of childbirth followed by the baptism of their children. The term “christening” derives from the custom of giving the child a Christian name at the time of their baptism.

October 1820

Sat. 28 I rode to Mr. Gatehouses; church and xtiand her little girl...

Sund. 29 Performd D. V. Service at Bartholomew Reardon's in the barn. His Honor the Lt. Govnr. and the gents with all the settlers and prisoners, free men and women attended. I church and xtian'd many children. The sermon was upon Industry and very much liked...^{xviii}

The third occasion Knopwood took a service he used the school room.

January 1822

Sund. 27 We (including Lt Govnr and Mrs Sorell) landed (by barge at Sorell) at ½ past 3 p.m.. Performed Divine Service in the new school room; chief of the settlers etc. attended, James Gordon Esqr, the magistrate, attended. At 6 we dind, a very excellent dinner and quantity of fine fruit, cherries, gooseberries and currents, apples. Mr. Riseley could not dine. In the eve Lt. Robinson and self rode to Mr. Reardon's, one mile. I took one pipe and slept there. Xtiand 4 children in the new school house.

Have you seen that wonderful movie “Master and Commander: the Far Side of the World”. It’s a fictional account of the adventures of a Royal Navy ship in the southern seas, set at exactly the same time as a real Royal Navy adventure in the southern seas – the first settlement of Hobart. The movie accurately portrays shipboard life including the harsh discipline, the class distinction, the danger and the patriotism of the time. The settlement of Hobart was a naval expedition led by a naval commander, David Collins, Lieutenant Colonel in the Royal Marines. Part of his company was the Reverend Robert Knopwood MA, a naval chaplain. Life aboard a Royal Navy ship in the Napoleonic Wars was no picnic. So what sort of person with an MA from Cambridge, an amiable personality and a love for the life of an English country gentleman of hunting, shooting, fishing, wining, dining and gambling would end up in his early middle years as a naval chaplain? The straight answer is someone who had sown his wild oats during his university years and ended up in financial difficulty. The other answer is someone from the same county, the same background and in fact an associate of the greatest naval hero of all times – Horatio Nelson – the scourge of Napoleon. Knopwood had served as a curate in the Nelson family church at Burnham Thorpe where the famous Admiral’s father, the Reverend Edmund Nelson was Vicar.

The Church of England was the official national church. Knopwood was employed by the British government. Every day a naval chaplain prayed:

O Eternal Lord God, who alone spreadest out the heavens, and rulest the raging of the sea; who hast compassed the waters with bounds until day and night come to an end: Be pleased to receive into thy Almighty and most gracious protection the persons of us thy servants, and the Fleet in which we serve. Preserve us from the dangers of the sea, and from the violence of the enemy; that we may be a safeguard unto our most gracious Sovereign Lord, King George , and his Dominions, and a security for such as pass on the seas upon their lawful occasions; that the inhabitants of our Island may in peace and quietness serve thee our God; and that we may return in safety to enjoy

the blessings of the land, with the fruits of our labours, and with a thankful remembrance of thy mercies to praise and glorify thy holy Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Knopwood was an amiable and easygoing bachelor who succeeded in getting on with all classes in the infant colony. He added a touch of civilisation not only by his humane treatment of people but by his love of gardening whereby he introduced a number of useful fruit trees and vegetables to the new land.

It was brutal era. It is a little known fact that soldiers and sailors of the era were treated just as harshly as convicts.. Knopwood attended every prisoner who was hanged. Prior to their execution the custom was for them to attend a special religious service. From Knopwood's notes we get a taste of such a sermon in which the condemned are encouraged to make their peace with God.

Go weeping sinners and hide your guilty heads from the fury of the law of God, hide them under the wings of your dear Redeemer, see the Saviour of the world eager to embrace his long lost children. Behold his flowing tears. Harken to his expiring groans – it was all for you. Go to the expanded arms of mercy: he waits to be gracious. Implore the riches of his grace, acquaint yourselves thus with Him and be at peace.^{xix}

He was obliged to serve in the unenviable role of magistrate in a penal colony. Compared to his NSW counterpart, Rev Samuel Marsden, he seems to have performed his duties with a minimum of rancour. He also managed to stay on good terms with the first three governors, in spite of the awkward situation of them cohabiting with mistresses. This was almost encouraged by the British government which ruled that serving officers of the Crown had to leave their wives behind in England. For a generation Bobby Knopwood, as he came to be known, baptised every child, including aboriginal orphans, and married every couple in Hobart and surrounding districts. He was the only clergyman in the colony for fifteen years until Rev John Youl arrived in Launceston. Knopwood got on very well with the first Catholic chaplain Philip Conolly who arrived after seventeen years. It was another two years after that the next Anglican clergyman Rev William Bedford arrived, who took over the ministry in Hobart and left Knopwood to look after New Norfolk and Rokeby.

Knopwood was in his heart of hearts an English country gentleman. He seemed happiest in his latter years as the parson of Clarence Plains, across the Eastern Shore of the Derwent from Hobart, looking after his little flock. He enjoyed riding, hunting, gardening and dining. His greatest grief seems to be over issues of land ownership, which can only be understood from his background where land ownership defined one's place in society, established one's legal and political rights and determined one's quality of life.

Knopwood has been described as a drunkard, an adulterer and professionally negligent by contemporary slanderers like John Pascoe Fawkner, who are called into question because of their own criminality. Later critics of Knopwood conveniently forget that Knopwood stood out for humanity, decency and good sense in a dysfunctional society of convicted criminals and misfits dumped in an isolated and strange new land. He was less missionary-minded but also less combative than Samuel Marsden, his fellow chaplain in the mother colony of New South Wales. He lacked the evangelical zeal and organisational capacity of Wesley. He lacked the otherworldliness of Francis of Assisi, but then these servants of God lived in another place and another time.

The Counter-culturalist: Mother Xavier Murphy

We move forward a couple of generations. By 1870 the population of Tasmania had increased to

103,000. Transportation of convicts had long since ceased.

Ellen Murphy was a daughter of Ireland, when it was still a Land of Sorrows. For centuries the Catholic majority were discriminated against by the English-backed upper classes through a whole range of laws that limited their education, their job opportunities, land ownership and practicing their religion.



Figure 2 The first Catholic school in Richmond, where the Presentation Sisters first ministered

Almost as soon as the country was liberated from these unjust laws a disease called potato blight hit the country and literally millions died and millions migrated to America and the outposts of the British Empire including Australia. Catholic priests, nuns and brothers supported their people through these trials and tribulations.

The *Empress* sailed from Ireland with a collection of bishops, priests and nuns for Bathurst, Maitland, Brisbane, Hobart and Geelong. Bishop Murphy and all his priests were there to greet his new team members at the Hobart wharf. The bishop was particularly glad to greet his sister Ellen, now called Mother Xavier with her group of nuns and trainee

nuns or “postulants”. They belonged to an order called the Presentation Sisters who were dedicated to serving the poor particularly through schooling. The bishop had some good news and some bad news for his sister. The bad news was that the convent and school that was being built for them next to the Cathedral in Harrington Street would take more than a year to be completed. The good news was that Father Dunne from Richmond parish had rented a large farmhouse for them and was keen to set them running a school and preparing a large number of men, women and children for confirmation and first communion.

The Richmond that the sisters arrived in was a more significant town than it is today. All traffic from Hobart to the eastern or south-eastern districts of the colony passed through Richmond. It was not for another few years that Richmond found itself bypassed by both the new Hobart to Launceston railway and the Sorell causeways, which also had the effect of silting up the mouth of the Coal River and ending Richmond’s role as a port. Most significantly Richmond like most Australian settlements had an “Irishtown” which represented an informal religion-based apartheid in the colonies. “Irishtown” is really a misnomer because a proportion of Irish were Presbyterians or Anglicans and very much part of the Protestant Establishment. It was really “Catholic Town” a quarter for the marginalised the Irish Catholics.

The convent also provided a much appreciated Irish welcome for visiting priests from across the colony. It was there in St John’s Church that, in a grand ceremony and celebration, four of the postulants took their final vows to become nuns. After twelve months the Hobart convent and college were ready when Mother Xavier and the Sisters left Richmond, leaving behind happy memories and a reinvigorated parish.

The church, on that special feast of Saint Matthew (27 February 1867), was filled to capacity (by people of all denominations) for the reception of the four Choir Sisters. Bishop Daniel Murphy, assisted by eleven priests, conducted the ceremonies which began when the procession appeared at the main door of the church and slowly processed to the altar. ...It was an experience which would be talked about and shared for decades to come in a Colonial community, where lives were singularly devoid of glamour or religious ritual.^{xx}

That day four Irish postulants, Ellen Beechinor, Kate Russell, Ellen Keller and Eliza Cronin became respectively Sister Mary Xavier, Sister Mary Joseph, Sister Mary Benigna and Sister Mary Evangelist.

Mary Evangelist was to be the longest lived of the four and was serve as a Presentation Sister for another 57 years.

To the people it was an awe-inspiring event, rich in archaic symbolism, accompanied by splendid reverent singing and contrasting colours. To conclude the occasion the Sisters had prepared a magnificent dinner for all present. Reflecting the theme of unity there was no distinction between the people who took part. The writer who described the event wrote that: "different professionals, different grades, different religious denominations became one".

One hundred years later the international Catholic Council known as Vatican Two swept aside many of the features that had made Catholics look and act differently to other Australians: the nuns and priests wore everyday clothes, the services went from Latin to English, lay people participated more in the church worship. Protestants were described as "separated brethren" rather than "heretics and schismatics". The television drama "Brides of Christ" portrays the turmoil among the women's religious orders, which have effectively collapsed. But it no longer mattered because Irish Catholics were well and truly part of the mainstream of Australian society. Gone were the days of Ned Kelly and other Australian-born who were immersed in the old grievances of the Irish Catholics. Tasmania had had a number of Catholic governors and Joe Lyons, the only Tasmanian to have served as Prime Minister of the nation, was a Catholic.

The Revivalist: Brother Stephen Cheek



Figure 3 Brother Stephen Cheek

By the late 1800s Australians were developing a strong sense of identity. If you have ever read Steele Rudd's "Dad and Dave" stories or any of Henry Lawson's "Joe Wilson and his Mates" short stories then you will be introduced to the classic battlers of the bush. These were the cockies, small farmers battling the elements of drought and fire and flood, but not always well treated by the banks or the squatters, the big landholders. There were the prospectors, timber getters and miners who worked in hostile and dangerous conditions where mateship was about survival not just convivial company. There were the itinerant rural workers: drovers, shearers, fencers, well-diggers and horse-breakers to name a few. These men and women were not peasants or hillbillies. They were the widest-read, most politically aware working class in the world at that time. If you fell into conversation with a swagman on a country road you might be talking to a son of a convict or of a viscount, to a Norwegian sailor who had jumped ship or a veteran of

the Indian army. There was a strong anti-authoritarian and anti-privilege streak in the new ethos that led to the birth of the Australian Workers Union and the Labor party.

It was also an era of Christian revivalism in Tasmania. Methodist Revivals in the 1860s in North West Tasmania led to doubling of numbers in 1870s. From 1869 revival meetings by Brown, Perrin and Moyse led to the growth of the Christian Brethren in the north and north west. Revivalism stressed personal decision and was very black and white, almost dualistic, in its contrast between walking in darkness and walking in the light. In 1904 a chronicler of the Churches of Christ denomination looked back a generation to one of the most remarkable outbreaks of revivalism :

Two churches came into being in the South Eastern portion of the island in 1879. Brother Stephen Cheek, whose name is still a household word among the brotherhood of Tasmania,

invaded the Bream Creek district with the primitive gospel in the early part of this year. In his judgment the ignorance of this community as respects religious matters was so profound as to justify a comparison with the ancient Egypt. But so immediate and salutary were the effects of the gospel that a church of fifty odd members was established in the district within seven weeks after its first proclamation by Brother Cheek. A few months later several of the brethren from Bream Creek removed to Tasman's Peninsula. Hence the organization of the church in that region. These two churches have continued loyal to the faith through many vicissitudes, and, although dependent to a great extent upon local effort, have made considerable progress. They are the two principal churches in the island.^{xxi}

Of course there is more to it than that. It was a story of conflict among Christian communities as well as triumphs of the gospel. Bream Creek was a scattered community of small settlers which before Cheek's visit was a model of ecumenical cooperation with the Anglican, Presbyterian and Congregational ministers from Sorell working in harmony by visiting on a roster.

Stephen Cheek's life was marked by passion and divisiveness. He had arrived from England as a three year old. His parents were devout Congregationalists who settled in Launceston. At 12 his family moved to a farm and at 19 he qualified as a teacher and became head of Rosevale school. He started studying to become a Congregational minister and got engaged. Then everything changed at the age of 23 when he received adult baptism by immersion, joined the Brethren church and became a rural evangelist until he died in Warwick Qld when he was 29. He also broke off his engagement resulting in a rift in the family and permanent estrangement from his father.

Cheek had an argumentative style using bible texts to prove that proponents of adult baptism and lay leadership were right and every other religious group was wrong. His preaching style was rational (albeit assuming the Bible is the infallible Word of God) and populist with strong parallels to the style of political radicals. By contrast Methodism, the older revivalist tradition, appealed rather to feeling, the preaching was didactic and the attitude towards other Christians, at least evangelicals, was eirenical.

Cheek broke with the Brethren because he considered they were not hardline and biblical enough in that they had communion with people who were not "saved" (i.e. had not been baptised by immersion as adults) He had an intense dislike for clergy, whom he contemptuously referred to as "ravens".

Invited to Carlton River he won a number of converts when he preached at the Congregational church. He then walked on to Bream Creek a place he described in "gross darkness" in spite of clergy having preached there for 18 years. He was alluding to spiritual ignorance but also commented on a high degree of illiteracy. He held three meetings in three days, the last of which he estimated over 200 attended. After five days there were 30 to 40 converts.

Cheek's method was to engage with his audience though an interrogative and argumentative approach that appealed to ordinary folk. He sought to bring his hearers through four clear stages: anxiety over sin, conviction of saving grace, public profession of faith and finally baptism by immersion. He also targeted the "blind guides", in this case the "unconverted" local school teacher and Sunday School superintendent, Mrs Davis, and the visiting Protestant clergy. He particularly antagonised Dear, the Congregationalist minister. Less than a month after he began preaching he baptised 27 in the river. A month later the total came to 49 baptised. Like the Apostle Paul, Cheek would keep in contact with the Bream Creek Brethren by correspondence and by including them in his round of his apostolic trips. Some of the Bream Creek congregation had recently moved down to the Tasman Peninsula when it was opened up for settlement. They met regularly for worship in homes at Impression Bay (Premaydena),

Wedge Bay (Nubeena) and Carnarvon (Port Arthur).

Six months later when Cheek returned there was an incident one evening when he was approached by a dozen young men, some with blackened faces. He was seized and struck with a knotted rope and with sticks and smothered in rotten eggs. He was then threatened and told to leave Bream Creek within twenty-four hours. Cheek said he would leave when he was ready. Cheek wanted to let the matter drop but others insisted that the matter be brought to the Sorell magistrate's court. Counsel for the prosecution argued that religious liberty was at stake, counsel for the four defendants claimed communal harmony was at stake and claimed that Cheek:

...had turned Bream Creek upside down, and converted it into a bear garden, setting father against son, and daughter against mother, neighbour against neighbour, and family against family, and sowing the seeds of strife broadcast by his mission.

The convicted men were sentenced to a small fine with costs and given a severe caution. The magistrate's concluding words were that

Liberty of speech and religious opinion must be maintained at all hazards, without respect to persons...

This can be better understood in the light of the infamous "the Chiniquy affair" which had transpired only a couple of months previously when Charles Chiniquy, an apostate Canadian Catholic priest, had visited Hobart on a lecture tour to expose the evils of the Roman church thereby fanning animosity between Catholics and Protestants.

Meanwhile the people of Bream Creek had organised an open-air debate between Cheek and the two Sorell Protestant ministers, the Reverends Brammall (Anglican) and Doctor (Presbyterian). The topic of course was baptism. The debate lasted four hours and at the end of the day the Cheek Brethren of Bream Creek had earned a new respect in the community. The next year Cheek made his final visit to the area. Nine months later he died of fever in Queensland. The Cheek Brethren of Bream Creek and the Peninsula joined with the Churches of Christ and now their heirs, the Copping Christian Fellowship near Bream Creek, and the Nubeena Church of Christ remain the strongest churches in those areas a century and a quarter after Cheek's visits.

An Afterword

So we have three individuals, each a Christian pioneer and each a very different personality with a very different way of operating: an Anglican colonial chaplain who grew up in Norfolk, a Catholic mother superior who grew up in County Cork and a Brethren evangelist who grew up in northern Tasmania. A lesson of history is that "there is nothing new under the sun". So these three Christian leaders from the past exemplify models of ministry that exist in a different form in the present.

Knopwood was paid by the government and was an integral part of the colonising process as the representative of the Church of England and as a magistrate. His personal style was to relate to all classes of society in a fair and friendly manner. Non-sectarian by nature he had a close friendship with Philip Connolly the Catholic chaplain and the times when he seemed to treat non-Anglicans harshly such as the issue of burial was more on the basis of a public servant seeking to conscientiously follow English law. This chaplaincy model of ministry is best exemplified in contemporary Tasmania by the school chaplaincies which mushroomed after 2007 because of Federal funding. The "Statement of Ethos" adopted by the Chaplaincy Working Group in 2004 includes these principles:

Chaplains are committed to make themselves available to all in the school community with an aim of being responsive to the needs of the school community as those needs arise.

Chaplains recognise the spiritual dimension of every person. They are committed to encouraging spiritual dialogue / exploration within the school community without manipulation and with recognition of the diversity of beliefs in that community. They recognise that all of life has a spiritual dimension and is worthy of exploration in that context.

Chaplains also acknowledge that proselytising is not appropriate within a state school environment...Chaplains will also show respect for the diverse range of beliefs held by members of the school community and will uphold an individual's right to choose their own beliefs and values for living.

Chaplains take a prayerful approach to chaplaincy with an underlying belief that the ministry cannot succeed without the help of God and other people.

Chaplains understand that, as role models, their behaviour matters and that they need to exercise integrity in ministry and life...They will always seek to imitate Jesus in actions and words and, in particular, to live lives in accordance with Biblical principles.

Murphy came to serve the poor through education. She was a nurturer. The substantial Irish Catholic minority were the second culture in the predominantly English Protestant colony. Within this Irish Catholic subculture Catholic Sisterhoods like the Presentation Sisters were a counterculture whose austere and ancient but radical lifestyle was focussed on the social, economic and moral uplift of this community. A contemporary Tasmanian example of the countercultural model of ministry is the Poatina community, an old Hydro village purchased by Fusion in 1995. Excerpts from the Fusion website illustrate this:

Poatina, a "community of hope" ...provides a unique opportunity to care for homeless and unemployed young people in a supportive atmosphere and offers a wide range of training and job skills.

Fusion's experience has confirmed the conviction that lives are changed when young people come into contact with a vigorous community modelling effective values, which itself has regular and meaningful contact with the broader community.

Poatina is now a place of growth! Its children are thriving and they enjoy life to the fullest. The Village has its own Under 8's and 12's soccer teams, men's and women's basketball teams and there are numerous activity programs for all ages. Even the ladies from the broader community get together to enjoy a crafty morning each Thursday. Poatina Village has gone in the opposite direction of current statistics, with over 40% of the population being under the age of 18 years! Many people have been profoundly affected by contact with Poatina. Within days people feel at home in a special way - even visiting tourists!

Like the Presentation Sisters Fusion is a Christian sodality seeking to create a Christian subculture that will impact on the wider culture.

Cheek was a giant killer. He was at war with the devil, all the mainstream churches and even those with similar beliefs who were less rigid. In a spiritual sense he came to call out God's elect, to bring the sword not peace and to drive a wedge between mother and daughter, father and son. Theologically orthodox with regards to the Trinity, in behaviour he was sectarian. Like the Churches of Christ in late nineteenth-century Australia the Assemblies of God have repackaged themselves as the most authentic and successful version of Christianity, for instance by rebranding their denomination as "Australian Christian Churches". The belief statement of a Tasmanian AOG church, Energizer Life

Church in Bellerive, taken from their website of 2007, states:

We believe that sin has separated each of us from God and His purpose for our lives, and that in order to receive forgiveness, we must repent of our sins, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and submit to His will for our lives. Our eternal destination of either heaven or hell is determined by this response.

We believe that in order to live the holy and fruitful lives that God intends for us, we need to be baptised by full immersion in water and be filled with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit enables us to use spiritual gifts empowering us for life and ministry to others.

The stress on the necessity of baptism by “full immersion” and of “being filled with the Holy Spirit” carries on the Revivalist emphasis on being different not only from the world but from other Christian groups.

This little excursion into Tasmanian Christian history has by just examining one small part of this State discovered a surprising amount. Imagine how much more waits to be discovered, and how much it will help Tasmanian Christians explore their identity and formulate appropriate mission strategies!

7. THINK ABOUT

Research some aspect of the history of the Christian churches in your parish or district and discuss how that helps you better understand the present situation. One suggested way ahead is this: “A pioneer Christian leader in my area”

- 1. Describe their style of ministry.*
- 2. What was their own religious or cultural background in terms of social class, parents, mentors or influences etc?*
- 3. What was Tasmania like when they began their ministry?*
- 4. What impact did they make or legacy did they leave?*
- 5. What did you personally find inspiring, encouraging or admonitory in their story?*
- 6. How does their ministry reflect biblical examples or patterns of mission and ministry?*

Lessons learned from 2000 years of Christian mission:

The importance of contextualisation

“Contextualisation” has three meanings. First, in Bible translation it describes the process of translating biblical terms into concepts that could be readily understood by people whose language and culture had no equivalent e.g. Jesus as the “lamb of God” makes no sense to PNG highlanders who have never seen a sheep and, strangely to us, the pig is probably the closest equivalent of a domesticated sacrificial animal. Second, contextualisation is used more broadly in Christian missions to describe the process of adopting culturally appropriate forms of preaching, teaching, worship and governance around the core non-negotiables of the Christian faith, like the divinity of Christ. Third, the term has transferred over to the secular field. We will be referring to the second meaning.

So what is “culture”? A technical answer is “the integrated system of learned patterns of behaviour, ideas and products, characteristic of a society”^{xxii}. A fundamental difference between communities is their culture, of which worldview is at the core. If we engage with another culture it is important to understand it so that we do not cause offence; so we can understand what is going on; so we can ask the right questions to get the right answers; and so we can communicate without misunderstanding. The funny thing is that in doing so we learn about our own culture!

There's an old dictum that highlights how our culture affects our expression of Christianity:

"Christianity began as a Jewish fellowship; infiltrated Greek culture and became a philosophy; moved west to Rome and became an institution; crossed the Atlantic and became an enterprise."

It is painfully simplistic but shockingly true. Judaism was full of sects. The Jews bequeathed us a belief in a God who is intensely relational. Hellenistic culture epitomised by the Greek language seeks to understand intellectually, to define and to categorise. The Greeks bequeathed us philosophy and science. Unlike the Hebrews the Greeks could not cope with embracing the paradox of Jesus Christ as both Man and God without seeking to define it. By contrast Roman civilisation was intensely practical with a particular concern for effective administration. The Romans bequeathed us so many things building blocks of our civilisation ranging from concrete to a legal system. Before embracing Christianity the Romans had a very pragmatic attitude towards religion. Hence the inability of Roman administrators, like Pontius Pilate or Porcius Festus, to appreciate the religious zeal of the Jewish people in their embracing martyrdom or in their vehemence when arguing over their precious held beliefs about the afterlife. American culture is strongly individualistic and entrepreneurial. America has given us Microsoft and the internet, Scientology and Jehovah's Witnesses, Mark Driscoll and Rick Warren.

Missionaries spend years submerging themselves in another culture and the longer they are there the more they realise they do not understand. But that is no reason not to grapple with the issue of culture. If we do not come to terms with cultural issues we either unthinkingly let them absorb and change the gospel, which is called syncretism or we never really connect and that is called irrelevance.

Love seeks to present Jesus Christ – rather than a cultural package called Christianity. Our culture has been profoundly affected by Christianity – which is mostly a good thing BUT it does mean that until we accept and explore this it will be a tremendous blind spot. Many of our social values are based on Christian values which we may not be aware of. Take two examples. One value in Western civilisation which is partly a product of Christian teaching is that public office is a responsibility allowing us to serve others rather than a privilege to benefit us and our families by giving us power over others. That is why we have such a strong disdain for nepotism, which is regarded as a positive value through much

of Asia where family loyalty is a supreme value. Another Western value is the idea of conscience: written and unwritten laws are to be obeyed because they are right rather than because we will get into trouble if we disobey them. This “guilt culture” view is very different from the “shame culture” view that is strong in the Middle East and Asia. By the same token there are Western values, perceived by other cultures as Christian, which offend many. Lack of respect for elders and those in authority; sexual promiscuity; unquestioning commitment to the rights, but not the responsibilities, of the individual and the unfettered power of the market economy are just some of these.

This also means that we miss nuances in the parables of Jesus because Jesus and his hearers operated in a culture very different from us e.g. in the Parable of the Prodigal Son we fail to appreciate the “shame culture” insight into the indignity and public ridicule which the father subjected himself to by running to greet his lost son.

Once every hundred years Jesus of Nazareth meets Jesus of the Christian in a garden among the hills of Lebanon. And they talk long: each time Jesus of Nazareth goes away saying to Jesus of the Christian, “My friend, I fear we shall never, never agree.” Kahlil Gibran quoted in Chandler (127)

The big difference between “Christianity” and personal faith in Christ is highlighted in Paul-Gordon Chandler’s “Pilgrims of Christ on a Muslim Road”^{xxiii} This book, which is invaluable for anyone working with Middle Eastern Muslims, is based on an interview with a remarkable Arab Muslim named Mazhar who came to faith in Christ in his early adult years. Initially he joined an Arabic speaking, but culturally Western and Protestant, church that had a deep hatred for Islam. However, Mazhar struggled with his loss of identity as a true Arab and through this crisis and subsequent years of struggle found his true identity in remaining an Arab Muslim but as a follower of Isa (the Arabic name for Jesus). He has thereby had a very fruitful ministry within Islam, reading the Injil (the Arabic name for the Gospels) with Muslims in coffee shops and mosques, and leading people to al-Masih (The Christ).Chandler^{xxiv} expresses Mazhar’s view of reaching out to Muslims:

Christians are often inaccurately called a “People of the Book.” Instead, we should be “People of the Person”, Mazhar suggests. The Christian faith has nothing to do with knowing a creed, or living a set of moral laws, or believing certain doctrines, but rather everything to do with knowing a person. A problem many Christians have often had is that they try to present Christianity as a better religion than any other, yet it isn’t necessarily so. (Let’s remember that Jesus himself wasn’t a Christian.) As Mazhar demonstrates, people are not typically interested in Christianity for all kinds of abstract reasons; they are fascinated with Jesus as he really was and is. The Jesus who is presented in the Gospels is what naturally attracts people. Yet it is often difficult to see that Jesus for all the religious and cultural baggage surrounding him.

Mazhar’s views are controversial and confronting. The “religious and cultural baggage” he writes of so dismissively includes the fruit of two thousand years of the greatest hearts and minds of the Christian church as they have interpreted the Scriptures, formulated creeds, responded to ethical issues, written liturgies, composed music and created beautiful works of art. However it is a reminder that we need constantly to seek to read the Scriptures with fresh eyes to allow God’s living Word to address our current culture.

Let us move east to India, where Sundar Singh came to Christ as a young man from a Sikh background in the early 1900’s. For a while he even considered the Anglican ministry, but finally became a “saddhu”, a Hindu term for a wandering mendicant who had dedicated his life to God. His desire was to offer Indians the “water of life in an Indian cup”. There are strong parallels between his story and St

Francis of Assisi. Sundar Singh had a huge impact in India and even in the Christian West through his travels and writings. He eventually disappeared on a solo missionary trip into Tibet in 1929. Some say he was martyred, others that he died in the wilds of the Himalayas and others believe that he retreated to a cave to dedicate the rest of his life to prayer.

Church history is full of many inspiring attempts at contextualisation. The early Jesuits were among the first to seek to understand and identify closely with the people they sought to enlist as disciples of Jesus. I recommend you read about the lives of Robert de Nobili and Mateo Ricci. The Protestants were a lot slower off the mark with foreign missions. The Moravians were among the first to groups like the Greenland Inuit and the African slaves of the West Indies. Their unique method of getting alongside the slaves was very drastic - to sell themselves into slavery. John Wesley realised that the Church of England had little interest in ministering to the miners and factory workers of the newly industrialised parts of England and no structures even if they did. He resorted to field preaching to reach these people and among his spectacularly successful ways of discipling converts was through setting up small nurture groups known as "Class Meetings" and publishing songs set to catchy tunes as an effective tool for inculcating Christian teaching.

Mazhar provides an excellent example of contemporary contextualisation^{xxv}. The problem is that many Muslims see the Bible as a culturally Western book so Mazhar sought to present the Christian Scriptures in a way that Muslims can understand and respect. This involved working with Muslim scholars and writers to understand and then resolve typical Muslim misunderstanding of the text. In fact it was influential Muslims who were friends of Mazhar who challenged Mazhar to publish the Scriptures in a way that Muslims would really understand them. This led naturally on to writing commentaries: "An Eastern Reading of the Gospel of Luke", "A Sufi Reading of the Gospel of John" (Sufis are a sect of Islam who reject the legalistic face of Islam and seek a personal relationship with God and are very attracted to Jesus), "Genesis: the Origin of the World and of Humanity". Note that unlike the Prophets, Proverbs, Psalms or Epistles these three books of the Bible are predominantly stories, which in Arabic culture play a far more important place than they do in Western culture. An Arabic saying goes "the shortest distance between a human being and truth is a story." (As an aside Mazhar is also a best-selling novelist who prefers to convey the Christian message by story rather than by polemical writing against Islam.)

These commentaries tackled the typical Muslim obstacles to faith in Christ like terms such as "Son of God", "Trinity" and questions like "Why are there Four Gospels"? The books are presented very attractively in accordance with the same respect that Muslims show the Koran with hardbound covers decorated with beautiful Arabic calligraphy. Rather than using colloquial Arabic the books are written in the high, literary Arabic that gives dignity and credence to an authoritative religious text.

As a result these books are bestsellers. As one Taliban reader said after reading the Luke publication, "I wish all the Taliban would read this." Unlike some Western missionary agencies who seek to illegally smuggle and distribute Christian literature into Muslim countries, Mazhar's books are only distributed legally through the largest and most respected secular Arab publishing houses in the Middle East. Hence they are readily available in bookstores in 23 Arab countries as well as Pakistan and Iran and in fact are bestsellers.

These commentaries use the text of current Arabic translations of the Scriptures. The next project is to attempt a new Arabic translation of the whole Bible because of the real shortcomings of current Arabic translations which are laden with ancient Church terminology.

8. THINK ABOUT

Biography is one of the best entry points for an appreciation of the practice, challenges and issues in Christian mission. Biography grounds mission in real life. We see the general principles of mission applied to a specific time and place in the human story. More importantly it is inspirational. You have already been given the opportunity to read some missionary biography. Now it is suggested you read the biography of Christians from other cultures. It is particularly interesting to see how Christians have sought to live out an authentic Christian life and presented Jesus in a way that is true to their cultural identity rather than just importing Western Christian lifestyle, values and thought forms.

Read a biography of an indigenous Christian.

- 1. What was the traditional religion of their area?*
- 2. How did they become a Christian?*
- 3. What challenges did they face?*
- 4. What did you learn from their example?*

Some suggestions:

Watchman Nee (China)
Liu Zhenying (China: Brother Yun "The Heavenly Man")
Samuel Crowther (Nigeria)
James Noble (Australian aboriginal)
Sundar Singh (India)
Pandita Ramabai (Indian woman)
Ko Tha Byu (Karen tribe in Burma)
Apolo Kivebulaya (Ugandan "Apostle to the Pygmies")
Toyohiko Kagawa (Japan)

The Value of the Four Selves and the Four P's

During the period of colonialism, missionaries preferred to linger in one place rather than move on. Not only was it easier to remain in charge of the churches they planted, but they also began to doubt whether local leaders were ready to take over. This led to the problem of dependency, where foreigners felt they had to lead indefinitely the churches they planted, and local people felt powerless to run their own churches. The Three-Selves Formula was a response to this syndrome. It has been around for over 150 years and states that a newly planted church is mature or indigenous when it is firstly self-governing, secondly self-propagating, and thirdly self-supporting. It was first popularized and implemented by a pair of missionary statesmen who headed the largest mission agencies of their day: the Englishman, Henry Venn, of the CMS and the American, Rufus Anderson.

The thinking behind the formula derived from field experiences of missionaries as well as from Bible study. The desired effect of the formula was to speed up the pace of world evangelisation by moving missionaries on to new places while the leaders of the churches they started would complete the task of local evangelisation. Venn and Anderson gave missionaries a goal to work towards: the production of churches that were mature enough to function on their own without missionary help in their own locale. Once that was achieved, missionaries could go to the "regions beyond," sure in the knowledge that the churches they left behind could succeed without them. That, after all, was how the Apostle Paul proceeded in his mission work.

Roland Allen followed up on Venn's and Anderson's thinking in his famous 1912 book, *Missionary Methods: St. Paul's or Ours?*, where he compared the mission efforts of that time with those of the Apostle Paul. Understandably, he found that Paul's methods were far superior. He called on missionaries to have more confidence in their converts and to release control over them as Paul did, trusting that the Holy Spirit would help them learn how to work effectively in their churches, even through their inevitable mistakes. But Allen predicted that few would pay attention to his proposals, as colonialism had not yet ended.

In this prediction, Allen was correct, as "indigenous principles," which incorporated the Three-Selves Formula, became popular after developing nations became independent in the second half of the twentieth century. Along with the end of colonialism came the sudden interest in mission circles to indigenise local churches. Apparently the thinking went something like this: if leaders of the developing nations are now expected to run their own countries, perhaps it is also time to allow the local church leaders to run their own churches. Not only that, but church leaders also insisted on taking over from missionaries after the prolonged delay associated with western domination.

In the last fifty years some missionary anthropologists suggested adding a fourth "self" in order to include the notion that an indigenous church would communicate Christianity effectively in its own context. This has come to be known as "self-theologizing" or a better term "self-contextualising" meaning the ability of an indigenous church to read and interpret Scripture within its local culture.

Several years ago a forward-looking mission agency, SIM, described the changing role of the missionary as the Four P's. The missionary arrived as a Pioneer to preach the gospel and plant a church. Then he naturally became a Parent as he nurtured the infant church. As the indigenous church started to stretch its wings the missionary worked alongside the indigenous church as a support or Partner. The final stage is where the missionary submits to the leadership of the indigenous church and simply becomes a Participant.

The Priority of the Great Commission

My experience as Vicar of All Saints church in Jakarta showed that any number of agencies from large foreign government donors like the Japanese; NGOs like Ford Foundation and smaller players like the British Women's Association charities supported development in Indonesia: education, civil society, poverty eradication, health initiatives, orphanages – pretty much everything except specifically religious work like theological education, bible translation and Christian media. Only the churches would support this type of work. So our church established clear guidelines that the work we would support would be connected with “gospel work” and leave all the other stuff to the cashed-up aid agencies and smaller charities. History repeatedly shows that the men and women who have made the Great Commission their marching orders have achieved great and lasting things for humankind. I will give you a personal example.

CASE STUDY 1

In researching the history of All Saints Jakarta I discovered an early English missionary named Walter Medhurst. His vision was to take the gospel to China, but because the Emperor of China banned all foreigners Walter and others settled in cities outside China that had large Chinese populations in order to make disciples of Jesus by learning the Chinese language, studying Chinese culture, translating and publishing the Bible in Chinese, preaching the gospel and teaching and encouraging converts to follow Jesus. Walter did this in Jakarta for over twenty years until foreigners were given permission to go to China where he spent the last twenty years of his life. All his life he had the one aim: to make disciples by baptising and teaching. Walter has been pretty much forgotten but in the process of seeking to make disciples in Jakarta he pioneered All Saints Church which has been an enormous blessing to the wider Indonesian church for over 180 years; and founded the Parapatan Orphanage which still exists and has helped literally thousands of young Indonesians.; pioneered studies of Chinese language and culture, giving westerners an appreciation of the world's oldest continuing civilisation. When he was able to finally move to China he helped found the modern city of Shanghai, becoming the first Chairman of the Municipal Council; established the first modern printing press and pioneered Christian publishing in China; was one of the small team of missionaries who translated the Bible into Chinese – an act which Sun Yat Sen the “Father” of modern China described as the most important step in modernising China and opening the ancient, tradition-bound, Empire to the wider world; mentored younger missionaries, including Hudson Taylor, who took the gospel throughout China and South East Asia. Some of his protégés pioneered women's education, modern medicine, orphanages and modern university education in China. Surprisingly, when I looked for biographies for Walter there were none. He has been virtually forgotten. But that would not have bothered him. His achievements, all the more important because of China's position in the world, would not have mattered to him. This is because he never set out to start a church or orphanage in Jakarta, or to be a pioneer of Chinese studies, or to help found Shanghai. He just wanted to make Chinese disciples of Jesus. The lesson is that so many of these valuable pillars of modern life like hospitals, schools, universities and welfare agencies are spinoffs from these quiet achievers who did not actually set out to found institutions but to carry out the Great Commission.

CASE STUDY 2

*The Edinburgh Missions Conference of 1910 had the stated aim of furthering world evangelisation. It was the genesis of the **World Council of Churches**, and within a generation other concerns like “Faith*

and Order” had taken centre stage and now the Council for World Mission and Evangelism is not only a subset of WCC but world evangelisation has been discredited by CWME participants as “triumphalistic” and “colonial”. Issues like social justice and now environmental concerns have been added to the meaning of the word “mission”, again blunting the Christ-given agenda of disciple-making. This is why in 1974 missionary and evangelistic agencies from across the world initiated the Lausanne Movement - to get back to the Edinburgh Conference agenda.

Sodalities and modalities

The history of missions shows that institutions are better at staying than going, whereas small bands of the keen and committed are better at going than staying. Ralph Winter invented the helpful dichotomy of categorising Christian organisations as either “modalities” or “sodalities”. He borrowed the term sodalities from Catholic lay organisations but expanded to mean any Christian group which is “ad hoc” i.e. formed together for a specific purpose. He invented the term modality as a counterpoint. A diocese is a modality, whereas a missionary society is a sodality. The church needs both modalities and sodalities. Once a sodality owns property and has to pay salaries it starts to merge into a modality. We need modalities that are responsibly and prudently managed but we also need risk-taking, adventurous sodalities. Both groups have different roles in mission. At their best they work together in a healthy synergy. At its worst a modality focuses so much on its own security that it becomes self-serving or over-regulated, whereas a sodality can end up having no accountability and leaving messes for others to clean up.

One lesson from this is don’t wait for “them” - those in charge - to take mission initiatives or they may never happen. Just do it, but do it prayerfully, humbly, with accountability and in partnership with other like-minded Christians.

9. THINK ABOUT

- 1. Focus on one particular cross-cultural, indigenous or Tasmanian Christian pioneer whose life strikes a chord with you or inspires you. Describe one specific lesson from their life that can apply to doing mission in your own area.*
- 2. How could worship in your church be changed to make it more accessible or relevant to someone who is 30 years younger than you? E.g. music, seating, prayers, sermon, hospitality, bible reading, advertising events etc.*
- 3. Rate your church on a five point scale for each of the “Four Selves” (1: not even trying, 2: struggling, 3: muddling by, 4: trying, 5: successful) Look at one of the “Selves” that scored lowly and suggest practical ways to improve in that area.*
- 4. Write two hundred words of your thoughts on how the Great Commission, to make disciples, relates to the Great Commandment, to love your neighbour as yourself, in local and global mission.*
- 5. Pick one mission initiative that should be taken in your parish. Look for like-minded people. Start praying together about this initiative and see where God takes you.*
- 6. Consider joining CMS as a way of participating in global mission.*

“Acts chapter 30”: the Great Commission here & now

The Book of Acts has only 28 chapters. If we imagine that the history of the Christian church is chapter 29, then by the same token chapter 30 is being written in the here and now. There is no good reason why being a Christian in 21st Century Tasmania should not be as exciting, challenging, faith-stretching and joyful as it was in the Book of Acts. Our Lord has not changed. His Great Commission has not changed. Moreover we have the lessons of the last two thousand years of Christian mission to learn from. To start a conversation here are my suggestions about being an “Acts chapter 30 church”

Repent

First and foremost we need to be overwhelmed, drenched, marinated in the experience of the height and depth and width of the love of Christ in all his mercy and beauty and grace and humility and goodness.

Second, we need to be committed disciples of Jesus Christ ourselves, serious about growing and deepening in our love of God and of others.

Third we need to make an honest assessment of our disciple-making which should result in a sense of crisis, that indeed our churches are failing their responsibility. Consequently there will soon be whole districts of this State where there is no longer a worshipping, witnessing, disciple-making Christian congregation. If we are culpable for being lazy, complacent, timid or disobedient we need to repent.

Fourth we need to have a sense of sorrow for the generations who have not been made disciples.

Fifth we need to profoundly and unswervingly hope in God’s capacity and desire to bring life back to the dead bones of the church

Sixth we need to be encouraged to recognise the positives of our situation and use them as building blocks for a bright future.

Pay the price: sacrifice the good for the sake of the better

When a man and a woman love each other it is natural and right that they should seek to conceive and nurture children together in love. God created us to love us. The privilege of discipleship carries the responsibility to make other disciples. The joy of discipleship is to see others come to Jesus and grow in him.

But “no pain, no gain”. We must be prepared to make costly sacrifices of money, cherished traditions, comfort and time. We need to embrace a new culture of boldness, risk-taking and innovation. Life is very short and not to be wasted devoting it to the trivial like sporting achievement, hobbies or acquiring possessions. Any pleasure now that we might sacrifice for the sake of serving God will be amply compensated in heaven where temporal pleasure, and suffering, is overshadowed by the joy of the beatific blessing of encountering God in all his beauty. There is only one vision worthy of the name: to see all people everywhere as growing disciples of Christ.

We need to make an honest review of the way church is currently done and how alien it is to the unchurched. When was the last time we surveyed the community about their perceptions of church, of how they have been treated in the past, even what they think we could do to make people feel welcome. That may sound a bit like taking a crass marketing approach but the greater danger is to be

regarded as an exclusive society with outlandish rites that meets in a quaint building at a most inconvenient time.

To love our neighbour as we love ourselves is to know him and to be known by him or her. While God is to be worshipped, being worthy of our love, loving our neighbour may well be in spite of his being unlovely. To love my neighbour involves seeking to understand and appreciate them. This is costly and will involve going outside our comfort zone and also making ourselves vulnerable. It requires us to break through our ego bubbles. It is a mistake to interpret this as “love your neighbour the same way you love yourself”. Rather it means “Love your neighbour to the same extent you love yourself”

Love is costly involving vulnerability of leaving our comfort zone in order to enter others’ comfort zones. We have to travel light – we take our personal knowledge of Jesus Christ to people – nothing more and nothing less. We can’t afford to take anything more than Jesus. A cross cultural missionary has to be truly incarnational. Just as God entered the world as a child at the first Christmas, an infant with no language and no ability to help himself, so missionaries have to forsake their privileges and become like infants starting with the first stumbling efforts of a two year old learning to make the strange sounds of a new language, then of a kindergartner learning the alphabet. It is frustrating and at times humiliating.

It is no accident that Jesus’ promise to be with us always caps off the Great Commission. As we seek to make disciples the sense of his presence and help and joy will become more evident. He reserves for us a very special joy for when we suffer rejection, opposition, slander or other troubles as a result of faithfully seeking to make disciples.

Seize opportunities

Our particular calling in disciple-making frequently relates to the manner in which we came and were nurtured in Christ e.g. people who were successfully nurtured from childhood through teaching tend towards teaching. It also relates to our talents e.g. people with a talent for sales are often good at personal evangelism.

As we pray God leads us to pray for particular situations or individuals. If not, a good prayer is “Surprise me Lord by causing a very unlikely person to become a Christian!” God is constantly supplying opportunities for disciple-making – but it is only when we are praying that we see them as such. When nothing seems to be happening pray for a crisis – not that we want anyone to suffer but because people need to be shaken from their spiritual slumber.

Pray to God that his Spirit will show points of contact with the community. Undertake a survey of needs that are not being met. Then take the initiative. Match the parishioners’ gifts, enthusiasm and desire to serve with community needs. Some local examples are ‘Backyard Angels’ (West Tamar Parish), ‘Mainly Music’(Riverlinks Parish), Craft Group (Sandford and others), Book Club (Cathedral), Breakfast Club (Buckland), Cafe church (St Leonard’s), Men’s Breakfasts , Men’s Pub Nights, Walking Groups, Community Carols by Candlelight, Youth Drop-in and remedial reading helpers in schools.

An obstacle, a difficulty or the prospect of suffering are not necessarily “closed doors” to the gospel. Take the example of Paul. When the Holy Spirit caused Christians to prophesy that if Paul went to Jerusalem he would be bound and handed over to the Gentiles (as had happened to his Lord) everyone jumped to the conclusion that the Holy Spirit was saying “Don’t go to Jerusalem”. Paul said “Bring it on!” He saw it as an opportunity to get to Rome, albeit in chains, so he could preach the gospel to the Roman Emperor himself!

Blossom where you are planted! Because your circumstances are unpromising, frustrating or unexciting that is no reason to feel washed up as a disciple-maker – for instance it is amazing the number of people who have been imprisoned for their faith who have found prison the most fruitful of mission fields! Some of the best intercessors have been people housebound by illness or age.

Recognise the team effort

As “it takes a village to raise a child” so it takes a church to make a disciple. There is no spiritual gift or role in the New Testament known as “disciple-maker”. Look at yourself. Who helped make you a disciple? It took the whole range of evangelists, teachers, givers, pray-ers and the rest. People you do not even know of probably prayed for you, perhaps someone invited you to church, someone else counselled you to put your trust in Jesus, someone rescued you when you were discouraged and on the verge of giving up. Someone wrote a book that helped you, and so on. And behind it all was the invisible hand of Jesus the great disciple-maker himself directing the operation and working on these different people through the invisible power of his Spirit.

Trust Jesus’ authority

“If God is for us, who can be against us?” We need to be utterly sure that Jesus is the unique Saviour of the world, and that God has made him Lord of all. “For Christians we have to deal with a tension between conflicting values. On one hand our society places a very high value on tolerance, moral relativism and cultural pluralism. On the other hands Christians believe that Jesus is “the way, the truth and the life.” Each of us must work at resolving this tension in a way that honours God and shows respect to people who do not yet believe in Jesus.

Recruit disciples

Evangelism is about proclaiming the truth about Jesus so our manner of sharing the gospel with others needs to be in keeping with the character and spirit of Jesus. Our attitude should be characterised by love, enthusiasm, dependence on God and knowledge of the truth.

Love seeks to understand someone’s personality type, going beyond our own ego bubbles, learning not to project on to others our feelings or preferences. Love also seeks to appreciate and respect the differences in the other’s background which cause them to see things differently and to have a different sense of values.

The apostle Andrew provides a model of someone enthusiastic to introduce others to Jesus. Although the first of Jesus’ disciples he lacked the forcefulness, leadership abilities and possibly intelligence of a Peter. However on the three occasions he is mentioned (John chapters 1, 6 and 11) he is introducing people to Jesus.

Paul exemplifies prayerful dependence on God. In Colossians 4: 2-6 Paul gave excellent advice for evangelism:

First, pray that “God may open doors for our message so that we may proclaim the ministry of Christ”. It means praying for opportunities but most importantly for God to soften stony hearts, to open the eyes of the spiritually blind.

Secondly, pray that we may “proclaim it clearly”. We need to have a clear grasp of the gospel and be able to explain it in terms that the hearer can comprehend.

We all need a clear understanding of the gospel so that we can explain it succinctly to anyone who

asks what we believe. For instance a simple ABC Gospel outline is:

A Accept that we have a problem called sin (Measles and band-aids illustration. Putting bandaids on the spots does not cure measles, because the problem is a virus in the bloodstream. In the same way specific sins are not the problem, they are just the symptom of the bigger problem of SIN which is our rebellious orientation away from God.)

B Believe that Jesus died for our forgiveness (The book and the light illustration. Place a book, as a list of all your multitude sins, on your hand. Look up towards a light and explain how our guilt blocks us from God. Then hold up the empty hand palm upwards towards the light and explain how there was only one without sin, Jesus. Next move the book across to the Jesus palm and explain how Jesus took our guilt when he died on the cross and was buried so that God could now see us as innocent)

C Commit to following Jesus (The hand in the mist illustration. Explain that in order to receive the forgiveness offered through Jesus' death we need to accept by faith. This faith is not so much belief as a trust that places our lives completely in God's hand. Describe someone slipping off the edge of cliff in the mist and grabbing on to some rocks. Then they hear a voice from above "Take my hand!" and see a hand above. Their life depends on taking one of their hands clinging to the rock and grasping the offered hand.)

Better still: make up your own gospel outline!

Paul continues "...be wise in the way you act towards outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversations be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." In other words we need to have some ammunition to graciously deal with the usual excuses people make for not committing to Jesus.

Clever retorts that we make are unlikely to win people to Jesus but by the grace of God they will bother them. It is worth remembering that when people become unsettled, restless and even irritated about the Christian message it is a sign that they are on the way to becoming disciples. Paul himself is an example of one who moved from violent opposition to Jesus and his followers to fervent commitment.



A HINT

Anglicans don't have to worry too much about a ready-made gospel presentation – just think of the baptism service.

10. THINK ABOUT:

1. *Learn the ABC formula and practise delivering it to each other.*
2. *Think of two objections people make about the Christian faith and research some good responses to them*
3. *Start praying regularly for three people that God will turn their hearts to Jesus*

Think strategy

In a parish situation, it is a priority to see Parish Council populated with people who take the Great Commission personally and who share the vision of disciple-making as the “core business” of the church.

Tasmanians tend to relate best to small groups rather than massed crowds. We all have a sphere of influence which is the small number of people we can intentionally influence. Jesus chose just twelve. Yet how often in Tasmania do we bewail the smallness of our congregations, particularly the little rural centres which may be gatherings of half a dozen of the faithful. Let us not forget the positive side to this type of ministry!

A fruitful area of ministry for Tasmania could be described as family chaplaincy – a pre-requisite of which is long-term presence. Encourage every member of the congregation to pray regularly for family members of every generation to follow Jesus.

Here is a three-stage model for initiating family ministry that has been tried and tested in Tasmania:

First, publicly declare a moratorium on all baptisms (step one of the two step disciple-making process) until there are provisions in place for nurture (step two of the disciple-making process “teaching all I have commanded”) This can be explained to those making enquiry about baptism that the church is currently failing in its responsibilities and needs to get its act together, rather than that the church is rejecting them. It is recognition of the futility of baptising people if we do not seriously attempt to make them disciples of Jesus. This is not a cop-out from welcoming and baptising all comers but rather a device to get into place some effective system of nurture.

Second, call together a small ad hoc group or taskforce to organise and publicise some initiatives aimed at families. At the same time the whole congregation needs to share the vision. The first initiative should be a monthly family service focussed on step 2 of disciple-making: teaching the young to love God and others.

Third, develop an email list of all families who have had any sort of contact with the church and local schools. Three times a year contact these families and schools. Invite children, parents and other family members to a seasonal event like a Children’s Nativity Service, Easter Celebration, Winter or Spring event. Organise the programme to be welcoming and relaxed, with maximum participation by the children and tea or coffee for the parents. Have relevant music, crafts, games, stories that give relevant input. Make sure the time suits families.

In unity there is strength. Team up with other Christian congregations or organisations in the area So far we have focussed on the “lost” generations who have missed the opportunity to become disciples of Jesus. However, we are all aware that Tasmania has an ever-growing aged population and they need to be made disciples too. In many cases these folk have been baptised, attended Sunday School, been married in a church and would like to have their funeral conducted by a Christian minister.

Know the Father

In the Great Commission Jesus commands that we are “to baptise in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”. In different generations and cultures there are different issues that confront us in seeking to know and help others to know God. For instance gone are the days in Australia when the father was the unquestioned authority figure and sole breadwinner in the family.

An increasing number of Australians have never known a father who takes responsibility for being a role model, a provider, a protector, a nurturer and a guide.

To know God as the Father is to know his unconditional love and acceptance. God is first and foremost “the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 1:3) but he also, by sheer grace, desires and enables us to become his children (Ephesians 1:4-7) That the Father loves us and accepts us unconditionally, one would think would be easy to respond to, but often it is not so. The New Covenant of Jesus enables a human being to relate to God in a new way as his child and to seek to become his child in character as well as in status. This first and greatest precept recognises that God knows us and requires us to know him. The Biblical concept of knowing is less about information and more about commitment and intimacy. It involves total commitment to God. In the hierarchy of loves God must come first hence “with all your heart and soul and mind and strength”. To be set free to love others we need to experience and be soaked in the love of God. Only after experiencing God’s forgiveness can we truly forgive others. Only after being grounded in the security experiencing God’s unconditional love can we love others unconditionally. Only when we are secure and confident in our identity as God’s children can we relate to others honestly, allow ourselves to become vulnerable.

In my ministry I have met some high achievers. Terry came to see me because he felt stuck in his Christian walk. He was not happy with his spiritual state. It was not a matter of previous moral lapses. That had been dealt with. It was just a strong but indefinite sense of inadequacy as a Christian. So we looked at his growing up years. His father had been a hard-bitten blue-collar worker, a “battler” who had a tough life compounded by PTS disorder so common to that generation of Second World War veterans. Gerry had been a talented child both in terms of sporting and academic achievement. But no matter how hard he tried or what he achieved his father never expressed approval or gave him encouragement. So Gerry was stunned to discover as an adult that during all these years his father had often at the pub proudly shared Gerry’s achievements. So then we looked at Gerry’s view of God and his sense that in God’s eyes he was never good enough, that no matter how hard he tried God would not approve of him. Then we looked at the story of the Prodigal Son and the father who rejoiced in his sons, who loved them unconditionally simply because they were his sons. For Gerry it was a spiritual breakthrough to recalibrate his understanding of the fatherhood of God away from his negative childhood experiences to the teaching of Jesus.

Jim was a keen Christian who was a devoted father and husband and conscientious employee and loyal parishioner. One day he came to see me to discuss his struggle with a sense of inadequacy as a Christian. It was not an issue of moral failing. So we looked at his relationship with his father. His father had been a high achiever and also a hard, demanding parent and Tim had grown up seeking his father’s approval and rarely obtaining it. So we then explored Tim’s relationship with his heavenly father. The conclusion we came to was that Tim had trouble accepting God as a Father who truly loved him unconditionally, who says “because of Jesus I accept you as you are, as my beloved son.”

Prayer is central to this relationship. The Lord’s Prayer expresses how we are to love God: relating to him as his children at the same time adoring and revering him in all his holiness; acknowledging his sovereignty and at the same time implicitly commit ourselves to the coming of his kingdom; humbly trusting him for provision of all our needs and forgiveness while committing ourselves to the lifetime task of forgiving others; recognising that life is filled with trials and challenges but so acknowledging our constant need for his guidance and protection. The ACTS formula for prayer is a useful way to explore loving God. ACTS is an acronym standing for Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, Supplication. To love God is different from loving church or even Christianity. The concept of adoration is central. It strips away the “me” part of loving the Other. Adoration is about focussing on God in the beauty and wonder of his nature, divorced from its implications for me personally whether negative (exposing my

sinfulness) or positive (counting my blessings or seeking his favour)

Know the Son

In this day and age when a core value of our society is acceptance of a variety of opinions about religion it is increasingly difficult to assert that Jesus is the One, True Way. We need the confidence and the evidence to counterattack the fuzzy thinking that leads to conclusions that Jesus was just one among many visionaries who was inspired to found a religion.

Jesus the disciple-maker was more than just the Supreme Teacher. He is the Great Fulfiller in whom all the hopes and aspirations of the Old Testament are at once fulfilled and transformed in a way that could never be imagined and that was at once wonderful and shocking.

Let me explain. There are four God-appointed roles in the Old Testament that keep recurring: the roles of prophet, priest, king and son. The prophet was God's messenger to God's people. The priest was God's doorkeeper or intermediary to God's people. The king was God's shepherd over God's people. The son had a special role: more than just the heir, he had the authority of the father. So the king was referred to as the son of God. The nickname given to Joseph the Levite was "Son of encouragement" (Barnabas) meaning that he was a great encourager, so "son of" meant to share the essential nature of someone or something.

Needless to say the Old Testament is a sad saga of false prophets, immoral priests, irresponsible kings and rebellious sons. But even the best like David the king, Elijah the prophet, Aaron the priest or Isaac the son had feet of clay. Now what Jesus did, was to rewrite each of those roles.

He was more than a prophet because he was in fact the message. If we only had the record of Jesus' actions and not his teachings, of how he treated people and how he died on the cross and rose – but none of his teaching, we would still hear God speaking through him loud and clear.

He was more than a priest because he did not just claim to be God's Temple but he provided himself as the complete and final and perfect sacrifice for the sin of the world.

He was more than a king because he was the servant of all who showed that real leadership is found in serving others rather than dominating them.

He is the true son of God because he perfectly embodied God's character. Immediately after his baptism when God confirmed to him that he was "My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" he was tempted in the wilderness and showed that true sonship is revealed in obedience to the Father rather than exploiting the privileges of the relationship.

There is no substitute for a profound and ongoing experience of Jesus Christ. So care needs to be taken for counterfeit experiences such as mood elevation produced by mind manipulation in the worship context by music, lighting or oratory, or the "feel goods" of Christian fellowship. Persistent demands for money are usually a sign of the real motivation for counterfeit "ministries". The real sign of genuine ongoing conversion is deep personal change involving forgiveness of others; a rejection of materialism and consumerism; healthy relationships free of manipulation or co-dependency; truthfulness; a humble awareness of sin and self-deceit; a healthy sense of humour; a delight in the wonders and paradoxes of God working in us through Christ.

Know the Holy Spirit

The teaching on the person of the Holy Spirit, that he is one of the three persons of the Trinity, has remained constant over the centuries. However over the years there have been changing emphases on the work of the Holy Spirit. Just compare the prayer for Pentecost from the different prayer books.

Four centuries ago a good Englishman was expected to be a loyal and obedient subject of the king, a faithful and unquestioning member of the Church of England and a seeker after the quiet life. The state and church hierarchy were most afraid of heresy, treason and schism, so not surprisingly the emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit was on keeping people in the truth. Hence the "Book of Common Prayer" prayer for Pentecost was: *"O God who at this time didst teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by the sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit; Grant us by the same Spirit to have a right judgement in all things, and evermore to rejoice in his holy comfort..."*

By contrast, the 1995 "Prayer Book for Australia" has three other prayers of the day for Pentecost. The first is focussed on mission-mindedness: *"Almighty God, at the feast of Pentecost you sent your Holy Spirit to the disciples, filling them with joy and boldness to preach the gospel: empower with us with the same Spirit to witness to your redeeming love and draw all people to you..."*

The second is focussed on personal holiness: *"Almighty God, you sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your Church: open our hearts to the riches of your grace, that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love, joy and peace..."*

The third is on joyful obedience: *"O God who in the smoke and fire upon Mount Sinai gave the law to Moses, and who revealed the new covenant in the fire of the Spirit: grant we pray, kindled by that same Spirit which you poured forth upon your apostles, we may fulfil with joy your commandments of love..."*

Each prayer is faithful to what the Scriptures show us about the Holy Spirit. It is rather a matter of emphasis, each drawing on different parts of the Scriptures, particularly the Book of Acts, John's Gospel and Paul's Letters. However it is a good reminder that teaching on the Holy Spirit needs to take in account the whole body of Scripture rather than a favourite passage.

Aim at maturity

Loving one's neighbour means helping him to grow and become mature, to achieve *"the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ"* (Ephesians 4:13). There are no shortcuts to maturity and there is no substitute for experience. Let me give you an example from a deputation visit.

In August 2009 Pam and I visited Flinders Island for a few days to meet the parishioners and talk about mission. One day we ascended Mt Strzelecki. It was a memorable experience, and very good exercise. We delighted in observing the elusive birds, the evidence of wombats, the roaring creek with the foam, the tantalizing fleeting views of Chapel Island and Trousers Beach, the sight and sound of the clouds being sucked through the gap between the peaks, the exhilaration of achievement, the companionship and even the hesitant crawl up the bare granite near the summit.

We enjoyed it so much because we were well prepared. On the previous day we had observed from the Rectory kitchen window that the mountain could become quickly covered in cloud. So we made sure we took our wet weather gear. We googled the weather forecast just before we set out so we knew it would be mostly fine and that there would be moderate winds. We knew from

tackling Mt Eliza the year before that that my right knee and Pam's hip might suffer from the bone-crunching descent so we followed a doctor's advice and took an anti-inflammatory the night before. We read the guide book and knew that at our speed, with a break at the top, it would take five hours so we arranged for Helen, our host, to pick us up at the estimated time of arrival.

Maturity is something that comes out of learning from experience and results in being well-prepared for the challenges that lie ahead. The same applies to spiritual maturity. Here are some key indicators of spiritual maturity. This list is not canonical so feel free to critique it. How would you supplement or modify it?

1. an unshakeable assurance of being God's beloved child
2. an experience of God's love that overflows into seeking for others to experience God's love
3. an honest assessment of one's personal strengths and weaknesses
4. a strong desire to know God better and to grow in holiness
5. an ability to look beyond appearances with people, with forms of worship – and appreciate the inner meaning
6. integration of belief and behaviour
7. a robust commitment to daily bible reading and prayer
8. a desire for Christian fellowship, not from the point of view of what can one get out of it, but from the point of view of seeking to encourage others
9. an acceptance of others and the church with all their faults without being disillusioned
10. contentment in Christ no matter what one's circumstances c.f. Philippians 4: 11-13,

11.THINK ABOUT

Devise a strategy for making disciples in your "neck of the woods" be it in a parish, chaplaincy or other situation.

Strong Advice: Ignore practicalities like finance, personnel and compliance issues. They tend to stifle creative thinking. They invariably get sorted out once the right vision is in place.

The following questions provide some direction:

1. *Who is your target group? E.g. young families, new arrivals, prisoners, tourists.*
2. *Are there others whose experience you can benefit from?*
3. *Are there partnerships that can be forged with others who have experience and/or success with this target group?*

4. *How do you invite people to a meeting or event?*
5. *Who is the team?*
6. *What training is needed for the team?*
7. *Who will you invite to commit to praying regularly and faithfully for the venture?*
8. *What are the potential contact points with the target group? What activities do they enjoy? What are their needs?*
9. *Thinking “comfort zones” for the target group, where and when is the best venue for initially contacting them and then regularly gathering them?*
10. *What is the best manner of teaching them e.g. activity-based learning, inductive bible study, story-telling, DVD’s, songs?*
11. *Make your own list of measures of maturity to help shape the content of the teaching, arranging it in order of importance*

Now, do it!

The CWME and the Lausanne Movement represent divergent attitudes to the Christian Mission. The following excerpts from their websites illustrate this. At the end is a list of Lausanne Occasional Papers which are well worth browsing for some good, practical mission thinking.

1. The Council for World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) of the World Council of Churches (WCC)



<http://www.oikoumene.org/en/who-are-we/organization-structure/consultative-bodies/world-mission-and-evangelism/history.html>

The world mission conference held in **Edinburgh** in **1910** in the mood of the student movement's watchword of "the evangelisation of the world in this generation" is considered the symbolic starting point of the contemporary ecumenical movement.

There had been earlier major mission conferences, but at Edinburgh, first steps were taken towards an institutionalized cooperation between Protestant mission councils. However there were no Catholic nor Orthodox delegates present. Out of the 1400 participants, 17 came from the global south.

The Edinburgh conference had been very carefully prepared in thematic commissions. Despite quite progressive debates in some of those commissions, the event generally reflected a traditional conservative approach to mission, linking the proclamation of the gospel to the heathens with the spread of Western civilization.

Edinburgh gave birth to the **International Review of Mission** and to a continuation committee which prepared the creation of the International Missionary Council (IMC) in 1921.

The mood at the second world mission conference, held in **Jerusalem** in **1928**, was quite different. The First World War provoked by "Christian" countries had profoundly challenged the ideal of the Western civilization as embodiment of the gospel. The communist revolution of 1917 had made the dream of evangelizing the whole world within one generation unrealistic. At the Jerusalem conference, mission was strongly debated. Two major questions came up on which no real consensus emerged: the relation between the Christian message and other religions, and the theological interpretation of Christian social and political involvement.

The third mission conference took place in **1938** in **Tamparam**, near Madras, India. In a world where peace was increasingly threatened by fascist-type regimes (Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Japan), the discussions focused on the importance and centrality of the church, in particular the local church, in mission. Representatives from the so-called "younger" churches became a majority in Tamparam. While the conference defended the ultimate truth of the Christian message vis-à-vis other religions, it also advised missionaries to a listening and dialoguing approach in practice.

The IMC conference held in **Whitby**, Canada, in **1947**, reflected on the fundamental changes in the world after the shock of the second world war. There was a need to rebuild not only countries, but also relations between peoples who had been in conflict. Whitby became famous for its slogan, "partnership in obedience". The term "partnership" had been used earlier, but now received a particular emphasis. Delegates abandoned the use of the language of "Christian" and "non Christian" countries, opening the way to new paths in mission theology.

The next enlarged meeting of the IMC was in **Willingen**, Germany, in **1952**. As the communist revolution in China had put an end to the traditional mission enterprise in that country, the delegates rediscovered that mission depended first and foremost on God's own activity. Mission is the purpose and action of the triune God. The idea of *missio Dei*, which was taken up in the follow-up of the conference in Willingen, proved to be most creative. The strong emphasis on the centrality of the church in mission was replaced by an enlarged perspective which allowed to interpret events in the

world as determining factors for mission.

In **1958**, the IMC met in **Achimota** near Accra, Ghana, and debated the proposal to unite with the World Council of Churches, with which the IMC shared several programmes and had had intensive relations. The proposal was accepted by a great majority, while certain theologically more conservative mission councils refused the idea of an integration of mission and church. They wanted to preserve the missionary freedom and not become dependant on ecclesiastical authorities and agendas.

In **1961**, the "integration" of church and mission, in practice of the IMC with the WCC, became effective at the assemblies of **New Delhi**. The mission councils affiliated to the IMC became affiliated to the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism of the WCC (CWME). The Division on World Mission and Evangelism (DWME) and its Divisional Committee took over the programmatic work and responsibility of the IMC who ceased to exist.

From now on, the world mission conferences could really be called "ecumenical" because of the much larger denominational participation, including Orthodox churches and soon after the Second Vatican Council also Roman Catholic observers.

In **1963**, the first CWME met in **Mexico-City** under the theme of "mission in six continents". The perspective of mission was enlarged to encompass every continent and not only those of the "south". Meeting during the first development decade, the conference dealt intensively with witness in a world understood as the place where God was active, inviting the churches to join in *missio Dei*. It was the time of a positive appreciation of secularization and of non-religious formulations of Christian faith and action, particularly in the West.

The world mission conference in **Bangkok**, at the turn of the years **1972/1973**, became famous for its holistic approach to the theme "Salvation Today", encompassing spiritual as well as socio-political aspects in equal measure. The Bangkok conference acknowledged the need for contextual theologies and the recognition of cultural identity as shaping the voice of those answering and following Christ. The delegates struggled with the situation of exploitation and injustice also in the relations between churches. In order to enable local churches in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Pacific to set their own priorities in witness, the proposal was made of a temporary "moratorium" on sending money and missionaries from the North. An alternative proposal for more justice in mission relations was seen in the transformation of the Paris mission society into a community of churches in mission (called CEVAA).

The next CWME took place in **Melbourne**, Australia, in **1980**. Reflecting on the theme "Your kingdom come", the conference insisted on the particular role of the poor and churches of the poor in God's mission. Influenced by the Latin American liberation theologies, the delegates highlighted the radical aspects of the kingdom message and the serious challenge it threw to traditional missiology and mission programmes. At the same time, the conference's section dealing with the church's witness did remarkable work on evangelism and on the church as healing community. The conference also reflected how Christ's choice of vulnerability and way to the cross challenged the use of power, in political, church and mission life.

Much of Melbourne's insights are to be found in the document *Mission and Evangelism - An Ecumenical Affirmation* adopted in 1982, which remains the fundamental text on mission for the WCC. It is a landmark document which draws on insights from Protestant, evangelical, Orthodox and Roman Catholic mission theologies. After the tensions experienced during the 70s with the creation of a new international Protestant mission movement (the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation in 1974), the 1982 document can be seen as an attempt by CWME at recentring ecumenical mission theology with a clearer commitment to the proclamation of the gospel without losing the prophetic challenge of conferences such as Bangkok or Melbourne.

In this period, the already active involvement of Roman Catholics was enhanced when the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity appointed a consultant to the WCC, based in the team working on mission and evangelism.

The world mission conference of **San Antonio**, Texas, USA, in **1989** was the last in a world dominated

by the conflict between two ideological and economic systems. Its theme was another of the Lord's prayers requests, "Your will be done", to which was added "mission in Christ's way", an expression taken from the 1982 affirmation. The San Antonio conference is remarkable for a consensus statement reached on the relation between Christianity and other religions. This question has always been controversial at WCC mission conferences. The consensus found can be summarized in three sentences: We cannot point to any other way of salvation than Jesus Christ; at the same time we cannot put any limit to God's saving power. There is a tension between these affirmations which we acknowledge and cannot resolve. Moreover, for the first time at such conference, the mission mandate was extended to the whole of creation.

The **1996** conference in **Salvador da Bahía**, Brazil, was fully dedicated to the relation between gospel and cultures. After the change in world politics of 1989 and the increased influence of cultural and ethnic identities on violent conflicts, a renewed missiological reflection on culture was needed. Reaffirming the Bangkok conference's position on inculturation, the CWME in Salvador insisted on the richness of cultural variety as God's gift, but also on the gospel imperative to link the affirmation of one's cultural identity with an openness to other identities. The Salvador conference recognized the fundamental equal value of all cultures, but also their ambiguity. In its relation with cultures, the gospel may be illuminated, but also obscured. Churches in mission may have to confirm elements of their culture but challenge others. In the face of the situation in the Eastern Europe notably, the conference reaffirmed the WCC's opposition to proselytism and the need for cooperation in mission and common witness.

In 2000, the CWME adopted the study document "**Mission and Evangelism in Unity Today**". A paper on "**mission as ministry of reconciliation**" resulted from the intensive study processes in preparation of the 2005 mission conference.

In **2005**, the Conference on World Mission and Evangelism met near **Athens**, Greece. It was the first CWME in a majority Orthodox context and the first time representatives from the Roman Catholic Church and from evangelical and Pentecostal churches participated as delegates with full rights. The theme was: "Come, Holy spirit, heal and reconcile - Called in Christ to be reconciling and healing communities". It invited a more humble approach to mission, reminding ourselves of the priority of God's the Holy Spirit's mission in the world, the only one able to really bring healing and reconciliation in the full sense of the term. Within that overall dynamic of God in the world, the churches have a specific calling, which is to be ambassadors of reconciliation, and in particular to build, renew, multiply spaces where humans can experience something of God's healing and reconciling grace.

2. The Lausanne Movement

<http://www.lausanne.org/about.html> www.lausanne.org

"The Whole Church taking the Whole Gospel to the Whole World"

The story of Lausanne begins with Rev. Billy Graham. A powerful preacher, Graham quickly rose to prominence in the 1940's and 50's to become America's foremost evangelist. As he began preaching internationally, Graham developed a passion to "unite all evangelicals in the common task of the total evangelization of the world."

In 1966 the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, in partnership with America's *Christianity Today* magazine, sponsored the World Congress on Evangelism in Berlin. The Congress brought together 1,200 delegates from over 100 countries and inspired a number of follow-up conferences in places such as Singapore and Bogotá.

Just a few years later, Graham perceived the need for a larger, more diverse congress to reframe the Christian mission of evangelization in a world rife with social, political, economic, and religious upheaval. He shared this idea with 100 world Christian leaders, and the affirmation of the need for such a Congress was overwhelmingly enthusiastic.



The Congress

In July 1974 some 2,700 participants and guests from over 150 nations gathered in the Swiss Alps for ten days of discussion, fellowship, worship and prayer. The Congress achieved an unprecedented diversity of nationalities, ethnicities, ages, occupations and denominational affiliations. In fact, TIME magazine described the Lausanne Congress as “a formidable forum, possibly the widest-ranging meeting of Christians ever held.”

Congress participants heard addresses from some of the world’s most respected Christian leaders of the time, including Graham, Samuel Escobar, Francis Schaeffer, Malcolm Muggeridge, and John Stott. Ralph Winter’s plenary address, in which he introduced the term “unreached people groups” was hailed as “one of the milestone events in missiology.” In contradistinction to those calling for a moratorium on foreign missions, Winter argued that because thousands of groups remained without a single Christian witness, cross-cultural evangelization should be the primary task of the church. Dr. Scott Moreau (Evangelical Missions Quarterly) and Dr. Mike O’Rear (Global Mapping) have called the people groups concept “the most significant development in evangelical mission strategy over the last 25 years” (Moreau 1998).

The Covenant

One of the major undertakings of the 1974 Congress was the development of the Lausanne Covenant. Drafted in large part by a committee chaired by Stott, the Covenant is a stirring articulation of Christian conviction and mission and helped set the stage for new collaborative efforts among Christians. On the last day of the Congress, the Covenant was signed by Graham and Anglican Bishop Jack Dain and subsequently affirmed by an overwhelming majority of participants. To this day, the Lausanne Covenant serves as a basis for unity and a call to global evangelization.

Reflecting on the tremendous lasting and expanding impact of the original Lausanne Congress, Stott writes, “Many a conference has resembled a fireworks display. It has made a loud noise and illumined the night sky for a few brief brilliant seconds... What is exciting about Lausanne, however, is that its fire continues to spark off other fires.”

The Committee

At Lausanne 1974, organizers also received a strong mandate from participants to establish a Continuation Committee that would build on the momentum created at the Congress. In 1975 the Continuation Committee held its first meeting in Mexico City. Committee members expressed a wide variety of viewpoints regarding the future of the movement. Some leaders pressed for a singular focus on evangelization, while others favored a more holistic approach. In the end, the Committee agreed to “further the total biblical mission of the church, recognizing that in this mission of sacrificial service, evangelism is primary.”

The Committee appointed Ghanaian leader Gottfried Osei-Mensah as its first General Secretary, and renamed itself the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelisation (Lausanne Movement). The fledgling Committee was united by the Lausanne Covenant and by what Graham and others have called the “spirit of Lausanne” a spirit exemplified by humility, prayer, study, partnership and hope. According to Leighton Ford, the Committee’s first chairman, “the Lausanne spirit was a new and urgent commitment to world evangelization in all its aspects, a new attitude of cooperation in the task, and a new cultural sensitivity to the world to which we are called.”

Continuing Impact

Throughout its history, the Lausanne Movement has intentionally avoided building a large bureaucratic organization. Instead it strives to be a dynamic, catalytic force that propels a movement of like-minded missional Christians who pray, plan and work together on global evangelization.

Since 1974, dozens of Lausanne-related global, regional, and topical conferences have been convened all over the world. Global gatherings include the Consultation on World Evangelization (Pattaya 1980),

Conference of Young Leaders (Singapore 1987), Lausanne II (Manila 1989), The Forum for World Evangelisation (Pattaya 2004) and The Younger Leaders Gathering (Malaysia 2006). Lausanne has also inspired a constellation of regional networks and topical conferences such as the Asia Lausanne Committee on Evangelism (ALCOE), Chinese Coordination Center for World Evangelisation (CCCOWE), three Nigerian congresses on world evangelization, and eight international consultations on Jewish evangelism.

Many Lausanne gatherings have produced landmark documents known as Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOPs). Most of the early LOPs focus on Christian witness to specific groups such as Hindus, Buddhists, refugees and nominal Christians. The 2004 Forum in Pattaya generated 31 LOPs on topics as varied as bioethics and business-as-mission to the persecution of Christians and globalization.

The Lausanne Occasional Papers (LOPs) are historically important documents that have emerged from global consultations involving widely recognized evangelical leaders. The LOPs have been placed in the Lausanne Website to make more accessible and understandable the historical context and development of the various aspects of world evangelization:

- Pasadena Consultation - Homogeneous Unit Principle
- The Willowbank Report: Consultation on Gospel and Culture
- The Lausanne Covenant - An Exposition & Commentary
- Glen Eyrie Report - Muslim Evangelization
- Christian Witness to Refugees
- Christian Witness to the Chinese People
- Christian Witness to the Jewish People
- Christian Witness to Secularized People
- Christian Witness to Large Cities
- Christian Witness to Nominal Christians Among Roman Catholics
- Christian Witness to New Religious Movements
- Christian Witness to Marxists
- Christian Witness to Muslims
- Christian Witness to Hindus
- Christian Witness to Buddhists
- Christian Witness to Traditional Religionists of Asia and Oceania
- Christian Witness to Traditional Religionists of Latin America & Caribbean
- Christian Witness to People of African Traditional Religions
- Christian Witness to Nominal Christians Among the Orthodox
- Evangelical Commitment to Simple Life-Style: Exposition and Commentary
- Evangelism and Social Responsibility: An Evangelical Commitment
- Christian Witness to the Urban Poor (Appendix in .pdf format; 604 KB)
- Christian Witness to Nominal Christians Among Protestants
- Co-operating in World Evangelization: A Handbook on Church/Para-church Relationships (Reserved; not published)
- Radio in Mission
- Modern, Postmodern and Christian (available from MARC Publications)
- Ministry in Islamic Contexts (available from MARC Publications)
- Spiritual Conflict in Today's Mission (available from MARC Publications)
- 2004 Forum LOPs
- (Order a printed version of the complete 2004 Forum LOP Compendium from the William Carey Library)
- Globalization and the Gospel: Rethinking Mission in the Contemporary World - IG1 (.pdf format; 400 KB)

The Uniqueness of Christ in a Postmodern World and the Challenge of World Religions - IG2 (.pdf format; 638 KB)

The Persecuted Church - IG3 (.pdf format; 505 KB)

Holistic Mission - IG4 (.pdf format; 481 KB)

At Risk People - IG5 (.pdf format; 386 KB)

Ministry Among Least Reached People Groups (27% of the World) - IG6A (.pdf format; 594 KB)

Ministry Among People with Disabilities - IG6B (.pdf format; 502 KB)

Non Traditional Families: Reaching families with the Good News - IG7 (.pdf format; 402 KB)

Towards the Transformation of Our Cities/Regions - IG8 (.pdf format; 444 KB) or Order a Printed Copy

Partnership and Collaboration - IG9 (.pdf format; 208 KB)

The Local Church in Mission: Becoming a Missional Congregation in the Twenty-First Century Global Context and the Opportunities Offered Through Tentmaking Ministry - IG10 (.pdf format; 326 KB)

Marketplace Ministry - IG11 (.pdf format; 691 KB)

Future Leadership: A Call to Develop Christ-like Leaders - IG12 (.pdf format; 295 KB)

Prayer in Evangelism - IG13 (.pdf format; 389 KB)

The Realities of the Changing Expressions of the Church - IG14 (.pdf format; 389 KB)

The Two-Thirds World Church - IG15 (.pdf format; 396 KB)

Religious and Non-Religious Spirituality in the Western World ("New Age") - IG16 (.pdf format; 403 KB)

Redeeming the Arts: The Restoration of the Arts to God's Creational Intention - IG17 (.pdf format; 390 KB)

Evangelization of Children - IG18
 English (.pdf format; 762 KB) | German (.pdf format; 532kb)

Media and Technology - The Rainbow, the Ark & the Cross - IG19 (.pdf format; 409 KB)

Understanding Muslims - IG20 (.pdf format; 301 KB)

The Impact on Global Mission of Religious Nationalism and 9/11 Realities - IG21 (.pdf format; 275 KB)

Reconciliation as the Mission of God: Faithful Christian Witness in a World of Destructive Conflicts and Divisions - IG22 (.pdf format; 404 KB)

The 12/25 Challenge: Reaching the Youth Generation - IG23 (.pdf format; 414 KB)

Empowering Women and Men to Use Their Gifts Together in Advancing the Gospel - IG24 (.pdf format; 491 KB)

Making Disciples of Oral Learners - IG25 (.pdf format; 477 KB)

Diasporas and International Students: The New People Next Door - IG26 (.pdf format; 484 KB)

Funding for Evangelism and Mission - IG27 (.pdf format; 523 KB)

Effective Theological Education for World Evangelization - IG28 (.pdf format; 356 KB)

Bioethics: Obstacle or Opportunity for the Gospel? - IG29 (.pdf format; 404 KB)

Business-as-Mission - IG 30
 English (.pdf format; 762 KB) | French (.pdf format; 683 KB)

Jewish Evangelism: A Call to the Church - IG31 (.pdf format; 358 KB)

Special Issue Group for Senior Advisors, Senior Pastors and Executives of International Evangelistic Organizations (.pdf format; 180 KB)

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Endnotes

- ⁱ Lewis “Mere Christianity” Book IV ‘Beyond Personality’ ch 8 ‘Is Christianity hard or easy’
- ⁱⁱ all Bible references are from Today's New International Version.. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2001, 2005.)
- ⁱⁱⁱ Matthew 24: 14
- ^{iv} Matthew 8: 10,11
- ^v Acts 17:26
- ^{vi} Revelation 7:9
- ^{vii} The following points draw on “Effective Theological Education for World Evangelization” Lausanne Occasional Paper No. 57 pp 18-22
- ^{viii} Matthew 18: 1-9
- ^{ix} Mark 6:7-11; Matthew 10:5-42; Luke 9:1-6; Luke 10:1-16
- ^x Mark 6:30; Luke 9:10; 10:17
- ^{xi} Acts 26: 12
- ^{xii} 26:15-19
- ^{xiii} Acts 26: 22-24
- ^{xiv} See also Acts 7: 54-60, Acts 16: 22-25.
- ^{xv} See Acts 2: 4, 2: 47, 4: 8, 5: 19-10, 8: 26-39, 9: 4-16, 10: 3-6, 10: 13-20, 12: 6-11, 13: 4, 16:6-10, 18: 9-10, 22: 6-10, 22: 17-21, 23:11, 26:14-18 (in Aramaic!) 27:23-25
- ^{xvi} West, p 48
- ^{xvii} Nicholls, pp 316-317
- ^{xviii} Nicholls, p 341
- ^{xix} Stephens, ‘Knopwood’ pp 84-85 Knopwood’s sermon for condemned men:
- ^{xx} Fox, p 33-34
- ^{xxi} Brown, pp125,-126
- ^{xxii} Hiebert, p25
- ^{xxiii} See bibliography
- ^{xxiv} Chandler p144
- ^{xxv} Chandler pp 147-159