

## CHURCH PLANTING CHALLENGE

David Jones and Mikey Lynch got together to chat about church planting. With David as Moderator General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia and Mikey a Director of The Geneva Push they had some interesting reflections on the state of things and the challenges of the future. Here we share the first part of their conversation.

ML - So David, as Moderator General, can you tell us what is the state of the Presbyterian church nationally?

DJ - It's a lot worse than I thought. A lot of our congregations are really small and elderly and in the next 10 years there just won't be many left.

ML - And in some places in particular it's pretty bad? Victoria, WA?

DJ - Yes, and in South Australia there are hardly any viable congregations. Victoria has the appearance of being much bigger, but there are a lot of church buildings with elderly congregations. A recent report said that about 45 out of the 93 congregations there will be defunct in the next 3-5 years.

ML - What went wrong? What were the kinds of mistakes that have been made? This isn't something that happened overnight...

"...we are now an evangelical denomination but we're not evangelistic and that's a dangerous position to be in."

DJ - Looking at it over the long term, liberalism came into the denomination. And during that period what happened, and I think this is really our weakness, is that the wrong people were put into leadership positions.

ML - In addition to the liberalism problem you also have a stand against liberalism which led to the

Presbyterian church surviving when others didn't.

DJ - Yes, there's a kind of false security that comes from 'we've got the truth, we've been faithful.' So we are now an evangelical denomination but we're not evangelistic and that's a dangerous position to be in.

ML - Al Stewart commented recently that the question is not rather, 'Why should we start planting churches but rather why did we stop?' And that's in a sense the challenge to the conservative end of the Presbyterian church as well.

DJ - Yes, especially when you read a bit of the early history. There was quite a lot of really innovative, quite radical work happening. So, for example, they wouldn't always hold meetings on a Sunday and they met in halls, schools and other venues.

They went looking for people as well, recruiting them into risky situations where there wasn't any guarantee of support. They transgressed parish boundaries, they'd plant churches on the doorstep of another church if that church was a dead church.

ML - Which is what you do when you're wanting to start something new, you do actually just find ways to make it happen don't you?

DJ - Yes, and I think one of the challenges for us being able to start new work is to recognise the kind of people who are able to do that and give them the space to do it. We've got Home Missionaries, as we call them, but most Home Missionaries

tend to be caretakers rather than innovators breaking new ground. I think we need to see a different breed of gospel worker raised up among us; cross-cultural evangelists.

"...the question is not rather, 'why should we start planting churches, but rather why did we stop?'"

ML - One of the challenges for the Home Missionary approach along those lines is that you end up with a character who potentially gets paid less, has less kudos, has less job security. Are there ways also that we could better look after them?

DJ - Yeah definitely. Lets not view such workers as second rate, or second best, wanna-be ministers, but rather lets recognize we need this sort of evangelistic ministry happening among us.

I think the Home Missionary is or should be thought of primarily as an evangelist and should be recognised as such, both in terms of remuneration and respect; "The worker is worthy of his hire."

As a movement we cannot allow church planting to become an end in itself it must always have an evangelistic edge to it.

Stay tuned as we publish more of David and Mikey's chat online at [www.vision100.org](http://www.vision100.org) and in our next issue.

# THREE SNAPSHOTS OF THE CROWDED HOUSE TASMANIA

In March this year The Crowded House Tasmania moved to a bi-weekly Gathering/Gospel Community (GC) model which is based around the greater Devonport region. One week our three GCs meet in their own locality and next week we are together as a whole church. 'Big church/little church' has become common vernacular. The results so far have been encouraging with leaders stepping up to the task of shepherding and teaching, the local communities deepening and relationships being developed with neighbours, friends and job mates.

## The Ulverstone Gospel

**Community** has been running for only a few months. In that time we have had our ups and downs. The GC is a new plant in the Ulverstone area. The other GCs in our network are centred around the Devonport/Latrobe area so geographically we are a bit isolated. We are currently made up of three families and are working to be missionally minded in Ulverstone as a

community. We have had some success with developing some gospel relationships with a range of families. Our biggest challenge at this time has been getting one of our families moved into the Ulverstone area. This family has had their house on the market for quite some time and have had a few contracts fall through, but God is faithful and we believe that His timing will be perfect. We are excited about what God is doing in Ulverstone and He has been working in and through many of the relationships in which we are intentionally involved. We are prayerful about our long term-low key-relational mode of doing church. (Geoff Davis)

**Latrobe Gospel Community** is a small group of believers made up of 3 families with children, an elderly couple and a few teenagers all living in close proximity to one another. Through this nearness we have great opportunities for sharing normal life together and showing neighbourly kindness as a community to those within our streets. Latrobe is a town

where everything is within walking distance. This enhances the missional opportunities as we take our kids to school or do our grocery shopping. Life is good. Latrobe GC Rocks. (Kelvin Smith)

**The Spreyton Gospel Community** is the most diverse of the three GC's. Diverse in age, diverse in experience, and diverse in location ... some live in Spreyton itself, others in greater Devonport, or Latrobe, or the Port Sorell/Hawley Beach area. For Christians, we focus on ensuring that everyone continues to be established in their faith, and for our non-Christian friends, you will see them in our homes, or us in theirs, at a local cafe, or just simply doing everyday things but with a Gospel intention. Conversation and discussion are encouraged, both on Biblical issues as well as simple life skills and encouragement. We are normal people who are intentional about making our Christian faith a normal part of our normal lives. (Des Reeve)

## COMMITTEE MOVEMENTS

We would like to say farewell and thank you to Rick Straatsma, Jo Hext and Ian Headley who have served faithfully on the Vision 100 committee. We would also like to welcome Mikey Lynch who was appointed Chairman at our Annual General Meeting on the 29th of November.

Rick Straatsma will remain in the role of Treasurer until his replacement is appointed. Rick has done an excellent job and we're extremely thankful for his hard work and dedication. We trust that God will continue to use him for the good of the kingdom as he takes up responsibilities at Summerleas and Kingston churches.

Jo Hext has been our Fundraising Officer and it is with sadness that we say farewell to Jo as she leaves to take up work at an ad agency in Melbourne. We've really valued her energy and ideas on the committee and we're thankful for all that she has done.

We are thankful for Ian Headley's faithful service on the committee as our Public Officer. We sincerely appreciate Ian's gospel-hearted enthusiasm and we are grateful for his contribution to the committee.

## FUNDRAISING PROGRESS

As the year draws to a close we are extremely thankful to God for your generous donations and for the privilege of supporting the work of the gospel through the funds raised. Here is an overview of each of our projects, showing the targets we committed to give this year and the amounts received for each of these projects in 2010.

FUND:	TARGET:	AMOUNT RAISED:
Midlands	\$ 20,400.00	\$ 4,000.00
Huon Valley	\$ 20,000.00	\$
FOCUS	\$ 5,000.00	\$
Uni Fellowship	\$ 5,000.00	\$
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>\$ 50,400.00</b>	<b>\$24,226*</b>

\*We have also received \$20,226 in general donations

We are also seeking to raise funds for three 'visionary' projects for future church plants in Hobart's Northern Suburbs, Eastern Shore and in Launceston. If you would like to make a contribution to any of these projects please let us know.



Fiona has been studying at Sydney Missionary and Bible College for the last three years. Here she shares her plans with us for future ministry:

On the 12th of November I handed in my last essay and on the 19th I completed my last exam. I've been spending a lot of my time doing that sort of thing over the last three years I've been studying at Sydney Missionary and Bible College.

Studying full time has been a funny way to live - and a huge privilege. I have learned so much from looking carefully at different books of the Bible under the guidance of lecturers who really know their stuff; from being exposed to the depth and breadth of orthodox, and unorthodox, thinking about various topics; and from learning to read the Bible in Hebrew and Ancient Greek.

Now I'm back in Hobart, my hometown, preparing to be a missionary. I'm hoping to live somewhere in Latin America because I love the people and the culture and there's work that needs doing.

I haven't always wanted to be a missionary, but then again I haven't always been a Christian. I used to think I would go to a Third World country and work as a Speech Pathologist.

## WELCOME BACK FIONA LOCKETT



But when I became a Christian I realised that there was something even more important than helping people communicate; telling them about eternal life and helping them grow to be more like Jesus.

So that was when I changed tack and did an apprenticeship with Crossroads Presbyterian church, after which I headed off to Bible college.

When I get to Latin America I'm hoping to work for a church in a teaching and mentoring sort of role. I'm told that,

while many people love Jesus, they're not sure how their belief should affect the way they live.

I want to help the women make sense of the Bible and apply it to their lives. I want them to gain such confidence that they will go on and help other women learn this too. I'm really looking forward to getting to know these women, who I imagine will be warm, passionate and possibly a bit all over the place!

I'd like to be here until about July of next year. There's lots to be done - reconnecting with old friends, learning Spanish, sorting out the logistics of moving overseas, gathering supporters and serving at Crossroads church.

So if you'd like to hear more about my plans, offer your ongoing emotional or financial support, or sign up for participating in the prayer side of my ministry, then you can either email me ([fionalockett@gmail.com](mailto:fionalockett@gmail.com)) or my advocate Kate ([kobiekat@hotmail.com](mailto:kobiekat@hotmail.com)) It's a pleasure and an honour to be sent out by you all.

Fiona Lockett

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## GROW YOUR OWN ORGANIC COMMUNITY

Summerleas Christian Church has as their vision statement: "To be a gospel centered, 'organic' community" In the first of a short series Dave Lynch, pastor of Summerleas introduces us to the concept.

The concept of organic farming using natural methods has been around a long time, but how does this apply to church?

I believe that the organic farming analogy applies very well to relationships. I think that what we are normally content to settle for in our churches are fake, chemically sprayed, genetically modified relationships. In many ways it is easy to see why we would opt for these because it's exactly the same with fruit. It's quicker, easier and, superficially, it looks better.

That's quite a strong statement. How do you see that happening in our relationships?

Well I think we can fall into this because these types of relationships are easier. You don't ever have to get overly involved, you don't ever have to deal with all the normal, complex, messy and time consuming issues of real relationships.

And then there's the size issue. Just as fruit gets bigger

with chemically enhanced farming, so does your relational

capacity when you approach relationships this way because again there's no effort or commitment or time required. You just don't have to get involved.

When things are like this it can be easy to settle for the status quo because these kinds of relationships also look better on a superficial level. They're like the inorganic apple which has a uniform shape and flawless skin and looks great on the outside. These kinds of relationships are neat and tidy. No one ever gets upset. All you ever hear are polite words and all you ever see are nice (though slightly strained) smiles.

And I guess ultimately these kinds of relationships are much, much cheaper. They won't cost you anything. They won't cost time, effort, emotion or stress. They are very, very cheap.

The word 'organic' doesn't appear in the New Testament though, how is this a biblical concept?

Although the word 'organic' doesn't occur in the New Testament, the concept runs right through it. Organic

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language and illustrations are frequently used to describe the slow, messy and involved nature of Christian growth and community (Matthew 13:1-35; Mark 4:26-29; Luke 6:43-45; John 15:1-8; 1 Corinthians 5:6-8, 12:12-31; 1 Timothy 3:5, 15; 5:1-2)

The organic/inorganic contrast provides an excellent analogy for the kinds of relationships we aspire to at Summerleas. We believe that if we are to live out the 'One Another' passages of the NT, then what we refer to as 'organic relationships' provide the best context. Perhaps I can unpack the analogy a bit.

To begin with, inorganic relationships are completely flavorless. There is really nothing to enjoy. And they also lack the health benefits of organic relationships. All of the edification, growth, encouragement and comfort that organic relationships offer are completely lacking in inorganic ones.

Jesus spoke of Christian relationships as a vital and strategic missionary tool (John 13.34-35, 17.23). Christian relationships are meant to be graphic, concrete pointers to the truth of the gospel and to the nature of the relational God we worship. If we settle for fake, artificial, chemically sprayed relationships, the effect on those around us will be negative. Sure those sorts of relationships look 'nice' on the outside, but they also look fake and people can spot a fake a mile away.

So what can we take away from all of this?

Well, I believe your church should aspire to rejoice in the pleasures and strains of organic relationships. Of course it will be hard, messy time consuming work. Organic farming always is.

What's more, just like organic fruit, organic relationships will cost you big time. They are very expensive. It will cost you your time, your emotions, maybe even your money and personal space.

But we also know that when we bite into them the taste will be astonishing, they will be incredibly good for us and we know that they will have a healthy impact on the environment around us, and on any outsiders who look within.

Dave Lynch

## Vision 100 Partners

**Cornerstone Mount Stuart, Richmond & Midlands Outreach** under David Jones' leadership

**Crossroads South House, North House, TBT & Classic** under Dan Shepheard's leadership  
**Kingston One Way, Bay, Summerleas & Redeemer** under Brian Vaatstra's leadership

**The Branch Evangelical Reformed Church** under Fred van Hulst's leadership

**AFES Tasmania** - Northern and Southern Uni Fellowship and FOCUS under Sam Green's leadership

**The Crowded House Tasmania** under Brian Wilson's leadership

## Vision 100 Committee

Mikey Lynch - Chairman 0414 669 554  
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Brian Wilson - Northern Representative  
Ric Straatsma - Treasurer  
Bronwyn Bultman - Publications and Promotions

## Vision 100 Newsletter

If you would like us to start (or stop!) mailing the newsletter to your postal address please contact Bronwyn Bultman. Telephone 0408 149 393 or email [bronwynbultman@gmail.com](mailto:bronwynbultman@gmail.com)

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# LEADERS CONFERENCE WRAP UP

"I think what I love about the conference is the way leaders from all over the network - men, women, pastors, elders, women's workers, wives, children & youth workers etc - come together for the common goal of learning to serve God better with their gifts.

Where so many churches do it alone, where many pastors lead by themselves, where many denominations argue & disagree, we are a unified group who just want to see God's kingdom grow here. That is really special, unique & a beautiful gift of God." (Jackie Vander Schoor)

"It was a great mix of bible teaching, thinking through practicalities, chatting together, and prayer.

The highlight was definitely talking and praying with other leaders. Spending time thrashing through stuff with other gospel-hearted leaders really clarifies and reinforces the vision for planting churches in Tassie.

David Jones' reflections on prayer were a clarion call back to the heart of ministry." (Bernard Cane)

The Vision 100 Leaders Conference took place on the 20th of October. It was a great evening with many leaders, apprentices and ministry partners attending. Here's what a few of the participants had to say:

"Great encouragement, even though I was only there for the second half. Thoroughly enjoyed the fellowship with like-minded gospel people (and the food!)

Most challenging thing? The fact that the hard work of gospel work and growth is actually prayer, personally and corporately." (James van Dyk)