

CHURCH PLANTING CHALLENGE PART II

Last issue we published the first part of David Jones and Mikey Lynch's chat about church planting. Here is the rest of their conversation:

Mikey Lynch (ML) - So David we've talked about the state of church planting around the nation and the challenges of keeping an evangelistic edge as we move forward. What do you see as the dangers facing us today?

David Jones (DJ) - I think there's an interest in independent Christianity. That's something that worries me a little bit. People are kidding themselves if they think that they're independent. There's no such thing as an independent [church], it's just another denomination really.

Although the denomination as such is something that is an accident of history in some ways, it's also pragmatically good to resource the local church. And there are biblical principles tied up in that - the interdependence of churches - which I would be sad to see lost.

What I would be worried about, in our circles anyway, is that out of frustration with the denomination we just go and do our own thing and don't try and fit in with the denomination. I don't think that's healthy really...

ML - There's another cycle of fascination with Americans - Piper, Carson, Driscoll... I'm sure you've seen some of those cycles before. What are some of the dangers of too much of a love affair with the US?

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THEN I CALLED ON THE NAME OF THE LORD

Joe Ware is an active kind of guy. He's in his 30s. He loves cricket and soccer and he works as a cocktail bartender. He talks like a surfer, which is no surprise as it's one of his passions. But when you meet Joe there's a far greater love that radiates from him. He looks like a guy who might've had a rough life, but there's peace and joy written all over his face. Joe became a Christian about a year ago. Here he shares his testimony as a witness to the miracle God has worked in him.

"I've been through some pretty dark times in my life. When I was quite young my Dad died and I had to come to terms with that and to try to understand it. Growing up I didn't have that male role model around. In high school I started to go down the wrong paths.

My life was pretty dark. But even while I was very lost God was there, guiding me through it even though I didn't know it. A few times in my life I've had some near death experiences and God kept me safe.

About a year ago God was working in me and I was starting to become a Christian. God had opened my eyes and revealed to me that our struggle was not with flesh and blood but with principalities and powers of the dark realm.

I fearfully experienced many demonic occurrences and one night after one of these occurrences I was driving home and I felt like I was going to die. My heart slowed to a faint beat and my chest felt like it was going to tear open. I was struggling to breathe. Then my vision started to fade.

I thought I wasn't going to make it. And I cried out to God, I prayed for forgiveness. I prayed even for a

chance to say goodbye to my family. And God saved me.

When I was becoming a Christian, Psalm 116 was very important to me. It's like that happened to me, "The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. Then I called on the name of the Lord; O Lord save me!"

God's worked such a transformation in my life. I know it because I was there - I'm a witness to it! God has broken the chains to addiction. My addictions to drugs and alcohol, sexual immorality, God's broken those bonds.

"It's a miracle that God saved me and he's shaping me to be the person he wants me to be as a follower of Jesus"

Like the vine being pruned of dead wood he's stripped away my sin. And it's not that I'm not still tempted - like anyone - but he's shown me the way and he's broken the chains.

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SOUL CHURCH

Soul Church is a city-based church currently meeting in the Cupping Room, 105 Murray Street Hobart, at 5pm on a Sunday night. It is part of the Vision 100 church planting movement.

Soul Church was started in May 2010 by Cornerstone Presbyterian Church. As a Presbyterian Church our teaching standard is The Westminster Confession of Faith.

Our church is a little bit different to what some may expect... we meet in a café so church happens amidst coffee machines, hessian bags of coffee beans, a commercial kitchen and a forklift!

We have lots of time for questions and answers after the sermon so it's a good place to come for those who are looking for a friendly and comfortable environment to find out more about the Christian faith.

We are also just like any other church in that we read the Bible together and listen to its teachings, sing a few



Campbell Markham preaching at Soul Church

songs, we pray, and we celebrate the Lord's Supper together.

We aim to be as approachable as possible. After church we invite everyone to stay and share a meal together, provided by the church team.

The church invites those that regularly attend, and feel comfortable, to pitch in by helping out in one way or another: be it in the music team, cooking a meal, helping to set up or pack up the café or sharing their life experiences or testimony with the church community.

This coming year Soul Church is:

- Concentrating on involvement in its Bible Studies/Growth Groups. We are having joint sessions every few weeks at the Cupping Room to study the Bible together - including running groups for those who are just learning about Jesus; and running groups for those that want to get into some theology.
- Really advertising the fact that we are welcoming and open to all visitors.
- Having our first church camp!
- Encouraging questions from both Christians and non-Christians.
- Encouraging those that come to pray for others in our community and worldwide.

Soul Church is a church very 'Serious About Jesus'; and serious about spreading the Good News to the people of Hobart.

Amelia Ferguson

THANKFULNESS FOR THE MINISTRY OF A GOSPEL CATALYST

2011 began with much sadness as we heard the news about James Poland's death while bushwalking in New Zealand.

Many from around the State and the country came to the Thanksgiving Service at St John's Anglican Church in Launceston and experienced that strange mix of sadness and joy that accompanies these occasions for Christians.

We want to express our sadness and support to Elizabeth Poland and her children during this very difficult time and we join with many in praying for them.

We also want to give thanks for James' ministry here in Tasmania. In a variety of roles, James has been a bold and creative catalyst in the State.

By God's grace, he helped establish the first MTS apprenticeships in the

North, set up the Tasmanian Leadership Conference, initiated a church plant and expanded the AFES ministry at UTAS, both with Australian and international students.

Through this wide variety of pioneering ministries, James touched the lives of many people and contributed significantly to shaping the gospel convictions of a new generation of Christian men and women, not only in his immediate ministry, but all across Tasmania.

We give great thanks to God for James' perseverance and big vision and pray that his influence will continue to be felt in the years to come.

Mikey Lynch

NEW PROJECT

Vision 100 has committed \$50,000 over two years to an exciting new project. The grant, together with private support, will enable Nick Bultman to work full time with Crossroads to develop their house church network and begin laying the foundations for future church planting in the Northern suburbs.

"Lots has happened in my first months at Crossroads. We've begun a new house church in our home, started two blocks of Adopt-a-block and I have been preaching and teaching at the house church, Messy Church (our combined Crossroads House meeting) and Bible studies.

It's a great privilege working with Crossroads and I'm very excited to be part of what God's doing in growing the house church network. Our dream is to grow to 20 house churches spread throughout Hobart and there's plenty to do to prepare for that!

The other part my job is spending a day and a half in Glenorchy doing evangelism, primarily through Adopt-a-block.

The concept of Adopt-a-block is very simple. Pick a 'block' of around 40 houses and with a reliable partner, visit those houses weekly, get to know people, love them and pray for opportunities to share the gospel with them.

Recently, Jake Bevan and I began visiting the houses on Stansall St in Glenorchy. We met a Jehovah's Witness, plenty of people with Catholic backgrounds and some Kenyan migrants who are Muslims. The Kenyan guys invited us in and we talked to them about everything from education in Kenya to my testimony. As we left one of them said 'maybe you come back every Sunday?' Yes.

I've been visiting the other block (Housing Commission units on Windsor St) for over a month now. I've had some great conversations already and

am learning heaps. It's exciting to see how even over the course of a month, people who have been a bit antagonistic have started to relax. There's a guy whose response in the first week was 'I'm not effing religious', the second week 'still not effing religious', the third week 'not religious, never have been, never will be' and the fourth week he didn't feel the need to make that point. We just had a quick chat and I moved on. It might not seem like much but it's great to see little positives. Hopefully over time God will soften his heart.

Last Thursday James Burleigh (from the Christian Reformed Church in Kingston) braved the cold to come out with me. He's thinking about starting Adopt-a-block in Kingston. There's been interest in Launceston as well. Our hope is that this ministry will be a blessing to many others around the State."

Nick Bultman

VISION 100 WELCOMES...

Vision 100 welcomes two new members to our committee. Cecily Lazenby has taken up the role of Treasurer and Nathan Hill joins us as a regular member.

Cecily has studied Fine Arts and currently runs her own business, Genesis Design. Cecily is on the Board of Management at Crossroads Presbyterian Church and brings valuable experience in finance and administration to her new role as Vision 100 Treasurer.

Nathan Hill joins us from Launceston where he is an elder and ministry team leader at The Branch Evangelical Reformed Church. We interviewed Nathan about his new role as Vision 100 committee member:

Why did you decide to join the Vision 100 committee? Mikey asked me to and I thought it would be good for the North/South church planting relationship. My church is also keen to church plant and we have started some things along that route this year.

What excites you about Vision 100? Churches getting on with the business of planting churches is very exciting. Church planting is a great way to foster gospel growth. It's great to hear what is happening in and around Hobart and I'm hoping similar things can happen up here.

What do you hope to contribute to Vision 100 as a member of the committee? Not sure yet. Maybe a bit more of a northern perspective on things. I reckon I'll be taking more than I give for a while - we northerners don't seem to have the church-planting bug as much as you southerners, but I'm hoping we catch it...

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I have so much peace now, knowing that I'm forgiven. My mind is clear, I even sleep better! It's a miracle that God saved me and he's shaping me to be the person he wants me to be as a follower of Jesus.

God's word is so important to me: Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

Praise God for leading me to Jesus. Thank you Jesus for your forgiveness and for resurrecting my life through your sacrifice.

Joe Ware

Key Dates for 2011:

- **Prayer Day South - Mon 30th May 7:30pm**
Christian Reformed Church of Kingston
- **Prayer Day North - Sat 4th June 7:30am**
228 Sheffield Rd Spreyton. Ph 0417367128 for details
- **Ministry Challenge Conference**
August 19th - 21st
- **Vision 100 Sunday**
October 23rd

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DJ - The US is a very different place to Australia in terms of church culture. It's comparatively easy to plant a church in the States. You get a phone book and phone people up and gather a congregation!

I actually think the UK culture is closer to Australia. I think to look in the direction of people like Steve Timmis and Tim Chester is probably more helpful.

ML - What sort of things can we learn from the UK?

DJ - I think there's the reality thing. For all the talk about church planting and the interest in it, there's not a lot of conversion happening, even in the good church plants, when you come down to it. And that's very much what it's like in the UK.

Coming back to the old hobby horse again, it is a spiritual thing, we need God to actually create a desire in people's hearts to hear the gospel. We need to be praying for revival.

ML - As another example, the Alpha course came out of the UK scene. Alpha is a long process, 12 weeks over dinner and talking. And it's a small surprise that we've had Introducing God here pretty soon after Alpha because in a sense we went "yeah, that makes sense". That's the Scripture Under Scrutiny experience in Tassie too.

DJ - Yeah, and I think the thinking behind Alpha and much more the thinking behind what Timmis and Chester are doing is that the gospel, if it works, produces a community.

Even the people who meet round the table for Alpha, that's the community that the gospel is actually forming. In a way that's the embryonic church.

I like that connection between evangelism and the effect of evangelism in terms of forming a community. I don't think we're really seeing much of that happening.

ML - Looking forward, can we talk about ways of speeding up the missionary effort? What are some of your schemes and dreams of how to actually get on the front foot and speed things up?

DJ- I think the multiplication over the mega thing is quite important. It's not that we're against mega church, we're not saying that it's not a valid expression of church, it just seems to me that with multiplication it's going to happen more quickly, it actually gets more people involved and you're raising up more workers that way.

I think as well there's always the need to consolidate what you've already started. And I can understand this, but I just feel that at the same time as you're trying to consolidate what you've actually planted you mustn't be afraid of starting new stuff and taking risks and sending people out.

In the end we have to stop talking about it and just actually get out there and do it. I am tempted sometimes when asked to speak at yet another seminar on church planting to stand up and say just three words: "Just do it".

David Jones, Mikey Lynch and Bronwyn Bultman

Vision 100 Partners

Mount Stuart & Midlands Outreach under David Jones' leadership
Cornerstone & Soul Church under Campbell Markham's leadership
Crossroads House Churches, TBT & Classic under Dan Shephard'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
David Jones - Vice Chairman 0400 134 701
Brian Vaatstra - Act. Secretary 0439 899 121

Brian Wilson - Northern Representative
Cecily Lazenby - Treasurer
Nathan Hill - Regular Member
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

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Donations

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FINANCIAL UPDATE

In the 2010 calendar year we received a total of \$28,308 in donations. We thank God for your generosity last year and in previous years which enabled us to invest \$50,400 in evangelistic ministry and church planting projects in 2010.

Thus far in 2011 we have received \$4,885 in general donations. We will keep you updated on our fundraising progress as the year continues.

If you would like to make a specific donation to any of our current or visionary projects please let us know (details above).