

Crosscurrent

Newsletter of Mitchelton Presbyterian Church—Spring 08

900 Men Hear Driscoll

Mark Driscoll, senior pastor at Mars Hill Church Seattle, was in Australia last month on holiday with his family and, more recently, flying around to the many speaking engagements he was booked for. His popularity and almost celebrity status was a great draw card— not hard to imagine from a man who started Mars Hill Church at 25 (with only twelve people plus his family) and now a decade later oversees 17 Sunday services at 6 different locations (via satellite feed) and almost 8000 people in attendance each week. More significantly, perhaps, over one million people download his talks from the internet each year.

After a long day lecturing at Queensland Theological College, Mark spoke at North Side Christian College to a group of men from around Brisbane. The event was promoted initially as '300 Men For Jesus', a Mitchelton Presbyterian effort to get 300 of their men to come and hear Mark speak frankly about biblical manhood. News of the event spread quicker than anticipated and a larger venue had to be found. In the end over 900 men turned up to hear what this biblically faithful and culturally relevant pastor had to say about being a man.

Initially the talk was titled, '*Burn Your Plastic Jesus*' - which he had given at the Sydney Entertainment centre the night before (to, apparently 10,000 people), but slightly more focused towards men. However he instead got up and preached from Genesis 1-3.

How was it? Well, some seemed to have been greatly impacted by it. Others seemed to have gotten off on the wrong foot with Mark and didn't quite enjoy it, to say the least. Rave reviews and criticism aside there were a few things everyone could agree on:

1. Mark spoke clearly and faithfully from Genesis 1-3.
2. His talk comforted those who were struggling and unsettled those who thought otherwise.
3. Like it or not, it was a challenging talk.

I personally found it challenging. Not primarily because Mark spoke abundantly about marriage, but because I'm sinful (with an overstated view of myself) and need to hear the hard word spoken to me directly. Mark's talk to men was hard and straight forward. How we responded to it is probably more indicative of our heart rather than what Mark said. I also found the talk encouraging and as I left for home I found myself slapped in the face, rebuked, challenged and given new energy to love and serve my sanctifying wife! I learnt so much about what it means to think of myself as head of the household and how to love and serve my wife and family.

Steve,

Chinese Christian Church St Lucia



More pics of the event online—follow the link at www.300menforjesus.com

On a Mission... to Brisbane

The mission field is just as much around the corner as across the world, says Mark Driscoll. But what exactly would it mean for mpc to gear up to reach 'as many as possible?'

In the iconic 1980s movie, the Blues Brothers were convinced they were on a 'mission from God.' The trouble is, they were deluded. It's a strange reversal, then, that we who really are on a mission from God are so easily convinced that we're not. Here's the point. Jesus told his disciples to go out and make disciples of all the nations. That's the mission. And the place where we are first and foremost called to make disciples is here in our nation – spiritually lukewarm, affluent and apathetic Australia. We're that strange pagan nation where there are public tears over the death of 'Colin', the baby whale, while the Victorian government calmly debates the legalization of late-term abortion. We're that crazy place where everyone believes in heaven, but nobody has time for Jesus... and we need to connect like never before.

American Pastor Mark Driscoll's visit to Brisbane at the end of September was a breath of fresh air. In the daytime seminar for pastors and church leaders at QTC, Mark challenged us to think 'missionally' – to be constantly aware that we are missionaries to our own cultures in our own place in our own time. He charged us to understand what our non-Christian culture is thinking about, so we can better connect with the claims of Jesus, who should be worshipped by 'as many as possible,' taking seriously the apostle Paul's command that we should be 'all things to all men so as to win as many as possible.' Churches so easily freeze up and lose their sense of mission, he said, gradually morphing from an enthusiastic and growing 'movement', into an 'institution' more interested in self-preservation, and then into a 'museum' whose only function is to preserve the memories of the glory days of the past. Which one are we?

The fact is, at MPC there are things we are doing well – and we need to keep doing them. One, in particular, is that we're deeply committed to raising up the next generation of young leaders. We must keep doing this with renewed vigour and urgency, and our focus needs to move to an earlier stage in the process. We've been good at supporting 'ministry trainees', but maybe not quite so good at identifying and training the next generation of

growth group leaders for ministry within our church family. Derek and I are going to work hard at that in 2009 under our 'New Leadership' training program. Pray that God will gift and raise up suitable leaders!

Session is convinced that if we are to continue to grow, we need to build on the great work of Matt Rowson over the past six years by employing specialist staff for both youth ministry and children's ministry. Stuart Hoadley and Meryl Webber have been interviewed by Session, and are highly recommended. Session is also convinced that we need to employ a pastoral care specialist on the ministry team to keep up with the growing needs of our growing church family. Simon Reeve was also interviewed by Session, and was asked to consider a position with us. However, after a week of prayer and consideration, Simon and Alison concluded that a position in country NSW better suits Simon's gifting and experience. If the congregation resolves to take the step of creating these three new positions, we will be well placed to face the challenges of growth, as we continue on our mission of 'growing committed, connected, clear-thinking and compassionate followers of Jesus.' Andrew Nielsen's report shows that there's a cost involved (around \$32,000 increase in our current budget), but that this increase is in line with past growth trends, with the safety net of the investment fund to back us up.

Finally, we need to take some firm steps to consolidate and improve our mpc facilities. Take a tour sometime and you'll see we've been operating with inefficient and insufficient office space and kidzbiz classrooms. It's time to get serious about building facilities for the future—and establishing an overall site plan that incorporates sufficient parking as well as the required buildings. These are long terms goals for growing as many committed, connected, clear-thinking and compassionate followers of Jesus as we possibly can.. Should we do it? Can we afford it? Which way from here? It's over to you.

Phil Campbell

WIZARD OF ID



Know Your Neighbourhood

How well do you know our neighbourhood? Is Mitchelton a middle class double income no kids type suburb? Is it retirement central? If we took a cross section of mpc would it reflect a cross section of Mitchelton? These are important questions if we're to effectively reach out to our own back yard with the gospel.

With that in mind, (thanks to the 2006 Australian Census) if mpc reflected Mitchelton it would consist of:

- 8.50% crèche / toddlers,
- 11.80% youth,
- 12.80% secondary & tertiary students,
- 45.70% workers,
- 8.40% retiring age,
- 12.80% grey Nomads



47.7% are males
52.3% are females.

Interesting figures when you compare them to a cross section of mpc. How are we doing? Do we reflect our neighbourhood? *Andrew Pearce*

So who's who in the new zoo?

With Matt Rowson and Andrew Pearce leaving us, a congregational meeting has been called to consider the following appointments. Position descriptions, budget considerations, and proposed appointees must all be approved. So who's who... and what will it cost?

Meryl Webber is a trained teacher who has studied at bible college and worked with SU at Chinchilla. Meryl would co-ordinate mpc kids ministry full-time.

Stuart Hoadley studied at bible college before working as Youth Pastor at Dalby Presbyterian Church. He's married to Belinda, and they have three kids. Stu would co-ordinate mpc youth ministry part-time and work at QTC.

Position Vacant
We are searching for a pastoral expert to co-ordinate the care ministries of our church through growth groups, the care team, and one-to-one contact.



Stuart and Meryl fit in the current budget. \$32,000 extra will be required either from giving, or the investment fund, to employ a pastoral care co-ordinator.

Fresh News from Freshchurch

Can you believe the Eatons Hill church plant is now 18 months old? Time flies when you're working as a team to engage with the community and grow a church! Freshchurch has grown to be around 70 adults with a further 70 children. Meeting on a Sunday in the Out of School Hours (OSH) room within Eatons Hill State School, it's been an exciting time with many challenges and opportunities along the way.

The typical picture of our church on a Sunday is a smallish classroom filled to the max with adults and kids. Some mornings some people have to stand with the limited space available. But by the time the kids leave for kidzbiz, church can seem quite small. That's a factor we have to deal with when we're in a great situation of being a 'kid-heavy' church. Obviously this classroom can't be our Sunday morning home for too much longer and we're hopeful the school will soon finalise plans for a new community hall. This multi-purpose facility is to be built within the school grounds and we think this will be a great new venue for Sunday morning church and give plenty of room for growth.

Given where we meet for church, we've tried to build a good relationship with the school. We've held a couple of working bees to improve the school grounds and our efforts have been very well received. Laying turf, spraying down walls and pavements, re-laying soft-fall and gardening, have been the sort of work we've been up to. We are due to hold another working bee in November. Nothing like being compassionate in our own community!

Church for us isn't just about our Sunday mornings - it's about developing a vibrant church life where people can be truly connected to each other - encouraging each other to grow as followers of Jesus. At the heart of this is our desire that every person at church be involved in a growth group. This year we have 3 evening groups, in addition to WOW, the Wednesday morning group for Women. This year the growth groups gave themselves a challenge of holding a 'Jesus, Pure & Simple' event where growth group members could invite a friend along to hear about Jesus. It was an event that pushed us out of our comfort zone but it was a great reminder to us all that our first and foremost mission field is our workplaces, neighbourhoods and families. It's the people around us every day that need to be introduced to our saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.

One thing we've come to notice at Eatons Hill is that even in a church our size, it can be a challenge for busy people to really connect with each other and build strong relationships. It's especially the case with guys who constantly have the challenge of balancing work and family time. To help guys connect with each other we've been holding a series of blokes events in the second half of the year - Father & Son Soccer morning, a men's breakfast, and of course going together to hear Mark Driscoll speak

about how Jesus should transform the way we live as husbands and dads.

With so many kids at freshchurch, we have the opportunity to teach the gospel to many and grow them as followers of Jesus. But with so many kids, it leaves us with the challenge of how to best resource kids and youth ministry and ensure the ministry continues to grow in the future. Through August and September, we've been the beneficiaries of great kids program, 'church4kids' - put together by a team of talented leaders from latechurch. It was like normal kidbiz on steroids' with music, games, craft, and skits, teaching the kids how the Old Testament is all about Jesus. MPC's drive to launch the church plant at Eatons Hill came from appreciation that the northside of Brisbane is our mission. In this particular patch of Brisbane, there's lots of work to be done so we need to stay focussed at Eatons Hill Presbyterian Church. Reaching our community with the message of Jesus is the work God calls us to.



Garnet Swann



Habits of Happiness

Last year noted Christian Psychologist and author Arch Hart spoke to groups all around Australia. Here's a detailed summary of his seminar on beating depression by developing the *habits of happiness*...

Deal with Depression by forming Happiness Habits

It's hard not to notice that depression is epidemic in our world. In fact, an astounding 25% of teenagers in the US are diagnosed with depression. "I am afraid that every teenager will need anti-depressants in about ten years time, to protect them," says Dr Arch Hart. Why? because we're living outside the box of our design. The best protection you can have against depression is to develop habits of happiness.

The biggest enemy of happiness is stress. Stress is not just the bad things in life. These will not kill us. It is the stress that comes from the good things that over-activate our adrenal system, the pace of life, increased stimulation and decreased rest time.

Multi-tasking - a modern scourge.

Dr Hart visited his daughter's home. As he walked in, his 14-year-old granddaughter Kate was sitting in the lounge working on her laptop. She had the screen split and was writing an essay for homework on one side while text-messaging a friend on the other. Not only that, but she had an ipod fixed in one ear blaring pop music and her mobile phone to her other ear talking to a friend. Dr Hart predicts that she's a prime candidate for depression. Her brain is being over-stimulated by the good things of life. One in five women and one in six men are depressed today. Depression robs us of happiness.

The revolution in psychology

During the last decade, there was a revolution in psychology. Psychologist Martin Seligman introduced the idea of learned helplessness when he became President of the American College of Psychologists. His Inaugural Lecture helped re-write the psychology Curriculum of the US, and the world. Learned helplessness is a state where you are convinced there's nothing you can do to change your circumstances.

Buffers Against Depression

In his address, Dr Seligman listed ten buffers against depression. He received a standing ovation. Since then, three more have been added. Here are all thirteen.

1. Courage
2. Future-mindedness
3. Optimism - this can be learned
4. Interpersonal skills - Dr Hart's granddaughters text message each other in adjoining bedrooms when they are upset with each other. They tell each other off in fine style, in abbreviated English, without looking each other in the eye. They are not learning to deal with each other face to face.
5. Faith - this flies in the face of all 20th Century Freudian psychology, dominant up to this point in time. Freud believed that all religion was neurosis. Now, a psychologist can be sued if he does not take a spiritual inventory of his patient.

6. A good work ethic
7. Hope - this is different from optimism. It involves finding something good after trauma that will outdo the bad. It
8. Honesty - many patients need help to see themselves honestly.
9. Perseverance
10. Capacity for insight

This is where Dr Seligman ended. The next three have been since been added by psychologists...

11. Forgiveness. If you can't forgive, you can't get out of your own prison. We will have to come to a place of forgiveness, of surrendering my right to hurt back.
12. Resiliency - the ability to bounce back.
13. Happiness - this was too subjective for old psychology.

Authentic Happiness

Authentic Happiness is not the same as pleasure. There are three legs to the tripod of happiness.

1. satisfaction/ contentment
2. joyfulness/ being gleeful
3. pleasure

If you pursue pleasure too much, you become unhappy, to the point where you can't enjoy something anymore. You

If you can't forgive, you can't get out of your own prison. We will have to come to a place of forgiveness, of surrendering my right to hurt back...

are sucked in to the spiral of 'anhedonia.' - the loss of ability to enjoy something: boredom. Anhedonia is the result of over-stimulation of the pleasure centre. You've got to get happiness right to prevent depression. Wealth, good education, high IQ, being young, etc do not make you happy. Basic needs of food and clothing and shelter come first. After that, in research:

1. religious faith is consistently the top winner
2. relationships, friendships
3. good social skills

Happiness Boosters

You can't be always happy. The valleys make the mountains beautiful. But these are good habits of happiness to be developed.

1. Do something unselfish for someone else every day.
2. Give yourself permission to make mistakes.
3. Give up expecting others to be perfect.
4. If someone offends you, forgive them. Don't harbour grudges.
5. Simplify your life. Learn to say "NO".

6. Get enough sleep. Enough sleep is nine hours per night. We sleep in 1½ hour cycles and we dream in the last few minutes. We need that. Modify your sleep patterns. Take a proper afternoon sleep if necessary, not a nap. Before the Industrial Revolution, people went to bed soon after dark, because lighting was poor and expensive. They slept soundly until about 3am, then if they couldn't sleep, they would meditate, reflect, sleep lightly until dawn or daylight. If you have less than six hours sleep, you are at high risk of cardio-vascular disease.
7. Spend as much time as possible with those you love.
8. Take 20 minutes a day to reflect and meditate and pray.
9. Download your worries, list them, every night before bed.
10. Before sleep, play the gratitude game. Remind yourself of five things to be grateful for. Count your blessings.
11. No matter how small, regularly complete a creative task, e.g. Use a new recipe.
12. Get a life! Don't put off doing things. Every day must be complete in itself.

Depression - Reactive And Biological:

Reactive Depression:- reaction to some trauma or loss. [Divorce is death that never dies. It never solves anything.]

Biological:- inherited. Any history of suicide in family is indicative of biological depression. Nowadays, stress eclipses genes in causing depression. Stress will make you depressed before your genes get a chance to. Treatment is the same for both. Getting people to change their lifestyle and stay on medication are the biggest problems.

Hormones at work:

1. Adrenaline puts you in overdrive. It kicks in the fight or flight response.
2. Cortisol is the cousin of adrenaline. It goes up 10 minutes after adrenaline. Our bodies assume that the crisis lasts for 10 minutes.
3. It then brings in the natural pain-killer, cortisone. This converts fat into sugar for two weeks. At two weeks, the system switches purpose and makes life miserable. The cortisone goes to the brain to make you stop the flight or fight response.
4. Two weeks after an adrenaline boost, the high level of cortisol:-
 - a. Blocks the brain's natural painkillers. Pain comes in and stops your body's ability to cope with stress.
 - b. Blocks the brain's natural tranquilizers, so anxiety goes up.
 - c. Blocks the neuro-transmitters in the brain. The brain then creates depression. All three are designed to pull you out of a dangerous or stressful situation.
 - d. Depression shuts down your immune system and you get sick.

Sleep

With our accelerated pace of life, we are not getting enough sleep. Sleep helps get our cortisol level down. The last three to four minutes of the 1½ hour cycle is dream sleep. We need to go through the complete cycle. And you can put deposits in your sleep bank, if you know a stressful time is coming up. Daylight saving disrupts sleep patterns. Psychologists are overrun with patients the week the clock changes.

Long-term Effect Of Caffeine

Starbucks is our modern day opium den. Caffeine is a powerful stimulant for adrenaline. It doubles the effect of adrenaline and cortisol levels. It blocks natural sleep patterns. Stop all caffeine.

Treatment Of Depression

There is an anti-medication mindset in our world today. This is partly due to the addictive nature and misuse of tranquilisers and sleeping pills. But Anti-depressants, properly managed, are a gift from God, a tool in the fight against depression.

The challenge is to keep someone taking their medication. After 4 to 6 weeks, a person starts to feel better. They stop taking the medication, and in another 4 to 6 weeks are depressed again. After 5½ weeks of anti-depressant medication, the first thing that gets better is a person's energy level. However, their mood hasn't lifted yet. Now they have the energy to do themselves harm, but not the will to keep living. At this point, a person needs close care and watching.

Anti-Depressant Medications do not go directly to the brain so they cannot cross the blood stream and increase serotonin. They go to the liver and are broken down. Their effect is to increase the number of receptors to serotonin, so that the brain can grow more receptors within three to eight weeks, to increase serotonin. ADM's cannot be mind-changing because they go to the liver, not the brain.

1. ADM is not addictive, but a person may become dependant.
2. As a general rule, the sooner you treat depression the better. Over long term, the brain is making connections that aren't helpful (Neuro plasticity). The brain is always making connections to the day you die. If it makes many connections that support depression, a person becomes chronically depressed.

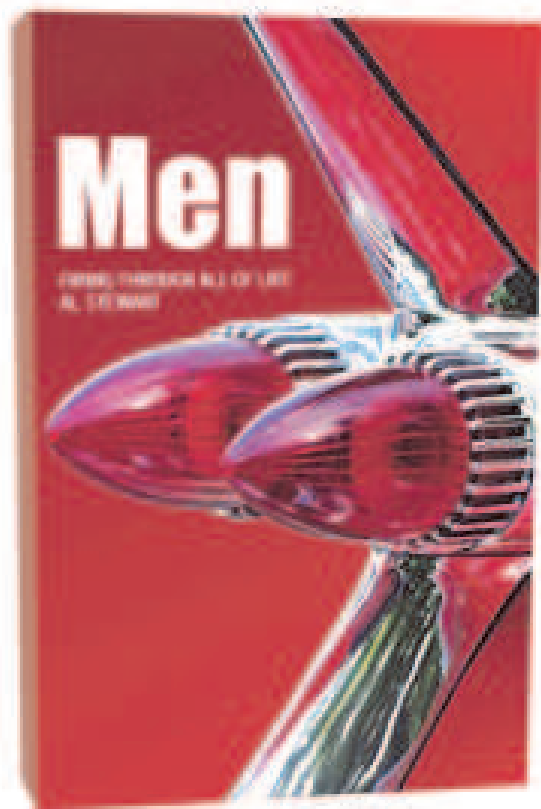
If you are prescribed anti-depressant medication, be patient! Try it for 6 months. Stay on it for a year if it works. If not, try another. Why a year? It takes a year to make the lifestyle changes to support healthy life. Then taper off. A year later, if depression returns, it is episodic., and you may need to stay on the medication for the rest of your life. But in any case, give thanks to God that such effective treatments have been developed!

Book Review

Still Firing after all these years...

Garnet Swann reviews 'Men Firing Through All of Life', by Al Stewart

Men – here's a pop quiz you can take. It will only take a minute.



1. Is your hair on top starting to get a bit thin, but at the same time your nose hair is growing wilder than an Amazonian jungle?
2. When you get socks or underpants as presents, are you're actually *happy* to receive them?
3. Do you spend so much time on your weekend driving your kids to their sporting events, that you're considering taking a fuel tax out of their pocket money.
4. Do you think most modern music is rubbish and 'remix' is just another way of murdering an old classic by doubling the speed and adding in a drum machine?
5. When you have a run on the footy field and are gasping for life-giving breath, do you console yourself with the delusion – "I'm not as fast as those young blokes but hey, at least I can play smarter"?"

If you answer 'yes' to any of the above questions, there's a good chance you're approaching or right in the thick of 'middle-age'. And if that's you I thoroughly recommend to you Al Stewart's book, 'Men – Firing Through All of Life'. It's a book for blokes who want to think a bit deeply about issues and struggles of middle-age. As well as the funny stuff, Al Stewart talks realistically about the serious issues that us blokes so often have to face up to: boredom with work, disappointment with your sex life, concern for the well-being of elderly parents, and loneliness. Any of these sound familiar to you?

What's great about Al Stewart's book is that he speaks about issues that are often experienced but go unspoken by most blokes. But Al hasn't written this book so that we can all have a big moan together - he offers solutions. What Al Stewart does is take the reader on a trip through the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes. With the recognition that everyday can be like 'ground hog day', this book had to be written by a middle-age guy don't you think! And what we see is that Ecclesiastes points to the way forward - 'Fear God'. And Al Stewart shows us that it's the life and death of the man Jesus that allows us to respond rightly to God and so have meaning and purpose in life.

From what I observe even in the Christian church, there are many dead-end paths that men take in their quest to rise above what they see as middle age monotony – pornography, adultery, plain simple selfishness. For a dose of excitement how easily is it for us men to medicate ourselves on a constant diet of TV watching and DVDs! And in his book Al Stewart talks about all this, but then shows how a life transformed by Jesus Christ makes all the difference.

What I really appreciate about this book is that it doesn't go down the path of being all triumphant and full of American jingoism. There's no call to 'find the warrior within' or anything like that. It's a book that's realistic about what middle-age is like with all its responsibilities and obligations. But its book that explains so well how being a follower of Jesus brings a revolution to your approach as a father, husband, friend, in fact to all relationships. As the book shows, middle-age doesn't have to be all about the disappointment of missed opportunities. Middle Age can be about displaying wisdom and responding to life with profound purpose and satisfaction.

Why do I like this book? Bottom Line - because it's very readable, honest, funny, practical, and reminds me why following Jesus is revolutionary and simply the best way to live. It's written for the Christian man but equally for any bloke who's open to the big questions of life. What more could you ask for!

Combining to give thanks!

It's almost time for our combined service... so make sure you're free on Sunday October 19th!

Remember last year's combined service at Albany Hills State School? It was a fantastic opportunity to bring all our congregations together for a day of celebration and thanksgiving for the way God has blessed our wider mpc church family. Sure, it was a change from our normal Sunday morning routines—but it was worth it. Chas Venning and Leon Argent said they were thrilled to be there. "We should do this every year," said Chas. Indeed we should!

Like last year, we're linking the combined Sunday morning service with our annual Bible Teaching Weekend. Our guest speaker is Paul Harrington, senior minister from Holy Trinity Anglican Church in Adelaide, a growing church with a well-deserved reputation for excellent Bible teaching. Paul spoke at a men's event in 2006, and also shared from his broad experience at church planting in Adelaide at the time we were planning our Eaton's Hill congregation. Paul will be speaking on 'Forgiveness' - an issue that's vital for us to think through, understand and apply as followers of Jesus.

As usual, we'll be getting together on Saturday evening for three sessions with Paul—we kick off at around 530pm, stop for a sausage sizzle dinner at 630pm, and have two more sessions (plus supper) afterwards.

Due to a booking clash at Albany Hills school, this year we'll be meeting in the Everton Park State High School auditorium—a fantastic facility, though sadly for our Freshchurch members, a little further to drive from Eatons Hill. Sorry about that! The combined service will start at 930am. The Bible Teaching weekend will conclude with Latechurch at mpc at 715pm.

WHO,
HOW,
WHEN
& WHY
SHOULD I
FORGIVE?

Five talks on the forgiveness we have from God and the way we forgive others. Do we ever withhold forgiveness? Do we forgive when someone doesn't repent? How do we deal with the feelings of anger and hurt that stay with us even when we 'forgive'? Should we feel that way?

an mpc bible teaching weekend
with Paul Harrington. Oct 18-19
more details at mpc.org.au



with combined service everton park high 930am sun 19 oct

FORGIVENESS

