

October 2009

RISE inside

Welcome to a Not-so-Brave New World



*By internet marketer and social media enthusiast Kaye Flack
Social Media*

Larry isn't an internet junkie. He is tech-savvy though; he checks and sends

email on his mobile phone, sends pictures of his kids' football games online to his folks, sends an SMS to his wife about dinner arrangements, connects online to the florist and orders flowers; connects to Facebook and writes on his kid's wall, watches the TV news and then arrives home. He feels connected with the people he loves and cares about. Larry goes to church on Sunday, and is on the worship team. He sighs, "Church just isn't like the real world. Pretty much the only way to get any information about what's happening, to get rosters, and stuff is to call someone who may (or may not) know." The four pages of text in the church bulletin are about as welcome as the reams of junk mail he gets every week. "I feel disconnected from the people and the place that should have a major part in my life." Clearly something is wrong.

Over these past few years social media has been a catalyst in how people discover, read and share news, information and content, and connect to their world.

The development of social media has been a catalyst for the rapid transition of our developed industrialised culture to an information and technology culture. Social media has reflected the transition and accelerated it. It's interesting to observe how the distribution of knowledge and information has transformed people from being content consumers into content producers. Subtle social and cultural changes have accentuated a rampant individualism and social isolation. Many feel a developing tension that leaves us time-poor, information-overloaded, and socially lonely in a crowd. Social media can be used to create a microcosm in which we relate the same way we communicate: in byte-size chunks. The Church would be wise to carefully consider the changes this has created in our core values and belief systems.

Some may argue that the church had better "get with the times" or risk becoming irrelevant to the people it was called to minister to. Perhaps there are two issues more important

for the church than relevance. The first relates to information media, the second is relationship dynamics.

In our contemporary culture, people filter information; deciding what information they want and how they want to assimilate it. When it comes to information, the church should use all forms of social media like forums, weblogs, social blogs, wikis, podcasts, picture and video sharing, vlogs, wall-postings, email, instant messaging and music-sharing (and many more) for they are communication media. The "boomer generation" witnessed the transition from hymn-books to chorus sheets, from overhead transparency projectors to multi-media projectors and wall-sized LCD screens. The text didn't change but the media incorporated the same video techniques that TV has used to great effect. Inevitably the medium does not merely convey information, it subtly transforms the message. To not use social media to convey information would be a mistake, to use it unwisely would be an even greater mistake.

Perhaps one of the reasons why social media has become extremely popular is because it allows people to connect and relate in the online world forming relationships for personal, political and business use on their own terms. Here is the cutting edge: what will the Church be online? In a world where people crave relationships on their own terms, will we (the Church) be solely information carriers and demand that people relate to us on our terms? If that happens, don't be surprised if even the faithful turn off and dissociate from the Church. On their terms? How have webcasts and podcasts from some of the most influential churches world-wide affected church attendance at home? Patterns of church attendance have changed for no other reason than people are making choices on the basis of personal preferences and not necessarily on the basis of principles or priorities.

It should be reinforced at this point that social media is always a means to an end, and not an end in itself. One of the core values of any truly effective internet marketer is to be transparent, to be the real deal, a person of integrity and authenticity. The premise is that what you do online is what you are offline.

Christian ministry is about building relationships with people; to care and connect, to show an interest. The marketplace has learnt how to use social media and how to build social networks to build relationships that deliver value. The early church did some of its most profound work through letters which were copied and disseminated around the world. The Church ought to get back to its core values and discover how to use media to touch the hearts of people, meeting heartfelt needs and opening the doors to relationships.

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Welcome to a Not-so-Brave New World (continued)

The one thing that the early church did that had the greatest impact on their world was to demonstrate the love of God to each other and to a needy world. Many social media expedients are careful of what they post, and rightly so. That is the magic of social media – you share what you want on your own terms, with as wide an audience as you choose. But how tragic, if the best the church has to offer remains unsaid, unposted. Even worse if the church becomes so insular that it can only be friends with its own people.

Social media has been an incredible means to connect and stay connected with family, friends who we have ministered to and they have ministered to us over the years, it's great to be still part of their lives. In the last 12 months I have connected with people I didn't know through different methods of social media, I have cried, laughed and prayed for, talked to and have been taught by these people who are real people behind the words, screens and cameras.

October 2009

RISE people

Writing for children earns Adelaide lecturer prestigious award



Tabor Adelaide is pleased to announce that Dr Rosanne Hawke, senior lecturer in Creative Writing, has been awarded a 2009 Citation for Excellence in Teaching from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council. Dr Hawke is one of only two recipients of the prestigious higher education sector

award from the private sector and is Tabor's first recipient of the award. The award, received at a ceremony held at the University of South Australia on 3 August, was for "success in fostering a learning environment that inspires and encourages creative writing students to achieve success in writing for children." Dr Hawke, a successful and award winning author of numerous children's books and young adult fiction, has proven very successful in motivating her students to enter the profession. The citation also particularly noted the effort Dr Hawke had put into offering her material on-line as well as internally and to the text she has written for the subject Writing for Children, titled Buried Treasure. Tabor Adelaide is excited to have lecturers of the quality of Dr Hawke on staff and congratulates her on this national recognition of her passion and commitment to teaching.

October 2009

smart living

Looking at our lenses: Consumerism



By Scott Berry, young adults pastor and music journalist

Have you ever noticed that if you wear sunglasses long enough you forget you have them on,

and sometimes even ask the embarrassing question “has anyone seen my sunglasses?” We are even less aware of the cultural lenses that always colour our vision of the world. The most all-pervading cultural lens that affects us in the Western world is that of consumerism. Wikipedia, the (dubious) source of all kinds of knowledge suggests “Consumerism is the equation of personal happiness with consumption and the purchase of material possessions.” This messes with Maslow’s hierarchy of needs as it suggests that the highest level of human enlightenment is not self-actualisation but the consumption of luxuries. One of the core failings of consumerism is that wealth is judged relatively, so we compare ourselves to those around us rather than recognizing our astonishing wealth in comparison to the average occupant of this planet.

Since by definition most people cannot consume more than most people the result is that consumerism has set up a competition that the vast majority of us can never win. Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman cuts to the (rotten) heart of consumerism claiming that “to increase capacity for consumption, consumers must never be allowed to rest. They need to be kept forever awake and on alert, constantly exposed to new temptations and so remain in a state of perpetual suspicion and steady disaffection”. This quote alerts us to the elements of the secular world that are beginning to recognize the soul crushing hopelessness of consumerism but also how much broader consumerism is than just materialism.

The mindset of consumerism does more than push us to buy luxury items we don’t need with money we don’t have. The stimulation from endless advertising serves to flip our brain into consumer mode permanently, which means we view every aspect of our life through these poisoned lenses. Consumerism teaches us to always be looking out for a ‘better deal’ and to avoid commitment (or bail on it) on all occasions. The outworking of consumer thinking is hinted at by the constant turnover in workplaces as neither employer nor employee ever expects long-term commitment. Consumerism helps keep the

‘church shopping’ roundabout moving as believers regularly “feel led to move on” while qualities like perseverance and commitment appear to have died a slow death soon after the birth of the baby boomers. Even those who do not leave their church still get caught up in consumeristic thinking as they rate how much they enjoyed their Sunday worship experience and how close it came to “meeting their needs” (You know a society is rich and spoilt when it’s people regularly complain that their needs are not being met while they are so clearly just talking about their wants/whims/momentary desires of the heart and would not recognize a genuine need if it smacked them in the face).

The most overt example of consumerism’s bind on the friendships of Gen X and Y’s is witnessed every time you seek to organize an event/party/dinner where RSVP’s are required. Some people are even brash enough to admit that they will not commit to an event because they unashamedly keep their possibilities open as they seek to play the ‘best options game’ waiting to the last minute to see what all their different friends offer them before choosing the most exciting activities for their weekend. The epitome of consumerism in marriages is seen when the financially attractive, ageing male trades in his wife for a younger, more physically attractive female companion.

Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:19 - 34 are not only timeless but they strike us as even more relevant now than they were when he first preached them at the inspirational Sermon on the Mount. This passage lifts the dark veil that our consumeristic culture has blinded us with.

1) Jesus calls us to have a right perspective on ‘stuff’ (vs 19 – 30)

There is nothing you own that will last for eternity. Material possessions are not evil but everything on God’s earth is His, so let us have a stewardship attitude towards possessions rather than a selfish, hoarding mentality. As Corrie Ten Boom said “Hold everything in your hands lightly, otherwise it hurts when God pries your fingers open.” Consider your most recent purchases (excluding core groceries); what motivated you? Were you seeking to create an image, hunting for happiness, purchasing to lessen guilt, caught in an addiction?

2) God wants us to be free (vs 32)

Consumerism is exhausting and pointless as both we and those around us are dehumanized. The great underlying deception of consumerism is that you are nearly there, happiness is just around the corner, if you only buy our product/holiday/experience/course of study/etc your life will be complete. Whenever we fall into the habit of thinking, ‘I will be satisfied when I buy that house/car/clothes’ or ‘I will be content when I

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Looking at our lenses: Consumerism (continued)

get married/have kids/change jobs'; we are falling for the lies of consumerism. Our purpose in life was only ever intended to come from God. However, if life on this planet even with God still leaves us lacking contentment that is okay. The truth is we are but tourists, enjoying this exotic but sometimes disconcerting foreign land travelling towards our rightful home as citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20). God has plucked us from the never-ending trap of running the rat race; why would we still be jealous of those stuck on the spinning wheel?

3) We are called to live according to his priorities (vs 33) Jesus is not content being one of the options we sometimes turn to, he calls us to live with him as Lord. He does not treat us like a consumer; instead he treats us like his beloved child. His plan is not to make all our dreams come true; his offer is simply that we can join His kingdom. He calls us to make a stand against consumeristic thinking whenever it is unhealthy (in church and in relationships) and to instead seek to live according to Jesus' values. The wiser elements of worldly thinking critique consumerism and recognize that it is inherently flawed and dehumanizes all involved but they have no real solution. It may sound simplistic but it is true, real freedom comes from rejecting consumerism in favour of seeking first His kingdom and his righteousness.

For further reading

www.thestoryofstuff.com

'The Corporation' secular documentary about corporations and advertising

'The Trouble with Paris' Christian DVD by Mark Sayers critiquing consumerism Article called 'Spent' by sociologist Amitai Etzioni in 'The New Republic' <http://www.tnr.com/politics/story.html?id=80661c9c-9c63-4c9e-a293-6888fc845351&p=1>

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smart living

Spot the fake!



By advertising executive and photographer Rob Jenkins

Have you ever seen a magazine ad for make up with a flawless Hollywood star as the spokesperson? They seem to have amazingly smooth skin even though they are in their forties or fifties. The advertising industry must have breathed a huge sigh of relief when photo manipulation software became affordable and accessible. Prior to the digital darkroom, airbrushing was a painstaking and tedious job that took hours. Today, professionals

can smooth skin, remove blemishes and make someone look years younger in minutes not days.

Manipulating photos raises the question of ethics in advertising. How much is too much? Surely if someone has a skin blemish on the day of a photo-shoot it is acceptable for the post production people to remove or reduce the problem area?

The ethical question is where do you draw the line. As an advertising person of some 20 plus years and amateur photographer I've seen many examples of photo manipulation for the sake of making the product look its very best.

Some examples are way over the top. Aging actresses air brushed to look 20 years younger, with flawless skin, bigger eyes, pouting lips and a lack of wrinkles that a twenty year old would be struggling to match. The problem is that teens can absorb this imagery and then have an unrealistic view of what they are suppose to look like. A very good example is available online at <http://demo.fb.se/e/girlpower/retouch/> where the Swedish Ministry of Health produced this website showing how dramatic retouching can be.

To see how simple retouching is, go to Youtube and search on retouching and you will be offered dozens of examples of photo manipulation and tutorials, some quite dramatic. As a photographer I have been asked to retouch photos and I have no problem with it as long as the subject understands what I will do and why. However when it comes to manipulating images and portraying this as the real thing, then I draw the line and say no.

Advertising is all about selling. It's about portraying your product in a positive light, bringing out the best so that customers are "sold" into a purchasing decision. This is acceptable and appropriate, after all you don't sell a used car without giving having it detailed, and products should and are photographed with the right lighting. Models are made up before they dress in a fashion store's latest offering so that they reflect the image of the product to the intended target market. But when photographs are manipulated to unrealistic levels and in effect are lying to sell products then the advertiser has crossed the ethical line all in the name of selling more product.

Next time you are browsing a glossy magazine, stop and look over the make-up ads, the health product ads and just about any ad featuring a female model and chances are there has been some retouching in order to make the product appear to "really work." This dishonesty is not just limited to photo manipulation. Fine print that people don't read, bait advertising and hard sell tactics are just as dishonest as any manipulation. Christian businesses can rise above this and offer customers honest products in such a way that customers respect that honesty and are happy to put down their hard earned money to buy your product. All you have to do is connect with them when they are in need of your product.

Want more examples of photo manipulation in the commercial world? Visit Photoshop Disasters at - <http://photoshopdisasters.blogspot.com/>

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Inside Out

My Tea-towel Prayer



*By children's author
Julie Flatt*

A couple of years ago I started to find life busy and hectic and felt that I rarely had any quiet time to myself, and it was

affecting my prayer life. I found myself praying one day as I was pegging out the washing and I noticed how peaceful the chore was.

Since then I have regularly used my time at the washing line as a time for prayer, both pegging the washing out and bringing the washing in.

I often use the washing items themselves to prompt my prayer points. For example, when pegging out school uniforms I will pray for my daughter at school. I will pray for God's protection over her, that she will be a shining light for God in her school, and more importantly, that she will learn the lessons that God has in mind for her. I pray similar points when I peg out the play clothes that my younger daughter wears to preschool.

When pegging out the tablecloth I often pray about the nutrition and health of our family, and I pray for our family mealtimes together, that they will be a time of sharing, conversation and bonding.

As I peg out socks, I usually pray for that family member in their walk with the Lord. For example, I might pray that the verse Micah 6:8 will be a reality in their life (or my life, if the socks being pegged out are mine).

"He has shown all you people what is good, and what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with the Lord." Micah 6:8 TNIV.

Micah 6:8 is one of my favourite Bible verses.

As I peg out my clothes, I will pray any personal confessions. I often also pray for God's guidance in my life, for God's help in my role as a wife and mother, for patience and other fruits of the Spirit.

The following verses are often inspirational verses in my prayer life at the washing line:

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control." Galatians 5:22-23a TNIV

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience." Colossians 3:12 TNIV

And here's a verse that I just found when I was looking for the reference of the Colossians verse. This will be a new addition to my washing line prayers.

"For all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." Galatians 3:27 TNIV

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Inside Out

Living Courageously in Uncertain Times



By life coach Carey Hauri

Scared witless...now what?!

Your heart races, you have difficulty breathing, your

mouth is dry, your legs have gone to “jelly” and your palms are sweating. These are some of the body’s classic responses to fear - the “fight or flight” response. Fear is the body’s reaction to a threat, regardless of whether the threat is physical, emotional or financial. Fear also leads to suppression of the immune system and activity in areas of the brain concerned with short-term memory, concentration, inhibition and rational thought. When this happens on a daily basis over many years, mental, emotional and physical health can be jeopardised, as well as the ability to function at peak capacity and the simple ability to enjoy life.

The problem is that a real or perceived threat signals a part of the brain to store the experience in long-term memory. We aren’t simply afraid of physical danger, which in itself is not bad. We also become afraid of any imagined situation that might evoke a painful emotion.

F - False

E - Evidence

A - Appearing

R - Real

Fear’s function is to keep us from getting hurt, but in doing so fear can also keep us from becoming all that God created us to be and do. Fear is the gatekeeper of our comfort zone and its number one job is to guard us against any negative feelings and to keep us “safe”. But how satisfying and faith stretching is “safe”?!

In uncertain times we can find ourselves becoming increasingly fearful and anxious. Those “what if” questions begin to loom: What if I lose my job? What if my hours at work are cut? What if I can’t pay the bills? Or maybe fear is holding us back from moving forward in some other area of our lives?

We can live courageously and move beyond the fear:

1. Acknowledge and examine our fear.
 - * Acknowledge that the event or situation we are facing is making us nervous and anxious.
 - * Use the Living Courageously Worksheet to examine and gain perspective on the event/situation.
2. Change our perception and perspective.
 - * Ask ourselves, “In what ways could this event or situation be positive and an opportunity?”
 - * Break bigger challenges and goals into smaller, more manageable chunks.
 - * The words we use will influence how we perceive a situation, event or person, and our emotional response to it. Watch the language and words we are using, and then change them if necessary. For example, instead of being “afraid” or “terrified”, we are “a little concerned”. Instead of an event or situation being “scary” or “frightening”, we can describe it as an exciting challenge.
 - * Remind ourselves of positive truths, backed up with God’s promises in Scripture.
3. Plan and prepare as well as we can, remembering that God is in control!
 - * Get the training and resources to improve our knowledge and skills.
 - * Ask for help from wiser, more experienced leaders, mentors, coaches and counsellors.
 - * Surround ourselves with optimistic, positive supporters who believe in us. Avoid the “fear junkies” and “dream drainers”.
 - * Formulate a contingency plan.
 - * Rehearse presentations, difficult conversations, answers to challenging questions.
4. Focus on what we want to happen.
 - * We attract what we fear! Dwelling on our fears can bring them upon us. “As a man thinks within himself, so he is.”
 - * Even if we say to ourselves, “I don’t want ‘A’ to happen”, we will gravitate toward ‘A’. Our mind cannot move AWAY from anything, only TOWARD something.
 - * Focus on what God wants/you want - focus directs energy and action.
 - * Having a clear, written purpose or vision will help us to clarify what we want to happen and direct our focus, actions and behaviour.
5. Just do it!
 - * Many of us wish our lives away, waiting for “someday” to come, for a guarantee that if we risk, nothing bad will happen.
 - * We need to take calculated risks and just do it!

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Living Courageously in Uncertain Times (continued)

- * Risk is one of the keys that move us from fear to freedom.
Taking risks builds courage, confidence and consistency.
- * Faith equals risk.
- * When we confront fears, they often disappear or aren't as big as we imagined them to be!
- * To walk on water we do need to get out of the boat!
- * When we are willing to trust God and shift, move or change – whether in one or all areas of life – we open ourselves up to true transformation.

Courage isn't the absence of fear but persevering and taking action despite our fears.

(If you would like a copy of the Living Courageously Worksheet mentioned above, please contact Carey at careyhauri@mail.com and she will be happy to email it to you!)

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Spotlight on the Nations

Child Rescue



Each year, more than 2 million children are exploited in the global commercial sex trade. (UNICEF)

This is a staggering & overwhelming figure, but it's true & happening in our time. I have seen them. These children are locked in hotel rooms in rural Cambodia, filmed by paedophiles and sold on DVD in Bangkok's major shopping centres. They are trafficked from Nepal and Bangladesh and forced to sell their bodies in Sonagachi, Calcutta, India. They are bought in a tribal village in the Philippines and sold out of a dingy bar in Angeles city.

Those of us who can, have a part to play, one child at a time. I invite you to join with us to rescue as many exploited children as we possibly can. Sign up today. Become an ambassador for child rescue.

You can leave no greater legacy than a rescued human life. Go to Free to be Kids website for more information:
<http://www.accworldrelief.org/freetobekids/child-rescue-anti-trafficking/>



Free to be Kids is proudly supported by Optimum Life Focus