

*All that's going on
around St Andrew's*

FROM THE SENIOR MINISTER & JAMES SMITH

REV JOHN DICKSON

☛ Senior Minister

Dear all,

This week I've got something a little different. For starters, what follows is written by Rev James Smith, our 10am Pastor. And it's excellent.

James, along with Meredith Hatcher, recently attended a Sydney Anglican Diocesan Conference on Church Growth with one of the world's leading researchers into the dynamics of church health and expansion. Afterwards, I asked him for a brief report on the conference, a punchy summary of the content as it relates to St Andrew's. What he wrote is more than a little pertinent to this moment we find ourselves in, especially in light of this Monday's special Parish-wide Property Meeting (Mon 29 Aug at 7pm). Have a read. See what you think.

God bless,

John

Church Growth ain't rocket science, folks

By Rev James Smith

At a recent conference on the 'science' of church growth, Meredith and I discovered that St Andrew's is poised at one of the significant thresholds of expansion.

We were at the *Next Level* conference put on by the diocese last week to help us understand how to take our churches to the "next level". Thank the Lord, our Archbishop and Bishops have no intention, humanly speaking, of letting Christ's church drift into obscurity in Sydney culture!

The keynote speaker was Dr Gary McIntosh, Professor of Church Ministry and Leadership at Talbot school of Theology, Biola University in California. Dr McIntosh has a Ph.D. in church growth and has for over 30 years consulted to thousands of churches throughout the Western world.

His talks were a powerful combination of insight and practical wisdom drawn from the latest organisational theory and current data from extensive research into North American churches. Fact, not anecdote, is what drives his analysis. Meredith and I were struck by how directly applicable McIntosh's findings are to St Andrew's right now.

Dr McIntosh suggested that the best way to help a church grow is to understand where it is in its life cycle (Age Dynamics) and what level it has reached in size (Size Dynamics).

Firstly, Age Dynamics. All organisms and organisations go through a typical life cycle of birth, rapid growth, consolidation, decline and death. A church is no different.

A church will typically go through this life cycle in a 60-80 year period, unless it is reenergised by a new vision. Optimally, this needs to happen at the end of the rapid growth phase (within 10-20 years of its birth or rebirth) before the momentum of the growth is lost.

This will then create a new life cycle. So a rebirth needs to happen every 5-10 years. Otherwise the church will almost inevitably decline.

In passing, he remarked that the saddest day in the church is often when the mortgage (for a building project) is paid off and the papers are ceremonially burnt. Why? Because then the church can sometimes lose its sense of purpose and drift into cruise control.

Secondly, Size Dynamics. Research into churches has identified 10 natural size levels: 35, 85, 125, 200 (the maximum one minister can lead), 400, 800, 1200, 3000, 6000, 10000 (numbers of regularly attending adults and children).

Typically churches plateau at each of these levels, unless real energy is created to break through these size “ceilings”—by, for instance, investing in more staff, launching new ministries, or renewing the church’s facilities.

In particular, the capacity of the worship space has been identified as an obvious barrier to growth. Research shows that as soon as a church building appears approximately 80% full, new people stop coming. The reasons for this are difficult to identify—perhaps new people are not prepared to sit so close to strangers, perhaps things appear to be too full for them to be noticed—but the data is real. At about 80% capacity, growth declines.

I was struck by the relevance of this research to St Andrew’s.

In terms of Age Dynamics, it seems that after a period of lovely growth (from about 500 adults and children in 2010 to 787 right now)

St Andrew’s has entered a consolidation phase, and growth is declining.

And when one considers Size Dynamics, it’s not hard to see a problem. Although St Andrew’s has put in place some of the requirements necessary to break through the 800 level (e.g. specialised staff team, pastoral function of small groups), our church is constrained by the capacity of the worship space. Both at the 10am and 5pm services the church is 70-80% filled and so perceived by guests to be full.

Dr McIntosh insisted that the growth of a church depends (under God) on the choices made by the congregation. St Andrew’s is at such a “choice point”.

A choice whether or not to catch the *2020 Vision* of the church and break out of the otherwise inevitable cycle of consolidation and decline.

A choice whether or not to make the necessary property redevelopment to overcome the capacity constraint and break through the current size ceiling.

Professor McIntosh said, “Church growth ain’t rocket science, folks. I’ve seen plenty of churches that knew what to do, what they needed to do, but they just didn’t do it.”

James Smith

A postscript from the Senior Minister

You might feel that the timing of this diocesan Church Growth conference, and the specific data emphasised by Gary McIntosh, look like a ‘set up’ designed to encourage support for the ambitious plans being tabled and discussed this Monday night. I think you’re probably right. Thank you, Lord!

Blessings,

John Dickson

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COMMUNITY WATCH

THIS WEEK

🕒 **2020 Vision Project Parish Meeting**

Mon 29th Aug | 7pm

In the Church

The evening will include presentations, an update of the Parish Council's position and a time of Q&A.

🕒 **World Religions & The Christian Faith**

A short series for sceptics and believers.

Continuing Sun 4th Sep

Plus, 'Why I Am A Christian' on Sun 11th Sep
- Guest Speaker, Stephanie Judd.

St Andrew's Roseville, at the 10am, 5pm
and 7pm services.

COMING UP

🕒 **Roseville Fair - Helpers needed**

Sat 10th Sep | 9am - 3pm

St Andrew's are serving Roseville Public School by tidying and cleaning during their school fair - kids can help too!

We need volunteers to take on 1 hour shifts.

RSVP to mel.bell@standrews.net.au
by Sun 4th Sep letting her know the time/s
you can help.

LIFE OF JESUS

- 🕒 *A four-week course that digs deeper into what is known about Jesus' life and why it matters.*

Whether you are looking for answers to life's big questions or just interested in the history and philosophy of the Christian faith, join us for a unique opportunity to discover the fascinating figure at the heart of Christianity.

No assumptions are made about your faith, knowledge or even interest in Christianity. This really is the '101' course for people curious to inspect the basics of the world's largest faith.

Register your interest in our next course commencing on Tuesday 20th September:

lifeofjesus@standrews.net.au
or 02 9412 2553



FOR THE DIARY

Dates for your diary - more details to come

- 🕒 Sun 18th Sep | Belonging Course
- 🕒 Sun 30th Oct | Foundation Day

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COMMUNITY WATCH

PLEASE PRAY

☛ Churchwide

Pray that radiotherapy treatment for Amity Roger's brain cancer will restore her to health, that any side effects of treatment would ease and its progress be smooth. Pray for her parents Mary Ellen and Jackson, brothers Atticus and Rufus, and her grandparents Chris and Christine Rogers and Ross and Margaret Hall. Pray for God's love to sustain each one as he knows their needs.

☛ 5pm

Pray for Susie Ladbrook's mother who has been diagnosed with Leukaemia; that she will remain firm in her faith and that God will comfort and sustain Susie and the whole family.

☛ 7pm

Pray for Tim and Tash Clark who leave this weekend to live in Cambridge, UK. Praise God for his provision for them to study and work there. Pray that he will guide and use them for his good purposes and bless them in this new situation.

MISSION & AID

DALE AND RACHEL BARCLAY

☛ Sunraysia South, Diocese of Bendigo

Pray for Rev Dale and Rachel Barclay, with children Samuel, Joseph, Eden and Talitha, serving with Bush Church Aid (BCA) in the parish of Sunraysia South in the Diocese of Bendigo.

Pray for the future ministry of Dale and his family in the Anglican Parish of Sunraysia South (APOSS), as the Diocese and BCA consider extending his time after 10 years there.

Pray for Dale; that he will have relief from chronic neck pain.

Pray for the Bible Study held at APOSS on Friday nights and for Fay and Sean as they lead it. Pray that it will be a time of blessing and growth.

Pray for the 'Bible in the Bush' team as they prepare for the 2016 event in late October.

Pray that the RENEW op-shop will show continuous positive development including more people offering as volunteers. Praise for continuing donations of saleable goods.

Things from today's talk

BUDDHISM: THE END OF PAIN

Introduction: the 'laid-back' religion?

1. Origins of buddhism

- i.** Siddhartha Gautama, NE India, 5th/4th century BC
- ii.** A 'prince' in luxury
- iii.** The 'Four Signs': old man, ill man, dead man, peaceful ascetic
- iv.** Enlightenment

2. What Buddha rejected

- i.** Gods and Brahman
- ii.** Soul (atman) and Self
- iii.** Reincarnation

3. The four noble truths

- i.** First Noble Truth: Suffering (*dukkha*) exists
- ii.** Second Noble Truth: the origin of suffering is desire or craving
 - ii(a).** Karma: willful action
- iii.** Third Noble Truth: the end of suffering through detachment from craving
 - iii(a).** Nirvana: 'unbinding' or 'extinguishing'
- iv.** Fourth Noble Truth: the 8-fold path to end of desire and suffering

BUDDHISM: THE END OF PAIN

4. The Eightfold path

- i. The three categories of the Eightfold Path
- ii. The 'Total Unbinding' (or death) of the Buddha

5. Buddhism and Christianity

- i. Practical atheism or worship of God
- ii. Ignorance or sin
- iii. Nirvana or New Creation
- iv. Detachment or engagement
- v. Effort or grace

Conclusion

The famous 'Elephant Parable'

Recommended reading

Carrithers, M., *The Buddha: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

Carter, J. R. and Palihawadana, M. (trans.), *The Dhammapada*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000;

Gyatso, K. G., *Introduction to Buddhism: an explanation of the Buddhist way of life*. Cumbria: Tharpa Publications, 2002. (Strongly representing the Mahayana tradition);

Hardy, F., 'The Classical Religions of India', in *The World's Religions* (ed. S. Sutherland, et al.). London: Routledge, 1988, 569-645 ('Buddhism,' 591-603);

Harvey, P., *An Introduction to Buddhism: Teachings, History and practices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990;

Keown, D., *Buddhism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press, 2013.

Rahula, W., *What the Buddha Taught* (Revised edition with illustrative texts translated from the original Pali). New York: Grove Press, 1974. (Representing the Theravada tradition);

Smart, N., *The World's Religions* (2nd edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, 75-165;

Smart, N. and Hecht, R. (editors), 'Buddhism', in *Sacred Texts of the World: a Universal Anthology*. New York: Crossroad, 2002, 231-275.

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FINANCIAL SUPPORT DETAILS

➔ Supporting the General Ministry

Supporting the general work of St Andrew’s:

Anglican Parish St Andrew’s
BSB 704 998 | A/C 100 005 413 *

This is our preferred method to receive your regular support.

Alternatively cash/cheque contributions can be made via the offertory collection during each of the services.

➔ Supporting the Property Redevelopment

To support the St Andrew’s Property Redevelopment, **tax-deductible** contributions can be made via:

St Andrew’s Anglican Church
Roseville Donation Fund
BSB 062 240 | A/C 0090 1771

Please include your surname and the initials “PV” (for Property Vision) in the reference field.

Donations by cheque should be made to St Andrew’s Roseville Donation Fund.

Please mark the envelope with your surname and “PV”.

If you would like to support the Property Redevelopment but **do not** require a tax deduction, please contact the Executive Pastor, Santino Dimarco.

(* this BSB may be displayed as Indue Limited which is part of the Diocesan banking arrangements)

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ANDREW’S
Believes
IN THE COMMUNITY

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